

more of the debates within which the term was utilized, as well as full analyses of those other terms against which *qing* was often defined—terms such as *xing* (nature) and *yu* (desires). But I do hope I have made a small contribution to such a study by analyzing at least some of the rich ways that the term *qing* was employed, defined, and debated in the early period, and by pointing out that some of the specific definitions of *qing* discussed by recent scholars as representing the basic meaning of the term in fact emerged in the course of that debate itself.

## THE SEMANTICS OF QÍNG 情 IN PRE-BUDDHIST CHINESE

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Linguistic articulation in speaking or writing involves a series of complex and variously motivated choices between culturally pre-defined linguistic alternatives.

In this case study, I shall deal with the notion of *qing* 情 in the context of the repertoire of choices this word enters with semantically adjacent words. The appendix on near-synonyms and on antonyms will focus systematically on these contrasts.

### *Psychological Vocabulary in Early Inscriptions*

One of the striking features of oracle bone characters is the almost complete absence in them of the “heart” radical, which became so common already in Warring States inscriptions. Xú Zhōngshū 1981, arranged according to radicals, brings this out most strikingly: under the heart radical, the columns with oracle bone and bronze inscriptions are pervasively empty.

Zhào Chéng 1988 divides oracle bone characters into 26 semantic groups: he has no category for psychological terms. Xú Zhōngshū 1981: 406–417 is naturally not up to date with recent discoveries, but the overall pattern that emerges from these pages is clear enough: the heart radical emerges as a productive formative element in the bronze inscriptions and develops considerably in Warring States inscriptions, e.g. markedly in the *Hóumǎ méngshū* 侯馬盟書 and fully flourishes throughout Han epigraphy. Shī Xièjié 1998: 114, a useful and remarkably beautiful survey of inscriptions from Wú and Yuè, lists 10 characters with the heart radical.

Consider a list of the (variously listed) seven “passions”: The antecedent of 喜 *xǐ* is used as a place name and a personal name, not

as a psychological term. *Nù* 怒, *āi* 哀, *jù* 懼, *ài* 愛, *wù* 惡, *yù* 欲 do not have recognised antecedents in oracle bone inscriptions.

The concepts of the *xīn* 心 "heart", *sī* 思 "think of, long for", *niàn* 念 "think about", *zhì* 志 "ambition, aspiration", *shèn* 慎 "be careful about", *zhōng* 忠, *gōng* 恭 "respect", *cí* 慈 "be loving", *wù* 悟 "understand", *wéi* 慰 "console", *mù* 慕 "admire", *xù* 恤 "show compassion", *yú* 愚 "be stupid", *dài* 怠 "be lazy", *wàng* 忘 "forget", *huò* 惑 "be confused", *jì* 忌 "resent", *yuàn* 怨 "resent", *nù* 怒 "be angry", *huī* 悔 "regret", *bēi* 悲 "be sad", *gǎn* 感 "be moved", *kǒng* 恐 "be terrified", *lián* 憐 "love" are absent in oracle bones and gradually emerge in the bronze, bamboo and silk inscriptions of later times. I take this to be an evolution not in the language but in the conventions regarding what was written down, and how things were written down.

There would be nothing unnatural in the oracle bones employing such psychological notions. The administrative practice of the archivists, however, was to exclude psychologising perspectives in their formal records. The scribal act was inconsistent with a psychological angle of attention.

There is good reason to study the emergence of the realm of the psychological and in particular of the emotional in epigraphy and in ancient Chinese recorded literature. In particular, SHI is already rich in psychological terminology which needs to be studied with close attention being paid to the dating of the various parts of the book.

One step further, beyond the development and deployment of a vocabulary for psychological terms, is the development and deployment of an abstract vocabulary for such general terms as that of the "emotions", the "passions". Thus we are interested not only in the conceptual repertoire of the ancient Chinese within the field of the emotions, we are also interested in the development of their abstract conceptualisations within this broad linguistic area.

In particular, we need to investigate the notion of *qíng* 情, which came to denote emotional reactions and came to resemble in certain ways what Western tradition called the passions of the soul, *pathēmata* *tēs psychēs* in the language of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The present paper concentrates on the received literature, because it was this literature which was widely read and thus shaped Chinese linguistic and intellectual history. It is obvious that this study would need to be supplemented by a detailed

For the purposes of this summary presentation I propose to distinguish only between the following basic meanings of *qíng* 情:

1. Factual: The basic facts of a matter.  
This is particularly common in historical and "scientific" prose.
2. Metaphysical: Underlying and basic dynamic factors.  
This is particularly common in YI and philosophical writings.
3. Political: Basic popular sentiments/responses.  
This occurs in writings on political theory.
4. Anthropological: General basic instincts/propensities.  
This is particularly common in ritual and philosophy
5. Positive: Essential sensibilities and sentiments, viewed as commendable.  
This is particularly cultivated in Taoist writings.
6. Personal: Basic motivation/attitude.  
This is particularly common in historical texts and texts on political philosophy.

contrasting survey of the huge corpus of excavated texts. In particular, the Guōdiàn strips contain at least 16 relevant occurrences of the graph 青 that can be plausibly transcribed as 情, which provide fascinating evidence that the word did indeed have clear psychological meanings in whatever period we must ascribe to these manuscripts. Moreover, the later bamboo manuscripts provide considerable further evidence of various uses of the word. It would be interesting to see if the contrast between the use of the word in the received literature and the excavated literature are systematic.

When in Guōdiàn strip 342 we read 君子美其情 "the gentleman beautifies his essential nature/basic emotions", that provides no challenge to what we would have predicted from the received texts. And when in strip 325 we seem to be told that 道始於情·情生於性: 始者近義, 終者近義, one might try to translate: "the Way starts out from the emotions, the emotions are born from (human) nature; in the beginning one is close to the emotions, but in the end one is close to rectitude." However one will, in the end, come to read these Guōdiàn texts, it is clear that in them *qíng* 情 has become something of a central philosophical term that is psychological rather than generally metaphysical in nature. Indeed, the phrase 情生於性 was felt to be so important that it was repeated in strip 362.

7. Emotional: Personal deep convictions, responses, feelings. This is predominant in lyrical poetry, particularly in CHUCI.

Some preliminary remarks may be useful although they will be felt to be superfluous by many familiar with work in conceptual history:

- In many contexts, these meanings shade into each other and overlap. Thus, as in any detailed historical dictionary, our concern in distinguishing meanings is with significant distinctions in focus, not with absolute differences of meaning.
- The labels I introduce are abbreviated labels of convenience only, and they must be understood as explained in the glosses that explain them. Thus, for example, “anthropological” does not refer to any branch of the social sciences in the context of this paper. It is simply the best I could do as a shorthand for the explanation of the category that I have given above.
- In order to highlight the contrasts concerned I shall naturally want to “overtranslate” and thus in a sense to overstate the distinctions that I find important.
- The subject of this paper is thus not the commonalities between the meanings, but their characteristic diversity.
- The last thing I aim for is consistency in translation even within a given category, because the aim is to show the variety of meaning produced by context even within each of our categories.
- The categories I introduce are developed from a detailed survey of many hundreds of examples. The aim of this conceptual analysis is not to impose such current schemes as “objective versus subjective”, “constant versus dynamic”, “universal versus unique”, “manifested versus hidden”, “commendatory versus pejorative” on the material. On the contrary, I try to reconstruct the clusters of usages that suggest themselves on the basis of the primary sources as one works through the hundreds of relevant example passages in the literature.

### 1. Factual: *The Basic Facts of a Matter*

In a wide range of usages, *qíng* 情 “the real facts, the basic fact, basic facts” is devoid of all emotional content, and is also devoid of all nuances of metaphysical depth. In this current meaning, we shall only understand the word properly to the extent that we learn to appreciate its specific difference in nuance from such other words as *shí* 實 “reality (versus mere name); objects”, *shì* 事 “the facts (as posing a task for human action)”, *shì fēi* 是非 “the rights or wrongs of a matter, what is right or wrong”. Thus in the examples that follow, the reader must constantly bear in mind two questions:

- A. Could any such near-synonyms have been used in the context?  
 B. What semantic differences would be by such substitutions.

Understanding factual *qíng* 情 is to be able to answer these two questions coherently and in a well-argued way.

The basic meaning of *qíng* 情 in ZUO is manifestly not emotional but relates to that proto-metaphysical meaning I have noted in YI, and in the following examples *qíng* 情 refers to the basic real facts of a situation.

(1) ZUO Zhuang 10.1 (684 B.C.); Yáng Bójùn 183; Wáng Shōuqiān et al. 125; tr. Legge 86

公曰；  
 「小大之獄，  
 雖不能察，  
 必以情。」  
 The duke went on to say:  
 “In all matters of legal process,  
 whether small or great,  
 although I may not be able to  
 search them out *thoroughly*,  
 I make it a point to decide  
 according to the *basic facts*.”

The decision is on the basis of real fact, not of prejudice or of hearsay. It is hard to see how any of the main synonyms could be used in this context.

A prototypical context in which *qíng* 情 is preferred is in context where these real facts might be hidden or are hidden:

- (2) ZUO Xiang 18.3 (555 B.C.); Y:1037; W:875; tr. Legge:478

「吾知子，  
敢匿情乎？」  
and would never dare keep back *the*  
*truth* from you.”

In ZUO Ai 8.03 女言其情 “The lady told *the truth*”, ZUO Zhao 13.09 敢不盡情? “Must I not tell you the complete truth?”, ZUO Zhao 13.02 而告之情 “he explained the *basic situation* to them” reference is not to some abstract truth as opposed to lies, but “the basic relevant determinant features of a situation” as opposed to some mere appearances or made-up artificialities. No experienced reader of ZUO would be tempted to read any metaphysics or any emotions into contexts like these.

The role of *qing* 情 is particularly complex in GUAN and HANFEI. Some examples link perfectly into the pattern established in ZUO:

- (3) GUAN 72.01.03; ed. Dai Wang 3.64; tr. Rickett 1998:373

「吾欲藉（籍）於人，  
men.  
How about that?」

何如？」  
管子對曰：  
「此隱情也。」

Guǎnzǐ replied politely:  
“That will lead to their concealing  
*their true numbers*.”

This is not the hiding of some underlying number of people, it is the hiding of the plain facts about population numbers. This unmetaphysical function of *qing* 情 may well be relevant in some of the cases where a more profound reading is made possible by the context, and often opted for by modern readers. In GUAN the manifestly unprofound cases abound:

- (4) GUAN46.01.80; ed. Dai Wang 3.55; tr. Rickett 1998:161

尺寸尋丈者，  
所以得長短之情也，  
The *chǐ* and *cùn*, *xún* and *zhàng*  
are the means for determining *true*  
*length*.

The real underlying facts, the real story behind a matter are always something that may be hidden, disclosed, spied out, investigated, and the knowledge of which allows one to be in control of events:

- (5) HANFEI 44.09:08; Chen Qitian 240; Chen Qiyou 925; Zhou Xunchu 603f; Zhu Shouliang 1538

察四王之情，  
貪得之意也；  
If one investigates *the basic facts*  
about these four kings carefully  
it turns out they were eager after  
gain;

度其行，  
暴亂之兵也。  
if one assesses their conduct  
they were violent and rebellious  
military men.

Here HANFEI speaks as a political philosopher. The focus is certainly not on feelings, but on the real story behind the kings. Like a lawyer, the political philosopher is trying to find out what really happened. This is not quite as trivial as some of the above cases, because it involves judgements of what is and what is not immediately relevant to a proper understanding of these kings.

The real facts are something that one clearly might like to learn about or understand:

- (6) ZGC 1.25; tr. Crump 1979 no. 34, p. 47

秦之輕重，  
未可知也。  
秦欲知三國之情，  
It is as yet impossible to know  
how weak or strong Qín may be,  
but she wants the real situation in  
the Three States.

- (7) ZGC 1.26; tr. Crump 1979 no. 35, p. 47

虛輸西周之情於東周。  
He revealed all of West Zhōu’s  
affairs to East Zhōu.

There is normally no question of revealing a deep interpretation of the basic factors. What is being revealed is simply the relevant facts of the matters at hand. In contexts like these we do not in fact expect *shí* 實 “the facts” because the latter in this kind of meaning has a strong tendency to be used in explicit opposition to other terms like *míng* 名 “name only”.

- (8) ZGC 3.13; tr. Crump 1979 no. 55, p. 64

陳軫去楚之秦。  
Qín.  
Chén Zhēn left Chǔ and returned to  
Qín.

張儀謂秦王曰：  
「陳軫為王臣，

常以國情輸楚。」

Zhāng Yí said to the King of Qín:  
“When Chén Zhēn was your  
minister,

he constantly divulged internal  
affairs of the state to Chǔ.”

The old commentaries read: 情，謂國事之隱者。補曰：情，實也。  
“*Qíng* refers to the hidden affairs of the state. Subcommentary: *qíng*  
means ‘facts’.” We must learn to glean the relevant information from  
this kind of commentary, and to go decisively beyond it in our ap-  
preciation of semantic differences between just those words that are  
customarily identified in the commentarial literature.

