CHAPTER 5

The Philosophy of the Analytic Aperçu

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Surveying the superabundant Chinese literature excavated, edited and annotated during the last few decades one cannot help but admire the judicious care with which Liu Xiang 劉向 (c. 77–6 BC) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (c. 50 BC–AD 29) chose and edited so many of our ancient books. If they were working from anything like those excavated versions of traditionally transmitted texts that we have this shows the immense task Liu Xin and Liu Xiang must have been facing as editors. The classical case study on the process of compilation by which this sort of editing was done still remains Piet van der Loon, "On the transmission of the Kuan-tzu."¹

Writing is always ‘writing as.’ Correspondingly, reading has always had to be ‘reading as.’ Writing is never just the writing of text. It is the writing of a certain type of text from a certain culturally pre-defined repertoire of ‘canonical’ possible types of text, the repertoire of written genres. The philosophy of literary genres is a necessary precondition for any possible analytic history of literature. For China, it seems to me, this precondition is still very far from having been met.

The genres of Chinese literature were many. The logia and apophthegms in the Confucian Analects were examples of one such early genre; one whose history has been studied by Donald Holzman.² The genre style of the Analects comports a philosophical message: the intellectual message of the book was not conceived as an art of successful one-way communication and of precise argumentation. The message was all about illustrating through live dicta and apophthegms in context, the living sagehood or higher wisdom of certain individuals as it operates differently in its varying contexts. In particular this was so of the sayings and dialogues involving Confucius and his disciples. The Analects give both Confucius and several of his disciples a distinct voice all of their own. That vulnerable and often playful reflexive Master’s ‘voice’ in the Analects matters at least as much as whatever true opinions they were maintaining more or less successfully and clearly.


The more extensive dialogues typical of the Mencius are another, problematizing variety. Here again, the genre style comports an overall ‘structural’ message. The intellectual message of the book was conceived as a kind of propositional wisdom that is presented as winning out in dialogue and in dispute, and by and large not just in one-way philosophical or moral pontification. The figure of Mencius presented in this anonymous compilation is given no interesting ‘voice’ in the book. To the extent he is engagingly funny, it is unwittingly and in spite of himself. What counts here is the superiority of his arguments, and his superior analyses of important issues.

The very chapter headings of the Xunzi 荀子 gives away the genre style as well as the intellectual aspirations of this work. The intellectual ambition is not only to argue for certain theses, but to treat coherently, argumentatively, and precisely of certain general issues such as those of ritual, government, nomenclature, study method and so on. Even this compilation does mention Xunzi by name, in the third person, but somehow the author comes out as much more ‘professorial’ in the sense of Michel Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France. The style of the non-poetic parts of this book comport and ‘bozoes’ a kind of classroom message atmosphere. It begins to smell of a classroom in ways that the book Mencius does not, because in the Mencius the discourse on intellectual issues is not yet disconnected from the painfully concrete social and political reality of the author, and the school that was to develop into an ivory tower had not yet emerged. (One is tempted to say that Xunzi’s didactic style with its repetitious parallelisms as well as the more pedestrian repetitiveness in Mozi 墨子 mark a move towards a ‘classroom’ style academic prose. For the emergence of such a classroom mentality in Europe see Jacques LeGoff, Intellectuals in the Middle Ages).³

The rhyming wisdom poetry of the Laozi by itself comports again an intellectual programme: this is the self-doubting, vulnerable, ephemeral and situational discourse that provides the intellectual meat in the Analects. Here the genre style of ponderous and deliberate, polished and spiritual epigrammatic apophthegm comports a message in itself. The form of the rhymed mystifying provocative epigram excludes anything other than celebrating with rhythmic and rhyming pomp its own spiritual superiority, and mysteriously all-important wisdom.

Within what today is one long ancient book, separate literary genres are often represented, as indeed one might in the "collected works" of any famous writer. Thus the Guanzi 荀子 contains dialogue sections that need to be read as moralising contextualised dialogue in the spirit of the Mencius on the one
hand, mystical *fang shu* 非術 treatises of edifying self-cultivation, thematic argumentative sections in the spirit of the *Xunzi* on the other, and then a crucial third professionalist almost practical text sort represented in the extensive *Qing zhong* 輕重 “economic chapters” that needs to be read as an administrative handbook.

