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Between Dao 道 and Fa 法: intertextual analysis of the Warring States period cosmological texts

Mezi Dao 道 a Fa 法: intertextuální analýza kosmologických textů z období Válčících států

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I hereby declare that I have written this dissertation independently, using only the mentioned and duly cited sources and literature, and that the work has not been used in another university study programme or to obtain the same or another academic title.

In Prague on September 15, 2023   Mgr. Bc. Kateřina Gajdošová v.r.

ABSTRACT

The cosmologies contained in excavated texts from the Warring States period, such as Taiyi Sheng Shui 太一生水, Heng Xian 恆先, or Fan Wu Liu Xing 凡物流形, shed new light on the landscape of early Chinese thought. The work seeks to build a coherent argument through which the previously disconnected elements of the texts in question would come together in a logical way. It starts from the reconstruction of the main features of the cosmologies contained in these texts and, on their basis, proposes the reformulation of the basic concepts used in early Chinese texts.

Using process philosophy as a conceptual arsenal, the work traces new connections between fundamental ontological concepts in Chinese texts. Building of this newly proposed interpretive framework starts from the exposition of the specific features of early Chinese cosmology, as captured in the texts of the corpus and supported by the received texts from the period. It continues to the investigation of the role of naming and the place of names within cosmological accounts. Finally, it leads to the reframing of the notion of the self in which the cosmological discourse and the naming discourse overlap.

In its main part, the dissertation focuses on the role of names within the cosmologies. Names seem to play an important part in the constitution and individuation of things (wu 物). Given the temporary character of all boundaries between things within the cosmos regarded as one, names provide things with provisional stability and integrity, thus allowing people to navigate the ever-changing world. As such, names form not only one's direct experience but also one's pre-understanding and expectations of future reality. Names are thus constitutive not only of what there is but also of what there is to be. The cosmological texts bring about the realization that one's reality is inevitably language based and therefore dependent on the prevailing discourse, but the one who knows this can rise above language and become an active co-creator of the discourse.

Keywords: cosmology, names, processual ontology, oneness, individuation

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Introduction

The present dissertation is based on the research into ancient Chinese philosophical texts, mainly from the late Warring States period (4th–3rd century BC). It builds on my thesis "Han Fei's Strategy in Interpreting the Laozi", a philosophical analysis of the Jie Lao 解老 and Yu Lao 喻老 chapters of the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, the first known commentary of the *Laozi* (or *Dao de jing*). The thesis brought my attention to the close link between the so-called Daoist and Legalist strands of thought, two apparently opposed philosophical traditions. The leading motive for this work was to examine this link closely, and hopefully to come up with a new interpretive framework that would elucidate the relationship between the two strands.

The primary direction of my research was the so-called Huang-Lao 黃老 school of thought, a not very well researched strand of political philosophy of the late Warring States and especially Han dynasty period, presumably combining the elements of Legalism and Daoism. The 20th century archaeological finds have brought a large number of new bamboo and silk manuscripts, some of which have been labelled as 'Huang-Lao'.[1] These texts have brought many new elements to the image of the Warring States period thought environment, some of them thematised in this work. They not only constitute important evidence about social and political life in the late Warring States but also contain a mixture of divination manuals, medical and technical texts and, most importantly, also texts inquiring into the nature and functioning of the universe as a whole and the role of human beings in it. Like pre-Socratic fragments, they can be regarded as representing a new stage in the development of human thought, a shift to a new level of maturity, independence and self-reflection.

The corpus of the dissertation consists of the excavated texts, including the Guodian bamboo manuscripts, the bamboo strips from the Shanghai Museum collection and the Mawangdui silk manuscripts, and the received texts, mainly the representatives of the 'Masters' literature' (zi bu 子部[2]). The excavated texts include: *Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水 (The Great One Generates

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[1] Due to the long period of their reconstruction, ordering and transcription, these manuscripts have only recently started being properly researched and interpreted. Last two decades have seen a real 'excavated manuscript mania' among scholars in the East and West.

[2] One of the traditional bibliographical divisions into four categories of literature (si bu 四部), together Confucian classics (jing 經), historiographies (shi 史), and miscellanea (collections) (ji 集) (from ca 3rd cent. AD).

Water) from Guodian bamboo strip collection (ed. Jingmenshi 1998[3]), *Heng xian* 恆先 (Constancy in the Beginning) and *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形 (All Things Flow into Form) from the Shanghai Museum bamboo manuscript collection (ed. Ma 2004), all dated roughly to the mid-4th century BC. Occasional use is made of the Mawangdui silk manuscript *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經 (Four Classics of the Yellow Emperor; ed. Chang and Feng 1998), dated to the 2nd century BC, but possibly of older origin (see Wang 2015). I also draw from a wide range of the received texts from the Warring States period, including the *Dao de jing* 道德經 or the *Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Guanzi* 管子, *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, *Xunzi* 荀子, or *Shenzi* 申子.

In the light of the excavated material, some previously unnoticed passages from the received texts emerge, in particular passages regarding cosmological order, human cognition, role of language (names), individuation of things etc. The research involves close reading and interpretation of the selected texts, with the aim to detect their intertextual links and correspondences on the level of content, vocabulary, means of expression, and genre. My further ambition is to extend these links in order to sketch a broader framework of the Warring States period thought which will make it possible, on one hand, to contextualize the excavated manuscripts and, on the other hand, draw attention to and reframe some previously unnoticed elements of the received texts. The ultimate aim is to identify an underlying link between seemingly disparate strands of Warring States thought and offer a new interpretive framework for their reading and philosophical interpretation.

The research into ancient Chinese philosophical texts involves many methodological challenges. It requires a highly interdisciplinary approach, combining the skills of a historian, palaeographer, philologist, linguist, and philosopher. Since my background is in the studies of philosophy, my main interest is to treat the topic from philosophical point of view while taking due account of disciplinary overlaps. In dealing with palaeography issues such as ordering of bamboo slips and transcription of individual characters, I rely on the work of mainly Chinese palaeographers, with only occasional critical reconsideration. The working versions of individual texts are in each case determined on the basis of the most recent studies and

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[3] Primary sources are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

conference proceedings. Since some of the texts are still relatively new and scholarly consensus has not yet been reached, I sometimes work with several parallel versions.

The ultimate goal of the work is an attempted reconstruction of shared ontology from which the Warring States texts in question arise. It therefore focuses on key ontology-related terms such as *you* 有 (what there is, 'something')*, wu* 無 (what isn't there, not 'something')*, heng* 恆/*chang* 常 (perpetual, ever-present)*, yi* 一 (the one)*, hua* 化/*bian* 變 (change, transformation)*, dong* 動 (to move, to act)*, jing* 靜 (to be still, quiet)*, ming* 名 (name, word)*, shi* 實 (actuality)*, shi* 勢 (position, strategic advantage)*, fa* 法 (law, manner, pattern, regularity)*, dao* 道 (way to do, way of being)*, wu* 物 (a phenomenon, a thing) and expressions such as *zheng ming* 正名 (to put names straight)*, zhi yi* 執一 (to hold on to the one; also *bao yi* 抱一*, shou yi* 守一)*, xing ming* 形名 (shapes and names), and other.

When using philosophical terminology arising from the Western scholarly tradition, one is necessarily confronted with the challenges of the comparative approach, namely the problems associated with applying certain traditional concepts and categories to a different type of thought.[4] A large part of the work is therefore dedicated to clarifying terminology and misunderstandings arising from the application of non-fitting interpretive frameworks.[5] The comparative method is used to show striking similarities between the excavated texts in question and early pre-Socratic thinkers, in particular the Milesians and Heraclitus. With the help of Heidegger's reinterpretation of the pre-Socratics, this specific type of thought is presented as deserving a new, non-metaphysical reinterpretation.

To find some data-based evidence for intertextual resonances, I have occasionally used the digital tools devised by Donald Sturgeon and his team, authors and coordinators of the Chinese Text Project, the digital database of ancient Chinese texts. The digital text database and related tools allow for an advanced work with large corpora of ancient Chinese texts. They are invaluable for identifying parallel passages with the required degree of character variation (so frequent in accumulative texts assembled over longer periods of time, as it is the case with many

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[4] Incompatibility (or even mutual untranslatability) of "Eastern" and "Western" thought is a view that this work deliberately seeks to challenge. Such view is not only harmful for our understanding of ancient Chinese thought but for contemporary understanding of philosophy as such within a globalizing world.

[5] E.g., applying a 'metaphysical' (post-Aristotelian) framework to texts of an essentially non-metaphysical type; more on that in Chapter 3 below.

early Chinese texts). They can be also used to determine the overall level of similarity between random groups of text, based on the vocabulary and sentence patterns (cosine similarity tool, principal component analysis) and create network diagrams of intertextual relations on the basis of the selected criteria. Although these tools allow for a much subtler analysis of the texts than mere frequency measuring, their applicability to my corpus remains limited: excavated texts, often very short and fragmentary, do not provide a quantitatively representative counterpart to the large body of the received texts and the results remain inconclusive. The received texts, on the other hand, are themselves the result of the centuries of transmitting, editing and commenting. In case of the Warring States texts, most of them derive their standard form from Han dynasty or early medieval editions. It is therefore difficult, even with the help of the sophisticated digital tools, to draw any broad conclusions about e.g. text dating based on character variants or to distinguish the 'core text' clearly from commentarial layers and later additions. Qualitative research and close reading supported by critical philological evaluation therefore remain the dominant method in this dissertation.

In case of excavated texts, I rely on their authoritative editions, including the life-sized photos of the bamboo slips, which I was able to consult during my research visit to the libraries of Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan. I am aware of the palaeographical issues related to these texts and I have paid attention to them in the dissertation, especially to the problem of ordering of bamboo strips, transcription and filling in of the lacunae. As for the received texts, I use their authoritative editions, including commentaries, as indicated in the bibliography. I also take into consideration the latest philological and textological studies about the cumulative nature of early Chinese texts, problems of authorship, provenance and process of their composition.

1. Theoretical and methodological preliminaries

1.1 Pitfalls of comparative philosophy

The premise of this work is that every philosophical inquiry takes place within a broader referential framework of ideas about the world and its functioning. This broader framework often remains non-thematized and non-reflected, yet it determines which questions make sense and which do not. It constitutes a grid of pre-understanding with which we approach any new

piece of information. However, texts from different cultural and intellectual traditions, from distant parts of the world and periods of time, require the awareness that their basic referential frameworks may vary substantially. Although there may be elements that look familiar, they can relate to each other in a different way when situated in a different framework.

As the proverbial fish that is not aware of the water, we naturally tend to regard some elements of our own worldview as universal, and they rarely come within the scope of our attention. These elements, such as basic components of the world, their stability or changeability, their relation to each other, the overall dynamics (or mechanics) of these relations, the place and role of (human) self in all this etc., remain in the background of our thought as tacit assumptions. For example, a question as simple as "How can I perceive things that surround me?" already contains several presuppositions: it presumes an "I" as a relatively stable centre of perception (which remains identical with itself throughout the process of perceiving), the possibility of perceiving – receiving something from 'outside' (i.e., not being the source of it), and the existence of things outside of me (with their own unity and integrity in space and time). It also posits a possibility of establishing a link between these two sides, i.e. a shared platform or environment in which they can meet, and there may be a non-specified number of other assumptions involved that are not themselves thematized (e.g., the concept of space as an empty and limitless continuum in which discrete things interact with each other, the concept of time, as a 'homogenous unidirectional progression' based on the model of empty geometrical space etc.). If considered one by one, these assumptions could be easily identified as historically conditioned, some of them actually quite recent, and specific to the intellectual context in which they appeared. Generally, they can been seen as the result of intellectual battles fought throughout the history of thought in a given cultural sphere. It could then be less surprising when seemingly fundamental questions are ignored or formulated rather differently in an environment that had its own history of intellectual battles.

This work is, more than anything else, a philosophical endeavour. More specifically, it could be identified as an endeavour in comparative philosophy, were it not for several problems of this specific discipline which it seeks to expose and overcome. The very definition of 'comparative philosophy' suggests that there are some 'comparanda' that can be examined against a universal background which we all share. This typically involves isolating certain expressions of philosophical thought from their broader background and making them subject of comparison, based on presumed shared criteria. The problem is both the postulation of a shared universal ground of philosophical questioning and the random selection and isolation of

topics to be compared. Comparative philosophers often disregard the fact that similarly sounding questions can have very different meanings when considered in their broader context in which they were posed. Such comparative effort usually comes down to listing 'similarities' and 'differences' between compared ideas, without answering any real question or advancing our knowledge in any way.[6] Therefore, the premise of this work is that each philosophical question is entangled in a framework of pre-understanding of how things work and how the world is generally organized, and that the assumed 'universal ground' can be the result of the specific development of thought in one's own narrowly defined cultural sphere.

Also, what we usually understand by comparative philosophy is primarily the comparison between different cultures of the world. As such, it presupposes a certain discreteness and, at the same time, inner unity of 'cultures' and disregards their processual aspect, fluidity, interpenetration, and internal development. By isolating certain comparanda out of the living context of their thought environment for the sake of comparison, we only reinforce the idea that cultures, representing different ways of thinking, have something essentially discrete and incompatible in them. Moreover, when we talk about 'world philosophy' (similarly e.g. to 'world music'), the general expectation is that we include 'all kinds of weird thought systems' from around the world to the existing philosophical discourse, out of sheer curiosity and aesthetic need for more diversity. Their proper philosophical value and their relevance for the already established narrative of the history of philosophy is mostly disregarded.

When we contrast and compare ideas of philosophers as diverse as pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, Averroes, St. Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, or Wittgenstein, representing not only different epochs but also very diverse cultural environments, it interestingly would not occur to us to call it comparative philosophy. Their respective contexts, often mutually incompatible, do not prevent us from making them part of one greater dialogue, as if they were all together in one large philosophical arena. It is because they have become part of a unifying chrono-logical narrative of the history of philosophy, part of the scholarly

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[6] The view that the idea of "comparative philosophy" is somehow inherently flawed has also been supported by, e.g., Ralph Weber (e.g. in his presentation "Post-Comparative Global Philosophy" at SACP conference in Krakow, 2018), or Steve Burik in his End of Comparative Philosophy and the Task of Comparative Thinking (Burik, Steven (2009). The End of Comparative Philosophy and the Task of Comparative Thinking: Heidegger, Derrida, and Daoism. Albany: SUNY Press.)

curriculum which has established philosophy as an academic discipline.[7] At one point, this narrative must have solidified and apparently become unable to absorb new elements.[8] The level of solidification of the discipline is further evidenced by courses and topics taught at university departments, accreditations of study programmes, library sections and shelves in bookstores, names of scholarly societies and institutions, journals and conferences etc. Other areas of thought that fall outside of that narrative, often only because they use different vocabulary or are performed in different genres, are then deemed to have a 'lesser philosophical value', or are directly left out as non-philosophical (tactfully labelled as 'teachings', 'wisdom', 'thought' etc.).[9]

The 'philosophical value' debate about Chinese philosophy opens deeper issues related to the status of philosophy as an academic discipline and, in a broader sense, as a professional occupation in general. Philosophy has always stood apart from other academic disciplines,[10] as if it were a science beyond all sciences, or an art beyond all arts. There is indeed no limitation for the scope of philosophical questioning. There is no 'field' of philosophy in the sense of something defined by its borders with something that it is not. As such, its status as a discipline is extremely hard to capture. Still, its importance continues to be recognized throughout centuries, despite twists and turns of postmodernism, up to our days. It still goes through lively development, with many newly emerging personalities and influences. New challenges facing humanities and natural sciences bring about the need for deeper reconsideration of existing paradigms, and philosophy plays an important part in addressing this need.

The view that I would like to defend in this work is that any effort in 'comparative' philosophy must necessarily come down to 'doing philosophy' (or maybe, 'systemic' philosophy). In other

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[7] As A. C. Graham has observed: "Western civilisation, … is no more than a retrospective fiction by which we claim for ourselves most of the genius we have heard of since Homer." (Angus Graham, Disputers of the Tao, La Salle: Open Court, 1989, p.5.)

[8] This is also the case of certain marginal thinkers who did not make it into 'history of philosophy' account despite their importance and originality.

[9] The debate about philosophical relevance of Chinese philosophy was summed up nicely in the exchange between Rein Raud and Carine Defoort in Philosophy East and West (See Defoort, Carine (2001). "Is There Such a Thing as Chinese Philosophy? Arguments of an Implicit Debate". Philosophy East and West 51.1: 393-413. Raud, Rein (2006). "Traditions and Tendencies: A Reply to Carine Defoort." Philosophy East & West 56 (4): 661–64.; Defoort, Carine (2006). "Is 'Chinese Philosophy' a Proper Name? A Response to Rein Raud." Philosophy East and West 56, no. 4: 625–60.) The historical roots of how and why Masters' texts have become treated as 'philosophy' were tracked by, e.g., Anne Cheng (in her lecture at Collège de France "Philosophy and the French Invention of Sinology"; published as Cheng, Anne (2014). Philosophy and the French Invention of Sinology: Mapping Academic Disciplines in Nineteenth Century Europe. China Report, 50(1), 11–30.)

[10] If these are traditionally split into arts and sciences, philosophy stands on the side of the arts, but the intuition is to put it apart from other arts as well.

words, comparative philosophy should not be comparative history of ideas, separate from philosophy in its proper sense. Without subscribing to universalism (seeking the most general referential framework or the lowest common denominator), I believe we can switch between different perspectives and shift our frames of reference to obtain divergent but internally coherent and, most importantly, mutually translatable interpretations. In other words, I believe we are able to delve deep into various and still variating worlds of thought and try to map them and explain them by means of suitable philosophical devices. Instead of regarding the history of philosophy as a unidirectional evolutionary tree-structure, I prefer to see it as a workshop full of ingenious philosophical tools, devised for various reasons, which have different uses in different circumstances, depending on the purpose of our inquiry. In the same way, different avenues of the discipline of mathematics produced various consistent interpretive techniques, which are then applied as tools to elucidate new findings in physics and other natural sciences. The goal is not necessarily to establish one overarching system but to connect the dots in a meaningful and productive way in each case, in order to find a solution to a specific problem.

In case of interpretation of philosophical texts, the goal should not be to appropriate the concepts of 'another system' to 'our own system', or to establish once for all how it is built, but to enable the switch between different and equally valid perspectives and provide a viewpoint from which anyone can make sense of any of the various elements of that system, as it continues to build itself and interact with others. To achieve such shift of perspective, that is, to provide a pair of glasses through which everyone can start seeing the previously unnoticed elements of another system and their connections, and develop on it in a productive way, that is the ambition of this work.

1.2 Prism of schools: Huang-Lao between Daoism and Legalism?

The present work focuses on a group of Warring States period texts presumably situated within the continuum between Daoism and Legalism. These texts include some of the recently excavated manuscripts, the study of which presents many challenges. Some of these texts have no received counterpart to be matched with and no commentarial tradition to lean on, and offer no other clues for their identification, such as title or reference to some other known text. And for those that have a received counterpart, their relation to it is not as straightforward as we would wish. In case of the received texts and their commentaries, we must take into account

the socio-political circumstances under which they were made. It is reasonable to assume that each edition introduced some bias in the original text. The political and religious agendas may have played the role also in the records of authorship and dating that we have now available. Not only reconstruction but even the very idea of some 'Urtext' becomes an unattainable goal.

Given this lack of certainty on all sides, the traditional categorisation of the Warring States period strands of thought into 'schools', or *xuepai* 學派, has gradually become the main guiding line for dating, attribution and contextualization of previously unknown material. This situation results in assumptions about the genre and purpose of the texts which may affect their reading and translation and, in case of excavated texts, even the ordering of bamboo slips, transcription of characters and filling in of the lacunae. It is not surprising then when new findings only confirm the already preexisting notions.

This work originally started as an inquiry into the close relation between two seemingly opposed 'schools of thought', Daoism and Legalism. It became evident early on that the inquiry based on the idea of the 'schools of thought' may be just a wrongly posed question. At a closer look, traditional dividing lines between 'schools', or even distinctive strands of Warring States thought, became blurred and the well-established categories of Daoism and Legalism started to dissipate. To introduce in detail the whole debate about the pertinence of the labels of Daoism and Legalism is beyond the scope of this work. Daoism as a summary label for vastly different forms of thought has been challenged for decades, among other by e.g. Herlee G. Creel,[11] or Nathan Sivin.[12] Problematic influence of traditional taxonomies was more recently pointed out

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[11] Creel, Herlee G. (1982) What is Taoism, and other studies in Chinese cultural history. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Creel points out the difference between 'philosophical Daoism' (represented by texts such as *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*), within which he recognizes 'contemplative' and 'purposive' Daoism, and 'religious Daoism' which he proposes to call Xian (仙) Daoism (following the foundation of Tianshidao 天師道 sect by Zhang Daoling 張 道陵 in 142 AD). While the distinction 'contemplative' / 'purposive' may be quite productive, as it will be discussed later in this work, the traditional 'philosophical' / 'religious' distinction only brings more confusion to the topic. Not only is it problematic to impose such distinctions on the world that did not have it, but it also suggests that the Warring States Daoist texts are somehow 'not religious' but purely 'philosophical' and that this 'philosophical' purity disappears with the growth of the religious movement and yields to mythical thinking and religious beliefs.
[12] Sivin, Nathan (1978). On the Word "Taoist" as a Source of Perplexity with Special Reference to the Relations of Science and Religion in Traditional China, in: History of Religions 1978; 17 (3/4). Although the article was written in the context of the debate about the beginnings of scientific thinking in China and the relation between science and religion, it makes the point that the vagueness of the term Daoism is getting in the way of basically any research in the early history of Chinese thought. Sivin notes that the word 'Daoist' often denotes nothing more specific than a frame of mind – nature loving, perhaps, or mystical in a naturalistic way, or unconventional. He rejects the distinction between philosophical and religious Daoism showing that what is usually considered 'philosophical Daoism' has no historical or sociological meaning based on evidence.

by Mark Csikszentmihalyi. According to him, archaeological discoveries such as Mawangdui and Guodian have "catalysed the re-evaluation of traditional categories used to describe late Warring States and the Qin-Han thought" and there is time to draw "a new map of Warring States and Qin-Han textual production, one that is based on differing sociological conditions of production rather than on received taxonomies."[13] The reservations about the use of the term 'Legalism' were summarized exhaustively by Paul Goldin in his recent article.[14]

Still, for anyone interested in the texts in which elements of Daoism and Legalism overlap, there is another label to be examined: the so-called Huang-Lao 黃老 thought. Almost all texts of the corpus of this work have, in one way or another, been associated with Huang-Lao thought – it was therefore the primary guiding thread that I decided to follow. It did not take long to realize that to apply this label to the Warring States period thought is rather problematic. Much of the existing scholarship about Huang-Lao, Chinese scholarship in particular, operated on the basis of the pre-established notions of 'Daoism', 'Legalism', and the image of 'Huang-Lao' given in the *Shiji* 史記, and used them without further discussion to draw conclusions about the nature and function of individual texts, especially newly excavated ones. In the following, I offer at least a brief overview of the debate about the Huang-Lao label, with the aim to disambiguate the terminology used in this work and to explain why I had to abandon this interpretive framework and to seek an alternative approach.

The term Huang-Lao 黃老 is interpreted as a compound of Huangdi 黃帝, the Yellow Emperor, and Laozi 老子, as it is explained in e.g. Lunheng.[15] Most generally, Huang-Lao thought is understood as "a school of thought prevalent in Western Han times which attempted to synthesize Daoist and Legalist concepts".[16] Before Mawangdui archaeological finds, there was

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[13] Csikszentmihalyi, Mark (2002). Traditional Taxonomies and Revealed Texts in the Han, in: The Daoist Identity, ed. Livia Kohn, Harold D. Roth. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 81-101. Csikszentmihalyi sees the perceived gap between so-called Lao-Zhuang 老莊 Daoism and late-Han Daoist movement as a result of strong and influential Han taxonomies (solidified in bibliographical records such as Han shu 漢書 chapter Yiwenzhi 藝文志).

[14] Goldin, Paul R. (2011). Persistent Misconceptions about Chinese "Legalism", Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 38(1), 88-104.

[15] Wang Chong 王充 (ca 27-97 AD), *Lunheng* 論衡, chap. 54 Ziran 自然: 賢之純者，黃、老是也。黃者、黃帝也，老者、老子也. ("Pure examples of wisdom are Huang and Lao; Huang stands for Huangdi and Lao stands for Laozi.")

[16] Nienhauser W. Jr (2021), p. 46, n. 32. Major works establishing Huang-Lao as a Warring States strand of thought "combining elements of Daoism and Legalism" include e.g. Chen Li-Kuei 陳麗桂, Sung, Winnie Hiu Chuk (2014). The doctrines and transformation of the Huang-Lao tradition. In Liu Xiaogan ed. (2014), Dao Companion to Daoist

no direct textual evidence of this influential strand, apart from references in the received texts. In *Shiji* 史記, the famous Han-dynasty history record, Sima Qian identifies as Huang-Lao thinkers such as Shen Buhai 申不害, and Hanfeizi 韓非子 (chapter 63),[17] and also thinkers associated with the so-called Jixia 稷下 Academy in the state of Qi 齊, such as e.g. Shen Dao 慎到 (chapter 74).[18] Throughout *Shiji*, Huang-Lao appears either as 'Huang-Lao yan' 黃老言 (teachings, texts), or 'Huang-Lao shu' 黃老術 (practices, techniques) that someone studies or promotes, which leaves room for the interpretation of Huang-Lao as both text-based teaching and a set of related practices. Huang-Lao is not mentioned in Sima Tan's account 'Lun liu jia zhi yaozhi' 論六家之要指.[19] There also seem to be no categorical gap in the *Shiji* between Huang-Lao and Legalists, and the distinction between Daoist and Legalists is rather blurred.

The scholarship about Huang-Lao before 1973 (the year of the discovery of Mawangdui manuscript *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經, see below) was based mainly on Sima Qian's account in the *Shiji* 史記 and Ban Gu's in the *Hanshu* 漢書. Huang-Lao was described as practically oriented philosophy, or political theory, focused on art of rulership, combined with self-cultivation practices, elements of yin-yang theory and Daoist cosmology similar to that presented in the *Laozi*, and with the medical and alchemical practices striving for longevity (or immortality) associated with the name of the legendary Yellow Emperor. It became quite wide-spread in the circles of the influential Empress Dowager Dou 竇皇后 (ca 205–135 BC), the spouse of Han emperor Wen 漢文帝 (ca 203–157 BC), and her family at the Han court. The

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Philosophy, pp. 241-264; Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1996), Shi pipan shu 十批判書, Jixia Huang Lao xuepai de pipan 稷下黃老學派的批判, Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe 北京: 東方出版社, pp. 142–173.

[17] *Shiji* 63, Laozi Hanfeizi liezhuan 老子韓非列傳: 申子之學本於黃老而主刑名。(…) 韓非者，韓之諸公子也。喜刑名法術之學，而其歸本於黃老。" The teachings of Shenzi were based on those of Huang-Lao and emphasized 'punishments and their designations.' (…) Han Fei was one of the Noble Scions of Han. He enjoyed the study of 'punishments and their designations' and 'techniques of legal models,' but his essentials were rooted in [the teachings of] Huang-Lao." (Nienhauser W. Jr 2021, pp. 46-47)

[18] *Shiji* 74, Mengzi Xun Qing liezhuan 孟子荀卿列傳: 慎到，趙人。田駢、接子，齊人。環淵，楚人。皆學黃老道德之術，因發明序其指意。故慎到著十二論，環淵著上下篇，而田駢、接子皆有所論焉。 "Shen Dao was a native of Zhao. Tian Pian and Master Jie were natives of Qi. Huan Yuan was a native of Chu. They all had studied the methods of the Huang-Lao, Way and its virtue, and then took the occasion to explain them and to give a sequence to the meanings they pointed to. On this topic Shen Dao wrote twelve dissertations, Huan Yuan wrote an upper and a lower chapter while Tian Pian and Master Jie both contributed discussions on them." (Nienhauser W. Jr 2021, p. 336)

[19] *Shiji* 130, incorporated by Sima Qian into Taishigong zixu 太史公自序. Jia 家 has been often translated as 'six schools' or 'six houses', but according to the more recent studies, in this type of context it is better translated as 'someone proficient or knowledgeable in a certain area'. According to Sima Tan, these six groups include: yin/yang, Ru, Mo, ming, fa, daode "陰陽、儒、墨、名、法、道德".

practical symptoms of the influence of Huang-Lao thought in this period, such as the non-interventionist policy against Xiongnu or lenience towards the self-governing tendencies of feudal lords, have been described thoroughly in an article by Hans Van Ess.[20] Van Ess suggests that Sima Qian may have written in support of Huang-Lao to assert legitimacy for one contemporary philosophical trend or that he may have been working on a political order, in the setting where the Han rulers faced the growing influence of rich merchant families. When Confucianism was established as the official state ideology under Han emperor Wu 漢武帝 (156–87 BC), Huang-Lao thought became the main representative of anti-Confucian opposition and was officially banned. The term 'Huang-Lao' disappears from use towards the end of 2nd cent. AD, around the time of the establishment of the Tianshidao 天師道 sect by Zhang Daoling 張道陵.

Guo Moruo was probably the first to use the 'Huang-Lao' label to address the apparent gap between two different faces of Daoism – the Warring States strand associated with *Laozi* and (later) *Zhuangzi* and its developments after the foundation of the Tianshidao in the 2nd cent. He observed that the term 'Huang-Lao' was used for Daoist thought on both sides of this gap, and he then identified *Huang-Lao xuepai* 黃老學派 as the missing link between these two manifestations of Daoism. At the same time, he posited that the doctrine had its origin in the environment of Jixia 稷下 academy in the capital of Qi around 300 BC.[21] Guo associated different practices, including alchemy and magic, appearing in late Han Xian 仙 Daoism with Jixia academy. According to him, philosophy may have degenerated so much that the magicians who supported Qin Shi Huangdi 秦始皇帝 (259–210 BC) in his desire for immortality could be in the direct line of transmission from the disciples of Zhuangzi. Of all these claims, hardly

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[20] Van Ess, Hans (1993). "The Meaning of Huang-Lao in Shiji and Hanshu". Études chinoises. XII (2): 161–177.
[21] Much scholarship has been dedicated to the Jixia academy, and whether or not it really existed, including: Meyer, Andrew (2011). "'The Altars of the Soil and Grain are Closer Than Kin' 社稷戚於親: The Qi 齊 Model of Intellectual Participation and the Jixia 稷下 Patronage Community." Early China 33 (2011): 37-99; Bai Xi 白奚, Jixiaxue yanjiu: Zhongguo gudai de sixiang ziyou yu baijia zhengming 稷下學研究：中國古代思想自由與百家爭鳴 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1998); Harnett, Richard A. (2011). Jixia Academy and the Birth of Higher Learning: A Comparison of Fourth-Century BC Chinese Education with Ancient Greece. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen; or Yu Kongbao 于孔寶 (2008). "Jixia xuegong yu Huang Lao zhixue lunshu" 稷下學宮與黃老之學論述. Guanzi xuekan 管子學刊 4: 37–42; recently, a great article adding to the debate was published by Oliver Weingarten (Weingarten, Oliver (2015). "Debates around Jixia: Argument and Intertextuality in Warring States Writings Associated with Qi". Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 135, No. 2 (April–June 2015), pp. 283–307. Weingarten concludes: "The scarcity and the often polemical nature of surviving testimony on Jixia may not permit the modern student to delineate the precise nature, institutional framework, and actual social interactions at this centre of patronage (…). But extant sources nevertheless offer sufficient evidence to discover networks of texts, attitudes, and ideas consistently associated with Jixia." (ibid, p. 307)

any can be really proved, but this position was immensely influential for general understanding of Daoism as well as of Huang-Lao.[22]

The boom of Huang-Lao studies started from 1973, following the discovery of the four Mawangdui silk manuscripts (also *Huang-Lao boshu* 黃老帛書), preceding the Mawangdui *Laozi* A and B, and identified as the lost Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor, *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經 (*HDSJ*), mentioned in *Hanshu* 漢書 bibliographical chapter Yiwenzhi 藝文志.[23] The main title is missing, only the titles of individual parts have been preserved: Jing fa 經法, Shi liu jing 十六經,[24] Cheng 稱 a Dao yuan 道原. Their content is very diverse: Jing fa is almost entirely dedicated to political theory and problems of government, Cheng is a collection of shorter reflections, Shi liu jing sums up the story of the Yellow Emperor, while Dao yuan contains cosmological accounts.

Among the scholars who have interpreted and contextualised *HDSJ*, the most important are Chen Guying,[25] Robin D. S. Yates,[26] Leo S. Chang and Yu Feng,[27] and Randall P. Peerenboom.[28] Peerenboom, who interprets Huang-Lao thought as a close pendant of Legalism (more specifically as a kind of Legalist moral theory based on the concept of natural law), admits the uncertainty that surrounds the manuscript and the Huang-Lao label itself:

> We do not know the title, author(s), or date. Whereas the four individual sections are titled, the text as a whole is not. Indeed, not only is the title uncertain, one cannot even be sure that the four sections form a single work. Similarly, with respect to authorship, not only is the author unknown, but single authorship is itself a matter of debate. And although archaeological evidence constrains the

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[22] Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1996), Shi pipan shu 十批判書, Jixia Huang Lao xuepai de pipan 稷下黃老學派的批判, Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe 北京: 東方出版社, pp. 142–173.
[23] See e.g. Du Weiming (1979). "The 'Thought of Huang-Lao': A Reflection on the Lao Tzu and Huang Ti Texts in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui." Journal of Asian Studies. 39 (1) 1979: 95-110. For more detailed information, see part 2.6
[24] Earlier transcribed also as Shi da jing 十大經; Li Xueqin argues that the title should be simply Jing 經 or the Classics (Chang and Feng, 1998, Introduction n. 4, Li Xueqin, 1996)
[25] Chen Guying 陈鼓应 (2007). Huangdi sijing jinzhu jinshi: Mawangdui Hanmu chutu boshu 黃帝四经今注今译：马王堆汉墓出土帛书. Beijing: Beijing Commercial Press 北京：商务印书馆.
[26] Yates, Robin D.S. (1997). Five Lost Classics: Tao, Huang-Lao, and Yin-Yang in Han China. Ballantine Books.
[27] Chang, Leo S. and Yu Feng (1998). The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor: Original Mawangdui Texts with Complete English Translations and an Introduction. University of Hawaii Press.
[28] Peerenboom, R. P. (1993). Law and Morality in Ancient China: The Silk Manuscripts of Huang-Lao. Albany: SUNY Press.

latest possible date of copying to 168 BC, the date of composition of the original remains much contested.[29]

However, scholars the field of early Chinese texts, inspired by Guo Moruo,[30] saw the *HDSJ* as providing the missing link, that is, the 'Huangdi' part of 'Huang-Lao', the 'Lao' part of which was represented by the *Laozi*. Further Huang-Lao studies therefore developed mainly on the basis of the research into *HDSJ*. Other texts, namely parts of *Guanzi*, *Huainanzi*, *Wenzi*, *Heguanzi* or *Lüshi Chunqiu*, were later identified as Huang-Lao based on textual or ideological similarities with *HDSJ* and *Laozi*. More recently, *Xunzi* was also associated with this strand of thought.

This cursory overview of the development of Huang-Lao studies was meant to show that the Huang-Lao label stands on very vague foundations and that it has obtained its more definite contours only recently, along with the boom of interest in excavated texts and lesser-known received texts from the Warring States and early Han period. Its use was legitimized by certain influential figures (such as e.g. Guo Moruo) and became fixed through habit and repetition within scholarly community. Although it may serve as a convenient 'box' allowing us to put together a number of otherwise unrelated texts, it cannot constitute a guiding framework for their interpretation and contextualisation. In other words, any insight into the meaning of the term Huang-Lao can be, at best, an eventual by-product of our inquiry but it should not be its starting point.

1.3 Recent scholarship related to the topic of early Chinese cosmological texts

As I have already mentioned, the research into excavated texts is a highly interdisciplinary enterprise, combining many different fields of expertise. Since the focus of this work is philosophical interpretation of the texts, it does not dedicate much space to historical, sociological, or political conditions in which they were composed. Also, their palaeographical, linguistic and philological aspects are not treated in great detail. However, the study of the

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[29] Peerenboom (1993), p. 3.
[30] See above, p. 17.

relevant scholarship in all these fields constitutes the necessary background of the present research.

For the reconstructed versions of my core texts – ordering of the bamboo strips, their transcription from Chu script and reconstruction of the missing parts – I rely, together with many other scholars in the field, on the work of palaeographers and leading experts in early Chinese texts, such as Li Ling 李零, Li Xueqin 李学勤, Xing Wen 邢文, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 or Pang Pu 龐朴. The volume "The Guodian Laozi: proceedings of the international conference at Dartmouth College, May 1998",[31] which captures the debate about the excavated Guodian texts in the course of one intense interdisciplinary academic event, offers a unique sneak peek into the process of finalisation of versions of individual excavated texts and it captures the productive cooperation of scholars across different fields and geographical areas.

The scholarship about the Guodian texts is much richer than in case of the Shanghai Museum bamboo strip collection. Two major monographs on excavated texts, Scott Cook's "Bamboo Texts of Guodian"[32] and Dirk Meyer's "Philosophy on Bamboo"[33] are dedicated to Guodian manuscripts. The most recent research is also comprehensively summarized in "Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts" from 2019.[34]

For the Shanghai Museum collection, I turned again to the works of Li Ling, Xing Wen, Pang Pu, Li Xueqin and the commentaries provided in Ma Chengyuan's edition. An important source for the study of *Heng xian* was Goldin et al.'s "A Philosophical Translation of the Heng Xian."[35] Among scholars involved with 'Shangbo' manuscripts, I was influenced by Shirley Chan's 陳慧 "Oneness: reading the 'All things are flowing in form",[36] or "From Nothingness to Somethingness: the Concept of Heng (恒) in the Text of the Hengxian (恒先)". But most importantly, I drew from recent works of Cao Feng 曹峰 and Wang Zhongjiang 王中江.[37] The

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[31] Allan, Sarah and Williams, Crispin eds. (1998).

[32] Cook, Scott (2012). The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: a study and complete translation, vol. I and II. Ithaca, New York: East Asia Program, Cornell University.

[33] Meyer, Dirk (2011). Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China. Leiden: Brill.

[34] Chan, Shirley ed. (2019). Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts. (Dao Companions to Chinese Philosophy, vol. 10). New York: Springer

[35] Brindley, Erica, Goldin, Paul R., Klein, Esther S. (2013). "A Philosophical Translation of the Heng Xian". Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 12.2: 145-151.

[36] Chan, Shirley (2015). "Oneness: reading the 'All things are flowing in form (Fan Wu Liu Xing) 凡物流形'", International communication of Chinese culture, Vol. 2, Issue 3: 285-299.

[37] In English e.g. Cao Feng 曹峰 (2017). Daoism in Early China: Huang-Lao Thought in Light of Excavated Texts. Tr. Callisto Searle et al. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; Wang Zhongjiang 王中江 (2015). Daoism Excavated:

research into *Huangdi sijing* was partly summarized in the previous section. I followed mainly the research of Leo S. Chang and Yu Feng, Randall P. Peerenboom and Chen Guying 陈鼓应.[38]

As regards the broader perspective of the development of Chinese thought, my views have been formed by the work of authoritative scholars such as Angus C. Graham or Roger Ames and David Hall – who, despite the criticism pointed at them in this work, have inspired it in many respects. Among those who have recently opened the field of early Chinese texts to more profound philosophical consideration, I would emphasize Li Chenyang and Franklin Perkins and their volume "Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems"[39] from 2015, building on the legacy of such scholars as Yu Jiyuan,[40] who passed in 2016, or Cheng Chung-ying. Among other inspiring authors, I have to mention Harold D. Roth, Livia Kohn and Thomas Michael for their views on early Daoism and its close connection to self-cultivation practices.

For the topic of names in early Chinese texts, including the excavated manuscripts, the works of John Makeham or Jane Geaney have served as a guiding line. More recently an engaging 'live exchange' of views on names developed around the article on "Incongruent names."[41] The topic raised by Moeller, Kantor and D'Ambrosio incited the reactions of Jane Geaney,[42] Paul Goldin,[43] and Sandra Wawrytko,[44] to which the authors replied in a follow-up article.[45] The exchange only proves that philosophical issues of early Chinese thought are currently a vivid and rapidly evolving field of study, with lots of questions yet unanswered. Among important players in the current debate, which might lead to critical re-evaluation of philosophical approach to early Chinese thought, I take the inspiration mainly from the views of Carine Defoort, Brook Ziporyn, Paul Goldin, Michael Puett, David Chai, Steven Burik, Mercedes

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Cosmos and Humanity in Early Manuscripts. Trans. Livia Kohn. Contemporary Chinese Scholarship in Daoist Studies. St. Petersburg: Three Pines Press.

[38] Chang, Leo S. and Yu Feng (1998); Peerenboom, Randall P. (1993); Chen Guying 陈鼓应 (2007).

[39] Li Chenyang and Perkins, Franklin, eds. (2015). Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[40] Yu Jiyuan 余纪元 (2011). "Is Chinese Cosmology Metaphysics?". Journal of East-West Thought 1.1: 137-150.

[41] D'Ambrosio, Paul J., Hans-Rudolf Kantor, and Hans-Georg Moeller (2018). "Incongruent Names: A Theme in the History of Chinese Philosophy." Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 17: 305–330.

[42] Geaney, Jane (2020). "Movement and Ming (Names): A Response to "Incongruent Names: A Theme in the History of Chinese Philosophy"." Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy (2020) 19: 635 – 644.

[43] Goldin, Paul R. (2020). "The Diversity of Perspectives on Language in Daoist Texts and Traditions." Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy (2020) 19: 619-624.

[44] Wawrytko, Sandra A. (2020). "The Continuing Relevance of Congruent/Incongruent Names Revealed by Buddhist Epistemology". Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy (2020) 19: 625-633.

[45] D'Ambrosio, Paul J., Hans-Rudolf Kantor, and Hans-Georg Moeller (2020). "Reflections on Incongruent Names, Including the Name "Best Essay," in Response to Respondents". Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy (2020) 19: 645–655.

Valmisa, or Edward Slingerland. However, this work is not intended as a synthesis of the existing views on the proposed topic but, inspired by all these invaluable sources, it attempts for the most part to develop its own original argument, in the hope that it can contribute to this lively debate in a meaningful way.

Finally, to end this preliminary part, I would like to give an explanation of some of the stylistic and linguistic choices made in this work. When speaking about an indeterminate person, I do not use singular 'they' (or 'she', which, as I have noticed, has become common in academic texts these days) but I mostly prefer 'he' (his/him). As a woman, I do not appreciate the 'positive discrimination' aspect of using 'she', and I often find the singular 'they' as too encumbering for the already complicated sentence structures. Also, given their social and cultural context, using 'he' seems to fit quite well as a neutral choice for this type of texts. I also tend to overuse the general subject 'we' when evoking positions generally or traditionally held, and I am aware of my excessive use of passive sentence structures. Although these habits do not go well together with the concise character of the English language, they capture my process of thinking I find it difficult to eliminate them without sacrificing the authenticity of expression and the overall structure of arguments.

Throughout the text, I use both simple and traditional characters in what may seem as an inconsistent manner. The idea was to use primarily traditional characters, but to leave simplified forms for names of mainland Chinese scholars and their works that have been published in *jiantizi* 簡體字 (or when citing from these works). Still, there may be certain inconsistencies because the work evolved over a period of more than 5 years. I use pinyin only in case of individual terms or short examples, but not for longer quotes. When quoting excerpts, I put the original (Greek and Chinese) first to stress its importance (translations are not always in accordance with the ideas expressed in the surrounding text; sometimes I chose canonical or authoritative translations instead of mine, and proposed a variant reading in the footnotes; sometimes I have adjusted the existing translation to bring out a point – also indicated in the footnotes). Although much of the work has been proofread, I apologize to the reader in advance for any offenses against good use of English and academic style.

2. Determining the scope of texts

2.1 Study of excavated texts and the related problems

The corpus of this work is composed of a relatively limited number of core texts, most of them excavated towards the end of the twentieth century, and a small group of the received texts that show some important similarities with the excavated ones. They have been selected primarily based on my personal interest, but there are still a few distinctive criteria for their selection: 1) most generally, they talk about the way in which the world is constituted and how it works; in this work, I label them as "cosmological" for the reasons explained in more detail in Chapter 3, but "ontological" would also be a fitting description; 2) they draw a link between the way the world generally works, or the "cosmic" order, and human affairs; 3) they address the reader as someone able to understand and decide for themselves, without recourse to a higher authority; 4) they are situated somewhere in the continuum spreading between what was later identified as two distinct strands of the Warring States thought – Daoism and Legalism. As I have already stated in Chapter 1, the original intention of the research was to explore the dynamics of this continuum and account for the unobvious relation between the two strands.

The core texts include the excavated texts *Taiyi sheng shui*, *Heng xian* and *Fan wu liu xing*, and partly also *Huangdi sijing*, in particular its Dao yuan chapter, and the received texts Nei ye, Xinshu xia, Xinshu shang and Bai xin from the *Guanzi*. Although they are not often explicitly cited as examples in this work, I have also made extensive use of the excavated versions of the *Laozi*, both from Guodian and Mawangdui finds. These selected texts are read against the referential framework of the received texts deemed to represent the late Warring States thought landscape (more specifically the period from mid-fourth to third century BC), namely the *Laozi*, *Hanfeizi*, *Shenzi*, *Xunzi*, and *Zhuangzi*. Occasional reference is made to *Lunyu* and *Mozi*, certain excerpts from the *Lüshi Chunqiu* are also considered.[46]

The archaeological finds of ancient Chinese manuscripts towards the end of the twentieth century have brought an upset to the peaceful field, dealing with what had been considered a

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[46] Despite the fact that it would fulfil the above-mentioned criteria, I have intentionally excluded the texts from the *Huainanzi* because of its complex textual history and my insufficient capacity and expertise to identify the layers that would be representative of the late Warring States' period worldview. I still utilise excerpts from G

relatively well-known landscape of early Chinese thought. A fixed corpus of received texts and their traditional interpretations, together with later commentaries, was suddenly expanded to include pieces of text of unknown provenience, often broken and scattered, and without any commentary. Some of them have been identified as versions or antecedents of known received texts (like *Yijing* or *Laozi*), some of them could be, at least approximately, subsumed under a Han-dynasty bibliographical item (like *Huangdi sijing*), but most of them come without any clue about their background or affiliation. Making sense of the excavated manuscripts, place them in the context of early Chinese thought, and process the new information that they bring, has been a challenge for scholars ever since.

The present work can be seen as a little extreme in taking the few excavated texts as a basis for large-scale reinterpretation of the Warring States period thought landscape. But in fact, it has proceeded in an opposite direction, from the hypothetical reinterpretation of a greater image to the interpretation and contextualisation of the new texts, and only then returning to the larger scale, in a sort of hermeneutic circle. Generally, I subscribe to the view expressed by Wang Zhongjiang in his work dedicated to excavated cosmological texts:

> We must be careful not to promote extreme perspectives concerning the significance of these finds. Both claims that the excavated bamboo and silk manuscripts completely invalidate our previous knowledge or that they have not really altered much of anything are equally simplistic approaches to this material; they do not really assist in accurately determining the true value of the excavated texts. This parallels the view that both total doubt and total belief offers nothing to human understanding.[47]

The work with excavated texts has its specificities and is challenging at many levels. In case of previously unknown texts, scholars have to work only with the limited information that can be derived directly from the manuscript and its material support , without the intermediary of a redaction or commentary of anyone chronologically closer to the date of its composition. In some cases, we have relatively detailed information about the location and dating of the archaeological finds, derived from the type of tomb in which the manuscripts were buried, in other cases, especially with texts looted from archaeological sites, we have to rely on the indices

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[47] Wang Zhongjiang (2016). *Order in Early Chinese Excavated Manuscripts: Natural, Supernatural and Legal Approaches*. Trans. by Misha Tadd. London: Palgrave Macmillian, p. 183, note 1 (referring here to Henri Poincaré).

detectable from the material support, that is, bamboo strips or silk canvas. The material support is fragmented and often deteriorated, which makes it difficult to define the boundaries of a textual unit, and the order of sequence of its subunits, and the texts typically have many missing or illegible characters. Finally, the transcription of Warring States period characters into a standardized form of classical Chinese is a discipline in and of itself, requiring palaeographical expertise.[48] All these factors make the interpretation of excavated manuscripts a highly multi-disciplinary enterprise[49] that needs to combine the knowledge of archaeology, palaeography, history, philology, linguistics, literary history, and philosophy to be successful. The present work seeks to contribute to this comprehensive enterprise from the philosophical perspective, with the hope that it would effectively complement the other equally important perspectives.

Before delving into the content of the texts, this chapter provides a brief introduction of each core text and an overview of available information about its textual materiality, dating, provenance, attribution, problems of ordering and transcription, attribution, editions and translations.

2.2 Taiyi sheng shui, Guodian Laozi

The bamboo text *Taiyi sheng shui* is a part of the Guodian find, i.e., it was discovered in a tomb near Guodian 郭店, district of Jingmen 荊門 (Hubei province), in 1993. The archaeological site is located approximately 9 km from the site of Ying 郢 (today's Jingzhou 荊州), the capital of Chu 楚 state from 676 BC until its defeat by Qin in 278 BC. The site is located on a slightly elevated platform believed to be the main burial ground of the Chu aristocracy.[50] The site had been looted several times before the tombs were discovered by Chinese archaeologists. The looters have taken an unknown number of artifacts and left an open shaft through which water entered into the tomb, damaging the majority of remaining artifacts. Nevertheless they left behind the total of 804 bamboo strips, 731 of them with manuscript texts.

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[48] After several attempts to gain at least a basic grasp of palaeography methods, I decided to fully rely on the available transcriptions made by teams of distinguished scholars (indicated in each case) with only occasional critical evaluation of their results.

[49] There have been multidisciplinary events organized for this purpose, such as, e.g., the International Conference on the Guodian Laozi at Dartmouth College in 1998 (see Allan, Sarah and Williams, Crispin eds. *The Guodian Laozi: proceedings of the international conference, Dartmouth College, May 1998*. Berkley: Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California), or the international "Bamboo Events" at the University of Pennsylvania.

[50] Shaughnessy, Edward L. ed. (2006). *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*. SUNY Press. p. 9.

The tomb labelled M1 from which the bamboo strips came is from the Warring States period. The collection of bamboo strips known as Guodian Chumu zhujian 郭店楚墓竹简 bears many similarities, in style and material, to another archaeological find in this area – the manuscripts excavated from the tomb of minister Shao Tuo near Baoshan 保山 (Yunnan province) in 1987, dated more reliably to around 316 BC.[51] It is therefore believed that the Guodian M1 tomb dates to not later than around 300 BC.[52]

Several external features indicate that the tomb hosted a member of lower educated aristocracy (*shi* 士 class). One of the preserved artifacts – a goblet with the inscription "*dong gong zhi shi*" 東宮之師 – suggests that it belonged to the teacher of Chu prince Xiong Heng 熊橫 (later known as Chu king Qingxiang 楚頃襄王, reigning in 298–263 BC).[53] This supports the dating of the Guodian find to the end of the fourth century BC.

The bamboo strips were found in three batches (possibly three bundles originally) and contained three different sets of texts corresponding to the passages of the received *Laozi* (known nowadays as Guodian Laozi A, B, C – 郭店老子甲、乙、丙), and, in the same batch, a text *Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水, written most probably by the same hand and on the same type of bamboo as the *Laozi*.[54] The other batches include fifteen texts of a "Confucian" spirit, attributed to Kong Ji 孔伋, grandson of Confucius, also known as Zi Si 子思 (483–402 BC).

The three Laozi sets correspond only in part to different passages of the received texts of the Wang Bi edition. *Laozi A* 老子甲 corresponds, or partly corresponds, to chapters: 19, 66, 46, 30, 15, 64, 37, 63, 32, 25, 5, 16, again 64 (a different part), 56, 57, 55, 44, 40, and 9; *Laozi B* 老子乙 to chapters: 59, 48, 20, 13, 41, 52, 45, and 54; *Laozi C* 老子丙 to chapters: 17, 18, 35, 31, and 64.[55] At the level of content, Guodian Laozi versions are missing certain passages deemed anti-Confucian (and included in the received texts as well as the Mawangdui version). They also do not contain certain metaphors related to water, valley, and female sexual organs,

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[51] Shaughnessy ed. (2006), p. 10.
[52] Liu Zuxin 劉祖信, Long Yongfang 龍永芳 eds. (2005). *Guodian Chujian Zonglan* 郭店楚簡綜覽. Taipei: Wanjuanlou tushu gufen youxian gongsi 萬卷樓圖書股份有限公司.
[53] Henricks, Robert (2000). *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 4.
[54] Harrington, Spencer P.M. (1998). *Laozi Debate*, in: Archaeology Magazine, Volume 51, Number 6. Archaeological Institute of America.
[55] Henricks, R. (2000). p. 6-8.

considered characteristic for the Laozi text in the eyes of later commentators (like chapter 6, 8, or 28). Significantly for our present inquiry, some passages talking about the One, yi 一, are also missing (chapters 10, 14, 39), as well as the passages on the art of rulership in the spirit of the late Warring States (3, 65). Still more noteworthy is the fact that the Guodian Laozi, to a large extent, does not include the passages that served as a basis for Han Feizi's commentary (chapters 38, 58, 60, 14, 1, 50, 67, 53 – Jie Lao 解老, and 36, 71, 47, 41, 33, 27 – Yu Lao 喻老).[56] The present work cites the Guodian Laozi in parallel with the received text whenever there is a significant difference between the two.

The text *Taiyi sheng shui*, although very close to *GDLZ* in both its topic and style, is considered to constitute a separate textual unit. On the bamboo strips its beginning and ending is indicated by black square marks. The text consists of 14 bamboo strips, seven of which have broken ends. Their unity as a single text is debated – Cao Feng[57] has suggested that strips 9–14 constitute a separate text (with the black division mark possibly on one of the broken ends); Li Ling[58] regards it as a single unit with possibly two chapters (zhang 章), 1–8 and 9–14. In the present work, I stick to the "one text" perspective and follow the original ordering proposed by the editors of the primary source edition.[59] Some of the translators put strip 9 in various positions between strips 10–14, but the original ordering provides for the most logical transition between strips and also seems to preserve a regular rhyming structure.[60] The text is written in ancient Chu script. *TYSS* follows immediately after the *GDLZ* C and is apparently written in the same hand and on identical bamboo strips. According to the binding marks, they have most probably constituted one bundle.

The original ordering and transcription were done by Peng Hao, Liu Zuxin, Qiu Xigui and Wang Chuanfu.[61] Several English translations have appeared over the last two decades,

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[56] It is thus possible that there were different versions of *Laozi* texts in circulation in the 3rd cent. BC, some of which gathered some more "legalist", or Huang-Lao, layers by the time of the redaction of Han Feizi's commentary.

[57] Cao Feng 曹峰 (2014). "Taiyi shengshui xiaban bufen shi yige duli wanzheng de pianzhang"《太一生水》下半部分是一个独立完整的篇章. Qinghua daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban) 2014/2, pp. 85–92.

[58] Li Ling 李零 (2002). *Guodian Chujian Jiaoduji* 郭店楚簡校讀記. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe 北京大學出版社. p. 43.

[59] Jingmenshi Bowuguan 荆门市博物馆 eds. (1998). *Guodian Chumu Zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹简. Wenwu Chubanshe 文物出版社.

[60] Zhao Jianwei 趙建偉 (1999). *Guodian chumu zhujian 'Taiyi sheng shui' shuzheng* 郭店楚墓竹簡 太一生水疏證. Daojia wenhua yanjiu 道家文化研究, vol. 17. pp. 380-392.

[61] Cited in Dartmouth conference proceedings (1998), p. 121.

including, most recently in Wang Zhongjiang,[62] Cao Feng,[63] Scott Cook,[64] Dirk Meyer,[65] Robert Henricks (as a part of his translation of *GDLZ*),[66] and in articles by Sarah Allan,[67] or Donald Harper.[68]

Since many of the *TYSS* bamboo strips are damaged, there are several lacunae in the texts, completed based on parallelism or the best guess of the transcriber. The opening cosmogonic sequence contains an obvious scribe's mistake – omission of repetition in a longer repetitive sequence – and several individual characters have various proposed transcriptions. I deal with these in greater detail in the annotated translation of *TYSS* in the Appendix.

At the level of the content, *TYSS* is indeed a unique and important new text, in that it brings several elements previously thought missing. It is partly similar in literary style to the *GDLZ* with which it came together, with its *zhang*-like sections in rhymed verse, and like *Laozi* it could also plausibly be a written version of an older orally transmitted text. Yet it is unique in the way it addresses the reader. The important distinction to which I draw attention in this work is that *TYSS* seems to speak to a different kind of audience. While the *GDLZ* maintains the tone of mysterious truth beyond words, bestowed on the reader (listener) by the wise men of the past, *TYSS* seems to build an argument, be it elementary, for how things work and how everything comes about. Although the indices of this are rather indirect, it seems to solicit the rational understanding of the reader, to explain things and encourage the reader to see for himself. Most importantly, it contains a cosmological account unlike any other that we had seen in early Chinese texts, and it puts it in the context of human actions thus establishing the link between understanding how things work and steering one's actions accordingly.

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[62] Wang Zhongjiang (2015). *Daoism Excavated: Cosmos and Humanity in Early Manuscripts*. Tr. Livia Kohn. Contemporary Chinese Scholarship in Daoist Studies. St. Petersburg: Three Pines Press.
[63] Cao Feng (2017). *Daoism in Early China: Huang-Lao Thought in Light of Excavated Texts*. Tr. Callisto Searle et al. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
[64] Cook, Scott (2012). *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation. vol. I and II*. Cornell East Asia Series 164-65. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University.
[65] Meyer, Dirk (2012). *Philosophy on Bamboo: Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China*. Studies in the History of Chinese Texts 2. Leiden: Brill.
[66] Henricks, Robert G. (2000). *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching: A Translation of the Startling New Documents Found at Guodian*. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press.
[67] Allan, Sarah (2003). "The Great One, Water, and the Laozi: New Light from Guodian." in: *T'oung Pao* 89.4-5 (2003): 237-85.
[68] Harper, Donald (2001). "The Nature of Taiyi in the Guodian Manuscript Taiyi sheng shui: Abstract Cosmic Principle or Supreme Cosmic Deity?" in: *Chūgoku shutsudo shiryō kenkyū* 中國出土資料研究 5 (2001): 1-23.

2.3 Heng xian and Fan wu liu xing

The texts *Heng xian* and *Fan wu liu xing* are both part of the Shanghai Museum Bamboo Manuscripts collection (Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書). This collection has an interesting history which helps illustrate some other difficulties related to the research of excavated manuscripts, namely the technical but also moral and political issues associated with the use of the looted material.

Today's Shanghai Museum Bamboo Strip Collection consists of more than 1200 bamboo strips that were originally purchased (in several baskets with the strips still encased in lumps of mud) at a Hong Kong antiquities market in 1994, one year after the Guodian discovery. According to the carbon dating, type of bamboo and script, they come most probably from the place and period close to Guodian and Baoshan find, that is, Chu State, late 4th century BC. The team of palaeographers of the Shanghai Museum worked on the conservation and ordering of the strips until 2001, when the first volume was published (volume II and III in 2002 and 2004 respectively).[69] Despite uncontestably high professional qualification of the team, it has to be said that the Shanghai Museum has never shared the details of the whole procedure and the scholarly public could not examine the materials, thus having to rely on the team's official findings. A summary account of the procedure is, however, provided in the foreword to the first volume by editor Ma Chengyuan.[70]

The attention of the academic community eventually turned to the problematic side of obtaining and researching looted artifacts in the past. With the looted material, we are left without any important additional information which would allow us to situate the text more closely – the location, the type of the tomb and its occupants, other manuscripts and artifacts found together with it etc. Goldin has summed it up as follows:

> The Shanghai Museum manuscripts are probably genuine for one depressing
> reason: in China today, it is easier to loot a tomb than to forge a manuscript.

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[69] The comprehensive edition, used in this work, is Ma Chengyuan 马承源 ed. (2001-2012). Shanghai Bowuguan Cang Zhanguo Chu Zhushu 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書 (Shanghai Museum Warring States Period Chu Bamboo Manuscripts). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, vol. I-IX.

[70] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 (2001). "前言: 國楚竹書的發現保護和整理." (Foreword: The Discovery, Preservation, and Editing of the Bamboo Manuscripts from the Warring State of Chu.), in: Shanghai Museum Warring States Period Chu Bamboo Manuscripts 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, Ma Chengyuan ed., Shanghai guji chubanshe, vol. I.

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Looting is out of control. With literally billions of dollars of annual sales of Chinese art, much (if not most) of it unprovenanced, looting is big business, even as it is universally condemned. And I believe the time has come for scholars to ask themselves whether their work indirectly abets this destruction of knowledge.[71]

Goldin also observes that acquisition of excavated manuscripts has become a matter of academic politics in the race for prestige and funding among institutions, and strongly condemns such practices.