## 2. *Metaphysical:*

### *Underlying and Basic Dynamic Factors or Inherent Principles*

There usually is nothing metaphysical about the facts of a matter.  
However, when one decides what are the basic facts, the crucial  
facts, the facts that constitute the underlying driving force in develop-  
ments, then one enters the semantic development of a new realm. At  
the end of this development lies something like a metaphysics of  
essential inner driving forces that determine the course of changes in  
the universe.

In medical texts, *qíng* 情 gets naturally linked to an essential  
aetiology rather than to a study of symptoms:

SUWEN 12, ed. Shanghai 1995: 99 得病之情 is to “get to the  
dynamic inner cause of the disease, the basic inner condition versus  
the external symptoms”. Similarly for SUWEN 26, ed Shanghai 1995:  
204 莫知其情而見邪形也. “No one understands the real underlying  
factors, but they can see the nasty external symptoms.” Maybe this is  
a later conceptual development but it perfectly illustrates what I take  
to be the core “metaphysical” meaning of *qíng* 情. For I do not  
intend anything necessarily mystical or obscure, only something un-  
derlying, basic.

The Book of Changes, YI, has the notion of *qíng* 情 at the very  
core of its project:

(9) YI, ed. Lóu Yǔliè 1980 p. 373; tr. Lynn 1994, p. 329; cf. tr.  
Shaughnessy 1997, p. 205

天地感  
而萬物化生，  
聖人感人心

When Heaven and Earth stimulate  
then the myriad things are created.  
When the sage stimulating the  
hearts of men

而天下和平；  
觀其所感，

then the entire world finds peace.  
If we observe how things are  
stimulated,

而天地萬物之情可見矣！

then the *fundamental dynamic*  
*features shaping Heaven and Earth*  
and all the myriad things can be  
seen.

My deliberate over-translation here is designed to make explicit the  
semantic features that I believe to be constitutive of the “metaphysical”  
meaning of *qíng* 情.

I note in passing that the notion of *gǎn* 感 which came to be  
heavily invested with psychological meanings, has no such connota-  
tions in early Chinese literature. When ZHUANG speaks of *gǎn ér*  
*hòu yìng* 感而後應 “first respond after one has been stimulated”, this  
does not involve human feelings, only external stimulation, so that  
the current lexicographic gloss *gǎnjué* 感覺 for *gǎn* 感 is an anachro-  
nism insofar as it suggests subjective feeling and emotion. In any  
case, the crucial phrase is repeated in YI, ed. Lóu Yǔliè 1980 p. 387;  
tr. Lynn 1994 p. 345 天地之情可見矣. “The basic dynamic factors  
in Heaven and Earth may be seen.” To bring this about, to make this  
palpable, is the project of the Book of Changes. Cf. YI, ed. Lóu  
Yǔliè 1980, p. 558; tr. Lynn 1994 p. 77.

What YI is all about, is discovering the “essential dynamics” in  
the world of changes, the underlying realm of real dynamic character-  
istics that are the essential factors in bringing about change. At this  
crucial point in the book, the keyword is *qíng* 情. Interestingly, the  
Mǎwángduì 馬王堆 manuscripts never write our word with the heart  
radical, hesitating as they do between 請 and 精.

Interestingly, LAO seems not to have use for *qíng* 情 at all, and  
the word is not in the text at all, whereas ZHUANG is full of puzzling  
examples that seem close in force to the specific uses of the word

cultivated in YI. ZHUANG takes *qíng* 情 to be something deep-seated and constant, something constitutive, if not defining, something that does indeed make one think of the Latin word *essentia*:

## (10) ZHUANG 6.223

死生，命也，  
其有夜旦之常，  
天也。  
人之有所不得與，  
皆物之情也。

Life and death are a matter of fate.  
Their constant alternation, like that  
of day and night,  
is a matter of Heaven.  
What man is unable to interfere  
with  
is always the *essential dynamic*  
*features in things*.

There is nothing psychological or anthropological here, nothing observably factual: we have a neatly metaphysical use of *qíng* 情 in the technical sense I use the word here.

Fate and Heaven belong to a metaphysical realm of ineluctable constancy. The metaphysical *qíng* 情 belongs firmly in this realm, the profound realm with which it is not given man to interfere because they are 常 “basic and constant”. And this realm of the constant is not an abstract realm removed from the creatures of this world, it is inherent in the creatures of this world. Thus *qíng* 情 is always the *qíng* 情 of something. It does not exist *in statu absoluto*.

Imperceptibly, this usage may occasionally verge towards the more psychological:

## (11) ZHUANG 32.1280; tr. CH

達生之情者傀，  
達於知者肖；

He who reaches to *essential*  
*features* of life is a giant;  
he who reaches (mere)  
understanding is slight.

Like the Way, *qíng* 情 is not something that is primarily understood, at most one can aspire to *dá* 達 “get to it”, and this raises one onto the new “metaphysical” level of something like the gigantic Nietzschean *Übermensch*. This one achieves because one operates no longer on symptoms but on essential realities.

Even in psychological contexts *qíng* 情 is by no means to be identified with *xīn* 心 “attitude” and retains, even within the psychological realm, something metaphysical. While we would never have *qíng zhī xīn* 情之心 we do find:

## (12) GUAN 49.02.01.01; ed. Dai Wang 2.99; tr. Rickett 1998:40

彼心之情，  
利安以寧，  
that is benefited by rest and quiet.

The text is concerned with the dynamic essence of the mind, what underlies and dominates mental manifestations. *Xīn zhī qíng* 心之情 must be read just like *wù zhī qíng* 物之情, where the peculiar force of *qíng* 情 is to raise us to a level *below* something manifest and familiar. And certainly, there is no way of interpreting this text as speaking of the “passions of the mind” or “the emotions in the mind”. The two meanings are manifestly distinct, and the distinction must have been clear to readers who were expected to understand this passage.

In the political philosophy of HANFEI, again, *qíng* 情 is at the core of the intellectual *démarche*:

## (13) HANFEI 14.05:01; Chen Qitian 219; Chen Qiyou 248; Zhou Xunchu 132; Zhu Shouliang 483

且夫世之愚學，  
皆不知治亂之情，  
The stupid ‘learned men’ of our  
time  
all fail to understand the *basic*  
*factors* involved in good  
government and chaos.

If we had read *shí* 實 here, we would have “the realities of good government and chaos”. But we read *qíng* 情, and so the discussion is of those underlying dynamic factors that bring about these political conditions. The stupid people are not so stupid that they cannot recognise the fact of good or bad government. What they do not understand is exactly what HANFEI sets out to uncover, namely those underlying essential structural factors that bring about good order or chaos. Within its proper realm of the political, HANFEI continues the essential enterprise of the Book of Changes.

The current alternation with *shí* 實 “facts, reality” is significant:

(14) HANFEI 14.05:04; Chen Qitian 219; Chen Qiyou 248; Zhou Xunchu 132; Zhu Shouliang 483

而聖人者，  
審於是非之實，

But as for the sage,  
he examines carefully the facts of  
right and wrong  
and he investigates the *real*  
*decisive factors involved in good*  
government and chaos.

察於治亂之情也。

*Shí* 實 refers to “objective facts” versus mere opinion or nomenclature. *Qíng* 情 refers to the real underlying and operative factors and principles involved. In our context, then, this must count as a neat case of “metaphysical”, and it does not matter for my purpose that one does not normally use the word “metaphysical” in this sense. “The facts of right and wrong”, on the other hand, have nothing to do with underlying factors: here we have an abstract moral reality referred to, not any underlying principle. Hence the use of the non-metaphysical word *shí* 實.

Again, we find that the combination of *qíng* 情 with *shì* 事 “matter” is not coordinate in the grammatical sense:

(15) GUAN 46.01.146; ed. Dai Wang 3.59; tr. Rickett 1998:168

明主之治也，

When the enlightened ruler

establishes good order,

審是非，

he closely investigates right and

wrong

and finds out about *the crucial*

*underlying principles of a matter*,

using procedures and measures to

judge people.

以度量案之，

Note the instructive contrast of *qíng* 情 “crucial determining factors/facts” versus *shì* 是非 “what is right and wrong”. This is not a pleonastic or loose way of talking. GUAN keeps the dimensions of the merely factual or judgmental and the dimension of the explanatory apart.

Especially in mystical poetry, the metaphysical force of *qíng* 情 comes out very clearly:

(16) GUAN 49.04.03.01; ed. Dai Wang 2.100; tr. Rickett 1998:42

彼道之情，

Those basic dynamic constitutive features of the Way,

惡音與聲。

are averse to articulation in sound and to fame.

修心靜音，

Only after cultivating one’s mind

and quieting one’s urge to

articulate in sound

道乃可得。

may the Way be comprehended.

In an interesting rhetorical act of personification this *qíng* 情 is credited with hatred for external expression. And then comes that crucial element of metaphysical cultivation, the human precondition for an appreciation of that realm: cultivation of the mind itself, the quieting down of the predominant urge to articulate (or, according to a widely accepted emendation of the text: the quieting down of the urge to plan things, *yì* 意).

What defines “metaphysical” *qíng* 情 is its opposition to *mào* 貌 “outer appearance”, even *yán* 言 “outer verbalisation”. These are mere *huá* 華 “outward flourishes” of what is inward, essential, and all-important:

(17) GY, jinyu:

吾見其貌而欲之，

When I see his shape I want him,

聞其言而惡之。

when I hear his speeches I dislike

him.

夫貌，情之華也；

External manifestation is the

言，貌之機也。

outward veneer of an inner reality;

言，貌之機也。

speeches are a function of external

shape.

身為情，

The person is the inner reality

成於中。

and it forms within.

言身之文也。

Speech is an outward adornment of

the person.

However we take this passage, it neither invites nor allows an interpretation of human *qíng* 情 in terms of emotions or passions.

### 3. Political: Basic Popular Sentiments/Responses

The earliest passage from the old parts of SHU involves neither facts, nor any form of underlying metaphysical factors, but basic ways of responding to the world, basic dispositions and attitudes, I quote the passage with Karlgren's translation:

(18) SHU, Kanggao 6, tr. Karlgren

王曰

嗚呼小子封

恫瘝乃身敬哉

天畏棗忱

民情大可見

The king said:

Oh, youngster Fēng,

(pain your body=) exert yourself  
intensely and be careful.

Heaven's majesty is not to be relied  
on (i.e. you cannot be sure of its  
favour).

The people's feelings are greatly  
visible (i.e. beware of signs of  
unrest).

Traditional commentators tend to agree (though they may all be wrong) that this refers to public sentiment and not to the objective real situation among the people. Whatever we end up saying about this famous passage, this conception "people's basic feelings" is important because it relates to the topology of "public space" in ancient China:

(19) ZHOULI Dasitu 大司徒, SSJZJY p. 402

以六樂防萬民之情

Through the six kinds of music he  
keeps the basic instinctive  
responses of the people under  
control  
and teaches them to be harmonious.

而教之和。

And in this context, there certainly is no question of reading any "objective real situation". Given this passage from ZHOULI, one is then less inclined to go against the unanimous old tradition. *Mín qíng*

民情 are basic inclinations, fundamental propensities, essential tendencies of the people. The term does not refer to emotions in general, but neither does it, in a psychologising way, refer to their subjective opinions. Let us turn to the discourse about *qíng* 情 in historical prose.

There is, in any case, also an explicitly psychological variant to *mín qíng* 民情: ZUO Zhao 7.14 民心不壹 "People's minds are not one."

Sometimes, *qíng* 情 alone can refer to *mín qíng* 民情. In a political context, the fundamental responses of the people, their basic instinctive feelings about things are important:

(20) GUAN 53.01.56; ed. Dai Wang 3.10; tr. Rickett 1998:224

凡有天下者，

It is always so that in controlling  
the empire,

以情伐者帝，

those who rely on people's basic  
attitudes become emperors, those  
who

以事伐者王，

rely on various undertakings  
become kings,

以政伐者霸，

those who rely on political power  
become lord protectors.

The basic attitudes are not here general instincts but current feelings.

In ZUO, there is frequent reference to the opposition between the real fundamental instincts of the people and pretense, and the pair *qíng wěi* 情偽 is current in Warring States Chinese:

(21) ZUO Xi 28.3 (632 B.C.); Yáng Bójùn 456; Wáng Shǒuqiān et al. 333; tr. Watson 1989:56; compare also ZUO Xi 28.3.

險阻艱難，

He has tasted every kind of

備嘗之矣；

hardship, trouble and danger,

民之情偽，

and the fundamental instinctive

盡知之矣。

reactions and the (superficial)

he knows all about.

pretenses of the people

In *Chūnqiū fǎnlù* 6, ed. Peking 1996 p. 103 we read that under the sage kings of antiquity in particular 民情至樸而不文 "the basic senti-



ments of the people were extremely plain and straightforward, and they were unpolished". Gassmann 1988: 68 translates plausibly: 'die Gefühle der Menschen'. In any case, there is no doubt that this passage refers to a certain historical stage and not to basic sentiments in general.

For *mín zhī qíng* 民之情 we occasionally get *tiān xià zhī qíng* 天下之情:

(22) MO 16, ed. Wú Yùjiāng 1993: 177; tr. Watson 1963: 42f

是故別君之言曰：

The partial ruler says,

「吾惡能為吾萬民之身若為吾身，

countless subjects the same as I regard myself?