Moving closer to my subject at hand, the dialogue sections of the book *Moi* must be ‘read as’ belonging to a very different text sort from what today is commonly referred to as the *Mo jing* 墨經, the Mohist Dialectical Chapters. Within these Dialectical Chapters, the often enigmatically short and unreevealing *jing* 經 ‘canons,’ need to be read and interpreted as very different text sorts from the *shuo* 说 ‘explanations.’ A.C. Graham has shown how within these *jing* ‘canons’ again, two profoundly different text sorts have to be distinguished: one part has to be read as definitions and the other as propositions. Understanding the Mohist Dialectical Chapters involves acquiring a systematic ability for each subtext to ‘read it as’ the text sort it is written as and thus intended to be. And there again, the scheme of text sorts in the Dialectical Chapters in itself contains something like an intellectual framework. It delineates, as it were, an overall topology of the intellectual space in which definitions of conceptual schemes are treated radically differently from propositions about the details within this conceptual space thus defined.

The present paper wishes to argue in some detail that an excavated text like the so-called “Yucong” 語Concat exhibited at Guodian 郭店 presents another case in point, in some profound ways like the *Mo jing.* “Yucong” 1 needs to be very much ‘read as’ a variety of a text in the tradition of the Dialectical Chapters, except that these were not Mohist, and more importantly, the parts are in no way intended to be construable as forming a systemic whole. I am tempted to call them ‘intellectually pointilistic.’

The “Yucong” 1 is identified entirely on the basis of physical characteristics of the bamboo stationery used to write it on. We are told that the content was not taken into account when identifying the individual bamboo slips that had to go into this pile of slips. Now this “Yucong” 1 does not simply inscribe itself into the genre mould of the Dialectical Chapters at all. It constitutes a philosophically significant genre of its own. Let me try to outline some of the components of this “Yucong” 1 text sort.

The genre style of this text is well-defined: it can be read as consisting of two kinds of material:

A. Short sequences of sometimes loosely interconnected short provocative analytic statements.

B. Isolated short provocative analytic statements.

The genre style of this text comports one crucial feature of its intellectual message:

There is no humble self-doubting reflexiveness à la Confucius to be expected in a book of this stylistic form,

There is no socially connected argumentative interface à la Mencius,

There is no coherently overall discursive elucidation à la Xunzi,

There is no narrative celebration of the moral excellence of an author à la *Yunzi Chunqiu* 春秋.

There is no morally proselytising, educational or missionary overtone in any of the “Yucong” 1 pieces that would invite the reader to *shu yu dai* 書於帶 “write it down on his sash” as a moral motto of any kind whatever.

There is none of the intellectually self-righteous pomposity imposed by extensive rhyme à la Laozi.

There is no witty, free-wheeling self-humour as cultivated occasionally in the outrageously free genre style à la Zhuangzi.

There is no egg-headed, provocative and systematically intellectualist narrative, à la Hanfei 韓非子.

There is also no attempt at organised coherent and systematic analytic theo- }

rising à la Mo jing.

The “Yucong” 1 turns out analytically pointilistic and quite predominantly provocative through a particular genre style, namely that of the programatically enigmatic, pithy, and un-argued for analytic *jing* 經 ‘propositions, statements, or theorems’ which often are badly in need of a *shuo* 说 ‘elaborating explanation.’ I would like to show that as in the proverbially obscure *dicta* of Heraclitus (“The way up and the way down are one and the same”) in the aphorisms “Yucong” 1 one learns to expect to be surprised.

Only very occasionally do its theorems get organised into sequences of equally enigmatic and provocative theorems.

This paper then will present some of these theorems in English by way of illustration of the mainly stylistic and rhetorical points above. In an earlier publication I have provided an elaborated explanation which tries to bring out explicitly their provocative analytic edge.

There will probably come a point when it will appear that my attempt fails. I shall happily leave it to the reader to decide where exactly this begins to be the case.

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4 Fragment 69.

Let me begin with the title: 阜物由亡生。

One can indeed read this, as modern Chinese and all Western commentators I have heard of seem to read it, as repeating a cosmological proposition inspired by Laozi: "All things arise from nothing."

