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The Gongsun Longzi and Other Neglected Texts : Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives

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The Gongsun Longzi and Other Neglected Texts

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Au nom de la Société Suisse-Asie

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The Gongsun Longzi and Other Neglected Texts

Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives

Edited by

Rafael Suter, Lisa Indraccolo and Wolfgang Behr

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Despite careful proofreading, the name of author Jiāng Xiàngdōng (江向东) was misspelled in the first edition of this book. This has been corrected. We apologize for the mistake.

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Preface and Acknowledgements

In a way, the idea for this volume and the conference out of which it grew was born out of chance. The editors first met as a group in 2011, and they soon discovered their shared fascination for one of the least-known, largely neglected treasures of classical Chinese masters literature. Playful yet technical, at the same time dazzling and obscure, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 had long since attracted the attention of Lisa Indraccolo, who dedicated her 2009 Ph.D. thesis at Ca' Foscari University in Venice to it. In Zurich, Rafael Suter had also been working on this intricate text for quite some time and had already produced some minor publications on it. After the success of a co-organized panel on the 'Zhǐwù lùn' 指物論 at the 19th Biennial Conference of the European Society of Chinese Studies in Paris in 2012, Indraccolo and Suter convinced Wolfgang Behr to jointly organize an entire international workshop dedicated to the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. Behr's broad interests in early Chinese language and philosophy neatly complemented the group. The workshop finally took place from August 27 to 29, 2014, at the University of Zurich.

That our efforts spawned the organization of a workshop that succeeded in gathering scholars from all over the world, and that this has eventually resulted in the publication of this book, is to the credit of many people.

First and foremost, the editors wish to thank all the authors who were ready to contribute their conference papers and to invest considerable time and effort in reformulating and reshaping them into full-fledged articles for publication. We would also like to thank our anonymous peer reviewers, whose constructive, competent, and critical feedback played a large role in improving the quality and consistency of this volume. We are grateful to Zhang Yuheng and Yves Trachsel, who kindly provided translations of three papers that were originally written in Chinese. Even a passing acquaintance with the difficulties of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* suffices to imagine the pains they took to bridge the gulf between the linguistic continents of Classical Chinese and academic English. The careful corrections and meticulous remarks of our copyeditor, Alissa Jones Nelson, have considerably helped to improve the language of the present volume as a whole. We thank her and the typesetters at De Gruyter, whose efforts contributed greatly to the systematizing of the fairly heterogeneous contributions gathered in this volume. The cover design was provided by Albina Töws, who ensured that it fulfilled both De Gruyter's formal requirements and the editors' wishes. Our thanks also go to the editors of the Worlds of East Asia series at the Swiss Asia Society for their readiness to include this volume in the series. The series production manager at De Gruyter, Christina Lembrecht, as well as Gabrielle Cornefert, deserve our gratitude for their professional support.

Finally, we are deeply indebted to the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the University of Zurich Foundation, the Association of the Non-Professorial Academic Staff of the University of Zurich, the Alumni Association of the University of Zurich, and the Swiss Asia Society for their generous support of our workshop and this publication project.

Rafael Suter / Lisa Indraccolo / Wolfgang Behr
Zurich, June 2019

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Rafael Suter, Lisa Indraccolo and Wolfgang Behr

The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and Other Neglected Texts – Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives: An Introduction

The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 (Master Gongsun Long) is traditionally attributed to the so-called “School of Names”. It stands out in the intellectual landscape of early China due to its marked interest in the relation between language and reality and its overall neglect of moral and political issues that are usually so characteristic of the thought of its time. Since the late nineteenth century, this philosophical orientation has invited modern scholars to study the text from the perspective of academic disciplines such as logic and philosophy. To the present day, most of the – increasing, yet still comparatively scarce – publications on the text appear in journals on Chinese and comparative philosophy, and thus continue this tendency. At the same time, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* has an intricate textual history, which has led major scholars like A. C. Graham (1919–1991) and Shěn Yǒudǐng 沈有鼎 (1909–1989) – though for slightly different reasons – to doubt the pre-imperial origin of various chapters, or even the text in its entirety.¹ The increasing sophistication and precision of philosophical interpretations of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* thus risk being undermined by the brittle philological ground on which they stand. There is good reason to assume that our philosophical understanding of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* will profit from an increased awareness of these philological problems, just as philological research requires a heightened alertness to the far-reaching philosophical implications of the text. It is against this background that the editors of this volume are convinced of the need for a broader dialogue among scholars engaged in studies on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – one that attempts to bridge the extant gaps between various

1 Cf. Graham 1956/7; and, e.g. Shěn 1992d, 1992a [1978]. In 1979, Zhōu Yúnzhī 周雲之 had argued that all extant chapters of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* except the ‘Báimǎlùn’ (Discourse on White and Horse) are medieval, but he then revised this opinion in later publications (see Jin 2015: 280). Hé Qímín 何啓民 also considers the extant text to be an early Táng collection, different both in terms of content and scope from the homonymous text attested at the beginning of the common era (Hé 1967: 219). Among Japanese publications on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the work by Amano Shizuo 天野鎮雄 (Amano 1963, 1964, 1965a, 1965b, 1966, 1967a, 1967b, 1968, 1969) stands out by his detailed studies which combine philological analysis with philosophical interpretation in an effort to reconstruct the original version of all chapters. For a sketch on the textual history of the text see Graham 1993, for a detailed survey see Indraccolo 2010: 60–100.

academic disciplines and intellectual traditions. The international workshop on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* that we organized at the University of Zurich on 27–29 August 2014 offered a first platform for the open and decompartmentalized academic exchange we had in mind. Most of the essays gathered in this volume are based on contributions to that workshop.

It is clear from what we have said so far that this volume, just as the workshop out of which it grew, brings together the work of scholars from various backgrounds. It includes contributions by philologists, philosophers, logicians, and linguists, established specialists and junior scholars alike, from within and beyond the disciplinary boundaries of sinology as traditionally conceived. Their essays may differ significantly in terms of the kinds of problems addressed, the methodologies applied, and occasionally the modes of presentation chosen, but they all share a common interest in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* or other thematically related texts that are traditionally attributed to the “dawn” of Chinese philosophy during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). And even if the title of the present volume suggests an “alignment of philosophical and philological perspectives”, this is an ideal to which this collection of essays subscribes rather than a promise it is actually able to realize. At best a first step toward this ideal, it aims to offer a representative survey of the variety of ongoing current research being carried out both on these texts and on the multifaceted problems they pose. Moreover, it brings together voices from Chinese and non-Chinese academia, i.e. from two all too often exclusive confines in the study of Early China.

The Eastern Hàn scholar Bān Gù 班固 (32–92 CE) classified the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as belonging to the *míngjiā* 名家, conventionally translated as the “School of Names”.² This term, apparently coined by Sīmǎ Tán 司馬談 (d. 110 BCE) in the second century BCE, is conspicuously absent from pre-imperial sources.³

2 All remaining texts of this “school” that his *Hànshū* 漢書 (History of the Western Hàn Dynasty), the earliest relevant source at our disposition, lists under this rubric (‘Yìwénzhì’ 藝文志, p. 31–32) are either lost or have been proven to be compilations that do not predate the early medieval period (220–581 A.D.), cf. Graham 1956/7: 168. For a recent summary of textual studies on the *míngjiā*-texts see Jin 2015: 276–284, on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, see pp. 280–283.

3 Scholars like Liáng Qǐchāo (Liáng 1936 [1902]), Hú Shì (Hú 1991 [1919], 1922), Wǔ Fēibāi (Wǔ 1983 [1949]) and Tán Jiēfū (Tán 1957) are responsible for the transfer of this originally bibliographical notion into a designation for a philosophical current of ancient Chinese thought which they first identified as a Chinese analogon of the Greek sophists and then, since Hú Shì, more generally (and in a less derogative sense) as a school of genuine Chinese logicians. On Tán’s specific view see sect. 2 of Ian Johnston and Wang Ping’s “Notes on the Relationship between the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the Dialectical Chapters of the *Mōzǐ*”, this volume.

Kidder Smith has convincingly argued that the meaning of *jiā* 家 in terms of a “philosophical” school that was associated with particular teachers, texts, and intellectual lineages is an anachronism even for Simǎ Tán’s time, let alone the Warring States period, and that it rather represents a reinterpretation by the very same Eastern Hàn scholars who mark the beginning of dynastic historiography.⁴ Possibly not least due to the lasting impact of this very tradition, many modern scholars up to the present day still treat the “School of Names” as a reality in pre-imperial China.⁵

The inventor of this term, Simǎ Tán 司馬談, has associated it with the concern for the relation between ‘names’ (*míng* 名) and ‘reality’ (*shí* 實)⁶ – that is, broadly speaking, with problems of language, logic, and their connection to reality. For this reason, it has been routinely related to the disciplines of logic and the philosophy of language adopted from the West since the early twentieth century.⁷ The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is a short text of less than 4,000 characters which consists of six chapters. Among them, the introductory ‘Jǐfǔ’ 跡府 (lit. Repository of Traces) is generally agreed to postdate the rest.⁸

While a majority of Chinese scholars accepts the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as an authentic pre-imperial text in its entirety, it is mainly due to the seminal work by A. C. Graham that large parts of the English-speaking sinological community today regard substantial parts of the received text as compilations dating from the early medieval period or even later (220–581 CE). In his influential 1956/7 study, Graham has gathered convincing evidence which suggests that three “chapters” (*piān* 篇)⁹ of the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are

4 Smith 2003: 130–131, 148–150. See also Nylan/Csikszentmihaly 2003.

5 For a recent book-length publication, though of posthumous and re-published articles, that adopts this view see Solomon 2013.

6 For a comprehensive study in English see Makeham 1994.

7 For an excellent discussion see Kurtz 2011: ch. 5, pp. 277–337.

8 Its compilation was traditionally attributed to the successors of Gōngsūn Lóng and dated to the early imperial period ensuing the Qín unification (Páng 1979: 1; Yáng 1981: 54; Asano 1990; Dǒng 1995: 102). Formal reasons like the use of Táng taboo characters rather speak in favor of a date of compilation in the 7th c. AD (Graham 1956/7: 172–173; Shěn 1992d: 502; Kubota 2003: 172–173).

9 The translation of the term *piān* 篇 is difficult, as it was used in the sense of textual unit, before its secondary meaning as “chapter” or “chapter section” was established around the 5th c. AD (Vittinghoff 1996: 168). The varying numbers of *piān* and *juàn* 卷 (“scroll/fascicle”) in bibliographical lists play a crucial role in Chinese studies on textual “authenticity” (*zhēn wěi* 真偽). Different counts of *piān* or *juàn* are taken as indicative of the existence of different versions of a text. For a critique of this practice see Karlgrén 1929. For a case study on the *Guǐgǔzǐ* 鬼谷子, see Vittinghoff 1996: 167–169. For a more recent account on Chinese “authentication studies”, see Fischer 2008–2009.

“spurious”¹⁰ and that they were forged on the model of the so-called “dialectical chapters” of the *Mòzǐ* – i.e. the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’¹¹ – which are among the very few other ancient Chinese texts dealing with the philosophy of language (among other topics).¹² Graham presents linguistic and philological evidence for their late compilation and ascribes to the alleged medieval imitators of the master only a truncated understanding of the Mohist original. Conversely, Graham has provided comprehensive interpretations of the remaining chapters, ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ 白馬論 (Discourse on White and Horse) and ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ 指物論 (Discourse on Pointers and Things), which he considers to be “genuine”.¹³ Whether intentionally or not, Graham’s influential verdict has brought sinological work on the remaining chapters of the collection to a halt. This situation is similar to the case of the *Yīn Wénzǐ* 尹文子, another text treated in this volume, which is traditionally attributed to a Warring States debater and classified under *míngjiā* (“School of Names”) in the *Hànshū* 漢書 (History of the Western Hàn; first century CE). Dan Daor has gathered evidence suggesting a date of compilation no earlier than the third century CE.¹⁴ The detailed works of Graham and Daor have thus by and large confirmed age-old doubts about the authenticity of these texts that harken back well into the imperial period. Inadvertently, they have also contributed to the continued marginalization – at least in the anglophone academic discourse – of a large portion of the scarce textual witnesses of ancient Chinese views on the relation of language and reality.

It is important to stress that the consequent sinological negligence has affected texts that had already been marginalized for many centuries within the

10 The chapters Graham has identified as late forgeries are ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ 堅白論 (his “Essay on Hard and White”), ‘*Míngshí lùn*’ 名實論 (Essay on Names and Actualities), and sections two and three of the ‘*Tōngbiàn lùn*’ 通變論 (Essay on Understanding Change).

11 Graham 1956/7: 157. “There is no unanimous external evidence for the existence of the “dialectical chapters” in pre-imperial sources. When the ‘*Tiānxià*’ 天下 (All-Under-Heaven) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* describes the current situation among later Mohists, it states that while they “all recite Mò’s canon, their [respective] arts of contradicting [each other] are not the same (俱誦墨經，而倍謫不同相。). As the passage then mentions the topics of “hard and white” and “sameness and difference” prototypically associated with pre-imperial disputation, this short remark is commonly referred to the received ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ which also deal with the rules of correct debate and argument. The *Jīnshū* (History of the Jin Dynasty) preserves the preface of a 3rd c. CE commentary on the *Mohist Dialectics* (*Mòbiàn* 墨辯), which describes the text as organized into ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, a structural characteristic of the “dialectical chapters” of the received *Mòzǐ*. Therefore, this *Mòbiàn* is commonly identified with chapters 40–44 of the extant *Mòzǐ*. If this is true, the “dialectical chapters” would thus be attested for the 3rd c. CE.

12 Graham 1956/7: 147–148; 181.

13 Graham 1956/7: 147, 181.

14 Daor 1974: 12, 34, 37, 38.

Chinese tradition itself. Adversaries of debaters (*biànzhě* 辯者) like Gōngsūn Lóng happened to be the predecessors of the kind of Confucian orthodoxy which came to dominate the imperial period. The criticism of the “idle rhetoric” and “moral deficiency” of these specialists in eloquence in books like the *Mencius* perpetuated Gōngsūn Lóng’s bad reputation and that of the entire tradition he was associated with, which was considered representative of a group of “talkative sophists” who had little – if anything – substantial to say.

This state of affairs only changed after the eventual collapse of the imperial order in the early twentieth century. As the moralistic Confucian tradition was increasingly being blamed for the country’s weakness and backwardness, logic and epistemology were acknowledged as two indispensable prerequisites for the development of the natural sciences and, *a fortiori*, of a modern nation-state.¹⁵ Therefore, one important motive for studies of China’s intellectual traditions during the Late Imperial and Republican periods was the search for indigenous contributions to these disciplines, which had been ousted by two millennia of Confucian dominance. While early Chinese debaters like Gōngsūn Lóng were already associated with Western sophists in Meiji Japan,¹⁶ it was essentially the ‘Zhèngmíng’ 正名 (Correcting Names) chapter of the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 and the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ – with their concern for problems of correct definitions, argumentation, and the relationship between language and reality – that were soon recognized as ancient Chinese texts dealing with questions of what in Western learning (*xīxué* 西學) was called “logic”. In contrast, the similarity between Gōngsūn Lóng and the Greek sophists, together with the depreciation of the “School of Names” inherited from the Confucian tradition, prompted pioneers of the study of logic in ancient Chinese texts – such as Liú Shīpéi 劉師培 (1884–1936),¹⁷ Zhāng Bǐnglín 章炳麟 (1869–1936),¹⁸ Liáng Qǐchāo 梁啟超 (1873–1929),¹⁹ and Wáng Guówéi 王國維 (1877–1927)²⁰ – to hesitate in accepting the role of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in the development of logic in early China.

This only changed after Hú Shì 胡適 (1891–1962) reclassified Gōngsūn Lóng as a Mohist²¹ and once ensuing generations of experts in ancient Chinese logic,

¹⁵ Kurtz 2011: 8; Kurtz 2011: ch. 3, esp. 147–154.

¹⁶ The first traceable association of Gōngsūn Lóng with Greek sophists apparently goes back to the Japanese Buddhist scholar Matsumoto Bunzaburō 松本文三郎 (1869–1944) (See Kurtz 2011: 284).

¹⁷ Kurtz 2011: 292, 299.

¹⁸ Kurtz 2011: 303–304.

¹⁹ Kurtz 2011: 313.

²⁰ Kurtz 2011: 330.

²¹ Kurtz 2011: 349.

who were less burdened by age-old prejudices, undertook a less lop-sided approach to the text.²² It was in the aftermath of these developments, in the first half of the twentieth century, that studies on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in China began to thrive. In 1901–1902, at the very beginning of these radical historical changes, Alfred Forke (1867–1944), then an interpreter with a first degree in law working for the German consular services in Beijing, first presented the text to an English-speaking public.²³ By the early 1950s, Max Perleberg (1900–1972)²⁴ and Ignace Kou Pao-koh, S. J. (Gù Bǎogǔ 顧保鵠) (1915–2015)²⁵ published annotated translations of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. These translations and the related secondary literature show that, during the first half of the twentieth century, the text had already attracted a considerable amount of interest, both within and outside China, among specialists from different fields, including philosophers and logicians, historians of Chinese philosophy and sinologists. As we have seen, just a few years later, A. C. Graham's 1956/7 study presented a strong case against the authenticity of most of the received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. While it is debatable whether this was due to the refutation of what he called the “spurious” chapters or rather on account of their intrinsic obscurity, the fact remains that subsequent research in both East and West tended to focus primarily on ‘Báimǎ lùn’ and ‘Zhǐwù lùn’.

As we have noted above, in contrast to Graham's pioneering philological exercise, most Western scholarship on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* has adopted a broadly philosophical perspective on the text. Pertinent studies may be conveniently divided into two main approaches. The first can be traced back to Janusz Chmielewski's (1916–1998) pathbreaking series of articles “Notes on Early Chinese Logic” (1962–69),²⁶ which discussed the text from the perspective of formal logic and analytic philosophy. The second approach adopts an explicitly comparative vantage point, concentrating on the similarities and dissimilarities between the text and ancient Greek and Roman philosophy (see e.g. the extensive study by Jean-Paul Reding on the sophists in Greece and China, published in 1985).

Although of relatively limited influence in China – at least as far as philosophical studies on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are concerned – the logician and historian of philosophy Shěn Yǒudǐng, who discovered the eponymous set-theoretical paradox, also refuted the idea that the text could possibly be an early imperial or even pre-imperial work. In spite of the fact that he arrived at these conclusions independently from and for different reasons than Graham, the results

²² Kurtz 2011: 354.

²³ Forke 1901–2.

²⁴ Perleberg 1952.

²⁵ Kou 1953.

²⁶ Chmielewski 1962, 1963a, 1963b, 1966.

obtained by these two scholars largely coincide. Unlike Graham, Shěn mainly argues from the perspective of intellectual history, and he rejects the received text more or less wholesale. In Shěn's view, all the chapters were compiled during the Jin 晉 period (276–420 CE) and, with the sole exception of the short dialogue about 'right' and 'left' at the beginning of the extant 'Tōngbiàn lùn' (Discourse on Understanding Change), it contains no integral section representing early Chinese thought.²⁷ His results chime well with Graham's in their emphasis on the pivotal role played by the Mohist 'Canons' and 'Explanations' in the composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, and like his English colleague, he argues that the authors/compiler of the text have conspicuously misunderstood their Mohist source.

As we see it, both Shěn's and Graham's studies suffer from various shortcomings. Graham provides inconsistent renderings of core phrases and key terms, his grammatical analysis is sometimes rather loose, and his translations of the allegedly forged passages of the text tend to be rather casual. Shěn displays a rather uncritical stance towards the reliability of medieval sources for the dating of the text and has a tendency to jump to rash and rather speculative conclusions. On the other hand, both scholars undoubtedly deserve credit for having offered by far the most detailed analyses of the exceedingly thorny issue of the text's "authenticity". Moreover, the fact that they have reached almost identical conclusions not only independently from each other, but also on the basis of fundamentally different methodological approaches, certainly seems to strengthen their case. While it is obvious that their findings – if valid – are a serious challenge to the acceptance of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as a source of Warring States thought, their consequences are in fact much more far-reaching.

We have noted above that most studies of the text are philosophical in nature, many of them striving to reach an adequate understanding of the entire collection, or at least of single chapters. It seems self-evident that one fundamental heuristic for evaluating the correctness, or at least the plausibility, of our reading of a particular text is the overall coherence of our interpretation. It also goes without saying that the applicability of coherence criteria rests on the assumption that the text indeed aims to convey a consistent intention, typically identified with that of "the author" – a notoriously elusive, often retrospectively "constructed" figure during the pre-imperial period.²⁸ If we assume that Graham and Shěn are right, most – or even all – of the chapters of the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* would be compositions that incorporate and

²⁷ Shěn 1992c [1989]: 446; Shěn 1992d: 507.

²⁸ Cf. Steineck/Schwermann 2014; Schwermann 2014; Beecroft 2014; Richter 2013; Kern (in prep.).

imitate passages from early Chinese sources, such as the Mohist ‘Canons’ or the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, as well as isolated fragments of unknown origin, and it would hardly seem plausible that the text allows for the reconstruction of any original intention whatsoever. It is therefore clear that the philological findings on the textual history of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are of immediate relevance for its philosophical interpretation and its historical contextualization. Moreover, as Graham pointed out early on, it is a methodological *desideratum* to address philological and grammatical questions *independently* of our philosophical concerns. Whether or not this is feasible for layered texts of putative pre-imperial provenance, and especially in the case of texts as concise as the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, is another issue. In any case, it seems wise to keep in mind the complex conditions of our hermeneutical efforts.

Moreover, if we intend to reach a balance between a philological reconstruction and a philosophical interpretation of the text, we must also be aware of the antagonistic forces driving these two endeavors. Their aims are fundamentally different, more often than not diametrically opposite. Philology identifies and distinguishes different sections and layers of a text, which it then tries to critically attribute to different sources, authors, or periods, among other things. As this analysis advances, literally by “breaking up” and “loosening”, it dissects the texts under investigation and undermines their original appearance of unity. By contrast, as seen above, philosophy typically proceeds from the premise that the text can – and should – be read in a coherent fashion: only based upon this presupposition can we hope to arrive at a consistent interpretation. As plenty of examples of a happy marriage between philosophy and philology show, however, this dialectical opposition in no way excludes the possibility that parallel efforts in both fields will eventually succeed in leading us to a better understanding of the text, in terms of *both* its historical genesis (and *Sitz im Leben*) and its philosophical interpretation.

As for the former, both Graham and Shěn have emphasized the eminent role of the renaissance of the “School of Names” in medieval China. This is true not only for the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, but also for the Mohist ‘Canons and Explanations’ – that is to say, the main item of comparison. The heightened revival of interest in questions of language and logic in this period is attested not least by Lǚ Shèng’s 魯勝 famous “Preface” to his commentary on what he terms the “Mohist Dialectics” (*Mò biàn* 墨辯), commonly identified with the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’.²⁹ Both Graham and Shěn invoke this short text to argue that not only would it have been possible, but in fact it was likely that someone might have

²⁹ *Jinshū* j. 914, 13–15, pp. 1539–1540.

engaged in the enterprise of “forging” a text on the basis of more or less well-understood chunks taken from the Mohist precedent.³⁰ Whether or not one follows their arguments, it is beyond doubt that the early medieval period in China was crucial for the transmission not only of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, but of the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ* as well. That the third century had indeed seen the fabrication of “masters texts” (*zǐshū* 子書)³¹ claiming to originate in antiquity is indicated by the *Lièzǐ* 列子, a text which also contains palpable traces of Buddhist influence.³²

By the fourth century CE, Buddhism had gained prominence in educated lay circles, and eventually it came to dominate the intellectual scene in subsequent centuries. However, explicit references to the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are only attested as late as the seventh century CE, and both Graham and Shěn assume that it was only during this period that the received text took on its present form.³³ Trying to identify possible traces of our text in Buddhist sources, but also conversely finding Buddhist traces in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, should therefore not be considered a moot undertaking *a priori*. That it is indeed worth taking the trouble to scrutinize Buddhist sources is highlighted by the fact that the first complete quotation from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, which both records this very title for the text and cites the initial sentence of the extant ‘Míngshí lùn’ 名實論 (Discourse on Name and Actuality) chapter, appears in the preface to a sub-commentary on the writings of Sēng Zhào 僧肇 (374–414) by the Buddhist scholar–monk Yuánkāng 元康 (fl. 636).³⁴ In this context, moreover, it is worth considering that one of the oldest editions of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, widely held to be the most reliable,³⁵ was transmitted in the Daoist Canon (*Dàoàng* 道藏), an authoritative collection of the texts of a religious community.³⁶ This does not necessarily imply that the text was considered to be of any religious relevance. However, it shows that, in their competition with the Buddhists, who could rely on a seemingly inexhaustible

30 See Graham 1956/7: 180; and, e.g., Shěn 1992c [1989]: 446–447.

31 It is crucial to see that so-called “masters literature” flourished well into the early medieval period and that compositional principles of later texts do not essentially vary from earlier ones, on this cf. Tian 2006.

32 Graham 1960/1: 142; Barrett 1993: 300.

33 Graham 1956/7: 172–173; Shěn 1992d: 502.

34 Yuánkāng, *Sēng Zhào shū* 僧肇疏 (T 45, no. 1859, p. 116): “公孫龍子名實論云: 天與地, 其所產焉, 物也。” “The ‘Treatise on Name and Actuality’ in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (or: by Master Gōngsūn Lóng) says: “Heaven combines with earth. Whatever they produce in it (= this combination/themselves?) is a thing.”

35 Graham 1956/7: 169. This judgment goes back to Yán Kējūn 嚴可均 (1762–1843) (Hé 1967: 266). More recently, Kaji 1981 has provided a detailed argument that traces the version of the *Zhèngtōng Dàoàng* to the Daoist Canon of the Sòng dynasty.

36 For an outline of the *Dàoàng* see Schipper 2004.

influx of new and ever more sophisticated writings from India, the medieval Daoists tried to incorporate as many “autochthonous” texts as possible into their canon.³⁷ It seems useful to note that one of the seventh-century CE texts which repeatedly refers to texts attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng is the *Zhuāngzǐ* sub-commentary by Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英 (fl. 631–655). Chéng is a representative of the Daoist school of *chóngxuán* 重玄 (lit. ‘double darkening’), a variety of Daoism deeply indebted to the rhetoric of the scholastics of Buddhist *madhyamaka*.³⁸

In view of the flourishing of this doctrine in the seventh century, and given its predilection for paradoxical formulations, it is unsurprising that it is in this context that references to Gōngsūn Lóng multiply. It strikes us as by no means far-fetched, therefore, to speculate that it was precisely during this heyday of paradoxical formulations that the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* was attested unequivocally for the first time. The uncertainties concerning the date and process of composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* thus strongly suggest that studies on the text would profit greatly from keeping a close eye on the almost 900 years of textual and intellectual history between the purported lifetime of Gōngsūn Lóng in the fourth–third centuries BCE³⁹ and the first firm evidence for the existence of our received text in the seventh century CE.⁴⁰ Regardless of the correctness of Graham’s and Shěn’s hypotheses, and even in view of the possibility that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – on the strength of some kind of new evidence – might eventually be proven to be a genuine

37 Cf. Schipper 2005: 18. Zhēn Luán 甄鸞 (535–566), author of the polemical work *Xiàodàolùn* 笑道論 (Treatise on Ridiculing Daoism), derides the practice of contemporary Daoists to include ever more ancient masters texts into their canon (point no. 36, “On Turning the masters into Daoist Books” [諸子為道書]), see *Hóngmíngjí* 弘明集, T22, no. 5103, fasc. 1, p. 86.

38 Assandri 2005; Kohn 1995; Liú 2008; Plassen 2002; Plassen 2015; On Chéng Xuányīng: Wáng 1989.

39 Biographical reconstructions draw on short passages in pre-imperial and early imperial texts like *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, *Shǐjì* 史記, and others which give (partly conflicting) information about Gōngsūn Lóng’s place of birth and his encounters with datable rulers. With the exception of the short episode of Gōngsūn Lóng’s dispute at the court of the lord of Píngyuán 平原 (d. 251), which is included in the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter, and possibly the discussion about ‘hard and white’ which, however, is a topic generally associated with “debaters” in early sources, none of the topics discussed in the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is mentioned in these ancient sources. On the alleged biography of Gōngsūn Lóng see Qián 1934, Páng 1979. A revisionist view is presented in Shěn 1992b [1979]. For a survey in English see Indraccolo 2010: 21–46. For a historical sketch of the varying judgments on the debater see Kandel 1974: 1–34. For a critical view on the relationship between the “historical” Gōngsūn Lóng and the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* see Shěn 1992c [1989].

40 The earliest source to mention the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* along with the full titles of all extant chapters seems to be a certain *Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ lùn* 擬公孫龍子論 (An Essay on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*), dating from 672 AD, see, e.g., Shěn 1992d: 491–493, Graham 1956/7: 170–171: On an earlier quotation from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in a Buddhist commentary by Yuánkāng 元康 see fn. 35, p. 7, above.

product of the Warring States period, this widening of scope would seem to be an inevitable methodological requirement for the time being.

Still, as we have mentioned above, most studies on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are philosophical in nature. And it is clear that a *genuinely* philosophical interest in the text will often remain largely unaffected by the historical and philological concerns discussed so far. However, such approaches will only be convincing if they do not rely on what are essentially *historical* preconditions, such as the common assumption that the text is representative of late Warring States thought on language. Leaving the confines of the history of philosophy and going beyond the business of mere comparison, then, one might still legitimately ask whether the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* leads to any valuable insights at all. If modern analytic philosophy started, in a sense, with Bertrand Russell's (1872–1970) attempt to clarify a number of apparently irresolvable paradoxes going back to antiquity, might there be a prospect for a genuine dialogue of texts from the “School of Names” with analytic philosophy of the present day? To be sure, most essays in this volume deal with problems of textual and intellectual history, language use, and grammar. Others strive for a historically informed understanding of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – or parts of it. Attempts to inquire into how this text could shed new light on problems in contemporary philosophy remain few and tentative. Yet we have good reason to think that precisely the kind of detailed and often preliminary studies that predominate in this volume will eventually establish the ground for a better-informed and hence more self-confident philosophical engagement.

The contributions to this volume are grouped thematically, according to the three broad categories of history, philosophy, and philology. It goes without saying that their boundaries are not clear-cut, nor are the categories themselves mutually exclusive or uncontested in a sinological context.⁴¹ They are merely descriptive and serve the practical purpose of facilitating the reader's orientation.

The section under the rubric of “history” gathers papers representative of the prevailing, “established” view of both the textual history and the interpretation of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in present-day Chinese academia. Concentrating mainly on the foundational period of modern Chinese studies of the text, these contributions discuss some of the most relevant scholarship produced in twentieth-century China.

⁴¹ Of these academic disciplines, each have a peculiar history of their spread to and establishment in China. Still, it would seem to be a historicist fallacy to refuse their applicability to any of the scholarly practices, institutions, modes of argumentation etc. in premodern China. On a discussion on the processes of adoption of these practices and the problems of their use for premodern contexts in China see, e.g., the China-related contributions in Steineck et al. 2018 (esp. Sela 2018) (philosophy), Pollock et al. 2015 (philology), as well as Schmidt-Glintzer 2005 and Vogelsang 2007 (history).

In “The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*: A Historical Overview”, Wang Ping and Ian Johnston give a comprehensive survey of early and pre-modern references to *Gōngsūn Lóng* and his eponymous text, from antiquity to the early twentieth century, and provide a concise summary of what can still be regarded as the standard, accepted view on such issues in China.

In their “Notes on the Relationship between the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the Dialectical Chapters of the *Mòzǐ*”, Johnston and Wang take up the problem of the relationship of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* to the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. They provide detailed documentation of the standpoints of some of the most influential specialists on these issues, such as Tán Jiěfū 譚戒甫 (1887–1974), Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百 (1890–1965), Wú Yùjiāng 吳毓江 (1898–1977), Móu Zōngsān 牟宗三 (1909–1995), and others, thus offering a larger historical context and background for the more radical, “iconoclastic” textual studies by Graham and Shěn, which feature prominently in this introduction.

Zhōu Chāngzhōng 周昌忠 is one of the pioneering scholars who, in the late 1970s, reinvigorated philosophical studies of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in mainland China. In his paper “The ‘Discourse on the White Horse’: A Concrete Analytical Philosophy of Language – with a Coda on the Authenticity of the Received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*”, he presents a summary of his interpretive approach to the text, which refers to and integrates both Kantian critique and analytic philosophy of language. His contribution concludes with comparative reflections on early Chinese philosophy of language and a defense of the traditional assumption of the authenticity of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as a Warring States text.

Zhōu’s contribution, with its strong philosophical penchant, prepares the ground for the second part of the volume, which gathers papers subsumed under the title of “philosophy” and further divided into two subgroups. The first group collects papers discussing the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* from the perspective of contemporary analytic philosophy. The second consists of close readings of selected chapters, which are not necessarily committed to an analytical approach.

Fung Yiu-ming (Féng Yàomíng 馮耀明), in his “Reference and Ontology in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*”, presents an outline of his interpretation of the text, which he develops from the perspective of modern analytic philosophy. Fung argues for the integrity and authenticity of the extant text and provides a comprehensive analysis including all the chapters of the received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

In his “How *Gōngsūn Lóng*’s Double-Reference Thought in His “White Horse Not Horse” Argumentation Can Engage with Fregean and Kripkean Approaches to the Issue of Reference”, Bo Mou takes his interpretation of the “Discourse on White and Horse” as a vantage point for transcendental reflections on the problem of reference. Taking inspiration from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, he tries to develop a position on reference that reconciles the extensionalist

approach highlighted by Kripke with the semantic view harkening back to Frege and Russell.

Dennis Schilling's "Place as a Category in the 'Treatise on Name and Reality' (*Míngshí lùn* 名實論)" develops a close reading of this chapter, focusing on the notion of 'place' (*wèi* 位). He highlights the innovative character of this concept in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and specifies its function in the peculiar theory of reference that is developed in *Míngshí lùn*.

Following a comprehensive survey of the different approaches to 'Zhǐwù lùn' (Discourse on Pointings and Things) across the ages, Liú Tǐshèng's 劉體勝 "A New Interpretation of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s 'Zhǐwù lùn' (Discourse on Pointings and Things) and 'Míngshí lùn' (Discourse on Names and Actualities)" presents his own detailed analysis of this notoriously difficult text. Unlike other interpretations, Liú emphasizes the crucial role of the term *wù* 物 'thing', which is considered largely unproblematic by most other scholars. Based on a detailed discussion of early and medieval sources, he reconstructs two verbal uses which he considers key for the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*: one in the sense of 'to name', the other meaning 'to create' or 'to render manifest'. While the former is pivotal for Liú's reading of 'Zhǐwù lùn', the latter proves essential for his interpretation of *Míngshí lùn*, for which he also provides a detailed analytical commentary.

Jiāng Xiàngdōng's 江向東 "A New Interpretation of 'Báimǎ lùn' (Discourse on White and Horse)" contributes a new translation of the "Discourse on White and Horse" based on an epistemological reading. In critical confrontation with the views of Féng Yǒulán 馮友蘭 (1895–1990), Móu Zōngsān, Láo Sīguāng 勞思光 (1927–2012), and Kirill Ole Thompson, Jiāng develops his own interpretation of the dialogue, which concentrates on the ontological arguments at its core.

The third part of the volume is dedicated to problems of "philology". It also branches into two groups, the first discussing problems of language and terminology from a linguistic and lexicostatistical approach, and the second dealing with intertextuality and its implications for questions of textual authenticity and philosophical interpretation.

In his "Logically Significant Words in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*", Thierry Lucas presents statistical investigations of the (co-)occurrence of central, key logical terms across the various parts of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in order to distinguish and identify different textual layers.

"Linguistic Affinities of the *Yīnwénzǐ* Text in the Light of Basic Corpus Data" by Lukáš Zádřapa resorts to a corpus-based approach in an attempt to draw conclusions regarding the plausible date of composition of the *Yīn Wénzǐ*. A detailed linguistic comparison with pre-imperial and early medieval texts suggests a decidedly late point in time. Zádřapa's close scrutiny of grammatical

and lexical peculiarities points to a promising way of reconstructing a relative chronology of the composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s various parts. Needless to say that the shortness and repetitiveness of the text also delimit the transferability of the proposed method.

Ernst-Joachim Vierheller's "Gōngsūn Lóng and the *Zhuāngzǐ*: On Classifying (Declassifying) Things ('Zhǐ [Qí] Wù Lùn' 指〔齊〕物論)" provides a detailed logical analysis of the crucial term *zhǐ* 指, which occurs prominently in the 'Qíwù lùn' chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Considering the usage of this term as a reference to Gōngsūn Lóng, Vierheller also provides an insightful new full-text translation of 'Zhǐwù lùn'.

In "Buddhist Murmurs? – Another Look at the Composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*", Rafael Suter argues in favor of Graham's and Shěn's claim of the spurious nature of at least parts of the received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. Looking for possible Buddhist traces and resonances in the received text, he draws a number of intriguing conclusions regarding the most plausible date for the text's compilation.

In spite of the plethora of delicate problems affecting both the philology and the philosophy of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and of the other related texts discussed in this volume, and notwithstanding the vastly different approaches, assumptions, disciplinary methodologies, and backgrounds of the contributors to this volume, all of them share the ultimate aim of arriving at a more convincing – if not "correct" (正 zhèng) – interpretation of the text. It may well be the case that the dim and distant past of Chinese reasoning, as reflected in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, is too remote and elusive to grasp in all of its facets. But to play on the figurative language of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), even if the light of that remote Other should eventually turn out to be too faint to justify our hope for a hermeneutical fusion of its horizon with our own,⁴² the rich and varied interpretations presented in this volume illuminate different aspects of the text, each resembling one of the multiple, infinite colors of Eriugena's (c. 800–c. 877) famous peacock feather.⁴³

⁴² Gadamer 1997: 302.

⁴³ Cf. John the Scot 1976: 216.

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I History

Traditions of Scholarship in China

Wang Ping and Ian Johnston

1 The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*: A Historical Overview

The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 (*GSLZ*), attributed to the late Warring States scholar Gōngsūn Lóng 公孫龍 (330–242 BCE, hereafter *GSL*), is one of the more remarkable works in the history of early Chinese literature. As it has been preserved in the *Dàoàng* 道藏 (*DZ*, Daoist Canon), it is a short text comprising five brief essays or arguments plus an introduction, presumed to be a later addition. There is, we would argue, an overall thread identifiable in the five essays; it is an examination of the relationship between names (*míng* 名) and entities (*shí* 實, actuality/reality) with the purpose of establishing the correct relationship between the two – the program of *zhèng míng* 正名. This is taken to be the central and defining interest of the *Míngjiā* (名家) or “School of Names”. In pursuing this central interest, the *GSLZ* necessarily touches upon some of the ontological and epistemological ramifications of such an endeavor. Along with the other works of the School and related texts,¹ it is comparable in focus to aspects of the more or less contemporary “Organon” of Aristotle and some of the Stoic writings on logic, now lost. However, the *GSLZ* and its putative author tended to be disparaged by the majority of early Chinese writers who commented on it, and this is a trend which has persisted. Two examples from the Hàn period are as follows:

1. Yáng Xióng 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE), in his *Fǎ Yán* 法言 (Model Sayings), writes:

Someone asked: “Gōngsūn Lóng’s specious arguments and many phrases are taken to be a method, but are they really a method?” The reply was: “Cutting wood to make chess pieces, flaying skin to make a ball – these too are both methods. But they are not in accord with the *dao* of the noble man; the noble man does not employ them as methods.”²

2. Wáng Chōng 王充 (27–97 CE), in his *Lùn Héng* 論衡 (Discourses in the Balance), writes:

Gōngsūn Lóng wrote the discussion on “hard and white”. Analyzing words and splitting up word combinations, he devoted himself to language analysis. There was no comparison of doctrines and principles and no benefit to bringing about good order.³

¹ The writings of the “School of Names” and important related texts (including the Later Mohist dialectical chapters, the ‘Qíwù Lùn’ 齊物論 in the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, and the ‘Zhèng Míng’ 正名 chapter in the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子) have been collected and translated in Johnston/Wang 2019.

² *Fǎyán* 法言, ‘Wúzi’ 吾子: *Cóngshū Jíchéng* 叢書集成 (New Series), vol. 18: 688.

³ *Lùnhéng* 論衡, ‘Ànshū’ 案書: Cài (ed.) 2009: 1454–1455.

Wáng Chōng's statement encapsulates what may have been the prevailing view – the work was essentially trivial, lacking social, political, or ethical relevance. Such negative views are still being voiced today, as this example from a modern Western writer attests: “But his [Gongsun Long's] most famous short essay [. . .] reveals its author as a young smart aleck. [. . .] In this piece it is difficult to discern any other motive than to amaze his hearers; philosophy has become pure show, not without chicanery.”⁴

Others, however, have held GSL and his writings in high regard. Thus, Hú Shì 胡適 describes him as a “great dialectician”, while Alfred Forke, in his pioneering article in English on the “Chinese Sophists”, writes of ‘On Hard and White’ (‘Jiānbái Lùn’ 堅白論): “His treatise on the hard and white [. . .] deserves our highest praise unreservedly. Though sophistical in form, its contents are highly philosophical. [. . . His] wonderful critique of our perceptive faculties recalls to us the modern Idealists Kant, Fichte and Schopenhauer.”⁵

Thus, the work has had a somewhat checkered history, with considerable variation in opinions on its importance, meaning, and authenticity. Nevertheless, it has remained more or less continuously in view. Moreover, it is a work that has aroused considerable interest in the West in recent times, stimulated by perceived similarities to subjects prominent in modern Western philosophy (e.g. language and logic). This is reflected in the number of translations of and articles on it. What follows is a brief outline of the history of the text, followed by some comments on several controversial matters – specifically, the authenticity of the work and the order of its chapters as this bears on the presentation of its central argument.

1 The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in Various Writings from Pre-Qín to Modern Times

1.1 References to *Gōngsūn Lóng* (GSL) Prior to and Including Liú Xiàng 劉向 (77–6 BCE)

There is no mention in the extant literature of the *GSLZ* as a work prior to Liú Xiàng and the *Hàn Shū* 漢書 (Book of Hàn) as below. There are, however, a number of references to the man himself in early works, as follows:⁶

⁴ Nivison 1999: 782.

⁵ Forke 1902–1903: 36–37.

⁶ All of these passages are given in full – with the Chinese text and an English translation – in Johnston/Wang 2019.

Zhuāngzǐ 莊子 (3 references): There is an anecdote giving details of a meeting with Prince Mǒu 牟 of Wèi 魏. GSL claims, among other things, to have “reconciled sameness and difference, separated hardness and whiteness, made the not-so, so, and made the inadmissible, admissible.” Nonetheless, he is said to be astounded by the profundity of Zhuāng Zǐ 莊子 (*Zhuāngzǐ* 17). Of the two other references, one (*Zhuāngzǐ* 24) is a brief mention of the school of Bǐng 秉, whom some identify with GSL,⁷ while the other (*Zhuāngzǐ* 33) links him with Huán Tuán 桓團 as proponents of dialectics and associated with the articulation of the twenty-one paradoxes of the Second List.

Hán Fēizǐ 韓非子 (1 reference): In this single reference, GSL is linked with Huì Shī 惠施, Sòng Jiān 宋鉞, and Mò Dí 墨翟 – “all like an ornamental whip. Although their discussions were far-reaching, deep and profound, they were of no use.”

Lièzǐ 列子 (1 reference):⁸ An account is given of a dialogue between Duke Mǒu 牟 of Zhōngshān 中山 (an avowed admirer of GSL) and Yuèzhèng Zǐyǔ 樂正子輿, in which a list of deceptive (paradoxical) statements is attributed to GSL. Zǐyǔ concludes by saying to the Duke, “You take all GSL’s utterances as principles. Even if he were to emit them from another orifice, you would still rely on them.”

Lǚ Shì Chūnqiū 呂氏春秋 (The Annals of Lǚ Bùwéi, 4 references): In one instance, GSL is linked with Huì Shī in attempting to persuade King Zhāo 昭 of Yān 燕 to eschew warfare, and Kǒng Chuān 孔穿 discusses this. The other three references are as follows: advice to King Huì 惠 of Zhào 趙 to eschew warfare and embrace “universal love” (*jiān ài* 兼愛); a discussion with Kǒng Chuān at the dwelling of the Prince of Píngyuán 平原 on Zāng’s 臧 having three ears; and an attempt to persuade the King of Zhào to avoid war.

Huáinánzǐ 淮南子 (3 references): The first reference gives a brief account of GSL and his disciples encountering a lowly fellow on the road. This sparks some observations on the subject of ability. In the second instance, GSL is described as someone who is excellent with words but has bought himself fame. In the third, he is said to have “analyzed words and opposed arguments, differentiated sameness and difference, and separated hard and white.”

Zhànguócè 戰國策 (Intrigues of the Warring States, 1 reference): There is a brief account of a discussion with the Prince of Píngyuán on the matter of enfeoffment.

Yántiě Lùn 鹽鐵論 (Discourses on Salt and Iron, 1 reference): There is a brief statement, as follows: “Gōngsūn Lóng had a saying: ‘In there being a *dao* of discussion, close attention must be fixed on distinctions and reasons. In fixing attention, there is mutual harmony, but mutual harmony returns to contention. If there is contention and not yielding, then it comes to be despicable.’ [...] This was why Zǐshí 子石 sighed.”

Shuō Yuàn 說苑 (Garden of Stories, 1 reference): There is an account of the story of the Prince of Liáng 梁 and the geese.

⁷ See, for example, *Zhuāngzǐ* 24, Chén 1983: 637–639. See also section 2.3 below.

⁸ Although the compilation of the *Lièzǐ* is considered to be later than the first century CE, the anecdote refers to an earlier time, and the date of compilation remains uncertain.

In the surviving writings of Liú Xiàng and his son, Liú Xīn 劉歆 (50 BCE–23 CE), there are two references to GSL and his eponymous work. One is merely a mention in the *Dèng Xī Xùlù* 鄧析敘錄 (Systematically Arranged Precis of Dèng Xī), in which he is described as being similar to Dèng Xī 鄧析. The other, however, appears in the *Biélù* 別錄 (Parerga) and is one of only two references to the *GSLZ* as a work in 14 *piān* 篇. There is also a reference to the *Biélù* in the notes to the *Shǐjì* 史記 (Grand Scribe's Records) 76: “Liú Xiàng, in his *Biélù*, says: ‘The state of Qí 齊 sent Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍 to pass through Zhào. Prince Píngyuán saw Gōngsūn Lóng along with his disciple Qí Mǔzǐ 綦母子 and others. They discussed the ‘a white horse is not a horse’ debate. The prince asked Zōu Yǎn, who said: ‘It is inadmissible.’”⁹

1.2 References to Gōngsūn Lóng and the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in the Dynastic Histories

Shǐjì 史記 (3 references): The first two references are brief and exemplify the issue of the “two Gōngsūn Lóng”. They are as follows, with appended notes:

1. *Shǐjì* 67 (Zhōng Ní Dìzǐ Lièzhuàn 仲尼弟子列傳, Biographies of the Disciples of Confucius):

Gōngsūn Lóng’s style was Zǐshí. He was younger than Confucius by 53 years.

[*Jíjiě* 集解 (Collected Explanations) – Péi Yīn 裴駟, fifth century CE] Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄 (127–200) said he was from Chǔ 楚.

[*Suǒyǐn* 索隱 (Seeking the Hidden) – Simǎ Zhēn 司馬真, eighth century CE] In the *Jiāyǔ* 家語 (School Sayings of Confucius) [his name] is sometimes written as Chǒng 寵 and sometimes said to be Xí 襲. The *Qīshí Zītú* 七十子圖 (Catalogue of the Seventy Disciples) says it was not Lóng 礪. According to the record, if the style was Zǐshí, then Lóng 礪 was probably a mistake. Zhèng Xuán said he was from Chǔ. The *Jiāyǔ* said he was from Wèi. Nonetheless, in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, it says he was the person responsible for the hard-white discourse.

[*Zhèngyì* 正義 (Correct Meanings)] The *Jiāyǔ* says he was from Wèi 衛; the *Mencius* says he was from Zhào; the *Zhuāngzǐ* speaks of the hard-white discourse.

2. *Shǐjì* 74 (Mèng Zǐ Xún Qīng Lièzhuàn 孟子荀卿列傳, Biographies of Mencius and Xúnzǐ):

Zhào also had Gōngsūn Lóng, who created the “hard-white” and “sameness-difference” debates.

⁹ See *Shǐjì* 76, vol. 7, pp. 2369–2370; the note is in the *Jíjiě* (Péi Yīn).

[*Suǒyǐn*]: This was the name of a disciple of Confucius. This says he was from Zhào. The *Dìzǐ Chuán* 弟子傳 says he was from Wèi 魏. Zhèng Xuán says he was from Chǔ. None of these sources was able to know the truth. Also, subsequently it was written that he lived at the same time as Confucius, although some said he lived later. Therefore we know there were not others.

[*Jǐjiě*]: The *Jīn Tàikāng Dìjì* 晉太康地記 states: “In Rǔnán 汝南, Xīpíng 西平 district, there are the Lóngyuān 龍淵 Waters which can be used to temper knives and swords, making them particularly hard and sharp. Therefore, there is the discussion of hard and white. This says: ‘It is yellow; therefore it is hard. It is white; therefore it is sharp.’ Someone debating this said: ‘It is white; therefore it is not hard. It is yellow; therefore it is not sharp.’”

[*Zhèngyì*]: The ‘*Yìwén Zhì*’ 藝文志 has the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in fourteen *piān*. Yán Shīgǔ 顏師古 says that this is in fact the hard-white discrimination (debate). According to the “*Píngyuán Jūn Zhuàn*” 平原君傳 this was at the same time as Zōu Yǎn. The *Kuòdì Zhì* 括地志 says: “In the Xīpíng District, 140 *lǐ* northwest of Yùzhōu 豫州, there are the Lóngyuān Waters.”

The third reference is an anecdote about a meeting with the Prince of Píngyuán and a discussion on a particular instance of the possibility of enfeoffment, referred to above (*Shǐjī* 76). In it, there is reference to GSL’s skill in the “hard-white” discrimination and also mention of Zōu Yǎn. This is obviously the “second” (i.e. later) *Gōngsūn Lóng*.

Hàn Shū (1 reference): This is the second reference to the *GSLZ* in 14 *piān*, probably adopted from the *Biélù*. *GSL* is identified as being from Zhào and also as being the creator of the “hard-white” discrimination.¹⁰

Jīn Shū 晉書 (Book of Jin, 1 reference): There is mention of *GSL* in the biography of Lǚ Shèng 魯勝, which contains the preface to the latter’s lost work on the *Mòbiàn* 墨辯 (Mohist Disputations). Two points of interest in this are his linking of Huì Shī and *GSL* as men perpetuating Mohist teachings and the following reference to a collection of other *Míngjiā* writings:

I have also drawn from a number of miscellaneous writings to create a *Xíng Míng* 形名 (Forms and Names) in two chapters, giving an outline explanation to indicate the way back to them, which awaits some noble man. My hope is that he will both bring forth what is obscure and restore what has been fragmented, and also that he will take some pleasure in doing this!

Suí Shū 隋書 (Book of Suí, 1 reference): There is brief reference to a *Shǒubái Lùn* 守白論 (On Preserving the White) in 1 *juàn* 卷 which, although listed under Daoist works, is taken to refer to the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.¹¹

¹⁰ On this point, see Makeham 1989: 74–81.

¹¹ On this point, see A. C. Graham’s comments in Loewe 1993: 254.

Jiù Táng Shū 舊唐書 (Old Book of Táng, 1 reference) and *Xīn Táng Shū* 新唐書 (New Book of Táng, 1 reference): Both record a work, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, in three *juàn*; both also record notes/commentaries by two men, Chén Sìgǔ 陳嗣古 and Jiǎ Dàiyīn 賈大隱, which have not been preserved (at least, not under these names – *vide infra*).

Sòng Shǐ 宋史 (The History of Sòng, 1 reference): There is a brief mention of GSL as being from Zhào and of a work, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, in one *juàn*.

1.3 References to Gōngsūn Lóng and the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* from the Later Hàn to the Sòng Periods

Apart from the two quotes (from Yáng Xióng and Wáng Chōng) given in the introductory remarks, these are as follows:¹²

1. Huán Tán 桓譚 (first century CE) makes brief mention of GSL in his *Xīn Lùn* 新論 (New Discourses) on three occasions. There is reference to both the “white horse” and “hard and white” arguments, and also to the anecdote about GSL’s unsuccessful attempt to persuade a frontier official that a white horse was not, in fact, a horse.
2. Gāo Yòu 高誘 (168–212) makes several references to GSL in his notes to both the *Lǚ Shì Chūnqiū* and the *Huáinánzǐ*.
3. Xú Gàn 徐幹 (171–218) mentions GSL briefly in his *Zhōng Lùn* 中論 (Balanced Discourses).
4. Zhōngcháng Tǒng 仲長統 (180–220) likewise makes brief mention of GSL in the preface to the *Yīn Wénzǐ* 尹文子, which is problematically attributed to him.
5. Wáng Sù 王肅 (195–256), in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* 孔叢子 (The Kǒng Family Masters’ Anthology) attributed to him, gives by far the most detailed account of GSL and his ideas during the period in question. Chapter 12 of the work is devoted to GSL and contains much the same material as is found in the ‘Jǐfǔ’ 跡府 (Storehouse of Traces) chapter of the *GSLZ* itself.
6. Gě Hóng 葛洪 (281–341), in his *Bàopǔzǐ* 抱朴子 (Master Who Embraces Simplicity), refers to GSL’s writings on forms and names, and also makes specific mention of some of his paradoxical statements.
7. In the *Shìshuō Xīnyǔ* 世說新語 (A New Account of the Tales of the World), attributed to Liú Yìqīng 劉義慶 (403–444), there is mention of “pointings that do not reach” and also of the “white horse” argument.

¹² All of these passages are given in full – with the Chinese text and an English translation – in Johnston/Wang 2019.

This is not a complete list. For example, there are references to GSL and his writings in Chéng Xuányīng's 成玄英 (fl. 630–660) commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ* and Yáng Liàng's 楊倞 (ninth century CE) commentary on the *Xúnzǐ*.¹³ Also, mention must be made of Xiè Jiàng 謝絳 (style: Xīshēn 希深, 995–1039), to whom both a preface to and a commentary on the *GSLZ* are attributed, although both are questionable. With regard to the commentaries and annotations mentioned in the *Táng* histories – that by Jiǎ Dàiyīn in the first instance, and by Chén Sìgǔ in the second – there is no reference to the *GSLZ* in the former's biography in the *Xīn Táng Shū*; we have been unable to track down Chén Sìgǔ.¹⁴ These commentaries are also mentioned in the *Tōng Zhì* 通志 (twelfth century CE).¹⁵ In addition, there is reference in the anonymous *Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 擬公孫龍子 (Probing into the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, in the *Wényuàn Yīnghuá* 文苑英華 [Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature]) to a work in one *juàn* comprising the six *piān* of the present *GSLZ*.

In the *DZ* text, there is an anonymous commentary. In the *Sìkù Quánshū* 四庫全書 (Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature, *vide infra*), there is the text with a preface and a commentary, both attributed to the aforementioned Sòng scholar Xiè Jiàng 謝絳. The consensus is that the preface may be attributable to him, but not the commentary; the latter may actually come from the commentaries mentioned in the *Jiù Táng Shū*.¹⁶ In modern editions in which the old commentary is included (e.g. Chén Zhù), it is simply referred to as *jiù zhù* 舊注 (“old commentary”). Xiè Xīshēn's preface is given in full in Wú Yùjiāng's modern edition of the *GSLZ*. In Xiè's biography in the *Sòng Shǐ*, there is, however, no mention of the *GSLZ*.¹⁷ In fact, uncertainty surrounds the sources of both the preface and the “old commentary”.¹⁸

1.4 The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* from the End of the Sòng to the Late Imperial Period

In the early part of this period, there were five notable contributions, as enumerated below:

¹³ See Wǔ 1983: 608–611.

¹⁴ The listings are in the *Jiù Táng Shū* 47, vol. 6, p. 2031. Jiǎ Dàiyīn's biography is in the *Xīn Táng Shū* 198, vol. 18, pp. 5649–5650.

¹⁵ See Loewe 1993: 288.

¹⁶ See J. E. Kandel, cited in Loewe 1993: 253–254, 256.

¹⁷ *Sòng Shǐ* 295, vol. 28, pp. 9842–9847.

¹⁸ See Wú 2001: introductory material.

1. Wú Lái's 吳萊 (1297–1340) *Dú Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 讀公孫龍子 (Reading the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*), included in his *Yuānyǐng Wú Xiānshēng Jí* 淵穎吳先生集 (Collected Works of Mr. Wú Yuānyǐng), as excerpted with a comment by Hú Dàoqīng 胡道靜.¹⁹
2. The earliest extant printed version of the *GSLZ* in the DZ of 1445/7, which includes the commentary sometimes attributed to Xiè Xīshēn and is the basis of the current standard version.
3. Yáng Shèn's 楊慎 (1488–1559) comments on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, included in his study notes (*Wàijí* 外集), quoted by Wǔ Fēibǎi.²⁰
4. The publication of Yáo Jìhéng's 姚際恆 (b. 1647) *Gùjīn Wěishū Kǎo* 古今僞書考 (Forged Books from Antiquity to the Present), in which he raises the possibility of the *GSLZ* being a late forgery, basing his argument on the absence of the work from the bibliographical chapter of the *Suǐ Shū*. The proposed explanation for this, now widely accepted, is that the work is included in the Daoist writings under the title of *Shǒubái Lùn*.²¹
5. Fù Shān's 傅山 (1607–1684) notes on the *GSLZ*. Fù was a Míng 明 loyalist, like Gù Yánwǔ 顧炎武, who expressed his admiration for him. He was both a practicing doctor and a scholar who, in his latter capacity, studied ancient texts including the *GSLZ*. He worked with his son Fù Méi 傅眉, who died just a few months before his father. Fù Shān's writings are preserved in two works – his *Shuāng Hóng Kān Jí* 霜紅龕集 (Works Collected in the Prayer Niche of Hoarfrost Dawn) and his *Sèlú Zá Zhù* 薈廬雜箸 (Miscellaneous Writings of [Fù] Sèlú).

In the later part of this period, there were two developments of particular note. First, the *GSLZ* was included in the *Sìkù Quánshū* 四庫全書 (SKQS) in six *piān*, without division into *juàn*. The early commentary, found in the DZ, was also included, and there is a brief account of the work in *Sìkù Quánshū Zǒngmù Tíyào* 四庫全書總目提要 (Abstracts for the *General Catalogue of the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*).²² Second, there were important textual studies undertaken by scholars associated with or influenced by the *kǎozhèng* 考證 (evidential research) movement. Four such men are listed below.

1. Chén Lǐ 陳澧 (1810–1882) was a scholar from Canton who, according to Momose, “may be regarded as the most brilliant among a group of Cantonese scholars who developed eclectic theories midway between Sòng

¹⁹ Hú 1934: 62–64.

²⁰ See Wǔ 1983: 630–631.

²¹ On this matter, see Indraccolo 2010: 95–100.

²² *Sìkù Quánshū Zǒngmù Tíyào*, vol. 3: 544–555.

Neo-Confucianism and the scholars of Hàn learning (following Gù Yánwǔ).²³ His commentary on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is preserved in the *Dōngshú Dúshūjì* 東塾讀書記 (Reading Notes of [Chén] Dōngshú).

2. Xīn Cóngyì 辛從益 has his *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Zhù* 公孫龍子注 (Notes on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*) in *Jìsī Zhāi Cáng Gǎo* 寄思齋藏稿 (Drafts from the Jìsī Studio) and *Yùzhāng Cóngshū* 豫章叢書 (Yùzhāng Anthology) – see *Qīngshǐ*, fasc. 377.²⁴
3. Yú Yuè 俞樾 (1821–1907) was a noted philologist and textual critic, following along the lines of Wáng Niànsūn 王念孫 (1744–1832) and Wáng Yǐnzhi 王引之 (1766–1834). All three made important observations on ancient texts. Yú Yuè's two works on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are his *Dú Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 讀公孫龍子 (Reading the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*) in *Chūnzài Táng Quán Shū* – 春在堂全書 (The Entire Collection of the Spring Hall) – Yú Lóu Zá Zuǎn 俞樓雜纂 (Miscellaneous Notes from the Yúlóu Villa) and *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Píngyì Bǔlù* 公孫龍子評議補錄 (Supplementary Entries for a Critical Discussion of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*) in *Zhūzǐ Píngyì Bǔlù* 諸子平議補錄 (Supplementary Entries for a Critical Discussion of the *Masters*).
4. Sūn Yíràng 孫詒讓 (1848–1908) was an important scholar of the late Qīng 清 period, particularly noted for his definitive edition of the *Mòzǐ* 墨子. His work on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Zháyí* 公孫龍子札迺, *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* Bookmarks, Resorted) is included in his *Zhūzǐ Zháyí* 諸子札迺 (*Masters* Bookmarks, Resorted).

1.5 The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* Post-1900

Over the past hundred or so years, there has been a considerable increase in the literature on the *GSLZ*, both in China and in the West (Japanese and Korean writings have not been examined). Apart from the general increase in academic activity, the following factors have contributed to this:

1. The recognition of the importance of the “School of Names” in the development of philosophy in pre-Qín China;
2. The endeavors of men like Hú Shì 胡適 (1891–1962) and Liáng Qǐchāo 梁啟超 (1873–1929) to find evidence of logical and scientific thought in early Chinese philosophy;

²³ See Hummel 1943–1944: 90–91.

²⁴ See *Qīngshǐ biānjí wēiyuánhui* 1961: 4580–4581 (‘Lièzhuàn’ 列傳, j. 163, ‘Xīn Cóngyì’ 辛從益).

3. The interest in comparing the writings of the “School of Names” generally, and the *GSLZ* specifically, with those of Western philosophy, both ancient (e.g. the Greek Sophists) and modern (e.g. philosophy of language).

Thus, with regard to the *GSLZ* itself, the work has been included in major collections, such as the *Sìbù Bèiyào* 四部備要 (SBBY, The Essentials of the Four Branches of Literature) and the *Cóngshū Jíchéng* 叢書集成 (CSJC, Complete Collection of Books from Various Collectanea), in the three *juàn*/six *piān* form with original commentary; there have been a considerable number of editions, both of the writings of the members of the “School of Names” and of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* specifically; there have been studies of individual *piān* and of the ideas expressed in these; and there have been translations into several European languages.

Fung Yiu-ming (Féng Yàomíng 馮耀明), in his very comprehensive bibliography, lists 122 books or articles on the *GSLZ*, being either editions of the whole work or studies and articles on one or more of the individual essays, published between 1918 and 2000.²⁵ Over 80 percent of these are post-1970. Notable inclusions are: Chén Guǐmiǎo 陳癸淼, Chén Zhù 陳柱, Fung Yu-lan (Féng Yǒulán) 馮友蘭, Hú Dàojìng 胡道靜, Jīn Shòushēn 金受申, Páng Pú 龐樸, Qián Mù 錢穆, Shěn Yǒudǐng 沈有鼎, Tán Jièfǔ 譚戒甫, Wáng Guǎn 王琯 (a.k.a. Wáng Xiàntáng 王獻唐), Wáng Qǐxiāng 王啓湘, Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百, Yáng Jùnguāng 楊俊光, and Zhōu Yúnyī 周雲之. Notable omissions are: Dīng Chéngquán 丁成泉 (1996), Móu Zōngsān 牟宗三 (1994), and Wú Yùjiāng 吳毓江 (published only in 2002). He also lists ninety-nine articles in English on aspects of the *GSLZ* and related matters. Over two-thirds of these are post-1970; a number of them relate the material in the *GSLZ* to aspects of Western philosophy.

1.6 Present-Day Editions of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

The present standard text of the *GSLZ*, as preserved in the DZ and the SKQS, the SBBY, the CSJC, and recently in the CHANT, comprises six *piān*, usually divided into three *juàn*. The *piān* are, in order: ‘Jǐfǔ’ (Storehouse of Traces), ‘Báimǎ Lùn’ 白馬論 (On White Horse), ‘Zhǐwù Lùn’ 指物論 (On Pointings To and Things), ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’ 通變論 (On Combination and Change), ‘Jiānbái Lùn’ 堅白論 (On Hard and White), and ‘Míngshí Lùn’ 名實論 (On Names and Entities). This division is retained in the majority of modern editions (for example, that of Wú Yùjiāng [2001]) and in translations. Several notable variations

²⁵ Féng Yàomíng 2000: 249–271.

(omitting the biographical ‘Jǐfǔ’ which is generally accepted as a later addition) are considered below. There are, inevitably, some textual issues, but these are not especially intrusive, as they are for example in the dialectical chapters of the *Mōzǐ*. There are also issues regarding the authenticity of the text, which are addressed in section 4 below.

2 Wǔ Fēibǎi’s Conclusions

Wǔ Fēibǎi, who ends his collection of 76 references to GSL and his work with a quote from Yán Kějūn’s 嚴可均 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Bá* 公孫龍子跋 (Postface on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*), draws the following conclusions, with which we largely concur.

1. There were two *Gōngsūn Lóng*s. One was a follower of Confucius. His style was Zǐshí 子石 and he was accustomed to speak of the *dào* 道 of discussion and disputation. He lived around the same time as Mò Dí 墨翟. The other was a native of Zhào and was a guest at the court of the Prince of Píngyuán. He was skilled in the hard/white and sameness/difference disputations. Previously he came and went between Yān and Zhào, and was opposed to warfare.
2. What is now transmitted as the book *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* was written by the earlier *Gōngsūn Lóng*, although some say it was written by the later *Gōngsūn Lóng*. They are equally possible, but now neither can be established. Historical materials prior to the Western Hàn do not say who wrote it, but on the whole refer to Zǐshí. Historical materials after the Western Hàn refer to the Six Kingdoms scholar of disputation and the guest of the Prince of Píngyuán as the author. (This theory is first seen in Huán Tán, but one cannot rely on what he says. The biographical chapter, the ‘Jǐfǔ’, for the most part agrees with Huán Tán.)²⁶
3. Things that can be identified about the later *Gōngsūn Lóng* are:
 - He was an expert adviser to Duke Móu 牟 of Wèi 魏.
 - He lived somewhat after Huì Shǐ, Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周, and Yǐn Wén 尹文.
 - He was of the Mohist persuasion and espoused pacifism.
 - That his style was Zǐbǐng 子秉 was a theory fabricated by Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英.
4. The work the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in fourteen *piān* was still preserved in the Hàn period, but by the Suí and Táng periods eight *piān* had been lost.
5. The present work, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, has annotations attributed to Xiè Xīshēn, but they are not by him. The notes are the old notes by the Táng scholars Chén Sīgǔ and Jiǎ Dàiyǐn, although it is not possible to tell what is Chén’s and what is Jiǎ’s.

26 On Huán Tán, see Johnston/Wang 2019: section 2.14.

6. In the Suí-Táng period, the name was changed to the *Shǒubái Lùn* 守白論 (Treatise on Preserving White). The Míng scholar Zhōng Xīng 鐘惺 also changed it to *Biàn Yán* 辯言 (Words of Disputation).

In these pieces of textual research regarding the book *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, and the historical material, having reached Yán's (Yán Kējūn), I stopped, not wishing to wear people out with historical material that is not necessarily reliable. In recent times, Wáng Guǎn 王琯 wrote the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Xuánjiě* 公孫龍子懸解 (Explaining Moot Points in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*), which is well referenced, has elegant and refined explanations, and is a really excellent work. Also, Chén Zhù, from Běiliú 北流, collected the notes of modern writers to create his *Jíjiě* 集解 (Collected Explanations), and this was also perfect. However, it was not really connected with historical material and so is not included.²⁷

3 The Order of the Chapters

In recent times, the following four scholars have, in their editions, changed the traditional order of the chapters dating from the fifteenth-century DZ version, as given above – i.e. 'Jǐfǔ' (JF), 'Báimǎ Lùn' (BML), 'Zhǐwù Lùn' (ZWL), 'Tōngbiàn Lùn' (TBL), 'Jiānbái Lùn' (JBL), and 'Míngshí Lùn' (MSL). A breakdown of these changes follows:

Tán Jièfǔ:²⁸ ZWL, BML, TBL, JBL, MSL.

Wǔ Fēibǎi:²⁹ MSL, ZWL, TBL, BML, JBL.

Móu Zōngsān:³⁰ MSL, BML, TBL, JBL, with the ZWL receiving brief and somewhat dismissive consideration separately in the introduction to his work, *Míngjiā yǔ Xúnzǐ* 名家與荀子.

Cheng Chung-ying:³¹ MSL, BML, JBL, TBL, ZWL.

Two particular points to emerge from comparison of these variations in order are (i) the varying relative importance placed on the MSL, and (ii) the issue of the significance – and indeed even the meaning – of the ZWL. Two comments from men who have seen fit to change the traditional order are as follows. Wǔ Fēibǎi writes:

²⁷ See Wǔ 1983: 626–628.

²⁸ Tán 2006.

²⁹ Wǔ 1983.

³⁰ Móu 1994.

³¹ Cheng 1997.

The sixth chapter in the original work has, in modern times, been moved to become the first. In fact, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as a book was, in ancient times, transmitted as a work in fourteen chapters, eight of which are now lost. Those preserved are only the following: ‘A Storehouse of Traces’, ‘On White Horse’, ‘On Pointings To and Things’, ‘On Hard and White’, ‘On Combination and Change’, and ‘On Names and Entities’ – six in all. I am of the view that within these six chapters, ‘A Storehouse of Traces’ was an introductory chapter written by someone of a later period and mistakenly incorporated as a true chapter. If we now look at the five chapters, the arguments form a single thread – branches and leaves, roots and trunk – which interrelate in a fruitful way. Even if there is a deficiency of eight chapters, this in no way harms the study of the system. In general terms, ‘On White Horse’ and ‘On Hard and White’ are on concrete (specific) matters. ‘On Pointings To and Things’ and ‘On Combination and Change’ are abstract explanations. If you interpret the meaning of ‘On Pointings To and Things’, you have a clear understanding of “white horse is not horse”. If you understand the purport of ‘On Combination and Change’, then “hard and white stone are two” is clearly apparent. When you come to ‘Names and Entities’, it is the foundational discussion of the two chapters, ‘On Pointing To and Things’ and ‘Conjunction and Change’. If one sees this point, then all discussions, true and false, can easily be understood. Therefore, the order is now rearranged as follows: first, ‘On Names and Entities’; second, ‘On Pointings To and Things’; third, ‘On Combination and Change’; fourth, ‘On White Horse’; fifth, ‘On Hard and White’. ‘A Storehouse of Traces’ is then added as a postface and not included as a true chapter.³²

And Cheng Chung-ying writes:

For a systematic understanding of Gongsun Long, I wish to present the following reordered sequence:

- (i) *Jifu*
- (ii) *Mingshi pian*
- (iii) *Baima pian*
- (iv) *Jianbai pian*
- (v) *Tongbian pian*
- (vi) *Zhiwu pian*

In this new order we can see how Gongsun Long sets out the goal of his project for rectifying names (ii) and how he starts to construct arguments and paradigms for his project in (iii), (iv) and (v) and finally comes to his theory of *zhi* 指 and *wu* 物 in (vi).³³

32 舊本第六，今移第一。按〈公孫龍子〉書，舊傳十四篇，今亡其八，存者唯〈跡府〉、〈白馬〉、〈指物〉、〈堅白〉、〈通變〉、〈名實〉六篇耳。竊疑此六篇中，〈跡府〉為後人序錄，廝入正篇。其餘五篇，皆〈公孫龍子〉原文，略有移易。今觀五篇，辭致一貫，枝葉根幹，交相扶疏。縱闕八篇，亦無害其為有系統之學。大抵〈白馬〉、〈堅白〉為具體之論證，〈指物〉、〈通變〉則抽象的說明。解〈指物〉之義，則「白馬非馬」之義明。達〈通變〉之旨，則「堅白石二」之情顯。至於〈名實〉則又〈指物〉、〈通變〉二篇之根本論。明此一論也，則一切正詭之論，皆可迎刃而解。故今改列〈名實〉第一，〈指物〉第二，〈通變〉第三，〈白馬〉第四，〈堅白〉第五。〈跡府〉則列為序錄，不入正篇。(Wü 1983: 510).

33 Cheng 1997: 145.

In our view, Cheng Chung-ying's reordering has much to commend it. Thus, the MSL, as an introduction, sets out the program for *zhèng míng* 正名; essays 2, 3, and 4 deal with possible or actual problems created by compound terms changing sense and reference (intension and extension), the role of sense perception in identifying compound entities and hence influencing naming, and also raise, without discussing them in detail, issues of ontology, epistemology and class, as well as the effects of combination and change in determining names. Essay 5 is, then, a concluding statement about concepts and percepts in relation to real things.

4 Authenticity

Several writers have questioned some or all of the essays of the *GSLZ*, arguing that they are not the work of the historical Gōngsūn Lóng, but rather of some later writer of the Wèi-Jìn 魏晉 or Six Kingdoms periods. The first of the serious doubters was probably Yáo Jìhéng 姚際恒 in his *Gǔjīn Wěishū Kǎo* 古今偽書考 (Examination on Forged Books from Antiquity to the Present). His primary argument was the absence of the work from the bibliographical chapter of the *Suǐ Shū*. On this point, it is now widely accepted that the work is, in fact, listed there, although not with the other *Míngjiā* works and with a different title – *Shǒubái Lùn* – as noted above. However, there is no author listed for this work.

A detailed recent analysis of the question of authenticity is provided by Fung Yiu-ming in his *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, published in 2000,³⁴ in which Western views, particularly those of A. C. Graham, are taken into account. He considers the matter under the following four headings:

- (i) Deficient but genuine (*cán zhēn shuō* 殘真說);
- (ii) Completely false (*quán wěishū* 全偽書);
- (iii) Intact and original (*wánběn shuō* 完本說);
- (iv) In disorder (*chànzá shuō* 羈雜說).

The first is clearly the majority view, at least among Chinese scholars. The second he associates with Yáo Jìhéng, referred to above,³⁵ and Huáng Yúnméi 黃雲眉;

³⁴ Féng 2000: 8–24.

³⁵ An interesting comment on Yáo Jìhéng appears in Hummel's *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, under the entry for Wāng Qǐshū 汪啓淑 (1728–1799). It reads as follows: “Two other early Ch'ing bibliophiles of Hangchow were noted for their achievements in textual criticism, namely: Yao Chi-hêng [Yáo Jìhéng] (b. 1647) and Sun Chih-tsu (1737–1801). Yao possessed, in addition to paintings and antiques, a collection of rare books of which the catalog is entitled *Hao-ku T'ang Shu-mu*, 4 *chüan* (reproduced in 1929 from an early manuscript copy). An

the third with Páng Pú 龐樸, who wrote a number of works on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* between 1974 and 1992; and the fourth with Yáng Jùnguāng 楊俊光 and Shěn Yǒudǐng 沈有鼎 among Chinese scholars, and A. C. Graham and Chad Hansen among their Western counterparts. To these last two, we might add J. E. Kandel who, “while accepting the argument that *piān* nos. 4–6 (i.e. TBL, JBL, and MSL) were written after 300 A.D., holds that they preserve authentic thought of the pre-Hàn sophists.”³⁶

Fung Yiu-ming opens his concluding remarks as follows:

With regard to whether the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is genuine or forged, we can conclude that there are four theories (as listed above). We have above considered each argument in turn and found there is insufficient evidence to decisively accept one theory or to reject the possibility of the others. But to speak generally, each theory has a different degree of possibility or probability. We consider that the possibility of the whole book being false is extremely low. This is because this theory’s main arguments – such as it being recorded in the *Hàn Shū* but not in the *Suí Zhì* 隋志 (The Literary Catalogue of the Book of Suí), that the ‘Jífū’ chapter is false, and that apart from the five (or six) chapters there is no interpretation – are all inadequate to establish proof that it is false. Next, the possibility of theories 3 and 4 being correct is rather higher than in the case of theory 2. Nevertheless, neither can be established beyond doubt. The proponents of these two theories must rely on certain previously established explanations and texts favourable to themselves, and although each of these may be internally consistent, they are not enough to negate the consistency of the opposing theory. In fact, the arguments for these two theories are mutually opposing – what weakens one strengthens the other. It is also possible through these [considerations] to see how the initial establishment of the two theories differed, and that the explanatory notes had differences, so it was difficult to establish unequivocally either one or the other. For example, in arguing for the “intact and original” theory, Dù Guóxiáng 杜國庠 quotes Zōu Yǎn’s 鄒衍 criticism of *Gōngsūn Lóng* [...].³⁷

Fung then continues by summarizing his arguments on several of the specific points, including particularly the supposed borrowings by a putative forger from the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, and the

exceptionally critical scholar, he refuted the traditional commentaries to the *Classic of Poetry*, and set forth his own views with a high degree of common sense, in a work entitled *Shih-ching T’ong-lun*, 18 *chüan*, written in 1705 and printed in 1837. He wrote commentaries to the other *Classics*, but these seem to have been lost. Yao was interested also in the genuineness of ancient books, or the detection of forgeries whose age or authenticity had not been adequately studied. He prepared a list of spurious works, entitled *Ku-chin Wei-shu K’ao* (Forgeries of Ancient and Modern Times), of which a re-punctuated edition, with notes by Ku Chieh-kang (see under Ts’ui Shu) was published in 1929. Though brief, it is one of the landmarks in Chinese historical criticism.” See Hummel 1943–1944: 811.

³⁶ See Graham in Loewe 1993: 255. The reference is to Kandel 1974: 220.

³⁷ Féng 2000: 22.

difficulties posed by the apparent discrepancy between the number of chapters recorded in the *Hàn Shū* and the number recorded in later works and found in the present text, finding these quite inconclusive, as we do.

His final paragraph reads, in full:

From the preceding analysis, one can know that Páng Pú's "intact and original" and Shěn Yǒudǐng's "in disorder" theories both have deficiencies and furthermore, that each offsets the other. There is, in fact, not enough to establish one or the other. To sum up, the traditional theory of "deficient but genuine" accords with the view that what are recorded as fourteen [chapters] developed into 6 [chapters], taking this to be an objective and factual historical occurrence, since we cannot find objective and reliable evidence to prove that the "fourteen [chapters]" of the *Hàn Shū* is false nor are there ample grounds for taking the presently available six chapters to be false. Otherwise, we cannot just lightly say that the "deficient but genuine" theory is wrong. So long as we do not have a decisive, or even a high probability argument to overturn the "deficient but genuine" theory, it must remain as the most reliable theory. The other three theories are really not able to substitute for it.³⁸

Although we agree wholeheartedly with Fung's analysis, particular attention needs to be given to A. C. Graham's thesis,³⁹ which is that only two of the five essays (namely BML and ZWL) and the opening section of a third (TBL) in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are genuine, while most or all of the other three (JBL, MSL, and the major part of TBL) are later forgeries from the Six Dynasties period. This thesis has been very influential among Western scholars, but it seems to have had little impact on their Chinese counterparts. We will deal with this matter only briefly here. In essence, Graham's argument has three components:

1. There are observable differences between the two-and-a-bit, supposedly genuine and the remaining three, presumed spurious essays. These differences are both general, in that the genuine essays are seen as significantly higher in quality, in terms of the structure and content of the argument, and specific, in that there are differences in the usage of certain words and phrases between the two groups. On the first point, Graham's assessment is quite subjective, and his negative comments on the three supposedly spurious essays would not be accepted by many commentators on the work. This particularly applies to the MSL. On the second point, the difference in certain usages, even where it reaches a level of significance (which would be difficult to define), might be taken as showing no more than that the actual author was different, but not necessarily of a different period. *Gōngsūn Lóng* is

³⁸ Fēng 2000: 24.

³⁹ As expressed in A. C. Graham 1957: 147–183.

credited with followers, and furthermore, many early Chinese philosophical works seem likely to be the product of different hands.

2. Later Mohist sources for the material of the supposedly spurious *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* essays. Important to this argument is Graham's stated assumption that *Gōngsūn Lóng* preceded the Later Mohists. There is no evidence for this. Indeed, both Huì Shī and *Gōngsūn Lóng* are identified in some ancient (Lǚ Shèng 魯勝) and modern (Hú Shì 胡適) sources as Mohists. In fact, it is hard to disagree with Wǔ Fēibǎi's comment: "In the study of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the *Mòbiàn* 墨辨, which was prior and which was subsequent cannot now be known."⁴⁰ One would also have to accept Graham's claim that some recognizably foolish person sought material in what appears to have been, at that time, an almost completely neglected text (the Later Mohist dialectical chapters) to supplement another text, also quite neglected, in a way that has convinced numerous scholars over many centuries. This is hard to swallow, to say the least!
3. External evidence. This includes taking as solid evidence the lack of mention of the *GSLZ* in a number of catalogues of literature compiled during the post-Hàn, pre-Táng period – taking references to the "hard-white" discussion to refer to the "white horse" argument, and Lǚ Shèng's comments on *Míngjiā* writings being lost – to be certain evidence of the absence of the *GSLZ* at that time (in the third century CE). However, there is no indication in Lǚ Shèng's introduction as to what the content of the 'Xíng Míng' he speaks of is. Moreover, there is no mention of the Mohist 'Dàqǔ' 大取 (Bigger Pick) and 'Xiǎoqǔ' 小取 (Lesser Pick) – does this mean they were lost too?

In short, there are problems with Graham's argument, which should mean that his thesis remains speculative at best – it is certainly not proven.

5 Conclusions

There are several general conclusions to be drawn from this brief review. In historical terms, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* has followed a somewhat similar course to the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ*, to which its subject matter is related. That is, it was clearly a significant treatise in pre-Hàn times, although it and its author were generally disparaged by rival philosophers, and particularly those of a Confucian persuasion. It seems to have then been largely neglected for many centuries, although

40 Wǔ 1983: 501.

there is a continuous record of it in the dynastic histories, as well as one surviving post-Hàn, pre-Qīng commentary by an unknown hand. Like the Mohist dialectical chapters, it was “rediscovered” particularly by the textual scholars of the Qīng period, although to judge by the number of works devoted to it during the late Qīng and early post-imperial years, it aroused less interest than the *Môzǐ*. As the twentieth century advanced, there was a steady trickle of studies on the work, some of the notable ones written by scholars who were interested in, and wrote on, the “School of Names” (including the Later Mohists) generally – men such as Sūn Yìràng, Hú Shì, Wǔ Fēibǎi, Wú Yùjiāng, and Tán Jiěfǔ, among others. In recent decades, there has been a considerable upsurge of interest in the work, somewhat matched by a similar interest in the Mohist dialectical chapters. Many of the recent studies, both Chinese and Western, look at the work in the light of modern developments in logic and the philosophy of language, with comparisons made to Western concepts and philosophers. Whether these later developments have brought clarity to the short essays of this remarkable and problematic work, or only further added to the confusion, is a moot point. Certainly they take the work out of its original context as a contribution to the pre-Hàn debate on names and entities/actuality, as well as related matters. In this regard, there is also the question of how serious a contributor Gōngsūn Lóng was to this debate, and specifically what relation he, and possibly his followers, had to the rather mysterious Later Mohists. There are also questions concerning the order of the essays and the authenticity of the work. On the first point, the traditional order is accepted, but the value of changing the order to facilitate the presentation of the author’s overall position is acknowledged. On the second point – authenticity – our view is that it is a genuine pre-Hàn work. All in all, despite the considerable attention the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* has enjoyed in recent years, many unanswered (and quite possibly unanswerable) questions still remain.

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Ian Johnston and Wang Ping

2 Notes on the Relationship between the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the Dialectical Chapters of the *Mòzǐ*

The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (*GSLZ*) is the only surviving pre-Qín text attributed to a member of the *Míngjiā* 名家 (“School of Names”), as defined by Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷 in the *Shǐjì* 史記 and subsequently catalogued in the bibliographical chapter of the *Hàn Shū* 漢書.¹ Following A. C. Graham’s 1957 paper, the view that approximately two and two-thirds of the five non-biographical chapters in the *GSLZ* are later forgeries has become widely accepted in the West, but it seems to have gained little or no traction among Chinese scholars.² The dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ* 墨子 (40–45, namely ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ A and B, and the Greater and Lesser Choosings) contain a substantial amount of material on the issues examined in the *GSLZ* and related matters. Despite the uncertainties of chronology and the textual difficulties that bedevil the Later Mohist chapters, an examination of the relationship between these two texts is an important aspect of the study of early developments in logic and the philosophy of language in China. Over the course of the twentieth century, several Chinese scholars have published texts and commentaries, or analytical studies of both of these texts – notably Tán Jièfǔ 譚戒甫 (1887–1974), Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百 (1890–1965), Wú Yùjiāng 吳毓江 (1998–1977), and Móu Zōngsān 牟宗三 (1909–1995). In the West, A. C. Graham (1919–1991) published a very detailed, if somewhat idiosyncratic study of the Later Mohist chapters, plus a number of papers on the *GSLZ*, while Cheng Chung-ying has published an important study of the overall work, plus papers on specific aspects.³

The aim of the present chapter is to summarize past and current views on the relationship between the two texts, focusing particularly on the work of the four Chinese scholars referred to above. After a brief consideration of the chronology of the *Míngjiā* in the pre-Qín 秦 period and of the terms *Míngjiā* and *Xíngmíngjiā* 刑/形名家, each of the chapters of the *GSLZ* will be dealt with in

1 *Shǐjì* 130, vol. 10: 3288–3292; *Hàn Shū* 30, vol. 6: 1736–1737.

2 See Féng 2000: 8–24 and Wang Ping and Ian Johnston, “The *Gongsun Longzi*: A Historical Overview” in this volume.

3 Tán 1964, 1981, 2006; Wǔ 1983; Wú 1993, 2001; Móu 1994; Graham 1957, 1978; Cheng 2000. For several papers by A. C. Graham and Cheng Chung-ying, see Vittinghof 2000: 168.

turn, looking at corresponding material in the Later Mohist chapters. The order of the *GSLZ* chapters will follow that given by Cheng Chung-ying.⁴

1 Chronology

The development of the *Míngjiā* is thought to have originated from Confucius (trad. 551–479 BCE) and Dèng Xī 鄧析 (trad. 545–501 BCE). In the case of the former, the issues were those of *lǐ* 禮, and the solution lay in the correction of names (*zhèng míng* 正名),⁵ while in the case of the latter, the issues were those of *fǎ* 法, and the solution lay in the formalization of reasoning and methods of argumentation. In the core chapters of his eponymous work, Mò Dí 墨翟 (traditional dates 468–376 BCE) was concerned, *inter alia*, with the process of presenting an argument and with the standards and rules for the verification of theories. “Later Mohists” may be taken as a general term to include all followers of Mòzǐ 墨子 who continued and developed his philosophy after his death; the period covered is from the early fourth century to the end of the Warring States period. There is written evidence of an early division into separate Mohist schools, but nothing substantial on the specific concerns of the separate schools, or which individuals or groups might have been responsible for the writings included in the dialectical chapters.⁶ It is these unknown men who have come to be termed “Later Mohists” in a more specific sense. The assumption made by Graham and others that this group of Later Mohists, if indeed it was a group, was later than Gōngsūn Lóng has no substantial foundation, nor is there information about any relationship with other schools or individuals. While there is quite a lot of information about the members of the “School of Names” in other early writings, there is very little about the Later Mohists as an entity, or who they were individually.

The Gōngsūn Lóng 公孫龍 held responsible for the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子是 thought to be the later of the two Gōngsūn Lóngs recorded in early records (i.e. 330–242 BCE), but there are suggestions that the earlier Gōngsūn Lóng, said to be a disciple of Confucius, was associated with some of the characteristic arguments of the extant work.⁷ In summary, it is impossible to define clearly the temporal relationship between the putative Later Mohists responsible for the dialectical chapters and Gōngsūn Lóng, who is taken to be the

⁴ See Cheng 1997.

⁵ See especially *Lúnyǔ* 論語 13.3; and Johnston and Wang (in press).

⁶ See Johnston 2010: xxii–xxv.

⁷ On the issue of “the two Gongsun Longs”, see Indraccolo 2010: 38–45.

author of the extant, eponymous work.⁸ The former, as is obvious from their writings, considered issues of language and logic relevant to the defense of the core Mohist doctrines, while the latter may have refined, collated, and perhaps added to some of the *biànzhě* 辯者 arguments already in existence. Whether there was any verbal or written exchange between the two cannot now be known. However, as will become apparent in the subsequent analysis, there was a common interest in issues of language and logic to a significant extent, although there were also areas of agreement and areas of disagreement.

In concluding these brief considerations, we should mention the biography of Lǚ Shèng 魯勝 in the *Jìn Shū* 晉書.⁹ This provides valuable early information on the Later Mohists and the *Míngjiā*, and it appears to be the last significant mention of these chapters prior to the Qīng 清 period. But it is tantalizingly brief! Following some basic biographical details and the comment on the loss of his writings (given below), the biography is taken up with the preface to his now-lost work on at least part of the Mohist dialectical chapters. Several points germane to the present discussion emerge from this.

First, the concern with names is traced to the Confucian text *Analects* 13.2, as it has been by many writers, including those of the modern era. Second, only the *Mò Jīng* 墨經 ('Canons' and 'Explanations' A and B) are specifically referred to; there is no separate mention of either of the two Choosings or Selections, 'Dàqǔ' 大取 (DQ, Bigger Pick) and 'Xiǎoqǔ' 小取 (XQ, Lesser Pick). Third, the 'Canons' are attributed to Mòzǐ himself, which may at least suggest an early date for them. Fourth, Huì Shī 惠施 and Gōngsūn Lóng are mentioned together as transmitting Mohist teachings. Fifth, the condemnation of the "School of Names" by Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 and Xún Kuàng 荀況 in particular is recorded. Sixth, several issues of particular relevance to the *Míngjiā* are listed: *jiān* 堅 and *bái* 白 ('hard' and 'white'), *yǒu* 有 and *wú* 無 ('existence' and 'non-existence'), *shì* 是 and *fēi* 非 ('this/not this', 'affirmation/negation', 'right/wrong'), *kě* 可 and *bù kě* 不可 ('admissible' and 'inadmissible'), and *tóng* 同 and *yì* 異 ('sameness' and 'difference'). Finally, Lǚ states that he has prepared a compilation of miscellaneous writings, which he titled *Xíng Míng* 形名 (Forms and Names), but there is no information on the source of the contents of this compilation.

⁸ Some of the issues are addressed by the authors of the paper on the history of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in the present work.

⁹ *Jìn Shū* 94, vol. 8: 2433–2434.

2 *Míngjiā* 名家 and *Xíngmíngjiā* 形名家

As mentioned above, the term *Míngjiā* appears to have been introduced by Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷 in the *Shǐjì* 史記 and has remained consistently in use since that time. The term *xíng míng* 形/刑名 (and therefore *Xíngmíngjiā*) is more problematic, not least because of the use of the two homophones of *xíng* 形/刑. Although to some extent the two terms (*Míngjiā* and *Xíngmíngjiā*) may seem to be used interchangeably, Tán Jièfǔ – who made an important contribution to the study of these matters, preparing two detailed works on the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ* and a study of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Xíngmíng Fāwēi* 公孫龍子形名發微) – makes a clear distinction within what is generally regarded as the “School of Names”, recognizing two ‘wings’ – the *Míngjiā* and the *Xíngmíngjiā*. The following two excerpts from his *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ Xíngmíng Fāwēi* give details of his concept of a “School of Forms and Names” (*Xíngmíngjiā*) separate from a “School of Names” (*Míngjiā*).

It is not now possible to determine when the School of Forms and Names arose. The ‘Tiāndào’ 天道 chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* simply quotes an old history, saying: “There are forms and there are names. Forms and names were things the ancients had, but they weren’t considered of primary importance. What was discussed was vague and general. It is very difficult to go back and get a grasp of the teaching.” Later, we see the *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策, the ‘Zhào 趙 Record’, has: “In the second year, Sū Qín 蘇秦 replied to the King of Qín 秦, saying: ‘Now the School of Forms and Names all say “white horse is not horse.”’

The three words, *xíng* 形, *míng* 名, and *jiā* 家, are first seen in this. “A white horse is not horse” is quoted many times in the ‘Storehouse of Traces’ chapter in *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s own work, and is undoubtedly the most important theory of the School of Forms and Names. At the time it spread rapidly. Kǒng Chuān 孔穿 alone, at the court of Prince Píngyuán 平原 of Zhào, was able to overcome him, forcing him into silent submission and withdrawal. In fact, the meaning contained in the two words *xíng* 形 and *míng* 名 is, with the benefit of the use of modern semantic associations, easily and clearly seen. Because all things must have a form, and then from this are given a certain definite name, [the school] was called “Forms and Names”. From this, one can realize that the School of Forms and Names only recognized the “forms” of things; they didn’t recognize the “reality” of things. They thought the form was the basis of the thing’s recognition, while the name was the expression of this form. If things have this form, then they have this name. If people seek a thing by means of a name, or seek a form by means of a thing, this is easily seen. If, however, it is necessary to seek the reality of a thing (a thing’s haecceity) by the name, it is very difficult to say what things ultimately are. For someone to be able to say, and for what he says to actually be able to achieve some

level, is a very difficult matter. So then, the reality of “the thing” is in the end impossible to ascertain – at best, we can only return to forms and names and that is all.¹⁰

The *Xíngmíngjiā* (“School of Forms and Names”) was one sect – fault-finding and convoluted, logic-chopping and without principles, and with theories that were difficult to grasp. In the Late Zhōu 周, only Gōngsūn Lóng and what he taught can in any way be regarded as a significant contribution. Nevertheless, the *Míngjiā* (“School of Names”) of the same period arose like a swarm of bees, but only lasted for several decades, and their teachings quickly ended. Along with the words of Yáng 楊 and Mò 墨, they filled all under heaven, but before long decayed and disappeared – which is hardly remarkable! Only the teachings (established statements) were deep and profound, but were difficult to understand thoroughly and link together, so at that time the study of them was ultimately relatively slight. Now the great part of this teaching is deficient and lost. The source from which it arose, as far as it can be examined and identified, is as follows. Before Gōngsūn Lóng, there was only one man – Dèng Xī 鄧析. Either a little before or all at the same time, there were five men: Yīn Wén 尹文, Tián Bā 田巴, Ēr Yuè 兒說, Huán Tuán 桓團, and Máo Gōng 毛公. Their successors were men like Qí Mǔzǐ 綦母子. Later, there were those who clarified the teaching: Huán Tán 桓譚 of the Hàn, Lǚ Shèng 魯勝 of the Jìn 晉, and Wáng Shīzhèng 王師政 of the Táng 唐 – three men in all. There were two men who practiced disputation – Dōngfāng Shuò 東方朔 and Yuán Yú 爰俞 of the Wèi 魏. There was one man who spoke of their discussions – Ruǎn Yù 阮裕 of the Jìn. There was one who verified their principles – Zhāng Yóucháo 張游朝 of the Táng. Among those who annotated their writings were Chén Sīgǔ 陳嗣古 of the Táng, Jiǎ Dàiyīn 賈大隱 of the Sòng 宋, Xiè Xīshēn 謝希深 of the Sòng, Fù Shān 傅山 of the Míng 明, and Chén Lǐ 陳澧 of the Qīng 清 – five men and that is all. In general, their published writings are much reduced. Nowadays, only six chapters of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, with the notes of Xiè, Fù, and Chén, are still in existence; the rest are all scattered or false. This is why trying to seek evidence is particularly difficult, and discussing and citing examples are not easy either. So I shall just bring out the essentials and use a table to illustrate them.¹¹

10 (i) 形名之家從何時起，今已不甚可考。惟〈莊子·天道篇〉引「古書」說：「有形有名。形名者古人有之，而非所以先也。」所論空泛，很難得到指歸。後見〈戰國策·趙策〉二載蘇秦對秦王說：「夫形名之家皆曰『白馬非馬』也。」形名家三字初見於此。白馬非馬，本書〈跡府〉引得很多，確是公孫龍所主張的形名學說。當時馳騁橫溢，孔穿特往趙平原君家想折服他。竟結舌大敗而歸。其實，形名二字的含義，若利用現代的語文作解釋，是容易清楚的。因為凡物必有形，再由形給它一個名，就叫「形名」。由是得知：形名家只認有物的「形」，不認有物的「實」。他以為「形」即是物的標幟，「名」即是形的表達；物有此形，即有此名。若人由名求物，由物求形，是易見的。若必由名而求物實，那個實究竟是什麼東西，很難說的；即或能說，而所說的究竟能夠達到什麼程度，還是很難的。然則「實」這個東西，終於不可捉摸，只好歸到形和名罷了。(Tán 2006: i-ii).

11 (ii) 形名一派，苛察繳繞，剝削無倫，說之難持者也。晚周唯公孫龍專其所學，以集大成，可稱極盛！然並世名家，詰難蜂起，僅數十年，其學遽息。衡以楊、墨言盈天下，不久衰喪，無足怪也。惟其立言深浚，通曉維艱，當時究其學者，或以較少。今載籍殘缺，不無湮沒，而淵源所自，就其確可考見者，公孫龍前，僅有鄧析一人；略前或同時者，尹文、田巴、兒說、桓團、毛公五人；門徒為綦母子之屬。後此明其學者，漢之桓譚，晉之魯勝，唐之王師政三人；習其辯者，漢之東方朔，魏之爰俞二人；道其論者，晉之阮裕一人；證其理者，唐之張游

In his analysis of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, Tán Jièfǔ lists forty examples of comparison between the two putative groups. In many of these, multiple passages are related. The number of passages from the various texts are as follows: from the *Míngjiā*, ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ 32; ‘Dàqǔ’ and ‘Xiǎoqǔ’ 7; *Zhuāngzǐ* 33 (‘Tiānxià’ 天下) 3; *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* Interlocutor 4; *Mòzǐ* ‘Fēi Gōng’ 非攻 1; and *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 22 (‘Zhèngmíng’) 1; and from the *Xíngmíngjiā*, *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* ‘Míngshí Lùn’ 名實論 7, ‘Jiānbái Lùn’ 堅白論 9, ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’ 通變論 7, ‘Zhǐwù Lùn’ 指物論 6, ‘Báimǎ Lùn’ 白馬論 4, and ‘Jīfǔ’ 跡府 1; *Zhuāngzǐ* ‘Tiānxià’ 16; *Zhuāngzǐ* other chapters 4; *Xúnzǐ* 4; *Lièzǐ* 列子 ‘Zhōngní’ 仲尼 6; *Yīn Wénzǐ* 尹文子 2; *Dèng Xīzǐ* 鄧析子 1; *Shǐjì* 1; Mohist dialectical chapters 1; and *Lǚ Shì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 ‘Zhèngmíng’ 正名 1. Thus, we can see that Tán Jièfǔ largely reserves the term *Míngjiā* for the Later Mohists, while *Xíngmíngjiā* is predominantly applied to Gōngsūn Lóng and those listed under *Míngjiā* in the *Hànshū* 漢書. His distinction certainly highlights the differences between the two putative groups, which are the subject of this chapter.

3 The Five Chapters of the *GSZ*

3.1 ‘Míngshí Lùn’ 名實論 (MSL)

Despite A. C. Graham’s peremptory dismissal of this essay as containing “nothing but the commonplace that words must be used in accordance with the things to which they refer, expressed in very obscure and sententious language”,¹² there are several commentators who accord the MSL considerable importance in Gōngsūn Lóng’s work. This even extends to placing it first in the sequence of essays (e.g. Wú Fēibǎi, Cheng Chung-ying), in that it sets out the method of making names correct. It is worthwhile to quote Wú Fēibǎi’s opening statement in full:

The sixth chapter in the old version has, in modern times, been moved to become the first. In fact, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as a book was, in ancient times, transmitted as a work in fourteen chapters, eight of which are now lost. Those preserved are only the following: ‘A Storehouse of Traces’, ‘White Horse’, ‘Pointing to Things’, ‘Hard and White’, ‘Conjunction and Change’ (“Understanding Change”), and ‘Names and Entities’ – six in all. I am of the view that within these six chapters, ‘A Storehouse of Traces’ was an introductory chapter, written by someone of a later period and mistakenly incorporated

朝一人；注其書者，唐之陳嗣古、賈大隱，宋之謝希深，明之傅山，清之陳澧，五人而已。凡諸纂述，今惟〈公孫龍子〉六篇及謝、傅、陳注尚存，餘均散佚。是以徵討獨難，論列匪易，爰繫綱要，立表明之。(Tán 2006: 104).

¹² For Graham’s negative comments on the three Gōngsūn Lóng essays he regards as late forgeries, see Graham 1957: 149, n3.

as a true chapter. The remaining five chapters are all *Gōngsūn Lóng*'s original writings, which have changed slightly. If we now look at these five chapters, the arguments form a single thread – branches and leaves, roots and trunk – which interrelate in a fruitful way. Even if there is a deficiency of eight chapters, this in no way harms the study of the system. In general terms, 'White Horse' and 'Hard and White' are on concrete (specific) matters. 'Pointing to Things' and 'Combination and Change' are abstract explanations. If you interpret the meaning of 'Pointing to Things', you have a clear understanding of "white horse is not horse". If you understand the purport of 'Combination and Change', then "hard and white stone are two" is clearly apparent. When you come to 'Names and Entities', it is the foundational discussion of the two chapters, 'Pointing to Things' and 'Conjunction and Change'. If one grasps this point, then all the discussions, true and false, can easily be understood. Therefore, the order is now rearranged as follows: first, 'Names and Entities'; second, 'Pointing to Things'; third, 'Conjunction and Change'; fourth, 'White Horse'; fifth, 'Hard and White'. 'A Storehouse of Traces' is then added as a postface and not included as a true chapter.