此泰非天下之情也。」

That would be too much at variance with the fundamental natural instinctive reactions of the world."

Moreover, even the current *rén qíng* 人情 "fundamental human sensibilities", which we shall discuss in detail below, deserves to be considered here. This essential dynamic nature must be properly tuned:

(23) GUAN 41.01.07; ed. Dai Wang 2.82; tr. Rickett 1998: 122

審合其聲，

Pay attention to placing yourself in harmony with the five notes

修十二鍾。

And cultivate the twelve bells

以律人情，

so that they may become the pitch pipes for people's basic instincts.

This refers to the people's instincts at a given time. It does not refer to these instincts in general.

#### 4. Anthropological: General Basic Instincts

For the theory of ritual, *qíng* 情 is again a keyword. The legitimisation of ritual is through the notion of *qíng* 情 "fundamental human sensibilities".

(24) LIJI 7; Couvreur 1.444f; Sūn Xīdàn 5.85; tr. Legge 1.331

君子禮以飾情。  
With a superior man the use of ceremonies is to embellish basic instinctive sentiments.

Whatever *qíng* 情 is, it is in some sense raw or instinctual and needs *shì* 飾 "beautification" through what in modern terms we would describe as "culture". The process by which instinct gets informed by *wén* 文 "dignified patterning" is at the very core of Confucius' educational project.

LIJI keeps insisting on that link with *wén* 文:

(25) LIJI 30; Couvreur 2.400f; Sūn Xīdàn 13.2; tr. Legge 2.284

禮者，

The rules of propriety keep in accordance with the *basic*

因人之情

*human instincts*,

而為之節文，

and moderate and pattern them,

以為民坊者也。

so they serve as dykes for the people.

Echoing Confucian thinking on ritual, HANFEI varies the point significantly:

(26) HANFEI 20.05:01; Chen Qiyou 331; Zhou Xunchu 184; Zhu

Shouliang 603

禮者，

Ritual

所以貌情也...

is that through which one gives outward expression to *inner basic sensibilities*...

In this connection HANFEI is not speaking of beatification, only of *mào* 貌 "giving expression to": to him, *lǐ* 禮 is not the solution but part of the problem. A problem that must be solved not through moralising, but through political/social Machiavellian manipulation.

For LIJI ritual is a traditional expression of true inner feelings, but on the other hand, it is regularly construed as controlling, ordering and governing these feelings:

(27) LIJI 9; Couvreur 1.500f; Sūn Xidān 6.32; tr. Legge 1.367

「夫禮，  
先王以承天之道，

It was by those rules  
that the ancient kings sought to  
continue the ways of Heaven (on  
earth),  
and to regulate *the basic human  
instincts*.

The use of the word *zhì* 治 does imply that the *qíng* 情 are not by their nature orderly or in good order: they need to be reduced to order.

Significantly, ZHUANG replaces the more assertive and aggressive *zhì* 治 “reduce to order, govern properly” with the much milder *lǐ* 理 “get into a proper pattern, sort out in a principled way”. According to ZHUANG one may and indeed should “sort out in a principled way” one’s natural appetitive drives associated with likes and dislikes:

(28) ZHUANG 31.1239

子審仁義之間，

You, sir, inquire into the sphere of  
humaneness and rectitude,

察同異之際，

examine the boundary between  
sameness and difference,

觀動靜之變，

observe the transformations of  
movement and stillness,

適受與之度，

comply with measures for giving  
and receiving,

理好惡之情，

adjust the *basic instincts* of liking  
and disliking,

和喜怒之節，

harmonize the rhythm of joy and  
anger,

而幾於不免矣。

and yet you have barely been able  
to escape all these troubles.

The essential appetitive features could, according to ZHUANG, not only be adjusted in a principled way, they should also be contained, and *qíng* 情 can naturally be used in conjunction with *yù* 欲 “desire”;

(29) ZHUANG 33.13120

以禁攻寢兵為外，

They took the prohibition of  
aggression and the halting of troops  
as their external strategy,  
*reducing and moderating their  
fundamental instinctive desires* as  
their internal strategy.

以情欲寡淺為內。

Here one begins to get close to a notion of *qíng* 情 as “passion for” which certainly comes to play an important part in later Chinese intellectual history.

GUAN insists on *qíng* 情 as something common:

(30) GUAN 3.8; ed. Dai Wang 1.9; tr. Rickett 1985, p. 95.

人情不二，

*Human nature is all the same.*

故民情可得而御也。  
That is why it is possible to control  
the people.<sup>2</sup>

審其所好惡，

By examining their likes and  
dislikes,

則其長短可知也；

their strengths and weaknesses may  
be known.

觀其交游，

By observing their associates,

則其賢不肖可察也。

their worthiness or unworthiness  
may be learned.

Like HANFEI, GUAN notices that it is the very predictability of *qíng* 情 which gives the ruler a handle by which to control his subjects. Without such predictability of basic responses his many subjects could not be made to submit to one unified regulative regime.

In an almost modern spirit, Wáng Chōng reports that instincts are also constant over time:

LUNHENG, ed. Liú Pànsuì p. 163

世好奇怪，

That the world is fond of  
outstanding and strange things

<sup>2</sup> Deleting 情 as a mistaken repetition of the same character in the preceding line [Chen, Yasui, and Tao].

古今同情。

is an instinct that is common to antiquity and modernity.

Our Warring States texts are not slow to describe what it is that all these constant instinctual responses *qing* 情 have in common:

(31) GUAN 53.01.31; ed. Dai Wang 3.8; tr. Rickett 1998:219f

夫凡人之情，  
men  
Indeed, it is the *basic instinct of*

見利莫能勿就，  
that whenever they see profit, they  
cannot help chasing after it,

見害莫能勿避。  
and whenever they see harm, they  
cannot help running away.

The ruler's task, then, is to use these natural instincts as his steering mechanisms in such a way that the people, steered by their instincts, come to do exactly what the ruler wants them to do. That is the essence of Warring States statecraft as expounded with exemplary clarity in HANFEI. On *qing* 情 we read, entirely in line with GUAN:

(32) HANFEI 14.02:02; Chen Qitian 214; Chen Qiyou 245; Zhou Xunchu 127; Zhu Shouliang 474

夫安利者就之，  
As for security and gain, one will  
go for these,

危害者去之，  
as for danger and harm, one will  
avoid these.

此人之情也。  
This is part of the *basic instinct of*  
man.

For political reasons HANFEI is interested in the natural basic human propensities or instincts, the appetitive base structure in human behaviour. A large number of passages discuss "human nature" in terms of *qing* 情, and in every case it is important to note the crucial distinction with *xing* 性 in being always appetitive in focus (*xing* 性 can be appetitive, but does not have to be):

(33) HANFEI 38.02:03 [2]; Chen Qitian 347; Chen Qiyou 844; Zhou Xunchu 537; Zhu Shouliang 1418

人情皆喜貴  
It is in the *basic instinct of* man that

they take open pleasure in high status and dislike low status.

而惡賤。

*Xing* 性 are the endowments, the natural qualities, the stative natural disposition. *Qing* 情 is the set of dynamic tendencies. No wonder we have much talk of "human nature being basically good" in terms of *xing* 性 and not *qing* 情.

(34) HANFEI 10.09:10; Chen Qitian 676; Chen Qiyou 194; Zhou Xunchu 95; Zhu Shouliang 400

人之情莫不愛其子，  
It is in the *essential instinct of* men  
that they all take good care of their  
children,

今蒸其子以為膳於君，  
but now he broiled his son in order  
to make a delicacy for his ruler:

其子弗愛，  
his own son he would not take  
good care of,

又安能愛君乎？  
how can he go on to take good care  
of his ruler?

(35) HANFEI 10.09:06; Chen Qitian 676; Chen Qiyou 194; Zhou Xunchu 95; Zhu Shouliang 400

管仲曰：

“不可。

夫人之情莫不愛其身。  
It is in the *natural instinct of man*  
that they all take good care of their  
own bodies.

公妒而好內，  
You being a jealous man, and fond  
of women

黷刁自穢以為治內。  
Shù Diào castrated himself in order  
to administer the harem.

其身不愛，  
Even his own body he does not  
take good care of,

又安能愛君？”  
how is he going to go on to take  
good care of his ruler?”

In all these cases, what is discussed is anthropology, the basic human instinctive reactions or responses to things.

## ROLE-SPECIFIC INSTINCTS

In particular, the underlying appetitive base structure of ministers' and rulers' behaviour, their basic natural structurally motivated instincts are of great concern in HANFEI, since they form the very basis of his Machiavellian theory:

(36) HANFEI 19.06:07; Chen Qitian 211; Chen Qiyou 311; Zhou Xunchu 178; Zhu Shouliang 589

害身而利國，

Harming his personal interests to

profit the state

is something the ministers will

refuse to do;

harming the state to profit his

ministers

is something the ruler will not do.

The minister's basic feeling is

that to harm one's person is not

profitable;

the ruler's basic instinct is

that if he harms the state he will

take no good care of anyone.

臣弗為也；

害國而利臣，

君不行也。

臣之情，

害身無利；

君之情，

害國無親。

Like one's inborn nature *xing* 性, *qing* 情 cannot be learnt, but unlike *xing* 性 it can be individuated and counted:

(37) LIJI 9; Couvreur 1.516f; Sūn Xidān 6.52f; tr. Legge 1.379; cf. also JIAYU 32 ed. Xuē Ānqín 1993: 203

何謂人情？

喜怒哀懼愛惡欲，

七者，

弗學而能。

...

故聖人所以治人七情，  
regulate the seven *fundamental*  
*responses* of men,

修十義...

cultivate the ten virtues that are  
right...

What is counted here is not individual events, individual bouts of anger etc, but *kinds* of feelings.

ZHUANG, like many other texts, links instincts to organs:

(38) ZHUANG 29.1187

今吾告子以人之情，

目欲視色，

耳欲聽聲，

口欲察味，

志氣欲盈。

Now, sir, I shall tell you *about the*  
*fundamental instincts of man.*

The eyes desire to see colours;

the ears desire to hear sounds;

the mouth desires to taste flavours;

the aspirations and vital breath

desire fulfilment.

In HSWZ the dimensions of man's appetitive essential drives are countable *kinds* of *qing* 情:

(39) HSWZ 05.16:01; tr. Hightower 1951, p. 175

人有六情，

目欲視好色，

耳欲聽宮商，

鼻欲嗅芬香，

口欲嗜甘旨，

其身體四肢欲安而不作，

衣欲被文繡而輕暖。

此六者，

民之六情也。

夫之則亂，

從之則穆。

Man has six *fundamental instincts.*

His eyes desire to see good-looking  
colors,

his ears desire to hear [the notes]

*kung* and *shang*,

his nose desires to smell fragrant

odors;

his mouth desires to taste fine

flavors,

his four limbs desire repose and

inactivity;

of clothing he likes the elegant and

embroidered, the light and warm.

These six are

the six *fundamental instincts* of the

people.

Neglecting them results in trouble;

acting in accord with them, in

harmony.

故聖王之教其民也，

必因其情而節之以禮，

必從其欲而制之以義。

義簡而備，

禮易而法，  
去情不遠，

故民之從命也速。

Hence the Saintly King, in  
instructing the people,

always makes a point of following  
their *instincts*, employing ritual to  
restrain them;

he accords always with their  
wishes, using rectitude to control  
them.

Rectitude being simple and  
complete,

ritual being easy and regulated,  
and not departing far from  
*fundamental instincts*,

the people as a result obey orders  
quickly.

Again, we are dealing with six *kinds* of desire, not six events or  
instances of desiring something.

(40) LJE 2, Xiāo Dēngfú 1990: 108ff

五情爽惑。  
His five appetitive drives were all  
in confusion.

This refers to the affective relationship with the outer world of ears,  
eyes, nose, mouth and touch. The matter is taken up again in

(41) LJE 7

五情好惡，

古猶今也。

The five fundamental instincts,  
likes and dislikes,  
are the same in antiquity and in  
present times.

Public opinion may change through time as a result of good or bad  
government. General basic instincts do not change so easily in this  
way, but still, they are something that government and education can  
set to work on and cultivate. What is basic in man as instincts and  
fundamental propensities is amenable to cultivation, cultural formation,  
like a field of cultural action:

(42) LJI 9; Couvreur 1.522; Sūn Xīdàn 6.57; tr. Legge 1.383  
故聖人作則，

必以天地為本，

以陰陽為端，

以四時為柄，

以日星為紀，

月以為量，

鬼神以為徒，

五行以為質，

禮義以為器，

人情以為田，

四靈以為畜。

Thus when the sages would  
make rules (for men),  
they felt it necessary to find the  
origin (of all things) in heaven and  
earth;

to make the two forces (of nature)  
the commencement (of all);

to use the four seasons as the  
handle (of their arrangements);

to adopt the sun and stars as the  
recorders (of time),

the moon as the measurer (of work  
to be done),

the spirits breathing (in nature) as  
associates,

the five elements as giving  
substance (to things),

rules of propriety and righteousness  
as (their) instruments,

the *basic sensibilities of men* as a  
field to cultivate,

and the four intelligent creatures as  
domestic animals to be reared.

