# LANGUAGE AS BODILY PRACTICE IN EARLY CHINA

## A CHINESE GRAMMATOLOGY

JANE GEANEY

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# Contents

Acknowledgments vii

Introduction ix

PART ONE
DISCOUNTING THE LANGUAGE CRISIS IN EARLY CHINA

Chapter 1 The Crisis of Blockage: Accessing and Transmitting Obscure Things 3

Chapter 2 The Crisis of Blockage: Why Not "Language and Reality"? 23

Chapter 3 The Prescriptive Crisis: Nomenclature, Not System 45

Chapter 4 The Prescriptive Crisis: Naming and Distinguishing 63

Chapter 5 The Prescriptive Crisis: Correcting Names without "Performing" Rules 89

PART TWO
UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHINESE CONCEPTIONS OF SPEECH AND NAMES

Chapter 6 Successful "Communication": Getting the *Yi* 意 and Becoming *Tong* 通 113

Chapter 7 "Ritual" versus *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound 141

Chapter 8 *Zhengming* and *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound 167

Chapter 9 Embodied *Zhengming*: How We Are Influenced by Seeing versus Hearing 181

Chapter 10 Separating *Lunyu* 12.11 from *Zhengming* 199

Epilogue 219

Appendix Glossary of Terms with Aural or Visual Associations 235

Bibliography 259

Index 277

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# Introduction

Part of the challenge to understanding ideas about linguistic entities in Early China (ca. 500 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.) is that even the term "language" is misleading.[1] If by "language" we mean a single phenomenon that includes speech, names, and writing—that is, a structure or an abstraction that is manifest in speech and writing—then early Chinese writers were not talking about "language" even implicitly. I cannot avoid the term, however, at least not in my title, because I will be responding to arguments that take for granted that ideas about language in Early China spawned a crisis. The presumption of a language crisis serves as my hook, which helps me organize various scholars' ideas: I strive to argue for an accurate understanding of conceptions of speech and names in early Chinese texts, and the very notion that their presentation of "language" could foster a crisis presupposes erroneous conceptions. This much will become obvious as I approach the idea of language from an unusual angle: its interaction with human bodies.

The interpretation of "language" in early Chinese texts that emerges from my investigation is distinctive. Here, the texts do not describe language in relation to a world of sensory experience and mental ideas; rather, early Chinese texts are repeatedly seen to create pairings of sounds and various visible things. In formulating my analysis of early Chinese ideas about "language," I resist the impulse to fit it into familiar constructions and instead attempt to account for such pairings by conceptualizing how things related to what we think of as language must have been understood in Early China. That is, by "language" in Early China, I mean sounds: speech (*yan* 言) and names/naming (*ming* 名, 命). Language in this sense is more like sounds that issue from the mouth and enter the ears. It is bodily utterances that are emitted and heard—not an abstraction. For some, to describe language as a "bodily practice" might conjure the idea of performance, but I have something different in mind. As I explain below, in early Chinese texts sounds that issue from the mouth are a matter of practice insofar as speech (*yan* 言) is something that is habitual. Along with action and bodies, early Chinese texts present *yan* 言 as a target of self-cultivation. Physiologically speaking, *yan* originates from *qi*. It is an auditory expression of one's heartmind (*xin* 心).[2] As such, it is within one's control. Thus, people can construct their *yan* by cultivating their aims, which precede it. They can also develop habits of *yan* that improve its virtue, in particular, by matching their *yan* to their deeds, thereby achieving a balance between that which is audible and that which is visible. That is, matching one's *yan* to one's actions is a form of matching aural and visual, which is an embodied virtue that is to be expected from a sage and from a virtuous person. Hence, when I refer to early Chinese language as a "bodily practice," I want to suggest not a performance but something more akin to a technology of the self.

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[1] Hans-Georg Moeller succinctly articulates the difficulty of wanting to use the term "language" to describe what is discussed in early Chinese texts. "I am well aware that it is problematic to apply the term 'language philosophy' in its strict sense in regard to ancient Chinese philosophical reflections on 'forms and names' (*xingming* 形名), speech (*yan* 言), writing (*shu* 書), or literature (*wen* 文). Chinese philosophy did not operate with a general notion of 'language' subordinating those concepts and establishing a general and explicit discourse of 'language philosophy.' " Moeller, "Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism," 91.

This bodily practice of "language" differs from more familiar ideas about speech acts in two specific ways. First, early Chinese texts do not discuss phenomena such as a spoken promise making something happen. But in certain contexts, names or naming (*ming* 名, 命) has the power to make something the case. Unlike *yan*, which typically issues from inside a person, *ming* does not express the heartmind, and it is only indirectly an area for self-cultivation.[3] A ruler's *ming*, however, resembles a speech act insofar as the authority to name—that is, to assign titles or issue decrees—makes something the case. Thus, dispensing titles and delivering commands renders the ruler's *ming* a specific kind of utterance that "does things with words." Nevertheless, there is a fundamental disparity between a ruler's *ming* and more familiar understandings of speech acts. Unlike a speech "act," early Chinese texts do not describe this naming as an "action." From the perspective of aural/visual polarities, an action is something else entirely—walking, sitting, standing, and moving. In an aural/visual polarity, what rulers say is audible and what they do is visible, but while a ruler's naming accomplishes the act of making a name refer to something, as I argue below, from the viewpoint of early Chinese texts, it does not thereby count as "doing." Instead, the naming functions as a complement to something visible, like treating the person differently or the person behaving differently.

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[2] As a translation of *xin* 心, I use the awkward but useful term "heartmind" to signal that the faculties of reason and emotion are not separate. In general, to facilitate reader-recognition of graphs that I discuss often, I gloss them using a single term when possible. The admittedly wooden translations that sometimes result serve my goal, which is to emphasize the way words and phrases are repeated.

[3] That is, while one can work on earning a name, ultimately it is up to others to repeat it.

In sum, in describing early Chinese "language" as a "bodily practice" in my title, I mean "language" only in the sense of speaking and naming. I call it "bodily" because it is not an abstraction. Paradigmatically, as I argue below, *yan* come out through the mouth, whereas *ming* enter the ears. Moreover, these sounds should correlate with visible actions or shapes. Finally, I characterize language as a bodily "practice" to emphasize that it is not detachable from its use in everyday experience. Speech is a habit to be cultivated. Names are earned when others take note of one's speech and action.

My subtitle, "A Chinese Grammatology," alludes to the discussion in Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* about the relationship between speech and writing in the Western philosophical tradition. In his remarks on how that relation has been framed through dichotomies such as reality/appearance and presence/absence, Derrida wonders whether Chinese theories of language do something different.[4] With an aural/visual polarity as the frame for "language" in Early China, my response to Derrida's question is affirmative, although it entails rejecting most of his assumptions about the nature of Chinese language.

Other scholars have recognized that early Chinese texts do not foreground dualisms like reality/appearance or one/many, nevertheless, these tenacious binaries resurface in different ways when scholars start to discuss what they take to be ideas about "language" in the texts they consider. While scholars' instincts that the texts do not feature those dualisms are correct, the dichotomies they identify in early Chinese ideas about "language" indicate that their ideas continue to be influenced by those Western philosophical dualisms, whereas the aural/visual polarities that I am offering are firmly grounded in early Chinese texts. The ears hear things like names, fame, speech, and music, whereas the eyes see things like walking, action, forms, shapes, colors, and patterns. Speech and writing inhabit opposing sides of this polarity. Furthermore, in terms of ontology, early Chinese texts do not draw a material/immaterial contrast; instead, they seem to depict a sensory world that is a spectrum of varying degrees of materiality ranging from visible condensed things to less condensed sounds. It seems that along this spectrum, the complementary relations of hearing and seeing extend to other forms of sensing. Thus, there might be something like a continuum of "visibles" and "touchables," on the one hand, and "audibles" and "smellables" on the other. The association between hearing and smelling may reflect the fact that the cavities of the ears and nose are similarly empty.[5] Moreover, smelling, which shares the same term as "hearing," *wen* 聞, cannot be as readily controlled as seeing since one can always shut one's eyes. Tasting seems to be on this side of the polarity too. The mouth—also a cavity but one that can be closed—aligns with sound as aural/oral.[6] On the other side of the polarity, there are more densely packed things that can be seen, perhaps along with things that can be touched.[7] In sum, the things heard and seen are different insofar as the boundaries of what is heard (and probably smelled) are less easily drawn than are those of what is seen (and probably touched).[8] Within this framework, speech and writing, as heard and seen, are not tokens of an overarching thing—language—that is instantiated in either. Instead, they fall on two sides of an interdependent relation in which one side or the other might dominate in any given situation. Hence, it will muddle our understanding of early Chinese ideas about language if we impose on them dualisms modeled on hierarchies of speech and writing.

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[4] As I read it, Jacques Derrida's hope in *Of Grammatology* is that Chinese writing might serve to "dislocat[e], through access to another system linking speech and writing, the founding categories of language and the grammar of the [Western] episteme." Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 92.

A reliance on dualisms like those implicit in speech/writing hierarchies has, nonetheless, led a number of prominent twentieth-century Sinologists to adopt the idea that Early China experienced a "language crisis."[9] While scholars have long read aspects of early Chinese texts as hostile to language, describing this hostility as a full-blown "language crisis" is relatively recent. Since Arthur Waley first suggested the phenomenon in 1934, scholars have widely (and rarely with disapproval) referred to the crisis. Indeed, as time has passed, it has become an uncontroversial fact about early Chinese intellectual history, although disagreements about its content and dates still persist.[10] In Waley's characterization, the crisis consisted of a "discrepancy between language and reality" that emerged when language lost its power to represent. His theory was likely modeled on an early twentieth-century *Sprachkrise*, associated with figures like the early Ludwig Wittgenstein, Franz Kafka, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Robert Musil.[11] That crisis of representation, which drew upon structural linguistics' depiction of language as an oppositional binary system, evokes mystics abandoning language in favor of silence or aphorism as well as poets using figurative language to re-empower it. For Waley, such ideas seem to have resonated unexpectedly in texts from Early China, which prompted him to posit the "language crisis." Half a century later, Chad Hansen's *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (1992) briefly adopted Benjamin Schwartz's portrait of the crisis and used it in a way that reflected a very different understanding of language. Building upon the distinction in twentieth-century philosophy between descriptive and prescriptive language, Hansen identified the function of language in early Chinese conceptions as prescriptive (in his term, "guiding"). In arguing for the view that language provides guidance, Hansen maintained that the "crisis" was triggered by an early Confucian realization—evident in the idea of rectifying names—that it was impossible to know how to consistently follow the sages' guidance in ritual texts.

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[5] The *Huainanzi* associates these cavities with using the useless, an idea related to nonaction.

> 16.6 鼻之所以息, 耳之所以聽, 終以其無用者為用矣.
> That by which the nose breathes, that by which the ear listens: in the end, it treats that which has no use as useful.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說山訓

All citations to early Chinese texts are to the *CHinese ANcient Texts* (*CHANT*) 漢達文庫 database unless otherwise noted. It is worth mentioning that assigning a date to individual passages and phrases in early Chinese texts is generally fraught with difficulties. As Erik Maeder observes, the received versions of early Chinese texts are like loose-leaf binders to which later scholars made additions and deletions. In a few cases when relevant to my argument, however, I will indicate the date attributed to the text as a whole. Maeder, "Some Observations on the Composition of the 'Core Chapters' of the *Mozi*."

[6] This statement in the *Zuozhuan* asserts the link between sound and taste:

> B10.20.8 先王之濟五味、和五聲也, 以平其心, 成其政也. 聲亦如味.
> The former kings balanced the five tastes and harmonized the five sounds in order to level their heartminds and complete their governing. Sounds are also like tastes.
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.20 《昭公二十年傳》

[7] For example, the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter includes "shape" (*xing* 形) in both its list of things that the eyes see and its list of agents that feel things (*xingti* 形體). This shows a link between seeing and touching: what we use to touch (the form and body) is paradigmatically what we see.

[8] In "Binaries in Early Chinese Texts," I propose a theory about early Chinese ontology based on my work on the senses and metaphors of discriminating. Geaney, "Binaries in Early Chinese Texts," 275–92.

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[9] It appears that there was dramatic linguistic change in Early China, but that is not the subject of the claims for a language crisis. Wolfgang Behr speaks of "drastic linguistic developments"—pertaining to "tonogenesis," a rapid rise in disyllabic prosody, classifiers, restructuring of tense-aspect, and syntactic changes—that began to stabilize in the Han and resulted in Early Middle Chinese. Behr, "Role of Language in Early Chinese Constructions of Ethnic Identity," 569.

[10] Scholars' dating of the alleged crisis varies from the fourth to third centuries B.C.E. to an unspecified period when developments in literacy presented problems. See Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 59; Schwartz, *World of Thought in Ancient China*, 169, 222; Hansen, *Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, 92, 404; Raphals, *Knowing Words*, 18; Brooks and Brooks, *Original Analects*, 7; Nylan, "Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han," 250; and Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism*, 88.

Explicit suspicions about the occurrence of a language crisis have been limited and brief. John Makeham denies that the crisis involved language and calls it a sociopolitical crisis. Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought*, 163. Carine Defoort suggests it is a misnomer. Defoort, *Pheasant Cap Master* (He guan zi), 171. See also Hsiu-Chen Jane Chang's "Arthur Waley's *Way and Its Power*," 179.

[11] Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 64. Waley's notion of a language crisis echoes a discourse that was popular around the turn of the century. "The discrepancy between language and reality" bears a strong resemblance to the so-called language crisis in Germany and Austria at the time. On the one hand, the crisis reflected a loss of confidence in the power of language to represent. But on the other, it also implied a celebration of certain kinds of experience that transcend language, perhaps encapsulated in the early Wittgenstein's "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." (I owe this observation about the "positive" side of the crisis to Lorna Martens. Martens, *Shadow Lines*, 211–16.)

Speech/writing dualisms characterize both versions of the early Chinese language crisis. The first suggests that early Chinese texts fault language for blocking access to reality.[12] Hence, people in Early China were caught in the "prison-house of language."[13] Implicit in this view is the notion that language provides access to reality by representing it. This reality-blockage perspective on language can be understood through dualisms like nature/culture, reality/appearance, and presence/absence. The second use of the idea of the language crisis (i.e., Hansen's borrowing of the term) rejects the blockage views but does not escape the lure of dualism. In affirming that early Chinese texts present the function of language as prescriptive, not representative, it still retains the concept of language as a scheme in relation to content. That is, language is a system of discrimination that provides guidance by dividing the world, which is the content, in certain ways.[14] As a scheme/content, it constitutes a different kind of dualism, but a dualism nonetheless. In place of speech/writing, the hierarchy is writing/speech, in the sense of a script and its performance. In this one/many dualism, a single bit of script is held to be constant (if not timeless), while attempts to perform it are multiple.[15] Furthermore, both explications of the crisis treat language as a system that potentially distorts the senses' pure experience.[16] By overlooking the way in which early Chinese texts portray sense discrimination, both versions of the language crisis miss the similarities between linguistic and sensory discrimination and, consequently, deem language responsible for all discrimination. This results in another dualism—nature/culture or immediate/mediated.

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[12] For instance, Mark Berkson asserts that for Zhuangzi, in the process of conveying "the ultimate categories of reality" to the human mind, language distorts them, whereas "natural intuition" provides "unmediated access to reality." Berkson, "Language: The Guest of Reality," 116.

In a similar vein, Jean-François Billeter speaks of language "blinding" rather than blocking reality. In his case this is not exactly a metaphor. He argues that the *Zhuangzi*'s intuition is achieved through vision and that language subjects reality to its forms and structures and thereby obscures reality, making it cease to be visible. He grants that physical movement also structures the world, which he views as a potential challenge to his theory that the *Zhuangzi*'s intuition is visual; hence, he restricts the intuition to moments when the body is motionless. Billeter, "Stopping, Seeing and Language," 21, 28.

[13] The term originates in Fredric Jameson's *Prison-House of Language*. Berkson uses the metaphor of a prison-house to depict the *Zhuangzi*'s view of language. He argues that, like Derrida, Zhuangzi doubts that language has the ability to "present reality objectively" and provide " 'true accounts' of the world in the form of propositional claims." Berkson, "Language: The Guest of Reality," 119, 98–100.

Adopting the same metaphor, Robert Shepherd argues that Zhuangzi promotes *wuwei* 無為 (which he glosses as nondeliberate activity), as a method for coming to terms with this prison-house as our fundamental condition. Shepherd, "Perpetual Unease of Being at Ease? Derrida, Daoism, and the 'Metaphysics of Presence,' " 233.

[14] Hansen invokes the idea of language as a system when he asserts that what he calls "discourse dao" is a system with names at its root (Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 116). Such a dao is "a system of behavior guiding language" (*Daoist Theory*, 138). In Hansen's view, Mengzi rejects the influence of a "language system" (*Daoist Theory*, 176). Moreover, Mengzi accuses Mozi of having two sources of morality, one of which is "a whole system of *shi-fei*'s instilled by social conditioning—

Both constructions of the language crisis take the idea of "language" for granted and present language as detached from utterance. They interpret criticism of *yan* 言 as being about doctrines, rules, maxims, models, "verbal packages," or "abstract linguistic formulas."[17] In other words, instead of taking criticism of *yan*

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the discourse dao" (*Daoist Theory*, 185). Similarly, according to Hansen, Laozi wanted to escape from "social, artificial, unnatural guidance, guidance by a system of distinctions and name pairs" (*Daoist Theory*, 214).

Lisa Raphals's argument is in some ways more like a blockage view, but it too contends that language in early China was "understood as a system of names." Raphals, *Knowing Words*, 73.

[15] It is worth noting that among the texts that potentially date to Early China, only the *Kongcongzi* (possibly a forgery dating to the third century C.E.) explicitly speaks to an idea like "using" a single saying, but this has nothing to do with following an abstract formula. For the *Kongcongzi*, a single *yan* represents succinctness. The passage implies that an excess of rhetoric is the opposite of using a single saying.

> 夫物有定名而論有一至. 是故有可〔以〕一言而得其難極, 雖千言之不能奪者, 唯析理即實為得, 不以濫麗說辭為賢也.
> Now, things have fixed names and sortings (*lun* 論) have one destination. Therefore, it is possible to use a single saying (*yi yan* 一言) to obtain their difficult [to reach] extremes. As for that which even a thousand sayings cannot seize, only by analysis of patterns nearing actions/things (*shi* 實) shall it be gotten. One cannot consider a plethora of pretty explanations and phrases to be worthy.
> *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 卷七 《連叢子上第二十二》《敘世》

[16] Interpreting references to distinction making as being specifically about language is a feature of Hansen's reading of the *Laozi*. Raphals also attributes to the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* the idea that language consists of categories that distort or fail to convey perception. Raphals, *Knowing Words*, 74, 86.

[17] I thank Dan Robins for pointing out that with regard to the *Mengzi* this idea seems to have originated with Tang Junyi (唐君毅), who suggests that the way Gaozi and Mozi use the term *yan* (言) is similar to how they use *yi* (義) and comparable to the contemporary use of *zhuyi* 主義 (-ism or ideology). Tang Junyi, *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun* (中國哲學原論), *Yuan Dao*, vol. 1 (原道篇卷一), 250.

The term "abstract linguistic formulas" comes from Hansen, who attributes this view to Mengzi (Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 178). The phrase "verbal package" is from Nivison, *Ways of Confucianism*, 127.

to be about verbosity or rhetoric, they treat *yan* as a linguistic system or written script that, by definition, is not grounded in the specificity of situations of use.[18] In this view, *yan* is external to the speaking subject.[19] Uses of the term *yan* are taken to refer to something other than the genuine expressions of speakers.[20] In this sense, *yan* blocks access to an inner reality. Moreover, in the understanding of the crisis as a prescriptive failure of language, rigidity is the reason why the *Mengzi* attributes inconstant guidance to *yan*.[21] In sum, in the discourse of the language crisis, familiar dualisms of speech and writing are imposed on early Chinese texts.

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[18] One rare dissenting argument occurs in a series of articles and chapters by Yang Xiao, who has made his case with reference to the ideas of Donald Davidson. Yang contends that we should understand language in the *Lunyu* as "communicative practice," which foregrounds the speaker's purpose in making an utterance. Supporting this, Yang cites Davidson's provocative claim that there is no such thing as language. Davidson writes,

> I conclude that there is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers and linguists have supposed. There is therefore no such thing to be learned, mastered, or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases. And we should try again to say how convention in any important sense is involved in language; or as I think, we should give up the attempt to illuminate how we communicate by appeal to conventions.

(This idea of language as a convention and a structure applied to cases is similar to how Hansen portrays the dominant view of language in Early China, as I explain in chap. 3.) See Yang, "Reading the *Analects* with Donald Davidson," 247–68; Yang, "How Confucians Do Things with Words," 497–532; Yang, "The Pragmatic Turn Articulating Communicative Practice in the *Analects*," 236–54; and Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," 174.

[19] Detachment is the problem with language when scholars say that the texts' discussions of language are about rules rather than speech. Like Hansen, Eric Schwitzgebel says the *Zhuangzi* is talking about "rules expressible in words." Schwitzgebel, "Zhuangzi's Attitude toward Language," 74.

According to David Nivison, the figure in the *Mengzi* called Gaozi held the view that we can achieve an "unmoved mind" by taking "statements of doctrine" and then "implant[ing] the principle . . . in this doctrine into our minds." The image suggests that *yan* 言 is invasive as well as nonnative to the mind's terrain. Nivison, *Ways of Confucianism*, 127–28.

[20] In addition to being a common reading of *yan* 言 in *Mengzi* 2A2, language-as-external is part of Hansen's reading of the *Laozi*.

Edward Slingerland articulates a different sort of interpretation of language as external to the speaker, implying that its externality makes it similar to appearances that are false. Slingerland claims that Kongzi exhibited a "general suspicion of language and outward show." Slingerland, *Confucius*, 2.

The range of interpretations of Kongzi's attitude toward language could not be wider. Zong-qi Cai argues the opposite position: that Kongzi believes in "an inherent, inseparable bond" between, on the one hand, language and, on the other, both sociopolitical realities and what lies in the human mind. Cai, "Early Philosophical Discourse on Language and Reality and Lu Ji's and Liu Xie's Theories of Literary Creation," 478–79.

Scholars rarely specify precisely what they mean by the "language crisis" they have identified, and so an attempt to clarify it is in order. From one scholar to the next, one vague use leads to another since scholars are uncertain as to what exactly their interlocutors mean by the term. In short, though, they seem to be talking about at least two different phenomena. The first is language skepticism, or what Schwartz calls the "full" language crisis. Sinologists assign to it differing origins, dates, and figures, sometimes foregrounding the "Sophists," the "Logicians," the "Disputers" or "Discriminators" (*bianzhe* 辯者), or the "Scholastic Lineage of Names," "School of Names," or "Language Students" (*ming jia* 名家).[22] It is not always clear who we should understand to be included in these names, but they seem mostly to refer to figures whose works are unknown, lost, obscure, and/or forged.[23] Waley notes that language was a burning question in the fourth century b.c.e. Although he cites examples from the *Zhuangzi* and the *Mo Bian*, he credits those he calls the "Discriminators" (*bianzhe*) with having "discovered and to some extent analysed the discrepancy between language and reality."[24] He also observes that the "Language Students" (*ming jia*) aimed to "amend language so that 'every different reality should be expressed by a different word.' "[25] For Schwartz, on the other hand, while the "language crisis" stretched into the third century, it originated in the fourth with the Mohists as its impetus and only reached its "climax" with the Ming Jia.[26] Hansen's use of the idea of a "language crisis" takes it in a different direction. In his view the early Confucian theory of correcting names (*zhengming* 正名) "triggers" the "central theme" that Schwartz calls the language crisis. Hansen adds, "This language crisis has radically different characteristics from Plato's." Its form of linguistic skepticism "raises the worry that we could not tell if we had gone wrong in our use of language."[27] Thus, unlike other scholars, Hansen identifies the origin of the crisis in the early Confucian ritual performance of correcting names, but because he considers rectifying names as a concern of the "school of names" (in his "Analytic Period"), the effects extend to Gongsunlong, whose ideas are "essentially related to the issue of rectifying names."[28] Hansen also mentions that Dengxizi, "famous sophist of the period[,] . . . may have heightened this awareness of the gap between codes and concrete guidance."[29] Thus, the "full" language crisis seems to be some form of language skepticism often, but not exclusively, related to shadowy figures ("School of Names," "Disputers," etc.) whose ideas are lost or exceptionally difficult to interpret.

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[21] Hansen characterizes Mengzi's worry about the "austerity" of language in this way: "Situations will always arise in which any prescriptive discourse will misguide us. Names are not sensitive enough to the complexity of the moral situation to provide constant guidance in making distinctions." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 217.

[22] Thus the "language crisis" falls under what some Chinese scholars have recently described as the overemphasis on logic in scholarship on conceptions of *ming* 名 in Early China. Cao Feng (曹峰) observes that early Chinese texts mostly treat the "logicians" as an object of criticism, and he suggests that their impact was minimal. He contends that the study of traditional Chinese thought has been "thoroughly influenced by the West," and the attention to such figures "is intricately connected to the importation of Western logic into the East." Without mentioning anything like a "language crisis," Cao Feng advocates rethinking the role of *ming* in texts from Early China through the lens of the history of political thought. His position is that "questions of knowledge (*zhi* 知) and language (*yan* 言) in the Chinese tradition always have political implications," and, more controversially, he adds that "the same cannot necessarily be said for the West." Cao Feng, "New Approach to Pre-Qin Discourse on Name," 220, 224–25.

Another Chinese scholar, Gou Dongfeng (苟东锋), is currently working on a new theory of *ming*. He uses a threefold breakdown of its connotations to clarify how early Confucians used *ming* in different ways, again, trying to open up new avenues for conceptualizing it with the aim of extricating it from the influence of interpretations that cast it as logic. Gou Dongfeng, "Three Connotations of Confucian Ming," "儒家之'名' 的三重内涵," 哲学研究 8 (2013), 42–48.

I, too, veer away from investigating "logic" in Early China. Positing that there was logic in Early China takes for granted that we know precisely what logic is. To my mind, there is more to be gained by trying new approaches. As a result, the major figures that some scholars associate with a "language crisis" only come up in my study when things that are attributed to them intersect with the patterns I find in my database searches of the way early Chinese texts use terms related to "language."

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[23] There is no consensus about who belongs in which category, but in Chris Fraser's summary, "With the exception of a few brief texts attributed to Gongsun Long, everything we know [about the seven figures that Han dynasty archivists associate with the Scholastic Lineage of Names] comes from quotations or anecdotes in other texts, including the *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Annals of Lü Buwei*, *Hanfeizi*, and several Han dynasty anthologies. These secondhand accounts typically date from long after the lifetime of the figures they describe, and they may be embellished or dramatized, warped to fit their writers' agenda, or even fictional." Fraser, "School of Names," http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/school-names/.

[24] Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 65.

[25] Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 67.

[26] Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 169, 222.

[27] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 92. Depicting the crisis as leading to a "central theme" in early Chinese philosophy, Hansen writes, "Thus, the rectifying-names theory as a solution to the problem of how to fill the gap between discourse and action triggers a central theme of classical Chinese philosophy, which Schwartz dubs 'the language crisis.' " (*Daoist Theory*, 92). The fear that language does not access ordinary reality could instigate a genuine crisis, but Hansen has argued convincingly that representation of reality is not the main function of language in Early China.

Hansen's prescriptive-inconstancy narrative of rectifying names, however, is even less likely to make linguistic crisis a central theme of early Chinese thought. The crisis that Hansen's narrative describes as triggered by a small group of "traditionalist Confucians" seems to have affected only the figures he associates with the "school of names." There is no urgent problem in the antilanguage views that he attributes to the *Mengzi*. Language is too rigid, but one gets better guidance within the heartmind to replace the inflexibility of linguistic guidance. Moreover, the antilanguage views he attributes to the *Laozi* amount to the observation that language is inconstant in a presumably inconstant world. If this is the case, then linguistic inconstancy would be the norm, not an urgent situation. Hence, because the antilanguage views Hansen ascribes to Mengzi and Laozi lack crisis potential, the impact of the alleged gap between discourse and action would be restricted to the school of names.

In the second, softer version of the language crisis, abuses of language, not language per se, is the problem. Schwartz, for example, postulates that in Early China a "concern about language" preceded the "full language crisis."[30] In reference to that "concern," he asserts that Kongzi did not mistrust language. Citing Hansen's first book, he writes, "If 'ancient Chinese philosophers shared modern Western philosophy's intense interest in language,' in the case of Confucius, this has little to do with any mistrust of language."[31] But Schwartz complicates his position by resorting to the term "crisis" when he adds, "The crisis is not a crisis of language but of the human abuse and distortion of language."[32] We are left wondering whether, in Schwartz's estimation, Kongzi thought that the human abuse of language constituted a "crisis" or just a "concern."[33] Fear of crisis seems implicit in Schwartz's interpretation of *Lunyu* 13.3—"If language is not used in ways which conform to its correct imbedded meanings, the entire human order will become disjointed."[34] Nevertheless, in defending the date he ascribes to the *Lunyu* 13.3, Schwartz asserts that there is no reason to view it as expressing more than a language "concern."[35]

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[28] In response to Schwartz's idea of a mere "language concern" among early Confucians, Hansen proposes continuity of language skepticism from the figures he calls the "traditionalist Confucians" to those he calls the "school of names." He writes, "Schwartz does not recognize any continuity between this Confucian concern with names and the discussions of the school of names. Thus he thinks *The Analects*' concern with names precedes the language crisis proper in ancient China. . . . Denying early Confucians' awareness of the problems simply results in the conclusion that they had *no* philosophical insights. I shall argue below that Kung-sun Lung's position, especially, is essentially related to the issue of rectifying names." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 387 n. 75 (emphasis in original).

[29] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 65. As noted above, without positing a connection to the language crisis sparked by the traditionalist Confucians, Hansen also presents antilanguage attitudes in various forms that differ depending on the text. These include at least two main alternative kinds of prescriptive problems: that language was inconstant (Laozi), and that language was too constant to fit changing circumstances (Mengzi). The language-as-unchanging version asserts that language fails as guidance in tracking the things of the world because language is a code that remains static while the world is changing. The language-as-changing version, which he attributes to Laozi, contends that the inherent inconstancy of language makes it fail as guidance (i.e., no linguistic guidance can be constant). Hansen's presentation of Laozi's view stops short of claiming that it replaces a language dao with a natural dao, because that "presupposes a distinction between distinction making that is *natural* and distinction making that is *conventional*." However, Hansen's rhetoric often implies just that. His Laozi opposes language, worships nature, and accesses nature through the senses, which do not create unnatural divisions as language does: "Daoists as nature worshippers could hardly oppose nature. The senses are our access to nature and its natural effects." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 230 (emphasis in original), 226.

[30] Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 91.

[31] In this book I use the pinyin forms "Kongzi" and "Mengzi" instead of the Latinized "Confucius" and "Mencius," but I do not alter the Latinized forms when they occur within quotations.

Responding to Schwartz, Hansen grants Kongzi's concern about the abuse of language, but he asserts that early Confucian *zhengming* was designed to correct it.

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[32] Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 91–92.

[33] In the context of a literature review of late twentieth-century Anglo-American scholarship on Kongzi, Chinese scholar He Tian (何恬) claims that "many" of these philosophers (including Fingarette) treat the question of *zhengming* like a kind of Western philosophical "language crisis" problem. This might be overstating the case a bit (in terms of Fingarette, who does not mention a language crisis), but she is right about Schwartz. She notes that the modern scholarly discourse about the early Chinese language crisis tends not to concern the thought of Kongzi per se but rather the later discourses of the Ming Jia (名家) and the *Mo Bian* (墨辯). As she points out, Schwartz's Western conception of a language crisis nonetheless bleeds into his interpretation of the *Lunyu*, despite his own admission that what occurs in the *Lunyu* is really just about the misuse of language. That is, using Platonic terminology, Schwartz interprets Kongzi as wanting to transcend language to an ultimate unity beyond all words. As He Tian observes, that interpretation of Kongzi's attitude toward language makes Schwartz's presentation of *zhengming* look like a case of dragging Kongzi into the framework of Western epistemology. He Tian, "此山之外——20世纪70年代以来的英美孔子研究," 112–21. 〈〈孔子研究〉〉2009年第2期, 第112–21页.

[34] Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 92.

[35] Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 91–92. More recently, Michael Nylan refers to a "naming crisis" that involves a mismatch of people's actions, on the one hand, and titles or words, on the other. She notes that the *Zuozhuan* highlights the need for Confucian *zhengming* by portraying "the increasingly nightmarish quality of life as moral language gradually comes to lose all meaning." Here she alludes to a translation of *Thucydides* 3.82.4, citing the work of James White. (Nylan, *Five "Confucian" Classics*, 288, 274). But again, this is probably less a problem of language than one of people misusing language. In John Wilson's translation, *Thucydides* 3.82.4 says that in times of war, people

> exchanged their usual verbal evaluation of deeds for new ones, in light of what they now thought justified; thus irrational daring was considered courage for the sake of the Party; prudent delay, specious cowardice.

On Wilson's reading, the line is not about word meanings. Wilson argues that the change *Thucydides* describes is an alteration in the values that people verbally attach to deeds. He contends that it does not make sense to interpret the line as saying the words' meanings have changed. That is, the people in the Thucydides passage would only question the misuse of language from a position of confidence that language has a proper use. See Wilson, " 'The Customary Meanings of Words Were Changed,' or Were They?," 18–20, and Hogan, "The ἀξίωσις of Words at Thucydides 3.82.4," 139–49.

He suggests that believing that humans are distorting language is likely to lead to questions about the reliability of language, which is what *zhengming* is about. He asks, “If we accept that naïve faith in language, how is such distortion possible? How do we know that *we* have not distorted it? . . . What is rectifying names supposed to correct?”[36] That is, in Hansen’s opinion, people with philosophical insight would not maintain that humans have distorted language without also expressing skepticism about language itself. But, as noted above, Hansen only states that early Confucian *zhengming* “triggers” the crisis.[37] In short, Schwartz’s “language concern” is an attempt to address early Confucian ideas about the distortion of language as signifying not a crisis but a prelude to it, whereas Hansen thinks any “language crisis” would involve precisely those early Confucian ideas about language distortion on the grounds that abuses of language would have led the Confucians to language skepticism.

All of which begs the question, Could early Chinese understandings of speech and names have produced a language crisis? I not only believe that they did not; they could not. Ideas about speech and names embodied in early Chinese texts would not have provoked a linguistic crisis in any form. In exploring patterns involving words for speech, names, and writing, I have found no evidence that speech, names, and writing were understood as belonging to a single phenomenon that we would call language. By default, then, since there was no theoretical construct comparable to the overarching idea of “language” in Early China, there could be no crisis concerning it. Therefore, if we recall that defining “language” as encompassing speech and writing is anachronistic for this period in Chinese history, we can avoid the trap of supposing that there was an alien monolith with the potential to block or be imposed on a person from the outside.[38]

In evaluating whether or not there was an early Chinese language crisis, it is also helpful to notice that modern discussions of it are rife with disparities about what it was, when it happened, which texts evince it, and how it all ended. In addition, we should consider the shadiness of the figures whose ideas are supposed to have constituted the “full” crisis: there are almost no reliable extant texts associated with the main culprits, who apparently did not succeed in disrupting anything (if that was their goal). Indeed, the very notion of a full-blown crisis continually recedes from view in the scholarly discourse, which portrays it as perpetually in the making or off stage. As a consequence, we could easily consider ourselves justified if we downgraded the crisis to a concern. Our concern, however, would not be equivalent to Schwartz's because the patterns in early Chinese texts that we have so far recognized focus not on language but on speaking and naming.

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[36] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 387 n. 75 (emphasis in original).

[37] He later revises this to “topically” initiating “philosophical reflection on puzzles about dao.” Thus it appears that instead of sparking a “crisis” central to early Chinese philosophy, *zhengming* only spawns “philosophical reflections on puzzles.” Hansen, “Metaphysics of Dao,” 223.

[38] Recognizing that the texts attribute distinction making to the senses as well as to the process of “disputing” or “debating” (*bian* 辯 and 辨) also reduces the likelihood that objections to discrimination are about “language” discriminations.

In fact, even our concern seems somewhat misplaced, because in early Chinese texts, the ordinary expectations for speech and names are met. The goal of names, which have the task of attaching to or selecting out things in the world, seems generally to have been achieved. While names are not expressive, there is an anticipation that speech will express something about the speaker, and at times the expressions concern things that simply cannot be gotten. However, teaching, rather than speech per se, is faulted for not conveying such things.[39] The deceptiveness of rhetorically skilled individuals apparently persuaded many people that any breakdown in the alignment of speech and action must be attributed to the pliability of speech rather than to a failure of action, but this suspicion was restricted to rhetorical speech. A similar problem arose for names. Rulers who mistitled officers created situations in which names did not match actions. Moreover, many things cannot be named or given visual form, but people attempted to do so nonetheless. In the end, it is reasonable to propose that there was some concern about speech and names in early Chinese texts, but evidence suggests that the concern was measured.

A word about "dao" is in order. While the term is occasionally used to mean "to tell" in early Chinese texts, it is not used to mean "language." The dao is neither another way of talking about language nor a reality on the other side of it. I argue below that early Chinese texts do not implicitly use a type-token model to understand language, which also applies to dao.[40] At the same time, they also do not contend that the absence of language would liberate a person's spontaneous responses and thereby provide access to the dao. Beyond the fact that the dao is as resistant to being presented as a visual form as it is to being articulated as a name, the metaphor of access is itself misleading. In this sense, "getting" (*de* 得) is more like "achieving." There is no reason to assume that early Chinese texts posit reality as a plane inaccessible to a plane of language, where the subject is trapped. So too, the dao is not in another plane. In early Chinese texts, the spatial metaphors for dao suggest it is "walked" (*xing* 行), "adhered to" (*xun* 循), "followed" (*cong* 從), and even, in the case of the *Zhuangzi*, "ridden" (*cheng* 乘). As the metaphor of the footpath implies, the goal is not to cross over into the dao but to walk it. The nominal use of dao is sometimes modified by "reaching" (*zhidao* 至道) and "attaining" (*dadao* 達道), perhaps best translated as "the utmost dao." Hence we can infer that dao is something that extends to extreme limits and that its extension makes it particularly valuable. In light of the walking and following metaphors, then, dao is not a fixed place but, rather, a place that itself continues to extend and reach. The metaphor of the footpath implies that people might resist following the dao but not that they are trapped outside of it.

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[39] This is my argument in chap. 1.

[40] That is, "dao" is not used, as in Hansen's terms, to mean "discourse dao" and "performance dao."

Occasional rhetorical excess notwithstanding, early Chinese texts do not depict an emergency or drastic behavior that would merit being classified as a language crisis. Even to acknowledge a political name crisis depends on accepting at face value the *Xunzi*'s hyperbolic rhetoric. The "Zhengming" chapter implies that dubious people were subverting the order of the ruler's names (or titles) by splitting phrases and creating odd ones. The chapter offers examples of phrases that had evidently confused people, and it prescribes punishments for strange phrases similar to those imposed for disrupting tallies and measures. Thus, while we might grant a justifiable fear that strange phrases were facilitating forgery and cheating (a lamentable but not a drastic situation), it seems that antilanguage interpretations of texts from Early China misidentify contempt for verbosity, rhetoric, reputation, textual authority, or binary discrimination as a language crisis. But to quibble about the level of concern or the degree of crisis is not really what is at stake here; instead, I will argue, to deny that there was a language crisis in Early China is to recognize that the very idea of a "language crisis" signals a fundamental misunderstanding of early Chinese conceptions of "language."

## Language and Writing

Early Chinese texts do not question or oppose language because they do not operate with the idea of "language." An idea of language is something that might arise in particular historical conditions. Before the first century C.E., people in Early China seem to have been unaware of the existence of any forms of writing other than their own, which helps explain why they would not think of writing and speech as two manifestations of a larger entity called language.[41] To understand the argument that follows, one must recognize a distinction between recorded speech and what linguist Roy Harris calls "non-glottic writing" (diagrams, emblems, and hexagrams).[42] In Early China, writing was singled out as uniquely significant.[43] It had a prestige that resulted from its uses for notation, memory, and communication (sometimes with the spirits). There is evidence that, from Shang times (ca. 1500–1045 B.C.E.), a certain kind of writing was used to measure time, based on the movements of heaven, with no obvious relation to speech.[44] Consequently, one means of conforming to heaven was to follow these so-called "ten stems" and "twelve branches." Moreover, the ritual power of writing on oracle bones from the Late Shang (1200–1045 B.C.E.) involved not only the inscriptions themselves but also various types of signs to be interpreted, including the cracks in the bones, the sounds of their cracking, and their portents. Bronze inscriptions from the Western Zhou (1045–771 B.C.E.) also attest to ritual uses of non-glottic writing. Although from the Western Zhou to the pre-imperial period, the ritual aspect of writing is less evident, it recurred in a different and more potent form as the empire took hold.[45] Texts from imperial times associate the origin of writing with cosmic inscriptions in the form of animal and bird tracks, not stories about recording speech. They also conflate the origin of writing with numinous hexagrams, which have nothing to do with recording speech.

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[41] Texts from Early China sometimes use *yan* 言 to depict written texts, but that does not imply *yan* was employed to mean "language." It merely reflects the understanding that writing can be used to record speech. Early Chinese texts also mention the *yan* of certain animals, as well as the *yan* of people from other regions. There were many *yan* and only one thing that was writing.

Before the first millennium, people from the central plain region had not yet encountered non-Sinographic scripts. As Daniel Boucher notes, prior to contact with a "significant literary other" at the beginning of the Common Era, "we have no reason to believe that any of the languages on the periphery of the Chinese empire had a written form at least in this earliest period" (Boucher, "Translation," 497). Strikingly, a passage in the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu* notes that in the distant region of Anxi (probably Parthia), as reported by the envoy Zhang Qian in 126 B.C.E., people "made records by writing on leather horizontally" (畫革旁行以為書記. *Shiji* 史記 傳 《大宛列傳第六十三》). The description suggests nothing unusual about the Anxi writing except its leather materials and horizontal direction. Perhaps the reason the envoy did not mention any other surprising features of the writing was that he did not see it himself. Indeed, much of his information about Parthia was indirect (Wang, "Parthia in China," 92). Assuming he had not actually seen the horizontal writing on leather, perhaps he presumed it resembled a Sinographic script in other ways.

Given these historical conditions, it is not surprising that early Chinese texts do not treat non-glottic writing, on the one hand, and speech/names, on the other, as two different forms of a single entity, language.[46] Texts from Early China did not posit abstractions that united speech and writing; instead, insofar as they compared them at all, they subsumed speech and writing on different sides of the aural/visual polarity. According to this polarity, names pertain to the audible side, while actions, events, and things pertain to the visible. Hence, (audible) names and speech pertain to one side, while writing pertains to the other.

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[42] The distinction between glottic and non-glottic writing is central to Roy Harris's *Signs of Writing*, but see especially 13–14.

[43] Zhang Longxi comments on this important difference in understandings of Chinese writing: "Chinese writing is never conceived as a mere recording of oral speech but as originating independently of speech." He does not, however, draw the same inference regarding its implications for ideas about language in Early China. Zhang, *Tao and the Logos*, 22.

The cosmological origins of writing differ from the conventional origins of names. In arguing that Chinese graphs play the interlinguistic role of Platonic ideas in Early China, Hansen observes that classical Chinese theories explain the relation of language (by which he means graphs) to the world as conventional (Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 38). But the mythology of the origin of the Chinese script does not focus on convention. See Geaney, "Grounding 'Language,' in the Senses," 253–255.

[44] Keightley, "Art, Ancestors, and the Origins of Writing in China," 74.

[45] Kern, "Performance of Writing in Western Zhou China," 115.

[46] Early Chinese texts consistently portray *yan* 言 and *ming* 名 in vocal and aural terms. As Christopher Leigh Connery writes, "the early Chinese stories do not make it clear that writing and speech can even be considered as two versions of the same phenomenon, namely, communication in language." Connery, *Empire of the Text*, 34. See also Geaney, "Sounds of *Zhengming*," 107–18.

Written texts, however, present an important distinction. Early Chinese texts regularly refer to books as "saying" and "speaking" (*yue* 曰 and *yan* 言) and they sometimes enumerate the contents of texts in *yan*. They do so because they understand books to be records of what people said.[47] Indeed, presumably because writing records speech (*yan*), the "Yu Lao" chapter of the *Hanfeizi* says, "What is written is speech (*yan*)" (書者言也). The line is not making the odd claim that writing is language. This is evident if we attend to the bodily metaphors early Chinese texts use to depict speech and writing. Hands produce writing. *Yan* comes from mouths.[48] Moreover, there is relevance in the fact that the length of a single *yan* varied. If *yan* was understood as a unit of "language" (like a word), we would expect it to have a uniform size. Instead, one *yan* can be as small as what one might think of as a single syllable or as large as an extended stretch of speech. Furthermore, books' contents being counted by their number of *yan* was a phenomenon that lasted only until a specific term for an individual unit of writing had arisen. The term *zi* 字 eventually became the first uniform term for "word" in Early China. Along with that change, an individual unit of writing became a "sociological word" (not a grammatical or linguistic concept, but the unit that is in the consciousness of general public).[49] As others have argued, the burgeoning of the authority of written texts in the Qin and Han periods signaled that writing was increasingly seen as the technology that could unify the empire by representing the constancy of culture.[50] The mythology that supported this development emphasized the idea of ordered, patterned markings not the capacity of writing to transcribe speech. Prior to the uniform use of a word for "word," then, there could be no theories for or against "language."

The sense that there was a language crisis in Early China is founded on interpreting terms like *yan* 言 and *ming* 名 to mean "language" and "words"—overarching types that have tokens in spoken and written media. The polarities of sound and sight and the usage of terms in early Chinese texts indicates that *yan* and *ming* were not conceptualized through type/token models.

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[47] My point here involves how writing was conceptualized, not the much-disputed subjects of whether texts were originally oral and the degree of availability of written texts in Early China. Nevertheless, the gradual shift from the emphasis on names to the emergence of a concept of "word" as a written unit that I describe here might lend indirect support to some historians' claims about a transition from oral to written transmission during the Han. See Nugent, "Manuscript Culture," 72, and n. 59 below.

[48] For more of this argument, see Geaney "Grounding 'Language' in the Senses," 251–93.

[49] Chao, *Grammar of Spoken Chinese*, 136–138. By "word" in this context, I mean a unit that is intended to serve for both writing and speech. See my *Emergence of Word-Meaning in Early China* (forthcoming) for a description of how the various ways in which linguists and philosophers define "word" can help and hinder an understanding of ideas in early Chinese texts.

[50] See Connery, *Empire of the Text*; and Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*.

## Non-glottic Writing and Ideographs

To grasp some of the ways in which Chinese writing has been conceptualized as isolated from speech, we can consider Sinological debates that highlight how it is even possible to think of writing as not being the product of speech. The debates concern whether language in general has to be something that is inherently spoken.[51] At least partly in reaction against an Orientalist tradition that fetishized Chinese graphs, some Sinologists have insisted that language does in fact require speech.[52] One counterargument is that sign language and mathematical sign systems are also languages.[53] While the status of math and sign language might seem irrelevant when considering the nature of Chinese writing, the analogy actually illustrates some of the ways in which early Chinese texts present non-glottic writing. They credit Fu Xi with creating mathematics, not just writing, which he invented after trigrams and knotting cords, according to the "Xici" (繫辭). He is also one of the sages who is said to have received the River Chart, which is a mathematical diagram.[54] Thus, writing's connection to mathematics is, in part, what has made it seem unlike a transcription of speech. Scholars have also turned to modern sign language—on the theory that it shares "ideographic" features of the Chinese script—in arguing that the principles of communication in Chinese writing are derived from something other than speech.[55] That is, in sign language there are visual constraints on the use of space that resemble those in Chinese writing (both in archaic Chinese oracle bone inscriptions and in the later codification of stroke order rules). According to this line of reasoning, the sequence in which a graph's components are written resembles the means by which sign language mimes concepts. For example, as Yau Shun-chiu has argued, in order to show something like a hand reaching for a ball—a concept that might easily be confused with a ball coming toward a hand—both sign language and oracle bone inscriptions first indicate the ball and subsequently indicate the hand.[56] Regardless of whether one accepts these claims, they suggest how graphs can be seen as having more in common with visual than with spoken modes of communication. Instead of appearing to be a written form of speech, graphs might seem to be associated with speech merely by convention. Thus, to understand early Chinese conceptions of writing, it helps to consider that associations with visual communication and notation have lent it a measure of independence from speech.

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[51] It is not clear whether Hansen means to argue that Chinese writing refers directly to things without the mediation of speech. He writes, "If Chinese writing does not *merely* record speech, then the generalization is false" (emphasis added). Hansen, "Chinese Ideographs and Western Ideas," 377.

[52] For the attack on the idea of ideographs, see DeFrancis, *Chinese Language*; DeFrancis, *Visible Speech*; DeFrancis and Unger, "Rejoinder to Geoffrey Sampson, 'Chinese Script and the Diversity of Writing Systems,'" 549–54.

[53] Hansen writes, "[Sign language] is an eloquent riposte to the view that some deep evolutionary mechanism has doomed us to be vocal creatures." Hansen, "Chinese Ideographs," 385.

[54] Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, 201.

[55] Yau Shun-chiu (游顺钊) might mean what Hansen might not: that sinographs were invented to record intentions directly into writing. Yau, "Temporal Order," 187–213.

## Writing and Abstract Linguistic Concepts

One might object that the idea of a "word" would inevitably occur to anyone thinking philosophically about language. But we should acknowledge that influences like the study of grammar—in Greek and Latin the idea of the "word" emerged as a grammatical construct—have made the word's autonomy seem obvious.[57] In addition, scholars in various disciplines have argued that, with sufficient literacy, the technology of writing provides a model for thinking about linguistic abstractions, including segmenting sequences of speech.[58] Even if Early China had had the requisite level of literacy, however, other impediments may have slowed the process by which writing served as a model for speech.[59]

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[56] In order to evoke concepts visually, Yau argues, ideographic writing and sign language require similar uses of space and motion. Yau cites a dozen of these constraints, but for the purpose of illustration (as above) we might first consider the one he calls "operand-operator." Other examples include specified/specifier, base/appendix, focus/peripheral, topic/comment, support/supported, container/content, location/event, orientation/movement, cause/effect, means/action, and action/result. Yau, "Temporal Order," 188–91.

[57] The authors of the passage on "word" in the *Dictionary of Untranslatables* note, "It was the predominance of parts of speech in the process of forging a grammar that placed the segmentation into words at the center of how language was discussed." Baratin et al., "Word." Retrieved from http://newman.richmond.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/prunt/word/0.

[58] David R. Olson argues that writing facilitates awareness of linguistic structures and units. Olson, *World on Paper*, 68, 82. See also Harris, *Rethinking Writing*, 207–11.

Jack Goody observes that the LoDaaga of Northern Ghana have no term for "word" but use a term like "a bit of speech." He notes, "The formal separation of words is of first importance for the study of language; implicit separation there is in oral cultures, but not the explicit divisions on which much linguistic analysis depends." Goody, *Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 274.

The argument that writing technology enhances the ability to recognize speech segments begins with the observation that speech sounds are continuous, which makes it difficult to identify individual units of speech. To individuate units, then, one would have to resort to a different model with the capacity to enhance the ability to isolate them. When we correlate two different systems—in this case, speech and writing—the more structured system will necessarily affect how we understand the elements of the less clearly structured one. For example, when we correlate music with musical notation, we understand the structure of the music differently and hear its parts differently than we did before. When writing is used to record speech, it creates breaks or spaces that are visible, and those breaks, in turn, can help people think about speech as consisting of similar units. Thus, the argument goes, in a nondeterministic way (because other factors might be relevant), writing facilitates the process by which a society develops the concept of standardized units of speech.

In the case of Early China, it is hard to disagree that writing had something to do with the invention of the term for a minimal speech unit because the one eventually selected for "word" was specifically used to mean a unit of writing (*zi* 字).[60] If, however, we do not begin with the assumption that texts in Early China already presumed a notion of the abstraction "word," then we can appreciate the obstacles facing the idea of taking writing as the model for speech. To do so would require not only appropriate levels of literacy but also the belief that the two systems to be correlated are indeed connected. Conversely, if the two were understood to be different in origin and even in some sense at odds with each other—as an aural and visual polarity—then the notion of using one to identify the structures of the other would hardly seem evident.

Some scholars have argued that during the Warring States period, as today, graphs were used as a kind of interlanguage for disambiguating utterances.[61] But this theory requires rethinking for the period prior to standardization.[62] The nonalpha-

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[59] The nature and the levels of literacy in Early China are disputed, and the scholarship on literacy is expansive. For a brief overview of the current dominant viewpoints on orality and literacy, see Nugent, "Literary Media," 48–51. See also Li Feng and Branner, eds., *Writing and Literacy in Early China*.

[60] *Zi* 字 was used as "graph" at least by the first century B.C.E.

[61] This is a less compelling feature of Hansen's persuasive argument that Chinese theories of language did not posit abstract mental ideas. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 36–40.

[62] Imre Galambos writes, "Mawangdui manuscripts also reveal that character structure was not standardized during the Western Han." Galambos, *Orthography of Early Chinese Writing*, 43. The *Shuowen Jiezi* is sometimes taken to mark the completion of the standardization. Boltz, *Origin and Early Development of the Chinese Writing System*, 156.

betic script of Early China was written in "scriptura continua." In other parts of the world, scriptura continua used in conjunction with alphabetic scripts did not produce readily discernible ways of segmenting spoken language.[63] But in the case of the early Chinese nonalphabetic script, the same amount of space surrounds each graphic sign, which would seem to highlight, or call attention to, it. We might assume, then, that a single morpheme would appear to be an obvious minimal speech unit. But in some bamboo manuscripts dating from around the Warring States or Han, disyllabic words are condensed into one written "space" in a kind of contraction.[64] Meanwhile, in other cases, prefixes of one spoken word became semanticized, resulting in two separate graphs for one spoken word.[65] Hence, there was a disparity between the number of written graphs and the number of syllables in a given bit of speech. Discoveries over the past fifty years also show that, in contrast to received texts, which only occasionally employ nonstandardized graphs, orthographic inconsistency is a fundamental feature of recently excavated early Chinese texts. Such differences cannot be attributed to graphic styles or regional habits of writing since excavated texts from the same locale and time—even from the same scribe—exhibit some degree of orthographic variability, whether that involves using the same graph to write more than one spoken word, using more than one graph to write a single spoken word, or using graphs with similar sounds or structures to write spoken words.[66] Contemporary scholars even argue that graphs that were completely unrelated to spoken words (either in sound or in structure) were sometimes used to write them.[67] Scribes in Early China could not have thought of the graphs themselves as the things they were intending to write by means of graphs; otherwise the graphs would have been more consistent. Absent the assumption that scribes conceived of graphs as the means for writing word-types (of which speech and writing were tokens), they must have understood themselves to be using graphs to write the intended sounds. As long as the intended sound was understood, some leeway in the depiction of the graph was acceptable; the sounds would have determined the identity of the visual graph. But such a circumstance would seem to run counter to a movement to use graphs as the model for understanding the structure of speech sounds. All of this variability reflects a situation in which the speech did not at first seem enough like the writing for the latter to serve as a model for the former. One or the other would have had to conform before an abstract unit of language, in the sense that it encompassed both speech and writing, could have been conjectured.

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[63] The scriptura continua style of writing is not exclusive to Chinese. It is sometimes characteristic of ancient Phoenician, Greek, Latin, and Medieval Nordic manuscripts.

[64] Branner, "Phonology in the Chinese Script," 97–99.

[65] Boltz, "Where Have All the Prefixes Gone?," 756.

[66] Galambos, *Orthography*, 155.

[67] For example, as Matthias Richter points out, this includes a graph that might have been used to write "dao" in one of the manuscripts of the Guodian *Laozi*. Richter calls these "uncertain cases of characters that apparently have nothing at all in common." An argument of that sort might be difficult to defend, but the important point is that the state of graphic variation is such that scholars have nevertheless entertained the possibility. Richter, "Suggestions Concerning the Transcription of Chinese Manuscript Texts—A Research Note," http://www.bamboosilk.org/admin3/html/Matthias%20Richter01.htm. Originally published in *International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents: Newsletter* 國際簡帛研究通訊 3.1 (March 2003): 1–12.

If graphic standardization was not complete even as late as the Western Han, then during the Warring States period, when parts of the philosophical classics were written, the script had certainly not been standardized either. Again, if we do not presume that the idea of an abstract word was obvious, then we can appreciate that other nonstandardized features of writing might have presented barriers to adopting such an idea. To arrive at the conception of language operative in the *Shuowen Jiezi* around the beginning of the second century, where a "word" is understood as a single graph the pronunciation of which is clearly secondary, a number of changes would have had to have occurred already. First, speech and writing would have been perceived as similar enough for writing to become a model for speech. Second, the idea of a unit, borrowed from writing, would have been imposed on speech in order to posit a uniform spoken word. Third, the value of a written graph would have superseded the value of speech.

If early Chinese texts operated with a type-token distinction for *ming*, we might expect them to exhibit puzzlement about how two *ming* could be "the same," which is then resolved by the idea of being two tokens of the same type. On the contrary, we see only another approach: *ming* in relation to actions and things. A few passages in early Chinese texts draw attention to the existence of multiple names for the same thing and one name for multiple things, but there are no cases that question how two *ming* can be "the same" *ming*. The problem of many particulars and one thing that is shared among them rarely arises, but the tale in the *Hanfeizi* chap. 32 is one example.

> 鄭縣人有得車軛者, 而不知其名, 問人曰: 「此何種也? 」對曰: 「此車軛也. 」俄又復得一. 問人曰: 「此是何種也? 」對曰: 「此車軛也. 」問者大怒曰: 「曩者曰車軛, 今又曰車軛, 是何眾也? 此女欺我也！」遂與之鬬.
> A person from Zheng acquired a yoke but he did not know its name. He asked someone saying, "What kind (*zhong* 種) is this?" The reply was "That is a yoke." Suddenly he acquired another yoke and he asked someone, "What kind is this one?" The reply was, "This is a yoke." The questioner became very angry and said, "The former one was called a yoke. Now this one is also called a yoke. How can there be so many? In this you're deceiving me!" Thereupon he started a fight with him.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左上第三十二

Not knowing the *ming* (name), the man asks for the "kind." He describes the answers he gets as people's "saying" (*yue* 曰), suggesting an equation of names, kinds, and what people call things. We can infer that the story is supposed to be humorous, because his ignorance about something as obvious as two things sharing a name leads to an altercation. A rare serious discussion of one *ming* for two *shi* occurs in the "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi*. The passage is concerned to establish which circumstances (change or different locations) make something count as one or two *shi*. But the emphasis is on what counts as two *shi*, not on any need to account for how one name can be "the same" while being used for two *shi*.[68]

Even when graphic correction was explicitly proposed in Early China, the terms used were *zhengzi* 正字 and *zhengti* 正體, rather than *zhengming* 正名.[69] Considered in this light, earlier philosophical discussions of *zhengming* 正名 (correcting names) could only have used *ming* to mean names as sounds. Different graphs could write the sounds in different ways, resulting in sounds with various written forms. It would be implausible to imagine that correcting (straightening) *ming* might be used to mean correcting both the sound and the graph because there was no single graph for each spoken word. If there was no compelling pressure to use specific graphs to write each speech segment, then there is little reason to believe that a spoken word and a written word were both considered tokens of a single word-type. Hence, it is unlikely that early Chinese texts operated with a type-token distinction for *ming*.

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[68] There is also a passage about one *ming* 名 and two *shi* 實 in the Warring States military text the *Wei Liao Zi*, which describes a context wherein rations are being illicitly allotted to soldiers who have fled from duty:

> 名為軍實. 是有一軍之名, 而有二實之出, 國內空虛.
> Names are the *shi* of the military. So this is a case of there being one military name but there being two *shi* [rations] expended, [as a result of which] the state's insides become empty.
> *Wei Liao Zi* 尉繚子 《兵令下》

(For paying salaries in grain, see chap. 2, n. 15.)

The alternative situation, different *ming* for one *shi*, occurs in the *Mo Bian* discussion of a dog. Different *ming* for one *shi* is also implied in a compound *ming*, which is a two-part personal name. The *Baihutong* explains that "compound" (兼 *jian*) *ming* for infants indicates something that is "not one" (示非一也). *Baihutong* 白虎通 姓名.

[69] According to Galambos, "The word *zheng* 正, which usually means 'correct' could also be interpreted with reference to characters as 'standard.' This usage is documented in the compound word *zhengzi* 正字 or *zhengti* 正體 which not only refer to the correct way of writing a character, but also to a constant way of writing it, implying an existence of a standard." Galambos, *Orthography*, 49.

## Changes in "Old Chinese"

Knowledge of the history of Old Chinese is limited, and most of the changes in the spoken language would have been too subtle to influence early Chinese ideas consciously. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Old Chinese underwent phonological, lexicographical, and morphological shifts, and in the field of historical linguistics, some consensus has emerged about the nature of those changes. For instance, some agree that, at one point, Old Chinese featured many morphological and phonological devices.[70] Scholars of historical linguistics speculate that there may have been as many as fourteen morphological elements—perhaps including nouns formed from verbs and inactive verbs from active verbs—most of which were obsolescent either by the end of the Warring States or the Eastern Han.[71] Moreover, scholars generally concur that Old Chinese was not entirely monosyllabic, although the likely percentage of disyllabic words in Early China is disputed.[72]

The political rhetoric about uncorrected names and split phrases likely had nothing to do with these linguistic shifts since most would have been so gradual as to have been all but unnoticeable. Still, a documented concern about having lost the proper music and pronunciations of the past betrays a striking conservatism about sound. In a culture that valued sound and sought to balance it with vision, alterations in sound would undoubtedly have been keenly felt.[73] If such changes were "in the air," then people may have sensed that something untoward had happened to speech, which could be blamed on a plausible target: the rhetoric-wielding verbal "disputers" (*bianzhe* 辯者). In any case, by the second century, one commentator,

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[70] The study of historical linguistics in Early China involves techniques like extrapolating from variant readings in medieval rhyme books, comparing rhyme texts with transcriptions of foreign words, and studying word games, glosses, and inconsistencies in *xiesheng* (諧聲) series (the use of one character as the phonetic in another).

David Prager Branner explains why this consensus does not necessarily extend to scholars in China in "On Early Chinese Morphology and Its Intellectual History," 45–76.

[71] Behr, "The Idea of a 'Constant' Way," in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology*, 17, 19–20.

Branner writes that the morphology in early Chinese was no longer present in the standard language of the late Warring States and Han. "Common Chinese and Early Chinese Morphology," 706–21.

William Boltz makes a similar point. Boltz, "Where Have All the Prefixes Gone?," 755.

[72] See Boltz, *Origin and Early Development*, 171. According to Endymion Wilkinson, only 78 percent of the *Mengzi* is monosyllabic. Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 31.

[73] In "Sounds of *Zhengming*," I suggest that diachronic changes in the sounds of music and speech might have had an indirect effect on the idea of straightening names. Geaney, "Sounds of *Zhengming*," 132–34.

Zheng Xuan, signaled his recognition of the presence of change when he registered the unorthodox ways in which prefixes were written in earlier texts.[74] That is, when commenting on certain cases in ancient texts of two adjacent graphs, Zheng Xuan demonstrated an awareness that the first of the two might have no purpose other than to indicate the beginning sound of the word written by the second. In other words, he was cognizant of the existence of sounds that, no longer meaningful, had formerly contributed to the meaning of a linguistic unit. It seems that when a linguistic unit was conceptualized as a graph (*zi* 字), it made evidence of former sound changes available to readers like Zheng Xuan.

## Book Summary

In the book that follows, I challenge the assumption of an early Chinese language crisis in order to highlight its reliance on flawed interpretations of ideas about language in Early China. The "blockage" explanation of the crisis treats language as a medium that is supposed to represent reality, and it depicts early Chinese texts as lamenting language's inability to do so. The "prescriptive-inconstancy" version of the crisis treats language as a system of guidance. It contends that some early Chinese thinkers recognized the problem of knowing how to apply the guidance correctly and proposed to resolve it by rectifying names in ritual performance.

Both renderings of the language crisis fault language, either for failing to provide access or for failing to guide. Although there are important differences between the two views, they are similar insofar as the ideas about language they ascribe to early Chinese texts present it as detached from the body and its senses and, literally or metaphorically, in accord with "writing." Neither view treats *yan* 言 and *ming* 名 primarily as things that enter or emerge from bodies. They share the assumption that early Chinese texts discuss language as something abstracted from situations of speaking.

Replacing these theories with one of my own, I argue that "language" is the wrong category from which to observe early Chinese texts, and in them, speech and names differ in significant ways. The purpose of speech is to express one's heartmind and to allow others to gain access to what is on one's mind. In addition, speech plays a part, along with action, in earning oneself a name. The purpose of names is to tag things in the world: to pick out paradigmatically visible things. Names are in some sense external to us. They are related to fate (*ming* 命); they do not express one's heartmind. The exemplary scene of naming is a ruler's authoritative decree, which attaches titles to people and to things. Thus, an important purpose of naming is to facilitate order. Names also serve as a form of immortality.

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[74] Boltz argues persuasively that the commentator Zheng Xuan was aware that a word from the "Shao Yi" chapter of the *Liji* was included in the text solely for the sound it contributed to a polysyllabic word. Boltz, "Where Have All the Prefixes Gone?," 767.

Speech is activated when something near the heartmind makes its way out of the mouth. Upon entering into the ears of others, it can be matched by what their eyes see. The most common physical focus of naming is on being heard. As reputations, names are repeated and carried upon the winds to far regions and to posterity.

Speech, then, has both an expressive and a "communicative" function. It reveals what is near the heartmind. What it communicates is not neutral information but something about the heartmind. Names have a prescriptive function insofar as what the ruler calls something is what it should be called. Moreover, the name one earns through careful cultivation of speech and action also represents one's respect for one's ancestors. Like action, speech and names are both corralled into the service of social regulation. If the ruler names things clearly and the people respond accordingly, then naming contributes to orderly government. If people match their speech to their actions and name things properly as directed, then they contribute to the preservation of order.

An abstract approach to language will strike many readers as obvious and inevitable, but that perception reflects the intellectual dominance and antiquity of such a view in certain geographical regions rather than any inherent superiority over alternative conceptions. In the Western philosophical tradition, the idea of language as an abstraction has deep roots. The concept of an alphabet, which isolates letters as minimal units of a larger structure, has a Phoenician ancestry dating back to the eleventh century B.C.E. Dividing sounds into phonemes and separating phonemes into vowels and consonants is as ancient as the writings of the pre-Socratics. Plato's interest in the abstractness of names as dialectical instruments is implied in their relation to Forms, which are not part of the sensible world.[75] Aristotle incorporated abstract aspects of language into his semantic model. That is, in addition to things and their spoken or written symbols, he singled out "affections of the soul." What he meant by "affections of the soul" is debatable, but some have equated it with "thoughts," with the implication that all people have identical thoughts or universal concepts to which names refer.[76] Furthermore, for Aristotle, language consisted of a set of structural rules involving "letters[,] . . . syllables, conjunctions, articles, nouns, verbs, affixes, and sentences."[77] He explicitly defined names (ὄνομα) as semantic sounds that are "non-temporal." Names in this sense are nouns, and they contrast with verbs, which are indicative of time.[78] Thus, static, abstract aspects of language appear not only in the structure's rules of combination but also within certain of its elements. In addition to these features in Ancient Greece, by the second century B.C.E. in Alexandria, the development of idealized conceptions of language had reached the point at which scholars were analyzing the organization of language as "grammar."

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[75] R. M. van der Berg notes that in various texts, "Plato often stresses . . . that names belong primarily to the Forms, only secondarily to their participation in the sensible realm." Van der Berg, *Proclus'* Commentary on the Cratylus *in Context*, 19.

[76] Van der Berg, *Proclus'* Commentary on the Cratylus, 20–21.

[77] Halliday, *On Language and Linguistics*, 98.

If one believes that these developments herald an intellectual advance, to contend that evidence of a standardized term for a concept like "word" did not occur in China until the beginning of the Common Era might seem disparaging. Moreover, it would seem to imply that the focus of early Chinese linguistic philosophy on names rather than words places Early China among less literate cultures. However, while the degree of literacy during the Warring States and Han periods is difficult to gauge, an unusual historical circumstance seems to have been at play: a situation in which literacy had developed sufficiently to yield philosophical writings, but writing was nonetheless held to have had a different origin and nature than speech.[79] In other words, the ideas about speech and names in the Yellow River Valley region are the product of a rare historical phenomenon. With that in mind, my goal is to explain why there was no "language" crisis in Early China and why holding fast to that view obstructs our ability to understand early Chinese conceptions of speech and names.

## Chapter 1: The Crisis of Blockage: Accessing and Transmitting Obscure Things

Here I begin to refute what I am calling the "blockage" version of the language crisis, which interprets early Chinese texts as faulting language for failing to transmit reality. I argue that the passages employed to support this claim are actually discussing things that cannot be transmitted by any means whatsoever; hence, the texts' target is not language per se. When we take into account the multiple ways in which knowledge is transferred and distinguish from them the idea of language transmitting reality, a language crisis seems unlikely.

## Chapter 2: The Crisis of Blockage: Why Not "Language and Reality"?

Approaching the blockage view from a different angle, I explore the translation of *shi* (實) as "reality" in early Chinese texts. As the term most often juxtaposed to names (*ming* 名), *shi* plays an important role in both versions of the language crisis insofar as it is widely translated as meaning "real," with little consideration of what that would imply about the nature of reality. Because cultural understandings of the "real" are not invariant or obvious, examining the ideology underlying the term's use is essential, as is ascertaining how other uses of *shi* determine the limits of its use to mean "real." Because there was no barrier to the "real" evidenced in early Chinese writings, there was no language crisis resulting from such "blockage."

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[78] Aristotle, *De Interpretatione* 16 a 20, 16 b 6 and *De Poetica* 1457 a 10, 14.

[79] This is the gist of my argument in "Grounding 'Language' in the Senses."

### Chapter 3: The Prescriptive Crisis: Nomenclature, Not System

In this chapter, I focus on the second and significantly different adaptation of the idea of a language crisis in Early China, which contends that the function of language is not to represent reality but to guide people through it. The bulk of my chapter summarizes the argument that what has been called the "language crisis" resulted from a realization that the linguistic structure's guidance is inconstant. Some early Confucians discovered, on this view, that there was no way to settle disagreements about correct ritual behavior because one could not know whether one was correctly applying the system's guidance. The resulting Confucian theory of rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名) through linguistic performance gave rise to a central theme in early Chinese philosophy, also known as the language crisis. In response, I observe that a "nomenclature" model of language (names for things), which presents names as being rooted in the environment, is characteristic of Early China, as is evident in the era's texts. By contrast, the less historically plausible "prescriptive" model represents language as an abstract system, code, structure, or scheme, which is what fuels the theory that early Chinese texts describe a crisis in "language." A variety of factors—the lack of interest in grammar, the ubiquity of naming, and the apparent absence of a debate about the nature of language—make it unlikely that any alternative to the nomenclature model, particularly a systemic view of language, developed in Early China.

### Chapter 4: The Prescriptive Crisis: Naming and Distinguishing

Early Chinese texts do not present language as a differential system that might provoke concerns about it providing unnatural or rigid guidance. Such a presumption does not allow for the texts' metaphor for what names do in relation to actions and things: that is, mainly pick or select. Furthermore, references to discrimination can be traced to the senses, which makes distinguishing not a function of names per se. Once we acknowledge that in early Chinese texts the senses discriminate, *yan* 言 seems less like a system that provides inconstant guidance and binary divisions seem less likely to be rooted in a linguistic system. If speech and names are not the sole source of binary oppositions, it is doubtful that early Chinese texts would have criticized "language" alone for imposing the distinctions that some may have considered unstable or misleading.

### Chapter 5: The Prescriptive Crisis: Correcting Names without "Performing" Roles

In the narrative that language is a scheme of guidance and *zhengming* a performance of its code, the role of *yi* 意 (intentions or "what is on the heartmind") is limited: *yi* is the intended guidance of ancient name coiners that the early Confucians want to retrieve from the graphs of ritual texts, and the intending structure of compound words that, in the Neo-Mohist view, guide action. I contend, on the contrary, that *yi* has a much more important and expansive role in early Chinese texts. To understand that role, we must consider the way in which the texts deploy the term *yi* from a speaker's point of view.

### Chapter 6: Successful "Communication": Getting the *Yi* 意 and Becoming *Tong* 通

To expand on what I mean by language as "bodily practice," I approach the idea of successful communication in early Chinese texts from a physical perspective. The first section of the chapter concerns the *Zhuangzi*'s fishnet/rabbit trap allegory, and the second is about Canon B41 of the *Mo Bian*. These two texts help me show what early Chinese ideas about speech might look like if not bound to the notion of language as an abstract system. From this alternative perspective, the chapter explores getting (*de* 得) something from a person's speech and becoming *tong* 通 (unobstructed). It also focuses on the politics of communication in texts from Early China by considering power relations and possible motives for speakers and listeners in communicative acts.

### Chapter 7: "Ritual" versus *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound

The idea that language interacts with bodies is pertinent to understanding what early Chinese texts mean by the famous but opaque concept of *zhengming* (correcting names). This chapter, which lays the groundwork for the next one that specifically addresses *zhengming*, rejects employing a conception of *li* 禮 as "ritual" as a means for understanding *zhengming*. Interpreting *li* 禮 as ritual is easy and accessible, and the scholarly literature often links it with language. I contend however, that, at least for the purpose of understanding *zhengming*, *li* must be detached from ideas about "ritual" except as ritualized action.

## Chapter 8: *Zhengming* and *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound

Building on the findings of the prior chapter, I consider what happens when scholars interpret *zhengming* through the lens of ritual. I describe four different ways in which Chad Hansen uses the idea of ritual to demonstrate how his understanding of ritual contributes to transforming the notion of “correcting names” into “performing names.” I also highlight script/performance, structure/application, code/program, and other one/many dualisms involved in the “ritual” explanation of *zhengming*. In the final section, I explore dualistic readings of *Lunyu* 12.11 that feature ideas about ritual and social role models.

## Chapter 9: Embodied *Zhengming*: How We Are Influenced by Seeing versus Hearing

My response to these dualistic conceptions of *zhengming* begins with a question found in early Chinese texts about how people are affected by exposure to action as opposed to sound. I use that investigation of the varying influences of visual (action) and aural (sound) to argue that because *li* 禮 pertains to a kind of action, *zhengming* must be understood as separate from *li*. In assessing how early Chinese texts present personal transformation through social influence, I find that rulers, rather than ordinary people, are the agents of *zhengming*, which is not the performance of a script but the ruler’s vocalization of his authority. Why people might have expected correcting names to be a priority in governing is genuinely puzzling. A bodily perspective allows us to resolve the enigma (to some extent) by disentangling it from the misguided question of what caused the alleged language crisis.

## Chapter 10: Separating *Lunyu* 12.11 from *Zhengming*

I begin in the first section of this chapter by examining instances in which names intersect with *li* 禮 in early Chinese texts, noting that what links names to *li* are concerns about taboos, omens, respect, and fate. I also clarify the nature of correcting names (*zhengming* 正名) by contrasting it to the idea of correcting speech (*zhengyan* 正言). In the second section of the chapter, to explicate social identity in *Lunyu* 12.11, I make a case for replacing “social roles” with something more like “social characters.” I conclude with two of my own potential interpretations of *Lunyu* 12.11, both of which avoid a reliance on dualisms.

## Epilogue

The idea that language is a bodily practice is particularly evident in stories about a legendary one-footed musician, for they reflect that early Chinese texts were conceptualizing *li* and music as a binary pair. Through the verbal play of these stories about Music Master Kui, we can see that early Chinese texts treat *li* 禮 as having to do with visible, patterned action. Kui's lameness—because he is one footed, he is an apt embodiment of music—is among the ways in which the texts present him as one-sided, as inept at *li* precisely because sound is his specialty. The recurring worry about Kui's uneven gait speaks to the importance of "walking the talk," which is, on another level, to harmonize the respective spheres of *li* and music.

## Appendix

The appendix is offered as a further elaboration of my argument that interpretations of linguistic terms are best understood in relation to the contrasts (or pairings) they pose between hearing and seeing. For example, the ears hear names, speech, music, and fame. The eyes see walking, action, deeds, forms, shapes, colors, patterns, and action. The appendix aims to help readers see how these patterns relate to the way I translate terms used in this book. Examples make the patterns apparent.

# PART ONE

# Discounting the Language Crisis in Early China

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Crisis of Blockage

## Accessing and Transmitting Obscure Things

The language crisis that some Sinologists claim to have identified in Early China assumes two basic forms. In the version I will discuss in this chapter, which often presumes that the role of language is representation, the crisis centers on a gap: a separation between words and reality, whether ordinary or ultimate; a disjunction between names, words, and real things; or ultimate reality's fundamental inaccessibility to language.[1] In addition to the paradoxical language attributed to "sophists" or the "school of names," arguments about this gap locate evidence of the crisis in the antilanguage bias of Daoist texts.[2]

In this chapter, I maintain that while there is much discussion of a failure of access and transmission in early Chinese texts, that failure is not restricted to "language" (a concept I will later problematize), and therefore the "crisis" (perhaps too extreme a term) should not be confined to "language" alone but should be understood more broadly. If we read early Chinese texts through the presentist filter of our familiar philosophical views concerning language, we might well locate vivid stories that seem to criticize language for reasons like inaccessibility, or blockage, and ineffability. But a subtle shift in attention corrects such a reading. That shift involves recognizing that there is a difference between, on the one hand, impugning language for preventing the transmission of something and, on the other, asserting that there is something that cannot be transmitted through any medium whatsoever. To attribute the problems of "access" (*de* 得) in early Chinese texts to linguistic blockage is to give undue weight to the role of language. The many elusive and unknown things that early Chinese texts present as inaccessible are not so through language alone.

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[1] Again, for Benjamin Schwartz the language question is the inaccessibility of reality to language. The Ming Jia represents the climax of it. For Kongzi, it is only a "concern" about the abuse of language. Schwartz, *World of Thought*, 197, 91. In Lisa Raphals's description, the crisis is that language cannot provide an accurate representation of reality. Raphals, *Knowing Words*, 18. In her earlier work, Michael Nylan calls the crisis "an awareness of the difference between names, words, and real things." Nylan, "Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han," 250. Her later position is that the "naming crisis" involves social chaos due to not matching *ming* to actions or things, similar to the situation described in *Thucydides* 3.82.4. Nylan, *Five "Confucian" Classics*, 288, 274. See introduction, n. 10 and n. 35 for another discussion of these points.

[2] Scholars commonly use the metaphor of blocked access in relation to Daoist ideas. For example, Isabelle Robinet contends that the *Laozi* rejects language because it cannot "access truth." Robinet, "Later Commentaries," 12.

Schwartz argues that language cannot access the dao because it is beyond organizing principles and determinate knowledge, "ineffable eternal . . . nondeterminate and nameless." Schwartz, "Thought of the *Tao-te-ching*," 191–93.

Textual passages about failures of transmission often have a dual focus: (1) the things themselves—only occasionally "gotten" or "achieved" (*de* 得)—that are barely known, and (2) the failure to transmit them. That is, some passages focus on these elusive things, while mentioning a failure of transmission only in passing. They assert that there are things that are obscure, imperceptible, or "unmeasurable." These things do not merely escape verbal expression; even though they are sometimes gotten, they exceed any ordinary kind of knowing. A second type of passage stresses the point that some things, because they are obscure, are also "unteachable." In other words, some passages describe not just not knowing but also an incapacity to transmit. Yet even when the context specifies speech and writing as the media for transmission, descriptions of the thing imply in addition that no other medium is capable of transmitting it. That no particular medium is at fault is clearest in passages that address the transmission of skills. While at times the thing to be transmitted looks like what we might call "ultimate reality," often it is a skill that, as is stressed, cannot be transferred from one person to another. If gotten at all, it must be gotten by means other than transmission or teaching. Taken, then, within a larger frame in which transmission fails, these passages go a long way toward illustrating that there is a difference between assertions about the difficulty of transferring knowledge and claims that language blocks the transmission of reality. Specific examples will help clarify the implications for media of transmission.

## Difficult Transmissions

In early Chinese texts, transmission is exceptionally important, which lends special resonance to its failures. Reputation and knowledge are among the most crucial things to be transmitted. Not managing to transmit one's reputation—an offense against one's ancestors—is generally presented as one's own fault. But the inability to transmit knowledge often reflects the elusiveness of that which has been learned, which at the highest level involves the task of receiving and transmitting heaven's decree (*ming* 命). As the *Shijing* puts it, heaven has neither sound nor smell, which poses a challenge for those charged with interpreting and enacting its mandate.[3] But there are other inscrutable entities that are sometimes "gotten," which include, among other things, the dao.

Passages about the special things that cannot be transmitted tend to emphasize their exceptional smallness, largeness, inwardness, or even flavorlessness. Such characteristics make it difficult to acquire knowledge of them and impossible for one who possesses such knowledge to transmit it to those who do not know.[4] The *Huainanzi* describes a dao like this:

> 嘗之而無味, 視之而無形, 不可傳於人.
> Taste it but it has no taste, look at it but it has no form, it cannot be transmitted to others.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 繆稱訓

An example from *Chuci* depicts the dao in similar terms:

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[3] The description suggests that heaven, although lacking sound and smell, might have visible patterns or, at least, patterns that former kings made visible. The implicit instruction is for the leader to enact heaven's mandate in his dutiful behavior, presumably because the behavior will constitute a visible model. The implication might be that the rarified workings of the upper regions cannot be heard/smelled (related sensory modes) but can be known through something more solidified.

> 上天之載, 無聲無臭. 儀刑文王, 萬邦作孚！
> The doings (*zai* 載) of High Heaven
> Have neither sound nor smell.
> Take your pattern from King Wen,
> And the myriad regions will repose confidence in you.
> *Mao Shi* 毛詩〈大雅・文王之什〉〈文王〉
> James Legge translation, 431.

[4] In an aural/visual contrast, the second century C.E. text, the *Fengsutongyi*, simply blames transmission and diagramming.

> 傳言失指, 圖景失形.
> Transmitting speech misses its point, diagramming images loses their form.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

> 道可受兮, 不可傳; 其小無内兮, 其大無垠.
> The dao can be received, [but] it cannot be transmitted. Its smallness [is so small that it] has no inwardness. Its greatness [is so great that it] has no limits.[5]
> *Chuci* 楚辭 九章 遠遊

With entities of this vague sort, there is a correlation between resistance to measurement and resistance to being transmitted.

> 宙合之意, 上通於天之上, 下泉於地之下 . . . 是大之無外, 小之無內. 故曰有橐天地. 其義不傳.
> The all-embracing intention: above freely passes in the heaven's heights,[6] below springs forth in the earth's lows. . . . Expand it, there is no outside; minimize it, there is no inside. Hence the saying: "having the receptacle for heaven and earth." Its *yi* 義 (model)[7] is not transmitted.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第四 宙合第十一

The affairs of the sages, too, are simultaneously too large and too small.

> 故聖人之事, 廣之則極宇宙、窮日月, 約之則無出乎身者也. 慈親不能傳於子, 忠臣不能入於君, 唯有其材者為近之.
> Thus, regarding the work/service of the sages: if you broaden it, then it reaches the limits of the universe and exhausts the sun and moon; if you restrict it, then it has that which does not exit the body. Affectionate parents are unable to transmit it to their children. Loyal ministers are unable to make it penetrate into rulers. Only those with the materials come near to it.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 吕氏春秋 審分覽第五 〈〈執一〉〉

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[5] A statement in the *Zhuangzi* reverses this claim about transmission and receipt without the effect being different:

> 夫道, 有情有信, 无為无形;
> 可傳而不可受, 可得而不可見;
> The dao has *qing* and has reliability; but lacks doing and lacks form.
> It can be transmitted but not received; it can be obtained, but not be seen.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 大宗師第六

[6] The reasons for my translation of this use of *yi* 意 in proximity to *tong* 通 are hopefully apparent from my discussions these two terms in chaps. 5 and 6.

[7] I translate *yi* 義 as "model" because of its relation to *yi* 儀 and because "model" makes sense of multiple puzzling uses of the term in the early Chinese corpus that do not admit ethical readings, such as a term like "duty." I discuss this in my forthcoming *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

This rhetoric of immeasurability applies to abstruse intellectual discussions (*yi* 議) as well. For instance, when a character in the *Zhuangzi* is asked to choose between two discussions regarding whether things have or lack causes, he responds as follows.[8]

> 雞鳴狗吠, 是人之所知; 雖有大知, 不能以言讀其所自化, 又不能以意〔測〕其所將為. 斯而析之, 精至於无倫, 大至於不可圍.
>
> Birds call and dogs bark. These are things everyone knows. But even if we have great knowing, we are unable to use speech to study what automates their [possibly barking or calling's] changes, and we are also unable to make a guess (*yi* 意) about their future behavior. If we take this and analyze it, its refinement reaches to where there is nothing to assess and its broadness reaches to where there is nothing to be mapped.
>
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 則陽第二十五

The speaker declines to privilege one discussion over the other for reasons that remain somewhat unclear but are related to the immeasurability of the topic at hand. Bird and dog noises represent the density of an occupied territory when they appear in the *Mengzi*. Here in the *Zhuangzi*, the reference to them seems to posit that it is difficult to predict or speak of even the most familiar vocalizations, never mind arcane discussions. If accounting for mundane animal noises is beyond the ken of those who possess great knowing, how could the speaker choose between competing articulations of abstruse ideas? The passage ends with assertions about transmitting extreme limits.[9]

> 言而足, 則終日言而盡道; 言而不足, 則終日言而盡物. 道物之極, 言默不足以載; 非言非默, 議有所極.
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> When speaking is sufficient, then speaking all day exhausts the dao. When speaking is not sufficient, then speaking all day exhausts things.

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[8] My interpretation of the two topics is tentative. They concern an opposition between *huoshi* 或使 and *mowei* 莫為 that seems to be about causality.

[9] In this case, the term for "transmit" is *zai* 載, as if speech and silence were bearing something on their backs and as if being "sufficient" were a matter of being up to the task. The passage also adds that the subject can be spoken and guessed at, but it expresses doubt about the outcome of such speaking.

> 可言可意, 言而愈疏.
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> It can be discussed and guessed at, but speaking [on the subject] increasingly diverges.
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> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 則陽第二十五

For the translation of *yi* as "guess," see my *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

> At the extreme limit of the dao and things, speech and silence do not suffice to carry it. At not-speech and not-silence, discussions reach their extreme limit
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 則陽第二十五

Each line is open to multiple readings, but the passage contends that some things at their limits are beyond speech and silence, both of which are situated on the same plane.[10] Neither speech nor silence is assigned any blame; rather, there is a type of thing that can barely be known, let alone transmitted.

Of the various passages I have cited concerning things that cannot be transmitted, only the last directly mentions a failure of speech, and then only as a consequence of a more generalized problem of elusiveness. Thus, examining cases in which speech fails, along with silence, in light of claims about immeasurability shows that in early Chinese texts, speech is not singled out as a special target of criticism. Instead, the focus is on something that has no discernible boundaries, in other words, something that eludes transmission and even, in some cases, any knowledge or reception of it at all. Hence, to interpret such passages about the obscurity of certain things as an indictment of language is to mistake a concern about inaccessibility for a problem about language.

## Successful Speech

Cases in which speech successfully fulfills its role and yet transmission still breaks down also help demonstrate that failures of transmission often involve concerns other than speech. For example, consider a passage in the "Tian Dao" chapter of the *Zhuangzi* that is often cited as being antilanguage.

> 世之所貴道者書也, 書不過語, 語有貴也. 語之所貴者意也, 意有所隨.
> 意之所隨者, 不可以言傳也, 而世因貴言傳書. 世雖貴之哉！猶不足貴也, 為其貴非其貴也.
> 故視而可見者, 形與色也; 聽而可聞者, 名與聲也. 悲夫！世人以形色名聲為足以得彼之情！夫形色 名聲果不足以得彼之情, 則知者不言, 言者不知, 而世豈識之哉！
> The world's most valued dao is books. Books do not surpass conversation (*yu* 語). Conversation has something of value. What is of value in

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[10] On my reading, the point is that the arcane discussion (possibly about causality) that begins the passage is itself beyond speech and silence. But the passage can be read as being about the dao, in which case the *yi* 議 in the last line need not refer back to its occurrence at the beginning of the passage.

> conversation is *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind). *Yi* has something it follows (*sui* 隨). What *yi* follows cannot be transmitted in speech. Nevertheless, the world—because it values speech—transmits books. Although the world values them, I still do not consider them sufficiently valuable, [because] I deem their value to be not their value.
>
> Thus, what can be seen by looking is form and color. What can be heard by listening is name and sound. Alas! People of the world take form, color, name, and sound to be sufficient to get its [= the dao's? the thing *yi* follows?] *qing* 情 (motivations).[11] So, form, color, name, and sound are not sufficient to get its *qing*. Therefore, those who know do not speak and those who speak do not know, but how would the world be aware of this?!
>
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 天道第十三

As with many passages in early Chinese texts, this one betrays signs of having been composed of smaller passages subsequently joined together. (Indeed, it is difficult to produce a coherent interpretation that directly relates the second section of the passage to the first.) Consequently, it is useful to examine the larger passage's three distinct elements (two sections and a capping line) independently of one another.

The first part of the passage does not claim that speech fails to perform its normal task, which is to provide the speaker's *yi* 意. Getting the speaker's *yi* is a pursuit that the passage belittles for its relative triviality but not for its ineffectiveness. That is, the passage asserts the value of that which *yi* follows (*yi zhi suosuizhe* 意之所隨者) over the dao of books, which the world values because they contain speech, which conveys speakers' *yi*. While that which *yi* follows cannot be transmitted through speech, speech does allow people to get *yi*. The chain of reasoning supports this inference. Books, we are told, contain conversation.[12] Conversation is credited with having (or possessing, *you* 有) some value; therefore, the passage suggests, conversation possesses *yi*, which is to say, one can get *yi* from conversation.

The assertion that speech does not transmit the thing that *yi* follows also indirectly confirms that *yi* can be gotten through speech. Books contain conversation and conversation possesses *yi*. Hence, ordinary people are not wrong to expect to get *yi* and dao from books and speech. The point is not that books and speech do not have the valued dao that people routinely seek from them; rather, the narrator who speaks in this passage values something beyond what the whole world values—something in comparison to which the dao in books lacks value. Thus, despite minimizing its value, he does not assert that the world values something that has no value at all; instead, he maintains that the world is overlooking something of even greater value that is not part of books, conversation, or even *yi*. The world's values are off kilter; its expectations for speech are not. Language does not fail to convey *yi*; but that which *yi* follows, which most interests our exacting critic and which he does not specifically identify, evades transmission.

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[11] I adopt the translation of *qing* 情 as something like motivational states, which could include feelings and attitudes, from Dan Robins. For an explanation of this way of bridging the fact and value uses of the term, see Robins's discussion in "Debate over Human Nature in Warring States China."

[12] Although *yu* 語 is often used more specifically for "discussions" or "conversations" as distinct from *yan* 言 (speech), I am treating *yu* and *yan* as generally synonymous here because the passage does.