'On Names and Entities' discusses the method of correcting (rectifying) names and entities. What is the method? "Now being corrected is correcting what it is as an entity. Correcting what it is as an entity is correcting its name. If its name is correct, then it corresponds to (specifically designates) its being 'that' or 'this'." This says the objective of correction lies in being correct on this "entity (reality)". How are we correct on this "entity"? This lies in correcting its name. How do we correct its name? This lies in establishing a correspondence with what it is called. How do we establish a correspondence with what it is called? This lies in it corresponding to its being "that" or "this". What do we call correspondence to its "that" or "this"? I say: "If I call it 'that' and it is that, then it corresponds to that, and this calling works for that. If I call it 'this' and it is this, then it corresponds to this, and this calling works for this."^{13,14}

Also of note is *Wú Yùjiāng*'s introductory comment, which starts by drawing attention to the relationship between this essay and the Later Mohist writings.

13 This statement is a rephrasing – positive rather than negative – of the second and third sentences of section 2 of the 'Míngshí Lùn' in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

14 舊本第六，今移第一。按〈公孫龍子〉書，舊傳十四篇，今亡其八，存者唯〈跡府〉、〈白馬〉、〈指物〉、〈堅白〉、〈通變〉、〈名實〉六篇耳。竊疑此六篇中，〈跡府〉為後人序錄，屬入正篇。其餘五篇，皆〈公孫龍子〉原文，略有移易。今觀五篇，辭致一貫，枝葉根幹，交相扶疏。縱闕八篇，亦無害其為有系統之學。大抵〈白馬〉、〈堅白〉為具體之論證，〈指物〉、〈通變〉則抽象的說明。解〈指物〉之義，則「白馬非馬」之義明。達〈通變〉之旨，則「堅白石二」之情顯。至於〈名實〉則又〈指物〉、〈通變〉二篇之根本論也。明此一論，則一切正詭之論，皆可迎刃而解。故今改列〈名實〉第一，〈指物〉第二，〈通變〉第三，〈白馬〉第四，〈堅白〉第五。〈跡府〉則列為序錄，不入正篇。〈名實論〉者，論正名實之方法也。方法如何？曰「夫正者，正其所實也。正其所實者，正其名也。其名正，則唯乎其彼此焉。」謂正之目的，在正其實。如何正實？在正其名。如何正名？在唯乎其謂。如何唯乎其謂？在唯乎其彼此。何謂唯乎其彼此？曰：「謂彼而彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼。謂此而此，則唯乎此，其謂行此。」(Wü 1983: 510).

Wáng Guǎn 王瑄 says, *Mòzǐ*, ‘Explanations of the Upper Canons’ (A81), explains the meaning of names and entities very appropriately: “What something is called by is its name; what is called [by the name] is the entity.” *Míng* 名 is a term (noun) and is how reality is represented. Therefore, it is said to be how it is called. Entities are facts (realities), so they are the thing-in-itself bearing this name, and are therefore what it is called. Understanding the main purport lies in correcting names and correcting entities so a correspondence is sought between the two. A clearly established definition is a rule of the greatest importance. The Explanation (A81) says: “The pairing of name and entity is correlation.” The discussion created by Gōngsūn is almost the same as this in purport. It is not only the crux of the whole book; it is what the spirit of the school of correcting names depends on.¹⁵

In fact, the issue of *míng* 名 and *shí* 實 is given considerable attention in the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ*. There are, however, two pairs of ‘Canons’ (C) and ‘Explanations’ (E) that are of particular importance – A79 and 80, and B67 and 71 – and these are quoted in full below.

A79

C: 名，達，類，私。

E: 名：物，達也。有實必待文多也。命之馬，類也。若實也者必以是名也。命之臧，私也。是名也，止於是實也。聲出口，俱有名，若姓字灑。

C: *Míng* 名 (‘a name’) [may be] generalizing (*dá* 達), classifying (*lèi* 類), or particularizing (*sī* 私).

E: *Míng* (‘a name’): ‘Thing’ is generalizing. If there is an entity, it necessarily gets this name. Naming it ‘horse’ is classifying. If it is an entity like this, it is necessarily named by this. Naming someone Zāng 臧 is particularizing. This name stops at (is limited to) this entity. The words issuing from the mouth are all names – like the pairing of surname and style.

A80

C: 謂，移，舉，加。

E: 謂：命狗犬，移也。狗，犬，舉也。叱狗，加也。¹⁶

C: *Wèi* 謂 (‘to say’, ‘refer’) [may be] to transfer (*yí* 移), to refer/raise/pick out (*jǔ* 舉), or to apply/add (*jiā* 加).

¹⁵ 王瑄云：〈墨子、經說上〉「所以謂，名也。所謂，實也。」，釋名實之義最當。名為名詞，所以代表事實，故曰所以謂。實為事實，所以承當此名之本體，故曰所謂。通篇大旨即在正名正實，二者使求相符。明定界說，科律最嚴。〈經說〉曰：「名實耦，合也。」公孫龍造論殆同此悖。蓋不特全書關鍵，正名家精神之所寄也。(Wú 2001: 48).

¹⁶ This is Wú Fēibǎi’s version of the Explanation, in which he emends the first example – see his A77 in Wú 1983: 77–78.

E: *Wèi* ('to say', 'refer'): To call a pup a dog is to transfer. (To call something) "pup" or "dog" is to refer/raise/pick out. Scolding a pup is to apply/add.

B67

C: 循(彼)此循(彼)此與彼此同。說在異。

E: 彼：正名者彼此。彼此可：彼彼止於彼，此此止於此。彼此不可：彼且此也。彼此亦可：彼此止於彼此。若是而彼此也，則彼亦且此，此[亦且彼]也。

C: That this, that this, and that this are the same. The explanation lies in the differences.

E: That: In the correction of names, with respect to that and this [there are three cases].

- (i) That and this are admissible: 'That' [name] applies to that [entity] and stops at that [entity]; 'this' [name] applies to this [entity] and stops at this [entity].
- (ii) That and this are not admissible: 'That' [name] but this [entity].
- (iii) That–this is also admissible: That–this stops at that–this. In this case, with respect to that and this, there is also that as well as this, and also this as well as that.

B71 (Wū Feibǎi's B70¹⁷)

C: 惟吾謂，非名也，則不可。說在(佞)彼。

E: 惟：謂「是霍」可，而猶(同由)之非「夫(同彼)霍」也，不可。謂「彼是」是也。謂者毋唯乎其謂。彼猶(同若)唯乎其謂，則吾謂不行。彼若不唯乎其謂，則彼謂不行也。

C: If the response to what I say (call it) is not the name, then it is inadmissible. The explanation lies in 'that' (the converse).

E: Responding: To say "this *huo*" 霍 ('crane', 'a person's name') is admissible, but it is still not *huo* in general. To say "that" and "this" are "this" is inadmissible. What is spoken of does not correspond to what he says. If "that" corresponds to what he says, then what I say works. If "that" does not correspond to what he says, then what the other says does not work.

In the first pair, A79 identifies three different types of function for *míng* 名 – generalizing, classifying, and particularizing – while A80 defines *wèi* 謂, which is used

17 Wū 1983: 183ff.

extensively in the MSL 1 & 2. In the second pair of ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, B68 shows a clear correspondence with the MSL, insofar as the first two of the three instances given in the Explanation match the final two statements of the MSL 2, although they are phrased slightly differently. It must be noted, however, that the Canon for B67 is quite problematic, and also that an additional instance considering the applicability of “this” and “that” (*cǐ* 此 and *bǐ* 彼) is given in the Explanation. In B71, if one accepts the emendation of the head character (from 惟 to 唯), there is a close correspondence with the initial statement of MSL 2, the claim being that what is said (or predicated) of something must correspond to (specifically designate) the something in question in order for the saying “to work”. Unlike the MSL, the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ give specific examples.

Other ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ of relevance, in that they define or otherwise consider terms that are important in the MSL, are: A11 (*shí* 實), A31 (*jǔ* 舉), A51 (*zhǐ* 止), B1 (*zhǐ* 止), B3 (*wù* 物), B9 (*wù* 物), B32 (*míng* 名 and *shí* 實), B52 (*míng* 名 and *shí* 實), and B79 (*wù* 物). Although there are obvious similarities between Gōngsūn Lóng’s MSL and the Later Mohist writings, not least in their having a common objective in the matter of names and entities, there are some differences. These are analyzed by Wǔ Fēibǎi in his final remarks on the Gōngsūn Lóng essay, which begin as follows:

The main purpose of ‘On Names and Entities’ (MSL) is the correspondence of correct entities and correct names, and the correspondence of correct names and specific designations, which can be referred to as the extreme of skilled investigation. Nevertheless, if reference goes beyond the mark and adherence to it is excessive, then its failings reach to there being referring and yet no name. This results in it being impossible to reliably point out the entities of the world; names cannot collectively illustrate, and the way of names and entities is done away with. The excesses of correcting names come back to bring disorder to names. The excesses of correcting entities come back to no entities. This is what is called “being bogged down in trivial details and convoluted, causing people to be constrained and lose the goodness of what is true.” This is what they are referring to. Therefore, the Mohist Canon exposes it, saying: (B71).¹⁸

He then quotes B71, as given above, and continues as follows:

The Mohist breaks down the theory of “responding and calling is not naming”. It says that in the way of general disputation, “naming” and “calling” (referring) are of equal importance. (To the Chinese “School of Names” of ancient times, the distinction between naming and calling (referring) was of very great importance. People nowadays frequently cannot

18 〈名實論〉大旨，因正實而正名，因正名而唯謂，可謂精審之至。然謂之太過，持之太甚，則其弊至於有謂而無名。使天下之實不可確指，名不可共喻，而名實之道廢矣。正名之過，反致亂名。正實之過，反致無實。所謂「苛察繳繞，使人檢而善失真」者，其此之謂也。故〈墨經〉破之曰：(Wǔ 1983: 517).

comprehend this.) Naming is for what is common (the same); calling (referring) is for what is specific (singular, particular). For both sides – principal and opponent – resolution should be based on the common (shared) features of naming and not the specific (particular) features. Resolution does not come through calling, which refers to what only one has. Now naming is something principal and opponent together allow. Calling is something principal and opponent are mutually in opposition over. If there is not the mutual opposition of calling, then the *shì* 是/ *fēi* 非 of disputation does not arise. If there is no joint acceptance of the name, then the *shì/fēi* of disputation is not resolved. This is the application of “naming” and “calling”; neither should be neglected. Therefore, it is not possible to do away with part. “If the response to what I call it is not the name” says that the name I use responds and points to what I am calling and saying, and is not like naming, from which one can understand its class.

If this is so, then the way of discourse collectively illustrating is done away with. Therefore, [the Canon] says: “If the response to what I say (call it) is not the name, then it is inadmissible. The explanation lies in (the other).” *Bǐ* 彼 (the other) in the disputation is the opposite position.

The differentiation of *wèi* 謂 (calling) and *míng* 名 (naming) in one way is firmly established and in one way is not firmly established. It is firmly established in what is complete and does not change; it is not firmly established in what does not point out one thing. Therefore, it is said (B71E): “What is spoken of doesn’t correspond to what he calls it.” When you know the calling is not one calling, then the concept (theory) of “responding to what I call” (B71C) is not appropriate. If you take the other to be like corresponding to what he calls it, then there is opposition in the name which principal and opponent jointly allow, and yet the connection of the distinguishing discussion does not arise. If the other is like not corresponding to what he calls (says), then this is mutual opposition existing from discussion, and his theory cannot be established. Therefore, it also says: “If that corresponds to what he says, then what I call it does not work. If that does not correspond to what he calls it, then what the other calls it does not work.” These several statements are directed against the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s interpretation of “works for this, works for that” and dispose of it.

From the quotations given above, the Mohist dialectical chapters break down the theory of “corresponding calling is not naming” in order to see that the theory in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* of “works for this, works for that” is a partial truth.¹⁹

19 此墨家破「唯謂非名」之說。言凡辯之道「名」與「謂」並重。(名與謂之分，中國古代名家守之最嚴，今人往往不省。)名者所同，謂者所獨。主敵雙方當以「名」之所共有者為斷，不以「謂」之所獨有者為斷。蓋名者，主敵共許者也。謂者，主敵相違者也。無相違之「謂」，則辯論之是非不生。無共許之「名」則辯論之是非不決。此「名」與「謂」之作用，所以不可偏廢者也。「唯吾謂，非名他」者，言我所用之名，唯指我所謂者而言，非如名之可通於其類。

如是則談說共喻之道廢。故曰「唯吾謂，非名他，則不可，說在彼」。彼者，辯者對方也。「謂」與「名」之分別，一有固實，一無固實。有固實者，一成不易。無固實者，所指非一。故曰「謂者無唯乎其謂」。既知謂非一謂，則「唯吾謂」之說不當。以彼若唯乎其謂，則違主敵共

Wǔ then considers B67, on which he says:

This is also directed against Gōngsūn Lóng's "that that this this" statement, and does away with it. In fact, Gōngsūn Lóng only knew the separation of meaning of "that this is admissible" and "that this is inadmissible" and completely forgot the common meaning of "that this is also admissible." This is how his "corresponding and calling (specifically designating) is not naming" diverged from the ten thousand things.²⁰

Then we come to B32, which in his version reads as follows:

C: 域, 過名也, 說在實。

E: 域: 知是之非此也, 又知是之不在此也, 然而謂此「南」「北」, 過而以己為然。始也謂此南方, 故今也謂此南方。²¹

C: Yù (a region) is a "passing" name. The explanation lies in the entity.

E: Yù (a region): One knows "this" (shì 是) is not this (cǐ 此) and also knows "this" (shì 是) is not at this (cǐ 此). Nevertheless, one calls this (cǐ 此) south or north, having passed through and taken it already to be so. At first one called this (cǐ 此) the south, so now one calls this (cǐ 此) the south.

In relating this to Gōngsūn Lóng's paradox 「孤犢未嘗有母」 as transmitted in the *Lièzǐ*, Wǔ says:

On "the orphan foal never had a mother" [he says] "this is also not to know the error of "Yu is a 'passing name'".²²

Wǔ Fēibǎi's concluding comments on the MSL are as follows:

For the most part, each of Gōngsūn's discussions separate forms and names to debate white horse, differentiate hard and white, and argue for two [in the stone] – his faults all have their source in the *wéi wèi* 唯謂 (corresponding and calling) of 'On Names and Entities'. If you understand this one discussion, then Gōngsūn Lóng's whole book can be easily understood in its entirety. It does not matter that only five chapters are still preserved. Even if the other eight chapters remained in existence, it would also be possible

許之名, 而辯論之關係不生。彼若不唯乎其謂, 則是自論相違, 而其說不能成立。故又曰「彼若唯乎其謂, 則吾謂不行。彼若不唯乎其謂, 則彼謂不行也」。此數語, 針對〈公孫龍子〉「行彼行此」之義而發。

以上係引〈墨經〉破「唯謂非名」之說而詳釋之, 以見〈公孫龍子〉「唯行乎此, 唯行於彼」之說之為偏謬也。(Wǔ 1983: 517–518).

²⁰ 此亦針對公孫龍彼彼此此之言而發。蓋公孫只知道有「彼此可」「彼此不可」之分別義, 而忘卻有「彼此亦可」之共通義。此其所以「唯謂非名」, 偏離萬物也。(Wǔ 1983: 518).

²¹ His version is essentially similar to the "standard" version.

²² 「此亦不知『域過名』之誤」。(Wǔ 1983: 519).

to take this viewpoint. Nevertheless, it would still be acceptable to call Gōngsūn Lóng a great master of [discussing the issue of] *wéi wèi* 唯謂 (corresponding and calling).²³

In summary, the Later Mohists address the issue of *míng* and *shí* (as well as *wéi* 唯 and *wéi hū* 唯乎) in several ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ (in A79 and 80, and in B32, 67, and 71), some or all of which are referred to by Wǔ Fēibǎi, Wú Yùjiāng, and Tán Jiěfǔ. Our overall impression is that Graham’s thesis that the MSL is unimportant and was fashioned later by some unknown person is at best improbable and deflects attention from an important component in the relationship between the *GSLZ* and the Later Mohist dialectical chapters.

3.2 ‘Báimǎ Lùn’ (BML)

Below is Wú Yùjiāng’s introduction to the BML, which mentions some of the correlations with Later Mohist writings.

In this chapter, one statement – “white horse is not horse” – is repeatedly analyzed, from which we see that the *Míngjiā* (“School of Names”) investigated the meaning and usage of the correction of names and entities to disclose how ordinary people habitually thought about things in an ambiguous and confused way. The view handed down was that the original text had errors and was in disarray. Now, according to Chén Jǐngyuán, not a single character should be added, removed, or changed; the text has been carefully compared and is considered correct. The whole chapter can be divided into five parts/sections, each one ending with either “white horse is not horse” or “white is not horse”, creating a coherent statement, with the divisions of the sections being clear and the general tone appropriate. The true meaning of the *GSLZ*’s “white horse discussion” can truly become very clear from this.

The section in the [Later] Mohist ‘Lesser Choosing’ (‘Xiǎoqǔ’) on “killing a robber is not killing a person” has a similar form of argument to “white horse is not horse.” The Later Mohist ‘Explanations of the Canons’ has the statement, “loving a black man is different from loving a man”, (A97), and then, in the ‘Storehouse of Traces’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, Confucius is quoted as follows: “A Chǔ 楚 man is different from what is called a man” – these can all be taken as proving the correctness of the differentiation of saying “a white horse” from saying “a horse”. Now in comparing a horse to a white horse, a horse is a universal; a white horse is a particular. Horse is a single name; white horse is a compound name – they are obviously different and should not be lumped together in a single

23 大率公孫各論，離形名而辯白馬，別堅白而主二石，其弊皆原於〈名實論〉之「唯謂」。通此一論，則公孫全書皆可迎刃而解。不特現存之五篇而已。使八篇尚在者，亦作如是觀可也。然則雖謂公孫龍為「唯謂論」之巨子也可。(Wǔ 1983: 519).

statement. Nevertheless, to exaggerate the difference between a universal and a particular, between a single and a compound name, and to deny that white horse and not white horse are both one part of horses, is also going too far.²⁴

There is, in fact, very little in the Later Mohist writings specifically related to the BML. In the ‘Lesser Choosing’ (XQ), however, there are two apparently unequivocal statements in opposition to Gōngsūn Lóng’s position. These are as follows:

XQ5: 白馬，馬也。乘白馬，乘馬也。驪馬，馬也。乘驪馬，乘馬也。

A white horse is a horse. To ride a white horse is to ride a horse. A black horse is a horse. To ride a black horse is to ride a horse.

XQ9: 一 [白] 馬，馬也。²⁵馬或(白)[白]²⁶者，二馬而或白也，非一馬而或白。

A white horse is a horse. With respect to some horses being white, there are (at least) two horses and some are (one is) white, not one horse and some are (one is) white.

Other related references include A79, where “horse” is identified as a classifying name, and also the very problematic B81, which, despite the absence of any mention of either “horse” or “white”, Tán Jiěfū takes to be about the white horse argument, with “this-this” representing the *Míngjiā* position (i.e. a white horse is a horse) and “this-not this” representing the contrary (i.e. white horse is not horse), which he describes as stating the *Xíngmíngjiā* position, indicating Gōngsūn Lóng.²⁷ There is also ‘Greater Choosing’ (‘Dàqǔ’) 9, which appears to state the contrary position (i.e. a white horse is a horse), but the text here is very uncertain. In the expression of this apparently divergent position, the Later Mohists do at least give the impression of writing to rebut Gōngsūn Lóng’s claim, although it could be the other way around.

24 本篇就白馬非馬一辭反復剖析，以見名家審正名實之義例，以破世人籠統混淆之痼習。傳本文有錯亂，今依據陳景元本，不增一字，不減一字，不改一字，審校移正。全篇共分五大段，每段皆以「白馬非馬」或「白者非馬」作為結語。段落分明，語氣拍合。〈公孫龍子、白馬論〉真相由此可以大白。〈墨子、小取〉篇「殺盜非殺人」論式與「白馬非馬」相同。

〈墨子、經說〉上篇「異愛黑人於愛人」，本書〈跡府〉篇引仲尼「異楚人於所謂人」，皆可以證明異白馬於所謂馬之正確。蓋馬與白馬對比，馬為共相，白馬為別相，馬為單名，白馬為複名，差異顯然，不應混為一談也。然將共相別相之間、單名複名之間差異誇大，否認「白馬與非白馬俱為馬之一部份」，則又過矣。(Wú 2001: 7).

25 Most modern commentators accept Wáng Yǐnzhī’s suggestion that this repeated statement be omitted. Tán Jiěfū, however, retains it and emends *yī* 一 to *bái* 白, as in parentheses above. Wǔ Fēibǎi retains the four characters and adds “二馬，馬也” here as well.

26 There is general acceptance of Bì Yuán’s emendation of *zì* 自 to *bái* 白.

27 Tán 1964: 349–350.

Wǔ Fēibǎi offers a somewhat different interpretation. He identifies a chronological sequence in the development of the white horse debate, which places Gōngsūn Lóng's argument as a response to earlier views. He finds possible antecedents in the work of several individuals, including Mencius (*Mencius* VIA.3 and 4), Huì Shī 惠施, Yīn Wén 尹文 (*Yīn Wénzǐ* 尹文子), Ēr Yuè 兒說 (*Hán Fēizǐ* 韓非子), and Sū Qín 蘇秦 (*Zhànguó cè* 戰國策). Of particular relevance in the present context, he refers to several instances in the Later Mohist dialectical chapters: first briefly in the 'Dàqǔ' 9, 'Xiǎoqǔ' 9, and B3, and then in a more detailed fashion, utilizing the terms *jiānmíng* 兼名, *biémíng* 別名, and *gòngmíng* 共名, beginning by referring to B66, his version of which follows:²⁸

一、兼名。〈墨經下〉曰：「牛馬之非牛與可牛同，說在兼。」〈說〉曰：「『牛馬非牛也』，未可。『牛馬牛也』，未可。曰『牛馬非牛』，則或可或不可。而曰『牛馬牛也』，未可，亦不可。且『牛』不二，『馬』不二，而『牛馬』二。則牛不非牛，馬不非馬，而『牛馬非牛非馬』，無難。」

1. Compound Name: The Mohist 'Canons' B 66 says:

C: "Ox-horse not being ox and possibly being ox are the same. The explanation lies in the joining (combination)."

E: "Ox-horse is not ox" is never admissible. "Ox-horse is ox" is never admissible. Saying "ox-horse is not ox" is then sometimes admissible and sometimes inadmissible. And yet, saying "ox-horse is ox" is never admissible and not inadmissible. Moreover, if "ox" is not two and "horse" is not two, and yet ox-horse is two, then "ox is not not-ox", "horse is not not-horse", and "ox-horse is not ox and not horse" is without difficulty.

Wǔ Fēibǎi goes on to comment:

Ox-horse is a compound name. In the 'Rectification of Names' chapter of the *Xúnzǐ*, it states: "If a single name is sufficient to make something understood, then use a single name. If not, then use a compound name." A compound name combines two names into one name. For example, ox-horse is one name. It combines ox and horse and calls it this. "Not-ox" refers to the name of ox-horse; it does not signify ox and mean [this]. "Ox is admissible" refers to the name of ox-horse; it signifies ox and means this. The two together become a partial raising and cannot be a complete name. Therefore, [the Canon] says: "Ox-horse not being ox and ox being admissible are the same. The explanation lies in 'compound' [joining, combining]."

Gōngsūn Lóng's "white horse is not horse" and the Mohist Canon's "ox-horse is not ox" are one and the same style of argument, with only minor adaptation (rejecting and accepting). Now I place these forms side by side to clarify the places of sameness and difference, and accepting and rejecting.

²⁸ This is B65 in Wǔ 1983: 177–179. It differs from our version, as given in Johnston and Wang (in press), Section 3.4A.

1. The Mohist Canon: “Ox-horse is not ox.” Explanation: “Ox-horse is not ox is never admissible; ox-horse is not horse is never admissible; ox-horse is ox is never admissible and also not admissible; ox-horse is horse is never admissible and also not admissible.”

2. The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*: “White horse is not horse.” Explanation: “White horse is not white is admissible; white horse is not horse is admissible; white horse is white is not admissible; white horse is horse is not admissible.”

The explanation of the relationship between *Gōngsūn Lóng* and the Mohist Canon’s “ox-horse is not ox” is from one aspect, they are the same, but from the other aspect, they are different. If you set them up, they are admissible; if you break them down, they are deniable. In one way to be admissible and in one way deniable makes for an impure example. Nevertheless, there is their acceptance as a compound (combined) name – this much is very clear. It is like saying: “White horse is horse and white. Horse and white is horse.” This is its verification. This is how *Gōngsūn Lóng*’s “white horse is not horse” discussion benefitted from [adopting] a compound name.

Differentiating name: A compound (combined) name is something the ancients in many cases based on the application of two names of equal qualities. For example: father-mother; older brother-younger brother; left-right; ox-horse and other such names. If this name was in one part obscure and in one part clear, then a differentiating name could be used to make it relatively acceptable. (What *Yīn Wén* raised as “good ox” is an example of this.) *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, in the ‘Rectification of Names’ chapter, says: “Although the ten thousand things are many and various, there are times when we want to partially raise something. Then we call them (refer to them as) ‘things’ (wù 物). ‘Things’ is a name of great generality. If we go on and generalize this, generalizing what is already generalized, we reach a point where there is no more generalizing; after this we stop. There are also times when we wish to partially raise something; therefore, we call them ‘birds and animals’. Birds and animals’ is a large differentiating name. If we go on and differentiate this, differentiating what is already differentiated, we reach a point where there is no more differentiating; after this we stop.” The Mohist Canon says: “*Míng* 名 (a name) [may be] generalizing (*dá* 達), classifying (*lèi* 類), or particularizing (*sī* 私).” The Explanation says: “‘Thing’ is generalizing. If there is an entity, it necessarily gets this name. Naming it ‘horse’ is classifying. If it is an entity like this, it is necessarily named by this. Naming someone *Zāng* is particularizing. This name stops at (is limited to) this entity.”

What the Mohist Canon calls a “generalizing name” is equivalent to the *Xúnzǐ*’s “large general name”. A “particularizing name” is equivalent to what the *Xúnzǐ* calls the “reaching a point where there are no more differentiations and afterwards coming to a stop” of the differentiating name. A “classifying name” then advances and retreats between generalizing and particularizing, and there is separation of large and small. For example, “animal” is one name. When compared to “thing”, it is differentiating; when compared to “horse”, it is generalizing. “Horse” is one name. When compared to “animal”, it is differentiating; when compared to “white horse”, it is generalizing. In summary, what generalizing names generalize must have differentiating names; what

differentiating names differentiate, generalizing names do not necessarily have. For example, “animal” must have the character (*dé* 德) of “thing”, and yet “things” do not necessarily all have the character of “animal”. “White horse” must have the form of “horse”, and yet “horses” do not necessarily all have the color of “white horse”. This is the distinction between generalizing and differentiating names. Gōngsūn Lóng says: “If you seek a horse, yellow and black horses both can be used to respond. If you seek a white horse, yellow and black horses cannot be used to respond. Only a white horse can be used to respond.” This is the meaning. This is where Gōngsūn Lóng benefitted from adopting a differentiating name in his “white horse is not horse” discussion.²⁹

In summary, two possible interpretations present themselves: (1) The simple statements of the Later Mohists could be taken as a rebuttal, even a peremptory dismissal, of Gōngsūn Lóng’s position – *Míngjiā* refuting *Xíngmíngjiā* in *Tān Jiěfǔ*’s terms; or (2) the Later Mohist texts could be seen as a reminder of the uncertainty surrounding the chronology of these texts and their putative authors.

29 「牛馬」，兼名也。〈荀子、正名論〉曰：「單足以喻則單，單不足以喻則兼。」兼名者，合兩名而為一名也。譬如「牛馬」一名，合牛與馬而謂之也。非牛者，謂牛馬之名，非指牛而言。可牛者，謂牛馬之名，指牛而言。二者同為偏舉，不能盡名。故曰：「牛馬之非牛，與可牛同。說在兼。」

公孫龍之「白馬非馬」，與〈墨經〉之「牛馬非牛」，同一論式，而略有去取。今并按列其式以明異同取舍之處。

1. 〈墨經〉「牛馬非牛」說：牛馬非牛 – 未可；牛馬非馬 – 未可；牛馬牛也 – 未可亦不可；牛馬馬也 – 未可亦不可

2. 〈公孫龍子〉「白馬非馬」說：白馬非白 – 可；白馬非馬 – 可；白馬白也 – 不可；白馬馬也 – 不可

公孫龍於〈墨經〉「牛馬非牛」之說，正面同而負面異。立則可之，破則否之。一可一否，為例不純。雖然，其有取於「兼名」，則甚顯著。如言「『白馬』者，馬與白也。馬與白，馬也。」是其證。此公孫龍白馬非馬論之有取於「兼名」者也。

二、別名。兼名者，古人多以限於兩名等量之稱。如「父母」「兄弟」「左右」「牛馬」等名是。若其名一玄一察，則以用別名者為較適。(如尹文所舉「好牛」之例是。)〈荀子、正名篇〉曰：「萬物雖眾，有時而欲遍舉之，故謂之物。物也者，大共名也。推而共之，共則又共，至於無共然後止。有時而欲偏舉之，故謂之鳥獸。鳥獸也者，大別名也。推而別之，別則又別，至於無別然後止。」〈墨經〉曰：「名：達、類、私。」〈說〉曰：「物，達也。有實必得之名也。命之馬，類也。若實也者，必以是名也。命之臧，私也。是名也，止於是實也。」

〈墨經〉所謂達名，當〈荀子〉之大共名。私名，當〈荀子〉所謂「至於無別而後止」之別名。類名，則進退於共別之間，而有大小之分者也。譬如「獸」之一名，對「物」為別，對「馬」為共。「馬」之一名，對「獸」為別，對「白馬」為共。凡共名之所共者，別名必具有之。別名之所別者，共名不必具有之。如「獸」必具有「物」之德，而「物」不必具有「獸」之德。「白馬」必具有「馬」之形，而「馬」不必具有「白馬」之色也。此共名、別名之辨也。公孫龍曰：「求馬，黃黑馬皆可以應。求白馬，黃黑馬不可以應，唯白馬乃可以應耳。」是其義。此公孫龍白馬非馬論之有取於「別名」者也。(See Wü 1983: 548–555 for the complete introduction).

3.3 ‘Jiānbái Lùn’ (JBL)

In this essay, the difference between the Later Mohists’ and Gōngsūn Lóng’s positions is made apparent by the Interlocutor expressing the former. This is well illustrated by Tân Jiěfǔ’s introductory comments on this dialogue:

This chapter also follows a question and answer form, and makes a start from the interlocutor’s idea. When we look into this meaning, he says, if white color combined with horse form does not make a horse, and yet you must say “white horse”, then how is it inadmissible to take a hard nature, white color, and stone form to be three? Admissible is like saying it can be accepted. Nevertheless, Gōngsūn Lóng takes it to be inadmissible. He says there is “separation of hard and white”.

The separation of hard and white was also one of the major theses maintained by the *Xíngmíngjiā*. Their statements were often found scattered in the works of other philosophers. Consider the statement in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, in the ‘Rifling Trunks’ chapter: “the confusion of hard and white”. In the *Shìwén* 釋文, it states that *xié huá* 頡滑 refers to the difficulty of establishing order. In the ‘Xú Wúguǐ’ 徐無鬼 chapter, there is: “the confusion of there being an entity”. The *Shìwén* quotes Xiàng (Xiù) as saying, “*xié huá* 頡滑 refers to being erroneous and confused”. Also, in the *Xúnzǐ*, ‘The Achievements of the Ru’ chapter has: “The sameness of hard and white is separated and divided.” Saying “mixed up and confused”, and saying “separated and divided” are both old explanations of the character *lí* 離 (separate).

In the white horse theory, the *Míngjiā* speak of the white being separate, while the *Xíngmíngjiā* say there is no separation. In the hard/white theory, the *Míngjiā* say there is no separation, while the *Xíngmíngjiā* say there is separation. Back and forth they go in their contrary views; it is hard to find anything matching this in ancient or modern times.

In this chapter, Gōngsūn Lóng particularly quotes the *Míngjiā* theory, taking these to be statements to resolve the interlocutor’s difficulties, and seeks to explain their purport. Now if you examine the statements of the interlocutor’s difficulties, they are all in the four chapters of the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. Those of modern times are in many cases confused and take them as one. In reciprocally verifying this theory, they are a thousand *lí* apart.³⁰

30 本篇亦問答體，即以或人之意發端。揣或人之意，以謂白色合馬形不為有馬，而必曰白馬，則堅性、白色、石形，何獨不可以為三？可乎，猶言可也。然公孫龍以為不可，謂之為「離堅白」。

離堅白，亦形名家所持最大論題之一，其語常散見於諸子之各書。惟〈莊子·胠篋篇〉作「頡滑堅白」，〈釋文〉「頡滑，謂難料理也。」而〈徐無鬼篇〉有「頡滑有實」之語，〈釋文〉引向云：「頡滑，謂錯亂也。」又〈荀子·儒效篇〉：「堅白之同分隔也。」言頡滑，言分隔，皆即離字舊註。

白馬說，名家言離白，而形名家言不離；堅白說，名家言不離，而形名家言離。翻其反而，古今罕匹。

Aspects of the “hard and white” argument are raised in a considerable number of ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ – more than twenty. The most important are A66–68 and B3, 4, 14, 15, and 36. The topic is also mentioned in ‘Dàqǔ’ (DQ), DQ14. The early B series of ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, particularly those concerning “hard and white”, are beset with textual uncertainty. In his analysis, Wǔ Fēibǎi gives the following six instances (his versions of the text are given in all cases; the numbering follows our version, with his numbers in parentheses):³¹

A67 (A64)³²

C: 堅、白，不相外也。

E: 堅：得二，異處不相盈。相非，是相外也。³³

C: Hard and white do not exclude each other.

E: Hard [and white]: Different positions do not fill each other. Not being each other – this is excluding each other.

A68 (A65)³⁴

C: 攬，相得也。

E: 攬，尺與尺俱不盡。端與端俱盡。尺與端或盡或不盡。堅白之攬，相盡。體攬不相盡。

C: To coincide is both obtaining (occupying the same space).

E: To coincide: With a line and a line, the coinciding of both is not complete. With a point and a point, the coinciding of both is complete. With a line and a point, the coinciding is complete with respect to one and incomplete with respect to the other. The coinciding of hard and white is mutually complete. The coinciding of parts is not mutually complete.³⁵

B4 (B5)³⁶

C: 不可偏去而二，說在見與值³⁷、一與二、廣與脩、堅與白。

E: 不：見不見離。一二必相盈。廣脩相函。堅白不相外。

公孫此篇，特引名家之說以為客難之辭，反覆駁詰，求申其指。今考客難之辭，皆在〈墨子·經說〉四篇中；近人多混而一之，互證其說，相去千里。(See Tân 2006: 45–46).

31 Wǔ 1983: 565–567.

32 Wǔ 1983: 55–59.

33 Wǔ Fēibǎi has 堅 as the head character of the Explanation instead of the more usual 堅[白] of the “standard” version. The addition of *bái* 白 follows Sūn Yíràng.

34 Wǔ 1983: 59–60.

35 Wǔ Fēibǎi’s version is the same as the “standard” version.

36 Wǔ 1983: 116–118.

37 Wǔ Fēibǎi reads *zhí* 值 as *jiàn* 見 (Wǔ 1983: 116).

C: Even where it is not possible to set aside a part, there are two. The explanation lies in “seeing both together”, “one and two”, “length and breadth”.

E: The seen and the not-seen are separate; one and two necessarily fill each other; length and breadth contain one another; hard and white do not exclude each other.³⁸

B36 (B36)³⁹

C: 於一：有智焉，有不智焉。說在存。

E: 於：石，一也。堅、白，二也，而在於石。故有智焉，有不智焉，可。

C: In one [thing] there is the known in it and there is the not-known in it. The explanation lies in existing.

E: In: A stone is one; hard and white are two and are in the stone. Therefore, “there is the known in it and there is the not-known in it” is admissible.⁴⁰

B15 (B14)⁴¹

C: 一不堅白。說在盈。

E: 一：無堅得白，必相盈也。無白得堅，必相盈也。

C: One is not hard and white. The explanation lies in filling.

E: One: Without hard, one gets white; they necessarily mutually fill. Without white, one gets hard; they necessarily mutually fill.⁴²

DQ 44.14⁴³

苟是石也白，敗是石也盡，與白同。是石也雖大，不與大同。

If this stone is white and you break this stone up completely, its whiteness is the same. Although this stone is large, the same does not apply to its largeness.⁴⁴

On the basis of these six instances, Wǔ Fēibǎi writes:

The above six passages are found in the Upper and Lower Mohist ‘Canons’, as well as the ‘Dàqǔ’; all are writings which support the view of hard and white filling, while diametrically

³⁸ Wǔ Fēibǎi has two changes to the Canon: 俱 replaces the second 見, and 堅與白 is added.

³⁹ Wǔ 1983: 147–148.

⁴⁰ Wǔ Fēibǎi’s version is the same as the standard version, apart from the use of *zhì* 智 instead of *zhī* 知 twice in the Canon and twice in the Explanation.

⁴¹ Wǔ 1983: 129.

⁴² In the Canon, Wǔ Fēibǎi adds 一不 at the start and emends 因依 to 盈. In the Explanation, he reads 無 as 無, and not as 撫, as a number of commentators do; he also adds the final eight characters.

⁴³ Wǔ 1983: 417.

⁴⁴ Wǔ Fēibǎi’s only change is to place the second comma after 盡 rather than 也.

opposing the “separationist” view. When it comes to the theories of the two sects, which is partial and which is true? See my previous work, *Mò Jīng Jiě gù* 墨經解故, in which I briefly argue about this in the section on hard and white not being mutually exclusive. That can be used as a reference.⁴⁵

Móu Zōngsān gives the following comment on A67:

The meaning of the Explanation of the Canon seems to be like this. “Dwelling in different places” is like white snow and hard stone; in these it is admissible to say the hard and white do not “mutually fill”. Rather, they mutually negate and exclude each other. If they are together in one stone, they must mutually fill each other, mutually attain, and mutually complete. (“Mutually attain” and “mutually complete” are the terms used in the Mohist Canon and Explanation above.) This seems to be going to change the mutually excluding and not mutually excluding of hidden or not hidden and become existing or not in a different place spatially. “Different places” is to mutually exclude; “not different places” is not to mutually exclude. This is not what the questioner means here by “not mutually excluding”. Based on the view of the hidden and not hidden, even if things do not exist in different places spatially, Gōngsūn Lóng can still say something is hidden and concealed. Even if they do exist in different places spatially, the questioner can still say something is not hidden and concealed. Therefore, we know that what the questioner says here about “not mutually excluding” has nothing to do with whether the two things exist in the different places spatially or not.⁴⁶

Wú Yùjiāng provides this note on B36:

The two qualities of hard and white are both within the stone. By seeing, one speaks of knowing the white, but not knowing the hard; by touching, one speaks of knowing the hard, but not knowing the white. Nevertheless, no harm is done to seeing the whole of the hard, white stone. Therefore, [the Canon] states: “In the one thing there is the known in it, and the not known in it is admissible.”⁴⁷

Finally, Tán Jiěfǔ offers an interesting analysis of the very problematical final Canon and Explanation B (B81 in our numbering) in relation to both the BML and the JBL. His version is quoted below, followed by his comments on these two Gōngsūn Lóng essays.

45 以上六條，見〈墨子〉〈經上下〉及〈大取〉，皆主「堅白盈」，與離派為針鋒相對之文。至於二家之說孰偏孰正，見作〈墨經解故〉於堅白不相外條曾略辯之，可參考。

46 此〈經說〉之意似是如此：「異處」若白雪堅石，此堅白可謂不相盈，相非，相外。若在同一石，則必相盈，相得，相盡。（相得相盡，依〈墨經〉上及〈經說〉上之詞語說。）此似是將隱不隱之相外不相外轉而為空間之異處不異處；異處相外，不異處不相外。此非此處問者所說「不相外」之意。若依隱不隱言，即使空間不異處，公孫龍仍可說其隱藏。即使空間異處，問者仍可說其不隱藏。故知此處問者所說之「不相外」與空間之異處不異處無關也。（Móu 1994: 161）。

47 堅白兩性俱在石中，以視言知白不知堅，以拊言知堅不知白，然無害於堅白石之具觀，故曰「於一有知焉，有不知焉可。」 See Wú 1993: 579, note 220.

B81

C: 不是而是同。說在不殊。⁴⁸

E: 不：是是，則是且是焉。今是，是於是而不是於是，故「是不是」。是不是，則是而不是焉。今是，不是於是而是於是，故「是」與「是不是」同說也。

C: Not this and this are the same. The explanation lies in “not different”.

E: Not: (i) If there is “this-this”, then there is “this” as well as “this” in it.

(ii) Now with “this”, there is “this” in “this” and “not this” in “this”; therefore, there is “this-not this”.

(iii) If there is “this-not this”, there is “this” and “not this” in it.

(iv) Now with “this”, there is “not this” in “this” and “this” in “this”; therefore, “this” and “this-not this” are explained together.⁴⁹

Tán has the following to say about BML:

(i) The *Míngjiā* say, “White horse is horse” which is “this-this”. Its conclusion then becomes “this as well as this”.

(ii) The *Xíngmíngjiā* say, “White is not horse.” “White horse” already becomes “this-not this”, and “not horse” still becomes “not this in this”, and the conclusion then becomes “this-not this”.

(iii) The *Míngjiā*’s “white horse is horse” is said to be “separating the white” and also is “this-not this”. Now “white” is already partly going away, so it really becomes “this and not this”.

(iv) The *Xíngmíngjiā* say, “White horse is not horse”; “not horse” already becomes “not this in this”. But this is said to be “not separating white” and is also termed “preserving white”, and yet also becomes “this in this”. This already sinks down into the midst of the same explanation in “this” and “this-not this”.⁵⁰

Furthermore, Tán comments on the JBL as follows:

(i) The *Míngjiā* say, “Hard, white stone is three” which is “this-this”. This has a clear distinction between the hard quality, the white color, and the stone form – three things – and is “this as well as this”.

⁴⁸ This is Tán Jiěfǔ’s emendation of the original 州, which most commentators read as 週邊 (all around).

⁴⁹ Tán 1964: 348.

⁵⁰ (i) 名家謂「白馬為馬」即「是是」，其結論乃成「是且是」。(ii) 形名家謂：「白馬非馬」，「白馬」已為「是不是」，而「非馬」卻為「不是於是」，其結論乃成「是不是」。

(iii) 名家之「白馬為馬」謂為「離白」亦即「是不是」，蓋「白」已偏去，確為「是而不是」矣。

(iv) 形名家謂「白馬非馬」，「非馬」已為「不是於是」，但謂為「不離白」，亦名「守白」，卻又成為「是於是」，此已陷入於「是」與「是不是」同說之中焉。(Tán 1964: 349–350).

- (ii) The *Xíngmíngjiā* say: “Hard, white stone is two.” Hard, white stone then becomes “this in this”, and two then becomes “not this in this”. Therefore, it becomes “this-not this”.
- (iii) The *Míngjiā* say, “Hard and white are two and are in one stone”, which is to say, “Hard and white are not separated”. The term becomes “hard and white filling” and also becomes “this-not this” as well as “this and not this”.
- (iv) In the *Xíngmíngjiā*’s “Hard white stone are two”, the “two” become “not this in this” and the other’s assertion of “separating hard and white”, even though “hard and white are two” and “white and stone are two” also still become “this in this”. This also sinks down into the midst of the same explanation in “this” and “this-not this”.⁵¹

It would seem, then, that the Later Mohist writings and Gōngsūn Lóng’s JBL consistently advance quite opposing views on the subject of “hard and white”, although the matter is contentious. Graham, for example, claims that the Gōngsūn Lóng essay is a late forgery utilizing material from the relevant ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ – material which, moreover, was not understood by the putative forger! To summarize (disregarding Graham’s claim), Gōngsūn Lóng’s position is that there are two possible forms of perception of the hard white stone. One is by vision as a white stone, and the other is by touch as a hard stone. Because the two are the work of different sense modalities, there is “separation”. Moreover, they are “hidden” in that the non-appropriate sense modality cannot perceive the other quality, although the mind can make the synthesis. For Gōngsūn Lóng, then, the issue arises as to whether these attributes (hard and white) have an existence independent of the stone, or of any other body in which they are manifest. For the Later Mohist, there are three things in the hard white stone. Although not explicitly stated, the question of how these things are perceived is irrelevant to the reality. There is the stone (substance), and there are the two attributes (hard and white) which are coextensive throughout the stone – that is, they “fill” the stone – but there must be a stone for them to “fill”. These opposing positions obviously have important ramifications which, in Western terms, involve issues relating to substance and attribute, to the ontological status of universals, and to questions of epistemology.

51 (i) 名家謂「堅白石三」即「是是」，分明具有堅性、白色、石形之三，即「是且是」。(ii) 形名家謂「堅白石二」，「堅白石」即為「是於是」，而「二」卻為「不是於是」，故成「是不是」。(iii) 名家謂「堅白二而在一石」，謂為「堅白不離」，名為「盈堅白」，亦為「是不是」，即「是而是不是」。

(iv) 形名家之「堅白石二」，「二」既為「不是於是」，而彼主張「離堅白」，即「堅白石」與「白石二」，卻又成為「是於是」，此亦陷入於「是」與「是不是」同說之中矣。(Tán 1964: 350).

3.4 ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’ (TBL)

In simple terms, this essay appears to be about the combination or conjunction of single entities to form classes, the criteria for class membership, and whether or not, in the various classes or combinations, the constituents preserve their own individual identity in some way. There are three distinct sections within the essay. The first concerns the combination of two elements – the numbers one and two and the directions right and left. The second concerns the grouping of certain domestic animals – ram, ox, horse, and fowl – into classes. The third concerns the combination of various colors. This third section reads somewhat differently from the first two, leading some to question whether it may be a later addition. Different scholars have given different emphases to the connection between this essay and the Later Mohist dialectical chapters. Some examples are as follows:

- (i) Wǔ Fēibǎi: Section 1 – A2, A46, B3, B4, B7, and B12. Section 2 – B65. Section 3 – none.
- (ii) Tán Jiěfǔ: Section 1 – B3 and B7. Section 2 – B12 and B65. Section 3 – A89, XQ5 and XQ9.
- (iii) Qián Mù: Section 1 – B7. Section 2 – B6, B12, and B65. Section 3 – A87, A96, B1, B3, B61, DQ14, DQ20, and XQ9.
- (iv) Móu Zōngsān: Section 2 – B65 and B66.
- (v) Wú Yùjiāng: None.
- (vi) A. C. Graham: In linking Section 2 with B65, Graham takes the view that all of Sections 2 and 3 and perhaps the last part of Section 1 are a later forgery from the Six Dynasties period, created by an unknown person who misunderstood the Later Mohist dialectical chapters.

The two ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ of particular importance for Section 2 are given in full below:

B65

C: 狂舉不可以知異。說在有(不可)。

E: 狂：牛與馬惟異，以牛有齒馬有尾，說牛之非馬也，不可。是俱有，不偏有偏無有。曰：牛之與馬不類，用牛[有]角，馬無角，[以]是類不同也。若[不]舉牛有角，馬無角，以是為類之不同也，是狂舉也。猶牛有齒，馬有尾。(或不非牛而非牛也，可。則或非牛或牛而牛也，可。)⁵²

⁵² See Johnston/Wang 2019: Section 3.4A, note 428, on these two problematic sentences.

C: “Wild raisings” are inadmissible as a means of knowing differences. The explanation lies in “having” (or in their being inadmissible).⁵³

E: “Wild”: Ox and horse are certainly different, but to take “ox has incisors”, “horse has tail” as an explanation of “ox is not horse” is inadmissible. These are what both have, and not what one has and one does not have. If you say “ox and horse are not of a class” on the basis of ox having horns and horse not having horns, this is the class not being the same. But if you do [not] raise “ox has horns, horse does not have horns” as the basis for the classes not being the same, this is wild raising. It is like “ox has incisors, horse has tail”. (If sometimes “not not-ox and not-ox” is admissible, then sometimes “not-ox and ox” is admissible.)

B66

C: 不可牛馬之非牛，與可之同。說在兼。

E: [Not]: 或不非牛而非牛也，可。則或非牛或牛而牛也，可。故曰：「<牛馬>非牛也」，未可。 <牛馬>牛也未可，則或可或不可。而曰：「<牛馬> 牛也未可」，亦不可。且牛不二，馬不二，而 <牛馬> 二，則「牛不非牛」，「馬不非馬」，而「<牛馬> 非牛非馬」，無難。

C: The grounds for taking “ox-horse is not ox” being inadmissible and being admissible are the same. The explanation lies in the joining (combination).

E: [Not]: If it is admissible that some are not ox is not ox, then some are not ox and some are ox and ox is [also] admissible. Therefore, it is never admissible to say that “ox-horse is not ox”, and it is never admissible to say that “ox-horse is ox”, since it is admissible of some but inadmissible of others. And to say “ox-horse is ox is never admissible” is also inadmissible. Furthermore, if ox is not two and horse is not two, but ox-horse is two, then “ox is not not-ox”, “horse is not not-horse”, and “ox-horse is not ox and not horse” are without difficulty.

Any conclusions drawn from a comparison between *Gōngsūn Lóng*’s ‘*Tōngbiàn Lùn*’ and the Later Mohist dialectical writings must remain tentative, given not only the discrepancies in relation to the creatures and criteria considered, but also the textual difficulties in the Later Mohist chapters and the uncertainty about chronology discussed above. It is hardly surprising that several important contributions listed above embody quite conflicting views. Both *Qián Mù* and *Wǔ Fēibǎi* pay close attention to the connection between the ‘*Tōngbiàn Lùn*’ and the Later Mohist dialectical writings, the former especially in his

⁵³ Included in parentheses is the translation if *bù kě* 不可 (inadmissible) is incorporated into this Canon.

commentary on Section 3 of the ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’ and the latter in his strongly presented view that the argument in the ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’ is primarily about change in relation to the *míng/shí* 名/實 nexus. Tân Jiěfǔ finds evidence of conflict between the two positions along the lines of *Míngjiā* versus *Xíngmíngjiā*, as elsewhere. The detailed consideration given by Mǒu Zōngsān is utilized by Cheng Chung-ying in his analysis of the essay in relation to modern views of concept and class. Graham’s view, while not accepted here, has been influential and must be taken into account. As things stand, then, our present position is that there is a connection between the two writings, which include areas of both agreement and disagreement. What follows are excerpts from four of the analyses considered.

First, we turn to (i) Wǔ Fēibǎi. What follows are his opening remarks on Gōngsūn Lóng’s TBL:

Understanding change is understanding the change of name and entity. The meaning of this and the essay ‘On Names and Entities’ (‘Míngshí Lùn’) make each other clear. The ‘Míngshí Lùn’ says: “If you say (predicate) ‘that’, and yet ‘that’ does not correspond to (specifically designate) ‘that’ (the entity), then ‘that’ is an instance of saying (predicating) not working. If you say (predicate) ‘this’, and ‘this’ does not correspond to (specifically designate) ‘this’ (the entity), then ‘this’ is an instance of saying (predicating) not working.”

This says, saying “this” works for “this”, and saying “that” works for “that”. If you have already called something “that”, you must not subsequently call it “this”. If you have already called something “this”, you must not subsequently call it “that”. On the whole, if an entity changes, then the name changes with it. You must not take the “old entity” and the “new entity” as being identical to them both. For example, if the name is “two”, it signifies the combination of two “ones”. Then we call it “two” and we do not again call it “one”. On another occasion, we divide two to attain ones, but it is appropriate to say of these ones that they are already not the ones that constituted the two. This is the main point of the ‘Míngshí Lùn’ and the ‘Tōngbiàn Lùn’.

“Two is not one” is in fact the meaning of the Mohist Canon and Explanation Lower Part (B): “When two are joined, the ones are lost; when they are not joined, the ones are preserved.” On many occasions in each of Gōngsūn Lóng’s discussions, the Mohist ‘Canons’ are taken to be in opposition. Only in this chapter is there mutual clarification. As now recorded in the Mohist Canon, the meaning of “when two are joined, the ones are lost” is in what follows: Referring to one part being cast aside, no definition is affirmed. The Explanation says: “If two [ones] are joined, the ones are lost”, not joined ones are preserved; part goes and doesn’t exist. There is this entity and afterwards we refer to it. If there is not this entity, then we do not refer to it. It is better to give it meaning, as in a loan character. If we call it “this”, then “this” is the definite meaning; if we

call it something else, then “this” is not the meaning. If it is not the meaning, then we don’t report it.^{54,55}

[...]

Calling (referring) is naming. “This” is an entity; “definitely this” is a definite entity. (For the meaning of “definite entity”, see *Xúnzǐ*, ‘Rectification of Names’, 22.6.) This is the way of naming it and what is used to designate the entity. If the entity is not preserved, then the name leaves it. Now if the naming is not complete, “this” is the name and it does not necessarily stop at this entity. When it comes to the name being complete, this name must stop at this entity. For example, if “two” is the name, it signifies (points to) two and speaks of it. If you take away one, reducing the two and preserving one, you must only refer to this as one, and must not speak of this as two, because the reality that was two is already lost. Since this entity is lost, then there is not this name. Therefore, [the Explanation] says: “When the two [ones] are joined, the ones are lost; when they are not joined, the ones are preserved.” Part going is harming. If you harm one of two, this is saying part goes. If you diminish its ones, then it is not two. If part of what is joined goes, then it is not joined. Therefore, it says: “If part goes, it does not exist.”

54 This is Wǔ Fēibǎi’s B4, in which the Explanation includes part of that for B3 in the “standard” version (this being a very complicated and problematical Canon and Explanation). The full translation of the “standard” Explanation for B3 is as follows: C: Things “use up” the same name. (For example), “to be in two minds” and “to contend”, [“to nurture” and] “to love”, “to eat” and “to call”, “being white” and “being blind”, “being beautiful” and [“being cruel”], “man” and “sandals”. If one of the pair is set aside, in naming it, it is what it inherently is. The explanation lies in the reason/criterion. E: The same name: Both “contend” but not both “are in two minds” is the example of “being in two minds” and “to contend”. One’s offspring and one’s liver and lungs are related to “nurture” and “love”. *Jú* 橘 and *máo* 茅 are for “feeding” and “calling”, respectively. Most of a white horse is white; most of a blind horse is not blind; this is “white” and “blind”. Being termed *lì* does not necessarily mean beauty; being termed *bào* does not necessarily mean cruel. Being deemed “wrong” by others is not being “wrong”. Being deemed “a brave man” is not being deemed “a man”. Being deemed “shoes” when linked to “buying clothes” is being “shoes”; this is “man” and “shoes”. If one of two is lost, it is not joined with the one remaining. If a part is gone, it is not there. What is there is the entity, and afterwards one speaks of it. What is not an entity is not spoken of. It is not like “flower” and “beautiful”. If one speaks of “this”, then “this” is inherently beautiful. If one speaks of something else, then “this” is not beautiful. If one does not speak of it, then it is reported on.

55 通變者，通名實之變也。其意與〈名實論〉相互發明。〈名實論〉曰：「謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行。謂此而此不唯乎此，則此謂不行。」蓋言此之謂行乎此，彼之謂行乎彼。既已謂之彼，不得復謂之此，既已謂之此，不得復謂之彼也。大致以「實」變則「名」與之俱變，不得復以「故實」與「今實」同一加減。譬如「二」之為名，指兩「一」之合而言，既謂之「二」，不復謂之「一」也。他日分二得一，但當言其一，又不得以曾經為二之一體，而冒二之名也。此名實通變之大例也。「二無一」，即〈墨經說下〉「二與一亡，不與一存」之義。公孫各論，多與〈墨經〉為敵，唯此篇則相互發明。今錄〈墨經〉「二與一亡」之義於後：一，偏棄之謂，無固是也，說在固。〈說〉曰：二與一亡，不與一存，偏去未有。有之實也，然後謂之。無之實也，則無謂也。不若假與義。謂是則是固義矣，謂他則是非義。無謂則無報也。(Wǔ 1983: 531).

The 'Tōngbiàn Lùn' says: "Does two comprise ones? The reply is: Two does not comprise ones." So although you say two is two ones joined, you must then say it is two and must not refer to it as two ones joined. Conversely, if you say it has ones, you must also not refer to it as two. This is the explanation of "part going away is not two". The Canon says: "Referring to part going away, there is not a definite "this". The explanation lies in being definite."⁵⁶

In there being an entity, there is what it is called. If there is no entity, there is not what it is called. In the case of the entity not being two, and yet still saying it is two, this is referring to it as not referring, and is not appropriate. Therefore, the Explanation says: "There is this entity and afterwards one refers to it. If there is not this entity, then one does not refer to it." Giving it a meaning (such as a loan word) refers to an assumed definition. The name is not a definite entity, and yet there is agreement to use the name. Thus, [the Explanation] says: "It is better to give it a meaning." If the meaning, although borrowed, nevertheless is agreed upon and established by convention, and we call it this name, then it points to (signifies) this entity. If you transfer it to refer to another entity, then you must no longer use it to signify this entity and say it still has this name. Therefore, the Explanation says: "If you call it this, then this is the definite (fixed) name. If you call it something else, then this is not the meaning." This is to say, if you refer to it as "this" and it is "this", then the referring works for "this". If you call it "that" and it is "that", then the referring works for "that", but cannot work for "this". For example, if you use the name "two", you can call it the combination of two ones, but at another time you can call it the separation of two ones. But then you must not again use the name "two". *Wèi* 謂 is equivalent to *bào* 報 (reporting, stating). *Bào* is like *yìng* 應 (responding, corresponding). If you call out "one", then one is the entity that corresponds to it. If you call out "two", then two is the entity that corresponds to it. Name and entity correspond. If there is no entity, then there is no name. If there is no name, then there is no entity. Therefore, [the Explanation] says: "If there is no referring, there is no reporting." By quoting the Mohist Canon above, this clarifies the meaning of "if part goes away it is not referred to". This clarifies the meaning of the original statement, "two is not one". This apart, the meaning and the original chapter (TBL) validate each other and also add to the explanation of what follows.⁵⁷

56 This paragraph refers to Wǔ Fēibǎi's B4, which is a modified form of the "standard" version B3.

57 謂，名也。是，實也。「固是」，即「固實」。(義見〈荀子、正名〉) 名之為道，所以命實。實既不存，名則去之。方名之未成，是名也，不必止於是實也。及名既成，是名也，必止於是實也。譬如二之為名，指二而言。若以一減二存一，只得謂之一，不得謂之二也，以其二之實已亡矣。既亡其實，則無其名。故曰：「二與一亡，不與一存」。偏去，損也。損二之一，是曰偏去。二損其一則無二，兼去其偏則無兼。故曰「偏去未有。」 〈通變論〉曰：「二有一乎？曰：二無一。」蓋謂二雖兼有兩一，但既謂之有二，即不得謂之一也。反之，若既謂之一，亦不得謂之二。此「偏去無二」之說。〈經〉曰：「一偏去之謂，無固是也。說在固。」

有實者，有所謂。無實者，無所謂。既無二之實，而猶謂其有二，是謂其無謂者也，不當。故〈說〉曰：「有之實也，而後謂之。無之實也，則無謂也。」

假與義，謂假定界說也。名無固實，約之以命，故曰「不若假與義」。

The following five ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ are quoted as they are provided in Wǔ Fēibǎi. The numbering is the same as in our version. Page references to Wǔ Fēibǎi’s text of the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ are given following each Canon and Explanation.

A46:

C: 「損，偏去也。」

E: 「損：偏也者，兼之體也。其體或去或存，謂其存者損。」

C: Decrease is a part leaving.

E: [Decrease:] A part is part of a whole. Of its parts, some leave and some remain. Decrease is said of what remains. (WFB, A43)⁵⁸

A2: 「體，分於兼也。」〈說〉曰：「體，若二之一，尺之端也。」

C: A part is a division of the whole.

E: A part: For example, one is a part of two; a point is a part of a *chi* 尺 (a measured length). (WFB, A49)⁵⁹

B7: 「偏去莫如少，說在故。」〈說〉曰：「俱一無變。」

C: In a part going away, there is no adding or subtracting. The explanation lies in the original.

E: Both ones do not change. (WFB, B6)⁶⁰

Wǔ Fēibǎi comments on these passages as follows:

Gù 故 is equivalent to jiù 舊. In ones joining in two, one is a base number and two is a compound number. Reducing two’s ones is therefore called “a part going away”. Two’s reducing its ones is then speaking of a compound number, making it look less.

義雖假借，然約定俗成，謂之是名，則指是實。若轉謂他實，則不得更指此實，而謂尚是有名。故曰：「謂是則是固義矣，謂他則是非義」。言謂此而此，則其謂行此；謂彼而彼，則謂行彼而不復行此也。譬如用二之名，既謂兩一之合，他日謂兩一之分，即不得復用而之名也。謂，報也。報，猶應也。呼一則一之實應之，呼二則二之實應之。名與實應，無實則無名，無名則無實。故曰「無謂，則無報也」。

以上引〈墨經〉「偏去無謂」之說，以明本篇「二無一」之義。此外，義與本篇相參證者，亦附錄於後。(Wǔ 1983: 531–533).

⁵⁸ Wǔ 1983: 40–41.

⁵⁹ Wǔ 1983: 47.

⁶⁰ Wǔ 1983: 118.

Nevertheless, in speaking of a base number, one is definitely established. Therefore, it says, “both ones don’t change”. This case is in accord with the meaning of “one is not left; left and right do not change” in Lóng’s text.⁶¹

We then turn to another Canon and Explanation:

B4: 「不可偏去而二，說在見與值、一與二、廣與脩、堅與白。」〈說〉曰：「見、不見離。一、二不相盈。廣、脩相函。堅、白不相外。」⁶²

C: Even where it is not possible to set aside a part, there are two. The explanation lies in “seen and not-seen”, “one and two”, “length and breadth”, “hard and white”.

E: The seen and the not-seen are separate; one and two do not fill each other; length and breadth contain each other; hard and white do not exclude each other. (WFB, B5)⁶³

Wū Fēibǎi comments on this passage as follows:

“Inadmissible for a part going away and there to be two” says a compound of related ones is mutually opposing and mutually completing. If you do away with this, there is not that; if you do away with that, there is not this; if that is preserved, then this is altogether preserved; if this is done away with, then that is altogether done away with. There are these four examples which affirm this: seeing and value; one and two; length and breadth; hard and white.⁶⁴

B12:

C: 「俱、特一體也，說在俱一、唯是。」

E: 「俱一，若牛馬四足。唯是，當牛馬。數『牛』數『馬』，則牛馬二。數『牛馬』，則牛馬一。若數指，指五而五一。」⁶⁵

C: Both (two) and one are [individually] one unit. The explanation lies in both being one, and specifically this [one thing].

⁶¹ 故，舊也。一之與二，一者基數，二者合數也。損二之一，故曰「偏去」。二損其一，就合數言之，似少矣。然就基數言之，一固在也。故曰「俱一無變」。案此與本篇「一無左」「左右無變」之義合。(Wū 1983: 533).

⁶² In the Canon, most editors emend the eleventh character from 俱 to 見; Wū Fēibǎi emends it to 值. He also adds the final three characters above. In the Explanation, he emends the “standard” ending (廣脩，堅白) to 廣、脩相函。堅、白不相外, as above.

⁶³ Wū 1983: 116–118.

⁶⁴ 不可偏去而二，言一對待之體，相反相成；去此則無彼，去彼則無此，彼存則此俱存，此去則彼俱去。其例有四，見與值、一與二、廣與脩、堅與白是也。(Wū 1983: 533).

⁶⁵ In the Canon, Wū Fēibǎi emends the first two characters from 獸物 to 俱、特. In the Explanation, he omits the head character. In their several instances in this Canon and Explanation, his 唯 is an emendation of 惟.

E: Both being one. For example [both] ox and horse have four feet. Being specifically this fits [both] ox and horse. If you count oxen and you count horses, then ox and horse are two. If you count ox-horse, then ox and horse are one. It is like counting fingers; the fingers are five yet the five are one. (WFB, B12)⁶⁶

Wǔ Fēibǎi then notes:

This makes clear the principle of the relative and the absolute being mutually opposed. *Jù* 俱 is equivalent to *èr* 二 and is a combination. *Tè* 特 is equivalent to *yī* 一 and is a single unit. One and one is a relationship (relative); two is absolute. Two and one is a relationship (relative); three is an absolute. Going on from this, related and independent divide and combine without limit. That is, one + one = two; two + one = *tǐ* 體 (three/one unit).⁶⁷

Next, we turn to Mǒu Zōngsān:

I believe that what was stated above is a true interpretation of this Canon and Explanation. This is entirely an issue of classes and the elements they contain. In the Mohist 'Canons', "the explanation lies in the combining" and the very last sentence of the Explanation, "ox-horse is not ox and not horse is without difficulty", both base their arguments on this view. Ox-horse is not equivalent to (differs from) ox; ox-horse is not equivalent to (differs from) horse. Gōngsūn Lóng, on the other hand, viewed the issue from this perspective: ox-horse contains ox; ox-horse contains horse. The Mohist 'Canons' as a whole, then, use very many admissible and inadmissible statements to fully illustrate that containing and differing exist at the same time. When you compare this to the 'Tōngbiàn Lùn', it is more complete and perfect.⁶⁸

Third, Cheng Chung-ying analyzes the text as follows:

First of all, we want to ask what is the main topic of this new dialogue. Apparently there are two main parts of the dialogue, one dealing with the problem of understanding identity in change, the other dealing with implications of intersection of concepts and classes. It may appear that these two parts are unrelated. In reality, however, they have to do with relating oneness of concept to manyness of things. This one-many problem can be understood as a change/non-change problem for non-change can be related to change like one can be related to many. But the core of the solution is involved with the distinction between classes and members of classes, and the problem of distinction between

⁶⁶ Wǔ 1983: 127–128.

⁶⁷ 此明相對與絕對為相對之理。俱，二也，共相也。特，一也，自相也。一與一為相對，二為絕對。二與一為相對，三為絕對。自此以往，相對絕對，分合無窮。式如下：特 + 特 = 俱；俱 + 特 = 體。(Wǔ 1983: 531–534).

⁶⁸ 吾信以上所說是此〈經說〉之確解，完全是積類與其所包含的分子之關係問題。〈墨經〉「說在兼」與〈經說〉最後一句「牛馬非牛非馬無難」是着眼於：牛馬不等於牛，牛馬不等於馬。公孫龍則是着眼於：牛馬函着牛，牛馬函着馬。〈經說〉全文則用許多可與不可之句將函與不等之同時成立完全表現出，此則比〈通變論〉為完備也。(Mǒu 1994: 149–150). This refers to B66.

concept and class. The second question is how these topics are related to Gongsun Long's main project of rectifying names. The answer is that insofar as rectifying names involves solution and dissolution of inconsistency, contradiction and paradoxical statements or concepts, the clarification of relation between change and non-change, concept and class, and intersection and union of classes to individual members, and certain inferential validity would no doubt contribute to the theory of names and their relation to the reality or actuality of things. Hence, this could be considered a logical inquiry into uses and semantics of concepts and classes for the purpose of rectifying names.⁶⁹

Finally, we turn to A. C. Graham:

That this passage (i.e. TBL 2) really is the nonsense it appears to be becomes apparent when we compare it with the Mohist parallel (i.e. B65 & 66). [...] It will be noticed that the arguments which make no sense in the *Gongsun Longzi* are intelligible in the Mohist 'Explanations'. But in the latter text they belong to two different sections which happen to be adjacent, one concerned with what properties can be used as evidence that "oxen are not horses" and "oxen and horses are not of the same class", the other with whether "oxen and horses are not oxen" is either true or false. The division between these sections is still a subject of dispute among scholars; the author of this part of the *Gongsun Longzi* apparently failed to connect them to the canons to which they belong, and read them as a consecutive demonstration that "sheep combined with oxen are not horses" ... a thesis which unlike those of the Mohists has no point, and to which the Mohist arguments are quite inappropriate. It is because he mechanically reproduces arguments designed for two different purposes that he gives the impression of not knowing himself whether he is trying to prove that "sheep combined with oxen are not horses" or merely that "sheep are not oxen." [...] There are two significant details which confirm that it is the *Gongsun Longzi* which is dependent on the *Mozhi*, not the other way round. The phrase *wei ke* 未可 occurs twice in the version of the former and three times in that of the latter. This phrase is common in the Mohist 'Canons'; but we have already seen that outside this passage Chapters 4, 5 and 6 (i.e. JBL, TBL, MSL) of the *Gongsun Longzi* use not *wei ke* 未可 but *bu ke* 不可.⁷⁰

3.5 'Zhǐwù Lùn' 指物論

The 'Zhǐwù Lùn' has proven a source of both fascination and puzzlement for scholars, Chinese and Western alike. Before considering its relationship to the Later Mohist dialectical chapters, some views on the actual meaning of the

⁶⁹ Cheng 1997: 162.

⁷⁰ Graham 1957: 162–164.

essay will be quoted, starting with that of Mǒu Zōngsān, who summarizes his analysis as follows:

Explained like this, the whole chapter is also very clear and coherent. The whole essay does not go beyond these three statements:

1. Things are never not pointed to.
2. Pointings to and things are not pointings to.
3. Pointings to are pointings to; things are things.⁷¹

In his expanded version of the claims made, Cheng Chung-ying, who adds a note that he consulted Mǒu Zōngsān's "critical comments" in the latter's *Míngjiā yǔ Xúnzǐ*, lists the following nine "basic propositions" taken from the 'Zhǐwù Lùn':

- (1) All things [in the world] are nothing more than *zhǐ* 指 (precepts and concepts as projected by the acts of pointing or referring).
- (2) But *zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*. (We cannot point to the pointing to or refer to the referring, not in the sense of pointing to things or objects; this sets a distinction between concepts and things. We could of course have second-order concepts for first-order concepts. But we cannot specify concepts by concepts as we specify things by concepts, on the basis of empirical evidence.)
- (3) Things are what there are in the world. (Hence we cannot but point to things by ostension or refer to them by percepts or concepts in order to know them.)
- (4) *Zhǐ* (percepts and concepts) are what there are not in the world. (Percepts and concepts are things coming from our perception and thinking with intentionality. They are not things.)
- (5) If there are no *zhǐ* in the world (in a different sense of being, such as predication), things cannot be said to be *zhǐ* (or to be referred to objects of reference, and hence described by percepts and concepts.)
- (6) The reason we are not aware of *zhǐ* in the world is that things are named by names (*míng* 名), which are not seen as acts of reference.
- (7) *Zhǐ* is what the world of things can share (*jiān* 兼).
- (8) If there are no things in the world, who are to make reference to things or to speak of pointing to things?
- (9) But *zhǐ* by themselves are something not to be pointed to; this does not depend on there being things to be predicated of *zhǐ*. (This shows how *zhǐ* is separate from the things and can also be hidden.)⁷²

71 如此疏釋，全篇亦甚通順。全文不過說三句：(i) 物莫非指；(ii) 指與物(物指)非指；(iii) 指是指，物是物。(Mǒu 1994: 4).

72 Cheng 1997: 171–173.

Cheng concludes by writing:

Based on these nine propositions, we can see how Gōngsūn Lóng has achieved a position of abstract ontology with his phenomenology of perception. In this process, he has paved the way of language for a better reflective and logical understanding of language in its relation to mind as well as its relation to the world.⁷³

Wú Yùjiāng, in his introductory comments, provides a relatively clear analysis, as follows:

This chapter creates a thorough investigation of the relationship between mind and things. Things that manifest themselves to people's perception are the many and varied qualities of things, and these are what are called *zhǐ* 指. For example, a horse is a thing. In its manifestations to our perception, there are various forms and colors: crooked, straight, broad, long, white, dark, black, and yellow. Therefore, we say a thing is in no case not its manifestations. Nevertheless, what can be pointed to with these manifestations of crooked, straight, broad, long, white, dark, black, and yellow are not the pointings to of crooked, straight, broad, long, white, dark, black, and yellow. What can be pointed to and what is pointed to should not be confused as the same thing. Therefore, it is said, being able to point to is not pointing to. The old characters *ér* 而 and *yòng* 用 have their common usage.⁷⁴

He also includes the “old note” (舊注), which reads:

物我殊能，莫非相指。故曰物莫非指。相指者，相是非也。彼此相推，是非混一，歸於無指。故曰而指非指。

Things and I have different abilities and always point to each other. Therefore, it is said, “things are always pointed to”. Pointing to each other is *shì-ing* (affirming) and *fēi-ing* (negating) each other. This and that infer each other. Affirming and negating unite in one and return to not pointing to. Therefore, it is said, “and yet pointings to are not pointed to”.

In his detailed initial comments, Wú Fēibǎi relates the ‘Zhǐwù Lùn’ to other writings, including the Later Mohist chapters, as the following excerpts show:

The ‘Zhǐwù Lùn’ clarifies the meaning of “pointing to does not reach”. In the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, there is: “Pointings to do not reach; reaching is not complete (absolute).” In the ‘Zhōng Nǐ’ chapter of the *Lièzǐ*, there is: “There are pointings to that do not reach; there are things that are not complete.” These both express the purport of Gōngsūn Lóng’s

⁷³ Cheng 1997: 171–173.

⁷⁴ 本篇為深究心物關係之作。物之引起吾人感覺者為其種種屬性，即所謂指也。如馬之為物，其引起吾人感覺者，曲、直、廣、修、白、黑、驪、黃之形形色色而已。故曰物莫非指。然能指此曲、直、廣、修、白、黑、驪、黃之指，非即此曲、直、廣、修、白、黑、驪、黃之指。能指，所指不應混為一談。故曰能指非指。而、能古字通用。(Wú 2001: 16).

discussion. Simply said, there are “pointings to and things”. Expressed in greater detail, “there are pointings to that do not reach, and there are things that are not complete”.

In simple terms, it can also be said, “a pointing to does not reach a thing”. The main meaning is thoroughly expressed in the two statements at the start of the chapter: “Things are in no case not pointed to (designated, signified, referred to), and yet the pointings to are not pointed to.” The two statements complete it. To understand the excess repetition of the chapter, it is nothing other than this meaning. The only things you need to know are: things are first; pointings to are second; not-pointed to is third; and not not-pointed to is fourth. These four things go back and forth between guest and host (interlocutor and principal), being repeatedly examined as the chapter goes forward.⁷⁵

In looking for the already established meaning of *zhǐ* 指, Wǔ refers to the two instances of 「指不至」 given above, and adds the following two quotations from the *Zhuāngzǐ*:

1. 「以指喻指之非指，不如以非指喻指之非指也。」(《齊物論》)
2. 「指馬之百體而不得馬，而馬係於前者，立其百體而謂之馬也。」(《則陽篇》)
3. “To use pointings to to explain/illustrate that pointings to are not pointed to is not as good as using not-pointing to to explain the not-pointing to of pointing to.” (*Zhuāngzǐ* 2, ‘*Qíwù Lùn*’)⁷⁶

75 〈指物論〉者，明「指不至」之義也。〈莊子·天下篇〉曰「指不至，至不絕」，〈列子·仲尼篇〉曰「有指不至，有物不盡」，皆述公孫龍論旨。簡言之曰「指物」。詳言之曰「有指不至，有物不盡」。單稱之，亦可曰「指不至物」。大意，篇首「物莫非指，而指非指」兩言盡之矣。通篇反覆推衍，無非斯意。唯有當知者：物，一也。指，二也。非指，三也。非非指，四也。四者迭為賓主，更審前進。(Wǔ 1983: 520).

76 There are various versions of this difficult statement given by translators. Among early commentators, Guō Xiàng has: “Now to consider oneself right and the other wrong is the common situation of the other and the self. Therefore, if I take what I refer to as a means of illustrating what another refers to, then the other’s referring is to everything except what I refer to. This is using a pointing to to show that a pointing to is not a pointing to. If again I take another’s pointing to in turn to compare to my pointing to, then my pointing to, in relation to the other’s pointing to is again not pointed to. This is taking not being a pointing to to illustrate a pointing to’s not being pointed to.” Chéng Xuányīng has: “*Zhǐ* 指 is equivalent to *shǒu zhǐ* 手指 (finger/pointing to). Horse (*mǎ* 馬) is a playful devising. *Yù* 喻 is equivalent to *bǐ* 比 (to compare, be equivalent to). This says that people each have an individual understanding of *shì* 是 and *fēi* 非. The other and I have different feelings; therefore I use my finger/pointing to to compare to another’s pointing to, and then use the other’s pointing to as a wrong pointing to. In turn, I shall take the other’s pointing out to compare to your pointing out, and your pointing out in relation to the other’s pointing to will again be a wrong pointing to. Having dealt with

4. “You may point to the many parts of a horse, but not ‘get’ a horse, and yet here is a horse tethered right in front of us, so we put together its many parts and call it (refer to it) as a horse.” (*Zhuāngzǐ* 25, ‘Zéyáng’ 則陽)

On the first of these quotations, he writes:

“Qíwù” is Zhuāng Zhōu’s study of names. What this passage raises is “not pointed to” and also combines “not horse”, thus bringing up both of these together to clarify his opposition to Gōngsūn Lóng’s chapter and refute it. If this meaning can be accepted as right and in summary is spotted as a clue, then the meaning of Gōngsūn Lóng’s ‘Zhǐwù [Lùn]’ is quite clear.⁷⁷

Wǔ then gives his version of two ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, as follows:⁷⁸

B37

C: 有指於二而不可逃。說在以二參。

E: 有： 指子知是，又知吾所無舉也，是重。則子智是而不智吾所無舉也，是一。謂有知焉，有不知焉也。若知之，則當指之。知告我，則我知之。兼指之以二也。衡指之參直之也。若曰，必獨指吾所舉，毋舉吾所不舉。則指者固不能獨指，所欲指不傳，意若未校。且其所知，是也。所不知，是也。則是知是之不知也，惡得為一而謂有知焉，有不智焉？

C: There is *zhǐ* 指 (pointing to, representing, signifying, denoting) through two, and they cannot be separated. The explanation lies in taking the two and the three.

E: There is *zhǐ*: If you know this and also know this which I did not raise, this is double. Then, if you know this, but do not know that which I did not raise, this is one. This is to say there is the known in it and there is the not known in it. If you know it, then it is valid to *zhǐ* it. If knowledge informs me, then I know it. A combined *zhǐ* is through two. A crosswise *zhǐ* is when three are met with. It is like saying what I raise is necessarily individually *zhǐ* and what I do not raise is

the meaning of pointing to, horse is also like this. This is why, among the various methods, he only raises pointing to, wishing to make clear by choosing from near at hand, what is in all bodies, and nothing should go beyond it. In embodying distant things, in terms of success and failure, nothing comes before horse. This is why the two examples are raised to compare *shì* 是 and *fēi* 非.” See also Vierheller’s article “On Classifying (Declassifying) Things” in this volume.

⁷⁷ 「〈齊物〉者，莊周之名學也。此文所舉「非指」，又與「非馬」並提，明為針對公孫本篇而發。使此義能因是而略規端倪也，則公孫指物之義瞭然矣。(Wǔ 1983: 522).

⁷⁸ There are minor differences from the “standard” version in punctuation, and also in the Explanation, *yǒu* 有 as the sixth character is emended to *yòu* 又, while *wú* 無 in both instances is an emendation of *xiān* 先.

not *zhǐ*-ed, so the *zhǐ* is certainly not able to be individually *zhǐ*-ed, and what you wish to *zhǐ* is not put forward, so the concept is still not compared (clear). Moreover, if what is known is this and what is not known is this, then this is known and this is not known, so how can you make it one and say: “There is the known in it; there is the not known in it?” (WFB, B37)⁷⁹

B38

C: 所知而弗能指。說在春也、逃臣、狗犬、遺者。

E: 所：春也，其勢固不可指也。逃臣不知其處。狗犬不知其名也。遺者巧弗能兩也。

C: There is that which you know but are unable to *zhǐ* (represent, point out). The explanation lies in spring, a runaway servant, pup/dog, what is lost.

E: That which: In the case of spring, its state cannot be pointed to (represented). In the case of a runaway servant, there is not knowing his whereabouts. In the case of pup/dog, there is not knowing its name. In the case of what is lost, despite skill, one is not able to duplicate it. (WFB, B38)⁸⁰

Wǔ summarizes the alternative (*Míngjiā*) view as follows:

The purport of the two schools of Zhuāng 莊 and Mò 墨 quoting this is more or less the same. They affirm that the character *zhǐ* 指 should in all cases be written/understood as “pointing out and the pointing out of what is referred to” in order to explain it. There are three meanings: one is “able to point out”; two is “what is pointed out”; and three is “pointing out the pointing out of what is able to be pointed out”. These three meanings have times when they are used together and times when they are used alone. There are times when one meaning is used and two are left out, and times when two are used but the third is left aside. You need to consider what is being said and settle on it – otherwise it is not possible to grasp what is being said at all.⁸¹

Finally, turning to Gōngsūn Lóng, he writes:

There is a reason why the ‘Zhǐwù Lùn’ was written. The main purpose was to say names and entities (reality) cannot but be closely related. The name is the entity’s “guest”. The name is not the entity itself. However, if there is no name, then the entity (reality) is not understood (illustrated). If the name is allowed to go beyond, then of necessity, it fails its entity and has the fault of neglecting what it is taken to be the name of.

⁷⁹ Wǔ 1983: 148–151.

⁸⁰ Wǔ 1983: 151.

⁸¹ 莊、墨兩家引用之旨趣略同。是此「指」字，皆當作「指而謂之之指」解。其含義有三：一「能指」，二「所指」，三「指所能指之指」。三義有時並用，有時獨用。有時用其一遺其二，有時用其二遺其三。須視所謂而定，不可執一以求。(Wǔ 1983: 523).

The main purpose of this essay in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is to say that the entities (realities) of the world do not come within the scope of our recognition as they truly are in themselves (i.e. we do not recognize the noumenon/*Ding-an-sich*). In the case of the form of the recognition, we create a name to link to the recognition, causing the recognition to be a record of the entity. What is remembered is then the reality of the concept and not the reality of the thing. What then? With concepts (ideas), there is separating and joining; with things, there is not separating and joining. With concepts (ideas), there is dividing and bringing together; with things, there is not dividing and bringing together. What can be attained and established in discussion is, in all cases, the reality of the concept (idea) and not the reality of the thing. If the reality of the thing is that of the thing itself, how are we able to use our ideas (concepts) to effect separating and joining, dividing and bringing together?

In general, we discuss one entity (actuality, reality) – whether it is this or not; whether it is so or not. In all of these instances, there is the form of separating and joining, dividing and bringing together, but this is not joined with the reality of the thing itself. *Gōngsūn Lóng* feared people would be bogged down by the entity and not its name. He also feared people would take the name to be the entity, and yet the entity is not the name (i.e. take white horse to be horse, and on the whole be bogged down in the reality and not the name). Therefore, he created the ‘*Zhīwù Lùn*’ to make people realize “a name is not this entity”. And what can be said and explained is all about the matter of names. The reason his argument is hard to grasp, going back and forth, is entirely due to the form of separating and joining, dividing and bringing together of names. We must not use the entity (actuality, reality) to confuse the name, just as we must not use the name to confuse the entity (actuality, reality). You must understand that the whole discussion focuses on the main point – there are pointings out but they do not reach – and opposes the idea that “there are pointings to and they cannot be avoided”, as expressed in the Mohist ‘Canons’.⁸²

4 Conclusions

The five conclusions provisionally drawn from this comparison of the five *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* essays with the Later Mohist dialectical writings are as follows.

82 〈指物論〉所由作。大指謂名實不能密合。名者，實之實也。名非是實，然無名則實不喻。任名太過，則必有失其實而忘其所以為名之患。〈公孫龍子〉本篇大旨，謂天下之「實」，其本體不徑入於吾人認識之範圍內。而吾人以渴欲知物之故，假認識之形式，造名以係念，因念以紀實。其所紀者，乃意之實，而非物之實也。何則？意有離合而物無離合，意有分聚而物無分聚。可得而論定者，皆意中之實，非物之實。夫物實自物實耳，豈能以吾意而為離合分聚乎？

凡論一「實」之是非然否者，皆意中離合分聚之形式，其於物之「實」也無與。公孫龍恐人之泥於實而非其名也，又恐人之以名為實而更非名也，（以白馬為馬者，大率泥於實而非名。）故造論〈指物〉使人知「名不是實」。而可言說者，皆名之事。其論難往返者，皆「名」之聚散離合。不得以實亂名，更不得以名亂實。通篇主「有指不至」，反對〈墨經〉「有指不可逃」之義。（Wü 1983: 523).

First, there are two primary texts dating from pre-Qín 秦 times that grapple with the issues of language and logic, and thus are characteristic of the *Míngjiā*. There are a number of subsidiary texts which are also important in this respect – for example, sections of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Xúnzǐ*.

Second, the *GSLZ* is an important statement contributing to the philosophical discussion on the correction of names – that is, achieving a proper correlation between names and entities or actuality/reality. The basic method is set out in the *MSL*. The remaining four essays essentially explore areas of difficulty within this overall program. Thus, the *BML* addresses the issue of compound or “double” names, specifically the addition of an adjective to a noun; the *JBL* examines the issue of the relationship between substance and attributes, which again relates to the question of compound names; the *TBL* treats altered names resulting from changes to an entity, particularly those due to combination with another entity or inclusion in a class; the *ZWL* addresses some of the issues raised in the three preceding dialogues – that a thing (*wù* 物) is only known as a percept or a concept, or its representation in the perceiving subject, and that this is a compound of substance and attributes that can be separately “pointed to” (*zhǐ* 指) and are therefore different from the totality of the thing (*wù* 物).

Third, the Later Mohist writings certainly deal with the same set of issues as the *GSLZ*, although their range is far greater, with considerable attention given to issues with no counterpart in the *GSLZ*. The presently unanswerable question that arises is: To what extent were these issues addressed in the presumed missing chapters of the *GSLZ*?

Fourth, on the topics that are common to both texts, there are areas of concordance, such as the nature and importance of the name/entity relationship, the fundamental significance of the program for the “correction of names”, and certain aspects of class as they pertain to naming. There are also areas of discordance, such as the “white horse” issue, aspects of the substance-attribute relationship as they pertain to naming, and issues of naming raised by change and combination. There also appears to be a somewhat different position taken on the relationship between *wù* 物 and *zhǐ* 指, although without a precise understanding of the meaning of the latter term, it is hard to be sure.

Finally, on the temporal relationship between the Later Mohist chapters and the *GSLZ*, we agree with Wǔ Fēibǎi’s statement: “In the study of the *GSLZ* and the *Mòbiàn*, which was prior and which was subsequent cannot now be known.”⁸³ If both texts are themselves compilations from different hands

83 Wǔ 1983: 501, note 3 above.

writing at different times, as seems quite likely, then all three possibilities may have obtained – prior, contemporaneous, and subsequent.

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Zhōu Chāngzhōng 周昌忠

3 The ‘Discourse on the White Horse’: A Concrete Analytical Philosophy of Language – with a Coda on the Authenticity of the Received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

Gōngsūn Lóng’s 公孫龍 (c. 325–250 BCE) ‘Discourse on the White Horse’ (‘Báimǎ lùn’, 白馬論; henceforth BML) has always been considered an example of sophistry. But just as the tracks of single particles in an aerosol chamber can only be recognized by an expert physicist, so it is only with a full grasp of its analytical philosophy of language and its epistemological nature that one is able to realize the essence of BML: its character as a concrete analytical philosophy of language. At the same time, this insight presupposes a solid understanding of the spirit and the atmosphere of the time, of the thought and scholarly culture from which this theory has emerged – namely, the point which the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 has characterized as the splitting up of the unified “Art of the Way” into the “Hundred Schools” of thought. And only together with firm evidence from ancient books and records, including bibliographical lists, are we able to evaluate and ascertain the authenticity of the received *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (henceforth *GSLZ*), in which BML has been transmitted.

1 The ‘Discourse on the White Horse’: A Concrete Analytical Philosophy of Language

The thought presented in BML expresses Gōngsūn Lóng’s (c. 325–250 BCE) concrete analytical philosophy of language. This theory is comparatively elaborate and coherent, and it includes philosophical principles that allow for a rather comprehensive and refined analysis of language.

First of all, it is based on the premise of a kind of ontological and epistemological thinking with a strong metaphysical flavor. Two chapters in the *GSLZ*, the

Note: Original title “白馬論”: 實質的語言分析哲學思想 — 兼論今本《公孫龍子》作為殘真本.
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‘Discourse on Concepts and Things’ (Zhǐwù lùn 指物論; henceforth ZWL) and the ‘Discourse on Hard and White’ (Jiānbái lùn 堅白論; henceforth JBL), make recurrent use of the phrases “*tiānxià yǒu*” 天下有 (lit. “the world has/in the world there is”) and “*tiānxià wú*” 天下無 (“the world has not/in the world there is not”) – that is, they define ‘existence’ in terms of ‘having’ and ‘not-having’. On a linguistic level, the terms ‘name’ (*míng* 名), ‘position’ (*wèi* 位), ‘actuality’ (*shí* 實), and ‘thing’ (*wù* 物) establish a world of existents, which is separated into the two spheres of the phenomenal and the noumenal. The concept of ‘position’ stands for both class and essence. In its function as an essence, it defines the individuals from which the class is formed – it functions as the individualized ‘actuality’ of a ‘thing’. It is this kind of definition which is realized in the “correction of names” (*zhèng míng* 正名):

- (1) ‘Míngshí lùn’ (Discourse on Names and Actualities; henceforth MSL)¹
 Heaven and earth and that which is produced in them are things. As for things, if one defines as a thing the place which [this] thing occupies without going beyond it, this is its actuality.
 天地與其所產焉，物也。物以物其所物而不過焉，實也。

An ‘actuality’ is the instantiation of a ‘thing’ in a definite area of space and time. It is an individual. The “realm of things” (*wù tiānxià* 物天下), according to JBL, is a realm of “independent and correct” (*dú ér zhèng* 獨而正)² entities that “are separate (from each other)” (*lí yě zhě* 離也者).³ This characterizes the factual world as differentiated and separated:

- (2a) MSL⁴
 Leaving the place of its position, it is not positioned. If it takes position in the place of its position, it is correct.
 出其所位非位，位其所位，正也。

- (2b) MSL⁵
 As for its correctness, it is correct at the place which it actualizes; to correct that which it actualizes is to correct its name.
 其正者，正其所實也；正其所實者，正其名也。

1 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 9/3.

2 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/25.

3 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/22.

4 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 9/4.

5 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 9/4–5.

(2c) ZWL⁶

Each thing has a name.

物之各有名。

Functioning as an essential definition, the ‘position’ subsumes an ‘actuality’ under its ‘name’. Gōngsūn Lóng specifically mentions essences (*xìngzhì* 性質) as universal categories that capture the pattern of substance vs. properties:

(3) JBL⁷

As for things, what is white in them does not define the place it makes white. As for things, what is hard in them does not define the place it makes hard. How could these two undefined things taken together be the stone?

物白焉，不定其所白；物堅焉，不定其所堅。不定者，兼，惡乎其石也？

Essences such as ‘hardness’ and ‘whiteness’ are not included in the ‘stone’; they are commonly possessed by a great many things. At the same time, BML states that “‘horse’ is used to designate a shape”, and that “something used to designate color is not something used to designate shape” (馬者，所以命形也。... 命色者非命形也).⁸ Essences thus likewise need to be distinguished from the substantial ‘shapes’ on which they predicate. Moreover, Gōngsūn Lóng explains that substances and classes are necessary and subsistent entities, while the world of individual things is accidental and manifest. The former are thus transcendent, whereas the latter are merely phenomenal.

(4) BML⁹

If horses were without color, there would simply be horses as such. But where would one then acquire a white horse?

使馬無色，有馬如已耳，安取白馬？

And again:

(5) JBL¹⁰

If there were no stones, how would one acquire a hard white stone?

石其無有，惡取堅白石乎？

⁶ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 4/18.

⁷ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/10.

⁸ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/1.

⁹ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/15.

¹⁰ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/22.

This rhetorical question affirms the necessity and subsistence of classes and substances. When they combine with transcendent ('hidden') qualities, then the resulting individual is always a perceivable, manifest entity. Therefore he says in JBL:

(6a) JBL¹¹

If there were no whiteness in the world, one would not be able to see the stone. If there were no hardness in the world, one would not be able to call [anything] a stone. Now, as hardness, whiteness, and stone do not exclude one another, would it be admissible that they are hidden as three (different entities)? They have the property of hiding-themselves, they are not hidden in the sense that someone would have hidden them.

天下無白，不可以視石；天下無堅；不可以謂石。堅、白、石不相外，藏三，可乎？有自藏也，非藏而藏也。

(6b) JBL¹²

Even if in the world there would never have been something hard, hard itself would still subsist.

天下未有若堅，而堅藏。

(6c) JBL¹³

Being in the stone is one; hard and white is two, but being two, they are in the stone. Therefore, there is in it (= the stone) something that is known and something that is not known; something that is seen and something that is not seen.

於石，一也；堅白，二也，而儼於石。故有知焉，有不知焉；有見焉，有不見焉。

In Gōngsūn Lóng's epistemology, the cognitive subject (the 'who') recognizes substances ('positions'; *wèi* 位) through the use of concepts of understanding ('pointers'; *zhǐ* 指) in discursive thought ('spirit'; *shén* 神). Cognition additionally arises from the sensual cognition ('seeing') of phenomenal individuals ('actualities'; *shí* 實):

11 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 7/29–8/1.

12 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/20–21.

13 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/14.

(7) ZWL¹⁴

If in the world there were no thing-pointers, who would directly speak about something's not being pointers? If in the world there were no things, who would directly say about something's being pointers? If in the world there were pointers, but no thing-pointers, who would directly say about something's not being pointers, directly say that there are no things that are not pointers?

使天下無物指，誰經謂非指？天下無物，誰經謂指？天下有指無物指，誰經謂非指？經謂無物非指？

The reference to all things relies on the concepts called 'pointers'. But the 'things' to which these 'pointers' refer are not identical to the 'pointers' which refer to them. When a concept grasps an individual, it is not equivalent to this individual itself.

Doubtless the pivotal term in this passage is 'pointer' – rendered as a 'concept' above. According to Duàn Yùcái 段玉裁 (1735–1815), the character 指 *zhǐ* ('finger/point at') is a phonetic loan of the character 指 *zhǐ* ('purpose/aim').¹⁵ Today, the character 指 *zhǐ* is either written as 旨 or as 指.¹⁶ The *Shuōwén Jiězì* (Explaining unit graphs and analyzing compound characters) says: "'thoughts/intentions' (yì 意) are recognized by examining words; *zhǐ* 指 is (= also means) 'thought/intention' (yì 意); intention (yì 意) is (= also means) 'will/purpose' (zhì 志)."¹⁷ Duàn comments on this as follows: "'Will/purpose' (*zhì* 志) is identical to 'cognition' (*shí* 識). It is what the mind recognizes."¹⁸

In his preface to the *GSLZ*, Xiè Xīshēn 謝希深 quotes Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍 (trad. 305 BCE–240 CE) as follows: "In debating, the distinction of separate classes ensures that these do not interfere; the ordering of different aspects ensures that they do not intermingle. One expresses one's intention and sticks to one's concepts (*zhǐ*), all by making clear what they say, thus ensuring that the others share one's knowledge about it, that [the disputers] do not mislead each other."¹⁹ Summing up our discussion, we can conclude that 'pointer' (*zhǐ*) is an expression for what our minds cognize when we think.

14 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/22–23.

15 “假借為指。” (Duàn 1988: 593).

16 “今字或作旨或作指。” (Duàn 1988: 502).

17 “意，察言而知意也；指，意也；意，志也。” (Xǔ 1988: 502).

18 “志即識，心所。” (Duàn 1988: 502).

19 “辯者，別殊類使不相害，序異端使不相亂，抒意通指，明其所謂，使人與知焉，不發相迷也。” (Wǔ 1983: 618).

Gōngsūn Lóng emphasizes that ‘pointers’ (*zhǐ*) are independent and separate from ‘things’, but that all ‘things’ are referred to by ‘pointers’. This is precisely what is explained in the following passage from ZWL:

(8) ZWL²⁰

If there are no ‘pointers’ in the world, then things cannot be called ‘pointers’. What cannot be called a ‘pointer’ is not a pointer. Yet as for not being pointer, [we noticed] that no thing is not a pointer. [While] in the world, there are no pointers, and a thing is something that cannot be called a pointer, [it is still so] that nothing being there is not a pointer. But when nothing being there is not a pointer, then no thing is not a pointer. [Thus], no thing is not a pointer, but a pointer is not (simply) a pointer.”

天下無指，而物不謂指也。不可謂指者，非指也。非指者，物莫非指也。天下無指，而物不可謂指者，非有非指也。非有非指者，物莫非指也。物莫非指者，而指非指也。

A ‘pointer’ is thus a concept of understanding. It is not merely empirical (thus referring to a ‘thing’), but is rather fixed and definite. Thus ZWL makes explicit the fact that substances and essences are definite universals. In the same chapter Gōngsūn Lóng further states:

(9) ZWL²¹

That in the world there are no pointers, arises from the fact that each and every thing has a name, and that it does not function as a pointer.”

天下無指者，生於物之各有名，不為指也。

This makes clear that ‘pointers’ are there in order to ensure that each of the ten thousand things has a name. In view of this, one can now understand that ‘pointers’ start from ‘actualities’ in order to grasp their ‘positions’, all by determining these ‘actualities’ on a linguistic level by means of ‘names’. All of this belongs to the epistemological aspects of “adjusting names and actualities” (*zhèng míng shí* 正名實). The cognition of understanding advances from phenomenal individuals to substances and classes. When Gōngsūn Lóng “separates hard and white”, he illustrates precisely this epistemological thinking. One might well say that the common-sense view “combines hard and white”. The common-sense view is restricted to the sensual cognition of the phenomenal individual; it only

20 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 4/14–16.

21 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 4/18.

sees the “fixed white” and the “fixed hard” as “located in a stone”, and consequently argues that, “as it is both white and hard, the stone necessarily can be grasped by their mutual interpenetration” (JBL²²). In stark contrast, the debater in JBL shows that the cognition of understanding progresses to comprehend the ‘self-contained’ and ‘non-attributed’ ‘white-in-itself’ and ‘hard-in-itself’, as well as the ‘stone’ itself. This approach thus “separates hard and white” (*lí jiān bái* 離堅白):

(10a) JBL²³

If there were no stone, how would one acquire a hard white stone? It is for this reason that they [i.e. hard, white, and stone] are separate.”

石其無，惡取堅白石乎？故離也。

(10b) JBL²⁴

[Since they] are hidden from each other, who would say that they are not separate?

藏故，孰謂之不離？

The three units ‘stone’, ‘solid’, and ‘white’ are distinct from each other, and every one of them is an independent and self-contained entity which transcends the phenomenal individual. Gōngsūn Lóng also makes clear that knowledge through sensual perception establishes phenomenal individuals – that is, entities with their attributes “that exist in the world”:

(11a) JBL²⁵

[When] looking [at it (i.e. a stone)], [one] does not grasp what is regarded as the ‘hard’ of it, but [grasps what is regarded as the ‘white’ of it.] When grasping what is regarded as the ‘white’ of it, there is no hardness. [When] touching [it (i.e. a stone)] [one] does not grasp what is regarded as the ‘white’ of it, but grasps what is regarded as the ‘hard’ of it. [When] grasping what is regarded as the ‘hard’ of it, there is no whiteness.

視不得其所堅而得其所白者，無堅也；拊不得其所白而得其所堅者，無白也。

²² “其白也，其堅也，而石必得以相盈。” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/3).

²³ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/22.

²⁴ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/15.

²⁵ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 7/26–27.

(11b) JBL²⁶

One may grasp the white of it, one [may] grasp the hard of it, [but] what is seen and what is not seen are separate [...] the one [i.e. the white] and the other [i.e. the hard] do not permeate each other. It is for this reason that they are separate.

得其白，得其堅，見與不見離。一一不相盈，故離。

(11c) JBL²⁷

When one grasps the white without the hard, what is disclosed of it [i.e. the stone] is two [i.e. the white and the stone]. When one grasps the hard without the white, what is disclosed of it [i.e. the stone] is two [i.e. the hard and the stone].”

無堅得白，其舉也二；無白得堅，其舉也二。

Here, Gōngsūn Lóng states the separateness of attributes which originates in the separation of the perceiving senses, and he further discloses the crucial principle of the analytical and definite character of knowledge through understanding. In fact, Gōngsūn Lóng points out that ‘hard’ combined with ‘stone’ and ‘white’ combined with ‘stone’ must result from two different judgments (“What is disclosed of it [i.e. the stone] is two”, 其舉也二).

Gōngsūn Lóng’s ontology addresses the facts of nature with an epistemological attitude. His epistemology concentrates on cognitive relations that constitutively involve both a subject and an object in order to establish the epistemological subject. BML then shifts the focus to knowledge itself. On a methodological level, it provides a logical analysis of the linguistic morphology of knowledge, including both a semantic and a pragmatic analysis. BML is thus essentially an analytical philosophy of language, and it forms the backbone of Gōngsūn Lóng’s thought.

Discussing BML in terms of an analytical philosophy of language, I posit five distinctions deriving from five pairs of close mutual relations. The first is the distinction of linguistic meaning into sense and reference. In its epistemological function, a ‘name’ is the ‘sense’ or ‘implication’ (in Gōngsūn Lóng’s terminology, the ‘position’) inherent in the cognitive manifestation of a concept (‘pointer’) vis-à-vis a matter of fact (‘actuality’). On the level of the epistemological method, the principle of “adjusting names and actualities” or “adjusting positions” reveals that a ‘name’ expresses, through a ‘sense’ (‘position’),

26 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 8/5–6.

27 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 7/21.

knowledge about an ‘actuality’. This distinction is of fundamental significance for the analytical philosophy of language of BML.