The thought is not only eagerly repeated in other texts like JIAYU, it  
is also eagerly elaborated upon in LJI itself:

(43) LJI 9; Couvreur 1.529f; Sūn Xīdàn 6.61f; tr. Legge 1.388

故人情者，

聖王之田也。

Those *basic sensibilities of men*  
were the field to be cultivated by  
the sage kings.

修禮以耕之，

陳義以種之，

They fashioned the rules of  
ceremony to plough it.

They set forth the principles of  
righteousness with which to plant  
it.

講學以釋之，

They instituted the lessons of the school to weed it.

本仁以聚之，

They made love the fundamental subject by which to gather all its fruits,

播樂以安之。

and they employed the training in music to give repose (to the minds of learners).

Emotions can otherwise come to be something one can become an unworthy servant of:

(44) HSWZ 02.24:04; tr. Hightower 1951, p. 64

巫馬期則不然。

Wū Mǎqī however did not do this.

弊性事情，

He misused his own nature and

勞力教詔，

putting his effort into instructions and orders.

雖治猶未至也。

Although there was order, there was not perfection.

##### 5. Positive:

*Essential Sensibilities and Sentiments, Viewed as Commendable*

At times there is a specific humanistic tinge to ZHUANG's use of the word that has reverberated through the millennia of Chinese civilisation:

(45) ZHUANG 1.24

吾聞言於接輿，

"I have heard Jiē Yú speak.

大而無當，

His words are impressive but not to the point.

往而不返。

Once he goes off on a tangent, he never comes back.

吾驚怖其言，

I was astounded by his words

猶河漢而無極也；

that were limitless as the Milky Way.

大有逕庭，  
不近人情焉。

They were extravagant and remote from basic human sensibilities."

Xìcí 繫辭, the appended explanations in YI also provide an intellectual context where the abstract consideration of qíng 情 in a more individuated, more psychologising different sense comes to the fore, and this meaning is not represented in the older parts of the book:

(46) YI, Xìcí 繫辭 ed. Lóu Yǔliè 1980 p. 557; tr. Lynn 1994 p. 76f; cf. Shaughnessy 203

爻象動乎內，

As the lines and the images move within the hexagrams,

吉凶見乎外，

so do good fortune and misfortune appear outside them,

功業見乎變，

meritorious undertakings are revealed in change,

聖人之情見乎辭。

and the basic meanings of the sages are revealed in the attached phrases.

What is referred to in this context is not, I think, some innate fundamental instinct of the sages, but a personal and creative profound and fundamental response based on the superior sensibility of a sage. It is as if qíng 情 begins to be individuated: your qíng 情 is not quite like my qíng 情. The sage has a special qíng 情 characterised by a higher perceptiveness regarding what is fundamental. One is getting generically close to the qíng 情 celebrated in Chǔ 楚 poetry, and of which I shall give a detailed account below. However, there is a difference: the deeply-felt feelings of the sage are, surely, irrelevant here. The attached phrases are not an expression of individual sensibilities of this sage or that. They are not an expression of emotional responses at all. What YI argues, if I understand this correctly, is that these formulations bring out the very essence of the wisdom that makes a sage into a sage. Unlike the Chǔ poetry, the attached phrases in the YI are not acts of individual communication. They are a general formulation of what is essential.

What exactly is referred to in the following, is a matter of understandable dispute:

## (47) ZHUANG 5.197

既受食於天，  
又惡用人！  
有人之形，  
无人之情。

Since he (i.e. the sage) receives  
sustenance from heaven,  
what use has he for man?  
He has a human form,  
but is without *the basic human*  
*instincts*.

Like Heaven, the sage is non-human, non-humane, lacks the essential  
sensibilities that make man human. This is Nietzsche speaking to us,  
through ZHUANG.

The art of living even of the Confucian gentleman is that of identi-  
fying with that innermost constitutive and basically positively valued  
psychological sensibility that defines one's identity:

## (48) LIJI 19; Couvreur 2.75f; Sūn Xidàn 10.42f; tr. Legge 2.110

是故，  
君子反情  
以和其志...

Hence  
*the gentleman reverts to his basic*  
*instincts*  
in order to bring his will into  
harmony with them...

This example belongs here because the heavy focus is on the positive  
valuation of the sensibilities in question, and not, as in the category I  
call "anthropological", to a neutrally viewed general biological and  
instinctual feature.

It turns out that *qing* 情 is crucial in defining one's basic moral  
personal identity. In poetry, we shall see, it is through *qing* 情 that  
the poet celebrates the discovery of his emotional identity.

Compare:

## (49) CHUCI QIJIAN 05:03; SBBY 422; Huang 217; Fu 198; tr.

Hawkes 253  
夫人孰能不反其真情？  
And all men, in the end, revert to  
*their true natures*.

It does seem, here, that Hawkes' translation hits the mark in this  
context.

The comparison is between the external things and the internal  
dynamic essence of a person is current:

## (50) GUAN 52.01.23; ed. Dai Wang 3.3; tr. Rickett 1998:206f

遇周武王，  
遂為周氏之禽，  
此營於物而失其情者也，  
愉於淫樂而忘後患者也。

When he met King Wu of the  
Zhou,  
he subsequently became a captive  
of the Zhou house.  
This is to be preoccupied with  
material things and to lose *one's*  
*true nature*,  
to find happiness in licentious  
pleasure and forget the disasters to  
follow.

Moreover, one's basic sound instincts are constitutive and basic to  
the concept of the person, they are, as it were, the essence of a  
person:

## (51) GUAN 38.12.03; ed. Dai Wang 2.73; tr. Rickett 1998: 96

故曰：  
欲愛吾身，  
先知吾情。

Therefore I say:  
If one wishes to care for one's  
body,  
one must first come to understand  
*one's basic instincts*.

The opposition between one's *qing* 情 "inner essence, basic inner  
feelings" and *shén* 神 "spirit" is important:

## (52) HANFEI 20.37:5; Chen Qiyou 384; Zhu Shouliang 669; Zhou

Xunchu 209; m189  
一於其情，  
雖有可欲之類，  
神不為動。

He is all concentrated on his *inner*  
*instinctual essence*,  
even if there is something of the  
kind he is fond of,  
his spirit is not moved by it.

The realisation of these quintessentially human inner feelings is the  
consummation of the true Confucian life, and here LIJI employs *qing*

情 as a commendatory term, not as a neutral term along the lines we have noted above:

(53) LJJI 35; Couvreur 2.555f; Sūn Xidàn 13.65; tr. Legge 2.377  
故哭泣無時，

Therefore he weiled and wept,  
without regard to time;  
he endured the toil and grief for  
three years.

思慕之心，  
孝子之志也，  
showed the aspirations of the filial  
son,

人情之實也。  
and was the real expression of his  
*true human instincts*.

禮義之經也，  
the proper method of propriety and  
rectitude.

非從天降也，  
非從地出也，  
人情而已矣。  
It does not come from heaven,  
it does not come from the earth;  
it is simply the expression of the  
*true human instincts*.

That Confucian ideal involves the establishment of what is elegant and proper in deep accord with the constitutive inner sensibilities:

(54) LJJI 38; Couvreur 2.580; Sūn Xidàn 13.84; tr. Legge 2.391  
三年之喪何也？  
What purpose do the mourning  
rites for three years serve?

曰：  
稱情而立文，  
The different rules for the  
mourning rites were established in  
harmony with *true human instincts*.

Even in the most cosmological of contexts, the relation of ritual to human sensibilities is stressed:

(55) LJJI 49; Couvreur 2.697f; Sūn Xidàn 14.63; tr. Legge 2.465  
凡禮之大體，  
All ceremonial usages looked at  
in their great characteristics

are the embodiment of (the ideas  
suggested by) heaven and earth;  
體天地，

法四時，  
take their laws from the (changes of  
the) four seasons;

則陰陽，  
imitate the (operations of the)  
contracting and developing  
movements in nature;

順人情，  
and are in conformity with the *true  
instincts of man*.

故謂之禮。  
That is why this is called propriety.

#### 6. Personal: Basic Motivation/Attitude

Under the heading I have labelled POLITICAL, I have collected examples where the reference is to collective attitudes. Under the heading PERSONAL, I will discuss individual personal attitudes and motivations of all kind, where the focus is on individual difference rather than on the shared political attitude. There are occasions where *qing* 情 come to be fundamental or crucial sentiments, or innermost defining attitudes that are constitutive of one's personal identity:

(56) ZUO Wen 15.4 (612 B.C.); Yáng Bójùn 611; Wáng Shòuqiān et al. 449; tr. Legge 271  
情雖不同，

Although they may have *different  
basic sentiments*,

毋絕其愛，  
they do not abandon the relative  
affection

親之道也。  
which should subsist between them.

Here we are clearly dealing with the individuated *qing* 情 which differs from one person to another, as we saw in the case of the *qing* 情 of the sages in YI. The difference between these two men is one neither of metaphysical essence, nor of biological/physical constitution, it is a difference in the fundamental psychological reaction or response to the world. The term *qing* 情 has clearly moved into the psychological sphere, though it is still not *gānqing* 感情 “feeling” in an ephemeral and purely emotional sense.

Nothing is more disastrous than the perversion of true basic inner attitude into something that itself is not in good faith, inwardly and essentially false:



(57) LUJI 32; Couvreur 2.510; Sūn Xidàn 13.36; tr. Legge 2.349

子曰：  
「情欲信，  
辭欲巧。」  
The Master said,  
“What is required in *fundamental*  
*attitude* is sincerity;  
in words, that they be susceptible  
of proof.”

The collocation of *yì* 意 “intentions” with *qíng* 情 is not incidental in ZGC:

(58) ZGC, Zhao 2 ed. Shànghǎigǔjī p. 651

是故不敢匿意隱情，  
Therefore I dare not hide my  
thoughts or the *truth*.

In HANFEI the word currently refers to the real propensities or basic convictions of the ruler which one might try to spy out, and which the ruler should take care not to disclose:

(59) HANFEI 34.23:06 [31]; Chen Qitian 576; Chen Qiyou 737; Zhu Shouliang 1275; Zhou Xunchu 457

夫大臣為猛狗  
而齧有道之士矣，  
Now if the powerful ministers are  
fierce dogs  
and bite freemen who have a Way  
to offer,

左右又為社鼠而間主之情，  
and if one's aides again are rats in  
the altar of the land and spy on the  
ruler's *real feelings*,  
without the ruler being aware of  
what is happening,

如此，  
主焉得無壅，  
then how can the ruler avoid being  
blocked

國焉得無亡乎？  
and how can the state fail to be  
ruined?

In contexts like these *qíng* 情 comes close to meaning “ultimate real motives, underlying motives”.

(60) HANFEI 30.50:01; Chen Qiyou 566; Zhou Xunchu 332; Zhu Shouliang 982

卜皮為縣令，  
Diviner Pí was the commander of a  
province.

其御史污穢而有愛妾，

His chief surveillance officer was  
very vulgar and was fond of a  
concubine.

卜皮乃使少庶子佯愛之，

Diviner Pí then ordered a young  
boy to pretend to fall in love with  
her

以知御史陰情。

to find out about the chief  
surveillance officer's *secret*  
*feelings*.

Note that he is not interested in the man's erotic inclinations but in secret underlying and operative feelings.

### 7. Emotional: Individual Deep Convictions, Responses, Feelings

Finally, we must turn to those cases where the semantic focus is not just on sentiment and attitude, but where the emotional charge becomes the semantic core of the word. Attitudes may be construed as dispositions to act, sensibilities as dispositions to feel, whereas emotions are not dispositions but certain heightened states of psychological excitement, often transitory, sometimes lasting. The relevant examples to be discussed here, though never unrelated to other categories, constitute a highly distinct set by themselves. It is tempting to call this category “lyric”, but this would confuse the issue by conflating genre theory with semantics.

There is a profusion of examples in this section for two reasons: one is that it seems to me these passages illustrate a crucial link with later conceptual developments, and the other is that in these examples the reader will find a wealth of semantic resonances with the other categories we have discussed. This illustrates a self-evident but nonetheless important point: My classification of clusters of meaning very obviously cannot and must not be taken to exclude semantic resonance between the categories I set up. There are not only the obvious overlapping borderline cases, and the cases of probably intended suspended

ambiguity between categories, there are also the cases where several categories of meaning are contemporaneously focussed, but to clearly different degrees. These are the semantic resonances that are so crucial not only for poetry, but also for artistic prose.

The ultimate source music is true inner feeling, according to LJJ:

(61) LJJ 19; Couvreur 2.47f; Sün Xidàn 10.20; tr. Legge 2.93

凡音者，  
生人心者也。  
情動於中，  
故形於聲。  
聲成文，  
謂之音。  
All modulations of the voice  
spring from the minds of men.  
when *emotions* are moved within,  
they are manifested in the sounds  
of the voice;  
and when those sounds are  
combined so as to form  
compositions,  
we have what are called airs.

What moves or is perturbed, here, is not instincts, certainly not what some might want to call “the emotional hard-wiring”. The reference is to a heightened state of emotion. At the same time we know that this heightened state of emotion may very well be presented as endemic in a population and as ultimately political in nature. The word is often overdetermined.

