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Preparing One's Act: Performance Supports And The Question Of Human Nature In Early China

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Abstract

Since the 20th century, Chinese institutions have been recovering a growing number of ancient objects, among which figure manuscripts produced during the Warring States (453–221 BCE) era. These are the protagonists of this dissertation. Chapter 1 articulates the overarching goal of my study: the importance of rigorous philological and intellectual engagement to promote the significance of these manuscripts in and beyond the study of early Chinese history. In Chapter 2, I analyze manuscripts produced around 300 BCE as what I call "performance supports," rather than self-contained philosophical and historical essays. My notion of "performance supports" incorporates observations about the composite nature of early Chinese manuscripts, but better accounts for other textual features, such as errors, abrupt endings, list-like passages, etc. Chapter 3 discusses the implications of my thesis. I show how performance supports were used in practices of knowledge management that relied on, but went beyond, the written medium. I explore oratory, recitation, literary compositions, and writings used to organize and retrieve knowledge. Second, I compare performance supports to other Warring States texts, so as to highlight the peculiarities of both groups and confirm that the concept of performance support is not an ad-hoc solution. Chapter 4 focuses on the performance support *Natural Dispositions Come from Endowment 性自命出, and reconstructs ways in which this manuscript functioned as the basis for central philosophical debates on human nature during the Warring States period. The dissertation is completed by a new philological study of *Natural Dispositions.

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PREPARING ONE'S ACT: PERFORMANCE SUPPORTS

AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN NATURE IN EARLY CHINA

Maddalena Poli

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Maddalena Poli

"Do not mistake my personal failings for a lack of devotion."
The Legend of Georgia McBride

For the life that was taken.
Once. And too many times after that.
For the life that was given.
Once. And so many times after that.

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As I complete this dissertation, Ukraine is being bombed for the 16th day by Russian forces. This while Afghanistan is still reckoning with the collapse of their state after the US army was completely withdrawn in 2021, and during the third year of a pandemic that started in 2019, two years after internment camps were officially established in Xinjiang. I had the luck of being able to shape my life in safety and security, and many people played a wonderful role in this.

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vi

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When I was still pondering whether to pursue a PhD in ancient history, aware of all the uncertainties that this life leads to, I also considered remaining in Italy, having

traveled around in Asia and Europe for a few years already. My mother did not want to

hear about it. "Se devi affogare, fallo nell'oceano, no' in una pozzanghera!" ("If you have

to drown, do it in the ocean, not in a puddle!") She has never let adversity tackle her

resolution to do the best of what life throws at you. As so I learned to swim.

ABSTRACT

PREPARING ONE'S ACT: PERFORMANCE SUPPORTS

AND THE QUESTION OF HUMAN NATURE IN EARLY CHINA

Maddalena Poli

Paul R. Goldin

Since the 20th century, Chinese institutions have been recovering a growing number of ancient objects, among which figure manuscripts produced during the Warring States (453–221 BCE) era. These are the protagonists of this dissertation. Chapter one articulates the overarching goal of my study: the importance of rigorous philological and intellectual engagement to promote the significance of these manuscripts in and beyond the study of early Chinese history. In Chapter two, I analyze manuscripts produced around 300 BCE as what I call "performance supports," rather than self-contained philosophical and historical essays. My notion of "performance supports" incorporates observations about the composite nature of early Chinese manuscripts, but better accounts for other textual features, such as errors, abrupt endings, list-like passages, etc. Chapter three discusses the implications of my argument. I show how performance supports were used in practices of knowledge management that relied on, but went beyond, the written medium. I explore oratory, recitation, literary compositions, and writings used to organize and retrieve knowledge. I then compare performance supports to other Warring States texts, so as to highlight the peculiarities of both groups and

confirm that the concept of performance support is not an *ad-hoc* solution. Chapter four focuses on the performance support *Natural Dispositions Come from Endowment* 性自命出, and reconstructs ways in which this manuscript functioned as the basis for central philosophical debates on "human nature" (*xing* 性) during the Warring States period. The dissertation is completed by a new philological study of *Natural Dispositions*.

Table of contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

PREFACE

Prelude

Xiaobai woke up all of a sudden. It took him several moments to make sense of his surroundings. He gazed around, while his mind slowly rebuilt the reality around him into his world: the ceiling, broken in the left corner that was too expensive to repair, and from which water dribbled in during episodes of heavy rain; the small window from which sunlight and cold breezes reached you in those winter mornings; the familiar noises of his father fast asleep not that far away. He closed his eyes again, recollecting the images of his last seconds of sleep. He was dreaming of being received at court by king Wei, or so he thought. It was his recurring dream of the last months. In the dream, he could feel himself being excited by this opportunity, which at last came true. When he fantasized about it in his daydreams, he rehearsed in his mind his behavior: bearing a steady pace, he would walk into the hall, glancing around slowly to take in every detail without looking uncultured to the royal assistants. He had learned to command his voice to a tone that communicated safety. "There is nothing more important than realizing that the person in front of us, delivering his speech, is unperturbed by what surrounds him," his master told them so many times.

In the dream, the sense of calm he pulled off in all his imagined debates was replaced by a strong pain in the abdomen, which made Xiaobai forget every word of his speech. All the courtly ministers stared at him, while he tried to remember why he was there. He

would always wake up right as a round of laughter was emerging from the audience, with an uncomfortable feeling of failure that lingered on through his day.

He really struggled to remember the ancient songs he needed to pull out of his mind when debating. Xiaobai often had the impression that even his master did not really understand their meaning, but discussed them nonetheless in relation to ancient tales in remote areas in the north. In the same ways these ancient songs had been explained to him when he was young, the master continued the tradition. There was one song in particular Xiaobai had a hard time remembering, about a strange beast with a funny name, and filled with names of plants Xiaobai never even saw. It had a nice rhythm to it, but he could not remember the words. How did it go? "Strong and abundant grow the artemisia…" Or was that the second verse? He tried to bring it to mind clearly, visualizing the writing of each word. After a few failed attempts, he rolled back to his now familiar conclusion: those ancient songs did not make any sense. What he really liked was learning about how ancient kings spoke to ministers, memorizing those expressions that resonated with power, authority, and glory. And he wanted to debate what mattered to him, too. He wanted to think about morality, and what social structure would best serve the needs of all men. The master told him of sages who were traveling in Lu arguing for a revolutionary idea: all humans have the same moral impulses, the same existential foundation. Xiaobai often took this to mean that men were all equals. Even women, perhaps. He turned his head to look at his little sister, still asleep. Perhaps she wanted to discuss morality too, but nobody ever asked her.

Recently, rumors of a man in Song that people called Zhuangzi, who was making fun of the ancient writings, reached Chu. Maybe Xiaobai's father was right: times were changing and the new generations were valuing all the wrong things. "All these wars, all the disruptions!", as he was always saying, created too many opportunities for facile success. And yet this Zhuangzi was said to be very wise. It was said that even kings tried to recruit him, even though he did not believe in tradition! Xiaobai desired to be the next Zhuangzi: courted by kings, uncompromising in his beliefs, discussing the complexity of life with his peers.

He glanced outside the window: the sun kept rising. He brought to mind all he needed to do before going to school: feed the pigs and the chickens; bring some water to boil from the wall… he probably needed water to wash the pig shed too, last time he did it was on the *bing* 丙 day, surely it already started to smell again. Xiaobai hated washing the pig shed, among all the chores, but that was the condition his father put when he expressed his desire to be educated by the village's master: he would work in the morning to make up in labor what his father had to pay to the master.

He stood by the door looking at the garden in front of him. It was a small but dignified household for a family of artisans. His father even had a concubine, although with all the fighting between her and the first wife, Xiaobai saw little use of having a second woman in the house. His grandfather made a fortune producing weapons. During his father's generation every small shop started to do the same, so Xiaobai's older brother and heir to the business Teng started very early to learn the craft and help increase the production.

War was also very remunerative, thought Xiaobai. Perhaps that's why there are always so many wars, even though all the kings talked of morality and of uniting the kingdom. Since he was little, Xiaobiao felt that forging weapons was not what he wanted to do. He wanted to travel to Lu, all the way to the coast, where he was told a vast land of water spread itself as far as the eye could see, and beyond it. To get there without a family name, one needs a ministerial position, an education.

The modesty of the house was accentuated by the huge villa several *li* 里 to the north. On a clear day, Xiaobai could spot the construction by standing on the wall that circumnavigated the garden. It belonged to the Zhang 張 family. Everyone in the village knew the story of the Zhang family, and narrated it in a whisper. Their ancestor, Zhang E, was a native of Song. He fought with bravery in one of the many battles between Chu and Song long before, saving the lives of many generals. So brave were his actions that the king of Chu spared his life when Song was defeated. Zhang E became a powerful minister of the king. It was said that the royal family paid for the villa of the Zhang family, but this was probably folklore. Now, generations later, the family was still producing some of the best generals that the royal family of Chu could hope for. All brave men, respected men. Except Young Zhang, the youngest son whose arrogance was as vast as the family's prestige. Xiaobai could only attend schooling in the afternoon, after working in the fields and having taken care of the animals. Young Zhang instead would be educated by a personal master at home in the morning, fresh from a good night of sleep. Once or twice Xiaobai caught the master going to the Zhang house, and saw

Young Zhang too riding around, comfortably sitting while his well-fed horses trotted along the road that went to the village. The sight always caused a strong upheaval in his feelings. He wanted to smack his ink holder right into Young Zhang's face, for example when he mocked other students for their plain clothes at the market.

The dog arrived to snap Xiaobai out of his absorption. He looked down at the big eyes that were now staring at him. Xiaobai knew that look: of someone waiting to be fed, and feel a bit of company, too. He caressed the dog, and together they started walking towards the well, a few *li* of distance. If I am quick, thought Xiaobai, I will even have some time to review my notes. Xiaobai tried again to recall the words of the song with a nice rhythm, but of incomprehensible meaning. "Strong and abundant grow the artemisia…" and something about an arrow. One of the shortest ones in the collection the master taught them, and with the name of a strange creature in it. What was it again? Ah, yes: it was the *zouyu*!

Conventions

- On authorship: The authorship of several of the sources used for this study remains (and will likely always remain) uncertain. Well-known examples are the *Lunyu* 論語, attributed to Confucius but more likely composed by his disciples; it took its final form during the Han Dynasty. Similarly, the text known as *Mengzi* 孟子 is named after Meng Ke 孟軻 (372–289? BCE), a Warring States era thinker who lived in the 3rd century BCE, but the text that we read today did not result directly from his own writing. Its final shape was given by Han scholar Zhao Qi 趙岐 (108–201 CE). The history of the text now known as *Mozi* 墨子 is a similar one: named after philosopher Mo Di 墨翟 (died circa 390 BCE), what we read today is a version of the text in fifty-three chapters (whereas the Yi Wen Zhi 藝文志 has seventy-one, *Hanshu* 30.1738) that survived as part of the *Dao zang* 道藏 (*Daoist canon*, published 1444). With all this in mind, for the sake of smoother writing, in my dissertation I will at times use expressions such as "Mozi believed…", or "Mengzi is showing…." to discuss the content of the *Mozi* and the *Mengzi* respectively.

- On gender pronouns: In discussing hypothetical scenarios, the male pronoun is most often used. This is a mere reflection of the social system in place during the Warring States era and Han dynasty (at least, to the best of the field's knowledge), one in which women are rarely represented, or able to speak in first person. It does not dispute the fact that the principles discussed by Warring States thinkers applied to all individuals, regardless of their sex, or that women are at times mentioned and gained at times position of power, such as in the often-cited case of Ban Zhao. It simply goes to the point that until idealism becomes a reality, it remains what it is. An idealization.

- Old Chinese reconstructions follow the system in Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*, 2014. A capitalized notation is used to refer to the types of syllabic values that can be written with a phonetic speller.

- Transcription of manuscripts: As a rule, quotations from excavated sources present the most updated normalization of the text. The usage of parentheses to distinguish what is written on the strips vs. the intended words is a very useful practice in several contexts, but the results are cumbersome in my opinion when what is targeted is the content of a text, rather than the conventions used to encode it. Annotations are given for cases of difficult interpretations. An asterisk precedes manuscript titles that were assigned by editors, to distinguish them from manuscript titles that appear on the manuscripts themselves.

- Translations and Wide-Giles: All translations are original, unless otherwise stated. I often consulted those of previous scholars, whose references are given in the footnotes for comparison, or directly in the bibliography. For the sake of uniformity, I have changed all transliterations to *pin-yin* when quoting previous scholarship.

- The term "early China" indicates the period from the earliest developments of culture and civilization that occurred in the area of and surrounding the Central Plain (today part of the People's Republic of China) to the end of the Han dynasty (220 CE). At times, it is used with the narrower sense of Zhou dynasty (1046 – 221 BCE). This dissertation will make a relaxed use of the term, always complemented by specific date ranges for the material being discussed.

Citations

- All citations from transmitted sources are given as chapter and page. *Shang* 上 and *xia* 下 division in the organization of texts are designated as A and B.

- All citations from manuscripts are given as strip number, or scholars' editions.

- All citations from the **Natural Dispositions come from Endowment* 性自命出 are given as strip numbers. The interpretative transcription follows my own edition of the text, detailed in appendix A of the dissertation.

- The thirteen classics are cited from the Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 edition of the *Shisan jing* 十三經, unless otherwise noted; I indicate passages with the format *pian*.page number. As a matter of convenience, when citing the text only of *Mengzi*

and *Analects* (that is, not their commentaries), I use the conventional "*Mengzi pian*.A/B.paragraph" and "*Lunyu pian*.paragraph" formats.

Abbreviations

In general, titles or texts and works are given in full the first time in each chapter, and then abbreviated to the first one or two words. For example, **Natural Dispositions* abbreviates the **Natural Dispositions come from Endowment*, **Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出; **Discussions* abbreviates the **Discussions on Natural Dispositions and Affections*, **Xing qing lun* 性情論. In tables, **Natural Dispositions* is XZMC and **Discussions* is XQL. **Duke Mu* abbreviates **Duke Mu Of Lu asked Zisi, Lu Mu gong wen Zisi* 魯穆公問子思; etc.

Other recurring abbreviations:

- *Jicheng* for *Yin Zhou jin wen jicheng shiwen* 殷周金文集成釋文. 2001. 6 vols. Xianggang: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo.

- *Jishi* for *Chutu Zhanguo wenxian zi ci jishi* 出土戰國文獻文献字詞集釋. Zeng Xiantong 曾憲通, and Chen Wewu 陳偉武, eds. 17 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2018. It is cited by volume number and page. E.g., *Jishi* 4.1876 refers to volume 4, page 1876.

- *Zuo Tradition* for the *Zuo Tradition. Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn" Annals* 春秋左傳.

Essential chronology

Zhou dynasty 周朝		1046 – 221 BCE	
	Western Zhou 西周	1046 – 771 BCE	
	Eastern Zhou 東周		770 – 256 BCE
		Spring and Autumn period 春秋時代	722 – 453 BCE
		Warring States period 戰國時代	453 – 221 BCE
Qin dynasty 秦朝		**221 – 206 BCE**	
Han dynasty 漢朝		**206 BCE – 220 CE**	
	Western Han 西漢	206 BCE – 9 CE	
	Xin dynasty 新潮	9 – 23 CE	
	Eastern Han 東漢	25 – 220 BCE	

List of manuscripts mentioned in the dissertation

From the Guodian collection. Excavated 1993 - 94; published 1997

Natural Dispositions come from Endowment, *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出

Frustration or Achievement Depends on a Timely Opportunity, *Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時

Thickets of Sayings, *Yu Cong* 語叢

From the Shanghai Museum collection. Looted; published 2001 - 2012

*The Way of Tang and Yu, *Tang Yu zhi dao* 唐虞之道

Discussions on human nature and feelings, *Xing qing lun* 性情論

The Son of Heaven builds his Realm, *Tianzi jian zhou* 天子建州

Zhengzi Jia sang 鄭子家喪

Junrenzhe he bi an zai 君人者何必安哉

*All things are flowing into forms, *Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形

King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs, *Wu wang jian zuo* 武王踐阼

A Parent to the People, *Min zhi fumu* 民之父母

Confucius's Discussion of the Odes, *Kongzi Shi lun* 孔子詩論

From the Tsinghua University Collection. Looted; published 2008 - ongoing

Cherished instructions, *Bao xun* 保訓

*Command to She, *She ming* 攝命

The High Ancestor of Yin Asked the Three Elderlies, *Yin gao zong wen yu san shou* 殷高宗問於三壽

Duke of Wen asks Tai Bo, *Zheng Wen Gong wen Tai Bo* 鄭文公問太伯

Instructions on commands, *Ming xun* 命訓

The way of all under heaven, *Tian xia zhi dao* 天下之道

The good minister, Liang chen 良臣

From the Anhui University Collection. Looted; published 2019 - ongoing

Book of Odes, *Shijing* 詩經

INTRODUCTION

Recoveries of ancient texts have always been part of Chinese history. Yet it was only with the 20ᵗʰ century that archeological discoveries have been preserved and made accessible on a large scale. Even though at times interrupted by political events, archeological excavations have brought to light an incredible richness of artifacts produced in the first two millennia BCE, a richness that has changed the study of ancient China. These ancient artifacts include manuscripts and objects carrying inscriptions, such as the famous oracle bones from Anyang (Henan, PRC) which attest the first usages of writing in the area around 1300 BCE. The digitization of this material through HD photographs also ensured fewer chances of misrepresenting the newly available documents, compared to hand-made reproductions of ancient inscriptions such as the Song dynasty catalog *Illustrated Antiquities* 考古圖.

Before the recovery of this material, scholars who wanted to research China's antiquity, and in particular its textual culture, were bound to work with a body of texts transmitted from one generation to the next, known as the "transmitted literature." This body of transmitted literature underwent two major editorial processes. The first occurred during the Han 漢 imperial dynasties (206 BCE - 220 CE), when Han officials organized and cataloged manuscripts in imperial libraries. Many of these texts had been handed down from the pre-imperial historical phase known as Eastern Zhou dynasty 東周 (1045 BCE - 221 BCE), which represent the incipient era of Chinese literary tradition. Through

1

the deletion of chapters and organization of material, Han scholars crafted the "Great Books" of Chinese culture, shaping the perception of the past for themselves and for future generations.

A second major editorial phase took place during the first half of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618 - 906 CE). A group of scholars under the guidance of Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (547 - 648 CE) selected five already very influential texts, chose for each one dominant commentary as explanatory tool, and wrote sub-commentaries with additional explanations. This group of canonical texts was then expanded to become the *Thirteen Classics* 十三經. This selection of books represented fundamental knowledge any individual had to master to be considered a fluent member of the literate world, and to pursue a political career. The *Thirteen Classics* thus played an extremely influential role in any cultural and political developments that followed their canonization.

Ancient documents recovered since the beginning of the 20th century have liberated scholars from working with what is in fact an altered, sealed canon. These ancient documents are "raw" material, a direct window onto the diversity of the intellectual, cultural, and social worlds of the first millennium BCE. This large collection of written texts also allow us for the first time to witness the variety of materials that the ancients used to carry their writings: animal bones used for divination; bronze vessels used in rituals; strips obtained from bamboo; wooden tablets; and silk textiles.

Of all these documents, I specialize in the study of bamboo manuscripts of philosophical and literary content that were produced during the Warring States era 戰國

時代 (453–221 BCE). I am interested in this specific period for two reasons. First, the Warring States saw the first attested moment of philosophical blossoming in Chinese history. It was in this phase that thinkers formulated concepts of morality and proper government upheld or rejected by almost every successive empire. The famous *Tao Te Ching*, or *Classic of the Way and the Virtue* 道德經 began to be composed during these years, and later became a foundational text of the cultural phenomenon known as Taoism. The field of early China is now presented with thousands of bamboo strips that circulated and were read by intellectuals during the Warring States era, allowing for an unprecedented understanding of the socio-political and cultural development of this central moment in Chinese history.

Secondly, these bamboo manuscripts represent something very close to the texts that Han scholars were working with when they cataloged and organized the imperial libraries.[1] Before the recovery of these ancient documents, modern scholars could only imagine how the first books came together. Already a decade ago scholars were talking of "rewriting" how books evolved and developed in Chinese history.[2] Since then, several major collections of texts have been acquired by Chinese institutions, such as: the Tsinghua University 清華大學 and Anhui University 安徽大學 collections, both dated to the mid-to-late fourth century BCE; the Peking University 北京大學 collection, dated to the Western Han dynasty 西漢 (206 BCE – 9 CE); and the collection of texts recovered

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[1] Chen Mengjia, 陳夢家. "You Shiwu Suojian Handai Jiance Zhidu 由實物所見漢代簡 (A Material Perspective on the Formats of the Bamboo and Wooden Manuscripts of the Han Dynasty)." In *Han Jian Zhuishu* 漢簡綴述 *(Study of Han Bamboo and Wooden Manuscripts)*. Zhonghua shuju, 1980 (1964).

[2] E.g., K. T. Wu's 吳光清 *The Chinese Book. Its Evolution and Development*; Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*.

from the tomb of the Marquis of Haihun 海昏侯, sealed in 59 BCE.[3] Several of these collections have not yet been published in full. It is clear that these manuscripts will force scholars to continuously rewrite the history of early Chinese history and intellectual history,[4] and that studying early Chinese history means working with these manuscripts.

This dissertation contributes to this enterprise. I analyze manuscripts of philosophical and literary content produced during the Warring States period that share a central characteristic: when compared with contemporaneous texts, they read as incomplete compositional gestures. These manuscripts feature interruptions, basic errors that experienced writers would not commit; texts with no internal structure that read as laundry-list passages; manuscripts featuring a compressed elliptical style; repetitiveness; reliance on generative formulae. Or again, we have manuscripts whose narratives contain contradictory or repetitive events in it, as if they had to be edited. Two questions led me to formulate my argument: "What would make someone write these texts?" and "In what context would texts with these features be relevant?"

These questions could not be asked without familiarizing oneself with both manuscript properties *and* content. Both aspects of a text carry with themselves interesting implications for the study of ancient Chinese intellectual history, and they rarely are mutually exclusive. This explains the shape that this dissertation took over the years.

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[3] Zhu Fenghan 朱凤瀚, ed. *Haihun jian du chulun* 海昏簡牘初論.

[4] The first three collections have been looted, and were only subsequently purchased and properly preserved. There have been some objections about working with looted material, first by Paul R. Goldin ("Heng Xian and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts." *Dao* 12, no. 2, 2013: 153–60). I have addressed this problem in my "Establishing the Text of the Odes. The Anhui University Bamboo Manuscript," co-authored with Adam D. Smith. See also the final section of chapter one.

The first half (chapter one to chapter three) addresses the questions just raised, with a focus on the material and organizational features of Warring States philosophical manuscripts. In chapter one, I review previous studies that are relevant to the argument made in this dissertation, organized by topics. This chapter also serves to introduce terminology and methodology concerning the study of ancient manuscripts. Furthermore, it reflects on the question of working with looted material.

More importantly for my study, chapter one introduces the core contribution of my research, namely the argument that collections of circa 350 BCE manuscripts contain many examples of what I call "performance supports." By "performance supports" I mean texts with philosophical and literary content whose structure and compositional features derive from their role in practices of knowledge acquisition and management, and which functioned as *aides-mémoire*, sketches for oratorical debates, cues for poetic and literary improvisations, and teaching tools. As I discuss in this first chapter, scholars had already noted that Warring States manuscripts challenge previous models of textual composition and transmission. My notion of "performance supports" integrates these observations, and offers a more comprehensive answer that merges what a text conveys with how it functioned.

In chapter two, I examine ten manuscripts that I identify as performance supports. An analysis of their content is paired with a study of their material features such as those shown in figure one, so as to corroborate my identification of these texts as incomplete compositional gestures, as well as to identify a set of characteristics that may be used as

guidelines in future studies. By implication, this approach invites scholars to engage with the manuscripts rather than rely on their transcriptions. These transcriptions, carefully done by Chinese and Taiwanese scholars, are indispensable for a proper study of texts. Yet, by transforming the manuscript into a text that appears in modern-format books, they also obscure material features that are vital for understanding how manuscripts were crafted and used.

The line of investigation in my dissertation has led me to reflect on who would have benefitted from the existence of performance supports. As I articulate in chapter three, the existence of performance supports corroborates previous observations about an emerging social group who used knowledge as their tool to access positions of authority. This social group included individuals of humble descent, most likely already active in the royal courts as teachers and assistants thanks to an increase of socio-economic mobility, and a consequent expansion in literacy. Not coincidentally, it is around this time that literature begins to be filled with narratives about courtiers and ministers who display their knowledge and skills to present themselves as a fundamental component of the ruling machine. While these representations cannot be taken as factual reflections of reality, they were informed by reality, and informed reality in return.

This consistency of depiction bears on my argument in a twofold way. It supports my identification of "performance supports," that is to say, of material used by individuals to become articulate participants in the cultural environment that surrounded them. These narratives describe a courtly environment where debates and oratorical exchanges are

strongly present. This corroborates the existence of something akin to teaching tools, used by aspiring courtiers to master the art of extemporaneous delivery of knowledge and verbal persuasion. Secondly, in these exchanges ministers are always depicted as winning and as extremely clever. This suggests that courtiers not only took advantage from the existence of performance supports, but were also able to manipulate the narratives that represented them, in order to create a discourse that identified their own social group as essential to the functioning of government.

The second half of this dissertation focuses on the philosophical notion of *xing* 性, "natural dispositions" or "human nature." The connection with previous chapters is provided by two Warring States manuscripts which I identify in chapter two as performance supports: the Guodian *Natural Dispositions come from Endowment, *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 and the manuscript *Discussions on Natural Dispositions and Feelings, *Xing qing lun* 性情論 (part of the Shanghai Museum collection). They both date to circa 350-300 BCE, and collect definitions of the vocabulary in use at the time to discuss "human nature," its relationship to feelings (*qing* 情), music (*yue* 樂), and learning (*xue* 學), while also defining these concepts.

It is not a coincidence that both manuscripts were produced during the Warring States period. Starting with the fourth century BCE, human nature became a concern so central that theories about it began to be written and circulated. Several thinkers and courtiers incorporated notions of human nature into their theories about government and social order. Thus, the history of the debate on *xing* 性 becomes an ideal case-study to illustrate

cultural practices introduced in the first three chapters: the topic was so relevant that performance supports came to be crafted to learn central definitions necessary to engage with it.

The dissertation is completed by several appendixes, the most important being a new philological study of *Natural Dispositions*.

CHAPTER ONE. *Setting The Stage*.

<div align="right">

君子動口不動手。
A gentleman moves
his mouth, not his fists.
Lu Xun 魯迅，《啊Q正傳》

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Introduction

The year of 633 BCE was the twenty-seventh year of reign of Lord Xi 僖, who ruled over the state of Lu 魯 until 627 BCE. In this year, the *Zuo Tradition. Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Chunqiu zouzhuan* 春秋左傳 records a new turn in the ongoing tension between the southern state of Chu 楚 and the state of Song 宋, located in the central plains. After less than three years of peace, the enlarging Chu attacked Song, which sought help from the state of Jin 晉. Jin met Song's request, and prepared its attack against Chu:

> 於是乎蒐于被廬，作三軍，謀元帥，趙衰曰：「郤縠可，臣亟
> 聞其言矣，說禮樂而敦《詩》《書》。《詩》、《書》，義之
> 府也;禮、 樂，德之則也;德、義，利之本也。」[5]
>
> At the time they mustered troops at Pilu, formed three armies, and deliberated over the choice of a commander-in-chief. Zhao Cui said, "Xi Hu is the right person. I have often heard his words. He takes pleasure in ritual and music, and is well versed in the *Odes* and the *Writings*. The *Odes* and the *Writings* are repositories of dutifulness; ritual and music provide the norms of virtue; and virtue and dutifulness are the foundations of profit.[6]

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[5] *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 左傳 27.267.
[6] Durrant *et al.*, *Zuo Tradition*, 403.

According to this passage, Xi Hu is chosen because he *speaks* well. His fame comes not from previous deeds in battles, but from having made his words known. In particular, he speaks well of the *Book of Odes* 詩經 and the *Exalted Writings* 尚書.[7]

Some three hundred years later, around 350 BCE, philosopher Zhuangzi 莊子 was strolling along a river with his peer Huizi 惠子 and remarked on how happy the fish in the river were. Provoked by this statement, Huizi inquired: "You are not a fish; how can you know about the happiness of fish?!" With the wittiness that often characterizes Zhuangzi, he replied: "You are not me, how do you know that I do not know about the happiness of fish!"[8] Meanwhile, at the court of the state of Wei 魏 north to the Yellow river, philosopher Mengzi 孟子 was persuading King Hui 惠王 that what he needed was to increase his state's morality, not its revenues, by cleverly turning the King's remarks into questions.[9]

These fictional and historical vignettes place an emphasis on the ability to speak eloquently and to engage in the art of argumentation. Why were these skills emphasized? How did ancient Chinese learn to debate? What socio-cultural environment produced the numerous debates and rhetorical speeches well-attested in the extant literature?

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[7] Naturally, there are also narratives where martial arts result as more attractive than etiquette. For example, in Duke Zhao - year one 昭公元年 it is recorded that two men competed over a young bride in Zheng 鄭. Somewhat unusually, she was allowed to choose among them. One presented himself as elegant and full of regalia; the other arrived in military dress and exhibited his skills with bow and arrows. The bride chose to marry the latter, defining him more manly (*fu* 夫). *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 41.1325. Yet cultural display is central: the Duke Zhao - year twelve, we read of Hua Ding of Song 宋華定, who was greeted by Lu officials with the recitation of *Mao* 172. Hua Ding not only does not recognize it, but he is also unable to recite anything in response. Disaster is thus predicted for him. *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 44.1489-1490.

[8] *Zhuangzi jieshi* 莊子解釋, 17.606-607. The passage also present a linguistic pun with between the words "how" and "why," impossible to reproduce in translation.

[9] *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏, 1A.1.

My dissertation takes manuscripts produced during the Warring States as key material to answer these questions. I will argue that manuscript collections from the Warring States are significantly characterized by what I call "performance supports." "Performance supports" are texts whose structures and compositional features derive from being participants in practices of knowledge acquisition and management, functioning as *aide-mémoires*, written canvas for oral debates, outlines of poetic and literary compositions, and teaching tools. Some of these manuscripts may even have been created for this purpose.[10]

My position develops from viewing manuscripts as one dimension only of multi-faced cultural activities, albeit the one that best survives. "*Performance* supports" highlights the performative nature of knowledge and intellectual activities that relied on, but were not confined to, the presence of a written text. Manuscripts were lived and experienced by the individuals who produced them or engaged with them.[11] Writings that stem from these practices often present themselves as incomplete acts, structured in ways that strike us as unconventional –precisely because they represent only a portion of the activities in which they were used. Over the years, notions such as "building blocks,"[12] traveling sayings,[13] and repertoires[14] emerged in the scholarship to conceptualize the

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[10] As conjectured by Li Ling, in Allan and Crispin, *The Guodian Laozi*, and Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*, 226. Neither study takes on this line of investigation, as I do here.

[11] Similarly, Luke Waring's research emphasizes tomb inventory manuscripts as components of ritual performances. See his "Writing and Materiality in the Three Han Dynasty Tombs at Mawangdui."

[12] Boltz, "Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts."

[13] Krijgsman, "Traveling Sayings as Carriers of Philosophical Debate."

[14] Kern, "'Xi Shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') And Its Consequences;"Xu Jianwei 徐建委. 文本革命：劉向、《漢書・藝文志》與早期文本研究 *Liu Xiang, Hanshu Yiwenzhi Yu Zaoqi Wenben Yanjiu*.

compositional process of these manuscripts.[15] My notion of performance support incorporates these observations, accounting for the nature of these ancient manuscripts and situating them in the socio-political environment of the fourth and third centuries BCE.

As a consequence of my argument, we can begin to envisage something akin to a Warring States philosophical curriculum, where "curriculum" is a term of convenience to indicate a selection of material that an individual had to master in order to be aware of topical discussions, and thus be able to participate in the intellectual debates that surrounded him. "Philosophical" is a term used loosely, to gather together texts of literary and historical content.[16] The manuscripts discussed in this dissertation focus on ideas, their origins, and their relevance for the society in which they functioned as currency.

Ancient Chinese manuscripts address many more topics beyond philosophical and literary ones. My focus on the latter excludes medical, legal, divinatory, and mathematical sources, among others. Most likely, the content and structure of these were determined by curricula relevant to these branches of learning. Intertextual parallels seem to indicate the existence of bodies of material that were largely independent from each other, whose identification is possible precisely in light of shared terminology and

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[15] See also Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 184, defines some of the texts "florilegia," composed of "unrelated units." More recently, similar ideas have been presented in Krijgsman, "Traveling sayings," and Krijgsman and Vogt, "The One Text in the Many;" Andreini, *Transmetto, non creo*, 47-53; and Richter, *The Embodied Text*.

[16] Whether or not histories can be factual is a separate question. See Goldin, "What is early Chinese History?"

formulae.[17] While the production of these texts may have resulted from people operating within a specialized area of knowledge (as in fact the scribal training described in the Zhangjiashan 張家山 texts suggests, dated between 202 and 186 BCE[18]), the ways in which these texts were gathered and used in real life was more eclectic. For example, the Baoshan 包山 collection from the Warring States era[19] includes both divinatory and legal texts; the Western Han collection found at Mawangdui 馬王堆 brings together medical texts, daybooks, and philosophical sources like the *Laozi* 老子. The question of why manuscripts were entombed and how these collections were gather prior to their entombment is relevant to the study of Warring States culture. However, because too many uncertainties remain on the topic, it will not be addressed in this dissertation.

Unlike curricula defined by individuals or institutions, the Warring States literary curriculum came together as the result of both deliberate and accidental actions. The Warring States represented a period of social changes, among which the uprooting of the previous political order stabilized by the Zhou dynasty. Thus, concepts such as loyalty, trustworthiness, and appropriate ways for a minister to relate to a king, became gradually more central. The Warring States is also the first attested moment when it is possible to promote some principles of equality, such as the idea that all humans are endowed with

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[17] Both the Baoshan and Liye 里耶 texts are notoriously difficult (and in part badly preserved) to read, and scholars turn to Zhangjiashan and Shuihudi 睡虎地 as a resource, precisely in light of the assumption that some vocabulary was shared.

[18] Discovered in 1983, the Zhangjiashan manuscripts describe specialized training for scribes, diviners, and invocators (see Barieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 1084-1211). I suggest that something similar, albeit perhaps less organized, took place for those who aspired to become ministers and intellectuals during the Warring States.

[19] First published in *Baoshan Chu mu* 包山楚墓. A study by Chen Wei 陳偉, *Baoshan Chu jian chu tan* 包山楚簡初探, and the more recent *Baoshan Chu jian zong shu* 包山楚簡綜述 by Zhu Xiaoxue made some progress of what is very challenging material. See also Guo Jue, *Reconstructing the Fourth Century BCE Chu Religious Practices in China* and Cook, *Death in Ancient China.*

the same nature, or that ruling positions should be given to moral individuals regardless of their social statues, which I believe are byproducts of more relaxed social and intellectual boundaries.

All these topics will be discussed in due course. Besides limiting my choice to philosophical manuscripts, I also limited my engagement to exemplars from the following corpora: Guodian 郭店, Shanghai Museum 上海博物館, Tsinghua University 清華大學, and the Anhui University 安徽大學.[20] This selection derives from my acquaintance with this material, and the belief that the manuscripts selected for this dissertation are diverse enough to support my argument.

As I mentioned above, performance supports are written tools used in the process of managing knowledge, and concern a variety of cultural activities. One of the points of this dissertation is to specify which manuscripts were used for which performance or cultural activity. Throughout my study, I identify the following performance supports:

- **Lists**. These are manuscripts devoid of any narrative structure, and lists elements (short repetitive sentences; objects). They merely list grammatical structures, places, and names of famous kings and ministers. Marie Ledentu and Romain Loriol's new study on the usage of lists as training tools to memorize and reproduce cultural knowledge in ancient Rome and Greece demonstrates their relevance in processes of cultural formation and canonization.[21] It is my contention

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[20] This is only a tiny fraction of the material available. A rather exhaustive list was created by Enno Giele, http://projects.zo.uni-heidelberg.de/manuscript/index.php/#

[21] Ledentu and Loriol, eds. *Penser En Listes*.

that ancient Chinese manuscripts present similar evidence. This dissertation contributes to an existing conversation about education in the ancient world.

- **Historical and philosophical writings**. These are manuscripts that imitate a writing model, or articulate statements around central topics. In the afore-mentioned study, Marie Ledentu and Romain Loriol consider these lists as well. In my study, I draw a distinction between lists that merely enumerate elements (single sentences, or names), and manuscripts that collect more articulated reflections. These writings read as incomplete acts, present architectural structure that strike us as unconventional, or basic incongruences that we would not expect of a text that has been polished and reviewed.

- Reproductions of texts that were already influential by the Warring States era, and which may have reasonably functioned as **models or templates to memorize** texts. These appear to have a stable textual format when compared with their transmitted counterparts. Examples are the *Laozi*, the *Black Robe* 緇衣, and the Anhui University *Odes* 安大詩經. These may be thought of as canonical sources, in light of an importance that was attached to them and contributed to a process of stable reproduction and transmission.

Several studies have already appraised some of the points presented in this dissertation, such as the relevance of oratory, rhetoric, persuasion,[22] and remonstrance[23] in early China.

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[22] See van Els and Sabattini, "Political Rhetoric in Early China."
[23] Schaberg, "Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou Historiography."

My contribution is the identification of manuscripts that served for the development of skills necessary for these activities.

Similarly, people have suggested that collections of Warring States manuscripts were likely to contain learners' material.[24] These insights are correct. However, they have not been followed by more comprehensive studies that determine criteria that may be used to identify this learners' material - what I call performance supports. My leading questions in this area have been: "What would make someone write a text of the kind [we are looking at]?";[25] "In what context would a text with these features be relevant?"

Of the cultural activities highlighted in this dissertation, oratory has been particularly at the center of scholarly publications. Yet it would be erroneous to conclude that all performance tools served the art of oral debating. As I will show in chapters two and three, among the performance supports we have exercises to practice writing styles, such as the *shu* 書 style that lies at the heart of what produced over time the *Exalted Writings* collection.[26] I decided to explore activities besides oratorical training also in an attempt to shift the attention from a debate between orality and writing as influential modalities of textual production and transmission that has polarized the field of early China in the last

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[24] Wagner, "The Guodian Manuscripts". Wagner was not able to develop this study into proper publications prior to his death in 2019. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting early Chinese Texts*, 260-261 has confidently asserted that texts were "doubtless transmitted, in the first place, by students;" Shen Jianhua, 沈建華. "初讀清華簡《心是謂中》 states the same (page 135), without articulating the reasons, for the Tsinghua *The Heart is what is at the center.*

[25] Many of the research questions that have been instrumental in my dissertation have been inspired by Friedman's *Who Wrote the Bible?*, which grapples with similar questions.

[26] Allan, *Buried Ideas*, esp. 271-273. Allan believes that compositions pertaining to the *shu* genre were regularly written down before being performed or read orally. I remain more agnostic on this aspect; some of the manuscripts whose language and style are very close to that of the speeches collected in the *Shangshu* seem to me imitations of speeches that may never have been performed orally; conversely, they might have been notes from a speech that was taking place orally.

decades. More fruitful discussions can be obtained not only from the idea of a continuous interaction between these two realities,[27] but also from adding a third central factor that affects both production and transmission of texts: memorization.

Warring States manuscripts present features that require a more articulated explanation of the material and textual aspects of this early literary material, as well as how it might have been used. The presence of mnemonic devices and formulae cannot be simply equated to oral production and transmission; and distinctions ought to be made between oral performance and oral production of a text.[28] I see memorization as a third, central element to be paired with written and oral practices.

This allows me to focus on a process that David M. Carr described as "transmission of the texts from mind to mind."[29] By probing into the question of who was producing and using these texts, and why, we quickly realize that Warring States people were relying on orality as much as writing in the process of learning, reproducing, and challenging culture. In the much-celebrated case of the Homeric epics, growing literature has challenged the myth of infallibility of memory in the reproduction of long and complex narratives without any written support,[30] especially in light of cognitive studies on the subject.[31] Scholars have highlighted the use of spatial arrangement,[32] and of

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[27] Kern, "Quotation and the Canon," 294 no.1.
[28] Hunter, "'Lengthy Verbatim Recall (LVR) and the Myth and Gift of Tape-Recorder Memory,'" 248-249.
[29] Carr, *Writing on the Tablet*, 5.
[30] Friedrich, *Post-oral Homer*.
[31] Hunter, "'Lengthy Verbatim Recall (LVR) and the Myth and Gift of Tape-Recorder Memory;'" Schwartz, and Brown, eds. *Tip-of-the-Tongue States and Related Phenomena*.
[32] Clay, *Homer's Trojan Theater*, 96-119.

mnemonic patterns such as epitaphs, rhyming,[33] and categories[34] to memorize content more quickly, albeit not necessarily accurately when relying solely on memory.[35]

Thanks to the recovery and publication of Warring States manuscripts, we can now move towards a finer understanding of how these rhetorical techniques and learning methods coexisted along with orality. The recent recovery of a manuscript version of the *Book of Odes* contributes to this.[36] This text had been long considered the result of oral production and transmission. Comparisons between the manuscript and the transmitted *Book of Odes* show this text as the outcome of more complex, and thus more interesting, interplays between oral performance, writing, and mnemonic devices[37] that contributed to the stability of this poetic collections, and its learning by individuals.

Prior the recovery of the *Odes* manuscript, Adam D. Smith proposed memorization as the engine driving the production of the Guodian text *Frustration or Achievement Depends on a Timely Opportunity*, *Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時. This manuscript enumerates instances of men who become powerful ministers thanks to fortuitous encounters with sage rulers, who rescued the future ministers from hardship. Smith explains its structure and its errors, as the result of compositional exercises, in which a scribe was given the equivalent of a cue card, or a first sentence, and had to continue the

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[33] Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes*, 10-12, and chapters 2 to 4.

[34] Noice and Noice. "The Effects of Segmentation on the Recall of Theatrical Material."

[35] See Bjork,"On the Symbiosis of Remembering, Forgetting, and Learning" for an interesting discussion of how learning new information affects the retrieval of existing ones.

[36] See section "The Oral-Writing debate" below.

[37] See discussion in chapter three.

narration.[38] *Frustration or Achievement* would thus result from an exercise in composition around the theme of minister-ruler relationship.

As these examples show, the field needs a larger and more articulated framework that brings together manuscript features, textual content, and compositional techniques to further our understanding of textual traditions in Warring States China.

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[38] Smith, "What Difficulty Could There Be?"

The Warring States Bamboo Manuscripts

Let us begin by introducing the material explored in this dissertation, and some relevant terminology. "Early China" is a loose term used to refer to cultural developments that took place in the Central Plain, today part of the People's Republic of China, between the first half of the second millennium BCE and the end of the Eastern Han dynasty, in 206 CE. However, in reference to manuscripts, "early China" is often used to define a subsection of this period, namely from the Warring States to the Eastern Han dynasty.

With the exception of the Han wooden strips from Dunhuang 敦煌 area brought back by Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943) at the outset of the 20th century,[39] the first discovery of ancient manuscripts that made a world-wide impact was that of the Mawangdui site in 1973.[40] Dated to the Western Han dynasty, the tombs yielded both texts written on silk and numerous artifacts, among which the famous T-shape silk funeral banner. Since then, several other collections have been archeologically or illegally excavated.[41]

If the Han manuscript corpora significantly advanced scholarly understanding of early imperial China, recoveries and publications of Warring States manuscripts are a major source of excitement for two main reasons. First, Warring States are written prior to the process of linguistic standardization initiated by Qin dynasty's counselor-in-chief Li Si 李斯 (280 - 208 BCE) around 213 BCE,[42] and which the Han dynasties retained. This

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[39] Published as *Dunhuang Han jian* 敦煌漢簡 by Zhonghua jushu press in 1991. There are two major studies in French and one in Japanese, see review in Giele, "Early Chinese Manuscripts," 285-286.

[40] See overview in Stack, "Reconstruction of Early Chinese Bamboo and Wood Manuscripts."

[41] See below for a discussion of the problem of working with looted manuscripts.

[42] The *locus classicus* of the event is Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記, 6.255. See Petersen, "Which Books Did The First Emperor Of Ch'in Burn?" Contributing to the loss of material were the ongoing wars and disruptions that characterize the Warring States era. See also Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 26.

makes Warring States manuscripts a palaeographer's paradise, since they encode different scripts and spelling rules in use prior to the standardization. For this reason, the working process for these manuscripts (from receiving the strips in disorganized bundles to issuing publications where the unfamiliar scripts are translated into the more familiar *kaishu* 楷書 script) takes more time and effort, with a team of specialized paleographers actively working on them –without whom access to these manuscripts would be considerably more challenging.[43]

I say "translated" because these manuscripts often present graphs that are otherwise unattested, and their interpretation (that is, their understanding of which words these graphs are writing) may be conjectural or rely on minimal evidence. Xing Wen has argued that the study of unearthed documents (*chutu wenxian* 出土文獻) should thus adopt as standard the usage of a "direct transcription," which indicates the reproduction of the structure of graphs presented on the strips, and a "interpretative transcription," which reproduces the words in the orthography of received tradition.[44] Interpretative transcripts may vary from scholar to scholar, following their own judgment calls.[45]

It is now easy to understand why the recovery of Warring States manuscripts has produced much fervor, in some way more so than Han dynasties manuscripts. It is through pre-imperial manuscripts that the field can begin to understand the nature and the

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[43] See Williams, *Interpreting the Wenxian Covenant Texts*, 20-26. See also Staack, "Reconstruction of Early Chinese Bamboo and Wood Manuscripts."

[44] Xing Wen, "Towards a Transparent Transcription." See also Xing Wen, "Paleographic, Historical, And Intellectual History Approaches To Warring States Manuscripts Written On Bamboo Slips: A Review Article," 242-243.

[45] See also the considerations in Williams, "A Methodological Procedure." The direct transcription may also vary in cases where a graph is illegible. By and large, it is more stable than the interpretative transcription.

functioning of the writing systems in use during the Warring States period.[46] They have been instrumental in advancing reconstructions of Old Chinese, solving puzzles on the etymology, graphic structures,[47] as well as pronunciations[48] of words. They also provide data to understand grammatical behavior, and diachronic linguistic changes[49] in light of the links between earlier texts such as the covenants, *meng shu* 盟書,[50] the bronze inscriptions from the Western Zhou dynasty,[51] and the documents produced during the Han dynasty.

Besides these technical aspects, Warring States manuscript collections bear on intellectual history, in that they include many otherwise unknown texts, adding flesh to the intellectual world in which Chinese history's most famous thinkers are said to have operated. For example, the manuscripts *The Way of Tang and Yu, *Tang Yu zhi dao* 唐虞之道 and *Cherished Instructions*, **Bao xun* 保訓 add evidence to the existence of a meritocratic challenge to the hereditary rule of succession. While the topic was known before from stories present in transmitted sources, this new material showed more clearly how this motif developed overtime.[52] Thus, early Chinese manuscripts open several lines

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[46] See Chen Zhaorong 陳昭容, *Qinxi wenzi yanjiu: cong Hanzi shi de jiaodu kaocha* .

[47] See e.g., Smith, "Early Chinese Manuscript Writings For The Name Of The Sage Emperor Shun 舜". Chen Jian's 陳劍 *Collected Essays on the bamboo texts from the Warring States period* 戰國竹書論集 and *Collected Essays of examinations of Oracle-bone and Bronze Inscriptions* 甲骨金文考釋論集 collect several of these examples. See also Park, *The Writing System of Scribe Zhou*.

[48] Some examples are in Qiu Xigui 裘錫桂, *Chinese Writing*; see also the more recent Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*.

[49] See e.g., Wei Kebin 魏克彬 (Crispin Williams), "Cong chutu mengshu zhong," on the negations *bu* 不 and *fu* 弗 in Zhou dynasty texts.

[50] Namely oaths of allegiance dating from the sixth to the fourth century BCE. See Williams, "Dating the Houma Covenant Texts."

[51] For an overview of the importance of the bronze inscriptions, their role, and a selection of material translated into English see Cook and Goldin, *A Source Book*.

[52] See for example Allan's exploration (*Buried Ideas*, 19-20) of how the story and meaning of the legend about Shun changed overtime.

of inquiry for intellectual historians interested in the content of these sources and their transmission history (or lack thereof).

Further research topics invigorated by these recoveries are textual production and transmission, processes of cultural formation, organization and canonization. Thanks to the variety of inscribed material (bamboo-strips; wooden tables; silk; etc.), manuscripts are also important to explore processes behind the physical production of the material in use at different points in time. While I am sympathetic to Gassman's claim that received texts should not be neglected by the zeal for these more ancient manuscripts,[53] it is increasingly the case that not engaging with manuscripts means not engaging with the material that will advance the field significantly in the next decades.

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[53] Gassman, Robert. "Through the Han-Glass Darkly on Han-Dynasty Knowledge of the Ancient Chinese Term Shi (Getleman)," 528. Although there are no examples that support his warning, there are countless examples of received sources being studied alongside manuscripts.

The question of researching looted objects

As hinted in the previous pages, some of the most recent Warring States manuscript collections have been illegally recovered. Because of several concerns voiced by the academic community when working with looted objects, I here contextualize the problem of working with manuscripts that derive from looting or smuggling objects of value[54] and present my view on it. This problem is hardly unrecognized in the field, since for decades Chinese objects of illegal or dubious provenance have been appearing in museums all over the world, including PRC ones, and the Chinese government has, in various measures, participated in on-going discussions concerning the possibility of repatriation and its implications for cultural heritage.

Recently, scholars of early Chinese intellectual history joined the discussion about practical and ethical consequences that come from researching and publishing on looted manuscripts. Paul R. Goldin was the first voice in the Anglophone field to advocate for a scholarship that refuses to engage in the study of ancient Chinese looted manuscripts.[55] Shortly after, Chris Foster responded, motivating his reasons to continue his studies of looted collections,[56] while Martin Kern limited himself to raising questions, stressing that more discussion is necessary on the subject.[57] In a separate publication,[58] I have also briefly expressed my wish for a scholarship that does not dismiss these ancient

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[54] I am thankful to Richard Leventhal for meeting with me to discuss some of the aspects involved in this thorny business.

[55] Goldin, "Heng Xian and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts."

[56] Foster, "Introduction To The Peking University Han Bamboo Strips."

[57] Kern, "'Xi Shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') And Its Consequences."

[58] Smith and Poli, "Establishing the text of the *Odes*."

manuscripts, but at the same time uses its resources to be aware of the problems and presses for more transparent analyses of the problem.[59]

The problems emerging from working with looted material are complex and embedded in a web of institutional, ethical, legal, and practical issues that ought all to be taken into consideration. In principle, not all unprovenanced objects are looted. It is possible that information about the production and movements of ancient objects has been destroyed in circumstances other than an act of looting. In reality, when an object is catalogued as "unprovenanced" it very often means that the object has been at some point looted, and has since been in private or public hands. The turning point that created a discussion on unprovenanced objects was the 1960 UN General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,[60] which gave newly-independent countries a voice to complain about objects deported from their territory under colonial ruling. This led to the 1970 UNESCO international treaty to combat illegal trade, a fundamental step in recognizing the problems involved in trafficking of objects,[61] which created a legal framework (later revised) for how to handle possession of objects resulting from looting and illicit activities.[62]

Repatriation soon became invoked as an universal course of action. Any object for which it is possible to demonstrate that it had been exported from a nation either through

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[59] There will be three more contributions on the topic by Glenda Chao, Mercedes Valmisa, and Chris Foster on the subject. I am thankful to Glenda and Chris for sharing their pieces, and discussing the topic with me.
[60] https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/152/88/PDF/NR015288.pdf? OpenElement
[61] For an overview of the treaty and its consequences, see Lyndel V. Pratt, "Strengths and Weaknesses of the 1970 Convention: An Evaluation 40 years after its adoption,"
[62] See how other institutions reacted to it in Leventhal, and Daniels. '"Orphaned Objects", Ethical Standards, and the Acquisition of Antiquities.'

illegal or unauthorized activities should be returned to their country of origin. The argument can also be extended to objects for which such proof is not possible, but that are clearly located outside their country of origin. There are then cases where legal transactions took place, but in a context of colonialism that created a severe disadvantage for the colonized. For example, in 1949, the Princeton Library was donated a large collection of manuscripts from two alumni, William Gates and Robert Garret. Gates in particular collected several Mayan manuscripts while traveling in Mexico between 1898 and 1922, some of which seem to have been legally purchased from their owners.[63] Still, even if all the manuscripts were legally obtained, one may point at his position of power with respect to poorer owners as a form of illicit appropriation. These donations made Princeton a primary center for the study of Mesoamerican culture.[64] Should Princeton repatriate these manuscripts to Mexico?

There are too many implications in the issue of repatriation to give a straightforward answer. To continue with the example of the Mayan manuscripts, an argument can be made that the repatriation should indeed take place, especially given the presence of a Mayan people that creates a much more vivid link to these manuscripts. At the same time, scholars worried about current discriminations against Mayans in Mexico and Guatemala view the repatriation as dangerous, and invite postponement.

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[63] Gates, *The Maya Society and Its Work*, 17-25. The problem is that here we have only Gates' account of how the transaction took place.

[64] See overview in Basler and Wright. "The Making of a Collection: Mesoamerican Manuscripts at Princeton University," which does not discuss the issue of the origin of these manuscripts.

Caution towards considering repatriation an imperative practical and moral solution[65] has been more explicitly articulated for areas that are internationally recognized as war-zones, with Afghanistan at the center of the debate.[66] A well-known example of the dangers of repatriation at all costs is the expatriation of artifacts in the 90s. Due to ongoing wars, Afghan institutions agreed to export several objects to Europe (primarily to Switzerland) for their protection, with the promise of regaining them after the area became stable again. Because of the unconventional aspect of this move, legal permission was not quickly obtained. This resulted in the destruction of thousands of pieces, seemingly while sitting at the Kabul airport for over ten months between 2000 and 2001. Eventually, some pieces reached Europe via legal ways; others were smuggled. In 2007, Switzerland and other European countries returned to Afghanistan many of these objects.[67] Much celebrated at the time, the repatriation is now remembered as a judgment error on the part of international authorities in considering Afghanistan safe enough to be given back its patrimony: many of the repatriated objects have since been destroyed by ongoing conflicts in the area. Gary Vikan has thus openly written about the necessity for legal bodies and museums to relax their policies concerning the housing of Afghan (and other) objects of dubious provenance, if this means protecting cultural objects until they are safely returned.[68]

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[65] Björnberg, "Historic Injustices and the Moral Case for Cultural Repatriation."
[66] But also Ukraine (now, writing this after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this is even more so), Syria, and many African nations.
[67] https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/07/world/asia/07afghan.html
[68] Vikan, "The Case for Buying Antiquities to Save Them," Wall Street Journal 2015, https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-case-for-buying-antiquities-to-save-them-1440024491

Questions about the efficiency of repatriation are not merely related to practicalities. Kwame Anthony Appiah, a legal philosopher born in the United Kingdom from Ghanaian parents and raised in Ghana before settling abroad, has argued against repatriation of objects as a default policy. In Appiah's view, culture does not belong to a single nation, but to the world. What is at stake is in the interest of all humans.[69] Is it necessary for an object to be in the country in which it was produced to be a meaningful representative of its culture? There are many examples of artifacts that are permanently located outside their country of origin, as requested by their legal owners,[70] that would make us answer "no" to the question. But the issue is not just one of context; rather, it is about appropriation and cultural prestige - which is tied to political prestige. Nations want to own the culture they identify with, as well as balance an uneven past.

What does it mean exactly for a nation to *own* objects produced centuries before, when nations themselves did not exist yet? As mentioned, nations in favor of repatriation point at context and ownership as ways to circumvent this problem. A new museum is being built in Nigeria that, it seems, will house many artifacts taken during the colonial era. Among these figure the Benin bronzes, currently housed in London and Germany. David Adjaye, the architect in charge of designing the Nigerian museum, has been vocal

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[69] Appiah, "Whose Culture Is It, Anyway?" One may add that the inability of most of Africans to experience in person returned objects removed requires more than repatriation. If these unbalances were leveled out, and equal access to these objects is granted to individuals from all countries, then the remaining argument in favor of repatriation would be that of nationalism.

[70] The case of The Lady in Gold by Gustave Klimt comes to mind. Seized by the Nazis in the late 30s along with all the assets of the Altman family, it now resides in the Neue Gallery in New York City, after a long legal battle by Maria Altman to demonstrate her ownership and right to remove the painting from Austria. (The novel *Stolen Beauty,* incidentally, is a wonderful semi-fictional read of this story.) The painting expresses all its beauty in spite of the 'foreign' environment in which it is positioned. This said, paintings are to some extent less context-bound than other objects.

about the need for these bronzes to return to Nigeria as the beginning of a "renaissance of African culture" and the unveiling of the impact that colonialism had in the area.[71] Yet the Benin bronzes themselves pertain to an episode in the history of the Benin people that has its shades of darkness. Almost all of the bronzes were produced during two phases (the second half of the 16th century, and the first half of the 18th century) as symbols of the great wealth of the Benin kingdom, wealth obtained from capturing and selling as slaves Africans of other tribes.[72] Attempts to justify these historical moments as choices due to circumstances[73] fall short, in that the same logic could be applied to the colonialists who took away the bronzes.

I am not suggesting that, in light of the bronzes' history of production, European institutions should not repatriate the Benin bronzes.[74] I am presenting Benin bronzes as a perfect case to consider yet another aspect of the debate, namely the role of institutions such as museums. If their role is, as I think it should be, educational, then these facts must be part of the narrative introducing the Benin bronzes, whichever their location (and this may be what the new museum in Nigeria will do). And, one may add, if the goal is educational, this can be achieved anywhere.[75] A person born in the UK should know as

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[71] https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/22/arts/design/david-adjaye-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture.html; https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/13/arts/design/david-adjaye-benin-bronzes-museum.html

[72] Graham, "The Slave Trade, Depopulation and Human Sacrifice in Benin History."

[73] Phillips (*Loot*) claims that the Benin did not enter "the slave trade with enthusiasm," (81), and the kingdom's choice was a consequence of the Europeans' appetite for slaves (100); Patrick Oronsaye, a Nigerian artist, is cited in the book saying that while slavery was part of the Benin traditions, "slave trade was not" (81).

[74] This is the position instead of Michael Mosbacher, "Why Jesus College shouldn't have returned its Benin bronze," *The Spectator*, October 2021, https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/why-jesus-college-shouldn-t-have-returned-its-benin-bronze. Hicks Dan acknowledges the history of the Benin bronzes, but still argues for their repatriation, see *Brutish Museum*.

[75] Jenkins, *Keeping their Marble*.

much about Ghanian history as European history. There is a real danger in claims that only individuals belonging to a specific ethnicity or nation have the right to narrate their histories,[76] since it drastically reduces (or directly nullifies) the role of expertise. Not to mention that nationalistic claims of ownership are being used in controversial ways in countries such as China or Turkey, where ethnic groups are given different representation[77] –when they are given any at all.

But none of this strictly pertains to the question of working with looted Chinese manuscripts, since the majority of these are already located in the country in which they have been recovered. So in discussing looted artifacts such as the Warring States manuscripts, the question is whether or not it is ethical to study them. Precisely because they have never left their country of origin, Edward Shaughnessy argues that scholars should be free to engage with them if they so desire. It is the responsibility of Chinese institutions to preserve this material, and combat illegal trafficking.[78] While this position solves one aspect of the discussion, it does not tackle other aspects that have been raised in the scholarship: the possibility that unprovenanced manuscripts may not be authentic; the fact that working with looted manuscripts increases their value, hence encouraging more looting; and the loss of contextual knowledge to understand the material in hand.

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[76] Jenkins, "Does One Ethnic Group Own Its Cultural Artefacts?" Aeon, 2016. https://aeon.co/ideas/does-one-ethnic-group-own-its-cultural-artefacts.

[77] See Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity?*, Chapter three in particular is dedicated to the case of PRC China.

[78] His position was most recently presented at the Tsinghua conference "清华战国楚简国际学术研讨会" that took place on November 23, 20221 (see https://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/1180/89066.htm). It will also appear in a forthcoming publication on the Tsinghua manuscripts.

The question of authenticity is an empirical question that can be solved on the basis of evidence and expertise.[79] Scholars working in China, first and foremost Chinese paleographers who are asked to assess the validity of looted manuscripts, have incredible expertise on the subject. However, it is the case that the data resulting from these assessments is hardly ever shared, a move that has the counter-effect of inviting uncertainty. This is one aspect that can be greatly improved.[80]

Scholars have then argued that researching looted objects creates a vicious cycle: it promotes their value, which in turn promotes more looting. Academics should thus refrain not just from providing expertise in the evaluation of these objects, but from incorporating them in their research altogether. This stance, far from being agreed upon in academic fields whose research involved looted material,[81] can of course be a legitimate individual choice, but more arguments must be articulated to make it an imperative. While the correlation between valuing looted objects and looting activities is undeniable, not to work with these manuscripts is unlikely, in itself, to slow down looting. For example, the considerable decrease of illegal activities in Italy is due to the effort of

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[79] One notorious example is the Zhejiang University manuscript, purchased by the university even though its authenticity was doubted by several scholars. See discussion in Petersen, "The Zhejiang Daxue Zuozhuan "Chu manuscript" 浙江大學蔵"楚簡"左傳." Reasons behind this purchase in spite of uncertainties surely are the prestige and, more importantly, large endowments given by the government to universities that possess ancient manuscripts. See also Hu Pingsheng 胡平生 "Lun jianbo bianwei yu liushi jiandu qiangjiu" 論簡帛辨偽與流失簡牘搶救; Foster, "Introduction to the Peking University Han bamboo strips: on the authentication and study of purchased manuscripts."

[80] In general, the openness about looting has forced scholars and institutions to grant more access to both the general and the academic public, an improvement from how the first scrolls from the Dead Sea were handled. See a brief discussion in "Copies of Dead Sea Scrolls To Go Public – Release Would End Scholars' Dispute'." *The Seattle Times*. 22 September 1991. Archived from the original on 21 October 2013. Accessed March 2, 2022.

[81] It is the position taken by Renfrew (*Loot, Legitimacy, and Ownership* 74-75), scholar of ancient Greek art, but not shared by many of his colleagues. David Owen has also defended the right to work with looted objects, Owen, "To Publish or Not to Publish — That Is the Question."

Italian and international authorities, and the increased awareness of this problem. Sadly, some of the improvement is only apparent, as criminals enter in possession of more advanced technologies and ways to circumvent investigations.[82] Obviously, one may argue that this decrease could be even more dramatic if there were no engagement on part of the academic world, and we cannot measure the efficiency of this move since no field of study has unitedly taken this position. This however invites reflection about the nature and role of scholarly research, and it is not dismissible just as complicit behavior on part of the academic community.

The loss of knowledge that derives from the destruction of a looted site is unquestionably true. If the manuscripts had been recovered through scientific excavations, it would be possible to know whether they come from a tomb, several tombs, or other locations; whether they were found together; and so on. But is this enough to discourage research that will, on balance, *increase* knowledge and the understanding of a field of study?

In my view, we should look at the problems of working with looted manuscripts from the point of view of consequences. What are the consequences of refusing to engage with looted manuscripts? Clearly, the immediate loss of knowledge. This is something that academics may be to accept; but what happens beyond that, if the position of Renfrew and Goldin are to be implemented? Should scholars refuse to work with any kind of

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[82] Magrans, "Contemporary Archaeological Looting: A Criminological Analysis of Italian Tomb Robbers," 22-25.

looted artifacts? Should museums still house and look after looted objects? Or should all institutions refuse to handle a looted manuscript, even if this leads to its disappearance?

By the time I engage with the study of a looted manuscript, some knowledge has already been lost. I have then to make a decision about how I can improve the situation from there, and I believe that refusing to work with looted manuscripts does not help neither the field, nor the advancement of knowledge at large. We have to ask what the academic community is trying to achieve with its work. If, as with museums, the goal is to educate, then educate we must, and this means having to compromise and work in an imperfect world *while* we make it a bit less imperfect.[83] In practice, for me this means to leave open the possibility of working with looted manuscripts to scholars, so as to expand our understanding of ancient Chinese history, Chinese literature, the role recoveries of ancient objects play in nationalist claims, and so on. Precisely because of my expertise and knowledge about it, I can use my work also as an occasion to expose the lack of transparency involved in how looted objects are handled. Besides the above-mentioned lack of information about the condition of manuscripts prior to their purchase,[84] lack of clarity emerges in other areas. In the last years, Chinese authorities started massive online databases, such as the *Zhongguo caipan wenshu wang* 中国裁判文书网,[85] through which

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[83] Goals towards which several national and international bodies to counter artifacts trafficking are working.
[84] For example, neither the initial report nor following publications indicate whether the Anhui University manuscripts were presented as a single bundle of strips covered in mud. Information of this kind, as basic as it is, would be helpful at least in proving the manuscripts to come from a single place.
[85] https://wenshi.court.gov.cn. It requires registering with a phone number.

they are making available court rulings and other legal documents.[86] In 2018, a case against the looters of the Guodian tomb was concluded after 24 years.[87] Among the many objects the nine looters retrieved from the tomb, the report mentions also some bamboo strips,[88] whose destiny is not specified. I am not aware of any mention of these bamboo strips from Guodian besides this court ruling.[89]

All these problems must be confronted, especially by academics like myself who are not constrained by political circumstances when voicing their opinions. Scholars working with manuscripts are indeed increasingly confronting them, precisely because what is at stake matters to them.

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[86] Another rich database is The Supreme People's Court of the PRC, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/ supremepeoplescourt/index.html, but this does not include cases on looting. But see also Echo Xie, "Millions of court rulings removed from official Chinese database," South China Morning Post, 2021, see https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3138830/millions-court-rulings-removed-official-chinese-database

[87] https://wenshu.court.gov.cn/website/wenshu/181107ANFZ0BXSK4/index.html? docId=8e87f8d76da3484db95aa8eb012b4aab, accessed March 2, 2022.

[88] All these objects were sold by the looters for collective sums of 6,000 yuan (circa $1,000).

[89] This would then suggest that the first looters of the Guodian tomb simply missed the strips that were later found during the scientific excavation of the area.

Relevant debates in the field

In this section, I introduce two debates in the field of early China that are most relevant to my argument. The goal of this section is to conduct a literature review, while clarifying where my argument places itself within the existing scholarship.

The oral-writing debate

One of the most heated discussions fostered by the recovery of Warring States manuscripts concerns textual production and transmission in early China. Because in this dissertation I discuss who and why produced the performance supports, and why these were not transmitted, it is worth to overview briefly the relevant scholarship. The main conclusion of this section is that the dichotomy between orality vs. writing has been instrumental in creating a vocabulary and standards to explore visual copying,[90] to identify formulaic language, to evaluate how textual parallels disclose the transmission of texts,[91] etc. But neither writing nor orality in isolation suffices to account for the complex reality in which texts were active.

Before the recovery of bamboo manuscripts, this debate revolved primarily around two transmitted sources, the *Book of Odes*,[92] and the *Zuo Tradition*. The *Odes* is a collection of 305 odes which, as legend has it, were collected from various states, and organized by Confucius himself.[93] The *Zuo Tradition* is a historical narrative that

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[90] Richter, "Faithful Transmission or Creative Change;" Morgan, "A Positive Case for the Visuality of Text in Warring States Manuscript Culture."

[91] E.g., Krijgsman, "Traveling Sayings as Carriers of Philosophical Debate."

[92] See overview of the debate by Shaughnessy, "The Origin and Development of Western Sinologists' Theories of the Oral-Formulaic Nature of the *Classic of Poetry*."

[93] See e.g. *Hanshu* 24.1123. Sima Qian first attributes to Confucius the selection of 305 poems from all those collected, *Shiji* 47.1936. See overview in Kern, "Early Chinese Literature," 19-21.

complements the annalistic chronicle *Spring and Autumn*, covering a period from the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the fourth century BCE.

Many anecdotes narrated in the *Zuo Tradition* are also found in the *Discourse of the States*, *Guoyu* 國語 and other sources composed with material from the Warring States period, often with variations. These variations, it was argued, are better explained in a culture developed orally: in the absence of a written version, the kernel of a story is reproduced, but the details differ, giving rise to a plethora of anecdotes.[94] The assumption here is that writing leads almost exclusively to textual stability. This is not necessarily the case. A written version of a story can be used as a canvas, or tool to memorize the essential details without having to be reproduced in its entirety, as it has been in fact demonstrated by previous scholarship on anecdotes in early China.[95] Furthermore, orality may not be the only explanation for the divergences among anecdotes: William Boltz had initially postulated the existence of a third source (now lost) common to the *Zuo Tradition* and the *Discourse of the States*, from which these anecdotes were copied with alterations.[96] Admittedly, this solution needs more data to be substantiated. The point here is that we cannot reduce writing to a mechanical tool of textual reproduction.

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[94] Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, esp. 68-80, 315-325. See also Schaberg, "Speaking of Documents: *Shu* Citations in Warring States Texts;" Durrant *et al. Zuozhuan: Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals"*: lvii. Garbnev in Kern and Meyer, *Origins of Chinese Political Thought*, 217 refers to orality too, but since it does not elaborate, I do not discuss his contribution. See Shaughnessy, "Review of "*Origins of Political Philosophy: studies in the Composition and Thought of the* Shangshu (*Classic of Documents*)" for a discussion of Kern and Meyer's work. Meyer (*Philosophy on Bamboo*) also favors orality, although later (Meyer, "Bamboo and the Production of Philosophy," 24, 26) Meyer somewhat contradictorily affirms that starting with the 5th century BCE, Chinese philosophical activity happens in a "predominantly written context". His *Philosophy on Bamboo* study focuses on a comparison between *Natural Dispositions and *Discussions*, hence I will return to it in the second chapter. See also ter Haar, "Towards Retrieving Early Oral Traditions," and Beecroft, "The Homeric epics and the Chinese 'Book of Songs': foundational texts compared," 76, 79.

[95] van Els and Queen, *Between History and Philosophy: Anecdotes in Early China*.

[96] Boltz, "Notes on the textual Relation between the "Kuo yü" and the "Tso chuan."

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The same material as studied by Yuri Pines presents a different picture. The level of details in several accounts led Pines to believe that the *Zuo Tradition* had been compiled on the basis of other written sources, equally detailed.[97] If we take his analysis seriously, arguments that see orality as central in the formation of the *Zuo Tradition* need to accommodate Pines's observation (and vice versa).

As in the case of the *Zuo Tradition*, the central role assigned to orality in the transmission of the *Odes* has also been met with misgivings. C. H. Wang's *The Bell and the Drum: Shih Ching as Formulaic Poetry in an Oral Tradition* (1974) was a most influential work in English language to introduce the idea that the *Odes* is strongly characterized by formulaic language. Influenced by the Parry-Lord hypothesis (the idea that poets rely on stocks of formulae to improvise poetic compositions), Wang concluded that formulaic language signaled an oral origin of the *Odes*. The collection results from improvisations by poets, who relied on formulae to compose the "same" poem with minor variations.[98] Thus, according to C.H. Wang, the *Odes* was for a long time also transmitted orally, and started being written down no earlier than the fifth century BCE.[99]

This conclusion is not entirely wrong. Yet, Wang's work presents some flaws in the argument that are worth pointing out. For one, Wang's study neglects much of the scholarship on the subject by Chinese colleagues, in particular the work of Yu Xingwu 于省吾,[100] who compared formulaic expressions as they appear in Zhou dynasty bronze

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[97] Pines, *Foundations of Confucian Thought Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period,* 19, 42.
[98] See review in Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*.
[99] This would be consistent with traditional accounts of how the *Shijing* was compiled in transmitted sources.
[100] See also list of other examples in Jiang Wen 蔣文, *Xian Qin Qin Han chutu wenxian yu "Shijing" wenben de jiaokan he jiedu* 先秦秦漢出土文獻與《詩經》文本的校勘和解讀, 7-10.

inscriptions and in the *Odes*. He was able to identify odes' lines that are difficult to comprehend because they inherited visual errors. This would indicate that visual copying participated in the production and transmission of some of the *Odes*.[101]

Secondly, Yu Xingwu's approach makes a related important point. Clearly, the *Odes* did not exist in a vacuum,[102] as Yu's comparisons show. Bronze inscriptions from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty represent a tradition that also relied on a formulaic compositional style. Were thus the odes eventually collected in the *Book of Odes* exceptional in being composed first and foremost orally? Or, were the bronze inscriptions composed orally too, given their formulaic language? Neither possibility is likely.

With the recovery of bamboo manuscripts, new observations were made to support either side of the debate. Although well attested in transmitted literature, Warring States manuscripts added evidence to the phenomenon of phonetic loans. The term 'phonetic loan' indicates cases where a word is written with the graph of a homophonous or near-homophonous word.[103] For example, the verb "to have" is commonly written in pre-imperial sources by borrowing the right hand pictogram 又, because they were near-homophones in Old Chinese:

"to have" *you* < *[ɢ]ʷəʔ-s, written with 又

"to have; also" 又 *you* < *[ɢ]ʷəʔ

[101] Yu Xingwu, *Shijing xinzheng* 詩經新證. See also Zhao Chaoyang 趙朝陽 "出土文獻與《尚書》校讀, *New Readings of The Book of Historical Documents: In Light of the Excavated Early Texts*" 14-21 on more examples of the relevance of unearthed material for clarifying lines in the *Shangshu*. Cf. also Shaughnessy, "Unearthed Documents," 356.

[102] Cf. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting*, 260 no. 8.

[103] Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, 167-168; Park, *The Writing System of the Scribe Zhou*, 31-32.

The introduction of the graphic form 有 disambiguated the visual representation of these two words. Another well-attested phenomenon is the use of the same graphic representation to write different words of close pronunciation. This can occur within the same manuscript, if not even the same strip. A well-known example is the graph 之, which was routinely used to write "to go", *zhi* > *tə and also the third person pronoun "it", *zhi* > *tə.[104] In the first example, the writing is not directly intelligible for someone unaware of all the possible words pronounced *[ɢ]ʷəʔ that 又 could represent; in the second, the graphic representation 之 can be ambiguous in its meaning.

The usage of phonetic loans and homographs has been taken as evidence that, without prior familiarity with the content of a text, or information sources from outside the text itself (e.g., via a tutor or another text), the content of a manuscript is not fully transparent.[105] Thus, Chinese culture heavily relied on orally transmitted information,[106]

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[104] The analysis of *Natural Dispositions* in appendix A presents several examples.

[105] Kern "The *Odes* in Excavated Manuscripts." In this study, Kern compares the quotations of odes in Warring States and Han manuscripts against each other, and against the received versions of the *Odes*, concluding that the differences between them indicates oral composition. Had the odes been transmitted in writing, there would be more consistency in the graphic representations of words. What weakens Kern's extensive study is that he compares quotations of the odes in excavated manuscripts from ca. 300 BCE to their parallels in the *Odes*, which took the shape we currently read in the Han dynasty. Although Kern is certainly right that there existed different writing conventions at the same time, in this paper his analysis proves a diachronic change in the writing system, and not a synchronic variation of writing conventions, which leads to other sorts of considerations. See discussion in Shaughnessy "Unearthed Documents and the Question of Oral Versus Written nature of the *Classic of Poetry*," 337 and Morgan, "A Positive Case."

[106] D. Meyer makes this claim for the *Ziyi* 緇衣, Meyer, "Writing Meaning," 65. On the *Odes*, see again Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants;" Kern, *Text and Ritual*. See also William Boltz "Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts;" Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*; Michael Nylan, "Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han;" Mathias Richter, "Faithful transmission of Creative Change," no. 5. Other transmitted and excavated sources besides those here mentioned have been investigated to understand what role, if any, orality played in their textual history. On the *Lunyu* 論語, see Hunter, *Confucius beyond the Analects*; Hunter and Kern, *Confucius and the Analects Revisited*. On the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, see Queen and Puett, *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China*. On the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 see Klein "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States?" for *Xunzi* 荀子, a brief discussion on its composition can be found in Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study*, 107ff. See also Nylan, "Xunzi: An Early Reception History," 395. Paul van Els *The Wenzi: Creativity and Intertextuality* discusses features of the excavated and received *Wenzi* 文子 (see esp. 38-60).

such as from a teacher to a student.[107] This position refutes the applicability of a *stemma codicum* model for early Chinese sources,[108] and promotes the idea that texts were orally composed and committed to memory, to be then recited, recorded, or read. Writing was auxiliary, but insufficient.

Here two points must be noted. First, fluency in language and orthographic conventions can unproblematically resolve apparent obstacles such as those given by phonetic loans, in similar ways in which typos in a sentence are corrected by the brain, assigning the correct meaning to a sentence.[109] Any educated reader (or listener) would be able to discern whether 之 (or *tə) is representing the word "it" or "to go" in a sentence. (Consider: "You are mean" vs. "This is the arithmetic mean.") It is more likely that teacher-student interaction was required to decode the *meaning* of a text, besides the teaching of writing skills and orthographic conventions. But this teacher-student scenario

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[107] Kern "Methodological Reflections," 164. Cf. Kern, *Text and Ritual*, xviii; and Kern, "The Formation of the *Classic of Poetry*," 42. Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 73. Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*.

[108] Introduced by Boltz "Textual Criticism and The Ma Wang Tui Lao Tzu," and "Notes on the textual Relation between the 'Kuo yü' and the 'Tso chuan.'" The applicability of the *stemma codicum* or *urtext* principle for early China has refuted also by Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 320, who disagrees with Boltz's idea of a *urtext* of the *Zuozhuan* and the *Guoyu* 國語; cf. Shaughnessy 2006: 258; Kern, "Xishuai and its consequences," 13. Cf. Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy*. Differently, Andreini ("Cases of 'Diffraction' and Lectio Difficilior in Early Chinese Manuscripts") builds his method to classify variants based precisely on the existence of an original version. The article's claims are to some extent controversial, but this is not the place to address it. It is however a good reminder of the issue pointed out above, namely the different and diverse methodological criteria scholars apply when working with excavated sources, which lead to different if not contrasting results.