The second distinction separates object–words from concept–words. This distinction introduces the pragmatic dimension of the speaker. Speakers use words in two different functions or modes: the first serves to express the sense, and the second speaks about the object in question. A word which a speaker uses to talk about – or more precisely, to refer to – an object is an object–word. At this point, the speaker concentrates on its referential function and does not consider its sense. This is especially common in everyday language use. When the speaker uses the word to express a sense, then it is a concept–word. In this case, the speaker disregards reference and only focuses on the sense. One can say that this is the core distinction in BML, which mentions it in three places. It is worth noting that the *GSLZ* makes ample use of dialogues between a debater and his opponent. While the questions of the latter represent common-sense positions, the answers of the debater stand for Gōngsūn Lóng’s analytical philosophy of language. Consider the following example from BML:

(12a) BML²⁸

Is it admissible [to say that] a white horse is not a horse?”

“白馬非馬，可乎？”

“Yes.”

曰：“可。”

“Why?”

曰：“何哉？”

‘Horse’ is what is used to assign a name to a shape. ‘White’ is what was used to assign a name to a color. What assigns a name to a color is not what assigns a name to a shape. Therefore, I say: ‘A white horse is not a horse.’

曰：“馬者，所以命形也；白者，所以命色也。命色者非命形也。故曰：白馬非馬。”

(12b) BML²⁹

[The term] ‘white horse’ is [the term] ‘horse’ in conjunction with [the term] ‘white’. ‘Horse’ takes part in ‘white horse’. Therefore, I say ‘[the concept of] white horse is not [the concept of] horse.’

白馬者，馬與白也。馬與白，馬也？故曰：白馬非馬也。

²⁸ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 2/19–3/2.

²⁹ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/16.

In this passage, Gōngsūn Lóng employs the phrase “white horse” as a concept-word expressing the sense of the terms ‘horse’ plus ‘white’. In contrast, the opponent, who holds that “a white horse is a horse”, represents the common-sense view, which uses the phrase “white horse” as an object-word. We may also refer to an anecdote to support this view. Gāo Yòu’s 高誘 (168–212) commentary on the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 notes that “Gōngsūn Lóng rode on a white horse and was not allowed to pass through the gate, thus he said that a white horse is not a horse.”³⁰ (This incident is also mentioned in Huán Tán’s 桓譚 (c. 43 BCE–28 CE) *Xīnlùn* 新論 [New Discourses], Liú Xiàng’s 劉向 (77–6 BCE) *Bié Lù* 別錄 [Separate Records], and Luó Zhènyù’s 羅振玉 (1866–1940) *Collection of Fragments of Ancient Texts and Old Manuscripts of Encyclopedias from the Táng Period – Section 1: “Commentaries on the White Horse”* [Gǔjī Cóngcán Táng Xiěběn Gǔ lèishū – Dìyīzhǒng Báimǎ zhù 古籍叢殘，唐寫本古類書——第一種白馬注]. Whether this anecdote is based on actual events is irrelevant to its overall meaning. What matters is that it reflects a common-sense perspective, and that the ‘horse’ in the proposition “a white horse is not a horse” is used in the opponent’s above-mentioned sense of an object-word referring to the very horse ridden by Gōngsūn Lóng. A second passage from BML reads as follows:

(13) BML³¹

[If] one is looking for a horse, yellow and black horses can both be presented. [If] one is looking for a white horse, yellow or black horses cannot be presented. If ‘white horse’ were nothing but ‘horse’, this [would mean that] what is being sought (i.e. a white horse or a horse) would be one [in kind]. If what is being sought would be one [in kind] then ‘white’ would not be different from ‘horse’. [If] what is being sought (i.e. a white horse or a horse) would not be different, why can yellow or black horses be presented in one case but not in the other? It is clear that the possibility [in the one case] and the impossibility in [in the other] contradict each other. Therefore, yellow and black horse are one and the same in that they both allow one to respond to ‘having a horse’ but not to ‘having a white horse’. This [makes it] evident that ‘white horse’ is not ‘horse’.”

求馬，黃、黑馬皆可致，求白馬，黃、黑馬不可致。使白馬乃馬也，是所求一也。所求一者，白者不異馬也。所求不異，如黃、黑馬可有不可，何也？可與不可，其相非明。故黃、黑馬 一也，而可以應有馬，而不可以應有白馬，是白馬之非馬，審矣。

30 “龍乘白馬，禁不得度關，因言馬白非馬。”(Luán 1982: 147).

31 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/7–11.

Both ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ here are the objects of ‘seeking’ (*qiú* 求) – that is, the things which the seeking person has in mind. He or she thus uses these words as concept words, and it is for this reason that the two expressions are not identical. Considering them as identical (i.e. using these phrases as object words) would lead to a contradiction. When one considers yellow horses and black horses as something that can be brought along in response to the query for a ‘horse’, one treats these expressions as object-words. Only in this way do they both allow one to respond to ‘seeking horses’. The following is the third passage of BML that is relevant to our topic:

(14) BML³²

The meaning of [the phrase that] ‘having a white horse’ cannot mean ‘not having a horse’ is one in which ‘white’ is separated [from horse]. In the case where one does not separate it, ‘having a white horse’ cannot mean [merely] ‘to have a horse’. Thus, the reason [‘having a white horse’] is taken to be ‘having a horse’ is simply that one takes the ‘horse’ [in ‘having a white horse’] to be [the ‘horse’ in] ‘having a horse’, and not [that one takes] ‘having a white horse’ [merely] to be ‘having a horse’.”

有白馬不可謂無馬者，離白之謂也。不離者，有白馬不可謂有馬也。故所以為有馬者，獨以馬為有馬耳，非有白馬為有馬。

In the phrase “having a white horse is tantamount to having a horse” (BML³³) both ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ instantiate cases of a “designation separated from white”. Neither pertains to the sense of the words, but both are object words referring to concrete horses. In the phrase “having a white horse is not having a horse” (BML³⁴), both ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ are “designations not separated from white” – that is, they are used to express the sense.

The third distinction pertains to different levels of concept words. Gōngsūn Lóng makes the following statements: “[The term] ‘white horse’ is [the term] ‘horse’ in conjunction with [the term] ‘white’. Yet, is ‘horse’ plus ‘white’ [still] ‘horse’?”³⁵ – “Something that has an exclusion [as to color] is nothing that has no exclusion [as to color].” With regard to ‘horse’ and ‘white horse’, the former disregards the color and merely focuses on the shape. It is thus not identical to the latter, which also includes the color. This clearly distinguishes between two different levels of concept words. Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) refers to the former

³² Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/28–29.

³³ “有白馬為有馬。” (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/21).

³⁴ “有白馬非有馬。” (Paraphrase of “有白馬不可謂有馬也”, Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/4).

³⁵ “白馬者，馬與白也。馬與白，馬也。” (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/16).

as “second-level concept words” and to the latter as “first-level concept words”. As Frege³⁶ has emphasized, the important point here is that in the case of *reference*, the relation between the two different levels of concept words is one of inclusion or subordination, whereas in the case of *sense* the relation between them is one of opposition. Gōngsūn Lóng agrees with Frege. As the citations above show, he explains that when one seeks a horse, a white horse can be brought in response. But if one considers that ‘horse’ and ‘white horse’ are “what is sought”, then these are no longer one and the same, but rather different from each other.

The fourth distinction separates sentence constructions expressing relations of predication from sentence constructions expressing relations of identity (or sameness and difference). Gōngsūn Lóng has realized the logical structure of these sentences, even though he only illustrates them with concrete examples. It is worth noting that the *GSLZ* employs various copulas, such as *shì* 是, *fēi* 非, *wéi* 為, and *nǎi* 乃. This is important because copulas occupy an important position in sentence structures.

In fact, one can say that BML’s presentation proceeds from four basic sentences: (1) “A white horse is not a horse;”³⁷ (2) “Having a white horse is tantamount to having a horse;”³⁸ (3) “Having a white horse is not having a horse” (lit. “Having a white horse cannot be said having a horse”);³⁹ and (4) “White horse is horse” (lit. “White horse eventually is horse”).⁴⁰ The first three sentences represent one kind of sentence construction, while the last represents a different kind. The last one, “White horses are horses”, is said by a person who seeks horses and uses the second occurrence of ‘horses’ as a concept-word (in fact, it is together with the copula that ‘horses’ here constitutes a concept-word) to predicate on the object-word ‘white horses’, thereby referring to the white horses from among the horses that can be brought up in response to the concept-word ‘horse’. In contrast, the first three sentences express relations of identity. The subjects and the predicates of these sentences are both concept-words and object-words, and the copulas express relations of equivalence. The standard example for this is the very proposition that “a white horse is not a horse” (“白馬非馬”).

The fifth distinction opposes sentences referring to matters of fact to sentences expressing sense. In establishing this distinction, we likewise use the two kinds of sentences mentioned above. When one proves that “a white horse is a horse”, then ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ are both used to refer to objects

36 Frege 1984: 190.

37 “白馬非馬。”

38 “有白馬為有馬。” (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/4).

39 “有白馬非為有馬。” (“有白馬不可謂有馬也。”) (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/4).

40 “白馬是馬。” (“白馬乃馬也。”) (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/7).

(‘horse’ is a class here), while the entire sentence refers to a matter of fact. The remaining three sentences, however, all express sense. This is doubtless also a distinction in synthetic and analytic sentences.

The gist of BML is most pointedly condensed in the proposition that “a white horse is not a horse”. In this sentence, both ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ are concept-words implying the senses of ‘white’ and ‘horse’, respectively, but they differ in terms of their level. From the vantage point of the sense, it is nothing but an analytical sentence expressing these levels.

Now we are able to understand that, from an epistemological perspective, the apparently paradoxical proposition that “white horses are not horses” in fact illustrates an analytical sentence. It is from this vantage point that BML develops its specific methodology. And it is truly the case that the most perfect form of knowledge is a (formally) synthetic sentence that is (semantically) analytic. However, what takes priority here is its analytic character: only if a sentence is analytic does it possess necessary and genuine truth; only in this way does it turn into knowledge; only thus does it adopt the authority of knowledge. On the contrary, the fact that a sentence contains empirical content – that is, its synthetic character – requires one to view it from a common-sense perspective. This goes without saying and does not seem to require further philosophical investigation.

2 ‘Báimǎlùn’ and Western Analytical Philosophy of Language

It is only by comparing BML to the Western tradition of analytical philosophy of language that a thorough understanding of its true meaning is possible. In fact, in the eyes of most mainstream thinkers in the Chinese tradition, the thought of Gōngsūn Lóng and the entire school of the “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiànxué* 名辯學) was to be dismissed as something ‘odd’, ‘insignificant’, and even ‘unworthy’. Only in the modern period, in the course of the process of the transmission of Western studies to the East, most importantly since the arrival of scientific logic, have Chinese thinkers come to realize the logical character of the pre-imperial “theory of names and disputation”. Jiǎng Wéiqiáo 蔣維喬 (1873–1958) has put it as follows:

In China, the “theory of names” (*míngxué* 名學 = Yán’s translation of ‘logic’), on which Yán Fù 嚴復 (1853–1921) focuses his attention, had already developed very early, during the final years of the Zhōu dynasty; texts such as Xūnzi’s (trad. c. 298–220 BCE)

‘Zhèngmíng’ (Rectification of Names) chapter; the ‘Jīng shàng, xià’ (‘Canons’ A and B), ‘Jīngshuō shàng, xià’ (‘Explanations’ A and B), ‘Dàqǔ’ (Greater Pick), ‘Xiǎoqǔ’ (Lesser Pick), and other chapters by Mòzǐ (trad. c. 468–391 BCE) and the treatises on hard and white and on sameness and difference by Huì Shī (trad. 370–310 BCE) and Gōngsūn Lóng all show similarities to [Yán’s] “theory of names” [i.e. Western logic]. However, this school of thought has not been passed on since the Hàn dynasty. As a result, the scholarship and methods of [Chinese] scholars were inadequate for providing detailed analyses and systematic writings. Since the advent of science, the sweeping superficiality of Chinese scholars has long been criticized as a major defect of the time. It was indeed a farsighted judgment when Yán Fù held that nothing was more urgent for renewing Chinese scholarship than the introduction the “study of names” (logic).⁴¹

However, at the same time, a one-sided approach to the *GSLZ* from a narrow logical perspective does not allow one to grasp its quintessence and has always tended to lead people to misjudge it as mere sophistry. Thus Shěn Yǒudǐng’s 沈有鼎 (1909–1989) studies on the *GSLZ* were biased by his choice of precisely this approach. This has resulted in a number of unconvincing and dogmatic conclusions: for him, MSL “made the form of the law of identity absolute and thus turned it into a classical kind of metaphysical methodology”.⁴² Additionally, he held that the following statement from BML is caught in a confusion of thought: “That ‘having a white horse’ cannot mean ‘having no horse’ is a statement in which ‘white’ is detached [from horse]. Where one does not detach it, ‘having a white horse’ cannot be equated with ‘having no horse’.”⁴³ Eventually, he remarked that “when Gōngsūn Lóng excelled in ‘disputation’, it was in fact prototypical ‘sophistry’”.⁴⁴ A correct interpretation of the *GSLZ* and an understanding of the genuine meaning of BML presuppose some knowledge of Western analytical philosophy. At the same time, it is clear that the meaning resulting from such a reading is inherent in the text itself. It is also necessary to point out that modern scholars’ lack of understanding of the theories of Gōngsūn Lóng has often resulted from their dialectical approaches. In this way, they may be able to grasp the theories of Gōngsūn Lóng from the perspective of a Kantian concept of ‘reason’, but they hardly realize that BML is indeed a philosophical reflection on understanding. Their method is thus inadequate, and by trying to fit a square peg into round hole, they haphazardly proceed to ‘judgments’ which, under these circumstances, can only lead to absurd conclusions. Thus Páng Pú 龐樸 (1928–2015) has remarked that

⁴¹ Jiǎng 1936: 141.

⁴² “《名實論》把同一律的形式絕對化了，就成為典型的形而上學方法論。” (Shěn 1979: 337).

⁴³ “‘有白馬不可謂無馬者，離 白之謂也；不離者，有白馬不可謂有馬也，’ 這就陷入思想混亂。” (Shěn 1979: 338).

⁴⁴ “公孫龍長於‘辯’，而且是典型的‘詭辯’。” (Shěn 1981: 195).

"Gōngsūn Lóng fundamentally violates dialectical logic and the dialectics of thought",⁴⁵ and he dismissed the proposition "a white horse is not a horse" as "fallacious reasoning" that runs counter to "common sense".⁴⁶

The pre-imperial "theory of names and disputation" (*míngbiànxué* 名辯學), which provides the basis of BML itself, emerged from the so-called "Art of the Way" (*dàoshù* 道術) from Chinese antiquity. This was short lived and disappeared amidst the rise of China's mainstream intellectual and cultural traditions. In contrast, the analytical philosophy of language in ancient Greece was already fully fledged and elaborate, and has underpinned the epistemological culture of the West ever since. At the end of a continuous development during which it became ever more influential, it eventually culminated in the "analytical era" of philosophy in the twentieth century. At present, China and Europe represent two mutually independent traditions. Mǒu Zōngsān 牟宗三 (1909–1995) makes an accurate point about these cultural differences. He remarks: "As for the origin of every culture, no matter where it arises, it is certain to manifest itself from a particular perspective, this is a metaphysical necessity. But why from one perspective rather than another? This is neither a metaphysical nor a logical necessity, it is but a historical inevitability."⁴⁷ Distinct cultures can thus be characterized as various "views from particular perspectives."⁴⁸ Still, all people live in a single, shared universe. Now the "particular perspective" of Western culture is knowledge-centered, and as all 'knowledge' pertains to one and the same object, it consequently encompasses a claim to universal truth. And there can be no doubt that the analytical philosophy of language is an important constituent part of Western culture. Insofar as BML is based on an epistemological attitude toward the world, it goes without saying that its theories are by and large equivalent to those of the analytical philosophy of language in the West.

This equivalence is complete. First, in ontology, Western philosophy – which is essentially a theory of knowledge – construes the epistemological object, something which implies the reality of the spheres of both the phenomenal and the noumenal; epistemology conceives the epistemological subject – that is, the mind in its functions – as sensual perception and intellectual conception. In methodology, it eventually construes knowledge itself, thus firmly grounding the norms of epistemic appropriateness. Based on this, it is clear that one can say that Gōngsūn Lóng's "theory of names and disputation" constitutes a complete

45 “根本地違反了辯證邏輯，違反了思維辯證法。” (Páng 1979: 74–75).

46 Páng 1979: 74.

47 Mǒu 1997: 13.

48 “一孔之見”.

framework of this kind, albeit in a condensed form. It is particularly in BML that he presents a relatively refined and detailed analytical philosophy of language. To sum up, the pivotal element of this overall equivalence of BML with Western philosophy is the fact that both share a methodology and an analytical philosophy of language which take ontology and epistemology as their basis.

Second, this equivalence results from the fact that both the *GSLZ* and Western philosophy share logic as their basic framework. In the latter, ontology uses formal logic to construe the ‘existents’ as objects of cognition, epistemology resorts to transcendental logic to construe the thinking subject of understanding, and methodology eventually employs the logic of language to construe knowledge itself. Each of these three levels is based on logic. Most important is the methodology of the analytical philosophy of language, which conceives the structure of knowledge as a logical system with language as its constitutive organizational rationale. A similar reasoning can be found in the *GSLZ*, in which the logical categories of ‘position’ (i.e. essence plus class; *wèi*), ‘pointer’ (i.e. concept; *zhǐ*), and actualities (i.e. individuals; *shí*) constitute both the world and the subject. But besides these fundamental logical distinctions, BML is also rich in logical reflections. The bases of logic are identity and analyticity. In MSL, the principle of identity is clearly pointed out:

(15a) MSL⁴⁹

To use what is regarded as correct, to make correct what is not regarded as correct, and not to use what is not regarded as correct, raises doubt about what is regarded as correct [...]

以其所正，正其所不正；不以其所不正，疑其所正。[...]

(15b) MSL⁵⁰

When the name is made correct, it will be in accord with the That [i.e., the one concept] or the This [i.e. the other concept] with respect to it [i.e. the ‘thing’]. If one says ‘that’ [i.e. the term] when that [i.e. the referent so designated] is not in accord with the That [i.e. the concept contained in the term], then the designation ‘that’ [i.e. for the referent] will not do. If one says ‘this’ [i.e. the term] when this [i.e. the referent so designated] is not in accord with the This [i.e. the concept contained in the term], then the designation ‘this’ [i.e. the referent] will not do [...]

其名正，則唯乎其彼此焉。謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行；謂此而此不唯乎此，則此謂不行。[...]

49 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/4.

50 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/5–6.

(15c) MSL⁵¹

Therefore, when a that [i.e. a referent so designated] acts like a That [i.e. an object of the concept so designated] and goes no further than the That [i.e. the concept contained in the term], when a this [i.e. a referent so designated] acts like a This [i.e. an object of the concept so designated] and goes no further than the This [i.e. the concept contained in the term], the [respective terms 'that' and 'this'] will do [for the respective referents].
故彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，可。

BML also expresses the principle of non-contradiction: “[How do we deal with yellow or black horses,] which can and cannot [be presented]? It is clear that possibility and impossibility contradict each other.”⁵² Many more thoughts on conceptual logic could be mentioned here, for example the differentiation between the singular concept (individual) and the universal concept (class), the differentiation between the concept of substance (the entity) and the concept of property (quality), or the definition and subsumption of concepts.

Finally, this equivalence is also based on the fact that both Western philosophy and the theories of Gōngsūn Lóng can be characterized as logical reasoning. Due to its basic epistemological orientation (which underlies the scientific branches of ontology, the theory of cognition, and methodology), Western philosophy was always inherently discursive in character. The same can also be said of Gōngsūn Lóng's “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiànxuē*). Focusing on the logical analysis of language, it develops its theories by means of discursive categories, such as ‘thing’ (*wù*), ‘actuality’ (*shí*), ‘pointer’ (*zhǐ*), and ‘position’ (*wèi*). Simǎ Tán 司馬談 (c. 165–110 BCE) seems to have realized this, though he formulated it as an accusation: “[The proponents of] the ‘School of Names’ get entangled in secondary investigations, so that people do not succeed in following their intentions. They decide exclusively on the basis of names and miss the genuine situation of others.”⁵³

However, due to their divergent cultural origins, BML and Western analytical philosophy of language are still somewhat different. To put it briefly, the analytical philosophy of language in BML represents a kind of cursory “thinking” about “real contents”, whereas Western analytical philosophy of language

51 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 9/8–9.

52 “有可有不可，何也？”[...] “可與不可，其相非明。” (Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 2/8; 10).

53 “名家，苛察纖縵，使人不得反其意，專決於名，而失人情。” *Shiji* 史記, ‘Taishǐgōng zìxù’ 太史公自序 (*Shiji*, p. 3291).

consists in strict and elaborate “theories” about the “formal”. Western theory not only breaks through the everyday use and superficial grammar of natural language, but moreover also captures and presents its profound logical structure. Its linguistic analysis relies on tools of mathematical logic and differentiates between meta-language and object language, the latter of which it understands as a system of formalized, symbolic language encompassing the three areas of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. In contrast, BML engages in a discussion restricted to real-life examples. Not only does it lack attention to linguistic forms, it also fails to provide a formalized handling of semantics and pragmatics. In short, BML does not contain formal thinking. The problem is that this difference (between form and content) is paramount, as it is not only the case that the essence and the foundation of knowledge lie in the formal, but moreover, that (this form) constitutes the very logical shape of language. If one takes analytical philosophy of language as a methodology without a solid grasp of the ‘form’, one is bound to fall short. Thus, according to this line of reasoning, BML as analytical philosophy of language still represents a rather early stage of development.

3 On the Authenticity of the Extant *GSLZ*

The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* collection contains not only BML, but Gōngsūn Lóng’s entire “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiànxué*). In search of an optimal basis for claims regarding its authenticity and reliability, we have to return to the very origins of China’s intellectual and cultural history.

All ancient civilizations went through the so-called “axial age”, marked by a breakthrough from religion to philosophy. In Chinese history, this happened in the Warring States period.⁵⁴ Zhuāngzǐ has a famous remark on the intellectual culture of that time:

(16) *Zhuāngzǐ*, ‘Tiānxià’ 天下

There ensued great disorder in the world, and sages and worthies no longer shed their light on it. The Dao and its characteristics ceased to be regarded as uniform. Many in different places got one glimpse of it, and plumed themselves on possessing it as a whole [...] and thus it was that the Dao, which forms the sage inwardly and the king externally, became obscured and lost its clearness, became repressed and lost its development. Everyone

54 For more information on this subject, see Yú 1987: 30–31.

in the world did whatever he wished, and was the rule to himself. Alas! The various schools held onto their several ways, and could not come back to the same point, nor agree together. The students of that later age unfortunately did not see the undivided purity of heaven and earth and the great scheme of truth held by the ancients. The system of the Dao was about to be torn into fragments under the sky.

天下大亂，賢聖不明，道德不一，天下多得一，察焉以自好。[...] 是故內聖外王之道，暗而不明，鬱而不發，天下之人各為其所欲焉，以自為方。悲夫！百家往而不反，必不合矣！後世之學者，不幸不見天地之純，古人之大體，道術將為天下裂。⁵⁵

Zhuāngzǐ's words highlight the fact that the originally coherent "one" of the "Art of the Way" (*dàoshù* 道術) split into the "Hundred Schools of Thought". Hegel famously claims that, over the course of history, this original "one whole" mind gives birth to a "richness" in organization: "Mind in each case has elaborated and expanded in the whole domain of its manifold nature the principle of the particular stage of self-consciousness which it has attained. Thus the mind of a people in its richness is an organization, and, like a cathedral, is divided into numerous vaults, passages, pillars, and vestibules, all of which have proceeded out of one whole and are directed to one end."⁵⁶ Thus, the "one whole" learning of the officials at the Zhōu royal court (*wáng guān zhī xué* 王官之學) split into the "Hundred Schools of Thought", and the "theory of names and disputation" (*míngbiànxué*) was one among these currents of classical thought. It sprouted from the practice of and reflection on the "adjustment of names" (*zhèng míng* 正名) at the Ministry of Rites, and also from the work of people such as Confucius, Guǎnzǐ, and Hǎn Fēizǐ. However, it was not properly established until Dèng Xī 鄧析 (545–501 BCE) and Yǐn Wén 尹文 (360–280 BCE) began to focus their scholarly attention on the concept of 'name' itself. They thus laid the groundwork for a scholarship concentrating on the theory of names (*míngxué*) or – to borrow an expression by the medieval scholar Lǚ Shèng 魯勝 – on the "establishment of the basis of naming" (*lì míngběn* 立名本). Mòzǐ then adopted a "dialectics" or "theory of disputation" (*biànxué*) – that is, a logical approach to the task of "establishing the basis of naming". It is evident that the Mohist dialectics (*mòbiàn* 墨辯) led the "theory of names" (*míngxué*) onto the path toward the logical analysis of language. However, the one who actually brought this task to

⁵⁵ Zhuāngzǐ 97/27, 98/1–3.

⁵⁶ Hegel 1995: 53.

completion was Gōngsūn Lóng. He consolidated previous teachings and developed the “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiànxué*), and he established an analytical philosophy of language, which he presented in BML. In sum, the teachings of Gōngsūn Lóng have emerged out of historical necessity from a unified, coherent line of cultural development. For this reason, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, as the crystallization of the “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiànxué*), is deeply rooted in the intellectual and cultural spirit and atmosphere of his time. It is also significant that the classical texts are not only replete with criticisms and records of other masters and classical schools of thought about the “theory of names and disputation” in general and Gōngsūn Lóng in particular, but that, taken together, this is strong evidence in support of the existence of the *GSLZ* as a text. If we want to engage in philological examinations of the *GSLZ*, we have to start from the broad perspective sketched along these lines.

In this respect, the historian Sīmǎ Qiān 司馬遷 (145–86 BCE) clearly states the following: “In Zhào there was Gōngsūn Lóng. He debated on ‘hard and white’ and ‘similarity and difference’ [...] Today many of his writings are extant, so I shall not discuss his transmitted sayings.”⁵⁷ Qián Mù 錢穆 (1895–1990) has dated Gōngsūn Lóng’s lifespan to the period from 320 to 250 BCE and identified his “courtesy name” as Zǐshí 子石.⁵⁸ Sīmǎ Qiān thus not only tells us that Gōngsūn Lóng was a native of the Warring States kingdom of Zhào, he moreover conveys that he was the author of two works on the “theory of names and disputations – namely, the disputations ‘On Hard and White’ and ‘On Sameness and Difference’ – and indicates to us that these books still circulated widely in the Western Hàn period. The first record of the *GSLZ* in bibliographical documents is Liú Xiàng’s (77–6 BCE) *Biélù* (Separate Records), which tersely lists a “*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in 14 *piān*”.⁵⁹ Later, the text is listed under the title *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in the *míngjiā* (“School of Names”) sections in the bibliographical chapters of the *Hànshū* 漢書 (History of the Western Hàn), the *Jiù Tángshū* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Táng), and the *Xīn Tángshū* 新唐書 (New History of the Táng). However, from a bibliographical perspective, two major problems cast doubt on this account.

The first problem is that the *GSLZ* is not mentioned in the bibliographical section of the *Suíshū* 隋書 (The History of the Suí; 581–618). Instead, the latter lists a so-called *Shǒubáilùn* 守白論 (Discourse on Preserving the White) in the Daoist section of the bibliography. This has led some people to consider the *GSLZ* a late

57 “而趙亦有公孫龍，為堅白同異之辯，[...] 世多有其書，故不論其傳云。” *Shǐjì* 史記, ‘Mèngzǐ Xún Qīng lièzhuàn’ 孟子荀卿列傳 (*Shǐjì* p. 2349).

58 Qián 1985: 434–435.

59 ‘Yìwénzhì’, p. 32.

forgery. However, *Shǒubáilùn* is just an alternative name for the *GSLZ*, developed by the Daoists. The medieval period from the third through the sixth centuries CE saw the sudden rise of the “dark learning” (玄學), promulgated by the Daoist school. At the same time, so-called “pure conversations” (*qīngtán* 清談) on “names and patterns” (*mínglǐ* 名理) were very much *en vogue*. These trends accompanied a spirit of “conversing on the dark” (*tánxuán* 談玄), which in turn propagated the “theory of names and disputations” (*míngbiànxiué* 名辯學), which thus came to “shine in new splendor”. Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百 (1890–1965) and Tán Jiěfǔ 譚戒甫 (1887–1974) have established that the *GSLZ* was renamed *Shǒubáilùn* during the transitional phase between the Jìn 晉 (266–420), Liú Sòng 劉宋 (420–479), and Liáng 梁 (502–557) dynasties. Tán Jiěfǔ points out that when Huán Tán 桓譚

said that Gōngsūn Lóng composed a “Treatise on Preserving the White” (守白之論 *Shǒubái zhī lùn*), he did not say that the entire work of [Gōngsūn] Lóng was called *Shǒubáilùn*; it was [Chéng] Xuányīng who first called Gōngsūn Lóng’s work *Shǒubáilùn*. Tán lived during the reign of Hàn Guāngwǔ and [Chéng] Xuányīng during the reign of Táng Tàizōng. Yet at which point was it exactly in this period of 600 years that the name *Shǒubáilùn* actually became the title of a book? Studies engaging the textual history of the *GSLZ* used to regard BML as its *magnum opus*. BML also takes pride of place among Gōngsūn Lóng’s books, since its text is the most widely known. Later readers who opened the book and familiarized themselves with it were baffled by its novel characteristics and immersed themselves in it. This substantially augmented the number of people who discussed it. Huán Tán’s utterances are thus based on BML. Another explanation is that other enthusiasts after the Eastern Jìn (after Zhāng Zhàn 張湛, fl. fourth c. CE) regarded Tán’s opinion as the established one and subsequently copied the latter’s work *Xīnlùn*, ranking it before Gōngsūn Lóng’s BML. And since that text contained the phrase “to engage in the discussion about preserving the white” (守白之論) it fitted neatly into the trend of “conversing on the dark” (*tánxuán* 談玄). As a result of this, the whole work of Gōngsūn Lóng was listed under the title of *Shǒubáilùn*.⁶⁰

In fact, it was probably Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英 (ca. 600–690) himself who directly influenced the composition of the bibliographical section of the *Suǐshū* and added the *GSLZ* to its Daoist section under its alternative name, *Shǒubáilùn*. I base this theory on the fact that he repeats statements such as the following: “The name ‘white’ refers to Gōngsūn Lóng’s *Shǒubáilùn*. His family name was Gōngsūn, his personal name Lóng, and he was a man from Zhào.”⁶¹

60 “言龍為《守白之論》，亦非謂龍全書名《守白論》也；而玄英乃始確稱龍著《守白論》。譚為漢光武時人；玄英為唐太宗時人。然則此六百年中，《守白論》之成為書名，究起何時乎？嘗考龍之學原以《白馬論》為最著，而其書編次亦以《白馬論》居首，文最易知。后之讀者開卷即味其文，輒驚為新異而鑽研之，而談論者紛起矣。夫桓譚之說，本因《白馬論》而發。或東晉以後（張湛之後）之好事者視譚說為弘通，乃抄錄《新論》此文以列於龍書《白馬論》之前，因中有‘為《守白之論》’句，適中當時談玄之風，遂目龍文全書為《守白論》。” (Tán 1987: 124).

61 “白，即公孫龍《守白論》也。姓公孫，名龍，趙人。” (Zhuāngzǐ jìshì, p. 77, n. 14).

Or: “Gōngsūn Lóng had an intelligent nature and exploited his talent to promulgate dialectics. He penned the *Shǒubáilùn* to make his refined dialectics well known.”⁶² And again: “Gōngsūn Lóng penned the *Shǒubáilùn* and made it known to the world”,⁶³ and “‘hard’ and ‘white’ refer to Gōngsūn Lóng’s *Shǒubáilùn*”.⁶⁴

Over the more than 100 years spanning from the Jìn, Sòng, and Liáng dynasties until the time of Chéng Xuányīng and the early Táng dynasty, Gōngsūn Lóng’s work circulated among Daoists under the title *Shǒubáilùn*. It is thus no coincidence that as an officially commissioned work, the bibliographical section of the *Suǐshū* lists it as Daoist.

It is important to note that, at the same time, the work was still circulating widely under its original name, *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. The Sòng-era work *Wényuàn Yīnghuá* 文苑英華 (Finest Blossoms in the Garden of Literature) contains a preface to a so-called “Summary of the *GSLZ*”, penned by an anonymous Táng writer, which states the following with regard to Gōngsūn Lóng:

I once heard his teachings and wanted to take a look at his book. In the second year of Xiánxiāng [671 CE] [. . .] I was just travelling from Mount Sōng to Rǔyáng, when I encountered an official named Mr. Wáng, whose personal name was Shìzhèng 師政 and whose courtesy name was Yuánzhí 元直. He was approaching seventy years of age and was erudite and talented. He enjoyed talking in times of leisure and seemed indifferent to the vicissitudes of life. A rare sage indeed. As I was resting with him, our informal discussion touched on “fingers” and “horses”, and thus he unbagged his book and showed it to me. It consisted of six *piān* and was bound together into one *juàn*.⁶⁵

In fact, the existence of the *GSLZ* can be even traced back to the Liáng dynasty, a century or so before the time of Wáng Shìzhèng 王師政. Through textual research, Wáng Guǎn has established the following:

Of the 14 *piān* of the *GSLZ* in the bibliography of the *Hànshū*, six survive to this day. In his *Fǎyán*, Master Yáng speaks of [Gōngsūn] Lóng’s “several ten thousand words of ‘sophistry’”. It appears that the complete work still existed at the time, and that its style was very rich. The commentary on the *Sānguózhi* (“Yuán Yú zhuàn”) quotes Xún Chuò’s *Jìzhōujì*, which states that, in disputations about the meaning of discourses, Yuán Yú used Gōngsūn Lóng’s words to discuss subtle principles. Also the Jin scholar Zhāng Zhàn,

62 “公孫龍秉性聰明，率才宏辯。著《守白之論》，以博辯知名。” (Zhuāngzǐ jìshì, p. 597, n. 1).

63 “公孫著《守白論》，見行於世。” (Zhuāngzǐ jìshì, p. 1111, n. 1).

64 “堅白，公孫龍《守白論》也。” (Zhuāngzǐ jìshì, p. 427, n. 2).

65 “嘗聞其論，願觀其書。咸亨二年 自嵩山遊於汝陽，有宗人王先生，名師政，字元直，春秋將七十，博聞多藝，安時樂道，恬淡浮沉，罕有知者；仆過憩焉，縱言及於指馬，因出其書以示仆，凡六篇，勒成一卷。” (Wényuàn yīnghuá, p. 3971).

in his commentary on the *Lièzǐ*, cited the original work *Báimǎlùn* and stated that this treatise still existed, and so forth. In his *Guǎngjué Jiāolùn*, Liú Xiàobiāo wrote about the “re-fined dialectics about the jade-blue chicken”. The meaning of “jade-blue chicken” is taken from the *GSLZ* itself, which shows that in the time of Wèi and Liáng, the original work still existed.⁶⁶

The second problem to be discussed pertains to the number of chapter sections. While the original version of the *GSLZ* consisted of a total of fourteen *piān*, the modern version only has six. The fate of the missing *piān* remains open and will have to be clarified by future archaeological finds or other discoveries. However, we can still venture a guess at this point. The missing parts were probably lost when the *GSLZ* was first renamed *Shǒubáilùn*, sometime during the Jìn, Sòng, or Liáng dynasty. We can also assume that the loss of these *piān* actually accelerated the name change. The remaining six *piān* are all centered around the “Treatise on Preserving the White” (*Shǒu bái zhī lùn*) and the “Treatise on White and Horse” (*Bái mǎ zhī lùn*), which led to the renaming of the remaining *piān* as *Shǒubáilùn*. It would even be possible that the remaining six of the original fourteen *piān* were rearranged and then published as *Shǒubáilùn*, whereas the other eight *piān* were gradually lost. By the time of the early Táng dynasty, the complete work had apparently ceased to exist. Later, during the time of the Later Jìn, when the bibliographical section of the *Jiùtáng shū* was compiled, the *Shǒubáilùn* was again given its original name, *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

In order to clarify these two points of doubt, one also needs to consider them from the perspective of the way of argumentation. Dù Guóxiáng bases his analysis on Liú Xiàng's *Bié Lù*, in which he records the following assessment of *Gōngsūn Lóng*'s teachings by his contemporary, Zōu Yǎn: “He multiplied formulations so that they were based on each other [but nothing else]; he complemented phrases so that they contradicted each other; he crafted analogies so that they diverged from each other.”⁶⁷ That his only intent was “rhetorical perfection” (lit. “the perfection of phrases”; *cí zhì* 辭至) shows that the extant *GSLZ* is in fact the original text which Zōu criticized. Jīn Shòushēn 金受申 further points out: “BML and the remaining five *piān* of the *GSLZ* are all consistent in their logic and their eccentric use of language. Hence, they can by no means

66 “《漢志》《公孫龍子》十四篇，今存六篇。揚子《法言》稱龍詭辯數萬，似當時完本，為字甚富。《三國志·鄧艾傳》注引荀綽《冀州記》，謂愛俞辯於論義，採公孫龍之辭，以談微理。晉張湛《列子注》亦引原書《白馬論》，稱此論現存云云。劉孝標《廣絕交論》曰‘縱碧雞之雄辯’，‘碧雞’一義，即出本書，可證魏梁之間原著猶存。” (Wáng 1992: 9).

67 “繁文以相假，飾辭以相諄，巧譬以相移，唯求‘辭至’，表明今本《公孫龍子》確系真本。” (Dù 1962: 85).

have been forged by later generations.”⁶⁸ The content of the eight missing *piān* of the original work has survived in other records, such as the “Twenty-One Paradoxes” in the *Zhuāngzǐ* (‘Tiānxià’ 天下, ‘All-Under-Heaven’), the “Seven Sayings” in the *Lièzǐ* 列子 (‘Zhòngní’ 仲尼, ‘Confucius’), and the ‘Treatise on Dimensionlessness’ (Wúhòulùn 無厚論) in Liú Xiàng’s *Dèng Xī Shū Jiàoxù* 鄧析子書校敘. Needless to say, these are only sidelines of the “theory of names and disputation” (*míngbiàn xué* 名辯學). Eventually, when Yáng Xióng 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) speaks about “several ten thousand distorted words”, the number “several ten thousand” arguably refers not to a concrete number, but merely emphasizes their enormous quantity.

Considering the level of argumentation, it thus becomes clear that, on closer inspection, Shěn Yǒudǐng’s claim that the modern version of the *GSLZ* was fabricated by a Jìn forger is baseless. Shěn Yǒudǐng claims that “Gōngsūn Lóng changed his identity from a Warring States debater to a specialist in logic during the Jìn dynasty”.⁶⁹ And as he writes elsewhere: “As for the other sections and chapters of the now-popular *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (except BML and the first part of TBL), I suggest that they were forcibly strung together by scholars from the Jìn dynasty, thus adding some zest to corrupted texts and isolated fragments.”⁷⁰ The problem with this claim is that even if Jìn scholars who engaged in “conversation on the obscure and discussions of the void” (*tán xuán lùn xū* 談玄論虛) adopted their style of argumentation from the “theory of names and disputation”, they still refuted the theory itself. In fact, the “learning of the dark” (*xuán xué* 玄學) breathes the spirit of *Zhuāngzǐ* and is as different from the “theory of names and disputation” as ice is from fire. Moreover, the comprehensibility and depth of the theories in the *GSLZ* cannot be achieved by haphazardly “adding some zest” to incoherent textual fragments. In sum, a Jìn scholar would have had neither the opportunity nor the ability to forge a text such as this.

This leads us to the conclusion that the extant version of the *GSLZ* is a fragmentary but authentic text. However, the ‘Jífǔ’ 跡府 (Storehouse of Traces) chapter about the deeds of Gōngsūn Lóng is most probably a later addition made by someone else. There has always been a heated debate over when exactly this chapter was added to the *GSLZ* and who was responsible for its inclusion. Yáng Jùnguāng

68 “自《白馬論》以下五篇，論理一貫，文辭僻遠，決非後人所能偽作。” (Jin 1928: 66).

69 “公孫龍由戰國時期的詭辯家，到晉代竟搖身一變成為邏輯學專家。” (Shěn 1979: 335).

70 “現在流行的《公孫龍子》的其他篇章〔指《白馬論》及《通變論》開頭一段外。——引者按我認為是晉代學者根據破爛的寫本或片字只語加鹽加醬勉強串起來的。〕” (Shěn 1981: 197).

has convincingly determined that “the creation of the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter cannot post-date the lifetime of Gōngsūn Lóng and his immediate disciples; this period around the compilation of the *Lǚ Lǎn* 呂覽 marks the eve of the unification of the Six Kingdoms by the Qin”.⁷¹ Yáng has clarified three major points of doubt. The first regards the prevailing view that the first part of the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter was copied from Huán Tán’s 桓譚 (23 BCE–56 CE) *Xīnlùn*. Yáng has shown that in fact, it was the other way round – it was the *Xīnlùn* which plagiarized ‘Jǐfǔ’. The discussion of BML in the extant ‘Jǐfǔ’ contains considerably more text than the respective *Xīnlùn* passage, as quoted in the *Tàipíng Yùlǎn* 太平御覽 (Readings of the Tàipíng Era). Moreover, this latter text, which essentially refutes the “theory of names and disputation”, has in fact merely copied a few passages of a purely introductory character from the ‘Jǐfǔ’.

The second doubt regards the assumption made by many scholars that the second part of the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter was copied from the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* 孔叢子 (The Kǒng Family Masters’ Anthology). However, the situation here is yet again precisely the other way round. The *Kǒngcóngzǐ* is a forgery by the Wèi scholar Wáng Sù 王肅 from the period of the Three Kingdoms (c. 220–280 CE). Based on the commentaries by the Eastern Hàn scholars Gāo Yòu 高誘 (168–212) (on the ‘Zhèngmíng’ chapter [Rectification of Names] of the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* [Master Lǚ’s Spring and Autumn Annals]) and Xǔ Shèn 許慎 (on the ‘Qísúxùn’ 齊俗訓 [The Unification of Customs] chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子), it is evident that both have read the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter. Furthermore, the second part of ‘Jǐfǔ’ contains the debate between Gōngsūn Lóng and Kǒng Chuān 孔穿, which “develops along the lines of the theory of Gōngsūn Lóng”. Yet while the corresponding records in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* are similar in this respect, they show traces of plagiarism.

The third doubt regards the assumption made by some scholars that the ‘Jǐfǔ’ was compiled during the Jin period. However, the records about the life of Gōngsūn Lóng in the ‘Jǐfǔ’ chapter contain neither the story of his opposition to Yú Qīng’s 虞卿 increasing the lands of the lord of Píngyuán 平原, as found in the *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策 (Strategies of the Warring States; ‘Zhàocè 趙策’) edited by Liú Xiàng, nor the debate between Gōngsūn Lóng and Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍, as recorded in the *Bié Lù*. This shows that ‘Jǐfǔ’ was compiled before the time of Liú Xiàng. Gōngsūn Lóng’s teaching only flourished for a very short time. Moreover, he had only a few successors (the only person known by name is Qí Mǔzǐ 綦母子).⁷² The account of Gōngsūn Lóng’s theory in ‘Jǐfǔ’ is fairly accurate

71 “成書，絕不會遲至公孫龍及門弟子以後；其年代，當在《呂覽》成書前後，即秦統一六國前夕。” (Yáng 1986: 44).

72 *Shǐjì*, p. 2370.

and thus cannot have been compiled by any other person than one of Gōngsūn Lóng's students. This shows that the compilation of the 'Jǐfǔ' chapter dates from the period of time when Gōngsūn Lóng and his disciples were still active.

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II Philosophy

Contemporary Analytic Approaches

Yiu-ming Fung 馮耀明

4 Reference and Ontology in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

As a dialectician (*míng biàn zhī shì* 名辯之士), Gōngsūn Lóng was famous in his time due to his provocative thesis “white horse is not horse”. As stated in the first chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子, ‘Jǐfǔ’ 跡府 (Collected Notes), “he wished to extend this disputation to rectify names and reality and spread his influence over the world” (欲推是辯以正名實而化天下焉). But his idea of the “rectification of names” (*zhèngmíng* 正名) is basically different from that of the Confucians. For Gōngsūn Lóng, this is not a normative problem of naming in terms of its function in socio-political construction, but rather a descriptive problem of names in terms of their linguistic role in semantics or theory of reference. As explained in this chapter, his arguments in support of the white-horse thesis are based on a special theory of reference, which, in turn, is grounded in a special theory of onto-cosmology.

Just like the Daoists, including the authors of the *Lǎozǐ* 老子 and of the outer and miscellaneous chapters of the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, and the Confucians of the *Yìzhuan* 易傳 (Commentary on the Book of Change) and the *Zhōngyōng* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), most ancient Chinese thinkers do not separate ontology and cosmology in establishing their worldviews. On the one hand, they treat their ultimate concern or ontological commitment as a transcendent entity or transcendental principle. On the other hand, they regard this entity or principle not only as an origin of creation or primordial creativity, but also as a kind of immanent power or sustained force to govern the created objects or phenomena. Additionally, some of them also think that the transcendental principle is not only a descriptive principle which determines what is and what will be the case in the world, but also a normative principle which regulates what is and what will be the state of well-being for people and objects in the world. So, for some of them, there are no distinctions between entity and principle in terms of ultimate concern or ontological commitment, between transcendence and immanence, and ‘is’ and ‘ought’.

Gōngsūn Lóng is not an exception in his worldview, though his onto-cosmology does not explicitly touch upon the problem of the distinction between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. To support his arguments for the theses of white horse and hard white, he provides a special theory of reference which is, in turn, supported by a peculiar theory of onto-cosmology. Gōngsūn Lóng’s theories of

reference and onto-cosmology are generally revealed in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 (An Essay on Zhǐwù), ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’ 通變論 (An Essay on Understanding Change), and ‘Míngshí lùn’ 名實論 (An Essay on Names and Reality), and specifically discussed in ‘Jiānbái lùn’ 堅白論 (An Essay on Hard and White). Based on this theory, Gōngsūn Lóng makes a controversial claim in ‘Báimǎ lùn’ 白馬論 (An Essay on White Horse). In this chapter, I will try to provide a coherent and comprehensive interpretation and analysis of all the essays included in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

1 The Rectification of Names in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

As a dialectician, Gōngsūn Lóng was famous in his time due to his provocative thesis “white horse is not horse”. As stated in the first chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子, ‘Collected Notes’ (‘Jīfū’ 跡府), “he wished to extend this disputation to rectify names and reality and to spread his influence over the whole world” (欲推是辯以正名實而化天下焉). But his idea of the “rectification of names” (*zhèng míng* 正名) is basically different from that of the Confucians. For Gōngsūn Lóng, this is not a normative problem of naming in terms of its function in socio-political construction – in which an imposed status function for executing deontic power is realized, as described by John Searle,¹ or in which there is a triple entanglement of (physical) fact, convention (or constitutive rule), and value (normative power), as described by Hilary Putnam² – but a descriptive problem of names in terms of their linguistic roles in semantics or theory of reference. As I have argued elsewhere,³ Gōngsūn Lóng’s arguments in ‘An Essay on White Horse’ (‘Báimǎ lùn’ 白馬論) are based on his special theory of reference, which, in turn, is grounded in his special theory of onto-cosmology.

Just like the Daoists, including Lǎozǐ 老子 and Zhuāngzǐ 莊子, and the Confucians of the *Yìzhuan* 易傳 (Commentary on the Book of Change) and the *Zhōngyōng* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), most ancient Chinese thinkers do not separate ontology from cosmology in establishing their worldviews. On the one hand, they treat their ultimate concern as a transcendent entity or transcendental principle. On the other hand, they regard this entity or principle not only as an origin of creation or primordial creativity, but also as a kind of immanent power or

1 Searle 2010: 94–95.

2 Putnam 2002: 30.

3 Yiu-ming Fung 2007: 515–536; see also Yiu-ming Fung, forthcoming, ch. 6.

sustained force to govern the created objects or phenomena. Additionally, they also think that the transcendental principle is not only a descriptive principle which determines what is and what will be the case in the world, but also a normative principle which regulates what is and what will be the state of well-being for people and objects in the world. So, for some of them, there are no distinctions between entity and principle in terms of ultimate concern or ontological commitment, between transcendence and immanence, and between ‘is’ and ‘ought’.⁴

Gōngsūn Lóng is no exception in this regard, though his onto-cosmology does not explicitly touch upon the problem of the distinction between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. To support his arguments for the theses of white horse and hard white, he provides a special theory of reference which is, in turn, supported by a peculiar theory of onto-cosmology. Gōngsūn Lóng’s theories of reference and onto-cosmology in general are revealed in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 (An Essay on Zhǐwù), ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’ 通變論 (An Essay on Understanding Change), and ‘Míngshí lùn’ 名實論 (An Essay on Names and Reality) and in particular in ‘Jiānbái lùn’ 堅白論 (An Essay on Hard and White). In the

⁴ For example, ch. 42 of the *Lǎozǐ* provides a vivid description of a cosmogonical process from *dào* 道 to all the things in the world. Ch. 40 does not seem to emphasize *dào*’s status as an entity in terms of cosmological origin, but rather to stress *dào*’s regulative function of reverse, an ontological principle/order. In comparison with ch. 42 and ch. 40, ch. 25 mentions *dào*’s diverse status: that is, as a cosmological or cosmogonic origin and a transcendental or regulative principle/order. *Dào* also works as a sustaining power, immanent in all things. In addition, ch. 34 seems to emphasize a natural sustaining power which is immanent in all things. On the other hand, ch. 39 stresses that *dào* is a normative sustaining power which can be embedded in both natural phenomena and human events. In sum, Lǎozǐ 老子 tries to provide a comprehensive, monistic worldview to explain various questions about the great cosmos, the small cosmos, and the relation between these two realms. This worldview is based on the background knowledge obtained from tradition, as elaborated by ritual specialists, officials, historians/historiographers, and medical experts. On this basis, Lǎozǐ speculates that there must be a substantial or functional entity which can be called ‘*dào*’. Nevertheless, Lǎozǐ does not realize that there may be tensions among the various roles that he assigns to or imposes on *dào*. As we know today, there are tensions between being a cosmological origin and an ontological entity, between being an ontological principle/order and an entity in terms of cosmology or ontology, and between a natural principle/order and a normative principle/order. It is well known that the concept of cosmological origin presupposes temporal priority, while that of ontological entity presupposes logical priority. Although the activity of the entity could be exemplified in its expressing a certain order or principle, the former is related to but not identical with the latter. Moreover, there may be a functional unity or entanglement between a normative or evaluative principle/order and a factual or natural principle/order. However, this does not imply that they are the same: the factual principle/order has deterministic implication, while the normative principle/order presupposes freedom of will.

remainder of this chapter, I try to give a coherent and comprehensive interpretation and analysis of these essays, which is also consistent with my interpretation and analysis of ‘Báimǎ lùn’.

2 Two-Level Ontology: *Zhǐ*, *Wù*, and *Wù-zhǐ*

In ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, there are three basic key concepts which Gōngsūn Lóng uses to work out his ontological backbone and also to back up his reference theory, which is especially reflected in his discussion on the relation between names and reality. The first two concepts are mentioned at the very beginning of the essay, that is *zhǐ* 指 (‘non-empirical entities’) and *wù* 物 (‘things’, ‘objects’, or ‘events’), while the last one is a linking concept between the first two, *wù zhǐ* 物指 (*zhǐ* in *wù*, or ‘properties of an object’). Most scholars treat *zhǐ* as a cognitive or epistemic, semantic or conceptual entity or relation. Thus, they interpret the first sentence “*wù mò fēi zhǐ*” (物莫非指) as “all things are known or conceptualized as *zhǐ*”, or as “all things are pointed out or designated [by names]”. To give a cognitive or epistemic, semantic or conceptual interpretation of the sentence, they have to translate the term *zhǐ* as meaning, designation, image, pointing, or a kind of conceptual or cognitive entity or relation.⁵ I think this kind of treatment cannot provide a comprehensive and coherent interpretation of the essay as a whole, especially due to the difficulties found in translating the second sentence, “*ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ*” (而指非指) (“but *zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*”) in a sensible way, leaving aside the problem of its relation to Gōngsūn Lóng’s other essays.

One of the most plausible and reasonable interpretations of these concepts, I think, is to treat them as the key terms in Gōngsūn Lóng’s theory of a two-level ontology. As indicated below, this treatment not only makes good sense of the whole essay, but also provides good ideas for understanding the

5 For example, Hú Shì 胡適 (Hu Shih) has provided a conceptual interpretation. He thinks that “the word ‘finger’ here means ‘a mark’ or ‘a sign’, that which ‘signifies’ . . . It seems that ‘mark’ or ‘sign’ here means the attribute or quality by which a thing is known. ‘There are no things which are not marks’ [*Wu-mo-fei-chih* 物莫非指] means that things are what their attributes indicate them to be; that is, what they are perceived to be” (Hu 1922: 126). Based on a realistic interpretation, Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭 claims that “Kung-sun Lung [Gōngsūn Lóng] makes a distinction between *chih* [*zhǐ* 指] and *wu* [物]; his *chih* can be recognized as the universal referred to by the name” (Fung 1961: 257). With regard to A. C. Graham’s peculiar semantic interpretation, please see the main text below.

other essays in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. For example, in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’, Gōngsūn Lóng regards the individual elements *jiān* 堅 (‘hard’) or *bái* 白 (‘white’) as hidden entities. He thinks that “what is separate is hiding” (離也者藏也); “what is separate is in accordance with what is in reality” (離也者因是[寔]); “what is separate is all over the world, hence the separate is single or independent and ideal or standard in itself” (離也者天下，故獨而正); and finally, “there is an entity of self-hiding, not hidden in or by anything else” (有自藏也，非藏而藏也). The self-hiding entity *jiān* when not combined with *bái*, or *bái* when not combined with *jiān*, can be understood in terms of *zhǐ*, a self-sustained entity in a non-phenomenal world. In other words, what Gōngsūn Lóng calls the independent *bái*, “the *bái* which is not fixed to anything nor located in any place” (不定其所白), and what he calls the ideal *jiān*, “the *jiān* which is not fixed to anything nor located in any place” (不定其所堅), in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ can be recognized as *zhǐ* in ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’. This *jiān* is necessarily *jiān* in itself (堅必[自為]堅), and this *bái* must be *bái* in itself (白必[自為]白). We can call them independent *zhǐ* (*dú zhǐ* 獨指) or separate *zhǐ* (*lí zhǐ* 離指). This idea of *zhǐ* that has *jiān* and *bái* as instances is similar to, but not exactly the same as, Plato’s Idea. As such, they can be understood as hardness and whiteness, a kind of universal *living* in an intellectual world.⁶

In ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’, there is a similar idea of non-fixed entity. Gōngsūn Lóng designates the *bái* separated from *mǎ* 馬 (‘white’) as “not fixed to anything nor located in any place” (白者不定所白) and the *mǎ* separated from *bái* as “without selection of any color” (馬者無去取於色) or as “only having *mǎ* [as such]”

6 Gōngsūn Lóng’s idea of *zhǐ* is similar to but not exactly the same as the Platonic Idea (here I use the capital letter ‘I’ for ‘Idea’ to distinguish it from Berkeley’s or any other philosopher’s concept of ‘idea’). Generally speaking, for Gōngsūn Lóng, *zhǐ* (or *mǎ*, as a specific example) is like Plato’s universal (or horseness, as a specific example) in the sense that neither of them exists in the phenomenal world or has the sense of concreteness defined by the physical characteristics of phenomena. They are different from each other in the sense that a *zhǐ* can emerge into a phenomenal object through its *jiān* 兼 (‘combining’ or ‘joining’) or *yǔ* 與 (‘participating in combination’) with other *zhǐ*, or through its *dīng* 定 (‘specifying’ or ‘fixing’), to form a concrete thing, while Plato’s universal can be manifested or exemplified in each of its instances without any emergence. Here I agree with Lisa Indracoletto that the referents of single terms in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* can be called “concrete universals”, if “concreteness” is not restricted to the sense of the physical characteristics of phenomena, but rather extended to non-phenomenal entities (see Indracoletto 2010: 115). In this sense, ‘concreteness’ is similar to the characteristics of ‘individuality’ and ‘independence’ of an entity. Thus, even if we identify *zhǐ* as ‘abstract entity’, I do not think there is any contradiction in this usage. Further details of my view on this point can be found in Fung 2007: 532.

(有馬如已耳). Similarly to the case described above, these entities can also be understood as *zhǐ*. In ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’, we can also use the concept of *zhǐ* to interpret some crucial terms in a sensible way. Some scholars try to interpret terms like *yī* 一 (‘one’) and *èr* 二 (‘two’) literally, either as numerals or as numerical rods, but these interpretations cannot make any sense of the text. When they encounter terms like *niú* 牛 (‘cow’), *yáng* 羊 (‘ram’, ‘sheep’, or ‘goat’), *mǎ* 馬 (‘horse’), and *jī* 雞 (‘chicken’), or *qīng* 青 (‘green’), *bái* 白 (‘white’), *huáng* 黃 (‘yellow’), and *bì* 碧 (‘bluish green’), they have to give up and, without any evidence, identify the second part of the essay as corrupted or as having been inserted at a later period, issues that I will discuss in more detail below. I think the most plausible and reasonable interpretation of these terms is that they are used by Gōngsūn Lóng as symbols or schemas of constants and variables or, as I would like to call them, semi-symbols or quasi-symbols. These symbols are used to represent entities in Gōngsūn Lóng’s two-level ontology. For example, when he claims that “*èr wú yī*” (二無一, “two does not have one”) and “*èr fēi yī*” (二非一, “two is not one”), he means that there is no individual and independent entity (one) embedded in a compound entity (two) which is constituted of two dependent entities, and that the entity constituted of two dependent entities is not identical with that individual and independent entity. The “one” in the combined “two” is not the original individual “one”. Thus, “two does not include the individual one”, neither the “one on the left” (*èr wú zuǒ* 二無左) nor the other “one on the right” (*èr wú yòu* 二無右), before they join together into a combined entity. To use the example from ‘Báimǎ lùn’, we can say that there is no separate *bái* (the left ‘one’ entity) or *mǎ* (the right ‘one’ entity) in the inseparable *bái-mǎ* (the entity comprised of two dependent components), and *bái-mǎ* (‘two’) is definitely not identical to either *bái* (‘one’) or *mǎ* (‘another one’). For Gōngsūn Lóng, *bái-mǎ* is a white horse living in our phenomenal or physical world, but the independent *bái* or *mǎ* are both separate from the actual world. They are hiding in the non-phenomenal world, *living* in an ideal, non-physical world.

Plato thinks that the universal Ideas of the intellectual world can be instantiated or exemplified in particular objects of the phenomenal world, or that the phenomena imitate the ideal of the noumena. Gōngsūn Lóng’s metaphysical theory is not exactly the same as Plato’s. It is not purely ontological, as it is mixed with cosmological ideas (i.e. an onto-cosmogony or onto-cosmology). He thinks that the separate *zhǐ* as an independent single entity is unchangeable (*bù biàn* 不變) in terms of its ontological status in the non-phenomenal world. However, after a cosmological activity or a generative process, some unchangeable entities *enter into* the phenomenal world by virtue of the fact that they join together to form a concrete object. When they become components of a

combined entity, their ontological status is changed (*biàn* 變). That is, they are changeable in the temporal-spatial world. This is the reason why Gōngsūn Lóng asserts that, on the one hand, “two is combined from the left [one] and the right [one]” (*èr zhě zuǒ yǔ yòu* 二者左與右). However, on the other hand, “two does not have the left [one]”, and “two does not have the right [one]”. It is because “the changeable [left one or right one] is not the original unchangeable [left one or right one]” (*biàn fēi bù biàn* 變非不變). To use the words of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, the unchangeable “one” is *dú zhǐ* 獨指 (an independent *zhǐ*). After undergoing a cosmologically emergent activity – that is, a process of transition from the unchangeable *zhǐ* to the changeable *wù* and its *wù zhǐ* – this “one” becomes changeable, and thus can enter into a particular object as *wù zhǐ* or *wù zhōng zhǐ zhǐ* (物中之指) (*zhǐ* in *wù*). Based on this onto-cosmological idea, Gōngsūn Lóng can argue that “a [particular] white horse is not a [universal] horse[ness]” (*bái-mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬), “the white [color] fixed onto a particular object is not the [non-fixed] white[ness]” (定所白者非[不定所]白也), and “the horse[ness] without any selection of color is not the horse [shape] with a selection of color” (無去[取於色]者非有去[取於色]也).

With respect to the first two sentences of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, some scholars use a conceptualist model and translate them as: “All things are known through concepts or ideas; but concepts or ideas are not known through concepts or ideas.” But interpreted in this way, the second sentence does not make any sense. A. C. Graham does not adopt this interpretation. Instead, he interprets the essay in terms of the part-whole relation, as he also does when explaining the relation between white horse and horse in ‘Báimǎ lùn’. He translates the two sentences as follows: “When no thing is not the pointed-out, to point out [the world] is not to point it out.”⁷ In order to interpret the essay in terms of part-whole relation, he has to add the words “the world” and “things”, followed by his keyword, “pointed-out”, “pointings-out”, or “point out.” I do not think there is any reason to add the word “world” in the second sentence.⁸ Moreover, Graham’s translation

7 Graham 1989: 92.

8 Graham’s translation adds too many words that are not in the original text. Here I will mention just one passage as an example. His translation of the following passage makes sense only if we add the words I put in square brackets: (*Refutation*) “There being no pointing out of the world derives from each thing having its own name and not being deemed the pointed-out [of the world] [part ≠ whole]. When though not deemed the pointed-out [of the world] we call them the pointed-out [of things], we collect together the not deemed the pointed-out [of the world]. It is inadmissible to take your step from having in it the not deemed the pointed-out [of the world] [= parts in a collected whole] to having nothing in it not deemed the pointed-out [of the world] [= a collected whole as an entity].” (天下無指者，生於物之各有名，不為指也。不為指而謂之指，是兼[無]不為指。以有不為指，之無不

is somewhat clumsy, and in many places it does not respect the grammatical structure of Classical Chinese. For example, Graham translates the sentence “*tiānxià yǒu zhǐ wú wù-zhǐ*” (天下有指無物指) as “there were pointing out of *world* [my italics] but no pointing out of *things* [my italics].” This translation is not in accordance with the grammatical structure of the original sentence, though it may be in accordance with a Chinese sentence such as “*yǒu tiānxià zhǐ ér wú wù zhǐ zhǐ*” (有天下之指而無物之指) or “*yǒu zhǐ yú tiānxià ér wú zhǐ yú wù*” (有指於天下而無指於物). From the grammatical point of view, it is obvious that the term *tiānxià* is used as the subject of both *yǒu zhǐ* and *wú wù-zhǐ*. It is not acceptable to treat both *tiānxià* and the *wù* in *wù-zhǐ* as grammatical objects. Most importantly, if we follow Graham’s translation, how could it possibly make sense that Gōngsūn Lóng or his opponent repeats over and over again the same point that “there were pointing out of *world* but no pointing out of *things*” throughout the whole essay?

Graham thinks that his part-whole model can be consistently used to explain the relation between *bái-mǎ* and *mǎ* on the one hand, and the relation between *tiānxià* 天下 and *wù* on the other. Since *bái-mǎ* is used as a term with reference to an entity, *tiānxià* has to be acknowledged as a term with reference to an entity as well, if we agree that the two terms are comparable.⁹ In other words, in this case *tiānxià* is not a collective noun which does not refer to any entity. However, when Graham translates the second of the two sentences at the very beginning of the essay (“*wù mò fēi zhǐ, ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ*”) as “to point out [the world] is not to point it out”, with the added word “world” (*tiānxià*), he has to treat the

為指，未可。) Graham’s explanation is as follows: “A thing is deemed an ox or horse, not the world; we apply the name ‘world’ to all of them added together. The proponent’s error was to make the jump from no part being deemed the world (his ‘It is inadmissible that what does have in it [every part which is in the whole] be deemed what it does not [the whole which is not in the whole]’) to ‘No thing is not the pointed-out [of the world]’ understood as every part being deemed the world.” I don’t think his explanation is acceptable. Moreover, there is no evidence for his treatment of the essay as a dialogue in which Gōngsūn Lóng criticizes an opponent’s thesis in the first two sentences. See Graham 1989: 93.

⁹ I do not agree with Graham that we should treat ‘white horse’ as a collective term. In his translation, the passage “To deem a yellow horse not a horse, yet in the case of a white horse deem it having a horse, this is ‘Flying things go underwater, inner and outer coffins are in different places’; it is the world’s worst fallacy and inconsistency” (see Graham 1989: 90) implies that Gōngsūn Lóng does not treat ‘white horse’ as a collective term which refers to a whole constituted of two parts (white and horse), because he rejects the idea that “to deem a white horse [is] having a horse”. Thus, for Gōngsūn Lóng, ‘white horse’ is a term with reference to an individual rather than a collective whole.

term *tiānxià* as a collective noun without reference to an entity. His explanation is as follows:¹⁰

When the scope of meaning is extended to everything a paradox arises. The name “world” does not point anything out, yet no thing is not what it [world] points out. May one point out world by identifying it with the things one points out inside it? But that would violate the principle we observed behind the “White horse”, that whole is not part nor part whole: “It is inadmissible that what the world does have in it [that is, its parts] be deemed what it does not.”

Let us leave aside the problem of whether the relation between *bái-mǎ* and *mǎ* is the same as that between whole and part. It is obvious that Gōngsūn Lóng uses both *bái mǎ* and *mǎ* to refer to entities. However, Graham seems to treat the term ‘world’ as a collective noun to express a whole without reference to an entity, either a collective whole as an entity or all the parts as entities within the whole. Therefore, I do not think there is any basis for him to make a comparable point with regard to the term *tiānxià* with the principle related to the compound term *bái-mǎ*. In other words, his part-whole interpretation cannot be applied to both ‘Zhīwù lùn’ and ‘Báimǎ lùn’ in a consistent way, because ‘white horse’ is a term with reference to an entity, unlike ‘world’, which is a collective whole without

10 Graham 1989: 92. Here Graham attributes a similar kind of paradox to Huì Shī 惠施. He interprets Zhuāngzǐ’s idea of *wéi yī* 為一 (‘being one’) in ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論 (On the Uniformity of All Things) in the *Zhuāngzǐ* as presenting Huì Shī’s idea of *yī tǐ* 一體 (‘one body’), as in the sentence “heaven and earth were born together with me and the ten thousand things and I are one” (天地與我並生，萬物與我為一). Graham thinks that Zhuāngzǐ rejects the validity of the statement on the grounds that “as soon as I say it there are two things, the world and my statement about it”. In this regard, he assimilates Zhuāngzǐ’s argument to Plato’s argument against the Greek sophist in demonstrating the difficulty of the One and its name. For Plato, if everything is one, the name ‘one’ cannot be included in the whole. Thus there seems to be a paradox or contradiction. First, I think that there are several mistakes in Graham’s interpretation of Zhuāngzǐ’s idea of ‘oneness’. Graham does not notice that Huì Shī’s idea of *yī tǐ* is essentially different from Zhuāngzǐ’s idea of *wéi yī*. Strictly speaking, Huì Shī’s idea is “all in one”, in contrast to Zhuāngzǐ’s idea of “all as one.” “All in one” means that all the parts are included in one whole, while “all as one” means that many is identical to one. The former is a collective whole, i.e. the one as aggregate of differentiated entities, whereas the latter is a mystic oneness, i.e. the one as undifferentiated chaos, which gives up the principle of individuality. To consider things as *yī tǐ* implies that there is one body or organic whole which consists of different parts or components, while to consider things as *wéi yī* means that many is one or one is many, a mental state of undifferentiation or non-individuality. Second, it is not necessary to treat the concept of ‘one’ or ‘whole’ as an entity expressed by an individual constant. If we follow Bertrand Russell’s theory of definite descriptions, the concept can be expressed as a predicate. If there is no value to satisfy the variable qualified by the predicate, there would be no commitment to an entity in terms of ontology. A solid argument against this view can be found in Yiu-ming Fung, forthcoming, ch. 4.

reference to an entity. If ‘world’ is treated as a term referring to an entity, it would be an “unbound totality or infinite”, as Georg Cantor has critically noted. It would be something which is not identifiable, definable, or constructible. It seems to me that Graham’s interpretation cannot escape this dilemma.¹¹

Let us now turn to my explanation of the key concepts in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’. In Classical Chinese, 指 (*zhǐ*) is often written as 指 or 旨. It means ‘idea’ or ‘meaning’, and its semantic field can be extended to mean an abstract or ideal entity. In ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, the first sentence asserts that “all things are constituted of or have emerged from *zhǐ*”, and the second sentence claims “but *zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*.” It seems that Gōngsūn Lóng is making a contradictory statement in the second sentence, but he is not. He gives an explanation for this point in the first two sentences of (8) (which I analyze below). He says that “it is not the case that *zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*; it is the case that when *zhǐ*s join together in a thing or object, they are not [the original, independent] *zhǐ*s” (指非非指也; 指與[於]物非指也。). Based on this explanation, the second sentence should be read as “the *zhǐ* which joins with other *zhǐ* in a thing or object is not [the original, independent] *zhǐ*”, or simply put, “*wù zhǐ* is not *dú zhǐ*” (物指非獨指). In ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’, this means that “the separate and unchangeable one is not the inseparable and changeable [left or right] one”. In ‘Báimǎ lùn’, it means that “the visible white color of a white horse is not the non-fixed and thus invisible white”.

Based on the cluster concepts of “[*dú*] *zhǐ*”, “*wù*”, and “*wù-zhǐ*” in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, Gōngsūn Lóng develops his onto-cosmological thought. The first two sentences are the main thesis of the whole essay. The text reads:

- (1) It is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from *zhǐ*s; but it is the case that [*wù*]-*zhǐ* is not [the original *dú*] *zhǐ*.
物莫非指; 而指非指。

Gōngsūn Lóng thinks that all *zhǐ*s – as abstract entities in the non-phenomenal world – are independent, separate, invisible, ideal, and unchangeable single entities. In comparison, all the things in the phenomenal world are embedded with dependent, inseparable, visible, actual, and changeable compound entities. In ‘Jiānbái lùn’ and ‘Báimǎ lùn’, Gōngsūn Lóng uses terms such as *lí* 離 (‘separate’), *cáng* 藏 (‘hiding’), and *dú* 獨 (‘independent’) to describe the ontological status of *zhǐ*. Although *zhǐ*s are single entities, with the characteristics mentioned above, they can be combined or joined together to form different

11 A detailed argument against the idea of treating an “unbound totality or infinite” as a substantial entity can be found in Yiu-ming Fung, forthcoming, ch. 4.

things in the phenomenal world. This is an emergent or generative process from the entities of the non-phenomenal world to the entities of the phenomenal world. In ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’, ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’, ‘*Tōngbiàn lùn*’, and ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’, Gōngsūn Lóng uses the terms *xiāng jiān* 相兼 (‘combined together’), *xiāng-yǔ* 相與 (‘joining together’), or *hé* 合 (‘joining’) to describe this act of *emergence* or *evolution*. Without this onto-cosmological activity, there would be nothing in the phenomenal world. In this sense, we can say that all things are dependent on the emergent process, and their components are inseparable from each other. Nevertheless, when some *zhǐ*s join together to form a physical object, these *dú zhǐ*s, as invisible and unchangeable ideals, undergo a qualitative shift or essential change. That is, these *zhǐ*s cannot maintain their ontological status. They are subjected to a transformation from *dú zhǐ*s to those *zhǐ*s that are concretized in the physical object (i.e. *wù-zhǐ*s). This onto-cosmological jump implies that the unchangeable and invisible in the non-physical world becomes the changeable and visible in the physical object. In ‘*Tōngbiàn lùn*’, Gōngsūn Lóng refers to this consequence as “the changed [one] is not the unchanged [one]” (*biàn fēi bù biàn* 變非不變). If we use an example from ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’, we can say that a particular property of horse shape in a particular white horse (as a physical object) is not identical with a universal horseness, though the horse shape in a white horse has emerged or is generated from the combination of horseness and whiteness through an onto-cosmological process. Hence, he concludes that *wù-zhǐ* is not the original *dú zhǐ*.

- (2) If there is no process from *zhǐ*s to things in the world, we cannot call anything. What is said, that [*wù*]-*zhǐ* is not [the original *dú*]-*zhǐ*, is: Can we call anything in the world “*zhǐ*”?

天下無指物，無可以謂物。[而指]非指者，天下而物可謂指乎？

A few lines further along, there are two sentences which seem to be contradictory in respect to (2), if we interpret the first two sentences as “*tiānxià wú zhǐ*, *wù wú kěyǐ wèi wù*” (天下無指，物無可以謂物) rather than “*tiānxià wú zhǐ-wù*, *wú kěyǐ wèi wù*” (天下無指物，無可以謂物). These two sentences assert that “what is called ‘*zhǐ*’ is nothing in the world” (指也者，天下之所無也), and “there is no *zhǐ* in the world” (*tiānxià wú zhǐ* 天下無指). But the first two sentences of (2) presuppose that there are *zhǐ*s in the world; otherwise nothing could be called ‘thing’. One of the options to explain away this contradiction is to assign two possible meanings to *tiānxià*: one is the physical world, and the other is the non-physical world. Another option is to assign the assertion “*xiānxià yǒu zhǐ*” to Gōngsūn Lóng and the opposite assertion “*tiānxià wú zhǐ*” to his opponent. I do not think the former reading is acceptable, because this interpretation is not supported by

any textual evidence. The latter arrangement is also unwelcome, because most of the content following (2) can be arranged into a dialogue only with difficulty. I therefore adopt Xú Fùguān's 徐復觀 analysis and divide the two sentences as follows: "*tiānxià wú zhǐ-wù, wú kěyǐ wèi wù.*"¹² This treatment not only provides a coherent reading for the whole essay, but also uses the term *zhǐ-wù* in a way consistent with the essay's title, 'Zhǐ-wù lùn'.

This paragraph is an explanation of the main thesis presented in (1). The first two sentences of (2) claim that, if there is no emergent or generative process from the ideal realm to the actual realm – or, put differently, if there is no onto-cosmological activity from *dú-zhǐ*s to things – nothing can be named or called, and thus people cannot recognize anything. The process of *zhǐ-wù* is the process described in the first sentence of (1): "It is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from *zhǐ*s." That is, "a shift from the unchangeable to the changeable" (*bù-biàn ér biàn* 不變而變), or the objectification or materialization (*wùhuà* 物化) of *zhǐ*. After (2), Gōngsūn Lóng explicitly refers to a process according to which a *zhǐ* can join together with another *zhǐ* in a *wù*. This is an onto-cosmological jump, which he describes as follows: "when *zhǐ*s join together in a *wù* they are not the [original *dú*-]*zhǐ*s" (指與[於]物非指也). For Gōngsūn Lóng, (2) stresses the metaphysical necessity of the process described in the first sentence of (1). Without these two-level ontological realms and their cosmological connection, we would not have anything in the phenomenal world to name or to know, and thus we cannot do anything about rectifying names.

The first two sentences of (2) explain why "the unchangeable becomes the changeable", while the last two sentences of (2) explain why "the unchangeable is not the changeable". The phrase "*fēi zhǐ zhě*" 非指者 (what is said or asserted, "*fēi zhǐ*") is an abbreviation of the second sentence of (1), that is, "[*ér zhǐ*] *fēi zhǐ zhě*" ([而指]非指者) (what is said or asserted, "[*wù*-]*zhǐ* is not [*dú*-]*zhǐ*"). Since the ontological status of all *zhǐ*s is changed from *dú-zhǐ*s to *wù-zhǐ*s once they have joined in their *wù*s after their onto-cosmological emergence, how can we say that all *wù*s in the world, which are constituted of their respective *wù-zhǐ*s, are *dú-zhǐ*s?

- (3) There is nothing in the [phenomenal] world that is called "*zhǐ*". There are entities in the [phenomenal] world that are called "*wù*". To regard what there is in the [phenomenal] world as what there is not is unacceptable. 指也者，天下之所無也。物也者，天下之所有也。以天下之所有，為天下之所無，未可。

12 Xú 1966: 14.

According to Gōngsūn Lóng's two-level ontology, in contrast to *wù-zhǐ* and *wù*, *dú-zhǐ* does not exist in the phenomenal world, so he asserts what is stated in the first two sentences of (3). If people confuse these two levels, they would make mistakes. For example, they would mistake a white horse, which is the combination of a color and a shape, for horseness, which does not have any color. It is not acceptable to treat a two-level ontology as a one-level ontology. Hence, (3) is used to further explain the last two sentences of (2).

- (4) There is no *zhǐ* in the [phenomenal] world, and *wù* cannot be called “*zhǐ*”. The reason why *wù* cannot be called “*zhǐ*” is that it is not *zhǐ*. Although *wù* is not *zhǐ*, it is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from *zhǐ*s.

天下無指，而物不可謂指也。不可謂指者，非指也。非指者，物莫非指也。

It is obvious from the context that the first two tokens of “*fēi zhǐ*” are abbreviations of “[*wù* is] not [identical with] *zhǐ*”, while the last token following “*wù mò*” clearly means that “[it is not the case that some *wù*s are] not [constituted of or have not emerged from] *zhǐ*s.” This paragraph explains that the relation of the two ontological realms is subordination rather than coordination.

- (5) In saying that “there is no *zhǐ* in the [phenomenal] world and *wù* cannot be called ‘*zhǐ*’”, it is not the case that there is anything which has not emerged from *zhǐ*s. In saying that “it is not the case that there is anything which has not emerged from *zhǐ*s”, it is not the case that some *wù*s have not emerged from *zhǐ*s. So, it is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from *zhǐ*s; but it is the case that [*wù*-] *zhǐ* is not [the original *dú*-] *zhǐ*.

天下無指，而物不可謂指者，非有非指也。非有非指者，物莫非指也。物莫非指者，而指非指也。

Although there is no *zhǐ* in the phenomenal world, and *wù*s and their *wù-zhǐ*s cannot be identified as *dú-zhǐ*s, this does not mean that the phenomenal entities are not constituted of or have not emerged from the non-phenomenal entities. Without the onto-cosmological activity of *jiān* or *yù*, or without the *degeneration* of *dú-zhǐ*s, there would be nothing in this world.

Gōngsūn Lóng's onto-cosmological theory is similar to Plato's metaphysics only with respect to sharing a two-level demarcation, but at the same time it differs from Plato's view with respect to the relation between the two realms. Plato's theory is purely ontological, while Gōngsūn Lóng's theory is

onto-cosmological. With regard to the idea of combination or joining to create things, Gōngsūn Lóng's approach seems similar to Wittgenstein's view on the relation between the "simple" or "object" and the composite "state of affairs", as described in the *Tractatus*. On the one hand, Wittgenstein thinks that "the world is the totality of facts, not of things" (§1.1),¹³ and "the totality of existing states of affairs is the world" (§2.04). On the other hand, he claims that "a state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)" (§2.01).¹⁴ Why is the world the totality of facts or the existent states of affairs, but not the totality of things or objects which are the components of states of affairs? It is because the ontological status of objects is essentially different from that of states of affairs. Therefore, he asserts that "objects are simple" (§2.02) and that "objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite" (§2.021). In other words, although he regards a fact as composed of objects, the relevant objects are not entities in the world. He also explicitly draws a demarcation between these two different levels of entities. He says that, "in a manner of speaking, objects are colorless" (§2.0232),¹⁵ while "the substance is what subsists independently of what is the case" (§2.204). And again, Wittgenstein claims that "objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one and the same" (§2.027); "objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable" (§2.0271); and "the configuration of objects produces states of affairs" (§2.0272).¹⁶ In comparison, Gōngsūn Lóng's "*dú-zhǐ*" is similar to Wittgenstein's "the simple" in the sense that the entities of both theories are mutually independent, mutually separate, and cannot be further cut down into smaller units. Both theories also assert that the composite entities of the phenomenal world are transformed from simple entities by combination or composition. In sum, there are two levels of entities in both theories, though they are different in some other respects.

- (6) That there is no [*dú*]-*zhǐ* in the [phenomenal] world is due to the fact that each *wù* has its own name, which is not about [*dú*]-*zhǐ*. If that is not about [*dú*]-*zhǐ* but we call that "[*dú*]-*zhǐ*", there would be nothing which is not [*dú*]-*zhǐ*. To make [an argument] that moves from the fact that there is something which is not [*dú*]-*zhǐ* to the fact that there is nothing which is not [*dú*]-*zhǐ* is unacceptable.

¹³ Wittgenstein 1961: 7 (§1.1).

¹⁴ Wittgenstein 1961: 7 (§2.01).

¹⁵ Wittgenstein 1961: 11 (§2.0232). It seems to be used as a metaphor.

¹⁶ Wittgenstein 1961: 13 (§2.027, §2.0271, and §2.0272).

天下無指者，生於物之各有名，不為指也。不為指而謂之指，是兼[無]不為指。以有不為指，之無不為指，未可。

The ontological fact that there is nothing which is *dú-zhǐ* in the phenomenal world can be recognized by the fact that all the *wù*s, together with their *wù-zhǐ*s, have their own names, which are not used to refer to *dú-zhǐ*s. If we call what is not *dú-zhǐ* “*dú-zhǐ*”, then there would be nothing which cannot be identified as *dú-zhǐ*. Therefore, it is not acceptable to cross the different realms of entities to identify *dú-zhǐ* as a phenomenal object.

- (7) Moreover, what is [*dú*]-*zhǐ* is what is used in combination in the [phenomenal] world. Although there is nothing which is [*dú*]-*zhǐ* in the [phenomenal] world, it cannot be said that there is no [*wù*]-*zhǐ* for *wù*. It cannot be said that there is no [*wù*]-*zhǐ* [in *wù*], because it is not the case that there is anything which is not constituted of or has not emerged from [*dú*]-*zhǐ*. [In other words,] it is not the case that there is anything which is not constituted of or has not emerged from [*dú*]-*zhǐ*, because it is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from *zhǐ*s.

且指者，天下之所兼。天下無指者，物不可謂無指也。不可謂無指者，非有非指也。非有非指者，物莫非指也。

This paragraph aims at stressing the consistency of the two sentences in (1). Here, Gōngsūn Lóng uses the technical term *jiān* 兼 (‘combination’ or ‘joining’) to explain how simple entities can join together to form composite entities. As explained in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’, when the simple entities are not in the state of joining together, they are “separate and self-hiding” (*lí ér zì-cáng* 離而自藏). On the other hand, when they combine together to form things in the phenomenal world, they change their ontological status through an onto-cosmological jump. This can be called “variation by combination” (*jiān zé biàn-xiàn* 兼則變現). Gōngsūn Lóng seems to say that, although there is nothing which is *dú-zhǐ* in the phenomenal world, we cannot conclude that there is no connection between *dú-zhǐ* and *wù*. *Dú-zhǐ* does participate in making or creating *wù*, though *dú-zhǐ*’s ontological status is changed after the process of emergence or generation.

- (8) It is not the case that [*dú*]-*zhǐ* is not [*dú*]-*zhǐ*; it is the case that when *zhǐ*s join together in a *wù* they are not [*dú*]-*zhǐ*s. Suppose there is no *wù-zhǐ* in the [phenomenal] world, who would directly say that *wù-zhǐ* is not [*dú*]-

zhǐ? If there is no *wù* in the [phenomenal] world, who would directly say there is [*dú*]-*zhǐ*? If there is [*dú*]-*zhǐ* but no *wù*-*zhǐ*, who would directly say that *wù*-*zhǐ* is not [*dú*]-*zhǐ*, and [who] would directly say that it is not the case that some *wù*s are not constituted of or have not emerged from [*dú*]-*zhǐ*s?

指非非指也，指與物非指也。使天下無物指，誰徑謂[物指]非[獨]指？天下無物，誰徑謂[獨]指？天下有[獨]指無物指，誰徑謂[物指]非[獨]指，徑謂無物非指？

The first two sentences of this passage explain that the second sentence of (1) is not self-contradictory. The sentence “*ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ*” cannot be translated as “*dú-zhǐ* is not *dú-zhǐ*”. It means that, if a *zhǐ* is joining together with another *zhǐ* to form a *wù* and is thus transformed into a *wù-zhǐ*, that *wù-zhǐ* is not the original *dú-zhǐ*. The phrase “*fēi zhǐ*” in the fourth sentence is an abbreviation of “[*wù-zhǐ*] *fēi* [*dú*]-*zhǐ*”, because it connects to the phrase “*wù-zhǐ*” in the third sentence. The other sentences of (8) are used to express the idea that *wù* and *wù-zhǐ* provide the cognitive ground for identifying *dú-zhǐ*, while *dú-zhǐ* is an ontological ground for making *wù* and *wù-zhǐ*.

- (9) Furthermore, if [*dú*]-*zhǐ* by itself [or by definition] is not [*wù*]-*zhǐ*, how does it need to join *wù* to become [*wù*]-*zhǐ*?
且夫[獨]指固自為非[物]指，奚待於物而乃與為[物]指？

Although *wù* and *wù-zhǐ* can be used as a criterion for identifying *dú-zhǐ*, this does not mean that *dú-zhǐ* is not independent. *Dú-zhǐ* in itself is self-sufficient in terms of its ontological status, while *wù* and *wù-zhǐ* are dependent on *dú-zhǐ*. Without *wù* and *wù-zhǐ*, there is still *dú-zhǐ* in the non-phenomenal world, though we cannot recognize it indirectly via *wù* and *wù-zhǐ*. But without *dú-zhǐ* this world would be nothing. For example, if there are only blackness and purpleness in the color Ideal and horseness and cowness in the shape Ideal in the non-phenomenal world, and there are black horses joining and emerging from blackness and horseness and black cows joining and emerging from blackness and cowness, we can say that these two kinds of objects (*wù*s) and their particular properties (*wù-zhǐ*s) are actual or existent entities in this one possible world. But purple horses and purple cows and their respective properties are logically possible entities only. It follows that the entities of the phenomenal world are dependent on the entities of the non-phenomenal world, while the latter is independent and self-sufficient.

3 The Separation of *Jiān* and *Bái*

The major topics discussed by the thinkers associated with the so-called “School of Names”, which includes mainly Huì Shī 惠施 and Gōngsūn Lóng, are identified by their contemporaries and by later thinkers as the disputation on “*jiān bái* and *tóng yì*” 堅白同異之辯 (‘hard’ and ‘white’, ‘identity’ and ‘difference’). For Gōngsūn Lóng, the main theses that “*wù* emerge from *dú-zhǐ*” but “*wù-zhǐ* is not *dú-zhǐ*” in ‘Zhǐ-wù lùn’, and that “two is generated from the left one and the right one” but “two does not have [the left or right] one” in ‘Tōng-biàn lùn’, are disputations on the problem of identity and difference in general. However, the thesis that “white horse is not horse[ness]” in ‘Báimǎ lùn’ is instead a concrete example in which Gōngsūn Lóng discusses the problem of identity and difference in particular. In these three essays, without exception, Gōngsūn Lóng uses the technical terms *jiān* 兼 (‘combination’), *hé* 合 (‘cooperation’), *yǔ* 與 (‘joining’), and *xiāng-yǔ* 相與 (‘mutually joining’) to express the fact that entities in the non-phenomenal world can be combined or joined together to form the entities in the phenomenal world. Additionally, in ‘Jiānbái lùn’ Gōngsūn Lóng provides an explanation for the relation between the entities of these two realms. In ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, he mentions that “it is not the case that some *wù* are not constituted of or have not emerged from *dú-zhǐ*” on the one hand, and that “there is no *dú-zhǐ* in the phenomenal world” (*tiānxià wú zhǐ* 天下無指) on the other hand. To explain away this seeming contradiction, he stresses that “what is *dú-zhǐ* is what is used in combination in the [phenomenal] world” (且指者，天下之所兼). In relation to this topic, ‘Jiānbái lùn’ seems to give us a relatively detailed explanation of the onto-cosmological process (“if there is combination, there is a transformative phenomenon” *jiān zé biàn-xiàn* 兼則變現) and of the reverse process (“if there is separation, there is self-hiding” *lí ér zì-cáng* 離而自藏). The former is helpful in understanding why “it is not the case that some *wù* are not constituted of or have not emerged from *dú-zhǐ*”, while the latter is helpful in understanding why “there is no *dú-zhǐ* in the phenomenal world”. These are the two main aspects of Gōngsūn Lóng’s onto-cosmological theory. To elaborate on this theory, he moves from the problem of identity and difference to the problem of hard(ness) and white(ness), providing a specific example to illustrate his theory.

Graham, however, is skeptical about the authenticity of ‘Jiānbái lùn’. He argues:¹⁷

17 Graham 1989: 84.

The phrase *chien-pai* [*jiān bái*] “hard and white” was long misunderstood in the deceptive light of a forged chapter entitled “Hard and White”, which distinguishes in a stone the hardness known by touch from the whiteness known by sight. This implies an awareness of sense perception as problematic for which there is no firm evidence in China before the arrival of Buddhism.

The main evidence on which Graham bases his argument that ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ is a forged chapter is Wú Yùjiāng’s 吳毓江 assumption, as expressed in his *Mòzǐ Jiàozhù* 墨子校注 (Compiled Annotations of *Mòzǐ*). According to Wú Yùjiāng, the term *yú* 於 in “*yú shí yī yě*” (於石一也) should be considered as a head word or a connecting sign (*biāodié zì* 標牒字) without any real meaning, since in the Mohist ‘Canon’ B 36 (‘*Jīng*’ 經), it is used to identify the corresponding ‘Canon Explanation’ B 36 (‘*Jīngshuō*’ 經說). According to Wú Yùjiāng, this term was misplaced and misinterpreted by the editors of the forged ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ chapter as ‘in’ or ‘inside’, and interpreted accordingly as “it is exactly the same that both are in stone”. I do not think that this seemingly convincing argument is based on solid evidence. There are several head words or connecting signs in the Mohist ‘Canons’ which are also used in their respective ‘Canon Explanations’ as meaningful words. For example, in A63 and A64 the head words “having an interval” (*yǒu jiān* 有間) and “intervening” (*jiān* 間) are also used as meaningful words. In A29 and A32, the head words *yù* 譽 (‘praise’) and *yán* 言 (‘speech’) are also used as meaningful words. Most importantly, in A67 *yú shí* 於尺[石] (‘in a stone’) is used by the Later Mohists as a meaningful phrase. Thus there is no reason to argue that the phrase *yú shí* might not have been used as a meaningful unit of sense in the first sentence of Canon Explanation B36.

Moreover, describing *yú shí* as “in a stone entity” rather than “situated in a stone shape” misses Gōngsūn Lóng’s point that there are two combined properties obtained by touch (hard texture cum stone shape) on the one hand, and two other combined properties obtained by sight (white color cum stone shape) on the other hand. Here “stone” is used to name a shape, just as “horse” is used to name a shape in the ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’. It is clear from the text that the Later Mohists use the term *shí* to refer to stone as a substance or stuff, while Gōngsūn Lóng uses it to refer to stone as a shape. Thus I do not find it helpful for Graham to quote Wú Yùjiāng’s view to support his argument that the head character in Canon Explanation B36 was misquoted in the forged essay on hard white.

According to most scholars, when the Later Mohists and the Sophists of the “School of Names”, including Gōngsūn Lóng, were advocating their theories during the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE), several other thinkers participated in the disputation on *jiān-bái* and *tóng-yì*. It is plausible that they partially share a common language for discussion, even though they dispute

the topic from different points of view. In the Mohist ‘Canons’ (*Mò jīng* 墨經) or “dialectical chapters” (*Mò biàn* 墨辯), the Later Mohists adopt an empirical, common-sense perspective to deal with the problem of *jiān-bái*, while Gōngsūn Lóng chooses a metaphysical, realistic perspective to treat the problem. The Later Mohists assert that the property of *jiān* and the property of *bái* coincide in *a stone as a substantive entity* (*yíng jiān bái* 盈堅白), and that these two properties do not exclude each other (*bù xiāng wài* 不相外). On the contrary, Gōngsūn Lóng claims that the two properties are separate from each other (*lí jiān bái* 離堅白) and that they do not simultaneously coincide in *a stone as the property of shape*.

The Later Mohists think that: “*Yíng* ‘coinciding’ or ‘overlapping’ is occupying each other” (‘Canon’ A68) (攖, 相得也) and that “Coinciding or overlapping: a [geometric] line and another line [in coinciding or overlapping] cannot be wholly exhausted or covered by each other. A point and another point [in coinciding or overlapping] can be wholly exhausted or covered by each other. For a line and a point [in coinciding or overlapping], it can be the case that some part [of the line] is exhausted or covered but the other part is not.” (攖: 尺與尺俱不盡, 端與端俱盡。尺與端或盡或不盡。堅白之攖相盡, 體攖不相盡。)(‘Canon Explanation’ A68)

If two properties coincide or overlap, they can also be called *yíng* 盈 (‘filling’). This means that “there is nothing which is not shared by both” (盈, 莫不有也。)(‘Canon’ A66). When they are filling in one and the same entity, “neither part of a pair can be canceled and divided into two. Explained by: seeing and not seeing together, one and two, length and breadth” (不可偏去而二。說在見與[不見]俱、一與二、廣與脩。)(‘Canon’ B4). The reason for this can be illustrated by examples such as: “What is seen and not seen are not separate, one and two are mutually coinciding, and also length and breadth and hard and white” (見不見[不]離。一二相盈, 廣脩堅白。)(‘Canon Explanation’ B4).¹⁸ It means that seeing and not seeing are not separate, and that one and two overlap. The case of length and breadth and the case of hard and white are the same. The Later Mohists stress the

18 According to Gāo Héng’s 高亨 edition, the first two sentences do not make sense for the Later Mohists, though they seem to support Gōngsūn Lóng’s thesis. To provide a coherent interpretation, he suggests that the word *bù* 不 (‘not’) in the sentence “*yī-èr bù xiāng yíng*” 一二不相盈 should be moved back to the previous sentence, “*jiàn bù jiàn lí*” 見不見離, before the word *lí* 離 (see Gāo 1958: 114). If we accept this emendation, the passage can be understood as supporting the Later Mohists’ argument against Gōngsūn Lóng’s idea that the property perceived by seeing and the property not perceived by seeing (i.e. that perceived by touching) cannot be joined together. In other words, there is no reason for the Later Mohists to mention the separation of properties obtained through different sensory faculties in establishing their own view, unless this is used to argue against Gōngsūn Lóng’s view of separation.

fact that treating *jiān-bái* as separate can only be explained in a situation in which there is neither time nor space, or which is not located in a temporal-spatial region (不堅白，說在無久與字。) ('Canon' B14). Otherwise, we cannot make the claim that they are separate. This is just like the case of the entity of two components, in which one is not separate from two. Similarly, when considering an object in a temporal-spatial region, its width is not separate from its length, and vice versa. Thus the Later Mohists disagree with the idea that through different sensory faculties, with different modes of perception, we can deduce that components perceived by different sensory faculties are not located in the same object. This is because the question of whether or not they are inseparable cannot be judged and justified by each of our single sensory faculties, but by our intellect.

In comparison with the Later Mohists' view, Gōngsūn Lóng's argumentative strategy in 'Jiānbái lùn' is different. His arguments basically take three different approaches: the first is an epistemological approach, with special emphasis on the different duties of the different sensory faculties; the second is a metaphysical analysis in terms of *jiān* ('combination') and *cáng* ('hiding'); and the third is a transcendental argument, in the sense that what is in the phenomenal world presupposes what is not in the phenomenal world.¹⁹

In his first argument, Gōngsūn Lóng seems to adopt a perspective informed by a peculiar kind of phenomenalism. Based on the different function of different sensory organs or different modes of perception, he tries to demonstrate that what exists in the phenomenal world is dependent on what is perceived by a single sensory organ. In this sense, what he means by "phenomenal world" (*tiānxià*) is a world understood merely in this phenomenalistic sense. At the very beginning of the essay, the text assumes that there is an opponent who, based on a common-sense view, asks Gōngsūn Lóng a question about the relation among three items: *jiān* ('hard texture'), *bái* ('white color'), and *shí* ('stone shape').

Q: Is it acceptable to say that hard, white, and stone are three [items of an object]?

(客) 曰：堅白石三，可乎？

A: It is not acceptable.

(主) 曰：不可。

Q: Is it acceptable to say there are two?

(客) 曰：二，可乎？

¹⁹ I have made a distinction between two kinds of transcendental argument or transcendental deduction. A detailed explanation can be found in Yiu-ming Fung 2006: 117–162.

A: Acceptable.

(主) 曰：可。

Q: Why?

(客) 曰：何哉？

A: Without hard we obtain white, what is mentioned or demonstrated is only two [i.e. white as color and stone as shape]; without white we obtain hard, what is mentioned or demonstrated is only two [i.e. hard as texture and stone as shape].

(主) 曰：無堅得白，其舉也二；無白得堅，其舉也二。

Q: By obtaining something which is white, we cannot say that there is no white [in it]; by obtaining something which is hard, we cannot say that there is no hard [in it]. With this stone being in the case, is it not three?

(客) 曰：得其所白，不可謂無白；得其所堅，不可謂無堅。而[與]之石也之於然也，非三也？

A: When we see, we do not obtain something which is hard; it means that there is no hard [in it]. When we touch, we do not obtain something which is white; it means that there is no white [in it].

(主) 曰：視不得其所堅，而得其所白者，無堅也。拊不得其所白，而得其所堅，無白也。

According to the annotation of the Sòng 宋 Dynasty scholar Xiè Xishēn 謝希深, “*jiān bái shí sān*” (堅白石三) means that “the three items *jiān*, *bái* and *shí* are united in one body” (堅也，白也，石也，三物合體). In other words, the three parts (the hard as texture or solidity, the white as color, and the stone as shape) join together to form a concrete object. If Xiè’s interpretation is right, I think that, unlike the Later Mohists, the term stone is not used by Gōngsūn Lóng as a name for an individual object. Here, most scholars regard *shí* as a name referring to an object made of stone, which is a carrier of both the property of hard and the property of white. But this interpretation is clearly not consistent with the debate on the topic of whether a hard and white stone counts for “two or three”. If we accept this interpretation, the problem would change to “two in one” rather than “two or three in one thing.” In other words, when the opponent asks the question “Is it acceptable to say that hard, white, and stone are three [items of an object]?”, it does not make sense to treat “three” as referring to two qualities (hard and white) plus one object (stone). Thus the two sentence tokens “*qí jǔ yě èr*” (其舉也二) should be understood as two in terms of qualities (white [color] plus stone [shape] demonstrated by seeing, and hard [texture] plus stone [shape] demonstrated by touching), rather than two in terms of one quality and one object (white

[color] plus stone [object] and hard [texture] plus stone [object]). “White stone”, just like “white horse”, is a combination of two qualities or properties – or, more appropriately, of two *wù-zhǐs*. In other words, *shí*, just like *mǎ*, is used to refer to form or shape, a quality or property of an object. If the referent of *mǎ* is recognized as a shape (as expressed in the sentence “‘horse’ is what was used to name a shape” 馬者所以命形也) in ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’, then the word *shí* should also be recognized as a word used to name a shape in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’. That is: *shí zhě suǒyǐ mìng xíng yě* (石者所以命形也).

Dù Guóxiáng 杜國庠 is one of the few distinguished scholars in the field of Later Mohism who does not treat Gōngsūn Lóng’s notion of *shí* as a term referring to a stone object or a carrier of properties. He says:

In ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ it says: “Without hard we obtain white, what is mentioned is only two [i.e. white as color and stone as shape]; without white we obtain hard, what is mentioned is only two [i.e. hard as texture and stone as shape].” The “two” of the former sentence refers to white and stone, while the “two” of the latter sentence refers to stone and hard. In ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ it says: “‘Horse’ is that by which we name the shape, ‘white’ is that by which we name the color.” From his [i.e. Gōngsūn Lóng’s] perspective, “hard white stone” and “white horse” can be [physically] broken down into *wù-zhǐs* such as color, shape, solidity, etc. (these are the actual properties of an object), and when they are separated from each other, they become independent, self-hiding *zhǐ*.²⁰

I think Dù Guóxiáng is successful in comparing the topic of ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ with that of ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’, and also in putting them into the general context of ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’. To interpret “hard white stone” as three kinds of *wù-zhǐ* or *dú-zhǐ* is helpful in understanding the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in a more coherent and comprehensive way. The only problem in Dù Guóxiáng’s interpretation, I think, is that he treats *wù* as the “carrier” (*fùhé zhě* 負荷者) or “substratum” (*tuōtǐ* 托體) of *wù-zhǐ*. I think it is unnecessary and somewhat inaccurate to assume such a concept in the text. Each *wù* can be understood as a composite or bundle of *wù-zhǐs*. If we assume this kind of carrier or substratum, it would be difficult to explain why Gōngsūn Lóng defines all existing things only in a phenomenalist sense – that is, he considers them to exist only as something like sense data obtained through single perceptual faculties. This assumption is not only unhelpful in establishing Gōngsūn Lóng’s thesis, but it is also useful for the Later Mohists and other opponents who attack his view. Even though “when we see we do not obtain something which is hard”, we cannot derive from this the conclusion that there is no hard (in it); and although “when

20 〈堅白論〉說：「無堅得白，其舉也二；無白得堅，其舉也二。」前者的二，謂白和石；後者的二，指石和堅。〈白馬論〉說：「馬者，所以命形也；白者，所以命色也。」「堅白石」和「白馬」，由他看來，可分解為顏色、形狀、硬度等等「物指」（實即物的屬性），又離而為種種獨立自藏的「指」。（Dù 1997: 99）.

we touch we do not obtain something which is white”, again we cannot derive from this the conclusion that there is no white (in it). The carrier or substratum can play the role of connecting what is seen with what is touched, and thus the thesis regarding the separation of hard white cannot be supported.