The passage offers three statements about the mysterious "that which *yi* follows." First, the world does not value it as much as it does the dao of books, which contain conversation, which in turn possess *yi*. Second, *yi* follows it. Third, it cannot be transmitted by means of speech, whereas *yi* can. These three characterizations provide no definitive evidence that would allow us to make the case that the mysterious entity is reality or ultimate reality. Still, they do not preclude such interpretations. When the entity in question is mysterious, it is common to equate it with something else that is mysterious, like ultimate reality or an ultimate dao. Such an approach is compelling for scholars who identify the function of language as transmitting representations of reality. Accordingly, the passage would maintain that language is incapable of transmitting the ultimate dao. A failure to transmit might not seem too different from a failure to represent. Thus, if there is a failure to transmit the ultimate dao, it could seem tantamount to saying that language fails in its usual function of representing, in this case, ultimate reality.

On the other hand, we might interpret the passage's emphasis on books and conversation to mean that the mysterious, valuable thing is closely related to the function of speech, which involves transmitting what is on the heartmind. From that perspective, the thing that *yi* follows would be something specifically related to a person's intentions, feelings, thoughts, or motivations. Thus, it would be integral to the process of feeling and articulating intentions of the heartmind and unlike them only insofar as it is not transmittable via speech. Such an interpretative approach would recognize that, in claiming that the world places the highest value on the dao of books, the dao becomes an ordinary term in the passage. This usage—as if this particular dao were one among many—thus makes it less likely that the elusive, untransmitted thing that *yi* follows is "dao," understood as the ultimate, only real way. Whether this passage addresses that sort of overarching dao is not, finally, resolvable, but the latter reading has more textual evidence in its favor.

While the first part of the passage considers the act of transmitting the unknown thing that *yi* follows, the second part concerns the act of getting (*de* 得) the *qing* 情 of some unidentified thing. Hence, both the action and the subject shift: transmitting and getting are not the same activities; moreover, the thing whose *qing* is not gotten is not obviously the same as the thing *yi* follows (*yi zhi suosuizhe* 意

之所隨者). The first section's focus on books, conversation, and *yi* is entirely absent in the second section. Viewed on its own, the second section has nothing to do with speech at all.

While the first section states that the world values books, the second section implies that the world values the important thing, although the world wrongly assumes it is available through the senses. Moreover, while the first section implies that the world gets what it values, the second section implies that it does not. That is, the first section says that the world places the highest value on the dao of books, which the speaker says do not contain the thing that should be valued. Hence the world does not value the right thing. The first section does not deny that the world gets what makes the dao of books valuable (presumably the *yi* of the conversation of the sages). Instead, it posits a more valuable thing that the world does not value. By contrast, in the second section, the presumption is that the world values the right thing, not a less valuable thing. Furthermore, in the first section, the world gets the thing it mistakenly values (which is audible and visible). By contrast, in the second section, the world values the right thing, but—unlike in the first section, when the world gets that thing it mistakenly values (which is audible and visible)—it gets nothing because it wrongly assumes that audible and visible things will provide it. Nothing can accommodate these divergences. The differences make it impossible to produce a coherent narrative that includes the details of both sections.

The notion of value and our lack of understanding of precisely what is meant by terms like *yi* and *qing* provide a shaky bridge between what *yi* follows and the *qing*. If we pursue that connection, however, the passage's second section expands the range of transmission's failures to all that is visible and audible. If the *qing* of the mysterious thing cannot be gotten via sound or sight, then the target of the passage's criticism is not speech or books alone but something more. Transmitting and getting this elusive thing is not possible by any means whatsoever. The unidentified entity sought is beyond anything visible or audible, including speech and books. The thing of highest value cannot be transmitted.

Like many passages in early Chinese texts, this one ends with a stylistic flourish, a line from the *Laozi* that juxtaposes speaking and knowing by way of objecting to verbosity. Knowing has not been mentioned earlier in the passage, but the capping line's reference to speaking, which is not raised in the second section, gives the appearance that it is tying the two sections together. Positioned as a final line to the passage, the quotation seems to suggest that, lest one sound like an idiot, one should not speak of the elusive thing (either the thing that *yi* follows or the thing whose *qing* is not audible or visible) since knowledge of it cannot be transmitted. In other words, even when read as a whole unit, the passage does not quite express an opposition to language. While it might be foolish to speak of things that cannot be transmitted, speaking in and of itself is not disdained.

## The Wheelwright's Failure to Transmit

In another passage in the "Tian Dao" chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, a wheelwright notes how difficult it is for him to transmit his knowledge, but he does not blame the medium of communication. To justify his outrageous claim that the ruler is reading the "dregs" of the ancients, he presents his own skill as analogous to that of the ancient sages. He thereby implies that the sages also had skills they could not transmit. They could not do so for the same reason that he cannot teach his son.

> 輪扁曰:「臣也以臣之事觀之. 斲輪, 徐則甘而不固, 疾則苦而不入. 不徐不疾, 得之於手, 而應於心, 口不能言, 有數存焉於其間. 臣不能以喻臣之子, 臣之子亦不能受之於臣, 是以行年七十而老斲輪. 古之人與其不可傳也死矣, 然則君之所讀者, 古人之糟魄已夫！」
> The wheelwright said, "I use my work/service to consider it. In making a wheel, if my method is gentle, the outcome is sweet but not firm; if my method is violent, the outcome is bitter and does not penetrate. If I proceed without slowness or hurry, I get (*de* 得) it with my hand and respond to it with my heartmind. My mouth cannot say, but there is a knack surviving within it. I cannot make it clear to my son, nor can my son receive it from me. Thus, doing this for seventy years, I am making wheels in my old age. These ancients, and that which they could not transmit, are dead. That being the case, what you, lord, are reading is just their dregs!"
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 天道第十三

The wheelwright says that his mouth cannot explain what his hands and heartmind are doing, but we learn that the problem is more general than that: teaching itself is impossible. Whether the teachers in question are wheelwrights or sages, they cannot transmit the thing they value. The failure of transmission from parents to children is particularly poignant, for even in a relationship that intimate, imparting a skill is not possible.[13]

The wheelwright's description of his skill reminds us that there is more than one kind of teaching; therefore, to interpret the passage as an attack on language is to miss the larger point. Given the physical nature of making wheels, we can assume that the wheelwright tried to convey his skill to his son by showing as well as telling, but neither method succeeded.[14] The wheelwright mentions his hands' ability to "get" something and his heartmind's response. The getting seems to involve his hands making fine adjustments; the heartmind's response seems directed toward their effect. In this two-part process, the wheelwright's hands and his heartmind each exert their particular skill. Although the wheelwright does not specifically mention that he could not hold his son's hands to the wheel and make them get what he himself gets or make his son's heartmind respond in the same way, presumably his son would be making wheels if demonstrations had sufficed to transmit the wheelwright's skill. Hence, the reference to his mouth's failure is potentially misleading.

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[13] This theme also occurs in *Huainanzi* 11〈齊俗訓〉and the *Lüshichunqiu*〈審分覽〉第五—17.8〈執一〉.

Linguistic teaching is the most obvious way for the wheelwright to illustrate his point to the ruler, but his choice of the linguistic medium does not turn his criticism into one aimed at speech and books in particular.[15] His claim is broader; it is directed toward the failure of teaching itself. By comparing the ancients' skills to his own, the wheelwright implies that the ancients are not to be faulted. In their speech and actions, they responded skillfully to their circumstances, just as he does. Like him, they were thwarted in their attempts, during their lifetimes, to teach their skills to anyone else. Because the wheelwright concludes by saying that the ancients and their failed transmissions are dead, readers might infer that ancient failed transmissions are even less useful precisely because they are ancient. The wheelwright's personal story, however, has just shown that being alive offers no advantage over being dead in that regard. Perhaps there is some tension in the passage insofar as these two ideas suggest different conclusions. Readers in the habit of assuming that writing is dregs because it is not present might look past the wheelwright's illustration and think they recognize a familiar idea here: writing implies the past and absence; speech implies the present and is superior to writing; and the full presence of the mind's inner speech or silent thinking is best of all. In contrast to how the passage is typically read, however, it does not accuse writing of being more out of touch than speech. The logic of the wheelwright's illustration is remarkable for not implying that being dead for less time—or being alive and talking in front of the ruler—would improve the situation. Even hands-on training would not help. Although the wheelwright does not explicitly say so, his own presumably manual as well as verbal teaching attempts are as much "dregs" as the ancients' were; hence this attack is not targeted at language.

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[14] This resembles what Chad Hansen describes as a problem of guidance (see chaps. 3–5 below), but the guidance is not necessarily verbal, so the problem is not about language per se. The claim is not that speech is flawed because learning someone's speech means applying a static code to new situations. Teaching itself is at fault because—whether in speech or action—adjusting and responding to circumstances cannot be taught.

[15] Claims about transmission often explicitly concern writing. *Mozi*'s "Jian Ai Xia" 兼愛下 chapter assumes that writing is precisely that which can be transmitted, while the *Huainanzi* and the *Wenzi* criticize writing even as they assert that it can be transmitted. Speaking of perfected people who gag their mouths to refrain from speaking, the *Huainanzi* says:

> 然天下莫知貴其不言也. 故道可道, 非常道; 名可名, 非常名. 著於竹帛, 鏤於金石, 可傳於人者, 其粗也.
> Yet none in the world knows to value their non-speaking. Thus, ways (dao) can be used as ways (dao-ed); they are not constant daos. Names can be named; they are not constant names. Writing on bamboo or silk and carving in metal or stone which can be transmitted to others are their dregs.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 本經訓

See also *Wenzi* "Jing Cheng" 文子 精誠.

The wheelwright's description of his unteachable skill makes it clear why his teaching attempts are dregs by emphasizing the continuous adjustments and responses the skill encompasses. Steering between extremes, he finds the action that is just right. The problem with transmitted knowledge, we can hence infer, is that it presumes that such adjustments and responses are teachable. The wheelwright implies that if one learns at all, one acquires the skill oneself, by doing. Therefore, even though it is a book that prompts the wheelwright passage, the problem it investigates does not lie in writing or speech. By comparing a wheelwright's skill to those of the sages, the passage minimizes the difference between verbal and nonverbal skills and indicates that teaching is not always verbal. The recorded teachings in the books the ruler is reading are indeed useless but no more so than the hands-on teaching the wheelwright presumably tried to share with his son. Here, the reason for the inability to transmit is evident: attunement cannot be taught.

## Transmitting the "That By/For Which" of Speech

A passage in the *Wenzi* that is often interpreted as antilanguage is likewise better understood as concerning an incommunicable knack. The passage identifies the feature of speech that cannot be spoken as its *suoyiyan* 所以言. The grammar of *suoyi* 所以 implies "that by/for which" an action occurs. The "by" and "for" in "that by/for which they spoke" indicate two possible readings of *suoyiyan*: on the one hand, as a method of acting or, on the other, as a purpose or reason for acting.[16]

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[16] "Reason" (as in "the reason why they spoke") is a variation on "purpose." If we understand this to be about reason, then "reason" in the sense of purpose or motivation—as opposed to cause or justification—works best here. In that sense, their goal of eradicating disorder could be the reason for their speech, which is then used by someone.

Thus, we can assert at the start that the *suoyiyan* can be read as either the reason for speaking or the means for speaking.

As in the wheelwright passage, the *Wenzi* passage emphasizes the idea of being attuned, but in this case there is also particular emphasis on the impact of time.[17]

> 苟利於民, 不必法古, 苟周於事, 不必循俗. 故聖人法與時變, 禮與俗化, 衣服器械, 各便其用, 法度制令, 各因其宜, 故變古未可非, 而循俗未足多也. 誦先王之書, 不若聞其言, 聞其言, 不若得其所以言, 得其所以言者, 言不能言也, 故「道可道, 非常道也, 名可名, 非常名也. 」
> If you want to benefit the masses, you do not have to make antiquity the standard. If you want to make events/service universal, you do not have to adhere to customs. Thus, the sages' standards change with the times, *li* [ritual action] changes with customs; clothes and implements, each avails of its use; standards, measures, and establishing orders, each adapts it appropriateness. Thus changing the old cannot be rejected. Adhering to custom does not merit much. Reciting the books of the ancient kings is not as good as hearing their speech; hearing their speech is not as good as getting their that for/by which they spoke (*suoyiyan*). [But] getting their that for/by which they spoke [is something that] speech cannot speak. Therefore, "Ways (dao) can be used as ways (dao-ed). They are not constant ways. Names can be named. They are not constant names."
> *Wenzi* 文子 上義

The beginning of the passage affirms the necessity for change, which establishes a ranking for books and speech according to measures of timeliness, which determine usefulness and appropriateness. When the passage moves to the body's processing of teachings, it asserts that reciting something from the past is inferior to hearing something in the present. At this point, the passage veers off in a new direction, one that poses an interpretive challenge. Being able to hear the ancients speak is less valuable than "getting" (*de* 得) something else: that by/for which they spoke (*suoyiyan*). It is not clear what the *suoyiyan* is, but the implication is that getting it is more beneficial than hearing someone speak.

The temporal ranking in the passage sheds light on the meaning of getting the *suoyiyan*. The opening lines rebuff rigidity, which provides an interpretive clue toward explaining why the passage then situates books at the far end of a spectrum. On a scale of rigidity, books are at one end because they are further removed than speech from the events to which the ancients were responding. At the other end of the spectrum is the *suoyiyan*, which is extremely sensitive to change.

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[17] As I explain in the introduction, n. 5, it is difficult to date passages, but here we should keep in mind that the *Wenzi* passage could be from a much later date than the *Zhuangzi* passage.

This reading is further supported by the passage's emphasis on the processes involved in the activities of hearing, getting, and reading. In early Chinese texts, *yi* 意 is generally what people seek to get from speech, but the "Tian Dao" chapter makes it clear that there is something other than *yi* that can be sought from speech. Even if this *suoyiyan* in the *Wenzi* is not the thing to which the "Tian Dao" chapter alludes, the existence of something else that is sought from speech contradicts the assumption that whatever is gotten from speech must be *yi*. Indeed, it is notable that the term *yi* is altogether absent from the *Wenzi* passage. Rather than looking to uses of *yi* for clues to interpret the *suoyiyan*, then, a more effective means might be to examine its series of verbs, which compare three kinds of action: reciting books, hearing speech, and getting the *suoyiyan*. The act of getting the *suoyiyan* is given more weight than the *suoyiyan*; as the text states, it is not the *suoyiyan* itself that cannot be spoken, it is the getting of it. Thus, we can conclude that the opposite pole from the untimeliness of books is the immediacy of an action: getting something from speech. Because this getting is not a thing but a process of doing something, we can infer that it cannot be spoken for the same reason that the wheelwright's skill cannot be transmitted to his son. That is, this getting requires attunement and responsiveness, which one must apparently acquire on one's own. Hence, the getting cannot be spoken, or articulated, because certain things simply cannot be transmitted. Even to attempt to explain the skill of getting the *suoyiyan* would be contrary to its responsiveness. Thus, the passage does not assert the ineffability of the *suoyiyan*; rather, despite its explicit mention of speech's inability to speak, it asserts something broader: the skill of getting the *suoyiyan* requires sensitivity and thus cannot be taught.

The appearance of the *suoyiyan* in the *Huainanzi* sheds further light on how early Chinese texts might use the term. In the *Huainanzi*, getting the *suoyiyan* helps differentiate sagelike speech from parrot speech.

> 16.8 聖人終身言治, 所用者非其言也. 用所以言也. 歌者有詩, 然使人善之者, 非其詩也. 鸚鵡能言, 而不可使長〔言〕. 是何則? 得其所言, 而不得其所以言. 故循迹者, 非能生迹者也.
>
> The sages spend their lives speaking about order. But what is used is not their speech. [They or we] use that by/for which they speak (*suoyiyan*). Singers have lyrics (*shi* 詩), but what causes people to appreciate them is not their lyrics. Parrots can speak, but they cannot be made to extend [their speech]. Why is that? Because they get (*de* 得) that which is spoken, but they do not get their that by/for which it is spoken (*suoyiyan*). Thus, following footprints is not [the same as] being able to generate footprints.[18]
>
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說山訓

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[18] I thank Dan Robins for his suggestions about translating this passage.

In sum, the analogies stack up as follows: sages, singers, and parrots all speak (in some sense), and in each case there is something unexpected about their speech.[19] But sages have something that parrots lack.[20] While parrots are able to speak, they are not able to generate speech.[21] "Getting/achieving speech" (*deyan* 得言) must be a minimal skill because parrots can do so.

It might seem reasonable to read the first two lines of the *Huainanzi* passage as an antilanguage statement, one that asserts that the referent or meaning of speech (in this case "order") is more important than speech itself. In other words, order is used, and the sages' speech is just a means to that use. However, the grammar of *suoyiyan* precludes such a reading.[22] "That by/for which" applies to an action. Thus, *suoyi* must be a means or purpose of an action. In this context, *suoyiyan* can be only a method for speaking or a purpose or motivation for speaking.

As in the *Wenzi* passage, I argue, the use of *suoyiyan* in the *Huainanzi* case is more plausibly viewed as a method than as a purpose for speaking. There are several grounds for such an interpretation. First, recall that the *Wenzi* asserts that getting the *suoyiyan* is something that cannot be spoken, but early Chinese texts do not treat getting people's purpose for speaking as beyond expression. As the "Tian Dao" passage discussed above indicates, the common assumption is that speech possesses *yi*, and early Chinese texts often describe people inferring the *zhi* 志 or *yi* from someone's speech. Furthermore, if one assumes that animals have motivations, there is no obvious reason why the *Huainanzi* would say parrots lack motivation or reason for speaking. Indeed, factors like motivation more plausibly account for choices than possibilities, which is what this passage emphasizes. In other words, motivation does not quite address why parrots *bu ke* 不可 (cannot) and *fei neng* 非能 (are unable to) extend or generate speech.[23] Thus, when reading the two passages in light of one another, in both cases "means of speaking" looks like a better understanding of *suoyiyan* than is "purpose for speaking."[24]

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[19] As the *Shiji* puts it, lyrics (or poems) are the speaking of the *yi*, which is elongated by the songs.

> 詩言意, 歌長言 . . .
> The *Shi* speaks the *yi* 意, the songs elongate the speech . . .
> *Shiji* 史記 紀 《五帝本紀第一》

[20] There is no basis in this passage for saying whether the singers are more like sages or parrots on this point. But the *Huainanzi* mentions that the songs of Hu Liang can be followed, whereas the "that by which" (*suoyi* 所以) he sang them cannot be made; hence, at least one famous ancient singer seems closer to a sage than to parrots.

> 故狐梁之歌可隨也, 其所以歌者不可為也.
> Therefore, the songs of Hu Liang can be followed, but his "that by which" he sang cannot be made.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 齊俗訓

Compare Andrew Meyer's translation in *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 413.

[21] The other parrot-related claims about getting that which is spoken and its *suoyiyan* are more ambiguous because the passage does not specify whether the speaking in question belongs to the parrots or to others or some combination of both. For instance, it might say that parrots are able to get what they themselves say, but they cannot extend their own speech or get "that by which" they themselves speak. On the other hand, it might be that parrots are able to get what others say, but they cannot extend the speech that they hear from others or get "that by which" others speak.

[22] A thing that speech "is about" is not the same as something "by which" we speak. In other words, *suoyiyan* is different from *suoyanzhe* 所言者. Thus, *suoyiyan* is not "what they say."

If we grant that the passage is about the means by which the sages speak, as opposed to their purpose or motive, we are still left with the task of interpreting the idea of a means of speaking. The implied contrast of sages to parrots makes it likely that the *suoyiyan* is involved with attunement and timeliness. Parrots say

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[23] The singing analogy is not complete, and the passage does not mention what constitutes the goodness of the singing. For instance, it could be the motivation for the singing, the response of the audience, the sound of the music, or the skill of the singer. It could be the *suoyi* 所以 of singing. Without more context, it is difficult to say.

[24] A few other examples also seem to be about the means of speaking rather than the purpose of speaking. In the subsequent lines of *Huainanzi* example introduced above, the fact that it is a question of "giving shape" to the speech of disputers helps rule out that the matter concerns the purpose of speaking. It says that, while the disputers' speech can be listened to, its *suoyiyan* cannot be given a shape. One need not give a purpose shape; simply being able to listen to it would be sufficient. But, as a method, something like a means of speaking is more amenable to being discussed in terms of taking shape.

> 故狐梁之歌可隨也，其所以歌者不可為也；聖人之法可觀也，其所以作法不可原也；辯士〔之〕言可聽也, 其所以言不可形也.
>
> Therefore, the songs of Hu Liang can be followed, but his "that by which" he sang cannot be made. The sages' standards can be observed, but their "that by which" they made standards cannot be sourced. The speech of disputing scholars can be listened to, but their "that by which" they speak cannot be given form.
>
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 齊俗訓

A briefer, slightly different version of the passage that appears in the *Wenzi*, which is explicitly about temporality (because it begins with rulers of old and the necessity for change), explains this in terms of the impossibility of recapturing the means by which the sages operated.

> 聖人 (法之) 〔之法〕可觀也, 其所以作法不可原也, 其言可聽也, 其所以言不可形也.
>
> The sages' standards can be observed, [but] their "that by which" they made standards cannot be sourced. Their speech can be listened to, [but] their "that by which" they spoke cannot be shaped.
>
> *Wenzi* 文子 道德

things at the wrong time. They speak with no relation to what is going on around them. Moreover, nothing can make parrots say more about a situation, even when additional speech is urgently needed. In other words, from an observer's perspective, parrots appear to have no skill in attunement. The passage notes that parrots cannot generate speech. That is, they have the ability to speak but cannot produce new speech. Therefore, although capping lines are often not particularly apt, in this case the capping line of the passage seems fitting. As the metaphor of following footprints suggests, parrots merely imitate what they have heard. If one cannot generate one's own speech, then one is not able to gauge and say what is appropriate in a given situation. At the conclusion of the metaphorical path of footprints, then, the sages' means for speaking seems to be the vehicle that allows them to produce speech that is apt.

Further analysis of the nature of *suoyiyan* requires addressing some of the ambiguity in the passage regarding the agents who "use" it. The passage mentions using speech, getting speech, using the *suoyiyan*, getting the *suoyiyan*, and simply being able to speak. The specific differences between these actions are not always clear; in interpreting the passage, however, the most significant difference concerns the sources of *suoyiyan*.[25] In other words, is using the *suoyiyan* a skill in listening

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The *Fayan* example also concerns time, which makes it seem to be about responsiveness, not reason or purpose. It answers the question of why Kongzi's way is not constant.

> 聖人固多變. 子游、子夏得其書矣, 未得其所以書也; 宰我、子貢得其言矣, 未得其所以言也; 顏淵、閔子騫得其行矣, 未得其所以行也. 聖人之書、言、行, 天也. 天其少變乎?
> The sage certainly often changed. Zi You and Zi Xia got his writings, but did not get his "that by which" he wrote. Zai Wo and Zi Gong got his speech, but did not get his "that by which" he spoke. Yan Yuan and Min Ziqian got his actions but did not get his "that by which" he acted. The sage's writing, speaking, and acting are from heaven. How could heaven rarely change?
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

The transition between the opening assertion that the sage changed and the subsequent list of the failures of his followers is abrupt unless we see what the final line implies about change. As good as these students were, each one also failed to get something that required attunement to changing circumstances.

[25] The question of whose *suoyiyan* is "gotten" is less significant than who uses the *suoyiyan* because the passage does not describe anyone as getting the *suoyiyan*. The passage only mentions that the parrots fail to get it in addition to noting that the parrots also cannot generate or extend speech. But if there is a difference between the claim that parrots are able to speak and the assertion that they "get speech," then getting speech could be a listening comprehension skill. By extension, that would suggest that getting the *suoyiyan* is also about getting something from someone else's speech. But it is also possible that being able to speak and "getting speech" are the same thing. In that case, getting speech consists in realizing or achieving the ability to speak. That is, the speaker is "getting" his/her own speech. On that reading, getting the *suoyiyan* would also pertain to getting or realizing something in oneself.

and comprehending or in speaking? I will explore both options to try to identify the *suoyiyan*.

On the one hand, the agents who use the sages' means of speaking (*suoyiyan*) could be their followers: that is, those who comprehend their talk about order. According to this reading, the sages' followers, having been exposed to the sages' speech, subsequently use their "means of speech" as their own. The passage might even assume that, insofar as speaking relies on the speech of others, all speakers, by default, use others' means of speech. The *suoyiyan*, then, might refer to the way in which, when we use someone else's speech, we do not repeat their exact speech; rather, we model our means of speaking on theirs. Such a reading also poses an analogy between the use of speech and the valuing of singing. Accordingly, we do not value singing for its lyrics (speech) but for something else, supposedly (although it is not directly articulated as such) the means of singing. The third analogy in the passage would thus imply that speech itself (whether it belongs to sages or singers) is no better than the speech of parrots, who "get speech" but cannot get the means of speaking. Taking that reading of the passage to its logical conclusion, the means of speaking is better than speech itself because it generates and extends speech in ways that are appropriate to the occasion. In sum, this interpretation would assert the importance of the means of speaking over speech itself. Scholars who accept such an interpretation might view the passage as criticizing speech, but it cannot be denied that while it does so, it also praises the means of speech.

On the other hand, the passage might be referring to the sages as the agents who use their own *suoyiyan*. Speaking "all day" is a sage's work.

> 終日言必有聖之事.
> To speak all day one must have the service/events of a sage.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說林訓

As the *Xunzi* notes, while the *junzi*'s (gentlemen) caution in speaking is well known, the sages characteristically speak a good deal.

> 多言而類、聖人也, 少言而法、君子也. 多 (少) 〔言〕無法而流喆然, 雖辨, 小人也.
> A sage is one who speaks a lot but with classification. A *junzi* is one who speaks little but with method. A small person is one who speaks a lot and in a loose uninhibited way.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 非十二子篇第六

Although these passages do not say so, the reader knows that speaking all day is taxing, but the sages are apparently not exhausted. They are able to speak endlessly because what they use to speak is not speech. Instead, they use "that by which" they speak: a method or a means that allows them to speak for an entire lifetime, possibly even about a single subject like order. Thus, they are able to tap a source like the *Zhuangzi*'s goblet words, which never run out. By contrast, the parrot's inability to generate speech illustrates not "getting," and therefore not using, the means of speaking. Singers, too, sometimes sound like parrots, and we do not value such singing. What we do value is not mere lyric production but the singer's attunement of his or her singing to a particular situation. By extension, ordinary people do not use the means of speaking. They simply use speech to speak, which is to say, they take the speech they have already heard and reuse it with insufficient regard to what is happening around them. They speak like parrots, not like sages. According to the foregoing reading of the passage, the contrast between using speech and using the means of speaking highlights the sages' uniqueness. No criticism of speech, even a subtle one, is present; instead, what is criticized is a certain type of speaking.

Like the first interpretation, this second reading accounts for the parrot and the singer analogies, but it explains as well why sages are mentioned at the opening of the passage. If the point was merely that the means of speaking is more important than speech, we might expect to see more emphasis on the difference between human speech and parrot speech. Instead, we see a contrast between sages at one extreme and parrots at the other, with humans potentially falling somewhere in between, depending on their ability to rise above their parrot-like tendencies. Furthermore, the second interpretation accounts for why the passage stresses the extent to which the sages spoke, which is made possible by their use of the means of speaking.

But what, after all, is the means by which we speak? Perhaps "means" sounds too mechanical. The "means" is something hard to pin down. It could include the actions of the mouth, the mind, the voice, and the breath as well as those entities' abilities to act and their capacity to sense when to do so. If *suoyiyan* is a skill that complex, we can appreciate why the *Wenzi* affirms that getting it cannot be spoken.

The *suoyiyan* in the *Huainanzi* and the *Wenzi* are not necessarily equivalent to whatever it is that *yi* follows (*yi zhi suosuizhe* 意之所隨者) in the "Tian Dao" passage. While such a similarity is possible, the texts elicit a more limited conclusion. The passages discuss a skill that is difficult to teach; they are not talking about a reality whose ineffability demonstrates the flaws of language. They associate the skill with speech simply because speaking is an important way of teaching. Moreover, to anticipate my discussion of the prescriptive-inconstancy version of the alleged language crisis (see chapters 3–5), they are not focusing on speech per se as failing to be constant over time. The point is that—whatever the method employed—because nothing is constant over time, teaching a skill that requires responsiveness is impossible.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out to show what is lost when we fit passages that describe access and transmission into a readymade framework from the dominant Western philosophical tradition that poses a relation of “language” to “reality.” The idea that language blocks access to reality presumes that language is on a different plane from reality, that its goal is to represent reality, and that for various reasons it fails to do so. Instead, in early Chinese texts, speech is not described as “representing,” and it is something that supplies access. The discourse of “getting” (*de* 得) and “transmitting” (*chuan* 傳) imply the idea of access but not the idea that reality is on the other side of a potential language barrier.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Crisis of Blockage

## Why Not "Language and Reality"?

The "blockage" version of the language crisis focuses on a separation between words and reality, on the presumption that "reality" is an obvious concept. This chapter explores a different approach: what cultures take to be real is neither invariant nor obvious. The term "real" has ideological features that are easily forgotten—for instance, the former use of "real" to mean "royalty" and "property" (as in "real estate"). In early Chinese texts, there is no single pair of terms that uniformly signifies the contrast between "real" and "unreal." While some terms can be interpreted to mean "real" in certain cases, in others they seem to have different or even opposite connotations. My goal in this chapter is not to analyze the etymology of terms but to demonstrate that concurrent, related usages of a specific term should inform how we understand and translate its use to mean "real." Otherwise, simply translating each appearance of the term *shi* 實 to mean "real" according to current practice risks obscuring ideological commitments and historical nuances that are worth examining. In short, investigating the uses of terms for "reality" can reveal ideologies in formation and offer hitherto unexplored insights into early Chinese texts.

Sinologists have sometimes supported the position that language is on the "other side" of reality by presuming that solidity is real and taking *shi* 實, the most common correlate of names (*ming* 名), to signify reality because of its solidity. Their reasoning seems simply to affirm the obvious: solidity is real. If we accept, however, that in some parts of early Chinese texts, emptiness is more "real" than solidity, we are left with the paradox that emptiness is more real than reality. Translating the term *shi* 實 to mean "reality" or "the facts" thus blurs an implicit philosophical disagreement. What do we do with texts that seem to endorse the value of tenuousness and emptiness? Unless we want to assert that, for instance, a text like the *Zhuangzi* praises the opposite of reality (appearance or unreality?), we should grant that the contrast between emptiness and fullness does not always correspond to real and not real. After all, in translating a text that affirms materialism, we would not translate its use of the term “ideal” as “unreal” even if the text implies that things that are ideal are not real; to do so would obscure the different uses of “ideal” and “unreal.”

If we allow that “names” and *shi* (*ming*/*shi* 名/實) is an aural/visual binary (rather than the equivalent of an empty/solid binary that justifies interpreting reality as solidity), then the possibility follows that “language” is not a barrier to reality.[1] Hence, I will explore what the *ming*/*shi* polarity involves—a balance of sound and sight—and I will propose a different way of understanding that polarity in relation to the idea of reality. In addition, I will consider how it could come about that *shi*—not “solidity” per se—would be understood as reality. From this examination will flow implications for the idea that language blocks reality. Because the value attached to emptiness varies in different contexts in early Chinese texts, the relative tenuousness of sound is not a block to reality or ultimate reality. Thus, names and speech are not on the other side of reality. It seems that only when solidity and sight combine to form a certain kind of knowledge does it begin to make sense to understand and translate uses of *shi* as “real.”

Various uses of *shi* should be interpreted, I maintain, with as much specificity as possible. Because texts from Early China are composite, we should not insist on interpreting their uses of a term like *shi* as consistent, even within a single text or chapter. We should feel confident translating *shi* as “reality” only when a particular passage strongly suggests that *shi* is being used in that way.

## Real Solidity

*Shi* 實 is one among many terms in early Chinese texts that is taken to mean “real.” (Others arguably include *shi* 事, *zhi* 質, and *qing* 情.) In the absence of a clear set of contrasting terms posing the “real” against the “unreal,” one might expect translators to be cautious, but the tendency to translate *shi* as “real” is widespread. In this regard A. C. Graham’s discussion of the striking difference between early Chinese and Western approaches to “Being” is most revealing.[2] The concept of reality is no less obscure than Being, but for Graham, early Chinese concepts of reality seem to be obvious. He contrasts early Chinese uses of “to have” (*you* 有) to “Western thinking about Being” as evident in uses of terms like “is.” According to Graham, Western thought assumes concrete, existing things to be real. Therefore, in order to present abstractions like Beauty as real, Western thought must describe them in terms consonant with the way in which it describes concrete, existing things. On the other hand, Chinese texts, according to Graham, only occasionally treat tenuous things, like the dao, as real, by using the term "to have" (*you* 有) to "cover these abstractions." That is, early Chinese texts say that the world "has" (*you* 有) *shi* 實 (fullness), but they do not say that the world "has" emptiness.

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[1] See Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses*, 109–35.

[2] Graham, “‘Being’ in Western Philosophy Compared with *Shih*/*Fei* and *Yu*/*Wu* in Chinese Philosophy,” in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy*, 344.

Graham maintains that early Chinese texts rarely use *you* of empty things like the dao. (In other words, he claims that they rarely say the dao is "had.") His belief is that insofar as they seldom say empty things like the dao are "had," we can infer that they do not assimilate abstractions into the real to the degree that the Western tradition does. They do not, that is, convert their abstractions into concrete, real things. In framing his argument, Graham takes the fact that early Chinese texts sometimes use *shi* to mean "real" as proof of a widespread presumption in early Chinese texts that solidity implies realness. His supposition can be tested by referring to the CHANT database of ancient Chinese texts. Searches reveal that daos are often described as tenuous and inaccessible to ordinary people's sensory capacities. This might make "dao" seem like a Platonic abstraction like Beauty. The verbs most commonly associated with dao, however, are "to have" and "to get" (*de* 得). People regularly have and get daos. Solid or not, insofar as people get them, it is hard to see how daos are being treated as unreal. That is, if something tenuous can be gotten and possessed, then it is not obvious that tenuousness is equivalent to unreality whereas concrete and solid are tantamount to reality.

Arthur Waley's translation of *xing* 形 (shape, form) as "reality" exemplifies how such assumptions about early Chinese texts' views of reality can stem from other assumptions about early Chinese conceptions of language. Waley writes, "The word for realities as opposed to names ("language") is *hsing* [*xing* 形], which originally meant 'shape.'"[3] Here, in contrast to Graham's supposition about *shi* 實, Waley at least acknowledges that *xing* 形 is not always used to mean "reality." But shapes, the alternative translation for a term used to mean "reality" in Waley's scheme, are not necessarily solid. In fact, shapes are even employed as a contrast to solids. Hence, Waley's claim could not possibly build from the presumption that solidity is real. What, then, prompts him to translate as "real" a term that he also translates as "shape"? Waley's reference to "as opposed to names" raises a possibility. Is his assertion motivated by a conviction that names are unreal even more so than by the belief that solidity or shapes are real? That is, is Waley assuming that anything that is contrasted to names is likely "real" because early Chinese texts treat names as unreliable and not real? If so, then Waley's translation might manifest the intransigence of antilanguage thinking as exemplified when one uses one's own culture's antilanguage traditions to interpret other cultures.

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[3] Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 67.

## Empty as Real

When passages from early Chinese texts contrast *shi* 實 to emptiness, whether *shi* should be interpreted as "real" depends on the value attached to fullness and emptiness. While some passages presume the superiority of *shi* over emptiness, others invert that order. Most notably, the *Zhuangzi*, the *Hanfeizi*, the *Huainanzi*, the "Xinshu" chapter of the *Guanzi*, and the "Daoshu" chapter of Jia Yi's *Xin Shu* all contain passages that elevate and praise emptiness.

The idea of heaven (*tian* 天) complicates the inference that fullness implies reality. Early Chinese texts generally assume that heaven is more powerful than earth. But heaven seems to be empty because the sky is tenuously filled. Earth, by contrast, appears to be full. Therefore, aligning emptiness with unreality becomes deeply problematic because it would amount to making heaven unreal and earth real. But empty as it is, heaven is formidable, which by extension affirms the superiority of emptiness.[4]

Examples abound in early Chinese texts that serve to caution us against interpreting emptiness to mean unreality. While in one case, the *Zhuangzi* implies that the dao is a *shi*, it also describes the dao in terms that uphold the value of emptiness over fullness.[5] Emptiness is something only dao can accumulate.

> 氣也者, 虛而待物者也. 唯道集虛.
> *Qi* is that which is empty and awaits things. Only the dao can accumulate emptiness.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 人間世第四

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[4] The *Huangdineijing* attributes emptiness to yin and earth, perhaps as a solution to not wanting to claim heaven is empty.

> 29.1 陽者, 天氣也, 主外; 陰者, 地氣也, 主內. 故陽道實, 陰道虛.
> Yang is heavenly *qi*. It controls the outside.
> Yin is earthly *qi*. It controls the inside.
> Thus yang is the dao of *shi* 實.
> Yin is the dao of emptiness.
> *Huangdineijing* 黃帝內經 太陰陽明論篇第二十九

This alignment of heaven with *shi* and externality is counter to the tradition that links heaven with emptiness and internality, but heaven is yang in both sets of correlations. I present a longer discussion of this point in *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

[5] While elsewhere the *Zhuangzi* says the dao bypasses ordinary vision, sound, taste, etc., the "Zhi Bei You" chapter implies that the "arrived" (that is, perfected) dao is a *shi* 實.

> 至道若是, 大言亦然. 周徧咸三者, 異名同實, 其指一也.
> The arrived dao is like this. Great speaking is also similar. "Complete," "inclusive," and "whole," these three are different names for the same *shi*. What they point to is one.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 知北遊第二十二

There is a similar observation in the *Lüshichunqiu*, which commends an empty, waiting dao.

> 故有道之主, 因而不為, 責而不詔, 去想去意, 靜虛以待.
> Thus, a ruler who has the dao depends and does not act, gives responsibility and does not inform, dismisses *xiang* 想 (supposing) and dismisses *yi* 意 (speculating), and waits in quiet emptiness.[6]
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審分覽第五 《知度》

The *Huainanzi* describes emptiness as the residence of the dao.

> 夫靜漠者, 神明之宅也; 虛無者, 道之所居也.
> Now quietude and unconcern, is the lodging place of the *shenming* 神明 (spirit illumination). Emptiness and not having is the residence of the dao.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 精神訓

The "Xinshu" chapter of the *Guanzi* portrays heaven's dao as emptiness and earth's as quiescence.

> 天之道虛, 地之道靜.
> Heaven's dao is empty; earth's dao is quiescent.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術上第三十六

The same chapter seems to accommodate any tension inherent in the idea of heaven being empty and yet powerful by attributing activity to *de* (power/virtue), thereby potentially attributing the movement of fuller things to an indirect feature of heaven.

> 虛 (無) 〔而〕無形謂之道, 化育萬物謂之德.
> Emptiness and formless, call it dao. It transforms and nurtures the ten-thousand things, call it *de* (power/virtue).
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術上第三十六

One example affirms the value of emptiness without diminishing the value of substance by rendering emptiness as the *zhi* (matter, substance) of the dao and of *de* (power/virtue). (Despite the puzzling idea that emptiness is a substance of something, the passage does not imply any sense of contradiction.)

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[6] Compare John Knoblock's and Jeffrey Riegel's translations in *Annals of Lü Buwei*, 425. For my translation of *yi* 意 as involving guessing, see *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

> 夫恬惔寂漠虛無無為，此天地之平而道德之質也.
> Now, placidity, indifference, silence, aloofness, emptiness, absence, and nonaction: this is the balance of heaven and earth and the *zhi* 質 (substance) of the dao and *de* (power/virtue).
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 刻意第十五

In a similar way, the *Hanfeizi* speaks of emptiness as an aspect of the dao's *qing* 情, a term whose uses are sometimes interpreted to mean "reality."[7]

> 虛靜無為，道之情也.
> Empty, quiet, and nonacting, this is the *qing* of the dao.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 揚權第八

The reality of the dao cannot be its unreality. While no one would be likely to translate it in that way, the above examples should caution against resorting to "reality" as the easy, default translation in other cases as well.

Substituting the term "ultimate reality" does not escape the problem. If emptiness is "ultimate reality," then solid things become less real. In sum, translating uses of *shi* as real can be misleading because the practice encourages the view that early Chinese texts take emptiness to mean unreality. While at times that might be the case, at others it seems highly unpersuasive to interpret emptiness as not real.

## Reality and Aural/Visual Polarity

In light of the evidence that empty things are sometimes presented as more real than solid things, solidity emerges as a deeply problematic definer of reality. Perhaps that makes the pairing of names and *shi* 實 seem puzzling. What do we name, if not "reality"? We understand names (*ming* 名) and *shi* better if we consider them within the context of a world that is thought to consist of two aspects: the aural and the visible.

*Shi* 實 is part of the visible aspect of the world. It is one of several terms—along with *xing* 形 (shape), *shen* 身 (body), *xing* 行 (actions), and *shi* 事 (events/service)—that early Chinese texts employ to refer to things that are named.[8] Each term has a different range of uses, but the uses overlap insofar as they refer to things that are visible. This is why discussions of *ming* and *shi* often treat *shi* as if it were comparable to some other visible act or entity.

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[7] For a comment on translating *qing* 情, see chap. 1, n. 11.

[8] See the appendix for the possibility that *wu* 物 might have a specific association with visual things as well as a general use. See chap. 7, n. 16, for this translation of *shen* 身.

As I outline in the introduction to this book, because, in the world of early Chinese texts, names and the things they name paradigmatically fall on either side of a cosmos that is characterized by multiple aural and visual polarities, typically that which is paired with *ming* (which are sounds) are visible things. Again, *shi* 實, *xing* 形 (shape), *shen* 身 (body), *xing* 行 (actions), and *shi* 事 (events/service) are all terms used to mean things that are understood to be visible entities. An example from the *Huainanzi*, which presents a contrast between someone who has persuaded an inarticulate carpenter to build a house and the carpenter, who knows it will collapse, indicates the overlap between *shi* 事 and *shi* 實.[9]

> 或直於辭而不 (害) 〔周〕於事者,
> 或虧於耳以忤於心而合於實者.
> Some people (the home-owner) are direct in their *ci* 辭 (phrasing) but not thorough about *shi* 事 (events/service).
> Some people (the carpenter) are deficient in tone (literally ear 耳) and stubborn of mind, but in accord with *shi* 實.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 人間訓

The owner is a skillful speaker (*ci*) but has little knowledge about the visual task (*shi* 事) at hand, that is, building the house. The carpenter's speech is hard on the ears, but he understands how to approach the visible action (*shi* 實) of building the house. The passage alludes to the ideal balance of ears and eyes by describing people who are either aurally or visually deficient.

It is not difficult to grant that a term used to mean "solid" would refer to something visible. But while *shi* is used to mean solidity, those uses are not the only ones that involve visible aspects of the world. *Shi* is often used to mean "fruit," which is visible because the progression of growth is visible. It is also used to mean "action," which earns a person a name, reputation, or title, thus making it the visible side of an oral/visual pair. Uses of *shi* that refer to action and putting speech into practice also point to something visible because bodies in action are visible. Thus, action (*xing* 行), like *shi*, also contrasts (or balances) with sound.[10]

> 嬰聞察實者不留聲, 觀行者不譏辭.
> I, Ying, have heard that one who examines[11] the *shi* 實 does not pay attention to sound. One who sees the *xing* 行 (action) does not criticize the phrasing.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 先識覽第四 《觀世》

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[9] Compare Andrew Meyer's translation in *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 729.

[10] For other examples, see the section on *xing* 行 in chap. 7 and the appendix.

[11] See the section on *cha* 察 in the appendix.

While not solid, human action is visible. Names typically denote things that share the quality of being visible. More tenuous movements, like those that constitute sounds, smells, and tastes, can also be named, but they are not paradigmatic *shi*. While names can be named, doing so seems to generate puzzles, as in the opening of the *Laozi*'s Dao section.[12] *Ming* do not paradigmatically name things that are audible.

In sum, uses of *shi* 實 that pair with *ming* highlight that *shi* is used to mean not just solid things but visible ones, especially those that are amenable to being selected and pointed out with names.

## Balancing Reputation and *Shi* 實

In early Chinese texts, reputation is generally as valuable as *shi*, its frequent pair term, since, unlike with the pairing of real and unreal, the balancing of aural and visual entities often presumes that they are equally desirable. Although in its pairing with *shi*, *ming* is not automatically inferior—a name, in and of itself, is neutral or good—a passage in the *Hanfeizi* portrays a *ming* that contrasts to a *shi* as inherently empty:

> 夫以實 (告) 〔害〕我者, 秦也, 以名救我者, 楚也.
> 聽楚之虛言而輕 (誣) 強秦之實禍, 則危國之本也.
> [The state of] Qin is harassing us in deed (*shi*), while Chu is rescuing us in name (*ming*). If we listen to Chu's empty speech (*yan*) and make light of forceful Qin's fulfilled (*shi*) calamity, this is the root of endangering the state.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 十過第十

This use of *ming*, unqualified and unmodified, arguably implies that a name is, simply, empty speech. Ordinarily, however, a name that is not modified by a term like "empty" is not empty. It is only empty when it is not balanced by action. As this passage in Jia Yi's *Xin Shu* exemplifies,

> 昔者衛侯〔入〕朝於周, 周行問其名, 〔對〕曰: 「衛侯辟 (彊) 〔疆〕」, 周行還之, 曰: 「啟 (彊) 〔疆〕辟 (彊) 〔疆〕, 天子之號也; 諸侯弗得用！」衛侯更其名曰燬, 然后受之. 故善守上下之陛者, 雖空名弗使踰焉.
> Formerly, the marquis of Wei came to court at Zhou. The Zhou usher asked his name, and he said, "I am the marquis of Wei, Pijiang." The Zhou

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[12] The assumption that names can be decreed might imply that a mandate itself can be mandated. See my discussion in chap. 9 of an excavated text's implications for interpreting the opening lines of the received version of the *Laozi*.

> usher sent him back, saying, "Qijiang (Opener of borders) and Pijiang (Expander of borders) are titles of the Son of Heaven. A feudal lord may not use them." The marquis of Wei changed his name to Hui and only then did they receive him. Thus, those that are good at observing the distinctions between superior and inferior will not allow even an empty name to overstep [rank]. (Charles Sanft translation)[13]
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷二 《審微》

Despite characterizing the name as empty in its last line, the passage allows that there is nothing wrong with the name itself. The problem is that it has been applied to actions that, in this case, were not performed. In other words, the thing that makes names empty is the same thing that makes speech empty: a failure of action. The "Zundao" chapter of the *Yantielun* makes the obvious point about the fundamental flaw of empty speech.

> 從之, 則縣官用廢, 虛言不可實而行之.
> If we follow it [empty speech], then the state's wealth and usefulness will be broken off: empty speech cannot be *shi* 實 (fulfilled) and enacted.
> *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論卷五 《遵道第二十三》

As noted above, unless a term like "empty" is added to describe them, speech and names are usually considered to be neutral or good. A reputation is a good thing.[14] This is how Kongzi is said to describe it.

> 15.20 子曰: 「君子疾沒世而名不稱焉.」
> The *junzi* hates that his name will not be spoken after his death.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈衛靈公〉第十五

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13. Sanft, "Rule: A Study of Jia Yi's *Xin Shu*," 215.

14. There are very rare instances in which a *ming* in the sense of reputation is described as bad, but these are qualified as such. The *Liji* says,

> 25.35 父母既沒, 慎行其身, 不遺父母惡名, 可謂能終矣.
> When parents have died, and ["one" or "you"] carefully enacts one's body-person in a way that does not leave a bad name to one's parents, that can be called being capable of concluding.
> *Liji* 禮記〈祭義〉. See also *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孝行覽第二 《孝行》

As Kenneth Brashier observes, the posthumous name generally served to describe one's good conduct, although there were a few cases of critical names like "Benighted" and "Cruel." Brashier writes, "At least in the preimperial period, a negative posthumous name was perhaps a pretense for the real threat, namely not to be remembered at all." Brashier, *Public Memory in Early China*, 84–86.

Again, there is nothing inherently inadequate about names in and of themselves. They become empty when they are not acted upon—a failure of action, not of names.

We can observe the balance of *ming* and *shi* as well in passages that treat *ming* as an ethical reputation and *shi* as something other than the target of the name. The *Zhanguoce* contains an interesting example in which the *shi* is a grain or a fruit.

> 有其實而無其名者, 商人是也. 無把銚推耨之勢, 而有積粟之實, 此有其實而無其名者也. 無其實而有其名者, 農夫是也. 解凍而耕, 暴背而耨, 無積粟之實, 此無其實而有其名者也. 無其名又無其實者, 王乃是也. 已立為萬乘, 無孝之名; 以千里養, 無孝之實.
>
> Those who have the *shi* but not the *ming* are the merchants. None of them has ever exerted himself using a hoe or pulling a rake, yet they possess the *shi* of accumulated grain. This is lacking the *ming* but owning the *shi*.
>
> He who has the *ming* but not the *shi* is the farmer. When the frost thaws, he turns over the earth, and blisters his back to weed. [But] he owns none of the *shi* of accumulated grain. This is lacking the *shi* but having the *ming*.
>
> The one who has neither *ming* nor *shi* is your majesty; you stand on [a state of] ten-thousand chariots, but have no *ming* for filial piety; with a thousand *li* of territory's [nourishment], you have no *shi* of filial piety.
>
> *Zhanguoce* 戰國策 〈〈秦四〉〉 秦王欲見頓弱

If we interpret the aphorism as saying that the merchant has the "reality" of the accumulated grain, then we imply that having the name, as the farmer does, is not only inferior to having the grain but somehow unreal because the grain is what is real and the farmer has only the name and not the grain. Because the passage presents both the *ming* and the *shi* as desirable, such a reading seems implausible. Indeed, we cannot even understand *shi* to mean "actual" in the sense of the actions that occur in the passage. The farmer's work is the action, but the farmer does not have the *shi*. By contrast, the merchant, who has the *shi*, does not act. It seems the *shi* is the fruition of the grain or, effectively, money.[15] But the *ming* is not the name "grain" or even the vaguer name "profit." Despite the usual rhetorical play of *ming* and *shi*, the *ming* is not a name for the *shi* in question. In this case, *ming* is being used to mean an honorable reputation. As such, while both are equally real, it evokes something visible (for example, an action, a body-person, a grain, or a fruit) without necessarily being the name of that thing. In these uses, a *ming* is presumably a good name, although goodness is implicit.[16] Thus, there is nothing surprising in the fact that in the last line, the speaker criticizes his ruler for his lack of *ming* as well as his lack of *shi*.

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[15] Christopher Cullen observes the different terms for grains in mathematical texts, noting that their "frequent occurrence underlines the importance of transactions and valuations in kind rather than in cash in the Western Hàn economy. Of all commodities, grain was paramount: official salaries were reckoned in *shí* 石 of grain rather than in money." Cullen, Suan shu shu 筭數書 '*Writings on Reckoning*,' 29.

In a military context in the *Zhanguoce*, an advisor uses *ming* and *shi* in a similar fashion.

> 伐之, 名則義, 實則利, 王何為弗為?
> In attacking it [Song], in *ming*, it would be duty and, in *shi*, it would be profit. Why should your highness not do it?
> *Zhanguoce* 戰國策 《燕二》 客謂燕王

The attribution "dutiful" is somewhat at odds with the motive for the planned attack, but assigning the name "duty" to the act of pursuing "profit" does not contrast a name to reality. In a passage in the *Hanfeizi* that uses *ming* in a comparable way, the *shi* is an act, or perhaps fruit, of revenge. Distinguishing the two aspects of the world, the character advises a ruler to profit from an action while earning a name for duty:

> 此義於名而利於實, 故必有〔為〕天子誅之名, 而有報讎之實.
> This will be dutiful with regard to *ming* and profitable with regard to *shi*. In consequence, your highness would have the *ming* of punishing the disobedient on behalf of the Son of Heaven and the *shi* of revenge.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左上第三十二

The reputation for punishing disobedience is as desirable as the profit of revenge. The name and *shi* have comparable value because the *shi* is a material benefit and

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[16] The implicit goodness of *ming* is apparent if we look at passages like this one in the *Shangjunshu*, which presents sullying a reputation as comparable to damaging the body's health. Criticizing those who seek profit, it notes,

> 故名辱而身危; 猶不止者, 利也.
> Therefore, though their *ming* are dishonored and their persons (*shen* 身) are endangered, yet, because of the profit, they do not desist.
> *Shangjunshu* 商君書 筭地

the name is an ethical benefit. As in the case of the farmer, the name does not refer to the *shi*: the name is a benefit in aural form, which is paired with a visible (but less ethical) benefit. In such contexts, where the name does not name the *shi* in question, the name does not contrast to any *shi* in the sense of being empty. Instead, parallelism is established.

There are passages that contrast *shi* 實 to sound that also argue for the equal value of reputation and visible things. For example, prestige works by reputation:

> 威以一取十, 以聲取實, 故能為威者王.
> With prestige (*wei* 威), we capture ten by means of one, we grasp *shi* by means of sound. Therefore, he who succeeds in having prestige becomes ruler. (J. J. L. Duyvendak translation modified)[17]
> *Shangjunshu* 商君書 去強

Just as *ming* typically pick out (*qu* 取) *shi*, here sound allows us to "pick" (*qu* 取) the *shi*, and in this case, because having one of something can produce ten of another, sound accomplishes a lot with little effort. Assuming that the sound in question is a reputation, *ming* becomes at least as valuable as *shi*. In another example of balance, the term for the visible thing (*shi* 事) is different, but the same aural and visual parallels obtain.

> 事 (事) 、辭稱則經. 足言足容, 德之藻矣.
> When the *shi* 事 (event/service) and the phrasing (*ci* 辭) are balanced, then there is a standard. Sufficient speaking and sufficient countenance: that is the embellishment of *de* (power/virtue).
> *Fayan* 法言 吾子卷第二

The second line signals that the pair in the first line is visual/aural. Hence, just as (visible) *shi* matches (audible) phrasing, so too (audible) speech matches (visible) expression. Both *ming* and *shi*, in balance, are real.

In sum, the various passages that balance *ming* and *shi* demonstrate that the two terms are often comparably valued. On the one hand, things have reputations (or titles), a condition that is presumed to be good or neutral unless additional terms depict it as bad. On the other, there is a *shi*, which is also good or neutral (although not necessarily ethical). Both *ming* and *shi* are characteristic of things that are not empty. It is almost never the case that these pairings present *ming* as inherently empty.

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[17] Duyvendak, *Book of Lord Shang*, 202.

## Things as Possessing Aural and Visual Aspects

Early Chinese texts, while frequently categorizing things in terms of visible/audible polarities, in a related way tend to conceive of things in general as possessing both form and sound. Such a practice is implicit even in passages that deny that the *dao* has a sound or a form. It becomes explicit elsewhere, as in a passage from the *Lüshichunqiu*:

> 形體有處, 莫不有聲.
> Of all forms and bodies occupying a place, there is none that is without a sound.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 仲夏紀第五 《大樂》

The aural and visible aspects of things are also evident in an obscure discussion in the *Zhuangzi* about whether life (or the dao) should ultimately be characterized by *shi* (fullness) or emptiness. It treats a *ming* and a *shi* as a thing's (*wu* 物) fundamental constituents:

> 有名有實, 是物之居. 无名无實, 在物之虛.
> It has a *ming* and it has a *shi*, this is residence of a thing. No *ming* and no *shi*, this is in the emptiness of a thing.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 則陽第二十五

Hence having residence seems to be the opposite of being empty, and with residence comes a name and a *shi*. Assuming, again, that *ming* and *shi* are an aural/visual pair, here they appear as the aural and visual features of living things. The equivalent features of *ming* and *shi* are evident in a particularly puzzling passage from the *Hanfeizi*. The passage describes *ming* and *shi* in relation to 性 *xing* (spontaneous character).[18]

> 民之性, 有生之實, 有生之名. 為君者, 有賢知之名, 有賞罰之實. 名實俱至, 故福善必聞矣.
> 48.5 The *xing* of ordinary people has the *shi* of life and the *ming* of life. As for the ruler, he has the *ming* of virtue and intelligence, and the *shi*

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[18] My translation of *xing* 性 as spontaneous character or disposition is borrowed from Dan Robins's study of the term, which emphasizes its connection to *tian* 天, effortlessness, and dispositions to certain kinds of behavior. For Robins's summary of his interpretation of *xing*, see Robins, "Debate over Human Nature," 14–15.

> of rewarding and punishing. His *ming* and *shi* both arrive [reach perfection], thus his fortune and goodness are necessarily heard.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 八經第四十八

The passage is difficult to interpret, but it seems to posit that ordinary people have only the *ming* (names/sounds) and *shi* (actions/bodies/things) that come with being alive. Life is both the *ming* and the *shi* of their spontaneous characters, which involves both equally. Ordinary people possess (and therefore ostensibly are) only that which is characteristic of being alive. By contrast, the ruler holds the names of virtue and intelligence as well as the actions/things of rewards and punishments, all of which reach the outer limits of achievement in names/sounds and actions/bodies/things. Ordinary people are restricted to *xing* 性, but the ruler appears not to be. Taking *ming* to mean "language" and *shi* "reality" would not further illuminate this passage, but the idea that all things consist of aural and visual aspects seems to explain why people would be thus described, in terms of their *ming* and *shi*.

As noted above, that which is named, or the visible aspect of things, is not necessarily indicated by means of the term *shi* 實. In addition, that which is named is also sometimes color and shape, which are also visible, reinforcing the contention that names apply to visible things. In a possibly early chapter of a text commonly dated to the third century C.E., the *Gongsunlongzi* asserts that we name ("ordain" *ming* 命) shapes and colors:

> 馬者、所以命形也, 白者、所以命色也.
> "Horse" is that by which we name shape. "White" is that by which we name color.
> *Gongsunlongzi* 公孫龍子卷上〈〈白馬論第二〉〉

There is nothing surprising about naming a color "white," but naming an unspecified shape "horse" is an idea worth pondering. Similarly, the *Xin Yu* (second century B.C.E.) treats a horse as consisting of a name and a distinctive shape (*xing* 形). In this passage, a ruler's corrupt ministers call a deer a horse, while his loyal ministers call it a deer, leaving the ruler uncertain about the identity of the animal even though he has seen it himself. The passage explains that a horse and a deer differ in shape, the sole means presented for distinguishing between them.

> 夫馬〔與〕鹿之異形,〔乃〕眾人〔之〕所知也, 然不能 (兮)〔分〕別〔其〕是非也, 況於闇昧之事乎?
> Now, a horse and a deer are different in shape, this is something everyone knows, but if one is unable to separate what is the case from what is not the case [in this instance], then how much worse will it be with events/works that are obscure?
> *Xin Yu* 新語〈〈辨惑第五〉〉

We might well infer from these and other passages that early Chinese texts tend to treat bodies in terms of the shape of the space they occupy. Although we might assume that an animal's sound, tactile surface, or temperament could help determine what it is, when the question emerges of what it should be called, the sense of sight is privileged as the appropriate counterpart of sound. Thus, the passages imply that things in the world tend to be understood in terms of their visible and audible aspects.

## Aural and Visual Aspects in Death

If we pursue the idea that all living things have both a visible and an audible aspect (as implied in the *Lüshichunqiu* and *Zhuangzi* passages cited above), we might reasonably consider whether, when something ceases to exist, it loses one or both of these characteristics. If things consist of audible and visible features, then death might comprise an absence of both name and *shi*. The *Fayan* presents Yang Xiong answering a series of direct questions about whether something is dead. The questions, which seem not to be posed by a single interlocutor, are similar in theme, but some are framed in terms of a person's "existence" (*you* 有), while others concern *shi* 實.

Is there such a thing as a celestial being (*xian* 仙, a spirit being who leaves society and lives a very long time)? Yang Xiong is asked.

> 或問: 「人言仙者, 有諸乎? 」
> 「吁！吾聞宓羲、神農歿, 黃帝、堯、舜殂落而死. 文王, 畢; 孔子, 魯城之北. 獨子愛其死乎? 非人之所及也. 仙亦無益子之彙矣！」
> Someone asked, "People speak of celestial persons. Do they exist (*you* 有)?" [Yang Xiong] sighed. "I have heard that Fu Xi and Shen Nong died. Huangdi, Yao, and Shun also succumbed to death. King Wen was buried at Bi. Kongzi was buried north of the Lu walls. Do you alone begrudge your death? It is not something that people can do anything about. Also, being a celestial person would not benefit you with remission."[19]
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

The answer is circuitous. Yang Xiong reports that a number of sages, whom he names, have died. By suggesting, although not stating, that they did not become celestial beings, Yang Xiong intimates that celestial beings do not exist. In another segment of the passage, an interlocutor asks what appears to be a different question.

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[19] My translation of the last phrase is uncertain. My translations throughout this section are generally informed by those of Michael Nylan. Nylan, *Exemplary Figures*, 218–21.

> 或問「仙之實」.
> 曰:「無以為也. 有與無, 非問也. 問也者、忠孝之問也. 忠臣孝子偟乎不偟. 」
> Someone asked: “What about the *shi* of celestial beings?”
>
> [Yang Xiong] said, “[I] have nothing to go on. Whether they exist (*you* 有) or not is not a [worthy] question. The question is that of loyalty and filiality. Do loyal ministers and filial sons have leisure for this?”
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

Although both questions seek to establish the authenticity of celestial beings, one inquires about the celestial beings’ *shi* (仙之實), while the other wants confirmation of their existence (有諸乎). The particular emphasis on *shi* emerges in another response from Yang Xiong.

> 或曰:「聖人不師仙, 厥術異也. 聖人之於天下, 恥一物之不知; 仙人之於天下, 恥一日之不生. 」
> 曰:「生乎！生乎！名生而實死也. 」
> Someone said, “Sages do not take celestial beings as teachers; their skills are different. The sages’ relation to the world is such that they are ashamed if there is one thing that they do not know. The celestial beings’ relation to the world is such that they are ashamed that there is a single day that they are not alive.”
>
> [Yang Xiong] said, “Alive! Alive! In name, alive, but in *shi*, dead.”[20]
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

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[20] This “yes, but no” pattern of Yang Xiong’s answer here is similar to another passage that discusses a binary that is sometimes related to *ming* and *shi*: *wen* 文 (design) and *zhi* 質 (substance). The affirmation and denial does not state which one matters, but the subsequent discussion clarifies that. The substance is more important, but it is not as if the design or pattern does not exist.

> 或曰:「有人焉, (曰)〔自〕云姓孔, 而字仲尼. 入其門, 升其堂, 伏其几, 襲其裳, 則可謂仲尼乎?」
> 曰:「其文是也, 其質非也. 」
> 「敢問質. 」曰:「羊質而虎皮, 見草而說, 見豺而戰, 忘其皮之虎矣. 」
> Someone said, “What if someone said that his surname was Kong and his name was Zhongni. If he entered Kongzi’s gate, ascended his hall, leaned on his armrest, and wore his clothes, then can he be called ‘Kongzi’?”
> Yang Xiong said, “In its design (*wen*), yes. In its substance (*zhi*), no.”
> The person said, “May I ask about substance?”
> Yang Xiong said, “[With a] sheep’s substance and tiger’s skin, if it sees grass, it is pleased, if it sees a jackal, it shakes, because it forgets its tiger’s skin.”
> *Fayan* 法言 吾子卷第二

Compare Nylan translation, *Exemplary Figures*, 32.

Yang Xiong asserts that celestial beings have life in name but not in *shi*. The pronouncement is not a straightforward denial of celestial beings. For some reason, Yang Xiong makes a distinction between names, on the one hand, and *shi*, on the other. His punctiliousness makes sense if, as I have been arguing, living things possess both *ming* and *shi*, that is, an audible and a visible aspect. If we allow the possibility of being alive in name, it is more equivocal to say that someone's *shi* is dead than to declare flatly that he/she does not exist.

But what does it mean to say that "in *shi*" a being is dead? One possibility, given the context of the preceding comment, is that a life consisting of perpetually seeking more life is life in name only. Such an answer would presume, of course, that celestial beings do in fact exist, which is not likely in light of Yang Xiong's assertion that highly qualified potential candidates, the sages, have died. Moreover, such a reading would assume that living on "in reputation" is not valued. Yang Xiong seems not to be making that point either, because he proceeds to praise the achievement of two of Kongzi's followers who died young but gained longevity by means of their virtue. That is, they were virtuous people whose virtue is confirmed by having achieved longevity in reputation.[21] When competing interpretations are ruled out, we are left to infer that Yang Xiong's comment about celestial beings living on in name but being dead in *shi* might involve the concept of things having both audible and visible aspects. In the case at hand concerning celestial beings, he might mean that their visible aspects—bodies, more or less—are dead, but their reputations remain alive.[22] Thus, celestial beings are alive in one sense and dead in

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[21] The passage implies that longevity comes in name as well as in body:

> 或問:「壽可益乎?」曰:「德.」曰:「回、牛之行德矣, 曷壽之不益也?」曰:「德, 故爾. 如回之殘、牛之賊也, 焉得爾?」
> Someone asked, "Can longevity be added to?" Yang Xiong said, "With *de* (power/virtue)." The interlocutor asked, "What about Yan Hui and Ran Boniu enacting *de* (power/virtue)? Why did it not add to their longevity?" Yang Xiong answered, "Their *de* (power/virtue) is certain. If there had been any damage to Hui's or impairment to Boniu's, how could they have achieved it [longevity]?"
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

[22] This seems plausible insofar as Yang Xiong has no good retort to the possibility of unworthy people also being long lived except to say it is odd:

> 曰:「殘、賊或壽.」曰:「彼妄也, 君子不妄.」
> The interlocutor said, "(Ethically) damaged and impaired people are sometimes long-lived."
> Yang Xiong responded, "That is abnormal. The *junzi* does not concern himself with abnormalities."
> *Fayan* 法言 君子卷第十二

another. They are alive insofar as we still hear about their accomplishments but dead in the sense that we cannot see their bodies. From a certain perspective, of course, these conditions are tantamount to being "dead" in fact (or reality)—that is, if we assume that a reputation is not "really" a person. However, in early Chinese texts, names are meaningful, and positioning a person by means of different names over the course of a lifetime (and beyond) is crucial to what constitutes being human.[23] Moreover, early Chinese texts' pattern of balancing the visible and audible, which in this instance entails simply mentioning the status of each, indicates that to interpret *shi* as "really" moves beyond what the passage implies.

The decisive means by which *shi* becomes "real" is evident in a passage from the *Lunheng* (first century C.E.), in which the unreliability of emptiness converges with the reliability of vision. The speaker investigates the claim that Huangdi became a celestial being (*xian* 仙), which we might think of as involving a tenuously aggregated "body" or configuration of *qi* that would ascend due to its lightness.

> 黄帝實仙不死而升天, 臣子百姓所親見也. 見其升天, 知其不死, 必也.
> If Huangdi, in *shi*, became a *xian*, not dying and ascending to the sky, his officers and people must have seen it in person. If they saw him ascend to the sky, they necessarily knew that he had not died.[24]
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈道虛篇〉〉

The insistence on visual confirmation effectively equates this use of *shi* with reality. That is, to observe what is visible and solid—Huangdi ascending (or not) into emptiness (that which is not solid or seen)—is to know what is real. The association of seeing with knowing is common in early Chinese texts, but on other occasions seeing is simply one form of knowing, albeit at times the privileged form. Things that are known by hearsay (*chuanyan* 傳言 and *wenyan* 聞言) are subject to doubt in various contexts.[25] But sound is described as having the capacity to travel farther:

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23. See Brashier, *Public Memory in Early China*, 58–143.

24. Dan Robins called my attention to the fact that this use of *shi* 實 is what creates the sense of the two lines being counterfactuals. Hence, my "in *shi*" must be an adverb meaning "really." But I translate this as "If Huangdi, in *shi*, became a *xian*" in order to emphasize the similarity to the way the *Fayan* line says, "In name, alive, but in *shi*, dead," because my point is that, although it functions as "really" here, "in body" does not automatically have the sense of "really."

The passage proceeds to object to burying a living person's clothes on the grounds that it would counter the official's "heart of fulfilled service" as well as the intent to distinguish death from life (非臣子實事之心, 別生於死之意也.).

25. I discuss some of these doubts about hearsay in the epilogue.

> 牆之外, 目不見也; 里之前, 耳不聞也.
> What is outside the wall [of the compound], the eye does not see. What is in front of [i.e., beyond] the village, the ear does not hear.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 君道篇第十二

Speech is also described as being able to persuade at a greater distance:

> 言為可聞, 所以說遠也; 行為可見, 所以說近也.
> Because speech can be heard, it delights the distant. Because action can be seen, it delights the near.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 大略篇第二十七

However, knowing by sight, because it can be more directly personal, is generally considered a more reliable means of knowing than that by ear.[26] While there are precedents for the *Lunheng* passage, then, its questioning about seeing a human body ascend into the sky, effectively becoming "empty," is exceptional because it implicitly treats "hearsay knowledge" as an oxymoron even as it flatly presents seeing as knowing. Only tenuous bodies would rise in the air; hence, a body rising would be barely visible. Thus, the *Lunheng* can place all confidence in vision and safely affirm that, if a body rising in the air were to be observed, then it did so in fact.

## Why *Shi* 實 Came to Be Used to Mean "Real"

In early Chinese texts, several features potentially contribute to the assumption that uses of *shi* should be understood to mean reality. As the discussion of emptiness suggests, attributing solidity to *shi* is not sufficient grounds for that inference. Things that are empty are not necessarily lacking in value or unreal. We get a better sense of why *shi* might imply reality if we consider how its uses to mean "fruition" and "in practice" support a supposition that the visible is real.

(1) Real Fruit. Reliability depends on what turns out to be the case. When it is used to mean an edible feature of vegetation, a *shi* is reliable because it comes to fruition. *Shi* in the sense of fruition can include grains, as in the farmer/merchant passage discussed above, but it can also include fruits not cultivated by humans. That its use to mean fruit is part of what makes *shi* seem reliable is evident insofar as another word for fruit, *guo* 果, plays a similar role.[27]

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[26] See the *Mo Bian* passages on hearing in the appendix, n. 11.

[27] A similar use of "fruit" is said of transmitted writing in the *Fayan*'s "Junzi," chap. 12, and of speech not being acted out in the *Mozi*'s "Xiushen," chap. 1.2.

> 期果言當謂之信.
> Agreements that *guo* 果 [come to fruition], and speech that matches: call that trustworthy.
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷八 〈〈道術〉〉

Harvesting fruit is akin to getting a name from acting:

> 善不由外來兮, 名不可以虛作. 孰無施而有報兮, 孰不實而有穫?
> Goodness does not come from outside. A *ming* 名 cannot be created from emptiness. Who is rewarded without carrying something out? Who reaps without *shi* 實?
> *Chuci* 楚辭 九章 抽思

That fruit and grain constitute a form of human sustenance may also be relevant to the way in which *shi* seems to lend itself to being equated with the "real." In some cases in which the fruit metaphor is extended to include a name as its pair term, the name refers to the tips of branches. The *Yuejue Shu* (first century C.E.) deploys the metaphor to suggest that we should pass over the branches and pick the *shi*.

> 所謂末者, 名也. 故名過實, 則百姓不附親, 賢士不為用, 而外□諸侯, 聖主不為也. 所謂實者, 穀□也, 得人心、任賢士也.
> That which is called the tips are *ming* 名. Thus, if *ming* surpass *shi* 實, then the hundred surnames do not attach to kin, virtuous scholars are not for employing, and external [missing graph] feudal lords. These are things that a sagely ruler does not do. That which is called the *shi*, is the grains [missing graph]: getting people's heartminds and relying on virtuous scholars.[28]
> *Yuejue Shu* 越絕書 越絕外傳枕中第十六

Branches are not just thinner than fruits; they are also inedible. Therefore, the metaphor might be implying, names are less useful than *shi*. So as fruit, *shi* might be taken to mean "reality" because it has the advantage of showing consistency and proving itself to be more useful over time. (It is important to recall here that salaries were figured by the Western Han in grain rather than money.)[29]

(2) Real Practice. In a usage related to fruit, *shi* is also used to mean "in practice" or "in effect." In contrast to talk or writing, practice involves the benefit of having been tested by action. For example, a use of *shi* in the *Fayan* signifies "in practice" rather than "really."

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[28] Compare Milburn, *The Glory of Yue*, 335.

[29] For the relation of salaries to grain, see n. 15 above.

> 聰明, 其至矣乎? 不聰, 實無耳也; 不明, 實無目也.
> Keen hearing and clear eyesight, isn't it the best? If you are not keen of hearing, that is, in *shi*, not having ears. If you are not clear sighted, that is, in *shi*, not having any eyes.
> *Fayan* 法言 問明卷第六

The passage is not stating that being defective in sight and hearing is "really" (or even "in body") equivalent to having no ears and eyes. Instead, the bridge between the two elements of the metaphor is that, in effect or in practice, weak hearing and eyesight is like being blind or deaf. A line repeated in the *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan*, to offer another illustration, distinguishes between what is recorded in the text and what is done in practice. It asks why something is not allowed. The answer is, "In practice, it is allowed, but in writing, it is not."[30] In this case, recorded proscriptions are strict but become more lenient in practice. The distinction does not necessarily impose a hierarchical value. Prescriptive texts often set an unrealistically high bar for human behavior; *shi* is what happens in practice. Hence, whether *shi* lends itself to being interpreted as "real" in such cases depends on whether one most values the text or the practice.

*Shi* can be interpreted to mean "reality" when what happens in practice is also what turns out to be the case over time. The *Hanfeizi* discusses Kongzi's reputation for "missing the *shi*."

> 故孔子曰: 「以容取人乎, 失之子羽; 以言取人乎, 失之宰予. 」故以仲尼之智而有失實之聲.
> Hence Kongzi said, "In selecting on the basis of countenance (*rong* 容), I was off-base about Zi Yu. In selecting on the basis of speech, I was off-base about Zai Yu." Thus, even someone with the knowledge of Kongzi had the reputation for missing the *shi*.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 顯學第五十

The passage implies that "missing the *shi*" is to overlook reality, that is, to make initial judgments about people that are not consistent with future behavior:

> 澹臺子羽, 君子之容也, 仲尼幾而取之, 與處久而行不稱其貌. 宰予之辭, 雅而文也, 仲尼幾而取之, 與處〔久〕而智不充其辯.
> Dan Tai Zi Yu had the countenance of a *junzi*. Kongzi momentarily examined and selected him. Having been with him for a while, his actions did not address his visual appearance. Zai Yu's eloquence was elegant and cultured, Kongzi momentarily examined and selected him.

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[30] The phrase is: 曷為不與? 實與, 而文不與. See, e.g., 春秋公羊傳–5 僖公–5.1〈僖公元年〉.

> Having been with him for a while, his knowledge did not fill out (*chong* 充) his disputation.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 顯學第五十

Kongzi's "missing the *shi*" depends on what happens over time. The point is not that looks or sounds are deceiving; rather, impressions based on early looking and listening, all Kongzi has to go on, may not hold up in light of prolonged looking and listening. In the case of Dan Tai Zi Yu having the aspect of a *junzi*, his subsequent actions, which Kongzi observes, do not bear out that estimation. And in the case of Zai Yu sounding eloquent, Kongzi's subsequent knowledge of him does not support that early assessment. Hence, the *shi* is the outcome. Using *shi* to mean practices that happen over time might encourage the idea that *shi* can be used to mean what is "real."

Thus, there are multiple uses of *shi* that contribute to its use as signifying "reality": those that pertain to actions, fruits, and practices that confirm or deny initial impressions. With such cases, uses of *shi* suggest something that is solid and visible and, therefore, amenable to verification.

## Conclusion

As the potential value of emptiness indicates, the use of a term in an early Chinese text does not mean "reality" merely because it implies solidity. If solidity is reality, then emptiness has to have solidity when emptiness is real. In other words, in order to claim that language is blocking "reality," we have to affirm that language is blocking solidity when a passage implies that it blocks something empty that it takes to be real.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Prescriptive Crisis

## Nomenclature, Not System

> Traditional Chinese thinkers focused on the problem of games and interpretation before they learned to doubt their traditional value systems—they did their Wittgenstein before their Socrates.
>
> —Chad Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao"

In the chapter that follows, I respond to what I call the "prescriptive view of language" that has been attributed to early Chinese thought as it relates to the purported language crisis.[1] The depiction of the language crisis as one of inconstant guidance differs from the "blockage view" addressed in the prior chapter in two main ways. (1) In light of Benjamin Schwartz's distinction between a language "crisis" and a language "concern," it presents the early Confucian idea of rectifying names (*zhengming*) as the impetus for the "crisis" that led to the "Analytic Period" of thinking in Early China. Thus, while the crisis provoked a "central theme" that followed, insofar as it concerned a single group of thinkers, it was not what Arthur Waley calls a "burning question."[2] (2) From the prescriptive perspective, the role of language (understood as a string of words) is not, as in the blockage view, to describe, access, or represent the world; instead, language is intended to contribute to the way in which social practice guides within the natural world.[3] The alleged crisis began when early Confucians became engaged in disputes because they discovered that the guidance offered by the names in their ritual discourse did not indicate how to correctly apply it.

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[1] The term "language crisis" in Hansen's *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* means the trigger of the "analytic period" of linguistic thinking. That is, it describes a break that, in Hansen's periodization for early Chinese thought, led to the analytic stage, discussed in Part 3 of the book, which concerns the "school of names" and the *Zhuangzi* (Hansen, *Daoist Theory*).

[2] Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 65.

[3] In *Daoist Theory*, Hansen puts it this way, "*All* language functions to guide behavior." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 51 (emphasis in original). But his view is that "descriptive or representative use of language, like an accurate map, is viewed as a contribution to [the] larger purpose—that of guiding human behavior." Email correspondence 12/28/16.

My rebuttal unfolds in the second part of the present chapter and those that follow. I begin by demonstrating that early Chinese texts do not depict language as a "system"—a concept I contrast to language as a "nomenclature." By asserting that language is not a system, I mean that early Chinese thinkers were not, as Hansen suggests, thinking of language in terms of something like games. In the definition I am using, a "system" is differential insofar as the elements gain their meaning in relation to one another and "closed" like a code or a game whose rules do not change during use without becoming a new code or game.

## Summary of the Prescriptive View of Language in Early China

The premise that the language crisis involves inconstant guidance originates with Chad Hansen. Because no one other than he has explored the hypothesis systematically, I will take his work to represent the prescriptive view. Here I concentrate on Hansen's theory about language guidance and its relationship to *zhengming*.

To ground his account of understandings of language during the classical period of Chinese philosophy, Hansen employs an interpretative method that attributes coherent attitudes to each philosopher and presumes that they were speaking to one another; hence, the uses of terms in one text's discussions remain consistent across all other texts. For the most part, Hansen takes each text to represent a single viewpoint that builds upon and responds to those of other texts. His scheme occasionally obliges him to posit a certain sequence in which texts were written, the justification for which is the expected coherence of the ensuing philosophical debate.

Hansen's argument is complex and nuanced, and in summarizing it I do not want to do him a disservice. Because I foreground elements in his discussion that he does not emphasize, I encourage readers to return to his publications to appreciate his overall argument.

### Guidance in Ritual Books

Hansen maintains that the Confucian idea of correcting names "triggers a central theme of classical Chinese philosophy, which [Benjamin] Schwartz dubs 'the language crisis.'"[4] According to this narrative, early Confucians inadvertently incited a "skeptical vertigo" when they began to worry about how the ancient sages' guidance might be followed consistently. The sages' "guiding discourse" was located in ritual books.[5] For example, Hansen submits, "We may have a simple *li* (ritual) entry that says 'pass to the left of a king and to the right of a commoner.'"[6] The early Confucians represented in the *Lunyu* (whom he calls "traditionalists" to distinguish them from the "innatists," like Mengzi) were confident, Hansen argues, that they were receiving proper guidance but were searching for "some constant, unchanging way to adhere" to it.[7] In other words, although the ritual texts articulated the guidance, they did not explain how to use it. Early Confucians, as Hansen observes, recognized their dilemma.

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[4] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 92. In later work, Hansen notes that *zhengming* initiates the idea "topically," not necessarily in terms of chronology. Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 223.

> I must be able to distinguish a person's rank from his appearance. Even if I have that skill, applying the rules may be difficult. The person may be a king in disguise making a clandestine survey of his realm, or a deposed king from another country in a democratic realm, or an illegitimate tyrant rather than a true king. Unless I can put the right name on the object, I cannot correctly apply the rules.[8]

Hence, the language vertigo that early Confucians initiated proceeded from their desire to play by the rules but ignorance of how and where to apply them.[9] Language was problematic because it was a game with rules, and "no set of rules or intuitions yields a *constantly reliable guide* to action."[10]

In Hansen's reading, the discussion of correcting names in the *Lunyu* 13.3 signals this vertigo, and *ren* 仁 (which he glosses as "humanity") represents one Confucian remedy for it. He takes *Lunyu* 13.3 to be about ritual, by which he means ritual texts as codebooks. *Lunyu* 13.3, he maintains, attempts to demonstrate how to adhere to the codes in the *Liji*; that is, *Lunyu* 13.3 advises sociopolitical authorities to perform the language distinctions in the ritual texts, thereby modeling their rules for the people to follow.[11] But, Hansen notes, because "it is not obvious whether a given action conforms with or conflicts with those rules," the demonstration raised new problems, and some of Kongzi's students proposed *ren* as the solution.[12]

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[5] The main text Hansen mentions in this context is the *Liji*. "Language, thus, is merely a particularly central convention, one on which other conventions, especially the *Book of Li*, rely." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 65.

Hansen's interpretation of the early Confucians also reflects his reading of the puzzling, corrupted medieval text attributed to Gongsunlong, a figure whose connection to early Confucianism is tenuous.

[6] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

[7] Hansen writes, "The Confucian baseline launched a search for some constant, unchanging way to adhere to a given guiding content." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93.

[8] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

[9] Again, Hansen begins by saying, "The Confucian baseline launched a search for some constant, unchanging way to adhere to a given guiding content." Then he adds, "The skeptical vertigo sets in because we can ask about the *way* to interpret every *way* we presuppose." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93 (emphasis in original).

[10] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93 (emphasis in original).

> They [the followers of Kongzi] saw *ren* (humanity) as the interpretive intuition that would enable them to see *specifically* what the *li* (ritual) required in any particular situation. The ruler (or their scholarly advisers) should cultivate that intuition. With it, they could behave correctly while citing the language of the *li* (ritual) and thus model the correct use of names in guiding action. The rectifiers of names must have some intuitive access to the right actions in these situations of doubt about what the rules require. Some kind of intuitive theory like that of *ren* (humanity) is required if rectifying names is to serve as a solution to the interpretive problem.[13]

Correcting names in *Lunyu* 13.3 involves ritual codes, and *ren* is an intuitive knowledge that escapes the interpretive problems that dog the "language of the *li* [ritual]." The inability to determine how to follow the language of ritual texts in a consistent fashion lent significance to *ren*, understood as nonlinguistic knowledge.[14] Thus, the Confucian component of the language crisis is about "interpreting"—that is, applying—a text. In other words, interpreting is about performing tokens of a type—in the sense that an iteration of a play "interprets" the script—rather than about trying to grasp or elucidate the meaning or significance of something. The language crisis was triggered by the fear of failing to adhere to a text consistently—not just any text but one that embodies the code of the language game.

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[11] Hansen summarizes its solution this way, "By carefully modeling language distinctions, social-political authorities try to make us follow the traditional codes correctly." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 65.

[12] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

[13] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 68 (emphasis in original).

[14] In this narrative, Hansen recognizes a tension in the *Lunyu* between *ren* (which he glosses as "humanity") and *li* (which he glosses as "ritual"). He concurs with arguments that the *Lunyu* offers evidence of an "interpretive split" among Kongzi's students regarding *ren* and *li*, which Hansen says generated an ongoing rift in Early China between Confucian innatists and traditionalists. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 59. On this view, while some of Kongzi's followers (the traditionalists) simply emphasized *li*, others proposed that an innate sense of *ren* provided the means to interpret *li*. Yet, Hansen says, early Confucians took the content of the teaching for granted: "The Platonic tradition was searching for some universal intellectual content; the Confucian took the content for granted." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93. How is it possible that they could have had an interpretive split and yet still have taken the content of the teaching for granted? Hansen avoids this implication by treating *li* as the teaching itself while treating *ren* as the method, not the teaching.

## *Yi* 意 and the Early Confucians

When explaining *zhengming* 正名, Hansen steers clear of ascribing semantic meaning to mental images, ideas, or abstract thoughts. In lieu of what he calls "inner psychology," he emphasizes society's role in how language functions. In keeping with his goal to refrain from attributing conceptualism to Early China, he translates *yi* 意 as "intention," using it to signal physical states—"aim," "desire," "purpose," and "motivation"—but not "thought" or "idea."[15] In rejecting the notion that linguistic meanings are "strange objects in a mystical mental medium," Hansen stresses that meanings are social insofar as the language community determines them. His example of "I want a biscuit" illustrates his point. The statement's meaning depends on how the community interprets the word "biscuit": "What goes on in my inner psychology cannot change what words mean in a community."[16] Hence, in the view that Hansen attributes to traditionalist Confucians, rectifying names "involves having the boundaries fixed by conventions, specifically the conventional guiding discourse (*li* ritual)."[17]

Intentions feature in Hansen's portrayal of early Chinese ideas about language, however, insofar as the intentions of the ancient sage kings who devised writing form the basis of the later social construction of linguistic reference. Sage kings "intended" the reference of names in the ritual texts.[18] Regarding the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, Hansen explains, we communicate intentions on the basis of naming references intended by the sages.

> Xunzi, having completed his list of miscellaneous names . . . says that these terms stem (like *fa* [standards]) from *later* kings. . . . Rulers are like fathers. They influence how we speak and act. When we use names,

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[15] Hansen thinks of *yi* 意 as "motivating, dispositional physical states of the heartmind." Email communication, 12/28/16.

[16] A word-meaning conceived as a mental picture "treats meanings as strange objects in a mystical, mental medium. These intellectual objects are accessible to individual minds independent of all their social practices." Hansen contends to the contrary, "meaning [is] fixed by the linguistic community." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 76.

[17] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 249.

[18] "We have missed the intentions of the inventors of language and no longer refer to what they intended to refer to." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 323.

> we discriminate things. Then, prescriptive discourse yields conduct and we communicate intentions successfully. Thus the kings can control the people and make them behave in perfect harmony. They [*sic*] key to government is language modeling.[19]

The note that follows suggests that, in Hansen's view, early Confucians believed that the intentions that are communicated proceeded from the sages who originated writing and were conveyed by later kings whose texts were still available. He clarifies, "Presumably these [intentions that we communicate] are the intentions of the sage-kings who *set up the system of names* and the *Dao* containing them."[20] The later kings (*houwang* 後王) established the standards for interpreting the ancient texts' intentions. "Very ancient texts fix the wording of the *dao*. The *fa* (standards) for the interpretive application of terms in that *dao* in action come from ensuing history. The *fa* are the interpretive standards of the later kings."[21] The sages' intentions in coining names, Hansen adds, inaugurated language:

> In our current, conventional, customary use of names, we have deviated from the way the sage-coiners used them. We have missed the intentions of the inventors of language and no longer refer to what they intended to refer to. We have to adjust reference so our practical intentions match up again.[22]

Thus, in the *Xunzi*, correcting names is conceived of as a method that should allow people to communicate the naming intentions of the specific individuals who invented language. Again, the sages' intentions had no semantic mediating role but were merely dispositions to use certain names to refer in certain ways. Either because by "names" and "language" he means graphs or because he assumes that the early Confucians thought the original names were preserved in books, Hansen grounds name-coining in writing rather than speech.[23] Hence, in his presentation, the early Confucians considered the sages to be the authors who intended names (probably graphs) to be used in certain ways.[24]

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[19] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 321.

[20] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 415 n. 32 (emphasis added). My translation of the lines in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter that he refers to is:

> 是後王之成名也. 故王者之制名, 名定而實辨, 道行而志通.
> In this way, the later kings formed names. Thus, in the ruler's establishing of names, the names are settled and the *shi* (actions/things) are distinguished, the dao is enacted and the aims are connected.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

[21] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 318.

[22] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 323.

"Language" is writing for both the *Lunyu* and the *Xunzi*, Hansen implies in *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, because ritual texts comprise the abstract "one" that must be performed correctly.[25] Hansen construes uses of "dao" in early Chinese texts in general to mean, on the one hand, a code-like scheme or structure, which he labels the "discourse dao," and, on the other, actions that enact the code.[26] In terms of early Confucian texts, he identifies the "discourse dao" (which he also calls "guidance dao") as the ritual code and the "performance dao" as its application in a "concrete pattern of behavior." The rectification of names entails "interpreting the text's language into action," which involves following the guidance dao's intended concrete performance:

> Confucius fixed his *dao* using the classical texts, especially the *Book of Li*. Although those texts stated his *dao*, following that *dao* required interpreting the text's language into action: rectifying names. The intended performance *dao* is a course of action (or a set of possible courses of action) *intended* or *expressed* in literature.[27]

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[23] In addition, Hansen repeatedly uses the term "fix" in a way that suggests the relative permanence of writing, while at the same time he also seems to employ "fix" as a translation of *zheng* 正 and *ding* 定. In terms of the permanence of writing, Hansen describes law as having a "fixed canonical formulation." Similarly, ritual books are a "fixed code," and the ancient texts "fix the wording." Like writing, both *li* and law, Hansen says, are "fixed" in the sense of resisting attempts at alteration. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 64, 67, 318, and 69. While suggesting writing, however, Hansen's frequent use of "fix" also implies prescribing and determining. The decisions of the Supreme Court, "fix" the reference of terms by modeling acceptable usage. "Confucius fixed his *dao* using the classical texts, especially the *Book of Li*," and for the Mohists, "similarity and difference in the world fixes the scope boundaries of terms." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 69, 205, and 249.

[24] Hansen writes, "education cannot succeed if people are misusing the names in the texts. Provisionally, we shall consider a misuse any use the sage kings (the authors of the *li*) would not make." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67. In a discussion of how Mengzi differs from the "traditionalist" Confucians, Hansen notes that the traditionalists would interpret a fragment of the code of *li* according to the ideals of rectifying names and the meaning of the founder: "pick out the action *intended* by the authors of the text." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 89 (emphasis in original).

[25] Later, in "Metaphysics of Dao," Hansen qualifies this emphasis on textuality. See my discussion in chap. 8. and Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 212.

[26] In his later work, Hansen adds, "Discourse *daos* are changeable in the sense that we can interpret them in different performances. (Alternatively, one can think of a given *discourse dao* as a sum or collection of possible *performance daos*.)" "Dao as Naturalistic Focus," 275.

[27] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 205 (emphasis in original).

The "intended performance dao" is "intended in literature." Thus, the guidance dao is the written text. Rectifying names involves "interpreting" the literature's intentions "into action." In other words, *zhengming* entails concretely embodying the original intentions in the *Liji* by performing them.