The emotional state may be one of emotional sensibility, and one might even be tempted think of *qing* 情 as referring to the organ of such emotional sensibility, in analogy with the organ of taste, *kòu* 口 “the mouth”. The opposition with *jing* 精 “subtle spirits” is not common, and certainly the idea of “gratifying one’s instincts” is unusual in pre-Buddhist literature. The passage is worth dwelling on:

(62) HANFEI 08.01:01; Chen Qitian 696; Chen Qiyou 121; Zhou Xunchu 61; Zhu Shouliang 322

天有大命，  
人有大命。  
夫香美脆味，  
厚酒肥肉，  
Heaven and Nature have their  
mandated fixed rule system,  
and man has his mandated fixed  
rule system.  
Aromatic delicacies and crisp  
tidbits,  
thick undiluted wine and fat meat,

甘口而疾形；

曼理皓齒，  
說情而捐精。  
these are sweet to the mouth but  
harmful to the body;  
delicate features and white teeth,  
these will gratify one’s *basic*  
*sensibilities* but impair one’s  
subtle spirits.

The reference, here, is to erotic sensibilities. That much is clear. And there is no doubt that these erotic sensibilities are referred to by *qing* 情. But at the same time the reference to these sensibilities is generic, certainly prosaic, and not lyrical in any sense of the word.

SHUOYUAN singles out the expressive function as defining language:

(63) SHUOYUAN 8.10

夫言者  
所以抒其胸  
而發其情者也。  
As for words,  
they are means whereby to dredge  
out what is in one’s breast  
and to bring out one’s *inner*  
*feelings*.

What is brought out here is important emotionally charged content, an emotional response to things, something one is emotionally committed to. That is what one *huái* 懷 “bears” in one’s chest. And note again that this is not a lyrical text. This is a prosaic reference to emotional content.

Prose passages like these are not so many. But also in philosophical texts, the specific emotionally charged convictions of certain outstanding individuals can be focussed on, in an entirely unpoetic manner:

(64) HANFEI 26.03:11; Chen Qitian 798; Chen Qiyou 492; Zhou Xunchu 284; Zhu Shouliang 860

誦賁、育之情，  
不以死易生；  
感於盜跖之貪，  
They thoroughly understand the  
*basic convictions* of Bèn and Yù,  
but they will not barter away their  
lives for death.  
They may be confused by the same  
greed as Robber Zhí,

不以財易身；  
則守國之道畢備矣。

but they will not barter away their  
lives for the sake of property.  
And then the way of safeguarding  
of the state is perfectly complete.

The reference here is to a strongly emotionally charged commitment, not just to instinct or attitude. Again, the reference is to something stable and general. This is not an episodic noun, a reference to a tensed transitory emotional state.

In poetry, the world of innermost feelings articulated by the poet is a paradigmatic subject defining the poet's enterprise in CHUCI. They are kept in one's breast, but will out:

(65) CHUCI LISAO 01:63; SBBY 57; Jin 98; Huang 20; Fu 41; tr.  
Hawkes 75; You 342; tr. CH

閨中既以變遠兮，

Deep in the palace,  
unapproachable,

哲王又不寤。

The wise king slumbers and will  
not be awakened;

懷朕情而不發兮，

I keep my innermost concerns in

my breast and do not let them out -  
how can I endure this to the end of  
my days?

余焉能忍而與此終古？

The reference, here as typically, is generically to one's deepest current emotionally charged moral commitments. What signals the emotional charge involved is the word 發 "let out": The emotional charge needs an outlet.

And yet, there is a need to dredge out this emotionally charged content, to *shū* 抒 (sometimes written 杼) scrape the bottom of what there is *zhōng* 中 "deep inside, innermost", and it is important to realise that this word is in no way limited to lyrical contexts. In fact it is also used by the Mohist logicians.

(66) CHUCI AISHIMING 01:01; SBBY 442; Huang 229; Fu 209; tr.  
Hawkes 263

志憾恨而不逞兮，

My mind is full of resentment  
that finds no outlet.

杼中情而屬詩。

Only in these verses can I express  
my feelings.

The epexegetic *zhōng* 中 "inner" must be read as "innermost" here, because *qing* 情 are "inner" to start with.

That image of "dredging out" what is most basic and constitutive of one's emotional and moral personality recurs many times, to the point where it appears to be routine cliché. Moreover, note the association of *qing* 情 with *fèn* 憤 "pent-up anger":

(67) CHUCI AISHIMING 01:18; SBBY 454; Huang 236; Fu 211; tr.  
Hawkes

獨便悵而煩毒兮，

Alone and ill at ease and full of  
bitterness:

焉發憤而抒情。

How can I vent my anger and  
dredge out my innermost feelings.

By exposing his innermost feelings, the poet hopes that it will arouse the special interest of the person for whom he writes:

(68) CHUCI LISAO 01:10; SBBY 17; Jin 16; Huang 04; Fu 30; tr.  
Hawkes 69; You 65; tr. CH

荃不察余之中情兮，

But the Fragrant One refused to  
examine my innermost feelings,

反信讒以齎怒。

He lent ear instead to slander, and  
raged against me.

One's innermost feelings invite *chá* 察 "scrutiny", make a claim to veracity which deserves to be investigated, and when exposed, these innermost feelings, honestly expressed, are opposed to the slander of others. While one is inclined to take the focus to be on these innermost, highly charged emotions, there is a strong link in this case, as indeed in many others, to a secondary focus on earnest political conviction and motivation. Quite often it is as if the emotional load and the intense commitment is superimposed on what is basically our category 5: PERSONAL.

To the poets of CHUCI that innermost constitutive sensibility and these essential defining sentiments are at the core of their poetic self-choreography or stance as poets, it defines their poetic persona:

(69) CHUCI LISAO 01:29; SBBY 30; Jin 48; Huang 10; Fu 35; tr. Hawkes 71; You 164  
不吾知其亦已兮，

I will not longer care that no one understands me,

苟余情其信芳。  
As long as I can keep the sweet fragrance of *my mind*.

Again and again the poets revert to that theme of fragrancy attaching to one's innermost emotions. And in one sense the poet can live on this fragrance alone:

(70) CHUCI LISAO 01:72; SBBY 62; Jin 131; Huang 24; Fu 44; tr. Hawkes 76; You 392  
苟中情其好脩兮，

As long as *your soul within* is beautiful

又何必用夫行媒  
What need have you of a matchmaker?

Setting forth in proper poetic order what is constitutive of one's poetic personal identity becomes a routine:

(71) CHUCI JUZHANG 07:10; SBBY 249; Jin 600; Huang 109; Fu 117; tr. Hawkes 177  
願陳情以白行兮，

I wished to set forth *my thoughts* and explain my actions:

得罪過之不意。  
I little dreamed that this would be held a crime.

Expectorating on such feelings can be a long-drawn-out and intensive affair:

(72) CHUCI JUZHANG 06:01; SBBY 238; Jin 561; Huang 104; Fu 113; tr. Hawkes 173  
申旦以舒中情兮，

Until the dawn I pour out *my inner heart*;

志沉菀而莫達。  
But my will is thwarted and cannot reach its object.

The hyperbole of the poet spending all night expectorating strikes one as epigonic, exhibitionist. The expectoration has become a standard poetic pose.

A typical way in which the emotional charge of the feelings, as dredged out, comes out in the imagery of fragrance:

(73) CHUCI AISHIMING 01:05; SBBY 445; Huang 231; Fu 209; tr. Hawkes 264; mod. CH  
誰可與玩斯遺芳兮？

With whom could I enjoy the fragrance that was left me?

晨向風而舒情。  
Long I stood against the wind, *unburdening my heart*.

It is clear that these innermost sensibilities are not only to be expected: they exude a fragrance that is to be shared.

In the poem *Grieving I Make My Complaint*, the theme has become the opening fanfare:

(74) CHUCI JUZHANG 01:01; SBBY 197; Jin 438; Huang 82; Fu 95; tr. Hawkes 156  
惜誦以致愍兮，

Grieving I make my complaint, to give my sorrows rein,

發憤以抒情。  
To vent my wrath and *tell my pent-up thoughts*.

The innermost feelings, like the habitually present pent-up wrath, and the general sorrows sung will out: through poetry or in interaction with friends.

The result of poetic expectoration is a form of *miǎn* 免 "release":

(75) CHUCI, JIUTAN, YUANSHI, ed. SBBY p. 508; Huang 269; Fu 236; tr. Hawkes 291  
長吟永歎涕究究兮，

Long I sigh and moan and my tears fall unconstrained.

解情敵詩冀以自免兮...

By unburdening my heart in verse, I hoped I might escape...

The artistic articulation of these sentiments through language, their formulation into words, becomes something of an emotional obsession later in the same poem:

(76) CHUCI JIUZHANG 04:07; SBBY 225; Jin 512; Huang 95; Fu 106; tr. Hawkes 167

茲歷情以陳辭兮，

And when I unlocked *these thoughts*  
of mine and put them into  
words,

蒸詳聾而不聞。

The Fragrant One feigned deafness  
and would not listen to them.

What David Hawkes translates as “thoughts” are clearly heavily charged, emotionally.

Typically, *qing* 情 refers to intense worries, and they can be *xiě* 寫 “written out”:

(77) CHUCI JIUSI 08:06; SBBY 568; Huang 307; Fu 262; tr. Hawkes 317

憂紆兮鬱鬱，  
惡所兮寫情。

Obsessed with smothering griefs,  
I have no way of venting my  
*feelings*.

In another poem of the same series these innermost emotional and moral responses are celebrated as *wēi* 微 “subtle”:

(78) CHUCI JIUZHANG 04:03; SBBY 223; Jin 508; Huang 95; Fu 105; tr. Hawkes 167

願搖起而橫奔兮，

I would like to rise up and fly to him  
unbidden,

覽民尤以自鎮。

But seeing how others have fared, I  
restrain myself,

結微情以陳詞兮，

And instead I have set out my  
*secret thoughts* and put them into  
verse,

矯以遺夫美人。

And offer them up to lay before the  
Fair One.

Setting forth in sound poetic order what is constitutive of one’s poetic personal identity becomes a routine:

(79) CHUCI JIUZHANG 07:10; SBBY 249; Jin 600; Huang 109; Fu 117; tr. Hawkes 177

願陳情以白行兮，

I wished to set forth my *thoughts*  
and explain my actions:

得罪過之不意。

I little dreamed that this would be  
held a crime.

But even without successful publication of one’s deepest sentiments, these retain an absolute value that is “more eternal than bronze”:

(80) CHUCI JIUZHANG 06:09; SBBY 242; Jin 570; Huang 105; Fu 114; tr. Hawkes 174; tr. CH

情與質信可保兮，

If my *innermost convictions* and  
inner substance keep their integrity,  
Though I dwell unseen and

堯居蔽而聞章。

obscure, my fame can yet be bright.

I believe *qing* 情 is being epeexegetically explained by *zhi* 質 “inner substance”. The poet’s inner sensibilities and moral convictions define his very material substance.

Along with this fragrance, the poet thrives on the purity of his basic emotional responses:

(81) CHUCI QIJIAN 06:01; SBBY 426; Huang 220; Fu 200; tr. Hawkes 254

哀時命之不合兮，

I mourn that my lot was cast in an  
unfit time;

傷楚國之多憂。

I grieve for the many woes of the  
land of Chǔ.

內懷情之潔白兮，

My *nature* was one of spotless  
purity,

But I fell on a time of disorder and  
met with disgrace.

The *jié bái* 潔白 “pristine purity” of this inner emotional response contrasts naturally with the dirty outside world.

In this kind of poetry, the feelings become even proper grammatical subjects, almost agents in the same poem:

(82) CHUCI JIUZHANG 01:06; SBBY 201; Jin 446; Huang 83; Fu 95; tr. Hawkes 157

情沈抑而不達兮，

My feelings were stifled and could not find expression,

又蔽而莫之白也。

For they screened me from my lord, that I might not explain myself.

In this way, the heart and the emotions become a natural pair in parallelism:

(83) CHUCI JIUTAN 05:07; SBBY 513; Huang 272; Fu 238; tr. Hawkes 293

心憤悵以冤結兮，

My mind is distracted and in a turmoil;

情舛錯以曼憂。

My feelings disordered and full of bitter grief.

So far, I have discussed what I consider some main strains of meanings of the word *qíng* 情 as I understand them. It will be obvious to everyone that one could easily have doubled the categories established. I have not found it natural to do this.

Similarly, one could have used the manifest overlap between the categories I established to collapse several groups into subgroups. I have considered this, but I have come to the conclusion that it would not add anything new to the analysis.

However, all these meanings will get into proper focus when one considers the relations of contrast and of antonymy into which the word can be seen to enter. In the appendix that follows I shall consider these contrasting relationships.

At first sight, one may object that the antonyms I introduce get unreasonably cursory treatment. But there are two reasons for this brevity which will be obvious enough to those who have worked with synonym dictionaries:

1. The relations of antonymy and of semantic adjacency obtain not between words as such, but between meanings of words only.

Thus, in principle, there is no need to lay out the meanings of the words compared in all their detail.

2. There is, of course, not the space to present a detailed analysis along the lines I have presented for *qíng* 情 for all the words below. (On the other hand there is space for this in the *Thesaurus Linguae Sericae (TLS): An Historical and Critical Encyclopaedia of Chinese Conceptual Schemes* [under construction], parts of which are about to be made available on the Internet.)