If there is no carrier or substratum, what is the real meaning of Gōngsūn Lóng’s *wù* (‘object’ or ‘thing’)? It is quite obvious that *wù* refers to concrete and individual things in the phenomenal world. Gōngsūn Lóng claims that *wù*s are what the world has (*tiānxià zhī suǒ yǒu* 天下之所有). But each *wù* is conceived as an ontological entity by virtue of a single perceptual faculty. In comparison with George Berkeley’s subjective idealism, Gōngsūn Lóng’s view seems to be more radical. He not only claims that “to be is to be perceived”, but moreover asserts that “to be is to be perceived by one single perceptual faculty”. On the other hand, his idea is essentially different from Berkeley’s in the sense that Gōngsūn Lóng does not regard what is perceived (i.e. *wù-zhī*) as a merely subjective entity. He thinks that *wù-zhī*s and their composite *wù*s emerge from *dú-zhī*s. In other words, they have an onto-cosmological ground and origin, and thus are objective entities. In sum, he establishes an epistemological theory of presentation in perception (I call this “*gǎnjué chéngxiàn lùn*” 感覺呈現論, a theory of perceptual presentation) to establish a criterion for identifying entities on the one hand, and a theory of separation by self-hiding (I call this “*xíngshàng lícáng lùn*” 形上離藏論, a metaphysical theory of separate hiding) to provide a ground or origin for generating entities on the other hand. Thus he is neither a pure subjective idealist like Berkeley, nor a mere metaphysical realist like Plato.

Based on the analysis above, we can understand why Gōngsūn Lóng cannot accept that there are three *wù-zhī*s (hard white stone) located or situated in an object. What is identified as an object is what can be perceived by a single perceptual faculty. He can only accept that there are two *wù-zhī*s located or situated in an object. But he thinks that *wù*s (‘objects’, ‘things’, or ‘events’) are not carriers or substrata. They are nothing but the combination of *wù-zhī*s. The concreteness of a *wù* can only be judged and justified by a single perceptual faculty. It seems that *wù*s and their *wù-zhī*s do not have objective validity. Nevertheless, he does not regard them merely as perceptual or conceptual entities. In this regard, he introduces the concepts of *jiān* 兼 and *cáng* 藏 to build his metaphysical argument.

To explain how the combination and separation happen during the onto-cosmological process from *dú-zhī*s to *wù-zhī*s and *wù*s, Gōngsūn Lóng builds his metaphysical argument as follows:

Q: The case of the white of the stone and the hard of the stone is the case of seeing and not seeing, that is, the two joined in three. Just like the case of the

width and the length that mutually fill or permeate each other. Are those not the right examples mentioned by us?

(客) 曰：石之白，石之堅，見與不見，二與三，若廣修而相盈也。其非舉乎？

A: Something may be white, but white [as *dú-zhǐ*] is not thereby fixed to it; something may be hard, but hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] is not thereby fixed to it. What is not fixed to anything can be joined together [to form any other thing]. How then is it possible to assume that they (hard as *dú-zhǐ* and white as *dú-zhǐ*) must be [joined] in the stone?

(主) 曰：物白焉，不定其所白；物堅焉，不定其所堅。不定者兼，惡乎其石也？

Q: When we touch the stone, [we know that] there would be no stone without that [touching something which is hard]. We cannot obtain the white stone if there is no stone. What is called “inseparation” is that which by nature is the case [of joining together], is it not the case?

(客) 曰：循石，非彼無石，非石無所取乎白石。不相離者，固乎然，其無也[耶]？

A: Joining in stone is one property; hard and white are two properties, though they are both in the stone. But one of them can be known [by touching], while the other cannot; one of them can be seen, while the other cannot. Obviously, what is known [by touching] and what is not known [by touching] are separate from each other; what is seen and what is not seen are hidden from each other. There being hiding, who will say that they are not separate?

(主) 曰：於石，一也；堅白，二也，而在於石。故有知焉，有不知焉；有見焉，[有不見焉。] 故知與不知相與離，見與不見相與藏。藏故，孰謂之不離？

The opponent thinks that the property perceived by seeing (i.e. white color) and the property perceived by touching (i.e. hard texture) are what is seen and what is not seen, respectively. Since the stone can be regarded as a basis on which to join together what is seen and what is not seen, these two must not be separate. The non-separation of hard and white is just like the case of the width and length of an object, which cannot be separated from one another.

Gōngsūn Lóng does not agree with the opponent's view. He reminds the opponent that white(ness) or hard(ness) are not fixed to something, though they can be joined with another *dú-zhǐ* in another thing. It means that each *dú-zhǐ* (e.g. whiteness or hardness) can be joined with another *dú-zhǐ* (e.g. horseness as a universal shape or stoneness as an ideal shape) to form a concrete *wù* or to be transformed into various *wù-zhǐs* in an individual *wù* (e.g. a hard stone's touchable hard

texture, or a white horse's visible white color). Nevertheless, this phenomenon of joining together does not necessarily imply fixing something together. *Dú-zhǐs* can generate *wùs* and their *wù-zhǐs* in the phenomenal world. But *wù-zhǐs* can be *with-drawn* from *wùs* and become self-hiding in the non-phenomenal world. There is a dynamic process going in two directions: joining together to let something emerge, and separating out to hide from something. In this case, there is no reason for Gōngsūn Lóng to assert that the hard or the white must be fixed to the stone shape in an object.

The opponent disagrees with Gōngsūn Lóng's idea that "the not-fixing [*zhǐ*] can be joined together [with any other *zhǐ*]" (*bù dìng zhě jiān* 不定者兼). According to the opponent, in perceiving a stone by touching, it is impossible to obtain the stone without that (*bǐ* 彼) hard texture. In addition to touching, we can also perceive the stone by seeing. If there is no stone which can be perceived both by touching and by seeing, then we cannot obtain a white stone. Based on this medium or middle ground, we know that these two and the medium one are joined together by nature. This response clearly shows that the opponent rejects any argument that might resort solely to perception or to a single perceptual faculty. The opponent thinks we should appeal to the intellect rather than to perception in order to establish the argument. Through touching, we know the hard texture is present in the stone shape; through seeing, we know the white color is also present in the stone shape. Through our intellect, we know that the medium or middle ground can be used to bridge the gap between these two different kinds of perception. Thus we can infer that there is transference from the statements claiming that A is inseparable from B and that B is inseparable from C, respectively, to the statement claiming that A is inseparable from C.

In this regard, if Gōngsūn Lóng merely suggests that "the not-fixing can be joined together", he may not successfully rebuke his opponent's transference thesis. In order to persuade the opponent, he has to explain why the not-fixing can be self-hiding. Unless there is a reverse process from *wù-zhǐs* to *dú-zhǐs*, he has no reason to refute the transference argument. Based on this dynamic two-way process, Gōngsūn Lóng can legitimately assert that the concreteness of objects can be perceived only via a single perceptual faculty.

Assuming that what is seen and what is not seen but instead is touched are separate, Gōngsūn Lóng can explain why the concreteness of objects is judged by a single perceptual faculty. However, this does not explain the ontological status of what is not obtained through seeing and what is not obtained through touching. Based on the argument that "the not-fixing can be joined together", he can explain why the separation thesis is grounded in this dynamic process. However, he does not provide a detailed picture of his two-level ontology, which is presupposed by the dynamic process. Finally, he has to go one step

further to clarify what the non-phenomenal world is, and what the ontological status of its entities is. Here, he proposes an idea of “self-hiding” (自藏 *zì cáng*) in contrast to the opponent’s idea of “hidden in or by anything else” (藏而藏 *cáng ér cáng*), and an idea of “independent and ideal” (*dú ér zhèng* 獨而正) in response to the opponent’s idea of “the mind’s knowing” (*shén jiàn* 神見 or *shénzhī* 神知).

Q: If there were no white in the world, one could not see the stone; and if there were no hard in the world, one could not talk about the stone. Hard, white, and stone do not exclude one another. How could the third one be hidden?

(客) 曰：天下無白，不可以視石；天下無堅，不可以謂石。堅、白、石不相外，藏三可乎？

A: There is something self-hiding; it is not hidden in or by anything else.

(主) 曰：有自藏也，非藏而藏也。

Q: Its whiteness and its hardness are permeating each other within the stone. How is it possible for either of them to be self-hiding?

(客) 曰：其白也，其堅也，而石必得以相盈。其自藏奈何？

A: One obtains its whiteness [by seeing] and one obtains its hardness [by touching]; what is seen and what is not seen are separate. [The hard(ness) as] one and [the white(ness) as] another one do not permeate each other, and thus they are separate. What is separate is hiding.

(主) 曰：得其白，得其堅，見與不見離。一一不相盈，故離。離也者，藏也。

Here, the term *cáng* as in *cáng-sān* 藏三 (‘the third one is hidden’) can be understood as the opponent’s *cáng ér cáng* 藏而藏 (‘hidden in’ or ‘hidden by anything else’) or as Gōngsūn Lóng’s *zì cáng* 自藏 (‘self-hiding’). For Gōngsūn Lóng, when a *zhǐ* is withdrawn from perception and thus separate from the other *wù-zhǐ* of a *wù*, its ontological status is no longer that of a *wù-zhǐ*, but rather that of a *dú-zhǐ*. In other words, it revives (metaphorically speaking) the independent, ideal status it had before it joined a *wù* in the phenomenal world. But the opponent disagrees with Gōngsūn Lóng about the use of the term *cáng* in the sense of *zì cáng*. In contrast, he adopts the idea of *cáng ér cáng*, which is similar to the Later Mohists’ idea of *cún* 存 (‘to exist’ or ‘to be stored in’). However, it should be noted that for the opponent, *shí* may be used to refer to a shape, while for the Later Mohists it is used to refer to an object:

Joining in one [stone as an object], there is something [i.e. the hard property] known [by touching] and something [i.e. the white property] not known [by touching]. Explained by *cún*.
於一，有知焉，有不知焉，說在存。(‘Canon’ B 37)

Joining in a stone as one [object], there are two [properties], hard and white, stored in the stone. So it is acceptable [to say] that there is something known [by touching] and something not known [by touching].

於石一也，堅白二也，而在石。故有智焉，有不智焉，可。(‘Canon Explanation’ B 37)

Dù Guóxiáng has pointed out that Gōngsūn Lóng’s idea of *zì cáng* is used to argue against the Later Mohists’ *cáng ér cáng* or *cún*.²¹ I think his observation is correct. However, some of his explanations are somewhat problematic. For example, he thinks that the statement “there is something known and something not known” (有知焉，有不知焉) is used to refer to our cognitive power in general (i.e. not to a single sensory organ) to express the thesis of non-separation. On the contrary, I think that the term *zhī* 知/智 (‘to know’ or ‘known’) is used in comparison to *jiàn* 見 (‘to see’ or ‘seen’) in the text. The Later Mohists support the thesis of non-separation. Accordingly, they stress that the reason why “hard and white are not excluded from each other” (堅白不相外) is because “what is seen and what is not seen are joined together” (見與不見相俱), and “what is known [by touching] and what is not known [by touching] coincide with each other” (知與不知相盈). Another problem is that, in certain instances, Dù Guóxiáng regards Gōngsūn Lóng’s *shí* (‘stone’) as equivalent to *shí-wù* (‘stone object’) and treats *shí-wù* as if it meant stone object rather than the property of stone shape. I think this understanding of the term is acceptable if it is used to interpret the Later Mohists’ view, but it is definitely wrong to interpret Gōngsūn Lóng’s ideas in this way. Furthermore, the greatest problem in Dù Guóxiáng’s interpretation is that he follows Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭 and treats horse, white, and white horse as three separate, independent concepts. If what the concepts refer to are conceptual entities, then we cannot use them to explain the text in a coherent, comprehensive way. Fung Yu-lan claimed that these concepts are to be treated as universal Ideas. However, I cannot find any evidence in the text that a white horse as something that exists in the phenomenal world can be treated as a universal entity. As indicated in ‘Báimǎ lùn’, according to Gōngsūn Lóng’s two-level ontology, all compound terms (including ‘white horse’ and ‘hard stone’) are used to refer to concrete objects by virtue of their being perceived via a single perceptual faculty. On the other hand, all single terms (including ‘white’ and ‘horse’) are basically used to refer to abstract entities. In other words, white horse is a *wù*, while horse

21 This point is held by Dù 1997: 89.

and white are two different kinds of *dú-zhǐ*. The former exists in the phenomenal world, while the latter subsist in the non-phenomenal world.

Dù Guóxiáng is not satisfied with Fung Yu-lan's Platonic interpretation, particularly Fung's explanation of *zì cáng*. He does not agree that *zhǐ* can be understood as being stored and hidden in a transcendent or intellectual world.²² However, as Luán Xīng 樂星 points out, Du's own treatment of *zì cáng* as "*zhǐ* [is] stored in itself" does not make sense either. Luán Xīng thinks it may be better to interpret *zì cáng* as *zì zài* 自在 ('self-existing' or 'self-enjoyment') if its meaning is neither that "*zhǐ* is stored in itself" nor that "*zhǐ* subsists in a transcendent or intellectual world."²³ There have been several attempts to interpret the term *zì zài* in a way similar to Zhuāngzǐ's *xiāoyáo* 逍遙 (referring to a mental state of enjoying absolute freedom or harmony). Instead, I suggest that *zì cáng* or *zì zài* can be recognized as *yīn shí* 因是 (因寔) (referring to something that is in accordance with what is in reality) in 'Jiānbái lùn'. When a *zhǐ* withdraws from the scope and reach of a perceptual faculty, it is 'self-hiding' in the sense that it resumes its original ontological status. In other words, under those conditions, *zhǐ* subsists in the non-phenomenal world. 'To subsist' (*qiáncáng* 潛藏) is different from 'to be stored' (*nàcáng* 納藏). Unlike the latter, the former does not presuppose the presence of another thing, such as a container, in which to store a *dú-zhǐ*. The non-phenomenal world as a realm is not a container, a big thing which can be used to store smaller things.

In addition to the idea of 'self-hiding', Gōngsūn Lóng proposes the ideas of 'independent' and 'ideal' to further explain the ontological status of *dú-zhǐ* in a much more positive sense. Let us analyze in detail the last paragraph of the essay:

Q: Although the eye cannot behold hard, nor can the hand grasp white, one cannot say that there is no hard nor white. These organs function differently and cannot substitute for each other. Nevertheless, hard and white both reside in the stone. How can they be separate?

(客)曰：目不能堅，手不能白，不可謂無堅，不可謂無白。其異任也，其無以代也。堅白域於石，惡乎離？

A: When the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] does not join with the stone [as *dú-zhǐ*] to become something hard [*wù-zhǐ*], it can be combined with any other thing. When the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] does not join with anything, it is necessary that the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] is hard [in itself]. When it does not make the stone [as *dú-zhǐ*] hard, nor makes anything hard, we cannot find such hard in the [phenomenal] world, and thus the hard is hiding. If the white by nature cannot be white in itself, how can it make

²² Dù 1960: 39–40

²³ Luán 1982: 37.

the stone [as *dú-zhǐ*] or anything else white? If it is necessary that the white [as *dú-zhǐ*] is white [in itself], it is white though it does not make the stone or anything else white. With yellow or black it is the same. If even the stone is no longer there [in the phenomenal world], how can we obtain a [wù of] hard white stone? So in this situation, they are separate. What is separate is in accordance with what is in reality. It is far better to accept that this is in accordance with what is in reality than to exert one's perceptive power of touch and sight. Furthermore, the white is seen by the eye with fire [i.e. light as a condition of seeing]; but fire [light] does not see the white. Then neither fire [light] nor the eye can see the white by themselves, and it seems that the mind can see [as the only alternative]. Actually, the mind alone cannot see it either, and thus what is seen is separate. The hard is felt by the hand, but the hand feels by means of a hammer. However, the hammer together with the hand do not know by themselves; even the mind together with them does not know by itself. Is it that only the mind can know? This [what is known] is called "separate". What is separate is all over the world; therefore, it is single or independent and ideal or standard in itself.

〔主〕曰：堅未與石為堅而物兼，未與物為堅而堅必堅。其不堅石、物而堅，天下未有若堅，而堅藏。白固不能自白，惡能白石、物乎？若白者必白，則不白物而白焉。黃黑與之然。石其無有，惡取堅白石乎？故離也。離也者，因是。力與知果，不若因是。且猶白以目以火見，而火不見；則火與目不見，而神見；神不見而見離。堅以手而手以捶，是捶與手知而不知；而神與不知。神乎？是之謂離焉。離也者天下，故獨而正。

The opponent stresses that each perceptual faculty or sensory organ has its own specific function and cannot assume the function of another one. However, this expresses the limitations of each perceptual faculty or sensory organ, but not the limitation of knowing the object's existence. According to Gōngsūn Lóng, the actual problem is not the limitation of knowing the object's existence, but rather concerns the limitation of the object's ontological status. That is, the limitation of a single perception would affect the ontological status of the relevant entity from existence to subsistence. However, the fact that something does not exist in the phenomenal world does not mean that it does not subsist in the non-phenomenal world. For example, when the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] does not join with anything, the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] is necessarily still the hard [as *dú-zhǐ*] in a state of subsistence. It means that the hard as *dú-zhǐ* would be the same in all possible worlds. The opponent's thesis implies that the existence of an object is justified not only by perception, but also by the rational power of the mind. The cooperation of both faculties can ascertain that the tri-ple properties of hard, white, and stone are not separate in a concrete object.

But Gōngsūn Lóng does not buy this argument. He thinks that this interpretation cannot explain where the objects in the phenomenal world come from, and why some of these different objects share similar properties. If we accept Gōngsūn Lóng's two-level ontology, based on the interaction between these two worlds, then we can answer such questions in a sensible way. Based on this ontology, Gōngsūn Lóng proposes a theory of a dual, dynamic process – that is, a downward process, activated by the *jiān*, *yǔ*, or *hé* of different *dú-zhǐ*s, that transforms them into various *wù*s and their *wù-zhǐ*s; and an upward process, activated by the *lí* and *cáng* of different *wù-zhǐ*s, that induces them to withdraw from their phenomenal existence and to resume their status of subsistence as *dú-zhǐ*s.

Gōngsūn Lóng's thesis of separation includes two possible meanings of separation: when an entity is activated in an upward process, it is separate from all the entities in the phenomenal world, but at the same time separate from all other entities in the non-phenomenal world as well. Only in the latter case, we can say that its ontological status is *dú* 獨 ('single' or 'independent'): it is single because it has no connection with any other entities, and it is independent because its subsistence is not dependent on any other entities. In addition, only in the latter case we can say that it is an entity in the state of *zhèng* 正 ('ideal' or 'standard'). In comparison with a *wù* or a *wù-zhǐ*, the corresponding *dú-zhǐ* is an ideal or standard for exemplification or instantiation through the process of emergence or generation. The opponent's common-sense view provides no explanation regarding the problems of fixing and resemblance mentioned above. On the contrary, based on his two-level ontology, Gōngsūn Lóng provides us with a coherent, sophisticated answer to these questions.

4 Two without One

The particular thesis “white horse is not horse” (*bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬) in ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ and the general thesis “*wù* cannot be called *zhǐ*” (*wù bù kě wèi zhǐ yě* 物不可謂指也) in ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ can be understood as examples of the formal thesis “two is not one” (*èr fēi yī* 二非一), as expressed in ‘*Tōngbiàn lùn*’. Let us take into consideration Gōngsūn Lóng's claims that “having white horse cannot be said to be ‘having horse’” (有白馬不可謂有馬也), and that “there is nothing in the [phenomenal] world that is called ‘*zhǐ*’”. There are entities in the [phenomenal] world that are called ‘*wù*’. To regard what there is in the [phenomenal] world as what there is not is unacceptable” (指也者，天下之所無也；物也者，天下之所有也。以天下之所有，為天下之所無，未可). These statements are used to demonstrate the formal thesis that “two does not have one” (*èr wú yī* 二無一). It seems to me that ‘*Tōngbiàn lùn*’ was written to explain the complicated relation between the entities

of these two worlds. Gōngsūn Lóng mentions some examples to explain this relation across worlds as correct or proper demonstration (*zhèngjǔ* 正舉), and other examples as wild or improper demonstration (*kuángjǔ* 狂舉).

The essay is made up of two parts. The first part discusses the relation between two and one (either the left one or the right one). The second part also talks about the issue of two and one, employing some unusual terms, such as *huáng* 黃 ‘yellow’, *mǎ* 馬 ‘horse’, *bì* 碧 ‘jade blue’, and *jī* 雞 ‘chicken’. These terms seem to be irrelevant to the topic and provide no substantial contribution to a better understanding of the discussion. Therefore some scholars, including A. C. Graham and Chad Hansen, consider the second part to be forged. Shěn Yǒudǐng arrives at the point of dismissing the whole essay as a composite array of sheer nonsense (*húluàn pīncòu de “jiézuò”* 胡亂拼湊的「傑作」).²⁴ But the skepticism expressed by these scholars is based on their inability to understand the text rather than on any solid evidence. They provide no evidence to prove that the second part of this text is a forgery. How can we portray the purposes of one who wants to insert some content into the text with words of nonsense in a systematic way?

I think this part can be understood and made sense if we treat these terms not as expressing the corresponding ideas according to their literal meaning, but instead as formal concepts in the sense of schemas of symbols, such as individual constants and individual variables. For example, when Gōngsūn Lóng says, “A ram and an ox connected together is not a horse. An ox and a ram connected together is not a chicken”, the alternative structure “AB is not C” and “BA is not D” clearly shows that A (ram) and B (ox) are used as symbols rather than as concrete terms. When Gōngsūn Lóng states that a ram and an ox cannot be regarded as different merely based on the fact that they do not share certain characteristics, and at the same time that they cannot be regarded as the same merely based on the fact that they share certain characteristics, this also indicates quite clearly that the terms ram and ox are not used to refer to an actual ram and an actual ox, respectively. They are nothing but symbols.

The main theses in ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’ include “two is not one” and “two does not have one”. In the first part, Gōngsūn Lóng discusses these issues, which seem to be paradoxical or contradictory:

Q: Does two have one?

(客) 曰：二有一乎？

A: Two does not have one.

(主) 曰：二無一。

²⁴ Graham 1957: 157; Hansen 1992: 408, fn. 49; Shěn 1992: 507–586.

Q: Does two have right?

〔客〕曰：二有右乎？

A: Two does not have right.

〔主〕曰：二無右。

Q: Does two have left?

〔客〕曰：二有左乎？

A: Two does not have left.

〔主〕曰：二無左。

Q: Can right be called “two”?

〔客〕曰：右可謂二乎？

A: No.

〔主〕曰：不可。

Q: Can left be called “two”?

〔客〕曰：左可謂二乎？

A: No.

〔主〕曰：不可。

Q: Can right together with left be called “two”?

〔客〕曰：左與右，可謂二乎？

A: Yes.

〔主〕曰：可。

Q: Is it acceptable to say that what is changed is not what is unchanged?

〔客〕曰：謂變非不變，可乎？

A: Yes.

〔主〕曰：可。

Q: If right joins with the other one, can it be said to be “changed”?

〔客〕曰：右有與，可謂變乎？

A: Acceptable.

〔主〕曰：可。

Q: What is changed?

(客) 曰: 變隻[奚]?

A: The right [has changed].

(主) 曰: 右。

Q: If the right has changed, how can we still call it “right”? If it has not changed, how can we speak of a change?

(客) 曰: 右苟變, 安可謂右? 苟不變, 安可謂變?

A: If two does not have left and right, how is it possible that two is the joining of left and right?

(主) 曰: 二苟無左又無右, 二者左與右奈何?

The main question here is that if two does not have one, how is it possible that two is made up of the left one and the right one? Or, put differently, if the left one joins with the right one and the joining process makes the left one or the right one change, how is it possible that what is changed can still be called “left” or “right”? In this dialogue, Gōngsūn Lóng seems to direct the opponent (and the reader) to a seeming paradox. I think that this seeming paradox can be explained away if we look carefully into the problem of “what is changed is not what is unchanged” (*biàn fēi bù biàn* 變非不變). This last sentence, formulated as a question, aims to make the opponent realize that, even though two does not have left and right, it is still possible that two can be the result of the joining of left and right. It means that the left, when joining with the right, is a left that has undergone change. This changed left is not the original, unchanged left that was uncombined with the right. If we have to name these two different kinds of ‘left’, we can say that the unchanged left is a *dú-zhǐ*, while the changed left is a *wù-zhǐ*. To use the example in ‘Báimǎ lùn’, we can say that the fixed *bái* is not the non-fixed *bái* (定所白者非[不定所]白也). If *bái* is fixed to *mǎ* to form a white horse, this *bái mǎ* does not have [the non-fixed] *bái* and [the non-fixed] *mǎ* in it. Thus, Gōngsūn Lóng can conclude that “*bái mǎ* is not [the non-fixed] *mǎ*” and “*bái mǎ* does not have [the non-fixed] *mǎ*.” In other words, Gōngsūn Lóng not only claims that “two does not have one” and that “two is not one”, but also asserts that “the one of the two is not the one which is not in the two”, or “the left one in the two is not identical with the left which is not combined with any partner”. To borrow Wittgenstein’s words, the *simple* (object) is not identical with any component of the *composite* (state of affairs).

When Gōngsūn Lóng asserts that “the fixed *bái* is not [the non-fixed] *bái*” and “something [say, the non-fixed *mǎ*] without selecting any color is not that [say, the fixed *mǎ*] with a color selected”, it is obvious that for him, the words *bái* and *mǎ*

can be used to express different meanings or to designate different entities. Therefore, even though the left has been changed in joining with the right, and thus is not the same as it was before joining, we can still call them both 'left' without any problem. Based on this interpretation, we can say that there is neither contradiction nor paradox in the first part of the dialogue.

In the second part of the dialogue, Gōngsūn Lóng extends his view from "two does not have one" and "what is changed is not what is unchanged" to the thesis that "two is not one". He discusses the problem of correct or proper demonstration over against that of wild or improper demonstration:

A: A ram and an ox connected together is not a horse. An ox and a ram connected together is not a chicken.

(主) 曰：羊合牛非馬；牛合羊非雞。

Q: What do you mean?

(客) 曰：何哉？

A: Although a ram is different from an ox in that the ram has upper front teeth while the ox does not, yet one cannot say that an ox is not the same as a ram, and a ram is not the same as an ox. They might not both have certain characteristics in common, but they still belong to the same class. On the other hand, although a ram has horns and an ox also has horns, yet one cannot say that an ox is the same as a ram, or that a ram is the same as an ox. They might both have certain characteristics in common, and yet belong to different classes. Rams and oxen both have horns and horses do not, whereas horses have prominent tails, while rams and oxen do not. Therefore, I say that "a ram and an ox connected together is not the same as a horse". That means that there is no horse. I say that there is no horse because a ram is not two and an ox is not two, but ram-and-ox is two. So this makes it possible for a ram joined with an ox to have no horse. When we demonstrate the problem with this example, it becomes clear that the argument is based only on the difference between classes. It is similar to the problem of left and right, which is also demonstrated in the same way. Ox and ram have fur and chicken has feathers. The legs of a chicken are one by saying and two by counting, and therefore three altogether; the legs of an ox or a ram are one by saying and four by counting, and therefore five altogether. Thus, an ox or a ram has five feet each, and a chicken has three. Therefore, in saying that "an ox and a ram connected together are not the same as a chicken", it is not the case that they have something that distinguishes them from a chicken. Between a horse and a chicken, it is better to choose a horse [as an example for demonstration]. The former [horse] is the stuff or datum suitable for demonstration, while the latter [chicken] is not. It is obvious that they do not belong to the

same class. Demonstrating the problem with this [latter] example is called “confusing the name”, and thus it is an example of “wild” or “improper” demonstration.

(主)曰：羊與牛唯異，羊有齒，牛無齒，而牛之非羊也，羊之非牛也，未可，是不俱有而或類焉。羊有角，牛有角，牛之而羊也，羊之而牛也，未可，是俱有而類之不同也。羊牛有角，馬無角；馬有尾，羊牛無尾。故曰羊合牛非馬也。非馬者，無馬也。無馬者，羊不二，牛不二，而羊牛二，是而羊而[與]牛非馬可也。若舉而以是，猶類之不同。若左右，猶是舉。牛羊有毛，雞有羽。謂雞足一，數足二，二而一，故三。謂牛羊足一，數足四，四而一，故五。牛羊足五，雞足三。故曰牛合羊非雞，非有以非雞也。與馬以雞，寧馬。材不材，其無以類，審矣！舉是謂亂名，是狂舉。

In the second part of the dialogue, Gōngsūn Lóng introduces the concept of *lèi* 類 (‘class’ or ‘kind’) to explain how to use a correct example to demonstrate the thesis that “two is not one”. Just like the word *móu* 某 (‘someone’), which is often used as a generic symbol for an individual, he uses the terms ‘ram’, ‘ox’, ‘horse’, and ‘chicken’ as symbols for individual constants, not as names referring to animals. For him, choosing this cluster of names is just a way to set up a random demonstration model. From one point of view, in this possible world or model of interpretation, although A (ram) and B (ox) are different because they do not share a particular characteristic (upper front teeth), we cannot ascertain that A is not B (ox is not ram) or that B is not A (ram is not ox) only based on this difference. They may still belong to the same class. This is because this particular characteristic may not be the defining characteristic which can ultimately be used to ascertain whether they belong to the same class. From another perspective, although both B (ox) and A (ram) have one particular characteristic in common (horns), we cannot ascertain whether they belong to the same class only based on this similarity. This is because what they share may not be the sufficient condition to define their sameness, and thus they may belong to different classes. Here, it is obvious that Gōngsūn Lóng uses these animal names as symbols rather than as concrete terms. Otherwise, we cannot make sense of the passage. As we know, it is a logical fact that ram and ox either belong to the same class or not. But Gōngsūn Lóng’s example clearly demonstrates that, from two different perspectives, they (A and B) may and may not belong to the same class depending on circumstances. In other words, there are four possible combinations: 1) A and B *do not belong* to the same class, and B and A *belong* to the same class; 2) A and B *do not belong* to the same class, and B and A *do not belong* to the same class; 3) A and B *belong* to the same class, and B and A *belong* to the same class; 4) A and B *belong* to the same class, and B and A *do not belong* to the same class. The A or B in “A and B” are not the same as the A or B in “B and A”. To prevent any confusion,

Gōngsūn Lóng is clever enough to make a distinction between “A and B” (ram and ox) and “B and A” (ox and ram) along the lines of the difference between the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’. To use the terminology of “left one” and “right one”, A as in “A and B” is the left one, while A as in “B and A” is the right one. Gōngsūn Lóng occasionally mentions this. Here, the message is that animal names should not be taken seriously as such.

The example with the formulas “A and B” and “B and A” is used to explain that we cannot set up any criteria of sameness and difference if we base these only on one particular characteristic. The criteria must be based on an essential characteristic, which can be used as both the sufficient and the necessary condition to identify sameness or difference in a class. Gōngsūn Lóng provides another example, using the form “AB is not C” (ram joined with ox is not horse) and “BA is not D” (ox joined with ram is not chicken) to explain the correct and incorrect demonstrations of the thesis “two is not one”.

To demonstrate the type difference between entities of the two worlds, Gōngsūn Lóng uses as an example the general statement “two is not one”; to demonstrate the token difference, he uses as an example the particular statement “white horse is not horse”. To demonstrate these differences in classes, he uses symbolic forms, such as “AB is not C” and “BA is not D”. To claim that “AB is not C”, we must first identify some defining characteristic(s) to determine that they belong to different classes. For example, how can we assert that A (ram) joined with B (ox) is not C (horse)? Since AB has a property or characteristic p_1 (horns) that C does not have, and C has a property or characteristic p_2 (a prominent tail) that AB does not have, these can be regarded as both a sufficient and a necessary condition to determine that AB and C belong to different classes. Based on this criterion, we can assert that “AB is not C”, and thus “AB does not have C”. For example, “A (ram) joined with B (ox) is not C (horse), and thus does not have C (horse)” [羊合牛非馬者無馬也]. We can say that there is no C (horse) because A (ram) is not two and B (ox) is not two, but AB (ram-ox) is two. So, this makes it possible to say that A joined with B (ram joined with ox) has no C (horse). Here, Gōngsūn Lóng clearly indicates that AB as a combination of two entities is neither A nor B as a single entity. This is also true in the case that AB is two, but C is one. Based on the fact that AB as two is neither A nor B as one, and that it is also not C as one, Gōngsūn Lóng concludes that two does not have one. Hence, it is obvious that when A joins with B to form AB, AB does not have A, or B, or C. In other words, AB (including the A in AB and the B in AB) is essentially different from A or B in terms of their ontological status. This can be explained by the idea that “what is changed is not what is unchanged”, as expressed in the first part of the dialogue. This can also be explained by the general idea in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ that “wù is not *dú-zhī*” and “wù does

not have *dú-zhī*”, and in the ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ by the specific idea that “white horse is not horse” and “the fixed white is not the [non-fixed] white”.

Although Gōngsūn Lóng accepts that “AB is not C” (ram joined with ox is not horse), he does not think that “BA is not D” (ox joined with ram is not chicken) is a proper demonstration of “two is not one”. Most scholars think that the reason Gōngsūn Lóng provides is odd, and that he cannot escape from the charge of sophistry. I do not think this accusation is reasonable, because these scholars provide no evidence to support their claim, except that they cannot explain the text in a sensible way. If we treat Gōngsūn Lóng’s discussion in a formal way, all the seemingly odd elements would disappear. However, why is “AB is not C” (ram joined with ox is not horse) a correct demonstration of “two is not one”, while “BA is not D” (ox joined with ram is not chicken) is not? The reason is that the thesis “AB has p_1 but C does not have it, and C has p_2 but AB does not have it” can be regarded as a defining characteristic to determine that they belong to different classes. On the other hand, we cannot find a similar defining characteristic to ascertain that BA is different from D in terms of belonging to different classes. Gōngsūn Lóng mentions that, for example, BA (ox joined with ram) has the particular property or characteristic p_3 (fur), while D (chicken) has p_4 (feathers). The difference between p_3 (fur) and p_4 (feathers) is not an essential one, since the terms *máo* 毛 (fur) and *yǔ* 羽 (feathers) in Chinese can be classified under the same category (*yǔ máo* 羽毛 or *máo yǔ* 毛羽), with *máo* being short hair and *yǔ* being long hair. On this basis, we cannot distinguish BA from D. In general, even though BA is different from D because a feature or characteristic differs in terms of quantity rather than quality, we cannot make a clear demarcation between BA and D based on this quantitative difference. A similar example is the one about animal legs: the legs of a chicken are one by saying and two by counting, and therefore three altogether; the legs of an ox or a ram are one by saying and four by counting, and therefore five altogether. Thus, an ox or a ram has five feet, and a chicken has three feet. Even though their difference can be identified by saying, by counting, or by both,²⁵ the difference is only in terms of quantity, not in terms of essential characteristics. Thus, using this example or model to prove that “two is not one” is an “incorrect” or “wild” demonstration. Gōngsūn Lóng agrees with the Later Mohists that “we cannot know the difference among things by ‘wild’ demonstration” (狂舉不可以知異), though their criteria for identifying a “wild” demonstration are different. He

²⁵ Here, Gōngsūn Lóng’s example of “by saying” and “by counting” is used to show that some features or characteristics are known in a subjective way, while others are known in an objective way.

concludes that the horse in “ram joined with ox is not horse” is an appropriate object or datum in the model for explaining “AB is not C”, while the chicken in “ox joined with ram is not chicken” is not a suitable datum in the model for explaining “BA is not D”.

Moreover, to further clarify this point, Gōngsūn Lóng uses another cluster of symbols. This is what he calls “the other [way of] disputation” (*tā biàn* 他辯). In the last paragraph, he engages in the following discussion with the opponent:

Q: Please discuss this in some other way.

(客) 曰：他辯。

A: Green joined with white is not yellow; white joined with green is not jade blue.

(主) 曰：青以[與]白非黃；白以[與]青非碧。

Q: How so?

(客) 曰：何哉？

A: If green and white cannot be joined together but only mixed, they would be in conflict with each other. [By nature], they are not next to each other even when placed next to each other, because they do not relinquish their position. As they do not relinquish their position, even though they are in conflict, each keeps its own place, just like left and right do not attach to each other. Thus, it cannot be said that they become one in green, nor that they become one in white. How then should they have yellow? Yellow [in the proposition that “green joined with white is not yellow”] is indeed proper, the proper demonstration for making distinctions. The contrast is like that between the sovereign and the ministers [representing green joined with white] on the one hand, and the state on the other hand, so it is an inadequate parallel. Furthermore, if green is attached to white, white does not overpower it. White could overpower it, but it does not, [according to the theory of the five agents] because wood damages metal. If wood damages metal, jade blue is produced, and thus jade blue is not a proper demonstration for making a distinction. If green and white cannot be joined together but can only be mixed, and neither of them overpowers the other one, then they both shine simultaneously. As they both conflict and shine simultaneously, the resulting color is jade blue. A better case than jade blue is yellow. Yellow is like the horse [in the previous illustration], and does it not facilitate a clear classification? Jade blue is like the chicken [in the previous illustration], and does it not produce chaos? When there is chaos, it is like the rivalry between the sovereign and ministers, and both [green and white] shine [to overpower each other]. The

consequence of them both shining simultaneously is that they are dim without shining. This is a case of improper demonstration. If the demonstration is improper, names and reality do not correspond. In this case, mixed or attached colors appear. This is why I say that they both shine simultaneously. When they both shine and the right way is lost, then there is no criterion for their rectification.

(主) 曰：青白不相與而相與，反對也；不相鄰而相鄰，不害其方也。不害其方者，反而對，各當其所，若左右不驪。故一於青不可，一於白不可，惡乎其有黃矣哉！黃其正矣，是正舉也。其有君臣之於國焉，故強壽矣。而且青驪乎白，而白不勝也。白足之勝矣而不勝，是木賊金也。木賊金者碧。碧則非正舉矣。青白不相與而相與，不相勝則兩明也。爭而明，其色碧也。與其碧，寧黃。黃其馬也，其與類乎！碧其雞也，其與暴乎！暴則君臣爭而兩明也。兩明者，昏不明，非正舉也。非正舉者，名實無當。驪色章焉，故曰兩明也。兩明而道喪，其無有以正焉。

In saying that “green joined with white is not yellow, and white joined with green is not jade blue”, Gōngsūn Lóng uses the same topic with an alternative formal structure: “AB is not C” and “BA is not D”. But in the explanation in this paragraph, Gōngsūn Lóng seemingly appeals to the theory of *wǔ xíng* 五行 (‘five agents’ or ‘five powers’), as asserted by Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍, one of the most famous thinkers of his time. Thus, Gōngsūn Lóng assimilates the five colors and the five directions to the five agents.

According to Xiè Xīshēn’s annotation,

Green is the color of wood; its direction is in the east. White is the color of metal; its direction is in the west. The east and the west are opposite and face each other. The east is itself oriented toward the east; the west is itself oriented toward the west. So it is said that “[they are] not next to each other”. It is not the case that the east and the west never connect to each other, but their connection does no damage. So it is said that “[they are] next to each other but without any damage being done to their direction”.

夫青不與白為青，而白不與青為白，故曰「不相與」。青者木之色，其方在東；白者金之色，其方在西。東西相反而相對也。東自極於東，西自極於西，故曰「不相鄰」也。東西未始不相接，而相接不相害，故曰「相鄰不害其方」也。

Based on the theory of *wǔ xíng*, there are two kinds of cyclical relations among the five agents. One relation is called *xiāng shēng* 相生 (‘mutual production’ or ‘emergence’). That is: wood (*mù* 木) → fire (*huǒ* 火) → earth (*tǔ* 土) → metal (*jīn* 金) → water (*shuǐ* 水) (→ wood ...). The other relation is called *xiāng shèng* 相勝 (‘mutual conquest’ or ‘overcoming’). That is: wood → earth → water → fire → metal (→ wood ...). Their dynamic cycle can be illustrated in the following diagram:

Fig. 1: The cycle of the mutual production of the five agents.

Scholars of the “school” of Yínyáng (Yínyáng jiā 陰陽家), such as Zōu Yǎn, use the *wǔ xíng* scheme to classify all the things and phenomena in the world into different groups of five entities. In each group, five entities are associated with and correspond to five properties or virtues (*wǔ dé* 五德), which in turn are related to each other dynamically and cyclically. They use this relation to explain the situation of order or disorder in the natural and human worlds. For example, if something is classified as wood, its corresponding color is green, and its ideal position is in the east. Suppose another thing is classified as metal; its corresponding color is white, and its ideal position is in the west. According to the theory of *wǔ xíng*, wood and metal are in a position facing each other, and the natural order is that a thing made of metal should conquer a thing made of wood. If people do not follow this natural order and artificially mix these two things together, this would change

the natural order according to which “metal conquers wood” into the artificial state of “wood damages metal” (*mù zéi jīn* 木賊金).²⁶

In Gōngsūn Lóng’s example, he thinks that green and white are not next to each other in terms of their positions, and thus their relation is not one of mutual production or emergence, but rather one of mutual conquest or overcoming. The natural order is that white (as metal) should conquer green (as wood). If people mix these two colors together, green (as wood) would rebel against white (as metal). The consequence is that they cover each other up, and thus no white and no green can be seen. This mixture results in jade blue, which is a mixed color and not one of the five proper or correct colors (*zhèng sè* 正色), just like the case in which the sovereign who joined with the ministers constitutes a state. But a state is not an independent entity, as the sovereign and the ministers are. In other words, jade blue is a mixture of two, not just one. Here, only *zhèng sè* can be identified as an independent entity. Thus, when we want to use colors to explain the thesis that “the two as an independent entity is not the one as an independent entity”, we can only use *zhèng sè* to demonstrate this thesis. Otherwise, we would make a wild or improper demonstration. As a matter of fact, the mixture of green and white is not yellow. This can be used as a proper example to demonstrate that the statement “two is not one” is true. The mixture of white

26 In ancient Chinese medicine, when the mutual conquest is not in good order, it creates an abnormal case, which can be used to explain sickness. For example, if the liver is sick, it may transfer the sickness to the spleen. This is known as “wood overacts on earth” (*mù chéng tǔ* 木乘土), because the conquest is overdone. Moreover, if the liver is sick, it may also transfer the sickness to the lungs. This is known as “wood rebels against metal” (*mù wǔ jīn* 木侮金), because wood is normally conquered by metal. There are two reasons for such cases of imbalance mentioned in “Sù wèn” 素問 in the *Huángdì Nèijīng* 黃帝內經 (*Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor*): the *qì* 氣 (‘mental’ and/or ‘material force’) is either “more than enough” (*guò* 過) or “too increased” (*piān shèng* 偏盛), or it is “less than enough” (*bù jí* 不及) or “too decreased” (*piān shuāi* 偏衰). With regard to cases of mutual conquest, for example, if the *qì* of an organ (y) is “more than enough”, then the consequence is that it will decrease the *qì* of another organ (x), which is supposed to be able to conquer y. So this case can be described as “y rebels against x”. Moreover, the *qì* of a third organ (z), which is supposed to be conquered by y, will in turn be overly decreased by the *qì* of y at an abnormal level. This can be described as “y overacts on z”. These two kinds of imbalance can also appear in cases of mutual production. The state of imbalance can be described as two kinds of struggle in the *qì*: one is *shèng qì* 勝氣 (‘the conquering *qì*’), and the other is *fù qì* 復氣 (‘the reversing *qì*’). In facing a case of imbalance, a Chinese medical doctor should use herbal medicines or other techniques to cure the patient by reversing the situation of “more than enough” or “less than enough”, and thus help them recover the state of *píng qì* 平氣 (‘the balanced *qì*’). In general, this not only makes sense, but it is also workable for Chinese medical practitioners to use this mode of thinking to explain a few interconnected conditions and symptoms.

and green is jade blue. This can be used as an example to demonstrate that the statement “two is not one” is false. Nevertheless, this is not a proper case of counter-example if we want to demonstrate the difference between two independent entities.

Gōngsūn Lóng uses the color model to illustrate that “green joined with white is not yellow” is a proper or correct demonstration of the truth of “two is not one”, while “white joined with green is not jade blue” is an improper or incorrect demonstration of the truth of “two is not one”. The color model is formulated in the same way as the animal model. That is: “green joined with white is not yellow” shares the form “AB is not C” with “ram joined with ox is not horse”, while “white joined with green is not jade blue” shares the form “BA is not D” with “ox joined with ram is not chicken”. In both cases, the former example is a correct or proper demonstration of the truth of “two is not one”, while the latter example is an incorrect or improper demonstration of the truth of “two is not one”.

5 The Correspondence of Names and Reality

Confucius may be the first thinker to mention the idea of the “rectification of names”. Later Confucians, especially Xúnzǐ 荀子, not only follow Confucius’s line of thought, but also try to elaborate an ideal language that might be used to reconstruct social and political order. As mentioned in the first section, the Confucian ideal of the rectification of names is focused on the act of naming in ritual, social, and political life. Confucians treat naming in this context as producing an institutional fact. This means that each name with collective recognition or general agreement on its status function is bestowed by the authority upon a person or an object in the ritual and socio-political system. Through naming, each person is assigned some kind of role in terms of particular obligations and rights. Here, the corresponding target of naming is not a brute fact. It is an institutional, social fact, constituted of a physical fact entangled with an imposed value or deontic power, as described by John Searle in his social ontology.²⁷ In contraposition to this moral approach, the “School of Law” (Fǎjiā 法家) chooses a political approach. Thinkers in this school, especially Hánfēizǐ 韓非子, stress two main ideas: “seeking realities in accordance with their name” (*xún míng zé shí* 循名責實) and “including all the three natural relations [among heaven, earth, and humankind] and the five [human relations], without leaving any out” (*cān wǔ bù shī* 參伍不失). Their idea of reality, just like that of the Confucians, is not about brute facts, but rather

27 Searle 2010: 94–95.

institutional, social facts. But the corresponding name of the former idea is given only by the political authority, without collective agreement. In this sense, the idea of rectification of names in the “School of Law” is basically different from that of the Confucians. For thinkers in the “School of Law”, “seeking realities in accordance with their name” is nothing but “requesting to perform [based on the authority’s standards] in accordance with the name [which is given by the authority to someone who plays a certain role in a political system]”. In contrast to the normative orientation of both Confucianism and the “School of Law”, both Later Mohism and the “School of Names” appeal to objective facts rather than normative facts as the basis for rectifying names. The Later Mohists’ objective facts should be considered in terms of physical reality, while facts mentioned by the “School of Names” basically include metaphysical entities. Roughly speaking, we can describe the orientation of Later Mohism and the “School of Names” as a “semantic turn”, in contrast with the normative approach of Confucianism and the “School of Law”.

In comparison with ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ and ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’, the language of ‘Míngshí lùn’ is much plainer and relatively easy to understand. However, quite surprisingly, the interpretation of this essay is as controversial as those of the other two essays mentioned above. Some scholars think that, in contrast to the realism of the Later Mohists, Gōngsūn Lóng is an idealist, because his standard or criterion for rectifying names in order to match their corresponding realities is not based on objective reality, but rather on names.²⁸ Other scholars think that both Gōngsūn Lóng and the Later Mohists regard reality as primordial and names as derivative. Hence, Gōngsūn Lóng’s perspective can be identified as a form of naïve materialism or realism, though his idea of rigid correspondence between names and realities may lead him to idealism.²⁹ Nevertheless, until each individual thinker’s concepts of reality and name are well defined, I think there is no problem with using the label of idealism or realism. As a matter of fact, the formal requirement for rectifying names for all philosophical schools in ancient China is the correspondence between names and reality. Thus the standard or criterion for rectifying names must be related to both names and reality. It does not make sense to say that the standard or criterion lies either in reality or in names. If we regard reality as the basis on which to rectify names and thus reject names without a corresponding reality, this is nothing but a standard or criterion for distinguishing between referring and non-referring use of names. This would not introduce the problem of idealism or realism. It is not

²⁸ Yáng 1986: 126.

²⁹ Wáng 1992: 178–179.

an issue of primary concern for these ancient thinkers. On the other hand, if we regard names as the basis on which to rectify names, as some scholars believe Gōngsūn Lóng does, this at most means only that we are free to choose any name beforehand and then use it to refer to an object in reality, because all names are established by convention. It seems that there is no problem in naming so long as there is general agreement. With regard to the charge of idealism, I think one of the possible interpretations is that Gōngsūn Lóng uses names as a conceptual tool to conceptualize or metaphysicalize what names refer to as a reality.

'Míngshí lùn' can be divided into three parts. The first part is about the four basic key concepts in Gōngsūn Lóng's idea of the rectification of names: *wù* 物 'thing', *shí* 實 'essence', *wèi* 位 'position', and *zhèng* 正 'correctness'. The second part is about identifying confusion and correctness in naming. The third part is about the criteria for uttering or not uttering a name. In the first passage, Gōngsūn Lóng gives the following definitions for the four key concepts mentioned above:

Heaven and earth, together with their products, are things. If each thing is regarded as what it is to be a thing without exceeding what it is to be a thing, it is its essence. If each essence is used to fulfill what the essence is to fulfill [i.e. the corresponding name] without staying away from what the essence is to fulfill, it is its position. To deviate from its position is to fall into a wrong position; to keep its position is to be in a position of correctness.

天地與其所產焉，物也。物以物其所物而不過焉，實也。實以實其所實[而]不曠焉，位也。出其所位，非位；位其所位焉，正也。

In the first sentence of this passage, Gōngsūn Lóng asserts that all entities – including heaven, earth, and all the other entities nurtured within heaven and earth – are things or objects. All these are what we can perceive in the phenomenal world. In 'Zhǐwù lùn', he claims that "what is called '*wù*' is all of those entities in the world". Here the second sentence ("If each thing is regarded as what it is to be a thing without exceeding what it is to be a thing, it is its essence") expresses a very important point which has been neglected by many scholars thus far. As pointed out by Luán Xīng, the phrase "*wù qí suǒ wù*" 物其所物 – just like the phrase "*wù wù*" 物物 in some chapters of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, such as 'Knowledge Rambling in the North' ('Zhī běi yóu' 知北游) and 'Exercising Forbearance' ('Zài yòu' 在宥) – has a cosmological meaning.³⁰ It means making a thing be a certain thing. As argued in previous sections, Gōngsūn Lóng's reference theory is related to or grounded in an onto-cosmology of a two-level world. This grounding theory can explain how concrete and composite things in the phenomenal world, such as a white horse and a hard stone, have emerged from the combination of separate

30 Luán 1982: 89.

and simple entities of the non-phenomenal world, such as the white as *dú-zhǐ* and the horse as *dú-zhǐ*. This process of emergence is the process of *wù wù* – the process of making a thing be what it is. In other words, through this process, some relevant *dú-zhǐ*s are transformed into *wù-zhǐ*s of a concrete *wù*. In this regard, we can say that the essence or reality (*shí*) of a thing (*wù*) is nothing but a bundle or cluster of *wù-zhǐ*s, and the essence or reality of what makes a thing be what it is, is *dú-zhǐ*s.

The third sentence (“If each essence is used to fulfill what the essence is to fulfill [i.e. the corresponding name] without staying away from what the essence is to fulfill, it is its position”) means that the essence of an entity, either a *wù-zhǐ* as the essence of a combined entity (i.e. a *wù*) or a *dú-zhǐ* as the essence of a simple entity, can be used to fulfill or satisfy its corresponding name. To use the essence or reality of the name to fulfill or satisfy the essence or reality required by the name is to occupy a position. Here, the term position is similar to the term argument or placeholder. When one says, “there is a white horse”, making this sentence true means finding an entity which satisfies what the term ‘white horse’ designates in the sentence. If Gōngsūn Lóng in ‘Báimǎ lùn’ uses the term ‘white horse’ as a rigid designator, the logical form of the above sentence can be formulated as $(\exists x) (x=a)$. If his opponent uses the term as a predicate, it can be elaborated into $(\exists x) Hx$. In this regard, making the former or the latter sentence true means finding an entity which satisfies the placeholder *x*. The last sentence of this passage (“To deviate from its position is to fall into a wrong position; to keep its position is to be in a position of correctness”) says that if we misidentify something to satisfy the placeholder or to fulfill the position, chaos in knowing and naming would arise. If we can grasp the position with what is fulfilled, there would be no problem in knowing and naming correctly. It is clear from the text that Gōngsūn Lóng uses these four concepts to regulate all the referring terms, and that he adopts an essentialist theory of reference. That is, what a referring term refers to must be an entity in terms of its essence or reality. Without correspondence to the essence or reality of an entity, a name would be used in a wrong position, and thus could be called “a chaotic or confused name” (*luàn míng* 亂名).

The following two passages in the second part of the essay talk about confusion and correctness in naming:

What is correct is to be used to rectify what is incorrect. What is incorrect is not to be used to cast doubt upon what is correct. Rectification is to rectify or certify what the essence is; to rectify or certify what the essence is, in other words, is to rectify or certify its [corresponding] name.

以其所正，正其所不正；[不]以其所不正[正]，疑其所正。其正者，正其所實也；正其所實者，正其名也。

When the name is rectified, then the “this” and the “that” are delimited. If, in uttering or saying “that”, “that” is not limited to that, then the utterance or saying of “that” is not applicable. If, in uttering or saying “this”, “this” is not limited to this, then the utterance or saying of “this” is not applicable. This is because what is regarded as corresponding is not corresponding. To treat what is not corresponding as corresponding is chaotic [in naming]. Hence, when one makes that be “that” [i.e. one names that with (the name) “that”] which corresponds to that, it is limited to that and the utterance is applicable to that. When one makes this be “this” [i.e. one names this with (the name) “this”] which corresponds to this, it is limited to this and the utterance is applicable to this. This is because what is regarded as corresponding is corresponding. To treat what is corresponding as corresponding is correct. Hence, it is acceptable to make that be “that” [i.e. to name that with (the name) “that”] which aims at that and to make this be “this” [i.e. to name this with (the name) “this”] which aims at this. It is not acceptable to make this be “that” [i.e. to name this with (the name) “that”] which is about both that and this and to make that be “this” [i.e. to name that with (the name) “this”] which is about both this and that. 其名正，則唯乎其彼此焉。謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行；謂此而此不唯乎此，則此謂不行。其以當不當也。不當而當，亂也。故彼彼當乎彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼；此此當乎此，則唯乎此，其謂行此。其以當而當也。以當而當，正也。故彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，可；彼此而彼且此，此彼而此且彼，不可。

In the first passage, Gōngsūn Lóng mentions the requirements and the goal of the rectification of names. In the second passage, he goes on to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable naming in a formal way. I think the first two sentences of the first passage (“What is correct is to be used to rectify what is incorrect. What is incorrect is not to be used to cast doubt upon what is correct”) can be explained with reference to the last two sentences of the first passage. That is, “What is correct is to be used to rectify what is incorrect” means the same as “What is kept in its position is used to rectify what has deviated from its position”. Similarly, “What is incorrect is not to be used to cast doubt upon what is correct” means the same as “What has deviated from its position is not used to cast doubt upon what is kept in its position”. For example, people are required to use the correct statement “white horse is not horse” to rectify the incorrect statement “white horse is horse”, but not the reverse. Additionally, people are required to use the proper example – that either hard stone or white stone counts as two – to rectify the improper example that hard white stone counts as three. In the second passage, Gōngsūn Lóng seems to be using the terms *wéi* 唯 (‘delimited’) and *zhǐ* 止 (‘aims at’) to express the fact that one name can only be used to refer exclusively to one entity. I do not think that Gōngsūn Lóng proposes anything similar to the “one-name one-thing” theory, as Hansen interprets it.³¹ If that were the case, he would not have used both *mǎ* and *bái-mǎ* in ‘Báimǎ lùn’.

31 Hansen 1983: 133.

According to his two-world ontology, the word *mǎ* used alone and the word *mǎ* used in the compound expression *bái-mǎ* are two tokens of the same type of character or word, but they are not the same term. Gōngsūn Lóng's *míng* is used to express a term rather than a character or word (*zì* 字). In addition, the passage clearly indicates that the words 'this' and 'that' appeared in a context in which quotations are used to refer to themselves, while those that appear in a context without quotations are used to refer to something. This is the difference between "mention" and "use". For example, if an instance of a *used* symbol is *mǎ* and an instance of a *mentioned* symbol is "*mǎ*", then the formal sentence "When one makes that be 'that' [i.e. one names that with (the name) 'that'] which corresponds to that, it is limited to that and the utterance is applicable to that" can be illustrated by the sentence "When one makes *mǎ* be '*mǎ*' [i.e. one names a horse with (the name) 'horse'] which corresponds to *mǎ* (a horse), it is limited to *mǎ* (a horse) and the utterance is applicable to *mǎ* (a horse)". So, if you use "*mǎ*" to designate *mǎ* as a separate entity (i.e. a *dú-zhǐ*), you cannot use "*mǎ*" to designate *niú* (a cow); nor can you use it as the same term (though it can be used as the same character or word) to designate the inseparable *mǎ* in *bái-mǎ* or *huáng-mǎ*. I think that this is a point related to Gōngsūn Lóng's essentialism. It is not about the "one-name one-thing" theory.

In the third part of the essay, Gōngsūn Lóng discusses the criteria for uttering or not uttering a name. He says:

Name is to designate or call an essence or a reality. Knowing that 'this' is not [corresponding to] this and that 'this' does not cover [the extension of] this, one will not make the designation or saying. Knowing that 'that' is not [corresponding to] that and that 'that' does not cover that, one will not make the designation or saying either.

Supreme indeed were the intelligent kings of old! They investigated names and reality with care, and they made designations or sayings with caution. Supreme indeed were the intelligent kings of old!

夫名，實謂也。知此之非此也，知此之不在此也，則不謂也；知彼之非彼也，知彼之不在彼也，則不謂也。

至矣哉，古之明王！審其名實，慎其所謂。至矣哉，古之明王！

In this last passage, Gōngsūn Lóng gives a clear definition of "name" (*míng*). That is, a name is used to refer to an essence or a reality (*shí*). In other words, he treats a name as a referring term. Based on this definition, he asserts that 'this' and 'that' should be used to designate their corresponding this and that, respectively. For example, if the name "*mǎ*" does not correspond to horses or is not used to cover horses, we cannot use this name to refer to horses. It may correspond to other things, such as cows, or it may be a non-referring term. However, to use a name to refer to any specific entity or to refer to any specific object, the name must correspond to that specific entity. All names, of course, were established by convention

and certified by the ancient kings. But this is not an arbitrary process. The intelligent kings were very careful to investigate the correspondences between names and their reality or essence. In this regard, it is not (or at least not only) a kind of normative problem; it is a kind of objective problem. For Gōngsūn Lóng, understanding the objective problem of reference is necessary to understanding the related problem of ontology.

6 Names as Rigid Designators

With respect to the problem of reference in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, I do not treat all terms (simple and compound) as if they refer to abstract entities. My argument and philosophical explanation is quite different from Fung Yu-lan's.³² I think Gōngsūn Lóng only uses single or simple terms – such as ‘white’ (*bái*), ‘horse’ (*mǎ*), ‘hard’ (*jiān*), and ‘stone’ (*shí*) – to refer to abstract entities or concrete universals in a broad sense. This is quite different from the view held by Fung Yu-lan, who treats all the terms in ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ as names referring to Platonic universals. I regard the compound (referring) terms Gōngsūn Lóng uses – such as ‘white horse’ (*bái-mǎ*), ‘yellow horse’ (*huáng-mǎ*), and ‘hard stone’ (*jiān-shí* 堅石) – as implicit forms of expressions. These forms of expression have the same function as the English phrases which denote definite or indefinite individual objects. In Classical Chinese, for example, *bái-mǎ* (‘white horse’) can have the same function as ‘some particular [white horse]’, *huáng-mǎ* as ‘this [yellow horse]’, and *jiān-shí* as ‘that [hard stone]’, according to different contexts. These compound terms function like demonstratives which directly refer to some concrete object in the world. If I am right, Gōngsūn Lóng uses both single terms and compound terms as referring terms, which can be identified as Saul Kripke’s “rigid designators”.³³ They should not be understood as descriptions, and their logical forms should be formulated as individual terms. As I argue elsewhere,³⁴ if we interpret all the compound terms used by Gōngsūn Lóng in all the arguments in ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ as predicates in descriptive forms, we cannot provide a coherent interpretation for the whole dialogue. But if we interpret the debate between Gōngsūn Lóng and his opponent as a conflict between the use of language based on a direct theory of reference and that based on a descriptive theory of reference, the

³² Yu-lan Fung 1961: 257

³³ Kripke 1972: 3–15.

³⁴ Yiu-ming Fung, forthcoming, ch. 8.

arguments provided by both sides are understandable and can be judged as reasonable. According to my interpretation, based on the principle of charity, as claimed by Donald Davidson,³⁵ it is also reasonable for the opponent to say that “white horse is horse”, because it is an analytic truth of the following form: $(\forall x)[(Wx \& Hx) \rightarrow Hx]$. In other words, “white” and “horse” in the opponent’s statement are represented by the predicates W and H, respectively.

However, if we formulate Gōngsūn Lóng’s keywords in his statement “white horse is not horse” according to the same predicates, his statement would be wrong – that is, analytically false. Based on a direct theory of reference, Gōngsūn Lóng basically uses a referring term to refer to the same referent in all possible worlds, provided it exists in each world. The simple term ‘white’, for example, when referring to a non-fixed (*bù dìng* 不定) entity, can be understood as referring to the same simple and unchanged *zhǐ* in all possible worlds. It cannot be regarded as referring to a class, because a class of entities in this world could be different from a class of the same kind of entities in another possible world. Based on this consideration, I think his keywords should be represented by individual terms such as a, b, and c, or understood as the value of individual variables such as x, y, and z. Therefore, instead of formulating Gōngsūn Lóng’s statement “white horse is not horse” as: $(\forall x)[(Wx \& Hx) \rightarrow \sim Hx]$, I think we should rather elaborate its form as: $\sim(a=b)$. This can be proven from his premises. Gōngsūn Lóng does not acknowledge the distinction between *use* and *mention* in a very effective way. Sometimes he uses words such as horse, white, and white horse not to refer to their corresponding entity, but to refer to themselves, i.e. to mention the name itself. However, his thesis can be proven based on his premises: “white horse is not horse” means “white horse is not the same [entity] as horse”, or alternatively, “The name ‘white horse’ is not [referring to] the same [thing] as the name ‘horse’”. As a consequence, the arguments provided by both sides can be formulated and understood in an intelligible way through first-order predicate logic, and in this way nothing has to be explained away.³⁶

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³⁵ Davidson 2001: 136–137, 196–197.

³⁶ Yiu-ming Fung, forthcoming, ch. 8.

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Bo Mou

5 How Gōngsūn Lóng's Double-Reference Thought in His “White Horse Not Horse” Argumentation Can Engage with Fregean and Kripkean Approaches to the Issue of Reference

The purpose of this chapter¹ is to explore how Gōngsūn Lóng's double-reference approach in his argument in support of the “white horse not horse” (*bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬) thesis (which I will refer to below as the “white horse not horse” argumentation, for short)² can contribute to our understanding and treatment of the issue of how reference is possible. It will engage with two approaches which are representative of the discussion of this problem in contemporary philosophy of language, namely the Lockean-Fregean and the Millian-Kripkean approaches. My basic view is this: first, it is philosophically significant that, through his “white horse not horse” argumentation, Gōngsūn Lóng applies the double-reference character of a referring name in the (declarative) subject-predicate sentential context of what I call “the basic employment of language” to the effect that something is said of an object;³ second, his double-reference thought⁴ allows us to engage with the two major approaches to reference in

1 A previous version of this paper (especially the content of part 2) was presented at the workshop “The *Gongsunlongzi* and Other Neglected Texts: Aligning Philosophical and Philological Perspectives” (University of Zurich, Switzerland, August 27–29, 2014). My special thanks go to the workshop organizers – Rafael Suter, Lisa Indraccolo, and Wolfgang Behr – for their kind invitation, their excellent organization of the event, and their meticulous and effective co-editorship of this post-workshop anthology volume. I am grateful to all the workshop participants, especially the foregoing three organizers, Yiu-ming Fung (馮耀明), Thierry Lucas, Dennis Schilling, Zhou Changzhong (周昌忠), and Jiang Xiangdong (江向東), for their helpful critical comments at the workshop. I am also grateful to an anonymous reviewer for making thoughtful and stimulating critical comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 The argument is transmitted in the ‘*Báimǎ lùn*’ 白馬論 (On the White Horse) chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子.

3 For a further explanation of what is called “a sentential context of the basic employment of language”, see my discussion in section 1.2.1 below.

4 The double reference also contributes to our understanding of the semantic-syntactic structure of the parallel inference (i.e. the *móu* 侔-style reasoning, a type of deductive reasoning) by his contemporaries, the Later Mohists. I will not focus on this topic here. For further information on this, see Mou 2016.

contemporary philosophy of language. It shows how the convincing aspects of both can be brought together, while other issues neglected by both can be constructively complemented.

This chapter will address the issue as follows: In part 1, I will present a double-reference account of Gōngsūn Lóng's "white horse not horse" thesis.⁵ In part 2, I will explain how a double-reference account of Gōngsūn Lóng's "white horse not horse" thesis can complement current approaches to reference and enhance our understanding of how reference is possible.

Three methodological notes are necessary at this juncture. First, as a research project in comparative philosophy (a philosophical exploration crossing the lines of tradition), this chapter emphasizes cross-traditional engagement and philosophical interpretation. It therefore does not content itself with historical reconstructions and the investigation of apparent similarities and differences between the ancient texts. Rather, comparative examination involves further philosophical interpretation and genuinely philosophical engagement with the issues addressed. Second, emphasizing the philosophical aspect of this endeavor does not imply ignoring or even dismissing other methodological approaches, such as the accurate description and reconstruction of relevant historical matters of fact. After all, historical accounts provide the sources necessary for further philosophical interpretation and elaboration. Third, more generally speaking, far from taking any methodological approach to be the exclusively legitimate approach in studies of Chinese philosophy, I am convinced that various distinct methodological approaches can complement each other and jointly contribute to a more adequate understanding and treatment of both the classical texts and the thought of their supposed authors.

1 An Examination of Gōngsūn Lóng's Double-Reference Thought via His "White Horse Not Horse" Thesis

Gōngsūn Lóng's "white horse not horse" claim is supported by a number of articulate arguments in his eponymous essay. I should probably start with a remark on the subject and focus of this chapter. There is an ongoing debate among modern scholars regarding how to understand Gōngsūn Lóng's "white

⁵ The content of part 1, especially section 1.2, is a substantial elaboration on the ideas presented in a previous publication (Mou 2007).

horse not horse” thesis and its significance. There are different aspects to this thesis. As a consequence, the interpretations of modern scholars focus on different aspects. Thus, some focus on the metaphysical status of the referents of such names as ‘horse’ and ‘white horse’.⁶ As indicated at the outset, this chapter will leave these metaphysical aspects untouched. Rather, I shall confine myself to elaborating on the dimension of reference concerning the relation between language, thought, and the world. I shall proceed as follows. In section 1.1, I will present an interpretation of the structure and content of Gōngsūn Lóng’s “white horse not horse” argument. I shall first present a translation of the entire text of ‘Bāmǎ lùn’ and suggest a preliminary analysis and interpretation. This interpretation shall resort neither to some kind of Platonic realism – assuming a Platonic heaven with ideal things, which seems dispensable when it comes to Gōngsūn Lóng’s approach – nor to radical nominalism, which unreasonably denies the indispensable role played by conceptual abstraction. My approach is more compatible with a kind of modest nominalism or conceptualism, which does justice to the role duly played by conceptual abstraction. In this preliminary analysis, I will highlight some crucial aspects of Gōngsūn Lóng’s argument that invite further theoretical explanation. Then, in section 1.2, I will suggest a double-reference account of how it is possible for a referring

6 For example, Chung-ying Cheng (1983) and Yiu-ming Fung (2000) present distinct elaborations on a representative and influential Platonic-realistic interpretation, which was originally suggested by Fung Yu-lan (1952–1953). According to Fung, Gōngsūn Lóng argues that ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ represent two distinct Platonic universals (or universal/abstract qualities), so that the universal of white-horseness is not (identical to) the universal of horseness. Cheng defends a Platonic realistic interpretation in terms of abstract ontology; he emphasizes the phenomenological source and basis of Gōngsūn Lóng’s ontology of forms, which is intended to unify the subjective and the objective as well as phenomenology and ontology (Cheng 1983). In contrast, Yiu-ming Fung maintains a realistic account in terms of universals. According to him, Gōngsūn Lóng’s universals exist in their separate, transcendent, unchanged world, but they can emerge and participate in the phenomenal world in some peculiar way (Fung 2000). Chad Hansen proposes a radical shift of interpretation toward mereology (part–whole logic) and his mass-noun hypothesis: ‘white horse’ is a mass noun and refers to a mass-sum whole of horse-mass and white stuff, distinguishing it from a mutually pervasive compound like hard white, which is a mass product; the whole of white-part and horse-part is not its horse-part. Hansen’s mereological interpretation circumvents class–member relation and resorts to whole–part division alone (Hansen 1983). In the metaphysical-interpretive part of my own account, I suggest a modest mereological interpretation (see Mou 2007). As far as their metaphysical interpretations are concerned, Cheng’s and Fung’s accounts represent two distinct versions of realism concerning universals, and Hansen’s account is a strong or radical version of nominalism, while my own account involves a kind of moderate nominalism (conceptualism). See also Chmielewski 1962 for a set-theoretic account.

name to refer to the same object in various sentential contexts. I shall explain the various ways in which this account can in fact enhance our understanding of the gist of Gōngsūn Lóng's text.⁷

1.1 A Preliminary Analysis of the Structure and Content of Gōngsūn Lóng's "White Horse Not Horse" Argument

Before providing a comprehensive, detailed translation and analysis of the argumentative structure of Gōngsūn Lóng's 'Báimǎ lùn', I will first highlight the basic rationale underlying the entire "white horse not horse" argument. On the one hand, what Gōngsūn Lóng emphasizes here is the following: when the relation of the white horse to the horse, if what is sought is their common or shared aspect, then what is expected or needs to be stated is that the white horse is identical to or is not different from the horse with regard to the addressed common or shared aspect. The reason is that what makes a white horse a horse consists in their sameness – the shared or common aspect of both. On the other hand, Gōngsūn Lóng stresses that what is sought in the above case is different from what is sought when the white horse is claimed to be different from the horse: in the latter case, what is sought is some distinct aspect (that of being white) that sets the white horse apart from the horse, an aspect fulfilled by neither the yellow horse nor the black horse. It is precisely at this point that Gōngsūn Lóng makes the crucial general point underlying all the specific arguments of 'Báimǎ lùn': while the subject expression "the white horse" designates (any member of) the collection of white horses as a whole, what is sought (in focusing on some specific aspect of the white horse) makes a significant difference. It is the distinct aspect or specific attribute of being white (something that is not shared by all horses) that is focused on when the white horse is designated; that is, in such sentential contexts, we encounter the establishment of what we could call double reference.

In order to give readers a comprehensive idea of Gōngsūn Lóng's approach in 'Báimǎ lùn' and to allow for a clear understanding of the structure of its argumentation, I will now present my translation of the whole text. Before going into the text itself, I would like to begin with a brief analysis of its structure.

⁷ I shall forego a critical examination of relevant competing interpretations for two reasons: first, my own argument itself constitutes a critical response to the major current approaches, as it differs from them in some substantial respects; second, the contributions to the present volume discuss a number of representative approaches and thus allow for comparison and cross-reference.

‘Báimǎ lùn’ develops Gōngsūn Lóng’s claim that “[the] white horse [is] not [the] horse” (*bái mǎ fēi mǎ*) in a number of articulate arguments. It seems uncontroversial that the structure of the entire text can be divided into five related groups: [G1], [G2], [G3], [G4], and [G5]. These groups present five arguments for Gōngsūn Lóng’s claim. In each, ‘A’ represents Gōngsūn Lóng’s dialogue partner, while ‘B’ stands for Gōngsūn Lóng himself. The numbers in parentheses immediately after A and B enumerate the utterances. Bracketed passages contain explanatory paraphrases or interpretations that I have added. My translation of ‘Báimǎ lùn’ is as follows:

[G1] “白馬非馬”，可乎？曰：可。曰：何哉？曰：馬者，所以命形也；白者所以命色也。命色者非命形也。故曰：“白馬非馬”。

A (1): “Is it adequate to say that a white horse is not a horse?”

B (1): “Yes.”

A (2): “Why?”

B (2): “The word ‘horse’ signifies (*mìng*) a certain shape [of the horse], and the word ‘white’ signifies (*mìng*) a certain color [of the white horse]. So, that which signifies the color (*mìng sè zhě*) [and thus that which signifies both the color and the shape] is distinct from that which signifies the shape (*mìng xíng zhě*) [regarding their distinctive conceptual contents]. [So, what the words ‘white horse’ denote via their associated conceptual content is not identical to what the word ‘horse’ itself denotes via its associated conceptual content.] Therefore, we say that the white horse is not identical to (*fēi*) the horse⁸ [because the attribute of white color is associated with the conceptual content of the words ‘white horse’ only].”

⁸ Considering that one standard English grammatical means to express a collection designation is via *the definite article plus the [addressed] common noun* (for instance, grammatically adequate, one can say “*the* wolf is not really a dangerous animal”, with this usage of the definite article to talk about *any* individual member of the collection of wolves), I thus use the English phrase “*the* horse” and “*the* white horse” in the sentence “the white horse is (not) identical to the horse” (here and below) to designate the collection of horses and the collection of white horses, respectively. In another article (Mou 1999), I argue for the collective-name hypothesis concerning the semantic-syntactic structure of Chinese common nouns, which explains my reason for translating such Chinese common nominal expressions as *bái mǎ* in the sentential context “*bái mǎ (fēi) mǎ*” into the English phrase “the white horse”, which designates the collection of white horses.

[G2] 曰：有白馬，不可謂無馬也。不可謂無馬者，非馬也？有白馬為有馬，白之，非馬何也？

曰：求馬，黃、黑馬皆可致；求白馬，黃、黑馬不可致。使白馬乃馬也，是所求一也。所求一者，白馬不異馬也；所求不異，如黃、黑馬有可有不可，何也？可與不可，其相非明。故黃、黑馬一也，而可以應有馬，而不可以應有白馬。是白馬之非馬，審矣！

A (3): “When there is a white horse, we cannot say that there is no horse. If one cannot say that there is no horse, then isn’t it a horse? There being a white horse means that there is a horse. Why is a white horse not a horse?”

B (3): “When a horse is sought, either a yellow horse or a black horse may fulfill what is sought. When a white horse is sought, neither a yellow horse nor a black horse may fulfill what is sought. What makes the white horse the horse (*shǐ bái mǎ nǎi mǎ*) is the same [common] aspect [of a white horse and a horse] given that it is what is sought (*suǒ qiú yī yě*). If what is sought is the common aspect, the white horse would not differ from (*bù yì*) the horse [regarding the common aspect]. If what is sought in one case [the common aspect of all horses that is fulfilled by the yellow horse and the black horse alike] does not differ from what is sought in the other case [the distinct aspect between the white horse and the horse that is fulfilled by neither the yellow horse nor the black horse], then why is it that the yellow or black horse does fulfil what is sought in one case, but not in the other? It is evident that the two cases are distinct. For this reason the yellow horse and the black horse, based on what is the same in them [they are horses but not white horses], answer to what ‘horse’ denotes [i.e. they fall into the extension of ‘horse’], but not to what ‘white horse’ denotes [i.e. they do not into the extension of ‘white horse’]. Thus [in the way in which the yellow horse and the black horse are not the white horse with regard to their distinct aspect] indeed the white horse is not the horse.”

[G3] 曰：以馬之有色為非馬，天下非有無色之馬也。天下無馬，可乎？曰：馬固有色，故有白馬。使馬無色，如有馬而已耳，安取白馬？故白者 非馬也。白馬者，馬與白也。馬與白馬也。故曰：白馬非馬也。

A (4): “If a horse with color can be adequately considered as not a horse, then, since there is no horse without color throughout the world, is it adequate to say that there is no horse at all in the world?”

B (4): “Horses certainly have color, and there are thus white horses. What makes any horses a horse but without its having a certain color is its being the horse [alone as its necessary identity contributor]; isn’t it that

being the *white* horse [my emphasis] is not [essentially] related to being the horse? Therefore being white is not [the same as] being a horse. A white horse is the combination of being the horse with being white [both as its necessary identity contributors]; thus there are the distinct identities of horses and white horses. Therefore one can say that the white horse is not the horse.”

- [G4] 馬未與白為馬，白未與馬為白。合馬與白，複名白馬。是相與以不相與為名，未可。故曰：白馬非馬未可。以“有白馬為有馬”，謂有白馬為有黃馬，可乎？曰：未可。曰：以“有馬為異有黃馬”，是異黃馬於馬也，是以黃馬為非馬。以黃馬為非馬，而以白馬為有馬，此飛者入池而棺槨異處，此天下之悖言亂辭也。

A (5): “A horse without being white is simply a horse, and a thing being white without being the horse is simply something white; when a horse is combined with being white, it is called a ‘white horse’. It is inadequate to talk about this combination by denying the actual character [i.e. being the horse as a contributing element in the combination] of this combination. Therefore, it is inadequate to say that a white horse is not a horse [or it is inadequate to say that a white horse does not include being the horse as a contributing element in the combination].”

B (5): “If you consider there being the white horse as there being the horse, is it adequate to say that there being the white horse is there being the yellow horse?”

A (6): “No.”

B (6): “If you consider there being the horse as distinct from there being the yellow horse, you distinguish the yellow horse from the horse. To distinguish the yellow horse from the horse is to regard the yellow horse as not the horse. Considering the yellow horse as not the horse and yet considering the white horse as being the horse is just like a bird flying into a pool or like the inner and outer coffins exchanging their due positions. This would simply be wild, contradictory nonsense.”

- [G5] 曰：有“白馬不可謂無馬”者，離白之謂也；不離者，有白馬不可謂有馬也。故所以為有馬者，獨以馬為有馬耳，非以白馬為有馬。故其為有馬也，不可以謂“馬馬”也。“白者不定所白”，忘之而可也。白馬者，言白定所白也，定所白者，非馬也。馬者，無去取於色，故黃、黑皆所以應；白馬者，有去取於色，黃、黑馬皆所以色去，故唯白馬獨可以應耳。無去者非有去也，故曰“白馬非馬”。

A (7): “When one says that ‘there is a white horse’ cannot be said to mean ‘there is no horse’, one’s focus [on being the horse but not on being white] separates from being white. When what one focuses on does not separate from but includes being white, then ‘there is a white horse’ does not amount to saying that there is [merely] the horse. Therefore, when one says that ‘there is [merely] a horse’, it is only because there is a horse [one’s focus being limited to being the horse alone] rather than because there is a white horse [one’s focus including both being white and being the horse]. Therefore, if one takes it [being white] as [a necessary contributing element in] identifying there being the horse, that would result in identifying a horse [as such via being the horse] and another horse [via being the white horse] – this would not make sense.”

[NB: This passage reveals a high level of reflection and sophistication. This demonstrates a number of things. First, Gōngsūn Lóng’s conversation partner is not a mere layman on the street, but an intellectual equal. Second, s/he can admit both claims, depending on which aspect is in focus. Third, so far, both Gōngsūn Lóng and his conversation partner have adopted compatible viewpoints; they are more like a pair of charitable interlocutors than genuine adversaries. This third point is important because it highlights the compatibility and consistency of the two seemingly self-contradictory claims, “the white horse is the horse” and “the white horse is not the horse”, as made by the two sides, respectively.]

B (7): “It is adequate to ignore being white that is not fixed on any [concrete] white things. However, in the case of the white horse, we are talking about being white as fixed on [particular, concrete] things. The thing on which being white is fixed is not the same as being white per se. The term ‘horse’ is not [essentially] related to any specific choice of color, and both yellow horses and black horses thus fall into what it denotes. Nevertheless, the term ‘white horse’ is [essentially] related to the choice of a certain color [white], and both yellow horses and black horses are thus excluded [from what it denotes] because of their colors. Only white horses fall into what the term ‘white horse’ denotes. What does not exclude [one specific color] is not the same as what does exclude [one specific color]. One thus says that the white horse is not the horse.”

Given that the fourth argument, as given in B (6) of [G4], is less substantial and forceful, as its (implied) substantial content (if any) has already been set forth in the other arguments, let me focus on Gōngsūn Lóng’s arguments as given in [G1], [G2], [G3], and [G5].

What is challenging here is both how to understand and interpret these single arguments and how to understand their mutual relation. In my opinion, Gōngsūn Lóng's second argument, as given in B (3) in the second group [G2], is the crucial foundation providing the rationale for the other arguments. In this sense, all other arguments can be considered variations of this basic point. Let us therefore have a closer examination of Gōngsūn Lóng's crucial argument in B (3).

Instead of only arguing that the white horse is not (identical to) the horse, Gōngsūn Lóng here makes explicit both in what respect and from which perspective it is adequate and in need to maintain that the white horse is “not identical to” (*fēi* 非) or “differs from” (*yì* 異) the horse *and*, with regard to what and from which perspective, it is adequate and in need to maintain that the white horse “is” (identical to) the horse (*bái mǎ nǎi mǎ* 白馬乃馬) or “not different from” (*bù yì* 不異) the horse. As briefly highlighted above, what Gōngsūn Lóng emphasizes here, on the one hand, is this: when what is sought is the common or shared aspect between the white horse and the horse, what is expected or needs to be stated is that the white horse is identical to or is not different from (*bù yì* 不異) the horse with regard to the common or shared aspect addressed, because what makes a white horse a horse consists in their shared or common aspect (*shǐ bái mǎ nǎi mǎ yě, shǐ suǒ qiú yì yě* 使白馬乃馬也, 是所求一也).⁹

On the other hand, Gōngsūn Lóng stresses that what is sought in the above case is different from what is sought when the white horse is claimed to be different from the horse: in the latter case, what is sought or focused on is some distinct aspect (that of being white) separating the white horse and the horse, which is

9 One way of translating and interpreting the statement “使白馬乃馬也, 是所求一也” is to read 使 as a character expressing a counterfactual ‘supposing’ or ‘if’ (for example, Chan translates this phrase as: “If a white horse were a horse, then what is asked in both cases would be the same”; see Chan 1963: 236). In contrast, in the whole context of B (3), my translation and interpretation read 使 as ‘make’ or ‘bring about’. This meaning of 使 is not odd in ancient Chinese; for example, in the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經, no. 86, ‘Jiàotóng’ 狡童 [*Shijing*, 39/5]), we find the sentence “維子之故, 使我不能餐兮” (“Yes, it is all your fault, but it makes me unable to eat?”; see Karlgren 1950: 57); in Dù Fǔ’s 杜甫 poem “Shǔ xiāng” 蜀相 (Shu’s Minister [Dù 2013: 1931]), we find the well-known lines “出師未捷身先死, 長使英雄淚滿襟” (“Ere the army sent forth was victorious, the man himself died, it always makes bold-spirited men fill their clothes with tears”; trans. Owen 2015: 299). Note that a reasonable interpretation of Gōngsūn Lóng’s statement “the white horse is [identical to] the horse” or “the white horse would not differ from the horse” does not depend solely on the translation or interpretation of the preceding statement in the Chinese original: in the whole context of B (3), especially in view of the statement immediately following, “所求一者, 白馬不異馬也”, Gōngsūn Lóng clearly and explicitly indicates that, if what is sought is the common (aspect), the white horse would not differ from (*bù yì*) the horse (regarding the common aspect).

thus fulfilled by neither the yellow horse nor the black horse. It is here that Gōngsūn Lóng makes the crucial general claim underlying all of his specific arguments in ‘Báimǎ lùn’: while the subject expression “the white horse” designates (any member of) the collection of white horses as a whole, what is sought (in the focus on some specific aspect of the white horse as a whole) makes a significant difference; it is the distinct aspect or specific attribute of being white (something that is not shared by all horses) that is focused on when the white horse is designated. Such sentential contexts thus involve some sort of double reference. This provides the fundamental rationale behind all Gōngsūn Lóng’s various arguments for the “white horse not horse” thesis, each of which focuses on a certain distinct aspect of the relation between the white horse and the horse (or a certain semantic aspect of the relationship of these respective ‘names’): for example, the relation between the distinctive conceptual contents of their referring names, their distinctive necessary identity contributors (i.e. the necessary identity contributor ‘having white color attribute’ of the white horse and the necessary identity contributor ‘having the horseness attribute’ of the horse), and the distinctive extensions of their referring names. It is important to note that this referential structure of the subject expression in a sentential context is neither odd nor simply coined for the sake of an intellectual game, because as I will specify at the beginning of the next section, semantically speaking, every subject–predicate sentence has such a double-reference structure.

Gōngsūn Lóng addresses precisely this double reference – that is, the semantic–syntactic deep structure of the referential function of the subject expression in a sentential context (in terms of his key term of what is sought here). He does so in order to call our attention to distinct aspects of things which are often ignored when these are categorized into the kinds to which they are supposed to belong. Gōngsūn Lóng thus generally alerts us to the danger of over-assimilating distinctions, especially when the distinctive aspects need to be emphatically focused on; more specifically regarding problem of reference, he cautions us to invest more care in distinguishing different but related referential functions of the referring terms and calls for sensitivity to which specific aspect of an object is pointed to in focus while the object as a whole is referred to in reasoning (both deductive and non-deductive reasoning).

Now let us take a closer look at the three arguments and how they illustrate the rationale spelled out in Gōngsūn Lóng’s meta-discourse in B (3). I would like to note that, in the following elaborations of Gōngsūn Lóng’s major arguments, certain conceptual and explanatory resources are resorted to for the sake of interpretation and understanding. For example, the terms ‘denote’ and ‘signify’ are used in their respective technical senses: ‘denote’ (roughly in a Russellian sense) means a name referring to things that fulfill what the name’s

associated descriptive sense specifies; ‘signify’ (*mìng*) here means a linguistic expression referring to a certain attribute via that attribute’s associated conceptual content. Clearly, neither Gōngsūn Lóng nor the eponymous text employ these terms in their modern technical senses. However, because the purpose of this chapter is not purely historical and descriptive, but rather interpretive and critical, it is not only legitimate but in fact necessary for our reflection on the text to resort to relevant conceptual and explanatory resources that can enhance our understanding of Gōngsūn Lóng’s text, help us make explicit its due implications, and facilitate us to capture their significance for our current philosophical inquiry. In this, I am in no way claiming that the relevant theoretical resources of contemporary philosophy were available to Gōngsūn Lóng around two thousand years ago.

1.1.1 The “Distinct Conceptual Content” Argument in B (2)

- [1] [Premise 1] The word ‘horse[-like shape]’ signifies (*mìng*) a certain shape [of the horse via the conceptual content of the word];
- [2] [Premise 2] The word ‘white [color]’ signifies (*mìng*) a certain color [of the white horse via the conceptual content of the word];
- [3] So, the term ‘white horse’ signifies the white color and the horse-like shape [via the conceptual content of the word];
- [4] So, that which signifies color (*mìng sè zhě*) [via its conceptual content] [thus that which signifies both color and shape, i.e. ‘white horse’] is not identical to that which signifies shape (*mìng xíng zhě*)¹⁰ [via its conceptual content] [in the sense that the former and the latter have distinct conceptual contents];
- [5] So, what the term ‘white horse’ denotes [via its conceptual content] [i.e. the collection of all the horses that possess both white color and horse-like shape, signified by ‘white horse’] is not identical to what the word ‘horse’ denotes [via its conceptual content] [i.e. the collection of all horses that possess a certain horse-like shape which is signified by ‘horse-like’] [regarding a

¹⁰ Note that, in this text, Gōngsūn Lóng did not make an *explicit* inference from “命色者非命形也” (that which signifies color is not identical to that which signifies shape) to “命色—形者非命形也” (that which signifies *both* color *and* shape is not identical to that which signifies shape); however, as far as *the conceptual content* is concerned, if the conceptual content of “that which signifies color” is not identical to that of “that which signifies shape”, it is clear and self-evident that the conceptual content of “that which signifies color *and* shape” is not identical to that of “that which signifies shape.”

distinct ‘color’ attribute which is associated only with the conceptual content of ‘white horse’]; that is, the white horse is not (identical to or differs from) the horse.

1.1.2 The “Distinct Extension” Argument in B (7)

- [1] [Premise 1] If what the term ‘white horse’ denotes and what the word ‘horse’ denotes are identical, then they have the same extension;
- [2] [Premise 2] The term ‘white horse’ and the word ‘horse’ do not have the same extension because they have different [conceptual] contents (the former with the choice of a certain color, the latter not): the yellow horse and the black horse [as two sub-collections] are included in the extension of ‘horse’, but not in the extension of ‘white horse’;
- [3] So, what the term ‘white horse’ denotes is not identical to (or differs from) what the word ‘horse’ denotes in regard to their distinct extension; that is, the white horse is not the horse.

1.1.3 The “Distinct Necessary Identity Contributor” Argument in B (4)

- [1] [Premise 1] [The necessary identity contributors of] a white horse include white color [as its necessary identity contributor];
- [2] [Premise 2] A horse does not have white color [as its necessary identity contributor];
- [3] So, being the white horse and being the horse are not essentially related to each other [that is, a white horse and a horse do not have the same necessary identity contributor];
- [4] [Premise 3] If two things are the same, then they must have the same necessary identity contributor [that is, if they do not have the same necessary identity contributor, then they are not the same];
- [5] So, the white horse is not identical to (or differs from) the horse [regarding the distinct attribute of possessing white color, which is “necessarily” possessed by any white horse but not “necessarily” possessed by all horses]; that is, the white horse is not the horse.¹¹

¹¹ Surely Gongsūn Lóng himself did not use such quasi-theoretic terms as ‘necessarily’; this is an interpretative formulation of his argument in quasi-theoretic terms to capture the implied point of his argument.

Gōngsūn Lóng's arguments (explicitly formulated here in quasi-theoretical terms) address the double-reference character of a referring name in a sentential context and deserve further interpretation: How is it possible for the same referent of a referring name such as 'white horse' to allow for distinct identity contributors that are sought or focused on in distinct sentential contexts? They might be necessary for one contextual identity of the referent (say, being white is necessary for the identity of the white horse when one claims that the white horse differs from the horse) but unnecessary for another contextual identity (say, being white is not necessary for the identity of the white horse when one claims that the white horse is the horse). This issue pertains to the relation between language and the world, and hence can be related to the issue of reference in the philosophy of language. Insofar as it intrinsically involves the structure and constitution of the referent of the referring name as a thing in the world, it is also metaphysically relevant. Insofar as it involves the question of which identity contributors are available to the speaker (or, strictly speaking in this context, the inter-subjective nominal speaker) as an epistemic agent¹² in a sentential context of using referring names, it is also an epistemological issue.

1.2 A Double-Reference Account

In this subsection, I first present the main points of a general double-reference account. This shows how it is possible for a referring name to refer to the same referent in distinct contexts while a variation in focus still distinguishes between different aspects, dimensions, or layers of the referent. Second, I interpret Gōngsūn Lóng's argument based on the suggested double-reference account.¹³

¹² The phrase 'the inter-subjective nominal speaker' is used here to highlight that the identity contributor can be provided inter-subjectively. Thus we can focus on the *semantic* dimension without discussing the presupposed "pragmatic" contributing elements. As a consequence, the phrase "the speaker" here can be replaced by "the inter-subjective nominal speaker" to suggest that we can focus on the *semantic* dimension of language use once relevant "pragmatic" elements have been presupposed.

¹³ An early version of a brief, general double-reference account was presented in section 2.2 of Mou 2007: 503–509, where "the specific-part referent" is incorrectly labeled "the pragmatic referent"; the double-reference character of the basic employment of language is a *semantic* account. It pertains to the *semantic* question of how reference is possible in the basic employment of language. The distinction between "specific-part reference" and "semantic-whole reference" is semantic in nature.

1.2.1 The Main Points of the Account and Their Explanations

Let me first address the double-reference phenomenon of people's basic employment of language. In our pre-theoretical understanding of the structure of the world around us, we may consider many different things – a particular human being, a horse, a tree, a chair, a cup of water, and so on – as objects associated with many (current and previous) non-relational or relational attributes or states, whether or not we really know those attributes that are or were actually associated with or possessed by these objects. Such an object is not “thin”, resembling neither a mere name-bearer without any indispensably associated attribute(s) nor a (group of) mere attribute(s) without its (or their) bearer. Rather, it is quite “thick”: say, it is a real-life person in space and time, with her rich past history, with her particular attributes (parts) and her inter-part “organizational” attributes (so that her identity cannot be reduced to a mere sum of these parts), with her multiple status, and in her manifold states.¹⁴ Such real-life objects have generated many situations and events (perhaps jointly with some other objects) in the world around us. These individual objects, with their manifold constituents and attributes, might as well be called “thick objects”.¹⁵ This pre-theoretical understanding of the basic structure of objects in the world around us is reflected and revealed in our ordinary linguistic practice. As briefly mentioned in the previous section, one basic employment of language in communication is this: when, in a linguistic activity (such as communication or doing math via language), a speaker refers to an object (a physical object in space and time, a number in math, or even a fictional figure in a story) via a referring name, generally speaking s/he typically intends to (specifically point to and) say something about the (same) object as a referent, or, in a more semantically oriented way (treating pragmatic elements such as “a speaker's intention” as the presupposed background elements), some (specific) thing is (specifically pointed to and) said of (about) a referent. I refer to this as people's pre-theoretic (or, if minimal reflection is involved, quasi-pre-theoretic) “double-reference” understanding of the “double-reference” (or “double-aboutness”) phenomenon of the basic employment of language.

¹⁴ In what follows, I use the term ‘attributes’ in a broad sense, to cover both attributes and status/states.

¹⁵ It seems that D. M. Armstrong is the first to use the phrase “thick object” as a quasi-theoretic term for labeling such a particular object with particular properties in his *theoretic* account (Armstrong 1997: 123–126). It is also worth noting that C. B. Martin's notion of particulars with attached tropes (particular properties) can be viewed as a theoretic elaboration of our pre-theoretical understanding of the identity of real-life thick objects (cf. Martin 1980).

It is in view of the foregoing double-reference phenomenon in people's basic employment of language that I present the main points of my general double-reference account. This explains how it is possible for a referring name to refer to the same referent in distinct linguistic contexts while allowing for a varying focus on its different aspects, dimensions, or layers.

First, the term 'reference' here means semantic 'aboutness' – that is, the relationship between language expressions as referring names and objects as referents.¹⁶ The semantic 'aboutness' relationship as a whole consists of both referring process which relates a referring name to what is talked about and (typically or in most cases) its result as the referent of the referring name. With this understanding, an elaboration of the above-mentioned double-reference character of the basic employment of language (to the effect that something is said of an object),¹⁷ which is essentially related to the "double-aboutness" characteristic of human consciousness (as mentioned above), can be made on two levels. At the level of the process of referring, which has both semantic and pragmatic dimensions, the addressing-the-whole reference and the addressing-a-specific-focus reference of a referring name in a sentential context simultaneously and jointly play their related roles in referring and predicating. At the level of the result of referring that is semantically characterized, the semantic-whole referent of a referring name and its specific-part referent (possessed by or grounded in the semantic-whole

16 As I have already stressed above, the term 'reference' or 'referring', just like 'talk about' or 'talking about', is here used as a less metaphysically loaded, neutral term expressing the 'aboutness' semantic relation between a word (or a collection of words) and some object(s), whether or not it "actually exists" (in contrast to being restricted to that holds only between a word and some thing that actually exists), and no matter how the ontological status of the object is explained. I have noted that some authors use the term in a narrow sense in which 'reference'/'referring' is restricted to the relation between language expressions and objects that actually exist (cf. Crane 2013: 9–10). This is not a mere verbal disagreement, but a substantial one. In my view, this artificial restriction first substantially conflates the issue of reference as a central semantic issue in philosophy of language and the ontological issue concerning what really exists in metaphysics; second, it unnecessarily and inadequately restricts the wide coverage of the semantic notion of referring or being about in philosophy of language, and thus fails to capture the explanatory power of the "double-reference" feature of the basic employment of language. In sum, the issue of reference in philosophy of language is distinct from an ontological issue in metaphysics; an adequate analysis of the semantic or referential relation between names and referents in philosophy of language is expected to be compatible with various metaphysical accounts regarding what counts as "real" existence concerning the ontological status of what is referred to.

17 The "double-reference" character of the basic employment of language is essentially related to the "double-aboutness" character of people's consciousness. For a detailed examination of the "double-aboutness" character of people's consciousness, see Mou 2017.

referent) in a sentential context simultaneously and jointly play their related roles in referring and predicating, providing their indispensable and distinct contributions to our linking to and understanding of things in the world through language. It is important to note that the distinction between the semantic-whole referent and the specific-part referent of a referring name in a (declarative) sentential context is a semantic distinction. It examines the issue of how reference is possible from a semantic perspective – in the sense specified above – by addressing the semantic dimension of the basic employment of language (that is, something is said about an object). At the level of the referring process, both of them, the reference addressing the whole and the reference addressing a specific focus, are linguistically associated with their respective “nominal” or “linguistic” referent as mere objects of thought; in this process, each of the two types of reference (the semantic-whole reference and the specific-part reference) minimally involves the referent as a mere object of thought (or its nominal or linguistic referent). Moreover, it can reach the alleged substantial referent (or “substantial” referent) when this alleged referent is really present in the alleged way; we might equally refer to this “substantial” referent as the “grounded”¹⁸ referent – as it is grounded, in the alleged manner, in its real presence in the addressed reality, a social reality, or an abstract reality based on theoretical construction.¹⁹ The nominal or linguistic referent we might call “non-grounded”. Note that the real presence or “groundedness” of the semantic-whole referent of a referring name at the semantic level does not imply the real presence of this name’s alleged specific-part referent of the referring name as given in a sentential context.

Given that a referring name in its addressing-whole reference process designates its semantic-whole referent, and that moreover, the alleged specific-aspect referent of the reference addressing a specific focus is indeed possessed by, and thus grounded in, that semantic-whole referent, the two levels of double reference discussed above would be in accordance and parallel with each other, like two sides of one coin. This is the ideal case in which truth can be achieved, in the sense that what is said of the semantic-whole referent really captures the

18 Part of such “grounding” content is this: that the existence of the specific-part referent is grounded in the existence of the semantic-whole referent. Given that a semantic-whole referent exists in some sense, its specific part is really possessed by, or really symptomizes, the semantic-whole reference, whether the specific part exists in the same sense in which the semantic-whole referent exists or in some other sense. For example, one person really has some abstract idea (say, the idea of numbers) in his or her mind; the existence of this idea is thus grounded in the existence of this person, although the person substantially exists, while this idea in her mind exists only on an abstract level.

19 “Real” presence is relative to the addressed reality.

way the semantic-whole referent is. However, whenever the alleged specific-part referent of the addressing-a-specific-focus reference (referring process) is not really possessed by (and thus not grounded in) the semantic-whole referent, the two levels of double reference are not in accordance. In the following, in view of the major purpose of this subsection, I shall focus primarily on the ideal case in which the two levels of double reference are parallel (i.e., the default case of “referent-associated reference”) and on the *semantic* distinction between the semantic-whole referent and the specific-part referent of a referring name in a (declarative) sentence, although the double reference at the level of the referring process is also addressed whenever necessary.

As emphasized above, this distinction is a semantic one, as it is part of an examination of the semantic dimension of the question of how reference is possible in the basic employment of language. Unless indicated otherwise, in the following I focus on the default case of “referent-associated reference” – that is, on the distinction between the semantic-whole referent and the specific-part referent of a referring name in a declarative sentential context.

Second, the semantic-whole referent of a referring name is either an individual thick object as a whole (in the case of a proper name and a definite description denoting a unique object²⁰), which unifies a collection of synchronous and diachronic parts, or a collection of individual thick objects (in the case of a common noun in a broad sense). Through a communication link embedded in linguistic practice,²¹ a speaker (or an inter-subjective nominal speaker) in a sentential context designates on a semantic level, via a singular referring name in the subject term, the semantic-whole referent, whether or not s/he recognizes – or is able to recognize – all of its characteristics. In this sense, all current and past synchronous (and diachronic) parts of the semantic-whole referent are necessary (we speak of “semantic-whole necessity” for short).²² Each part thus makes a necessary or

20 Such definite descriptions include both definite descriptions in the usual sense, such as “the President of the United States”, and common nouns with demonstrative adjectives in front of them, such as “this horse” and “that human being”.

21 The “pragmatic” notion of the communication link is simply presupposed here, though this does not amount to committing myself to a Kripke-Putnam version of rigid designation: what is designated or identified via a causal-historical link is not what is “essential” (i.e. what remains the same in all relevant possible worlds), but rather a thick object as a whole which possesses its various attributes, which are or were possessed in this actual world (via the notion of rigid designation concerning this actual world, as explained in Jackson 1998). For further details, see also the last section of part 2 below.

22 The notion of *semantic-whole* necessity, as specified here, is neither that of *metaphysical* necessity nor that of *de re* necessity – the latter two are distinguished in Kit Fine (1994). One might consider semantic-whole necessity trivial, as it simply includes *all* constituent parts or attributes

indispensable contribution to the “semantic-whole identity” of the semantic-whole referent of a referring name – that is, it is a necessary contributor to the identity of the semantic-whole referent (as a thick object) of that name. The reason is this: due to its very nature, every part of the thick object provides its indispensable contribution to the identity of the thick object as a semantic-whole referent. However, note that it is not the case that each part of the thick object is metaphysically necessary (some might be merely metaphysically accidental rather than essential).