Every time a cultural or academic institution such as the Shanghai Museum makes a large (and highly publicized) purchase of looted artifacts, it only encourages the next cycle of looting. Over the past couple of years, one Chinese institution after another has acquired its own cache of newly looted manuscripts: for example, Beijing University, Tsinghua University, and the Yuelu Academy. This has almost become a game of one-upmanship, and clearly the acquisition of such artifacts is thought to add to an institution's prestige. No less is it considered an honour for individual scholars to be invited to collate and publish manuscripts acquired in this manner. It will not be long before such activities are recognized for what they are, namely complicity.[72]

Nevertheless, the Shanghai collection is invaluable for the uniqueness and richness of its content. It took the Shanghai Museum three years to restore and preserve the corpus before textual studies could begin in 1997. Researchers have identified over 100 manuscripts (about 35,000 characters) written in 10 calligraphic styles, and covering a multitude of topics including historical, philosophical, religious, literature, musical, philological, military and other; ninety percent of them have no parallel transmitted text. In addition to *Heng xian* and *Fan wu liu xing* that are subject of this work, the new texts include, for example, Kongzi Shi lun 孔子詩論, a treatise on the meaning of the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) attributed to Confucius, Zi yi 緇

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[71] Goldin, Paul (2013). Heng Xian and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts, in: Dao (2013) 12:153–160. Dodrecht: Springer. p. 156

[72] Goldin, Paul (2013). p. 156-157. Goldin has recently followed up on this problem with an article Goldin, Paul (2023). "The Problem of Looted Artifacts in Chinese Studies: A Rejoinder to Critics". in: Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 22/2023. pp. 145–151. (https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-022-09870-8)

衣 (Black robes), a Confucian text identified as a part of *Li ji* 禮記 (Classic of Rituals) which appears also in the Guodian batch, text Xing qing lun 性情論 (About human nature and disposition) with its Guodian counterpart Xing zi ming chu 性自命出 (Human nature comes from mandate), or the earliest version of *Zhou Yi* 周易, consisting only of hexagrams and line statements, without later commentaries.

The text *Heng xian* is written on 13 bamboo strips which happen to be almost intact and inscribed with a well-legible script. The bundle also has the first two characters inscribed on verso side of the first strip as a "title", suggesting that it indeed constitutes a single textual unit. However, it is the ordering (*zhengli* 整理) of the strips that is problematic: none of the proposed sequences offers a logical, or at least smooth, transition between the stripes. The ordering proposed by the first editor Li Ling[73] in 2003 edition was contested almost immediately after the publication. The transition between strips 7 and 8 seemed to be the most problematic. Pang Pu 龐朴 therefore proposed an alternative arrangement, namely 1–2–3–4–8–9–5–6–7–10–11–12–13.[74] This variant has been supported by many, but it still has problem with the transition between strips 4 and 8, and again between 9 and 5. This led some scholars to suggest that one or more strips might actually be missing. Another puzzling element to this debate is the presence of a diagonal guiding line at the verso of the strips which presumably served as a clue for ordering the strips in case the bundle got untied. The line supports Li Ling's original ordering and makes other variants look less likely. However, it might also support the view that we have to do with two texts mixed together (on the basis of their cosmological content). Therefore, despite its relatively well-preserved state, the bamboo text of *Heng xian* involves many uncertainties. For the purpose of this work, I follow Pang Pu's arrangement, that is, placing strips 8 and 9 between 4 and 5, being aware that other solutions, including the missing strips, may be equally plausible.

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[73] Li Ling 李零 (2003). "Gengxian" 亙先. in: Shanghai Museum Warring States Period Chu Bamboo Manuscripts 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, Ma Chengyuan ed., Shanghai guji chubanshe, vol. I. pp. 287–99.
[74] Pang Pu 龐朴 (2004). "A Tentative Reading of Heng Xian" 《恆先》試讀. in: 中國古代思想史研究通訊 (Bulletin for Research in Ancient Chinese Intellectual History) 2. pp. 21–23.

The text *Fan wu liu xing* was found in two versions, closely corresponding with each other: version A consists of 30 strips with 846 characters, Version B is more deteriorated, with only 21 strips and 601 characters. They are both included in Volume VII of the Shangbo edition.[75]

Again, the ordering of the strips has been a subject of a debate. There are at least three known alternatives to the primary ordering proposed by Cao Jinyan 曹锦炎 (i.e., strip 1–30). Cao Jinyan cooperated closely on the first edition with Li Rui 李锐 and a postgraduate study group at the Fudan University's Centre for the Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Palaeography. Fudan study group's work resulted in the following order: strips 1–2–3–4–5–6–7–8–9–10–11–12A–13B–14–13A–12B–22–23–17 (the first part); strip 27 only (second part); strips 16–26–18–28–15–24–25–21 (third part); strips 19–20–29–30 (fourth part). Li Rui has proposed yet another variant, that is: strips 1–2–3–4–5–6–7–8–9–10–11–12A–13B–14–15–24–25–21–13A–12B–22–23–17–26–18–28–16–19–20–29–30. However, he identifies strip 27 as not belonging to *Fan wu liu xing* at all. Wang Zhongjiang 王中江 has proposed a solution for the apparently missing link between the four parts suggested by the Fudan study group, namely: strips 1–2–3–4–5–6–7–8–9–10–11–12A–13B–14–16–26–18–28–15–24–25–21–13A–12B–22–23–17–19–20–29–30, creating one continuous text, but dropping strip 27 altogether. Gu Shikao 顾史考 also supports this view. In this work, I follow Wang Zhongjiang's ordering because it offers the least problematic transition between sections and makes of FWLX plausibly one integral text. To my untrained eye, strip 27 did not seem so far from the rest but my lack of erudition in palaeography, despite some honest attempts, and also the bad state of the said strip made it impossible to come up with reasonable suggestions how to integrate it.

As regards the nature of the content of these two excavated Shangbo manuscripts, it will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. However, they captured the attention of not only philologists but also of philosophically oriented scholars. If one had been under the impression that the thought landscape of the Warring States period was relatively well-known, texts like these were a reminder that there is so much more to know there and that our image of that landscape could actually be a very incomplete puzzle with lots of missing pieces. Both HX and FWLX seemed to be a product of an inquisitive mind, looking to understand how the universe works, and providing an explanation. The sequence of questions in the first part of the

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[75] Ma Chengyuan 马承源, ed. (2008), Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu 上海博物馆藏战国楚竹书 (七), vol. 7. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe. pp. 219–300.

FWLX seemed unusual and uncharacteristic for the period, similar perhaps only to Tian wen 天問 (Questioning Heavens) from Chu ci 楚辭 (Songs of Chu), itself a quite outstanding and hard to decipher work of early Chu poetry. FWLX also contains a passage strikingly parallel to another piece of the received text, namely the Nei ye 內業 chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子.[76] It is a passage that urges the reader (or listener) to stop looking elsewhere and start getting answers from within himself, not from any other place or through divination.

2.5 Nei ye and Xin shu chapters of the *Guanzi*

It was partly because of its thematic closeness to the *Laozi* and partly for its resonance with the excavated cosmologies that I chose to include a set of received texts into the core corpus of this work. I am aware that such heterogeneity of the corpus may be problematic to defend. Yet, Nei ye was the original starting point that led me from *Laozi* and *Hanfeizi* to the excavated texts in the search for the hypothetical link between Daoism and Legalism, the so-called Huang-Lao thought. The interest in Nei ye necessarily involved exploration of all four Xin shu 心術 chapters of the *Guanzi*, that is, Xin shu xia 心術下 (a possible commentary to Nei ye), Xin shu shang 心術上 and Bai xin 白心,[77] chapters that stand out from the rest of the *Guanzi* text and have been identified as Huang-Lao.[78]

Nei ye is possibly the oldest of the four Xin shu and it is unique not only for its antiquity, and its rhymed structure, but also for its apparent lack of interest in social affairs and its focus on individual experience. Importantly for the present work, it also offers a distinctive cosmological account. Despite its apparent similarities with the *Laozi*, it is a very different text with its unique focuses and concerns.

The *Guanzi* 管子 is a large collection of texts (76 pian 篇), traditionally associated with the 7th-century BC statesman, Guan Zhong 管仲 (ca 720–645 BC), a prime minister of Qi 齊 serving

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[76] *FWLX* strip 22: 毌遠求 ， 度於身稽之。Cf. Nei ye, part 6: 能一乎？能無卜筮而知吉凶乎？能止乎？能已乎？能勿求諸人 而得之己乎？; Cf. also the Zhuangzi chapter 23, 'Geng sang chu' 庚桑楚.

[77] In contrast with their order within the Guanzi, and with the shang 上/xia 下 logic, I cite the chapters in order of importance for the present project.

[78] See the discussion above, Chapter 1, part 1.2

under Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643 BC).[79] The received version was most probably compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (1st century BC) and consisted of 86 sections of which only 76 constitute the received version (of the others, only the titles are known).[80]

Originally, the *Guanzi* was classified as a Daoist text in the *Hanshu* 漢書 bibliographical chapter Yiwenzhi 藝文志, but from the 7th century CE on (the *Suishu* 隋書 bibliography), it is listed as a Legalist work. Nearly each section of the work represents a distinct text rather than being a chapter of a unified, coherent work. Gustav Haloun, a Czech sinologist based in Cambridge who was one of the first to bring Nei ye to the attention of scholars in the 20th century, described the *Guanzi* as an "amorphous and vast repository of ancient literature."[81] Most chapters are concerned with political, social, and economic affairs, some contain also military strategies or early historical accounts. The overall orientation seems to be rather pragmatic. In this context, the Xin shu 心術 group stands apart as apparently non-consistent with the rest of the collection, suggesting more of a Daoist affiliation. The classification of the whole *Guanzi* collection as Legalist in bibliographies from the 7th century CE onwards was probably the reason why the four Xin shu remained outside the scope of attention of Daoism scholars until the 20th century.

As regards the dating, the material in the *Guanzi* is estimated to accumulate between the second half of the 4th century BC (the parts that may be referred to as "proto-Guanzi") and the middle of the 2nd century BC (when the court of the King of Huainan fell). This is the dating supported by both Allyn Rickett and Kanaya Osamu. The four Xin shu are generally considered to constitute the oldest layer of the collection (late 4th cent.) although the opinions differ as to their relative dating.[82]

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[79] I subscribe to the general notion that the Warring States period "Masters" texts are not *a priori* considered to be the work of the given 'Master' in the title, and that Guan Zhong is not responsible for the composition of this collection, only his name served as an identification symbol for a specific group of texts.

[80] The edition of the *Guanzi* used for the purpose of this work is Guanzi 管子, Chiyaotang Siku Quanshu Huiyaoben《摛藻堂四庫全書薈要》本. 24 卷, 7 冊. 影印古籍 摛澡堂四庫全書薈要·子部·法家類, reprinted in Sturgeon, Donald (ed.). (2011). Chinese Text Project. http://ctext.org; https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=4821 [last accessed January 2023].

[81] Cit. by Rickett, Allyn (1985). *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China (Princeton: Princeton University Press*. pp. 14-15. Gustav Haloun and Piet van der Loon (1950's) were the first to investigate more deeply the textual history of the *Guanzi* collection. Another important attempt in this respect is *Guanzi jijiao* 管子集校 by Guo Moruo, Xu Weiyu and Wen Yiduo (1955). The results of both are summarized in Rickett's introduction to the *Guanzi*.

[82] The dating debates are, to a large degree, based on presumed authorship. Guo Moruo derives his dating from Song Xing 宋鈃 and Yin Wen 尹文 who are thought to be Jixia scholars and contemporaries of Mencius (371-289

An early dating of the Nei ye chapter would correspond to its form: it is written in rhymed verse which suggests it could have been circulated orally, perhaps in multiple versions, before it became a part of a written corpus (in this, it shares some characteristics of the *Laozi*). Harold D. Roth, author of the most recent (and extensive) study and English translation of Nei ye,[83] has summed up the linguistic features that, in his opinion, support the mid-4th century dating.[84]

Nei ye has about 1,900 characters (nearly one third of the length of the Laozi). The received version is divided only into three general sections. However, the text consists of relatively autonomous stanzas only loosely connected and holding together mainly by topic. One can easily imagine a different arrangement of the same material.[85] The first arrangement into 18 stanzas was suggested by Gustav Haloun. Developing on this arrangement, Harold D. Roth divides it into 26 sections.[86] In this work, I follow Roth's arrangement.

Nei ye is written mostly in rhymed verse. Most lines are tetra-syllabic, with exceptional five or more syllable lines. The prevailing rhyme pattern is a rhyme on every second line – ABXB, occasionally alternating with an AABB pattern (according to the traditional rhyming categories). The rhymed sequences are framed by short introductory/summarizing lines (typically "是故…" or "謂之(曰)…") or by what looks like short pieces of incorporated commentary.

The title was probably added ad hoc, as it is typically the case with the texts of this period, yet it aptly summarizes the message or programme proposed in it. Nei ye 內業, translated as "Inner Enterprise", "Inner Cultivation" or "Inward Training", is strongly focused on individual experience and internal self-cultivation. Its cosmology, based on *qi* 氣 and "oneness", *yi* 一,

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BC), influenced by Mozi (479-381 BC). As we have seen, these conclusions stem from Guo Moruo's assumption that the whole Guanzi collection is closely related to Jixia academy and that these two figures really represent the Jixia mainstream, the so-called Huang-Lao which he sought to resurrect.

Wu Guang represents another view, seeing in the four Xin shu a development of Laozi Daoism. It is based on the presumed antiquity of the Laozi (6th-5th century BC). As the basis for dating, he chooses the other two Huang-Lao (Jixia) author figures, namely Shen Dao 慎到 (360-285 BC) and Tian Pian 田駢.

Li Cunshan rejects both, arguing that based on textual evidence and cross references, the four chapters must postdate Mencius and Zhuangzi. His argument is based on an unfortunate but typical mistake of confusing Zhuangzi as a person (369-286 BC) with the *Zhuangzi* as a work in which textual evidence is found. It is yet another example of how vague arguments we can have for the dating of an early text.

[83] Roth, Harold D. (2004). *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*. Columbia University Press.

[84] However, many of his observations (like the use of the post-verbal particle *yu* 於 instead of *hu* 乎, or using ru 如 for 'like, as', instead of ruo 若 etc.) do not stand the linguistic scrutiny and, moreover, would not allow us to date the text with greater precision than +/- a few hundred years.

[85] H. D. Roth suggests that Nei ye itself may be the result of accumulation over a longer period of time.

[86] Ma Feipai 馬非白 divides the text into 15 parts. This arrangement was also adopted by Rickett.

serves as a basic framework, thanks to which an individual can align with the vital forces of the universe and let them act in his favour, as well as in favour of the whole universe. More precisely, the term pointing to the individual (or internal) "enterprise" is *xin* 心, or heart-mind. One who succeeds in aligning his *xin* with universal forces becomes a *shengren* 聖人, a sage or an "ultimately wise man". *Shengren* is described as being "full of qi" and "complete in heart-mind and in body" – that is the desirable outcome of the practice and understanding of Nei ye (ex. stanza 1).

Although the four Xin shu 心術 chapters have been singled out together as a set of 'Daoist-sounding' chapters, they do not constitute a homogenous bundle. While Nei ye, and possibly parts of Xin shu shang, belong to an older layer, as attested by linguistic features, the rest of the group appears to be of a much later date, possibly even from the Western Han period, 2nd – 1st century BC.[87] Also their content is rather heterogenous with only a few common traits. They nevertheless deserve a brief mention here.

Among the three other Xin shu chapters, Xin shu xia 心術下 (XS II) is the second most important for the present project. The text cites and expounds on the large passages of Nei ye and it is most probably its commentary. This is suggested by the difference in style, Nei ye passages being written in rhymed verse and commentary bits mostly in prose, and by the use of character variants.[88] But the commentary takes on a different twist than Nei ye itself. It interprets the seemingly more speculative, cosmological and self-cultivational, passages in a more pragmatic way. More importantly, while there is no mention of names in Nei ye itself, Xin shu xia commentary not only talks about names but also presents them as a link between the 'cosmic' or 'natural' order and the human way of ordering things, both on a personal and social or political level.[89] The received version has 850 characters, it is therefore much shorter than Nei ye itself, and Nei ye passages constitute about 20 percent of the text. Xin shu xia therefore offers predominantly its own unique perspective of the piece.

It is peculiar though that Liu Xiang would put this chapter, instead of Nei ye, together with Xin shu shang 心術上 (XS I), to which it seems almost unrelated. As opposed to both previous

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[87] Core of XS I and XS II is estimated to come from the environment of Liu An (2nd cent. BC); cf. Rickett, Allyn (1985), p. 155-158.
[88] Occasionally, XS II has *yu* 乎 instead of *yu* 於, and *ru* 如 instead of *yu* 於 in comparison; cf. Rickett, Allyn (1985), p. 156.
[89] The distinction 'personal' v. 'social/political' is more closely discussed (and put into question) in Chapter 5.

examples, Xin shu shang has a much less speculative and more practical tone, which led some to classify it as 'Legalist' or 'Legalist-Confucian'. Yet, similarly to XS II, it also seems to be a commentary of an older text, possibly from the late 3rd century BC.[90] Of all four chapters, it is the only one that actually speaks of the 'techniques of the heart-mind' (*xin shu* 心術) and how it is related, on the one hand, to the natural order and, on the other hand, to human affairs within the society. In my view, the form and style of argument of XS I is strongly reminiscent of another well-known 'pragmatic' commentary of a 'speculative' or 'esoteric' text – Hanfeizi's commentary of the *Laozi* (chapters Jie Lao 解老 and Yu Lao 喻老).

Bai xin 白心 is the most stand-alone of the four chapters,[91] and possibly also the latest. The received version has about 1700 characters, the length similar to Nei ye. Rickett observes that it also contains a number of rhymed verses with irregular rhyme pattern characteristic of Chu area;[92] a similar pattern is present in Nei ye, and also *Chu ci* 楚辭, *Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子 *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經, *Wenzi* 文子, or *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝内經.[93] Like XS I and XS II, Bai xin seems to develop and explain on another older text, using the introductory "that's why it is said", *gu yue* 故曰 , not less than 12 times. In line with XS II, Bai xin seems to take the awareness of the inner workings of the cosmos and their application in one's life as a basis for the exposition of good government practices, but also the art of gaining power and ensuring prosperity and longevity.

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[90] Most parts of XS I expound directly on one-line segments of the older-sounding text.

[91] Guo Moruo argues that it was composed by Yin wen 尹文 (360–280 BC), as opposed to the other three chapters which he attributes to Song Xing 宋鈃 (385–304 BC) (Guo Moruo et al., 1955); see also Roth, Harold (2014). Daoism in the Guanzi, in: Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy, Liu Xiaogan ed. Springer, p. 265-280.

[92] See e.g. Meisterernst, Barbara. (2019). The function of poetic language and rhymes in pre-modern Chinese literature. In: The function of poetic language and rhymes in pre-modern Chinese literature. 1. Routledge, pp. 118-130; Feng, Shengli. 2011. A prosodic explanation for Chinese poetic evolution. Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies 41(2): 223–257; or Wang Li 王力 (2004). *Shijing yundu. Chuci yundu* 詩經韻讀・楚辭韻讀. Beijing: Renmin daxue chubanshe.

[93] Rickett, Allyn (1998). *Guanzi, Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China. A Study and Translation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press Vol. II: p. 24-27; for the rhyme table, see Chart I on p. 26.

2.6 Huangdi sijing and other related texts

The last important part of the core is another excavated manuscript: the set of four texts on silk found in Mawangdui Han tomb together with another two versions of the *Laozi*, recognized as the lost Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor, *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經.

In 1973, at Mawangdui 馬王堆, a site near Changsha 長沙), the archaeologists uncovered tombs of the Western Han dynasty aristocracy. The tombs from the early 2nd century belonged to Li Cang 利蒼, Marquis of Dai (d. 186 BC), his wife (d. 186 BC) and son (d. 168 BC). The son's tomb, n. 3, contained 50 texts on silk scrolls, enclosed in lacquer boxes and relatively well-preserved.[94] The texts known as Mawangdui Silk Texts, Mawangdui boshu 馬王堆帛書, contained, inter alia, a version of the *Yijing* 易經 with five different commentaries, parts of the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, a version of *Zhangguoce* 戰國策 with 27 chapters, and many other texts dedicated to medicine, political theory, astrology and astronomy, or five phases theory, as well as maps, diagrams etc.

Two of the silk scrolls contained the most complete extant versions of the *Laozi*, labelled as Laozi A (老子甲) a Laozi B (老子乙).[95] Compared to the received version of Wang Bi's commentary, the Mawangdui Laozi texts are not yet divided into sections (*zhang* 章) but into two larger parts, labelled *De* 德 and *Dao* 道, in the reversed order of the receptus.[96] However, they already contain all 81 sections of the received text.

More importantly, Laozi B was preceded by four texts up until then unknown: Jing fa 經法, Shi liu jing 十六經, Cheng 稱 and Dao yuan 道原. Together they were identified with a lost bibliographical item listed in Yiwenzhi 藝文志 chapter of the *Han shu* 漢書, namely the

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[94] It is to be noted that the state of preservation of the three tombs was extraordinary. The mummy of Xin Zhui 辛追, Lady of Dai, was remarkably intact. Mawangdui artifacts, including the famous painted silk funeral banner, contributed a great deal to the knowledge of the Western Han culture and history.

[95] Laozi A is deemed older since it uses certain Han dynasty word-taboos, such as *bang* 邦 instead of *guo* 國 for "state" (replaced after the death of the first Han emperor Gaozu 高祖, originally Liu Bang 劉邦, in 195 BC). Laozi B has *guo* 國. The same applies to Laozi A's *ying* 盈 (later *man* 滿) and *heng* 恆 (later *chang* 常), tabooed out of respect to Emperor Hui 漢惠帝 (Liu Ying 劉盈, r. 194-187 BC) and Emperor Wen 漢文帝 (Liu Heng 劉恆, r. 179-156 BC). Robert Henricks thus situates the origin of Mawangdui Laozi A approximately to 200 BC, and Laozi B a few decades later (mid-2nd cent. BC). Cf. Henricks, Robert (1989). Lao-tzu Te-Tao-Ching, A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-wang-tui texts. New York: Ballantine Books. p. xv.

[96] Interestingly, Han Fei's commentary also follows the reverse De-Dao ordering.

Huangdi sijing 黃帝四經 (*HDSJ*).[97] The texts also became known as *Huang-Lao boshu* 黃老帛書 because of their association with the Huang-Lao strand of thought discussed above.

The *HDSJ* constitute a relatively large corpus – Jing fa has 5000 characters, Shi liu jing more than 4500, Cheng 1600 and Dao yuan 464.[98] Their careful analysis would in itself be more than enough for another dissertation. For the purpose of this work, I use them to illustrate, or oppose, some views expressed on the basis of other texts, without interpreting them in their entirety. However, I would like to pursue this endeavour as a follow-up to the present project.

The identification of the four texts with the four *jing* 經 of the Yellow Emperor is closely interrelated with the debate about origin and delimitation of the Huang-Lao strand as such. Nevertheless, two of the texts are clearly marked as *jing* and the figure of the Yellow Emperor, or the teachings associated with him, are abundantly present in them. Origins of *HDSJ* are situated either to the region of Zheng 鄭[99] or to Chu 楚[100] state, depending on the used criteria. The dating ranges from mid-Warring States (4th century BC) to early Han (first half of the 2nd century BC).

The content of the *HDSJ* is relatively homogenous as regards its philosophical position although each part has a different style and emphasis. Importantly for the present inquiry, all four parts of *HDSJ* deal in some way with the topic of *xing ming* 形名/刑名, interpreted alternatively as 'forms and names' or 'punishments and titles'[101]; they talk about self-cultivation as a way of obtaining social and political power, and they introduce cosmological accounts in their argumentation. I dedicated most attention to Dao yuan 道原 because of its possibly older (mid-4th century BC) origin and emphasis on cosmology, but all four parts have been equally taken into consideration and are cited here.

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[97] Sometimes translated as "Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor"; See e.g. Du Weiming (1979). "The 'Thought of Huang-Lao': A Reflection on the Lao Tzu and Huang Ti Texts in the Silk Manuscripts of Ma-wang-tui." Journal of Asian Studies. 39 (1) 1979: 95-110.

[98] The numbers are approximate as parts of the silk scrolls were deteriorated. Cf. Peerenboom, R. P. (1993), p. 6.

[99] See Tang Lan 唐兰 (1975). Mawangdui chutu Laozi yibenjuan qian guyishu de yanjiu 马王堆出土老子乙本卷前古佚书的研究. Kaogu xuebao 考古學報 1/1975; based on classifying *HDSJ* as a Daoist compendium.

[100] See Long Hui 龙晦 (1975). Mawangdui chutu Laozi yiben qian guyishu tanyuan 马王堆出土老子乙本卷前古佚书的探原. Kaogu xuebao 考古學報. p. 23-32; based on philological criteria (cross-references to other Chu texts, knowledge on Chu proverbs and geography etc.)

[101] This distinction is discussed later in Chapter 4.

The first complete transcription of the texts, put together by a team of scholars, was published in 1980 by Wenwu publishing house.[102] Before that, in 1975, Tang Lan 唐兰, one of the Wenwu team, published an authoritative study on its dating, authorship and content of the text.[103] The modern translations of the *HDSJ* include, among other, Chen Guying's Chinese edition with modern Chinese commentary,[104] Leo S. Chang and Yu Feng's *The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor*,[105] or Randall P. Peerenboom's *Law and Morality in Ancient China: The Silk Manuscripts of the Huang-Lao*.[106]

Since the core of the corpus consists of a rather limited number of short texts, most of them excavated and without the larger context of later editions and commentarial tradition, I worked with a wide range of other received texts in order to identify possible connections and to specify the framework within which they could make sense. For that purpose, I used, above all, the received *Laozi* (of the Wang Bi's commentary), the *Zhuangzi*,[107] the *Shenzi* (Shen Buhai 申不害), the *Shangjunshu*, the *Hanfeizi*, the *Xunzi*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, and partly also the *Lunyu* and the *Mozi*.[108] When it comes to contextualisation of the unknown material, I deliberately disregarded the presumed affiliation of these received texts to 'Daoist', 'Legalist', or 'Confucian' 'schools of thought' and tried to avoid making conclusions based merely on the expectations related to these labels.

I am aware that the way in which I work with the texts may be considered academically problematic: I take a few bamboo strips with only several hundred of characters, obscure or

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[102] Ancient manuscripts research group of the PRC State administration for cultural heritage 国家文物局古文献研究室, a team for the ordering/transcription of the Mawangdui Han silk manuscripts 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小组 eds. (1980). *Mawangdui Hanmu Boshu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書. Wenwu publishing house 文物出版社.
[103] Tang Lan 唐兰 (1975), p. 7-38.
[104] Chen, Guying (1995). *Huang di si jing jin zhu jin yi: Mawangdui Han mu chu tu bo shu* 黃帝四經今註今譯 : 馬王堆漢墓出土帛書. Beijing: Beijing Shang wu yin shu guan.
[105] Chang, Leo S. and Yu Feng (1998). The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor: Original Mawangdui Texts with Complete English Translations and an Introduction. University of Hawaii Press.
[106] Only excerpts, not a complete text; Peerenboom, R. P. (1993). *Law and Morality in Ancient China: The Silk Manuscripts of Huang-Lao*. Albany: SUNY Press.
[107] The examples from the *Zhuangzi* are considered with great caution, mainly to illustrate the argument rather than to build it, bearing in mind the synthetic and accumulative nature of the text and its many temporal and intellectual layers. One exception may be the Qi wu lun 齊物論 chapter (*Zhuangzi* 2) that I would confidently estimate as reflecting the debate going on between late 4th and early 3rd century BC among the travelling intellectuals of the Warring States.
[108] These texts are, for reasons of efficiency but with the awareness of possible problems, cited according to the Chinese Text Project database (Sturgeon, Donald (ed.). 2011. Chinese Text Project. http://ctext.org). Printed versions are cited at the first occurrence of the quoted received text. I also used authoritative Western language translations of the texts as listed in the bibliography.

corrupt in many places, and use them as a basis for drawing large-scale speculative conclusions about the intellectual landscape of the late Warring States in general, supporting these claims here and there by random quotes from the received texts, selected with the view to support my hypothesis. And such criticism would surely be substantiated. That is why I would like to describe the whole process in greater detail.

It is true of all scholars, not only doctoral candidates, that they read and interpret every new text against the background of what they already know, that is, what they have researched, and of the type of questions they have posed themselves. My original question, as mentioned above, was the relation between apparently strict, pragmatic and politically oriented thought of the 'Legalists' and apparently quietist, inward-oriented and politically disengaged 'Daoist' thought, especially how these two types of thought can mingle in texts like the *Laozi*. The close reading of source texts has shown that intertextual connections and the treatment of certain topics defy the neat dividing lines between 'schools.' At the same time, there were topics shared across the wide spectrum of the received Warring States texts and hard to understand in nearly all of them, like the topic of names, the problem of oneness, and the relation between greater (cosmic/natural) processes and human action (i.e., between ontology and ethics).

This necessarily led to the question: is there a shared worldview underlying these different texts that would explain our misunderstandings? Could it be that there is an entirely different ontology going on in the background of the Warring States debate? And what kind of texts would best explain the most basic ontological views: what is a thing and how it comes about? What is a human being and how it fits within the cosmic process? This is where the excavated cosmological texts, with their hard-to-decipher content, came in. While it is surely desirable to decipher their content correctly and put them into right context, it was not the ultimate goal of this project. The reading of excavated texts consisted of constantly moving back and forth between them and the spectrum of received texts, seeking for textual and thematic resonances. In this cyclic process, both the excavated and the received texts started to appear in a new light and certain passages began to stand out as more relevant. Instead of serving merely as an illustration, excerpts from the received texts often became themselves subject to reinterpretation. This also explains why I chose to offer my own translation instead of using existing translations of definitely higher literary value. The main criterion for the choice of excerpts was, in each case, the need for a better understanding of the whole. I hope the selection of quotes from the received texts is sufficiently justified in each case through the argument of the chapter itself.

Lastly, a part of this work quotes extensively from pre-Socratic fragments. This is also the result of cyclic 'back-and-forth' between the excavated texts and their resonances within the known corpus. In this case, the choice was motivated by several questions: if the Warring States texts represent a specific ontological worldview, is it something typical for that period and culture or can we find any resonance with it in a culture recognized as a birthplace of philosophy? At which point can we identify the way of thinking as 'philosophical', as opposed to mythical, sapiential, historical, ethical etc.? Here again, both the excavated texts and ancient Greek fragments shed new light on each other, leading hopefully to innovative reading of both. In this case, however, my expertise in ancient Greek is far from sufficient to propose an original translation. That is why I rely substantially, in this respect, on the work of several Czech experts in pre-Socratic thought grouped around Professor Zdeněk Kratochvíl. The Greek originals are cited by fragment number and series, their provenance is indicated and concordances with the existing authoritative edition (Diels-Krantz) are provided. The translations in this work are either from respected sources, or, where needed for the sake of the argument, my English renditions of the Czech translation by Kratochvíl and his team.

3. Common features of the excavated cosmologies

3.1 Cosmology and 'tacit assumptions'

The difference between ancient Chinese cosmology and the cosmology standing at the birth of the Western philosophical tradition has been examined time and again by the greatest scholars in Chinese philosophy and history of thought. They have jointly identified this difference as a possible source of misunderstanding in interpreting early Chinese texts. Surprisingly, these findings have had little impact on further research in the field. Even today, scholars continue to apply the same inappropriate metaphysical frameworks to early Chinese texts, and in the process create pseudo-problems and pose misleading questions, only because they do not take into account the cosmological background.

As I have already proposed in Chapter 1, one of the premises on which this work is based is that every philosophical inquiry takes place within a broader referential framework of ideas about the world and its functioning. This broader framework often remains non-thematized and non-reflected, yet it determines which questions make sense and which do not. These elements, such as basic components of the world, their stability or changeability, their relation to each other, the overall dynamics (or mechanics) of these relations, the place and role of (human) self in all this etc., remain in the background of our thought as tacit assumptions. Every expression of thought is embedded in an implicitly assumed cosmological image, that is, an image of the structure and functioning of the world as a whole. This image is so deeply ingrained in us that it often falls below the horizon of our awareness. For the same reason, it escapes the light of critical thinking and resists attempts at theoretical reconsideration.

It would be problematic to claim that Western scholarly philosophy,[109] in its many variations, is built on any specific set of assumptions about the structure of the world. Nonetheless, there

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[109] By using this formulation ('Western scholarly philosophy') I attempt to avoid generalizations such as 'Western thought', 'the Euro-American tradition', 'the Greco-Latin philosophical tradition', 'European philosophy', etc. that are usually used 'to cover almost anything that has been written in philosophy in Europe and the U.S. for the past two-and-a-half thousand years' (A. C. Graham, 1989, p. 5). In contrast, Western scholarly philosophy is a relatively well-defined genre, with its special terminology, admissible modes of argumentation, and a specific self-narrative of its history, delimited by the curricula of philosophy departments at European and American universities and the topics of related journals, conferences, publications, and library sections.

is a kind of 'family resemblance'[110] between Western philosophical systems, in which the family traits are embedded in terminology and in the specific type of questioning, that was shaped in its constitutive period and reflects the specific Plato's and Aristotle's layout.[111]

When we work with texts that have no identifiable author and are difficult to situate in space and time, we should seek to understand in as much detail as possible the cosmological framework in which they might have been written. Comparative philosophy as a field is built on the assumption that there are multiple different but mutually understandable ways of philosophical questioning. Without necessarily embracing universalism, it presupposes at least a fundamental mutual translatability of thoughts. Despite my reserves towards the idea and methods of comparative philosophy, I subscribe to the view that any thought system, however different from the one in which we have been educated, can be explained and mediated using existing philosophical tools and methods, provided that we use them conscientiously enough.[112]

The problem of underlying cosmology and related assumptions comes to the fore whenever there is a discussion about 'metaphysical' topics in ancient Chinese philosophy. When scholars use terms such as 'entity', 'being', 'essence', 'substance', 'form', 'principle', 'infinite', or 'mind', they inadvertently bring into play the whole development of these terms throughout the history of philosophy, from Plato and Aristotle, through scholasticism, to the Enlightenment, modernity, and German idealism. Their pre-understanding of what these terms designate is already tied up in a network of contexts that may not apply to the Chinese texts. Rather than interpreted, texts are adapted to fit certain pre-established frameworks of questioning that are seen as philosophical. Moreover, the use of specific terminology may lead to the formulation of questions which, from the point of view of the original Chinese text, are pseudo-problems. For example, there certainly is a consistent discourse in which it makes sense to translate *you* 有 as 'being' and *wu* 無 as 'non-being'. Such translations allow scholars to connect early cosmological texts with later highly speculative developments in both Daoism and Buddhism, as well as with other non-Chinese thought systems. Yet, postulating 'non-being' as a metaphysical category is already a major step towards philosophical abstraction and at the same time a step away from the lived experience in which this type of thinking seems to be rooted.

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[110] Wittgenstein uses this term to describe the way in which individuals of a certain type form a group based on varying degrees of similarity although we cannot arrive at a closed set of defining traits that all they all share.
[111] These very general claims are developed in more detail below, Chapter 3, part 3.4.
[112] This view and the reasons for it are formulated more explicitly in part 1.1 above.

However, it is hard to believe that such abstract use of ordinary terms suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the Warring States period. More plausibly, their use in cosmological accounts could not have been too distant, or entirely separate, from their ordinary meaning.

Past encounters between Chinese and Western scholarly philosophy have shown on multiple occasions that mutual translatability of ideas is possible and that we do not need to build an entirely new terminological framework. What we need, however, is a reconfiguration of the framework, a shift of perspective, projection onto a different plane, and subtle reformulation of questions. Hence, our aim should be to collect as much information as possible about the cosmological image underlying the texts we study and adjust our expectations and the philosophical tools we employ accordingly. At the same time, we should be aware of our assumptions, make them as explicit as possible, and put them temporarily aside. Fortunately, the field of philosophy has, over the millennia, developed a great variety of tools and approaches, some of which can be very helpful in explaining the specific traits of the early Chinese philosophical discourse.

3.2 Cosmology, creation and order

Many scholars have pointed out the striking differences between Chinese and Western cosmological thinking. Frederick W. Mote, in his *Intellectual Foundations of China*, says conclusively:

> The genuine Chinese cosmogony is that of organismic process, meaning that all
> the parts of the entire cosmos belong to one organic whole and that they all
> interact as participants in one spontaneously self-generating life process.[113]

Here, Mote echoes the neo-Confucian scholar Du Weiming 杜维明, who speaks about 'a fundamental assumption about reality, namely, that all modalities of being are organically connected.'[114]

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[113] Mote, Frederick W. (1971). Intellectual Foundations of China. Studies in World Civilization New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 15.
[114] Du Weiming (1985). Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation, SUNY Press, 1985, p. 35.

Joseph Needham, in *Science and Civilisation in China*, Volume 2, rephrases the same idea of spontaneous organization in rather poetic terms:

> It was an ordered harmony of wills without an ordainer; it was like the spontaneous yet ordered, in the sense of patterned, movements of dancers in a country dance of figures, none of whom are bound by law to do what they do, nor yet pushed by others coming behind, but cooperate in a voluntary harmony of wills.[115]

Elsewhere, he characterizes the system of Chinese thought as 'correlative thinking, in which the whole universe in all its parts spontaneously cooperates without direction or mechanical impulsion'.[116] Needham is often invoked as the first to have used the metaphor of a spontaneously self-regulating organism to characterize the ancient Chinese cosmos. Among the many others who have stressed the importance of the cosmological difference, we can name Roger Ames and David Hall,[117] Benjamin Schwartz,[118] and Angus C. Graham.[119]

Interestingly, these reflections have often been made in the context of the presupposed problem of creation. The notion of cosmology seems to be naturally associated with two ideas: First, the universe should have a beginning, the first cause. Second, the universe should be an ordered system based on an organizing principle, one that is possibly external to it but certainly transcends it. Scholars have been intrigued by the fact that they cannot find a widely shared cosmogonic account, or creation myth, in early Chinese documents.[120] A.C. Graham in the *Disputers of the Tao* notes:

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[115] Needham, Joseph (1956). Science and Civilisation in China, vol. 2. History of Scientific Thought. Cambridge University Press, p. 283

[116] Ibid., p. 499

[117] See e.g., Ames, Roger T. and Hall, David L. (1995). Anticipating China: Thinking through Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture. Albany: State University of New York Press, in particular the 'Squaring the Circle' chapter, pp. 1–110; or Ames and Hall (1987). Thinking through Confucius. Albany: SUNY Press.

[118] Schwartz, Benjamin I. (1985). The World of Thought in Ancient China. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[119] Graham, Angus C. (1989).

[120] For an exhaustive treatment of this topic, see Paul Goldin, The Myth that China Has No Creation Myth, in: Monumenta serica, Journal of Oriental Studies, vol. 56, 2008, pp. 1–22. Goldin is one of the few who consistently challenge traditional misconceptions about early Chinese thought through textual evidence. The examples that follow are also referred to in Goldin's article. Goldin sees the above misunderstandings as the result of a similar 'myth': that of China being 'the Other' of 'Western thought'. He explains scholars' dwelling on the missing creationist aspect of cosmology as an implicit effort to draw a dividing line between the Chinese and Western worldviews. In the effort to eradicate this 'myth', he brings together a host of examples of ancient Chinese cosmogonies; unfortunately, however, many of them postdate the Warring States period that I focus on.

> The past to which Confucius looks back is not the beginning of things; there is no cosmogonic myth in pre-Han literature, merely a blank of pre-history before the First Emperors, who for Confucius are the pre-dynastic sages Yao and Shun.[121]

When A. C. Graham wrote these lines, he was certainly aware of the cosmological accounts contained, say, in Laozi 42 and 25,[122] to give two prominent examples that have been commented on abundantly. Yet, for Graham and others, they somehow do not meet the definition of term 'cosmogonic myth' – probably because they do not involve the 'first cause', a creator figure, or some other distinct trigger of causal sequence.

Derk Bodde, in his *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, makes these expectations explicit. When he summarizes all known mythical accounts presumably connected with the prehistoric beginnings of the universe, such as the myths of Pan Gu 盤古, Fuxi 伏羲, and Nü Wa 女媧, the myth of the separation of heaven and earth, the legend of ten suns, and the Great Flood story, he identifies most of them as the products of foreign influences that were gradually absorbed as China expanded. He concludes:

> It is rather striking that, aside from this one myth (the myth of Pan Gu),[123] China – perhaps alone among the major civilizations of antiquity – has no real story of creation. This situation is paralleled by what we find in Chinese philosophy, where, from the very start, there is a keen interest in the relationship of man to man and in the adjustment of man to the physical universe, but relatively little interest in cosmic origins.[124]

For Bodde, interest in cosmology also equals interest in the origin of the cosmos, understood as the first cause. He explicitly states:

> [The Chinese] cosmic pattern is self-contained and self-operating. It unfolds itself because of its own inner necessity and not because it is ordained by any external volitional power. Not surprisingly, therefore, Chinese thinkers who

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[121] Graham (1989), p. 12.
[122] For the text and a discussion of the cosmological parts of *Laozi* 42 and 25, see bellow, part 3.3.
[123] Bodde identifies this myth as 'the youngest and most obviously alien'. See Bodde, Derk (1981). Essays on Chinese Civilization. ed. Charles Leblanc and Dorothy Borei. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 80.
[124] Bodde (1981), p. 81.

have expressed themselves on the subject are unanimous in rejecting the possibility that the universe may have originated through any single act of conscious creation.[125]

A similar observation is made by Frederick W. Mote, in the context of his previously mentioned account of the organismic and holistic character of the Chinese cosmos:

> The basic point, which outsiders have found so hard to detect, is that the Chinese, among all people ancient and modern, primitive and advanced, are apparently unique in having no creation myth – unless we use the word 'creation' as is sometimes done in the more general sense of 'genesis'. That is, the Chinese have regarded the world and man as uncreated, as constituting the central features of a spontaneously self-generating cosmos having no creator, god, ultimate cause, or will external to itself.[126]

The clearest formulation of the same idea is found in David Hall and Roger Ames's influential work *Anticipating China*:

> The sort of cosmogonic speculations central to the Western tradition were of no great importance to the Chinese. […] The Chinese tradition, therefore, is '***acosmotic***' in the sense that it does not depend upon the belief that the **totality of things constitutes a single-ordered world**. Employing Western cosmogonic assumptions in the interpretation of the classical Chinese tradition can only result in an expectation that the modes of reflection and argumentation undergirded by these cosmogonic assumptions are shared by the Chinese. Such a resort to the 'transcendental pretence' would lead, as it has often in the past, to a skewed understanding of classical China.[127]

These excerpts illustrate well how the way in which these scholars speak about cosmology is deeply influenced by a particular, tacitly assumed cosmology. Hall and Ames, as quoted above,

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[125] Bodde, Essays, 1982, p. 286.
[126] Mote, Intellectual Foundations of China. p. 17.
[127] Hall and Ames, Anticipating China, p. 11 (emphasis mine). Hall and Ames confirm it again in the conclusion: 'The classical Chinese thinkers are primarily acosmotic thinkers. By "acosmotic" we shall mean that they do not depend in the majority of their speculations upon either the notion that the totality of things (wan-wu 萬物 or wan-you 萬有, "the ten thousand things") has a radical beginning, or that these things constitute a single-ordered world.' (p. 184)

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assume that a culture's concern with the structure and functioning of the universe must be expressed as concern about the universe's beginning and creating principle. Lack of such concern must therefore mean that the given culture had little interest in cosmological issues and preferred to contemplate other issues. Unfortunately, Bodde and Mote, as well as many other scholars, arrive at a conclusion that has since become almost a stereotype: early Chinese thought is primarily human centred and human oriented, focusing on practical aspects of human coexistence within society, and almost uninterested in the functioning of the universe and cosmological issues. In the following, I will challenge this stereotypical view of early Chinese thought, as well as the theoretic separation of the 'human' and 'natural' realms. As I will demonstrate, the problem of creation may be one of the above-invoked 'misleading questions' linked to the shared assumptions about the linearity of time, unidirectional causal chains, or the teleological arrangement of the universe.

'Cosmology' is usually used as a close equivalent of 'cosmogony', and 'cosmogony', in turn, is automatically associated with the concept of creation and the beginning of time. To clarify the terminology used in this work, by 'cosmology' I mean an inquiry into the functioning of the world as an ordered whole (*kósmos* – κόσμος).[128] As such, it encompasses the broadest range of accounts, whether poetic or rational, philosophical or scientific. At the same time, it is seen as bordering on, but distinct from, myth, because of its *logos* element. For our purposes, a *logos*-based account will be understood as an answer to questions freely posed by an enquiring mind, that is, as an *explanation*, whereas the label of *myth* is reserved for accounts that should not be questioned but accepted. Typically, a myth is something that is already there, imposed from the position of ancestral authority and to be passed on with reverence. In this respect, myth may include but is not equivalent to 'cosmogony'. Its element *gónos* (γόνος)[129] has unfortunately become associated with the idea of linear chronological development and causal order, with the underlying image of each generation 'giving birth' to the next one in a linear sequence. By tracing the succession of generations back to the beginning, one must necessarily arrive at the notion of the 'first mother' (or 'father'). Cosmogony, in its narrower sense, is understood as a theory about the beginning, the zero point of the universal timeline, a starting point of a unidirectional sequence of events. From this point of view, the problem of the starting point can

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[128] Gr. 'cosmology', from ancient Greek *kósmos* (κόσμος), 'ordered form', 'ornament'; from *kosmein* (κοσμείν), 'to order', 'to arrange', 'to adorn'; (according to Liddell-Scott)
[129] *gónos* (γόνος), the source or result of being born (a 'seed', or an 'offspring'); from *gígnomai* (γίγνομαι), 'come into being', 'being born'. (Liddell-Scott)

be reframed as the problem of creation, 'the creator' being defined as 'the first cause' or 'the prime mover'.[130] As we can see, the terminology may already bear in itself a certain cosmological image that may not be relevant to the early Chinese context.

To avoid such terminological traps, scholars have described the specific character of early Chinese cosmology as 'non-transcendental', or 'organismic'. Joseph Needham was among the first to describe Chinese cosmology as 'organismic' to distinguish it, on one hand, from more religious vitalism and, on the other hand, from rigid causal mechanicism.[131] He understands cosmos as self-generated, following similar developmental patterns as an organism, and, at the same time, not being created or governed by a transcendent principle. Individual beings, although distinct, still cooperate in the 'harmony of wills', that is, they are able to align themselves with the whole without premeditation or intermediation of knowledge. This view, shared also by Frederic W. Mote, encapsulates the most important shared features of this cosmos: wholeness, processuality, and self-regulation.

Benjamin Schwartz, however, has reservations about Needham's 'organismic' metaphor.[132] He argues that it involves a slight contradiction: the 'harmony of wills' suggests that the parts do not blindly follow the ways of being of the whole organism (like, as he illustrates it, the liver or the stomach in the human body) but that there is real individuality and independence of will involved. Schwartz presents a cosmological metaphor of a family or a bureaucratic state in which an ancestor or the ruler represents the 'one will' to which all other wills are subordinate. As we will see, Schwartz brings into play another heavily loaded topic in Western metaphysics – the question of 'who is the source of action', in other words, the question of agency and free will. Adopting Schwartz's family-state metaphor as a cosmological model means abandoning a holistic view in favour of a unidirectional causal model requiring a prime mover – a 'ruling will'.

But even the holistic 'organismic' model does not help us overcome another set of expectations related to the notion of 'organism'. Within the specific Platonic and Aristotelian layout, an organism – a living being – is still regarded as an entity delimited by its form (*eidos* – εἶδος). An implicit connection with its 'form' guarantees its individuation and integrity. By adopting

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[130] Cf. Aristotle Metaphysics XII (λ).
[131] Needham, Joseph, Order and Life. Cambridge, US: MIT Press, 1968., pp. 8–9.
[132] Schwartz, Benjamin, World of Thought in Ancient China, pp. 416–17.

the 'organism' metaphor we do not necessarily get rid of the idea of an organising principle, an external or transcendent source (as Derk Bodde also remarks), or of the causal-mechanical view.

Further terminological confusion arises from our expectations regarding the meaning of 'order'. In the quote from Hall and Ames cited above, the questions whether 'the totality of things has a radical beginning' and whether 'the totality of things constitutes a single-ordered world' are in fact two different questions. A lack of interest in the *beginning*, or the event of *creation*, of the universe is not the same as a lack of interest in its order or functioning. If these two are seen as necessarily connected, one implying the other, it is because preference is implicitly given to one particular view of order: the one corresponding to firm and unchanging grid of rules combined in a stable and closed system. As such, it would belong to the level of reality separate from its changing 'content,' and would therefore require a separate cause, an organizing principle. From the point of view of such an understanding of order, a universe conceived primarily as continuous change and novelty would be considered the opposite of order, namely 'chaos'.[133] This is due to the ontological preference for the stable and permanent over the unstable and changing.[134] As we will see below, this notion of order can, too, be reformulated with the help of appropriate philosophical tools.[135]

The idea of a radical beginning, or the birth of the universe, that is hidden in the term 'cosmogony' does not have to be reduced to its modern, technical meaning of the zero point on the universal timeline – 'time zero'. The concept of time as an abstract time axis independent of the events that constitute its content is fairly modern and has little to do with how time was conceived in ancient times. Cosmogonies are typically situated in non-specified prehistorical timelessness, in '*illo tempore*'. Generally, creation myths – of 'all people ancient and modern, primitive and advanced', to use Mote's words – are better understood as efforts to capture the patterns in the present functioning of the cosmos rather than any kind of causal explanation of the sequence of events at the beginning of the world. Entities depicted as 'the source' or 'the creator' do not represent the literal beginning of a chronological or causal sequence, but rather a power, function, or state of affairs standing at the top of ontological hierarchy. The other

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[133] Chaos χάος – the first state of the universe, also 'abyss', 'infinite darkness', 'any vast gulf or chasm' (according to Liddell, Henry George, Scott, Robert (1940). A Greek-English Lexicon – revised and augmented. Oxford. Clarendon Press. (hereafter Liddell-Scott dictionary)

[134] The preference we have possibly inherited from the times of Plato and Aristotle.

[135] In the following, I will discuss the misrepresentation of early pre-Socratic cosmologies by Aristotle and the ensuing tradition; many misconceptions that we have identified here apply also to the treatment of *physikoi* by their own culture.

elements present in creation stories can then be understood as depictions of deeper recurrent patterns of universal becoming. Cosmogonies would not play such a central role in cultures throughout the world if they had no bearing on the present human experience.[136] Only then they may serve as a shared value framework according to which each new generation adjusts its own values and decision-making. Cosmogonies also usually touch upon the relations between the natural and human realms, establish their hierarchy and thus have strong ethical implications.[137]

Scholarly accounts[138] of the specific nature of early Chinese cosmology frequently include the term 'correlative thinking'. 'Correlative cosmology', which flourished mainly in the Han dynasty period, has become almost a widely accepted equivalent for Chinese cosmology in general. The idea of cosmic correlations is usually associated with the system of the five elements (corresponding to the four main directions and their centre point) and the corresponding colours, zodiac signs, body organs, seasons, minerals, and so forth. 'Correlative cosmology' also conjures up images of the yin-yang symbol and the related circle of transformations, arising from the *Yijing*, which maps how the five elements influence each other. Such schemes are usually associated with superstition rather than cosmology, with divination rather than philosophy, with magical practices rather than science.

In this context, it should be noted that a large part of the European intellectual tradition relied on correlative thinking, at least as regards the functioning of the cosmos as a whole. As A. C. Graham notes, 'piecemeal causal explanations did not add up to a cosmos, or even to a single organised science.' [139] In particular, Renaissance thinkers indulged in non-causal, non-mechanical explanations, revived numerology and interest in Pythagorean thought and Kabbalah (and thus surprisingly paved the way for the modern mathematization of natural

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[136] Comp., e.g., Lévi-Strauss (*Anthropologie Structurale*, Paris: Plon, 1973).

[137] The problem of differentiation between 'natural' and 'human' in the early Chinese context will be developed in the following.

[138] This brief reference to the notion of correlative cosmology does not do justice to the vast topic of 'correlative thinking' in both Chinese and Western tradition. The vast debate about its meaning and philosophical relevance is captured in greater detail, among others, in the following works: Hall, David, and Ames, Roger T. (1991). "Rationality, Correlativity, and The Language of Process." The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 5, no. 2 (1991): 85–106; Graham A. C. (1986). Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking. Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies; Wang Aihe (2000). Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Sivin, Nathan (1995). "State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 55(1), 6-1995: 5–37; Henderson, John B. (1984). The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology. New York: Columbia University Press; for an original take on cross-cultural relevance of correlative thought patterns, see article Farmer, Steve, Henderson, John B., Witzel, Michael (2000). "Neurobiology, layered texts, and correlative cosmologies: a cross-cultural framework for premodern history." Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 72, 2000 [2002], 48-90.

[139] Graham (1989), p. 318.

science), and elaborated on complex systems of correlations (e.g., in *Corpus Hermeticum*, a neo-Platonic text disguised as, and taken for, a major work of ancient Egyptian wisdom).[140]

In this dissertation, I understand 'correlative cosmology' as a term that summarizes various attempts at mapping the cosmic becoming in terms of typical recurrent processes and as a holistic system in which these processes are all mutually dependent. The relations of similarity between them are established on the basis of similar dynamics, or tendencies of development in certain situational configurations. The efficiency of the 'correlative' view, compared to the 'causal' or mechanical view, would then consist in being able to use the knowledge of processes on a micro-level to control and manipulate far greater processes on the macro-level, which, in the mechanical order, would be well beyond our control. The point is in using natural tendencies and inner forces of larger wholes, such as an organism or the society, to be able to manage their behaviour through minor interventions (while using a disproportionally small amount of energy).

To conclude this examination of terminology, I argue that, far from being *acosmotic*, early Chinese thought indeed manifests interest in the universe as an ordered whole, provided that we re-evaluate our expectations as to how this interest is typically expressed. If we focus on accounts of cosmic functioning and patterns of process rather than the beginning and an ordering principle, we arrive at a much broader range of potential cosmological texts.

3.3 Example of the Warring States period cosmological thought

When we broaden our definition of what can be considered cosmology, we find many examples of cosmological motives in late Zhou texts. Even before the Mawangdui, Guodian, and Shanghai Museum manuscripts were unearthed, there was no lack of evidence of cosmological thinking in the Warring States period; however, the conceptual and terminological issues discussed above unfortunately obscured the view of those who were searching for it. Indeed,

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[140] Lévi-Strauss, in his *La pensée sauvage*, compares the correlative schemes of pre-literate cultures to those of the naturalists and hermetics of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, Galen, Pliny, Hermes Trismegistus, Albertus Magnus. (Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1962), La pensée sauvage, Paris: Plom. p. 57) Cf. e.g., Yates, Frances (1964). Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. London: Routledge; for the development of correlative systems in Renaissance philosophy, see also e.g. Farmer, Steve A. (1998). Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486): The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems. Tempe, Arizona: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies.

the received corpus includes well-known texts whose relevance for understanding the early Chinese cosmos has been unquestioned.

The most prominent examples can be found in the received *Laozi*, particularly Chapters 42 and 25:

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。

The Way gives birth to the One; the One gives birth to two; two give birth to three; three give birth to the ten thousand things. Ten thousand things bear *yin* on their back and *yang* in their arms; they blend *qi*, thus creating balance. [141]

This excerpt has been frequently cited as the basis of so-called Daoist cosmology. It contains the basic elements that we will encounter in other cosmologies: *dao* 道, *yi* 一, *sheng* 生, *wan wu* 萬物, *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, and *qi* 氣.

The image is further developed in *Laozi* 25, which brings into play further topics:

有物混成[142]，先天地生，寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。

There is something undifferentiated yet complete, born before heaven and earth. How still, how void! It stands on its own and does not change; it moves everywhere and encounters no peril. It can be considered a mother of all under the heaven.[143]

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[141] *Laozi* 42; MWD variant 老子乙(5): 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生□□□□□□□□□□以為和。Alternative trans. 'The Way generates the One. The One generates the two. The two generates the three. The three generates the ten thousand entities. The ten thousand entities [might] carry the Yin on their back [or] embrace the Yang, but they take the ether of emptiness as their harmonizing [factor].' (Wagner, 2003)
'Way-making (*dao*) gives rise to continuity, Continuity gives rise to difference, Difference gives rise to plurality, and plurality gives rise to the manifold of everything that is happening (*wan wu*). Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its arms and blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious (*he*).' (Hall and Ames, 2003)
[142] Cf. *Heng xian*, strips 2-4.
[143] GDLZ A variant 老子甲 (11): 有**狀**混成，先天地生，**清**寥，獨立不**亥**，可以為天下母。 (Henricks, 2000)
MWD A variant 老子甲 (25): 有物昆成，先天地生。**繡呵繆呵**，獨立□□□，可以為天**地**母。 (Henricks 1989, p. 77)

Instead of the *dao* 道 at the beginning of the previous excerpt, which can be readily identified with an ordering first principle or cause, here we encounter a 'thing', *wu* 物,[144] and it is completed, as if somebody had made it. Moreover, it was 'born', which would normally imply that something gave birth to it. But, although the primary cosmic instance appears as a product or offspring of something else, its further characterizations through negation offer a different perspective: it is still (*ji* 寂), without any self-expression; vast or deserted (*liao* 寥), without any benchmarks or boundaries; standing alone (*du* 獨), as there is nothing outside of it; and not changing (*bu gai* 不改), as it cannot be increased or diminished in any aspect. It is also characterized by cyclic movement (*zhou xing* 周行) in which nothing ever really disappears. *Wu* now appears as a provisional term for 'something' that otherwise cannot be put into words, rather than 'the Thing,' that is, some primal entity. This reading is supported by further verses of Laozi 25:[145]

吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大，大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。

I do not know its name; I call by a style name *dao*. If I had to give it a name, I would call it 'great.' 'Great' would mean 'to pass'; 'to pass' would mean 'to move away'; 'to move away' would mean 'to go back'.[146]

The reluctance to put a name on this ontologically primary 'thing' is most commonly and typically associated with the alleged 'unknowability' and 'ineffability' of the first cause or the ordering principle:[147] there is something that causes and ordains everything else, but it is situated beyond the realm of human experience, transcending it. This line of argument is usually supported by connecting the 'ordering principle' with a transcendent or immanent divinity. As

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[144] In the following chapter, I will further discuss the meaning of *wu* 物 and how it differs from what we usually understand by 'a thing' (see 4.3).

[145] Cf. also Laozi 1: 無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

[146] Cf. GDLZ A variant 老子甲 (11): 未知其名，字之曰道，吾強為之名曰大。大曰**折**，**折**曰**轉**，**轉**曰**返**。 MWD A variant 老子甲 (25): 吾**未**知其名，字之曰道，吾強為之名曰大。□曰**筮**，**筮**曰□□□□。

[147] An interesting debate evolved around the subject of ineffability, considered from the point of view of congruence between names and actualities in early Chinese context, starting with an article of D'Ambrosio et al. (D'Ambrosio, Paul J., Kantor, Hans-Rudolf, and Moeller, Hans-Georg (2018). "Incongruent Names: A Theme in the History of Chinese Philosophy." in: Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 17. pp. 305–330.) and followed by the reactions of Goldin (Goldin, Paul R. (2020). "The Diversity of Perspectives on Language in Daoist Texts and Traditions." in: Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 2020/19: 619-624.) and Wawrytko (Wawrytko, Sandra A. (2020). "The Continuing Relevance of Congruent/Incongruent Names Revealed by Buddhist Epistemology". in: Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 2020/19: 625-633.) I summarize this debate in Chapter 1.3.

such, it can be understood as protected by a taboo and therefore 'not to be known' or inquired into rather than 'unknowable', and 'not to be named' rather than 'ineffable'.

The common denominator of both of these positions is the implicitly perceived link between names and things: names are seen as tools through which things can be handled, categorized, and compared (again *legein*), and the act of naming as the exercise of this 'handling power'. If there is a divine entity out there that cannot, or should not, be handled by people, it either cannot or must not be named. Yet, by putting the ontologically primary 'thing' into the realm of the unknowable and unattainable, or even into the realm of the divine, we presuppose there is a more fundamental layer of reality than the immediate world of human experience, which takes us back to Plato's and Aristotle's framework. To avoid this presupposition, we need to reconstruct the main cosmological features out of the available texts and either confirm or disprove that such a framework can indeed be applied to Warring States period texts. More importantly, in this dissertation I will reconsider in detail the role of names and naming as such in the way in which the world is constituted.

3.4 Cosmology, metaphysics, and the beginnings of philosophy

To bring into light the assumptions hidden under habitually used metaphysical categories, I will provide a summary account of the origins of the metaphysical type of questioning and the worldview from which it arose. The aim is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of this topic, but rather to sketch the main lines of discord between the metaphysical thought of Plato and Aristotle and the 'physical' thought instantiated by some pre-Socratic fragments. In turn, the 'physical' worldview outlined by the Milesians and Heraclitus will serve as a basis for our alternative interpretive framework. While keeping in mind the incompatibility of texts coming from cultures so distant in time and place, I point to certain similarities that will help us put the Chinese texts in a different perspective and make better sense of them. In the next part, the alternative interpretive framework is tentatively applied to the Chinese cosmological texts, and to other similar passages selected from across various strands of Warring States thought.

