THE CLASSICAL CHINESE MODAL PARTICLE "YI" 

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I. Introductory Remarks

Joseph Henri Prémare, the incomparable pioneer in the field of Chinese grammar, wrote in 1730 "Nulla enim littera proprie vacua est, sed in se semper aliquid significat". My teacher David Hawkes, from whom I ought to have learnt much more than I have, in the introduction to his translation of Hung Lou Meng, declared it his abiding principle to insist on translating everything he found in his sentences.

The precise force of modal particles is notoriously difficult to pin down. But these modal particles do exist, and they should be no more neglected than the fine distinction between the aorist and the perfect forms of the verb in Classical Greek.

In this article I aspire to live up to my teacher's abiding principle, and to vindicate Joseph Henri Prémare's grammatical statement, with respect to the modal particle yi 是. I hope that the result will be a sharper and more coherent overall picture of the semantics of the word yi 是 and of the semantics of sentences involving the particle yi 是. Since I am explicitly presenting much of the evidence my analysis is based on, the patient reader will, I hope, find it convenient to try out alternative interpretations of modal yi 是 to the one presented here. If someone comes up with a better solution, I shall not have presented the material in vain.

II. The Meanings of Yi 是

I shall begin by relating the grammatical usages of yi 是 to the verbal uses in a schematic way. I shall construe a sentence ending in modal yi 是 as deriving

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1 For properly speaking no character is 'empty'. Characters always do mean something in themselves.
3 Note incidentally the 'gnomic' uses of the generally past tense aorist in Classical Greek!
4 I do not claim originality for my interpretation. When Yan Shih-ku 颜师古 (581-645) observed on one occasion that yi you er 已那儿 (Hung-wen Da-tzu-dian p. 4535), I think he came reasonably close to the truth. Chou Fa-kao (1975) is by far the best and the most detailed treatment of yi 是 to date.
by a process of grammaticalization from a complex sentence consisting of sentential subject followed by the predicate yi 已. We note that the origin of the modern particle le 了 has been shown to have similar verbal origins.

Let me try to set up a schema on the interrelated uses of yi 已:

1. Intransitive Verbal Uses:

1.1 yi 已 'to desist, to stop, to finish'

(1) 必不得已而於斯三者何先。

"If you certainly (cannot manage to desist>) have no alternative but to give up one, which of these three would you put first?" (Luen Yu 12.7 (twice), cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 111)

The Suen Tz provides interesting evidence that yi means not just 'stop' (止) but 'finish' (cheng 成):

(2) 修傳帳具於具三月而後成。匿闕又三月而後已。

To prepare the shielded wagons and make ready the necessary arms and equipment requires is only completed after three months; to pile up earthen ramps against the walls is first finished after another three months. (Suen Tz 3.4, cf. Griffith (1963) p. 78)

The Lau Tz conveniently links this to the 'exclamatory' yi 已:

(3) 不道早已。

If you do not behave according to the Way you come to an early end. (Lau Tz 30 and 55. Note the splendid verbal use of dau 道.)

Most significantly, in connection with our account of modal yi 已, we find the idiom i.e. yi 則已 'then that finishes the matter, then there is no more to be said':

(4) 死者無知則已。若有知世面目以見仲父以地下。

(A duke is about to commit suicide and says:) "If the dead have no knowledge, then there is no more to be said. But if they do have knowledge, then how will I be able to face Jung Fu in the underworld?" (Guan Tz ch. 32, ed. Wan-you-wen-ka vol. 2, p. 41)

1.1.1 yi er 已而 'when that was finished, then... then after a while'

In S1, yi er 已而 S2 'S3 and only after that S3' the yi 已 must be taken to have S1 as its subject: 'when S1 was finished then (and only then) S2'. Compare first,

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5 The cases where yi 已 seems to be a phonetic loan for yi 已 are not important in our context. The extremely rare cases when it is supposed to be used as a demonstrative pronoun. Luen Yu 17.22, in any case, is not a case of pronominal yi 已, as Yang Bojun (1965) p. 197 rightly points out. Why the Er Yu 鄭偉 dictionary defines yi 已 as '了' remains something of a puzzle to me, unless this simply represents a mistaken forced attempt to make sense of Luen Yu 17.22. Guo Pu 郭璞 seems to think of it as a phonetic loan. (Cf. Liu Qi (1955) p. 132). Chou Fa-kao (1975) p. 315; footnote 2 disregards the question of the systematic interrelation of the various meanings of yi 已 which is the starting point of our investigation.

6 Contrast W. A. Rickett (1985) p. 429 "If, on dying, I had not known any better, it would be all right, but having known, how will I be able to face Zhongfu in the netherworld?"
in preparation, the following example:

(5) 已殺孔父而伐諸公。
He finished killing Kung Fu and then assassinated Duke Shang. (Tzuo Juan, Duke Huan 2.5)

(6) 期年不得魚，已而大魚食之。
For a whole year he did not catch any fish. (When this had finished) finally a fish did bite... (Juang Tz 26.12, cf. Watson (1968) p. 296)

The combination yi er 已而 comes to mean something like 'then finally' then after a while':

(7) 始鄒陽一國也，已而別。
"Originally Jeng and Liang were one state. Then (when that had finished) finally they were separated." (Han Fei Tz 30.38.3)

1.1.2 yi tze 已則 ‘when that was finished then... > then after a while'
Occasionally, we find the variant yi tze 已則:

(8) 其鄰之子非變也，已則變矣。
The neighbour's son would not change his ways. In the end he did change his ways. (Liu Shr Chuen Chiou 13.3, ed. Chen Qiyou p. 689)

1.1.3 yi hu 已乎 ‘(I) am finished>alas!’

(9) 已乎已乎。
"I am done for! I am done for!" (Tzuo Juan, Duke Jau 12.8)

1.1.4 yi yi 已矣 ‘(I) am finished’
1.1.4.1 yi yi hu 已矣乎 ‘(I) I am surely finished!’

(10) 已矣乎。
"I am surely done for!" (Luen Yu 5.27, 15.13)

1.1.4.2 yi yi fu 已矣夫 ‘(I) am done for, aren't I?'

(11) 鳥鳥不至，河不出圖。吾已矣夫。
"The Phoenix does not appear nor does the River offer up its Chart. I am done for, aren't I?" (Luen Yu 9.9, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 79 who—understandably—disregards the final fu 夫.)

1.1.5 yi er 已而 ‘(I) am finished, that's all'
The madman of Chu sings:

(12) 已而已而。
“(You) are done for, that's all! (You) are done for, that's all!” (Luen Yu 18.5, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 183 who disregards the troublesome final er 而, for which see Tzuo Juan, Shiuan 4 and Luen Yu 9.31 “It is not that I do not long for you; you house is far away, that's all!” and the note in A. Waley (1938) p. 145.)

1.1.6 yi yan tsai 已焉哉 ‘(I) am finished with respect to this'

(13) 已焉哉!
It is all over with respect to this! (Shr Jing 40. 1-3)
2. Transitive Verbal Uses:

2.1 *yi* 己 ‘to cause to finish’

*Yi* 己 is used transitively for ‘to cause to finish in a job, remove from office’:

(14) 三已之無威色。
When they thrice dismissed him from office he showed no resentment on his face. (Luen Yu 5.19, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 43)

(15) 王之矣必可已矣。
His Majesty’s illness may certainly be caused to come to an end. (Liu Shir Chuen Chion 11.2, ed. Chen Qiyu (1985) p. 578)

Finally we must quote an ancient definition of *yi* 己:

(16) 己: 成亡。 (說): 為大成也，治病亡也。

Canon: *yi*: ‘to finish making’, ‘to cause to finish’.

Explanation: Of making a coat: to finish making.
Of curing an illness: ‘to cause to finish’. (Mo Tz, A. C. Graham (1978) p. 323)

3. Adverbial Uses:

3.1 *yi* 己 ‘having finished (the process) > by then, by now, already’

Compare *yi* ming *yi* 已明白 ‘is (or should be) clear by now’. *Yi* 己 ‘already’ is the exact opposite of *wei* 未 ‘not yet’.

(17) 至治之法明已矣，而世學者弗知也。

The method of perfect government should by now be clear, but the scholars of our generation will not understand it. (Han Fei Tz 14.4.63. Cf. also Jan Gito Tse no. 126, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 521)

(18) 夫民之不及神農曾史亦已明矣。

That the common people cannot reach Shen Nung or Tzeng Shr should surely by now be clear. (Han Fei Tz 46.5.41)

(19) 敵攻未至而一城已降。

Enemy relief had not yet arrived and one city had already surrendered. (Wei Liu Tz, ed. Zhong Zhaohua (1982) p. 26) Remembering that *wei* 未 has not only a temporal meaning ‘not yet’ but also a logical meaning ‘not quite’ (as in *wei* bi 未必 ‘not quite necessarily’), it will not come as a surprise that *yi* 己 not only has a temporal meaning ‘already’, but also a logical meaning ‘fully, very, exceedingly’.