#### Appendix: Synonyms and Antonyms

Among the semantically adjacent concepts relevant to a proper delimitation of the contrasts which define the meaning of *qíng* 情 I find it useful to list the following. Needless to say each and every one of the terms I here refer to need and deserve much more detailed treatment than they can get here.

I deal with these terms only in so far as they seem to me to throw direct light on the problems of *qíng* 情 discussed in this paper.

*ài* 愛 “loving care for, love” is one of the profound basic responses designated by *qíng* 情, and there are times when *qíng* 情 seems — in context— genuine deep-seated affection. None the less it remains to be emphasised that while *qíng* 情 may occasionally so discreetly refer to genuine feelings (for someone), the word never refers concretely to any of the other emotions like anger and so on. Thus there does seem to be a special semantic affinity between *qíng* 情 and love. If there were more examples like the following very puzzling passage, we should have to introduce a new semantic category for it in our above account:

(84) SHI 136; tr. Karlgren

徇有情兮，

I certainly have love (for you),

而無望兮。

but no admiration.

Here it seems all commentators simply take it for granted that *qíng* 情 means something like “affection”. Xiàng Xī 1997 (new expanded edition) provides no alternative glosses to this. There are no textual

variants. Whatever we say about *qíng* 情: the earliest occurrence of the word involves emotion and comes in a love poem.

*chéng* 誠 “earnestness” is not an innate or instinctive matter, and it does not typically involve a reaction to the outside world, but comes close to *qíng* 情 “fundamental and instinctively based deep commitment”. The two words concur in their emphasis on the genuineness of the commitment, but *qíng* 情 is more outward-directed in its meaning, whereas *chéng* 誠 belongs rather with *xìng* 性 in referring to a primarily internal quality as such rather than to a relation to outward things. Used adjectivally, *qíng* 情 is very close to *chéng* 誠 “genuine” in meaning:

(85) HANFEI 33.27:02 [35]; Chen Qitian 540; Chen Qiyou 697; Zhu Shouliang 1209; Zhou Xunchu 424

主不審其情實，  
If you, my lord, do not carefully  
examine the essential facts of the  
matter

坐而患之，  
but sit around and worry about  
them,

馬猶不肥也。  
then the horses will still not get any  
fatter for it.

*duān* 端 “basic impulse” is subtly and autogenously psychological and describes the very source from which developed the more responsive and appetitive *qíng* 情 “basic attitudes, fundamental responses; basic motives”. *Duān* 端 in MENG are incipient sensibilities rather than full-fledged instincts like *qíng* 情. None the less, like *qíng* 情 they are typically hidden, as in HF 5.2.15 匿其端 “hide one’s motives”. Thus in two of its meanings *duān* 端 competes with *qíng* 情.

(86) HANFEI 07.03:06; Chen Qitian 183; Chen Qiyou 112; Zhou Xunchu 56; Zhu Shouliang 314

人臣之情非必

As for the minister’s real attitudes,  
he is by no means  
necessarily

能愛其君也，  
able to show loving care for the  
ruler.

為重利之故也，

and the reason is he acts to  
maximise his advantage.

今人主不揜其情，

Now if the ruler does not cover up  
his real attitudes

不匿其端，

and does not hide his basic  
motives,

而使人臣有緣

if he brings it about that the

以侵其主，

ministers have something to go on  
and thus to encroach on the ruler’s

則群臣為子之、田常

authority,  
then for the various ministers to  
become Zizhi and Tián Cháng

不難矣。

is not a hard thing to accomplish.

*lǐ* 理 “principle” is an individualised and specified constitutive feature of things of any kind, and the word does not normally, like *qíng* 情, relate to a dynamic response or to the appetitive or emotional features of living creatures; moreover *lǐ* 理 is not typically conceived as something potentially hidden by a person, although the *lǐ* 理 of something may be hard to find out. One’s principles are, typically, a matter of one’s own choice, and keeping to them is a matter of pertinacity:

(87) GUAN 36.01.57; ed. Dai Wang 2.65; tr. Rickett 1998:80

惡不失其理，  
In dislikes one does not lose sight

of principles,

欲不過其情，  
in desiring one does not exceed

fundamental instincts.

But music does not appeal to the ephemeral or occasional. It is concerned with what is quintessential in man’s inner sensitivities:

(88) LIJI 19; Couvreur 2.83f; Sūn Xidān 10.48f; tr. Legge 2.114

樂也者，

Music

情之不可變者也。

is an expression of basic

invariable sensibilities.

禮也者，

Ritual

理之不可易者也。

is an expression of *unchanging principles*.

It is clear that there is less emotional content in 理 and it is therefore not at all interchangeable with 情.

Basic, constant and unwarped sound human instincts are 情 and naturally contrast with the 理 “principle” of things:

(89) GUAN 36.01.39; ed. Dai Wang 2.64; tr. Rickett 1998:77

義者，謂各處其宜也。  
禮者，因人之情，緣義之理，而為之節文者也。  
“Duty” refers to doing what is appropriate in each situation.  
“Propriety” relies on man’s inner feelings.  
It is connected with the inherent order underlying duties and provides the restraints and means of expression for them.

The opposition here with that other metaphysical term 理 “principles” is significant here: for the principles are just those specified dynamic essential features of things that make them into what they are.

*móu* 謀 “plan” is articulated and typically even explicitly verbalised; it differs neatly from 情 “basic attitude, disposition to act” as well as from 情 “basic instinctive response, instinctive urge” where there is no focus on articulation. Thus a 情 may be the basis for a 謀 but not vice versa. Thus although these two words do not belong to the same synonym group, they are in this specific sense semantically adjacent. A single example suffices to illustrate the point:

(90) HF 31.21:01; Chen Qiyou 585; Zhou Xunchu 346; Zhu Shouliang 1015

司馬喜，中山君之臣也，而善於趙，  
Simǎ Xǐ was a minister to the ruler of Zhōngshān, and he had good relations to Zhào.

嘗以中山之謀微告趙王。

On one occasion he secretly told the King of Zhào about Zhōngshān’s plans.

In this connection, *qíng* 情 would have meant: “real basic intentions” or “basic situation”.

*qīn* 親 “feeling of closeness” is again one of the basic instinctive responses that may—in context—be referred to by the more general word *qíng* 情. While *qíng* 情 does sometimes mean something like “affection”, it seems never to refer more generally to “closeness of relations”.

(91) HF 34.26:03 [37]; Chen Qitian 581; Chen Qiyou 745; Zhu Shouliang 1285; Zhou Xunchu 461; trm 390

論其親，則子母之間也；  
猶不免議之於蔡姬也。  
今疑之於人主也，  
非子母之親也，  
而人主皆有蔡姬。  
When one assesses the closeness of our relation then it was that between a son and a mother.  
And yet, she would be sure to discuss matters with Mummy Cài.  
Now as for my relation to the rulers of states it is not as close as that between a son and a mother, and rulers all have their Mummy Càis.

*qì* 氣 “vital spirits, vital energies, energies, force” are typically part of a physical aetiology of symptoms or appearances, or of purely physical development, unlike *qíng* 情 “fundamental instincts”, which is nowhere conceived as distinctly predicated on some physical base. There is an interesting collocation of these *qíng* 情 “instincts” with *qì* 氣 “vital spirits”:

(92) GUAN 53.01.24; ed. Dai Wang 3.8; tr. Rickett 1998:219; mod CH.

不作無補之功，  
One does not use less effort



不為無益之事，  
故意定  
而不營氣情，  
氣情不營，  
則耳目穀。  
衣食足。

one does not engage in pointless activity,  
therefore one's thoughts become settled  
and one does not meddle with one's vital force and basic instincts.  
If one does not meddle with one's vital force and basic instincts  
then one's ears and eyes will be sharp and clear  
and one's clothes and food will be sufficient.

The reference here is to the basic material and physical endowments linked to *qi* 氣 but differing from it by being conceived in a non-material—we might say metaphysical—way.

(93) HSWZ 01.20:04; tr. Hightower 1951, p. 28; cf. SHUOYUAN 18.12

故不肖者精化始具，  
而生氣感動，  
觸情縱欲...

Now when in an unworthy person sexual change is first complete the generative vital force is stimulated;  
then his libidinous instincts are excited and he gives free rein to his desires...

*shén* 神 “spirit” is primarily physical, more cosmological and mystical than emotional, as I hope to document in a detailed study elsewhere. At this point I will just briefly summarise what is immediately relevant to interpretation of *qing* 情. Meanwhile, the reader is referred to Michael Pucit's stimulating account of the evolution of the word *shén* 神 in his recent book *To Become a God. Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinisation in Early China* (Cambridge (Mass): Harvard University Press, 2002).

One passage in ZHUANG forces us to address three adjacent terms:

(94) ZHUANG 25.1018

遁其天，  
離其性，  
滅其情，  
亡其神，  
以眾為。

They hide from Heaven,  
they deviate from their inborn nature  
they destroy their fundamental instincts,  
they annihilate their spirit,  
for their multifarious activities.

Heaven covers all and determines all, but as for people nowadays, they hide from it. Heaven is the source of *xing* 性, hence the common formula 天性 “inborn nature from Heaven”. One's inborn nature is inalienable, but they deviate from it. *Xing* 性 refers to the state in which one is born into this world and refers primarily to static properties rather than dynamic tendencies. One's fundamental instincts constitute the dynamic aspect of one's very identity. *Shén* 神 “spirit” refers to the substantially conceived fine substance that one expends, wastes, or even annihilates.

(95) CHUCI JIUTAN 02:08; SBBY 495; Huang 262; Fu 232; tr. Hawkes 287

情慌忽以忘歸兮，  
神浮遊以高厲。  
心蚤蚤而懷顧兮，  
魂眷眷而獨逝。

My mind is distraught; I forget where I am going;  
My soul goes wandering off, high into the air;  
The heart within me yearns in sadness;  
My longing spirit speeds on its way alone.

There is some very good reason why David Hawkes was tempted to use “mind” for *qing* 情 here insofar as the mind is what can change and be upset, unlike “fundamental instincts”. In this passage we have four mental terms: the *qing* 情 “basic emotional state” (see our category 2) is disorientated; the *shén* 神 “spirits”, like a subtle physical substance, have left the body and risen high; the *xin* 心 “heart” is contrite with nostalgia; and the *hún* 魂 “heavenly soul” is about to gain its own independent existence and speeds off all on its own.

*shí* 實 “*reality*” is non-dynamic and refers to the facts as they are in themselves rather than, like *qíng* 情 to the facts as basic factors shaping the appearance of things or their development.

(96) XINYU 3, ed. Wáng Lìqǐp. 55

惟堯知其實，

The point is Yáo understood the facts,

仲尼見其情。

but Confucius saw the *crucial underlying factors*.

*shì fēi* 是非 “*right or wrong, truth of a matter*” is abstract and theoretical, describing what might or might not be truthfully said about something, and it differs from *qíng* 情 “*fundamental dynamic factors*” which refers to what it is in things that might make statements true.

(97) HF 47.09:02; Chen Qitian 147; Chen Qiyou 976; Zhou Xunchu 640; Zhu Shouliang 1632

治國是非，

If the rights and wrongs in governing the state

不以術斷

are not judged according to professional skill

而決於寵人，

but are determined by favourites then ministers and subordinates

則臣下輕君

will take the ruler lightly

而重於寵人矣。

and they will regard the favourites as important.

*shì* 事 “*undertaking, matter*” is primarily a human undertaking (which is never ever *qíng* 情), but can by extension refer to any external macrocosmic manifestly real event, and in that meaning it differs clearly from *qíng* 情 “*crucial or determining dynamic factors of a situation, the basic facts*”.

*shì* 嗜 “*craving, desire*” is always negative and specific, not innate or generally instinctive like *qíng* 情.

(98) HF 20.31.05; Chen Qiyou 371; Zhu Shouliang 654; Zhou Xunchu 203

嗜慾無限，

If in one's predilections and desires one knows no limits,

動靜不節，

if in one's demeanour one shows no restraint,

則瘕疽之爪角害之。

then the claws of boils and ulcers will harm one.

Typically, it is the very arbitrariness of the craving that is focussed by *shì* 嗜:

(99) HF 39.12[12]; Chen Qitian 373; Chen Qiyou 882; Zhu Shouliang 1465; Zhou Xunchu 567; Liao 2.197

屈到嗜芟，

Qū Dào was addicted to water chestnuts.

文王嗜菖蒲菹，

King Wén was addicted to calamus minced meats.

非正味也。

It is not as if these things had the correct taste,

而二賢尚之，

but the two men of talent prized them highly.

所味不必美。

What one has a taste for is not necessarily objectively beautiful.

*shì* 勢 “*constellation of power*” refers to the overall external and manifest distribution of power, and it differs from *qíng* 情 which firstly does not particularly concentrate on the distribution of power, and which secondly is about a variety of basic underlying factors rather than specifically manifest position of power.

(100) HF 30.31:03; Chen Qiyou 550; Zhou Xunchu 322; Zhu Shouliang 953

此知必勝之勢也。

In this way he made sure *the constellation* was one bound to lead to victory.