Before we dive into analysing the language and argumentation used in the excavated cosmologies, we first need to confront the issue of 'metaphysics'[148] that keeps getting in the way. The notion of 'metaphysics', as implicitly assumed and vaguely defined by contemporary scholars, has been detrimental to the interpretation of not only ancient Chinese but also certain pre-Socratic texts, religious and gnostic texts, and other texts from various cultural backgrounds. Some scholars assume that any type of questioning that involves the most fundamental questions about the constitution of our experience and its relation to the functioning of the world is "metaphysical".[149] However, metaphysics as a specific type of questioning already contains in itself a value judgement about the nature of the 'physical world' and the realm of the 'unchanging truth' lying behind it, and hence raises the question of 'transcendence':

> Being 'above' something implies transcending it or not being confined by it. 'What is above forms,' (*xing er shang* 形而上) therefore, means what is not confined by any forms. These can also be seen as two realms of studies, with the latter roughly corresponding to the tangible physical realm and the former the 'realm beyond the tangible.' Studying what is beyond the tangible or things confined by specific forms is not a matter of physics; it is metaphysical (*xing er shang xue* 形而上學). [150]

When scholars pose 'metaphysical' questions about the absolute, transcendence, truth, unchanging reality, the first cause, and so forth in ancient Chinese or pre-Socratic contexts, they have already imposed on them a worldview that may be inappropriate to them. If these scholars fail to get answers that fit their presumed 'metaphysical' frame, they tend to draw incorrect conclusions and make false value judgements, including those about philosophical irrelevance, of these texts, and a lack of interest in the functioning of the cosmos on the part of their authors.

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[148] This term is usually translated into Chinese as *xing er shang xue* 形而上學. 'While there was no Chinese term corresponding precisely to the Western term "metaphysics," the phrase commonly used to translate "metaphysics" into Chinese was taken from the *Yijing*. The *Yijing* classifies two forms of existence as "what is above (specific) forms 形而上者" and "what is with (specific) forms 形而下者."' (Li Chenyang, 2015, p. 73)

[149] This view is attested to, inter alia, by a recent anthology of works on the topic: Li, Chenyang and Franklin Perkins, eds. (2015). Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cf. also Li Chenyang and Franklin Perkins (2014). "Chinese Metaphysics as a Fruitful Subject of Study". Journal of East-West Thought 4.4: 71-86.

[150] Li Chenyang, Perkins F., 2015, p. 73.

The late professor Yu Jiyuan, in his article 'Is Chinese Cosmology Metaphysics?', [151] summarizes the confusion between *metaphysical* and *cosmological*. He asks: if Chinese thought supposedly lacks interest in metaphysical pursuits, being preoccupied with merely practical affairs, the functioning of the human world and society, how can it still have cosmological concepts? Is it so that Chinese cosmologies are 'not metaphysical'? If they indeed are not, what does it tell us about our understanding of the relationship between cosmology and metaphysics? Yu goes on to analyse stereotypes about the 'non-metaphysical' character of Chinese cosmological thought and to propose how Aristotle's original enquiry can be fitted to early Chinese ways of questioning.

As we will see, the question is not whether Chinese cosmologies can or cannot be labelled 'metaphysical', but whether we are able to abandon one perspective of 'metaphysics' for another, with only a slight shift of emphasis regarding the question of 'being qua being'. Metaphysics as a special type of inquiry was born alongside the specific Aristotelian perspective. In his *Metaphysics,*[152] Aristotle presents such inquiry as 'the first philosophy' and defines it as a type of science, or knowledge (*episteme,* ἐπιστήμη), that is concerned with 'being qua being', or with 'what is as is' (*to on hēi on,* τὸ ὂν ᾗ ὄν):

> ἔστιν **ἐπιστήμη** τις ἣ **θεωρεῖ τὸ ὂν ᾗ ὂν** καὶ τὰ τούτῳ ὑπάρχοντα καθ᾽ αὑτό. αὕτη δ᾽ ἐστὶν οὐδεμιᾷ τῶν ἐν μέρει λεγομένων ἡ αὐτή: οὐδεμία γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπισκοπεῖ καθόλου περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ᾗ ὄν, ἀλλὰ μέρος αὐτοῦ τι ἀποτεμόμεναι [25] περὶ τούτου θεωροῦσι τὸ συμβεβηκός, οἷον αἱ μαθηματικαὶ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν. ἐπεὶ **δὲ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἀκροτάτας αἰτίας ζητοῦμεν,** δῆλον ὡς φύσεώς τινος αὐτὰς ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι καθ᾽ αὑτήν. εἰ οὖν καὶ οἱ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῶν ὄντων ζητοῦντες ταύτας τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐζήτουν, **ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰ** [30] **στοιχεῖα τοῦ ὄντος εἶναι μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἀλλ᾽ ᾗ ὄν**: διὸ καὶ ἡμῖν τοῦ ὄντος ᾗ ὂν τὰς πρώτας αἰτίας ληπτέον.

> There is a **science** which **studies Being qua Being**, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature. This science is not the same as any of the so-called particular sciences, for none of the others contemplates Being generally

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[151] Yu Jiyuan (2011). 'Is Chinese Cosmology Metaphysics? A Greek-Chinese Comparative Study'. *Journal of East-West Thought* 1.1: 137–150.
[152] More precisely 'the first philosophy'; the title originally just reflected the ordering of Aristotle's works by his successors (*meta ta physika* – μετὰ τὰ φυσικά).

qua Being; they divide off some portion of it and study the attribute of this portion, as do for example the mathematical sciences. But since **it is for the first principles and the most ultimate causes that we are searching**, clearly, they must belong to something in virtue of its own nature. Hence if these principles were investigated by those also who investigated the elements of existing things, **the elements must be elements of Being not incidentally, but qua Being**. Therefore, it is of Being qua Being that we too must grasp the first causes.[153]

In Aristotle's view, metaphysics is not concerned with the partial and incidental aspects (*symbebēkos*, συμβεβηκός) of 'being' (*to on*, τὸ ὄν), but with what remains unchanged throughout the change of these accidental characteristics, in other words, what makes things 'be' before being anything else. Aristotle uses the term *ousia* (οὐσία, the participle of εἶμαι, 'to be'), translated as 'substance' or 'essence':

> πανταχοῦ δὲ κυρίως τοῦ πρώτου ἡ ἐπιστήμη, καὶ ἐξ οὗ τὰ ἄλλα ἤρτηται, καὶ δι᾽ ὃ λέγονται. εἰ **οὖν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία**, τῶν οὐσιῶν ἂν δέοι τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς αἰτίας ἔχειν τὸν φιλόσοφον.

> Now in every case knowledge is principally concerned with that which is primary, i.e. that upon which all other things depend, and from which they get their names. If, then, **substance is this primary thing**, it is of substances that the philosopher must grasp the first principles and causes.[154]

These quotes illustrate the particular nature of Aristotle's approach: the question itself, starting from the epistemological concern of 'what can be correctly known and how', is responsible for creating the concept of 'substance' that underlies change, thus shifting the whole problem into the ontological realm of 'what there is'. In *Metaphysics* 1.1, Aristotle makes it evident that his major and primary concern is epistemological: it is 'to know', 'to have wisdom'.[155] In other

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[153] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4, 1003b20-31, trans. Hugh Tredennick (1933), Cambridge, Harvard University Press; London (accessed online through Perseus Project, http://perseus.tufts.edu, as of 2018/10/07) (emphasis added).
[154] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4, 1003b17-19 (emphasis added). For our purposes, it is also interesting to note how the reference by names is mentioned in this context.
[155] Aristotle, Metaphysics 1, 981b28. ("[…] it is generally assumed that what is called Wisdom (σοφία) is concerned with the primary causes and principles, […] and the speculative sciences to be more learned than the productive.")

words, it turns primarily to what has been grasped and retained. And naturally, within this set of 'what is known', it is that which lasts and does not change that will be regarded as the most fundamental. The emphasis is thus on the stable and permanent, on the unchanging over the changing. This type of inquiry then necessarily leads to a specific type of answer: there must be something that makes a thing 'be', before 'being anything in particular'.[156] Such an approach naturally takes 'entities' as the point of departure and searches for the underlying stable structures behind them and how to account for them.[157]

Aristotle's specific type of questioning has roots in Plato's world image, famously illustrated in the cave allegory.[158] Through the light of an enquiring mind, humans have access to the realm of clarity in which all things are what they really are, not mere shadows or reflections. Similarly, in Plato's dialogues, Socrates typically leads his interlocutors to specify what can be ultimately 'said about' a thing. Gradually, a pure form or idea (*eidos*, εἶδος) emerges as an answer to this type of inquiry. The idea is the object of knowledge extracted from its particular instances, which belong in the world of mere opinions (*doxa*, δόξα). This primarily epistemological concern is translated into a world image with ontological implications: what is seen through the light of human reason is true and permanent (the realm of unchanging *eidos*), whereas the changeable world of normal experience is unreliable and derivative.

As a result, the world is ontologically split into two layers: a more fundamental layer of the unchanging, which we turn to when we seek ultimate knowledge, and a derived and unreliable layer of changing phenomena.[159] Behind the changing and accidental aspects of a thing, we expect substance, which is the basis of its existence and individuation, and essence which makes the thing what it is. This 'crack in reality' was later developed within the Peripatetic school into a more pronounced dichotomy between the two layers of reality: a layer of changing aspects

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[156] For the discussion on the philosophical implications of the verb 'to be' (einai εἶναι) in ancient Greek, see Graham, A. C. '"Being" in Western Philosophy Compared with shi/fei and you/wu in Chinese Philosophy' in: Graham A. C. (1990). Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 322–59; Kahn, Charles H. (1973). The Verb Be in Ancient Greek. Dordrecht: Reidel; Reding, Jean-Paul (2004). Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking. Abingdon: Ashgate.

[157] In this respect, I completely agree with the following passage from Nicolas Rescher (2000, p. 4): "From the time of Aristotle, Western metaphysics has had a marked bias in favour of things. Aristotle's insistence on the metaphysical centrality of ostensively indicatable objects (with *tode ti* as a pointable-at this) made an enduring and far-reaching impact. In fact, it does not stretch matters unduly to say that the Aristotelian view of the primacy of substance and its ramifications (see Metaphysics IV, 2, 10003b6-11) - with its focus on midsize physical objects on the order of a rock, tree, cat, or human being-have proved to be decisive for much of Western philosophy."

[158] Plato, Republic (514a–517a). Although it is sometimes referred to as a 'myth', it is the exact opposite: a fabricated metaphor about how myth works in contrast with the light of reason.

[159] From *phainómenon* φαινόμενον, 'thing appearing in view'.

accessible through perception and a deeper layer accessible through thought, one of invisible substance and primary causes.[160] In line with Plato, metaphysics as a primary science became concerned with the realm of eternal validity hidden behind the veil of changing appearances.[161]

However, because the conceptual framework of Western scholarly philosophy is so deeply rooted in Plato's and Aristotle's thought systems, it is almost impossible to avoid their specific terminology and consequently the underlying kind of questioning, especially in the field of metaphysics. In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger encountered this problem when he tried to reformulate the most fundamental concerns of philosophy as 'being's concern with its own being'. To overcome the metaphysical split, he sought to retrace the earliest roots of philosophy to the point where this specific type of questioning gradually broke away from religion, myth, and poetry. In his lectures on early Greek thinkers, he sought to disentangle their specific worldviews from later Aristotelian and Peripatetic interpretations. Heidegger observes that metaphysics is itself already defined as primarily concerned with entities ('beings' nm. pl., *Seiende*) as distinct from 'being' (*Sein* v. infin., ger.) itself. In metaphysics, entities are seen as ontologically primary and their 'being' is only thematised as something that entities 'do' or 'have'. Entities are also conceived as separate individuals ('having' their own 'being'), and therefore there must be some source of their 'being' and individuation. But in Heidegger's shifted perspective, entities appear as entities 'only in the uncovering light of being'.[162] In other words, nothing 'is' unproblematically there unless it is 'uncovered' as such. Being, understood verbally or processually (as *Sein* as opposed to *Seiend*), is not the focus of metaphysics. Metaphysical questioning is therefore itself an expression of a specific way of being, that is, being-concerned-with-its-own-being ('Sein dem um dieses Sein selbst geht').[163] As opposed to Aristotle, Heidegger sees in the pre-Socratic *physikoi* – the Milesians and Heraclitus – a stage where the emphasis on substance has not yet occurred and entities are not yet conceptualized

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[160] This aspect was certainly reinforced by Christian scholastic philosophers who adopted and developed this ontology for theological purposes.

[161] See also the discussion of Parmenides below, part 4.2.

[162] '…jedesmal erscheint das Seiende als seiendes im Lichte des Seins.' (Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe, Klostermann 1949, p. 365) Heidegger points out that the truth can arise as *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια, 'uncovered-ness') only in the uncovering light of being, whereas in the metaphysical realm, truth can only be accessed by means of cognition (*episteme,* ἐπιστήμη). Cf. Heidegger, Martin (1931). *Was ist Metaphysik*. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann.

[163] E.g., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 179.

as discrete and distinct from their being, which is 'one' – not in the monistic sense of 'one entity' or 'one kind of entities', but 'one (way of, or process of) being'.[164]

When referring to his Milesian predecessors of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, Aristotle reports that they posit 'one' as the principle and origin of all things; in his interpretation, this 'one' (water, *aēr*, *apeiron*) is *archē*, or a primary cause, and within Aristotle's distinction of four types of causes, it is the material one. The 'one' from which everything arises is therefore interpreted as *primary matter*, or *hylē*.[165] As we can see, for Aristotle such a cosmology is incomplete because it lacks an explanation of the cause of movement and the force behind the process of the generation of all things.

If we now look at Anaximander's and Anaximenes' cosmologies through Heidegger's interpretation, we may find a different 'one': the 'one' that is neither thing, nor entity, nor material cause. The following fragment from Simplicius is probably the most direct testimony about Anaximander's 'one', or *apeiron*:

> λέγει δ᾽ αὐτὴν [ἀρχὴν] μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων, **ἀλλ᾽ ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον, ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους·** ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσίς ἐστι τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι **κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν,** ποιητικωτέροις οὕτως ὀνόμασιν αὐτὰ λέγων.

> He [Anaximander] says that it [*archē*] is neither water nor any other of the so-called elements, but **some other boundless nature, from which come into being all the heavens and the worlds in them**. And the source of coming-to-be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens **according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their**

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[164] Cf. Heidegger, Martin (1967). *Vom Wesen und Begriff der Physis: Aristoteles Physik* B l. Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann.

[165] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 983b3-11: 'τῶν δὴ πρώτων φιλοσοφησάντων οἱ πλεῖστοι τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἴδει μόνας ᾠήθησαν ἀρχὰς εἶναι πάντων. (…) καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὔτε γίγνεσθαι οὐθὲν οἴονται οὔτε ἀπόλλυσθαι, ὡς τῆς τοιαύτης φύσεως ἀεὶ σωζομένης.' 'Most of the earliest philosophers conceived only of material principles as underlying all things. […] Hence, they believe that nothing is either generated or destroyed, since this kind of primary entity always persists.'

injustice according to the assessment of time, as he describes it in these rather poetical terms.[166]

Anaximander's *apeiron*, presented by Simplicius as *archē*, is often translated as 'infinite' or 'boundless.'[167] According to tradition, this fragment is the first example of 'conceptual, in essence metaphysical abstraction',[168] or even the first occurrence of the concept of infinity.[169] *Apeiron* is sometimes read as 'infinite space'.[170] Yet the meaning of the word in Anaximander's time was closer to 'boundless', 'lacking boundaries', 'undefined', or even 'wrapped up in itself in a way that no end can be found'. When we look at the above example, this 'boundless nature' is something from which all things, being defined and possessing boundaries, arise and into which they perish when these boundaries dissolve. Their complementarity and mutual interdependence are evoked through an image of penalty and retribution. The 'one' or 'boundless' is the guarantee of justice, in the sense that everything arising from it as definite is indebted to the rest of the whole and will eventually repay this debt by returning to it. Behind this principle of justice is the idea that all phenomena are essentially 'one being', their existence is interconnected, and the being of any one of them is indebted to the being of the others.[171]

Anything that becomes defined within the undefined 'one' necessarily brings about its opposite. For every A, there is a non-A. These two are complementary and inseparable, being essentially 'one'. Anaximander's cosmology contains examples of such interacting opposites:

ἐνούσας γὰρ τὰς ἐναντιότητας ἐν τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ, ἀπείρῳ ὄντι σώματι, ἐκκρίνεσθαί φησιν Ἀναξίμανδρος, (…). ἐναντιότητες δέ εἰσι θερμὸν ψυχρὸν ξηρὸν ὑγρὸν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα.

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[166] Anaximander, fr. B1 - Simplicius, In Physica 24, 13 (DK 12a9), trans. Kirk, Raven (1957), p. 105.
[167] Contrary to the traditional view that Anaximander uses the nominalized form *to apeiron*, Couprie and Kočandrle argue that this nominalization appeared only with Aristotle and his followers and that *apeiron* should be understood as an adjective, i.e., as 'undefined/boundless (something)'; cf. Couprie, Dirk L., Kočandrle, Radim (2017). *Apeiron: Anaximander on Generation and Destruction*, Berlin: Springer.
[168] Cf. e.g., Havelock, E. A. (1983). 'The Linguistic Task of the Pre-Socratics', in: Robb, K. (ed.), *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy.* Illinois: La Salle, p. 53.
[169] E.g. Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, trans. Whitlock, Greg (2001). The Pre-Platonic Philosophers. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
[170] Kahn, Charles H. (1994). *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, p. 233: 'The Boundless is in fact what we call infinite space. […] But this space is not as yet thought of in the abstraction from the material which fills it.'
[171] I will return to this association between shape and penalty in Chapter 4 in the discussion of *xing ming* 形名/刑名 (Chapter 4, part 4.7 'Posing boundaries and setting rules').

Anaximander says that the opposites are within the substance that is a boundless body, and that they separate from it. […] The opposites are hot, cold, dry, wet, and other.[172]

A distinctive feature of Ionian cosmologies, present also in Anaximander, is perpetual motion. Change and motion are seen as fundamental characteristics of the world as accessed through our everyday experience:

οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴν καὶ στοιχεῖον εἴρηκεν τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἄπειρον, πρῶτος τοὔνομα καλέσας τῆς ἀρχῆς. πρὸς δὲ τούτωι κίνησιν ἀίδιον εἶναι, ἐν ἦι συμβαίνειν γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανούς.

He [Anaximander] said that the principle and element of existing things was the *apeiron*, being the first to use this name for *archē*. In addition to this he said that motion was eternal, in which it results that the heavens come into being.[173]

For Anaximander, the tension and interaction of opposites is itself the explanation of change and movement. Opposites remain 'one being' of the whole cosmos and, as such, maintain each other in a dynamic equilibrium. Through their interaction, different modes of being arise as distinct – for example, the heavens on one hand and the earth on the other; hot, bright, heavenly lights and dark, damp, earthly depths. However poetic or mythical Anaximander's cosmology may sound, it in fact leads to concrete proto-scientific considerations about the nature of the physical world, astronomy, meteorological phenomena, and so forth.

Moreover, the whole process of generating differences from differences, down to the level of the subtlest phenomena, is not situated in the remote mythical past but is ongoing and continues to repeat itself. However, to claim that such a system emphasizes movement over rest would also be a Peripatetic misinterpretation. The movement of the opposites is as eternal as the rest of the boundless whole. The boundless whole, being essentially 'at rest and without change' in that it does not increase or decrease and does not go anywhere, is paradoxically a source and guarantee of the perpetual movement of the opposites. That is why the 'one', or the 'boundless',

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[172] Anaximander, frag. A 9/2 - Simplicius, In Physica 150, 22–24.
[173] Anaximander, frag. A 11 – Hippolytos, *Refutatio* I, 6, 1–7, trans. Kirk, Raven (1957), p. 105.

can be characterized as 'everlasting and unageing' (*aidion kai ageron*)[174] and surely has divine connotations, as observed by Aristotle:

> καὶ τοῦτ᾽ εἶναι τὸ θεῖον· **ἀθάνατον γὰρ καὶ ἀνώλεθρον**, ὥς φησιν ὁ Ἀναξίμανδρος καὶ οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν φυσιολόγων.

> Further they identify it with the Divine, for it is **'deathless and imperishable'** as Anaximander says, with the majority of the physicists.[175]

Anaximander's idea that the one 'boundless nature', or the undifferentiated, is in itself sufficient to account for the emergence of everything there is unfortunately disappeared under the layer of Aristotelian interpretation that saw *apeiron* as a somewhat clumsy term for *hypokeimenon* (ὑποκείμενον). In such an interpretation, Anaximander's view naturally comes out as flawed and not accounting for the ordering principle and the emergence of distinct entities.

Anaximenes, Anaximander's disciple, developed on the idea of the 'boundless nature' of the cosmos but the concept he introduced was *aēr* (ἀήρ). *Aēr*, besides meaning 'air', as in 'breath', 'wind', 'vapour', or 'mist', is the term used for air as one of the elements, or more correctly, as one of the 'simplest bodies' (*hapla sōmata*) of which the world is composed. Yet, Anaximenes seems to use it differently, in a way that preserves characteristics similar to *apeiron*: it is all-encompassing, and nothing is outside of it; it is boundless and undefined, and from it all things arise; and its 'oneness' is what holds the cosmos together ontologically:

> Ἀναξιμένης, (...) ἑταῖρος γεγονὼς Ἀναξιμάνδρου, μίαν μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν ὑποκειμένην φύσιν καὶ ἄπειρόν φησιν ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος, οὐκ ἀόριστον δὲ ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλὰ ὡρισμένην,[176] ἀέρα λέγων αὐτήν· διαφέρειν δὲ μανότητι καὶ πυκνότητι κατὰ τὰς οὐσίας. καὶ ἀραιούμενον μὲν πῦρ γίνεσθαι, πυκνούμενον δὲ ἄνεμον, εἶτα νέφος, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ὕδωρ, εἶτα γῆν, εἶτα λίθους, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἐκ τούτων. κίνησιν δὲ καὶ οὗτος ἀίδιον ποιεῖ, δι᾽ ἣν καὶ τὴν μεταβολὴν γίνεσθαι.

> Anaximenes, […] a companion of Anaximander, also says that the underlying nature is one and infinite like him, but not undefined as Anaximander said but

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[174] Anaximander, fr. B 2 – Hippolytos, *Refutatio* I,6,1
[175] Anaximander, fr. B 3 – Aristotle, Physics Book III, 4; 203b13
[176] In this fragment, the description of *aēr* as definite must be attributed to Simplicius' (Theophrastus's) reading – he would regard *aēr* as one of the elements ('simple bodies', *hapla sōmata*) and therefore defined; yet in the same fragment, the other elements are explained as variations of *aēr*.

definite, for he identifies it as air; and it differs in its substantial nature by rarity and density. Being made finer it becomes fire, being made thicker it becomes wind, then cloud, then (when thickened still more) water, then earth, then stones; and the rest come into being from these. He, too, makes motion eternal, and says that change, also, comes about through it.[177]

It seems that what is described by *aēr* is actually similar to *apeiron*, only with the emphasis shifted from its boundlessness to its dynamic aspect: it is still undifferentiated since it does not assume any form, yet it moves and affects, it exercises impact. It does not coincide with the 'air' in its usual meaning, which seems to be derived from *aēr* at a lower cosmological stage. Compared to Anaximander, in Anaximenes the focus seems to have shifted from the 'stabilizing role' of the 'one' to the 'mobilizing role' of the cosmic energy process: at the same time, *aēr*, as all-encompassing, is itself the energy and vehicle of change and movement. It also guarantees the temporary stability of things, in the same way that the vital breath, or 'soul' (*pneuma,* πνεῦμα), is believed to preserve the unity of a human being.

Different stages of being derive from it through rarefaction and condensation (*manotēs, pyknotēs*). The movement of *aēr* is thus behind the emergence and disappearance of every definite thing within the continuum of the cosmos. It is also evident that opposites are not mutually exclusive but rather two complementary sides of the same process. Emergence and disappearance happening at all levels are explained by changes of *aēr*, or in a more metaphoric way, as 'breathing' of the whole. Anaximenes's evocative cosmic image appears more resistant to the Aristotelian 'material cause' misinterpretation: 'air' is easier to imagine moving of itself without being determined by anything external to it, as well as being ever-present and all-encompassing without having any definite characteristics.

Heraclitus, compared to his Milesian predecessors, offers much broader ground for cross-cultural comparison on the topics of perpetual change, the unity of differences, and due measures of emergence and disappearance. About one hundred textual fragments have been preserved that account for approximately one third of his original work on *physis* dedicated to Artemis. Heraclitus earned the nickname 'the obscure one', *ho Skoteinos* (ὁ Σκοτεινός), for his difficult-to-grasp view of the cosmos and specific ways of expression. This is partly because Heraclitus's speech is crafted specifically to convey the unstable and dynamic character of

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[177] Anaximenes, frag. A 5 /1 = Simplicius, In *Physica* 24, 26, trans. Kirk, Raven (1957), p. 144.

reality and the complexity of the relations between one and many and between the part and the whole. As I will try to show in the next chapter, Heraclitus indeed uses speech, *logos*, in a very different way from his Greek successors who transmitted his fragments. His strange ways of expression in fact force the reader to adopt an unusual perspective, or to hold multiple perspectives together. Heraclitus praises *logos* as bringing new light and awakening from the slumber of ordinary understanding. He does not dismiss language as relative and inadequate, as it is sometimes summarized in textbooks, but he seems to be testing and expanding the limits of speech to reach a new level of thought complexity.

Many of the fragments combine opposites that seem mutually exclusive. In language that must have appeared counter-logical or directly obscure, they suggest that there is inner unity in the differences:

ταὐτὸ γ᾿ ἔνι

ζῶν καὶ τεθνηκὸς

καὶ [τὸ] ἐγρηγορὸς καὶ τὸ καθεῦδον

καὶ νέον καὶ γηραιόν·

τάδε γὰρ μεταπεσόντα ἐκεῖνά ἐστι,

κἀκεῖνα πάλιν μεταπεσόντα ταῦτα.

The same thing is both living and dead,

awaking and asleep

young and old;

for these things transformed are those,

and those transformed back again are these.[178]

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[178] Heraclitus DK B 88, Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 10, p. 106e. Curd (2011), p. 49

In contrast to the ideas Aristotle develops in Metaphysics, that is, that each thing (to on) must have something that underlies and guarantees its 'being' before 'being anything else', Heraclitus emphasizes the unsubstantial, radically relational character of things and their characteristics. For Heraclitus, it is possible to see things as the result of tension between opposites, which, however, exists only because they are held together in an inherent unity, as illustrated by the metaphor of the bow and lyre contained in fragment B 51:

οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν

ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῷ ὁμολογέει·

παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη,

ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης.

They do not understand how,

though at variance with itself, it agrees with itself.

It is a backwards turning attunement,

Like that of the bow and lyre.[179]

The bow and lyre represent *palintropos harmonie* (παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη), translated here as 'backward-turning attunement'. In both the bow and the lyre, the two opposite poles do not annihilate each other; they do not represent a deadlock or a stalemate. Quite the contrary, their interconnectedness enables these instruments to perform their dynamic functions: propelling the arrow or emitting the sound. Within the 'harmonious tension', an energy is hidden in the string, given by its capacity to diverge from its axis and its natural tendency to recoil. Interestingly, a similar image is found in Laozi 77:

天之道，其猶張弓與？高者抑之，下者舉之；有餘者損之，不足者補之。

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[179] Heraclitus, DK B 51, Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* IX, 9, 2 (1–4), trans. Curd (2011), p. 47; See also Heraclitus B 8: τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον, καὶ ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν, καὶ πάντα κατ᾽ ἔριν γίνεσθαι. "The opposing is in accordance, from discordant things the most beautiful harmony, and everything is born from the conflict."

Isn't the way of heaven like the bending of a bow? What is above is bent down, and what is below is lifted up. Where there is surplus, it (the heaven) takes away, where there is not enough, it adds.[180]

Both texts seem to redefine the relation between the one and many in a similar way. The one is not a sum of entities, and it is not itself an entity. It is the way in which individual things relate to one another, or 'oneness.' Thanks to this oneness, many different manifestations are possible, and these many different manifestations are 'the many' contained within the one:

συνάψιες

ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον,

συνᾷδον διᾷδον,

καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα.

Couples:

things whole and not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder,

the harmonious and the discordant.

The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one.[181]

This would suggest that Heraclitus' cosmos, like that of the Milesians, is also 'one', all-encompassing, and ever-changing. This is what he has to say about its self-sustaining, non-generated character:

κόσμον, τὸν αὐτὸν ἁπάντων,

οὔτε τις θεῶν οὔτε ἀνθρώπων ἐποίησεν,

ἀλλ᾽ ἦν ἀεὶ καὶ ἔστιν καὶ ἔσται

πῦρ ἀείζωον

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[180] *Laozi* 77. Cf. *TYSS*, strip 9.
[181] Heraclitus, DK B 10, Aristotle, *De mundo* 5, 396b20, trans. Burnet, John (1920). Early Greek Philosophy, London: Adam and Charles Black. p. 101 (as an alt. trans. for "couples", I suggest "connections"). Cf. DK B 50

ἁπτόμενον μέτρα καὶ ἀποσβεννύμενον μέτρα.

This world, which is the same for all,

no one of gods or men has made.

But it always was, is, and will be:

an ever-living fire,

with measures of it kindling, and measures going out.[182]

Like the undifferentiated 'one' of the Milesians, Heraclitus's fire resists being interpreted as a material cause or material substrate of changes. It is the essence of instability, the ultimate process of consuming and bursting out again without anything graspable being preserved throughout changes. Compared to *apeiron* or *aer*, fire serves as a metaphor for radical irreversibility: although there are some recurrent patterns of becoming (*metra*, μέτρα, 'measures', 'regularities'),[183] the configuration of the whole is new at every moment, always going ahead. Obviously, there is little room for entities in any Aristotelian sense in such a layout. Heraclitus seems to avoid all hypostatization and prefers to explain phenomena as 'turns' or 'modalities' (*tropai*, τροπαὶ) of an ever-burning fire:

πυρὸς τροπαὶ πρῶτον θάλασσα, θαλάσσης δὲ τὸ μὲν ἥμισυ γῆ, τὸ δὲ ἥμισυ πρηστήρ... θάλασσα διαχέεται καὶ μετρέεται εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ὁκοῖος πρόσθεν ἦν ἢ γενέσθαι γῆ

The transformations of Fire: first, sea; and of the sea half is earth, half whirlwind... It becomes liquid sea, and is measured by the same tale as before it became earth.[184]

If an implicit ontology is contained in Heraclitus's fragments, it is obviously far from Aristotle's view of entities. What Heraclitus describes as *tropai* are turns, or modalities, of the same process, yet they express themselves in distinct ways. Again, as in the bow and lyre metaphor, their being distinct is only possible thanks to their being tied together in one whole. One process

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[182] Heraclitus, DK B 30, Alexandros, *Simplicii In Aristotelis De caelo Commentaria* VII; trans. Burnet (1920), p. 99.
[183] Cf. also Heraclitus DK B 76 and DK B 36 on the cyclicity of transformation.
[184] Heraclitus, DK B 31, Clement, *Miscellanies* 5.104 3,5, trans. Burnet (1920), p. 99.

of 'burning' (*tropos* of fire) can manifest itself through the most contrary of phenomena, such as the sea and earth, without there being a common 'material' denominator. An apparent entity is the result of a process rather than being its subject ('that which does it') or object ('that which undergoes it'). To regard the parts as different modalities, or subprocesses, of one larger process means to redefine altogether the relation between the part and the whole: Parts may be distinct from each other but are still comprised in the becoming of the whole. They are, at the same time, one and many.

Although the interplay of opposites is subject to the universal necessity or justice, *dike* (δῐκη), in that each one thing that comes into being will eventually relapse into the undifferentiated, the way in which this interplay unfolds is always new:

> {δῆλον ὅτι} καὶ ὁ ἥλιος οὐ μόνον {καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτός φησιν,} νέος ἐφʼ ἡμέρῃ ἐστίν, ἀλλʼ ἀεὶ νέος {συνεχῶς.}

> It is evident that for Heraclitus, the Sun is not only new every day, but that it is always new (continuously).[185]

This view is also attested for in Heraclitus's famous and often imprecisely quoted fragment:

> ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ·

> On those stepping into rivers staying the same other and other waters flow.[186]

From Heraclitus's perspective, things arise as what they are only in relation to something else, and this relational aspect is more fundamental than their being separated. Any one thing, or any of its distinct features, is thus intrinsically connected with its opposite: alive–dead, awake–asleep, young–old, and so forth. From an Aristotelian perspective, this way of speaking was a clear step away from logic and towards obscurity. Yet, it was neither random nor nonsensical; it was only radical in capturing the relational character of what is. Its performative value is to provoke a shift of perspective: each thing is defined by its situatedness within the whole and prone to change, yet it can also be thought of as the whole itself. Heraclitus draws our attention

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[185] Heraclitus, DK B 6, Aristoteles, *Meteorologica* II, 2, p. 355a 14.
[186] Heraclitus, DK B 12, (Cleanthes) in Arius Didymus fr. 39.2 (also *Doxographi graeci*, 471.4). Plato is also guilty of "imprecise" quotation in Cratylus: "Heraclitus, I believe, says that all things go and nothing stays, and comparing existents to the flow of a river, he says you could not step twice into the same river." (Plato, Cratylus 402a)

to the fact that we tend to hypostatize our ways of speaking about things into concrete stable entities while there is nothing stable in the cosmos.

All these subtleties are conveyed only thanks to an aspect of reality that receives central position in Heraclitus' thought: the *logos* (λόγος).

> τοῦ λόγου τοῦ δέοντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίνονται καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε, ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιουτέων ὁποῖα ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὕδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται.

> Though this Word is true evermore, yet men are as unable to understand it when they hear it for the first time as before they have heard it at all. For, though **all things come to pass in accordance with this Word**, men seem as if they had no experience of them, when they make trial of words and deeds such as I set forth, **dividing each thing according to its kind and showing how it is what it is**. But other men know not what they are doing when awake, even as they forget what they do in sleep.[187]

Importantly for our further analysis of the role of speech (and naming) in cosmological texts, Heraclitus' *logos*, too, represents a tension between 'human speech' and something closely connected to the way the cosmos is organized, its patterns, regularities and even intelligence. I deliberately refrain from using the phrase 'organizing principle' for the reasons explained above.

> οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι,
> {ὁ Ἡράκλειτός φησι.}

> When they have heard not me but the speech (logos), it would be wise of them to agree that all is one, {Heraclitus says.}[188]

On the one hand, *logos* is used for what can be spoken and understood (see B1 above), what is shared (*to xynon*), 'intersubjective' and potentially intelligible to all. On the other hand, it is

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[187] Heraclitus, DK B 1, Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* 7.132; trans. Burnet (1920), p. 98.
[188] Heraclitus, DK B 50, Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* IX, 9, 1.

binding, and it does not seem to have a man-made quality. It is, in a way, already present in the world through patterns and regularities, regardless of whether we do or do not conceive of it. In this sense, it is neither merely personal, nor interpersonal or impersonal, it is rather all of these aspects at once. What makes *logos* what it is (binding, ruling, fundamental) is its oneness through multiplicity. Yet not being able to see the oneness aspect and dwelling on multiplicity is the same as not understanding, being blind or asleep.

> τοῦ λόγου δ᾽ ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν.

> Although this speech (logos) is common for all, most people live as if they had their own consciousness.[189]

This double aspect of *logos*, however, does not have to represent a contradiction. If we return to the previously cited notion of the 'one', i.e., inherent oneness of differences, even the apparently firm and insurmountable differences between individuals are overcome through *logos* that can be grasped from within oneself. On the contrary, the *logos* leads one to see one's own situatedness within the oneness. From that perspective, boundaries of an individual self are nowhere to be found.

> ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροι ὁ πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδόν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει.

> Not even the one who has tried every path can step on the boundaries of *psyche*:
> So deep is its *logos*.[190]

In this context, it is interesting to note that, according to fragments 41 and 32, the 'one' can be considered wise, or intelligent (*en to sofon* – ἓν τὸ σοφόν). Closer connection between this 'wisdom' and *logos* itself is, however, not explicitly made although it follows from the context. We will borrow from the above-sketched field of associations when we discuss the motif of *logos* further in the context of structuring of the world in the next chapter.

The above examples from Anaximander's, Anaximenes's, and Heraclitus's cosmologies illustrate the special nature of 'physical', as opposed to 'metaphysical' discourse.[191] The many

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[189] Heraclitus, DK B 2, Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus mathematicos* VII, 133, 3-5.
[190] Heraclitus, DK B 45, Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* IX, 7 = A 1, 7
[191] Having said this, I do not intend to dwell on the labels, or argue that we should refrain from using the term 'metaphysics' for this type of inquiry. What should be achieved, again, is the awareness of implicit assumptions

distortions of pre-Socratic thought introduced by Aristotle have influenced the entire later tradition, including our interpretation of ancient Chinese texts. Therefore, much caution is needed so that we do not perpetuate the same bias and keep in mind the above examples when we approach our excavated cosmologies.

3.5 The process perspective

Before tackling the main task of this chapter, which is to reframe the excavated cosmologies in a more fitting interpretive framework, I will shortly introduce philosophical tools that may be helpful for this enterprise. David Hall and Roger Ames, in reaction to Chad Hansen's mass noun hypothesis and mereological model, have suggested that early Chinese thought could be better understood using 'some kind of "process ontology"'.[192] Despite their persuasive arguments and thorough observation of the implications of cosmological differences, the 'process ontology' direction has not yet been much explored in the context of early Chinese thought.[193]

In Western philosophy the idea of process ontology, or process metaphysics, is not entirely new. Throughout the history of philosophy, there have been numerous attempts at replacing the substance model of reality with a processual one. In the contemporary philosophical debate, process philosophy has been associated mainly with Alfred North Whitehead[194] and his followers. But in its broader sense, it has been around for at least as long as philosophy focused on entities. Whitehead traces its roots back to the pre-Socratics – Anaximander, Anaximenes,

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and interpretive frameworks. But once they have been brought into light, there is no obstacle to labelling the inquiry as 'metaphysical'.

[192] Hall and Ames (1987), p. 263. The passage continues: 'Chinese ontological views are closer to being 'holographic' than 'mereological', and this entails the idea that the activity of naming is an act of focusing or attuning in which the discriminated element at least adumbrates the whole in and through its particularity' (ibid., p. 263).

[193] There are several exceptions to this trend. Interestingly, the Chinese government, in its quest for justification of a "China-specific approach" to human rights and management of the society, recently offered large grants to support the development of process philosophy studies in China, which materialized, e.g., as the Institute for the Postmodern Development of China (https://postmodernchina.org/) founded in 2006 by John B. Cobb, a renowned Whiteheadian scholar and promoter of process philosophy. Attempts to use process philosophy to explain the "specificity of Chinese thought" in general have also been associated with the work of French philosopher Francois Jullien (e.g., his works Jullien, François (1992). La propension des choses. Pour une histoire de l'efficacité en Chine. Paris: Éditions du Seuil; Jullien, François (1997), Traité de l'efficacité. Paris: Grasset.)

[194] Mainly in his 'metaphysical' works, such as Whitehead A. N. (1929), Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology, based on the Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1927–8, New York: Macmillan.

and above all Heraclitus. Other proponents include Leibniz, Hegel, James, Dewey, and Peirce, and also Henri Bergson, whom Whitehead invokes specifically as his inspiration.

Generally speaking, process philosophy proposes a shift of ontological perspective from the focus on entities, generally referred to by nouns, to processes, that is, to movement and change. Nicolas Rescher formulated the common features of process-oriented philosophies in his *Process Philosophy* as follows:

> From the time of Aristotle, Western metaphysics has had a marked bias in favour of things. Aristotle's insistence on the metaphysical centrality of ostensibly indicatable objects (with *tode ti*[195] as a pointable-at this) made an enduring and far-reaching impact. In fact, it does not stretch matters unduly to say that the Aristotelian view of the primacy of substance and its ramifications (see Metaphysics IV, 2, 10003b6–11) – with its focus on midsize physical objects of the order of a rock, tree, cat, or human being – have proved to be decisive for much of Western philosophy.[196]

This specific type of questioning takes process as a 'doing' of a 'thing', that is, as an action of an agent. Where an agent is not easy to identify (in processes that seem to occur 'of themselves'), action is explained by a 'force', also eventually attributed to a thing.

From the process metaphysics perspective, however, ontological enquiry starts from the process, which is considered more fundamental than entities. An entity becomes something derivative, a product or a manifestation of a process.[197] Its existence is only relative and provisional, for it takes another process (e.g., the process of naming or conceptualizing) to 'extract' an entity from the universal continuum. In other words, traditionally perceived 'concrete' objects are in fact 'abstract' in that they are carved out of a processual continuum and treated as stable.

The emphasis on continuity itself is also fundamental for the process perspective: it always involves a kind of immediate connection between what there is and what has not yet come to

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[195] τόδε τι, 'this particular something'
[196] Nicolas Rescher (2000), Process Philosophy: Survey of Basic Issues, University of Pittsburgh Press, p. 4. Rescher calls it 'the ontological substance bias of Western philosophy'.
[197] "It sees things not just as the products of processes (since one cannot avoid doing) but also as the manifestations of processes – as complex bundles of coordinated processes. It replaces the troublesome ontological dualism of thing and activity with an internally complex monism of activities of varying, potentially compounded sorts" (Rescher, 2000, p. 7).

be. The 'not yet' aspect of what there is is crucial, even though most difficult to conceptualize. Without it, as we will see in the reasoning of Parmenides, movement and change would not be possible.[198] It is also at the root of another important feature of process ontology – the ability to incorporate novelty, emergence, and contingency in its system.

A. N. Whitehead[199] has described his philosophy as an 'organic philosophy' in that he views reality as consisting of interrelated and mutually dependent processes. In his *Modes of Thought,* he says:

> The fundamental concepts are activity and process. Nature is divisible and thus extensive. But any division, including some activities and excluding others, also severs the patterns of process which extend beyond all boundaries. […] There are no essentially self-contained activities within limited regions. These passive geometrical relationships between substrata passively occupying regions have passed out of picture. Nature is a theatre for the interrelations of activities. All things change, the activities and their interrelations. To this new concept, the notion of space with its passive, systematic, geometric relationship is entirely inappropriate. It has thus swept away space and matter and has substituted the study of the internal relations within a complex state of activity. This complex state is in one sense a unity.[200]

Whitehead replaces the notion of entity with the process-based notion of 'actual occasion'. It is a 'unit' of process, or an event, situated in the context of all other events and co-constituted by them. The past and present are inseparably linked through 'presenting/actualization' of past actual occasions: past events are ceaselessly synthesized into a new unique event. That is how the system is able to incorporate radical novelty, and also creativity. In this sense, 'actual occasions' are self-determining.[201]

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[198] See below, Chapter 4, part 4.2

[199] Whitehead's *Process and Reality* is a complex metaphysical work, the elements of which – not easily graspable in their systematic whole – are often misused to support the wildest metaphysical speculations. To avoid this, I limit my reference to Whitehead's ideas to a few elements relevant for the present work. For a broader discussion of Whitehead's processual approach, see e.g. Lucas, George R. (1989), The Rehabilitation of Whitehead: An Analytic and Historical Assessment of Process Philosophy, SUNY Press; Andrle, Michal (2010), Whiteheadova filosofie přírody, Červený Kostelec: Nakladatelství Pavel Mervart.

[200] Whitehead, A. N. (1968). Modes of Thought. New York: The Free Press, p. 140.

[201] The question of self-determination from the perspective of process ontology is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, part 5.4.

From the processual point of view, a physical thing, or what we call a stable object, is only a pattern of process that exhibits temporary stability. It comes about through a combination of stabilities in statistical fluctuations, like a gust of wind.[202] The process approach is also able to account for the categorical properties of things, which are also explained in terms of patterns and regularities: they can be understood as 'stable clusters of process-engendering dispositions.'[203]

The basic elements of Whitehead's process ontology include 'prehension', or the way in which one actual occasion is internally related to every other occasion in its past. The notion of prehension helps overcome, or reformulate, the problem of knowledge and of universals: there is no longer the question of how distinct minds (each a subject of its activity) can perceive the same thing. If this 'thing' is the result of an event of active grasping and structuring of the reality in the past, it necessarily also constitutes a part of the present actual occasion. Knowledge is possible through participation in the same processes.[204]

All these features prove very productive when we seek to understand 'oneness' cosmologies and follow their ontological implications. Although the process ontology has never been fully developed, not even in Whitehead's case, to become a respectable alternative to entity-based philosophical systems, it opened the door for basic reformulation of traditional philosophical questions. These include the relation between one and many, the problem of knowledge, the problem of universals, and the conceptualization of change and novelty. In the processual perspective, we can avoid getting caught up in aporias arising from conceiving 'one' as one entity, or one substance: the 'one' understood as one process of being can encompass all individual processes without becoming something more or less than it already is. The relation between the whole and its parts becomes less problematic: individual phenomena are merely different modes of being of the whole. They arise only temporarily as complementary variations of it but remain ontologically one. As such, they are intrinsically connected, and there is no essential gap between individuals and the whole.

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[202] Rescher, 2000, p. 13.
[203] Rescher, 2000, p. 7.
[204] Rescher: "We can understand the world's processes precisely because we ourselves are party to them, seeing that we ourselves, in our own makeup and being, participate in the operation of nature." (Rescher, 2000, p.12)

3.6 Recently excavated cosmological texts

Let us now consider in greater detail the selected three texts from the second half of the Warring States period that contain previously unknown cosmological accounts and thus added a new element to the Warring States period thought. The *Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水 (*TYSS*) from Guodian and the *Heng xian* 恆先 (*HX*) and the *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形 (*FWLX*) from the Shanghai Museum collection, which we have introduced above, date roughly to the mid-fourth century BC. Together with the Guodian *Laozi* A and B (*GDLZ A, B*), the Mawangdui *Laozi* A, B, and C (*MWDLZ A, B, C*), and the Mawangdui silk texts of the *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經 (*HDSJ*), they serve as a starting point and, at the same time, a goal of our hermeneutical circle. These texts pose troubling questions about cosmic order and try to make sense of natural phenomena in a way very similar to the pre-Socratic thinkers, who in turn are considered in the Western scholarly tradition to present the first instances of a philosophical worldview. The language and style of these texts are situated somewhere between a mythical account and a systematic exposition of principles. Yet, they already establish a new kind of questioning and address the reader as an independent individual able to accept or refute an argument. As I will try to demonstrate, they contain elements that have previously been considered missing or at least marginal in early Chinese thought, that is, cosmological inquiry and the questioning of the nature and structure of the universe as a well-ordered whole, or *cosmos*.

3.6.1 Taiyi sheng shui

The *Taiyi sheng shui* 太一生水 opens with a complex cosmological sequence. The 'one', or the 'great one' (*tai yi* 太一, or *da yi* 大一, depending on the transcription choice), stands at its beginning and further cosmological stages not only derive from it but also join with it to produce further stages.[205]

> 太一生水, 水反輔太一, 是以成天。天反輔太一, 是以成地。天地[復相輔]
> (strip 1) 也, 是以成神明。神明復相輔也, 是以成陰陽。陰陽復相輔也, 是以

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[205] I am intentionally using the word 'stage' here to avoid the potentially distortive notions of 'element', 'substance', or 'entity'.

成四時。四時 (strip 2) 復[相]輔也, 是以成滄熱。滄熱復相輔也, 是以成濕燥。濕燥復相輔也, 成歲 (strip 3) 而止。

The great one gives birth to the water. The water returns to assist the great one, thus creating the heaven. The heaven returns to assist the great one, thus creating the earth. The heaven and the earth [again assist each other], thus creating the spiritual and bright forces.[206] The spiritual and bright forces again assist each other, thus creating *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* again assist each other, thus creating the four seasons. The four seasons again assist each other, thus creating cold and hot. Cold and hot again assist each other, thus creating wet and dry. Wet and dry again assist each other, thus completing the yearly cycle, and that is where it stops.[207]

Tai yi, or *da yi*,[208] represents the highest stage. In cosmological accounts, *tai* or *da* often appear in connection with high cosmological stages, meaning, on the one hand, 'out of human scale', ungraspable, or limitless and, on the other hand, being the highest authority or the ultimate reference point. In the context of ancestral lineage, *tai* is used for the founder or the oldest ancestor (*tai zu* 太祖). According to the occurrences in pre-Qin texts, *tai yi* can be interpreted both as 'union', or 'unity', and as 'axial point', or 'keystone'. In both senses, it is closely connected and sometimes used interchangeably with *tai ji* 太極, a symbol of the *yin/yang* unity characteristic of later Daoist thought.[209] According to many scholars,[210] *tai yi* is associated with

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[206] The interpretation of the term *shen ming* 神明 in this context has been vividly discussed. *Shen* 神, usually rendered as 'spirit', appears in pre-Qin texts mostly in the context of supernatural forces, deities, or gods, whereas translations of *ming* 明, in addition to 'light' (including specifically the celestial 'lights' – the sun, moon, and stars), 'bright, distinct', include '(to be) clear about', 'to understand clearly', 'intelligent/bright'. As *shenming* compound, it appears in Warring States texts as the joint term for heavenly and earthly spirits. Yet, around the fourth century BC, in the environment of the competing 'hundred schools', it became more abstract and is often translated as 'divine insight', or 'spirit-like intelligence' (e.g. in *Xunzi* 1, 21). In the cosmological context, it began functioning as a pair of opposing forces, similar to yin/yang, or dark/bright, as it is also the case in the *TYSS*. I propose reading *shen ming* here as a pair of opposites, that is, as 'unobvious and obvious', 'invisible and visible', or 'hidden and manifest' forces between heaven and earth. For a different reading as 'divine/ingenious insight', see Cf. Small, Sharon Y. "A Daoist Exploration of Shenming." Journal of Daoist Studies, vol. 11, 2018.
[207] *TYSS* strips 1-3.
[208] Transcription of the character *da* 大 as *tai* 太 in this case has become the standard, yet some prefer to keep the reading of *da* 大, e.g., Sarah Allan in "The Great One, Water, and the Laozi: New Light from Guodian", (T'oung Pao, Second Series, Vol. 89, Fasc. 4/5 [2003], pp. 237–285)
[209] Sarah Allan (2003). Allan cites *Shuowen jiezi*, in which *yi* 一 is already set firmly in cosmological context: "One (*yi* 一): the beginning; the great ultimate (*taiji* 太極). The Way (*dao* 道) was established by One. It created and separated into sky and earth, transformed, and became the myriad things." (S. Allan, p. 28)
[210] See e.g. Qian Baocong (Qian, Baocong 錢寶琮. 1932. Examinations on Taiyi 太一考. Journal of Yenching University 燕京學報 12: 2449–78); Peng Hao (Peng, Hao 彭浩. 2000. A new theory of cosmogony 一種新的宇

the divinity of the Pole Star, whose cult was popular in the state of Chu 楚 in the late Zhou period. In the received texts, 'the Great One' appears as the name of the spirit, or spiritual force, of the Pole Star, that is, of the only immovable point around which the sky and all constellations revolve.[211] It occasionally appears as the name of the Little Dipper constellation, or of the Pole Star itself.[212]

In this context, another association of *tai yi* deserves mention: it is the model of heaven and earth used for divination, probably from the Warring States period onwards, the 'cosmograph', *shi* 式 or *shipan* 式盤. In the cosmograph,[213] a circular plate symbolizing heaven (the Great Circle, *da yuan* 大圜) and a square plate symbolizing the earth (the Great Square, *da fang* 大方) move around the axis represented by the Pole Star or the Tai ji 太極.[214] A pivot joins the two plates together and, at the same time, forms the immovable axis around which the two plates revolve. This schematic representation of the cosmos can help us reconstruct the imagery behind some of the texts and how it was visualized.[215] We will return to the image of the cosmograph several times, including in Chapter 5 dedicated to the question of self.

The resulting image of the 'great one' appears to be, on the one hand, a union of opposites and, on the other, a balance point or an axis that remains in place while everything else revolves around it. This is already a shift away from 'substance monism' in the sense of one substance or one matter. Recalling Anaximander's *apeiron* and Anaximenes's *aer* above, we may be able to bring into play a more processual (physical) and less substantial image of the one. Perhaps,

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宙生成理論. In Essays for the international conference on the Chu Bamboo Slips excavated from Guodian 郭店楚簡國際學術研討會論文集, 538–541. Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe); Li Ling 李零, 郭店楚簡校讀記 (2002).

[211] E.g. *Shiji* 史記, Tian guan shu·天官書 1; *Hanshu* 漢書, Tian wen zhi 天文志 2;

[212] E.g. The Classic of the Constellations - *Xingjing* 星經 (Sarah Allan, 2003)

[213] A term coined by Stephen Field (Stephen Field, "Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet A New Answer to the 'Heaven Questions," in Early China 17 (1992): 83-1 10.) The beginnings of the use of *shipan* are hard to situate. There are, however, references to the Heavens being round and the Earth being square from the 3rd century BC on. The oldest examples of *shipan* from the 3rd century BC have been excavated at Wangjiatai 王家台 and Shashi 沙市 in Hunan Province. (Wang Aihe, Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 118 and note 87.) (For the image of the cosmograph excavated from 2nd century BC tomb at Fuyang, Anhui Province, see Major, J.S. (1993). Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, p. 42)

[214] Cf. also Neiye (part 16): 人能正靜，(…) 乃能戴大圜，而履大方。 "If one is able to be correctly disposed and quiet, (…) Then he can carry the Great Circle (of heaven) on his head and stand on the Great Square (of earth)."

[215] It is interesting to note that the axial point of *shipan*, the Pole Star itself, was not the last star of the constellation, which is its place today, but the second star of the Small Dipper's handle. This is explained by the fact that, between the Warring States period and today, the earth's axis has shifted. 2,500 years ago, the star closest to the celestial pole was indeed *beta Ursae minoris* (Kochab), as evidenced also by ancient Greek observations.

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a more fitting expression to capture the processual aspect would be 'being one', 'one-ing', or 'oneness', that is, the one that does not imply unchangeability and homogeneity or contradict multiplicity or change. The problem of one and many is often subconsciously framed in a Platonic–Aristotelian framework in which unity lies in a transcendent, ideal realm while multiplicity consists in various configurations of matter. But if we drop this 'idealist versus materialist' perspective, the relation between the one and many becomes less complicated. Within the one conceived as 'being one', multiple forms may arise as multiple 'modes of being', rather than discrete 'entities' derived from it and separate in any ontological sense. The one and many would then be only two different perspectives of the same reality. The same would apply to change and unchangeability: even though multiple forms undergo changes, as mutually opposed and complementary modes of being one, but from the viewpoint of the one, there is nothing being added to or subtracted from it in the process; it is not augmenting or diminishing. The entire system holds together ontologically as one. This view is emphasized through the repetition of the cosmological sequence in the reverse order:

故歲者，濕燥之所生也。濕燥者，滄然之所生也。(…) 天地者，(strip 5) 太一之所生也。

That is why the yearly cycle is born out of wet and dry, wet and dry are born from cold and hot. (…) The heaven and the earth are born from the great one.

There has been some discord among scholars regarding the meaning of the next passage. If *tai yi* is read as 'origin', or 'primordial state', its occurrence within the multiplicity is puzzling:

是故, 太一藏於水, 行於時, 周而又[始, 以己為] (strip 6) 萬物母, 一缺一盈，以己為萬物經。

That is why the great one is present in the water, moves in the seasons, makes a circle and [starts anew, making of itself] the mother of all things. Now emptying and now filling, it becomes the warp of all things.

Scott Cook, who interprets *tai yi* as 'an ultimate origin', wonders how it can be 'stored' (*cang* 藏) in the water:

Water would almost appear to become the material incarnation of *taiyi* itself, for once water returns to join with[216] *taiyi* to produce Heaven, it then disappears from the cosmogonic description altogether, taking no other explicit part in the reproductive processes and conspicuously absent from the line that concludes the recounting of that process.[217]

Sarah Allan, who understands *taiyi* (*dayi*) as *taiji* and connects it with the Pole Star, reads the whole cosmological text as an image of celestial configurations that are somehow determinative of earthly becomings. She then proceeds to identify water with the celestial river, or the Milky Way:

Cosmologically, when the Great One is taken as the Pole Star, the water may be understood as a river, namely, the Milky Way, in which the Pole Star may be hidden.[218] […] *Shui* means 'river' as well as water, and the water that flowed from the pole in the *Da yi sheng shui* can be understood as the Milky Way, the Celestial River that flowed across the sky, circled around (as the Yellow Springs), and returned to 'assist' or 'enhance' the sky.[219]

These two examples only illustrate how wide the range of possible interpretations of the *TYSS* is, depending on the interpretive framework that the given scholar chooses. For our purpose, which is to propose yet another alternative framework, the reading of this passage by scholars such as Xu Kangsheng 許抗生[220] or Chen Guying 陳鼓應[221] seem to be more relevant. They do not read 'water,' *shui* 水, as 'water element' or 'material entity', the 'embodiment' of *taiyi*, but rather as the way of being of water, the 'water-mode': water is undifferentiated, fluid, ungraspable, without form, yet it has power. Although it fills and permeates forms, it does not decay when a form decays; it only shifts to a different mode and comes back full circle. Because

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[216] Cook's translation of *fu* 輔, apparently derived from it meaning 'to assist, to help'.

[217] Scott Cook (2012), vol. I, p. 327. Cf. also Donald Harper, The Nature of Taiyi in the Guodian Manuscript *Taiyi sheng shui*: Abstract Cosmic Principle or Supreme Cosmic Deity?, *Zhongguo chutu ziliao yanjiu 5* (2005), pp. 1-23.

[218] Even as a metaphor, the image of the Pole Star as 'hidden' in the Milky Way seems highly unplausible because the galactic plane is always at an angle with the celestial pole, so these two views never coincide.

[219] Sarah Allan (2003), p. 264, p. 279.

[220] Xu Kangsheng 許抗生 (1999), "Chu du Taiyi shengshui" 初读《太一生水》, in *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 vol. 17, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, pp. 306-315

[221] Chen Guying 陈鼓应 (1999). "Taiyi sheng shui yu Xing zi ming chu fawei" 《太一生水》与《性自命出》发微, in *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 vol. 17, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, pp. 393-411.

of these characteristics, water is, to cite Wang Bo 王博, a perfect 'natural bridge between the formless, nameless source of existence and the nominal world of the myriad things.'[222]

Indeed, there are other passages indicating that 'the one' is not merely a primordial state situated in the mythical past before all divisions began. It seems to remain present, and at work, throughout the process of differentiation at further cosmological stages.[223] The one does not lose its oneness in the process of differentiation. It is one, working in many different modalities and, at the same time, holding them together in mutual complementarity. This is where the specific nature of the relationship between 'the one' and 'the many' stands out most explicitly.

But the terms in which the multiplicity is expressed reveal another important feature. It is significant that the cosmological sequence does not result in *wan wu* 萬物 in the first place, as one would expect. *Wu*, things, appear only in the second plan, as if they were derived from an ontologically more primary interplay of opposites. It is the perpetual movement induced by the tension between the opposites that brings about 'things.' Things are thus seen as derived from, and secondary to, the subprocesses that together constitute the one, and not vice versa. A similar development can be observed, as we will see, in other excavated cosmologies. They all arrive at explanations of how movement, circulation, basic orientedness, and perhaps also time, have come to be.

The perpetual movement and change emphasized in this part of the *TYSS* comprise the connecting point between *taiyi* 太一 and *dao* 道; the two are sometimes taken as equivalent. The idea behind it is that the more we approach the most fundamental layer of reality, the less we are able to put a name on it – this may be the reason why all labels are only approximate and therefore interchangeable. But we do not necessarily have to adopt this view to regard the two terms as close: I would argue that they are interchangeable insofar as they both point to the undifferentiated, holistic aspect of reality. But they obviously do so from different perspectives, with *taiyi* emphasizing the perspective of ever-present tension between the opposites, brought

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[222] Wang Bo 王博, Jianbo sixiang yanjiu lunji 簡帛思想研究論集 (Taibei: Taiwan guji chuban youxian gongsi, 2001), p. 216–217.