(See 3.2.)

3.1.1 *chang* *yi* 曾已 ‘have experienced finishing > already’

3.1.2 *ye* *yi* 眾已 ‘have achieved finishing > already’

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7 Compare also the ordinary final particle *yi* 己, which has a temporal function ‘by that time’ versus a logical function, notoriously after *tse* 試, when it means ‘under such conditions’.

8 This use first becomes common in Han times.

9 Also this use becomes common first in Han times. For a set of examples from *Shi Ji* 史記, see Hong Chengyu (1984) p. 177.
3.2 yi 己 ‘finishingly, consummately>fully, exceedingly’

(20) 二子之言已当矣。

“The two master’s words were quite true, (but Wu Chi was dismembered and the Lord of Shang was pulled to pieces between carts.)” (Han Fei Tz 42.2.13, cf. W. K. Liao (1953) p. 210. There is a close parallel in Han Fei Tz 13.3.25.)

(21) 言圣人之智慧已多矣，其所守者有約故掌而必矣。愚人之智固已少矣，其所事者多故動而必窮矣。

Now the sage’s intelligence is inherently quite considerable, but what he is concerned with is limited to the essential. Therefore when he acts he is sure to win public recognition. The moron’s intelligence is inherently quite limited, but what he concerns himself with are many things. Therefore, when he moves he is bound to fail. (Huai Nan Tz 9, ed. Liu Wendian p. 31b, cf. R. Ames (1983) p. 205-6. Shian Tz 11.110 has yi 己 ‘in order to’ for our yi 己，but Liang Qixiong (1973) p. 151 prefers to read yi 己 without apparently being aware of the Huai Nan Tz reading which so nicely supports his suggested emendation/reading.)

Yi shen 己甚 ‘too much, excessively’ becomes a current idiom in Classical Chinese, but we also find yi tai 巳太 in Shr Jing, a usage which I have not found in later texts:

(22) 非已太强。

We must make sure not to be too excessively joyful. (Shr Jing 114.1, 114.2, and 114.3)

4. Uses as Sentence Final Particle

4.1 S yi 己 ‘S,( that) finishes/ed the matter>definitely S, enfín S’

Modal yi 己 turns out to be very unevenly distributed in pre-Han literature. The short Luen Yu contain no less than 23 occurrences of modal yi 己 outside the er yi 而已 pattern. The much longer Han Fei Tz 韓非子, contains very little evidence on modal yi 己. I find exactly one example involving the current idiom yi ... yi 己 ... 己: (23) 我以悅越來遠亦可會已。

The claim that one should please those who are near and cause those who are far away to come closer is quite definitely to be rejected. (Han Fei Tz 38.8. 47)

4.1.1 S yi fu 己夫 ‘S, and that finishes/ed the matter, or is it not so?>definitely S, isn’t that so?’

4.1.2 S yi yi 己已 ‘S, that finishes/ed the matter, this is a currently relevant state of affairs>definitely S!’

10 Cao Heng (1969) p. 150 surely misinterprets wu yi 己已 as bu yu 不遇.

11 Here the ke 可 invites final ye 而, and the yi 己 invites final yi 己. One is tempted, here, as in a considerable number of other cases, to construe yi 己 as a combination ye yi 也已. It is worth keeping this possibility in mind as we proceed with our enquiries.

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When we have the construction like *yi yi* 已矣 at the end of a sentence I think we generally\(^\text{12}\) do not have two particles but a sentence-anaphoric semi-grammaticalized verb *yi* 已 'and that is definit(e)' followed by a post-verbal particle *yi* 已. We thus have a theoretically interesting instance of a 'particle' which retains enough 'verbality' to qualify for another verbal particle to follow it. We have yet another piece of evidence of the softness of categorial boundaries in Classical Chinese grammar.\(^\text{13}\)

**4.1.3 S yi hu 已乎 'S, that finishes/ed the matter, and this is surely (or: is this) so! (?)> definitely S!'**

The combination *yi hu* 已乎 is exhortative and emphatic:

(24) 子未可以已乎。

*You definitely cannot act as yet!* (Li Ji, *Tan Gung*, ed. Couvreur p. 257)

The combination can also mark the questioning of a definitive statement, as in *Juang Tz* 23.38.

**4.1.4 S yi t'ai 已哉 'S, that finishes/ed the matter, and this is emphatically so!''**

**4.2 S ye *yi* 也已 'S is judged to be true, that finishes the matter'**

When we seem to have a sentence followed by the construction *ye *yi* 也已 we do not have a sentence followed by two particles but rather a sentence which ends in its sentence-final particle *ye* 也, and then a sentence-anaphoric semi-grammaticalized verb *yi* 已 'and that is definitive/definite'.

**4.2.1 S ye *yi* 也已 'S is judged to be true, and this finishes/ed the matter, and this is a currently relevant state of affairs!'**\(^\text{14}\)

When we seem to have a sentence followed by the particles *ye *yi* 也已 we actually have a sentence in *ye* 也 followed by a sentence-anaphoric semi-grammaticalized verb *yi* 已 'and that is definit(e)' which in turn is modified by the verbal particle *yi* 矣.

**4.3 S er *yi* 而已 'S, and that finishes the matter>S and that is all.'**

The construction *er *yi* (yi) 而已(矣) 'and that is all' is current enough, but it still remains less than adequately understood. *Yi* 已 is, I suppose, generally recognized as a verb here which is linked with the preceding sentence by the anaphoric connective *er* 而 'and/but it/he'. That is why we can have the verbal particle *yi* 矣 after *er *yi* 而已.

A number of problems arise. Firstly, one might suppose that *er *yi* 而已 after a verbal sentence corresponds to *yi* 已 after a nominal sentence, since *er* 而 links

\(^{12}\) There are certain exceptions like: 以人傑人則賢者可如已矣。

\(...\) then the talented men may definitely be recognized. (Li Ji, *Bian Ji*, ed. Couvreur vol. 2, p. 488).

\(^{13}\) Here the final *yi* 矣 seems connected with the *t'ai* 哉. It does not seem to link with our *yi* 矣.

verbal predicates. However, the facts are otherwise. Er yi 而已 turns out to occur in nominal sentences, as in Luen Yu 4.15 and Luen Yu 8.20, and yi 已 alone frequently marks verbal sentences. Thus the distribution of yi 已 versus er yi 而已 (矣) cannot simply be explained in terms of the nominal or verbal character of the sentence modified.

Secondly, there is a problem about the uneven distribution of er yi 而已 versus er yi yi 而已矣 which will be taken up below. Thirdly, there is a crucial problem about the scope of er yi 而已 ‘that is all’. The point is that we need to ask ‘What is all?’. To put the matter more technically: What is the subject of the (semi-grammaticalized) verb yi 已? For convenience of presentation we shall write the scope of er yi 而已 in capitals.

The scope of er yi 而已 may be the subject of the sentence:

(25) 非獨此五國為然而已也。
It is not only THESE FIVE STATES that are like this. All the ruined states in the world are like this. (Jan Gwo Tse no. 367, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p.130)
The scope or subject of yi 已 in er yi 而已 may be a number predicate:

(26) 有婦人壽九十人而已。
“With a woman among them they were only NINE PERSONS.” (Luen Yu 8:20. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 73 writes: “there were, in fact, only nine,” which suggests a combination of restrictive quantification with definite mood.)

It may even be a nominal predicate:

(27) 夫子之道忠恕而已矣。
“Our Master’s Way is simply this: LOYALTY, CONSIDERATION.” (Luen Yu 4.15. I follow the translation in A. Waley (1938) p. 105. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 33 is uncharacteristically discursive: “The way of the Master consists in doing one’s best and in using oneself as a measure to gauge others. That is all.” The crucial point for us is that D. C. Lau, unlike A. Waley, fails to make clear the scope of er yi 而已.)

The subject of yi 已 may also be a time-expression preceding the main verb:

(28) 與也其心三月不遠仁, 其餘則日月至焉而已矣。
“As for Huei, his heart does not offend against benevolence for three months (at a time). The others attain it only for A DAY OR A MONTH.” (Luen Yu 6.7. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 49 translates: “The others attain benevolence merely by fits and starts.” This may be acceptable as a loose paraphrase of the ancient commentary (ed. Liou Bau-nan, WEN-y0u-wen-ku vol. 2, p. 10) but it certainly does not translate the original.)

The relevant time expression may come after the main verb:

(29) 荷有用我者期月而已可也。
“If anyone were to really employ me for only as much as A FULL YEAR (the result) would be acceptable. (Luen Yu 13.10. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 125 fails to
recognize the force of go shō in spite of the fact that the old commentary gives the correct and current gloss cheng zhe 'really', then leaves out our er yī 而已 and mistranslates: "If anyone were to employ me, in a year's time I would have brought things to a satisfactory state...". Again A. Waley (1938) p. 173f is superior to D. C. Lau in precision of thought, not to speak of style: "If only someone were to make use of me, even for a single year...")