One thing is that this represents a misreading of the word fan 凡, which never means 'all' but is a modal particle meaning something like 'as a matter of principle.' The point that interests us in this context is that this interpretation feels free to read this title according to what another text says and without any reference to what is in the present text itself. Now the present text itself has nothing whatsoever to do with cosmology or the origins of the universe and all the things in it.

But if we are not to read this along the lines of the parallel in Laozi, then how are we to understand it in the context of the present material? We need to find a reading that relates to conceptual analysis. We need a reading that does not tell a story about how things arise, but a reading which presents a conceptual analysis of a key concept. And also: the analysis has to have something unexpected or witty.

Now the concept of a thing is not intelligibly analysed in terms of it arising from nothing. On the other hand, the concept of 'arising' itself, which is a dominant theme throughout "Yucong" 1 is exquisitely analysed in terms of the fact that if you want to arise somewhere, you had better not already be wherever it is you want to arise. In other words, arising is something that has to happen where whatever arises was not. That is exactly what this very appropriate header, which is repeated in the body of the text, does indeed say.

The question now arises how exactly to arrange the excavated material under the heading we must hope we have correctly interpreted. Since in general the arrangement of the material remains completely uncertain one had better begin with some pieces that clearly do go together in the order we are reconstructing for them:

亡能為。

Here again, current philological wisdom suggests that the text must be read differently. It must be emended to read: 亡能為 "Kind-heartedness one can in no way go about deliberately." This is indeed what would fit together very well with 亡能為也 "Rectitude one can in no way go about deliberately." Such an emended reading creates coherence in a text that looks incomprehensible. For, surely, any man can act! The text, at first, makes no sense. Emendation is necessary. Moreover this new reading is phonetically not only plausible. We do have a perfect fit: the two words are exact homophones. What more can one ask for as an argument to defend the reading?

One might ask for another example where the character 人, which of course, in much of the early excavated literature, is written with an entirely different character, with the heart radical under 身. For in these matters one isolated reading without support from other similar cases carries little plausibility and can shake the touch of the arbitrary.

But there is a much more powerful argument against this reading and indeed for interpreting the text as it stands. That is that the text as it is makes excellent sense in context. The translation we have seen provides exactly that kind of paradoxical sophistication that we shall observe in so many other statements. To come back to Heraclitus: our text makes a statement embarrassingly close in kind to Heraclitus' when he says: "Into the same river we enter and we do not enter. We are, and we are not."

In one sense we can "be ourselves." We can't even help being ourselves, in fact! Not we! (As Heraclitus puts it: "We are.") But then there is this other aspect under which "Yucong" 1 considers the matter, the aspect of what man can go about doing, decide to do, do deliberately and so on. Among these things that he can set about doing, "being oneself" is not one of them.

The structural crux is this: the isolated statements in "Yucong" are not merely cumulative, like for example the "Tuncong" chapter of the Shuoyuan 說苑. Like La Rochefoucauld's (1613–1680) aphorisms they cohere. They add up to an overall vision that is intimately linked to the aphoristic form itself. This overall vision, which does not add up to any reasoned system, is articulated through a series of analytic aperçus. Some of these do fall into natural groups or unordered sets. It is important to realise that in these groups the individual members, though interrelated, always retain their semantic and rhetorical independence. They also share important stylistic features: none are narrative. None are moralising or moralistic. None of them contain injunctions of any kind. Those that are related to ethics will be shown to focus not on ethics as such but on the conceptual framework used to describe moral or ethical phenomena. None of them are cosmological in focus: those that appear to be related to cosmology will be shown to focus not on cosmology itself but on the conceptual framework used to describe cosmological or physical phenomena. None argue from scriptural authority. None contain arguments ex auctoritate. None of them contain any other references of any sort to named individuals.

None of them display any dogmatic adherence to any school of thought. None are descriptive in any detail, or are in any way poetic in diction or style. None are explicitly discursive, involving complex arguments. None of them involve synonym compounds like pengyou 朋友. Extraordinarily, many are provocative, deliberately paradoxical. Nearly all of them are—in a broad sense—analytic. All of them are maximally concise—cut to the analytic bone.