Third, due to the “thick-object” metaphysical nature and the non-epistemic character of the individual semantic-whole referent of a (singular) referring name, this name might alternatively be called a ‘sentential’ name, because it can be viewed as an abbreviation of a number of relevant sentences, each of which reveals one synchronous part of the semantic-whole referent. For example, when “this white horse” as a singular referring name (or “the white horse” as a non-singular referring name, a collective name) is used to refer to one individual thick object (or a collection of individual thick objects) as its semantic-whole referent, the name is linguistically or – more accurately – semantically implicitly associated with a number of relevant sentences, each of which asserts one synchronous part of the thick object, such as this specific horse’s being white (or a collection of such synchronous parts of all individual white horses as individual thick objects). On the one hand, the list of relevant sentences includes, “this (the) white horse has its ‘horse’ attribute, its shared ‘common’ aspect with all other horses”, and hence, “this (the) white horse is identical to (or is not different from) other horses with regard to this common aspect”. On the other hand, it also includes sentences such as, “this (the) white horse is white”, and hence, “this (the) white horse is different from other horses of different color with regard to color”.

possessed by a thick object, and thus wonder why such a notion should be philosophically relevant and in need. The subsequent account of the semantic-whole necessity possessed by each of the parts and attributes of the semantic-whole referent in view of its distinction and connection with the specific-part referent suggests that the notion of semantic-whole necessity is not trivial but philosophically relevant in four respects. First, especially from the holistic vantage point shared by most classical Chinese philosophers, a past event that has resulted in a certain attribute of a thick object, even if it is “accidental” from the point of view of metaphysical necessity, can bring about significant consequences for the object. Second, whether or not a certain (accidental) attribute of the object can significantly contribute to its identity, it is one *indispensable* contribution to the *whole* identity of the object; understanding it is therefore indispensable from a holistic understanding of the object. Third, each of the parts or attributes of the object is an indispensable *truth maker* for the predication content of a certain (actual or potential) specific-part referent, if the latter is claimed to be an attribute of the object. Fourth, a seemingly trivial part of an object might be substantial or significant from another perspective.

Fourth, given a referring name (say, “this white horse”), a part of its semantic-whole referent (this particular white horse as a whole object) might be epistemologically available or epistemologically unavailable (or in pragmatic terms, currently – or even eternally – unavailable for particular or even all speakers). However, this cannot prevent the speaker from successfully designating the semantic-whole referent and thus reaching it via a communicational link which objectively exists, and which is thus independent of her knowledge of the characteristics of the semantic-whole referent as well as the entire communicational link. An epistemologically available part of the semantic-whole referent of a referring name in a linguistic community is either analytically knowable (for example, when it is based on the linguistic sense of one part of the referring name, such as ‘white’ in the referring name “this white horse”) or is non-analytically knowable via some other epistemic means (for example, our knowledge of the specific attribute of this horse – its ability to run faster than other horses – could be based on our empirical observation of this white horse’s performance in a horse race).

Fifth, in a (declarative) sentential context, a specific-part referent of a referring name is a part which a speaker (or an inter-subjective nominal speaker) is to identify (correctly or incorrectly) as one part of what the referring name rigidly designates (the semantic-whole referent) and on which, in that particular sentential context, she purposefully and emphatically focuses. In other words, in an “outside-in” way, the referring name rigidly designates the semantic-whole referent, while in an “inside-out” way, it contextually denotes the specific-part referent, the identity of which is thus sensitive to a focus or perspective established in some specific sentential context (typically, it is revealed linguistically through a complete subject-predicate sentence about the semantic-whole referent – be it true or false).

Sixth, the identities of particular specific-part referents of a referring name in distinct sentential contexts may differ, although it is one and the same referring name which occurs throughout all of these varying contexts, yet with a different focus or from a different perspective. (This semantic presentation can point, on a pragmatic level, either to a case in which the same speaker in various contexts makes different statements from a shifting focus or perspective, or to a case in which different speakers in some specific context utter different statements from distinct perspectives or foci). Thus the identity of the specific-part referent of a referring name can change, depending on the particular distinctive focus or perspective on a particular sentential context.

Seventh, a part identified, in some declarative sentential context, as belonging to the semantic-whole referent when it is focused on in this particular context may not really be a part of the semantic-whole referent. It might be

semantic-whole relevant or semantic-whole irrelevant in the following sense: if a specific-part referent is identified in a particular sentential context as a part of the semantic-whole referent, and if it in fact constitutes an indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor to the identity of the semantic-whole referent, it is semantic-whole relevant, or “grounded” in the semantic-whole referent. In plain English, it is truly attributed. Otherwise, if a specific-part referent that is identified in some sentential context as part of the semantic-whole referent while, in fact, it does not constitute an indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor to the identity of the semantic-whole referent, this part is semantic-whole irrelevant, or not grounded in the semantic-whole referent. Or, in plain English, it is falsely attributed.

Eighth, the specific-part referent of a referring name is epistemologically available to the speaker who uses the name to refer to the specific-part referent from her perspective. Alternatively, put in non-pragmatic semantic terms, the specific-part referent in some particular sentential context is explicitly given (by an inter-subjective nominal speaker) either through the subject term or through the predicate term. However, we must keep in mind that (1) such an available, specific-part referent may not be a genuine part of the semantic-whole referent, and (2) only those parts of the semantic-whole referent which are epistemologically available are candidates for specific-part referents that are semantic-whole relevant. As mentioned above, the identity of the specific-part referent of a referring name can vary in different sentential contexts (or, in pragmatic terms, in differently situated contexts); the set of sentential contexts is open. Consequently, there is no general list of epistemologically available, specific-part referents of a referring name.

Ninth, an indispensable (thus “necessary” in this sense) semantic-whole-identity contributor to the identity of a semantic-whole referent of a referring name is any substantial constituent part of the thick object as the semantic-whole referent of the name. In contrast, a specific-part referent of the referring name is either semantic-whole relevant or semantic-whole irrelevant: if it is indeed a constituent part of the thick object as the semantic-whole referent of the name, it is semantic-whole relevant; otherwise, it is semantic-whole irrelevant. In a sense, all specific-part referents provided in particular sentential contexts constitute indispensable specific-part-identity contributors to the collection of available specific-part referents. However, an indispensable specific-part-identity contributor that is semantic-whole relevant must also be an indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor. In contrast, any indispensable specific-part-identity contributor that is semantic-whole irrelevant is not an indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor. On the other hand, an indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor in some particular sentential context is not necessarily an indispensable semantic-part-identity contributor: when an

indispensable semantic-whole-identity contributor is irrelevant to every *perspective* given in any currently available sentential context, it is not a member of the collection of available specific-part referents; otherwise, it is simultaneously an indispensable semantic-part-identity contributor.

Tenth, the semantic-whole referent and the specific-part referent of a referring name jointly (generally speaking) and simultaneously (specifically speaking, in any particular token of the basic-employment-of-language type) play their respective roles in referring and make their indispensable contributions to our connection with and understanding of things in the world. Through this double reference, language links to the world. The expression “double reference” highlights precisely this joint role and intrinsic connection of the two aspects of the referring process and emphasizes their role in establishing the semantic connection. Both metaphysically and epistemologically, the semantic-whole referent and the specific-part referent of a referring name are neither two absolutely separate things nor mutually exclusive, either-or alternatives.

Eleventh, last but not least, the specific-part reference *per se* brings about and constitutes the primary predication in a sentential context; in other words, the predication in the sentential context starts with specific-part reference. This last point is in need of further elaboration, which I will not explore here but discuss in another writing with consideration of the major purpose of this essay.

Someone familiar with the literature of contemporary philosophy of language might notice that there are a number of apparently similar distinctions: among others, there are Keith Donnellan's distinction between the attributive use and the referential use of definite descriptions,²³ and Saul Kripke's distinction between speaker's reference and the semantic reference of referring names,²⁴ which essentially follows the line of H.P. Grice's distinction between what the speaker's words mean on a given occasion and what s/he means in saying those words on that occasion.²⁵ In what respect do these conceptual differentiations differ substantially from our own double-reference distinction? There are three major differences.

First, perhaps the most prominent and substantial difference is this: though conceptually and functionally distinct, semantic-whole and specific-part references are simultaneously made in the basic employment of language (which, as indicated above, is thus characterized by double reference). In contrast, both Donnellan's and Kripke's distinctions, as I see them, are conceived as either-or

²³ Donnellan 1966.

²⁴ Kripke 1977.

²⁵ Grice 1957.

alternatives. According to Donnellan's distinction, one makes either an attributive or a referential use of some definite description (although sometimes the application of a definite description may be "successful" in its referential use and, at the same time, "incorrect" in its attributive use). Kripke distinguishes between the "simple" case (the speaker's specific intention [giving the speaker's referent] coincides with his general intention [giving the semantic referent]) and the "complex" case (the speaker's specific intention is distinct from his general intention). According to Kripke, "Donnellan's 'attributive' use is nothing but the 'simple' case, specialized to definite descriptions, and [. . .] the 'referential' use is, similarly, the 'complex' case."²⁶ However, generally speaking, Kripke does not assume that the speaker's specific intention both coincides with and differs from the general intention.

Second, in addition to the double-reference character of our own distinction, there are substantial differences with regard to some of the instances of specific reference, where these resemble specific-part reference distinctions. Consider that Kripke's notion (as Kripke considers Donnellan's distinction to be a special case of Kripke's own) of "semantic" reference (determined by the speaker's general intention) corresponds to neither semantic-whole reference nor specific-part reference. Though the latter may appear to be similar to Kripke's notion of speaker's reference (provided by the speaker's specific intention), it is actually fundamentally different: a specific-part reference of a referring name could be a "semantic" reference in Kripke's sense, rather than a speaker's reference (when the specific focus is what is provided by the speaker's general intention).

Last but not least, the double-reference distinction explained here is primarily 'semantic' (in the sense explained above) while, in my opinion, Donnellan's and Kripke's distinctions are primarily "pragmatic", in terms of the addressed two uses in the former case and of the speaker's general and specific intentions in the latter.²⁷

1.2.2 Further Interpretation of Gōngsūn Lóng's Argumentation

In the following, I present a further interpretation of Gōngsūn Lóng's argument in terms of the double-reference account, as explained in the previous subsection. In so doing, I also test the explanatory force of the double-reference

²⁶ Kripke 1977: 161.

²⁷ Due to space constraints and the major focus of this chapter, and with consideration of the fact that readers can rely on the pre-theoretical understanding of the "double-reference" phenomenon, I will not elaborate the theoretical account further (e.g. by responding to possible objections).

account. On this occasion, some of the crucial points of the double-reference account can be illustrated quite well.

In my view, Gōngsūn Lóng's basic claims about reference, as highlighted in his arguments for the "White-Horse-Not-Horse" thesis, are not merely compatible with, but actually illustrate and deliver some basic points of the foregoing double-reference account. As indicated in the previous examination, in the crucial passage B (3), Gōngsūn Lóng gives his meta-discourse explanation of in what sense (or from which perspective) one is entitled to claim that the white horse is not identical to (*fēi*) or differs from (*yì*) the horse *and* in what sense (or from which perspective) one is equally entitled, or is in fact forced, to claim that the white horse is the horse (*bái mǎ nǎi mǎ*) or that the white horse does not differ from (*bù yì*) the horse. I think Gōngsūn Lóng's text delivers some of the crucial points elaborated on a theoretical level in the double-reference account, as illustrated above. The reason is as follows.

It is clear that, in both cases, the semantic-whole referents of the term 'the white horse' are the same (namely, the collection of individual white horses as thick objects); that is, the two sentential contexts, "the white horse is the horse" and "the white horse is not the horse", say different things about the same semantic-whole referent that is semantically referred to by the referring phrase "the white horse". But the referring name in the two sentential contexts has its distinct specific-part referents: one with a focus on the common aspect that the white horse and the horse share, and the other with a focus on the distinct aspect, the specific white-color part, which is possessed by all whites horses but not by all horses.

In other words, in the former case, Gōngsūn Lóng emphasizes that what makes a white horse a horse lies in what is the same in both of them – that is, the common aspect that is sought (*suǒ qiú yī yě*); if this common aspect of the white horse and the horse is focused on (i.e. if what is sought is the common aspect), then the white horse does not differ from (*bù yì*) the horse. In contrast, in the latter case, Gōngsūn Lóng stresses that what is sought in the second case is different from what is sought when one claims that the white horse does not differ from the horse: what is sought or focused on in this case is some distinct aspect (being white), which is possessed by all whites horses but not by all horses, by neither the yellow horse nor the black horse.

I shall now highlight Gōngsūn Lóng's crucial point in B (3) through a double-reference semantic paraphrase of each of the two statements, "the white horse is (identical to) the horse" and "the white horse is not (identical to) the horse"; in so doing, I also explain how, under the charitable assumption that Gōngsūn Lóng himself does not render them self-contradictory, he can still maintain that both are true (in the "semantic" sense of "true", the sense of capturing the way things

‘true’, as conceived in people’s “way-things-are-capturing” understanding of truth), so that there is no paradox at all.

B (3.1) The white horse (= the collection of white horses) is (identical to) the horse (= the collection of horses or the horse collection) [regarding some attribute that they share].

In a double-reference semantic paraphrase, ‘the white horse’ in this sentential context refers to the collection of white horses as a whole, while at the same time, it points to the specific attribute of “horseness” (it talks about both the common or shared attribute “horseness” and the entire collection of white horses). The sentential predicate “comments” on the collection of white horses as the semantic-whole referent in view of this specific-part referent.

The truth of B (3.1) consists in capturing the following specific way the white horse is: namely its being identical to the horse regarding the shared specific attribute of “horseness”. In this sentential context, the referring name “the white horse” refers to the collection of white horses as a whole. At the same time, it specifically refers to the white horse’s horseness aspect. The full referential identity of the white horse includes “being identical to the horse regarding this shared attribute of horseness” which in B (3.1) is explicitly addressed and referred to (as the referentially relevant portion of its horseness aspect). If the referring name ‘the white horse’ fails to refer to the white horse as a whole and/or that alleged specific part, then B (3.1) fails to be true.

B (3.2) The white horse (= the collection of white horses) is not (identical to) the horse (= the collection of horses or the horse collection) [regarding some distinct attribute which is possessed by any white horse, but not by all horses].

What follows here is a double-reference semantic paraphrase: in this sentential context, “the white horse” refers to the collection of white horses as a whole, while at the same time pointing to the specific part – namely, the distinct attribute of possessing white color – shared by any white horse, yet not by every member of the horse collection. The sentential predicate thus further comments on the collection of white horses as a whole in view of this specific part (the distinct attribute of possessing white color).

The truth of B (3.2) consists in capturing one specific way of the white horse: namely, its “being not identical to the horse regarding some distinct specific attribute”; in the sentential context of B (3.2), the referring name “the

white horse” refers to both the collection of white horses as a whole and, specifically, the white horse’s distinct, specific attribute of possessing white color. Yet the full referential identity of the white horse as a whole includes “being not identical to the horse regarding this distinct attribute”, which is explicitly addressed and referred to (as the referentially relevant portion of its “white color” aspect) in the sentential context of B (3.2). If the referring name “the white horse” fails to refer to the white horse as a whole and/or that alleged specific part, then B (3.2) fails to be true.

In so saying, we do not use the same name to refer to two different collections of things, but to one and the same collection, namely that of white horses. Thus we can simply say that the white horse is identical to the horse regarding some shared attribute, and is not identical to the horse regarding some distinct attribute that is possessed by the white horse but not by all horses.

In this way, in B (3) Gōngsūn Lóng makes the crucial point underlying all of his specific arguments: what is sought or focused on concerning the referent of a name (say, ‘white horse’) makes a difference. Indeed, this crucial point provides the fundamental rationale behind, and a key for our understanding of, Gōngsūn Lóng’s major specific arguments for his “White-Horse-Not-Horse” thesis – that is, his “distinct conceptual content” argument in B (2), his “distinct necessary identity contributor” argument in B (4), and his “distinct extension” argument in B (7). These three major specific arguments focus on the following distinct aspects or layers of the white horse and the horse, respectively: the distinct conceptual contents of their names, their distinct necessary identity contributors, and the distinct extensions of their names. In the three different sentential contexts, these constitute three distinct specific-part referent identities, but they all share the same orientation and are supported by the same fundamental rationale: what is sought from a certain perspective in focus is some distinct aspect separating the white horse and the horse.

This point is in the same spirit as one central point that Gōngsūn Lóng makes in his essay ‘Zhīwù lùn’ 指物論 (On Referring to Things): those relevant contributing elements involved in the referring subject’s act of referring via a referring name (such as her purpose or her perspective focus), which can be explicitly or inter-subjectively presented in sentential contexts, make their intrinsic contributions to the identities of things that are referred to.²⁸ Gōngsūn Lóng’s point in this connection makes a substantial contribution to the contemporary debate on the issue of reference and enhances our understanding and treatment

²⁸ Although it is known that the text of ‘Zhīwù lùn’ is too corrupt to be interpreted with absolute certainty, the central point mentioned, in my opinion, seems to be quite explicitly delivered.

of the issue of the relation between language, thought, and the world, as I will explain in the next section.

2 Engaging with Lockean-Fregean Approaches and Millian-Kripkean Approaches

In this part, I explain how a double-reference line of Gōngsūn Lóng's argumentation for his "White-Horse-Not-Horse" thesis engages with two major approaches to the issue of how reference is possible: the Lockean-Fregean approach and the Millian-Kripkean approach. I will also discuss how this contributes to our understanding and treatment of the issue.²⁹

2.1 Engaging with the Lockean-Fregean Approach

John Locke's general conception of language is a succinct characterization of one dominant understanding of language in Western philosophy since Aristotle, and in the Western tradition, major parts of this conception are still accepted today. Locke's view can be boiled down to the following assumptions.³⁰ (L1) The nature of language is defined by its function. [People find out or create "some external sensible signs" as some (Locke 2013 [1690]: 656) kind of artifact to language, in order to accomplish a certain job with a certain purpose.] (L2) The function of

²⁹ In Mou 2014, I explain how the double-reference character of "hexagram" names in the *Yijing* allows for engaging with Fregean and Kripkean approaches to the issue of reference. However, Gōngsūn Lóng develops this view in explicit philosophical argumentation, addressing the issue of "what is [specifically] sought" from a certain perspective in focus; this is a significant advance for the sake of philosophical argumentation. Yet whether the double-reference character is implicitly shown (as in "hexagram" names) or explicitly argued for (as by Gōngsūn Lóng), these two elaborations on the fundamental double-reference feature of the basic employment of language in early Chinese philosophy have similar and significant implications and thus allow us to engage with Fregean and Kripkean approaches to the issue of reference in a similar way. For this reason, the subsequent discussion on how Gōngsūn Lóng's approach can engage with Lockean-Fregean and Milian-Kripkean approaches to the issue is partially similar to my discussion in Mou 2014.

³⁰ All quotations in this paragraph are taken from Morris 2007: 6–8. I restate them with some modifications: (L6) is added; therefore (L7), (L8), and (L9) here are (L6), (L7), and (L8) in Morris's original account; I also make short explanatory notes within parentheses by citing some relevant key phrases from Locke 2013 [1690] to these points.

language is to communicate. [Through language, “those invisible ideas. . . might be made known to others” (Locke 2013 [1690]: 657)] (L3) What language is meant to communicate is thought. [Language is to be created and used for the sake of “communication of thoughts” (*op.cit.*, 656).] (L4) The components of thought are Ideas. [One’s thoughts “are made up of” “invisible ideas” (*op.cit.* 657).] (L5) Words stand for the components – Ideas – of what language is meant to communicate. [Words “stand for nothing but [I]deas” (*ibid.*).] (L6) The Ideas for which words stand are thus meanings of the words. [“[I]deas [words] stand for are their proper and immediate significance” (*ibid.*; also 658).] (L7) One person’s Ideas cannot be perceived by another. [One’s Ideas are “invisible and hidden from others” (*op.cit.*, 656).] (L8) The relation between words and what they stand for is arbitrary. [There is no natural connection between “particular articulate sounds and certain ideas” (*op.cit.*, 657).] (L9) Words are not intrinsically meaningful. [Words only come to be meaningful by being “made use of by men” as “sensible marks of ideas” (*ibid.*).]

Although the assumptions (L1), (L2), (L8), and (L9) have generally been accepted without question in the mainstream tradition, some of the other assumptions have been challenged to a greater or lesser extent in contemporary philosophy of language. Among others, the most relevant assumptions for the current discussion are (L3) and (L4); although very few people really subscribe to (L4) anymore when the key term ‘idea’ is understood in Locke’s original way (that is, something private and unintelligible to others), (L3) is essentially still maintained by many philosophers, especially when the term ‘thought’ is understood in a Fregean way: thought is the sense expressed by a sentence and is inter-subjective rather than private. Frege revolutionarily puts forward the distinction between reference (*Bedeutung*) and sense (*Sinn*). However, as for the relation between them, Frege maintains that the reference of a referring name is determined by its sense. At this point, we know that Frege suggests the basic line of the (Fregean-Russellian) description theories of referring for (proper) names as follows. (FR1) The sense of a name *a* is given by a (set of) definite description(s) known as the *F*. (FR 2) Sense is supposed to determine reference. (FR 3) A name is an abbreviation of a (set of) definite description(s) regarding its sense and reference: *a* designates *x* by virtue of the *F* denoting *x* (our original problem of explaining reference for names is reduced to that of explaining reference for definite descriptions). (F4) Thanks to Russell’s theory of descriptions, we have an answer to the problem of descriptions: the *F* denotes *x* if and only if *F* applies to *x* and to nothing else. (The problem of explaining reference for definite descriptions is reduced to that of explaining it for general terms that fill the place of *F*. The remaining problem is merely this: By virtue of what does a general term apply to an object?) In sum, the description theory of referring for names,

together with Russell's theory of descriptions, reduces three problems of referring to one: the problem of designation for names, denotation for definite descriptions, and application for general terms are reduced to the problem of application for general terms.

A neo-Lockean-Fregean approach such as Jackson's tries to avoid talking about the half-mysterious "sense" which, according to Frege, is neither objective nor subjective, but which he claims has the status of the "third" world.³¹ Jackson goes one step further, talking about the properties we associate with words (descriptions) instead of the "sense" associated with words; for him, the term 'property' is simply a shorthand for the way we take things to be (thus a way things might be). He tries to *objectivize* Locke's *subjective* Idea and Frege's *inter-subjective Sinn* into *objective* or *quasi-objective* properties as ways things might be and intends to have Fregean description theory of reference for spoken and written language based on a Lockean picture of language, as follows:

[L]anguage [. . .] is a convention generated set of physical structures that has as a principal function making it easy to articulate, and in consequence easy to record, transmit in communication, debate the correctness of, and so on, how someone — you, me, the enemy, the ideal observer [. . .] — takes things to be. I am going to presume this Lockean picture of language. To avoid misunderstanding, though, I should note an unfortunate ambiguity in talk of language having the capacity and principal function of capturing and thereby facilitating the communication of how we take things to be. It might be read as saying, implausibly, that language is principally about states of belief, or it might be read as saying, plausibly, that language is about what states of belief are about, namely, how things are. [. . . W]e must associate various words with various ways things *might be*; or, as we will put it, we must associate words with properties. Here the term 'property' [. . .] is simply a short for a way things *might be* in the wide sense that includes relational and dispositional ways things might be.³² [. . . U]sing the pre-analytic or folk term 'about': terms like 'London', 'Pluto', 'water', and 'inert gas' are used by speakers to talk *about* whatever has the properties they associate with the term in question [. . .] or, as philosophers of language might say it, a name *T* used by *S* *refers* to whatever has the properties that *S* associated with *T*.³³

However, one crucial thing is missing in the foregoing neo-Lockean-Fregean approach: it actually allows the referential function of referring names to lose the root or foundation that is independent from what we take things to be; for what a referring name refers to is eventually still "whatever has the properties they

³¹ Frege 1918: 369.

³² Jackson 1998: 135–136.

³³ Jackson 1998: 137.

[speakers] associate with the term in question”.³⁴ In this way, given that linguistic referring names do link to their extra-linguistic referents when they are normally or adequately used, the neo-Lockean-Fregean approach cannot really explain how a referring name links to the extra-linguistic referent that is independent of how we take the referent to be and of how much we know about the referent. The reason is this: once the alleged properties a speaker associates with the referring name turn out to be mistakenly associated, whatever has the properties the speaker associates with the term would not match the genuine referent.

Now, according to Gōngsūn Lóng, the referring name “the white horse” in both “the white horse is (identical to) the horse” and “the white horse is not (identical to) the horse” designates the same collection of white horses as what is talked about (i.e. the same semantic whole) but denotes distinct specific parts, or distinct commented-upon aspects, of the same semantic whole. In so arguing, Gōngsūn Lóng suggests that the same semantic-whole referent of the same subject expression in the two distinct sentential contexts “the white horse is (identical to) the horse” and “the white horse is not (identical to) the horse” constitutes what the distinct specific-part referents are really about. To this extent, so to speak, without the semantic-whole referent as the semantic-metaphysical foundation, the specific-part referent of a referring name is simply baseless. In other words, a certain specific-part referent (distinct specific-part referents, if any) of a referring name is (are) semantically or referentially parasitic on its (their shared) semantic-whole referent. It is noted that this commented-upon specific-part referent, if it is genuinely semantically relevant, is not something that is derived from certain conceptual content when we trace it back to its “source”; rather, the commented-upon referent that is semantically relevant is genuinely possessed by the semantic-whole referent. A referring name with its double reference is thus linked to the world by designating the semantic-whole referent and signifying a certain commented-upon specific-part referent; the double reference of the referring name has thus been passed from generation to generation in a communication link. This significant dimension of the issue of reference (i.e. a referring name in distinct sentential contexts can be about or designate the same object differently, in distinct perspective foci) has been captured by the Kripkean account, albeit in a partial way, in the sense that I will explain in the next section.

34 Jackson 1998: 137.

2.2 Engaging with the Millian-Kripkean Approach

In contrast to the Lockean-Fregean approach, the Kripkean causal-historical account of referring is intended to do justice to the aforementioned communication link by which a referring name reaches its designated referent.

According to Kripke, a term that designates the very same item in all possible worlds in which that item exists is a “rigid” designator (in contrast, a description is a “flaccid” designator because it designates different things in different possible worlds); the reference of a name, or even a singular term, consists in rigid designation (designation through rigidly designating). In contrast to the Millian “direct-reference” approach,³⁵ Kripke’s definite descriptions can be rigid when they designate the same item in all possible worlds – their rigid designations would be secured by exploiting their conceptual content. Nevertheless, Mill and Kripke share essentially the same view of the nature of the reference of referring names and their semantics: the reference of a proper name consists in direct (rigid) designation (designation “directly” through rigid designating, rather than “indirectly” through describing), which can be summarized in the following way. (MK1) A proper name is only accidentally associated with a certain (non-rigid) definite description, because the same person designated by the proper name might have different attributes in different possible worlds. (MK2) A proper name is thus only accidentally associated with the sense/properties provided by the (non-rigid) definition description. (MK3) A proper name cannot designate its reference, which is supposed to be necessarily the same in all possible worlds, indirectly through the sense provided by the description. (MK4) A proper name has no sense insofar as such sense is supposed to determine its referent. (MK5) In this way, it is not merely intuitive that a proper name designates its referent directly (in [MK1] we appeal to this), but also impossible that a proper name designates its referent indirectly in the sense provided by the description. (MK6) Therefore, a proper name designates its referent directly in the strong sense, as above. That is, as far as the nature of reference of proper names and their semantics is concerned, the Millian-Kripkean answer is this: a proper name has its rigidly designated referent as its meaning. As far as how, or in virtue of what, a referring name refers to its bearer, Kripke and Putnam suggest their well-known causal-historical account of referring for proper names and natural-kind terms: a referring name rigidly designates its bearer through a causal-historical link or

35 See Mill 2013: 29–34.

(more accurately speaking) a communication link that traces back to its original “naming ceremony”.³⁶

What is at issue now is this: Given that what has a referring name hook up to the world is a communication link between the name and the world, as correctly identified by the Kripke-Putnam line of thought (‘Kripkean picture’ or ‘Kripkean line’ for short), and given that the process of rigid designation via such a communication link is successful and results in what is rigidly designated, what is the identity of this rigidly designated referent? The Kripkean picture tells us that what a referring name rigidly designates is a kind of “essential” referent (such as the “essential” Aristotle) that would cut across different possible worlds where it exists. Clearly, this picture excludes the contribution of all the alleged “accidental” attributes (other than the “essential”) to the identity of that which a referring name rigidly designates. Relating to his criticism of Kripke’s Aristotelian conception of essentialism (on the issue of what counts as the “essential”), Quine makes the following methodological point when commenting on the quantified modal logic of necessity:

The notion of knowing or believing who or what someone or something is, is utterly dependent on context. Sometimes, when we ask who someone is, we see the face and want the name; sometimes the reverse. Sometimes we want to know his role in the community. Of itself the notion is empty [. . .] The [. . .] notions of [. . .] vivid designator and rigid designator are similarly dependent on context and empty otherwise. The same is true of the whole quantified modal logic of necessity [. . .] The very notion of necessity makes sense to me only relative to context. Typically it is applied to what is assumed in an inquiry, as against what has yet to transpire.³⁷

This methodological point is, I think, shared by Gōngsūn Lóng, though he and Quine lived in different times and developed their ideas within different philosophical traditions, employing distinct conceptual resources. As shown by his double-reference approach, Gōngsūn Lóng’s “White-Horse-Not-Horse” thesis assumes that distinct sentential contexts provide distinct settings in which distinct specific parts of the designated object as a whole are specifically pointed out in different perspectives in focus. These foci give the most relevant specific identities of the object in question relative to the distinct contexts (thus necessary to the distinct purposes and foci, respectively). Along Gōngsūn Lóng’s line, there seems to be something significant missing in the Kripkean picture of referring. Indeed, at the purely semantic level, one can innocently claim that what the name ‘Aristotle’ rigidly

³⁶ Cf. Kripke 1980 and Putnam 1973, respectively.

³⁷ Quine 1977: 121.

designates is Aristotle; however, what is the identity of Aristotle as a whole? Now let us look at the “White-Horse-Not-Horse” case: What is the identity of the semantic-whole referent (the collection of white horses) of the referring name “the white horse” (a natural-kind term)? Let us view the identity of the white horse from Gōngsūn Lóng’s double-reference insight together with people’s pre-theoretic understanding of the double-reference phenomenon in the basic employment of language. For one thing, the white horse (the collection of white horses) is a semantic-whole referent. Designated, via a communication link, by the referring name “the white horse” as a collective name³⁸ in the subject term, it is the collection of white horses with all the associated attributes that are jointly and generically possessed by white horses in this actual world (such as those attributes addressed in ‘Báimǎ lùn’, like white color and a certain shape) instead of the mere “essential” part(s) (whatever it or they are), even if some of these associated attributes were unknown during Gōngsūn Lóng’s time (e.g. the white horses’ DNA structure, or the physical structure that brings about the white color – just as the H₂O structure of what the natural-kind term ‘water’ designates in this actual world was unknown).

For another thing, what is most relevant, or semantically indispensable and thus necessary in a specific instance of reference as determined by a certain sentential context (say, “the white horse is identical to the horse with regard to the shared attribute”, or “the white horse is not identical to the horse with regard to some distinct attribute [possessed by every white horse but not by every horse]”), is the double reference established in this specific sentential context, which points to both the semantic-whole referent *and* the specific-part referent (if any) that is specific to a certain perspective focus. In other words, what makes the sentence true is necessarily associated with the semantic-whole referent which really possesses that specific part instead of something else (whether or not it is an “essential” part in an Aristotelian-Kripkean sense). I note that, in the interests of a fair understanding and evaluation, Kripke does not ignore what the speaker specifically intends to refer to. Nevertheless, as briefly explained above, he captures his distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference by rendering the distinction “pragmatic” and “epistemic”, and characterizing speaker’s reference and semantic reference essentially in terms of the speaker’s (general and specific) intentions on

38 As already indicated above, in this chapter I use the English phrase “*the* horse” and “*the* white horse” in the sentence “the white horse is (not) identical to the horse” (here and below) to designate a collection of horses and a collection of white horses, respectively, in view of the fact that one standard English grammatical means to express a collection designation is via *the definite article plus the [addressed] common noun*.

particular occasions.³⁹ However, as maintained by the double-reference account, and as suggested and illustrated by Gōngsūn Lóng's "White-Horse-Not-Horse" thesis, the specific-part referent is signified linguistically in an explicit sentential context and in terms of an inter-subjective "liberal" sense of the "White-Horse-Not-Horse" thesis. In this way, the specific-part reference is established right at the semantic or non-pragmatic level,⁴⁰ as the identity of a specific-part referent in the sentential context can be delivered linguistically without involving the speaker's knowledge of or specific intentions regarding the communication link concerning that specific-part referent.

In this way, from the vantage point of Gōngsūn Lóng's line of thought, the Kripkean picture of referring misses some things significant in the foregoing two connections. In my view, these are exactly where Gōngsūn Lóng's double-reference approach, as established in the "White-Horse-Not-Horse" thesis, can make his a philosophically significant contribution to the discussion of reference. First, what is rigidly designated through a communication link is the object as a whole in this actual world, instead of any fixed part that is considered "essential". It is this object which provides the referential basis for the distinct specific identities to be focused on in distinct sentential contexts and which are the "objective" foundation for the cross-contextual understanding of its various distinct, specific part-specified identities, all of which are about the same semantic-whole object, rather than referring to different objects. Second, different sentential settings provide distinct contexts in which distinct specific parts (if any) of the designated object as a whole are specifically pointed to and focused on from different perspectives. They provide the most relevant specific identities of the object in question relative to the distinct contexts (and are thus respectively "necessary" for distinct purposes or particular focuses).

In sum, this chapter has explored how Gōngsūn Lóng's double-reference approach in his "White-Horse-Not-Horse" argumentation, as developed in 'Báimǎ lùn 白馬論 (On the White Horse), can contribute to our understanding and

39 Following Grice's line of thought, Kripke makes the distinction between what the speaker's words meant on a given occasion and what he/she meant in saying these words on that occasion; then he makes the distinction between speaker's reference and semantic reference – the distinction is taken as a special case of the foregoing distinction. See Kripke 1977: 160–161.

40 Given that the label "semantic" here means either the semantic relation between a linguistic item and an extra-linguistic item or something presented in terms of inter-subjective liberal senses of the words appearing in the sentence in question, and that "pragmatic" here means something that is sensitive to the speaker's specific intentions on the particular occasion, which are not delivered by the literal senses of the involved words and their appropriate implications.

treatment of the issue of how reference is possible. For this purpose, I have engaged two different approaches in contemporary philosophy of language, namely one heralded by Locke and Frege, and another represented by Mill and Kripke. In part 1, I first provided an interpretation of the text, explaining why its philosophical implications are not only interesting, but highly significant. In part 2, I have discussed how Gōngsūn Lóng's double-reference thought can engage with the two major approaches to the issue of reference in a philosophically significant way. In my view, his double-reference approach points out not only how the convincing aspects of both the Lockean-Fregean and the Millian-Kripkean approaches can be conjoined to play their due roles in explaining reference, but further shows how the notion of double reference complements a crucial aspect of reference that has been neglected by both of these theories.

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Philosophical Readings of the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ

Dennis Schilling

6 Place as a Category in the ‘Treatise on Name and Reality’ (Míngshí lùn 名實論)

1 To Start With: A Schema of Categories

The ‘Treatise on Name and Reality’ (Míngshí lùn 名實論, hereafter the Treatise)¹ opens with a categorical schema that aims to expose the principle of “rectifying names” (*zhèng míng* 正名) – that is, the correct usage of names. The application of these conditions for designations becomes the subject of further treatment in the subsequent passages. The schema first introduces the categories “to be a ‘thing’” (*wù* 物, here denoting to the name ‘thing’) and “to be solid” (*shí* 實), then presents the category “to be in a place” (*wèi* 位), and finally leads to the judgment “to be right” (*zhèng* 正).

[1]	天地	與	其所產	焉	物也
[2]	物	以物其所物而不過焉	實也		
[3]	實	以實其所實	不曠焉	位也	
[4a]		出其所位	焉	非位	
[4b]		位其所位		正也	

- [1] ‘Heaven’ and ‘earth’ and what is born by them inside are ‘things’.
- [2] [The name] ‘thing’ is solid as [it applies the name] ‘thing’ [to] what is [named] ‘thing’ and does not go beyond that.
- [3] A ‘solid’ (i.e. the name applied to the object) is in a place as [it] fills out what is [named to be] filled out without leaving a void inside.²
- [4a] [Names] that step out where they [should] be placed do not constitute a place.
- [4b] [Names] that are placed where they [should] be placed are right.³

¹ The ‘Treatise about Name and Reality’ (Míngshí lùn 名實論; abbreviated as MSL in the footnotes) belongs to the transmitted corpus of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 (abbreviated as *GSLZ*).

² *GSLZ* (11b–12a). Some editions suggest an emendation for the third sentence and place *ér* 而 before *bù guàng yān* 不曠焉: “實以實其所實而不曠焉位也.”

³ MSL in *GSLZ* (12a–b).

A very short, general summary of these four statements could proceed as follows: Names are related to things. Naming things makes names ‘solid’, as they become visible and recognizable for us in objects. And finally, naming places objects in positions relative to other positions, which enables us to evaluate their realization. ‘Names’ and ‘naming’ (*míng* 名) are the overall topic of the schema even though the word *míng* is not mentioned directly. Yet names appear in different forms in reality at the same time: a name can be a designation (‘thing’), an expression of meaning (‘solid’), and an assignment (‘place’). These forms are interrelated, and the schema exposes their various relations. I use the term ‘category’ to refer to these relations,⁴ since they are constitutive for making a predication (*wèi* 謂).

In a theory of reference – as described, for example, by John Stuart Mill – names contain two functions, in principle: When we use a name to designate a thing, we *denote* the thing and we *connote* it – we select and identify a particular thing among other things as the object of the name and attribute properties to it.⁵ Our description of naming in the Treatise is remarkably different from such a theory of reference. First, our description is not founded on the concept of *reference*, but rather on the concept of *equation* and, in addition, on a set of operative notions (such as ‘actuality’, ‘capacity’, ‘authority’, and ‘efficacy’). For instance, statement [1] claims that names are *intrinsically attributed* to things. In [2], we see a “metaphysical operation” at work: When we name a thing with the name ‘thing’, we *transform* the thing into the ‘solid’ (*shí* 實) or ‘object’ of the name (sc. the thing acts as the physical representation of the name). The name *appears* in the object, and the object *represents* the name. Thus, we can say that the name has actuality.

Second, naming *places* the object in a specified position. ‘Placing’ here comprises various acts of bestowing or enabling. The name *assigns* tasks to persons, or it *authorizes* persons to perform certain actions. Therefore, the place *defines* the authority of the name.

While establishing the differences between these two descriptions of naming, I do not want to say that we cannot use one description to explain the

⁴ My usage of the term ‘category’ is based on the Aristotelian usage of category as a form of predication – how we speak about objects – but it differs from it in that it does not assume these categories to display a classification or enumeration of all possible forms of how we *can* speak about objects – what properties an object possesses, at which place it is located, etc.

⁵ According to Mill (1882: 39 [035]), a connotative name “*denotes* the subjects, and implies, or involves, or indicates, or, as we shall say henceforth, *connotes*, the attributes.”

other. Instead, in the following analysis, I will use the terms 'to denote' and 'to connote' as well as 'denotative function' and 'connotative function', 'reference' and 'referential function' (borrowed from a theory of reference) for hermeneutical reasons. These terms do not represent the conceptual approach of the Treatise, but they help us explain its conceptual texture – that is, how terms like 'thing', 'solid', and 'place' are related to each other. Although in the Treatise's description names are principally considered to be *applied* to objects (not to *refer* to the objects) and to change along with their transformations (from a thing to a solid, from a solid to a place), notions of reference are inherent in terms such as 'name', 'thing', 'solid', 'place', 'this', and 'that', which are used in the Treatise.

In the view of the author(s) of the Treatise, names primarily fulfill *predicate* functions, and predications are exclusively treated in the form of a *designation*. A tentative reconstruction of the grammatical pattern of such a predication underlying the analysis of names in the Treatise could proceed as follows: "this [is named] 'this'" (cǐ cǐ 此此) and "that [is named] 'that'" (bǐ bǐ 彼彼).⁶ A particular thing at a certain place (this) is named A ('this'); a second thing at another place (that) is named B ('that'). Names ('this', 'that') fulfill the predicative function, while demonstrative pronouns (this, that) refer to the predicated object and occupy the subject position.

6 This grammatical form appears as a dependent part of speech in several complex clauses in MSL (GSLZ 12a–b): "故彼彼當乎彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼；此此當乎此，則唯乎此，其謂行此"： "Therefore, when [naming] that 'that' fits that (i.e. the designated thing or person), then it (i.e. the referent so designated) responds to 'that' (i.e. the name), and its designation will carry out 'that' (i.e. the functions involved with the designation). When [naming] this 'this' fits this, then it responds to 'this', and its designation will carry out 'this'." And: "故彼彼止于彼，此此止于此，可"： "Therefore, when [naming] that 'that' is confined to 'that' (i.e. the functions involved in the designation), and [naming] this 'this' is confined to this, it is admissible." The phrases "that is named 'this'" (bǐ cǐ 彼此) and "this is named 'that'" (cǐ bǐ 此彼) also appear here: "彼此而彼此且此，此彼而此且彼，不可"： "When [naming] that 'this', such that that (i.e. the designated thing or person) acts as 'this' at the same time, or [naming] this 'that', such that this acts as 'that' at the same time, [the designation] is not admissible." Cf. Solomon (1981–1983: 269–270) who, however, gives a different interpretation of the last two phrases. The last two phrases explicitly refute a dictum in the Mohist 'Canons', saying that "[w]hen 'this' is about to be used for that, it is likewise admissible to use 'that' for this" (Graham 2003: 440–441 [B68]). Not all commentators would agree with this reconstruction. Wáng (1925: 94), for instance, punctuates the first four phrases differently: "故彼，彼當乎彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼"： "Thus, [regarding the name] 'that', if the name 'that' fits that (the denoted object), then that responds to [the name] 'that' and the designation 'that' can be carried out."

Before going into greater detail, let me first add some remarks about the status of the categories and the theme of the Treatise. The categories in the Treatise constitute the inner texture, the *functions* and *relations* of a name. Functions are bound to *norms* in order to be effective. These categories provide *rules* for the use of names. They show us how we have to use a name in order to ascertain our approach to the world and to signify objects or appoint persons in the right way. Categories can be seen as descriptions as well as prescriptive rules for our uses of language.

The relation between name and object (*míng shí* 名實) is a quite common tenet in early Chinese philosophical literature and appears in different discourses.⁷ In the political conception of the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, for instance, names are used as instruments of political control. The ruler discriminates ‘things’ (*wù* 物) with names (for instance, names designating objects used in ceremonies and rituals) or distinguishes persons by bestowing gifts and titles on them, thereby creating hierarchies and structures of order.⁸ In the Mohist investigations, names capture distinctive features of objects, and we can use names to identify objects in our conversation with others.⁹ Irrespective of their different contexts, both texts ascribe to a theory of correspondence between name and object.¹⁰

The Treatise further analyzes the relation between name and object. Names and objects are both components of a predication (*wèi* 謂). Accordingly, ‘naming’ is defined as “making a predication *real*” (*míng shí wèi yě* 名實謂也).¹¹ Placed in a predication, a name *requires* that the designated object ‘responds’ in accordance with the functions and properties assigned to it by the name.¹² This explanation of ‘predication’ differs from the definition given in the Mohist ‘Canons’, where a

7 See Makeham (1991 and 1994) for a historical overview of the various theories on the correspondence between names and objects.

8 Cf. XZ 22: 486, 489 (‘Zhèng míng’ 正名); Hutton 2014: 249.

9 Graham 2003: 286 [A 31] and 482–483 [NO 11].

10 In the Mohist ‘Canons’, the relation between name and object is expressed as being “mated with each other” (*ǒu* 耦), and their correspondence is expressed by *hé* 合; see Graham 2003: 327 (A 80).

11 *GSLZ* (12b). Yáng Jùnguāng (1982: 188–189) punctuates the phrase differently: “Thus, naming what is real constitutes a predication” (夫名實，謂也.) He denies that names are mere expressions or reflections of real things. On the contrary, names constitute what is said to be real. My interpretation is by and large in accordance with Yáng’s, but I read *shí wèi* (實謂) not as an expression about reality, but as “making a predication real.” It is due to the names that predications constitute reality.

12 *GSLZ* (12b). Responding is expressed by the term *wéi* 唯, ‘to affirm’.

name is “that by which something is predicated” (*suǒ yǐ wèi* 所以謂) and objects (*shí* 實) are “that which is predicated” (*suǒ wèi* 所謂).¹³ In the Mohist description, ‘responding’ is not part of the predication.

In the present chapter, I will argue that we get a further illustration of ‘responding’ and its requirements from the concept of *wèi* 位, or ‘to be in a place’, which the Treatise introduces as a form of the actuality of a name. *Wèi* is usually used as a noun meaning ‘place’, ‘position’, or ‘rank’, yet in the Treatise, *wèi* is also used as a verb: “be in a place”, “place (sth. or so.)”, or “to be placed in”. Added to the schema, *wèi* or “be in a place” is considered a category like “to be a ‘thing’” and “to be solid”. Thus, we not only have two categories that expose the relation between name and object in a predication, but also a third category that ‘places’ an object in a position. And we can judge the right use of names according to this ‘placement’.

The Treatise has not yet received the same amount of attention in the secondary literature as the other chapters of the *GSLZ* have. In general, scholars treat it in accordance with the other chapters of the corpus.¹⁴ In the analyses of many studies and interpretations, the concept of ‘place’ adds no significant change to the diverse yet well-known views of how names relate to objects. Nevertheless, interpretations of the category “to be in a place” vary greatly, partly due to different approaches to the categorical schema.

In short, the concept of ‘place’ in the Treatise has not yet been discussed in detail. The present chapter aims to gain a deeper understanding of the schema, and especially of the category “to be in a place”. What exactly does this category mean? What does it contribute to the description of the actuality of names?

As mentioned above, my argument proceeds from the perspective that the “rectification of naming” has to be analyzed on the pragmatic-functional level of predications. ‘Naming’ cannot be understood solely based on the bivalent

¹³ Graham 2003: 327 (A 80). Note also the usage of *shí*, ‘object’, in the Mohist ‘Canons’, which differs from the Treatise.

¹⁴ Angus C. Graham (1956: 147–148 and 180–181) distinguishes between a core corpus affiliated with a prior Hàn dynastic edition of the *GSLZ*, which is mentioned in the *Documents of the Hàn Dynasty* (*Hàn shū* 漢書), and essays such as MSL, added to the core corpus after the Hàn dynasty, sometime between the fourth and sixth centuries CE. Nevertheless, many scholars regard MSL as an outline of the principles behind the naming practice of the *GSLZ*: see Kandel 1976: 61–62; Wáng Guǎn 2007: 87; Páng Pú 1979: 46; Wǔ Fēibǎi 1983: 510; Hú Qūyuán and Chén Jīnkūn 1987: 94; and Sòng Zuòyīn 1990: 55. Dù Guóxiáng (1977) and Bernard Solomon (1981–1983) read MSL as an explanation of statements given in the third chapter of the *GSLZ* corpus, the ‘Treatise on Signifiers and Things’ (*Zhiwù lùn* 指物論); Wǔ Fēibǎi (1983: 510) instead relates it to the third and the fourth chapters of the corpus.

relationship between a name and a thing, between the signifier and the signified; one also has to judge the ‘responses’ (wéi 唯) to the predication. If the predicated object does not respond to the name used in the predication, then the object is not in accordance with its name, and the predication fails; hence, the use of the name is not right.¹⁵ This requires not only that the assigned name and the denoted thing correspond to each other, but that this correspondence is also properly realized in the responses to the designation.

Another function of the category “to be in a place” refers to the meaning of wèi 位 as ‘placement’ or ‘position’. According to their ‘placement’, the designated thing and the name attributed to the thing are distinctive in relation to other things and names. Thus, names are relative entities – not only in respect to their objects, but also in respect to other names. The inherent relatedness of names provides a second criterion for judging the correct use of names. In the following discussion, I will consider both explanations of the category “to be in a place” – correspondence as well as relatedness – as the principal criteria for correctness.

Furthermore, the category wèi exposes the importance of *spatial notions* for the conceptualization of the relations between names and things. I will argue that all three categories – “to be a ‘thing’”, “to be solid” and “to be in a place” – contain specific spatial connotations, and that the combination of these spatial notions contributes to the consistency of the whole conceptual framework of the Treatise. Thus, we have to investigate how the spatial notions of “to be a ‘thing’” and of all subsequent categories relate to each other. An initial assumption could be that these spatial notions function in a twofold way: they are crucial for the argument of the whole passage, establishing the inherent logic of the entire argument, and they constitute the conditions in which things are presented to us. The latter interpretation would be in accordance with Angus C. Graham’s considerations about the conceptual view behind Mohist thought on how things and qualities are linked together: objects are conceived “as the composite ‘filling’ of a space.”¹⁶

The main part of the present study provides a close reading of statements [1] to [4] of the categorical schema and an investigation of their conceptualization of

¹⁵ Cf. MSL in *GSLZ* (12b): “謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行”: “If one says ‘that’ when that (i.e. the designated thing or person) does not respond to ‘that’ (i.e. the functions involved in the name), then the designation ‘that’ will not be carried out.” My translation is based on Solomon 1981–1983: 268.

¹⁶ Graham 2003: 202.

name and naming. The focus of section two zeroes in on the inherent spatial notions in this description. Section three provides a summary of the significance of these spatial notions. In the concluding section, I will reflect on the “reality of names”, the subject of the Treatise, from a more general perspective: What is a name? What is the reality of a name? And what makes the conception of names in the Treatise so distinctive, as compared to other texts?

The present chapter deliberately focuses on the description of names in the Treatise and does not try to link its ideas to other parts of the *GSLZ* corpus. Occasionally, I will use common examples (such as ‘shape’, ‘color’, ‘horse’, and ‘white’) taken from the other chapters, which are often used in the commentaries written in the twentieth century, for purposes of illustration. This exemplary usage is not intended to claim that my interpretation of the conceptual scheme of the Treatise is valid for the other chapters as well.

2 Categories of Naming

Prima facie, it is reasonable to assume that the four statements in the categorical schema are not intended to be separated from each other. The recurrent sentence structure suggests that they are linked by certain key phrases which create a chain of reasoning: the second item follows from the first, and so on.¹⁷ The wording is repetitive. Words, related to each other by morphological conversion (e.g. *wù* is used as noun and as a verb), are used together and occur in different functions – in both the subject and the predicate positions. The expressions “what is VP-ed by/of it” (*qí suǒ* VP 其所 VP; “VP” stands for a verb phrase) in the middle of each statement enforce the interpretation of an interlocking structure for the whole passage. Self-reference plays a crucial role in the definition of each category. Statements [2] and [3] are composed of two parts: an equation (VP_a *qí suǒ* 其所 VP_a ; VP_a stands for a particular verbal phrase *a*) and a condition (*bù* 不SVP *yān* 焉; SVP stands for a verb phrase with a stative verb). In sum, we thus get two equations and two conditions which constitute

17 Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百 (1983: 512) gives a somewhat divergent account of the interrelationship between these four expressions. According to him, ‘substance’ (*shí*; lit. ‘be solid’) depends on “being a ‘thing’”, but ‘substance’ also gives rise to names. He considers *wèi* (lit. ‘place’ or ‘position’) as the semantic content which is defined by the substance of a thing. Since ‘content’ and the ‘correct’ (*zhèng*) reference are within the realm of names, they should be the first subject of the investigation.

the main part of the whole argument. The deductions [4a] and [4b] are constructed as an equation and its negation, respectively.

The Treatise's argumentative technique tacitly claims that a certain logic inherent in this chain of categories should be applied to the relationship between 'name' and 'object'. By calling for logical consistency, the language of the Treatise becomes prescriptive. The relation between names and objects *should* be in accordance with the categorical schema.

2.1 The Category "to be a 'thing'" (wù 物)

[1] 天地與其所產焉物也。

'Heaven' and 'earth' and what is born by them inside are 'things'.¹⁸

The Treatise begins with a definition of wù 物 or 'thing'. Some Chinese authors, beginning with Wáng Guǎn 王琯 (1896–1960), regard wù as a name.¹⁹ They refer to a passage in the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 which claims that, "although all the ten thousand things are manifold, we sometimes want to collectively bring them out, thus we call them wù ('things'). Wù is a 'large-scale group name'".²⁰ Or they point out that we find a somewhat similar approach in the Mohist 'Canons': 'Names' (míng) are distinguished as 'unrestricted' (dá 達; lit. 'extended'), 'classifying' (lèi 類), or 'private' (sī 私), and wù is regarded as an unrestricted name. According to the explanations attributed to the 'Canons', the name wù corresponds to the fact that everything that is 'real' (shí) – what is present, real, or given to us – should necessarily bear a name.²¹ Many scholars today, however, do not agree with Wáng and prefer to look at the first part of the Treatise as an investigation into the nature of things in reality.²²

18 Cf. Solomon 2013: 85: "Heaven and earth and that which is produced by them are things." In Solomon's translation, heaven and earth are the producers of things. For translating yān (焉) as 'inside', see the discussion below.

19 Wáng Guǎn 2007: 87–88. Wáng Xiàntáng 王獻唐 published the book under his pen name, Wáng Guǎn. According to the date of his preface, he finished it in 1925. See also Yáng Jùnguāng 1986: 122.

20 XZ 22 (16: 495): "萬物雖眾，有時而欲徧舉之，故謂之物。物也者，大共名也。" The term "large-scale group name" is modeled on Eric Hutton's translation (Hutton 2014: 151).

21 MZ 40 ('Jīng shàng' 經上, 10: 285): "名達類私。"; 42 ('Jīng shuō shàng' 經說上, 10: 316): "物達也，有實必待之名也。" Cf. Graham 2003: 325 (A78).

22 See, for instance, Páng Pú 1979: 47; Xú Fùguān 1966: 39; and Chén Guǐmiǎo 2010: 211. According to Sòng Zuòyīn (1990: 56), wù is simply 'matter' (wùzhì 物質). A somewhat middle position is held by Tán Jiěfū (1956).

The view that *wù* relates to names certainly finds justification in the Treatise. Think about the fact that 'names' are the subject of the Treatise. Everything, including heaven and earth, bears a name. Due to the fact that both names and things alike are given to us, we can use names to denote things. However, this does not imply that *wù* or 'thing' in this passage should be read as a general name by which we denote all things, including heaven and earth. Rather, we use 'heaven', 'earth', 'horse', and other names to denote individual things. *Wù* ('thing') operates as a variable, as a placeholder for particular names, such as 'heaven', 'earth', and 'horse'.²³

Statement [1] explains the basic relationship between names and things: a thing is something that bears a name, and 'thing' is the name of this thing. This means that things are somehow equated with their names, and names with their things. According to [1], this *intrinsic attribution* of names to things exists from the beginning – and it applies to all things as well as to all names. Otherwise, metaphysically, a thing would not be a thing, and epistemologically, we would not be able to discern a thing as a thing.

Thus, I would prefer to draw a distinction between a 'name' and a 'category'. The name *wù* ('thing') denotes a thing that is not further specified or, in the plural, things in general. The category "to be a 'thing'" stands for a particular name appearing in a particular thing. Thus the category "to be a 'thing'" is an operation and entails a *function*: we use names to denote and connote things, and thereby to transform things into objects. In the conceptual framework of the Treatise, both functions are inherent to the *relations* between names and things: names are intrinsically attributed to things; names appear in their objects; and names occupy 'places'. (We will discuss these relations in detail below.) The category "to be a 'thing'" refers to this relation which a name inherently possesses: every name is attributed to a thing.

Thus, we have to distinguish between linguistic categories and the "naming categories" we encounter in the Treatise. The Mohists and the *Xúnzǐ* both established linguistic categories such as "unrestricted name" or "large-scale group name",²⁴ which refer to words or concepts distinguished according to their exten-

²³ Kandel (1976: 63) glosses *wù* as *Individualbezeichnung* (the designation of an individual), which should not be confused with proper names.

²⁴ In accordance with Hutton's translation (2014: 251), the term "large-scale group naming" denotes a kind of general name, not a collective name.

sional contents. *Wù* is a name in the Mohist ‘Canons’ and in the *Xúnzǐ*, while in the Treatise it is a category of the functions and relations of a name.

As categories, the expressions “to be a ‘thing’”, “to be solid”, and “to be in a place” provide rules which distinguish names, structure their functions, and at the same time, somehow situate entities in the world around us. In this categorical chain, the first category (“to be a ‘thing’”) means not only that a particular name denotes a particular thing, but also that when we use a name, we assert that this particular thing is *present* ‘within’ (*yān* 焉) the spatial as well as the genealogical dimensions which are confined and “stretched out” by heaven and earth. It is a particular thing ‘existing’ inside the genealogical and spatial structure of reality – and it bears a name. Due to this condition, a thing can become the object of denotation when we use the name in a predication.²⁵

It is interesting to note that heaven and earth themselves also belong to the category “to be a ‘thing’”.²⁶ The relationship of heaven and earth to other things is explained by the phrase *qí suǒ chǎn yān* 其所產焉 (“what is born by them inside”). The anaphoric pronoun *qí* 其 refers to heaven and earth as the *producers* of things (“by them”). The meaning of the anaphoric pronoun *yān* 焉 strengthens the producer/produced relationship and refers to heaven and earth as the sources generating all things (“from the inside”). Ontological or genealogical priority can be seen as a conceptual scheme that includes all things or, as it were, that conceptualizes the totality of all entities. All things belong to lineages (species) which are generated by heaven and earth. Accordingly, [1] means that the totality of names is displayed in the totality of entities, including those entities which are the origin of all other entities. No real thing exists for which we do not have a name, and heaven and earth are themselves also things that bear names.²⁷

My translation of [1] strengthens the spatial notion of *extension* (*yān*; ‘inside’), as *yān* is used in a similar sense in the subsequent statements [2] and [3]

25 Referring to the dictum “no thing is not pointed out” (*wù mò fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指) in the chapter ‘Zhīwù lùn’, we may even say that only under the premise of functioning as an object of a reference can a thing be called a thing. Cf. Yáng Jùnguāng 1982: 188; Yáng Jùnguāng 1986: 121.

26 This view is proposed in several texts of the Warring States period, although they probably held different positions as to whether heaven and earth are one combined entity or rather two entities. Compare ZZ 25 (‘Zé yáng’ 則陽, 8c: 913): “Heaven and earth are the greatest forms” (天地者形之大者也).

27 The names ‘heaven’ and ‘earth’, however, may differ from other names, as they only refer to singular entities. There are neither two heavens nor two earths. They can be considered as proper names. All the other names or *wù* treated in the Treatise are most probably not considered proper names.

as well. *Yān* ('inside') identifies heaven and earth as the *container* of all things.²⁸ This means that extension is primarily associated with the idea "to be a 'thing'". Heaven and earth constitute the extension of space and time, and at the same time, they are considered the most extended things.²⁹ All the other things occupy some place and space inside of them; nothing can exist outside. Consequently, a certain place can be occupied by various things as long as their dimensions allow inclusion (as heaven and earth do). The extension of a particular thing A may be greater than the extension of a thing B. Therefore, A may include B, or A and B may share a common place, just as the extensional dimension of a horse is part of the space between heaven and earth.

Since things share the feature of "being located in the spatial-temporal continuum" of heaven and earth, names reproduce this configuration in some way. And since its meaning is manifested in the object, a name constitutes an extensional dimension, too. Accordingly, statements [2] and [3] say that the object as representation of the name does not "go beyond" (*guò* 過) the name. The 'filling' – the properties of the object – does not "leave open" (*kuàng* 曠) what is connoted by the name. The 'meaning' of names is conceptualized as being 'extensional' in some way, covering and filling out spatial dimensions. Note that, on the other hand, 'meaning' is not considered to be intensional, since the informational content of a word does not relate to a mental construction or concept.

To sum up, "to be a 'thing'" in the first statement is not merely a name, but belongs to the structure of how names denote things. Naming implies that structural equivalences between names and things exist; otherwise names could not be related to things. The Treatise explains the fact that names attributed to things are distinctive and recognizable for us from an even more concrete perspective: names and things are distinctive according to *extension* and *presence*. Furthermore, the category of "being a 'thing'" is defined not by equation and condition, as are the other categories, but by a proposition explicating a certain relatedness inherent in things, and therefore inherent in names

²⁸ Compare the chapter 'Zhǐwù lùn' 指物論, in which "the world" (*tiān xià* 天下) is considered by some scholars to function as the spatial container for individual things. This does not mean that the meaning of "the world" has to be confined to spatiality. Rather, the concept of space provides a conceptual scheme for dimensions. Universality, for example, can be seen as a dimension applied to predicates (universals). For an analysis of the expression "the world" in 'Zhǐwù lùn' in the sense of a universal name, see Reding 2002: 191–192.

²⁹ The commentary ascribed to Xie Jiāng 謝絳 (994–1039) refers to the 'shape' (*xíng* 形) of heaven and earth, which makes them "being things" (GSLZ 11b).

at the same time. (This relatedness will be meaningful for the category “to be in a place” below). The category “to be a ‘thing’” unconditionally refers to all names. Each name appears in a thing, and each name contains representational and referential functions. And vice versa: each thing bears a name, and each thing can be identified by a name.

The category “to be a ‘thing’” asserts the presence of a thing and relates it to properties of extension and inclusion. The spatial notion of extension in the Treatise is linked with the idea of presence: a thing possesses a certain space and is located in a certain place in the space-time continuum of heaven and earth. Therefore, in the Treatise, extension covers both the spatial dimension of real things in the world and the “spatial extension” of names. If we take ‘shape’ (*xíng* 形) as a representative expression of spatial extension, we can say that names primarily denote ‘shapes’. Used in a predication, names ‘shape’ a corporeal space occupied by an individual thing in our world. This idea of extension differs from the idea of extension as the range of objects a concept or a word refers to. In the Mohist ‘Canons’, for instance, extension is primarily understood in relation to the referential function of a name, and we can classify names accordingly (as general names, individual names, and so on). The Treatise, however, does not develop a classificatory system of names based on the idea of the extension of meaning.

Before we move on to the second statement, I will make two additional remarks regarding the notion of spatiality. First, the expression “that which is born by them inside” (*qí suǒ chǎn yān* 其所產焉) stresses that heaven and earth share the quality of “being a ‘thing’” with all other things, although they differ from other things in their spatial dimensions, as heaven and earth contain all things, and all the other things are inside them. Statement [1] describes a totality which can be understood in different ways: as a spatial container (“all things born inside heaven and earth”); as a time-space-continuum (“all things originating from heaven and earth”); or based on ontological dependency, all things belong to the lineages of heaven and earth (“all things produced by heaven and earth”).

Second, space is not considered an independent category; it is linked with the extended dimension of things. In its most general sense, space is the dimension which is occupied by heaven and earth. The same may be true in the case of time. Heaven and earth constitute the beginning of the time dimension, since they are the origin of all things.

2.2 The Category “to be solid” (*shí* 實)

[2] 物以物其所物而不過焉實也。

[The name] ‘thing’ is solid as [it applies the name] ‘thing’ [to] what is [named] ‘thing’ and does not go beyond that.³⁰

The category *wù* (“to be a ‘thing’”) is linked with the category “to be solid” (*shí* 實). The meaning of the expression ‘be solid’ varies in the Treatise, and part of this discussion will be dedicated to distinguishing its different usages (see also the third and fourth sections below). To start with, let us take a look at the basic construction of [2]: How do the two verbs *wù* 物 in the syntagma *wù qí suǒ wù* 物其所物 relate to each other?

Páng Pú 龐樸 (1928–2015) – who considers the schema to be a discussion of how things are given to us in reality – explains the first *wù* in the phrase *wù qí suǒ wù* 物其所物 as a verb meaning ‘to manifest’ (*tǐxiàn* 體現) or ‘to shape’ (*xíngchéng* 形成) and translates the following phrase *qí suǒ wù* 其所物 as “[things manifest] their own [...] specific essence” (‘它自己的 [...] 那個本體’).³¹ When a thing manifests what a thing truly is, it is ‘real’. In Páng’s view, statement [2] equates the visual or physical appearance of a thing with its (hidden) essence.

We can follow his grammatical interpretation this far, yet his metaphysical interpretation seems rather implausible, since the Treatise does not make a distinction between appearance and essence.³² Tán Jièfū 譚戒甫 (1887–1974), on the other hand, sees statement [2] as the expression of a denotation based on the appraisal of the ‘shape’ (*xíng* 形) of things. In his view, the verb *wù* in this expression means ‘to tax’ (*xiàng* 相). (This usage comes close to the word *wùsè* 物色 (“look out for something”) in modern Chinese.) When we tax land, we diagnose the consistency of its soil by virtue of its color and form. The syntagma *suǒ wù* 所物 refers to the result of this appraisal, “the color and shape which have been appraised” (*suǒ xiàng zhī xíng sè* 所相之形色). According to Tán, there is a close connection between a name and the form of a thing (which probably alludes to the representational content of the Chinese writing system).

³⁰ Cf. Graham 1956: 151: “A thing which is a thing where it should be a thing, without going beyond it, is an actuality.” Cf. also Solomon 2013: 85: “Because one treats a thing as the thing, it is regarded to be nothing more than that, the thing is real.”

³¹ Páng 1979: 47n1; 49.

³² Xú Fùguān (1966: 39) avoids the essentialist view, yet comes to a similar interpretation: “a particular thing completes (*chéngjiù* 成就) what makes it be this particular thing.”

Things differ from each other according to their shapes, thus “what is characterized by a thing (*suǒ wù zhě* 所物者) is what each thing presents in its shape” (*wù gè yǐ qí xíng zhù yě* 物各以其形著也). Things appear as particulars with specific characteristics, and names appraise those characteristics. Thus naming things *shapes things* or, in other words, “gives credit to the shape of things” (*wèi yǐ xíng wù ér mìng zhī míng* 謂以形物而命之名). For instance, when we apply the word *mǎ* 馬 (‘horse’) to a particular thing, we do so by attributing the shape manifested by horses to a particular thing (*yóu yǐ mǎ suǒ zhù zhī xíng ér bì yǐ mǎ zhī hào yě* 猶以馬所著之形而畀以馬之號也).³³ The shape which has been identified to be horse-shaped is named ‘horse’. In a very skillful manner, Tán Jiěfū unequivocally addresses the realm of things and the realm of names; the distinctiveness of things, which is due to their distinctive shapes, is the distinctiveness of names. Jochen Kandel sees the matching of name and thing as expressed directly in the phrase *wù qí suǒ wù*. The first and third *wù* relate to the name, the second to the thing. His translation of statement [2], rendered in English, reads as follows: “The designation of things becomes what the designation of things defines by virtue of the things; the designation is significant in reality, if the designation does not exceed the things.”³⁴

My grammatical analysis follows Páng and Tán, as I regard both instances of *wù* 物 in the expression *wù qí suǒ wù* 物其所物 as verbs, and my interpretation comes close to those of Tán and Kandel, as I see an equation of the name ‘thing’ with the thing as its denoted object in the phrase *wù qí suǒ wù*.³⁵ The two phrases *suǒ wù* 所物 and *wù qí suǒ wù* 物其所物 explain the specific operations involved when we designate a thing as ‘thing’. The intrinsic attribution of a name to a thing becomes a twofold relation between a name and its object, one by principle and one by fact. The difference between these two relations is that a name is *principally* related to things, since things bear names and names are intrinsically attributed to things. But a name becomes related to objects *in fact*, when we apply a name to a thing and make the thing the object of the name.

33 Tán 1956: 57–58.

34 Kandel 1976: 62; the original German text of [2] reads as follows: “Die (Benennung der) Dinge wird durch die Dinge zu dem, was die (Benennung der Dinge) ausmacht; und geht die Benennung nicht über die Dinge hinaus, dann hat sie Realbedeutung.” In Kandel’s view, the first *wù* in the syntagma *yǐ wù qí suǒ wù* is a noun (‘thing’), and the phrases *yǐ wù* 以物 and *yǐ shí* 以實 in [3], respectively, are coverb-object syntagmata. It is difficult for me to understand how the syntagma *yǐ wù* relates to the following nominal phrase *qí suǒ wù* 其所物. Kandel interpolates the verb ‘wird’ (‘becomes’) in his translation.

35 This interpretation actually goes back to Wáng Guǎn’s seminal study (1925: 1b–2a). Yáng Jùnguāng 1982: 120–127 elaborates on Wáng’s interpretation.

Names with objects are 'solid', as the name becomes visible in reality. The name is present for us in the object and located in a certain place. Designation is considered to constitute an equation: we designate a thing as the 'solid' or the object of the name. On the operative level of names, a thing becomes an 'object', a solid entity, which manifests the name in reality. Likewise, on the conceptual level of names, the category "to be a 'thing'", marking the intrinsic attribution of names to things, is translated into the category "to be solid", denoting the factual representation of the name. The equation considers how a name operates on things as well as the result(s) of this operation: the designated thing confines the name, as the designated thing is confined by the name. The appearance of the name "does not go beyond" its manifestation (*bù guò yān* 不過焉), nor does the object "go beyond" its designation; this is 'this' and nothing else.³⁶

The spatial notions of *presence* and *extension*, which mark the distinctiveness of names and things in statement [1], are manifested in reality as they appear in the object of the name. The category "to be solid" implies that a particular shape, an extended dimension, is "filled out" by the object as well as by the name, since the name appears in the object. Studies on the Treatise often mention color as the distinctive property that fills out the extended space, but other properties do this as well. Nevertheless, we may think that shape and color define the paradigm of how extension and solidity are related to each other, and how the two categories "to be a 'thing'" and "to be solid" are linked together. Having shape is the precondition for having color, and "filling out the shape" is the primary condition for the 'solidity' of the name.

In addition to extension ('shape'), 'solidity' implies *continuity*, *limitation*, and *consistency*: an extended dimension is filled out and presented to us as a continuous entity, since a "discontinuous portion of the spatiotemporal world" does not exist.³⁷ The name presented to us does not 'go beyond' (*guò yān* 過焉) the space defined by its representative object.

36 Wú Fēibǎi's (1983: 513–514) interpretation of "not going beyond" (*bù guò*) goes in a similar direction. He describes "not going beyond" as referring to operations of set theory. In the expression "the white hard stone" (*jiān bái shí* 堅白石), we are not allowed to apply the unifying operation that we are looking for: something which is a stone as well as something which is hard and white (*jīn yán shí ér jiān jī jiān bái shì guò* 今言石而兼及堅白是過). Instead, the 'solidity' (*suǒ shí* 所實) of a "white hard stone" is given by applying the intersection operation.

37 To use Quine's expression, as cited in Harbsmeier's (1998: 311) refutation of Chad Hansen's mass-noun hypothesis.

2.3 The Category “to be in a place” (wèi 位)

The category “to be solid” is linked with the category “to be in a place”:

[3] 實以實其所實不曠焉位也。

A ‘solid’ (i.e. the name applied to the object) is in a place as [it] fills out what is [named to be] filled out without leaving a void inside.³⁸

The definition of the category “to be in a place” resembles the definition of the category “to be solid”. A self-referential expression makes up the main part of the definition, and two operations of a name are equated. The appearance of the name in the object transforms the name into a ‘solid’ entity. The object ‘fills out’ (*shí* 實) the properties connoted to the thing by the name (*suǒ shí* 所實; “what is named to fill out”).³⁹ The object also constitutes the reality of the name, since the meaning or the ‘filling’ (*suǒ shí*) of the name is visible to us.⁴⁰ When we say that the ‘filling’ of a name or “what is named to be filled out” (*suǒ shí*) is the informational ‘content’ of the name, we should be aware that the description of naming in the Treatise does not refer to the conceptual content of names, as if this were somehow independent of its ‘realization’. Rather, it means that the ‘content’ of a name appears in the object. The expression *suǒ shí* is the concrete embodiment of the name in the object, not an abstract conceptual entity.

Due to the ‘solidity’ of names, designations are distinctive. They occupy and fill out particular, limited ‘places’ (*wèi* 位).⁴¹ Designations not only ‘limit’ the

38 Cf. Graham 1956: 151: “An actuality which is actual (literally ‘fills’) where it should be actual, without leaving a void, is in place.” Cf. also Solomon 2013: 85: “Because one regards as real that which has been made real and nothing less than that, the real is in a place [in the order of real things].”

39 Cf. Yáng Júnguāng 1986: 123: “「所實」就是名。”

40 Kandel uses the term *Realbedeutung* (‘significance in reality’) to translate *shí*. A designation conforms to the fact that a name unambiguously signifies a certain object (“geht die Benennung nicht über die Dinge hinaus, dann hat sie Realbedeutung”: [物]不過焉實也).

41 For *wèi* as ‘limiting condition’ (*jièxiàn biāozhǔn* 界限標準), see Wáng Guǎn 1925: 1b. Wú Fēibǎi (1983: 513) also defines *wèi* as the “domain of the object [referred to]” (*shí zhī jièyù* 實之界域). A certain place identifies the limits of the objects we refer to. In this sense, solidity (*shí*) and place would be consequences of the fact that a thing must have extensional limits (shape and location). I do not agree with Chén Guǐmiǎo (2010: 212) that *wèi* has to be understood only as ‘limit’ (*jièdìng* 界定) and has lost the connotation of location and extension. The limiting function of the concept of place is crucial for the idea of a systematic configuration underlying our names. Yet, the limiting function does not suspend other functions related to the category “to be in a place”.

reality of names and their objects; they also distinguish one object from other objects and one name from other names. The distinctiveness of names can be judged according to the characteristics of their objects – and vice versa, the distinctiveness of objects according to their names.

A designation would 'be void' (*kuàng* 曠) if the actualization of these properties in the object is not done completely. Tân Jiěfǔ explains this statement by giving an example: we cannot say 'horse' when we want to receive a white horse.⁴² According to him, when we use the predication "white horse", we leave the predication 'white' void if we adopt this predication for horses in general.⁴³

The two criteria of "not going beyond" (*bù guò* 不過) and "not leaving a void" (*bù kuàng* 不曠) justify our application of names to things. According to some scholars, the two criteria resemble the common distinction between the extension and intension of concepts or words.⁴⁴ "Not going beyond" denotes the referential scope of a word, while "not leaving anything void" refers to its content. Yáng Jùnguāng (楊俊光) identifies their mutual relationship simply as the same fact expressed in two different ways: "The name should not go beyond the object; the object should not leave the name void."⁴⁵ Wǔ Fēibǎi (1890–1965) calls it a rhetorical embellishment, a kind of *repetitio*, in which the same meaning is expressed from two different points of view (*hù wén jiàn yì* 互文見義).⁴⁶

We should note, however, that the Treatise does not contain the idea that reality is pre-constructed by ideas and concepts. Our text does not refer to mental activities such as 'intention' (*yì* 意) or 'purpose' (*zhì* 志),⁴⁷ nor to mental entities such as ideas or perceptions, when describing the reference and meaning of names. Rather, it suggests that we have a system of names that exactly mirrors the differentiations in the world. Names pre-sort reality. Names are conceived to express reality directly: names do not denote ideas. The Treatise does not establish a theory of meaning based on a trivalent relationship (symbol, concept, object), as the triangle of reference does. Instead, we have the idea

42 Tân Jiěfǔ 1956: 59.

43 Wǔ Fēibǎi (1983: 515) interprets this passage in a similar way.

44 See, for instance, Zhōu Yúnzhī 2004: 85–86; Chén Xiànyóu 1990: 67; and Hú Qūyuán and Chén Jìnkūn 1987: 94; 96n11.

45 "名不過實與實不曠名"; see Yáng Jùnguāng 1986: 125.

46 Wǔ Fēibǎi 1983: 514.

47 For 'intention' as a category in Mohist language theory, see Harbsmeier 1998: 336; Graham 2003: 470, 478 and 482 (NO 3, 9, 11), and also 249 (EC 3), in which *zhì* ('purpose') is distinguished from *gōng* 功 ('achievement'); MZ 44 ('Dà qǔ' 大取, 11: 372); 40 ('Jīng A' 經上, 10: 286); 45 ('Xiǎo qǔ' 小取, 11: 379); 44 (11: 371).

that reality is perfectly represented in our language, and that naming things is merely an issue of recognizing the right object with the right name.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in accordance with the understanding of the ‘meaning’ of a name as ‘filling’, the phrase “not leaving a void” (*bù kuàng* 不曠) refers to the ‘solidity’ of a name – its objective representation and its capacity to actualize the functions ascribed to it.

Such a ‘solid’ name is thought to occur in a particular place. As a name becomes real in the object, and the object manifests the reality of a name, actuality is ascribed to the place itself: the place as well as the object realize the distinctive properties of the name, thereby carrying out the significance of the designation. Positions are relative. We define a position relative to other positions. According to their extension and ‘filling’, one name can be distinguished from other names. The category “to be in a place” demarcates the distinctness of a name among other names. It denotes a qualitative shift from acts of matching to activities of contrasting and comparing in order to define the correctness of a name in respect to its relations with others.⁴⁹

2.4 ‘Placement’ as a Condition for Judgment

- [4] a. 出其所位非位
b. 位其所位焉正也

- [4] a. [Names] that step out from where they [should] be placed do not constitute a place.
b. [Names] that are placed where they [should] be placed are ‘right’.⁵⁰

In the Treatise, *wèi* occupies a crucial place in the argument, as it provides the final criterion for determining the correctness of a predication. “To be right” is

⁴⁸ Cf. Kandel (1976: 64), who defines the epistemological act as *Wiedererkennen* (‘recognizing’). Yáng Jùnguāng (1982: 189) also elucidates this fact by saying that the name comes first, and the object comes second.

⁴⁹ Compare other texts, such as the *Kǒng cóng zǐ* 12 (‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ 公孫龍 4: 2a), in which the act of recognizing the object differs from the act of recognizing its qualities. Drawing on a passage from the *Zuǒ zhuàn* 左傳 (4: 2a), it is stated that we first become aware of six things flying in the sky by ‘sight’ (*dǔ* 覩), and then we ‘inspect’ (*chá* 察) them and recognize them as six egrets.

⁵⁰ Cf. Graham 1956: 151: “To leave its place is to be out of place; to be in place in its place is correctness.”

defined according to the fact that something is considered “to be at the place where it [should have] been placed” (*wèi qí suǒ wèi yān* 位其所位焉). On the other hand, “stepping out of a place” (*chū qí wèi* 出其位) is thought “not to constitute [the proper] place” (*fēi wèi* 非位), which obviously leads to false predications.

Before discussing why and how *wèi* or “to be in a place” can be seen as a condition for correctness, we will take a look at how place and location are discussed in other texts, since the category “to be in a place” marks a significant contribution to the conceptual framework of naming, as compared to other texts. While the expression *wèi* is not found in the Mohist ‘Canons’ at all,⁵¹ it is well known from the exegetical language of the *Yi jīng* 易經 (Book of Changes).⁵² The mantic *figurae* of the *Yi*, its signs or ‘hexagrams’ (*guà* 卦), are composed of six lines, thus providing six different ‘ranks’ (*wèi* 位) that are interpreted as distinctive positions of interaction. A rank can be occupied either by ‘the hard’ (*gāng* 剛) or by ‘the soft’ (*róu* 柔), which are the manifestations of the generative powers *Qián* 乾 and *Kūn* 坤, marked by unbroken (—) and broken (— —) lines, respectively. Commentaries on the line statements often judge ‘the hard’s’ occupation of the fifth rank of a *figura* as ‘correct’, using expressions such as “the rank is rightly appropriated” (*wèi zhèng dāng* 位正當), or explain good fortune “because [the hard] exerts the right from the center” (*yǐ zhòng zhèng* 以中正). Here, ‘place’ or ‘rank’ defines a position, and the proper appointment of the position is subject to judgment.

Probably drawing on a passage from the *Kǒng cóng zǐ* 孔叢子 (The Anthology of the Masters of the Kǒng Family; third century CE), *Tán Jiěfǔ* defines *wèi* as the syntactical order of the different linguistic parts in an expression.⁵³ The

51 The term *wèi* 位 in the second part of the ‘Canons’ (MZ 41, 10: 293; Graham 2003: 381 [B23]) should be read as *wā* 洼 (Graham) or as *lì* 立 (Bi Wǎn). I am thankful to Wolfgang Behr for his comment that Graham’s explanation is rather implausible.

52 It is used in the ‘Tradition of Judgments’ (*Tuàn zhuàn* 彖傳), probably the earliest text of the anonymous exegetical corpus of the *Yi jīng*, and in the lesser part of the ‘Tradition of Images’ (*Xiàng zhuàn* 象傳), which comments on the line statements in the divination manual.

53 *Tán Jiěfǔ* 1956: 58. In chapter 12 (4: 2a) on *Gōngsūn Lóng* in the *Kǒng cóng zǐ*, it is said that color should be picked up (*jǔ* 舉) first, before the ‘substance’ (*zhì* 質) should be named (*míng* 名). Syntactic problems are treated in the Mohist ‘Canons’ too. For instance, it is said that names and ‘objects’ (*shí*) are not necessarily in accordance. The qualities ‘big’ and ‘white’ differ in their relationship to a stone. If we break up a white stone, its parts will still be white. But the parts of a broken big stone are not big any more. In the expression “one human finger” (*yī rén zhī* 一人指), the sub-phrase “(yī rén 一人) [‘one’ and ‘human’]” does not denote “one man”, but in the expression “the finger of one man” (*yī rén zhī zhī* 一人之指), the subphrase *yī rén* denotes “one man”. “One side of a cube” (*fāng zhī yī miàn* 方之一面) is not a ‘cube’ (*fāng* 方) but a ‘plain’

expression “white horse” (*bái mǎ* 白馬) is right, but the inverted expression “horse white” would be wrong (*mǎ bái* 馬白).⁵⁴ Tán’s argument implies the claim that ‘color’ (*sè* 色) and ‘thing’ (*wù*) belong to two different linguistic categories.⁵⁵ Because they are different, we have to follow certain syntactical rules in order to combine them. As the category “to be a ‘thing’” is required to constitute the category “to be solid”, this relationship should be reflected in the syntactical structure of our language. In this sense, “to be in a place” would connote the fact that differences between certain qualities as well as rules for their combination do exist.⁵⁶ For Tán, these differences become apparent in the linear position of words in a phrase.

Conceptions of solidity or substance are often treated together with the notion of location in other writings as well. Terminology differs, however. In the Mohist writings, it is said that if the ‘sites’ (*chù* 處) of (two) entities differ, their qualities cannot “mutually fill up” (*xiāng yìng* 相盈);⁵⁷ instead, they ‘exclude’ (*fēi* 非) each other, because they signify different things. We can only combine two different qualities and assign them to a single object if the site is the same.⁵⁸ In the ‘Rectifying Names’ (‘Zhèng míng’ 正名) chapter of the *Xúnzǐ*, ‘location’ (*suǒ* 所) and ‘appearance’ (*zhuàng* 狀) are defined as essential criteria for discerning the distinctiveness of things. Things are distinguishable either by their location or by their appearance, or by both.⁵⁹ I can see two distinct white horses when they are placed in different locations. I can distinguish a thing from another thing by their different appearances, although they are placed in the same location: we may distinguish a black fly on the back of a white horse by its color. Here, ‘location’ and ‘appearance’ both refer to categories which make things distinguishable.

The *Xúnzǐ* provides another interesting parallel for the concept of *wèi*. Besides ‘location’ and ‘appearance’, a third category – ‘solidity’ (*shí*) – is necessary to define whether a thing appears as the first or the second in the course of

(*miàn* 面), while in the expression “the side of a cube of wood” (*fāng mù zhī miàn* 方木之面) there is still a “wooden cube” (*fāng mù* 方木); see 44 (‘Dà qǔ’), 11: 376–377; Graham 2003: 470–471 (N01).

54 Tán Jiěfǔ 1956: 58.

55 Cf. Harbsmeier 1998: 310.

56 This function is stressed by many scholars who render *wèi* 位 as ‘limits’ (*jiè* 界).

57 MZ (40 and 42, 10: 284 and 312); Graham 2003: 313 (A66).

58 I refer to something “being white” (i.e. “white horse”), but since the quality “to be white” is not at the same location which is occupied by a thing (i.e. “brown horse”), I have to reject the expression as being void (not in accordance with my reference – although the given thing would be of the substance [‘horse’] which I am looking for).

59 XZ 22 (16: 496): “物有同狀而異所者，有異狀而同所者，可別也。”

time.⁶⁰ Two things may appear in different forms at different times, but their 'solidity' is the same. This fact explains the process of 'transformation' (*huà* 化). 'Solidity' here is understood in a material sense, like 'stuff' or 'substance' (*zhì* 質), as in the passage from the *Kǒng cóng zǐ* mentioned above.

'Solidity' turns things into individual, countable entities. According to the *Xúnzǐ*, if transformation does not lead to separation (*yǒu huà ér wú bié* 有化而無別), we have "one solid entity" (*yī shí* 一實). Thus, we have "to inspect the solidity [of things] in order to determine [their] number" (*jī shí dìng shù* 稽實定數).⁶¹ If "one solid" is given, then we have one thing; if not, we have two different things. Since transformation may include growth and decay, increase and decrease, *shí* cannot refer to a defined volume, amount, or stuff. A tree that bears fruit in autumn and is bare-branched in winter is one and the same object. The young scion of previous years has to be considered the same person as the current king.

The Mohist writings provide a very strange example of transformation: the fact "that a frog becomes a quail" (*wā wéi chún* 黿為鶉).⁶² Since transformation is considered the "alteration of characteristics" (*zhēng yì* 徵易), the characteristics of the frog change into the characteristics of the quail. We may assume that, according to the ideas expressed in the *Xúnzǐ*, we would have counted this process as a transformation "with separation" – meaning their 'solidity' is different.

These considerations look somewhat familiar to us. The categories "to be a 'thing'" and "to be solid" contain spatial notions such as extension, location, filling, and continuum, partly in accordance with the ideas we find in the Mohist texts and the *Xúnzǐ*. Objects can be identified as continuous entities (though transformation is not discussed in the Treatise, solidity implies continuity), and location is linked to the identification of things (though the Treatise does not assume that their appearance changes over time). Thus, location functions as a criterion for the correct usage of the names we apply to things.

However, the concept *wèi* ("to be in a place") in the Treatise should be considered differently. It is not only used as a criterion for identifying the right object, but also to evaluate its 'actualization'. As already outlined above, not only the object but also the place displays the distinctive reality of the name. We can

60 'Location' seems to distinguish entities appearing at the same time. To distinguish entities which appear at different times, we need another criterion: 'solidness'. Therefore, I would not agree with Knoblock (1994: 339n43), who holds that 'location' refers both to space and time.

61 XZ 22 (16: 497) "狀同而為異所者，雖可合，謂之二實；狀變而實無別而為異者，謂之化；有化而無別 謂之一實；此事之所以稽實定數也。"

62 Graham 2003: 295 (A45). This example can also be found in several ancient texts and became the subject of considerations of material change.

distinguish one name from another according to its position. The actuality of a name is not absolute, but is relative to other positions.

The relation of the actuality of names is also due to the idea that a structured totality exists along genealogical lineages, which concern names as well as things. Since all names belong to this totality, names are related to each other. Names as distinct entities stand in relation to other names, as things are related to other things. Therefore, each name obtains a particular position in relation to other names, as does each object in relation to other objects.

Kandel uses the term “systematic determination” (*systematische Bestimmtheit*) to denote the systematic distinctiveness of names. Systematic determination or *wèi* 位 makes it clear that a designation conforms to the totality of all assignments of names.⁶³ Systematic determination itself is not considered the result of a designation, but rather the distinction among the designations themselves. Systematic determination provides demarcation among the names, which helps us avoid conflating one name with another. On this systematic level, we may say that the totality of all names corresponds to the totality of all things. Since the totality of names is definite and invariable, the task of the practice of naming is to assign the right names to concrete things whereby making these things available for the speaker (“der Name [ist] eindeutig und der Gegenstand verfügbar”).⁶⁴

Identifying the right name in a system of names, however, is not the only function that the category “to be in a place” provides. The category – as a prerequisite for making a designation – transfers a name to an object. Moreover, it confers values, status, privileges, entitlements, and authorization to the object, thereby defining its ‘position’. The interrelatedness of names and the distinctiveness of a name receive their significance from this operation, since values, status, and privileges are relative to other positions; authorization has to be restricted to a limited number of individuals in order to be effective. As designations are a means to delegate authority and power, the relatedness of the position as well as its definition are crucial factors in judging correctness.

⁶³ Kandel (1976: 62) translates the second part of [3] as follows: “hat die [Benennung der] Realität keine Unbestimmtheit, dann entspricht sie einer [systematischen] Bestimmtheit” ([實] 不曠焉位也).

⁶⁴ Kandel 1974: 62–63: “Die Totalität der Gegenstände auf der Seite der Realität und die systematische Bestimmtheit auf der Seite der Namen entsprechen einander, d.h. die Bestimmtheit des Namens ist gleich der vollständigen Zuordnung der Bezeichnungen zueinander im System. Keine Bestimmtheit darf von der relationalen systematischen Bestimmtheit abweichen” (The totality of the objects in reality and the systematic determination of the names match each other. This means that the determination of a name is in accordance with all attributions in a system of mutual references. It is not allowed that a determination deviates from its relational position in the system of determinations).

In my view, the category “to be in a place” sets up two criteria at the same time: (a) the criterion of effective correspondence – placed in a position, the object has to respond to the functions related to this position in making the designation effective; and (b) the criterion of the relatedness of this placement with regard to other places. Correct naming is not a single act. The correctness of the designation has to be judged on the basis of how it interferes with other previous or future designations. Both criteria are combined in the category “to be in a place”. If the name, as an effective entity, “steps out from where it [should] be placed” (*chū qí suǒ wèi* 出其所位), we can conclude that the designated object does not realize its ‘entitlement’ with that name. The designation also fails if it is misplaced, because it uses a name which interferes with other designations and positions. In both cases, the name cannot guarantee efficacy. Therefore, the name “does not constitute the place” (*fēi wèi* 非位), and the operation behind the predication fails. In contrast, the predication is considered to be ‘right’ (*zhèng* 正) if the name is “placed where [should] be placed” (*wèi qí suǒ wèi yān* 位其所位焉).

3 The Spatiality of Names

I want to come back to my thesis that spatial notions structure the argument of the category schema and help to conceptualize how the evaluation of the correctness of a designation relies on these categories. The logic of the categorical schema develops the interrelationship between the spatial notions. The expression “to be in a place” is closely connected to a proceeding that explains how the extended container “heaven and earth” (*tiān dì* 天地) is given and presented to us; how extended things occupy space in this container; how they get filled up by certain properties; finally, how they become distinct, continuous and effective entities located at a certain ‘place’. Since the categories are interrelated to each other, they do not display three distinct conditions, isolated from one another, but rather build a unified framework for our judgment.

In the Treatise, meaning is not conceptualized by virtue of reference functions, but as a combination of distinctive operations attributed to a name due to its spatiality. ‘Presence’ and ‘extension’ define the category “to be a ‘thing’”. The category “to be a ‘thing’” relates to the category “to be solid” like extension relates to solidity. Extension is primary; solidity can be ascribed to a name if the extended space is properly delineated and represented in the object without “going beyond”. The solidity of a name presupposes that the object represents the name to us distinctly. The category “to be solid” includes the notion that

something is “filled out”. This ‘filling’ can be interpreted in two ways: it is the content of the extended space of the object, filled out by the properties connoted to the object, and this content is considered to be ‘solid’, meaning that it satisfies specific requirements and conditions. ‘Solidity’ cannot only be considered the sum of the properties, but displays a particular constitution that is effective and sufficient in certain respects. The denoted object embodies a capacity to fill these requirements. In short, we have to describe ‘solidity’ both as content and as capacity. Capacity, furthermore, conveys two descriptions of solidity: capacity ‘fulfils’ or ‘fills out’ the name, and at the same time, it expresses the *requirement* to fill it out without “leaving a void”. The expression “to be void” not only means a lack of properties, an unfilled state, but also an ineffective or inoperative state. Thus capacity in the second meaning constitutes the requirement to achieve satisfaction or fulfilment. Related to the category “to be in a place”, this requirement is described as occupying a position, thus transferring the actuality of the requirement to the position. Appointment is no mere denomination: it implies the claim that the conditions defined by the name or the title will be actualized and fulfilled exactly as this particular position demands. In relation to the position, a name becomes normative. Satisfying this normative claim provides the first criterion for correctness. Since positions are relative to other positions, relatedness provides a second criterion for correctness.

The relations of names to objects are not conceptualized as ‘references’, as in the chapters ‘Treatise on Pointing at Things’ (Zhǐwù lùn 指物論) and ‘Treatise on the White Horse’ (Báimǎ lùn 白馬論), for instance. In our analyses, we have remarked that ‘name’ is an entity conveying denotative and connotative functions. In the Treatise, these reference functions are described as equating the name with what is named and predicating equivalence *in space*. Thus the second statement provides the description that “the name ‘thing’ names ‘thing’ what is named ‘thing’ and *does not go beyond it*”. According to this statement, the denotative function and (partly) the connotative function are realized in the *spatial* representation of the name, while other properties ascribed to the connotative function are contained in the way in which the extended space appears to us. Our description of naming does not consider these two reference functions distinct from each other; rather, they are combined in one operation. This is due to the fact that the connotative function is not related to conceptual content distinct from the realization of the name in the denoted object.

The two operations of extension and solidity are once more interrelated in the third statement: “A ‘solid’ fills out what is named to be filled out without *leaving a void inside*”. Once again, the ‘solid’ refers to the denoted object. The

denotative function is implied in the object, while the connotative function is expressed in the equation. 'Filling' and the condition of "leaving a void inside" describe the connotative function as the 'content' of a name, a metaphor commonly used in describing meaning.

To sum up, spatial notions substitute for the functions of reference in our description of naming. This way of describing 'naming' enables the author(s) of the Treatise to combine the two reference functions of names with a place. According to this view, names *denote* objects, *connote* objects, and *locate* objects in certain places. Designation is therefore *authorization*. The name designates a thing to act in a certain domain and to fulfill specific functions in relation to other agents and positions.

The twentieth-century commentaries on the *GSLZ* explain the spatial notions of extension and solidity as 'shape' (*xíng* 形) and 'color' (*sè* 色).⁶⁵ 'Color' has to be understood as *pars pro toto* for other properties – for instance, 'hardness'. In my view, shape and color are qualities attributed to a substance. According to these commentaries on the Treatise, the quality of 'shape' differs from the quality of 'color': the first is related to the category "to be a 'thing'", the second to the category "to be solid". It is difficult to decide whether the spatial notion of extension and solidity should be equated with the qualities of 'shape' and 'color', and it is interesting to note that these terms are not used in the description in the Treatise. Thus, the texture of the name is conceptualized on a rather abstract level: there is no need to express it through the qualities of 'shape' and 'color'.

The category "to be in a place" provides another approach to the spatiality of names. We can distinguish two basic functions in this category – its *operative competence* and its *systematic relatedness*. The *operative competence* of a place is described such that, by designating a thing or a person, we place the thing or the person in a certain position and bestow on it the competence to exert certain specific functions. We appoint a thing or a person *as something*. This operation of authorization underlies each designation, and 'place' defines the operative space of the function of the name. The concept of 'place' thus comprises both location and position. As a position, it specifies the possession of a particular authority or competence to take certain actions. As a location, it

⁶⁵ Cf. Tân Jiěfū (1956: 58), who gives the following example of naming a thing: we use the word 'white' to attribute a particular color to a thing and the word 'horse' in order to determine its shape. In the 'White Horse Treatise', the designative function of a name is called *mìng* 命, 'to designate' or 'to assign': "'Horse' is used to assign a shape. 'White' is used to assign a color" (*GSLZ* 3b: 馬者所以命形也。白者所以命色也.). The word *mìng* 命 does not occur in the Treatise.

defines the domain of these actions. This is quite a dynamic idea of place, which can also to be found in the commentaries on the *Yi*. In these commentaries, a certain operative capacity is achieved by obtaining a position which, on the other hand, defines and specifies the functions and domain of its efficacy.

The *systematic relatedness* of a place relies on the assertion that ‘place’ is given to each thing. The Treatise introduces a *system* expressing both the distinctness and the relatedness of its elements. According to this concept, systematic totality is conceptualized as spatial ‘totality’ and is provided by “heaven and earth”. Singular entities are considered to be located in the spatial system and to occupy specific places relative to other places. As such, relatedness as well as distinctiveness defines the ‘place’ of a name. A name “is in a place” when its ‘solidity’, its actuality, fulfills both status and function in the whole system, as clear as it is distinct in relation to all the other names.

The linguistic pattern of a designation also displays the operative competence and systematic relatedness of a place. We may even think that the description of names in the Treatise is partly based on the analysis of this pattern. Returning to the basic pattern *bǐ bǐ* 彼彼 (“that [is named] ‘that’”) or *cǐ cǐ* 此此 (“this [is named] ‘this’”) introduced above, the words ‘that’ (*bǐ*) and ‘this’ (*cǐ*) both appear twice in each sentence, equal in sound and writing, but their meaning differs according to their positions. The expression ‘place’ functions as an operator: distinctive ‘places’ in the linguistic pattern fulfill distinctive functions, and names ‘placed’ in these places operate according to the functions given to these places by the pattern. This would mean that, in the Treatise’s theory of naming, *wèi* (‘place’) can also be considered a grammatical term that distinguishes the positions in a predication.⁶⁶

4 Conclusion: Names and Their ‘Reality’

Names are the subject of the Treatise, yet neither all kinds of names nor all of their types of function are examined. The Treatise primarily considers ‘thing’ names, and naming is restricted to a designation, a specific form of predication (*wèi* 謂). The name ‘thing’ acts as placeholder for names attributed to things (*wù*).

⁶⁶ As mentioned above, Tán Jiěfū (1956: 58) relates the category “to be in a place” to the syntactic sequence, but in the nominal phrase *bái mǎ* 白馬, “white horse”. We are not allowed to reverse the order and put the attributive stative verb *bái* after the noun *mǎ*.

What is a “thing-name”? The Treatise introduces the name ‘thing’ to denote things generated by heaven and earth and located within their sphere. Thus, the name ‘thing’ does not refer to substances or entities in general. We have to exclude many entities as possible candidates for receiving the name ‘thing’: mental and psychic entities such as emotions and ideas; abstract names of qualities such as ‘whiteness’; and probably individual names as well, since only connotative names are considered in further detail. Since names are considered ‘solid’, we do not deal with names denoting imaginary objects.⁶⁷ In this respect, the scope of ‘names’ (*míng*) examined in the Treatise is rather limited in comparison to other texts.⁶⁸

On the other hand, the political program of “rectifying names” is not confined to designating natural entities. It also includes designating persons as functionaries in the government and at court. According to the commentary ascribed to Xiè Jiàng 謝絳 (994–1039), designating a person is an act of naming analogous to predicating natural entities with names. The title of a position conferred on a person is considered equivalent to the name of an edifice or a utensil, such as the wooden construction of the imperial court (*láng miào*, 廊廟), a cart, or a machine.⁶⁹ These things perform specific functions, and their names often equally denote the thing itself as well as its function. Likewise, we use the title ‘chamberlain’ to address the person as well as to designate rank and the duties a chamberlain has to fulfill.

The ‘solidity’ (*shí* 實) of a name covers both paradigms of names – names given to natural entities as well as to titles. ‘Solidity’ is linked to things as well as to positions. When we designate a name for a thing, the “thing-name” transforms

67 In an anecdote about Gōngsūn Lóng contained in the *Lǚ shì chūn qiū* (呂氏春秋), the expression “void name” (*xū míng* 虛名) is juxtaposed to “real deeds” (*shí wéi* 實為). Propagated ideas did not become realized in reality (see Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 442).

68 The Mohist ‘Canons’ points to the idea that *wù* can refer to abstract entities, too. According to Graham (2003: 210), the term *sān wù* 三物 refers to abstract concepts like ‘love’ or ‘benefit’ (and ‘intelligence’). This argument is based on Graham’s reconstruction of the ‘Canons’ (Graham’s section EC 2, pages 246–248). Sūn Yǐràng’s 孫詒讓 (1848–1908) reconstruction differs from Graham’s; see MZ 44 (‘Dà qǔ’ 大取), 11: 370 and 377. In a discussion of the minister’s behavior toward his ruler, the term *sān wù* is used to speak about a complex matter which is not fully understood by the scholar Gōng Mèng zǐ 公孟子, and the term *èr wù* 二物 indicates two similar affairs; see MZ 48 (‘Gōng Mèng’ 公孟), 12: 412; and 9 (‘Shàng xián’ 尚賢 II), 2: 50. *Èr wù* and *sān wù* seem to be used in a quite general sense as anaphoric expressions and may refer to things, affairs, facts, etc. in general, as in the expressions “important matter” and “unimportant matter” (*dà wù* 大物, *xiǎo wù* 小物). However, in my view, it is questionable to take these passages as evidence for the use of *wù* meaning ‘something’ in logical discussions. For individual names in the ‘Canons’, see Graham A 78 on page 325.

69 GSLZ (11b).

into a “solid-name”,⁷⁰ and the denoted things are not mere things as such: they become ‘solids’,⁷¹ objects endowed with specific properties and functions, and located in a certain place. We can refer to an object by its solid-name, just as we address people by their title. Like titles, solid-names imply that the denoted object should act in accordance with its designation. In the later passages of the Treatise, the solidity of the name is connected with the capacity of the denoted object to ‘respond’: the object is expected to satisfy the functions and tasks related to its position.

The metaphysical conception of the Treatise suggests the possibility of combining these two paradigms. Individual things occupy positions in the spatio-temporal realm of heaven and earth and form lineages that relate them to other things. For instance, we apply relative names such as ‘father’ or ‘mother’ to individuals to make this structure visible to us. Chinese texts may also consider other names to be relative – for instance, they may offer relative descriptions for names such as ‘water’ and ‘fire’, or ‘wood’ and ‘metal’: “[t]he nature of water is to soak and descend; of fire, to blaze and ascend; of wood, to be crooked and to be straight; of metal, to obey and to change.”⁷² Certain functions are inherent in things, related to their properties (‘wet’, ‘hot’, etc.) as well as to their opposite functions (‘to ascend’, ‘to descend’, etc.). Titles are no different: they directly relate individuals to positions in a greater administrative unit and denote functions specific to them within this larger system of organization.