In a section of *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* entitled "A Familiar Western Analogue to Rectifying Names," in which Hansen introduces the problem that he thinks rectifying names was meant to solve, he exemplifies his point by drawing a comparison with strict constructionism in American legal thought. The United States Constitution, being written and public, is a "fixed code" against which traditionalists measure all decisions. Proponents of early Confucianism, like those of American legal traditionalism, consciously "understand themselves as conforming to the founding fathers' (or sage-kings') intentions,"[28] both of which are fixed in a written document. Although Hansen posits that early Chinese texts understand *ming* 名 to be word-types that can be tokened in either speech or writing, he contends that writing—not speech—was of central concern to Kongzi.[29] He posits that *zhengming* aims to retrieve the sages' original intentions regarding the referential boundaries of names. To understand that process, we must recognize that, in Hansen's discussion, *ming* is also a dualism—on the one hand, a "scheme" or "system" and, on the other, a scope of picking—a model that differs slightly from the type-token dualism with which he also invests *ming* (word-type and token) as well as dao (discourse dao and performance dao). The "scheme of names" is analogous to "discourse dao," but the "scope boundary" of names is not a performance. Hansen identifies the traditionalist Confucian "scheme of names" with classic ritual texts; hence the scheme of *ming* is a written word as it appears in conjunction with other words in such texts. By the "scope boundaries of terms," Hansen means the range of things that a spoken and/or written name is used to pick out.[30] Thus the scope of *ming* is its referential range. Hansen contends that for early Confucians, the scheme of *ming* had not changed since the sages established it. He writes, "They [early Confucians] are unwilling to take responsibility for reforming the scheme of names. They take those as fixed by nature and past history."[31] Thus, the scheme of names is simultaneously natural and conventional. Because the scheme is already fixed, rectifying names entails merely correcting what has been altered, that is, readjusting the boundaries of the scope of what names pick out. According to Hansen, rectifying names was simply meant to realign the current scope of names to correspond with the textual scheme of names, which was fixed by convention, nature, and history.

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[28] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 70.

[29] Hansen writes, "The written form—*wen* (literature)—not spoken language, fascinates Confucius. (1:6). . . . What we think of as words, Confucius would regard as a way of pronouncing words, not as the words themselves. (7:18)." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 74.

[30] Regarding the *Xunzi*, he says, "We have missed the intentions of the inventors of language and no longer refer to what they intended to refer to." By contrast, he writes, "For the Mohist realist, objective similarity and difference in the world fixes the scope boundaries of terms." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 323, 249.

[31] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 122.

In Hansen's account, traditionalist Confucians were less worried about whether they could retrieve the intentions for texts or graphs than they were about whether they could consistently apply them. By implication, then, these Confucians assumed that the ancient sages' intentions were self-evidently present in the *ming* of the text, that each graph of the *Liji* embodied the sages' clear intentions for the boundaries of what is picked out by uses of that name. Hansen notes that some early Confucians did end up doubting that *zhengming* could work, but their skepticism did not derive from any uncertainty about their understanding of the intentions. Rather, they worried that the sociopolitical authorities' attempts to rectify names would fail because they began to realize, as Kongzi had with legal books, that, "[g]iven a codebook filled with rules, it is not obvious whether a given action conforms with or conflicts with those rules."[32] The original intentions of the names were obvious, but their application was not.

## *Yi* 意 in the *Mo Bian*

When, in Hansen's narrative, traditionalist Confucians seek to rectify names, the intentions at issue derive from a sage's purpose for using a *ming* to cover a particular scope of things. Thus, we can imagine the sages either uttering their intentions, which were later recorded, or writing them down. As Hansen portrays it, the Neo-Mohists' use of *yi* 意 was, on the one hand, similar insofar as *yi* 意 pertain to a referential scope for terms and, on the other hand, different insofar as no one seems to have originated them.

Rejecting A. C. Graham's conceptualist treatment of *yi* as "ideas," Hansen describes how he thinks *yi* functions in relation to language in the reconstructed chapters of the *Mozi* known as the "Canons" or the *Mo Bian* by referring to the line "以名舉實, 以辭抒意, 以說出故," which I call the "tripartite division of argument." Hansen paraphrases this line as "Names pick out stuff, phrases convey intentions, explanations give the inherent way things are."[33]

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[32] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

[33] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 239. Hansen does not view these as three parts of an argument, but I take this line in the *Mo Bian* to describe the functions of *ming*, *ci*, and *shuo* in an argument, not to be general glosses of each term. Thus, I translate it as "With *ming* (names or naming), pick *shi* (actions/things). With *ci* (phrases or phrasing), dredge up *yi*. With *shuo* (explaining), issue forth the *gu* (basis, or causes)." For a discussion of this line, see my section in chap. 5 entitled "*Yi* 意 in the *Mo Bian* Tripartite Division of Argument."

> A similar problem affects [Graham's] understanding of *yi* (intention). The text ties it with the *ci* (phrase). . . . Graham himself shows most convincingly what *intent* amounts to in the Mohist enterprise. The intent in using language involves a commitment to use the term up to a certain point and stop. It is the disposition to project terms onto things (and to stop the projection somewhere).[34]

This gloss of *yi* 意 as a "commitment to use the term up to a certain point and stop" evokes Hansen's portrait of the early Confucian sages intending reference for individual words in ritual texts, but his use of a singular term ("the term") is misleading here. In his interpretation of the *Mo Bian*, the idea of "intent in using language" is restricted to compound terms since only they involve *yi*. In other words, intentions pertain to phrases alone, not to individual *ming*. The distinction is important because it reflects Hansen's claim that the Neo-Mohists rejected the early Confucian presumption of a guiding "term framework." Regarding these differing beliefs about *yi* 意, Hansen writes, in the section "Rectifying Intentional Phrases,"

> The Neo-Mohists cling to the view that the real world fixes the boundaries of the scope of terms. Accordingly, they cannot accept rectification of names as understood in Confucius. That involves having the boundaries fixed by conventions, specifically the conventional guiding discourse (*li*, ritual). We manipulate the conventions by deliberate use of social superiors. For the Mohist realist, *objective similarity and difference in the world fixes the scope boundaries of terms. This means the term framework does not guide by itself*. The terms must be combined into phrases that guide by expressing a *yi* (intent).[35]

By the "term framework"—which he contrasts to phrases expressing *yi*—Hansen seems to mean the names in ritual texts since he implicitly attributes to Confucians the idea that the "term framework" alone provides guidance. The *ming* in ritual texts occur in combinations, of course, but Hansen's allusion to name coiners raises the possibility that an individual name would have an *yi*, and here, in this passage, he contrasts the Neo-Mohists and Confucians. Because Hansen's discussion of the *Xunzi* implies that a single name contains the name coiners' intention for its range of reference, here he seems to be suggesting that Confucians thought the sage coiners' intentions fixed the scope of individual names; in other words, individual names in ritual texts offered guidance by fixing the reference intended

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[34] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 239.

[35] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 249 (emphasis added).

(by the authors or by sage-kings who invented names). Hansen proposes that the Neo-Mohists, by contrast, believed that names used individually did not provide guidance because they considered the nonsocial world (i.e., not human intentions) to be the source of the "scope" for applying individual *ming*. According to Hansen, the difference between *ming* and phrases in the *Mo Bian*'s tripartite division (as he interprets it) serves to justify his reasoning because, in his view, the Neo-Mohists believed that guidance comes solely from phrases (*ci* 辭, which he takes to mean compound *ming*). They guide because they express intentions. As he puts it in the line cited above, "The terms must be combined into phrases that guide by expressing a *yi* (intent)."[36] In short, in Hansen's opinion, the difference between the Neo-Mohist and Confucian views on the relation of individual *ming* 名 and *yi* 意 is that the Confucians look to the sages for intentions of individual term reference, whereas the Neo-Mohists look to the nonsocial world and, hence, do not suppose that there are intentions in individual names.

Hansen thinks that the Neo-Mohists and the Confucians differ on this point because he conceives of the *yi* 意 of phrases (which he attributes to their *structure*) as specifically intention that involves action. We can infer as much from his description of the intentions of phrases as "guiding actions." That is, they are not simply intentions—they are intentions to guide. Moreover, he describes the guiding actions as the product of "compounding [*ming*] with verbs in guiding structures." Speaking in the voice of the Neo-Mohists, Hansen writes, "We rectify not names but phrases that combine names in guiding actions," a statement that seems to suggest that a phrase consists of a "guiding action" that is added to a single *ming*.[37] To clarify, we might consider Hansen's example of a Neo-Mohist phrase, "kill thieves." "Kill thieves," we can surmise, has an *yi*, whereas "thief" and "kill" do not because only in combination does "kill" instruct people how to treat "thieves."[38] In Hansen's interpretation of the Neo-Mohists, the *ming* themselves do not guide; they require intention (one of the terms Hansen uses to translate *yi* 意), which the Neo-Mohists would attribute only to humans. In Hansen's view, the Neo-Mohists assume that, unlike *ming*, the reference of phrases does not derive from the world but is "intentionally structure[d]" by humans.[39] The intentional feature of the structure of a phrase is what Hansen means by the intention that guides action. Hence, for example, the nonsocial world is the source for the scope of "kill" and "thief," but only "kill thief" contains an *yi* 意. "Kill thief" guides people because it contains an intentional structure, that is, one that involves both a thing and an action to be done to it.

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[36] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 249. Hansen's point is related to a correct observation about the use of *ming* in early Chinese texts: they refer externally and do not express *yi* 意. (See sections on *yan* 言, *ci* 辭, and *yi* 意 in the appendix.) This view is not, however, exclusive to the *Mo Bian*.

Whether individual *ming* contain "guidance," is a different question. As I explain below, I do not sense a significant emphasis on language "guiding" in early Chinese texts, perhaps because I do not interpret uses of "*dao* 道" to mean "language." But the ruler's *ming* regulate and, if *ming* follow the distinction-making of the senses, as might be implied in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, then insofar as distinctions guide, *ming* guide as the senses guide.

[37] Of the Neo-Mohists, Hansen writes, "But compounding them [terms] with verbs in guiding structures, they argue, does not exhibit regular and uniformly predictable effects." Hansen's reference to "verbs," should not be taken to mean that he thinks that the Neo-Mohists recognized verbs or nouns as grammatical terms. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 250.

[38] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 249–51.

Thus, the early Confucians began the language crisis with their frustrated realization of the difficulty of consistently applying the linguistic guidance offered in texts. The Neo-Mohists later recognized that the structure of linguistic compounds does not provide consistent guidance. Overall, because language does not serve to represent reality but instead guides, constancy is at a premium.

When applying unchanging guidance, inconsistent results seem to signal failure since it is impossible to determine which is closer to the ideal. Like the blockage version of the language crisis, the prescriptive analysis presents language as a scheme in relation to the world. It does not presume that language is a prison-house, with reality escaping its grid, but it subtly participates in that model nonetheless when it theorizes that certain early Chinese texts present a scheme, a system of rules, or a structural composition that is assessed in terms of whether it can be performed consistently in the world of change.

## Nomenclatures versus Systems

To reframe how early Chinese texts approached "language," it is helpful to consult linguist Roy Harris's categorization of language into two main models: nomenclature and system.[40] A nomenclature model, as its designation suggests, is based on the idea of naming. The contrasting model is based on a system, or a game. In important ways, conceiving of language as a nomenclature precludes conceiving of it as a system and vice versa.[41] For my purposes, the most significant incompatibility between the two models concerns how, in each, terms acquire their respective identities. In a nomenclature model, different terms are used to mean different things according to their interaction with the things they name in the extralinguistic environment. By contrast, in a system model, language is self-contained, and so the differences its terms mark proceed entirely from its own internal relations. This contrast between the two models, I will show, helps explain why certain antilanguage interpretations of early Chinese texts are implausible. There is a closed system in Eary China—the hexagrams of the *Zhou Yi*—but *ming* operate differently. *Ming* in early Chinese texts paradigmatically name things in the world; therefore, the identity of a *ming* is not constituted like an element of a system.

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[39] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 45.

[40] In *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, Harris contrasts system and nomenclature models, outlining rarely noted similarities between Ferdinand de Saussure and Ludwig Wittgenstein's models of language. See especially, Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 7–35.

[41] As I explain below, it is not possible to combine a nomenclature view with a system view because a system's closure effectively precludes introducing the external interaction that makes naming possible.

The evidence of nomenclaturism in early Chinese texts is unmistakable. The texts repeatedly signal the purpose of naming through metaphors of picking or raising up (*qu* 取, *ju* 舉) actions or things. Names differ from one another insofar as they name different things. Thus, early Chinese texts imply that differences between things are the cause of differences between names. The alternative idea—that is, that internal relations among a system of *ming* account for their differences from one another—is nowhere present in texts from Early China. Names, in other words, acquire their identities by referring (*qu* 取, *ju* 舉) to the extralinguistic things they name. By extension, then, names are not responsible for creating the differences that they name. Therefore, as I argue below, when we take early Chinese texts to be faulting a linguistic system for imposing its alien structural distinctions on things, we are misreading the texts.

In brief, in a nomenclature model, language is composed of names for entities in the world, and the names serve as surrogates for those things. Language originates as vocal noises that, by means of convention, substitute for the use of gestures to indicate things. Because a single act of naming is possible, an individual name can exist independently of the rest of language. Thus, in a nomenclature model, even though names (individual units of language) can be combined to create longer bits of speech, elements of language do not depend upon relationships to other linguistic elements to be what they are.[42] In short, in a nomenclature model, the relation of language to the world is paramount because naming interacts with its environment.

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[42] There are weak and strong versions of nomenclature models. Some versions of nomenclaturism view language as consisting simply of names without exploring the complexities involved in the idea of naming ideal entities, but stronger versions extend the idea of naming to explain how it is possible that words for all kinds of entities are names. Early Chinese texts do not theorize about naming to the extent that some other examples of nomenclaturism do by positing that names also substitute for ideal things. To explain a view of Bertrand Russell's, for example, Harris notes that a preposition like "in" might be understood as a name standing for a particular kind of relation between things. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 13.

The alternative language model minimizes the role of naming and focuses instead on language as a system or game.[43] Taking language as a totality, it deliberately brackets off environmental contact, thus excluding any consideration of linguistic change and fluidity. Language as a system is an abstraction involving signs as variables that operate interdependently in a self-contained totality.[44] As in a game, the rules—that is, the fixed grammar of the system—do not alter during play.[45] Moreover, the elements of language are distinguished internally against one another. In other words, negative differential relations among parts determine their identities.[46] Thus, what constitutes a unit of the system is not a connection to something outside of language—whether an idea or a thing in the world.[47] Viewed as a system, language does not name things; instead, relations among internal elements determine the terms' "value." For example, two words from two different languages might have different values even though they might be used to refer to the same thing. Units like *mouton* and "sheep," that is, cannot be divorced from their systems without ceasing to be what they are.[48] In short, in a system model, meaning is generated through use *within a system*. Language is not the thing that people adopt or change through interaction with their world.[49]

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[43] Harris attributes versions of the system model to Wittgenstein and Saussure, highlighting the way in which they both depict language through the metaphor of a game.

[44] Saussure's proposal that language is a closed system was arguably necessary for making the study of language something that could be considered a science. Recently, there have been attempts in different fields to modify Saussure's insight to allow for more openness to the environment. For some examples, see *Dynamic Structure*, ed. Fehr and Kouba.

[45] It is not my intention to assert the accuracy of Harris's interpretation of Wittgenstein's view of language. It is enough for my purposes that the portrait of language as a game is suggestive. Wittgenstein's statement on changing the rules by which we use the word "not" seems to indicate that in such a case changing the game's rules is decisive. He writes,

> There cannot be a question whether these or other rules are the correct ones for the use of 'not.' (I mean, whether they accord with its meaning.) For without these rules the word has as yet no meaning; and if we change the rules, it now has another meaning (or none), and in that case we may just as well change the word too.
> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 147

But Harris notes that Wittgenstein briefly mentions games in which new rules are invented during play. In any event, a game is less rigid than a calculus, which was Wittgenstein's earlier metaphor. Jaakko Hintikka argues that he abandoned the calculus metaphor precisely because it implies intralinguistic activity. Hintikka, *Lingua Universalis vs. Calculus Ratiocinator*, 177.

The point I find most relevant to the contrast between system and nomenclature views of language is that, with the metaphor of a game, change has to be removed from the equation because, as Harris observes, if the rules are constantly changing during the game, there would be good reason to doubt that the participants are actually playing the same game or playing a game at all. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 91–92.

[46] In chess, a rook is a rook not because of its shape but because it is not a pawn, a knight, etc.

[47] A notable difference between Saussure's and Wittgenstein's views is that concepts play a role in Saussure's view of language. For Saussure, however, a concept is inseparable from language—the flip side of a vocable—like two sides of a coin.

The system model of language has two striking attributes. First, because it is a system of differences, linguistic units cannot be isolated from the whole. Second, relations with the world are not significant for language. Thus, viewing language as a system effectively creates a dualism: the system is isolated from the world and the utterances of the community of users with little indication of how it is even possible for the system and the world to interact.

## Early China: System or Nomenclature?

When the features of the two language models are compared, the prominent attention given to names (*ming* 名) in early Chinese texts implies a nomenclaturist view. *Ming* is used to mean fame or reputation, in addition to title. Interchanges between *ming* 命 (decrees) and *ming* 名 (names) renders the titles the ruler assigns to things tantamount to commands. Insofar as the texts presume that idea, naming is the foundation of the social order. In certain texts, the term for name (*ming* 名) appears so often that some interpreters tend to assume that it means "word," but a better understanding is that texts from Early China emphasize names in exceptional ways.

A number of traits of early Chinese texts do not accord with the attributes of an abstract system of language. The texts do not employ an idea like language in the sense of an abstraction consisting of speech and writing combined.[50] Discussions of *yan* 言 focus on utterances in the sense that they do not imply something reducible to its component units (see the *yan* 言 section of the appendix). The absence of any discussion of grammar (or related structures) also raises doubts that language would have been understood as a structure in Early China. Moreover, the texts do not treat names as synchronic but as sensitive to their environment.[51] In short, early Chinese texts do not treat language as a system.

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[48] As Harris notes, Saussure explains that *mouton* has a different value than "sheep" because English contains the word "mutton," which is used to mean meat. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 43.

[49] Wittgenstein's point is not that meaning is individual acts of use, as the slogan "meaning is use" might seem to imply. Harris observes that Wittgenstein says that words mean according to their use *in a language*, and Saussure separates *langue* from *parole*, emphasizing that words function in association with, and in contrast to, other aspects of a *langue*. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 23.

[50] See Geaney, "Grounding Language in the Senses," 251–93.

## The *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" and Nomenclaturism

Because the "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi* discusses naming more extensively than any other early Chinese text, it serves as an important source for evidence that early Chinese texts treat "language" as a nomenclature. While I discuss the "Zhengming" in greater detail in other parts of this book, some general observations here will help introduce the text's nomenclaturist characteristics.

The approach to names in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter manifests a distinctly diachronic perspective. The rulers must do something to reestablish communication because, at some point in time, it has broken down. In the past, admirable rulers selected appropriate names from different sources across different time periods and, thereby, formed or "completed" (*cheng* 成) names. Their efforts succeeded only temporarily, and there is no reason to assume that the authors or compilers of the "Zhengming" expected their own potential name corrections to be permanent.[52] When the chapter declares that names have no firm relation to things (*ming wu gu shi* 名無固實), it confirms that names are directly related to things (even if not firmly) and not to each other. Because names are rooted in relationships to things rather than, as in a closed system, interrelations among themselves, names continue to change as long as things in the world change. Furthermore, the "Zhengming" chapter describes types of names by means of temporal rather than structural metaphors. For example, instead of claiming that names have certain types, it states that "there are times" (*youshi* 有時) when one needs to use general names or when one needs to extend names. In other words, names are responsive to changing situations; their identities do not depend on relations to other names. The "Zhengming" also observes that names become appropriate when they have retained attachments over time; the text makes no mention of relationships solely among names establishing appropriateness. The target of criticism in the "Zhengming" is people who are creating chaos with names and *shi* 實 (actions/things) by disordering straight names. By contrast, in a system view of language, the utterances of individuals have no impact. Hence, in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming," names cannot constitute a synchronic system of differences.

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[51] As noted above, the *Zhou Yi* is a closed binary system, but it is noteworthy that use of the *Zhou Yi* involves the diachronic movements of the hexagrams.

Hansen rarely mentions the *Zhou Yi*. He does not agree with the claim that it was important to Kongzi (Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 379 n. 5) and he refers to it in the context of a thinker he considers outside the philosophical period of interest.

> The superstition-influenced Han produced a precocious teenager, Wang Bi, who constructed his own theory. It combined the *Daode Jing* and a divination manual (the *I Jing* [Book of Changes]). This turned the *Daode-Jing* into a cosmogony, Wang Bi's conception of deep thought. He explained that the reason we cannot name Dao was that we cannot see it! That the Confucians should take so shallow and silly a theory of language, developed by a superstitious teenager in the philosophical dark age, to be the view of the geniuses of the greatest period of Chinese thought testifies mainly to the power of the Confucian doctrine of respect for antiquity. Still, it had the advantage of fitting in with the Buddhist theory of language and mind.
> Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 238

[52] That is, the authors of the "Zhengming" would not have thought that correcting names was something that could be done once and for all because that assumption would have failed to take into account the impermanence of the names instituted by former rulers.

Furthermore, references to the environment throughout the "Zhengming" also offer evidence of nomenclaturism. Names are world-dependent. The world, not differential relations among names as values within a system, is the source of the similarities and differences to which names are said to refer. The differences between names are rooted in the differences between things. In sum, the "Zhengming" presents *ming* as historically formed, distinguished by situational use, responsive to time, and subject to change by individuals—all of which is incompatible with the view that *ming* are elements of a language system.

Moreover, the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" betrays nothing that can be construed as a reference to grammar. Two sections do seem to allude to something like structural linguistic features. First, the chapter mentions what it calls "combined names," which are used when single names are not sufficiently clear. Second, it identifies an argument's three parts: names, phrases, and distinguishing explanations. These structures are minimal; hence, insofar as the chapter aims to use names to improve the social order, we can assume that the order in question is not structural or systematic. Indeed, the very nature of names works against their systematic ordering. In contrast to the systematic order of syntax, the only sort of order to which names would be amenable would, at best, be sequential, an order established name by name. For example, the ruler would use the name "noble" to eliminate confusion about actions that are noble and base. Thereafter, people would know which actions the ruler deems noble and base.[53] But the ruler would be obliged to adjust each name to effect any correction to other names for which there was confusion with that name's corresponding reference in the nonlinguistic world.[54] Moreover, the outcome of that process would not create a system. *Ming* are commands and titles, not axioms or rules for combining words.[55] The potential order created by *zhengming* would be a dynamic, diachronic pattern of utterances, not a synchronic system such as a grammar.

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[53] The "Zhengming" chapter might imply that the body's senses register similar things similarly; hence people would understand what makes all noble actions similar. For the implications of binary pairs like noble and base, see chap. 4 below.

## Conclusion

As my analysis of the *Xunzi*'s chapter on names implies, early Chinese texts take nomenclaturism for granted, which precludes the idea that they view language as a system. In theory, a language can be conceived as a system at the level of sound, grammar, or meaning. If early Chinese texts do not posit grammar or word meanings, then what would be the feature of language that is systematized? There is no evidence in the texts that their authors systematically analyzed how the sounds of various *ming* differ from one another.[56] If *ming* simply refer—and are not accompanied by concepts, ideas, or meanings—then there is no part of *ming* to be systematized. In short, early Chinese theorizing about names did not treat them as a system and so did not resemble Greek or Latin studies of grammar or anticipate modern linguistics.

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[54] This need not be an impossible task unless we interpret the "Zhengming" chapter as proposing a comprehensive rectification of all names. But the chapter does not state that one should straighten every conceivable name. The impression is that an authorized namer should adhere to naming customs of the past, as the former kings did, while also making new names, presumably in areas of confusion, and punishing those who are responsible for the confusion.

[55] As Hansen often notes, they do not have a sentential structure. See chap. 8 below.

[56] The *fanqie* system had not yet developed. "An important step forward in decomposing the syllable was taken early in the Common Era with the invention of a method of notation called *fanqie* 反切, presumably under the influence of Sanskrit writing which came in when China adopted Buddhism." Wang and Sun, *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Linguistics*, 5. Whether the concept of *fanqie* was, in fact, borrowed from India is controversial, but R. H. van Gulik notes that a scholar in the Song dynasty, Shen Kuo 沈括, took it to be. Van Gulik, *Siddham*, 42. Wen Hsu contends that the idea that led to the creation of the *fanqie* system was specifically the method by which the *Kharoṣṭhī* script is spelled. Wen, "The First Step toward Phonological Analysis in Chinese: *Fanqie*," 137–58.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# The Prescriptive Crisis

## Naming and Distinguishing

As I argue in chapter 3, the treatment of speech and names in early Chinese texts resembles a nomenclature more so than a concept of language as a system. I now turn to “distinguishing,” a common theme in texts from Early China, the prevalence of which could contribute to the misleading impression that the texts posit an idea of language as a system of discrimination. In support of the view that early Chinese texts treat language as prescriptive guidance, scholars appeal to the recurrence of a handful of terms: *bian* 辨/辯 (distinguish/discriminate), *fen* 分 (divide), *bie* 別 (separate), and *yi* 異 (differentiate). In light of the fact that *bian* 辯 is also the name for the rhetorical practice of disputation, this emphasis on distinguishing between alternatives can foster the impression that there is an idea of “language” that consists in a system of differential discriminations. Particularly if we accept that the frequent references to distinguishing in early Chinese texts derive from linguistic discriminations (rather than, as I will argue, something more comprehensive), then it might seem plausible that the texts present language as a differential system of names that, as values within a system, provide guidance. On that presumption, when some texts bemoan the inconstancy of names, their complaint might seem to reflect the antilanguage idea that names carve distinctions out of the world, providing unnatural or rigid guidance.[1]

I will argue in this chapter that: (1) there is insufficient evidence to support interpreting the *Xunzi*’s “Zhengming” chapter as saying that naming is the direct agent of distinguishing; (2) the metaphor of discriminating is significantly different from the metaphor for what names do in relation to actions and things, which is mainly pick or select; (3) the view that in the "Zhengming" language discriminates "kinds" does not sufficiently consider how the chapter depicts the sense faculties; and (4) the senses discriminate in binary pairs, and while binaries might contribute to a system, by themselves binaries are not systems.

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[1] For instance, Hansen’s *Laozi* opposes the unnatural divisions of language in favor of the natural senses: “Besides, Daoists as nature worshippers could hardly oppose nature. The senses are our access to nature and its natural effects.” Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 226. Yet Hansen rejects interpreting the *Laozi* in a way that “presupposes a distinction between distinction making that is *natural* and distinction making that is *conventional*,” because doing so would make the text incoherent. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 230 (emphasis in original).

Many scholars interpret *Mengzi* 2A2 as evidence that Mengzi criticizes language for being external and rigid, an interpretation that generally translates *yan* (speech) as something like “doctrine” or “formula.” See the introduction, n. 17.

On the face of it, references to discriminating and dividing in early Chinese texts, such as the frequent occurrence of the terms *bian* 辨, *bian* 辯, *fen* 分, *bie* 別, and *yi* 異 (used as a verb), lend support to arguments that early Chinese texts present language as a system that produces its own distinctions. That is, if language is the source of human distinguishing—drawing lines between things that mark sameness and difference—it might seem like language itself creates distinctions or boundaries between things without reference to the world, whether understood to be an undistinguished ground or as something with its own distinctions that are eclipsed by language.[2]

The assertion that language in Early China distinguishes, however, is at once too narrow and too broad. As its name indicates, the metadiscourse called *bian*—that is, argumentation or disputation—consists in distinguishing, but in Early China disputation is a particular rhetorical genre—polemical speech—not the practice of ordinary speakers. Thus a claim about what "disputation" does is not the same as a claim about what all language does. From the broader perspective, a use of speech to discriminate is accompanied by—or perhaps preceded by—sensory discrimination. Early Chinese texts explicitly describe sensory faculties creating distinctions in the world, and only one example (from the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter) arguably seems to state that names produce discriminations.[3] The observation that the senses distinguish suggests an embodied complexity in early Chinese texts' understandings of how human beings discriminate, a complexity that claims of a language crisis do not take into account.

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[2] Hansen argues that early Chinese texts present names as making distinctions in reality. He writes, "Reality is not a multitude of independent, fixed objects, but a ground out of which a linguistic community *carves* distinctions and marks them with names." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 50 (emphasis in original). Chris Fraser rejects aspects of this ontology in "Language and Ontology in Early Chinese Thought," 420–56.

[3] I analyze the example below.

I do not take this line from the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter as evidence that names distinguish because, while it lists outcomes or conditions of establishing names, the relation among them is not direct.

> 故王者之制名, 名定而實辨, 道行而志通, 則慎率民而一焉.
> Therefore, in the ruler's establishing naming, names are settled and *shi* (actions/things) are distinguished, the dao is enacted and [his] aims are unobstructed (see chap. 6 on

## The *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming": Names, *Shi* 實, and Distinguishing Same/Different

In the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, the identification of "distinguishing" (*bian* 辨) as one outcome of establishing names might be taken as supporting the argument that early Chinese texts depict language as distinction-making. Because this is one of very few passage in extant early Chinese texts in which names might seem to contribute to making distinctions, it requires close analysis.

The passage begins by proposing this solution to confusion in the ruler's aims and affairs: "the knower" divides separations (or divides and separates) and establishes names in order to point to *shi* 實 (action/things). The next line can be read, conceivably, as saying that names' pointing at *shi* 實 consists in (or at least results in) distinguishing same and different, but its meaning is far from transparent.

> 貴賤不明, 同異不別; 如是, 則志必有不喻之患, 而事必有困廢之禍. 故知者為之分別制名以指實, 上以明貴賤, 下以辨同異. 貴賤明, 同異別; 如是, 則志無不喻之患, 事無困廢之禍, 此所為有名也. 然則何緣而以同異? 曰: 緣天官.

One possible translation is:

> Noble and lowly are not clear (*ming* 明), same and different are not separated (*bie* 別). When it is like this, then the aims will certainly have the misfortune of being obscure and *shi* 事 (events/work) will certainly have the disaster of being blocked and wasted. Therefore, the knower, on their behalf, divides (*fen* 分) separations (*bie* 別) and establishes names in order to point to *shi* 實. Above, in order to clarify noble and lowly. Below, in order to distinguish/discriminate (*bian* 辨) same and different. When noble and lowly are clear, same and different are separated (*bie* 別), in this way then, the aims will have no misfortune of being unclear, and affairs (events) will have no disaster of being blocked or wasted. This is the reason for having names. In that case, what is relied on (*yuan* 緣) such that there be sameness and difference? The answer is, what is relied on is the heavenly officers (the senses).
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

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this translation of 通 *tong*), thus he carefully leads the people and they become one. *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The implication might be that establishing names facilitates making *shi* 實 distinguished but not that names do the distinguishing. The dao does not directly make the aims unobstructed; hence the names need not directly make the *shi* distinguished.

Here, the rhetoric of dividing (*fen* 分), separating (*bie* 別), and distinguishing (*bian* 辨) is by no means restricted to naming. In fact, the phrase in which the knower divides separations (or divides and separates) before establishing names seems to imply that discriminating precedes naming (分別制名). Or, further, we might assume that the knower divides *in order to* establish names (although there is no clear indication of such a causal relationship). In the first reading, the knower divides, but that which is divided is not specified. It could be anything, including names. The first instance of "dividing" (*fen* 分) is paired with the synonym "separating" (*bie* 別), which later yields to "distinguishing" (*bian* 辨), which suggests that the passage treats all three activities—dividing (*fen* 分), separating (*bie* 別), and distinguishing (*bian* 辨)—as essentially the same. Because the knower divides (and possibly separates) some thing before establishing names, that rather obscure endeavor serves to undermine the claim that language functions to distinguish by virtue of its act of naming since the act of naming occurs *after*, not before or at the same time as, the discriminating endeavor. One might protest that the knower uses other names to distinguish in order to establish names that distinguish, but that interpretation seems unnecessarily convoluted.

Depending on how the sentence (故知者為之分別制名以指實，上以明貴賤，下以辨同異) is interpreted, two processes—both dividing separations and establishing names—could be read as the dual cause of what follows. For my purposes, the resulting discrimination of same/different (辨同異) is what is most pertinent. Interpreting the fragment as part of a single sentence, a rare instance of *ming* and *bian* appearing so close together, seems to be the source of the claim that language discriminates, and it hinges on a translation of the passage that identifies names as the agent of the action:

> 故知者為之分別制名以指實，上以明貴賤，下以辨同異.
> Therefore, the knower, on their behalf, divides (*fen* 分) separations (*bie* 別) and establishes names in order to point to *shi* 實: above, [names are the agent] in order to clarify noble and lowly; below, [names are the agent] in order to distinguish/discriminate (*bian* 辨) same and different.

In this interpretation of the passage, establishing names is at least partly responsible for two outcomes: clarifying noble/lowly and discriminating same/different. But why mention both noble/lowly and same/different? Why characterize them as being up high or down low? What is the significance of the difference between "clarify" and "distinguish"? And finally, how do the answers to those questions affect the final line of the longer passage quoted above, which patently declares that we rely on the senses (not names) for sameness and difference?

Before attempting to answer the questions I have posed, we should consider an alternative (my preferred) reading in which the line under consideration ends with pointing to *shi* 實 (actions/things). In that case, we might infer that names are not the agent that performs the acts of clarifying and discriminating. For example, we could interpret it as I implicitly do above.

> 故知者為之分別制名以指實, 上以明貴賤, 下以辨同異.
> Therefore, the knower, on their behalf, divides separations and establishes names in order to point to *shi* 實. Above, [the knower is the agent] in order to clarify noble and lowly. Below, [the knower is the agent] in order to distinguish/discriminate (*bian* 辨) same and different.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

In that reading, the knower discriminates, and names do not necessarily discriminate at all.

We might consider a potential interpretation of this line's use of the pair "above and below" in light of early Chinese yin/yang polarities. That is, we can interpret above and below as a relation characterized by degrees of difference, complementarity, and mutual interdependence.[4] Interpreted with regard to how early Chinese texts tend to use "above/below" rhetoric, this use of "above" would refer to the sky, which aligns with light, tenuous things (including sound and, therefore, *ming*), whereas "below" would refer to the earth, which aligns with more condensed things (including shapes and bodies and action, therefore *shi*). Many passages in early Chinese texts contrast "lofty" things like honor and reputation (*ming* 名) with more "earthy" things like a concern for profit (*li* 利) or bodily comforts.[5] Such an interpretation would, unlike my preferred interpretation, treat that which is above as typical of *ming* and that which is below as typical of *shi*. It might look like this: "above" consists in things that are "near the heavens" in the sense of being ethical. (In this use, "noble/lowly" should be read as a single term implying honor.) Moreover, noble/lowly would not be as amenable to differentiation according to same/different. Below consists in things that are "near the earth," which are not exalted. It is important to note that this would not imply aligning "below" with the senses.

On the contrary, when we use a yin/yang polarity to frame *ming* and *shi*, the senses are present on both sides of the polarity. That is, "above" encompasses sound (including *ming*), while "below" encompasses visual things like shapes, bodies, and actions (including *shi*). In that light, the polarity would suggest that visual things are more amenable than audible things to a same/different analysis. The conjecture is not implausible because, in other contexts, early Chinese texts indicate that visible things are condensed enough to divide, whereas sounds are less so.[6] On the other hand, if we interpret noble/lowly and same/different in this way as a yin/yang pair (meaning, noble/lowly is *ming* and same/different is *shi*), then the line from the *Xunzi* would seem to assert that establishing *ming* would point to *shi* by clarifying *ming* and distinguishing *shi*. Thus, there are reasons both for and against interpreting noble/lowly and same/different in this line as a yin/yang polarity. Hence, we might just as well read the line not as a yin/yang polarity involving the senses but as typical (like near/far, inside/outside, above/below) of early Chinese rhetorical style, which, in this case, implies merely that the distinction of noble/lowly is appropriate for (but not exclusive to) things above, while the distinction of same/different is appropriate for (but not exclusive to) things below.

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[4] For this understanding of yin/yang see, e.g., Ames and Hall, *Thinking Through Confucius*, 17–21, and Ames, "Putting the *Te* Back into Taoism," 119–21.

[5] See chap. 2 in the section entitled "Balancing Reputation and *Shi* 實."

While a yin/yang polarity interpretation is plausible, to construe this use of above and below as the *Xunzi*'s invention of a fact/value contrast would be anachronistic.[7] A fact/value dualism, unlike a polarity, implies objective states of affairs versus subjective evaluative judgments and tends to assert irreducible difference on the assumption of superiority and independence of one side over the other. But again, early Chinese texts present the senses of sound and sight on either side of a polar relation. The fact that sounds (including honorable reputations, *ming* 名) and visible things (including deeds, *shi* 實 and *xing* 行, that fill out those reputations) occur on different sides of the polarity makes it unlikely that the authors of the

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[6] I make this argument in “Binaries in Early Chinese Texts.”

[7] Regarding fact/value, Hansen writes that, for the *Mozi*, constant/inconstant and natural/conventional serve instead and that value words and descriptive words work similarly in a pragmatic point of view, both being “world guided.” Nevertheless, he thinks that the *Xunzi* makes such a distinction in its treatment of noble/base and same/different (*Daoist Theory*, 126, 319–20, 391). For a discussion of fact/value in Early China, see Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 29. See also Hansen, “Dao as a Naturalistic Focus,” 267–97.

Dan Robins sees the “Zhengming” distinction as closer to that of fact/value than I do. He writes,

> He [Xunzi] tells us that we have names in order to illuminate noble and base and distinguish same and different. By separating these two issues, he came closer than does any other early Chinese thinker (at least in extant texts) to articulating a distinction between fact and value. But his aim is not to identify those uses of language that are appropriate for the objective description of fact. The point of distinguishing same and different, just like the point of illuminating noble and base, is to ensure that the ruler’s intent can be made plain and that the business of government can succeed. Robins, “Xunzi,” https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/xunzi/

*Xunzi* would be employing a newly invented fact/value dualism in which "above" is the realm of nonsensory (linguistic) value, as distinct from the judgment-free sensory experience of facts below.[8]

To approach this matter in a different way, early Chinese texts do not use the vocabulary of noble/lowly (*guijian* 貴賤) and same/different (*tongyi* 同異) to indicate a distinction between ethical judgments and sensory distinctions. In fact, the two pairs (*guijian* and *tongyi*) appear in proximity in only one other instance in the *Lüshichunqiu*. That passage introduces a third category, elder/younger, to same/different and noble/lowly polarities.

> 同異之分, 貴賤之別, 長少之義, 此先王之所慎, 而治亂之紀也.
> The divisions of sameness and difference, the separations (*bie* 別)[9] of noble and lowly, the *yi* 義 (models)[10] of elder and younger, these are things about which the ancient kings were careful and they are the thread of order and chaos.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 似順論第五 《處 (方) 〔分〕》

The *yi* 義 of elder/younger is an ethical matter, which precludes interpreting noble/lowly in this context as meaning all things ethical. Indeed, the mere presence of a third category here disrupts any easy assumption that the authors of the "Zhengming" chapter are proposing a new philosophical distinction that uses *guijian* to mean everything that is above (value) and *tongyi* to mean everything that is below (sensory facts).

Moreover, in other passages in the *Xunzi*, *tongyi* seems to be one among several technical terms. In the "Ru Xiao" chapter, *tongyi* functions as one kind of distinction, that is, not as signaling solely all "lower" distinctions made by the senses:

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[8] Nor does the sound/vision polarity promote the mind/body version of that dualism, according to which "above" pertains to the heartmind's values whereas "below" is the sphere of objective knowledge gathered through the senses.

[9] This use of *guijian* 貴賤 (noble/lowly) with "separations" (*bie* 別) rather than "clarifying" (*ming* 明) reduces the likelihood of any special significance when the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" uses "clarify" with noble/lowly instead of "separate," which it uses with *tongyi* 同異.

[10] The use of *yi* 義 here, after *fen* 分 (divide) and *bie* 別 (separate), is also worth thinking about if we interpret this line with the assumption that each word choice is weighty: it might suggest a similarity between *fen*, *bie*, and *yi*. Alternatively, there might be no particular concern about precisely which term is applied to any of the three different binaries. For this translation of *yi* 義, see Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

> 若夫充虛之相施易也, 堅白、同異之分隔也, 是聰耳之所不能聽也, 明目之所不能見也, 辯士之所不能言也.
> Now, as for the divisions of the applications and changes of full and empty, hard and white, same and different, these are what the acute ears are not able to listen to, bright eyes are not able to see and *bian* 辯 (discerning) scholars are unable to speak.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 儒效篇第八

The incidence of "full and empty" and "hard and white" in this list conveys the impression that specific kinds of distinctions are being signified, albeit ones that we do not quite understand. The use of *tongyi* here does not include hard and white, which are sensed by touch and vision. Hence, although the *Xunzi* does not have a single author, this example undermines the likelihood that the authors or compilers of the "Zhengming" chapter were using *tongyi* to mean all sensory distinctions "below."

Returning to the "Zhengming" line, then, even if we interpret it as a single sentence, it most likely identifies the *shi* 實 (actions/things) that are pointed out by names as consisting equally of noble/lowly and sameness/difference. That is, because the line states that names point to *shi* 實, which it then modifies as being above and below, the *shi* would be understood to encompass both the things above (that are to be treated in terms of their honorableness) and the things below (that are to be treated in terms of more general differences). Positioning the distinction of noble/base as "above" highlights the importance of ethical concerns, suggesting that *shi* 實 come in two kinds, those that are subjects of honor and those that are not. Such a reading is justified insofar as *shi* 實 is often used when the context concerns ethical deeds that fulfill the promise of speech and reputation.

In the "Zhengming" line, *tongyi* is not about the *shi* 實 of empirical experience as opposed to something that is not-*shi*, which is to say, language. In short, there is not enough evidence to support such an extreme distinction. The unusual proximity of *ming* and *bian* as well as the passage's interpretive flexibility make the line from the "Zhengming" a weak foundation for inferences about conceptions of language in early Chinese texts.

## Metaphors for the Use of Names

Like the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming," other early Chinese texts show minimal evidence of names being described as distinguishing.[11] The shortage of such examples encourages us to look elsewhere to identify the primary function of names. "Clarifying" emerges as one possible alternative in the "Zhengming" passage:

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[11] The *Kongconzi*, the *Shuo Yuan*, and the *Baihutong*, each have one case of *mingbie* (名別), while the *Shizi* has one case where *ming* facilitates *bian* 辯. See *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 卷四 《公孫龍

> 故知者為之分別制名以指實, 上以明貴賤, 下以辨同異.
> Therefore, the knower, on their behalf, divides separations and establishes names in order to point to *shi* 實. Above, in order to clarify noble and lowly. Below, in order to distinguish/discriminate (*bian* 辨) same and different.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

Whether this asserts, on the one hand, that dividing separations and establishing names clarify noble/lowly or, on the other, that the knower divides separations and establishes names in order to clarify noble/lowly, names only distinguish same/different to the extent that they clarify noble/lowly. But distinguishing and clarifying are not names' main activities in early Chinese texts. Recent scholarship, which tends to emphasize distinguishing as an element of the prescriptive role of language, occasionally suggests that names guide by making distinctions that "carve" the world.[12] Given this possibility of extrapolating ideas from figures of speech, we should review metaphors for naming as they appear in early Chinese texts.

"Add to" or "attach to" (*jia* 加) is one common metaphoric activity early Chinese texts typically align with names. For example, the *Mozi* uses both "raise up" and "attach" to explain what people do with the name "sage-king":

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第十二〉〉, *Baihutong* 白虎通 五行, and *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 辨物. The *Shizi* example does not say that names *bian* 辨, instead it asserts that settled names are required for *bian*.

> 天下之可治, 分成也; 是非之可辨, 名定也. 無過其實, 罪也; 弗及, 愚也.
> That the world can be ordered is because divisions (*fen*) are formed. That *shi* and *fei* can be distinguished (*bian* 辨) is because names are settled. Not exceeding its fulfillment is a crime. Not reaching it is ignorance.
> *Shizi* 尸子 1〈卷上〉

[12] Again, the view that "Reality is . . . a ground out of which a linguistic community *carves* distinctions and marks them with names" (emphasis in original) is something Hansen attributes to "Chinese linguistic theory" and specifically the *Laozi*: "Laozi's image of the nameless *pu* (simplicity)—the uncarved block that is freedom from desire—captures the essence of his view. Nameless, it is uncarved, undivided. Freedom from names and distinctions is freedom from desire. As soon as it is cut—as soon as there are distinctions—there are names." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 50, 213. He also expresses this in the voice of Zhuangzi: "All languages involve what we called thick concepts that are strongly world guided. Each appears to its adherents to be the obviously correct way to *carve things up*." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 281 (emphasis added).

> 故舉天下美名加之，謂之「聖王」.
> Hence, we raise up (*ju*) the world's most excellent name and attach (*jia*) it, calling him "Sage-king."
> *Mozi* 墨子卷七 7.1《天志上第二十六》

Here, what one does with a name involves a two-step process: raising something up, and then attaching the name onto something. Other metaphors describe not what one does with a name but what the name itself does: pick or select (*qu* 取), or raise up (*ju* 舉). The picking and raising up metaphors (*qu* and *ju*) seem related to picking fruit or grain (*shi* 實). They also evoke what a ruler does when he bestows a title that elevates an official out of the ranks of commoners as well as what happens when people become "famous" (*ming* 名): other people hear their *ming*, hence it is brought out from the sounds of other names.

While picking and raising up imply a difference between that which is selected and that which is not, they do not, unlike discriminating, imply carving out of a ground as one does when slicing a pizza. That is, the metaphors of picking and raising up make no suggestion that the thing (or person) selected does not already have its own boundaries. Selecting foregrounds the thing in question and makes it distinct, but it does not necessarily detach it from something else that borders it. Moreover, while references to *mingfen* (名分) involve the term *fen*, which can be used to mean "divide" as well as "part," they tend to concern "titles and shares" that are assigned to people. In early Chinese mathematics, in the process of division, *fen* is used to mean a "part" or fraction.[13] In the *Zhoubi Suanjing*, a classic of astronomy and calendrical theory, *ming* 命 occurs repeatedly in relation to the process of division (以法命之). But in this phrase, the *fa* is the number by which the *shi* (the dividend) is to be divided. The *ming* do not perform the dividing; instead, a *ming* (name) is applied to the leftover part that does not fill the divisor: that is, it is named according to the *fa*. If we apply those relations of *ming* and dividing to the *Xunzi*'s line, the metaphor of pointing by means of names might contribute to a process of dividing or distinction making, but because *ming* do not do the dividing, distinguishing is not the activity of names.

As with "raising up" and "picking," the metaphor of pointing (*zhi* 指) does not suggest carving out boundaries. Although early Chinese texts seldom use pointing as a metaphor for naming, examining the few cases in which they do is a useful exercise. The *Zhuangzi* comments:

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[13] See, for example, Chemla, "Shedding Some Light on a Possible Origin of a Concept of Fractions in China,'" 174–98.

> 異名同實, 其指一也.
> These different names have the same *shi* (action/thing): their pointing is one.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 知北遊第二十二

The *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter twice applies the activity of pointing to names.[14] Sometimes, pointing is an attribute of *shi* rather than of *ming*, as in the *Mo Bian*.

> 10.4.52 堯霍. 或以名視人, 或以實視人. 舉友富商也, 是以名視人也; 指是臛也, 是以實視人也.
> Yao and X[15]: the one by means of a name (*ming*) shows a person.
> The other by means of a *shi* 實 (action/thing) shows a person.
> To raise up (*ju* 舉) a friend as a wealthy merchant is a case of showing a person by using a name.
> To point (*zhi* 指) to X is a case of showing a person by using a *shi*.
> (A. C. Graham translation, modified.)[16]
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.4 《經說下第四十三》

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[14] The examples of pointing in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" include the one discussed above (分別制名以指實) and this: "*ming* are sufficient to point to *shi*" (名之足以指實).

Pointing features prominently in the *Gongsunlongzi*, and, in one case, *ming* is involved, but whatever it says, it does not characterize the act of *ming* as pointing: 天下無指者, 生於物之各有名, 不為指也. Tentatively translated, this might say, "Of the things in the world that are its not-pointing, [the fact that] everything born among things has a name is not deemed pointing." *Gongsunlongzi* 公孫龍子卷中 《指物論第三》.

Pointing is a metaphor for speech (*yan* 言) in examples that contrast sound and sight. For instance, there are these two examples from second century C.E. texts:

> 故目者, 心之浮也, 言者, 行之指也.
> Thus the eye is the floating (or "sign") of the heartmind, and speech (*yan* 言) is the pointing (indication) of the action.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第四 《曾子立事第四十九》

> 傳言失指, 圖景失形.
> Transmitting speech (*yan* 言) misses the point, diagramming images loses the shape.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

[15] I am using "X" because the identity of this graph is uncertain, and its role here is not particularly important for my purposes. A. C. Graham considers two possibilities: a term used to mean "meat soup" or a word for "crane." Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 219–20, 422.

[16] Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 421.

The translation is tentative, but it is evident that we "show" things in two ways. One is by means of names, which involves raising up. The other is by means of hands, which involves pointing. Similar mouth/hand contrasts, although they do not mention names, occur in which mouths' speaking are juxtaposed with hands' visibly pointing.[17] Drawing conclusions from these various metaphors for naming is difficult, but a few remarks are in order. Picking (*qu* 取), raising (*ju* 舉), and pointing (*zhi* 指) are all metaphors for naming that involve an activity of the hand. But for some reason, examples of the hand picking or raising are not visually contrasted to the sounds of naming or speaking, while pointing occasionally is. Because that contrast is sometimes extended to the activity of speech or names as well, the use of *zhi* 指 does not automatically imply that something linguistic does the pointing. In sum, names typically attach, pick, raise up, and, less commonly, point, and so we should think of various hand gestures as metaphors for naming. With hands absent knives, then, names do not paradigmatically create distinctions between things.

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[17] There are these two examples of aural/visual contrasts in which hands point:

> 口不設言, 手不指麾.
> [Regarding Shun] . . . his mouth did not arrange speech and his hand did not point with flags.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 原道訓
>
> 故至德者, 言同略, 事同指.
> Thus of those of the utmost *de* 德 (power/virtue), their speech is similar to their planning, and their service (*shi* 事) is similar to their pointing.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 繆稱訓

Examples where speech might be pointing include the following:

> 14.32 言近而指遠者, 善言也.
> To speak of the near while pointing far, that is good speech.
> *Mengzi* 孟子 盡心下

In the example used above of speech compared with the eye, speech could be the agent that does the pointing.

> 故目者, 心之浮也, 言者, 行之指也.
> Thus the eye is the floating (or "sign") of the heartmind, and speech (*yan* 言) is the pointing (indication) of the action.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第四 《曾子立事第四十九》

A *hao* 號 (perhaps a command rather than a nickname in this case) also has something to do with pointing: it clarifies it.

> 出言以副情, 發號以明指.
> [The sages] emit speech in order to supplement feelings/motivations (*qing* 情), and issue commands/names in order to clarify the pointing.
> *Wenzi* 文子 精誠

See chap. 1, n. 11, for a note on the translation of *qing* 情. See also the *Huainanzi* version, which has 旨 instead of 指 (主術訓).

## Distinguishing and "Kinds" (*Lei* 類) in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming"

The claim that early Chinese texts view language as making discriminations might seem to be supported by the frequent appearance of *bian* 辨 in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming," given the chapter's overriding concern with correcting names. Most of those occurrences arise, however, in the section that rationalizes the *junzi*'s engagement in the activity called *bian* 辨, "disputation."[18] The passage is long, but I cite most of it here to give the gist of the relationship between names and *bian* 辨:

> 今聖人沒, 天下亂, 姦言起, 君子無埶以臨之, 無刑以禁之, 故辨說也. 實不喻然後命, 命不喻然後期, 期不喻然後說, 說不喻然後辨. 故期、命、辨、說也者, 用之大文也, 而王業之始也. 名聞而實喻, 名之用也. 累而成文, 名之麗也. 用、麗俱得, 謂之知名. 名也者、所以期累實也. 辭也者、兼異實之名以 (論)〔諭〕一意也. 辨說也者, 不異實名以喻動靜之道也 . . . 心合於道, 說合於心, 辭合於說, 正名而期, 質請而喻. 辨異而不過, 推類而不悖, 聽則合文, 辨則盡故.
>
> The sages are gone, the world is in chaos, and dissolute speech has arisen. The *junzi* lacks authority to approach people and punishments to hinder them, therefore [the *junzi* participates in] distinguishing explanations (*bianshuo* 辨說). When *shi* (actions/things) are not illustrated (*yu* 喻), there are orders/names (*ming* 命). When the orders/names are not illustrated (*yu* 喻), there are arrangements (*qi* 期). When arrangements (*qi* 期) are not illustrated (*yu* 喻), there is explaining. When explaining is not illustrated (*yu* 喻), there is *bian* (辨 disputation). Thus, arrangements (*qi* 期), orders/names, and distinguishing explanations (*bianshuo* 辨說): use them with great pattern (*wen* 文) and they are the start of the ruler's enterprise. When names (*ming* 名) are heard and *shi* (actions/things) are illustrated (*yu* 喻), that is the usefulness of names. When [names]

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[18] I translate this as "distinguishing explanations" when it seems to be a compound with *shuo* 說.

> accumulate (*lei* 累) and form a pattern (*wen* 文), this is the beauty[19] of names. When use and beauty are both obtained, [we] call it knowing names. Names/naming is that by which one arranges (*qi* 期) accumulated (*lei* 累) *shi* (actions/things). With *ci* (phrases or phrasing): compound the names of different *shi* (actions/things) in order to proclaim (*yu* 諭) one *yi* (thing on the heartmind). With distinguishing explanations (*bianshuo* 辨說): do not[20] differentiate *shi* (actions/things) from names in order to elucidate the dao of movement and stillness. . . . The heartmind accords with the dao, the explanations accord with the heartmind, the phrasing accords with the explanations, straight naming is arranged (*qi* 期), and substance and motivation become illustrated (*yu* 喻). The differences are distinguished (*bianyi* 辨異) and not mistaken; the kinds (*lei* 類) are pushed and not at odds (*bei* 悖). There is listening, and thus according with the patterns (*wen* 文), and there is disputation (*bian* 辨), and thus exhausting the causes.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The challenge that requires the "distinguishing explanations" of disputation does not concern names but chaos and dissolute speech. Names have a role in the passage, but they do not discriminate nor does their role suggest that language makes discriminations. Instead, names (1) are the second of the many things that need to be made clear (*yu* 喻); (2) can be known; (3) perform one of three activities of disputation (in an unusual description, by arranging accumulated *shi*); and (4) appear amidst nine outcomes of the disputation process.

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[19] Based on a proposal by Liu Shih-p'ei, Graham contends, in his interpretation of the *Mo Bian* A70 and B3, that *li* 麗 in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter is a technical term meaning "connect" or "link." His rationale builds on speculations about several different emended graphs ("disguised" he says, with different forms) from the *Mo Bian* and a forged chapter of the *Gongsunlongzi*. See Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 191, 326.

Interpreting the "Zhengming" occurrences of *li* 麗 as "beauty," however, is plausible in its context. Aesthetics feature in the "Zhengming" view of names insofar as it asserts that "arranging" (*qi* 期) is required when *shi* and ordaining/naming (*ming* 命) are not illustrated, and it describes the foundation of the ruler's work as a "great pattern" (*dawen* 大文) in the use of ordaining/naming, arranging, explaining, and distinguishing.

On my reading, the passage asserts that names have both use and beauty: their usefulness being the way hearing them illustrates *shi* 實, and their beauty being the way accumulating them forms patterns. By contrast, Graham's reading would have the "Zhengming" say that names possess—not use and beauty—but use and links. Reading the graph as "link" (i.e., when names accumulate and form patterns this is the "linking" of names) would make the line redundant, because accumulating (*lei* 累) already presupposes a linking in the sense of being assembled. Thus, to make Graham's theory work for the "Zhengming," this technical sense of *li* 麗 would have to mean linking of a particular sort that goes beyond merely connecting, further stretching the plausibility of his hypothesis.

[20] The graph for "not" here is arguably extraneous.

The argument that early Chinese texts view language as making distinctions sometimes focuses on the idea of distinguishing kinds (*lei* 類).[21] Distinguishing kinds, however, only highlights that names have a role in the senses' distinction making.[22] At least, as I will argue, according to one possible interpretation of the "Zhengming," attention to distinguishing kinds buttresses the claim that *the senses* distinguish kinds, after which naming follows.

To return to the opposing view, the idea that names (and thus language in general) distinguish kinds might seem to be the substance of a passage in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter that concerns agreement about names. But the passage pertains to the senses making discriminations, not names making them. To explain how we get shared names, the passage discusses the senses' differentiating operations and the basis for determining sameness and difference. The term “kinds” (*lei* 類) appears twice in this passage.

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[21] Passages that describe kinds (*lei* 類) being divided or discriminated are not common. The *Lüshichunqiu* has a chapter called *Bie Lei* 別類 ("Separating Kinds"), but only the first of its six sections uses the term *lei*, and it does not mention names, speech, or spoken explanations (*shuo* 說). Two of the following sections disparage explanations (*shuo*), and one disparages phrases (*ci* 辭) precisely because they do not effectively distinguish between things. This rhetoric is similar to passages about "disputers" that describe debate as entailing arranging different starting points and separating and dividing (*bieshu* 別殊) kinds. The kinds in question seem to be types of arguments, just as the starting points are features of arguments. (See *Dengxizi* "Wuhou" chapter and *Hanshi Waizhuan*, chap. 6).

In the *Hanfeizi* the ruler examines *ming* in order to fix positions. Distinguishing kinds seems to be the byproduct of clarifying shares, but perhaps it is indirectly related to examining *ming*, because clarifying shares might result from examining *ming* and fixing positions.

> 凡聽之道, 以其所出, 反以為之入. 故審名以定位, 明分以辯類.
> Now, the dao of listening is to use what comes out in order to, in turn, enter something into it. Therefore, examine *ming* (titles) to fix positions, clarifying shares in order to distinguish kinds.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 揚權第八

[22] Fraser characterizes language as using distinctions of kinds to guide: "Language functions and guides conduct through action-guiding distinctions." With reference to several lines from the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming," he adds, "This ability to draw distinctions also explains the mechanism by which names guide action. Distinguishing a particular thing as being of one kind or another triggers a norm-governed response to that kind." Fraser, "Language and Logic in the *Xunzi*," 291–321.

My argument is not that *ming* never name kinds, but that distinguishing is not the most common function of *ming*, and insofar as *ming* distinguish, the senses seem to either precede or accompany the process. For a case of *ming* naming kinds or groups (*zhong* 種), see the passage from the *Hanfeizi* chap. 32, "Wai Chu Shuo Zuo Shang" (外儲說左上) in my introduction.

> 凡同類同情者, 其天官之意物也同, 故比方之疑似而通, 是所以共其約名以相期也. 形體、色理以目異 . . . 徵知, 則緣耳而知聲可也, 緣目而知形可也, 然而徵知必將待天官之當簿其類然後可也; 五官簿之而不知, 心徵之而無說, 則人莫不然謂之不知, 此所緣而以同異也.
> For all [things of] the same kinds (*lei* 類) and motivations (*qing* 情), their heavenly officers’ [the senses] *yiwu* 意物 (estimate of the thing)[23] are also similar.[24] Thus [we, or the senses] place side by side their doubts and resemblances and achieve nonobstruction (*tong* 通). In this way, we make their attached names shared for mutual arrangement. Shapes, bodies, colors, and patterns are differentiated by the eyes. . . . With verifying knowing,[25] relying on the ears and knowing sound is possible, and relying on the eyes and knowing shapes is possible. But the verifying knowing must await the senses’ matching and recording (*bu* 簿)[26] their kinds (*lei* 類) before it is possible. If the five officers record them but do not know, if the heartmind verifies them but does not explain, then no one will not call it not knowing. This is what [people] rely on and use for taking [things] as same and different.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

Treating similar and different in turn, the passage first addresses sameness (kinds, *lei* 類, and motivations), noting a similarity pertaining to the senses (the heavenly officers). Next, each sense differentiates specific things. For example, the eyes differentiate shapes, bodies, colors, and patterns. After describing what the eyes, ears, nose, body, and heartmind differentiate (in a section omitted here), the passage goes on to say that “verifying knowing” awaits something from the senses, and notes that the senses match (*dang* 當) and record (*bu* 簿) their kinds. Whatever

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23. See chap. 1, n. 11, for a note on this translation of *qing* 情. The compound *yiwu* 意物 is unclear. On the basis of the argument that *yi* is used to mean “guess” about things that are not known, I translate it as “estimate of the thing.” For a discussion of *yi* used to mean “guess,” see *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

24. Interpretations of this line are debatable, and my translation is deliberately vague. I appreciate Chris Fraser’s reminder (email communication) that the grammar indicates that creatures of the same kind and motivations have senses that create similar *yiwu*.

25. The term *zhengzhi* 徵知 is obscure.

26. The use of *bu* 簿 (recording) in this context seems odd because the senses do not record things in other texts from Early China.

the term for “kinds” (*lei* 類) is doing in this line, it reflects the senses’ activities. It could be that each individual sense has its “kind,” so that, for instance, what the eyes record, what the ears record, and so on are the “kinds” of each. A competing interpretation might hold that the eyes differentiate shapes and colors *into kinds*. When the eyes differentiate colors, for example, they could be discriminating into kinds of colors. Thus, because the senses match and record kinds, it might seem that, when the senses differentiate, they distinguish things as kinds.

Even if we grant that the senses distinguish into kinds, however, the passage is not about names. It refers to them only to assert that the sensory process serves to create agreement about shared names (or something like that: 是所以共其約名以相期也). If we were to endorse the view that names distinguish kinds, we might assume that the names become shared because they accord with the senses’ distinguishing into kinds. In the next (but potentially unrelated) passage, we learn that “thereupon” (*sui* 隨), things are named—and those that are the same are treated as the same, while those that are individual (*dan* 單) are treated as one (單足以喻則單), etc.[27] Possibly excluding what is implied in the use of the word “thereupon,” however, the relationship between sensing and naming is, unfortunately, not covered in the “Zhengming.” If we presume that a consistent thread organizes the passages, then we might conclude that naming takes place *after* sensing occurs and that naming conforms to the senses’ differentiating.[28] That is, if the senses differentiate things into those of the same (*tong*) kind, then naming automatically follows suit (同則同之). And if the senses’ differentiation as single (*dan*) is sufficient to clarify, then naming treats it as such (單足以喻則單), etc. But if this is the case—regardless of whether the differentiation is “into kinds”—it does not necessarily follow that language guides through distinctions. If naming does not alter the senses’ discriminations, then sensing, not language, guides (presupposing that distinguishing guides) through distinctions. In other words, the senses create the norms for naming. Hence, if we accept that the two sections of the chapter belong in sequence, the senses' role deserves considerably more attention and credit. Insofar as distinguishing guides, the senses guide action and set norms based on their distinguishing. On this reading, names do nothing more than mirror the senses' discriminations by articulating those norms in sound as they pick things in the world.

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[27] The next section says,

> 然後隨而命之: 同則同之, 異則異之; 單足以喻則單, 單不足以喻則兼.
> Thereupon, afterwards, we name them. If they are the same, then we name them similarly, if they are different, then we name them differently. If a single name is enough to elucidate, then [we use] a single name. If a single name is not enough to elucidate, then [we use] a combined name.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

[28] The potentially unreliable structure of the text as a compilation undermines the plausibility of this interpretation. It appears that speaking (and thus perhaps naming) already occurs once the heartmind verifies knowledge and provides spoken explanation (*shuo* 說). That is, speaking occurs before the text declares, “thereupon, afterwards, we name them.”

Holding at bay, for a moment, any suspicion that the chapter consists of stitched-together strands, to interpret it as saying that names automatically follow sense discriminations raises the question of how naming discriminations could possibly create chaos and confusion. If everyone's naming discriminations accord with sense discriminations, and if sense discriminations are the same for creatures of the same kinds and motivations, then it is difficult to understand how a person would manage to create confusion by means of naming. The answer lies not with discriminations but with power, specifically its usurpation. Indeed, the chapter is oddly uninformative about who or what it is criticizing when it accuses people of making names chaotic. The passage describes its opponents as causing confusion with names and implicitly blocking the ruler's aims, but—as if of no interest or concern—it says nothing about what technically renders names incorrect. The chapter provides examples of "using *shi* to cause chaos with names" and "using names to cause chaos with *shi*," not to mention "using names to cause chaos with names," but they remain, to us at least, more like enigmas than illustrations.[29] Its objections to confusion regarding names seem rooted in its general objection to chaos in the world.

The chapter might object to unauthorized naming, "splitting phrasings and unauthorized making *of names* that causes chaos in straight names"—unless the line is emended to delete the word "names," as in the CHANT line: 故析辭擅作(名)以亂正名.[30] If we accept that similar sense differentiations automatically prompt similar naming, then to have any purchase, such a complaint about unauthorized names would probably need to be targeting the lack of authorization. There is no evidence for interpreting the chapter as objecting to a method of creating naming discriminations that departed from universally shared sense discriminations while simultaneously being persuasive enough to create chaos. Hence, it is likely that even when the "Zhengming" mentions people using confusion about names to incite chaos, the rhetoric reflects an attempt to consolidate power in the face of threats to the ruler's control (and the *junzi*'s desire to contribute to it). The issue resolves into one in which unauthorized names conflict with the aims of the authorities.

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[29] There is little in the "Zhengming" to help us discern what distinguishes the obscure examples of "using *shi* to cause chaos with names" from the equally obscure examples of "using names to cause chaos with *shi*." The processes are also vague. Patterns from other texts are not sufficient to yield a confident interpretation here. Any attempt to decipher what it means to investigate which ones "walk" (*xing* 行) or "harmonize" (*tiao* 調) with reference to other texts, like the *Mo Bian*, feels too much like interpreting a Rorschach test.

[30] The emended line, following Wang Niansun, would not object to new names but merely to split phrases and unauthorized actions that cause chaos with correct names. Either way, the concern is authority.

The "Zhengming" chapter is a discourse that prescribes the ruler's way of creating shared names on the assumption that only authorized naming is authentic. It does not imply that language is a system of discriminations. Distinguishing pertains directly to disputation and the senses. Insofar as the chapter gives any evidence that names distinguish, it suggests that they do so on the basis of the senses' own discriminating.

## Binary Distinguishing

Some scholars might take the frequent occurrence of binary pairs in early Chinese texts as evidence of a differential linguistic system, but, as I have suggested with reference to the "Zhengming" chapter and as I will go on to show in more detail, these differences appear, more accurately, to derive from the senses. Early Chinese texts often figure ignorance as a failure to apply the names "black" or "white." For example, a blind person who uses a name to select out the color black or white symbolizes a ruler who mistakenly assigns titles and rewards. In drawing the idea of difference to the extreme, the black/white pair might seem to imply that things acquire their identities by negation; that is, because the passages explicitly refer to the use of names, they might be taken to mean that "black" and "white" are values in a negative differential system of names.[31] Chapter 2 of the received version of the *Laozi* might similarly seem to imply that language creates such oppositions when it declares that knowing ugliness comes from knowing beauty.

As in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, however, sameness and difference (*tongyi* 同異), while not representing empirical experience as opposed to language, arise from the senses, which makes sense discrimination—not names—the origin of binaries. If we think of language as a scheme of differences imposed on sensory experience, we might expect that the senses would register *shi* 實 as degrees of difference, not as an opposition like same/different. But, as noted above, the "Zhengming" explicitly asserts that the senses are the source of differentiating between sameness and difference (*tongyi*).

> 此所為有名也. 然則何緣而以同異? 曰: 緣天官.
> This is the reason for having names. In that case, what is the cause of sameness and difference? The answer is, the cause is the heavenly officers.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

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[31] For a discussion of this trope, see Geaney, "*Míng* 名 as 'Names' Rather than 'Words.'"

Thus, when the "Zhengming" chapter specifies the "reason for having names"—as distinct from, but not in opposition to, the "cause of same/different"—it indicates that same/different distinctions arise from the senses.

As noted above, given the assumption that the senses originate sameness and difference (*tongyi* 同異), one might wrongly identify a fact/value dualism in the *Xunzi* by taking it to mean that same/different signals sensory objectivity, in contrast to value distinctions of noble/base (*guijian* 貴賤) potentially associated with language. The terms *shi*/*fei* 是/非 (affirm/deny) might also seem to contrast to *tong*/*yi*, with resulting antilanguage implications, if one interprets *shi*/*fei* as linguistic distinctions akin to the "1" and "0" of computer input.[32] In computer language, "1" and "0" are empty terms that draw their values from their place within a larger system. By contrast, it might seem that the senses' same/different distinctions are value free. But such an understanding presents two problems.

First, if early Chinese texts assume that the senses provide access to differences in the world—versus language superimposing alien 1-0 distinctions—where is the evidence that they posit this difference between alien and nonalien differentiations? If the answer is simply that the senses discriminate *tongyi* 同異 (same/different), while language discriminations impose a system of values, then the argument is circular.

Second, early Chinese texts do not use the terms *shi* 是 and *fei* 非 as elements that get their value by virtue of arrangements within combinations of others.[33] Instead, they imply that "to *shi*" or "to *fei*" is to act from one's preferences or sense of right and wrong, suggesting that *shi*/*fei* are more like right and wrong or preferential attitudes than structural "values." Rather than representing names, their use as right and wrong is facilitated by names being settled.

> 天下之可治, 分成也; 是非之可辨, 名定也. 無過其實, 罪也; 弗及, 愚也.
> That the world can be ordered is because divisions are formed. That *shi* and *fei* can be distinguished is because names are settled. Not exceeding its fulfillment is a crime. Not reaching it is ignorance.
> *Shizi* 尸子 1〈卷上〉

A passage in the *Zhuangzi*, which places *shi*/*fei* chronologically prior to *ming* 名 and *shi* 實, helps explain why uses of *shi*/*fei* resemble paradigms of preference-based binaries more so than paradigms of the differential elements of a digital system.

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[32] Hansen writes, "It [knowledge] assigns the *shi* and *fei*, the 1 and 0, that must be input for the program to run in a real world." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 253.

[33] Again, we might think of the broken and unbroken lines of the *Zhou Yi* as an early Chinese example (although, arguably, broken and unbroken are more charged than "1" and "0").

> 是以生為本, 以知為師, 因以乘是非; 果有名實, 因以己為質.
> This takes life as the basis and uses knowledge as the teacher. Depending on this, it multiplies *shi* 是 and *fei* 非. The fruits are *ming* 名 (names) and *shi* 實. Depending on this, it takes self as the basis.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 庚桑楚第二十三

However we interpret this obscure passage, it is obvious that *shi/fei* occurs separately from and prior to names; therefore, it is implausible that *shi/fei* 是/非 represents digital 1-0 alternatives and, consequently, that early Chinese texts use the pair to mean linguistic discriminations.[34]

To push the opposing argument from a different angle, one might contend that same/different (*tongyi* 同異) is used to signal the value-neutral discrimination of the senses, whereas other oppositions—like "black and white"—are understood to entail the bias of a linguistic system.[35] There is something arbitrary, however, about interpreting uses of *tongyi* 同異 (same/different) as singular in that respect, for early Chinese texts do not indicate that the pairing is any less oppositional than "black and white" or "beautiful and ugly." Moreover, the texts depict the senses as differentiating beyond the general *tongyi* 同異 ("same and different"). For example, the *Huainanzi* describes a blind person as having eyes that cannot separate black and white: "Now in the case of a blind person, his eyes cannot separate (*bie* 別) day from night or divide (*fen* 分) white from black" (今夫盲者, 目不能別晝夜、分白

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[34] After all, naming is not the only way to deny or affirm something; actions and expressions are equally useful in that regard.

The *Zhuangzi* talks about speaking without picking *shi* and *fei*.

> 不擇是非而言.
> Not picking *shi* and *fei* but speaking.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 漁父第三十一

That act would be impossible if *shi* and *fei* were bits of speech. The *Zhuangzi* also says,

> 道惡乎隱而有真偽? 言惡乎隱而有是非? . . . 道隱於小成, 言隱於榮華.
> By what is the dao darkened that there are genuine and false? By what is speech darkened that there are *shi* and *fei*? . . . The dao is darkened by small completions, speech is darkened by flourishing and flowering.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 齊物論第二

This seems to say that small completions darken the dao and cause genuine and false, whereas flourishing and flowering darken speech and cause approving and disapproving. I do not pretend to know what the passage means, but we should not take it as evidence that *shi* and *fei* are bits of speech unless we also grant that genuine and false are bits of the dao.

[35] For a more in-depth discussion of sense discrimination, see Geaney, *Epistemology of the Senses*.

黑. *Huainanzi* 淮南子脩務訓). The underlying assumption is that, typically, sighted people's eyes differentiate black/white and night/day. Similarly, the *Hanfeizi* 韩非子 implies that eyes normally discriminate black from white: "If the eyes are not able to decide on the divisions (*fen* 分) of black and white . . ." (目不明則不能決黑白之分. *Hanfeizi* 解老). Also presuming the eyes' capacity to discriminate, the *Xin Yu* mentions a failure to separate black and white.

> 夫目不能別黑白, 耳不能別清濁, 口不能言善惡, 則所謂不能也.
> Now if eyes cannot separate (*bie* 別) black and white, ears cannot separate clear and muddy, and mouths cannot speak good and bad, then they are called incapable.
> *Xin Yu* 新語《慎微第六》

The passage implicitly correlates the eyes distinguishing black/white and the ears distinguishing clear/muddy with the mouth speaking good/bad. If we insist upon a qualitative difference here, the mouth speaks whereas the eyes and ears separate. The mouth, then, represents either one of the senses or language, but if the mouth represents language, then the senses (eyes and ears) explicitly discriminate or separate, while language does so only indirectly. In another, rare instance, the senses distinguish (*bian* 辨) among sets of five.

> 17.2 肝和則目能辨五色矣.
> If the liver is in harmony, then the eyes can distinguish the five colors.
> *Ling Shu Jing* 靈樞經〈脈度〉第十七

These are the very same terms—*bian* 辨, *fen* 分, *bie* 別—that scholars use to support the premise that early Chinese texts present language as differentiating. The *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, which maintains that distinguishing same/different derives from the senses, also asserts that the eyes differentiate (形體、色理以目異 *Xunzi* 荀子正名篇第二十二). What would justify qualifying all of these claims by positing that the senses' differentiations can be reduced to same/different, whereas those of language cannot? There is, in short, not enough evidence of a language/sensory distinction here.

Finally, one might object that, at the very least, the senses do not make value discriminations like "beautiful and ugly." To do so, however, would be to deny that black/white and clear/muddy are value laden. Indeed, in early Chinese texts, even *tongyi* itself can entail a value preference: difference (*yi* 異) is generally not a good thing.[36] We might also note that early Chinese texts treat the senses as capable of desiring and knowing. In one example from the *Huainanzi*, knowledge is implicitly located in the mouth.[37]

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[36] The reference to *yixing* 異形 coming out of the heartmind in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" is one example of *yi* 異 being used to mean something vaguely negative.

> 17.165 象肉之味不知於口.
> The flavor of imitation meat is not known in the mouth.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說林訓

In fact, when chapter 2 of the *Laozi* derides discriminations, it does not mention the "names" "ugly" and "beautiful." Instead, it implicates knowing (*zhi* 知) ugliness and beauty.

> 天下皆知美之為美, 斯惡已. 皆知善之為善, 斯不善已.
> When the whole world knows beauty to be beauty, herein lies ugliness.
> When the whole word knows good to be good, herein lies not good.
> *Laozi* 老子 第二章

Absent the belief that all desires and preferences come from the mind, "ugly" is likely to be that which repulses the eyes. That the senses themselves know and that their knowledge might be inflected with values is plausible if we do not assume a mind/body split wherein all knowledge is mental and the body is ignorant. If the conception of knowledge does not exclude factors like attraction, preferences, and values (implied in both *tongyi* and *shifei*), language is beside the point. Thus there is little reason to posit that *shi*/*fei* is linguistic whereas *tong*/*yi* is sensory.

Contemporary readers, when confronted with early Chinese oppositions like beauty and ugliness, might presume that they recognize the familiar objection that linguistic concepts imprison us in a net of oppositional thinking; that is, stark oppositions have the effect of blunting the subtle degrees of difference that characterize perceptual experience. I have four points to raise in countering such a claim.

First, binaries are not systems or schemes. To posit that two sides of a contrast mutually constitute one another is not to assert that all terms are related to each other. Even a series of contrasting pairs such as that in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites does not constitute a differential system. Thus, even if we grant that the appearance of binary terms in an early Chinese text is about the nature of names, binaries do not themselves indicate systems. At most, multiple instances of oppositional names like "black" and "white" might justify the inference that the oppositional terms depend on one another, as with yin/yang, but the presumption that the meanings of all terms are interdependent elements of an overarching system does not then follow.

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[37] For examples of the senses' desiring, see Geaney, *Epistemology of the Senses*, 19–22. For the senses' knowing, see *Epistemology of the Senses*, 36–46.

Second, the textual illustrations that involve a blind person being asked to pick (*qu* 取) black from white concern an individual case of use (and, subsequently, of naming), which means they are not about language as a system. They presume that the use of a single name (or a name pair) can be understood in isolation from other names. Instead of the identity of terms being dependent on relations in an overarching system, a single paradigmatic event of naming stands for all other names. In a system view of language, no isolated contrast between names could represent the differential values of the entire system because only in the context of the system do the terms acquire their meaning.

Third, early Chinese texts do not describe the senses as accessing actual degrees of difference but as desire-motivated sensing within binaries and sets of five. The binary contrasts might seem to emerge from a system of negative differential discriminations, but instead they resemble distinctions like yin/yang, which vary by situation. Furthermore, because early Chinese texts use the "five colors" to mean what people desire to see, we should not interpret the finite sets as inherently limiting.[38] People might want more of them in greater combinations, but they are not described as wanting to see (or to hear) degrees of colors (or sounds). In other words, early Chinese texts do not presume an "analog" richness of perceptual experience that would inevitably be flattened out by a "digital," differential linguistic system.

Fourth, the texts do not present the sages' exceptional perceptual skills as being the consequence of their escaping language and appreciating the richness of a world of color and sound variations. In the *Mozi*, for example, someone raises a question that presumes that the sages have a special capacity for knowing. Mozi's answer is cast as a sensory comparison between spirits and sages.

> 「鬼神孰與聖人明智？」子墨子曰：「鬼神之明智於聖人，猶聰耳明目之與聾瞽也．」
> [Wu Mazi 巫馬子 asked Mozi] "Ghosts and spirits versus sages, how does their bright knowing compare?" Mozi said, "With regard to bright knowing, ghosts and spirits as compared to sages are like keen ears and bright eyes with regard to the deaf and blind."
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十一 11.3《耕柱第四十六》

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[38] Chap. 12 of the received *Laozi* does not blame the blindness that results from colors on the limitation of "five." Hansen argues that, in the *Laozi*, the five colors that "blind you to the richness of visual experience" are conventional categorizing, which he attributes to society, by which he means language in particular. This presumes that sensory experience involves subtle degrees of difference; thus, the limiting "five" must come from something else: society or its linguistic system. I do not want to attribute the "Western fixation" on sense experience to the *Laozi* any more than Hansen does, but the idea that sensory functions are prior to or independent of language might be another Western fixation. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 226–27.

The knowledge ghosts, spirits, and sages possess, in short, is linked to their sensory abilities, not to their liberation from linguistic trappings. In the first century *Shuo Yuan*, that supposition persists.

> 2.9 君耳目聰明, 思慮審察, 君其得聖人乎?
> If a *junzi*'s ears and eyes are acute and clear-sighted, and their thoughts and ponderings are cautious and probing, has the *junzi* achieved being a sage?
> *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 臣術

The sages' superior sensory skills are not portrayed as producing an insight that transcends the influence of linguistic discriminations; rather, their skills are praised for their success in accessing a relatively inaccessible target.[39] Moreover, it is worth noting, instead of escaping language (or the body) to know things that cannot be heard, the sages hear them. That is, they hear things that have no sound.

> 故唯耶 (聖) 人能察无刑 (形), 能聽无聲.
> Therefore, only the sage is able to examine that which is without form and is able to listen to that which is without sounds.
> Mawangdui "Dao Yuan"
> 老子乙本卷前古佚書 馬王堆漢墓帛書・老子乙本卷前古佚書-道原

The statement does not assert that there are things beyond hearing and seeing; it says that even things without shape and sound can be seen and heard. That the sages are able to do so has to do with their senses. They perceive more not in the sense of experiencing rich varieties of difference but in having clarity and keenness of sight and hearing. The sages do not perceive more subtly because they escape the limitations of language discriminations but because their sensory discriminations are exceptionally acute or refined.[40]

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[39] The inaccessible things that the sages and "knowers" (*zhizhe* 智者) access include seeing and knowing far into the past and the future.

> 聖人知天道吉凶, 故知禍福所生; 智者先見成形, 故知禍福之門. 聞未生聖也, 先見成形智也.
> Sages know the *dao* of heaven's good and bad fortunes, therefore they know where disaster and happiness come from. Knowers see in advance what takes form, therefore they know the gate of disaster and happiness. Hearing what has not yet been born is sagely. Seeing what has not yet taken shape is insightful knowing.
> *Wenzi* 文子 道德

[40] The explanation for the sages' skills varies depending on the passage, if not the text, in question. See Brown and Bergeton, "'Seeing' Like a Sage," 641–63, for an argument in which the reasons for the superiority of the sages' perception differ by text.

## Conclusion

The overall thrust of my point-by-point rebuttal is, in brief, that Chinese texts presume a nomenclature, not a system model of language. That conclusion is evident in the way the "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi* presents naming. The function of names is evident from hand metaphors, which show names doing something to things that are already differentiated. *Bian* and similar terms are the means for describing a rhetorical style of disputation and the activity of the senses. In the usage of *bian*, however, we should not assume that patterns of binary differentiation resemble virtual linguistic differentiation. Patterns are sensory, temporal, and "thicker" than systems. They supply order without being totalizing and do not depend on the arrangement of other "values" in an overarching closed system.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Prescriptive Crisis

## Correcting Names without "Performing" Rules

In the effort to make the case that language guides, proponents of the prescriptive interpretation downplay the role of expressing *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind). The narrative about language as prescriptive guidance subsumes *yi* under theories about two phenomena: Confucian aims to mimic the intended guidance of ancient name coiners, and Neo-Mohist observations about how compounding words guides action. My attention to this treatment of *yi* 意 foregrounds aspects of Chad Hansen's work that are not central to his interpretation of early Chinese philosophy but are, nevertheless, crucial to confront in order to clear the way for understanding early Chinese assumptions about what we think of as "language." Clarifying the role of *yi* (or its absence) in the passages about rectifying names results in a more embodied assessment of how early Chinese texts depict speaking and naming.

### Language, *Zhengming*, and *Yi* 意

Attempting, rightly, not to impose Indo-European theories of mind on Early China, Hansen avoids references to a semantic role for mental ideas or images. In that regard, my translation of *yi* 意 as "what is on the heartmind" is potentially misleading, because it seems to imply contents within the heartmind. Whereas early Chinese texts mention emotions and thoughts (*si* 思) being "in" or "on" the heartmind (*yu xin* 於心), they never describe *yi* in that manner. Nevertheless, they associate *yi* with the heartmind and imply that *yi* originate near it. Thus, to understand concepts of language in Early China, we must try to account for the way in which early Chinese texts deploy the term *yi* from a speaker's point of view even if to do so risks making it appear like an "inner psychology," as Hansen puts it, involving inaccessible cognitive or symbolic contents that give language its meaning.[1]

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[1] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 77, 383–84.

## *Zhengming* and Intending to Perform Codified Rules and Models

In Hansen's discussion of early Confucianism, intentions function on two levels: the sage authors' original intentions when coining the *ming* of ancient texts and the intent of the traditional Confucians to "perform" (put into practice) them. He writes,

> Classical Chinese theorists do not give into the temptation to make picturing the explanation of the language-world relation. History (Sage king's [*sic*] coining) and convention (our intentions to conform to their usage) tie language to the world.[2]

Here Hansen argues that written graphs do the work that mental pictures are sometimes thought to accomplish. Hence rectifying names concerns the intent to conform to the sage-kings' graph usage. Similarly, Hansen interprets the reference to music in *Lunyu* 13.3 as written symbols.

> No less interesting is the inclusion of music among the traditional literature forms that can go awry if we misuse names. A simple explanation is that, in effect, if names (symbols) are not rectified, we will play the wrong notes. If we don't know how to translate the marks into fingerings we won't play the song intended by the composer.[3]

Assuming that early Confucians viewed language as a symbolic script to be performed, Hansen speculates that there may have been a perceived lack of modeling of the script, which in turn spawned antilanguage attitudes. He writes,

> Early Confucians thus supposed that people learn most effectively by emulating skilled practitioners, what [Donald] Munro calls model emulation. The roots of the intuitive wing's [associated with Mengzi] antilanguage position also lurk in this outlook. Without modeling, no amount of rule giving can convey the detail necessary for a good interpretive performance. We saw traces of this antilanguage attitude in

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[2] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 38.

[3] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67. There is no current evidence, however, that musical notation existed before the Han, making Hansen's metaphor potentially anachronistic. Lothar von Falkenhausen considers references in the Han imperial library to "tone compositions" to be the earliest available evidence of musical notation, but these were unfortunately not preserved. Nevertheless, Falkenhausen remains optimistic that future archeological discoveries will disclose much earlier evidence of musical notation. Von Falkenhausen, "The Zeng Hou Yi Finds in the History of Chinese Music," 110.

> Confucius' opposition to law and punishment. The interpretive looseness of codified rules generates glibness and cleverness in *rectifying names* to escape punishment.[4]

The intuitive wing's opposition to language is motivated by their objection to rule giving, implying that language consists of rules. That Kongzi's objection to law bears traces of this language hostility presumes Kongzi viewed language as consisting of codified rules, like laws—abstractions requiring modeling to flesh out details. The intuitive wing's fears are apparently unfounded, however, because Kongzi's proposal to *zhengming* does not alter language's rules, which belong to "the inherited transmitted dao," not the ruling authority.[5] Hansen explains, "The task of political leaders is to model the correct use of terminology [*zhengming*], not to modify the rules, that is, to legislate. The rules are in the inherited transmitted dao." Thus, *zhengming* does not make or modify rules. Similarly it does not alter the pre-established models that the ruler names, which also belong to the inherited dao: "rulers must name or identify models of social roles correctly. The dao of each role is a settled matter."[6] *Zhengming* merely models, without modification, the rules of the inherited transmitted language that traditional Confucians intended to perform.

Hansen's depiction of *zhengming* invokes Donald Munro's concept of model emulation but the intent to perform inherited rules bears little resemblance to Munro's idea. Hansen's use of "performance" to describe model emulation turns learning to be a virtuous father, for example, into a matter of being able to execute a set of instructions. Whereas all sense of timing is lost if being a virtuous father is a role in a script, Munro notes that early Confucians portray model emulation as more or less automatic. While effort might be required, the attraction to virtuous models is "natural."[7] The idea of model emulation assumes multiple models of behavior, rather than a unique model.[8] When we emulate people, the guidance we receive is contextualized. Hansen also describes actual contexts contributing to modeling, but he does so through a script/performance paradigm:

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[4] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 74 (emphasis in original).

[5] Hence, the "inherited transmitted dao" is even more rigid than law, because rulers at least can modify laws.

[6] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 68.

[7] See especially, Munro, *Concept of Man in Early China*, 102–03.

[8] Thus, even if a learner is focused on one person only, the learner will imitate many virtuous events of speech and behavior. While the ancestors contribute to modeling virtue, their stories would presumably have to resonate in each subsequent age to be effective. Hence Henry Rosemont and Roger Ames are right to emphasize that model emulation begins with the people we know. They write, "It is through knowing these people as they define *our* lives and determine in large measure the course *our* lives will take, that we come to know and internalize the roles that model the activities of the people who live in our society, many of which we already occupy ourselves or soon will." Ames and Rosemont, "Were the Early Confucians Virtuous?," 19 (emphasis in original).

> Upright officials contribute to moral education just by being seen in proficient action (2:1). Without this modeling of proficiency, teaching of *li* cannot succeed (4:13). Ultimately, our ritual know-how comes from emulating others, not from book learning. . . . Modeling is important for another reason. We unconsciously process so many clues from the environment in acting, we could never learn a skill from a finite set of instructions. We must see exemplars model in actual contexts. However much we can learn to do from descriptions and instructions, we can never get the kind of exhaustive detail to guarantee skillful and successful performance of such repertoires.[9]

While acknowledging teaching and proficiency, Hansen proposes that model emulation also takes another form: a requirement for conforming to a "finite set of instructions." This latter form of model emulation is what pertains to Hansen's interpretation of *zhengming*, in which people "must see" and "get" the exhaustive detail of actual contexts in order to guarantee successful adherence to instructions. The crisis of "performance interpretation" that develops from those efforts to perform a single codified thing does not seem to pertain to a lifetime of automatic attraction to virtuous people or attempts to emulate them.[10] In other words, model emulation in Hansen's interpretation of *zhengming* is not Munro's concept.

I will call Munro's idea "analogical modeling," as distinct from Hansen's "performance-modeling" or "adapting guidance to real-time situations."[11] Analogical modeling is better conceived in terms of a concrete model involving a pattern, because we do not perform a pattern, we imitate it.[12] It entails witnessing patterns that we eventually emulate—not rules that we strive to perform. The relationship of imitator to imitated is not play/performance or instruction/action. Learners align themselves with the (changing) model by striving to become similar, rather than identical, to it.

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[9] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 73.

[10] Hansen introduces the "language crisis" with the metaphor of a codified dao:

> The philosophical issue that clearly emerges in *The Analects* arises after we have identified a codified *dao.* The issues in philosophy of education and philosophy of language start from the shared position of the two lines. We have our code; now what constitutes following it? What constitutes understanding *li* and can it be taught?
>
> Thus, the rectifying-names theory as a solution to the problem of how to fill the gap between discourse and action triggers a central theme of classical Chinese philosophy, which Schwartz dubs "the language crisis."
>
> Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 92

[11] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 213.

[12] Thus Hansen is closer to the mark when he describes early Confucian models as "conventional, ceremonial patterns" than when he invokes the term "rulebook." Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 213.

Hansen's later work seems to recognize that a "codified dao" departs from analogical modeling, when he grants "Following a rule is an analytically important model, but performing a symphony may more sympathetically capture Confucius' conception of *dao*."[13] A symphony with a fixed script, however, would not differ significantly from a rule. Hansen also acknowledges that the "guidance that allows us to rectify names" is "a bit of the world," but what he describes still employs the metaphor of interpreting something codified (instruction or a play).

> To focus our issue, consider the use of example, or what [Donald] Munro calls "model emulation" in Confucianism. Take Confucius in the act of rectifying names. He simply uses language correctly. The rectify names passage ends: "Thus when an exemplary person uses a name, it can surely be spoken, and when spoken it can surely be acted upon. There is nothing careless in the attitude of the exemplary person to what is said." The relation of that concrete particular and my action is interpretively like the relation between a play and performance, instruction and action. (This corresponds to Wittgenstein's point about pointing.)[14]

The choice of example seems important because it is a "concrete particular": a person like Kongzi in the act of using language. Moreover, a "play" is not necessarily a codified script and "instructions" are not necessarily rules. But Hansen does not indicate whether these models of using language correctly are still ultimately performances of something that is not a performance: the codified language of transmitted texts.