*sī* 私 “private matters, personal feelings and personal affairs” can be used as an adjective for *qíng* 情 in Han prose, but such combinations I have not found in pre-Han literature:

(101) SHIJI 126/3199 tr. Dolby/Scott 1974, p. 161

若朋友交遊，  
久不相見，  
卒然相睹，  
歡然道故，  
私情相語，  
或 I suddenly meet up with  
someone,  
we merrily recall old times  
and talk about private affairs and  
personal feelings.

Perhaps *sī* 私 is here not an adjective but a noun.

*tǐ* 體 “system” the organised whole of various *qíng* 情, hence the current *dà tǐ* 大體 “overall system”, as in SUWEN 12 得病之情知治之大體也 “get the underlying factors of the disease and understand the overall system of medical cure of disease”. But the semantics of *tǐ* 體 are more complex than we can take up here.

*xīn* 心 “heart” is, of course, far too complicated to take up in any detail here, but the meaning “attitude” is much more general than the highly specific *qíng* 情 “basic response to a situation, fundamental dynamic disposition to react”.

*xìng* 性 “inborn nature” is the most important one of the synonyms and needs to be dealt with in some detail. It shares with *qíng* 情 the feature of innateness and of basic disposition. However, *xìng* 性 is primarily not a response to outside things but an autogenous disposition to behave in a certain way. Thus we do say that *xìng shàn* 性善 “nature is good”, but we do not say that *qíng shàn* 情善 “that one’s basic instinctive reactions/responses to things are good”. In adverbial position *xìng* 性 means “by nature” and emphasises the congenital nature of the condition, whereas *qíng* 情 emphasises the hardly changeable deeply engrained nature of that condition.

Here is a case where *qíng* 情 and *xìng* 性 are explicitly contrasted:

(102) ZHUANG 8.313

故性長非所斷，  
性短非所續，  
無所去憂也。  
意仁義其  
非人情乎！  
Therefore, if what *by nature* is  
long is not cut short,  
and if what *by nature* is short is  
not extended,  
there will be no grief to dispense  
with.  
One suspects that humaneness and  
righteousness  
are not *basic human instincts!*

And in case one has not got the point, the crucial phrase is repeated a little further down:

(103) ZHUANG 8.313

故意仁義其  
非人情乎！  
Therefore, one suspects that  
humaneness and righteousness  
are not *basic human instincts*.

In the large majority of cases, *xìng* 性 is not replaceable with *qíng* 情, and it is important to analyse why this is so in order to get the precise semantic nuances of *qíng* 情. One thing is that the innateness in *qíng* 情 is not so prominent a feature and is not commonly played upon:

(104) MENG 6A03; tr. D. C. Lau 2.223

告子曰：  
「生之謂性。」  
Gàozi said,  
“The inborn is called ‘inborn  
nature.’”

The *xìng* 性 “nature” includes propensities and instincts *qíng* 情 but typically with a special focus on their congenital nature:

(105) XUN 23.02.01; 23:1a, Knoblock 3:150, tr. CH

今人之性，  
生而有有利焉，  
Now human nature is such  
that from birth he is prone to seek  
his own advantage.

When such word-play is involved we rarely find *qíng* 情.

(106) MENG 7A38; tr. D. C. Lau 2.281

孟子曰：

「形色，  
天性也。」

Mencius said,

“One’s body and complexion  
are one’s inborn nature from  
Heaven.”

Our innate endowment includes the particular physical shape and complexion that we have. *Xìng* 性 can refer to the specific innate endowments of a person of other kinds:

(107) ZHUANG 12.426

齧缺之為人也，

聰明叡知，

給數以敏，

其性過人，

As a person,

Gnaw Gap is intelligent, shrewd,  
quick-witted, and clever.

His natural talents surpass those of  
other men.

Thus one *xìng* 性 can differ from another in ways that *qíng* 情 are not said to differ:

(108) ZHUANG 17.600

鴟鵂夜撮蚤，

察毫末，

晝出瞑目

而不見丘山，

言殊性也。

An owl can catch fleas at night  
and can discern the tip of a downy  
hair,  
but when it comes out during the  
day it stares blankly

and can’t even spy a hill or a  
mountain,  
and this means creatures have  
different natures.

(109) NJ 3

陰陽殊性，

男女異行。

Yīn and Yáng are different in  
nature,  
men and women have different  
standards of behaviour.

SHENDAO does, however, say that it is a basic feature of people they differ:

(110) SHENDAO, ed. Thompson 1979, fragment no. 03.33; tr. Paul Thompson

民雜處而各有所能：

The people live in diverse  
conditions and circumstances, but  
each person has his own abilities.

所能者不同。

此民之情也。

This is an *essential characteristic*  
*of the people*.

Paul Thompson’s translation is illuminating in many ways, and it illustrates the plausibility of A.C. Graham’s way of reading the word in many contexts.

The fact that one has instincts is not itself an instinct *qíng* 情 but part of one’s stable innate human nature *xìng* 性:

(111) ZHUANG 29.1205

夫欲惡避就，

固不待師，

此人之性（也）。

Desires, dislikes, aversions, and  
predilections,  
indeed, do not require a teacher—  
this is the nature of man.

I do not believe that *qíng* 情 would have been possible here.

Also inanimate non-living creatures have *xìng* 性 “natural properties” just as they have *qíng* 情 “essential features”:

(112) ZHUANG 15.560

水之性，

不雜則清，

旋動則平；

鬱閉而不流，

亦不能清。

The nature of water  
is to be clear when unadulterated,  
to be level when undisturbed.  
But if it is blocked and not allowed  
to flow,  
it cannot retain its clearness.

Here *qíng* 情 would be possible, but since no desires are involved, it is not particularly preferred.

The famous swimmer in ZHUANG refers to his own specific nature as it is shaped by his childhood:

## (113) ZHUANG 19.702

長於水，  
而安於水，  
性也。

Having grown up in the river  
one feels comfortable in it.  
That is [my] inborn nature.

Very clearly, *qíng* 情 would be impossible here, and understanding *qíng* 情 is to understand these kinds of impossibilities, also in the cases that follow:

## (114) ZHUANG 8.308

駢拇枝指，  
出乎性哉！

Webbed toes and extra fingers  
may issue from one's nature.

## (115) ZHUANG 9.329

馬，蹄可以踐霜雪，  
毛可以禦風寒，  
齧草飲水，  
翹足而陸，  
此馬之真性也。

A horse's hooves can tread upon  
frost and snow,  
its hair can withstand the wind and  
the cold.  
It eats grass and drinks water;  
it prances about briskly.  
This is a horse's true nature.

The desire to eat is primarily *qíng* 情 but the tendency to weave in order to make clothes and to till the fields in order to grow food, is part of one's *xìng* 性:

## (116) ZHUANG 9.329f

彼民有常性，  
織而衣，  
耕而食，

Their people, having a constant  
nature,  
would weave cloth to wear  
and plow the land in order to eat.

I very much doubt that we could have had *qíng* 情 in this context.

## (117) MENG 6A04; tr. D. C. Lau 2.225

告子曰：  
「食色，  
性也…」

Kao tzu said,  
“Eating food and having sex  
is part of inborn nature. ...”

Properly speaking it is the desire to do these things that is part of one's inborn nature. So this usage comes close in meaning to one of the core meanings of *qíng* 情, but still, without an explicit mention of this desire, one might argue that *xìng* 性 “inborn nature” here is different from *qíng* 情 “basic instinct”.

The question whether *qíng* 情 “fundamental instincts” are good never arises in ancient Chinese literature. The issue is about the *xìng* 性 “inborn nature” of the individual person or of persons in general:

## (118) XUN 23.01.01; 23:1a, Knoblock 3:150

人之性惡，  
其善者偽也。

Man's nature is evil,  
and what is good in him is  
man-made.

## (119) XUN 23.04.02; xinzhu 391; 23:1c, Knoblock 3:152

凡性者，  
天之就也，  
不可學，  
不可事。

In general, when it comes to human  
nature  
it is what Nature tends towards,  
and it is not something that one can  
try to learn,  
or something one can work at.

## (120) XUN 23.04.03; xinzhu 391; 23:1c, Knoblock 3:152

不可學、不可事而在人者，  
謂之性；  
可學而能可事而成之在人者，  
謂之偽，  
是性、偽之分也。

That in man which can be studied  
but cannot be worked for  
is called human nature;  
that in man which one can apply  
oneself to and learn, which one can  
work on and perfect,  
that is called artifice.  
This is the distinction between  
nature and artifice.

And when *xìng* 性 is described in terms of the use of the senses, a typical description is in terms not of appetitive desire but cognitive potential:

## (121) XUN 23.04.04; xinzhu 391; 23:1c, Knoblock 3:152

今人之性，

Now it is part of human nature

目可以見，  
耳可以聽。  
夫可以見之明不離目，  
可以聽之聰不離耳；  
目明而耳聰，  
不可學明矣。

that the eye can see,  
and that the ear can hear.  
The visual faculty of seeing is  
inseparable from the eye,  
and the acoustic faculty of hearing  
is inseparable from the ear.  
The visual faculty of the eye and  
the acoustic faculty of the ear,  
one cannot apply oneself to these  
and develop these intelligent  
faculties.

What is objectively likely to happen because of one's inborn nature is typically *xìng* 性 and what is bound to happen primarily for external reasons is *mìng* 命 "fate".

(122) HF 50.09:01; Chen Qitian 18; Chen Qiyou 1099; Zhou Xunchu 692; Zhu Shouliang 1790; Watson 126  
今或謂人曰：

Suppose someone were to tell  
people:

"I will make sure you will be wise  
and that you will live long lives!"  
then the world would be bound to  
consider him mad.

Wisdom  
is a matter of inborn nature;  
a long life  
is a matter of fate.

則世必以為狂。

夫智，  
性也；  
壽，  
命也。

*Xìng* 性 here is the inborn nature not of man in general, but of a certain imagined person. This *xìng* 性 will differ very much from one person to another.

Note that in *xìng* 性 there generally tends to be no element of desire:

(123) HF 19.02:03; Chen Qitian 204; Chen Qiyou 307; Zhou Xunchu 170; Zhu Shouliang 574

亂弱者亡，  
人之性也；  
治強者王，  
古之道也。

That those who are unruly and  
weak will fail  
is in accordance with the human  
condition;  
that those who are orderly and  
strong become kings  
is an ancient pattern.

Moreover, the word refers specifically to the natural character of individuals:

(124) HF 23.22:02; Chen Qiyou 464; Zhou Xunchu 261; Zhu Shouliang 807

民性有恆！  
曲為曲，  
直為直。

The people will be predictable in  
their disposition.  
Then crookedness will count as  
crookedness  
and straightness will count as  
straightness.

(125) HF 24.01:03; Chen Qiyou 479; Zhou Xunchu 273; Zhu Shouliang 834

西門豹之性急，  
故佩韋以緩己。

Ximén Bào was hot-tempered by  
nature  
so he wore a soft leather belt to  
soften himself down.

This remained a popular usage throughout Han times:

(126) CHUCI JIUBIAN 06:02; SBBY 317; Huang 147; Fu 148; tr. Hawkes 213

性愚陋以褊淺兮，  
信未達乎從容。

And though dull and stupid by  
nature and poor in talents,  
I restrain myself and learn to mourn  
in verses.

## (127) NJ Preface

鄙人愚暗，

受性不敏。

蒙先君之餘寵，

賴母師之典訓。

Unworthy as I am, stupid and benighted,

I am by nature unintelligent.

[However,] I have received not a little favour from my now-deceased father,

and I could rely on my mother's, my teacher's, regulation and instruction.

The innate nature of *xìng* 性 is emphasised by the addition of the word *tiān* 天 "from Heaven/Nature":

(128) HF 25.05:03; Chen Qiyou 484; Chen Qitian 811; Zhou Xunchu 279; Zhu Shouliang 849

以詐偽為是，  
天性為非，Deceit he considered right  
natural features of people he  
considered wrong.

Apart from one passage in XUN, we do not find the combination *tiān qíng* 天情 in the literature I have surveyed.

(129) HF 33.07:05 [8]; Chen Qitian 525; Chen Qiyou 677; Zhu Shouliang 1176; Zhou Xunchu 409

非私臣而然也，

夫天性仁

心固然也。

此臣之所以悅  
而德公也。”It is not that you were partial to me  
and therefore reacted like this.It was that your *Heaven-given nature* is kindly  
and your heart is inherently like  
that.This is why I felt pleased  
and felt grateful to you.”

Against this nature from Heaven one may inflict harm or injury:

(130) HF 40.03:04; Chen Qitian 65; Chen Qiyou 687; Zhu Shouliang 1475; Zhou Xunchu 572; m476; Liao 2.200f

桀、紂為高臺深池  
以盡民力，and in that way they exhausted the  
strength of the people.

They roasted people alive

and in that way they offended

against the *human nature of the people*.

為炮烙

以傷民性，

At times, though, the distinction between *xìng* 性 and *qíng* 情 does come close to being neutralised:

(131) HF 47.06:02; Chen Qitian 144; Chen Qiyou 975; Zhou Xunchu 638; Zhu Shouliang 1628

子母之性，

愛也；

臣主之權，

策也。

The inborn *natural relation*  
*between a child and a mother*

is one of love;

the power relations between

ministers and rulers

is a matter of strategy.