The subject or scope of yī 已 may be the object of the main verb:

(30) 子誠者也，知管仲子而已矣。

"You are a genuine Chi man: you know only of GUAN JUNG AND YAN TZ."

(Meng Tz 1A1, our translation follows D. C. Lau (1984) p. 51 which at this point is perfectly satisfactory and explicit.)

(31) 故治天下及國在乎定分而已矣。

"Therefore the governing of the world and the state consists in nothing other than FIXING THE DIVISION OF DUTIES." (Liu Shu Chu'en Chiu 17.6, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1110, Shen Zi Fragments no. 82, P. M. Thompson (1979) p. 280)

Finally, the subject of yī 已 may appear to be the whole sentence:

(32) 子曰：不言而已矣。

The Master said: "(It is that) HE DOES NOT CONDUCT (PROPER) PROGNOSTICATION, that is all." (Luen Yu 13.22, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 129)

(33) 莫知也斯已而已矣。

"If it is the case that no one recognizes him, then HE SHOULD GIVE UP, that is all." (Luen Yu 14.39, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 145 who takes yī 知 'recognize somebody's talents' in its ordinary meaning 'understand'.)

4.3.1 S er yī yī 而已矣 'S, and that finishes/ed the matter, and this is a currently relevant state of affairs> S and that is all (!11)'

4.3.2 S er yī hū 而已乎 'S, and that finishes the matter, and this is surely so!>It is (is it) just that S! (?)'

(34) 如是而已乎。


4.3.3 S er yī er 而已耳 'S, and that finishes/ed the matter, and that's it> S, and that is simply all there is to it!'

(35) 知知其所宜知知其所失正正待之而已耳。

Confucius said: "How do we know what is an end? How do we know what is a beginning? The only thing for us is just to wait." (Juang Tz 20.60. I quote the translation in B. Watson (1968) p. 218 which captures the relevant nuances

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15 In the texts which regularly have both er yī 而已 and er yī yī 而已矣 we may express the nuances of the final yī 矣 by an exclamation mark. But for the texts which either have only er yī 而已 or er yī yī 而已矣 it seems implausible to assume that the final yī 矣 makes a significant difference since it does not contrast with its absence.
admirably. Cf. Shiun Tz 1.36, (Köster (1968) p. 8) and Shiun Tz 13.12. I found another example in Han Shu Wai Juan 9.7.

Our schema obviously needs to be checked against the uses of yi 已 in pre-Han literature. We shall concentrate on the problematic usages particularly of modal yi 已. The reader is invited to consider in each instance to what extent the passage quoted admits of a unified interpretation along the lines suggested, or whether some other glosses would give a more coherent picture.

The question of what particles yi 已 may be a fusion of will be left for separate discussion at a later stage. It is in any case an etymological question which has no direct relevance to our semantic and syntactic purpose, although it is a question which one wants to keep in mind as one surveys the evidence. Some neat possibilities come to mind, such as a derivation of yi 已 from a combination of ye 也 and the ordinary yi 已. Moreover, ordinary yi 已 might be taken as another grammaticalized version of the verb yi 已. We would then have two distinct grammaticalizations of the same verb. But it is by no means a foregone conclusion that yi 已 and the ordinary yi 已 had the same pronunciation in Classical times, although this is the view adopted in B. Karlgren’s Grammata Serica Recensa p. 384. Chou Fa-kao (1975) p. 315 argues that the two pronunciations were different.

All this must remain in the backs of our minds as we set out, in the first instance, to sort out the semantics of the particles in ancient Chinese texts.

It is even more important to keep in mind that since I am proposing to analyse modal yi 已 as a grammaticalized verb, there arises a problem of the degree of grammaticalization. Since one theoretically could construe modal yi 已 as the main verb with a sentential subject, to what extent should one interpret yi 已 in such an etymological way? I cannot discuss this problem for each passage I quote. Instead, I must ask the reader to keep in mind the theoretically problematic question of the degree of grammaticalization of yi 已 in each case.

The finest modern translators have reacted quite differently to the uncertainty about the modal yi 已. D. C. Lau is in my view one of the finest translators of Classical Chinese philosophical literature. D. C. Lau is typical of the majority of translators: he mostly disregards our modal yi 已, but he occasionally attributes various meanings to it as and when this seems to suit the context. This method creates a disconcerting fuzziness in the translation which I believe is in the mind of the translator rather than in the texts themselves.

D. C. Lau’s method is systematically avoided by A. C. Graham who refuses to assign arbitrary meanings to what we call modal yi 已 as long as he has no reliable interpretation for the particle.

Let us now see if we can find such a reliable interpretation. We shall proceed book by book, and we shall aim at treating all relevant cases, not just the ones
that happen to bear out our interpretation particularly well. This, I hope, will show up the limitations of what is achieved in the present paper.

III. The Use of Modal Yi 己 in Pre-Han Literature

In what follows I shall treat exhaustively the uses of modal yi 己 in the indexed (and some of the non-indexed) pre-Han literature. The order in which the books are treated is not always chronological.

Shu Jing

The grammar of the ancient parts of Shu Jing is special in many ways, and the particle yi 己 makes no exception. There are eight relevant cases of yi 己 in all. In no less than seven of these, yi 己 is sentence-initial and precedes first or second person pronouns. All cases of the particle yi 己 are in direct speech. Perhaps this initial yi 己 is exclamatory like the later yi hu 衡乎 'I am finished' alas'. This, in any case, is the traditional interpretation.

(36) 己子惟小子。

"I am but a little child, that is all." (Shu Jing 27.54 and 27.308)

(37) 己汝惟小子。

"You are but a little child." (Shu Jing 29.274 and 29.483, cf. 33.261)

(38) 己汝乃其造化義事。

"You should definitely speedily, according to these norms of right, kill them all." (Shu Jing 29.658, cf. Karlgren p. 40 no. 17)

(39) 己若致監曰。

"Being an inspector like this I definit(ive)ly say: ..." (Shu Jing 31.237, cf. Karlgren p. 48 no. 8)

We also find one case of the sentence-final yi 己.

(40) 公定子徒。

"You, prince, have arranged for my going, and that is definitive." (Shu Jing 33.511, Karlgren p. 53 no. 21)

The idiom er yi 而已 is absent in Shu Jing. It turns out to be absent also in Shr Jing, which is less than surprising since er yi 而已 strikes us as perhaps a somewhat prosaic idiom.

Shr Jing

It is well worth giving an exhaustive survey of yi 己 in Shr Jing, for the usages we here observe will help us to understand the later grammaticalized usages of the word.

(41) 夫也不良，國人知之，知而不知耳。

"He is my husband, but is not good. The people in the state know this, but he will not stop." (Shr Jing 141.1, cf. also 172.3, 191.4, 198.2, 235.2, 262.6, 267.1, and wu yi 要已 in Shr Jing 110.1, wei yi 未已 129.3.)
Closely connected is the question:

(42) 心之憂矣,獨我其吉。

"The grief of the heart, when will it end?" *(Shr Jing 27.1)*

*yi* 已 may, in this function, be nominalized:

(43) 至于巴斯亡。

"When it comes to the end then they are ruined." *(Shr Jing 223.4)*

The so-called exclamative auxiliary *yi* 已 is closely connected:

(44) 必即生。

"It is surely all over with respect to this." *(Shr Jing 58.6)*

When it comes to *yi* 已 'excessively', this again can be naturally derived from the basic meaning: 'finish>go all the way>go to excess>going to excess>' excessively'. ⑩ Consider first:

(45) 鳥鳴不已。

"The cocks crow and do not finish>the cocks crow incessantly." *(Shr Jing 90.3)*

(46) 或不言行。

"Some never cease going on their expeditions." *(Shr Jing 205.4)*

Unnegated *yi* 已 in this pre-verbal position comes to be translatable as 'by now, already' in later books, as we shall see below.

Next we have:

(47) 彼語者亦已大甚。

"These slanderers, they are surely too excessive." *(Shr Jing 200.1, cf. also relevant examples in Shr Jing 198.1, 257.9)*

This completes our account of all occurrences of *yi* 已 in *Shr Jing*. We find few clear traces of grammaticalization.

**Li Ji: "Tan Gung"**

The *Tan Gung* section of *Li Ji*, like the *Luen Yu*, is an important document in the early history of colloquial Chinese. Here, in any case, is a survey of all the relevant instances of *yi* 已 that I have found in reading that fascinating text.