In "Dao as Naturalistic Focus," Hansen comes closer to addressing the question of an immutable founding model when he states, "Discourse *daos* are changeable in the sense that we can interpret them in different performances."[15] This prompts a number of questions pertaining to Hansen's presentation of *zhengming*. Does interpreting (performing) the discourse dao differently leave unchanged the one being performed (interpreted)? Is the inherited transmitted dao still settled and not open to modification? Are only *some* discourse daos subject to change insofar as they are interpreted differently? More promisingly, Hansen adds, "Alternatively, one can think of a given *discourse dao* as a sum or collection of possible *performance daos*."[16] If a discourse dao is nothing more than the sum of its possible performances, then that would eliminate the immutable side of Hansen's script/performance paradigm. This concession is headed in the right direction, but it does not erase the suspicion that the texts show no evidence of any version of type-token distinction making.

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[13] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 85.

[14] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 214. See my interpretation of this "Zhengming" passage below.

[15] Hansen, "Dao as Naturalistic Focus," 275.

## Expressing the Heartmind with *Yi* 意

If, then, early Confucians were not intending to perform language rules codified in ancient texts, what is the relation of *yi* 意 to names and speech in their texts? In early Chinese texts in general, people's heartminds express things in speech.[17] In this sense, *ming* (names) and *yan* (speech), while related, are not the same. The use of the term *ming* 名 differs from the use of terms for speaking (*yan* 言 and *ci* 辭)[18] in a specific way: they orient toward different directions. M*ing*, which are applied externally, are paradigmatically used to pick or raise things up—call attention to them or refer to them. By contrast, phrasing (and speaking in general) can at least potentially express things that are on the speaker's heartmind, as suggested by the use of the metaphors "proclaim" (*yu* 諭) and "dredge" (*shu* 抒) to describe the function of *ci* and *yan*. Speaking and phrasing give voice to an internal aspect, whereas *ming* does not. (In the context of early Chinese ideas about the boundaries of a person, internal and external are not entirely separate spheres but differ by a matter of degrees.)[19] In terms of their overlapping uses, we might think of speech and phrases as utterances that use names that refer outside but emerge from inside. The key difference is that speech is expressive of the heart, whereas *ming* are not.

Speaking and phrasing are commonly characterized as expressing internality, particularly in terms of the *yi* 意 of the heart. Perhaps the most famous passage that discusses the relation of *yi* to speaking is from the "Xici."

> 書不盡言, 言不盡意.
> Writing does not exhaust *yan* (speech). *Yan* does not exhaust *yi* (what is on the heartmind).
> *Zhou Yi* 周易 〈〈繫辭上〉〉

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[16] Hansen, "Dao as Naturalistic Focus," 275.

[17] Some of the evidence I adduce uses the term *ci* (辭 phrasing) to support my claim about *yan* not consisting of *ming* as building blocks.

[18] The terms for phrasing, *ci* (辭), and speaking are similar for my purposes because the texts describe phrases as simply a particular kind of speech. See appendix.

[19] See Geaney, "Self as Container?," 11–30.

This implies that just as writing comes from speaking, speaking comes from *yi*. The *Guanzi* depicts the derivation of speech with a sequence that begins in the heartmind.[20]

> 心之中又有心. 意以先言, 意然後刑, 刑然后思, 思然后知.
> Within the heartmind there is another heartmind. The *yi* comes before *yan*. After *yi*, there are shapes. After shapes, there is pondering. After pondering, there is knowing.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術下第三十七

The fishnet analogy from the *Zhuangzi* asserts the close relation of speaking to *yi*.[21]

> 荃者所以在魚 . . . 言者所以在意.
> The purpose of the net lies in the fish. . . . The purpose of *yan* lies in *yi*.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 外物第二十六

The *Lüshichunqiu* also emphasizes the closeness of speaking and *yi*:

> 言者, 以諭意也. 言意相離, 凶也.
> *Yan* is for proclaiming *yi*. When *yan* and *yi* are distant, there is disaster.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 《離謂》

In another example that suggests the implications of *ming* occurring within utterances, the *Mo Bian* glosses speech as issuing forth and then performing the function of names: raising up or choosing.[22]

> 10.1.64 言、出舉也.
> *Yan* is what comes out and lifts up/picks.
> *Mozi* 墨子 墨子卷十 10.1 《經上第四十》

Speech includes names and can, therefore, perform their functions of picking and pointing. Names, however, are referential, not expressive.

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[20] In a related passage in *Guanzi* 16, the next line says that after shapes, there is speech. After speech, there is *shi* 使 (possibly meaning "control"), and the sequence terminates in achieving order.

[21] I discuss the *Zhuangzi* fishnet passage at length in chap. 4.

[22] See chap. 6 for an exploration of a *Mo Bian* example of how *ming* functions within *yan* when *ming* are part of an utterance. I appreciate Susan Blake's question, which led me to clarify this point.

It must be granted that, from the perspective of the boundaries that constitute a person, early Chinese texts characterize speaking and phrasing as external. Such is the case relative to *yi* because they constitute the externalization of a person's feeling, aiming, and desiring. As the *Lüshichunqiu* puts it,

> 夫辭者, 意之表也.
> *Ci* (phrasing): the exterior of *yi* (what is on the heartmind).
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 〈〈離謂〉〉

Nevertheless, speaking and phrasing function to bring out something internal; hence their exteriority is the manifestation of their connection to something interior. Speaking expresses the heartmind's *yi*. Names do not have that function.

This difference between *ming* and speech clarifies *yi* 意's relation to speech as distinct from its absence of relation to names. To revise Hansen's example, the meaning of an utterance like "I want a biscuit" would be determined only partly by the referents the community assigns to the *ming* "I," "want," and "biscuit."[23] The test of knowing a *ming* is the publicly observable ability to employ it to pick out something, and the community decides whether the picking is acceptable. Nevertheless, the fact that the terms *yan* 言 and *ci* 辭 are used for something qualitatively different from a grouping of *ming* means that, in the case of an utterance like "I want a biscuit," the speaker's heartmind would play a prominent role. That is, whatever goes on in the heartmind would not alter the referential range of the individual *ming* of "I want a biscuit," but it would alter what mattered about the utterance. In early Chinese texts, the community's determination of what the *ming* refer to is generally not what people want to learn about utterances; they want to know the heartmind of the speaker, which is apparent in speech and phrases, not in *ming*.

We get a better sense of early Chinese approaches to interpreting the intentions of ancient texts if we focus on their references to the *Shijing* rather than the *Liji* as Hansen does. In texts from Early China, the occurrence of the term *li* 禮 need not be about a text unless it is preceded by something like "read aloud" (*du* 讀). By contrast, textual interpretation is clearly at issue in frequent contentious disputes about the *shi* 詩 (song-poems that are texts, whether oral or written). In what appears to be the only debate about textual interpretation in a pre-Qin philosophical text that explicitly deploys metalinguistic terms, the *Mengzi* presents a controversial interpretation of a *shi*. Mengzi's response to the interpretive challenge advocates using *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind) to meet the aims (*zhi* 志) of a *shi* 詩. The fact that the *Mengzi* does not use the term *ming* undermines the hypothesis that passages like *Lunyu* 13.3 would have presumed that textual intentions were located in *ming*. Instead, the metalinguistic terms are *wen* 文 (forms, decoration), *ci* 辭 (phrases), *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind), and *zhi* 志 (aim).

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[23] What exactly counts as a *ming* is not entirely clear. There is no discussion in early Chinese texts that would tell us whether a word like the question marker "*hu* 乎," which presumably cannot point to any *shi* 實 (action/thing), could be considered a *ming*. The grammatical concept of "empty" terms is not evident yet. See appendix, section on *ming* 名, and my *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

> 故說《詩》者, 不以文害辭, 不以辭害志. 以意逆志, 是為得之.
> 9.4 Thus, those who explain the *Shi* do not harm the phrasing with the form, do not harm the aim (*zhi* 志) with the phrasing. [They] use the *yi* (what is on the heartmind) to meet the *zhi* and, in this way, get it.
> *Mengzi* 孟子 《萬章上》

In asserting that textual interpretation should meet the (text's?) aims (*zhi* 志), the passage uses *wen* 文 as a term for literary qualities, not graphs. Nothing in the passage suggests that "rules for reference" are implied in graphs. Meeting the aims involves not letting literary qualities get in the way as well as not taking phrases out of context.[24] As with the *Lunyu* 13.3, dating this passage is uncertain due to the complexity of textual composition in Early China, but if it is from an early period, then its discussion of textual interpretation indicates that early Chinese texts directly address interpreting textual intention. This undercuts the theory that *Lunyu* 13.3, which does not mention the *Liji*, actually alludes to the problems of interpreting the authorial intentions of the graphs of the *Liji*. In short, the little evidence we have to go on regarding approaches to interpreting textual intention in an early Chinese philosophical text concerns aims and intentions, but it does not presume that ancient texts consisted of a "scheme" of graphs whose reference was intended by ancient name coiners.[25]

Hansen's attempts to avoid imposing Indo-European theories of mind and language on Early China might inadvertently inhibit recognizing the expressiveness of speech. The expressiveness of speech need not involve symbolic or cognitive contents, but it cannot be appreciated without reference to some kind of inner aspect of a person. Texts from Early China consistently describe utterances emerging from a speaker's internal region, somewhere near the heartmind. Not a separate inner realm, as in a mind/body dualism, the heartmind is located within the physical person. Hansen is correct when he states that inner psychology is not relevant to *ming*. But *yan* (speech) and *ci* (phrases) are not just a string or stream of names. Although *ming* do not have word-meanings, speech and phrases have *yi*, and *yi* originates near the heartmind, not in sages' intentions for naming reference or in the structural composition of phrases. Moreover, the speaker's *yi* reveals what people want to know about *yan* 言. When people converse, their *yi* matters.

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[24] Steven Van Zoeren makes a good case that letting the *ci* (phrases) harm the *zhi* (aims) involved the common habit of plucking *ci* out of context and interpreting them on their own. Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*, 69–73.

[25] Hansen uses the phrases "scheme of linguistic guidance," "scheme of names," and "scheme of words" in ways that seem interchangeable. When discussing the *Mozi*, however, by "scheme of words" he seems to mean something like being in a sequence or "the order in which we use words in public discourse," whereas in relation to the traditionalist Confucians, the scheme concerns texts. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 117.

## *Ming* 名 without *Yi* 意 in Early Chinese Texts

Databases of early Chinese texts reveal that the graphs *ming* 名 and *yi* 意 almost never appear in proximity (defined as within two lines of one another).[26] Consequently, it would have been commonly understood that *ming* and *yi* were not associated. As I will argue in this section, when the *Lunyu* 13.3 and the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" mention *ming* without mentioning *yi*, they are conforming to a general pattern by which *ming* and speaking differ insofar as *ming* does not derive from the heartmind as do *yan* 言 and *ci* 辭. Thus, the fact that the *Lunyu* 13.3 concerns *ming* without mentioning *yi* does not support interpreting it as triggering a crisis in performing the original sagely *yi* (intentions) for *ming* in ancient texts.

### The Absence of *Yi* 意 in the *Lunyu* 13.3

In the *Lunyu* 13.3, Kongzi advocates *zhengming* in the context of being asked what he would do if he had political power, which suggests that straightening *ming* should be viewed as a political act. *Zhengming* is significant for governing not because, as Hansen proposes, it names (identifies) the rules and thereby models the inherited transmitted language, but because ordaining titles facilitates the ruler's aims for order.

While model emulation is important in early Chinese texts, *zhengming* is not model emulation either in the sense of performance modeling or of analogical modeling. Authorities' naming is too obviously connected to the force of their commands to be a performance meant to model rules of language use. Moreover, *zhengming* requires political authority. In the *Lunyu* 13.3, *zhengming* is done by someone who is more than just a virtuous practitioner who sets examples for others to emulate. Kongzi responds as an advisor to the ruler. This political role is crucial to his participation in *zhengming*, which involves issuing titles or mandates. Given their source, these *ming* have the force of commands and are matters of compliance rather than of interpretative application or emulation.

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[26] See appendix, sections on *ming* 名, *yan* 言, *yi* 意, and *ci* 辭.

The fact that the discussion of *zhengming* in *Lunyu* 13.3 does not mention *yi* 意 is not surprising because the passage concerns decrees and titles, not the ruler's intentions in naming or ordinary people's intentions to follow them. In addition to the story's frame, from which we learn that Kongzi is describing the initial steps of governing, the information the passage supplies about *zhengming* (except the final lines that I address below) amounts to nothing more than this sequence:

> 13.3 名不正, 則言不順; 言不順, 則事不成; 事不成, 則禮樂不興; 禮樂不興, 則刑罰不中; 刑罰不中, 則民無所錯手足. 故君子名之必可言也, 言之必可行也. 君子於其言, 無所苟而已矣.
> If *ming* are not *zheng* (straight, rectified), then speech will not comply, if speech does not comply, then tasks/service will not complete themselves, if tasks/service do not complete themselves, then *li* [ritual action] and music will not flourish, if *li* and music do not flourish, then punishments will not be on target, if punishments are not on target, then the common people will be at a loss for what to do with their hands and feet. Thus, if the *junzi* names it, it must necessarily be spoken. If the *junzi* speaks about it, it must necessarily be enacted. Regarding the *junzi*'s speech there is nothing about which he is careless.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈子路〉第十三

The passage sets forth the cascading repercussions of not straightening names. The first two phrases highlight a distinction between naming and speaking. If the ruler's titles or names are not correct, ordinary people's speech becomes unmanageable. Several aural/visual reactions ensue (although categorizing them as such is not critical to my interpretation): speech, which is audible, affects events/service (*shi* 事), which are visible.[27] *Li* 禮 and music are the aural and visual sides of a polarity.[28] They affect punishment (*xing* 刑), which is visible because it is the physical form that is punished.[29] Thus, the list is a sequence of aural and visual influences and correspondences that are typical of early Chinese texts. In this case, something that happens in sound has consequences that reverberate in the visible dimension of action. Most important, the ruler's decrees correct official titles. *Yi* 意 does not appear here because the ruler's heartmind is not relevant to assigning titles. When the ruler issues a title—picking out something/someone and assigning it a name—it is not necessary to inquire about his intentions.

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[27] See section on *shi* 事 in the appendix.

[28] The pairing of *li* 禮 with music here does not allude to a score/performance model, as Hansen argues. Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 214. For a discussion of *li* and its relation to music, see chap. 7.

[29] In the early texts, *xing*/form and *xing*/punishment were written with the same graph, but ideas about bodies and punishments are also connected. In justifying why a ruler does not change his *xing*/punishment, the *Liji* says,

> 5.44 刑者侀也, 侀者成也, 一成而不可變.
> Punishment is [on] the body/shape. The body is a complete thing; when once completed, it cannot be changed.
> *Liji* 禮記〈王制〉

One might deny that the ruler's commands involve model emulation or interpretive performance and still admit that one or the other is implied in the passage's final statement, which explicitly concerns a *junzi*'s naming.

> 13.3 故君子名之必可言也, 言之必可行也.
> Thus, if a *junzi* names it, *bi ke yan*. If [a *junzi*] speaks about it, *bi ke xing*.
> *Lunyu* 論語 〈子路〉第十三

Typically, *bi ke yan* is taken to mean "surely can be spoken"—that is, the *junzi*'s names definitely can be articulated in speech. In other words, names should (because of the *bi* 必) be spoken, and these are names that are possible (because of the *ke* 可) to speak. Adopting a similar interpretative line, Hansen argues that the relation of the *junzi*'s particular utterance and the action of someone who follows it is that of "a play and performance, instruction and action."[30]

An alternative translation, however, suggests a competing interpretation. "If a *junzi* names it, it should necessarily be spoken. If a *junzi* speaks about it, it should necessarily be done."[31] In interpreting the line from *Lunyu* 13.3, it is important to note that the use of *bi ke* 必可 in the context of governing functions to emphasize

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[30] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 215.

[31] I am grateful to Dan Robins for suggesting this reading of the line, although I am taking it in a different direction than he does.

In another use of *bi ke* in the *Xin Shu* version, speech itself is the thing that should be spoken about:

> 故君子言必可行也, 然後〔言之〕;〔行必可言也〕,〔然後〕行之.
> Thus, the speech of the *junzi* must necessarily be acted on, and only then be talked about; their actions must necessarily be talked about, and only then be acted on.
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷九 《大政上》

This next example involves an emendation that involves *bi* 必, but a plausible one.

> 子墨子言曰: 凡出言談, 則 (必) 〔不〕可而不先立儀而言.
> Mozi said: Whenever emitting speech and talk, one must first establish a standard to speak.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷九 9.5 《非命下第三十七》

"must" in a way that excludes reading the *ke* of *bi ke* as "can be." For example, in a story from the *Hanfeizi*, the king's consort tells a coachman to follow the king's orders. The king says to cut off a woman's nose, so the coachman does so.

> 「王適有言，必可從命．」御者因揄刀而劓美人．
> "If the King happens to say something, *bi ke* 必可 follow his orders." The coachman thereupon took his knife and cut off the beautiful woman's nose.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 內儲說下六微第三十一

This *bi ke* 必可 is not being used in the sense of permitted but optional. There is no question of deviating from the mandate; *bi ke* means it is certainly right, which is why when the king says to cut off her nose, the coachman does.

Such uses of *bi ke* 必可 have implications for the line in *Lunyu* 13.3. First, the grammar suggests that the activity referred to in each case is not about something that "can" be done. Whatever the activity is, it must be done. Second, the grammar does not suggest that the *junzi*'s names are simply possible to speak. These names should be spoken. Third, there is no hint of performance modeling or analogical modeling. The rhetoric is emphatic and, in that regard, suggests official commands.

The statement that, if a *junzi* speaks about it, commoners must do it sounds like an attempt to authorize the *junzi*'s pronouncements, attributing to the *junzi* some of the ruler's power. As such, the formulation might be an example of early Confucians defending the equality of the "rising stratum of *shi* 士," the lowest level of aristocracy, by promoting the *junzi* as "a legitimate member of the ruling elite."[32] The *Lunyu* 13.3 portrays Kongzi explaining how he would facilitate governing by correcting names. This investing the *junzi* with the status of an advisor, however, is not presenting commoners with a virtuous model whose speech and behavior could be emulated. In the case of a virtuous model whose overall example naturally inspires emulation, one would not comply with any and every thing that the model says. In addition, just as the example is not a case for model emulation, it also does not call for tokens of a type. If a commoner obeys an order from someone who speaks with authority, his/her action is not a token of a particular pronouncement functioning as a type. Commands demand obedience, which is neither analogical modeling nor performance modeling.

The prescriptive "constancy crisis" in Early China is alleged to have resulted from the problem of intending to comply with rules but not knowing how interpretively to perform them. The *Lunyu* 13.3 does not mention either intentions (*yi* 意) or aims (*zhi* 志), however, and nothing in the passage suggests interpretations or intentions. Hence, the *Lunyu* 13.3 must be discounted as evidence of the prescriptive language crisis.

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[32] Pines, "Disputers of the *Li*," 19.

## *Ming* without *Yi* 意 in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming"

Paying attention to general patterns in the uses of *yi* 意 in texts from Early China poses another challenge to the prescriptive-inconstancy version of the language crisis, which takes *zhengming* in the *Xunzi* to be about adjusting reference so that current intentions match with "the intentions of the inventors of language."[33] To explain why the sages' intentions for the use of *ming* are not a feature of *zhengming* in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, I will build upon the observation that early Chinese texts do not connect *yi* 意 to *ming*.

The graph *yi* 意 appears only twice in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter—in neither case in association with *ming*.[34] We should consider the chapter as a whole, however, to understand the relationship between *zhengming* and *yi* in response to the claim that the text concerns the intentions of the sages who coined names.

Early Chinese texts rarely discuss the coining of names, and there are only two allusions to it in the "Zhengming" chapter. Hansen takes its reference to old and new names as an encouragement to reestablish the sages' intentions for value names, on the one hand, and to create new "fact-based" names, on the other.[35]

> 若有王者起, 必將有循於舊名, 有作於新名.
> If a ruler were to arise, he must in some cases follow the old names and in some cases make new ones.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The idea that the new names are only fact-based names presumes that the "Zhengming" invented a fact/value dualism (as noted above). Absent that assumption, without any references to the sages' intentions, the line advocates creating new names and following old ones. The chapter also might contain a line that—if not emended to delete the graph *ming* 名, as in the CHANT line below—objects to unauthorized new naming.

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[33] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 323.

[34] The first says:

> 凡同類同情者, 其天官之意物也同.
> For all [things of] the same kinds (*lei* 類) and motivations (*qing* 情), their heavenly officers' (the senses) *yiwu* 意物 (estimate of the thing) are also the same.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

(See chap. 1, n. 11, for a note on this translation of *qing* 情, and my *Emergence of Word-Meaning* for this translation of *yiwu*.) I discuss the other use below.

[35] Hansen writes, "The mission of a sage-king, should he choose to accept it, would be to reestablish the old names. However, there is a nonreactionary part. He does get to create some new names, fact-based ones." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 324.

> 故析辭擅作（名）以亂正名 . . . 則謂之大姦.
> Therefore splitting phrasing and presuming to make *ming* 名 in order to unsettle straight *ming* 名 . . . is thus called a great wickedness.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The objection to an unauthorized making of *ming* does not cite a failure to match the ancients' intentions. But if we emend the line by deleting the graph *ming* 名, its meaning might not even concern unauthorized naming. In that case, it would read, "splitting phrases and unauthorized creating in order to unsettle straight *ming*." Such a reading is justified by the fact that, in the following lines, presuming to make names does not recur, whereas the judgment that strange phrases cause chaos with names is repeated twice.[36] Those lines compare the crime of splitting phrases (and giving rise to strange phrases) with disrupting tallies and measurements (*fujie* 符節 and *duliang* 度量). Tallies and measurements are supposed to thwart forgery and cheating in travel and sales. Thus, splitting phrases allows people to lie and defraud, which subverts the order that the ruler is trying to establish. The lines do not state that splitting phrases facilitates lying about intentions, but even if they did, such an assertion would be consistent with typical uses of *yi* 意: that is, phrases express *yi*, but *ming* do not. In short, the chapter's allusions to intentions do not support the assumption that *zhengming* is about recovering what the sages intended *ming* to refer to during the originating events of naming.

Aims (*zhi* 志) play a significant role in the "Zhengming," but while *zhi* 志 can be translated as "intention," the chapter does not imply that anyone's aims or intentions must match those of the ancient sages. The chapter says that *zhi* 志 will not be clear when *ming* and *shi* are confused or when "different" forms leave the heartmind.[37] Such disorder can be avoided if, as discussed above, "the knower" separates divisions and establishes names in order to point to *shi* (actions/things) (知者為之分別制名以指實). When the chapter mentions aims achieving *tong* 通 (nonobstruction), its context—a description of a process wherein the ruler is the agent from beginning to end—implies that the aims in question belong to the ruler.[38]

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[36] In any case, the line does not say that *ming* can be split, an interpretation that inadvertently muddies the distinction between *ming* and *ci* and thereby encourages the mistaken notion that *ming* might express what is on the mind. Hansen writes, "Obviously, given his conception of the role of the king and the political structure, *Xunzi* will find *splitting* names to be the most dangerous type of antisocial behavior." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 321 (emphasis in original). Waley says something similar about splitting "meanings," citing the "Zhengming" statement that chaos is avoidable if each different thing has a different name:

> The theoretical object of the "Ming Chia" (Language Students) was to amend language so that "every different reality should be expressed by a different word," and this having been achieved no one should in future be allowed "to split up existing meanings and make them into new words."
> Waley, *Way and Its Power*, 67.

> 故王者之制名, 名定而實辨, 道行而志通, 則慎率民而一焉.
> Thus, in the ruler's establishing of names: when names are settled and *shi* (actions/things) are discriminated, the dao is enacted (*xing* 行) and his aims are *tong*, then he carefully leads the people to unity among them.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

Here names are settled, and *shi* (actions/things) are distinguished as a byproduct of the ruler's establishing names. In the governing process, the ruler's aims become comprehensively *tong* 通 (unobstructed). It is plausible, as with the dao that is enacted, that the aims that become unobstructed refer to the ruler's purposes in general rather than anything in particular, such as naming. To correct the current customs of name use, now as in the past, the ruler need only establish names. No adjusting reference to match with the intentions of the ancients is required. Hence, the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" emphasizes that naming facilitates achieving aims, but those aims are not intentions for naming.

An aspect of the "Zhengming" concerning the *junzi* could also be mistaken for a directive to accommodate current intentions to those of past rulers. The "Zhengming" says that that *junzi* straightens his names and correlates his phrases in order to make clear his *zhiyi* 志義. The specific graphs here are important: *zhiyi* 志義 is not *zhiyi* 志意. I translate *zhiyi* 志義 as "intent on duty" or "moral intent" for several reasons. First, the graph *yi* 義 is rarely interchanged with *yi* 意 in texts from Early China. Second, they do not appear to have been pronounced similarly.[39] Third, the compound is used elsewhere in early Chinese texts to mean "moral purpose," and so here alone would the compound use *yi* 義 as a substitute for *yi* 意.[40] Assuming that the graphs are rendered correctly as *zhiyi* 志義, the aim in question is likely to be duty, that is, the *junzi*'s moral purpose. Furthermore, even if something like linguistic intentions were at issue, the subsequent lines say nothing about the ancient sages' intentions.

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[37] The association with confusion suggests that "different" (*yi* 異) implies oddness here.

[38] For this translation of *tong* 通, see section entitled "*Tong* 通 and the Nature of Communication" in chap. 6.

[39] *Yi* 意 and *yi* 義 are not pronounced similarly in William Baxter and Laurent Sagart's phonetic reconstruction. *Yi* 意 is pronounced OC *ʔ(r)ək-s > MC *'iH, whereas *yi* 義 is pronounced OC *ŋ(r)aj-s > MC *ngjeH. Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction*, version 1.1 (20 September 2014), http://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf, 136.

> 彼正其名、當其辭以務白其志義者也. 彼名辭也者、志義之使也, 足以相通則舍之矣; 苟之、姦也. 故名之足以指實, 辭足以見極, 則舍之矣 . . . 彼誘其名, 眩其辭, 而無深於其志義者也.
> They [the *junzi*] correct their names and make their phrases coincide in order to strive to clarify their *zhiyi*. Their names and phrases are *shi* 使 (officers, messengers) of their *zhiyi*. They should be sufficient for mutual *tong* 通 (nonobstruction), and then put it aside. Carelessness with them is heinous. Therefore, the name should be sufficient to point to the *shi* (action/thing). The phrase should be sufficient to make visible extremes, and then put it aside. . . . They [ignorant people] entice with names and confuse with phrases, and they have no depth to their *zhiyi*.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The passage offers a general description of a *junzi*'s speech. When the *zhiyi* has depth, as in the case of the *junzi*, the names and phrases will be appropriately brief. Although the lines mention the *junzi* making their phrases "coincide" (*dang* 當) without explaining what exactly that entails, there is no reason to assume that it involves the ancients' intentions.

## *Yi* 意 in the *Mo Bian* Tripartite Division of Argument

Hansen's approach to *yi* 意 in the *Mo Bian* builds upon a line that appears in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter as well the *Mo Bian*, which he takes to be three general glosses of linguistic terms and I take to be three different parts of an argument (the "tripartite division of argument").[41] By interpreting the role of *ci* 辭 (phrases) in the tripartite division of argument through the *Mo Bian*'s analysis of compound terms, Hansen downplays the expressive function of speech in relation to *yi*. As a result, language appears to have only one function: to guide us.

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[40] In *Emergence of Word-Meaning*, I discuss interpreting *zhiyi* 志義 as moral purpose.

[41] Again, I take this to be about parts of an argument rather than parts of "language" (or even "speech"). Most important, the third term is "explanation" (*shuo* 說) or "distinguishing explanation" (*bianshuo* 辨說), not *yan* 言. Moreover, the third term has implications for "the dao of movement and stillness," which has nothing to do with "language." Besides, the passage does not mention "different *ming* (names)" as if it were describing the components of language; it mentions "the *ming* of different things." For a longer discussion of these points, see my *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

The structural parts of argument (or "disputation," *bian* 辨) in the *Mo Bian* are broken down as follows:

> 以名舉實, 以辭抒意, 以說出故.
> With *ming* (names or naming), pick *shi* (actions/things).
> With *ci* (phrases or phrasing), dredge up[42] *yi*.
> With *shuo* (explaining), issue forth the *gu* (basis, or causes).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十一 11.2《小取第四十五》

A similar division appears in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter:

> 名也者、所以期累實也. 辭也者、兼異實之名以 (論)〔論〕一意也. 辨說也者, 不異實名以喻動靜之道也.
>
> *Ming* (names or naming) is that by which one arranges accumulated *shi* (actions/things).
>
> With *ci* (phrases or phrasing): Compound the names of different *shi* (actions/things) in order to proclaim one *yi*.[43]
>
> With *bianshuo* (distinguishing explanations): Do not[44] differentiate *shi* (actions/things) from names in order to elucidate the dao of movement and stillness.
>
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

Hansen interprets the *Mo Bian* line about *ci* as pertaining specifically to the *Mo Bian*'s own analysis of the "functional compositionality" of linguistic strings.[45] He does not ascribe this tripartite division to disputation per se, nor does he comment on the fact that early Chinese texts commonly describe *yan* and *ci* as having the function of expressing the heartmind.[46] Rather, he takes the compound terms analyzed in the *Mo Bian* as illustrations of this use of *ci*, and he employs them to interpret what *yi* means in the line "with phrases, dredge up *yi*" (以辭抒意). His translation, then—"Names pick out stuff, phrases convey intentions, explanations give the inherent way things are"—treats the tripartite division as glosses of three linguistic terms, "names, phrases, and explanations," rather than as three functions of an argument, "naming, phrasing, and distinguishing explanations."[47]

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[42] I explore the metaphor of "dredging" (*shu* 抒) for the expression of the heartmind and its intentions in *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

[43] Hansen paraphrases the line, "We string names together to form larger units, *ci* (phrases), which people used to express *yi* (intentions)." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 241.

[44] The graph for "not" here is arguably extraneous, and some scholars omit it.

[45] "The Mohists did indeed discover that word order was important in *ci* (phrases). But that does not mean they discovered the sentence. All linguistic strings have functional compositionality. That is, the unit is made up of functional parts." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 45.

Although Hansen twice mentions that phrases express *yi* (intentions) and once notes that phrases "convey" intentions, he emphasizes in his analysis of the Mohists that phrases have word order and word order guides.[48] As he describes it, word order is the important feature of phrases, and the reason that word order is significant is that it guides. To distinguish early Chinese understandings from representational views of language, he writes, "Chinese linguistic theorists did notice that word order was important in discourse. . . . The importance of word order lay in how language guides us."[49] Action guidance is what Hansen thinks is implied in the intention (*yi* 意) that the *Mo Bian* tripartite division of argument associates with phrases. The *yi* 意 is an intended structure. "The ancient Chinese concept of *ci* (phrase) ranges across any linguistic strings that we intentionally structure."[50] Thus, the Neo-Mohists focused on action-guiding phrases that contain verbs, like

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[46] For the expressive functions of *yan* 言 and *ci* 辭, as distinct from *ming* 名, see chap. 9 and the sections on *ming* 名, *yan* 言, and *ci* 辭 in the appendix.

[47] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 238.

[48] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 238, 241, 249. Describing language as "conveying" anything might not enhance Hansen's contrast between Early China and "Western language ideology." He writes, "Western language ideology, by contrast, treats the key role of language as conveying ideas, facts and descriptive content." He also notes, "We need not assume they [early Chinese texts] will treat language as conveying a unit of thought (belief or other counterpart of a sentence) or a fact." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 41, 43. Yet, Hansen treats the "intent" for the reference of a name as something that can be conveyed, presumably because that intent is not conceived as a unit of thought. Regarding the idea of a single name being sufficient in the *Xunzi* (單足以喻則單), Hansen says that a single term can convey intentions. He writes, "if a single term sufficiently indicates a paradigm and conveys the settled intent, then use a single term." Here the conveyed intent concerns the ancient sages' intended range of reference for a name: "If neither can properly pick out the intended range then go ahead and use a more vague general term." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 327.

[49] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 45.

[50] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 45.

"Kill thief" and "Serve parents." Hansen describes the Neo-Mohists as rectifying "phrases that combine names in guiding actions."[51] In his treatment, phrases intend a guiding structure. This amounts to claiming that a phrase has a *yi* by virtue of its structure. The unreliability of manipulating these structures contributes to Hansen's explanation of why the Neo-Mohists concluded that language guides unreliably.[52]

Hansen's interpretation of the tripartite division is not compelling. When the *Mo Bian* states that phrases proclaim *yi*, we should assume that it means what contemporaneous texts that raise the matter mean: phrases utter what is on the heartmind of the speaker. Phrases are forms of speech and, like speech in general throughout the early Chinese corpus, they express *yi* insofar as they draw out the heartmind. Even if Hansen were right that the Neo-Mohists were analyzing phrase structures in the abstract, there is no particular reason to expect the structure "Kill thief" to possess an *yi* in the first place, because *yi* come from the heartminds of speakers. Because *yi* express the heartmind, it is not plausible that an *yi* is an intentional phrase structure.

## Conclusion

The key *Lunyu* passage about *zhengming* that Hansen posits as having triggered a central theme in early Chinese texts does not reflect concerns about the inability to perform the original naming guidance consistently. *Zhengming* is not about graphs, intentions, or ancient sage name coiners. While early Chinese texts do not present mental pictures anchoring the language-world relation, graphs do not serve that role either. Early Confucians did not think they had to adjust reference because they had missed the original *yi* of the inventors of language. Nor did Neo-Mohists think of *yi* as the property of structured phrases. The *yi* of speech expresses what is on the mind of the speaker.

Nevertheless, while the notion of "language guidance" might be exaggerated, appreciating the prescriptive function of names significantly advances our understanding of Early China. Discussions of names often occur in the context of political regulation. Understood as commands that select people and give them titles, the ruler's names are prescriptive, for they ideally bestow clear and consistent titles that help normalize human behavior. Moreover, social regulation is significant in the rhetorical genre of “disputation.” Building on the discriminations of the senses, disputation differentiates kinds, thereby focusing early Chinese philosophy on coordinating human behavior rather than representing truth or reality. Earning a name as a means of respecting one’s ancestors also has a regularizing effect. Recognizing these prescriptive aspects of “language” should not, however, tempt us to overlook the expressive function of speech or the importance of the intentions of speakers’ heartminds.

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[51] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 250. Hansen's point is that, for the Neo-Mohists and in Early China in general, the function of words is not to describe reality. The Neo-Mohists "reflect on how people use words to guide them in a reality rather than on how pure language fits pure reality." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 241.

[52] Regarding the Neo-Mohist view, Hansen writes, "But the guidance in the phrase *killing thief* differs from that in *killing people*. . . . Their conclusion is that we cannot rely on language parallelism to give guidance." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 250–51 (emphasis in original).

# PART TWO

# Understanding Early Chinese Conceptions of Speech and Names

## CHAPTER SIX

# Successful “Communication”

## Getting the *Yi* 意 and Becoming *Tong* 通

If early Chinese texts do not present language as an abstract system, then how do they conceive of it? In what follows, I will show that they consider communication in light of the human body. In speech communication, sounds exit and enter bodies. In a successful interaction, two different things might occur: the recipient might get (*de* 得) something from a person’s speech; and *yi* 意 (intentions, what is on the heartmind) might become *tong* 通 (unobstructed). Because the implied model of communication is not neutral—that is, it is not one in which words pass from speaker to hearer with no motive involved other than conveying information—speaking and hearing are not regarded as dispensable for comprehension. Even passages that seem to deride language or detach it from context are still best understood by taking the speakers’ bodily expressions and aims into account.

In the first section, I analyze an enigmatic passage from the *Zhuangzi* about a fishnet and a rabbit trap—a passage that is often understood to dismiss language in favor of getting the *yi* 意 (generally taken to mean “thought”). I present two new interpretations of the segment that examine the bodily processes involved in communication. I consider the possible motives for speaking and hearing implied in the text as well as the power relations signified by nets, traps, and getting someone’s *yi* 意.

Motives for communicating are also at issue in the chapter’s second part, where I treat the idea of *tong* 通. I analyze its use in a passage from the *Mo Bian*, where *yi* 意 is made *tong*. Although the topic is communication, I do not presume that *tong* is being used to mean “communicate.” Because the *Mo Bian* strives for univocal meaning, the rhetorical play in the passage, unlike that in the *Zhuangzi* extract, is minimal. Nevertheless, the discussion of *yi* 意 and *tong* 通 in Canon B41[1] is perplexing for other reasons: it seems to suggest something unusual among early

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[1] These references to numbered sections of the Canons are from Graham, *Later Mohist Logic* (original edition 1978).

Chinese texts. That is, it seems to explicate *tongyi* 通意 by asking about a name, ostensibly implying that *yi* 意 has something to do with names (*ming* 名). This usage is curious since, as I contend in chapter 5, names differ from *yan* 言 in that they refer externally and do not express what is on the heartmind.[2] In order to solve this puzzle, I examine uses of *tong* in other contexts, like politics and translation, and explore how one makes one's own as well as other people's *yi* 意 become *tong*. The results of that endeavor lead me to propose that *yan* 言 (speech) is like tastes and desires. When speech is not *tong*—that is, when it is obstructed—interpreters do not serve to make *yi* become *tong*. Instead, they foster *tong* by creating shared tastes and *yi*. This idea of assimilating tastes and *yi* sheds light on the conception of speech as well as *tong*, and I use the findings about *tong* to resolve the puzzle in the *Mo Bian* exchange.

## Communication in the *Zhuangzi*'s Fishnet/Rabbit Snare Allegory

Readers commonly interpret the *Zhuangzi*'s famous anecdote about the fishnet and the rabbit snare as advocating that nets and snares (i.e., language) should be abandoned. The antilanguage reading is justified if we understand *yan* to be language and take communication to be the transmission of mental entities from speaker to addressee. But if *yan* is used to mean speaking rather than language, the implications of the passage shift noticeably.

The section reads,

> 荃者所以在魚, 得魚而忘荃; 蹄者所以在兔, 得兔而忘蹄; 言者所以在意, 得意而忘言. 吾安得夫忘言之人而與之言哉 !
> The purpose of the net is in the fish. [We/I] get (*de* 得) the fish and forget the net. The purpose of the trap is in the rabbit. [We/I] get the rabbit and forget the trap. The purpose of speaking is in the *yi* (what is on the heartmind). [We/I] get the *yi* and forget the speaking. Where can I get (*de* 得) someone who has forgotten the speaking and speak with him?
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 外物第二十六

The passage seems to invite a universalizing reading: modern readers tend to interpret seeking someone who has forgotten speech as evidence that, like "us," people in Early China confronted the problem of ineffability.

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[2] I discuss the exception from the "Da Zheng Xia" chapter of Jia Yi's *Xin Shu* in *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming). For the expressive function of *yan* 言 and *ci* 辭 as distinct from *ming* 名, see chap. 9 and the sections on *ming* 名, *yan* 言, and *ci* 辭 in the appendix.

If we analyze the perspectives inside the passage, however, we are better able to attend to the bodies (ears, mouths) of its agents and to scrutinize who is doing what. To be sure, the passage does not specifically mention mouths, voices, ears, or any other bodily feature, but, as I will show, speakers and listeners are nonetheless embodied therein. When people fish, of course, they do not typically do so precisely in order to get fish that belong to someone else, which complicates the analogy between fishing and speaking. If we note the ways in which the anecdote distinguishes speakers from listeners, we can construct interpretations that are consonant with other uses of the term *yan* (as "speech" rather than "language") in texts from Early China.

Because the *Zhuangzi* passage is, arguably, about communication, it might be useful to view it in relation to Ray Jackendoff's simplified version of the model proposed by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure:

> Something in Harry's brain that we might as well call a "thought" results in movements of his vocal tract (lungs, vocal cords, tongue, jaw, and lips), which in turn create a sound wave that is transmitted through the air. This sound wave, striking Sam's ear, results in Sam's having the same "thought" (or a similar one) in his brain.[3]

Communication is herein portrayed as a process by which a hearer matches the sounds produced by the speaker's thoughts to his own preexisting thoughts. Even though the description alludes to certain physical features that are involved in speaking and hearing, the model seems oddly disconnected from bodies. Harry's thought is effortlessly matched to something in Sam's brain. The *Zhuangzi*'s story might seem to illustrate the same process, but if we take into account whose bodies are involved, the two models begin to look different.

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[3] Jackendoff, *Patterns in the Mind*, 39. In Roy Harris's translation, Saussure's version is this:

> Suppose, then, we have two people, A and B, talking to each other. The starting point of the circuit is in the brain of one individual, for instance A, where facts of consciousness which we shall call concepts are associated with representations of linguistic signs or sound patterns by means of which they may be expressed. Let us suppose that a given concept triggers in the brain a corresponding sound pattern. This is an entirely psychological phenomenon, followed in turn by a physiological process: the brain transmits to the organs of phonation an impulse corresponding to the pattern. Then sound waves are sent from A's mouth to B's ear: a purely physical process. Next, the circuit continues in B in the opposite order: from ear to brain, the physiological transmission of the sound pattern; in the brain, the psychological association of this pattern with the corresponding concept. If B speaks in turn, this new act will pursue—from his brain to A's—exactly the same course as the first, passing through the same successive phases . . .

Harris cites *Cours de linguistique générale*, 28. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein*, 99.

In the Saussurian model, Harry speaks and Sam gets his thought. Similarly, when the *Zhuangzi* asserts that the goal of speaking is to get an *yi*, we might assume that the speaker speaks in order to convey his/her *yi* to some addressee. On the face of it, such an interpretation seems plausible. If that is the case, however, the speaker, by means of speaking, casts his own net and sets his own trap since the vignette identifies speech with such snares. That is, listeners, who get the *yi*, get it by means of the speech-traps that the speakers themselves supply. If getting the fish is the goal, then listeners seem to win at the expense of speakers, who ensnare themselves by revealing their *yi*. If the effect of speaking is to entrap oneself, then when Harry speaks in order to convey his *yi* to Sam, he is making a fish or rabbit of himself. The metaphor in the final line of the passage says just that. The narrator wants to "get" (*de* 得) a person who forgets speech, as if that person were a (still free) fish or rabbit. But if the narrator succeeds in capturing his prey, he will also be "gotten" because the narrator also wants to talk. The idea that speech is self-entrapment might seem to have a certain rationale, but first we must explain why a reader in Early China might have found the analogy between speech, nets, and traps compelling.

The allegory's meaning depends on *yi*. In one possible scenario, we speak to get our own *yi*, which would otherwise be inaccessible to us. In the other, we encourage others to speak to get their *yi*. I will consider these two options in turn.

The first instance, when we speak to get our own *yi*, I offer as something akin to a thought experiment because it fails to explain the last line of the passage. According to this reading, which involves talking to oneself, the *Zhuangzi* anecdote would not be a model of communication at all. Now, it might seem that, since the *yi* is already ours, we would not need speech to get it. There is evidence in early Chinese texts to suggest, however, that people get their own *yi*, which some references portray as something not quite accessible, by speaking. As the "Xici" famously notes, speaking does not "exhaust" or reach the limit of *yi*.[4] One implication of that might be spelled out in the *Guanzi*, which describes *yi* as rooted deeply in a sequence that ultimately produces knowing. The *Guanzi*'s two similar passages convey the thought:

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[4] The Mawangdui manuscript "Xici" line reads:

> 子曰:「書不盡言, 言不盡意. 」然則聖人之意, 其義可見已乎?
> Kongzi said, "Writing does not exhaust speech and speech does not exhaust *yi* 意."
> But as for the sage's *yi* 意, can its *yi* 義 not be seen?
> Mawangdui "Xici" 《繫辭》 in Shaughnessy, trans., *I Ching*, 200–01.

> 心之中又有心. 意以先言, 意然後刑, 刑然后思, 思然后知.
> Within the heartmind, there is another heartmind. The *yi* comes before speaking. After *yi*, there are shapes. After shapes, there is pondering. After pondering, there is knowing.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術下第三十七

> 心之中又有心 (馬)〔焉〕. 彼心之心, (音)〔意〕以先言. (音)〔意〕然后形, 形然后言. 言然后使, 使然后治.
> Within the heartmind there is another heartmind. Within that heartmind's heartmind, the *yi* comes before speaking. After the *yi*, there are shapes. After shapes, there is speaking. After speaking, there is serving, after serving there is order.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十六 內業四十九

It is true that one or both occurrences of the graph for *yi* in the second passage might be the graph for tone (*yin* 音); moreover, in the first passage, the second *yan* seems to be missing. When the passages from the *Guanzi* are read together, however, they suggest that knowledge and order would have to go back through pondering, shapes, and speech to get to *yi*. Hence, perhaps we can understand our *yi* only by working backward through things like speech and shapes.[5] In addition, later texts describe *yi* as sunken beneath visibility, and writers are said to struggle to express their submerged *yi*.[6] Thus, getting one's own *yi* could pose a challenge, which means alluding to someone trying to get his/her own *yi* by speaking is not an implausible interpretation of the *Zhuangzi*'s anecdote. Based on the *Guanzi* passages, making the mouth speak might help us articulate the *yi* that is near our heartmind. By extension, on this interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* passage, once we get that hidden *yi*, we would stop speaking—either because we should or because we have gotten what we want. This train of thought leads to the culmination of the passage, which I interpret to be toying with the idea of *de* 得 "getting." The narrator wants to get something other than fish, rabbits, or *yi*. That is, the narrator wants to get a person who has forgotten speech. If the rest of the passage is about speaking in order to get one's own *yi*, wanting to speak to someone else at this point is a jarring departure from all that has gone before. But perhaps in order to learn how to get his/her own *yi* and forget speaking, the narrator wants to "get" and speak to someone who forgets about speaking. The irony is that such a person might not want to be "gotten" for such a conversation.

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[5] Only the sages seem to get past speaking to a (subvocal?) speaking that precedes speaking.

> 聖人相諭不待言, 有先言言者也.
> Sages make themselves clear to one another without waiting for speaking. [They] have a speaking that precedes speaking.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 吕氏春秋 審應覽第六 《精諭》

[6] For example, the *Lunheng* says that even the sages do not necessarily manage to articulate their *yi* 意 in writing:

> 夫賢聖下筆造文, 用意詳審, 尚未可謂盡得實, 況倉卒吐言, 安能皆是? 不能皆是, 時人不知難; 或是, 而意沉難見, 時人不知問.
> When worthies and sages took up the brush, using *yi* 意 (intent) and careful consideration, they still cannot be said to exhaustively bear fruits. All the more when they hurriedly emitted their speech—how can it all be right? It cannot all be right, but people of this era do not know about that difficulty. Or, it is right, but their intentions are deep and difficult to see, so people of this era do not know to ask about them.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 《問孔篇》

A second, more plausible interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* passage is that the purpose of speech is to get other people to reveal their *yi*, a reading that more closely accords with early Chinese texts' tendency to present listening to speech as a way to access someone else's *yi*. In a passage from *Lüshichunqiu* that works with ideas like those in the *Zhuangzi* passage, the narrator complains about clever rhetoric and immoral *yi*.

> 言者, 以諭意也. 夫辭者, 意之表也. 鑒其表而棄其意、悖. 故古之人, 得其意則舍其言矣. 聽言者以言觀意也. 聽言而意不可知, 其與橋言無擇.
> Speaking is for proclaiming *yi*. *Ci* (phrasings) are displays of *yi*. To reflect on the display but discard the *yi* is unruliness. Thus, people of old discarded the speech (*yan*) when they obtained the *yi*. Listening to speech is for observing *yi*. If you listen to the speaking and the *yi* cannot be known, there is no way to pick that out from crazy speech.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 〈〈離謂〉〉

The episode that is recounted pertains to a servant who uses rhetoric to justify his intention not to die for his master. Because the servant unabashedly defends his *yi* 意 to avoid dying, the source of the narrator's complaint cannot be, as his last comment implies, that the servant's *yi* is hidden. Instead, the narrator's complaint likely concerns the mismatch between the unassailable phrasing and what he considers to be an unethical *yi* 意. Nevertheless, he frames his complaint as an assertion that speech should proclaim the *yi* and that listening to speech (*yan*) should permit observation and knowledge of *yi*. His frustration with rhetoric prompts him to declare that any form of speaking that does give the listener access to *yi* might as well be babbling. Again, the narrator's complaint does not do justice to the servant's forthrightness. However, it manages to restate the conventional position in early Chinese texts: *yi* are expressed in speech, and speech is supposed to be the reliable exterior of *yi*. It is reasonable to expect to get a person's *yi* by listening.

The *Mo Bian*'s description of the function of listening makes a similar point: the listener gets the *yi* of the speaker.

> 10.1.82 聞、耳之聰也.
> 10.1.84 循所聞而得其意, 心 (也) 〔之〕察也.
> Hearing is the keenness of the ear.
> Following what you hear and getting its *yi* is the heartmind's examining.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1《經上第四十》

The listener's heartmind examines the speech that he/she hears and thereby gets the *yi*. Comparing this account of listening to the *Mo Bian*'s explanations of speaking indicates their differing relationships to *yi* 意. Whereas the outcome of listening is "getting its *yi*," the outcome of speaking is that the *yi* gets to appear or achieve visibility.

> 10.1.86 言、口之利也.
> 10.1.88 執所言而意得見, 心之辯也.
> Speaking is the sharpness of the mouth.
> Grasping what is spoken, and the *yi* getting visible is the heartmind's discriminating.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1《經上第四十》

If the reconstructed sequence of the lines in *Mo Bian* is correct, then lines 10.1.82 and 10.1.86 appear to describe the ears' keenness and the mouth's fluency, while lines 10.1.84 and 10.1.88 describe the heartmind's skillful examining and discriminating, which pertain to the ear and the mouth.[7] In other words, a heartmind's skill in examining (*cha* 察) consists in following what is heard to get the *yi*. By contrast, its skill in distinguishing (*bian* 辯) consists in grasping what is said in such a way that the *yi* achieves visibility. One might argue that the important distinction here is between *cha* and *bian*, but if the sequence is accurate as given, then a more obvious distinction is between how the heartmind works with the ears and how it works with the mouth.[8] In that case, the lines would seem to describe a single person's listening and speaking, respectively, and how *yi* operates differently with each. The *Mo Bian* passage does not specify whose *yi* is being revealed. In speaking, however, grasping (*zhi* 執) the speech precedes the *yi* becoming visible. Thus the speaker's heartmind grasps the speech of his/her own mouth, which then allows his/her own *yi* to become apparent. By contrast, when listening, the person gets the *yi* from the other person's speech. The idea of listening to get someone's *yi* is consonant with the speech-as-trap metaphor that, in early Chinese texts, frequently occurs when rulers are advised to hide their wishes and intentions. By speaking, the ruler gives himself away. By listening and not speaking (and also not offering visual cues), the ruler encourages others to speak and disclose the *yi* of their heartminds.

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[7] Graham offers a justification for the reconstruction of the line. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 409.

The heartmind is not always the agent within the person that is the source of *bian* 辯, as we might assume if this were more like a mind/body dualism. Given the references to the heartmind's *bian*, the speech's *bian*, the mouth's *bian*, "*bian*-ing" with speech, and *bian*-ing with the mouth—not to mention other senses' "*bian*-ing"—we should not assume that the heartmind is always understood to be the ultimate agent of *bian*.

In that light, the *Zhuangzi* anecdote can be interpreted as addressing the purpose of speech from the listener's perspective: other people should speak so that the listener can get their *yi*. The common advice for rulers to remain silent in order to get officials to speak could inadvertently foster the excessive verbiage that disturbs the narrator in the *Lüshichunqiu* passage, who complains about people failing to forget the speech after getting the *yi*. Reading the texts against one another in this way suggests a plausible target of the *Zhuangzi*'s criticism: people who do not treat speech normally, which is to say the "disputers" and the rulers who encourage them.[9] According to this interpretation, the *Zhuangzi* anecdote contends that

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[8] In addition to the implications of the lines' sequence, this unusual use of *cha* 察, the term I translate as "examine," makes it unlikely that the lines are focused on establishing the difference between the heartmind's *cha* 察 and its *bian* 辯. It is more likely to be about comparing the heartmind's relation to the ears and the mouth because *cha* 察, which is typically associated with visual skills (see appendix), is generally used for something more proactive than just going along or harmonizing (*xun* 循). If this contrast were mainly aimed at differentiating *cha* from *bian*, it would be odd both because *cha* is usually used with vision and because, unlike *xun* 循, *cha*, as said, is more active than just harmonizing.

My interpretation challenges the more standard reading whereby *bian* is directed at external things, not to one's own speech and certainly not to one's own *yi* 意 (however that term is understood). On my reading, a person's heartmind's *bian* deciphers his/her own *yi* 意, not by directly grasping *yi* 意 (which might not even be possible) but by grasping his/her own speech, perhaps because *yi* 意 is embedded in it. To translate that into more familiar parlance, in order to figure our own intentions, we would work backward by getting a grip on our own speech (and perhaps also our actions, which are not mentioned here).

[9] The *Hanfeizi* describes rulers' unabashed delight in the sounds of disputation.

> 今人主之於言也, 說其辯而不求其當焉; 其用於行也, 美其聲而不責其功.
> Today's rulers, with regard to speech, delight in disputations (*bian* 辯) and do not seek their correlate; in [what they] utilize for action, they find beauty in the sounds and do not hold [them] responsible for their achievements.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 五蠹第四十九

listeners should forget speech once they get the *yi* from it. Rulers, and perhaps disputers themselves, should cease being impressed by the rhetoric of dispute; they should just get their *yi* and forget their cleverness. In the final line, the narrator wants to "get" someone who is not trying to trap someone else into speaking. The narrator's desire to speak to that person whom he "gets" would also amount to self-entrapment, but at least he would be playing fairly.

The foregoing interpretations of the *Zhuangzi* passage highlight the important ways in which it diverges from the Saussurian model of communication. The *Zhuangzi* story assumes, as do other texts of the period, that listeners seek to get the speaker's *yi*. But unlike in the Saussurian model, the process is not simple or unmotivated. Fish and rabbits are slippery and elusive. They are not invariant ideas, and they are not easily packaged. If the *yi* of the heartmind is like a fish or a rabbit, we need a more dynamic understanding of the heartmind's operations than the Saussurian model offers with its simple matching of thoughts to words. If we think of *yi* as dependent on "that toward which it tends," the *yi* will change with the context, and every expression of *yi* in subsequent, varying contexts will continue to transform it. Moreover, the *Zhuangzi* passage presumes that people speak for a reason: to express their heartminds. In doing so, they make themselves vulnerable to others—listeners who are not detached observers—who might want to catch their *yi*. Whether we read the passage as being about getting one's own *yi* or someone else's, the model of communication is not neutral nor is its operation smooth or inevitable. When throwing in a net for fish, one might get nothing, or one might get something the speaker does not want to reveal.

Scholars who interpret early Chinese texts as having an antilanguage sentiment have latched onto the *Zhuangzi* passage about ensnaring speakers' *yi* to demonstrate that they describe language blocking access to what is of true value. But the *Zhuangzi* anecdote is not lamenting that a linguistic construct impedes direct human communication because there was no such concept of language in Early China. The passage does not present language, nor even speech, as a nonessential conduit for transmitting invariant entities. My two alternate interpretations suggest that the passage is about speech which, if it is to be successful, must solve three problems: *yi* are elusive; listeners might want to ensnare speakers; and some people enjoy superfluous rhetoric. The comment about forgetting speech condemns not ordinary speech but an infatuation with rhetoric. Snares and traps are not prison-houses of language. On the contrary, they provide access to what people want, whether speakers like it or not.

## *Tong* 通 and the Nature of Communication

As in the *Zhuangzi* passage, the *Mo Bian* does not treat communication as an information transfer between disinterested parties, yet the *Mo Bian* decontexualizes dialogue more stringently than does any other text from Early China. Hence it is worth noting that even the explanation of *tongyi* 通意 in Canon B41 requires us to think about the bodies of the parties therein. My goal in exploring the canon is to account for the role of names (*ming* 名) in making *yi* 意 become *tong* 通. As a translation of *tong*, "communication" does not work in this passage. I contend that *tong* is best understood as a state of being unobstructed or able to move freely without impediment. Making the *yi* 意 become *tong* is creating that state. To make one's own *yi* become *tong* in conversation with others is to allow their aims or desires to move unimpeded, which leads to my larger conclusion about *tongyi* in early Chinese texts: its aim is not intellectual understanding but cooperation.

### *Mo Bian* B41

Canon B41 is about *yi* 意 and *tong* 通, and yet it seems to involve names at least indirectly. Because *yi* is present in the passage, one might expect it to be about communicating something in the heartmind, but all that seems to be communicated is the referent of a name. Canon B41 requests information about that referent while ostensibly discussing making an *yi* 意 become *tong* 通. Yet if naming things generally involves *yi* 意, then early Chinese texts would use *ming* frequently in conjunction with *yi* 意, but this is not the case.[10] B41 states:

> 10.2.81 通意後對, 說在不知其誰謂也.
> *Tong* the *yi*, then afterwards answer. Explained by: not knowing that to which it refers.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.2 《經下第四十一》

This accompanying "Explanation" follows the "Canon." (I add "Person A" and "Person B" for clarity in the ensuing discussion.)

> 10.4.40 通. 問者曰: 「子智贏乎? 」應之曰: 「贏，何謂也? 」彼曰: 「贏，施. 」則智之. 若不問贏何謂，徑應以弗智，則過. 且應必應問之時，若應長，應有深淺 . . .
> *Tong*. The questioner [Person A] asks, "Do you know X?" [Person B] responds saying, "What does X refer to?" The questioner [Person A] says, "X is Y,"[11] and then the respondent knows it. If [Person B] did not

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[10] See n. 2 above.

[11] Graham writes that the reply in that context is supposed to be "X 也." I follow him, but reading it this way emends *shi* 施. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 409.

> ask what X refers to, and directly responded with not knowing it, then there would have been a mistake.
> Now, responding must respond to the timing of the question, like responding at length. Responding includes deep and shallow . . .[12]
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.4〈〈經說下第四十三〉〉

The Explanation presents a puzzle, for it is not clear how it actually explains the stated subject of the Canon, which is *tongyi*. The Canon alludes to three actions or conditions: making the *yi* become *tong*, answering, and not knowing a referent. The Explanation seems to fit insofar as it mentions responding and not knowing a referent, however it does not mention either *yi* or *tong*. If the Explanation is about *tongyi*, then *tongyi* seems to be either the act of asking about the referent of a name or the state of having received an answer to that question. I argue for the former.

Our understanding of the Canon is obscured by the unidentified function of the unknown graph 贏, translated here as X. It might signify something like the variable X, or it might refer to something meant to be surprising, like a nonsense word. Because the graph does not appear elsewhere in early Chinese texts, I take it to be an imaginary word that functions here as an unfamiliar name.

The solution to understanding B41 might seem simple: whenever a speaker uses a name in an utterance, the speaker has an intention, and thus uttered names have intentions. On that reading, Person A, who asks the initial question, has an intention, and Person B, who asks about the referent, is inquiring about Person A's intention. When Person A answers, he or she is communicating that intention. Such an interpretation seems compelling insofar as the *Mo Bian*'s gloss of *yan*, which describes speech as something that emerges and raises things up, might imply that an utterance comes out of the heart and also refers through names. The gloss reads:

> 10.1.64 言、出舉也.
> *Yan* is what comes out and lifts up/picks (*ju* 舉).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1〈〈經上第四十〉〉

Selecting, picking, or lifting up are characteristic descriptions of what names do. Hence, in B41, speech appears to be doing what it normally does—emerging from the person—but also what names do: pick something out.[13] On that basis, one might infer that the names in any speech utterance that contains names would have intentions, and it seems that all speech utterances involve *ming*.[14] Thus, Person A, who asks the first question ("Do you know X?"), would intend something by his/her use of the name "X," and the answer to Person B's question ("X is Y.") would communicate that intention.

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[12] The rest of the Explanation is incoherent.

[13] John Makeham translates it as "To speak is to emit references." Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 53.

But there are several challenges to this solution. If such were the case, graphic searches for associations of *ming* 名, a ubiquitous feature of utterances, and *yi* 意 would produce many more results than they do. Indeed, this is even less plausible if we apply Saussure's commonsense model of linguistic communication cited above. Two heads exchange mental particulars by means of sound waves: Harry says something to Sam, and Sam acquires an understanding of that bit of the content of Harry's mind. According to that model, Person A would be the agent who communicates by answering the question posed by Person B, who then understands Person A's intention. Both the Canon and the Explanation imply, however, that Person B is the agent who must do something. That is, they cast Person B, not Person A, as the one who is required to *tong* the *yi* because he/she must do so before responding or risk a mistake. Furthermore, the way in which the dialogue unfolds in B41 does not reflect how people typically ask questions about *yi* in early Chinese texts. In response to an utterance, they often ask, "What does that refer to?" But inquiring about the referent of a name is not asking about *yi*. In early Chinese texts, it does not seem possible to ask bluntly, "What is the *yi* of that utterance?" or "What is your *yi*?" It appears that, in terms of *yi*, people tend to say something like, "Is your *yi* X? . . . Or is your *yi* Y?" but such queries are not described as making *yi* become *tong*.

Three possibilities for interpreting the Canon present themselves. (1) The topic of the Canon is misleading. The Explanation does not actually discuss how to make the *yi* become *tong*; it merely shows how to ask about the referent of a *ming* to pave the way for making the *yi* become *tong* at some unspecified future date, a delay readers would be expected to understand. (2) Making the *yi* become *tong* occurs in the latter part of the Explanation, where matching the timing of the response to that of the question is discussed. What exactly would be involved is unclear, but the end of the passage, which seems to have been corrupted, might have been helpful in that regard. (3) The Explanation does reveal the process of making *yi* become *tong*. The third option is the one I will go on to explicate.

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[14] This raises the difficult question of what exactly constitutes a *ming* in relation to *yan*. Early Chinese texts do not address this question, probably because they do not theorize about the concept of a "word." Nor do they theorize about the concept of a "name." My interpretation is that *ming* and *yan* are similar insofar as both contrast to visual things (like gestures and actions) and different insofar as *ming* pick things externally, whereas *yan* emerge from within. As a result, *yan* has an expressive function that *ming* does not. I consider this in relation to the idea of a "word" in *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

In brief, I suggest two possible interpretations of "communication" in B41, that is, two possible readings of *tongyi*: understanding *yi* or connecting *yi*. If *tongyi* is a matter of understanding *yi*, then Person B must make Person A do something (answer a question) to create an understanding in Person B's heartmind. This means *tong* is not functioning to mean "communicate" because Person A does the communicating (talking), while Person B creates the state of *tong*. On the other hand, if *tongyi* involves connecting with someone's intentions, then Person B must pose the follow-up questions that will establish the connection with Person A. In this scenario, too, *tong* is not equivalent to "communicate" because the person who is communicating information about intentions (Person A) is not the one who is performing the process of *tong*. Therefore, given either interpretation of *tongyi*, the person who communicates information about something related to his/her heartmind is not the person who makes *yi* become *tong*.

The fact that B41 mentions both *tong* 通 and *zhi* 知 (knowing) offers a clue toward solving the puzzle it presents. Both terms are used with *yi* in other contexts: one can *tongyi* 通意, but one can also *zhiyi* 知意. While it might seem plausible to frame the difference between *tong* and *zhi* as that between "to understand" (*tong*), on the one hand, and something more definitive, that is, "to know" (*zhi*), on the other, there is a great deal of overlap between uses of these terms. In other words, to understand and to comprehend can often seem like forms of knowing. Thus, by taking *tong* to mean "understand" or "comprehend," we blur the distinction between *tong* and *zhi*.[15]

B41's use of both *tong* 通 and *zhi* 知 therefore merits further consideration. In the passage, *tongyi* might mean "understanding intentions." But what intention becomes understood? Let us imagine that someone named Susan asks me, "Do you know Nad?" In turn, I ask her who or what she calls Nad, and she tells me that Nad is her nickname for someone we both know who is named Dan. What intention do I understand when she tells me who she calls "Nad"? Perhaps in unusual circumstances her answer (Nad is a nickname for Dan) might be enough to make me understand her "intention" in the sense of understanding her motivation for asking whether I know Nad. But in most instances, her answer would not be sufficient to explain her motivation for asking. The *Mo Bian* typically pares its cases down to bare-bones information. Not unlike math problems, the generic examples of the *Mo Bian* do not typically rely on special contexts. Hence, we can rule out that the Canon involves "understanding intention" in the sense of understanding the motivation for Person A's question, because in the case of this sparse dialogue, it is likely that only a special context would help Person B understand the motivation for Person A's question.

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[15] Chris Fraser says, "One canon (B41) depicts a scenario in which we come to understand the thought (*yi*) of a speaker who uses an unfamiliar word by asking to what the word refers. The point is that if we can determine reference, we can communicate."

Fraser, "Mohist Canons," http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/mohist-canons.

Let's try a different tack. Susan answers my question, and by learning the referent of the name in her utterance, I might have a better understanding of what she intends me to believe her to mean (one definition of "speaker meaning") or, more broadly, the effect she wants to have on my mind with her utterance. I know, for instance, that she wants me to think about a person rather than a thing. Although plausible, such an interpretation of *yi* 意 in this context raises two problems.

To begin with, when I asked Susan, "Who (or what) do you call Nad?" I understood enough about what she intended me to believe her to mean to realize that she intended to ask me a question. I also seem to have known already that she was asking about knowing.[16] Moreover, I understood that I could clarify her question by following up with a particular kind of query. Thus, it appears that I generally understood the intended effect of her first utterance on my mind, and I needed to know only the referent of the name she uttered. But if that is the case, then her answer seems to have merely apprised me of a missing piece of information in the initial utterance: the referent of a name. If learning the referent of a name constitutes understanding intentions, then it returns us to the anomaly of B41 implying that an uttered name expresses the heartmind's intentions. In other words, in an extremely rare case among early Chinese texts, B41 would seem to imply that names possess *yi* 意 after all.

Another problem with interpreting the utterance's *yi* 意 in such a way is that cases from other early Chinese texts in which speech interacts with *yi* treat it as a matter of expression rather than of the addressee's reception.[17] The verbs that describe what speech does with *yi* depict it as an act of drawing something out of the speaker's heartmind rather than invoking the intended effect on someone else. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the *Mo Bian* would be inventing a new technical usage focusing on the effect of speakers' intentions on hearers because, in other parts of the text (the tripartite division of argument), it too describes *yi* in terms of the expressive feature of speech. In short, in terms of Canon B41 alone, it might be plausible to interpret *yi* as "the effect intended on the addressee's mind," but on the basis of how other early Chinese texts use *yi* with speech, this reading is not persuasive.

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[16] In Canon B41 the addressee understands the question well enough to know that she need only ask about the referent of X before being able to answer without mistake.

[17] See sections on *yan* 言 and *ci* 辭 in the appendix.

## *Tongyi* 通意 in Other Early Chinese Texts

So far, I have not challenged the assumption that *tong* with *yi* is used to mean an intellectual understanding, but that assumption in itself is problematic. Database searches of early Chinese texts suggest that uses of *tong* in concert with other people's *yi* connote a "nonobstruction" or an accord with their intention; it is not used to mean reaching a cognitive understanding of the intention expressed in another person's speech.

*Tongyi* rarely occurs texts in early Chinese texts. Philosophers in particular might tend to notice one instance in the *Hanshi Waizhuan* (also repeated in the later *Dengxizi*), which describes disputers making *yi tong*.

> 6.6 辯者, 別殊類, 使不相害, 序異端, 使不相悖, 輸公通意, 揚其所謂, 使人預知焉, 不務相迷也.
> Disputers (*bianzhe* 辯者) separate different kinds so that they do not harm each other, and arrange different starting-points so that they do not rebel against each other. They convey publicly and *tong* the *yi*, spreading what they are referring to, in order to make others prepared to know (*zhi*) of it. They do not strive to confuse each other.[18]
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳卷第六

Because the "disputers" are renowned for their analytic skills, readers might be inclined to think of the passage's use of *tongyi* as describing an intellectual apprehension of other people's intentions, but it clearly differentiates *tongyi* from knowing (*zhi*). When the disputers make their *yi* become *tong*, they have not made their intentions known but, rather, have only taken a step toward making others know or understand them.

The fact that one can make one's own *yi* become *tong* also works against an interpretation of *tongyi* as a matter of "communicating" one's *yi*. Even if communicating is taken to mean understanding, cases of such usage in early Chinese texts do not seem to pertain to understanding one's own *yi*. An instance in the *Lüshichunqiu* describes making *tong* the disruptions in one's *yi*, which, when combined with other feats of self-cultivation, produces an unimpeded dao. The passage identifies these disruptions or rebellions (悖 *bei*) in one's *yi* as, for example, wanting to be valued, to be rich, or to be famous.

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[18] The translation of the phrase 輸公通意 is tentative. In its place, the *Dengxizi* version has 論志通意, "proclaim the aims and *tong* the *yi*." *Dengxizi* 鄧析子 1〈無厚〉篇

> 故曰通意之悖, 解心之繆, 去德之累, 通道之塞. 貴、富、顯、嚴、名、利六者, 悖意者也. 容、動、色、理、氣、意六者, 繆心者也.
> Therefore, it is said, *tong* the rebellions in your *yi* 意, unravel the snares in your heartmind, dispel the burdens on your *de* (virtue/power): that is the foundation of *tong* dao. These six things are the rebellions of the *yi*: value, wealth, prominence, gravitas, fame, and profit. Six things ensnare the heartmind: countenance, movement, color, pattern, *qi*, and *yi* 意.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 似順論第五《有度》

In this description, then, making one's *yi* become *tong* amounts to clearing out unruly desires that, because they are not virtuous, potentially block the dao.

This catalog of solitary efforts to make one's *yi* become *tong* illuminates the process of making one's own *yi* become *tong* in the presence of another. That is, one might *tong* one's *yi* in order to dodge potential barriers to sharing other *yi* that are more admirable. A character in the *Huainanzi* confronts a ruler and makes his own *yi* become *tong*, after which he lays his hand on his heartmind and issues forth sound. The passage approvingly notes that the incident moves the ruler to tears.

> 昔雍門子以哭見於孟嘗君, 已而陳辭通意, 撫心發聲, 孟嘗君為之增欷歍唈, 流涕狼戾不可止. 精 (神) 〔誠〕形於內, 而外諭哀於人心.
> Of old, Yong Menzi used weeping in his audience with Lord Mengchang. Once there, he lined up phrases and made [his] *yi tong*, stroking [his] heartmind and expressing sounds. Lord Mengchang cried increasingly until he was short of breath, and his tears flowed violently without stopping. That which is pure and sincere forms on the inside, while on the outside it proclaims sadness to others' hearts.[19]
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 覽冥訓

The crucial point to note here is that *tongyi* is something Yong Menzi does to himself: he makes his own *yi* become *tong* before the ruler responds. If considered as a process, then, Yong Menzi rids himself of unruly impulses that are not sincere or pure before giving vent to the feelings by which he hopes to affect the ruler.

When *tongyi* is not something that one does to oneself, it tends to show up in political contexts in which uses of the term involve power. In my discussion thus far, uses of *tong*—being open, clear, or connecting—might have seemed politically neutral. When rulers want their *yi* to be *tong*, however, they apparently strive to be free to apply their intentions. For instance, an early use of *tongyi* in the *Guanzi* is about swans who *tong* their *yi* across the sky, a metaphor for rulers who want to make their *yi* become *tong* throughout the entire world.[20] Duke Huan, who is shooting arrows, poses a question about the swans to his two advisors.

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[19] For an alternate translation, see John Major's translation of the "Surviving Obscurities" chapter in *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 216.

> 今夫鴻鵠, 春北而秋南, 而不失其時, 夫唯有羽翼以通其意於天下乎? 今孤之不得意於天下, 非皆二子之憂也?
> Now, wild swans go north in the spring and south in the fall and they do not miss a season. So, is it only because they have wings to *tong* their *yi* across the sky? Now, the fact that I am unable to achieve (*de* 得) my *yi* across the world, does this not upset you two?[21]
> *Guanzi* 管子 管子卷第十 戒第二十六

The advisors take the occasion to point out various ways in which the duke is imposing on his people, and hence does not merit swan's wings. In a similar vein, the *Lüshichunqiu* contains a passage in which a would-be ruler's guests come from afar to serve, while both his *qi* 氣 and *yi* become widely *tong*.

> 豪士時之, 遠方來賓, 不可塞也. 意氣宣通, 無所束縛, 不可 (收) 〔牧〕也.
> Heroic scholars will regularly arrive from distant quarters to serve as guests in a way that cannot be stopped. Your *qi* and *yi* will be widely *tong*, with nothing restraining them in a way that cannot be shepherded.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 季春紀第三 《論人》

The reference to *qi* is a reminder of the physicality of *yi*. The *qi* and *yi* become *tong* when the would-be ruler's intentions are unrestrained, like a swan soaring through the air. Insofar as this usage resembles an “understanding,” it is so in the sense of an agreement.

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[20] Rickett associates this part of the chapter with Warring States texts. The second example is from a chapter that Rickett dates to the early Han. Huan Gong sees swans in the sky:

> 桓公嘆曰:「仲父, 今彼鴻鵠有時而南, 有時而北, 有時而往, 有時而來, 四方無遠, 所欲至而至焉, 非唯有羽翼之故, 是以能通其意於天下乎? 」
> Huan Gong sighed and said, "Zhongfu, how those wild swans, according to the season, fly south or fly north. According to the season, they go, according to the season, they come. Without treating the four corners of the world as far, wherever they desire to arrive, they arrive. Is it only the wings that allow this? Is it possible to *tong* one's *yi* across the whole world?"
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第九 霸形第二十二

In case there is any doubt, we learn in what follows that Huan Gong's heart is set on being a Lord Protector. See Rickett, trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays*, vol. 1, 350.

[21] For an alternate translation, see Rickett, trans., *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays*, vol. 1, 382.

## Regional Differences and *Tong* 通

In some uses of *tongyi* in early Chinese texts the goal is for the ruler’s *yi* to become *tong* across different regional dialects. Because the context is linguistic, we might expect the passages to be about cognitive understanding, but although they mention interpreters, they do not describe the translation process or clarify how it might work. Instead, they emphasize that the foreigners should be made to be *tong*. *Tongyi* functions to sweep away the barriers of regional differences and to create shared tastes, desires, and *yi* among those who speak dialects that are not *tong*. Such a reading conforms to what scholars in the field of Translation Studies have noted about the history of translation. As opposed to providing word-to-word equivalents, translation may have been expected to help people negotiate the sale of merchandise in a way that would leave both parties satisfied.[22] Again, the two sides reach an understanding, which in this case amounts to an agreement.

It is worth noting that, in general, uses of *tong* are rooted in the idea of commonality regardless of whether the context involves translation. Among people of the same region and speech, the term *tong* is used to refer to something like nonobstruction, but *tong* is not automatic, and it requires some kind of mutual condition, sometimes in class status.[23] In other words, *tong* does not occur among people who have nothing in common.

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[22] See, e.g., Lefevere, “Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation,” 12–25.

[23] See, e.g., *Lunheng* 85〈自紀〉and the *Huainanzi* passage cited above, which goes on to say,

> 此不傳之道〔也〕. 使俗人不得其君形者而效其容, 必為人笑.
> This is an untransmitted dao. But if a common person who had not gotten the ruler’s shape-body (*xing* 形) nonetheless effects his visage (*rong* 容), it would certainly make others laugh.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 覽冥訓

(See discussion of this passage in chap. 9.) Yong Menzi makes the feelings of his own heart *tong*, and the subsequent description of Mengchang’s reaction demonstrates that Yong Menzi’s *tong* affects Mengchang. In the closing segment, the passage offers further details about its central character to assert that common people cannot have this *tong* with their ruler. Up to this point, there is no reason to assume that Yong Menzi has any special status. But unless the lines are unrelated, the comment about the common person implies that Yong Menzi had already attained some aspect of Mengchang’s shape (*xing* 形), which is what allows him to provoke tears rather than laughter.

Passages that discuss *yan* 言 (speech) together with customs cast speech as inevitably rooted in place and shared by those who live there. Implying thereby that speech is customary, the passages do not treat different regions' *yan* 言 or *ming* 名 as arbitrary; instead, they note that geographic factors affect speech in ways that render it comparable to a custom. For example, the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" emphasizes customs when it introduces the method for achieving *tong* with those from distant places.

> 散名之加於萬物者, 則從諸夏之成俗, 曲期遠方異俗之鄉則因之而為通.
> In attaching the assorted names to the ten thousand things, they accord with the customs of the Xia. For villages with divergent arrangements, distant locations, and different customs, they follow it (the Xia) to become *tong*.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

"Customs" is mentioned twice. The "assorted names" (one of four kinds of names) follow Xia customs. Moreover, the people who need to become *tong* have customs that are different. When carried into other passages, the pattern makes a larger point. Custom does not merely influence how people speak; it is entwined with speech.

> 夫吳之與越也, 接土鄰境, 壤交通屬, 習俗同, 言語通.
> Now as for Wu and Yue, with meeting lands and neighboring borders, fields connecting and *tong* joining, our customs are alike and our conversations (*yanyu*)[24] are *tong*.[25]
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 貴直論第三 〈《知化》〉

Perhaps the line states, simply, that when regions overlap, peoples' dialects are similar. But the use of *tong* to describe both topography and speech should give us pause. When regions are geographically *tong*, they have speech that is *tong* as well as similar customs. Here the first use of *tong* can be taken to mean open to traffic, not only of humans but also of winds, of customs and sounds that traverse the unobstructed, bordering lands. Topography influences the inhabitants' speech and customs as well. In this unconventional sense—that is, differing from the usual sense that it could be otherwise—*yan* is as inexorable as custom, both of which are rooted in the particularities of the land. For example, people who live near water have water-related customs and food. So, too, people speak as their land encourages them to speak.

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[24] For the same reasons that I argue here in relation to *yan* 言, I do not take *yanyu* 言語 to be an abstraction—language—but rather either a compound of speech and conversation or simply conversation.

[25] Compare John Knoblock and Jeffrey Reigel's translation in *Annals of Lü Buwei*, 594.

Similar passages reveal that speech is linked not only to customs but also to aims and, even, tastes, which are embedded in local regions. A passage from the *Zhanguoce* takes for granted that people who do not understand one another's conversation will also have different aims. This presumed disparity in the objectives of different regions anchors the segment's claim about the exceptional cross-cultural cooperation that occurs when people are drowning in the same boat.

> 胡與越人, 言語不相知, 志意不相通, 同舟而凌波, 至其相救助如一也.
> Regarding the people of Hu and Yue, their conversation (*yanyu*) is not mutually intelligible (*buxiangzhi* 不相知), and aims (*zhiyi*) are not mutually *tong*. But when they are on the same boat and the waves rise high, they reach to rescue each other as if they were one.
> *Zhanguoce* 戰國策 〈〈燕二〉〉 或獻書燕王

The passage describes regional speech as not being mutually intelligible (*buxiangzhi* 不相知).[26] This unusual use of *zhi* 知 draws attention to the specific implications of *tong*. The interpreters' goal is not to make speech intelligible but, instead, to create *tong* in something (not necessarily *yi* 意, as we will see below). Here, it is the aims that are not *tong*, which suggests that they are not in accord. *Tong*, then, is about being in accord rather than being intelligible. Moreover, the placement of discordant aims following unintelligible conversation intensifies the sense that speech cannot be isolated from other regional features. It is as if the passage is saying that speech is not intelligible independent of regional aims.

The rootedness of region is even more evident in passages in which the failure to communicate across dialects occurs alongside references to disparities in tastes. I will cite two examples.

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[26] It might be relevant that the phrase "knowing speech" is sometimes used to mean knowing how to speak well or knowing what other people's speech reveals about them. In this context, both knowledge failures would be apt. For *zhiyan* 知言 as knowing when to speak, see, e.g., *Xunzi*, 〈非十二子〉第六; for knowing how to speak well, see *Zhuangzi* 〈知北遊〉第二十二; for knowing people by means of their speech, see *Lunyu* 〈堯曰〉第二十 and *Mengzi* 〈公孫丑上〉.

> 5.40 五方之民, 言語不通, 嗜欲不同. 達其志, 通其欲, 東方曰寄, 南方曰象, 西方曰狄鞮, 北方曰譯.
> With the people of the five regions, speech and conversation are not *tong* and likings and desires are not the same. To access their aims, and to *tong* their desires, [there are interpretive officers] in the east, called *ji*; in the south, called *xiang*; in the west, called *di di*; and in the north, called *yi*.
> *Liji* 禮記〈王制〉
>
> 夫胡、越之人, 生而同聲, 嗜慾不異, 及其長而成俗也, (參)〔絫〕數譯而不能相通, 行 (雖有)〔有雖〕死 (不能)〔能不〕相為者, 教習然也.
> The people of Hu and Yue from birth sound the same, and their tastes and desires do not differ, but when they grow and acquire customs, accumulating multiple interpreters will not be able to make them *tong* with one another. That actions have those that even death cannot make mutual is so from learning and custom.[27]
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第三《保傅第四十八》

Immediately after mentioning sound or speech, the passages touch upon tastes and desires. Even more so than aims and intentions, tastes and desires ground speech in features of bodies—bodies that are the same at birth but then acquire the tastes of particular regions. Interpreters who seek to facilitate communication across regions must, then, create shared feelings more so than convey intelligible content. And just as aims, intentions, desires, and tastes are presented as regionally specific, so too speech cannot be detached easily from the environment in which it arose. In short, speech is not understood as a structure of repeatable types with stable relations over varying uses.

The reference to shared tastes in this context also implies that *tong* is a form of assimilation. Making speech *tong* is not to communicate "utterance intentions" since, even when interpreters are present, utterances between adults from significantly different regions never become *tong*. A passage from the *Huainanzi* stresses the point.

> 羌、氐、僰、翟, 嬰兒生皆同聲, 及其長也, 雖重象狄騠, 不能通其言. 教俗殊也.
> The children of Qiang, Di, Bo, and Di, all have similar sounds at birth. But when they grow up, even with both the *xiang* and the *didi* interpret-

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[27] My interpretation of this last line is tentative.

> ers, they are not able to make one another's speech *tong*. This is because of different education and customs.[28]
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 齊俗訓

This passage, and the two above it, draw attention to the difference between making speech *tong* and making other things, such as *yi* and desires, *tong*. As we see in the *Liji* passage, utterances do not *tong* (*butong* 不通) and likes and desires do not resemble each other (*butong* 不同), but interpreters nonetheless manage to make desires *tong* (通其欲).

To appreciate this unusual interpretative function, we must set aside familiar ideas of translation. Early Chinese interpreters do not, by their utterances, help speakers and hearers exchange the things that "speakers want hearers to understand them to mean." The inclusion of tastes, in particular, makes it unlikely that what is involved in successful "translation" is specific to an utterance. Instead, the *Liji* passage claims that interpreters manage to reach the speakers' aims and make their desires not obstruct one another. Thus, if interpreters "communicate" anything, they do so by generating shared preferences or inclinations.

A similar idea may be at work in making "mutual *tong*" in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter.

> 彼正其名、當其辭以務白其志義者也. 彼名辭也者、志義之使也, 足以相通則舍之矣.
> They correct their names and make their phrases coincide in order to strive to clarify their *zhiyi* (aim for duty).[29] Their names and phrases are messengers of their *zhiyi*. They should be sufficient for mutual *tong* and that is all.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

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[28] The passage continues:

> 今令三月嬰兒, 生而徙國, 則不能知其故俗. 由此觀之, 衣服禮俗者, 非人之性也, 所受於外也.
> Now, if you take three-month-old children and move them after birth to another place, then they will not be able to know their old customs. Seen from this perspective, clothes, ritual actions, and customs are not people's spontaneous character (*xing* 性), but that which comes from without.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 齊俗訓

See also Andrew Meyer's translation in *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 403. See chap. 2, n. 18, for this translation of *xing* 性.

[29] See the discussion of *zhiyi* 志義 in chap. 5 in the section "*Ming* without *Yi* 意 in the *Xunzi*'s 'Zhengming.'"

In light of the foregoing uses of *tong* in the context of "translation," the contention in the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter that names and phrases should be sufficient to create mutual *tong* should not be read as making speech intelligible. Clarifying an "aim for duty" (or moral purpose) and making mutual *tong* are significantly different processes, although the former might be a precondition for the latter in this case. Whereas correcting names and correlating phrases is for clarifying the intelligibility of their moral purpose, the necessity to limit the number of names and phrases is for fostering agreement (mutual *tong*) regarding that moral purpose. In other words, using names and phrases to create intelligibility is one thing; using names and phrases to foster *tong* (nonobstruction) is another. By forming mutual *tong*, the *junzi* achieves shared commitment.

Such an interpretation also illuminates what it means for the ruler's aims to be *tong* as a result of establishing names.

> 故王者之制名, 名定而實辨, 道行而志通, 則慎率民而一焉.
> Thus in the ruler's establishing of names, when names are settled and *shi* (actions/things) are discriminated, the dao is enacted (*xing* 行) and his aims are *tong*, then he carefully leads the people to unity among them.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

In contrast to the *tong* that the *junzi* strive to create by clarifying their aims, *tong* in this instance is not described as "mutual" (*xiang* 相). Perhaps when it involves the ruler, it is not mutual insofar as people become *tong* with him. But again, *tong* is not a matter of cognitive understanding. When various preconditions involving *ming* and *shi* are met, and when his dao is put in motion and his aims are *tong*, the ruler's aims will flow, unimpeded, toward his subjects and be met by them with agreement.

In these uses of *tong* 通, *yan* is not the abstraction "language" but the vocal expressions of regional speakers. Making *yan* 言 *tong* and making *yi* 意 *tong* are not equivalent endeavors. When people from different regions whose speech is not *tong* are made *tong*, that process does not involve creating intelligibility but, instead, altering the tastes, desires, or aims of some of the speakers to fashion an unobstructed pathway through which those attributes can pass. The *yi* that *yan* expresses seems like taste or desire rather than thoughts or information, and making *yi tong* is not a matter of conceptual comprehension but of acculturation. *Tong* in this usage is not "speech communication" even though it occurs in the context of dialects that require interpreters.

If, as early Chinese texts attest, taste, desire, or intentions are the proper focus of interpreters, then we must question what *yan* is. My contention is that, in Early China, *yan* is understood to be more like sounds linked to regions, as are tastes and customs, than it is a universal faculty that conveys information. *Yan* itself is *tong* only when the same speech sounds move freely, without hindrance, as is evident in parallel forms of *tong*: *tongyu* (通欲) is making desires unobstructed; hence, *tongyi* (通意) is making the *yi* unobstructed. As a result, *yan* 言 that is *tong* 通 cannot be unobstructed *yi*, which is indicated instead by *tongyi*. Thus, *yan* that is *tong* must be speech sounds that are unimpeded. When speakers from two connected regions have *yan* that is *tong* (as in the passage from the *Lüshichunqiu* above), it is the speech sounds themselves that pass freely between them.

## *Tong* 通 in Canon B41 Revisited

Informed by the intervening analyses, we return to Canon B41. Taken on its own, the Canon seems to say that making *yi* become *tong*, which should precede answering, has something to do with discovering the referent of some unknown thing. This unknown thing is ostensibly the referent of a *ming* because *ming* refer. The Explanation seems to reinforce that interpretation because it addresses not knowing the referent of something. I contend that the Explanation does actually explain the process of making *yi* become *tong*, and it does so insofar as asking the referent of the name contributes to being in emotional or "intentional" accord with the speaker. Several considerations support my contention:

- Typically, the Explanation explains the Canon.
- The Canon seems to say that asking about not knowing the referent of something is making *yi* become *tong*, not merely a prelude to it.
- The Canon instructs us not to answer until we have made the *yi* become *tong*. The Explanation implies that we should not answer until we have asked about the referent. This parallel between the Canon and the Explanation makes it seem as if inquiring about the referent in the question might be the act of making the *yi tong*.

Although my evidence is not conclusive, it is at least reasonable to posit that the *Mo Bian* is associating the act of making *yi* become *tong* with asking follow-up questions about an utterance. Whereas the answer has to do with knowing, the asking has to do with *tongyi*. Hence it is important to phrase the activity as "making the *yi* become *tong*." *Tongyi* is not a state in this passage; making *yi* become *tong* is a process.

In other words, if the Explanation in B41 is about making *yi* become *tong*, then if Susan asks me, "Do you know Nad?" and I respond by asking, "Who does 'Nad' refer to?" then I have already made our *yi tong*. If, on the other hand, I had cut her off at the first sound of an unfamiliar name by saying I did not know, I would have simultaneously committed an error in knowing and in not being *tong*. To say I did not know "Nad" would have been wrong—"mistaken," as the Explanation asserts—because I do know him, although under a different name. Keeping in mind that *tongyi* (通意) is different from *zhiyi* (知意), what makes this a matter of *tong* is the willingness to cooperate and to persist in posing questions. As the Canon instructs, before answering, one should create a state of nonobstruction (*tong*) with the intentions.

In this regard, it is worth considering how the *Huainanzi* describes *tong* (in terms unrelated to *yi* but related to both speaking and hearing).

> 夫言者、所以通己於人也,
> 聞者、所以通人於己也.
>
> 瘖者不言，聾者不聞，既瘖且聾，人道不通，故有瘖聾之病者，雖破家求醫，不顧其費. 豈獨形骸有瘖聾哉? 心志亦有之.
> Speaking is that by which one makes oneself *tong* to others, and hearing is that by which one makes others *tong* to oneself. Mute people do not speak, deaf people do not hear, and if people are mute and deaf, the human dao cannot *tong*. Thus, if people have the ailments of muteness and deafness, although seeking a doctor will wear out the family [finances], they do not consider the cost. How could only form and body have deafness and muteness? The heartmind's aims also have that.[30]
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 泰族訓

I cite the passage at length because it does not present the purpose of *tong* through speech and *tong* through hearing as intellectual understanding. *Tong* concerns, rather, connecting oneself to other people, connecting other people to oneself, and, the very dao of human connection. If we assume *tong* is used to mean a form of intellectual understanding, then the occurrence of "oneself" (*ji* 己) and "others" (*ren* 人) in the first two lines would make it seem like a description of a person's process of exchanging knowledge with others: we make ourselves understood by others through speaking, and we make others understood by us though hearing. But these are glosses of speaking (*yanzhe* 言者) and hearing (*wenzhe* 聞者), not descriptions of the process of speaking and hearing from an individual's perspective.

Indeed, if we translate *tong* as "intelligible" and read the lines as being about an individual's sensory experience, then they make an oddly narcissistic claim about how we hear. They would say that speaking is how we render ourselves intelligible to others, and hearing is how we render others intelligible to ourselves. It would be different if it said we "allow people" to make themselves intelligible, but there is no change in the agent: in speaking, we "*tong* ourselves" (通己), and in hearing, we "*tong* others" (通人). Unless "we" are uniquely important, the method by which others render themselves intelligible to us should be others' speaking rather than our hearing (just as our speaking does so for others). Thus there are two alternatives: (1) The opening lines present glosses of the process of speaking and hearing from an individual's perspective, and in the hearing process, others are not the agents of intelligibility in the same way we are when we speak. (2) The lines present glosses of speaking and hearing, rather than a person's experience thereof, and *tong* is not being used to mean intellectual understanding. The subsequent reference to muteness and deafness supports the second interpretation. The subject of the passage is the faculty of speech and hearing rather than an individual's experience of these senses, and *tong* should be interpreted as "unimpeded." The resulting interpretation minimizes the relevance of the occurrence of "oneself" (*ji* 己) and "others" (*ren* 人) in favor of *yanzhe* 言者 and *wenzhe* 聞者, which signal glosses of speaking and hearing in general. In effect, it makes "oneself" into the plural "people's selves." Speaking is that by which people connect themselves with others, and hearing is that by which people connect others with themselves. Making *tong* is removing obstacles.