[109] Rayner ("Eye guidance in reading") introduced the term "preferred viewing point" to refer to the point where the eyes fixate themselves when reading English words. This point lies towards the beginning of the word, suggesting that the brain "completes" the words it is reading through prior knowledge, even if the word includes a typo in it. With Chinese language, the eye-fixation point cannot be measure according to the length of a word. Yet parallel studies have also demonstrated the ability of the brain to overcome minor "typos" in Chinese as well. Characters written with the omission of one stroke are still read relatively easily, whereas characters heavily altered posed a challenge. See Li *et al.*, "Effect of Anomalous Characters and Small Stroke Omission on Eye Movements during the Reading of Chinese sentences." Furthermore, eye-fixation time is much shorter on words that are contextually constrained, for which there is less possibility of ambiguity; this is true across different writing systems. See Li, Bicknell *et al.*, "Reading is Fundamentally Similar across Disparate Writing Systems."

moves the discussion about orality on a different level, that of interpretations and education. It does not deny that textual production and transmission was done in writing, nor sustain that it occurred orally.

Recently published manuscripts have shown that the reliance on writing and visual copying for textual reproduction was more widespread than previously assumed. The Shanghai Museum collection has proven particularly extraordinary because it collects four texts with duplicates,[110] identified as A (*jia* 甲) and B (*yi* 乙): the **The Son of Heaven builds his Realm*, *Tianzi jian zhou* 天子建州; the **Zhengzi Jia sang* 鄭子家喪; the **Junrenzhe he bi an zai* 君人者何必安哉, and the **All things are flowing into forms*, **Fan wu liu xing* 凡物流形.[111] Although the Shanghai Museum corpus is unprovenanced,[112] it is regularly assumed that these manuscripts all came from the same tomb.[113] Even if this assumption is incorrect, these couples give the opportunity to compare two manuscripts of the same texts with reliable confidence that these had been produced around the same time.

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[110] A similar case has later been found in the Tsinghua collection, which contained two manuscripts replicating the same text, titled by the editors **Duke of Wen asks Tai Bo*, **Zheng Wen Gong wen Tai Bo* 鄭文公問太伯. See study by Shaughnessy, "The Tsinghua Manuscript **Zheng Wen Gong Wen Tai Bo* and the Question of the Production of Manuscripts in Early China." Here the case is slightly different: the four pairs of manuscripts in the Shanghai Museum collections are copies of the same text produced by two different scribes. In the case of **Duke of Wen,* the evidence shows that the two manuscripts were copied by the *same* scribe from *two* different sources.

[111] *Shanghai bowuguan cang Chu zhu shu (liu)* 上海博物館藏楚竹書（六）: *Tianzi jia sang*: photographs pp. 125-153, transcription pp. 309-338. *Shanghai bowuguan cang Chu zhu shu (qi)* 上海博物館藏楚竹書（七）: *Zhengzi Jia sang*: photographs pp. 33-49, transcription pp. 171-188. *Junrenzhe he bi an zai*: photographs pp. 53-73, transcription pp. 191-218. *Fan wu liu xing*: photographs pp. 77-132, transcription pp. 221-300. See also new edition in *Shanghai Bowuguan Cang Zhanguo Chu Jian Jishi* 上海博物館藏戰國楚簡集釋, vol. 6 pp. 306-358 for *Tianzi jia sang*; vol. 7 pp. 53-87, 88-135, 136-326 for *Zhengzi Jia sang*, *Junrenzhe he bi an zai*, and *Fan wu liu xing* respectively.

[112] See discussion in Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 53-55, which summarizes suggestions by different scholars that the origin of the Shanghai Museum corpus is a tomb next to the Guodian one, belonging to a woman (which leads to questions about female literacy, pp. 55-58).

[113] Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 35.

For example, the two manuscripts of *The Son of Heaven builds his Realm* have been proven to be one the visual copy of the other: the peculiarities in the orthography of many words in A and B versions are identical to a degree that cannot be otherwise explained. One text was written to imitate the other in all aspects, including punctuation.[114] The same is true of the two copies of *Junrenzhe he bi an zai* is sufficient to determine a commitment in replicating this text almost stroke by stroke. Particularly revealing is the writing of *qian* 前 ("former") with two long, perpendicular strokes in the upper component, an otherwise unattested structure:[115] *Junrenzhe* A strip 3: vs. *Junrenzhe* B strip 3: .

This claim has been extended to all four examples of duplicate manuscripts,[116] perhaps too enthusiastically. In the case of *Zengzi jia sang,* for example, only *Zengzi* A has punctuation; secondly, several characters present different graphic structures and alternations in the usage of decorative strokes (i.e., strokes that are not necessary to identify a character):

Table 1 Orthographic changes between Zengzi A and Zengzi B

Zengzi A	*Zengzi* B	

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[114] Morgan, "A Positive Case."

[115] For example, the Shangbo manuscript *Zigao* writes it as , which is the more frequently occurring way of writing this word.

[116] Morgan, "A positive Case," 4. Shaughnessy, "Philosophy or bamboo," 207-208.

Throughout the manuscript	Throughout the manuscript	奠, writing Zheng 鄭 The lower component 収 has a decorative horizontal stroke in *Zengzi* A, which *Zengzi* B does not show. The upper element 酉 appears reclined in *Zengzi* B
strip 3	strip 3	盒, writing "to answer," 答 *Zengzi* A adds an horizontal stroke at the bottom.
strip 4	strip 4	*qi* 其, personal pronoun. *Zengzi* B more consistently adds a decorative horizontal stroke (Note that on the previous strip, it is written with the decorative horizontal stroke in both manuscripts)

The example of *Zengzi notwithstanding, the three other cases of duplicate manuscripts prove convincingly that visual copying was a regularly used mode of textual production in Warring States China. Another known example of duplicate manuscripts for the same text is that of the Guodian[117] and Shanghai Museum[118] *Black Robe. Comparison between the two manuscripts have also led to the conclusion that the two versions result from faithful copying.[119] (I return to this example in chapter two.) The point here is the importance of visual copying in the textual world of early China, and the impact it played in it. Later mathematical sources from the Mawangdui corpus from the Han dynasty and copies of the same poem from the Dunhuang collection confirm the continuation of this method.[120]

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[117] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 355-418.
[118] Shanghai Bowuguan Cang Zhanguo Chu Jian Jishi 上海博物館藏戰國楚簡集釋 vol 1., 184-279.
[119] Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*, 260-261.
[120] Morgan, "What good's a text?" Nugent, "The Lady and Her Scribes: Dealing with Multiple Dunhuang Copies of Wei Zhuang's 'Lament of the Lady Qin.'"

Another couple of manuscripts that parallel the situation of *Black Robe* are *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions.* Produced around the same time (middle 4th century BCE), they belong to two different collections, Guodian and Shanghai Museum respectively. These too have been analyzed in an attempt to frame them as the result of oral or written production. In discussing these two sources, Feng Shengjun leveraged Olivier Venture's observations on the use of prepositions "in, at" in the *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions.* Venture noted that both manuscripts consistently use *yu* 於, except on one occasion. In exactly the same sentence "Instruction is that by which one gives rise to virtue within, 教所以生德于中者也",[121] both *Natural Disposition* and *Discussions* use *yu* 于.[122] To Feng, this is evidence of visual copying.[123] However, this conclusion overlooks the fact that, although pronounced identically in modern Chinese, the two prepositions had distinct pronunciation in Old Chinese:[124]

"go, at" 于 *yu* < *ɢʷ(r)a, *vs*

"at" 於 *yu* < *[ʔ]a

Hence, the change from 於 to 于 might as well have resulted from someone writing under dictation and correctly translating into writing different sounds, and not necessarily from visual copying. Furthermore, exactly in the same strip where 于 appears in both

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[121] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 712.

[122] Venture, "Zhanguo liang Han 'yu', 'yu' zi yongfa gushu de chuanxie xiguan 戰國兩漢 "于"、"於"字用法與古書的傳寫習慣."

[123] Feng Shengjun "Scribal Influence on the Transmission of Pre-Qn texts, as seen in excavated manuscripts" 187. This issue of *Chinese Studies in History* is entirely dedicated to show "that early Chinese texts were primarily transmitted as copies that passed from hand to hand and text to text," as the editors explain (Lai and Wang, "Manuscript culture in early China: Editors' introduction").

[124] Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, 361-362. See also Richter, *The Embodied Text*, 78.

manuscripts, the following sentence presents variants that pose a challenge to Feng's position. In the sentence,

（…）體其義而節文之，理其情而出入之（…）
(…) gave embodiment to their propriety and provided it with regularity and refined pattern; ordered the affections [they expressed by] drawing them out and reimplanting them (…).[125]

Natural Dispositions 17 writes "regulation" with 即, whereas *Discussions* has 節; "affections" 情 is written without the signifier 心 at the bottom of the graph, whereas *Discussions* has it:

Table 2. Orthographic differences in 情 "affections" and 節 "regulations"

word	*Natural Dispositions* strip 17-18	*Discussions* strip 10
"regulations"		
Qing 情		

If the texts had been copied visually, so faithfully that the one change from 於 to 于 is reproduced, we would expect the words "regulation" and "feelings" to be faithfully reproduced too, at the very least on the same strip.

A stronger defense of the role of visual copying and written transmission comes from studies that compare graphic variants for the same words as they appear on bamboo texts

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[125] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 712.

and in bronze inscriptions. This has been done by Feng Shengjun for the Guodian and Shanghai corpora in his *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu* 郭店簡與上博簡對比研究 (*A comparative study of the Guodian and the Shanghai Museum bamboo manuscripts*). Thus far, all Warring States manuscripts are written with the Chu 楚 script, that is, the script in use in the Chu state at the time of their production.[126] Feng identifies elements from other scripts, particularly from the script of Qi 齊,[127] and argues that a scribe working via dictation or memorization would unlikely introduce elements from foreigner scripts in their writing. This line of reasoning better sustains the role of visual copying and written transmission as central in early China, although the examples are limited in numbers.[128] As for the case of *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, neither visual copying nor orality can fully account for all their peculiarities. As we will see in chapter two and three, the notion of performance supports instead accounts for them.

So far, I have reviewed textual evidence whose features were used to elevate one form of textual production. We can also consider mentions of oral teaching and visual copying to infer how textual production and transmission operated. These references are

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[126] The majority of Warring States manuscripts are from Hubei, an area that around 300 BCE was under the control of the state of Chu. In cases of looted manuscripts, it remains impossible to ascertain their origin, although numerous similarities indicate that the Shanghai Museum texts were also from the same state (again, see Allan, *Buried Ideas* 53-54).

[127] Feng *Guodian jian yu Shangbo jian duibi yanjiu,* 258-327. This bears on the question of how scribes were trained, and their level of familiarity with the sources they were working with. Were scribes trained to recognize, or even use, different writing styles, in a context of inter-state communication? The Zhangjiashan *Statues on Scribes*, *Shi lü* 史律, reports that scribes were tested "on the eight forms" 八體, likely referring to the eight forms of Qin graphs (Barbieri-Low and Yates *Law, State, and Society in Early Imperial China*: 1093 and 1103 footnote no. 14.). It is possible that a similar training was already occurring in pre-imperial times.

[128] We are also not confident that scribes did not learn orthographic conventions for different scripts. This is a can of worms that anyone wanting to use graphic variants as primary evidence would have to open, but there is a meager chance of reaching solid conclusions. All the Warring States manuscripts that we currently possess are written in Chu 楚 script, hence extensive studies of what the Qi script might have looked like, and consequent comparisons, are not possible.

worth exploring because they are representations of activities that this dissertation aims to explore.

In some cases, oral teaching is negatively perceived: the *Hanshu*'s 漢書 section Yi wen zhi 藝文志 ("Treatise on arts and literature")[129] states that Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (556-452 BCE) wrote his commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* because he feared that the true meaning of the work would otherwise have been lost in all the explanations proliferating among disciples who relied on oral teaching, and which he deemed incorrect.[130] Although the narrative of Zuo Qiuming's motivations may be fictional, it still indicates that someone felt compelled to underline what he considered a dangerous consequence of oral transmission.[131]

A similar sentiment emerges from Liu Xin's 劉歆 (50 ? BCE - 23CE) memorial[132] to Han emperor Ai 哀帝 (r. 7-1 BCE). In this memorial, Liu Xin complains of the new habit in his age of relying on oral explanations without verifying their validity, "tuning one's back on commentaries and records, 信口說而背傳記."[133] Within the context of the entire

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[129] On the nature of the "Yi wen zhi", see Hunter, "The 'Yiwen Zhi' 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) Bibliography in Its Own Context."

[130] *Hanshu* 30.1715. *Shiji* 14.509-510 has a similar account that combines the presence of oral transmission and writing on the part of Zuo Qiuming. See discussion of this passage in Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 318-319.

[131] We should note that oral explanations were not discredited per se: the *Shiji* also records that after a period of indifference towards the Ru studies (first under Emperor Wen, who preferred legal sources, and then under Emperor Jing 景帝 r. 157-141 BCE, when the Huanglao 黃老 teachings enjoyed the court's favoritism under the influence of his mother Empress Dou 竇太后), these re-gained a role of prominence at court with Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 141-87BCE), who recruited scholars well versed in the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Changes*, the *Shangshu*, etc. These masters provided the oral explanations *yan* 言 for these texts (*Shiji* 121.3188; cf. *Hanshu* 88.3593). No negative tone is attached to the nature of the explanation, as long as they came from scholars well versed in these sources: Fu Sheng 伏勝 is for example the authoritative voice about the *Shangshu*.

[132] *Hanshu* 36.1967-1970.

[133] *Hanshu* 30.1970.

memorial, this line expresses the presence of both written and oral transmission[134] as *modi operandi*, as well as of Liu's concerns with an intellectual environment that had become stagnant. His peers, Liu Xin says, "trust oral explanations" (*xin kou shuo* 信口說) uncritically. This is in line with Wang Chong's 王充 (27-100 CE) lament of the popularity of painting to the detriment of sages' written words recorded on bamboo and silk:[135] the problem does not lie in paintings per se, but in the fact that people look at paintings *only*. In both transmitted and excavated sources, there is therefore no explicit evidence that early Chinese thinkers favored oral or written transmission, nor of any clearcut demarcation between the two.[136]

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[134] Nylan 2000: 254 reads this line in isolation as the first explicit distinction between textual and oral transmission, but within context this reading weakens. Nylas 2016: 397 claims that oral transmission was still a widespread phenomenon during the Western han. Further inquiry into *kou shuo* shows that such expression meant oral communication more in general, rather than oral transmission in a learning context. When Han Emperor Jing's 景帝 (188-141 BCE) attempted to resize principalities to make them less threatening, the lord of Wu 吳 Liu Pi 劉濞 sent and envoy to Jiaoxi 膠西 to seek alliance against the emperor. What will then become known as the Rebellion of the Seven States, 七國治亂, erupted in 154 BCE. The envoy Ying Gao 應高 "orally explained to the lord of Jiaoxi 使中大夫應高口說膠西王" the reason of his visit (*Hanshu* 30.1906-1907). Here, *kou shuo* emphasizes the lack of written documents, probably to have an easier time denying that this meeting ever took place. The *Shiji* version of this story reads that Ying Gao "without written document, verbally reported 無文書，口報" Liu Pi's plan to rebel (*Shiji* 70.2825).

[135] "People like to contemplate images and paintings of men of ancient times. But how does looking at their faces compare with contemplating their words and actions? Painted upon the bare wall, their shapes and appearance are there, but if people are not inspired, it is because they do not perceive their words or deeds. The writings of old sages shine forth from the bamboos and silks, where they are written, how can they follow from images on walls?! 人好觀圖畫者，圖上所畫，古之列人也。見列人之面，孰與觀其言行？置之空壁，形容聊，人不激勸者，不見言行也。古賢之遺文，竹帛之所載粲然，豈徒墙壁之畫哉？" *Lunheng jiaoshi* 38.590. Compare Forke, *Lun-hêng,* vol. 2 p. 102.

[136] Nylan ("Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han," 255) claims that there existed a "sharp division between writing and speech," and that memorization and chanting was superseded by writing only in the Han dynasty. For the most part, Nylan relies on Han sources to infer habits that existed prior to the empire. For example, she mentions a line in Dong Zhongshu's 董仲舒 biography where it is said that disciples transmitted his teachings, without seeing him in person, 弟子傳以久次相受業，或莫見其面 (*Shiji* 121.3127, Nylan, "A Problematic Model: The Han 'Orthodox Synthesis,' Then and Now" 26, and footnote 61. She does not mention that the same line also states that Dong Zhongshu would study by lecturing and chanting (*xia wei jiang tong* 下帷講誦), which would strengthen her claim.) As Behr and Fueher discuss, words within the semantic range "to recite" seldom appear in sources before the early empires (Behr and Fueher "Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit,"), which would disprove Nylan's statement (see also Barbieri-Low and Yates *Law, State, and Society in Early*

On the other hand, we also have mentions of writing as having negative consequences. While early Chinese texts that portray Cang Jie 蒼頡 as the inventor of writing describe this act in positive tones,[137] in "The Basic Warp" 本經訓, the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 states:[138]

> 昔者，蒼頡作書而天雨粟，鬼夜哭。伯益作井而龍登玄雲，神棲崑崙。能愈　多而德愈薄矣。故周鼎著倕使銜其指，以明大巧之不可為也。[139]
>
> In ancient times, when Cang Jie invented writing, Heaven rained corn and the ghosts cried at night. When Bo Yi invented wells, dragons rose towards dark clouds, and the spirits withdrew in the Kunlun. While skills increased further, virtue diminished even more. Thus, the Zhou tripods display Chui biting his nails, in order to show that great and brilliant skills cannot be accomplished [through these inventions].[140]

The inventions of writing and wells, taken as a metaphor for the establishment of social norms, have serious consequences in that they constrain natural forms of living. While a worthy act when first created,[141] writing soon started to be misused:

蒼頡之初作書，以辯治百官，領理萬事。愚者得以不忘，智者
得以志遠；至其衰也，為姦刻偽書，以解有罪，以殺不辜。[142]

Cang Jie initially created writing to explain [things] and govern the
hundred officials, and to direct and arrange the myriad affairs.
[Soon] the fools obtained it and used it not to forget things, while
the wise intentions and affairs.[143] By the age of decline, it was for
the wicked to [use it to] inscribe false documents to free those who
were guilty, and to put to death the innocents. [144]

While neither passage concerns the production and transmission of sources, and therefore

are tangential to our discussion here, the latter passage betrays an anxiety that is specific

to the act of writing texts. Similarly, a saying from the *Analects* reads:

子曰：「吾猶及史之闕文也，有馬者借人乘之。今亡已
夫！」[145]

The Master said: "I am old enough to know of scribes who would
leave blank spots [when in doubt], and of owners of horses who
would lend them [to those who needed them]. Today, there are no
such things!"

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[142] *Huainanzi jishi* 20.1390-1391.

[143] Following Wang Niansun's 王念孫 reading, *Huainanzi jishi* 20.1390.

[144] Compare Major *et al.*, *The Huainanzi*, 806.

[145] *Lunyu* 15.26. This is a sentence difficult to understand, as the numerous comments by scholars of the centuries testify (*Lunyu jiishi* 論語集釋 32.1112-1114). The Kaicheng Stone Classics 開成石經 did not include this line; in the *Hanshu*, the saying appears without the sentence *you ma zhe jie ren cheng zhi* 有馬者借人乘之, suggesting it may have originally belonged elsewhere, possibly resulting from some corruption. Bao Xian 包咸 (6 BCE - 65 CE) interpreted both sentences to convey the same meaning: scribes who did not know how to write a word would leave a space until they could consult with someone who knew better, in the same way those who own horses but do not know how to ride them lend them to those with more expertise, and interpretation followed by Slingerland, *Confucius' Analects*, 184-185. To remain more faithful to the original text, I read the two sentences as indicating two different acts, both lacking in Confucius's days: humility in refraining from pretending to know, and expression of mutual support.

It is possible that Confucius here refers to the act of writing because of the potential durability of the written word. An irony, for someone who did not produce any written evidence on his teachings.

The list of manuscripts and their bearing on the question of oral vs. writing, as well as of references in received literature to either cultural modality, could continue. This section aimed to review current literature on the subject. The picture that emerges reveals several modes of textual composition and reproduction coexisted at the same time.[146] Different modalities to manage knowledge became more influential in specific environments: memorization and its practice was tied to courtly debates to display one's erudition; visual copying was important to master spelling rules and writing styles; oral instructions circulated among educational circles. The question then should not just be how a text was composed, but also in what scenario it might have been used.

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[146] Preferences for one mode of production emerges as a shortcoming of the otherwise skillful analysis of the Shanghai Museum text *A Parent to the People*, *Min zhi fumu* 民之父母 by Mathias Richter. He examines the graph 㠯 as it occurs in the manuscript, demonstrating how the character *chi* 遲 "and ultimately also 棣 originate in a graphic error, i.e., a confusion of the graph 犀 and 隶" (Richter, *The Embodied Text*, 104-108). This most likely indicates visual copying, possibly combined with oral teaching. Richter instead favors orality as mode of textual transmission (pages 4-5, 107), and concludes that "[g]raphic variants resulting from copying errors can reflect a predominantly oral transmission as well." Jiang Wen's study of the Anhui *Odes* mentioned above is instead an example of forcing a case of visual copying where even the evidence presented by Jiang Wen herself is not conclusive to reach this conclusion (something that she, somehow contradictorily, points out).

Oratory in early China

Although this dissertation does not deal exclusively with oratory, this is a central activity

that has been reconstructed on the basis of written documents. Chinese textual sources

represent an outcome of the art of speaking well: they record speeches that aimed to

persuade,[147] and which encode argumentative techniques such as metaphors, repetitions,

definitions of concepts that lead to a certain conclusion, comparisons.[148] Yet for all the

"immense power"[149] oratory gained during the Warring States, early China lacks any

theorization about oratory or rhetoric[150] comparable to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* or Cicero's *De*

Oratore.[151] Cautious in applying terminology from Greek and Roman cultures to explore

ancient Chinese history has thus been invited. In his study of *Stratagems of the Warring*

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[147] Schaberg "On the Work of Shi 使 and Shi 史."

[148] Crump, *Intrigues*, 36.

[149] Kern and Elman, *Statecraft and Classical Learning*, 7.

[150] A text known as *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子 is often presented as the earliest Chinese treatise on rhetoric; a most recent study is Wu and Swearingen's *Guiguzi, China's First Treatise on Rhetoric: A Critical Translation and Commentary*. A person named Guigu is often named in the sources as the teacher of Zhang Yi 張儀 and Su Qin 蘇秦, two famous persuaders active during the Warring States era. We have no reasons to doubt the existence of someone who fulfilled this role. The book attributed to him, however, is most likely a forgery from times later to the Han dynasty (Olberding. "Politically Efficacious Persuasion in the *Guiguzi*"). Xiao Dengfu 蕭登福 believes it may reflect or incorporate some Warring States material (*Guiguzi yanjiu* 鬼谷子 研究, 33-37), but the evidence is rather thin. This makes the *Guiguzi* a text with a complex history, one that, although representative of something, cannot be straightforwardly be taken to be representative of pre-imperial rhetorics.

Another transmitted text that was thought to include essays related to the art of debate the is *Gongsun Longzi* 公孫龍子, see Indraccolo, "Gongsun Long and the *Gongsun Longzi.*" However, at least two chapters of the *Gongsun Longzi* have been demonstrated to have taken their current form in the fifth century (see Suter, "Buddhist Murmurs? – Another Look at the Composition of the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ."), confirming the *Gongsun Longzi* as a layered work that requires careful analyses to be evidence for early Chinese intellectual history. As such, it is not treated here.

[151] Harbsmeier, "Chinese Rhetoric," 114-116; Goldin, *After Confucius*, 76-78. A possible exception of Gui Youguang's 歸有光 (1507-1571) *Wenzhang zhinan* 文章指南 (*A guide to prose*), which includes directions on how to master essay-writing. This is part of a wave of prose criticism that starts after the Song 宋 dynasty, in a culture that is by then much more reliant on writing that oral discussions. See Wang Shuizhao, "Wenhua: A crucial academic resource for Chinese classical criticism."

States, *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策,[152] a *locus classicus* on oratory in ancient China,[153] James Crump prefers the term "persuasion," arguing that oratory was meant to exhort "groups of people to certain actions or attitudes," whereas in early China, thinkers exhort a single person, the ruler.[154]

Crump's distinction is correct but not the most apt,[155] since there are several examples of speeches that exhort changes which address a collectivity, such as *Mengzi*'s investments in persuading other thinkers of their faulty reasoning. To my mind, a more fundamental difference lies not in the number of people that an orator aimed to persuade, but in who could access these speeches. In ancient Greece and Rome, oratory was performed publicly (where "public" defines what is accessible by all male citizens of age). We currently lack any indications of who could access courtly or philosophical debates in early China.

So why use the words "oratory" and "rhetoric" at all in this dissertation? Primarily for convenience, to apply a term that brings to mind an activity that involves delivering a speech in an eloquent manner for someone, displaying knowledge as a way to showcase one's erudition or improve one's status.[156]

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[152] Compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 - 6BCE) between 26 and 8 BCE, on the basis of various sources that, Liu Xiang tells us, existed during the Warring States. See Tsien "Chan Kuo Ts'e 戰國策," 1-11 on the history of the *Zhanguo ce*.

[153] Cf. Maspero, "Le roman de Sou Ts'in;" Goldin "Miching Mallecho."

[154] Crump, *Intrigues*, 36.

[155] Crump does also not engage satisfactorily with his use of *suasoria*, as discussed in Goldin, *After Confucius*, 76-78. The arguments were first discussed in Goldin, "Miching Mallecho: the *Zhanguo ce* and Classical Rhetoric."

[156] This position distances my study from works such as Urlich Unger's 1999 *Rhetorik Des Klassischen Chinesisch*, which approaches Chinese tradition using several rhetorical concepts that have a long tradition in European history. I am not currently interested in determining comparisons between structures used in ancient Greek and ancient China.

Anecdotes describing this practice proliferated in early China. Being anecdotes, they represent indirect evidence for this activity, and they must be analyzed accordingly and cannot be taken as a direct reflection of reality. Yet literature incorporates reality and, to some extent, influences reality as well. Furthermore, as I discuss in chapter three, additional evidence about social and cultural changes can be found to support the dynamics depicted in these narratives: starting with the fourth century BCE, a new group of individuals of humble descent was able to establish themselves by using knowledge as a form of power. Descriptions of individuals and aspiring ministers seeking service in royal courts engage in rhetorical discussions with rulers[157] are the literary outcome of these changes.

Furthermore, we also have references to oratorical abilities. In the *Analects*, Confucius remarks on disciples Zai Wo 宰我 and Zigong 子貢 for their abilities in speech (*yan yu* 言語),[158] in contrast to Ziyou and Zixia, who are praised for their textual learning (*wenxue* 文學[159]),[160] singling out verbal abilities as a category. In glossing this

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[157] Crump, *Intrigues*, 3. Weingarten "Debates around Jixia" 288-294 analyzes a body of dialogues between King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 and Mengzi and observes that it can be divided into two categories, hostile and supportive attitudes on Mengzi's part. One can imagine this as being due to the fact that these dialogues were not verbatim recordings of dialogues that did take place, but also (if not especially) canvas, templates for aspiring ministers to learn different codes of exchanges. As Weingarten points out (p. 287), "the dialogues under investigation will be treated as products of creative and ideologically motivated acts of reimagination, which tell us more about the concerns of their authors than about their protagonists and the events they represent." I think that it tells us about all of them, with the help of additional evidence. See discussion in chapter three.

[158] Sima Qian also refers to their linguistic skills: both Zai Wo and Zigong are proficient orators, the former is further skilled at debating 利口辯辭, the latter is clever with words 利口巧辭. *Shiji* 67.2194-2195.

[159] I paraphrase the term *wenxue*, which has no straightforward translation. It is clear however that it indicates textual knowledge, and hence stands in contrast to *yanyu* in the passage here quoted; see Kern 2001: 47-48.

[160] *Lunyu zhushu* 11.160.

passage, Kong Yingda's 孔穎達 (574-648) states that Zai Wo and Zigong were envoys[161] who used their oral skills as envoys, 用其言語[162]辯[163]說，以為行人，使適四方.[164]

The title *xing ren* 行人, which connotes also disciple Ziyu 子羽,[165] is glossed by Ma Rong 馬融 (79-166) as an official who handles diplomatic exchanges, 行人，掌使之官.[166] The *Zhouli* 周禮 further differentiates between *da xingren* 大行人 and *xiao xingren* 小行人, both officials who would handle audiences at court and matters of rituals and marriage affairs.[167] In other words, *xing ren* was associated with diplomatic activities, and its seems safe to infer that a requisite to conduct these activities was having oratorical abilities. This appears also in Sima Qian's anecdote on Zigong, who was able to talk his way into preventing the state of Qi 齊 from attacking Lu 魯.[168] After a series of meetings and speeches delivered to several heads of states, Zigong saves Lu from entering war, while Qi, Wu 吳, Jin 晉 and Yue 越 are all turned against each other.[169] Ironically, the same Confucius who condemns oral sharpness if used to overthrow states and families (惡利口之覆邦家者[170]) also sent Zigong as an envoy, declining other disciples' offers.[171]

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[161] Hucker 1985: 245 no. 2574. Legge has "internucious" in the translation of the *Zhouli*, for internocios.

[162] Note incidentally that indicating the use of language (*yong yuyan* 用語言) might indicate that other discussions took place otherwise, that is, in writing. Once again, this disproves the dichotomy orality vs. writing.

[163] Reading *bian* 辯 "to debate" instead of *bian* 辨 "to distinguish" as per Ruan Yuan's 阮元 note, *Lunyu zhushu* 11.160.

[164] *Lunyu zhushu* 11.160.

[165] *Lunyu zhushu* 14.210.

[166] Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 similarly reads "*xing ren*, title of official handling foreign affairs in antiquity 行人官名，即古代的外交官, see *Lunyu yizhu* 1984: 148. See also *Hanshu* 24.1123.

[167] *Lunyu zhushu* 14.210-211.

[168] *Shiji* 67.2194.

[169] *Shiji* 67.2201. The story starts at 67.2197.

[170] *Lunyu zhu shu* 17.273.

[171] *Shiji* 67.2194.

Other remarks about the danger of sharp tongues are found in *Mengzi*, where the eponymous master fears that verbal skills may undermine trustworthiness, 惡利口，恐其亂信也.[172] The *Huainanzi* describes Deng Xi 鄧析 (6th BCE) as being so verbally crafty that he would muddle standards, 鄧析巧辯而亂法.[173] Similarly, *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 remarks that, although they differ in their personality, both the worthy and the unworthy are skilled at talking and defending their positions, confounding rulers who do not recognize the worthiness behind the words,[174] 賢不肖異，皆巧言辯辭，以自防禦，此不肖主之所以亂也.[175] These are clues of how widespread oratorical skills were among thinkers, so much so that it becomes something to guard oneself against.

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[172] *Mengzi zhushu* 14B.478.

[173] *Huainanzi* 14.472.

[174] Hence possibly also remaking how rulers were dependent on their ministers and advisors.

[175] *Lüshi chunqiu* 3.160. Compare Konblock and Riegel *The Annals*, 108: "The worthy and the unworthy are different even though both use artifices of speech, discriminations, and propositions to defend themselves against opponents."

Theoretical notions

In this section, I discuss some theoretical notions that underpin my approach to manuscripts. I will treat here only certain aspects of complicated subjects and keep as simple as possible a necessarily technical discussion.

Modules and textual architecture

The manuscripts that I examine in this dissertation are all of philosophical and historical content, and present a variety of formats. I analyze both the structure of manuscripts as well as their content. Because of the (somewhat) novelty of the material, and their variety, the scholarship on ancient manuscripts presents different approaches and criteria. In an attempt to contribute to the discussion while bringing some clarity to the plethora of methods, I present here my own terminology.[176]

The first step concerns the identification of elements within the structure. Rudolph Wagner conceived a definition of "units of thought" as follows:

> If units of thought in a text have a different position in the overall sequence of such units in different early manuscripts and editions that have come to us, and if their respective place in a recognizably identical form (barring a normal range of textual differences), this is an indication that they functioned as independent units of thought, whose meaning and status did not depend on their place in the overall text.[177]

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[176] Needless to say, many of the previous studies on the notion of modularity, composite texts, and manuscript culture more in general have been fundamental to developing my own. These will be duly noted and mentioned in due time.

[177] Wagner "The Guodian Manuscripts and the 'Units of Thought,'" 3.

According to this definition, the boundaries that determine the divisions of a text into units are determined by comparison with other texts, and identification of identical (or semi-identical) passages. This however limits the applicability of "units of thoughts" to manuscripts for which there exist a counterpart. We are then lacking a conceptual unit to analyze unique exemplars. Thus, I formulated the notion of "module." A "module" is

> A section of a text that can stand alone. In other words, if removed from its original context, it continues to articulate an intelligible concept. A module can be made of more than one sentence, but it is shorter than a paragraph. This definition is intentionally loose so as to accommodate diverse evidence; the continuous recovery of manuscripts may force a new formulation.

For example, the sentence "human nature is inclined towards goodness" is a module. While retaining meaning by itself, it can be inserted in contexts to support different conclusions. Such as, "human nature is inclined towards goodness, therefore there are no evil persons in the world," or "human nature is inclined towards goodness, therefore only animals are evil," and so on.

Logically, modules have one of the two following characteristics:

a. It is found with variations in other texts. Textual comparison determines the boundaries of the module, as Wagner suggested.

b. It is not found in other texts. In this case, boundaries are determined by a clearly identifiable feature, such as repetition of the same grammatical structure or narrative sequence.

Let us take the incipit of the Guodian text *Frustration or Achievement* as example:

有天有人，天人有分。察天人之分，而知所行矣。有其人，無其世，雖賢弗行矣。苟有其世，何難之有哉？舜耕於厲山，陶埏於河滸，立而為天子，遇堯也。邵繇衣胎蓋，帽絰塚巾，釋板築而佐天子，遇武丁也。

There is Heaven and there is mankind. By examining the division [of causal responsibility] between Heaven and mankind, one will know what each performs. If there is [the right] person but not [the right] era, even though he is worthy, he will not perform it. If it were the right era, what difficulty could there be? Shun was plowing in the fields near Mount Li, and molding pottery on the banks of the river, [to then] be established as Son of Heaven. This is because of his encounter with Yao. Gao Yao[178] was wearing hemp clothes and the headgear [like convicts], and he eventually became the assistant of the Son of Heaven. This is because of his encounter with Wu Ding.[179]

Module one (in red) sets the tone of the composition, from the beginning to the question "what difficulty could there be?" This module indicated the theme that anchors all subsequent modules. It can stand as a meaningful passage by itself: removing it from the *Frustration or Achievement* does not affect its meaning.[180] The second module (in blue) is the story of Shun, and how he came to prominence thanks to his encounter with Yao. The third (purple) module is the same story of Gao Yao.[181] Each module is therefore meaningful in itself, and found with variations in other early Chinese texts, representing natural textual divisions. The textual architecture of this manuscript is given by a temporal sequence that determines the order of modules, after the opening that sets the tone.

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[178] This narrative is usually associated with Fu Yue 傅說. The 'Gao Yao error' is discussed in Smith, "What Difficulty Could There be?"

[179] Translation based on Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 453-456 with some modifications according to Smith, "What Difficulty Could There be?"

[180] It appears with variations in *Xunzi jiaoshi* 12.1118. See also Smith, "What Difficulty Could There be?"

[181] Colored in blue and purple respectively.

As for manuscripts that are otherwise unattested, module boundaries can be drawn by identifying features such as grammatical structures or thematic coherence. Consider the Guodian manuscript *The Way of Loyalty and Trustworthiness*, *Zhong xin zhi dao* 忠信之道.[182] In the following passage, I identify a module defined by the grammatical "not to… is the height of…" (in blue), and one defined by the conditional sentence "When… then…" (in red):

> 不訛不孚，忠之至也。不欺弗知，信之至也。忠集則可親也，信集則可惡也。
> "To neither deceive nor ingratiate is the height of loyalty; not to cheat the uninformed is the height of trustworthiness. When one's loyalty builds up, he may be held dear; when one's trustworthiness builds up, he may be trusted."[183]

While sentences within each module could be reversed in sequence without altering the content of this passage,[184] reverting the sequence of the two modules would create a paragraph that first discusses the consequences of embodying values like loyalty and trustworthiness before defining these two virtues.

Physical properties such as punctuation, blank sections, and marks can also indicate boundaries among modules.[185] Consider the Guodian manuscripts collected under the title

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[182] Discussed in chapter two.

[183] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 577.

[184] At most, it would however disrupt the parallelism between the two models: in each, the topic of loyalty precedes that of trustworthiness.

[185] I am hesitant in seeing features such as blank space as paratextual information, since in the original formulation of this notion, paratex is information inserted with the aim of influencing and or guiding the audience of that text (Genette, *Paratext*; see also an application of this notion in early Chinese texts in Du, "The Mastery of Miscellanea"). In the case of the *Odes* manuscript, blank space follows the end of each ode; along with the title of the ode, also placed after the last line, it indicates the end of each composition. In that case, it would be appropriate to talk of paratext, a way for the scribe to divide the text he was reproducing. Another case where blank spaces can be read as paratex is that of the Tsinghua *The way of all*

of *Thickets of Sayings*, *Yu Cong* 語叢. The final section of the third group of the *Thickets* is made by twelve strips (from 61 to 72) that record brief sentences separated by either a dot or a blank area, or both:

*Figure 1. Example of blank areas in *Thicket of Sayings**
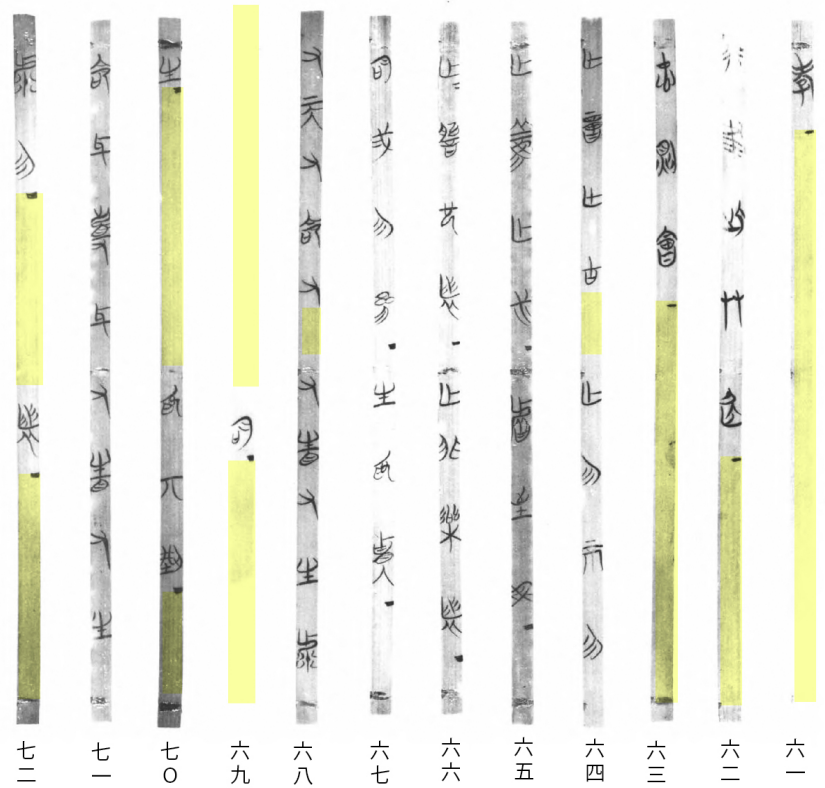
A case could be made to group together both sentences on strip 64, in light of the shared grammatical structure: the upper sentence reads "there is no intention and there is no antiquity, 亡意亡古;" the lower sentence states "there is no externality that is not an externality, 亡物不物." Here however it is irrelevant whether to group them together as

one module or keep them separated as two, since we are not dealing with a text, but with short fragments.[186]

Naturally, not all manuscripts necessitate a division into modules. The Anhui University *Odes*, for example, includes punctuation and other markers at the end of each ode and *guo feng* sections that make their architecture already intelligible. Other manuscripts, such as the Tsinghua *Command to She*, *She ming* 攝命,[187] represent continuous narrations that cannot be broken into modules as defined in this dissertation. But this is not a primary concern of my study, since my goal is precisely to find a way to conceptualize and analyze those texts that present apparently cryptic structures.

The notion of module may be useful in discussing transmitted sources. Their textual architecture has been imposed by Han scholars in the form of "chapters" (*pian* 篇), "rolls" (*juan* 卷), yet the criteria guiding these divisions are not clearly understood. Thus, we are left with texts such as the *Mengzi*, whose last two chapters (*Jin xin shang* and *xia* 盡心上下) are unified by the theme "Mencius says, 孟子曰" (as if imitating the *Analects*). Or like the *Analects*, whose "Yao yue 堯曰" chapter reads like a collection of paragraphs in *shu* 書 style, that would as easily fit in the *Exalted Writings*. The notion of module can thus be applied to bypass divisions in *pian* and *juan* (whose rationale is still little understood), and attempt to visualize the structure of these texts that are so indebted

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[186] Awareness of the actual structure of manuscripts, which is not always reflected in the transcriptions and analyses provided by Chinese scholars, weakens arguments of the *Thickets* being a collection of words of wisdom, describing the nature of social relationships (Chan, *Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 260-261). These are exercises, and while the vocabulary used clearly reflect the philosophical discourses of the time, building conclusions about early Chinese philosophy on the basis of what are casual pairings warrants scrutiny.

[187] See study by Shaughnessy, "A Possible Lost Classic."

to the Warring States culture and style. Because of space constraints, this application remains outside the scope of this dissertation.

Finally, dividing a text into modules brings out literary features of the text itself. This leads to spotting patterns such as repetitions of short sentences, formulaic usage of grammatical structure, list-resembling passages, elliptical arguments. All of these were instrumental to generate new cultural and textual material in the process of absorbing and producing knowledge. Bringing them to light is relevant to scholarly studies of early Chinese intellectual history.

Scribe and ownership

An important notion that recurs through this dissertation is that of 'scribe.' In its most plain usage, 'scribe' defines a person whose profession is to write, or the act of writing itself.[188] A scribe would thus be expected to have a high level of proficiency in writing skills, but in reality several reasons led to the employment of scribes with different proficiency levels. Direct evidence of this comes from the Zhangjiashan "Statutes on Scribes" *shi lü* 史律: after a period of training of three years, scribes would be tested, and assigned positions of varying responsibility according to their skills.[189] However, in times when the demand exceeded the supply, less qualified scribes could be temporarily promoted.[190]

I believe that during the Zhou dynasty, scribal education and employment functioned similarly. Scribes whose job was to sustain the functioning of states were trained and fully employed to serve that purpose. The profession was hereditary, as it would be in imperial times. Parallel to this centrally controlled body of scribes, there were other opportunities to obtain a literary education. As I discuss in chapter three, the latter became more numerous during the Warring States. After the Zhou court lost the political as well as cultural monopoly, individual states began to compete to become the new political *and* cultural center. The environment also led to a sort of pragmatism: men of

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[188] *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2021. Web. 30 May 2021. For studies on scribes in ancient China, see Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China;" Selbitschka, "I Write Therefore I am;" Foster, "Study of the *Cang jie pian*;" Xu Zhaochang's 許兆昌 *Zhou dai shiguan wenhua: qianzhou xinqi hexin wenhua xingtai yanjiu* 周代史官文化: 前軸心期核心文化形態研究, among others. On China in comparative perspective, see Haicheng Wang, *Writing and The Ancient State*.

[189] Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 1084-1111. See also study by Ma Tsang Wing, "Scribes, Assistants, and the Materiality of Administrative Documents in Qin-Early China."

[190] Barbieri-Low and Yates, *Law, State, and Society*, 1097.

talent, but of no particular lineage, gained more visibility. Writing culture expanded beyond administrative needs. More people accessed writing, texts, and cultural exchanges not to become professional scribes, but as tools to become the new minister to whom the king would lend an ear.

Thus, by taking its most neutral definition, I use "scribe" in this dissertation to indicate who wrote the manuscript being discussed. He[191] may be composing the text relying on previous material, composing anew, or copying it. This must be assessed case by case. In some cases, evidence suggests that the scribe is also the owner of the manuscript;[192] in other cases, scribes worked by commission, reproducing a text produced by and made for others, thus acting as transfer.[193]

Referring to scribes also circumvents the questions of literacy and authorship. In spite of the number of new written texts, these questions can be explored only tentatively, and often through guesswork. Literacy indicates the ability to read and write, but a distinction should be made when discussing ancient cultures. Clearly, linguistic competence is *sine qua non* to produce a written product.[194] Accordingly, scribes (as defined above) were by definition literate persons.[195] However, a distinction between education and literacy must

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[191] With rare exceptions (see e.g., Meier 1991), scribes were males. As far as I know, Warring States texts do not document the presence of female scribes.

[192] Smith and Poli, "Establishing the text of the *Odes*."

[193] Škrabal, "Writing before Inscribing."

[194] What Cesare Serge calls "competenza testuale", see Serge, "La natura del testo."

[195] Škrabal, "Writing before Inscribing," reconstructs instances of people reproducing a text onto a bronze likely without comprehending it and the instructions that came with it, and it thus would be possible to define them as "illiterate scribes." Yet, their role is that of casting bronzes, with or without inscriptions, and not that of composing the text. Hence, I do not identify them as scribes. In later centuries, there are records of illiterate woodblock cutters, which resulted in literate editors adding several notes to the text (see discussion in Dennis, *Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Gazetteers in Imperial China, 1100–1700*, 156-159). But when this is the case, i.e. that the person conducting the writing is illiterate, mistakes and miswritten characters are highly frequent (see also Ting *Circulating the Code* 115). While mistakes are

be drawn when researching ancient worlds. Mastering a language (i.e., being fully fluent, beyond knowledge of grammar and words[196]) does not necessarily include writing abilities.[197] Famously, Charlemagne (748 - 814 CE) was one of the most educated persons of this time, competent in Latin, some Old Dutch, Old French, as well as some Greek, and repeatedly scolded monks for their writing mistakes in their letters. He also supervised the intellectual project of standardization of the language in the Bible. All this without being himself able to write.[198] In ancient China, Confucius may have refrained from writing down his own teachings to be coherent with his idea that people must think for themselves,[199] or he may have been unable to, since it was not expected that the élite would undertake the labor itself.[200] The establishment of a scribal profession testifies to this extent.

This clarification is necessary because of the material at hand. According to the definition of "performance supports" given at the beginning of this chapter, the process of production and consumption of these manuscripts may have involved groups of actors with different skills. Not all scribes however were aspiring ministers, and not all aspiring

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present in Warring States manuscripts, so far none of them presents such a high frequency of errors to suggest that the scribe is illiterate. Of course, it remains possible (especially in the case of manuscripts produced via visual copying mentioned above) that scribes did not always grasp the meaning or the implications of what they were writing.

[196] Serge, "La natura del testo," 140.

[197] According to the *Shiji* (14.510), King Wei of Chu (d. 329 BCE) could not read the *Springs and Autumns*, and his tutor thus compiled a short piece as substitute, known as the *Duoshi wei* 鐸氏微 (now lost). See also Xiaofei Tian. "Literary Learning: Encyclopedias and Epitomes."

[198] Barbero, *Carlo Magno*, 150-173. The life of Charlemagne has been narrated by historian Einhard (770-840), *Vita Karoli Magni*. On the literacy of royals in the second half of the first millennium and notable exceptions, see also Galabraith, "The Literacy of the Medieval English Kings."

[199] Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy*, 33.

[200] His inability to write could still be consistent with the desire of not having his words written down by others, for the reason articulated by Goldin just cited.

ministers necessarily had the ability to write. (Although I suspect writing and reading was part of the education of the noble class with whom aspiring ministers had to compete.) This specification defines the complex Warring States social scene with enough flexibility to accommodate future evidence on the subject.

今人用之少驗者，由於出來歷久，傳寫之多誤故也。又信心不
篤，施用之亦不行。又譬之於書字，則符誤者，不但無益，將
能有害也。書字人知之，猶尚寫之多誤。故諺曰，書三寫，魚
成魯，虛成虎，此之謂也。七與士，但以倨勾長短之間為異
耳。然今符上字不可讀，誤不可覺，故莫知其不定也。[201]

Today, people use [book of talismans] and rarely verify [their accuracy]. They come from a long history, in being transmitted in writing several mistakes [occur]. Furthermore, trusting the mind is not a serious [method], relying on using [the books] is also not appropriate. Furthermore, to exemplify this from the writing of words, if there is a mistake in the charms, not only the charms have no benefit, they can also bring harm. People know the written words, yet in writing them there are still many mistakes. Therefore a proverb says: "when a book is written three times, "fish" becomes "Lu" and "empty" becomes "tiger." This is what [I am referring to.] [The writing for] "seven" [is confused] with [that of] "soldier," but "to rely on" and "hook," "long" and "short" are different. Therefore today in the charms there are words that cannot be read, mistakes that cannot be assessed, thus nobody knows, their [meaning] is not established.

These passages from the *The master who embraces simplicity*, *Baopuzi* 包朴子 reveals a preoccupation with a phenomenon that concerns anyone involved with texts: the introductions of variants and errors when a text is reproduced. The very proverb here quoted is reproduced elsewhere already with a mistake: "'empty' becomes 'tiger', 虛成虎" is written as "'*di*' becomes 'tiger', 帝成虛" elsewhere in the same text.[202]

Textual variants (in which I include rearrangement, addition or deletion of material, changes in the lexicon, insertion of punctuation, errors, etc.) may or not be intentional.

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[201] *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋, 19.307.
[202] *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 19.342 no. 59. Another variant occurs in the sentence "但以倨勾長短之間為異耳," *loc. cit.*

Because very little is known about the degree of control in the reproduction of texts in early China, identifying what caused variants in ancient documents is contentious. In some ways, the field advances by relying on a variety of methods that are not fully explicated. While the publication of manuscripts has been making the field of early China thrive, scholars have to digest this very diverse corpus written in a language(s) for which the rules are only partially clear.

The matter is further complicated by the content of manuscripts. With texts such as mathematical sources and calendars, errors in calculations or the sequencing of days can be assessed more straightforwardly.[203] Calendar days occur in fixed sequences, and mathematical formulae are expected to determine a set result. But in the case of manuscripts of philosophical content.[204] Consider the following examples. At the very opening, *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* present a variant between *xing* 性 and *sheng* 生:

> *Natural Dispositions*: 凡人雖有性，心無正志。
> Although humans have natural dispositions, their heart lacks rectified intentions.
> *Discussions*: 凡人雖有生，心無正志。
> Although humans have life, their heart lacks rectified intentions.

How to evaluate this alternation? 生 is one of the components of the graph *xing* 性. It may thus represent the word "natural dispositions." A reader familiar either with the text,

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[203] Morgan, "What Good is a Text?"; Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 374-375 also confidently identifies a scribal error on the basis of numeric patterns that repeat themselves in the *Taichan shu* 胎產書, a silk manuscript concerning childbirth.
[204] Andreini, "Errore o Variante" examines variants in the *Laozi* manuscripts, without committing to a resolution.

or with this statement on human nature, could unproblematically assign the same meaning to either opening. At the same time, except for this instance, all other occurrences of "natural dispositions" in the *Discussions* are written with 眚. The graphs 眚 and 生 commonly encountered in Chu manuscripts, they are structurally simple, and graphically distinct, which reduces the chances for visual confusion. Thus, one may argue that *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are in fact writing two different words, and that this must be reflected both in the interpretative translation and in their translations.

Let us look at a second example. Strip 2 of *Natural Dispositions* reads:

喜怒哀之氣，性也。

The *qi* of pleasure, anger, sadness, , is part of natural dispositions.

The graph (*Discussions*:) has been consistently interpreted as *bei* 悲, "sorrow." 悲 is indeed what the graph is depicting, yet there is ground to propose a different reading, namely the possibility that the word being written is *le* 樂, "happiness." This follows two considerations: one, the writing of resembles in structure that of *le*, in having to components arranged from top to bottom, and whose upper halves are graphically similar (compare *Natural Dispositions* strip 27,). Second, and more importantly, there is no attested usage of the expression "pleasure, anger, sadness, and sorrow, 喜怒哀悲," whereas the sequence "pleasure, anger, sadness, and happiness, 喜怒

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哀樂" is widely attested in the literature from early China.[205] Thus, I normalize the text to

xi nu ai le 喜怒哀樂, and consider a scribal error, rather than lexical innovation.

Either position on leads to more questions. If it is indeed a scribal error, does its occurrence in both **Natural Dispositions* and **Discussions* indicate a process of visual copying, where at least one of the scribes is reproducing content (and hence the error) mechanically?[206] We have seen before however that visual copying cannot be straightforwardly taken to be behind the production of these two manuscripts. Arguing for the presence of a lexical innovation in comparison with all the other occurrences of the string *xi nu ai le* 喜怒哀樂 also creates a direct link between **Natural Dispositions* and **Discussions*, and further raises the question of scribal authority,[207] and the status of the text: was it part of any canon? Could it be freely amended?

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[205] See appendix A. Here it can be tempting to apply the *difficilior lectio potior* and argue that the less frequent reading should be chosen. But there are several points to be noted accordingly. First, that the *difficilior lectio* privileges the most difficult reading (not the least frequent) over the easier one, according to the principle that in reproducing a text, a scribe is more likely to "translate" a difficult sentence into something more easily graspable that follows his or her understanding. Here, the alternatives "pleasure, anger, sadness, and sorrow" and "pleasure, anger, sadness, and happiness" are equally easy. Secondly, the *difficilior lectio* principle often implies a willful alteration of the text; and in some cases, this may be demonstrated to be the case. It is not the case for the example provided here. Thirdly, there is no universal method that can be applied transversally to resolve textual variants; and there likely never will be. There are case-by-case scenarios, in each different principles carry different weight. (Which is partly what makes the study of manuscripts more time consuming than other activities.) It perhaps also ought to be reminded that the *difficilior lectio* arose in Erasmus's studies to retrieve the "original" divine meaning of the New Testament, which he only could save from the laziness and stupidity of scribes throughout the centuries. See Bentley "Erasmus, Jean Le Clerc, and the Principle of the Harder Reading." Contemporary scholars' intentions in working with are almost always very different, and their conclusions are open to require adjustment in light of future evidence.

[206] A point raised by Richter, "Faithful transmission of Creative Change," 904-905.

[207] Marc Kalinowski's analysis of *rishu* 日書, "day books" that annotate astro-calendrical and religious matters, from the Shuihudi corpus assign a high degree of intentionality in altering a text, see Kalinowski, "Les Livres Des Jours (Rishu) Des Qin et Des Han," 23-24.

In the examples presented above, neither reading is incorrect. Each choice leads to slightly different interpretations. At the current state of knowledge, either position is subject to future revision. I chose these examples also for their simplicity: in both cases, the graphs are clearly visible and are widely attested in manuscript culture; the Old Chinese reconstructions of the words involved are fairly undemanding; and both examples lead to broader questions of textual production and transmission. Yet these two examples are also an exception to the situation palaeographers face: the majority of problems deal with graphs unattested outside one or two manuscripts, involving passages for which there are no close parallels, which complicates significantly their interpretations.

These difficulties notwithstanding, or rather precisely because of them, there are guidelines that can be employed when facing textual phenomena of the kind just illustrated.[208] This kind of analysis, known as textual criticism, has a long history in any culture that relies on textual transmission. Several studies have made a name for themselves within the European tradition, such as Paul Maas's *Textual Criticism*. In Anglophone scholarship, fewer studies have been devoted to formulating principles and criteria tailored to the functioning of the Chinese script, with the exception of Qiu Xigui's *Chinese Writing,* which remains the standard reference.

Mass's *Textual Criticism* has become less and less relevant (including for cross-disciplinary studies) because the goal of the inquiry has changed overtime. His aim was to craft a way to "reproduce a text as close as possible to the original (*constitutio textus*)"

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[208] See also appendix A.

by comparing later versions.[209] More recent studies in the field of textual criticism push back against the idea of an "original" version of a text, and introduce methods to work with manuscripts allowing for uncertainties and ambiguities.[210]

The following criteria for the study of early Chinese manuscripts are presented here according to the same logic. None of them lead to reconstructing an original text, especially in those cases where the content itself is not fully understood. But this ought not to stop us from issuing critical editions of manuscripts, as subject to future amendments as they are, nor from using words such as "errors" if our expertise and research leads us to such conclusions.

When working with manuscripts and textual variants more broadly, we ought to consider:[211]

1) The nature of the variant - graphic and/or lexical. This is a simple matter of establishing whether the "new element" is the same word written with a different graph, or a new word altogether. Graphic differences are quickly noted, but in order to determine that the variant is graphic, it is also necessary to determine that the two elements are writing the same word. Consider the following example that Shaughnessy discusses in his

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[209] Mass, *Textual Criticism*, 1.

[210] West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique: Applicable to Greek and Latin Texts*, 47-59; Worthington, *Principles of Akkadian Textual Criticism. Principles of Akkadian Textual Criticism*, 41-163.

[211] For none of the manuscripts discussed in this dissertation it is possible to identify an author, hence the criterion of authorship is not included.

study of textual variants between the Tsinghua manuscript *Instructions on commands*, *Ming xun* 命訓, and the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書:[212]

> *Instructions*: 正之以政
>
> *Yi zhou shu*: 震之以政

The variant 正 vs. 震 gives rise to two possibilities: 1) 正 and 震 write the same word, and thus we are looking at a graphic variant; 2) they write different words, and thus we are looking at a lexical variant. The following criteria contribute to establishing this simple but crucial distinction.[213]

2) The identification of parallel sentences from coeval sources which aid the identification of a word and its variant. Additionally, one may consider the frequency with which the variant occurs.

For example, when the Guodian manuscript *Frustration or Achievement* was first published, the opening sentence contained the graph , previously unattested. Qiu Xigui identified it as writing the word "to examine," *cha* 察, on the basis of graphic similarities with a passage in the *Wuxing* 五行.[214] The passage thus reads: "Examine the division between heaven and mankind, and you will know how to act, 察天人之分，而知所行矣."[215] A passage in the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 matches the sentence *verbatim*: "Examining the separation between heaven and mankind and observing the differences

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[212] Shaughnessy, Edward L. "Varieties Of Textual Variants: Evidence From The Tsinghua Bamboo-Strip *Ming Xun* Manuscript," 121-122.

[213] Shaughnessy presents this as a phonetic loan, in spite of noticing himself that the phonological values for the words "correct; to govern" (正) and "to shake" (震) in Old Chinese "are quite distant" (footnote 14).

[214] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 154.

[215] Compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 453.

between the way and the mandate [make] possible to understand the theories of rites, 察天人之分，觀道命之異，可以知禮之說矣."[216] In this example, two parallels from texts of different dates support the initial identification proposed by Qiu Xigui.

3) Evidence from texts and philological studies dating later than the Han dynasty, to corroborate existing data from earlier sources.

Let us continue to investigate the example from *Frustration or Achievement* just quoted.

As we have seen, the graph can be reliably identified as writing the word "to examine." While the identification is solid, it does not clarify why the word "to examine" is being written with the graphic structure as it appears in this Guodian manuscript. While the left-hand component is easily identified as *yan* 言, the right-hand component has challenged scholars for a decade. In 2012, in a study of Tsinghua manuscripts, Li Ling 李零 concluded that the right-hand component is a graphic variation of the word *xie* 契／卨.[217] The phonetic series (*xiesheng* 諧聲) of words spelled with 契 include the following:

xiesheng series of words spelled with 契	Middle Chinese pronunciation	Middle Chinese initial
"Ancestor Xie" 契	*sjet*	*s-*
"wedge" 楔	*set*	
"measure" 揳	*set*	
"to cut" 栔	*kʰejH*	*k-*
"tally" 契	*kʰejH*	

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[216] *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 17.445.

[217] Li Ling 李零, "Du Qinghua jian biji: Xie yu Qie 讀清華簡筆記：卨與竊."

According to the evidence from bamboo manuscripts, we now know that 契 was also spelling the words:

"to examine," *cha* 察, Middle Chinese *tsrheat*

"to steal," *qie* 竊, Middle Chinese *tshet*

"wild grass," *cai* 蔡, Middle Chinese *tshajH*

Thus, one speller, i.e. *xie* 契, gave rise to three Middle Chinese initials, *s-, k-, ts-*, forming a group of initials of very different phonetic values, and that we would not expect to be clustered together. This requires an explanation. The evidence points to a reconstruction of *xie* 契 in Old Chinese as *s.k(j)et, where the initial cluster *s.k- gave rise, through various processes, to this group of MC initials. Besides having explained the graphic structure of , we can also improve the Old Chinese reconstruction for "to examine," which then results in

察 "to examine" *cha* < *tsrheat* < *tsʰret < *stʰret < *s.kʰˤret

Warring States manuscripts already encode strong evidence to support this reconstruction. Further confirmation for the presence of a *k- in the Old Chinese pronunciation of "to examine" comes from a 19th century commentary to the *Da dai liji* 大戴禮記 by Yu Yue 瘉樾 (1821-1907), well illustrating our third criterion: how evidence from sources later than the Han dynasty can determine help resolving problems that we encounter in the

study of bamboo manuscripts. The "Shao xian 少閒" chapter of the *Da dai liji* has the following puzzling passage:

> 禹崩，十有七世，乃有末孫桀即位。桀不率先王之明德，乃荒耽于酒，淫泆于樂，德昏政亂，作宮室高臺汙池，土察，以民為虐，粒食之民忽然幾亡。[218]
> "When Yu died, after seventeen generations with still no heir, Jie ascended the throne. Jie did not obey the bright virtue of the former kings, he was neglectful and indulged in wine, he was excessively licentious in music, therefore virtue benighted and government was in chaos, he built palaces, terraces and lakes, soil and examination (?), [he] treated people as cruelty (?), the rice-eating people were befuddled and almost perished."

As it stands, the meaning of *tu cha*, as well as of the following "[he] treated the people as cruelty," is hard to reconcile. Yu Yue argues that the line "土察，以民為虐" had been corrupted in the transmission process, and the sentence should be emended as "*yi min wei tu jie* 以民為土芥."[219] This is a metaphor known in the literature,[220] used here to say that King Jie of Xia (traditionally 1728-1675 BCE) treated the people "as soil and weeds," i.e. poorly. Yu Yue's comment attests the existence of a relationship between *cha* 察 and *jie* 芥, whose Old Chinese reconstruction is *jie* < *keajH* < *kˤret-s. This confirms the presence of the initial *k- for the word "to examine," as reconstructed above. In this example, the initial lead in the philological analysis of the word "to examine" is given by Warring States manuscripts and Old Chinese reconstructions. Evidence from a later commentator validates it.

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[218] *Da Dai Liji huijiao jizhu* 大戴禮記彙校集註 76.1235-1239.
[219] *Da Dai Liji huijiao jizhu* 76.1237.
[220] *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 57.4680.

4) Syntactical behavior of the words being analyzed.

For example, of the 181 times the particle *yi* 矣 appears in the *Analects*, it is used as final particle 179 times (either alone of in combination with other final particles). In one sentence only, repeated twice,[221] it is placed between *xian* 鮮, "rare," and *ren* 仁, "benevolence." Here the suspicion of corrupt sentence may emerge because of the unusual behavior of *yi* within the *Analects*, the lack of any other example of this sentence in the pre-Qin corpus of transmitted texts, and the annotation of a version of this sentence as "*xian yi, you ren* 鮮矣，有仁" ("how rare!, to have benevolence").[222]

5) Phonological values of the words being analyzed.

The title of *Mao* 25 of the received *Odes*, *Zouyu* 騶虞, is one of those terms specific to the *Odes* tradition only,[223] and on whose understanding there are few and dissenting voices.[224] With the recovery of the Anda *Odes*, a new spelling is now attested for this word: 從 for *zou,* and 虎 for *yu*. A different spelling naturally leads to assumptions about different meanings,[225] but since the problem at hand is precisely a *spelling*, we must also complete the argument with phonological evidence. When we compare the two spellings with their respective Old Chinese pronunciations, we see that the different spelling was

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[221] *Lunyu* 1.3; *Lunyu* 17.17.
[222] *Lunyu zhushu* 1.4, footnote no. 6.
[223] See discussion in Mittag, "Odes Scholarship in Its Formative Stage."
[224] *Shi San Jia Yiji Shu* 詩三家義集疏 2.118-120.
[225] Shaughnessy, "A First Look."

induced by a case of resyllabification,[226] where the boundary between two syllables shifted:

cong hu < *TSONG *ɢˤa 從虎

zou yu < *tsˤro-ŋʷa 騶虞

Not only does phonology free us from the difficult position of having to devise a new (and still uncorroborated) meaning for 從虎, it also allows us to state that both 從虎 and 騶虞 are writing the same word.[227]

The last two criteria are the less straightforward in their application, since many aspects remain to be discovered about Old Chinese language. Yet lacunae in current understanding of this ancient language are not reason enough to dismiss explanations based on Old Chinese language, even if partial. One may think of reconstructions of Old Chinese language as the frame of a building, in need of continuous renovations on the basis of new, or newly discovered, textual evidence. Indeed, revising previous conclusions on the basis of new evidence is a sign of progress of knowledge, not of the invalidity of systems in their entirety.

Ideally, an investigation into textual variants should address all the criteria listed above. On what grounds can then variants be defined as a "scribal error"? There are no

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[226] Smith and Poli, "Establishing the Text of the *Odes*."

[227] The phenomenon is attested in manuscript cultures. In a later fifteen-century English manuscript, the scribe erroneously writes "The Syphome" instead of "Thesiphone" (i.e. Tisiphone, the Fury from Virgil's *Aeneid*). See Oxford, BodL MS Rawlinson Poet. 163 f. 1r. See the edited edition of Chaucer's of "Troilus & Criseyde" by Windeatt, pages 69-73; 84-85. I thank Harry Carter for sharing with me this.

fast and hard rules nor shortcuts to assess the matter. Identifying a variant as error always depends on case-by-case factors.

Highlighting these details reveals what processes might have been behind the production of these manuscripts. For example, if a text presents a significant number of copying errors, one may conclude that the scribe's ability to write was still at early stages of development. Differently, when we encounter cases of resyllabification as in the "*zou yu* error," we may conclude that the scribe was writing with partial understanding of this word[228] or of the ode altogether.

Furthermore, the presence of scribal errors has been correlated with questions concerning the quality of the manuscript at hand, and the level of competence of the scribe,[229] yet it is important not to create the axiom that all scribal errors determine textual quality and/or scribal incompetence. Let us consider the Guodian **Thicket of Sayings* mentioned above. The manuscripts are virtually error-free, the writing betrays steady control. Thus, the quality of the production may as well be very high, but we are also not looking at a text: these are short, simple sentences that result from exercises to internalize grammatical structures (more in chapter two). Errors are more likely to appear in the reproduction of lengthy texts, perhaps even composed under pressure of time, as a matter of probability. As with genetic reproductions, it is more likely that a scribe incorrectly

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[228] What *zou yu* means or is has remained a mystery, thus suggesting that by 300 BCE this may already have been an archaic word no longer in use, preserved only in ancient songs and sayings.

[229] Kern, "Methodological Reflections," 169-170. Kern, *Ritual and Text in Early China*, 178-179. On the opposite side of the argument, Boltz ("Textual Criticism," 400) argues that errors within Chinese texts were hardly identified as errors, due to the logographic nature of Chinese writings. Thus, "variants were treated as honest lexical alternatives," and, consequently, the perceptions that transmitted texts included errors did not arise. This is largely an unsupported claim, which disregards the countless examples of Han scholars correcting errors in their commentaries.

recalls or misreads a word when he is bound to reproduce 3,590 graphs (the total of the Andhui University *Odes*) than the simpler 500 of **Thicket of Sayings (group two)*.

When talking about the quality of a manuscript, then, we cannot impose a standard according to which high-quality implies no mistakes. The *Wu xing zhan* 五星占, a silk manuscript part of the Mawangdui collection that describes planetary omens, well exemplifies this. The choice of support (silk) indicates a "luxury text," yet the manuscript contains copy errors of the same kind that appear on bamboo manuscripts.[230]

Secondly, anyone with high levels of mastery of both writing and cultural knowledge will still make mistakes, particularly under stress-inducing conditions, such as having to replicate a text in a given timeframe.

Third, errors may be unintentional,[231] at times due to misidentification of syllable boundaries, especially of sentences and expressions that become frozen overtime and are replicated automatically.[232] In this context, the scribe bears close to no responsibility, in that he is reproducing expressions that are fully intelligible, albeit slightly mistaken. Finally, other factors to consider include the chain of production of manuscripts, and the level of competence of all the people involved. Ondřej Škrabal demonstrated how this impacted the production of inscriptions on bronzes, leading to errors in the final product.[233]

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[230] Morgan, "What Good is a Text?"
[231] An example of this kind in the Guodian *Laozi* is discussed in Cook, ""Reviewed Work(s): The Guodian Laozi: Proceedings of the International Conference," 58-62.
[232] Williams, "Scribal Variations."
[233] Škrabal, "Writing Before Inscribing."

Thus, scribal errors are a natural component of manuscript production.[234] They are nothing more than mistakes that result from the act of writing, and must be identified through rigorous, logical analyses. Studies that refer to the notion of errors to explain textual phenomena are by no means implying that scribes were careless, unless explicitly stated and proved. The "trope of the careless scribe," i.e. the idea that scribes did not reproduce a text as meticulously as they should out of carelessness or incompetence, emerges from authors wanting to assert their authority over their own productions, as well as put distance from what they considered a corrupted version of their works.[235] This exact trope, widely attested in late European manuscript culture but not entirely alien to the Chinese tradition,[236] does not concern studies of ancient Chinese manuscript since we lack authors (besides those assigned by posteriority) that impose authority in determining how a text should and should not look like.[237]

This authority is at times leveraged through the use of transmitted sources: oftentimes when comparing a manuscript version of a text with its received counterpart, some scholars show a predilection for trusting the transmitted version, and consider the manuscript one vaguely mistaken, *wu* 誤, without any explicit blame imposed on scribes.

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[234] A phenomenon scholars from all fields grapple with, see e.g. Tucker, "Scribal Error or Scribal Innovation? A Closer Look at the Law (s) of Seduction and Rape in the Temple Scroll." In 2016, a conference was held on this subject, see https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/cal-details/Conference%20on%20Mistakes%20and%20the%20study%20of%20manuscripts%20-%202016.pdf

[235] See discussion in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English*, 36-38.

[236] For example, Southern Song (1127-1179 CE) literatus Li Jike 李季可 recurs to a similar argument to defend Han Yu's 韓愈 (768-824 CE) literary skills. The latter's poetry had been largely discredited after his death by several scholars who pointed out its immorality. Li Jike argued that such defamation was undeserved: Han Yu's poetry was bad because it had been corrupted in the process of transmission by some scribe; none of its badness should be imputed to Han Yu himself. See Davis, "Lechery, Substance Abuse, and … Han Yu?" 85-86.

[237] On some reflections on the history of corrections, see also Cerquiglini, *In praise of the variant*, 8-9.

But here too, I believe that what should be questioned is not the notion of textual error, but rather the basis on which transmitted sources are deemed more reliable without supporting evidence.

CHAPTER TWO. Ancient Chinese Manuscripts As Performance Supports

The officers had no books or other source material with which to research their subjects. Czapski would later write, "Each of us spoke about what he remembered best." (…) Czapski's talks, and our knowledge of the circumstances under which they were given, have been handed down to us in this form. Further details remain difficult to verify. (…) "I dictated parts of these lectures," [Czapski] wrote. How much more material was there in these original presentations? When were the handwritten transcriptions typed, where, and by whom?
Introduction to *Lost Proust*, Jósef Czapski

Introduction

This chapter evolved from an initial analysis of the Guodian manuscript *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出, *Natural Dispositions comes from Endowment*, and the Shanghai Museum *Xing qing lun* 性情論,[238] *Discussions on Human Nature and Affections* (hereafter as *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* respectively). During initial stages of my dissertation, I set for myself the goal of demonstrating that *Discussions* was a better edition of *Natural Dispositions*, on the basis of a few initial observations. The more I examined them, however, the less credible any explanations on the compositions of these sources were. Not only is *Discussions* not a better edition of *Natural Dispositions*; it cannot even be demonstrated that the two manuscripts are copies of each other. As this chapter will show, it is also improbable that they result from a third now-lost written instantiation of this text. After an exhaustive analysis of these two manuscripts (which resulted in the first section of this chapter, as well as appendix A to this dissertation), I found myself still asking myself the question my advisor Paul R. Goldin opens his classes with: "What are we reading?!"

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[238] For a summary of the materiality of the manuscripts in the Guodian and Shanghai corpora, see Feng Shengjun *Guodian jian yu Shang bo jian dui bi yan jiu* 郭店簡與上博簡對比研究, 1–41.

Seeking an answer to this question led me to formulate the notion of "performance supports" introduced in the previous chapter. Considering *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* as texts that were used to learn definitions and terminology concerning natural dispositions (*xing* 性) not only accounts for the compositional features of these two manuscripts, as this chapter shows. It also gives a plausible account for the variants, as well as how and why philosophical discussions on human nature were shaped and circulated during the Warring States.

In this chapter, I analyze a total of nine manuscripts from three different collections that functioned as performance supports, starting with a comparison between *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* for the reasons stated above. I will show that these manuscripts present incongruences about stories so famous that we have to ask what might have caused them –perhaps a scribe working under pressure of time, during a performance. Among the most notable features of manuscripts analyzed here, in one case a manuscript that is recording a story ends abruptly in the middle of an inscription; another one collects two versions of the same story with the addition or deletion of details, as if resulting from practicing the art of storytelling. Furthermore, three of these manuscripts can be divided into modules, and we will see that altering the sequence of these modules does not affect the content of the texts –another feature that invites an explanation.

Two objections may arise in reading this chapter. One is the variety of features identified in the manuscripts studied here. If, as I argue, they were all used as

performance supports, why is there such variety in textual features? For the simple reason that these writings participated in different kinds of performances, which I will discuss in chapter three. Performative activities such as oratory have been appraised in the scholarship, but it is only with the recovery of manuscripts, and in particular with the identification of performance supports, that we can have a direct window to see how the eloquence displayed in court speeches, debated, remonstrances, letter-writing that abound in received literature was achieved. The complexity that emerges from this approach calls for new ways to devise relationships among manuscripts and transmitted literature, with the necessary flexibility to accommodate forthcoming evidence on the subject.

The second objection is that case-by-case explanations may account for the textual features highlighted below, which makes the notion of performance supports redundant. As I articulate in chapter three, however, the strength of my thesis comes from bridging features from individual manuscripts with what we know about the intellectual environment of Warring States China and its practices of knowledge management (organizing material into collections, memorization, lists, etc.). In other words, my argument rests on the coupling of points of detail within a single manuscript, their replication across corpora, and cultural expectations of the time.

The relationship between Xing zi ming chu 性自命出 *and* Xing qing lun 性情論

Human Nature and *Discussions* can be described as two versions of the same composition. The relationship between them however remains unclear. As I mentioned, it is not possible to ascertain whether one is the copy of the other or even a *better* edition of the other, or whether they are independent productions. The content covers several topics, primarily that of *xing* 性, "natural dispositions" (or, more loosely, "human nature"). For context, in early China *xing* defines a set of inborn characteristics shared by all individuals within the same species.[239] The manuscripts also include reflections on how *xing* relates to affections, *qing* 情;[240] how music (*yue* 樂), how teaching influences both *xing* and *qing*, and so on.

Since their discovery, a huge number of publications have been devoted to the material aspect and paleographic features of these two manuscripts;[241] others have discussed their philosophical content, and their place in the intellectual arena of the time.[242] The Guodian corpus in particular has been described as a coherent corpus that reflects the intent "to establish stable philosophical concepts."[243] Holloway went as far as to identify a "Guodian religion."[244] The discussion in this chapter pushes back on these

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[239] We will discuss this in chapter four.

[240] The term *qing* is a rather difficult one to translate. Briefly, in early Chinese philosophy, *qing* indicates essential qualities. Since it is not the center of my study, I will refer to it as 'feelings' or I will leave it untranslated, '*qing*'. On *qing*, see, among many others, P. Santangelo, ed. *Love, Hatred, and Other Passions. Questions and Themes on Emotions in Chinese Civilization*, and Curie Virág. *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy*; Marks *et al*. eds. *Emotions in Asian Thought*; Middendorf, "Again on 'Qing'."

[241] See bibliography of the philological analysis of these texts, appendix A.

[242] See review in Allan and Williams *The Guodian Laozi*, esp. 243–257. Most recent examples include Ding Sixin *Guodian Chu mu zhu jian si xiang yan jiu* 郭店楚墓竹簡思想研究; Ikeda Tomohisa *Kakuten Sokan Jukyō Kenkyū* 郭店楚簡儒教研究; Shaughnessy "The Guodian Manuscripts and Their Place;" Andreini *Transmetto, non creo*.

[243] Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 4.

[244] Holloway *Guodian: The Newly Discovered Seeds Of Chinese Religious And Political Philosophy*.

claims, prioritizing more an evidence-based understanding of the central mission of Warring States philosophical manuscripts.