*Xìng* 性 does refer to basic instincts here, and we should not be surprised at all to find *qíng* 情 in its place.

Moreover, in the following two examples there would have been no problem with *mín zhī qíng* 民之情:

(132) HF 54.01:02; Chen Qitian 813; Chen Qiyou 1134; Zhou Xunchu 713; Zhu Shouliang 1848

夫民之性，

喜其亂而不親其法。

It is in the *inborn nature of**people*that they delight in chaos and do  
not keep to the law.

(133) HF 54.02:01; Chen Qitian 814; Chen Qiyou 1135; Zhou Xunchu 715; Zhu Shouliang 1851

夫民之性，

It is in the *inborn nature of*  
*people*

惡勞而樂佚。

that they dislike toil and enjoy leisure.

But in these two examples, the reference is not to current sentiment but to general disposition. We can say that in such examples the difference between *qing* 情 and *xing* 性 is neutralised, and thus they give very important evidence in connection with our study of *qing* 情.

However, even when the two terms are used together, their force is perhaps still distinct:

(134) XUN 23.02.02; 23:1a, Knoblock 3:150, tr. CH

生而有耳目之欲，

From birth he has desires of the ear and of the eye, he is fond of sounds and of female beauty.

順是，

When he acts in accordance with such tendencies,

故淫亂生

then profligacy and political unrest will arise,

而禮義文理亡焉。

and ritual propriety, rectitude, decorousness and principle will disappear.

然則從人之性，

Thus if one follows the nature of man

順人之情，

and acts in accordance with man's basic sentiments,

必出於爭奪，

then this is bound to result in competitive struggle for things

合於犯分亂理，

combined with the flaunting of social divisions and the confusing of principles,

而歸於暴。

so that all naturally ends up in violence.

(135) NJ 7

雖以賢女之行，

Even if she has the moral behaviour of a worthy woman,

聰哲之性，

even if she has the endowments of a clever and wise woman, can a woman be perfect?

其能備乎？

(136) LUNHENG 13, ed Liú Pànsuì 1990, p. 141 reports the crucial distinction between *xing* 性 and *qing* 情:

性，Nature

生而然者也，is that which is so by birth;

在於身而不發。it is present in the person, and it does not emerge.

情，The passions

接於物而然者也，are something that arises from

contact with things,

出形於外。and they manifest themselves on the outside.

This shows how *qing* 情 was conceived as interactive with things, related to responses. Wáng Chōng explicitly distances himself from earlier, ambiguous usages.

*yì* 意 “intention” which is not innate, instinctive or reactive to the outside world, but which comes close to *qing* 情 “fundamental response to a situation, basic reaction to a situation” where that response or reaction can take the form of a plan or a determination to do something, where *qing* 情 always involves heart-felt commitment whereas *yì* 意 only denotes an idea, a decision or a plan of any kind.

*yù* 欲 “desire; actual desires” contrasts as negative and reprehensible with the neutral and sometimes even positive *qing* 情 “basic sentiments, basic inclinations”. *Yù* 欲 can very often refer to ephemeral, changeable, superficial urges or even temporary intentions and is always a positive urge for—not against—something, whereas *qing* 情 can refer to both positive and negative, but typically basic, constitutive, or instinctive reactions of all kinds to things. ZGC 2.1; tr. Crump 1979 no. 7, p. 28, ed. Shanghaiguji p. 45 君之情 “your real basic intentions/inclinations” is glossed by the old commentary (footnote 21) as: 心所欲也 “what the heart desires”, and in this context the word does come close to *yù* 欲 in meaning. However, such usages are very rare.



LAO 61 oxymoronically recommends 聖人欲不欲 “the sage’s desire is not to desire”, and the least one must do is reduce the number of one’s yù 欲 “desires”, and there never is any question of reducing the number of qíng 情:

(137) MENG 7B35; tr. D. C. Lau 2.301

Mencius said,

“There is nothing better for the nurturing of the heart than to reduce the number of desires.”

孟子曰：

「養心莫善於寡欲。」

(138) HF 20.24:01; Chen Qiyou 361; Zhu Shouliang 641; Zhou Xunchu 198;

人有欲，

則計會亂；

When men have strong desires then their calculations and plannings are confused.

yù 慾 “lusts” seem always to be negatively loaded and reprehensible, often linked to the equally reprehensible shì 嗜 “cravings” for objects of desire, as we have seen above. In any case, giving rein to them is tantamount to immorality:

(139) HF 44.10:02; Chen Qitian 245; Chen Qiyou 931; Zhu Shouliang 1546; Zhou Xunchu 607; Liao 2.226

趙之先君敬侯，

Jing,

不修德行，  
而好縱慾，  
did not cultivate virtuous behaviour  
and he was fond of giving free rein  
to his desires.

In any case, one is in no doubt about the implications when Confucius pronounces his judgment:

(140) LY 5.11; tr. CH

子曰：

「吾未見剛者。」

The Master said:

“I have never met anyone who has firm convictions.”  
Someone responded to this:  
“How about Shēn Chéng?”

子曰：

「根也慾，  
焉得剛？」

The Master said:

“That man Chéng is full of lusts.  
How can he get to count as firm?”

The lusts condemn Chéng as a softling.

zhēn 真 “true, genuine” specifies that something is non-fake, unwarped, pristine, and it comes close to some usages of qíng 情 “essential, basic, real, inalienable”. However, the distinction becomes clear when one considers combinations such as zhēn rén 真人 “True Man” which has no classical pendant qíng rén 情人 “modern Chinese: lover”. Zhēn 真 is current as a main verb and may take intensive adverbs:

(141) ZHUANG 7.275

其知情信，  
其德甚真，

His knowledge was truly reliable,  
his integrity very genuine.

Qíng 情 in the related sense is metaphysical and absolute, and in fact often adverbial, although it is not clear whether the word really needs to be taken adverbially in this particular context.

zhì 志 “aspirations” is something waiting to be realised in action, and the word is current in essentially related verbal usages, as in the idiomatic zhì yú 志於 “aspire to; be bent on” which naturally takes the object rén 仁 “benevolence”. By contrast, qíng 情 is something waiting to be disclosed, expressed. The result of a failure to expectorate is jì mò 寂寞 “loneliness” and bitter discontent:

(142) CHUCI, qǐjian, miujian, ed. SBBY p. 430; tr. David Hawkes

願承聞而效志兮，  
恐犯忌而干諱。  
卒撫情以寂寞兮，  
然悒悒而自悲。

I wanted to wait on his leisure, to  
show him my intent;  
But I feared to infringe on some  
ban or prohibition.  
In the end I restrained my feelings  
and kept silent;  
And so I grieve still in bitter  
discontent.

*zhi* 質 “substance” refers to an inert basic substratum quite unlike the dynamic fundamental disposition of things to respond to other things that is called *qing* 情, although in poetry, the difference can occasionally be neutralised.

It is my claim that we properly understand the meaning of the word *qing* 情 in the texts we investigate to the extent that we understand what motivates the choice of that word versus the possible choice of other words that might appear to be plausible candidates in certain specific contexts. Thus my primary aim is not to find any one plausible English “equivalent” for *qing* 情. The aim is to define the parameters of semantic contrasts in the ancient language which define the place of that word in the relevant ancient Chinese conceptual schemes.

## ANTONYMS

The meanings of a word are often best understood when one considers its antonyms. In what follows I give a brief survey of selected antonyms, and I discuss only such details as seem relevant to the proper understanding of *qing* 情.

*ci* 辭 “verbal formulations” contrast with unarticulated basic *qing* 情 “real feelings” that need expression.

*mào* 貌 “appearance” is in frequent contrast with *qing* 情. What defines “metaphysical” *qing* 情 is its opposition to 貌 “outer appearance”, even *yán* 言 “outer verbalisation”. These are mere *huá* 華 “acoutrements, outward flourishes” of what is inward, essential, and all-important:

(143) GY 11.2, ed. Shanghaiguji p. 394

吾見其貌而欲之，  
聞其言而惡之。

When I see his shape I want him,  
when I hear his speeches I dislike  
him.

夫貌，情之華也；

*External manifestation is the  
outward veneer of an inner  
reality;*

言，貌之機也。

speeches are a function of external  
shape.

身為情，

The person is *the essential inner  
feature*

成於中。

and it forms within.

言身之文也。

Speech is an outward adornment of  
the person.

However we take this passage, it neither invites nor allows an interpretation of human *qing* 情 in terms of emotions or passions.

In LJI there is no question but that *qing* 情 are essential to man, and inward, opposed to *mào* 貌 “outward appearance”:

(144) LJI 32; Couvreur 2.510; Sūn Xidàn 13.35; tr. Legge 2.349

子曰：

The Master said,

「君子不以色親人；

“The superior man is not  
affectionate to others with his  
countenance

情疏而貌親。」

(merely) as if, while *distant in  
fundamental attitude*, he was  
close in *appearance*.”

The obvious function of music is to bring these innermost sensibilities into a kind of harmony:

(145) LJI 19; Couvreur 2.55f; Sūn Xidàn 10.28; tr. Legge 2.98

樂者為同，  
禮者為異。

Similarity and union are the aim of  
music;

同則相親，

difference and distinction, that of  
ceremony.

異則相敬，

From union comes mutual  
affection;

樂勝則流，

from difference, mutual respect.

禮勝則離。

Where music prevails, we find  
weak coalescence;

合情飾貌者

where ceremony prevails, a  
tendency to separation.

禮樂之事也。

To align *the basic instincts* and to  
beautify *external appearances*  
that is the task of propriety and of  
music.

Instinctual reactions can jar with each other in an emotional cacophony. The purpose of music is construed as being the standard instrument of harmonisation.

In poetry as in prose, these innermost quintessentially real feelings are customarily opposed to mere outer appearance:

(146) CHUCI JIUZHANG 01:02; SBBY 198; Jin 438; Huang 82; Fu 95; tr. Hawkes 156  
言與行其可跡兮，

情與貌其不變。

For my words and my deeds  
followed one in the steps of the  
other,

And *that* which I felt and that  
which I showed, between them  
there was no change.

*míng* 名 “names”, being only ways of talking, contrast naturally with those *qíng* 情 which are the real factors that shape reality. Compare ZUO Ai 8.02 魯有名而無情 “Lǔ has the name (of being a great state), but not the essential dynamic features (that would make it into a great state)”. It seems clear that *qíng* 情 is more dynamic in force here than *shí* 實 “the objective features required to qualify” would have been. It is as if *qíng* 情 comes close to “inner driving force, inner momentum”.

*shēn* 身 “the body”, being outwardly manifest, standardly contrasts with the inner dynamic instincts *qíng* 情 that govern one’s conduct of the body.

*wén* 文 “elegant form” often naturally contrasts as an antonym with *qíng* 情 “unpolished fundamental instinctive responses”.

*wù* 物 “things” contrast with the fundamental factors *qíng* 情 that shape these things.

*xíng* 行 “overt behaviour” contrasts with *qíng* 情 “basic propensity” as well as *xíng* 性 “inborn nature”.

*xíng* 形 “outer form” and *mào* 貌 “appearance” are both frequent antonyms to the inner and at least potentially hidden *qíng* 情 “fundamental factors; basic inner responses and attitudes to things”.

Throughout the texts I have investigated one cannot “feel” a *qíng* 情, one cannot be anything like “overwhelmed” by *qíng* 情. Thus the relations into which one can enter with *qíng* 情 differ widely from those one might expect as a comparative student of Latin or Greek. There are severe restrictions on the way in which the concept of *qíng* 情 enters classical Chinese discourse and syntax. It is for this reason that a satisfactory account of *qíng* 情 must involve a rich selection of representative examples of how the word is actually used. It is not good enough just to specify the semantic nuances the word has, and the other words which it contrasts with. We also need to know the pragmatic and syntactic contexts in which the word enters classical Chinese linguistic practice.

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## THE SEMANTICS OF QÍNG 情

### IN CHÁN BUDDHIST CHINESE

CHRISTOPH ANDERL

This article<sup>1</sup> is a case study on the use of the Chinese character *qíng* 情 in Chán Buddhist texts as exemplified in the 10th-century historical Chán text *Zūtáng jí* 祖堂集.

The term *qíng* in Buddhist texts is most frequently used in the compound *yǒuqíng* 有情 'have/be endowed with *qíng*' > 'those who have *qíng*' > 'sentient beings' and in its antonym *wúqíng* 無情 'not have *qíng*' > those who do not have *qíng*' > non-sentient (objects)'.<sup>2</sup>

In part one of this paper, the meanings and usages of the term *qíng* are investigated.

In Buddhist texts, *qíng* does not usually mean 'real state of affairs', 'real feeling' or 'emotion'. On the contrary *qíng* refers to the activities of the "unenlightened mind" and thus has a rather negative connotation. *Qíng* refers to *secondary mental processes* which are generated through contact with the external world. The sense data which are received through contact with external objects and thought-objects are interpreted in a deluded way and diverted into *mind tendencies*. The failure to recognize the true nature of things can result in attachment to the object (passion, desire) or mental processes of conceptualizing, evaluating, discriminating, etc. which, by Buddhist standards, all give a deluded perspective of the world.

Very rarely *qíng* is modified in a way that makes it into a positive concept.

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