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[30] See also Sarah Queen and John Major's translation in *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 829.

In the case of B41, then, Person B makes *yi* become *tong* by speaking and hearing, asking questions and listening. Person A is the benefactor of Person B's willingness to *tong* intentions. Person B thereby allows someone else's *yi* 意 unimpeded movement. In other words, if the Canon were illustrating *zhiyi* 知意, as opposed to *tongyi* 通意, it would concern understanding another person's heartmind. But it is about opening oneself up to another person, which might involve dispelling one's inclinations to dismiss the question. *Tongyi*, in short, is an act of cooperation.

If my reading of B41 is reasonable, then when an unfamiliar name is part of an utterance, names might potentially and indirectly overlap with making *yi* become *tong*. To reiterate my argument, almost without exception in early Chinese texts, "linguistically" expressing one's heartmind or discerning someone else's heartmind involves *yi* with speech or phrases (because speech expresses what is on the heartmind) rather than *yi* with names (because names refer externally). While unusual, the use of *tongyi* in B41 conforms to this pattern because the referent of the name has no direct effect on creating *tong* with the questioner's heartmind. It is the effort to inquire that fosters a condition of nonobstruction between the participants in the dialogue. In sum, the metalinguistic discussion of *tongyi* in B41 complies with the usual uses of *ming* in other texts from Early China: by itself, a *ming* does not involve expressing what is on the heartmind.

## Conclusion

When reading early Chinese texts, we tend to interpret descriptions of getting someone's *yi* 意 or becoming *tong* 通 (unobstructed) through familiar models of communication, but to do so invokes ideas about language that might be alien to the context of Early China. "Getting" someone's *yi* 意 is not neutral when the *Zhuangzi* compares it to fishnets and rabbit traps. "Communication" seems like a disinterested process, but uses of *tong* 通 seem to involve bringing intentions into conformity rather than establishing an intellectual exchange. Moving beyond standard models and approaching ideas about language from the perspective of bodies highlights the ulterior motives and desire to cooperate that underlie the politics of communication. The *Zhuangzi* passage playfully resists any single interpretation, while the *Mo Bian* B41 seems dedicated to outlining a means to avoid mistaken assumptions. Yet in their different ways, both passages reward attempts to consider the motives and processes involved in the nature of speech communication.

The findings in this chapter also serve to remind us that, in Early China, speech does not convey the meanings of words.[31] Speech expresses people's *yi*, but people do not fix their *yi* within an utterance any more than they inject it into the expression on their face. While early Chinese texts sometimes describe interpreters as transmitting (*chuan* 傳), that act does not involve isolating a bit of intention, repackaging it in another tongue, and conveying it to the target audience; it also does not involve taking something from one region's speech and placing it "inside" the speech of another. If anything passes from one person's heartmind to another, it is not wrapped up, safely bounded, and unchanged by the journey.

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[31] As linguists have noted, the "conduit metaphor" is suspiciously well suited to ways of talking about language in English. Reddy, "The Conduit Metaphor," 284–310.

Because phrases like "conveying" might imply that phrases serve as the linguistic packages for meanings in transit, I now think that in "Sounds of *Zheng Ming*," I was wrong to use the term "conveying" when I wrote, "The 'Zhengming' chapter of the *Xunzi* elaborates on this . . . by suggesting that 名辭 *mingci* (*ming* in conjunction with phrases) are capable of conveying these commands." Geaney, "Sounds of *Zhengming*," 134.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# “Ritual” versus *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound

In the chapter that follows, I will lay the groundwork for clarifying what early Chinese texts mean by *zhengming* (correcting names), a prefatory step toward explaining the way in which “language” interacts with bodies in Early China. References to *zhengming* are scarce and opaque, and to access it, scholars have tended to view it through *li* 禮, which they conceptualize as ritual. Since language is often taken to be an important theoretical concept for understanding the nature of ritual, especially by scholars in the field of Ritual Studies, it might be logical to assume that *zhengming*, interpreted as a feature of *li*, concerns language in some way.

But no early Chinese text presents *li* as the context in which *zhengming* occurs. Indeed, translating *li* as “ritual” tends to conceal important instances in which *li* corresponds to visible aspects of experience (bodily movement, clothing, vessels, habitations, the occupation of space, and other visible marks of social difference). Although *li* can restrict sounds (speech, names, and music), because *li* is typically action rather than a system of rules, it nonetheless remains on a different “side” of the body’s experience (with sound and sight as the two parts of the polarity) from *ming*, which is paradigmatically audible. Thus, to presuppose that *zhengming* is related to *li* because *li* is “ritual” is to miss the sensory feature of uses of the term *li* in early Chinese texts.

I contend that the distinction between *zhengming* and *li* is both noticeable and notable. I do not attempt to counter the claim that *zhengming* is “ritual.” Because no broad consensus exists regarding the definitional limits of “ritual” (in some scholarly contexts, for example, it is taken to encompass virtually everything), it is difficult, if not impossible, to make a convincing case that something is not ritual. But whether some concept of ritual is a good tool for understanding the ways in which early Chinese texts discuss *li* or whether some concept of ritual can be used to illustrate some aspect of *zhengming* is of less concern for me than whether *zhengming* belongs to the context of *li*. *Zhengming*, I contend, is different from, say, *zhengli* (正禮), correcting the visual aspects of ceremonial processes (walking, gesture, facial expression, dance, posture, attire, and implements). In other words, different operations determine the process of, on the one hand, correcting something aural and, on the other, correcting something visual.

My argument will progress through stages as I show that *li* is walking, that walking is visible, and that walking, as something visible, pairs with music as something audible. It lays out and responds to the counterargument that *li* sometimes seems to include music and vice versa.

## Historicizing the Concept of Ritual

In contemporary scholarship, ritual has become "*the* master key to understanding cultures."[1] To assess its prevalence, scholars have analyzed word usage across academic disciplines and found that its dominance over potential alternative terms like "worship," "cults," "service," "adoration," "feasts," "stylized behavior," and "ceremony" is evident.[2] But academic concepts of ritual encompass a vast array of subjects, including syntax, aesthetics, cognition, communication, semiotics, performance, and praxis. The definitions that emerge from these divergent fields are contested, and the term itself is sometimes considered to be meaningless.[3]

The current tendency to translate *li* as "ritual" reflects shifts in academic scholarship on religion.[4] In the study of the history of religion from the nineteenth century onward, ritual was subsumed within religion.[5] Understood as practice—in contrast to belief (something cognitive or linguistic)—ritual was presumed to be more ancient than belief and even unchangeable.[6] Relative to other terms, "ritual" was perceived as having the advantage of being less associated with Christianity. Nevertheless, its use in belief/action divisions bore witness to a lingering Reformation disdain for popular customs and their irrational rules. In the early twentieth century, translations of *li* fell in line with the list compiled by Homer Dubs: "religion, ceremony, deportment, decorum, propriety, formality, politeness, courtesy, etiquette, good form, good behavior, good manners, or . . . the rules of proper conduct."[7] For Dubs's era, "religion"—being the larger category—had the priority that "ritual" has now. Not until the 1970s, as the academic field of Ritual Studies took hold, did studying the idea of practice become so important that ritual itself became the focus.

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[1] Kreinath, Snoek, and Stausberg, eds., "Ritual Studies, Ritual Theory, Theorizing Rituals—An Introductory Essay," xv (emphasis in original).

[2] Platvoet, "Ritual," 161–205.

[3] Jack Goody argues that the vague definitions of the term "ritual" produce meaningless tautologies. "We then have a category that includes almost all action that is standardized in some way or other, and we have to then begin all over again breaking it down into some more meaningful categories." "Against 'Ritual,'" 25–35, 27–28. See also Skorupski, *Symbol and Theory*.

[4] Talal Asad calls it "the historical shift that might have made our contemporary concept of ritual plausible." Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*.

[5] Here I rely on the following: Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*; Boudeinjnse, "Conceptualization of Ritual," 31–56; Bremmer, "Religion, Ritual, and the Opposition of Sacred and Profane," 9–32; and Platvoet, "Ritual," 161–205.

[6] Bremmer, "Religion, Ritual, and the Opposition of Sacred and Profane," 24.

It is difficult to gauge the effect that the complex history of studies of ritual has exerted on the current uses of "ritual" as a translation equivalent for *li*. Approaches to ritual that foreground language—and we can identify four distinct groups that adopt such a view—are, however, distorting: (1) Nineteenth-century scholarship in religion, pioneered by liberal Protestants and "Antipapists," focused on ritual but demoted it to a status inferior to dogma (expressed in language). (2) Twentieth-century scholars of ritual have used language as a model to conceptualize how ritual creates meanings, treating it as symbolic (noninstrumental) action whose meaning lies outside of itself.[8] (3) Other modern scholars of ritual deny that rituals possess meaning at all and instead use syntax to account for how rituals function.[9] (4) Still other scholars of ritual have framed ritual as performative: either as statements that bring things about when uttered, or as signs that constitute transactions and communication.[10]

Although there may well be situations in which conceptualizing *li* through language-inflected ideas about ritual is productive, pursuing that course tends to mask the aural/visual binaries that pertain to *ming* 名 and *li* 禮 in early Chinese texts. Conceptualizing *li* as ritual encourages the assumption that *li* can be explained through *zhengming* or that *zhengming* can be explained through *li*.

## *Li* Is Visible Because "Walking" Is Visible

When early Chinese texts refer to perceiving *li*, that sensing is portrayed in terms of visibility. *Li* consists of some form of movement like *xing* 行 (walking, action, or, less physically, "behavior");[11] hence *li* is part of the visible aspect of experience.[12] If it seems plausible that walking is more likely to be seen than heard, then it should not be difficult to accept that *li* would also be paradigmatically visible.

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[7] Dubs, *Hsuntze: The Moulder of Ancient Confucianism*, 113 n. 2. Masayuki Sato describes an evolution in the development of *li*, making the point that it cannot simply be translated as "ritual." Regarding his own project, he observes, "This comparative textual study will show that the term *li* has always embraced more than what the term 'ritual' could possibly cover." Sato, *Confucian Quest for Order*, 179. For a summary of positions on the meaning of *li*, see Keliher, "Manchu Transformation of *Li*," 39–80.

[8] Victor Turner's definition adds that ritual practices, as opposed to other practices, refer to mystical powers. Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, 19. See also, Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 55.

[9] See, e.g., Staal, "Meaninglessness of Ritual," 2–22.

[10] My list summarizes Severi, "Language," 583–93.

Textual evidence that *li* is associated with the visible spectrum is abundant. Multiple glosses relate it to the body's walking. The human dimension of *li*, according to the *Zuozhuan*, is *xing* 行.

> B10.25.3 夫禮、天之經也, 地之義也, 民之行也
> Now *li* is the warp of heaven, the *yi* 義[13] of earth, and the *xing* (walk, action) of the people.
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.25 《昭公二十五年傳》

The specific emphasis on *xing* as walking—not just behavior in general—is evident from the use of other terms. The *Xunzi* says,

> 禮者、人之所履也.
> *Li* is that which a person treads.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 大略篇第二十七

The *Er Ya* and the *Shuowen Jiezi* gloss "treading" as *li*.

> 2.66 履、禮也.
> To tread is *li*.
> *Er Ya* 爾雅 釋言第二

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[11] One might say the feet or posture, because sometimes *li* is a question of standing rather than walking per se.

> 20.3 「不知命, 無以為君子也; 不知禮, 無以立也; 不知言, 無以知人也. 」
> To not know *ming* 命 (the ordained) is to have nothing by which to be a *junzi*. To not know *li* is to have nothing by which to stand. To not know speech, is to have nothing by which to know people.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈堯曰〉第二十

> 8.8「興於詩, 立於禮. 成於樂. 」
> Incited in odes; standing in *li*; completed in music.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈泰伯〉第八

Another recent work that considers *li* from the perspective of embodiment is Ori Tavor, "Xunzi's Theory of Ritual Revisited," 313–30.

[12] *Xing* 行 is one of the main terms that occurs when early Chinese texts describe what the eyes see. Other things typically presented as visible include form (*xing* 形), color/sex (*se* 色), body (*ti* 體), events/service (*shi* 事), action/things (*shi* 實), and various terms for adornment.

[13] Here, to match the idea of a "warp," we might translate *yi* 義 as "model" rather than dutifulness. For this translation, see my *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

The reverse occurs in the *Baihutong*.

> 禮者、履也, 履道成文也.
> *Li* is to tread, treading the dao and completing form.
> *Baihutong* 白虎通 情性

Evidently the two words had a similar sound. For example, in the Mawangdui *Zhou Yi*, "tread" (*lü* 履) is written with *li* 禮 in "Treading," which is Hexagram Ten in the received text.[14] This likeness gave rise to puns like the following:

> 禮者履此者也, 義者宜此者也.
> *Li* is to tread (*lü* 履) this. *Yi* is to treat this as appropriate (*yi* 宜).
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孝行覽第二《孝行》See also, *Liji* 禮記〈祭義〉

> 禮者, 體此者也; 行者, 行此者也.
> *Li* is to embody (*ti* 體) this. Walking is to walk this.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第四《曾子大孝第五十二》

Thus, *li* is the body's treading and walking.

Walking is visible. The best evidence that walking is specifically aligned with the eyes in early Chinese texts is their tendency to parallel or contrast seeing *xing* 行 with hearing something else, as in the examples that follow.[15] (Because I simply want to note the pattern, I will not elaborate on the significance of the passages I cite.)

> 孝子言為可聞, 行為可見. 言為可聞, 所以說遠也; 行為可見, 所以說近也.
> Filial people's speech can be heard and their *xing* can be seen. Because [their] speech can be heard, it delights the distant; because [their] *xing* can be seen, it delights the near.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 大略篇第二十七

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[14] Shaughnessy, trans., *I Ching*, 289.

[15] Parallel phrases that contrast action/walking (*xing* 行) and speech (*yan* 言) also provide evidence that early Chinese texts present *xing* as visible. For example, the *Mozi* says:

> 政者, 口言之, 身必行之. 今子口言之, 而身不行, 是子之身亂也.
> As for government, if the mouth says it, the body-person must enact it. Now your mouth says it, but your body-person does not *xing* (enact/walk) it. This is your body-person causing chaos.
> *Mozi* 墨子 墨子卷十二 12.2《公孟第四十八》

For a detailed gloss of *shen* 身 as "body-person," see note 16 below. For other examples of this pattern, see appendix.

> 1.4 言出於身、加於民,
> 行發乎邇、見乎遠;
> Speech comes forth from the body-person (*shen* 身),[16] and it is attached to the masses. *Xing* issues forth in the near, and can be seen from afar.
> *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 君道
>
> 2.18 多聞闕疑, 慎言其餘, 則寡尤;
> 多見闕殆, 慎行其餘, 則寡悔.
> If you hear much, set aside the doubtful, and carefully speak of the rest, then your faults will be few.
> If you see much, set aside what is dangerous, and carefully *xing* (act on) the rest, then your regrets will be few.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈為政〉第二
>
> 及其聞一善言, 見一善行, 若決江河, 沛然莫之能禦也.
> 13.16 Whenever he [Shun] heard a single bit of good speech or saw one good *xing*, he was like a bursting stream or river, so overwhelming that nothing could resist it.
> *Mengzi* 孟子《盡心上》
>
> 3.37 . . . 其次, 聞其言而信之. 其次, 見其行而信之.
> . . . Next is hearing their speech and trusting it. Next is seeing their *xing* and trusting it.
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 韓詩外傳卷第三

Because aural/visual parallels are so common, and because hearing is paralleled (or contrasted) with seeing *xing* 行, we can infer that the eyes are the typical sensory faculty through which *xing* is experienced.

The visible associations with *xing* are also apparent in its occurrences with *guan* 觀, a term used generally to mean "observe," often visual observing in particular. Again, the contrast to hearing indicates that the observing is visual.

> 5.10 始吾於人也, 聽其言而信其行; 今吾於人也, 聽其言而觀其行.
> In the beginning, with other people, I listened to their speech and trusted their *xing*. Nowadays, with other people, I listen to their speech and watch their *xing*.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈公冶長〉第五

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[16] I sometimes translate *shen* 身 as "body-person"—as opposed to just "body" or "person"—to avoid any implication that it was used to mean a body as distinct from a person or vice versa. While any given use might seem to us to favor either "body" or "person," early Chinese texts do not articulate such a distinction; therefore, it sometimes seems unjustified to infer it.

> 今聽言觀行.
> Now, listen to speech and watch *xing*.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 問辯第四十一

> 明主聽其言必責其用, 觀其行必求其功.
> An astute ruler, when listening to their speech must make it responsible to its uses, when watching their *xing* must seek its results.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 六反第四十六

> 2.28 發而安中者言也, 久而可觀者行也.
> Speech is what is expressed and pacifies the center/interior. *Xing* is what endures and can be watched.
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 韓詩外傳卷第二

> 聾者不謌, 無以自樂; 盲者不觀, 無以接物.
> 17.58 The deaf do not sing. They lack that which automates music.[17] The blind do not observe. They lack that which connects to things (*wu* 物).[18]
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說林訓

On the basis of such evidence, I submit that it is safe to conclude that early Chinese texts consider *xing* 行 to be particularly accessible to the eyes.

In descriptions set forth in the *Hanfeizi*, *li* enhances the visibility of motivations while also adorning one's dutifulness.

> 禮者, 所以 (情貌) 〔貌情〕也, 群義之文章也.
> *Li* is that by which motivations[19] are made visible (*mao* 貌). It is the adornment and display (*wenzhang* 文章) of various forms of *yi* (duty).
> *Hanfeizi* 解老第二十

Not only is *li* walking, but, through walking, *li* visibly manifests a person's more internal aspect (motivations), thereby visually adorning an array of dutifulness.

Given the ubiquity of aural/visual parallels involving walking, when we interpret references to walking in early Chinese texts, we should consider its visibility to be implicit, even if not always operative or central to how a specific use of "walking" should be interpreted. But when the body itself is relevant, as it is with *li* (because it is walking), visibility is probably relevant too. *Li* is walking, walking is visible, thus *li* is visible.

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[17] Another possible translation would be "They lack that which, from themselves, makes music."

[18] This is an example of *wu* 物 serving as that which is visible. See appendix.

[19] For this translation of *qing* 情, see chap. 1, n. 11.

## Visible *Li* and Audible Music

Aural/visual parallels or contrasts of *yue* 樂 (music) and *li* provide additional evidence that *li* is paradigmatically visible. We can infer that music and *li* are not identical because, according to the "Yucong Yi," the former was born from the latter.[20] Or, as the *Mozi* maintains, from the beginning, music and *li* were created separately.

> 昔者堯舜有茅茨者, 且以為禮, 且以為樂.
> In the past Yao and Shun possessed thatched huts,[21] nevertheless they created *li*, and nevertheless they created music.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷一 1.7《三辯第七》

When the *Mozi* states its opposition to music, it contrasts it to *li* in a way that makes it clear that they are not the same thing. It describes music (and *ming* 命) as promoting indulgence and *li* as properly respecting superior powers (which is not incidentally a contrast of audible and visible).

> 國家說音湛湎, 則語之非樂、非命;
> 國家遙僻無禮, 則語之尊天、事鬼
> If the country delights in tones and overdrinking, then talk to them about contesting music and contesting *ming* 命 (the ordained).
> If the country is distant and secluded and lacks *li*, then talk to them about reverencing heaven and serving ghosts.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十三 13.1《魯問第四十九》

According to the *Mozi*'s criticism, the transgression of enjoying music has something to do with indulging in alcohol and assuming that things are fated (*ming* 命). By contrast, *li* has to do with being civilized and respecting that which is higher. Thus, the *Mozi* advises, acquire *li* and reject music.

Other texts also present *li* and music as separate but treat them as forming a polarity. In this example from the *Lunyu*, *li* pertains to visible objects that are complemented by musical instruments.[22]

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[20] It says *li* gives birth to music: 禮生樂. "Yucong Yi"《語叢一》郭店楚簡十五《語叢一》.

[21] The identity of the graphs *diqi* 第期—possibly referring to a text related to music—is uncertain and has been emended to *maoci* 茅茨, or "thatched hut." For details, see Chinese Text Project (Chinese: 中國哲學書電子化計劃), edited by Donald Sturgeon (Chinese: 德龍), http://ctext.org/mozi-jiangu/san-bian/zhs.

[22] Regarding the *Xunzi*, Sato writes that music creates harmony, and "in this respect, music is the complementary idea of *li*." Sato, *Confucian Quest for Order*, 362. As Li Zehou puts it, "the parallel discussions of 'rites and music' do demonstrate that the two were both unified and distinct, that they at once worked together and had a division of labor." Li Zehou, *Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, 17.

Scott Cook refers to *li* and music in the *Xunzi* as "complementary institutions." Moreover, he notes that music later becomes correlated with yang and *li* with yin. He refers to the relation

> 17.11 子曰:「禮云禮云, 玉帛云乎哉? 樂云樂云, 鍾鼓云乎哉? 」
> Talk of *li*! Talk of *li*! Is it talk of anything but jade and silk?
> Talk of music! Talk of music! Is it talk of anything but chimes and drums?
> *Lunyu* 論語〈陽貨〉第十七

Several early Chinese texts describe the relation of *li* and music as a polarity of external/internal.[23] The "Yueji" chapter of the *Liji* (see below) suggests that the

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of *li* to music in the "Yueji" as a dichotomy and notes that they are the "counterparts" of heaven and earth. Nevertheless, while translating *li* as "ritual," he refers to music as "an important part of the ritual system." Cook, "Xunzi on Ritual and Music," 8, 29.

For another explanation for the pairing of *li* and music, see Peter Yih-Jiun Wong, "Music of Ritual Practice," 243–55.

[23] According to the *Liji*,

> 19.1 樂由中出, 禮自外作.
> Music emerges from inside, *li* works from outside.
> *Liji* 禮記〈樂記〉

It also says,

> 19.26 故樂也者, 動於內者也; 禮也者, 動於外者也.
> Thus music moves on the inside, *li* moves on the outside.
> *Liji* 禮記〈樂記〉

The *Shuo Yuan* notes that *li* is appropriate for straightening the outside, while music straightens the inside.

> 19.43 凡從外入者, 莫深於聲音, 變人最極 . . . 故君子以禮正外, 以樂正內.
> Of the things that enter from outside, none penetrates more deeply than sounds and tones, and none affects people more extremely. . . . Therefore the *junzi* uses *li* to straighten the outside and music to straighten the inside.
> *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 脩文

The *Hanshu* adds,

> 樂以治內而為同, 禮以修外而為異
> Music is the means to govern the inside, and enact sameness; *li* is the means to cultivate the outside, and enact difference.
> *Hanshu* 漢書 志《禮樂志第二》

However, some texts excavated late in the last century depart from this arrangement. The Guodian "Yucong Yi" (語叢一) says that both music and *li* are external, while it notes that kindliness, sincerity, and trust are internal. Moreover, as if rejecting the idea that either one is internal or external, another Guodian manuscript, the "Six Virtues," says that both are common: "*Ren* is internal, *yi* is external. *Li* and music are shared." (仁, 內也. 義, 外也. 禮樂, 共也.). "Liude"《六德》三.

relationship is like that of yin/yang. In any case, we can conclude with a fair degree of certainty that *li* is distinctly separate from music, whether as good/bad (*Mozi*), aural/visual (*Lunyu*), outside/inside (*Shuo Yuan* and *Hanshu*), and/or yin/yang (*Liji*). Because music is sound, and because early Chinese texts feature aural/visual parallels, these contrast imply that *li* is visual.

When music and *li* are explicitly aligned with sensory functions, they constitute an aural/visual pair. This sensory pairing is particularly apparent in the *Fayan*, which says,

> 天之肇降生民, 使其目見耳聞, 是以視之禮, 聽之樂.
> In originating and giving birth to people, heaven makes their eyes and ears able to see and hear. Thus, what people look at is *li* and what people listen to is music.
> *Fayan* 法言 問道卷第四

The phrasing suggests that all that we hear can be classified as music and all that we see is encompassed by *li*. Indeed, it is as if seeing *li* and hearing music were the very reason that eyes and ears were created. A passage in the *Shiji* supports the implication that *li* and music are what we most want to see and hear, perhaps even what we *should* want to see and hear.

> 故聖王使人耳聞《雅》《頌》之音, 目視威儀之禮.
> Thus the sage ruler makes people's ears hear the tones of the Ya and Song, and their eyes look at the majestic deportment of *li*.
> *Shiji* 史記 書《樂書第二》

Early Chinese texts also analogize two different, fundamental types of knowledge to seeing *li* and hearing music. The Guodian "Wuxing" asserts that the ears and eyes correspond to two types of expertise—sageliness (*sheng* 聖) and "(visual) knowing" (*zhi* 知, 智).[24] Having described the sage's incomparable skill in hearing, and then having contrasted it to the "knower's" exceptional visual skills, the passage goes on:

> 聖知, 禮樂之所由生也.
> Sageliness and knowing are that from which *li* and music are produced.[25]
> Guodian "Wuxing"《五行》十七

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[24] (See also chap. 4, n. 39.) I use "insightful knowing" as a translation for this visual use of *zhi* 知 or *zhi* 智, but it is important to keep in mind that the same term in this usage is also used for the ordinary sense of "to know"—a fact that can be lost if we translate this type of usage instead as "insight" or "wisdom."

[25] This sequence of the compounds in the "Wuxing" passage does not align, but that is because there is a norm for the sequence in which the two elements of the compounds appear. *Liyue* and *shengzhi* are conventional forms; *yueli* and *zhisheng* are not used.

Hence, acquiring a sagely knowledge of sound gives us music: that which we hear. Acquiring a visual knowledge of things gives us *li*: that which we see.

Passages describing failures to hear or see further demonstrate *li*'s association with sight. In the *Zuozhuan*, for instance, a minister in charge of taste addresses the master of music and the master of *li*.[26] The music master, the minister declares, is the ruler's ears and, therefore, is in charge of hearing.

> 「女為君耳, 將司聰也. 辰在子、卯，謂之疾日，君徹宴樂，學人舍業，為疾故也. 君之卿佐, 是謂股肱. 股肱或虧, 何痛如之? 女弗聞而樂, 是不聰也. 」
> B10.9.5 "You are the ruler's ears, and in command of the management of keen-hearing. The cyclical day of Zimao is called a baneful day. Because of the banefulness, the ruler does not have feasts or music, and learners give up their business of studying. The ruler's officers and assistants are called his limbs. If a limb is deficient, what pain is like it? You did not hear and are making music. That is not keen-hearing."
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.9 《昭公九年傳》

Thereupon, the minister tells the court favorite who manages the exterior, the *li* master, that he is in charge of vision and action:

> 「女為君目, 將司明也. 服以旌禮, 禮以行事, 事有其物, 物有其容. 今君之容, 非其物也; 而女不見, 是不明也. 」
> B10.9.5 "You are the ruler's eyes, and in command of the management of clear seeing. Clothes are for manifesting *li*, and *li* is for enacting tasks (*xing shi* 行事). Serving (*shi* 事) involves things (*wu* 物), and things have their visible features (*rong* 容). Now the ruler's visible features (*rong* 容) are contrary to the matter (*wu* 物).[27] You did not see. That is not clear-sighted."
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.9 《昭公九年傳》

The passage sets forth the visual responsibilities of the *li* master's job description. The master of *li* functions as the ruler's eyes. His focus is on clothing, action, and visual appearance.

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[26] The taste master first addresses someone unnamed, implicitly the music master, for not knowing about the inauspiciousness of the day (because a minister has died). He then addresses the "exterior" favorite, named Shu (外嬖嬖叔), who we can infer is the *li* master both because of the association with exteriority and because he describes his charge as "manifesting *li*." The officer of taste describes himself as the mouth, which produces *qi* (氣), aims (*zhi* 志), and ultimately speech (*yan* 言) and orders (*ling* 令), hence he holds himself responsible for the behavior of the ears and eyes.

[27] This is one of several indications that *wu* 物 might have a particular affiliation with the eyes. See appendix.

An additional passage that references the failure of seeing and hearing confirms the visual character of *li*. The hypothetical situation involves being deprived of sight and hearing:

> 目未嘗見禮節, 耳未嘗聞先古.
> [His] eyes have never seen *li* orderliness (*jie* 節), and his ears have never heard the ancients of the past.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 脩務訓

Again, *li* is that which should be seen, in this case expressed in correspondence with hearing the ancients rather than hearing music. Whereas one hears stories of the ancestors, the visible feature of *li* is its measured regularity (orderliness). In a more complex example, we can infer from a "failure" to hear soundless music and see bodiless *li* that the body is what is visible about *li*.

> 『三無』乎, 無聲之樂, 無體〔之〕禮, 無服之喪. 君子以此皇于天下, 傾耳而聽之, 不可得而聞也; 明目而見之, 不可得而見也.
> The "three withouts": music without sound, *li* without body, mourning without garb.[28] The *junzi* uses this to be august over the world. [Even] when bent (or attached)[29] ears listen to it, it cannot be gotten to hear; when clear eyes look at it, it cannot be gotten to see.
> "Min Zhi Fu Mu" 〈〈民之父母〉〉.[30]

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[28] My translation is adapted from that of Matthias Richter. As I explain below, for various reasons, mourning is sometimes the ultimate case of *li*, which might justify the subsequent compression of music, *li*, and mourning into music and *li* only. For a discussion and translation of the passage in the Chu Bamboo Slip, "Min Zhi Fu Mu," see Richter, *Embodied Text*, 84–98.

[29] According to Richter, the graph describing the ears (here *qing* 傾) might plausibly be *xi* 系 "attach." Richter, *Embodied Text*, 91–98. If *qing* 傾 is the right graph, perhaps the one thing that should not be *zheng* is the ears!

In the *Liji* and *Kongzijiayu* versions, there is an unlikely imbalance in the lines. The eyes are described with two terms, *zheng* 正 (straight) and *ming* 明 (clear or bright), whereas the equivalent for the ears is one, *qing* 傾 (slanted, inclined). This is the *Liji* version:

> 是故正明目而視之, 不可得而見也; 傾耳而聽之, 不可得而聞也.
> Therefore, [even] when straight bright eyes look at it, it cannot be gotten and seen; when bent ears listen to it, it cannot be gotten and heard.
> *Liji* 禮記〈孔子閒居〉30.1

[30] Other texts present this idea differently. In the list in the *Liji* and the *Kongzijiayu*, the line about unheard and unseen follows the "five arrivals" (*wu zhi* 五至), where it makes no particular sense. Here it follows three items that are more compellingly collapsed into things that are heard or seen. That is, music is heard, and *li* and mourning are seen. See Richter, *Embodied Text*, 84.

The *junzi* is able to hear barely audible music. The barely visible things he is able to see include aspects of clothes, in the case of mourning, and *ti* 體 "bodies," in the case of *li*.[31]

Recognizing early Chinese texts' presentation of *li* is crucial to understanding their embodiment of "language." While scholars have devoted a good deal of attention to *zhengming*, *ming* is only one thing that early Chinese texts portray as being made *zheng* (correct).[32] One's body can also be made correct, and the walking and movement of *li* is closely related to that process.[33] The "Xiushen" chapter of the *Xunzi*, which focuses on cultivating the body, explicitly depicts *li* as having the function of correcting bodies.

> 禮者、所以正身也, 師者、所以正禮也. 無禮何以正身? 無師, 吾安知禮之為是也?
> *Li* is that by which the body is made correct. Teachers are those who make *li* correct. Without *li*, how can the body be made correct? Without teachers, how can we know this is *li*?
> *Xunzi* 荀子 脩身篇第二

Not only does *li* make bodies correct, but, the *Xunzi* account implies, *li* alone makes them so. The directness of that assertion contrasts starkly with the offhandedness of the references to *li* in the discussions of *zhengming* in the *Lunyu* 13.3 and the "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi*. If correcting *ming* were a form or act of *li*, then we would expect statements about their relation to one another to be as explicit as those associating *li* with the body.

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The texts do not explain the five arrivals. They include *zhi* (aims), *shi* (odes), *li*, *yue*/*le* (music/joy), and *ai* (sadness). This presence of both *li* and sadness, before and after, seems to balance *yue*/*li* from either side: that is *li* and *yue*, on the one hand, and *le* and *ai*, on the other.

[31] I thank Joseph Allen for explaining the logic of a *Shijing* metaphor (*Mao Shi* 〈國風 · 鄘風〉〈相鼠〉) in which *li* 禮 is the *ti* 體 "body" of a rat. The poem implies that a person lacking *li* 禮 and other crucial moral traits—like a rat lacking body, skin, and teeth—might be expected to die as a result. Email correspondence 2/22/17.

[32] Uses of *zheng* 正 in early Chinese texts indicate that it is possible for these things to be *zheng*: the heartmind (*xin* 心), the breast (*xiong* 胸), the "self" (*ji* 己), the body-person (*shen* 身), the body (*ti* 體), the face or complexion (*yanse* 顏色), and the senses (*tianguan* 天官).

[33] Robert Eno's depiction of Confucians, in *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, as precisely attired "masters of dance" captures much of what I think *li* is about. In early Chinese texts, correcting the body can be quite physical: "correct shape" (*zhengxing* 正形) is sometimes used to mean a body that reaches its full height, and "correct body" (*zhengti* 正體) is sometimes used to mean a person sitting up straight.

*Li*'s correction of the body is equivalent to correcting the outside, or visible aspects, of a person.[34] By contrast, sound, specifically music, corrects the inside.

> 19.43 故君子以禮正外, 以樂正內.
> Therefore, the *junzi* uses *li* to straighten the outside and music to straighten the inside.
> *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 脩文

Another text indicates that the eyes correct the body, which confirms that that which *li* corrects is visual.

> 〔夫〕君子目以正體, 足以從之, 是以觀〔其〕容而知其心〔矣〕.
> Now the *junzi* uses his eyes to correct his body (*zhengti* 正體) and his feet to follow it. Therefore one can look at his countenance (*rong* 容) to know his heartmind.
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷十《禮容語下》

*Li* is what makes the body or shape correct, which in turn makes the face reveal the heartmind.

In sum, early Chinese texts never state that *li* corrects (*zheng* 正) *ming*; but they say that *li* corrects bodies and the outside, in short, visible things. *Li* is walking. And, as we see from its aural/visual pairing with speech, walking is visible. Furthermore, the texts present *li* and music in parallels and contrasts; they assert that *li* corrects the outside of the body, whereas music corrects the inside. In light of the tendency for early Chinese texts to use aural/visual pairs, and insofar as *li* and music form a pair, to associate *li* with vision is certainly more defensible than associating it with sound. Hence, we can infer that *li* is paradigmatically a thing that is sensed by the eyes, just as *yue* (music) is paradigmatically a thing that is sensed by the ears.

## Counterargument: Gauging the Scope of *Li*

The most obvious challenge to my argument is that early Chinese texts sometimes intermingle discussions of *li* and music, a practice that tends to muddy the alliance of music with sound and *li* with vision. For example, in the *Liji*, Kongzi considers a potential conception of *yue* 樂 (music) that includes *xing* (行 walk, act), dances, and feather plumes. He poses a rhetorical question:

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[34] For the argument that inside/outside are relative boundaries in early Chinese texts, see Geaney, "Self as Container?," 11–30.

29.5 爾以為必行綴兆, 興羽籥, 作鍾鼓, 然後謂之樂乎?
Do you take it that what is required is walking in linked positions, raising plumes and fifes, playing bells and drums, and then it can be called music?
*Liji* 禮記〈仲尼燕居〉

The context suggests that Kongzi is caricaturing a conception of *yue* that sacrifices self-cultivation to showiness.[35] Insofar as the embellishments include visible movements and ornaments, my claim that *yue* is paradigmatically sound and should be translated as "music" might seem suspect.

Furthermore, since music and *li* are at times presented as overlapping, viewing *li* as an overarching category of which sound is a part has some justification, an inference that seems to be supported by a line from the *Lunyu*.

12.1 非禮勿視, 非禮勿聽, 非禮勿言, 非禮勿動.
If it is not *li*, do not look. If it is not *li*, do not listen. If it is not *li*, do not speak. If it is not *li*, do not move.
*Lunyu* 論語〈顏淵〉第十二

Here, amid aural/visual parallels, *li* limits what is heard as well as what is seen. In another example, the *Xunzi* depicts *li* as restraining wailing at the funeral of a castrated criminal and balancing extremes of sounds (music and crying). More closely related to the idea of *zhengming*, the *Mo Bian* characterizes *li* with a reference to respectful names:

10.1.17 禮、敬也.
10.3.9 禮. 貴者公, 賤者名, 而俱有敬僈焉, 等異論也.
*Li* is respect.
*Li*: "Sir" for nobles, *ming* (personal names) for inferiors, but both have respect and rudeness in them. Ranks differ by sorting.[36]
*Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1〈〈經上第四十〉〉
*Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3〈〈經說上第四十二〉〉

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[35] See below for a discussion of the passage.

[36] The glosses in the Canons have no context. If they did, we might understand why this section of the *Mo Bian* glosses both *li* 禮 and *xing* 行 with reference to *ming* 名. The next line reads:

10.1.19 行、為也.
10.3.10 行. 所為不善名, 行也. 所為善名, 巧也, 若為盜.
Action is doing.
Action: That which is done—without using a nice *ming*—is "action." That which is done—using a nice *ming*—is "cleverness." Like committing robbery.
*Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1〈〈經上第四十〉〉
*Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3〈〈經說上第四十二〉〉

*Li* also establishes prohibitions on speaking names.

> 1.41 卒哭乃諱. 禮, 不諱嫌名.
> When the ceremony of wailing is over, there is avoidance [of speaking his father's name]. *Li* does not require avoiding doubtful names.
> *Liji* 禮記〈曲禮上〉

Thus, *li* determines the proper level of formality in speech, type of music, sounds for grieving, and even the right names to use. Taken together, these examples could be used to buttress the objection that *li* is not strictly visible. If references to music mention visible things and *li* determines the appropriateness of sounds as well, then perhaps *li* should not be ruled out as a contextual basis for understanding *zhengming*.

## Response: The Nature of Sound and Sight

It is not surprising that *li* and sound overlap because, generally speaking, visible and audible experiences, including music and dance, often do. Drumming and the sounds of dancing complicate any clear-cut division between *li* and *yue*, but early Chinese texts strive to distinguish between them in any case. Moreover, while *li* restricts many things, it does not necessarily consist of them. Although the restrictions *li* enforces are wide ranging (as in the *Lunyu* passage cited above), when the *Zhou Yi* singles out one thing that *li* limits, it is walking.

> 君子以非禮弗履.
> The *junzi* takes what is contrary to *li* to be what he will not tread.
> *Zhou Yi* 周易《大壯第三十四》

Presumably, the *junzi* would also not look, listen, or speak things that are not *li*, but these do not merit mention. Walking does. Therefore, while it is true that *li* restricts many different things, it is associated above all with the body's movements.[37]

It is in the nature of *li* to separate things, as the "Yueji" chapter of the *Liji* explains with this series of binary contrasts.

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[37] *Li*'s restricting of sounds need not involve rules (i.e., something in a sentential form). Human movement regulates sound, just as sounds (like commands) regulate behavior. Changing the shape or size of an instrument alters the resulting sound. The movement of pounding on a drum creates the sound. Arranging when and where a sound occurs and to whom it is directed amounts to controlling it with behavior. Thus, contextually sensitive movement can regulate what comes out of the mouth without actually *being* what comes out of the mouth.

> 19.6 天高地下, 萬物散殊, 而禮制行矣. 流而不息, 合同而化, 而樂興焉. 春作夏長, 仁也; 秋斂冬藏, 義也. 仁近於樂, 義近於禮. 樂者敦和, 率神而從天, 禮者別宜, 居鬼而從地. 故聖人作樂以應天, 制禮以配地.
> Heaven is above
> Earth is below.
> The ten-thousand things scatter apart, and the regulations of *li* act.
> Flowing without ceasing, pairing, uniting, and transforming, and within that music arises.
> In the spring, there is creation and in the summer, there is growth. This is *ren* (kindliness).
> In the autumn, there is holding back and in winter, there is storing. This is *yi* (dutifulness).
> *Ren* is close to music.
> *Yi* is close to *li*.
> Music is kindly and harmonious. It leads spirit-souls and follows heaven.
> *Li* is differentiating and appropriate. It stores ghost-souls and follows the earth.
> Thus, the sage makes music to respond to heaven, and makes *li* to match earth.
> *Liji* 禮記〈樂記〉

The parallels attribute restraint and separation to *li* while imbuing music with youth, exuberance, and union.[38] As a moderating force, *li* serves to harness movement, which includes the flowing, uniting, and blending transformations of sound.[39]

The restraint of *li* and the necessity of contrasting it to music/joy (樂) is particularly evident in its affinity with grieving. *Li* is to mourning, the *Mozi* analogizes, as studying is to scholars.

> 喪雖有禮, 而哀為本焉. 士雖有學, 而行為本焉.
> With mourning, although there is *li*, sadness is its root. With scholars, although there is studying, practice is its root.
> *Mozi* 墨子 墨子卷一 1.2〈〈脩身第二〉〉

Mourning and music should not be combined.

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[38] Scott Cook rightly notes that *li* “serves to confine music within proper bounds, and direct a potentially explosive force toward ends which are ostensibly for the good of society as a whole.” He takes the role of music, however, to be uniting “the divergent patterns of ritual,” rather than simply blending and uniting all things. Cook, “Xunzi on Ritual and Music,” 33.

[39] I present this argument in more detail in “Binaries in Early Chinese Texts,” 275–92.

> 2.5 居喪不言樂.
> When occupied with mourning, do not speak of music.
> *Liji* 禮記〈曲禮下〉

Whereas the well-known wordplay with *le* 樂 and *yue* 樂 testifies that music is joy, the *Liji* affirms that sadness and mourning are *li*. Perhaps because death violates so many boundaries, mourning is a time for restraint and recognizing differences (like that between alive and dead). Indeed, the *Liji* asserts that music has no role in any yin ceremonial event, including autumnal feedings of the elderly:

> 11.3 凡飲, 養陽氣也; 凡食, 養陰氣也. 故春禘而秋嘗; 春饗孤子, 秋食耆老, 其義一也. 而食嘗無樂. 飲, 養陽氣也, 故有樂; 食, 養陰氣也, 故無聲. 凡聲, 陽也.
> All drinking nourishes *yang qi*; all eating nourishes *yin qi*. Therefore, there were the spring sacrifices and autumnal sacrifices. When feasting the orphaned young in spring and feeding the aged in autumn, the model[40] was the same. But in the feeding at the autumnal sacrifice, there was no music. Drinking nourishes *yang qi* and therefore it occurs with music. Eating nourishes *yin qi*, and therefore it does not occur with sound. All sound is *yang*.
> *Liji* 禮記〈郊特牲〉

Just as sadness and joy are different, *li* and music are as well. More broadly, yin and yang are different, a distinction, like so many others, that *li* enforces. These passages seem to intimate that, because all sound is yang, sound is inappropriate for yin events. That is, being yang, sounds blend and resist moderation. Sad sounds are ambiguous in that they are both sad and sound, but insofar as they are sound, they are irrepressible, like yang. Hence yin events exclude even sounds of sadness. In a world of polar differences, then, audible sounds flow, blend, and unite, while *li* separates and restrains such activities.

It is fitting that *li* differentiate things because *li* is visible and visible phenomena, unlike sounds, are differentiated enough to divide. The "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi* tells us what is visible:

> 形體、色理以目異.
> Shapes (*xing* 形), bodies, colors, and patterns (*li* 理) are differentiated by the eyes.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

The "Jie Lao" chapter of the *Hanfeizi* pronounces that some of these visible things, patterns and shapes, are identifiable and easily cut:

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[40] For this translation of *yi* 義, see Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

> 凡理者, 方圓、短長、麤靡、堅脆之分也.
> Patterns (*li* 理) are divisions (*fen* 分) of square-round, short-long, coarse-slight, and strong-fragile.[41]
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 解老第二十

> 凡物之有形者易裁也, 易割也.
> All things that have shape (*xing* 形) are easy to cut (*cai* 裁) and easy to cleave (*ge* 割).
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 解老第二十

Being divisible and easily cut is crucial to identity and identification. As the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter explains, the separation in space indicates how we count (or individuate) entities.

> 物有同狀而異所者, 有異狀而同所者, 可別也. 狀同而為異所者, 雖可合, 謂之二實. 狀變而實無別而為異者, 謂之化. 有化而無別, 謂之一實.

物有同狀而異所者, 有異狀而同所者, 可別也. 狀同而為異所者, 雖可合, 謂之二實. 狀變而實無別而為異者, 謂之化. 有化而無別, 謂之一實.

> Among things (*wu* 物) there are those of the same look (*zhuang* 狀) and different locations and those of a different look in the same location, which can be separated (*bie* 別). If the look is the same but the location is deemed different, although they can be united, call them two *shi* 實. If the look changes but the *shi* 實 has no separation (*bie* 別), although it is deemed different, call it transformed. If there is transforming but no separating (*bie* 別), call it one *shi* 實.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

Thus, the senses individuate by separating (*bie* 別) according to location. *Zhuang* 狀 and *shi* 實, which are visible, are separable because they "stay" in place, to some extent maintaining their boundaries.[42] In early Chinese mathematical texts, *shi* 實 is used to mean the dividend, that which is divided.[43] The sphere of the visible is amenable to divisions (*fen* 分), which are applied to presumably visible things whose boundaries are clear enough to be divided.

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[41] The line can be interpreted in two ways: it could mean that *li* 理 (patterns) consist of different portions of square/round, long/short, etc.; or it could mean that portions of each binary alone constitute a pattern.

[42] It is a question of "stopping" or "staying," in the *Mo Bian*'s terms. The *Mo Bian* says, 10.3.74 臧, 私也, 是名也, 止於是實也. *Cang* is private. This name stops in this *shi*. *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3《經說上第四十二》. This line from the *Mo Bian* is about private names, but it reflects the general way in which identification, not just naming identification, operates in early Chinese texts. (A. C. Graham translates "Cang" as "Jack." Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 325.)

[43] Chemla, "Shedding Some Light on a Possible Origin of a Concept of Fractions in China,’" 174–98.

By contrast, *sheng* 聲 (sound), while differentiated by the ears, defies boundaries and is less localizable. According to the *Shuo Yuan*, sounds and tones penetrate inside more deeply than anything else does. This is why music corrects the inside, as noted above.

> 19.43 凡從外入者, 莫深於聲音, 變人最極 . . . 故君子以禮正外, 以樂正內.
> Of all the things that enter from outside, none penetrates more deeply than sounds and tones, and none affects people more extremely. . . . Therefore the *junzi* uses *li* to correct the outside and music to correct the inside.
> *Shou Yuan* 說苑 脩文

Given its deep penetration, sound seems to be inside while simultaneously originating outside of us. With sound, the distinction of inside/outside is blurred. Again, the *Liji* says music arises from flowing, uniting, and transformation.

> 19.6 流而不息, 合同而化, 而樂興焉.
> Flowing without ceasing, pairing, uniting, and transforming, and within that music arises.
> *Liji* 禮記〈樂記〉

Identifying the boundaries of something that flows is, of course, supremely difficult. This may be why *sheng* 聲 functions in a way that does not tie it to a thing that causes it.[44] In other words, as with the English term "sound," one can talk about *sheng* without being able to pinpoint its origins. In early Chinese texts, no term for "sight" exists that is comparable to that for "sound."[45] The terms for color (*se* 色) and shape (*xing* 形) are used without reference to things, but they are not as general as "sight."[46] As two separate, visible things, *se* and *xing* are already more distinct than *sheng*, which encompasses all that is audible. That there is no undivided, single term for the visible, whereas there is one for the audible, correlates with the notion that visible phenomena, as compared to audible phenomena, are more localized, divisible, and not as likely to flow and unite. The observation helps explain one of the seeming incongruities in music/*li* parallels. Assuming that "music" (*yue* 樂) and "sound" (*sheng* 聲) are good translation equivalents, to claim that music is sound seems natural. But what is the broad sensory category to which *li* belongs? Perhaps for reasons having to do with the early Chinese conception of visual experience, no comparable term is available for the visual sensory category to which *li* would be assigned.[47] In the absence of a term like "sight," early Chinese texts gloss *li* with something else that is also visible but, unlike "sound," not a generalized sensory term: treading (*lü* 履) or embodying (*ti* 體).

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[44] My comments here are informed by Kendall Walton, "Listening with Imagination," 47–62.

[45] There is also no general vision term comparable to "sound" in English, since "sight" does not have that use. That is, we do not say "What is that sight?" And, in saying "We saw the sights," the term "sights" is likely to mean things worth seeing, not simply things that present themselves to the eyes.

[46] Rather than treating colors and shapes as properties belonging to things, the *Lunyu* and *Mengzi* discuss Kongzi hating purple as if purple *was a thing*, not a surface that hides an unseen essence. See my discussion in "Self as Container?" Similarly, the *Mo Bian* Canon B70 discusses color inside a room, and the *Mozi* talks about people selecting black from white rather than black things from white things.

Texts from Early China do not treat discursive language as transcending sound in general. *Sheng* 聲 is used to mean "voice" and voiced sounds as well as just "sound." In that sense, *sheng* 聲 is like *yan* 言 and *ming* 名—more embodied than abstract types like "language" and "words."[48] That the heartmind expresses itself in speech as well as in music diminishes the difference between the two.[49] Speech is not even strictly human because some animals also speak (*yan*), which means speech is perhaps not much more than a form of sound.[50] In the case of chanting, the distinction between speech and music is not firm. Moreover, in the narrative of music's primordial origin, speech (*yan* 言) is not divorced from music. In the *Shujing* passage that recounts the appointment of the first music master, the musical sound involves metered, rhymed, and sung speech. The music master makes the *shi* (odes/poems) "speak" (*yan* 言) the aims of the heartmind:[51]

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[47] The early Chinese parity between sight and sound does not translate readily into English.

[48] I mean "language" here in the sense that Hansen stipulates with his introduction of the type-token distinction: "an abstract symbolic system." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 37. In what follows I am summarizing part of my argument in "Sounds of Zhengming," 107–18.

[49] The fact that some early Chinese texts transpose *yi* 意 (*ʔ(r)əək-s) with *yin* 音 "tone" ([q](r)əəm) is less likely to be evidence of this, because, according to the William Baxter and Laurent Sagart reconstructions, they were probably not pronounced similarly. Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction*, http://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf, 136–37. I am grateful to Wolfgang Behr for drawing my attention to the pronunciation differences.

[50] See *Liji* 1.6 and *Zhou Li* 5.24 and 5.26.

[51] According to Laurence Picken, the odes are "measured songs," which indicates that they are both discourse and music. Picken, "The Shapes of the *Shi Jing* Song-texts and Their Musical Implications," 85–109.

> 「夔！命汝典樂, 教冑子. 直而溫, 寬而栗, 剛而無虐, 簡而無傲. 詩言志, 歌永言, 聲依永, 律和聲. 」
> Kui! I appoint (*ming* 命) you Overseer of Music (*yue*) and to teach our sons. . . . The odes speak (*yan* 言) of aims, singing elongates this speech (*yan*), sound (*sheng* 聲) relies on that elongation, and pitch-pipes harmonize sound (*sheng*).
> *Shangshu* 尚書 舜典

The task of the music master also involves "conversation."

> 以樂德教國子中、和、祗、庸、孝、友. 以樂語教國子興、道、諷、誦、言、語.
> [The Grand Music Master shall] employ "musical *de*" (virtue/power) to instruct the sons of people of rank in uprightness, harmoniousness, respect, constancy, filial piety, and friendship. [He shall] use "musical conversation" (*yueyu* 樂語) to teach them stimulus (*xing*), exposition (*dao*), admonition (*feng*), praise (*song*), speech (*yan* 言), and conversation (*yu* 語).[52]
> *Zhou Li* 周禮〈春官宗伯〉〈大司樂〉

Musical conversation teaches speaking (*yan*). Hence, the musical and the discursive are not strictly separated in Early China. Names, speech, and music are all similarly understood to be sounds, and, given the polarities of music and *li*, they are not *li*.

If we were to situate *ming* (names) and *yan* (speech) in the polarity of music and *li*, we would place them on the side of music because all three are sound. The relation of speech and names to *li* is that of aural elements, which are ideally paired with visible ones.

## The Relationship of *Ming* to *Li*

Aural/visual polarities are useful tools for grasping Early China's understanding of the relationship between *zhengming* and *li*. The pairing of *li* and *yue* and the blending of discursive and musical sound suggests how *li* interacts with sound in general and, thus, in what sense *li* and *ming* are separate and how *li* interacts with *ming*, insofar as it does. Again, *li* does not correct (*zheng* 正) *ming*, but, in addition to regulating sound, it corrects visible things, including bodies and walking, often by ensuring that action matches sound. *Li*'s objective to match sound and sight remains obscure, however, unless we recognize the underlying polarity of sound and sight.

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[52] Translation modified from Saussy, *Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic*, 62.

Let us return to the *Liji* passage in which Kongzi instructs Zizhang about the proper understanding of *li* and music:

> 29.5 爾以為必鋪几、筵, 升降, 酌、獻、酬、酢, 然後謂之禮乎?
> 爾以為必行綴兆, 興羽籥, 作鐘鼓, 然後謂之樂乎?
> 言而履之, 禮也.
> 行而樂之, 樂也.
> Do you take it that what is required is preparing tables and mats, ascending and descending, serving, offering, toasting health with wine, and then it can be called *li*?
> Do you take it that what is required is walking in linked positions, raising plumes and fifes, playing bells and drums, and then it can be called music?
> *Li* is speaking and treading it.
> Music is acting and making “music/joy”[53] of it.
> *Liji* 禮記〈仲尼燕居〉

As noted above, in this passage Kongzi caricatures notions of *li* and music that presuppose no personal investment, wherein *li* is no more than ceremonial movements and implements, while music is simply ostentatious movements and sounds. Again, that shallow conception of music seems to challenge my argument because it subsumes visible dance movements within a description of music, thereby potentially undermining my contention that the paradigmatic conception of music is sound. Kongzi’s final two lines, however, confirm that *li* is visible and music is audible as the two aspects are repeatedly and triumphantly combined to demonstrate that *li* and music are appropriately integral to one’s life. The point emerges from the uniting of sound and sight on four different levels: (1) something aural (speaking) and something visual (treading); (2) something visual (walking) and something aural (music); (3) something visual (*li* 禮, as the subject of the first line) and something aural (*yue* 樂, as the subject of the second line); (4) something visual (the graphic puns of *li* 禮 with *lü* 履 and *yue* 樂 with *le* 樂) and something aural (the phonetic puns of *li* with *lü* and *yue* 樂 with *le* 樂). Each of these four pairings reinforces the lesson that Kongzi promotes: the value of correlating in one’s person what is heard and what is seen. If we do not already recognize that these things (speaking, treading, walking, music, *li*, *yue*, visual puns, and aural puns) are either audible or visible, we will not comprehend Kongzi’s message. But if we already know that *li* is paradigmatically seen and that music is paradigmatically heard, we will understand that Kongzi advocates combining the aural and the visual as a way of embodying virtue.

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[53] The parallelism and the puns imply that we should not take the first 樂 to mean only “enjoy.”

This virtuous embodiment might be more intuitively obvious if we think about the difference between saying and doing. Like saying, music is the sound we make, and it is paradigmatically audible. Like doing, *li* is the actions we take, and it is paradigmatically visible. A different perspective on this virtue emphasizes the visibility of *li*, which is the gate to the road of duty. The good person enters and exits the gate, treading the road for the benefit of onlookers.

> 10.7 夫義、路也; 禮、門也. 惟君子能由是路, 出入是門也. 《詩》云: 『周道如底, 其直如矢; 君子所履, 小人所視. 』
> Now *yi* 義 (duty) is the road. *Li* is the gate. Only the *junzi* is able to follow this road and go in and out of this gate. The *Shijing* says, "The way of Zhou is like a whetstone, its straightness is like an arrow. It is what the *junzi* treads, while the little people look on."
> *Mengzi* 孟子 《萬章下》

The *junzi*'s moving through the gate of *li* has two consequences. First, the *junzi* "walks the walk"; second, the "small" people observe the walking and are inspired to model their behavior on it. If you leave the gate, then you walk the road. The *Xunzi* asserts the importance of doing what one says in a slightly different way: "walking the talk."[54]

> 口能言之, 身能行之, 國寶也. 口不能言, 身能行之, 國器也. 口能言之, 身不能行, 國用也. 口言善, 身行惡, 國袄也.
> If the mouth can say it and the body can enact (*xing* 行) it, this is the state's treasure. If the mouth cannot say it but the body can enact it, this is the state's device. If the mouth can say it but the body cannot enact it, this is the state's tool. But if the mouth speaks of good and the body acts in bad ways, this is the state's demon.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 大略篇第二十七

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[54] This also works from the other direction in the sense that people are assigned names on the basis of their deeds, so they get the names that their actions have earned. As the *Yizhoushu* says,

> 謚者行之迹也, 號者功之表也, 車服〔者〕位之章也. 是以大行受大名, 細行受小名, 行出於己, 名生於人.
> Posthumous names are the traces of deeds. Appellations are the signs of accomplishment. Chariot and dress are the manifestations of rank. Therefore, great deeds (*xing*) receive great names; trifling deeds receive trifling names. Deeds emerge from the person; names are born from others.
> *Yizhoushu* 逸周書 《謚法解》

The value of the body following through on the mouth's speech is also evident in the *Mozi*.

> 政者, 口言之, 身必行之.
> As for government, it is such that when the mouth speaks it, the body must enact (*xing* 行) it.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十二 12.2 《公孟第四十八》

Footprints function as metonymies for deeds, and, as in the case of deeds, the footprints are expected to match speech.[55]

> 然後聖人聽其言, 迹其行, 察其所能而慎予官.
> Thereupon the sages listened to the speech [of the virtuous], and traced the footsteps of their deeds, investigating their abilities and then cautiously giving them offices.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷二 2.2 《尚賢中第九》

Thus, *li* is the walking, and it is a virtue to live up to one's word by combining one's sounds with one's visible steps. Longer narratives evoke *li* as treading to dramatize matching one's aural and visual aspects. The *Lüshichunqiu* tells the story of someone who injures his foot and then avoids society because the injury implies that he has been careless with the body his parents gave him. The man hides at home and blames himself for not keeping in mind that his body came from his parents. He draws attention to the idea of walking by noting, "The *junzi* should not walk a step and forget it."[56] Referring to *Lunyu* 1.11, the chapter concludes by identifying *li* with acting without harming the name of one's parents.[57]

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[55] Occasionally footprints serve as a metaphor for writing, but because of the connection of feet to action/walking (*xing* 行), early Chinese texts are more likely to treat footprints as a metonymy for deeds, actions, or walking. The *Dadai Liji* also notes the importance of being able to tread in footprints.

> 其 (信) 〔言〕可復, 其跡可履.
> His speech could be repeated and his footprints could be tread.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第一 《主言第三十九》

The same line is in the *Kongzijiayu* (third century C.E.).

[56] The line reads: 君子無行咫步而忘之. *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孝行覽第二《孝行》.

[57] The *Liji* version differs slightly in wording. *Liji* 禮記〈祭義〉.

> 父母既沒，敬行其身，無遺父母惡名，可謂能終矣. 禮者履此者也.
> When parents have died, and ["one" or "you"] respectfully enacts (*xing* 行) one's body-person in a way that does not leave a bad name to one's parents, that can be called being capable of concluding. As for *li*, it is treading this.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孝行覽第二 《孝行》

Hence *li* consists of walking in such a way that one's deeds fulfill one's speech and reflect well on the name of one's dead parents. *Li* actively matches both one's name and the sounds of one's speech.

## Conclusion

In sum, as befitting a tradition that values the balance of sound and sight, *li* and music "go together." The case of *li* and music is complicated because *li* is sometimes charged with restraining sound. When distinctions in sound are needed, *li* provides them. This control over sound does not disconfirm the polar relation of *li* and music, however. There are uses of the term *li* in which it restrains sound, but there are also uses that explicitly exclude music from being *li*. The case of *li* and music is also complicated because occasions of music and dance often coincide, and the difference between the two is not always explicitly marked. In general, however, there is no reason to surmise that one side of a yin/yang-type relationship encompasses the other. By being not-music (as opposed to simply not being music), *li* is visual. Although sounds and visible things often occur simultaneously, early Chinese texts tend to treat them as two sides of a pair, not as one encompassing the other.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# *Zhengming* and *Li* 禮 as the Visible Complement of Sound

In this chapter, I will focus on the relationship between *zhengming* and *li* 禮 in order to show how, by conflating the two, Chad Hansen transforms advice in the *Lunyu* 13.3 to "correct names" into the recommendation to "perform" them correctly. Following the dominant practice, Hansen adopts "ritual" as a translation of *li* 禮. As I noted in the prior chapter, however, there is little consensus about the concept of ritual, and so it is important to recognize how Hansen's use reflects his understanding of ritual as it applies to *zhengming*.

Hansen starts with the right theory of *ming*—as terms that refer rather than have "meanings"—and yet he ends up with a dualistic interpretation of *zhengming* as script/performance. To track how he gets there, I begin with his notion of *zhengming* as pertaining to "codebooks of ritual," like the *Liji*, and then I explore four forms that the concept of ritual assumes in his explanation of *zhengming*. Hansen supposes that *li* refers to ritual texts whose salient, individual segments are *ming*, which are the sources for those to be corrected. He also considers ritual to be a ceremony insofar as it involves a performance of something (the ritual texts). Deploying a different metaphor altogether, he aligns a "ritual code" with a computer code to suggest how *zhengming* functions to isolate and correct errors in naming. Finally, he borrows the idea that ritual addresses social roles, like "father" and "son," which are, Hansen believes, the primary sort of names to be corrected.

I go on to discuss the one/many dualisms in Hansen's interpretation of *zhengming*. I conclude by examining similar dualisms that emerge in the work of scholars who rely on *Lunyu* 12.11 to interpret *zhengming* as ritual social roles.

## *Zhengming*, the *Liji* "Codebook," and Commands

In his interpretation of correcting names, Hansen takes the early Confucian concept of ritual to entail instructions in a code, specifically a written code, the source of the names in need of correction. By means of performances that "interpret" the ritual "type" (the text as script), Hansen posits, early Confucians hoped to recover and simultaneously correct the ancient sages' original reference range for written *ming* in the *Liji* as well as in other books of instruction.[1]

According to Hansen, early Chinese texts feature theories of language that center on *ming* as the main linguistic unit. Texts from Early China contain "two related characters pronounced *ming*" (命, 名), he observes, which are used variously to mean command, name, and fate. Given that the term for name interchanges with the term for command, Hansen speculates, "Chinese thinkers . . . ha[d] little motivation to mark the joints in the program [of the ritual computer code] as sentential commands or rules."[2] In other words, people in Early China had little reason to invent grammatical concepts ("joints in the program") because each individual name was like a command. Thus, they conceptualized commands as authoritative fiat rather than analyzable statements of obligation. He describes the prescriptive guidance of *ming*, in contrast to the kind of guidance that involves sentential structure, in a comparative examination of *ming* 名 (name) and *ming* 命 (command).

> On the one hand, as we have noted, *ming* (command) is understood to be a verbal form of *ming* (name). It suggests that names play the prescriptive role of commands but without invoking the sentential structure of a command, a law, or a rule.[3]

Hansen clarifies the implications of these overlapping terms for "name" and "command" in a discussion of Mozi. He writes,

> [Mozi's] account of how words work is indirectly referential—guidance depends on our making distinctions in the real world. But the overarching *prescriptive* role of discourse shapes the account of *how* words refer. As we noted above, one verbal form of *ming* (names) is *ming* (command).[4]

The early Confucians, in Hansen's view, also thought of *ming* as referring to things but, again, in a prescriptive context: "Words do refer to things, but the reference of words is embedded in guiding discourse, not in factual discourse."[5] This relation of names to commands leads Hansen to suggest that the texts treat *ming* not as things to be "understood" but as signposts that spark responses.

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[1] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 65, 68.

[2] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 105.

[3] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 122.

[4] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 116.

[5] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 115–16.

## "Ritual" as Etiquette Manual

According to Hansen, the early Confucians were convinced that the "transmitted instructions" for *ming* were contained in their ritual texts. He writes, "The paradigm *initial* form of Confucius' *dao* was extremely text-like—a book of ritual (the rough counterpart of a series of books by Emily Post)."[6] Reenacting textual instruction was all that was required to correct *ming*.[7] The early Confucians found, however, that although the instructions recorded the intentions of the inventors of language, they did not offer guidance on how to apply them. Imagining their predicament, Hansen writes, "Even given my acceptance of this traditional way of acting, how shall I know if I have followed it correctly?"[8] To resolve these difficulties, a sage-king should execute the ritual and, in the process, align the performance with the instructions as transmitted. In the voice of an early Confucian, Hansen writes,

> In our current, conventional, customary use of names, we have deviated from the way the sage-coiners used them. We have missed the intentions of the inventors of language and no longer refer to what they intended to refer to. We have to adjust reference so our practical intentions match up again.[9]

The Confucians turned to their ancient ritual texts for the original guiding discourse in hopes that performing the use of those words would rectify them. In short, *zhengming* attempts to enact—and thereby rectify—the *ming* located in ritual books.

Hansen describes the texts of *li*—the original sources for the *ming* in need of correction—as "codebook[s] filled with rules,"[10] although he emphasizes that the early Confucians focused not on rules but on *ming*.

> We treat Confucian *li* (ritual) as a discourse *dao*. Confucius, however, did not theorize about his norms in sentential or rule form nor did he use duty words such as *ought* or *should*. His notion of *dao* was not a set of prescriptive sentences. It was a notion of behavior-guiding discourse in which the segments of discourse were the words—just as

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[6] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 212.

[7] More broadly, he notes, "rectifying names corrects the performance of *li* [禮 ritual], music, laws, and any other transmitted instructions in literature." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 68.

[8] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93.

[9] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 323.

[10] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

> Mozi's are. Whenever Confucius gave us any hint of the makeup of *dao*, the salient parts or units were *ming* (words).[11]

Each graph of the ritual texts contains the ancient sages' guidance needed for rectifying it. But in enacting a "ritual entry" like "Pass to the left of the king," early Confucians began to question one another's *ming* distinctions and, in time, to doubt the very possibility of knowing how to adhere to such an instruction. Hansen illustrates their dilemma.

> For that rule to guide me, . . . I must be able to distinguish a person's rank from his appearance. Even if I have that skill, applying the rules may be difficult. . . . Unless I can put the right name on the object, I cannot correctly apply the rules.
>
> Even after I decide which rule to apply, I still have to decide what the rule tells me to do. I must be able to distinguish right from left in the way the rule-writer intended. Again, even if I have learned the left-right distinction, I can have further questions. Does the rule mean my right or the commoner's right?[12]

Again, even though a command like "Pass to the left of a king" takes a sentential form, its *ming* alone were thought to trigger an automatic reaction that directed users to make a distinction. When the reactions of multiple individuals came into conflict, they turned to ritual texts to resolve their differences by recovering clues about the sage coiners' intentions for the reference of *ming*.

## Ritual as Ceremony

Hansen's treatment of ritual as ceremony explains why, from his perspective, early Confucians would think that *ming*, which trigger automatic reactions, would be corrected by something not at all automatic: deliberate reenactments that perform ancient texts. Alluding to a *Lunyu* passage frequently (and incorrectly) interpreted as being about *zhengming*, he indicates that enacting ceremonies required knowing which "names in the texts" were properly applied to which objects. Regarding a "goblet" (*gu* 觚), he writes,

> That education cannot succeed if people are misusing the names in the texts. Provisionally, we shall consider a misuse any use the sage kings (the authors of the *li*) would not make. So, if we use the word *gu* of

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[11] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 115.

[12] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66.

> the wrong ritual object, we will not be carrying out the ceremony in the correct way (6:23).[13]

As in the "king" example, Hansen's discussion of ceremonial education centers on an individual term because, he avers, correcting *ming* does not involve sentential structure. A *ming*, an individual term, is a command people are trained to follow by virtue of their ability automatically to discriminate. Regarding this example of a single *ming* (*gu* 觚), then, one might imagine that correcting it would involve a single utterance prompting a single bit of behavior. In Hansen's view, though, correcting *ming* is not about individual names but about codes. "Rectifying names is a practical political answer to the problem of interpreting codes. By carefully modeling language distinctions, social-political authorities try to make us follow the traditional codes correctly."[14] Thus, even if, as in the case of a *gu*, only a single *ming* is being targeted, a ceremonial reenactment of ritual encompasses it in a larger entity stable enough to be performed—a code that is "interpreted" in the sense of being carried out. The early Confucians, in Hansen's view, corrected *ming* by performing ritual ceremonies. *Zhengming* is based in ritual, Hansen contends, not simply because the relevant *ming* are located in ritual texts but also because the ceremonies executed to correct *ming* adhere to the texts' original rules of reference for those *ming*.

## "Ritual" as Code

As already noted, Hansen also refers to a "ritual code" to explain *zhengming*. By itself, a *ming* is not a thing to be "performed" or "carried out," but by employing the metaphor of a code, Hansen emphasizes that *ming* are part of something larger, indeed, something that can be performed: a system, the system of *li* ("ritual") or the system of the *Liji* as a text. Within the *Liji* codebook, *zhengming* functions in a manner analogous to debugging a computer. Like a computer program, the *Liji* is composed of bits with no sentential form. Running the program—that is, "interpreting" or performing it—provides the opportunity to correct errors:

> The basic solution is the equivalent of debugging. Run the program in real time and have the teacher (programmer) correct errors. Rectifying names is essential to achieving the goal of a dao (guiding discourse). It is the job of the social elite.[15]

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[13] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67. The cryptic passage about a goblet in the *Lunyu* reads:

> 6.25 子曰:「觚不觚, 觚哉！觚哉！」
> Goblet not [doing] goblet. Goblet indeed! Goblet indeed!
> *Lunyu* 論語〈雍也〉第六

[14] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 65.

[15] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 21.

Presenting the *Liji* as a computer program consisting of *ming* that must be corrected embeds the *ming* (distinction triggers) within a larger system of guidance that can be set in motion, or "run," to correct them.

## "Ritual" as a Code of Social Roles

Hansen also links *zhengming* to ritual when he declares that the *ming* to be corrected are the names of "status roles"—nonsentential commands that function like forms of official recognition (rank and status)—which he believes are central to ritual. He writes, "*Ming* (name) plays a theoretical role that embraces that of rank, fame, accomplishment, status. The name is the recognition to which one can aspire."[16] He also implies that the *ming* to be corrected name the "models of ritual roles":

> Society must also correctly identify the models of the ritual roles. The educational purposes of government thus depend on rectifying names.[17]

If the government is to correct names, it must identify the requisite ritual role models, for the *ming* to be corrected are simultaneously the *ming* of those models that must be correctly identified. Moreover, the *ming* in the code serve to guide status role performance:

> Confucians originally directed their attention to the names society attaches to status roles. The code guides one in role performance, but early theorists did not segment the code into sentential units.[18]

Alluding to *Lunyu* 12.11 and 6.25, Hansen observes that the *ming*-reference that especially concerned the early Confucians pertained to behavior-guiding ritual objects and role terms.

> Typical words are role terms such as father, son, ruler, minister or the names of artifacts and ceremonial objects. Words do refer to things, but the reference of words is embedded in guiding discourse, not in factual discourse. Proper discrimination of roles or objects involves a way of acting toward them.[19]

By implication, social leaders correct a *ming* by acting properly with regard to its use. They do not, however, use (or act upon) a *ming* as an individual thing, because a

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[16] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 122.

[17] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 68.

[18] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 354.

[19] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 115–16.

*ming* simply triggers a discrimination, a bit of behavior. Instead, the relevant *ming*, according to Hansen, are "embedded in guiding discourse," a text to be "interpreted" in performance.[20] Thus, to correct the *ming*, or get its "proper discrimination," entails being engaged with a larger code; that is, one must perform the ritual script.

In sum, *zhengming* does not involve separate, independent conventions for attaching individual names to things. The *ming* are the words in instructions and ceremonies encompassed within codes of ritual texts. In Hansen's view of early Confucian thought, then, the concept of ritual is linked to *zhengming* insofar as the Confucians turned to ritual performance in an attempt to adhere to ritual codes that stipulate intentions for the reference of names.

## *Zhengming* and One/Many Dualisms

As Hansen notes, early Chinese philosophy did not produce theories about the nature of reality that in any way resemble a Platonic metaphysics. Instead, as he correctly characterizes it, early Chinese metaphysics involves a more flexible, complex kind of "shifting individuation."[21] Still, in interpreting *zhengming*, Hansen resorts to one/many dualisms. Prioritizing text over speech is only one such instance in his treatment of conceptions of language in Early China. Indeed, even when he uses speech to illustrate the "language crisis," Hansen's emphasis drifts away from the utterance toward something more easily treated as a type to be tokened in performance, a rule that a speaker asserts he will follow. In other words, Hansen's focus gravitates toward interpreting the rule rather than interpreting the speaker's intention for the utterance.[22]

In *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, Hansen alludes to a "gap" between discourse and action, codes and concrete guidance, and a "familiar interpretive gap between codes and actions" that concerns how we project a "pattern of naming" onto "the world."[23] In his later "Metaphysics of Dao," he does not restrict the entities on either side of the gap so rigidly. The "discourse dao," he clarifies, need not be linguistic (he offers a "ritual act" as a potential "dao-type"). He also proposes that the constituents of discourse and performance are interchangeable, and he acknowledges that early Chinese texts do not distinguish between the metaphysical status of types and tokens.[24] But while a single "concrete speech act" (Kongzi "in the act of rectifying names") can serve as the guidance-type, apparently his *ming* utterance would still be a token of a graph because, as Hansen reminds us, a *ming* is "paradigmatically the ideographic character."[25] Repeating the observation that Chinese philosophy addressed Wittgenstein's challenges before those of Socrates, he depicts the type-token approach to language as the "natural metaphysical treatment for this [*zhengming*] discourse-like situation" since traditional Confucians used "the same 'rulebook'" and yet disagreed.[26]

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[20] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 116.

[21] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 214.

[22] Hansen writes, "This language crisis has radically different characteristics from Plato's. It concerns following an instruction set, not a theory of meaning. . . . We *intend* to conform. But there can be no way to be sure that we have done so. This is not merely a problem between generations. I may be unable to tell whether I have adhered to *my own* resolved and announced intentions to follow some rule. If I have reinterpreted the rule, I will be unable to notice that I have done it." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 92 (emphasis in original).

In his later essay "Metaphysics of Dao," Hansen describes Kongzi's dao as paradigmatically textual, but not exclusively so. After noting the textual nature of Kongzi's dao, he adds:

> Still, the Confucius of *The Analects* clearly is engaged in a study of ritual that is not exhausted in library work. The text has him placing importance on examples and the study of history (not merely of rule-books but of histories of the *ways* others acted in the past).
>
> Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 212 (emphasis in original)

Hansen grants that this one/many relation was inconsistent with the "conceptual structure and philosophical agenda" of the period.

> [A] type-token analysis is a more stark (and Platonic) metaphysical structure than is suggested by the contextually shifting individuation we have highlighted in ancient Chinese talk of *dao*. The type-token model presents a particular problem for my approach since I find little motivation in ancient Chinese concepts of background beliefs for the kind of universal-particular model characteristic of ancient Greek (and Indic) thought. While handy for us today in understanding what a *dao* is, we are unlikely to find any echoes of this metaphysical structure in Daoist writing from the classical period of Chinese thought. Thus, while we have no overt reason to reject this metaphysical analysis of *dao*, it departs from the conditions on a solution we began with. Arguably, it is

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[23] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 92, 65, 217. Nor does Hansen limit this gap to the ideas of early Confucians. He also sees it in the *Zhuangzi*, which "faces [a] gap between the world and guidance." Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 263.

[24] According to Hansen, "To regard something as a discourse dao is to take it as subject to interpretation (a dao-type). To regard it as performance dao is to take it as subject to evaluation (a dao-token). Since they may take the different evaluative attitudes toward the same speech or ritual act, we should not be surprised that Chinese thinkers do not think of them as different metaphysical types." Moreover, he adds, "Chinese thinkers might have come to regard dao as being in nature . . . while giving us an alternative, contextual, and pragmatic distinction to replace a type-token metaphysics." "Metaphysics of Dao," 216.

[25] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 208.

[26] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 213. See also, Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 93.

> not what would occur to a Chinese thinker with the conceptual structure and philosophical agenda of ancient China.[27]

In the footnote that follows, Hansen briefly mentions an alternative resource for understanding possible early Chinese ideas about relations among *ming* when he alludes to David Kaplan's work in philosophy of language. Kaplan investigates the challenge names pose to the type-token approach to understanding words, and in lieu of the Platonic model involving tokens of a type (understood as an unchanging form), he suggests a "stage-continuant" model in which a single entity's first stage is its initial production, after which its identity lies in its continuity through change over time. Kaplan calls these entities "natural"—not physical or mental—objects as distinct from abstract constructions.[28] Submitting that Kaplan's model probably accords more closely with early Chinese thought than his own, Hansen recommends that scholars of Chinese philosophy try Kaplan's approach "from the ancient Chinese point of view (as far as we can understand it). We may find a way to use it [Kaplan's model] here, but it would have to come from the concrete focus of Chinese thought."[29] In the next section of "Metaphysics of Dao," however, Hansen continues to employ the type-token interpretive model to discuss *zhengming*. When we follow the *junzi*'s example in "the guidance that allows us to rectify names," he remarks, the "relation of that concrete particular and my action is interpretively like the relation between a play and performance, instruction and action."[30] Thus, Hansen briefly entertains an alternative to the type-token model, and he proposes—but does not himself seek to discover—that there might be ideas that emerge from the "conceptual structure of ancient China" to illuminate comparable early Chinese theories about relations of sameness among *ming*. As noted in chapter 5, in "Dao as Naturalistic Focus" Hansen also raises the possibility that "one can think of a *discourse dao*" as simply a "sum or collection of possible *performance daos*."[31] Hansen does not, however, offer enough evidence to justify the need for positing a type/token structure for "dao" in the first place.

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[27] Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 214.

[28] David Kaplan later observes that he did not mean to take on the idea of kind/instance.

> I have now concluded that the token-type terminology is too powerful and too useful metaphorically to make it the focus of attack. I never meant to attack the abstract notion of a kind versus an instance of that kind. This is a useful idea, although there is an interesting literature on whether types should be thought of as kinds. What I wanted to attack was the idea that the type was an ideal, Platonic form living in an eternal, unchanging world and that what made a token a token of that type was that it resembled it.
> Kaplan, "Comments and Criticism," 509.

[29] Hansen writes,

> We may be tempted to experiment with a model like David Kaplan's account of words as distributed through space and time (in brains, sound waves, computer electric potentials, paper tracings, and so forth) (see Kaplan 1990). Probably something like that will be a more precise metaphysical characterization, but Kaplan's model is structured to replace the platonic type-token model, not to explain language from scratch. For our interpretive purposes, it will be more instructive to see if we can get there from the ancient Chinese point of view (as far as we can understand it). We may find a way to use it here, but it would have to come from the concrete focus of Chinese thought, not a rephrasing of a Platonic insight. We may well notice ways to work that solution out differently given our different motivation."
> Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 224 n. 19

## A Different Argument for Ritual Connection: *Zhengming* through the *Lunyu* 12.11 and Ritual Social Roles

The second line of reasoning that associates *zhengming* with ritual focuses on *Lunyu* 12.11. While this approach does not employ a text/performance dualism per se, it too exhibits dualistic tendencies (reality/appearance, model/performance, and/or type/token), albeit less directly than those described above.

The second approach is to interpret *Lunyu* 13.3 (the sole passage in the *Lunyu* that explicitly concerns *zhengming*) in light of *Lunyu* 12.11, understood to concern ritual social norms and role models.[32] In *Lunyu* 12.11, Kongzi offers an enigmatic answer to a question about government. (Here I hold off fully translating the content of his famous line to convey a sense of its ambiguity.)

> 12.11 齊景公問政於孔子. 孔子對曰:「君君, 臣臣, 父父, 子子.」公曰:「善哉！信如君不君, 臣不臣, 父不父, 子不子, 雖有粟, 吾得而食諸?」
> Duke Jing of Qi asked Kongzi about governing. Kongzi replied, "Ruler ruler; minister minister; father father; son son." The Duke said, "Excellent! Truly if ruler not ruler, minister not minister, father not father, son not son, although there is grain, how would I get to eat it?"
> *Lunyu*〈顏淵〉第十二

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30. Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 215.

31. Hansen, "Dao as Naturalistic Focus," 275.

32. Here I am summarizing ideas that are articulated in the discussion at Manyul Im's Chinese Philosophy Blog "Rectification of Names (*zhengming* 正名)," http://manyulim.wordpress.com/2008/01/28/rectification-of-names-zhengming.

In this section, I examine the metaphor of a role because it is relatively clear compared to that of a norm. Definitions of "norm" vary. If arguments claim that ideas about norms are implied in uses of *ming* 名 in early Chinese texts without articulating how norms differ from models, standards, conventions, and/or rules, it is harder to respond to what is being claimed.

The term *ming* is not uttered in Kongzi's reply, but since information about *zhengming* is in short supply in early Chinese texts, scholars have expanded their search to encompass promising examples, even if those passages, as is the case with *Lunyu* 12.11, do not mention names. Reading *Lunyu* 13.3 and 12.11 in light of one another supports the understanding that *zhengming* is about ritual by using *zhengming* to explicate "ritual roles" in 12.11 and reading that association back into *Lunyu* 13.3.[33] Three examples follow. I will offer my own interpretations in chapter 10.

1. "Ruler" the ruler.

In one reading, the line assumes a verb-object construction: Name "ruler" those who are rulers, name "minister" those who are ministers, name "father" those who are fathers, name "son" those who are sons. Here the topic of 12.11 becomes governing by naming, as in 13.3, because the names in question are conflated with "models of ritual roles."[34] The names are the names of the models; thus, names and models are essentially equated.

2. Have the "ruler" rule.

The second reading employs a subject-verb construction as well as a reality/appearance dualism involving *ming* and *shi* to suggest that titles are not reliable. On its own, a title is empty; its fulfillment depends on certain qualifying actions. The person called "ruler" should start doing what rulers are supposed to do, the phrase declares. Therefore, in terms of reality/appearance, it poses a *ming* without a *shi* (action). The *shi* is real; the *ming* is not.

3. Have the ruler "rule."

The third reading, which also employs a subject-verb construction and a reality/appearance dualism by means of *ming* and *shi*, does not insist that *Lunyu* 12.11 concerns names directly but nonetheless contends that it has a bearing on names. Like the first reading, the interpretation equates the concept of names with that of ritual roles. To see how it works, let us consider, for example, "father." The interpretation would maintain that the *ming* "father" is also used to mean the role "father," which is a type that people perform. Thus, the line might be taken to say, "Have the person who is father perform the fatherly role," that is, perform those actions that the role calls for. Fathers perform father-types, ministers minister-types, etc. Kongzi's advice for governing would then relate ritual to *zhengming* insofar as people should perform ritually sanctioned social roles.

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[33] John Makeham discusses arguments for this reading of the *Lunyu* 12.11, 16.14, 3.1, 3.2, and 6.24. Makeham, *Name and Actuality*, 30–43.

[34] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 68.

## Conclusion

Correcting a “word” seems as if it would involve examining its uses in sentences, but Hansen recognizes that a *ming* 名 (or a *ming* 命) is not understood to be a grammatical unit. The brevity of a *ming* further complicates the prospect of “correction”—whether in the sense of demonstrating proper usage or repairing its attachment. But if one cannot correct its use as part of a sentence, how does one manage to demonstrate that a usage is correct? Hansen suggests that if early Confucians noticed, as Wittgenstein did, that pointing itself requires interpretation, they would not expect *zhengming* to operate simply by pointing at something and uttering a *ming*.

Let us return to Hansen’s resolution of this problem, which I have reconstructed here. In his thinking, “correcting” *ming* is “performing” *ming*. This shift from correction to performance depends upon his reliance on four phenomena associated with the concept of ritual: texts, ceremonies, codes, and behavioral role modeling. The early Confucians thought of *ming* as parts of a ritual text—not just a ritual action, which, again, could simply amount to a gesture of pointing and uttering a name—but a ritual code with roles to be performed in ceremonies. Observing that Kongzi never described the procedure of correcting names, Hansen offers this possibility:

> Though Confucius says why he must rectify names, he does not say how . . . Most likely the ruler rectifies names the way parents do for their children. Model their correct use and then *shi* (right) the child’s own correct uses and *fei* (wrong) his mistakes. Modeling the correct use will involve using them correctly as one *skillfully* practices and performs one’s *li*-ordained role.[35]

It might seem implausible that a ruler’s technique for *zhengming* (正名) resembles a parent’s gradual method for correcting children. After all, typically rulers are not required to repeat their commands. But although Hansen mentions the ruler here, he indicates that the “social leadership”—not necessarily rulers—correct names.[36] Furthermore, by introducing the idea of “*li*-ordained roles,” Hansen draws our attention to a different kind of command more closely related to the source from which, he implies, parental modeling gets its efficacy. The power to correct *ming* derives from ritual, not from the ruler's authority per se. In other words, Hansen's procedure for correcting *ming* gets its rectifying capability from a ritual text, whose units resemble computer "commands" (or the "stack of words" in a program).[37] The overarching code endows a parent's act of modeling with the efficacy to rectify. So too, a social leader's act of correct usage would get its efficacy from the *li*-ordained roles of the comprehensive text. A social leader's rectification of *ming* is analogous to parents' correcting in the sense of similarly occupying ritually ordained roles that empower one to correct. Assuming early Confucians conceived of *ming* as *li*-ordained roles, they would expect that rectifying names would entail modeling/performing the role system in ritual texts that is the source of the underlying coherence of their social practices (including speaking *ming*). Thus, while Hansen's interpretation of *zhengming* appeals to ritual mainly in the form of texts like the *Liji*, he and others also find overlap between *zhengming* and ideas about ritual arguably implied in the references to rulers, ministers, fathers, and sons in *Lunyu* 12.11.

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[35] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67 (emphasis in original).

[36] Hansen observes that Kongzi “mentions rectifying names explicitly only once in the collected fragments. The context suggests it is the duty of social leadership, specifically of a scholar like himself who attained the position of prime minister.” Hansen also notes that *zhengming* is the role of the “social elite,” not the rabble. Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 66, 321.

In the following chapters, I will propose a second way to account for how early Confucians might have thought that *ming* could be made correct—a solution that does not presume that "ritual" is the key to the puzzle. Although some early Confucians might have believed *li* 禮 should be the foundation of governing authority, only a disembodied approach to early Chinese thinking would take that to entail rectifying names by performing a code or script. As an alternative, I investigate how early Chinese texts present two different (sound-based and sight-based) forms of personal transformation through social influence. On this basis, I argue that *zhengming* pertains to rulers and perhaps their direct advisors, but not ordinary people or mere would-be "social leaders." The authority of the ruler's utterance would explain how an early Confucian might imagine that *ming* could be corrected.

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[37] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 21.

## CHAPTER NINE

# Embodied *Zhengming*

## How We Are Influenced by Seeing versus Hearing

As part of my argument for interpreting *Lunyu* 13.3 from a perspective other than ritual, I want to return to what I consider to be at the heart of early Chinese conceptions of "language": a concrete focus on the body, specifically its eyes and ears. To demonstrate how audible things operate separately but parallel to the visible moving bodies characteristic of *li* 禮, I will explore an early Chinese adage that addresses the question: what influences us more, the sounds we hear our leaders utter or the sight of them conducting themselves? The adage shows that early Chinese texts distinguish between the effects of watching leaders' actions and hearing their speech and commands. Only certain kinds of authoritative sounds—not *yan* (言) but *ming* (名)—have a powerful impact, characteristically entering peoples' ears from outside as commands. While sometimes effective, the method of transforming people by *ming* (名/命) is distinct from seeing leaders' actions and gradually changing one's shape by means of emulating them. These differences shed light on *zhengming*. The effect of the authority's voice, which comes from the outside, enters deeply and feels a bit like fate. By contrast, emulating what we see leaders do entails walking the body into existence, in short it is *li*. In chapter 10, building on the idea that transforming others takes two forms, visual (action) and aural (sound), I will show in a new reading of *Lunyu* 12.11 that *zhengming* does not resemble *li*.

### Do People Follow What They Hear or What They See?

In four distinct passages, early Chinese texts ask whether we are more likely to follow what our superiors say or what they do, and in each case, the proverb is invoked to assert the potency of action over speech. The stronger impact of action over speech is remarkable when we consider that commands (*ming* 命), *zhengming*, and even fate (*ming* 命) fall under the scope of what we hear. Although the concept of "performative language" would lead us to think otherwise, early Chinese texts do not consider correcting something audible to be an instance of an "action," since they treat actions (e.g., *xing* 行 and *shi* 實) as things that are visible. Naming, then, is not an action even when *ming* 命 is used as a verb form of *ming* 名.

While not about *zhengming*, the adage pertains to understanding *zhengming* in two ways. (1) To represent the authority's "vocalizations," which contrast to his actions, the adage uses the terms *ming* 命 and *yan* 言. *Ming* 命 (decree, ordain) and *ming* 名 sometimes substitute for one another, and *yan* 言 and *ming* 名 are closely related (although I argue below for a specific, and crucial, difference between them that bears on this discussion). Hence, both *zhengming* and the adage are about sounds, in the sense of the voice of authority. (2) The adage considers how best to influence people, a prominent concern in the *Lunyu* 13.3, which ascribes to *zhengming* powerful effects on society. Again, however, all four occurrences of the adage in early Chinese texts affirm that we may ignore what authorities declare, even their orders. Thus, insofar as it dismisses the impact of authorities' speech and commands, the adage sheds light on *zhengming*, for its motivating mechanism is the authority's voice (as distinct from the authority's action), so it indirectly minimizes *zhengming*'s importance insofar as it devalues pronouncements from authorities.

These assertions that the impact of what people do surpasses that of what they say use three different terms to signify what is heard: *ling* 令 (command), *ming* 命 (decree), and *yan* 言 (speech). We can infer that, in relation to the adage, the three terms are interchangeable insofar as they share a feature: that is, they all represent voiced sound that can be contrasted to visible behavior. Two versions of the maxim use *yan* 言 for what is heard. In the *Wenzi* version, the sages are the authorities:

> 不言之令, 不視之見, 聖人〔之〕所以為師也. 民之化上, 不從其言〔而〕從其所行.
>
> The sages' way of teaching is ordering without speaking and seeing without looking. When commoners are transformed by their superiors, they do not follow their speech (*yan* 言) but what they do (*xing* 行).
>
> *Wenzi* 文子 精誠

The first statement notes that the effortless teaching of the sages, whose audible and visible senses are finely tuned, entails neither issuing oral commands (*ling* 令) nor looking to see. The commoners, however, privilege, and follow, what they see.[1] The *Huainanzi*'s version of the adage, which also uses *yan* 言, investigates the influence of authorities (in this case, rulers) from a negative point of view. When rulers behave badly, even then their actions carry more weight than their speech:

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[1] In this case, because the sages do not say anything, the commoners do not actually have the option of being influenced by what their superiors say.