[223] In the *Fan wu liu xing* (FWLX), the idea that the 'one' is always present is even more pronounced. It is explained as something directly accessible, even tangible, in our immediate experience. In other words, it manifests itself in multiple ways while remaining one: 是故一, 咀之有味, 嗅[之有臭], 鼓之有聲, 近之可見, 操之可操。

Therefore, the one can be tasted when chewed; its scent can be perceived when smelled; it makes sound when clapped; it can be seen when approached; it can be managed when an attempt is made to manage it. (tr. Chan 2015)

about by their oneness, and with *dao* drawing attention to the process of its becoming, to movement and change:

天道貴溺(弱)，削成者 以益生者。伐於強, 積於[弱…][224] [9]。

The *dao* of heaven values the weak, it takes away from that which is complete and supplies with it that which is born. It takes down the strong and builds up the weak.

The *TYSS* eventually gets to the level of things. But, importantly for my argument, it does so through the intermediary of names. First, it introduces how names work:

下土也，而謂之地。上 氣也，而謂之天。 道也 其字也。 請問[225] 其名。

Below, there is the soil, and we call it earth. Above, there is the air (qi), and we call it heaven. *Dao* is (also) a *zi*-name. What, may I ask, is its *ming*-name?[226]

Whereas the soil or the air are only different experiential qualities, what makes them 'earth' and 'heaven' for us is their name. They are delimited as two disparate opposites through their names. At the same time, being opposites, they are put into relation with each other also through their names. A 'grid of significance' is thus constructed. Their names then hold together as a pair because they make sense only in mutual contrast:

天地名字並立 。

The names (*zi*-name and *ming*-name) of heaven and earth are established together.[227]

Yet, because they remain essentially 'one', there is continuity between them; they maintain their mutual complementarity and tension, as illustrated in Heraclitus's example of the bow and lyre. Upon closer examination, their actual boundaries are not easy to establish. Only when we

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[224] The end of the strip is missing, with a lacuna of approx. 6-7 characters (which suggests there were another two three-character lines).
[225] Chu-script graphs here are also transcribed as *qing* 青 and *hun* 昏; Cook argues that this combination is commonly transcribed as 請問 in pre-Qin texts. Cf. Cook, p. 350, n. 43; Harper reads: '*qing hun* (clear and muddled) is its name.'
[226] Strip 10. The transcription of the last line is contested. With this specific transcription, I understand the last line to mean: "Dao is (also only) a formal designation, but what is its name?"
[227] Strip 11, see the note above.

go far enough to the north-west can we see the mountains rising to the sky to their maximum so that there can be nothing above them but the sky, and only when we go far enough to the south-east can we see the sky stretched to its maximum so that there can be nothing below it but the sea. The other starts where the first is the strongest:

天地名字並立，故過其方，不思相 [當 (尚) …]。

The names of heaven and earth are established together. Thus, when they exceed their territory, they mutually do not […].[228]

天不足] (strip 12) 於西北，其下高以強。 地不足東南，其上[厚以廣]。

[Where the heaven is not sufficient] in the north-west, what is below is high and strong. Where the earth is not sufficient in the south-east, what is above is [ample and vast].

These opposites are thus ontologically inseparable, both taking part in the 'one'. In line with Anaximander and Anaximenes, their interconnectedness may be described in terms of lack and abundance, or scarcity and density:

[不足於上] (strip 13) 者，有餘於下，不足於下者，有餘於上。 (strip 14)

What is not sufficient above has an abundance below; what is not sufficient below abounds above.

Moreover, the whole, as we have seen above, is in perpetual movement (*zhou er you shi* 周而又始, *yi que yi ying* 一缺一盈), which makes any demarcation line fluctuating and unstable. Therefore, if there is any 'heaven' and 'earth', it is primarily their names that make them so. Although the boundaries between opposites may be unclear and prone to change, in names they are made clear: this is called earth, and this is called heaven. Through the use of names, we provisionally stabilize boundaries and, as if it were, we gain a foothold in the ongoing process

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[228] Strip 11. The ending of the sentence is rather unclear due to the missing characters. Qiu Xigui proposes *dang* 當, 'to fit', 'to correspond'; Cook chooses *shang* 尚, here 'to surpass', based on Wang Bo's reconstruction (Scott Cook I (2012), pp. 351–3). A more problematic term in this section, however, is *bu si* 不思. Henricks proposes the interpretation: 'But when we move beyond these domains, we can think of nothing that could fit.' *Si* 思 could indeed point to the 'human experience' aspect being stressed here (similarly as in *wei* 謂). Readings such as 'don't think that', 'without thought', or 'not knowingly' have also been suggested (Guo Yi 郭沂, Erica, Brindley).

of change and instability. For anyone who navigates this continuous and changing environment, names are necessary steppingstones:

> 以 [10] 道從事者，必托其名，故事成而身長。 聖人之從事也，亦托其 [11] 名。 故功成而身不傷。

> The one who attends to his tasks in accordance with *dao* must rely on their names; thus his tasks are successful and his life can be long.[229] When a sage attends to his tasks, he also relies on their names; thus the job is accomplished and he remains without injury.

When names come into question, it is in direct connection with *shi* 事, in the very general sense of 'things to do' or 'tasks.' In the following chapters, I will examine in greater detail this connection, which recurs in all sorts of Warring States texts. But still, although a direct connection is made between names and people engaged in a purposeful activity (*cong shi* 從 事), names seem to be thematized separately from any act of human cognition. Their role in the cosmological accounts is more significant than the role of labels that humans put on things. Although people rely on names to navigate the changing environment, the *TYSS* does not say where names come from, and it is far from suggesting that they are born within people's heads.[230] In the next chapter, I will focus on this aspect of the *TYSS*, together with the relationship between purposeful action and cognition.

At this stage, the elements of understanding I would like to draw from the *TYSS* are as follows: 1) oneness is an overarching feature of multiple aspects of reality; 2) reality is seen in terms of complementary processes and individual things appear as derived from these processes; 3) there are boundaries within the oneness and they are constitutive of what we call a 'thing'; and 4) the way in which things are delimited, that is, in which boundaries are established, has something to do with names. As I will try to show in the following chapter, the fact that a human being, supposedly the primary 'user' of names, is always already engaged in a purposeful activity because of his or her entanglement with the whole of the cosmic becoming allows us to think

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[229] Only one of possible reading; I find the reading as 'he/his body can evolve to fulness' equally plausible.
[230] Cf. the discussion of the role of names in Parmenides, see below Chapter 4, part 4.2.

of names as preceding individual acts of cognition and to regard naming as a specific type of structuring of the 'one' itself.

3.6.2 Heng xian

The reading of the second Warring States–period cosmological text, the *Heng xian* 恒先 (*HX*), proves comparatively more challenging than the *TYSS*. First, the ordering of the strips is very problematic, as I have shown above.[231] Second, many of the sentences are composed in an unusual way, making informed guesses about punctuation and the delimitation of sections rather difficult. Third, uncertainties resulting from arguable ordering and sectioning have an impact on the transcription of certain characters in key positions. Even when the most prominent scholars in the field met face to face to debate the text, the interpretations they suggested diverged widely, and consensus could not be reached.[232] This attempt to produce a shared reading of the text and an English translation was materialized in *A Philosophical Translation of the Heng xian*, by Erica Brindley, Esther Klein, and Paul Goldin.[233] The present attempt at a philosophical interpretation of the *HX* does not pretend to resolve the controversies, or contest the existing translations. Instead, I approach this text from a different perspective, as proposed above, to bring to light previously unnoticed connections.

The cosmological sequence opens with *heng* 恒,[234] which is often identified as the central concept, equivalent to the *dao* 道 or the 'one', *yi* 一 or *taiyi* 太一:

恒先無有、樸、靜、虛。樸、大樸。靜、大靜。虛、大虛。自厭不自忍。

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[231] See Chapter 2 above, part 2.3.
[232] I am referring specifically to the 'Bamboo Event' organized by Pennsylvania State University in 2010, which gathered eleven of the most prominent scholars from both the Anglophone and Sinophone academic communities to discuss four of the Shanghai Museum manuscripts, including the *HX* and the *FWLX*. The proceedings of this debate were published in a special issue of Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy, to which I refer extensively in this section.
[233] Erica F. Brindley, Paul R. Goldin, Esther S. Klein, A Philosophical Translation of *Heng Xian*, in: Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy, Dordrecht: Springer, Dao (2013) 12: 145-151.
[234] *Heng*, later replaced by *chang* 常 following the taboo imposed on the use of *heng* after the death of Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 (Liu Heng 劉恆, 203–157 BC), is one of the Yijing hexagrams; for a more detailed discussion, see Esther Klein, Constancy and the Changes: A Comparative Reading of Heng Xian, Dao (2013) 12: 207–224.

Heng comes first, before there is nothing or something. It is simple, still, and empty. Its simplicity is great simplicity, its stillness is great stillness, its emptiness is great emptiness. It is fulfilled in itself and does not curb itself.[235]

However, the centrality of *heng* is a matter of debate, and one can plausibly read it as an adjective modifying *xian* 先.[236] The ambiguity of the opening line has resulted in many variant readings. Xing Wen 邢文[237] has summarized them as follows:

For example, the first line […], has been read as Heng, xian wu you 恒、先無有 (As for eternity, at first there was no being), or Heng xian, wu you 恒先、無有 (Eternity existed first, and there was no being), or Heng xian, wu "you" 恒先、無"有" (Eternity existed first, and there was no Being) or Heng, xian "wu," "you" 恒、先 "無"、"有" (Eternity existed before Non-Being and Being) or Heng xian wu, you … 恒先無, 有 … (Eternity first was non-being but had …; or, Eternity existed before non-being and had …, etc.)[238]

Xing Wen proposes reading the first two characters together as 'ante-eternity' or 'eternal antecedence', in line with the majority of translations.[239] Even though *heng* (later *chang* 常) is often used as a modifier in texts close to *HX*, such as the *GDLZ*, in this case it appears separately later in the text (*heng mo sheng qi; qi shi zi sheng zi zuo* 恒莫生氣。氣是自生自作。). As regards *wu you* 無有,[240] I see a problem with reading them together as 'no being' (*wu* itself

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[235] *HX*, strip 1. Xing Wen translates: "*Hengxian* (previously translates as 'ante-eternity') has no being but simplicity, quiescence, and emptiness. This simplicity is supreme simplicity. The quiescence is supreme quiescence. The emptiness is supreme emptiness. Being self-sufficient but not yet self-fulfilled, the undefinable *huo* arises. Since the undefinable *huo* is there, there is *qi*. Since *qi* is there, there is being, Since being is there, there is beginning. Since there is beginning, there is returning." (Liu Xiaogan ed., Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy, p.103)

[236] As a collocation, *heng xian* does not appear elsewhere in pre-Qin texts, with the one significant exception of the excavated Mawangdui *HDSJ* text Dao yuan 道原, where it appears in the opening line *heng xian zhi chu* 恆先之初.

[237] In the chapter dedicated to excavated cosmologies of the Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy (Xing Wen 邢文, Chapter 5: Early Daoist Thought in Excavated Bamboo Slips, in: (Liu Xiaogan ed.) Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy, Dordrecht: Springer, 2015, pp. 101-126.)

[238] Xing Wen (2015), p. 105

[239] Li Ling 李零 also reads "ultimate antecedence" (Ma Chengyuan 2003: p. 287). Pang Pu follows this option (Pang 2004 p 21-23.). Recently, Qiu Xigui 裴錫圭 deciphered the character in front of *xian* as *ji* 極, rather than *heng*, (Qiu Xigui 裴錫圭 (2004). Zhongguo chutu gu wenxian shi jiang 中國出土古文獻十講. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe).

[240] In pre-Qin texts, *wu you* 無有 appears often in the sense of an emphatic double negative ('there is no such X that would not have a Y'); in this case, however, *you* is not followed by an object (and *wu* is not preceded by a

already comprises 'no being'). In this case, it seems more plausible that they stand for two opposites: 'there is nothing' and 'there is something.' In line with what has been said above about the relation between undifferentiated and differentiation, I propose a reading in which *wu* and *you* represent the primary division into 'there is nothing' or 'there is something.' The text would then suggest that there is a level at which this *wu* and *you* have not yet 'come to be', or maybe, more precisely, are not relevant as a description. For these reasons, I prefer to read *xian* as the verb 'to precede', not necessarily in a temporal sense but rather in the sense of ontological priority. From this perspective, *heng* is yet another term randomly selected to capture the undifferentiated level of reality that is impossible to name since the name necessarily implies differentiation and limits.

Heng is further characterized as simple, still, and empty, that is, lacking any prominent feature or definition. This very lack of definition is what makes it great and majestic. The use of *da* 大 has led some to suggest that *pu* 樸, *jing* 靜, and *xu* 虛 as characteristics may be 'lesser manifestations' of greater primordial *da pu* 大樸, *da jing* 大靜, and *da xu* 大虛.[241] We can observe how this interpretation is influenced by Platonic thought. My interpretation would be that in this text, similarly to other cosmological examples, the most central concept eludes definition and is therefore referred to by negation, that is, as what it is not: 'simple', 'without differentiation', 'unchiselled', 'uncarved'; still as 'without sound'; empty as 'without content'. From this perspective, *heng* appears analogous to the 'undefined one' and as such has a superior ontological status. The undifferentiatedness is again emphasized further in the text:

> 未有天地, (strip 2) 未有作行出生 。 虛靜為一若 。 寂寂夢夢! 靜同, 而未有明 、 未有滋生。

> There is not yet heaven and earth, there is no arising, progressing, emergence or engendering. Empty, still and as though one. Muddled and murky! All is still and homogenous. There is not yet light, not yet teeming life.[242]

The next sequence captures the process of differentiation leading to the emergence of movement and circulation. According to the 'Bamboo Event' translation, this passage describes

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thematic subject), and given that the segment involves talking about *wu* and *you* in cosmological sense, I would see their juxtaposition as meaningful.
[241] Brindley, Goldin, Klein (2013), p. 146, note 3.
[242] *HX,* strip 1-2, trans. Brindley, Goldin, Klein (2013), p. 147

the emergence of 'space', 'time', and 'material existence'. These heavily loaded terms, however, should be used with caution, for their connotations, such as the empty infinite geometrical continuum of space and the similar spatially conceived empty continuum of time, not to mention the metaphysical assumptions hidden in 'material existence', are unfortunately stored deep in our cosmological subconscious. Still, the passage probably does talk about the emergence of space and time, in a certain sense, but does so by showing the stages of the process through which this very basic structuring of reality takes place:

> 或作。有或焉有氣, 有氣焉有有, 有有焉有始, 有始焉有往。

> A delimited area[243] arises. Once the delimited area is there, there is also *qi*. Once there is *qi*, there is also something there. Once there is something there, there is also beginning. Once there is beginning, there is also going forward.[244]

To see the processual rather than the substantial aspect of this sequence, it may be helpful to start from the end: both *shi* 始 and *wang* 往 imply movement or action. In the same way, it is also possible to read *you* 有 not automatically as 'a thing' (something that is there) but as a modality of 'being there (as something)[245]' (something being there), which is preceded by the modality of 'being there of *qi*'.

Interpreting *huo* 或 / *yu* 域 then presents the greatest challenge. The reading as 'a delimited area' or 'region' is the broadest common denominator of all suggested interpretations. From the perspective that I propose here, it should indicate a transition between the undifferentiated 'one' and the modality of 'being there (as something)'. Leaving the interpretation as open as possible, I propose to understand *yu* as the very first sign of differentiation, the emergence of bivalence: a part of the whole stands out as 'an area', or 'a field of focus' not necessarily with strict limits but already standing out from the rest.[246]

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[243] The character *huo* 或 is frequently transcribed here as *yu* 域, 'territory', 'region', 'delimited area'.
[244] *HX*, strip 1.
[245] NB: only if 'as something' is understood in the most general sense, without specifying what that 'something' is, otherwise there would probably be *wei* 為 instead ('being as/in the manner of').
[246] Constance Cook, on the other hand, sticks to the reading as *huo* 或, interpreting it as 'ambiguity'. Although this is not the way *huo* is usually used in pre-Qin texts, its more usual uses all include an element of 'ambivalence', 'either-or-ness'; see Constance Cook, The Ambiguity of Text, Birth, and Nature, Dao (2013) 12:161–178. Interestingly, Zhu Yuanqing proposes a reading of *yu* 域 as 'boundary', which would shift our interpretation but still support it; see Zhu Yuanqing 朱淵清 (2007), The Metaphysical Dimension of 'Yu' - "域"的形上学意义,

It is only after the emergence of this first sign of bivalence that *qi* 氣 comes into play. From the point of view of Heraclitus's image of the bow and lyre, *qi* can be understood as the result of the connectedness of opposites. Opposites, being two and one depending on the point of view, remain in mutual tension and their tendency to 'be one' manifests as *qi*. Like water, *shui* 水, in the previous example, it preserves the undifferentiated character of the one, but it is no longer characterized by stillness: it moves, it comes and goes, it accumulates and dissipates, becomes thicker or thinner, it appears in many transformations, but it is always present. As such, it is reminiscent of Anaximenes's *aēr*, with its modalities of condensation and rarefaction:

濁氣生地, 清氣生天。氣信神(伸)哉! 芸芸相生, 伸盈天地。

Turbid *qi* gives birth to the earth; clear *qi* gives birth to the heavens. *Qi* is truly expansive! (They) proliferate and generate each other, expanding and filling heavens and earth.[247]

Again, some scholars have explained *qi* as 'itself a type of material existence',[248] somewhat similarly to Aristotle's reading of the Milesians. However, an alternative view would be to see it as a subject-less process, occasioned by another process, the process of differentiation. The small but substantial difference between those views is the missing 'agent' of *qi*-ing. *Qi* is not caused by an entity, nor is it a result of an interaction of entities,[249] as it is also emphasized in the text:

氣是自生, 恒莫生氣 。 氣是自生自作 。

For *qi* it is so that it generates itself, there is nothing in the *heng* that generates it. *Qi* generates itself and acts of itself.

The stage of *qi* is then followed by a sequence of subjectless processes. The practice of not specifying subjects of verbs, usual in early Chinese texts, is particularly puzzling for interpreters in case of texts such as the *HX*:[250]

《简帛考论》，上海，上海古籍出版社. Source: http://www.artx.cn/artx/guoxue/88097.html (accessed 05/06/2017)
[247] *HX*, strip 4
[248] Brindley, Goldin, Klein (2013), p. 147, n. 6.
[249] In other words, the relationship 'one – opposites – qi' is not to be thought of as 'substance – entities – force between them'.
[250] Brindley, Goldin, Klein (2013), p. 147, n. 9

昏昏不寧, 求其所生 。 異生異, 歸生歸, 違生違, 非生非, 依生依 。

Obscure, it does not rest, it seeks that from which it is born. Difference generates difference; convergence generates convergence; infringement generates negation, negation generates infringement; dependence generates dependence.[251]

At this point, the cosmology still does not seem to have reached the level of individual things, as if this stage was somehow secondary. On the contrary, there are many lines dedicated to what looks like patterns of processes. They tend to replicate themselves, but they do not exclude the possibility of novel developments:

欲自復。復, (strip 4) 生之生行。

It desires to repeat itself. Repetition is the natural[252] movement of life.[253]

同出而異生, 因生其所欲 。

They originate from the same, but they generate differently. That is because they generate that which they desire.[254]

Regular patterns are also observed in the way in which complementary modalities follow each other:

先有中, 焉有外 。 先有小, 焉有大 。 先有柔, 焉 (strip 9) 有剛 。 先有圓, 焉有方 。 先有晦, 焉有明 。 先有短, 焉有長。

First there is inside, then there is outside. First there is small, then there is big. First there is soft, then there is hard. First there is round, then there is square. First there is dark and then there is light. First there is short, then there is long.[255]

However, this passage may as well point to the inseparability of opposites discussed above. One without the other cannot exist or make sense. There can be the hard only once there is the

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[251] *HX*, strip 3.
[252] Reading the second sheng1 生 as xing4 性, 'innate character', 'natural disposition'.
[253] *HX*, strip 3-4.
[254] *HX*, strip 4.
[255] *HX*, strips 8-9.

soft and vice versa; they represent opposite ends of a continuous spectrum, and what manifests as a specific quality is made possible by their connection and contrast.

Like in the *TYSS*, names and human affairs enter the cosmological account at this point. The following sequence draws a direct line from the original *huo/yu* to human affairs through names, suggesting that names indeed have something to do with the structuring of the cosmos:

> 有出於域, 生[256]出於有, 音[257]出於生, 言出於音, 名出於 (strip 6) 言, 事出於名。

> Something defined arises from a delimited area; the living arises from something defined; the tone arises from the living; speech arises from the tone; names arise from the speech; things to do arise from names.[258]

Although I discuss this passage in greater detail in the next chapter, I would like to draw attention to the way in which the talk about naming is entangled in the cosmological account. In strip 8, it is pointed out that all processes take their proper course until people start interfering with them:

> 先者有善, 有治無亂; 有人焉有不善, 亂出於人 。

> At first, there is 'good', there is order and no disorder. Once there are men, there is 'not good'. Disorder comes from men.[259]

Another passage links the emergence of values and categories of usefulness, and more importantly, the 'variety of things' (*cai wu* 彩物) to human endeavour:

> 祥宜 利巧 、 彩物出於作 。 作焉有事; 不作無事 。

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[256] Alternative transcription here is *xing* 性, natural disposition which changes slightly the character of the sequence (see Appendices, HX)

[257] It is interesting that *yin* 音, as 'a musical tone' or even 'tune', is described as that which precedes words. Some prefer to transcribe this character as *yi* 意 (cf. its occurrence in a similar context in the *Nei ye* 內業, see below, Appendices, part Nei ye)

[258] *HX,* strip 5-6; for a discussion of this line, see below, Appendices, part HX.

[259] *HX*, strip 8.

Appropriate timing, beneficial skilfulness and diverse things come from creating. Once there is creating, there are tasks. Where there is no creation, there are no tasks.[260]

For some commentators, these passages represent a switch between discourses, a shift from 'general cosmological speculations' to 'practical affairs'.[261] But if we are dedicated to the perspective of oneness proposed above, there are no such two disparate levels of discourse. More plausibly, these lines talk about the further structuring of the undifferentiated 'one', that is, value-structuring. The opposites of good and bad, auspicious and inauspicious, beneficial and harmful, and so forth are dependent on another 'cosmological' process – the process of human being-in-the-world. As we have seen in the line written on strips 5–6, there is a direct link between being alive and 'having things to do'. When one is alive, one is always already immersed in the context of other cosmic processes and, as such, has tasks arising from this situation. In the light of these tasks, categories of values (benefit, efficiency, timeliness, appropriateness) become just as real as any other things. Names, as I will propose in the next chapter, are then the further articulation of these values and meanings that structure the world around us.

3.6.3 Fan wu liu xing

The *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形 (*FWLX*) departs from the previously examined texts in style and tone. It seems less esoteric and addresses the reader more directly. Unusually for a Warring States–period text, it opens with a series of questions inquiring about the nature of cosmic processes, their causes, and relationships:

凡物流形 ， 奚得而成 ？

流形成體 ， 奚得而不死 ？

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[260] HX, strip 7. Cf. also *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子, chap. Huan liu 環流: "有一而有氣，有氣而有意，有意而有圖，有圖而有名，有名而有形，有形而有事，有事而有約。"
[261] Cf. Brindley, Goldin (2013), Guest Editors' Introduction, Dao (2013) 12: 141-144: 'The Heng Xian is therefore not merely a text of abstruse metaphysical importance; it seeks a place in the realm of political thought and policy as well.'

既成既生 ， 奚呱而 鳴？

既本既根 ， 奚後 (strip 1)之奚先 ？

陰陽之序 ， 奚得而固 ？

水火之和 ， 奚得而不厚 ？

聞之曰 ： 民人流形 ， 奚得而生 ？

(strip 2) 流形成體 ，奚失而死 ，又得而成 ，

Generally, when things flow into form, how is it that they become complete?

When they flow into form and become a body, how is it that they do not perish?

When they have attained completion and have been born, what makes them have voice and cry out?

When they have sprouted and taken roots, which came later and which came first?

When yin and yang take turns, what makes their alternation steady?

When water and fire get along with each other, how is it that their harmony is not precarious?

I have heard it said: when people flow into form, how is it that they are born?

When they flow into form and become bodies,

what do they lose when they die, and through what they attain completion?[262]

This inquisitive tone is reminiscent of another enigmatic text, dating back to the third century BC, namely the 'Tian wen' 天問 part ('Asking the Heavens') of the famous *Chuci* 楚辭. [263]

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[262] *FWLX* strip 1–2.
[263] At least parts of *Chuci* are attributed to Qu Yuan 屈 原 (340–278? B.C.). He was a high minister in the state of Chu, advisor both to King Huai (r. 328–299 B.C.) and his successor, King Qing Xiang (r. 298–263 B.C.). More in The Songs of Chu: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poetry by Qu Yuan and Others (edited and translated by Gopal Sukhu) New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

Even though the *FWLX* does not stand comparison with the rich imagery of 'Tian wen', they are very close in their tone and direction of inquiry. The 'Tian wen' opens:

曰：遂古之初，誰傳道之？

上下未形，何由考之？

冥昭瞢暗，誰能極之？

馮翼惟象，何以識之？

明明暗暗，惟時何為？

陰陽三合，何本何化？

Deep in the past, at the very beginning of everything,

who was there to tell us what it was like?

If up and down had not yet formed,

from what position could one observe it?

In the blear dusk before the parting of darkness and light,

who could find beginning or end?

If no phenomenon was other than simmering chaos,

through what sense did one experience it?

Dawn breaks, night falls.

But consider time: what is that?

There are three mixtures of yin and yang.

Which is the original? Which are variants?[264]

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[264] Trans. Sukhu, Songs of Chu, p. 94-95.

Before the *FWLX* was discovered, the 'Tian wen' was considered unique in the context of early Chinese thought.[265] As we have seen above, sinologists believed that questions about the order and functioning of the universe as a whole were simply not posed.[266] Surprisingly, the 'Tian wen' has received relatively little scholarly attention,[267] and it is one of the less understood parts of the *Chuci*. The study of the excavated cosmological texts could, however, shed some light on it.

The *FWLX* raises questions that would typically be answered through mythology: it asks about the emergence of living beings, the existence of ghosts and supernatural powers, the reasons for the alternation of night and day, dark and light, and yin and yang phases, the emergence of 'heavenly lights' and stars, and the causes of meteorological features, and so forth. The questions are sometimes formulated as if they were asking about an anthropomorphic superior power, like the heavens of early Zhou:

孰為天 ？ 孰為地 ？

孰為雷 ？ [11] 孰為電 ？

土奚得而平 ？ 水奚得而清 ？

草木奚得而生 ？ [12A] 禽獸奚得而 鳴？

[13B] 夫雨之至 ，孰唾津之 ？ 夫風之至 ，孰噓吸而迸之 ？

Who made heaven? Who made earth?

Who makes a thunder? Who makes a lightning?

How is it that the land is flat? How is it that the water is clear?

How is it that the plants and trees grow and that the birds and beasts cry?

[265] Several parts of the *Guanzi* contain the term *wen* 問 in the title ('Xiao wen' 小問, 'Zhu wen' 主問, 'Wen' 問). However, the questions posed therein are all very concrete, related to good government and other practical and administrative affairs.
[266] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.2.
[267] Of the few studies dedicated to it, see e.g. Wen Yiduo 聞一多, "Tianwen shi tian" 天問釋天, published in Qinghua xuebao 清华学报 (1936); Stephen Field, 'Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet: New Answers to the Heaven Questions', Early China, Vol. 17 (1992), Cambridge University Press, pp. 83–110.

When the rain comes, who is spitting?

When the winds arrive, who propels them through inhaling and exhaling?[268]

At first sight the *FWLX* does not seem to contain an obvious cosmological account. However, it does drop several hints that may help us reconstruct some cosmological features. The first sequence talks about things (*wu* 物) as *liu xing* 流形, variously rendered as 'flowing forms',[269] 'forms in flux',[270] 'flowing in form', and so forth. *Liu xing* 流形 is sometimes found in medical texts where it is used to describe the foetus in prenatal state. [271] Therefore, an interpretation as 'in (the process of) formation' also seems plausible. In translating *xing* 形 (a form, shape, bodily shape) as 'form', we must take care not to introduce unknowingly the elements of the form-substance discourse. If we allow the idea of an underlying substance independent from form, we arrive at a form independent from substance, the equivalent of an empty vessel. Forms in the *FWLX*, on the other hand, are no such abstracts; they keep changing (*liu* 流), even though they may temporarily be regarded as accomplished and stable (*cheng ti* 成體, becoming a 'bodily structure'). From the processual perspective, this 'form' could be understood as a concrete way of shaping, structuring, or configuring a thing vis-à-vis other things, that is, not independent from its background and other forms, and not abstract or permanent.

The next set of questions in the *FWLX*, resembling to 'Tian wen', addresses a problem central to philosophical inquiry, one that in a way even gave birth to this type of thought: what makes a thing be recognized for what it is throughout changes and from different points of view, or in other words, what constitutes the integrity of a thing in space and time? The problem is framed as a question about measures and comparability: measurement and comparison only make sense if distinct things can be put next to each other, and 'held together'. Thus, they must have something in common. The question is where this common ground comes from and what it is in a world of unceasing change:

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[268] *FWLX*, strips 11-12 (see also Appendices, part *FWLX*.)
[269] Sukhu, Gopal (2017). The Songs of Chu: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poetry by Qu Yuan and Others. New York: Columbia University Press.
[270] Wang Zhongjiang (2015).
[271] Shirley Chan (2015). Sungryule Lee suggests that *liu xing* here is the same as *liu xing* 留刑 referring to the foetus in the first month of pregnancy in the excavated medical texts ('a body-shape in formation'). See Sungruyle Lee, 'The Fanwu Liuxing and its Intellectual Discussion about the One', in: Journal of Chinese Philosophy 43:1–2 (March–June 2016) 136–153.

天地立終立始 ， 天降五度 乎 ， 奚 [3] 橫奚縱 ？

五氣并至乎 ， 奚異奚同 ？

五言在人 ， 孰為之公 ？

九域出誨 ， 孰為之逢乎 ？

When heaven and earth establish the end and the beginning and the heaven sends down the five measures, how do they become horizontal or vertical?

When five kinds of energy are thus obtained, how do they become different or similar?

When five kinds of speech are among people, what makes them a common language?

When teachings come from nine regions, how can they meet?[272]

If only the first part of the text were preserved, it could indeed be a testimony of existential awe before the unintelligible powers of the universe. But in fact, the questions it poses serve only as exposition to an answer revealed in the second part of the text. Here it says there is indeed a basis for all these various phenomena: the one. The only line of the *FWLX* that can be considered cosmological resembles a famous passage from Laozi 42:

聞之曰 ： 一生兩 ， 兩生叁 ， 叁生母 ， 母成結。是故有一 ， 天下無不有 ； 無一 ， 天下亦無一有。

I have heard it said: one generates two, two generate three, three generate the mother, the mother ties the knot. That is why when there is the 'one', there is nothing that cannot be under the heaven. If there were not the 'one', there would not be a single thing under the heaven.[273]

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[272] *FWLX*, strip 2-3. (See also Appendices, part *FWLX*.)
[273] *FWLX*, strip 21 (Appendices, part *FWLX*); for Laozi 42, see above, Chapter 3, part 3.3.

Still, the one is the answer to the questions about the source of all changeable phenomena, and they are graspable thanks to no ontological gap between the one and men, other than the difference of scale:

草木得之以生 ， 禽獸得之以 鳴，遠之施 [13A] 天 ， 近之薦[274]人。

Plants and trees grow thanks to it; birds and beasts cry thanks to it.

At a distant level, it serves the heavens, at a close level, it grants itself to men.[275]

The one, or oneness, seems to be the answer to all the previously posed questions concerning both the causes of natural phenomena and the possibility of their knowledge. Here again, the problem of how the cosmos functions and how humans grasp it is treated as one, suggesting that a connection is felt between these two aspects:

[聞之] 曰 ： 百姓之所貴 ， 唯君 ；

君之所貴 ， 唯心 ； 心之所貴 ， 唯一。

〔一〕得而解之 ， 上 [28] 賓於天 ， 下播[276]於淵。

坐而思之 ， 謀於千里 ；起而用之 ， 陳於四海。

(I have heard it) said: common people only values the ruler.

The ruler only values the mind. The mind only values 'one'.

If you are able to understand it, above you can reach the heaven and below you can throw yourself into the abyss.

If you sit and ponder it, your plans will reach a thousand miles' radius.

If you rise and apply it, you can put it into action between the four seas. [277]

There is a perspective from which all things, both 'naturally' existing and existing as the result of human activity, work as one whole. The same cosmic patterns then apply to 'natural' and

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[274] Both shi 施 and jian 薦 in this line are alternatively transcribed as shi 矢 (Chan, 2015).
[275] *FWLX,* strips 21 and 13A (See below, Appendices, part *FWLX*)
[276] The two characters *bin* 賓 and *bo* 播 here are obviously puzzling for all interpreters – most of them offer a translation based on the whole sentence ("…above you can X the heaven, below you can Y the depths/the abyss")
[277] *FWLX*, strips 28–29. (See below, Appendices, part *FWLX*)

'human' processes. The cyclicity of all individual life cycles is the result of their beginning coinciding with their end, or in other words, of the inseparable oneness of opposites:

是故陳為新 ， 人死復為人 ，水復 [24] 於天，

凡百物不死如月。 出則又入 ， 終則又始 ，至則又反。[25]

That is why the old will become new, the man who dies will again become man,

and water will return to heaven.

In general, the multiple things do not die, like the moon,

they rise and set again, they disappear and then appear again,

they reach fullness and they return again.[278]

From the same perspective, the fundamental oneness of changeable things is what keeps the whole system running. The one is therefore neither essence, nor substance, nor any transcendent principle. It is not even a primordial state of undifferentiatedness situated in the mythical past. Quite the contrary, it is present throughout the changes, or in other words, it is being present ('present-ing') as the changing things. Hence, it can be described as present in one's immediate experience:

是故一 ， 咀之有味 ， 嗅 [之有臭]， 鼓之有聲 ， 近之可見 ， 操之可操 ， 握之則失 ， 敗之則 (strip 19) 槁 ， 賊之則滅。

That is why the one, when you chew on it, it has taste, when you smell it, it has a smell, when you tap on it, it makes sound, when you approach it, it can be seen, when you touch it, it can be touched. But if you want to get hold of it, you will lose it, if you want to dominate it, it will wither, if you damage it, it will perish.[279]

By being present in all things and making them what they are, the one is also the basis of their intelligibility. It is the basis of their comparability and measurability, in that their being different

[278] *FWXL*, strips 24-25; on the cyclicity of the workings of the *dao* and the movement of returning, cf. Laozi 16, see below, part 3.7.
[279] *FWLX*, strips 17 and 19.

depends on being one from another perspective, for example as different degrees of the same spectrum. Strictly speaking, in a cosmos understood purely as an incessant process of change of the one, no individual thing could ever exist as a thing – it could not stand out ('ex-sist') in its individuality and integrity, as different from its background and other things. By the same turn, there would be nothing intelligible, only a stream of always new and always unique experience.

The *FWLX* differs from both the *TYSS* and *HX*, as well as from the received Laozi, in the way it frames its cosmological account. The urgency and specificity of the initial questioning set it apart from any other text treated in this work. But the cosmological motifs and the link made between the cosmic patterns and human knowledge and action make of it one of the key representatives of the possible 'cosmological turn'[280] for which I argue in this chapter.

3.7 Other cosmological fragments

At this point, it should be evident that the range of textual examples that I regard as pertaining to 'cosmology' is rather broad and it includes those speaking about language, agency and human society, as well as about what we would call 'natural' processes. The common ground of the examples from pre-Socratic thinkers and the *TYSS*, *HX*, and *FWLX*, is that they represent the same type of questioning: they are attempts at answering questions such as 'what is' and 'how it works as a whole'. From this perspective, there are several other examples of such motifs to be found across the variety of the received and excavated texts. Some of them are not apparently 'cosmological', but they display some characteristics of the cosmic image outlined above, and their specific features may serve to put the above discussion into a broader perspective.

The cosmological features I have so far identified in the excavated texts can be roughly summed up as follows:

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[280] In using this expression, I paraphrase Franklin Perkins who first used it in his article (Perkins, Franklin (2016). "The Laozi and the Cosmogonic Turn in Classical Chinese Philosophy", in : Frontiers of Philosophy in China 11.2. pp. 185-205.)

1) The cosmos is characterized as one. Although this 'one' is referred to by different names (*tai yi* 太一 in the *TYSS*, *heng* 恆 in the *HX*, or *yi* 一 in the *FWLX*), oneness seems to be the common feature shared by all the texts.

2) This 'one' is not regarded as an entity, or a substance, but rather as an ongoing process. Its processuality is presented as more fundamental than its substantiality. If we therefore talk about 'being' in this context, we must understand it primarily as 'becoming', or 'being-underway'.[281]

3) Stages of the cosmic development (heaven and earth, yin and yang, the four seasons) are themselves not to be seen as discrete principles or elements, let alone as entities, but rather as complementary modalities of this process. I propose referring to them as different modes of being of the one. Their names capture certain universal patterns of becoming. What we can regard as 'entities' (*wu* 物, 'things' or 'phenomena') are only secondary and temporary products of these more universal patterns.

4) Within the one cosmos, different modes of being arise only in contrast to one another; they are complementary and thus mutually dependent.

5) The 'one' is characterized as 'undifferentiated,' as preceding all delimitation. This makes it close to *wu* 無, understood as 'no thing' (rather than 'nothingness'). Undifferentiatedness, however, is not to be understood as a 'primordial state', but as a fundamental and always present aspect of what there is (*you* 有).

If the understanding of the unchanging One as giving rise to an ongoing and cyclic process of differentiation seems somewhat counter-intuitive, it is because we tend to imagine the One as a lump of matter or energy,[282] that is, as a single entity that is a sum of all entities. But if it were so, the differentiation would be finite, and the primary one would necessarily lose its oneness in the process—it would eventually dissipate. Also, there would be no force inherent to the

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[281] For more on Heidegger's concept of being as an ongoing process, see below, Chapter 5, part 4.5.
[282] By the same turn, Aristotle (and his followers) dismissed the ideas of his Milesian predecessors (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes) as logically inconsistent because he interpreted them in terms of matter and form rather than in terms of process.

system that would explain the circulation. A more productive metaphor here may be the one of a wave—a sound wave or a light wave.[283]

In a wave diagram, the zero line (or zero plane) represents an undifferentiated state where the plus and minus coincide. The wave, however, oscillates between plus and minus, and its different amplitudes and wavelengths create a rich variety of sounds or colours. If we use this metaphor, we can imagine the cosmic One as such a zero state, where the plus and minus coincide. Possible modalities of oscillation between the two are inexhaustible, but they always "hold together as one." [284] No matter how extreme or imperceptible, they are always complementary deviations from the same zero state. The One can thus split in infinite ways to create an infinite number of modalities without anything being lost or added to it while it remains one and 'unchanged', i.e., not diminished or increased. (*TYSS* 5–6; FWLX, 17, 19).

The most obvious examples appear, of course, in the received *Laozi*. I will cite only the most relevant examples and complement them, where possible, with their Guodian (GD) and Mawangdui (MWD) versions. In addition to the most obvious cosmological sections, Chapters 42 and 25 (discussed above),[285] Chapters 1, 4, 20, and 52 talk about the *dao* as the source of all other realities, or 'the ancestor' or 'the mother'. *Laozi* 14 and 21 emphasize its undifferentiated character, resonating with the famous Chapter 1.[286] *Laozi* 14 emphasizes undifferentiatedness in a manner similar to the *HX*:

> 視之不見，名曰夷；聽之不聞，名曰希；搏之不得，名曰微。此三者不可致詰，故混而為一。其上不曒，其下不昧。繩繩不可名，復歸於無物。是謂無狀之狀，無物之象，是謂惚恍。

> Looking and yet not seeing it, we thus call it elusive. Listening and yet not hearing it, we thus call it inaudible. Groping and yet not getting it, we thus call it intangible. Because in sight, sound, and touch it is beyond determination, we

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[283] Or a 'string' in the sense it is used in physics today (but in general imagination, the image of a 'string' usually evokes a material object rather than this sophisticated fluid concept).

[284] In a similar sense, Heraclitus uses the metaphors of a bow or a lyre, in which the oneness of opposite poles constitutes a potential that gives rise to a propelling force or to a musical tone.

[285] See chapter 3, part 3.3.

[286] An interesting reading is offered by Sehnal: 無，名天地之始；有，名萬物之母。故常無，欲以觀其妙；常有，欲以觀其徼。 'I use "nothing" to name the beginning of all things. I use "something" to name the mother of all things. By using the ordinary word "nothing", I want to examine it in its subtlety. By using the ordinary word "something", I want to observe its contours." (Sehnal, pp. 80-85.)

construe it as inseparably one. Its surface is not dazzling, nor is its underside dark. Ever so tangled, it defies discrimination, and reverts again to indeterminacy. This is what is called the form of the formless and the image of indeterminacy. This is what is called the vague and the indefinite.[287]

Laozi 2 talks about the complementarity and mutual dependence of opposites:

有無之相生也，難易之相成也，長短之相形也，高下之相盈也，音聲之相和也，前後之相隨也 (恆也)。[288]

Determinacy and indeterminacy give rise to each other, difficult and easy complement each other, long and short set each other off, high and low complete each other, refined notes and raw sounds harmonize with each other, and before and after lend sequence to each other (this is really how it all works).[289]

Laozi 16 illustrates the cyclic movement characteristic of a closed system. Anything that has arisen as a deviation from a balanced state of undifferentiatedness has to return to that state eventually due to the sheer fact of being connected with everything else within the one:

萬物並作，吾以觀復。夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。歸根曰靜，是謂復命。

In the process of all things emerging together, we can witness their reversion. Things proliferate, and each again returns to its root. Returning to the root is called equilibrium. Now as for equilibrium—this is called returning to the propensity of things.[290]

I will return to the *Laozi* (especially to Guodian and Mawangdui versions) in the next chapters, in connection with the role of names and implications for the self.

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[287] *Laozi* 14, trans. Ames and Hall, 2003 (Ames, Roger T., Hall, David L. trans. 2003. Daodejing: "Making This Life Significant." A Philosophical Translation. New York: Ballantine.) I use Ames and Hall's translation for the sake of consistency through the work even though my own interpretation of certain places and terms may differ.
[288] This quote is from the Guodian version (Henricks, 2000, A 9). Only MWD versions (A and B) have 恆也".
Wang Bi has: 故有無相生，難易相成，長短相**較**，高下相**傾**，音聲相和，前後相隨。
[289] *Laozi* 2, trans. Ames and Hall, 2003.
[290] *Laozi* 16, trans. Ames and Hall, 2003.

The *Zhuangzi*, of course, offers a lot of material relevant to ontological issues. For example, the 'Qi wu lun' 齊物論 chapter, [291] which I will cite it in more detail in the next chapter, discusses in a detailed manner the inter-dependent character of what is:

> 天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一。

> Heaven, Earth have arisen together with me, and all things and I are one.[292]

'Qi wu lun' expresses the idea that individual things, being one, arise in contrast to one another, or are occasioned by each other:

> 物無非彼，物無非是。(…) 故曰：彼出於是，是亦因彼。

> There is no thing that is not 'that' and there is no thing that is not 'this'. (…) That is why it is said: 'that' arises from 'this' and 'this' is a response to 'that'.[293]

Another formulation of the same idea appears later in the chapter:

> 非彼無我，非我無所取。

> If there weren't the other, there would be no I; if there weren't I, there would be nothing picked out.[294]

This passage is followed by what I read as a reference to the undifferentiated one: it is manifested through things, it is present in things but is itself not a thing, because it assumes no particular form. The translation is, however, quite problematic and the one I offer is not necessarily the most plausible one:

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[291] However, its value for my argument is limited because it probably belongs to later layers of the *Zhuangzi* that postdate the Warring States period

[292] *Zhuangzi* 2, 'Qi wu lun' 齊物論, 9

[293] *Zhuangzi* 2, 'Qi wu lun' 齊物論, 5; cf. *Mozi* Canon II, 68: 循此循此與彼此同。說在異。 'You can "that" this if and only if you both "that" this and "this" that. Explained by: their being different.' Canon Explanations II, 68: 彼：正名者彼此彼此可。彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，彼此不可。(…) 'For those who rectify names, it is admissible to "that" this and to "this" that. "That-ing" that stays confined to that; "this-ing" this stays confined to this (and) "that-ing" this is not admissible.'

[294] *Zhuangzi* 2, 'Qi wu lun' 齊物論, 3; A. C. Graham trans.: 'Without Other there is no Self, without Self, no choosing one thing rather than the other.' I understand 'choosing' or 'picking out' as an act of occasioning the thing's existence (ex-sistence, 'standing out').

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是亦近矣，而不知其所為使。若有真宰，而特不得其眹。可行已信，而不見其形，有情而無形。

This is close but nobody knows what it will bring about. It is as if there were a real ruler but his traces (?) couldn't be seen. It does act indeed, but its appearance cannot be seen. It is present but takes no form. [295]

Without mentioning the one explicitly, 'Yu yan' 寓言 chapter (Za pian 雜篇) also talks about fundamental oneness, mutual interconnectedness and cyclicity, calling it the 'heavenly fairness':[296]

萬物皆種也，以不同形相禪，始卒若環，莫得其倫，[297] 是謂天均。天均者，天倪也。

The ten thousand things all come from the same seed, and with their different forms they give place to one another. Beginning and end are part of a single ring and no one can comprehend its principle. This is called Heaven the Equalizer, which is the same as the Heavenly Equality.[298]

Despite the heterogeneous character of the Zhuangzi text, the cosmology of oneness seems pervasive in it. Undifferentiatedness that precedes and underlies all differentiation is also repeatedly emphasized. Chapter 'Tian di' 天地 (Wai pian 外篇) tells us more about how the undifferentiated relates to individual things (bodily shapes) that arise as a result of dividing lines.

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[295] Cf. trans. Graham: 'This is somewhere near it, but we do not know in whose service they are being employed. It seems that there is something genuinely in command, and that the only trouble is we cannot find a sign of it. That as a Way it can be walked is true enough, but we do not see its shape; it has identity but no shape.'; trans. Legge: 'This is nearly a true statement of the case, but we do not know what it is that makes it be so. It might seem as if there would be a true Governor concerned in it, but we do not find any trace (of his presence and acting). That such an One could act so I believe; but we do not see His form. He has affections, but He has no form.'

[296] *Tian yun* 天均, Watson translates as' Heavenly Equality'; it can be also understood as 'natural' fairness.

[297] This passage has a parallel in the *Huainanzi*: 以不同形相嬗也，終始若環，莫得其倫。 "In order that their different forms evolve into one another, ending and beginning like a circle, of which no one can trace an outline." (Major, John S., et al., trs. 2010. The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 250.)

[298] *Zhuangzi* 12, 'Tian di' 天地 (Wai pian 外篇), transl. Burton Watson (Watson, Burton. 2013. The Complete Works of Zhuangzi. New York: Columbia University Press).

泰初有無，無有無名，一之所起，有一而未形。(…) 未形者有分，且然無間，謂之命；留動而生物，物成生理，謂之形；

In the Great Beginning, there was nonbeing; there was no being, no name. Out of it arose One; there was One, but it had no form. (…) Before things had forms, they had their allotments; these were of many kinds but not cut off from one another, and they were called fates. Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and as they grew, they developed distinctive shapes; these were called forms.[299]

In accordance with later Wang Bi's interpretation of the Laozi, *wu* 無 often appears as the key feature in cosmological passages of the Zhuangzi, like for example in Geng sang chu 庚桑楚.

(…) 入出而無見其形，是謂天門。天門者，無有也，萬物出乎無有。有不能以有為有，必出乎無有，而無有一無有。聖人藏乎是。

(…) there is a coming out, there is a going back in—yet in the coming out and going back, its form is never seen. This is called the Heavenly Gate. The Heavenly Gate is nonbeing. The ten thousand things come forth from nonbeing. Being cannot create being out of being; inevitably it must come forth from nonbeing. Nonbeing is absolute nonbeing, and it is here that the sage hides himself.[300]

As I have argued above, rather than 'nothingness' or 'non-being' I prefer to read *wu* as a lack of something definite, a lack of differentiation.[301] We have seen already in the *HX* that the *wu you* 無有 couple represents a challenge for interpretation: translating it as 'non-being' or 'non-existence' raises the question whether *you* 有 is not redundant in this context. As in the *HX*, I am more inclined to see the conjunction of *wu* and *you* as significant, that is, as a conjunction of something definite with an element of undifferentiatedness. Rather than a pair of abstract metaphysical principles, *wu* and *you* can be understood as representing two complementary perspectives of what is going on: as 'something' it is distinct, it has certain contours thanks to which it can be thematised; as 'no-thing' it preserves its unfinished character, it keeps changing

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[299] *Zhuangzi* 12, 'Tian di 天地 (Wai pian 外篇), trans. Watson (Watson, The Complete Works of Zhuangzi, 2013)
[300] *Zhuangzi* 23, Geng sang chu 庚桑楚 trans. Watson, 2013.
[301] In the same way as when we look into the room and say that it is empty: although there can be many different things, there is nothing in particular that we thematize, or there is nothing to catch our attention.

and escaping the firm grasp, it is always under way towards what is not there yet. This 'not-yet' aspect is in line with the characterization of all things as being in the continuous process of change and transformation.

The same shift of perspective is suggested when the texts talk about the relation between the one and many, as in this example from 'De chong fu' 德充符 (*Zhuangzi* 5), put in the mouth of Confucius.

> 仲尼曰：「自其異者視之，肝膽楚越也；自其同者視之，萬物皆一也。
>
> Confucius said, "If you look at them from the point of view of their differences, then there is liver and gall, Chu and Yue. But if you look at them from the point of view of their sameness, then the ten thousand things all are one."[302]

While the Zhuangzi is, with little or no opposition, associated with the Daoist tradition, the texts traditionally attributed to Ruist tradition (such as the Analects, Mengzi or the Li ji) also contain some interesting cosmological motives. For one, they often thematise *dao* 道, interpreted in these cases as the way something happens or is done, or the 'correct way' in which things should happen or be done. It often appears in connection with a modifier, as 'someone's way': the way of a noble man (*junzi zhi dao* 君道), of the ruler (*zhu dao* 主道), of the heaven (*tian dao* 天道), or of the ancient sage-rulers (*xian wang zhi dao* 先王之道) etc. Although the focus of these texts seems to be on the 'human universe' (*tian xia* 天下), there is an underlying notion of a more general *dao*, in the context of which these various instances of *dao* make sense and from which they derive their correctness. Among the many examples of this, one can be found in the *Li ji* 禮記, Ai gong wen 哀公問 chapter.

> 公曰：「敢問君子何貴乎天道也？」孔子對曰：「貴其『不已』。 如日
> 月東西相從而不已也，是天道也；不閉其久，是天道也；無為而物成，
> 是天道也；已成而明，是天道也。」

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[302] *Zhuangzi* 5, De chong fu 德充符, trans. Burton Watson, 2013 (p. 34)

The duke said, 'I venture to ask what it is that the superior man values in the way of Heaven.' Confucius replied, 'He values its unceasingness. There is, for instance, the succession and sequence of the sun and moon from the east and west – that is the way of Heaven. There is the long continuance of its progress without interruption – that is the way of Heaven. There is its making (all) things complete without doing anything – that is the way of Heaven. There is their brilliancy when they have been completed – that is the way of Heaven.'[303]

For the purpose of our discussion, it is important to connect these different contexts of *dao* with the cosmological examples above into one picture. As in the case of *wu* and *you*, as well as *ming* 名 in the next chapter, we should not be expecting a large metaphysical gap between the use of terms in the texts such as our excavated cosmologies, Laozi or Zhuangzi, and their conventional use in other texts of the Warring States period.

In another Li ji chapter, Li yun 禮記, we can find a sequence similar to the *Taiyi sheng shui*.

是故夫禮, 必本于大一, 分而為天地, 轉而為陰陽, 變而為四時, 列而為鬼神。

Thus the rules of propriety must originate from the Great One, which separates, thus becoming heaven and earth, circles, thus becoming yin and yang, changes, thus becoming the four seasons, and stratifies, thus becoming the forces visible and invisible.[304]

It not by accident that the rules of propriety, or rituals, are backed up by being situated in the context of greater cosmic processes. I will trace the connection between the regularities observed in the cosmos and the justification of social rules and institutions in greater detail in Chapter 5 dedicated to the question of the Self.

As I have mentioned above, some of the received anthologies, such as the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*LSCQ*) or the *Guanzi* 管子, have emerged through collation of various texts, sometimes

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[303] *Liji* 禮記 (Records of Rites), Ai gong wen 哀公問, transl. Legge (Legge, James. 1885. The Sacred Books of China. The Texts of Confucianism, Part IV. The Li Ki, XI-XLVI. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 268)
[304] *Liji*, Liyun 禮運, transl. Legge (Legge, James. 1885. The Sacred Books of China. The Texts of Confucianism, Part III. The Li Ki, I-X. Oxford: Clarendon Press.)

from largely different time periods and thought environments.[305] The dating and provenance of individual parts is thus very difficult to establish. Serving as an illustration rather than a piece of evidence, interesting cosmological motives are found, for example, in the Da yue 大樂 chapter of the *LSCQ*.

道也者，至精也，不可為形，不可為名。強為之名， 謂之太乙。

The Dao is the supreme instance of the seminal essence, for it cannot be given shape or name. Forced to give it a name, I would call it 'Grand One'.[306]

For our discussion, it is important to note that these motives appear in a larger chapter dedicated to *yue* 樂, music. The chapter presents 'music' as a dynamic system of ratios which, in a sense, is a perfect embodiment of oneness and its relation to the differences.

音樂之所由來者遠矣，生於度量，本於太一。太一出兩儀， 兩儀出陰陽。陰陽變化，一上一下，合而成章。渾渾沌沌，離則復合，合則復離，是謂天常。天地車輪，終則復始，極則復反，莫不咸當。(…) 萬物所出，造於太一，化於陰陽。

The origins of music lie in the distant past: born of measurement, founded by Grand One. Grand One brought forth the Dyadic Couple; The Dyadic Couple brought forth Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang metamorphize and transform. The one rising, the other falling, joined together in a perfect pattern.

Spinning and pulsing. If dispersed, they rejoin, and joined, disperse again. This is called the 'invariable principle of nature.' Heaven and Earth turn like the wheel of a carriage. Reaching the end, it begins again; reaching its limit, it reverts again. Everything fitting the overall scheme. (…) The myriad things that emerged were created by Grand One and transformed by Yin and Yang.[307]

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[305] In this context, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*HNZ*) anthology surely contains a number of texts related to various aspects of cosmology. Cf. e.g. *HNZ*, chapter 7, Jing shen xun 精神訓 etc. However, since the whole HNZ anthology is suspected to be of a later date, with many layers from the Han period, I chose not to use it even as an illustration here.

[306] *LSCQ*, Book 5/2.4, Da yue 大樂 (Knoblock, John, and Riegel, Jeffrey trans. 2000. The Annals of Lü Buwei: A Complete Translation and Study. Stanford: Stanford University Press.)

[307] LSCQ, Book 5/2.1, Da yue 大樂 (Knoblock and Riegel, 2000.)

If we extrapolate from the musical metaphor, what remains is the pure system of mutual differences within the one. Differences can arise as different only against the background of oneness. And vice-versa, without differentiation, in terms of shape, sound etc., 'one', as pure undifferentiatedness, could not be grasped at all. It would remain, as the cosmologies jointly put it, empty, silent, fuzzy, or in negative terms, invisible, inaudible, shapeless, nameless etc. Therefore, the next passage of the Da yue chapter, although it seems in direct contradiction to the *FWLX* excerpt cited above,[308] can be understood as a formulation of the same view, only with a different emphasis – this time on the lack of differentiation.

> 道也者，視之不見，聽之不聞，不可為狀。有知不見之見、不聞之聞，
> 無狀之狀者，則幾於知之矣。

> It is the nature of the Dao that when we look for it, it is invisible, and when wc listen for it, it is inaudible, for it cannot be given material form. Whoever is aware of the visible in the invisible, the audible in the inaudible, and the form of the formless almost knows it.[309]

The *LSCQ* contains a number of such loci scattered across the anthology and I will return to some of them in the context of the next chapter.

One of the cosmological texts most closely related to *HX* and *FWLX* is undoubtedly the fourth of the Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor, *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經 (*HDSJ*), Dao yuan 道原. As I have mentioned above, there are reasons for not including the *HDSJ* in the core corpus of this work.[310] However, the Dao yuan 道原 part, plausibly representing the earliest layer of the *HDSJ*, cannot be omitted from the picture.

The opening of the Dao yuan is strikingly similar to *HX*:

> 恒先之初[311]， 迵同太虛。虛同為一，恒一而止。[312] 濕濕夢夢，未有明晦。

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[308] See above, part 3.6.3.
[309] *LSCQ*, Da yue, 5/2.4, transl. Knoblock and Riegel, 2000.
[310] See Chapter 2 above, part 2.6.
[311] Chang and Feng (1998) have 恒無之初. The ambiguity is due to the fact that the two characters *wu* 无 and *xian* 先 have a similar form in the Chu silk manuscripts (see Li Xueqin, 1996)
[312] Cf. *HX* strip 1: 恒先無有，樸，靜，虛。

In the beginning of the time, (the universe) was all undifferentiated and was a great void. Undifferentiated and void it constituted the One. There was constantly One and nothing else. Amorphous and obscure, there was neither day nor night.[313]

A similar motive is present also in another part of *HDSJ* silk manuscripts, Jing fa 經法:

虛無形，其寂冥冥，萬物之所從生

Empty, formless, still and hidden in darkness, it is something from which all things come into being.[314]

Even here, in Dao yuan, *dao* alternates freely with *yi* in the central ontological position, bringing into play the two complementary perspectives: oneness and processuality.

一者，其號也；虛，其舍也；無為，其素也；和，其用也。是故上道高而不可察也，深而不可測也。顯明弗能為名，廣大弗能為形。獨立不偶，萬物莫之能令。

One is its name. Emptiness is its abode. Non-action is its nature. Harmony is its function . Therefore. the supreme *dao* is beyond investigation and is fathomless. It is splendidly manifest and yet it cannot be named. It is omnipresent and yet it is formless. It is uniquely independent and is peerless. None of the myriad things can order it.[315]

The emphasis on oneness allows to make sense of mutual dependence and complementarity of opposites, while the emphasis on processuality (*dao*) explains the cyclicity of emergence and disappearance of things (*wanwu* 萬物) within the closed but non-deterministic system.

天地陰陽，四時日月，星辰雲氣，蚑行蟯動，戴根之徒，皆取生，道弗為益少；皆反焉，道弗為益。

[313] *HDSJ* 4.1.1; trans. based on Chang and Feng 1998, adapted to correspond to the selected variant reading. cf. *HX* strip 1 and 2: 恒先無有，樸，靜，虛．(…) 虛靜為一若 。 寂寂夢夢！靜同，而未有明。 (See part 3.6.2 above)
[314] *HDSJ*, 1.1.2 trans. amended from Chang and Feng, 1998.
[315] *HDSJ*, 4.1.4 (trans. Chang and Feng 1998)

> Although heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang*, four seasons, sun and moon, stars, clouds and *qi*, those who run and those who crawl, that which takes root, everything takes its life from it, *dao* is thereby not diminished; although they all revert to it, *dao* is thereby not augmented.[316]

There is an interesting contrast in the way in which *yi* 以, 'by means of', is used in Dao yuan. On the one hand, it is said that when there is no 'by means of which', none of the things has what makes it a thing, and everything remains in its shapeless, undifferentiated state. On the other hand, *dao* is precisely this *yi* 以, or 'that by which' all things are what they are, in their differentiatedness.

> 小以成小，大以成大，(...)。鳥得而飛，魚得而游，獸得而走；萬物得之
> 以生，百事得之以成。人皆以之，莫知其名。人皆用之，莫見其形。

> It is because of it that what is small becomes small and what is great becomes great. (…) Obtaining it, birds fly, fish swim and beasts run. Obtaining it. the myriad things come into existence and all affairs are completed. Everyone lives on it, but no one knows its name. Everyone makes use of it. but no one sees its form.[317]

Dao, 'that by which' things are what they are, is so vitally and immediately present in all things but, at the same time, it defies all attempts at being captured by means of names and shapes, because it always continues to unfold. What we could capture would be the product of our action of capturing, but never the reality itself. Again, we do not need to recur to the notion of transcendence and relegate *dao* to some other order of reality.

Finally, I would like to complete the picture with a few excerpts from one of the four Xin shu 心術 chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子, the Nei ye 內業. Nei ye, supposedly the earliest of the four Xin shu,[318] talks about cosmology in terms of *dao,* similarly to our previous examples. The emphasis is, again, on the undifferentiatedness and processuality.

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[316] *HDSJ* 4.1.4.
[317] *HDSJ* 4.1.3, (trans. Chang and Feng 1998); cf. *FWLX* strip 21: 草木得之以生 ，禽獸得之以 鳴; also *HFZ* Jie Lao 解老: 萬物得之以死，得之以生；萬事得之以敗，得之以成。
[318] See above, Chapter 2, part 2.5.