For a source that has been considered central in intellectual debates of early China,[245] it is worth noticing that there is no counterpart to the *Natural Dispositions in transmitted literature, neither of the text as a whole nor even of sections of it. Thus, the *Natural Dispositions differs from other Guodian texts such as the Laozi[246] and the *Black Robes,[247] which were previously known in the body of transmitted literature. It also differs from a text such as the Guodian *Frustration or Achievement, which is unique in its entirety, but whose sections can be found almost verbatim scattered across a variety of transmitted sources.[248]

While in the last decade *Natural Dispositions and *Discussions have almost become synonym of each other, the Shanghai Museum manuscript became publicly available seven years after the recovery of the Guodian *Natural Dispositions. The discovery of *Discussions re-opened a discussion about internal division of the text, which I summarize briefly since it is relevant for my conclusions below.[249]

*Natural Dispositions was initially divided into three sections. Section one runs from strip 1 to 35, based on the fact that strip 35 has a hook-shaped marker followed by a blank space for the remainder of the strip. Section two runs from strip 36 to 49; section three includes the remaining strips, from 50 to 67. The division has been corroborated by

[245] D. Meyer, "Bamboo And The Production Of Philosophy;" Andreini, Transmetto, non creo, 49.
[246] Allan and Williams. The Guodian Laozi.
[247] Shaughnessy Rewriting Early Chinese Texts.
[248] Smith, "What Difficulties Could There Be?"
[249] See for an extensive coverage Cook The Bamboo Texts of Guodian, 686–695.

Liao Mingchun, who noted a dot at the end of *Natural Dispositions* strip 49[250] that could be representing a section marker. Although this was met by other scholars with some misgiving because of the unclear the shape of the punctuation mark is,[251] Liao Mingchun's argument is supported by the fact that the dot to be a repetition mark (*chongwen hao* 重文號),[252] and that the *Natural Dispositions* has very few punctuation marks,[253] making this dot relevant. Arguments have been proffered to reverse the order of these sequences. As I will show, the sequence of sections does not impinge on my argument or the readability of the text. Therefore, in what follows I retain the initial strip arrangement proposed for the *Natural Dispositions*.

While the two manuscripts have been presented as two copies of the same text,[254] my study argues that this is likely not the case. I present two kinds of comparisons: one on a 'macro level', where I look at the texts as whole and follow the overlap between the two of them. In the second one, I move to a 'micro level' analysis: for each text, I identify units that are distinguished by a set of specific features. Which is to say, a module. Each module is characterized by recurring stable components, and is capable of working

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[250] Liao Mingchun "Guodian jian 'Xing zi ming chu' de bianlian yu fenhe wenti" 21.

[251] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 691. Several other divergences have divided scholars. See Ji Xuzheng and Chen Lingqing, ""Xing qing lun" yi shi「性情論」譯釋," 152. Li Tianhong (*Guodian zhujian "Xing zi ming chu" yanjiu* 郭店竹簡《性自命出》研究, 11-12) separates the manuscripts in two parts due to stylistic reasons. The first part, from strip 1 to 35, has according to him a cruder style than the second one, and has fewer words per strip. He hence conjectures that the two sections are written by two persons, or that the same person is intentionally changing style. Some of the most common words (e.g., *ye* 也) seem to me fairly stable, but this could be due to the high frequency of them (which means scribes are highly familiar with them). See Cook *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 48–53 for a review of calligraphic division and identification of scribal hands for the Guodian corpus. Cook *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 668 also provides a division based on content: strips 1 to 23 concern *xing*, *xin* 心, *qing* and education; strips 23 to 35 concern music as educational means; strips 36 to 67 concern authenticity and true affections.

[252] See Richter, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-chinese-language-and-linguistics/punctuation-premodern-COM_00000346.

[253] Whereas *Discussions* has many more punctuation marks.

[254] Guo Yi 郭沂. "'Xing Zi Ming Chu' Jiaoshi《性自命出》校釋; Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 140.

independently from the context in which it is found. Both analyses have been intentionally performed without a close reading of the content: I am here looking at the 'mechanical' structure of these manuscripts.

In order to visualize the 'macro level' comparison,[255] I developed a visual display of the structures of these manuscripts, presented below. The images highlight the overlap between *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions,* taking the structure of *Natural Dispositions* as the basis.[256] *Natural Dispositions* lies in the background, while the colored sections indicate the *Discussions* strips, with red numbers marking the end of each strip. As it can be seen at first glance, section one has a fairly stable overlap: strips 1–20 of *Discussions* run almost parallel to *Natural Dispositions* in ordered sequence, with a couple of exceptions: the content of *Natural Dispositions* strips 7 and 8 is not present in *Discussions* version[257]). This stable and continuous overlap supports Dirk Meyer's identification of this section as the "core text".[258]

After this, the parallelism between the two texts is less and less stable. *Discussions* strip 21 has a partial overlap with *Natural Dispositions* strip 33, but continues on *Natural Dispositions* strip 50. This might suggest an inversion of *Natural Dispositions*

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[255] The sequence and material features of the two manuscripts (the length of strips, the number of words for each one, hypothetical reconstructions, etc.) has been reviewed most recently by Liang Jing 梁靜, "Shangbo 'Xing qing lun' yanjiu jiyu Guodian ben duibi 上博《性情論》研究及與郭店本的對比". An extremely well designed diagram to visualize the overlap between these two manuscripts has been designed by Takeda Kenji 竹田健二, "Kakuten Sokan 'Sei ji mei shutu' to Shanhai hakubutsukan zō 'Seijō ron' to no kankei 郭店楚簡「性自命出」と傷害博物館藏「性情論」との関係," 3.
[256] See appendix C for the reverse visualization.
[257] Throughout this chapter, we need to bear in mind that the *Discussions* was not recovered through archeological excavation. This invites the possibility that the strips recording this content were lost. Yet this loss of information can be compensated through engagement with what we *do* have, which in the case of the *Discussions* in more than enough material to make a substantial analysis.
[258] Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 27, 136.

sections two and three,[259] resulting in the final order of *Natural Dispositions* as 1–35, 50–67, 35–49. *Discussions* strip 40 represents the end of *Discussions* manuscript (indicated by a black star in the image below), which coincides with the end of *Natural Dispositions* strip 49 and the dot spotted by Liao Mingchun, lending further credence to the inversion of sections two and three. The inversion would make the end of both manuscripts coincide. At the same time, reversing sections two and three of *Natural Dispositions* does not significantly change the content of this text; either case can be supported by equally valid reasons.[260]

Compared with *Natural Dispositions*, sections two and three of *Discussions* display a discontinuous pattern. The content of *Discussions* strip 27 (light green), for example, overlaps with sections from *Natural Dispositions* strips 59, 62, and 65. Furthermore, there are two insertions on *Discussions* strip 27, indicated in the diagram with a blue paragraph-symbol. These modules are not in *Natural Dispositions*. *Discussions* strip 31 presents another discontinuous pattern, moving from strips 36, 37, to 61 and 62.

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[259] E.g., Chen Wei, *Guodian zhushu bieshi* 175–177.
[260] See Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 692–695 on the validity to retain the order of the strips as presented by the first edition of the Guodian texts in 1994.

Figure 2.1 *Natural Dispositions*. Section one, strips 1-35
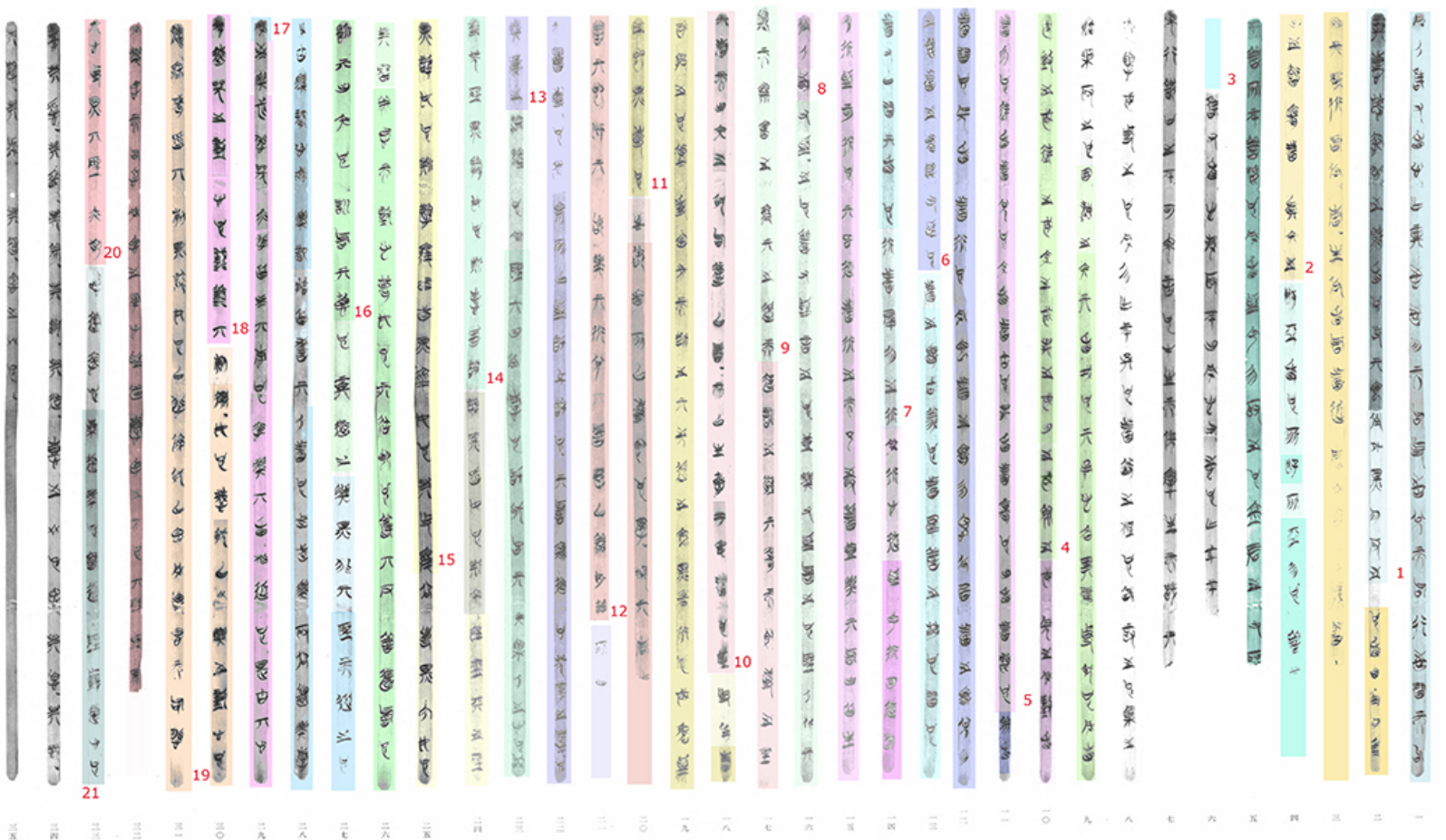
Figure 2.2. *Natural Dispositions* Section 2, strips 36-49
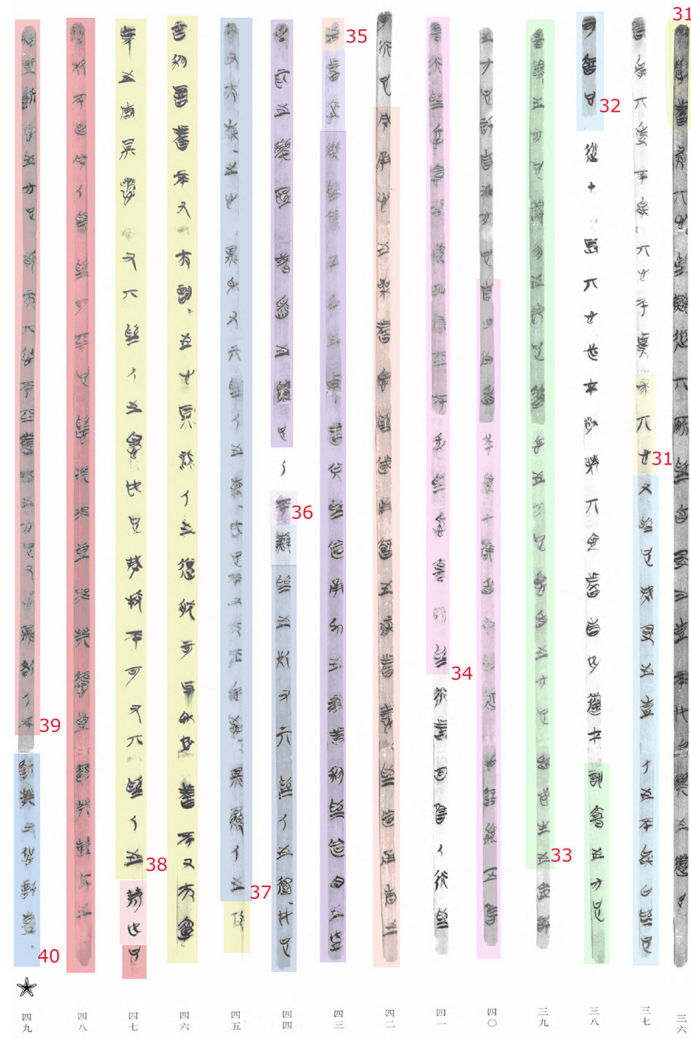
*Figure 2.3 *Natural Dispositions,* Section three, strips 50-67*
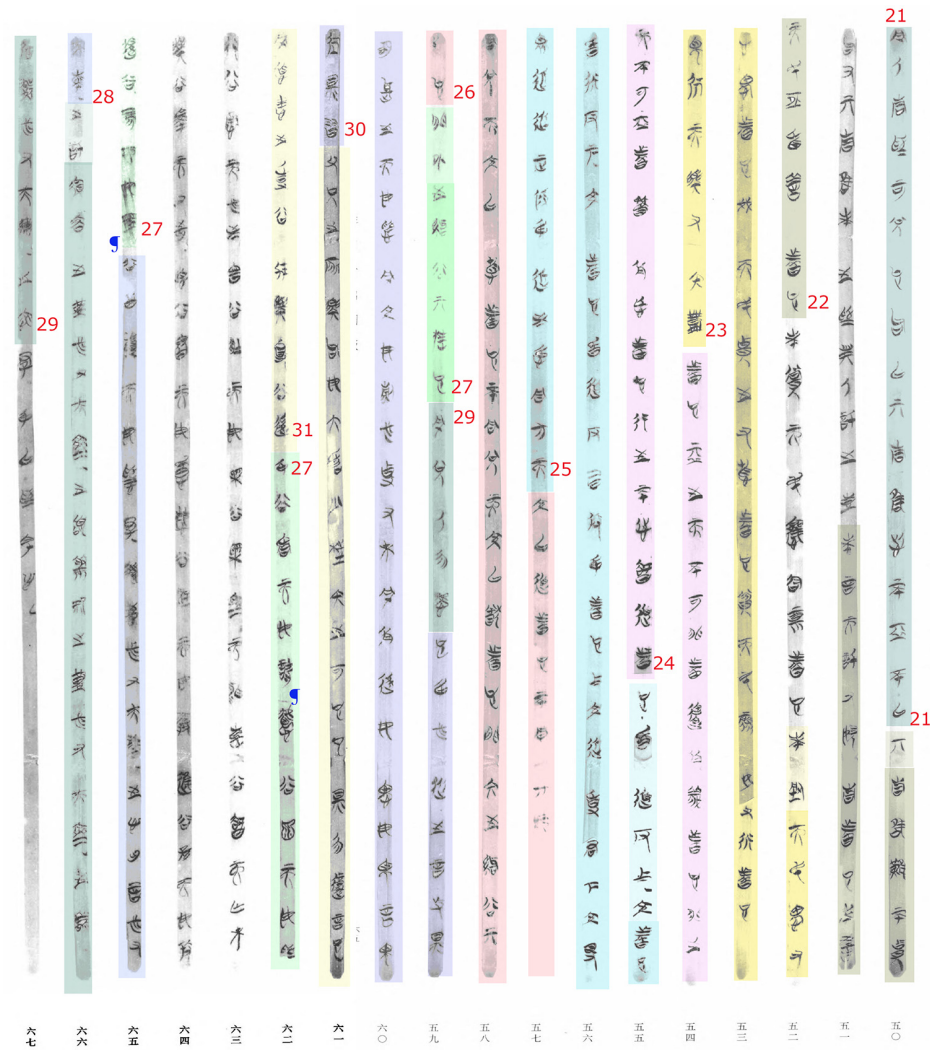
To exclude the possibility that the structures of *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are due to how texts were regularly composed in early China, we need to look at other texts. The *Black Robes* 緇衣 is the ideal starting point: as in the case of *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, there exist two manuscript versions of this text,[261] one from the Guodian corpus and one from the Shanghai Museum one.[262] The composition of the *Black Robes* is stable at both the macro-level[263] and the micro-level. Furthermore, details show that the text was proofread in an effort to stabilize its content. One of these details appears on the verso side of Guodian *Ziyi* strip 40, where a short sentence makes up for an act of forgetfulness by the scribe. Similarly, on Shanghai Museum *Black Robes* strip 13, the word *yi* 以 appears squeezed into the sentence「故慈以愛之」"therefore, if he cherishes [the people] with the love of a parent":[264]

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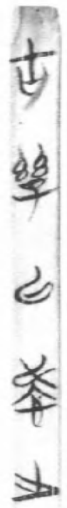
[261] There is also a received version of the *Black Robes*, part of the *Ritual Records, Liji* 禮記.
[262] Cf. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*, 109.
[263] See appendix B.
[264] Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*, 109.

Table 3. Example of proofreading of Black Robe

故慈以愛之	
Guodian *Black Robes*	Shanghai Museum *Black Robes*

The stability in wording and sequence of *Black Robes* makes it clear that the text assumed a fixed form during the Warring States. While the received version of *Black Robes* presents a different structure,[265] here I am interested in synchronic textual reproduction.[266] The comparison between *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* and the two *Black Robes* suggests that 1) the 'jumping patterns' that appear from the comparison above are not a standard mode of composition in Chinese philosophical writings, and 2) during the Warring States, *Black Robes* may already have had a semi-canonical status, unlike *Natural Dispositions*. Thus, there are two stories to be told: how the *Black*

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[265] See Shaughnessy 2006.
[266] Meyer (*Philosophy on Bamboo*, 141) follows a similar logic in his analysis of *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, concluding that these two manuscripts reflect a "stable, but not totally fixed, text." This is the conclusion in spite of noticing that only a fraction of the two manuscripts are close parallels.

Robes assumed the form that we see in its transmitted version, and how to account for the characteristics of *Natural Dispositions*. This dissertation is concerned with the latter.

The comparison between *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* defeats every attempt to frame the text as a compositional narrative. There is no temporal sequence, no logical chain that develops from module to module. It might be possible to consider section one of *Natural Dispositions* as a text by itself, as initially suggested by Li Ling 李零: strip 35 has a 'hook-mark,' namely a mark shaped like a hook with different functions,[267] after which the strip is left blank.[268] But if this were a complete section, why would *Discussions* misses *Natural Dispositions* strips 33 and 34, as the image above shows?[269] This, of course, if we consider that *Discussions* was produced after *Human Nature*.[270] We could reverse the scenario and claim that *Natural Dispositions* was copied from *Discussions*. Once again, difficulties emerge: it requires imagining a scribe copying the text ad stopping halfway *Discussions* strip 21, added two strips of content either from his imagination or by working with multiple texts. Scenarios like this soon become, although not implausible, highly improbable.[271]

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[267] It appears to be used as mark to draw the attention of the reader (Li and Branner, *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, 225), termination of the text (Richter, *The Embodied Text*, 57), or end of paragraphs (Giele, "Using Early Chinese Manuscripts As Historical Source Materials," 427). See overview in Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 62–63.

[268] See Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 62 footnote 48.

[269] This weakens to my mind Dirk Meyer's identification of a 'core text' in both the *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* (what he calls *canto*, see *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 136), although he is correct in stressing the consistency of the first part of both sources.

[270] *Discussions* has several horizontal lines that break the text into smaller units. If *Natural Dispositions* 1–33 was initially standing on its own, we would expect some mark on *Discussions*.

[271] Thus, it seems also unlikely that the text resulted from a collation of two or more independent texts, as Li Ling suggested.

A sensible conclusion is that there is no secure indication that *Natural Dispositions* was the origin of *Discussions*, or vice versa.[272] The evidence also indicates that these two manuscripts cannot be copies of a third written model.[273] Dirk Meyer has proposed that whoever wrote *Natural Dispositions*, did so by combining glancing at a written model with self-dictation,[274] attempting in this way to account for the orthographic variants and lexical differences between these two texts. This scenario however invites other questions: was the written model present in order to preserve some stability? If so, why are there so many discrepancies between the two manuscripts? Are we witnessing an intentional re-articulation of content?

Meyer's solution also leaves other features unexplained, such as the patterns of graphic variants to write the same word. Consider the word "propriety." *Natural Dispositions* strip 13 writes: "Propriety refers to the standards of all [forms] of goodness, 義也者，群善之蕝也".[275] In the parallel sentence on *Discussions* strip 7, the word is written with the character 宜 instead of 義 that we have on *Natural

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[272] See also Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 150. Cf. Andreini, *Transmetto, non creo,* 50.

[273] D. Meyer proposes that the two manuscripts derive from a *Vorlage,* "a written model or source text for a new manifestation of that text" (*Philosophy on Bamboo*, 141 and *ibid.* footnote 39). This does not solve the issue: the author gives no explanation as per why a *Vorlage* would be a suitable origin, nor does he detail the difference with the idea of an *urtext*.

[274] "When producing a new copy of a written manuscript, the scribe worked from the sound he heard, not from the graph he saw. By analogy to early European manuscript production, it can be assumed reasonably safely that a scribe dictated the text to himself even when he had a written *Vorlage* at hand. As a result, when producing a new copy, the scribe would not write the *graph he saw* but would write the *sound he heard*." Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 149–150. another problem with Meyer's analysis is that he focuses mainly on the first half of each text, where the parallel is strongest.

[275] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 708.

Dispositions. Whereas *Discussions* prefers the writing 宜, the scribe of *Natural Dispositions* alternates between the two:

Table 4. Writings for 'propriety'

Strips # *Nat Dispositions /* *Discussions*	As written in *Natural Dispositions*	As written in *Discussions*
3 / 2	義	義
11 / 5	宜	宜*
13 / 7	義	宜
17 / 10	宜	宜*
19 / 11	宜	宜*
22 / 13	宜	宜
53 / 24	義	宜
38 / 33	宜	宜
41 / 34	宜	宜
*transcription has been given as 宜, even though it is difficult to see with clarity what is written on the strip.		

Other examples are: the word *qing* 情, written on *Natural Dispositions* both with and without the 心 radical at the bottom, whereas *Discussions* more consistently present the 心 radical; the word "regulations" (*jie* 節), written on *Natural Dispositions* with 即

, while *Discussions* adds the *zhu* 竹 component .[276]

These stylistic changes are not too surprising. During 300 BCE, writing systems were not standardized, and different orthographies by the same person are commonly seen.[277]

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[276] See appendix B. There are no identifiable patterns, nor changes of hand, that could give some insight on the writing procedure for these two manuscripts.

[277] See also discussion in Smith and Poli, "Establishing the Text of the *Odes*."

But chances are that if these texts were written in one session, or with a written model at hand, there would be a more consistent writing style for the same word, due to both the presence of a model and a tendency to automate one's writings. In chapter one, we saw how meticulous visual copying could be. *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* were clearly not visually copied from each other.[278] And what about punctuation? If we assign to it a prominent role in determining the identity of a text,[279] then it follows that *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are two different texts.

A new way of analyzing bamboo manuscripts is necessary. For *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, we have just seen how the macro level analysis has weakened previous theories. Further evidence can be gathered by analyzing the texts on a micro level, that is, looking at what distinguishes one module from the other. Most modules are characterized by a recurring use of the grammatical structure; 'discursive' defines those cases where there is no recurring structure.

Table 2 shows my analysis. After dividing each text into modules, I looked at how these are distributed in the two texts, and grouped them accordingly. For example, *Natural Dispositions* opens with:

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[278] Of course, there is also the possibility that the manuscript from which the *Natural Dispositions* was copied presented exactly the same version, and the *Natural Dispositions* scribe just replicated it faithfully, while the *Discussions* scribe actively the orthography. I initially suspected that the *Discussions* represented a more polished version of the *Natural Dispositions*, but having become more and more acquainted with Warring States manuscripts, the chances of building this case are very slim.

[279] Richter, *The Embodied Text*, 12.

凡人雖有性，心無正志，<u>待物而後作，待悅而後行，待習而後</u>奠。喜怒哀樂之氣，性也。及其現於外，則物趣之也。性自命出，命自天降。[280]

Although humans have natural dispositions, their heart lacks rectified intentions. [These] dispositions await externalities and then arise; they await gratification and then they are in motion, they depend on habits to be established. The *qi* of happiness, anger, sadness, joy, is part of natural dispositions. When they manifest externally, it is because [external] objects stimulate them. Natural dispositions come from endowment; endowment is sent down from heaven.

Here, I identify two modules: one using the grammatical structure "to await…and then…, 待…而後…" (marked in blue), and a discursive one, were the interaction between externalities and human nature is detailed (marked in magenta). The identification of modules is then paired with the physical constraint presented by manuscripts in the form of bamboo strips: since these two modules are continuous on *Discussions* strip one, they are assigned the same color in the table below. The assumption is that if they are together in both texts, these two modules were expected to occur frequently in the literature of the time. In fact, as my list of contacts in appendix A shows, the structure "to await…and then…" appears in received literature frequently in relation to statements on human nature and its interaction with externalities.

This division in modules, and their regrouping according to both material aspects of the manuscripts and content combine manuscript features and content. Relying only on the transcription of the text, which conceals aspects such as blank sections on the strips,

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[280] *Human Nature* strips 1–2.

can be misleading.[281] I sought a more comprehensive way to determine the beginning and

end of each module, even though this division does not always result in clear-cut breaks.

For example, the module "to hear…then… 聞…如也，則…" results to be divided neatly

in *Natural Dispositions* strips 24–25, whereas in *Discussions*, the last statement of the

sequence ("to hear…then…") is at the beginning of strip 16.

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[281] For example, Chen and Ji ("Xing qing lun" yi shi「性情論」譯釋) treat the first 8 strips of *Natural Dispositions* as a single unit, whereas Cook (*The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 697-696) stops at the first 4 strips of *Natural Dispositions* by taking the particle *fan* 凡 as indicative of a new section; Perkins ("Motivation and the Heart in the Xing Zi Ming Chu") puts a break after two first two; Feng Shengjun, *Guodian jian yu Shang bo jian dui bi yan jiu*; D. Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 154–169.

*Table 5. *Natural Dispositions and *Discussions division*

*Natural Dispositions		*Discussions	
strip #	Sequence	strip #	Sequence
1	雖有/亡 待verb而verb	1	雖有/亡 待verb而verb discursive
2	discursive	2	verb於 能出之vs 能內之 X不X，X也。所X所不X，Y也
3	verb於 能出之vs能內之	3	discursive discursive, 或verb之
4	X不X，X也。所X所不X，Y也	4	
5	discursive	5	X verb 性，Y也
6	discursive	6	repetitive structure
7	discursive	7	X者，explanation; discursive
8	discursive	8	discursive
9	或verb之	9	
10	X verb 性，Y也	10	
11	X verb 性，Y也	11	
12	repetitive structure	12	所以 所以／X，Y之Z也 X，Y之Z也 and discursive 聞X如也則Y
13	X者，explanation	13	
14	discursive	14	
15	discursive	15	聞X如也則Y 聽X如也則Y 觀X如也則Y
16	discursive	16	觀X如也則Y / discursive

#		#	
17	discursive	17	discursive
18	discursive	18	parallel structure but discursive
19	discursive	19	parallel structure but discursive
20	所以	20	凡X + explanation
21	所以	21	X遊Y也
22	所以 / X，Y之Z也	21	parallel structure but discursive
23	X，Y之Z也 and discursive	22	
24	聞X如也則Y 聞X如也則Y 聽X如也則Y	23	
25	觀X如也則Y 觀X如也則Y	24	X之而不可verb，sentence也
26	discursive	25	聞道反noun, sentence discursive
27	discursive	26	X而Y，以sentence也
28	discursive	27	欲verb而negation+verb (with insertions)
29	parallel structure but discursive	28	欲verb而negation+verb
30	parallel structure but discursive	29	sentence 有夫XX之Y
31	凡X + explanation	30	discursive
32	凡X + explanation	31	discursive，
33	X遊Y也	32	欲 sentence
34	X斯Y	33	X之方Y也
35	X斯Y	34	parallel structure but discursive
36	discursive	35	用X之Y，Z為甚也
37	discursive	36	discursive
38	discursive / X之方Y也	37	有X之如不有Y之心則Z 有X之如不有Y之心則
39	X之方Y也	38	sentence, 弗verb不verb

40	parallel structure but discursive		39	noun斯verb sentence, 雖sentence也
41	parallel structure but discursive		40	
42	用X之Y，Z為甚也			
43	discursive			
44	有X之如不有Y之心則Z			
45	有X之如不有Y之心則Z			
46	有X之如不有Y之心則Z			
47	有X之如不有Y之心則Z			
48	noun斯verb			
49	sentence, 雖sentence也			
50	parallel structure but discursive			
51	parallel structure but discursive			
52	parallel structure but discursive			
53	parallel structure but discursive			
54	X之而不可verb，sentence也			
55	聞道反noun, sentence			
56	discursive			
57	discursive			
58	X而Y，以sentence也			
59	discursive one 欲 sentence			
60	discursive			
61	discursive			
62	欲verb而negation +verb			
63	欲verb而negation +verb			
64	欲verb而negation +verb			
65	欲verb而negation +verb			

66	sentence 有夫XX之Y			
67	sentence 有夫XX之Y			

The evidence presented this far can be summarized as follows:

- One a macro level, *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* present a rather stable parallelism for the first 33 and 20 strips respectively. After that, the two texts diverge considerably. This suggests that these two manuscripts were not copied from one another or a third written models.

- On a micro level, the texts can be divided into modules (a total of 26 for *Natural Dispositions* and 25 for *Discussions*).

- There is no indication that either sequence, at either level, results in more cohesive content. In other words, *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* lack any strong underlying architecture. Therefore, sequencing was not important in the building of this text.

Given all the observations presented in this section, these manuscripts are best described as collections of individual modules that are brought together because of their shared themes: human nature; feelings; affections. One may even go as far as calling *Natural Dispositions* an anthology, representing a more articulate text than the fragmentary

Thicket of Sayings. The text has also no narrative nor temporal relationships among parts of the kind we will encounter in manuscripts used to learn compositional skills.

It is also not an argumentative text. This classification may raise an eyebrow, since too often the presence or absence of philosophical arguments has been assessed by projecting notions of argument derived from ancient Greek philosophy. The suggestion however is not that the *Natural Dispositions* lacks *forms* of argument of the kind we find at the origin of the European tradition, but rather that it lacks arguments themselves, i.e., a set of reasons given with the aim of persuading that something is either right or wrong. When Mencius reasons with King Hui of Liang 梁惠王 on why it is perilous to focus on profit instead of morality, he is presenting an argument that aims to do just that: convince the King that his penchant for richness is a distraction.[282] *Natural Dispositions* does not present anything similar. It reads as too repetitive to embody a polished reflection on human nature.

What would make someone write a text like this, and for whose benefit? This question does not try to identify an author.[283] Rather, it seeks to understand to whom, and for what purpose, a text like *Natural Dispositions* may have been relevant. Historical and social environment of a text are fundamental criteria in studying the history of

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[282] *Mengzi* 1A.1.
[283] It remains impossible to ascertain anything about the identity of the author. This saves scholars of *Natural Dispositions* from the temptation to interpret a composition on the basis of its author biography, an approach known as 'intentional fallacy' (Wismatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy"). See most recent discussion in Farrell, *The Varieties of Authorial Intention*.

texts.[284] Like all artifacts, texts are responses to the intellectual environment in which they are produced. Their relevance –and therefore survival, or lack thereof– is subject to society's needs, which change overtime. For example, when the highly formulaic style of the bronze inscriptions ceased to be appealing, and society replaced older rituals with new ceremonial acts, fewer and fewer texts were redacted in that form, and different writing styles emerged.

The environment that best explains *Natural Dispositions*'s characteristics is one that favors intellectual debates performed orally, among thinkers of equal status or between a thinker and a king, with the aid of written media as training sources. Aspiring orators experimented with linguistic structures and ideas, learning lists of examples to use, key-components and concepts. Manuscripts such as *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* participated in this activity as writing aids. They were used to learn definitions, of which they abound; associations of ideas, as discussed in both chapter three and in appendix A to this dissertation; and were read individually or with a master to explore the topic of human nature and elaborate on the subject. The composition of this text would derive from any of the contexts below, or a combination thereof:

- They result from note-taking –that is, summaries of a wider body of knowledge. Orators and thinkers relied on them to learn definitions concerning the topic of

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[284] Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," esp. 48: "The understanding of texts, I have sought to insist, presupposes the grasp both of what they were intended to mean, and how this meaning was intended to be taken."

human nature; the oversights in them were tolerated since they did not affect their utility.

- They combine well-known material, reworked into a new format as a writing exercise. They could be an impromptu composition, crafted in one or multiple sessions.

- They result from a teacher's assignment,[285] e.g., to continue the definitions presented in the first half of the text (the more stable one), or responses to an invitation to improvise a debate on a topic, with students sketching their arguments with few brief, yet related sentences.

Performative activities such as oratory and exercises in composition is the environment in which the features like those of the *Natural Dispositions* become alive, a living practice that relied on, but went beyond, the written medium.

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[285] A good analogy with modern times is given by in-class essays. Each student's composition on the same subject will reflect similar developments, analogous ideas given by a shared culture mixed with individual statements.

Performance Supports among pre-imperial bamboo manuscripts

The Guodian *Yu Cong 語叢

Besides *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, other manuscripts whose structures and textual features are relevant for my argument. I start with the Guodian *Thicket of Sayings, Yu cong* 語叢. As the title suggests, the *Thicket of Sayings* are a collection of short sayings divided in four groups by the editors, named *Yu cong yi* 語叢一, *Yu cong er* 語叢二, *Yu cong san* 語叢三, *Yu cong si* 語叢四. None of these groups reads as a collection of structured texts. Their grouping reflects rather loose criteria, such as the repetition of grammatical structures (in group one and two) or the longest sentences (collected in group four). Of the 166 paragraphs in which all of the *Thicket of Sayings* has been divided,[286] only 0.16% can be identified in a received text.

Thus, like *Natural Dispositions, *Thicket of Sayings* is otherwise unattested, yet at the same time it is everywhere: the grammatical structures practiced through writing are the basis for any form of expression. *Thicket of Sayings* has been identified as students' exercising shortly after the publication of the Guodian corpus.[287] Later, Rens Krijgsman defined the *Thicket of Sayings* (group one to three in particular) as "traveling sayings," namely sentences that travelled across texts because of their short and easy-to-remember

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[286] My calculation does not include broken strips, strips with single-words, e.g., or *Yu cong san* strip 21, "耳" (ear), and sequences of words that defeat any logical meaning, e.g. *Yu cong yi* strip 44: "者也."

[287] Li Xueqin in Allan and Williams, *The Guodian Laozi*, 197. In a conference paper (unpublished), Rudolf Wagner also hypothesized so. See Wagner, "The Guodian Manuscripts and the "Units of Thought" in Early Chinese Philosophy (draft)."

nature.[288] While Krijgsman's study does not explicitly refers to these writings as practices, the way in which Krijgsman reorders strips to create meaningful passages evinces how well *Thicket of Sayings* could be manipulated, be it by Warring States thinkers or modern scholars. A similar degree of manipulation is found in a recent publication by Shirley Chan,[289] which attempts to read this Guodian material as purposeful responses to questions concerning social development. Since my position distances itself from emphasizing the philosophical relevance of *Thicket of Sayings* in the form they are, it is worth reviewing the evidence to assess the matter.

In order to support her argument, Chan patches together sentences from different strips,[290] taking pains to find meaning even in the most list-like passages. This reveals the nature of this material: *Thicket of Sayings* is for the most part composed of strips with one or two sentences each, with no explicit relationship with each other. (The transcription below includes strip numbers in subscript to highlight this feature.) Sometimes, when the sentence is longer than a handful of words, we see that the same grammatical structure is used repeatedly with some stable components, as if to master it:

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[288] Krijgsman, "Traveling Sayings As Carriers Of Philosophical Debate." I agree with his overall understanding of the *Yu cong*; I remain unsure about the extent to which these sayings were "esthetically pleasing expressions of an important philosophical problem." As it has been mentioned before, in order to single out the *Yu cong* as aesthetically pleasant, one would need to define both what is and what is not pleasant in aesthetics terms in the Warring States culture.

[289] Chan, *Dao Companion To The Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*.

[290] E.g. Chan, *Dao Companion To The Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 262. A review of Chan's study is beyond the scope of this chapter. Yet is it noteworthy to mention briefly another weakness in her approach: to consider each of the four sets labelled *Thicket of Sayings* as standing out for a particular theme (261). But the grouping as we have it today is due to editors' choices, who gathered them together according to shared features (Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*: 799, 845, 865l 903), and does not reflect the original format.

- In the *Thicket of Sayings one*, strips one to seventeen repeat the expression「有X 有Y而(verb)」"there is X and there is Y, and (verb)":[291]

  有物有容，有盡有厚，₁₄ 有美有善，₁₅ 有仁有智，有義有禮，₁₆ 有聖有善 (…)₁₇ "There are objects and there is appearance; there is what is limited and there is abundance, there is what is beautiful and what is good. There is humanity and there is knowledge, there is morality and there is rituality, there is what is sage and there is what is good (…)"[292]

- Strip no. 2 of *Thicket of Sayings one* reads "there is heaven and there is mandate; there are objects and there are names, 有天有命，有物有名". (Note that the translation itself reads clumsily.) Shortly after, strip no. 3, we read "there is mandate and there is pattern and there is naming, 有命有文有名".[293] We can see from both these examples the lack of textual structure, besides the formulaic verb-object segment. Not coincidentally, the Guodian *Frustration or Achievement* opens with the statement "there is heaven and there is mankind, and there is a division between these two entities, 有天有人，天人有分。"

- Strip 27 of the *Thicket of Sayings one* reads "Only after knowing others does one know others; only after knowing others does one know rituals; only after knowing rituals does one know how to act, 知己而後知人，知人而後知禮，知禮而後知

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[291] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 193–194.
[292] *Guodian Chu mu zhu jian*, 193.
[293] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 192.

行.”[294] This strip repeats the structure 「知A而後知B」: it is necessary to know A before understanding B.

- Likewise, strips 1 to 37 of *Thicket of Sayings two* 語叢二 recurrently list 「X生於Y，Y生於Z，Y生於A」 "X is born from Y, Y is born from Z, Y is born from A" etc., each sentence being connected to the former by sharing one referent.[295] (The same structure appears also in *Thicket of Sayings one* strips 22 and 23, and an argument can be made that these should be reground with *Thicket of Sayings two*).

- *Thicket of Sayings two*'s strip no. 1 reads: "affections are born from natural dispositions; rituals are born from affections, 情生於性，禮生於情."[296] One of the opening lines of *Natural Dispositions* reads appropriately, "The Way beings from emotions, emotions are born from natural dispositions, 道始於情，情生於性."[297] Similarly, in the Han text *The Steelyard of Discourses*, *Lunheng* 論衡 we read "Natural dispositions are born from *yang*, emotions are born from the *yin*, 性生於陽，情生於陰。"[298]

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[294] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian,* 194. Compare translation by Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 831.
[295] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian,* 204–205.
[296] *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 203. the structure "X is born from Y, X生於Y" goes on for the first nine strips. Each strip has no more than a couple of sentences.
[297] *Human Nature* strip no. 2.
[298] *Lunheng jiaoshi* 13.139.

Examples abound.[299] Some early Chinese writings are known for their structured parallelism, but this parallelism is a stylistic device for lengthy speeches, so craftily incorporated with the argument that sometimes it easily goes unnoticed.[300] In the examples just listed, we are looking at a basic sentence-by-sentence development of highly repetitive nature and with no argument proffered. The intellectual content pales in comparison to other sources of the time, making it implausible to view *Thicket* as "words of wisdom highly valued."[301]

It has been noted that *Thicket* resemble the collection of *Mozi* statements in the *jing* 經 ("canons") sections. The *Mozi jing* sections gather brief statements on the most various topics: definitions of terminology, measurements, parameters to define concepts. This led to the identifying *Thicket* as "sophisticated abstract propositions of considerable logical interest."[302] I believe the opposite is a more convincing explanation that does not require to be sustained by unfalsifiable claims (such as defining a piece of writing "sophisticated" without any comparative measure). It is *Thicket* that cast light on the nature of the Mohist canons. *Mozi*'s canons provide terms and glosses that aim to clarify central philosophical concepts.[303] The canons read like a list of elements, presented in a structured and formulaic format, as already noted by Erik Maeder.[304] Whilst

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[299] See list of parallels in appendix A.

[300] Schaberg, *A Patterned Past,* 23–56.

[301] Chan, *Dao Companion To The Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 261.

[302] Harbsmeier, "A Reading of the Guōdiàn 郭店 Manuscript Yǔcóng 語叢 1 as a Masterpiece of Early Chinese Analytic Philosophy and Conceptual Analysis," 3.

[303] I disagree with Harbsmeier's conclusion that these statements are examples of metaphysical arguments. They do constitute a genre, as he points out (Harbsmeier, "The Philosophy of the Analytic Aperçu," 160–161), but as my conclusions indicate, they are too brief and isolated to be rightfully defined arguments. See also misgivings introduced by Shaughnessy, *Chinese Annals in the Western Observatory*, 358–359.

[304] Maeder, "Some Observations on the Composition of the "Core Chapters" of the Mozi," 35–37.

fundamental to building philosophical arguments, they are not, in themselves, elaborate

philosophical arguments. Consider these two examples, from *Mozi* and *Thicket* (group

three) respectively:

> 知，接也。
>
> 說知。知也者，以其知過物而能貌之。若見。[305]
> Knowing: to connect.
> Explanation to the concept of knowing: by means of one's intelligence, having experienced[306] a thing one is able to describe it.
> It is like seeing.[307]
>
> 友，君臣之道。[308]
> Alliance is the way [in which] lords and ministers [relate].

Both *Thicket* and the *Mozi*'s canons provide examples of statements that define the

scope of words.[309] In *Mozi*, some definitions are followed by short comments or glosses,

possibly revealing that the terms being listed were either a novelty in the philosophical

discourse of the time, or an object of controversy. Either source is a perfect candidate to

be a performance support: material used to learn key definitions, so as to craft arguments.

We see this in *Mozi*, but also in the first part of the "Gaozi A" chapter in *Mengzi*, where

Mengzi turns around Gaozi's definitions of human nature to prove him wrong by playing

with words and definitions.

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[305] *Mozi jiaozhu* 40.496.
[306] I understand *guo* 過 as conveying the idea of going through, having an experience of something (*wu* 物). This gives knowledge.
[307] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi*, 377.
[308] *Yu cong san*, strip 7. *Guodian Chu mu zhujian*, 209.
[309] It is possible that the *Mozi* retrains this kind of working material because of the little popularity it enjoyed during the Han dynasty. It was not purges of repetitions in the same way the *Xunzi* was.

Considering *Thicket* a list of words and grammatical structures used for training purposes has two benefits.[310] First, in the case of fragmentary texts such as *Thicket,* it avoids struggles that one encounters in reading these brief sentences as meaningful production of philosophical positions. Second, it explains the elegant and clear writing style that characterizes, in contrast with texts such as *Natural Dispositions* or *Frustration or Achievement,* whose basic errors[311] are what we would expect from someone who is writing an impromptu composition, taking notes, quickly scribbling down ideas to bear in mind.

The *Thicket* may address "the question of human development and social advancement,"[312] but it does so by showing the vocabulary and the language used for this topic by early Chinese thinkers, with no particular sequencing of material.[313] Although these passages reflect and engage with philosophical ideas of the time, they are hardly comparable to the lengthy, articulated reflections on morality, wisdom, ritual behavior that appear in the Guodian *Wu xing* 五行, or the cosmological order that the *Tai yi sheng shui* 太一生水.

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[310] See introduction in Ledentu and Loriol, eds. *Penser En Listes* discussed in chapter one.

[311] As noted by Qiu Xigui and Li Ling, see summary of their argument in Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 28; Smith, "What Difficulties Could there be?"

[312] Chan, *Dao Companion To The Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 260.

[313] I disagree with Chan's statement that the order is meaningful to their comprehension, Chan, *Dao Companion To The Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 261.

The Guodian *Lu Mu gong wen Zisi* 魯穆公問於子思 *and* *Zhong xin zhi dao* 忠信之道

Another Guodian manuscript relevant to my argument is the *Duke Mu of Lu asked Zisi, Lu Mu gong wen yu Zisi* 魯穆公問於子思. Unlike the * Thicket,* the *Duke Mu* develops a narrative. The text tells of Duke Mu's 穆公 inquiries about the concept of loyalty. He first exchanges a few word with Zisi's 子思, who was serving in some form of ministerial position, and then, confused by his reply, the Duke turns to another minister, Chengsun Yi 成孫弋 for more explanation. Given the text's brevity, it is worth reproducing in its entirety:

> 魯穆公問於子思曰：「何如而可謂忠臣？」子思曰：「恆稱其君之惡者，可謂忠臣矣。」公不悅，揖而退之。成孫弋見，公曰：「嚮者，吾問忠臣子思，子思曰『恆稱其君之惡者，可謂忠臣矣。』寡人惑焉，而未之得也。」成孫弋曰：「噫，善哉，言乎！夫為其君之故殺其身者，嘗有之矣。恆稱其君之惡者，未之有也。夫為其【君】之故殺其身者，效祿爵者也。恆【稱其君】之惡【者，遠】祿爵者【也。為】義而遠祿爵，非子思，吾惡聞之矣！」

> Duke Mu of Lu asked Zisi: "How must one be in order to be called a loyal minister?" Zisi replied: "Someone who consistently calls out his ruler's mistakes can be defined as a loyal minister." The Duke was unhappy, bowed and left. When Chengsun Yi was received, the Duke said: "Before, I asked Zisi about loyal ministers. He said 'Someone who consistently calls out his ruler's mistakes can be defined as a loyal minister.' I was a bit perplexed by this, and did not comprehend it." Cheng Sunyi replied: "Ah, brilliant words! There have been cases of [ministers] who sacrificed their lives for

their ruler's cause; but there has yet to be someone who would consistently call out his ruler's mistakes. Those who sacrificed their lives for their ruler's cause are devoted to salary and rank. Those who consistently call out their ruler's mistakes distance themselves from salary and rank. To act morally while distancing oneself from salary and rank –if not for Zisi, how would I hear of this?"[314]

Portions of text that are repeated *verbatim* are highlighted. For a text of only eight strips, the degree of redundancy is noteworthy. Modern students who encounter ancient manuscripts for the first time do not struggle with this text: they can confidently reconstruct its missing parts and read the last strips fluently precisely because of how repetitive (and simple) the text is. Ministers' loyalty, *zhong* 忠,[315] was widely discussed in early China, and *Duke Mu* testifies to the centrality of this topic at the time. Why, then, is there no trace of this text, other than the Guodian manuscript, especially given that both Duke Mu of Lu and Zisi are cited in the literature? If we compare *Duke Mu* articulation of these concepts to others in received literature,[316] we can observe some striking differences. *Duke Mu* appears as a very simple representation of ruler-minister relationship; structurally, it reads like a template, an exercise in creating a narration that incorporates known figures and a key philosophical topic. In terms of content, this vignette does not portray rulers in a positive light –an indication of who might have crafted this piece, as I discuss in the next chapter.

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[314] Compare Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 425–427.
[315] But see Goldin, "When Zhong 忠 Does Not Mean 'Loyalty.'"
[316] E.g., see Pines ""Friends Or Foes: Changing Concepts Of Ruler-Minister Relations."

Another text from the Guodian corpus relevant for my thesis is the *The Way of Loyalty and Trustworthiness*, *Zhong xin zhi dao* 忠信之道.[317] This manuscript, also very short, focuses on trustworthiness (*xin* 信) and loyalty (*zhong* 忠, hence confirming its importance). The brevity of the text is again paired with a redundant vocabulary: the text opens with the repetitive "not to… and not to… is the peak of…, 不⋯不⋯, ⋯之至也" highlighted in chapter one. It then continues,

> 忠信積而民弗親信者，未之有也。至忠如土，化物而不
> 夋(伐?)；至信如時，必至而不結。忠人亡謊，信人不背。
> There has never been someone who accumulated loyalty and trustworthiness, and yet whom the people did not consider close and trust. The highest form of loyalty resembles the earth: it transforms the elements without harming (?) them; the highest trustworthiness is like the seasons: they invariably arrive though not bound to do so. A loyal person lacks deception; a trustworthy person does not turn his back [on people].[318]

"The highest … is like … ; it [verb] and does not [verb]" structures the passage. These formulae repeat throughout the text, which has in fact been described as "exhibit[ing] a particularly tight-knit structure, marked by the repetition of key terms and strict

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[317] See study in Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 565-581.
[318] Transcription and translation are based on Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 575-577, with minor adjustments.

parallelism throughout."[319] In his study on *The Way of Loyalty and Trustworthiness*, Dirk

Meyer likewise notes how the text defines core terms and their intellectual dimensions.[320]

The Way is then a second example of an exercise in composition or oral delivery,

whose formulaic expressions set a mnemonic rhythm. Although highly structured, each

module makes a statement on its own. Unlike *Duke Mu*, there is no narrative. And while

changing the order of modules breaks a parallelism that characterizes the entire text

where "loyalty" always comes before "trustworthiness," it does not disrupt the meaning

of each module.[321] The formulaic language and strict parallelism, both indications of

memorization, do not necessarily indicate that the text was or remained stable.[322]

[319] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 573.
[320] Meyer, "A Device for Conveying Meaning: the Structure of the Guōdiàn Tomb One Manuscript "Zhōng xìn zhī dào," 70. I find myself however in disagreement with Meyer's emphasis on the coherence and the idea that reorganizing textual segments would corrupt the meaning of the text, as any reader can determine by switching the text's modules. To the best of my understanding, Meyer's insistence on taking the Guodian manuscripts as "coherent compositions" (Meyer, *Philosophy on bamboo*, 179) is to underpin specific philosophical developments that, to his mind, take place during the Warring States era (such as the emergence of texts that required oral explanations to be understood, vs. self-contained texts that were intelligible to anyone who could read them). Yet the evidence in support of these claims (including a precise authorial intention) is scant, *in primis* because the Guodian manuscripts are analyzed within the corpus only, thus definitions of "coherence," "crafted texts," "argumentative texts" result somewhat circular. See also Shaughnessy, "Philosophy or Bamboo."
[321] Cf. Wagner, "The Guodian Manuscripts and the "Units of Thought" in Early Chinese Philosophy," 8.
[322] Contra Mayer, "A Device for Conveying Meaning," 71. His position is especially difficult to defend, because there are no other versions for comparison.

The Shanghai Museum *Kongzi Shi lun 孔子詩論, *Zhuang wang ji Cheng 莊王既成, and *Wu wang jian zuo 武王踐阼

We may now turn to examples of performance supports from the corpus acquired by the Shanghai Museum. Let us start with the much-debated *Confucius's Discussion of the Odes*, *Kongzi Shi lun 孔子詩論. In the case of this manuscript, my job is much aided by previous scholarship that has already called attention to structural features of the text. *Confucius's Discussion* has been described by Thies Staack as "a collection of statements referring to particular odes, ode categories and also the Odes in general," where questions between Confucius and his disciples "were nothing more than a rhetorical device." Staack then continues to describe it as "a very elaborate style with distinct textual parallelism, while others could originally have been concise notes meant to serve as a basis for later elaboration or as a mere reminder."[323] Similarly, Martin Kern called it a "catechism", suggesting that the text was used to understand which poems were best applied to different discussions and situations.[324] In other words, this text represents material to be learned to boost one's performance, be it written or oral.

Unfortunately, the strips are poorly preserved,[325] which does not allow for a fair assessment of the overall textual structure. The content clearly shows a text that contextualizes and explains how to decode and use the odes collected in the *Book of*

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[323] Staack, "Reconstructing the Kongzi shilun: From the Arrangement of the Bamboo Slips to a Tentative Translation," 900.
[324] Kern, "Lost in Tradition: The Classic of Poetry We Did Not Know," 36–38.
[325] Staack, "Reconstructing the Kongzi shilun," 862 has a clear and helpful reconstruction. See the original pictures in *Shanghai Bowuguan Cai Zhanguo Chujian Shu,* vol. 1, 3-4.

Odes. For example, the text says that the "Guan ju" 關雎 ode is about rules of conduct, presented through metaphors involving sexual desire.[326] Some of these explanations are given in the voice of Confucius, likely used here as a rhetorical strategy (as well known, Confucius is also traditionally identified as the organizer of the *Odes*). *Confucius's Discussion* may also have been used to craft other texts, such as the Tsinghua *Qi ye* 耆夜. *Qi ye* narrates a banquet where King Wu and his allies the Dukes of Zhou 周公, of Bi 毕公, of Shao 召公, and Xin Jia 辛甲 celebrate a victory. During this banquet, they drink and recite odes. Whilst scholars with more conservative views see the *Qi ye* the *impromptu* recording of a banquet that did take place, placing his compositions in the sixth century BCE,[327] the evidence indicates that the *Qi ye* is a Warring States production by a scribe who is framing how odes might have been composed in a past that was remote to him.[328] How would someone know which odes were appropriate to use in the constructed narratives, if not through texts like the *Confucius's Discussion*?

The Shanghai Museum manuscript *King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs*, *Wu wang jian zuo* 武王踐阼[329] also shows features that are revealing for my study. This manuscript collates two stories by juxtaposition.[330] The two stories describe King Wu's inquiries on the Way of the Yellow Thearch and the Cinnabar Documents, and his performance of rituals. The narrations were previously known in the literature as part of the transmitted

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[326] "Kongzi Shi lun", strip 11.

[327] Li Xueqin 李學勤. "Lun Qinghua Jian Qi Ye de 'Xi Shuai' Shi 論清華簡《耆夜》的《蟋蟀》詩."

[328] Liu Chengqun, "Qinghua Jian Qi Ye 'Xi Shuai' Xian Yi 清華簡《耆夜》《蟋蟀》詩獻疑."

[329] *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* vol. 7, 148–168.

[330] The text has been examined by Zhou Boqun 周博群, making it unnecessary to review it in its entirety here, see Zhao Boqun, "A Translation and Analysis of the Shanghai Museum Manuscript *Wu Wang Jian Zuo*."

Da dai liji 大戴禮記,[331] where they are collated together with the addition of a temporal context and a brief introduction to strengthen the narrative structure.

In **King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs*, instead, the two versions differ on details such as for how many days the king fasts, or the name of the minister to whom he addresses his questions. Scribal conventions suggest that each story was recorded by different individuals, who both knew the overall story well enough to recount it, and adjusted its details and minor points as they saw fit.

With this manuscript, then, we see how two different scribes rehearsed the same story. Knowing how to replicate narratives is a central part of cultural learning. The format and structure of manuscripts such as the Tsinghua *Command to Fu Yue*, *Fu Yue zhi ming* 傅說 之命 reviewed below, suggest that these manuscripts derived from narrative-learning activities. Transmitted texts are rich of examples where the same anecdote is replicated on several occasions, at times used to strengthen an argument or a theory.

Going back to the case of **King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs*, we must note that the two stories about King Wu are recorded on the same manuscript. On strip 10, an horizontal line (|) (usually, this marks the end of a text or a textual segment) ends the first story abruptly and illogically, right in the middle of the reading of an inscription:

> 牖銘惟曰:「位難得而易失,士難得而易外。毋謹弗志,曰余
> 知之,毋 |

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[331] *Da Dai Liji huijiao jizhu* 大戴禮記彙校集註, 6.639–667. The *Da dai liji* section has been translated by Yuri Pines ("Confucian Irony?"), and again by Zhou Boqun in comparison with the excavated versions.

The inscription on the window says: "Rank is hard to get but easy to lose. Service is hard to get but easy to be left outside of. Without being diligent and mindful, [one] says 'I know it.' Without[332] |

On strip 11, the text begins the second story with the king again asking questions to his ministers. This second narration has an ending.

How to explain these puzzling features? As with *Natural Dispositions*, readers who approach these texts as if they were unabridged compositions, or with the desire to see sustained argumentative structures, are left with disappointment. So Zhou Boqun in fact describes each of these texts: a "failed promise."[333] However, if we see these sources as written aids to processes of knowledge acquisitions by individuals who aimed to become acquainted with describing the Cinnabar documents, the names of rituals, the ways in which kings and ministers address each other, then manuscripts such as *King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs* come to life.

Our final example from the Shanghai Museum corpus is a manuscript with a startling title: the *Zhuang wang ji Cheng* 莊王既成 - *Shen gong chen Li wang* 申公臣靈王. The long title is due to the fact that this manuscript brings together two stories that lack an explicit connection. They are written continuously, one after another, with a single black dot on strip 4 that marks the end of the first one. Both stories are dialogues; both have as protagonists a king from Chu 楚 and a minor official; and in both cases, the exchanges concern power relationships and etiquette.

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[332] Normalization and translation by Zhou Boqun, "A Translation and Analysis," 17.
[333] Based on Zhou Boqun, "A Translation and Analysis," 24.

It has been assumed that the task of connecting these two stories was left to the reader, who would have been provided background knowledge and familiarity to decode an otherwise rather puzzling text.[334] Just as modern readers rely on the *Zuo Tradition* to find information that complete the dialogues in this manuscript, a similar background knowledge (if not even something resembling *Zuo Tradition* itself) was provided to whoever accessed *Zhuang wang* in 300 BCE.

I would like to suggest a different solution. The difficulty in reconciling the two *Zhuang wang* anecdotes is a difficulty only if we assume that, by virtue of being recorded on the same manuscript, these two anecdotes must have been connected, to form a coherent unit. The Shanghai Museum corpus includes several manuscripts concerning kings of Chu, and the only connection among them is the presence of a royal Chu character.[335] The principle that readers were expected to draw connections between the *Zhuang wang* and *Shen gong chen* stories and their background knowledge is correct, but this is true of any narration that names characters without fully introducing them. In fact, it is true of any text that is not accompanied by explanatory notes. To assume that the text is crafted so as to force readers to determine connections assigns quite a specific editorial intention for which there is no clear evidence.[336]

More likely, that these were exercises in composition, where scribes would learn to incorporate prominent historical and historicized figures, such as kings, into a meaningful

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[334] Krijgsman and Vogt, "The One Text In The Many: Separate And Composite Readings Of An Early Chinese Historical Manuscript."
[335] Krijgsman and Vogt, "The One Text In The Many," 477.
[336] Krijgsman and Vogt, "The One Text In The Many," 491.

narrative, with references to well-known events or ritual moments (e.g., the casting of bells that appears in this manuscript) that were components of the culture in which the scribes operated. The web of references remains equally important in understanding these texts, but by considering them performance supports, we explain more of their feature and textual history.

It comes as no surprise then to find in *Zhuang wang* grammatical structures that recur in other manuscripts: the second anecdote in fact ends with the rhetorical structure "what boldness would there be?", *he gan zin zhi you* 何敢心之有, the same that marks the rhythm of the Guodian **Frustration or Achievement* as "what difficulty could there be?" *he nan zhi you zai* 何難之有哉, and is found in other Warring States texts. Not coincidentally, this second *Zhuang wang* anecdote is about a minister who rises to a powerful position by encountering the right king, which is the central motif of the **Frustration or Achievement* text.

The Tsinghua Fu Yue zhi Ming 傅說之命

Command to Fu Yue, *Fu Yue zhi ming* 傅說之命 is one of the manuscripts from the

Tsinghua corpus that bear on the history of composition and transmission of the *Exalted*

Writings[337] 尚書, a text with a notoriously complex textual history of losses and

discoveries.[338] The *Writings* is one of the most studied texts in Chinese history, so the

recovery of pre-imperial manuscripts that relate to this classic has caused great

excitement.

Presented in the scholar as one text, *Command to Fu Yue* shows a more complicated

picture if we look at the actual manuscript. It includes three sections, all titled "Fu Yue

zhi ming" on the verso of the last strip of each section.[339] The three stories have however

been taken as parts of an *unicum*, narrating how Fu Yue 傅說, a laborer who lived during

the Shang dynasty, became King Wu Ding's 武丁 (traditionally reign dates: 1250-1192

BCE) assistant.[340] This interpretation is strongly influenced by the presence of a chapter

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[337] Literally, *Writings of Higher Antiquity*. *Shang* 尚 used as reference to "Higher antiquity," is explained in key passages in *Mozi,* where *shang* is standing for *shang* 上, "higher", in the expression *shang guan yu* 上觀乎, literally "to look high (i.e., up) at": "to look up at the writings of the Shang, *shang guan hu Shang shu* 上觀乎商書" and *Mozi jiao zhu* 墨子校注 8.341 and 9.401 respectively. See also Liu Qiyü, *Shangshu xue shi* 尚書學史, 7–9.

[338] See Appendix E.

[339] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (san)*《清華大學藏戰國竹簡［參］》, 27–51 enlarged photographs; 121–131 transcription and notes.

[340] The most-cited version of this story among transmitted sources is probably from *Shiji* 史記, 3.102: "When Emperor Xiaoyi died, his son Emperor Wu Ding took the throne. After Wu Ding already installed, he reflected on how to revive the Yin dynasty, having not yet obtained [the right] assistants. For three years he did not speak, and all the government affairs had to be decided by the Minister of State according to observations of the customs of each state. One night Wu Ding dreamt he would obtain a sage person, named Yue. With [the memory of] what he had seen in the dream, he inspected all the ministers and officials, but none of them were Yue. Therefore he displaced a hundred officials to seek him among the wilderness, [and they] obtained him in Fuyan. At that time, Yue was a prisoner under forced labour, building walls in Fu Yan. He was given an audience with Wu Ding, and Wu Ding said he was the right person. After obtaining and talking with him, [Wu Ding realized] he was indeed a sage person, and promoted him to Chancellor. The state of Yin was greatly governed. Subsequently his place of origin was

that narrates the same story in *Exalted Writings*. The transmitted chapter, titled "Command to Yue", "Yue Ming" 說命, is divided into three sections (*shang* 上, *zhong* 中, and *xia* 下). It is also one of the chapters of the *Writings* discredited as forgery by the Qing philologists, most famously by Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩 (1636-1704) in his *Guwen Shangshu shuzheng* 古文尚書疏證.

Because of a similar tripartite division and the traditional understanding of the transmitted "Command to Yue" as forgery, in spite of some discrepancies between what is narrated in the two versions of this story,[341] Li Xueqin 李學勤[342] and Liao Mingchun 廖名春[343] interpreted *Command to Fu Yue* as the "real" (*zhenzheng* 真正) chapter of the *Writings,* lost during the Han dynasties and later substituted by "Command to Yue."[344]

An immediate pushback to the identification of *Command to Fu Yue* as *the* real chapter that should have been part of *Exalted Writings* came from Li Rui 李銳,[345] Xie Weiyang 謝維揚,[346] and Shen Pei 沈培.[347] These scholars all articulated that connections

taken as his surname, and he became Fu Yue. 帝小乙崩，子帝武丁立。帝武丁即位，思復興殷，而未得其佐。三年不言，政事決定於冢宰，以觀國風。武丁夜夢得聖人，名曰說。以夢所見視羣臣百吏，皆非也。於是乃使百工營求之野，得說於傅險中。是時說為胥靡，筑於傅險。見於武丁，武丁曰是也。得而與之語，果聖人，舉以為相，殷國大治。故遂以傅險姓之，號曰傅說。"

[341] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian (san)*《清華大學藏戰國竹簡［參］》, 121.

[342] Li Xueqin 李學勤. "Xin zhengli Qinghua jian liu zhong gaishu 新整理清華簡六種概述," 68.

[343] Liao Mingchun 廖名春, "Qinghua jian yu 'Shangshu' yanjiu 清華簡與《尚書》研究," 125.

[344] The identity of the compiler of the *Shangshu* as we know it is actually unknown. A tradition initiated by Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩 identifies Mei Ze as the author of the "fabricated" chapters in the received edition of the *Shangshu*, thus Mei Ze is often taken as a token of identity for whoever was beyond the formation of the *Shangshu* in the 4th century. See Yan Ruoqu, *Shangshu guwen zhu zheng* 古文尚書疏證, 7.25. See appendix E.

[345] Li Rui 李銳, "Qinghua jian 'Fu Yue zhi ming' yanjiu 清華簡《傅說之命》研究. "

[346] Xie Weiyang 謝維揚, "You Qinghua jian 'Yue ming' san pian lun gushu cheng shu yu wenben xingcheng er san shi 由清華簡《說命》三篇論古書成書與文本形成二三事."

[347] Shen Pei 沈培, *"Tan tan Qinghua jian "Fu Yue zhi ming" he zhuashi wenxian xianghu duizhao de ji ge "ruo" juzi*, 談談清華簡《傅說之命》和傳世文獻相互對照的幾個 '若' 字句."

between the Tsinghua manuscript and what may or may not have been part of the *Writings* in later centuries are tentative at best. In Anglophone scholarship, Sarah Allan has identified Tsinghua manuscripts as literary compositions that mimic what she defines the "*shu* 書 style," i.e. writings that imitated the practice of composing in writing speeches delivered by kings to officials in a language that by the Warring States was no longer in use.[348] Her identification of a *shu-* writing style suggests that Warring States manuscripts are not compositions with which to replace the forged chapters in the *Writings*, not unless a strong case is made for it.

My position aligns with that of this second group of scholars. To understand why, let us look at some of the features of *Command to Fu Yue* closely. As mentioned, although it is often referred to as one manuscript, it is in fact divided into three parts of 7, 7 and 10 strips respectively. The ending of the each narration is marked in all cases by a 乙-shaped hook-mark; the text is frequently, although unevenly, punctuated, with small dots indicating the end of direct speech. The three sections by and large present non-overlapping content.[349] The first narration can be schematized as follows:

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[348] Sarah Allan, "On Shu 書 (Documents) And The Origin Of The Shang Shu 尚書 (Ancient Documents) In Light Of Recently Discovered Bamboo Slip Manuscripts."

[349] For the few passages that I quote, I have based myself on the first publications, along with Li Rui's "Qinghua jian 'Fu Yue zhi ming' yanjiu;" Zhang Chongli's 張崇禮 "Qinghua jian 'Fu Yue zhi ming' jian shi 清華簡《傅說之命》箋釋", (http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/Web/Show/2404, 2014) and the overview in Ma Cui 馬翠, *Qinghua jian 'Yue ming' ji shi 清華簡《說命》集釋*, 14–43.

- The first line introduces Fu Yue as a gift to a king of the Yin 殷 (i.e., Xia 夏) dynasty from Heaven. He is also said to be serving the Lord of Shi 佚仲.[350]

- The king has a dream, in which it is revealed to him the face and the name of Fu Yue as that of his next sagely minister. The morning after, the king dispatches officials with a reproduction of Fu Yue's countenance to find him.

- Fu Yue is found in Fu Yan, and is rewarded with gifts.

- The figure of Fu Yue is then introduced: he was a laborer building walls.

- A short dialogue between Fu Yue and the king occurs, where Fu Yue describes himself his coming as a consequence of Di's 帝 will.

- Fu Yue is sent by Heaven to fight the Lord of Shi, whom he previously served. An act of divination by the Lord of Shi follows, with some obscure vocabulary. Fu Yue wins by seizing the city of Lord of Shi.

- The text concludes with Yue's return to the capital to personally serve the king, and his promotion to the rank of Duke (*gong* 公).

Why is there no explicit mention of Wu Ding as the King of Yin who is awarded Fu Yue? The association is present in several other texts that developed during the Warring States.[351] And who exactly is behind this encounter (which *Frustration or Achievement*

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[350] The interpretation "Lord of Shi" is tentative. *Shi zhong* 佚仲 most certainly refers to a person; it is difficult to ascertain whether it is a name or a name and title. I chose to translate Lord of Shi to signal the social hierarchy between him and Fu yue. See Ma Cui, *Qinghua jian 'Yue ming' ji shi*, 8–9.

[351] *Mozi jiaozhu* 2.97; *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 6.247. Interestingly, *Mengzi*'s use of the list of ministers does not mention any of the monarchs by name. Perhaps the author of this passage intentionally directed the attention onto the ministers' figures.

describes as completely fortuitous), Heaven or Di (if they are, as it seems, different entities)? Why is Fu Yue introduced once, and then a second time, after the narration discusses the king's decision to send officials out to search for Fu Yue?

The second part of the manuscript begins again by describing Fu Yue's arrival in the capital. A dialogue set in the ancestral temple follows. The king praises Fu Yue, and commands him to respect royal orders. The speech closes with what resembles an attempt at imitating formulaic language used in divination settings and bronze inscriptions:

吉，不吉。 余告汝若是，志之于乃心。
It may be auspicious or not. I have announced to you to this effect;
may you record these intentions in your heart.

This sentence reads superfluous in the context of the narration.

The third and last section of this manuscript is divided into seven segments, all introduced by the formula *wang yue* 王曰, "The king said." Both the formula "the king said" and the commands echo the tone and the language of bronze inscriptions, of chapters from *Exalted Writings* such as the "Kang Gao" 康誥, and of other Tsinghua manuscript like the *Command to She*. As with the first section, the name of the king is never mentioned. The only reasons this is assumed to represent an exchange between Wu Ding and Yue is the title and the explicit mention of Fu Yue's name. This personalizes what would otherwise be rather a set of standardized formulae that could apply to any minister.

131

Why does the second part begin again with Fu Yue's arrival in the Yin capital? The second section includes Wu Ding's commands to Fu Yue, and yet again more appear in the third section. It is difficult to reconcile the features of all these questions if we read the three parts as a continuous narration, even more so if we wanted to see this as the original, polished lost chapter of the *Writings*.

A better explanation comes from considering the three sections of the Tsinghua *Command to Fu Yue* as three different anecdotes that narrate the story of this ancient minister, with inclusion of different details. All the key elements associated with Fu Yue's story are in fact present: the dream that prompted Wu Ding to search for a sage in his domain; Fu Yue's initial status as worker and his subsequent promotion to minister; and the success of this encounter.[352] These are exactly the same elements that appear across different narrations of the Fu Yue legend. In *Mozi* 墨子, Fu Yue is part of a list of ministers which is used to criticize the promotion of one's relatives instead of deserving people.[353] In *Mengzi* 孟子, the anecdote conveys the principle that great men, before being awarded by Heaven, must undergo suffering to stimulate their mind and temper their nature.[354] As mentioned above, the Fu Yue story also appears in the Guodian *Frustration or Achievement*, to demonstrate the principle of timely, fortuitous encounters.[355]

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[352] Curiously, the Tsinghua version does not mention Fu Yue's hemp clothing and wearing of ropes (in one version, *yi he dai suo* 衣褐帶索) that frequently characterize his appearance in other sources.

[353] *Mozi jiaozhu* 2.97.

[354] *Mengzi* 6B/35.

[355] See also *Guoyu ji jie* 國語集解, 17.503–4. Incidentally, this last version directly contradicts the idea that Fu Yue was sent to Wu Ding by a third party, be it Heaven or Di.

The Tsinghua *Command to Fu Yue* represents three more adaptations of the Fu Yue story,[356] used both to rehearse the story itself, and to practice archaisms of what must have been already an old-fashioned writing style[357] (which, being poorly understood, were incongruently replicated[358]). This was one of the many legends and stories that anyone well-versed in Zhou culture ought to have known in order to relate to their cultural surroundings.
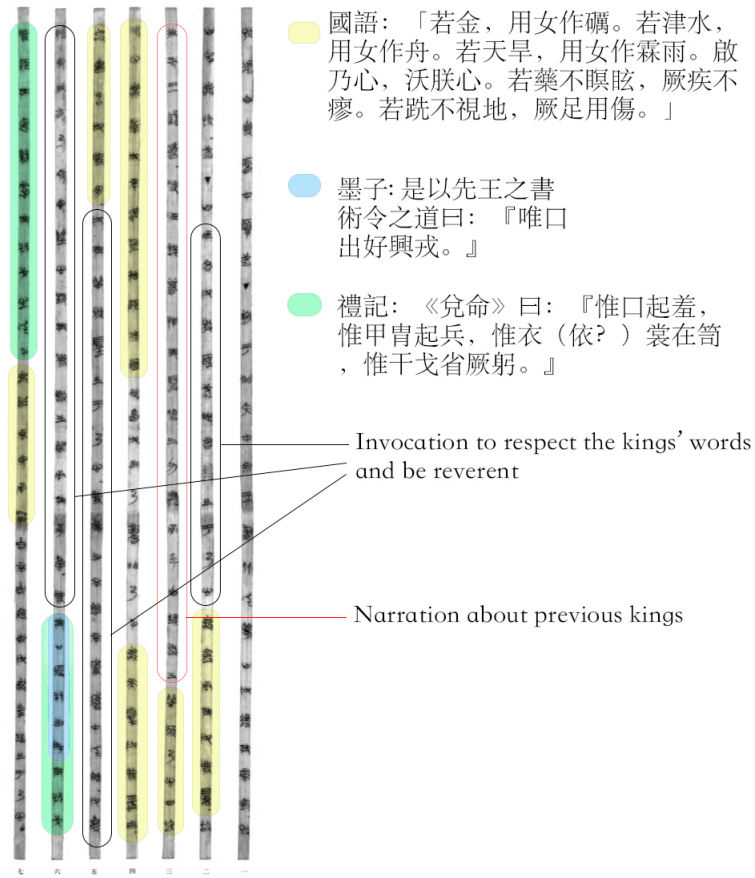
Interpreting *Command to Fu Yue* as a performance support accommodates also some of the parallels in the second narration. The image below captures them visually, with the metaphors used to portray Fu Yue's service to Wu Ding in yellow, and the metaphors that appear in *Mozi* and *Ritual Records* in blue and green respectively.

[356] Cf. Li Rui "Qinghua jian 'Fu Yue zhi ming' yanjiu", 71.
[357] Schaberg, "Speaking of Documents: Shu Citations in Warring States Texts." On archaism more broadly, see von Falkenhausen, "Late Western Zhou Taste," esp. 168–74; cf. Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the *Shangshu*, and the *Shijing*: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice during the Western Zhou."
[358] Cf. Shaughnessy, "A Possible Lost Classic," 276 footnote 28.

Figure 3. Visualization of parallels between Command to Fu Yue section 2 and transmitted literature.

國語：「若金，用女作礪。若津水，用女作舟。若天旱，用女作霖雨。啟乃心，沃朕心。若藥不瞑眩，厥疾不瘳。若跣不視地，厥足用傷。」

墨子: 是以先王之書術令之道曰：『唯口出好興戎。』

禮記：《兌命》曰：『惟口起羞，惟甲冑起兵，惟衣（依？）裳在笥，惟干戈省厥躬。』

Invocation to respect the kings' words and be reverent

Narration about previous kings

The metaphorical representations of Yue's service follow a different sequence than that of the *Discourse of the States*, where they are listed one after another:

> 若金，用女作礪。若津水，用女作舟。若天旱，用女作霖雨。啟乃心，沃朕心。若藥不瞑眩，厥疾不瘳。若跣不視地，厥足用傷。[359]
>
> If I were metal, I would use you as a whetstone; if there were a flood, I would use you as a boat; if there were a drought, I would

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[359] *Guoyu ji jie*, 17.503–4.

use you to make rain for three days.[360] Enlighten your mind, and [through it] enrich my own. If you were medicine, you would not cause dizziness from which to recover.[361] If barefoot, [I could walk] without paying attention to the ground [thanks to your guidance], and my feet would [not] be hurt.[362]

In the Tsinghua manuscript, these metaphors appear as part of Wu Ding's praises of Fu Yue, but are scattered and mixed with lines about previous kings and Heaven (a section that, according to textual evidence from bronze inscriptions and chapters in the *Writings*, we would expect to precede the commands), and demanding loyalty from the newly appointed minister.

The text then closes with a rather curious line about shields and dagger-axes that also appears in the *Mozi*[363] and the "Black Robe" chapter of the *Ritual Records*:

Table 6. Comparison among parallels in Command to Fu Yue

Fu Yue Zhi ming	且惟口起戎出好，惟干戈作疾，惟哀載病，惟干戈眚厥身。 "And it is the [same] mouth that can elicit war or produce harmony; it is shields and daggers that produce sickness; is it the sadness that carries diseases; it is shields and daggers that bring calamity (?) to one's person.

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[360] *Lin* 霖 is glossed as a period of rain of three days, *Guoyu ji jie*, 17.503.

[361] Here I follow Zhao Qi's 趙岐 interpretation of this line, which appears in the *Mengzi* as well. Zhao Qi interprets it to say that medicines cure a person but cause dizziness as a side-effect, from which a person has to recover. Ministers like Fu Yue are so efficient that if they were medicine, they would cure the sickness and cause no side-effects altogether. See *Mengzi zhu shu* 孟子注疏 (2009), 13.5874.

[362] I suspect that we are are looking at a corrupt passage. My translation follows Kong Yingda's interpretation, *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義, 10.37. The manuscript reads "*ruo di bu shi, yong shang* 若眡 不視，用傷". None of the interpretations presented by scholars is particularly helpful in understanding this passage; they all range around the idea that carrying out an action (the nature of the action depends on how 眡 is interpreted) without paying attention will lead to injuries. Exactly how this statement fits the context is left unresolved. Various interpretations are summarized in Ma Cui, *Qinghua jian 'Yue ming' ji shi*, 28–29.

[363] *Mozji jiao zhu* 3.119.

Mozi	是以先王之書《術令》之道曰：『唯口出好興戎。』 "Thus the former kings wrote in the "Commands to Yue": "The [same] mouth can produce harmony or start a war."
"Black Robe"	《兌命》曰：『惟口起羞，惟甲冑起兵，惟衣裳在笥，惟干戈省厥躬。』 The "Commands to Yue" says: "It is the mouth that elicits shame; it is helmets and armors that elicit war; it is the clothes that are in the basket; shields and daggers are what harm one's person."