> 故民之化〔上〕也，不從其所言，而從其所行.
> Thus in the commoners' transformations, they do not follow what [the rulers] say (*yan* 言) but what they do (*xing* 行).
>
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 主術訓

Again, the leaders' visible actions train the commoners.

Other iterations of the saying, where the aural influence concerns not *yan* 言 but *ming* 命 (decree), underscore that *ming* come out of the mouth, which makes it pertinent to governing by correcting *ming* 名. The Guodian "Ziyi" uses *ming* 命 instead of "speech" (*yan* 言) to signal what the commoners are less inclined to follow:

> 下之事上也，不從其所以命，而從其所行.
> When inferiors serve superiors, they do not follow what they decree (*ming* 命), but what they do (*xing* 行).
> Guodian "Ziyi" 〈〈緇衣〉〉八

Also supporting that interpretation of what aspect of their leaders people follow, the similar *Liji* version of the line uses yet another term for command (*ling* 令) as the sound that ordinary people tend to ignore.

> 34.4 下之事上也，不從其所令，從其所行. 故上之所好惡，不可不愼也，是民之表也.
> When inferiors serve superiors, they do not follow what they command (*ling* 令); they follow what they do (*xing* 行). Therefore, a superior's likes and dislikes cannot but be a matter of care. This is a display (*biao* 表) for the commoners.
> *Liji* 〈緇衣〉

Because people do not follow the authorities' orders, their orders are not a matter of care (*shen* 愼), but their actions are because they are on display (*biao* 表). That is, the rulers need to be careful because commoners see them visibly expressing their preferences (acts of like and dislike). The authorities' commanding sounds contrast to their visible actions (*xing* 行), which is where *li* 禮 would belong if it were mentioned.

A similar comparison occurs in the version of the adage from the *Xin Shu*, which echoes the *Lunyu* 13.3 while also introducing the notion that *ming* 命 are beyond our control whereas actions are not. In this case, the speech and action on display (*biao* 表) are those of commoners or would-be *junzi*, not superiors, and their purpose is to reveal one's character to said superiors.

> (失)〔夫〕一出而不可反者，言也；一見而不可揜者，行也；故夫言與行者，知愚之表也，賢不肖之別也. 故是以知者慎言慎行，以為身福；愚者易言易行，以為身菑. 故君子言必可行也，然後〔言之〕；〔行必可言也〕，〔然後〕行之. 嗚呼！戒之哉！戒之哉！行之者在身，命之者在人，此福、菑之本也.
>
> Speech is that which cannot be turned back once it emerges. Action is that which cannot be covered over once it appears. Thus, regarding speech and action, they are displays (*biao* 表) of knowledge or ignorance and a means of separating worthy and unworthy. Therefore, knowers[2] are careful in their speech and careful in their actions. And in this way they bring fortune to their body-persons.[3] Those who are ignorant are easy in their speech and easy in their actions. And in this way they bring calamity to their body-persons. Thus, the speech of the *junzi* must necessarily be acted on, and only then be talked about; their actions must necessarily be talked about, and only then be acted on. Oh! Beware! Beware! Acting on it lies in one's body-person. Decreeing it lies in another. This is the root of fortune and calamity.
>
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷九 《大政上》

Although the line about the *junzi*'s speech being acted on echoes the *Lunyu* 13.3, the passage as a whole is not about rulers governing. Instead, it cautions people that, through their speech and actions, they will disclose themselves to authorities who will separate the worthy from the unworthy (and presumably assign titles, *ming* 名, on that basis). Hence again, as in the *Liji* passage, there is no suggestion that rulers' commands are on display. Moreover, the speech sounds (*yan* 言) that the underlings utter are not *ming*, which the passage presents as belonging to an outside force. The passage takes a section of the *Lunyu* 13.3 that could be read as directed exclusively toward rulers' advisors and transforms it into a claim that pertains to an ordinary person or would-be *junzi*. That is, having balanced the *Lunyu* 13.3 line about speech being enacted with a corresponding line about action being talked about, the passage proceeds to indicate that the implied subject of that corresponding line is someone with no power to *ming* 命 (decree), because at the end of the passage, the sounds—*yan* 言 that were coming from the *junzi*—are replaced with the sounds of *ming* 命 that come from "outside" (in the assertion that *ming* 命 belongs to another). In other words, the aural/visual binary of the *junzi*'s action and speech is transformed into, on the one hand, the *junzi*'s action and, on the other, someone else's *ming* 命. The initial action and speech in the passage are

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2. See chap. 7 for the contrasts between "sages" 聖 who hear and "knowers" 智/知 who see, although that distinction is not evident here.

3. See chap. 7, n. 16, for this translation of *shen* 身 as "body-person"—as opposed to just "body" or "person."

self-produced, but later, in the second pair, although action is still self-produced, speech has been replaced with *ming*, which is not one's own. In terms of bodily experience, the point is consistent; if one is not a ruler, action and speech come from one's own body-person, but *ming* 命 do not.

## The Difference between *Ming* 名/命 and *Yan* 言

The passages containing the adage indicate a significant difference between *yan* 言 (speech) and *ming* 名/命 (name/command) even though they assert that people are inclined to ignore both in favor of what they see leaders do. The emphasis on the external-to-internal trajectory of *ming* 命 in the *Xin Shu* passage is a reminder that, if decrees are like fate, this question of what most effectively transforms—that is, influences—the commoners is moot. Commands and/or fate do not arise from within us. If something is mandated, it is beyond us. In that sense, the *Xin Shu*'s final line throws light on the idea of *zhengming*'s effectiveness and, at the same time, draws attention to the difference between *yan* 言 and *ming* 命/名. *Ming* are sounds to be reckoned with because they paradigmatically come from outside, particularly from higher powers.

Superiors assign *ming* and other sorts of names on the basis of deeds. In this regard, the final line in this passage from the *Yizhoushu* is revealing.

> 謚者行之迹也, 號者功之表也, 車服〔者〕位之章也. 是以大行受大名, 細行受小名, 行出於己, 名生於人.
> Posthumous names (*shi* 謚) are the traces of actions. Appellations (*hao* 號) are the displays of accomplishment. Chariot and dress are the manifestations of rank. Therefore, great actions (*xing*) receive great *ming*; trifling actions receive trifling *ming*. Actions emerge from the person; *ming* 名 are born from others.
> *Yizhoushu* 逸周書 《謚法解》

Using *ming* 名 rather than *ming* 命, the last line asserts that *ming* 名 does not proceed from us, whereas action does. Like certain types of attire and means of transport, names are an externally bestowed status marker. People produce actions, and their superiors determine various kinds of names (as well as chariots and dress) as a consequence. Making a similar point, the *Lüshichunqiu* says:

> 人主出聲應容, 不可不審. 凡主有識, 言不欲先. 人唱我和, 人先我隨. 以其出為之入, 以其言為之名, 取其實以責其名, 則說者不敢妄言, 而人主之所執其要矣.
> With a ruler, the sounds he produces and the responses of his countenance cannot but be examined. Whenever a ruler has an insight, in

> his speaking he will not want to go first. “Others sing and I harmonize. Others first and I follow.” What is put into something should be based on what it puts out: the *ming* 名 should be based on the speaking. Pick their fruits (*shi* 實) to hold them responsible for their *ming* 名. Then the explainers (*shuo zhe* 說者) will not dare to derange speaking and the ruler will control that which is important.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六《審應》

Knowing that officials will accommodate themselves to their interpretations of a ruler’s cues, he should strive to control his vocal and visual expressions. In this manner, the inscrutable ruler seduces officials into showing themselves worthy or unworthy of *ming*. The people produce *shi* 實 (action, fruits) and speech (*yan* 言) from within themselves. While the ruler listens, the officials’ speech comes out (*chu*). On that basis, the ruler’s *ming* “enters in” (*ru*, possibly into the underlings’ ears). The ruler’s *ming* is the input that enters the officials on the basis of their output in the form of speaking and acting.

This idea of *ming* (名/命) as external input, which makes *ming* different from *yan*, is also evident in the *Liezi*. The passage is worth considering even though the *Liezi* falls outside the historic period we are considering.

> 言美則響美，言惡則響惡；身長則影長，身短則影短．名也者、響也，(身)〔行〕也者、影也．故曰：慎爾言，將有（知）〔和〕之；慎爾行，將有隨之．是故聖人見出以知入，觀往以知來，此其所以先知之理也．度在身，稽在人．
> If the speech (*yan* 言) is good, then the echo is good. If the speech is bad, then the echo is bad. If the body-person (*shen* 身) is long, then the shadow is long; if the body-person is short, then the shadow is short. *Ming* are echoes. Body-persons [or *xing* 行][4] are shadows. Thus it is said, “Be attentive to your speech, for someone will know it. Be attentive to your action, for someone will follow it.” Therefore, the sages take what is seen coming out to know what is inside. They observe[5] where it is going to know what is coming. This is the pattern [*li* 理][6] of knowing in advance. Moderating lies in one’s body-person, examining lies in others.
> *Liezi* 列子 說符第八

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[4] In light of the idea that bodies acquire their shapes (discussed below), the emendation of (身) to〔行〕(as in the CHANT database presented here) might not be necessary.

[5] Because the passage is about both speech and action, this use of *jian* 見 suggests that, in a text from this period, when a term is needed to mean simultaneously seeing and hearing, seeing takes precedence.

[6] In a text of this late date, *li* 理 might be used to mean “principle,” an abstraction.

Note that *yan* is what comes out and produces an echo in the same way that a body produces a shadow. Although *yan*, which is closely linked to the originating person, produces an echo, it is not itself that echo; rather, the passage equates *ming* with the echo. Again, the passage is explicitly concerned with what comes in and out. The sages, like the ruler in the *Lüshichunqiu* passage, note and assess what comes out. (Unlike rulers, however, they do not put anything in.) In and out implicitly reappear in the final line, which reinforces that *yan* pertains to the sphere of what a person produces or controls. By contrast, *ming* belongs to a sphere external to the person. Whereas in the *Lüshichunqiu* passage *ming* are external because they are titles that the ruler commands (or designates) from without, in this part of the *Liezi*, *ming* are more likely to be reputations, also granted or imposed from without. In either instance, you may have earned your *ming*, but it is received from the outside. In both cases, moreover, speaking (*yan* 言) is internal because people bring it out of themselves. Hence, a *ming* is not simply a more specialized or narrower term than *yan*; in this specific way, it contrasts with it. *Ming* are titles or reputations (whether an imposition, a recognition, or an authorization) brought to people from without, while the people's speech comes out of themselves and reveals what names they deserve. Thus, while *yan* 言 and *ming* (命, 名) are both sounds—as distinct from the (visible) actions (*xing* 行) of the body-person (*shen* 身)—they nevertheless diverge in one sense. Paradigmatically, we produce our own *yan* 言, but *ming* come from outside.[7] In that sense, speech and *ming* are different, whereas speech and action are similar.

Consequently, like action but unlike *ming*, speech (*yan* 言) is an area for direct physical cultivation.[8] Speech is a physiological phenomenon that emerges from a person prior to *ming*. Passages that verge on describing the origin of speech first mention speaking and only subsequently mention *ming*, which strongly suggests that *ming* are not the constituent elements of *yan*. Unlike *ming*, *yan* emerges from *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind). The (possibly forged) "Heng Xian" traces the progression:

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[7] Even a ruler might pretend to believe (or actually believe, see n. 10) that *ming* come from outside and not from himself.

> 名各自名, 類各自類, 事猶自然, 莫出於己.
> Names each name themselves. Categories each categorize themselves. Events are like self-so and nothing comes from himself.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 主術訓

[8] That is, cultivating one's *ming* operates only indirectly through cultivating one's speech and action. I also describe the physiological features of *yan* in *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

> 意出於性, 言出於意, 名出於言, 事出於名.
>
> *Yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind) emerges from spontaneous dispositions,[9] *yan* emerges from *yi*, *ming* emerge from *yan*, events/service emerge from *ming*.
>
> "Heng Xian" 〈《恒先》〉四

In this sequence, speech is more closely related to the interior of the person. *Qi* forms in the mouth, ears, and eyes, and afterwards speaking appears. *Ming* comes later.

> 口內味而耳內聲, 聲味生氣. 氣在口為言, 在目為明. 言以信名, 明以時動. 名以成政, 動以殖生. 政成生殖, 樂之至也.
>
> 若視聽不和, 而有震眩, 則味入不精, 不精則氣佚, 氣佚則不和. 於是乎有狂悖之言, 有眩惑之明, 有轉易之名, 有過慝之度.
>
> When the mouth contains flavors and the ears contain sounds, the sounds and flavors produce *qi*. *Qi* in the mouth becomes *yan* 言 (speech). In the eyes it becomes clear-sightedness (or brightness). *Yan* is that which makes *ming* 名 (names) trustworthy. Clear-sightedness is that which makes movement timely. *Ming* is that which completes governing. Movement is that which produces growth. Completed governing and produced growth are the ultimate joy.
>
> If what is seen and heard is not harmonious, and if there is thunder and dazzling light, then flavors enter, but are not *jing* (vital); if they (the flavors) are not vital, then the *qi* is slanted; if the *qi* is slanted, then there is no harmony. Thereupon, we have crazy *yan*, blinded and confused clear-sightedness, revolving transforming *ming*, and an excess wickedness as measurement.
>
> *Guoyu* 周語 〈《單穆公諫景王鑄大鍾》〉

The passage establishes the differing roles of *yan* and *ming*. Harmonious *qi* produces *yan*. Slanted *qi* produces crazy *yan*. Thus, *yan* is directly linked to physiology.

Another example depicts aims (*zhi* 志) mediating the relation of *qi* to *yan*: *qi* produces aims that settle *yan*, which in turn permits one to issue commands (*ling* 令).

> B10.9.5 味以行氣, 氣以實志, 志以定言, 言以出令.
>
> The flavors are used to move the *qi*. The *qi* is used to fill out the aims. The aims are used to settle the *yan*. The *yan* is used to issue orders (*ling* 令).
>
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.9 〈《昭公九年傳》〉

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[9] See above chap. 2, n. 18, for this translation of *xing* 性, which I adapt from Dan Robins, "The Debate over Human Nature."

Cultivating proper eating is implied because flavor makes the *qi* that makes the aims that affect the *yan*. A later passage extends the succession to the importance of securing salaries (or, more literally, groceries).

> 食為味, 味為氣, 〔氣〕為志, 發志為言, 發言定名, 名以出信.
> 信載義而行之, 祿不可後也.
> Food makes flavor, flavor makes *qi*, *qi* makes aims, expressing aims makes *yan* 言 (speech), expressing *yan* 言 settles *ming* 名, and *ming* are that by which trust emerges. Trust bears duty and enacts it. Groceries (emolument) cannot be put last.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第九 《四代第六十九》

Salaries and groceries are required to set in motion the physiological transformations that produce the *yan* 言 that emerges from inside the person and, in due course, externally fixes *ming* 名.

Informed by this analysis, let us return to the *Xin Shu* use of the adage that dismisses the impact of the ruler's speech while evincing the difference between *ming* 名 and *yan* 言. Commoners and would-be *junzi* display and reveal themselves through their *yan*. They do not display their *ming* because, for them, *ming* are typically external. People can cultivate those visible and aural personal aspects that are within their control, which does not include *ming*. Moreover, even those who might hope to become *junzi* do not personally correct *ming*. That process belongs to those who have authority, not those who submit to it. One can work to earn a *ming*, but unlike speech and action, a *ming* does not originally emerge from one's person and, thus, is not available for unmediated self-cultivation.

The difference between *ming* 名 and *yan* 言 helps explain why *ming* make things happen even though, as noted above, early Chinese texts do not present language as performative. A *ming*, typically conferred by an "other," is not a *xing* 行. Where we might expect to find an overarching category (action) that includes "speaking" and "naming," early Chinese texts repeatedly present a polarity based on sound and sight. Like a reputation earned by word of mouth, a *ming* decreed by an authority is a sound, not an action that we might see the authority visibly carrying out. Again, readers would be wrong to think that, because *ming* can be used to mean "naming" (i.e., as a verb form), early Chinese texts understood it to be a speech act. Even when used as verbs, audible things remain audible; they do not become visible. The grammar that distinguishes a noun from a verb emphasizes that substances become actions as names become naming, but the study of grammar had not yet developed in Early China as it had in Ancient Greece. Thus, a ruler's decree makes something happen not by virtue of being an activity but by virtue of a power that reflects the conception of the experience of sound.

The argument for *zhengming*, as the adage about following leaders' actions rather than their speech suggests, might not have struck all subjects of Early China as persuasive, but the implications for *zhengming* of *ming* 名 (names) and *ming* 命 (decrees) being sounds are important. The sounds of being named/titled/commanded arrive from outside, so to speak, and because they are "outside," they can seem to be bestowed by a greater power. The authority of *ming* 命 is most obvious when commands are described as descending from the heavens above (命自天降), as the "Xingzimingchu" (性自命出) reminds us, but *ming* (名/命) also derive from the ruler. Moreover, parents and relatives also command children, not incidentally, starting with the choice of the child's name, because the tradition of the name's prior usage weighs on its bearer. For these reasons, although the external origin of *ming* (名/命) might evoke a sense of powerlessness, possessing a *ming* 命 authorizes, because it comes from a power greater than oneself. That greater force, which is arguably related to the experience of hearing, is implicated in the potential efficacy of *zhengming*. The ruler's *zhengming* is sound, and in early Chinese texts, sound's penetration of the human subject is considered to be especially potent.[10] The *Xunzi* states that "sound and music" (*shengyue* 聲樂) enter people deeply, while the *Shuo Yuan* notes that "sound and tones" (*shengyin* 聲音) enter more deeply than anything else. These compound terms do not suggest "musical sound" or "tonal sound" but something broader, which includes music, tones, and "discursive" sound. Whether the sound is speech or music, it has this power.[11] According to chapter four of the "Xingzimingchu," sound (*sheng* 聲) enters bodies and stirs heartminds "thickly" (凡聲, 其出於情也信, 然後其入撥人之心也厚). In uses as "fame," sound or name (*ming* 名 or *sheng* 聲) can cause widespread alterations in those who hear it. By means of his fame (*ming* 名 or *sheng* 聲), the ruler "sets the tone" that allows his virtue to transform the world, producing a sympathetic response akin to that of resonating strings. Insofar as *zhengming* involves sound, it too shares in these forces of penetration and sympathetic response.

Governing through *zhengming* also has sound's sense of inevitability. Hearing is a metaphor for authority. One cannot tighten or even shut one's ears as easily as one's eyes. Even in our sleep, we hear sounds. Hence, in theory the ruler's *ming* is as unstoppable as sound's penetration of the ears. In early Chinese texts, one listens and obeys (*ting* 聽) the decree (*ming* 命).[12] The following passages articulate the expectations for how effortless should be *zhengming*'s effect.

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[10] Using Julian Jaynes's provocative "bicameral" theory of mind, Michael Carr offers an interesting explanation for the authoritative impact of the voice in Early China: originally, one's own "inner voice" was experienced as the hallucinated voices of the ancestors, exemplified in the role of "personators" (*shi* 尸) in rituals for the dead. Carr argues that the gradual realization that the voices were one's own is evident in the eventual disillusionment with the personators in those rituals. Arguably, that slow realization of ownership of one's inner voice also accounts for what I describe here about *ming* 名, *ming* 命, and *ling* 令 (on this view, experienced as coming from another but not necessarily as penetrating through one's ears): the rise in confidence in the authorities' visible actions over their voices of command. Carr, "*Shi* 'Corpse/Personator' Ceremony in Early China," 343–416.

[11] Geaney, "Sounds of Zhengming," 107–18.

> 言寡而令行, 正名也.
> Scarcely speaking and yet having orders enacted is *zhengming*.[13]
> *Shizi* 尸子 1.5〈卷上〉[14]

The sage allows *zhengming* to occur naturally:

> 名正物定, 名倚物徙. 故聖人執一以靜, 使名自命, 令事自定.
> Names are *zheng* and things (*wu* 物) are settled. Thus, the sage holding to unity in quietude (*jing* 靜) causes names to order themselves and commands tasks to settle themselves.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 揚權第八

The sense of inevitability spreads from audible names to parallel, visible actions.

> 故虛靜以待令, 令名自命也, 令事自定也.
> Thus empty and quiet (*jing* 靜), he awaits ordering. Ordering names ordains itself, ordering events/tasks (*shi* 事) settles itself.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 主道第五
>
> 名自命也, 事自定也
> Names decree themselves, events/tasks (*shi* 事) settle themselves.
> "Jing Fa" "Lun" 馬王堆漢墓帛書・老子乙本卷前古佚書-經法-論
>
> 名各自名, 類各自類, 事猶自然, 莫出於己.
> Names each name themselves. Categories each categorize themselves. Events/tasks (*shi* 事) are like self-so, and nothing comes from himself [the ruler].
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 主術訓

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[12] A single term is used for listening and obeying in Latin as well. "According to Chantraine (RT: *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*), *aisthanomai* comes from *aïô* [*ἀΐω*] (as witnessed above all in the participle in Homer), based on the Sanskrit *avih*, like the Latin *audio*, which means "to hear," "to perceive" (and, less frequently, "to listen, "to obey")." Simon et al., "Sense / meaning," 949.

[13] See Carine Defoort's translation in "Ruling the World with Words," 229.

[14] Interestingly, the *Guanzi* version omits speech and names and replaces them with the sage's thinking, making it about the power of thought and strength instead of speech and action. *Guanzi* 管子卷第二十 形勢解第六十四.

In *zhengming*, names characteristically move of themselves and actions follow because hearing is obeying.

The interchanges of *ming* 名 and *ming* 命 encourage interpreting one in light of the other, which reinforces the sense of inevitability. The overlap might explain why the "*ming* of *ming*" seems to foster puzzlement in the opening of the *Laozi*'s Dao section.

> 道可道, 非 (常) 〔恒〕道. 名可名, 非 (常) 〔恒〕名.
> Ways (dao) can be used as ways (dao). They are not constant ways (dao). Names can be named. They are not constant names.
> *Laozi* 老子 第一章

The Beijing University bamboo slip manuscript reads 可命 instead of 可名, which lends support to translating the perplexing line as "names can be decreed."[15] Mandates that mandate additional mandates destabilize the decisiveness of the initial mandate, not unlike the way in which, in the first line, "dao," used as a verb ("track," i.e., to make a path), de-authorizes the dao being dao-ed (the track being tracked). Upon hearing a command, a decree seems inevitable. But if a mandate itself can be mandated, then it is not constant. Such is also the case with the fate implied in one's name. It is as if someone decreed, "With this name/title/fate, you will become like this," but it is still possible to resist or miss your *ming*. As the *Mengzi* says, *zhengming* 正命 entails completing the dao you are treading.

> 13.2 莫非命也, 順受其正; 是故知命者不立乎巖墻之下. 盡其道而死者, 正命也; 桎梏死者, 非正命也.
> Nothing is not *ming* 命. Follow and accept its straightness/correctness (*zheng*). Therefore, one who knows *ming* 命 does not stand under the wall of a cliff. To exhaust one's dao and die is correct *ming* 命. To die in cuffs and fetters is against *zhengming* 正命.
> *Mengzi* 孟子《盡心上》

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[15] For a brief discussion of this phenomenon in the work of Cao Feng (曹峰), see Defoort, "Excavated Manuscripts and Political Thought," 3–9; Cao Feng, 《老子》首章与"名"相关问题的重新审视——以北大汉简《老子》的问世为契机《哲学研究》, 58–67.

As others have argued, this *ke dao* does not modify the first *dao*. By contrast, the *zhe* 者 in the phrasing in the "Fan Lun Xun" chapter of the *Huainanzi* means it should be read as "that can be."

> 故道可道者, 非常道也.
> Therefore ways (dao) that can be used as ways (dao-ed) are not constant ways (dao).
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 氾論訓

A decree tags you with some identity, and yet your actions will not necessarily fulfill it. Both *ming* 名 and *ming* 命 might be read to involve a mandated sound, for both "to nominate" and "to call by name" are means of appointing a kind of destiny.

Decreeing is supposed to make things happen, as if by destiny. Thus, rulers can use *ming* to make things happen instead of exerting bodies (their own or those of others). Compared to the force applied to or issuing from other people's bodies, a command, in theory at least, does not meet resistance from the ears. When rulers command, their voices penetrate. Insofar as *zhengming* is thought to be effective, it shares these qualities of hearing sound.

## Visible Models: Shaping by Doing

The assumed polarity of sight and sound in early China had ramifications for how one responded to hearing *ming* (名/命), on the one hand, and, on the other, to watching a model to be emulated. In early Chinese texts, visible things (bodies, actions, treading, *li* 禮, etc.) serve as models for underlings. Thus, governing by *zhengming* would not set an example for model emulation, not merely because most people lack the power to re-create the ruler's utterance, but also because of *ming*'s external origin.

Modeling, which requires both time and effort, takes place through things that are visible. As discussed in chapter 7, sound blurs boundaries. It enters deeply. The resulting transformations seem as fluid as music and as light as the air that penetrates the ears. By contrast, the outcome of emulating a visible model is neither fluid nor inevitable. Moreover, particularly in the case of *ming* (名/命), the agency of sound resides in a location different from that of visible models. That is, in contrast to modeling oneself on others' actions, early Chinese texts stress that *ming*—as in decrees, titles, or reputations—are imposed or conferred by others. In texts from Early China, sound can change us spontaneously, while visible models inspire a gradual transformation that in due course remakes us.

To elucidate the differing effects of audible and visible influences, I will present examples from early Chinese texts that suggest that actions produce shapes and bodies, a phenomenon that entails conceptualizing bodies as "interfaces" rather than as preexisting forms.[16] *Li* 禮 is implicated in this process because action (*xing* 行) is an important feature of *li*. Most of the illustrations seem to involve *li*, although it is not always explicitly mentioned.

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[16] I borrow the concept of the body as an interface that is affected by things from Bruno Latour, who describes an interface as a "dynamic trajectory." Latour, "How to Talk about the Body?," 205–29. For a discussion of how this concept can be applied to ideas about the body from Early China, see Geaney, "Self as Container?"

Actions produce shapes. As people can earn a reputation (*ming* 名) by speaking, so too they can earn a shape by serving. The ensuing passage is from the perspective of an observing ruler.

> 有言者自為名, 有事者自為形, 形名參同, 君乃無事焉, 歸之其情.
> Those who have spoken make themselves a *ming* (reputation). Those who have served (*shi* 事) make themselves a *xing* (shape 形). [If the ruler] compares the *xing* (shape) and *ming* (reputation) side by side, the ruler will then have no task (*shi* 事) in it and returns things to their own motivations.[17]
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 主道第五

In this parallel, the ruler assesses two outcomes: a visible shape (*xing* 形) and an audible reputation (*ming* 名). The shape—whatever it is—turns out to be sufficiently separate from the person's reputation that the ruler can compare them to one another. In other words, instead of actions and speech combining to constitute a reputation, the shape that derives from the person's actions functions on its own. Thus, it seems the service results in some kind of bodily shape, just as the speech results in a reputation.[18]

In a different example, a use of *xing* 行 arguably suggests that movement creates what the body-person (*shen* 身) is:

> 25.35 父母既沒, 慎行其身, 不遺父母惡名, 可謂能終矣.
> When parents have died, and ["one" or "you"] carefully enacts (*xing* 行) one's body-person (*qishen* 其身) in a way that does not leave a bad name to one's parents, that can be called being capable of concluding.[19]
> *Liji* 禮記〈祭義〉

The possessive *qi* 其 before the *shen* 身 indicates that the *shen* belongs to someone who we might assume to be the agent who enacts (*xing* 行) the *shen*. A standard interpretation is that filiality occurs when people enact themselves after their parents have died in a way that does not create a bad reputation. But agency is complex when *shen* 身 is an object of an action. As I argue in chapter 2, living things, including people, possess both an audible and a visible aspect. People consist, for instance, of both their body-persons (*shen*) and their names or reputations. It is easy enough to say that, in this case, it must be the bodies that are the agents who earn the reputations, but the agent of "enacting (*xing* 行)" here is more complex. If a person consists of a body and a name, when we separate out the body, we are left with the name, not the person. While the term *shen* is used in ways that, depending on the context, look more like "body" or more like "self or person," early Chinese texts never draw that distinction between body and self (or body and person). Thus we should take *shen* to mean "body-and-person" (i.e., the same thing), hence the body-person enacts its body-person, carefully walking itself into existence.

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[17] For this translation of *qing* 情, see chap. 1, n. 11.

[18] The shape seems to be the actor's body. Alternatively, perhaps the shape the ruler compares is like a visual memory (created by thinking about a person's actions). But preserving the parallelism on that interpretation would entail an unlikely use of *ming*—a person's *ming* would not be "fame" (what others say about the person) but what someone remembers hearing.

[19] See also a very similar line in the *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孝行覽第二《孝行》.

Bodies-persons are not simply preexisting things that are altered (as in the idea of getting in shape); they are created and acquired. The *Mengzi* refers to "treading the body," using a different graph for body—one that highlights shape, *xing* 形. Treading the shape-body is no mere matter of shaping something that is already there, because the skill is confined to the sages.

> 13.38 形色、天性也; 惟聖人然後可以踐形.
> Shape and sex/color[20] are heavenly spontaneous character. Only after becoming a sage is it possible to tread shape-body.
> *Mengzi* 孟子〈〈盡心上〉〉

In a passage from the *Huainanzi*, a commoner manages to produce some part of the ruler's appearance (visage or face, *rong* 容).[21] To depict the way the commoner succeeds in becoming like him in face but not in shape-body (*xing* 形), the passage uses *xiao* 效—"effects," in the sense "bring about."[22] To take *xiao* 效 as "imitate" here would mistakenly shift the focus toward the commoner's action as opposed to its success: he does not just imitate, he achieves the effect. The resulting facial similarity is compelling enough to be funny in contrast with his failure to "get" (*de* 得) the ruler's shape-body.

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[20] The term *se* 色 is used to mean color and sex. *Xing* 形 and *se* 色 are both visible, so along with treading (*jian* 踐), all three are things seen.

[21] Here *rong* 容 seems like it is used to mean countenance, but other passages note its connection with *qi* 氣.

> 容色, 目司也. 聲, 耳司也. 嗅, 鼻司也. 味, 口司也. 氣, 容司也.
> 志, 心之司.
> *Rong* 容 and color are in the charge of the eyes. Sound is in the charge of the ears. Smells are in the charge of the nose. Tastes are in the charge of the mouth. *Qi* is in the charge of the *rong*. Aims are in the charge of the heartmind.
> "Yucong Yi" 〈〈語叢一〉〉 郭店楚簡十五〈〈語叢一〉〉

[22] The *Mo Bian* explains *xiao* 效 in terms of *fa* 法, standard. *Mozi* 墨子卷十一 11 · 2 〈〈小取第四十五〉〉.

> 使俗人不得其君形者而效其容, 必為人笑.
> But if a common person, who had not gotten the ruler's shape-body (*xing* 形), nonetheless effects his visage (*rong* 容), it would certainly make others laugh.
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 覽冥訓

Although the commoner fails to "get" the ruler's shape-body, his inability to do so in this instance indirectly implies that a shape-body is something that might conceivably be gotten or achieved. Acquiring other people's faces and bodies is another unusual way of conceiving embodiment, like walking a body into being.

The requisite ethical education for acquiring a body begins with *li* 禮. Thus, it is not surprising that a commoner would fail to get a ruler's shape-body: as the *Mengzi* notes, only sages can tread shape-bodies. Again, the *Mengzi* explains that *li* is the gate to the road where only the *junzi* are able to walk, although the commoners can benefit by watching.

> 10.7 夫義、路也; 禮、門也. 惟君子能由是路, 出入是門也. 《詩》云: 『周道如底, 其直如矢; 君子所履, 小人所視. 』
> Now *yi* 義 (duty) is the road (*lu* 路). *Li* 禮 is the gate. Only the *junzi* is able to follow this road and go in and out of this gate. The *Shijing* says, "The dao (way) of Zhou is like a whetstone, its straightness is like an arrow. It is what the *junzi* treads, while the small person looks on."
> *Mengzi* 孟子 《萬章下》

Commoners who observe such achievements might be expected to become edified by watching, or even to try to emulate their superiors, but probably not acquire their shape-bodies.[23] In any case, we might infer that the purpose of the superior's walking through the gate of *li* is partly educational. As the *Xunzi* says, teachers are responsible for understanding *li*, while *li* is what makes the body-person correct.

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[23] If we consider the *Xiao Jing*'s perspective on the rarity of those who deserve respect versus the plethora of those pleased by respecting, it seems it was unusual to actually improve oneself to the point of earning respect.

> 禮者、敬而已矣. 故敬其父則子悅, 敬其兄則弟悅, 敬其君則臣悅. 敬一人而千萬人悅. 所敬者寡, 而悅者眾, 此之謂要道也.
> *Li* is respect and nothing more. Thus, respecting his father is the son's pleasure. Respecting his elder brother is the younger brother's pleasure. Respecting the ruler is the minister's pleasure. Respect one person and multiple thousands of people are pleased. Those who are respected are few but the pleased are multitudinous; this is the crucial dao.
> *Xiao Jing* 孝經 12 〈廣要道章〉

> 禮者、所以正身也, 師者、所以正禮也. 無禮何以正身? 無師, 吾安知禮之為是也?
> *Li* is that by which the body-person is made straight (*zhengshen* 正身). Teachers are those who make *li* straight (*zhengli* 正禮). Without *li*, how can the body-person be made straight? Without teachers, how can we know this is *li*?
> *Xunzi* 荀子 脩身篇第二

Duty is the road, *li* is the gate, and *li* is also treading dao, according to the *Baihutong*. It glosses *li* as treading dao in a way that brings “form” (*wen* 文) to completion.

> 禮者、履也, 履道成文也.
> *Li* is to tread, treading the dao and completing form.
> *Baihutong* 白虎通 情性

If we interpret this gloss of *li* in light of the other cases described above, although *wen* 文 “form” is not used to mean “body,” the form that becomes completed is like a body’s visible actions brought into an arrangement by walking. Through *li*, the sages produce the shapes of their bodies, whereas commoners improve themselves by watching their betters.

## Conclusion

Whether achieving someone’s shape or treading a body, the visible aspect of the person seems to be constituted of repeated action. If we consider this constituting of the body in light of *zhengming*, some significant differences become apparent. People walk the body into existence over time in a process, *li*. *Li* involves a gate, acts of treading, and careful attention, which lead toward getting or completing. Commoners watch the walk of the leaders and might be inspired to emulate them. This modeling process diverges markedly from the experience of hearing *ming* (命/名). The authority’s voice correcting *ming* comes from the outside and, if successful, has a decisive effect on the person not only because, as sound, it enters deeply but also because it has the inevitability of fate. It calls for obedience rather than emulation.

## CHAPTER TEN

# Separating *Lunyu* 12.11 from *Zhengming*

Because *ming* is not present in *Lunyu* 12.11, scholars who strive to tie it to *zhengming* (via *Lunyu* 13.3) must posit that it has an implied subject who is naming something, or they must interpret the passage to be about *li* 禮 in the form of social roles, understood as hypostatized names. However, when trying, as in such instances, to discern an implicit concept of "language," the most reliable approach is to interpret uses of metalinguistic terms like *ming* 名 and *yan* 言 to be sure that something linguistic is even at issue. We cannot rely on devices like quotation marks, because, of course, early Chinese texts have no way of writing " 'lords' (the implied subject) should act like lords." To clearly indicate such a metalinguistic usage, they are obliged to muster more explicit terms involving saying, naming, or calling. In the absence of such terms, a conservative approach is well advised. So when we see *jun* 君, for example, we should read it as referring to a name (or a role understood as a name) only if reading it as specifically referring to certain people or kinds of people does not make sense. In this chapter, I propose different ways of interpreting *Lunyu* 12.11 that make no appeal to invisible quotation marks.

## *Zhengming* with *Li* 禮 in Early Chinese Texts

Interpreting *zhengming* through the concept of *li* is central to the prescriptive guidance version of the early Chinese language crisis, and so to substantiate or dispute its claims, one must analyze the relationship between *li* and *zhengming* in early Chinese texts. Aside from the reference to *li* and music in the *Lunyu* 13.3, however, *li* and *zhengming* occur closely together in only a single additional passage, from the *Dadai Liji*, a second-century C.E. compilation. Given the rarity of this passage (again excepting the *li* and music pair in *Lunyu* 13.3), I will expand my investigation to consider cases in which *ming* and *li* occur together.

The passage from the *Dadai Liji* praises heaven's *zhengming* for its lack of naming taboos. Laying out hierarchies involving heaven, earth, people, the ruler, feudal lords, and grand officers, it attaches *zhengming* to heaven, as distinct from the earth's *shi* 事 (service or events) and the people's *de* 德 (power/virtue). Within that triad, the familiar yin/yang polarity appears in the form of heaven's *ming* paired with earth's *shi* 事, with the people's *de* 德 as an implied third.

> 禮失則壞, 名失則惛. 是故上古不諱, 正天名也. 天子之官四通, 正地事也. 天子御珽, 諸侯御荼, 大夫服笏, 正民德也.
> If *li* becomes lost, there is damage. If *ming* become lost, there is confusion. Therefore, in the distant past, there were no (naming) taboos. That was correct heaven's *ming* (*zheng tian ming* 正天名). The Son of Heaven's rule was unobstructed (*tong* 通) across the four [directions]. That was correct earth's *shi* 事 (service or events). The Son of Heaven carried the *ting* jade baton, the feudal lords carried a *tu* jade baton, and the grand officers carried a *hu* tablet.[1] That was correct people's *de* (power/virtue).
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第九 〈〈虞戴德第七十〉〉

*Li* does not reappear after the first line, but the passage indicates that *li* and *ming* are, or may be, lost when naming taboos are in force: either the loss leads to the taboos or the taboos point to that loss. In this case, *zhengming* pertains to past uses of *ming* that were *zheng* precisely because they did not taboo *ming*, probably because they had heaven's correct *ming*.[2] The *Liji* itself promotes naming taboos in certain circumstances:

> 21.19 子與父同諱. 母之諱, 宮中諱. 妻之諱, 不舉諸其側.
> Father and son similarly tabooed names [of all dead close relatives]. The names that were tabooed by his mother, the son avoided in the house. The names tabooed by his wife, he did not use at her side.
> *Liji* 禮記〈雜記下〉

> 1.41 卒哭乃諱. 禮, 不諱嫌名.
> When the ceremony of wailing is over, there is tabooing [of speaking his father's name]. [However] *li* does not require tabooing suspicious names.
> *Liji* 禮記〈曲禮上〉

This presumes that some naming taboos accord with *li*, which counters the suggestion that naming taboos indicate a loss of *li*. We can therefore infer that, whether a text favors or opposes naming taboos, *li* is the sphere in which naming taboos belong.

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[1] The line also appears in the *Xunzi*, and my translation is adapted from that of John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation*, vol. 3, 208.

[2] It is worth noting that *ming* belong to heaven, which is the airy sphere that is above, whereas *shi* 事 belong with earth, which is dense and visible. See discussion of *Liji* 禮記〈樂記〉in chap. 7.

*Ming* intersects with *li* regarding omens as well as taboos. In the following passage from the *Zuozhuan*—which describes a ruler having given woefully unsuitable names to his sons (calling his elder son “enemy” and his younger son “great success”)—*ming* appear first in a list of what may be a chain of events.

> B2.2.8異哉, 君之名子也！夫名以制義, 義以出禮, 禮以體政, 政以正民, 是以政成而民聽. 易則生亂. 嘉耦曰妃, 怨耦曰仇, 古之命也. 今君命大子曰仇, 弟曰成師, 始兆亂矣. 兄其替乎！
>
> How odd, the lord’s naming of his sons! Now names (*ming* 名) are for establishing *yi* 義 (duty/models).[3] *Yi* is for emanating *li*. *Li* is for embodying (*ti* 體) governing. Governing is for correcting people (*zhengmin* 正民). In this way, when governing is complete, the people obey/listen (*ting* 聽). If changed, then it produces chaos. Of a good partner, we say, “mate.” Of a vengeful partner, we say, “enemy.” Those were named/decreed (*ming* 命) of old. Now, the lord named (*ming* 命) his older son Enemy, and his younger son Great Success, which began an omen of chaos: the elder will be replaced!
>
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 桓公 B2.2 《桓公二年傳》

At first glance, the passage appears to be about correcting names, but instead it mentions correcting people (*zhengmin* 正民). Names that originated in the distant past, the vignette notes, should not be altered, for repetition enhances order. Long ago, people began using the name “enemy” for vengeful partners. Changing names—that is, now calling one’s eldest son “enemy”—fosters chaos rather than obedience for two reasons: first, naming, which is foundational, is the initial event in achieving social control or obedience; second, names are omens. Names foreordain the fate of the individuals who receive them, not only when they receive them from a ruler but when they receive them from parents and, indirectly, from tradition or history. A name with a long-standing pejorative use bodes poorly for its recipient. Custom as well as, presumably, the ruler does not intend that the younger brother replace his elder, but their names portend that such will be the case. In this passage, *li* embodies the process of governing that *ming* inaugurate. Hence, sometimes, as in this instance, *li* is an outgrowth of *ming*.

Alongside taboos and omens, *li* is also the ordinary respect that governs the names people assign to their superiors and inferiors. The *Mo Bian*’s reference is characteristically terse and difficult to interpret, but it glosses *li* as respect and then attributes to it polite terms of address.

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[3] For this translation of *yi* 義, see my *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

> 10.1.17 禮、敬也.
> 10.3.9 禮. 貴者公, 賤者名, 而俱有敬僈焉, 等異論也.
> *Li* is respect.
> *Li*: “Sir” for nobles, *ming* (personal names) for inferiors, but both have respect and rudeness in them. Ranks differ by sorting.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1〈〈經上第四十〉〉
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3〈〈經說上第四十二〉〉

Again, there is no context for the way these Canons gloss terms (i.e., “*Li* is respect”), which is unfortunate because a missing context might well explain why the next Canon also glosses *xing* 行—the term by which *li* 禮 is often glossed—with regard to naming things. That is, the next (equally obscure) Canon and its Explanation concern how to name actions: either simply or in a courteous way.

> 10.1.19 行、為也.
> 10.3.10 行. 所為不善名, 行也. 所為善名, 巧也, 若為盜.
> Action is doing.
> Action: That which is done—without using a nice *ming*—is “action.” That which is done—using a nice *ming*—is “cleverness.” Like committing robbery.[4]
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1〈〈經上第四十〉〉
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3〈〈經說上第四十二〉〉

Like the prior Explanation, which reviews using respectful names for people, this one says as much about naming actions. Other texts support the idea that *li* is about respect.

> 禮者、敬而已矣.
> *Li* is respect and nothing more.
> *Xiao Jing* 孝經 12〈廣要道章〉

> 8.28 仁者愛人, 有禮者敬人.
> *Ren* is loving people, having *li* is respecting people.
> *Mengzi* 孟子〈〈離婁下〉〉

In short, evidence warrants that *li* is about respect; therefore, we can infer that, as respect, *li* includes prescriptions for naming with courtesy as well as naming with taboos.

Analyzing *zhengming* through its explicit intersections with *li* provides no more information than the one observation in the *Dadai Liji* that heaven’s correct naming does not require taboos. But if we include intersections of *li* and *ming*, there are more examples to consider. Fate-bearing names produce *yi* 義 (duty or models) that lead to *li*, which embodies governing. *Li* also has something to do with taboo naming and respectful forms of address. We might hypothesize that *li* reflects the fear and respect of ancient or heavenly commands/fate (*ming* 命), omens, and taboos. Fate, taboo, and respect are not typically involved in interpretations of *zhengming*. If it is the case that we should take these intersections of *li* and *ming* into consideration, then *zhengming* might evoke cosmic powers more so than textual reenactments or role modeling.

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[4] Like many features of the *Mo Bian*, the last line is completely obscure.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that *li* is not a crucial feature of *zhengming*. In its only other appearance with *zhengming*, the *Lunyu* 13.3, the sole reference to *li* concerns *music* and *li* being prevented from flourishing (*xing* 興), which results in untargeted punishments. The passage is worth considering again.

> 13.3 名不正, 則言不順; 言不順, 則事不成; 事不成, 則禮樂不興; 禮樂不興, 則刑罰不中; 刑罰不中, 則民無所錯手足. 故君子名之必可言也, 言之必可行也. 君子於其言, 無所苟而已矣.
> If *ming* are not *zheng* (straight, rectified), then speech will not comply, if speech does not comply, then tasks/service will not complete themselves, if tasks/service do not complete themselves, then *li* and music will not flourish, if *li* and music do not flourish, then punishments will not be on target, if punishments are not on target, then the common people will be at a loss for what to do with their hands and feet. Thus, if the *junzi* names it, it must necessarily be spoken. If the *junzi* speaks about it, it must necessarily be done. Regarding the *junzi*'s speech there is nothing about which he is careless.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈子路〉第十三

The impact on *li* and music is one among several untoward consequences of names remaining not straight, and the damage to *li* and music does not stand out among those other outcomes. Moreover, insofar as *li* is paired with music, the reference evokes the frequent matching of sound and sight, which balances their roles.[5] *Li* is not presented, then, as the overarching context for making *ming* become *zheng*.

In fact, the *Lunyu* 13.3 and a later passage that alludes to it imply that *zhengming* involves sound (names and music) more so than visible things like *li*. The first and perhaps only direct impact of uncorrected *ming* in *Lunyu* 13.3 involves sound:

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[5] Hansen cites the *Lunyu* 13.3 reference to *li* and music in tandem as a justification for treating the concept of dao as a one/many dualism. "A performance *dao* consists of a concrete, particular series of actions or behaviors. The score-performance model motivates a cluster of helpful insights. First, it illuminates Confucius' constant pairing of ritual and music in his formulations." Hansen, "Metaphysics of Dao," 214.

speech does not comply (*shun* 順), which seems to mean that people's speech does not conform or flow smoothly in the wake of incorrect naming.[6] In the later text, the *Yantielun*, when sounds are corrected (*zheng* 正), they are the sounds of music. Whereas the *Lunyu* modifies *ming* with *zheng*, the *Yantielun* applies *zheng* to music instead.

> 禮所以防淫, 樂所以移風, 禮興樂正則刑罰中.
> *Li* is for preventing laxity. Music is for shifting atmosphere. When *li* is flourishing and music is *zheng*, then punishments will be on target.
> *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論 〈〈論誹第二十四〉〉

The *Yantielun* portrays *li* as "flourishing" and music as *zheng*, thereby signaling that *zhengming* has more to do with sound than with the visible actions of *li*.

Evidence to support arguments that the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter links *zhengming* to *li* is also scant. The *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" mentions *li* by itself (as distinct from the compound, *liyi* 禮義) only once, which is striking in light of the chapter's length. Moreover, it refers to *li* in a way that limits its significance. After noting that the exemplary former kings borrowed terms for punishment from the Shang and rank terms from the Zhou, the passage states that the former kings took decorative/culture (*wen* 文) terms from *li* (here possibly, but not necessarily, meaning a written text). It is noteworthy that the chapter presents punishment, rank, and decorative terms as equally important. The only other appearance of *li* in the chapter, the main concern of which is governing, is a line cited from the *Shijing* that mentions *liyi* 禮義. As I have argued above, in the case of the *Xunzi*'s "Zhengming" chapter, the perceived need for *zhengming* centers on subversive naming that challenges the governing authority. Both *ming* and *li* assist in governing, but *li* is no more the same as governing than *ming* is. In sum, the *Xunzi* chapter does not convey the impression that *li* has any special role in *zhengming*.

Readers may think of *li* as anything that involves social role models, so it is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, social relationships and, on the other, political situations. Although those two categories may overlap, *zhengming* is explicitly identified as a tool of governing in the *Lunyu* 13.3, in the *Xunzi's* "Zhengming" chapter, and in the *Lüshichunqiu*'s "Zhengming" chapter.[7] In this regard, the final lines of *Lunyu* 13.3 (the capping lines) are potentially misleading because they change the subject from the ruler's *ming* to the *junzi*'s speech.[8] Insofar as *zhengming* requires the *junzi* to concern themselves with speaking, it is because they advise rulers. Ordinary people who have no contact with leaders might, however, imagine themselves as potential *junzi*; hence, these lines could encourage the impression that correcting *ming* is as mundane as nice people modeling language for one another. If we think of *zhengming* as that kind of project, it can appear to resemble the way in which a child acquires language skills from a parent, as Hansen posits.

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[6] On the one hand, if we read each action in the list as the cause for the next (as if leaving *ming* uncorrected only affects *li*, for instance, by way of affecting speech and service), then the impact of not correcting *ming* on the remaining outcomes is mediated. On the other hand, if we read the effect not as the result of a "sorites" that emphasizes the causal order of the links in the chain but as a collection of impacts, the sequence of which has no import other than facilitating memorization—then not correcting *ming* directly produces problems for everything else on the list.

[7] As Hui-chieh Loy argues in "*Analects* 13.3 and the Doctrine of 'Correcting Names,'" the context of *zhengming* is not just ruling but ruling in a very specific circumstance. Loy, "*Analects* 13.3," 223–42.

> Most likely the ruler rectifies names the way parents do for their children. Model their correct use and then *shi* (right) the child's own correct uses and *fei* (wrong) his mistakes. Modeling the correct use will involve using them correctly as one *skillfully* practices and performs one's *li*-ordained role. We simply set examples by publically [*sic*] identifying objects and by naming our modeling behaviors as we do them.[9]

In this view, the roles of ruler and parent are different, to be sure, but parents' roles are important for *zhengming* because they, too, are "ordained" by *li*.

I have three objections to this part of Hansen's explanation of *zhengming*. First, being corrected by someone is an experience quite different from emulating a model. It is passive and rarely voluntary, while emulation is active, although sometimes unconscious. Correcting someone's naming, that is, is different from setting examples by naming. Second, there is some slippage between modeling and naming in Hansen's description of parents correcting children by uttering names *as* they publicly identify things (visual modeling). Whereas early Chinese texts typically depict identifying things as picking or pointing, which constitute acting (*xing* 行), naming is making a particular kind of sound with one's mouth, which cannot be seen and therefore is not a *xing*. Naming things *as we do them* does not suffice to turn naming into a *xing*; it merely adds a visible action to a sound that the mouth makes. The picking itself could count as setting an example or modeling an action, but naming what we pick *as we do it* is still a case of naming (*ming* 命, 名), not *xing*. In aural/visual parallels, actions (as in terms like *xing* 行, *shi* 實, and *shi* 事) and human sounds (in this case, *ming*) ideally balance one another, so naming while acting balances sound and action, but, again, that accompanying gesture does not make naming a *xing* 行.

Third, the ruler ordains what things are by means of *ming* (命, 名) and, again, unlike parents teaching their children to speak, he does not need to repeat himself. When a ruler calls people by titles, they become their titles. By contrast, parents cannot actually make names refer to things. Insofar as parents are not empowered to ordain what things will be called by means of their naming (except the names of their children), parents' verbal corrections are, in one very important respect, not analogous to those of the ruler. Moreover, parents also command (*ming* 命) children, but while parents sometimes command their children to fulfill what we might identify as gender roles (*Mengzi*'s "Teng Wen Gong Xia"), the commanding effect of *ming* 命 has less to do with social roles than summoning by name. To call someone's name is to require that they pay attention, and just the hearing itself entails a kind of compliance. In this sense, to name is to command. For example, the *Liji* presents this idealized response to a father's call.

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[8] As noted earlier, capping lines are not always integral to the passage to which they are attached.

[9] Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67 (emphasis in original).

> 13 · 24 父命呼, 唯而不諾, 手執業則投之, 食在口則吐之, 走而不趨.
> When father's *ming* 命 called, [the son] simply, and without even saying yes, set aside whatever work was in his hands, spit out whatever food was in his mouth, and ran rather than walked quickly.
> *Liji* 禮記〈玉藻〉

If fathers' *ming* 命 pertain to *zhengming*, it is because fathers command children's obedience by calling their names, not because fathers provide language instruction or because "father" is a social role. The governing authority of the ruler's decrees, capitalizing as they do on sound's ability to penetrate human ears, seems largely to account for the efficacy of *zhengming*.[10] When people believe that the ruler's use of correct *ming* facilitates governing, they do not seek to emulate that authority, as a child seeks to emulate a parent's speech, so much as respond to its means and potency. As crucial as it is in early Chinese texts, then, modeling is not decreeing.

The difference between *yan* 言 (speaking) and *ming* 名, 命 (naming) will remind us of the distinction between what rulers do when they *zhengming* and what parents do when they teach children how to speak. Again, *yan* has a psychological aspect that expresses one's interior state, whereas *ming* typically come from others. Early Chinese texts occasionally describe rulers as making *yan* become *zheng*, but in the context of rulers, associations of *ming* with *zheng* are more common. Presumably, rulers can *zhengyan* as well as *zhengming*. By contrast, while ordinary people can *zhengyan*, they cannot *zhengming*.

*Zhengyan* (正言) is making edifying corrections to someone's speech, including one's own. It does more than make speech accord with normative conventions, however; it explicitly aims to improve its ethical value. In the two passages in early Chinese texts in which parents expose children to *zhengyan*, both concern modeling virtuous speech rather than simply modeling the proper use of language.

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[10] For a similar argument, minus the focus on sound, see Moeller, "Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism," 98–101.

> 故太子乃〔生而〕目見正事，聞正言，行正道，左（視）右（視）前後皆正人〔也〕.
> Now the crown prince was born with eyes seeing correct (*zheng* 正) events/service, hearing correct speech (*zhengyan*), acting the correct way, left and right, front and back, all were correct people.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第三《保傅第四十八》
>
> 7.27 夫為人父者, 必懷慈仁之愛, 以畜養其子. 撫循飲食, 以全其身. 及其有識也, 必嚴居正言, 以先導之.
> To be a father, one must harbor a love that is considerate and kind in order to raise and nourish one's child. Comfort it with food and drink in order to complete (*quan* 全) its body-person.[11] When it begins to have knowledge, one must use strict posture and correct speech (*zhengyan*) in order to lead it.
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳卷第七

In other words, good parents will expose their children to *zhengyan*, thereby teaching them to speak honorably, not merely to speak well (although that too is normative). There are no examples of parents engaging in *zhengming*; therefore, given what we know about its role in government, we may surmise that they do not do so.

A superior might also correct someone's speech (*yan* 言), but again, he is pointing out moral flaws in need of correction, not correcting the individual's language use.

> 6.19 君子崇人之德, 揚人之美, 非道諛也. 正言直行, 指人之過, 非毀疵也.
> When *junzi* venerate others' *de* (virtue/power) or holds up others' excellence, it is not speaking flattery. When they correct speech (*zhengyan*) and straighten action, pointing out others' mistakes, it is not putting them down.[12]
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳卷第六

From a different perspective, the *Zhuangzi* revels in the plight of legendary figures, including Kongzi, who suffered the consequences of extreme concern about their righteous speech and action.

> 此上世之所傳, 下世之所語, 以為士者正其言, 必其行, 故服其殃, 離其患也.
> These are transmissions from the past and discussions from later times that suppose that scholar-knights corrected their speech (*zheng qi yan*

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[11] See chap. 7, n. 16, for the reason why I translate *shen* 身 as "body-person" rather than "body" or "person."

[12] For another translation, see Hightower, *Han Shih Wai Chuan*, 210.

> 正其言) and applied strict requirements to their actions and thus were subject to those misfortunes and left to those calamities.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 盜跖第二十九

In short, both extraordinary and ordinary persons can *zhengyan*. If my theory is right that ordinary people do not *zhengming*, however, then *zhengming* clarifies *ming/shi* relations for governing, whereas *zhengyan*, while also helpful for governing, more specifically concerns improving the ethical qualities of speech.

Sometimes *zhengyan* and *zhengming* occur together. In a story from the *Hanshi Waizhuan*, Kongzi corrects a euphemism about a ruler borrowing a horse. After listening to Kongzi, the authority follows his advice and corrects the *ming* that the minister uses on behalf of the ruler.

> 5.34 孔子侍坐於季孫, 季孫之宰通曰: 「君使人假馬, 其與之乎? 」孔子曰: 「吾聞君取於臣謂之取, 不曰假. 」季孫悟, 告宰通, 曰: 「今以往, 君有取謂之取, 無曰假. 」孔子 (曰) 正假馬之言, 而君臣之義定矣. 《論語》曰: 「必也正名乎. 」《詩》曰: 「君子無易由言. 」
> Kongzi was seated in attendance on one of Jisun lineage, and the Jisun's District Magistrate Tong said [to him], "If the prince were to send someone to borrow a horse, should it be given to him?" Kongzi said, "I have heard that when a ruler takes from his minister, it is called taking. One does not say borrowing."
>
> The member of the Jisun clan understood and told District Magistrate Tong, "From now on, when your prince takes something, call it taking. Do not say borrowing."
>
> Kongzi rectified the saying (*yan* 言) [of?] borrow a horse, and as a result settled the duties between ruler and subject. The *Lunyu* says, "What is necessary is to *zhengming*." The Odes say, "The ruler should not be easy with speech (*yan*)."
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 韓詩外傳卷第五[13]

The context is that Kongzi is seated in attendance on someone with the power to rule and is asked a question by a lesser party, a district magistrate; his answer initiates a response not from the district magistrate but from the person with the authority. Thus, Kongzi's correction is aimed at a person with the power to rule. Moreover, the capping lines cite a passage in the Odes in which the subject is the ruler. That is, in this Ode, "Xiao Bian" (小弁), the *junzi* (君子) is the sovereign—not a just an exemplary person. Kongzi's correction pertains to the ethical implications of a

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[13] See also Hightower's translation in *Han Shi Wai Chuan*, 190. The same story is in the *Xin Xu* 新序, chap. 雜事第五.

"saying" (*yan* 言): the saying [of?] borrow a horse (*zheng jiama zhi yan* 正假馬之言). The reference to the *Lunyu* 13.3, however, implies that the outcome is corrected names (*zhengming* 正名). Because *zhengming* is the outcome, it could be the case that, by calling Kongzi's correction *zhengyan* instead of *zhengming*, the passage refers to "borrow horse" rather than just "horse." In other words, it is possible that the example qualifies as *yan*, not *ming*, because it is what we might think of as a phrase. That would presume, however, a definition of a single *yan* that is not consistently borne out in early Chinese texts.[14]

Another possibility is that the difference between *zhengyan* and *zhengming* in this example is the distinction between what Kongzi does and what the ruler does.[15] An allusion in a later text supports that reading when it declares that Kongzi "accorded with" (*shun* 順) the *ming* of borrow a horse. The *Hou Hanshu* refers to the horse anecdote without saying Kongzi corrected *ming*. Instead of *zheng* 正, it uses *shun* 順, the term that *Lunyu* 13.3 uses to describe the influence of *zhengming* on speech.

> 昔仲尼順假馬之名, 以崇君之義.
> Of old, Zhong Ni (Kongzi) made accord (*shun* 順) for the name of borrow a horse in order to esteem the duty of a prince.
> *Hou Hanshu* 〈〈後漢書〉〉〈〈志〉〉〈〈 律曆中〉〉 (Chinese Text Project)

Could there be a specific reason why these texts do not explicitly attribute *zhengming* to Kongzi? Perhaps, even though Han legends had made Kongzi into a sage, he is not personally able to *zhengming* without actually being a ruler, directly advising a ruler, or acting on a ruler's behalf. In the *Lunyu* 13.3, when he is asked to identify the first step of governing, Kongzi calls for straightening names without indicating who would do so. The *Lüshichunqiu*'s *zhengming* narrative shows Yin Wen, an advisor, teaching a ruler how to correct *ming*, but it never says that Yin Wen himself corrects the *ming*. The section begins with a statement about order arising from names being correct (名正則治), and it speaks of King Min of Qi as an example of shape and name having different fulfillments and sound and *shi* being called differently (刑名異充而聲實異謂也). The section mentions some names to be corrected—"worthy" (*xian* 賢), "good" (*shan* 善), and "acceptable" (*ke* 可)—and shows Yin Wen teaching King Min how to use the title *shi* 士 (scholar-knight). The narrator describes the situation in this way:

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[14] See Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

[15] We cannot infer much about the corrected speech from the passage in the *Shizi* in which the "sage rulers" correct speech (*zheng yan*) at court, because it only mentions the regularizing effects of correcting the speech and does not describe the specific *yan* in question.

> 言者, 百事之機也, 聖王 (正) 〔止〕言於朝而四方治矣. 是故曰: 正名去偽, 事成若化; 以實覈名, 百事皆成.
> Speech is the contrivance for a hundred tasks. When the sage rulers correct speech (*zhengyan*) in the court, the four corners become ordered. Therefore, it is said, "*Zhengming* excludes falsity, and events become complete like transformations. Use *shi* 實 (actions, things) to examine *ming*, and the hundred events all become complete."
> *Shizi* 尸子 1〈卷上〉〈〈群書治要〉〉卷三十六 1.5 分

Here again, a reference to *zhengyan* seems to become (or prompt) a reference to *zhengming*, and the passage concludes with a brief paean to the accomplishments of *zhengming*.

> 是刑名異充而聲實異謂也.
> This is an example of shapes (*xing* 刑) and names being different in their fulfillment (*chong* 充) and of sounds and *shi* (實 actions/fruits) referring to different things.[16]
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 先識覽第四 〈〈正名〉〉

*Zhengming* in this case concerns clarifying a confusion about *ming* and *shi* 實 (or *xing* 刑). The *ming* involved are titles or at least terms of praise related to earning titles. King Min is unable to respond, so he did not correct any *ming*. Perhaps Yin Wen, the advisor, did correct the *ming* by explaining that King Min's titles were attached to the wrong actions. But in that case, the advisor's *zhengming* is still metonymically connected to the immediate power of a ruler. Another possibility is that the passage concerns *zhengming* but does not imply that *zhengming* occurred. In short, my speculation is that one difference between *zhengming* and *zhengyan* is that the authority of ruling is a requirement for correcting *ming*, as distinct from *yan*.

The presence of rulers in these dramatized *zhengming* narratives highlights the reason why *zhengming* does not extend outside the scope of governing. As noted above, rulers have the power and license to command (命 *ming*) by assigning titles (名 *ming*), thereby making names refer to things. Hence *zhengming* is restricted to the sphere of governing, where authorities can make things happen with *ming* (名, 命). If ruling is the necessary context for *zhengming*, we can understand why the Kongzi of *Lunyu* 13.3 describes *zhengming* as a governing priority. That singularity also clarifies why we should not hypothesize that the *ming* to be corrected are elements of a "*li* entry," like "king" in "Pass to the left of the king," for such a linguistic interpretation neglects the authority of governing by decree, disregards the ruler's *ming* as spoken to be obeyed, and downplays the possibility of rewarding (raise people up)

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[16] Matching aural to visual is a standard way in which to describe *zhengming*, as in this example from the *Guanzi*:

> 以形務名, 督言正名, 故曰「聖人」.
> Use the shape (*xing* 形) [of something] to work out its name. Closely examine the speech and correct the names (*zhengming*), thus we say "sage."
> *Guanzi* 管子 管子卷第十三 心術上第三十六

through *zhengming*. *Zhengming* corrects the *ming/shi* connection not in the interest of performing a model but to clarify the proper use of *ming* in governing. The authority of governing ordains *ming*. Recipients of decrees, whether welcome or not, have no latitude to puzzle over the terms of their compliance. A decree is a decree.

## Alternative Interpretations of *Lunyu* 12.11

Because *li*'s connection to *zhengming* is tenuous, even if *Lunyu* 12.11 is about *li*, there is no particular reason to assume it is concerned with *zhengming*. Indeed, the language of *Lunyu* 12.11 and later evocations of it suggest more compelling alternatives. Whereas *zhengming* interpretations of the passage suppose one/many or reality/appearance dualisms, other explanations are more compatible with conceptions about bodies and the world implied in early Chinese texts.

The phrasing of the *Lunyu* 12.11 argues against the verb-object interpretation that brings names into the passage. Again, the passage reads:

> 12.11 齊景公問政於孔子. 孔子對曰:「君君, 臣臣, 父父, 子子.」公曰:「善哉！信如君不君, 臣不臣, 父不父, 子不子, 雖有粟, 吾得而食諸?」
> Duke Jing of Qi asked Kongzi about governing. Kongzi replied, "Ruler ruler; minister minister; father father; son son." The Duke said, "Excellent! Truly if ruler not ruler, minister not minister, father not father, son not son, although there is grain, how would I get to eat it?"
> *Lunyu* 論語〈顏淵〉第十二

Whereas Kongzi's statement is ambiguous, the duke's retort is not. "Ruler ruler; minister minister; father father; son son (君君, 臣臣, 父父, 子子)" might at first be considered a verb-object structure: an instruction to an implied subject to apply the name "ruler" to rulers. The subject-verb structure evident in the "if . . . not" of the duke's rejoinder, however, resolves the initial interpretive ambiguity.[17]

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[17] Furthermore, the duke's excited "Excellent!" confirms the value of Kongzi's punning wordplay, which is typical of memorable sayings in early Chinese texts. Hansen proposes instead that the duke's response is sarcastic, adding that a verb-object reading would be in keeping with the grammar of early Chinese texts.

> The duke himself, however, replies as if *zheng* (administering) is everyone else's responsibility. In fact his reply seems so incongruous that one wonders if he is not sarcastically objecting to the enigmatic nature of Confucius' answer. His analysis of that koan-like answer is a self-serving one. The rival interpretation accepts the duke's self-serving analysis as fixing the grammar of Confucius' punning formula. Aside from the duke's reply, we would usually give such two-noun phrases the verb-object analysis.
> Hansen, *Daoist Theory*, 67, 382 n. 35

A later echo of *Lunyu* 12.11 in the first-century B.C.E. *Fayan* furnishes clues for other potential ways to interpret the earlier text.

> 或苦亂. 曰: 「綱紀. 」曰: 「惡在於綱紀? 」曰: 「大作綱, 小作紀. 如綱不綱, 紀不紀, 雖有羅網, 惡得一目而正諸? 」
>
> Someone worried about chaos. [Yangzi] said "[It's all in] the drawstring and the control-string."
>
> "How does it lie in the drawstring and the control-string?"
>
> "The great undertakings are the drawstring, the small undertakings are the control-string. If the drawstring does not drawstring and the control-string does not control-string, although there is a net, how would one get even a single eyelet to straighten it?"
>
> *Fayan* 法言 先知卷第九

The pattern of *ru gang bu gang, ji bu ji* (如綱不綱, 紀不紀) is similar to *ru jun bu jun, chen bu chen* (如君不君, 臣不臣), and the *sui you . . . de* (雖有 . . . 得) matches as well.[18] But what does it mean for drawstrings not to drawstring? The idea becomes clearer when phrased as the solution to an implied problem. That is, when we turn "if X not X" into "X should X," the phrase is open to two possible reality/appearance interpretations: one doubts the genuineness of the first term (as subject), and the other doubts the genuineness of the second (as predicate). (1) Have the apparent drawstring become (or be replaced by) a real drawstring. (2) Have the drawstring live up to the real role of a drawstring. Neither of these interpretations, however, seems to fit the *Fayan* line. When the issue involves difficulties with pulling a drawstring and a control-string, the source of the problem is not likely to be that the strings are not real or that they must strive to fulfill their given role.

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[18] David Pankenier argues that early Chinese texts employ fabric metaphors for patterns of the cosmos and social organization. He focuses on weaving, but the same is true of nets, he notes, because they were not "strictly distinguished in figurative deployment" (Pankenier 2015, 5). In spite of Pankenier's research, we cannot conclude (and Pankenier does not suggest) that fabric metaphors explain *zhengming*. While technology for weaving and netting is appropriate to the period (unlike Hansen's system model), early Chinese texts never use *ji* 紀, *gang* 綱, or *jing* 經 to describe how *zhengming* works. Not surprisingly, instead, they use these terms from fabric-making to describe the (visible) action of *li* 禮, rather than sound. The *Zuozhuan* says that *li* is the control-string for the spheres above and below (*Zuozhuan* B10.25.3), and according to the *Liji*'s "Li Qi" chapter, by "walking *li*" (*xingli* 行禮) the *junzi* acts as the control-string of the masses. Hence, this *Fayan* passage might offer an alternative to correcting names: a visual substitute for an aural process. Instead of straightening names, the *junzi* straightens a net, using a mechanism whose operation and efficacy would be well known. As the *Lüshichunqiu* "Li Su" chapter explains, a single pull on the control-string draws the eyelets up, and a single pull on the drawstring opens them. Insofar as this metaphor has anything to do with "language," it seems to be a question of archaic writing rather than speech: Pankenier proposes that fabric-making terminology evokes the ancient technique of using knotted strings to keep records (Pankenier 2015, 20).

A more plausible explanation would be that the strings are stuck, tangled, or broken. Something needs to be done (by someone else) to free the strings to do their job. With the *Fayan* passage in mind, the initial line of *Lunyu* 12.11 might then be interpreted as allowing the ruler to do something, as it is sometimes translated, "Let the ruler. . . ." In the second part, the "*ru jun bu jun* (如君不君)" might look like: (1) "If rulers are not serving as rulers . . . ," or (2) "If rulers are not being used to rule. . . ." The rulers are not ruling. But that particular situation need not generate a hypothesis that there is such a thing as a real ruler or that there is an ideal of ruling that rulers should achieve. In other words, the phrase need not be taken to posit apparent rulers and real rulers or apparent ruling and real ruling.

The readings I suggest avoid imposing a gap between people and the socially defined roles or categories that are crystalized in names. Interpreting early Chinese texts should not involve an assumption that people exist outside of what they do and vice versa. The concept of "social role" merits some attention because it subtly informs why names might seem to be implicated in the *Lunyu* 12.11. Current notions of social roles in Ritual Studies arguably derive from studies of people occupying multiple jobs and statuses in complex industrial societies characterized by high levels of bureaucracy, institutionalization, and suprapersonal organizations. But that idea of a "role" builds upon an older dramaturgical metaphor of actors and parts. While actors put on and shed roles as they do clothing, the role is static, part of the script. Moreover, outside of the performance, actors can detach themselves from the parts they play. In other words, the metaphor presumes a distinction between actors and their many roles. In its modern use as a suprapersonal structural metaphor, the term "social roles" is applied to societies composed of detachable individuals who flexibly and sequentially take multiple positions in an organized network of social relations.[19] If people are considered to be interdependent, then a metaphor presuming separation is not apt. The role metaphor contributes to the presumption that a *ming* names an abstraction instead of a concrete, changing thing in the world.

Sociologist Jorge Arditi's contrast between roles and "social characters" might be useful in discussing premodern societies like that of Early China entrenched in the idea of a hereditary social order.[20] Building on George Simmel's work, Arditi argues that in describing premodern societies, a more appropriate metaphor than social roles is social characters. Thus, people resemble the *characters in* a play, which for them it is not a play at all, rather than actors outside of it—a hypothesis that nicely dispenses with the appearance/reality feature of the theatrical metaphor.[21] Thinking of characters as having characteristic behaviors, rather than scripts, is a better way of approaching the binaries of ruler/minister and father/son in *Lunyu* 12.11, where people are not *just* playing a part. Moreover, because the ruler will never become the minister, the phrasing does not emphasize playing multiple parts. Sons are expected to become fathers, but the foregrounding of the ruler/minister relation indicates that the point is less about occupying multiple roles than about the proper relationships within each pair.[22] A ruler and a drawstring are characters in the sense that they are motivated toward differing characteristic actions. A drawstring that does not drawstring is not a thing that could just as well play the role of control-string. Its characteristic is to allow itself to be pulled so that all the loops open. So, too, understanding "ruler not ruler" need not involve an ideal (social role). It only requires people who rule and acts of ruling that are typical of such "characters." In *Lunyu* 12.11, there is an action that certain people characteristically do that is either not being done or is not being completed.

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[19] As Jorge Arditi puts it, "it is only the detachment of the individual from any particular position that provides the basis for the full emergence of social roles, and this detachment becomes reality only in highly complex societies." Arditi, "Role as a Cultural Concept," 567.

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[20] Although the date of *Lunyu* 13.3 is debated, the general context arguably involves declining lineage-based social hierarchy and lowest-ranked aristocrats' (*shi* 士) aspirations for social mobility. The fact that the *shi* 士 were struggling to improve their social status on a basis other than heredity is an indication of the rigidity of the prevailing social system. Compared to the multiplicity and fluidity (if not upward mobility) of roles in complex industrial societies, the difference is striking.

From the political perspective, the proposal for *zhengming* in *Lunyu* 13.3 looks less like a recommendation about social roles than an affirmation of "the importance of hierarchic order," as Yuri Pines puts it. Pines stresses that reinterpreting *li* 禮 was part of the method of seeking social mobility, but he does not indicate whether Kongzi would have been conceptualizing *zhengming* as a feature of *li* (whether traditional or reinterpreted), because he mentions *zhengming* only to affirm the value Kongzi attached to hierarchic order. Pines, "Disputers of the *Li*," 18.

[21] Arditi also calls them "social types," but to avoid the misleading impression that he is speaking of a type-token relation, I will use "character" in this context.

[22] Three things about using "social roles" in our interpretations of early Chinese texts seem worth considering. First, as Arditi notes (see n. 19 above) the metaphor itself relies on the possibility of detaching the "actor" from *any* particular social position. Second, rather than conceiving of people occupying multiple potentially unrelated social positions (e.g., son and teacher), in early Chinese texts people might be constituted by their relationships in the sense that being a father entails various other concomitant "roles" (being a teacher, a disciplinarian, a family leader)—an idea that Arditi cites from S. F. Nadel as pertaining to certain kinds of premodern societies. In that case, the behaviors that might prompt the idea of "other roles" are actually related extensions of being a father—which is part of what makes being a father constitute what the person is. Arditi, "Role as a Cultural Concept," 579. Third, the idea of a role is as static and predetermined as the abstract concepts Roger Ames rightly contends are inapt. Granting Ames's point that the experience of being a child is normative, if contemporary readers are interested in contemplating what it might mean to apply a form of early Chinese ethics to being good at different kinds of relationships, we could drop the word "role" in favor of participation or relationship. In other words, we might be better off calling it "relational ethics" or "participation ethics." Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*, 161, 168.

In reality/appearance interpretations of *Lunyu* 12.11, it is obviously important for rulers to rule and fathers to father because real is always better than fake. Setting aside that framework of an idealized, static reality, however, we can explain the rationale for Kongzi's statement in two other ways. First, we must remember that early Chinese texts often describe actions and even substances as being in the process of completing (*cheng* 成) themselves, as implied in *shi* 實 (fruit or grain). Actions are temporal and, while in process, they aim toward completion, but not in the sense of a *telos*. Thus, to be a ruler is always to be becoming a ruler. Indeed, the phrase *jun jun* 君君 does not emphasize a difference between a detemporalized "ruler" (a state of being or a social role) in the subject position in contrast to "ruling" (an action) in the predicate position. To reinforce an idea more in line with early Chinese ontology, we might even use the term "ruling" for both the first and the second *jun*, a course that would bypass the substance-oriented reading of the first *jun* as meaning people who are agents of actions and substitute, instead, the idea that ruling is occurring but, for some reason, is cut off. That interpretation would support the premise that governing should allow acts of ruling, ministering, fathering, and son-ing to be fulfilled or completed since people exist within a succession of time wherein they inevitably answer to what came before and what will come after.[23] Being a person would entail completing the actions that make people what they were, currently are, and will become. Their efforts are strung between the past and the future. On that reading, the *Lunyu* 12.11 would value completing one's characteristic actions, because they characterize us as temporal beings with a past and a future to which we are responsible.

The second (compatible) explanation for the importance of *jun jun* 君君 etc. is the maintenance of order. On the face of it, order in these hierarchical and gendered pairs—ruler and minister, father and son—certainly seems to involve maintaining the status quo. Layering onto it a concept of "social role" makes the very idea of order seem rigid and unappealing. But order need not imply preserving the current situation or a stable past. Although typical Confucian declension narratives favor a stable past, if time is understood as duration, as the texts also suggest, order might signify continuance and transmission from an uncertain past to an unknown future.

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[23] The concept of *cheng* 成 (complete) deserves more attention than I can give it here. Visible things can complete themselves or their activities. Early Chinese texts also describe sounds as *cheng* 成 (complete). In some contexts, sounds can complete actions (insofar as matching the heard and the seen assists in knowing, trusting, and governing).

To some extent, recognizing time as duration can also enhance agency. If people see themselves as inhabiting a present with a past and a future, they *could* view themselves *as* processes of change authorized by the present moment, since they would not be encumbered with seeing themselves as static entities *within* those processes. So while, rulers, ministers, fathers, and sons might sound like stifling roles when conceived of as detemporalized (i.e., as social roles or states of being), when conceived of as processes of becoming, they achieve a degree of flexibility (albeit within these limited hierarchical and gendered social relations). According to that reading, rulers, fathers, etc. must be allowed to complete their actions because they are already embarked on (or treading in) that direction.

Education is also relevant to the conservatism of *Lunyu* 12.11 if it is taken to concern acting as models for others. Education necessarily transmits something of the past, and it is most successful when it teaches people to do the things that it trains them to do. That is, teaching people to do whatever they want, such that ministers might end up doing ruler duties (or something else), would make it harder for those who are trying to transmit the tradition of ruler, minister, etc. Moreover, it would be more confusing for those who are trying to learn. Education seems to require witnessing frequent examples of behaviors to emulate. From that perspective, *Lunyu* 12.11 might be read as "Have the ruler *do* ruler. . . ." By substituting "do" for the more familiar "be," the line echoes the idea that not only should people do what they are trained to do, but everyone should do so in a way that allows others to see their actions as good models. Thus, rulers who do ruler should model ruling actions. When rulers are not doing ruling and sons are not "doing son" (for whatever reason), they endanger both order and education.

## Conclusion

Both the notion of completing action and the notion of modeling action evoke *li*, because *li* involves doing or acting/walking (*xing* 行). Treading *li* and modeling pertains to governing, but, unlike *zhengming*, it also pertains to everyday education, including parents teaching children. To acknowledge that *Lunyu* 12.11 concerns *li* and modeling does not constitute evidence for associating it with *zhengming*. Viewing *zhengming* through modern concepts of ritual overlooks the difference between *li* and *zhengming*, which results in overplaying the importance of *zhengming*. Its role in early Chinese texts is fairly minimal—not as large as it seems when we think of it as a feature of ritual, particularly if by "ritual," we mean something that includes just about everything!

Interpretations of *zhengming* do not typically ask readers to consider how early Chinese texts describe bodies moving and processing sounds. But when approaching early Chinese texts from the perspective of bodies, it becomes evident that *li* is not a system of which *ming* are a part. In the case of *zhengming*, attention to bodies makes us aware that texts from Early China describe sound entering the person with a type of penetration that is hard to resist. Hence the commanding sounds of authority plausibly explain the evident confidence in the idea of *zhengming*. At the same time, correcting names would only inspire confidence if people believed themselves to be influenced by sound. Doubts on that score could account for why early Chinese texts do not describe *zhengming* as often or in as much detail as we might hope. Actions also influence people. We might trust what we see—action—over what we hear. Thus, to understand *zhengming*, we should not think of it as a branch of *li*. Despite the scholarly habit of translating *li* as "ritual," *li* is paradigmatically visible action, not an abstract, all-encompassing system. The visual features of *li* argue against interpreting *zhengming* by means of it, but they also suggest a new way of thinking about *Lunyu* 12.11 as a proposal for governing by modeling characteristic behavior, not by modeling language or roles.

# Epilogue

I want to conclude my investigation with stories about the legendary Music Master Kui. Before recounting them, I want to remind the reader that, in the foregoing chapters, I have made the point that early Chinese texts treat *li* 禮 as something characteristically visible. I have argued that it has no particular connection to correcting names, and I have also shown that *zhengming* builds on the sounds of decrees, whereas actions like *li* form the shapes of bodies. Kui has only one foot, making him the virtual incarnation of music, which inhabits the sound side of aural/visual polarities. Given his disability, Kui is inept at *li*. The recurring concern in early Chinese texts about Kui's uneven gait speaks to the importance the era placed on harmonizing the respective spheres of *li* and music, thereby matching the sounds people utter with their visible actions.

## A One-Footed Monster and a One-Footed Musician

In this section, I briefly consider the idea that, as other scholars have noted, people in Early China might have conflated two ancient figures with the unusual name Kui 夔.[1] I discuss the theory that the "hearsay" that developed about the music master might have cropped up because at some point the stories about the two figures had become fused in the cultural imagination.

As related in texts like the *Shanhaijing* and the *Zhuangzi*, early Chinese myths describe a one-legged nonhuman creature of ancient times who bore the name Kui. But as related in the "histories" of the *Shangshu*, Emperor Shun appointed a figure named Kui music master. Accepting the post, Kui declares that he will beat the drum and cause the animals to dance.[2] But several texts mention "popular" (*su*

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[1] Albert Galvany devotes an article to the figure of Kui, attributing the reluctance to describe Kui as one-legged to three things: attempts to distance the Kui figure in the *Shangshu* from the mythical creature, the disgrace of amputation, and aesthetic features of *li* as cultural adornment. Galvany, "Debates on Mutilation," 67–91.

[2] The *Shangshu* passage says that Kui responds to his appointment by asserting that he strikes a drum and the animals dance, thereby leaving unanswered the question of whether Kui himself could dance.

俗) sayings—a kind of unreliable hearsay—about the music master.[3] The sayings concern the homonym *zu* 足, which has two divergent uses, “foot” and “sufficient.”[4] These two alternatives give rise to conflicting statements about the music master’s ability to walk (*xing* 行).[5]

> 故曰夔一足, 非一足行.
> Thus, the saying is “Kui had one [that was] sufficient,” not [Kui] walked one-footed.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

In addition, other questions surfaced about the music master’s relation to *ren* 人 (person, human, or other people), which we might interpret as questions about his very humanity (i.e., alluding to the one-footed monster) or merely doubts about his historical existence. Here, I argue for the former, although my larger point about these puns that I will proceed to argue below is not dependent on whether there was any confusion about the two figures named Kui.

The expression *Kui yi zu* can be employed, with no change in sound or graph, to say either “Kui had one foot”[6] or “Kui had one, [which was] sufficient.” The basic plot in the stories that use this phrase is the same in all texts except the *Lunheng*. One of two characters, either Zi Gong (a student of Kongzi) or Lu Ai Gong (a ruler of the state of Lu), asks Kongzi about the rumor that Kui had *yi zu* (one foot or one sufficiency). Kongzi then explicates how the saying should properly be understood.

The *Fengsutongyi* version of the saying is the most detailed.

> 俗說: 夔一足而用精專, 故能調暢於音樂.
> The popular saying is: Kui had *yi zu*. But his efforts were concentrated and specialized. Therefore, he was able to harmonize and blend music.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

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[3] See below for the accusations regarding the unreliability of the sayings. The references occur in a wide range of early Chinese texts from the *Hanfeizi*, the *Lüshichunqiu*, the *Liji*, and the *Huainanzi*, to the *Lunheng*, the *Fengsutongyi*, and the *Kongcongzi*.

[4] In William Baxter and Laurent Sagart’s phonetic reconstruction, in both uses *zu* 足 is pronounced MC*tsjowk<OC*[ts]ok. Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction*, version 1.1 (20 September 2014), http://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf, 160.

[5] The *Fengsutongyi* attributes its explanation to the *Lüshichunqiu*, but the graphs in the passages are a little different.

[6] *Zu* can be used to mean “leg” as well as “foot,” so it is possible that “leg” would be the better translation.

Again, aside from the polyvalence of *yi zu*, a possible reason for distrusting Kui is the unfortunate matter of his name, which is the same as that of the mythical, one-footed creature of yore. Specifically, the phrasing of people's comments about the music master might signal that the two figures had mistakenly become one, because they can be interpreted as doubting Kui's humanity.[7]

In the second *Hanfeizi* passage, for no apparent reason, Kongzi asserts, "Kui was a person (夔, 人也)." Moreover, in the *Liji*, after Kongzi makes a claim about *li* 禮 being dependent on humanity, Zi Gong rudely crosses the mat to ask a question about Kui's personhood. Kongzi's response begins and ends with the repeated assertion that Kui was a "person of old" (古之人). Although Kongzi never explains the reason for his declaration, it seems that Zi Gong may well have been asking about Kui's humanity:

> 29.4 子曰:「制度在禮, 文為在禮, 行之, 其在人乎? 」子貢越席而對曰:「敢問夔其窮與? 」子曰:「古之人與? 古之人也. 達於禮而不達於樂, 謂之素; 達於樂而不達於禮, 謂之偏. 夫夔達於樂而不達於禮, 是以傳於此名也, 古之人也. 」
> Kongzi said, "Since order and regulation is located in *li* (禮), and adornment is located in *li*, enacting (*xing* 行) it—isn't that dependent on humans (*ren* 人)?" Zi Gong crossed the mat and asked, "Dare I ask, does not Kui have an impoverishment?" The Master said, "Was he a person (*ren* 人) of antiquity? Yes, he was. To have achieved in *li*, but not achieved in music, we call being plain. To have achieved in music and not in *li*, we call being one-sided (*pian* 偏). Now Kui achieved in music, but not in *li*. Therefore, he is transmitted by this name. He was a person (*ren* 人) of antiquity."
> *Liji* 禮記〈仲尼燕居〉

Kongzi is talking about *li*, which prompts Zi Gong's sudden question about Kui's impoverishment (*qiong* 窮). The impoverishment, *qiong* 窮, probably alludes to Kui being described as having "one *zu*" (一足)—one foot or one sufficiency—which in this case Kongzi refers to as his "one-sidedness" (*pian* 偏).

Three interpretations of Kongzi's response present themselves. (1) His first use of *gu zhi ren yu* 古之人與 (person of antiquity) does not call for a question mark, because it is actually not a rephrasing of Zi Gong's question. It is a repeated exclamatory assertion ("A person of antiquity!" that has nothing to do with Zi Gong's question about Kui's impoverishment, which refers to his lack of achievement in music. (2) Kongzi rephrases Zi Gong's question as *gu zhi ren yu*? 古之人與? ("Was he a person of antiquity?"), which signals that Kui's "impoverishment" concerns something about *ren* 人 (person, human, others). On this reading, the reference to personhood takes Kui's impoverishment to be his fictional nature. That is, Kongzi restates Zi Gong's question, which was effectively, "Doesn't he have an impoverishment?" as "Wasn't he just a fictional person?" and then confirms that he was a person of old. (3) Kongzi's repeated assertion of Kui's personhood, however, might also show that urgent questions about Kui's relation to *ren* 人 betray worries that Shun's drumming music master might have been one and the same as the ox-like creature described in the *Shanhaijing*, who had one foot, made thunderous noises, and suffered the fate of being turned into a very loud drum.[8]

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[7] See also "Transforming the Beasts," chapter in Sterckx, *Animal and the Daemon*, 123–63.

The indications of concern about Kui's humanness are there: (1) Zi Gong's abrupt behavior occurs immediately after a comment about humans being responsible for *li*. (2) "Impoverishment" (*qiong* 窮) is more likely to be used to describe the condition of being a one-footed animal than the condition of being fictional.[9] (3) Kongzi's opening exclamation responds to the question. If the question was whether Kui suffered the impoverishment of being a one-footed creature, Kongzi answered it by asserting that Kui was an ancient person. (4) Kongzi's answer asserts that something about this name (*ci ming* 此名) is what prompts Zi Gong's concern, reminding readers that there was more than one ancient figure named Kui.[10]

Furthermore, versions of the story in other texts involve different phrasings of the question about Kui's relation to *ren* 人 that focus on the nature of Kui's personhood rather than his historical existence. For example, the *Kongcongzi* expresses wonderment about Kui's difference with the phrase: *yi yu ren* 異於人.[11] We might be tempted to take this merely to concern whether Kui was different "from other people," and we might do the same with the reference to Kui's "difference from others" *tuo yi* 他異 in the *Hanfeizi* version of the story. However, being emperor Shun's appointed music master—not to mention having the *yi zu* of one sufficiency or one foot—made Kui obviously different from other people, hence any question about his difference from others could only involve an even more significant degree of difference.[12] In sum, these uses of *ren* 人 in relation to Kui are more likely to be centered on his humanity. Thus the attention to Kui's *yi zu* might well be motivated by the disconcerting fusion of a music master and a monstrous, nonhuman animal.

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[8] *Shanhaijing* "Da Huang Dong Jing," chap. 14, 山海經 大荒東經. Perhaps even more relevant is the undignified creature in the *Zhuangzi*, chap. 17, who hopped around on one foot.

[9] Perhaps we might also translate *qiong* 窮 here as outside of or at a limit.

[10] In this context, it might seem like the name that Kui is called by is *pian* 偏 ("one-sided"). Kui is known as *yi zu*, which suggested "one-sided," but he is not directly known as *yi pian*.

[11] The line reads,

> 吾聞夔一足, 有異於人, 信乎?
> I have heard Kui had *yi zu* ("one foot" or "one sufficiency"), and had some difference *yu ren* ("from others" or "from people"), is that reliable?
> *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 卷一〈〈論書第二〉〉

## Hearsay about a One-Footed Musician

While it is intriguing to consider the source of the confusion about Kui that rises to the surface in early Chinese texts, my interest in the music master is at once more specific and more general. I want, by scrutinizing the word play of the texts that describe him, to explore the role of *li* 禮 in the early Chinese habit of balancing sound and sight. We should notice, at the outset, that the texts pose the problem of *Kui yi zu* as a consequence of hearsay, in other words, transmission by sound. In speaking the expression *Kui yi zu*, a pause between the words would help clarify how they should be understood. If read aloud with a pause (which I indicate by the placement of a comma), the phrase *Kui yi*, *zu* suggests "Kui had one, [which was] sufficient." By contrast, if the pause (and the comma) is shifted forward, the phrase *Kui*, *yi zu* intimates that Kui was one-footed. But the stories do not include punctuation; nor do they speculate that identical graphs are the source of confusion.[13] They refer, rather, to hearing what people say. That is, in both *Hanfeizi* passages, Lu Ai Gong introduces the rumor about Kui as something he heard ("I have heard . . ." 吾聞).

Also emphasizing oral transmission, the *Fengsutongyi* calls *Kui yi zu* "common talk" (*sushuo* 俗說). While the *Lunheng* and the *Kongcongzi* frame their discussions of the Kui story within the context of textual transmission, writing is not subject to criticism; instead, they focus on the kind of pedestrian saying that manages to make its way into texts. Although the *Kongcongzi* mentions textual tradition, Lu Ai Gong's question concerns what he heard, and the *Lunheng* calls attention to the problem of "popular hearsay" (*shisu chuanyan* 世俗傳言). The *Lüshichunqiu* also blames hearsay by situating the utterance in a chapter, "Inspecting Transmissions" (*chachuan* 察傳), that identifies, in most of the vignettes it describes, mistakes that occur when one bases one's judgment on reports repeated by others.[14] The *Lüshichunqiu* introduces the Kui story with an admonition that any instance of "heard speech" (聞言) should be "checked by means of pattern" (驗之以理). The other stories in the section also involve confirming various faults of hearing. One case concerns hearing someone mispronounce an inscription's graphs.[15] The *Fengsutongyi*, which references the *Lüshichunqiu*, disparages a reliance on oral reports by noting, "many mouths melt gold and accumulated slanders destroy bone" (眾口鑠金, 積毀消骨).[16] The fact that the texts take hearsay to be the culprit suggests that *Kui yi zu* is considered to be a badly transmitted saying, presumably because of the confusion caused by repeating sounds. The *Lunheng* explains how the saying became corrupted.