There are no cases of the current idiom *bu de yi* 不得已 'cannot help', but the source of this idiom comes out beautifully in

(48) 得已則吾欲已。

"If I can refrain (from doing this) then I will refrain." *(Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 226, cf. ibidem p. 240)*

There are four cases of *yi* 已 'already', three of them accompanied by the final reflex *yi* 已:

(49) 鄡者已告矣。

"Some time ago I have (finished>) already announced it." *(Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed.*

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⑩ See the Jeng *yi* commentary to *Shr* no 114, first stanza.
Couvreur p. 254, cf. also p. 123, 139, and 179 without final yi 吾)

I find five cases of yi 吾 ‘exceedingly’:

(50) 然後吾來, 於省則吉。

“If one does it in the open countryside that is excessively distant. If one does it in the bedchamber that is excessively much.” (Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 137, cf. ibidem p. 204, 144, 261)

Our modal yi 吾 comes in

(51) 以死者不可別也。

“They definitely >simply consider that the dead cannot be distinguished.” (Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 201)

(52) 生事無而鬼神始已。

“They definitely >finally begins the serving the spirits of the deceased.” (Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 241)

The combination ye yi 也已 seems to have an emphatic declarative force, as indeed we should expect:

(53) 吾子可謂知禮也已。

“Young Tz may definitely >properly be said to be knowledgeable about rites!” (Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 212)

We also find a less idiomatic variant of er yi 而已 which indicates that at the time er yi 而已 was perhaps not quite established as a very current fixed idiom:

(54) 貳得正而陰靈斯已矣。

“I must die in pursuance of what is right, and that is all.” (We might also translate: ‘If I must die in pursuance of what is right, then so be it!’ as R. P. Kramers has kindly pointed out to me.) (Li Ji, Tan Gung, ed. Couvreur p. 126. For er yi 而已 see ibidem p. 174.)

This completes the analysis of all the relevant instances of yi 吾 that I have come across in Tan Gung.

Li Ji other than “Tan Gung”

There is no complete concordance to Li Ji. While I am reasonably confident that I have not overlooked many instances of yi 吾 in the Tan Gung section, my treatment of the rest of Li Ji must be based on a more cursory reading of the text and on all the examples referred to—but unfortunately not properly located—in Shi Mingcan (1974).

While a text like Han Shu Wai Juan has practically no modal yi 吾 it turns out that the particle is common in the later parts of the Li Ji. There are several possible reasons for this. The parts in which modal yi 吾 comes are in fact early, or they are unadulterated quotations in later compilations, or they are deliberate archaizing usages.
(55) 可司所授即公館矣。
“Dwellings allocated by officials definitely count as public dwellings.” (Li Ji, Tseng Ti Wen, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 1, p. 459)

(56) 為人矣。
“...such a man definitely is a sage.” (Li Ji, Jung Ni Yan Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 383)

(57) 習穀而收民息已。
“After the sacrifice, when the harvest was finished, the people would definitely/ simply rest.” (Li Ji, Jou Te Sheng, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 1, p. 598)

(58) 君雖未知喪臣服已。
“Even if the ruler had not yet learnt of the mourning, the servants would definitely put on mourning clothes.” (Li Ji, Sung Fu Shiau Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 1, p. 753)

Finally, two rather puzzling examples in which sentence-final yi 已 is glossed as pre-verbal yi 已:

(59) 為兄弟既待矣已。及其罪也反服其服。
“if the brothers had definitely/by then taken off their mourning garments, then when it came to the burial, they would again take on their mourning garments.” (Li Ji, Sung Fu Shiau Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 1, p. 772 who understands this yi 已 as if it was the adverbial 'already' in his literal Latin rendering: si exuera tua quinternium, adeuntientes suas vestes funebres and Suen Shidan’s admirable commentary (ed. WYWK vol. 9, p. 56), in his paraphrase, does transpose the yi 已 to the pre-verbal position. Similar observations apply to Li Ji, Tsa Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 200, ed. WYWK vol. 11, p. 60.)

Yi yi 已矣 in Li Ji

(60) 亡矣，黃矣，不可復見矣矣。
“He was gone. He was lost. He could definitely/by then not be seen again.” (Li Ji, Waco Song, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 555)

(61) 以人望人則賢者可知矣矣。
“If he looks at men in terms of (other) men, then the talented ones may definitely be recognized.” (Li Ji, Biau Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 488, who glosses our yi 已 as 'et nihil amplius' (and nothing further), which does not quite seem to make sense in the context. By the way, Séraphim Couvreur’s literal Latin paraphrases are always of much greater use to the grammarians that his translations into French.)

Ye yi yi 已矣 in Li Ji

(62) 後世雖有作者褒揚弗可及也已矣。
“In later ages, even if there arose (scil. true rulers) Emperor Yu could definitely not be reached/equalled.” (Li Ji, Biau Ji, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 501)

Ye yi 已矣 in Li Ji

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(63) 所謂孝也已。
    “In a case like that that definitely is what is called filial piety.” (Li Ji, Ji Yung, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 302)

(64) 祭者敬之本也已。
    “Sacrifice is the basis of education.” (Li Ji, Ji Yung, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 333)

(65) 是唯成其親之名也矣。
    “This definitely is what is called establishing one's parents' name.” (Li Ji, Ji Yung, ed. Couvreur (1913) vol. 2, p. 373)

Luen Yu

The ungrammaticalized uses of 之 in Luen Yu have been discussed as part of the schema above.

Pre-verbal 之 in Luen Yu

We find the idioms 之 shen 已甚 'too much' (Luen Yu 8.10). One other case may be related to this use:

(66) 道之不行已知之矣。
    “That the Way is not practised he (already＞) knows full well.” (Luen Yu 18.7, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 187: "As for putting the Way into practice, he knows all along that it is hopeless.” 之 已 can mean 'by then, already', but surely never ever 'all along'.)

    If my suggestion is correct we have the logical pair 之 jr 未知 (Luen Yu 5.19) 'be not quite sure' versus 之 jr 已知 'be quite sure' just as we have the temporal pair 之 未 'not yet' versus 之 已 'already'. This is a crucial parallelism.

    Finally, we find the idiom 之 jion 之 久矣 'already for a long time' in Luen Yu 17.19.

Sentence-final 之 之 已矣 in Luen Yu

Curiously, 之 已 on its own never occurs sentence—finally in Luen Yu. It is always combined with other particles.

(67) 士見危致命，見得思義，祭思敬，喪思哀，其可已矣。
    “When a knight is ready to lay down his life in the face of danger, does not forget what is right at the sight of gain, and does not forget reverence during a sacrifice nor sorrow while in mourning, then (such a knight) must definitely be acceptable!” (Luen Yu 19.1, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 191 who in this instance renders our 之 已 as 'perhaps': "One can, perhaps, be satisfied with a Gentleman who is ready to lay down his life...". I have found no evidence that 之 已 ever can mean anything like 'perhaps'. Quite the contrary: it gives sentences a definitive flavour. It may be that D. C. Lau is translating the chi 兵 by 'perhaps'. In that case N. G. D. Malmqvist (1982) has shown that interpretation to be

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mistaken.\(^{17}\)

(68) 若聖與仁吾豈敢抑之不順時人不順則可謂云而已矣。

"How dare I claim to be a sage or a benevolent man. I may definitely/simply be said to study without flagging and to teach without growing weary." (Luen Yu 7.34, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 65: “Perhaps it might be said of me that I learn without flagging…” Confucius might have used a word for ‘perhaps’, but it so happens that he did not.)

(69) 非不始可與言詩而已。

"With Te-gung one can **definitely**> **properly** begin to talk about the Songs." (Luen Yu 1.15, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 7 who translates *yi* 已 as if it could work as a restrictive quantifier on the subject, an interpretation for which I have found no evidence: “Ssu, only with a man like you can one discuss the *Odes*.”\(^{18}\)

Compare a relevant passage:

(70) 能去八能行四惠而始可教已。

Not until you get rid of the eight blemishes and avoid the four mischiefs can one **definitely**> **properly** begin to teach you. (Jhuang Tz 31.26, cf. A. C. Graham p. 251)

Yi *yi* 也已 in Luen Yu

(71) 攻乎異端斯害也已。

"To attack a task from the wrong end will **definitely**/simply do harm." (Luen Yu 2.16, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 15: “… can do nothing but harm,” which is satisfactory.)

(72) 欲罷不為, 既竭吾才, 如有所立卓爾, 雖欲從之未由也已。

"I cannot give up even if I wanted to, but, having done all I can, it (the Way of Confucius) seems to rise sheer above me and I **definitely**/simply have no way of going after it, however much I may want to." (Luen Yu 9.11, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 79 who disregards our *yi* 也已."

(73) 四十而惑於常考者其時也已。

"If by the age of forty or fifty he has not distinguished himself in something, then he is **quite definitely** not worth standing in awe of." (Luen Yu 9.24, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 83 who disregards our *yi* 也已 as well as *yi* 也已 ‘surely’ and writes: “… one can say, I suppose, that he does not deserve to be held in awe.” ‘I suppose’ is pretty exactly the opposite of what *yi* 也已 means if our interpretation

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\(^{17}\) For the grammar of *yun er* 云爾 see A.C. Graham’s important article on the subject “The verbs of direct speech in Classical Chinese”, in *Acta Orientalia* (Copenhagen) 1983.