The statement about the dual nature of the mouth, working as a metonymy for speech, is the only fully sensical one. The remaining metaphors, both in *Command to Fu Yue* and the "Black Robe" chapter, give the impression that someone incorporated them without fully understanding their meaning.[364] It remains impossible to determine whether the metaphors traveled from the "Black Robe" to the Tsinghua manuscript, or the other way around –if indeed they traveled at all. Yet, the parallel is important in that it shows *Command to Fu Yue* as a full participant in the Warring States literary culture, which reinforces my take of this manuscript as performance support, the product of an exercise in story-telling and imitating archaic linguistic expressions.

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[364] As for previous quotations, I suspect here too we are looking at corrupt and misunderstood passages. What does "the clothes are in the basket" mean? The commentarial tradition interprets as a metaphor about serving according to the ritual, *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, 33.3580. Even if correct, the sense of the overall passage remains obscure.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed a total of nine Warring States manuscripts that exemplify what performance supports looked like around the third century BCE. Other manuscripts would rightfully belong to the list, such as the **Si gao* quickly addressed above, or the Tsinghua *Good ministers*, *Liang chen* 良臣, a text used to memorize combination of worthy ministers and the Zhou kings they served, presented as a list (no verbal forms, nor narrations). A thesis however gains as much strength from evidence as it does from a demonstration of its plausibility. Thus, in this final section, I reflect on the utility of my argument to explore Warring States manuscript production. I round off the applicability of modules introduced in chapter one, and prepare the background for chapter three, where we will see how plausibly the existence of performance supports was within the intellectual world of Warring States China.

As it is evident, the manuscripts presented here are of different content and have different structures. In studying **Natural Dispositions*, the division into modules was helpful in conceptualizing this text. Yet, not all manuscripts require divisions into modules. Let us exemplify this point by returning for a moment to *Command to Fu Yue*. The second narration can be easily divided into modules thanks to existing parallels with other texts. The third narration could also be divided through the repetitions of "the king said," the formula that introduces each direct speech.
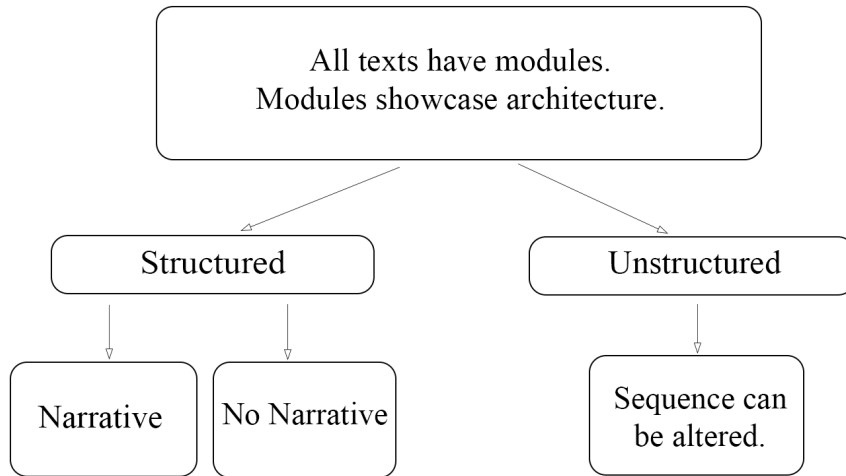
But once we look to divide into modules the first narration of *Command to Fu Yue*, different combinations are possible. Depending on how the text is being interpreted, the

divination scene that precedes Fu Yue's attack to Lord of Shi's city may be taken as a module that represents a new thematic element (i.e., the act of divination). Others may see it as inseparable from the events that follow it. In other words, for texts which develop as a narrative, a division into modules seems unnecessary. The same is true, for example, of the Shanghai *King Wu*, whose rhythm is given by the change of voice in the dialogues between the king and his ministers.

We can thus refine the conceptualization presented in chapter one. The definition of module was presented as flexible in chapter one to be applicable to all texts. Yet not all of them *necessitate* being divided into modules. I think of "module" as an instrument whose applicability helps to visualize features of a text, and that can then be disregarded in later stages of analysis. In other words, a module should be taken as a conceptual instrument that is beneficial, but not necessary, to apprehend the structure of texts.

In practical terms, thinking through modules allows us to highlight textual structures, as with *Natural Dispositions, *Discussions* and *Zhong xin zhi dao*, a vision that is missed if we focus on portions of these texts. Seeing texts through modules has led me to articulate the following scheme, a prism through which we can navigate the evidence from manuscripts discussed in this chapter:

Figure 4. Visualization of textual divisions according to textual architecture


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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   All texts have modules.   │
│ Modules showcase architecture.│
└─────────────────────────────┘
         ↙            ↘
  ┌────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
  │ Structured │   │ Unstructured │
  └────────────┘   └──────────────┘
      ↓    ↓              ↓
┌──────────┐ ┌─────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Narrative│ │ No Narrative│  │ Sequence can │
│          │ │             │  │  be altered. │
└──────────┘ └─────────────┘  └──────────────┘
```

Accordingly, *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are unstructured compositions whose modules' sequence can be altered without losing meaning. Compare the following:

> 凡學者，求其心為難。從其所為，近得之矣，不如以樂之速也。雖能其事，不能其心，不貴。求其心有偽也，弗得之矣。人之不能以偽也，可知也。訓（?），義之方也。義，敬之方也。敬，物之節也。篤，仁之方也。仁，性之方也。性又生之。忠，信之方也。性，情之方也。情出於性。愛類七，唯性愛為近仁。智類五，唯宜（義）道為近忠。惡類三，唯惡不仁為近義。[365]

> "In general, the most difficult thing in learning is the search for the [authentic] heart-mind. If one follows the lead of what is to be performed, one will be close to attaining it, [but this means] will not be as rapid as [instruction] through music. If there is artifice in one's search for the authentic heart-mind, one will not attain it. [Thus] may it be known that people cannot make use of artifice. Instruction(?) is the orientation of propriety; propriety is the orientation of respect, and respect [determines] the regularity of

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[365] *Xing zi ming chu* strips 36–41.

139

things. Earnestness is the orientation of humanity; humanity is the orientation of [human nature], and [human] nature also gives rise to it. Loyalty is the orientation of fidelity; fidelity is the orientation of genuine affections, and the affections arise from human nature. There are seven types of love, but only love [that stems from] human nature lies close to humanity. There are five types of knowledge, but only the way of propriety lies close to loyalty. There are three types of loathing, but only a loathing for the inhuman lies close to propriety."366

With:

訓(?)，義之方也。義，敬之方也。敬，物之節也。篤，仁之方也。仁，性之方也。性又生之。忠，信之方也。性，情之方也。情出於性。凡學者，求其心為難。從其所為，近得之矣，不如以樂之速也。雖能其事，不能其心，不貴。求其心有偽也，弗得之矣。人之不能以偽也，可知也。愛類七，唯性愛為近仁。智類五，唯義道為近忠。惡類三，唯惡不仁為近義。

"Instruction(?) is the orientation of propriety; propriety is the orientation of respect, and respect [determines] the regularity of things. Earnestness is the orientation of humanity; humanity is the orientation of [human nature], and [human] nature also gives rise to it. Loyalty is the orientation of fidelity; fidelity is the orientation of genuine affections, and the affections arise from human nature. In general, the most difficult thing in learning is the search for the [authentic] heart-mind. If one follows the lead of what is to be performed, one will be close to attaining it, [but this means] will not be as rapid as [instruction] through music. If there is artifice in one's search for the authentic heart-mind, one will not attain it. [thus] may it be known that people cannot make use of artifice. There are seven types of love, but only love [that stems from] human nature lies close to humanity. There are five types of knowledge, but only the way of propriety lies close to loyalty. There are three types of loathing, but only a loathing for the inhuman lies close to propriety."

366 Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 728-730.

The text contains no indication to establish the original sequence. In both passages, the content is neither distorted nor does it become unintelligible.[367] The only indication might be the presence of *fan* 凡 at the beginning of the statement on the difficulties of learning, a particle usually understood to be signaling the beginning of a new topics. *Thicket* lacks structure and a sequence that directs the meaning in similar ways to *Natural Dispositions*, with the difference that the latter runs for 67 strips, while *Thicket* is more fragmentary.

The *Duke Mu* and *Zhong xin zhi dao* instead are examples of structured texts. The former presents a narrative, and therefore the sequence of its modules cannot be altered. While the latter does not have a narrative, we have noted in chapter one that the text alternates between statements to define a value and statements about the consequences of embodying these values. I would describe the textual architecture of *Zhong xin zhi dao* as determined by logical concatenations (what is X > consequence of X).

We then have three examples from the Shanghai Museum. Both *King Zhuang* and the *King Wang Trod on the Eastern Stairs* are structured narratives, albeit incomplete and at times incongruent. Here modules may be identified by chains of events as well as changes of scene. As for *Confucius's Discussions*, a structure can be identified: a group of odes are named, and a question or a statement is made about them. Then, a brief

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[367] Cf. Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 668.

141

explanation follows. This structure (group of odes > single statement about each ode in the group > brief explanations) gets repeated throughout.

Finally, we return to the Tsinghua *Command to Fu Yue* just reviewed. As I have argued, I believe that the three sections all bearing the same title are best considered separately, as three instantiations of a culture where individuals ought to be able to perform, either orally or in writing, these topical stories. The first and second Fu Yue stories have a narrative, thus we are looking at a structured text whose modular sequence cannot be altered. With the third Fu Yue section, instead, we are looking at structured texts lacking a narration, and whose rhythm is given by the formulaic *wang yue* 王曰, "the king says".

Finally, if we merge the architectural analysis with the categories of texts introduced in chapter one, we obtain the following image: 1) lists, red rectangle. These are unstructured texts whose modular sequence can be altered. *Thicket* is the most apt example of this. 2) Historical and philosophical writings, which are structured texts with or without a narrative (green rectangle). *Zhong xin zhi dao* and *Command to Fu Yue* are the most apt examples. 3) Canonical texts, blue rectangle. These share similar characteristics (structure, with or without a narrative), but they differ in light of an already privileged status attached to them by the Warring States era. In this chapter, the third category would be represented by the *Black Robe* manuscripts.

Figure 5. Schematic visualization of textual genres and their interactions
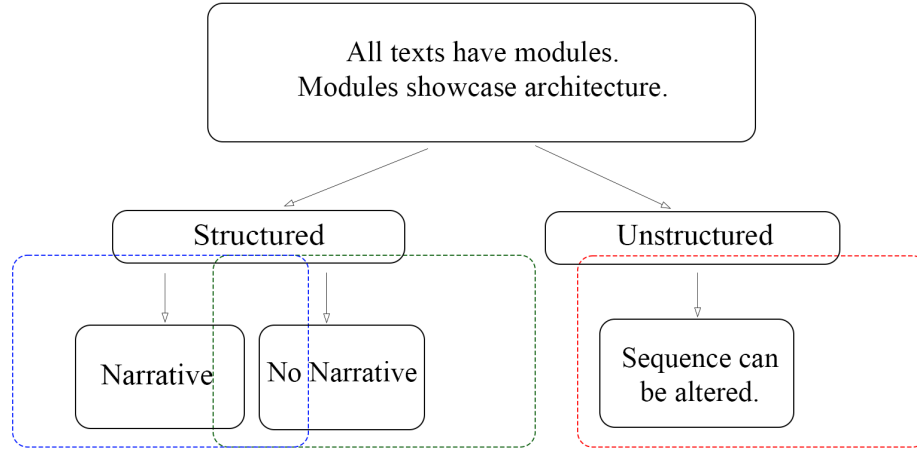
This exposition may read fastidious, but it seems a necessary steps to understand and navigate the variety of philosophical texts that we now know were central to the cultural formation of the Warring States (and thus, of pre-modern Chinese literature more broadly), and whose compositions appears unconventional when compared to contemporaneous sources, which I explore this comparison in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE. *The Performance.*

How performance supports were used, and by whom.

> Although this has been said at greater length
> and in greater detail by the older philosophers,
> it was my desire to hand them on to you in this
> condensed form in our days. For a ready knowledge of
> these matters even to this brief extent is useful.
> Cornutus, *Epidrome*

Introduction

Sometimes the work of intellectual historians resembles that of investigative journalists, as both attempt to reconstruct complex matters from partial information. Working with ancient manuscripts is a similar activity. For all the richness of data provided by this new material, the field still lacks answers to central questions. Why were manuscripts produced? Were they all produced in Chu 楚 during the fourth and third century BCE, as the evidence seems to suggest? If so, how come many of the stories and narratives concern events that take place outside the state of Chu, and prior to 400 BCE? Who participated in the production of these sources, besides the scribes involved in their writing? Were these sources commissioned, or did they spontaneously emerge among certain groups of people?

Answers to these questions can only be partial and tentative.[368] Edward Shaughnessy has recently published a *tour de force* to determine the production and transmission of the Tsinghua manuscript *Command to She, *She ming* 攝命, in which he assessed a plenitude of possibilities. Yet, he was only able to conclude that the manuscript was

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[368] Some of these questions will be picked up again in the conclusion.

144

produced during the Warring States era, and that other aspects are "still an open question."[369]

These difficulties notwithstanding, we can bridge evidence from Warring States manuscripts with what is known about the socio-political contexts of the last centuries BCE. By looking at bronze inscriptions that predate the production of *Command to She*, as well as at texts that postdate it, Shaughnessy positions this manuscript as part of a literary continuum across time, reconstructing its textual histories. This is the same approach adopted by sever scholars when working with manuscripts. In this chapter I look at the issue fro a synchronic perspective. How was a manuscript used at a point in time, i.e. around 300 BCE? What do we know of that era that can help us answer questions concerning the production of these manuscripts?

I will begin with a platitude. The Warring States represent a period of diversity. One of the ways in which this diversity manifested itself was the loosening of social boundaries of nobility.[370] With the weakening of the political and cultural power of the Zhou court, local political entities gradually became stronger, and eventually declared their independence (more or less overtly) from the ruling court they once served. Each state attempted to emerge as the new legitimate political power replacing the Zhou dynasty. In order to achieve this, states turned their local military forces into proper armies loyal to their king. Rulers were also deeply aware of the necessity to establish what today is called soft power, i.e. the ability to present themselves persuasively as the

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[369] Shaughnessy. "A Possible Lost Classic: The *She Ming, or *Command to She."
[370] Hsü, *Ancient China in Transition*, 35-40. See also discussion in Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 10-13, in which she also summarizes Von Falkenhausen's contribution to the topic.

legitimate political successors of the previous era through cultural arguments, rather than solely through coercive measures. This led to a commingling of claims that were both clinging to tradition while innovating it.

Multiple forces were thus at play. Gradual independence from the Zhou court strengthened the importance of local cultural centers, since states had an interest in functioning independently of the Zhou court and of each other. These centers became instruments to create and promote ideologies by a dominant group.[371] This has the (perhaps unwanted) effect of enlarging the body of courtiers and intellectuals who operated within these literate circles.[372] More possibilities presented themselves to non-noble individuals who had the resources, economic or otherwise, to become members of literate society. While by and large literate groups remained dominated by members of the elite,[373] there are signs of an increased social mobility, and with it, new emphasis was placed on the importance of behavioral qualities rather than hereditary status, as the redefinition of the term *junzi* 君子 from "son of lord" to "person who acts morally" suggests.[374] David Schaberg summarizes anecdotes where individuals remonstrate against rulers in Warring States with these words: "the relationship between a 'man of service' (*shi* 士) and the government he served was now defined not by entitlement but by wit, which alone could ensure successful negotiation of the dangers he faced."[375]

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[371] Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 10.
[372] This group is known as *shi* 士; their crescent role in the Warring States political scene has been noted before, e.g., in Pines, *Envisioning Eternal Empire*, 115-184; see also extensive study by Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Shi yu zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化.
[373] Brashier, *Public Memory in Early China* 10-13.
[374] Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy*, 49.
[375] Schaberg, "Playing at Critique," 215.

Crucially, the novelty is not the expansion of literacy *per se* –a phenomenon that began with the Western Zhou (1045-771 BCE),[376] but rather its acceleration combined with an accumulation of knowledge that led to the formation of a body of literature that went beyond administrative purposes.[377] There is no extant evidence of a similar process prior to the fifth century BCE. This body of literature became an expression of power,[378] and literacy itself a form of social accomplishment. Possession of knowledge is only meaningful insofar as it can be *displayed*. Hence, the "performative" aspect of the manuscripts I discuss in this dissertation.

In what follows, I will attempt to integrate the evidence from ancient Chinese literature to reconstruct five educational aspects which required the usage of performance supports: reciting, composing on a topic (which often required mastering a determined stylistic register), debating with opponents, organizing a text so that it would facilitate the retrieval of information, and crafting texts with mnemonic devices such as rhyme or alliteration so as to facilitate their learning. I will show how performance supports studies in the previous chapter fit in these activities.

These activities left traces beyond those mentioned in the literature, such as in the biographies of thinkers who came to be seen as great intellectuals. In the following analysis, each activity is treated in a dedicated section, but this structure is merely for sake of convenience. The skills behind these activities were interrelated and likely formed

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[376] Li Feng, "Literacy and the Social Contexts of Writing in the Western Zhou."

[377] Mattos, "Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions," shows that with the Eastern Zhou, writing is less monopolized by the nobility.

[378] C. Cook, "Education and the Way of the Former Kings."

a sort of "curriculum" for the aspiring intellectual: oratory relies on reciting and literary skills, as much as composing a good narrative, especially *ex novo*, puts to good use the art of eloquence.

Two points must be clarified at the outset. One concerns my approach in using primary sources. In this chapter, I combine information from biographies, depictions of oratorical activities and recitation, with the performance supports analyzed in chapter two. Anecdotes are not factual descriptions of reality. However, like much of culture they are a "representation of reality," an active conceptualization of how the world ought to be in response to how it is.[379] This means that aspects of the world as it functioned during the Warring States permeated narratives. And conversely, the spreading of these representations affected, albeit mildly, the reality.[380] With this in mind, it is possible to read literary texts as bespeaking real-life dynamics.

A second important aspect is the notion of "parallel." In contrasting performance supports to other extant texts, I argue that what we lack parallels between these two groups, and yet we can nonetheless see how performance supports played a role behind the scenes in the production of texts that present arguments. But what is meant exactly by "parallel"? Ancient commentators and modern scholars often do not provide a definition of parallel, not without fault. To define theoretical notions is also to be constrained by them. Repeated efforts have been made primarily in the field of biblical studies, with

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[379] Auerbach, *Mimesis*.

[380] Schaberg writes of the Han times: "As the model of indirect remonstrance gained ground, (…) the gap between imagination and reality began to close, and Han intellectuals found heroic entertainers closer to their own times" ("Playing at Critique" 217). This is true of representations of oratorical activities and minister-ruler exchanges from the Warring States era as well.

works such as Schultz's *The Search for Quotation*.[381] In ancient Chinese studies, Michael Hunter has referred to the issue, and defined a parallel as having "at least three characters in common (…) in a similar syntax."[382]

This definition worked well for Hunter's aim, but it is too restrictive for my purposes. In the discussion below, for instance, I present the following case: **Natural Dispositions* uses the expression "… await on… and then, 待而…後" to frame human-world interactions. The same expression appears in *Xunzi*, but it is used in a different way.[383] According to Hunter's definition, this would constitute a parallel; and yet we will see that this is not the case. What we are looking at here is a case not of parallels but of borrowing of expressions and linguistic formulae. The outcomes share a structure, but are clearly different. I call these "points of contact."[384]

A "parallel" is a case of verbal, syntactical, and wording correspondences (allowing for the common phonetic and graphic variants), without having to be *verbatim* matches. A parallel may be resulting from an act of copying, or from the use in separate occasions of idiomatic phrases. Quotations differ from parallels in that as a rule they are often *verbatim*, and either marked or there is an implicit expectation that the reference is clear in the audience's mind. We can now see how these formulations relate to the identification of performance supports' usages in Warring States China.

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[381] And all those cited in his review of the subject, pages 222-226.

[382] Hunter, "Did Mencius Know the Analects?" 48.

[383] See "Oratory" section below.

[384] Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, also uses the terms "allusion" and "thematic link." These also may be appropriate.

Performances in Warring States China

Reciting

The activity of reciting has been assessed differently in the scholarship. Gaining insights from Han biographies, Michael Nylan has proposed the Han dynasty as the era marking the end of memorization, chanting and reciting as the primary techniques underpinning knowledge transmission.[385] Yet Wolfgang Behr and Bernhard Fueher have pointed out that words within the semantic range of "to recite" seldom appear in pre-imperial texts,[386] a point that weakens Nylan's claim. So far, the only pre-imperial text that clearly presents reciting as a mode of transmission preferred to writing is the Tsinghua manuscript *Treasured Instructions*, **Baoxun* 寶訓. In this text, King Wen 文王 recites instructions to govern his life, and it is only after falling ill that he turns to writing to leave the instructions to his successor, King Wu 武王.[387] But this is one example among many others where written documents were viewed as repositories of knowledge, as in **King Wu trod on the Eastern stairs*, or in the Tsinghua **The High Ancestor of Yin Asked the Three Elderlies*, **Yin gao zong wen yu san shou* 殷高宗問於三壽.

As with the debate between orality and writing, we will gain more insights by shifting the conversation from discussing a "sharp division between writing and speech"[388] to one that accommodates a kaleidoscopic intellectual environment where writing, orality,

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[385] Nylan, "Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han."

[386] Behr and Fueher, "Einführende Notizen zum Lesen in China mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Frühzeit."

[387] Krijgsman, "Cultural Memory and Excavated Anecdotes in 'Documentary' Narrative," and "The One Text in the Many."

[388] Nylan, "Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han," 255.

recitation, and other forms of cultural engagement coexisted. The field lacks direct descriptions of many of these cultural activities. Because recitation relies on the ability to memorize, texts that incorporate mnemonic devices are good candidates to testify to the presence of this practice.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that the presence of mnemonic devices meant that a text *had* to be recited; in the same way I am not suggesting that the *lack* of these devices indicates that a text was never recited, or memorized. The exercise I propose here is that of interpreting textual features as manifestations of cultural practices, rather than a text's idiosyncrasies, to then reflect on the environment that fostered these practices.

The *Odes* are a natural starting point to explore recitation and mnemonic devices. These poetic compositions, widely quoted in Warring States texts,[389] are rhymed. As is well known, giving rhythm to a text through rhymes or musicality (or both) facilitates its memorization. In order to insert mnemonic devices and other formal restrictions, texts take specific shapes.

A mnemonic device is enumeration. In *Mao* 53 "Gan mao 干旄," each verse refers to a set of carriages of horses, increasing the number from four (*si* 四) to five (*wu* 五) to six (*liu* 六). Why was this combination of numerals[390] selected? The choice of numerals was purposeful. With the sequence four-five-six, each number belongs to the same rhyming

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[389] The importance of quoting and using *Odes* quote to buttress one's argument has been effectively demonstrated, primarily by Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, and by Kern, in several publications. In the *Zuo Commentary*, they are often cited in diplomatic occasions. See also Wang Tsung-hsuan, 王琮瑄. "由《左傳》交際涵養與外交辭令論「禮」——兼論交際失敗之例," and Hsu Pei-yu 許倍瑜. "論《左傳》引《詩》、賦《詩》之外交運用及其意義."

[390] Instead of "one, two, three," or "six, seven, eight," etc.

group of the entire verse, as the table below shows.[391] In other words, the increase from four to six locks the sequence in place, it makes it easy to remember, and facilitates the memorization and reproduction of this ode in this exact sequence:

Table 7. Rhyme scheme of Mao 53

Mao 53, "Gan mao"	Rhyme groups of the highlighted words	OC rhyme
孑孑干旄、在浚之郊。 素絲紕之、良馬四之。 彼姝者子、何以畀之。	*zhi* 脂, *zhi* 質	*-IJ, *-IT
孑孑干旟、在浚之都。 素絲組之、良馬五之。 彼姝者子、何以予之。	*yu* 魚	*-A
孑孑干旌、在浚之城。 素絲祝之、良馬六之。 彼姝者子、何以告之。	*jue* 覺	*-UK

Similarly, *Mao* 110 "Zhu hu" 陟岵 presents a narrative sequence where the protagonist is addressed first by his father, then by his mother, and finally by his older brother. The sequence "male parent - female parent - older brothers" would be easy to recall, being foundational to the socio-political discourse of premodern China:

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[391] The odes are intentionally left untranslated, to keep the attention on the structure.

Table 6. Rhyme scheme of Mao 110

Mao 110, "Zhu hu"	Rhyme groups of the highlighted words	OC rhyme
陟彼岵兮、瞻望父兮。 父曰嗟、予子行役、夙夜無已。 上慎旃哉、猶來無止	*yu* 魚	*-A
陟彼屺兮、瞻望母兮。 母曰嗟、予季行役、夙夜無寐。 上慎旃哉、猶來無棄。	*zhi* 之	*-Ə?
陟彼岡兮、瞻望兄兮。 兄曰嗟、予弟行役、夙夜必偕。 上慎旃哉、猶來無死。	*yang* 陽	*-Aŋ

Notably, the words "father," "mother," and "older brother" appear in the opening of each verse, and rhyme only with the preceding line (that is to say, each verse has two rhyming patterns[392]). This likely worked as a trigger to recollect the entire verse. Thus, in this ode, both the sequence of relatives and the rhyming worked as mnemonic devices to facilitate the memorization, and consequently the recitation, of "Zhu hu." Not coincidentally, both "Gan Mao" and "Zhu hu" are two among the Anda *Odes* manuscript that do not present permutation of verses when compared to its transmitted counterpart.[393]

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[392] See http://www.kaom.net/yayun_book8.php?wen_no=S110i, accessed Sept. 18, 2021. The rhyming scheme in kaom.net is based on Wang Li's 王力 *Shijing yun du* 詩經韻讀.

[393] See *Anhui Daxue Cang Zhanguo Zhujian (Yi)* 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡（一）, strips 72-73, and 98-99. An initial list of permuting odes had been presented in Yen Shih-hsuan 顏世鉉, "A Tentative Discussion," 50-51, but it contains some minor errors: see Smith and Poli, "Establishing the Text of the *Odes*."

Compositional skills

As with recitation, there are no explicit descriptions of processes by which individuals learned compositional skills, i.e. the ability to produce an argument, or to narrate a story using the appropriate style, or quoting the appropriate *Odes*. Yet this competence was clearly achieved, as demonstrated by the logical arguments in *Hanfeizi*, by *Zhuangzi*'s witty refusals of social norms, or again by how philosophers frame quotations from the *Odes* in their debates.

Common sense requires conjecturing a process of learning that included the following steps: the mastery of writing started with simple, short sentences. I have already shown in the first and second chapter that **Thicket of Sayings* include exercises for individuals at their first stages of writing. Afterwards, a scribe moved to learn more complex compositions, likely by relying on canvas and models,[394] eventually to learn to compose *sua sponte*. This produced a series of written documents at different stages of completeness, as the manuscripts analyzed in chapter two demonstrate. In this section, I consider how these manuscripts might have been used in reality as performance supports,[395] and for what purpose.

I start with **King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs*, the Shanghai Museum manuscript that assembles two versions of the same story where King Wu inquires with his ministers about the wisdom of ancient monarchs. In the first version, the minister is Shi Shang Fu; in the second, it is Taigong Wang. Both ministers in each case impose a period of fasting

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[394] Stallybrass, "Against Thinking,"

[395] I cannot demonstrate the exact manuscripts mentioned in this dissertation were used as I suggest here; but something bearing similar features.

and praying. After the king has complied, they read to him the same passage from a text named Cinnabar Documents.

The conversation between King Wu and Shi Shang Fu was previously known as part of the *Da Dai Liji*; that between the king and Taigong Wang was previously attested in the *Shuoyuan* 說苑.[396] Neither transmitted version mentions the Cinnabar Documents. One may see these two versions as two more stories that enrich the anecdotal tradition about King Wu and his ministers.

In practice, this perspective does not accommodate a rather unusual feature of first narration, namely the abrupt ending discussed in chapter two. It also does not explain why two anecdotes are recorded on the same physical manuscript and present the same narrative.[397] More plausibly, *King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs* represents an act of exercise in composition. The scribe is retrieving the story from memory, or is working to memorize it, and gives it two similar but not identical frameworks.

This view agrees very well with another detail: in both manuscript narratives, the set of instructions that the ministers urge the king to follow is the only textual portion that features rhymes and assonance. This carries over in the *Da Dai Liji* (DDLJ) anecdote:

> WWJZ A: 師尚父奉書，道書之言曰:「怠[3]勝敬則喪*s-mˤaŋ，敬勝怠則長*traŋʔ。義勝欲則從*tsoŋ，　欲勝義則兇*qʰ(r)oŋ。仁以得之，仁以守之，其運百[4]［世］。不仁以得之，仁以守之，　其運十世。不仁以得之，不仁以守之，及於身。」

[396] *Shuoyuan jiao zheng* 1.13-14 and 15.377-378.

[397] These are questions that ought to be explained especially if *King Wu Trod on the Eastern Stairs* is taken to be a factual record of King Wu's words themselves, as Liao Mingchun implies. See discussion in Zhou Boqun, "A Translation and Analysis."

WWJZ B:「丹書之言有之曰，『志勝欲則[13]昌（*-aŋ），欲勝志則喪*s-mˤaŋ。志勝欲則從*tsoŋ，欲勝志則兇*qʰ(r)oŋ。敬勝怠則吉*C.qi[t]，怠勝敬則滅*[m]et。不敬*kreŋ(ʔ)-s則不定*N-tˤeŋ-s。弗[14]彊*N-kaŋ則枉*qʷaŋʔ。枉者敗（*N-pˤra[t]-s），而敬者萬世（*l̥ap-s）。使民不逆而順成（*[d]eŋ），百姓之為經(*k-lˤeŋ)。』丹書之言有之。」

DDLJ：師尚父西面道書之言曰：「敬勝怠者吉*C.qi[t]，怠勝敬者滅*[m]et，義勝欲者從*tsoŋ，欲勝義者凶*qʰ(r)oŋ，凡事，不強則枉，弗敬*kreŋ(ʔ)-s則不正*C.teŋ，枉者滅廢。藏之約、行之行、可以為子孫常者，此言之謂也！且臣聞之，以仁得之，以仁守之，其量百世；以不仁得之，以仁守之，其量十世；以不仁得之，以不仁守之必及其世。」

Liu Qiurui 劉秋瑞 observed the two manuscript narratives are written with structurally different graphs.[398] This sparked discussions concerning how many scribes were involved in the production of *King Wu* manuscripts.[399] There are clear differences in writing styles, as in the cases of *yue* 曰 (*King Wu* A: B:) and *yu* 於 (*King Wu* A: B:). This variety however cannot be directly taken as evidence of multiple hands at work, since there are also examples of manuscripts most likely produced by one

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[398] Liu Qiurui, "Zailun Wu wang jian zuo shi liangge banben" 再論《武王踐阼》 是兩個版本."
[399] See summary in Zhou Boqun, "A Translation and Analysis," 3.

person *practicing* different styles (e.g., *Natural Dispositions* and the Anhui *Odes*[400]).

Furthermore, whether one or two scribes were involved in the production of the *King Wu*, my theory is valid: the composition was an occasions to rehearse what by the Warring States constituted a series of dicta, and to learn how to contextualize them in a dialogue between ruler and minister. Knowing the piece by heart was as important as knowing how to use it.

While the second anecdote ends right after Taigong Wang has concluded his reading from the Cinnabar Documents, the first story in *King Wu* continues further. The king, terrified by what he just heard from his minister Shi Shang Fu, orders a series of inscriptions to be made on different writing supports. One of these is a bronze basin (*pan* 盤) that records the following rhyming line:[401]

> 與其溺於人，寧溺於淵。溺於淵猶可游，溺於人不可救。
> Compared to drowning among the people, one would rather drown
> in an abyss. If drowning in an abyss, one can still swim. When
> drowning among the people, one cannot be saved.

As one may expect, the sentence appears in the *Da Dai Liji* parallel story, in which it is said to be quoted from an unnamed *guan pan* 盥盤 (wash basin). More importantly, the

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[400] On the *Natural Dispositions* see appendix A; on the Anhui *Odes*, see review in Smith and Poli, "Establishing the Text of the *Odes*."
[401] *Ren* 人 "person" and *yuan* 淵 "abyss" are both *-IN; 游 "swim" and 救 "to save" are *-U.

initial half of the sentence appears *verbatim* in one of the few bronze inscriptions cast

during the Warring States (circa 315 BCE[402]), the tripod of King Cuo of Zhongshan:

寡人聞之，與其溺於人，寧溺於淵。[403]

I, the lonely one, have heard this: Compared to drowning among

the people, one would rather drown in an abyss.

Liao Mingchun 廖名春 has used this parallel to argue that the Shanghai *King Wu* was

produced earlier, and that the Zhongshan vessel was copying from it. He Youzu 何有祖

instead reached the opposite conclusion: the manuscript was copying from the bronze[404] –

or rather, from the text that was eventually cast on the bronze. Neither position is certain,

since the Shanghai Museum corpus is carbon-dated to 305 ± 65 years.[405] The production

of the *King Wu* could easily fall before or after the casting of the Zhongshan tripod.

Furthermore, if we trust that the usage of Chu writing style indicates that the manuscript

was produced in the state of Chu, the manuscript and the bronze would have been

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[402] The scholarship on the Zhongshan bronzes is immense. For a quick introduction in English, see Mattos "Eastern Zhou Bronze Inscriptions" and Cook and Goldin, *A Source Book,* 294-300. Both give references to the first publications in Chinese language on the subject.

[403] *Jicheng* 2840.

[404] He Youzu 何有祖. 2007. "Shangbo jian Wu wang jian zuo chudu" 上博簡《武王踐阼》初讀. Liao Mingchun's position is summarized in here.

[405] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed. *Shanghai Bowuguan Cai Zhan Guo Chu Jian Shu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, vol. 1: 3. This is yet another example of the extra complications resulting from working with material not retrieved through scientific excavations, and at the same time, of the necessity to research this material in spite of these complications, because of how illuminating it is.

produced in states whose relations grew increasingly tense beginning around 323 BCE,[406] complicating the chances of smooth cultural transmission.[407]

The presence of this saying on both artifacts is significant for my argument: as literary and philosophical discourses grew in importance in the courtly spheres of ancient China, due to desire of states to regain political control and produce innovation to justify a shift of power, an increasing number of texts were created by individuals for whom mastering this knowledge was instrumental in securing a ministerial position.[408] The important point here is not the mere presence of idiomatic usages.[409] It is the presence of idiomatic usages in texts that, as demonstrated in chapter two, read as incomplete compositional gestures.

Another text that I have argued worked as a performance support used to learn compositional skills is the Guodian *Duke Mu of Lu asked Zi Si*, in light of the extensive verbatim repetition in just a handful of strips. Unlike the parallelism and other rhetorical patterns studied by David Schaberg,[410] this repetition does not build momentum. *Duke Mu* is an exercise to learn how a ruler-minister interaction ought to be framed according

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[406] Wu, *Material Culture, Power, and Identity in Ancient China*, 16.

[407] Here I am being speculative, as we also lack evidence that hostility inhibited cultural interaction. I am thinking about practical consequences that war brings, such as disruption of road travel which may have halted cultural exchanges.

[408] *Mengzi* 3B.9 talks of himself and the defender of the way of the Former sages 先聖之道, and implies that he is a sage as well ("if a sage rises again, they will not change my words" 聖人復起不易吾言矣). The rhetoric on sages being indispensable assistants to rulers was well developed by the Warring States era, thus giving suggestions on the implications of this passage.

[409] Where idiomatic usage is distinguished from "quotation" in that the latter must have a referential character to a source, either explicitly (by using quotation marks) or implicitly (i.e., when the quotation is not explicitly marked but the expectation is that anyone reading or listening to the text would understand. This distinction draws from Schultz's study, *The Search for Quotation*, which in turn builds on Herman Mayer's *Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst*.

[410] Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*.

to the literary expectations of the time: with a ruler humbly seeking the guidance of his ministers. The definition of loyalty presented in it is also noteworthy: loyal are those who weigh (*cheng* 稱) their rulers' actions. Ministers are the final judges in assessing their superior's behavior.[411]

The composer of this text created a narrative of how he would have liked a dialogue between non-equals to take place. The duke comes across as slow, unable to confront Zi Si and ask for a clarification of the latter's view on loyalty. Zi Si instead embodies the impeccable, intelligent minister. This is informative of the reality that surrounded the production of this text: by the Warring States, ministers and their voices became outspoken protagonists, in contrast with prior records where kings were commanding voices, demanding loyalty from their submissive vassals. I will return to this point later. Here, we can observe that the according to the exchange depicted in *Duke Mu*, a possible usage of this text was precisely to represent how an interaction between ruler and minister should have taken place from the point of view of the minister.

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[411] I traced three definitions of ministerial loyalty that present a similar position. "To fear the punishment of the battle-ax, and not to dare remonstrate against one's lord: this is not a loyal minister, 懼斧鉞之誅，而不敢諫其君，非忠臣也," *Han Shi Waizhuan Jishi* 韓詩外傳集釋 21.359. "When a ruler is tyrannical and there is no remonstration against him: this is not a loyal minister, 主暴不諫，非忠臣也 *Xin xu yangzhu* 新序詳注 7.192; "if a ruler errs but the minister does not remonstrate, the latter is not loyal. If there is a remonstration and the ruler does not listen, he is not bright, 君過而不諫，非忠臣也，諫而不聽，君不明也," *Wenzi shu yi* 文子疏義 10.429.

Oratory

The evidence for oratorical activities is the most straightforward. Early Chinese anecdotes and narratives testify that oratory was a praised skill, one that gained particular centrality during the Warring States era.[412] A successful orator is one who integrates knowledge of cultural referents, eloquence, memorization, and deployment of the right terminology.

Performance supports lacking an architectural structure or presenting a list format were used to learn terminology. Chapter two introduced *Natural Dispositions* as a collection of definitions on the topic of human nature, *xing* 性.[413] Here, I will show the recurrence of its terminology in other early Chinese arguments that involve elements related to human nature (e.g., the heart-mind, affections, etc.).[414] The contrast will also explicate the difference between *Natural Dispositions* and other philosophical pieces on human nature, supporting my previous statement that *Natural Dispositions* is not an argumentative text. The reader is asked for the moment to set aside the obvious objection that this contrast is, first and foremost, a contrast between an excavated text and three texts that underwent an editorial process during the Western Han dynasty –a problematic that I address below.

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[412] See overview of previous scholarship in chapter one.

[413] Also as "natural dispositions" when it best serves the English translation without compromising the import of the original passage.

[414] Some of the texts cited below took their shape during the Han dynasty or later times, but their content reflects Warring States thought and are therefore included.

I will start right at the beginning of *Natural Dispositions*.[415] The first two strips read:

凡人雖有性，心亡正志，待物而後作，待悅而後行，待習而後
奠。喜怒哀樂之氣，性也。及其現於外，則物趣之也。性自命
出，命自天降。[416]

In general, even though humans have natural dispositions, their heart lacks established intentions. Natural dispositions depend on externalities to arise, they await gratification to be in motion, they depend on habit and then they are established. The *qi* of pleasure, anger, sadness, happiness, is part of natural dispositions. When they appear on the outside, it is because externalities stimulate them. Natural dispositions come from endowment; endowment is sent down from Heaven.

This paragraph introduces three major themes: the dormant potentiality of natural dispositions; the definition of affections as being part of natural dispositions; and the topic of external stimulation. These three themes recur in the literature of the time, with the important difference that they are embedded as part of longer passages that use these assertions to proffer an argument. *Xunzi*'s chapter "On the Badness of Human Nature" *xing e* 性惡 is, as one would expect, a fitting starting point:

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[415] As it should be clear by now, the argument here applies to both manuscripts. I quote primarily from the *Natural Dispositions*. For a more detailed discussion of variants and differences between the two manuscripts, see my appendix A.

[416] *Xing zi ming chu* 1-3. On *Xunzi* and the *Natural Dispositions*, see Goldin, "Xunzi in the Light Of The Guodian Manuscripts."

若夫目好色，耳好聽，口好味，心好利，骨體膚理好愉佚，是
皆生於人之情性者也；感而自然，不待事而後生之者也。夫感
而不能然，必且待事而後然者，謂之生於偽。[417]

Now, the eyes love colors; the ears love to hear; the mouth loves
flavor; the mind loves profit, the whole body loves pleasure and
idleness. These all are born from human affections and natural
dispositions. If stimulated, they respond naturally; they do not
await for [the person] to act to be produced. What is stimulated but
one cannot respond to naturally, and must await for the person to
act to then be produced, we call this what is born from
fabrication.[418]

Both the theme of stimulation and the assertion that affections derive from human nature
are present.[419] Note that while *Natural Dispositions is *stating* these points, *Xunzi* is *using*
them to establish a distinction between natural responses to stimulations and what we
may define as more controlled responses to stimulation. *Xunzi* aims to correct the
impression that both behaviors prompted by affections and behaviors derived from
fabrication belong to the same category. The former are unruly responses that follow
human nature, while the latter come from assimilating the rituals and moral norms that
the sages established for humans. Thus, *Xunzi* dismisses the skeptical question "if human

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[417] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.
[418] Compare Hutton, *Xunzi*, 250.
[419] The theme of potentiality is also in *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.960 and *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.947.

nature is bad, how can rituals and norms of morality be produced"[420] with the logical

argument that rituals and morality are acquired behaviors, not part of human nature.[421]

Another good example comes from the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn*

Annals, *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露. Even though the text dates much later than **Natural*

Dispositions,[422] I mention it here since it well represents the difference between stating

the potential of human nature and using this concept to proffer an argument. In *Luxuriant*

Dew, the concept of potentiality is used in various metaphors to set apart the ability of

human nature to become good, and goodness itself:

> 中民之性如繭如卵。卵待覆二十日而後能為雛，繭待繅以涫湯
> 而後能為絲，性待漸於教訓而後能為善。善，教訓之所然也，
> 非質樸之所能至也，故不謂性。性者宜知名矣，無所待而起，
> 生而所自有也。善所自有，則教訓已非性也。是以米出於粟，
> 而粟不可謂米；玉出於璞，而璞不可謂玉；善出於性，而性不
> 可謂善。[423]

> The natural dispositions of ordinary people are like cocoons and
> eggs. An egg depends on [someone] to sit on it for twenty days,
> and only then does it become a bird; cocoons need to be unwound
> and soaked in water, and only then do they become silk. Natural
> dispositions wait to be imbued with teachings and instructions and
> then they become good. Goodness is obtained from instructions
> and teachings, which are not part of our natural dispositions. Thus,
> we make millet with grains, but we do not call millet "grain". Jade

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[420] 人之性惡，則禮義惡生, *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.

[421] From *Xunzi*, see also *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.947, discussed in appendix A.

[422] It is usually thought to be a Han dynasty text, attributed to Dong Zhongshu. Parts of it, however, may be as late as the Six Dynasties. The kind of vocabulary identification proposed here may help with its dating.

[423] *Chunqiu fanlu* 10.275.

ornaments come from the mineral jade, but we do not call them simply "jade." Goodness comes from natural dispositions, but we do not [simply] call natural dispositions good.[424]

We have a clear contrast between plain statements in *Natural Dispositions*, and philosophical arguments where the principle of potentiality is used to assert the goodness or badness of human nature. Later in the same chapter,[425] people's nature is explained through the same principle: its potentiality is dormant, and it requires the appropriate teachings to be awakened.

Other examples come from focusing on the sequence of affections that *Natural Dispositions* asserts to be part of human nature, i.e. pleasure, anger, sadness, happiness, *xi nu ai le* 喜怒哀樂. In *Guanzi*'s 管子 chapter "Xin shu" 心術, these appear as elements that, despite being a natural part of humans, disrupt their being:

> 凡民之生也，必以正平，所以失之者，必以喜樂哀怒。節怒莫若樂，節樂莫若禮，守禮莫若敬。外敬而內靜者，必反其性。[426]
>
> When people are born, they are[427] balanced through correct [measures]. That with which they lose this balance are pleasure, happiness, sorrow, and anger. To regulate anger, nothing is better than music; to regulate joy, nothing is better than the rituals; to observe rituals, nothing is better than respect. Those whose

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[424] Compare Queen and Major, eds, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*, 354.
[425] *Chunqiu fanlu* 10.267.
[426] *Guanzi xin zhu* 37.303. This principle is similarly stated in *Guanzi xin zhu* 49.360.
[427] I take *bi* 必 as indication of the certainty of the condition given the premise.

exterior is respectful, and whose interior is quiet, are thus reverting

to their natural dispositions.[428]

This passage is interesting for another reason. It mentions the necessity of regulating (*jie* 節) one's affections through external means, a theme appears in *Natural Dispositions* (even though in the latter, definitions on how to control one's feelings are complicated by philological uncertainties[429]).

   In the "Musical Records, "Yue ji" 樂記 chapter part of *Ritual Records*,[430] the bare *Natural Dispositions* statement becomes functional part of an explanation of how rulers affect people's behavior through musical stimulation (also a topic in *Natural Dispositions*). According to "Musical Records," in antiquity kings expressed their affections through music. The sages soon realized that music could be used as an instrument to stir people in the right direction. The efficiency of this method is due to the lack of constancy in human affections:

> 夫民有血氣心知之性，而無哀樂喜怒之常，應感起物而動，然
> 後心術形焉。[431]
>
> People have the nature of the *qi* of their blood and knowing their heart, but there is no constancy in the affections of sorrow, happiness, pleasure, anger. They move after being provoked by externalities, and then the techniques of the heart are manifested from it.

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[428] Compare Rickett, *Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China,* vol. 2, 53.
[429] See appendix A.
[430] Cook, "'Yue Ji' Yue Ji -- Record of Music: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary."
[431] *Liji zhengyi* (2009) 38.3327.

Another example comes from a passage halfway *Natural Dispositions*, where we read:

凡學者，求其心為難。縱其所偽[432]，近得之矣，不如以樂之速也。雖能其事，不能其心，不貴。求其心有偽也，弗得之矣。[433]

When learning, searching for one's heart is difficult. If one lets go of artificiality, one is close to getting it, but it is not as expedient as doing it through happiness.[434] Being capable at one's affairs but not capable at [finding] one's heart is of no worth. If there is artifice when searching one's mind, one will not obtain it.

Li Tianhong 李天虹 proposed that this passage should be connected to a discussion in *Mengzi*[435] that stresses the importance of searching for one's heart:

孟子曰："仁，人心也；義，人路也。舍其路而弗由，放其心而不知求，哀哉！人有雞犬放，則知求之；有放心而不知求。學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。"[436]

Mengzi said: Humanity is [in] the human heart; morality is the human path. To abandon this path and not to follow it, to discard one's heart and not know how to search [for it again], how sorrowful it is! When people set free fowls and dogs, they then know how to search for them; but if they let go of their heart, they then do not know how to search for it. Along the way of learning

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[432] Both here and in the following strip, the graph is 為, possibly also *wei* "action."
[433] *Xing zi ming chu* strip 36, 37.
[434] Here 樂 could as well be *yue*, "music."
[435] Li Tianhong, *Guodian zhu jian "Xing zi ming chu" yanjiu*.
[436] *Mengzi zhu shu* 10B.5987

and inquiring, there is nothing else than to search for one's discarded heart.

The connection with *Natural Dispositions* is given by the keywords "to learn" *xue* 學, and "to search for one's heart" *qiu xin* 求心. In both passages, searching for one's heart is portrayed as a goal, and the activity of learning (*xue* 學) is an essential component in both cases. In the *Mengzi*, this reasoning is tied to proving a central tenet of its philosophy, namely that while human nature tends towards goodness, one has to work to achieve morality.[437]

This last example draws the attention to the lack of parallels and quotations between *Natural Dispositions* and other Warring States texts that discuss human nature, in particular *Mengzi*. This is an essential aspect of the role of a manuscript like *Natural Dispositions*. *Natural Dispositions*, or a text akin to it, made available philosophical frameworks, concepts, terms, and phraseologies that we find in contemporaneous literature.

Consider a final example, this time from *Thicket of Sayings*, group number four and involving a parallel. Strips 8 and 9 record the assertion "Those who steal a belt buckle are punished; those who steal a state become feudal princes, and righteousness and soldiers are [then] at the gates of feudal princes."[438] The sentence known in the literature in

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[437] Here I need to clarify that am not suggesting a hierarchical nexus "*Natural Dispositions > Mengzi*," or that Mengzi was reading *Natural Dispositions*. My point is simpler: to highlight the differences between a text that provides definitions, and a text that uses these definitions to present an argument. Mencius may have used an ancestor of *Natural Dispositions*, or a similar text to learn the relevant philosophical vocabulary.

[438] Jingmen shi bo wu guan 荊门市博物馆, ed. *Guodian Chu Mu Zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹简, 217.

Zhuangzi's chapter "Qu qie" 胠篋, with the minor variant of "benevolence and righteousness" (*ren yi* 仁義) instead of "righteousness and soldiers" (*yi shi* 義士).[439] This has caused excitement, perhaps unwarrantedly so: *Thicket of Sayings* strips have been considered a fragment of the "Qu qie" chapter,[440] even representative of the whole chapter.[441] But how would this fit contextually in group four of *Thicket*? Why would an entire chapter be written down in single, separated sentences? By considering *Thicket* as a performance support, instead, we can build a more credible scenario: this statement, like many others collected there, was included in order to be studied and later used in larger contexts, contexts that allowed for the development of an argument, as in the case of *Zhuangzi*.

The sentence appears in *Records of the Historian* as well, to convey a similar message (interestingly, without any reference to the *Zhuangzi*'s chapter by Tang commentators):

> 鄙人有言曰：「何知仁義，已饗其利者為有德。」故伯夷醜周，餓死首陽山，而文武不以其故貶王；跖、蹻暴戾，其徒誦義無窮。由此觀之，「竊鉤者誅，竊國者侯，侯之門仁義存」，非虛言也。[442]
>
> The villagers have a saying: "Why bother to understand humanity and righteousness? Those who already enjoyed the profits therefrom are those who determine the existence of virtue." Thus

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Bo Yi[443] was ashamed of the Zhou, and starved to death [in protest] on the Shouyang Mountain, but Kings Wen and Wu were not for this reason considered less royal. Robber Zhi and Zhuang Qiao were ruthless and violent, and yet their followers praised their righteousness to no end. From these it can be seen that the words "Those who steal a belt buckle are punished; those who steal a state become feudal princes, and righteousness and soldiers are [then] at the gates of feudal princes" were not empty.

I include this passage from the *Records* because it gives me a chance to counter another objection to my analysis. It may be argued that the presence of common phrases and themes among textual sources arose from the acquisition and circulation of texts whose composition had already been concluded. We could imagine that someone reading the *Xunzi* would extrapolate the concept of potentiality to formulate what now constitutes the opening of *Natural Dispositions*, in a relationship that we may define as "philosophical arguments → performance support."

While this method of summarizing knowledge was surely known, I see the opposite relationship "performance support → philosophical arguments" as more likely to explain the texts discussed in this dissertation. To begin with, if the transition went from philosophical arguments to performance support, we would expect the latter to reproduce more passages, even *verbatim* ones, or a quote in a scheme that signals organization of

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[443] According to the tradition, he lived during the transition from Shang to Zhou dynasty. He and his brother, disturbed by the behavior of the last ruling Shang king, fled to the Zhou territory. There, however, they remonstrated against the future King Wu, considering him unfilial. They retired to a mountain in sign of protest, referred here by Sima Qian and their place of death.

extant knowledge (such as in the maps and diagrams to navigate divination practices in the Mawangdui corpus, or the encyclopedic works that emerge from the third century CE[444]). Secondly, in this scenario, we would then be left with the questions of how the knowledge behind philosophical arguments came to be. The transition "performance support → philosophical arguments" is not only more natural in an environment that promotes cultural developments as that of the Warring States era, but it also makes better sense of observations that would otherwise remain unsolved.

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[444] Xiaofei Tian. "Literary Learning: Encyclopedias and Epitomes."

Performance supports in context.

Singling out performance supports from a body of texts implies that the remaining texts are not from the same category. From the comparisons discussed above, it may appear that the dividing line between performance supports and other texts coincides with a dividing line between manuscripts and transmitted texts. This impression would be both mistaken and correct at the same time.

It is mistaken because the scope of this dissertation is limited. I have not been able to address the presence of manuscripts that clearly do not read as incomplete compositional acts, and which would remove this impression.[445] Examples are the Tsinghua *Command to She* mentioned above, or the *Black Robe* manuscripts, briefly mentioned in chapter two.[446] Conversely, the body of transmitted literature likely incorporated performance supports. In chapter two I highlighted the resemblance between the "canons" section of *Mozi*, and *Thicket of Sayings*. A more detailed analysis of this body will yield more examples –a subject for another study.

At the same time, it would be also correct to say that transmitted literature was likelier to be transmitted precisely because it articulated and proposed philosophical arguments instead of simply listing statements. In the comparisons above, I illustrated the difference between a text that provides dicta and the usage of these dicta to build an

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[445] Beyond the body of literary and philosophical writings that I focus on, administrative texts and *rishu* 日書 also belong to this category.

[446] To remind the reader, the text of *Black Robe* was known in the scholarship as a chapter of the *Book of Rites*. There now exist two manuscript versions, one from Guodian and one from the Shanghai collection, identical with each other and different from the received version. Since I am looking into the lives of manuscripts during the fourth century BCE as opposed to overtime, here the take away is that the *Black Robe* manuscripts are stable at that time, and articulate a position.

argument. I also suspect that the presence of an authorial figure, factual or otherwise, increased the chances of transmission.

A potential criticism building on the contrast between manuscripts and transmitted texts could be raised. "Transmitted" is attached to texts that were handed down through generations, some more reliably than others, all the way to, and then from, the Han dynasties. During the Han dynasties, many of them underwent processes of textual organization and cataloging. Could it then be the case that a text such as *Mengzi* preserves structured arguments on human nature because its shape was determined during this editorial process?

This assumes that the editorial process that took place during the Han dynasties involved considerable alteration of textual content. Yet we do not have evidence of this. In the case of *Mengzi*, Zhao Qi 趙歧 (d. 201) asserts that he organized a *Mengzi* in seven chapters (*pian* 篇), setting aside the so-called *Mengzi wai pian* 孟子外篇, because he doubted that they were authentic (*zhen* 真).[447] There is thus no indication that Zhao Qi meddled with the main textual content. Commentators emended single words and added their annotation. The structure of many transmitted texts supports this. *Mengzi* has passages famous for having left commentators and scholars confused about how to interpret them,[448] and the *Analects*'s last chapter "Yao said" 堯曰 reads as a text that perhaps ought to belong to *Exalted Writings*.

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[447] *Mengzi zhu shu* 孟子注疏, "Mengzi ti ci 孟子題辭" 11. Incidentally, he did not destroy this material, deferring to later generations' judgment whether or not his analysis was correct.
[448] For an example, see Goldin, *Confucianism*, 50.

In other words, different textual features between performance supports and the transmitted texts presented here cannot be attributed entirely to their transmission histories (or lack thereof). And if this is the case, we find ourselves at the beginning of this story, asking ourselves, what are we reading?

Cui bono?

To contextualize the performance supports, we need to consider who benefitted from their existence. The question is relevant in a twofold way. Though conjectural, the identification of a social group that could reasonably have gained from the existence and usage of performance supports could validate my argument. Secondly, it begins to answer the question of why performance supports were not transmitted.

At the beginning of this chapter, I have briefly discussed the diversity manifested during the Warring States. As mentioned, one of the forms it took was the establishment of states de facto independent of the Zhou ruling court. This socio-political change determined, and was in turn reinforced by, the ability of local administrative centers to function independently. In origin, these administrative centers were local centers that the Zhou court gave permission to organize.[449] Over time, as the loyalty of aristocratic families in charge of local territories began to fade,[450] local centers not only grew in importance, thus increasing literacy levels; they also began to produce writing that went beyond administrative purposes.[451]

Scholars have long noted changes in the control of textual production. Even with the little evidence that exists about Western Zhou bureaucratic structures, there is growing consensus that the process of inscribing bronzes was primarily controlled within lineages. Bronzes produced by the same family through generations display consistency in both

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[449] Li Feng, "Literacy and the Social Contexts of Writing in the Western Zhou."
[450] Pines, *Foundation of Confucian Thought*.
[451] Major and Cook, *Ancient China. A History*, 16.

decorative patterns and inscriptions, as shown in studies by Li Feng,[452] Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚,[453] and more recently Ondřej Škrabal.[454]

The emphasis on lineages is also seen in the rhetoric used in bronze inscriptions to demonstrate allegiance. In the famous Shi Qiang *pan* 史墻盤, dated around the tenth century BCE, the narrating voice (supposedly, Archivist Qiang 墻盤 himself) demonstrates his loyalty to the king by telling his family's history of service.[455] His lineage and his knowledge of the Zhou dynasty represent his credentials.

As we enter the fifth century BCE, the idea of replacing the prominence of kinship with an emphasis on social relations and moral behavior gains traction.[456] In reality, family-bonds and lineage-owned appointments did not disappear. Judging from the Zhangjiashan "Statues on Scribes," scribal families remained a central structure of this activity. Yet social changes that led to the formation of a more diverse literate class took place. If we trust historical records such as *Records of the Historian*, a growing number

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[452] Li Feng. "Literacy Crossing Cultural Borders."

[453] Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 in his articles "Jinwen suo jian Xi-Zhou guizu jiazu zuoqi zhidu" 金文所見西周貴族家族作器制度, *Qingtongqi yu jinwen* 1 (2017), 24–45.

[454] Škrabal, Ondřej. "Writing Before Inscribing."

[455] *Jicheng* 10175. See study in Cook and Goldin, *A Source Book of Ancient Bronze Inscriptions*, 93-100. See also Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou History*, 183-192, and Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China," among others.

[456] Von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC),* discussing the importance of lineage stressed in Western Zhou inscriptions, and its gradual disappearance (pp. 71-73, and throughout). And Sena, "Arraying the Ancestors in Ancient China."

of Warring States influential thinkers are of unknown origin, and yet this did not hinder

their chances of becoming participants in Warring States intellectual debates.[457]

This group of thinkers aspired to a ministerial position.[458] In a famous anecdote from

the *Zhuangzi*, the King of Chu sent emissaries to offer Zhuangzi a court position.

Zhuangzi firmly refuses, considering office the path to become a relic.[459] On other

occasions, *Zhuangzi* discredits political engagement, warning of the deleterious

consequences office has on one's health.[460] The strength of the position comes from the

implied acknowledgment that a ministerial position was desired and valued by Warring

States intellectuals. As such, *Zhuangzi*'s refusal of what was perceived as an honor is a

shocking one. To us, it reveals the aspiration of this new literary social class.

Perhaps already active in courtly realms as teachers (this is the position that Xunzi

occupies according to his biography in *Records of the Historian*[461]), these thinkers

accelerated the process of linking eloquence and knowledge to the possibility of

accessing positions of political prestige and influence. To them, culture became a path to

power. These phenomena, fostered by kings' desire to put together the best army *and*

ideology, are reflected with embellishments in the literature of the Warring States era.

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[457] Loewe, "Consultants and Advisors, and the Tests of Talent in Western and Eastern Han," attempts a similar reconstruction for intellectuals in the Han dynasties. He discusses four groups of intellectual and social speakers, in a similar manner to what I have done here: starting from what is known about the intellectual life in the first imperial years and imagining the types of services that would make sense in that context.

[458] Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 114: "rulers were in fact competing to attract knights with new ideas and skills to their courts." See also Graziani, *Fiction and Philosophy in the Zhuangzi*, 3.
[459] *Zhuangzi* 17.149.
[460] Goldin, *The Art*, 148-152.
[461] *Shiji* 74.2348.

For example, during the Warring States moral behavior becomes a yardstick for social recognition. Low-ranking, and even felonious, individuals are the protagonists of several narratives where they rise to power solely on the basis of their behavior. This specific form of rhetoric begins to be attached to foundational figures such as that of the mythical emperor Shun 舜: he was the perfect embodiment of filial piety, and endured a stubborn father, an insincere stepmother, and arrogant brothers.[462] Once his virtue reached the ear of Yao 堯, he was recognized as a sage, and named the successor to the throne.[463]

Soon, other aspects besides morality became the *sine qua non* to achieve success for humble people, such as acts of recognition of virtuous behavior by superiors. The Guodian *Frustration or Achievement*, is a perfect example of this. If the time is right, any moral individual will be recognized, regardless of their status.[464] In *Hanfeizi*, timely encounters are less relevant (perhaps because its author was socially better positioned), but equal importance is attached to creating the right circumstances.[465] Merit is a critical new element. As Sarah Allan[466] and Yuri Pines[467] have already discussed, Warring States texts also promote the idea of a succession of rulers based on merit rather than hereditary principles.

Thinkers understood the role they could have played and actively worked to depict themselves as essential to government. They gained control of at least part of the

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[462] *Shiji* 1.21. See discussion in Allan, *Buried Ideas*, 18.
[463] See discussion in Pines, "Disputers of Abdication."
[464] Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 429-452. Smith, "What Difficulty"
[465] 夫有材而無勢，雖賢不能制不肖 *Huainanzi jishi*, 28.208.
[466] Allan, *Buried Ideas*.
[467] Pines, "Disputers of Abdication." See also discussion in *Zhou History*, 142 ff.

narrative in which they were protagonists. This explains not only the emergence of the themes just mentioned, but also of tropes such as the poor-but-moral individuals (by Han times, it evolves into the poor-but-studious rhetoric, *jia pin hao du shu* 家貧好讀書[468]) who become successful ministers indispensable to the functioning of government. Consequently, it is in Warring States literature interactions between rulers and ministers take a new form. While in bronze inscriptions rulers are talking *to* assenting and silent ministers, with the fourth century a new situation emerges, one where ministers dialogue extensively with rulers, and almost always win the argument. Rulers' comments are often simple expressions of admiration. At times, rulers are even depicted as subjugated to ministers' orders. In both narratives of **King Wu trod on the Eastern Stairs*, King Wu is represented as subject to his ministers: each minister refuses to answer the king's question unless the king fasts and prays for days.

More examples of this rhetoric appear among the Tsinghua collection. In volume five, a manuscript titled **The High Ancestor of Yin Asked the Three Elderlies*, collects the exchanges the High Ancestor of Yin has with three wise old men. The three elderlies provide him with definitions of good governance and of the key virtues involved, such as

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[468] This is the case of Chen Ping 陳平 (active second c. BCE), whose life sets out in the most discouraging conditions: orphaned, he lives with his older brother Bo 伯, who dedicates himself to working to ensure that Chen Ping can pursue and education. Ping's love for books will eventually pay back: he becomes an important minister who had access to no less than the Han court itself, and was recognized as a virtuous person (*Shiji* 56.2051-2059). Kuang Heng 匡衡 (active first c. BCE) becomes chancellor of state uniquely because of his love for studying, in particular a keen understanding of the *Odes* (*Shiji* 96.2688). A similar fate was that of Li Yiji 酈食其 (circa 268-206 BCE), born so poor that he barely has clothes and food, and the people in the village think of him as crazy. He becomes no less than Liu Bang's strategic advisor, playing a role in the establishment of the Han dynasty (*Shiji* 97.2691-2696). Zhu Maichen 朱買臣 was born poor, but with an ardent love for knowledge that made him recite what he learned while carrying bundles of firewood to the market. He later became assistant to Emperor Wu (*Shiji* 112.2950; *Hanshu* 74.2791). Chen Tang 陳湯 (active second BCE) begins in poverty and raises to a military office, *Hanshu* 70.3007.

benevolence and wisdom. The manuscript even describes the ruler as terrified (*kong ju* 恐懼) when seeking counsel from Ancestor Peng.[469]

In other words, the literature incorporates signs that individuals who lacked noble descent and were immersed in a literate environment grew more conscious of their role. A famous event suggests notable changes in power dynamics: in 316 BCE, King Kuai of Yan 燕王噲 (d. 314 BCE) yielded the throne to his otherwise unheard-of minister Zi Zhi 子之. The intellectuals of the time appraised the act differently.[470] While this event represents an exception and not the rule,[471] it signals that the ministerial class came to have unprecedented influence on political power, and thinkers were conscious of it.

Manuscripts now add evidence of this consciousness. A stronger social class would actively contribute to making itself an indispensable component of society. Performance supports are the written vestige of this process. This reconciles their features, and also their textual histories. The lack of references or quotations to manuscripts that cover topics of primary importance in the fourth century BCE becomes more understandable: they were instruments in a process that responded to specific needs. Over time, these

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[469] *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡, vol. 7, 149-162.
[470] Pines, "Disputers of Abdication."
[471] A second example is the takeover of the throne by Tian Wu 田午 in the state of Qi 齊 in 384 BCE. The Tian family was originally from Chen 陳, and relocated to Qi after Chen Wan 陳完 took refuge there in 672 BCE. They became powerful advisors to Qi's ruling family, at times directly controlling the royal line of succession. Tian Wu became the fact ruler of Qi after his father Tian He 田和 put the Qi ruler Duke Kang 康公 (r. 404-384) in house arrest. The history of the Qi state is particularly rich and informative of how ruler-minister relationships unfolded and changed from the Spring and Autumn to the Warring States period. The story is narrated in the "Tian Jingzhong Wan shi jia 田敬仲完世家" (*Shiji* 46.1879-1904) and the "Qi Taigong shi jia 齊太公世家" (*Shiji* 32.1477-1531) sections of the *Records of the Historian*. There is also a very useful table at http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Zhou/rulers-qi.html.

timely-shaped instruments became of less use, and other kinds of texts became prevalent

as tools of knowledge acquisition, as the next section goes on to discuss.

Towards a Warring States educational system

We have now put together a plausible account concerning the usage of manuscripts that I have identified as "performance supports." Manuscripts were as central actors as the individuals who used them; together, they participated in the formation of a body of knowledge that, over time, would become tradition. I have also defined, to the extent possible, who would have benefitted from this material, and why: individuals used knowledge as a gateway to courtly appointments. Some of these individuals did not belong to the noble class, but operated in the same range of environments.

We can distinguish how knowledge displays separated members of the noble class from aspiring ministers is the value assigned to it. In a long narrative recorded in the *Zuo Commentary*, the wisdom of Jizha 季札 (prince of the Wu 吳 state, mid 6th century BCE) and his grasping of political matters is signaled by his thorough understanding of the odes and their music.[472] In another episode, ailure to display one's knowledge was synonymous with disaster:

> 夏，宋華定來聘，通嗣君也。享之，為賦《蓼蕭》，弗知，又
> 不荅賦。昭子曰：「必亡，宴語之不懷，寵光之不宣，令德之
> 不知，同福之不受，將何以在？」[473]
> In summer, Hua Ding of Song came [to Lu] on an official visit, to
> establish communication with the inheriting lord. They received
> him [ceremonially], and recited 'Luxuriant Artemisia"[474] for him.

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[472] *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 39.4356-4362.
[473] *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 44.1489-1490.
[474] *Mao* 173.

He did not know it, and also did not respond with a recitation [of his own]. Zhaozi[475] said: "He will have to flee [his state]. Without cherishing the words of the feast, without letting the lights of favor shine, without knowing what makes virtue is, without receiving the communal blessings: how can he possibly remain [in his position]?"[476]

In the *Zuo Commentary* narratives, displaying knowledge is part of ritual procedures.[477] For aspiring ministers, performing their knowledge correctly and convincingly was functional to their identity.

We would like then to reconstruct the educational system in which these manuscripts found their place. Who could have had access to debates and discussions in which a text like *Natural Dispositions* would have been used? Did the performance supports circulate at all, and if so, how? What would an educational system look like?

These aspects of Warring States society remain conjectural. As pointed out in this dissertation, manuscripts are only one outcome of intellectual activities. However, some educated guesses can be made. It is likely that thinkers and ministers traveled with manuscripts. Their format made them apt to transportation, and sources from a few centuries later confirm that manuscripts traveled with their owners. For example, commentator Du Lin 杜林 studied the *Exalted Writings* 尚書 in modern Jiangsu with

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[475] That is, Shusun Chuo 叔孫昭 (d. 517), high ranking minister of Lu.
[476] Cf. Durrant *et al. Zuo Tradition*, 1473.
[477] Cf. Wang Tsung-hsuan, 王琮瑄，“由《左傳》交際涵養與外交辭令論「禮」 ——兼論交際失敗之例.”

Zhang Song 張竦 (d. 23 CE). Zhang's copy of the *Writings* was most likely obtained by

his uncle Zhang Chang 張敞 (d. 48 BCE) while he acted as governor in Shangyang

(modern Shangdong), who later returned home with his library.[478] The chances that

manuscripts circulated through similar channels in pre-imperial eras are high. One cannot

fail to notice that Warring States manuscripts were by and large produced in Chu (the

looted ones included, if one compares writing styles and other elements), but the majority

of narratives and events narrated recorded on them take place somewhere else.[479] Perhaps

this is a sign of Chu's apparatus acting to incorporate Zhou traditions as expressed

elsewhere, and that manuscripts traveled along with individuals.[480]

A difficulty in narrowing the focus on how an educational system[481] might have been

conceived in Warring States societies comes from balancing the notions of textual fluidity

and stability. Much has been discussed about the fluidity of texts in pre-imperial China,

and it has been correctly pointed out that much textual stability has been created by Han

dynasties' scholars, who gathered together and organized the written corpus they

inherited from previous generations.[482] Yet if we analyze fluidity in Warring States texts

from the Han perspective, we risk forcing a degree of fluidity for the benefit of

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[478] See appendix E.
[479] Especially if we consider the existence of multiple instantiations of the same texts, as in the case of the *Black Robe*. Soil conditions from the Southern area in which the Chu state was located are particularly conducive in preserving bamboo strips; but this claim remain true even if we found ancient manuscripts in tombs in the north whose content focus on events that took place in Chu.
[480] There is both archeological and textual evidence of ongoing trades and movements in ancient China. For the state of Chu, a summary is given in Peters's "Towns and Trade," in– *Defining Chu*, 99-120.
[481] In Anglophone scholarship, start from Creel, *The Origin of Statecraft in China*, in particular 406-409. Cf. Lee, *Education in traditional China*.
[482] The notion of "author" is particularly functional to this process, for a recent discussion see Du Heng, "The Author's Two Bodies."

highlighting a bottleneck in textual canonization that shares no common ground with the production of texts in previous centuries.[483]

To be clear, there *is* fluidity in Warring States textual production: I argued in chapter two that *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are not one text, but rather two instantiations of a set of philosophical assumptions concerning the topic of human nature that gave access to understanding ongoing discussions. The examples of *King Wu Trod the Eastern Stairs* is even more telling. Yet, there is also textual stability, as demonstrated by the existence of Warring States copies of *Black Robe*,[484] of copies of identical texts within the Shanghai Museum collection, or the discovery of a text that parallels the Tsinghua *Yue gong qi shi* 越公其事 among the archeologically excavated manuscripts from Jingzhou.[485]

The general principle for philosophical and literary arguments, especially as regards the vocabulary used to build them, is one that contrasts stability without promoting endless fluidity. The degree to which stability or fluidity are part of the production of a manuscript remains however to be determined on a case by case basis.

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[483] As proposed by Du Heng, "Exploring Textual Dating and Its Implications." Lecture delivered for the Altars of Soil series, on Feb 25, 2022.

[484] And indeed, there is also stability over time.

[485] Zhao Xiaobin 趙曉斌, "Jingzhou zao zhi jian 'Wu wang cha qi shi dai Yue' yu Qinghua jian 'Yue gong qi shi' 荆州棗紙簡《吳王夫差起師伐越》與清華簡《越公其事》. Incidentally, this discovery tips the balance considerable in favor of the authenticity of the Tsinghua collection.

CHAPTER FOUR. *The Warring States debate on human nature*

> And please remember people that no matter who you are,
> and what you do to live, thrive and survive,
> there are still some things that make us all the same.
> You, me, them, everybody, everybody.
> *The Blues Brothers*

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I contextualized some of the philosophical and literary manuscripts I have been working on, defining them "performance supports." In chapter three, I have illustrated how a performance support such as **Natural Dispositions come from Endowment* would have been used to acquire the terminology and the concepts to engage with, and craft new, arguments on the topic of human nature, *xing* 性, which was a topic of intellectual debate in the fourth and third centuries BCE.

In this final chapter, I shift the conversation to the intellectual debate that motivated the production of the performance support **Natural Dispositions*. I chose this text, among others, partly because it was how my research started, and partly because of my interest in the topic. I argued that the production of performance supports was spurred by an increasingly competitive environment where knowledge display could lead to a career in public life. What motivated the production of performance supports on human nature? In discussing this topic, we can also consider whether the discovery of **Natural Dispositions* has significantly changed what was previously known about *xing*. These are the two questions asked in this chapter, and they both require an overview of the concept

of *xing* in the Warring States era. Since **Natural Dispositions* has been already introduced in chapter two and is finely analyzed in the appendix section of this dissertation, here I deal primarily with ancient transmitted sources.

Human nature in the Warring States era

Warring States philosophy is often represented by a group of transmitted texts. Usually this includes *Analects* 論語, *Mozi* 墨子, *Mengzi* 孟子, *Xunzi* 荀子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子. The choice has its merit: these texts have exerted incredible influence on subsequent generations of intellectuals.[486] When discussing human nature, a second reason can be added to select these four among the transmitted texts: they provide rich, dense discussions of the topic, referencing each other.[487]

Following traditional accounts, two more texts appear to belong to Warring States literature, *Liezi* 列子 and *Wenzi* 文子. However, their textual histories complicate a straightforward inclusion of these sources as Warring States voices. *Liezi* is most likely an imperial text that was attributed to a mysterious sage, Lie Yükou 列禦寇, about whom almost nothing is known.[488] As for *Wenzi*, the publication of a manuscript of this text (in 1995, fourteen years after its recovery) that partially matches the received text confirms that some sort of *Wenzi* existed at least during the first century BCE, and perhaps a bit

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[486] Goldin, *The Art*.

[487] In future versions of this study, I would also like to include *Han Feizi* 韓非子, somewhat less explored in the Anglophone scholarship because of the paramount importance of the *Mengzi* and the *Xunzi* in this debate. This is somewhat also true of the *Zhuangzi*. On *xing*, there is a large number of studies, many of which will be cited in the discussion below. Yet including them all is both an herculean task, and unnecessary.

[488] Graham, "The Date and Composition of the *Liehtzyy*."

earlier. However, the majority of *Wenzi* content, including all references to *xing,* are derived from *Huainanzi* 淮南子.[489] Thus, I take the discussion on human nature present in *Wenzi* and *Liezi* as a Western Han and Eastern Han phenomena respectively. Because of my focus on Warring States intellectual history, these remain outside the scope of this dissertation.

In this chapter I will not aim to provide an exhaustive summary of all the passages in which *xing* occurs in each philosophical text. Especially in the case of *Mengzi* and *Xunzi,* many studies have been dedicated to their conceptions of human nature that repeating it all here would make it redundant. I will emphasize those sections that are most representative, or that relate to **Natural Dispositions*. This will also reiterate a point made in the previous chapters: there are no references to **Natural Dispositions*, nor does the Guodian manuscript parallel contemporaneous discussions on human nature.

Finally, philosophical notions are best discussed in relation to other concepts that inform a discourse. There are several philosophical topics that both inform and are defined by human nature, such as *sheng* 生, 'be born; life'; *qing* 情, 'emotions'; *yi* 義, 'morality'; desires; sexuality; conceptions of self.[490] These have already appeared, and will continue to, in our discussions. However, because of the obvious limitations of this chapter and dissertation, my research does not exhaustively review them.

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[489] Van Els, *The Wenzi*, 94-100 and 101-108. The first substantial study of *Wenzi-Huainanzi* parallels was by Kandel, *Wen Tzu: Ein Betrag zur Problematik und zum Verständnis eines taoistischen Textes.* See also Ding Yuanzhi 丁原植, *Huainanzi yu Wenzi kaobian huainanzi yu* 淮南子與文子考辯.

[490] Such as Goldin *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* on sexuality; Csikszentmihàlyi, "Ethics And Self-Cultivation Practice In Early China," on self-cultivaiton; Virág *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy,* on emotions; Slingerland, *Beyond Orientalism,* on body-mind dualism. Other studies will be referred to in due course.

What is "xing" 性

Before immersing ourselves in ancient Chinese texts, I will clarify what *xing* is. Warring

States texts present different conceptions of *xing*. Comparing them highlights some

common factors. *Xing* is a set of inborn dispositions endowed to all members of the same

species alike.[491] While different species have different *xing*, their operational principle is

the same: inborn dispositions determine a path of development.

Several studies have discussed the topic of *xing* in early Chinese philosophy. A still

very influential definition is that of Angus C. Graham, introduced in his "The

Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature."[492] To Graham, *xing* is the "proper

course of development" of a thing during its life. With regard to humans,

> "The concept of *xing* begins as the course of a healthy human life,
> and comes to be translatable as 'nature' when its scope is extended
> to all things animate and inanimate and to all that characterizes
> them when they are developing or have developed along the
> courses proper to them."[493]

Graham was fundamentally correct. On the basis of new textual evidence, Paul Goldin

later modified the interpretation of *xing* to indicate: "a set of inborn characteristics shared

by all members of the same species."[494] My own definition introduced above builds on

Goldin's one. Both definitions target central aspects of human nature: it is inborn, and it

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[491] Goldin, *The Art*, 89-91 refutes this definition for *Mengzi*. I discuss this in detail below.
[492] Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature."
[493] Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," 11.
[494] Goldin, *Confucianism*, 50.

constitutes the same starting point for all members of the same species. By the end of this chapter, we will add a third cardinal point: it is affected by external circumstances.

In the texts reviewed below, *xing* is primarily discussed in relation to humans, hence it is very often translated as "human nature". This is overall unproblematic,[495] but it is worth remembering that humans are not the sole possessors of *xing*: in Chinese texts, animals and inanimate objects possess natural dispositions too. These references are worth a brief discussion, since they help to clarify the broader meaning of *xing*.[496]

On one occasion, *Mengzi* talks of the *xing* of a mountain –an inanimate object.[497] In the passage, the Ox Mountain 牛山 is described as having been beautiful and lush. Now, however, the mountain is bare, because humans chopped its trees and let cattle graze there. But this desolate state is not the *xing* of the mountain, it comes as a consequence of interference. *Huainanzi* 淮南子[498] discusses the *xing* of bamboo and metal. The *xing* of bamboo is to float, but if it is interfered with, its broken strips will sink. Metal's *xing* is to sink, but if it is positioned on something like a boat, it will float.[499] In all these examples, *xing* indicates a disposition that determines the behavior of elements, provided that nothing interferes with it.

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[495] As fair as I know, the only objection against such translation has been articulated by Roger Ames (The Mencian Conception of *renxing*"), and somewhat reintroduced in the more recent "Reconstructing A. C. Graham's Reading of Mencius on *xing* 性" (in Defoort and Ames, *Having a Word with Angus Graham*). His position has been amply discussed in two publications by Irene Bloom, thus it does not need further revision here (Bloom, "Mencian Arguments on Human Nature (Jen-Hsing)," and "Human Nature and Biological Nature in Mencius").
[496] A few more are mentioned in the section dedicated to *Zhuangzi*.
[497] *Mencius* 6A.8; see discussion in Goldin, *Confucianism*, 52–53.
[498] A text of imperial composition that however incorporates much Warring States material.
[499] *Huainanzi jishi* 11.775. See Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 403-404.

Warring States thinkers specify that humans' *xing* is different from that of other entities. A main difference lies in the possibility of humans' natural dispositions developing differently from individual to individual. In animals, the development of *xing* is determined, whereas humans have the ability to develop their *xing* in different ways.[500]

As these examples illustrate, it is easy to grasp the overall meaning of *xing*, but contextual usages add situational details. This suggests that, in the mid fourth century BCE, *xing* had just begun to metamorphose into a technical term of philosophical interest, and was thus being continuously re-defined and reinvented –forcing modern translators to juggle with "nature; human nature; natural dispositions," as my own translations below show.

Little is known about this philosophical debate prior to the fourth century BCE, as Graham had already noted. According to his study, "individualists" such as Yang Zhu 楊朱 (fourth c. BCE) introduced *xing* into the philosophical discourse with the meaning of natural "span of life."[501] Today the scholarship tends to avoid assigning specific timing and actions to figures like Yang Zhu about whom little is known.[502] But Graham's observation that the debate begins to be recorded in the Warring States is a factual statement. No texts predating the Warring States period include the word *xing* with the meaning of "natural dispositions."

There are reasons for why this might have been the case. For one, we do not possess large bodies of philosophical writings from the first half of the first millennium BCE.

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[500] *Xing zi ming chu* strips 7-8.
[501] Graham, "The Background," 7–9.
[502] Andreini, *Il Pensiero Di Yang Zhu*; Perkins, "Recontextualizing Xing."

However, I suspect that even if we found them, human nature would not figure predominantly among the discussions as it does in later writings. As I will argue at the end of this chapter, the debate on human nature was a product of the socio-political circumstances outlined at the end of chapter three. Furthermore, the history of this word presents another piece of evidence.

The words *xing* 性 "nature" and *xing* 姓 "lineage" were derived from *sheng* 生 "to be born" probably through a process of *qusheng* nominalization:[503] from "to be born" *sreŋ, to "nature" *seŋ-s, and "lineage" *seŋ-s. Originally, these three words would have been written with the same graph, 生. In other words, there was not an orthographic distinction between *sheng* "to be born" and its derivatives.[504]

An etymologically unrelated word, "to inspect" 眚 *sheng* < *sreŋʔ, was by the Eastern Zhou dynasty spelled with the component 生. In Warring States manuscripts like

[503] See Jacques, Guillaume. "How many *-s suffixes in Old Chinese?" Which begins with introducing prior literature on this subject. The disappearance of the medial -r- needs more investigation.
[504] See Cai Zhemao 蔡哲茂 ("Bu ci sheng zi zai tan 卜辭生字再探") for an overview of the semantic of *shēng* 生 in oracle-bone inscriptions. In bronze inscriptions, *shēng* was used to write the word "life", such as in the formulaic expression wishing prolonged life, "*mi sheng* 彌生". The same expression is found in the *Odes* 詩經, in "Juan A 卷阿," in the recurring expression "may you fulfill your life 俾爾彌爾性", where *xing* 性 is glossed by Zheng Xuan 鄭泫 as *xing ming* 性命, "life" (*Maoshi* 17.626–2). See also the 蔡姞簋 (*Jicheng* 4198) where 性 "span of life" is written with 生; and Xijiapan 兮甲盤 (*Jicheng* 10174). Conversely, *xing* 性 is used with the meaning of *sheng* 生 in *Zuozhuan* 左傳 "Xu said: I heard that someone who nurture his people restrain the inside and establish virtue on the outside, people [hence] enjoy their lives, and there are no enemies nor hatred. 戍曰，吾聞撫民者，節用於內，而樹德於外，民樂其性，而無寇讎." Commentator Kong Yingda 孔穎達 glosses: "*xing* means 'life' 性，生也". Yan Shigu 顏師古 gives exactly the same gloss to read this passage from the *Hanshu* 漢書: "positions were not established, actions did not follow the [correct] way, therefore [he] ruined his life, arriving to ruining his ancestral lineage 處非其位，行非其道，果隕其性，以及厥宗" (*Hanshu* 70.2903).

Natural Dispositions,[505] a convention is adopted in which *xing* "nature" and *xing* "lineage"[506] are disambiguated from *sheng* 生 "to be born" by writing the former two words with 眚.[507] It was only by the Han dynasty, that the orthography 性 for "nature" was fixed, with the component 心 rather than *mu* 目.

I believe the change in the orthography was dictated by a new need to disambiguate two related words, "to be born" and "nature," because of the increasingly central discussions concerning the concept of "nature" starting in the fourth century BCE. A statement such as Gaozi's "What is inborn is what we call 'nature'"[508] gained much clarity from this attempt at leveraging the graphic structure to specify the word being written: 生之謂眚 (eventually normalized as 性) as opposed to being written 生之謂生.[509]

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[505] See Bai Yulan, *Jian Du Bo Shu Tongjia Zi Zidian*, 293–296 for a comprehensive list (up to 2008) of the *xing* occurrences in excavated manuscripts. In fact, we even have one early record of 眚 writing *sheng* 生 "to be born" in the Yang *gui* 揚簋 inscription dated to late Western Zhou (ca. tenth–eighth BCE): the dating term *jishengpo* 既生霸 is written as 既眚霸 (*Jicheng* 4294).

[506] E.g., in Guodian *Laozi bing* 老子丙 strip no. 2: "成事遂功，而百眚曰：我自然也。[He] accomplishes affairs and fulfills undertakings, yet the hundred peoples say 'We ourselves achieved this.'" See Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 310–311 on the variations among all extant editions of the *Laozi*. The writing 百眚 for "hundred peoples" is also used in both manuscript versions of the *Ziyi* that we have from the Guodian (e.g., strip no. 12) and Shanghai (e.g., strip no. 7) corpora. Paul Goldin suggested that perhaps members of the same lineage were thought to share the same nature.

[507] "To inspect" is also written with the form 省, as in *Analects* 1.4: "Three times a day I examine myself, 吾日三省吾身." 省 more often writes *sheng* "fault, shortcoming." Several scholars have attempted to explain these orthographies according to their structure, but no theory so far strikes me as particularly convincing. See e.g. Ji Xusheng, *Shuowen Xinzheng* 說文新證, 272-273, who takes 眚 as composed by grass (屮) on top of an eye (目), to indicate "to look at something closely," as opposed to *xiang* 相, where the eye pictogram is paired with that of a tree to indicate looking from far away. The *Shuowen jiezi* explains the graph as representing something growing in the eye, with the meaning of "eye disease."Yet, as Ji notes, the graph is never used in the literature with this meaning.

[508] *Mengzi zhushu* 11.348.

[509] There are examples of this phenomenon in *Natural Dispositions* itself, see e.g. *shi* 勢 in appendix A.

Remember that we have struggled in chapter one with a difference in the opening of *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* that concerned precisely the alternation between 生 and 眚.

Natural Dispositions: 凡人雖有眚（性）

"In general, even though humans have natural dispositions"

Discussions: 凡人雖有生

"In general, even though humans have life (or natural dispositions?)"

I will not repeat the discussion, further detailed in appendix A. Here I want to stress that efforts in disambiguating these words indicate that the debate on this topic was a new one, and that a technical vocabulary began to surface because of this.[510] It is not that prior to the fourth century BCE human nature was not debated; more simply, I think the intellectual pressures and needs were not in place to make it grab everyone's attention. In the fourth century BCE, for the first time, writing played a role supporting attemps at logical and conceptual precision.

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[510] This is an aspect that I would like to investigate further in the future.

The Transmitted texts

Having a first understanding of what *xing* represents, we can now look at the textual evidence. I start by discussing *xing* in *Analects* and *Mozi*, two sources brought together by the fact that neither has a particular focus on *xing*. I then review *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*, the two earliest extant texts within the transmitted corpus that make human nature a central tenet of their philosophies. These two sources became the classic representatives of two opposite views of *xing*. The final section discusses *xing* in *Zhuangzi*.[511]

As just stated, *Analects* and *Mozi* do not engage with theories of *xing*, which requires an explanation of why they are included in this review at all. There is more than one way to answer this question. One is that the lack of explicit discussions on *xing* does not preclude that other concepts can be indicative of underlying theories about human nature. Second, we can consider why these texts do not assess *xing*. This seems prejudiced: asking the question why sources do not present discussions on human nature implies an expectation of finding them.[512] Other texts largely compiled during the fourth century do not show any discussion of *xing*: *Zuo Tradition* 左傳 is an apt example, to which one can add the divinatory, administrative, and *shu*-style manuscripts.