The concept of a name in the Treatise conforms to the descriptions given in the Mohist ‘Canons’ – they are not “terms of a realm of universals in which each name can have its own point-by-point counterpart”.⁷³ Yet the description of names in the Treatise also differs from the Mohists’ conception in certain respects. In the Mohist view, names such as ‘round’ and ‘tiger’ are applied to objects when the properties of the objects match specific ‘standards’.⁷⁴ The Treatise does not mention standards, but judges the correctness of a name according to its ‘actuality’ and its ‘place’. Furthermore, the Treatise discusses the relation between a name and its object differently. According to Graham, “[t]he Mohist [...] thinks of many names as fitting one mutable object, the name of

⁷⁰ I borrow the concept of ‘transformation’ from Dù Guóxiáng’s (1977: 102) discussion of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter.

⁷¹ Graham 2003: 35.

⁷² From the ‘Great Plan’ (*Hóng fān* 洪範) chapter of the *Venerated Documents* (*Shàng shū* 尚書), Legge 1982: 324–325.

⁷³ Graham 2003: 35.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of these standards, see Graham 2003: 35–37.

what it is ('stone') and names of what is so of it, either through duration ('white') or temporarily ('big' until the stone is broken up)".⁷⁵ This remains quite opposed to the Treatise's idea that names are inherently attributed to things. However, since the Treatise discusses names in a predication, the relation of names to things has to be understood from this perspective.

We may consider the discussion about the correctness of naming in the Treatise as a treatment of meaning and truth. Alexis McLeod pointed out the fact that "the early Chinese focus on names rather than sentences does not entail the lack of a concept of truth or concern about truth". He criticizes Chad Hansen for his claim that in early Chinese philosophy, "[t]he concept of truth is both unnecessary and discordant with linguistic focus on *míng* ('names') rather than on sentences. No truth theorizing occurred because no theorizing about things to which 'truth' applies occurred".⁷⁶ Instead, "names [. . . can] be understood as descriptions in such a way that a consideration of the acceptability of names can be seen as considerations about whether particular things satisfy certain descriptions".⁷⁷ In the Treatise's view, the concept of the 'solidity' of a name implies that names in a predication make truth claims, just as McLeod suggests. The Treatise even goes one step further: it provides an investigation of how names imply such a claim, and how this claim is expressed. On the other hand, the Treatise does not abstract names from their actualizations in predication. Names are not considered to be distinct from their 'solidity'.

Solidity is the concept truth claims actually rest upon. Solidity is constituted by incorporating the dyadic name-thing relationship under the condition that both items have to match each other. Equating "the name 'thing' to what is named 'thing'" (*wù qí suǒ wù* 物其所物) makes the name 'solid'. The solid-name is the form of the name used in a predication, since it is predicated upon an object and represented by the designated object. In the end, due to this theory of the representation of names in objects, names imply truth claims. Moreover, due to the definition of solidity as capacity, these truth claims are expressed and can be used as a criterion to judge whether the designated object satisfies the requirement given to it by its name. Names authorize things, and 'place' – in the sense of location as well as position – can be considered the distinctive determination of this authorization.

The correctness of the usage of a name has to be judged by its solidity and place, its representation and its authorization. Authorization implies limitation,

⁷⁵ Graham 2003: 35.

⁷⁶ McLeod 2016: 13; the cited passage is taken from Chad Hansen 1985: 502.

⁷⁷ McLeod 2016: 12.

and the ‘authority’ of a name is limited by its position in relation to other positions. We have to examine whether the object representing the name corresponds with the name (this acts as ‘this’; that acts as ‘that’) and whether the object matches the position of ‘this’ or ‘that’ (this is at the place ‘this’; that is at the place ‘that’).⁷⁸

Let us come back to the question of how solidity is related to meaning. Although primarily analyzed in its pragmatic context as a designation,⁷⁹ the concept of solidity does not exclude the semantic dimension. The semantic meaning of the name, however, does not refer to ‘conceptual’ content, but to the designated object as its representation and to the place as an expression of its capacity. The pragmatic meaning of a name is given to the object which is said to possess the capacity and authority to satisfy and respond to its designation. The meaning of a name is contained in the relation of the name to its object. This relation is multifaceted. On the one hand, it is considered to be symmetric: ‘names’ and ‘objects’ are juxtaposed with each other as signifier and signified, and thus set in correspondence with each other. On the other hand, it is asymmetric: the objective realm is defined by the nominal realm, or at least by some aspects of it; conversely, actuality or representation in the objective realm determines actuality or presence in the nominal realm. In order to evaluate the correctness of a name, we have to consider both the semantic and the pragmatic content of a name: “To make right what is [named to be] filled out” (*zhèng qí suǒ shí* 正其所實) is the way to “rectify names” (*zhèng míng* 正名).⁸⁰ Our analysis of the concept of solidity shows that, at one and the same time, we have to understand the phrase “what is named to be filled out” in at least two ways – namely, according to the representative and authoritative functions of a name.

Since names are considered parts of a predication, designating things or the practice of ‘naming’ (*míng*) seems to be the overall concept under which the linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of names are discussed. The pragmatic aims of the argument prevail in the analysis of language. Nevertheless, we may distinguish three different conceptual levels when it comes to how names are used in the predication. Names are real, single *entities* in the linguistic realm (words) as well as in the physical realm (embodied in their objects);

78 *GSLZ* (12b): “知此之非此也，知此之不在此也，則不謂也。知彼之非彼也，知彼之不在彼也，則不謂也。”

79 This “pragmatic” attitude toward language is generally attested for linguistic discussions in ancient China. “The clearly predominant traditional Chinese interest in language was social, not theoretically linguistic in a narrow sense” (Harbsmeier 1998: 46).

80 See *MSL* in *GSLZ* (12a): “正者正其所實也。正其所實者正其名也。” *Wū Fēibǎi* (1983: 510) also stresses this point.

names are *relations*, since they are intrinsically attributed to things and take things as their objects or locate things in a certain place; and names are *acts* that make designations and bestow authorization. These categories expose the different conceptual levels of names and the compositional structure of the relation between name and object. Even though the Treatise does not offer a distinct term for subsuming the categories into one concept, we may use the expression *míng shí* 名實 (taken as a modifier-head construction) to capture their meaning: the categories constitute “the reality of names”.

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Liú Tǐshèng 劉體勝

7 A New Interpretation of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s 'Zhǐwù lùn' (Discourse on Pointings and Things) and 'Míngshí lùn' (Discourse on Names and Actualities)

The 'Zhǐwù lùn' 指物論 chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 is arguably one of the most difficult pre-imperial Chinese texts. The obvious reason for its inaccessibility is its repetitive structure. The central terms, *zhǐ* 指 (which literally means 'finger', but also, in a verbal reading, 'to point') and *wù* 物 ('thing'), together make up for roughly one-quarter of the entire word count. As the treatise itself does not provide any definition for these crucial terms, there have been a great number of extremely divergent interpretations of the meaning of the term *zhǐ* and an abundance of proposals on its relationship to *wù*. In spite of this sheer variation of interpretations, there are still more or less clear lines along which they can be classified. The most basic distinction I suggest here is between traditional Chinese approaches and analyses by modern scholars inspired by Western methods. Traditional interpretations attempt to arrive at an analysis of the terms and their relationship on the basis of the inherited pre-Qín masters literature, and thus resort to an autochthonous hermeneutical approach. What I call "Western" interpretations, by contrast, base their analyses on relevant theoretical literature from outside China, e.g. on Marxist theories. Since the May Fourth Movement in the late 1910s and the subsequent impact of Western theories, the latter approach has become the dominant interpretive framework. Within both of these broadly defined groups, one can further distinguish various smaller trends with specific features.

Note: Original title 指物與名實——公孫龍子名學思想新探. Translated by Xǔzhāng Mù 穆樟樟, Rafael Suter.

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1 A New Approach to ‘Zhǐwù lùn’

1.1 Traditional Interpretations

1.1.1 The Daoist (Lǎo-Zhuāng) Tradition

The Tang dynasty scholars Jiǎ Dàiyǐn 賈大隱 (fl. 676–679) and Chén Sìgǔ 陳嗣古 were the first to annotate the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, but their commentaries have been lost.¹ The earliest extant commentary available is Xiè Xīshēn’s 謝希深 (ca. 994–1039) *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ zhù* 公孫龍子注, dating from the Sòng period (c. 10 CE). Both the commentary’s authorship and its time of composition are controversial.² Xiè interprets ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ on the basis of the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, glossing *zhǐ* with *shì fēi* 是非 (‘right and wrong’):

I and the [other] things have different abilities. All things judge others by pointing a finger at them, thus pointing fingers at each other. Pointing fingers at each other means to deem each other right or wrong. But in fact things continuously change and the boundaries of right and wrong get blurred, so that right and wrong lead to a realm where there is no pointing fingers at each other. Therefore it says: pointing fingers at each other annihilates pointing fingers at each other.³

In Wáng Guǎn’s opinion, this commentary, which quotes from the *Zhuāngzǐ*’s ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論 (Leveling Out Things), “is entirely off the mark”.⁴ However correct Wáng’s view may be, it still seems wrong to ridicule Xiè’s rather strange interpretation, as this means ignoring the specific value of his approach to reading ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ through the lens of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Moreover, Xiè’s annotation may be a useful guide toward a possible understanding of the meaning of the term *zhǐ*. And as *Gōngsūn Lóng* is mentioned in several chapters of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, such as ‘Qīushuǐ’ 秋水 (Autumn Floods) or ‘Tiānxià’ 天下 (All-Under-Heaven), there does indeed seem to be a certain connection between the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, a valuable observation which has guided later commentators.

The Qīng scholar Fù Shān 傅山 (1607–1684) approved of Xiè Xīshēn’s views, and Lǚ Sīmǎn 呂思勉 (1884–1957) developed them further. For his annotations, the latter also relied on the *Zhuāngzǐ*, additionally taking into

1 Cf. *Jiù Táng shū*, ch. 49, ‘Jīng jí zhì’ 經籍志; *Xīn Táng shū*, ch. 59, ‘Yì wén zhì’ 藝文志; *Tōng zhì*, ‘Yì wén lüè’ 藝文略.

2 Luán 1982: 141.

3 Xiè 1991: 12.

4 Wáng 1992: 48.

account the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子. Basing his interpretation on the statement in the *Zhuāngzǐ* that “direction is lost in change” (*zhǐ qióng yú wéi* 指窮於為),⁵ he explained that *zhǐ* means direction:

In this chapter, the word *zhǐ* has to be interpreted like this. It expresses the fact that people's knowledge of space relies on actual objects. But as in the world there are only actual objects but nothing called space, [Gōngsūn Lóng] simply refuted the common-sense view that actual things are actual things by themselves, just as space is space by itself.⁶

Among those who interpret 'Zhǐwù lùn' against the background of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the view of Cheng Chung-ying and Richard H. Swain is rather unique. They analyze 'Zhǐwù lùn' from a noteworthy perspective that combines logical and meta-physical considerations. Drawing on a distinction in the *Zhuāngzǐ* between concrete and subsistent things (i.e. a subsistent field of undifferentiated matter), the article suggests that the term *wù* as used by Gōngsūn Lóng carries two different meanings: (a) thing in the sense of a homogeneous “subsistent field” on the one hand, and (b) thing as shaped “concrete things” on the other. Furthermore, they interpret the term *zhǐ* as the act of pointing, which, according to them, analogously falls into two distinct classes – namely, acts referring to observable things and acts referring to the unobservable field of the indistinct.⁷ However, on the basis of both the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the fact that the *Zhuāngzǐ* ridicules Gōngsūn Lóng, it is difficult for me to see this difference in the basic meaning of these terms.

Zhōu Shān 周山 bases his interpretation of 'Zhǐwù lùn' on statements from the *Lǎozǐ* 老子. In his view, our treatise from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is to be read in terms of the *Lǎozǐ*'s dictum that “a name that can be named is not an eternal name”. As a consequence, he analyzes the relationship between *zhǐ* 指 ‘pointer’ and *wù zhǐ* 物指 ‘thing pointer’ as a relation between the “eternal name” and the the thing that “can be named”.⁸

In sum, the above examples illustrate that interpretations of our treatise based on the *Zhuāngzǐ* or the *Lǎozǐ* not only leave one with the impression that 'Zhǐwù lùn' is treated as a mere footnote to either of these texts, but that they also tend to depart from the main topic of the treatise itself. These shortcomings notwithstanding, they are still valuable in identifying various possible points of reference in the traditional literature.

⁵ *Zhuāngzǐ* 8/21.

⁶ Lǚ 1930: 140–141.

⁷ Cheng/Swain 1970.

⁸ Zhōu 2006.

1.1.2 Interpretations in Terms of Reference

In spite of a few early studies of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – such as by the eminent Ming scholar Yáng Shèn 楊慎 (1488–1559), who wrote a commentary that later fell into oblivion – it was only in the late years of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) that scholarship on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* eventually gained momentum. The excellent philologist Yú Yuè 俞樾 (1821–1907) also contributed an interpretation of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ that had a tremendous impact on later scholars. He writes:

Zhǐ (‘pointing’) means to point at something with one’s finger and to fix it with one’s eyes (*zhǐ mù* 指目). When I see a cow, I point at it with my fingers and eyes and call it a cow; when I see a horse, I point at it with my fingers and eyes and call it a horse. This is what is meant by “there is no thing that is not pointed” (*wù mò fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指). But people consider ‘cow’ and ‘horse’ simply to be names. But how can I know then that ‘cow’ is not ‘horse’, or that ‘horse’ is not ‘cow’? That’s the reason why the “pointed are not the pointed” (*zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指).⁹

In my opinion, Yú Yuè’s explanation of *zhǐ* in the sense of “pointing at what we see” and the parallel he draws between the relationship between name and object on the one hand, and the relation between pointing and object on the other, is closer to the original meaning of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* than most other traditional interpretations. Yú Yuè’s short note proved seminal for later interpretations of the treatise. Modern scholars such as Wáng Guǎn 王琯 (sobriquet of Wáng Xiàntáng 王獻唐 1896–1960),¹⁰ Jīn Shòushēn 金受申 (1906–1968),¹¹ Wǔ Fēibǎi 伍非百 (1890–1965),¹² Chén Zhù 陳柱 (1890–1944),¹³ and Tán Jièfǔ 譚戒甫 (1887–1974) all adopted and further developed Yú Yuè’s explanation. The prominent sinologist A. C. Graham (1919–1991) has also proposed a similar interpretation of *zhǐ*.¹⁴

Viewing the text from the perspective of the commentarial tradition and judging from the interpretative context provided by such pre-Qín texts as the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the Mohist ‘Canons’ (*Mòjīng* 墨經), or the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the above-mentioned scholars are no doubt right to determine the meaning of *zhǐ* as a “pointing designation” or “designating appellation” (*zhǐwèi* 指謂). It is certainly right to analyze the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ from the vantage point of its

⁹ Yú 1956: 29.

¹⁰ Wáng 1992.

¹¹ Jīn 1931.

¹² Wǔ 1983.

¹³ Chén 1937.

¹⁴ Gé [Graham] 2003: 110.

attribution to the “School of Names” (*míngjiā* 名家). Still, the different interpretations presented above also appear insufficient in various respects. Thus, they analyze *wù* (‘thing’) in the narrow sense of ‘material thing’ (*shìwù* 事物), which shows a certain degree of arbitrariness and simplification on the level of analysis and interpretation. Therefore, their analytical comments not only appear incomplete and problematic from an intratextual perspective on ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, but they also seem to conflict with the basic tendency of the “School of Names” to lay sustained emphasis on the role of names. Yú Yuè’s treatment of the difference between *zhǐ* ‘pointer’ and *míng* 名 ‘name’, just to take one example representative of the entire above-mentioned group, is clearly unsatisfactory and in obvious need of further analysis and sophistication. Examples such as “Zāng [has] three ears” (*Zāng sān ěr* 臧三耳) or “a chicken [has] three legs” (*jī sān zú* 雞三足) in fact show that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* does not touch upon a distinction between material things and their designations. Rather it is the other way round, in that both material things and designations are actually considered to represent an inseparable unity. The frame of interpretation under discussion has thus provided later interpreters with a reliable and important foundation. Although in obvious need of further improvement, this basis on the one hand clearly indicates the direction future research efforts must take. On the other, it also identifies the necessity of a thorough reexamination of the implications of the term *wù* ‘thing’ as one of the bottlenecks to overcome. This is precisely one of the goals of this chapter.

1.1.3 Other Traditional Interpretations

Among those who follow the traditional lines of interpretation further are people such as Chén Lǐ 陳澧 (1810–1882), Xīn Cóngyì 辛從益 (1760–1828), Zhāng Tàiyán 章太炎 (1869–1936), and Xú Fùguān 徐復觀 (1904–1982). Chén Lǐ interprets *zhǐ* to mean finger, stating that “people use their fingers to point at things, and while all things are pointed at, the finger itself is not pointed at”.¹⁵ In Xīn Cóngyì’s view, *zhǐ* 指 is to be identified with *zhǐ* 旨 (‘basic meaning’ or ‘principle’), of which it is a graphical variant: “*zhǐ* here is like principle. It is the highest principle, the ultimate point of reference”,¹⁶ and “*wù* (‘thing’) is shape; principle dominates shape. If something has a specific shape, there necessarily

15 “人以手指指物，物皆是指而手指非指” (Chén 1937: 86).

16 “指猶主也，宗指也，指歸也” (Xīn 1991: 24).

is something that dominates this shape”.¹⁷ Both Chén’s and Xīn’s analyses of the term *zhǐ* obviously remain within the scope of traditional explications.

Xú Fùguān starts from *zhǐ* ‘to point’ in the sense of *zhǐchì* 指斥 ‘to point out’:

Zhǐ is the cognitive subject as well as the reflection received at the time when the cognitive subject points in the direction of a thing. The cognitive subject appears due to its pointing in the direction of a thing. Therefore one calls it *zhǐ*, ‘pointing out’. Pointing in the direction of a thing, it captures the reflection of that thing. This reflection arises due to [the subject’s] pointing out. Hence, one can also call it [= this reflection] ‘pointing out’.¹⁸

Although the traditional sense of *zhǐ* ‘to point’ has the connotation of pointing out, it does not mean ‘to project’. Thus Xú Fùguān’s analysis, which invokes the idea of a ‘projecting consciousness’, is rather innovative, and it enriches the traditional view with a perspective resembling modern epistemological considerations. Zhāng Tàiyán’s analysis of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ also belongs among the more traditional accounts. He interprets *zhǐ* in terms of the two Buddhist concepts of ‘sense contents’ (*viśaya*, *jìng* 境) and ‘sense consciousness’ (*viññāna*, *shí* 識):

What he [Gōngsūn Lóng] calls *zhǐ* (‘pointer’), in the first occurrence expresses the object which is ‘pointed out’, that is the sense content (*viśaya*), whereas in the second occurrence, *zhǐ* (‘pointer’) expresses the cognitive faculty that is ‘pointing out’, namely the sense consciousness [perception]’ (*viññāna*). All things have something to which they are opposed [namely, the sense bases (*āyatana*)], therefore they are all sense contents. In contrast, sense consciousness has nothing to which it is opposed, hence it is not itself a sense content.¹⁹

Zhāng’s analysis is obviously an explication of his own elaboration of the Buddhist “consciousness-only theory” (*viññāptimātratāvāda*) rather than an interpretation of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ in its own right.

1.2 Hermeneutical Approaches Inspired by “Western” Methods

Ever since the May Fourth Movement in 1919, a host of new approaches provided by so-called “Western learning” have been applied to the analysis of traditional Chinese texts. Against this backdrop, a great number of Chinese scholars has sought to interpret ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ in terms of Western philosophy,

17 “物者，形也；指者，形之主也。有是形必有主是形者” (Xīn 1991: 24).

18 “指系認識能力及由認識能力指向於物時所得之映射。認識能力因指向於物而見，故可稱為指。指向於物而得到物之映射，此映射系由指而來，故亦可稱之為指” (Xú 1984: 13).

19 Wǔ 1983: 658.

most prominently logic and semiotics. Up to the present day, these new approaches have dominated Chinese research on the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

1.2.1 Empiricist Theories: *Zhǐ* as Material Properties or Elements

Hú Shì 胡適 appears to have been the pioneer in first applying the methods of “Western learning” to ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’. His analysis of the term *zhǐ* has changed somewhat over time. In his *History of Logic in Pre-Imperial China*, he understood the term as a sign or a mark. He identified its meaning as something “by means of which one recognizes the property or attribute of a thing”. In this view, “the meaning of ‘every thing is a *zhǐ*’ is precisely that a thing appears in the very way in which its properties point it out and in which they are perceived by the senses (*gǎnzhi* 感知)”.²⁰ In his *Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, Hú Shì further clarified his empiricist interpretation and explicitly defined the meaning of *zhǐ* as an “external [sensual] property” (*biǎodé* 表德).²¹ While it is already difficult to follow Hú’s interpretation of *zhǐ* in the sense of mark or sign, his further specification in terms of a sensual property is entirely misled and lacks any basis in traditional Chinese texts. Other scholars who analyzed ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ from the perspective of empiricism and who identified the term *zhǐ* as a ‘property of an object’ (*wùdé* 物德) include scholars such as Yú Yú 虞愚 (1909–1989),²² Qián Mù 錢穆 (1895–1990),²³ and Tán Jiěfǔ.²⁴ The details of their analyses differ considerably. Tán Jiěfǔ synthesized Yú Yuè’s and Hú Shì’s interpretations of the term, claiming that its definition includes both the aspects of a ‘pointing designation’ (*zhǐwèi* 指謂) and of a ‘property of an object’ (*wùdé* 物德):

As for the meaning of *zhǐ*, one thus has to differentiate between *zhǐ* in the sense of a ‘name’ and *zhǐ* in the sense of a ‘designated’ [property]. *Zhǐ* in the sense of pointing something out with one’s eyes means to *designate* [by a word]; on this ground, the shape and color of the [concrete] cow or horse one thus points out are also called *zhǐ*; they are [the] names [of these things]. [...] However, the three [elements of] shape, color, and nature can all be called properties, and it is precisely these which are called *zhǐ*.²⁵

²⁰ Hú 1999: 150.

²¹ Hú 1996: 216.

²² Yú 1992.

²³ Qián 1998.

²⁴ Tán 1963.

²⁵ “蓋指義有二，即‘名’‘謂’之別。其指目牛馬之指，謂也；因而所指目牛馬之形色性亦曰指，名也。……然則形色性三者可稱為德，亦即此所謂指耳。” (Tán 1963: 18).

Although Tán clearly adopted Yú Yuè's view, in his overall approach he still followed the lines of Western empiricism. He states:

That no thing is not a *zhǐ* is to say that the things which our sensual organs perceive all belong among material properties like shape, color, etc. Plainly speaking, what our contemporaries call things in the sense of real entities (*wù zhī shíti* 物之實體) [thus] do not exist at all; what is called 'thing' is nothing but an appearance (*biǎoxiàn* 表現) of *zhǐ*. Therefore it is said: No thing is not a *zhǐ*. Thus, although with respect to the relationship between thing and *zhǐ*, one establishes two designations, any *zhǐ* which we consciously perceive, that in which they [these *zhǐ*] appear, is nothing other than what we call things. Therefore, things are precisely *zhǐ*, and *zhǐ* likewise are precisely things. Now, *zhǐ* are things, but through their designations they are isolated [and distinguished] from each other, so that a thing [at the same time] is not a *zhǐ*. And as a thing is a not-*zhǐ*, a *zhǐ* [in some sense] also is not-*zhǐ*. Therefore it says: "But a *zhǐ* is a not-*zhǐ*."²⁶

Another scholar who analyzes the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s 'Zhǐwù lùn' from the perspective of Western empiricism is Dí Jinchéng 翟錦程.²⁷

1.2.2 *Zhǐ* as Attribute

Among the most important representatives of this theory is Shěn Yǒudǐng 沈有鼎 (1908–1989). His analysis somewhat resembles Hú Shì's. He considers that

what is called *zhǐ* is something like 'hard', what is called 'thing' is something like 'stone' (a single, distinctive stone). In our opinion, *zhǐ* has the meaning of symbol or sign, which is in turn further generalized in the sense of any attribute of a thing. And as an attribute is something general (*yībān* 一般), we can further conclude that the topic of 'Zhǐwù lùn' is the dialectical relationship between the particular and the general (*yībān*).²⁸

Other scholars who share this interpretation in terms of attributes include Hú Qūyuán 胡曲園 (1905–1993), Chén Jìnkūn 陳進坤, and others whom I shall not discuss here in detail.²⁹

²⁶ “物莫非指，言吾人五官所感覺之物，皆屬形色性等之物德。直而言之，世人所謂物之實體，全然無有；所謂物者不過指之表現，故曰物莫非指。是以物之與指，雖立二名，而吾人所感覺之指，其所呈者又皆吾人之所謂物。則物即指，指亦即物也。指既為物，物名得專，則物非指。物既非指，則指亦非指，故曰‘而指非指’。” (Tán 1963: 18–19).

²⁷ Dí 2005.

²⁸ “所謂‘指’就是像‘堅’那樣的東西，所謂‘物’就是像‘石’（個別的石）那樣的東西。我們認為‘指’有記號、象徵的意思，再推廣為事物的任何屬性。屬性既然是一般，那末我們可以進而指出，《指物論》所討論的正是個別和一般的辯證關係。” (Shěn 1992: 268).

²⁹ Hú/Chén 1987.

1.2.3 Zhǐ as Universal

For a long period in the history of the interpretation of 'Zhǐwù lùn', approaches analyzing it in terms of a theory of concepts (alternatively called a theory of universals) were extremely widespread and dominant. Analyses of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s *zhǐ* based on the Western paradigm of universal or concept consider the relationship between *zhǐ* and things as discussed in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* to pertain to the connection between concepts and their instantiation in particular objects. The first to apply this interpretational approach was Féng Yǒulán 馮友蘭 (1895–1990). In his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, he very clearly states that “things are what occupies a position in space and time, that is what in contemporary philosophy is called a concrete individual”, and “what the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* calls *zhǐ* is the concept. . . . Not yet having coined a special term for ‘universal’, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* uses *zhǐ* to name it, just as Plato’s ideas are in fact equivalent to universals”.³⁰ In his *Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Féng gives two explanations for why *zhǐ* can be interpreted as ‘concept’ or ‘universal’: One is a peculiarity of the Chinese language, which defines “a universal” as “exactly the thing which is ‘denoted’ (lit. ‘pointed at’, *zhǐ*) by a name. This is the reason why the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* calls universals *zhǐ*”. The second invokes the homonymy of *zhǐ* (‘to point’) with *zhǐ* (旨 ‘purport/implication’) which latter corresponds to the sense of ‘idea’ or ‘concept’.³¹ In approximating *zhǐ* to the notion of ‘concept’ and further stating that it “is equivalent to [the notion of] idea”, Féng clearly differs from traditional commentaries. Although his analysis was supported by Guō Zhànbō 郭湛波 (1905–1989),³² he definitely goes way too far when he interprets the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ in terms of Platonic idealism.

Other scholars who support an analysis of *zhǐ* in terms of ‘universal’ or ‘concept’ include Guō Mòruò 郭沫若 (1892–1978), Hóu Wàilú 侯外廬 (1903–1987), Rèn Jìyù 任繼愈 (1916–2009), and others.³³ As Yáng Jùnguāng 楊俊光 (b. 1932)

30 “物為占空間時間中之位置者，即現在哲學中所謂具體的個體也”，“公孫龍子所謂‘指’，即概念也。 公孫龍子未為共相專立名詞，即以‘指’名之，猶柏拉圖所說之概念 (Idea)，即指共相也。” (Féng 2000: 157–158).

31 “一個共相就是一個名所‘指’的東西。公孫龍子把共相叫做‘指’，就是這個原故。 ‘旨’字有相當於‘觀念’、‘概念’的意思” (Féng 1996: 79).

32 Guō 1992: 132–133.

33 In his *Ten Books of Critique* (*Shí pīpàn shū* 十批判書), Guō Mòruò considers *zhǐ* in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* “equivalent to what today is discussed as idea or what is called a universal” (“相當於現今所說的觀念，或謂之共相”) (Guō 1954: 242). When Hóu Wàilú et al. in their *Comprehensive History of Chinese Thought* (*Zhōngguó sīxiǎng tōngshǐ*) discuss the phrase “no thing is not a *zhǐ*, but a *zhǐ* is a non-*zhǐ*” (*wú mò fēi zhǐ, ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ*), they explain: “Each of the concrete objects in the world like a white horse, a black ox, or a hard and white stone is also a

has noted, the interpretation of *zhǐ* in terms of ‘idea’, ‘concept’, or ‘universal’ has been rather unanimously and commonly accepted in academia after 1949.³⁴ At that time, research on ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ in the People’s Republic mainly concentrated on the controversial question of whether this treatise represents idealist or materialist thinking. Some scholars from Taiwan and Hong Kong, such as Láo Sīguāng 勞思光 (1927–2012),³⁵ also consider the topic of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ to be the relation between ‘concepts’ and ‘particular objects’. Zhōu Chāngzhōng 周昌忠 holds a similar position. Analyzing ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ from the perspective of Kantian epistemology, he develops a decidedly Kantian view of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the “School of Names”.³⁶

Dù Guóxiáng 杜國庠 (1889–1961) combined the two analyses of *zhǐ* in terms of ‘attribute’ and ‘concept’. Taking the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s ‘Jiānbái lùn’ 堅白論 and ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ together, he interprets *zhǐ* in terms of ‘concepts’ or ‘universals’ abstracted from the different attributes of objects:

In ‘Jiānbái lùn’, we saw that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* abstracted the whiteness of a stone (*shí zhī bái* 石之白) or the hardness of a stone (*shí zhī jiān* 石之堅), that is, various attributes of things, regarding them as independent and self-contained entities which are separated from human consciousness. In ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, these entities are called *zhǐ*, whilst the whiteness of a stone, the hardness of a stone, etc. are called “*zhǐ* of things” (*wùzhǐ* 物指). *Zhǐ* is something invisible and untouchable, corresponding to what we call a concept (universal).³⁷

Xǔ Kàngshēng’s 許抗生³⁸ (b. 1937) analysis of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is very similar to this. Dù’s position was also supported by scholars like Wāng Diànjī 汪奠基 and Luán Xīng 樂星. However, the latter two differ from Dù in that they complement his analysis with the above-mentioned theory that ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ deals with the properties of things. As a consequence, they enrich Dù’s analysis in a sense

concept. But this concept is neither contained in one’s subjective cognitive faculties, nor is it an objective object of cognition. Rather it is an independent reality separate from subjective cognition and objective matter (*wùjiàn*)” (宇宙所有具體事物，如白馬、驢牛、堅白石等，莫非概念。但此概念，既不在主觀的能知中，亦非客觀的所知，而是離開主觀認識與客觀物件的獨有的實在。) (Hóu et al. 1951: 358–359). This analysis of *zhǐ* in terms of ‘concept’ is shared in the *History of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhōngguó zhéxué shǐ*), edited by Rèn Jiyù. See Rèn 1996: 185.

34 Yáng 1986: 62.

35 Láo 2005: 290.

36 Zhōu 1991.

37 “在《堅白論》中，我們看到了公孫龍子把‘石之白’、‘石之堅’等，即物的屬性抽象了，把它們看做離開人們意識互相分離而獨立自藏的東西。這東西在‘指物論’中被稱為‘指’，而把石之白、石之堅等叫做‘物指’。‘指’是看不見摸不著的東西，相當於我們所說的概念（共相）。” (Dù 1955: 17).

38 Xǔ 1980.

by interpreting *wùzhǐ* 物指 (lit. 'zhǐ of things') in the sense of a 'concrete property' or 'phenomenon'.³⁹

Chén Guǐmiǎo's 陳癸淼 (1934–2014) explanation of the meaning of *zhǐ* also shares a conceptualist point of view. He claims that the *zhǐ* discussed in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* are the concepts 'designating' (*zhǐwèi* 指謂) or 'predicating on' (*lùnwèi* 論謂) objective, real things. He is furthermore convinced that this interpretation also covers similar theories in other masters texts.⁴⁰ This view is also acknowledged by Móu Zōngsān 牟宗三, who complements it with his own comment on the treatise.⁴¹

Even if, in abstracting from the requirements of a serious interpretation of the text, we would like to discuss our treatise in terms of 'universals' or 'attributes', I think that in the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the term which comes closest to these notions is *lí* 離 (lit. 'abstracts', 'isolates') rather than *zhǐ*. In 'Jiānbái lùn', the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* clearly admits that 'hardness', 'whiteness', and the like can be independent, self-contained entities, which it defines as *lí*, i.e. 'abstract' or 'isolated':

This is like 'whiteness', which is seen by means of the eye and the light, whilst the light [itself] is unseen; therefore neither the eye nor the light see, but the spirit sees; the spirit is not seen, but it sees [or: makes visible] *isolates* (*lí*, 'isolated entities'). [...] In this world, these *isolates* are inevitably independent and correct [in themselves].

且猶白，以目、以火見，而火不見；則火與目不見，而神見；神不見，而見離。... 離也者，天下故獨而正。⁴²

In 'Zhǐwù lùn', it is written: "*zhǐ* do not exist in the world".⁴³ Considering the hypothesis that *zhǐ* means 'universal' or 'attribute' therefore amounts to the assumption that the 'Zhǐwù lùn' and 'Jiānbái lùn' chapters of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* put forth opposing explanations of this problem: The former would claim that they "don't exist in the world", whereas the latter clearly declares such universals or attributes as hardness or whiteness real entities, which "in this world are inevitably independent and correct [in themselves]"; this is an obvious contradiction. But topics such as "chicken [has] three feet" (*jī zú sān* 雞足三)⁴⁴ or "ox-and-sheep [has] five feet" (*niú yáng zú wǔ* 牛羊足五)⁴⁵ are also sufficient to

39 Wáng 1979: 90; Luán 1982: 100.

40 Chén 1986: 44.

41 Móu 2003.

42 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/23–25 (References are to the Harvard-Yenching concordance, the format is page number/line number).

43 “指也者，天下之所無也。” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11–12).

44 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, “Tōngbiàn lùn”, 6/17.

45 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, “Tōngbiàn lùn”, 6/17.

prove that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* does *not* introduce a distinction between what modern scholars who base themselves on Western philosophical vocabulary call concepts (i.e. ‘chicken foot’ or ‘ox -and -sheep foot’ as a concept) and concrete objects (chicken feet or the feet of oxen and sheep). Quite the contrary, these two are combined and regarded as one and the same thing in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*: “A chicken has three feet”; “the feet of ox-and-sheep are five.” For these reasons, I think one can hardly maintain that *zhǐ* is indeed to be understood in terms of ‘universal’ or ‘attribute’.

1.2.4 *Zhǐ* as Consciousness or Symbol

In a sense, Páng Pú 龐樸 also developed this analysis under the influence of the dualism of matter and mind current at the time of his writing. He thinks that the meaning of *zhǐ* comes close to ‘intention’ or ‘thought’ (*yì* 意), arguing that *zhǐ* in ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ means consciousness or thought, whereas *wù* (‘thing’) refers to matter or existents. In this view, the treatise would address “the problem of the mutual relationship of matter and mind”.⁴⁶ Since the 1990s, scholars such as Zhū Qiánhóng 朱前鴻⁴⁷ and Zēng Xiángyún 曾祥雲⁴⁸ have made insightful attempts to read and interpret ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ from the perspective of Western semiotics.

To sum up, modern and contemporary studies that interpret ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ according to the model of Western scholarship have doubtless left the traditional perspectives developed since the Sòng and Míng periods behind. Through the work of modern and contemporary scholars, research on pre-imperial theories of names has made its most significant advances since the sixteenth century. Their contributions to our understanding of the traditional Chinese “School of Names” are immense and go far beyond the interpretation of particular texts. At the same time, the shortcomings of their approaches are also all too evident. Running the danger of going too far in applying the methods of Western scholarship to Chinese sources, quite a few analyses entirely lose sight of the contexts of traditional culture and, in our particular case, of the traditional “School of Names”. As a consequence, their definitions of the meaning of *zhǐ* often lack any textual evidence.

⁴⁶ “物質和意識的關係問題” (Páng 1979: 20).

⁴⁷ Zhū 1997.

⁴⁸ Zēng 1999.

1.3 A Reflection on the Mutual Relationship of the Two Hermeneutical Approaches Discussed

In spite of their differences in presuppositions and textual evidence, both traditional and Western approaches to the text share one common assumption: they agree on the interpretation of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s notion of *wù* ('thing') in terms of an object or matter of fact (*shìwù* 事物). In fact, this common assumption proves to be the basis on which both approaches develop their respective interpretations of the term *zhǐ*. It is the common and uncontroversial point of departure upon which they base their theories about the relationship between *zhǐ* and *wù*. While there have been a host of conflicting interpretations of *zhǐ*, there is an astonishing conformity between old and new, West and East when it comes to the definition of the meaning of *wù*.

Based on the first part of this chapter, one could easily say that all analyses of 'Zhǐwù lùn' base themselves on this assumption, which they take as sufficient for reaching toward a conclusive interpretation of the text. But this is not necessarily the case. In fact, the complex and highly controversial history of the interpretation of *zhǐ* should rather alert us to the possibility that the common and uncontroversial point of departure, the shared interpretation of *wù* in terms of 'thing', might after all be fundamentally flawed. In the countless interpretations and reinterpretations of 'Zhǐwù lùn', the investigation of the term *wù*, which is obviously indispensable to an appropriate understanding of the text, has generally been widely neglected.

In modern hermeneutics, paradigmatically represented by Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, preliminary understanding (the so-called *Vorverständnis*) is considered the most fundamental condition for the advancement of the process of understanding. Any interpretation of a text is in fact deeply marked by the imprint of the interpreter and his or her time. It manifests their epoch's view of a certain matter of fact or a certain object. Even if the interpreters think they have a more complete understanding or grasp of the matter, they still have to maintain an open-minded attitude. They have to be susceptible to what the text tells them, and they need to pay attention to the critical assessment of the correctness or adequacy of their own preliminary understanding. I certainly do not mean to criticize previous scholars for an alleged lack of critical reflection on their own pre-understanding regarding the notions of *zhǐ*, *wù*, and their mutual relationship. At the same time, I am convinced that in reading their analyses, we should take into account the "implicit ways of thinking", as Gadamer puts it, which are mirrored in their understandings of the meanings of these pre-imperial terms. Focusing on the term *wù*, I moreover hope to develop a new analysis of 'Zhǐwù lùn' which is both evidence-based and consistent.

Zhū Xī 朱熹 (1130–1200) once warned us that in reading ancient texts, “we should understand the meaning of each word and grasp the intent of every phrase. We should not proceed to the next word or phrase as long as we have not yet fully grasped the preceding one. We should not try to understand something remote as long as we have not yet fully grasped what is at our hands”.⁴⁹ Likewise, Dài Zhèn 戴震 (1724–1777), from his philosophical perspective, noted regarding our method of interpreting the classics that “nothing in our interpretation can ignore the philological scrutiny of texts”.⁵⁰ Our interpretation rests on the careful analysis of each and every term. This general observation is all the more valid for our ‘Zhǐwù lùn’. As interpreters generally agree that this text is about the relation of *zhǐ* and *wù*, it seems clearly wrongheaded to simplify or even neglect our understanding of the second member of this relationship. Any understanding of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ as a whole rests upon our previous understanding of the meaning of *wù*.

The first question we have to address is whether the term *wù* in pre-Qín contexts can really only be interpreted in terms of its commonly assumed understanding as ‘object’ or ‘matter of fact’. We can hardly say that our analysis of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ is reliable as long as we are unable to base our interpretation on a detailed and substantial investigation, clarification, and definition of the meaning of *wù*, one which takes into account the interpretational background of the writings of the pre-imperial “School of Names”. It is only in this way that we are able to provide a solid basis for our analysis of the meaning of *zhǐ* and its relationship to *wù*.

1.4 An Investigation into the Meaning of the Terms *Wù* and *Zhǐ* in Pre-Qín Contexts

‘Zhǐwù lùn’ provides no definition of the meaning of the two terms *zhǐ* and *wù*. This makes it plain that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* uses these two concepts in a sense that must have been commonly accepted in the author’s time. The foundation of any interpretation of our text therefore clearly needs to be a semantic investigation of these two terms in a pre-Qín context.

1.4.1 The Meaning of *Wù* (‘Thing’)

Up to this point, almost all interpreters have unanimously interpreted the term *wù* in the sense an ‘object’ or a ‘matter of fact’, namely anything which exists.

49 字求其訓，句索其旨，未得乎前則不敢求其後，未通乎此則不敢志乎彼。(Zhū 1961: 634).

50 未有能外小學文字。(Dài 1995: 378).

However, this definition is in fact both ambiguous and inaccurate. It conflicts not only with the definition of this term in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* itself, but also with the meaning of *wù* in the linguistic context of the pre-Qín period.

In fact, there are rather precise definitions of the meaning of *wù* in pre-imperial texts. Only an object that can be directly perceived by our human senses can be called *wù*. This is paradigmatically expressed in the 'Dáshēng' 達生 chapter (Grasping Life) of the *Zhuāngzǐ*: "Whatever has either form, shape, sound, or color is a *wù*."⁵¹ In other words, only those concrete objects which are directly perceptible to human beings are considered things.

Concordantly with this, *wù* in extant pre-Qín texts also has a second meaning when it sometimes expresses a "designation of a concrete perceptible thing". In the second chapter of the 'Chǔ yǔ' 楚語 (Discourses from Chǔ) section of the *Guóyǔ* 國語 (Discourses of the States), we read: "The Jiǔlí (tribe) disturbed peace and virtue, confusing and troubling people and immortals. They stirred up chaos so that people were unable to distinguish the *appellations of things* (*bù kě fāng wù* 不可方物)."⁵² The commentator Wéi Zhāo 韋昭 (204–273) glossed the term *wù* as 'name' or 'designation' ("*wù* means 'name'").⁵³ In the 'Qíwù lùn' (Leveling Out Things) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, it says: "Roads are made by people walking on them; *wù* are so or so by people referring to them."⁵⁴ The *Zhuāngzǐ* compares *wù* – designations for things – with roads. While a road takes shape only after many people have walked it, names of things are determined only after many people call a kind of thing by a certain name. The 'Jǐfǔ' 跡府 (Collection of Accounts) chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* puts this even more explicitly:

White horse is not horse. By saying 'white' we name its color; by saying 'horse' we name its shape. Color is not shape, shape is not color. Thus if I tell you the color, it is inappropriate to consider the shape; if I tell you the shape, it is inappropriate to consider the color. It is therefore wrong to combine them into one thing.

白馬為非馬者：言白，所以名色；言馬，所以名形也。色非形，形非色也。夫言色，則形不當與；言形，則色不宜從。今合以為物，非也。⁵⁵

In this paragraph, the word *wù* also is to be understood in the sense of the *name* of a thing. The meaning is that it is wrong to intermingle and eventually identify the two distinct designations 'white horse' and 'horse'.

51 "凡有貌、象、聲、色者，皆物也。" (*Zhuāngzǐ* 49/32–50/1).

52 "九黎亂德，民神雜糅，不可方物。" (*Guóyǔ* 106/1).

53 "物，名也。" (Wéi 1937: 204).

54 "道，行之而成；物，謂之而然。" (*Zhuāngzǐ* 4/24).

55 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 1/6–8.

This investigation and clarification of the meaning of *wù* based on evidence from pre-Qin texts becomes even clearer if we consider the respective explanations in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* itself. In ‘Míngshí lùn’, it is explicitly written that “heaven, earth, and what arises from these are things (*wù*)”.⁵⁶ From this we can see that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* strictly defines the extension of what it captures in the concept of things: it exclusively comprises heaven, earth, and the natural objects which they produce. It thus not only excludes imperceptible or abstract objects, but moreover explicitly debars all kinds of human artifacts, which are nevertheless perceptible, concrete objects. Thus we can see that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* uses the concept of ‘thing’ even more restrictively than other pre-imperial texts. It is therefore completely mistaken for scholars to read the expression *wù* in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in ontological terms. Thus, the term *wù* here is used on two different levels of abstractness. In the first meaning, things are viewed as concrete and perceptible natural objects. The second meaning is closely related and in fact secondary to this basic definition: in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, the word *wù* in most instances is used in the sense of ‘name of thing’ or, more precisely, the ‘name of a concrete and perceptible natural thing’.

1.4.2 The Meaning of *Zhǐ*

The first part of this chapter has demonstrated that there is no unanimous interpretation of this term in previous scholarship. Let us therefore begin with a lexicographical investigation into its fundamental meaning. The *Shuōwén Jiězì* 說文解字 (Explaining unit graphs and analyzing compound characters) gives ‘to point out with one’s finger’⁵⁷ as the basic meaning of *zhǐ*. This is exemplified in the *Analects* (chapter ‘Bāyì’ 八佾), where it says “*zhǐ qí zhǎng*” 指其掌, that is, “to point to one’s palm”.⁵⁸ The *Guāngyǎ* 廣雅 glosses *wèi* 謂 ‘to call’ with the word *zhǐ*, roughly yielding “to call is to point out [with words]”.⁵⁹ In accordance with this explanation, *zhǐ* also has the meaning of ‘pointing and designating things’ (*zhǐ wèi* 指謂). This can be inferred from the Mohist ‘Canons’, where it says: “Things we know by name but cannot point at include spring, a minister who has deserted his post, ‘dog’ and ‘puppy’ [in a puppy dog], or a lost object.”⁶⁰ Although we know these expressions and the things to which they refer, we are unable to point them out, as

56 “天地與其所產焉，物也。” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3–4).

57 “指，手指也。” (*Shuōwén Jiězì*, p. 251).

58 *Lúnǚ* 3.11/5/21.

59 “謂，指也。” (Wáng 2004: 155).

60 “所知而弗能指，說在春也、逃臣、狗犬、遺者。” (Tán 1964: 287).

they are either absent or abstract. It is precisely in this sense that a statement attributed to the sophist Gōngsūn Lóng in the 'Tiānxià' 天下 chapter (All-Under-Heaven) of the *Zhuāngzǐ* notes that "pointings do not reach" (*zhǐ bù zhì* 指不至). Accordingly, the object of *zhǐ* in the sense of 'pointing at and designating something' is certainly an actually extant, concrete, perceptible object. This is likewise what the Mohist 'Canons' refer to when they speak about "showing the man by means of the actual object" (*yǐ shí shì rén* 以實視人). What does this expression mean? The 'Explanations' say: "If I point [at someone] saying, 'This is Huo', this is to show the man by means of the actual object."⁶¹ If we relate this concretely to the concept of *wù* as put forward in 'Zhǐwù lùn', the precise principal meaning of *zhǐ* is 'to point at and designate' some concrete, perceptible natural thing.

In the writings of the pre-imperial "School of Names", the basic verbal meaning of *zhǐ*, namely 'to point at and designate by name', can also be nominalized. Thus the Mohist 'Canons' state: "Some pointing designations are in duplication, but none of them can escape [scrutiny]. This is explained by the possibility of relating the two to a third [element]."⁶² In this sentence, *zhǐ* is a noun. The representatives of the Mohist "School of Names" appear to have thought that even if the "pointing designations" various people propose for some concrete object may be vastly different from each other ("Some pointing designations are in duplication", *yǒu zhǐ yú èr* 有指於二), they can still be tested as to their adequacy. Consequently, who is right and who is wrong can be determined ("the two can be related to a third", *yǐ èr cān* 以二參). By comparing different pointing designations and substantiating them on the basis of what they actually point at, one can finally arrive at the correct designation for the particular thing at hand.

On this topic, the *Zhuāngzǐ*'s 'Qíwù lùn' famously says: "Explaining that *zhǐ* is not-*zhǐ* by means of *zhǐ* is not as good as explaining it by means of not-*zhǐ*."⁶³ Here, the word *zhǐ* stands for the noun 'pointing and designating'. According to the *Zhuāngzǐ*, all things participate in the nature of the Way and thus have a value in themselves: "Things inevitably have an aspect in which they are true, an aspect in which they are acceptable."⁶⁴ For him, the same is true for all competing schools of thought; each one of them propagates the Way to some extent and has its reasonable aspects. However, each school equally has its shortcomings. Starting from the vantage point of leveling out the words of the hundred schools of thought by "affirming what they negate and negating what they

61 "指'是臠也', 是以實視人也。" (Tán 1964: 307).

62 "有指於二而不可逃, 說在以二參。" (Tán 1964: 285).

63 "以指喻指之非指, 不若以非指喻指之非指。" (*Zhuāngzǐ* 4/20–21).

64 "物固有所然, 物固有所可。" (*Zhuāngzǐ* 4/25).

affirm”,⁶⁵ the *Zhuāngzǐ* therefore holds that people need to break out of the restrictions of their own ‘pointing and naming’. Instead, one should investigate the ‘pointings and designations’ of one’s competitors from the perspective of the latter’s own theories. By so doing, one can recognize the reasonable aspects of the others’ ‘pointings and designations’, eventually acknowledging that the ‘pointings and designations’ of both sides are equally biased in their respective values and ontological commitments. Only in this state of mind can one eventually reach the level of an awareness of the Way. This is precisely the meaning of “explaining that *zhǐ* is not-*zhǐ* by means of not-*zhǐ*”. Thus we can see that the *Zhuāngzǐ*’s answer to the problem that “some pointing designations are in duplication” (*yǒu zhǐ yú èr* 有指於二) is fundamentally different from the one given by the Mohists, and that this position in the *Zhuāngzǐ* is moreover a critique of the respective theories in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.

Combining the texts of the Mohist ‘Canons’ and the *Zhuāngzǐ*, one can arrive at another extremely important insight. Due to different but equally possible distinctions by various subjects, the ‘pointing designations’ of some concrete object can sometimes be in conflict or even contradict one another, a phenomenon which is in fact very common. Thus, pointing designations suggested by different people for one and the same object may include names such as ‘horse’, ‘donkey’, or ‘white horse’. This can be illustrated with the common expression “identifying (lit. ‘pointing out’) a deer as a horse” (*zhǐ lù wéi mǎ* 指鹿為馬) – that is, designating a deer as a horse. Although this specific example implies the dimension of an intended deception by the speaker, comparable examples of different designations of the same thing are in fact very common.

Judging from the above analysis, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s concept of *zhǐ* represents a human being’s ‘pointing designation’ of a concrete, perceptible natural thing. Due to the possibility that different subjects distinguish in different ways, such designating signs are not rigorously determined. At the same time, from within a specific linguistic system, the relationship between the names of things (*wù míng* 物名) and the objects to which they refer (*zhǐ chēng* 指稱) is always definite and constant. In this sense, there is a difference between ‘pointings’ (‘pointing designations’) and ‘names of things’. In my view, this constitutes the basic premise of the composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter. What I intend to show in more detail below is that the argument in this chapter revolves around precisely this complex relationship between the name (*míng chēng* 名稱) of a concrete, perceptible natural thing and its pointing designation (*zhǐ wèi* 指謂).

65 “是其所非而非其所是。” (*Zhuāngzǐ* 4/14).

1.5 An Analytical Commentary on 'Zhǐwù lùn'

After our contextualization of the meanings of the terms *zhǐ* and *wù* ('thing'), we are now in a position to attempt a detailed analysis of the content of 'Zhǐwù lùn', which aims to reconstruct the *míngxué* 名學 ("School of Names") thought of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. We have already noted above that the character 物 *wù* in 'Zhǐwù lùn' has two different meanings:

(1) It can be interpreted in terms of a concrete, perceptible natural thing, as in the case of its occurrence in the phrase: "That there are no pointing (designations) in the world arises from each thing's having a name."⁶⁶ But this interpretation only applies to a minority of all the occurrences of the term. (2) The great majority of occurrences of *wù* is used here in the sense of the opposite of *zhǐ*, which means pointing designations – that is, in a second sense of the *designations* of concrete, perceptible natural things (which in the following I shall simply refer to as "names of things").

In contrast to this, all the instances of *zhǐ* in the present chapter are to be interpreted in terms of pointing designations, although there is a difference between pointing designations in a broad and a narrow sense. In a broad sense, the character 指 *zhǐ* is opposed to the first meaning of *wù* – that is, a concrete, perceptible natural thing: it is any pointing designation of such a concrete, perceptible natural thing, and thus *includes* the names of things. As 'Míngshí lùn' says: "Now, a name (*míng*) is a designation of an actual thing."⁶⁷ Simply speaking, designations of things (*wù míng*) are also a kind of people's pointing designations, referring to concrete, perceptible natural things. The only difference is that they are designations of actual things. Unlike pointings (*zhǐ*) in the narrow sense, however, they are connected to the *reality* (*shízhì* 實質) of the object (*shìwù* 事物); they are rigorous and commonly accepted designations of the kind of thing to which they refer. Thus we read in 'Zhǐwù lùn': "If there are no pointing (designations) (*zhǐ*) in the world, then there is no thing which can be designated (*wèi*) as a thing" (*Tiānxià wú zhǐ, wú wù kěyǐ wèi wù* 天下無指，物無可以謂物).⁶⁸ This is to say that if there are no pointing designations, then a concrete, perceptible natural thing in this world cannot be identified – that is, called by the name of a specific object or thing. In short, if there are no pointing (designations) (*zhǐ*), then there are also no designations of things, because the names of things are derived from pointing (designations). The name of a concrete, perceptible natural

⁶⁶ "天下無指者，生於物之各有名。" (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/18).

⁶⁷ "夫名實謂也。" (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/9)

⁶⁸ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11.

thing is nothing other than people's commonly accepted and rigorous designation of this thing in a certain linguistic system. Therefore, if we look at it from the perspective of its first establishment, there first has to be a pointing (designation) before there can be a name of a thing. Consequently, the designation of the thing arises from a pointing (designation) (*zhǐ*) in an instance of that kind of thing. If 'Zhǐwù lùn' states that "no thing is not a pointing" (*wù mò fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指),⁶⁹ then this claim refers to pointing designations in this broad sense, including both designations in the narrow sense *and* names of things.

In contrast to a pointing designation (*zhǐwèi* 指謂), people apply a designation in the narrow sense to some particular natural thing in an actual situation *after* the names of things have been established. Thus such designations both depend on and presuppose the names of things, and they can vary according to different designations chosen by the pointing subjects. As a consequence, designations in the narrow sense are not rigorously determined, an aspect we have already discussed in some detail above. An object's name and pointing designation can differ according to the three dimensions: the subject which points, the object pointed at, and the rigorousness of pointing. A name of a thing is a rigorous object of pointing which is commonly acknowledged by every member of a linguistic community so that it is fixed and reliably refers to its object in every possible actual situation. But if we look at it from the perspective of the Mohist 'Canons' or the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the pointing designations ascribed by different subjects to a concrete object in a particular situation often differ from each other, so that it is possible that a dispute among them arises. In 'Míngshí lùn', the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* also uses expressions such as "designating as this" and "designating as that" in order to oppose names and designations. This is sufficient to make it plain that designations in this narrow sense were also recognized by the author of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. If the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* speaks about the "rectification" or rather "adjustment" or "correction of names" (*zhèng míng* 正名), it is precisely because it urges speakers to use names as rigorous designators of exactly those objects to which they correspond: "When a name is adjusted (correct), then it corresponds to the respective this or that. If one calls something 'that' when 'that' does not correspond to that, then the predication of that does not apply. If one calls something 'this' when 'this' does not correspond to this, then the predication of this does not apply."⁷⁰ No doubt it is precisely because the author of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* recognized this difference between designations of things (names) and pointing designations in the narrow sense that he

69 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/9.

70 "其名正, 則唯乎其彼此焉。謂彼而彼不唯乎彼, 則彼謂不行; 謂此而此不唯乎此, 則此謂不行。"

asserted that “no thing is not a pointing” (*wù mò fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指), while at the same time emphatically elaborating on the difference between the two by adding, “yet a pointing (designation) is not *just* a pointing (designation)” (*ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 而指非指).⁷¹

It was probably under the influence of the particular constraints of the language of his time and the general specificities of the Chinese language that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ avoided creating two separate specific terms and instead subsumed both pointing in a wide sense and pointing in a narrow sense under the same term, *zhǐ* (pointing [designation]). As a consequence, we need to decide in each concrete step of our analysis whether, in any particular phrase, the word *zhǐ* (pointing [designation]) is used in its broad or its narrow sense. In what follows, I will proceed with a detailed analysis of the original text of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ on the basis of my previous discussion.

Let me begin with the initial statement that “no thing is not a pointing (designation)” (*wù mò fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指).⁷² This means that there is no name of a thing (*wù míng* 物名) which is not, at the same time, a pointing designation (*zhǐwèi* 指謂). As names of things originate in pointing designations, they are also essentially a kind of pointing designation: “If there would be no pointing (designations) in the world, then there would be no thing which could be designated as a thing” (*Tiānxià wú zhǐ, wù wú kěyǐ wèi wù* 天下無指, 物無可以謂物).⁷³ First there are pointing designations; the names of things are secondary and derived from these. Only if people point at some thing, saying “this is an X”, can that object have a corresponding name. It is therefore with reference to pointing designations (*zhǐ*) in a broad sense that ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ states that “no thing is not a pointing (designation)”.

Once the pointing designation of a certain natural thing and the object to which it points have been connected and developed into a pointing designation with a rigorousness that is generally accepted in the linguistic community, it is elevated from a concrete, particular pointing designation to a generally accepted name. Consequently, this name is then different from other pointing designations. Therefore the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* states: “(a) pointing (designation) together with a thing is not just a pointing (designation). Imagine there would be no pointing (designations) of things in the world. Who would then rashly say that they [viz. the designations] are not (just) pointing (designations)?”

⁷¹ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/9.

⁷² *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/9.

⁷³ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11.

(zhǐ yǔ wù fēi zhǐ yě, shǐ tiānxià wú wù zhǐ shéi jìng wèi fēi zhǐ? 指與物非指也。使天下無物指，誰徑謂非指?).⁷⁴ The word yǔ 與 ('together') here means 'in connection' or 'combination'. A pointing designation connected to a natural thing is called the designation of a thing (wù zhǐ 物指) in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – an expression which in fact coincides with the name of a thing (wù míng 物名). As soon as the name of a thing is determined, it follows that it “is not (just) a pointing (designation)” (fēi zhǐ 非指). This has two concrete implications.

The first is that names of things “are not pointing (designations)” – this is easily inferred from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s logic that “white horse is not horse” (bái mǎ fēi mǎ 白馬非馬). Because the pointing designation of a thing (wù zhǐ) – that is, the name of a thing – is formed by the connection of a pointing designation (zhǐ) with a thing (wù) and therefore doubtless differs from the concept of a pointing designation itself, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* captures this difference by saying that it “is not” – that is, it “is not just a pointing designation” (just as ‘white horse’ is not [just] ‘horse’).

The second implication is that, following the establishment of the name of a thing, one has a criterion for judging whether a pointing designation in relation to a particular natural thing is correct. If this thing does not correspond to the one intended by and connected to the specific name one applies, we have a false designation, so that alternatively, we could say that it “is not a pointing designation”, in the sense that a pointing designation that fails to point out successfully is in fact no designation at all.

It is exclusively with reference to these two interpretative levels that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* eventually states: “Imagine there would be no pointing (designations) of things in the world. Who would then hurriedly say that they (viz. the designations) are not (just) pointing (designations)?”⁷⁵ If there were no pointing (designations) of things (wù zhǐ 物指) – that is, names of things – so that we would then have no way to say that what we uttered (suǒ wèi 所謂) “is not a pointing (designation)”, then who could still talk about its “not being a pointing (designation)?” It is for this reason that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* goes on to say: “Assume there were pointing (designations) in the world, but no pointing (designations) of things. Who would rashly state that they (pointing designations) are no pointing (designations)? Who would rashly state that there are no (pointing designations of) things that are not (also) designations?”⁷⁶ If we only had pointing designations in the broad sense, but no pointing designations of things – that

74 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/22.

75 “使天下無物指，誰徑謂非指？”(*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/22).

76 “天下有指、無物指，誰徑謂非指？徑謂無物非指？”(*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/23).

is, names of things – how would we still be able to say that these pointing designations “are not pointing (designations)”? Who would say that they are non-designations, that they are in disagreement with the name of the thing?

We have already stated that those pointing designations which are at the same time names of things in their concrete connotation differ somewhat from pointing designations in the narrow sense. The latter are designations which a subject in a concrete situation applies to a natural thing and which thus depend on the subject's knowledge (of the thing). In contrast, names of things are public and rigorous, so that in any situation they invariably refer to their corresponding objects. Because of this rigorous connection to the objects which they denote, names of things often are considered real existents like the objects themselves. This is exemplified in the text of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, for example when ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’ says: “If we designate a chicken foot it's one, if we count ‘chicken foot’ it's two; it's two plus one, and therefore three” (*wèi jī zú yī, shǔ zú èr; èr ér yī, gù sān* 謂雞足一，數足二；二而一，故三).⁷⁷ The claim that the number of a chicken's feet, or rather of “chicken foot”, is three obviously implies that “chicken foot” as the name of a thing and the objects it designates are equally real. Therefore, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ also clarifies that “names of things” are “something which is there in the world” (*Tiānxià zhī suǒ yǒu yě* 天下之所有也).⁷⁸ Pointing (designations), however, are precisely the opposite. They are not fixed and persistent entities, and hence they are “not there in the world” (*Tiānxià zhī suǒ wú yě* 天下之所無也).⁷⁹ Accordingly, names of things and pointing (designations), from the perspective of “being there” (*yǒu* 有) (that is, existence), are not the same: “It is unacceptable to consider what there is in the world as something which is not there in the world.”⁸⁰ As for those indefinite pointing (designations) which “are not there in the world”, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* also asserts that “in the world there are no pointing (designations)” (*Tiānxià wú zhǐ* 天下無指).⁸¹ We have seen above that the claim that “in the world there are no pointing (designations)” is true only before the names of things – that is, a kind of pointing designation that somehow exists – have been established. Therefore, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* moreover adds: “That in the world there are no pointing (designations) arises from each thing's having a name” (*Tiānxià wú zhǐ zhě, shēng yú wù zhī gè yǒu míng* 天下無指者 生於物之各有名).⁸²

77 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 6/16.

78 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/1.

79 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11–12.

80 “以天下之所有，為天下之所無，未可。” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/12).

81 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11.

82 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/18.

Based on our previous discussion, we also can conclude that if we adopt the broad sense of pointing (designation), neither the name of a thing nor a pointing (designation) in the narrow sense can simply be equated to a pointing (designation): “What cannot be called a pointing (designation) is no pointing (designation):” (*bù kě wèi zhǐ zhě, fēi zhǐ yě* 不可謂指者，非指也).⁸³ Consequently, we have to say that both names of things and pointing (designations) in a narrow sense are equally “not *just* pointing (designations)” (*fēi zhǐ* 非指). At the same time, however, names of things are also existents, so that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* also asserts that “we do not consider pointing (designations) [in the narrow sense] what is there”; rather, pointing (designations) in the narrow sense are non-existents, so that one can correspondingly say that “we do not consider pointing (designations) [in the broad sense] what is not there”. Nevertheless, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* holds that the two should not be intermingled: “From not considering a pointing (designation) [in the broad sense] what is there, to advance to not considering a pointing (designation) [in the broad sense] what is not there, is not acceptable” (*yǐ yǒu bù wéi zhǐ, zhī wú bù wéi zhǐ, wèi kě* 以有不為指，之無不為指，未可).⁸⁴

The names of the things in the world have to be determined by starting from pointing designations. Therefore, “pointing (designations) are something the world joins together” (*zhǐ zhě, tiānxià zhī suǒ jiān* 指者，天下之所兼).⁸⁵ However, people’s pointing designations likewise have to make a distinction between which predications are correct and which are mistaken. “Names are designations of actual things” (*shí wèi* 實謂) – names of things are definite designations of objects. In case of the fundamentally indefinite designations in the broad sense “which there are not in the world”, there exists the possibility that they correspond to the names of things pointed at and thus are correct, but also the possibility that they fail to correspond to them and hence turn out to be false pointing (designations). On the indeterminacy of pointing (designations) which “are not there in the world”, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* states that “there are [pointing (designations) that are] not pointing (designations)” (*yǒu fēi zhǐ* 有非指) – it is possible that there are wrong designations. And this implies that in these cases pointing fails, in that reference is not established. Hence these pointing (designations) are no pointing designations. The names of things are obviously opposed to such pointing (designations) which “there are not in the world”, and therefore the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* correspondingly says that “they are

⁸³ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/14.

⁸⁴ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/18–19.

⁸⁵ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/19.

not such [pointing (designations)] which are there and which still are not pointing (designations)” (*fēi ‘yǒu fēi zhǐ’* 非有非指)⁸⁶ – that is, designations that fail to establish reference. Pointing (designations) determined by specific objects are in fact names of things, which, however, as a matter of course, also belong among pointing (designations) in a broad sense. For this reason, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* continues: “Not being such a [pointing (designation)] which is there and which still is not a pointing (designation) [i.e. because it inherently establishes reference], no (name of a) thing still is not a pointing (designation)” (*fēi yǒu fēi zhǐ zhě, wù mò fēi zhǐ yě* 非有非指者, 物莫非指也).⁸⁷

If we define pointing (designations) according to the logic of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s theory that “white horse is not horse”, from its two different connotations of names of things on the one hand and pointing (designations) in the narrow sense on the other, each will in one case turn out “not to be a pointing (designation)”. Thus ‘Zhīwù lùn’ says: “There are no pointing (designations) in the world, and things cannot be called pointing (designations). What cannot be called a pointing (designation) is no pointing (designation)” (*tiānxià wú zhǐ, ér wù bù kě wèi zhǐ yě. Bù kě wèi zhǐ zhě, fēi zhǐ yě* 天下無指, 而物不可謂指也. 不可謂指者非指也).⁸⁸ Furthermore: “That there are no pointing (designations) in the world arises from each thing having a name and that it cannot be taken to be a pointing (designation)” (*tiānxià wú zhǐ zhě, shēng yú wù zhī gè yǒu míng, bù wéi zhǐ yě* 天下無指者, 生於物之各有名, 不為指也).⁸⁹ If we understand pointing (designations) as names of things, then pointing (designations) in the narrow sense will be something which “is not a pointing (designation)” (*fēi zhǐ* 非指), and vice versa.

To summarize our discussion, we see that, in correspondence with the meaning of the two concepts of pointing (*zhǐ* 指) and thing (*wù* 物), we can distinguish three relations between pointing and things which constitute the topic of the entire ‘Zhīwù lùn’. The first relationship is the one between a concrete, perceptible natural thing and its pointing designation. The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* assumes that if there were no pointing designations in the world, then such a concrete, perceptible natural thing could not be called an object or a thing; there would be no vantage point from which to use names. Therefore it says: “If in the world there would be no pointing (designations), no thing could be called a thing.”⁹⁰

86 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/15, 21.

87 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/15.

88 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/14.

89 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/18.

90 “天下無指, 物無可以謂物。” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/11).

The second aspect is that, if there were no concrete, perceptible natural things in the world, pointing designations would also not exist: “If in the world there would be no things, who would rashly speak about pointing (designations)?”⁹¹ Eventually, in a third step, we recognize that, as soon as pointing (designations) arise, they have a certain independence: “Now, if these pointing (designations) would inherently exert non-pointing, how would they depend on things and only exert pointing in combination with them?”⁹²

Of course, this relationship is not the focus of the entire treatise, the purpose of which is a repeated analysis of the distinctions and connections between names of things and pointing designations: “No thing is not a pointing (designation), but a pointing (designation) is not a pointing (designation)” (*wù mò fēi zhǐ, ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 物莫非指，而指非指). On the one hand, this proves that names of things are pointing (designations) (“no thing is not a pointing [designation]”), while at the same, it attempts to establish a difference between names of things and the non-existent pointing (designations) (“but a pointing [designation] is not a pointing [designation]” – that is, a pointing designation in the specific sense of a name of a thing is not a pointing designation in the narrow sense.).

1.6 Final Remarks

‘Zhǐwù lùn’ exemplifies the general specificity of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s linguistic analysis. It is an extension and concrete application of what ‘Míngshí lùn’ calls “investigating the relationship between actuality and name and being true to what one designates” (*shěn qí míng shí, shèn qí suǒ wèi* 審其名實，慎其所謂).⁹³ Of course, the designation of a concrete, perceptible natural thing belongs to the name, but in pointing toward something, it also has to be a kind of designation. Therefore, ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ represents an important aspect of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*’s “theory of names and designations” (*míng wèi lùn* 名謂論). However, the problem of the relationship between names and designations is one of the central points in pre-imperial theories about the rectification of names. This makes it clear that ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ in no way goes beyond the discourse of its own time.

At the same time, ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ testifies to a high level of reasoning specific to the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. It emphasizes both synthesis and dialectic, a peculiarity

91 “天下無物，誰徑謂指？” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/22–23).

92 “且夫指固自為非指，奚待於物而乃與為指？” (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/23–24).

93 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/10–11.

of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s logic which the remaining parts of the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* do not share. It is commonly agreed that 'Báimǎ lùn' – the treatise on the white horse – and 'Jiānbái lùn' – the treatise on the hard white stone – are illuminating examples of the theoretical emphasis on logical distinctions (*chāyì* 差異) in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. Féng Yǒulán is one of the exemplary scholars who considers Gōngsūn Lóng to be a representative of the so-called "analytical" (*yì* 異) branch of the pre-imperial "School of Names", an intellectual strand he opposes to the "synthetic" (*hé* 合) branch represented by Huì Shī 惠施. This view has been rather influential, and I think it is in need of some clarification and reconsideration. It is obvious that in 'Zhǐwù lùn', despite underlining the difference (*yì* 異) between things and pointings, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* equally emphasizes their mutual relationship and eventual unity – that is, their "synthetic" character. In this way, Gōngsūn Lóng actually reaches the point of a "union of sameness and difference" (*hé tóng yì* 合同異). In this sense, 'Zhǐwù lùn' goes beyond the level of thought represented in 'Báimǎ lùn' or 'Jiānbái lùn'. It not only illustrates the overarching theoretical specificity in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s analysis, but with its emphasis on subtle differences, it equally admits the connections between the various opposites, something which marks a new culmination of theoretical reasoning in ancient China. This "elaboration of the sameness and difference of pointings and things" (*zhǐ wù tóng yì zhī biàn* 指物同異之辯) in 'Zhǐwù lùn' corresponds to what the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the *Shǐjì* 史記, the *Huáinánzǐ*,⁹⁴ and other transmitted texts note about Gōngsūn Lóng's central topics – sufficient proof that the chapter is not a forgery. Shěn Yǒudǐng, who has admitted that 'Zhǐwù lùn' is the most representative example of the theory of the "union of sameness and difference", has nonetheless overlooked the two above-mentioned aspects and consequently identified 'Zhǐwù lùn' as a later forgery by the medieval scholar Yuán Yú 爰俞 (fl. late 3rd c. CE) – a contention which, unfortunately, he failed to prove in detail.

From the perspective of intellectual history, 'Zhǐwù lùn' has a twofold significance. First, it represents an early text dating from the pre-Qín period specifically dedicated to the problem of reference – a valuable and important insight on the philosophy of language in pre-imperial China. What is more,

⁹⁴ In the 'Qiūshuǐ' (Autumn Floods) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, it is said that master Gōngsūn Lóng "unifies sameness and difference" (*hé tóng yì* 合同異); in the joint biography of Mèngzǐ and Xúnzǐ (孟荀列傳), the *Shǐjì* states that Gōngsūn Lóng "engages in debates about hard and white and sameness and difference (*wéi jiān bái, tóng yì zhī biàn* 為堅白、同異之辯); and the *Huáinánzǐ* states in its 'Qísú xùn' (Equalizing Customs) chapter that Gōngsūn Lóng "distinguishes sameness and difference" (*bié tóng yì* 別同異).

Western philosophy of language – especially since Frege, Russell, Carnap, and the early Wittgenstein – in its thorough investigation of the relationship between referring expressions and their corresponding objects, tended to underestimate the “human factor”. In contrast, the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* analyzes this problem from a standpoint which takes into account the three dimensions of language, world, and human being, and therefore doubtless provides important stimuli for our contemporary investigations of the philosophy of language.

2 An Analysis of ‘Míngshí lùn’

We have seen that ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ is actually a development and a concrete example of the problem of the relation between names and designations, as expressed in the statement in ‘Míngshí lùn’ (Discourse on Names and Actualities) that one has to “investigate the relationship of name and actuality and to be true to what one designates” (*shěn qí míng shí, shěn qí suǒ wèi* 審其名實，慎其所謂).⁹⁵ Therefore both treatises are closely intertwined. Following our investigation of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, we shall now attempt a detailed analysis of ‘Míngshí lùn’. On a theoretical level, ‘Míngshí lùn’ is doubtless the basis of the thought represented in the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. It provides the theoretical framework for the remaining four treatises, although the problem of their exact relationship remains rather complex.

2.1 An Analytical Comment on the Concepts of ‘Thing’ (*wù* 物) and ‘Actuality’ (*shí* 實) and the Cosmology of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

In my opinion, previous investigations of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* have considerably focused on the analysis of its theory of names and its paradoxical argumentation. In contrast, there are very few thoroughgoing inquiries into its theory of cosmic evolution. Of course there are concrete reasons for this deficit: the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in fact contains very few direct statements about cosmology. But saying little is not tantamount to saying nothing.

⁹⁵ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/10–11.

The few things the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* positively and explicitly states about its cosmological position are contained in 'Míngshí lùn'. At the very beginning, this treatise gets right to the point, stating that "heaven and earth and what arises out of these are things" (*tiān dì yǔ qí suǒ chǎn zhě wù yě* 天地與其所產者焉物也).⁹⁶ Closely following this statement, we note that the text claims two perspectives on the evolution of the cosmos: First, it assumes that, in the process of the emanation of the cosmos, heaven and earth arise first. Natural things only come into existence afterward. Second, it adopts the idea that heaven and earth produce the other natural things.

Connecting this to other relevant pre-imperial documents, we can easily see that this view of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is very similar to the ideas in the Confucian *Classic of Changes* (*Yījīng* 易經). The 'Xùguà' 序卦 (On the Order of Hexagrams) commentary on the *Changes* clearly states that "there are heaven and earth", and that "afterwards the ten-thousand things arise out of these" (*yǒu tiān dì, rán hòu wàn wù shēng yān* 有天地，然後萬物生焉).⁹⁷ The 'Tuàn' 彖 commentary puts forward an explanation of the different functions of heaven and earth in the process of engendering things: "How great it is, the origin of (the hexagram) *qián*! It is due to its procreating and feeding them that the ten-thousand things are connected to heaven"; and again, "How perfect it is, the origin of (the hexagram) *kūn*! It is due to its bearing and feeding them that the ten-thousand things follow and emulate heaven" (*dà zāi qián yuán, wàn wù zī shǐ nǎi tǒng tiān . . . zhì zāi kūn yuán, wàn wù zī shēng nǎi shùn chéng tiān* 大哉乾元，萬物資始乃統天、至哉坤元，萬物資生乃順承天).⁹⁸ On this basis, the 'Xìcí' 繫辭 (Appended Judgments) commentary goes a step further and combines the 'Tuàn' commentary's idea of *qián* as a procreating source and *kūn* as a begetting wellspring, stating that "*qián* knows the great beginning, *kūn* executes the completion of things" (*qián zhī dà shǐ, kūn zuò chéng wù* 乾知大始，坤作成物).⁹⁹

Judging the text on this basis, we see that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*'s cosmology is consistent with the views of pre-imperial Confucians. When the 'Qiūshuǐ' (Autumn Floods) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* states that "(Gōngsūn) Lóng in his younger years learned the Way of the former kings, and when had grown up, understood benevolent and just behavior" (*Lóng shào xué xiān wáng zhī dào, zhǎng ér míng rén yì zhī xíng* 龍少學先王之道，長而明仁義之行), this is apparently not mere fiction, but is in fact substantially based on Gōngsūn Lóng's

⁹⁶ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3–4.

⁹⁷ *Zhōuyì*, 87/20.

⁹⁸ *Zhōuyì*, 3/24.

⁹⁹ *Zhōuyì*, 76/23.

thinking. On the other hand, it goes without saying that this does not allow us to assimilate or even identify Gōngsūn Lóng with the Confucian school, as the cosmological idea that heaven and earth engender the ten-thousand things is not only found in the commentaries on the *Changes*, but equally in the *Lǎozǐ*, where it famously states that “the Way engenders the one, the one engenders the two, the two engender the three, the three engender the ten-thousand things”.¹⁰⁰ The “two” in this sentence refers to heaven and earth. When the *Lǎozǐ* says that “the three engender the ten-thousand things”, this doubtless shows that its author assumed that the ten-thousand things only arose after heaven and earth had come into existence. However, experts today commonly acknowledge that the *Lǎozǐ* is older than the *Yìjīng*. Based on this assumption, the *Lǎozǐ* would be the first text to put forward this evolutionary view of the cosmos, according to which “there are first heaven and earth which then engender the ten-thousand things”. Xiāo Hànmíng 蕭漢明 (1940–2011) is right in saying that, “as early as after *Lǎozǐ*, it had become a commonly accepted view among scholars of the time that there were first heaven and earth, and that only afterwards did heaven and earth further engender the ten-thousand things”.¹⁰¹ Consequently, it is difficult to attribute the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* to a certain school of thought merely on the basis of the two fundamental cosmological positions mentioned above. It thus appears reasonable that ever since the time of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子, Gōngsūn Lóng has not been attributed to either the Confucian or the Daoist school of thought.

Proceeding yet another step, we might further ask whether the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is in agreement with the *Lǎozǐ* or the *Classic of Changes* in positing that above heaven and earth, which are thought to generate the ten-thousand things, there exists an ultimate reality comparable to the ‘Way’ (*dào* 道) or the ‘Ultimate Pole’ (*tàijí* 太極). Quite a few scholars answer this question in the affirmative. For example, we know from the discussion above that Féng Yǒulán is one of the representatives of a group of experts who interpret the term ‘pointing’ (*zhǐ* 指) as representing the highest metaphysical entities in the philosophy of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. I have already criticized this view above. In my view, it is hardly tenable. I base my argument here on the concept of *lí* 離 (an ‘isolate’, i.e. a self-contained entity) found in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’. I think that the question of whether the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* posits an ultimate substance has to be answered on the basis of ‘*Míngshí lùn*’, because it is the only piece in the extant collection which positively and directly addresses this fundamental

100 *Lǎozǐ*, 15/5.

101 Xiāo 2004: 40.

philosophical question. More specifically, it is intimately related to the implications of the sentence: "As for a thing, [its] actuality is the object (or place, *suǒ*) a thing makes a thing and which does not go beyond (that thing?)" (*wù yǐ wù qí suǒ wù ér bù guò yān, shí yě* 物以物其所物而不過焉，實也).¹⁰² I should admit, however, that scholars differ widely in their interpretations of this difficult sentence. Up to the present day, there is no agreement on what it means. The interpretation of the two instances of the word *wù* ('thing') in this sentence is the bone of contention. In my view, there are three main representative views on the meaning of this word and the entire sentence.

The first goes back to Wáng Guǎn. He interprets the word *wù* ('thing') as *míng* ('name'), suggesting that this sentence means: "What is here called 'thing' is a name. Whenever we name some thing, this thing has to correspond to the distinctive marks defined by the nature of the thing which is named and must not go beyond it. This distinctive mark of a thing's nature is what is called its *shí* 實 ('reality')." ¹⁰³ This analysis was emphatically supported by Hóu Wàilú, who adduced relevant textual material from the *Xūnǐ* and the Mohist 'Canons' to substantiate it.¹⁰⁴ But it is obviously difficult to reconcile this reading with the first sentence of 'Míngshí lùn', according to which "heaven and earth and what arises out of these are things". Abruptly jumping from natural things to names in one's interpretation of the term *wù* seems unsubstantiated and far-fetched.

The second view derives from Tán Jiěfǔ, who assumes that the two instances of the character *wù* in this sentence have to be interpreted in terms of an 'assessment' or 'judgment' (*xiàng* 相). According to Tán:

"As for a thing, to make a thing what makes it a thing", states that every thing in the world is designated by a name on the basis of "assessing" its shape and color. Thus an ox or a horse is called so because they are each "assessed" on the basis of their respective specific shape and color. "Not going beyond" then means that, once the names 'ox' and 'horse' are established, they are distinguished from other things, so that things and names are no longer mixed up.¹⁰⁵

Tán's interpretation of *wù* ('thing') in terms of an 'assessment' or 'judgment' no doubt has some basis in the commentarial tradition (for details on this, see below), but the analysis of the entire sentence obviously becomes extremely

¹⁰² Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 9/3.

¹⁰³ Wáng 1992: 38.

¹⁰⁴ Hóu et al. 1951: 448.

¹⁰⁵ Tán 1963: 57–58.

complicated. What is more, the insertion of the term ‘name’ is evidently incompatible with the intention of the text.

The third interpretation is represented by Móu Zōngsān, who thinks the phrase means that “one identifies (things of) some kind which are to be identified (as things of) this kind by means of an existing thing which has been identified as being of this kind” (*wù zhī cúnzài zhī shì ér shì qí suǒ shì* 物之存在之是而是其所是).¹⁰⁶ In the new edition of his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, Féng Yǒulán claims a similar position: “Any single thing is precisely this single thing, nothing more and nothing less [. . .] This is what is meant by asserting its actuality.”¹⁰⁷ Both Móu and Féng are renowned thinkers, but their explanations involve a certain amount of theoretical speculation for which they fail to provide a textual basis in the commentarial tradition.

As I have argued above, it is crucial to grasp the meaning of the second occurrence of *wù* (‘thing’) clearly if we are to reach a solid understanding of our sentence. The reason is that, in the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, this specific use of the term is found nowhere else. As was the case with our analysis of the terms ‘pointing’ (*zhǐ* 指) and ‘thing’ (*wù* 物) in our previous discussion of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, this situation therefore requires us to look into other pre-imperial texts to identify verbal uses of the word *wù*.

Examining the relevant pre-imperial literature, we somewhat unsurprisingly find that the word is generally used as a noun. Verbal uses are rare and seem to be confined to the following three types:

First, the ‘Jìxǐlǐ’ 既夕禮 (Evening Ceremonies) chapter of the *Yǐlǐ* 儀禮 says: “The oldest man *judges* (Chin. *wù* = lit. ‘thing’) the soil” (*zhōnggrén wù tǔ* 冢人物土),¹⁰⁸ a phrase which Zhèng Xuán 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) comments on as follows: “‘To judge’ (*wù*) is the same as ‘to assess’; he assesses that this soil allows for burying the dead. Only then is the place prepared.”¹⁰⁹ The word is also attested in the same sense in the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳. It is on this basis that Tán Jièfǔ interpreted ‘thing’ (*wù*) as ‘assessment’ or ‘judgment’.

Second, in the twenty-ninth year of Duke Zhào, the *Zuǒzhuàn* moreover registers the following words by a certain Cài Mò 蔡墨:

In the *Changes* there is the following situation: when the hexagram *qián* changes into *gòu*, it is said that the “hidden dragon” should not be employed. The same person also speaks about seeing a dragon in the fields; on the hexagram *dàiyǒu*, he says that there are

106 Móu 2010: 55.

107 Féng 1998: 473.

108 *Yǐlǐ*, 86/24.

109 “物猶相也，相其地可葬者，乃營之。” (Zhèng 2008: 1248).

flying dragons in the sky; on *jué*, he says that with high dragons there is sorrow; and on *kūn*, he remarks that seeing a group of headless dragons is good luck; when *kūn* changes into *bó*, he states that dragons fight in the wild. Who would have been able to *name* (lit. *wù*, 'thing') them without seeing them from dawn to dusk?¹¹⁰

Taking into account the context of this occurrence of *wù*, one has to interpret it as a verb meaning 'to name'. The passage states that in antiquity, the officer of the waters was able to cultivate his virtue, and that therefore dragons must have been something people would have commonly seen in their everyday lives. How else would they have been able to report on dragons? This corresponds to the second sense of the word *wù* as attested in 'Zhǐwù lùn', on which see above.

Third, the 'Zàiyòu' 在宥 (Letting Be, and Exercising Forbearance) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* contains the expression *wù wù* 物物 (lit. 'to thing things'), the basic meaning of which clearly has to be something like 'to create things'. However, it remains unclear how the "creator of things" (called *dà wù* 大物, lit. 'large[st of] thing[s]') is assumed to create them and what the concrete implications of this process are supposed to be. Nevertheless, it is clear that all of these questions are related to a verbal use of *wù* meaning 'to create things'.

Clarifying this verbal use of the word is thus the key to understanding 'Míngshí lùn'. A passage from Guō Xiàng's 郭象 (252–312 CE) commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ*'s 'Qíwù lùn' is an important inspiration for precisely this goal:

Now, as for the creator of things, is it being (*yǒu* 有 = being-there)? Is it nothing (*wú* 無 = not-being-there)? If it is nothing (not-being-there), *what* would be able to create things? If it is being (being-there), it is still not sufficient to *make manifest* (*wù* 物) the many shapes. Therefore it is clear that the many shapes are *made manifest* by themselves (*zì wù* 自物). Only then is it possible to combine them with the expression "creator of things".¹¹¹

In this passage, Guō Xiàng assumes that the creator of things can be neither nothing (lit. 'not-being-there') nor being ('being-there'). Given the particular definiteness of being (being-there), how would being be able to "make the many shapes manifest" (= *wù* 物, lit. 'to thing' them)? In the apocryphal text *Qiánzuǒdù* 乾鑿度, which is related to the *Changes*, the process of the evolution of the cosmos is divided into the four subsequent levels of the "Supreme Change" (*tàiyì* 太易), the "Supreme Opening" (*tàichū* 太初), the "Supreme

110 "《周易》有之：在乾之姤曰潛龍勿用，其同人曰見龍在田，其大有曰飛龍在天，其夬曰亢龍有悔，其坤曰見群龍無首吉，坤之剝曰龍戰于野。若不朝夕見，誰能物之？" (*Zuǒzhuan* 400/17–20).

111 "夫造物者有耶？無耶？無也，則胡能造物哉？有也，則不足以物眾形。故明眾形之自物，而後始可與言造物耳。" (*Zhuāngzǐ Jìshì*, p. 111, n. 4).

Beginning” (*tàishǐ* 太始), and the “Supreme Purity” (*tàisù* 太素). Among these, the Supreme Beginning is characterized as “the beginning of shape” (*xíng zhī shǐ* 形之始), and the Supreme Origin is identified as “the beginning of texture or material” (*zhì zhī shǐ* 質之始). On this basis, the formation of heaven, earth, and the ten-thousand things passes through a long process, which first begins with “shapes” (*xíng* 形). These are only later complemented by “texture/material” (*zhì* 質). The difference between shape and texture is based on human perception. Shape is defined as what the eyes see but the body is unable to touch, while texture is what can be both seen and touched.¹¹² Therefore, the process called “making the many shapes manifest” in the Guō Xiàng commentary arguably refers to the process of supplying merely formal beings with a palpable texture or some solid materiality. When Guō further says that “the many shapes manifest themselves by themselves”, this simply means that all beings of a certain shape materialize by themselves – that is, they produce their texture by themselves. Guō Xiàng thus propagates the theory that things change exclusively by themselves (*dúhuà* 獨化). This is also precisely the verbal meaning of *wù* 物 in the ‘Zàiyǒu’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. I shall simply speak of this as ‘materialization’.

If we now analyze the second and third instances of the word *wù* in this sense of materialization, our sentence suddenly becomes clear: “As for a thing, [its] actuality is the object which a *materialization* (lit. ‘thing’) *materializes* (‘makes manifest’, ‘makes a thing’) and beyond which (‘actuality’) it (the ‘materialization’) does not go.” When a thing materializes (manifests the object into which it materializes or as which it manifests itself), there can be no exaggeration, because there are manifest ‘actualities’ (*shí* 實) that exist. As a verb, the word *shí* means ‘to fill’, ‘to actualize’, ‘to realize’. For this reason, the derived nominal sense here means ‘filling’ or ‘stuffing’. What is it that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* calls ‘actuality’ or, more literally, ‘filling’? Unfortunately, ‘Míngshí lùn’ does not explain this. However, we can infer it from ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’. If we speak with reference to a sheep, then the actuality which is ‘filled’ or ‘stuffed’ possesses teeth, horns, fur, etc. Some scholars additionally include hardness and whiteness in this domain of ‘filling’ or ‘stuffing’, but this is obviously wrong. There are three reasons for this.

First, in ‘Jiānbái lùn’, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* classifies ‘hard’ and ‘white’ by clearly defining them as *lí* 離 (‘isolates’), which obviously excludes the possibility of considering them ‘filling’ or ‘stuffing’ (i.e. ‘actualities’, *shí* 實).

112 *Yìwěi Qiánzuǒdù* II, p. 39.

Second, 'jiānbái lùn' clearly states that hardness, when "not yet combined with [a thing]¹¹³ is already hardness, and that this hardness is necessarily hard" (wèi yǔ [wù] wéi jiān ér jiān bì jiān 未與【物】為堅而堅必堅).¹¹⁴ Yǔ, translated here as 'combined', is synonymous with hé 合 ('to combine') and means 'to connect'. This meaning of yǔ is attested in other chapters of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* – for example in 'Báimǎ lùn', when it speaks about "horse combined with white" (mǎ yǔ bái 馬與白)¹¹⁵; in 'Tōngbiàn lùn', when it speaks about "left combined with right" (yòu yǔ zuǒ 右與左)¹¹⁶ or states that "green and white are combined with each other although they are not combinable" (qīng bái bù xiāng yǔ ér xiāng yǔ 青白不相與而相與)¹¹⁷; and in 'Zhǐwù lùn', where it is said that "pointing (designations) combined with things are not pointing (designations)" (zhǐ yǔ wù fēi zhǐ yě 指與物非指也).¹¹⁸ However, in these relations the two companion pieces are opposed to each other, a case which is obviously different from the relation of the two elements by 'filling' or 'stuffing' (namely, the filling/stuffing activity or agent and the object being filled/stuffed). Even if we would thus step back and assume that hardness indeed belongs into the domain of 'filling/stuffing', the sentence "(hardness) not yet combined with [a thing] is already hardness, and this hardness is necessarily hard"¹¹⁹ would arguably have to be reformulated as "(hardness) not yet *filling* (shí 實) [a thing] is already hardness, and this hardness is necessarily hard".

Third, if we start from the relation between 'filling/stuffing' (shí 實, 'actuality') and 'material/texture' (zhì 質), we see that 'material/texture' is the result of 'filling/stuffing'. Thus, if hardness and whiteness belonged among the 'fillings/stuffings', both would have to display the specific feature of 'material/texture' – namely, visibility and palpability. However, we know that in 'Jiānbái lùn', the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* clearly states that "the eye is unable to identify hardness, the hand is unable to identify whiteness".¹²⁰ Attributes like hardness and whiteness are therefore entities which are different from 'things', but which can still be combined with them (such as in a white horse, a materialized pointing, or a hard white stone).

113 Here the *Dàoziàng* version has no character wù 物. It is emended on the basis of the "Old Commentary".

114 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/20.

115 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 3/16, 18.

116 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 5/25.

117 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 6/26.

118 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 4/22.

119 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/20.

120 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 8/17.

There are scholars who consider ‘actuality’ (‘filling/stuffing’) to be the ‘metaphysical’ substance which defines why a thing is a thing. But this view must also be refuted. Substance is the origin out of which other things and objects arise. Consequently, all of these other things have to depend on it. But when we look at ‘Míngshí lùn’, we notice that the concept of ‘actuality’ (‘filling/stuffing’) lacks this property. The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* even explicitly states this: “As for the ‘actuality’ (‘filling/stuffing’), if it actualizes (‘fills/stuffs’) the object which it actualizes (‘fills/stuffs’), there is no gap. This is because of its position” (*shí yǐ shí qí suǒ shí (ér) bù kuàng yān, wèi yě* 實以實其所實【而】不曠焉, 位也).¹²¹ This means that, due to the existence of positions, ‘actualities’ (‘fillings/stuffings’) do not leave any gaps which they could not reach (*kuàng* 曠) when filling the objects they fill. An ‘actuality’ (*shí* 實) is thus limited or restricted by a ‘position’, which guarantees that, in the process of bringing along an actuality by ‘filling/stuffing’ a place, no gap is left behind. Since this kind of actuality is subject to restriction and limitation, it certainly cannot be a substance. Moreover, the sentence “heaven, earth, and what arises out of them are things”¹²² additionally indicates that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* may actually assume a kind of substance like *qì* 氣 (breath/stuff), or even something like the ‘Way’ or the ‘Ultimate Pole’. When the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* finally remarks, “as for a thing, [its] actuality is the object which a *materialization* (lit. ‘thing’) *materializes* (lit. ‘makes manifest’, ‘makes a thing’) and beyond which [‘actuality’] it [the ‘materialization’] does not go”,¹²³ this strikingly resembles Guō Xiàng’s idea that things spontaneously arise and change by themselves. Unfortunately, the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* does not provide sufficient evidence for a more conclusive assessment.

2.2 An Analytical Commentary on ‘Míngshí lùn’

Our clarification of the meaning of the concepts of thing (*wù* 物) and actuality (*shí* 實) has provided a firm philological ground for our reading of ‘Míngshí lùn’. In our analysis, we shall follow the original text of ‘Míngshí lùn’ step by step.

¹²¹ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3–4.

¹²² *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3.

¹²³ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3.

- (1) 天地與其所產焉，物也。物以物其所物而不過焉，實也。實以實其所實【而】不曠焉，位也。

Heaven, earth, and what arises out of them are things. As for a thing, if one judges a thing the object which the thing makes manifest without going beyond, this is its actuality (filling). As for an actuality, if one identifies as an actuality the object which it actualizes without leaving any gap, this is its position.¹²⁴

Note that the *Dàoàng* version has no *ér* 而 after the expression *suǒ shí* 所實 (the object which it actualizes/fills). I emend it in analogy to the preceding sentence. In the 'Tāng wèn' 湯問 (Questions to Tāng) chapter of the *Lièzǐ* 列子, it says: "Heaven and earth are also things."¹²⁵ Gōngsūn Lóng considers heaven, earth, and the natural things which these produce as the entire extension of the term *wù* 物 ('thing'). Other entities, such as abstract substances or human artifacts, do not count as things. Every thing consists of a shape and a texture or material. It claims that when a formal entity is provided with a certain texture or material (*zhì* 質) to realize a thing that can be seen and touched, this cannot go "beyond the due measure" (*guò fēn* 過分). The reason for this is that this materialization allegedly depends on the existence of an 'actuality' ('filling/stuffing'). Here, 'gap' (lit. 'clearance', *kuàng* 曠) means an empty space which this actuality would not reach. For the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, it is because of the existence of positions (*wèi* 位) that, in the process of actualizing ('filling/stuffing') objects, there are no residues that remain blank. Let us exemplify this with a sheep: It has to be actualized ('filled/stuffed') with teeth, horns, fur, etc. When a sheep is actualized in this way, it is impossible that there remain gaps which are not filled – that is, that the horns are missing, or that the horns are incompletely or only partially provided. For the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, this is due to the fact that the actuality ('filling/stuffing') is defined by a concrete position to be filled. The concept of 'position' thus stands for a strict definition or delimitation of an actuality ('filling/stuffing').

- (2) 出其所位，非位；位其所位焉，正也。以其所正，正其所不正；【不以其所不正】，疑其所正。其正者，正其所實也；正其所實者，正其名也。
If something leaves the place in which it had been positioned, it is not positioned anymore; if one considers as its position the place which its position takes, it is adjusted. By the place to which it is adjusted, one corrects the

124 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/3–4.

125 *Lièzǐ*, 26/5.

place(s) to which it is not adjusted; [one does not, by the place to which it is not adjusted], doubt the place(s) to which it is adjusted. As for its adjustment, one adjusts the place (object) which it actualizes; if one adjusts the place (object) it actualizes, one adjusts its name.¹²⁶

Note that the *Dàozàng* version does not have the bracketed phrase “[one does not, by the place to which it is not adjusted].” It is emended by Tân Jièfǔ in his corrected and commented edition of the text. “To leave the place to which it had been positioned” means that an actuality leaves the position which it has to assume. Therefore the actuality is not in position, even if it takes some other position. Only by taking the required position is an actuality ‘adjusted’ and thus ‘correct’. Thus, if a sheep is supplied with teeth, these can only be assigned to their genuine position in the mouth. Only this position can be called ‘adjusted’ and ‘correct’; if positioned anywhere else, the teeth are not in position (*fēi wèi* 非位). The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* argues that one has to base one’s understanding on such adjusted actualities in order to correct situations in which an actuality is not adjusted in this way. On the other hand, one should not call into question a correctly adjusted actuality by referring to instances of actualities which are not adjusted. Correctness or adjustment therefore essentially means that an actualized thing is placed in the position which it has to take – that is, one has “to consider as its position the place which its position takes” (*wèi qí suǒ wèi* 位其所位). This is what is meant by the phrase “to adjust the place which it actualizes (fills/stuffs)” (*zhèng qí suǒ shí* 正其所實). And this adjustment of the places which a thing actualizes is identified by the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as the “adjustment (rectification) of its name” (*zhèng míng* 正名). Only if the place a thing actualizes (fills/stuffs) is adjusted can a name be adjusted and hence be correct. In the case of a sheep, it is only after the teeth, horns, and fur have been “actualized” and are all “positioned in the place where they [have to] take position” that we can call it a sheep.

- (3) 其名正，則唯乎其彼此焉。謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行。謂此而行不唯乎此，則此謂不行。其以當，不當也，不當而【當】，亂也。故彼彼當乎彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼；此此當乎此，則唯乎此，其謂行此。其以當，而當也。以當而當，正也。故彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，可。彼此而彼且此，此彼而此且彼，不可。

When its name is adjusted (correct), then it corresponds to the respective this or that. If one calls something ‘that’, when ‘that’ does not correspond

126 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/4–5.

to that, so the predication of that does not apply. If one calls something 'this', when 'this' does not correspond to this, so the predication of this does not apply. This is taking to be adequate, yet being inadequate. If something is inadequate [while one takes it to be adequate], this is confusion. If therefore the identification of that as 'that' is adequate to that, it corresponds to that, and the predication applies to that. If the identification of this as 'this' is adequate to this, it corresponds to this, and the predication applies to this. This is taking to be adequate and actually being adequate. If one takes something to be adequate which actually is adequate, then this is well adjusted and correct. It is therefore acceptable if, in identifying a that as a 'that', one stops at that, or if, in identifying a this as a 'this', one stops at this. It is unacceptable if one takes a this for a 'that' so that a that becomes a 'this', or if one takes a that for a 'this' so that a this becomes a 'that'.¹²⁷

Note that, in analogy to the previous phrase, the character 行 *xíng* ('to go/to execute') in the sentence "wèi cǐ ér xíng bù wéi hū cǐ" (謂此而行不唯乎此) has to be read as a miswriting of cǐ 此 ('this'). In the *Dàozàng* version, there is no character wú 無 ('is not there/has not') after the expression "bù dàng ér" (不當而, 'is not correct'). My emendation follows Tán Jièfū's commented and emended edition of the text. In the *Old Commentary* it says that "wéi is an expression for 'correspondence'" (wéi yìng cí yě 唯應辭也).

On the basis of the preceding text, we know that, according to the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, "the adjustment (correction) of a name" is achieved "through the adjustment to what it actualizes (fills/stuffs)". This means that we can judge whether a "name is adjusted/correct" by scrutinizing whether name and actuality correspond to each other. Concretely speaking, if we designate some thing by the name 'that' (kind/class), then this name ('that') has to correspond to the actuality of this 'that' (instance/member). Thus, in 'Tōngbiàn lùn', the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* says that the combination of sheep and oxen cannot be named 'horse'. This is because the name 'horse' has to correspond to the actuality of a horse: something which has a tail, but no horns. However, this actual horse is not contained in the combination of sheep and oxen: "Sheep and oxen have horns, horses have no horns; horses have a tail, sheep and oxen have not." Consequently, it says that "sheep and oxen are not horses". If the name of a 'that' and the actuality of a that correspond to each other, then this name ('that') is adequately applied ("adequate for that", *dàng hū bǐ* 當乎彼), so that the predication of 'that' can be realized. In the opposite case, the predication is not admissible. Such is

127 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/5–9.

the case if the combination of oxen and sheep is called ‘horse’, a predication which cannot be established. The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* thus clearly recognizes that confounding correct and incorrect relations between names and actualities causes serious social chaos – namely, if “something is not adequate, yet one takes it to be so” (*bù dāng ér dāng* 不當而當). Therefore *Gōngsūn Lóng* holds that the correspondence between name and actuality has to be strictly defined: “Identifying that as ‘that’ to confine oneself to that, and identifying this as ‘this’ to confine oneself to this, are both acceptable. If one identifies a this as ‘that’ so that this becomes that, or if one identifies a that as ‘this’ so that that becomes this, both are not acceptable.” This means that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* demands that one actuality has only one name. Taking the horse as an example, the actuality horse has only the name ‘horse’. If one further uses the name ‘ox’ to designate it, this results in a situation wherein the names and actualities of oxen and horses get confused.