\(^{18}\) Cf. the similar Luen Yu 3.8. Note that *ye* 也 after proper names is not normally used in addressing the person named, although it does predominantly occur in direct speech. Here, the force of the *ye* 也 is brought out rather nicely by Karljens’s suggested paraphrase into German: *der Tzu Kung, mit dem kann man am fangen über das Buch der Gesänge zu reden.*

\(^{19}\) Some editions write *ye* *yi* 也已矣.

\(^{20}\) Some texts read *ye* *yi* 也已矣 for *ye* *yi* 也已矣, but all texts have our *yi* 也已矣.
is correct.)

(74) 年四十而見惡焉，其終也已。
   "If by the age of forty a man is still disliked he definitely is finished." (Luen Yu 17.26, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 181 who disregards our yi 已.)

(75) 李之也已，何必公山氏之之也。
   "We definitely/simply have nowhere to go. But why must we go to Gung-shan?" (Luen Yu 17.5, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 174: "We may have nowhere [to go, but...] Which would have fitted the context well enough, but happens to be entirely unsupported by the evidence on yi 已.)

(76) 君子食無求飽，居無求安，敏於事而慎於言，就有道而正焉，可謂好學也已。
   "When the gentleman seeks neither a full belly nor a comfortable home, when he is quick in action but cautious in speech, when he goes to men who have achieved the way to have himself put right, then he may definitely be called hau shiue 好學 (eager to learn)." (Luen Yu 1.14, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 7 who disregards our yi 已.)

(77) 能近取譬可謂仁之方也已。
   "The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand may definitely be called the method of benevolence." (Luen Yu 6.30, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 55 who disregards our yi 已.)

(78) 如有周公之才之美，使賢且令其餘不足觀也已。
   "Even with a man as gifted as the Duke of Jou, if he was arrogant and miserly, then the rest of his qualities would definitely not be worth looking (admiringly) at." (Luen Yu 8.11, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 71 who disregards our yi 已.)

Ye yi yi 也已矣 in Luen Yu

This colloquial idiom seems largely limited to Luen Yu.23

(79) 周伯其可謂至德也已矣，三以天下讓民而得而稱焉。
   "Tai Bo may definitely be said to be a man of perfect moral charisma! Three times he abdicated his right to rule over the Empire, and yet he left behind nothing the common people could acclaim." (Luen Yu 8.1, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 69 "Surely T'ai Po can be said to be..." Yi 已, on our interpretation is not suggestive but definitive, apodictic, unlike the suggestive yi 亦 'also', 'surely',)

(80) 周之德其可謂至德也已矣。
   "The moral charisma of the Jou should definitely be called perfect moral charisma!" (Luen Yu 8.20, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 75 who disregards our particles.)

21 Editions of the Luen Yu have various sets of final particles here, but all editions have, among other things, the crucial yi 已.
22 Some editions have ye yi yi 也已矣 for ye yi 也已. All editions have our crucial yi 已.
23 Cf. however Li Ji, Blou Ji, ed. Couvreur vol. 2, p. 300 for an example outside that text.

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(81) 昔如其所亡，月無忘其能。可謂好學也已矣。

"A man who knows in the course of the day what he lacks and who does not forget in the course of a month what he has mastered, such a man may definitely/properly be said to be ban shue 好學 ‘eager to learn!’ (Luen Yu 19.5, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 191 “A man can, indeed, be said to be eager to learn who is...”)."

(82) 非其時，處之無不行為可謂明也已矣，...可謂達也已矣。

"When a man is not influenced by slanders which are assiduously repeated or by complaints for which he feels a direct sympathy he may definitely/properly be called ming ‘clear-sighted!’ Such a man may definitely/properly be called yuan ‘far-sighted!’ (Luen Yu 12.6, cf. D. C. Lau (1983) p. 111 who disregards our particles.)"

(83) 誠而不解從而不改吾未知之何也已矣。

"I definitely/simply can do nothing with the man who gives assent but does not rectify himself or the man who is pleased (with what is right) but does not reform himself" (Luen Yu 9.24, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 83 who disregards our particles.)

(84) 不曰如之何如之何者吾未知之何也已矣。

"There is definitely/simply nothing I can do with a man who is not constantly saying: ‘What am I to do? What am I to do?’" (Luen Yu 15.16, contrast D. C. Lau (1983) p. 153 who disregards our particles.)

Finally, the trickiest of the examples:

(85) 亦名其志也已矣。


Why does the Master add the yi 已? I believe it is because he is repeating with definite emphasis something he has maintained using the same words (but without the yi 已 we are interested in) a moment before.

Meng Tz

In Meng Tz I count no less than 48 instances of er yi yI 而已矣 and three of er yi 而已 without yi 已矣. (Cf. Meng Tz 6B2 and 6B8)

There are four cases of bu de yi 不得已 ‘cannot help it’ and thirteen verbal uses which need not interest here. Two cases of yi shen 已甚 ‘excessively much’ (3B7, 4B10) as well as a single instance (1B16) of yi 已 ‘by then, by now, already’ are also unproblematic. That leaves the cases of final yi 已 to be interpreted.

(86) 然則王之所大欲可知已。

"In that case one can definitely/simply understand what the thing is that you greatly desire." (Meng Tz 1A7, contrast D. C. Lau (1984) p. 19 and W. A. C. H. Dobson (1963) p. 12 who disregard our yi 已.)

(87) 苟無恒心放肆邪侈無不至已。

"If they really have no constant minds they will go astray and fall into
excesses, and there will definitely/simply be nothing at which they stop." (Meng Tz 1A7, contrast D. C. Lau (1984) p. 21 and W. A. C. H. Dobson (1963) p. 13 fail to get the nuance 'if really' (traditional gloss cheng 誠) expressed by gou 習, and then disregard our yi 已. Similar observations apply to Meng Tz 3A3, D. C. Lau (1984) p. 97.)

(88) 援而止之而止者是亦不屑去已。

"When pressed to stay he stayed, and this quite definitely was because he regarded it as beneath his dignity to leave!" (Meng Tz 2A9, cf. D. C. Lau (1984) p. 71. There is another exactly parallel example. W. A. C. H. Dobson (1963) p. 165 disregards our yi 已.)

(89) 須勿乎不可尚已。

"So immaculate was he that his whiteness could definitely/simply not be surpassed." (Meng Tz 3A4, contrast D. C. Lau (1984) p. 109 and W. A. C. H. Dobson (1963) p. 119 who disregard our yi 已.)

Yi yi 已矣 in Meng Tz

(90) 由是喟之則君子之所義可終之已矣。

"From this one can definitely/simply understand what it is a gentleman cultivates in himself!" (Meng Tz 3B7, contrast D. C. Lau (1984) p. 127 and W. A. C. H. Dobson (1963) p. 81 who disregard our yi 已.)

(91) 是則章子已矣。


Ye yi yi 也已矣 in Meng Tz

(92) 此亦妄人也已矣。


Tzuo Juan

It may be worth reminding ourselves that yi 已 at the end of a sentence need not be the grammatical particle yi 已:

(93) 我燕已得已。

"How can I help it?" (Tzuo Juan, Shiang 27.5)

We have here a neat illustration how negative polarity items like the English 'ever' recur also in questions. ('Have you ever heard of such a thing?') De yi 得已 is such a negative polarity item.

The long book Tzuo Juan provides a clear stylistic contrast with the Meng Tz.
with regard to er yi 已. I count 44 cases of er yi 已 'and that finishes the matter', and not one single instance of er yi y 'and it is finished'. Supposing that the Tsuo Juan is the work of many hands, it is remarkable that a grammatical feature such as the absence of the (possible) y 'and it is finished' after er yi 已 should be maintained throughout by a number of conspiring scribes, or artificially introduced at a later stage. By far the most likely conclusion is Karlsgren's, that we do have, in the Tsuo Juan as in the Meng Te, works written in a dialect of Chinese. Han Fei Tez, we might add, is already writing a kind of koiné Chinese, a form of ancient putung-hua.

Sentence-final y '已 in Tsuo Juan

Consider first the particle y 已, as it regularly co-occurs with y 'also, surely' to make an idiom which I understand as 'quite definitely

(94) 既而靜之亦親及之。

"... Afterwards, even if I repent it one quite definitely could do nothing about it." (Tsuo Juan, Jau 20.2, ed. S. Couvreur (1951) p. 305. In Shuo Yuan 4.10, ed. Jau Shan-yi p. 91 I find a closely similar statement expressed with ye 也 instead of y '已."