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夫道者所以充形也，而人不能固。 其往不復，其來不舍。

謀乎莫聞其音，卒 乎乃在於心， 冥冥乎不見其形，淫淫乎與我俱生，

不見其形，不聞其聲，而序其成，謂之道。

It is the *dao* which fills all shapes and forms, yet the men are unable to hold it firm. When it goes, it does not return, when it comes, it does not stay.

It is so silent that no one hears its sound, and so condensed, as if it were right inside the mind. It is so obscure that its shape cannot be seen, yet so pervasive, born together with us.

We cannot see its shape, we cannot hear its sound, yet we continue to follow its (path to) fullness – that is what is called *dao*.[319]

The Nei ye builds on the contrast between the ungraspability of *dao* and its immediate reality. The undifferentiated aspect of things is, at the same time, the basis of its unlimited potentiality, from which limited things can arise. Other examples from the Nei ye repeat the same idea.

道也者，口之所不能言也，目之所不能視也，耳之所不能聽也，所以脩心而正形也。

Dao is that which the mouth cannot tell, that which the eyes cannot see, that which the ears cannot hear, yet it is something (that can be used) to cultivate one's mind and put one's body in order.

凡道，無根無莖，無葉無榮，萬物以生，萬物以成，命之曰道。

Generally, *dao* has no root or stem, no leaves or blossoms, (and yet) all things arise because of it, and all things are brough to fulness by it. We gave it a name of 'dao'.[320]

The role of *dao* is thus described in a way very close to *physis* in some of the pre-Socratic fragments, being 'at work', or 'under way', in every of its distinct forms, and making them what

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[319] Nei ye, part 4 (See also Appendices – Nei ye)
[320] Nei ye, part 6 (See also Appendices – Nei ye)

they are.[321] It is responsible for bringing their shapes to fullness, not in a deterministic way but in the way the shape of a plant is already present ('under way') in its seed. This idea, in my view, is conveyed by the term *jing* 精, essence (of things).

> 凡物之精，此則為生。下生五穀，上為列星。流於天地之間，謂之鬼神，藏於胸中，謂之聖人。

> Generally, the essence of things is that by which they are brought to life.

> Below it generates five kinds of grain, above it gives rise to the arrays of stars.

> When it flows between the heaven and earth, it is called the ghosts and spiritual forces.

> When it is stored within a man (man's chest), it is called the sage.[322]

The point of the cosmology in the Nei ye is to draw from it some general advice for the art of living. The text of the Nei ye therefore proceeds from the cosmology to the situatedness of one's bodily shape, including one's mind, in the cosmic context. To become a sage means to dispose oneself in such a way as to become an ideal, non-obstructing channel for the general cosmic processes. In the end, the shift of perspective towards oneness (embracing the one) is required to achieve that.

3.8 Specificities of the genre and language of the earliest cosmologies

At this point, the connection between the presented cosmological texts and their somewhat lengthy pre-Socratic prelude may not be quite evident. Although we may able to spot some common features, the historical and social context of the two types of thought remain widely different. To force the fit between them by proposing direct conceptual parallels is something I would like to avoid. However, I had several reasons to make this connection.

First, the history of philosophy, at least in its current academic self-narrative, starts with the Milesians and Heraclitus. Together with other strands of pre-Socratic thought they are deemed

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[321] On *physis* (φύσις), see also above, chapter 3, part 3.4.
[322] Nei ye, part 1 (see also Appendices – Nei ye)

to represent the turning point in which the vague ideas about the functioning of the world are transformed into explanations. This turn is sometimes called the turn from myth to logos, or from belief to critical thinking. However, I cannot fully subscribe to this distinction because there is a lot of mythical thinking still involved in these explanations, as well as there certainly are logical (rationalizing) levels to many myths, some of which have been preserved up to our times. Also, the language and the way in which pre-Socratic ideas are expressed are often rather poetic and contain mythical elements. The same can be said about the *Laozi* and the other cosmological texts I have mentioned. What makes them unique and new in genre is that they are offered as explanations to everyone who wants to understand. Although some of their premises (oneness, cyclicity, mutual interconnectedness of opposites, perpetual change) are presented as a given, the account as a whole is offered to the readers' own free judgment. It counts on it, and it appeals to an inquiring mind, not satisfied with ready-made answers provided from the position of authority. It is the type of talk that recognizes one's self and the other as decision-making beings. *In other words, it is the power of discernment talking to another power of discernment.* If this criterion is met, it is not important whether the message comes in the genre of philosophical poetry, or a logically structured essay, or an anecdote, or a dialogue.

Second, in the Milesians and Heraclitus specifically, we can observe how their ideas have been shifted and distorted in post-Aristotelian, Peripatetic interpretation. Aristotle's influence was enormous, and the conceptual framework devised by him was determinative to his successors, many of whom are our main sources of pre-Socratic fragments. That is why they often understood 'one' as 'one stuff' or 'one cause', in line with the system of four types of causes. Also, the shift of emphasis from the changing (in their view: accidental, non-essential) to the unchanging (that is, the underlying substance, that which is not 'said of' anything else and that is not 'present on' anything else; that which makes thing 'be' before 'being something') has relegated the *physikoi* with their emphasis on change to irrelevance. Only much later have thinkers like Heidegger, Gadamer, Whitehead and others opened the way to rehabilitation of this type of thought, and their arguments, in my view, are highly relevant also to the early Chinese cosmological texts. The lessons we can take from the recent research in the field of pre-Socratic thought is that our primary task is to reconstruct the questions to which the fragments are answers, possibly different from those posed by Plato and Aristotle.

Third, both Heraclitus and the cited cosmological texts use a specific way of expression which I propose to call 'the language of opposites.' They describe things, and their ways of being,

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using apparently opposite characteristics (bright – dark, alive – dead, upwards – downwards, infinitely great – infinitely small), which may seem obscure, illogical, or provocative, to the reader who expects clear exposition of principles. The underlying expectation is that clarity is not compatible with bivalence, that is, that for any information to be clear is to be expressed unequivocally, in terms of 'either – or', 'A – non-A', 'black – white' etc. However, taking full account of the bivalence and including it in the reasoning may be also regarded as a bold step forward: as overcoming the limits imposed by speech. Through intentional juxtaposition of opposites, the reader is forced to rise above their duality and adopt the perspective of oneness: for any discernment to take place (for any duality) there has to be some unity in which the two poles of discernment are held as different. In other words, for any 'multiplicity' there has to be a unity (a unifying act, or environment, or context) in which 'many' are held together at the same time. The 'language of opposites' testifies of the capacity of the speech to express 'one' and 'many' at the same time and to hold those two perspectives simultaneously, in one compound image. But it does not necessarily involve abandoning one for the other or putting them on the same level. Perspective of oneness is preserved in the discernment, but even more importantly, discernment is preserved in the perspective of oneness. White remains white, hard remains hard etc. even if their inseparability from black or soft, and their interconnectedness with the whole of the cosmos is taken into account. Therefore, the cosmological texts presented, as well as their pre-Socratic counterparts, may be using the language of opposites to include in the picture the perspective of oneness, in order to force the reader's mind out of the flat plane of distinctions and provoke it to 'take a step back' and move freely between different perspectives. Unfortunately, it is often the reason why they are considered obscure, esoteric, or irrational.

As we can see in the examples given above, the cosmological texts are almost without exception found in the close entanglement with the topics concerning human action, self-cultivation, good government and political decision-making. This is the case of the *Laozi*, as well as the *HDSJ*, four Xin shu chapters of the *Guanzi*, *HX*, *FWLX* and many other. Moreover, the same close connection can be observed in the texts like *Xunzi*, *Shen Buhai*, or *Hanfeizi*. The connection is so prevalent that it becomes nearly impossible to imagine a Daoism in some distilled, purely theoretical form, without this apparently pragmatic aspect, at least in the Warring States period. In the next chapter, I focus on this connection and propose an alternative view of the link between what we perceive as 'theory' and 'practice'. With the support of philosophical tools belonging to a whole different historical era, such as hermeneutics and phenomenology, I will

propose to abandon the theory-practice distinction as such and try to rephrase the debate in non-dualist terms.

4. Role of naming within the cosmology

As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is peculiar that the Warring States period texts frequently mix cosmological accounts into passages related to the art of rulership or self-cultivation and, more importantly, passages on names – *ming* 名. For the purpose of our analysis of the excavated texts themselves, finding the link between cosmology, names and action seems to be the key point. All the more because it is the point in which much of the existing philosophical analysis seems to derail into a different discourse: the one in which a thinking subject stands apart from the rest and, through the light of the mind, observes the unchanging structures behind changing phenomena of the outer world. This discourse has, however, not offered a satisfactory explanation of the role of names in early Chinese texts. As we have seen above, the ontologically primary reality is often referred to as *wu ming* 無名 while *ming* 名 is associated with the emergence of a multiplicity of things and with the possibility to manage them. Moreover, the appearance of names in this apparently 'metaphysical' discourse is not too consistent with the otherwise quite straightforward use of 'name' in the Warring States period texts.

In this chapter, I will explore this problem in greater detail. The starting point of the exploration is the hypothesis that the occurrence of *ming* together with more pragmatic passages on self-cultivation and government is not a matter of accident. In a cosmos conceived as one, in which all distinct things can be seen as mutually dependent, the boundary between them starts to play a major role in the arising of things as things. Language as a medium of differentiation, that is, boundary-making, may therefore be more directly involved in the way in which the world is organized. It seems that, for the authors of the cosmological reflections, names – or, in a broader sense, the whole network of language – did not represent some meta-layer of language-independent objective reality. As suggested in the previous chapter, we should not *a priori* expect any meta-layers or radical ontological splits in this type of thought. The same applies to the fundamental conceptual split between disengaged observation (*theoria*) and active doing (*praxis*). My aim is to expose the hidden conceptual dualisms and reframe the debate about names in a more holistic and processual interpretive framework, based on the insights drawn from the excavated cosmologies.

To support my hypothesis, I examine the connection between names and things (*wu* 物) and between names and 'the one'. I also propose a reinterpretation of the link between ontology,

knowledge, and agency, in which these three are closely connected. For this purpose, I bring into play the onto-hermeneutical theory proposed by Cheng Chung-ying, and also Gadamer's and Heidegger's hermeneutical ontology.

4.1 Names in Huang-Lao and other pre-Qin texts and their repercussions

If we wanted to identify a trend that distinguishes the Warring States period thought from the preceding, it would be a shift of attention towards the role of language and naming in general. The Warring States period saw a real intellectual boom. Socio-political factors, such as the dissipation of central state power and the growing importance of *shi* 士 class, constituted an environment favourable to the proliferation of various strands of thought, further enhanced through vivid intellectual exchange and competition. New rulers of competing states sought legitimation of their power, independent from the central ruling house, and were motivated to employ advisors, strategists, and teachers from lower educated aristocracy to help them achieve and legitimate their goals. The growing competition among the *shi,* who often travelled between the courts of various Warring States, created an environment favourable for cultivating the art of argumentation and persuasion. At the same time, conservative strands of thought were challenged, and traditional thinkers were forced to defend their positions against skilful argumentation of pragmatists of power. Also, the deterioration of the central ruling authority brought about the need to redefine the very fundamentals of the social order. Old patterns gradually became irrelevant in the new context and there was an increasing demand for new explanations which could serve as guidelines for decision-making. That may have been the impulse for the proliferation of cosmological accounts that offered a new perspective of the cosmic whole, its functioning, and its implications for one's actions.

Intellectual competition and the growing importance of the art of persuasion may be the reasons why the attention of thinkers turned to names, language, and speech in general. Many Warring States period texts raise fundamental philosophical questions about how names relate to things, how they came to be and what makes them common. Texts explore the limits and possibilities of argumentation, and the problems of definition, logic, and etymology. They observe the link between certain techniques of using names and gaining power. Also, they reflect the subtle connection between the way things are spoken about and the way in which they happen. There

seems to be a similar 'turn towards language' that occurred in ancient Greece in the pre-Socratic period and more importantly with Plato and Aristotle.[323]

The traditionally distinguished principal strands of the Warring States period thought, the Ruists, the Mohists, the 'sophists' (*mingjia* 名家), the Daoists, and the Legalists, were all, to our knowledge, engaged with the role of names. As I have discussed above, the categorization itself is problematic. The strands probably interacted, merged, and crossbred to the point that the use of traditional labels does not make much sense anymore. (However useful it is for didactic purposes, it does not help too much with the classification of newly found texts.) Still, names are the topic they all share. Ruists are traditionally associated with the concept known as *zheng ming* 正名, "rectification of names" or "putting names straight". [324] Legalists talk about names as tools for efficient government, in particular for the definition of responsibilities and punishments (*xing ming* 刑名).[325] Parts of the Mohist canon that will be mentioned here go deep into the questions of logic and definition and they offer some interesting insights into the function of names, while the representatives of the 'school of names' and some other independent thinkers such as Hui Shi[326] or Zhuangzi explore the limitations and other functions of speech.

For the present work, the connection between names, cosmology, and management of human affairs, made typically in the so-called Huang-Lao texts, is the most important level of this debate. The examples from both Daoist and Legalist sides of the Warring States thought spectrum are surprisingly complementary. They make a connection between the way in which the world is structured and the way in which it can be managed, while the two are presented as

[323] See e.g. an original paper by A. V. Lebedev, Greek Philosophy as a reform and therapy of ordinary language (in: Indo-European Linguistics and Classical Philology XXVII, Proceedings of the 27th Conference in Memory of Professor Joseph M. Tronsky, St. Petersburg, June 2023.)

[324] This idea, however, was recently challenged by Carine Defoort in her article Defoort, Carine (2021). Confucius and the "Rectification of Names": Hu Shi and the Modern Discourse on Zhengming. Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 20 (4): 613-633. For the debate about whether *zheng ming* was indeed a major topic for Ruist and where did this idea originate from, see below, Chapter 4, part 4.6. It is traditionally exemplified by *Lunyu* 論語 13.3, or *Xunzi* 荀子, "Zheng ming 正名" chapter.

[325] The topic of the Legalist treatment of names and *xing ming* is discussed below, Chapter 4, part 4.7

[326] Hui Shi 惠施;, also known as Huizi 惠子, (ca 370–310 BC) is mentioned as representing the *ming jia* 名家 ('those who were proficient in dealing with names', or Logicians, sometimes also Sophists); his work was preserved only through fragments in other texts. A. C. Graham gives a comprehensive overview of his ideas in his Disputers of the Tao (Graham, 1989, p. 76-82); see also below, p. 144, nn.

complementary aspects of the same process. The book *Shenzi* 申子 attributed to Shen Buhai 申不害,[327] traditionally classified among the Legalists, opens with the following lines:

> 名者，天地之綱，聖人之符。張天地之綱，用聖人之符，則萬物之情無所逃之矣。

> Names constitute the main cord of the net of heaven and earth; they are the tallies of the sage giving him authority over all things. When the ruler casts out the main cord of the net of heaven and earth, and makes use of the tallies of the sage, then no aspect of ten thousand things can elude him.[328]

This statement may well have been the reason why the *Shenzi* was the first on the list of proscribed doctrines issued in 144 BC by the Han emperor Wu 漢武帝, in the document establishing Confucianism as the state doctrine. It expresses the idea that names are a powerful tool that allows the ruler to take things into his own hands, including the complicated cosmic processes. If the ruler grasps the situation correctly through names, he has full control of the events. He becomes autonomous and independent, not bound to rely on tradition, the example of the sage kings of the past, or the established ways of social interaction (*li* 禮). For Confucianists, this must have been a heretic and dangerous idea.[329]

The notion of things being efficiently manageable through names is shared across the spectrum of texts classified as Legalist. For example, in Yang quan 揚權 chapter of the *Hanfeizi*, we read:

> 用一之道，以名為首。名正物定，名倚物徙。

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[327] Shen Buhai 申不害 (ca 395-337 BC) is counted among the *fa jia* 法家 (e.g. in Shiji, Laozi Hanfei liezhuan 老子韓非列傳) but the text *Shenzi* bearing his name in fact contains only very few references to *fa* 法. *Shenzi* is much more concerned with the question of *ming* 名 and how it relates to human agency. A comprehensive study and translation: Creel, Herrlee Glessner trans. (1974) Shen Pu-Hai: A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B. C. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[328] *Shenzi* 1.4. Creel, 1974.

[329] Despite the fact that the *Shenzi* shows some resonance with Confucian views in the same chapter: Shen Buhai 1(8/9) 昔者堯之治天下也以名。其名正，則天下治。桀之治天下也，亦以名，其名倚，而天下亂。是以聖人貴名之正也。 "Anciently Yao ruled the world by means of names. His names were correct, and consequently the world was in good order. Jie also ruled the world by means of names. His names were perverse, and the world fell into disorder. Therefore, the sage values correctness in names."

Following the method of the One, one must take names as a starting point. When names are adequate then things are settled. When they are slanted then things go astray.[330]

A similar phrasing to that of the *Shenzi* can be found in the *Guanzi* 管子*, Xin shu shang* 心術上:

名者，聖人之所以紀萬物也。

It is through names that the sage manages ten thousand things.[331]

The idea is also pervasive in *Huangdi sijing*, e.g., in part 1 – Jing fa 經法:

天下有事，必審其名。名［定則］循名究理之所之，是必為福，非必為災。

In dealing with affairs under heaven, it is necessary to carefully examine their names. When the names are determined, then (you should) follow names and look into principles wherever they go – if you do so, then your action will necessarily lead to happiness, if you do not, they will necessarily lead to disaster.[332]

But in all these cases, these statements are made in a context that may seem surprising to those who embrace a simplified view of Legalism. The question to help us understand this context is "Where do names originate?" The cited *Hanfeizi* passage from the Yang quan chapter continues:

用一之道，以名為首。名正物定，名倚物徙。 故聖人執一以靜，使名自命，令事自定。

Following the method of the One, one must take names as a starting point. When names are adequate then things are settled. When they are slanted then things go

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[330] *HFZ* 8, Yang quan 揚權, 2 transl. own.
[331] *Guanzi*, Xin shu shang, 4b9, see Rickett, Allyn W. (1965). *Kuan-tzu: A Repository of Early Chinese Thought*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. p. 177.
[332] *HDSJ*, part 1 (Jing fa 經法), 1.9.6 (following Chang and Feng 1998 edition)

astray. That is why the sage, holding on to the One, remains quiet and lets the names be attributed by themselves, lets the tasks to be defined by themselves.[333]

In another *Hanfeizi* chapter, Zhu dao 主道, the ruler is encouraged, in a way that could be easily classified as 'Daoist', to remain empty and silent and to "let the names be attributed of themselves":

> 故虛靜以待令，令名自命也，令事自定也。虛則知實之情，靜則知動者正。有言者自為名，有事者自為形，形名參同，君乃無事焉，歸之其情。
>
> (…) awaits empty and calm and he lets the names to be attributed of themselves, he lets affairs to get stabilised by themselves. Being empty he understands the actual situation, being still he knows the right course in action. Those who have something to say will come up with names. Those who have something to do will come up with (concrete) forms. When forms and names fit together, the ruler doesn't need to get involved and he leaves it to the situation.[334]

The first chapter of the *Shenzi* 申子, too, continues in this direction:

> 名自名也，事自定也。是以有道者因名而正之，隨事而定之也。
>
> Names are established of themselves; tasks are determined of themselves. That is why the one who has the correct way starts from the names in order to rectify things, follows the tasks in order to determine the next ones.[335]

In contrast to what we might expect, the ruler, or the sage, is not the one who only uses names as a tool to impose structure on things (that is, to give orders, identify tasks, assign ranks and responsibilities to officials, establish the rules etc.) He is, surprisingly, also regarded as a recipient of names that are 'out there', and not only in the sense of social convention. Names "constitute the main cord of the network of heaven and earth", that is, they are somehow relevant to the way things are organized of themselves, they have a connection to the way in which the cosmos itself is structured. An example from the *Guanzi*, Xin shu xia 心術下

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[333] HFZ 8, Yang quan 揚權, trans. taken from my earlier work on Han Fei's commentary of the *Laozi*.
[334] HFZ 5, Zhu dao 主道, trans. taken from my earlier work on Han Fei's commentary of the Laozi.
[335] *Shenzi,* part 1.6, trans. amended from Creel, 1974, to emphasise the point.

suggests that not only are things managed through names but, above all, they come to us through names:

> 凡物載名而來。 聖人因而裁之，而天下治，實不傷不亂於天下，而天下治。

> It is ever so that things come bearing names. The sage relies on these to make decisions so the world will be well regulated. If actualities are not misnamed, there will be no confusion in the world and the world will be well regulated.[336]

Certainly, the above examples allow for a more pragmatic reading. On the level of the discourse on rulership, "letting the names come of themselves" can be understood as adopting the position of an objective observer and letting the others describe the situation or letting the situation itself develop before acting upon it. It is quite understandable that the ruler would need to use names skilfully, including careful objective observation and evaluation of available information, to gain control over things. But the idea that names should constitute the main cord of the network of heaven and earth is somewhat less evident. It suggests that names are not a merely human device, but that they are somehow relevant to the way in which things occur of themselves. At the same time, they are 'tallies' of the sage, that is, they can be used to gauge and guide one's actions. There is therefore an ambivalence surrounding the question "What are names and where do they originate?" For the moment, I propose to leave the question open and preserve this ambivalence for the purpose of our further discussion.

To complete the picture of ambiguity surrounding the notion of a name in this very specific set of Warring States contexts, I add the notorious example from *Laozi* 1:

> 無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

> What does not have a name is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; what does have a name is the mother of all things.[337]

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[336] *Guanzi*, Xinshu xia 心術下, transl. Ryckett, 1965.
[337] *Laozi,* chapter 1.

The debates about what is meant by 'a name' in this context are unending and, up until the present day, it represents a point of discord among scholars.[338] For our present discussion, it is yet another pointer to the connection between naming and the emergence of things. It links the act of having a name with an act of differentiation in the most fundamental, cosmological way. A similar view is also expressed in *Laozi* 14:

> 繩繩兮不可名，復歸於無物。是謂無狀之狀，無物之象，是謂惚恍。

> Ever so tangled, it cannot be named, and reverts again to 'no thing'. This is what is called the form of the formless, the image of 'no thing'. This is what is called the vague and the indefinite.[339]

Those who interpret *wu ming* 無名 (*bu ke ming* 不可名) as 'unnamable' or 'ineffable'[340], to the effect that one cannot have a concept of it or there are no words that could match it, find themselves in a difficulty to explain the second part: It is all right to say that all other things in the world 'can be named' or have their names, but if we take the names as being a human device (and therefore originating in one's mind), in what way are they the source, or the 'mother', of all things? This takes us back to the question "Where do names come from?".

These, in short, are the difficulties that lead us to inquire more deeply into the topic of names, especially in the context of the excavated cosmological texts and the received texts situated between Daoism and Legalism.

4.2 Folk theory of naming and its origins

Before I start delving deeper into the topic, the reinterpretation of the role of names in the early Chinese contexts will require a larger explanatory detour. The topic of names unavoidably brings us in the middle of the debate about language and its relation to reality, which has been going on in Western philosophy from its beginnings until the present day. It is beyond the scope of this work to introduce, however briefly, all its complicated developments, starting from

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[338] I have personally witnessed a heated debate about this topic on several occasions, during international conferences and workshops, involving early China scholars from all different parts of the world.

[339] *Laozi*, chapter 14; trans. amended (to include *ming* and *wu*) from Ames and Hall, 2003.

[340] For the discussion on the topic of ineffability, see above Chapter 3, part 3.3. (note 146).

Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, through scholastic debates, nominalism and realism, naturalism and conventionalism, pragmatism, referential theories, Sapir and Whorf hypothesis, logical positivism, late Wittgenstein's innovative views and Quine's ontological relativity, up to the most recent analytical philosophy debates.

For the purpose of the present analysis, however, let us narrow down the view which serves as the other side of the comparison. In the debates about the role of names in early Chinese texts, arguments are not necessarily based on the refined philosophical positions mentioned above, but rather on a much more general idea about the ontological place of language within the whole of reality, something like a 'folk theory' of language. By 'folk theory', I mean a set of tacit assumptions arising from the most general idea about the world and how it works. This basic and unsophisticated image of the world is expressed in the ways we speak and, more importantly, in the way we pose questions. In my view, this set usually includes, for example, the view of language (names) as being separate from objects and constituting a kind of meta-realm in its own right. It also includes the world of objects that are 'out there' and have their separate identity, independent from the language. It may also include the idea of the mind (usually residing in one's head, or brain) which works as a receiver of perceptions from the world outside of it, their processer and storage device, and producer of thoughts that take the form of language. The realm of thought is then considered as 'less real', or maybe 'more flexible' than the realm of objects. Hence the idea that names are 'made' to match their objects, and that they are the 'medium of truth' through which one's thoughts are adjusted to correspond to objective reality.

Whatever the ontological character of names is in this layout, the 'folk theory' presumes a fundamental split between language and the world of objects. From its perspective, the problem of naming comes down to the relation between these two realms. As a result, the questions about names are formulated in terms of correspondence or reference, essences and ideas, substance or accidents, all of which derive from this split view. Yet, the aim of this work, as pointed out in the previous chapter,[341] is to propose an interpretive framework for early Chinese texts that does not involve a split between orders of reality.

To draw an alternative interpretive framework as opposed to the 'folk theory' image, we need to start at the basics: What is 'a name', *ming* 名, in the Warring States period context? The

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[341] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.4.

semantic field of *ming* covers 'name', 'proper name', 'fame' or 'reputation', alt. 'famous' or, 'renowned', 'title', 'rank' or 'status'; verbally, 'to give a name', 'call', 'refer to as', and also 'to be or become famous'.[342] In some contexts, it can be understood as an equivalent for 'word', yet such translation may be problematic for our argument. Although the translation as 'word' is very close to my interpretation of the role of *ming*, it also bears undesirable connotations. As I mentioned above, word-metaphysics is a complex and evolving discipline with many competing theories[343] which all start to swarm in through the back door if we do not put them intentionally into brackets. A 'word' evokes an image of a discrete knot in a language system, conceived as relatively static, independent from the concrete situation of its actualisation and abstracted from the process of becoming a word. Generally, I prefer to use 'name' instead of 'word' to shift the emphasis towards naming as a process.[344] The connotations I specifically seek to avoid are: word as a mental representation of a language-independent reality, word as an embodiment of an idea (*eidos*), or word as a label that we put on objects. The questions associated with this view would be: what is the nature of the relation between the word and the object itself? Are they connected necessarily or arbitrarily? And if arbitrarily, how can the speech serve as a means of communication? What makes it common and understandable? Another set of questions arises on the side of the so-called objective reality: What makes an object discrete? What constitutes its individuality, discreteness and integrity in time? These ontological and epistemological problems result from a specific type of questioning opened, for the Western philosophical tradition, by Plato and Aristotle, and perpetuated ever since.

To provide an illustration, in his dialogue *Cratylus*, Plato exposes the problem of whether names are purely a matter of convention or whether some words are more appropriate than other.[345] And if it is the case, what makes them so. The dialogue plays on the difference between what

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[342] There is no proven etymological connection between *ming* 名 and *ming* 命 (Schuessler, Axel (2007). ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press); only the later *Shuo wen jie zi* 說文解字 (Xu Shen 許慎, Eastern Han, 1st cent. AD) makes this (rather mnemotechnical) connection: 名: 自命也.

[343] See e.g. Kaplan, D., 1990, "Words", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume, 64: 93–119; Alward, P., 2005, "Between the Lines of Age: Reflections on the Metaphysics of Words", Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, 86: 172–187; Hawthorne, J. and E. Lepore, 2011, "On Words", Journal of Philosophy, 108: 447–485; Gasparri, L., 2016, "Originalism about Word Types", Thought: A Journal of Philosophy, 5: 126–133.

[344] As A. C. Graham specifies: "A consistent nominalism has to extend its principle to the particular utterances of the name itself; I pronounce the sound 'stone' over X and afterwards convey that Y is like X by pronouncing a similar sound." A. C. Graham, Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 287.

[345] Eng. trans. of *Cratylus*, e.g. Fowler, Harold North trans. (1926). Plato: Cratylus, Parmenides, Greater Hippias, Lesser Hippias (Loeb Classical Library 167), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

we now label conventionalism and naturalism (and sides with naturalism with a slight conventionalist twist at the end). The metaphysical solution to which Plato's dialogues jointly point is that partial and imperfect images of things, expressed in words, have a perfect counterpart in a different order of reality, that of pure 'forms' (eidos, εἶδος)[346] in which they only participate. From pure forms, things receive their names and derive their characteristics. Through metaphysical connection between the human soul and this realm, the forms (ideas) are accessible to the light of human reason. Thanks to the human soul linked to the realm of unchanging forms (to which it once belonged), the words can play the noble role of expressing permanent truths.

As I already mentioned in Chapter 3, Aristotle's enquiry was formulated as a search for knowledge. Its point of departure was, in fact, not 'what is' but 'what can be known'.[347] Thus, Aristotle's ontology, developed in *Metaphysics,* can be ultimately regarded as derived from this primarily epistemological concern. Aristotle's view of names can be illustrated on the examples taken from his text *On interpretation*:

> Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα, καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ. καὶ ὥσπερ οὐδὲ γράμματα πᾶσι τὰ αὐτά, οὐδὲ φωναὶ αἱ (5) αὐταί· ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταὐτὰ πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταὐτά. περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων εἴρηται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ψυχῆς, —ἄλλης γὰρ πραγματείας·

> Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the mental experiences, which these directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images. This matter has, however, been discussed in my treatise about the soul, for it belongs to an investigation distinct from that which lies before us.[348]

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[346] Gr. eidos, εἶδος - (visible) 'form', 'shape', 'appearance', or a 'kind,' 'nature (of)', 'quality' (Liddell-Scott)
[347] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.4..
[348] Aristotle, On Interpretation, provided by The Internet Classics Archive
 http://classics.mit.edu//Aristotle/interpretation.html (accessed on 12. 07. 2018) (Aristotle. Categories, On Interpretation, and On Sophistical Refutations. Trans. E. M. Edghill and W. A. Pickard-Cambridge. Stilwell, KS: Digireads.com, 2006)

Behind this view, there is a specific Aristotle's metaphysical layout in which words correlate with mental images of external things. A human soul, standing 'apart', is affected by the forms of things and these 'affections of the soul' (*pathe tes psyches*) translate as mental images of what is happening 'outside'. It is a profoundly dualist layout in which the human soul belongs to a different order of reality than the world of things. Under such scheme, it is only natural for Aristotle to presume that the same objects affect different souls in the same way and give rise to the same mental images. Although the words as sounds may vary in different languages, the images to which they correspond are the same for everybody.

The idea that our mind stands apart from the rest of the world and it is also a stage for mental images and their label-making has largely formed the general preunderstanding of the language-reality problem in Western philosophies. It also underlies the 'folk theory' of names which I have outlined above.

However, among Plato's and Aristotle's predecessors there are certain counter currents in the early Greek thought that offer a different, non-dualist perspective. Two prominent examples of these are Parmenides and Heraclitus.

Parmenides stands out among pre-Socratic philosophers for the boldness of his ideas that go against ordinary human experience. Parmenides proposes a radically non-dualist view of reality in which all differences are seen as arbitrary. For Parmenides, names are deceptive in that they cut up the continuum of 'the one' into a multitude of discrete things. The often-cited fragment B 3 says that "it is the same to know and to be."[349] This strong statement has been interpreted in different ways but, maybe, it is best understood in the light of fragment B 8, a longer text in which the goddess explains to the philosopher why the reality that manifests as a multiplicity must in fact be one and unchanging:

> ταὐτὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.
>
> οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ὧι πεφατισμένον ἐστιν,
>
> εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ [ἢ] ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται

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[349] DK B 3: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι. (Clement of Alexandria, Stromata VI, 23,2-3) *Noein* - "to conceive," "to think," "to apprehend" (Liddell-Scott).

ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ᾽ ἐπέδησεν

οὖλον ἀκίνητόν τ᾽ ἔμεναι· τῶι πάντ᾽ ὄνομ[α] ἔσται,

ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,

γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι, εἶναί τε καὶ οὐχί,

καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διά τε χρόα φανὸν ἀμείβειν.

The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same.

For you cannot find thought without something that is, as to which it is uttered.

And there is not, and never will be, anything besides what is,

since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable.

For this reason, all these things are but names which mortals have given, believing them to be true –

coming into being and passing away, being and not being,

change of place and alteration of bright colour.[350]

In the light of B 8, I would reformulate the statement of B 3 as: "to be there (as 'something') is the same as to be singled out by an act of knowing (it as 'something')." In this strong sense, the goddess says, there are no entities other than those carved out by humans using names. The real world is 'chained' together, forming one whole. The same applies to the passing of time which is also the result of human perspective, or the effort to grasp the whole through its part.

οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καί νυν ἔασι

[350] DK B 8, Simplicius, In Physica 78,4; 145,1. (trans. Burnet, John (1920). Early Greek Philosophy, London: Adam and Charles Black).

καὶ μετέπειτ᾽ ἀπὸ τοῦδε τελευτήσουσι τραφέντα·

τοῖς δ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ᾽ ἐπίσημον ἑκάστωι.

Thus, according to men's opinions, did things come into being, and thus they are now. In time they will grow up and pass away. To each of these things men have assigned a fixed name.[351]

Parmenides goes as far as to deny any possibility of change, arguing that change implies inherent duality of being and non-being. To use his argumentation, what we see when we observe changes are merely shifts of perspective, and emphasis, within the one unchanging reality. For Parmenides, it is ontologically not possible for what is not to come into being. Still, it is again through *logos* that apparent boundaries can be uncovered as non-existent, and the reality can be correctly seen as one indivisible (and immovable) whole.

For our discussion, these passages serve to illustrate an early expression of the idea that knowledge is not 'disengaged mirroring' of what there is but rather the result of a human grasping of things as things. Distinctions embodied in names are imposed on an otherwise undifferentiated whole. But to know always means to know 'something', that is, having distinctions, structuring, taking out, retaining, and comparing. Consequently, there is no other access to reality than through differentiation. Names are a necessary mediator through which anything can stand out 'as something,' or exist. But the problem is, as the goddess says, that people have hypostatized names and thus fail to see the actual oneness of reality.

Heraclitus, on the other hand, represents a different challenge: seeing the reality as one in the sense of tension of complementary opposites (as illustrated above).[352] For Heraclitus, the oneness is a characteristic feature of how the world works, and how it maintains itself as a continuous and never-ending process. Within this oneness, however, *logos* has a specific place in Heraclitus' account, that is challenging for the interpreters. Among its many different roles, *logos* is that according to which everything happens, it is all-embracing and divine.

καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι

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[351] DK B 19, Simplicius, In De caelo 558, 8 (trans. Burnet, 1920)
[352] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.4.

γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε,

ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι

πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιουτέων

ὁποῖα ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι

κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον

καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει·

For, though all things

come to pass in accordance with this Word,

men seem as if they had no experience of them,

when they make trial of words and deeds such as I set forth,

dividing each thing according to its kind

and showing how it is what it is.[353]

At the same time, Heraclitus uses the same word, logos, for normal speech that people use to communicate. It is still through this same logos that things are named and shared, sorted and compared, and put together. Yet, people dwell on the distinctions, oppositions and discontinuities and fail to see the intrinsic unity of opposites. If they were not, as if it were, asleep or in a dream, they would see the 'logical', necessary connection between unity and multiplicity.

οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν

ἓν πάντα εἶναι, {ὁ Ἡράκλειτός φησι.}

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[353] DK B 1, Hippolytos, Refutatio omnium haeresium IX,9,1. (trans. John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, third ed., 1920, chapter 3).

It is wise, listening not to me but to the speech (logos), to agree that all things are one, {Heraclitus says.}[354]

Also, fragment B 10 speaks about this connection.

συνάψιες

ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον,

συνᾷδον διᾷδον,

καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα.

Couples: things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one.[355]

This ontological model of one and many holding together is also the only possible model allowing for real and continuous change. No gap opens between the changing reality and *logos* itself; they do not belong to separate orders. Heraclitus repeatedly points out the difference between *logos* and the way in which the speech is used among ordinary people who dwell in distinctions, oppositions and discontinuities, as if they were in a dream. *Logos*, on the other hand, offers a perspective from which the unity of opposites makes perfect sense and for one who can see it, it is as an awakening from sleep. Without implicit unity behind all multiplicity, things could not be thought of as multiple at all. Multiple can be recognized as multiple only if it can be held simultaneously, involved in one act. Otherwise, there would be only one singularity after another without connection.

In contrast to Aristotle, the examples from Parmenides and Heraclitus represent a specific view of individuation, the one based on boundaries and contrast. If a thing stands out (ex-sists) from

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[354], DK B 50, Hippolytos, Refutatio omnium haeresium IX, 9, 1. (trans. Kahn, 1979, p. 45) (alt. trans. "When they have heard not me but the speech (logos), it would be wise of them to agree that all is one.")
[355] DK B 10 (synapsies – alt. trans. "graspings", "connections") trans. Burnet, 1920 (p. 101)

the environment, there must be some dividing line between it and the rest, and there has to be 'the other' of the contrast. What the thing is not is therefore equally constitutive of it. Paradoxically, it is the view of individuation that is, at the same time, unification/integration in the whole. The constitutive act through which a thing comes to be is therefore the emergence of a boundary, that is, its breaking away from the sameness (undifferentiatedness) of its environment. Moreover, while standing out as different, the thing does not cease to be one with the whole. It is important to point out this specific implication: if there is no unifying context (no oneness), no thing can stand out 'as different' because the basis of difference is the contrast with what the thing is not, the juxtaposition of *shi* 是 and *fei* 非.

To summarize this part, my purpose is to show that whenever we pose ourselves a question about names, there is always a pull towards various types of metaphysical perspectives that we need to counter. It is because they involve, in one way or other, a dualist view of the world which we need to put into brackets in interpreting early Chinese texts. In order to remain faithful to the image of cosmos as 'one' and in continuous motion, we need to reformulate questions related to names to the effect that they do not carry any dualist, essentialist or substantialist implications. Instead of asking how a name relates to an object (conceived as steady and existing independently from it), that is, how it denotes it or corresponds to it or represents an idea of it in terms of its essence or attributes, we should be asking what is the ontological status of a name, what kind of process it is, where it comes from and what it causes, and last but not least, how it relates to the notion of a boundary.

4.3 Names and individuation: what is a thing *wu* 物 and how it arises

In this part, I will explore in greater detail the nature of the relation between names (*ming* 名) and things *wu* 物 (also 'what there is', 'something' *you* 有, 'realities', 'actualities' *shi* 實 or 'forms', 'appearance', 'body' *xing* 形). As it was pointed out in the previous chapter, a different cosmology implies a different ontology. But to reconstruct an alternative ontology more

relevant to our group of texts, we need to pursue further the shift of perspective from dualism to oneness and from substance to process.[356]

In substance ontology, we do not have a problem to account for the existence of individual things. They are separate pieces of substance which underlies their being-there, before being anything in particular, being perceived or having any characteristics. The substance explains their integrity (unity) and continuity in space and time. The main question derived from this layout is how these discrete entities relate to each other. From this point of view, human beings necessarily stand out as entities with a special type of relation to other entities. They perceive them, learn to know them and recognize them as discrete and as standing out from their background (ex-sisting). This encounter is usually described as an encounter between the human mind and things themselves, which implies their being separate. The idea of the human mind in general has, over the time, been reduced to the notion of 'pure subject', a view from the inside, as opposed to everything else, the world of 'objects.' That is the basic ontology that constitutes the framework for further questioning which we call epistemological. As opposed to 'what there is', epistemological questioning points to 'what can be known', thus establishing a dualist split between what is known and the knower. Any further questioning regarding the relation between names and things that ensues from this view is, as a consequence, not ontological but epistemological.

As I have suggested in the previous part,[357] Aristotle's ontological views are derived from primarily epistemological concerns. His *Metaphysics* starts from asking how things are talked about and the opening question of his *Physics* is what it means to be wise, that is, to know something. Again, since our purpose here is to better understand ancient Chinese texts, I will provide is just a very simplified summary of what I mean by Aristotle's ontological views. For each thing, there must be something that makes it what it is, in addition to the substance that underlies its 'being' in general. And this something must be, in a way, resistant to change, because it stays with the thing throughout changes of space, time or perspective. This change-

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[356] The shift proposed, among others, by Ames and Hall with their "field-focus" approach (Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998); Franklin Perkins develops this line of thought in detail in "What is a thing (wu 物)?: The problem of individuation in early Chinese metaphysics", chapter in *Chinese Metaphysics and its Problems*, Li Chengyang and Perkins F. eds. Cambridge University Press (2015). Another perspective is offered e.g. by David Chai (Chai, David (2014). *Meontological Generativity: A Daoist Reading of the Thing*. Philosophy East & West, Volume 64, Number 2/2014 (University of Hawai'i Press) 303–318)

[357] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.4.

resistant aspect, then, is what makes the thing graspable, or recognizable, as this thing. This permanent aspect is then expressed as an essence, idea or form. This type of ontology, however, stands on the premise that things are what they are 'essentially' or 'objectively', that is, independently from a subject or an observer. The idea that there must be some permanent aspect of a thing behind changing appearances has its roots in the dissociation between the subject, conceived as a pure observer, and the object, the thing as it is.

In the previous chapter,[358] I have touched upon the process ontology as a potentially more productive approach to explaining the ontological views behind the excavated texts. Process ontology does not have a problem to account for change and interaction, but it has difficulties to explain discreteness of individual things and their continuity in space and time. Entities are conceived only as the result of a certain type of processes: what appears as a 'thing' is, ontologically, merely a regularity, a pattern within a process, a bundle of activity.[359] Their different attributes or qualities are accounted for as 'stable clusters of process engendering dispositions'.[360] Stability and integrity of 'objects' is explained in terms of regularity and rhythm. In this layout, the subject and the object, the mind and the thing, are not dissociated: the cluster of processes called 'subject' plays an irreducible role in clustering other processes into 'objects' and vice versa. However, the process ontology makes it rather difficult to explain discreteness and the notion of boundary. A process is not an entity; therefore, it cannot be defined by form. But there is still some unique aspect of it, which makes it distinct from others: the way, the modality, the tendency, the 'how.' Although processes are conceived as continuous and interconnected, if there is multiplicity, there must be also some discontinuity between them. But this discontinuity cannot be conceived as a fixed boundary. If we were to imagine a boundary in the radically processual context, it would have to be a boundary-in-progress, or 'boundary-ing,' that is (the act of) splitting, diverging, 'parting ways.' To do this, we really need to stretch the limits of our language and imaginations, but such effort is crucial for our further discussion about individuation and multiplicity in early Chinese context.[361]

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[358] See above, Chapter 3, part 3.5.
[359] E.g. as in Heraclitus' 'turns of fire' (*pyros tropai*) (see above, chap. 3, part 3.4., p. 68), or Leibniz's *monads*.
[360] For this exact formulation, see Rescher (2000), p. 15; see also above, part 3.5.
[361] The problem of discreteness in process ontology has been tackled in various ways (atomicity of events in Whitehead, monads as discrete units in Leibniz), but this immensely complex topic goes far beyond the scope of this work.

The individuation of a thing is indeed thematized as a philosophical problem in many other Warring States texts. The fragments from *Mozi*, Hui Shi, *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi* and other texts attest to it.[362] However, the problem is rarely articulated as 'What is a *wu* 物?'.[363] More often, we can see it expressed in terms of names, *ming* 名, and 'forms', *xing* 形,[364] or names and 'actualities', *shi* 實.

If names, or *ming*, are not to be understood primarily in terms of reference and correspondence, but in terms of process in the way explained above, how can we reinterpret their pairing with *shi* 實? In the *ming/shi* 名/實 couple, *shi* is usually understood as "a fact," "an object," "a real thing," or "an actuality," that is, as representing the other, objective, and language-independent layer of reality. This interpretation unfortunately leads to many other wrongly posed questions, such as whether *shi* can be understood as "truth" in an early Chinese context or how can names be appropriately matched with corresponding realities. From the oneness cosmology perspective, however, the dynamics of the *ming/shi* 名/實 couple appears in a different light.

Names, due to their dual aspect as something given and as something actively created, play the role of connecting points between what there is and what there is to be. Names not only constitute one's actual situation, but they are also involved in the active anticipation and constitution of future reality. They are imprints of usual patterns of becoming, but at the same time, they are projected forward onto what has not yet come to be, set expectations, pose boundaries, and represent an agenda to be fulfilled. The boundaries set by a name become provisional guiding lines along which the process deploys itself, so that the name becomes more or less fulfilled. The process of fulfilling a name would then be described as *shi* 實, which can be understood as 'bringing to fulfillment,' 'realizing,' 'actualizing,' with the emphasis on processuality and an always present element of indeterminacy, of 'not yet.'[365] Through *shi*, a thing brings its name to fulfilment and either develops in its fullness (fulfills its name) or fails half way through (and its name will remain empty).[366]

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[362] The concrete examples of each of those will eventually be cited in this chapter.

[363] Indirectly, it is formulated in this way in the *Gongsun Longzi* (which however cannot be reliably dated to the Warring States period) or in the *Mozi.*

[364] Also 'body, bodily shape, appearance'; this term is discussed below Chapter 4, part 4.7.

[365] See also above, Chapter 3, part 3.5 – The process perspective, or part 3.7 – Other cosmological fragments.

[366] Cf. Jane Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 109-135.

At the first sight, one would be tempted to slide back to the subject–object perspective where names play a mediating role in the mind's way of tackling objects, either as 'facts,' *shi* (in particular), or 'forms,' *xing* (in general). However, textual examples related to *ming* and *xing/shi* do not support this view. They draw a subtle, non-unidirectional link between the two sides, as if the forms depended on names in the same way as the names depend on forms. The relation is often expressed in processual terms: names 'come' to us, just as forms do; names are both 'received' and 'given' in the process of doing something, in order to achieve something, and forms, or actualities, are expected to deploy themselves accordingly. Verbs used to describe the act of naming ('to mention', 'to refer to') also mean 'to raise', 'to pick', *ju* 舉 or 'to take', 'to select', *qu* 取, less frequently 'to reach', 'to attain', *da* 達 or 'to obtain' *de* 得. The following examples illustrate that. The *Mozi* Canon speaks about the name-thing relation in this way:

> 以名舉實，以辭抒意，以說出故，以類取，以類予。

> Names are used to raise things; speech is used to convey intention; explanations are used to bring out causes. It is picked according to kind, it is conveyed according to kind.[367]

The idea that, through names, a thing is picked out or carved out from its background[368] which itself remains non-thematized and undifferentiated has two important implications for the view of a thing: 1) A thing is not simply there as a thing; it becomes a thing by being picked out as a thing (otherwise it remains one with the rest, it remains within the undifferentiated).[369] 2) It is the result of an act – the act of focusing on, being directed to, pointing to, thematizing. These two implications already lead us away from the realm of essentialism.

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[367] *Mozi*, Xiao qu 小取, 45.1; Cf. also *Mozi*, Canons and Explanations I, 31. 經上: 舉，擬 實也。經說上: 舉：告以文 名，舉彼實也。 "To raise (to pick out) is to plot an actuality. To raise: to inform by means of structured names is to raise that actuality." The Mohist Canon also distinguishes three kinds of names, which I will, for the reasons proposed above, interpret as three ways of naming: naming in general, classifying by kind, and giving proper names: 經上: 名，達、類、私。經說上: 名：物，達也。有實必待之名也。命之馬，類也。若實也者，必以是名也。命之臧，私也。是名也止於是實也。 "Canon I: Name - Attaining; classifying; private. Canon Explanation I: Name: (to name) a thing is to attain it. If there is something there, it necessarily gets its name. To name something 'a horse' is classifying it. If it is like something else, it must be called by that specific name. To name someone Zang is private. This specific name is limited to this specific fact." (*Mozi*, Canons and Explanations I, 79. kg)

[368] The idea was also expressed in the article by Chiara Robbiano (Robbiano, Chiara (2018). Can Words Carve a Jointless Reality? Parmenides and Śaṅkara. Journal of World Philosophies, 3(1), 31–43.)

[369] Cf. Parmenides, see above, part 4.2.

In the previous chapter, I have shown that, in the cosmologies, the process of gradual differentiation does not necessarily end at the creation of myriad things. Many times, the cosmological sequence talks about the differentiating processes, or modes of process, and only indirectly arrives at the emergence of 'ten thousand things.' Also, *wan wu* 萬物 (or *bai wu* 百物) is a summary term for the multiplicity of things. Emergence of *a thing*, in its individuality, is not thematized. We almost do not have a sequence which would make it clear: "this is how a thing comes to be." Still, it is worth noting that the word *wu* occurs far more often in contexts where cosmological issues and questions of names are addressed.[370]

I could find hardly any textual examples of people 'creating *wu*' or 'making *wu*' in the sense of inanimate objects. Still, the examples of what is considered a *wu* cover the largest scope of phenomena, many of which we would usually call forces, processes or abstract concepts, rather than things. Also, it is not unusual for *wu* to be used for anything that reaches the senses, including what we would normally call qualities, like colour, smell, sound, size etc.[371] Indeed, when we switch to the world of early Chinese texts, the very distinction between 'things' and their 'characteristics' appears less clear. Unlike its English equivalent, 'a thing', *wu* works as a most general term for anything distinct, anything that can be named, a "hypernym of all hypernyms."[372] Some of the sophisms are even built around the ambiguity of 'thing-ness.'[373]

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[370] E.g. it occurs 348 times in the *Zhuangzi*, 100 times in the *Hanfeizi,* 42 times in the *Mozi*, 37 times in the *Laozi* etc.

[371] The examples of the use of *wu* for colours and natural phenomena are attested in Zuo Zhuan (Pines, Yuri. "Lexical Changes in Zhanguo Texts." Journal of the American Oriental Society 122, no. 4 (2002): 691–705; p. 697.) For a full analysis of the semantic field of *wu*, see Franklin Perkins's chapter What is a thing (wu 物)? The problem of individuation in early Chinese metaphysics (in: Li Chenyang and Perkins, Franklin, eds. (2015). Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); see also e.g. *Xunzi*, chap. 22, Zheng ming.

[372] Cf. *Xunzi*, chap. 22, Zheng ming: 故萬物雖眾，有時而欲無舉之，故謂之物；物也者，大共名也。 Cf. also Zadrapa's note in his translation of the *Xunzi*: "Wu 物, the word denoting both things and phenomena, can indeed be considered a superordinate to all nouns, a hypernym of all hypernyms in the taxonomy of objects in the broadest sense." (Zádrapa, Lukáš. 2019. Sün-c', tradičně Sün Kchuang, Praha: Academia, p. 371).

[373] E.g. there is a passage on Hui Shi in the *Zhuangzi* Tian xia 天下 chapter that sums up several of these 'sophisms': 惠施以此為大觀於天下而曉辯者，天下之辯者相與樂之。卵有毛，雞三足，郢有天下，犬可以為羊，馬有卵，丁子有尾，火不熱，山出口，輪不蹍地，目不見，指不至，至不絕，龜長於蛇，矩不方，規不可以為圓，鑿不圍枘，飛鳥之景未嘗動也，鏃矢之疾而有不行不止之時，狗非犬，黃馬、驪牛三，白狗黑，孤駒未嘗有母，一尺之捶，日取其半，萬世不竭。辯者以此與惠施相應，終身無窮。

"Hui Shi by such sayings as these made himself very conspicuous throughout the kingdom and was considered an able debater. All other debaters vied with one another and delighted in similar exhibitions. (They would say), 'There are feathers in an egg.' 'A fowl has three feet.' 'The kingdom belongs to Ying.' 'A dog might have been (called) a sheep.' 'A horse has eggs.' 'A tadpole has a tail.' 'Fire is not hot.' 'A mountain gives forth a voice.' 'A wheel does not tread on the ground.' 'The eye does not see.' 'The finger indicates, but needs not touch, (the object).' 'Where you come to may not be the end.' 'The tortoise is longer than the snake.' 'The carpenter's square is not square.' 'A compass should not itself be round.' 'A chisel does not surround its handle.' 'The shadow of a flying

Wu is sometimes used in the sense of 'being in the manner of a thing.'[374] This could suggest that to be 'as a thing' means to manifest itself in a certain way, and that things have another, 'non-entity' aspect about them. In *Lunyu*, for example, we find a well-known passage saying that a noble man does not function as (cannot be made into) a thing, which is here expressed as *qi* 器.

> 子曰: 君子不器。

> The Master said: A noble man is not a utensil.[375]

In addition to meaning simply that a noble man should not let himself be used and manipulated by anyone, the quote implies that there is something radically 'non-thingy' about the man and that this 'non-thingy' aspect may be exactly what constitutes a 'noble man' as opposed to lowly people.

There is a related passage from the Zhuangzi that, interestingly, appears cited in many later texts throughout the history of Chinese thought, where it is used to support often widely divergent views:[376]

> 物物者非物。

> That which[377] makes things to be things is not a thing.[378]

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bird does not (itself) move.' 'Swift as the arrowhead is, there is a time when it is neither flying nor at rest.' 'A dog is not a hound.' 'A bay horse and a black ox are three.' 'A white dog is black.' 'A motherless colt never had a mother.' 'If from a stick a foot long you every day take the half of it, in a myriad ages it will not be exhausted.' - It was in this way that the debaters responded to Hui Shi, all their lifetime, without coming to an end."

[374] The Mengzi speaks about water 'as a thing,' e.g. *Mengzi*, Jin Xin I 盡心上: 流水之為物也，不盈科不行. "Running water (as a thing/is a thing of such kind that it) does not go further until it has filled the holes."; and there are several other examples across the texts in which something or someone as a thing is or does XY, e.g. *Mozi* ("music as a thing" 樂之為物), *Zhuangzi*, Da zong shi chapter ("As a thing, there is nothing that he does not support and nothing that he does not welcome." 其為物，無不將也，無不迎也). Yet, the construction A 之為 B 也… is quite normal, and in case of *wu* 物, it does not have to be significant.

[375] *Lunyu*, 2.12. trans. Watson (Watson, Burton, tr. 2007. The Analects of Confucius. Translations from the Asian Classics. New York: Columbia University Press.) It should be noted that, to fit Watson's translation, the original would have to be *fei qi* 非器; as an adjective, *qi* 器 can be understood as 'to have characteristics of a tool' (if taken as a verb it could also have a causative or putative sense, 'made into a tool/considered a tool').

[376] Cf. Rafael Suter, paper "Old Bottles for New Wine – on a Figura Etymologica, its Changing Interpretations, and the Possibility of Reading Ancient Chinese Philosophy", presented at the 2nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy in Basel, September 2017.

[377] Or, "the one who"

[378] *Zhuangzi* 22, Knowledge Rambling in the North 知北遊; the context preceding this phrase is the dialogue between fictional Confucius and his disciple Ran Qiu 冉求. Confucius says: 不以生生死，不以死死生。死生

For our current discussion, an important signal received from these formulations is that to be a thing could literally mean 'thing-ing,' acting or being in the manner of a thing, or being made into a thing, or being considered a thing.

The aim of this part is to raise cautiousness about any form of essentialism and turn towards a more processual view of a thing. This applies also to another aspect of essentialism which is defining things in terms of their constitutive traits, qualities, and dispositions. The idea behind such view of an entity is, again, that it stands of itself and it 'possesses' certain combination of constitutive traits that are proper to it and some other that are only situational and changeable, accidental. It is widely accepted that the first set makes the thing what it is, while the second does not. To give a very simple example, the chair at my table does not stop being that particular chair if I put it in a different place, or even if I paint it a different colour.[379] In the same way, there are some constitutive traits which characterize the thing as a thing of a certain kind, referred to by a general noun (name). In the case of a chair, it could be characterized by its specific shape, function, typical material etc. These characteristics are then believed to constitute the thing and, at the level of naming, to constitute the definition of that thing. In other words, to capture what a thing is, we need to look for characteristics that are essential to it, that 'make it what it is.'

In order to shift from essentialism towards a processual view of a thing, we will need to turn this whole setup around. If we start from the view of the cosmos as constantly changing, a thing cannot 'stand' either, which means it has to be also conceived processually, as a certain kind of becoming. What appears as stable must be described as a relatively repetitive pattern of multiple processes coming temporarily together to constitute one bundle. Some of these processes can then be regarded as more contributing to 'relative stability' of the bundle than others but, since

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有待邪？皆有所一體。有先天地生者物邪？ 物物者非物。 "It is not so that through the living, one brings to live what is dead, and through the dead, one brings to death what is living. Do life and death not come in turns? Both have what makes them one (whole/body). If there was something born before heaven and earth, was it a thing? (Was that which was produced before Heaven and Earth a thing? Trans. Legge) That which makes things things is itself not a thing."

[379] I intentionally avoid any, be it cursory, summarization of Aristotle's substantialism and its relation to his categories, or Plato's idealist essentialism. I would not be able to present it succinctly in the way that would not be too encumbering for the present discussion.

the whole of the universe is in the process of change, the difference between constitutive and situational becomes far less important.[380]

But, even in the processual layout we need to account for multiplicity and, therefore, for discreteness. That is where names come into play. Many textual examples above have shown that names are dominantly associated with 'form' or 'shape' or 'appearance', *xing* 形, and that their mutual relation has to do with how things are constituted.[381] We have also seen them connected with *shi* 實, usually translated as 'fact', 'reality' or 'actuality'. In the next part, I will use the insights drawn from the excavated cosmological texts to shed more light on the connection between individuation of things and their names, and between names and forms or actualities. The primary focus will be on the question of boundary, its nature and relation to the problem of oneness and multiplicity.

4.4 Names within the cosmologies and the question of boundaries

In the previous chapter, we have discussed the problem of oneness and multiplicity from the viewpoint of the excavated cosmological and some other related texts. We have seen that they can be read, in general, as capturing the process of emergence of distinct things out of an undifferentiated source. But we have also seen that this process is not necessarily situated in the pre-historic beginning of the cosmos, a zero point of a universal timeline. The cyclic view of the cosmos allows us to understand this process as perpetual, repeating itself at present and at different scales, at a macro- as well as a micro-level. From this point of view, we can interpret a cosmological account as pointing to the process of individuation.[382]

Now, to develop on this cosmology-based idea of individuation, we could see that the passages about 'natural differentiation' are closely accompanied by passages about 'epistemological' differentiation. To give an example, we read that heaven and earth are established, *yin* and *yang*

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[380] I am aware that the possible counter-example of this would be the much debated distinction between *xing* 性 , as innate set of characteristics, and *qing* 情, as situational dispositions, but I will discuss this distinction in a slightly different light in the following chapter.
[381] In some contexts, *xing* 形 is an equivalent for 'bodily shape' or 'body.' In accordance with what has been said above about individuation in processual ontology, we should be cautious not to understand it as 'form' in the sense of something fixed or predetermined, either immanent or transcendent, standing outside of universal change, such as 'pure form' (*eidos,* εἶδος) or Aristotle's *morphe* (μορφή).
[382] Cf. above, part 4.3.; this view is shared e.g. by Franklin Perkins, "What is a thing (wu 物)?", p. 55.

interact, *qi* flows and creates inequalities, and the ten thousand things start to proliferate and replicate. And, at the same time, we read that different sounds arise from the differences, names arise from the sounds and affairs arise from the names.[383] In our usual way of distinguishing between types of discourse (ontological and epistemological, theoretical and practical, speculative and empirical), this is either a mix-up or a crossover. But the coincidence of the two seemingly distinct discourses is so pervasive that it may be more productive to look for a closer link between them and to see the two levels as connected.

When it comes to the cosmologies of the *Taiyi sheng shui, Heng xian*, and *Fan wu liu xing*, but also other texts of similar orientation, the role of names (*ming* 名) in them appears to be a challenging aspect for commentators. Within these cosmological accounts, the mention of names indeed seems to involve a switch to a different discourse, one that has to do with the human mind and action. In the usual interpretive framework arising from our implicit cosmology, things have their own objective existence independent of the mind, and they are reflected in the mind as concepts that take an outward form of words; words are essentially linked with concepts in one's mind, and they are tokens representing language-independent realities, to which they more or less appropriately correspond. Names (words) and things belong to different fundamental layers of reality, and the large part of further debate focuses on the nature of their connection. This is how the problem of names is usually approached.

Yet, the cosmologies above seem to include names in the account of the functioning of the universe, as if they were involved in the very process of individuation of things (*wu* 物) within the undifferentiated one. [384] The shift of perspective that would allow us to make sense of this connection here is to extend the notion of the one from the initial 'state' of void, silence, obscurity to a more general situation of undifferentiatedness, of unfocused-ness or, in a stronger sense, of nonexistence in the sense of not standing out (not ex-sisting). What makes a thing exist? It is its 'standing out,' its becoming distinct from the cosmic continuum. That is why its defining trait, in a non-essentialist perspective, is its dividing line with what it is not, that is, its boundary line.[385]

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[383] E.g. *HX* strips 5-6, or Nei ye, part 14.
[384] Cf. above, part 4.1., e.g. *Shen Buhai* 申不害 1.4 etc.
[385] The elements of this interpretation can be detected e.g. in Wang Bi's commentary of the *Laozi*. In his commentary to Laozi 25, Wang Bi connects *ming* 名 with 'stopping' and 'dividing' (see Wagner, Rudolf G. (2003). A Chinese Reading of the Daodejing: Wang Bi´s commentary on the Laozi with critical text and translation. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 198–204.)