Much of Chinese philosophical literature tends to be fond of historical narrative references and narrative illustration of philosophical points. This is even true of the Confucian Analects, and also of the introduction to the book Gong sunlongzi 公孫龍子 which is primarily concerned with logical analysis. “Yucong,” like the Laozi, eschews all narrative or historical context. I shall try to show that its focus is squarely conceptual.

Much of Chinese philosophical literature involves different forms of advice; it analyses moral and prudential questions in order to arrive at prudential rules, moral advice, and valid ethical principles. From the Analects and the Laozi onwards, and for the prudential part—in such books as the Hanfeizi and the Guanzhu—this has been the dominant mode of the zhushi 諸子 literature. Significantly, the “Yucong” rhetorical style eschews all of this, focusing on conceptual analysis instead.

From the Laozi and the Zhuangzi onwards, Chinese zhushi literature has paid intermittent attention to questions of cosmology and particularly the origin of the universe. Much cosmological speculation is indeed represented in the excavated literature such as that from Guodian 郭店 and from Yinxue 銀雀. Here again the “Yucong” style imposes a different conceptual perspective on cosmology. There is not one cosmological statement in “Yucong.”

From the Analects onwards, the appeal to authoritative and unquestionably valid written sources of wisdom has been ubiquitous. There are exceptions to this rule, such as the Laozi, the Wenzhi 文子, and a whole range of the excavated literature. But even when there is no overt quotation, there is in most of our extant texts, including the Laozi, that notoriously traditionalist but often enigmatic phrase gu yue 放言 “That is why it is said: ….” It is deeply significant that in Yucong gu yue occurs nowhere. To the writers of this text it does not matter what is “being said” by this authority or that—or even by themselves elsewhere. Their concern is directly with the subject matter at hand.

Scriptural reference is often to anonymous documents. But in addition to this there is the very common appeal to what Laozi 老子 said, what Zi Mozi 孟子 said, or Kongzi 孔子 said, or indeed what fuzi 夫子 ‘our Master’ said and so on, where the idea is that the person referred to is incontrovertibly right. (Although it is to be noted that at least in the Analects the Master’s voice is not at all treated as infallible.) Intellectual insight, in Late Warring States China as in many places elsewhere, tends to want to strengthen its case by an appeal to the personal authority of men of incontrovertible wisdom. The refusal to make any such appeal in a book like the Laozi is a stylistic feature of that text. But at the same time that stylistic feature comports a fundamental point about the message in the Laozi: this message has, and is, its own authority. It is, as it were, intellectually autonomous, although it does show certain features of intertextuality the detail of which need not concern us here. What does concern us is the fact that “Yucong” refuses to make such appeals to any authoritative person because it speaks in its own intellectual right, and is beholden to no authority past or present.

Most of Chinese philosophical literature—again from the Analects, which mention many dozens of individuals, onwards—makes frequent reference to the cases of certain individuals of various kinds. These texts have a strong tendency to the sort of anthropocentrism that links points of view in direct or indirect ways to the fates, experiences, strengths, or weaknesses of certain individuals. Han Fei refers to hundreds of individuals in his highly philosophical and highly analytic book and many excavated texts contain such personal references. The stylistic constraints in “Yucong” are such that references of this sort are excluded. The focus is not on historical or personal embedding of the propositions proposed. It is ahistorical in a provocatively ‘un-Chinese’ manner. Its defiant focus is on conceptual analysis alone.

Much of Chinese philosophical literature takes part and indeed takes sides in the broad on-going conversation between what Arthur Waley memorably called ‘ways of thought in ancient China.’ For example, the Mencius sees itself embattled against the Mohists and against what it thinks of as the ‘Yangists’ as well as the ‘Agriculturalists’ (A.C. Graham), and in the process it sees no alternative but to stoop so low as to engage in ‘disputation: bu de yi 不得已 ‘he saw no alternative.’ Other texts like the Hanfeizi aim to reconcile or