- (4) 夫名，實謂也。知此之非【此】也，知此之不在此也，則不謂也；知彼之非彼也，知彼之不在彼也，則不謂也。

A name is the designation of an actuality. If you know that this is not (a ‘this’), that this is not inside ‘this’, then do not designate it (by ‘this’). If you know that a that is not a ‘that’, that that is not inside ‘that’, then do not designate it (by ‘that’).¹²⁸

This passage obviously continues the reflections of the preceding one, which states that the relation between name and actuality is defined in such a way that “adjusting/correcting the object (or ‘place’, *suǒ* 所) which it actualizes (‘fills/stuffs’) is adjusting/correcting its name”, and that “identifying a that as ‘that’ stops at that”. This is therefore a precise definition of the meaning of the term ‘name’ and of the relation between a name and an actuality: a name is a designation which fits an actuality. Thus Mǒu Zōngsān is right when he suggests that the expression *shí wèi* 實謂 should be complemented by an intervening character *zhī* 之 to yield the sense “designation of an actuality”.¹²⁹ *Gōngsūn Lóng* thinks that the name ‘this’ must not be used if someone wants to assign it to a certain thing if he knows that that thing’s actuality does not correspond to this name ‘this’. Let us illustrate this with the previous example, according to

¹²⁸ *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/9–10. Note that the sentence “*zhī cǐ zhī fēi cǐ yě*” (知此之非此也) in the *Dàoàng* version originally reads “*zhī cǐ zhī fēi yě*” (知此之非也). Likewise, “*zé bù wèi yě*” (則不謂也) originally is mistakenly written as “*míng bù wèi yě*” (明不謂也). Both emendations follow Tán Jiěfū.

¹²⁹ Mǒu 2010: 61.

which “sheep and oxen are not horses”. If someone intends to assign the name ‘horse’ to the combination of oxen and sheep, yet recognizes that an actuality corresponding to ‘horse’ (which would have a tail and so on) is not identical with this actuality of oxen and sheep, he or she will not be allowed to apply the designation. It would be a different situation if one knew that the actualities corresponding to the name ‘horse’ (defined by tails, etc.) are not included among the actualities corresponding to the combination of oxen and sheep (defined by horns, etc.), and she or he would also not be able to use the name ‘horse’. In the first situation, a concrete object has been carefully studied, and the kind of actuality before one’s eyes has turned out to be entirely different from the one represented by ‘horse’. The second case only requires that oxen and sheep, because of their distinguishing criteria (horns but no tails), are not counted as members of the group ‘horses’. Logically speaking, both examples are instances of total exclusion.

- (5) 至矣哉，古之明王！審其名實，慎其所謂。至矣哉，古之明王！
How perfect! The enlightened kings of antiquity. They investigated the relationship of name and actuality and were careful in what they designated (by names). How perfect they were, the enlightened kings of antiquity!¹³⁰

Note that in this final eulogy of the kings of antiquity, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* not only lauds the ancient kings for being able to investigate the relation between names and actualities, but also their care in applying designations. It shows that even a pre-imperial thinker like Gōngsūn Lóng, who placed much emphasis on epistemology, had very explicit political concerns: pre-Qín philosophy always leads back to questions of policy.

2.3 Reflections on the School Affiliation of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

The analysis above has shown that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, although deeply influenced by both Daoists and Confucians, cannot simply be attributed to either of these. The text’s affiliation has been the subject of heated debate. The most influential view has been that the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is a Mohist text, a view which can be traced back to the Wèi-Jìn 魏晉 scholar Lǚ Shèng 魯勝 (c. 3 CE) who, in the preface to his *Commentary on the Mohist ‘Canons’*, transmitted in the *History of*

130 *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 9/10–11.

the Jin Dynasty, wrote that “Mòzǐ composed writings and wrote the ‘Mohist Canons’ in order to establish a foundation of names. Huì Shī and Gōngsūn Lóng appealed to his teachings, which they further expounded in order to distinguish the names correctly and to elucidate them for their times”.¹³¹ This claim of Gōngsūn Lóng’s adherence to the Mohist school was later adopted by famous scholars such as Wāng Zhōng 汪中 (1745–1794), Zhāng Huìyán 張惠言 (1761–1802), Sūn Yíràng 孫詒讓, Chén Lǐ, Hú Shì, Liáng Qǐchāo, Wáng Guǎn, Wú Fēibǎi, and others, who provided detailed evidence for their position. Their argument is mainly based on the following two points.

First, according to the ‘Yīngyán’ 應言 (Responding Words) and ‘Shěnyīng’ 審應 (Examining Responses) chapters of the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, Gōngsūn Lóng convinced both King Huì of Zhào and King Zhào of Yān to stop military campaigns. A fragment of the *Shuōyuàn* 說苑 (Garden of Persuasions) further states that Gōngsūn Lóng hindered the prince of Liáng from committing a murder. These three reports were interpreted as evidence that Gōngsūn Lóng’s thought tended toward the Mohist principles of pacifism and universal love. However, the implications of Gōngsūn Lóng’s suspension of a military campaign and of the Mohist “condemnation of offensive wars” are in fact very different. According to the respective chapter in the *Mòzǐ*, the Mohist principle is based on the criterion of ‘righteousness’ (yì 義): it condemns the “large-scale unrighteousness of offensive wars”,¹³² yet not only approves of just wars, but even actively propagates them, considering them a means “to expel evil for one’s time” and “to foster armies for punishment”.¹³³ But even if we admit that the suspension of a campaign is a Mohist position, the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* proves that it is not exclusively so. There, it is Yǐn Wénzǐ 尹文子 and Sòng Jiān 宋鉞 who propagate a “ban on offensive wars and the silencing of weapons” (*jìn gōng qǐn bīng* 禁攻寢兵).¹³⁴ The *Hànshū* (History of the Western Hàn) classifies Yǐn Wénzǐ as a *míngjiā* thinker. But the case of Sòng Jiān is more complicated. The ‘Fēi shí’èr zǐ 非十二子 (Refuting the Twelve Masters) chapter of the *Xúnzǐ* groups him together with Mòzǐ,¹³⁵ but the ‘Zhènglùn’ 正論 (Rectifying Discourses) chapter attributes him to the school of Yáng Zhū 楊朱. The ‘Xiǎnxué’ 顯學 chapter of the *Hán Fēizǐ* 韓非子 eventually places him outside the schools of both the Confucians and the Mohists.¹³⁶ This at least allows

131 “墨子著書，作《墨經》以立名本，惠施、公孫龍祖述其學，以正別名顯於世。”

132 ‘Fēi gōng shàng’ 非攻上 (Condemning War I), *Mòzǐ* 30/27–28.

133 ‘Fēirú xià’ 非儒下 (Condemning the Confucians II), *Mòzǐ* 65/7–8.

134 *Zhuāngzǐ* 99/2.

135 *Xúnzǐ* 21/20.

136 *Hán Fēizǐ* 150/30–151/1.

us to assert that Yǐn Wénzǐ does not belong to the Mohist school. Pacifism is obviously not the exclusive privilege of the Mohists. Judging from the *Mòzǐ*, however, 'universal love' is indeed the central doctrine of the Mohist school. At the same time, a survey of the extant texts reveals that this expression by no means exclusively characterizes the Mohists. When the 'Tiānxià' chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* gives a sketch of the Mohist school, it alternatively refers to this doctrine as "boundless love" (*fàn'ài* 泛愛). But in the 'Tiāndào' 天道 chapter (The Way of Heaven), the *Zhuāngzǐ* puts the slogan into Confucius's mouth when he defines Confucian humaneness and righteousness as "selfless, universal love". Therefore, when the 'Shěnyīng' chapter of the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* comments on Gōngsūn Lóng's words by saying that "the intention of a suspension of the military campaign reflects the conviction (*xīn* 心) that one has to 'universally love the world'",¹³⁷ the sense of this universal love is not necessarily Mohist. Moreover, the 'Xúwúguǐ' 徐無鬼 (Xu Wugui) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* mentions Gōngsūn Lóng (as Bǐng) along with Confucians, Mohists, and the followers of Yáng Zhū. This shows that Gōngsūn Lóng is not considered a member of the Mohist school. But all of these are rather peripheral materials, and Gōngsūn Lóng's only political statement in the extant version of the text (leaving aside the introductory 'Jǐfǔ' chapter) is what he says in 'Míngshí lùn': his advice to heed the relation between name and actuality, and to be mindful in one's use of designations. New materials may help us find an answer to this question.

Second, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is also considered a Mohist text on the basis of the terminology, syntax, and topics of the extant text, which are closely related to the Mohist 'Canons'. But the similarity of themes by no means implies that the two texts belong to the same intellectual tradition. Zhāng Xíngyán 章行嚴 (1881–1973) has long pointed out that whenever the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* addresses these topics, the interpretation is contrary to the Mohist 'Canons'. Moreover, we read in the 'Tiānxià' chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* that although Mohists "all read the 'Mohist Canons', their interpretations are diverse and contradictory, and they say that the other groups differ from Mòzǐ". On this basis, Wáng Xiàntáng 王獻唐 has suggested that followers of Mohists such as Xiànglǐ Qín 相里勤 might well have read the Mohist 'Canons', but that they deviated from the genuine sense of the 'Canons'. Therefore, if Gōngsūn Lóng does not agree with the Mohist 'Canons', this for Wáng "is plain evidence that his thought derived from them".¹³⁸ But the crucial point is that the statement about the different, conflicting Mohist schools in the *Zhuāngzǐ* in no way implies that their teachings were incompatible with

137 “偃兵之意，兼愛天下之心也。” (*Lǚshì Chūnqiū*, 109/8).

138 Wáng 1992: 17.

the meaning of the ‘Canons’. Given that the Mohist ‘Canons’ were revered as the guidelines of the school, it is clear that Mohists differed in their interpretation. At the same time, it is clear that the fundamental meaning of these ‘Canons’ was certainly preserved. This is similar to the case of the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經, where the principles have been preserved although commentaries abound. It is thus clear that Wáng Xiàntáng’s view is hardly tenable. In fact, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* contains phrases and passages identical to the Mohist ‘Canons’, but as prototypically exemplified in ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’, these are often attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng’s detractors. As this has already been pointed out by Dù Guóxiáng, I shall not dwell on it here.

With regard to the problem of the relation between name and actuality, for example, the two maintain quite controversial positions. On core topics, the positions of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the Mohist ‘Canons’ are diametrically opposed. As for the problem of terminology, the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* does indeed use the same terms as the Mohists – such as ‘name’ (*míng* 名), ‘actuality’ (*shí* 實), ‘pointing (designations)’ (*zhǐ* 指), ‘reference’ (*jǔ* 舉), ‘correction/adjustment’ (*zhèng* 正), ‘completion’ (*yíng* 盈), ‘adequacy’ (*dāng* 當), ‘correspondence’ (*wéi* 唯), ‘execute’ (*xíng* 行), and ‘designate/predicate’ (*wèi* 謂). However, this does not imply that these terms were exclusively Mohist. The use of ‘pointing (designation)’ (*zhǐ* 指) in the *Zhuāngzǐ* or the view on the relation between name and actuality in the *Xúnzǐ* are instructive examples that such is not the case. It is therefore certainly possible that Gōngsūn Lóng was deeply influenced by the Mohists. But acknowledging this is not the same as claiming that he was himself a Mohist. At least on the basis of the extant materials, this contention can hardly be plausibly maintained.

Our previous discussion has shown that Gōngsūn Lóng’s cosmology was influenced by Daoist views. Accordingly, the extant *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* was listed in the Daoist section in the bibliographical chapter of the *Suǐshū* (History of the Suǐ Dynasty), under the designation *Shǒubái lùn* (Treatise on Keeping White Intact). Later, it was included in the Daoist Canon. Judging from this perspective alone, the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is indeed intimately related to both philosophical and religious Daoism. But there are two problems that need to be clarified here.

First, on a theoretical level, the Daoists doubtless acknowledge the value of the theories of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. Even if Zhuāngzǐ attacks and ridicules Gōngsūn Lóng in the ‘*Tiānxià*’ chapter, he nonetheless accepts – albeit from the biased perspective of the art of the Way – the value of the debaters Huì Shī and Gōngsūn Lóng in terms of their scholarship and thought. Viewing the concrete position of these debaters among the scholar-philosophers, the ‘*Tiāndào*’ chapter clearly states that “among those speaking about the great Way in antiquity” one can, “on the fifth position, adopt the theory shape and name”. This

means that in the entire intellectual universe of the Daoists, the “School of Names” took the fifth position. Based on this, it is fully acceptable that the *Suíshū* lists the *Shǒubái lùn* (i.e. the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*) under the rubric of Daoism. Finally, Daoism as a philosophy and Daoist religion are clearly related to each other but stand for different concepts. Religious Daoism is a specific form of Daoism, the theoretical foundations of which lie in the so-called Huáng-Lǎo doctrine (Huángdì and Lǎozǐ). Theoretically speaking, therefore, it is not purely Daoist. Hence, it is no doubt a great contribution by the compilers of the Daoist Canon to include an (albeit already corrupted) version of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in its ‘Tàiqīng’ section, thereby preserving it for later generations. However, as such, this does not allow us to consider the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* as a Daoist text. The reason for this is very simple: Daoism as a denomination of a school is the designation of an intellectual tradition rather than a religion. Thus, although texts like the *Hán Fēizǐ* and the *Mòzǐ* are also transmitted in the *Dàoàng*, no one considers them Daoist. At the same time, one has to admit that the connections of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* to Daoism run very deep, both in terms of its intellectual content and its history of transmission.

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Jiāng Xiàngdōng 江向東

8 A New Interpretation of ‘Báimǎlùn’ (Discourse on White and Horse)

The lack of a theory of knowledge or epistemology in traditional Chinese culture has resulted in a severely inadequate understanding of the pre-Qín “School of Names” (*míngjiā* 名家) for over two millennia. In view of this short-coming, I try to reinterpret the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 precisely from the perspective of a theory of knowledge. The scope of the present chapter is limited to the discussion of ‘Báimǎlùn’ (Discourse on White and Horse; henceforth BML): the first part consists of an annotation of the original text, the second part concentrates on its theoretical gist, and the third part presents my comments and evaluation of other scholars’ interpretations.¹

¹ Huì Shī 惠施 and Gōngsūn Lóng are the representative figures of the so-called pre-Qín “School of Names”. Gōngsūn Lóng is assumed to have been Huì Shī’s junior and a contemporary of Zhào Shèng 趙勝 (lord of *Píngyuán* 平原), Kǒng Chuān 孔穿, and Zōu Yǎn 鄒衍. His central ideas were preserved in the book *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. Of the 14 *piān* originally listed in the bibliographical section of the *Hànshū* 漢書, only six have been preserved in the current version. While one *piān*, entitled ‘Jīfǔ’ (跡府) was written by authors from a later period, it is almost certain that the other five *piān* were written by Gōngsūn Lóng himself. The best-known *piān* are BML and ‘Jiānbái lùn’ 堅白論 (On the Hard and the White), but the *piān* that best represents Gōngsūn Lóng’s theoretical thinking is actually ‘Zhīwù lùn’ 指物論 (On Concepts and Their Instances, hereafter ZWL). The most essential feature of the pre-Qín “School of Names” is their consciousness of ‘names’ or ‘concepts’. If we take Kant’s perspective in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as our vantage point, the “School of Names” already provided a preliminary “theory of knowledge” – that is, a theory about “knowledge for its own sake” and a “speculation on pure intellect”. The reason the pre-Qín “School of Names” was so short-lived and had no lasting impact on Chinese intellectual history is the lack of this kind of ‘theory of knowledge’ in traditional Chinese culture. This has resulted in a severely inadequate understanding of the “School of Names” for over two millennia. For more details, see my Jiāng 2011.

Note: Original title 公孫龍子 — 白馬論 新詮. Translated by Zhang Yuheng, Yves Trachsel, and Rafael Suter.

1 Annotation of the Original Text

The following discussion is based on the *Dàoàng* 道藏 edition, which I have punctuated, collated, and sectioned. I shall now present my annotation and interpretation of the text, which is required for an adequate understanding. I base this on Gōngsūn Lóng's "fundamental line of thought". The specific theoretical issues relevant to capturing his thought will be discussed further below.

(1a) BML²

Is it permissible [to say that] a white horse is not a horse?

白馬非馬可乎?

Yes.

曰：可。

(1b) Why?

曰：何哉？

Horse is what was used to designate a shape. *White* is what was used to designate a color. What designates a color is not what designates a shape. Therefore, I say: "A white horse is not a horse."

曰：馬者所以命形也。白者所以命色也。命色者非命形也。故曰：白馬非馬。

At the very beginning of this first section, Gōngsūn Lóng expounds on the key points of the chapter from his vantage point of "pure discursive understanding": the first exchange between the two discussants provides a positive, affirmative answer to the central thesis of this chapter, while the second provides the explanation supporting it.

The first two lines of the BML as in (1a) are presented in the form of an exchange of question and answer (Q&A) between a debater and his opponent; they provide a positive, affirmative answer to the central thesis of this chapter (lit. "white horse is not horse"; i.e. "a 'white horse' is not [just] a 'horse'", "a 'white horse' is different from a 'horse'", or "a 'white horse' is not equal to a 'horse'"), concluding that it is tenable.³ This theoretical presupposition is both

² Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 2/19–3/2 (references are given as page no./line no.).

³ According to the 'Jifū' chapter of the *GSLZ* (Dàoàng version), "Gōngsūn Lóng met with Kōng Chuān in the house of the lord of Píngyuán in the state of Zhào. Chuān said, 'I have heard of your magnificent acts and wanted to be your student for a long time. But the only thing I cannot accept is your idea that a white horse is not a horse. If you would please give up this notion, I would very much like to be your student.' Gōngsūn Lóng said, 'What you have

the point of departure and the conclusion of the whole BML. In fact, if we read through this chapter by following what I call the “basic line of thought” of Gōngsūn Lóng’s argument, we shall easily find that the phrase “white horse is not horse” is simply intended to illustrate that empirical concepts such as ‘horse’, ‘white’, and ‘white horse’ all exhibit their own independent substantiality; he further emphasizes that the concept of ‘white horse’ is different from the concept of ‘horse’. However, without taking into account the second exchange between the two discussants, the proposition “white horse is not horse” can be rather misleading. The reason for this lies in the philosophical difficulty that results from the ambiguity and multiple semantics of the negative copula *fēi* 非 (‘not to be’) in ancient Chinese. After this positive endorsement of the chapter’s central thesis, Gōngsūn Lóng therefore provides the necessary explanation to support it. Again, the text provides this through an exchange of a question and

said is false. What makes me famous is my theory about the white horse! Now if you ask me to drop it, then I will have nothing to teach you. Besides, if one wants somebody as a teacher, this is because his wisdom and knowledge is not as good as the teacher’s. Now if you ask me to part with my views, this is to teach me first and then to learn from me. To teach somebody first and then to learn from him is erroneous. Furthermore, even Confucius agrees with the idea that a white horse is not a horse. I have heard that the king of Chǔ 楚 once forgot his bow Fánruò 繁弱 when he went to hunt alligators and rhinoceros in the Garden of Yúnmèng 雲夢. He lost his bow, and his retainers wanted to look for it. The king said, “Stop! A man of Chǔ lost his bow and a man of Chǔ [will] find it; why should we bother to look for it?” Confucius heard this story and said: “Is the king of Chǔ righteous but did he not succeed? He could have said that someone lost his bow and someone else will find it, why does it have to be [the people of] Chǔ?” As such, Confucius distinguished the people of Chǔ from [so-called] people. If you agree with Confucius on distinguishing the people of Chǔ from people but criticize me for distinguishing a white horse from a [so-called] horse, it is false. Now that you study Confucius’s teachings but criticize what he agreed to, you want to learn from me but ask me to part with what I can teach, even if there are hundreds of me. I dare not to associate with you.’ Kǒng Chuān had nothing to reply.” (Cf. *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, 1/11–19). This “documentary record” is sufficient to illustrate vividly that Gōngsūn Lóng was indeed famous for his proposition “a white horse is not a horse” at that time. We also know, from the dispute about this proposition between him and Kǒng Chuān, that “a white horse is not a horse” actually means that a ‘white horse’ is *different* from a ‘horse’, just as in Confucius’s utterance “the people of Chǔ” are different from the “people”. Therefore, the character *fēi* 非, whose meaning is ambiguous in ancient Chinese, should be interpreted as ‘different from’ or ‘not equal to’ in this context. Although this clarification belongs to the level of interpretation, it is also crucial for us if we intend to correctly grasp the basic theoretical framework of BML. Here I also need to point out that Western scholars commonly translate this “proposition” in a literal way, as “a ‘white horse’ is not a ‘horse’” or “a white horse is not a horse”. See, for example, Perleberg 1952: 84; Solomon 2013: 99.

a corresponding answer: In (1b) it argues that ‘white’ and ‘horse’ both possess their own independent substantiality. Yet ‘white horse’, even as a combination of ‘white’ (which designates a color) and ‘horse’ (which designates a shape), also possesses its own independent substantiality. Accordingly, the concept of a ‘white horse’ is different from the concept of ‘horse’. Thus BML simply engages in a series of arguments repeatedly supporting the view that ‘horse’, ‘white’, and ‘white horse’ all have their own independent substantiality.

(2a) BML⁴

“Having a white horse” cannot mean “not having a horse”. [Now,] as it cannot mean “not having a horse”, isn’t this “[having] a horse”? [If] “having a white horse” is tantamount to “having a horse”, why is “white <horse>” not “horse”?

曰：有白馬，不可謂無馬也。不可謂無馬者，非馬也？有白馬為有馬。白之非馬，何也？

- (2b) [If] one is looking for a horse, yellow and black horses cannot be presented. If “white horse” were nothing but “horse”, this [would mean that] what is sought would be one [in kind]. The reason that what is sought would be one [in kind] is that “something white” would not be different from “horse”. [If] what is sought is not different, how do we deal with yellow or black horses, which [in one case (i.e. when one is looking for ‘horse’)] can [be presented], and [in the other (i.e. when one is looking for ‘white horse’)] cannot. It is clear that possibility and impossibility contradict each other. Therefore, yellow and black horse are one [and the same] in that they respond to “having a horse” but not to “having a white horse” (which has been suggested to be tantamount to “having a horse”). This [makes] it clear that “white horse” is not “horse”.

曰：求馬，黃黑馬皆可致。求白馬，黃黑馬不可致。使白馬乃馬也，是所求一也。所求一者，白者不異馬也。所求不異，如黃黑馬有可，有不可，何也？可與不可，其相非，明。故黃黑馬一也。而可以應有馬，而不可以應有白馬。是白馬之非馬審矣。

Yú Yuè 俞樾 (1821–1907) states that “‘*fēi mǎ yě* 非馬也’ in (2a) should in fact be ‘*fēi mǎ yé* 非馬耶’, since *yě* 也 and *yé* 耶 were interchangeable in ancient times.”⁵ I agree with Yú’s interpretation here. Móu Zōngsān 牟宗三 (1909–1995)

4 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/4–11.

5 Yú/Lǐ 1956: 27.

remarks that “*zhī* 之 is incorrect, it should be *mǎ* 馬, or [another explanation is that] the character *mǎ* 馬 was simply omitted on top of *zhī* 之”.⁶ Here both options are acceptable. Following the basic line of thought in this context, especially in view of the fact that the debater's answer ends with the utterance “*bái mǎ zhī fēi mǎ*” 白馬之非馬, allows us to infer that the answer of the opponent should end identically. We thus follow the second suggestion by Mǒu and add *mǎ* 馬 before *zhī* 之.

The second exchange between the debater and his adversary concentrates on a common-sense argument against the former's claim that ‘white horse’ is not ‘horse’. The adversary refutes this by remarking that “having a white horse” is in fact “having a horse”. On this point, Gōngsūn Lóng proves his own argument by expounding that wanting a ‘horse’ is different from wanting a ‘white horse’.

The first part of the opponents's question in (2a) addresses the topic from a common-sense perspective. He emphasizes that having a ‘white horse’ is in fact having a ‘horse’. Yet this counterargument lacks a clear theoretical insight into the independent substantiality of both ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’. It aims to negate the difference between the concepts ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’: “Having a white horse” cannot mean “not having a horse”. Yet is the negation of “not having a horse” not simply “[having] a horse”? However, if “having a white horse” is tantamount to “having a horse”, why is “white <horse>” not “horse”?

The debater's answer in (2b) is directed against his adversary's claim that “having a white horse is in fact having a horse”. Demonstrating that wanting a ‘horse’ is actually different from wanting a ‘white horse’, Gōngsūn Lóng proves that the concept of ‘white horse’ is different from the concept of ‘horse’: If one wants a ‘horse’, both yellow and black ones can be presented; but if one wants a ‘white horse’, yellow and black horses may not be presented. If ‘white horse’ were equal to ‘horse’, this would imply that the desired objects in both cases are identical. If this were the case, then ‘white’ (that is, ‘white horse’) would not be different from ‘horse’. Yet if there is no difference between the desired objects, why can yellow and black horses be presented in one case but not in the other? The reciprocal exclusion of these two cases is all too obvious. Yellow horses and black horses are one and the same in that they can both be brought up when one wants a horse, but not when one wants a white horse. Accordingly, one can prove that the concept of ‘white horse’ is indeed different from the concept of ‘horse’.

6 Mǒu 1994: 103.

(3a) BML⁷

[If] one considers a horse's having color as tantamount to its not being a horse, would it be permissible [to say that] there are no horses in the world, unless there were colorless horses in the world?

曰：以馬之有色為非馬。天下非有無色之馬也。天下無馬可乎？

- (3b) Horses certainly have color; therefore, there are white horses. If horses were without color, there would simply be horses, and that is all. Where would one get a white horse? Therefore, the white is not [tantamount to] horse. *White horse* is *horse* in conjunction with *white*. Yet, is 'horse' in conjunction with 'white' [still] 'horse'? Therefore I say: "White horse is not horse."

曰：馬固有色。故有白馬。使馬無色，有馬如已耳。安取白馬？故白者非馬也。白馬者，馬與白也。馬與白，馬也。故曰：白馬非馬也。

Tán Jièfǔ 譚戒甫 remarks on the phrase “*yǒu mǎ rú yǐ ěr*” 有馬如已耳: “In the *Jiùzhù* (Old Commentary), it says that *rú* 如 is like *ér* 而. These two characters were interchangeable in ancient times.”⁸ I agree with Tán's interpretation here. Dīng Chéngquán 丁成全 says: “*yě* 也 is the same as *yé* 耶. It is a modal particle for rhetorical questions.”⁹ I adopt Dīng's interpretation here.

This third exchange again starts from a common-sense perspective to design another argument against the chapter's central claim. The latter is attacked by suggesting that it would imply the existence of colorless horses, which, however, clearly do not exist. Gōngsūn Lóng maintains his own argument by stating simply: “If horses were without color, there would simply be horses.”

The opponent's objection in (3a) again adopts a common-sense perspective. It emphasizes that the debater's claim would imply that “there are colorless horses in the world”. Yet again, it lacks a clear theoretical insight into the fact that, in this case, “there would simply be horse” (i.e. ‘horses in themselves’). The adversary aims to negate the idea that the concept of ‘white horse’ is different from the concept of ‘horse’: if you claim that ‘horses’ which have ‘color’ (such as ‘white horse’, ‘yellow horse’, and ‘black horse’) are different from ‘horse’, and that there are no ‘colorless’ horses in the world, you have to conclude that there is no ‘horse’ in the world at all. But can one say this?

⁷ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/13–16.

⁸ Tán 1963: 26.

⁹ Dīng 1996: 35.

The debater's reply in (3b) is directed against the claim that his idea must be wrong "unless there are colorless horses in the world". Invoking the claim that if "horses were without color, there would simply be horses", Gōngsūn Lóng substantiates his view that the concept of 'white horse' is different from the concept of 'horse' – that is, 'horses' essentially have 'color', thus there are 'white horses'. If horses had no color, there would simply be 'horses in themselves'. But how could there be 'white horses' then? Yet the 'white' is different from the 'horse'. 'White horse' is the combination of 'horse' and 'white'. Now, how could this new combination, which contains both 'horse' and 'white', simply equal 'horse'? This is the reason why the debater maintains his claim that "white horse is not horse".

(4a) BML¹⁰

'Horse' not yet in conjunction with 'white' is horse. 'White' not yet in conjunction with 'horse' is white. Putting 'horse' and 'white' together and repeating the [separate] terms [for them] as 'white horse', this conjunction (i.e. of the terms 'white' and 'horse') takes as [its] name (i.e. the term 'white horse') what is not conjoined (i.e. the terms 'white' plus 'horse') and is [thus] not permissible. Therefore I say: "White horse is not horse."

曰：馬未與白為馬，白未與馬為白。合馬與白，復名白馬，是相與以不相與為名，未可。故曰：白馬非馬 <未可>。

(4b) [If] one takes "having a white horse" as tantamount to "having a horse", is it permissible to refer to "having a white horse" as "having a yellow horse"?

曰：以有白馬為非馬，謂有白馬為有黃馬，可乎？

(4c) No.

曰：未可。

(4d) To regard "having a horse" as different from "having a yellow horse" is to regard yellow horses as different from horses. To regard yellow horses as different from horses, this is to regard 'yellow horse' as not tantamount to 'horse'. To regard 'yellow horse' as not tantamount to 'horse', and to regard '[having a] white horse' as tantamount to having a 'horse', this is [like] the expression "something flying enters the water" or "inner and outer coffins

¹⁰ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/18–26.

are in different places”. It is [an example of] the most nonsensical speech and the wildest talk in the world.

曰：以有馬為異有黃馬，是異黃馬於馬也。異黃馬於馬，是以黃馬為非馬。以黃馬為非馬，而以白馬為有馬，此飛者入池，而棺槨異處。此天下之悖言亂辭也。

This fourth section consists of two exchanges between the two discussants. Again starting from a common-sense perspective, it provides a third argument against the chapter's main thesis, this time countering it by observing that a 'white' 'horse' is not a "conjoined" entity. In contrast, Gōngsūn Lóng substantiates his argument by proving that "yellow horse is not tantamount to horse". However, the arguments in this section do not seem to correspond neatly and thus might be the result of disarranged bamboo slips.¹¹ As yet, experts in China and abroad have been unable to present us with a convincing solution for this delicate problem. I shall therefore stick to the *Dào zàng* version and omit further discussion of these textual difficulties, which obviously require further research. Yet again starting from a common-sense perspective, the adversary's question largely agrees with the debater's opinion: Both admit that 'horse' and 'white' are 'separate' or 'uncombined'

11 As to this question, Mǒu Zōngsān's answer may not be perfect, but his line of thought is inspiring and valuable. For example, he points out that "it seems the whole answer does not accord with the aim of the question [...] hence, I assume that this might have been caused by disordered bamboo slips. Let us try to move the very last answer here and check whether it is more clear and coherent: [The white inherent in the term] 'white' is not fixed in what is regarded as white, and may [therefore] be ignored (i.e. in the case under discussion). [The white inherent in the term] 'white horse' speaks of a [species of] white fixed in what is regarded as white. What is fixed in what is regarded as white (i.e. the white of a white horse) is not [the white inherent in the term] 'white'. [The concept of horse reposing in the term] 'horse' does not forego color, nor make a choice with respect to it. For this reason, yellow and black [horses] both respond [to the call for a 'horse']. [The concept of white horse inherent in the term] 'white horse' [on the one hand] foregoes [some] colors and [on the other] makes a choice with respect to [one] color. [For this reason,] yellow and black horses are both rejected on the grounds of color. Therefore, white horses alone can respond [to the call for a white horse]. What [entails] non-rejection (i.e. the concept of horse inherent in the term 'horse') is not what [entails] rejection (i.e. the concept of white horse inherent in the term 'white horse'). Therefore, I say '[the concept of white horse inherent in the term] "white horse" is not [the concept of horse inherent in the term] "horse"'. I have no proof from other versions supporting this arrangement. However, uncollated books like this are very likely to have been affected by a displacement of slips during the long period of transmission. Considering its meaning and logic, I hold the view that this arrangement renders the question-and-answer format more suitable and the meaning it expresses clearer and more coherent; moreover, it does not contradict the original approach and the original meaning. Thus it is not unacceptable to rearrange it like this, and it is helpful for readers' understanding." See Mǒu 1994: 108–110.

lí 離. However, the opponent also here has no clear theoretical insight into the implications of the 'combination' (hé 合) of 'horse' and 'white'. He still aims to refute the idea that the concept of 'white horse' is different from the concept of 'horse': for him, 'horse' is only horse when it is not yet conjoined with 'white', and 'white' is white only so long as it is not conjoined with 'horse'. If one puts 'horse' and 'white' together and repeats the (separate) terms (for them) as "white horse", then this conjunction takes as its name (i.e. 'white horse') something that is *not* conjoined (i.e. the two *separate* terms 'white' and 'horse'), something the adversary considers impermissible. Accordingly, he concludes that one cannot say that "white horse is not horse". In this section, the debater proves his thesis by demonstrating that one can prove that "a yellow horse is not a horse". Yet if one considers "having a horse" as different from "having a yellow horse", then one distinguishes between 'yellow horse' and 'horse'. But to regard yellow horses as different from horses is to regard yellow horses as not (tantamount to) horses. However, to regard a 'yellow horse' as not 'horse', but to claim, at the same time, that 'white horse' is 'horse', is self-contradictory. Or as Gōngsūn Lóng puts it, it is like stating that "something flying enters the water" or "inner and outer coffins are in different places".

(5a) BML¹²

[To say that] "having a white horse" cannot mean "not having a horse" is [a statement] in which 'white' is detached. In a case where one does not detach it, "having a white horse" cannot [simply] mean "having a horse". Thus, the reason that ["having a white horse"] is considered to be "having a horse" is simply that one takes the "horse" [in "having a white horse"] to be [the "horse" in] "having a horse", and not [that one takes] "having a white horse" [merely] to be "having a horse". Therefore, its (i.e. the statement "having a white horse") [merely] constituting "having a horse" would not permit one to refer to a horse as 'horse'.

曰：有白馬，不可謂無馬者，離白之謂也。不離者，有白馬，不可謂有馬也。故所以為有馬者，獨以馬為有馬耳。非有白馬為有馬。故其為有馬也不可以謂馬馬也。

- (5b) [The white inherent in the term] 'white' is not fixed in what is regarded as white, and may [therefore] be ignored. [The white inherent in the term] 'white horse' speaks of a [species of] white fixed in what is regarded as

12 Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ, 3/28–4/1–3.

white. What is fixed in what is regarded as white (i.e. the ‘white’ in ‘white horse’) is not [the white inherent in the term] ‘white’. [The concept of horse inherent in the term] ‘horse’ does not forego color or make any choice with respect to it. For this reason, yellow and black [horses] both respond [to the call for ‘horse’]. [The concept of white horse inherent in the term] ‘white horse’ [on the one hand] foregoes [some] colors and [on the other] makes a choice with respect to [one] color. [For this reason,] yellow and black horses are both rejected on the grounds of color. Therefore, white horses alone can respond [to the call for a white horse]. What does not reject (i.e. the concept of horse inherent in the term ‘horse’) is not what does reject (i.e. the concept of white horse inherent in the term ‘white horse’). Therefore I say: “[The concept of white horse inherent in the term] ‘white horse’ is not [the concept of horse inherent in the term] ‘horse’.”

曰：白者，不定所白。忘之而可也。白馬者，言白定所白也。定所白者，非白也。馬者，無去取於色。故黃黑皆<馬>¹³所以應。白馬者，有去取於色。黃黑馬皆所以色去，故惟白馬獨可以應耳。無去者，非有去也。故曰：白馬非馬。

In this fifth and final section, Gōngsūn Lóng takes the perspective of “pure intellectual reasoning” as his vantage point, providing a conclusive argument against the common-sense view put forward by his adversary. His aim is once again to defend the fundamental conviction implied by his pivotal thesis that ‘having a white horse’ cannot mean ‘not having a horse’. (This also happens to be the common-sense view of the argument in section two of the dialogue). He bases this on separating out a distinct concept of ‘whiteness’. However, following this concept, a white horse could not be referred to as a ‘horse’. Hence the reason why having a ‘white horse’ can be equated with having a ‘horse’ is that one relies exclusively on the constituent term ‘horse’ in ‘white horse’ to determine that there is a horse, rather than resorting to the entire expression ‘white horse’. Thus one can only talk about there being a horse, but one cannot say that there is a ‘horse in itself’. White (that is, ‘whiteness itself’) is not itself fixed to this white object or that white object. Accordingly, the latter [white object] can be ignored. But in the case of the expression ‘white horse’, white is fixed to the object that is determined as white (in this case, the ‘horse’); the horse (to which the white is fixed) is different from the white. Horse (that is, the ‘horse itself’) is not limited by a

13 Mǒu Zōngsān says: “There is a character 馬 missing after ‘huáng hēi 黃黑’; I now add it according to a similar sentence in a later paragraph (‘huáng hēi mǎ suǒ yǐ sè qù 黃黑馬所以色去’). This is easy to understand, as other commentators also are aware of it and I am not the first one to point it out.” (Mǒu 1979: 110). I agree with Mǒu’s interpretation here.

color. Hence, yellow or black horses are all possible referents of 'horse'. In contrast, 'white horse' is indeed limited by the color, and as a result, yellow and black horses are ruled out due to their 'color'. Only a 'white horse' can be considered. But a term without limitation ('horse'; "what does not exclude") is different from one with limitation ('white horse'; "what does exclude"). Consequently, Gōngsūn Lóng can claim that "white horse is not horse".

2 The Theoretical Gist of BML

In the first part of this chapter, I have mainly followed Gōngsūn Lóng's basic line of thought. I have punctuated, collated, and sectioned the *Dàoàng* version and provided some necessary annotations and explanations. The present section is based on the textual arrangement above, and it provides a brief discussion on the main theoretical questions of BML. The essentials of the latter's theory are as follows:¹⁴

Firstly, in terms of ontology (i.e. in a metaphysical perspective), the main aim of BML is to confirm the independent substantiality of empirical concepts such as 'horse', 'white', and 'white horse'. The first exchange of arguments between the debater and his contender represents a positive endorsement of the pivotal thesis that "white horse is not horse". This theoretical thesis marks both the point of departure and the conclusion of the entire chapter. The second exchange then provides the indispensable explanation of the key thesis. 'Horse' is something that designates a shape, while 'white' designates a color. Yet what designates a color ('white') is not what designates a shape ('horse'). Not only 'white' and 'horse', but also 'white horse' (which designates color plus shape) – that is, the combination of 'white' (which designates color) and 'horse' (which

¹⁴ As to the theoretical gist, the topics involved in ZWL and BML are apparently on different levels: in ZWL, there is no conclusive argument about the independent substantiality of 'empirical concepts', but only the assurance of the independent substantiality of 'marks' (*zhǐ*) on the ontological (metaphysical) level. Actually, this 'distinction' of 'mark' and 'horse' is also reflected in one remark in the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子. Thus, 'Qíwù lùn' 齊物論 (On the Equality of Things) opposes the pre-Qin "School of Names" (and probably Gōngsūn Lóng himself), and it states that "all things in heaven and earth may be dealt with as 'mark'; each of their myriads may be dealt with as 'horse'". ("天地一指也，萬物一馬也。" *Zhuāngzǐ* 4/21–22) The *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 says, "conceived of as having no name, it is the originator of heaven and earth; conceived of as having a name, it is the mother of all things". (*Lǎozǐ* 1/3–4). It thus seems that 'mark' refers to 'heaven and earth' and 'having no name', while 'horse' refers to the 'myriads of things' and 'having a name'. Given that ZWL assures the independent substantiality of 'marks', we can infer that BML's argument is based on this. For further details, see my Jiāng 2011: 44.

designates shape) – each have their independent substantiality. For this reason, the concept of ‘white horse’ is different from the concept of ‘horse’. The entire BML consists of a series of arguments, each of which is intended to prove the fundamental view that ‘horse’, ‘white’, and ‘white horse’ all have their own independent substantiality: Opposing his adversary’s rhetorical question in section two, which suggests that “having a white horse” is nothing other than “having a horse”, the debater defends his point by showing that there is a difference in intention between wanting a horse and wanting a white horse. In section three, the debater counters his opponent’s claim that his thesis would imply the obviously false claim that “there are colorless horses in the world” by clarifying that his thesis merely entails that there are simply horses. In section four, he eventually proves that, at times, one treats the terms ‘yellow horse’ and ‘horse’ differently, so it would be self-refuting if, at the same time, one were to categorically exclude the idea that ‘white horse’ is not just ‘horse’. In section five, Gōngsūn Lóng provides the conclusive argument that ‘white’ (that is, ‘whiteness in itself’) is not fixed to any particular white object, whereas in the case of ‘white horse’, the white is fixed to the object that is white, namely the horse. Summarizing our discussion above, it is clear that BML’s main argument confirms the independent substantiality of empirical concepts such as ‘horse’, ‘white’, and ‘white horse’. This clearly demonstrates the metaphysical dimension of Gōngsūn Lóng’s thinking.

Secondly, as to the issue of logic (and epistemology), the key thesis of BML that “white horse is not horse” seems to emphasize the difference between a common name (generic term) and a distinctive name (specific term) in relations of implication or subsumption. The crucial claim that “white horse is not horse” underlines the idea that, in this relation of subsumption, there is a difference between a distinctive name (a specific term, i.e. ‘white horse’) and a common name (a generic term, i.e. ‘horse’). This is highly relevant when it comes to confirming the independent substantiality of empirical concepts (‘horse’, ‘white’, ‘white horse’) on a metaphysical level. However, it has a negative effect on our understanding of the logical connection between ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’, as it neglects the commonality between distinctive names (specific terms like ‘white horse’) and common names (generic terms like ‘horse’) in relations of subsumption. Hence, the correct expression of the logical connection between ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ concomitantly implies two aspects: While, in a sense, “white horse is not horse”, it is nonetheless clearly also true that “white horse is horse”. Since Gōngsūn Lóng only employs the ambiguous word *fēi* 非 to express the logical connection between ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’, his claim indeed comes close to sophistry. It was also this point which led his contemporaries – as well as later generations – to misunderstand his point. Although in the context of his

arguments he clearly makes conscious use of the fact that *fēi* 非 means both 'is different from' and 'is not equal to', Gōngsūn Lóng's logical contribution is obviously less significant than that of the Mohists.¹⁵

Third, as to the issue of "ontology" (*tǐxìngxué* 體性學), the interpretive strategy in BML makes two kinds of distinctions: first, shape ('horse') is not identical to color ('white'); second, color plus shape ('white horse') is not identical to shape ('horse'). Here, the question of shape and color involves both the dimension of the distinguishing functions of consciousness and what is commonly termed the problem of substance and properties. According to Aristotle's *Categories*, the independent existence of substance is fundamentally different from the dependent existence of relations and qualities (that is, properties): substances can exist independently, while qualities and relations can only exist as properties of and relations between substances. For example, certain qualities – such as green, spicy, or good – cannot exist separately from the entity *x* which possesses them as attributes. Similarly, relations such as 'more open' or 'above' cannot exist without the two entities *x* and *y* involved in these relations. According to Aristotle's explanation, the existence of attributes (including qualities and relations) depends on the entities to which they pertain. Taking this as our point of reference for discussing the relationship of shape ('horse') and color ('white') in BML, we can trace the existence of properties (white) which necessarily depend on the existence of entities (horse) in the concrete process of cognition. Although Gōngsūn Lóng demonstrates a certain tendency to distinguish between 'horse' and 'white' in consciousness itself, he sticks to the view which affirms the independent substantiality of 'horse' and 'white', and thus fails to proceed further in the discussion of cognitive functions. Consequently, he has made no theoretical achievement in the field of ontology. However, addressing this issue is the central task of the 'Jiānbái lùn' (堅白論, henceforth the JBL).

Thus far, I have provided some brief arguments about the main theoretical issues treated in BML: Gōngsūn Lóng's main purpose in this chapter is to confirm the independent substantiality of empirical concepts like 'horse', 'white', or 'white horse'. This also reveals the metaphysical achievements of Gōngsūn Lóng's thought; as to the issue of logic (epistemology), the key proposition of BML, "white horse is not horse", seems to resort solely to the ambiguous character *fēi* 非 in order to emphasize the difference between generic terms and

¹⁵ To some extent, the Later Mohists corrected the obvious logical deficiencies of BML's central thesis that "white horse is not horse": Thus the 'Xiǎoqǔ' 小取 says: "A white horse is a horse; riding a white horse is riding a horse" (*Mòzǐ* p. 98, line 320).

specific terms in relations of subsumption. Yet, as I have remarked above, this actually shows traces of sophistry, which led his contemporaries and later generations to miss the point of Gōngsūn Lóng's argument. Concerning the issue of formal ontology, Gōngsūn Lóng demonstrates some intention to distinguish 'horse' and 'white' in consciousness itself. But sticking to the view that affirms the independent substantiality of these empirical concepts, he in fact fails to advance further in the discussion of cognitive functions, ultimately failing to make any substantial contributions.

3 Comments on Other Interpretations

Traditional Chinese scholarship spent considerable effort on textual history, but not on reflection on and development of the theoretical problems raised. Over the past two millennia, many scholars have worked on Gōngsūn Lóng's BML. However, from a theoretical perspective, they have scarcely succeeded in achieving any logically adequate interpretation of the text. The fundamental yet obvious reason is that, in dealing with extremely sophisticated texts such as BML, the efforts of traditional scholarship, which restricts itself to mere textual studies instead of adopting a theoretical perspective, are doomed to be fruitless. However, the situation has luckily been improving over the course of an intensified exchange between Eastern and Western philosophy and scholarship since the early twentieth century. In this last section, I shall introduce some of the relevant works on BML by representative scholars, such as Féng Yǒulán 馮友蘭, Móu Zōngsān, Láo Siguāng 勞思光, and Kirill O. Thompson. Thus I will shed light on the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of their studies on BML in order to gather the expertise of a couple of outstanding experts on the text, from both China and abroad.

The first section is dedicated to research by Féng Yǒulán. From the philosophical stance of Platonism and Neorealism he adopted in his early years, Féng has provided a theoretically significant assessment of Gōngsūn Lóng's BML. For example, he was the first to explicitly distinguish between the two concepts of 'horse' and 'white horse', respectively:

The term 'horse' refers only to the qualities common to all horses, to the horse as such alone, those of which it is said "that there are simply horses". However, they all lack any definition as to their color, while 'white horse' is defined as to color; therefore the references of the terms 'white horse' and 'horse' are indeed different.¹⁶

¹⁶ Féng 1947: 256.

Here, Féng clearly interprets “the reference of the term horse” as “only those qualities common to all horses”, that of which it says, “there are simply horses” (that is, ‘horse in itself’). He emphasizes that ‘horse’ is not “defined as to” (lit. “fixed to”) any color, while ‘white horse’ is defined as to color. As a consequence, the referent of the term ‘white horse’ is in fact different from the referent of the term ‘horse’. This analysis illustrates Féng’s talent for grasping the philosophical gist of BML. Moreover, he also tries to distinguish between the concepts ‘white’ and ‘white horse’, respectively:

As to white, there is a universal white or whiteness which is neither this white thing nor that white thing. This is the so-called white that does “not define what is white”. As to the white of a white horse, it can only be the white(ness) of a white horse, therefore it says “as to the white horse, white here defines what is white; when the white defines what is white, what is defined by the white is not white itself”. This means that if whiteness is that of the white horse, then it cannot be the universal white. The reference of the term ‘white horse’ is thus also different from the reference of the term ‘white’.¹⁷

Here, Féng clearly identifies the concept of ‘white’ as ‘universal white’, which “is neither this white thing nor that white thing” – i.e. ‘white(ness) in itself’ – or, in BML’s terms, “the white which is not defined as to what is white”. In spite of the potential misreading and confusion caused by erroneous punctuation,¹⁸ Féng’s basic line of thought can still provide us with some valuable insights. At the same time, it goes without saying that once we read through Féng’s interpretation of BML, we notice that it is restricted to cursory comments and lacks a profound, systematic analysis of the text. In spite of the above-mentioned significant theoretical contributions, the most striking shortcoming of Féng’s argumentation is that he fails to truly realize his original plan to take his early Platonic and Neorealist standpoint as the basis for providing a logically adequate interpretation of the inner structure of this chapter. Compared with the kind of evaluation by means of rigid theoretical criteria presented by later scholars such as Mǒu Zōngsān and Lǎo Sīguāng, his explanation appears

¹⁷ Féng 1947: 256.

¹⁸ Lǎo Sīguāng points out the following: “Féng is definitely wrong in the interpretation of this section. In ‘the white is fixed in what is white’, ‘what refers to ‘horse’; in ‘when the white is fixed in what is white, what is fixed by the white is not white by itself’, ‘what’ refers to ‘horse’, not ‘white’. Féng deems ‘the white which is not fixed in what is white’ as the concept white or whiteness itself, while considering ‘the white fixed in what is white’ as the white of things; and ‘what is fixed by the white is not white by itself’ means the white of things is different from the universal white. This clearly touches upon another issue and is not connected to the context at all. It is obvious that this is not the intended meaning of this section.” See Lǎo 2005: 236.

somewhat simplistic and shallow. Still, Féng's groundbreaking contribution to the analysis of BML should not be forgotten.

This section comments on the works of Mǒu, Láo, and others. After Féng Yǒulán, the two scholars Mǒu Zōngsān and Láo Sīguāng interpreted BML and provided in-depth analyses of the philosophical problems it addresses. In his book *The School of Names and Xúnzǐ*, Mǒu follows the inner logical structure¹⁹ of BML in order to divide it into six sections, which his lucid interpretation associates with the three major relevant theoretical questions, namely: (1) the difference between 'individual names' and 'common names', i.e. the contrast between terms for individual entities and terms for classes, or between individuals and universals; (2) the peculiar meaning of the word *fēi*; and (3) the ontological insight into 'conceptual existence', i.e. the existence of concepts.²⁰ Regardless of the adequacy of Mǒu's theories, his main contribution to the interpretation of BML is that the theoretical framework he set up eventually allows one to fully grasp the gist of the text. Needless to say, Mǒu's interpretation is not the last word on BML. In fact, his interpretation still contains a few inadequate readings and interpretations. For example, in the debater's second reply in section three, Mǒu emends "*bái mǎ zhě, mǎ yǔ bái yě; mǎ yǔ bái, mǎ yě (yé)*" 白馬者，馬與白也；馬與白，馬也（耶） to "*bái mǎ zhě, mǎ yǔ bái yě; mǎ yǔ bái mǎ yě*" 白馬者，馬與白也；馬與白馬也。 In the larger context of this passage, this interpretation does not make sense. Worse still, Mǒu fails to provide a clear exposition both of the logical connections between BML and the 'Discourse on Pointers and Things' (ZWL) and of the relation between formal ontology (i.e. the dimensions of substance and attribute) and 'consciousness'.

In contrast, it is Láo Sīguāng who, from a distinct logical and metaphysical perspective, provides an interpretation of some theoretical depth, addressing the major problems touched upon in BML. For example, he points out the following:

Firstly, Gōngsūn Lóng used the word '*fēi* 非' for an ambiguous negation. So, while in his proof he only refers to two kinds of (questions pertaining to) 'inequality', his conclusion seems to negate all relations of subsumption (implication); second, he claims that the concept of 'white' is not the concept 'horse', and the concept 'horse' is not the concept 'white'; due to a mutual restriction of 'white' and 'horse', there arises the single concept of 'white horse'; 'white horse' is thus constituted by two concepts. But one of the two

¹⁹ In my opinion, there can be no clear-cut distinction between philological problems and the philosophical interpretation of BML. In fact, there is no purely philological dimension that would be independent of a philosophical reading. Here I must point to Mǒu's inspiring lines of thought about the philology of BML. On this, see above and, for details, Mǒu 1994: 102–115.

²⁰ Mǒu 1994: 115.

concepts has no relation to 'horse', and for this reason he says that "white horse is not horse".²¹

This demonstrates that Láo Siguāng's interpretation of ZWL draws on the philosophical questions identified in BML by Féng Yǒulán, Móu Zōngsān, and some of his other predecessors, adding further theoretical depth to their discussions. As his genuine contribution, Láo also discusses questions of formal ontology – the relation of substance and property as involved in BML.²² However, Láo's interpretation of BML also remains inconclusive. It provides yet another interpretational framework with which to address the questions raised in the *GSLZ*; what is more, Láo's description of the logical connections between the topics of BML and ZWL is not only misleading, but also fails to specify clearly the different levels on which their respective problems are discussed.

This final section is about the work of Thompson and others. Kirill Ole Thompson's paper "When a 'White Horse' Is Not a Horse", published in *Philosophy East and West* in 1995, is a representative contribution which nevertheless stands out among the comprehensive studies on BML in the West, due to its relative theoretical depth. In his paper, Thompson proposes a "use–mention" distinction, which is common in modern logical analysis and philosophy of language. He resorts to this "frame of reference" to resolve the "challenge" posed by Gōngsūn Lóng's BML – namely, his alleged paradox that "a white horse is not a horse". This is a significant and theoretically innovative approach. Here, I shall sketch the basic line of thought in Thompson's paper, tracing his arguments and commenting on their theoretical strengths and weaknesses. Thompson agrees with the majority of scholars in emphasizing the importance of the issue of 'signs' and 'signification', as raised in ZWL, for dealing with the paradox that "white horse is not horse". In ZWL, Gōngsūn Lóng develops a discussion on the essence of the functions of 'signs' and 'signification'. According to Thompson, "the signs that exist in the world have been set up by human beings engaging in communication by referring to certain objects".²³ On this basis, he analyzes Gōngsūn Lóng's "view of language": "The fact that Kung-sun [Long] views language as a communication system based upon conventionally established signs indicates that he considers languages as ultimately devised, and words as ultimately defined, by human beings for various communicative functions ... Accordingly, he sees signs (words and expressions) as

²¹ See Láo 2005: vol. 1, 236–237.

²² See Láo 2005: vol 1, 294.

²³ Thompson 1995: 481.

human artifacts.”²⁴ With respect to the conversation recorded in BML (in which Gōngsūn Lóng considers “a white horse is not a horse” an acceptable proposition, aiming to argue against his opponent, who claims that “having a white horse”, we cannot assert that we “have no horse”), Thompson explicitly points out that “we will want to note that in the course of the debate, Kung-sun focuses mainly on the signs (terms, expressions) ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ in their significative and communicative functions, while his disputant speaks of their objects – white horses and horses”.²⁵ Following Thompson’s hint, we learn that the focus of Gōngsūn Lóng’s arguments is on the signs themselves – ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’ – and that his opponent’s argument pertains to the objects of these signs – white horses and horses. Based on these insightful points, Thompson states his central argument:

We see that Kung-sun is, in effect, staking his position on an insight into what is now referred to as the use-mention distinction, an important distinction in modern logical analysis and linguistic philosophy. Briefly, the use-mention distinction marks the difference between contexts in which one uses words and expressions in their normal functions, such as to refer to and talk about ‘things’ in the world, from contexts in which one mentions words, that is, to talk about the words themselves, for example about their grammar, how they are used, their usual entailments, and even their spelling.²⁶

Here, Thompson’s argument is very pertinent. The so-called “use–mention” distinction is essentially the distinction between a word as used and a word as mentioned: the former refers to the *objects* of words, while the latter refers to *words* themselves. On this basis, Thompson goes on to highlight the fact that the paradox of “a white horse is not a horse” and the interpretative “dilemma” we face in Gōngsūn Lóng’s BML actually originated in the reader’s confusion over being unable to identify and grasp the use–mention distinction. “People spontaneously tend to understand words in the context of use rather than of mention, unless explicitly trained to do otherwise.”²⁷ Closely following Thompson’s basic line of argument, we see that the use–mention distinction can indeed help us resolve the paradox that “a white horse is not a horse”, and thus the interpretative dilemma encountered in Gōngsūn Lóng’s BML.

Yet it goes without saying that Thompson’s interpretation, based on the theoretical assumption of an underlying use–mention distinction, offers a new perspective from which to interpret the piece rather than a definite answer.

²⁴ Thompson 1995: 482.

²⁵ Thompson 1995: 482.

²⁶ Thompson 1995: 483.

²⁷ Thompson 1995: 484.

Moreover, there are also weaknesses in Thompson’s understanding of the topic of ZWL. For instance, he clearly overlooks the alleged independent substantiality of ‘signs’ (*zhǐ* 指), and this fundamentally prevents him from genuinely resolving the white horse paradox in Gōngsūn Lóng’s BML. In his *On the School of Names in Ancient China*, published in 2013, the contemporary American scholar Bernard S. Solomon also proposes a significantly new theoretical framework for interpreting BML. However, the main problem with his approach is that, instead of stepping out of the sphere of language, Solomon exclusively refers to language itself. Therefore, his analysis of the language puzzle in Gōngsūn Lóng’s BML fails to achieve an understanding on a transcendent level (comparable to Lǎozǐ’s 老子 attitude of detachment, which emphasizes the “nameless” over against “non-eternal names”) or even on a definite level (as in Aśvaghoṣa’s stance on refuting attachment, which “detaches itself from the distinctive marks of written text”).²⁸

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²⁸ Solomon assumes a three-layered order of existence distinguishing “real existents”, “mental existents”, and “verbal existents”: for example, he writes that “in the fourth chapter (*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* II. 7b: *hé mǎ yǔ bái fù míng bái mǎ* 合馬與白複名白馬), this *míng* 名 not only allows us to understand the word right after it (*báimǎ* 白馬) as a verbal existent, but also alerts us to the fact that *mǎ* and the *bái* preceding it may be something other than that. In *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* II, we observe that a pattern appears if one separates the nominals ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’, which are the objects of the transitive verbs *yǒu* 有, *wú* 無, *qiú* 求, and *zhì* 致, from their other appearances. This pattern allows us to distinguish the real existents, the white horse and the horse, from the mental existents ‘white horse’ and ‘horse’, although these terms in other verbal environments allow us to do the same (as in II. 6b, for instance: *mǎ gù yǒu sè* 馬固有色).” For further details, see my Review on Bernard S. Solomon’s *On the School of Names in Ancient China*” (Jiāng 2014).

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III Philology

Perspectives on Language and Terminology

Thierry Lucas

9 Logically Significant Words in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

1 Introduction

The “School of Names” (*Míngjiā* 名家) has brought logical considerations into the field of Chinese philosophy. The present contribution aims to give a ‘measure’ of the ‘logicity’ of the texts, more particularly of the texts of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子. The chapter looks at some logically significant words, such as *yǒu* 有, *wú* 無, *kě* 可, *fēi* 非, *bù* 不, *gù* 故, and *suǒyǐ* 所以, trying to make the analysis as objective as possible. To accomplish this, I pay special attention to the occurrences of these words: their numbers, their immediate contexts, and their non-controversial variations of meaning. I am confident that this type of inquiry brings out some features of the logical structure of the texts of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and demonstrates their similarities and differences. It is hoped that this approach will help to confirm, invalidate, or at least qualify the hypothesis of their different origins.

The problems listed in Suter et al. (in this volume) constitute a very interesting challenge. They are often tackled with philological tools or historical studies methods. Here, I argue that logic can also provide new perspectives on the analysis of the texts of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (hereafter the *GSLZ*).¹ The idea is to appreciate the logical style of the different texts and, hopefully, to differentiate them in an objective manner.

Before entering into this subject, I would like to add a few words of caution on the use of logic and of the word ‘logic’. Logic is generally defined as the study of reasonings and their classification as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Taken in a strict sense, logic concentrates on form and on valid reasonings – that is, reasonings which guarantee that true premises lead to true conclusions. Although closely related, the logical form and the grammatical form of a reasoning should not be

¹ Abbreviations used throughout this chapter: BML = ‘Báimǎ lùn’ 白馬論 (in the *GSLZ*); BY = ‘Bā yì’ 八佾 (in the *Lúnyǔ* 論語); DQ = “Dà qǔ” 大取 (in the *Mòzǐ* 墨子); the *GSLZ* = *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子; JF = ‘Jīfǔ’ 跡府 (in the *GSLZ*); JBL = ‘Jiānbái lùn’ 堅白論 (in the *GSLZ*); MSL = ‘Míngshí lùn’ 名實論 (in the *GSLZ*); TBL = ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’ 通變論 (in the *GSLZ*); WZ = ‘Wéi zhèng’ 為政 (in the *Lúnyǔ*); XQ = ‘Xiǎo qǔ’ 小取 (in the *Mòzǐ*); XE = ‘Xué ér’ 學而 (in the *Lúnyǔ*); and ZWL = ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 (in the *GSLZ*).

confused: the operations of conjunction, disjunction, implication, negation, and quantification belong to the core of classical logic, but may be grammatically expressed in many ways. For instance, implication may be expressed as follows: “if p , then q ”, “ p implies q ”, “ p is a sufficient condition for q ”, “ q is implied by p ”, and so forth. Conversely, words such as ‘is’ are considered logically ambiguous. Does “ a is b ” mean “ a is an element of the extension of b ”, “the extension of a is a subset of the extension of b ”, or “ a is identical to b ”? Despite these apparent mismatches, it remains a fact that many words or expressions have an almost immediate logical interpretation, such as ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘if’, ‘hence’, ‘all’, ‘some’, ‘there exists’, ‘either ... or ...’, ‘is true’, and ‘is false’. In what follows, I will call these “logical words” and will even extend the notion to the Chinese characters expressing them. At the other end of the spectrum, there are words for which logical content has not yet been suggested: referential words such as ‘horse’, ‘to eat’, and ‘Socrates’, but also grammatically important words, such as the prepositions ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘in’, ‘out’, and ‘at’. I will call this latter kind of words “grammatical words”. Between these two extremes, there is a whole range of expressions which are susceptible to a more or less profound logical analysis. It is part of contemporary logic to study operations on propositions expressed by words and expressions, such as ‘necessarily’, ‘possibly’ (modal logic), ‘I know that’ (epistemic logic), ‘it has always been true that’, ‘it will be true that’ (tense logic), ‘probably’ (probability logic), and even ‘in general it is true that’ (logic of defeasible reasonings). I therefore hold that the list of “logical words” should remain open to extensions, and I include in the list words such as ‘because’, which plays an important role in concrete reasonings but has not yet received satisfactory treatment.

Another precaution concerns our methodology: we will essentially rely on logic, and I intend to use it without appealing to other types of evidence, such as those furnished by historical studies or detailed philological commentary. Although that restriction is part of a sound methodology, which tries to keep the contributions of each method separate, I want to stress that a balanced appreciation of the texts should take all of these methods into account – a daunting task, which will not be attempted here.

A final precaution is that we will not discuss the logical *content* of the texts of the *GSLZ*, but concentrate on the *language* in which this content is presented. This distinction is very important: while an essential theme of the “discourse on the white horse” revolves around noun phrases, predication, and the defense of the thesis that a white horse is not a horse, we will not discuss the arguments or the underlying logical concepts, but only examine the ‘style’ used to express the reasonings in favor of the thesis.

Let us start from a well-known, basic idea of stylometry²: each author has his own style, and this style may be measured by ‘objective’ means, such as counting the number of occurrences of words. If two texts show a similarity on this account, it is a reasonable hypothesis to suspect that they are by the same author, or at least from the same school. If, instead, the two texts are sufficiently dissimilar on that account, the reasonable hypothesis is that they are not by the same author, or that they have been written by the same author at different moments, or at least that they have different styles. So much for the basic idea; needless to say, despite the apparent objectivity of the technique, the measurement of similarity suffers from many different interpretations. The problem is therefore to minimize the subjective appreciation of similarity, without falling into the trap of a blind application of mathematical techniques.

There are some difficulties in applying the mathematical techniques of stylometry to the texts of the *GSLZ*. The most obvious is that the texts are very short and do not lend themselves to a reliable statistical treatment. A first response to that objection is that these short texts are unfortunately all we have;³ any further information on them would be welcome! A more profound answer is that we can take some precautions which, as I will argue, may help minimize the subjective appreciation of the similarities. In the following, these will be formulated as four guiding procedural principles:

- (1) *Concentrate on a corpus*. This is an obvious methodological precaution: for example, if you want to compare text A, attributed to the Mohists, with text B, attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng, then at the very least, you should consider the corpus constituted by the union of text A and text B. You can add other texts to the corpus or consider a corpus determined *a priori*, but an overly large corpus will tend to elide the differences between the two texts: many words will appear in both texts with a frequency of 0.
- (2) *Concentrate on function words*. When computing the occurrences of words, it is generally pertinent to concentrate on words which, *a priori*, will be likely to appear in any text. “Function words”, such as grammatical words and logical words, are very good candidates for this, because they have a high occurrence frequency and, lacking direct referentiality, a rather stable meaning. Logical words are especially important if we want to study philosophical

² For a general presentation of stylometry, I refer the reader to Delcourt 2002.

³ “Gōngsūn Lóng” is perhaps a construction of later authors, and it is used here as a convenient way of referring to the unique or multiple authors of the *GSLZ*.

texts, and even more so if we look at the *míngjiā* 名家, a “school”⁴ of philosophers who were said to be fine debaters and to have presented arguments in favor of their theses. Negatively speaking, if you compare “content words”, almost all texts will be sharply differentiated: in BML (a text with a length of 493 characters), *mǎ* 馬 (‘horse’) appears 84 times, and *shí* 石 (‘stone’) does not appear at all. In JBL, on the other hand (a text of 502 characters), *mǎ* does not appear at all, while *shí* appears 21 times. The only reasonable conclusion one may draw from this observation is that BML talks a lot about horses, while JBL talks a lot about stones, and that is obviously not enough to deduce a difference in style, much less a difference in authors.

On the other hand, *yě* 也, *bù* 不, and *fēi* 非 are extremely frequent words in Classical Chinese,⁵ so that they will appear in almost all texts, though hopefully with different frequencies. Thus there is a good chance that their occurrences incorporate the logical style of the author: among other uses, *yě* 也 is a marker of nominal predication which serves to construct propositions in the form of “NP1 NP2 *yě*” (NP1 is NP2); similarly, *fēi* 非 serves to form propositions in the form of “NP1 *fēi* NP2” (NP1 is not NP2). In argumentative texts such as the *GSLZ* or the Mohist *DQ* and *XQ*, these propositions are clearly asserted as being true: *bái mǎ mǎ yě* 白馬馬也 is intended to assert that a white horse is a horse, and should be logically analyzed as the general assertion that all white horses are horses; similarly, *bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬 is intended to assert that a white horse is not a horse, and should be logically analyzed as the general assertion that no white horse is a horse. Contrast these argumentative contexts with the Confucian *Analects*.⁶ In BML, *fēi* appears 18 times; in JBL, it appears 5 times; *fēi* 非 has 0 occurrences in XE (the first chapter of the *Lúnyǔ*), 1 occurrence in WZ (the second chapter), and 0 occurrences in BY (the third chapter). Is it not reasonable to suspect that BML on the one hand and XE, WZ, and BY on the other have different authors? Is it not also reasonable to re-examine the question of the common authorship of BML and JBL? If you rightly object that *fēi* 非 as a negative copula should be considered along with *bù* 不 and *wèi* 未, and even with *wú* 無 (as a negation of *yǒu* 有), then please observe the next recommendation.

⁴ The notion of “school” has been criticized, but it is simply used here as a convenient way of referring to thinkers who have been traditionally grouped together. For a detailed discussion, see Csikszentmihalyi/Nylan 2003.

⁵ I use “Classical Chinese” here to refer to the language of the pre-Qín period, beginning with Confucius and ending in 221 BCE, and I apply it to the language of the *GSLZ*, despite the doubts concerning its exact dating.

⁶ The Confucian *Analects* (*Lúnyǔ*) will be used for contrastive purposes below.

- (3) *Look at the whole spectrum of chosen words.* By this I mean that it is not enough to observe that word X has a high frequency in text A and a low frequency in text B and then to conclude that text A and text B have different styles, much less different authors. It is better to perform this analysis for the whole spectrum of chosen words. But it is also important to compare the “overall patterning” of the set of these occurrences. Concretely speaking, this means that it is important to compare the curves representing the frequencies of the chosen words in texts A and B. They may correspond to different frequencies but have similar forms (i.e. peaks in curve A corresponding to peaks in curve B, and troughs in curve A corresponding to troughs in curve B). If that is the case, then that seems to me a good argument in favor of the two texts having the same style, and perhaps the same author. If they have opposite forms (i.e. peaks in curve A corresponding to troughs in curve B, and troughs in curve A corresponding to peaks in curve B), then it is reasonable to claim that the texts have different styles. And two different styles may often imply different authorship, although the distinction may also be due to other factors, such as the genre of the text, its functions, or the fact that the same author wrote the texts at different points in his life.
- (4) *Never blindly apply your results, and refer back to the details of the text as often as necessary.* This is a reminder of modesty: results remain subject to interpretation and may always be criticized on points of detail. We will make the move of returning to the text in sections 6 and 7 of this chapter, when we try to take into account the logical contexts of the occurrences of words.

I have tried to apply these principles in the following study of the *GSLZ*. Section 2 explains the choices I made in order to implement them in a ‘realistic’ fashion.

2 Methodology

My methodology is constituted by somewhat heterogeneous decisions, which I list below under four different headings.

2.1 The Objective

My main objective is to compare the ‘logical’ distances between texts in the *GSLZ* – that is, to provide a global picture of the various occurrence frequencies of “logical words” in the different texts. In Classical Chinese, logical

words are often expressed by a single character, so that we will in fact be comparing characters. A secondary objective is to contrast the texts of the *GSLZ* with other texts, such as the *Lúnyǔ* 論語 or the Mohist DQ (‘Dàqǔ’ 大取, or ‘Major Illustrations’) and XQ (‘Xiǎoqǔ’ 小取, or ‘Minor Illustrations’).⁷ A more distant aim would be to formulate new elements of appreciation of the common arguments concerning the shared authorship of the different texts of the *GSLZ*, but that is certainly not my main objective. For the purposes of this chapter, and for practical reasons, I had to circumscribe the problem, so I have decided to take the whole of the *GSLZ* as a background corpus.

2.2 Fixing the Text

Among the different variants of the text, I relied upon an electronic text for reasons of convenience. I have used the *Zhèngtǒng Dàozàng* 正統道藏 (vols. 843–846) version in 15 j., as digitized by Donald Sturgeon (2018), to whom I am greatly indebted. Since the method is completely insensitive to punctuation and not very sensitive to variants of characters, I am confident that this should not elicit too many objections.

2.3 Computing Frequencies

I computed the number of occurrences of each of the characters appearing in the *GSLZ* and classed them in order of decreasing frequency. In this contribution, I have neglected different readings and meanings of the same character. The reason is that the distinctions of meaning are quite subjective and open to many degrees of differentiation. For example, *yě* 也 has a global role as a “pause marker”, but a closer look will distinguish the *yě* 也 which forms sentences of the type “NP1 NP2 *yě*” from the *yě* 也 which serves to mark topicalization within a sentence. An even closer look at the *yě* which punctuates sentences will produce further distinctions from the *yě* that forms declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative, negative, and nominal sentences, among others. We would also have to examine *yě* as it occurs after proper nouns and in expressions such as *jīn yě* 今也 (the contrastive ‘now’) and *wéi suǒ yě* 惟所也 (the hortatory ‘it is only that’).⁸ To take into account differences

⁷ See Graham 1978 for a thorough study of Later Mohist logic.

⁸ On the different uses of *yě* and the translations mentioned here, cf. Pulleyblank 1995: 184.

of meaning, it would be necessary to provide a more detailed study of the occurrences of each of the characters. This is a considerable task, and here I will merely sketch a test case at the end of the present chapter: a contextualized study of the negatives *bù* 不, *fēi* 非, and *wèi* 未.

The following provides the first elements in the list, with decreasing numbers of occurrences greater than 20 out of the 3164 characters of the *GSLZ*, and their frequency (in percentage):

也 138 (4.36), 馬 124 (3.92), 不 123 (3.89), 之 104 (3.29), 白 96 (3.03),
非 92 (2.91), 而 89 (2.81), 曰 86 (2.72), 以 78 (2.47), 有 73 (2.31),
可 68 (2.15), 無 66 (2.09), 者 66 (2.09), 其 65 (2.05), 所 60 (1.9),
謂 58 (1.83), 指 49 (1.55), 為 47 (1.49), 與 44 (1.39), 乎 41 (1.3),
此 34 (1.07), 物 32 (1.01), 王 31 (0.98), 則 30 (0.95), 堅 30 (0.95),
是 30 (0.95), 故 28 (0.88), 下 24 (0.76), 人 23 (0.73), 天 23 (0.73),
彼 23 (0.73), 焉 22 (0.7), 龍 22 (0.7), 二 21 (0.66), 石 21 (0.66).

2.4 Selection of Characters

I extracted the first 25 characters from this list, which I considered to be those more susceptible to giving a measure of the logicity of the texts. This is undoubtedly the most subjective part of my work. Here are some comments on the principles which guided my selection and some remarks on the concrete decisions to which they lead:

- (a) We will accept characters expressing logical connectives, such as *bù* 不, *ér* 而, and *qiě* 且, and quantifiers such as *yǒu* 有 and *wú* 無.
- (b) We will eliminate characters expressing referential words, such as *mǎ* 馬 ('horse'), *shí* 石 ('stone'), and *bái* 白 ('[be] white').
- (c) We will accept characters which do not directly correspond to connectives or to quantifiers, but the analysis of which demonstrates logical content: in the *GSLZ*, *yě* 也 and *fēi* 非 often have an assertive role, analogous to the English phrases 'it is true that' and 'it is false that'.
- (d) We will not accept words which have clear logical content but are themselves the topic of a discussion within the text (cf. the distinction between 'use' and 'mention' by the logician). Consider the following example: *cǐ* 此 ('this') and *bǐ* 彼 ('that') have a logical role similar to variables: "this = x"; "that = y". From the logical point of view, the comparison of 'this' and 'that' may be seen as a discussion of the role of distinct variables. But if we accept them into the list, we will immediately single out MSL, where *cǐ* and *bǐ* are a

central topic of discussion, as central as *mǎ* 馬 ('horse') in BML or *shí* 石 ('stone') in JBL. It would be too easy to separate MSL from the rest simply by looking at the number of occurrences of *cǐ* and *bǐ*: *cǐ* has 2 occurrences in BML, 0 in JBL, 11 in JF, 21 in MSL, 0 in TBL, and 0 in ZWL (34 in the whole of the *GSLZ*); *bǐ* has 0 occurrences in BML, 1 in JBL, 1 in JF, 21 in MSL, 0 in TBL, and 0 in ZWL (23 in the whole of the *GSLZ*). Consequently, we do not take *cǐ* and *bǐ* into account. A similar example is the following: *míng* 名 (number of occurrences: 2–0–6–4–2–1 respectively, for a total of 15 in the *GSLZ*) and *shí* 實 (number of occurrences 0–0–2–8–1–0 respectively, for a total of 11 in the *GSLZ*) are certainly important logical terms.⁹

- (e) We will not accept characters which refer to logical content but depend more on the literary than on the logical style of the text. Thus, the verbs *yuē* 曰 and *yán* 言 both heavily depend on the general style of the text (typically a dialogue or a representation of what the Master said), but not on its *logical* style; this is similar in the case of other speech-act verbs, such as *wèi* 謂 ('to say').
- (f) We will not take into account characters that do not have sufficient occurrences (less than 5 occurrences in 3164 characters, or less than 0.16 per cent). They are useless for global comparisons.

To sum up: we want to look at what constitutes the less visible structure of the text, ideally independent of its content, and to exclude those items which occur as a topic of discussion within the text.

Despite these precautions, there obviously remains a certain amount of interpretive leeway, and the present analysis might have limits – for instance, due to the fact that the different meanings of *suǒ* 所 have not been fully explored. I have not differentiated among occurrences of *suǒ*, which occurs as a passive marker, or with the meaning of 'place' (n.), or as a relative pronoun in the expression 'that by which' in *suǒyǐ* 所以. On the other hand, I have not included the name of the philosopher Yǒu 有 (i.e. the name of the disciple Yǒuzǐ 有子, which has 3 occurrences in XE) under the same heading as the corresponding verb *yǒu* 有 ('to have', which has 6 occurrences in XE). Here, the differences in meaning are easily objectifiable. After much hesitation, I decided not to include *zhī* 之 and *qí* 其 in my list, considering that their grammatical roles are more prominent than their logical roles. Obviously, such a decision may be reevaluated in future studies.

⁹ For further explanation, cf. Lucas 2011, where the terms are discussed in the context of Mohist logic.

As a result, I arrive at the following list of 25 characters (again representing the number and percentage of occurrences in the *GSLZ*):

也 138 (4.36), 不 123 (3.89), 非 92 (2.91), 而 89 (2.81), 以 78 (2.47),
有 73 (2.31), 可 68 (2.15), 無 66 (2.09) 者 66 (2.09), 所 60 (1.9),
為 47 (1.49), 與 44 (1.39), 則 30 (0.95), 是 30 (0.95), 故 28 (0.88),
未 16 (0.51), 異 11 (0.35), 且 10 (0.32), 若 10 (0.32), 唯 8 (0.25),
乃 7 (0.22), 必 7 (0.22), 悖 6 (0.19), 夫 5 (0.16), 莫 5 (0.16).

In the following diagram, the x-axis represents the sequence of characters with decreasing frequency in the *GSLZ*. The y-axis represents the frequency (expressed in percentages) in each of the chapters considered. The points are connected by a smooth curve. There is a good reason for choosing to represent the characters in order of decreasing frequency: it makes the more frequent words much more visible, because they appear high on the left-hand side of the curve. Thus, beginning with the whole of the *GSLZ* itself, we obtain a curve that gently descends from the left to the right, as expected:

Fig. 1: Graph of the *GSLZ*.

Let us now look at the frequency of words in *BML*. We now obtain a much more irregular curve, representing the frequencies of the same words in the same order:

Fig. 2: Graph of BML.

Let us now combine the two examples into one graph:

Fig. 3: Combined Graph of BML and the GSLZ.

BML's considerable departures from the 'mean' of the *GSLZ* are immediately apparent: *yǒu*, *kě*, *zhě*, *wèi*, and *gù* are significantly more frequent in BML than in the *GSLZ* as a whole, while *ér* is significantly less frequent in BML. Of course, it

will be even more interesting to apply this method of binary comparisons to the different texts of the *GSLZ* (cf. section 4 below). Before delving into the presentation of the binary comparisons, we will make use of the computed frequencies to obtain some global indexes (in section 3 below). Generally speaking, they are all clearly relevant when it comes to distinguishing the different texts.

Ideally, a detailed study of the occurrence contexts would be a desirable next step. As mentioned above, given the formidable scope of such analyses, in this chapter I will only present a contextualized study of the negatives *bù*, *fēi*, and *wú* (in sections 6 and 7 below).

3 Global Results

Using the procedure outlined above, we can make the following observations. I will present three global results here. We will see that they are clearly relevant to distinguishing the different texts.

3.1 Technicality of the Texts and the Repetition Index

Highly technical texts often go together with repetitions. Literary texts may repeat themselves when trying to achieve a particular effect, such as parallelism. However, they typically avoid frequent repetitions and tend to choose synonymous words. Let us introduce the (mean) “repetition index” (RI), i.e. the value which is defined for a text as being the total number of characters of that text divided by the number of different characters. This provides a rough measure of the tendency to repeat the same word. A high RI indicates that there are relatively few different characters in the text; therefore there must be a relatively high degree of repetition. Conversely, a low RI indicates a relatively low degree of repetition. The lowest RI is 1, indicating that the total number of characters in the text equals the number of different characters in that text, and this means that no character is repeated. The index should be taken more as an indication than as a rigorous measurement, because longer texts will generally repeat more frequently than shorter texts. Still, in the case of the *GSLZ*, we obtain the following interesting results, calculating the RI of the different texts in the *GSLZ* as indicated above:

TEXT	BML	JBL	JF	MSL	TBL	ZWL	GSLZ
CHAPTER LENGTH	493	502	1106	250	544	269	3164
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHARACTERS	71	83	238	48	102	37	338
MEAN RI	6.94	6.05	4.65	5.21	5.33	7.27	9.36

Obviously, the high degree of repetition within the *GSLZ* as a whole is due to the length of the text, but if we arrange the component texts of the *GSLZ* in a decreasing sequence according to the repetition index, we obtain the following ranking:

TEXT	GSLZ	ZWL	BML	JBL	TBL	MSL	JF
MEAN RI	9.36	7.27	6.94	6.05	5.33	5.21	4.65

This conforms to some well-known facts: ZWL, as a very short text, should have fewer repetitions, but in fact has a high RI; BML immediately follows. The JBL index is also quite high, and TBL and MSL follow, with almost the same repetition index, while the more narrative JF comes last, with a score of 4.65. One should not take these RIs too strictly, but at the very least, they indicate a high degree of technical terms occurring in the component texts of the *GSLZ*. This is confirmed by comparison with other texts: the technical DQ and XQ have comparable repetition indexes, while the admittedly more ‘literary’ introductory chapter of the Confucian *Analects* (XE) comes out much lower, with an index of 2.65:

TEXT	XE	DQ	XQ	DQ+XQ
CHAPTER LENGTH	493	1777	898	2675
NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CHARACTERS	186	287	185	364
MEAN RI	2.65	6.19	4.85	7.35

3.2 Heavy Repetition of *bái mǎ fēi mǎ* and *fēi zhǐ*

While I did not compute many occurrences of character sequences, two expressions deserve mention: *bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬 and *fēi zhǐ* 非指.

The first expression, literally “white horse is not horse”, is the central theme of discussion in BML. It appears five times in BML, and once in a slightly modified form in the expression *shì bái mǎ zhī fēi mǎ* 是白馬之非馬 (“that a white horse is not a horse”). In JF, the expression *bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬 appears three times as such, and eight times in slightly modified forms: three times in JF, five times in the form *bái mǎ wéi fēi mǎ* 白馬為非馬 (“a white horse is not a horse”), once in the form *bái mǎ zhī fēi mǎ* 白馬之非馬 (“that a white horse is not a horse”), once in the form *bái mǎ jìng fēi mǎ* 白馬竟非馬 (“a white horse is after all not a horse”), and once in the form *yì ‘bái mǎ’ yǔ suǒ wèi ‘mǎ’* 異『白馬』於所謂『馬』 (“differentiate ‘white horse’ from ‘horse’”). We should not hasten to draw conclusions from these facts, but it is quite reasonable to observe that such repetitions seem to indicate that this expression is a kind of “slogan”.

An even more striking repetition is the case of *fēi zhǐ* in ZWL: it appears no less than 20 times in this very short chapter. Here, a plausible interpretation would seem to be that such an ambiguous expression (perhaps meaning ‘non-indication’, ‘does not indicate’, or ‘is not indicated’) has been deliberately used to compose a cryptic text.

The 14-fold repetition of *tiānxià* 天下 (‘Heaven’, ‘the world’, lit. ‘that which is under the sky’) in ZWL has also been a source of inspiration for unconventional interpretations.¹⁰

3.3 Logicity of the Texts and the Logicity Index

Another index that could give us further indications regarding a text is what I would like to call the “logicity index” (LI), which could be defined in general as the total number of occurrences of “logical particles” divided by the total number of signs. For the *GSLZ* and its component texts, the LI will be defined as the total number of occurrences of the 25 characters expressing logical relationships (as selected above) divided by the total number of characters. Using this procedure, we obtain the following results:

10 Graham 1978: 457–468; see also Schleichert 1993 and Reding 2002.

TEXT	BML	JBL	JF	MSL	TBL	ZWL	<i>GSLZ</i>
NUMBER OF LOGICAL CHARACTERS	220	178	323	82	181	133	1117
CHAPTER LENGTH	493	502	1106	250	544	269	3164
MEAN LI	0.446	0.355	0.292	0.328	0.333	0.494	0.353

If we rank the different texts in decreasing order, we obtain the following sequence:

$$ZWL > BML > JBL > TBL > MSL > JF.$$

These results may not look strongly significant at first sight, but it is striking that the ranking according to the LI exactly matches the ranking obtained by the repetition index (RI). If we look even more closely, it is evident that the RI and the LI are very similar when calibrated on a similar scale. Moreover, comparisons with other texts confirm that the logicity index (measured with the same list of characters) provides interesting results. For the Neo-Mohist DQ and XQ texts, we obtain quite similar distributions, while chapters from the *Lúnyǔ* have significantly lower frequencies:

TEXT	DQ	XQ	DQ+XQ	XE	WZ	BY
NUMBER OF LOGICAL CHARACTERS	521	340	861	115	124	115
CHAPTER LENGTH	1777	898	2675	493	579	689
MEAN LI	0.293	0.379	0.322	0.233	0.214	0.167

Obviously, these comparisons should be investigated in more detail, since our background list consists exclusively of the 25 characters expressing logical relationships selected from the *GSLZ* alone (contrary to methodological precaution number 1 above). I do not exclude the possibility that the differences shown here are partly due to the different datings of the corpora, but I think the main factor is the more or less intensive use of argumentation: the Mohist DQ+XQ and the *GSLZ* are universally acknowledged to be more argumentative than the different chapters of the *Lúnyǔ*, whatever their dating may be. On the other

hand, these texts are so short that statistical methods are unreliable. That is why I present another method in the following section.

4 Binary Comparisons

Since the global indexes are rather crude and statistical methods are not adequate for the study of short texts, I think a comparison of the whole spectrum of “logical words” may provide some measure of the similarity of corpora. Moreover, binary comparisons enhance the contrasts, so I have systematically compared all the binary pairs of the component texts of the *GSLZ*. These are plotted on graphs, where the x-axis is constituted by the 25 characters selected above, and classed as above in decreasing order of their frequency in the *GSLZ*. The complete results will not be cited here, but some graphs are worth reproducing because they clearly exhibit the dissimilarities between the texts compared. As an example, I have included the results for the dissimilar pairs BML/JBL and BML/MSL:

Fig. 4: BML/JBL Pair.

Fig. 5: BML/MSL Pair.

Conversely, there are clear examples of very similar pairs – for example, the pair JBL/TBL (see Figure 6).

Other pairs show mixed distributions of proximity or difference. But all in all – omitting JF, which is clearly of a different nature¹¹ – the graph tends to confirm the opinion of many other researchers that there is a neat separation between two groups of texts: BML and ZWL on the one hand, and JBL, TBL, and MSL on the other. Below, I compare BML and ZWL (see Figure 7); the proximity is not completely transparent, but it is clear that the curves lean more toward similarity than toward opposition.

By way of a preliminary conclusion to this section on binary chapter comparisons, I may state with confidence that there is indeed a difference in logical style between the group constituted by BML and ZWL, on the one hand, and by JBL, MSL, and TBL on the other. In itself, this is not enough to constitute definitive proof of different authorship. However, it chimes well with other philological and historical considerations, and it supports Graham's opinion.¹² In order

¹¹ JF is supposed to be a biography of Gōngsūn Lóng, and is thus more narrative than argumentative.

¹² Graham 1990 [1957]: 126–166.

Fig. 6: JBL/TBL Pair.

Fig. 7: BML/ZWL Pair.

to corroborate these findings further, we will take an even closer look at the textual environments of the occurrences of some logical words in sections 6 and 7.

5 Control Tests of Some Aspects of the Methodology

To further assess the basic reliability of the present approach, I devised two tests and some variations on them. The first test consists in checking whether two texts which are universally accepted as being from the same “school” – if not the same “brush” – demonstrate similar behavior with respect to the distribution of the selected “logical words”. The second test, then, is to look at texts which are universally accepted as being from different schools, which should then demonstrate the opposite behavior.

For the first test, I chose DQ and XQ, consisting of 1777 and 898 characters, respectively. As a preliminary approach, I checked the similarity in the distribution of the 25 characters selected above. This provided quite convincing results, but to be faithful to the methodology sketched in section 2, I decided to start all over again from the beginning. Replicating the procedure outlined above, I used the consolidated DQ and XQ corpus, ranked the characters by decreasing number of occurrences, and selected the most frequent “logical characters” (i.e. those having more than four occurrences in the corpus). This resulted in a list of 29 “logical characters” that the reader may compare with the preceding list of 25 characters. This list is provided below, in order of decreasing frequency:

也，不，非，而，為 >
 以，者，是，有，同 >
 所，若，無，與，異 >
 故，乃，或，可，此 >
 諸，周，則，夫，盡，必，因，且，彼。

The similarity of the distribution of these particles in DQ and XQ is clearly confirmed. As a final variation, I tweaked the notion of ‘logicity’ quite liberally, adding the following 14 characters to the original set of 29:

於，之，其，一，類，然，在，己，明，二，今，物，後，多。

These additional characters have a certain degree of generality, but I am inclined to consider it as of a different nature, whether grammatical (e.g. *zhī* 之 or *qí* 其), mathematical (e.g. *yī* 一, ‘one’; *èr* 二 ‘two’), or the subject of discussion (e.g. *lèi* 類, ‘category’) in the text. It is interesting to note that, despite the addition of these 14 new characters, the distribution of the resulting list of 43 characters once again resulted in similar graphs. The diagram comparing DQ and XQ according to the full list of the 43 characters is provided below. Please also note that it includes the comparison for the strict count of 29 characters.

Fig. 8: Similarities between DQ and XQ.

For the second test, I chose BML and XE, the first chapter of the *Lúnyǔ*, each consisting – by a strange coincidence – of the same number of characters: 493. That XE is a composite chapter of a composite book¹³ is not a substantial objection: I am not looking for an urtext, and in this case, I am not even trying to differentiate among authors. I simply want to objectify the obvious differences in logical style between the two texts. As a preliminary approach, I checked the dissimilarity of the distribution of the 25 characters selected above, and it gave convincing results. Applying the methodology described above, I considered a

¹³ See for example, Makeham 1996.

corpus consisting of BML and XE, and then proceeded to rank the characters. To select the “logical characters” (those having more than four occurrences in the corpus), I again made two counts – one stricter, one more liberal. For the strict count, I chose the following set of 17 characters, which I list here in order of decreasing frequency in BML and XE:

也，有，不，可，而 >
者，以，為，非，與 >
無，所，故，未，異 >
是，則。

For the more liberal count, I added:

之，其，於，如，矣，亦。

(NB: in the case of *yǒu* 有, I excluded the three occurrences designating Confucius’s disciple Yǒuzǐ 有子).

The diagram comparing BML and XE according to the full list of the 23 characters is provided below. It is a clear example of dissimilar distributions. Please also note that it includes the comparison for the strict count of 17 characters.

Fig. 9: BML and XE are dissimilar.

6 Detailed Study of the Occurrences of Characters: The Case of Negatives (*bù* 不, *fēi* 非, *wèi* 未)

A.C. Graham (1919–1991) already studied most of the occurrences of the “logical words” which I have chosen (plus a few more) in detail.¹⁴ One is not obliged to agree with all of his conclusions in order to accept the objective differences between the occurrences in BML and ZWL and in the three other texts, JB, TBL, and MSL, and I will not repeat his results here. My main objective in this section is to provide enough elements to show that a detailed study of the occurrences of “logical words” may also help to objectify differences in style. I will concentrate here on negation, which is a fundamental operation that appears almost unavoidably in every text.

In Classical Chinese, in particular in the texts of the *GSLZ*, there are mainly three characters which carry the basic meaning of negation: *bù* 不, *fēi* 非, and *wèi* 未. It is better to study these characters together, because *bù* and *wèi* negate verbs, while *fēi* (mainly but not exclusively) negates nominal predicates. Note that *fēi* is not optional to negate nominal predicates, and that *bù* cannot be used for the same purpose: in Classical Chinese, “*bái mǎ fēi mǎ (yě)*” is the normal way to express “a white horse is not a horse”. Grouping these three characters together tends to equalize the frequencies of negation in the different texts of the *GSLZ*, with the notable exception of ZWL, which is rich with negations, and the slightly poorer case of JF.

It therefore seems promising to look more carefully at the occurrences of these different negatives in the different texts (see “Table of Negatives” hereafter). Let us start with a few grammatical remarks on the usage of these negatives in the *GSLZ*. References are given in the form (ABBREV n), where ABBREV is the abbreviation given in footnote 1 of this chapter and ‘n’ is the number of the subdivision, as retrievable from Sturgeon’s “Chinese Text Project”. Among the numerous different translations proposed in the literature, I have generally chosen those which best bring out the use of the negatives.

6.1 *Bù* 不

Bù 不 is the usual way of negating a verbal predicate. When it occurs with *kě* 可, *bù* is used to answer a question in the negative. It theoretically means ‘X is not

¹⁴ Graham 1990: 129–136.

Table of negatives. Number and frequencies of occurrences of negatives in the GSLZ and its component texts.

TEXT	CHARS.	GSLZ	%	BML	%	JBL	%	JF	%	MSL	%	TBL	%	ZWL	%
OCCURRENCES	不	123	3.89	14	2.84	34	6.77	29	2.62	14	5.6	22	4.04	10	3.72
	非	92	2.91	18	3.65	5	1.0	25	2.26	3	1.2	16	2.94	25	9.29
	未	16	0.51	5	1.01	3	0.6	4	0.36	0	0	2	0.37	2	0.74
	不+非+未	231	7.3	37	7.51	42	8.37	58	5.24	17	6.8	40	7.35	37	13.75
TOTAL	(100%)	3164		493		502		1106		250		544		269	

possible’, but in fact it is equivalent to a simple ‘no’ or, in logical statements, to a simple ‘it is not true’.

When used with *kě* and a transitive verb V, *bù* has the meaning of ‘It is not possible for X to be V-ed [passive]’, i.e. it marks passivization. An example of this would be: *huáng, hēi mǎ bù kě zhì* 黃、黑馬不可致: “brown and black horses may not be sent” (BML 6).

When used with *kěyǐ* 可以 and a transitive or an intransitive verb V, *bù* has the active meaning of “It is not possible for X to V [active]”. Examples of this would be: *bù kěyǐ* 不可以應有白馬: “one cannot answer that there is a white horse” (BML 6); or *bù kě yǐ shì shí* 不可以視石: “one cannot see the stone” (JBL 9).

When combined with *kě wèi* 可謂 V (predicate), the meaning is therefore ‘X cannot be said to be’, as in the following examples:

- (1) 有白馬，不可謂無馬也。
“but if one has a white horse, one cannot be said to be without horse” (BML 5);
- (2) 得其所白，不可謂無白。
“when one gets its white(ness), one cannot be said to be without white (ness)” (JBL 7).

When combined with *kěyǐ wèi* 可以謂, the meaning is ‘X cannot say that’. For example:

- (3) 不可以謂馬馬也。
“one cannot say that a horse is a horse” (BML 13).

However, one may suspect that these last two expressions are often simply used as linguistic devices to negate complex expressions. The examples given above do not differ significantly from the following assertions: “if one has a white horse, it is false that there is no horse”; “when one gets its white(ness), it is false that there is no white(ness)”; or “it is false that a horse is a horse”.

6.2 Wèi 未

Wèi 未, like *bù* 不, is used to negate verbal predicates, but carries with it the aspect of ‘negation of continuation’, so that its meaning corresponds to ‘not yet’ or ‘never’. For example:

- (4) 馬未與白為馬，白未與馬為白
 “If ‘horse’ not yet in combination with ‘white’ counts as ‘horse’, and if ‘white’ not yet in combination with ‘horse’ counts as ‘white’” (BML 9, trans. Harbsmeier).¹⁵

Wèi 未 combined with *kě* 可 would therefore have the meaning of ‘it is not yet possible’ or ‘it is never possible’. In our texts, *wèi kě* 未可 mostly appears as a strong rejection of contradictory or incompatible pairs:

- (5) rejection of a contradictory pair (*xiāngyǔ* 相與 / *bù xiāngyǔ* 不相與):
 是相與以不相與為名，未可。
 “we give names that are out of combination to things that are in combination, and that is not quite admissible” (BML 9, trans. Harbsmeier);¹⁶
- (6) rejection of contradiction (*yǒu* 有 / *wú* 無):
 以天下之所有，為天下之所無，未可。
 “taking what nature has for what nature lacks is not possible” (ZWL 3, trans. Rieman);¹⁷
- (7) rejection of contradiction (*yǒu* 有 / *wú* 無):
 以有不為指之無不為指，未可。
 “to take ‘having not-be-*zhǐ*’ as ‘lacking not-be-*zhǐ*’, that is never possible” (ZWL 6, literal translation);
- (8) rejection of two incompatible pairs (*yáng niú* 羊牛 / *yáng* 羊 and *yáng niú* 羊牛 / *niú* 牛):
 而羊牛之非羊也，之非牛也，未可。
 “it is inadmissible to conclude that sheep and oxen are not sheep and are not oxen” (TBL 22, trans. Graham).¹⁸

Logically speaking, one may say that *wèi kě* 未可 corresponds to a very strong negation, a notion of “logical impossibility” or “logical contradiction”.

¹⁵ Harbsmeier 1998: 308.

¹⁶ Harbsmeier 1998: 308.

¹⁷ Rieman 1980: 307.

¹⁸ Graham 1990: 131.

6.3 *Fēi* 非

Fēi 非 is mandatory when one wants to negate a nominal predicate, as in the following examples:

- (9) 白馬非馬。
“(a) white horse is not (a) horse” (BML 1).

But it is also used to negate verbal predicates:

- (10) 天下非有無色之馬也。
“but it is not the case that there are colorless horses in the world” (BML 7, trans. Harbsmeier).¹⁹

Sometimes *fēi* is also encountered as a linguistic device used to negate complex expressions:

- (11) 故所以為有馬者，獨以馬為有馬耳，非有白馬為有馬。
“Therefore, as regards the reason why one counts as having a horse, it is exclusively because of (the word) ‘horse’ that one counts as having a horse. *It is not because of (the expression) ‘white horse’ that one counts as having a horse.*” (BML 13, trans. Harbsmeier).²⁰

Harbsmeier’s translation, along with my italics, makes it clear that the scope of *fēi* here is the whole expression *yǒu bái mǎ wéi yǒu mǎ* 有白馬為有馬, and is not restricted to the occurrence of *yǒu*, which immediately follows *fēi*.

Note also the construction in which *fēi* appears with a reciprocal *xiāng* 相, as in:

- (12) 可與不可，其相非明。(BML 6).

Here, it has the meaning of ‘are not the same as each other’, or better, ‘oppose each other’, ‘are contradictory’. This is indeed the way the passage has been translated in all three recent major translations: 1) “It is evident that the admissible and the inadmissible are not the same as each other;”²¹ 2) “Admissible and

¹⁹ Harbsmeier 1998: 306.

²⁰ Harbsmeier 1998: 309, italics mine.

²¹ Harbsmeier 1998: 305.

inadmissible are plainly contradictory;”²² and 3) “That ‘may be’ and ‘may not be’ are mutually exclusive is evident.”²³

Finally, note that *fēi* has five occurrences with two other meanings in JF, those of ‘to condemn’ and ‘to be at fault’. Both meanings occur in the following passage:

- (13) 人有非則非之，無非則亦非之。

“If anyone is at fault, he condemns him, and if he is not, he condemns him nevertheless” (JF 9, trans. Mei).²⁴

7 A Classification of the Occurrences of the Negatives *bù* 不, *fēi* 非 and *wèi* 未

How do we classify the occurrences of the negatives studied in the preceding section? After many trials and errors, I propose that a useful ‘practical’ classification may be provided in a kind of “logicity scale”.

7.1 The Logicity Scale: First Degree

The highest degree of logicity is provided by a context which is logical in the modern sense of the word: the negation of a predicate (be it verbal or nominal) is frequently opposed to the predicate itself and inserted into sentences, which are themselves part of reasonings whose formal structure is transparent, sometimes sophistic, and which seem almost ready-made for formalization. For example:

- (14) rejection of an incompatible pair ([*yǒu*] *bái mǎ* / [*yǒu*] *huáng mǎ*):

以「有白馬為有馬」，謂有白馬為有黃馬，可乎？曰：未可。

“Since you consider ‘having a white horse’ as ‘having a horse’, will you say that ‘having a white horse’ is ‘having a brown horse’?

No, it is logically impossible!” (BML 10, my translation).

[Scheme: if having WH = having H, then having WH = having BH; (having WH = having H); hence having WH = having BH; hence the contradiction.]

²² Graham 1990 [1957]: 190.

²³ Johnston 2004: 274.

²⁴ Mei 1953: 419.

- (15) rejection of a contradiction (*kě / bù kě*):
 可與不可，其相非明。
 “That ‘may be’ and ‘may not be’ are mutually exclusive is evident.” (BML 6, trans. Johnston).²⁵
 [Scheme: (A and not A) are contradictory.]
- (16) 得其所白，不可謂無白。得其所堅，不可謂無堅。
 “Obtaining its whiteness, one cannot be said to lack whiteness; obtaining its hardness, one cannot be said to lack hardness” (JBL 7, my translation).
 [Scheme: obtaining W → not lacking W // obtaining H → not lacking H]
- (17) 曰：「謂變非不變，可乎？」
 “Is it correct to say that what changes is not what does not change?” (TBL 13, trans. Chan).²⁶
 [Scheme: rejection of ‘A is non-A’]
- (18) 出其所位，非位。
 “If it goes away from its position it is ‘out of position’” (MSL 4, trans. Johnston).²⁷
 [Scheme: this is the almost tautological ‘if it goes out of position, it is out of position’.]

7.2 The Logicity Scale: Second Degree

The second degree of logicity is provided by a context which cannot be so immediately formalized, but appeals to meta-logical or epistemological principles, or to perceptual evidence. For example:

- (19) rejection of a contradictory pair (*xiāngyǔ* 相與 / *bù xiāngyǔ* 不相與):
 是相與以不相與為名，未可。
 “We give names that are out of combination to things that are in combination, and that is not quite admissible” (BML 9, trans. Harbsmeier).²⁸
 [Scheme: giving not-C names to C-things > contradiction]

²⁵ Johnston 2004: 274.

²⁶ Chan 1963: 238.

²⁷ Johnston 2004: 272.

²⁸ Harbsmeier 1998: 308.

This (doubtful) meta-logical principle seems to be based on the postulate of a strict isomorphism between language and reality.

- (20) 目不能堅，手不能白。不可謂無堅，不可謂無白。

“The eye cannot perceive hardness nor the hand perceive whiteness. But one cannot say that there is no hardness or whiteness” (JBL 17, trans. Chan).²⁹

[Epistemological-perceptual principle: E cannot perceive H, S cannot perceive W; but it is not the case that there is no H, and it is not the case that there is no W.]