But, in the oneness model of the cosmos, any boundary that arises within it gives rise to opposing modes of being, one defined only by contrast to the other. This is the way of thinking that may seem hard to accept, but there are some textual examples that seem to support it. For example, there is a passage in Qi wu lun 齊物論 chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, saying:

> 物無非彼，物無非是。(…) 故曰：彼出於是，是亦因彼。彼是，方生之說也。

> There is no thing that is not 'that,' and there is no thing that is not 'this'. (…) Hence it is said, 'That comes from this; and this, too, responds to that.' The alteration of life (and death)[386] is explained by (the theory) that 'that' and 'this' produce each other.[387]

Although some regard this chapter as post-Warring-States addition to the *Zhuangzi*, I chose to quote it here for illustration. It is my unsupported hypothesis that this chapter might be reacting to the Zhi wu lun 指物論 text attributed to Gongsun Longzi 公孫龍子, a representative of the 'language thinkers', or *ming jia* 名家, where I identify a similar topic: things arise as the result of being pointed out, being thematized.

> 物莫非指，而指非指。 天下無指，物無可以謂物。

> Among things there is none that is not pointed out. But as regards pointing out, it is not pointed out. If there was no pointing out in the world, no thing could be spoken of as a thing.[388]

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[386] This translation is based on the next passage which says: 雖然，方生方死，方死方生；方可方不可，方不可方可; "Although it be so, there is either life, or death, either death, or life, either it can be, or it cannot, either it cannot be, or it can." I read it to mean that although the opposites arise together and bring each other about, they do not cease to be what they are, that is, to be clearly different from each other.

[387] *Zhuangzi*, Qi wu lun 齊物論, (ctext para 5) (trans. mine based on Legge);

[388] *Gongsun Longzi,* Zhi wu lun 指物論; the interim passage goes: 指也者，天下之所無也；物也者，天下之所有也。以天下之所有，為天下之所無，未可。 "Pointing out is something that is not in the world. A thing is something that is in the world. To make of/To deem something that is in the world something that is not in the world is impossible."

天下無指，而物不可謂指也。 "If there is no pointing out in the world, then a thing cannot be spoken of as pointed out."

Similar motives are found in the *Gongsun Longzi* chapter Ming shi lun 名實論,[389] or in the *Mozi*, for example in Canon Explanations II, part 169.[390] Although each of these texts demonstrates a different aspect of individuation, they all talk about the relation between 'standing out' as a thing and being pointed at, selected, differentiated, divided from what it is not. There are several important aspects to note here. Firstly, it seems that things are not approached as something that is already there (because why would we otherwise need to mention any 'this-ing' 此此/是是 or 'that-ing' 彼彼 or '*wu*-ing' 物物 at all). Secondly, the differentiation is described as setting boundaries and thus thematizing the thing itself and, by the same act, its dividing line with what it is not in terms of binary oppositions.

The idea of differentiation as being delimited, picked out against one another, and having a boundary, resonates in the cosmological texts. The following examples from the *Taiyi sheng shui*, in my view, illustrate this idea:

> 下，土也，而謂之地。上，氣也，而謂之天。道也 其字也。請問其名?

> Below, there is the soil, and we call it earth. Above, there is the air (qi), and we call it heaven. Dao is also only a formal designation, but what is its name?[391]

> 天地名字並立，… [不足於上]者，有餘於下，不足於下者，有餘於上。

> Names of heaven and earth are established together.[392] … That which is not sufficient above has a surplus below; that which is not sufficient below has a surplus above.[393]

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[389] *Gongsun Longzi*, Ming shi lun, e.g. 故彼彼止于彼，此此止于此，可；彼此而彼且此，此彼而此且彼，不可。 "That is why it is possible that doing 'that' of that stops at that and doing 'this' of this stops at this. And it is impossible to affirm 'that' by 'this' and to have them both, or to affirm 'this' by 'that' and to have them both."
[390] *Mozi*, Canon Explanations II 經說下, part 169: 彼：正名者彼此彼此可。彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，彼此不可。彼且此也，彼此亦可。彼此止於彼此，若是而彼此也，則彼亦且此此也。 "As regards 'that': It is admissible for the man who uses names rightly to use 'that' for this and 'this' for that. As long as his use of 'that' for that stays confined to that, and his use of 'this' for this stays confined to this, it is inadmissible to use 'that' for this. When 'this' is about to be used for that, it is likewise admissible to use 'that' for this. If 'that' and 'this' stay confined to that and this, and accepting this condition you use 'that' for this, then 'this' is likewise about to be used for that."
[391] *Taiyi sheng shui*, strip 10.
[392] I read this as "in relation to each other," or to put in more emphatic words, "by mutual contrast."
[393] *Taiyi sheng shui*, strip 12 and 14.

In my understanding, the text points to the holistic nature of the cosmos as directly accessible through experience of what there is: although we encounter qualitative differences, they imply oneness rather than discreteness. Difference is perceived as a contrast (e.g. soil–air, thick–thin, solid–soft etc.), yet the contrast means holding, in some way, both sides of the comparison together in the experience. It means thematizing one while being aware of the other that is not it. Discreteness, on the other hand, lies in names that we use to capture the differences. By pointing to 'this', we simultaneously establish 'that.' Only through getting a name is 'this' stabilized and treated as a discrete entity. Its boundaries, however changing or blurred, are provisionally made clear. Yet, the text makes the point that the way in which the cosmos is organized is a continuous and cyclic interplay of opposites. Therefore, we need to take names and the entities established through them for what they are, while bearing in mind that the cosmos is also continuous and undifferentiated in itself.[394]

Apart from the two instances quoted above, the *TYSS* does not speak about names. Its primary focus is on the differentiation. The process of differentiation is unceasing and continues down to the level of individual phenomena (*wan wu* 萬物). Their boundaries, or lines of definition, emerge and dissolve in accordance with universal patterns. In such a layout, boundaries are constitutive of the phenomena; they are the basis of their (provisional) individuation. In other words, a thing is not primarily defined through its essential characteristics but rather by the boundaries between what it is and what it is not. At the same time, boundaries are only temporary and unstable due to the ever-changing, interdependent character of the whole. Names appear to be one way of temporarily stabilizing the boundary lines between individual phenomena.

However, since the 'one' is primarily undifferentiated, the cosmological texts offer a perspective from which there are no real boundaries but only multiple complementary and interconnected modes of one single stream of being. From this point of view, an individuated thing is nothing objective or stable. That is where names come into play. The *Guanzi* passage cited above[395] says that "things come bearing names." This resonates with some more recent strands of philosophy according to which the speech and language pre-structure, or even

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[394] This interpretation resonates, in my view, with Heraclitus' image of a bow and a lyre (see above, Chapter 3, part 3.4, p. 69); there is tension between opposites that arises from their holding together; when undisturbed, the string is at rest, but when it is struck, the power of mutual bond is translated into moving energy and 'things' start coming out of it.

[395] *Guanzi*, Xinshu xia 心術下, see above, part 4.1.

determine, our access to what is, to the point that there is no entirely language-independent 'objective' reality. In this perspective, names are the way in which the reality is presenting itself. That is, they are not mere labels fished out from a language database inside of one's mind and put on things 'out there.' They are a grid or a prism through which the world of things comes to be, or in other words, the way of structuring the undifferentiated. They function as provisional boundaries between what a thing is and what it is not, thus picking or carving 'things' out of an undifferentiated whole.[396]

Nevertheless, the cosmological texts do not present names as ontologically fundamental or as a divine force that structures reality, either. Instead, they draw attention to the arbitrary and unnecessary character of names. Despite the role of names in the constitution of reality, they are still presented as tools allowing one to navigate the ever-changing world and to gain a temporary foothold in the stream of becoming. They are "mere sounds," "arising as empty," and they become stabilized only through shared usage and habit, as illustrated in the following examples form the *Heng xian*:

> 凡言名，先者有疑，荒言之。 後者校比焉。

> In general, when using the names to speak: at first people use them confusedly and vaguely. Those who follow compare and contrast them.

> 舉天下之名，虛樹。 習以不可改也。

> As regards the names in the world, at first, they are established as empty. But once they have become habitual, they cannot be changed.[397]

This ambiguity related to naming, common to texts such as *TYSS*, *HX* and other so-called Huang-Lao texts, can be summed up in the following way: on the one hand, names arise from the patterns of the cosmic process itself; human beings participating in this process are subjected to names that have already been established, they have grown into a language-structured reality; on the other hand, names are a human device, a tool through which things are managed; they are nothing firmly given and firmly attached to reality; they are a matter of convention and habit;

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[396] Hall and Ames, Thinking through Confucius, 274.
[397] *Heng xian*, strips 9-10.

and, most importantly, different ways of using names establish different realities. This can be illustrated in the way that the *HX* connects the very existence of things to their names:

有出於域，生出於有，音出於生，言出於音，名出於言，事出於名。

Something defined arises from a delimited area; the living arises from something defined; the tone arises from the living; speech arises from the tone; names arise from the speech; things to do arise from names.[398]

The *HX* establishes a link between "being there as something" (*you* 有), a name, and "something to be done". Names appear as a natural continuation of the process in which something arises and expresses itself. At the same time, they directly connect this process of arising with agency, and things with "things-to-be-done" (*shi* 事). The *HX* also plays with the double aspect of names: names are the link between the differentiation that takes place of itself and the distinctions made and agreed upon by people. They naturally arise as sounds made by living beings, and only when they are shared and used to communicate, can they become means of distinction and lead to action. For the names to fulfil this function, it is necessary that they are universally shared, otherwise they would remain just empty sounds.

It is evident that the role of names is conceived differently in this layout. Their closeness to cosmological speculations would suggest that they are associated with the differentiation and emergence of things, while the whole, the 'one' from which they emerge, is characterized as being 'without a name', *wu ming* 無名, that is, without differentiation. In such a cosmos, things have no substantial or essential basis for their individuation. Things, too, are in flux, waxing and waning, and they seem to be regarded as only accidental products of more fundamental processes. These recurring processes, not things, constitute the reliable foundations of the cosmos.

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[398] *HX*, strip 5-6. See also above, part 3.6.2. Cf. *Guanzi* 《管子》, Xinshu shang〈心術上〉：凡物載名而來。聖人因而裁之，而天下治，實不傷不亂於天下，而天下治。專於意，一於心，耳目端，知遠之證。 "It is ever so that things come bearing names. The sage relies on these to make decisions so the world will be well regulated. If actualities are not misnamed, there will be no confusion in the world and the world will be well regulated. Concentrate your powers of awareness and focus your mind. Your ears and eyes will then perform correctly, and you may come to know the far as if it were near." Transl. Allyn Rickett, *Kuan-Tzu*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1965).

Having a name is a condition of being articulated, and therefore being manifest, is also a possible interpretation of the following well-known excerpt from chapter 1 of the *Laozi*, suggesting that names have something to do with multiplicity of discrete entities that we encounter.

無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

Not having a name is where heaven and earth take their origin; having a name is the mother of all things.[399]

The 'unnameability' is one of the main features of the undifferentiated one in texts related to cosmology. The one comprises in itself all particular instantiations, yet none of these can be sufficient to capture it in its entirety. The only way to convey the one using a name would therefore be to label it as something that does not and cannot have a name. As in the already cited *Laozi* chapter 25:

有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大。

There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger. It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Dao. Making an effort to give it a name I call it the Great.[400]

Similarly, in the *LSCQ,* Da yue 大樂 chapter:

道也者，至精也，不可為形，不可為名，彊為之謂之太一。

As for Dao, it is the quintessence. It cannot be given a shape, nor can it be given a name. Forced to give it a name, I call it 'Great One'.[401]

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[399] *Laozi*, chapter 1.
[400] *Laozi* 25, (trans. Legge, 1891). Cf. also Laozi 32: 道常無名。; Laozi 41: 大象無形；道隱無名。
[401] *LSCQ* 22, Da yue 大樂, (trans. Knoblock, Riegel, 2000).

The Mawangdui silk texts *Huangdi si jing* 黃帝四經 (*HDSJ*) abound with the examples of *ming* 名 being mentioned together with cosmology, as in this example from the chapter Shi liu jing 十六經 , in which the figure of the Yellow Emperor is brought into picture:

> 黃帝曰：群群□…□，窈窈冥冥，為一囷。無晦無明，未有陰陽。陰陽未定，吾未有以名。今始判為兩，分為陰陽，離為四時，[剛柔相成，萬物乃生，] 德虐之行，因以為常。

> The Yellow Emperor said: (…in an undifferentiated lump…) unclear and obscure, as in one (round-shaped container); there was neither night nor day, neither yin, nor yang. Since yin and yang were not yet stabilized, I had no means to name it. So, in the beginning, it was divided in two, further divided to yin and yang, separated into four seasons; hard and soft began to complement each other, that is how ten thousand things were born, (virtuous and harmful behaviour arose, and it has then become a constant pattern.[402]

These different aspects of cosmologies and their implications for names must be taken into account to better understand the ontological background of the texts. I would therefore like to propose the following perspective: what the cosmologies try to convey is that the cosmos is only encountered as structured, that is, as a product of an act of grasping, picking out and putting into perspective, in other words, "making sense" of it. To support this perspective, I propose considering the role of names from three different angles: as a condition for being manifest, as the tissue of the world pre-structured through understanding (the embodied past), and as enabling self-projection and self-actualization.

4.5 Theoria v. praxis: intertwining of cognition and action

The role of names (*ming* 名) in cosmological accounts and its broader implications for understanding the ontology underlying Warring States–period thought calls for reinterpretation. Scholars usually interpret the mentioning of names in more speculative contexts as an indication

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[402] *HDSJ* 2, Shi liu jing 十六經, 2.2 Guan 觀 (part 2.2.3 in Chang and Feng, 1998); see also Li Chenyang (2008). The Ideal of Harmony in Ancient Chinese and Greek Philosophy. Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy. 7. 81-98.

of a shift between cosmological, epistemological, and pragmatic discourses. In other words, it is assumed that, in these texts, cosmology is directly applied to the world of human action, especially to self-cultivation and the art of government. But when it comes to early Chinese texts, we should be cautious not to impose on them metaphysical distinctions arising from the specific cosmological context and type of questions that originates in ancient Greece, such as the sharp distinction between *theoria* (θεωρία)[403] and *praxis* (πρᾶξις). To clarify, the point of my argument is not to show that this distinction, as well as other such distinctions (cosmic – human, subject – object, active – passive), is not present in early Chinese thought. The aim is to see them from the perspective of the previously explained alternative view of oneness and multiplicity, that is, not as mutually exclusive fixed categories but as the results of certain type of differentiation made towards a certain goal.

In Huang–Lao texts, names are not presented simply in the context of human *theoria* and *praxis*, that is, in the application of cosmological speculations to the world of human action, but as more directly involved in how things of the world come to be, or in other words, in the very structuring of the cosmos as such. To explore this, we must shift the perspective towards a more holistic model of ongoing interaction between "what generates" and "what is generated". Building upon Cheng Chung-ying's onto-generative interpretation of Gadamer's hermeneutics and Heidegger's ontology, I suggest that we consider names as a condition of "being manifest" and, at the same time, as a way of self-structuring of the cosmos. To provide a theoretical background for this argument, I turn to Heidegger's interpretation of language as "*Existenziale*" of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world, which he develops in *Sein und Zeit*. Looking at the texts through the lens of Heidegger's ontology, I propose that names constitute the received network of distinctions and relations that underlies thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) and, at the same, are essential for active self-projection into possibilities (*Selbst-Entwurf in Möglichkeiten*). By including language and speech in the onto-generative perspective, I build upon Cheng's view of the dynamic union of the receptive and the creative in Chinese cosmology.

Cheng Chung-ying has pointed out on multiple occasions that many misunderstandings between ancient Chinese texts and traditional philosophical terminology arise from dualist formulations of problems. Cheng is aware that a holistic cosmology, such as that exemplified by the *Yijing*, requires a specific kind of questioning. He finds it in theories that seek to abolish

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[403] θεωρεῖν (theōrein) - "to see"

dualism and embrace a processual perspective, especially in Gadamer's hermeneutics of Being and Heidegger's ontology. Cheng has transposed Gadamer's hermeneutical ontology of historically determined and intentionally self-determining being (developed in *Warheit und Methode*) into the onto-generative interpretation of early Chinese cosmology as the union of the receptive and the creative.[404]

In Gadamer and Heidegger, Cheng sees an "ontological turn" in Western philosophy in that they include language in ontological questioning, "making language the vehicle for being".[405] For Gadamer, language has even taken on the role of the centre (*die Mitte*) in which the subject and the world come together as one: "[…] die Sprache eine Mitte ist, in der sich Ich und Welt zusammenschließen oder besser: in ihrer ursprünglichen Zusammengehörigkeit darstellen […]"[406]

To outline the ontological role of language, that is, language as a condition of being manifest and at the same time as a tool of self-articulation, I turn to Heidegger's hermeneutics of *Dasein.* Heidegger's discussion of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world is important for the following reasons: 1) it attempts to overcome the subject–object split; 2) it embraces the processual perspective; and 3) it highlights the role of language (as speech) in the ex-sistence of *Dasein,* as situated and self-situating Being-in-the-world.

Heidegger explicitly seeks to overcome the subject–object split by introducing an entirely new type of questioning focused on Being (*Sein*), instead of entities (*Seiende*). He develops the concept of *Dasein* as a specific type of Being: *Dasein* is Being as situated (*geworfen*) and, at the same time, projecting itself actively (*Selbst-entwerfend*) in its possibilities. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is not "a being" (an entity) among other beings arising as things; it is a kind of Being (*Sein*) that incorporates potentiality-for-Being (*Sein-können*).[407]

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[404] Chung-ying Cheng, "Receptivity and Creativity in Hermeneutics: From Gadamer to Onto-hermeneutics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 42, nos.1–2 (2015) 10–41, 2016.

[405] Ibid. 20.

[406] Hans-Georg Gadamer, Warheit und Methode I: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik (Tübingen, Mohr, Siebeck, 1990), 478.

[407] Martin, Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), § 31, 143: "Dasein ist nicht ein Vorhandenes, das als Zugabe noch besitzt, etwas zu können, sondern es ist primär Möglichsein. Dasein ist je das, was es sein kann und wie es seine Möglichkeit ist". Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford, Cambridge US: Blackwell, 1962), 183." The English translation follows the German where indicated.

By building his ontology around the question of *Sein*, Heidegger has shifted the ontological perspective from structure to process and incorporated the radical openness (and thus temporality) of Being into his system: Being is a process open to future development, always bearing in itself the element of "not-yet", of reaching forward.[408] At the same time, *Dasein* is always already situated in the specific context of Being, it is Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) and its interconnectedness with Being of the whole and its situatedness in the particular context, that is, its "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*), is constitutive of it at every moment. Thus, when Heidegger exemplifies Being as *Dasein*, he sees it as a nexus of what is received and, at the same time, actively projecting itself forward.

From the viewpoint of *Dasein,* Being-possible (*Möglichsein*) means that there is something not yet actual, and in no way necessary. From the viewpoint of the receptive, Being-possible is the openness of the world. From the viewpoint of the creative, it is an *existentiale*, one of the fundamental characteristics of *Dasein*, as self-determining. It is important to note again that *Dasein* is not a subject in disguise but a situated kind of Being open to future development. Only by recognizing this can we say that it is through *Dasein* that the receptive and the creative processes come together in union.

There is still another important characteristic that distinguishes *Dasein* from being simply present at hand (*Vorhandenes*): Understanding the world from within its thrownness and understanding its future in terms of open, unnecessary possibilities is the constitutive feature of *Dasein* as Being-possible.[409] In other words, the union of the receptive and the creative presupposes a disclosedness of Being in understanding itself and its possibilities.[410]

Disclosedness in understanding means that, on the receptive side, the world is not simply given in its pure and objective undifferentiatedness. What is understood is always already structured

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[408] Cf. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* § 31, 145.

[409] Ibid., 31, 144: "Verstehen ist das existenziale Sein des eigenen Seinkönnens des Daseins selbst, so zwar, daß dieses Sein an ihm selbst das Woran des mit ihm selbst Seins erschließt." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 183. ("Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein' s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of."); "Im Verstehen liegt existenzial die Seinsart des Daseins als Sein-können," *Sein und Zeit*, 143. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 183. ("The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in understanding.")

[410] Ibid., 31, 147. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 187: "Die Erschlossenheit des Da im Verstehen ist selbst eine Weise des Seinkönnens des Daseins. In der Entworfenheit seines Seins auf das Worumwillen in eins mit der auf die Bedeutsamkeit (Welt) liegt Erschlossenheit von Sein überhaupt."; "The disclosedness of the "there" in understanding is itself a way of Dasein's potentiality-for-Being. In the way in which its Being is projected both upon the "for-the-sake-of-which" and upon significance (the world), there lies the disclosedness of Being in general."

– it has the structure of "something as something".[411] In understanding, Being is disclosed to itself as structured, which in this case does not mean being cut up into distinct pieces, but being integrated into the network of relations to the whole.

This is where names play their role: Language represents the primary medium through which *Dasein* can understand something "as something". Names express language-articulated being situated in the relations of space and time which they help to establish. Language therefore does not represent the result of the conceptual schematization of the world in one's mind or a collective agreement on cutting up sensory material into pieces, but rather an expression of the network of relations and distinctions that becomes disclosed in understanding.[412]

Finally, the whole act of understanding and self-projecting outlined above is not a discrete and linear task but an ongoing process of circular readjustment in which none of the actions can be thought of as separate. *Dasein* characterized as Being-in-the-world concerned with its own being (*dem um sein Sein selbst geht*) has, ontologically, a circular structure:

> Der »Zirkel« im Verstehen gehört zur Struktur des Sinnes, welches Phänomen in der existenzialen Verfassung des Daseins, im auslegenden Verstehen verwurzelt ist. Seiendes, dem es als In-der-Welt-sein um sein Sein selbst geht, hat eine ontologische Zirkelstruktur.

> The 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein that is, in the understanding which interprets. An entity for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure.[413]

To return to the three aspects of naming proposed above, that is, a condition for being manifest, the tissue of the world pre-structured through understanding (the embodied past), and enabling self-projection and self-actualization, these three can be seen as united in an ongoing cycle of self-actualizing Being-in-the-world.

For the explanation of how this interpretive model aligns with my reading of early Chinese cosmologies, let us reconsider the above-quoted Warring States–period texts. To sum up their

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[411] Ibid., 32, 149.
[412] Ibid., 34, 161.
[413] Ibid., 33, 153. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 195.

common features, they posit that the undifferentiated is the source of everything there is and movement is its modus; everything there is arises as a result of differentiation; things are defined by their boundaries, but their boundaries are in flux; names are presented as a way to take a foothold in the cosmos despite its being in movement. Within Heidegger's framework, to understand the cosmos in terms of things ("something as something") means to have it already pre-structured through language. It is through names that things can come about as things. Names temporarily stabilize the boundaries of things and also serve as provisional guiding lines along which this process further develops.

Language is also a medium of relations. Everything that has a name is already interconnected with other things (and processes) in one network. This "web of connections"[414] constitutes the medium of meaning, open only for Being for which its own being is an issue,[415] that is, *Dasein* as "ex-sisting". Names, therefore, do not exist separately, waiting for meanings to be attributed to them. To the contrary, it is the meaning (rooted in the fore-structure of understanding) that takes on a name.[416] The network that language represents is never fixed; it is always in the process of cyclic self-actualization through the act of "making sense" – it is indeed the living tissue of worldly being.

Although *Dasein* can easily be misinterpreted as a human subject in disguise, we need not reintroduce this element into the onto-generative cycle. Significantly, this element is also missing in the cosmologies in question. To avoid a formulation involving the self, we can say that at every moment, there is an event in which the net of meanings is taken and cast forward on what has not yet come to be, the event of being structured in a certain way and, at the same time, structuring what arises. In this event, there is an element of indeterminacy, or undifferentiatedness: what has "not yet" come to be remains open in its possibilities.

To take my interpretation yet another step further, the source of differentiation is not identified with the self, as we would expect, but with the undifferentiated "one", in the continuous process of differentiating itself into its many manifestations. From this perspective, the act of structuring the world through language would be only one of the many ways in which the "one" differentiates itself in its temporary manifestations. In other words, the only special aspect of

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[414] Cheng, Receptivity and Creativity in Hermeneutics, 27
[415] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* § 4, 12: "[…] diesem Seienden in seinem Sein um dieses Sein selbst geht."
[416] Ibid., 34, 161: "Das Bedeutungsganze der Verständlichkeit kommt zu Wort. Den Bedeutungen wachsen Worte zu. Nicht aber werden Wörterdinge mit Bedeutungen versehen." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 204.

being a "self", as opposed to other "things", would be its ability to become aware of the inherent undifferentiatedness, of the openness of possibilities into which it steps; to use the words from our texts, it can "embrace the one" (*bao yi* 抱一), "hold on to the one" (*zhi yi* 執一), "become one with the *dao*" (*yu dao wei yi* 與道為一). Cheng Chung-ying summarizes these ideas in his article on receptivity and creation as follows:

> Language is both a medium and tool, not medium alone, for unifying the receptive experience of the world in meaning, whether presupposed or not, in reference, whether explicit or not, and in the creative experience of the human self in inter-subjective communication and cross-cultural translation and persuasion.[417]

To summarize the main points of this part in a more straightforward way: Things arise 'as things' in narrow connection with names which, in turn, arise in connection with actions, or tasks, or 'things-to-do'. Action is processual and situational; it is way of being; it arises from the conditions (thrownness) and is oriented towards a certain goal (or simply, point of focus).[418] It involves, as its part, an act of structuring reality in a certain way for that purpose. Names are a product of this structuring. At the same time, they are also part of the conditions from which and with regard to which this structuring happens.

4.6 Social, non-individual character of names: stabilizing names (*zheng ming* 正名)

If we accept the perspective that there is a connection between names and fundamental human orientedness in the world, it has further interesting implications for our reading of early Chinese texts on names. Emerging in the Chunqiu period and stretching on to the Warring States, there was a traditionalist strand of thought, usually associated with the Ruists, *Ruzhe* 儒者, or the

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[417] Cheng, Receptivity and Creativity in Hermeneutics, 12.
[418] Cf. the above-cited excerpt from the *HX,* strip 5-6.

Confucians.[419] For our time, it became represented mainly by the Five Classics and, among the Masters, by the Analects, or *Lunyu* 論語, the *Mengzi* 孟子 and the *Xunzi* 荀子. According to these texts, the traditionalists sought answers to contemporary problems in the examples of good government of the sage kings of old. Vis-à-vis the deterioration of the central ruling authority and growing political and social disorder, they strove to restore and maintain social order by promoting correct models of behaviour, *li* 禮, education and cultivation of noble men, loyalty and obedience of subjects and firm social hierarchy. An ideal ruler was supposed to possess such moral integrity and intrinsic persuasive power (encapsulated in the notion of *de* 德) that the people would follow him willingly of their own accord, knowing that he acts in their best interest, in the above invoked "harmony of wills."[420] This type of desirable social cohesion was to be upheld by means of education, automatization and ritualization of certain forms of social interaction, and also by shaping the 'actual disposition' (*qing* 情) [421] of people through music and right words.

In this context, it is significant that the topic of names was carried to the top of political importance. The most cited text in this respect is the excerpt from the Analects (13.3) in which Confucius explains why 'putting names in order', or 'orderly names' (*zheng ming* 正名)[422] should be the primary concern of the ruler:

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[419] Among the works on Confucianism more relevant for this work, see e.g. Xing Wen, ed. (2006). Rethinking Confucianism: Selected Papers from the Third International Conference on Excavated Chinese Manuscripts, Mount Holyoke College, April 2004 儒家的再思考：第三屆國際簡帛研討會論文集. San Antonio: Trinity University, 2006; De Bary, William Theodore, and Tu Wei-ming, eds. (1998). Confucianism and Human Rights. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; De Bary, William Theodore (1991). The Trouble with Confucianism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
[420] Cf. Needham, 1956, see above Chapter 3, part 3.2.
[421] *Qing* 情 , usually translated also as 'feelings', 'emotional state'. Yet, this translation carries some undesirable associations, such as 'irrational, bodily reaction' in contrast to a 'rational thinking mind', the dualism that may not be pertinent to the early Chinese context. Based on the closer reading of *qing* 情 and its being contrasted with *xing* 性 'nature', or 'innate character', I prefer to translate it as 'actual state', 'situatedness', 'actual disposition.' For the discussion of *qing*, see e.g. Andreini, Attilio (2006). "The Meaning of Qing 情 in the Texts of Guodian Tomb No. 1." In: Love, Hatred, and Other Passions: Questions and Themes on Emotions in Chinese Civilization. Paolo Santangelo and Donatella Guida (eds.). Leiden: Brill; or Marks, Joel, and Roger T. Ames, eds. (1995). Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press.
[422] The much-studied subject of 'rectification' or 'correcting of names' (*zheng ming* 正名) is considered one of the pillars of Confucianism. Yet, its interpretation still remains a subject of controversies (see e.g. John Makeham, Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought, Albany: SUNY Press, 1994, p. 35). Whether this excerpt was part of the *Lunyu* has been put into doubt, due to its mention of *xing fa* 刑罰, penalties and punishments, which would suggest a later interpolation (see Arthur Waley, Lunyu, p. 170, note 1). Our present interpretation is proposed as one among many possible perspectives.

子路曰：「衛君待子而為政，子將奚先？」子曰：「必也正名乎！」子路曰：「有是哉，子之迂也！奚其正？」子曰：「野哉由也！君子於其所不知，蓋闕如也。名不正，則言不順；言不順，則事不成；事不成，則禮樂不興；禮樂不興，則刑罰不中；刑罰不中，則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也，言之必可行也。君子於其言，無所苟而已矣。」

Zilu asked, "If the Duke of Wei were to employ you to serve in the government of his state, what would be your first priority?" The Master answered, "It would, of course, be the rectification of names." Zilu said, "Could you, Master, really be so far off the mark? Why worry about rectifying names?" The Master replied, "How boorish you are, Zilu! When it comes to matters that he does not understand, the gentleman should remain silent. "If names are not rectified, speech will not accord with reality; when speech does not accord with reality, things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practice and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. The gentleman simply guards against arbitrariness in his speech. That is all there is to it."[423]

This passage is traditionally cited as the key example of *zheng ming* 'doctrine' or 'theory' in Confucianism. Another notorious passage cited in this context is *The Analects* 12.11:

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[423] *Lunyu* 13.3, trans. Edward Slingerland (Slingerland, Edward. 2003. Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, p. 139) Alt. James R. Ware, translated in 1980: Zi Lu said, "The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?" The Master replied, "What is necessary is to rectify names." "So! indeed!" said Zi Lu. "You are wide of the mark! Why must there be such rectification?" The Master said, "How uncultivated you are, You! A superior man, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve. If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music will not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore, a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect."

齊景公問政於孔子。孔子對曰：「君君，臣臣，父父，子子。」公曰：「善哉！信如君不君，臣不臣，父不父，子不子，雖有粟，吾得而食諸？」

Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about governing. Confucius responded, "Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons." The Duke replied, "Well put! Certainly if the lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain, will I ever get to eat it?"[424]

Whether the problem of correct names was or was not the main concern for the Confucians in the Warring States period remains open for debate.[425] Still, it became emblematic of the Ruist thought in the works of scholars concentrating on the relation between language and reality in early Chinese thought.[426] Most interpretations gravitate around the central sequence of the 13.3 passage *ming bu zheng, yan bu shun* 名不正，則言不順 , understood as referring to the correspondence between language and reality. "Speech will not accord with reality," [427] "language is not in accordance with the truth of things."[428] However, the present text does not feature the *ming* 名 / *shi* 實 couple as one might expect. Instead, it connects in one sequence *ming* 名 (names), *yan* 言 (act of speech) and *shi* 事 (things to do), similarly to the *Heng xian* example cited above.[429] That is, it links the problem of naming directly to the problem of

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[424] *Lunyu* 12.11, trans. Slingerland (2003); alt. trans. The Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, "There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son." "Good!" said the duke; "if, indeed, the prince be not prince, the minister not minister, the father not father, and the son not son, although I have my revenue, can I enjoy it?" (trans. Ware, 1980)

[425] Carine Defoort has suggested in her recent article that it may have been in fact only due to Hu Shi and his emphasis on the subject that *zheng ming* 正名 started to be seen as one of the main pillars of Confucianism (Defoort, Carine (2021). Confucius and the "Rectification of Names": Hu Shi and the Modern Discourse on Zhengming. Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy 20 (4): 613-633)

[426] See Makeham, John (1994). Name and actuality in early Chinese thought. Albany: State University of New York Press; Geaney, Jane (2010). "Grounding 'Language' in the Senses: What the Eyes and Ears Reveal about ming 名 (Names) in Early Chinese Texts." Philosophy East and West 60.2/2010): 251-93; Geaney, Jane (218). "Ming (名) as 'Names' Rather than 'Words': Disabled Bodies Speaking Without Acting in Early Chinese Texts." In: Having a Word with Angus Graham: At Twenty-Five Years into his Immortality, edited by Carine Defoort and Roger T. Ames. Albany: Statue University of New York Press; also Moeller, Hans-Georg (1994). Die Bedeutung der Sprache in der frühen chinesischen Philosophie. Berichte aus der Literaturwissenschaft. Aachen: Shaker; etc.

[427] See trans. Slingerland 2003.

[428] See trans. Ware 1980.

[429] *HX*, strips 5-6, see above, chapter 3, part 3.6.2.

communication, action and its further consequences. In accordance with the line of reasoning that I am following in this chapter, I read the sequence as "if the names are not straight, what is said will not be obeyed/followed. (And if what is said is not obeyed, tasks will not be accomplished.)"[430] Although the shift of perspective is small, the core of the *zheng ming* argument changes significantly. In this text, names are directly connected with taking action. If they are wrong, it is not because they do not correctly describe what there is, but because they do not lead to appropriate action. The talk is not about amending correspondences between names and some independently existing reality that they describe, but rather about ensuring that the reality will continue to structure itself appropriately through the use of right words that bring about the right action. We no longer need to suspect Confucius of proposing an impossible project of setting up a network of standardized names for everything. Indeed, in what sense could names be manipulated to achieve such goal, in order to reflect the existing things 'correctly'?

The *zheng ming* excerpt can be read as proving that Confucius' concern was primarily political, that is, that he was aware of the crucial link between the language and power, in decision making, doing politics and governing people. To put it in more general terms, he was aware of the fundamental connection between the use of names and the structuring of the world. As we have seen, the Warring States period thought environment brought the problem of language to the foreground. The arbitrariness and elasticity of language was exposed, art of argumentation and persuasion was perfected, sophisms became popular. At the same time, the traditional system of government based on an indisputable authority of the ruler was shaken. In my view, the excerpt expresses, through the words of Confucius, the awareness that names constitute the connective tissue of the society. Shared use of names is at the basis of shared worldview, shared values and cooperative action, things that hold people together as a society. But the more this tissue is pulled and stretched, the looser it becomes. 'Straightening of names' then could be understood as the effort to strengthen and stabilize the binding threads between members of the society, created through centuries of communication, cooperation, and common interests.

The loosening of the 'naming tissue' could have manifested at several levels. With the dissipation of the central ruling authority, the political reality became increasingly complex and

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[430] Another solution, closer to my reading, is offered by D. C. Lau (Lau, D. C. 1979. The Analects. New York: Dorset Press. p. 118): "When names are not correct, what is said will not sound reasonable." Cf. Cao Feng (2016): "If names are not correct, one cannot speak smoothly and reasonably."

the usual ways of formulating rules and orders and defining tasks no longer corresponded to the complexity of tasks. Also, the class of educated lower officials competed for rulers' favour using skilful persuasion techniques and rhetoric. It turned out that arguments, explanations and justifications can be custom-made to suit the purposes of a given ruler. Finally, if the lower ranking officials feel free to interpret the ruler's orders as they wish, original authority of the ruler's word dissipates before it reaches the people. The hierarchical structures of power become muddled, responsibilities confused, forces scattered, and the people can indeed no longer be sure "where to put their hands and feet."[431]

What, on the other hand, strengthens the network of names, that is, the tissue of the society, is the shared experience of doing things with certain purpose. And names, once again, constitute the basis of communication and coordinated action. Strengthening of social ties is therefore ensured by using the same words in the same expected situations to bring about the same desired actions and effects. This can be achieved through education, imitation of the role models, and repetition.

Moreover, if we accept that the basic cosmological features, that is, oneness and continuous change, were shared by the different strands of the Warring States thought, then even from the point of view of the traditionalists (*Ru zhe* 儒者) the connective tissue of the society was, by definition, always under threat of corruption and needed to be constantly maintained and renewed in order to hold the society together. Once the names start to be regarded as arbitrary, the whole network could disintegrate, including all the shared structures of meaning, reliability, responsibility etc.

In another presumably Ruist text, the *Xunzi* 荀子 (especially the *Zheng ming* 正名 chapter), we find a more detailed analysis of the topic which, in some respects, supports the interpretation proposed above:

> 故王者之制名，名定而實辨，道行而志通，則慎率民而一焉。

> So when the kings established names, the names were fixed, and the corresponding objects were thus distinguished. This way was followed, and the

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[431] See *Lunyu* 13.3.

kings' intentions were thus made understood. They then carefully led the people
to adhere to these things single-mindedly.[432]

The role of names, as is understood here, is apparently not to match some objective referent, but to establish distinctions (*bian* 辨), to pose the boundary between *shi* 是 and *fei* 非. Only then can the intention of the ruler be communicated, and the ruler and the people can 'become one' in their effort.

The *Xunzi* clearly expresses the idea that names are not something given but that they result from general social agreement.[433]

> 名無固宜，約之以命，約定俗成謂之宜，異於約則謂之不宜。名無固實，約之以命實，約定俗成，謂之實名。

> Names have no predetermined appropriateness. One forms agreement in order to name things. Once the agreement is set and has become custom, then they are called appropriate, and what differs from the agreement is called inappropriate. Names have no predetermined objects. One forms agreement in order to name objects. Once the agreement is set and has become custom, then they are called names of objects.[434]

The *Xunzi* also expresses the awareness that reliability of this social agreement constitutes the reliability of the whole system. It resolutely condemns wilful and arbitrary use of names and warns about the chaos that can result from it. In the background, we can sense the fear that newly discovered powers of rational argumentation and skilful persuasion could be disruptive to the society.

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[432] *Xunzi* 22, transl. Eric Hutton, Xunzi: The Complete Text, Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 236-237.
[433] In this, his views are close to those expressed in the *Heng xian*; cf. HX: 凡言名：先者有疑，荒言之。 後者校比焉。 "In general, when using names to speak: at first people use them vaguely, without precision. Those who follow compare and contrast them." 舉天下之名，虛樹 。 習以不可改也 。 "As regards the names in the world, at first, they are established as empty. But once they have become habitual, they cannot be changed."
[434] *Xunzi*, trans. Hutton (2014), p. 239; alt. trans. KG "Names do not have their stable appropriateness; they are agreed upon through being given. When the usage is stabilised and habit formed, then they are called appropriate. Then, when they diverge from the usage, they are called inappropriate. Names do not have their stable content; they are agreed upon through being given to the same content. When their usage is stabilised and habit is formed, we call it name with the content (fulfilled name)."

故析辭擅作名，以亂正名，使民疑惑，人多辨訟，則謂之大姦。其罪猶為符節度量之罪也。(…) 今聖王沒，名守慢，奇辭起，名實亂，是非之形不明，

> Thus, they called it great vileness to mince words and recklessly create names such as to disorder the correct names and thereby confuse the people and cause them to engage in much disputation and litigation. This wrongdoing was considered to be just like the crime of forging tallies and measures. (…) And now, the sage kings are no more and the maintaining of the names wanes. Queer expressions have emerged and the relation between names and actual realities is in disorder and the configuration of what is right and what is not is unclear.[435]

To put names in disorder, through disputes and argumentation, is considered equal to forging tallies and measures. Tallies and measures represent the embodiment of the social agreement. Although they are only human tools, they are binding for any individual who wishes to participate in social interactions. Names have a similar character.[436] Although they are man-made and arbitrary, their binding power lies in people's need to reach an agreement and be able to rely on it within the society. Anyone who wants to participate in the shared social reality has to accept its names as binding. Therefore, any attempt to tamper with them is plainly anti-social, it is "great vileness" (*da jian* 大姦). Here the difference between 'names' and what we would normally call 'a language system' comes out very clearly. Names, determining boundaries between *shi* 是 and *fei* 非, are inherently connected with shared values, to which those who use them subscribe.

A similar idea is expressed in Book 16 of *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*LSCQ*):

> 名正則治，名喪則亂。使名喪者，淫說也。說淫則可不可而然不然，是不是而非不非。

> If names are correct, there is order; if names are allowed to become confused, there is disorder. What causes the confusion of names are explanations that

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[435] *Xunzi*, trans. Hutton (2014), p. 237.
[436] Cf. the opening passage of the *Shenzi*, quoted above, part 4.1. *Shenzi* 1.4: 名者，天地之綱，聖人之符。Names constitute the main cord of the net of heaven and earth; they are the tallies of the sage giving him authority over all things.

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involve an excess of elegance and subtlety. If explanations involve such excesses, then the not acceptable is called acceptable, the not so is called so, the incorrect is called correct, and the not wrong is called wrong.[437]

The Zheng ming chapter of the *Xunzi* gives a very detailed account of issues related to names, including a few concrete examples of actually 'putting them straight.'[438] In a key passage, the *Xunzi* offers an insight into what is the ultimate purpose of having names and how they come to be:

異形離心，交喻異物，名實玄紐，貴賤不明，同異不別；如是，則志必有不喻之患，而事必有困廢之禍。故知者為之分別制名以指實，上以明貴賤，下以辨同異。貴賤明，同異別，如是，則志無不喻之患，事無困廢之禍，此所為有名也。

When different forms make contact with the heart, they make each other understood as different things. If the names and their corresponding objects are tied together in a confused fashion, then the distinction between noble and base will not be clear, and the like and the unlike will not be differentiated. If this is so, then the problem of intentions not being understood will surely happen, and the disaster of affairs being thereby impeded and abandoned will surely occur. Thus, the wise person draws differences and establishes names in order to point out their corresponding objects. Most importantly, he makes clear the distinction between noble and base, and more generally, he distinguishes the like and the unlike. When noble and base are clearly distinguished, and like and unlike are differentiated, then the problem of intentions not being understood will not happen, and the disaster of affairs being thereby impeded and abandoned will not occur. This is the reason for having names.[439]

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[437] *LSCQ*, Book 16, part 8, Zheng ming, trans. Knoblock, Riegel (2000, The Annals of Lü Buwei, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 400-403)

[438] Cf. *Xunzi* 22.1; the passage directly defines some key concepts, such as "human nature" *xing* 性, "dispositions" *qing* 情, "ability" *neng* 能, "intellect" *zhi* 智, "understanding" zhi 知 etc. It is interesting to note that these definitions are, what we might call, processual and the emphasis is put on distinction and mutual disambiguation, that is, 'setting boundaries.'

[439] *Xunzi* 22.4, trans. Hutton (2014), p. 237.

I quote this lengthy passage in its entirety because it captures well the important differences between our usual idea of names and their relation to things and how their purpose was perceived in the environment of the Warring States. First, it once again establishes the link between giving names, asserting values and putting intentions into action. This link is not accidental, but fundamental. The purpose of having names is to impart values, to communicate intentions and to carry out actions. What I also see as an implication of this passage, is the idea that the link between a name and its actualisation (fact, reality etc. – *shi* 實) is nothing stable or definite. There is no talk of correspondence or representation, but there is definitely expectation (order, direction, instruction) and its fulfilment through the corresponding process.

Secondly, the purpose of names is primarily to allow for clear and unambiguous distinctions. The focus is once more on setting the boundaries between two opposites, or between what falls in and what falls out of the expected range set by the name. As we can see, the distinctions mentioned above as fundamental are value-oriented and purpose-driven. The examples of names used elsewhere are often something relative, susceptible to cause a disagreement or dispute because it depends on one's point of view.[440] Thirdly, if there is no pre-established or 'correct' link between a name and its actuality. The act of using a name becomes generative – it establishes a distinction, thus influencing all ensuing distinctions and resulting actions. Only a wise and worthy man is authorized to do such thing, and his worthiness gives the authority to the names he has established, thus unifying the intentions of the people with his own. Unification, or harmonization, of minds seems to be the ultimate purpose of having names. That is why, as the *Xunzi* says, it is important to rely on the names established by the sage kings of the past, yet anyone who wishes to rule the people will both have to use the "old names" and establish "new names."

> 今聖王沒，名守慢，奇辭起，名實亂，是非之形不明 (…)。若有王者起，
> 必將有循於舊名，有作於新名。

> Nowadays, the sage kings have passed away, and the preservation of these names has become lax. Strange words have arisen, the names and their corresponding objects are disordered, and the forms of right and wrong are unclear. (…) If there

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[440] Among the examples related to names throughout the Warring States period literature, examples like what constitutes a "dog" or a "boat" are much rarer than e.g. what constitutes a "gentleman" or "loyalty" or what can be called "base."

arose a true king, he would surely follow the old names in some cases and create new names in other cases.[441]

The implied tension between old and new names is a significant point. It illustrates the two-fold nature of names invoked above, that is, that they are received as a given and, at the same time, they can be freely used and created.

To make the problem even more complicated, the *Xunzi* speaks about yet another source of distinctions – one's natural disposition to identify them through senses. The Zheng ming chapter contains what we might call one of the first expressions of 'natural universalism.'

> 然則何緣而以同異？曰：緣天官。凡同類同情者，其天官之意物也同。故比方之疑似而通，是所以共其約名以相期也。

> That being the case, then what does one follow and use to distinguish the same and the different? I say, one follows one's Heaven-given faculties. For all creatures belonging to the same category and having the same dispositions, their Heaven-given faculties cognize things in the same way. Thus, one compares similarities with another party and thereby has communication. This is the means by which one shares agreed-upon names so as to align people with one another.[442]

In the further development of the argument, the text speaks about the natural faculty of the mind to synthesize what comes in through the five senses into wholes and to verify the pertinence of names. This view seems to go directly against the interpretation proposed in this whole work: in addition to the ruler, or the sage, who establishes important distinctions in order to assert values and to achieve goals, there is, as if it were, a set of natural distinctions that precede any individual act of naming. They are simply 'out there.'

Although this part of the argument can be used to support the view that things exist of themselves independently of any self-orienting and self-projecting Being-in-the-world, there is a way to consistently read it as supporting the opposite. The shift required is the shift of focus from things to distinctions that constitute them. Unless we adopt a god-like perspective, that is,

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[441] *Xunzi* 22.3, trans. Hutton (2014), p. 237.
[442] *Xunzi* 22.5, trans. Hutton (2014), p. 238.

a perspective of a transcendent observer, our point of departure is always that of an insider, or in other words, that of a situated (*geworfen*) being. As such, we are part of a larger whole. Our pre-understanding of us being human and sharing this nature with other human beings, as the *Xunzi* text reminds us, has come to us as a part of becoming this human being, through speech, education and social interaction. The pre-structuring of the world into distinct things is something we have not made up ourselves, but we have arrived to it, received it and grown into it. What, in another discourse, would be called intersubjectivity, we might, in this discourse, call the fluidity of subject. Any individual, before actively assuming the role of the subject, that is before it starts creating his own distinctions, moves and lives within the reality that has been pre-structured for them.

If we take another step back from entity-focused thinking and towards processual thinking, the naturalist-universalist *Xunzi* passage can be read as capturing the most basic processes that constitute human beings. In other words, it offers a processual basis for any commonality among diversely situated bundles of processes that constitute people.

The examples from Shen Buhai cited above[443] suggest that not only the names capture the things as they are, they also play the role in how they will or should be. They are a 'net' that is cast on heaven and earth which helps the ruler, or the sage, accomplish their affairs. Yet, this net is, as if it were, not necessarily 'man-made'; it arises from the structuring of the heaven and earth themselves. What we may find unusual about this, is that names are thought of as being 'out there'. The role of the ruler is to pick them up correctly, or to let them come of themselves.[444]

The ruler's role, if he 'has a correct way' (*you dao zhe* 有道者), is to comply and to follow.[445] The idea can be traced in several other texts, among others, for example, the already cited Yang quan 揚權 chapter of the *Hanfeizi*.

> 用一之道，以名為首。名正物定，名倚物徙。故聖人執一以靜，使名自命，令事自定。

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[443] Part 4.1, p. 125, 127, part 4.6.
[444] See the *Shenzi*, 1.6 (1.7), part 4.1, p. 127 above.
[445] as suggested by *yin* 因 and *sui* 隨.

Following the method of the One, one must take names as a starting point. When names[446] are adequate then things are settled. When they are slanted then things move out of balance. That is why the sage, holding on to the One, remains quiet and lets the names be attributed by themselves, lets the tasks to be defined by themselves.[447]

The advice for the sage ruler to remain still and await names is indeed quite strange. If naming is seen as 'correct labelling' of elements of a situation, we can see that it is important for understanding the situation and making the right decisions. But if the decision maker is relegated to the role of a mere recipient, the question arises: where do names come from? Even in a more pragmatic interpretation, to the effect that the ruler's subordinates themselves come up with 'names', that is, they themselves bring necessary information, and formulate their tasks on the basis of that, it is still a strange idea that the ruler should assume such passive role, especially in the presumably Legalist context. Yet, similar advice is found in another *Hanfeizi* chapter, Zhudao 主道, where the sage king is defined as someone, who:

虛靜以待令，令名自命也，令事自定也。虛則知實之情，靜則知動者正。
有言者自為名，有事者自為形，形名參同，君乃無事焉，歸之其情。

(…) awaits empty and quiet and he lets the names to name themselves, he lets affairs to stabilise themselves. Being empty he understands the facticity of the situation, being still he knows the right measure of action. Those who have something to say will come up with names, those who have something to do will come up with forms. When forms and names fit together, the ruler doesn't need to get involved and he lets things return to their actual state.[448]

Both Yang quan and Zhu dao chapters of the *Hanfeizi* contain what could be classified as Daoist motives, such as encouraging the ruler to remain still and quiet, to 'adopt the way of the One', or in other words, to remain undifferentiated. But without using the prism of Legalist and Daoist labels, we still have to make some sense of the idea that names are something to be received,

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[446] In this context, 'name' can be understood as 'agenda' or 'job description'.
[447] HFZ 8, Yang quan 揚權.
[448] Hanfeizi 5, Zhu dao 主道. Both Yang quan and Zhu dao chapters are interesting for its seemingly 'Daoist' elements used in the 'Legalist' context.

picked up, rather than originating within oneself. This element, too, should be included in our reinterpretation of 'name'.

4.7 Posing boundaries and setting rules (fa 法)

The somewhat lengthy discussion about naming as an act of imposing boundaries earlier in this chapter brings us to another aspect of naming: the link between naming and power. In the previous segment, we focused on the role of names as a medium of social cohesion and the need to preserve and correctly use names from the position of a ruler. In this part, our attention turns from the 'received' names to names actively 'created', or asserted, and imposed on others from the position of authority.

In the many examples already cited,[449] the ruler is advised to carefully examine names to recognize the elements of the situation, to know what is the right action to take and to tell the beneficial from the harmful. Some texts, however, also mention the great power that comes with knowing how names work. For those who never thought about names and only use them in the way they have learnt from their predecessors, their reality has been largely imposed on them – the names they usually use determine how they perceive and understand their reality and themselves. Their roles determined by names dictate their actions. For the ruler, however, or any intelligent being who is aware of how names work, they become much less binding and much more flexible: they become tools that can be used for a purpose.

Through the above explained connection between names and values, we can see how this newly discovered potential of names became a major ethical issue. If the way things are usually talked about determines how they are viewed by most, then it only takes a little tweak in the discourse and the whole social reality can be changed in a big way. Then the problem for the ruler of the Warring States period would not be how "to call things by their right names,"[450] but how to use the names responsibly as a powerful tool to either maintain the existing social order or to establish a new one.

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[449] See above, e.g., nn. 211-214, 300, (*Shenzi, Hanfeizi, HDSJ, Guanzi*)
[450] See above, part 4.6. for the discussion about the *zheng ming* 正名 quote from the Analects 13.3 and the question of its pertinence for the Warring States period.

How much the discourse on names is value-laden can be illustrated by innumerable examples from all parts of the Warring States period spectrum of thought. But among these examples, those that stand out the most are 'anti-traditionalist', or 'legalist' texts. Texts such as *Shangjun shu*, *Shenzi* or *Hanfeizi* like to emphasize that old models are not necessarily appropriate for new times, and that ruling methods need to evolve according to the evolving needs of the state. For this purpose, they often invoke the metaphor of a craftsman who becomes more sophisticated in his craft and uses better tools in a better way as his field evolves. A modern reader may perceive a tendency here towards what would today be considered objective rationality: the beliefs in fortune-telling, spirits, fortunate and unfortunate timing, and the divine ancestral power, are discarded as obsolete and human skills and knowledge are praised as the 'new way'. 'To examine names' in this context often means to recognize the objective parameters of the situation in order to determine, with the greatest possible precision, what will happen next. In the context of guidelines for decision-making, the texts often mention weights, measures, and carpentry tools, that is, the devices that allow us to introduce regularity into an essentially irregular world. Weights and measures help us bring the multiplicity and variety of shapes down to a standardized measurement, while carpentry tools help us mould the variety of unique shapes into straightness or other desired form. [451]

The metaphor of a ruler underlying these texts is the one of a skilful craftsman who designs and constructs his state as an efficient machine, using his abilities, on the one hand, to understand the mechanisms already in place and, on the other hand, to establish new mechanisms in such way so as to optimize its performance. In this type of texts, the term *fa* 法, 'standard (method or procedure)', 'rule' or 'regulation', and also 'law' (incl. 'written law'), appears the most frequently. *Fa* 法 are necessarily formulated through names, and the act of introducing a rule is therefore closely related to the act of giving a name to something. Where the name determines an expected form or role, the rule makes this expectation even clearer. Where the name establishes a boundary between what a thing is and what it is not ('carves' the thing out of the undifferentiated), the rule solidifies this boundary and makes it into something regular and

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[451] To expand on this, see e.g. Hansen, Chad (1994). "Fa (Standards: Laws) and Meaning Changes in Chinese Philosophy." Philosophy East and West 44.3/1994): 435-88; or Cook, Scott. (2019). The Debate Over Coercive Rulership and the "Human Way" in Light of Recently Excavated Warring States Texts. (In: Chan, Shirley ed. (2019). Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts. New York: Springer.)

intransigent. Establishing a rule (or a law) is thus an act of naming taken to a higher level of fixedness.[452]

The above cited example from the *Huangdi sijing* illustrates the link between names and laws and sees the laws as naturally proceeding from names (notable is the use of *duan* 斷, 'to cut', and *fu* 符, 'tally', in this connection).

> 天下有事，必審其名。名理者，循名究理之所之，是必為福，非必為災。
> 是非有分，以法斷之；虛靜謹聽，以法為符。

> In (dealing with) affairs under heaven, it is necessary to examine their names. When the names are determined, (you should then) follow names and look into principles wherever they go – if you do so, then your action will necessarily lead to happiness, if you do not, they will necessarily lead to disaster. The distinction between right and wrong (what there should be and what there should not) is to be determined by law. For the one who is empty and still and listens carefully, laws are his tallies.[453]

Even more importantly for our present discussion, *HDSJ* makes an explicit connection between *dao* 道 and *fa* 法,[454] thus suggesting that laws have the same dual character as names: on the one hand, laws arise from the cosmic order itself, they represent its regularities and repeating patterns, on the other hand, they can be used as tools, improved and adjusted.

The first part of the *HDSJ*, Jing fa 經法, elucidates the link between *dao*, names and laws in many ways. As we have seen above, the role of the ruler is to remain as undifferentiated as possible, in order to be able to 'receive' the laws, to let them form (in his mind) of themselves, rather than actively creating them.

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[452] Interesting in this context is the clarification of *fa* in Mozi, Canon I, 71: 法，所若而然也。 In a tentative translation: "The rule - (if you) do something (according to it) in a certain way, it results in its being so and so."
[453] *HDSJ* 1.9.6 (trans. Feng and Chang 1998), see also above, n. 230.
[454] This has led some scholars to assume that the whole of *HDSJ* embraces the idea of natural law – that is, the 'human law' being formed on the basis of observed natural regularities (e.g., Peerenboom, R. P. (1993). Law and Morality in Ancient China: The Silk Manuscripts of Huang-Lao, Albany: SUNY Press.) As we have suggested earlier, *dao* in its general sense covers human affairs in the same way as natural phenomena; therefore, human affairs such as social order, affairs of state or individual ambitions constitute an integral part of the cosmic *dao*.

道生法。法者，引得失以繩，而明曲直者也。故執道者，生法而弗敢犯也，法立而弗敢廢也。

Dao gives birth to laws. Laws use (the measure of) gain and loss as a carpenter's cord to distinguish the curved from the straight. Thus, the one holding on to the *dao* formulates the laws but does not dare to counter them, when the laws are established, he does not dare to ignore them.[455]

On the other hand, some of the texts choose a more pragmatic view and emphasize the other side of the dual character: the creative side. If we remain within the metaphor of a craftsman, he understands that there is something given (material and its natural dispositions, actual situation, tools available etc.) to begin with, but he is also free to create something entirely new and to shape his creation to match his intentions. In this act, it is him who, despite being shaped, imposes a shape on things, thus bringing them into existence ('as things').[456] When applied to the problem of names, and laws as their special instance, this metaphor depicts a ruler who recognizes the given elements of the situation but uses this understanding to establish new names, forming new rules and laws according to his own intentions. An example of such texts is *Shangjun shu* 商君書 where this side of the equation is clearly emphasized:

夫常人安於故習，學者溺於所聞。此兩者所以居官守法，非所與論於法之外也。(…) 故知者作法，而愚者制焉；

Indeed, ordinary people abide by old practices, and students are immersed in the study of what is reported from antiquity. These two kinds of men are all right for filling offices and for maintaining the law, but they are not the kind who can take part in a discussion which goes beyond the law. (…) Therefore, a wise man creates laws, but an ignorant man is controlled by them.[457]

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[455] *HDSJ*, Jing fa, 1.1.1; cf. The above cited HFZ 5, Zhu dao 主道: "是以明君守始以知萬物之源， 治紀以知善敗之端。故虛靜以待，令名自命也，令事自定也。虛則知實之情，靜則知動者正。有言者自為名，有事者自為形，有事者自為形，形名參同，君乃無事焉，歸之其情。 Cf. also, e.g., *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子, chapter 兵政：＂賢生聖，聖生道，道生法，法生神，神生明。＂
[456] See above, Chapter 4, part 4.5 (Heidegger on Selbst-Entwurf, 'self-projection')
[457] *Shangjun shu* 商君書, chapter Geng fa 更法 (Reform of the law), trans. J. J. L. Duyvendak; cf. *Guanzi*, chapter Ren fa 任法: 夫生法者君也，守法者臣也，法於法者民也，君臣上下貴賤皆從法，此謂為大治。

The system of rulership based on laws therefore represents a great emancipation of the ruling authority from the tradition and ethical standards associated with this role.[458] Remaining 'undifferentiated' (*xu* 虚, *jing* 靜, *wu xing* 無形), the ruler adopts a 'valueless' position from which he can pick up the existing regularities in the most objective way possible and pin them down by means of names. Using the names as tools and making laws, he pursues his goals and the only 'value' involved in the distinctions thus created depends on whether this goal is being attained. Effectiveness therefore necessarily becomes the paramount 'value' embedded in this system of rulership.

The aim of this part, however, is not to make ethical judgments, but to demonstrate that the role of laws, similarly to the role of names, is to clarify boundaries of a thing (that are otherwise blended with their environment in one moving continuum), that is, to make a clear distinction between what it is, *shi* 是, and what it is not, *fei* 非. The *shi/fei* distinction is the basis of knowledge and naming, but in the act of actively creating new distinctions (posing new boundaries) it is projected forward to indicate what should be/what should not be (*shi/fei*).[459] A clear boundary projected onto a continuous process therefore necessarily involves a restriction of its own processual tendencies, like the dyke regulates the flow of a river.