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10 See Arthur Waley, Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China (London: Routledge, 1939).
accommodate perceived ideologies in the *Laozi* with statist ideologies attributed to the (entirely pragmatic and not ideological) Lord of Shang. Some texts, like the *Liushizhuan* juxtapose different ways of thought in some unmediated kind of encyclopaedic eclecticism. But by and large most transmitted texts we have, relate in one way or another to these 'schools of thought.' Strikingly, we find less of this positioning in relation to current ways of thought in the excavated literature written for specialists. "Yuncong" cannot be called a Confucian text just because it mentions virtues like *ti* 悌 'brotherly love' and filial piety. Nor can it possibly be taken to advocate the teachings of *Laozi* just because it does make advanced use of concepts of *wu wei* 無為 'non-assertive action.' "Yuncong"1 discusses concepts as such, quite independently of their appurtenance to this way of thought or that. Its rhetorical constraint signifies an intellectual and analytic focus.

Vivid description and characterisation of persons and things is a hallmark of Chinese prose literature from the *Analects* onwards. Descriptive *ekphrasis* as in the description of the 'myriad holes' in *Zhuangzi*, ch. 2 is much rarer in Chinese literature than it is in Greek literature. But still, the descriptive mode is not absent in the Chinese tradition, whereas it is clinically absent in "Yuncong" 1. The rhetorical constraint on vivid description is again the result of an intellectual discipline of analysis.

One might have thought that the notion of 'that is why' (gu 故) is absolutely indispensable in philosophical discourse. Indeed, the word marks the pivotal moment where an author passes from his premises to his conclusion. There are forty-three chapters of the fairly non-argumentative book *Laozi* in which the word *gu* figures and often establishes a fairly vague semantic link between what precedes and what follows. Sometimes one is even tempted to see this *gu* between different parts of a chapter as no more than a mark of a compiler's bad conscience. Nonetheless, all this awkwardness only serves to put our point into even clearer perspective: The *Laozi* was compiled by people who, increasingly as time went on,1¹ imposed on themselves an intellectual régime involving the idea that the chapters needed to show an argumentative systematicity rather than a mere general coherence. Now the systematic rhetorical avoidance or at least absence of *gu* in all of "Yuncong" 1 acquires a striking meaning. It signals a style of thought that I have called pointilistic, intuitively analytic, almost aphoristic, and averse to logically concatenated argumentative discourse.

Now I wish I could garnish my survey of what is not to be found in "Yuncong" 1 with examples. But it is in the nature of things that what does not exist cannot be 'shown' or exemplified as not existing. Thus, instead of illustrating what I have just summarised I shall proceed to give one example of what comes closest to refuting my basic thesis. This is the case of a sequence of statements that do in fact 'go together,' although there are no discourse particles to mark this fact. They go together in the sense that they constitute so much of a tight and strictly coherent logical argument that it would seem to be doing violence to the strips to read them separately, as isolated propositions. Strips can 'go together' for plain grammatical reasons when an unfinished sentence seems very clearly to continue on to a new strip. Strips can also go together for perhaps less plain, logical reasons when an unfinished argument on one strip seems very clearly to continue on another strip. Of course, both in the judgement of cases of grammatical coherence and in the judgement of cases of logical coherence there will often remain an inescapable element of subjectivity. Given the limited evidence we have from ancient China, our interpretation of the coherence of these texts can rarely be more than tentative.

1. **On the impossibility of managing to do what one makes a point of doing**

If one makes a point of showing filial piety, then that is not filial piety;

if one makes a point of showing brotherly love, [slip 55] then that is not brotherly love.

These things one cannot make a deliberate point of practising (they must be spontaneous), [slip 56] and yet they must not be left unpractised.

If one deliberately makes a point of practising them, [slip 57] this is not right; and if one refuses to practise them, that is (also) not right. ... [slip 58]

Rectitude one can in no way deliberately make a point of acting out. [slip 53]

2. **On the possibility of investigating the good and the impossibility to set out to be good (because one would only be pretending to be good)**

There is the possibility of probing goodness/excellence (in others), but there is no way of going deliberately about practising goodness. [slip 84]

In this proposition, the generalisation is consummated: the issue, in all the propositions about the virtues, has been all along that of what is moral
excellence or goodness. This states the generalisation as succinctly as *Principia Mathematica* could have done in another context.