The difference however is that texts from this latter group are not philosophical sources, by which I mean that they do not discuss the role of individuals and how one ought to behave in the world. Even though they were central in the intellectual arena of

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[511] Naturally, a more extensive discussion would be preferred, taking into consideration *Han Feizi* and how the Warring States debate on *xing* was received in imperial times. This dissertation has limitations that I hope to overcome in the future.

[512] Note also that expectations normally rise from having observed significant patterns, as in our case here.

the Warring States, their content would in this sense not be labeled as philosophical. Confucius's sayings and *Mozi*'s arguments instead were. Their figures are assigned philosophical positions, and the texts to them attributed are quoted by other intellectuals of the time. For example, *Mozi*'s philosophical statements find parallels in philosophical manuscripts;[513] the text emphasizes "standards," *fa* 法, which will become *Han Feizi*'s central focus; it rejects the importance of music, *yue* 樂, whose importance will be instead defended in *Xunzi*. Its alleged author Mo Di is mentioned by other Warring States intellectuals who refute his claims; he has a brief introduction in the *Shiji* 史記 alongside Mengzi and Xunzi.[514] In other words, there are multiple reasons why we would expect to find at least a reference to the debate on human nature.

Yet, the evidence shows otherwise. In *Mozi*, the terms *xing* 性 and *qing* 情 (in those occurrences in which it most likely means "human affections"), which often appears together in other philosophical texts,[515] are rarely used, and never together.

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[513] See A. Meyer, "'Only The Human Way May Be Followed.'"

[514] *Shiji* 74.2350.

[515] I focus on these two words because they are two terms that were redefined and became part of a technical vocabulary within philosophical discussions about human nature during the third century BCE. Hence, they are much more revealing of what I defined the "emergence" of a philosophical concern on *xing* than other terms that were amply used before too, such as *xin* 心, 'heart.' A handful of times, *qing* is written as 請. In most occurences, *qing* 請/情 refers to the realities of an event or a situation, in similar ways in which it is used in legal cases.

Table 7. *Schematizing the usage of "human nature" and "human affections" in* Mozi *by chapter.*[516]

卷	篇	Word	Dating
一	1	情	"Opening Chapters", 270–259 BCE.
	2	情	
	3	性	
	4	/	
	5	/	
	6	情	
	7	/	
二	8 9 10	/	Core chapters. Early 4ᵗʰ – early 3ʳᵈ. Early Mohism. They do not include mentions of the Ru 儒.
三	11		
	12	情 'emotions'	
	13	情 'emotions' but also possibly 'true circumstances'	
四	14		
	15		
	16	情	
五	17	情	
	18	情	
	19	情	
六	20 21 25		

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[516] The listing of *pian* 篇 ('chapters') includes only extant ones. The dating and grouping of *pian* are mainly according to Defoort and Standaert *The Mozi as an Evolving Text*, which summarizes previous studies.

七	26 27 28		
八	31 32		
九	35		
	36	情	
	37		
	39		
十	40 42 42 43		
十一	44	性	
	45		"Mohist *Analects*", middle 4th century BCE.
	46		
十二	47 48		
十三	49 50		
十四	52 53 56 58 61 62 63		
十五	68		
	69		
	70		
	71	情	

The absence of conceptions of human nature in the *Mozi* is all the more intriguing, especially considering the composite nature of this text, whose content cannot be assigned to a single person or to a single historical moment.

Secondly, these texts are included in the discussion because of an explanation presented by Michael Hunter with regard to the lack of references to human nature in the *Analects*. Hunter postulated that this resulted from an intentional act on part of the compilers of this text, who wanted to strip Confucius's sayings of any possible associations with "controversies of various sorts."[517] Did this happen to *Mozi* as well? It seems unlikely, since the text remained by and large unavailable until 1447, when the *Daoist Canon* 道藏, in which *Mozi* was preserved, was published.[518] This secluded preservation of the *Mozi* increases the likelihood that this text preserves the shape it had in the last centuries before the common era.

In a comment made to a famous passage in *Analects* where Zi Gong claims that the Master did not discuss neither human nature (*xing* 性) nor the way of Heaven (*tiandao* 天道), the Han commentator Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 states: "[These are] difficult and abstruse [concepts], therefore they could not be obtained and heard, 深微，故不可得而聞也."[519] And yet Confucius, at least according to the account of his person that emerges from the *Analects*, is not afraid to redefine (albeit rather vaguely) the vocabulary in use at the time.

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[517] Hunter "Did Mencius Know the *Analects*?" 75-79, esp. 77. In Hunter's *Confucius beyond the Analects*, 302–313, the author presents a plausible scenario for the compilation of the *Analects*. See discussion of this position in Slingerland, "Michael Hunter. Confucius Beyond the Analects. Leiden: Brill, 2017. Book Review."
[518] Goldin, *The Art*, 55-78.
[519] *Lunyu* 5.67.

One of his goals was precisely that of "rectifying names" *zheng ming* 正名 in what he perceived as a society that had lost a proper understanding of them.[520] Why was *xing* abstruse for Confucius, but not for Mengzi or Xunzi?

A simpler explanation is that their content reflects cultural developments that predate the focus on human nature that developed in the fourth century BCE.[521] This would also soften the amount of editing attributed to later intellectuals. The forthcoming publication of other philosophical manuscripts part of the Anhui University collection will cast more light on the shape *Analects* and *Mozi* had around 350 BCE.

A second factor that may have contributed to lack of interest in these topics. *Mozi* and *Analects* predate both the emergence of a discussion on human nature, and the possibility to state that all humans are born equal.[522] Only on two occasions Confucius is consulted by rulers,[523] in contrast to later representations where intellectuals are repeatedly addressing rulers or presenting their views on how states should be ruled. Around the fifth century BCE the socio-political context was not yet allowing statements of universality to be part of intellectual discussions. The changes that will allow members lacking a lineage to become actors in ruling environments had begun in Confucius's times, but they had not yet reached fruition.

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[520] *Lunyu* 13.3.

[521] In "Recontextualizing Xing," Perkins has suggested that the lack of discussions of *xing* in texts such as the *Mozi* and the *Laozi* is due to the fact that this was primarily a Confucian or Ru interest (page 17 and throughout; a claim previously made by Angus Graham). This is possible, and yet there are so many philosophical topics discussed by both Ru and Daoist texts that one ought to ask why human nature was not one of them. See also discussion in Goldin, "Confucius and His Disciples in the Lunyu."

[522] Goldin suggests that Confucius is not involved in debating *xing* because in his days, he was the only uncontested authority (*The Art*, 91). This argument too invites the question of why he was the only authoritative voice, and this leads us back to the socio-political changes that I discussed in chapter three.

[523] *Lunyu* 3.13; 8.20.

<u>*Analects* 論語</u>

Analects is a convenient starting point because it contains only two explicit references to *xing*. These two mentions are well-known. In *Analects* 17.2, Confucius said that humans are close by nature but differ in practice, 性相近也，習相遠也. This statement has been understood to mean that what separates humans is their behavior, which is determined by cultural environments. Elsewhere, *Analects* in fact states that individuals ought to determine by themselves the best course of action according to contextual circumstances.[524] Similarly, in **Natural Dispositions* we see that humans are affected by externalities, and also that individuals may apply their heart-mind differently.[525]

The second explicit reference in *Analects*, already introduced in the previous section, occurs in the voice of Zi Gong, one of Confucius's disciples. According to Zi Gong, Confucius would not talk about either human nature or the way of Heaven.[526] The reasons are not articulated, thus the line is open to multiple interpretations.

Other lines can be analyzed to infer underlying views on nature. (Curie Virág has approached with a similar *modus operandi* the topic of *qing* 情.[527]) Consider, for example, *Analects*, 2.3:

> 子曰：「道之以政，齊之以刑，民免而無恥；道之以德，齊之
> 以禮，有恥且格。」
> The Master said: "Guide them through legislations and unify with punishments: the people will avoid [misbehaving] but they will

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[524] E.g., *Lunyu* 7.8. See discussion in Goldin, *Confucianism*, 9–10.
[525] This does not suggest a direct lineage between these two texts.
[526] *Lunyu* 5.13.
[527] Virág, *The Emotions in early Chinese Philosophy*, 52–75.

have no sense of shame. Guide with virtue and unify with rituals: they will have a sense of shame; moreover, they will rectify [themselves].”

This passage is understood to signal Confucius's disagreement with how "virtue" and "rituals" were understood at the time. These should not be a set of regulations, like legislations and punishments. They should be a model to transform people.[528] This principle in turn assumes that humans (represented by the collective "people" *min* 民) are influenced by circumstances. In other words, humans are stimulated. In the years after Confucius, the question would become what environment best stimulates humans towards a functioning, moral society. Circa a millennium later, Kong Yingda understood the passage following the same principle. Superiors can change people's behavior through their example, *shang hua min* 上化民.[529] Consider then these two passages from *Analects*:

子曰：「吾未見好德如好色者也。」[530]
The Master said: "I have never seen [a person] as fond of virtue as of sex."

子曰：「君子食無求飽，居無求安，敏於事而慎於言，就有道而正焉，可謂好學也已。」[531]
The Master said: "The superior person eats without seeking without gorging; dwells without seeking easiness; is clever in his actions and cautious with his words; thus the superior person has principles

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[528] E.g., Goldin, 2020, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy*, 42–43.
[529] *Lunyu zhushu* 2.16.
[530] *Lunyu* 9.12.
[531] *Lunyu* 1.14.

and can rectify [himself] through them. Such a person can be said
to be fond of learning.”

The underlying assumption in both is that humans have instincts (e.g., hunger; sex), and

this must be acknowledged. But humans can control and master these instincts towards

becoming a moral person. In *Analects* 9.14, Confucius expresses desire to live among the

barbarians. One of his disciples warns him of their rudeness, to which Confucius replies:

“If the noble person lives among them, what rudeness would there be?”.[532] Thus, the path

to moral nobility is open to anyone who desires it. This is one of the ways in which

morality began to be associated with behavior rather than family birth.

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[532] See discussion in Goldin, *The Art*, 47-48.

Mozi 墨子

Like *Analects*, *Mozi* does not explicitly articulate views of human nature. Here again I discuss other philosophical arguments proffered in the text to explore an underlying theory. I first consider the concept of "impartial caring", *jian'ai* 兼愛. I focus on *jian'ai* because in *Mozi* this principle is presented as a cure to all social problems, from lack of filiality to theft and robbery. *Jian'ai* corrects human behaviors that in Mozi's view, are not advantageous:

若使天下兼相愛，愛人若愛其身，猶有不孝者乎？視父兄與君若其身，惡施不孝？猶有不慈者乎？視弟子與臣若其身，惡施不慈？

故不慈不孝亡。猶有盜賊乎？故視人之室若其室，誰竊？視人身若其身，誰賊？故盜賊有[533]亡。猶有大夫之相亂家、諸侯之相攻國者乎？視人家若其家，誰亂？視人國若其國，誰攻？故大夫之相亂家、諸侯之相攻國者亡。[534]

If everybody in the world cares impartially, caring for others as they care for oneself, would there still be unfilial persons? If one considers his father, elder brother, and lord as himself, how could one exhibit unfilial behavior? Will there yet be anyone who is unkind? When every one regards his younger brothers, sons, and ministers as himself, how can he exhibit unkindness? Therefore there will be neither unfilial or unkind feelings. How could [then] be thieves and robbers? When every one considers the house of others as his own, who will steal? If one regards other persons as his own, who will harm [someone]? Therefore there will also be neither theft nor killing. How could the ministers disturb each other's households, which lord would attack each other's state? When every one considers the households of others as his own, who will disturb [others]? When everyone considers others' states

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[533] Reading as *you* 又 "also", see *Mozi jiaozhu* 14.158.
[534] *Mozi jiaozhu* 14.155.

as his own, who will invade [others' territory]? Therefore there will be no minister disturbing each other's households, nor lords attacking each other's state.[535]

Mozi's belief in impartiality counterbalances the idea that one should care first for one's family and kin, a value promoted by those who identified themselves as Ru 儒.[536] Although Mozi did not reject Confucian values *per se,* he believed that they ought to be extended to anyone in the same measure.[537] For example, in the passage just quoted, filiality (*xiao* 孝) is a result as desirable as it was for the Ru. But in *Mozi*, filiality is valuable only if applied to any individual byeondone's family. Otherwise, it paves the way to favoritisms that disrupt the social order.

Mozi's insistence on *jian'ai* suggests that the desire to care for one's kin was a common behavior, so common that one is tempted to describe it as natural.[538] As the dialogue between Master Wu Ma and Mozi discussed below will show, in *Mozi* humans are inclined to partiality, so as to profit themselves, *li ji* 利己.[539] These natural instincts have to be overcome[540] to implement the calculated solution to social problems that *Mozi* offers.

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[535] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 133-135.

[536] A section of the *Mozi* is in fact title "Against Ruism," *feiru* 非儒. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, 83. See also Goldin*, The Art*, 54-73.

[537] Although *Mozi* mischaracterizes their beliefs at times. See Van Norden "A Response to the Mohist Arguments in 'Impartial Caring,'" 45.

[538] Indro Montanelli humorously suggested that Esiodo's dislike of women was not due, as some critics have suggested, to the fact that he never married, but rather to the fact that he knew women too well (Montanelli *Storia dei Greci,* 58). As ironic as it is, his argument is a valid one: direct experience is a primary source of knowledge.

[539] Virág *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy*, 52–53.

[540] Cf. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism,* 83-84.

Mozi recognizes the difficulties of behaving exclusively according to *jian'ai*. In the well-known thought experiment of a man who has to leave his family to go to war, Mozi acknowledges how strong the desire to put one's family first is. The experiment goes as follows. There are two persons, one inclined to partiality and who believes he cannot possibly care for others in the same way he cares for himself, and one who cares for others impartially. Given this premise,

今有平原廣野於此，被甲嬰胄將往戰，死生之權未可識也。又有君大夫之遠使於巴、越、齊、荊，往來及否未可識也。然即敢問不識將惡擇之也？家室奉承親戚，提挈妻子，而寄託之，不識於兼之有是乎？於別之有是乎？我以為當其於此也，天下無愚夫愚婦，雖非兼之人，必寄託之於兼之有是也。此言而非兼，擇即取兼，即此言行拂[541]也。」[542]

Suppose there is an open plain, a large field like this, where people in armor [are] and helmet ready to join the battle, and the balance between life and death cannot be known. Or suppose one is sent by the ruler as a deputy to Ba, Yue, Qi, and Jing, and the arrival and return are quite uncertain. Now this dares the question, [in this situation of] not knowing, how would one choose? Would one, without knowing, place the care of his household, his house, the support of his parents, the care of his wife and the raising of his sons with the impartial or with the partial? I believe that, on occasions like these, there are no fools in the world. Even a person who refutes impartial care will lay the trust upon the impartial person. He will refute impartial care with words, but he will choose it [when in need]. This is self-contradiction between one's word and deed.[543]

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[541] See *Mozi jiaozhu* 185 footnote 43.
[542] *Mozi jiaozhu* 16.177. Various sentences in this passage are corrupt, and there exists several emendations. See *Mozi jiaozhu* 184–5; Johnston, *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 152. See also the interpretation in Van Norden 2003.
[543] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 153.

Jian'ai leads to social benefits: the elderly and those without wives and sons will be taken care of during the end of their lives; those without a family will be looked after.[544] "Humane is he who makes his business to be devoted in prompting what benefits the world and eliminating what harms it, 仁人之事者，必務求興天下之利除天下之害."[545]

Van Norden has noted several difficulties in this line of reasoning,[546] making it unnecessary to revise it here. What matters for my discussion here is that the conclusion of this experiment can be valid insofar as caring for one's family is recognized as a natural instinct. For the reasoning to work, *Mozi* needs the man to be concerned about his own family. This concern must be real for him to see the benefits of choosing the impartial carer, thus overcoming immediate desires to choose a calculated solution to the problem, one that would benefit themselves *and* society.

The language used to proffer the argument is also worth noting. In the experiment just quoted, the person choosing to trust his family with the impartial carer explains his choice as follows:

> 吾聞為高士於天下者，必為其友之身，若為其身，為其友之親，若為其親。[547]
>
> I have heard that to become a superior person in the world, one must consider his associates as he considers himself, and consider the relatives of his friends as he considers his own relatives.[548]

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[544] *Mozi jiaozhu* 16.176. Compare Johnston *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 150–151.

[545] *Mozi jiaozhu* 16.175. Compare Johnston *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 147.

[546] Van Norden "A Response to the Mohist Arguments in 'Impartial Caring.'"

[547] *Mozi jiaozhu* 14.177.

[548] Emphasis added. Compare Johnston *The Mozi: A Complete Translation*, 151 "I have heard that one who aspires to high office in the world must regard the person of his friend's parents as he regards his own person and he regard his friend's parents as he regards his own parents."

His compliance comes from having heard that in order to be a superior person, one must (*bi* 必) act in a certain way. What I find interesting in this artificial[549] experiment is that it does not betray any underlying conception of stimulation and situational responsiveness, as instead the conceptions of human nature in **Natural Dispositions*, *Mengzi* and *Xunzi* suggest. Even in the lapidary statement from *Analects* mentioned above, we can infer that humans respond to situations. *Mozi*'s protagonist here has already accepted the value of *jian'ai*.[550] Someone else's dictum ("I have heard") becomes one's behavior.

In another passage, Wuma 巫馬, a disciple of Confucius who in *Mozi* upholds the Master's ideas, raises some doubts regarding the applicability of *jian'ai*, giving Mozi a chance to explicate his ideas once more:[551]

> 巫馬子謂子墨子曰：「我與子異，我不能兼愛。我愛鄒人於越人，愛魯人於鄒人，愛我鄉人於魯人，愛我家人於鄉人，愛我親於我家人，愛我身於吾親，以為近我也。擊我則疾，擊彼則不疾於我，我何故疾者之不拂，而不疾者之拂？故有我，有殺彼以我，無殺我以利彼。」子墨子曰：「子之義將匿邪？意將以告人乎？」巫馬子曰：「我何故匿我義？吾將以告人。」子墨子曰：「然則一人說子，一人欲殺子以利己；十人說子，十人欲殺子以利己；天下說子，天下欲殺子以利己。一人不說

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[549] Van Norden ("A Response to the Mohist Arguments") judges the thought-experiment as ill-formed, because it presents only two alternatives. Through-experiments however are artificial by nature, and are devised with the intention of provoking a response given certain conditions.

[550] Cf. Van Norden, "A Response to the Mohist Arguments," 43.

[551] Information about Wu Ma is scant. He is listened in the *Shiji* as Wuma shi 巫馬施, a disciple of Confucius whose courtesy name is Master Qi 子旗 (*Shiji* 67.2218). He appears in the *Lunyu* in an exchange with Confucius (*Lunyu* 7.31) that is narrated in the *Shiji* as well.

子，一人欲殺子，以子為施不祥言者也；十人不說子，十人欲殺子，以子為施不祥言者也；天下不說子，天下欲殺子，以子為施不祥言者也。說子亦欲殺子，不說子亦欲殺子，是所謂經者口也，殺常之身者也。」子墨子曰：「子之言惡利也？若無所利而必[552]言，是蕩口也。」[553]

Wu Mazi said to Mozi, "You and I differ, I cannot love universally. I love the people of Zou more than the people of Chu, and I love the people of Lu better than the people of Zou. I love the people from my village more than the people of Lu, and my family more than the people of my village. I love my parents more than [other] family members, and myself more than my parents. This, because of their [relative] closeness to me. If I am beaten I am in pain. If others are beaten, there is no pain on me. For what reason should I not resist who hurts me, and resist who does not hurt me?[554] Because I exist, there might be [occasions] where I kill others for my own sake, but there are no occasions where I [let] others kill me to profit them." Mozi replied, "Do you conceal your principle? Or do you communicate it to others?" Wu Mazi said: "Why should I conceal it? I would tell it to other people." "Then" Mozi replied, "if every person persuaded by you is a person that [might] desire to kill you to profit himself. If you persuade ten people, ten people [might] desire to kill you to profit themselves. If the entire world were persuaded by you, the entire world would desire to kill you to its profit. Every person that is not persuaded by your principle is [also] a person who [might] desire to kill you, by considering you someone who promotes wicked words. If then people were not persuaded, they would have the same desire for the same reason. The same is true if you did not persuade the entire world. Both persuading and not persuading someone equal to making them desire to kill you. This is to say that your words are what harm your person. How did your words profit you? If you must speak without profiting anyone, then you are wasting your breath."[555]

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[552] See *Mozi jiaozhu* 681 footnote no. 115.
[553] *Mozi jiaozhu* 17.660.
[554] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi*, 655.
[555] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi*, 655–657.

Wu Ma's reasoning is mistaken because it leads him to cultivate enemies. His sentiments are not wrong, the outcome is the problem: if Wu Ma's principles were extended to society, no one would benefit from them. It comes to no surprise that the philosophy of *Mozi* has been labeled as that of a consequentialist.[556] *Mozi*'s reasoning continuously brings attention to the end-results, so as to prove that impartial caring is the only solution. And one that, precisely, already assumes a definition of "benefit."

Mozi's acknowledgement of the difficulties in carrying out impartial care is another cue that in the mind of whoever formulated these opinions, *jian'ai* was not felt as a natural inclination. He compares it to the mythological Yu's ability to order the waters in the central plain, and to King Wen's 文王 and King Wu's 武王 ability to govern. Their deeds were difficult, but possible, and looked favorably upon by Heaven because the benefits outweighed the difficulties.[557] So Mozi states, "if [impartiality] could not be of use, even I would refute it. How can there be something good that is of no use? 用而不可，雖我亦將非之。且焉有善而不可用者?"[558] The goodness of an action is measured by its usefulness to society. *Mozi*'s appeal to paragons of wisdom and correctness such as Yu, King Wen and King Wu was also meant to elevate his own battle and person. Had his implementation of *jian'ai* been successful, Mozi would have achieved something equally grandiose to those of the sage kings of the past.

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[556] Van Norden, *Virtue, Ethics*, 139–198 and Fraser, *The Philosophy of Mozi.*
[557] *Mozi jiaozhu* 15.159.
[558] *Mozi jiaozhu* 16.176. Compare Johnston, *The Mozi*, 151.

Based on what we discussed so far, I suggest extrapolating a conception of human nature that has the following characteristics.[559] Humans are by nature inclined to be partial towards their kin, but these inclinations can be overcome. Overcoming them is effortful, but it must be done for sake of a more favorable outcome that benefits both the individual and society. Moreover,

> 夫愛人者，人亦從而愛之。利人者，人亦從而利之。惡人者，
> 人亦從而惡之。害人者，人亦從而害之。[560]
>
> When someone cares about others, others will follow [his behavior], and care about him. When someone benefits others, others will follow and benefit him [in return]. If one dislikes others, others will accordingly dislike him back. If someone harms others, others will follow and harm him.[561]

This passage, which is reminiscent of Confucius's belief[562] that it would take the presence of a gentleman to rectify the rudeness of the barbarian,[563] indicates that humans could learn from observing others' behavior.[564] At the same time, it cannot be said to be direct simulation, since what drives their learning is a form of internal reasoning. Humans care for others because they hope to receive the same treatment.[565]

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[559] I disagree with Van Norden's ("A Response to the Mohist Arguments," 53) claim that for the Mohist arguments to work, we must infer that Mozi believed that humans simply have no human nature.

[560] *Mozi jiaozhu* 15.160.

[561] Compare Johnston, *The Mozi*, 143.

[562] Goldin ("Why Mozi Is Included in the Daoist Canon," 64 footnote no. 5) includes more aspects that are in common between *Mozi* and Confucians. The belief about exercising mutual influence may be another shared element. See also van Norden "A Response to the Mohist Arguments," 51.

[563] *Lunyu* 9.14.

[564] Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, 83-84; 130.

[565] Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, 130 considers the possibility that such logic can coexist with sincere affection for others. I think that this would not have been a concern for Mozi, who was more preoccupied about how to implement a solution to cure society than how sincerely this was done.

On the basis of similar passages, Ning Chen[566] has argued that *Mozi* is implicitly upholding that human nature is changeable, and it can develop morally. While agreeing on the former, I hesitate in considering moral development a feature of the Mohist conception of human nature. *Mozi* does not promote moral transformation,[567] but rather a calculation whose result shows impartial care outweighs other considerations. It might not have mattered to Mozi whether or not humans grew morally.[568] As long as they followed *jian'ai*, society would be cured.

Mozi thus results extraordinary in its lack of engagement on the topic of human nature and the exclusion of the vocabulary associated with this philosophical topics. Because its chapters date to different compositional phases, the absence of these references requires more than one explanation.[569] For the chapters that are considered to be of Warring States date, I suspect that the we are looking at a similar situation with the *Analects*: the authors operated in an environment that was still focusing on behavior rather than ontology.

As for chapters of later production, we may be looking at an attempt to adhere to a set of values promoted by the initial authors, values that did not include human nature. *Han*

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[566] Ning "The Ideological Background of the Mencian Discussion of Human Nature: A Reexamination."

[567] Cf. Goldin, *The Art*, 57, according to whom one of the reasons behind the failure of Mohism is the absence of a developed notion of self-cultivation.

[568] Neither genuinely nor artificially, as *Xunzi* will have it, "what is good [in humans] is artificial 其善者偽也". Nivison (*The Ways of Confucianism* 206 ff.) follows Watson's translation of *wei* 偽 as "conscious activity", which has the benefit of stressing that goodness is something that humans must pursue intentionally. Although *Mozi* does not use the word in this sense when discussing impartial care, the adoption of impartial care seems to necessitate a similar intentional process.

[569] See discussion in Maeder, 'Some Observations;" and Desmet, Karen. "The Growth of Compounds in the Core Chapters of the 'Mozi.'" So far, only a handful of bamboo strips have been identified as related to the *Mozi*. These are poorly preserved; see Li Xueqin 李學勤 "Changtaiguan zhu jian zhong de 'Mozi' shipian" 《長台關竹簡中的〈墨子〉佚篇》, and He Linyi 何琳儀, "Xinyang zhushu yu *Mozi* shiwen" 信陽竹書與《墨子》失文. According to preliminary descriptions, the Anhui University collection includes some content relevant to the textual history of this text, but it is yet to be published.

Feizi singles out Confucius and Mo Di as the two individuals from which intellectual affiliations were formed. Later groups may have been interested in following what had been initiated by earlier thinkers if this determined their identity.[570]

[570] *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu* 韩非子新校注 50.1124.

Human Nature in the Mengzi *and* Xunzi.

孟子作《性善》之篇，以為「人性皆善，及其不善，物亂之也。」謂人生於天地，皆稟善性，長大與物交接者，放縱悖亂，不善日以生矣。(⋯) 孫卿有反孟子，作《性惡》之篇，以為「人性惡，其善者偽也」。性惡者以為人生皆得惡性也，偽者長大之後，勉使為善也。[571]

Mengzi made the chapter "On the Goodness of Human Nature," he believed that "human nature is good. If it is not, it is because externalities muddled it." This is what is meant by [saying that] humans are born from heaven and earth, they are all endowed with a nature that is good. (…) Xun Qing [i.e., Xunzi] opposed Mengzi. He made the chapter "Human nature is bad," believing that "human nature is bad, its goodness is a fabrication." [To say that] human nature is bad is to believe that humans when they are born all obtain bad natural dispositions. Fabrication [happens] later, when growing, it forces [a person] to become good."

This passage from the *Steelyard of Debates* 論衡 by Wang Chong 王充 (27 - circa 100 CE), summarizes *Mengzi*'s and *Xunzi*'s positions on human nature. To this day, their visions on human nature are metonymic to their entire philosophies.[572]

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[571] *Lunheng jiaoshi* 13.133
[572] While *Xunzi* does indeed include a chapter titled "On the evil of human nature" *xing'e* 性惡, the *Mengzi*'s chapter "On the Goodness of Human Nature" *xing shang* 性善 *pian* exists in a Ming dynasty version of the *Mengzi waishu* 孟子外書, which is almost certainly a forgery, according to Qing dynasty scholars Wu Qian 吳騫, Zhou Guangye 周廣業, and later Liang Qichao 梁啟超, see Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Zhonghua shuju p. 8). Sun Qizhi 孫啟治 and Chen Jianhua's 陳建華 *Gu yishu jiben mu ku fu kaozheng* 古佚書輯本目錄附考證 (1997) mentions a study carried out by Zhou Guangye 周廣業 (1730–1798) on the language of the *Mengzi waishu*, and his conclusion on it as being a forgery. The received *Mengzi* also does not include the statement "人性皆善，及其不善，物亂之也", in its entirety or not. It remains impossible to discern whether Wang Chong was reading a Warring States manuscripts, or what was put together around his time. The statement cited in the *Steelyard* ("human nature is good. If it is not, it is because externalities muddled it 人性皆善，及其不善，物亂之也") is not found in the transmitted *Mengzi*, either verbatim or partially. The concept of external stimulation is widely attested in both pre-imperial and imperial literature, thus it does not help date this chapter.

214

Discussing human nature in *Mengzi* and *Xunzi* is at once easy and difficult. It is easy, because much scholarship has been devoted to the subject. By the same token, it is also difficult, since it complicates the possibility of approaching these texts without someone else's understanding in our mind. In what follows, I discuss passages that I believe are most relevant to grasp their philosophies on *xing*, some of which have been assessed before, as signaled in the footnotes.

<u>*Mengzi* 孟子</u>

As central as it was to his philosophy, the concept that human nature is good is made explicit only three times in *Mengzi*,[573] and only once it comes directly from his mouth.[574] By defining *xing* "good" (*shan* 善), *Mengzi* was claiming that everyone has the potential to be good if properly directed. This is a wise and necessary position for him. It is wise, because a position stating that human nature *is* good, as opposed to having the potential to be good, would be harder to defend. It is necessary, because *Mengzi*'s philosophy is not about human nature. If I had to identify an overarching theme in this text, I would choose that of moral cultivation of the individual and, by consequence, of society. The conception of human nature as good is one of the components to promote *Mengzi*'s agenda.

I will start from the three explicit statements just mentioned. In the first one, Duke Wen of Teng 滕文公 passes through the state of Song on his way to Chu. In Song, he met with Mengzi, who "talked of the goodness of human nature," among other topics.[575] Here, no theorization is offered.

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[573] Graham, ("The Background," 57) interprets this as indicating that "Pre-Han writings scarcely ever refer to human nature as good, bad, without good or bad (…) except in controversies between philosophers or in formulae summing up the doctrines of philosophers." Yet as pointed out, later generations identified *Mengzi* as the promoter of the goodness of nature par excellence, which is more telling of the interpretative history of this text. An excellent example brought to my attention by Paul Goldin is the Mencian story of the child about to fall into a well (*Mengzi* 2A.6). This story has become an epitome to explain Mengzi's belief in the potential for goodness, and is taught in every introductory class to ancient Chinese philosophy. Yet, the story is not discussed in any pre-Song philosophical debate.

[574] *Mengzi* 2A.2.

[575] *Mengzi* 3A.1.

The second occurrence comes from a a dialogue between Mengzi and Gongdu 公都, who opens with a series of statements on human nature by other philosophers, questioning Mengzi's position:

公都子曰：「告子曰：『性無善無不善也。』或曰：『性可以為善，可以為不善；是故文武興，則民好善；幽厲興，則民好暴。』或曰：『有性善，有性不善；是故以堯為君而有象，以瞽瞍為父而有舜；以紂為兄之子且以為君，而有微子啟、王子比干。』今曰『性善』，然則彼皆非與？」

孟子曰：「乃若其情[576]，則可以為善矣，乃所謂善也。若夫為不善，非才之罪也。」[577]

Master Gong Du said: "Gaozi says, 'Human nature is neither good nor bad.' Some say: 'Human nature can be good or evil. Thus when King Wen and Wu rose [to power], the people loved goodness.[578] When King You and Li rose [to power, instead] the people loved violence.' Some other says: 'There are [people whose] human nature is good, and there are [those whose] human nature is bad. That is why when Shun was ruler there still were [people like] Xiang;[579] with someone like Gu Sou for father, still there was Shun; with someone like Zhou as ruler, he still had relatives such as Zi Qi and Bi Gan.'[580] Now you say, 'Human nature is good.' Are all of them wrong?"

Mengzi replied: "Then, [considering human nature's] essence, then it is possible to become good.[581] If one does not become good, it is not a fault of natural capacities."

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[576] *Qing* 情 is also read as an error for *xing* 性, "human nature," *Mengzi zhushu* 11.5981. In my translation, I tried to accommodate this annotation without emanding the text.

[577] *Mengzi* 6A.6.

[578] That is, because King Wen and Wu guided the people.

[579] This is Shun's stepbrother, known in the tradition as arrogant. *Shiji* 1.32.

[580] The passage here seems corrupt. Bi Gan 比干 is King Zhou's uncle, who served and exhorted his nephew to behave better; Zi Qi 子啟 was king Zhou's half-brother. He also remonstrated towards his sibiling's reckless behavior.

[581] Zheng Xuan gives a different yet interesting reading, based on his understanding of *ruo* 若 as "to obey" (*xun* 訓): "*xing* and *qing* are complementary gauge, *xing* overcomes *qing* and therefore *qing* follows it."

Mengzi then goes on to list a series of qualities that all humans possess (*jie ren you zhi* 皆人有之): the ability to commiserate, to feel shame and ugliness, and to distinguish what is right from what is wrong. Each of these abilities is associated with a virtue, and thus it follows that all the necessary virtues are also already within humans: "benevolence, morality, righteousness, and wisdom do not permeate us from the outside, 仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也." In fact, they are so natural that humans do not even need to think deeply about them. If humans behave immorally, it is because they cannot bring to fruition their natural dispositions. After this, Mengzi quotes the *Odes*, with which he ends the discussion.

Mengzi does not really answer Gong Du's question. To use circumstances as an explanation for the lack of goodness is to move the attention to another issue. It still fails to consider that individuals surrounded by the same environment, such as Shun and his father, developed different degrees of morality. Perhaps Mengzi's answer would have been that individuals' efforts are fundamental to develop the moral faculties humans are naturally given. In another passage[582] Mengzi remembers famous heroes who rose to prestige from dire conditions, such as Shun himself, or the minister Fu Yue. This was Heaven's doing, which puts these great men in hard living conditions to stimulate their hearts and strengthen their nature. Mengzi continues "humans always err, and then they can improve, 人恒過，然後能改."[583] Even great sages began as faulty, yet this should

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[582] *Mengzi* 6B.35.
[583] *Mengzi* 6B.35.

218

not deter them from returning on the right path. Thus, the responsibility is of the individual, too.[584]

The third time human nature is explicitly stated to be good (*shan* 善) appears in a direct speech by Mengzi, who is busy he is rebutting Gaozi's theory that human nature does not distinguish between good and not good. Like water, it follows the path that it finds open to it, be it eastward or westward. Mengzi sees it differently:

> 水信無分於東西，無分於上下乎？人性之善也，猶水之就下也。人無有不善，水無有不下。今夫水搏而躍之，可使過顙；激而行之，可使在山：是豈水之性哉？其勢則然也。人之可使為不善，其性亦猶是也。[585]
>
> When it comes to water, indeed there is no distinction between east and west. But is there no distinction between upwards and downwards? Human nature is good in the same way the water moves downwards. Among humans, none has badness, in the same way no water lacks moving downwards. Now, with water, by striking and making the water leap, one can make it go past one's forehead; by damming and guiding it, one can make it remain on mountains. But is this the natural tendency of nature? This is because of [specific] circumstances. If humans are made not to become good, it is [because] their nature is like this, [being forced].

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[584] See also *Mengzi* 2A.2, and discussion in Goldin*, The Art* 80-83. *Mengzi* 2B.18 stresses the same principle: "in antiquity, the noble person erred and then corrected his errors; today the noble person errs, and persists in erring."

[585] *Mengzi zhushu* 11.347.

With this response, Mengzi ties together two aspects. While saying that humans are incipiently good,[586] he is also stating that, within a range of different developments, goodness is the strongest tendency, in the same way water just goes downwards. This "foundation of morality,"[587] implies that human nature requires development, but it does not need excessive working or shaping. This point emerges more explicitly in another exchange with Gaozi:

> 告子曰：「性，猶杞柳也；義，猶桮棬也。以人性為仁義，猶以杞柳為桮棬。」
>
> 孟子曰：「子能順杞柳之性而以為桮棬乎？將戕賊杞柳而後以為桮棬也？如將戕賊杞柳而以為桮棬，則亦將戕賊人以為仁義與？率天下之人而禍仁義者，必子之言夫！」[588]
>
> Gaozi said: "Human nature is like a willow; righteousness is like cups and dishes. To consider human nature as humane and righteous, is like considering the willow to be cups and plates.
> Mengzi replied: "Can you, while following the nature of the willow, make cups and dishes? [Or] do you have to murder and wound the willow tree and only after, you can make cups and dishes? If so, would you not then also [have to] injure humans for them to be humane and righteous? Your words are the equivalent of leading all people to harm humanity and righteousness!"

Gaozi privileges a definition of *xing* that brings to mind John Locke's idea of *tabula rasa*: human nature will be good or bad depending on how it is shaped. This does not agree

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[586] Cf. Goldin, *The Art*, 89: "Mencius [does not mean] that all people are necessarily good, not even that they are born good," a point previously stressed by Graham (*Disputers of the Tao*). Yet this and other similar statements give room to consider that humans are in fact born good. Perhaps Mengzi was somewhat reluctant in being explicit about this aspect (which seems to me to underpin his overall view on human nature), because being born good is neither sufficient, nor as important as constant cultivation.

[587] Goldin, *Confucianism*, 48.

[588] *Mengzi zhushu* 11.346.

with Mengzi's focus on moral conduct. It is almost as though Mengzi were a motivational

trainer, uninterested in debating the nature of *xing*: assuming that human nature is good is

an efficient way to speed forward to discussing self-cultivation and moral growth by the

individual.

For the same reason, Mengzi wants humans' *xing* to be qualitatively different than the

xing of other creatures:

> 告子曰：「生之謂性。」孟子曰：「生之謂性也，猶白之謂白
> 與？」曰：「然。」
>
> 「白羽之白也，猶白雪之白；白雪之白，猶白玉之白與？」
>
> 曰：「然。」
>
> 「然則犬之性，猶牛之性；牛之性，猶人之性與？」[589]
>
> Gaozi said: "We call *xing* what is inborn." Mengzi asked, "Do you
> call *xing* what is inborn, in the same way we call 'white' what is
> white?" "Indeed."
> [Mengzi continued]: "Is the white of a white feather the white of
> snow? And is the whie of snow the same white of a white jade?" "It
> is so."
> [Menzgi replied]: "If this is so, [would] then the *xing* of a dog equal
> the *xing* of an ox, and the *xing* of an ox equal that of a person?"

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[589] *Mengzi zhushu* 11.348.

This passage is worth discussing for different reasons. For one thing, it reads as though the reasoning were incomplete[590] –almost as if it were a performance support, one may say.[591]

Secondly, the logic with which *Mengzi* is trying to discredit his opponent's view is interesting. Paul Goldin has argued that with this passage, *Mengzi* resists a commonplace definition of *xing* simply as "what is inborn." To *Mengzi*, *xing* indicates "the ideal state an organism should attain,"[592] defining *xing* differently from what must have been a commonplace definition. Goldin's argument that Mengzi is here introducing a new nuance to this philosophical term is correct, but my understanding differs slightly. I think that Mengzi is refuting a definition of *xing* as what is inborn because this definition could be applied too widely. For example, **Natural Dispositions* reads:

> 凡至樂必悲，哭亦悲，皆至其情也。哀樂，其性相近也，是故
> 其心不遠。[593]
>
> Extreme happiness must turn to mourning, [in the same way] wailing [becomes] sorrow. They both exhaust the affections. [When it comes to] mourning and happiness, their functioning is close, and for this reason the [state of] the heart is not far apart [either].

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[590] Goldin, *Confucianism*, 50 (later reprinted in *The Art*, 89). Nivison (*The Ways of Confucianism*, 149-166) overcomplicates the reading of this passage, furthermore considering *sheng* and *xing* "in a sense the same word," an assumption unsupported by the fact that they may have been written alike in Mencius's time.

[591] Somewhat dismissively, Waley (*Three Ways of Thought*, 193-194) calls Mengzi "nugatory" as a controversialist, claiming that his analogies and metaphors do not demonstrate what Mengzi would like. Perhaps the difficulty in understanding some passages of the *Mengzi* (more below) can be reconciled by considering his writings (or writings that attributed ideas to him) not mature yet, that circulated and became increasingly important overtime. In this sense, I am suggesting it worked similarly to a record of a impromptu debate.

[592] Goldin, *The Art*, 90.

[593] **XZMC* 29-30. See discussion in appendix A.

In my understanding, here and in other passages in *Natural Dispositions xing* indicates a mechanism in which inborn dispositions operate. Here, *xing* is of the affections, not of humans. If *xing* is like the whiteness of elements, then we are grouping together otherwise unrelated entities, in the same way the quality of being white does. To Mengzi, this sense of *xing* is a distraction from his goal. In order to stress the use of *xing* as an ideal state once it has been nourished (*yang qi xing* 養其性[594]), *Mengzi* also needs to narrow its application to the human case.

Natural Dispositions echoes the sentiment that human *xing* is qualitatively different:

> 牛生而倀（長？），雁生而伸（？），其【性也。人生】而學，或變之也。
>
> Oxen are born and grow; geese are born and stretch out [to fly in formation], this is their nature. Humans are born and learn, something changes it.
>
> 凡物無不期也者。剛之柱也，剛趣之也。柔之約，柔趣之也。
>
> 四海之內，其性一也。其用心各異，教使然也。
>
> Among externalities, there is nothing that does not await. When hardness manifests itself as being erect, it is the hardness that prompts it. When softness manifests itself as being tied, it is the softness that prompts it. For all within the four seas, [the principle of] their natural dispositions is identical. The application of one's heart is in each case unique. Teaching causes it to be so.

These two statements present a contrast between humans' *xing*, animals' *xing*, and the *xing* of inanimate objects. In the first statement, whose understanding is still tentative, animals are born with a set path of behavior, while humans have the possibility of

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[594] *Mengzi* 7A.1.

learning (*xue* 學). In the second quote, objects are assigned the same need of stimulation that humans are also subject to. Yet objects do not choose the property that regulates their *xing*, while humans develop differently according to how they respond to teaching.[595]

If we suppose that a conversation existed among these ideas (rather than between these two specific texts), these passages from the Guodian manuscript illuminates *Mengzi*'s famous passage. Mengzi was against the idea of *xing* to indicate the operative principles of innate dispositions. In Mengzi's view, humans are given an inborn foundation of morality, but it is fundamental that they cultivate it[596] and develop into proper morality. Accordingly, in the exchange with Gaozi, Mengzi attempts to single out humans from the generic proposition that their natural dispositions develop according to a set process, as it happens with oxen and geese.

In other occasions, however, *xing* is not as carefully disambiguated. In the passage about the Ox Mountain mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, *Mengzi* states that a mountain's tendency is that of growing lush. When this does not happen, it is because humans interfere with it. Similarly, a person loses his good heart (*liang xin* 良心) if there is no constancy in keeping at bay what harms moral development.[597] The lack of a more explicit disambiguation of *xing* and its usages suggests again that with the *Mengzi* we may be facing an incomplete opus, or at least a discussion of *xing* that was just beginning.

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[595] This also means that what is inborn is indeed relevant, contra Roger Ames's conclusion on the matter. In his "The Mencian Conception of Ren Xing." Yet Ames also recognizes Mencius's intent to present human *xing* as special, see Ames in Defoort and Ames, *Having a Word with Angus Graham*, 205–210.

[596] *Mengzi* 7A.1.

[597] *Mengzi* 6A.8

Even a simplified exploration of the conception of human nature in the *Mengzi* needs to include the notion of "four beginnings," *si duan* 四端. These are like four seeds, one for each aspect deemed essential by *Mengzi*: *ren* 仁, 'humanity'; *yi* 義, 'morality'; *li* 禮, 'ritual'; and *zhi* 智, 'wisdom'. These beginnings are as natural to humans as the four limbs:

> 人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。有是四端而自謂不能者，自賊者也；謂其君不能者，賊其君者也。凡有四端於我者，知皆擴而充之矣，若火之始然，泉之始達。[598]
> Humans have these four beginnings in the same way they have four limbs. Having these four beginnings, to claim that one cannot develop is to deceive oneself. To say to one's lord that he cannot develop them, is to deceive the lord. We all are the four beginnings in ourselves. Once we understand how to develop and fulfill them, it will be like a fire that begins to burn, or a spring that begins to flow.

Mengzi is naturalizing four values that he deemed fundamental in the same way he naturalizes a tendency towards goodness. This attention of Mengzi to the physical nature of humans has brought Irene Bloom to characterize his conception of human nature as biological,[599] building on Angus Graham's conclusion that for *Mengzi*, to become moral is as natural as growing.[600] Here too the passage from *Natural Dispositions* quoted above seems in line with *Mengzi*: humans learn as naturally as animals develop.

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[598] *Mengzi zhushu* 3.112–113.
[599] Bloom, "Human Nature and Biological Nature in Mencius."
[600] Graham, "The Background," 28.

The relevance of the "four beginnings" lies also in its applicability. The possibility to cultivate these four beginnings is within reach for everybody.[601] Yet, guidance is also necessary. This emerges from a most famous exchange between Mengzi and King Xuan 宣王 of Qi 齊 (reign 319–310 BCE). After seeing an ox being dragged to be sacrificed, King Xuan ordered it to be swapped for a goat. While people in the state interpret this as a sign of stinginess, Mengzi diagnosed the issue differently: King Xuan's action was guided by his innate sense of humanity, finding the sight of the scared ox unbearable.[602]

By reshaping the argument in this way, Mengzi accomplishes two things. He flatters his interlocutor King Xuan by interpreting his actions as a sign of morality, and thus implying the king is *already* on the right path.[603] At the same time, Mengzi proves that humans act and make decisions even if the subject is not fully aware of it. In other words: naturally. A king and a commoner alike share the same feelings. Hence, these feelings cannot be due to education or social status.[604]

This is highlighted in another passage, where Mengzi hypothesizes that anyone without fail will feel compassion when seeing a child about to fall into a well:

> 孟子曰：「人皆有不忍人之心。先王有不忍人之心，斯有不忍
> 人之政矣。以不忍人之心，行不忍人之政，治天下可運之掌
> 上。所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者，今人乍見孺子將入於井，皆

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[601] Bloom, "Mencian Arguments on Human Nature," 32 ff.; Goldin, *Confucianism*, 49.

[602] *Mengzi zhushu* 1.23–25.

[603] Goldin also reminds us that King Xuan was famous for his repugnant behavior (Goldin, *The Art,* 83 ff.) and here Mengzi is graciously saving his reputation.

[604] Contra Ames, who argues that for Mengzi, humans are "unimportantly similar" ("The Mencian Conception of *renxing* 人性," 158).

有怵惕惻隱之心。非所以內交於孺子之父母也，非所以要譽於
鄉黨朋友也，非惡其聲而然也。由是觀之，無惻隱之心，非人
也；無羞惡之心，非人也；無辭讓之心，非人也；無是非之
心，非人也。[605]

Mengzi said: "All humans have a heart that cannot bear [the suffering of] others. The former kings had a heart that could not bear it, and therefore had a government that [did not allow] others to suffer. (…) Suppose now a child is about to fall into a well: anyone [seeing this] would have a frightened, compassionate heart. It would not be to ingratiate themselves with the child's parents; nor to gain fame among neighbors and friends; nor because they dislike having a reputation [of not being moved by such a scene]. From this it can be seen that those who do not have a heart capable of compassion are not human; those who lack a heart that is ashamed of bad [feelings] is not human; those who lack a heart capable of deference are not human; those who lack a heart capable of [distinguishing] right and wrong are not human.[606]

Although this passage does not mention *xing* 性, Mengzi defines here an important related concept, that of *ren* 人. Humane are those who are compassionate, feel shame, and can distinguish between right and wrong. And because anyone will be moved by seeing a child being in danger, anyone is human, In turn, anyone has the ability to be moral. This sort of circular argument hammers a cardinal notion in Mencian philosophy: the equal constitution of all humans, and their natural disposition towards goodness. It also relies on a third aspect that I argue should be included in a new definition of human nature: the subjects' response is stimulated by an external event, seeing someone in distress, be it an ox or a child.

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[605] *Mengzi zhushu* 3.112–113.
[606] Compare Goldin, *Confucianism*, 44–45.

An obvious objection to Mengzi's theory is to ask why, if all humans are born with a tendency towards morality and humanity, not everybody acts morally and humanely. Master Gong Du 公 都子 targets this when he asks Mengzi why, if all humans are equal (*jun* 均), some are greater than others. Mengzi's response is articulated in terms of physical properties.[607] Humans have a "greater part," *da ti* 大體, namely the heart, and "lesser parts," *xiao ti* 小體, the senses.[608] Those who follow their heart rather than their senses are capable of becoming a great person. This however only begs the question of why some are unable to follow "greater part." Like the exchange on the whiteness of jade and snow,[609] we have here a sense that the dialogue is incomplete.

We can find other indications in *Mengzi* to understand why not all humans develop morally, in spite of their identical foundation. Consider the above-mentioned example of the behavior of water: although it can be made to move upwards under specific circumstances, *shi* 勢, it is unnatural for water to do so. Although *Mengzi* never defines *shi*, the term indicates a context that is set up by an agent: the water is made to go upwards by someone.[610] In *Han Feizi* 韓非子, *shi* are the circumstances set up by humans:

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[607] *Mengzi zhushu* 11.369. Bloom ""Mencian Arguments on Human Nature (Jen-Hsing)," 28–29.
[608] Goldin *The Art*, 93–94.
[609] Goldin, *The Art*, 259 footnote 31.
[610] Brindley defines *shi* "environmental forces" (*Individualism*, 67), but this translation misses the agency involved in the actions that causes the water to go against its nature. Virág translates "momentum" (*The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy* 113), but this also risks being misleading.

夫勢者，名一而變無數者也。勢必於自然，則無為言於勢矣。

吾所為言勢者，言人之所設也。[611]

As for *shi* 勢, [this is] one word that varies [in its usages] endlessly. If *shi* indicated what is so by itself, then there would be no [need] to engage in a discussion of it. When I discuss *shi*, I discuss what humans set up.

Cautiousness is required in transferring definitions from one text to the other. Let however assume for sake of argument that this definition of *shi* is similar to what Mengzi had in mind in stating that water can be made to move against its nature. What disrupts natural dispositions are external factors that force them in unnatural ways. Who is responsible for establishing the correct circumstances is never well defined in *Mengzi*, perhaps intentionally so: the responsibility lies in individuals (who have, as Philip J. Ivanhoe "moral autonomy"[612]) as much as governments.

Given the occurrence of *shi* in conjunction with discussions of human nature, it is worth pausing on this term for a moment. *Han Feizi*'s definition of *shi* suggests that a more common understanding of the word was that of "circumstances not caused by humans." *Shi* is used in this sense in *Natural Dispositions*:[613]

善不善，性也。所善所不善，勢也。[614]

Approval and disapproval is part of natural dispositions; what is deemed good or not are circumstances.[615]

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[611] *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu* 40.945.
[612] Ivanhoe "Thinking And Learning In Early Confucianism," 474 ff.
[613] A third instance of *shi* occurs in *Natural Dispositions* strip11, "what exposes (?) natural dispositions are circumstances, *chu xing zhe, shi ye* 出性者，勢也." It remains difficult to understand the exact meaning of *chu* here; the expression *chu xing* is otherwise unattested in the literature.
[614] *Natural Dispositions*, strips 4–5.
[615] Lit: "what is being set up."

凡現者之謂物，快於己者之謂悅，物之勢者之謂勢，有為也者
之謂故。[616]

What is perceptible is called 'externality'. Being delighted in oneself is called 'happiness'. The name we give to the set up of externalities is 'circumstance'. The name for when there is an action being performed is 'purpose'.

If this interpretation is correct, the usage of *shi* in both *Mengzi* and *Han Feizi* departs from that in **Natural Dispositions*. It is worth paying attention to these echos, for two reasons. First, this may be yet another instance of how the Guodian manuscript worked as a collection of philosophical definitions. Secondly, both in *Mengzi* and **Natural Dispositions*, we are seeing the emergence of a technical vocabulary used to discuss the specific philosophical notion of *xing*. This is better illustrated in appendix A to this dissertation, and ought to be explored further.

In conclusion, *Mengzi*'s notion of *xing* can be summarized as follows. *Xing* indicates natural dispositions shared by all humans, and the ideal state of moral growth that these dispositions lead to if properly developed. From the beginning, *xing* is inclined towards morality, humanity, ritual, and wisdom. Individuals and social groups are responsible for the development of these inclinations. Human *xing* is qualitatively different that of other entities. While the end goal of moral growth is the same for all humans, the way in which this is reached may differ, depending on the external stimulations to which they are subject.

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[616] **Natural Dispositions,* strips 12–13.

Xunzi 荀子

As Wang Chong tells us, in *Xunzi* we have an entire chapter on the subject of human nature, "On the badness of human nature," *xing'e* 性惡. This chapter constitutes a natural starting point to discuss this topic. The opening of this section sets the tone of *Xunzi*'s philosophical conception of *xing*:

> 人之性惡，其善者偽也。今人之性，生而有好利焉，順是，故爭奪生而辭讓亡焉；生而有疾惡焉，順是，故殘賊生而忠信亡焉；生而有耳目之欲，有好聲色焉，順是，故淫亂生而禮義、文理亡焉。[617]
>
> The nature of humans is bad; its goodness is a fabrication. Now, human nature is born with a fondness for profit. If indulged, dispute and robbery arise, while decorum and courtesy are destroyed by it. [Humans] are [also] born with jealousy and hatred in it. If indulged, oppression and theft arise, while loyalty and trustworthiness are destroyed by it. At birth, [humans] have desires of the ears and the eye, they have fondness for sounds and colors. If indulged, perversion and chaos arise, while rituals, righteousness, culture and principles are destroyed by it.[618]

Xunzi operates within the same theoretical framework that emerges from *Mengzi*: *xing* indicates given characteristics with which humans are born.[619] These natural dispositions follow the same logic that we find in *Mengzi* and **Natural Dispositions*: they arise and direct one's behavior. However, whilst in *Mengzi* the foundation is one of goodness, *Xunzi* believes more natural for humans to be attracted to the desire to profit oneself (echoing *Mozi*'s concerns).

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[617] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.934.
[618] Compare Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. III: 150–151.
[619] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.915 and 23.938 (discussed below).

孟子曰：「人之學者，其性善。」

曰：是不然。是不及知人之性，而不察乎人之性偽之分者也。凡性者，天之就也，不可學，不可事。禮義者，聖人之所生也，人之所學而能，所事而成者也。不可學，不可事，而在天[620]者，謂之性；可學而能，可事而成之在人者，謂之偽。是性偽之分也。今人之性，目可以見，耳可以聽；夫可以見之明不離目，可以聽之聰不離耳，目明而耳聰，不可學明矣。[621]

Mengzi said: "Humans learn [because] their nature is good."
[I] say: "This is not the case. [To say] this is not to follow and understand human nature, and not to investigate the separation between human nature and fabrication.[622] When it comes to human nature, Heaven realizes [it]; it cannot be learned, and it cannot be controlled. Rituals and righteousness are [instead] what the sages bore, humans can learn and accomplish them, they can control and bring to completion. What cannot be learned, cannot be controlled, and resides in Heaven, we call that 'human nature.' What can be learned and accomplished, can be controlled, what [humans] bring to completion, and resides in humans, we call this fabrication. This is the division between human nature and fabrication. Now, when it comes to human nature, the eyes have the ability to see; the ears can listen. The clarity that comes from the ability to see cannot be separated from the eyes; the cleverness that comes from the ability to hear cannot be separated from the ears. That the eyes are bright and the ears are clever, clearly cannot be learned.

Like *Mengzi* and *Natural Dispositions*, *Xunzi* claims that *xing* derives from Heaven. None of the texts are however interested in debating its origin, or what determines its qualities.. Xunzi quickly moves on to discussing the environment that best accounts for

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[620] I follow here Gu Qianli's 顧千里 (1776-1835) suggestion and emend *ren* 人 to *tian* 天, following the reasoning of the passage, see *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.940.
[621] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.938.
[622] See discussion below on *wei* 偽.

human dispositions. In a more practical vein, one's efforts should focus on rituals and righteousness, which are also the roots of an orderly society:

故必將有師法之化、禮義之道，然後出於辭讓，合於文理，而歸於治。（…） 今人之性惡，必將待師法然後正，得禮義然後治。今人無師法，則偏險而不正。[623]

Therefore it is necessary to accomplish a transformation [according to] the standards of the teachers, and the Way of ritual and righteousness, [and only] after come decorum and courtesy, according to culture and principles, and [one] returns to order. (…) Now, human nature is bad; [therefore] it must await the standards of the teachers, and only after [it is possible to] rectify it. [It must] to obtain rituals and righteousness, only after [it is possible to] govern it. If humans lack the teachers' standards, then they are prejudiced, vicious and not correct.[624]

For *Xunzi*, improvement comes from a process of transformation (*hua* 化) and rectification (*zheng* 正) of one's *xing*. Lacking these standards is problematic, since human nature is not self-sufficient for establishing and governing itself.[625]

The idea of transforming human nature recurs multiple times in the chapter, in connection with a pivotal concept in *Xunzi*'s discourse on *xing*, that of *wei* 偽. To Xunzi, *wei* indicates an active action of manipulation, in direct contrast to human nature:[626]

問者曰：「人之性惡，則禮義惡生？」應之曰：「凡禮義者，是生於聖人之偽，非故生於人之性也。故陶人埏埴而為器，然

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[623] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.934.
[624] Compare Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. III: 151.
[625] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 4.324.
[626] As stated above, "不可學，不可事，而在人者，謂之性；可學而能，可事而成之在人者，謂之偽." *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.938.

233

則器生於陶人之偽，非故生於人之性也。故工人斲木而成器，

然則器生於工人之偽，非故生於人之性也。聖人積思慮，習偽

故，以生禮義而起法度，然則禮義法度者，是生於聖人之偽，

非故生於人之性也。若夫目好色，耳好聽，口好味，心好利，

骨體膚理好愉佚，是皆生於人之情性者也；感而自然，不待事

而後生之者也。夫感而不能然，必且待事而後然者，謂之生於

偽。是性偽之所生，其不同之徵也。」⁶²⁷

Someone asked, "If human nature is bad, then are rituals and morality also born imperfectly?" This was answered as follows: "As for rituals and righteousness, these are born from the actions of the sages, they are not born from human nature. The potter models the clay to make a vessel, hence the vessel is born from the artifice of the potter, it is not born from [his] nature. The worker hacks a tree to make a vessel, hence the vessel is born from the artifice of the worker, and it is not born from [his] nature.⁶²⁸

Now, the eyes love colors; the ears love to hear; the mouth loves flavor; the mind loves profit, the whole body loves pleasure and idleness. These all are born from human emotions and natural dispositions. If stimulated, they [respond] naturally; they do not await for [the person] to act to be produced. What is stimulated but its response is not natural, and must await for [the person] to act to then be produced, we call this what is born from fabrication."

Here Xunzi is struggling with the same question raised with Mengzi, turned upside down: if human nature is bad, whence does anything good, such as rituals, arise? The answer lies in *wei* 偽, or rather in the ability of the sages to fabricate (*shengren zhi wei* 聖人之偽) the tools necessary for moral cultivation. In direct contrast with what comes as natural responses to stimulations, *wei* leads to the inability (*bu neng* 不能) to respond naturally. Yet this unnatural response is meant to give individuals control over their

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⁶²⁷ *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.

⁶²⁸ Compare Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. III: 154.

234

actions. This passage reveals another way in which Xunzi conceives human nature: subject to stimulation, in an unreflective way. This needs management.

The metaphor used in this quote expresses this sentiment: vessels (i.e., what is useful) result from the controlled manipulation of a primary source. Thus, *Xunzi* claims, the vessel is the result of humans' fabrication. A strict analogy would build a contrast with the *xing* of wood, not that of humans: the unprocessed wood and clay correspond to *xing*, while the vessel corresponds to fabrication (wood → vessel : natural element / *xing* → product). Instead, *Xunzi* moves the attention to the potter and the worker because he wants to emphasize that without an external agent, natural conditions (i.e. the wood, the clay, or human nature) cannot be modified. Humans need sages and their rituals. While in *Mengzi* achieving morality is a matter of ensuring that human nature develops what it already contains, for *Xunzi* it is about transformation, *hua* 化:

> 故聖人化性而起偽，偽起而生禮義，禮義生而制法度；然則禮義法度者，是聖人之所生也。故聖人之所以同於眾，其不異於眾者，性也；所以異而過眾者，偽也。夫好利而欲得者，此人之情性也。[629]
>
> Thus the sages transformed their natures and gave rise to fabrications; fabrications rose and they gave birth to rituals and morality; rituals and morality were born and the sages fixed the standards and the rules. It then follows that rituals, morality, standards and rules are what the sages gave birth to. That through which the sages are equal to and do not differ from the masses is human nature; that through which they differ and surpass the masses is fabrication. To love profit and to desire gains, these are human natural dispositions and emotions.

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[629] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.

This should not be mistaken with the idea that individuals have no responsibility. Individuals ought to take on themselves the learning of the appropriate conduct. While *Mengzi* encourages everybody to understand their nature,[630] to *Xunzi* the individual's responsibility is that of learning to overcome one's immediate reactions in favour of an external system that regulates one's actions:

> 假之有弟兄資財而分者，且順情性，好利而欲得，若是，則兄
> 弟相怫[631]奪矣；且化禮義之文理，若是，則讓乎國人矣。故
> 順情性則弟兄爭矣，化禮義則讓乎國人矣。[632]
>
> Suppose there are a younger and an older with wealth and valuables to divide, and [that they do so by] following their feelings and dispositions, which are the love for profit and desire to gain. If so, the older and younger brother will violate and attack each other. If instead [they do so by] transforming [according to] the pattern and the lines of rituals and righteousness, if so, then they would yield to their countrymen. Thus, to follow one's feelings and dispositions is to lead brothers to quarrel; to change [according to] rituals and righteousness is to yield to one's countrymen.

This is not easily achieved: only sages such as Shun and Yao were capable of it. That is why sages gave rise to rituals to guide human's actions, as we read above.

Implied here is a tenet of *Xunzi*'s discourse that is made explicit a few lines below. As in **Natural Dispositions* and *Mengzi*, *xing* is a universal feature. Yao and Yu, sages, the noble and the petty person, all share the same nature. What differs is their ability to modify it:

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[630] *Mengzi* 7A.1 "If one knows one's natural dispositions, then one knows Heaven, 知其性則知天矣."
[631] See *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.945 no. 16.
[632] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.

凡人之性者，堯禹之與桀跖，其性一也；君子之與小人，其性一也。今將以禮義積偽為人之性邪？然則又曷貴堯禹，曷貴君子矣哉！凡貴堯禹君子者，能化性，能起偽，偽起而生禮義。[633]

As for human nature, in comparing Yao and Shun with Jie and Zhi, their *xing* is one. The noble person and the petty one, their *xing* is one. Now, how to take rituals and righteousness, and the accumulated fabrication as part of human nature?! If it were so, how [could one] praise Yao and Yu, how could one praise the noble person! If we praise them, [it is because] they can change their natural dispositions, and could give rise to fabrication, and once fabrication rises, they could produce rituals and righteousness.

The universality of *xing* is reiterated also in the chapter "Rectifying Names," *zheng ming* 正名:

性者、天之就也；情者、性之質也；欲者、情之應也。以所欲為可得而求之，情之所必不免也。以為可而道之，知所必出也。故雖為守門，欲不可去，性之具也。雖為天子，欲不可盡。欲雖不可盡，可以近盡也。欲雖不可去，求可節也。所欲雖不可盡，求者猶近盡；欲雖不可去，所求不得，慮者欲節求也。[634]

Natural dispositions follow from Heaven. *Qing* is the substance of natural dispositions; desires are the tendencies of *qing*. When what is desired is considered reachable and obtainable, then the emotions will surely not avoid it. If it is considered possible to follow, that knowledge will emerge [to that end]. Thus, even if one is a gate-keeper, the desires could not be dismissed. If the natural

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[633] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.950. Emendations follow the annotations in footnotes 5 and 6, page 952.
[634] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.915.

dispositions are preserved [in their original state],[635] even if one is the Son of Heaven, desires could not be exhausted. Although desires cannot be exhausted, [one] can moderate them. If they cannot be dismissed, [one] can seek for moderation. Even though what is desired cannot be exhausted.[636]

Hre there is a more explicit leveling of individual differences. The Son of Heaven and the gate-keeper are the same when it comes to their natural dispositions, in the same way in *Mengzi* the king was distressed in seeing a suffering ox in ways any human would be. The universality of *xing* should not be taken as promoting social equality. It is meant to place the responsibility for moral growth in anybody's lap,[637] not to remove social order.

What motivates *Xunzi* to claim that *xing* is bad? Human nature has basic necessities: when hungry, humans desire to be fed; when cold, they desire warmth; when fatigued, they desire to rest.[638] These feelings are not wrong *per se*; what is wrong is that they lead us to act in an immoral way:[639]

> 今人見長而不敢先食者，將有所讓也。勞而不敢求息者，將有
> 所代也。（⋯） 故順情性則不辭讓矣，辭讓則悖於情性矣。用
> 此觀之，人之性惡明矣，其善者偽也。[640]
>
> When seeing an elderly person, one does not dare to eat first, to display courtesy. When fatigued, one does not dare to ask for rest, giving it first to [his father and brothers]. (…) Therefore, if we indulge in [our] emotions and natural dispositions, we are neither appropriate nor respectful; to be appropriate and respectful is to go

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[635] That is, if there is no action yet taken to force it towards goodness. *Ju* 具 is glossed as *quan* 全, "complete," here in the sense of its original state.
[636] Compare Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. III: 136.
[637] Goldin, *Confucianism*, 71.
[638] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.935.
[639] On *Xunzi*'s political philosophy, start from Harris, "Xunzi's Political Philosophy."
[640] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.935.

against one's emotions and dispositions. As it can be seen, human nature is bad, and its goodness is a fabrication.[641]

As in the example above discussing two brothers who have to divide their wealth, what *Xunzi* seems to imply is that human basic instincts work only for a single individual, but are not conducive to establishing a shared functioning environment.

In *Xunzi* too *xing* is a set of inborn dispositions shared by all humans. These dispositions, although natural, produce negative social outcomes if followed. Thus, it is not desirable to sustain or nourish them.[642] Humans have the faculty to know what these dispositions are,[643] understand why they should not be followed, and correct them through the tools that the ancient sages produced. While Mengzi believed that, given the appropriate environment, developing human nature is the basis to produce moral subjects, Xunzi thought it was necessary to bend one's nature through corrective measures. As Rose Sayer says in *The African Queen* "[Human] nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above."[644] Xunzi would have agreed.

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[641] Compare Knoblock 1994 vol. III: 153.
[642] So for *Xunzi xing* could never indicate an "ideal state", as it is for *Mengzi*.
[643] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 21.872.
[644] *The African Queen*, 1951 movie adaptation of the novel by C. S. Forester.

239

Zhuangzi 莊子

In this overview of *xing*, the *Zhuangzi* is somewhat an outlier. Like *Mozi,* its

chapters belong to different historical phases, and consensus on their chronological

formation is far from reached. The traditional account considers the first seven

chapters of this text, known as the "Inner chapters" *nei pian* 內篇, as the oldest,

written while Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (first half of the fourth century BCE?) was alive

(some argue that he himself wrote them[645]). The following chapters, divided in

"Outer chapters" *wai pian* 外篇 and "Miscellaneous chapters" *za pian* 雜篇, are

produced between the fourth and the second centuries BCE.

Franklin Perkins claimed that the discussion on human nature was a Confucian

issue[646] (a point in fact previously made by A. C. Graham[647]), since the term *xing*

性 does not appear in the "Inner chapters" of *Zhuangzi*, in the *Daodejing,* or in

Mozi. Yet Esther Klein has convincingly challenged the traditional account for the

Zhuangzi's textual dating, arguing that the "Inner chapters" may in fact be the

latest group of chapters ascribed to the enigmatic person of Zhuang Zhou.[648]

These dating uncertainties notwithstanding, I include a discussion of *xing from*

Zhuangzii because its chapters clearly contain Warring States material. Besides the

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[645] On these two different schools of thought, see Defoort, "Mental Fasting In The Study Of Chinese Philosophy: Liu Xiaogan Versus Esther Klein."

[646] Perkins, "Recontextualizing Xing: Self-Cultivation And Human Nature In The Guodian Texts."

[647] Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature."

[648] Klein, "Were There 'Inner Chapters' in the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about the *Zhuangzi*."

arguments presented in the scholarship, we can recall the saying about stealing belt that appears both in *Zhuangzi* and **Thicket* discussed in chapter one, or point at the many points of contact presented in appendix A to this dissertation. A second reason to include the *Zhuangzi* is that studies of its conceptions of human nature are relatively few outside Chinese scholarship. Thus the following overview modestly fills a gap in the scholarship.

Zhuangzi's statements on *xing* proceed in almost the opposite direction of *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*. While for these two thinkers acting on one's natural dispositions is a *sine qua non* for moral growth, *Zhuangzi* promotes the preservation of *xing* as it is. As the opening of the outer chapter "Webbed Toes" 駢拇 claims, to modify *xing* is to do it harm:

> 駢拇枝指，出乎性哉！而侈於德。附贅縣疣，出乎形哉！而侈
> 於性。多方乎仁義而用之者，列於五藏哉！而非道德之正也。
> 是故駢於足者，連無用之肉也；枝於手者，樹無用之指也；多
> 方駢枝於五藏之情者，淫僻於仁義之行，而於聰明之用
> 也。[649]（…）彼正正者，不失其性命之情。故合者不為駢，
> 而枝者不為跂；長者不為有餘，短者不為不足。是故鳧脛雖
> 短，續之則憂；鶴脛雖長，斷之則悲。故性長非所斷，性短非
> 所續，無所去憂也。意仁義其非人情乎！彼仁人何其多憂也？
> 且夫駢於拇者，決之則泣；枝於手者，齕之則啼。二者或有餘

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[649] Following emendations according to *Zhuangzi jishi* 8.314 footnote 2.

於數，或不足於數，其於憂一也。今世之仁人，蒿目而憂世之
患；不仁之人，決性命之情而饕富貴。故意仁義其非人情
乎！[650]

Webbed toes and extra fingers, these come out of one's nature! And [yet] they are excessive to integrity. Attached cysts and hanging tumors, these come out of one's form. And [yet] they are excessive for one's nature. [There are] many techniques about benevolence and righteousness, and people use them, lining them up with the five organs. But this is not the appropriate [technique] of the Way and the virtue. Thus, webbed toes in a foot connect flash that has no use; an extra finger in a hand sets up a finger that has no use. The numerous techniques are like webbed toes and extra fingers to the essence of the five organs, they are excessive and eccentric in the conduct of benevolence and righteousness, and in the application of intelligence and brightness. (…) Those who are correct and just do not lose the affections of endowed nature. What is joined [then] is not considered webbed; what diverges is not considered as divergent; what is long is not considered as needing to be short; and what is short is not considered as insufficient. Thus, even if a duck's legs are short, to stretch them is then worrisome. The crane's legs are long, to shorten them is then sorrowful. Thus, if by natural disposition something is long, it is wrong to shorten it; if by natural disposition something is short, it is wrong to lengthen it; [otherwise] there is no way to expel worry. Consider, [then,] that benevolence and righteousness are not human emotion! [Otherwise,] why are those benevolent persons so worried. Those with webb toes, if they cut them would weep; and those with extra fingers, if they bite them off, they would cry. In these two cases, one has abundance in numbers, the other suffers insufficiency, but their worry is the same. Now the benevolent people of our age, they gaze around[651] and worry about the sufferings of the world; those who are not benevolent cut off with the feelings of the dispositions that are endowed, and are greedy for wealth and honor. Thus, consider: benevolence and righteousness are not human emotions!

Zhuangzi here advocates the preservation of human nature. At the same time, the

opening of this quote tells us that excess is harmful, even when natural. Perhaps

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[650] *Zhuangzi jishi* 8.313-319.

[651] Following *Zhuangzi zhu yi* 莊子注譯 8.112.

the author of this chapter aimed to emphasize the notion of excess even if it meant settling for a less-than-ideal analogy, because ultimately the goal is to discredit benevolence and righteousness as excessive for humans. The chapter continues:

且夫待鉤繩規矩而正者，是削其性；待繩約膠漆而固者，是侵其德也；屈折禮樂，呴俞仁義，以慰天下之心者，此失其常然也。天下有常然。常然者，曲者不以鉤，直者不以繩，圜者不以規，方者不以矩，附離不以膠漆，約束不以纆索。故天下誘然皆生而不知其所以生；同焉皆得而不知其所以得。故古今不二，不可虧也。則仁義又奚連連如膠漆纆索而遊乎道德之間為哉？使天下惑也！夫小惑易方，大惑易性。何以知其然邪？自虞氏招仁義以撓天下也，天下莫不奔命於仁義，是非以仁義易其性與？[652]

Now, when something depends on the hook and the rope, the compass and the square to be straightened, this is to abrade its nature; when something depends on the cord to be bound, on the glue and the lacquer this is to encroach on its character.[653] To bend to and to govern[654] according to rituals and music, to yearn and talk of[655] benevolence and righteousness, [thinking] to comfort the world's minds with these, [when in fact] these fail its constant being. The world has a constant disposition. [According to this] constant disposition, what is bent is not so through the hook; what is straight is not so through the rope; what is round is not so through the compass; what is squared is not so through the ruler. What is joined is not so through glue and lacquer; what is bound is not so through cord and rope. Thus the world is guided naturally, all [the elements] are born without knowing what bears them. Equally, from this [process] they obtain [their characteristics] without

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[652] *Zhuangzi jishi* 8.322-323.

[653] Here I translate *de* 德 as "character" since it refers to laquer. Later in the same passage is more aking to "virtue."

[654] Reading "to break" 折 *TET as "to govern" 制 *TET, as in the manuscript of *Black Robe* from the Shanghai museum collection, strip 14.

[655] Reading 俞 as *yu* 喻 "to discuss," as in *Lunyu* 4.16.

knowing through what they obtain them. Now the ancient and modern times are not different; [this process] cannot be discouraged. If so, when it comes to benevolence and righteousness, are they not binding [people] like glue and lacquer, like cord and rope, and [then these people] exist roaming among the Way and Virtue? [This] confuses the world. A small confusion changes the orientation; a big confusion changes one's natural dispositions. How to know that its character is damaged? Ever since Shun adopted benevolence and righteousness and gave them to the world, there has been nobody in the world that did not encourage their fate to be about benevolence and righteousness. Is this not to change one's natural dispositions through benevolence and righteousness?

Humans have done nothing but alter their nature because of externalities (*yi wu yi qi xing* 以物易其性): the petty person alters it to obtain profit; the officer for sake of fame; the sages too sacrificed their *xing* for the world. They are all the same in "harming their nature," *shang xing* 傷性.[656] Here we begin to see how the positions of the *Zhuangzi* on social involvement is antithetical to that of *Xunzi* and *Mengzi*. Both *Xunzi* and *Mengzi* welcome stimulation from the world external to humans: it is through interactions that human nature can be managed for *Xunzi,* and developed for *Mengzi*. In *Zhuangzi*, the virtues of benevolence and righteousness are external impositions that fail to benefit a person.

The same theme recurs in a narrative from the chapter "The Way of Heaven" 天道 Laozi (here as Lao Dan 老聃) debates with Confucius about benevolence and righteousness. As often happens, the entire exchange aims to make Confucius appear foolish in his conviction.

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[656] *Zhuangzi jishi* 8.323.

老聃曰：「請問：仁義，人之性邪？」孔子曰：「然。君子不仁則不成，不義則不生。仁義，真人之性也，又將奚為矣？」老聃曰：「請問何謂仁義？」孔子曰：「中心物愷，兼愛無私，此仁義之情也。」老聃曰：「意！幾乎後言！夫兼愛，不亦迂乎！無私焉，乃私也。夫子若欲使天下無失其牧乎？（…） 又何偈偈乎揭仁義，若擊鼓而求亡子焉？意！夫子亂人之性也！」[657]

> Lao Dan said: "May I ask, are benevolence and righteousness part of humans' natural dispositions?" Confucius said: "Of course. If the noble person is not benevolente, he will not be accomplished; if he is not righteous, he will not live [properly]. Benevolence and righteousness truly are humans' natural dispositions. How else could it be?" Lao Dan responded, "May I ask: how do you define benevolence and righteousness?" Confucius replied: "When things are content at the center, in [one's] heart; to care impartially without self-interest, these are the sentiments of benevolence and righteousness." Lao Dan exclaimed: "Ah!   [These are] almost nonsense words.[658] About caring impartially: is it not twisted?! To have no self-interest, that is also self-interest. So you indeed wish to make the world to be without, to lose its nourishment? (…) You encourage to take on benevolence and righteousness, it is as if you were beating a drum to go look for someone who ran away![659] Ah! You confuse humans' nature!

The argument is not perfectly played out. Yet the aim of this passage is clear: acting on one's nature, in whichever form, is harmful. It twists humans in the same

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[657] *Zhuangzi jishi* 13.478-480.

[658] Following *Zhuangzi zhu shi* 13.182 no. 4.

[659] Here the point seems to be that the person has run away, hence the search cannot be broadcasted with drums. See *Zhuangzi jishi* 13.480.

way matter is twisted to produce vessels. Even if vessels are useful, they are still the product of a distortion of the natural dispositions of wood.[660]

With these claims, *Zhuangzi* raises expectations. What is this *xing* so worth being defended against any possible interference from the world? Somewhat disappointingly, the definitions of *xing* provided in this text (at least in the version we read today) are not particularly revealing. Halfway through the chapter "Heaven and Earth" 天地, we are presented a cosmogenesis that involves *xing*:

泰初有無，無有無名；一之所起，有一而未形。物得以生，謂之德；未形者有分，且然無間，謂之命；流[661]動而生物，物成生理，謂之形；形體保神，各有儀則，謂之性。性修反德，德至同於初。[662]

In the great beginning, there was nothing. There was no existence nor names. The One rose from it, and [thus] there was the One that had no form. Elements obtained the One and were born, [so] we call this [having] virtue;[663] what is without form has divisions, and moreover is so without differences, we call this endowment. [The one] flows and moves and gives birth to the elements; when the elements are complete they give birth to patterns, and we call this "[to have a] form". Forms and bodies protect the energy, each [element] has [its] protocol and rules, we call these its "natural dispositions." When the natural dispositions are restored [there is] a return to virtue; if the virtue is reached, it is the same as returning to the [great] beginning.

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[660] *Zhuangzi jishi* 12.453: "A hundred-year-old three is broken to make sacrificial vessels, colored in green and yellow and decorated, and the [remaining] pieces are [tossed] in a ditch. If one compares the sacrificial vessels with the chips in the ditch, there will be differences in their beauty, but they all lost their original condition in the same way, 百年之木，破為犧尊，青黃而文之，其斷在溝中。比犧尊於溝中之斷，則美惡有間矣，其於失性一也。"

[661] Following *Zhuangzi jishi* 12.425 no. 5.

[662] *Zhuangzi jishi* 12.424.

[663] The passage is hard to contextualize. Several interpretations have been offered. I follow that proposed in *Zhuangzi jishi*.

A second definition of *xing* appears in chapter "Gengsang chu" from the Miscellaneous section:

> 道者，德之欽也；生者，德之先⁶⁶⁴也；性者，生之質也。性
> 之動謂之為，為之偽謂之失。⁶⁶⁵
>
> The Way is the exemplification of Virtue.⁶⁶⁶ Being born is precedent to [displaying] behavior. Natural dispositions are the substance that comes from being born. We call "action" what comes from human nature being moved; when the action is a fabricated [response], we call this a loss.

So *xing* in *Zhuangzi* is defined according to the mainstream principle that was prevalent during the Warring States: inborn characteristics that determine development. *Zhuangzi* desires that these dispositions remain unaltered.⁶⁶⁷ Like in *Xunzi* and **Natural dispositions*, is is incorrect to indulge in the emotions that come as congenital part of *xing*:

> 無足曰：（…）　「且夫聲色滋味權勢之於人，心不待學而樂
> 之，體不待象而安之。夫欲惡避就，固不待師，此人之性也。
> 天下雖非我，孰能辭之！」知和曰：「知者之為，故動以百
> 姓，不違其度，是以足而不爭，無以為故不求。不足故求之，

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⁶⁶⁴ Emending according to Lu Deming's observation that in another edition, the sentence reads *de zhi xian* 德之先, *Zhuangzi jishi* 23.811. This also accords with the cosmogenesis presented above, although it should be noted that the two quotes belong to different passages.

⁶⁶⁵ *Zhuangzi jishi* 23.810.

⁶⁶⁶ Following Yu Yue's interpretation, *Zhuangzi jishi* 23.811.

⁶⁶⁷ *Zhuangzi jishi* 15.544: "The natural disposition of water is to be clear if it is not twirled; the be flat if nothing moves it. But if closed and unable to flow, it will then be not clear. This resembles Heaven's virtue. 水之性，不雜則清，莫動則平；鬱閉而不流，亦不能清；天德之象也。"

爭四處而不自以為貪；有餘故辭之，棄天下而不自以為廉。」⁶⁶⁸

Never-Enough said: (…) "Moreover, as for a person's [interest in] sounds, beauty, tastes, power and authority, the heart does not depend on learning [these] to rejoice in them, the body does not depend on practicing them to [find them] soothing. Desires and dislikes [make a person] escape or follow [something; these] surely do not depend on teaching, these are humans' natural dispositions. Knowing-Harmony said: "The actions of a person who knows are thus moving for the hundred clans, and they do not violate its rules. If with this [there is] sufficiency then [the knowing person] does not struggle, there is nothing for which to act [further] and thus this person does not seek [more]. If [there is] insufficiency, then [those who know] seek more, fight in all directions, but will not consider themselves greedy. If there is surplus, they will not for this reason reject it; they reject [the constraints of] the world, and do not see themselves as upright.

Thus natural dispositions emerge as a form of guidance,⁶⁶⁹ but they are not defined as in *Mengzi*, nor is there the need to establish a social system to develop them. Individuals are independent in cultivating their nature and return to the primordial potency (*xing xiu fan de* 性修反德). This explains why *Zhuangzi* repeatedly warns against the peril of losing one's nature, *shi xing* 失性.

Zhuangzi would deserve a much longer discussion to do justice to the conceptions of *xing* collected in this book, one that delve into other major topics, such as that of *de* 德 ("character; virtue"), self-cultivation, and emotions. Here the focus has been intentionally

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⁶⁶⁸ *Zhuangzi jishi* 29.1010-1015.
⁶⁶⁹ "Consider horses: their hooves can treat on frost and snow, their mane can protect them from cold winds, he feeds on grass and drinks water, he rises his feet and leap. These are truly the horse's natural dispositions, 馬，蹄可以踐霜雪，毛可以禦風寒，齕草飲水，翹足而陸。此馬之真性也。" Yet people cut their manes, domesticate them, and race them, and so horses die in this (unnatural) environment, *Zhuangzi jishi* 9.330-334.

narrower, following the desire to include this text in the conversation on human nature. As I see it, the themes presented on *xing* in *Zhuangzi* (such as that of stimulation and inborn features; or the suggestions that virtues are harmful to one's nature) suggest that these chapters have been indeed drafted during the Warring States era.

All are born equal, within a social hierarchy.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the debate concerning conceptions of human nature became popular during the mid fourth century BCE, a moment often considered as the beginning of early Chinese philosophy. Prior to this watershed moment, other topics were more compelling and dominated written records. In this final section, I would like to suggest an explanation for this development to add to the increase in the production of literature beyond administrative purposes.

The explanation ties back to the dynamics presented in chapter three. The broadening of literacy and the formation of a social group whose identity depended on the acquisition and employment of knowledge reflects a change in social configurations, one that allowed members outside the nobility to articulate positions that shortened the gap between a ruler and an otherwise unknown individual. The discourse on human nature represents one of the ways in which these changes were manifested.[670]

The conditions allowed thinkers to state authoritatively that *every* human is endowed with the same dispositions, regardless of their birth. The debate on human nature became so central both because of deep social changes that led to a reconsideration of social values and, with them, behaviors; and because of an unprecedented possibility to put forward claims of universality that allowed thinkers to promote philosophical positions that could be applied to all the participants in the society of the time.

However, we should not believe that the universality of human nature was meant to lead to any change in the Warring States social structure. None of the thinkers discussed

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[670] Another one being the trope of abdication, especially when in favor of socially subordinates.

above (indeed, no early Chinese thinkers that I am aware of) proceeded to claim that a king and a farmer could thus be considered *social* equals. In the texts discussed in this chapter, the main goal is to change individuals' behavior, not social structures.

This chapter made three points. By looking at how conceptions of natural disposition were presented in Warring States philosophical texts, it integrated the discussion of performance supports from the point of view of their content. Secondly, it continued the argument of chapter three in showing how performance supports were used, this time focusing on *Natural Dispositions*. Finally, it emphasized that in early Chinese intellectual discussions, stimulation was an intrinsic feature of *xing*. We may redefine *xing* as follows. In the philosophical discussions that developed during the fourth and third century BCE, *xing* indicates a set of normative inborn dispositions endowed to all members of the same species. All natural dispositions respond to stimulation. In *Mengzi*, *xing* also determines an ideal status once its dispositions are properly developed. All these features will carry through in later discussions of this topic by Chinese literati.

In the next chapter, I bring to a close this study by reflecting on two implications of my argument.

Concluding remarks

是若果是也，則是之異乎不是也亦無辯。莊子
If right were really right, then the difference
of what is right with what is wrong [would be so]
that there would be no argument. *Zhuangzi*

One of the goals of this dissertation was to encourage a shift in thinking about Warring

States manuscripts. Instead of interpreting them as one moment in the history of textual

sources, I focused on manuscripts as a manifestation of the socio-political phenomena

that developed during the third and second centuries BCE. I have coined the notion of

performance supports to indicate those manuscripts among Warring States collections

whose central mission was that of granting access to intellectual conversations.

Intentionally, my argument is falsifiable. As I mentioned in previous chapters, there is

no explicit evidence that individuals used performance supports as part of their

educational activities. And new material may emerge showing an entirely different use of

any of the texts discussed in this dissertation. For the time being, I present it as extremely

plausible if we consider all the points raised in this dissertation. My position pushes back

against the idea that the manuscripts presented here ever represented "fully developed

and coherent philosophy,"[671] "words of wisdom highly valued" to read over and over

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[671] D. Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 140. In other occasions, Meyer has defined these manuscripts as "self-contained piece[s] of thought" (D. Meyer, "Writing Meaning: Strategies Of Meaning-Construction," 59), another definition that goes without saying, while not going that far. In the argument proffered by Meyer, paragraphs too can be described as such. See also Chan's discussion of moral cultivation in **Natural Dispositions* taking it as single unit, "Human Nature and Moral Cultivation in the Guodian 郭店 Text of the Xing Zi Ming Chu 性自命出"). Underpinning some of these statements is the belief that the 5[th] BCE saw a "change in philosophizing" (D. Meyer "Bamboo and the Production of Philosophy," 27), but the case for this change is not well supported by evidence (for one, we do not have direct evidence of forms

again.[672] In fact, I find the eagerness in seeing in these manuscripts one of the high-points of Chinese philosophical production misleading.

I resist the identification of these manuscripts as Philosophy because it requires us to accept all of the puzzling features presented in the previous chapters simply as a way in which philosophical thinking manifested itself. Furthermore, it disregards the idea that manuscripts are concrete elements whose production took place among more complex dynamics than individuals expressing their philosophical ideas. It abstracts intellectual history in a way that even a single sentence can be extrapolated and be made a cornerstone for the entirety of Chinese Classical philosophy.[673] When *Natural Dispositions* was first published, it was celebrated as a missing piece in reconstructing intellectual lineages and textual histories.[674] And yet after the text has been exhaustively studied for almost two decades, *Natural Dispositions* is still described as a text that