We have seen that the cosmologies talk about things as being always in flux, coming into being and then returning to non-being, subject to continuous movement and change. In such an environment, regularities – being the only conceivable source of any stability – are always necessarily accompanied by openness to a new development (as there is always an undifferentiated state in the heart of every ongoing process). Therefore, any system counting predominantly on regularity is inherently intolerant and vulnerable to irregularities. As it can be seen in *Shangjun shu*, but also in *Hanfeizi* and in *HDSJ*, the government system based on laws has a major problem with processes that include contingency, that is, they do not develop as expected. In such a system, the only element allowed to create any novelty should be the ruler (or the top of the ruling hierarchy), and the rest of the system should be subject to absolute control and forced to obedience. The control is facilitated by taking advantage of natural tendencies of 'the material', including the people. It is therefore only logical that the system

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[458] Also expressed in *Shangjun shu* (chapter Yi yan 壹言): 夫聖人之立法化俗，而使民朝夕從事. ("When the wise man establishes laws and alters customs, he makes people engage in their tasks relentlessly from dawn to dusk." Trans. J. J. L. Duyvendak)

[459] See above, p. 4.5.

cannot tolerate independent minds that are not easily controllable, people who see through the rules and 'make up their own names'.[460]

A major part of introducing laws was to establish rewards, *shang* 賞, and punishments, *fa* 罰.[461] Within the logic of the rule as establishing a boundary, rewards and punishments are a way of practically asserting such (new) *shi/fei* distinction. In the *Hanfeizi*, this pair, famously called 'two handles', *er bing* 二柄,[462] serves to reduce otherwise 'open processes' (e.g. people with their own minds and preferences) to 'things', that is, to shape them into a unified and predictable mass that is easy to handle. With punishments prevailing significantly over rewards, both these 'handles' were there to eliminate uniqueness and unexpected behaviour by reinforcing in each process its most universal element – the tendency to perpetuate itself (i.e., avoid death).

The interpretation of laws (standards, rules, …) as an act of positing boundaries casts a new light on another important pair that appears frequently in these texts, *xing ming*, written as 形名 or (in this context more frequently) as 刑名.[463] It seems to first appear in the circles of 'logicians'[464] (thinkers who tested the possibilities of logic and language) to describe the relationship between an actual 'thing' (in the sense of something definite) and a name. But in connection to the law, it is often understood very specifically as penal law, or the definitions of punishments for certain action.[465] In *Hanfeizi* specifically, *xing ming* 刑名 is somewhere in between the two: it describes the relationships between what one is supposed to do and what one does. Goldin proposes a translation as "performance and title".

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[460] On the main legalist tenets and their contemporary relevance, see e.g. Pines, Yuri (2009). Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

[461] For a closer look at this topic, see e.g. Weingarten, Oliver (2020). "The Limits of Coercion: Rewards and Punishments in Early Chinese Military Thought." Journal Asiatique 308.1 (2020): 85-118; Turner, Karen (2009). "Law and Punishment in the Formation of Empire." In Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires, ed. Walter Scheidel, 52-82. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

[462] *Hanfeizi*, chapter 7 Er bing 二柄 . See e.g. Indraccolo, Lisa. (2022) "Two Handles to Rule Them All: A Structural Analysis of Han Feizi 'Er bing' 韓非子·二柄." Oriens Extremus 59/2022: 187-223.

[463] Both *xing* 形 and *xing* 刑 were used interchangeably to denote the same word ('to conform', 'to punish', 'appearance', 'shape', '(bodily) form'). For the proper discussion of *xing ming,* see e.g. Moeller, Hans-Georg (1997). "The Chinese Theory of Forms and Names (*xingming zhi xue*) and Its Relation to a 'Philosophy of Signs.'". Journal of Chinese Philosophy 24.2/1997: 179-208. Herrlee G. Creel (1970). What is Taoism and other studies in Chinese cultural history. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 79-91.

[464] Wang and Chang (1986, 57-64), on the other hand, suggest that 刑名 was originally used only in penal law (with 刑 meaning 'punishments') and only then it was adopted by 'logicians' who generalized it to describe the relation between names and actuality.

[465] E.g., in *Xunzi* (Zheng ming chapter), LSCQ (also Zheng ming) etc.

刑名者，言與事也。為人臣者陳而言，君以其言授之事，專以其事責其功。功當其事，事當其言 則賞；功不當其事，事不當其言 則罰。

Performance and title mean (the relation between) statements and tasks. When a minister presents his statement, the ruler assigns him a task according to his statement and evaluates his achievement only according to the given task. When the achievement corresponds to the task, and the task corresponds to the statement, then he is awarded; when the achievement does not correspond to the task, and the task does not correspond to the statement, then he is punished.[466]

Xing 形/刑 , with its semantic field ranging from 'being a model', 'conform to', to 'punishment' and 'appearance/form',[467] interestingly resonates with the idea of names (and rules) as imposing boundaries proposed above. We have described the act of naming as 'delineating' (introducing definite borderlines) or 'carving out' a thing out of the universal continuum. There is indeed a certain forced compliance implied in imposing 'a name' on something essentially 'nameless' (something escaping a name), that is, something processual and therefore always open to new development.[468] The third part of *HDSJ* (Cheng 稱) suggests that the name naturally follows the shape and not vice versa.

道無始而有應。其未來也，無之；其已來，如之。有物將來，其形先之。建以其形，名以其名。

Dao has no beginning, but it reacts. When it has not yet come, there is nothing (no-thing). When it has already come, it is the way it is. If there is a thing coming about, its shape is coming first. It arises in accordance with its shape, and it gets its name.[469]

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[466] HFZ, Er bing 二柄. See Paul Goldin. "Han Fei and the Han Feizi," in Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Han Fei, ed. Goldin (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013).

[467] Schuessler, 2007, p. 540.

[468] *Laozi* 74, 75 expresses this idea that forceful imposition of law goes against *dao* and can therefore be counterproductive. (Interestingly, Greek kategoria κατηγορία, 'accusation' (Liddell-Scott dictionary) is etymologically connected with a list of accusations against a convict which was read in a public agora. From this perspective, categorization, as an act of attributing a name by which something is attributed to a certain kind, could be seen as a significant way of speaking which, too, imposes a certain name-limitation on an entity.) However, these reflections are based more on free associations than on any lexical or textual evidence.

[469] *HDSJ* chap. 3 Cheng 稱, 3.1.1; Cf. Also Guanzi, Xinshu shang: 物固有形，形固有名，名當謂之聖人。 Things have their given form, forms have their given name. Who has the names right is called a wise man.

But when it comes to the practice of the government, the sequence is reversed and the names come first to 'create forms', that is to establish the expected processes leading to performance.[470] The one who 'creates forms' is the ruler whereas those who are subjected to the law lose their processual aspect, their unique and open way of being is suppressed and they virtually become 'things among things'.[471]

To conclude this part, its main purpose was to show that whenever we pose ourselves a question about names, there is always a pull towards various types of metaphysical perspectives that we need to counter because they involve, in one way or another, a dualist view of the world which we need to be cautious about in early Chinese context. In order to remain faithful to the image of cosmos as 'one' and in continuous motion, we need to reformulate questions related to names to the effect that they do not carry dualist, essentialist or substantialist implications. Instead of asking how a name relates to an object (conceived as steady and existing independently from it), that is, how it denotes or corresponds to it or how it captures the essence of it in terms of its characteristic features, we should be asking what is the ontological status of a name, what kind of process it is, where it comes from and how it is related to the process of taking form, that is, how it relates to the notion of a boundary.

If we were not willing to abandon the idea of names as representing some language-independent reality, we would have to remain puzzled with their role in Warring States texts. By adopting a process perspective, one can see naming as dynamically interacting with experience. From this perspective, there is no self-established world of entities waiting for us to be captured in words; 'things' (*wan wu* 萬物) are brought about as the result of the interaction of names with other worldly processes. What is not emphasized in the Warring States period texts is the image of a subjective 'mind' as a centre of this interaction. What is emphasized, on the other hand, is the possibility to become aware of this interaction and thus become a sage ruler.

In the intellectual environment that we seek to reconstruct, names are not primarily thought of as representing reality that exists on itself. If anything, it is the names, not the entities, that are 'out there'. Anyone who uses the language to speak has received names from the society and

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[470] Generally, on the art of rulership as connected to naming, see esp. Ames, Roger T. (1983). The Art of Rulership. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; or Pines, Yuri, Goldin, Paul R., Kern Martin eds. (2015). Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology in Early China. Sinica Leidensia 124. Leiden and Boston: Brill; or Wang Hsiao-Po a Chang Leo S. (1986), The Philosophical Foundations of Han Fei's Political Theory, Monograph No. 7 of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu.

[471] Here is yet another way of understanding of the famous *Zhuangzi* quote: 物物者非物.

has grown into its network of distinctions. The network of names constitutes the tissue of the body of the society, and as such it needs to be carefully maintained and protected. For the traditionalist strands in the Warring States thought, names represent the shared network of meanings that is the guarantee of social cohesion, justice and accountability.[472] They are also the deposit of all good practice and previous knowledge. For 'legalist' strands, names are sophisticated tools that allow those who have the power to shape the reality for themselves and for others according to their intentions. And for even more radical anti-traditionalists, names are artificial restrictions only provisionally imposed on undifferentiated and always changing reality.[473] As such, they can be useful for certain purposes but become unnecessary once the purpose is attained.

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[472] The trend represented by, e.g. *Lunyu*, *Xunzi*.

[473] On the one hand, represented by Shenzi (Shen Buhai) or Hanfeizi, on the other, by Laozi and esp. Zhuangzi. Cf. also the discussion of this spectrum below, chapter 5, part 5.5.

5. Self in cosmological texts

This work started from the attempted reconstruction of the cosmological background of the Warring States period texts, using a non-metaphysical, processual perspective. It continued with an inquiry into the nature and role of names within the reconstructed cosmological framework, and further, into the role of names in the Warring States' intellectual discourse in general as reinterpreted in the light of the cosmological texts. This inquiry would not be complete without exploring the implications of what has been found so far for the notion of the self. It is obvious that once we have identified 'things' as dependent on the way they are established as things, singled out of their surroundings, thematized and attributed value, we also must consider the other pole of that process of establishing and thematizing, that is, "the one who does it". The reformulation of the problem of self will help shed some more light on the connection between cosmology, naming and agency, which seems to emerge from the explored texts.

As we have seen in previous chapters,[474] the cosmological texts talk about the world order as an endless cycle of transformations with repetitive patterns, that is, a rather deterministic model in which every individual thing emerges and disappears in accordance with greater cosmic regularity. Such model does not seem to leave much space for novelty, uniqueness or contingency, let alone for the notion of freedom. Yet, the cosmological texts also contain what we could call promises of independence, or of greater control over what there is, that can be gained through the knowledge of cosmic processes and one's own position within them. The one who understands this, the texts say, will be able to know the auspicious from the inauspicious from within himself and choose his own path, thus becoming not only a part but an active co-player of cosmic processes, a co-creator of *dao*. These two aspects of cosmological texts appear to be in direct contradiction: in what sense can one become an active co-player while still being subordinate to broader cyclic processes of the universe? This apparent paradox cannot be explained without exploring the relation between cosmology, naming and the self in further detail.

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[474] See Chapter 3, esp. part 3.3

5.1 New understanding of the self

One of the distinctive traits of the texts from the corpus of this work is the way in which they engage the reader. Although they present their cosmological accounts, at the first sight, as something given, possibly from the position of authority or as handed down through ancestral tradition, they nevertheless address the reader as a decision-making being, an individual seeking to understand the structure of the cosmos.[475] What they offer is not a dogma but an explanation, and also an invitation to see oneself and the world in a different light.

The FWLX opens with a series of intense questions that have no match in other texts from this period:[476]

> 屢問： 天孰高歟， 地孰遠歟。孰為天 ？ 孰為地 ？ 孰為雷 ？ [11] 孰為電？土奚得而平？水奚得而清？草木奚得而生 ？ [12A] 禽獸奚得而 鳴？ [13B] 夫雨之至 ，孰唾津之 ？夫風之至 ，孰噓吸而迸之 ？

> People often ask: What is higher than the heaven? What is broader than the earth? Who made heaven? Who made earth? Who makes a thunder? Who makes a lightning? How is it that the land is flat? How is it that the water is clear? How is it that the plants and trees grow and that the birds and beasts cry? When the rain comes, who is spitting? When the winds arrive, who propels them through inhaling and exhaling?[477]

These urgent questions reveal an inquiring mind that wants to find new and better answers – not those imposed on it from the position of authority (through a ruler, priest, shaman, or a mythical account), but the ones that can be intellectually grasped and accepted or rejected on one's own accord. They appeal to an individual who has reached a certain stage of intellectual maturity and seeks to understand, not just accept. This new type of questioning can remind us of Aristotle's account of the beginnings of philosophy through wonder as the desire for knowledge for the sake of knowing:

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[475] This feature, i.e. addressing the reader as a critical-minded being is not limited to the examples mentioned in this work's corpus. It starts appearing across the wider spectrum of Warring States texts in our period of focus (from mid-4th-3rd cent. BC) and becomes prominent in texts such as *Xunzi* or *Hanfeizi* which already have the character of philosophical essays.
[476] Resembling to Tian wen 天問 (Questioning Heavens) from Chu ci 楚辭 (Songs of Chu), see above, part 3.6.3.
[477] *FWLX*, strips 11-13, see also above 3.6.3.

διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν τὰ πρόχειρα τῶν ἀτόπων θαυμάσαντες, εἶτα κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω προϊόντες [15] καὶ περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διαπορήσαντες, οἷον περί τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too, e.g. about the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and about the origin of the universe.[478]

New questions, and supposedly new answers, attest to a changing intellectual environment of the Warring States in which all previous explanations of the world order were put to test. The reader is challenged to consider the proposed cosmological account and take it as a basis for a shift of perspective:

聞之曰 ： 能執一 ， 則百物不失 ；如不能執一 ， 則 [22] 百物俱失。如欲執一 ， 仰而視之 ， 俯而察之。 毋遠求 ， 度於身稽之。

I have heard it said: if you can hold on to the 'one', then none of the things is lost; If you cannot hold on to the 'one', then all the things are lost. If you want to hold on to the 'one', look up and see it, look down and examine it. Do not seek it far away but examine the measure that is right within yourself.[479]

One should no longer be looking for external guidelines but find the measure of correctness within himself.[480] In this direct move against traditionalism, a new perspective of the self emerges: a self that is independent, in what it considers to be correct, from what has been established as correct before or what has been predetermined through external authority or through divination.

The texts often have a directly exhortative tone. A prominent example of that would be this passage from Nei ye, sounding as urgent as if it were meant to wake the reader from a dream:

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[478] Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book I, 982b11–16, trans. Hugh Tredennick 1933.
[479] *FWLX*, strips 22-23.
[480] The turn can remotely remind of, e.g., St. Augustine's "Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi." (De vera religione, XXXIX, 72)

能摶乎？能一乎？能無卜筮而知吉凶乎？能止乎？能已乎？能勿求諸人而得之己乎？思之思之，又重思之。

Can you concentrate? Can you be one? Can you not resort to divination (using milfoil or bones and shells), and still know auspicious from inauspicious? Can you stop? Can you cease? Can you not seek it in others but obtain it from within yourself? Think about it, think about it, and think about it again.[481]

A similar passage is found in the *Zhuangzi*, as an alleged echo of Laozi's words:

老子曰：「衛生之經，能抱一乎？能勿失乎？能無卜筮而知吉凶乎？能止乎？能已乎？能舍[482]諸人而求諸己乎？

Laozi said, '(If you ask about) the basics of safeguarding one's life: Can you embrace the One? Can you keep from losing it? Can you know the auspicious and inauspicious without divination through tortoise shells and milfoil? Can you stop? Can you cease? Can you let go of (looking for) it in others and seek it within yourself?[483]

The idea of 'inner measure of correctness' suggests that there is knowledge accessible from within oneself – at least in the form of shi 是/fei 非 (it is so / it is not so, correct / incorrect). The scope of knowledge available 'from within' is apparently greater than what would be normally accessible through one's individual experience, as suggested for example by another FWLX passage:

聞之曰：執道，坐不下席。端冕 [14] 著，不與事，先知四海，至聽千里，達見百里。是故聖人處於其所，邦家之 [16] 危安存亡，賊盜之作，可先知。

I have heard it said: When one holds on to the (right) way, he can be seated, not leaving his mat, he can wear his cap straight, not getting involved in affairs (of others), and still know (about everything between) the four seas, hear everything

[481] Nei ye 內業 (*Guanzi*), part 6 (see also Appendices); a paraphrase of the passage in Xinshu xia 心術下 (a commentary to Nei ye) goes: 能專乎？能一乎？能毋卜筮而知凶吉乎？能止乎？能已乎？能毋問於人，而自得之於己乎？; cf. FWLX strip 22: 毋遠求，度於身稽之。; Zhuangzi 23, Geng sang chu 庚桑楚.
[482] Reading 舍 as 捨.
[483] Zhuangzi 23 (雜篇), Geng sang chu 庚桑楚.

within a thousand miles and see everything within a hundred miles. That is why the wise man remains where he is, and still knows in advance whether the state is in danger or in safety, whether it will survive or perish, and knows in advance the schemes of bandits and traitors.[484]

Greater knowledge coming from within is also one of the promises of Nei ye:

敬慎無忒，日新其德；徧知天下，窮於四極；敬發其充，是謂內得 。

> If one is respectful, cautious and without wavering, his inner power is daily renewed. He can know about everything under the heaven, encompass everything between the four extremities (of the earth) and respectfully bring forth his plentiful resources. That is called having attained it on the inside.[485]

To explore where this supposedly powerful and omniscient self[486] comes from, we need to find how it fits in the cosmological scheme that this work has been trying to reconstruct. We will need to reconsider what 'inner' and 'outer' actually means in the processual perspective in which all boundaries are subject to ongoing change and negotiation. We will need to re-evaluate the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' within the system in which all processes are interconnected.

It is important to note that, despite the 'oneness' cosmological setting, the texts still speak to the reader as a person in the most ordinary sense, that is, to one's 'personal self'. They use the usual dualist formulations in which there is an 'I' that deals with 'things' of the world and is a source of action, even though both sides of this dualism are seen as more closely intertwined. In the following, we will try to find the logic behind the relation between the self and the cosmos viewed as One that is continuously splitting itself in innumerable ways.

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[484] FWLX, strips 14, 16, 26. Also, *TYSS*, strip 8, expresses a similar idea rather radically: 君子知此之謂[智, 不知此之謂之愚] 。 The noble man who knows it is called [knowledgeable, the one who does not know it is called ignorant.] Cf. Laozi 28, 22.

[485] Nei ye, part 16. In Nei ye specifically, 'going within' not only leads to greater knowledge, but also to bodily prosperity, longevity and safety from adversities.

[486] The motive of an 'omniscient sage who does not leave his seat' appears abundantly in other Warring States texts, e.g. Laozi 47: 是以聖人不行而知，不見而名，不為而成。(…) 不出戶知天下 ; this last passage is quoted or paraphrased in *Hanfeizi*, *Wenzi*, *Huainanzi*, and *LSCQ*). In *Hanfeizi* 21, Yu Lao 喻老, it is commented: 空竅者，神明之戶牖也。耳目竭於聲色，精神竭於外貌，故中無主。中無主則禍福雖如丘山無從識之，故曰：「不出於戶，可以知天下；不闚於牖，可以知天道。」**此言神明之不離其實也**。

5.2 Self as a process

If we want to propose a consistent interpretive framework for the Warring States texts of this type, we will have to pose a question about the self differently. In metaphysical systems built on the primacy of entities, the self does not escape a certain 'entity-ness' in that it is conceived as relatively stable, discrete, and having some essential characteristics which determine its actions. Regarded from within, it is a subject to which all other entities are objects, regarded from without, it is a special type of entity. As in the case of names, it would be impossible to summarize the complicated conceptual history of the notion of self throughout philosophical tradition in the limited scope of this work, and it is not even its aim.[487] But in order to align the perspective of the self with the process cosmology based on oneness, we will at least need to identify, by negation, what it cannot be. First, it should not involve any radical metaphysical split into different layers of reality because it would defy the oneness; second, it should not involve any eternal or unchangeable elements because it would defy the continuous becoming; third, it should not be conceived as discrete and standalone because, within oneness, all opposites arise and disappear in mutual connection.

In an entity-based worldview, it is possible to see the self as something stable, with its own unity and integrity in space and time, and to set it apart as a special type of entity, one that is able to perceive other entities, reflect and act on them from an independent position. In general non-philosophical discussions, we are more likely to encounter a more common and less sophisticated view of the self as a walking bundle of perceptions, emotions, memories, and personal intentions, wrapped in an individual body, moving around in the world of things and acting on them or being acted upon by them.

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[487] For more comprehensive overviews, see e.g. Brinthaupt, Thomas M. and Lipka, Richard P. (1992). The Self: Definitional and Methodological Issues. Albany NY: State University of New York Press; Ames, Roger T., Dissanayake, Wimal and Kasulis, Thomas P. (eds.) (1994). Self as person in Asian theory and practice. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. On the self in early Chinese thought, e.g. Slingerland, Edward (2004). "Conceptions of the Self in the Zhuangzi: Conceptual Metaphor Analysis and Comparative Thought." Philosophy East and West 54, no. 3/2004: 322–42; Berkson, Mark A. "Conceptions of Self/No-Self and Modes of Connection: Comparative Soteriological Structures in Classical Chinese Thought." The Journal of Religious Ethics 33, no. 2 (2005): 293–331.; and see note 483 below.

Conceiving the self in terms of process philosophy requires a different approach.[488] The self, as well as other things, is never separate but always involved in the all-encompassing cosmic process, *dao*. The challenge is to interpret it as a process in its own right. It cannot be simply identified with usual 'me', because within the process perspective, 'me' and 'not-me' arise together as a result of the process of their differentiation. Thus, 'me' becomes 'me' only in opposition to anything regarded as 'not-me'. On the other side of the relationship, there are things that also have to be conceived as products of the same process. They are not stable and discrete of themselves but they emerge and relapse into the undifferentiated, depending on the course of action that brings them into existence. As such they are, in the most radical sense, situational, configurational, dependent, and temporary. A thing becomes a thing only through being thematized or focused upon. If the process of differentiation does not take place, both 'me' and 'not-me' (both the subject and the thing) remain in the undifferentiated, or in other words, they remain one.

The self thus conceived is much less graspable: it emerges and disappears together with things that it encounters, or prompts. It has no substance or essence that would be the basis of its individuality, and it does not even necessarily have to be associated with a person, or a human being for all that matter. If it can be conceptually isolated, then only as a specific type of process – with its own individual development and trending – which gathers its own momentum along the way. Yet, even as a specific process, it remains entangled in the universal cosmic process, as a continuation of processes that preceded it and the source of the processes that will ensue.

Conceiving of the self as continuous with the whole of the cosmos – that is, with the One – has important implications for our usual understanding of cognition, knowledge and memory. When the exploration of self is no longer burdened by the metaphor of an individual mind residing in an individual body, some questions and answers provided by early Chinese texts can start to make better sense. Instead of a 'walking storehouse', with its own thoughts, perceptions, and memories, one is regarded as a receiver, and perpetuator, of repercussions of the processes that have led to it, all the way back to the original oneness. Also there is no epistemological

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[488] There are newer studies in Chinese philosophy proposing a reconsideration of the essentialist view of the self, outlined above, in the context of early Chinese texts, e.g. Fox Brindley, Erica (2010). Individualism in early China: human agency and the self in thought and politics. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, or Puett, Michael J. (2002). To Become a God. Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center.

barrier between the One and any given individual self: the whole body of knowledge of what has been is, in principle, accessible to any one being that has arisen from the One.[489]

However, the Warring States texts mostly do not speak about human beings directly in these processual terms. They speak from the perspective of people communicating and dealing with each other and with things, and making each other responsible for their actions. The distinction between a heart-mind (xin 心) on the 'inside', encountering things on the 'outside' is also made clear. Even though both 'self' and 'things' are presented as relatively less stable and prone to change, they still serve as a temporary foothold in the universal becoming.[490] In this context, the cosmological accounts of oneness and processuality, being formulated in this way, may have been intended to challenge the usual worldview, and ultimately to cause a radical transformation of the reader's own sense of self.

5.3 Becoming One

The promises of freedom and greater power in cosmological texts are often connected with the talk about the 'undifferentiated', including its variants such as 'simple', 'empty', 'quiet', 'formless', 'nameless'.[491] The desirable strategy to shift one's view of the self is described as "embracing the One" (*baoyi* 抱一)[492] or "holding on to the One" (*zhiyi* 執一).[493] What does it mean within the already proposed framework? As it was suggested in Chapter 3 above, oneness is to be seen as the way of being of the cosmos, the original coincidence of all opposites and a continuous undifferentiated source of all differentiation. For a thing, its 'thingness' aspect represents the point of view from which it stands out against its environment in an apparent unity and stability in time. Yet, there is another point of view from which a thing is never still, its boundaries with its environment are continuously negotiated, and it is always in the process of becoming something new. As such it has in itself a point of indeterminacy, a 'not-yet', which is the same as the 'not-yet' of the cosmic whole. That the One remains 'present' throughout the

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[489] This would be a possible interpretation of the promises of "omniscience"; see above, e.g. FWLX 14-16, *Laozi* 47 etc.
[490] Cf. Chapter 4, part 4.4.
[491] See above, chap. 3, part 3.6.2.
[492] *Laozi* 22, 10; *Zhuangzi* 23
[493] *FWLX* 22–23 , cf. *Guanzi*, Xin shu xia, Neiye

process of differentiation[494] means that there is a grain of undifferentiatedness in every individual part of the whole. There is therefore no real gap between the process of cosmic differentiation and any particular process of differentiation at any level of being, other than the difference of scale and perspective.[495]

In this context, cosmological texts may have a reassuring effect: there is an inherent order in the patterns of the cosmic process — *yin* and *yang*, hot and cold, dry and wet hold each other in mutual balance and none of them can prevail; the four seasons take turns and will not stop; everything circles back and starts anew in more or less regular cycles. The way of heavens (*tiandao* 天道), or what today might be called 'natural forces', maintains the cosmic balance in a way that nothing can go dramatically wrong even if no 'action' is taken. This situation is illustrated, e.g., in the Baixin 白心 chapter of the *Guanzi*:

> 天行其所行，而萬物被其利. 聖人亦行其所行，而百姓被其利. 是故萬物均既誇（百姓）眾矣. 是以聖人之治也，靜身以待之，物至而名自治之.

> Heaven carries out its functions, and all things are thus benefited. The sage also carries out his functions, and the hundred clans are thus benefited. For this reason, all things are treated equally, and the hundred clans proliferate. This being the case, the sage, in maintaining good order, remains quiescent while waiting for things. When things arrive, he assigns names to them.[496]

From the point of view of a human being – if it is regarded as a process among other processes –, the situation is more complicated though. All processes have their specific tendencies, obey certain trends and together create situations, each of which has a specific configuration and possible development. As an individual, one may feel just as 'a thing among things,' a small insignificant particle being determined by the momentum of greater and ungraspable processes already under way. In this spirit, it may be regarded as safer and wiser for an individual to go

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[494] See above, chap. 3, p. 3.6.1.

[495] This 'no-thing' aspect of things is pointed out in multiple ways in the *Zhuangzi*, where the differences of scale and perspective is so often pointed out (e.g. Zhuangzi 2, Qi wu lun 齊物論: (tip of an autumn hair) 天下莫大於秋豪之末，而大山為小；莫壽乎殤子，而彭祖為夭。 Or 1, Xiao yao you 逍遙遊: (perspective of a cicada) 朝菌不知晦朔，蟪蛄不知春秋，此小年也。 Or 18, Zhi le 至樂: (when talking about the deceased wife) 察其始而本無生，非徒無生也，而本無形，非徒無形也，而本無氣。雜乎芒芴之間，變而有氣，氣變而有形，形變而有生，今又變而之死，是相與為春秋冬夏四時行也。

[496] *Guanzi*, chapter Baixin 白心

along with these greater processes, which in practice could mean sticking to the existing patterns, imitating old models, using time-proven solutions, or even perpetuating certain narratives. Even if there were a possibility to choose one's own path, it would be safer not to embrace it if one does not want to get in the way of a more powerful cosmic dynamics. Otherwise he risks being swept away, with all his individual plans and ambitions.

However, the cosmological texts speak not only about cosmic indeterminacy but also about self-determination, which arises from holding together one's possibilities 'as one', in other words, from being able to hold the 'plus' and 'minus' together. To move from the perspective of a small particle to the perspective of someone who is undetermined and self-determining – that is, creative in the same way as the whole of the cosmos is – requires precisely the shift of focus: it requires one to move his sense of self from the particular, limited and situated being to the unlimited and undifferentiated source of all beings.[497] The one who understands the cosmic dynamics can lean towards the undifferentiated within himself and adopt a position 'in the centre' of any particular event – the position of the immovable 'axis of Heaven and Earth', [498] likened to that of the Pole Star in the sky (also identified with its deity, called Great One or Great Ultimate), which does not move and the heaven with its constellations revolves around it. *Nei ye* offers a powerful image of the sage as the axis of Heaven and Earth:

> 人能正靜，皮膚裕寬，耳目聰明，筋信 而骨強，乃能戴大圜，而履大方。

> If one is able to be correctly disposed and quiet, his skin will be fresh and smooth, his ears and eyes sharp and clear, his sinews firm and bones strong. Then he can carry the Great Circle (of heaven) on his head and stand on the Great Square (of earth).[499]

Laozi 28 uses the term *tianxia shi* 天下式 , which can be associated with the above-mentioned *shipan* 式盤 or 'cosmograph'.

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[497] This shift happens, inter alia, through the recognition of the role of names; for the related discussion of the view of being as "thrown" and "self-projecting", see above, chapter 4 (part 4.5).

[498] As mentioned in Chapter 3 above, Sarah Allan speaks in this context about an astrological device called 'cosmograph' or cosmic compass (*shi* 式, *shipan* 式盤), technically a small model of the universe – its square plate represents earth and the circle on the top matches heaven. The two are joined together by an axis or pivot, around which they revolve: in *Laozi* 22, 28 and 65, the sage is compared to such pivot which remains immovable while the whole of the universe revolves around him (Allan, 2003, 250). See above, chapter 3 (3.6.1), p. 79.

[499] Nei ye, part 16, (see also Appendices- Nei ye).

知其白，守其黑，為天下式。為天下式，常德不忒，復歸於無極。

Know the white, yet safeguard the black, and be a model for the world. As a model for the world, your real potency will not be wanting, and with your potency not wanting, you return to the state of the limitless.[500]

The intuition that there is something non-determined and autonomous within one's self resonates also in *Xunzi*. Chapter 21, Jie bi 解蔽, shows how the mind is able to operate at the same time as undifferentiated and differentiating:

人何以知道？曰：心。心何以知？曰：虛壹而靜。心未嘗不臧也，然而有所謂虛；心未嘗不兩也，然而有所謂壹；心未嘗不動也，然而有所謂靜。 (…) 心生而有知，知而有異；異也者，同時兼知之；同時兼知之，兩也；然而有所謂一。

How does one know the way? Through the mind. How does mind know it? Through being empty, one (focused) and still. Mind will keep everything that it experiences, but there is still something in it that can be called emptiness. Mind will keep differentiating everything that it encounters, yet there is still something in it that can be called one. Mind will keep moving with everything that it experiences, but there is something called still within it. (…) The mind, as soon as it is born, can understand; when it understands, it differentiates. That something is differentiated means that the both (sides of the difference) are understood simultaneously; when both sides are understood simultaneously, the mind makes it two. Yet there is something in it that can be called one.[501]

The example of *Xunzi* shows that the power residing in indeterminacy and undifferentiatedness is no mystical power, accessible through some mysterious connection with the One. It can be simply translated as a power of an 'objective' and independent mind, able to choose its own words for things, and establish their boundaries on its own accord. 'Objective' is used here precisely in the sense of standing 'in the middle' of the event, not being biased or inclined in any way, finding a stance from which one's individual situatedness is not a factor for evaluating

[500] *Laozi* 28, trans. Hall and Ames (2003), p. 111. Cf. also Laozi 22 and 65; Zhuangzi 33, Tianxia 天下 chapter.
[501] *Xunzi*, chapter 21, Jie bi 解蔽.

circumstances. As such the mind is identical with the locus of decision-making. It can be autonomous and have the 'source of movement and rest within itself'.[502]

> 心者，形之君也，而神明之主也，出令而無所受令。自禁也，自使也，
> 自奪也，自取也，自行也，自止也。

> The mind is the ruler of the bodily shape and master of the spiritual forces. It gives orders and has nowhere to receive orders from. It forbids itself and it makes itself do things, it makes itself give and take, it makes itself move and stop.[503]

5.4 Locus of decision-making

In Chapter 4, I have suggested that the cosmological texts see an important link between names and things coming into being as things. Naming was taken out from its purely linguistic context and explained as an act through which the boundaries of a thing are temporarily determined and their 'thingness' is thus established. However, the question that remained open was the question about the source of names, that is, about 'the actor' of the naming act.

Laozi chapter 1, which I have already cited in the context of individuation, suggests that although the multiplicity of things is linked to their having a name, not having a name (or that which has not a name) is the origin of all differentiation.

> 無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

> Not having a name is where heaven and earth take their origin; having a name is the mother of all things.[504]

Similarly, *Zhuangzi* chapter Qiwulun expresses the idea of mutual interconnectedness (and interdependence) of opposites, and their effective oneness.

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[502] Aristotle in Physics B, 1 (192b14) refers to *physis* as something that has in itself the source of movement and rest (*archē kinēseōs kai staseōs*), i.e. it is not moved by other; cf. Heidegger, *Vom Wesen und Begriff der Physis* (1967), p. 189.

[503] *Xunzi*, chapter 21, Jie bi 解蔽 (trans. on the basis of the Czech trans. of *Xunzi* by Lukáš Zádrapa; Zádrapa, Lukáš (2019). Sün-c': tradičně Sün Kchuang. Praha: Academia)

[504] *Laozi*, chapter 1.

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是亦彼也，彼亦是也。彼亦一是非，此亦一是非。果且有彼是乎哉？果
且無彼是乎哉？彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。樞始得其環中，以應無窮。
是亦一無窮，非亦一無窮也。

> What is It is also Other, what is Other is also It. There they say 'That's it, that's
> not' from another point of view. Are there really It and Other? Or really no It
> and no Other? Where neither It nor Other finds its opposite is called the axis of
> the Way. When once the axis is found at the centre of the circle there is no limit
> to responding with either, on the one hand no limit to what is it, on the other
> hand to what is not.[505]

The One comprises all different modalities in the same way as the zero state comprises all
pluses and minuses. From the point of view of any particular process, the world differentiates
into many modalities; from the point of view of the One, there is no differentiation. Now, when
we switch to the process view, the universal process or *dao* is always "underway." Despite
regularities, it remains open-ended and continues to develop. In this sense, every particular
process can be seen as the furthermost moving tip of this greater universal process. Whether it
is a human being, a thing, an event, or anything else, it always bears in itself a point of
indeterminacy, that is, the point in which plus and minus coincide as one.[506]

Still, the notion of inherent indeterminacy of all processes, although it can help us better
understand certain elements of early Chinese texts, is not sufficient to explain the nature of the
implicit link between cosmology, naming and agency. To move from mere indeterminacy to
decision-making, there has to be 'someone' (a self) who realizes that there is a choice, i.e.,
someone capable of seeing the possibilities (the plus and minus) and holding them together as
one. Without this capacity, the self, if understood from the viewpoint of an individual human
being, would be just a separated and helpless particle in the big billiard of the universe. Even if
one understood his possibilities, there is not much he could do to choose his path, and when
he acts, his individual powers are limited while the power of the circumstances is immense.
Under such conditions, there is not much advantage in embracing one's decision-making power
and it is safer to steer all actions in accordance with the greater trends.

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[505] *Zhuangzi* 2, Qiwulun (trans. A. C. Graham, Disputers)
[506] In a sense, this situation of "having the plus and minus together" can also be described as a "not-yet", i.e.,
'something is' (already thematized) but 'is not' (decided) at the same time.

On the other hand, if the self is understood as a process, there is no separation between the self and the One as the source of all things: this self is a continuation and the furthermost tip of the greater cosmic process, *dao*. Thus, the question relevant for this type of "processual" agent is: Where in this continuous process of cosmic creation lies the locus of decision-making? The cosmological texts, which as we know served also as manuals for the ruler,[507] challenge the reader to re-situate the self toward the One, i.e., embrace or hold on to the One. In the context of agency, this means to let the One be the locus of decision-making in any particular situation and life circumstances.

There are subtle differences between the two perspectives of self outlined above. In the first case, one is not really free because his powers to change the situation are limited. In the second case, the self, although it coincides with the individual human being within a particular situation, can view the situation and make decision from the point of view of the One. As such, it theoretically has at its disposition the power and knowledge of the whole, where the power can be understood as the momentum of greater cosmic process, and knowledge as the reverberation of all the processes that have led up to this point.[508] This self also cannot incur any personal harm because it does not "get in the way" of anything more powerful.

Ming li section of *HDSJ* shows that the strategic advantage lies in the ability to shift one's self according to the actual need and to move freely between different perspectives.

> 道者，神明之原也。神明者，處於度之內而見於度之外者也。處於度之內者，不言而信；見於度之外者，言而不可易也。處於度之內者，靜而不可移也；見於度之外者，動而不可化也。靜而不移，動而不化，故曰神。 神明者，見知之稽也。

> Dao is the source of mysterious wisdom.[509] Mysterious wisdom is the ability to stand inside the measure and to see outside the measure. Being able to stand

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[507] In case of Guodian manuscripts, this theory is supported by the fact that they were excavated from the tomb the occupant of which was identified as an elderly noble scholar and teacher to the crown prince. See above, chap. 3, part 3.6.1.

[508] To support this point, see the discussion of Whitehead's 'actual occasion' and 'prehension' in Chapter 3, part 3.5 (The Process Perspective).

[509] With regard to the argument above, the translation of *shen ming* 神明 as 'mysterious wisdom' is not entirely fitting; however, in this context, I do think it has the meaning of being *ming* 明 – as in 'being clear about', 'understand clearly', 'intelligent' – with the quality of *shen* 神 – as in 'divine', 'ingenious'. For the discussion of the other reading of *shen ming* 神明, see the note to *TYSS* strip 2, Chap. 3, part 3.6.1, or Appendices – *Taiyi sheng shui*.

inside the measure, he is trusted without uttering a word. Being able to see outside the measure, he makes his words indisputable. Being able to stand inside the measure, he is free from motion and tranquillity; being able to see outside the measure, in activity he will not transform. Because he is free from motion in tranquillity and free from transformation in activity, we call his wisdom mysterious. The mysterious wisdom is the key to correctly seeing and knowing.[510]

With regard to what has been shown above, the question about the self as a source of differentiation, i.e., as something that creates and not only performs, has to be formulated in different terms – in terms of agency. And since there is presumably no gap between the whole of the cosmos in motion and an individual as its furthermost offspring, instead of starting from the view of the self as a source of action and trying to explain the agency from the self, we need to start from the agency and try to localize the self within the continuum of cosmic agency.[511]

5.5 Different faces of freedom: 'Daoist' and 'Legalist' response

When the problem of self is reformulated in processual terms and made dependent on the understanding of agency – as the cosmic agency being, in each moment, actualized through individuals – only then can we start to see how all the main parts of the Warring States discourse can fit logically together. When the self is no longer separate from the things it deals with, but effectively involved in their becoming, the observation of the world and the way it is described is no longer a disengaged *theoria* but becomes a matter of (practical) agency and thus also an ethical issue. The one who uses names to delineate things is responsible for the world thus created, and the act of naming is potentially a purposeful, goal-oriented action, just as any other kind of action. If the goal is to preserve the state, then the names – and therefore actualities they bring about – are correct as far as they correspond to that goal. The act of naming thus enters the ethical realm, and the need to "get the names right" becomes the central concern for the ruler. But to be the one who decides which names will be used in which situation is a precarious position which requires good insight into the functioning of the cosmos, otherwise the names

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[510] *HDSJ*, 1.9.1 Ming li 名理 (trans. Chang and Feng, 1998).

[511] For an original new perspective of agency in early Chinese texts, see Valmisa, Mercedes (2021). Adapting: a Chinese philosophy of action. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

are not right and the world established on their basis will crumble. It becomes vital for the ruler to know where the locus of decision-making is and to be able to situate one's self there. To stand in such position and 'give names'[512] should therefore only be the privilege of enlightened rulers or ultimately wise sages.

In the tumultuous late Warring States period when the social and political reality was going through rapid and violent changes, the demand to understand agency (i.e., a capacity to act, to be the source of action), both in oneself and in others, was greater than ever before, as the number and variety of philosophical texts confirm. The more the world shows itself as a continuous and open process, the greater the need for the ruler to find ways to control it, to discover patterns and regularities, and to establish rules and procedures, in order to maintain and reinforce social cohesion. At the same time, the turn of attention to the role and functioning of language, manifested as the flourishment of art of persuasion, argumentation, rhetoric, logic and also of sophisms and language paradoxes,[513] opened new perspectives on how the speech can be used. The link between names and things loosens and language starts to be used as a tool. Under these circumstances, those who were able to understand the connection between cosmology, names and agency and were able to use it in real life, political or private, had a significant competitive advantage.

There are many different ways how to translate such understanding into practice. On the one hand, the reader is encouraged to get as close to the undifferentiated state as possible. This means becoming 'empty', 'still', 'formless', 'nameless', or 'simple'. The practice of silencing one's ordinary mind in order to give space to the formation of names and tasks, as if it were, by themselves makes sense only if there are answers available on another level – the level of oneness.[514] The counter-intuitive state of no action and no thought is required so that the receptivity to the processes that are already at play (that is, also to thoughts and actions) could

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[512] Here in the broadest sense, ranging from 'giving a description of the situation', 'identifying its elements', i.e. 'formulate what is', to 'giving orders', 'naming tasks/people' (assigning tasks to people), 'establish rules/standards', i.e. 'formulate what should be'.

[513] Evoked in Chapter 4, especially part 4.1. These few paragraphs only summarize and put in logical order what has already been said in preceding chapters. For supporting references, see chap. 3, 4 and 2 (introductory and concluding parts).

[514] Nei ye goes so far as to suggest that there is "another mind" within the mind – the "mind's mind": 治之者心也，安之者心也；心以藏心，心之中又有心焉。 彼心之心，音以先言，… What brings order (to mind) is the mind. What quiets (the mind) is the mind. The mind hides in itself a mind, there is another mind inside the mind. This mind's mind has in itself a tone that precedes words.

increase. The texts often point out that a turbulent emotional state (both positive and negative), as well as one's strong ambitions, can "hamper the reception."

> (凡心之形) 其所以失之，必以憂樂喜怒欲利。能去憂樂喜怒欲利，心乃反齊 。

> (Disposition of the mind is such that) … what is surely detrimental to it are worries, joys, affections, resentments, desires, and profit-seeking. If you can get rid of worries, joys, affections, resentments, desires, and profit-seeking, the mind returns to its evenness.[515]

If thoughts and actions are left to arise, as if it were, "by themselves," they cannot be wrong because they have arisen from within the situation itself. The wager on receptivity is expressed also in *Hanfeizi*, without any tinge of mysticism.

> 故虛靜以待，令名自命也，令事自定也. 虛則知實之情，靜則知動者正. 有言者自為名，有事者自為形，形名參同，君乃無事焉，歸之其情.

> [The ruler] awaits empty and quiet, and he lets the names be attributed of themselves; he lets affairs get stabilized by themselves. Being empty, he understands the actual situation, being still he knows the right action to take. Those who have something to say will come up with names. Those who have something to do will come up with forms. When forms and names fit together, the ruler doesn't need to get involved and he leaves it to the situation.[516]

From the perspective of entity-oriented cosmology, there may be an implicit tension between receptivity and freedom to act. If I receive a thought, it sounds like it was sent to me from outside, and I'm only a passive recipient. Indeed, in a world where processes are regarded as the result of entities affecting each other, there seems to be a clear dividing line between active and passive. And freedom is associated with an active rather than passive position, with

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[515] E.g. Nei ye 3 (Appendices)

[516] HFZ 5, Zhu dao 主道; As in many examples from the *Hanfeizi*, many other translators (Harbsmeier, Ivanhoe, Queen, Zádrapa) choose a more pragmatic reading of these passages – as I have explained in my previous work ("Han Fei's Strategy in Interpreting the Laozi", Bc. Thesis FA CU, unpublished), I suggest that we use the pragmatic and non-pragmatic reading of these passages as complementary information, because both aspects play the role in Hanfeizi's argument and he uses 'Laozian' ways of expression consistently throughout the work (also outside the chapters Jie Lao, Yu Lao).

initiating rather than being a recipient of an action. From the process perspective, however, the boundaries of entities are not firm, nor is the boundary between active and passive – it depends on where the focus is in the given situation. In this sense, a decision-making individual is active in his decision to adopt an undifferentiated position, in the same way as he is free to use the impulses he has received to actively pursue his own goals and ambitions. They, too, are part of the greater cosmic process.

However, we can also infer from what has been said above that such freedom is not for everyone. One who simply performs usual patterns of speech and behaviour and whose actions are triggered by conditions or dictated by a greater authority is not a locus of decision-making in the proper sense. Even though they may have the impression that they take action, their actions just perpetuate the momentum of greater processes already underway. From the perspective of the decision-making self, they are just 'things among things'.

Through this somewhat convoluted exposé of an alternative interpretive framework, applicable to a larger spectrum of Warring States period philosophical texts, I would like to return to the question from which this work originally departed, but which eventually led to all other questions posed in it. The question was about the logic behind the close link between Daoism and Legalism – or of course the two strands of Warring States philosophy that later received these labels. Even if we no longer subscribe to the traditional categorisation of the Warring States period thought[517], we can admit that the texts such as the *Zhuangzi*, on the one hand, and *Shang Yang*, on the other, represent the opposite poles of the spectrum – ranging from playful, detached, humorous, 'laisser-vivre' attitude towards life to pragmatic, efficiency-oriented political philosophy promoting social engineering and harsh disciplinary measures. The intermingling between these two apparently opposite philosophical strategies is the most provocative in case of the *Laozi* and *Hanfeizi*, the latter containing, moreover, the first known commentary of the former.[518] The same paradoxical mix of 'Daoist' and 'Legalist' tenets is then present in many of the so-called Huang-Lao texts, the majority of which constitute the corpus of this work.

These few last examples selected from the range of the received texts between 'Daoism' and 'Legalism' illustrate how these seemingly opposed strategies may be interpreted, using the

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[517] See Chapter 2, part 1.2.
[518] The already mentioned *Hanfeizi* chapters 20, 21 – Jie Lao 解老 and Yu Lao 喻老 (Introduction)

proposed framework, as only different reactions to the same kind of understanding and different utilisations of the same sense of freedom and power, gained on the basis of such understanding.

On the one side of the spectrum, the intellectual emancipation (the shift in one's self) leads one to rise above all "names"[519] imposed by the society. Such person sees through the usual distinctions and recognizes the relativity and temporary character of values connected to them. On the one hand, they are absolutely free, enjoying 'untroubled ease'[520], because whatever happens on the level of things cannot affect them in any harmful way – their self has shifted towards the One. The *Zhuangzi* offers multiple examples of such persons (and other personified beings). In several cases, their unconditioned state of freedom is emphasised by the contrast with their apparent physical impairment.

> 俄而子輿有病，子祀往問之。曰：「偉哉！夫造物者，將以予為此拘拘也！曲僂發背，上有五管，頤隱於齊，肩高於頂，句贅指天。」陰陽之氣有沴，其心閒而無事，(…) 子祀曰：「汝惡之乎？」曰：「亡，予何惡！(…) 且夫得者時也，失者順也，安時而處順，哀樂不能入也。此古之所謂縣解也，而不能自解者，物有結之。且夫物不勝天久矣，吾又何惡焉？

> All at once, Master Yu fell ill. Master Si went to ask how he was. "Amazing!" said Master Yu. "The Creator[521] is making me all crooked like this! My back sticks up like a hunchback, and my vital organs are on top of me. My chin is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are up above my head, and my pigtail points at the sky. It must be some dislocation of the yin and yang!" Yet he seemed calm at heart and unconcerned. (…) "Do you resent it?" asked Master Si. "Why no, what would I resent? (…) I received life because the time had come; I will lose it because the order of things passes on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order, and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called the 'freeing of the bound.' There are those who cannot free

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[519] See n. 508 above.
[520] Xiao yao you 逍遙遊, a term from the *Zhuangzi*, also translated as 'free roaming'.
[521] Zao wu zhe 造物者, interestingly appears several times in the *Zhuangzi*, as an alternative name for the source of all things; cf. above, chap. 3, part 3.2.

themselves because they are bound by things. But nothing can ever win against Heaven—that's the way it's always been. What would I have to resent?"[522]

At the same time, the one who has risen above the distinctions and understands the inherent undifferentiatedness of all things no longer fits in the society that is build on them. People do not understand him and find him weird and suspicious. The sage is "like a broken vessel". He may find himself lost for words, uprooted, being left out of normal human undertakings.

> 眾人役役，聖人愚芚，參萬歲而一成純。萬物盡然，而以是相蘊。

> Common people fuss and fret, the sage is a dullard and a sluggard. Be aligned along a myriad years, in oneness, wholeness and simplicity. All the myriad things as they are and as what they are make up totality.[523]

Similarly in *Laozi* 20:

> 眾人熙熙，如享太牢，如春登臺。我獨怕兮其未兆；如嬰兒之未孩；儽儽兮若無所歸。眾人皆有餘，而我獨若遺。我愚人之心也哉！沌沌兮，俗人昭昭，我獨若昏。俗人察察，我獨悶悶。澹兮其若海，飂兮若無止，眾人皆有以，而我獨頑似鄙。

> The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased; as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn, as if I had no home to go to. The multitude of men all have enough and to spare. I alone seem to have lost everything. My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos. Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted. They look full of discrimination, while I alone am dull and confused. I seem to be carried about as on the sea, drifting as if I had nowhere to rest. All men have their spheres of action, while I alone seem dull and incapable, like a rude borderer.[524]

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[522] *Zhuangzi* 6, Da zong shi 大宗師 (trans. Burton Watson, 2013, p. 47–48)
[523] *Zhuangzi* 2, Qi wu lun 齊物論 (transl. A. C. Graham, Chuang-tzu: the Inner Chapters, 2001)
[524] *Laozi* 20, trans. Legge (1891). The Tâo Teh King of Lâo Dze. (Müller, Max ed. The Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XXXIX – The Texts of Taoism, 1891); in this case, I selected Legge's translation because it captures this passage most simply and clearly.)

On the other hand, the one who becomes aware of the arbitrary connection between names and reality, and fully embraces it, can adopt a pragmatic attitude toward names, use them as a tool, tamper with them, or choose them to purposefully create a reality for himself, and for others who do not have that awareness. Shen Buhai 申不害 (*Shenzi*) stresses the importance of controlling names in order to control the world (*tianxia* 天下) and Shang Yang 商鞅 (*Shangjun shu* 商君書) expresses this stance even more bluntly.

> 夫常人安於故習，學者溺於所聞。此兩者所以居官守法，非所與論於法
> 之外也。(…) 故知者作法，而愚者制焉；

> Indeed, ordinary people abide by old practices, and students are immersed in the study of what is reported from antiquity. These two kinds of men are all right for filling offices and for maintaining the law, but they are not the kind who can take part in a discussion which goes beyond the law. (…) Therefore, a wise man creates laws, but an ignorant man is controlled by them.[525]

The idea that the ruler formulates the standards[526] by which the subjects are bound is certainly nothing unheard of.[527] What appears as a new element, symptomatic of the 'Legalist' part of the spectrum, is that these standards can be actively invented to suit new purposes. The names through which the ruler manages the state can be tailored to changing circumstances. In addition to *Shang jun shu*,[528] *Hanfeizi* or *Guanzi*, this idea is also expressed in *LSCQ*, chapter Cha jin:

> 凡先王之法，有要於時也，時不與法俱至。法雖今而至，猶若不可法。
> 故擇先王之成法，而法其所以為法。先王之所以為法者何也？先王之所
> 以為法者人也。而己亦人也，故察己則可以知人，察今則可以知古，古
> 今一也，人與我同耳。

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[525] *Shangjun shu* 商君書, chapter Geng fa 更法 (Reform of the law), trans. J. J. L. Duyvendak.

[526] On relation between *ming* 名 in the broader sense and *fa* 法, see chapter 4, Part 4.7.

[527] A similar idea is found across the Warring States texts, e.g. Guanzi, Ren fa 任法 chapter: 夫生法者君也，守法者臣也，法於法者民也，君臣上下貴賤皆從法，此謂為大治。

[528] E.g. *Shang jun shu* 1, Geng fa 更法: 禮法以時而定，制令各順其宜，兵甲器備各便其用。臣故曰：治世不一道，便國不必法古. "Since conventions and standards were fixed according to the times, restrictions and commands were appropriate to the circumstances, and armaments and equipment each convenient for its purpose. I say then that there is more than one Way to bring order to one's generation, and to do what is best for the state one does not have to take antiquity as standard." (trans. Graham, Disputers, 1989, p. 271.).

The standards of the former kings all answered some need of the time. The time doesn't come down to us with the standard; and even if the standard does come down to now, it can't be taken as standard. Dismiss, then, the formulated standards of the former kings, and take as standard the reasons why they made standards. What were those reasons? They were men, and myself likewise am a man. Therefore if I scrutinise myself I may know other men, if I scrutinise the present I may know the past. It is simply that past and present are one, others and myself the same.[529]

In *Hanfeizi*, the implicit tension between "seeing beyond the measure" and using the freedom and power arising from it without any restriction, for practical purposes, is the most obvious. On the one hand, there is a clear ambition to situate the sovereign power of the ruler within the greater cosmic *dao*.

> 道者，萬物之始，　是非之紀也。　是以明君守始以知萬物之源，治紀以知善敗之端。

> As for the Way, it is the beginning of the multitude of things and the guideline of right and wrong. That is why the enlightened ruler will stick to the beginning in order to understand the source of the multitude of things, he will take care of the fundamental guideline in order to know the limits of gain and loss.[530]

On the other hand, there are many instances in *Hanfeizi* and other Warring States period texts proving that some of those who realized the role of names in shaping things started to use language in order to manipulate reality and assert power. Among the innumerable examples from *Hanfeizi*, *LSCQ*, or *Shiji*, the anecdote from the *Shiji* on "Calling the deer 'a horse'" stands out as the most representative.

> 八月己亥，趙高欲為亂，恐群臣不聽，乃先設驗，持鹿獻於二世，曰：「馬也。」二世笑曰：「丞相誤邪？謂鹿為馬。」問左右，左右或默，或言馬以阿順趙高。或言鹿（者），高因陰中諸言鹿者以法。後群臣皆畏高。

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[529] *LSCQ* 15.8, chap. Cha jin 察今 (trans. A. C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao, 1989, p. 214.)
[530] *Hanfeizi* 5, Zhu dao 主道.

In the eighth month on Ji Hai, Zhao Gao wanted to bring about a rebellion but was afraid that the officials would not pay heed, so he first of all arranged a test. He took a deer and presented it to Second Generation[531] and said: 'It is a horse.' Second Generation smiled and said: 'Have you not got it wrong, Chief Minister? You said a deer was a horse.' He asked the courtiers, and some of them remained silent, while others said it was a horse in order to curry favour with Zhao Gao, and others said it was a deer. So, Zhao Gao secretly had the law on all who said it was a deer. Afterwards the officials were all afraid of Gao.[532]

These different developments therefore seem to have a common staring point. The ability to achieve a state of undifferentiation and to understand the role of names as a creative tool for shaping reality together constitute the basis for freedom in a radical sense. This freedom can then manifest in many different ways. On one side of the spectrum, this emancipation could translate as detachment, serenity, and freedom from personal ambitions, social conventions and distinctions imposed by the language – this side is best represented by texts such as *Zhuangzi* or Nei ye chapter of the *Guanzi*. On the opposite side would be the texts focusing mainly on the techniques of government, sometimes bordering on totalitarianism, such as *Shang jun shu*. But there is a very colourful spectrum of texts in between, representing different mixtures of elements and motivations from both sides, to which we can count both *Laozi* and *Hanfeizi*, but also e.g. *Xunzi*,[533] the other three Xin shu chapters of the *Guanzi*, and more importantly the *HDSJ* and the excavated texts constituting the corpus of this work.

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[531] Er shi 二世, the newly established emperor Qin Er Shi 秦二世 – Ying Huhai 嬴胡亥 (r. 210–207 BC).
[532] *Shiji*, Ben ji 本紀, Qin Shi Huang ben ji 秦始皇本紀, trans. Dawson R. S. trans. (2007). Sima Qian. The First Emperor: Selections from the Historical records. Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press.
[533] The place of *Xunzi,* as a recognized part of the Ru tradition, within this spectrum is certainly a topic for further investigation.

Conclusion and topics for further research

This work started as an inquiry into the character of the early Chinese cosmological texts (*Taiyi sheng shui*, *Heng xian*, *Fan wu liu xing* and Nei ye) and an attempt at their intertextual interpretation and systemization. In the beginning of this inquiry, different interpretive frameworks were used and abandoned as unsuccessful.[534] This led me to eventually thematize the problem of interpretive frameworks as such and delve more into the presuppositions through which we usually approach the texts from a very distant cultural sphere and time period. Chapter 1 clarifies the reasons for this step and explains why other strategies proved unproductive. It comments on the problems related to comparative philosophy as a discipline and on the problem of bias introduced by looking at the newly excavated texts through the prism of the traditional 'schools of thought'. Chapter 2 introduces the texts of the corpus in greater detail in terms of their materiality, dating, and provenance. Developing on the brief bibliographical outline in Chapter 1, it also provides more detailed references to the related scholarship in each case.

The work seeks to build a coherent argument through which the previously disconnected elements of the texts in question would come together in a logical way. The building of this newly proposed interpretive framework starts from the exposition of the specific features of early Chinese cosmology, as captured in the texts of the corpus and supported by the received texts from the period. It continues to the investigation of the role of naming and the place of names within cosmological accounts. Finally, it leads to the reframing of the notion of the self in which the cosmological discourse and the naming discourse overlap.

The following main theses are developed in the respective chapters:

1) (Chapter 3: Common features of the excavated cosmologies)
   Every philosophical inquiry is embedded in a certain tacitly assumed cosmology; in order to make sense of any questions posed in the texts, we need to make explicit the underlying referential framework. Early Chinese texts, when explored from philosophical point of view, are often viewed through the prism of dualist and essentialist cosmology, which leads to misinterpretation.
   The cosmology behind the various and opposing strands of Warring States thought is formulated in non-dualist and non-essentialist terms. In the texts in question, the cosmos

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[534] This initial 'fumbling around in the dark' is partly captured in Chapter 1.

is seen as one. Cosmological texts characterize this One as all-encompassing, ever-present and, most importantly, undifferentiated. They regard the multiplicity of things as manifestations of the One, arising in the process of differentiation. Opposites arise together as complementary and remain 'one', in that they maintain each other in a dynamic equilibrium. Through their interaction, things (distinct phenomena) arise as as specific and unique modes of being. The oneness cosmology is characterized by perpetual motion and change, brought about by the continuous dynamic interaction of opposites. A medium of such interaction is sometimes thematised as qi 氣 or water or some other energy-like formless medium. As variated and extreme as some manifestations of opposites may be, they always hold ontologically together, moving around the centre of balance. Being essentially 'one', they define each other through lack and abundance and mutual redistribution of force and energy. That is why the texts emphasize the movement of return, cycle, coincidence of the end with the beginning. Anything differentiated will eventually relapse to an undifferentiated state.

Within such cosmology, many fundamental ontological concepts need to be reformulated: subject and object, active and passive, temporal and eternal – these dualist terms cease to apply. The applicable conceptual model can be found in the process philosophy, as proposed e.g. by A. N Whitehead (3.5).

Oneness cosmology can find its counterpart in certain pre-Socratic thinkers, especially the Milesians and Heraclitus. Early Greek examples are used in close comparison with excavated cosmological texts to show they addressed similar questions in similar terms, and that this type of questioning is embedded in the beginnings of the Western as well as Eastern philosophical discourse.

2) (Chapter 4: Role of naming within the cosmology)

Within these cosmologies, a special role is attributed to names and the act of naming. This role has not been well understood up to these days, because the discourse on names was entangled in metaphysical presumptions about the relation between self, language and reality. Within the oneness cosmology however, names play an important ontological role: they are regarded as directly involved in the constitution of things as things, as the basis of their individuation; on the one hand, they are, as distinctions, embedded in the structure of the cosmos itself and, at the same time, they are created by people and stabilized through shared use and habit. In the cosmos regarded as One, in which all things come into existence only as a result of establishing some temporary

boundaries between them, the act of giving a name represents one way of setting such a boundary. Being able to use names in a creative way, human beings are no longer passive elements of the cosmos: they can participate in the co-creation of reality and assume an active role in universal becoming. The key to such understanding is accepting and internalizing the cosmological layout where the undifferentiated is the source of definition.

However, the world of usual human experience is pre-structured by names and names therefore constitute a part of one's condition; but holding one's possibilities together, again in terms of names, allow one to project himself in future possibilities and choose his way (this part is explained with the help of the conceptual framework of Gadamer's hermeneutic ontology and Heidegger's phenomenology.)

When the role of names in the cosmological discourse is reformulated to include these aspects, we can then arrive at better understanding of names in the context of different strands of early Chinese of thought (in Confucianism, as the connective tissue of the society, the medium of attunement, the basis of social order, shared values and cooperative action; in Legalism, as a tool for shaping social and political reality, as a way of imposing rules and standards and managing the state though them, as an instrument of power, and even manipulation).