3. **On the impossibility of setting out to be the person one is**  

The person one is one can in no way deliberately make a point of being/becoming? [slip 83]

Here comes the thunderous corollary, which would be even more stunning, if we did not have the similarly stunning and similarly aphoristic Heraclitus: "The same river we enter and we enter not. We are, and we are not." "Yucong," like Heraclitus, manages to problematise what it is to be the one one is. But "Yucong" does this in a civilisation, which is such that even after more than two thousand years of intellectual development it is still not ready to understand him. In their desperation about this proposition 1.4 it has been suggested that one should be read as 仁. This sounds plausible because it would make the text comfortably repetitive and nicely predictable. But, of course, "Yucong" is not generally nicely repetitive and comfortably predictable in the first place. It is a manifestly provocative text at many points. It is true enough that the reading 仁 for the character 人 is unattested anywhere else in the hundred thousand bamboo slips that have been carefully sifted in Bai Yulan's 白於觀 *jiandu boshu tongjiasi zidian* 筆墨帛書通假字字典. However, since we know of no difference in the ancient pronunciation of these two characters it is quite easy to imagine that one character was carelessly misspelled for the other. Thus when a text with 人 'man' cannot be interpreted as it stands but makes excellent sense when one reads 人 as intended to represent the word 仁 'humaneness' then one might well need to understand 人 as it were 仁 in order to make sense of the text. However, this does not mean that one is entitled to read 人 as 仁 anywhere, at will, sine necessitate (without being forced by the context), as medieval logicians would have put it. In my interpretation I take the liberty of assuming that our scribe had good reason for choosing the character 人.

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12 Xiamen: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2008. See now Bai Yulan 自於觀, *Zhuoqiu Qin Han jianbo gushu tongjiasi huiyuan* 戰國秦漢簡帛古書通假字彙纂 (Xiamen: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2002), which lists a number of instances where 人 is interpreted as 仁. People occurs tens of thousands of times in the corpus of excavated literature. The fact that in some cases philologists have found it necessary to read this common character as 仁 certainly does not justify a philological method according to which all instances of 人 are taken to invite the natural reading 仁.

4. **On things and the criteria of their identity as the things they are and on naming and names as the criterion of the names naming the things they name**

有物有容， avoir des noms.  
There being things, there are outlines 'physiognomies' (of these things), there being having, there is a name (for the thing called by that name). [slip 13]

For a thing to be the thing it is there must be a criterion of identification of that thing as the thing that it is, and that is its rong 容 'physiognomy.'

5. **On two apparently contradictory types of investigation**

察所知，察所不知。  
One investigates what one understands, and one investigates what one does not understand. ... [slip 85]

6. **On existence being a function of having a name**

有生乎名。  
Existence arises from having a name. [slip 96]

7. **On the nature of punitive coercion**

刑非嚴也。  
Physical punishment is not a matter of showing severity. [slip 64]

8. **On ontological self-determination**

亡物不亡，皆至焉，而亡非己取之者。  
There is no (category of) creature/thing that fails to act as the thing it is, and they all get to this point (of being themselves), and [slip 71] none are such that they have not themselves determined themselves. [slip 72]

The proposition that "no thing fails to thing," in all its defiant and entirely original departure from ordinary grammar, makes a point of ontology which in fact involves the dramatisation of ontology: the notion of choice, in this instance, involves a certain level of personification. It involves a kind of abstract personification that is not common in early Chinese literature.
9. On the completeness condition for being called a sage

When one fulfilled (completely fulfills the criteria for) being a sage one is called a sage. [slip 100]

This literal transcription, if correct, would attribute to this text a statement puzzlingly close to the statement "Snow is white is true if snow is white."

10. On the consummate conceptual essence of sagehood

Providing completely the (relevant) criteria (scl. for sagehood) is called sagehood. [slip 94]

11. On a logical entailment of sagehood

There being sagehood there is excellence. [slip 17]

12. On the ontogenesis of human-heartedness

Being in mourning is the starting-point of human-heartedness. [slip 98]

13. On the genealogy of precedence

From (the case of) elder and younger brothers

one becomes aware of who takes precedence. [slip 70]

14. On the genealogy of social hierarchy

From (the cases/concepts of) 'father' and 'son' one becomes aware of the relation between superior and inferior. [slip 69]

15. On two subtypes of elective relations: the hierarchical versus the horizontal

Relations between ruler and minister, and between friends, are the sort that are elective. [slip 87]

16. On the fundamental distinction between kinship relations versus elective relations

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長者，親也。
友，君臣，/無親也。 [slip 78]

(In the case of X-ing the) father
there is blood relation and reverence.