of philosophizing before this moment, and yet questions about loyalty and moral behavior almost certainly circulated already). See also Weingarten, "Intertextuality And Memory In Early Chinese Writings: A Case Study From Huainanzi," 204 no. 11 on other problematic stances in Meyer's scholarship. Cf. also D. Meyer, "Writing Meaning: Strategies Of Meaning-Construction In Early Chinese Philosophical Discourse," 66; Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 180-181. Another somewhat contradictory aspect in Meyer's position is that philosophical manuscripts are at once deeply embedded in the cultural context of the time that produced them (Meyer, "Bamboo and the Production of Philosophy") and also independent units of coherence built with a complex, "web-like" structure without which the meaning of the text would be lost (Meyer also, *Philosophy on Bamboo*, 26, 31-42, and throughout). Meyer, "Patterning Meaning," argues that the Tsinghua texts *Tang zai chi men* 湯在啻門 has a matryoshka structure, and that is why it is not immediately understandable.

[672] Chan, *Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts*, 260-261.

[673] See e.g., Valmisa, *Adapting*, where one single definition of *wu* 物 as "entity" is equated with an entire philosophical thinking. She transcribes the definition from *Natural Dispositions* as "*wu* is that which makes itself apparent, 現者為物." The strip however writes *wei* 謂. Cf. also Shaughnessy's review "Philosophy or bamboo" of D. Meyer's 2012 book.

[674] See overview in Cook, *The Bamboo Texts*, 667-668.

engages with the topic of human nature, affections, self cultivation, and that may or may not have direct ties to texts such as *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*.[675]

Part of the motivation in identifying these manuscripts as philosophy comes from a debate that has little to do with them. To answer otherwise may be taken as a sign of Orientalism. Modern scholars trained outside China expect arguments to have certain features because of their educational background. More broadly, if scholars do not understand an ancient text, it is a sign of their narrowness. Not to call ancient evidence "philosophy" is to reiterate, albeit implicitly, that philosophy is an European, and European only, phenomenon.

This falls short on two aspects. To begin with, it fails to recognize expertise. Having a background in European studies prior to encountering other cultures does not equate to being exposed to one form of argument only. Scribal exercises and educational texts have been found in all ancient cultures that produced large bodies of written works,[676] with parallels to my argument on performance supports that are worth exploring.

Secondly, early Chinese literature gives abundant evidence of fully developed arguments,[677] with different goals and structures,[678] and with psychological subtleties.[679]

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[675] E.g., Li Rui, "Kong-Meng zhijian 'xing' lun yanjiu: yi Guodian Shangbo jian wei jichu" 孔孟之間「性」論研究–以郭店、上博簡為基礎, argues for a direct linke between *Natural Dispositions*, Confucius and Mengzi. The most recent study in Anglophone language is Chan's "Xing 性 and Qing 情: Human Nature and Moral Cultivation in the Guodian Text Xing Zi Ming Chu 性自命出 (Nature Derives from Endowment)."

[676] To name a few: Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (STDJ 54; Leiden: Brill, 2004); Robson "The Tablet House: A Scribal School in Old Babylonian Nippur;" on the mathematical equivalent of performance supports, see Jöran Friberg. *A Remarkable Collection of Babylonian Mathematical Texts*, 22 and throughout.

[677] Goldin, *The Art*, 13-27.

[678] Wang Chong's *Steelyard of Discourses* is a perfect example of this.

To the examples used above to illustrate how concepts of human nature appear in other manuscripts, one could cite the reasonings in the *Han Feizi*, how Wang Chong refuses myths by appealing to logical argumentations.[680] To rush in gathering ancient philosophical manuscripts as coherent and argumentative[681] regardless of their specific features is inattentive.

The issue stretches beyond advocating for the argument proffered in this dissertation, or what can be legitimately called a philosophical argument in Warring States intellectual culture. It had already become a question about the nature of the field. In the early 2000s, Carine Defoort engaged with the issue in two publications, starting from the root of the problem: what is meant by "philosophy."[682] The word had been swaggered around as if it had one unequivocal meaning, and yet just after a hundred years from first attested usage of the word "philosophy," Plato felt it was necessary to clarify that it meant "love for knowledge," and not just "knowledge."[683] Confucius predicted it correctly: "Nothing means what it says, / and it says it all the time."[684] Poetic excursions aside, in more recent years the problem of how appropriate "philosophy" may be as a label for cultures that

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[679] Schaberg, David. "The Ruling Mind: Persuasion and the Origins of Chinese Psychology."

[680] Li, Jiaming and Li, Jidong, "Wang Chong's Thoughts on Argumentation" (2020). *OSSA Conference Archive*.

[681] Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo*.

[682] Defoort, "Is there such a Thing as Chinese Philosophy? Arguments of an Implicit Debate," and "Is 'Chinese Philosophy' a Proper Name? A Response to Rein Raud." The question was then discussed by Anne Cheng, '*Can China Think?*' Inaugural lecture delivered on Thursday 11 December 2008, Paris: Collège de France, available at http://books.openedition.org/cdf/2207. See also the online debate https://warpweftandway.com/raud-and-defoort-or-defoort-continued/.

[683] Defoort, "Is 'Chinese Philosophy' a Proper Name?" 360.

[684] Tony Hoagland, "Big Grab," in *Unincorporated Persons in the Late Honda Dynasty*.

show no connection to the Greece came back in less pleasant tones, with either side of the debate defining the other xenophobic.[685]

But I do not want to overview this debate here. The point is that we should be able to bring to life the diversity among unearthed manuscripts, and to allow scholars of ancient literature to call a manuscript "incomplete" because of their expertise in ancient Chinese texts and textual histories. To be clear, I am not advising against the promotion of philosophical traditions in Chinese history. I am suggesting a stop to the race of putting Chinese philosophy in competition with the "Western" culture (whichever this may be[686]), which reiterates cultural monolithic entities that do not reflect the rich, complex, and vibrant series of traditions that took place on either side of the globe.[687] Chinese historical developments would be a worthy subject of inquiry even if there were no single trace of philosophical activities.[688] There are, instead, rich philosophical traditions in Chinese history (whichever definition of philosophy one may choose) to be explored, letting manuscripts and texts guide us to where they belong.

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[685] J. L. Garfield and B. Van Norden, *If Philosophy won't diversify, let's call it what it is*, May 2016. Van Norden later published *A Multicultural Manifesto*, expressing opinions along the same line. Pushbacks against his views came in online postings from Paul Murphy, *Professor van Norden, Western Philosophy is not racist*, Kyle Poene, *Yes, Let's Call Philosophy what it is*.

[686] The convenience of terms such as "West" and "East" is largely outweighed by their incorrectness. See discussions in Said, *Orientalism*; Gramsci, *Quaderni dal carcere*, vol. 4, 467 ff.; and App, *The Birth of Orientalism*.

[687] The abstract to Valmisa's *Adapting* beings with the following sentence: "Philosophy of action in the context of Classical China is radically different from its counterpart in the contemporary Western philosophical narrative." Its description reads: "If you are from the West, it is likely that you normally assume that you are a subject who relates to objects and other subjects through actions that spring purely from your own intentions and will. Chinese philosophers, however, show how mistaken this conception of action is." The body of the book however does not dwell on these generalizations.

[688] Nicola Tampio, *Not all things good and wise are philosophy*, Sept 2016.

Viewing manuscripts as performance supports will also contribute to a conversation on practices of knowledge management that relied on written material. In her study on how overload of information has been handled in pre-digital eras, Ann Blair discusses four methods used to organize knowledge (storing, sorting, selecting, and summarizing), and how these affected the compilation and reception of texts in Europe during the Middle Ages (476–1453 CE), with some comparisons with the premodern context in China in the second part of her book.[689] We can push the idea further into pre-imperial times, with performance supports as the raw material from which ancient thinkers crafted their philosophical system.[690] Oliver Weingarten worked with intertextual parallels as a way to reconstruct "networks of debates",[691] concluding that "similarities [among texts] resulted from personal contact between political advisors, from a shared awareness of writings produced in the same milieu, or both."[692] Performance supports add a tangible element in this equation.

It is my hope that this dissertation helps us make visible practices that contributed to the formation of ancient Chinese intellectual history. My approach has been that of merging technical methods with intellectual questions to explore Warring States manuscripts. Thanks to this integration, manuscripts become "vital"[693] not just in the sense of being the source of more textual production; they were first repositories of ideas

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[689] Blair, *Too Much to Know*.

[690] Identifying educational texts has also the advantage of illuminating what a culture prioritize, cf. discussion in Galambos, *Translating Chinese Tradition and Teaching Tangut Culture*.

[691] Weingarten, "Intertextuality And Memory In Early Chinese Writings," 287.

[692] Weingarten, "Intertextuality And Memory In Early Chinese Writings," 305.

[693] Expression borrowed from Najman, "The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the 'Canon.'"

and vocabulary that would come to life in the minds of those who, directly and indirectly, contributed to the formation of a literary tradition eventually known as Warring States intellectual history.

*A*ppendix A. A philological study of 性自命出 and 性情論

This analysis has been one of the most exhaustive and instructive experiences in writing my dissertation. It is an exercise in *slow reading*, an attempt to make *friends with the lento*. In what follows, I have collected notes and views for each single word in *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions*, taking as model Scott Cook's 2012 study. Returning continuously to these two manuscripts and revisiting them word-by-word on the basis of new evidence at times distanced me too much from the content of the text, and at times, most of the times in fact, made me see it clearly.

For this chapter in particular, I harbor endless gratitude to Prof. Lin Zhipeng 林志鵬 (Fudan University), Dr. Adam D. Smith (Penn), Dr. Bai Youyin 白右尹 (National Taiwan University), and graduate colleagues Li Yumeng 李雨萌 and Zhang Yusi 張雨絲 (both at Fudan University in 2019) for patiently reading this text over and over during my studies, working out the philological as well as the philosophical difficulties, and making the experience all the more worthwhile, and fun.

Conventions
- Numbers in orange indicate the end of the strip for each manuscript. References to Scott Cook's 2012 study of the *XZMC* are given as "Cook + page number;" UM indicated the translation by Urlike Middendorf, 2008. References to Chen Linqing's 陳霖慶 analysis in Ji Xusheng 季旭昇 2004 is given as "Chen and Ji + page number."
- I use the terms "transcription, to transcribe" to indicate the reproduction of what is written on the strips (with various degrees of faithfulness), and "normalization, to normalize" to indicate how the word is written in Chinese now.
- Words in red highlight differences in the wording of the two manuscripts. Since this analysis discusses both philological and philosophical differences, I have when possible transcribed the graphs and given the intended words in parenthesis.
- 'Character ?' indicates that the graph is difficult to read, as opposed to 'character (?)', which indicates that the graph is clear to read, but the identification of the word written with this graph remains uncertain. E.g., 悉(?) means that the graph is clearly seen as 悉, but the identification of the word written with it remains uncertain; "逃？" means that the 逃 itself is a guess, and the graph is hard to see clearly.

259

- As a rule, round brackets indicate the target word, i.e. the word that a graph represents in the script of the time. Glosses are not given, but they might be reflected in the translation. E.g., strip one, *dian* 奠 "to establish" cannot be writing the word *ding* 定 "to determine", because their final in OC is different. But *dian* 奠 can be *glossed* as "to determine". In this case, my normalization leaves 奠. The translation is annotated.

- I discuss in length graphs in cases when:

  1/ I present evidence for a interpretation different from Cook 2012;

  2/ I disagree with Cook's 2012 interpretation;

  3/ I introduce relevant studies published after 2012 that have not been discussed in the English scholarship.

  Cook 2012 is an impressive work that provides as many interpretations and analyses as possible for each graph that has been debated. In this edition, I aimed to prune the tree: when the analysis of a word is faulty, does not respect phonological rules, or does not make sense in context, I discuss it, and provide only those options that bring us closer to the answer. In producing this appendix I have consulted numerous studies not always directly quoted (e.g., when the study does not solve residual problems, or is already incorporated in Cook's analysis). They are all listed in the bibliography for reference.

- When there is consensus about the interpretation, I provide the normalization (indicating when necessary authors who introduced each interpretation and their reasons.) This is true even of cases where the graphs in *XZMC* and *XQL* differ, but they are well-known examples of two ways to write the same word or their understanding is not problematic.

- When dealing with a character that is not possible to type, I provide directly the normalization, once again if the scholarship has reached consensus.

- NP stands for "notable passages," as a loose way to indicate that, as defined in chapter three, not all those listed below are parallels. MP indicates my own translation to *Natural Dispositions* (and *Discussions* in those cases where the content diverges significantly). All translations in the NP sections are mine, unless otherwise stated.

- *Natural Dispositions* and *Discussions* are abbreviated with *XZMC* and *XQL* respectively

- Because this was meant to be an exercise in philology and paleography, translations and annotations are not final; sometimes they give competing

versions. This analysis is also meant to work also as a repository for forthcoming studies.

上篇	
性自命出	凡人雖又(有)眚(性)，心亡奠(定)志，待勿(物)而句(後)乍(作)，待悅而句(後)行，待習而句(後)1奠。
性情論	凡人雖又(有)生，心亡正志，寺(待)勿(物)而句(後)乍(作)，寺(待)悅而句(後)行，寺(待)習而句(後)奠。
Notes	• Chen and Ji 154: they normalize *XQL sheng* 生 to *xing* 性, referring to Gaozi's claim in *Mengzi* "what is inborn is called *xing,* 生之謂性" (*Mengzi* 6A.3). Arguably, given the *XZMC* and the parallels in other texts, the target word in *XQL* is *xing* "natural dispositions." *Sheng* 生 and *xing* 性 regularly write each other in ancient texts, so this different at the outset between the two manuscripts is not particularly revealing. Chen Lao 2002 also notes the different writings 眚/生, but does not comment further.
• *Dai* 待, "to await," is written with two different graphs within strip 1 of *XQL* (Chen and Ji 155): {止+之} for the first occurrence, and {止+手} for the following two. *XZMC* has the form {止+之} 迬 for all three occurrences. Since they all belong to the same rhyme group 之, the authors see the phonological relationship between these two forms unproblematic. "To go" 之 is *tə ; "foot" 止 *tə?; "hall" 寺 *s-[d]ə?-s. Similarly, the meaning of the sentence "to await for ⋯ and then ⋯ 待X而後Y," is equally unproblematic, and found in the literature (see parallels above). However, in Chu text, *dai* 待 is frequently written with 寺 (graphic components: 止 over 手; the latter merges with 寸), which may be taken as indication that the *XQL* was the more standard edition. Given the context, is seems clear that *dai* indicates a natural waiting, something is in a state until something else happens.

Notes	• Related to *dai*, I argue the subject of "to await" is *xing* 性, differntly from Cook (Middendorf's translation is ambiguous). On strips 10-11, externalities (*wu* 物), gratification (*yue* 悅), and practices (*xi* 習) are all defined as acting on *xing* itself. Similarly, the passages in received literature all portray natural dispositions as awaiting. Accordingly, one may argue that in the opening sentence, **XQL* too should read *xing* 性. In light of all the evidence, I suspect the existence of an association between the syntactic pattern "to await for ⋯ and then⋯, 待⋯ 而 後⋯" and natural dispositions. Possibly this pattern was memorized.
Notes	• I normalize *dian zhi* 奠志 in **XZMC* to *zheng zhi* 正志 "rectified intentions", on the basis that this is what is written on **XQL*, and the fact that *zheng zhi* appears twice in received literature (*Xunzi jiaoshi* 21.855; *Zouyi zhengyi* 4.98), while *dian zhi* is unattested. This normalization however follows interpretation: *zheng* 正 and *dian* 奠 have different finals in OC (*teŋ-s vs. *N-tˤe[n]-s); the same is true of *dian* < *teŋ-s 奠 and *ding* < *N-tˤe[n]-s 定, hence I disagree with Cook normalization (footnote no. 4, followed in the scholarship). Possibly, **XZMC* writes *dian* in anticipation (it comes up later in the sentence). Ths would be an indication that the **XQL* is a better edition of this text. • 作 "come into existence." On *zuo*, see Puett 2001: 23 ff. • 《荀子・性惡》夫人雖有性質美而心辯知，必將求賢師而事之，擇良友而友之。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.960. "Even if humans had beautiful nature and essence, and a mind that can discern knowledge, they would still have to seek sages for teachers and serve them, and select good friends and befriend them."

NP	
	• 《荀子·性惡》若夫目好色，耳好聽，口好味，心好利，骨體膚理好愉佚，是皆生於人之情性者也；感而自然，不待事而後生之者也。夫感而不能然，必且待事而後然者，謂之生於偽。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942. "Now, the eyes love colors; the ears love to hear; the mouth loves flavor; the mind loves profit, the whole body loves pleasure and idleness. These all are born from human emotions and natural dispositions. If stimulated, they respond naturally; they do not await for [the person] to act to be produced. What is stimulated but its response is not natural, and must await for [the person] to act to then be produced, we call this what is born from fabrication."
	• 《六韜》文王曰：主位如何？太公曰：安徐而靜，柔節先定。善與而不爭。虛心平志，待物以正。*Tai Gong liu tao jin zhu jin shi* 1.53 "King Wen asked: 'How is control [of oneself] established?' Tai Gong replied: 'Be calm, dignified and tranquil; to gently regulate before deciding. Be good in relating [to others], and not argumentative. Empty your heart for controlled intentions; await for externalities [to know how] to correct."
	• 《荀子·性惡》直木不待檃栝而直者，其性直也。枸木必將待檃栝烝矯然後直者，以其性不直也。今人之性惡，必將待聖王之治，禮義之化，然後始出於治，合於善也。用此觀之，人之性惡明矣，其善者偽也。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.947. "A straight three does not await on the straightening machine to become straight, its nature is that of being straight. A crooked three *must* await for the straightening machine and the builder's frame, and only after it is straightened. Thus, its nature is not that of being straight. Now, the badness of human nature must await on the governing of the sages, the transformations [brought about] the rituals and morality, and only after this it begins to emerge from being regulated, and unites with goodness. From this we can see that human nature is clearly bad, and its goodness is artificial." This is an interesting passage that again relies on the idea that in the case of humans, natural dispositions depend on external factors to brought changes onto themselves. Plants are instead straightforwardly embodying their natural dispositions.

NP	• 《春秋繁露》中民之性如繭如卵。卵待覆二十日而後能為雛，繭待繰以涫湯而後能為絲，性待漸於教訓而後能為善。善，教訓之所然也，非質樸之所能至也，故不謂性。性者宜知名矣，無所待而起，生而所自有也。善所自有，則教訓已非性也。是以米出於粟，而粟不可謂米；玉出於璞，而璞不可謂玉；善出於性，而性不可謂善。 *Chunqiu fanlu yi zeng* 36.312-313. "The natural dispositions of ordinary people are like cocoons and eggs. You have to sit on eggs for twenty days and only then it becomes a bird; cocoons need to be unwined and soaked in water, and only then becomes silk. Natural dispositions wait to be imbued with teachings and instructions and then it becomes good. Goodness is obtained from instructions and teachings, these are not part of our natural dispositions. Thus, we make millet with grains, but we do not call millet grains. Jades ornaments come from the mineral jade, but we do not call them simply "jade." Goodness comes from natural dispositions, but we do not [simply] call natural dispositions good. "

NP	• 《史記·樂書》"凡音之起，由人心生也。人心之動，物使之然也。感於物而動，故形於聲。" *Shiji* 24.1179 "As for the origins of tones, they are born from the human mind. When the mind is moved, externalities makes it so. [The mind thus is] affected by externalities and moved, therefore the form [of this stimulation] results in sounds." The same passage occurs in the *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (2009) 37.3310, see discussion in Owen, *Readings*, 50 – 51. Interesting are the comments for this passage in the *Shiji* (not present for the *Liji*): Zheng Xuan (*zheng yi* 正義) comments: "物者，外境也。外有善惡來觸於心，則應觸而動，故云「物使之然也」。 Externalities are the external environment. Among these external factors there are good and bad ones that come to stimulate the mind; then the mind echoes the stimulation and is moved. Therefore the text says 'externalities make it so.'" The Song dynasty *Shiji jijie* 史記集解 also collects a comment by Wang Su 王肅 (195-256), "Externalities are affairs. It is said that affairs of pleasure, anger, sadness, happiness, and respect affect humans and move them, and the response is visible as sounds. 物，事也。謂哀樂喜怒和敬之事感人而動，見於聲。" (見 is writing *xian* 現, based on the *Shiji xing yu sheng*).

NP	• 《春秋繁露》性有似目，目臥幽而瞑，待覺而後見。當其未覺，可謂有見質，而不可謂見。今萬民之性，有其質而未能覺，譬如瞑者待覺，教之然後善。當其未覺，可謂有善質，而不可謂善，與目之瞑而覺，一概之比也。靜心徐察之，其言可見矣。性而瞑之未覺；天所為也。*Chunqiu fanlu yi zheng* 35.297-8. "Natural dispositions is like the eye. When you lie down in a quiet and dark [place], the eye waits [the person to be] awake and then they see. While [the person] is not awake, it can be said that there is the material to see, but it cannot be said that [the eye] sees. Now, when it comes to the natural dispositions of the thousand people, there is material but they are not yet awake. It is like the person in the dark who awaits to be awake, you have to teach [the people] and then they will be good. While [the people] are not awake, there is the material for goodness, but it cannot be said [that people have] goodness, like for the eye in the dark and then awoken, they are one comparison. Calm the heart-mind and slowly examine it, and its (?) words can be seen. Natural dispositions are like the darkness before awakening; this is Heaven's doing." The passage continues with related statements.
MP	*XZMC*: Although humans have natural dispositions, their heart lacks established intentions. [These] dispositions await on externalities and then arise; they await gratification and then they are in motion, they depend on habits and then they are established. *XQL*: Although humans have life, their heart lacks fixed intentions. [The heart] waits for externalities to arise; they await gratification and then they are in motion, they depend on habits and then they are established.
Cook 700	In general, although all people possess [human] nature, their heart-minds have no fixed inclinations, [which instead] depend upon [external] things to arise, depend upon gratification to take action, and depend upon practice to become fixed.

性自命出	喜怒哀悲(樂)之氣，眚(性)也。及其見(現)於外，則勿(物)取(趣)之也。眚(性)自命出，命**2**自天降。
性情論	喜怒哀悲(樂)之氣，眚(性)也。及其見(現)於外，則勿(物)取(趣)之**1**【也。性】自命出，命自天降。
Notes	• On 取 read as *qu* 趣 meaning *cu* 促, "to stimulate," see appendix F. • As sounding as a statement, there is no close match in transmitted literature to "natural dispositions come from endowment, 性自命出." The closest passage seems to be a line in the *Zhongyong* 中庸 chapter of the *Liji*, "What Heaven endows is called *xing*, 天命之謂性," *Liji zhengyi* (2009) 52.3527
Notes	• I believe that what is regularly understood as *bei* 悲, "sorrowful," is most likely likely an error for *le* 樂 "happiness," caused by the similarity between the upper components of the two graphs. All passages from received literature related to either *xing* 性 or *qing* 情 have the combination *xi nu ai le* 喜怒哀樂, while the sequence of emotions with *bei* is not attested. This would indicate that both manuscripts are mistaken, which in turn raises questions about their production. On *XZMC* strip 29, *le* and *bei* appear next to each other in the same sentence, indicating that the scribe would have been aware of their differences. This may imply: 1) my understanding of *bei* as an error is wrong, and the manuscript is in fact introducing for the first time a new combination of emotions; 2) the scribe was not fully comfortable with the content of the text, and reproduced it "blindly," without reflecting on its possible mistakes; 3) the scribe did not perceive within his role the possibility to alter the text. • I understand the difference between *xi* 喜 and *le* 樂 as one of degree, as this passage from *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 suggests: "Getting a small part of what one likes is pleasure (*xi*), getting a bit part of what one likes is happiness (*le*), 喜小得其所好則喜，大得其所好則樂," *Yi Zhou shu* 1.1927 – 1. See also statement below, *XZMC* 22-23.

NP	• 《毛詩》自天降康, "Prosperity is sent down from Heaven." *Maoshi zheng yi* (2000) 20.1690. • 《潛夫論》夫令譽從我興，而二命自天降之。*Qianfulun jian xiao zheng* 1.34 • 《禮記》夫民有血氣心知之性，而無哀樂喜怒之常，應感起物而動，然後心術形焉。*Liji zhengyi* (2009) 38.3327 "People have the nature of the *qi* of their blood and knowing their heart, but there is no consistency in the emotions of sorrow, happiness, pleasure, anger. They moved after being provoked by externalities, and then the techniques of the heart are manifested from it."
NP	• 《申鑒》或曰：「仁義性也，好惡情也，仁義常善而好惡或有惡，故有情惡也。」曰：「不然，好惡者，性之取舍也，實見於外，故謂之情爾，必本乎性矣。」*Shen Jiang Zhu Jiao Bu* 申鑒注校補 5.203-4. "Some say: 'Benevolence and propriety are part of human natural dispositions; likes and dislikes are part of emotions. Benevolence and propriety are constantly good; among the likes and dislikes some are bad, therefore there are emotions that are bad [for out nature.]' Answer: "This is not so. When it comes to likes and dislikes, natural dispositions obtain them and releases them, and this sincerely manifests (reding *jian* as *xian* 現) externally, therefore we call these emotions, and they surely are rooted in our natural dispositions." The logic of this exchange is unclear. The passage, as well as Xun Yue's 荀悅 comment, are interesting because they are phrased extremely similarly to the **XZMC/*XQL*: "The response to delight is when human nature enjoys what it desires, and rejects (惡) what it does not desire. When these natural responses are manifested externally, then we call them emotions, thus emotions must in origin be part of human nature. 此悅答，謂性所欲則好之，所不欲則惡之，性之實見於外，則謂之情，情必本於性也。"

NP	• 《禮記》何謂人情？喜怒哀懼愛惡欲七者，弗學而能。*Liji zhengyi* (2009) 22.3080 "What are called human feelings? These seven: pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire. Humans are capable [of having these feelings] without learning them." • 《荀子》天職既立，天功既成，形具而神生，好惡喜怒哀樂臧焉，夫是之謂天情。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.667 "When the duties of Heaven are established and the works of Heven are accomplished, forms are provided and spirits are bron. Liking, disliking, pleasure, anger, sorrow, and happiness reside within [this process], this is what are called emotions from (?) Heaven." • 《荀子》性之好、惡、喜、怒、哀、樂謂之情。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.882. "The liking, disliking, pleasure, anger, sorrow, and happiness [that are part] of human nature are called emotions."
NP	• 《荀子》疾癢凔熱滑鈹輕重以形體異；說故⑺喜怒哀樂愛惡欲以心異。*Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.891. (說故 seems to be an erroneous interpolation, see *Xunzi jiaoshi* 22.897no. 12.) "Sickness, itching, excessive cold, excessive heat, being cunning being heavily or lightly built: through these the bodies differ. ? Pleasure, anger, sorrow, happiness, love, hate and desire, it is through these that the hearts differ." • 《禮記》喜怒哀樂之未發，謂之中；發而皆中節，謂之和；中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之達道也。*Liji zhengyi* (2009) 52.3527 "When pleasure, ager, sorrow, happiness are not yet expressed, it is called to be balanced. If they are expressed and they are all restrained in a balanced way, it is called harmony. This balanced state is the great root of all under Heaven; the harmony is its obtainable path."

NP	《管子》內業, possible related:「凡人生之也，必以平正。所以失之，必以喜怒憂患，是故止怒莫若詩，去憂莫若樂，節樂莫若禮，守禮莫若敬，守敬莫若靜，內靜外敬，能反其性，性將大定。」 *Guanzi* 49.778 *Guanzi xin zhu* 49.360 *Neng fang qi xing* interpreted as "You may revert to your true nature," (Rickett, vol. 2 p. 53), but in light of *XZMC 反 may be 反對 "to oppose" (even though it is Guanzi xin zhu as *huifu* 回復 "to respond back, to return"), meaning "to turn against one's nature," i.e. to remove emotions and thus be closer to quietness. It is also reminiscent of Xunzi's idea that music and rituals are tools to control emotions. The sentence appears almost identical in another section of the *Guanzi*: 凡民之生也，必以正平，所以失之者，必以喜樂哀怒。節怒莫若樂，節樂莫若禮，守禮莫若敬。外敬而內靜者，必反其性。*Guanzi xin zhu* 37.303, , where *gan qi xing* 反其性 is glossed as *huifu* 恢復 "to restore." 《春秋繁露》「人之好惡，化天之暖清；人之喜怒，化天之寒暑；人之受命，化天之四時。人生有喜怒哀樂之答，春秋冬夏之類也。喜，春之答也；怒，秋之答也；樂，夏之答也；哀，冬之答也。天之副在乎人。人之情性有由天者矣。」 *Chunqiu fanlu* 41.282 "Humans' likes and dislikes transform transform according to the warmth and chilliness of Heaven. Their pleasure and anger, according to the cold and the heat. Humans receive their endowment, and it transform according to Heaven's four season. At birth, humans have responses to pleasure, anger, sadness, and happiness, according to the season. Pleasure is the response to Spring; anger to Autumn. Happiness is the response to Summer, and sadness is the response to Winter. Heaven's pairing reside in human beings. Human emotions and nature come from Heaven.

NP	• 《春秋繁露》「天有寒有暑。夫喜怒哀樂之發，與清暖寒暑，其實一貫也。喜氣為暖而當春，怒氣為清而當秋，樂氣為太陽而當夏，哀氣為太陰而當冬。四氣者，天與人所同有也，非人所能蓄也，故可節而不可止也。節之而順，止之而亂。人生於天，而取化於天。喜氣取諸春，樂氣取諸夏，怒氣取諸秋，哀氣取諸冬，四氣之心也。」 This 取 is "adopting" "take as model", not the same of *XZMC Chunqiu fanlu yi zheng* 44.330 • 《春秋繁露》「人有喜怒哀樂，猶天之有春夏秋冬也。喜怒哀樂之至其時而欲發也，若春夏秋冬之至其時而欲出也，皆天氣之然也。」 *Chunqiu fanlu yi zheng* 80.465 "People experience (lit: have) pleasure, anger, sorrow and happiness, in the same way Heaven experiences spring, summer, autumn and winter. When pleasure, anger, sorrow and happiness are extreme the desires are timely expressed (or have reached their timely course?); in the same way spring, summer, autumn and winter have reached their timely [course], the desires (of Heaven?) come forth. All of this is the course of Heaven and *qi*.
NP	• On *qi* 氣: Lin Zhipeng (personal communication) takes here 氣 as *ganqing* 感情, something close to the English "mood," as in *Xunzi jiaoshii* 1. "Do not debate with someone who is in quarrelsome mood, 有爭氣者，勿與辯也." For other readings, see Chen and Ji 155; Chen Wei 陳偉 2000 "Guodian jianshu 'ren sui you xing' jiao shi" p. 5 defines *qi* 氣 is what manifests outside, and reads 見 as *xian* 現 accordingly (also in Chen Wei 2002 179). Liu Xilan 劉昕嵐 (2000: 330) sees a connection between this statement and the following passage from the *Da dai liji*: 民有五性，喜、怒、欲、懼、憂也 (…) 五氣誠於中，發形於外，民情不隱也 (*Da Dai Liji Bu Zhu* 大戴禮記補注 71.192).
MP	The *qi* of pleasure, anger, sadness, happiness, is part of natural dispositions. When they appear on the outside, it is because externalities stimulate them. Natural dispositions come from endowment, endowment is sent down from heaven.
Cook 700	The vital energies of joy, anger, grief, and sorrow are [human] nature; once they manifest externally, things take hold of them. [Human] nature comes via mandate, and [this] mandate is sent down from Heaven.

性自命出	衍(道)司(始)於青(情)，青(情)生於眚(性)。司(始)者近青(情)，冬(終)者近義。知【情者能】 3出之，知宜(義)者能內(納)之。
性情論	道司(始)於情，情生於眚(性)。司(始)者近情，終者近義。知情者能出之，知義者能內(納)【之。】 2
NP	• Ji Xusheng 2004 Footnote7: Li Tianhong reads 義 as 理，道德規範. Liqing here thinks that the beginning and the end indicate the beginning and the end of the human way.
Notes	• Chen and Ji 155: They point out the similarity with the Guodian *Yucong er* 語叢二 strip one "emotions are born from human nature, and rituals are born from emotions, 情生於性，禮生於情." Pu Maozuo 濮茅左 argued for reading *dao* 道 in *XZMC* and *XQL* as meaning "rituals." Chen Ling refutes this interpretation, reading *dao* to mean "human way" 人道, which occurs later in the manuscript. • Chen and Ji 156-6: reads 知情者能出之 as "those who understand emotions can make them come forth, 知情者能使之出," with the idea of externalizing emotions. Accordingly, 知義者能入之 would then be read as "those who understand morality can internalize it 知義者能使之入 ." MPlation follows this reading.
NP	*Lunheng jiaoshi* 13.139: "*xing* is born from *yang*, *qing* is born from *yin*, 性生於陽，情生於陰," is the closest in structure and content.
MP	At first one starts close to feelings, and in the end one is close to righteousness. Those who understand emotions can express them. Those who understand righteousness internalize it.
Cook 700	The Way begins with the affections, and the affections are born of [human] nature. [The Way's] beginnings are close to the affections, while its finalities are close to propriety. Those who know the affections can bring them forth, while those who know propriety can instill it.

273

性自命出	好亞(惡)，眚(性)也。所好所亞(惡)，勿(物)也。善不 【善，眚(性)也。】 4所善所不善，執(勢)也。
性情論	【好惡，眚(性)也。所】好【所】亞(惡)，勿(物)也。善不善，眚(性)也。 所善所不善，執(勢)也。
NP	See *Shen Jiang Zhu Jiao Bu* 5.203-4 above.
Notes	• Chen Lai 1999 p. 298 notes also 禮記 《好惡無節於內，物誘於外》，which he sees as related to the statement 所好所惡，物也. • 執 was read as 勢 in the 1998 publication; followed by Liu Xinlan 2000 and Li Ling 2002, "situations and environment external to the person." Lin Zhipeng instead follows Zhou Fengwu 2003 and reads as 藝, "skills, abilities", on the basis that the *XZMC* emphasizes teaching and learning for humans. Good and not good is accordingly what humans learn after being born. 向世陵１９９９:７６：勢……按其意，物勢顯然與物不可分割，它所表示的應當是事物自身變化的形勢或趨勢。Gets it, also important the parallel 丁原植２０００：２８："物"、"勢"均指外在的因素。《老子》第五十一云："道生之，德畜之，物形之，勢成之。" Bc it gives you couples that go together (dao/de, wu/shi). But note Mawangdui laozi has something else.

Notes	• 勢 is an old graph, depicting a person kneeling down and planting something. During Warring States, it gets added the component 女. In origin it writes "to plant" 藝, and this is what Cook 2012 thinks it is writing. It occurs with the same structure in GD *Zun de yi* meaning "to plant", 藝地. Phonetically, OC "to plant" is very close to "to set things up" 設。"the way things are set up" 勢 is also pronounced similarly. Passage in the *Xin shu* 人之性非窺且望，勢使然也。Human nature is not about looking ahead or peeking, context makes it so. More importantly, 韓非子 "所為言勢者 what I meant by *shi* is the way things are set up by people … this is a natural context, it is not what is set up by humans." 勢 is then defined in the *XZMC as 出性者, and again 物之勢者之謂勢. So 勢 is related to 物 all the way through, and it makes little sense that in the latter is means "cultivation." 勢 seems to be the context, how externalities are set up. So in this strip it means there are contexts that are approved and contexts that are not approved. • Ji Xusheng 2004 no. 10 reads 善 as what you are good at, a skill. hence, the closing of this would be "what you are good at and not good at are your skills 藝能. Cf. Guodian *Zundeyi* 教以藝，則民 strip 14.
MP	Like and dislike are part of natural dispositions. What one loves and what one hates are externalities. Approval and disapproval is part of natural dispositions; what is deemed good or not are circumstances / contexts. [Idea that *shan* 善 refers to behavior, not cultivation.]
Cook 700	Liking and disliking belong to [human] nature; the objects of that liking or disliking are [external] things. Approval and disapproval belong to [human] nature; the objects of that approval or disapproval are a matter of cultivation.
性自命出	凡眚(性)為主，物取(趣)之也。金石之又(有)聲【也，弗鈎(扣) 5 不鳴。人】雖又(有)眚(性)，心弗取(趣)不出。
性情論	凡眚(性)為主，物取(趣)之也。金石之又(有)聲也，弗鈎(扣)不鳴。3

275

NP	• 《論衡》子夏曰：「死生有命，富貴在天。」而不曰：「死生在天，富貴有命」者，何則？死生者，無象在天，以性為主。 *Lunheng jiaoshi* 6.46 "Zi Xia said: 'Death and life are [part of the] mandate, richness and honors are in Heaven.' He did not say, 'Death and life are in heaven, richness and honor are [part of the] mandate.' Why is that? [Because] death and life have no form in Heaven, they take natural dispositions as cardinal.
NP	• 《莊子》金石不得，無以鳴。故金石有聲，不考不鳴。*Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 12.411 "If you do not have bells and chimes, there is no way to make noise. Therefore bells and chimes have the potential of sounds, [but] if they are not struck they do not resound." An almost verbatim passage appears in *Huainanzi* 淮南子, "bells and chimes have the potential of sounds, if one does not knock them they do not resound, 金石有聲，弗叩弗鳴" *Huainanzi jishi* 14.1021. The line is part of also *Wenzi* 文子: "鼓不藏聲，故能有聲，鏡不沒形，故能有形，金石有聲，不動不鳴。管籥有音，不吹無聲。是以聖人內藏，不為物唱，事來而制，物至而應。"The drums do not conceal sounds so as to have sounds; the mirrors do not posses images so as to have images. Bells and chimes have the potential for sounds, [but] if not hit they do not resound. Pipes and flutes have [the potential for] tunes, [but] if one does not blow in them, there is no sound. Therefore sage's internal [worlds] are concealed, they do not cry out for externalities, if something happens [lit: arrives] they manage it; externalities arrive and they respond [properly]." *Wenzi shuyi* 6.293. Cf. again 《墨子》, 君子若鍾，擊之則鳴，弗擊不鳴。*Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注 39.438.
Notes	• Chen Linqing and Ji Xusheng reads 促發 for 取 here as well, p. 158. In both instances; cf p. 159 comment by Chen Linqing on the fact that *xing* needs initiation by externalities, in the same way a bell needs to be stricken to sound. He Shanggong suggested to understand *qu* 取 *zhi* 治, following the line in the *Laozi* "取天下以無事。To do nothing and yet possess the world." See Cook 2012: 997 for comparison across multiple *Laozi.* • 弗 is here abbreviating *bu zhi* 不之, where "it" refers to the heart. Cf. Williams 2019.

Notes	• The line *xing wei zhu* is puzzling. *Zhu* 主 may be expressing the centrality of human nature, but at the same time the text describes *xing* as endowed by Heaven, not as the result of a choice. Lin Zhipeng 2017 also reads 主 as "host", to stress the idea that 性 is internal, whereas external elements (*wu* 物) are not part of it. What is the implicit contrast here? What is not central? The heart (*xin* 心)? • Guo Yi 郭沂 2002 suggested that in the final sentence of **XZMC* 心 is an error for *ye* 也, thus resolving the puzzle about which element (human nature or the heart) is being stimulated. Thus, the text would read "Even though human beings have human nature, if it is not stimulated, human nature does not come forth. [人]雖有性也，弗趣不出。" I was not able to individuate other examples of this error in the Guodian corpus. • This line describes perception through a metaphor. In the **XZMC* passage, there is a conceptual parallel between *bu chu* 不出 and *hou zuo* 後作 in strip 2.
MP	Natural dispositions are principal. If the heart is not stimulated, it does not come forth. Bronzes and stones (i.e., bells and chimes) have sounds, but if they are not struck they do not resound. [End of **XQL* strip.] Even though there are natural dispositions, if the heart if not stimulated, they do not come forth.
Cook 701-2	In general, [human] nature acts as a host, and [external] things take hold of it. The tones of bronze [bells] and stone [chimes] are such that they do not sound unless they are struck. Although humans have their nature and they heart-minds, these do not emerge unless taken hold of.
性自命出	凡心又(有)志也，亡与(與)不【行。心之不可】6 獨行，猶口之不可獨言也。

Notes	• Ji Xusheng 2004 reconstructs these for *XQL* as well. This move imposes that the two manuscripts represent the same text. • Because the strip is broken, there is a long debate of how the sentence might have finished. I adopted here a solution that takes into consideration the number of graphs per strip.
MP	In general, the heart-mind has intentions, if there is no participation [with externalities, the heart-mind], cannot [act]. [The heart-mind cannot] operate by itself, just like the mouth does not utter words by itself.
Cook 703	In general, the inclinations of the heart-mind are such that they do not take [action] unless they are induced. [that the heart-mind cannot] act on its own is like the mouth being unable to speak on its own.
性自命出	牛生而倀(長?)，雁生而伸?，其【性也。人生】**7** 而學，或變/使之也。
Notes	• Chen Linpeng and Ji Xusheng 2004 they read 變 "to change" for the graph 使, through studying you can change your nature. • 倀，《性自命出》作 . Evidence from GD and SH (e.g., *Ziyi*) seems to confirm that it's writing 長, here logically meaning "to grow". Yan Shixuan (2000, 79) has it "writes 張, meaning *da* 大 'to grow'". Unnecessary passage? Lin Zhipeng considers Bai Yulan (2008) may be correct in reading it as 倀 "to grow horns."
MP	Oxen are born and grow; geese are born and stretch out [to fly in formation], this is their nature. Humans are born and learn, something changes it.
Cook 703	Oxen are born to spread out, and geese are born to line in formation – this is in their natures. Humans, however, are born to learn, as there is something to give them direction.

性自命出	凡勿(物)亡(無)不其(期)也者。剛之柱也，剛取(趣)之也。柔之 8 約，柔取(趣)之也。四海之內，其眚(性)一也。其用心各異，教使然也。
性情論	—— 內，其(期)眚(性)一也。其用心各異，教使然也。
NP	- 《荀子》干、越、夷、貉之子，生而同聲，長而異俗，教使之然也。 - 《荀子》強自取柱，柔自取束。The *shu* 束 ("to bind") in the passage helps explain the meaning of 約 in *XZMC*. - 《大戴禮記》于越戎貉之子，生而同聲，長而異俗者，教使之然也。*Da Dai Liji bu zhu* 大戴禮記補注 64.141 - 《大戴禮記》強自取折，柔自取束。*Da Dai Liji bu zhu* 64.143 Most likely here 折 is an error (*e* 訛) for *zhu* 柱, in light of *Xunzi* and now *XZMC*, due to graphic similarity. - *Yu cong san* 語叢三 strip 46:「強之樹也，強取之也。」 *Qiang* 強 and *gang* 剛 are probably the same word, former is *N-kaŋ (voicing upfront) and latter is *kˤaŋ. - 樹 is not "tree" until the Tang dynasty. 木 is tree (contra Holloway).
MP	As for the uniqueness of all things / Among externalities, there is nothing that does not meet [the expectations]. the standing-ness of hard [things], it is the hardness that stimulates it. [Contrasting the effect with the disposition / quality]. > When hardness manifests itself as being erect, it is the hardness that prompts it. When softness manifests itself as being tied, it is the softness that prompts this. Within the four seas, human nature / natural dispositions are the same, and yet the application of the heart differs. Learning brings this about. > All people within the four seas, their nature is identical, yet the application of one's heart is in each case unique. Learning brings this about / causes it to be so.
Cook 705	In general, that there is nothing that does not carry expectations as follows. That the firm is [used for] erecting is determined by it firmness; that the pliant is [used for] binding is determined by its pliancy. Within the fours seas, all [people, too] share the same nature; that they employ their minds uniquely, [however] is due to the direction of their education.

Notes	• Ji Xusheng reads 取 as *cu* 促, p. 160s.
	• ： Qiu Xigui reads as 異, considering it a simplified version of 異 , whose reading as "different" is confirmed mainly because of the SB writing . Cook follows Yuan Guohua in reading it as 其, meaning *qi* 期 "to expect, to foresee". The idea would then be that things have a established path, contrasted with humans who can grow differently (bc of teaching). A problem with this interpretation might be that *qi* 期 with this meaning is almost never associated with externalities (*wu* 物), and that its meaning of "to expect" still leaves a sense that the expectation might change. If we read *yi* 異 as Lin Zhipeng suggests (2017), then the sentence would mean that externalities differ in their development, what is firm will be firm. For humans, instead, developments are not settled and therefore the closing with "using their minds uniquely." One occurrence of *wu bu yi* 無不異 occurs in a text composed in the third century CE but supposedly collecting pre-imperial material, the *Lu Sheng Mobian zhu shu* 魯勝墨辯注敘 (晉書 *Jin shu* 64.2434): "At the peak of sameness, there is nothing that is not the same, at the peak of difference, there is nothing that is not different; this is called differentiating sameness and difference, 至同無不同，至異無不異，是謂辯同辯異。"
	• This passage builds a contrast between externalities and natural dispositions. The latter are the beginning of something that can be developed in different ways. Externalities instead embody a characteristic.
	• *Jiao* 教 could be interpreted as *xue* 學, "to study" (morphological relation). *Jiao* is a deliberate activity, *xue* stresses the learning more broadly.

性自命出	凡眚(性) **9**，或動之，或逆之，或交之，或 (屬?)之，或出之，或養之，或長(作?)之。
性情論	凡眚(性)，或動之，或逆之，或室(?)之，或萬之，或出【之，或養之，】**4** 或長(作?)之。
Notes	• This graph has been object of intense debate. Qiu Xigui (2002) suggested that is in fact writing *shi* 室, and not *jiao* 交 "to interact" as initially assessed in the first publication; in 2003 he revised is position and considered it a writing for *shi* 實 (*shi* 室 and *shi* 實 rhyme but do not seem to share the same initial in OC, which would break one of the principles of phonetic spelling). Cook (705 no. 62) follows a previous interpretation of his taking *shi* 室 as *di* 砥, but the respective pronunciations cannot possibly be phonetic spellers of each other in the reconstruction system adopted by Cook (in Baxter & Sagart, the former spells *TIT syllables, the latter *TIJ, bringing the two closer). From manuscript evidence, 室 is consistently written with two strokes at the bottom; hence, I here give 交 as transcription, remaining uncertain of the meaning. The graph in *XQL* is also of difficult interpretation. • As it is often the case throughout the manuscript, 萬 is written on *XQL* with an additional 心 at the bottom. • What is generally transcribed as 逆 is of difficult interpretation.
MP	In general, with regard to natural dispositions, there is what moves them, what opposes them, what connects them, what disciplines them, what exposes them, what nourish them, and what grows them.
Cook 706	In general, there is that which motivates [human] nature, that which receives it, that which tempers [室] it, that which sharpens it, that which brings it forth, that which nurtures it, and which gives it growth.

性自 命出	凡動眚(性) **10**者，勿(物)也；逆眚(性)者，兌(悅)也；交眚(性)者， 古(故)也；(厲?) 眚(性)者，宜(義)也；出眚(性)者，勢也； 羕(養)眚(性) **11** 者，習也；長眚(性)者，衍(道)也。
性情論	凡動眚(性)者，勿(物)也；逆眚(性)者，兌(悅)也；室眚(性)者， 古(故)也；萬眚(性)者，宜(義)也；出眚(性)者，勢也 **5**； 羕(養)眚(性)者，習也；長眚(性)者，道也。
Notes	• Ding Yuanzhi (quoted in Chen and Ji p. 161) reads the opening "凡動性者，物也" to mean that external objects make human nature arise (*xing* 興). This interpretation reminds of a line in *Liji zhengyi* (2009) 37.3310: 人心之動，物使之然也。」Linqing makes 動 into *zuo* 作 according to definition in the *Shuowen*, and links then this sentence to the initial sentence on external stimulation (待物而後作), meaning *xingqi* 興起 "to arise, to spring up."
Notes	• 故 indicates "traditions", 禮 尚書 等等 [e.g., in *Zuozhuan* 左傳 we have "the traditions of Lu, 魯之故" where *gu* 故 is glossed as 舊典 by Du Yu 3rd CE. See definition in following strip. • Ning Chen 2002: 24 has 達 for 逆, and links with 達生 in Zhuangzi, • This 黃德寬、徐在國1999:76釋"逆"。《爾雅‧釋言》："逆，迎也。"《韓詩外傳》卷九："見色而悅謂之逆。"此簡謂"逆性者，悅也"，正用此意。Is misplaced bc the context is entirely different. • Ning Chen interprets 交 as writing *jiao* 矯 "to correct, citing *Xunzi*: "以矯飾人之情性而正之." • the lower component resembles the old writing for 众.
MP	In general, what prompt natural dispositions are externalities; what oppose them is pleasure; what connect them is tradition; what disciplines them is morality; what exposes (出) them are circumstances. What nourishes natural dispositions are habits; and what grow human nature are the ways (perhaps here as in methods, knowledge acquired?).

Cook 706	In general, [external] things are what motivate [human] nature, gratification is what receives human nature, traditions are what temper human nature, propriety is what sharpens human nature, cultivation is what brings human nature forth, practices are what nurture human nature, and [proper] ways (*dao*) are what give human nature growth.
性自命出	凡見(現)者之胃(謂)勿(物)，快於己者之胃(謂)兌(悅)，物 12 之勢者之胃(謂)勢，又(有)為也者之胃(謂)故。
性情論	凡見(現)者之胃(謂)勿(物)，快於其者之胃(謂)悅，物之勢者之胃(謂)勢，又(有)為也【者】6 之胃(謂)故。
Notes	• See on the structure *zhi wei* 之謂 Smith forthcoming, who argues that 謂 works as noun "the calling of." • What is transcribed as 其 in *XQL* is a somewhat wild guess from . As a frustrated colleague once pointed out, "I can barely see the bloody thing." • The definition 物之勢者之謂勢 well represents one of the ways in which the *XZMC* is a puzzling text. The line uses 勢 both in the explanation and in what is being defined. Here it seems plausible that 勢 writes two different words, as Cook's and MPlation's show.
MP	The name for for things that can be perceived is externalities. The term for being delighted in oneself is happiness. The name we give to the configuration of external objects is context. The name for when there is an action being performed is 'purpose'.
Cook 708	In general, all that appears is what we refer to as "[external] things"; that which is satisfying to the self is what we refer to as "gratification"; things that [we] implant are what we refer to as "cultivation"; and things created for a purpose are what we refer to as "traditions".

性自命出	義也者，群善之蕝也。習也 13 者，又(有)以習其眚(性)也。衍(道)者，群物之衍(道)。
性情論	宜(義) 也者，群善之蕝也。習也者，又(有)以習其眚(性)也。道也【者，群物之道。】
Notes	• The grammatical structure is found in *Shen jiang* 申鑒 ，"仁也者，慈此者也；義也者，宜此者也；禮也者，履此者也；信也者，守此者也；智也者，知此者也。"(*Shen Jiang Zhu Jiao Bu* 1.5); cf. *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋，"義也者，萬事之紀也。"(*Lushi chunqiu* 8.179). • 蕝 on *XZMC is written with 艸 on top of silk component , which is slightly different from *XQL, where the horizontal line is the knife cutting the silk . This would be another point to argue that the *XQL represent a better edition, with all the strokes of the graph recalled correctly. As for its interpretation, the graph as also been read as *biao* 表 because of a passage in the *Black Robe*, (Shaughnessy 2006: 107). Interestingly, *biao* 表 appears in the *Shuowen* 說文 definition of *jue* before the *Black Robe* was seen, so it is possible that there a connection existed between the two. Is is unclear whether the *Shuowen* treats it as a gloss, or indicates a morphological connection. If we followed this, we may consider *jue* to convey the sense of a marker: righteousness is marked by what is approved.
MP	'Righteousness' is the indicator of all that is approvable. 'Habit' is to have the means to habituate one's natural dispositions. 'The way' is the way of all things.
Cook 708	"Propriety" refers to the standards of all [forms] of goodness; "practices" refer to that by which one accustomizes [human] nature; and "[proper] ways" refer to the courses [properly taken by] all things.
性自命出	凡衍(道)，心術為主。衍(道)四術，唯 14 人衍(道)為可衍(道)也。其厽(三)術者，衍(道)之而已。

性情論	【凡道，心[術]】 7 為主。道四術也，唯人道為可道也。其三術者，道之而已。
Notes	• Cook 708 no. 86 has exhaustively overviewed *xin shu* 心術. • Here *ke dao* 可道 is not "can be said." It means "to carry out, to practice," as in the *Laozi*, "the way that can be walked is not the Way, 道可道非常道" (Zhao Jianwei 趙建偉 1999). I see also *Xunzi jiaoshi* 15.619: "Upon encountering the enemy and determine the battle [strategies], one must carry out [actions] according to what he understand, and not according to he doubts about, 遇敵決戰，必道吾所明，無道吾所疑;" and in *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu* 韩非子新校注 49.1115: "to abandon practices that are necessary to avoid destruction, and to carry out affairs that surely lead to extermination – these are the faults of those who govern, 舍必不亡之術而道必滅之事，治國者之過也." *Dao* 道 as "to say" is influenced by *Mao* 46: 中冓之言、不可道也 "words uttered in the middle of the night should not be spoken" (On *gou* 冓 as "noght" see Smith and Poli 2021). • 《春秋繁露》: "If insult can be avoided, so one avoids it. If it cannot avoid it, then the *junzi* deems death as returning home [desirable]. 辱若可避，避之而已。及其不可避，君子視死如歸." *Chunqiu fanlu* 3.46. • It is possible that 道 and 術 are a pun, *lˤuʔ vs. *lut, which complicates the reading of this sentence. If it is a pun, should it be taken literally? 道 may possible be in the plural, compare **XZMC* 40. • *Wei* 為 seems to be emphasizing approval (I render as "should").
MP	In general, [when it comes to] the way, the techniques of the hˇeart are central. [When it comes to] the way, [there are] four techniques. Only the human path should be followed. [As for] the other three techniques, [people just] follow them.
Cook 711	In general, for all ways, the pathways of the heart-mind are primary. The Way has paths [in] four [directions], [but] only the human way is worthy of being taken. The [other] three paths are merely taken, and that is all.

性自命出	《時(詩)》、《箸(書)》、豊(禮)、樂，其司(始)出皆生 15 於人。《時(詩)》，又(有)為為之也；《箸(書)》，又(有)為言之也；豊(禮)、樂，又(有)為舉之也。
性情論	《詩》、《箸(書)》、豊(禮)、樂，其司(始)出也並(皆)生於【人。《詩》，】— 8 又(有)為為之也；《箸(書)》，又(有)為言之也；豊(禮)、樂，又(有)為舉之也。
Notes	Y*ou wei* 有為 is given the same definition of *gu* 故, 'having a purpose.'
MP	The Odes, Documents, Ritual, and Music, in their first emergence, are all born from mankind. The poems are what we do for a reason; the writings is what we speak with a purpose; the Rituals and the Music, we perform them with a purpose.
Cook 711	The Odes, Documents, Ritual, and Music all in their beginnings arose from mankind. The odes [of men] were created for a purpose; the [words of theirs] documents were expressed for a purpose; [their] rituals and music were performed for a purpose.
性自命出	聖人比其 16 類而侖(論)會之，觀其之(先)後而逆訓之，體其宜(義)而即(節)文之，里(理)17其青(情)而出內(入)之，肰(然)句(後)復以教。教，所以生惪(德)于中者也。
性情論	聖人比其類而侖(論)會之，觀其先後，而 9 逆訓之，體其宜(義)而節文之，里(理)其情而出內(入)之，肰(然)句(後)復以教。教，所以生惪(德)于中者也。

Notes	• The orthographic representations of *jiao* 教 and *zhong* 中 differ between the two manuscripts. • On 于, see Venture 2007, who takes it as evidence os sight-copy, being the only instance where the graph is 于 and not 於. But the two words were pronounced differently (*ɢʷ(r)a vs. *[ʔ]ˤa), this this could equally suggest that the scribes were working under dictation. • On *zhihou* 之後 / *xian hou* 先後, see Cook 710 no, 103. This may be another example that *XQL is a better edition of this text, since *XZMC has 之 as partial representation of *hou* 先. Qiu Xigui 1998 already pointed out this as mistake.
Notes	• If the passage aims to discuss the arranging of the *Odes* the documents, *shengren* here represents a sagely "editor," a role later attributed to Confucius 孔子. • *Wen* 文 is written in an interesting way. The scholarship has not yet clarified the reasons for this orthographic representation. Qiu Xigui initially interpreted 〜 曼 as writing *du* 度, but it is most likely *jie wen* 節文 "to order and adorn" following Li Jiahao 李家浩 1999 transcription of the graph as 閔 . *Jie wen* is a compound that recurs frequently in ancienvt texts, giving credit to Li's reading. See also *Shanghai Bowuguan Cang Zhanguo Chu Jian Jishi* 上海博物館藏戰國楚簡集釋, vol. 1 page 323 and other examples of this orthography at http://ccamc.org/cjkv_oaccgd.php?cjkv=%E9%96%94&type=chujian
MP	The Sage compared their categories, and arranged and assembled them, observed their order [what comes first and what comes later], materialized their [principles of] righteousness, giving patterns and elaboration/ornaments to them. / To pattern and to ornament them. He then repeatedly instructs with them. Instructions is the meaning through which [one] produces virtue inside.

Cook 712	The sages compared their types and arranged and assembled them; observed their succession and reordered them into better accord; gave embodiment to their propriety and provided it with regularity and refined pattern; ordered the affections [they expressed by] drawing them out and reimplanting them; and the returned [this all] back [to the people] so as to instruct them. Instruction is that by which one gives rise to virtue within.
性自命出	豊(禮)作於青(情) 18，或興之也。堂(當)事因方而折(制)之。其先後之舍(序 / 敘)則宜(義)衍(道)也。或舍(序)為 19 之即(節)則文也。
性情論	豊(禮)10【作於】情，或興之也。堂(當)事因方而折(制)之。其先後之舍(序)則宜(義)道也。或舍(序)為之節則文也。11
Notes	• *Zhi* 制 is written **XZMC* with 衣 at the bottom. • The graph 舍 may be writing either *xu* 序 or *xu* 敘; both are possibilities (all sharing the phonetic value *LA). • Is this plus previous line a description of the editing process of texts?
MP	Rituals arise from affections, but also evoke them. And thus their linear sequence / the ordering of them is in keeping with the way. In some cases? to give it a rhythm / to segment them is to ornate [them].
Cook 714	Ritual arises from the affections, but also elevates them. It is tailored in accordance with what is proper for each occasion. As for its prioritizing of first and last, this is the way of propriety. There is that which lends rhythm, to this prioritizing, and this is refined patterning.
性自命出	至容廟(貌)，所以文即(節)也。君子美其青(情)，【貴其義，】 20 善其即(節)，好其容，樂其衍(道)，兌(悅)其教，是以敬安（焉）。
性情論	【至】容廟(貌)，所以文節也。君子美其情，貴其宜(義)，善其節，好其容，樂其道，兌(悅)其教，是以敬焉。

Notes	*Mao* 貌 "countenance" is written with 庿, phonetic value *MAW. The *Shuowen* entry for *miao* 廟 reads "the place when you honor the appearance 皃 of ancestors", making the connection, and the *guwen* form for 庿 preserved in the *Shuowen* Guwen form in fact resembles the graph that appears in **XZMC* and **XQL*. Interestingly, Shanghai mss *Zi yi* 緇衣 writes 「皃+毛(?)」 for *miao* 苗, "the Miao People".
NP	The closest passage is in *Ritual Records,* "[using] demeanor and countenance to adorn [the people] 容貌以文之." *Liji zhengyi* (2009) 32.3560
MP	Coming now to [reading 至 as *zhiyu* 至於] to countenance and appearance, these are those with which one patterns and ornaments oneself. A *junzi* beautifies one's feelings; puts great value his righteousness; esteems his countenance, takes delight in his way; takes pleasure in learning. Thereby he is respectful in these.
Cook 715	It is by extending (reading 至 as *zhi* 致) to the full one's countenance and appearance that one brings about refined patterning and rhythm. The noble man regards the affections as beautiful, places the value in the propriety, holds the rhythm in approval, has fondness for the countenance, finds its happiness in the [proper] way, and delights in the instruction – thus he is held in respect.
性自命出	拜，所以【□□也，】 21 其謷文也。幣帛，所以為信与(與)證(徵)也，其辭宜(義)道也。
性情論	拜， 12 所以【□□也，】其謷文也。幣帛，所以為信與登(徵)也，其辭宜(義)道也。
Notes	This line elaborates on social behavior.
MP	To be deferential is how to ⋯ ; its praising is patterend (?). Coins and silk are the means to establish trust and give accountability. (Or perhaps, is 辭 is writing *yi* 貽, it could mean "their bestowal follows (*yi* 宜) the way.")

Cook 715	Obeisance is that by which to show respect (?); its gradations are finely patterned. Gifts of coin and silk are that by which to garner trust and confirmation; their regulations 治 [of exchange] are [in accordance with] the way of propriety.
性自命出	笑，慦(喜)之淺澤也。22 樂，慦 (喜)之深澤也。凡聖（聲），其出於情也信，肰(然)句(後)其內(入)拔(撥)人之心也，厚。23
性情論	笑，喜之淺澤也。樂，喜之13【深澤也。凡】聖（聲），其出於情也信，肰(然)句(後)其內(入)拔(撥)人之心也厚。
Notes	• 出於情: this is one of the few occasions where *XZMC* writes "affections" with the 心 element (see also *XZMC* 29/*XQL* 18), which may suggest visual copying. • Chen Lai 1999 links this line to a passage in *Ritual Records*, "Trustworthiness is near (> relates) to affections. ⋯ Affections can be trusted, 信近情⋯情可信" (*Liji zhengyi* 2009 32.3559). However one may translate *qing* 情, there is little doubt that both the *Ritual Records* and the *XZMC* are using it to express the truthful nature of an element. The *Ritual Records* passage continues to say that once there is courtesy, truthfulness, and respect, "even if one errs, the mistakes will not be grave, 雖有過，其不甚矣," which we find similarly formulated in *XZMC* strip 50: "If the feelings are involved, even that are mistakes, it will not considered bad, 苟以其情，雖過不."

Notes	• In a *Shuowen* edition now lost, quoted in Sun Mian's 孫愐 (8th century) *Tang Yun* 唐韻, 笑 is defined as "to have pleasure (喜), from *zhu* 竹, from *quan* 犬," the the *XZMC* and *XQL* in fact write it with 犬 at the bottom, confirming the existence of this orthography. In his edition of the *Shuowen*, Li Yangbing 李陽冰 emend the entry to "from *zhu* 竹, from *yao* 夭," possibly due to graphic similarity, thus creating the orthography still in use. See also discussion in *Chutu Zhanguo wenxian zi ci jishi* 出土戰國文獻文献字詞集釋 vol. 1 page 346, and vol. 5 page 2377. Another example is Shanghsi 鬼神之明, strip 2. • It is quite likely that is a ligature (*hewen* 合文) of 淺 and 澤 (which appear again later in the manuscript). • 懬 in *XZMC* was initially interpreted as *li* 禮; the publication of *XQL* confirms that the graph is writing *xi* 喜+心 (Li Ling 2002); and *li* is never written with 心 at the bottom. *XZMC* scribe seems to be confusing 喜 with 禮, another point that would suggest that *XQL* may be a better edition.
NP	• A sentence in *Xunzi* is strongly reminiscent of *qi ru bo ren zhi xin ye hou* 其入撥人之心也厚 , or vice versa: "the penetration of sound and music in humans is profound, 夫聲樂之入人也深"(*Xunzi jiaoshi* 20.814). The parallel is important because if clarifies the nominalizing role of *qi* 其 in this context, as in the sentence that follows in *Xunzi*, "their transform humans quickly, 其化人也快速。"
MP	Laughter is a shallow release of pleasure; happiness is a deep release of pleasure. In general, sounds that come from affections are truthful, and then their plucking at one's heart is profound.
Cook 718	Laughter is the shallow release of joy; music is the deep release of joy. In general. Whenever [expressive] voices/sounds derive from affections genuinely, their entry into and inciting of the heart-mind is profound.

性自 命出	䎽(聞)笑聖（聲），則鮮(鮮)女(如)也斯喜。昏(聞)訶(歌)謠，則 舀(慆)如也斯奮。聖(聽)琴瑟之聖(聲)，24 則悸女(如)也斯歎。
性情論	䎽(聞)笑聖（聲），則鮮(鮮)女(如)也斯喜。昏(聞)歌要(?)14，【則 舀(慆)如也斯奮。】聖(聽)琴瑟之聖(聲)，則悸如也斯歎。
Notes	• In both *XZMC* and *XQL*, the first occurrence of *wen* 聞 "to hear" is written as 昏+耳; in the second occurrence, *wen* is written with 昏 only. This occurs within the same strips. It could be an example of a certain relaxation in the spelling rules, or an indication that the two orthographies are writing different words. One may take it as proof of visual copying, but then other graphs in the same section are written differently. For example, *se* 瑟 is written with the *xin* 心 component in *XQL* only; *ji* 悸 is written with the 言 element in *XZMC*, but not in *XQL* (see discussion below). The parallel between two sentences in the text is strong, so the target word is most likely "to hear" 聞 in both cases.
Notes	• Note also that in the sentence 聖(聽)琴瑟之聖(聲), the same graph 聖 is writing two different words within the same family, *ting* 聽 (*l̥ˤeŋ) and *sheng* 聲 (*l̥eŋ). Interestingly, the same contrast is found in *Ritual Records*, although this time the two words have different orthographies: "When the noble man hears the sounds of lute and cithern, then he thinks of ministers who are determined and moral, 君子聽琴瑟之聲，則思志義之臣" (*Liji zhengyi* 2009, 39.3341). • Note the alternation of orthography to write "to hear" in both manuscripts (highlighted in blue).

Notes	• Liao Mingchun (廖名春 2000：42) suggested to interpret 悸 as *nan* 戁 with the sense of "to move," according to glosses bu Guo Pu 郭璞 to the *Erya* and the *Shuowen*. A more apt reading is *kuai* 快 "cheerful, gratified." The graphic structure on *XQL is「季+心」, which also occurs in a line of the *Zhouyi* 周易 manuscript (strip 48), where the meaning is "cheerful, happy". Most likely, this meaning applies to *XZMC, where the graph if written as「季+言」. The components 言 and 心 swap frequently; yet their relationship is still unclear. • 奮 gets abbreviated in the Chu script, Qiu Xigui has suggested that the *niao* 鳥 element in the middle is not always present, but the graph regularly preserves the element 衣. It is found again in *XZMC strip 46.
Cook 718	When one hears the sounds of laughter, one radiantly becomes joyous. When one hears songs and ballads, one elatedly becomes excited. When one listens to the sounds of *qin* and *se* zithers, one becomes stirred and given to sighing.
性自命出	觀《賚》、《武》，則齊(懠)如也斯作。觀《韶》、《夏》，則免(勉)如也 25 斯儉。
性情論	觀《賚》、《武》，則懠如也斯作。觀【《韶》、《夏》，則免(勉)如也15斯儉。】

293

Notes	• Here the *XQL strip is broken, and signaled in the transcription. • The graph for *si* 斯 begins to be normalized as 其＋斤 in imperial times; the *Shuowen* indicates 其 as phonetic, but in *XZMC, the graph is , not , which usually writes *qi* 其. *XQL uses the same component, adding 斤 on the side: . Could it be a corrupted form of 其? • The text moves from hearing to seeing, from laughters to songs to music with instruments to historical dances. • I have not been able to identify further examples of *jian* 儉 "to be frugal" (if this is indeed the target word) used in connection with music. • Here nother example of *XZMC writing a graph without the *xin* 心 component, while *XQL has it, in 憎. What these graphs are writing is unclear. • In the Tsinghua manuscript *Feng Xu zhi ming*, on the first strip the graph 乍 is a visual mistake for 亡 (see Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian 清華大學藏戰國竹簡, volume 5 page 118). But in *XZMC and *XQL the graph writes 乍＋又, thus clearly writing 作. Which word is 作 writing remains controversial.
Cook 718	When one observes the Lai and Wu [dances], angrily one takes rise. When one observes the Shao and Xia [dances], one is exhorted to take restraint.
性自命出	㦞(詠)思而動心，胄(喟)如(然)也。其居即(節)也舊[久]，其反善復始也26慎，其出內(入)也順，司(治)其德也。
性情論	詠思而動心，莨(喟)如(然)也。其居節也舊[久]，其反善復司(始)也慎，其出內(入)也順，治其德【也。】

Notes	• 《禮記‧禮運》：“出游於觀上，喟然而嘆。” *Liji zhengyi* 21.3061. • The orthography of 喟 differs. In *XZMC, it is spelled with 胃, whereas *XQL has 畏. Although they both belong to the Wei rhyming group 微部, the two elements are reconstructed with different pronounciations in OC (and thyme differently). It is possible that here the two manuscripts are writing different words, and *XQL should be normalized differently. • The expression “to return … and to begin again,” *fan … fu shi* 反…復始 if often found in received literature, reassuring us of the interpretation here, even though (or perhaps especially) the graph for *shi* differ between *XZMC and *XQL. “To return to excellent and beginning again”. This reading also makes sense given the previous *jiu* 久: after long engagement with something, one returns to the beginnings. Some examples of the expression *fan … fu shi* are *Liji zhengyi* 2009, 47.3462: “to tech the people to return to antiquity as a new beginning, 教民反古復始;” *Wuzi* 1.54, “the Dao is that with which one returns to the origin, 夫道者，所以反本復始;” *Hou Hanshu* 39.1314, etc. • Perhaps *si* 思 in context is more appropriately translated as “to yearn.”
Cook 719	When the heart-mind is moved through the drawing out [in sound] of yearning, it is as if letting out a sigh [of appreciation]. [Music] has for long occupied the rhythm [of our affections]; its return to goodness and recollection of beginnings is (26) conscientious, and its bringing forth [of affections] and instillment [of propriety] moves in accord [with human nature].
性自命出	鄭衛之樂，則非其聖(聲)而從之也。27
性情論	【鄭衛之16樂，則非其】聖(聲)而從之也。

Notes	• Li Tianhong 李天虹 (2003: 161-162) has argued that the phrase *fei qi sheng* from the *XZMC can be used to interpret a line in *Xunzi* believes we can use 非其聲 to fix a passage in *Xunzi*'s Yue Lun 樂論. The transmitted version reads, "the noble man is enlightened about music, and his virtue, 君子明樂，乃其德." Li Tianhong argues that the passage might have possibly have been "the noble man is enlightened about music, and its sounds, 乃其聲." The error of 德 instead of *sheng* 聲 "sounds" is could be explained as a visual mistake if the graph being copied was 聽, writing *sheng* (since "to listen" and "sounds" were homophones, *LEŊ). Contextually, to interpret the word as "sounds" is plausible. However, other details of the argument, such as Yu Yue's 俞 樾 quote that the *Xunzi* passage rhymes and *ting* 聽 • The Fudan Reading group notes that Wang Xianqian 王先謙 in his *Xunzi ji jie*《荀子集解》 notes that Yu Yue 俞樾 had argued that *de* 德 is the only non-rhyming words in a passage on music and emotions in *Xunzi*'s "Yue lun 樂論" (from "窮本極變，樂之情也" to "弟子勉學，無所營也，"), and *de* should thus be considered a mistake for *ting* 聽, which appears in the *Xunzi* passage in question. If so, the *Xunzi* passage would read "fei qi ting ye 非其聽也," and could be considered a parallel to *XZMC 非其聖; 聖 was in fact transcribed as *ting* 聽 "to listen" in the first 1998 edition. This argument is a stretch, but I inserted it here as an example of how manuscripts and transmitted literature interface. Liu Xilan 劉昕嵐 (2000,339) follows Li Ling in reading the graph 聖 as *sheng* 聲 "sounds", a reading that I adopt.
Notes	• There are several examples of the structure *fei* X *er* Y *zhi* 非…而…之, "to deny, to repudiate X and yet Y". E.g., *Lunyu* 2.24: "to deny [a relation] to a spirit and yet to sacrifice to it, 非其鬼而祭之". *Liji zhengyi* 5.2746: "to repudiate what is being offered and yet to offer it, this is called a licentious sacrifice, 非其所祭而祭之名曰淫祀。" *Chunqiu Gou liang jing zhuan bu zhu* 春秋穀梁經傳補注 23.695: "to repudiate what one takes, and yet to take it, this is called robbery 非其所取而取之，謂之盜。"

Notes	• *fei* X *er* Y 非⋯而⋯ see also this passage from the *Shuoyuan* 說苑, worth quoting in full because it is a good example of a passage that resulted from patching together material from different sources: "When elks and deer move [lit: become] in group, tigers and leopards avoid them. When birds fly in flocks, eagles and falcons do not strike them. When multitudes form assemblies, the sages do not violate them. The soaring snake travels among the dew, rides winds and rain and proceeds, without stopping for thousands of *li*. Then at night, it resides in the cave of the loaches and sturgeons. And all of this, how is it so? Because its mind is not unified. Now the earthworm does not have an internal strength from muscles and bones; it does not have the advantage of claws and teeth, but then it burrows to drink from the Yellow Springs, and ascends to to dig the sun-dry soil. How is this so? Because its mind is unified. The wise have ears that can hear, the bright have eyes that can see. When the wise and the bright appear, then humanity and care [follow], and honor and shame are allotted. Therefore to repudiate a path and yet to follow it, then labor does not arrive. To deny what is possessed and ask for it, then the strength is not obtained. The intelligent do not act after affairs they repudiate to deny their affairs; the honest does not ask what it denies to have. 是以遠容而名章也. This is what the *Odes* mean by saying that the noble man "does not hate not asks for [things], how could he employ what it not good?" 麋鹿成群，虎豹避之；飛鳥成列，鷹鷲不擊；眾人成聚，聖人不犯。騰蛇遊於霧露，乘於風雨而行，非千里不止；然則暮託宿於鰍鱣之穴，所以然者，何也？用心不一也。夫蚯蚓內無筋骨之強，外無爪牙之利；然下飲黃泉，上墾晞土。所以然者，何也？用心一也。聰者耳聞，明者目見，聰明形則仁愛者，廉恥分矣。故非其道而行之，雖勞不至；非其又(有)而求之，雖強不得；智者不為非其事，廉者不求非其有；是以遠容而名章也。《詩》云：「不忮不求，何用不臧」此之謂也。" *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* 説苑校證 17.418.
MP	[As per] the musics of Zheng and Wei, on the other hand, [people] repudiate their sounds, and yet follow them.
Cook 719	The musics of Zheng and Wei, one the other hand, give free rein to indulge in the wrong kinds of sounds.

性自命出	凡古樂動心，嗌(益)樂動指（嗜），皆教其人者也。《賚》、《武》樂取，《韶》、《夏》樂情。[28]
性情論	凡古樂動心，嗌(益)樂動【指（嗜），皆教其】人者也。《賚》、《武》樂取，《韶》、《夏》樂情。

Notes	• 動 has been read by Li Ling (1999) as writing "to harmonize," followed by S. Cook. SB version has 土, cf. On #30 there is 動心. I think the transcription to 龍 is wrong, there is confusion but the graphs are more likely to be a simplified version of 動 in comparison with other occurrences of 動 in the corpus. Disagree with Cook.
	• Here I suspect the 取 is writing *zou* 奏, "to play music." (There is a forthcoming paper on the subject, continuing the discussion on 取 in appendix F) Even so, the sentence remains obscure.
	• Chen Wei 陳偉 (2000: 10-11) suggested that *zhi* 指 means "fingers." If so, there may be a some connection between this passage and a *Zhuangzi* line, "the transformations [occurred] between the fingers [of artisan Chui] and externalities, and he did not use his mind to examine [the preocess], 指與物化， 而不以心稽" *Zhuangzi jishi* 19.662. Accordingly, we may read this line in *XZMC to say that when it comes to extravagant music, *yi yue* 溢樂, only the fingers (i.e., the body) is moved, but the mind is not. Zhao Jianwei's 趙建偉 also interprets as *zhi* 指, on the basis of a line in *Mao* 241 (Zhao Jianwei 1999:37). The Guodian manuscript *Zundeyi* 尊德義 strip 26 has *bu yi zhi yu hai qi yi* 不以旨欲害其義, where 旨 is *shi* 嗜 "to have a liking for," as in the expression *shi yu* 嗜欲 that is widely attested in the literature. Qiu Xigui had in fact here interprets 旨 as *shi*, taking the sentence to mean that one must not harm their propriety with likes and desires. In support of his reading there is also the attested usage of *shi* within discussions on human nature, e.g., *Huainanzi jishi* 11.778: "human nature desires equilibrium; yearning and desiring harms it." (Compare Major et al. *Huainanzi*, 404).
	The overall meaning of the passage remains similar: unlike the ancient music, licentious music moves something more superficial than the mind.

Notes	• What is the relationship between 益 and 淫? The 益 pictogram represents a basin with a lot of water, meaning "to overflow." In pre-imperial writing, it is however written as two strings, in fact GD strip has . In the *Shuowen* entry, the *guwen* representation of "to overflow" is written adding a mouth to two strings, today written as 嗌 (this writing is in Baoshan, ; it is preserved in the Hanjian 汗簡 for the *Documents* 尚書 and appears in the *Gu Laozi*, see *Guwen zi gulin* 古文字詁林, 5.207), meaning "neck", hence "to strangle", but "to necklace someone" possibly because they put a string of shells or a necklace around their neck as rewards (see also 朋). Initially "to neck" and "to overflow" are different words, each with pictogram. In Warring States time, they spell each other, since they share the speller (the 'two strings', *q[i]k). Starting with the Han, the graph 益 appears, as in the Mawangdui writings. There are no difficulties in interpreting it as *yi* 溢, as S. Cook does (719). However, the graph has also been read as *yin* 淫, "excessive" (e.g., Ikeda Tomohisa, Urlich Middendord, and Lin Xinlan). This interpretation however requires an explanation, since 1) there is no textual evidence that links either 益 or 溢 to *yin* 淫; 2) the formers end in *-k, while *yin* has final *-m, a phonological incongruity that requires to be accounted for. These words appear in compounds such as *yin yi*, 淫益, 淫溢, and *yin shi* 淫佚. But this is most likely because of the close meaning, and not because of other relations. • A passage in *Zhuangzi* rebukes the person who abandons the truths (*qing* 情) endowed by human nature to follow excess, *Zhuangzi jishi* 8.319.
MP	In general, ancient music moves the heart, overflowing music [i.e., the Zheng and Wei's music] moves the desires. Both are things which instruct the individual. The Lai and Wu performances stimulate, / delight in stimulus, the Shao and Xia performances are emotional (?).

Cook 720	In general, ancient music elevates the heart-mind, and extravagant music elevates the desires – they both serve to instruct the people [who listen to them]. The Lai and Wu [dances] express musical happiness over the conquest; the Shao and Xia dances express musical happiness over [human] affections.
性自命出	凡至樂必悲，哭亦悲，皆至其情也。哀樂，其眚(性)相近也，是故其心 29 不遠。
性情論	凡17【至樂】必悲，哭亦悲，皆至其情也。哀樂，其眚(性)相近也，是故其心不遠。
Notes	• Second instance where *XZMC* writes *qing* with the 心 component (see above *XZMC* 23 / *XQL* 14). • Because in the following line 樂 is *yue* "music", one could assign the same meaning here. I thus disagree with Middeldorf's "pleasure". I read *ai* 哀 as "mourning," because it conveys a sound-related emotional expression, especially if 樂 is indeed writing *yue*. • I think *ku* 哭 is better translated "to wail" ("to cry" as "to shed tear" is *li* 泣), and it conveys again a vocal expression of an emotion.
MP	Extreme happiness / music must turn to mourning, [in the same way] wailing is sorrow. They both exhaust the affections. [When it comes to] mourning and happiness / music, their functioning [lit: their natural inclinations, the way they naturally operate] is close, and for this reason the [state of] the heart is not far apart [either].
Cook 722	In general, extreme [expressions of] music (/happiness) must [end in] sorrow, and crying (/grief) also [ends in] sorrow – this is because they each bring out the utmost of their affections. Happiness (/music) and grief (/mourning) are similar in nature, and thus their [effects upon the] heart-mind are not far apart.
性自命出	哭之動心也，侵(?)溅，其刺(烈)戀戀(?)如也，戚(促?)然以终。 樂之動心也，30 潜深臓舀(郁陶)。 其刺則流如也，以悲，悠然以思。

301

性情論	哭之動心也，侵(?)焊，其18【刺】戀戀(?)如也，戚(促?)然以终。 樂之動心也，濬深臧惛(郁陶)。 其刺【則】流如也以悲，悠然以思。
Notes	 - *Jin* 浸: on *XZMC it is written as , *XQL graph has the same components except 戈. It is possible that the presence of a *ge* 戈 "weapon" indicates and association with the word "to invade, to seep in a territory" 侵. - 濬深 the pair is likely secure, their meaning is close and the graphs are clearly different. In received texts, they gloss each other (sometimes 濬 is spelled with 浚 though). - Where *XZMC has 溺, *XQL's graph has been read as 焊. However, all the words in the series have the 水 component, and the *XQL strip is damaged, making it difficult to see clearly if the left-side element is 水 or 火. A passage in *Records*'s 史記 "Yue shu 樂書" has "there are no discorded and broken sounds, 無怗懘之音" (*Shiji* 24.1881), written as 怗懘 in *Ritual Records* "Yueji" 樂記 (*Liji zhengyi* 2009, 37.3312). 溺 and 懘 both end in *-at-s, giving some credit to interpreting 溺 as *chi* 懘. Commentators are unclear about its meaning, they gloss only as "broken". Another example from *Ritual Records* confirms the presence of a compound associated with music that included a word pronounced *SAT: 噍殺之音 (*Liji zhengyi* 37.3327). Interpretations on the meaning vary. See exhaustive discussion in Liao Mingchun 2000. *Jiao* 噍 and *sha* 殺 also occur next to each other in 《禮記‧樂記》："是故其哀心感者，其聲噍以殺；其樂心感者，其聲嘽以緩。" *Liji zhengyi* 2009, 37.3311.

Notes	• Following several Chinese scholars (e.g., Chen Jian 2000: 78; Li Tianhong 李天虹 2003: 166- 167), both Cook 721 and Middendorf 2008: 155 normalize 膉舀 to *yu tao* 鬱陶, translating "elation" and "apprehension" respectively. Two notes are in order. First, although *yu tao* can mean either "anxious" or "happy", *tao* occurs in *XZMC 34, and the context indicates it indicates positive expressions, "happy, elated" (the passage also occurs in *Liji zhengyi* 2009, 9.175). Accordingly, this should lead us to understand 膉舀 with positive connotations. Second, at the current state of knowledge, it is more correct to normalize 膉舀 (*[ɢ]ʷrək-l̥ˤu) to *yu tao* 郁陶 (*qʷək-[l]ˤu). Reading 膉 as *yu* 鬱 is a problem, since they write different words and have different finals (鬱 is 物韻, *-t; 郁 is 屋韻, *-k), which cautions us to consider them as interchangeable. The reading as *yu* 鬱 may have been possible after a phonetic change. 膉舀/郁陶 was pronounced *qʷək-*[l]ˤu , when the *l initial hardens to *d (Baxter 1992: 197), 陶 became *dˤu < *[l]ˤu. The dental initial influenced the final *-k in the pronunciation of 郁 *qʷək, making it sound close to final *-t. This would then have led to using 郁 to write 鬱. The picture is complicated by the fact that there are two more characters that can write, or can be confused with, 鬱. In these, instead of 缶, we have the component 爻, OC final: *-aw. • On *XZMC, *liu* 流 is written 水+虫. It is a corrupted form of a prior attested graph, written with water + baby upside down + water. The *XQL graph for *liu* in still includes a central component representing the head of the child. • The expression 戚戚然 occurs in the *Liezi* and the *Shiji*. On *XZMC and *XQL, it seems clear that the graph is 戚, although slightly differently. In the manuscripts, 戚然 conceivably writes *curan* 促然 "suddenly", in opposition to *you* 悠 "long" that comes after. Adam Smith suggests possibly 幾 as speller, although it remains to be explained why the *XZMC has 艸 component.
MP	When wailing moves the mind, it decays. Its climax is (?), it suddenly comes to an end. When music moves the mind, it is deep and intense. Its climax is flowing, and thereby sad (sic.), Prolonged with thoughts. ???

Cook 722	When [expressions of] crying stimulate the heart-mind, it becomes sunken and depressed; when they are intense, it becomes all distraught, and [then turns] mournful until the end. When [expressions of] music (/happiness) stimulate the heart-mind, it is profoundly elated [within], [but] when they are intense, it becomes dissipated to the point of sorrow, and becomes brooding to the point of yearning.
性自命出	凡憂，思而後悲 31；凡樂，思而後忻。凡思之甬(用)心，為甚。 戁(歎)，思之方也，其聖(聲)弁(變)則【心從之】 32，其心弁(變)則 其聲亦然。
性情論	凡憂，思而後悲 19；【凡】樂，思而後忻。凡思之甬(用)，心為甚。歎，思之方也，其聖(聲)弁(變)則心從之矣，其心弁(變)則其聖(聲)亦然。 20
Notes	• 歎 is written with the 心 component in *XZMC*. • I believe that the subjects of *wei shen* 為甚 is "thinking uses the mind, 思之用心" since, at least in *XZMC*, *yong xin* 用心 is always coupled. Thus, my reading differs. • The meaning of *fang* 方 has been widely debated. I think it is *fang* 方 as in "counterpart", "category", possibly even related to *bang* 傍 "close to / companion." • *Bian* 變 is here written with 弁, previously attested they found it in the *mengshu* 盟書. The graph 弁 was initially understood as *shi* 事 "to serve," due to graphic similarities (the two will in fact merge, while they were distinguished on bronze inscriptions). It's in the *Shuowen* under 兊. "Hat" character writing "change".
MP	When it comes to sadness, if one thinks [about it] then [they feel] sorrow (?); When it comes to happiness, if one thinks [about it] then [they feel] delight. In general, the application of the heart when thinking is maximal. Sighing is counterpart of thinking: when the sound changes then the heart follows, and vice versa when the heart changes.

Cook 723	In general, apprehension turns to sorrow only within yearning, and happiness turns to delight only with yearning (sic.). In general, yearning makes extreme use of the heart-mind. Vocalization lies in the direction of yearning. When the voice (/sound) changes, so too does the hear-mind; when the heart-mind changes, so too does the voice (/sound).
性自命出	吟遊哀也。喿(譟)遊樂也，啾遊聖(聲)。戲遊心也。 **33**
性情論	【吟遊哀也。】喿(譟)遊樂也，啾遊聖(聲)也。嘔遊心也。 |
Notes	• It looks as though the scribe of *XZMC* forgot *ye* 也 after the third sentence. This would also be a point in favour to *XQL* being a better edition. • If one reads as *you* (Liu Zhao 劉釗 2000), a parallel is in *Chunqiu fanlu* "when humans follow the way joifully and not chaotic, that is the [true] human way, 人道者，人之所由樂而不亂."

Notes	• Li Tianhong argues that is should be *liu* 游 or *you* 遊 , not 由 "to come from," as it was initially proposed (Li Tianhong 2003: 170). The meaning of the passage remains however unclear. *You xin* 遊心 appears in transmitted texts, but the brevity of the *XZMC statement makes it difficult to see a clear parallel. Li Tianhong suggested a possible connection with a passage in the *Han Shi wai zhuan* (although it remains debatable how it would affect the reading of *XZMC): "in order to be able to control All Under Heaven, one has to be able to raise the people. In order to be able to raise the people, one has to be able to raise himself. Foods and beverages are suited to be stored; the flavors accord the *qi*, labor and idleness accord one's strength. Cold and warm accord to one's skin. Then, the storing of the *qi* is even, the hear's skills are governed, thinking and reflecting is mastered, happiness and anger are expressed at the right time, [there is] work and rest, and traveling is joyful, the affairs are [handled] timely and usages are sufficient. This is what is called nourishing oneself. 能制天下，必能養其民也；能養其民者，為自養也。飲食適乎藏，滋味適乎氣，勞佚適乎筋骨，寒暖適乎肌膚；然後氣藏平，心術治，思慮得，喜怒時，起居而遊樂，事時而用足。夫是之謂能自養者也。" *Han Shi wai zhuan ji shi* 韓詩外傳集釋 20.103.
Notes	• Meng Pengsheng 孟蓬生 (2002: 405) interprets 啾 as 嘯/歗 "to whistle," on the basis of several glosses and a phonological proximity between the two words (note however that *chi* 嘯 has a final *-k).
Cook 723	Moaning is grief on excursion, shouting [for joy] is happiness on excursion; intoning is the voice on excursion; and playful banter is the heart-mind on excursion.
性自 命出	喜斯慆(陶)，慆(陶)斯奮，奮斯詠，詠斯猷(猶)，猷(猶)斯迁 (?)。迁 (?)，喜之終也。慍斯憂(憂)，憂(憂)斯戚，戚34斯嘆(嘆)，嘆(嘆)斯闢，闢斯通(踊)。通(踊)，慍之終也。35

Notes	• Here the graph 慆 is written with the *xin* 心 component (which I am unable to replicate in the transcription), unlike on strip 31 where it does not have it and yet it writes the same word (*tao* 陶). Example of different orthographies for the same word.
	• The interpretation of 迬 remains open. Cook transcribes as *wu* 舞 "to dance," following Qiu Xigui's interpretation.
	• Chen Jian 劉釗 2003 100: reads as written with the components 亡 and 尚, meaning *pi* 辟 "to beat", with the extended meaning of "beating one's chest" in this context (拊心，捶胸). Li Tianhong (2003: 173), although admitting the the identification of the graph remains debatable, uses this identification to argue that the 尚
	component here is the same in **XZMC* 22 幣 , and normalizes to *fu* 撫 "to strike", but the phonology of these words does not sustain this argument.
	The element might be arguably the same 尚, working as speller for *pi* 辟 *[N]-pek (which is in the *Liji* parallel) and 幣 **[b]e[t]-s (although final is different). But *fu* 撫 "to strike" is not a good normalization.

NP	• A near parallel appears in *Ritual Records*: "if a person rejoices then they are elated; when elated, then they chant; when they chant, then they swing; then they swing, then they dance. When they dance they are excited; excitement [then turns to] distress; when distressed, they sigh. If they sight, then they act out; when they act out, they jump up. [All these] behaviors were regulated; these [regulations] are called ritual." 人喜則斯陶，陶斯詠，詠斯猶，猶斯舞，舞斯慍，慍斯戚，戚斯嘆，嘆斯辟，辟斯踴矣。品節斯，斯之謂禮。*Liji zhengyi* 2009, 9.2824. • 《淮南子・本經訓》"In general, human nature is such that if the heart is pacified and desire is obtained, humans are joyful If joyful, then there is movement; if there is movement, then there is stepping about. Stepping around gives rise to agitation, which gives rise to singing; and singing gives rise to dancing. If singing and dancing are regulated, then birds and beats also leap." 凡人之性，心和欲得則樂，樂斯動，動斯蹈，蹈斯蕩，蕩斯歌，歌斯舞，歌舞節則禽獸跳矣。*Huainanzi jishi* 8.598.
Cook 724	Joy leads to elation; elation leads to excitement; excitement leads to song; song leads to swaying; and swaying leads to dance. Dance is the conclusion of joy. Anger leads to distress; distress leads to indignation; indignation leads to sighing; sighing leads to wailing; and wailing leads to foot-stomping. Foot-stomping is the conclusion of anger.
下篇	
性自命出	凡學者，隶(求)其心為難。從(縱)其所為，近得之壹(矣)，不如以樂之速也。36 唯(雖)能其事，不能其心，不貴。求其心又(有)為(偽？)也，弗得之矣。
性情論	凡教者，求其31心又(有)為(偽？)也，弗得之矣。

Notes	• The graph 隶 on *XZMC* 36 is an example of visual mistake for 求 "to search." This would also be an indication that the *XQL* may be a better copy. • Here *XQL* seems to have missed a line, mistaking the second occurrence of *qiu qi xin* 求其心 for the first that the scribe was copying. If this is the case, this would be evidence of visual copying from *XQL* to *XZMC*. However, we may also consider, given the number of missing characters (ca. 30), that a *XQL* strip has been lost. *XZMC* here makes more sense. • Zhi Linpeng (forthcoming) understands "雖能其事，不能其心，不貴" as expressing something similar to a statement attributed to Zisi 子思 *Zhong lun* 中論 3.53: 能勝其心，於勝人乎何有？ 不能勝其心，如勝人何。 • Here I follow Ding Yuanzhi 2000: 83 on 縱 "to let go", which creates a contrast with the searching at the beginning of the sentence (*qiu* 求) and with the closing sentence, again on searching (求其心有偽也，弗得之矣). • 速 written with 束 phonetic, pictogram of a tied bag. Regular writing at this time. • One may consider that since 為 is read as *wei* 偽 here, the same may apply before. But there is not strict rule about orthographic consistencies, as pointed out several times.
NP	There is one passage noted by Li Tianhong 2003, that is worth discussing, because it uses the two key words "to study" *xue* 學 and "searching the heart," *qiu xin* 求心: "Mengzi said: humanity is [in] the human heart; morality if the human path. To abandon this path and not to follow it, to let go of searching for one's heart and not know how to search [for it again], how sorrowful it is! When people set free fowls and dogs, they then know how to search for them; but if they let go their heart, they then do not know how to search for it. Along the way of learning and inquiring, there is nothing else than to search for one's lost heart. 孟子曰： "仁，人心也；義，人路也。舍其路而弗由，放其心而不知求，哀哉！人有雞犬放，則知求之；有放心而不知求。學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。" *Mengzi shu shu* 10B.5987

MP	When learning, searching for one's mind is difficult. If one lets go of acting it / Relaxing your behavior, you are close to getting it, but it is not as quick as doing it through happiness / music. In the search for the [authentic] mind, if there is any artificiality they will not obtain it. Being capable at one's affairs but not capable at [finding] one's mind is of no worth. If there is artifice when searching one's mind, one will not obtain it. (Or perhas: "If there is influence (? Perhaps "action?) when searching one's mind, one will not obtain it.") *XQL* differs in the opening line: "the most difficult thing in learning is to search for [one's] mind. [If] there is artifice, one will not attain it." And "When teaching, when searching for one's mind, if there is artifice one will not obtain it."
Cook 728	In general, the most diff thing in leaning is the search for the [authentic] heart-mind. If one follows the lead of what is to be performed, one will be close to attaining it, [but this means] will not be as rapid as [instruction] through music. Though one may be able [to perform] the task, if he is not able [to attain] the [authentic] heart-mind, this is not to be valued. If there is artifice in one's search for the authentic heart-mind, one will not attain it.
性自命出	人之不能以為(偽)也，₃₇ 可智 (知) 也。[不]過十舉，其心必才 (在) 安 (焉)， (察) 其見 (現) 者，青 (情) 安失才 (哉)？
性情論	人之不能以為(偽)也，可知也。不過直—— *broken* ₃₂
Notes	• Here we have another example of one graph, 才, writing two different words on the same strip. • *Ju* 舉 is written with 牙+止. "Actions" remains an unsatisfactory translation; perhaps "behavior" would be a more accurate.

Notes	- The graphic history of *shi* 失 (*XZMC* ; the graph also appears in Guodian 老子 A strips 11, where the transmitted 老子 has *shi*) has been discussed in Zhap Ping'an 趙平安 2000, 戰國文字的 與甲骨文的 , in *Guwenzi yanjiu* (reprinted in 2017 *Wenxi, wenxian, gushi: Zhao Ping'an xuan ji* 文字，文獻，古史：趙平安選集. See also discussion in Wang Ziyang 王子揚， 說甲骨文的"逸"字, http://www.gwz.fudan.edu.cn/Web/Show/573. The graph in *XZMC* comes from a writing attested in oracle bone inscriptions (e.g., 甲骨文合586), of *nie* 夆 ("shackles") + 止. *XQL* being the strip broken, it is unclear to see exactly what the last word is. 直 is the best graphic approximation; but it is unlikely writing "ten" (because the two words "straight" and "ten" are phonologically not compatible.
MP	It is known that people cannot be [entirely] fake. In no more than ten actions, their heart surely must be present within [one of those performances]. Examine what is manifest, / examine [their heart] when is manifested, how can their feelings (or perhaps *qing* as in "essence"?) be missed?!
Cook 728	[Thus] may it be known that people cannot make use of artifice. Within no more than ten undertakings, [we may know that] one's heart-mind must lie therein. If one examines its manifestations, how could [its] true affections be lost [upon anyone]?
性自命出	訓/誨（?），宜(義)之方也。38 宜(義)，敬之方也。敬，物之即(節)也。
性情論	(?)，宜(義)之方也。宜(義)，敬之方也。敬，物之即(節)也。

Notes	• *Ji* 即 can write neither *ci* 次 nor *ze* 則, as suggested by the editors of the 1998 publication, since there is not common phonetic ground (see discussion on Cook 729 footnote 255). • Perhaps *fang* 方 here means *lei* 類, the sense would be of "X belongs to the category of Y." Hence my "part of".
Notes	• 訓: . The right side component is subject to debate. The graph on *XQL is illegible, . Lian Liyong 連立勇 (in Liao Mingchun 2000) sees it as close to the right component in *hai* 海 (*XZMC strip 9; see Cook 729 no. 254). Lin Zhipeng (forthcoming) considers the possibility of being writing a simplified 冊 , with 言 being the sound component. The editors of *XQL argue that it presents a similar structure to Guodian *Wuxing* 五行, "東", (Ma Chengyuan 2001.1: 267). The photographies does not allow to ascertain. Middendorf 165: 315 notes a clever line in received commentary. But the resulting interpretation of the graph as *shi* 施 has no phonological ground. The recent publication of Tsinghua Sigao 《四告》 credits Liao Liyong's reading: on strip 9, Sigao has , which, according to the context, writes *hui* 誨, "To instruct."
NP	• *Yu cong san* strip 25 has "morality is part of goodness, 義，善之方也；" • Guodian *Wu xing* strip 40-41: 東(簡)善之方也。匿仁之方也/剛，義之方也。柔仁之方也。See discussion in Cook 514.
MP	To instruct (?) is part of of righteousness. Righteousness is the counterpart of respect. Respect is the regulation / pattern of external objects.

Cook 730	Instruction(?) is the orientation of propriety; propriety is the orientation of respect, and respect [determines] the regularity of things.
性自命出	篤，仁之方也。仁，眚(性)之方也。眚(性)或生之。忠，信**39**之方也。信， 情之方也。青(情)出於眚(性)。愛類七，唯**40**眚(性)愛為近仁。智類五， 唯**40**宜(義)衍(道)為近忠。惡類三，唯惡不仁為近宜(義)。
性情論	篤，仁之方也。仁，眚(性)之方也。眚(性)或生之。—— *broken* **33** 情 出於眚(性)。愛類七，唯眚(性)愛為近仁。智類五，唯宜(義)道為近 中(忠)。惡類三，唯惡不仁。惡類三，唯惡不仁為 —— **34**
Notes	• *XQL* #33 has 29 characters. *XQL* has a median of 36 graphs per strip. Thus, here five graphs can be added thanks to the parallel with *XZMC* (that is, 忠，信之方也。性). In this case, the emendation is justified. • Liu Xilan 劉昕嵐 (2000: 344) argues that in "信， 情之方也" *qing* should be read as 情實, "Loyalty is the orientation of sincerity; sincerity is the orientation of real facts." • 郭沂 Guo Yi reads 或 as *ce* 則 [Cited in Lin Zhipeng], resulting in a contrast "human nature instead is born [from heaven]." I cannot find an example where *huo* would have the meaning of *ce*.
Notes	• On 愛類七, 智類五 and 惡類三: attempts have been made to identify them. Lin Zhipeng (forthcoming) comments that seven and three can be found in other sources coupled together used figuratively (虛數對 舉), hence he suggests that here too "three", "five", and "seven" should be taken figuratively. • Ning Chen 2002: 32 links "benevolence is the orientation of *xing*" [his translation] with the *si duan* 四端 in *Mengzi*. • Given the usage of *huo* throughout the manuscript, I believe it should be read as "something," which is how it is most commonly used. *Huo* and *you* are close phonetically, but the former has a final velar *-k that ought to be accounted for. Furthermore, *you* is such a common word (and 又 a common graph) that if the sentence here were "human nature also gives rise to it,: we would likely find 又.

MP	Sincerity is part of humanity. Humanity is part of natural dispositions. As per human nature, something gives birth to it. Being loyal is part of trust. Trust is part of human emotions. These come from natural dispositions. The types of love are seven; only the natural love is indeed close to humanity. The types of knowledge are five, the way of propriety is the closest to loyalty. The types of hatred are three, and only disliking what is not human is close to propriety.
Cook 730	Earnestness is the orientation of humanity; humanity is the orientation of [human nature], and [human] nature is also gives rise to it. Loyalty is the orientation of fidelity; fidelity is the orientation of genuine affections, and the affections arise from human nature. There are seven types of love, but only love [that stems from] human nature lies close to humanity. There are five types of knowledge, but only the way of propriety lies close to loyalty. There are three types of loathing, but only a loathing for the inhuman lies close to propriety.
性自命出	所為衍(道)者四，唯人衍(道)為41<u>可衍(道)也。</u>
性情論	——道為可道也。｜
MP	There are four so-called ways, only the human way can be practiced.
Cook 730	There are four ways that can be taken, but only human way is worthy of being taken.
性自命出	凡甬(用)心之杲(躁)者，思為甚。甬(用)智之疾者，患為甚。甬(用)青(情)之42至者，哀樂為甚。
性情論	凡甬(用)心之趏(躁?)者，思為甚。甬(用)智之疾者，患為甚。甬(用)情之至35【者，哀】樂為甚。

Notes	• *XZMC 喿 vs. *XQL 趲: *XQL 趲 for 躁 is not a good phonetic match, even though the *Shuowen* attests a writing for *zao* 躁 with 走 as component, 趮. But 趲 has a final velar *-k final that the other word does not have, and the initial is not the same either (*th- vs. *ts-). As such, it is an imperfect match. Maybe the *XQL* scribe has used a word with a similar sound; this hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that any of the words written 趲 would fit this context. As noted by Li Tianhong (2003: 178), the expression *yong xin zao* is found in *Xunzi*, "蟹六爪而二螯，非蛇蟺之穴無可寄託者，用心躁也。" *Xunzi jishi* 1.8-9. • The sentence "凡用心之躁者，思為甚" has an internal parallel with "思之用心為甚" • *XZMC 其 is written with a 國, differently form usual. Other 甚 in the *XZMC* are like the most regular form; this one is the only one that, in comparison, has many more strokes. Li Ling 李零 discusses this (2002), but the conclusion are unsupported by evidence. • On 患: *XQL* writes it as 卷+心, where *XZMC* has 串+心. Since the same structural difference occurs *XZMC* 62 / *XQL* 31, one may consider this not as evidence that the text was not visually copied, but rather as evidence of different scribal conventions.