After having listened to a great deal of music, and after having commented on each item he has heard, Ji Ja exclaims:

(95) 若有他樂吾不敢諶已。

"The greatest moral power has nothing to add to this! If there are other kind of music, I definitely do not presume to ask (to hear them)." (Tsuo Juan, Shiang 29.8, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 535

Ye ye 也已 in Tsuo Juan

The combination ye ye 也已, which is totally absent in Meng Te, is an important part of the grammatical repertory of Tsuo Juan:

(96) 此時也非可失也已。

"This (moment) chance must definitely not be missed!" (Tsuo Juan, Jau 27.3) Here some texts have ye 也 others have y '已. The hesitation is significant, for I do find both co-occurring in the same syntactic context:

(97) 已非可改也已。

"He could definitely not be changed!" (Tsuo Juan, Shi 7.3 and Ai 12.3. Cf. also Cheng 2.2, Jau 1 fu 7, Ding 6.5 where fu ke 佛 is made emphatic by final ye y 'i

24 Our findings at this point give further support to Bernhard Karlsgren's observations regarding the grammatical contrasts between Meng Te and the Tsuo Juan.

25 Wrongly, Karlsgren writes of the phrase er y '已 which is common in all texts, even in such as otherwise never or but seldom have double finals' (B. Karlsgren (1951) "Excursions in Chinese Grammar", BMFEA 23 p. 121.) The facts fit his general views of Tsuo Juan a great deal better than he realized.

26 It is not maintained in the Gu-hang Juan, Duko Shi 19.7 "It is a case of a correct use of names, and that finishes the matter." or in Gun-gang Juan, cf. Yin 1.3.
Elsewhere *fu ke* 弗可 is followed simply by *yi* 已:

(98) 弗可誠已。

A gentleman says: "... (His injustice) is definitely unerasable!" (*Tzuo Juan*, Jau 31.6 (Ed. S. Couvreur (1951) p. 470, Yang Bojun (1981) p. 1512)

In all these cases, except the last one, we have not general moral judgements (where *ye* 也 alone would be sufficient) but urgent advice, where *ye* *yi* 也已 is colloquially idiomatic. Unnegated pre-verbal *ke* 可 ‘be ... able’ is made emphatic in the same way in *Tzuo Juan*, Jiau 28.6, *Shiang* 29.5, Jau 11.8. *Neng* 能 ‘can’ is made emphatic with *ye* *yi* 也已 in Shi 30.6, Jau 22.2.

Sometimes we have *yi* ... *ye* *yi* 赅 ... 也已:

(99) 其亦無能為也已。

"... They quite definitely cannot do anything about it!" (*Tzuo Juan*, Jau 22.2 (not listed in Harvard Yenching Index), ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 346

I count twenty cases of *ye* *yi* 也已 in the *Tzuo Juan*, none in *Meng Tz*, and only one isolated example in *Gang-yang Juan*, Ai 6.8. We have accounted for only twelve, and the remaining eight cases deserve our close attention.

There is one splendid *ye* *yi* 也已 between a subordinate and a main clause:

(100) 先自弃也已，亦何能之有。

"If you first definitely abandon yourself (!) what continuity can there be?" (*Tzuo Juan*, Shi 11 fu 1, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 282: "Quand dès le commencement, on s’abandonne ainsi soit-mêmes, comment peut-on continuer longtemps?")

In subordinate clauses our *ye* *yi* 也已 is somewhat curious. The curiousness of the phenomenon is paralleled by the impossibility of introducing an exclamation mark after a subordinate clause. Main clauses pose no such problem.

(101) 鄭伯其死乎。自弃也已。視焉而行远。

"The Baron of Jeng looks as if he must die. He is definitely abandoning himself! His eyes are wandering (against the rules of proper behaviour), and when he walks he hurries (also against the rules of proper behaviour)...." (*Tzuo Juan*, Cheng fu 1, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 52)

(102) 夫先自棄也已。安能敗我。

*Tz* Shi said: "... Such a person will definitely ruin himself in the first place! How can he defeat me?" (*Tzuo Juan*, Ai 1 fu 4, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 602)

When the Duke of Jin learns of the death of a certain Tz Yu he is simply delighted and exclaims:

(103) 安余壽也已。

"He will definitely no longer poison me (spoil my joys)!" (*Tzuo Juan*, Shi 28.6 and Shiuan 12. fu 2, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 400: "Il n’empoisonnera plus ma joie.” An exclamation mark would surely have been in place in Couvreur’s translation.)

Horbsmeier: THE CLASSICAL CHINESE MODAL PARTICLE YI

(104) "... Things are also like that: when they reach an excessive stage they definitely leave off!" (Tzego Juan, Jau 1 fu 8, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 96)

(105) "... If the Chen clan still has not disappeared the state definitely will be his!" (Tzego Juan, Jau 26 fu 5, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 419)

(106) (105) "... If the Chen clan still has not disappeared the state definitely will be his!" (Tzego Juan, Jau 26 fu 5, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 419)

(107) "He can still live for a complete cycle of Jupiter (but at his death) Jupiter will definitely not have reached this point!" (Tzego Juan, Shiang 30.7, ed. Couvreur (1951) p. 555)

This completes our survey of all the occurrences of the sentence-final particle yi 已 in Tzego Juan. Following Karlgren, one might expect the situation to be similar in Guo Yu. Let us see.

Guo Yu

In Guo Yu we find nineteen er yi yi 而已矣 and only two er yi 而已.

We find our ye yi 也矣 after ke 可:

(108) 此其利也不可矢也椰。

"This is the advantage, and it definitely must not be lost." (Guo Yu 20, ed. SBBY (sz-bu bei-yau) p. 2a)

And after yi 亦 'surely':

(109) 其至者亦將不能之會也已。

"... If he arrives he will quite definitely be unable to (go and meet) join battle with us." (Guo Yu 19, ed. SBBY p. 10b, tr. Harlez p. 243)

(110) 失其利也難悔之必無及已。

"If you miss this advantage, then even if you regret, it is (quite definitely) bound to be too late." (Guo Yu 20.1, ed. SBBY p. 2a. The Gung Shiu edition obliges us by reading yi 亦 'surely' for bi 亦 'certainly'. (Cf. Guo Yu, ed. Shanghai Gu-ji chu-ban-shu 1978 p. 634, note 6) We do seem to have identified an idiom here.)

(111) 贰知是也已。

"I definitely know how to get out of things!" (Guo Yu 18, ed. SBBY p. 11a)

(112) 云差矣自敗也已。遂能敗人。

"Fu Chai is definitely ruining himself! How can he defeat others?" (Guo Yu 18, ed. SBBY p. 8a)

Compare incidentally:

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“... He has already pulled out his own root (i.e. loyalty). How can he last long?” (Guo Yu 8, ed. SBBY p. 5b)

Could the correct interpretation of yi 已 in contexts like (114) be ‘definitely/already’?

With this question we complete our survey of all cases of sentence-final yi 已 in Guo Yu.

*Juang Tz*

The *Juang Tz* is a text rich in colloquialisms, and it is rich in the kind of yi 已 that interests us. The question is whether the interpretation of yi 已 suggested by the preceding analyses yields plausible interpretations of the many relevant *Juang Tz* contexts. As mentioned above, A. C. Graham’s excellent translation disregards modal yi 已 throughout on the sensible grounds that it is insufficiently well understood.

(114) 香之問韓也是已。

(South of Chu there is the tree Mingling, which grows through a spring of five hundred years....) “Tang’s questions to Ji were definitely about this.” (*Juang Tz* 1.13, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 44)

(115) 地德則根畜是已。人德則比狸是已。政間天倫？

“The pipes of earth, these are definitely>simply the various hollows (in the earth that have just been described). The pipes of men, these are definitely>simply arrays of tubes. But may I ask about the pipes of Heaven?” (*Juang Tz* 2.8, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 49)

(116) 此所謂已。

(My Teacher, O my Teacher! He chops fine the myriad things but it is not cruelty. His bounty extends to a myriad ages but it is not goodwill. He is elder to the most ancient but it is not growing old. He overhangs heaven and bears up earth and cuts up and sculpts all shapes but it is not skill.) “This is definitely>simply his way of roaming!” (*Juang Tz* 6.69, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 91)

(117) 然則是至人之德已乎？

“This definitely>simply is (all there is to) the moral charisma of a Perfect Man?” (*Juang Tz* 23.38, A. C. Graham (1981) has not translated this passage, but cf. Burton Watson (1968) p. 233)

(118) 是衛生之謂已。

“This is definitely>simply the basic guideline of the preservation of life.” (*Juang Tz* 23.38 and 23.40, cf. Burton Watson (1968) p. 253)

(119) 背自以爲聖遞已。


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(120) 面貌未是已?
(Thus to Webb the eyesight deranges the Five Colours, vitiates emblems and designs by excess, by the dazzle of greens and yellows and multicoloured vestments, or would you deny it?) “And Li Ju was definitely/simply a case of that.” (Juang Tz. 8.4, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 200 and B. Watson p. 98. There are three more precisely similar examples in the immediate context.)