Treating with fraternal respect
is a Way involving blood-bonds.

Among friends, and between ruler and minister [slip 80] there is no blood relation. [slip 81]

17. On affection-generating versus respect-generating virtues

[厚於仁，薄於義，親而/不親。]
厚於義，薄於仁，/尊而不親。 [slip 77]

[If one emphasises humanheartedness and one de-emphasises rectitude, then one will be affectionate, but [slip 77] not reverent; if one emphasises rectitude and one de-emphasises humanheartedness, [slip 82] then one will be reverent but not affectionate. [slip 79]

18. On the double origin of man's superior status in the world

天生百物，人為貴。
人/之道也，/或/由中出，或由外入。 [slip 18]

When Heaven originated all kinds of creatures man counted as the noblest of these.

As for the Way [slip 18] of man, in some cases [slip 19] it emerges from the inside/is endogenic, in other cases it enters from the outside/is exogenic. [slip 20]

19. On endogenic versus exogenic virtues, humanheartedness and rectitude

或生於，義生於道。/或生於內，或生於外。/Humanheartedness arises from (within) a person, rectitude arises (outside) from the Way. [slip 22]

The one arises from within, the other arises from without... [slip 23]

Humanheartedness, being endogenic, and a subjective virtue, has its origin within the person, rectitude, being exogenic, and an objective virtue has its origin within the Way.

The second proposition does NOT say the obvious, namely that "Humanheartedness arises from within; rectitude arises from without". It lifts the discourse onto a more abstract, analytic level. Some virtues/values have their origin outside, others inside.
20. On the endogenic versus the exogenic virtues

由中出者：
仁忠信。
由【外人者：
禮樂刑。
As for those that emerge from the inside/the endogenic ones:
these are humanheartedness, devoted effort, and good faith.
As for those [which enter from the outside]
these are ritual propriety, music, and punishments] [slip 21]

21. On the epistemic conditions for mass education

察天道以化民氣。
One investigates the Way of Heaven in order to transform the vital spirits of the people. [slip 68]

22. On epistemic antecedence I

知天所為，知人所為，然後知命。
Only when one understands how Heaven works, and when one understands how
man works, [slip 29] does one understand the Way; and only when one understands
the Way does one understand ordained fate. [slip 30]

23. On epistemic antecedence II

知己而後知人，
知人而後知禮，
知禮而後知行。
Only when one understands oneself does one understand others,
only when one understands others does one [slip 26] understand ritual propriety,
only when one does ritual propriety does one understand (proper) conduct. [slip 27]

Conclusion

Surveying the pithy precision of these dicta in “Yucong” one is struck by their
logical independence on the one hand, and by the stylistically manifested in-
tellectual coherence of their approach on the other. As one feels that one
is getting under the skin of some of these propositions, one feels invited to go on
constructing new ones, thinking along these lines of critical analysis. It is a
little bit like reading Wittgenstein. Not like reading the Tractatus—which does
avoid quotation and the like, yet which organises its propositions on a struc-
tured tree of subordination—but more like reading On Certainty. One feels in-
vited to listen in on an intense intellectual effort that manifests itself not
through a chain of well-rehearsed argumentation but through a jumpy and
knotty sequence of highly polished analytic aperçus. To a Western reader these
aperçus seem to hold a vague promise that they may constitute insights that
constitute conditions for the possibility of any future account of the scheme of
Chinese conceptual schemes, much in the spirit of Immanuel Kant. And the
curious thing is this: these propositions are written as if they are intended very
much that way. And it is not a coincidence that we find the punctuation marks
in this pretty well exactly where we would have hoped to see them anyway. The
text works indeed as a pointillistic attempt at conceptual clarification that is a
perceived prerequisite for any future intellectual transparency. The Mohist
logicians felt that way. It now appears that the Mohist milieu was not the only
one in which this historically jejune, non-pragmatic and non-moralistic, ethereal
analytic intellectualism was cultivated to an almost professionalistic, dry,
and caustic perfection.