MP	As for the extremities of using feelings, yearning is the most extreme. Of all the urgent applications of the heart, thought is the most extreme. Of all that the emotions can reach, mourning and joy are the most extreme.
Cook 732	In general, yearning is that which makes most restless use of the heart-mind; worry is that which makes most anxious use of knowledge; grief (/mourning) and happiness (/music) are those which make most extreme use of the affections.
性自命出	甬(用)身之覺(忤)者，兌(悅)為甚。甬(用)力之盡者，利為甚。目之好43色，耳之樂聲，臧舀(郁陶)之氣也，人不難為之死。
性情論	甬(用)身之叟(?)者，兌(悅)為甚。甬(用)力之盡者，利為甚。目之好色，耳之樂聲，??(郁陶)之氣也，不36【難】為之死。

Notes	• 氣 is written 既+火 • This line here might be proof *you tao* 郁陶 also has having positive connotation, see discussion above. Here **XQL* is corrupted; the few strokes that are visible indicate it is probably 郁陶. • *Se* 色 is written as 印, but the reason for this orthography is not clear (they have the same final *-ik but different initials). In *Yucong* is written adding the face (or maybe doubling the face?), adding to the meaning of "looks". The *Shuowen* preserves the form that appears in the Guodian, adding 彡 on the side. In ancient writing, the 彡 component is often added when the meaning relates to some sort of emanation, e.g. 鼓 "drum" and 彭 "resounding [of the drum]." See zhun de yi, yucong yi 110, 47, in some cases it is hard to distinguish them. • 覍 / 叟: almost certainly, these two graphs are writing something close to "pleasure, *bian* 忭." Shanghai *Kongzi shi lun* 孔子詩論 uses the graph on **XQL* to write the title of *Mao* 197, in received orthography as "Xiao bian 小弁." Cf. also Guodian *Wu xing*, where the Warring States manuscript has 叟 the Mawangdui silk manuscript writes 臀. In this context, it conveys something positive ("joyous, pelased"). See also discussion in Chen Wei, 2002, *Guodian zhu shu bie shi* 郭店竹書別釋.
MP	Of the things that please the self, delight is the most extreme. Of all the things on what one exhausts strength, profit is the most extreme. The eyes are fond of beauty, the ears rejoice in sounds, this is the *qi* of intense pleasure. It is not difficult for humans to die for it.
Cook 732	Gratification is that which makes most agitated use of the body; and profit is that which makes most exhaustive use of one's energy. The eyes' fondness for beauty and the ears' delight in sounds [result in] and energy of pent-up elation. It is not difficult for people to die for the sake of such things.
性自命出	又(有)其為人之節節?如 (然) 也，44不又(有)夫柬柬之心則采 (採?)。又(有)其為人之柬柬如 (然) 也，不又(有)夫恆怡之志則縵。

性情論	又(有)其為人之 僕 僕 (惛惛? 節節?)如(然)也，不又(有)夫柬柬之心則悉（？）。又(有)其為人之柬柬如 (然) 也，不又(有)夫恆忻之志則曼(慢)。
Notes	• 縵, from the components 曼 and 糸 , follows the regular spelling of *man* 曼 *MˤA[N]. The expression *jian jian man man* 柬柬曼曼 shows up in the Shanghai manuscript "Yong yue" 用曰 (strip 7; volume 6 page 111) where it is understood as *jian jian man man* 柬柬慢慢. The meaning in both cases is tentative. Perhaps it is writing *xie* 泄; the Tsinghua manuscript *Xinian has a similar graph (Strip 106) and the passage, compared with *Zuozhuan*, indicates that word. Here probably it means *sangzhi* 喪志 "to drain; to demoralize." • The logic of this statement seems to be: 有 (quality A) 不有 (quality B), 則 (shortcoming). "If you have quality A, but do not have quality B, then (there is a shortcoming)". • The transcription of *jie* 節 in *XZMC is tentative; the graph is in fact not that close to what regularly writes *jie* "to regulate" (cf. Previous instances of this word.) I leave some of this passage untranslated, since no interpretation is convincing.

Notes	安大簡《茉苡》：end of strip 13, 菜＝（采采）IMG（茉） 出土文獻中的"采"字相關材料： • 《郭店楚簡・性自命出》："不有夫崠崠之心則采。"劉釗："采即彩，意即文飾，指外表華麗，徒有虛名。"劉昕嵐："文過其實。"李天虹也認為當從此說. Lin Zhipeng also follows. • In addition to the notes by Cook (page 733), Chen Jian reads 恆怡 as 恆殆. Lin Zhipeng proffers the possibility of the Guodian manuscript writing *geng zhi* 恆治, for the *XQL* he interprets as *geng zhi* 恆制, both to express the meaning of "to control". The idea is that a person becomes indolent if the mind is not permanently in control. • 怡 written as [厶+心], but *XQL* has 斤 in it (although the graph is also a bit unclear). What is interesting about this different graphic spelling is that Wang Li 王力, in his *Nanbeichao shiren yong yun kao* 南北朝詩人用韻考 (page 801) gives examples of contacts between the same rhyming groups (*jin* 斤 is *wenbu* 文部, *si* 厶 is *zhibu* 脂部). • Interpreting 其為人 as "the way a person is."
NP	This passage from the *Da Dai liji* may be related, yet one that does not elucidate the meaning of the bisyllabic expressions such as *jie jie ran*. 公曰：「吾猶未也。」子曰：「群然，戚然，頤然，罨然、蹜然、柱然、抽然、首然、斂然、湛然、淵淵然、淑淑然、齊齊然、節節然、穆穆然、皇皇然。*Da Dai liji* 68.174.
Cook 732	For those who conduct themselves in a regulated manner, they will become ostentatious if they lack a heart-mind that is straightforward. For those who conduct themselves in a straightforward manner, they will become dissolute if they lack a heart-mind of lasting contentment.
MP	To have 節節 as part of yourself, if you do not possess a 崠崠 heart, then you will regret [it]. To have 崠崠 as part of yourself, if you do not possess a 恆怡 heart, then you will be scattered / lazy.
性自命出	人之攷（巧）45言利詞者，不又(有)夫詘詘之心則流。 人之脫戕(然)可与(與)和安者，不又(有)夫奮46犴{猛}之青(情)則悉(柔?)。

性情論	人之 37【巧】言利詞者，不又(有)夫詘詘之心則流。 人之逃？肰(然)可与(與)和安者，不又(有)夫奮犰{猛}之情則忞(柔?)。
Notes	• The graph normalized as *liu* 流 is actually the same graph writing *xie* 泄 previously. It could be writing same word; yet at the same time, we have seen many examples of the same graphs writing two different words within the same strip. • The graph 奮 represents a bird flapping wings over a field, as we see in bronze inscriptions. But on Chu manuscripts, "impetuous; to rise" is written with 衣 over 田 and 心. This change is due to graphic similarity between 衣 and the upper part of 奮; this is an example of *xing jin we hua* 形近而訛. • On 犰: *XQL* writes 作 clearly with 亡, due to graphic similarity between 乍 and 亡 (The Tsinghua manuscript *Feng xu zhi ming* 封許之命 presents this alternation. In *XZMC* the graph looks like 犭 + 亡, the transcription 犭 + 作 is not entirely accurate. • 忞 ：Chu writings confuse 矛 with 務 {矛+人 or 矛+攴}, but they belong to different rhyme groups. Which one is *XZMC* writing here? 矛 or 務, and what is the meaning?
NP	The expression "craft words and clever phrases" appears in *Hanfeizi* as *qiao yan li ci* 巧言利辭, but the context is very different (*Hanfeizi jishi* 45.413).
MP	People of canny words and sharp expression, unless one has XX, then Someone who is 脫然, and can be get along with, unless they have the energetic character, then they are yielding [if 忞 is 柔]. Disagree with Cook
Cook 734	For those who speak crafty words and clever phrases, they will become degenerate if they lack a heart-mind that is clumsy of speech. For those who are detached and who can be related to harmoniously, they will suffer insult if they lack affections that are vigorous and aggressive.
性自命出	又(有)其為人之快(慧)如也，弗牧不可。又(有)其為人之願如也，47 弗輔?不足。

性情論	又(有)其為人之慧如也，弗{羊+攴 > 養}不可。又(有)其為人之38【愿如】也，弗輔?不足。|
Notes	• The alternation between *kuai* 快 and *hui* 慧 appeared before in *Laozi*: where the transmitted has "智慧出，有大偽"，the Mawangdui *Laozi jia* 馬王堆漢墓帛書・老子甲本 (125 column; Page 100) has 快. The two are homophonous, so here in *XZMC* and *XQL* they are likely writing the same word. • {羊+攴}牧 go search for graph 38, they write different words: *XZMC* means "if a person is intelligent, but [nobody] guides him, it will not be good." *XQL* "if a person is intelligent, [but nobody] develops him, it will not be good." • the top element is two 十, not *cao* 艸. Other examples of this graph used to write 原 are in Shangbo "Min zhu fumu" strip 2 and "Cheng zhi wen zhi" strip 11. If the top component (十) is not there, it's writing 湶, e.g. *Zhouyi* strip 45. • The understanding of 輔 is tentative, since "to assist" is more widely attested with a different writing.
Cook 734	For those who conduct themselves in a wanton way, it will not do not to rear them. For those who conduct themselves in a cautious way, they will be insufficient if not bolstered.
性自命出	凡人慐(偽)為可亞(惡)也。慐(偽)斯叟(隱)壴(矣)，叟(隱)斯慮壴(矣)，慮斯莫與之48結壴(矣)。慎，仁之方也。肰(然)而其過不亞(惡)。速，悬(悔)之方也，又(有)過則咎。人不慎斯又(有)過，信壴(矣)。49
性情論	凡人慐慐(為)可亞(惡)也。慐(偽)斯叟(隱)矣，叟(隱)斯慮矣，慮斯莫與之結。|慎，慮之方也。肰(然)而其過不亞(惡)。速，悬(悔)之方也，又(有)過則咎。人不慎39【斯】又(有)過，信矣。40

Notes	- Perhaps *jiu* 咎 is here alluding to divination literature, "you will be condemned." - Ding Yuanzhi 丁原植 (2000：98) links *shen* 慎 and the expression *ren zhi fang* 人之方 with two instances in the *Liji* 禮記: in the "Jiyi" 祭義 chapter, "慎行其身，不遺父母惡名，可謂能終矣。仁者，仁此者也" (*Liji* 47.3469); and again in the "Ru xing" 儒行, "敬慎者，仁之地也" (*Liji* 41.3662). Perhaps this suggests that *fang* 方 should be read as *di* 地, "the area." *Su* 速 is most frequently written with a double 束, in Tsinghua "Yin zhi" it appears without the 辶 element (strip 3). In *XQL, it is written 辶 + single 束.
MP	In general, people's fake doings are hateful. If it is fake, then one is secretive. If one is secretive, then no one will bind with them. Cautious is the counterpart of kindness (reflecting for **XQL*), and so the errors are not bad. Haste is the zone / counterpart of regret, if there is a mistake then it is unfortunate. If people are not careful, then there will be mistakes, this is a certainty.
Cook 736	In general, artifice is something to be deplored in a person with artifice, one becomes secretive; secretive, one becomes deceptive, and deceptive, no one will form ties with him. Conscientiousness [discretion] is the orientation of humanity, and thus its transgressions will meet with blame. That people will transgress if not conscientious is a certainty.
性自命出	凡人青(情)為可悅也。句(苟)以其青(情)，唯(雖)過不惡；不以其青(情)，唯（雖）難不貴。50 句(苟)又(有)其青(情)，唯（雖）未之為，斯人信之矣。未言而信，又(有)美青(情)者也。未教(51)而民恆，眚(性)善者也。未賞而民懽(勸)，含福(富)者也。
性情論	凡人情為可悅也。句(苟)以其情，唯(雖)過不惡；不以21【其】情，唯（雖）難不貴。未言而信，又(有)美情者也。未教而民恆，眚(性)善者也。【未賞而民勸，含福者也。】22

Notes	• The sentence 未賞而民勸 is almost verbatim with *Liji zhengyi* 2009, 53.3548, "不賞而民勸" (See also *Liji zhengyi* 32.3559 above). The expression 故不賞而民勸，不罰而民畏 is variously found in received literature.
	• I translate *qing* as "qualities" Because of *Xunzi* 故君子無爵而貴，無祿而富，不言而信，不怒而威，窮處而榮，獨居而樂。豈不至尊、至富、至重、至嚴之情舉積此哉！
	• Cook seems to have missed parallel from Guodian *Laozi jia* 老子甲：「欲不欲，不貴難得之貨，教不教，復眾之所過。」 This passage may indicate that *guo* 過 means "to trespass", to mean that the sage goes back to the spot the masses have left behind.
MP	In general, human feelings can be delighted in. If the feelings are involved, even that are mistakes, it will not considered bad. If one does not rely on feelings, even if there are hard-wins, these will not valuable. [I.e.: If one has feelings, even if one does not realize them, people will nevertheless trust them.] When [the people] trust without words, this a case of there being beautiful qualities. When the people are constant without having been instructed, this is a case of their nature being good. When the people are motivated without having been rewarded, they hold their wealth internally.
Cook 737	In general, true affections in a person are something to delight in. If one does something with true affections, though he may transgress, this is not to be deplored. If one does something not with true affections, though he may [accomplish] difficult [tasks], these are not to be valued. If one has true affections, though he has not yet done something, people will have trust in him [to do so]. He who is trusted before he even speaks is one who possesses magnificent affections. One for whom the people have constancy before he even teaches is one who has made goodness his nature. One for whom the people are motivated before he even rewards them is one who harbors blessings within him.
性自命出	未型(刑)而民悓(畏)，又(有)52心悓(畏)者也。戔(賤)而民貴之，又(有)德者也。貧而民聚焉，又(有)道者也。53獨處而樂，又(有)內辨?者也。

性情論	【未型(刑)】而民愄(畏)，又(有)心愄(畏)者也。戔(賤)而民貴之，又(有)德者也。貧而民聚焉，又(有)道者也。獨居而樂，又(有)內動?23 者也。
notes	If it's someone who posses a nighty mind, it would be 有威心者
NP	• The expression "If the people are in awe without having been disciplined, 未刑而民畏" is similar to *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 "If the people are in awe without having been punished, they will not understand 未罰而民畏民不知怨 (*Lushi chunqiu jishi* 20.549). • Xin xu 故不賞而民勸，不罰而民畏; 故不賞而民勸，不罰而民治 • 獨居而樂 is found • Li Tianhong 李天虹 2003：186 links this strip to *Liji*'s Da xue" chapter, to the passage"財聚則民散，財散則民聚。"(*Liji zhengyi* 42.3635).
MP	If the people are in awe without having been disciplined, [it is due to] having internal awe in their hearts. If [the ruler] is humble and yet people honor him, it is because he has virtue. If [the ruler] is poor and yet people gather to him, it is because he possesses the way. He lives alone and yet he is happy, because he has internal ?
Cook 741	One in whom the people hold awe before he even punishes them is one who possesses might of mind. One whom the people value despite his low social status is one who possesses virtue. One to whom the people congregate despite his poverty is one who possess the [proper] way. One who is happy while rescind alone is one who possess internal discernment.
性自命出	亞(惡)之而不可非者，達於義者也。非之54而不可惡者，篤於仁者也。行之不過，知道者也。
性情論	亞(惡)之而不可非者，達於宜(義)者也。非之而不可惡者，篤於仁者也。行之而不過，知道者。24

Cook 742	One who, though despised, cannot be faulted is one who has comprehended propriety. One who, though faulted, cannot be despised is one who is earnest about humanity. One whose conduct does not transgress is one who has realized the [proper] way.
MP	
性自命出	聞道反上，上交者也 55。聞術(道)反下，下交者也。昏(聞)道反己，修身者也。
性情論	【聞道反上，上交】者也。昏(聞)道反己，修身者也。
Notes	• Strip 56 has 道 written differently from strip 55 in *XZMC*. • Scholars reconstruct *XQL* here as 聞道[反下，下交者也。聞道]反己，修身者也。It may be here that the scribe has missed a section due to the recurring of *fan* 反, which would indicate visual copying (while retaining different writing styles, as *XZMC* 術 vs *XQL* 道 demonstrate).
NP	• A passage of significance may be *Wenzi Shu Yi* 1.30 "Laozi said: 老子曰：夫人從欲失性，動未嘗正也，以治國則亂，以治身則穢，故不聞道者，無以反其性，不通物者，不能清靜。" The argument leads to the opposite conclusion: by interacting with externalities, one forgets one's true nature (this position is also expressed in *Zhuangzi*). The passage is most likely taken from *Huainanzi* 淮南子, as it happens with many sections of *Wenzi* (see van Els 2018), with Confucius as narrator: 人之性無邪，久湛于俗則易，易而忘本，合於若性。故日月欲明，浮雲蓋之，河水欲清，沙石濊之。人性欲平，嗜欲害之，惟聖人能遺物而反己 (*Huainanzi jishi* 11.775). • Worth noting is also the following: 逆而不知其逆也，湛於俗也。久湛而不去則若性。性異非性，不可不熟。不聞道者，何以去非性哉？無以去非性，則欲未嘗正矣。*Lushi Chunqiu jishi* 19.533.
MP	To hear of the dao and turn to one's superiors is to interact with them. To hear of the dao and turn to one's inferiors is to interact with them. To hear of the dao and to return to one's self is to cultivate one's person.

Cook 742	One who hears of the [proper] way and reflects it back upon its superior is one who interact upwardly. One who hears of the [proper] way and reflects it back upon his subordinates is one who interacts downwardly. One who hears of the [proper] way and reflects it back upon himself is one who cultivates his self.
性自命出	上交近事君，下交旻(得)[56]眾近從正(政)，修身近至仁。同方而交，以道者也。不同方而【交，以古(故)者】。[57]
性情論	上交近事君，下交得眾近從正(政)，修身近至仁。同方而[25]交，以道者也。不同方而交，以古(故)者也。
MP	To intercourse with one's superior is close to serving one's ruler. To intercourse with one's inferiors and winning over the masses is close to conduct government. To cultivate one's persons is to be close to the highest form of kindness. Those who have the same intentions, interact by means of the *dao*. Those who do not have the same intentions, interact because of a motive.
Cook 742	Interacting upwardly is close to serving one's ruler; interacting downwardly and attaining the masses is close to engaging in governance; and cultivating the self is close to achieving humanity. One who interacts with those who share his [ethical] orientation is one who acts on the basis of the [proper] way. One who interacts with those of divergent orientation 【is one who acts for a purpose.】
性自命出	同悅而交，以德者也。不同悅而交，以猷(謀)者也。門內之治，谷(欲)其[58]　(掩)也。門外之治，谷(欲)其　(斷)也。
性情論	【同悅】而交，以德者也。不同悅而交，以猷(謀)者也。門內之治，谷(欲)其　(掩)也。[26]【門外】之治，谷(欲)其　(斷)也。

Notes	• *XQL* actually writes 猷 with the addition of the component 心; this is recurring in the manuscript in comparison with *XZMC*.
	• Eventually in the edition of the *Liude* we should note that 紉 is normalized to 恩 it cannot be a loan for it. Possibly 紉 is "forbearance" 忍.
	• On : *XQL* has ; neither graph is easily readable. In the received literature we find *an* 揜 or *yan* 掩. *Liude* writes 弇; if the target word is indeed *an* 揜, this may be another piece of evidence of a phenomenon that has been observed before in OC, namely the alternation of the finals *-m (in *an*) and *-p (given by the speller 合 *he* < *kˤop). A previously known example of this phenomenon is "to float" 泛 OC *-om, spelled with 乏 OC *-op. (Cf. Baxter 1992: 540541). *Yan* 掩 (*-m) is also glossed as *xi* 襲 (*sə-l[ə]p) in *Zuozhuan*, a reading worth considering given that it can indicate the clothes to cover corpse for funerals (as in *Liji zhengyi* 41.3373). It is also glossed as 合 "to combine", there are 金文 examples meaning "to protect". This disagrees with Cook's interpretations.

Notes	• 斷 is written in *XZMC* with what looks like a conflation of the graphs 析 and 折. Usually 析 has 木+斤, with the tree as intact. With *she* 折, the tree is broken into two pieces, e.g. . *Si* on the *XZMC* strip has 木 *and* a chopped tree, . Graphically, it may be interpreted as *zhi* 制 (*mu* 木+ *dao* 刀), but the parallels make *duan* 斷 "to chop" the most likely reading. Of the close parallels (below), *Liude* writes , which has been transcribed as *zhan* 斬 "to cut" and interpreted as *duan* 斷. The relationship between *zhan* and *duan* is semantic. OC reconstructions of elements such as 析 or 折 are hard because they are pictogram, we need to know the words they are writing. Possibly the *Liude* has because it occurs before in the passage, it is being confused. *XZMC* uses a similar structure, but does not make the same point of the parallels from received sources; it has neither *yi* 義 nor *en* 恩. The manuscript is like Miss Teen South Carolina 2008 only in better shape in spite of the age difference. It's a result of form over function, mechanical writing that does not aim to be meaningful. This can be articulated as evidence that *XZMC* derives from rehearsing and misremembering, and does not represent a high point of philosophical production (contra Meyer 2012: 114).
NP	• 《呂氏春秋·論人》：“何謂反諸己也？適耳目，節嗜欲，釋智謀，去巧故，而遊意乎無窮之次，事心乎自然之塗，若此則無以害其天矣。 What is said 'to return to one's entire self'? [It is] to accord to one's ears and eyes, to regulates likes and desires, to get rid of wittiness and schemes, to refuse [artificial] skills and causes " This passage has many of the words we find in the *XZMC Lushi chunqiu jisji* 3.74. Note that *shi* 嗜 here could be a clue to confirm this interpretation on *XZMC* strip 28.

NP	- 《逸周書・官人》:"不同而交,交必重〔己〕,心悅而身弗近,〔身近〕而實不至。"*Yizhoushu* 58.1970-2. - *Liude* 六德 strips 30 - 31: 門內之治紉(恩?)弇(揜)義,門外之治義 紉(恩?)。Cf. *Liji*《禮記・喪服四制》"In regulating [mourning] within the household, compassion overcomes propriety; in regulating it outside the household, propriety 門內之治恩揜義,門外之治義斷恩",*Liji zhengyi* 49.3680, and verbatim in *Da dai liji jiegu* 80.253. See also Li Tianhong 2003. - In extant literature, all examples using the expressions *men nei* 門內 and *wai zhi zhi* 外之治 have to do with funerals.
Cook 742	One who interacts with those with common [sources of] gratification is one who acts on the basis of virtue. One who interacts with those with divergent [sources of] gratification is one who conspires from a motive. When managing those within the household gates, lenience is to be desired; when managing those beyond the household gates, decisiveness is to be desired.
MP	Those who have the same pleasures interact by means of virtue. Those who have different pleasures, interact by means of schemes. In managing the household, one wants it to get the upper hand. In managing outside the household, one wants it to cut off.
性自命出	凡兌(說)人勿吝也,身必從之,言及則59明舉之而毋悆(偽)。凡交毋烈,必使又(有)末。凡於路毋悓(畏),毋蜀(獨)言。蜀(獨)60處(處)則習父兄之所樂。句(苟)毋(無)大害,少(小)枉,內之可也,已(已)則勿復言也。61 凡憂(憂)患之事谷(欲)任,樂事欲後。62

性情論	凡兌（說）人勿隱29，身必從之，言及則明舉之而毋偽。凡交毋烈，必使又(有)末。凡於道路毋畏，毋獨言。獨居則習30【父】兄之所樂。句(苟)毋大害，少枉內（納）之可也，已則勿(物)復言也。凡憂患之事谷(欲)任，樂事欲後。｜31 [continues *XZMC strip 36]
MP	In general, when persuading people, do not hold back, and you must accord with the advice yourself. When it comes time to speak, clearly perform it and do not be artificial. When interacting with others do not be too fierce, and make sure there is an ending. When you are on the road, do not be fearful and do not make up words. When leaving alone, practice what your father and brothers enjoy. If [something] is not of great harm, but has few shortcomings, accept it, but do not talk about it repeatedly. In general, one wants to undertake matters of concern and worry, and wants to postpone pleasurable matters.
Cook 744	In general, when persuading others, one must conceal nothing and must follow himself through [with action]; whatever he mentions his words he must clearly undertake and do so without artifice. When interacting [with others], one myst not take things too intensely, but rather must allow things to reach their [proper] conclusions. When on the road, one must not cause fear and must not speak as an individual; when residing alone, one [should] practice [what one has been taught]. What his father and elder brothers find happiness in, if it causes no great harm, it is all right to accept a minor fault [therein], and once it is over one must not mention it again. In general one should shoulder matters of apprehension and worry, [but] should take a back seat in matters of happiness.

Notes	• This passages is punctuated differently by different scholars; yet no decisive argument has been presented yet. • *Du yan* 獨言 perhaps means "coming up with words by oneself", as in *Lunheng jiaoshi* 18.777: "師無其說而弟子獨言者，未之有也。There was never the case where a teacher had no teachings and the disciples came up with their words." If so, the translation would read "when on the road, do not be fearful, and do not make up words," and would relate to the previous line about sincerity. • Both *du ju* 獨居 and *le* 樂 appeared before. The structure echoes with *Xunzi*, "獨居而樂 the *junzi* lives alone and is content." See also *Han shi wai zhuan ji shi* 24.25: "even if [the *junzi*] lives alone he is content, his virtue is fulfilled and takes form. 雖獨居而樂，德充而形。" Cf. *Shuo yuan jiaozheng* 19.481, "[thus the *junzi*] is content and virtuous 獨居樂德." • 患: in *XQL the *xin* 心 element is added, consistently with previous observations on the addition of the 心 element. • The section in pink is found at the end of *XQL.
性自命出	身谷(欲)靜而毋(譴)，<u>慮谷(欲)困(淵)而毋愳(偽)</u>，₆₂行谷(欲)勇而必至；䫂(貌)谷(欲)莊而毋拔[伐]，谷(欲)柔齊而泊；喜谷(欲)智而亡末，₆₃ 樂谷(欲)度而又(有)止 (or 先？)，憂谷(欲)斂而毋惛，怒谷(欲)盈而毋暴；進谷(欲)遜而毋巧，₆₄退谷(欲)肅而毋輕，谷(欲)皆文而毋偽。
性情論	<u>凡身谷(欲)靜而毋譴?</u>，用心谷(欲)德而弗尤，<u>慮谷(欲)困(淵)而毋異?</u>，退谷(欲)緊(?)而毋輕，₂₇ ?谷(欲)隨而又(有)禮言，言谷(欲)直而毋流；居仉谷(欲)皆?文?而毋曼。

Notes	• Chen Jian 2003a has a complex explanation on 謰, he thinks it's 滯, but he does neglect the phonology in his argument. See file "*XZMC* notes". The *Kongcongzi* has a line by Zisi claiming that he cannot be a tongue, and therefore cannot serve his lord. Tongue and teeth are often mentioned in the context of serving. • The exchange is similar to *Lu Mu gong wen zi si*, and it is talking about one's nature and following it. • In green are lines that are not found in the entire **XZMC*. • This passage is pretty much like UD.GAL.NUN Sumerian.
Cook 748	One should oneself be tranquil and not critical [of others]. One's considerations should be deep and not artificial; one's conduct should be courageous and certain to accomplish. One's appearance should be solemn and not pretentious; one's [countenance?] should be gentle, respectful, and placid. One's joys should be knowing and not trivial; one's happiness should be measured and have limits. One's apprehensions should be restrained and not distraught; one's anger should be replete yet not erupt forth. One's advances should be modest and not cunning; one's retreats should be somber and not frivolous. One should always be finely pattered yet not artificial.
性自命出	君子執志必又(有)夫坓坓(?)之心，出言必又(有)65夫柬柬之信。賓客之禮必又(有)夫齊齊之容，祭祀之禮必又(有)夫齊齊之敬，66居喪必又(有)夫戀戀之哀。君子身以為主也。67
性情論	君子執志必又(有)夫往往(?)之心，出言必又(有)夫柬柬28【之信。】賓客之禮必又(有)夫齊齊之容，祭祀之禮必又(有)夫齊齊之敬，居喪必又(有)夫戀戀之哀。

Notes	• The interpretation of 㞷 is contested. *XQL* writes it as 木+宝 , but its meaning remains unclear. It has been interpreted as 往, meaning *guang* 廣 "ambitious" (e.g. Li Ling 1995, Ding Yuanzhi 2000). What duplicates convey is notoriously hard to interpret and translate; this entire passage remains open to interpretations. This passage may also have conveyed onomatopoeic sounds now lost. • The final word on *XZMC* strip 67 writes actually 心, but I agree with Cook (749: 408) that it must be a visual mistake for 也. • In light of the theme of external stimulation discussed above, I read this sentence to mean that the noble person knows how to display (hence the "must have" 必有, and the closing sentence of *XZMC*) the appropriate emotions, and does not let his feelings to be driven by externalities.
MP	To control their intention, the noble person must have a magnanimous heart; in carrying out his words, he must have straightforward sincerity. In [performing] rituals towards guests, he must have a reverent appearance; in [performing] rituals of sacrifice, he must have reverent respect; in the period of mourning, he must have a strong grief. *XZMC:* The noble person is in charge of himself.
Cook 750	The noble man, when directing his inclinations, must have a heart-mind that is magnanimous, and when uttering words, he must have credibility that is forthright (/resolute). In rituals involving guests, he myst have a countenance that is respectful; in rituals of sacrifice, he must hold a reverence that is solemn; and when undergoing mourning, he myst bear a grief that is reluctant to part. The noble man treats his self as the host [for others to follow].

Appendix B. <u>Colored comparison of the *Black Robe* manuscript versions.</u>
Guodian *Ziyi* is the basis; Shanghai *Ziyi* is represented in colors. Each color represents one strip.
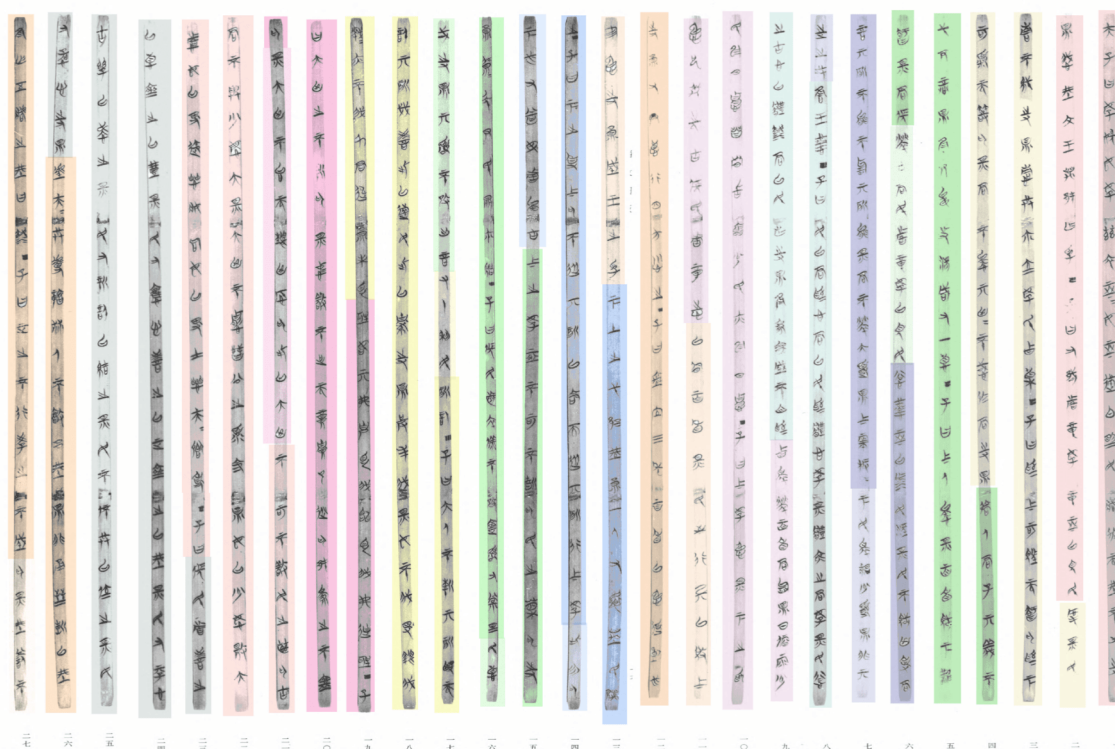
Appendix C. <u>Table of orthographic variations in 性自命出 and 性情論</u>

Overall, the *XQL* is more regular than the *XZMC* in writing the same word consistently. "Gap" means that the strip is broken. Such regularity may indicate that the *XQL* is a more carefully composed manuscript produced from the *XZMC*. To assert this, however, we need to assume intimacy with the content and intentionality in changing the order of the pericopes as seen in the comparison of the macrostructure above.

Table 8. <u>Table of orthographic variations for "affections" and "way (道)"</u>

"Affections" 情		
strips # XZMC/XQL	as written on XZMC	as written on XQL
3/2	青	情
18/10	青	情
18/11	青	情
19/12	青	情
23/14	情	情
28/17	情	情
29/18	情	情
50/21	青	情
51/22	青	情
40/33	青	gap
40/34	青	情
42/35	青	情
47/38	青	情

"Way" 道		
strips # XZMC/XQL	as written on XZMC	as written on XQL
3/2	 衍	 道
12/6	衍	道
14/7	衍	道
	衍	broken
14-15/8	衍	道
19/11	衍	道
21/12	衍	道
22/13	道	道
53/23	衍	道
55/24	道	道
55-56/25	道	broken
	道	道
57/26	道	道
60/30	not in the text	道
41/34	衍	道
42/35	衍	道

Appendix D. <u>Visualization of 性自命出 and 性情論 on the basis of 性情論</u>
Numbers in the left column represent the strips of the XQL. Numbers underneath the strips give the XZMC sequence.

27 59 62 *insertion* 62 65 *insertion*

28 65 66

29 66 67

30 59 60 61

31 61 62 36 37

32 37 38

33 38 39

34 40 41

35 42 43

36 43 44

37 44 45

38 45 46 47

39 47 48 48

40 49
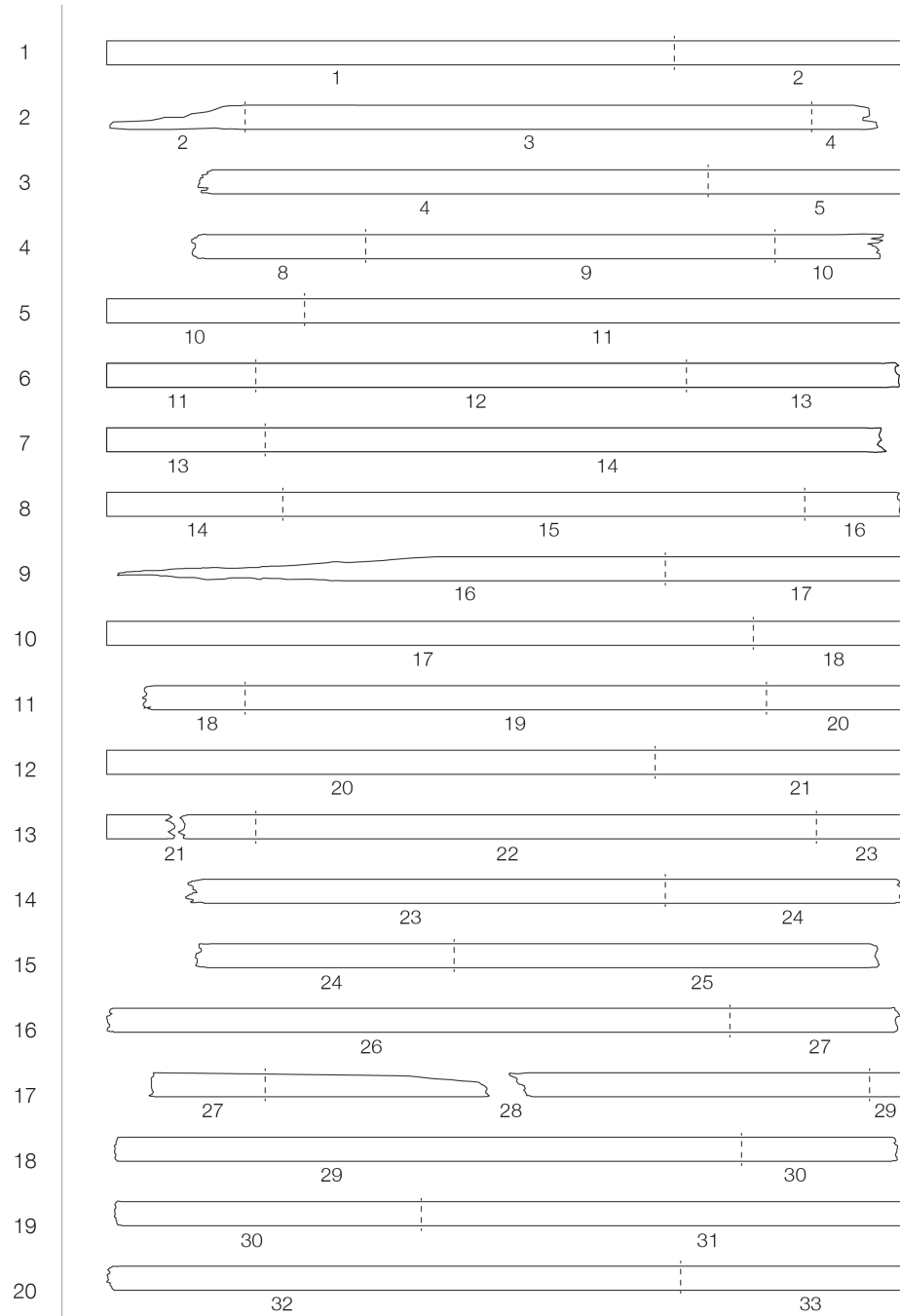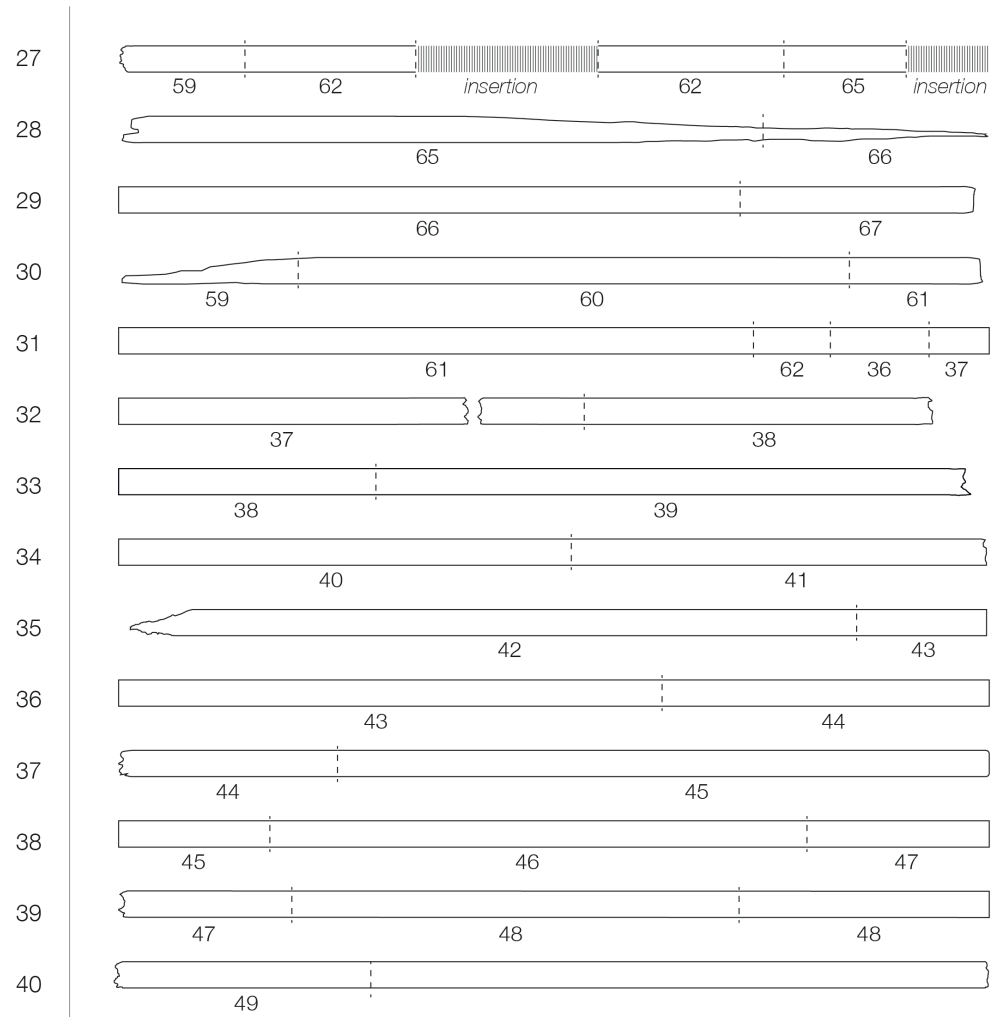
Appendix E. <u>A plausible account of the origin of the *Shanghu* 尚書 in 58 *pian* 篇</u>

Qing scholar Yan Ruoqu's 閻若璩 (1636–1704) *Guwen Shangshu shuzheng* 古文尚書疏
證 and Hui Dong's 惠棟 (1697–1758) *Guwen Shangshu kao* 古文尚書考 are the
culmination of centuries of skepticism towards the composition of the *Shangshu* 尚書.

The current *Shangshu* presents 58 chapters: 33, known as *jinwen* 今文 chapters, result
from reorganization of material that can be traced to Fu Sheng 伏生, a Qin dynasty
minister who lived into the first year of the Han dynasty. The remaining 25, known as
guwen 古文 chapters, appeared during the fourth century when Mei Ze 梅賾 (fl.
beginning 4[th] century) presented this 58 chapter *Shangshu* to the newly established
Eastern Jin 晉 court in 317. The first attested scholar to raise doubts concerning the
dating of the *guwen* chapters was Wu Yu 吳棫 (fl. 1120).[694] Other Song scholars noted
this, yet the *Exalted Writings* remained otherwise uncontested,[695] until Yan Ruoqu proved
and labeled as *wei* 偽 ("fabricated") the 25 *guwen* chapters, attributing their composition
to Mei Ze himself.[696]

The narrative put forward in the *Shangshu* preface (also of late composition) claims
that this text was the result of Confucius' editing and Kong Anguo's 孔安國 transmission.

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[694] See overview in Benjamin Elman, *From Philology to Philosophy. Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (LA: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001), 47–52.
[695] Zhu Xi 朱熹 will also notice a sharp contrast in some chapters, deemed too easy to read, but he thought this was due to the influence of dialects. See Elman, *From Philology to Philosophy*, 48.
[696] Yan Ruoqu, *Guwen Shangshu shuzheng* 1.15 and 8234. Another Kong Anguo who lived during the end of the Han dynasty might have been also responsible for the creation of some of the 25 *wei* chapters (Nylan, *The Five Confucian Classics*, 131). Liu Qiyu claims that current evidence does not allow for an identification of the identity of who created these chapters, Liu Qiyu 劉起釪. *Shangshu yuanliu ji zhuanbenkao* 尚書源流及傳本考 (Shenyang Shi: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1997), 98–99. For sake of convenience, in this account I will refer to Mei Ze as the creator of the 58 chapter *Shangshu* that we see today.

Like many successful fabrications, this narrative is powerful because it contains kernels of truth; furthermore, even prior to becoming a canonical source, the important role the *Shangshu* held in the fabric of Chinese political power and legitimacy guaranteed its untouchability.[697]

Scholars now fully agree that Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong's analysis was correct, and that studying the *Shangshu* implies wrestling with concepts of "forgery", "authenticity", and reliability of the information encoded in its chapters. The precise textual history of how the *Shangshu* came to take the form it has had since its canonization as one of the five classics (in the version *Correct Meaning of the Five Classics*, *Wujing zhengyi* 五經正義) in the seventh century continues to be a thorny subject.[698] What follows is an attempt at disentangling some of the uncertainties that still surround the history of this classic, tackled with the help of the superb work *Shangshu xue shi* 尚書學史 (*A History of the Study of the Shangshu*) by Liu Qiyu 劉起釪.[699]

I start from one question and one assumption that I deem necessary to understand the history of the *Shangshu*:

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[697] Already with Wang Mang 王莽 we see the usage of the *Shangshu* as a way to legitimize his reign (r. 9–23CE); as this appendix shows, by then the 28 *pian Shangshu* enjoyed a strong reputation.

[698] Nylan (*The Five Classics*, 132) suggests setting aside the question of composition altogether, given the difficulty of the recovering traces of the material that eventually formed the *Shangshu*. Well after Nylan's publication, the Tsinghua manuscripts began to be published, forcing specialists of early China to confront the problem of textual composition.

[699] A shorter version is his *Shangshu yuanliu ji zhuanbenkao* mentioned above. The only notable shortcoming of his work is that Liu Qiyu refers to *jinwen* and *guwen* factions as existing during the Han dynasty. In truth, these result from assumptions by scholars who operated long after the Han. See Paul Pelliot, "Le Chou King en carateres anciens et le Chang Chou che wen", *Mémoires concernant l'Asie Orientale*, 2 (1916): 123–77, and Michael Nylan, "The Chin Wen/Ku Wen (New Text/Old Text) Controversy in Han." *T'oung Pao* 80 (1994): 83–145.

1) Why would Mei Ze present a version of 58 (not 57,[700] not 59) *pian* ("chapter")?[701]

2) In order to be successful, he needed to accompany the presentation of the *Shangshu* with a story that was both vague and precise enough to match common knowledge on this text.

I considered Mei Ze's choice of 58 total *pian* a reasoned one. A major difficulty in untangling the evidence was knowing what sources Mei Ze had access to while working as imperial secretary (*nei shi* 內史) at the Eastern Jin court. Given the lack of this information, the timeline that follows by necessity places some pieces of the puzzle on plausibility rather than direct evidence.

Let us start from some well-known facts. There is no record of a stable, fixed *Shangshu* collection until imperial times.[702] Scholars have also often been skeptical of a 100 chapter *Shangshu* mentioned by imperial sources. While agreeing with the impossibility of identifying a 100 chapter *edition* of the *Shangshu*, it seems plausible that by the first century of the Western Han dynasty a hundred or so chapters were known to be part of the same genre, the *shu* 書 ("writings").[703] These were known to scholars either by title or by content: through comparisons with other Han sources, it is possible to identify a total of 68 chapters mentioned by title and/or quoted in the *Shiji* 史記 (fig. 1).[704]

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[700] As in fact mentioned in the *Yi wen zhi*, see footnote 19.

[701] Yan Ruoqu asked a similar question, namely why did Mei Ze need to present the fabricated chapters at all, given the loss of material through the centuries, which I take to imply that Mei Ze could have simply presented what he had in hand (*Guwen Shangshu shuzheng*, 1.16).

[702] Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 11–65.

[703] See Sarah Allan, "On Shu 書 (Documents) and the Origin of the Shang Shu 尚書 (Ancient Documents) in Light of Recently Discovered Bamboo Slip Manuscripts." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London,* 75, no. 3 (2012): 547–57.

[704] For a list of references and quotation in ancient literature, see Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 64–65, and tables at pages 103, 153–55.

Given the overall reliability of the *Shiji*, in all probability Sima Qian 司馬遷 did have access to 68 *shu*-related chapters, 29 of which were associated with Fu Sheng's figure and already enjoyed imperial sponsorship. Interestingly, Sima Qian does not identify this group in his work; the 29 are mentioned or quoted into his narrations like the remaining 39.

Figure 6. Visualization of the *shu* chapters mentioned in *Shiji* based on Liu Qiyu's analysis (*Shangshu xue shi*, 88–93)
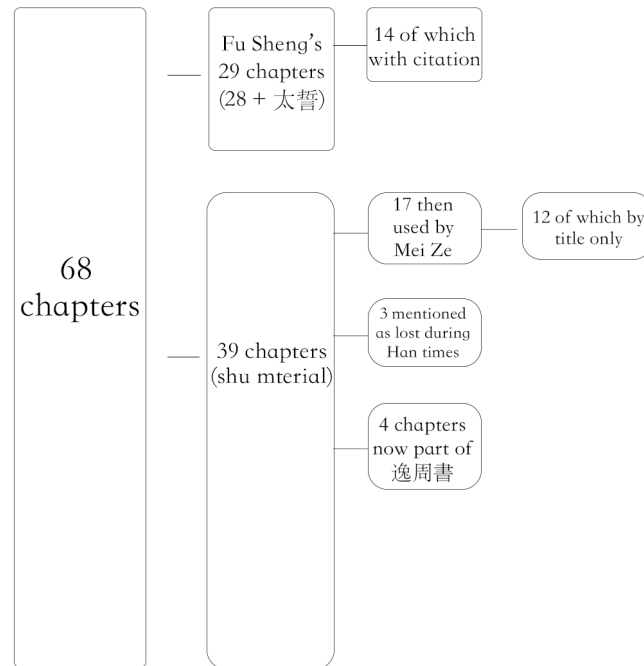
This is as close as we can get to identify a body of *shu* material around a hundred chapters.[705]

Zhang Ba 張霸 (d. before 97 CE) is responsible for the creation of lists of 100 titles, but they do not seem to be based on material he actually saw. See Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 108–09.

The story of the *Shangshu* as a stable collection begins slightly earlier than the *Shiji*, with the recovery of 28 *pian* from Fu Sheng in the very first decades of the second century BCE. Another *pian*, the *Tai Shi* 太誓, surfaced during the Western Han, and was incorporated, making the collection of 29 *pian*.[706] These 29 chapters were the ones studied by Ouyang Gao 歐陽高 (a. 136 BCE), Xiahou Sheng 夏侯勝 (a. 70 BCE) and his nephew Xiahou Jian 夏侯建 (a. 50 BCE) in their teachings. Three collections came to be known after them: the *Ouyang Shangshu* 歐陽尚書, the *Da Xiahou Shangshu* 大夏侯尚書 and the *Xiao Xiahou Shangshu* 小夏侯尚書. All these circulated in the same years. While sharing the source material, these three were distinct in the organization of chapters (Ouyang divided the *Pangeng* 盤庚 chapter into three sections; his *Ouyang Shangshu* is hence also referred to as the 31 *pian Shangshu*[707]), their interpretations, and likely a few lexical variants.

By the very end of the Western Han, then, we can identify three editions of the *Shangshu*[708] based on the material that can be traced back to Mr. Fu's 28 *pian*. During the Xin dynasty, modern Shandong becomes the home to the three major lines of

[706] The history of this chapter is rather obscure. Whether or not what we read today matches the pre-Qin version is hard to tell. See discussion in Nylan, *The Five Classics*, 130 n.3 (the endnotes are available as additional material at https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300081855/five-confucian-classics)

[707] Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 153. Zhang Ba also wrote a preface, the *Shuxu* 書序 , that was later incorporated in Ouyang's version, which is the reason why this version of the *Shangshu* is also referred to as of 32 *pian,* Liu Qiyu's tables and graph pages 149–55.

[708] Nylan (*The Five Classics*, 130) talks of "seven distinct sets of chapters or fragments" that surfaced during the Han dynasties. I believe that her basis for this claim is Chen Mengjia's analysis of circulating editions (*chuan ben* 傳本) starting from the Han dynasty (*Shanghu tong lun* 尚書通論, 38–53). The phrasing however can be misleading: Chen Mengjia is listing seven circulating editions under different names, although some of these are copies of each other. In that sense, they are not "distinct", other than physically (for example, he identifies Xian Wang 獻王 edition as a copy of the chapters found in the wall of Confucius' house, *Shanghu tong lun*, 49). Furthermore, the last edition in Chen's list is Mei Ze's edition, not a seventh Han edition. A clearer summary of the four editions circulating during Han can be found in Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 105–14.

transmission of this edition: the *Da Xiahou Shangshu* taught by Mou Rong 牟融, the *Xiao Xiahou Shangshu* by Wang Liang 王良, and the *Ouyang Shangshu* taught by Huang Rong 桓榮. Of these three, the Ouyang version was the most renowned.[709]

Ouyang Gao was active during the years of the famous recovery of texts writing in ancient script (*guwen* 古文) in the walls of a building believed to have been Confucius' house. Among the texts found in the house, there were chapters believed to belong to the *Shangshu*, 16 of which were previously unseen. Liu Xiang is said to have collated these newly found 16 *pian* with the three circulating editions of the *Shangshu* labeling the edition *Guwen Shangshu* 古文尚書.[710] This is the edition that Liu Xin 劉歆 promotes in his memorial to Emperor Ai 哀 (r. 7–1 BCE), when he called for the establishment of a *boshi* position to study more comprehensive editions of the *Shangshu* and other important texts such as the *Chunqiu*.[711] The imminent fall of the dynasty disrupted these plans. I could find no evidence of Ouyang and the Xiahou family members interacting with these newly found texts. Accordingly, there are three possible scenarios:

- The recovery of the ancient script texts in the wall of the house is fictional. This would explain why there is no mention of the *Shangshu* scholars incorporating this material, but would contradict Liu Xin's statements, which we have no reason to believe are false.

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[709] *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), 79.2556. Li Qiyü, *Shangshu xue shi*, 7.

[710] *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.1705–6. The story is also narrated with minor variation of details in other Han sources.

[711] *Hanshu* 36.1967. The *Hanshu* "Yi Wen zhi" implies that the witch trials disrupted the establishment of these positions, 遭巫蠱事，未列于學官 *Hanshu* 30.1706.

- The recovery did happen, but the 16 *pian* of previously unknown material were lost shortly after.

- The recovery did happen, and the 16 *pian* were integrated with Fu Sheng's 28 by Liu Xiang, but did not circulate outside the imperial library at all.

There are no reasons to believe that the accounts on the recovery of material in the wall are entirely fictional; it seems more likely that what happened was a combination of the second and the third scenario: right after the collation by Liu Xiang, this 44 *pian Shangshu* was lost. Already by Ma Rong's 馬融 times (circa 70 years), the 16 *pian* are known by titles only.[712]

The next important figure in the textual history of the received *Shangshu* is Du Lin 杜林. Originally from Fugeng (modern Shaanxi), he lived through the beginning of the first century CE. After a rather adventurous life (he even survived an assassination attempt[713]) as attending secretary (*yashi* 御史), he moved to modern Jiangsu in the last years of the reign of Wang Mang 王莽 (circa 20–23 CE). There, he studied with Zhang Song 張竦 (d. 23 CE),[714] the nephew of Zhang Chang 張敞 (d. 48 BCE). Zhang Chang is primarily remembered in history as a successful governor of Shanyang (modern Shandong). He

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[712] Kong Yingda quotes the preface by Ma Rong in his *Shangshu Zhengyi* 尚書正義, 1.23–25. A version of this 46 *juan* 卷 edition might have still exited when Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) and Ban Zhao 班昭 (c. 45–117) were working on the *Hanshu*. After the "Yi wen zhi" entry" *Shangshu* of 46 *juan* 尚書古文經四十六卷 (the one that Liu Xiang produced), there is the annotation: "it makes for 57 *pian* 為五十七篇". *Hanshu* 30.1705.

[713] *Dong guan Hanji jiao zhu* 東觀漢記校注 (Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局 2008), 14.527–528; *Hou Hanshu* 80.936.

[714] *Hou Hanshu* 27.935.

was also very well versed in the literature of the time, in the ancient script, and operated in Shandong at the same time when the three Western Han *Shangshu* editions were being taught. Incidentally, he is one of the scholars who contributed to spreading the affirmation that Confucius made the *Spring and Autumn*,[715] a legend that gained strength during the Eastern Han dynasty, along with claims that Confucius was responsible for the shape of the *Shangshu*. His social and geographic positions, combined with his erudition, made it likely for Zhang Chang to have a copy of the *Shangshu*, which Zhang Song was able to use for his teachings.

It is therefore possible to trace a direct line of transmission between the 29 *pian Shangshu* that takes shape during the Western Han and Du Lin, through Zhang Chang[716] and Zhang Song. After all, the *Shangshu* was literally a family business: Du Lin's paternal grandmother was one of the daughters of Zhang Song.

Figure 7. Family tree of Du Lin.
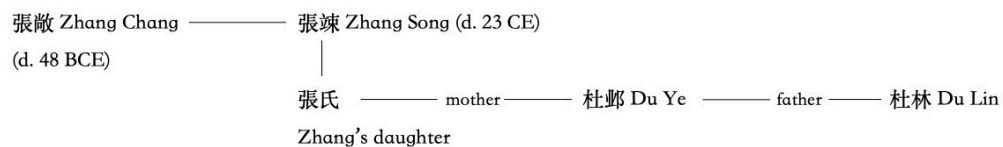
Spelling out the line of transmission is extremely important in order to clarify a central point, namely the number of editions being transmitted. When Du Lin begins his study of

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[715] *Hanshu* 76.3217.

[716] A point of direct contact between Zhang Chang and Du Lin is in the history of transmission of the *Shi Zhou* 史籀 (*Historian Zhou*), *Hanshu* 30.1721.

the *Shangshu*, we have records of four editions, mentioned above and listed here for clarity:

1. Ouyang's *Shangshu*;

2. Elder Xiahou's *Shangshu*;

3. Younger Xiahou's *Shangshu*;

4. Liu Xiang's collated edition.

If Liu Xiang's edition was part of the imperial library only, its disappearance might be due to the moving of the capital and the disruptions between the years from the fall of the Western Han to the establishment of the Eastern Han. With this, the edition that defined the *Shangshu* as *guwen* disappeared.[717]

To add more confusion to the story, Du Lin's edition begins to be called *guwen Shangshu* 古文尚書, not because it includes the 16 wall *pian*,[718] but because in making his famous lacquer version of the *Shangshu* (covering only a portion of it), he used the ancient script. Subsequently, the entire 29 *pian Shangshu* came to be written in ancient script, and defined "*guwen Shangshu*".[719]

To summarize: by the first century CE, we can reliably identify *one* edition of the *Shangshu* based on the text transmitted by Fu Sheng. With Du Lin, this edition came to be known as *Guwen Shanshu* 古文尚書 (fig. 3).[720] This 29 *pian* edition is the one that

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[717] It may have been possibly seen by Zheng Xing, although references are not secure. See fig. 5.
[718] As it was true of Liu Xiang's *Guwen Shangshu*.
[719] Li Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 129–30.
[720] The same expression is also used by Sima Qian to refer to the script rather than a particular edition (given his quotations of *shu* material in the *Shiji*, it seems that by his time not even the 28 *pian* edition was that prominent yet). In fact, he adds right after that Kong Anguo read it in modern script, *er Anguo yi jinwen du zhi* 而安國以今文讀之.

continues to be transmitted, primarily through Ma Rong, Jia Kui 賈逵, and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 through their respective commentary (*zhuan* 傳), "instructions" (*xun* 訓), and annotated version (*zhuyi* 注解) (fig. 4). The origin for the confusion surrounding the number of editions[721] transmitted likely originates with a misunderstanding of the meaning of *guwen* and *jinwen*: during the Han dynasty, they primarily refer to the script in which a document is written. When Kong Yingda eagerly makes use of these terms, he is operating a distinction to divide in two categories the 58 chapters of the *Shangshu* that he is working with; he is not referring to two editions of this text.

Figure 8. Visualization of the four traceable *Shangshu* edition

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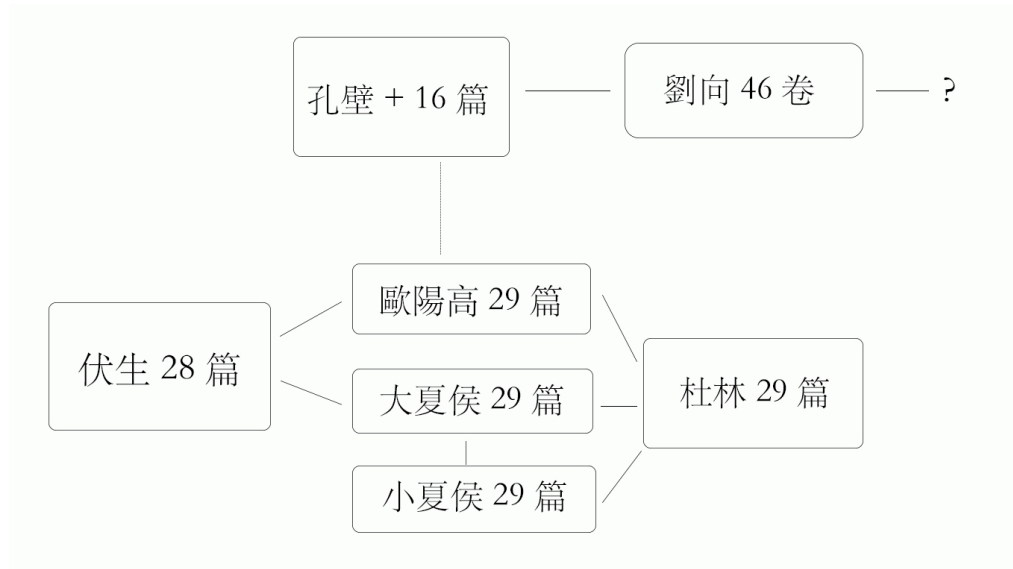
[721] E.g., Liu Guozhang talks of discrepancies between the "two editions of the *Shangshu*", i.e. a *jinwen* 今文 and *guwen* 古文 versions, and a consequent debate "on the merits of the ancient-script versus the modern-script versions" that lasted for two thousand years Liu Guozhong. *Introduction to the Tsinghua Bamboo-Strip Manuscripts* (Translated by Foster, Christopher and William French. Leiden Boston: Brill, 2016), 103.

Going back to our initial questions, the final important moment that will determine the action of Mei Ze comes with Ma Rong and Zheng Xuan. Both Han scholars worked on Du Lin's *Guwen Shangshu*; while their works went lost at some point during the Song dynasty (960–1279), fragments and passages were preserved in other texts. From comparison with other lists of chapter titles, it emerges that both scholars (Zheng Xuan under the influence of Ma Rong) divided some of the 29 chapters transmitted from Du Lin into two parts, creating a *Shangshu* in 58 chapters.[722]

We begin to be able to answer our initial questions regarding Mei Ze's logic in establishing a 58 chapter edition. We have every reason to believe that he was working with the *Shangshu* transmitted by Ma Rong and Zheng Xuan through the hands of Zheng Chong 鄭沖 (?-247 CE).[723] Zheng Chong was an influential scholar at the time, promoted Assistant Palace Gentlemen by Cao Shuang 曹爽 (d. 249) to whom he personally taught the *Shangshu*.[724]

From Zheng Chong, the *Shangshu* reached Mei Ze in 29 chapters,[725] surrounded by associations with Kong Anguo.[726] Mei Ze must have known of Zheng Xuan's 58 *pian Shangshu*, and mistakenly assumed that this indicated that he was looking at an

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[722] For example, mentions of a 58 *pian Shangshu* by Zheng Xuan in his *Xu can* 敘贊 are made by Kong Yingda, *Shangshu Zhengyi* 1.22–25. See Liu Qiyu, 110 and table p. 154.

[723] There are actually three more scholars in between Zheng Chong and Mei Ze, see Yan Ruoqu, *Shangshu guwen shu zheng*, 17.35; Li Qiyü, *Shangshu xue shi*, 179.

[724] *Jinshu* 晉書, Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 1974, 33.991–992. See also Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 177–178.

[725] The *Shangshu* at this point cannot be organized in 58 *pian*, otherwise Mei Ze would not have needed to create what he thought were missing chapters.

[726] It seems that Zheng Chong was primarily responsible for this: after the fall of the Wei dynasty, he was appointed Grand Protector 太保 (*Jinshu* 3.49). Likely in order to secure himself a position, he claimed that the *Shangshu* he was acquainted with was the edition that Kong Anguo commented on (Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, 178).

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incomplete edition of the *Shangshu*. This must have been believed by others too. Hence, in order for his version of the *Shangshu* to be considered *the* correct version among many that surely circulated at the time, he had to establish a 58 chapter edition. After splitting what he had in hand into a total of 33 *pian*,[727] he had one task left: to compose the remaining 25 *pian*. Michael Nylan raised the question of why scholars readily accepted Mei Ze's version, finding its answer in the fact that the 25 fabricated chapters rely on genuinely old material gathered from the abundant quotations in the literature. To this valid answer, we can also add the following: Mei Ze's edition echoed the existence of a 58 *pian Shangshu*, mistakenly believed to be the complete edition of this text.[728]

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[727] See graph in Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu xue shi*, p. 153.

[728] One may also note that the third and fourth centuries are known to be an era where literati take distance from government service and the study of the classics associated with the Ru 儒 tradition (often referred to as "Confucian"), reducing the number of authoritative voices on the subject; this was somehow anticipated by Yan Ruoqu (*Guwen Shangshu shuzheng* 1.16) when he stated that during Mei Ze's times, there were no erudite of the kind of Ma Rong and Zheng Xuan. The Eastern Jin court's eagerness to establish their ruling also participated to the readiness in accepting Mei Ze's *Shangshu*. The other alternative would be for Mei Ze to acknowledge Liu Xiang's edition as the complete edition, which the *Hanshu* describes it as of 57 *pian* (see footnote n.76). However, this seems less likely for two reasons: one, Mei Ze compiles a *Shangshu* of 58, not 57, chapters; two, we have no trace of Liu Xiang's work after the Han, while Zheng Xuan's is more accounted for.

Figure 8. Summary of the transmission of the *Shangshu* 尚書.

The red line indicates Liu Xiang's collated version of which we lose traces.
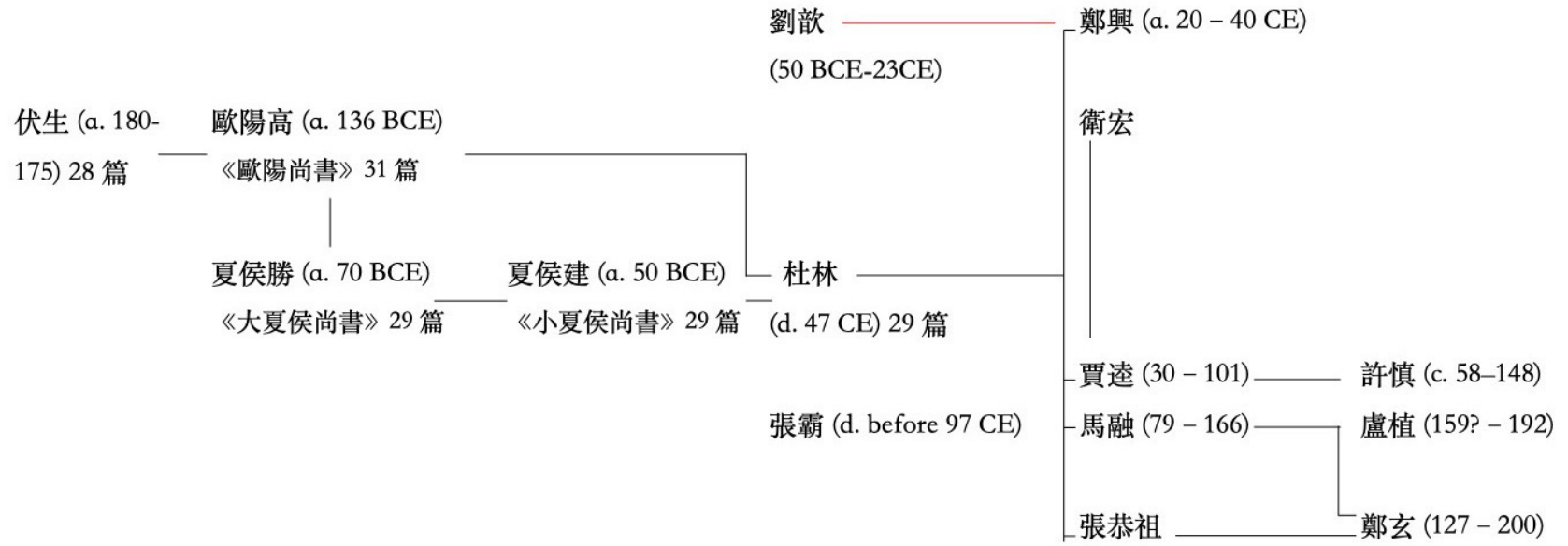
Appendix F. The Arousal of Human Nature. 取 in the Xing zi ming chu 性自命出.

Natural Dispositions come from Endowment, *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 is one of the manuscripts recovered from a tomb in Guodian village, Hubei.[729] Some Guodian manuscripts were previously known in the transmitted literature, such as the *Laozi* 老子, the *Wu xing* 五行,[730] and the *Black Robe, Ziyi* 緇衣.[731] The *Frustration or Achievement depends on a Timely Opportunity*, *Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時, also from the Guodian tomb, has sentence-by-sentence- matches in the textual sources.[732] In contrast, *Natural Dispositions* is never referenced nor quoted. A few years after the publication of the Guodian corpus, a manuscript that extensively parallels[733] *Natural Dispositions* was published with the title of *Discussions on Natural Dispositions and Emotions*, *Xing*

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[729] The manuscripts there recovered among several objects in the tomb. The report lists ritual objects, bronzes, daily-life tools, musical instruments, etc. See Hubei Sheng Jingmen shi Bowuguan 湖北省荊門市博物館, "Jingmen Guodian yi hao Chu mu" 荊門郭店一號楚墓, *Wenwu* 文物 7 (1997): 35–48. The manuscripts were first published in Jingmen shi Bowuguan 荊門市博物館. *Guodian Chu mu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing 北京: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1998).

[730] See Mark Csikszentmihalyi. *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004).

[731] The *Ziyi* was known as a chapter in the *Liji* 禮記 in the body of transmitted sources. See Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

[732] Adam D. Smith, "'What Difficulty Could There Be?' The Composition of the Guodian Qiong Da Yi Shi 窮達以時 from Memorized Performance Cues." In Wolfgang Behr and Lisa Indraccolo eds. *Warp, Woof, Wen / Phoneme, Pattern, Pun - Structural Approaches to Early Chinese Texts*. (Leiden: Brill. Forthcoming).

[733] As I discuss extensively in my dissertation, this is an important aspect to understand the history of production of these manuscripts. The sequence and material features of the two manuscripts (the length of strips, the number of words for each one, hypothetical reconstructions, etc.) has been reviewed most recently by Liang Jing 梁靜, "Shangbo 'Xing Qing Lun' Yanjiu Jiyu Guodian Ben Duibi 上博《性情論》研究及與郭店本的對比" *Chutu Wenxian* 出土文獻 1 (2019): 130–144. A well-designed visualization of the overlap between these two manuscripts has been designed by Takeda Kenji 竹田健二, "Kakuten Sokan 'Sei ji mei shutsu' to Shanhai hakubutsukan zō 'Seijō ron' to no kankei 郭店楚簡「性自命出」と上海博物館藏「性情論」との関係", *Nihon Chūgoku gakkaihō* 日本中国學會報 54 (2002), 1–14, 3.

qing lun 性情論.[734] While many of the ideas presented in these two manuscripts are echoed in several transmitted sources, which lead to a reconsideration on the degree of originality of some philosophical ideas,[735] neither *Natural Dispositions* nor *Discussions* are quoted or referenced to in the literature.

Natural Dispositions has been attracting attention ever since its publication.[736] Dated to ca. 300 BCE, the text represents the first extant discussion of philosophical topics that were at the center of the intellectual arena of the time: natural dispositions or human nature,[737] *xing* 性, how *xing* relates to *qing* 情, here translated as "emotions, essence;"[738]

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[734] Ma Chengyuan 馬承源. *Shanghai Bowuguan Cai Zhan Guo Chu Jian Shu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書. (9 vols. [Shanghai]: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2001) vol. 1. This manuscript belongs to the Shanghai Museum corpus, a collection of texts of unknown provenance. The Shanghai collection now is one of many that result from looting activities, rather than archeological recoveries. To some scholars, this has posed an ethical dilemma about working with such material, see Paul R. Goldin. "Heng Xian and the Problem of Studying Looted Artifacts." *Dao* 12, no. 2 (2013): 153–160. The topic is extensively discussed in Christopher Foster, "Introduction To The Peking University Han Bamboo Strips: On The Authentication And Study Of Purchased Manuscripts." *Early China* 40 (2017): 167–239. See also reflections in Martin Kern, "'Xi Shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') and Its Consequences: Issues in Early Chinese Poetry and Textual Studies." *Early China* 42 (2019): 1–36, 7–11.

[735] For a more detailed description of the overall content, see Cook, Scott Bradley. *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation*. Ithaca, N.Y.: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2012, 667–696.

[736] To date, the most extensive Chinese study is Chen Linqing 陳霖慶 and Ji Xusheng's 季旭昇 edition 'Xing qing lun' yi shi〈性情論〉譯釋 (Translation and Interpretation of the *Xing qing lun*) in Ji's *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chuzhu shu (yi) duben* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書（一）讀本 (Taibei Shi: Wan juan lou tushu youxian gongsi, 2004), 152–221; In English, see the interpretation with the most comprehensive word-by-word annotations of the *Xing zi ming chu* in English is in Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian*, 697–750. A thorough study in Japanese has been conducted by Ikeda Tomohisa 池田知久, 'Kakuten Sobo chikukan 'Sei ji mei shutsu' yakuchū' 郭店楚墓竹簡『眚自命出』譯注 (in *Kakuten Sokan no kenkyū* 郭店楚簡の研究, 2002–2006).

[737] *Xing* 性 as 'natural dispositions' follows Angus C. Graham's insightful study, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," (in his *Studies in Chinese Philosophy* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 7–58; the study was previously published in *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 1 and 2 [1967]: 215–274). Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr. also use 'natural disposition' to translate *Lunyu* 5.13, see *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2010), 98. Ames and Rosemont stress that *xing* is not restricted to *human* natural dispositions. Still, most of philosophical discussions use *xing* in reference primarily to humans, hence the translation 'human nature' can be contextually justified. In this paper, I use both 'natural dispositions' and 'human nature' to render the meaning of each passage as

and how music (*yue* 樂) and teaching (*jiao* 教) influence both human nature and emotions. All these were salient topics during the Warring States period (453–221 BCE). The text also mentions *shi* 詩, *shu* 書, *li* 禮, and *yue* 樂, in what might be an early datable reference to formations of collections centered on 'odes', 'the documents', 'rites', and 'music,' respectively.[739] These mentions are significant: in transmitted literature, each of these four categories came to be represented by texts that have exerted considerable influence ever since the Han dynasty (2nd BCE–2nd CE): the *Book of Odes* 詩經; the *Exalted Writings* 尚書; the *Ritual Records* 禮記; and its chapter the 'Yue ji' 樂記, 'Records on Music.'

**Natural Dispositions* often resorts to metaphorical devices, especially musical metaphors, to elucidate concepts relevant to discussions of human nature, in what seems an attempt to establish a technical vocabulary for what today would fall under the

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accurately as possible.

[738] The term *qing* is a rather difficult one to translate. Briefly, in early Chinese philosophy, *qing* indicates the "essential qualities," hence "essence." In the *Xing zi ming chu* it is also used as a collective for anger, joy, sadness, hence I also resort to the imprecise yet convenient translation of "emotions" when contextually appropriate.

[739] The line in question reads "詩、書、禮、樂，其始出皆生於人。The poems, the documents, the rituals, and the music, in their first emergence, are born from mankind." The text does not allow for secure identification, although several interpretations have been presented. Ding Yuanzhi 丁原植 takes *shi* 詩 'poetry' and *shu* 書 'documents' as referring to written material (the predecessors of the *Book of Odes* and the *Exalted Writings*), whereas *li* 禮 and *yue* 樂 refer more generally to rituals and music used to cultivate one's morality, see Ding Yuanzhi, *Chu jian rujia xing qing shuo yanjiu* 楚簡儒家性情說研究 (Taibei Shi: Wan juan lou tu shu you xian gongsi, 2002), 48. Conversely, Puett interprets all four of them as traditions that are not yet in any written version (see Michael Puett, "The Ethics of Responding Properly: The Notion of Qing in Early Chinese Thought." In H. Eifring ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004, 37–68, 49), whereas Goldin takes them all as references to classics, see Paul R. Goldin, "Xunzi In The Light Of The Guodian Manuscripts." *Early China* 25 (2000): 113–146, 121–2. The recent publication of a 300 BCE manuscript of the *Book of Odes* would suggest that at least *shi* may indeed be referring to existing collection. See Anhui daxue Hanzi fazhan yu yingyong yanjiu zhongxin 安徽大学汉字发展与应用研究中心, ed. *Anhui Daxue Cang Zhanguo Zhujian (Yi)* 安徽大學藏戰國竹簡（一）. Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 2019.

category of 'philosophy of mind'. In other words, it represents a central source to understand the philosophical interest in human nature in early China, and for comparison with other traditions in the ancient world. The more exact the reading of this manuscript, the more fruit it will bear.

In spite of the importance of the text and the attention it has attracted, there remain unanswered questions. This paper concerns one of them, namely the interpretation of the character 取 in two crucial passages.[740] In the language of the Warring States period, *qu* 取 is a frequently used word meaning "to take", but in neither passage the graph can be convincingly assigned this meaning. As this paper demonstrates, 取 is being used as a technical term to express the nature of interaction among the external world, human nature, and emotions, namely one of stimulation. Put in context, understanding 取 as "to stimulate" is more intuitive, and squares better with other claims presented in *Xing zi ming chu,* as well as passages from other sources. In fact, even with the uncomfortable understanding of "to take," several scholars pointed out that one of the themes in the manuscript concerns how the world stimulates human beings and their minds.[741]

The interpretation of 取 as *cu* "to stimulate," now conventionally written 促, was first proposed by Chen Linqing 陳霖慶 and Ji Xusheng 季旭昇 in their philological study of

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[740] *Qu* appears a total of six times. I here prioritize a discussion of the first two to focus on the topics of human nature and emotions. An extensive analysis of 取 in the *Xing zi ming chu* is forthcoming.

[741] E.g., Attilio Andreini, *Trasmetto, non creo, Percorsi tra filologia e filosofia nella letteratura cinese classica* (Venezia: Cafoscarina), 78; Dirk Meyer, *Philosophy on Bamboo, Text and the Production of Meaning in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 146; Puett, "The Ethics of Responding Properly", The Notion of Qing in Early Chinese Thought." Ed. H. Eifring ed., *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 37–68, 45; Paul Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, 38-47.

the text.[742] This paper briefly discusses this interpretation, and then delves into its philosophical implications for how early Chinese thinkers conceived the reception of stimuli from the external world. This concept, as well as the metaphors used to illustrate it, are found in several other sources whose content is dated to the first centuries BCE, confirming that *Natural Dispositions* participated in Warring States intellectual history linguistically and philosophically. This may appear a triviality, given that the manuscript was created during the Warring States era. Yet, the date of a manuscript is not necessarily the same as the date of composition of the text represented on the manuscript. Furthermore, many Warring States are written with a language filled with archaisms, and read very differently from a text like *Natural Dispositions*, which also justifies attention to linguistic features.

取 as technical term in the *Xing zi ming chu*

Although they did not state it explicitly, Chen and Ji must have considered 取 a valid speller for *qù* 趣. This is unproblematic, since the former functions as a phonetic element in the latter. They then assign it the meaning of "to impel, to stimulate" (*cu* 促) on the basis of a passage in the *Guanzi* 管子 where *qù* is so glossed.[743] Several other annotations by Chinese scholars not only confirm this reading, but make explicit a *phonetic*

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[742] Chen Linqing and Ji Xusheng, 'Xing qing lun' yi shi〈性情論〉譯釋, 155. In the Anglophone scholarship, Franklin Perkins has follows this interpretation for the first occurrence of 取 in the *Xing zi ming chu*, Franklin Perkins, "Motivation and the Heart in the Xing Zi Ming Chu." *Dao* 8 (2009): 117–131, 119.

[743] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 管子校注 (Beijing Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 73.1266.

relationship between *qù* and *cu*. For example, in a passage[744] from the *Book of Han* 漢書 assigning the demise of the Qin dynasty to the powerful eunuch Zhao Gao 趙高 (d. 207 BCE), Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645 CE) comments:

昔秦時趙高用事，有正先者，非刺高而死。高威自此成，故秦
之亂，正先趣之。

師古：「趣」，讀曰促。[745]

In the past, during the Qin dynasty, when Zhao Gao took power, there was a man named Zheng Xian[746] who was put to death for repudiating and criticizing Gao. Gao's despotism developed from this. Thus, it was Zheng Xian who prompted the chaos of the Qin dynasty.

Yan Shigu: '趣' is read as *cu* 促, 'to prompt, to stimulate'.

Similarly, in the other major historical source from the Han dynasty, the *Records of the Historian* 史記, Tang commentator Sima Zhen 司馬貞 (679–732 CE) gives a similar indication. The passage belongs to the narration of the hereditary house of Chen She 陳涉 (d. 208 BCE), who attempted to guide the first rebellion against the Qin empire. Wu Chen 武臣, one of his allies, proclaimed himself Prince of Zhao after some initial success against the Qin army. This greatly upset Chen She, who arrested Wu Chen's relatives in

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[744] See Chen Hui 陳慧, Liao Mingchun 廖名春, and Rui 李銳 Li, eds. *Tian, Ren, Xing: Du Guodian Chu Jian Yu Shangbo Zhu Jian* 天、人、性：讀郭店楚簡與上博竹簡 (*Heaven, Mankind, and Natural Dispositions. Reading the Guodian Chu Strips and the Shanghai Museum Strips*). Shanghai: Guji, 2014, 227.

[745] *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing Zhonghua shuju 1962), 45.3165.

[746] Commentator Meng Kang 孟康 identifies him as Qin scholar, *Han shu* 75.3165.

order to execute them. The Pillar of the State Cai Ci 蔡賜 warned him that this response

resembled the very Qin methods Chen was rebelling against:[747]

> 陳王乃遣使者賀趙，而徙繫武臣等家屬宮中，而封張耳子敖為
> 成都君，趣趙兵亟入關。[748]

> 司馬貞：上音促。「促」謂「催促」也。

> So, the Prince of Chen sent an envoy to congratulate the Prince of
> Zhao, then he put under arrest the relatives of Wu Chen in the
> palace. He bestowed on Fang, the son of Zhang Er, the title of Lord
> of Chengdu, and urged the Zhao army to hasten and enter the
> [Hangu 函谷] pass [to attack Qin].
> Sima Zhen: "Pronounce '趣' as *cu* 促, meaning *cuicu*, 'to prompt,
> to rush.'

Similarly, in the *Rites of Zhou* 周禮 section dedicated to listing the territorial offices, we

learn that the District Officials, *xian zheng* 縣正,

> 掌其治訟，趨其稼事而賞罰之。[749]

> manage prosecutions to stimulate agriculture, and reward and
> punish accordingly.

Tang commentator Lu Deming 陸德明 (550?–630 CE) notes: "「趨」本又作「趣」，

音促。*Qu* '趨' originally[750] written also as 趣, is pronounced as *cu* 促."

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[747] To the parallel passage in the *Book of Han*, Yan Shigu likewise notes: "「趣」讀曰促。趣 is read as *cu* 促", *Hanshu* 31.1790.

[748] *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 48.1995.

[749] *Zhouli zhu shu* 周禮注疏 (*Shisan jing zhu shu*. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2000), 15.473.

[750] It is unclear what *ben* 本 when standing alone exactly refers to in Lu Deming's glosses. It might be a version of the text that he believes precedes the one he is commenting, or it might indicate how he thought the word should be written.

Lastly, in the 'Wang zhi' 王制 ('The King's Regulations') chapter of *Xunzi*'s 荀子 that the duties of a district official, Yang Liang 楊倞 (second half 8ᵗʰ century CE) comments:

> 順州里，定廛宅，養六畜，閒樹藝，勸教化，趨孝弟，以時順修，使百姓順命，安樂處鄉，鄉師之事也。 [751]
>
> 楊倞：「趨」讀為促。 [752]
>
> To organize the provinces and the villages; to organize the markets and the households; to [order] the raising of the six domestic animals; to habituate [peasants] to farming; to encourage changes according to the [right] teachings; to promote filiality and fraternity; to act in accordance with the seasons to make the people act in accordance with the mandate, to make them find security and contentment while residing in the countryside, [these] are the duties of a district official.
>
> Yang Liang: '趨' is read as *cu* 促.

All these glosses[753] follow a convention by which the word *cu* 促 "to hasten (someone), to promote, to urge" can be written with the character 趣 (in one occasion, with 趨). A problem in glossing *qù* 趣 as *cu* 促 comes from their Middle Chinese pronunciations:[754] *cu* is *rusheng* 入聲, that is to say, it has a final -k: *tshjowk*. Neither *qu* 趣 nor 取 have *rusheng* readings. Regularly, syllables with *rusheng* codas and open syllables such as *qu*

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[751] *Xunzi jiaoshi* 荀子校釋 (Wang Tianhai 王天海 ed. Shanghai: Guji 2005), 5.388.

[752] *Xunzi jiaoshi*, 5.395.

[753] See also examples in Wang Li 王力. *Tong yuan zi dian* 同源字典 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), 197.

[754] Middle Chinese pronunciations follow the transcription in William H. Baxter. *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1992). Old Chinese reconstructions follow the system by William H. Baxter, and Laurent Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014). For the *Guangyun* 廣韻, I have relied on Yu Naiyong's 余迺永 edition *Xin jiao hu zhou Song ben Guangyun* 新校互註校正宋本廣韻 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2008).

(i.e., *shangsheng* 上聲 words) do not share phonetic spellings in Old Chinese.[755] We would not expect 趣 to write the word *cu* 促.

The answer to this problem involves two parts. One is the establishment of a connection between the graph 取 and the word "to prompt, to stimulate." The second is the explanation of why a -k final word has phonetic contacts with a non-k final word.

Let us begin with the first. The current understanding of spelling is that, in early stages of the script, different morphological forms with the same root could be written with a single graph.[756] In some cases, the two forms were later distinguished in writing.[757] Briefly,[758] in our case study the word "to prompt, to stimulate" is cognate with the word "to run."[759] The former is the transitive form of the latter. These two words were pronounced differently, but were written with the same graph 走 in Zhou dynasty bronze inscriptions, as the two following quotes demonstrate:

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[755] Qing dynasty (1644-1911) first noted this phenomenon and the problems it represented for the spelling system. Wang Li 王力 (1900-1986) has listed examples contacts between *rusheng* and *shangsheng* syllables, but they remain largely unexplained, see his *Tong yuan zi dian* 同源字典 (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1982), 14–15.

[756] Laurent Sagart. "L'emploi Des Phonétiques Dans l'écriture Chinoise." *Ecriture Chinoise/Données, Usages et Représentations* (Françoise Bottéro and Redouane Djamouri eds. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2006), 35–53.

[757] See Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing* (Edited by Jerry Norman. Translated by Gilbert Louis Mattos. Berkeley, California: Chinese Popular Culture Project, 2000), 321–365.

[758] See extensive discussion in my forthcoming "Graph and Words."

[759] The etymological connection is confirmed by an annotation to a line in the *Zuo Commentary*. During one of the many attempts by Lord Ling of Jin 晉靈公 (? - 607 BCE) to kill Zhao Dun 趙盾 narrated in the *Zuo's Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋左傳, Lord Ling "incites his hounders" to come out from hiding and attack Zhao Dun, *gong sou fu ao yan* 公嗾夫獒焉. Lu Deming notes that in Fu Qian's 服虔 (active second CE) version of the text, the verb *sou* 嗾 "to incite, to prompt", is written as 瘶, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, *Shisanjing Zhu Shu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 21.686. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer who pointed this out in their comments, in fact providing yet another piece of evidence for this connection.

A) 今余唯令汝盂，詔、榮敬德經敏，朝夕入諫，享奔走，畏天威。[760]

Now I command you, Yu, to join Zhao and Rong in respectfully enacting [the Zhou law of] unifying *de*: day and night enter [the court] to remonstrate, when presenting dedications, hastily running around to express fear of Heaven's awesomeness.

B) 王詔走馬雁。[761]

The King summoned Yan the horse runner (lit: the person who makes the horses run).

There is in fact one unequivocal instance of 走 for "to make run" in Han writings (206 BCE - 220 CE),[762] in the *Book of Han*'s biography of Sui Hong 眭弘:

眭弘字孟，魯國蕃人也。少時好俠，鬬雞走馬。[763]
Sui Hong, courtesy name Meng, was a man from Bo, in Lu. When he was little, he liked knights, to make chickens fight, and to race horses.

In later stages, a phonetic speller was added to distinguish the words "to run" and "to make run, to prompt" in writing.[764] Due to its phonological proximity and the presence of

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[760] The interpretative transcription is based on *Yin Zhou jin wen jicheng shiwen* 殷周金文集成釋文, no. 2837 (Xianggang: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 2001, hereafter as *Jicheng*). See study and English translation in Cook and Goldin, eds., *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions* (Berkely, California: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2020), 30–35.

[761] *Jicheng* 2807. Other examples are *Jicheng* 4275 and 4556.

[762] Related is also *Zhuangzi jishi* 9.330-334, "to gallop and to race them [i.e., horses], 飢之渴之，馳之驟之."

[763] *Hanshu* 45.3153.

[764] See examples of this phenomenon in Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, esp. 225–226.

aspiration,[765] "to take" 取 *qu < tshuwX <* *tsʰoʔ* was chosen as marker for the aspiration, resulting in the writing currently still in use:

	Regular form in Bronze Inscription writing	Regular form by Han times
"To run"	走	走
OC reconstruction	*tsˤoʔ* $\qquad$ *tsˤoʔ-s*	
"To make run"	走	趣
OC reconstruction	*tsʰˤoʔ* $\qquad$ *tsʰˤoʔ-s*	

Once a phonological relationship between 取 "to take" and 趣 "to make run, to prompt" was established, both graphs were viable spellers for each other. A bronze inscription using the graph 趣 to write "to take"[766] dates the first attested moment of this relationship to the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BCE). This evidence established a solid connection between the graph 取 and the word "to prompt, to stimulate."

With regard to phonetic dilemma given by the glosses on *qu* 趣 as *cu* 促 by Medieval and Tang dynasty commentators, we can resort to a phenomenon known in linguistics, that of sound similarity. In our case, the phonetic proximity between the postcoda *-ʔ* and final *-k* accounts for the glosses observed above:

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[765] The aspirated form might be due to a process of valency–increase. This phenomenon has mainly been discussed with regard to the prefix *s-, see Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese*, 56, 136–139; Zev Handel, "Valence-Changing Prefixes and Voicing Alternation in Old Chinese and Proto-Sino-Tibetan: Reconstructing *s- and *N- Prefixes." *Language and Linguistics*, 13.1 (2012), 61–82.

[766] *Jicheng* 4151: The sponsor of the vessel is said to have selected precious metal used to cast the bronze, *shiqu ji jin* 拾趣吉金. The expression *shiqu* 拾取 is found in the *Ritual Records* 禮記 also; in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, it glosses *duo* 掇 "to pick", Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen Jiezi* 説文解字 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1998), 225.

取 ~ 趣 *qu* < *tshuwX* < *tsʰˤoʔ

促 *cu* < *tshowk* < *tsʰok

Contacts between the postcoda *-ʔ and final *-k have already been observed in Old Chinese.[767] In spite of some outstanding uncertainties,[768] we have gathered enough evidence to credit the idea that 取 can be used to write the word "to prompt, to stimulate" in the *Xing zi ming chu*.

We can now return to the *Xing zi ming chu*, and apply the philological reading of 取 presented above. As we will see, this not only highlights the text's elaboration of how external stimuli affect the mind, but also makes visible "networks of debates"[769] between this manuscript and other early Chinese sources. The first of the two crucial *Xing zi ming chu* passages reads:

> 喜怒哀樂之氣，性也。及其現於外，則物取（＞趣）之也。
> The *qi* of happiness, anger, grief and joy is [part of] human nature. When it is manifest externally, it is because external objects stimulate it.

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[767] See Baxter, *A Handbook*, 336–339. Of the various contacts, those between *qusheng* and *rusheng* are the most frequent, as noted by several scholars mentioned by Baxter. See also Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 68–69.

[768] For example, I remain agnostic regarding how the *pingsheng* 平聲 "to pursue" 趨 *qu* < *tshju* < *tsʰo fits in this story, besides noting that, while connections between *rusheng* words and *pingsheng* words are rare and "as yet unaccounted for," some have been observed (Baxter, *A Handbook*, 337). The postcoda *-s has also been shown to be responsible for the loss of voiceless stops (Baxter, *A Handbook*, 182–183).

[769] Oliver Weingarten. "Debates around Jixia: Argument and Intertextuality in Warring States Writings Associated with Qi." *Journal of American Oriental Society* 135.2 (2015): 283–307, 287.

凡性為主，物取（　＞　趣）之也。金石之有聲也，弗扣不鳴。人
雖有性，心弗趣不出。

In general, human nature is cardinal, and external objects stimulate
it. Bells and chimes have [the potential for] tones, but if one does
not strike them, they do not sound. Although humans have
dispositions, if nothing stimulates the heart,[770] they do not emerge.

Both passages formulate, in similar fashion, the idea of a separation between internal and

external worlds, through a relationship of stimulation: although humans possess inborn

features, it is only through interaction with "external objects" (*wu* 物) that these features

are set in motion. Taking the body as barrier between internal and external[771] is an

intuitive reality of every living organism: "One key to understanding living organisms,

from those that are made up of one cell to those that are made up of billions of cells, is

the definition of their boundary, the separation between what is in and what is out."[772]

*Natural Dispositions's articulation that humans are stimulated is echoed both within

the text and in other sources. This is not surprising: it has long been observed that early

Chinese sources often present parallel passages or reuse metaphors and parallels to craft

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[770] *Xin* 心 was also considered the seat of what we today call mental faculties. It is therefore sometimes
translated as "mind," or the more cumbersome "heart-mind."

[771] Incidentally, in early Chinese literature such distinction elaborates on an 'internal/external theme' (*nei
wai* 內外) that is central to many debates concerning human nature. *Mengzi* zealously promotes the idea
that the potential to develop righteousness (*yi* 義) and humanity (*ren* 仁) resides within humans (*Mengzi
zhushu*, 2A.112–3), whereas for *Xunzi* 荀子 they must be acquired from external models such as rituals
(*Xunzi jiaoshi*, 19.752).

[772] A. R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New
York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 135–136. See also Edward Slingerland's *Mind and Body* and his discussion of
philosophy of mind and body/mind dualism in early Chinese Philosophy (*Mind and Body in Early China:
Beyond Orientalism and the Myth of Holism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019).

their arguments,[773] producing sources that imitate as well as respond to each other.[774] Finding textual evidence discussing in what terms human nature is stimulated by externalities (rather than "taken hold of") not only confirms our interpretation, but also contextualizes the *Xing zi ming chu* within the cultural milieu of early China.

I will start with a passage in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which reflects on the source of emotions happiness, anger, grief and joy, *xi nu ai le* 喜怒哀樂: exactly the same sequence presented in *Natural Dispositions*. Ultimately, *Zhuangzi* asserts, it is impossible for humans to understand what produces them.

> 喜怒哀樂，慮嘆變慹，姚佚啟態；樂出虛，蒸成菌。日夜相代乎前，而莫知其所萌。已乎，已乎！旦暮得此，其所由以生乎！非彼無我，非我無所取（＞趣）。[775]
>
> Happiness, anger, grief and joy; anxiety, lament, anticipation and regret; vehemence, idleness, eagerness and insolence: [all are emitted] like music comes from a tube, like steam gives rise to mushrooms. Day and night they alternate in front of us, and no one knows from where they sprout. Enough, enough! From dawn to sunset there is this, from where are they produced! If it were not for these [emotions], there would be no self; if it were not for the self, there would be nothing to stimulate.

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[773] See, among others, Paul R. Goldin, "Appeals to History In Early Chinese Philosophy And Rhetoric." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35.1 (2008): 79–96; and the volume by Paul van Els and Elisa Sabattini, eds. 2012. Political Rhetoric in Early China. Rhétorique et Politique En Chine Ancienne. *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 34. With regard to the Han textual tradition, Xu Jianwei 徐建委 coined the expression of "communal material" *gonggong sucai* 公共素材, to indicate a set of material made of ideas, poetic verses, and anecdotes that traveled from text to text, see Xu Jianwen, *Wen ben geming. Liu Xiang, Hanshu Yiwenzhi yu zaoqi wenben yanjiu* 文本革命：劉向、《漢書·藝文志》與早期文本研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017), esp. 25–26. Martin Kern most recently applied Stephen Owen's idea that medieval poetry is a collection of poems sharing a pool of tropes and themes, departing from the traditional search for an 'original' poem and its subsequent variations, see his "'Xi Shuai' 蟋蟀 ('Cricket') And Its Consequences".

[774] E.g., Andrew Meyer believes some of the Guodian texts are the result of responses to arguments presented by the Mohist, see Andrew Meyer, "Only the Human Way May Be Followed".

[775] *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (4 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985), 2.51–5.

As my transcription shows, not only this passage discusses the same emotions that *Natural Dispositions* does, but uses the same vocabulary. Here too, I argue, 取 is writing *qù* 趣, "to stimulate." The similarity of topics and language is too striking to be a mere coincidence. This is a first exemplification of how philological analyses bear on the reading of early Chinese sources, leading us to pinpoint accurately which sources share common vocabulary and themes.

The idea that human nature responds to external triggers indicates that it has a potential waiting to arise. In fact, *Natural Dispositions* opens with a statement precisely on this:

> 凡人雖有性，心亡奠志。待物而後作，待悅而後行，待習而後奠。[776]
>
> Although humans have natural dispositions, their heart lacks established intentions. [These] dispositions await externalities and then arise; they await gratification and then they are in motion, they await habits and then they are established.

Human nature awaits for its potential to be released. While some interpretations have read *xin* 心 as the subject of "to await" (*dai* 待),[777] I believe that *xing* 性 is more accurate. Later in the manuscript, in fact, externalities, gratification (*yue* 悅) and habits (*xi* 習) are all defined as acting on human nature, not on *xin*. Furthermore, the *Luxuriant Dew of the Springs and Autumns* 春秋繁露, a source that has a significant number of echoes and

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[776] Chen and Ji, 'Xing qing lun' yi shi, 154.
[777] Cook and Middendorf make *xin* 心 the subject, see Cook, *The Guodian Bamboo Strips*, 700; Middendorf, "Again on *qing*", 151; Andreini, *Trasmetto, non Creo*, 74–76 ponders both possibilities.

uses a lot of the terminology introduced in *Natural Dispositions*, illustrates with two interesting metaphors the idea that human nature requires something outside itself in order to achieve its potential:

中民之性如繭如卵。卵待覆二十日而後能為雛，繭待繰以涫湯
而後能為絲，性待漸於教訓而後能為善。[778]

The natural dispositions of ordinary people are like cocoons and eggs. An egg waits to be brooded for twenty days, and only then can it become a chicken; a cocoon waits to be reeled by being boiled, and only then becomes silk. Natural dispositions await being soaked in teachings and instructions, and then they can become good.

A second metaphor to articulate the dynamic interaction between external objects and humans is that of movement. Humans are moved by externalities, and indeed *Natural Dispositions* so defined the latter: "externalities are what moves human nature," *dong xing zhe, wu ye* 動性者，物也. Now that we understand how central the theme of stimulation is through an exact reading of 取, this line also acquires more meaning. The text is providing us with a definition that relies on a contextual understanding of objects and their influence on humans. This brings to mind two passages in the *Ritual Records* 禮記, where the relation between human nature and externalities is described with the same verb *dong* 動, "to move:"

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[778] *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 春秋繁露義證 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1992), 36.312. See also *Chunqiu fanlu* 35.397 and *Xunzi jiaoshi* 23.942.

人生而靜，天之性也；感於物而動，性之欲也。物至知知，然後好惡形焉。好惡無節於內，知誘於外，不能反躬，天理滅矣。[779]

Humans are born quiet; that is their nature from Heaven.[780] It is the desire of human nature to be influenced by objects and [therefore] moved. Things arrive and [humans] acquire knowledge [of them];[781] therefore likes and dislikes are formed by this. If likes and dislikes are without restraint, the faculty of knowledge will be enticed by the external; one cannot return to oneself, and the principle of Heaven will be destroyed.

夫民有血氣心知之性，而無哀樂喜怒之常，應感起物而動，然後心術形焉。[782]

People have by nature blood, *qi* and a knowing mind, but they lack constancy in [the emotions of] sorrow, happiness, pleasure, and anger. These emotions are stimulated by externalities and moved, and therefore the faculties of the heart are formed by it.

Even the *Restating the Lessons* 申鑒, written by the Han scholar Xun Yue 荀悅 (148–209 CE) and presented as a political compendium that aims at preserving lessons from the past as a guide for the future, collects in a miscellaneous section a statement that expresses the interrelation among natural dispositions, *qing,* and external stimuli, and once again reminds us of *Natural Dispositions*:

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[779] *Liji zhengyi* 37.1262.

[780] The sentence literally reads "the nature of Heaven", but it stands to reason that here that the text is not discussing Heaven's nature, but rather how Heaven sets up the way of being of humans.

[781] I suspect that the sentence "*wu zhi zhi zhi* 物至知知" is the result of some sort of corruption. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 explains it to mean it what I have translated. The sentence has a parallel in *Wenzi* 文子, where this sentence reads "objects arrive and influence [humans]."

[782] *Liji zhengyi* 38.1286.

369

或曰：「請折於經。」曰：「《易》稱『乾道變化，各正性命』是言萬物各有性也。『觀其所感，而天地萬物之情可見矣。』是言情者，應感而動者也。」[783]

Someone said: "May you discuss [what you said] with regard to the classics." "The *Yijing* declares: 'The way of *qian* is of change and transformation, so that everything is regulated [according to] its natural dispositions and their endowment.' This is to say that all the myriad things have natural dispositions. [The *Yijing* also says,] 'Observe what [the sages] stimulate, and it will be possible to see the essence of the myriad things and of Heaven and earth.'[784] This is to say that their essence is what is influenced and moved.

To add one last quote to our list, the *Steelyard of Discourses* 論衡 refashions the interaction among human nature, emotions, and externalities according to *yinyang* 陰陽 categories, while retaining the idea that emotions resides inside humans but manifesting on the outside:

劉子政曰：「性，生而然者也，在於身而不發；情，接於物而然者也，出形於外。形外，則謂之陽，不發者，則謂之陰。」[785]

Liu Zizheng said: "Natural dispositions are what humans are born with. They reside in the body and are not manifest. Emotions appear on the outside when there is a connection with externalities. When they take form on the outside, we call them *yang*; if there is no manifestation, we call them *yin*."

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[783] *Shenjian zhu xiao bu* 申鑒注校補 (Sun Qizhi 孫啟治 ed., Taibei: Shijie shuju 2012), 5.208.

[784] This is a reference to *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (Shisanjing zhushu 十三經注疏, Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000) 4.164: "Heaven and earth bring influences about and the myriad things are transformed and are born; the sages influence the heart of humans, and the world is harmonious and peaceful. Observe what they influence, and the *qing* from Heaven and earth and the myriad things will be visible 天地感而萬物化生，聖人感人心而天下和平。觀其所感，而天地萬物之情可見矣".

[785] *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1990), 13.140–141.

In all these passages, being influenced by objects is portrayed as unavoidable. Although the first quote from the *Ritual Records* states that excessive influence can be dangerous, interacting with the world is also portrayed as necessary for further developments. The *Huainanzi* 淮南子 presents a similar principle using similar wording, but the conclusion differs:[786]

> 人生而靜，天之性也；感而後動，性之害也；物至而神應，知之動也；知與物接，而好憎生焉。好憎成形，而知誘於外，不能反己，而天理滅矣。[787]
>
> Humans are born still, this is the nature of Heaven. To be influenced and to go after [objects], is a calamity for one's nature. Objects arrive and the spirit is influenced; this is the movement of the faculty of knowing. When this faculty interacts with objects, likes and dislikes are born thereby. They take shape on the outside, and the faculty of knowing is seduced by what is external, one cannot return to oneself, and the principle of Heaven is destroyed.

The Qing dynasty scholar Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821–1907 CE) believed that *hai* 害 is a mistake for *yu* 欲 "desires," noticing the parallels with the *Ritual Records* just mentioned and using the one to read the other. However, note that the context of the two passages differs: in the *Ritual Records*, a negative outcome occurs when there are no regulations over likes and dislikes. Conversely, the *Huainanzi* is saying that any stimulation by objects is unwelcome, regardless of how well-regulated one's internal states are. The use of *hai* is

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[786] The *Wenzi* 文子 has a near-identical passage, *Wenzi shuyi* 文子疏義 (Wang Liqi 王利器 ed. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000) 1.26. The passage also appears in *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1959), 24.1184–1186, with *song* 頌 to write "desires", *yu* 欲. This might be a good example of two interrelated phenomena: the existence of a pool of themes and arguments to quote and modify as needed, and the misunderstandings that inevitably arose in the transmission of knowledge. On *Wenzi*, see van Els, Paul. *The Wenzi: Creativity and Intertextuality in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

[787] *Huainanzi jishi* 淮南子集釋 (He Nin 何寧 ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 1.24–25.

therefore no mistake. Rather, this is a deliberate adaptation of well-known material on stimulation and emotions.

The *Huainanzi* is not the only voice that presents externalities as harmful to the self. *Han Feizi* 韓非子 makes the same point by contrasting rituals with objects: they are both external, but only the former represents a set of regulations discernible to humans:

> 禮者，外節之所以論內也。故曰：「禮以貌情也。」凡人之為外物動也，不知其為身之禮也。[788]
> Practices are external regulation with which one expresses the internal. Therefore it is said: "Practices are to embellish one's *qing*." When humans are moved by externalities, they do not know what practices are governing their persons.

In the same chapter, *Han Feizi* also tells us that governing one's person prevents externalities from inducing disorder. Unlike in the merely descriptive *Natural Dispositions* externalities are harmful. Yet, for both texts, the point is the same: they affect humans.

Examining the second of *Natural Dispositions* passages mentioned above discloses a similar web of linguistic and conceptual echos. As mentioned, this line too describes interactions between humans and external objects. It does so with a musical metaphor: although human nature is central to any development, stimuli are essential for realizing the potential of human nature, in the same way that it is essential for musical instruments

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[788] *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu*, 12.376-7.

to be struck in order to emit sounds. Among the passages echoing this metaphor,[789] one is

particularly interesting for its implication about human nature and the being of sages.

Matthew L. Duperon has shown that the *Huainanzi* uses *qing* 情 to indicate responses

to a person or a situation. Many of the examples he presents to support his thesis

articulate contexts where some kind of stimulation takes place.[790] We can now draw a

more direct link between *Huainanzi* and **Natural Dispositions* in patterning their

intellectual relations. Although it does not mention *qing*, the following passage in

Huainanzi uses the same metaphor we find in **Natural Dispositions*:

> 鼓不藏聲，故能有聲；鏡不設形，故能有形。金石有聲，弗叩
> 弗鳴；管簫有音，弗吹無聲。聖人內藏，不為物倡，事來而
> 制，物至而應。[791]
>
> Drums do not contain their sound, so that they can emit sounds.
> Mirrors do not capture images, so that they can reflect images.
> Bells and chimes have [the potential] for sound, [but if one] does
> not strike them, they do not ring. Pipes and flutes have [the
> potential] for music, [but if one] does not blow into them, there is
> no sound. The sages store [responses] internally; they are not led by
> objects. Affairs arrive, and the sages regulate them; objects come
> and the wise respond [properly] to them.

According to the *Huainanzi*, sages are the only ones who are not at the mercy of

externalities, in the way drums and mirrors are. Something that sages store internally

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[789] *Zhuangzi jishi* 12.411; *Wenzi shuyi*, 6.293; *Mozi Jiaozhu* 墨子校注 (Sun Qizhi 孫啟治, ed., Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1993), 39.438.

[790] Matthew L. Duperon. "The Role of Qing 情 in the Huainanzi's Ethics." *Early China*, no. 38 (2015): 79–107, 96–99.

[791] The passages is rather obscure. I transcribe the passage following the emendations collected by He Ning, see *Huainanzi jishi* 14.1020-21. A parallel passage is in *Wenzi*, which is likewise difficult, *Wenzi shuyi*, 6.293. I wish to thank Paul van Els for discussing this passage with me.

allows them to respond by bringing the stimulation under control, and avoid being driven by externalities.[792] In this passage, sages are by implication contrasted with the rest of humanity. The sages' ability to respond is not the norm: humans are dominated by externalities. It is only by becoming a sage that they learn how to respond.[793]

As this evidence shows, early Chinese thinkers were reflecting on topics that today we would gather under the wide umbrella of 'philosophy of mind'. In contrast with the passages that articulate the effects of stimulation and the nature of sages, *Natural Dispositions* adopts a rather neutral tone. This makes me suspicious that it represents an attempt to clarify terms and provide definitions without formulating an argument on these topics. Ancient Chinese thinkers used it as a learning tool, to articulate and elaborate how, and in what terms, humans interact with the world in their writings. This would also explain the lack of any reference to, or direct quote from, *Natural Dispositions*, in spite of the fact that its content was clearly central to the intellectual debates of the Warring States era. The existence of a closely parallel text, *Discussions*, is significant, but perhaps it is so as evidence of a society's intellectual needs, and less as evidence that these texts must represent "consciously written philosophy."[794]

Natural Dispositions for us scholars of early China is however undisputed. As this paper has shown, a philological study of a single word has paved the way to

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[792] See also the conclusion on how *Huainanzi* portrays sages in Duperon. "The Role of Qing 情 in the Huainanzi's Ethics," 106.

[793] Franklin Perkins argues something similar is implied in the *Xing zi ing chu*, see "Recontextualizing Xing: Self-Cultivation And Human Nature In The Guodian Texts." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 37 (2010): 16–32.

[794] Dirk Meyer, "Writing Meaning: Strategies of Meaning-Construction In Early Chinese Philosophical Discourse." *Monumenta Serica* 56 (2008): 55–95, 66.

reconsidering and discovering a web of connections among early Chinese text. This allowed us to then return to *Natural Dispositions*, and better understand its place in Warring States China. This reciprocal clarification among different bodies of texts is particularly important given the paucity of information on manuscripts. Even when the archeological context is provided, many questions about the selection and grouping of texts remain unanswered.

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