(121) 自三代以下者是已?
“Since as far back as the Three Dynasties onwards it has definitely/simply been like this!” (Juang Tz. 10.40, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 210)

(122) 吾能不及已夫?
“We had definitely/simply failed to get anywhere, hadn’t we?” (Juang Tz. 14.23, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 165)

(123) 然則君之所謂者古人之詳論已夫?
“Then what my lord is reading definitely/simply is the dregs of the men of old, isn’t it?” (Juang Tz. 13.70 and 13.74, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 140)

(124) 岂其慶生恨性則流賊亦伯夷已。
“In the damage to life and harm to nature Robber Jr quite definitely/simply a Bo Yi.” (Juang Tz. 8.26, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 202)

(125) 若此時，則豈治也。
“At times like this, then there definitely is perfect government.” (Juang Tz. 11.32, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 209)

(126) 唱不亦間是已矣哉然何?
“You should quite definitely/simply enquire about this! Why do you muddle on in a confused way?” (Juang Tz. 24.110, contrast B. Watson p. 279)

(127) 古之人乎於此言已。
“The ancients, at this point (i.e. after the preliminary libations), would definitely conduct conversation.” (Juang Tz. 24.66, contrast B. Watson (1968) p. 271. Liou Kiao-hway (1969) p. 201 gets the general sense right.)

(128) 謹已生為喪也，以死為反也，是以分已。
“The considered life as ‘being lost’ and death as a ‘returning home’. In this way they were (definitely>) already divided.” (Juang Tz. 23.59, cf. Watson p. 257)

(129) 天知子省聞過亦子而死已矣！
“He that was Heaven to me knew that I am coarse and rude, that is why he definitely/simply abandoned me and died!” (Juang Tz. 22.54, cf. A. C. Graham (1981) p. 162 who translates the yi 已 as an independent sentence: “Enough!”)

Finally we must focus on an example for which one must be especially grateful: an apparent counterexample.

(130) 若是則汝何為驚已?
“Why did you (definitely (?) simply (?) get scared?) get that scared?” (Juang Tz. 32.2, cf. B. Watson p. 353)
No commentaries seem to have worried about this *yi* 已, but in fact it is very puzzling. What I find surprising in the present survey is the fact that there are so few of these puzzling cases. It is the paucity (in spite of the possibility) of these which suggests that we may be on the right track in our interpretation of the semantics of *yi* 已. After all, our interpretation of modal *yi* 已 has empirical content only to the extent that it excludes the occurrence of *yi* 已 after many kinds of sentences.

*Mo Tz*

In *Mo Tz* I count 14 cases of *er yi* 而已 and seven cases of *er yi* 而已.28

Three times we find the phrase

(131) 事已...

When the matter was over... (*Mo Tz* 70.73, 70.74, 70.102, see also Shiun *Tz* 26.26.)

This connects with later uses of *yi* 已 as a sentence connective.

We have verbal *yi* 已 with *yi* 亦 'surely' in a characteristic idiom:

(132) 死人不知亦已。

If the dead do not have knowledge then that surely is the end of the matter.

(*Mo Tz* 31.26)

We find not *ye yi* 也已 but *yi* 已 alone after *ke* 可 in the following tricky passage which we may or may not include in the direct speech attributed to *Mo Tz*:

(133) 鬼神有無之別以爲不可不察已。

*Mo Tz* said: "... Since there is a distinction between the existence or non-existence of ghosts, therefore we definitely have to investigate the matter." (*Mo Tz* 31.9)

(134) 國家之亂治可得而知已。

The ruin of the state can definitely at this stage be known. (*Mo Tz* 9.14)

(135) 今治國之道盡已邪?

"When the state is well governed, is this definitely/simply all there is to (running) a state?" (*Mo Tz* 13.28, Y. P. Mei 74; cf. 13.35 for a precisely similar example.)

This completes our account of all cases of sentence-final and related *yi* 已 in *Mo Tz*.29

*Liu Shr Chuen Chiou*

In *Liu Shr Chuen Chiou* I find seven cases of *er yi* 而已 versus 22 cases of *er yi* 而已矣.

The co-occurrence of *yi* 已 with *gu* 當 ‘certainly, inherently’ goes nicely with our interpretation:

28 Unfortunately, these cannot be attributed to the schools of Mohism established in A.C. Graham (1985).

29 There are no relevant occurrences of *yi* 已 in *Yi Jing*.

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(136) is 客人之命同盡已，子無復言矣。

“My allotted time definitely is out. Don’t say more about it.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 6.4, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 348, tr. Lin Pinshi p. 163, Wilhelm p. 76)

(137) 所謂固秋箋已。

“What he dreamt about was certainly (definitely>) nothing other than the Chion Jia race.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 24.5, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1618, Wilhelm p. 428)

Similarly for fen 真 ‘genuinely’:

(138) 此真所謂士已！

(“If one shows these four forms of behaviour may one be called a ‘knight’?” The King of Chi replied:) “This genuinely and definitely is what one calls a knight!” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 16.8, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1020. Chen notes an early gloss to the effect that one edition reads the ordinary yi 當 for yi 已. He comments that yi 已 and the ordinary yi 當 are synonymous.)

Similarly for bi 必 ‘necessarily’:

(139) 此必是已。

“This is definitely bound to be the man!” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 18.2, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1156)

A significant majority of examples with modal yi 當 are nominal sentences in Liu Shu Chuen Chion:

(140) 六君者是已。

“The six rulers were definitely cases in point.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 2.4, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 96)

(141) 公孫枝, 鄭平, 濟絳, 公孫緯是已。

“Gung-suen Yang, Jeng Ping, Shiu Jing and Gung-suen Jie are definitely examples of this.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 22.2, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1491)

(142) 正名分是治之歸已。

“The correct use of names and recognition of social divisions are definitely the reins of good government.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 17.1, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1030)

(143) 是所以加於子之上已。

“This definitely is what I excel you by.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 17.8, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1133)

(144) 此其所以觀後世已。

“This is definitely/precisely what one can use as a model for future generations.” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 24.5, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1618)

(145) 此人主之所以失天下之士也已。

“This is definitely the way to lose the knights of the world!” (Liu Shu Chuen Chion 19.8, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1311)

However, verbal cases do exist:
(146) 夫大義之不咸，亦有成已...

"Although the great aim is not achieved, something is definitely achieved." (Liu Shu Chuen Chiu 26.2, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1706)

(147) 必又見之已因以發同！

"(The Chancellor is fond of weapons...) He is definitely bound to have a look at them! (Then (on the basis of them:) use them as a present when you drink his health.)" (Liu Shu Chuen Chiu 22.1, ed. Chen Qiyou (1985) p. 1482 and footnote 27)

Shun Tz

In Shun Tz I count ten cases of er yi 而已 and seven cases of er yi 而已矣. There is one interesting case of fei te ... er yi ye 非特 ... 而已也 ‘it is not as if... and that was all’

(148) 是善惡之分已。

Mencius says: "Human nature is good." I reply: "This is not so! All men in the world, past and present, agree that goodness is that which is upright, reasonable and orderly, and evil is that which is prejudiced, irresponsible, and chaotic. That definitely is the distinction between 'good' and 'evil'." (Shun Tz 23.36, contrast tr. Watson p. 162, cf. Köster (1968) p. 307)

(149) 固維而飽已矣！

"They definitely/simply eat delicacies to their hearts' content!" (Shun Tz 4.52, ed. Yang Liuqiao, Ji-nan (1985) p. 83)

Final yi 已 combines with yi 而 'surely':

(150) 此亦善惡安危之際已。

(Yang Ju cried at a crossroads: "This is a place where you make a tiny mistake and you will find you have gone a thousand li astray, isn't it!" He cried bitterly as he said this.) Now here quite definitely is a crossroads where you can choose between glory and disgrace, safety and danger, survival and ruin. (And there is more to wail about here than at (Yang Ju's) crossroads. Alas and alack! Those who rule over others do not wake up to this in a thousand years!) (Shun Tz 11.86, cf. Köster (1968) p. 142, Liang Qixiong p. 152)

(151) 是行行亦富人已。

"Such a person surely is definitely a superbly rich man." (Shun Tz 8.45, cf. Köster (1968) p. 76, Liang Qixiong p. 82)

(152) 人之情欲是已。

They reply: "Human nature definitely is like this." (Shun Tz 18.117, Liang Qixiong p. 256)

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30 There is a significant problem of punctuation here: Xu WeiYu's standard edition punctuates as we do, but Chen Qiyou's 聽必又見之已發同！. Chen's reading of our passage is possible but not the most plausible in view of our survey of yi 已.

31 Shun Tz 10.116, which recurs with to 萬 for te 當 in Guan Tz 3.52-8.
(153) 異亂國已。

(If you want to find out if a country is well governed or in chaos, whether it is good or not, then you can see the indications already at the border. If the military guards roam all over the place to check and if the customs officers inspect everything,) that sort of place is definitely a chaotic state. (Shiun Tz 10.88, cf. Köster (1968) p. 124, Liang Qixiong p. 132)

The final yi 已 here is far from incidental, it recurs seven times in exactly parallel contexts. The force of yi 已 in these contexts seems clear enough: already from these indications you can definitely conclude that the state or ruler is such-and-such.