The social pendant to this analytic independence of mind, I like to think,
was a cultural independence vis-à-vis any particular ‘school of thought’ or in-
deed ‘way of thought’ that the authors of these propositions may have been
adherents of. These propositions do not give off the scent of polite submissions
to a ruler. Defiantly they leave the prevalent hierarchical structures of com-
munication in Late Warring States China. There is no advice here to a ruler. There
is no intended audience of disgruntled courtiers either. The status of the au-
thors is entirely irrelevant. It is their implicit argumentation that counts. And
the argument matters only to those who happen to have that ‘philosophical’
taste for abstract de-contextualised conceptual analysis. The discourse is not
ad personam, directed at this or that intended individual. The discourse is in-
tertextual, but it poses as being abstractly self-contained. These propositions
set out to establish an apolitical, independent, autonomous realm of what one
might indeed call ‘academic’ discourse. They apply cold-blooded and icon-
clastic logical analysis to what were the holiest of virtues in their time. The
exciting thing is that these propositions seem to pose as philosophically non-
partisan, unattached to any one particular philosophical school rather than
another. And unlike Zhuang Zhou 莊周, the authors of these propositions
avoid all manner of dogmatic social, ideological or moral conclusions, even of
any narrative sceptic relativism, Montaigne style. Our text poses as curiously
cool and abstract, analytically above all philosophical or social factionalism.
CHAPTER 6

Speaking of Poetry: Pattern and Argument in the “Kongzi Shilun”

Martin Kern

The “Kongzi shilun” 孔子詩論 (Confucius’ Discussion of the Poetry) is by far the most prominent text among the Shanghai Museum corpus of bamboo manuscripts dated to roughly 300 BC. Since its publication in December 2001, it has attracted hundreds of articles and several book-length studies. In the months immediately following the initial publication, a vigorous online debate arose during which at least six different sequential arrangements of the altogether twenty-nine bamboo slips were proposed. Moreover, Li Xueqin 李學勤 has argued that the text by no means reflects “Confucius’ Discussion of the Poetry” but rather a ‘discussion’ that invokes Confucius; his proposed shorter title “Shilun” 詩論 (Discussion of the Poetry) is by now widely accepted and for this reason alone—and against better judgment (see below)—will be used in the present study. Aside from detailed paleographic analysis and vigorous discussions of interpretation and textual arrangement, much research has been devoted to two questions: the authorship of the anonymous manuscript text and, often related to the question of authorship, the text’s position vis-à-vis the received Mao Shi 毛詩 where it has been compared to both the “Great

References

——. Zhanguo Qin Han jianbo gushu tongji zihuan 戰國秦漢簡帛古書通假字彙. Xiamen: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2012.

2 On http://www.jianbao.org, the principal online forum for academic discussions of early Chinese manuscripts.
3 For a convenient survey of these discussions, see Xing Wen, “Guest Editor’s Introduction,” Contemporary Chinese Thought 39.4 (2008): 3–17.
4 The three most important books, all reflecting the extensive discussion in the field, have been Huang Huaxin 黃懷信, Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhusu “Shilun” jiuyi 上海博物館簡戰國楚竹書《詩論》解義 (Beijing: Shenhui kexue weixian chubanshe, 2004); Liu Xinfang 劉信芳, Kongzi shilun shuxue 孔子詩論述學 (Hefei: Anhui daxue chubanshe, 2002); and Chen Tongsheng 陳崇生, Kongzi shilun yanjiu 《孔子詩論》研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004). Chen, 315–341. provides a survey of the large number of publications on the manuscript that appeared just between December 2001 and March 2004. Recently, long after the present essay was completed, a massive new study has appeared: Zhao Fulin 趙福林, Shangbo jian ‘Shilun’ yanjiu 上博簡《詩論》研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003).
5 At stake, of course, is not the identity of the writer, or copyist, of the recovered manuscript but of the text that is contained in this particular manuscript and that, so it is presumed,