3) (Chapter 5: Self in cosmological texts)

The texts of the corpus of this work address the reader in a new way, as a free, decision-making being, able to accept or reject the argument on his own accord. Their answers are explained, not imposed from the position of authority. They appeal to an individual who has reached a certain stage of intellectual maturity and seeks to understand.

They also invite the reader to adopt a different perspective of self from which one's actions are aligned with the greater cosmic processes.

When the self is no longer separate from the things it deals with, but effectively involved in their becoming, the observation of the world and the way it is described is no longer a disengaged *theoria* but becomes a matter of (practical) agency and thus also an ethical issue. The one who uses names to delineate things is responsible for the world thus created, and the act of naming is potentially a purposeful, goal-oriented action, just as any other kind of action. The act of naming thus enters the ethical realm, and the need to have 'correct names' becomes the central concern for the ruler. To stand in such

position and 'give names' should therefore only be the privilege of enlightened rulers or ultimately wise sages.

The desirable position to adopt is described in the texts as 'becoming One' (*yi* 一) 'embracing the One' (*bao yi* 抱一) or 'holding on to the One' (*zhi yi* 執一, *shou yi* 守一), that is, to resituate one's self to the undifferentiated – source of differentiation, which is continuously present in every event as the potential for new development.

Such shiftable notion of self, i.e., as something that both creates and is created, depending on the point of view, can be better understood and reformulated in terms of agency: since there is presumably no gap between the whole of the cosmos (as One in motion) and an individual as its furthermost offspring, instead of starting from the self as a source of action and trying to explain the agency from the self, we need to start from the agency, and try to localize the self within the continuum of cosmic agency.

The goal of this work was not to provide an exhaustive exposé of all key topics, but to build, with the help of very divergent philosophical tools, an alternative interpretive framework for reading and contextualising early Chinese texts, especially the newly excavated ones. The proposed framework does not pretend to be without problems and has no ambition to be a final solution for interpretation of this type of texts, but ideally, it could serve as a grid, or a pair of glasses through which everyone can start seeing the previously unnoticed elements of early Chinese thought system and their connections, and develop on it in a productive way.

The work developed over a period of more than five years, and can therefore suffer from certain internal inconsistencies. There are many points missing that I would have liked to include and many of the important parts would still need to be developed to reach the necessary level of academic rigour. I am aware I have not clarified sufficiently the contrary positions against which my arguments are suppose to react. I certainly have not done justice to very pertinent and influential philosophical positions, such as structuralism or cognitive linguistics; there is much relevant scholarship from these fields pertaining to my topic that I have not taken into account.

As the time passed, I became aware that some of the points important for the argument will have to be developed separately. In my further research, I would like to address in greater detail the question of agency, including the re-examination of the problem of self which deserves a

much larger analysis, the topic of "precursors of action" and the way how predisposition and actual situatedness enter into it. Another large topic that kept resurfacing in the course of this inquiry is the role of music in agency, and Chinese cosmology in general. These are the possible directions of further research, using the interpretive framework tentatively proposed in this work.

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Appendices

<u>恒先</u> **Constancy comes before**

恒先無有 , 樸 , 靜 , 虛 。 樸 , 大樸 ; 靜 , 大 靜 ; 虛 , 大虛 。 自厭, 不自忍。

Constancy comes before nothing and something, simple, quiet and empty. Its simplicity is the great simplicity, its quiescence is the great quiescence, its emptiness is the great emptiness. It is self-satiated without supressing itself.

域[535]作。有域 , 焉有氣 ; 有氣 , 焉有有 ; 有有 , 焉有始 ; 有始 , 焉有往者。

A field[536] arises. Once there is a field, there is *qi*[537]; once there is *qi*, there is something; once there is something, there is beginning; once there is beginning there is going somewhere.[538]

未有天地 , 未 [1][539] 有作行出生 。 虛靜為一若 。 寂寂[540]夢夢[541] 靜同 , 而未有明[542]、 未有滋生。

When there was not yet heaven and earth, there was no creating, moving, arising and being born. Empty, quiet and (as if) being one. Still and indistinct, it was quiet, unified and there was no light, no proliferation.

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[535] Reading huo4 或 as yu4 域 (in accordance with Brindley et al. 2013); see also Zhu, Yuanqing 朱淵清 4/18/2004. '域' 的形上學意義 (A Metaphysical Meaning of *Yu*). Jianbo yanjiu 簡帛研究. Accessed on… (paywall).

[536] I understand *yu* as a delimited area or "focused upon" area, an area "of something", hence the translation as "field", in an abstract rather than material sense. Cf. "Field and focus" theory proposed by Hall and Ames, 1998, David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998) (Hall and Ames1998, pp. 45–77).

[537] Qi4 氣 is left untranslated to avoid a loaded word "energy"; also: breath, air, life-force.

[538] Alt. reading (*you wang zhe* 有往者) "there is the past."

[539] Marking the end of the strip; strip numbers follow the original Ma Chengyuan edition (2004); strip order in this version follows Brindley, Goldin, Klein (2013).

[540] Ji4 寂, still, quiet, desert.

[541] Meng4 夢, dark, indistinct

[542] A possible variant reading is meng2 萌, bud(ding), sprout(ing)

氣是自生 , 恒莫生氣 。 氣是自生自作 。

Qi is self-generated. There is nothing in the constancy that would generate *qi*. *Qi* is that which is self-generated and self-perpetuating.

恒氣之 [2] 生 , 不獨 , 有與也 。 域恒焉 , 生域者同焉 。[543]

When constant *qi* is generated, it is not alone, there is also something else generated together with it. The field is constantly there as well. That which gives rise to the field coincides with it.

昏昏不寧 , 求其所生 。 異生異 , 歸生歸 , 違生非 , 非生違 , 依生依 。

Obscure, it does not rest, it seeks that from which it is born. Difference generates difference; convergence generates convergence; infringement generates negation, negation generates infringement; dependence generates dependence.

求欲自復[544]。復, [3] 生之生行。

It seeks and desires to repeat itself. Repetition is the natural[545] movement of life.

濁氣生地 , 清氣生天 。 氣信神[546]哉！芸芸相生 , 伸[547]盈天地。

The turbid *qi* gives birth to earth, the clear *qi* gives birth to heaven. *Qi* is truly divine! (Things) proliferate and generate each other, spread, and fill everything between the heaven and the earth.

同出而異生 , 因生其所欲 。

They originate from the same, but they generate differently. That is because they generate that which they desire.

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[543] Grammatically unclear sentence - the translation is tentative.
[544] Fu4 復 can also be understood here as 'carry out ', 'act out'; with regard to the context, I opt for its reading as '(doing/being) again'.
[545] Reading the second sheng1 生 as xing4 性, 'innate character', 'natural disposition'.
[546] Possible but less likely reading of shen2 神 would be shen1 伸, 'to expand', 'to stretch', in accordance with the following sentence.
[547] Some versions have xin4 信, in this context 'truly', 'indeed'.

察察天地，紛紛而 [4, beginning 8]⁵⁴⁸ 多彩物。

How lucid are heaven and earth, how lavishly (they generate) the diversity of things.

先者有善，有治無亂；有人焉有不善，亂出於人。

At first, there is 'good', there is order and no disorder. Once there are men, there is 'bad'. Disorder comes from men.

先有中，焉有外 。 先有小，焉有大 。 先有柔，焉有 [8] 剛 。 先有圓，焉有方 。 先有晦，焉有明 。 先有短，焉有長。

First there is inside, then there is outside. First there is small, then there is big. First there is soft, then there is hard. First there is round, then there is square. First there is dark and then there is light. First there is short, then there is long.

天道既載，唯一以猶一，唯復以猶復 。

Once the path (*dao*) of heaven is taken, only because of oneness can it be as one and only because of repetition can it be as repeated.⁵⁴⁹

恒氣之生，因 [9, beginning 5] 復其所欲 。 明明天行，唯復以不廢 。 知既而荒思不殄。

When the constant *qi* is generated, it is because it also repeats that which it desires. How brilliant are the workings of heaven, it is only by repeating that nothing is ever lost. Once you know it, you can ponder over it without end.⁵⁵⁰

有出於域，生⁵⁵¹出於有，音⁵⁵²出於生，言出於音，名出於 [5] 言，事出於名。

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[548] The transition between these strips is problematic; nevertheless, the ordering 1-2-3-4-8-9-5-6-7-10-11-12-13 proposed by Pang Pu, (Allan, Sarah and Williams, Crispin eds., 1998) offers, in my view, the least problematic connections in other parts of the text.

[549] Subject of the sentence is unclear; the suggested translation is only tentative. Brindley et al. (2013) translate: "…only through oneness do things appear as one; only through reproduction do things appear as reproduced."

[550] Sentence is unclear; a tentative translation is provided. Brindley et al. (2013): "When knowing is complete, one's far-ranging thoughts will not be destroyed."

[551] Given the following sequence, reading as xing4 性 (nature, natural disposition) instead of sheng1 生 is also possible; I translate in accordance with this reading (other possible translations would be 'that which is alive', 'being born' etc.)

[552] Considering possible parallelism with the following segment, yin1 音 could also be yi4 意 here.

'Something'[553] arises from the field; natural disposition arises from 'something'; tone arises from natural disposition; speech arises from the tone; names arise from the speech; tasks arise from names.

域非域，無謂域 。 有非有，無謂有 。 性非性，無謂性 。 意非意，無謂意 。 言非言，無謂言 。 名非 [6] 名，無謂名 。 事非事，無謂事 。

If the field were not the field, it would not be called 'field'. If 'something' were not 'something', it would not be called 'something'. If the natural disposition were not the natural disposition, it would not be called 'natural disposition'. If the intention[554] were not the intention, it would not be called 'intention'. If the speech were not the speech, it would not be called 'speech'. If the name were not the name, it would not be called 'name'. If the task were not the task, it would not be called 'task'.

祥宜利巧 、 彩物出於作 。 作焉有事；不作無事 。

Appropriate timing, beneficial skilfulness and diverse things come from creating. Once there is creating, there are tasks.[555] Where there is no creation, there are no tasks.

舉天(下)之事 、 自作為事 、 庸以不可賡也[556] 。

As regards tasks under heaven, they arise as tasks of themselves. How could they not be continued?[557]

凡 [7, beginning 10] 言名：先者有疑，荒言之 。 後者校比焉。

Generally, when speaking of names: At first, they are ambiguous, and people use them confusedly. Later, they are connected and contrasted (with each other).

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[553] In accordance with the interpretive key proposed in the dissertation, you3 有 ('there is') is understood as the result of being singled out as 'something', as opposed to the undifferentiated.

[554] Alt. "sound"; considering possible parallelism with the previous segment, yi4 意 could also be yin1 音 here.

[555] Understood most generally as "things to do" (as opposed to just "things").

[556] The proposed punctuation is only one among may possible variants. I follow the solution of Klein (2013) in this case. Considering the same sentence pattern repeated below, yong1 庸 is taken as an indicator of a rhetorical question, like qi3 豈 (with "no" as an expected answer).

[557] The interpretation may vary depending on whether we accept the addition of xia4 下 as missing, in a parallel to the following two segments 舉天下之名, 舉天下之作). Without it, the segment could be roughly interpreted as "heavens accomplish their 'tasks' in a natural way and humans can only continue their unfolding." (Brindley et al. 2013)

舉天下之名 、 虛樹 。 習以不可改也 。

As regards names under heaven, they are established as empty.[558] Once they become a matter of habit, they cannot be altered.

舉天下之作 、 強者果 。 天下 [10] 之大作 、 其熾尨 [?]不自若 [=然]。 作 、庸有果與不果 。 兩者不廢 。

As regards creating under heaven, what is strong has results. The great creations under heaven have not attained their splendid variety by themselves. As regards creating, how is it that some brings results, and some does not? None of these two (outcomes) is to be discarded.

舉天下之為也 、 無舍也 、 無與也 、 而能自為也 。[11]

As regards doing under heaven, when you do not abandon it, but you do not meddle with it either, then it can be done of itself.

舉 天下之生、同也 。 其事無不復。

As regards life under heaven, it is the same. Its endeavour is that nothing remains without repeating itself.[559]

天下之作也 、 無迋恆 、 無非其所。

As regards creating under heaven, if it does not go against constancy, it is never 'out of place' anywhere.

舉天下之作也 、 無不得其恒 而果述 。 庸或 [12] 得之 、庸或失之 。

As regards creating under heaven, there is none that would not attain constancy and still bring the results worth talking about. How is it that some attain it and some do not?

舉天下之名 、無有廢者。

[558] Lit. "they are emptily established".
[559] Alt. trans., depending on the emphasis: "Its tasks always keep repeating."

As regards names under heaven, there is no thing[560] that can be without it.

舉天下之明王 、 明君 、 明士 、 庸有求而不慮。

As regards enlightened kings, enlightened rulers and enlightened scholars under heaven, how could they strive for something and not consider it carefully?

凡物流形 Things Flow into Form

凡物流形 ， 奚得而成 ？[561]Generally, when things flow into form,[562] how is it that they become complete?

流形成體 ， 奚得而不死 ？When they flow into form and become a body, how is it that they do not perish?

既成既生 ， 奚呱而 鳴？ When they have attained completion and have been born, what makes them have voice and cry out? [563]

既本既根 ， 奚後 [1] 之奚先 ？When they have sprouted and taken roots, which came later and which came first?

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[560] In the sense of "there is (something)", proposed above.

[561] The whole sequence is most probably written in rhymes, but I have not attempted a rhymed translation for the sake of precision and because of the lack of poetic inspiration.

[562] liu xing 流形 – alt. as "have a fluctuating shape" or "form in a flowing way"; interestingly, in medical texts, *liu xing* is used specifically for the foetus taking shape in mother's womb in the first months of pregnancy (Sungryule Lee. 2016. *The Fanwu Liuxing and its Intellectual Discussion about the One*, in: Journal of Chinese Philosophy 43:1–2. 136–153.)

[563] The translation could also be "cry and cry", where the first "cry" means wailing of a child and the second one means bird or animal sounds.

陰陽之序 ， 奚得而固 ？　When yin and yang take turns, what makes their alternation steady?

水火之和 ， 奚得而不危 ？[564] When water and fire get along with each other, how is it that their harmony is not precarious?

聞之曰 ： 民人流形 ， 奚得而生 ？ I have heard it said: when people flow into form, how is it that they are born?

[2] 流形成體 ，　When they flow into form and become bodies,

奚失而死 ，又得而成 ，　what do they lose when they die, and through what they attain completion?

未知左右之情。　　　　I do not know any of these circumstances.

天地立終立始 ，　　　　When heaven and earth establish the end and the beginning

天降五度[565]乎 ，　　　and the heaven sends down the five measures,

奚 [3] 橫奚縱 ？　how do they become horizontal or vertical?

五氣并至乎 ， 奚異奚同 ？ When five kinds of energy are thus obtained, how do they become different or similar?

五言在人 ， 孰為之公 ？　When five kinds of speech are among people, what makes them a common language?

九域出誨 ， 孰為之逢乎 ？ When teachings come from nine regions, how can they meet?

---

[564] A variant transcription is *bu hou* 不厚, which makes the translation even more difficult; maybe "how is it that their harmony is never great?"

[565] *Wu du* 五度 appears also in Heguanzi 鶡冠子 in connection with the five cardinal directions and five processes (wu xing 五行): "制以五行 左木右金前火後水中土, (…), 五度既正。"

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既長而 [4] 又老 ， 孰為侍奉 ？ When one has grown up and then grown old, who will care for him and serve him?

鬼生於人 ， 奚故神明 ？ When ghosts come from men, why do they have their divine insight?

骨肉之既靡 ， 其智愈彰 ， 其慧奚適 ？ When their bones and flesh have decayed, but their intelligence is even brighter, where do they obtain their wisdom?

孰知其 [5] 强[566] ？ Who knows their strength?

鬼生於人乎 ， 奚故事之 ？ When ghosts come from men, why do we serve them?

骨肉之既靡 ， 身體不見乎 ， 奚自食之 ？ When their bones and flesh have decayed, and their bodies are no longer there, why do we feed them?

其來無度 [6] 乎 ， 奚時之(塞)[567] ？ When there is no criterion for their coming, how do we know the right time to bring them an offering?

祭祀奚升乎 ， 如之何使飽 ？ When we perform sacrificial rites, how much do we offer to satisfy them?

順天之道乎 ， 奚以為首乎 ？ When we want to follow the path of heaven, what should we take as a lead?

欲得 [7] 百姓之和乎 ， 奚事之 ？ When we want to bring the people together in harmony, how do we serve them?

敬天之明奚得 ？ When we want to honour the clarity of heaven, how do we do it?

鬼之神奚食 ？ 先王之智奚備 ？ The divine insight of the ghosts, how is it nourished? The wisdom of the kings of old, how is it perfected?

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[566] Rhymes with *zhang* 彰.

[567] This is a very dubious transcription of an unclear graph (which could be shown only using the image function)` in this case, I follow other translators (Brindley et al. 2013, Tadd 2016, Lee 2018) in connecting it with the following sentence and therefore translating as "bringing a (sacrificial) offering".

聞之曰 ： 登 [8] 高從卑 ， 致遠從邇。　I have heard it said: If you want to climb high, you have to start low; if you want to go far, you have to start near.

十圍之木 ， 其始生如蘖。　Even the tree of ten armlengths around the trunk was a small sapling in the beginning.

足將至千里 ， 必從寸始。　Even the journey of a thousand miles must have started by the first inch.

日之有 [9] 耳 568， 將何聽 ？　When the sun has ears, what does it want to hear?

月之有暈 ， 將何征 ？　When the moon has a halo, what does it seek to rectify?569

水之東流 ， 將何盈 ？　When the rivers flow towards the east, what do they seek to fill?

日之始出 ， 何故大而不耀 ？　When the sun rises, why is it big and shines softly?

其入 [10] 中 ， 奚故小益暉 ？ When it culminates, why is it small and shines brightly?

屢問 570： 天孰高与571， 地孰遠与。　People often ask: What is higher than the heaven? What is broader than the earth?

孰為天 ？ 孰為地 ？ 孰為雷 ？ [11] 孰為電 ？ Who made heaven? Who made earth?572 Who makes a thunder? Who makes a lightning?

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568 These two lines refer to the less usual astronomical phenomena – 'ears' of the sun meaning probably solar eruptions observable during the sun eclipse and a lunar halo which occurs under certain meteorological conditions – and show the lack of reasonable explanations for them (the use of 'names' in this case being shown as misleading).

569 The meaning of zheng1 征 (which can also refer to a punitive military expedition) is not clear. In some versions, it is transcribed as *zheng* 正 and put in contrast with *yun4* 暈 as 'hazy'. In my opinion, this part of the sentence only wants to demonstrate that if we derive a logical explanation of a phenomenon solely from its name, it can be misleading.

570 Another transcription here is wen 聞, which I would understand as parallel to "聞之曰"; the line would then be: 'I have heard it (asked) frequently'.

571 Possible variant yu2 歟.

572 Shirley Chen translates "What is Heaven made of? What is Earth made of?" (Chen, 2015).

土奚得而平 ？ 水奚得而清 ？　　How is it that the land is flat? How is it that the water is clear?

草木奚得而生 ？ [12A] 禽獸奚得而 鳴？ How is it that the plants and trees grow and that the birds and beasts cry?

[13B] 夫雨之至 ，孰唾津之[573] ？　　When the rain comes, who is spitting?

夫風之至 ，孰噓吸而迸之 ？ When the winds arrive, who propels them through inhaling and exhaling?

聞之曰 ： 執道 ， 坐不下席。　　I have heard it said: When one holds on to the (right) way, he can be seated, not leaving his mat,

端冕[574] [14] 著，不與事 ，　　he can wear his cap straight,[575] not getting involved in affairs (of others),

先知四海 ， 至聽千里 ， 達見百里。　　and still know (about everything between) the four seas, hear everything within a thousand miles and see everything within a hundred miles.

是故聖人處於其所 ，　　That is why the wise man remains where he is,

邦家之 [16] 危安存亡 ，　　and still knows in advance whether the state is in danger or in safety, whether it will survive or perish,

賊盜之作 ， 可先知。　　and knows in advance the schemes of bandits and traitors.

聞之曰 ： 心不勝心 ， 大亂乃作 ；　　I have heard it said: If the mind does not overcome the mind,[576] great chaos ensues.

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[573] This line and the next one belong to a very damaged part of the strip and they are therefore completed in different ways. In this case, I follow Wang Zhongjiang's version (Wang 2015)

[574] Alt. a 'cap' or a 'crown', attire of a ruler.

[575] Either as 'having a correct attire' according to the ritual propriety, or 'not being dishevelled' as when busy or in a hurry.

[576] Xin1 心, usually rendered as 'heart-mind', must be considered in both of its aspects, i.e., both as 'heart' and 'mind'. Therefore, rather than reading one as 'mind' and the other as 'heart', I chose to repeat the same term. However, this 'twofold' character of the heart-mind is also mentioned in some other texts, e.g., *Nei ye* (and *Xin shu xia*), suggesting that there are several 'layers' to it between which one can switch.

心如能勝心 ， [26] 是謂少彻。　　When the mind is able to overcome the mind, it is something that only few can grasp.

奚謂少彻 ？ 人白為執。　　Why is it called something that only few can grasp? Because one's effort to do it or get hold of it would be pointless.

奚以知其白 ？ 終身自若。　　How can one know that it is pointless? Because it has always been so of itself.

能寡言乎 ， 能一 [18] 乎 ，　　If you can be frugal with words, if you can be 'one',

夫此之謂少成。　　then it is called something that only few can achieve.

[聞之] 曰 ： 百姓之所貴 ， 唯君 ；　　(I have heard it) said: common people only values the ruler.

君之所貴 ， 唯心 ； 心之所貴 ， 唯一。　　The ruler only values the mind. The mind only values 'one'.

〔一〕得而解之 ， 上 [28] 賓於天 ， 下播[577]於淵。　　If you are able to understand it (the 'one')[578], above you can (reach) the heaven and below you can (throw yourself into) the abyss.

坐而思之 ， 謀於千里 ；　　If you sit and ponder it, your plans will reach a thousand miles' radius.

起而用之 ， 陳於四海。　　If you rise and apply it, you can put it into action between the four seas.

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[577] The two characters bin 賓 and bo 播 here are seemingly puzzling for all interpreters – most of them offer a translation based on the whole sentence ("…above you can X the heaven, below you can Y the depths/the abyss")

[578] This is my interpretation of this segment, based on the arguments offered in this work. The previous passage talks about the 'one' as something from which everything else takes its lead. I understand this and the following sentences as an illustration of the (almost divine) powers that one (the ruler) obtains if he identifies his 'self' with the 'one', the source of everything.

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聞之日： 執情而智， I have heard it said: holding on to actual disposition leads to intelligence,

[15] 執智而神， holding on to intelligence leads to divine insight,

執神而同， holding on to the divine insight leads to equity.[579]

執同而險，執險而困， But holding on to the equity leads to precarious position, and holding oneself in precarious position leads to difficulty.

執困而復。 Being in difficulty means to return to the beginning.

是故陳為新， 人死復為人， That is why the old will become new, the man who dies will again become man.

水復 [24] 於天， and water will return to heaven.

凡百物不死如月。 In general, the multiple things do not die, like the moon,

出則又入， 終則又始， they rise and set again, they disappear and then appear again,

至則又反。 they reach fullness and they return again.

執此言起於一端。 [25] That we hold on to these words arises from (the fact that we consider)[580] only one end of it.

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[579] Alignment, alt. also 'sameness' – is understood to refer to the alignment or the sameness of opposites; this balanced, 'valueless' state, however, is an untenable position for anyone who needs to 'continue to live', i.e., have preferences, choose one way over the other.

[580] Again, this is a contestable solution that I choose in accordance with the argument developed in the work: the 'one end' (yi duan 一端) is understood as being always situated at one or other part of the spectrum ('plus' or 'minus'), as opposed to being aware of 'oneness' ('plus' and 'minus').

聞之日 ： 一生兩 ， 兩生叁 ， 叁生母[581] ， 母成結[582] 。　　I have heard it said: one generates two, two generate three, three generate the mother, the mother ties the knot.[583]

是故有一 ， 天下無不有 ；　　That is why when there is the 'one', there is nothing that cannot be under the heaven.[584]

無一 ， 天下亦無一有。　　If there were not the 'one', there would not be a single thing under the heaven.

無 [21] 〔目〕而知名 ， 無耳而聞聲。　　Without eyes, one can know the names, without ears, one can hear the sounds.[585]

草木得之以生 ， 禽獸得之以 鳴，　　Plants and trees grow thanks to it; birds and beasts cry thanks to it.[586]

遠之施[587] [13A] 天 ， 近之薦人。At a distant level, it serves the heavens, at a close level, it grants itself to men.

是故 [12B] 執道 ， 所以修身而治邦家。 That is why holding on to the right way (dao) is that through which one can cultivate himself and through which the state can be governed.

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[581] Alt. transcribed as nü 女.

[582] Franklin Perkins (Perkins, Early China 38, 2015. p.24) suggests reading cheng jie 成結 as 'become full form' (similar to cheng ti 成體 in strip 1); Misha Tadd proposes: "…the Mother formed the Congelations" (M. Tadd, in Wang Zhongjiang, 2015); Shirley Chan: "…the feminine aspect becomes binding." (Chan, 2015); Sungryule Lee: "…the mother bears fruits";

[583] Given the difficulty of this part (see the previous note), my translation is only tentative, suggesting that the female mode of being (the 'receptive' or 'integrative' process) closes the cycle of differentiation and integration – 'binds the two ends together'.

[584] Alt. (in accordance with the following passages) "If you have the 'one', then there is nothing under the heaven that you do not have; if you do not have the 'one', there is not one thing you have under the heaven." However, this solution is grammatically improbable.

[585] Proposed reading in the context of "When holding on to the 'one'…".

[586] Cf. *HDSJ* 4.1.3: 小以成小，大以成大，(…)。鳥得而飛，魚得而游，獸得而走；萬物得之以生，百事得之以成。人皆以之，莫知其名。人皆用之，莫見其形。 In small it makes small, in great it makes great, (…). Birds can fly because of it, fish can swim because of it, animals can run because of it; all things are alive because of it, all undertakings are accomplished because of it. All men live on it, but no one knows its name; all men make use of it, but no one sees its shape.

[587] Both *shi* 施 and *jian* 薦 in this line are alternatively transcribed as shi 矢 (Chan, 2015).

聞之曰 ： 能執一 ， 則百物不失 ； I have heard it said: if you can hold on to the 'one', then none of the things is lost;

如不能執一 ， 則 [22] 百物俱失。 If you cannot hold on to the 'one', then all the things are lost.

如欲執一 ， 仰而視之 ， 俯而察之。 If you want to hold on to the 'one', look up and see it, look down and examine it.

毋遠求 ， 度於身稽之。 Do not seek it far away but examine the measure that is right within yourself.

得一 [而] [23] 圖之 ， 如并天下而助之 ； If you attain the 'one' and make plans, it is as if all under heaven were helping it.[588]

得一而思之 ， 若并天下而治之。 If you attain the 'one' and ponder on it, it is as if all under heaven were managing it.[589]

〔此〕一以為天地稽。 This 'one' can be considered the measure of heaven and earth.

[17] 是故一 ， 咀之有味 ， 嗅 [之有臭]， That is why the one, when you chew on it, it has taste, when you smell it, it has a smell,

鼓之有聲 ， 近之可見 ， 操之可操 ， when you tap on it, it makes sound, when you approach it, it can be seen, when you touch it, it can be touched.

握之則失 ， 敗之則 [19] 槁 ， 賊之則滅。 But if you want to get hold of it, you will lose it, if you want to dominate it, it will wither, if you damage it, it will perish.

執此言起於一端。 That we hold on to these words arises from (the fact that we consider) only one end of it. [590]

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[588] Alt. "it is like uniting all under heaven and helping it."
[589] Similarly as in the previous note, alt. "it is like uniting all under heaven and managing it."
[590] Cf. the same line above, n. 444.

聞之曰 ： 一言而終不窮 ， 一言而有眾 ， I have heard it said: there is one speech[591] with which (you) never exhaust the resources; there is one speech with which (you) win over the people;

[20] 一言而萬民之利 ， 一言而為天地稽。 there is one speech with which (you will) benefit the crowds; there is one speech with which (you are) the measure of heaven and earth.

握之不盈握 ， 敷之無所容 ， When you grasp it, it does not fill the hand, when you spread it, there is nothing that could contain it.

大 [29] 之以知天下 ， 小之以治邦。 On a large scale, it allows one to know all under heaven, on a small scale, it allows one to govern the state.

太一生水 The Great One Gives Birth to the Water

太一生水， The great one gives birth to the water.

水反輔太一，是以成天。 The water returns to assist the great one, thus creating the heaven.

天反輔太一， 是以成地。 The heaven returns to assist the great one, thus creating the earth.

天地[復相輔] [1] 也， 是以成神明[592]。 The heaven and the earth [again assist each other], thus creating the spiritual and bright forces.

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[591] Yi yan 一言, also "one word" or "one sentence". The reading that I would have preferred, i.e., something like "As regards the 'one', speaking it…" or "with this 'one' speech", is grammatically highly improbable. It is more likely that "yi yan er…" is used in a sense similar to the Analects, i.e., when someone asks a sage to summarize his teaching in "one word" or "one simple sentence" (Analects, Zi Lu 子路: "定公問：一言而可以興邦，有諸？"; or Analects, Wei Ling Gong 衛靈公: "子貢問曰：有一言而可以終身行之者乎？ 子曰：其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。"

[592] The interpretation of the term shen ming 神明 in this context has been vividly discussed. Shen 神, usually rendered as 'spirit', appears in pre-Qin texts mostly in the context of supernatural forces, deities, or gods, whereas translations of ming 明 include 'light' (including specifically the celestial 'lights' – the sun, moon, and stars), 'bright', and 'to see clearly', 'clairvoyant'. As a 'shenming' compound, it appears in Warring States texts as the joint term for heavenly and earthly spirits. Yet, around the fourth century BC, in the environment of the competing 'hundred schools', it became more abstract and, it can be often translated as 'divine insight', or 'spirit-like intelligence' (e.g. in *Xunzi* 1, 21). In the cosmological context, it began functioning as a pair of opposing forces,

神明復[相]輔也， 是以成陰陽。 The spiritual and bright forces again[593] assist each other, thus creating *yin* and *yang*.

陰陽復相輔也，是以成四時。 *Yin* and *yang* again assist each other, thus creating the four seasons.

四時 [2] 復相輔也， 是以成滄然。 The four seasons again assist each other, thus creating cold and hot.

滄然復相輔也， 是以成濕燥。 Cold and hot again assist each other, thus creating wet and dry.

濕燥復相輔也， 成歲 [3] 而止。 Wet and dry again assist each other, thus completing the yearly cycle, and that is where it stops.

故歲者，濕燥之所生也。 That is why the yearly cycle is born out of wet and dry,

濕燥者，滄然之所生也。 wet and dry is born out of cold and hot,

滄然者，四時 [4] [之所生也。] cold and hot [is born out of the four seasons,][594]

四時者，陰陽之所生[也]。 the four seasons are born out of *yin* and *yang*,

陰陽者，神明之所生也。 *yin* and *yang* are born out of the spiritual and bright forces,

神明者，天地之所生也。 the spiritual and bright forces are born out of the heaven and the earth,

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similar to yin/yang, or dark/bright, as it is also the case in the *TYSS*. Therefore, I also offer for consideration here an alternative reading of 'shen ming' as a pair of opposites, that is, as 'unobvious and obvious', 'invisible and visible', or 'hidden and manifest' forces between heaven and earth. Cf. Small, Sharon Y. "A Daoist Exploration of Shenming." Journal of Daoist Studies, vol. 11, 2018.

[593] I'd prefer a looser translation for fu 復, as 'continue to', to emphasize the continuity between the stages, but it would go against its adverbial position in the sentence.

[594] This part is entirely omitted in the text, probably by the scribe's mistake.

天地 [5] 者，太一之所生也。　　the heaven and the earth are born out of the great one.[595]

是故太一藏於水，行於時。　　That is why the great one is present in the water, moves in the seasons,

周而又[始以己為] [6] 萬物母。　makes a circle and [starts anew, making of itself] the mother of all things.

一缺一盈，以己為萬物經。[596]　　Now emptying and now filling, it becomes the warp of all things.

此天之所不能殺，　　It is something that the heaven cannot destroy

地之所 [7] 不能埋，　　something that the earth cannot bury,

陰陽之所不能成。　　something that yin and yang cannot bring to completion.

君子知此之謂[智，　　The noble man who knows it is called [knowledgeable,

不知此之謂之愚] [8]。　　the one who does not know it is called ignorant.][597]

天道貴溺(弱)，　　The *dao* of heaven values the weak,

削成者　　it takes away from that which is complete

以益生者。　　and supplies with it that which is born.

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[595] Interestingly, water (shui 水) is omitted in this reverse account. This can be understood 1) as another omission of a negligent scribe, 2) as an indication that water is almost identified with the '*tai yi*' as its prominent 'mode' (that is, undifferentiated, formless, fluid, always moving).

[596] Scott Cook, p. 347, n. 28, sense of „guideline", „warp", „model" (could also stand for 精, „essence", cosmological principle in the *Nei ye*)

[597] The end of the strip is eroded – the rest of the sentence is completed based on probability and the number of characters (I am following Li Ling's suggestion here.)

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伐於強, 積於[弱]⁵⁹⁸ [9]。　　It takes down the strong and builds up the weak.

下, 土也，　　　　　　Below, there is the soil,

而謂之地。　　　　　　yet we call it earth.

上, 氣也，　　　　　　Above, there is the air (qi),

而謂之天。　　　　　　and yet we call it heaven.

道也 其字也。　　　　Dao is (also only) a formal designation,

請問⁵⁹⁹其名。　　　　but what is its name?⁶⁰⁰

以 [10] 道從事者，　　The one who attends to his tasks in accordance with *dao*

必托其名，　　　　　　must rely on their names;

故事成而身長。　　　　thus, his tasks are successful, and his life can be long.

聖人之從事也，　　　　When a sage attends to his tasks,

亦托其 [11] 名，　　　he also relies on their names;

故功成而身不傷。　　　thus, the work is accomplished, and he remains without injury.

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⁵⁹⁸ The end of the strip is missing, with a lacuna of approx. 6-7 characters (which suggests there were another two three-character lines).

⁵⁹⁹ Chu-script graphs here are also transcribed as *qing* 青 and *hun* 昏; Cook argues that this combination is commonly transcribed as 請問 in pre-Qin texts. Cf. Cook, p. 350, n. 43; Harper reads: '*qing hun* (clear and muddled) is its name.'

⁶⁰⁰ Alt. "Dao is (also) a *zi*-name. What, may I ask, is its *ming*-name?"

天地名字並立，	Names[601] of heaven and earth are established together.
故過其方，	Thus when they exceed their territory,
不思相[當, …]。	they mutually do not […].[602]

天不足] [12] 於西北，	[Where the heaven is not sufficient] in the north-west, ,
其下高以強。	what is below is high and strong.
地不足東南，	Where the earth is not sufficient in the south-east,
其上[厚以廣。[603]	what is above is [ample and vast.
不足於上] [13] 者，	What is not sufficient above]
有餘於下，	has an abundance below;
不足於下者，	what is not sufficient below
有餘於上。 [14]	abounds above.

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[601] i.e., both ming 名-name and zi 字-name.

[602] A longer part of the strip is missing and remains unreconstructed The ending of the sentence is rather unclear due to the missing characters. Qiu Xigui proposes *dang* 當, 'to fit', 'to correspond'; Cook chooses *shang* 尚, here 'to surpass', based on Wang Bo's reconstruction (Scott Cook I (2012), pp. 351–3). A more problematic term in this section, however, is *bu si* 不思. Henricks proposes the interpretation: 'But when we move beyond these domains, we can think of nothing that could fit.' *Si* 思 could indeed point to the 'human experience' aspect being stressed here (similarly as in *wei* 謂). Readings such as 'don't think that', 'without thought', or 'not knowingly' have also been suggested (Guo Yi 郭沂, Erica Brindley).

[603] The end of the strip is missing; completed according to Scott Cook, p. 352, n. 56.

內業 Nei ye – Inner Workings

1.

凡物之精，	Generally, the essence[604] of things
此則為生	is that by which they are brought to life.
下生五穀，	Below it generates five kinds of grain,
上為列星。	above it gives rise to the arrays of stars.
流於天地之間，	When it flows between the heaven and earth,
謂之鬼神，	it is called the ghosts and spiritual forces.
藏於胸中，	When it is stored within a man ('s chest),
謂之聖人；	it is called the sage.

2.

是故此[605]氣，	That is why this *qi*
杲乎如登於天，	is so bright, as if rising to heaven,
杳乎如入於淵，	and so dark, as if diving into the abyss,
淖乎如在於海，	so vast, as if (extending) through the seas,

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[604] Jing 精 translated as "the essence" may be misleading, given the context of the whole work. The translation as "essence" is not meant in any abstract, ideal or definitive sense, but rather as "a gist", or an initial instruction (a leading tone) according to which the thing develops, choosing its own unique way of developing it. I am inclined to read it as an equivalent term to *dao* 道 (and maybe also *qi* 氣) used in the same sentence pattern a few verses below, that is, as one of the different names used to point to the nameless (the undifferentiated) which is the source of differetiation.

[605] I replace min 民 in this version by ci 此, following Harold Roth and Allyn Rickett's solution.

卒[606]乎如在於己。	so condensed, as if (residing) within oneself.[607]
是故此氣也，	That is why this *qi*
不可止以力，	cannot be held back by force,
而可安以德。	but it can be stabilized through the inner attraction power.
不可呼以聲，	It cannot be summoned by calling it,
而可迎以音[608]。	but it can be met through the tone.
敬守勿失，	To preserve it with respect and not to lose it,
是謂成德。	that is called bringing the inner attraction power to fullness.
德成而智出，	If the inner attraction power is full, the knowing arises.
萬物果得。	Then the multitude of things can be brought to fruition.[609]

3.

凡心之刑[610]，	The disposition of the mind is generally such
自充自盈，	that it fills of itself and replenishes itself,
自生自成；	arises of itself and brings itself to fulfilment.
其所以失之，	But what is surely detrimental to it
必以憂樂喜怒欲利。	are worries, joys, affections, resentments,
	desires, and profit-seeking.

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[606] Reading cu4 卒 as cui4 萃, dense, thicken, collect together (Ryckett, 1965, p. 158)

[607] Alt. "within itself".

[608] A variant yi 意 is appears as well; a translation

[609] Meaning: "then the results of all things can be achieved". In the process perspective, guo 果 can be understood as the goal (intent) for which the things were established in the first place.

[610] Reading xing 刑 as xing 形.

能去憂樂喜怒欲利，	If you can get rid of worries, joys, affections, resentments, desires, and profit-seeking,
心乃反濟[611]。	the mind returns to its evenness.
彼心之情，	The mind's disposition is such
利安以寧，	that it benefits from the calmness and peacefulness.[612]
勿煩勿亂，	Do not disturb it and do not confuse it,
和乃自成。	(its) harmony will then be accomplished of itself.

4.

折折[613]乎如在於側，	It is so bright, as if it were right beside you,
忽忽乎如將不得，	yet so fleeting, as if it were ungraspable,
渺渺乎如窮無極，	so vast, as if it should exhaust the boundless.
此道不遠，	This *dao* is not far from you,
日用其德.	every day you can use its inner attraction power.

夫道者所以充形也，	It is the *dao* which fills all shapes and forms,
而人不能固。	yet the men are unable to hold it firm.
其往不復，	When it goes, it does not return,
其來不舍	when it comes, it does not stay.

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[611] Alt. qi2 齊 – I read as "complete, orderly, even".
[612] I read *yi*3 以 here as a connective, so "calm and peaceful" or "calm and thus peaceful".
[613] Emended to zhe2 zhe2 晢晢 (Ryckett, 1965, p. 159)

謀[614]乎莫聞其音，	It is so silent that no one hears its sound,
卒[615]乎乃在於心，	and so condensed, as if it were right inside the mind.
冥冥乎不見其形，	It is so obscure that its shape cannot be seen,
淫淫乎與我俱生，	yet so pervasive,[616] as if it were born together with us.
不見其形，	We cannot see its shape,
不聞其聲，	we cannot hear its sound,
而序其成	yet we continue to follow its (path to) fullness.
謂之道。	That is what is called *dao*.
凡道無所，	*Dao* has no location,
善心安處	yet it dwells peacefully in good mind.
心靜氣理，	When the mind is still and *qi* is in order,
道乃可止。	*dao* can then stop there.[617]
彼道不遠，	This *dao* is not far,
民得以產。	when people have it, they proliferate.
彼道不離，	This *dao* is not distant,
民因以知。	when people follow it, they gain knowledge.

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[614] Wang Niansun emends to *ji* 寂, silent (Ryckett, 1965, 159)
[615] Again, emending cu4 卒 to cui4 萃, similarly to "卒乎如在於己" above.
[616] I understand yin 淫 here as "copious, abundant, bountiful", that is, without its usual negative connotations.
[617] The notion that the *dao* could "stop" goes against everything that is otherwise said about it. That is why I would interpret it here as "stay", "find a stable place".

是故卒[618]乎	That is why it is so condensed,
其如可與索。	as if it could be bound together with a cord,[619]
渺渺乎	and yet so vast,
其如窮無所。	as if it could exhaust the limitless.
彼道之情，	This *dao* is disposed in such a way
惡音與聲。	that it is repelled by noises and voices.
修心靜音，	Cultivate the mind and silence the noise,
道乃可得。	*dao* can then be attained.

6.

道也者，口之所不能言也，	*Dao* is that which the mouth cannot tell,
目之所不能視也，	that which the eyes cannot see,
耳之所不能聽也，	that which the ears cannot hear,
所以脩心而正形也。	yet it is something (that can be used) to cultivate one's mind and put one's body in order.
人之所失以死，	When people lose it, they die,
所得以生也。	when they receive it, they live.
事之所失以敗，	When affairs lose it, they go wrong,
所得以成也。	when they have it, they will be accomplished.

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[618] Again, reading cu4 卒 as cui4 萃 (see nn. above)
[619] Alternatively, "as if you could be bound to it using a cord".

凡道，無根無莖，	Generally, *dao* has no root or stem,
無葉無榮，	no leaves or blossoms,
萬物以生，	(and yet) all things arise because of it,
萬物以成，	and all things are brough to fulness by it.
命之曰道。	We gave it a name of "*dao*".

7.

天主正，	For the heaven, the (most important) principle is regularity,
地主平,	for the earth, the principle is the balance,
人主安靜。	for the man, the principle is stillness.
春秋冬夏，	Spring, summer, autumn and winter
天之時也，	are the natural seasons of the heaven.
山陵川谷，	Mountains, hills, rivers and valleys
地之枝(材)也，	are the limbs of the earth.
喜怒取予，	To like and to dislike, to give and to take,
人之謀也，	are the plans of men.
是故聖人	That is why the sage man
與時變而不化，	changes with the seasons without being transformed,
從物而不移。	follows things without shifting himself.

8.

能正能靜，	If you can remain straight and quiet,

然後能定。	Then you can find stability.
定心在中，	With a stable mind within,
耳目聰明，	one's ears and eyes are sharp,
四枝堅固，	one's four limbs are strong and firm.
可以為精舍。	One can then become home to the vital essence.
精也者，氣之精者也。	Vital essence is the quintessence of *qi*.
氣道乃生，	Where *qi* flows, the life is born,
生乃思，	where the life is born, there is pondering[620].
思乃知，	Where is pondering, there is knowing.
知乃止矣。	Where there is knowing, one can stop there.[621]
凡心之形，	Generally, the state of mind is such,
過知失生。	that it exalts the knowing[622], thereby harming the life.

9.

一物能化謂之神，	To regard things as one and to be able to change them is called the divine insight,
一事能變謂之智，	To regard affairs as one and be able to transform them is called the superior intelligence.

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[620] Among many possible translations of "thinking" here, I would choose the equivalents associated with "making decisions", such as "deliberation, consideration".

[621] Cf. HX, strip 5-6. Again, zhi 止, rather than "to stop" in a definite sense, I understand as "it is enough", "there is no other step needed after that".

[622] This is a very rough estimate, based on the preceding line with zhi ("to stop"), in the sense that if one does not stop there, or does not see this stage as sufficient, it only harms his life energy. Cf. above, FWLX strips 15-14.

化不易氣，	To change (things) without changing (one's) *qi,*
變不易智，	to transform (affairs) without changing (one's) intelligence,
惟執一之君子能為此乎！	only a noble man who holds on to the 'one' is capable of such thing!
執一不失，	Who holds on to the 'one' and does not lose it
能君萬物。	can rule over all things.
君子使物，	The noble man uses things to serve him,
不為物使。	he does not serve things.

10.

得一之理，	Who attains the principle of the 'one',
治心在於中，	has a well-ordered mind within,
治言出於口，	well-ordered speech comes out of his mouth
治事加於人，	and he charges (his) people with well-ordered tasks.
然則天下治矣。	If it is so, then all under heaven is in order.

一言得而天下服，	With one speech he achieves it and all under heaven will conform.
一言定而天下聽，	With one speech he establishes it and all under heaven will listen.
公之謂也。	This relates to what is widely known.

11.

形不正，	If one's bodily shape is not correctly disposed,

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德不來。	the inner attraction power does not come,[623]
中不静，	there is no silence inside
心不治。	and the mind is not in order.
正形攝德，	Correct your shape and gather the inner attraction power,
天仁地義	and the heaven becomes caring and the earth just.
則淫然而自至。	Then it all comes of itself in abundance.

12.

神明之極，	The divine insight is the utmost clarity.
照乎知萬物，	So penetrating that it grasps all things.
中(義)守不忒。	Inside it allows one to follow what is right without mistake,
不以物亂官，	it does not let things confuse the senses,
不以官亂心，	and does not let the senses confuse the mind.
是謂中得[624]，	This is called to attain it on the inside.

13.

| 有神自在身， | There is a spirit present of itself in a man. |
| 一往一來， | It comes and it goes |

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[623] Xing 形 here can be understood, in a more specific sense, as "a body" or "one's body", or in a more general sense as any "distinct shape" (or "situational disposition"). One of the possible interpretations suggests that this line refers specifically to correct bodily (meditation) positions, see e.g., Harold D. Roth, Original Tao: "Inward Training" and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism (Columbia University Press, 1999).

[624] Possibly also *zhong de* 中德, resonates with *nei de* 內得/內德 below. This would suggest a possible interplay between 'the inside' as *zhong* 中 and as *nei* 內, connected to the discernment of "two levels of mind" below.

莫之能思.	and no one can figure how.
失之必亂，	If one loses it, disorder necessarily ensues,
得之必治。	if one has it, order must govern.
敬除其舍，	Respectfully make space for it to reside,
精將自來。	and its essence will come of itself.
靜[625]想思之,	Quiet idle ideas[626] and (you can) consider it,
寧念治之。	calm your thoughts and (you can) put it in order.
嚴容畏敬，	With a dignified appearance and respectful attitude,
精將至定。	its essence will itself become settled.
得之而勿捨，	Attain it and do not let go of it,
耳目不淫，	then the ears and the eyes will not be craving for more
心無他圖。	and the mind will have no other intentions.
正心在中，	If the mind inside is correctly disposed,
萬物得度。	all things will reach their proper measure.

14.

道滿天下，	*Dao* fills the whole world,
普在民所，	it is everywhere where people reside,
民不能知也。	and yet people are not able to understand it.

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[625] NB Rickett replaces jing 靜 with jing 精, in accordance with the preceding verse.
[626] Xiang 想 is understood here as imagining, fantasising or recalling things from the past, rather than reflecting or pondering, hence the translation as "idle ideas".

一言之解，	If one could sum it up in one explanation,
上察於天，	above (it would allow him to) explore the heaven,
下極於地，	below (it would allow him to) reach the utmost depths of the earth,
蟠滿九州。	and comprehend all nine districts of the world at once.
何謂解之在於心安？	What does it mean that the understanding lies in one's quiet mind?
我心治，官乃治。	If my mind is in order, then the senses are in order, too.
我心安，官乃安。	If my mind is quiet, then the senses are also quiet.
治之者心也，	But what brings order (to mind) is the mind.
安之者心也；	What quiets (the mind) is the mind.
心以藏心，	The mind hides in itself a mind,
心之中又有心焉。	there is a mind inside the mind.
彼心之心，	This mind's mind
音以先言，	has in itself a sound/tone[627] that precedes words.
音然後形，	When it has a sound, it can take form,
形然後言。	when it takes form, it can be put into words,
言然後使，	when it is put into words, it can serve a purpose,
使然後治。	when it serves a purpose, it can be put in order.
不治必亂，	When it is not in order, disorder necessarily ensues

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[627] *Yin* 音 is understood here as a sound in its specificity, a tone or a tuning, that is, a specific "process" in its formless aspect.

亂乃死。	and what is in disorder will perish.

15.

精存自生，	When the vital essence[628] is preserved and naturally generated,
其外安榮，	on the outside it manifests as serenity and flourishing,
內藏以為泉原，	stored inside, it serves as a source
浩然和平，	from which harmony and balance flow abundantly,
以為氣淵。	it serves as a deep reservoir of *qi*.
淵之不涸，	Since this reservoir is never exhausted,
四體乃固，	all four limbs are firm.
泉之不竭，	Since this source never runs dry,
九竅遂通，	all nine apertures allow free circulation.
乃能窮天地，	One can then encompass (all between) heaven and earth,
被四海。	cover (all between) the four seas.
中無惑意，	Inside (he has) no confused thoughts,
外無邪菑。	outside (he encounters) no bad calamities.
心全於中，	Inside, his mind is whole,
形全於外，	outside, his (bodily) shape is unimpaired,
不逢天菑，	he will not encounter natural disasters,

| 不遇人害， | nor will he be harmed by people. |
| 謂之聖人。 | That is called the sage man. |

16.

人能正靜，	If one is able to be correctly disposed and quiet,
皮膚裕寬，	his skin will be fresh and smooth,
耳目聰明，	his ears and eyes sharp and clear,
筋信[629]而骨強，	his sinews firm and bones strong.
乃能戴大圜，	Then he can carry the Great Circle (of heaven) on his head
而履大方。	and stand on the Great Square (of earth),[630]
鑒於大清，	see his reflection in Great Purity
視於大明。	and look in the Great Brightness[631].
敬慎無忒，	If one is respectful, cautious and without wavering,
日新其德；	his inner power is daily renewed.
徧知天下，	He can know about everything under the heaven,
窮於四極；	encompass everything between the four extremities (of the earth).
敬發其充，	and respectfully bring forth his plentiful resources.

[629] Xin 信 can also be read as shen (syn. with shen 伸), 'stretched straight' or 'straightened'.

[630] Great Circle symbolizes the heaven, Great Square symbolizes the earth. This symbolism is also reflected in an ancient astrological divinatory device called 'cosmograph', composed of a round plate with the depictions of constellations connected to the square plate, representing four cardinal directions. The sage is then metaphorically compared to the immovable axis around which the device revolves, i.e., a stable centre of the cosmic becoming.

[631] In another sense, *da ming* 大明 is also used as a term for 'the big heavenly lights', i.e., the Sun and the Moon.

是謂內得[632]。	That is called having attained it on the inside.
然而不反	If one then fails to return to it,
此生之忒。	it causes wavering in one's life.

17.

凡道必周必密，	The way is generally such
	that it necessarily involves coiling and thickening,
必寬必舒，	as well as widening and unfolding,
必堅必固。	as well as hardening and solidifying.
守善勿舍，	Maintain what is good and do not falter,
逐淫釋[633]薄。	get rid of excess, let go of the petty.
既知其極	Then you understand that in its furthermost limit
反於道德。	it goes back to the way (*dao*) and the inner power (*de*).

18.

全心在中，	When a complete mind is within,
不可蔽匿。	it cannot be concealed.
知[634]於形容，	it is evident from one's outer appearance,
見於膚色。	it shows itself in complexion and countenance.
善氣迎人，	When you meet people with good *qi*,

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[632] Cf. note 486 above.
[633] Emending *shi* 澤 to *shi* 釋 (Rickett, 1985, p. 164, n. 50)
[634] Emending he 和 to zhi 知 (Rickett according to Wang Niansun, p. 14, n. 52)

親於弟兄。	they will be closer than your brothers.
惡氣迎人，	When you welcome them with bad *qi,*
害於戎兵。	they will be more harmful than weapons of war.
不言之聲，	The sound of what is not said
疾於雷鼓。	is more compelling than the strike of thunder.
心氣之形，	The character of the mind's *qi* is such
明於日月，	that it is brighter than the sun and the moon,
察於父母。	and more inquisitive than mother and father.
賞不足以勸善，	Rewards are not enough to encourage the good,
刑不足以懲過。	punishments are not enough to supress the transgressions.
氣意得而天下服。	If you get hold of the orientation of *qi,* the whole world will comply.
心意定而天下聽。	If you determine the orientation of the mind, the whole world will listen.

19.

摶氣如神，	Concentrate *qi* like spiritual forces,
萬物備存。	and all things will be there ready.
能摶乎？	Can you concentrate?

能一乎？	Can you be one?[635]
能無卜筮	Can you not resort to divination
	(using milfoil or bones and shells),
而知吉凶乎？	and still know the auspicious from inauspicious?
能止乎？	Can you stop?
能已乎？	Can you cease?
能勿求諸人	Can you not seek it in others,
而得之己乎？	but obtain it from within yourself?
思之思之，	Think about it, think about it,
又重思之。	and think about it again.
思之而不通，	You think about it and still do not understand?
鬼神將通之，	If spirits and divine forces can understand it,
非鬼神之力也，	it is not due to their strength,
精氣之極也。	it is because of the highest refinement of their *qi*.
四體既正，	Once the four limbs are correctly aligned
血氣既靜，	and once the stream of qi is calm,
一意摶心，	make the thought one[636] and concentrate the mind,

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[635] In the more common sense of "concentrated on that one thing", but possibly also (in the intentions of this work) "being one (with it)", or "making it into one", which is where the decisive power, or the power of influencing things, comes from.

[636] Focused, concentrated, or "one" in the sense of the note above.

耳目不淫，	then the ears and the eyes will not go to excess.
雖遠若近	Even the distant will be like close.

20.

思索生知，	Thinking leads to knowing,
慢易生憂。	sloppiness leads to worrying.
暴傲生怨，	arrogance leads to resentment,
憂鬱生疾，	worries lead to illness.
疾困乃死。	When the illness is grave, it leads to death.
思之而不捨，	If you think and never stop,
內困外薄。	you are troubled on the inside and thin[637] on the outside.
不蚤為圖，	If it is not too early to make a plan,
生將巽舍。	life can remain in its abode.
食莫若無飽，	Like, with food, the best is not to eat to the full,
思莫若勿致，	also with thinking, the best is not to go the extreme.
節適之齊，	Put a suitable limit on it
彼將自至。	and (life) will come of itself.

21.

凡人之生也，	Generally, the life of men is such

---

[637] I have doubts about the translation of *bo/bai* 薄 here – other possible associations would be "sth. insignificant, poor, not enough in some way".

天出其精，	that their vital essence comes from heaven
地出其形，	and their bodily shape comes from the earth.
合此以為人；	When these two join together, they create a man.
和乃生，	When they are mutually adjusted, then there is life.
不和不生。	when they are not adjusted, there is no life.
察和之道，	If we examine the way (*dao*) how this adjustment occurs,
其情[638]不見，	its conditions cannot be observed,
其徵不醜。	its signs cannot be sorted out.[639]
平正擅匈，	When the balance settles within
論治在心，	and the order resides in the mind,
此以長壽。	that is how one can live a long life.
忿怒之失度，	When, in anger, you lose your measure,
乃為之圖。	make a plan for that.
節其五欲，	Restrict the desires of the five senses,
去其二凶。	get rid of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness,
不喜不怒，	let go of liking and disliking,
平正擅匈。	then the balance can settle within.

22.

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[638] Rickett and Guo Moruo emend *jing* 精 to *qing* 情
[639] Following Rickett, I understand *chou* 醜 as *lei* 類.

凡人之生也，	It is ever so with life,
必以平正；	that it needs to be put into balance.
所以失之，	What surely threatens the balance
必以喜怒憂患，	is liking and disliking, sorrow and worries.
是故止怒莫若詩，	That is why to stop (the irritation of) disliking,
	there is nothing better than poetry,[640]
去憂莫若樂，	to get rid of sorrow, there is nothing better than music,
節樂莫若禮，	to moderate music/joy,[641] there is nothing better than rituals,
守禮莫若敬，	to observe rituals, there is nothing better than respect,
守敬莫若靜，	to preserve respect, there is nothing better than stillness.
內靜外敬，	(The one who is) still on the inside and respectful on the outside,
能反其性，	can return to his natural disposition.
性將大定。	Then the natural disposition will arrive at great stability.

23.

凡食之道，	Generally, with the food it is so
大充，傷而形不臧。	that with excessive fullness,
	one is harmed and his bodily shape suffers,
大攝，骨枯而血沍。	and with excessive restraint,

---

[640] Also "Poetry"/"Songs", as in *shi jing* 詩經; the same goes for "Music" and "Rites" in the next lines.
[641] I believe this line actually does play with the double sense of *le/yue* 樂.

	the bones dry up and the blood congeals.
充攝之間，	To stay between fullness and restraint,
此謂和成。	this means the harmony is achieved.
精之所舍，	This is where the vital essence dwells
而知之所生。	and where the knowledge is born.
飢飽之失度，	When you lose your measure in fullness and starvation,
乃為之圖。	make a plan for it.
飽則疾動，	When you are full, move vigorously,
飢則廣思，	when you are hungry, broaden your thought,
老則長慮，	when you are old, think far ahead[642].
飽不疾動，	When you are full and not moving vigorously,
氣不通於四末，	*qi* will not flow through the four limbs.
飢不廣思，	When you starve and do not broaden your thought,
飢而不廢。	starvation will not go away.
老不長慮，	When you are old and do not think far ahead,
困乃遫竭。	you will be troubled and soon become exhausted.

24.

大心而敢，	Make your mind big and be courageous,

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[642] I understand this to mean "think in longer perspective", "making plans ahead".

寬氣而廣，	spread your *qi* wide, and expand,
其形安而不移，	with your body staying calm and not moving anywhere.[643]
能守一而棄萬苛。	Then you can hold on to the one[644]
	and let go of ten thousand minor things.
見利不誘，	Encountering profit, you will not be tempted,
見害不懼，	facing harm, you will not be scared.
寬舒而仁，	You will be easy and relaxed and still considerate of others,
獨樂其身，	finding joy in yourself alone.
是謂雲氣，	This is the so-called "cloud *qi*"[645]
意行似天。	Then the intentions and actions will be like (given by) the heaven.[646]

25.

凡人之生也，	Generally, the life of men is such,
必以其歡，	that it is supposed to be enjoyed.
憂則失紀，	When you are sad, you lose thread,
怒則失端，	when you are irritated, you lose boundaries.

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[643] Or not "changing", "remaining unchanged".
[644] Cf. chapter 5, part 5.3 above (in accordance with the thesis of this work, I translate it as "preserving oneness", "holding on to the one" etc.)
[645] The meaning of *yun* 雲 is unclear; I am inclined to understand it as "primal *qi*", according to mentions in *Guang yun* 廣韻, it symbolize the undifferentiated state "雲者，天地之本", and also "陰陽聚爲雲". Rickett understands it as "clouding" and translates as "setting into motion"; Roth translates as "revolving the vital breath", suggesting that it could be a practical technique.
[646] I understand it to mean "very natural", "as if coming of itself" (from another place than one's self).

憂悲喜怒，	When there is sorrow, grief, pleasure and frustration,
道乃無處，	*dao* does not have a place to stay.
愛慾靜之，	If you are attached to your desires, make them still,
遇亂正之。	if you encounter disorder, make it right.
勿引勿推，	Do not pull and do not push,
福將自歸。	and the well-being will come back of itself.
彼道自來，	That the right way (*dao*) will naturally come to you,
可藉與謀。	you can rely on it and plan with it.
靜則得之，	When you are still, you will get it,
躁則失之，	when you are upset,[647] you will lose it.

26.

靈氣在心，	Spiritual[648] *qi* within the mind is such
一來一逝。	that it comes and it goes.
其細無內，	It is so fine that nothing is inside of it,
其大無外，	and so vast that there is nothing outside of it.
所以失之，	How one loses it
以躁為害，	is through harming it by being hasty.
心能執靜，	If the mind can embrace stillness,

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[647] What is meant is the opposite of "still", therefore "hasty" or "rushing" may be a better translation.
[648] Meaning of *ling* 靈 here is unclear; possibly also "subtle".

道將自定。   the way (*dao*) will become stable of itself.

得道之人，   When one has attained the way (*dao*),

理丞而屯(毛)泄，[649]   it exudes from his traits and permeates his hair,

匈中無敗。   Within himself he does not feel defeated.

節欲之道，   Following the way of restricting his desires,

萬物不害。   nothing can bring him any harm.

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[649] This line is very obscure. I follow Rickett and Wang Yinzhi (and Roth) in emending *cheng* 丞 to *zheng* 烝, and *tun* 屯 to *mao* 毛.