(154) 至成康則案無誣已。

"When it came to (the kings) Cheng and Kang there definitely were no executions (any more)." (Shiun Tz 27.70, cf. Köster (1968) p. 354, cf. the parallel in Shiun Tz 7.15 which has the ordinary yi 夫 for our yi 已.)

(155) 先王之道則堯舜已, 六武之德堯天府已。

(If you do not know about something, ask about Yau and Shuen. If you are short of something, look for it in the Imperial Archives.) "The Way of the former kings is definitely a matter of Yau and Shuen. As regards the range of the six arts, then it is definitely a matter of the Imperial Archives." (Shiun Tz 27.80, cf. Köster (1968) p. 355, Shiun Tz shen ju p. 459, here as everywhere else, fails to comment on final yi 已. This in many ways excellent book consistently disregards final yi 已 in its paraphrases.)

(156) 此三其美徳已。

"These three (qualities) are definitely his admirable moral charisma." (Shiun Tz 32.10, cf. Köster (1968) p. 387)

This completes our survey of all relevant cases of yi 已 in Shiun Tz.

Jan Guo Tse

A cursory reading of Jan Guo Tse yields the following picture.

Modal yi 已 is commonly used in the parts I have perused:

(157) 耿褒爾生弗能改已。

"Even if Yau, Shuen, Yu and Tang were born again they definitely could not change this." (Jan Guo Tse no. 93, ed. Zhu Zugen (1965) p. 281. Cf. Shi Ji 79, ed. Takigawa p. 8 which retains our yi 已 because Sz-ma Chian is quoting an old source and not writing his own prose.)

(158) 今攻齊, 此君之大時也已。

"Now to attack Chin is definitely a great opportunity for you." (Jan Guo Tse, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1965) p. 264)

(159) 懷亂宋, 德強齊定身封此亦百世之一時已。

"To ruin Sung, to strengthen Chi, and to make safe your own status, this is definitely an opportunity that comes once in a hundred generations." (Jan Guo
"Then that is definitely nothing other than what is called 'not having (needing) a king!'" (Jan Guo Tse no. 93, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 305. Shr Ji 130, ed. Takigawa p. 21 omits our yi 已.)

(161) 王乃乎已！

"Your Majesty is definitely/simply nothing other than a case of this." (Jan Guo Tse no. 111, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 375)

(162) 其母在秦，則屬塞之割也已！

"His mother being in Chin, Wei would definitely/simply be a province of Chin."

(163) 則此秦之宮，桑林之塜，非王之有已！

"Then the palace at Hung Tai and the park at Sang Lin will definitely not be under your control!" (Jan Guo Tse no. 393, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 1365)

(164) 然誰當之不可得已也！

"Then, even if you should repent this, you definitely cannot do anything!"

(165) 塞崩韓魏之士，黨太原之西，秦有已。


(166) 此亦並言李兵之類也。


(167) 蔡虛所謂之事因是也。

"The affairs of Lord Sheng Hou of Tsai are definitely along these lines." (Jan Guo Tse no. 219, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 818, cf. especially p. 822 footnote 11. There are four structurally parallel examples in the context.)

(168) 先生實之，勿謂言已！

"Forget about it, sir! Definitel/simply do not speak about it!" (Jan Guo Tse no. 227, ed. Zhu Zugeng (1985) p. 833)

In the absence of a proper index to the Jan Guo Tse I am unfortunately unable to give a complete picture of the use of the colloquialism modal yi 已 in that book. But the contrast with the Han Fei Tz is clear enough. This is not the place to speculate on the exact conclusions to be drawn concerning the nature and date of these two texts. But it does seem natural to indulge in the hypo-
thesis that those parts of the Jan Guo Tse which do contain our modal yi 已 probably belong to the earlier rather than later strata of that composite text. Much of the Jan Guo Tse is evidently written in a late koine Chinese style belonging to the late 3rd and the 2nd century BC. But in contrast with the Han Fei Tz the Jan Guo Tse would also seem to contain certain not inconsiderable earlier strata. The Han Fei Tz is a more coherently mid to late 3rd century work.

Han Shr Wai Juan

A survey of Han Shr Wai Juan reveals a situation remarkably similar to that in Han Fei Tz. I found only two stray relevant examples:

(169) 文王亦可謂大儒已。

King Wen may definitely/properly be called a great ru. (Han Shr Wai Juan 5.5, ed. Xu Weiyu (1980) p. 174. Cf. J. R. Hightower (1952) p. 166 “King Wen can certainly be called a Great Confucian” which is perfectly satisfactory.)

(170) 嗟，吾子殆可以言書已。

“Ah! With you one may definitely/properly speak of the Book of History.” (Han Shr Wai Juan 2.29, ed. Xu Weiyu (1980) p. 73. J. R. Hightower (1952) mistranslates: “Ah, sir, now you can discuss the Odes,” as if yi 已 meant the same as the ordinary yi 喎, and as if there was no unanimous tradition to read yi 以 ‘with’ as xu 與 ‘with’. The fact that Hightower reads shr 詩 for shu 書 need not interest us here.)

IV. Concluding Remarks

It is my impression that our modal yi 已 is an early colloquialism which, like the exclamation mark which one so often is tempted to use in translating yi 已, we are more likely to find in dialogue than in other kinds of texts. Modal yi 已 has tended to disappear from Literary Chinese around the time of Han Fei Tz. From our point of view the text of Jan Guo Tse draws on sources representing an earlier stage of Chinese grammar than the Han Fei Tz. However, there are a few archaising examples, like those in Han Shr Wai Juan which must not be overlooked. Moreover, Sz-ma Chian writes in his postface to the Shr Ji:

(171) '察其所以, 皆失其本已。'

When we investigate the reasons for this, it is definitely all because they lost sight of what is essential. (Shr Ji 130, ed. Takigawa p. 24.)

There is no question of Sz-ma Chian quoting an earlier source here. He just occasionally uses a particle which has gone out of colloquial use by his time. Such modal yi 已 are, I think, best seen as archaisms. They were in any case sufficiently anomalous in Shr Ji for the authors of the Ji Jie 集解 commentary to take to trouble to explain that yi 已 here is a yu jung jr isz 語終之辭, a sentence-final particle, a gloss that became standard. Thus, when we look at this counter-example in detail we find that it ends up confirming our generalization that yi
was not an integral part of colloquial or literary Han Chinese. The varying degree to which Literary Chinese writers of later ages used archaising 

was not an integral part of colloquial or literary Han Chinese. The varying degree to which Literary Chinese writers of later ages used archaising 

Modal 义乌 does have its successors in early colloquial Chinese. In the colloquial text Bai Yu Jing 百喻经, translated from the Sanskrit in 492 A.D., the cases of 义乌 after a subordinate in a construction of the type S 义乌 S, ‘when S was finished, then S’ is simply ubiquitous.

The construction is common in the colloquial literature even before Bai Yu Jing. I have a lingering doubt that 义乌 here is a usage which was incorporated into Buddhist hybrid Chinese in order to convey in Chinese Sanskrit constructions. The Bai Yu Jing may be a colloquial text, but it is also heavily Sanskrit-inspired. One does smell syntactic interference with a foreign language in many places. But as we have seen, the usage has its ancient roots in pre-Han literature.

In any case, this 义乌 is increasingly replaced by, and its functions are taken over by, the verb liau/le 乊 in such texts as the Lion Tsu Tan Jing 大藏論經 (ed. P. B. Yampolski (1967) Appendix p. 1-30) dating probably from the eighth century AD. Liau/le 乊 in that sutra seems to function as a semi-grammaticalized verb with sentential subjects, just as we have construed early 义乌.

When the Great Master had finished explaining the dharma (the Imperial Delegate Wei, the government officials, and the monks and laymen uttered words of praise.) (Lion Tsu Tan Jing 33, tr. P. B. Yampolski (1967) p. 155)

Liau/le 乊 in turn is on its way towards being grammaticalized as a particle. But that is a different story which has recently been studied in considerable detail in an admirable article by Mei Tsu-lin (1981). Quite properly, Mei Tsu-lin compares the verbs jing 竟, chi 嗿, and bi 比 with 义乌 as predecessors of the modern Chinese le 乊. But among these verbs, 义乌 is unique in that it has a clear pre-history of grammaticalization. It is this pre-history which was the subject of the present paper, which was concerned with the colloquial language of the pre-Han period.

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I hope I have shown through a fairly exhaustive presentation of examples that the meaning of modal yi is historically, syntactically and semantically may not be as vague as translators have made it appear, and as the conflicting glosses in current grammars might tempt one to believe.

But perhaps, in the end, the precise meaning of modal yi is in the eye of the beholder. Maybe modalities are inherently a little bit like beauty in that way? Who knows?

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35 The historical etymology on the particle yi 已 would make an interesting study in its own right which falls outside the scope of the present study.
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