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[12] The *Hanfeizi* equates the idea of Kui's difference to his *yi zu* by saying he had no difference from others, but was sufficient and not one-footed (*yi zu*).

> 彼其無他異, 而獨通於聲. 堯曰: 『夔一而足矣. 』使為樂正. 故君子曰: 夔有一 (之)〔足〕, 非一足也. 」
> He [Kui] had no difference from others (*tuo yi* 他異) except that he alone achieved nonobstruction (*tong* 通) in sound. Yao said, "Kui had one, and [that] was sufficient," and made him the corrector of music. Therefore, the *junzi* says Kui possessed one sufficiency. [He] was not one-footed.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左下第三十三

[13] These stories may indeed have led to later Chinese jokes about incorrect punctuation, as Christoph Harbsmeier suggests, but none of these passages try to explain the confusion by discussing the problems posed by the parsing or pronunciation of written texts. Harbsmeier, *Language and Logic in Traditional China*, 178.

> 唐、虞時, 夔為大夫, 性知音樂, 調聲悲善. 當時人曰: 「調樂如夔, 一足矣.」世俗傳言: 「夔一足.」
> In the age of Tang and Yu, Kui was a great officer. By spontaneous disposition (*xing* 性),[17] he knew music, and his tunes were sad and beautiful.

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[14] The "transmitted report" (*chuan* 傳) is neither as formal as "transmission" nor as petty as "gossip." The text later redescribes it as "heard speech" or hearsay (*wenyan* 聞言). The passage notes two potential problems with transmitted reports. First, "white becomes black and black becomes white." Second, by the end of a sequence of resemblances, the first item does not resemble the last.

> 夫 (得) 〔傳〕言不可以不察, 數傳而白為黑, 黑為白. 故狗似玃, 玃似母猴, 母猴似人, 人之與狗則遠矣.
> Transmitted speech cannot but be checked (*cha* 察) carefully. After many transmissions, white becomes black and black becomes white. Thus, a dog resembles an ape, an ape resembles a monkey, and a monkey resembles a human, but a human and a dog are far apart.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 慎行論第二 《察傳》

[15] This is the only case in the "Inspecting Transmissions" chapter in which an initial source of confusion is explicitly identified as a feature of writing: the graphs looked similar. The words were pronounced the same, however, and the story's point is to confirm the reports that you have heard, not to read more. This is evident because the person who subsequently learns the proper saying does so without actually looking at the inscription.

[16] Balancing its comment about transmitted speech losing its referent, it also mentions that mapped or diagrammed views lose forms (傳言失指, 圖景失形), but maps do not recur in the passage.

[17] For this translation of *xing* 性, see above chap. 2, n. 18.

> People of the time said, “Playing music like Kui is, by itself, sufficient.”
> The worldly common saying is, “Kui had one foot.”
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

Thus, according to the *Lunheng*, “*Kui yi zu*” is a colloquial laxity originating in the unreliability of sound.

In addition to being unreliable, however, this sonorous ambiguity is a source of pleasure. That is, there is pleasure in the sounds of word play, not just in the sounds of music. The texts make only slight changes in phrasing in their attempts to clarify the expression. The reformulations include adding an *er* 而 between the *yi* and the *zu*; dropping the *Kui* and negating *yi zu*; and keeping *yi zu* together but adding a *you* 有 between the *Kui* and the *yi zu*. (The similarities of the rephrasings are less obvious in English translation, hence I include phoneticizations, although they are not historically reconstructed.)

> 夔非一足也, 一而足也.
> *Kui fei yi zu ye, yi er zu ye.*
> Kui was not one-footed. [He had] one, and [that was] sufficient.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左下第三十三
>
> 夔有一 (之) 〔足〕, 非一足也.
> *Kui you yi zu, fei yi zu ye.*
> Kui possessed one sufficiency. [He] was not one-footed.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左下第三十三
>
> 故曰夔一足, 非一足也.
> *Gu yue, kui yi zu, fei yi zu ye.*
> Thus the saying is, “Kui had one [that was] sufficient. He was not one-footed.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 慎行論第二 〈〈察傳〉〉
>
> 一而足矣, 故曰一足. 非一足也.
> *Yi er zu yi, gu yue yi zu, fei yi zu ye.*
> [Kui had] one, and [that was] sufficient. Thus the saying is, one sufficiency. He was not one-footed.
> *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 卷一 〈〈論書第二〉〉

Only one text, the *Fengsutongyi*, resists the joy of punning. It offers a clear formulation by introducing the function of a foot, which is to say, walking (*xing* 行).[18]

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[18] Again, the *Fengsutongyi* attributes its explanation to the *Lüshichunqiu*, but passages use different graphs.

> 故曰夔一足, 非一足行.
> Thus the saying is, “Kui had one [that was] sufficient,” not [Kui] walked one-footed.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

Walking puts an end to the pure play of sound. As I have argued, walking (*xing* 行) is in the field of the visible. It clarifies the ambiguity of sound.

## A Musician with a One-Sided Deficiency

The purported lameness of Music Master Kui reflects allegations that he was one-sided because music itself is only one side of the *li*/music pairing. Because Kui was a single-minded music master, the assumption is that he thoroughly understood sound. But precisely because he had mastered sound, he was predictably deficient in the complementary arena of *li*, paradigmatically walking. In other words, the figure of Kui is the focal point for unease about an imbalance of music over *li* or of sound (including speech) over visible action. Rumors about Kui, I contend, specifically concern the loss of a foot, as opposed to, say, a hand, because the loss of a hand would not have such a dramatic effect on *li*. A foot is not just any body part that needs to be preserved, but one that relates directly to treading the path of *li*. One foot might be sufficient for music but not for walking *li*. Indeed, whether *Kui yi zu* is interpreted as Kui being one-footed or as his interest in music being sufficient, the phrase constitutes a slight to *li*. If he is one-footed and performs *li*, he will appear ungainly. If he is a musician and music is sufficient to govern, then sound is encroaching on vision, the sphere of *li*.

Most versions of the story, except the *Liji* and the *Lunheng*, that identify Kui’s single talent as making music also affirm that his talent is sufficient. In all but one case, Kui’s single trait is identified as his musicality.[19] The second *Hanfeizi* passage offers a clear reading of Kui’s talent. Kongzi explains,

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[19] Only the first *Hanfeizi* passage in chap. 33 identifies something else—trust—as Kui’s sufficiency, but the story is an outlier on other counts as well. The characters are the same as in some of the stories (Lu Ai Gong and Kongzi) and the question is quite similar. But the answer insults Kui’s personal character and does not even mention that he was a musician.

> 魯哀公問於孔子曰: 「吾聞古者有夔一足, 其果信有一足乎? 」孔子對曰: 「不也, 夔非一足也. 夔者忿戾惡心, 人多不說喜也. 雖然, 其所以得免於人害者, 以其信也. 人皆曰: 『獨此一, 足矣. 』夔非一足也, 一而足也. 」哀公曰: 「審而是, 固足矣. 」
> Lu Ai Gong asked Kongzi, “I have heard that, of old, there was a one-footed person called Kui. Did he turn out to truly have only one foot?” Kongzi responded, “No. Kui was not one-footed. Kui was angry, violent, and bad-hearted. Most people

> 彼其無他異, 而獨通於聲. 堯曰: 『夔一而足矣. 』使為樂正. 故君子曰: 夔有一 (之)〔足〕, 非一足也. 」
> He [Kui] had no difference from others except that he alone achieved nonobstruction (*tong* 通)[20] in sound. Yao said, "Kui had one, and [that] was sufficient," and made him the corrector of music. Therefore, the *junzi* says Kui possessed one sufficiency. [He] was not one-footed.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左下第三十三

The *Lüshichunqiu* attributes Kui's sufficiency to his musical specialization, a view that the *Fengsutongyi* reiterates. The *Kongcongzi* also identifies Kui's sufficiency as his musical focus. To justify the claim to sufficiency, it narrates the *Shujing*'s story of his selection as music master and enumerates his musical feats. Even the *Lunheng* explains *Kui yi zu* in terms of his musical talent, although, as we will see, it goes on to discuss Kui's inadequacies. The text prefaces its explanation of how the saying degenerated into its current form with a historical reflection:

> 唐、虞時, 夔為大夫, 性知音樂, 調聲悲善. 當時人曰: 「調樂如夔, 一足矣. 」
> In the age of Tang and Yu, Kui was a senior officer. By spontaneous disposition (*xing* 性), he knew music, and his tunes were sad and beautiful. People of the time said, "Playing music like Kui is, by itself, sufficient."
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

But while Kui's musical talent is generally conceded to be a sufficiency, according to the *Liji* and the *Lunheng*, the office of *li* should not be overshadowed by music, a sentiment with which the *Kongcongzi* seems to accord:

> 公曰: 「然則政之大本, 莫尚夔乎? 」孔子曰: 「夫樂所以歌其成功, 非政之本也. 眾官之長, 既成熙熙, 然後樂乃和焉. 」
> Lu Ai Gong asked, "In that case, for the great foundation of government, is there none more esteemed than Kui?" Kongzi replied, "Well, using music for praising its accomplished efforts is not the foundation of government. When numerous office heads are already accomplished in great splendidness, then only afterwards will music be harmonious."
> *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子 卷一 〈〈論書第二〉〉

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did not like him. However, the reason he was able to avoid people's harm was his trustworthiness. Everyone says, 'This one alone is sufficient.' Kui was not one-footed. [He had] one, and [that was] sufficient."
Duke Ai said, "If you investigate and it's like this, certainly it is sufficient."
*Hanfeizi* 韓非子 外儲說左下第三十三

[20] See chap. 6 for an explanation of the translation of *tong* 通.

Hence one potential implication of *Kui yi zu* is that music might alone be sufficient for government—an idea that was not well received in all quarters.

The *Liji* and the *Lunheng* also criticize Kui's deficiency in *li*. The *Liji* version, which depicts Kui as one-sided (*pian* 偏), encapsulates his narrative within the respective traits of *li* and music. It opens with Kongzi proclaiming that *li* is pattern (*li* 理), while music is something else: measure or orderliness (*jie* 節).[21]

> 29.4 子曰:「禮也者, 理也, 樂也者, 節也. 君子無理不動, 無節不作. 不能詩, 於禮繆; 不能樂, 於禮素; 薄於德, 於禮虛.」
> Kongzi said, "*Li* is pattern. Music is orderliness. The *junzi* does not move without pattern and does not create without orderliness. If there is inability in the songs, in *li* there will be error; if there is inability in music, in *li* there will be plainness; if *de* [potency/virtue] is diffuse, in *li* there will be emptiness."
> *Liji* 禮記〈仲尼燕居〉

Kongzi asserts that the *junzi* relies on both *li* and music.[22] Moreover, he implies, there is a mutual dependence between *li*, on the one hand, and, on the other, songs, music, and *de* (power/virtue).[23] In the next few lines, Kongzi applies this theoretical discussion of music and *li* to Kui. Kui was skilled at music but not *li*; hence, he was one-sided. To cite the passage again,

> 29.4 達於禮而不達於樂, 謂之素; 達於樂而不達於禮, 謂之偏. 夫夔達於樂而不達於禮, 是以傳於此名也, 古之人也.
> To have achieved in *li*, but not achieved in music, we call being plain. To have achieved in music and not in *li*, we call being one-sided. Now Kui achieved in music, but not in *li*. Therefore, he is transmitted by this name. He was a person of antiquity.
> *Liji* 禮記〈仲尼燕居〉

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[21] While *li* 理 appears to be closely aligned with vision, *jie* 節 is not necessarily associated with either sound or temporality. See, e.g., *Huainanzi* 淮南子 脩務訓, in my chap. 7.

[22] The passage does not seem to endorse the notion that inability in one modality might enhance the other, as in the prevailing perception in Early China that a blind person might have exceptionally good hearing. The tradition of blind musicians in Early China presumes that deficiency of sight enhances the power of hearing. Ingrid Furniss notes that the tradition might be restricted to male musicians, who are associated with a more staid, formal music. Furniss, "Unearthing China's Informal Musicians," 23–41.

[23] This is the kind of reference that makes it plausible to think of *de* (power/virtue) as related to sound; however, because *de* (power/virtue) drops out of the discussion that follows, the reason it appears in this particular context is not clear.

Having insisted that Kui is human, Kongzi leaves open the possibility that Kui was a one-footed person. While claiming that Kui was one-sided is not quite the same as saying he was one-footed, the *Liji* seems to be equating those characteristics. Kongzi concludes that Music Master Kui has become known to future generations by the name "one-footed," and presumably his foregoing comments explain why. That is, Kui has become known through the ages (or transmitted) by this name because of his one-sided focus on music and his deficiency in *li*. The connection between inadequacy in *li* and one-footedness is not spelled out, but the implication is that Kui was so useless at *li* that he might as well have been one-footed.

The *Lunheng* offers variations on the life of Kui that also stress his inadequacy. In the *Shangshu*, the passage that occurs immediately before reporting that Kui had been appointed music master, concerns appointing the legendary Bo Yi to the position of being in charge of the "three *li*" (*sanli* 三禮), but thereafter it refers to the *li* appointment as director of ancestral worship (*zhizong* 秩宗). Bo Yi unsuccessfully tries to decline being *zhizong* in favor of Kui or another figure named Long. Shun then appoints Kui to direct music and appoints Long to direct his orders. In the *Lunheng*'s version of the story, the question concerns whether Bo Yi yielded to Kui the *li* post of director of ancestral worship (*zhizong*). The *Lunheng* explains that the post Bo Yi tried to pass off to Kui or Long requires more than musical talent, which prompts the narrator to reflect on the office of *li*:

> 秩宗卿官, 漢之宗正也. 斷足, 足非其理也. 且一足之人, 何用行也?
> The office of a director of ancestral worship would correspond to the Han director of the imperial clan. With a chopped foot, the feet would go against their pattern (*li* 理). And a person with one foot—how could he be used for acting/walking (*xing* 行)?
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

A story ensues about a child adopted by an emperor who became a lowly doorkeeper because his foot had been cut off. The narrator then ties the boy's fate to Kui's qualifications for the post Bo Yi sought to relinquish to him.

> 斷足無宜, 故為守者. 今夔一足, 無因趨步, 坐調音樂, 可也; 秩宗之官, 不宜一足, 猶守者斷足, 不可貴也. 孔甲不得貴之子, 伯夷不得讓於夔焉.
> A chopped foot lacks appropriateness, therefore he became a doorkeeper. Now, Kui had one foot, he had nothing by which to hasten or march. To sit and make music would be possible. But for the office of sacrificial worship, it would not be appropriate to have one foot; like a doorkeeper with a cut-off foot, he could not be valued. Kong Jia [the emperor] did not achieve a valuable son, and Bo Yi did not succeed in yielding the post to Kui.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

The *Lunheng*'s treatment of Kui's story thus ends by highlighting that having only one foot is an impediment to *li*.

In Early China, even in ordinary interactions, moving the body appropriately is of utmost importance. Because using one's feet to walk is normative, a missing foot occasionally serves as a metonymy for impropriety in early Chinese texts. Thus, for instance, a missing foot might signal a criminal whose punishment involved having his foot chopped off (as in *Zhuangzi*, chap. 5). Perhaps the concern with Kui's feet reflects such ideas about the functions of the body's various parts. Again, the *Fengsutongyi*'s rephrasing of *Kui yi zu* makes it clear that walking is being debated.

> 故曰夔一足, 非一足行.
> Therefore, the saying is "Kui had one [that was] sufficient," not [Kui] walked one-footed.
> *Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義 正失第二

A sense that missing feet signal nonnormative behavior may also play into how the rumor would have been received by its implied audience. Feet, which are necessary for action, are supposedly required to fulfill the "promise" of one's speech. Insofar as being true to one's word means acting on it, the one-footed is at a decided disadvantage.[24]

Thus, if Kui were one-footed, he would be deficient in *li* because he would be incapable of "walking the walk." At best, he could only sit and make noise, whether speech or music. By granting that music can be performed while sitting, the *Lunheng* implies that dance does not fall within the purview of the music master.[25] By contrast, the *li* office of the director of ancestral worship is one for which feet are required: the *li*-master must be able to hasten and to march. Again, as the *Lunheng* puts it, being one-footed is not "appropriate" (*yi* 宜).

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[24] Not surprisingly, in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Laozi*, the concept is reversed, and the ideal is not to leave traces. While chap. 4 of the *Zhuangzi* talks about walking without touching the ground, the *Laozi* promotes not leaving any footprints.

> 善行〔者〕無轍迹, 善言〔者〕無瑕讁.
> Those who are good at walking/deeds leave no tracks or footprints; those who are good at speaking leave no blemish or flaws.
> *Laozi* 老子 第二十七章

[25] Thus, while the *Shangshu* does not explicitly disqualify a one-footed person from the job, the *Lunheng* implies that it does.

Martin Kern observes that in imperial rituals in the Han, "the composers of melodies were not identical with those who submitted the lyrics; and both were again different from the actual singers and dancers." Kern, "The Poetry of Han Historiography," 55. In that case, a music master would not be expected to dance.

> 斷足無宜 . . . 今夔一足, 無因趨步.
> A chopped foot lacks appropriateness. . . . Now, Kui had one foot, he had nothing by which to hasten or march.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

Moreover, the *Liji* insists, music is about regulation, while *li* is about pattern. Hence a one-footed Kui might be skilled in musical measure but not *li* pattern. According to the *Liji*, regulation and pattern—perhaps we might say, timing and movement—are specific to different media, music and *li*. The association of pattern with visual media is evident in other early Chinese texts that align *li* 理 with things that can be seen. As the "Zhengming" chapter of the *Xunzi* explains, *li* is one of the things that the eyes differentiate.

> 形體色理以目異.
> Form, body, color, and pattern (*li* 理) are differentiated by the eyes.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

In its gloss of the term *li* 理, the "Jie Lao" chapter of the *Hanfeizi* includes at least two distinctions that are related to vision.

> 凡理者, 方圓、短長、麤靡、堅脆之分也.
> Patterns (*li* 理) are divisions of square/round, short/long, coarse/fine, and strong/fragile.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 解老第二十

Although strong/fragile is not necessarily experienced via sight, the first two qualities, square/round and short/long, are visual patterns, and coarse/fine is also amenable to visual apprehension. Hence Kui's defective *li* 理 is likely to be a deficiency in the sphere of vision.

Unlike many other music masters in Early China, Kui is not portrayed as blind, but he was evidently "visibly" impaired in a different way. As has already been noted, the *Lunheng* specifies Kui's disability.

> 斷足, 足非其理也. 且一足之人, 何用行也
> With a chopped foot, his feet would go against their pattern. And a person with one foot—how could he be used for acting/walking?
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

Pattern is important to *li* specialists not only as something they themselves see but also as something created by their own visible bodies for witnesses to observe. If Kui were one-footed, he would be unsightly. He would hop on one foot like the creature in the *Zhuangzi*. From the perspective of onlookers and those who follow in the sages' footprints, Kui would lack pattern.

If Kui had one foot only, he would not have been able to take his own measured sounds and integrate them into *li*. Again, as the *Mengzi* puts it, *li* is the gate to the road of duty. First, the *junzi* "walk the walk"; then, the small people observe the walking and seek to model their behavior on it. That the music master might be up to that task ignores the crucial functions of *li* action: Kui could provide no *li* patterning for spectators to view and emulate. Indeed, the very idea that the one thing Kui had was "sufficient" is itself a provocation. It reminds us that it is one thing to sit and make sounds and quite another to stand and produce observable actions that correspond to those sounds, an accusation that would be sensitive for the Ru masters of *li*.[26]

Kui's lameness would be irrelevant if *li* were a system of information or cultural meaning. Having only one foot would not affect his mastery of a system or script nor his ability to explain it to others. But if *li* is not a system but patterned, visible action, then the stories about Music Master Kui retain the power to disrupt some culturally acquired habits of thinking about bodies and language. Taking bodies seriously enough to notice the play of linguistic sound in Kui's story draws attention to the nature of *li* 禮: walking in patterns. *Li* are divisions (*fen* 分)—as the *Hanfeizi* glosses the term—that make visible arrangements. Perhaps the patterns resemble the cosmic array of moving stars. They are not, in any case, abstract, closed systems like synchronic slices of language or computer programs.

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[26] For example, consider the *Yantielun* (first century B.C.E.) passage that complains about the speech of the Ru being like blind people who sit and talk rather than getting up and acting on what they say.

> 盲者口能言白黑, 而無目以別之. 儒者口能言治亂, 無能以行之. 夫坐言不行, 則牧童兼烏獲之力, (逢須) 〔蓬頭〕苞堯、舜之德. 故使言而近, 則儒者何患於治亂, 而盲人何患於白黑哉? 言之不出, 恥 (窮) 〔躬〕之不逮. 故卑而言高, 能言而不能行者, 君子恥之矣.
> The blind can speak of white and black, but they do not have the eyes to separate (*bie* 別) them. The mouths of the Ru can speak about order and chaos, but they do not have the ability to act on them. Now, when seated talk is not acted on, then shepherd boys are joined with the strength of Wo Hou, and the long-beards possess the potencies of Yao and Shun. Therefore, if they were caused to speak about the near at hand, how could the Ru dither about order and chaos and how could the blind dither about white and black? If you do not speak things aloud, then the shame of not embodying (*gong* 躬) them will not catch up with you. Thus, cases where the lowly speak of the elevated and where there is an ability to speak but no ability to act: these are the sorts of things of which the *junzi* would be ashamed.
> *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論卷七《能言第四十》

Evoking the discussion in the *Xunzi* 27 ("Da Lüe"), the Ru in the passage protests that he has abilities to act. Thus the blind, the Ru, and the effectively lame (young shepherds and old long-beards) might be perceived to have something in common: while they can speak, they cannot act on it.

## Conclusion

Relying on dualisms like speech/writing hierarchies has led some twentieth-century Sinologists to misunderstand conceptions of "language" in Early China. We can dispense with their dualisms by adopting a perspective on "language" as it interacts with human bodies hearing, speaking, and acting. When we start, as Hansen recommends, from the "ancient Chinese point of view" and the "concrete focus of Chinese thought," we find no terminology for—or discussions of—script/performance or role/occupant. Through metaphors and rhetoric of the body, we also find no gap between language and reality or between code and action—a gap whose need to be filled encourages scholars to hypothesize that a language crisis might plausibly have occurred in Early China. Instead, we find an abundance of aural and visual parallels. Within them, the two sides—speaking and acting or hearing and seeing—are never so far apart that it seems impossible to match them. Thus, early Chinese texts provide not yet another modern view of "language" but a different perspective on a human capacity that has so routinely been understood in one way as to seem insusceptible to being conceived in any other.

## APPENDIX

# Glossary of Terms with Aural or Visual Associations

Nine terms in *Language as Bodily Practice in Early China: A Chinese Grammatology* whose aural or visual associations will benefit from further explication are listed here in alphabetical order. The glossary supports and continues, with additional examples, the argument I have developed in the text. For each term, I indicate whether it is paradigmatically aural or visual, and in some cases I provide counterexamples that constitute exceptions—either a change in usage over time or just an irregularity. An asterisk next to a word's first mention in each entry indicates that it, too, appears on the list.

***Cha*** 察 (*mainly visual*): examine, discern, discerning

*Cha* 察, when it appears alone, is often aligned with seeing. For example,

> 1.6 明足以察秋毫之末, 而不見輿薪.
> My eyesight is clear enough to *cha* 察 (examine) the tip of an autumn hair, but I do not see a wagon of firewood.
> *Mengzi* 孟子 〈〈梁惠王上〉〉

While *cha* 察 can involve other senses, including that of hearing, when hearing and seeing are explicitly contrasted, *cha* 察 is always allied with the eyes, as in the following.

> 夫聽聲有術, 則察色有數矣.
> Listening to sounds has a method,
> and *cha* 察 (examining) colors has a way of reckoning.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈實知篇〉〉

> 離婁之明, 不能察帷薄之內; 師曠之聰, 不能聞百里之外.
> The clear-sightedness of Li Lou cannot *cha* 察 (examine) inside a screen;
> the acute hearing of Shi Kuang cannot listen beyond a hundred *li*.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈書虛篇〉〉

> 聞審謂之聰 . . . 見察謂之明.
> Hearing and investigating is called keen-hearing (or judiciousness), . . .
> Seeing and *cha* 察 (examining) is called clear-sighted.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第四 宙合第十一

> 夫目察秋毫之末者, 耳不聞雷霆之聲.
> Now with eyes that *cha* 察 (discern) the tip of an autumn hair,
> the ears do not hear the sound of thunder.
> *Wenzi* 文子 九守 (also *Huainanzi* 淮南子 俶真訓)

> 故唯耶 (聖) 人能察无刑 (形), 能聽无聲.
> Therefore only the sage is able to *cha* 察 (examine) that which is without shape (*xing* 形) and able to listen (*ting* 聽) to that which is without sound.
> Mawangdui "Dao Yuan"
> 老子乙本卷前古佚書 馬王堆漢墓帛書・老子乙本卷前古佚書-道原

> 必審名察刑 (形).
> It is necessary to scrutinize the name/fame (*ming* 名*) and *cha* 察 (examine) the shape (*xing* 形).
> Mawangdui "Shun Dao"
> 老子乙本卷前古佚書 馬王堆漢墓帛書・老子乙本卷前古佚書-十六經 順道

In a few instances, when no direct contrast between hearing and seeing is involved, the ears can also be described as *cha*, as the next two examples show.

> 夫目之察度也, 不過步武尺寸之閒; 其察色也, 不過墨丈尋常之閒. 耳之察和也, 在清濁之閒; 其察清濁也, 不過一人之所勝.
> Now the eyes' *cha* 察 (discernment) of measurements does not exceed the area of several feet. And their *cha* 察 (discernment) of colors does not exceed the area of a few dozen feet.
> The ears' *cha* 察 (discernment) of harmony lies in the sphere of clear and turbid sounds. Their *cha* 察 (discernment) of clear and turbid does not exceed the limits of one person.
> *Guoyu* 周語 〈〈單穆公諫景王鑄大鍾〉〉

This is also evident in a later text, the *Chunqiu Fanlu*.

> 雖有察耳, 不吹六律, 不能定五音.
> Even with *cha* 察 (discerning) ears, if you do not blow the six pitch pipes, you cannot hear the five tones.
> *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露卷一 〈〈楚莊王第一〉〉

**Ci** 辭**; also ci** 詞 (*mainly aural*): phrases, phrasing

To some extent, the term *ci* 辭 (also *ci* 詞, which is interchangeable with *ci* 辭), is used similarly to *yan* 言* (speech), but in part *ci* 辭 differs from *yan* 言 insofar as it is also used to mean well-phrased.[1]

We can see that *ci* represents something that comes from the mouth in this passage from Yang Xiong's *Fayan*.

> 君子事之為尚. 事勝辭則伉, 辭勝事則賦, 事、辭稱則經. 足言足容, 德之藻矣！
> What the *junzi* esteems is service/deeds (*shi* 事*). When the service/deed (*shi* 事) wins out over the *ci* 辭 (phrasing), there is bluntness. When the *ci* 辭 (phrasing) wins out over the service/deed (*shi* 事), it is like the *fu* (the name of literary genre that Yang Xiong dislikes). When the service/deeds (*shi* 事) and the *ci* 辭 (phrasing) are balanced, it is a standard. Sufficient speaking (*yan* 言) and sufficient countenance (*rong* 容): that is the embellishment of *de* (power/virtue).[2]
> *Fayan* 法言 吾子卷第二

Just as speech (*yan* 言) balances with something visible (countenance, looks, *rong* 容), so does *ci* 辭 balance with something visual, service/deeds (*shi* 事). Therefore, balancing *ci* 辭 and *shi* 事 creates parity between something aural and something visual. Like speaking, *ci* 辭 also implicitly contrasts with *shi* 實* (fruit, action, deeds) in this set of two pairs of aural/visual reversals concerning a story of someone who wants a house built but who out-talks the carpenter who tries to explain to him, correctly, that the house will collapse.[3]

> 或直於辭而不（害）〔周〕於事者,
> 或虧於耳以忤於心而合於實者.
> Some people (the homeowner) are direct in their *ci* 辭 (phrasing) but not thorough about matters/deeds (*shi* 事).

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[1] One exception to the idea that *ci* 辭 is well-formulated speech appears to be an anomalous use of *ci* involving what we might want to call "one word" in the *Lunheng*.

> 故「毋」、「必」二辭, 聖人審之.
> Thus, as for "not" and "must," these two *ci* 辭, the sage examines them.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 《譴告篇》

See the discussion of the idea of a single unit of language in Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning* (forthcoming).

[2] Michael Nylan translates *shi* 事 here as "substance," but she notes that *shi* 事 could also be interpreted as deeds (事功), as in Wang Rongbao (汪榮寶), *Fayan yishu* 法言義疏 [Meaning and Subcommentary on Model Sayings] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987). Nylan, *Exemplary Figures*, 29.

[3] Major et al., *Huainanzi: A Guide*, 729.

> Some people (the carpenter) are deficient in tone (literally “ear” 耳) and stubborn of mind but in accord with action/thing (*shi* 實).
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 人間訓

The homeowner, a smooth talker (whose phrasing is impressive), does not understand construction, whereas the builder, a bumbling speaker, has difficulty conveying his opinions to others’ ears or heartminds, but his judgments are borne out when the house the homeowner has instructed him to build collapses.

*Ci* 辭 is often described in ways that suggest it is used to mean well-formed speech. In the next case, it is contrasted to sincere speech.

> 懇言則辭淺而不入, 深言則逆耳而失指.
> If speech (*yan* 言) is earnest, then there is shallow *ci* 辭 (phrasing) and it does not penetrate.
> If speech (*yan* 言) is deep, then there is grating on the ear and it loses the point.
> *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論 卷六 〈〈箴石第三十一〉〉

Another passage in the *Lunheng* contrasts the distinguishing (*bian* 辯) of the heartmind, which produces speech (*yan* 言), to that of the mouth, which produces phrasing (*ci* 辭), implying that both heartmind and mouth should engage in distinguishing. It suggests that *ci* 辭 is sometimes used to mean unreliably stylized phrasing:

> 心辯則言醜而不違, 口辯則辭好而無成.
> If the heartmind distinguishes, then the speaking (*yan* 言) is ugly, but it does not violate; If the mouth distinguishes, then the *ci* 辭 (phrasing) is pleasant, but it does not come to completion.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈定賢篇〉〉

Both *ci* 辭 and *yan* 言 (speech) are used to mean that which proclaims the *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind).[4] The *Lüshichunqiu* treats *ci* 辭 and *yan* 言 as having the same purpose in relation to *yi* 意, that is, to reveal it.

> 言者, 以諭意也.
> 夫辭者, 意之表也.
> Speech (*yan* 言) is for proclaiming what is on the heartmind (*yi* 意).
> *Ci* 辭 (phrasings) are displays of what is on the heartmind (*yi* 意).
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 〈〈離謂〉〉

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[4] As I discuss in chaps. 5, 6, and 9 above, and in the sections on *ming* 名 and *yan* 言 below, *ming* differ from *yan* insofar as they do not express or proclaim the *yi* 意. This is an argument from absence, the point being that *ming* are not used in close connection to *yi*. I consider the rare, possible counterexamples in Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

Glossing the graph *ci* 詞, which is interchangeable with *ci* 辭, the *Shuowen Jiezi* says that it is *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind) on the inside and speech on the outside.

> 詞: 意內而言外也.
> *Ci* 詞: what is on the heartmind (*yi* 意) on the inside, and speech (*yan* 言) on the outside.
> *Shuowen Jiezi* 《說文解字》

*Ci* 辭 (*phrases*) proclaim the *yi* 意 in the *Xunzi*'s version of what I call the "tripartite division of argument."

> 名也者、所以期累實也. 辭也者、兼異實之名以 (論) 〔諭〕一意也. 辨說也者, 不異實名以喻動靜之道也.
> Names/naming (*ming* 名*) is that by which one arranges[5] accumulated[6] actions/things (*shi* 實).
> With *ci* 辭: Compound the names (*ming* 名) of different actions/things (*shi* 實) in order to proclaim one intention (*yi* 意, what is on the heartmind).
> With distinguishing explanations (*bianshuo* 辨說): Do not[7] differentiate actions/things (*shi* 實) from names (*ming* 名) in order to elucidate the dao of movement and stillness.
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

In another example, where *ci* 辭 is used to mean well-formed speaking, the *Lunheng* distinguishes it from, while also comparing it to, the formation of inscriptions on rocks:

> 刻為文, 言為辭, 辭之與文, 一實也. 民刻文, 氣發言.
> Carvings make inscriptions.
> Speaking (*yan* 言) makes *ci* 辭 (phrasing).
> *Ci* 辭 (phrasing) and inscriptions are one action/thing (*shi* 實).
> People carve inscriptions. *Qi* 氣 expresses (*fa* 發) speech.[8]
> *Lunheng* 論衡 《紀妖篇》

Thus, this is an aural/visual parallel in which *ci* 辭 are embellished forms of speech comparable to inscriptions that are decorative forms of carving.

In later texts, *ci* 辭 (phrasing) might also be used to discuss written words. In the *Taixuanjing*, for instance, readers observe the *ci* 辭 of a text with the expectation that the phrases will exhibit its motivations, which in this case is likely to mean looking at graphs because the reader performs a series of visual acts.

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[5] The term *qi* 期 is used frequently and obscurely in the "Zhengming" chapter.

[6] It is possible that this graph should be *yi* 異, meaning "different things, actions"; hence, the translation is uncertain.

[7] The graph for "not" here is arguably extraneous.

[8] It is worth noting that the source of speech here is *qi* 氣, not the heartmind.

> 不沈則其意不見. 是故文以見乎質, 辭以睹乎情, 觀其施辭, 則其心之所欲者見矣.
> Were it [the *Taixuanjing* itself] not deep, its intentions (*yi* 意) would not reveal anything.
> For this reason, pattern is used to see (*jian* 見) into the simple;
> and *ci* 辭 (phrasing) to look into (*du* 睹) the motivations (*qing* 情).[9]
> If we take a close look (*guan* 觀) at the *ci* 辭 (phrases) it lays out, then surely its heartmind's desires will be revealed. (Michael Nylan translation, modified.)[10]
> *Taixuanjing* 太玄經 87〈太玄瑩〉

***Guan*** 觀 (*mostly visual*): observe

*Guan* 觀 is a term that can be used more generally as "observe," but the following cases show a specific tendency to use the term for visual entities:

> 5.10 始吾於人也, 聽其言而信其行; 今吾於人也, 聽其言而觀其行.
> In the beginning, with other people, I listened to their speech (*yan* 言*) and trusted their actions (*xing* 行*). Nowadays, with other people, I listen to their speech (*yan* 言) and *guan* 觀 (observe) their actions.
> *Lunyu* 論語〈公冶長〉第五

> 今聽言觀行.
> Now, listen to the speech (*yan* 言) and *guan* 觀 (observe) the action (*xing* 行).
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 問辯第四十一

> 明主聽其言必責其用, 觀其行必求其功.
> An astute ruler, when listening to their speech (*yan* 言), must make it responsible to its uses; when *guan* 觀 (observing) their action (*xing* 行), must seek their results.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 六反第四十六

> 2.28 發而安中者言也, 久而可觀者行也.
> What is expressed and pacifies the center/interior is speech (*yan* 言).
> What endures and can be *guan* 觀 (observed) is action (*xing* 行).
> *Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳卷第二

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[9] For this translation of *qing* 情, see above chap. 1, n. 11.

[10] Nylan, *Canon of Supreme Mystery by Yang Hsiung*, 436.

> 17.58 聾者不謌, 無以自樂; 盲者不觀, 無以接物.
> The deaf do not sing. They lack that which automates music.
> The blind do not observe (*guan* 觀). They lack that which connects to things (*wu* 物).
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說林訓 (also *Wenzi* 上德)
>
> 聖人矢口而成言, 肆筆而成書, 言可聞而不可殫, 書可觀而不可盡.
> Sages [shoot] arrows from their mouths and thereby bring their *yan* 言 to completion.
> They let loose their brushes and thereby bring their writings to completion.
> Their speech (*yan* 言) can be heard and cannot be depleted.
> Their writings can be *guan* 觀 (discerned) and cannot be exhausted.
> *Fayan* 法言 五百卷第八

Thus, *guan* 觀 is used to mean paradigmatically visual observation.[11]

***Ming*** 名 (*audible*): generally personal names, titles, naming

In texts from Early China, *ming* 名 is not used to signify a written graph (although there are two rare exceptions that, as I have argued, reflect attempts on the part of early Chinese writers and scribes to select a standard term to mean

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[11] In support of my contention, the *Mo Bian* uses the same phrase twice to describe *qin* 親 (up close or in person) with *guan* (身觀焉, 親也). First, it lists three kinds of knowing:

> 10.1.62 知、(間)〔聞〕、說、親.
> Knowing: Hearing, explaining, and *qin* (up-close, in person).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1《經上第四十》

It is possible that this means that up-close (*qin* 親) knowing is either hearing or seeing. But if that were the case, why would hearing be listed as its own form of knowing, whereas seeing is not? Given that the first two kinds of knowing are both related to sound, it seems likely that at least one form of knowing would focus on sight. The Explanation seems to make that assertion by saying the body's knowing is observing (*guan* 觀) "up-close" (*qin* 親).

> 10.3.76 知. 傳受之, 聞也. 方不㢓, 說也. 身觀焉, 親也.
> Knowing: Receiving it by transmission: is hearing. Square does not (unknown graph, possibly *zhang* 㢓): is explaining. The body-person *guan* 觀 (observes) it: is up close (*qin* 親).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3《經說上第四十二》

Because *guan* 觀 is generally used with vision, this could imply that up-close knowing is visual observation in particular. The only example the *Mo Bian* uses for *qin* 親 "up-close knowing" involves seeing. Someone outside a room has "up-close knowing" of a color.

"graph").[12] The evidence that *ming* 名 is not used for "graph" derives mainly from the constant contrasts of *ming* 名 to something visual.

Texts from Early China typically use the term *ming* 名 to mean personal names as well as titles. The *Liji* includes "*ming* 名" in a list of certain kinds of names to denote a personal name given in childhood:

> 3.56 幼名, 冠字, 五十以伯仲, 死謚, 周道也.
> Youth *ming* 名 (name), the capping name (*zi* 字), "elder uncle" or "younger uncle" at fifty years, and honorary titles after death (*shi* 謚): these were the way of the Zhou.
> *Liji* 禮記〈檀弓上〉

While *ming* 名 are personal names, their vocal descriptions attest that they are not graphs assigned at birth. The *Baihutong* notes that *ming* 名 permit people to cough up (*tu* 吐) their motivations or feelings.[13]

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> 10.4.69 外, 親智也. 室中, 說智也.
> The outside is up-close (in-person, *qin* 親) knowing. Inside the room is knowing by explaining.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.4〈〈經說下第四十三〉〉

In another case, in what appears to be a contrast to secondhand information, the *Mo Bian* describes knowing "in person" as the body-person observing.

> 10.3.78 聞. 或告之, 傳也. 身觀焉, 親也.
> Hearing: Someone telling it: is by transmission. The body-person *guan* 觀 (observes) it: is up close (*qin* 親).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3〈〈經說上第四十二〉〉

On the other hand, the hypothesis that *guan* 觀 is thus aligned with seeing is complicated by the fact that the *Mo Bian* 10.1.65, repeating the same phrase, also presents *qin* 親 as one of two kinds of hearing. Moreover, A. C. Graham mentions a case from the *Mozi* (not the *Mo Bian*) of hearing the sound of something up close. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic*, 329. The use of *qinwen* 親聞 that he refers to is its only occurrence in pre-Qin texts, however, and seeing up close (*qinjian* 親見) is significantly more common.

[12] For an explanation for the rare exceptions, see Geaney, "Grounding 'Language' in the Senses," 251–93.

[13] The orality of this image might seem to counter my claim that early Chinese texts associate *ming* with externality rather than self-expression, but two things argue against it. First, the first-century *Baihutong* is a late text relative to others I consider here. Second, and more importantly, in the context of this passage, displaying one's motivations is the default explanation for non-specific features of social protocol. For instance, just as *ming*'s purpose is to reveal one's motivations "for the reverential service of others," so too saluting (*bai* 拜)—a visual gesture—is said to reveal one's motivations and intentions (*biaoqing jianyi* 表情見意) "for the reverential service of others."

> 人必有名何? 所以吐情自紀, 尊事人者也.
> Why must people have *ming* 名 (names)? To spew forth one's feelings/motivations (*qing* 情)[14] for the reverential service of others.
> *Baihutong* 白虎通 姓名

Babies are sometimes born with *ming* 名 written on their hands, but the writing itself is not *ming* 名. In every such case in the *Zuozhuan*, the text refers to the writing as *wen* 文 (visible pattern/writing).[15] When a baby is named, the vocal articulation of that name constitutes its *ming*. The ruler names the child by means of some kind of sound.

> 12.46 適子庶子見於外寢, 撫其首, 咳而名之.
> A [second] son or any other son by the wife proper was presented in the outer chamber, when [the ruler] laid his hand on its head, and with gentle voice named (*ming* 名) it. (James Legge translation.)[16]
> *Liji* 禮記 〈內則〉

*Ming* 名, which are audible, pair with visible things. The *Guoyu* notes that the ears are for *ming*:

> 夫目以處義, 足以踐德, 口以庇信, 耳以聽名者也.
> Now the eyes are for dwelling in duty. The feet are for treading virtue. The mouth is for guarding trustworthiness. The ears are for listening to/obeying *ming* 名 (titles/decrees).
> *Guoyu* 周語 《單襄公論晉將有亂》; also, *Xin Shu* 卷十 10.2 禮容語下

Expanding on the same idea, the *Xin Shu* adds,

> 視遠, (曰) 〔日〕絕其義 . . . 聽淫, (曰) 〔日〕離其名.
> To look into the distance is called cutting short one's duty. . . . Listening to looseness (*yin* 淫) is called departing from one's *ming* 名 (name, title).
> *Xin Shu* 新書 賈誼新書卷十 《禮容語下》

We hear names because we hear reputations. In the following two examples, hearing someone's reputation pairs with seeing the person's body.

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[14] See n. 9 above.

[15] See *Zuozhuan* chap. "Min Gong" 閔公 B4.2.4, chap. "Zhao Gong" 昭公 B10.1.12, and chap. "Zhao Gong" 昭公 B10.32.4.

[16] Legge, *Li Chi: Book of Rites*, vol. 1, 474–75.

> 聞子之名, 不　子之形, 久矣！
> For a long time, I have heard your *ming* 名 (name), but have not observed your shape (*xing* 形)!
> *Kongzijiayu* 孔子家語 本姓解第三十九
>
> 名不可得而聞, 身不可得而見, 其惟江上之丈人乎?
> He whose *ming* 名 (name/fame) cannot be gotten (*de* 得) and heard, and whose body-person (*shen* 身)[17] cannot be gotten and seen: this could only be the old man on the banks of the Yangzi.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孟冬紀第十《異寶》

Although part or all of the following passage might date to a later time, it is instructive in that it explicitly shows names to be oral/aural (echoes) in relation to things that are visible (shadows).

> 言美則響美, 言惡則響惡; 身長則影長, 身短則影短.
> 名也者、響也, (身)〔行〕也者、影也.
> If the speech (*yan* 言*) is good, then the echo is good. If the speech (*yan* 言) is bad, then the echo is bad. If the body-person (*shen* 身) is long, then the shadow is long, if the body-person (*shen* 身) is short, then the shadow is short. *Ming* 名 (name) are echoes. Bodies-persons (*shen* 身) [or, as emended in the CHANT database, *xing* 行*] are shadows.
> *Liezi* 列子 說符第八

Names paired with visual items align with speech paired with various things that can be seen.

> 夫以實 (告)〔害〕我者, 秦也, 以名救我者, 楚也.
> 聽楚之虛言而輕 (誣) 強秦之實禍, 則危國之本也.
> [The state of] Qin is harassing us in deed (*shi* 實*) while Chu is rescuing us in *ming* 名 (name). If we listen to the empty speech (*yan* 言) of Chu and make light of forceful Qin's fulfilled (*shi* 實) calamity, that is the root of endangering the state.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 十過第十
>
> 故視而可見者, 形與色也; 聽而可聞者, 名與聲也.
> Thus, that which can be seen from looking is shape (*xing* 形) and color. That which can be heard by listening is *ming* 名 (name/fame) and sound.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 天道第十三

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[17] See chap. 7, n. 16, for this translation of *shen* 身.

> 道也者, 視之不見, 聽之不聞 . . . 不可為形, 不可為名.
> Regarding the dao, we look for it, but do not see [it], and we listen for it, but do not hear [it]. . . . it cannot be given shape (*xing* 形), it cannot be given a *ming* 名 (name).
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 仲夏紀第五 《大樂》

> 名不可得而聞, 身不可得而見.
> . . . [his] *ming* 名 (name/fame) could not be heard,
> [his] body-person (*shen* 身) could not be seen.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 孟冬紀第十 《異寶》

When the *Mo Bian* says that the name of something (what it is called) mates with its *shi*, the pairing signifies that audible naming is matched with a visible action/thing that it names.

> 10.3.77 所以謂, 名也. 所謂, 實也. 名實耦, 合也.
> That by which something is called is the *ming* 名 (name).
> What is called is the action (*shi* 實). The mating of *ming* 名 (name) and *shi* 實 (fruit, action, deed) is uniting.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.3 《經說上第四十二》

Thus, early Chinese texts consistently use *ming* 名 as something that is audible.

My rebuttal to the assumption that early Chinese texts use *ming* 名 to mean "word" is two-pronged: first, *ming* 名 is certainly used to signify "name," which is not the same as "word," and second, word-types are not obvious categories.[18] A name appears to be a relatively obvious category: a tag for a person or thing. Words, on the other hand, are theoretical abstractions. Even definitions of a word are contested. Those definitions might, broadly speaking, contrast "words" to "names" in two ways: (1) those that distinguish names from words by highlighting the grammatical or semantic functions of words, and (2) those that stress the idea that a word is a unit of language, perhaps a minimally meaningful one. Both of these approaches, however, presume theorizing about language in ways that are not characteristic of early Chinese texts, which do not postulate the idea of grammar or analyze the nature of semantic meaning as such. Moreover, the texts that generally seem to belong to earlier periods exhibit no investment in positing uniform terms for specific units of what we call "language." "One *ming* 名" for instance, is sometimes the same as, and at other times different from, "one *yan* 言." If *ming* 名 were being used to mean "word" and *yan* 言 to mean "language," then "one *yan*

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[18] See Geaney, *Emergence of Word-Meaning*.

言" would mean "one language"; it would not sometimes be used to refer to the same thing as "one *ming* 名." In part, establishing standards for such units is what characterizes the abstraction "language."

Another significant difference between uses of *ming* 名 (name) and *yan* 言 (speech) should dissuade us from thinking about *ming* as word-types. Rather than stressing grammar, semantic features, or unit-hood, early Chinese texts subtly distinguish *ming* 名 from *yan* 言 on the basis of the area from which they proceed. As explained in chapter 9, *yan* 言 emerge from inside the person: from the mouth and the heart. By contrast, *ming* 名 are typically heard outside and imposed from outside (sometimes by a ruler as a title or command). In other words, *yan* 言 has an expressive function, but *ming* 名 does not.

***Shi*** **事** (*visual*): service, deeds, affairs, matters

*Shi* 事 (service, deeds, affairs, matters) is substituted for *shi* 實* (action, thing) and is used for things that are visible.

The visibility of *shi* 事 and its transposition with *shi* 實 are evident in the passage cited above from the *Huainanzi* (淮南子 人間訓) concerning a man who persuades a carpenter to build a house. The phrasing (*ci* 辭*) represents audible skills; the matter at hand (the house) and the deed (building it) are visible phenomena. Lacking aural skills (defective with regard to the ears) and lacking action (*shi* 事 and *shi* 實), in this case the building of a house, form a pair.

*Shi* 事 contrasts to *ming* in the following examples, suggesting aural/visual pairs like *ming* 名 and *shi* 實 (action, thing) or *ming* 名 and *xing* 形 (shape):

> 使名自命, 令事自定.
> Make names (*ming* 名) ordered of themselves.
> Make *shi* 事 (service) settled of itself.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 揚權第八 and 主道第五
>
> 有言者自為名, 有事者自為形.
> Those who possess *yan** (speech) make themselves a name (*ming* 名).
> Those who possess *shi* 事 (service) make themselves a shape (*xing* 形).
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 主道第五
>
> 臣任力, 同其忠而無爭其利, 不失其事而無有其名.
> In the ministers' bearing of their power, they are the same in their loyalty and do not contend about profit, they do not neglect their *shi* 事 (service), but do not have its reputation (*ming* 名).
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第四 宙合第十一

A potentially much later passage included in the *Chunqiu Fanlu*, compiled between the fourth and sixth centuries, is unusual insofar as it associates *shi* 事 with hearing.

> 王者貌曰恭, 恭者、敬也.
> 言曰從, 從者可從. 視曰明, 明者知賢不肖者, 分明黑白也.
> 聽曰聰, 聰者能聞事而審其意也.
> The king's expression (*mao* 貌) is said to be respectful. Those who are respectful are reverent.
> His speech (*yan* 言) is said to be compliant. Those who are compliant should be followed.
> His sight is said to be clear. Those who are clear know the virtuous and unworthy [as if] separating and clarifying black and white.
> His listening is said to be keen of hearing (or judicious). Those who have keen hearing can listen to an event (*shi* 事) and examine its intent (*yi* 意).
> *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露卷十四 《五行五事第六十四》[19]

The assumption that a *shi* 事 is a deed or thing about which people speak might account for such an alignment of *shi* 事 with hearing:

> 聽言之道 必以其事觀之
> The way of listening to speech (*yan* 言) is certainly using its *shi* 事 (service/deeds) to observe (*guan* 觀*) it.
> *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第二 《禮察第四十六》

The possibly forged "Heng Xian" uses *shi* 事 (deeds/service) as the visible pair term for audible names (*ming* 名*). Note in particular that, if these are aural/visual parallels in the first and last two lines, they might suggest that *ming* and *shi* 事 might stand in for the more familiar pair of *ming* and *shi* 實:[20]

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[19] Modified from a translation by Queen and Major, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*, 488.

[20] William Baxter and Laurent Sagart's reconstructions are *shi* 事 (*[m-s-]rəəʔ-s) and *shi* 實 (*məə.li[t]). Baxter and Sagart, *Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction*, version 1.1 (20 September 2014), http://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf, 100.

I am grateful to Wolfgang Behr for explaining that, because identity/proximity of the lexical root (i.e., *rəʔ and *lit in this case) is what matters for loan and phonetic relations, this is unlikely to be a pun. The only shared element is the root vowel *-ə- and the prefix *m(ə)-, already on its way to obsolescence during the Warring States period.

> 名出於言, 事出於名 . . . 言非言, 無謂言. 名非名, 無謂名. 事非事, 無謂事.
> Names (*ming* 名) emerge from speech (*yan* 言).
> *Shi* 事 (deeds/service) emerge from names (*ming* 名).
> . . . If speech (*yan* 言) is not speech, it is not called speech.
> If names (*ming* 名) are not names, they are not called names.
> If *shi* 事 (deeds/service) is not *shi* 事, it is not called *shi* 事.[21]
> "Heng Xian" 《恒先》四

***Shi*** 實 (*visual*): fruit, action, deeds

This entry expands on my discussion of the visual associations of *shi* 實 in chapter 2. A *shi* is a fruit or grain. Patterns in early Chinese texts show *shi* 實 to be something seen by the eyes, in parallel to names being heard by the ears. Like fruit and grain, a *shi* 實 fills space by growing and expanding its contours, making it visible. We can see the assumption that *shi* is paradigmatically visible when certain passages interchange names and actions (*ming* 名* and *xing* 行*) for names and *shi* 實, and when they use the terms speech (*yan* 言*) and *shi* 實 instead of speech and action (*xing*). More directly, there are passages such as these that mention seeing *shi* 實.

> 有華言矣, 未見其實也.
> [This] is having flowery speech but not yet seeing its *shi* 實 (fruits).
> *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論卷五《相刺第二十》

> 嬰聞察實者不留聲, 觀行者不譏辭.
> I, Ying, have heard that one who examines (*cha* 察*) the *shi* 實 (action/thing) does not pay attention to sound.
> One who observes (*guan* 觀) the enacting (*xing* 行) does not criticize the phrasing.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 先識覽第四《觀世》

Some examples in which *shi* 實 pertains to a human being contrast hearsay to seeing *shi* 實 "in the flesh."

> 臣聞古人有辭天下而無恨色者, 臣聞其聲, 於王而見其實.
> I, your minister, have heard of people of old who gave up the world with no regret on their faces. I have heard the sound [of such people] and in you I see its *shi* 實.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 貴直論第三《過理》(see also *Xin Xu* 新序 雜事第五)

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[21] The translation is tentative. See also Brindley, Goldin, and Klein, "A Philosophical Translation of the *Heng Xian*," 145–51.

A different sense of seeing someone's *shi* 實 occurs in the context of a question about whether a person had died.

> 少君之死, 臨尸者雖非太史公, 足以見其實矣.
> When Li Shao Jun died, although the Grand Annalist was not among those who approached the corpse, he was close enough to see its *shi* 實.
> *Lunheng* 論衡 〈〈道虛篇〉〉

Even if this use of *shi* 實 is interpreted as "its reality," rather than the dead person's visible form, it still indicates that a *shi* 實 is something that is seen.

***Wu*** 物 (*generally both aural and visual, but sometimes specifically visual*): a thing in general

On the one hand, *wu* 物 (thing) is used to mean a thing in general. As such, it has both aural and visual aspects. For example, when the *Zhuangzi* considers whether something (either life or the dao) should be characterized by *shi* (fullness) or emptiness, it treats having a name (*ming* 名*) and an action/thing (*shi* 實*) as what constitutes being a located *wu* 物 (thing):

> 有名有實, 是物之居. 是物之居; 无名无實, 在物之虛.
> It has a name (*ming* 名) and it has an action/thing (*shi* 實), this is residence of a *wu* 物.
> Not having a name and not having an action/thing, this is in the emptiness of a *wu* 物.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 則陽第二十五

On the other hand, the "Xingzimingchu" aligns *wu* 物 with vision in particular by characterizing a *wu* as anything that is visible:

> 凡見者之謂物.
> Anything that can be seen is called a *wu* 物.
> "Xingzimingchu" 〈〈性自命出〉〉一 (see also "Xingqinglun" 〈〈性情論〉〉七)

This passage in the *Guoyu* also implies a specific association with visual things.

> 聲一無聽, 物一無文, 味一無果, 物一不講.
> If sounds are all one, there is no listening.
> If *wu* 物 are all one, there is no ornamentation (*wen* 文).
> If tastes are all one, there is no fruit.
> If *wu* 物 are all one, there is no thoroughness.
> *Guoyu* 國語 鄭語 〈〈史伯為桓公論興衰〉〉

Although the last line seems to use *wu* 物 to mean anything, the second connects it to visible patterns. The *Huainanzi* contains a visual use.

> 17.58 聾者不謌, 無以自樂; 盲者不觀, 無以接物.
> The deaf do not sing. They lack that which automates music.
> The blind do not observe (*guan* 觀*). They lack that which connects to *wu* 物 (things).
> *Huainanzi* 淮南子 說林訓 (The same line occurs in the *Wenzi* 文子 上德.)

In two parallel passages about the officers in charge of hearing and seeing, the *Zuozhuan* aligns *wu* 物 with vision. The officer of hearing is addressed first:

> B10.9.5「女為君耳, 將司聰也. 辰在子、卯, 謂之疾日, 君徹宴樂, 學人舍業, 為疾故也. 君之卿佐, 是謂股肱. 股肱或虧, 何痛如之? 女弗聞而樂, 是不聰也. 」
> "You are the ruler's ears, and in command of the management of keen-hearing. The cyclical day of Zimao is called a baneful day. Because of the banefulness, the ruler does not have feasts or music, and learners give up their business of studying. The ruler's officers and assistants are called his limbs. If a limb is deficient, what pain is like it? You did not hear and are making music. That is not keen-hearing."
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 昭公 B10.9 《昭公九年傳》

Next, the officer of vision is held to account:

> B10.9.5「女為君目, 將司明也. 服以旌禮, 禮以行事, 事有其物, 物有其容. 今君之容, 非其物也; 而女不見, 是不明也. 」
> 「女為君目, 將司明也. 服以旌禮, 禮以行事, 事有其物, 物有其容. 今君之容, 非其物也; 而女不見, 是不明也. 」
> "You are the ruler's eyes, and in command of the management of clear seeing. Clothes are for manifesting *li*, and *li* is for enacting tasks (*xing shi* 行 事). Serving (*shi* 事) involves *wu* 物 (things), and *wu* 物 (things) have their visible features (*rong* 容). Now the ruler's visible features (*rong* 容) are contrary to the matter (*wu* 物). You did not see. That is not clear-sighted."

A more tentative connection of *wu* 物 to vision is implied in the following two passages.

> 物有同狀而異所者, 有異狀而同所者, 可別也. 狀同而為異所者, 雖可合, 謂之二實. 狀變而實無別而為異者, 謂之化. 有化而無別, 謂之一實.
> Things (*wu* 物) include those of the same look (*zhuang* 狀) and different locations and those of a different look in the same location, which can

> be separated (*bie* 別). If the look is the same but the location is deemed different, although they can be united, call them two *shi* 實 (fruit/action/deeds). If the look changes but the *shi* 實 (fruit, action, deed) has no separation (*bie* 別), although it is deemed different, call it transformed. If it is transformed but there is no separation (*bie* 別), call it one *shi* 實 (fruit/action/deeds).
> *Xunzi* 荀子 正名篇第二十二

If we keep in mind that *shi* 實 (action/thing) is paradigmatically visible, that *zhuang* 狀 (one's look) is visible appearance, and that locations tend to be perceived through the eyes, then *wu* 物 is discussed as if it falls within the visible range.

In the following passage, the *wu* 物 seems more directly related to the shape (*xing* 形) than it is to the name (*ming* 名).

> 物固有形, 形固有名.
> *Wu* firmly possess shapes (*xing* 形). Shapes (*xing* 形) firmly possess *ming* 名 (name, fame).
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術上第三十六

In short, a *wu* 物 seems to signal primarily visual things and sometimes things more generally.

***Xing*** 行 (*visual*): walk, act

This entry expands on my discussion of the visual associations of *xing* 行 in chapter 7. The term *xing* 行, which is typically visual, is used to mean to "walk" or to "act."

> 然後聖人聽其言, 迹其行, 察其所能.
> Afterward, the sages listened to their *yan* 言, retraced their action (*xing* 行), and examined (*cha* 察) their capabilities.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷二 2.2 〈〈尚賢中第九〉〉

While nonhumans are also able to *xing* 行, when the term is used in relation to humans in particular, it can also be translated as "conduct" or the more general "behavior." For the purposes of my argument, however, those translations are misleading, for both "conduct" and "behavior" can be taken to mean what people say as well as what they do. Or perhaps more to the point, from the perspective of performative language, "saying" can be taken to mean "doing." Because, as I argue, texts from Early China consistently demonstrate a parallelism (often in the form of a contrast) between saying and doing, translations that potentially conflate the two obscure a crucial feature of early Chinese ideas about "language." Translating *xing* as "action" does not entirely evade that problem, but it seems to be the best way to signal a difference between the sounds that people make and their (visible) bodily actions.[22]

**Yan** 言 (*aural*): speech

To fully appreciate the difference between uses of the terms *yan* 言 (speech) and "language," it is important to note that people's character and intentions are reflected in their *yan* 言.

> 言、身之文也.
> *Yan* 言 (speech) is the embellishment of the body-person (*shen* 身).
> *Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 僖公 B5.24 〈〈僖公二十四年傳〉〉

The link between *yan* 言 and the body-person is even more apparent when *yan* emerges from the mouth.

> 惡言出於口.
> Bad *yan* 言 (speech) emerges from the mouth.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十一 小稱第三十二

> 4.70 其言吶吶然如不出諸其口.
> His *yan* 言 (speech) was like stuttering, as if he could not get it out of his mouth.
> *Liji* 禮記〈檀弓下〉

> 25.36 壹出言而不敢忘父母, 是故惡言不出於口, 忿言不反於身.
> In emitting (*chu* 出) one *yan* 言 (speech), he should not forget his parents, and thus bad *yan* 言 would not emerge from his mouth, and angry *yan* 言 would not reflect on his body-person (*shen* 身).
> *Liji* 禮記〈祭義〉

> 氣發言.
> *Qi* issues forth (*fa* 發) *yan* 言.
> *Lunheng* 論衡〈〈紀妖篇〉〉

The verbs describe *yan* 言 as being "emitted" (*chu* 出) or "issued" (*fa* 發). We do not say that "language" emerges from the body; hence, either the abstraction "language" is not an appropriate translation term or, conversely, its use for *yan* in early Chinese texts requires us to reconceive what we mean by language.

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[22] See also Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses*, 50–84.

2.28 發而安中者言也, 久而可觀者行也.
*Yan* 言 is what is issued (*fa* 發) and pacifies the center.
Actions (*xing* 行*) are what endure and can be observed (*guan* 觀*).
*Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳卷第二

11.1 出言陳辭, 身之得失, 國之安危也.
Emitting (*chu* 出) *yan* 言 and arranging phrases (*ci* 辭*) are the person's gain or loss and the state's peace or danger.
*Shouyuan* 說苑 善說

7.24 先生何為出此言也?
Master, why do you emit (*chu* 出) such *yan* 言?
*Mengzi* 孟子 《離婁上》

In accordance with being something that comes out of the mouth, *yan* 言 is sound, which parallels between hearing and seeing make apparent.

12.20 察言而觀色.
[A person of achievement (*da* 達)] examines (*cha* 察) people's *yan* 言 and observes (*guan* 觀) their faces.
*Lunyu* 論語〈顏淵〉第十二

孝子言為可聞, 行為可見.
Filial children's *yan* 言 is what is possible to hear, and their actions (*xing* 行) are what is possible to see.
*Xunzi* 荀子 大略篇第二十七

5.10 今吾於人也, 聽其言而觀其行.
Nowadays, in my dealings with others, upon listening to their *yan* 言, I observe (*guan* 觀) their action (*xing* 行).
*Lunyu* 論語〈公冶長〉第五

2.18 多聞闕疑, 慎言其餘, 則寡尤;
多見闕殆, 慎行其餘, 則寡悔.
If you listen (*wen* 聞) broadly, set aside the doubtful, and cautiously *yan* 言 on the rest, you will make few errors.
If you look (*jian* 見) broadly, set aside what is perilous, and cautiously act (*xing* 行) on the rest, you will have few regrets.
*Lunyu* 論語〈為政〉第二

然後聖人聽其言, 迹其行, 察其所能.
Afterward, the sages listened to their *yan* 言, retraced their action (*xing* 行), and examined (*cha* 察) their capabilities.
*Mozi* 墨子卷二 2.2《尚賢中第九》

辯士〔之〕言可聽也, 其所以言不可形也.
The *yan* 言 of disputing scholars can be heard, but their "that by which" they *yan* 言 cannot be given form (*xing* 形).
*Huainanzi* 淮南子 齊俗訓

13.16 及其聞一善言, 見一善行, 若決江河, 沛然莫之能禦也.
When he heard a single good *yan* 言, or saw a single good action (*xing* 行), he was like the bursting of a stream or a river, so overwhelming that none could withstand it.
*Mengzi* 孟子《盡心上》

7.15 聽其言也, 觀其眸子, 人焉廋哉?
Listen to a person's *yan* 言 and observe (*guan* 觀) his/her pupils: how can the person be concealed?
*Mengzi* 孟子《離婁上》

聽言之道 必以其事觀之
The way of listening to *yan* 言 is certainly using its service/deeds (*shi* 事) to observe (*guan* 觀) it.
*Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記卷第二《禮察第四十六》

References to writing in later texts continue to align *yan* 言 (speech) with sound.

言、心聲也, 書、心畫也.
*Yan* is the sound of the heartmind (*xin* 心), and writing is the paintings of the heartmind.
*Fayan* 法言 問神卷第五

聖人矢口而成言, 肆筆而成書, 言可聞而不可殫, 書可觀而不可盡.
Sages [shoot] arrows from their mouths and thereby bring their *yan* 言 to completion.
They let loose their brushes and thereby bring their writings to completion.
Their *yan* 言 can be heard and cannot be depleted.
Their writings can be observed (*guan* 觀) and cannot be exhausted.
*Fayan* 法言 五百卷第八

To expand on my discussion of the association of *yan* 言 and *yi* 意 in chapters 5 and 6, as something that issues from, emerges from, proclaims, or expresses something about a person, *yan* 言 is a source for getting *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind).

> 意出於性, 言出於意.
> *Yi* 意 emerges from spontaneous character (*xing* 性).[23]
> *Yan* 言 emerges from *yi* 意.
> "Heng Xian" 《恒先》四

The *Zhuangzi* asserts that the purpose of speech lies in the *yi* 意 (what is on the heartmind).

> 言者所以在意, 得意而忘言.
> The purpose of *yan* 言 is in the *yi* 意.
> [We/I] get the *yi* 意 and forget the *yan* 言.
> *Zhuangzi* 莊子 外物第二十六

The *Lüshichunqiu* features a similar claim that extends the assertion about speech to one about phrases (*ci* 辭).

> 言者, 以諭意也. 夫辭者, 意之表也.
> 鑒其表而棄其意、悖. 故古之人, 得其意則舍其言矣. 聽言者以言觀意也. 聽言而意不可知, 其與橋言無擇.
> *Yan* 言 is for proclaiming *yi* 意.
> Phrasings (*ci* 辭) are displays of *yi* 意.
> To reflect on the display but discard the *yi* 意 is unruliness. Thus, people of old discarded the *yan* 言 when they obtained the *yi* 意. Listening to *yan* 言 is for observing (*guan* 觀) *yi* 意. If you listen to the *yan* 言 and the *yi* 意 cannot be known, there is no way to pick that out from crazy *yan* 言.
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 《離謂》

The purpose of speech, according to the following passage from the *Lüshichunqiu*, is for proclaiming the mind.

> 言不欺心, 則近之矣. 凡言者, 以諭心也.
> When *yan* 言 does not cheat the heartmind (*xin* 心), that comes close to it.
> Now, *yan* 言 is for proclaiming the heartmind (*xin* 心).
> *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 審應覽第六 《淫辭》

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[23] See above chap. 2, n. 18, for this translation of *xing* 性.

People can reveal the state of their heartminds either by actions (which are visible) or by speech (which is audible).

> 中心懷而不諭,(其)〔故〕疾趨卑拜而明之;實心愛而不知,故好言繁辭以信之.
> When one's inner heartmind (*xin* 心) harbors something but has not proclaimed it, [one] quickly hastens and bows low to show it. When one's full (*shi* 實*) heartmind loves something but has not made it known, then [one uses] good *yan* 言 and complex phrasing (*ci* 辭) to accredit it.
> *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 解老第二十

*Yan* 言 is the source for getting things related to the heartmind, because *yan* 言 is not an abstraction but, rather, something like speech or utterances that emerge from the person. The *Shiming* (potentially as late as the second century) describes speech as something that speaks one's *yi*.

> 又曰言, 言其意也.
> It is also said, *yan* 言 is speaking (*yan* 言) one's *yi* 意.
> *Shiming* 釋名〈〈釋名第六卷〉〉釋書契第十九

The *Lunheng* characterizes good *yan* 言 as emerging from the *yi* 意. It also describes a "shared root" with actions that come from the heartmind.

> 人君有〔善言〕善行, 善行動於心, 善言出於意, 同由共本, 一氣不異.
> When noble people act (*xing* 行) well, their good actions move from their heartminds (*xin* 心), and their good *yan* 言 emerge from their *yi* 意. Together, they come from a shared root, and are one *qi* without differentiation.
> *Lunheng* 論衡〈〈變虛篇〉〉

The shared root could be the *yi* 意 and the heartmind insofar as *yi* 意 is understood as being near the location of the heartmind. The *yi* 意 and the heartmind also have or share a single (or unified) bit of *qi*.

The following example implies that speech is the source (although not an exhaustive source) of *yi* 意, while writing is the source (also not an exhaustive source) of speech.

> 書不盡言, 言不盡意
> Writing does not exhaust *yan* 言, and *yan* 言 does not exhaust *yi* 意.
> *Zhou Yi* 周易〈〈繫辭上〉〉

A passage in the *Hanshu* advocates speaking directly to exhaust one's *yi* 意 and not to assume any taboos on names.

> 直言盡意, 無有所諱.
> Directly *yan* 言 and exhaust one's *yi* 意, without having anything be unmentionable (tabooed).
> *Hanshu* 漢書 本紀 《元帝紀第九》

Speech, while not as close to the heartmind as *yi* 意, is closer than shapes, ponderings, and knowledge.

> 心之中又有心. 意以先言, 意然後刑, 刑然后思, 思然后知.
> Within the heartmind there is another heartmind. The *yi* 意 comes before *yan* 言. After *yi* 意, there are shapes. After shapes, there is pondering. After pondering, there is knowing.[24]
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十三 心術下第三十七

*Yi* 意 is something that can be gotten from listening, presumably to speech.

> 10.1.82 聞、耳之聰也.
> 10.1.84 循所聞而得其意, 心 (也) 〔之〕察也.
> Hearing is the keenness of the ear.[25]
> Following what you hear and getting its *yi* 意: that is the heartmind's discernment (*cha* 察).
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1 《經上第四十》

With speaking, the *yi* 意 becomes visible ("gets seen").

> 10.1.86 言、口之利也.
> 10.1.88 執所言而意得見, 心之辯也.
> *Yan* 言 is the fluency of the mouth.
> Grasping what is *yan* 言-ed, and the *yi* 意 getting visible is the heartmind's discriminating.
> *Mozi* 墨子卷十 10.1 《經上第四十》

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[24] A second example might be corrupted because *yan* appears in more than one location in the sequence. Still, the passage affirms a link between speech and *yi* (or tones, *yin* 音, depending on how the graph is read).

> 心之中又有心 (馬) 〔焉〕. 彼心之心, (音) 〔意〕以先言. (音) 〔意〕然后形, 形然后言. 言然后使, 使然后治.
> Within the mind there is another mind. Within that mind's mind, the *yi/yin* (tone) comes before *yan*. After the *yi/yin* (tone), there are shapes. After shapes, there is *yan*. After *yan*, there is serving, after serving there is order.
> *Guanzi* 管子卷第十六 內業四十九

[25] See the discussion of the *Mo Bian* 10.1.82 in chap. 6.

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*Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記
*Dengxizi* 鄧析子
"Dao Yuan" 《道原》
*Er Ya* 爾雅
*Fayan* 法言
*Fengsutongyi* 風俗通義
*Gongsunlongzi* 公孫龍子
*Guanzi* 管子
*Guoyu* 國語
*Hanfeizi* 韓非子
*Hanshi Waizhuan* 韓詩外傳
*Hanshu* 漢書
*Heguanzi* 鶡冠子
"Heng Xian" 《恒先》
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*Huangdineijing* 黃帝內經
*Kongcongzi* 孔叢子
*Laozi* 老子
*Liezi* 列子
"Liude" 《六德》
*Liji* 禮記
*Ling Shu Jing* 靈樞經
*Lunheng* 論衡
*Lunyu* 論語

*Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋

*Mao Shi* 毛詩

"Min Zhi Fu Mu" 《民之父母》

*Mozi* 墨子

*Shangjunshu* 商君書

*Shangshu* 尚書

*Shiji* 史記

*Shiming* 釋名

*Shizi* 尸子

"Shun Dao" 《順道》

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# Index

Note: An italic *n* or *nn* following a page number indicates one or more footnotes.
Glosses of Chinese graphs generally indicate author's interpretation
in context of discussion.

above and below, 6, 65, 66, 67–70, 69*n*, 71, 157, 190, 212*n*. *See also* heaven and earth

abstraction. *See also* concepts; mental ideas; nomenclature, not system
  - "abstract linguistic formulas" (Hansen), xv*n*
  - Hansen and performance dao and, 51, 203*n*
  - kinds and, 175*n*
  - Kongzi and, 91
  - language and, ix, xv, xxiv, xxvii–xxxi, xxxiii, xxxiv–xxxv, xxxvii, 58, 59, 131*n*, 135, 246, 252, 256
  - language crisis and, xxxvi
  - *li* 理 as "principle" and, 186*n*
  - *li* 禮 and, 217, 232–233
  - mental ideas and, xxviii*n*
  - *ming* 名 and, 213
  - "natural" *versus*, 175
  - reality and, 24–25
  - social roles and, 214
  - "word" and, xxviii, xxx, 245
  - writing and, ix, xxvii–xxxi
  - *yi* 意 and, 108

access and transmission. *See also* blockage view; prescriptive crisis (Hansen); reality; representation; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
  - "by/for which of speech" and, 14–21, 17*nn*, 18*n*, 19*n*
  - dao and, xxii, 5, 6, 10, 13*n*, 14
  - inaccessible things and, 4–8, 6*nn*
  - language crisis and, xxxiii, xxxv, 3*nn*, 3–4, 22
  - Ming Jia and (Schwartz), 3*n*
  - speech and, xxxiii, 224*nn*
  - successful transmission and, 8–12
  - wheelwright and, 12–14, 13*n*

accord (*tong* 通), 134, 136–139

accord, comply (*shun* 順), 203, 204, 209

accumulate (*lei* 累), 76, 76*n*, 77, 106

achieve (*de* 得), xxii, 4, 21*n*, 87, 129, 229

action. *See also* dance; earning a name; ethics, morality, and virtue; guidance; *li* 禮 (ritual action); practice; prescriptive crisis (Hansen); things; titles, commands, and decrees; walking
  - aural and visual associations in source texts, 248–249, 251–252
  - "by/for which" and, 17
  - codes (Hansen) and, 174, 174*n*
  - correcting, 207
  - empty speech and, 30–31
  - guidance of, 107–108, 107–109, 108*nn*
  - *junzi* 君子 and, 100*n*, 100–101
  - *li* 禮, xxxviii
  - *li* 禮 and vision and, 151

action *(continued)*
  names and, x, xxx, 30–35, 42, 57, 66, 155*n*, 164, 164*n*, 177, 185–186, 202, 205
  persons and, 197
  reality and, 28–29
  referring and, 210
  reputation and, 30–34, 31*n*
  rhetoric and language crisis and, xxii
  ritual and, 143
  shapes and, 193–197
  speech and, x, 30–31, 145*n*, 164, 182–185, 186*n*, 232*n*
  speech and persuasion and, 41
add to or attach to (*jia* 加), 71–72
adhere to (*xun* 循), xxii
adornment, 144*n*, 147, 219*n*, 221
affirm/deny (*shi*/*fei* 是/非), xiv, 82*n*, 82–83, 83*n*, 85
*ai* 哀 (sadness), 128, 153*n*, 157–158, 224, 227
aim/intent on duty, moral intent (*zhiyi* 志義), 104–105, 134–135
aim or intention (*zhiyi* 志意), 101, 104–105, 132
aims. *See also* motivation; purpose
  communication and, 113
  for duty, 134, 135
  five arrivals and, 153*n*
  heartmind and, 195*n*
  intentions and, 103–104
  interpretation in *Mengzi* (Van Zoeren), 97*n*
  obstructed, 65, 65*n*
  rulers' unobstructed, 103–104
  settling *yan* 言, 188–189
  of *shi* 詩 (song-poem), 97
  speech and, x, 18, 135–136
  taste master and, 151*n*
  *tong* 通 and, 132, 135–136
Alexandria, xxxv
Allen, Joseph, 153*n*
alphabets, xxxiv
ambiguity, 225–226
American legal thought, 52
Ames, Roger, 91*n*, 214*n*
*The Analects* (Confucius), xix*n*, 92*n*, 173*n*. See also *Lunyu*
"Analects 13.3 and the Doctrine of 'Correcting Names'" (Loy), 204*n*
analogical modeling, 92–93, 98, 101
analytic period, 45, 45*n*
ancestors. *See* reputation; respect
animals, xxiii*n*, xxiv, 7, 36–37, 161, 219, 222–223. *See also* parrot speech
*Annals of Lü Buwei* (Knoblock and Riegel), 27*n*, 131*n*. See also *Lüshichunqiu*
Anxi writing, xxiii*n*
appearance/reality. *See* reality/appearance dualism
appearance *versus* rank (Hansen), 47, 170
appropriate (*yi* 宜), 145, 230–231
Arditi, Jorge, 213*n*, 213–214, 214*nn*
argumentation. *See* disputation; tripartite division of argument
Aristotle, xxxiv–xxxv
arrange (*qi* 期), 75, 76, 76*n*
"Arthur Waley's *Way and Its Power*" (Chang), xiii*n*
Asad, Talal, 142*n*
astronomy, 72
at odds (*bei* 悖), 76
attach (*xi* 系), 152*n*
attain (*da* 達), xxii, 253
attunement, 14, 15, 16, 18–19, 19*n*, 21
aural or visual associations, terms with, 235–257
aural/visual polarity. *See* hearing and seeing; *ming*/*shi* (名/實) polarity

*Baihutong*, xxxi*n*, 70*n*, 71*n*, 145, 197, 242*n*, 242–243
Baxter, William H., 161*n*, 220*n*
beautiful and ugly, 82, 84, 85
beauty, 24–25, 76*n*
Behr, Wolfgang, xiii*n*, 161*n*
Being, 24–25

*bei* 悖 (at odds), 76
below and above, 6, 65, 66, 67–70, 69*n*, 71, 157, 212*n*. *See also* heaven and earth; senses
Berg, R. M. van der, xxxiv*n*
Bergeton, Uffe, 87*n*
Berkson, Mark, xiv*n*
*bianshuo* 辨說 (distinguishing explanations), 61–62, 75*n*, 75–77, 105*n*
*bianyi* 辨異. *See* distinguishing and discrimination
*bianzhe* 辯者 (Discriminators), xvii–xviii
*bianzhe* 辯者 (disputers), xxxii, 127
*bian* 辨 (debating), xxi*n*. *See also* disputation
*bian* 辨/辯. *See* disputation; distinguishing and discrimination
*biao* 表 (display), 183–184
*bie* 別 (separate), 63, 64, 65–70, 69, 69*n*, 83–84, 159
*bi ke* 必可, 100*n*, 100–101
Billeter, Jean-François, xiv*n*
binaries, xv, xxvii*n*, 64, 70, 81–82, 85, 86, 156–157. *See also* hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity)
birds, xxiv, 7. *See also* parrot speech
black and white, 81, 83–84, 85, 86, 160*n*, 224, 232, 247
Blake, Susan, 95*n*
blind people, 81, 83–84, 86, 147, 228*n*, 232*n*, 241, 250
blockage view, xiv*nn*, xiv–xvi, xv*n*, xxi, xxxiii, xxxv–xxxvi, 3*n*, 24, 44, 45–46, 56. *See also* access and transmission; reality
bodies and embodiment. *See also* action; body-person (*shen* 身); death; desires; hand; hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); punishment; senses; shape; speech and speaking; writing
  commands *versus*, 193
  communication and, 113
  correcting, 153*n*, 153–154, 156*n*, 156–166
  fishnet and rabbit snare analogy and, 115
  as interfaces (Latour), 193*n*, 193–194
  language and, ix–xi, 233
  language crisis and, xxxiii, xxxviii
  *li* 禮 and, 144*n*, 152, 153*n*, 153–154, 156–166, 201, 211–217
  music master Kui and, xxxix, 232–233
  overviews, ix–x, xi
  politics of communication and, 139
  reality and, 39–40, 40*n*
  teaching and, 15
  *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通 and, xxxvii
body and form (*xingti* 形體), xii*n*
body-person (*shen* 身). *See also* bodies and embodiment; persons
  aural/visual polarity and, 146, 184, 186
  *versus* "body" or "person" only, 146*n*
  reputation and, 33*n*
  *shi* 實 and, 29, 33
  *xing* 行 (enacting) and, 31*n*, 145*n*, 166, 184–185, 194–195, 196–197
  *zheng* 正 and, 153*n*, 207
body-shapes (*xing* 形), 195, 196, 244
Boltz, William, xxxii*n*, xxxiii*n*
*Book of Li*. See *Liji*
"borrowing a horse" euphemism, 208–209
Boucher, Daniel, xxiii*n*
branches and tips, 42
Branner, David Prager, xxxii*n*
Brashier, Kenneth, 31*n*
breast (*xiong* 胸), 153*n*
bright/clear (*ming* 明), 69*n*, 71, 77*n*, 79, 87, 152*n*
broken and unbroken, 82*n*
Brown, Miranda, 87*n*
*bu* 簿 (record), 78, 78*n*
*butong* 不通 and *butong* 不同, 134
*buxiangzhi* 不相知 (mutually unintelligible), 132, 135
"by/for which" of speech (*suoyiyan* 所以言), 14–21, 17*nn*, 18*n*, 19*n*

Cai, Zong-qi, xvi*n*

*cai* 裁 (cut), 159
calendrical theory, 72
"Canons" (*Mozi*). See *Mo Bian*
Cao Feng, xvii*n*, 192*n*
careful (*shen* 慎), 183
carpenter example, 29
Carr, Michael, 190*n*
carry (*zai* 載), 7*n*
carving things up, 63, 64*n*, 71, 71*n*, 72, 239
ceremony, 142, 143, 156, 167, 170–171, 178, 200
*cha* 察 (examining), 119, 120*n*, 235–236
Chang, Hsiu-Chen Jane, xiii*n*
change. *See also* chaos and confusion; constant/inconstant; contexts; guidance
  "by/for which" and, 19*n*
  chaos and confusion and, 201
  discourse/performance dao and, 51*n*
  Early to Middle Chinese and, xiii
  *li* 禮 and, 15
  in Old Chinese, xxxii–xxxiii
  systems and, 58
  things and, 61–62
  *Thucydides* and, xx*n*
  type/token model and (Hansen/Kaplan), 175
  "word" (*zi* 字) and, xxv, xxx
chaos and confusion
  changing names and, 201
  names *versus* dissolute speech and, 76
  naming crisis and (Nylan), 3*n*
  senses and, 80–81
  splitting names and, 103*n*
  "Zhengming" chapter of *Xunzi* and, xxiii
*cheng* 乘 (ride), xxii
*cheng* 成 (completing), xii, 60, 83*n*, 99*n*, 144, 144*n*, 145, 188, 197, 201, 203, 209*n*, 215*n*, 215–216
CHinese ANcient Texts (CHANT) 漢達文庫 database, xii*n*
"Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism" (Moeller), ix*n*
Chinese Philosophy Blog (Manyul Im), 176*n*
Chinese Text Project (Sturgeon, ed.), 148*n*
Christianity, 142–143
*chuanyan* 傳言 (hearsay), 40, 224. *See also* hearsay
*chuan* 傳 (transmit), 22, 139, 224*n*. *See also* access and transmission
*Chuci*, 5–6, 42
*Chunqiu Fanlu*, 236, 247
*Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan*, 43
*Chunqiu Zuozhuan*. See *Zuozhuan*
*ci* 辭 (phrase)
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 237–240
  *bian* 辨 and, 76
  as external, 96
  guidance of actions and, 107–108
  Hansen on *Mo Bian*'s concept of, 106*n*, 106–107
  heartmind and, 108
  interpretation in *Mengzi* (Van Zoeren), 97*n*
  kinds and, 77*n*
  split, 80*n*, 103, 103*n*
  *yan* 言 (speech) and, 94, 94*n*
  *yi* 意 and, 54, 55, 56, 94, 96, 97, 98, 103, 108, 118, 239, 240, 255
  "Zhengming" chapter of *Xunzi* and, 61–62
class status, 130*n*, 130–131
clear (*yu* 喻), 75–76, 76*n*, 77
clear/bright (*ming* 明), 69*n*, 71, 77*n*, 79, 87, 152*n*
cleave (*ge* 割), 159
cleverness, 91, 121, 155, 155*n*, 202
clothes, 40*n*, 134*n*, 141, 151, 152, 153*n*, 164*n*, 185, 250
codes, 51*n*, 51–52, 167–173, 174, 174*n*, 178, 233. *See also* rules
codified dao, 92*n*, 93
color, xi, 9, 36, 79, 84, 86*n*, 128, 144*n*, 158, 160*n*, 160–161, 195, 195*nn*, 235, 241*n*. *See also* black and white
command (*hao* 號), 74*n*
commands. *See* governing; rulers; titles, commands, and decrees

“Common Chinese and Early Chinese Morphology” (Branner), xxxii*n*
commoner producing ruler’s appearance, 195–196
common people, *tong* 通 with ruler and, 130*n*
complete (*quan* 全), 207
completing (*cheng* 成), xii, 60, 83*n*, 99*n*, 144, 144*n*, 145, 188, 197, 201, 203, 209*n*, 215*n*, 215–216
comply, accord (*shun* 順), 203, 204, 209
compound *ming* (*jianming* 兼名), xxxi*n*, 79*n*
computer language metaphor (Hansen), xxxviii, 82, 82*n*, 168, 171, 175*n*, 179. *See also* rules
concepts, xxxiv, 58*n*, 71*n*. *See also* abstraction
“concern” *versus* “crisis,” xix, xix*n*, xx–xxiii, xxi, 3*n*, 8
conduit metaphor, 139*n*
*Confucian Creation of Heaven* (Eno), 153*n*
*Confucian Quest for Order* (Sato), 148*n*
*Confucian Role Ethics* (Ames), 214*n*
Confucius. *See* Kongzi
*cong* 從 (follow), xxii
connect/link (*li* 麗) (Graham translation), 76*n*
constant/inconstant, 68*n*
contexts, xxxi, 28, 86, 92, 97*n*, 113, 121, 139. *See also* change
“control,” 95*n*
conventions. See also *li* 禮 (ritual action); social construction of meaning
  color and (Hansen), 86*n*
  Davidson on, xvi*n*
  Hansen on, xvi*n*, 64*n*
  *li* 禮 and (Hansen), 47*n*, 49, 54, 169, 173
  *versus* mental ideas, 90
  names *versus* writing and, xxiv*n*
  nature *versus*, xiv, xix, xix*n*, 52–53, 63*n*, 68*n*
  nomenclature and, 57
  norms and, 176, 206–207
  overview, xvi
  sensory difference and, 86*n*
  writing and (Hansen), xxiv*n*, xxvii
  *yi* 意 (intention) and (Hansen), 49–50, 52, 53, 54, 90, 169
conversation, 8–11, 132, 162. *See also* disputation
conveying referential intent, 107*n*. *See also* conduit metaphor
Cook, Scott, 148*n*, 157*n*
cooperation, 122, 132, 138, 139. See also *tong* 通
correct body-person (*zhengshen* 正身), 196
correcting action, 207
correcting bodies (*zhengti* 正體), 153*n*, 153–154, 156*n*, 156–166
correcting graphs (*zhengzi* 正字 and *zhengti* 正體), xxxi, xxxi*n*
correcting names. *See* rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名)
correcting people, 201
correcting reference, 168
correcting speech (*zhengyan* 正言), xxxviii, 206–209
correcting visual ceremonial processes (*zhengli* 正禮), 141–142
correct shape (*zhengxing* 正形), 153*n*, 154
countenance (*rong* 容), 154, 195, 195*n*
counting, 159
crazy speech, 118
“crisis” *versus* “concern,” xx, xx*n*, 3*n*, 8
Cullen, Christopher, 32*n*
culture, xxv. *See also* regional differences; social order
“‘The Customary Meanings of Words Were Changed,’ or Were They?” (Wilson), xx*n*
customs, 131–132, 142–143
cut (*cai* 裁), 159

*da* 達 (attain), xxii, 253
*Dadai Liji*
  flavor and, 189
  footprints and, 165*n*

*Dadai Liji* (continued)
  listening to *yan* 言 and, 254
  *li* 禮 and walking and, 145
  *li* 禮 and *zhengming* and, 199–200, 202–203
  pointing and, 73*n*, 74*n*
  regional differences and, 133
  *shi* 事 and hearing and, 247
  *zhengyan* and, 207
dance, 156, 163, 166, 219, 219*n*, 230
*dang* 當 (match), 78
dao. *See also* attain (*da* 達); attunement; discourse and performance dao (Hansen)
  access and transmission and, xxii, 5, 6, 10, 13*n*, 14
  aims obstructed and, 65*n*
  codified (Hansen), 92*n*, 93
  darkened, 83*n*
  *de* 得 (getting) and, xxii, 5, 25
  discourse/performance, xxii*n*, 51*n*, 51–52, 203*n*
  emptiness/reality and, 26*n*
  enacted, 104
  inherited and transmitted, 91, 91*n*
  language crisis and, xxii–xxiii, 3
  as one/many dualism (Hansen), 203*n*
  reality/emptiness and, 25, 26*n*, 26–28
  wording of, 50
  *Zhuangzi* on access and transmission and, 8*n*
"Dao as Naturalistic Focus" (Hansen), 93, 176
*Daodejing*. See *Laozi*
Daoists, 3, 3*n*, 63*n*
*A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (Hansen), xiii, 45*nn*, 51, 52, 173–174
"Dao Yuan," 87, 236, 253
Davidson, Donald, xvi*n*
*dawen* 大文 (great pattern), 76*n*
*de* 得 (get/achieve), xxii, 4, 21*n*, 87, 129, 229. See also *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
*de* 德 (power/virtue), 27, 28, 34, 39*n*, 74, 128, 162, 199–200, 207, 228, 228*n*, 237
dead, rituals for, 190*n*. *See also* mourning
deaf and mute, 137, 138, 147
death ritual and dead, 37–41, 39*nn*, 40*n*
"Debate over Human Nature in Warring States China" (Robins), 9*n*, 35*n*, 188*n*
decorative culture (*wen* 文), 204. See also *wen* 文
decrees. *See* governing; rulers; titles, commands, and decrees
deer and horse example, 36
Defoort, Carine, xiii*n*, 192*n*
degrees of difference, 67, 81, 85, 86, 94, 222–223
*Dengxizi*, xix, 77*n*, 127, 127*n*
deny/affirm (*shi/fei* 是/非), xiv, 82*n*, 82–83, 83*n*, 85
Derrida, Jacques, xi, xi*n*, xiv*n*
design. See *wen* 文
desires, 85, 85*n*, 114, 128*n*, 133, 134, 135–136
detachment, xvi*n*
*deyan* 得言 (getting/achieving speech), 17, 19
diagrams, xxiv, 5*n*
differentiation, 63, 79, 158–159
discourse and performance dao (Hansen). *See also* odes
  dao and, xxii*n*
  as interchangeable (Hansen), 174, 174*n*, 176
  overviews, 51*n*, 51–52
  ritual (Hansen) and, 169–170
  script/performance paradigm and, 93–94
  systems and, xiv*n*
discrimination. *See* distinguishing and discrimination
Discriminators (*bianzhe* 辯者), xvii–xviii
display (*biao* 表), 183–184
display (*zhang* 章), 147
disputation, xxi*n*, 63, 64, 75–77, 77*n*, 81, 88, 106, 109, 120*n*, 121. *See also* rhetoric; tripartite division of argument
Disputers, xvii–xviii, 18*n*
disputers (*bianzhe* 辯者), xxxii

"Disputers of the *Li*" (Pines), 214*n*
distinguishing and discrimination. *See also* kind (*lei* 類); pick or select; pointing; raise up (*ju* 舉); same/different (*tongyi* 同異); senses; separate; titles, commands, and decrees
  *cha* 察 *versus*, 120*n*
  guidance and, 63, 71
  kinds and senses and, 64, 75–81, 77*nn*
  metaphors for, 64*n*, 70–75
  naming and, 63–64, 65–70, 70*n*, 71*n*
  nomenclature, not system and, 63–64, 81–82, 83, 85–86, 88
  overviews, xvi*n*, xxxvi–xxxvii, 63–64, 88
  reality and (Hansen), 64*n*, 71*n*
  rectifying names and, 172–173
  sound/sight and, 119*n*, 119–120, 160*n*, 160–161
distinguishing explanations (*bianshuo* 辨說), 61–62, 75*n*, 75–77, 105*n*
divide (*fen* 分), 63, 64, 65–70, 69*n*, 72, 83–84, 160, 232–233
doctrine/formula, 63*n*
dog noises, 7
drawstring and control-string metaphor, 212*n*, 212–213, 214–215. *See also* weaving metaphors
dredge (*shu* 抒), 94
drowning in same boat example, 132
drumming, 156, 156*n*, 219*n*
dualisms. *See also* fact/value dualism; mind/body dualism; one/many dualism; polarities; reality/appearance; script/performance; type/token distinction
  avoidance of, xxxviii
  crisis of representation and, xiii
  Derrida on, xi
  language crisis and, xiv–xv, xxiii, xxxvi–xxxvii
  *ming* 名 and (Hansen), 52
  nomenclature, not system and, 64, 81, 85, 86
  overviews, x, xi–xiii, xxxviii
  polarities *versus*, xi–xii
  speech/writing and, xii, xiv, 233
  Western views and, xi–xvii, 233
  *zhengming* and, 176, 211–212, 215
Dubs, Homer, 142–143
*duliang* (度量). *See* measurement
duty (*yi* 義), 6*n*, 33, 104–105, 147, 164, 196–197
*Dynamic Structure* (Fehr and Kouba, eds.), 58*n*

"Early Philosophical Discourse on Language and Reality and Lu Ji's and Liu Xie's Theories of Literary Creation" (Cai), xvi*n*
earning a name, x*n*, xi, xxxiii, xxxiv, 29, 194. *See also* reputation; titles, commands, and decrees
ears. *See* hearing, ears, and audible things
echo, 186–187
education, 51*n*, 196, 216
elder/younger, 69
elites, 171, 178*n*
emblems, xxiv
embodiment. *See* bodies and embodiment
emotion, xii*n*
emptiness, 23, 24, 25, 26*n*, 26–28, 30–31, 34, 44
empty terms, 96*n*. *See also* grammar
emulation. See *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted)
enact (*xing* 行), 104, 135, 164, 166, 194–195
enacting tasks (*xing shi* 行事), 151
Eno, Robert, 153*n*
*Er Ya*, 144
estimate of the thing (*yiwu* 意物), 78, 78*n*, 102, 102*n*
ethics, morality, and virtue. See also *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted); noble/lowly (*guijian* 貴賤); right (*shi* 是) and wrong (*fei* 非); *yi* 義 (duty); *zhiyi* 志義
  ancestors modeling and, 91*n*
  correcting names for clarifying moral purpose, 135

ethics, morality, and virtue *(continued)*
  correcting speech and, 206–209
  embodying, 163, 164, 165
  ethical deeds and, 70
  language crisis and, xx*n*
  longevity of name from virtue and, 39, 39*n*
  Mozi's two sources for (*Mengzi*), xiv*n*
  music and, 162, 228, 228*n*
  relational ethics, 214*n*
  *tongyi* 通意 and, 128–129
  virtuous name, 31*n*, 33, 35–36, 190, 201, 203, 209
  *yan* 言 matching action and, x
etiquette manual, 169–170
events/service (*shi* 事), 144*n*
examining (*cha* 察), 119, 120*n*, 235–236
"Excavated Manuscripts and Political Thought" (Defoort), 192*n*
*Exemplary Figures* (Nylan), 37*n*, 38*n*
exist (*you* 有), 38
explainers (*shuo zhe* 說者), 186
explanation (*shuo* 說), 77*n*, 105*n*. *See also* tripartite division of argument
expressive speech, xxii, 94–99, 103, 106, 107, 108, 109, 124*n*. *See also* heartmind; rhetoric; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
external interaction, 56*n*, 58–59. *See also* internal and external; things
eyes. *See* seeing, eyes, and visible things

*fa* 法, 50, 72, 195*n*
face. *See* countenance (*rong* 容)
face or complexion (*yanse* 顏色), 153*n*
fact-based names, 102*n*, 102–103
fact/value dualism, 9*n*, 68*n*, 68–69, 82–85, 88, 102–103. *See also* reality
Falkenhausen, Lothar von, 90*n*
false and genuine, 83*n*
fame (*ming* 名), xi, xxxix, 59, 72, 127, 128, 172, 190, 194*n*, 236, 244, 245, 251. *See also* reputation
*fanqie* 反切 system, 62*nn*
fate, xxxiii–xxxiv, xxxviii, 33, 148, 168, 181, 185, 192–193, 197, 201, 203
*Fayan*
  aural/visual polarity and, 34, 37–40, 50, 237, 237*n*, 241, 254
  on design and substance, 38*n*
  drawstring metaphor and, 212
  on longevity, 39*nn*
  *Lunyu* and, 212*n*, 212–213
  reality and, 40*n*, 41*n*, 42–43
  responsiveness and, 19*n*
feeding the elderly, 158
feelings, 133
feet, 144*n*, 230. *See also* walking
Fehr, Johannes, 58*n*
*fei* 非 (wrong), 82, 178, 205
*Fengsutongyi*, 5*n*, 73*n*, 220, 223, 224, 225*n*, 225–226, 227, 230
*fen* 分 (divide), 63, 64, 65–70, 69*n*, 72, 83–84, 160, 232–233
Fingarette, Herbert, xx*n*
"The First Step toward Phonological Analysis in Chinese: *Fanqie*" (Wen), 62*n*
fishnet and rabbit trap analogies, xxxvii, 95, 113–121, 139. *See also* net analogies
five arrivals (*wu zhi* 五至), 152*n*, 153*n*
five colors, 86*n*
*Five "Confucian" Classics* (Nylan), xx*n*, 3*n*
"fix" (*zheng* 正 and *ding* 定), 51*n*, 52*n*, 52–53
flavors, 188–189
follow (*cong* 從), xxii
footpath metaphor, xxii
footprints, 165, 165*n*, 230*n*
foot/sufficient (*zu* 足), 220*nn*, 220–222, 222*nn*, 223*n*, 225*n*, 225–227, 226*n*, 227*n*, 229–232, 230*n*
form (*xing* 形), 35–37, 144*n*. *See also* shape; *wen* 文
form and body (*xingti* 形體), xii*n*
forms and names (*xingming* 形名), ix*n*
formula/doctrine, 63*n*

Fraser, Chris, xviii*n*, 64*n*, 77*n*, 78*n*, 125*n*
freedom from desire, 71*n*
fruit or grain (*shi* 實 or *guo* 果), 32*n*, 32–33, 41*n*, 41–42, 72, 186, 210, 215. See also *shi* 實 (fruit or grain)
*fujie* 符節 (tallies), xxiii, 103
full and empty, 25–27, 35, 69–70
Furniss, Ingrid, 228*n*

Galambos, Imre, xxviii*n*, xxxi*n*
Galvany, Albert, 219*n*
games metaphor, 45, 46, 47, 49, 56, 58. *See also* nomenclature, not system
*gang* 綱, 212, 212*n*
Gaozi, xv*n*, xvi*n*
gate and road metaphor, 164, 196–197, 232
*ge* 割 (cleave), 159
gender roles, 206
genuine and false, 83*n*
getting. *See also* access and transmission; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
  access and transmission and, 22
  body-person (*shen* 身) and, 244
  body-shapes (*xing* 形) and, 195, 196
  "by/for which" and, 15–17, 16, 19*n*, 21
  dao and, xxii, 5, 25
  expressive speech and, xxii
  heartmind (*xin* 心) and, 42, 97
  *li* 禮 and body and, 152
  parrot speech and, 17*n*
  *qing* 情 and, 10–11
  transmission and, 10, 12, 22
  wheelwright's skill and, 12, 13
ghosts, 86–87, 148, 157
goblet passages, 21, 171*n*
Gongsunlong, xviii*n*, xix, 36, 47*n*, 73*n*, 76*n*. *See also* Kung-sun Lung
good/bad polarity, 150
Goody, Jack, xxvii*n*, 142*n*
Gou Dongfeng (苟东锋), xvii*n*
governing. *See also* modeling behavior, not roles; obey and obedience; rulers; titles, commands, and decrees
  education and rectifying names and, 176
  hearing *versus* seeing and, 145*n*
  *li* 禮 and, 201, 203, 204, 204*n*
  music and, 228
  rectifying names and, xxxviii, 101, 177, 207, 208–211
  saying and doing and, 164–165
  social roles and, 176–177, 204–205
Graham, A. C.
  "Cang" 臧 translation by, 159*n*
  on fact/value dualism, 68*n*
  *guan* 觀 and seeing and, 242*n*
  on heartmind and distinguishing and discrimination (*bian* 辯), 119*n*
  on *li* 麗 as "connect" or "link," 24–25, 76*n*
  on *Mo Bian* B41, 122*n*
  on reality, 24–25
  on "X," 122
  on *yi* 意 (intention), 53–54
grain or fruit (*shi* 實), 29, 32n, 32*n*, 32–33, 32–33, 41*n*, 41–42, 44, 72, 186, 210, 215, 248
grammar, xxxv, xxxvi, 27, 58, 59, 61–62, 96*n*, 168, 178, 189, 245–246. *See also* "word"
graphs, xxiii*n*, xxiv*n*, xxv*n*, xxvi–xxvii, xxvii*n*, xxix*n*, xxix–xxx, xxxiii, 50–51, 90. *See also* Old Chinese, changes in; writing
grasping (*zhi* 執), 120
great pattern (*dawen* 大文), 75–76, 76*n*
groceries, 189
groups (*zhong* 種), 77*n*
*guan* 觀, 240–241, 241*n*
*Guanzi*
  aural/visual polarity and, 210*n*, 236
  on emptiness, 26, 27
  measurement and transmission and, 6
  on mouth, 252
  on obeying, 191*n*
  on service, 246
  on shape, 251
  speech and heartmind (as *yi* 意) and, 95, 95*n*, 116–118, 257, 257*n*

*Guanzi* (continued)
  on speech and names, 191*n*
  on *tong* 通 and *yi* 意, 128–129, 129*n*
  transmission and measurement and, 6
  on *yi* 意 and knowing and guessing, 7, 7*n*, 27*n*, 78*n*, 95, 95*n*, 116–117
*Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays* (Rickett), 129*n*
*guan* 觀 (observe), 146
guess (*yi* 意), 7, 27, 27*n*, 78*n*
guidance. *See also* change; governing; *li* 禮 (ritual action); modeling behavior, not roles; prescriptive crisis (Hansen); rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名); rulers; rules; script/performance; titles, commands, and decrees; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
  of actions, 107–109, 108*nn*
  blockage view compared, 45–46
  discourse dao and, 51*n*, 51–52, 93–94
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 63, 71
  Hansen on, xviii*n*, xix*n*, 47*n*, 107–108
  kinds and, 77*n*
  language crisis and, xvii, xxxvi, 56
  *li* 禮 as ritual (Hansen) and, 47
  *ming* 名 and, 55*nn*, 55–56
  overviews, xxxiii, 108–109
  phrases (*ci* 辭) and, 54, 55
  representation and (Hansen), 45*n*, 45–46, 47
  ritual books and, 46–49
  senses and, 79–80
  titles and, 108–109
  wheelwright example compared, 13*n*
  *yi* 意 (intention) and, xxxvii, 55*nn*, 55–56, 107–108
*guijian* 貴賤 69, 69*n*, 82
Gulik, R. H. van, 62*n*
Guodian, xxix*n*, 149*n*, 150, 183
*Guoyu*, 188, 236, 243, 249
*guo* 果 (fruit), 41

hand metaphors, xxvii, 12, 13, 88
hand/mouth, 74*n*, 74–75
hands
  writing and, xxv
*Hanfeizi*
  aural/visual polarity and, 30, 33, 35–36, 43–44, 240, 244, 246, 256
  on commands and *zhengming*, 191
  on delight in sounds, 120
  differentiation by eyes and, 158–159
  distinguishing kinds and, 77*nn*
  on emptiness, 26, 28
  eyes and black and white and, 84
  on *li* 禮 as *fen* 分 (divisions), 231, 232–233
  mandates and *bi ke* 必可 and, 101
  music master Kui and, 220*n*, 221, 222, 223*n*, 223–224, 225, 226*n*, 226–227, 227*n*
  "same" *ming* 名 and, xxx–xxxi
  on serving and shapes, 194
  on *shi* 實 and *xing* 性 (spontaneous character), 35
  on writing and speech, xxv
  *xing* 行 as visible and, 147
Hansen, Chad, xiii–xvi, 173–174. *See also* abstraction; convention; guidance; language crisis; *Lunyu*; prescriptive crisis; rules; script/performance *and other entries*
*Hanshi Waizhuan*, 77*n*, 127, 146, 147, 207, 208, 240, 253
*Hanshu*, xxiii*n*, 149*n*, 150, 256–257
*hao* 號 (command), 74*n*
Harbsmeier, Christoph, 223*n*
hard and white, 70
harmonizing (*xun* 循), 120*n*
Harris, Roy, xxiv, xxiv*n*, xxvii, 56, 56*n*, 57*n*, 58*n*, 59*n*, 115
to have (*you* 有), 24–25
heard speech, 224, 224*n*. *See also* hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity)
hearing, ears, and audible things. *See also* hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); hearsay; listening; *li* 禮 as

visible complement of sound; mouths; music; *sheng* 聲; smell and hearing; speech and speaking
  access and transmission and, 11, 15–16
  concepts and, 58*n*
  correcting, 182
  *de* 德 (power/virtue) and, 228*n*
  delight in, 120*n*
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 67–69
  fishnet and rabbit snare analogy and, 115
  graphs and *ming* 名 and, xxxi
  hearers (*wenzhe* 聞者), 137–138
  modeling *versus*, 197, 205
  music and, 154
  names and, xxiv*n*, 52*n*, 245
  obeying, 190–193
  smelling and, xi–xii, xii*n*, 5, 5*n*, 30, 195
  speech pointing and, 73*n*
  terms and sources and, 235–257
  *tong* 通 and, 131–132
  *yi* 意 (heartmind) and, 119–120
  *yi* 意 and *tong* 通 and, 137
  Zheng Xuan and polysyllabic word and, xxxiii*n*
hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity). *See also* aural or visual associations, terms with; *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; seeing, eyes, and visible things; senses; writing
  access and transmission and (*Zhuangzi*), 9
  action compared in referring, 210
  blind musicians and, 228*n*
  carpenter example and, 29
  commands and, 181–185, 190–193
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 119*n*, 119–120, 160*n*, 160–161
  failure of, 151–153
  heartmind and, 120*n*
  heaven's decree and, 5*nn*
  language and, ix–x
  language crisis and, xxiv*nn*, xxiv–xxv, 233
  *li* 禮 and *zhengming* and, 162–166
  mind/body dualism and, 69*n*
  *ming* 名 versus *yan* 言 and, 184, 185–193
  nature of, 156–166
  overviews, ix–x, xi, xxxviii, xxxix, 29, 181, 197
  reality and, 24, 28–30, 35–41
  reputation and *shi* 實 and, 34
  shaping by doing and, 193–197
  things (*wu* 物) and, 34–37, 151, 151*n*, 249–251
hearsay (*chuanyan* 傳言 and *wenyan* 聞言), 40, 219–220, 223–226, 224*nn*, 227
heartmind (*xin* 心). See also *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
  aural/visual polarity and, 255, 256
  getting, 42
  guidance and, xviii*n*
  *li* 禮 and correct body or shape and, 154
  reason and emotion and, x*n*
  speech and, x, xxxiii–xxxiv, 94–96
  tastes and sounds and, xii*n*
  wheelwright's transmission and, 12, 13
  *zheng* 正 and, 153*n*
heaven (*tian* 天), 26, 35*n*
heaven and earth, 26*n*, 26–27, 199–200, 200*n*, 203. *See also* above and below
heavenly officers (*tianguan* 天官), 153*n*. *See also* senses
heaven's decree (*tianming* 天命), 5, 5*n*, 190, 200, 203
"Heng Xian," 155, 187–188, 247–248, 248*n*
He Tian (何恬), xx*n*
hexagrams, xxiv, 57, 60*n*. See also *Zhou Yi*
Hintikka, Jaakko, 58*n*
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, xiii
Homer, 191*n*
"horse" and deer example, 36
*Hou Hanshu*, 209
"How to Talk about the Body?" (Latour), 193*n*
Hsu, Wen, 62*n*
*Huainanzi*
  on access and transmission, 5, 12*n*, 13*n*
  aural/visual polarity and, 29, 74*n*, 182–183, 236, 238, 241, 246, 250, 254

*Huainanzi* (continued)
  "by/for which" and, 16–18, 17*nn*, 18*n*, 20, 21
  class status and, 130*n*
  on ears, noses, and use of the useless, xii*n*
  on emptiness, 26, 27
  external *ming* 名 and, 187*n*
  on faces and shape-body (*xing* 形), 195–196
  on *jie* 節, 228*n*
  *ke dao* 可道 and, 192*n*
  knowledge in mouth and, 85
  music master Kui and, 220*n*
  on obeying, 191
  regions and *tong* 通 and, 133–134, 134*n*
  on senses differentiating, 83–84
  *tongyi* 通意 and, 128
  visibility of *li* 禮 and, 152
  *xing* 行 as visible and, 147
  *yi* 意 and *tong* 通 and, 137
*Huainanzi: A Guide* (Major, Queen, Meyer, and Roth), 17*n*, 29*n*, 128*n*, 137*n*
*Huangdineijing*, 26*n*
human (*ren* 人), 219*n*, 220–223, 222*n*. *See also* ourselves and others

*I Ching* (Book of Changes). See *Zhou Yi*
identification, 159, 159*n*
identity, 175
ideology, xxxvi, 23
ignorance, xxxii, 47, 71*n*, 81, 82, 184
illustrated (*yu* 喻), 75–76, 76*n*
Im, Manyul, 176*n*
immortality, xxxiv. *See also* longevity
impoverishment (*qiong* 窮), 221, 222
inclined (*qing* 傾), 152*n*
individuation, 173–174
industrial society, 213–214, 214*n*
innatists, 48*n*
inner psychology, 49, 89, 98. *See also* thoughts
in person (*qin* 親), 241*n*
intellectual understanding, 113, 114, 127–130, 137–138
intention (*zhi* 志), 18, 97, 101, 103, 104, 151*n*, 153, 188. *See also* aims; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
intention or aim (*zhiyi* 志意), 104–105, 132
internal and external. *See also* external interaction; inner psychology; mental ideas; ourselves and others; thoughts
  expressive speech and, 94, 96, 97–98
  heaven and earth and, 26*n*
  language crisis and, xvi, xvi*nn*
  *li* 禮 and music and, 149*n*, 149–150, 151, 151*n*, 154, 160
  *ming* 名 and, xxxiii–xxxiv, 33, 185, 187–188, 190, 193, 242*n*
  music master Kui and, 222*n*
  ritual meanings and, 143
  sound and, 128, 160, 181
  voice and, 190*n*
  *yan* 言 and *ming* 名 and, x, xi, 124*n*, 184, 187–188, 189, 190, 197*n*, 206
  *yi* 意 and, 119
interpretation, 46, 50, 51, 51*n*, 96–97. *See also* access and transmission; rules; translation; type/token distinction
intuition, xiv*n*, 47, 48
-ism or ideology (*zhuyi* 主義), xv*n*

Jackendoff, Ray, 115, 115*n*
Jameson, Fredric, xiv*n*
Jaynes, Julian, 190*n*
*ji* 己 (self), 153*n*
*ji* 紀, 212*n*
*jia* 加 (add to or attach to), 71–72
*jian* 兼 (compound) *ming*, xxxi*n*
*jie* 節 (orderliness), 228, 228*n*
"Jing Fa," 191
*jing* 經, 212*n*
*jun* 君 (role/name), 199
*ju* 舉 (referring, raise up), 57, 71–72, 73, 74–75, 95, 123–124

Kafka, Franz, xiii
Kaplan, David, 175, 175*nn*

Kern, Martin, 230*n*
Kharoṣṭhī script, 62*n*
kind (*lei* 類), 64, 75–81, 77*nn*, 78*n*, 79*n*, 102*n*, 109
kind (*zhong* 種), xxx–xxxi, 77*n*
Knoblock, John, 27*n*, 131*n*
knower, knowing, and knowledge
  accessing and transmission and, 4–5, 11, 14
  aural/visual polarity and, 40–41
  "divides separations" and, 65–66
  *Guanzi* on, 95
  insightful (*zhi* 智, 知), 150–151
  language crisis and, xxxv
  *li* 禮 and walking and, 144*n*
  *ming* 名 and *shi* 實 and, 104
  mouth and, 85
  nonlinguistic (Hansen), 47–48, 48*n*
  politics and, xvii*n*
  seeing and, 87*n*
  speech and, 95, 132, 132*n*
  speech and action and, 184
  *tong* 通 and, 125–127
  "visual" knowing (*zhi* 智, 知), 150–151
knowing intentions (*zhiyi* 知意), 125, 137–138
*Knowing Words* (Raphals), 3*n*
*Kongcongzi*, xv*n*, 70*n*, 220*n*, 222, 222*n*, 223–224, 225–226, 227
Kongzi (Confucius)
  codified dao and language crisis and, 92*n*
  correct speech and, 207–208
  "fix" and, 51*n*
  foot/sufficient and, 220
  on language, xvi*n*
  language crisis and, xiv, xx*n*
  laws and, 91
  rectifying names and, 93, 178, 178*n*
  score-performance model (Hansen) and, 203*n*
  writing and, 52
*Kongzijiayu*, 152*n*, 165*n*, 244
Kouba, Fehr, 58*n*
Kung-sun Lung, xix*n*. *See also* Gongsunlong

language, ix–xiii, xiii*nn*, xv*n*, xvi*n*, xxi, xxii. *See also* abstraction; access and transmission; bodies and embodiment; conventions; grammar; hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); language crisis; *li* 禮 (ritual action); names and naming (*ming* 名/命); nomenclature, not system; speech and speaking; Western philosophy; writing
*Language, Saussure, and Wittgenstein* (Harris), 56*n*
*Language and Logic in Traditional China* (Harbsmeier), 223*n*
language crisis. *See also* blockage; change; chaos and confusion; guidance; hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted); nomenclature, not system; prescriptive crisis (Hansen); rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名); representation; skepticism; successful communication
  aural/visual polarity and, 233
  Behr on, xiii*n*
  blockage and, xxxiv–xxxvi
  codified dao and, 92*n*
  "crisis" *versus* "concern," xix, xix*n*, xx*n*, xx–xxiii, xxi, 3*n*, 8
  fishnet and rabbit snare analogy and, 114, 121
  Hansen on, xiii–xiv, xviii*nn*, xviii–xxi, xix, xix*nn*, xxi*n*, 45*n*, 92*n*, 173, 173*n*
  language and writing and, xxiii–xxvi, xxiv*nn*, xxv*n*, xxv*nn*, xxvi*nn*
  *li* 禮 as visible and, xxxvii–xxxviii
  model emulation and, 90–94
  names/games and, 57
  overviews, xiii*nn*, xiii–xxiii, xv*nn*, xvii*n*, xviii*nn*, xx*n*, xxv*n*, xxv–xxvi, xxxiii–xxxix, 3
  reality and, 3, 22
  *zhengming* and *li* 禮 and (Hansen), 199

“language philosophy,” ix*n*

*Laozi*
  access and (Robinet), 3*n*
  binaries and, 81, 85
  convention and color and (Hansen), 86*n*
  distinctions and (Hansen), xv*n*
  graphic variation and, xxix*n*
  guidance and (Hansen), xv*n*
  language-as-external and (Hansen), xvi*n*
  language crisis and (Hansen), xv*n*, xviii*n*, xix*n*
  *ming* 名/命 of *ming* 名/命 and, 192
  on naming names, etc., 30, 30*n*
  natural *versus* conventional and, 63*n*
  on transmission of knowledge, 11
  “uncarved” reality and (Hansen), 71*n*
  walking without leaving tracks and, 230*n*

Latin, xxix*n*, 191*n*

Latour, Bruno, 193*n*

laws, 51*n*, 52, 53, 91, 91*n*, 168, 169*n*

*le* 樂, 158, 163

leg, 220*n*

*lei* 累 (accumulate), 76, 76*n*, 77, 106

*lei* 類 (kinds), 63, 64, 71, 75–81, 77*nn*, 78*n*, 79*n*, 102*n*, 109

*le* 樂 and *yue* 樂, 153*n*, 158, 163

*li* 麗 (connect/link), 76*n*. *See also* beauty

*li* 理 (patterns), 158, 159, 159*n*, 186, 224, 228, 228*n*, 229, 231–232

*li* 理 (principle), 186*n*

*li* 禮 (ritual action) as treading, 144–145, 165–166

*Liezi*, 186–187, 244

*Liji* (*Book of Li*)
  aural/visual polarity and, 152*n*, 183–184, 252
  body-person (*shen* 身) enacted (*xing* 行) and, 194
  control-string metaphor and, 212*n*
  desires and *tong* 通 and, 134
  “five arrivals” and, 152*n*
  guidance and (Hansen), 47*n*, 48, 52, 53
  interpreting intentions in *Liji* and (Hansen), 97
  *li* 禮 and music and, 149*n*, 150, 154–155, 158, 160, 163
  *li* 禮 and polarity contrasts and, 156–157
  *li* 禮 and walking and, 145
  *li* 禮 as codebook and (Hansen), 167–168, 171–172
  on *ming* 名, 242
  on *ming* 名 and heaven, *shi* 事 and earth, 200*n*
  music master Kui and, 226, 227, 228–229, 231
  names and sound and, 243
  on naming taboos, 200
  on parents’ commands, 206
  prohibitions on speaking names and, 156, 158
  on punishment and bodies, 99*n*
  on regional differences, 133
  on reputation, 31*n*
  sayings and unreliability and, 220*n*
  social roles and, 179
  on sounds as inside/outside, 160
  Zheng Xuan and polysyllabic word in, xxxiii*n*

*li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted). See also *Lunyu*; modeling behavior, not roles; *Lunyu* 12.11 quoted, 176, 211
  model emulation and, 172–173, 176–179, 211–216
  overviews, xxxviii, 199, 216–217
  *zhengming* and *li* 禮 in early texts and, 199–211

*ling* 令, 151*n*, 182, 183, 188, 190*n*

*Lingua Universalis vs. Calculus Ratiocinator* (Hintikka), 58*n*

link/connect (*li* 麗) (Graham translation), 76*n*

*li* 禮 and rectifying names (*zhengming*). See also *li* 禮 (ritual action); *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted)
  action and, 193

  conventions and (Hansen), 49
  overviews, 167, 178–179
  referring and commands and, 167–173, 179
  social roles and, 167, 172–173, 176*n*, 176–179, 205–206
  type/token distinction and, 168, 173–177, 174*n*, 175*nn*
*li* 禮 (ritual action). *See also* ceremony; *li* 禮 and rectifying names (*zhengming*); *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted); *Lunyu*; mourning; walking
  bodies and, 152, 211–217
  as "fixed," 51*n*
  gate and road metaphor and, 196
  inconstant guidance and, 47
  intention and (Hansen), 51*n*
  language and, 143, 153
  *Lunyu* and, 211–217
  *ming* 名 and, 162–166
  names and, 162–166, 200–203
  nomenclature, not system and, 141, 149*n*, 171–172, 179, 216–217, 232–233
  *ren* 仁 and, 48*n*
  respect and, 196*n*, 201–202, 203
  ritual, concept of, and, xxxvii, xxxviii
  rules and, 48
  social roles and, 214*n*
  weaving metaphors and, 212*n*
  *yue/le* (music/joy) and, 153*n*
listening. *See also* "by/for which" of speech (*suoyiyan* 所以言); hearing, ears, and audible things; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
  *Dadai Liji* on, 254
  dao of, 77*n*
  deception and, 44
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 70
  embodiment and, 115
  governing and, 201
  *Guoyu* on, 243, 249
  *Hanfeizi* on, 240, 244
  *li* 禮 and, 150, 155, 156
  *Lunheng* on, 235
  *Lunyu* on, 240, 253
  *Lüshichunqiu* on, 245, 255
  Mawangdui "Dao Yuan" on, 236
  *Mengzi* on, 254
  *Mozi* on, 254, 257
  music and, 150
  overviews, 9
  patterns and, 76
  speaking and (Saussure), 115*n*
  *suoyiyan* 所以言 and, 18*n*, 19*n*, 19–20
  to that which is without sounds, 87, 152
  titles/decrees and, 243
  using the useless and, xii*n*
  *Xin Shu* on, 243
  *yi* 意 and, 116, 118–121, 255, 257
  *yi* 意 becoming *tong* 通 and, 138
  *Zhuangzi* on, 244
"Listening with Imagination" (Walton), 160*n*
listen/obey (*ting* 聽), 201
literacy, xxviii*n*, xxxv
literature (*wen* 文), ix*n*, 52*n*
"Liude," 149*n*
Liu Shih-p'ei, 76*n*
*li* 禮 as visible complement of sound. *See also* hearing and seeing
  correcting bodies and, 153*n*, 153–154, 156*n*, 156–166
  etiquette manual metaphor and, 169–170
  historicizing concept of ritual and, 42*nn*, 142–143, 143*nn*
  *Liji* "codebook" and, 167–168
  *li* 禮 and *ming* 名 and, 162–166
  *li* 禮 and walking and, 143–147, 145*n*, 154, 165, 168
  loss of sight and hearing and, 152–153
  music and sound and, 148*n*, 148–153, 149*n*, 152*n*, 153*n*, 154–156, 157*n*, 161, 163, 166, 203–204
  music master Kui and, xxxix, 221–233, 228*nn*

*li* (continued)
  names and, 162–166
  nature of sound and sight and, 156–162
  one/many dualisms and, 173–176
  overviews, xxxvii–xxxviii, 141–143, 217, 219
  patterns and, 232–233
  regulation (correcting) by, 156*n*, 156–166, 157*n*, 166
  "ritual" as ceremony and, 170–171
  "ritual" as code of social roles and, 172–173
  ritual social roles and, 176–179
  walking and, 143–147, 145*n*, 154, 165, 168
*liyi* 禮義, 204
*liyue* 禮樂, 150*n*
Li Zehou, 148*n*
locations, xxii, xxxi, 41, 159–160, 161, 193
LoDaaga people of Northern Ghana, xxvii*n*
logic, xvii*n*
Logicians, xvii–xviii. *See also* Ming Jia; School of Names
longevity, 39*nn*, 39–40. *See also* immortality
looks (*zhuang* 狀), 159
Loy, Hui-chieh, 204*n*
*Lunheng*
  aural/visual polarity and, 235, 237, 238, 239, 249, 252, 256
  music master Kui and, 226–231, 230*n*
  sage's *yi* 意 and writing and, 117*n*
  sayings and, 220, 220*n*, 223–226
  *shi* 實 as real and, 40, 41, 249
*Lunyu*. See also *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted)
  acting and names and, 165
  aural/visual polarity and, 146, 148, 184, 240, 253
  color-as-thing *versus* color-as-property and, 160*n*
  constant guidance and, 47
  on correcting bodies, 153
  "crisis" *versus* "concern" and, xx, xx*n*
  date of, 214*n*
  goblet passage, 171*n*
  knowing people by speech and, 132*n*
  knowing speech and, 132*n*
  on language as convention, xvi*n*
  language crisis and (Schwartz), xix*n*, xx*n*
  *li* 禮 and bodies and, 211–217
  *li* 禮 and music and, 148–150, 155, 203*n*
  on *li* 禮, music, and punishment, 203
  *li* 禮 and standing or walking, 144*n*
  music as written and, 90
  rectifying names (*zhengming*) and, xxxviii, 47–49, 98–102, 108, 209–210
  referring and roles and, 172–173
  on reputation, 31, 165
  ritual (Hansen) and, 47–49, 48*n*
  social roles and, xxxviii, 214*n*
  writing and, 51
  *yi* 意 (what is on heartmind) and, 97, 98–102
  *zhengming* and, 153, 167, 170, 172, 176–177, 179, 181–182, 184, 199–217, 204*n*, 214*n*
*Lüshichunqiu*
  access and measurement and, 6
  action and *ming* 名 and, 185–187
  aural/visual polarity and, 29, 255
  body-person (*shen* 身) and, 194*n*
  body-person (*shen* 身) and movement and, 184*n*
  on body-person (*shen* 身) getting a *ming* 名, 244, 245
  *ci* 辭 and *yi* 意 and, 255
  on corrector of music, 227
  custom and, 131
  on dao, empty, 27
  drawstring metaphor and, 212*n*
  elder/younger and, 69
  on empty dao, 27
  on expressing heartmind, 96
  form and sound and, 35
  getting *yi* 意 and failing to forget speech and, 35
  on hearsay, 224*n*, 224–225

- kinds (*lei* 類) divided and, 77*n*
- *li* 禮 and *zhengming* and, 204, 209–210
- *li* 禮 (ritual action) as treading, and, 145, 165–166
- music master Kui and, 220*n*, 225, 227
- rectifying names (*zhengming*) and, 204, 209–210
- on reputation, 31*n*, 128, 166, 194*n*, 244, 245
- rulers' rectifying names and, 209–210
- on sages speaking before speaking, 117*n*
- sayings and unreliability and, 220*n*
- on senses and ethics, 39
- *shi* 實 and aural/visible and, 29, 248
- on skill-imparting, 12*n*
- sound and ambiguity and, 225
- transmission of skill and, 12*n*
- walking (*xing* 行) and, 220*n*, 225*n*
- *yan* 言 and heartmind (*xin* 心) and, 255
- *yan* 言 and *tong* 通 and, 131
- on *yi* 意 and speaking, 95
- on *yi* 意 and *tong* 通, 127–128, 129
- *yi* 意, *ci* 辭, and *yan* 言 and, 238
- on *yi* 意, immoral, 118–119

*lü* 履, 163

Maeder, Erik, xii*n*
Major, John, 128*n*, 137*n*, 247*n*
Makeham, John, xiii*n*, 123*n*, 177*n*
mandates mandated, 30*n*
*Mao Shi* (*Shijing*), 5, 5*n*, 96, 153*n*, 164, 196, 204
Martens, Lorna, xiii*n*
match (*dang* 當), 78
material/immaterial, xi. *See also* reality
mathematics, xxvi, 32*n*, 72, 159. *See also* measurement
Mawangdui manuscripts, xxviii*n*. *See also* "Dao Yuan"; *Zhou Yi*
meaning, xx, xxxiii, 17, 49, 49*n*, 58, 89, 96, 103*n*, 116, 126, 139, 173*n*, 245. *See also* inner psychology; mental ideas; names and naming (*ming* 名/命); nomenclature, not system; referring
"meaning is use," 59*n*
means of speech, 18*n*, 18–21
measurement, 6–7, 8, 103. *See also* mathematics
memory, visual, 194*n*
Mengzi and *The Mengzi* (Mencius). *See also* Gaozi
- "abstract linguistic formulas" and (Hansen), xv*n*
- "austerity" of language and (Hansen), xvii*n*
- on body-shape (*xing* 形), 195
- on commanding gender roles, 206
- on external/rigid language, xviii*n*, 63*n*
- on fate, 192
- gate and road metaphor, 196
- on inconstant guidance, xvii
- language crisis and (Hansen), xviii*n*, xix*n*
- *li* 禮 and respect and, 202
- monosyllabicism and, xxxii*n*
- music master Kui, 232
- on *shi* 詩 (song-poems), 96–97, 97*n*
- on speech and pointing, 74*n*
- systems and (Hansen), xiv*n*
- traditionalists *versus*, 51*n*
- visible walking and, 146
- *yan* 言 and *yi* 義 and (Tang Junyi), xv*n*
- *yan* 言 as external and, xvi*nn*
- *yi* 義 (duty), 164

mental ideas, ix, xxviii*n*, 49, 49*n*, 89–94, 108, 114. *See also* Saussure, Ferdinand de
"Metaphysics of Dao" (Hansen), 173*n*, 174, 175
Meyer, Andrew, 17*n*, 29*n*, 134*n*
mind/body dualism, 69*n*, 85, 98, 119*n*
*ming*. *See* names and naming (*ming* 名/命)
*ming jia* (Ming Chia) and the *Ming Jia*, xvii–xviii, xx*n*, 3*n*, 103*n*. *See also* Logicians; School of Names
*ming/shi* (名/實) polarity, xi, 24, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 67*n*, 67–68, 200, 244, 245
*ming* 明 (clear/bright), 69*n*, 71, 77*n*, 79, 87, 152*n*

"Min Zhi Fu Mu," 152
*Mo Bian*
  color-as-thing *versus* color-as-property and, 160*n*
  different *ming* 名 for one *shi* 實 and, xxxi*n*
  language crisis and, xviii, xx*n*
  *li* 禮 and, 76*n*, 155, 155*n*, 201–202
  *qin* 親 and *guan* (身觀焉, 親也) and, 241*nn*
  *shi* 實, name-stopping and, 159*n*
  *shi* 實 and audible naming and, 245
  *shi* 實 and pointing and, 73
  *xiao* 效 and, 195*n*
  on *yan* 言 raising up, 95
  *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通 and, xxxvii, 113–114, 119–126, 120*n*, 136–139
  *yi* 意 and, 53–56, 105–108, 113–114, 122–126, 136–139
model (*yi* 義), 6, 6*nn*, 69, 144*n*, 158, 201
modeling behavior, not roles. See also *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted); social characters
  aural/visible binary and, 193–197, 217, 233
  education and, 216
  fate, taboos, and respect, 203
  governing and, 100–101
  heaven's decree and, 5*n*
  industrial societies and, 213*n*, 213–214, 214*n*
  as *li* 禮, 181
  *li* 禮 and, 92, 164, 167, 172–173, 176–179, 199, 205, 216, 217
  music master Kui and, 232
  obedience *versus*, 197
  overviews, xv–xvi, xxxviii, 90–94, 91*n*, 233
  *suoyiyan* 所以言 and, 20
  *zhengming* and, 98, 204–206, 211, 212*n*18
Moeller, Hans-Georg, ix*n*
Mohists. *See* Mozi, *Mozi*, and Mohists; Neo-Mohists
morality. *See* ethics, morality, and virtue
motivation, xxxvii, 9, 9*n*, 14*n*, 17, 18, 78, 113, 125–126, 147, 147*n*. *See also* aims; purpose; *qing* 情
mourning, 152, 152*n*, 153, 157–158. *See also* dead, rituals for
mouth/hand, 74*n*, 74–75
mouths. *See also* taste
  *bie* 別 and, 84
  body's doing and, 163–164, 164*n*
  fishnet and rabbit snare analogy and, 115
  heartmind and, 120, 120*n*
  knowledge and, 85
  *li* 禮 and restricting sounds and, 156*n*
  speech and, xxv
  taste master and, 151*n*
  wheelwright and, 12, 13
Mozi, *Mozi*, and Mohists. See also *Mo Bian*; Neo-Mohists
  aural/visible polarity and, 145*n*, 155*n*, 155–156, 242*n*, 245, 251, 254, 257
  *bi* 必 and, 100*n*
  *ci* 辭 (phrase) and, 106*n*
  fact/value dualism and (Hansen), 68*n*
  "fix" and (Hansen), 51*n*, 52*n*, 54
  on guidance and referral (Hansen), 168
  *li* 禮 and mourning and, 157–158
  *li* 禮 and music and, 148–150
  *li* 禮 and respect and, 202
  Maeder on, xii*n*
  *ming* 名 as referring (Hansen) and, 53–56, 169–170
  "raise up" and "attach" and, 71–72
  on sages and senses and, 86–87
  "scheme of guidance" and (Hansen), 97*n*
  speech and *xing* 行 and, 165
  speech not being acted out and, 41*n*, 145
  systems and (Hansen), xiv*n*
  transmission and writing and, 13*n*
  *yan* 言 (speech) and *yi* 義 (duty) and, xv*n*
  *yan* 言 (speech) and *yi* 意 (intent) and (Hansen), 53–56, 107, 123

Munro, Donald, 90, 93
music. See also *le* 樂 and *yue* 樂; *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; music master Kui; odes (*shi* 詩); sound
  composers, lyricists, singers, and dancers and, 166, 230*n*
  correcting inside and, 160
  *li* 禮 and, 157*n*, 161
  mourning and, 157
  musical notation, 90, 90*n*, 99*n*
  music master Kui and, 227–228
  regulation and, 231
  speech and, xxxii*n*
  visibility of *li* 禮 and, 148–166
music/*li* 禮 polarity, 162, 231
music master example, 151, 161–162
music master Kui
  hearsay and, 219–220, 223–226, 227
  humanity (*ren* 人) and, 219*n*, 220–223, 222*n*
  *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound and, xxxix, 221–233
  *zu* 足 (foot/sufficient) and, 220*n*, 220–222, 222*nn*, 223*n*, 225*n*, 225–227, 226*n*, 227*n*, 229–232, 230*n*
"Music of Ritual Practice" (Wong), 149*n*
Musil, Robert, xiii
muteness and deafness, 137, 138
mutually unintelligible (*buxiangzhi* 不相知), 132, 135

Nadel, S. F., 214*n*
*Name and Actuality* (Makeham), xiii*n*, 177*n*
names (ὄνομα) (Aristotle), xxxiv–xxxv
names and naming (*ming* 名/命). *See also* action; distinguishing and discrimination; fame; fate; language; *ming/shi* (名/實) polarity; ordain; orders; rectifying names; referring; speech and speaking; titles, commands, and decrees; "word"; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 241–246
  coining of, 51, 102–103
  embodiment and, 161
  establishing, 64*n*, 65, 66, 104
  new names, 80*n*, 102–103
  overviews, ix–x, xxxiii–xxxiv
  speech expressing *versus*, 95, 103
  splitting, 103*n*
  what counts as, 96*n*
naming crisis, xx*n*, 3*n*
natural intuition, xiv*n*
natural *versus* conventional, xiv, xix, xix*n*, 52–53, 63*n*, 68*n*. *See also* conventions
Neo-Mohists, xxxvii, 53, 54–56, 55*n*, 89, 107–108, 108*nn*. *See also* Mohists; *Mo Bian*
net analogies, 212*n*. *See also* fishnet and rabbit trap analogies
Nivison, David, xvi*n*
noble/lowly, 61, 65–71, 68*n*, 69*n*, 82, 155, 202
nomenclature, not system. *See also* game metaphor; mathematics; type/token distinction; *Zhou Yi*
  binaries and, 64, 81, 85, 86
  blockage and, xv*n*
  computer languages and, 82, 171
  *de* 得 and *tong* 通 and, xxxvii
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 63–64, 81–82, 83, 85–86, 88
  *fanqie* system and, 62*nn*
  Hansen and, xiv*n*, 50, 52, 161*n*, 171, 212*n*
  language crisis and, xiii, xv–xvi, xxxiii
  *li* 禮 (ritual action) and, 141, 149*n*, 171–172, 179, 216–217, 232–233
  music master Kui and, 232
  nomenclature characterized, 46, 56, 57*n*, 59–60
  overviews, xxxvi, 88
  prescriptive crisis (Hansen) and, xxxvi–xxxvii, 56–62, 88
  prescriptive model and, xxxvi
  speech and writing and, xxviii
  system characterized, 46, 56*nn*, 56–57, 161*n*

nomenclature, not system *(continued)*
  Western philosophy and, xi*n*
  *zhengming* and, 50, 52, 61, 62, 64, 81–82, 88, 212*n*, 217
nonobstruction. See *tong* 通
norms, 176*n*
Nylan, Michael, vii, xiii, xx*n*, 3*n*, 37*n*, 38*n*, 237*n*, 240

obey and obedience, 190*n*, 190–193, 197, 201, 206
odes (*shi* 詩), 153*n*, 161*n*, 161–162, 208–209. *See also* poems
*Of Grammatology* (Derrida), xi, xi*n*
Old Chinese, changes in, xxxii*n*, xxxii–xiii
*Old Chinese: A New Reconstruction* (Baxter and Sagart), 161*n*
Olson, David R., xxvii*n*
omens, xxxviii, 201, 203
"On Early Chinese Morphology and Its Intellectual History" (Branner), xxxii*n*
one/many dualism, xv, xxxviii, 167, 173–176, 203*n*
one-sided (*pian* 偏), 222*n*, 228
oracle bones, xxiv, xxvii
ordaining, 36, 76*n*, 144*n*, 148, 178–179, 182, 191, 205–206, 211. *See also* fate; titles, commands, and decrees
order and regulation, xix*n*, 215–216. *See also* rulers; social order
  as motivation for speech, 14*n*
  music and, 231
  naming and, xxxiv
  representing reality *versus*, 109
  titles and, xxiii, 98, 108–109, 156*n*, 191
orderliness (*jie* 節), 228*n*
orders (*ling* 令), 151*n*, 182, 183, 188. *See also* titles, commands, and decrees
ornamentation. See *wen* 文
*Orthography of Early Chinese Writing* (Galambos), xxviii*n*
ourselves and others, 19*n*, 20, 116–121, 137–138, 164*n*, 189, 193, 223*n*. *See also* internal and external; person, human or others (*ren* 人)

Pankenier, David, 212*n*
parents, 6, 12, 31*n*, 165–166, 178–179, 190, 194, 201, 205–207, 214*n*, 216
parrot speech, 16–19, 17*n*, 19*n*, 20, 21
patterns. See *wen* 文
patterns (*li* 理), 158, 159, 159*n*, 186, 224, 228, 228*n*, 229, 231–232
performance dao. *See* discourse and performance dao (Hansen); script/performance (Hansen)
performative ritual, 143. See also *li* 禮 (ritual action)
performing names, xxxviii, 178
"Perpetual Unease of Being at Ease? Derrida, Daoism, and the 'Metaphysics of Presence' " (Shepherd), xiv*n*
person, human, or others (*ren* 人), 137–138, 220–223, 222*n*. *See also* ourselves and others
persons, 94, 195, 197, 214*n*, 221. *See also* body-person (*shen* 身)
*Pheasant Cap Master* (He Guan zi) (Defoort), xiii*n*
*Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein), 58*n*
Phoenicia, xxix*n*, xxxiv
phrases. See *ci* 辭 (phrase)
*pian* 偏 (one-sided), 222*n*, 228
Picken, Laurence, 161*n*
pick or select (*qu* 取, *ze* 擇). *See also* pointing; raise up (*ju* 舉)
  blind person and, 86
  hand and, 74–75
  language crisis and, xxii, xxxvi
  model emulation and, 205
  names and actions and things and, xxxiii, 52–53, 57, 64, 72, 205
  nomenclature and, 57
  reputation and *shi* 實 and, 34
  senses distinguishing and discrimination and, 80
  *shi* 是 and *fei* 非 and, 83*n*
  speech *versus*, 74–75, 83*n*
  *yan* 言 and, 123–124
  *zhengming* and, 52–54

Pines, Yuri, 214*n*
Plato, xviii, xx*n*, xxiv*n*, xxxiv, xxxiv*n*, 48, 173*n*, 174, 175*nn*. *See also* Socrates
pleasure, 225–226
poems, 17*n*. *See also* odes (*shi* 詩)
"The Poetry of Han Historiography" (Kern), 230*n*
pointing
  binaries and, 70
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 65, 67, 72
  hands and, 74*n*, 74–75
  *ming* 名 versus *shi* 實 and, 76
  model emulation and (Hansen), 178
  script-performance and (Hansen), 93
  separating and, 65
  *shi* 實 and, 72–75, 73*n*, 74*n*, 104, 205
  speech and, 74*n*, 95–96
polarities. *See also* dualisms; hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; *ming/shi* (名/實) polarity; noble/lowly
  dualisms *versus*, xi–xii
  non-glottic writing and names and, xxiv–xxv
  senses and, 64, 67–69, 81–88, 86*n*
political thought, xvii*n*
politics, xxxvii, 114, 128–136, 139. *See also* ideology; rhetoric
pondering, 95
possess (*you* 有), 9
posture, 144*n*, 207
practice, x, 42–43, 143, 143*n*. *See also* repeating
prefixes, xxix, xxxii*n*, xxxiii
premodern societies, 213–214, 214*n*
prescriptive crisis (Hansen). *See also* distinguishing and discrimination; guidance; modeling behavior, not roles; nomenclature, not system; rules; script/performance (Hansen)
  blockage compared, xiv, 45–46
  detachment and, xvi*n*
  expressing heartmind and, 94–98
  inherited transmitted dao and, 91, 91*n*
  language crisis and, 82*n*, 101–102, 173*n*
  *li*'s 禮 restrictions and, 156*n*
  *ming* 名 without *yi* 意 and, 98–105
  model emulation and (Hansen), 90–94, 91*n*, 233
  nomenclature, not system and, xxxvi–xxxvii, 56–62, 88
  overviews, xiv–xix, xviii*n*, xxxvi–xxxvii, 46–56, 89–90, 108–109
  Reformation and, 142
  *yi* 意 and, 49–56, 89–98, 102–108
prescriptive function, xxxiv
prescriptive inconstancy, xxxiii, 21
principle (*li* 理), 186*n*
*Prison-House of Language* (Jameson), xiv*n*
"prison-house of language," xiv, xiv*n*, 6
proclaim (*yu* 諭), 94
*Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context* (van der Berg), xxxiv*n*
profit, 33, 33*n*
promises, x
*Public Memory in Early China* (Brashier), 31*n*
punctuation jokes, 223*n*
punishment, 33, 99*n*, 203, 204
purpose, 14, 14*n*, 17–18, 18*n*. *See also* aims; motivation
Pythagorean Table of Opposites, 85

*qi* (氣), x, 151*n*, 188–189, 195*n*
*qi* 期 (arrangements), 75, 76, 76*n*
*qin* 親 (up close or in person), 241*n*
*qing* 傾 slanted, 152*n*
*qing* 情, 9*n*, 10–11, 24, 28, 74*n*. *See also* motivation; reality/appearance dualism; solidity; substance
*qiong* 窮 (impoverishment), 221, 222
Queen, Sarah, 137*n*, 247*n*
*qu* 取. *See* pick or select; referring

raise up (*ju* 舉), 57, 71–72, 73, 74–75, 95, 123–124
rank, 31, 47, 170, 172. *See also* titles
Raphals, Lisa, xv*nn*, 3*n*
rat body metaphor, 153*n*

reach (*zhi* 至), xxii
realists, 52*n*, 54
reality/appearance dualism. *See also* blockage view; nomenclature, not system; referring; representation; things
  appearance *versus*, 176–177, 211–215
  aural/visual polarity and, 24, 28–30, 35–41
  blockage and, xiv, xiv*nn*
  bodies and, 40*n*
  body metaphors and, 233
  dao and, xxii
  Derrida on, xi
  distinctions and (Hansen), 64*n*, 71*n*
  emptiness and, 23, 24, 25, 26*n*, 26–28, 30–31, 34, 44
  guidance *versus* (Hansen), 108*n*
  language crisis and, 3, 22, 233
  overviews, xxxv–xxxvi, 23–24, 44
  reputation and, 30–34, 31*n*, 39*nn*, 39–40, 43–44
  *shi* 實 and, 23–24, 41–44
  *versus* social regulation, 109
  solidity and, 23, 24–25, 28, 29, 40, 41, 44
  Waley on language crisis and, xiii
  what *yi* 意 follows and, 10
reason, xii*n*, 14, 14*n*, 14–15
recognition, 172, 187. *See also* rank; reputation
record (*bu* 簿), 78, 78*n*
rectifying names (*zhengming* 正名), xiv, xviii, xviii*n*, xx, xx*nn*, xx–xxi, xxi*n*, xxiii, xxxvi, xxxviii, 45, 45*n*, 46, 52, 92*n*, 199. *See also* blockage view; correcting graphs; “fix”; language crisis; *li* 禮 and rectifying names; *Lunyu*; prescriptive crisis (Hansen); school of names; taboos; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
referring. See also *ju* 舉; *qu* 取; reality; representation; things
  Hansen on *zhengming* and, 52, 52*nn*
  heartmind and, 96
  intention and (Hansen), 53–54, 54–55, 107*n*, 108
  language crisis and, 57
  *li* 禮 and rectifying names and, 167–173, 179
  parents and, 205–206
  rulers and, 54–55, 210
  speaking and, 123*n*, 224*n*
  speech expressing *versus* names and, 95, 103
  *yi* 意 and *tong* 通 and, 122–126, 136–139
Reformation, 142–143
regional differences, xxiii*n*, xxix, xxxiv, 130–136, 134*n*, 139. *See also* culture
regulation. *See* order and regulation; titles, commands, and decrees
religion, 142–143
*ren* 人 (human), 219*n*, 220–223, 222*n*. *See also* ourselves and others
ren 仁, 47–48, 48*n*, 149*n*, 157, 202
repeating, x*n*, xi, xxxiv, 20, 133, 165*n*, 178, 205–206. *See also* hearsay; practice
representation. *See also* access and transmission; blockage; nomenclature, not system
  access *versus*, 22
  guidance and, 45*n*, 56
  language crisis and, xiii, xiii*n*, xiv, xviii, xxxiii, 3*n*, 10, 22
  nomenclature, not system and, xxxvi
  respect for ancestors and, xxxiv
reputation. *See also* earning a name; fame; titles, commands, and decrees
  access and transmission and, 4–5
  body-persons (*shen* 身) and, 194–195
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 70
  reality and, 30–34, 31*n*, 39*nn*, 39–40, 43–44
  shape and, 194
residence, 27, 35, 249
respect, xxxiv, xxxviii, 109, 148, 149, 155, 166, 196*n*, 201–202, 203, 247
responsiveness, 16, 19*n*, 21, 61

rhetoric, xv*n*, xvi, xxii, xxiii, 118, 121. *See also* disputation
rhyme books, xxxii*n*
Richter, Matthias, xxix*n*, 152*nn*
Rickett, W. Allyn, 129*n*
ride (*cheng* 乘), xxii
Riegel, Jeffrey, 27*n*, 131*n*
right (*shi* 是), 178, 205
right (*shi* 是) and wrong (*fei* 非), 82
rigidity, 15
ritual as code and, 171–172. See also *li* 禮 (ritual action)
ritual texts, xiv, 46–49, 51*n*, 179
road and gate metaphor, 164
Robinet, Isabelle, 3*n*
Robins, Dan, xv*n*, 9*n*, 16*n*, 35*n*, 40*n*, 68*n*, 100*n*, 188*n*
"Role as a Cultural Concept" (Arditi), 214*n*
"Role of Language in Early Chinese Constructions of Ethnic Identity" (Behr), xvi*n*
roles, social. *See* modeling behavior, not roles
*rong* 容 (countenance), 154, 195, 195*n*
*rong* 容 (visible features), 151
Rosemont, Henry, Jr., 91*n*
"ruler ruler; minister minister; father father; son son" (*Lunyu* 12.11), 172–173, 176–177, 179, 211, 211*n*, 214–216
rulers. *See also* commands; governing; "ruler ruler . . ." (*Lunyu* 12.11); titles, commands, and decrees
  action *versus* speech and, 183–185, 189–190, 190*n*
  aims of are *tong* 通 and, 135
  common people having *tong* 通 with, 130*n*
  decrees *versus* role modeling and, 206
  delight in sound of disputations and, 120*n*
  drawstring metaphor and, 214–215
  establishing names and, 104
  intentions and, 49–50, 52, 68*n*
  intuition and, 48
  language modeling and, 49–50
  *ming* 名, 命 and, x
  mistaken, 81
  parents *versus*, 205–207
  prescriptive function of titles and, 108–109
  rectifying names and, xxxviii, 177–179, 209–210
  referring and, 54–55, 210
  shape-body (*xing* 形) of, 130*n*
  speech-as-trap metaphor and, 120
  speech of *versus* script-performance model, xxxviii
  systems and, 61–62
  unauthorized names and, 81
  *zhengming* and, x, 98–99, 100, 206
  *zhengyan* and, 206–210, 209*n*
rules, xv, xvi*n*, xxvi, xxxiv–xxxv, 90–94, 91*n*, 92*n*, 97, 97*n*, 98–99, 101–102, 156*n*, 167–173. *See also* codes; computer language metaphor
Ru masters of *li* 禮 (Eno), 153*n*, 232
Russell, Bertrand, 57*n*

sadness (*ai* 哀), 128, 153*n*, 157–158, 224, 227
Sagart, Laurent, 104*n*, 161*n*, 220*n*, 247*n*
sageliness (*sheng* 聖) and "visual" knowing (*zhi* 智, 知), 150–151
sages. *See also* disputation; writing and books
  actions *versus* speech and, 182
  body-shape (*xing* 形) and, 195, 196, 197
  "by/for which" and, 15, 16–21
  difficult transmissions and, 6
  senses and, 86–87, 87*nn*
  speaking that precedes speaking and, 117*n*
  *yi* 意 and, 53–56, 117*n*
sages (*sheng* 聖) hearing and "knowers" (*zhi* 智, 知) seeing, 184*n*
salaries, xxxi*n*, 32*n*, 189

same/different (*tongyi* 同異). *See also* binaries; distinguishing and discrimination; kind (*zhong* 種)
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 64–70, 69*nn*
  "fix" and, 51*n*
  kinds and, 78
  look and location and, 159
  music and, 149*n*
  pointing and, 65
  senses and, 61*n*, 69–70, 81, 82, 83, 84
  senses and value and, 84–85, 102*n*
  *shi* 實 action/things and, 70
  type/token distinction and, xxx
  *Xunzi* and, 68*n*, 70
  "Zhengming" and, 69*n*
"same" *ming* 名, xxx
Sanskrit writing, 62*n*
Sato, Masayuki, 143*n*, 148*n*
Saussure, Ferdinand de, 56*n*, 58*nn*, 59*n*, 115, 115*n*, 121, 124
saying (*yue* 曰), xxv, xxxi. *See also* speech and speaking
sayings, 219*n*, 219–220, 223–226, 224*nn*, 227
scheme/content dualism, xiv–xv
scheme of words, 97*n*
School of Names (Language Students) (Scholastic Lineage of Names), xvii–xviii, xviii*n*, xix*n*, xx*n*, 3*n*, 103*n*. *See also* Logicians; Ming Jia
Schwartz, Benjamin, xvii–xxii, xviii*nn*, xix*n*, xix–xxx, xx*nn*, 3*nn*, 45, 46, 92*n*
Schwitzgebel, Eric, xvi*n*
script/performance (Hansen). *See also* discourse and performance dao (Hansen); modeling behavior, not roles; rules; type/token distinction (Hansen)
  commands and, 100
  language crisis and, xv–xvi
  *li* 禮 and, 99*n*, 167–169, 169*n*, 179, 203*n*
  music master Kui and, 232, 233
  overviews, xxxviii, 48–49, 90–94, 167, 173, 176
  rulers' speech *versus*, xxxviii
  speech/writing polarity and, xv
scriptura continua, xxix, xxix*n*
*se* 色, 195*n*. *See also* color; sex
seeing, eyes, and visible things. *See also* action; blind people; color; hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); pattern; shape; things; visual skill; *wu* 物 (that which is visible)
  access and transmission and, 11
  blockage and, xiv*n*
  correcting body and, 154
  Dao and, 60*n*
  desire and, 86
  differentiating and, 83–84, 158
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 67–69
  earth's *shi* 事 and, 200*n*
  *li* 禮 and, 154
  *ming* 名 and *yan* 言 and, 124*n*
  pointing and, 73*n*
  polarities and, 145–147
  reality and, 39–44
  terms and sources and, 235–257
  ugliness and, 85
  *wu* 物 and, 147*n*, 151*n*
  *yi* 意 and, 117, 119
"'Seeing' Like a Sage" (Brown and Bergeton), 87*n*
self, x, 195. *See also* ourselves and others
self (*ji* 己), 153*n*
self-cultivation, x, xxxiv
senses. *See also* hearing and seeing (aural/visual polarity); seeing, eyes, and visible things; smell and hearing; taste; touch/seeing continuum
  below and, 69*n*, 70
  chaos and confusion and, 80–81
  desiring and, 85*n*
  disputation and, 109

  distinguishing and discrimination and, xxxvi, 36, 64–68, 77–82, 84, 119*n*
  estimate of thing and, 102*n*
  guidance and, 79–80
  Hansen on, xix*n*, 63*n*
  kinds and, 64, 75–81, 77*nn*
  language and, xix*n*, 84
  language crisis and, xv, xxi*n*, xxxiii
  material/immaterial contrast and, xi
  metaphors for, 64*n*, 70–75
  naming and, 63–64, 65–70
  Plato and, xxxiv, xxxiv*n*
  polarities and, 64, 67–69, 81–88, 86*n*
  sages and, 86–87, 87*nn*
  same/different and, 61*n*
  *shi* 實 and same/different and, 64, 65–70
  speech and, 64
senses (*tianguan* 天官), 153*n*
sensitivity, 16
separate, 63, 64, 65–70, 69, 69*n*, 83–84, 159
serve (*shi* 事)
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 246–248, 248–249
  body-shape (*xing* 形) and, 194, 194*n*
  customs and, 15
  ghosts and, 148
  people's *de* 德 (power/virtue) and, 199–200
  sages and, 6, 7, 20, 191
  speech and, 74, 99, 117
  as visible, 28–29, 34, 144*n*, 151
  wheelwright and, 12
sex, 144*n*, 195*n*
shadow, 186–187
*Shadow Lines* (Martens), xiii*n*
*Shangjunshu*, 33*n*, 34
*Shangshu* (*Shujing*), 161, 162, 219, 219*nn*, 227, 229, 230*n*
*Shanhaijing*, 219, 223
shape. *See also* form (*xing* 形)
  above/below and, 67
  chess rook and systems and, 58*n*
  correct, 153*n*, 154
  diagramming images and, 73*n*
  heartmind to knowing sequence and, 95, 95*n*, 117, 257, 257*n*
  *li* 禮 and, 156*n*, 219
  means of speaking and, 18*n*
  model emulation and, 181, 186*n*, 193–197, 194*n*
  seeing and, 36–37, 78–79, 158–159, 160–161
  solidity and, 25, 28
  sources on, 236, 244, 245
  speech and, xi
  as things, 160*n*
  touch/seeing continuum and, xii*n*
  *zhengming* and, 210, 210*n*
shape-body (*xing* 形), 130*n*, 195–197
*shen* 身. *See* body-person
*shen* (body-person 身), 28–29, 33*n*, 145*n*, 146, 146*n*, 153*n*, 166, 184–185, 186, 194–195, 196, 207
*shen* 慎 (careful), 183
*sheng* 聖 (sageliness) and "visual" knowing (*zhi* 智, 知), 150–151
*sheng* 聲 (sound), 160–162, 190. *See also* hearing, ears, and audible things
*sheng* 聲 (voice), 161
Shen Kuo 沈括, 62*n*
Shepherd, Robert, xiv
*shi* 事. *See* serve
*shi* 實, 248–249. *See also* action; reality; *ming/shi* (名/實) polarity; things
*shi* 實 (fruit or grain), 29, 32*n*, 32–33, 41*n*, 41–42, 44, 72, 186, 210, 215, 248
*shi* 實/*ming* 名 polarity, xi, 24, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 67*n*, 67–68, 200, 244, 245
*shi* 是 (right), 178, 205
*shi* 詩 (odes), 96–97, 153*n*, 161*n*, 161–162, 208–209
*shi/fei* 是/非 (affirm/deny), xiv, 82*n*, 82–83, 83*n*, 85
*Shiji*, xxii*n*, 17*n*, 150, 153*n*, 204
*Shijing* (*Mao Shi*), 5, 5*n*, 96, 153*n*, 164, 196, 204

*Shiming*, 256
*Shizi*, 70*n*, 71*n*, 82, 191, 209*n*
*shu* 抒 (dredge), 94
*shu* 書 (writing), ix*n*
*Shujing* (*Shangshu*), 161, 162, 219*nn*, 227, 229, 230*n*
*shun* 順 (accord, comply), 203, 204, 209
"Shun Dao," 236
*shuo* 說 (explanation), 77*n*, 79*n*, 105*n*. *See also* tripartite division of argument
*Shuowen Jiezi*, xxviii*n*, xxx, 144, 239
*Shuo Yuan*, 70*n*, 71*n*, 87, 146, 149*n*, 150, 154, 160, 190
*shuo zhe* 說者 (explainers), 186
sight. *See* seeing, eyes, and visible things
sign language, xxvi*n*, xxvi–xxvii, xxvii*n*
*Signs of Writing* (Harris), xxiv*n*
singers, 16–17, 17*nn*, 18*n*, 21
"Six Virtues" (Guodian), 149*n*
skepticism, xvii–xviii, xix, xxi, 47*n*, 47–48, 53
skills, 4, 12–13, 14, 16, 21. *See also* wheelwright example
slanted (*qing* 傾) ears, 152*n*
Slingerland, Edward, xvi*n*
smell and hearing, xi–xii, xii*n*, 5, 5*n*, 30, 195
social characters, xxxviii, 213–214, 214*n*
social construction of meaning, 49, 49*n*. *See also* conventions; expressive speech; *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
social order, 59, 109. *See also* culture
Socrates, 45. *See also* Plato
solidity, 23, 24–25, 28, 29, 40, 41, 44. *See also* substance
"Some Observations on the Composition of the 'Core Chapters' of the *Mozi*" (Maeder), xii*n*
Sophists, xvii–xviii
sound. *See* hearing, ears, and audible things; music; *sheng* 聲
"speaking that precedes speaking," 117*n*
speech acts, x
speech and speaking. *See also* animals; bodies and embodiment; "by/for which" of speech (*suoyiyan* 所以言); conversation; discourse and performance dao; disputation; dualisms; hearing, ears, and audible things; language; mouths; parrot speech; regional differences; rhetoric; *sheng* 聲; texts (oral or written); *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
  access and transmission and, xxxiii, 224*nn*
  action and, x, 30–31, 145*n*, 164, 182–185, 186*n*, 232*n*
  action and persuasion and, 41
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 252–257
  aural/visual polarity and, 99–100, 145, 145*n*, 151, 151*n*
  bodies and, xxv, 115–116
  crazy, 118
  dissolute, 76
  distinguishing and discrimination and, xv, 64, 70, 76, 77*n*
  dualisms and, xii, xiv, 233
  expressive, xxii, 94–99, 103, 106, 107, 108, 109, 124*n*
  feet and, 230
  forgetting, 114, 116, 118, 120–121, 255
  heartmind and, x, xxxiii–xxxiv
  intellectual understanding *versus*, 113, 114, 127–130
  language and, ix*n*, xxvi–xxvii
  language crisis and, xxv–xxxi, xxxiii, 233
  *li* 禮 and, 156, 156*n*
  means of, 18*n*, 18–19
  method of, 17–18
  music and, xxxii*n*
  music/*li* 禮 polarity and, 162
  music master Kui and, 232–233
  names and, xxxiii, 94, 96, 99, 114, 124*n*, 184, 185–193
  nomenclature, not system and, xxviii
  overviews, ix–x
  pointing and, 73*n*

  politics and, xvii*n*
  purpose and, xvi*n*
  raising up and, 123–124
  referring and, 123*n*
  successful transmission and, 8–12
  tastes and desires and, 114
  titles, commands, and decrees and, x, 182, 183, 184, 185–193, 190*n*
  *tong* 通 and, 131–132, 134, 135, 136, 137–138
  walking compared, 230*n*
  without picking *shi* 是 and *fei* 非, 83*n*
  writing and, xi–xii, xiv–xvii, xxiii*n*, xxiii–xxxiii, xxvi*n*, xxvii*nn*, xxviii*nn*, xxix*nn*, xxxv, 4, 15, 51, 51*n*, 52*n*, 52–53, 79*n*, 94, 173, 173*n*
  *yan* 言 as “speech” not “language” and, xxiv*n*
  *yi* 意 and, xv*n*, xxxvii, 18, 117*nn*, 126, 137–138, 187–188, 254–259
spirits, xxiv, 86–87
spoken explanation (*shuo* 說), 79*n*
spontaneous character (*xing* 性), 5*n*, 35–36, 134*n*
stage-continuant model (Hansen), 175
standard (*zhengzi* 正字 or *zhengti* 正體), xxxi*n*
standing, 144*n*
straight (*zheng* 正), 152*n*, 153*n*
structure/application model, xxxviii
Sturgeon, Donald, 148*n*
substance, 27, 38*n*, 189, 215, 237. *See also* solidity
successful communication, xxxvii, 8–12, 50, 113, 132–133. See also *tongyi* 通意; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
sufficient/foot (*zu* 足), 220*nn*, 220–222, 222*nn*, 223*n*, 225*n*, 225–227, 226*n*, 227*n*, 229–232, 230*n*
“Suggestions Concerning the Transcription of Chinese Manuscript Texts—A Research Note” (Richter), xxix*n*
*suoyiyan* 所以言 (by/for which of speech), 14–21, 17*nn*, 18*n*, 19*n*
swans example, 129*n*, 129–130
syllables, xxix
systems. *See* nomenclature, not system

taboos, naming, xxxviii, 200–203
*Taixuanjing*, 239–240
tallies (*fujie* 符節), xxiii, 103
Tang, Junyi, xv*n*
taste master, 151, 151*n*
tasting and tastes, xii, xii*n*, 114, 133, 134, 135–136, 195*n*
Tavor, Ori, 144*n*
teaching, 12–14, 13*n*, 15
texts (oral or written), 96–97, 97*n*, 173, 173*n*. *See also* speech and speaking; writing and books
“Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han” (Nylan), 3*n*
things. *See also* action; carving things up; distinguishing and discrimination; natural *versus* conventional; reality; referring; *shi* 實; *wu* 物
  audible naming and, 245
  aural/visual polarity and, 34–37, 151, 151*n*, 249–251
  binaries and, 70
  blindness and, 147, 241
  change and, 61–62
  chaos and, 80
  *ci* 辭 (phrase) and, 76
  correct names and, 191
  different *ming* 名 for different *shi* 實, 103*n*
  different *ming* 名 for one *shi* 實, xxxi*n*
  distinguishing and discrimination and same/different and, 64, 65*n*, 65–70, 159
  estimate of, 78, 78*n*
  illustrated (*yu* 喻) and, 75–76
  inaccessible, 87*nn*
  language crisis and, xxii
  mathematics and, 159
  names and, xxii, xxx, 54, 57–59, 60–61
  one *ming* 名 for two *shi* 實 and, xxxi, xxxi*n*

things *(continued)*
  pointing and, 72–75, 73*n*, 74*n*, 104, 205
  same/different and, 64, 65–70, 159
  as visible, 144*n*, 147, 147n, 151*n*, 182, 249–250
thoughts, xxxiv, 10, 49, 87, 89, 115, 121, 135. *See also* inner psychology; meaning; mental ideas
"Three Connotations of Confucian Ming" (Gou Dongfeng), xvii*n*
"three withouts," 52
*Thucydides* (Wilson, trans.), xx*n*, 3*n*
*ti* (體), 144*n*, 153, 153*n*. *See also* bodies and embodiment
*tian* 天 (heaven), 26, 35*n*
*tianguan* 天官 (heavenly officers), 153*n*. *See also* senses
*tianming* 天命 (heaven's decree), 5, 5*n*, 190, 200, 203
time, xxiv, xxxv, 14–15, 16, 18–19, 87*n*
*ting* 聽. *See* obey and obedience
titles, commands, and decrees. *See also* fate; governing; obey and obedience; ordaining; *orders* (*ling* 令); rank; reputation; rulers
  action and, xx*n*, xxii, 29, 177, 181–185, 210
  aims and, 188
  aural/visual polarity and, 181–185, 190–193
  conveying and, 139*n*
  decrees decreed and, 30*n*, 192–193
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 77*n*, 81
  as external sound, 187, 190, 193, 246
  listening to, 243
  *li* 禮 and, 167–173, 203
  model emulation *versus*, 178–179, 205–207
  nomenclature, not system and, 59, 62
  "not illustrated," 75
  order and, xxiii, 98, 108–109, 156*n*, 191
  overviews, 241–242
  parents and, 190, 206
  picking and, 72
  pointing and, 74
  referring and, 205–206, 210
  speech and, x, 182, 183, 184, 185–193, 190*n*
  *yi* 意 and, 98–101
*tong* 通, 65*n*, 78, 104, 122–124, 125, 127, 130, 131, 136–139, 223*n*. *See also* regional differences; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
*tongyi* 通意, 114, 122, 123, 125–138, 127*n*, 129*n*, 130*n*, 134, 135
*tongyi* 同異. *See* same/different
*tongyu* 通欲, 136
topography, 131–132
touch/seeing continuum, xi–xii, xii*n*, 14, 70
traditionalists, 48*n*, 49, 51*n*, 52, 53, 97*n*
translation, 114, 130, 132–136
transmit (*chuan* 傳), 22, 139, 224*n*. *See also* access and transmission
treading (*lü* 履), 161
tripartite division of argument, 53, 53*n*, 55, 105*n*, 105–108, 126, 239
type/token distinction (Hansen). *See also* codes; dualisms; script/performance (Hansen); word-types
  commands and, 101
  language and, xxii, xxvi, 161*n*
  *li* 禮 and rectifying names and, 173–177, 174*n*
  overviews, vi, xii, xx, xxii, xxix, xxx–xxxi, 52, 174
  Platonic forms and (Hansen), 175*nn*
  writing and speech and, xxvi, xxix, xxx, xxxi, 52*n*

understand. See *tong* 通
"Unearthing China's Informal Musicians" (Furniss), 228*n*
United States Constitution analogy, 52
up close (*qin* 親), 241*n*
usefulness, 76*n*

valuable things, 9–11, 12, 13*n*, 15, 20–21

Van Zoeren, Steven, 97*n*
virtue. *See* ethics, morality, and virtue
visage (*rong* 容), 130*n*
visible features (*rong* 容), 151
visible pattern/writing (*wen* 文), 243
"visual" knowing (*zhi* 智, 知), 150–151
visual skill, 120*n*
visual things. *See* seeing, eyes, and visible things
voice (*sheng* 聲), 161

Waley, Arthur, xiii, xiii*n*, xviii, 25, 45, 103, 103*n*
walking. *See also* correcting bodies; footprints; foot/sufficient (*zu* 足); *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 251–252
  correcting body and, 153
  dao and, xxii
  *li* 禮 (ritual action) and, 143–147, 154, 156, 168, 212*n*, 216
  music master Kui and, xxxix, 220, 225–226, 229–232, 230*n*
  speaking compared, 230*n*
  as visible, 143–144, 145*n*, 147, 251
Walton, Kendall, 160*n*
Wang Bi, 60*n*
Wang Niansun, 80*n*
*Ways of Confucianism* (Nivison), xvi*n*
weaving metaphors, 212*n*. *See also* drawstring and control-string metaphor
*Wei Liao Zi*, xxxi*n*
*wen* 文, 38, 38*n*, 52*n*, 75–76, 76*n*, 97, 147, 197, 204, 243, 249. *See also* literature (*wen* 文)
*wenyan* 聞言 (hearsay), 40, 224*n*. *See also* hearsay
*wenzhang* 文章 (adornment and display), 147. *See also* adornment
*wenzhe* 聞者 (hearers), 137–138
*Wenzi*
  "by/for which" of speech and, 14–16, 17–18, 18*n*, 21
  on command (*hao* 號) and pointing, 74*n*
  dating of, 15
  on sages and senses and, 87*n*
  on speech *versus* action, 182–183
  transmission and writing and, 13*n*
*wen* 文 (literature), ix*n*, 52*n*
*wen* 聞. *See* hearing, ears, and audible things; listening
"Were the Early Confucians Virtuous?" (Ames and Rosemont), 91*n*
Western philosophy, xi*n*, xi–xxii, xiii, xiii*n*, xvii*n*, xx*n*, xxxiv, 22, 24–25, 86*n*, 107*n*. *See also* Plato *and other philosophers*
what *yi* 意 follows, 9–10, 11, 21
wheelwright example, 12–14, 13*n*
"Where Have All the Prefixes Gone?" (Boltz), xxxii*n*
White, James, xx*n*
Wilkinson, Endymion, xxxii*n*
Wilson, John, xx*n*
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, xiii, xiii*n*, 45, 56*n*, 58*nn*, 59*n*, 93, 174, 178
Wong, Peter Yih-Jiun, 149*n*
"word," xxv, xxv*nn*, xxv–xxvi, xxvii*n*, xxvii–xxviii, xxviii–xxix, xxx, xxxiv, xxxv, 52*n*, 124*n*. *See also* names and naming (*ming* 名/命)
word-meaning, 49, 49*n*, 139
word-types, 245–246
*World of Thought* (Schwartz), 3
*World on Paper* (Olson), xxvii*n*
writing
  *yi* 意 and, xxix–xxx
writing (*shu* 書), ix*n*
writing and books. *See also* dualisms; "fix" (*zheng* 正 and *ding* 定); grammar; graphs; graphs; music; Old Chinese; script/performance; texts (oral or written); "word"
  abstract linguistic concepts and, xxvii–xxxi
  access and transmission and, 13*n*, 13–14
  codified rules (Hansen), 91–94

writing and books *(continued)*
  conversation *versus*, 8–11
  correcting reference and, 168
  dualisms and, xii, xiv, 233
  footprint metaphor and, 165*n*
  language and, xxiii*n*, xxiii–xxvi, xxiv*n*, xxv*n*
  language crisis and, xxxiii
  mouths and, xxv, xxxiv
  nomenclature, not system and, xxviii
  non-glottic, xxiv, xxiv*n*, xxvi–xxvii
  origins of, xxiv, xxiv*n*
  practice *versus*, 43
  punctuation jokes and, 223*n*
  ritual and, xxiv
  speech and, xi–xii, xiv–xvii, xxiii*n*, xxiii–xxxiii, xxvi*n*, xxvii*nn*, xxviii*nn*, xxix*nn*, xxxv, 4, 15, 51, 51*n*, 52*n*, 52–53, 79*n*, 94, 173, 173*n*
  wheelwright example and, 13
'*Writings on Reckoning*' (Cullen), 32*n*
wrong (*fei* 非), 178, 205
*wuwei* 無為 ("nondeliberate activity"—Shepherd), xiv*n*
"Wuxing," 150, 150*n*
*wu zhi* 五至 (five arrivals), 152*n*, 153*n*
*wu* 物 as visible things, 147, 147*n*, 151*n*, 249–250. *See also* things

*xi* 系 (attach), 152*n*
*xiao* 效, 160*n*, 195*n*
Xiao, Yang, xvi*n*
"Xiao Bian" (Ode), 208–209
*Xiao Jing*, 196*n*, 202
"Xici," xxvi, 94–95, 116, 116*n*
*xin* 心. *See* heartmind
*xing* 刑. *See* punishment
*xing* 形. *See* shape
*xing* 行 (enact), 104, 135, 151, 164, 166, 194–195. *See also* action; walking
*xing* 形 (form), ix*n*, 35–37, 144*n*. *See also* shape; *wen* 文
*xing* 形 (shape-body), 130*n*, 195–197
*xing* 形 as "reality," 25
*xing* 性 (spontaneous character), 5*n*, 35–36, 134*n*
*xing* 行 (walking), 220*n*, 225*n*
*xingming* 形名 (forms and names), ix*n*
"Xingqinglun," 249
*xingti* 形體 (form and body), xii*n*
"Xingzimingchu," 190, 249
*Xin Shu*, 26, 30–31, 42, 100*n*, 114, 183–185, 189, 243
*Xin Xu*, 208*n*, 248
*Xin Yu*, 36, 84
*xiong* 胸 (breast), 153*n*
*xun* 循 (adhere to), xxii
*xun* 循 (harmonizing), 120*n*
"Xunxi's Theory of Ritual Revisited" (Tavor), 144*n*
*Xunzi*. *See also* "Zhengming" chapter of *Xunzi*
  aural/visual polarity and, 41, 239, 251, 253
  "by/for which" and, 20–21
  correcting bodies and, 153
  doing and saying and, 164
  fact/value dualism and, 82
  kinds and, 79*n*
  knowing speech and, 132*n*
  *li* 禮 and music and, 148*n*, 157*n*
  on *li* 禮 and shape-bodies (*xing* 形), 196–197
  *li* 禮 and walking and, 144
  on music and crying, 155
  music master Kui and, 232*n*
  on naming intentions (Hansen), 50, 52*n*, 107*n*
  new names and, 103
  noble/base, same/different and, 68*n*
  reference of terms and (Hansen), 54–55
  same/different *tongyi* 同異 and, 69*n*, 69–70
  seeing *versus* and hearing and, 145
  on senses and estimate of thing, 102*n*
  on sound, 190
  writing and, 51

*yan* 言, xxiv*n*. *See also* doctrine/formula; speech and speaking
Yang Xiong. See *Fayan*
*yanse* 顏色 (face or complexion), 153*n*
*Yantielun*, 31, 204, 232*n*, 238, 248
*yanyu*. *See* conversation
*yanyu* 言語 (conversation), 131, 131*n*
*yanzhe* 言者, 137, 138. *See also* speech and speaking
Yau Shun-chiu, xxvi*n*, xxvii, xxvii*n*
*yi* 宜 (appropriate), 145, 230–231
*yi* 意 (guess/speculate), 7, 27, 27*n*, 78*n*
*yi* 異 (differentiate), 63, 64, 69*n*
*yi* 義 (duty), 6*n*, 33, 104–105, 164, 196–197. See also *zhiyi* 志義
*yi* 異 (difference), value and, 84, 84*n*, 94*nn*
*yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通. See also *tong* 通; *tongyi* (通意); *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
  fishnet and rabbit trap analogies and, 113–121, 139
  *Mo Bian* and, xxxvii, 113–114, 119–120, 120*n*, 122–126, 136–139, 257
  ourselves and others and, 137–138
  overviews, xxxvii, 113–114, 121–122, 139
  own *yi* 意 *versus* others' and, 116–121, 137, 138
  politics and translation and, 114, 128–136
  referring and, 122–126, 136–139
  regional differences and, 130–136, 134*n*, 139
  translation and, 114, 130, 132–136
  understanding intention and, 125–126
*yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind). *See also* aims; expressive speech; fishnet and rabbit trap analogies; "fix" (*zheng* 正 and *ding* 定); heartmind; rules; *suoyiyan* 所以言 (by/for which of speech); *tongyi* (通意); tripartite division of argument; what *yi* 意 follows; *yi* 意, getting and becoming *tong* 通
  aural and visual associations in source texts, 255–259, 257*n*
  *ci* 辭 (phrase) and, 54, 55, 56, 94, 96, 97, 98, 103, 108, 118, 239, 240, 255
  conventions and (Hansen), 49–50, 52, 53, 54, 90, 169
  conversation (*yu* 語) *versus* books and, 9–10
  deafness and muteness and, 137
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 76
  embodiment and, xxxvii, 49, 98, 113, 127–130, 161*n*, 187
  expressing and interpreting, 94–99, 103, 107, 108, 121
  getting, 9–11, 16, 18, 113–140, 255–257
  guidance and, xxxvii, 55*nn*, 55–56
  immoral, 118–119
  lyrics (poems) and, 17*n*
  mental ideas and, 49, 58, 89–90, 96, 108, 114
  *ming* versus (*Mengzi*), 97
  *Mo Bian*'s concept of *ci* 辭 and (Hansen), 106*n*, 106–107, 107*n*
  names and, 98–105, 126, 138, 187–188
  overview, xxxvii
  prescriptive crisis (Hansen) and, 49–56
  rectifying names and, xxxvii–xxxviii, 49, 89–94, 169
  of rulers, 49–50, 50*n*, 52
  sage's *yi* 意 and rectifying names (Hansen), 53–56, 117*n*
  semantic meanings and, 49*nn*, 49–56
  spoken explanation (*shuo* 說) and, 79*n*
  visibility and, 117, 119
  writing and, xxix–xxx
  *yin* 音 transposed with, 161*n*
  *yixing* 異形 and, 84*n*
*yi* 義 (model), 6, 6*nn*, 69*n*, 144*n*, 158, 201
yin/yang polarities
  binary terms and, 85, 86
  feeding the elderly and, 158, 166, 200
  heaven/earth and internal/external and, 26*n*
  *li* 禮 and music and, 148*n*, 149–150

yin/yang polarities *(continued)*
  *ming* 名 and *shi* 實 and, 67*n*4, 67–68, 200
  music and dance and, 166
*yin* 音 (tone), 117
*yi* 異 (oddness), 104*n*
*yiwu* 意物 (estimate of the thing), 78, 78*n*, 102, 102*n*
*yi* 意 and *yi* 義, 104, 104*n*
*yi* 意 transposed with *yin* 音, 161*n*
*yi zhi suosuizhe* (what *yi* follows), 9, 10–11, 21
*Yizhoushu*, 164*n*, 185
*you* 有 (to have), 24–25
*you* 有 (exist), 38
*you* 有 (possess), 9
*yu* 喻 (clear), 75–76, 76*n*, 77
*yu* 語, 9*n*. *See also* conversation
*yu* 諭 (proclaim), 94
*yuan* 緣 (relied on), 65
"Yucong Yi," 148, 149*n*, 195
*yue* 曰 (saying), xxv, xxxi. *See also* speech and speaking
*yue* 樂. See *li* 禮 as visible complement of sound; music
*yue* 樂 and *le* 樂, 153*n*, 158, 163
"Yueji" chapter of *Liji*, 149*n*, 149–150, 156–157
*Yuejue Shu*, 42

*zai* 載 (carry), 7*n*
*ze* 擇 (select) 83*n*, 118
*zhang* 章 (display), 147
Zhang Longxi, xxiv*n*
*Zhanguoce*, 32, 33, 132
*zheng* 正 (straight), 152*n*, 153*n*
*zhengli* 正禮 (correcting visual ceremonial processes), 141
*zhengming* 正名. See *li* 禮 as model emulation, not *zhengming* (*Lunyu* 12.11 interpreted); rectifying names
"Zhengming" chapter of *Xunzi*
  aims and *tong* 通 and, 134
  aural/visual polarity and, xii*n*
  binaries and senses and, 81–82
  chaos and, 80*n*, 80–81
  clarifying and, 71
  conveying and, 139*n*
  correcting *li* 禮 and bodies and, 153
  distinguishing and discrimination and, 49–50, 63–64, 65–71, 75–81
  divisibility and identity and, 159
  on establishing naming, 64*n*
  fact/value dualism and, 68*n*
  guidance and (Hansen), 55*n*
  kinds and senses and, 77*n*, 77–79
  language crisis and, xxiii
  *li* 理 and, 231
  *li* 禮 and, 153, 204
  *li* 麗 and, 76*n*
  on naming intentions of rulers, 49–50, 50*n*
  nomenclature, not system and, 60–62, 88
  one *ming* 名 for one *shi* 實 and, 103*n*
  one *ming* 名 for two *shi* 實 and, xxxi
  rectifying names and, 60*n*, 60–61, 62*n*
  senses and, 84
  on senses and similarity, 61*n*
  *shi/fei* 是/非 and, 82–83
  *shi* 實 and pointing and, 72, 73, 73*n*
  *tong* 通 and, 131, 135
  touching and seeing and, xii*n*
  tripartite division of argument and, 105–106
  on what is visible, 158
  *yi* 意 as not occurring with *ming* 名 and, 98, 102–105
  *yi* 異 as negative and, 84*n*
*zhengshen* 正身 (correct body-person), 196
*zhengti* 正體 (correct body), 153*n*. *See also* correct body-person
*zhengti* 正體 (correcting graphs), xxxi, xxxi*n*
*zhengxing* 正形 (correct shape), 153*n*, 154
Zheng Xuan, xxxiii, xxxiii*n*
*zhengyan* 正言 (correcting speech), 206–210, 209*n*
*zhengzi* 正字 (correcting graphs), xxxi, xxxi*n*
*zhi* 執 (grasping), 120
*zhi* 志. *See* aims

*zhi* 志 (intention), 18, 97. See also *yi* 意 (intention or what is on heartmind)
*zhi* 指. *See* pointing
*zhi* 知. *See* knower, knowing, and knowledge
*zhi* 至 (reach), xxii
*zhi* 質 (substance), 24, 27, 28, 38*n*
*zhiyan* 知言 (knowing when to speak), 132*n*
*zhiyi* 志意 (aim or intention), 101, 104–105, 132
*zhiyi* 志義 (aim or intent on duty), 104–105, 134–135
*zhiyi* 知意 (knowing intentions), 125, 137–138
*zhi* 智, 知 ("visual" knowing), 150–151
*zhong* 種 (kind), xxx–xxxi, 77*n*
*Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun* (Tang Junyi), xv*n*
*Zhoubi Suanjing*, 72
*Zhou Li*, 162
*Zhou Yi* (*I Ching*), 57, 60*n*, 82*n*, 94–95, 145, 156, 256
*Zhuangzi*. *See also* fishnet and rabbit trap analogies; wheelwright example
  access and transmission and, 6*n*, 7*n*, 7–9, 8*n*
  appearance and, 23
  aural/visual polarity and, 35, 37, 244, 249, 255
  on blockage of reality, xiv*nn*
  carving up reality and (Hansen), 71*n*, 72–73
  dating of, 15*n*
  on emptiness as real, 26, 26*n*, 28
  goblet words of, 21
  guidance gap and (Hansen), 174*n*
  knowing speech and, 132*n*
  language crisis attributed to, xv*n*, xviii, 45*n*
  music master Kui and, 219, 230*n*, 232
  one-footed creature and, 222*n*, 230
  picking *shi* 是 and *fei* 非 and, 82–83, 83*n*
  on reality, xiv*n*
  "ridden" dao and, xxii
  rules and (Hansen), xvi*n*
  *zhengyan* and, 207–208
*zhuang* 狀 (looks), 159
*zhuyi* 主義 (-ism or ideology), xv*n*
"Ziyi," 183
*zi* 字. *See* graphs; "word"
*zu* 足 (foot/sufficient), 220*nn*, 220–222, 222*nn*, 223*n*, 225*n*, 225–227, 226*n*, 227*n*, 229–232, 230*n*
*Zuozhuan*, xii*n*, xx*n*, 144, 151, 161–162, 188–189, 201, 212*n*, 243, 250, 252. *See also* music master example

CHINESE STUDIES / PHILOSOPHY

Jane Geaney argues that early Chinese conceptions of speech and naming cannot be properly understood if viewed through the dominant Western philosophical tradition in which language is framed through dualisms that are based on hierarchies of speech and writing, such as reality/appearance and one/many. Instead, early Chinese texts repeatedly create pairings of sounds and various visible things. This aural/visual polarity suggests that texts from early China treat speech as a bodily practice that is not detachable from its use in everyday experience. Firmly grounded in ideas about bodies from the early texts themselves, Geaney's interpretation offers new insights into three key themes in these texts: the notion of speakers' intentions (*yi*), the physical process of emulating exemplary people, and Confucius's proposal to rectify names (*zhengming*).

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