- (21) 得其白，得其堅，見與不見離。

“Getting its whiteness, getting its hardness, the seen and the not-seen, are separate” (JBL 12, trans. Johnston).³⁰

[Questionable assertion of the ‘separation’ of the seen and the unseen]

7.3 The Logicity Scale: Third Degree

The third degree of logicity is provided by an argumentative context: it uses arguments which are not logical. It does not appeal to supposedly well-known principles, but uses comparisons or points to pragmatic contradictions. For example:

- (22) 今教龍去白馬非馬，是先教而後師之也；先教而後師之，不可。

“Now, to demand that I give up my view that a white horse is not a horse, would be first to teach me and afterwards to learn from me, which is improper” (JF 6, trans. Mei).³¹

[Pragmatic contradiction: rejecting my doctrine of the white horse contradicts the fact of being my pupil.]

- (23) 曰：「青白不相與而相與，反對也。不相鄰而相鄰，不害其方也。不害其方者，反而對。各當其所，若左右不驪。」

“Because green and white *cannot* be combined, and if you combined them, they would stand in contrast to each other. *They do not occupy* adjacent positions. This is so because while [green and white] stand in

²⁹ Chan 1963: 242.

³⁰ Johnston 2004: 276.

³¹ Mei 1953: 418.

contrast to each other [in quality], *they do not interfere with each other in position*. This may be seen from the case of left and right, which *cannot be mixed*” (TBL 31, trans. Chan).³²

[This seems to be a (none too clear) comparison of left–right with green–white; my italics suggest precise ways to analyze the analogy.]

7.4 The Logicity Scale: Fourth Degree

The fourth degree of logicity is provided by a context in which negation appears for purely grammatical reasons, for rhetorical reasons, or where it is not really a negation. For example:

(24) 與馬以雞，寧馬。材，不材，其無以類審矣。

“A horse is better than a fowl [for the purpose of illustration]. Regardless of the ability of a horse and the lack of ability of a fowl, however, the fact is obvious that they are different in species [from an ox or a ram]” (TBL 27, trans. Chan).³³

As shown in this translation, *bù* seems to be used here simply to present the independence of two facts. Johnston’s translation agrees with Chan’s above: “In taking horse and taking fowl, horse is preferred. It should be judged on the basis of useful and not useful [i.e. on the basis of usefulness], not on the basis of class.”³⁴ Mei’s translation seems to be less accurate: “Between a horse and a chicken it is better to decide in favor of the horse. Evidently when instances are not good instances they may not be depended upon for purposes of classification.”³⁵

(25) 馬未與白為馬，白未與馬為白

“If ‘horse’ *not yet* in combination with ‘white’ counts as ‘horse’, and if ‘white’ *not yet* in combination with ‘horse’ counts as ‘white’” (BML 9, transl. Harbsmeier, italics mine).³⁶

³² Chan 1963: 240, italics mine.

³³ Chan 1963: 239.

³⁴ Johnston 2004: 280.

³⁵ Mei 1953: 428. One of the anonymous reviewers suggests the verbal translation “Whether talented or not”.

³⁶ Harbsmeier 1998: 308.

Here, *wèi* functions as a simple aspectual negation. Or take the following example:

- (26) 楚王仁義而未遂也。
“The King of Ch’u is benevolent and righteous but not yet perfect” (JF 3, trans. Mei).³⁷

Again, *wèi* functions as a simple aspectual negation. A similar case is found in the two special uses of *fěi* mentioned in example 13 above, which I classify in the present category.

This classification is admittedly susceptible to many interpretations, and there are many borderline cases. Several of the examples cited above could be questioned, but I found the classification useful in making some of the differences in “logical style” explicit. The following table presents the occurrences of different levels, as discussed in detail above, which – for the sake of simplicity – are simply labelled “logical”, “epistemological”, “argumentative”, and “grammatical”.

TOTAL 不+非+未	GSLZ	BML	JBL	JF	MSL	TBL ³⁸	ZWL
LOGICAL	59	31	0	14	2	5	7
EPISTEMOLOGICAL	125	4	39	7	15	30 (0?)	30
ARGUMENTATIVE	26	0	0	26	0	0 (30?)	0
GRAMMATICAL	21	2	3	11	0	5	0

The following comments may help to differentiate these texts.

First, negatives in BML are overwhelmingly logical. One can confidently assert that almost every occurrence of negation in BML is an element of a context which is ‘logical’ in the modern sense of the word. This characteristic sets BML apart from the other texts of the *GSLZ*, and probably also from most other pre-Qín literature.

Second, negatives in JBL are overwhelmingly epistemological and based on parallelism. Logical reasonings are not really present in JBL. The majority of the

³⁷ Mei 1953: 416.

³⁸ The question marks in this column indicate a hesitation between two classifications; see point 5 in the main text below.

occurrences of negation are simple epistemic assertions for which proofs are not given, nor are they inserted in reasonings. It is true that the negation of a predicate (be it verbal or nominal) is frequently opposed to the predicate itself, but these pairs are not inserted into complex reasonings and are mainly constructed in one of the following ways. One way is via parallelism of the type ‘eye sees whiteness / hand feels hardness’, as in the following example:

- (27) 視不得其所堅，而得其所白者，無堅也。拊不得其所白，而得其所堅。得其堅也，無白也。

“Seeing, you do not get its hardness but you do get its whiteness so there is not hardness. Touching, you do not get its whiteness but you do get its hardness so there is not whiteness” (JBL 8, trans. Johnston).³⁹

Another way is via the absolute separation of the two sequences, as follows:

- (28) 得其白，得其堅，見與不見離。不見離，一一不相盈，故離。離也者，藏也。

“Getting its whiteness, getting its hardness, the seen and the not seen, are separate. The one and the two do not fill each other and are therefore separate. Being separate is being concealed” (JBL 12, trans. Johnston).⁴⁰

Third, negatives in JF are partly logical (by ‘report’, since the text is not attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng) and partly argumentative. Logical occurrences of negatives appear in the first part of JF, and most of them are related to the quotation of Gōngsūn Lóng’s central thesis, *bái mǎ fēi mǎ*. The occurrences in the second part are inserted into argumentative contexts.

Fourth, negatives in MSL are mainly epistemological. They appear in contexts revolving around the principle of successful reference: if you want to use names correctly, you have to use the name which “corresponds to reality, without exceeding it and without being empty”.⁴¹ This corresponds to the idea that a predicate has an extension, which is now defined as the set of entities and only those entities which satisfy the predicate; the extension of a normal predicate should also be non-empty. I also note that the style is definitional and prescriptive, but that should probably be counted more as a ‘literary’ characteristic than as a logical one.

³⁹ Johnston 2004: 276.

⁴⁰ Johnston 2004: 276.

⁴¹ According to Johnston 2004: 272.

Fifth, negatives in TBL constitute a melting pot of different styles. I found some clearly logical occurrences in the text, but I do not know how to classify the rest of them. We find both perceptual evidence and epistemological assertions, but these are mixed with the problem of compounds and of the determination of class (*lèi* 類), and the whole is embedded in nebulous comparisons ('left-right' with 'ox-ram' and 'green-white'; 'green-white' with 'ruler-minister'). Therefore, I vacillate between two classifications for the main bulk of occurrences. If one insists on the role of perceptual evidence and its interpretation, one would class them under the heading "epistemological"; if one insists on the role of comparison, one would class them under the heading "argumentative". I tend to agree with Graham's opinion that JBL is a mixture of copies from different sources.⁴²

Sixth, negatives in ZWL are partly logical, but mainly epistemological-ontological. The text is notoriously difficult and has as many interpretations as it has readers. However, I think that the logician is authorized to say that the text is deliberately cryptic. As mentioned above, I count no less than 20 occurrences of the ambiguous phrase *fēi zhǐ* 非指 (perhaps 'non-indication', 'does not indicate', or 'is not indicated').

8 Concluding Perspectives

This chapter set out to characterize the "logical style" of the different texts included in the *GSLZ*. I have tried to find some objective means of measuring the 'logicity' of the texts. The first method is a holistic, almost purely mechanical way of comparing the number of occurrences of the logical characters. The second is a more detailed study of the context of the occurrences. In my opinion, both methods give interesting and sometimes unexpected results, and they tend to confirm the composite character of the *GSLZ*. However, both methods still need improvement, justification, experimentation, and complementation. These could, for instance, include a detailed study of other "logical characters" occurring throughout the text, or a comparative study of other pre-Qin texts using a similar methodology and set of test characters.

⁴² Graham 1990: 163–166.

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Lukáš Zádřapa

10 Linguistic Affinities of the *Yǐnwénzǐ* Text in the Light of Basic Corpus Data

The text known as *Yǐnwénzǐ* 尹文子 has traditionally been attributed to the Warring States philosopher Yǐn Wén 尹文 (traditionally c. 360–280 BCE), who lived in the state of Qí and was active in the environment of the so-called Jìxià academy.¹ Generally, it is among the most neglected ancient texts, even in comparison with the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子. The *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* has always attracted the attention of those interested in the history of Chinese logic as its foremost representative, although there have been problems with its authenticity at least since Graham's publications.² Similar to the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the *Yǐnwénzǐ* is a relatively concise compilation, and at first sight, its content appears even more heterogeneous than the former: in addition to discussions of the issue of naming, which directly relate to the field of the history of Chinese logic and semiotics, there are passages focusing on matters of effective rule. This has provoked many debates among Chinese scholars about which of the traditional schools it should be assigned to: the “School of Names” (*míngjiā* 名家), the “School of Law” (*fǎjiā* 法家), or the “Huáng-Lǎo” trend of thought. Such debates may seem somewhat pointless, however, in light of our awareness of the non-existence of such schools in pre-imperial times, as well as of the largely artificial character of the traditional classification. In my opinion, the *Yǐnwénzǐ* is just another proof of how closely related and frequently intertwined the “legalist” and “nominalist” trends of thought were, beginning with Shēn Bùhài 申不害 (d. 337 BCE) and the adaptation of the *xíngmíng* 形名 techniques for legalist purposes in the *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 (late third century BCE).³ In

1 Cf. Nylan and Csikszentmihályi 2003 for a critical evaluation of the historicity of such figures.

2 Cf. Graham 1956 and 1990.

3 It is interesting in this context that Wang and Chang (1986: 57–64) argue that the administrative conception of *xíngmíng* is the older one, while the logical or semiotic conception is a later development. Given the historical background, I consider this hypothesis very attractive. See also Makeham 1990/1991 and Makeham 1991.

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any case, the mixed nature of the text has made it relatively unattractive for both historians of legalism and historians of logic. Another reason why the *Yīnwénzǐ* has not been properly studied in modern times is the fact that it was deemed an early medieval forgery for a large part of the twentieth century. Doubts about its authenticity were occasionally aired already during the Yuán dynasty (namely, in the writings of Sòng Lián 宋濂, 1310–1381). To my knowledge, there exist only a handful of publications dedicated to the work, either entirely or partially in Chinese, and there are almost none in a Western language.⁴

This chapter is another contribution to the debate about the authenticity of the text in question.⁵ The present state of affairs may be characterized by a gradual rehabilitation of the book as an authentic Warring States compilation – an approach, developed mainly in the 1980s, which is in accordance with the general tendencies of Chinese academia over the last few decades. Prior to this, the *Yīnwénzǐ* was largely held to be a late forgery. The arguments of those espousing such a critical view of its authenticity,⁶ as well as the counter-arguments of those defending it,⁷ have involved many facets, and the debate is neatly summarized in Chén Rìqīng's 陳日青 thesis,⁸ written under the supervision of Wáng Bāngxióng 王邦雄 (*1941). The scholars dealing with this issue have focused almost exclusively on the content of the book from the perspective of the history of philosophy, on bibliographic records, on the much-discussed preface to the extant version, and on matters of textual criticism (mainly borrowings from several pre-Qín texts, their wording, and the way they are incorporated into the *Yīnwénzǐ*). Quite surprisingly, the question of the language of the work is almost never mentioned in these studies, with the exception of Luó,⁹ whose remarks are far from a systematic survey or a well-constructed proof supported by substantial data.

In fact, when one reads through the compilation, one gets the impression – and there is often clear evidence – that the language differs considerably from Warring State Chinese, and includes much later linguistic elements associated with the medieval period. And as impressions are, of course, notoriously

⁴ The only recent exceptions seem to be Suter 2007 and Suter 2008.

⁵ I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers, who greatly contributed to the improvement of this chapter. Of course, all mistakes of any kind that remain are exclusively mine.

⁶ See, for example, Táng 1927; Guō 1954; Luó 1982. See also Yáo and Huáng 1959.

⁷ See, for example, Zhōu 1983; Wǔ 1984: 470; Hú 1992; Dǒng 1997; and Shào 1999.

⁸ See Chén 2003.

⁹ Luó 1982.

unreliable and unacceptable as arguments in scholarly debate, I have decided to take advantage of the relatively recently available electronic databases of pre-modern Chinese texts, however coarse-grained the search options they provide, in order to shed more light on this problem. It would not be feasible to test each word of the text, and therefore I selected only those phenomena, both syntactic and lexical, that appeared to me potentially indicative of a late date, and subjected them to scrutiny. The results of the inquiry are presented below.

I have relied on the combined data included in two major electronic databases of pre-modern Chinese texts: The Thesaurus Linguae Sericae (henceforth the TLS) and the Chinese Text Project (henceforth the CTP), which offer good coverage of ancient texts, overlapping to a large extent on the pre-Qín and, to a lesser degree, the Hàn periods, and a relatively representative coverage of post-Classical Chinese. For this latter period, the two databases are rather complementary – the TLS includes a representative sample of medieval Buddhist texts in a language that is close to vernacular, while the CTP contains a larger number of later texts in literary language. Obviously, such corpora are not free of problems. For example, the post-Hàn part is approximately four times more extensive than the ancient part, judging by the number of characters indicated in the CTP. One could consider solving this imbalance by relying on relative occurrence frequency. However, given the low overall numbers of occurrence of most of the lexemes under investigation, this would mean working with inconveniently small quantities. Moreover, what is most important for my argument is the first attestation, taken absolutely, rather than relative frequencies. In those cases in which the respective word is attested in the pre-Qín period but is rare, its argumentative value is reduced anyway, and only a massive increase in its occurrence in later texts may contribute to the conclusion that although the presence of the word in the *Yīnwénzǐ* does not rule out its authenticity outright, it might still indicate its closer connection with post-classical literature. For this purpose, the ratio 1:4 is not especially serious.

Another issue is the degree to which the corpora are representative, which concerns primarily the post-Hàn section. It is not particularly homogeneous in any respect. The selection is largely haphazard, and it includes texts of various genres, styles, and linguistic stylizations. But again, I do not consider this to be a major obstacle in carrying out the present preliminary analysis – it would be more of a problem if it were the other way round, with the ancient section being the unrepresentative one. In a sense, the presence and/or frequent occurrence of a word solely in the random and fragmentary post-Hàn corpus might actually highlight its diagnostic value, and it does not make a difference whether it features in a text written in a more colloquial or a more classical style. The fact that many texts in the later section, especially Táng and Sòng compendia, are based

on earlier materials does not invalidate the point: it is their wording that is important, which is clearly influenced by the linguistic norms of the period of their composition, as is that of any other text in post-classical *wényán*. In any case, whole patterns of distribution must be carefully evaluated.

There are of course problems with the dating of the texts in the analyzed corpus as well, especially for earlier periods. I have basically relied on the dating indicated in the TLS, and also consulted Loewe's *Bibliographic Guide*.¹⁰ I am well aware of the fact that there is an ongoing debate about these matters, characterized by iconoclastic tendencies in the West, but the somewhat conservative dating I employ is, in my opinion, meaningful enough for my purposes. When looking for patterns of distribution and tentative connections with particular eras, it is essentially sufficient to distinguish very broadly defined periods, such as pre-imperial antiquity, sometimes including and sometimes excluding Western Hàn Chinese, Hàn period Chinese, and medieval Chinese. Medieval Chinese typically also includes late Eastern Hàn Chinese – which is sometimes also called pre-medieval Chinese – as this was the language of the transitional period.

As is usually the case, the linguistic arguments offered here are far from decisive or conclusive. The patterns of distribution of the selected syntactic and lexical-semantic phenomena can only reveal general trends and clusters of more or less probable links, in the light of which the question of the date of compilation of the present version of the text may be given a tentative and imprecise answer. Even so, this may be a more reliable clue than many of those based on the analysis of the content. Of course, it is always possible that the substance of the text came into being much earlier than the extant version, and that the symptomatic linguistic traits simply reflect the time of the most substantial revision – that is, the early third century CE in the case of our text, as we know from the preface. After all, any linguistic argument regarding the authenticity of any text can be dismissed out of hand in this way, and this is also true of many other types of evidence, which will never be compelling enough in and of themselves. However, we must then ask to what extent it is probable that a learned editor, in revising an ancient text, allowed traces of the vernacular language of his time to penetrate the final version. As far as we know, it would be quite unusual, as this happened to hardly any of the texts whose antiquity has been less disputed over the course of their transmission. These texts seem to have been polished, normalized, and regularized, mostly in their details, and also miscopied, but always in such a manner as to preserve their

¹⁰ See Loewe 1993.

ancient style: they were never rewritten in “modern” language. Also, it appears very improbable that an educated person would fail to distinguish the styles of the language and unwittingly let “modern” expressions and meanings enter the text. We know from a few examples of later forgeries that Chinese scholars were quite skilled in imitating the language of earlier stages. Language modernization is characteristic of acknowledged compilations of older sources, such as various florilegia and encyclopedia popular under the Táng and Sòng dynasties. I have no ambition to resolve these questions in this chapter. I do not intend to propose any strong opinions about the authenticity of the substance of the text here. Rather, as indicated above, I am skeptical about the possibility of doing away with the linguistic arguments simply by reference to the editor’s influence or “unauthorized alterations” (*cuàngǎi* 篡改).

1 Syntax

In the domain of syntax, there are a small number of suspicious phenomena that attract one’s attention. However, mere hints of a possibly later origin can only be arrived at after a more careful investigation.

First of all, there are isolated instances of non-classical use of the negatives *bù* 不 and *fú* 弗 with regard to the presence or absence of an object, expressed either by the personal pronoun *zhī* 之 or a nominal phrase.

DDS.10:¹¹

名賢不肖為親疏，名善惡為賞罰，合彼我之一稱，而不別之，名之混者也。

To call the capable and incompetent by the names of intimate and detached, to call the good and bad by the names of reward and punishment, and thus to mix

¹¹ DDS refers to the ‘Dàdào shàng’ 大道上, the first chapter of the *Yīnwénzǐ*. The numbering of the paragraphs is in accordance with the CTP. The format of references to other texts is taken from the TLS, if those texts are included in the database. If they are only included in the CTP, then I use the format employed in the CTP. The translations are mine, except for those that were readily available in the databases: James Legge’s for *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 (1872), *Shījīng* 詩經 (1871), *Shūjīng* 書經 (1865), and *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 (1885); Christoph Harbsmeier’s for *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 (TLS), *Lúnyǔ* 論語 (TLS), and *Wǔxíngpiān* 五行篇 (TLS, based on Páng Pú 1988); A. C. Graham’s for *Lièzǐ* 列子 (1960); A. R. O’Hara’s for *Liènnǚzhuàn* 列女傳 (1945); B. E. Wallacker’s for *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 (1962); Tjan Tjoe Som’s for *Báihūtōng* 白虎通 (1949 and 1952); J. I. Crump’s for *Zhànguócé* 戰國策 (1979); Christoph Anderl’s for *Zǔtángjì* 祖唐記 (2004); Wolfgang Behr’s for *Fānyì míngyìjī* 翻譯名義集 (1991); and Burton Watson’s for *Fāhuājīng* 法華經 (1993).

up the objective and subjective designations without distinguishing them, this is the confusion of names.

DDS.38:

魏田父有耕於野者，得寶玉徑尺，弗知其玉也。

There was an old farmer from Wèi ploughing in the fields; he found a piece of precious jade having one cubit in diameter, but he did not know that it was jade.

DDS.38:

怪石也。畜之，弗利其家，弗如復之。

It is an inauspicious stone. If one keeps it, it will not bring benefit to his family. It is better to put it back where it was.

DDX.19:

雖弗酬之，於我弗傷。

Although [the ruling class] refuses to grant it to them, it does no harm to it.¹²

DDX. 19:

故為人君，不可弗與民同勞逸焉。

Thus if one is the ruler of others, one is bound to share both toil and repose with the people.

It is very well known and extensively described and discussed in the literature that, a) under normal circumstances, *V + zhī* should be negated as either *fú + V* or simply *bù + V* in the classical period, and that b) there are various examples of exceptions to this rule. The hypothesis that *fú* is in fact a fusion word from the combination of *bù* and *zhī* (i.e. OC *pə + tə > *pət¹³) has been suggested and subsequently refuted several times. Generally, on the basis of the newly excavated texts from Qín and Chǔ tombs, and also from Western Hàn tombs, a consensus seems to

¹² The use of the pronoun *wǒ* 我 is problematic here, since it clearly does not refer to the imagined speaker, but rather to the subject of the preceding sentence. It may be explained as a quite special variant of a non-referential pronoun with the meaning ‘oneself’ (which is one of the current functions of *wǒ*), but its use is unusual, since the subject of the first sentence is definite. Or it may be understood as a variant of a first-person pronoun, but then again, a shift in perspective would be necessary to justify the switch between the zero third-person pronoun in the first sentence and the co-referential first-person pronoun in the second.

¹³ The reconstruction of Old Chinese (OC) pronunciation here follows the system of Baxter and Sagart (2014).

have emerged among scholars¹⁴ that the rule was observed in the classical period. However, the word *fú* most probably did not originate as a fusion, but was rather reanalyzed as such in Warring States times, and the rule gradually weakened in the late classical and most notably post-classical periods, already including Hàn dynasty linguistic material. Because of the lack of perfect conformity to this rule even in (allegedly) Warring States transmitted texts, the occurrence of the four cases cannot serve as proof. Nonetheless, the concentration of these “exceptions” – in total, 16 occurrences of *fú* in the text (25 percent) – is much higher than the norm.¹⁵ This state of affairs cannot but arouse suspicion. Also, it is worth noting that the combination *bù kě fú* 不可弗 never occurs in pre-Qín and Hàn texts.

Another problem consists in the occurrence of the combined question word *hěsuǒ* 何所 (twice in parallel in DDS.23),¹⁶ which is used distinctively in post-classical literary language instead of the plain *hé* in those cases in which the interrogative pronoun is syntactically the direct object of a verb. Ōta even claims that the combination begins to function as a special interrogative form only in the medieval period.¹⁷ The actual state of things is somewhat more complicated, but in any case, this interrogative form is absolutely atypical for any text compiled before c. 200 BCE.

This analysis reveals that the combination is characteristic of rhymed texts in the tetrasyllabic meter, mainly in medieval texts, and especially in Buddhist ones. The CTP statistics are as follows:

pre-medieval (95 times):

<i>Lúnyǔ</i> 論語	1
<i>Shuōyuàn</i> 說苑	1
<i>Báihūtōng</i> 白虎通	1
<i>Xīnxù</i> 新序	1
<i>Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ</i> 孔子家語	1
<i>Qiánfūlùn</i> 潛夫論	2
<i>Lùnhéng</i> 論衡	15
<i>Fēngsú tōngyì</i> 風俗通義	2

¹⁴ See especially Pulleyblank 1991; Wèi 2001; Zhōu 2005; and Caboara 2006, where the previous contributions and divergent views are also summarized.

¹⁵ Hé (2004: 533) gives the range 6.4–9.6 percent; Zhōu (2005: 195), after corrections and thus more accurately, gives 1–7 percent, with an average of 4 percent.

¹⁶ In the sentence: 好何所貴? 愚、醜何所賤? (“What is to be valued of beauty, and what is to be valued of ugliness?”).

¹⁷ Ōta 1987/2000: 303–304.

(continued)

pre-medieval (95 times):	
<i>Kǒngcóngzǐ</i> 孔叢子	3
<i>Lièzǐ</i> 列子	2
<i>Lièxiānzhuàn</i> 列仙傳	6
<i>Liùtāo</i> 六韜	1
<i>Huáinánzǐ</i> 淮南子	2
<i>Lǚshì Chūnqiū</i> 呂氏春秋	1
<i>Shǐjì</i> 史記	4
<i>Zuǒzhuàn</i> 左傳	3
<i>Yì Zhōushū</i> 逸周書	1
<i>Yànzǐ Chūnqiū</i> 晏子春秋	1
<i>Wú-Yuè Chūnqiū</i> 吳越春秋	6
<i>Yántiělùn</i> 鹽鐵論	1
<i>Liènnǚzhuàn</i> 列女傳	2
<i>Hànshū</i> 漢書	5
<i>Qíánhànjì</i> 前漢記	5
<i>Dōngguān Hànjì</i> 東觀漢記	1
<i>Hòuhànshū</i> 後漢書	7
<i>Chǔcí</i> 楚辭	15
<i>Nánjīng</i> 難經	5

Among these, occurrences in pre-Qín texts are represented by *Lúnyǔ* 論語 (one time), *Liùtāo* 六韜 (one time), *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 (one time), *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 (three times), and *Yànzǐ Chūnqiū* 晏子春秋 (one time). Those texts in which the combination is found more than five times were mostly written later than the beginning of the Christian era.

On the other hand, there is comparatively a much higher number of occurrences of the combination in post-Hàn texts – 843 times, distributed as follows:

Period	Text	No. of occurrences
Wèi 魏-Six Dynasties (220–581 CE)	<i>Shìshuō xīnyǔ</i> 世說新語	18
	<i>Bàopúzǐ</i> 抱朴子	15
	<i>Sānguózhì</i> 三國志	30
	Total Wèi-Six Dynasties	76
Sòng-Míng 宋明 (960–1644)	<i>Tàipíng yǔlǎn</i> 太平御覽	126
	<i>Tàipíng guǎngjì</i> 太平廣記	120
	<i>Zhūzǐ yǔlèi</i> 朱子語類	64
	Total Sòng-Míng	356

In Suí and Táng (581–907) period texts there are 82 occurrences (evenly distributed, but most frequent in *Tōngdiǎn* 通典, with 35 instances). Occurrences in Qīng (1644–1911) collections amount to a total of 329, almost all of them (307) in *Quán Tángshī* 全唐詩 (i.e. an anthology of Táng dynasty poems).

In the TLS, the combination occurs a total of 99 times (including the structure adN + N, i.e. *suǒ* [‘place’]), distributed as follows:

Text, Author	Number of Occurrences
<i>Bǎiyùjīng</i> 百喻經	5
<i>Chǔcí</i> 楚辭	15
<i>Fǎhuājīng</i> 法華經	6
<i>Hánshān</i>	6
‘Kǒngquè dōngnán fēi’ 孔雀東南飛	1
<i>Lùnhéng</i> 論衡	14
Lǐ Bái 李白	2
<i>Lièzǐ</i> 列子	1
<i>Lièniǚzhuàn</i> 列女傳	2
<i>Lǚshì Chūnqiū</i> 呂氏春秋	1
<i>Lúnyǔ</i> 論語	1
<i>Mózǐ</i> 墨子	1
<i>Shǐjì</i> 史記	4 (2 adN + N)
<i>Shìshuō xīnyǔ</i> 世說新語	6
‘Táo Yuānmíng’ 陶淵明	3
<i>Xiàolín</i> 笑林	1
<i>Xīnlùn</i> 新論	1
<i>Xiányújīng</i> 賢愚經	5
<i>Yànzǐ Chūnqiū</i> 晏子春秋	1
‘Zhāng Jiǔlíng’ 張九齡	2
<i>Zhūzǐ yǔlèi</i> 朱子語類	1
<i>Zǔtángjí</i> 祖堂集	8
<i>Zuǒzhuàn</i> 左傳	3

Those texts that contain five or more occurrences include four Buddhist texts, poetry, and then *Shìshuō xīnyǔ* 世說新語, *Lùnhéng* 論衡, *Chǔcí* 楚辭, and *Shǐjì* 史記.

As far as the few pre-Hàn occurrences are concerned, the majority of them are problematic. In the following examples, the combination is found in a spatial context, in which the original semantics of the word *suǒ* (‘place’) are still clearly present, and the process of grammaticalization is not yet completed.¹⁸

18 Cf. Caboara, n.d.

Yànzi Chūnqiū 晏子春秋 7.11.3:

子為寡人吊之，因問其偏柩何所在。

Sir, please go and condole with him on my behalf, and ask him in passing where the coffin with the body is.

Zuǒzhuàn 9.29.11.2:

若非侵小，將何所取？

If it had not encroached on the small [states], where should it have found territory to take?

Zuǒzhuàn 11.4.3.7:

難而逃之，將何所入？

But now there's trouble, and you want to run away! Where do you think you can run to?

Lǚshì Chūnqiū 13.3.3.2:

將何所以得組也？

But how/from where shall I get a silk rope? (Some translate this as *cóng shénme dìfang* 從什麼地方 or *cóng nǎlǐ* 從哪裏 ['from where'].)¹⁹

In the sentence from *Zuǒzhuàn* 9.31.6.11, 敢請執事，將何所命之？(“May we venture to ask the authorities what they wish us to do?”), the combination is sometimes glossed as *hé shí* 何時 (‘when’). The whole construction is difficult to interpret unambiguously, since the verb *mìng* 命 is followed by the third-person pronominal object – thus it is not easy to consider *suǒ* as the object-substitute relative pronoun, even if we consider the fact that this verb may be ditransitive.

There are two further examples:

Lúnyǔ 19.3.2:

我之大賢與，於人何所不容？

Suppose one is superbly talented, then in one's relation to others, to whom will he fail to be tolerant?

Here, the context could also be seen as spatial – *róng* 容 is essentially a spatial concept, translated as ‘contain’ or ‘hold’ (figuratively > ‘tolerate’), but this case is not so clear.

¹⁹ Guān et al. 1997: 391.

Finally, one occurrence is unequivocal, and it comes in a text that can possibly be dated to the Warring States period:

**Liùtāo* 六韜, ‘*Wéntāo*’ 文韜, ‘*Míngzhuàn*’ 明傳 1:

王何所問?

What are you asking about, my king?

To summarize this data, one can clearly see that the occurrence of the combined interrogative form *hésuǒ* strongly suggests a late origin, although again the argument remains inconclusive, as there are some exceptions to this historical tendency.

A relatively strong argument for a rather late date of composition is the passive construction *bèi shā* 被殺 (“to be killed”). It is well known that the passive construction with the marker *bèi* is first detected only in late Warring States and Western Hàn texts.²⁰ Most of the early examples (five in *Táng Yùmíng* 唐鈺明 and *Zhōu Xīpò*’s 周錫嘏 relatively representative corpus, including excavated texts)²¹ come from the *Zhànguó cè* 戰國策, and several occurrences can also be found in the *Hánfēizǐ*.²²

Táng Yùmíng provides a small table showing the ratio of the *bèi* construction among all other passive constructions:²³

Period	<i>bèi</i> construction (percentage of all passive constructions)
Pre-Qín	1.1 %
Early Hàn	1.2 %
Late Hàn	5 %
Six Dynasties	15 %

As we can see, the construction is highly atypical for Classical Chinese, but also for early post-Classical Chinese.

It was not possible for me to repeat the research undertaken by quite a few scholars before me, trying once again to describe the grammaticalization process of *bèi*. Instead, I tried to take a closer look at the collocation *bèi shā*, which

²⁰ Cf. Wáng 1980; *Táng* 1987/2002; Peyraube 1989.

²¹ *Táng*/Zhōu 1985/2002: 264.

²² Xu 2006: 98–111.

²³ *Táng* 1987/2002: 277.

is in any case typical, because it features a verb with an adverse meaning – and such verbs were the first to occur in this construction.

The CTP registers the following “pre-medieval” examples, two of which are in fact medieval (post-Hàn):

Xú Gàn 徐幹 (171–218 CE), *Zhōnglùn* 中論, ‘Wángguó’ 亡國, 2:

晉有趙宣子、范武子、太史董狐，而靈公被殺。

In Jin, there were Zhào Xuānzǐ, Fàn Wǔzǐ, and the grand scribe Dǒng Hú, and Duke Líng got killed.

Hòuhànshū 後漢書, ‘Lièzhuàn’ 列傳, ‘Dòu Róng lièzhuàn’ 竇融列傳, 6:

遂謀立子駿。事覺被殺。

Then they planned to enthrone Zījùn. It was disclosed, and they were killed.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Lièzhuàn’, ‘Guǎngwǔ shí wáng lièzhuàn’ 光武十王列傳, 55:

光、弇被殺。

Guāng and Yǎn were killed.

On the other hand, the CTP registers 86 “post-Hàn” occurrences, among which there are 77 cases from the very late Sòng-Míng period, especially in the *Tàipíng yùlǎn* 太平御覽 and *Tàipíng guǎngjì* 太平廣記. Again, the overall pattern strongly suggests a late origin of the version of the text under investigation.

Another striking difference between the language of the *Yǐnwénzǐ* and Classical Chinese is the use of the sentence-final particle *yě* 也. There are many missing *yě* particles in places where we would expect their occurrence with a very high degree of probability, although we can never judge with certainty, not being native speakers of Classical Chinese. However, what we know for certain is that in nominal predicates, the particle is practically obligatory, although admittedly there are also instances of nominal predication without it.²⁴ We also know that the omission of the particle in this environment is a feature quite typical of post-Classical Chinese, especially medieval *wényán* 文言. Therefore, I supplied a *yě* for each nominal sentence where it appeared to be missing. The second type of environment where I tentatively added *yě* are sentences with the modal word (*bù*) *kě* (不) 可 – which, however, represent only the minority of cases. Here again, we can be quite sure that in Classical Chinese there would have been a *yě* at the end of this type of sentence, in spite of the existence of counterexamples

²⁴ See Caboara 2013.

from pre-Qín texts. Of course, there may be other “missing” *yě* particles in the text, but the probability of their occurrence would be much more difficult to assess. In sum, there are 73 occurrences of the particle in the text, and I reconstructed another 33. That means that approximately one-third of the expected occurrences of the particle *yě* are absent from the text. This is indeed a very high number, which strongly suggests a post-classical date of composition.

The last syntactic phenomenon I would like to mention, although it does not provide decisive evidence, is the naming construction *mìng* 名 A *wéi* 為 B (“to give the name B to A”, “to call A B”). As far as I know, the naming construction has yet to be properly studied in its own right. This task cannot be accomplished with a trivial “search”. Nonetheless, *mìng* 名 usually seems to occur together with *yuē* 曰 in the classical period, and not with *wéi* 為. I leave this question for further research.

2 Lexicon

It is much more difficult to assess the validity of lexical evidence for a certain time of composition because, unlike in the case of syntax, it is basically necessary to scrutinize each occurrence of the given character in order to identify those occurrences in which it represents the word under investigation, and then to examine carefully the particular meaning it has in the given context. In many instances, the evidence is inconclusive. However, sometimes one can observe quite obvious semantic changes over time, leading to the conclusion that a certain meaning was either certainly not present in the language of the pre-Qín period, appearing only later (often at a much later stage), or was at least highly atypical in pre-Qín texts. There are also some expressions that arouse suspicion in this regard, but it has not been possible to trace their history, since this would require a much longer study in its own right. Thus, I leave the question open. In addition to my own analysis, I occasionally rely on secondary literature, which somewhat surprisingly tends to be more categorical in its denial of the existence of certain uses and meanings prior to the medieval period. I also checked selected studies on the lexicon of excavated texts,²⁵ which appear to register some meanings much earlier than they are attested in edited literature, but it has turned out that these are of no use for my purposes, as they do not deal with the items I chose to check. In order to keep my study within reasonable limits, I

²⁵ See Wèi 2002; Wáng 2008.

restricted the extent of my survey to the first part of the book, the chapter ‘Dàdào shàng’ 大道上 (henceforth DDS).

I have divided the expressions under scrutiny into three categories according to their evidential value, arranged in descending order from the strongest arguments for a late date of composition to mere hints thereof, with all the necessary caveats as to the degree of relevance of linguistic indicators.

3 Category A

3.1 *míng, fǎ, rú, mò* 名、法、儒、墨

In DDS.3, there is a collocation *míng, fǎ, rú, mò* 名、法、儒、墨, which clearly means “sophists, legalists, Confucians, and Mohists”.

Whereas the combination *rú-mò* is safely and even amply attested in pre-Qín texts, which is expected, it is well known that the terms *míng* and *fǎ* were not used to denote “schools” of thought before Sīmǎ Tán 司馬談 invented them for the *Shǐjì*, where we really do find the disyllabic expression attested. The only other text connected to ancient philosophy in which it occurs is the *Lièzǐ* (7.2.3), which is indeed symptomatic, since the book has long been considered a relatively late forgery, and deservedly so.

3.2 *jūrán* 居然

One of the most convincing pieces of evidence for a late date of composition of the text under investigation is the expression *jūrán* 居然 (‘clearly’, ‘evidently’), which appears in the following sentence:

DDS.8:

然形非正名也，名非正形也，則形之與名，居然別矣，不可相亂，亦不可相無。 However, objects are not essentially a matter of correcting names, and names are not essentially a matter of correcting objects; objects and names are thus clearly differentiated and must not be confused, but they also cannot do without each other.

With this particular meaning, the word is attested comparably late: there are no pre-Hàn or Hàn examples, whereas it is quite common to find examples in the tenth-century Buddhist text *Zūtángjí* 祖堂集, such as:

Zǔtángjī 7.3.2:

於識環之年居然異俗。

At the age of *shíhuán* he was obviously different from common people.

The fact that this meaning of the word is obviously a medieval development is also confirmed by Wáng Yúnlù 王雲路.²⁶ The CTP includes 88 occurrences of this character combination in the post-Hàn period. However, only a minority of these are used to write the word with the meaning in question. In addition to the above-mentioned Buddhist collection, the following examples are representative:

Bàopúzǐ 抱朴子, 'Wàipiān' 外篇, 'Rénmíng' 仁明, 37.2:

精粗之分, 居然殊矣。

The difference between what is fine and what is coarse becomes clearly distinguished.

Sānguózhì 三國志, 'Wèishū' 魏書 12, 'Hé Kuí zhuàn' 何夔傳 5:

顯忠直之賞, 明公實之報, 則賢不肖之分, 居然別矣。

If one makes the rewards for loyalty and frankness visible and publicizes the remunerations for being public-minded and honest, the difference between competent and incompetent ones becomes clearly differentiated.

Yīwén lèijù 藝文類聚 26, 'Rén bù' 人部 10, 'Yánzhì' 言志 17:

能否居然別。

It will become clear as day whether he is able or not.

Tōngdiǎn 通典, 'Lǐ' 禮 55, 'Qiánmǔdǎng wéi qīn jí fú yì' 前母黨為親及服議 3:

居然可見矣。

Then it can be clearly seen.

Tàipíng yùlǎn, 'Tiān bù' 天部 3, 'Rì 2' 日下 21:

不聞人從日邊來, 只聞人從長安來, 居然可知。

I have not heard of a man coming from the vicinity of the sun, but I have heard of a man coming from Cháng'ān, therefore it [the relative distance between the sun and Cháng'ān] is clear as day.

²⁶ Wáng 2010: 544.

There are also much later instances, which I have not systematically traced here. Nevertheless, it may be worth noting that the tetrasyllabic three-word collocation *jūrán kě zhī* 居然可知 (“to be obvious”) has been lexicalized (attested in the *Bàopúzǐ*, for example) and is included in common dictionaries.

3.3 *chūqún* 出群

DDS.19 includes two passages with the word *chūqún* 出群 (“to be extraordinary”): *biàn yù chūqún* 辨欲出群 (“[people of these times] want to excel above others in argumentation”) and *chūqún zhī biàn, bù kě wéi hù shuō* 出群之辨，不可為戶說 (“extraordinary argumentation cannot be made into household-by-household explanations”). This disyllabic word with an original V–O structure is not attested at all until very late. In my corpus, I have not been able to find a single instance before the fall of the Hàn. It would appear then that it was quite common during the Middle Ages, at least at first sight. In fact, of 46 occurrences recorded in the CTP, 30 appear in the *Quán Tángshī*. The word is thus quite probably a very late formation.

3.4 沴

The character 沴 appears in the following sentence:

DDS.26:

故俗苟沴，必為治以矯之。

Therefore if customs are corrupted, it is necessary to correct them through proper rule.

It is to be understood as ‘to be corrupted’ or ‘out of harmony’ and probably read *lì*. However, on the basis of several rhyme books, the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* 康熙字典 gives the reading *tiǎn* as well, meaning ‘unordered’ or ‘chaotic’, together with an example from the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子. In my opinion, this reading is not ruled out either. The one example found in *Zhuāngzǐ* 6.5.2 is the only pre-Qín instance that I have been able to discover, and moreover, if we read the character as *lì* in the *Yīnwénzǐ* and as *tiǎn* in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, we cannot really count the latter as another instance of the word attested in the former. After Qín, the CTP registers 57 occurrences of the character (not necessarily the word) from late Hàn (of which 28 instances are found in the *Hànshū* 漢書), but this number also includes 11 cases in the definitely post-Hàn *Hòuhànshū*. Even for later periods, the CTP includes 90

occurrences of the character. However, 50 occurrences are from the Qīng section, mainly from the *Quán Tángshī*, which represents Táng language, and there are also many instances in the quotations included in the *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*.

3.5 tè 特

One of the most solid pieces of lexical evidence for a late origin of the present version of the *Yīnwénzǐ* is the measure adverb *tè* 特 ('very', 'extraordinarily', 'extremely', 'especially'), which co-occurs with the adjective *hòu* 厚 ('intensive', 'strong') in DDS.31 (in parallel with *shí zhòng* 實眾 "indeed many"):

DDS.31:

今天地之間，不肖實眾，仁賢實寡。趨利之情，不肖特厚；廉恥之情，仁賢偏多。
In today's world, the incompetent are many, while the humane and worthy are scarce. The tendency to seek profit is especially strong in the incompetent, while the sense of honor and shame is especially widespread among the humane and worthy.

Wáng Yúnlù lists this adverb specifically as a new medieval development, and this is also what our data show.²⁷ The CTP records too many instances of the current character *tè*; I have not been able to analyze all of them – this would require a separate study in its own right. But exhaustive analysis of the instances included in the TLS data gives interesting (though not surprising) results: among 88 occurrences of the character, there is no single case of it representing the adverb in question. The adverb can, however, be found in later texts, such as the following:

Fǎhuājīng 法華經 4.9:

有如是等種種嚴飾。威德特尊。

Such were the many different types of adornments, the emblems of prerogative and marks of distinction.

Fānyì míngyì 翻譯名義 1.6:

特為詳正。

It is especially differentiated and correct.

²⁷ Wáng 2010: 555 and 587.

Lǐ Bái 李白 48 (= QTS 7874):
魯連特高妙。
Lǚ Lián was especially ingenious.

Xiányújing 賢愚經 54.1:

世尊慈憫，垂矜特隆。

The World-honored one was kind and compassionate, and his love [for the monks] was especially intense.

This means that the material covered by the TLS confirms the view arrived at by lexicologists of medieval Chinese. It is also obvious that the word belonged to the spoken stratum of the language and did not enter the formal style of *wen-yan* until modern times.

3.6 *chùdì shì yān* 觸地是焉

Again in DDS.31, we find the expression *chùdì shì yān* (“you find it everywhere”, “it is everywhere”). Its internal structure is not entirely clear. In any case, the word *chùdì* 觸地 alone, meaning ‘everywhere’, may be a good indicator of the date of composition. Among 20 occurrences of this character combination, which were found only in the post-Hàn section of the CTP, only the following can be quoted as relatively safe attestations:

Shishuō xīnyǔ 世說新語, ‘Páidiào’ 排調, 52:

法師今日如著弊絮在荊棘中，觸地挂闔。

It looks today as if the master had dressed in well-worn, cotton-padded clothes and stayed in a thorn-bush, restricted from every direction (= in any direction).

Yánshì jiāxùn 顏氏家訓, ‘Miǎnxué’ 勉學, 2:

有學藝者，觸地而安。

Those that possess learning and various abilities are at peace everywhere (= under any circumstances).

It is thus not surprising to read in Wáng Yúnlù that *chù* meaning ‘all’ is typical of medieval Chinese.²⁸ Thus the whole paragraph in DDS.31 looks like a textual block with a very strong medieval as well as a colloquial flavor.

²⁸ Wáng 2010: 92–93.

3.7 *shūměi* 姝美

The disyllabic word *shūměi* 姝美 ('beautiful'), which appears in DDS.36, is attested in my material only seven times: twice in the *Tàipíng yùlǎn* and five times in the *Tàipíng guǎngjì*, both of which are Sòng dynasty texts. Its presence in the examined version of the allegedly Warring States text *Yīnwénzǐ* is thus unexpected. One could point to its interchangeability with *shūměi* 殊美 ('extraordinarily beautiful'), but this word seems to be first attested in the Western Hàn *Jíjiùpiān* 急就篇, and then in post-Hàn works.

3.8 *jīngsù* 經宿

Another disyllabic word, *jīngsù* 經宿 ('overnight'), appears in the following sentence:

DDS.37:

將欲獻楚王，經宿而鳥死。

He intended to donate it to the king of Chǔ, but overnight the bird died.

This expression is entirely unexpected in a Warring States text, as confirmed by the data from the corpus: the TLS contains three instances, all very late: *Shìshuō xīnyǔ* 23.47.2, *Xiàolín* 笑林 8, and *Zǔtángjī* 6.4.13. The CTP also registers only post-Hàn examples, and these are surprisingly numerous – 95. Among these, the word occurs 67 times in the two Sòng dynasty encyclopedias, *Tàipíng yùlǎn* and *Tàipíng guǎngjì*, and 16 are found in the *Quán Tángshī*. Obviously, *jīngsù* is a medieval coinage, current only in the second half of the Chinese Middle Ages.

3.9 *liǎo* 了

In DDS.44, we find the following sentence:

然則是非，隨眾賈而為正，非己所獨了。

So the norm of what is right and wrong is set up on the basis of the opinion of the masses, and it is something that one cannot know on one's own.

It includes the word *liǎo* 了 ('to know', 'to understand'). As is well known, this word – and even the very character – are not attested in pre-Qín texts. In my data, there is no clear example from the pre-Qín period, not even of the character 瞭, for which it is supposed to be a phonetic loan (瞭 is attested, but in basically

unrelated contexts). Both the character and the word seem to have appeared sometime between 100 and 200 CE, and they are not attested in any current meaning until late antiquity (one can see uncertain examples, e.g. in the *Qiánfūlùn* 潛夫論 by Wáng Fú 王符 [c. 82–167 CE] or in the highly problematic *Kǒngcóngzǐ* 孔叢子).²⁹ Pān Wéiguì 潘維桂 and Yáng Tiāngē's 楊天戈 study also provides a table with the earliest occurrences of the character and the respective words: it begins with three instances in the *Hòuhànshū*, and it is precisely with the meaning 'to understand' (the other common meanings being 'to finish' > 'completely', and '(to understand)' > 'to be clever').³⁰

4 Category B

4.1 jiǎn 檢

In the following three sentences, the character *jiǎn* 檢 represents the verb 'to check', 'to investigate':

DDS.5:

名以檢其差，故亦有名以檢形。[...] 形以定名，名以定事，事以檢名。

On the basis of their names we examine their differences, and therefore the name is also sometimes used to examine the object. The object serves to decide the name, the name serves to decide the task, and the task serves to examine the name.

DDS.10:

名稱者，別彼此而檢虛實者也。

Designations are the things that [serve to] distinguish between these and those and to examine what is false and what is true.

DDS.26:

故俗苟沴，必為治以矯之；物苟溢，必立制以檢之。

Therefore, if the customs are corrupted, it is necessary to correct them through proper rule; if things are in excess, it is necessary to examine³¹ them by establishing a system.

²⁹ For further details on this, see Pān/Yáng 1980/2000.

³⁰ Pān/Yáng 1980/2000: 308.

³¹ This is according to the translation in Gāo/Liú 1996: 123. In principle, there is no major obstacle to understanding the word in the sense of 'to restrict'.

This word, written with the character *jiǎn* 檢 and with the “modern” meaning ‘to examine’, is not attested in Warring States texts in the TLS at all; there are only four occurrences of the character, but none of the respective word. The CTP registers 112 paragraphs in the texts assigned to the pre-Qin and Hàn periods in which the character (not the word!) occurs, with a striking leap in frequency during the Hàn dynasty. It is usually found with other meanings. However, it commonly occurs with the present meaning in the (post-Hàn) *Hòuhànshū* and in other texts of that period, and also as a component of a disyllabic word, as in the following:

Fǎyán 法言 3.21:

天下有三檢：眾人用家檢，賢人用國檢，聖人用天下檢。

There are three kinds of examination in the world: common people examine against their family, worthy men examine against the state, and sages examine against the whole world.

Lùnhéng, ‘Dánìng’ 答佞, 3:

唯聖賢之人，以九德檢其行，以事效考其言。

Only the wisest men check their behavior against the nine virtues and examine their words against how they fulfill the tasks.

Lùnhéng, ‘Dìngxián’ 定賢, 25:

世人之檢，苟見才高能茂，有成功見效，則謂之賢。

The way of examination common among people of these times is such that if they see that someone’s talents are great and abilities abundant, and that he has achievements and his actions are effective, they call him a worthy one.

Cài Zhōngláng jí 蔡中郎集, ‘Wàijí 2’ 外集二, ‘Lìshùyì’ 曆數議 2:

以今渾天圖儀檢天文亦不合于《考靈曜》。

If we examine the astronomic phenomena against the present-day armillary sphere, they do not conform to the *Kǎolíngyào* either.

Hànshū, ‘Shíhuòzhì 2’ 食貨志下, 63:

均官有以考檢厥實。

All officials have means to examine the real state of affairs.

Hànshū, ‘Héwǔwáng Jiǎ Shīdān zhuàn’ 何武王嘉師丹傳, 9:

然疾朋黨，問文吏必於儒者，問儒者必於文吏，以相參檢。

But he detested factions, and so he always asked scholars about the civil officials and asked civil officials about scholars so that they would be checked against each other.

Dōngguān Hànjì 東觀漢記, ‘Zhuàn 6’ 傳六, ‘Liú Lóng’ 劉隆 1:

詔下州郡檢覈其事，百姓嗟怨。

He ordered the subordinate administrative units to check the matter, and the people started to grumble.

Dōngguān Hànjì, ‘Zhuàn 12’ 傳十二, ‘Dù Gēn’ 杜根, 1:

太后使人檢視。

The empress dowager sent a man to check it.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Jì’ 紀, ‘Guāngwǔ dì jì 2’ 光武帝紀下, 121:

詔下州郡檢覈墾田頃畝及戶口年紀。

He ordered the subordinate administrative units to check the acreage and the population, including their age.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Jì’ 紀, ‘Xiàoshùn Xiàochōng Xiàozhì dì jì’ 孝順孝沖孝質帝紀, 49:

二月戊戌，詔以民入山鑿石，發洩藏氣，敕有司檢察所當禁絕。

In the second month, on the day *wùxū*, he issued an order to enter the mountains together with the people and to chisel the stone so that the hidden *qì* is given vent, and he commanded the authorities to carefully check what should be banned.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Lièzhuàn’ 列傳, ‘Wěi Áo Gōngsūn Shù lièzhuàn’ 隗囂公孫述列傳 7:

上下貪賄，莫相檢考。

Both the superiors and the subordinates were greedy, and no-one checked it out.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Lièzhuàn’, ‘Dǒng Zhuó lièzhuàn’ 董卓列傳, 26:

帝疑賦卹有虛，乃親於御前自加臨檢。

The emperor had a suspicion that there were frauds in the process of supplying material aid to the people, and thus he personally set out to examine the matter in front of his throne.

However, there is one occurrence of the word in a disyllabic compound *jiǎnyàn* 檢驗 in the “military chapters” of the *Mòzǐ* collection:

Mòzǐ 墨子, book 15, chapter 71, ‘Záshǒu’ 雜守:

守節出入，使主節必疏書，署其情，令若(>著)其事，而須其還報以檢驗之。

The certificate of the defender [of the city] works as follows: when [a messenger] goes out or in, the official in charge of the certificates is always made to record [the event] in the files, and to write down the circumstances and the mission, and then [the officer] waits for [the messenger] to come back and checks him against [the documents].

Of course, this touches upon the issue of the date of composition of various parts of the *Mòzǐ*, especially those other than the “core chapters”, but because the structure of the book is complicated and the text itself has been handed down to us in very poor shape, much of the debate remains open.³² In any case, this occurrence would seem isolated, if there were not another occurrence in the ‘Yìxùn’ 伊訓 chapter of the *Shàngshū* 尚書:

與人不求備，檢身若不及。

He did not expect every talent in those he employed; but in governing/restraining himself, he behaved as if he could never meet the expectations.

However, the chapter in question belongs to the so-called “Old Text” version, which has generally been considered a medieval forgery since 18th c. There are many other words to express this meaning which are quite common in Warring States texts, such as *cān* 參, *yàn* 驗, or in some contexts, *chá* 察 and *xǐng* 省 (see the synonym group “CHECK” in the TLS). Moreover, as we can see from the translation by James Legge, it is possible to take the same character to mean ‘to restrain’ here.

4.2 *sān kē* 三科

In DDS.6, we find the following sentence:

名有三科，法有四呈。

There are three categories of names and four kinds of manifestation of standards.

It contains the word *kē* 科 in the sense of ‘category’. This word is infrequent in pre-Qín texts – the character occurs eight times in Warring States texts

³² In any case, Angus C. Graham always considered the whole of the work to predate the Qin dynasty, basing his argument on the assumption that this peculiar style of thinking had died out before the unification of China (cf. his entry in Loewe 1993: 336–341).

according to the TLS, but largely with a different meaning. Nevertheless, there are other uses that basically conform to that found in the *Yǐnwénzǐ*:

Hánfēizǐ 20.37.11:

修身者以此別君子小人，治鄉治邦蒞天下者各以此科適觀息耗，則萬不失一。
If those who cultivate their persons in this way distinguish between gentlemen and petty men, and if those who govern a district, a country, or are in charge of All-under Heaven employ the same distinction, and observe the flourishing and declining of things, then among ten thousand things they will not fail in one.

Zhànguócè 3.2.7:

萬端俱起，不可勝理；科條既備，民多偽態。
Myriad pretexts came to hand – more than any could understand. Statutes breed ordinance [countermeasures], and the people learned deceit.

Lúnyǔ 3.16.1:

射不主皮，為力不同科，古之道也。
In archery, one does not consider the state of the leather of the target to be the main thing. This is because the strength of people is not of the same order. That is the Way of the ancients.

In the *Zhànguócè*, the word is employed in the sense of ‘legal (sub)-category’ or ‘paragraph’, which is a specialized terminological narrowing of the basic meaning. The other two may be understood as slightly diverging semantic variants of the word found in our text. Thus, the word does not necessarily suggest a late origin.

In any case, it is worth noting that in the pre-Qin and Hàn parts of the CTP, there are 176 paragraphs in which the character occurs, very often with the meaning ‘legal (sub)-category’ or paragraph’. Its use in this sense is clearly associated with the Hàn period, and the word was apparently becoming progressively more common from the Western Hàn period onward and achieved widespread use during the Eastern Hàn period and later. Below I include just a few examples:

Shuōyuàn 說苑, ‘Fèngshǐ’ 奉使 1:

此義者各止其科，不轉移也。
These instances of social propriety are restricted to their own category; they cannot be classified otherwise.

Chūnqiū fánlù 春秋繁露, ‘Zhúlín’ 竹林 2:

《春秋》之道，固有常有變，變用於變，常用於常，各止其科，非相妨也。

As for the principles embodied in the *Annals*, there are principles of constancy as well as principles of change; the principles of change are applied to changing matters, the constant principles are applied to constant matters; each is confined to its proper category and does not impede each other.

Chūnqiū fánlù, ‘Zhòngzhèng’ 重政 2:

聖人所欲說，在於說仁義而理之，知其分科條別，貫所附。

What the sages want to explain consists in explaining humanity and social propriety and supplying a system for them, in the understanding of their categories and subcategories and of what they apply to.

Chūnqiū fánlù, ‘Shēnchá míngào’ 深察名號 2:

深察王號之大意，其中有五科。

If we thoroughly investigate the overall sense of the king’s instructions, we will find that there are five types.

Báihǔtōng 31.200.2:

命有三科以記驗。

There are three kinds of destinies, indicating [man’s] vicissitudes.

Lùnhéng, ‘Mìnglù’ 命祿 6:

初階甲乙之科，遷轉至郎博士。

He first obtained the first and second ranks during the examinations, and he was promoted to Erudite in Attendance.

4.3 *píngzhǔn* 平準

The term *píngzhǔn* 平準 is found in the following sentence in DDS.6:

四曰平準之法，律度權量是也。

It is usually translated ‘balanced standard’ or ‘stabilized price standards’, hence the whole sentence can be translated as follows: “The fourth of them is called the law of balanced standards, which relates to such things as measuring and weighing.”

The term *píngzhǔn* is well known from the *Shǐjì* 史記 (30.116 and 30.117), where it also features in the title of a chapter (‘*Píngzhǔnshū*’ 平準書). In that book, it acquires a special economic meaning, which is not so far from the

meaning relevant for the passage in the *Yīnwénzǐ*. There, it is mentioned as one of the “four manifestations” of law discussed above. In addition to this, it occurs in the *Yántiělùn* 鹽鐵論 (1.1.32 and 1.1.33), where it is the name of an office. The CTP registers 14 occurrences in the pre-Hàn and Hàn parts of the database, all of which belong to the Hàn sub-period, but not all are attested with the relevant meaning. For the post-Hàn period, there are 80 occurrences of the disyllabic word. Thus, this evidence again points to a date of composition later than the Warring States.

4.4 *qióngjǐ* 窮極

The disyllabic word *qióngjǐ* 窮極, with the nominal meaning ‘end’ and the verbal meaning ‘to exhaust’, appears in two sentences:

DDS.4:

始終相襲，無窮極也。

So, the beginning and the end follow each other without termination.

DDS.11:

以通稱隨定形，不可窮極者也。

If one attaches a general appellation [lit. ‘appellation reaching to > connectible to (other words)’] to a fixed shape, the possibilities [of their combinations] are inexhaustible.

There are no pre-Qín examples of this compound (*Lièzǐ* 5.2.2 does not really count, for the reasons mentioned above), but it is relatively common during the Hàn period: the CTP registers 44 occurrences; in post-Hàn times, there are 108 occurrences in the corpus.

4.5 好牛, 好馬, 好人

In DDS.11, we encounter the following passage:

語曰：好牛，又曰³³：不可不察也。「好」則物之通稱，「牛」則物之定形，以通稱隨定形，不可窮極者也。設復言「好馬」，則復連於「馬」矣，則

³³ Probably two excrement characters.

「好」所通，無方也。設復言「好人」，則彼屬於「人」矣，則「好」非人，「人」非好也。則「好牛」、「好馬」、「好人」之名自離矣，故曰：名分不可相亂也。

When people say “*hǎo/hào niú*” (i.e. ‘good ox’/ ‘to like oxen’), it must be examined. *Hǎo/hào* (‘good’/ ‘to like’) is a general appellation of an object, *niú* (‘ox’) is a fixed shape of an object. If one attaches a general appellation to a fixed shape, the possibilities are inexhaustible. If we construe the collocation “*hǎo/hào mǎ*” (i.e. ‘good horse’/ ‘to like horses’), then [the general appellation] will be connected to *mǎ* (‘horse’). Thus, there is no [fixed] direction in which [the general appellation] reaches. Again, if we construe the collocation “*hǎo/hào rén*” (i.e. ‘good man’/ ‘to like people’), that thing gets joined with *rén* (‘man’). Thus, *hǎo/hào* (‘good’/ ‘to like’) is not the same as *rén* (‘man’) and vice versa. Then the names in the expressions *hǎo/hào niú* (‘good’ / ‘to like ox[en]’), *hǎo/hào mǎ* (‘good’ / ‘to like horse[s]’), and *hǎo/hào rén* (‘good’ / ‘to like man/people’) are naturally distinguished. Therefore I say that titles must not be confused.

This passage contains the expressions 好牛, 好馬, and 好人. There is a substantial problem when it comes to deciding which linguistic structure lies behind them, and thus when it comes to transcribing them accordingly: the characters either represent the verb *hào* (‘to like’, ‘be fond of’), followed by different objects (*niú* [‘ox’], *mǎ* [‘horse’], and *rén* [‘people’]), or the adjective *hǎo* (‘good’) and three different head nouns modified by it. If the former is the case – as suggested, for example, by Suter (2008)³⁴ – then there are no grounds for paying special attention to the passage. However, if it is the latter, we have a serious difficulty in explaining the presence of a late meaning of the word in a text traditionally believed to be written during the Warring States period. The word *hǎo* does not mean ‘good’ in pre-Qin times – it refers to the pleasant appearance of humans. The word for ‘good (quality)’ is *liáng* 良 or *shàn* 善 in Classical Chinese, and indeed, examples of *liáng mǎ* are common, though there are also other terms for good horses. We also encounter *liáng gōng* 良弓 (‘good bow’), for example, among others, while *hǎo mǎ* is not attested until very late, namely the ninth-century Buddhist text *Zǔtángjī*; the *Shǐjì* also includes *shàn mǎ* 善馬.

The following examples show some early instances of *hǎo mǎ*:

Qiánhànjì 前漢記, ‘*Xiàowǔ huángdì jì*’ 孝武皇帝記 5.12:
後得烏孫好馬。名曰天馬。

³⁴ Suter 2008: 55–56.

Thereafter he got a good horse from the Wūsūn people and named it “Celestial Horse”.³⁵

Hòuhànshū, ‘Lièzhuàn’ 列傳, ‘Xiyù zhuàn’ 西域傳 57:

有牛、馬、駱駝、羊畜。能作弓矢。國出好馬。

They have oxen, horses, camels, and sheep; they are able to make bows and arrows, and they export good horses.

Yīwén lèijù 42, ‘Yuè bù’ 樂部 2, ‘Yuèfǔ’ 樂府:

《周庾信燕歌行》: 桃花顏色如好馬。

The song of Yān by Yǔ Xìn from the Zhōu dynasty [runs]: “The colour of peach blossoms is like a good horse.”³⁶

Zǔtángjī 4.7.57:

師曰: 與摩則好馬也。對曰: 若是好馬則將出去。

The master said: “If it is like this, then it is a good horse.” Yúnyán answered: “If it is a good horse, then bring it forth.”

Tōngdiǎn, ‘Biānfáng’ 邊防 9, ‘Kāngjū’ 康居 1:

地和暖, 饒桐、柳、蒲萄, 多牛羊, 出好馬。

The region is mild and warm; it abounds with *wútóng* trees, willows, and vine; there are many oxen and sheep there, and they export good horses.

Thereafter, there are Sòng and later examples.

The collocation *hǎo niú* appears nowhere except in the *Yīnwénzǐ*, while the collocation *hǎo rén*, with the ancient meaning of the adjective ‘nice’ or ‘lovely’, features in the *Shījīng* (107.1):

要之襪之, 好人服之。

[His bride] puts the waistband to his lower garment and the collar to his upper, and he, a fine man, wears them.

In post-Hàn times, the CTP knows of 257 cases of the character combination, but they apparently represent the structure ADJ + N only exceptionally, and that in very late texts. It seems that the first occurrence is probably found in the

³⁵ This example is problematic, as the version of the sentence in the *Shījī* reads: 得烏孫馬好。

³⁶ This example is uncertain as well; in some other versions, the line runs as follows: 桃花顏色好如馬。

Sānguózhì: ‘Wú shū’ 吳書, ‘Lóu Xuán zhuàn’ 樓玄傳 (宜用好人 [“A good man should be employed”]). Later, we find the following sentence:

Tōngdiǎn, ‘Xuǎnjǔ’ 選舉 3, ‘Kǎojì’ 考績 12:

縱使朝廷實無好人, 猶應於見在之內, 比較其尤善者, 以為上第。

Although there are really no accomplished men at the court, it is still necessary to pick the especially good ones among those who are at hand and to raise them to the first rank.

Finally, we already see a completely “modern” usage in *Zhūzǐ yǔlèi* 朱子語類 11.32.2, for example:

譬如人欲知一箇人是好人, 是惡人。

For example, one wants to know whether a certain man is a good man or a bad man.

This state of affairs is also confirmed by Wáng Yúnlù.³⁷

In the discussion after the talk I gave at Zürich University, on which this chapter is based, an alternative reading was suggested by Rafael Suter, who proposed that the collocations should be read as instances of the verb + object pattern. In his 2008 article, Suter translated the word *hào* 好 as ‘mögen’. I have not been able to find enough evidence for either interpretation. The passage is not discussed sufficiently explicitly anywhere, and the translation into modern Chinese, which I have at my disposal (I am unaware of any other), does not really translate the expressions, but quotes them as objects worthy of metalinguistic attention (though the commentary on the respective sentence suggests that the translators do understand the word as an adjective).³⁸ Still, my impression is that the adjectival reading is intended here, for the following reasons. First of all, this debate is strongly reminiscent of the debates about both white horses and hard stones, and refers to the unequal status of the property and the object it is ascribed to: this is corroborated by the statement 「好」非人, 「人」非好也 (“*Hǎo* is not the same as man, the man is not the same as *hǎo*”). Second, I consider it probable that the statement 「好」則物之通稱, 「牛」則物之定形 (“*Hǎo* is a general appellation [pertaining] to a thing, *niú* is the fixed shape of the thing”) points in the same direction. Surely the exact meaning of the term

³⁷ Wáng 2010: 939.

³⁸ Gāo/Liú 1996: 111.

wù zhī tōngchēng 物之通稱 is unclear. However, it appears to me that, especially in contrast with “a fixed shape of a thing”, it refers to a property of a thing rather than to a process that the thing is involved in.

The expression *tōngchēng* 通稱 is itself problematic.³⁹ I have discovered only two instances in pre-medieval times, which both appear in the same passage in the *Báihǔtōng*:

Báihǔtōng 2.14:

子者丈夫之通稱也。

Zǐ is the common designation of an adult man.

Báihǔtōng 2.14:

何以（言）知其通稱也？

How do we know that it is a common designation?

Following these, the CTP registers further instances in the post-Hàn section, and the word seems to be quite common.

4.6 yùn 韻

We find in the text a word written with the character *yùn* 韻, which obviously means ‘harmonious’ or, in the given putative context, ‘to consider harmonious’, ‘pleasant (of sounds)’:

DDS.12:

我愛白而憎黑，韻商而舍徵，好膾而惡焦，嗜甘而逆苦。

We [subjectively] prefer white color and dislike black color, we consider *shāng*-mode tunes pleasant and refuse *zhǐ*-mode tunes, we like the odor of mutton and do not like the smell of burnt things, we have a special liking for sweet things and find the bitter ones disgusting.

³⁹ Rafael Suter (2008) translates the term in a technical and quite unusual way, namely “eine durchdringende Abwägung (von Dingen)”, i.e. “a penetrating weighing (of things)” (cf. p. 55). Although such a translation is doubtlessly possible on a purely linguistic basis, I am still not convinced that the term does not here stand for something more mundane and much closer to the later well-established meaning, as suggested by my rendering above.

The problem is that the character itself is very late. Formerly, the word was written with the character 均.⁴⁰ So the question then arises as to why it appears in this book – it is possibly a later emendation.

Another example is as follows:

Cài Zhōngláng jǐ, ‘Wàijí 3’ 外集三, ‘Tánqínfù’ 彈琴賦 1:

爾乃清聲發兮五音舉，韻宮商兮動徵羽。

Then, pure sounds get emitted, ah, and all five tones get played, you tune/produce the *gōng* and *shāng* tones/tunes, ah, and activate the *zhǐ* and *yǔ* tones/tunes.

If we were to believe this version, the word would have a different meaning from the one attested in our text (most probably ‘to harmonize’, ‘tune’). Nonetheless, in other versions, there is the word *fā* 發 (‘to emit’, ‘produce’) instead of *yùn*, which seems to fit the context better. Otherwise, more certain instances begin to occur in texts composed around 500 CE.

4.7 *zhōuwù* 周務

The expression *zhōuwù* 周務 (‘to carry out one’s duties attentively’) is attested in the following sentence:

DDS.15:

周務而已，故明主任之。

[The gentleman] carries out his duties attentively, and therefore an enlightened ruler employs him.

In the pre-medieval period, the word is not otherwise attested at all. It is only rarely attested in the post-Hàn part of the corpus, where it occurs three times.

4.8 *gǔ yǔ yuē* 古語曰

In DDS.17, an expression appears which introduces a quotation of an allegedly old saying, with the form *gǔ yǔ yuē* 古語曰 (‘an old saying runs as follows’). There are several current formulae serving to introduce an ancient saying in the

⁴⁰ Cf. Behr 1997: 17–20.

edited Warring States literature, and they are widely employed. It is therefore quite surprising that they do not include this particular formulation. In the combined corpus of the TLS and the CTP, no pre-Hàn examples can be found. There are occasional occurrences of the formula in Eastern Hàn texts, namely in Cài Yōng's 蔡邕 (132 – 192 CE) *Cài Zhōngláng jǐ* and Xú Gàn's 徐幹 (171–218 CE) *Zhōnglùn*. But even later, there are not many instances – only eight registered by the CTP. The texts in which the word occurs include the *Yīwén lèijù*, the *Tōngdiǎn* or *Tàipíng yǔlǎn*, and one piece of Sòng *bǐjì* 筆記 literature.

4.9 juézhòng 絕眾

Another disyllabic word for ‘being extraordinary’ is *juézhòng* 絕眾, which has the same internal structure as *chūqún* 出群 (3.3) and is used in parallel with it in the same passage:

DDS.19:

今世之人，行欲獨賢，事欲獨能，辨欲出群，勇欲絕眾。

Contemporary people want to be uniquely worthy in their behavior and uniquely capable in their undertaking; in argumentation they want to excel among others, and in bravery they want to be unique.

The picture that emerges from this data is somewhat more favorable than in the case of *chūqún*: there are at least some Hàn dynasty examples, even if we exclude *Lièzǐ* 5.18.2 for all the known reasons and maintain our doubts regarding the authenticity of the *Héguānzǐ* 鶡冠子 (‘Tàilù’ 泰錄 1).

For the pre-medieval period, the following examples are available:

Huáinánzǐ 淮南子 11.35.3:

然而樂離世伉行以絕眾。

Though this was so, they took pleasure in departing from the preceding generation and [engaging in] lofty practices to cut [themselves] off from the multitude.

Dōngguān Hànjì, ‘Zhuàn’ 傳 3, ‘Péng Chǒng zhuàn’ 彭寵傳 1:

容貌飲食絕眾。

In his appearance, in eating, and in drinking, he was extraordinary.

Hòuhànshū, ‘Lièzhuàn’ 列傳, ‘Yáoqī wángbà jìzūn lièzhuàn’ 姚期王霸祭遵列傳 27:

彤為人質厚重毅，體貌絕眾。

Róng was a sincere man and cherished resoluteness, and his appearance was extraordinary.

However, we must bear in mind that the latter two texts were in fact compiled after the fall of the Hàn dynasty, and thus, strictly speaking, belong to the medieval period. The one sentence from the *Huáinánzǐ* is thus the only certain pre-medieval instance. The word does not occur frequently in post-Hàn texts either: the TLS knows of one instance in the eighth-century Buddhist text *Chángduǎnjīng* 長短經 (3.35), and the CTP registers one occurrence in the *Rénwùzhì* 人物志 ('Liúyè' 流業 15, after 200 CE) and eight in the very late *Tàipíng yùlǎn*, all featuring in very similar formulations.

4.10 ài xì yāo 愛細腰

In DDS.26, we find the following sentence, including the collocation *ài xì yāo* 愛細腰 ('to be fond of slim waists'):

楚莊愛細腰，一國皆有饑色。

[Duke] Zhuāng of Chǔ was fond of slim waists, and all the people in the whole country had a hungry look.

Now *ài* can mean 'to be fond of', 'to prefer' in pre-Qín times (cf. the relevant entry in the TLS, along with the lexeme entry attributions pertaining to it), but one would rather expect the word *hào* 好 at that particular position instead of *ài*. And indeed, if one searches for the whole collocation (which refers to a well-known fact that was proverbial in ancient China), one finds that in the pre-medieval period, the meaning "to be fond of slim waists" is expressed by the construction *hào xì yāo* 好細腰, as attested in *Hánfēizǐ* 7.3.3, *Huáinánzǐ* 9.7.8, *Mòzǐ* 15.3.2, *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 12.4.2, *Yànzǐ Chūnqiū* 7.11.6, and *Hòuhànshū*, 'Mǎ Yuán lièzhuàn' 馬援列傳 42. Only in the post-Hàn section of the CTP database do we find *ài xì yāo*; it occurs three times, over against twelve cases of *hào xì yāo*, and these three occurrences are found in the *Bàopúzǐ*, *Qúnshū zhìyào* 群書治要, and *Kāngxī zìdiǎn*, although two of these are merely quotations.

4.11 qǐnfèi 寢廢

The rare disyllabic word *qǐnfèi* 寢廢 ('to give up', 'abandon') features in the following sentence:

DDS.28:

禮樂獨行，則私欲寢廢。

If rituals and propriety alone are practiced, private desires are abandoned.

I have been able to identify only five other instances of the word in the whole corpus: in *Xīnlùn* 新論 9.15; *Lùnhéng*, ‘Zìjì’ 自紀 14; *Tōngdiǎn*, ‘Lǐ 3’ 禮三, ‘Jiāo tiānxià’ 郊天下 12; *Yìlín* 意林, quoting the text from the *Lùnhéng*; and *Tàipíng yùlǎn*, ‘Wénbù’ 文部 18, ‘Zhùshū xià’ 著書下 8 (in the same collocation as in the *Lùnhéng*, i.e. *lìnián qǐnfèi* 歷年寢廢 [“to have given up for many years”]). There is not the least sign that the word existed in pre-Qín times, and I deem it extremely improbable.

4.12 *guósè* 國色

In DDS.36, we find the disyllabic word *guósè* 國色 (‘a beauty’, ‘the mistress of the state’), which is also a current lexeme in modern Chinese. In the pre-medieval period, I identified only two occurrences, both in the Hàn dynasty text *Gōngyángzhuàn* 公羊傳 (‘Xī’ 僖 10.2, ‘Zhāo’ 昭 31.6). What is interesting is that, according to the CTP, the word is attested 63 times in the post-Hàn section. The word is clearly used more frequently in medieval texts, and especially in Sòng dynasty encyclopedias (32 occurrences altogether).

4.13 *chēngjiā* 稱家

The term *chēngjiā* 稱家, obviously with the meaning ‘whole family’ (translated as *quán jiā* 全家 in Gāo and Lín),⁴¹ is found in another sentence in the paragraphs containing anecdotes:

DDS.38:

其夜玉明，光照一室，田父稱家大怖。

On that night, the piece of jade lit up, and its light illuminated the room; the whole family of the farmer became terribly frightened.

⁴¹ Gāo/Lín 1996: 132.

As far as I can tell, it is a *hapax legomenon*; the significance of this fact is difficult to assess (cf. also 5.5.). It may be a medieval innovation to replace *jǔjiā* 舉家, as attested in *Xúnzǐ* 27.57.1, and then in the *Lùnhéng* and the *Hànshū*.⁴²

4.14 *kě xiāo* 可銷

In the same paragraph, DDS.38, we also encounter the word *xiāo* 銷 (lit. ‘to melt’) in the phrase *yāng kě xiāo* 殃可銷 (“the calamity can be dispelled, avoided”). The construction *kě xiāo* is rare in the pre-medieval period. The word *xiāo* refers in these examples to the ‘dissolving’ of troubles:

Wú-Yuè Chūnqiū 吳越春秋, ‘*Fūchāi nèizhuàn*’ 夫差內傳, 13:

願大王按兵修德，無伐於齊，則可銷也。

I would wish the great king to stop the army and cultivate virtue, and not to attack Qí. Then [the precarious situation] could be resolved.

Hànshū, ‘*Zhì*’ 志, ‘*Wǔxíngzhì*’ 五行志, ‘*Wǔxíngzhì zhōng zhī xià*’ 五行志中之下 22: 宜謀於賢知，克己復禮，以求天意，繼嗣可立，災變尚可銷也。

It is necessary to consult with wise men, to gain control of one’s self and turn to ritual, inquiring about the will of heaven in this way, and then the successor to the throne can be installed and the calamity can still be avoided.

Hànshū, ‘*Zhuàn*’ 傳, ‘*Gǔ Yǒng Dù Yè zhuàn*’ 谷永杜鄴傳, 28:

則赫赫大異庶幾可銷，天命去就庶幾可復。

The terrible calamity can hopefully be dispelled and the mandate of heaven, which adheres to virtuous men and abandons those without virtue, can hopefully be restored.

Thereafter, it is attested consistently only in the *Quán Tángshī* in the established poetic meaning of the resolution of grief or anxiety, or of spending a night (cf. *Táo Yuānmíng*’s 陶淵明 [365–427 CE] notorious phrase *yǐ jiǔ xiāo yōu* 以酒銷憂 [“to dissolve worries with wine”]).

The single word *xiāo* does occur in pre-Qín times, but always as the intransitive verb ‘to disappear’, leaving aside its literal meaning of ‘to melt’. Such

⁴² As the anonymous reviewer pointed out, a similar use can be seen in Yǔ Xìn’s 庾信 epitaph inscription (*Zhōu dà jiāngjūn mùzhì míng* 周大將軍墓誌銘) – *chēngzú ér xíng* 稱族而行.

instances can be found in *Zhuāngzǐ* 12.12.1, *Zhuāngzǐ* 25.5.2, and also, though not precisely equivalent, in *Lǐjì* 禮記 19.3.46 and 24.2.21. This means that the possibility that the phrase in question may have appeared in a genuine Warring States text cannot be ruled out, although, as in so many cases, the particular use of the words is connected to later periods (in this case, to the Hàn dynasty).

5 Category C

5.1 *míng* 名

There are certain uses of the word *míng* 名 ('name') that belong to the family of its well-attested verbal uses. However, their valency and particular sense are quite atypical – the derived verb is intransitive and means 'to have a name':

DDS.2:

大道不稱，眾有必名。

The great Way has no designation, yet the many existing things necessarily have a name.

DDS.5:

形而不名，未必失其方圓白黑之實。名而不可不尋。(or 不形不尋)

An object that does not possess a name is not necessarily deprived of its real properties, such as angularity, roundness, whiteness, or blackness. If it has a name, [...]

There is only one such use in the edited literature traditionally understood as coming from the Warring States period, namely in a probably corrupted passage in one of the later chapters of *Mòzǐ* 76.44.33 ('Dàqǔ' 大取):

諸聖人所先，為人欲名實。名⁴³實不必名。

The sages were ahead of others in that they wanted to name things for other people. But real things do not necessarily have a name.

Of course, it is quite possible that it was a special terminological use of the word restricted to the specialized context of the theory of naming, and this is

⁴³ Probably an excrescent character.

why it is so rare and atypical. This problem would require a more extensive, deeper investigation.

5.2 *jiàozhōng* 徼終

There is a disyllabic word *jiàozhōng* 徼終 (‘to come to an end’), which does not have a particularly clear structure, and which appears in the following sentence from DDS.4:

故窮則徼終，徼終則反始，始終相襲，無窮極也。

Thus when they are exhausted, they come to an end; when they come to an end, they return to the beginning, and so the beginning and the end follow each other without termination.

There is no other occurrence of this peculiar VP (originally noun + verb, coalescing most probably through the stage $N_V + V$) in the corpus. The nominal meaning ‘border’ of the first component *jiào*, if it really means ‘border’ in this unusual compound, is not very frequent; there is one use close to this one in *Lièzǐ* 1.6.2 – which is again quite indicative:

死也者，德之徼也。

Dying is the virtue in us going to its destination.

5.3 *sì chéng* 四呈

In the same sentence as that containing *kē* 科 (4.2), we encounter the collocation *sì chéng* 四呈 (‘four manifestations’). The word *chéng* with this meaning arouses suspicion. There are no occurrences of the word before the Hàn dynasty, if one does not count the *Lièzǐ*, which is apparently a medieval forgery. Thereafter it appears in the very late *Rěnjīng* 忍經 (1306 CE) and in the medieval *Shìshuō xīnyǔ* (fifth century CE); furthermore, there are seven cases in the *Tánjīng* 壇經 (ninth century CE), and eight in the *Zǔtángjī* (890–1000 CE). There is one earlier occurrence in the *Xīnlùn* (c. 60 BCE – 0) with the sense ‘to take off’, ‘to undress’. Otherwise, it is most frequently used in the related meaning of ‘to present’. The CTP knows of 43 instances in the pre-medieval period, all of which occur in the Hàn period, both Western and Eastern. It thus seems that the word first appeared in Hàn times.

5.4 *jìnrán* 盡然

Apart from *jùrán* (3.2), there is another word formed by the suffix *-rán* that carries the same meaning of ‘obviously’, ‘clearly’ – *jìnrán* (or *jǐnrán*) 盡然 – at least according to the editor and translator of the modern Chinese version.⁴⁴ This word is a *hapax legomenon* which is, moreover, apparently not recorded in any dictionary.

5.5 *héjìng* 闔境

One sentence from DDS.26 appears as follows:

昔齊桓好衣紫，闔境不鬻異采。

Once upon a time, [Duke] Huán of Qí was fond of dressing in purple, and in the whole country no other colors were sold.

Here we find the highly atypical expression *héjìng* 闔境 (‘everywhere within the borders’). It is a *hapax legomenon* within the corpus. There are indeed various *hapax legomena* in the edited pre-Qin literature, but on the other hand, there are also several common ways to express this meaning.

5.6 *wújǐshí* 無幾時

In DDS.27, we encounter the expression *wújǐshí* 無幾時 (‘in an instant’) as a basically sentence-adverbial theme preceding the rest of the sentence. This formulation is quite rare (in comparison with the relatively common *wújǐhé* 無幾何). In the domain of ancient texts, the combination occurs in the *Zhuāngzǐ*:

Zhuāngzǐ 25.2.1:

憂乎知而所行恆無幾時，其有止也若之何？

James Legge translates the sentence as follows: “If he were troubled about (the insufficiency of) his knowledge, what he did would always be but small, and sometimes would be arrested altogether – how would he in this case be (the sage)?” It is obvious that Legge breaks the sentence after *jǐ*, joining the *shí* with the next phrase. Most modern editions punctuate the sentences with *shí* at the

⁴⁴ See Gāo/Lín 1996.

end of the first phrase, but the translations, such as Chén Gǔyìng's, are rather ambiguous, and even suggest a reading with the *shí* moved to the beginning of the following sentence, as if it were in both positions.⁴⁵ Legge's interpretation is based on earlier commentaries, some of which are adduced by Chén.⁴⁶ As so often with the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the text is not clear enough to yield unambiguous evidence.

For post-Hàn times, the CTP records eight cases, five of which are included in much later commentaries to post-Hàn texts. The remaining three instances are these:

Yīwén lèijù, *juàn* 78, 'Língyì bù 1' 靈異部上, 'Xiāndào' 仙道 21:

盛年無幾時，奄忽行欲老。

The prime of life does not last a moment; suddenly we grow old.

Tàipíng yùlǎn, 'Qìwù bù' 器物部 9, 'Lóng' 籠 3:

無幾時，烈宗晏駕，而天下騷動。

In a short time, the emperor Lièzōng passed away, and All-under-Heaven fell into turmoil.

Tàipíng yùlǎn, 'Shòu bù' 獸部 17, 'Gǒu 2' 狗下, 17:

如其言無幾時，狗便死。

Shortly after they did it according to the advice, the dog died.

I am not able to decide whether the example from the *Zhuāngzǐ* actually counts or not, and it is thus difficult to assess its value for our purposes.

5.7 *lùrén* 路人

The word *lùrén* 路人 ('a man on the road', 'passer-by', 'people on the street') appears three times in DDS.17; this passer-by performs the role of a partner in a dialogue. The picture that emerges from my data is interesting. The TLS attests only instances from very late texts: *Móuzǐ* 牟子 15.1, *Shìshuō xīnyǔ* 1.47.1, *Táo Yuānmíng shī* 陶淵明詩 4, and *Xiàolín* 8. The CTP, on the other hand, registers several occurrences in Hàn dynasty texts, from which the following are relevant:

⁴⁵ Chén 2007: 774.

⁴⁶ Chén 2007: 773.

Xīnxù 新序, 'Záshì 2' 雜事下, 51:

魏文侯出遊，見路人反裘而負芻。

When Duke Wén of Wèi was going out to have a ride, he saw a man on the street wearing a fur coat inside out and carrying hay.

Hòuhànshū, 'Lièzhuàn' 列傳, 'Lǐ Dù lièzhuàn' 李杜列傳 17:

大行在殯，路人掩涕。

When he died and was put in the coffin, people in the streets were covering their faces and weeping.

Fēngsú tōngyì 風俗通義, 'Qiānlǐ' 慙禮, 'Gōngchē zhēngshì Yùzhāng Xú rúzi' 公車徵士汝南袁夏甫 2:

儻見微闕，教誨可乎，如何儻忽，甚於路人。

When he saw the tiny deficiency, he could have instructed him; how is it that he neglected him more than a stranger?⁴⁷

Cài Zhōngláng jì 5, 'Chén Liú tàishòu Húgōng bēi 1' 陳留太守胡公碑:

路人感愴，觀者嘆息。

Passers-by were becoming sorrowful, the audience was sighing.

For the post-Hàn period, the CTP gives as many as 215 instances, which are concentrated in Táng poetry included in the *Quán Tángshī* and in Sòng encyclopedias. The word – or collocation – seems to have a strong medieval flavor. But there is one example that is as safe as it can be – it is found in the excavated text of **Wǔxíngpiān* 五行篇:

**Wǔxíngpiān* 6.4:

酉下子輕思<思輕>於翟，路人如斬；酉下子見其如斬也，路人如流。

When Yóuxiàzǐ reflected with a light touch, his thought was lighter than feathers; it was as if the people in the street all stopped; when Yóuxiàzǐ noticed them to have stopped short, it was as if the people in the street all kept moving along.

This changes the perspective in the sense that, although the expression might have been infrequent in earlier times, it definitely existed in pre-Qín Chinese. This is exactly why lexical evidence cannot be assessed in isolation and has its natural limitations – it is weighty only in a wider context, and the individual

⁴⁷ Given as an example of another meaning, namely 'stranger'.

pieces of evidence must support each other in order to be sufficiently convincing.

In sum, of the thirty expressions I have examined, nine can be assigned to category A (the most convincing evidence), fourteen to category B, and seven to category C (the least reliable evidence).

6 Conclusion

The linguistic evidence I have presented in this chapter provides many good reasons to doubt that the extant transmitted version of the *Yīnwénzǐ* can be a Warring States composition. The combination of some important syntactic evidence and certain lexical phenomena support the hypothesis of a later date of composition. As I argued in the introduction to this survey, it is self-evident that one can always try to dismiss these findings out of hand with reference to the influence of a post-classical editor. I will not repeat the discussion here – suffice it to say that in such a case, one would have to carefully explain how and why the editor happened to revise and transmit the text in a style characterized by a noticeably colloquial and, at the time, modern flavor instead of preserving its original ancient appearance, as was the case with practically all genuinely pre-Qín texts in the course of their transmission.

It is difficult to say anything more precise about the possible date of compilation of the version I have examined here, based exclusively on centuries-long trends in syntax, lexicon, and lexical semantics. If I were to articulate a hypothesis, I would propose that it was written certainly no earlier than the third century CE, having much in common with late Hàn and early medieval texts, including those related to the late Hàn period, such as chronicles. However, this is merely a cautious and tentative *terminus post quem*. The strong affinities with much later texts, such as Táng poetry or Sòng encyclopedias, and the occurrence of many words or meanings that are either generally accepted to be or, on the basis of my data, with some probability seem to be medieval developments, would actually suggest that at least some parts of the compilation are considerably later than the third century. The frequency of rare disyllabic lexemes or outright hapax legomena, considering the shortness of the chapter under investigation, look somewhat unusual, and give the impression that they might be, for example, a consequence of the influence of Buddhist Chinese. Within the chapter, the (pseudo-)historical anecdotes are especially noteworthy – the wording has such a medieval flavor that it generally reminds one of books like the *Shìshuō xīnyǔ*, and the density of terms with medieval affinities

is striking. Finally, it is worth noting that the lexicon examined here (and to a certain extent the syntax as well) does not, of course, represent all the dubious passages in the text. In fact, I am convinced that there are a substantial number of other linguistic units pointing in the same direction, though not always with the same degree of unequivocality.

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Appendix: Texts Investigated

In this chapter, I have investigated a total of 71 texts of varying dates of composition, lengths, subject matters, and styles:

- Báihǔtōng* 白虎通, after 79 CE, or even later (213–245 CE)
- Bǎiyùjīng* 百喻經, 492 CE
- Bàopúzǐ* 抱朴子, written by Gé Hóng 葛洪 (284–364 CE)
- Cài Zhōngláng jí* 蔡中郎集, the writings of Cài Yōng 蔡邕 (133–192 CE)
- Chángduǎnjīng* 長短經, 716 CE
- Chǔcí* 楚辭, probably late Warring States–Western Hàn
- Chūnqiū fánlù* 春秋繁露, written by Dǒng Zhòngshū 董仲舒 (possibly 179–104 BCE)
- Dōngguān Hànjì* 東觀漢記, 72–220 CE
- Fǎhuājīng* 法華經, 380–417 CE
- Fānyì míngyì* 翻譯名義, compilation of earlier texts by Shì Fǎyún 釋法雲 (1088–1158 CE)
- Fǎyán* 法言, written by Yáng Xióng 揚雄 (53 BC – 18 CE)

- Fēngsú tōngyì* 風俗通義, written by Yīng Shào 應劭 (c. 140–204 CE)
Guǎnzǐ 管子, mid-or-late Warring States to early Hàn
Guóyǔ 國語, mid-Warring States
Hánfēizǐ 韓非子, mostly late Warring States
Hánshān 寒山, ninth century CE
Hànshū 漢書, completed before 100 CE
Héguānzǐ 鶡冠子, early Hàn to later Hàn (TLS dating 300–200 BCE)
Hòuhànshū 後漢書, compiled by Fàn Yè 范曄 (398–445 CE)
Huáinánzǐ 淮南子, before 139 BCE
Jíjiùpiān 急就篇, first century BCE
Kāngxī zìdiǎn 康熙字典, 1715 CE
Kǒngcóngzǐ 孔叢子, problematic, much influenced by the first editor
 Wáng Sù 王肅 (195–265 CE)
‘Kǒngquè dōngnán fēi’ 孔雀東南飛, 300–500 CE
Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ 孔子家語, possibly partially first century BCE, edited by
 Wáng Sù 王肅 (195–265 CE)
Lǐ Bái 李白, lived 701–762 CE
Liènǚzhuàn 列女傳, 50–100 CE
Lièxiānzhuàn 列仙傳, compiled by Liú Xiàng 劉向 (79–8 BCE)
Lièzǐ 列子, possibly fourth century CE
Línjìlù 臨濟錄, written by Yìxuán 義玄 (d. 867 CE)
Liùtāo 六韜, dating unclear, but at least early Hàn
Lùnhéng 論衡, written by Wáng Chōng 王充 (27–100 CE)
Lúnyǔ 論語, Warring States, possibly even early Hàn
Lǚshì Chūnqiū 呂氏春秋, most probably completed in 239 BCE
Móuzǐ lǐhuòlùn 牟子理惑論, fourth century CE
Mòzǐ 墨子, the dating is problematic, especially of the so-called “military
 chapters” (possibly Hàn)
Nánjīng 難經, most probably mid-Hàn
Qiánfūlùn 潛夫論, written by Wáng Fú 王符 (c. 90–165 CE)
Qiánhànjì 前漢記, written by Xún Yuè 荀悅 (148–209 CE)
Quán Tángshī 全唐詩, collection of poetry written during the Táng period
 (618–906 CE)
Qúnshū zhǐyào 群書指要, Zhēngguān era (627–649 CE)
Rěnjīng 忍經, 1306 CE
Rénwùzhì 人物志, by Liú Shào 劉邵 (d. 240s CE)
Sānguózhì 三國志, compiled by Chén Shòu 陳壽 (233–297 CE)
Shānghánlùn 傷寒論, 200 CE and later
Shāngjūnshū 商君書, late Warring States
Shǐjì 史記, completed around 100 BCE

- Shìshuō xīnyǔ* 世說新語, written by Liú Yìqìng 劉義慶 (403–444 CE)
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Tánjīng 壇經, resp. *Liùzǔ Tánjīng* 六祖壇經, ninth century CE
Táo Yuānmíng 陶淵明, 365–427 CE
Tàipíng yùlǎn 太平禦覽, under the direction of Lǐ Fǎng 李昉 (925–996 CE)
Tōngdiǎn 通典, written by Dù Yòu 杜佑, 766–801 CE
**Wúxíngpiān* 五行篇, 300–200 BCE
Wú-Yuè Chūnqiū 吳越春秋, later Hàn – fourth century
Xiányújīng 賢愚經, 445 CE
Xiàolín 笑林, fourth century CE
Xīnlùn 新論, written by Huán Tán 桓譚 (43 BCE–28 CE)
Xīnxù 新序, compiled by Liú Xiàng 劉向 (79–8 BCE)
Yántiělùn 鹽鐵論, after 81 BCE
Yànzǐ Chūnqiū 晏子春秋, problematic, but probably (late) Warring States
Yì Zhōushū 逸周書, probably mid-Warring States
Yílín 易林 or *Jiāoshì Yílín* 焦氏易林, ascribed to Jiāo Yánshòu 焦延壽, early Hàn
Yílín 意林, edited by Mǎ Zǒng 馬總 (fl. 806–820 CE), but based on earlier versions (sixth century)
Yìwén lèijù 藝文類聚, 624 CE
Yuèjuéshū 越絕書, late Hàn, after 52 CE
Zhāng Jiǔlíng 張九齡, lived c. 673–740 CE
Zhànguó cè 戰國策, material up to around 225 BCE, compiled by Liú Xiàng 劉向 (79–8 BCE)
Zhōnglùn 中論, written by Xú Gàn 徐幹 (171–217 CE)
Zhuāngzǐ 莊子, probably mid-to-late Warring States
Zhūzǐ yǔlèi 朱子語類, after 1200 CE
Zuǒzhuàn 左傳, mid-Warring States
Zǔtángjì 祖堂記, 890–1000 CE

Reference Texts Sorted by Approximate Date of Composition

Essentially Pre-Hàn

Guǎnzǐ 管子, mid-or-late Warring States to early Hàn

Guóyǔ 國語, mid-Warring States

Hánfēizǐ 韓非子, mostly late Warring States

Lúnyǔ 論語, Warring States, possibly even early Hàn

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Zuǒzhuàn 左傳, mid-Warring States

Western Hàn

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Huáinánzǐ 淮南子, before 139 BCE

Chǔcí 楚辭, probably late Warring States–Western Hàn

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Yìlín 易林 or *Jiāoshì Yìlín* 焦氏易林, ascribed to Jiāo Yánshòu, early Hàn

Eastern Hàn

Báihǔtōng 白虎通, after 79 CE, or even later (213–245 CE)

Cài Zhōngláng jí 蔡中郎集, writings of Cài Yōng (133–192 CE)

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Qiánhànjì 前漢記, written by Xún Yuè (148–209 CE)
Xīnlùn 新論, written by Huán Tán (43 BCE–28 CE)
Yuèjuéshū 越絕書, late Hàn, after 52 CE
Zhōnglùn 中論, by Xú Gàn (171–217 CE)

Middle Ages up to Táng

Bǎiyùjīng 百喻經, 492 CE
Bàopúzǐ 抱朴子, written by Gé Hóng (284–364 CE)
Fǎhuājīng 法華經, 380–417 CE
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Fānyì míngyì 翻譯名義, compilation of earlier texts by Shì Fǎyún (1088–1158 CE)

Rěnjīng 忍經, 1306 CE

Tàipíng guǎngjì 太平廣記, under the direction of Lǐ Fǎng (925–996 CE), 978 CE

Tàipíng yùlǎn 太平御覽, under the direction of Lǐ Fǎng (925–996 CE)

Zǔtángjí 祖堂集, 890–1000 CE

Zhūzǐ yǔlèi 朱子語類, after 1200 CE

Kāngxī zìdiǎn 康熙字典, 1715 CE

Textual Resonances and Questions of Authenticity

Ernst-Joachim Vierheller

11 Gōngsūn Lóng and the *Zhuāngzǐ*: On Classifying (Declassifying) Things *Zhǐ (Qí) Wù Lùn* 指〔齊〕物論

In the collection of texts dealing with the logic of language and compiled under the name of the logician Gōngsūn Lóng 公孫龍 (c. 320–250 BCE), one of the chapters is ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論, which roughly translates as: “On Classifying Things”. The text opens with an enigmatic statement which literally says: “No thing is not a finger, but a finger is not a finger” (物莫非指而指非指). This statement has been the object of many studies which aim to establish its meaning. Another text of approximately the same era, ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論, which roughly translates as: “On Equalizing Things”, is the second chapter of the Taoist anthology *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子, compiled under the name of Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 (c. 370–285 BCE). In this text, the statement quoted above is not only alluded to, but actually applied to support a line of argument. This chapter shows how the author of the *Zhuāngzǐ* is making use of the statement from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and establishes the meaning he attributes to it. Given the two texts’ proximity in time, the interpretation thus arrived at may have a sufficient measure of authority to add a conclusive perspective to the study of the text of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, of which an annotated translation is provided as an appendix.

In the Taoist anthology *Zhuāngzǐ*, the name of Gōngsūn Lóng, a pre-Qin logician, appears in anecdotes making fun of him. Therefore, conventional wisdom holds that tenets ascribed to him in the anthology *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*¹ are not taken seriously in the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Even in the context of discursive reasoning – such as in ‘Qíwù lùn’ (On Equalizing Things), the second chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*² – where the text employs quotations from the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, these quotations are interpreted as ridiculing supposedly paradoxical utterances in the latter, such as “a white horse is not a horse” (*bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬).³

1 On the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, see Indraccolo 2009, with an exhaustive bibliography and a translation of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’.

2 On ‘Qíwù lùn’, see Graham 1969/1970.

3 See for example, Graham 1989: 53n; Höchsmann/Yang 2007: 97n5.

However, an unbiased reading of passages in the *Zhuāngzǐ* shows that the authors appreciate key positions set forth in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and use them in developing their own reasoning. A case in point is the opening statement of the chapter ‘Zhǐwù lùn’⁴ (On Classifying Things) in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. The substance of this proposition remains controversial to this day. The ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, however, refers to this sentence and quotes it literally. Moreover, it positively integrates this content into a line of argument it supports. This indicates that the author of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter must have arrived at a certain understanding of the meaning of this statement. Since the origin of both of the texts in question can be roughly dated to within a century or two of each other, surely this understanding can be credited with at least as much authority and authenticity as commentaries and studies removed from the original by centuries.

The ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* opens with the following sentence:

物莫非指而指非指。 (G5)
 wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

of which a literal translation would be:

“No thing is not a finger, but a finger is not a finger.”

On the face of it, this statement does not make sense. Either its author intended it to be read as a paradox, or the intended meaning is hidden and has to be found. The search for a convincing interpretation has been underway in China for more than 2,000 years and is also an issue in modern Western sinology. It has yielded a Heinziian variety of different results.⁵ Therefore, this sentence in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and the chapter that follows remain subjects of controversy and are counted among the most baffling Chinese texts, removed from our present efforts by centuries.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to try to establish one meaning of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ sentence in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* by analyzing the way in which it is adapted to the context of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter in the *Zhuāngzǐ*. Obviously what the

4 On ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, see Graham 1955 and Graham 1978: 457–468.

5 For a selection of references, see the bibliography in Reding 2002: 205–206.

sentence says depends on the interpretation of the word ‘finger’, assuming it is used in a non-literal sense. One can demonstrate that the author of the chapter in the *Zhuāngzǐ* seems to read ‘finger’ as a ‘class of things’. From a more penetrating perspective, however, the *Zhuāngzǐ* author also recognizes the crucial role of the ambivalence in the logical function of the negative copula *fēi* 非 (‘is not’). Thus he arrives at an understanding of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ proposition, on the strength of which it can be rendered as follows:

No thing is not an element of a class of things, but the class of things as such is not an element of a class of things.

Understood in this way, this proposition fits perfectly with the reasoning of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ text in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, for which it provides the essential perspective. At the same time, it also opens the way for a coherent interpretation of the text that follows it in the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. It expresses elementary facts of logic and language which continue to animate logicians and mathematicians in the West more than two millennia later. Both authors exhibit a remarkable grasp of sets and classes in accordance with modern thinking. The remainder of this chapter will provide a step-by-step analysis leading up to this result, as well as a new translation of the entire text of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, based on the reading of its first sentence given above.

1 The Imprint of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ on ‘Qíwù lùn’

As noted above, the context in which all of this occurs is ‘Qíwù lùn’. The theme of this chapter is the human propensity to react to the outside world based on irrational assessments, whether to accept (*shì* 是, ‘yes’) or to reject (*fēi* 非, ‘no’) external things in their perceived relation to the subject’s self. In its entirety, the chapter makes a case for overcoming this propensity. The author uses the intersubjectivity of language as a paradigm for a sphere unadulterated by subjective (*shì/fēi* 是非) ‘yes/no’ reactions, thus substantiating the essential neutrality of things in their relation to the self. He devotes an entire section of the chapter to this project.⁶ It is in this section that the opening sentence of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ makes its appearance.

In ‘Qíwù lùn’, the sentence is taken up in the following way. The original sentence appears as follows:

⁶ For the location of the section, see appendix I.

物莫非指。 (G1)

wù mò fēi zhǐ

而指非指。 (G2)

ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

It consists of two clauses, G1 and G2, connected by the conjunction *er* 而 ('but'). Zhuāngzǐ⁷ makes use of these two clauses separately, at two different places in his own text. In doing so, he underlines the individual significance of the content of each clause (G1 and G2) alongside the significance of G as a whole.

The first clause is:

物莫非指。 (G1)

wù mò fēi zhǐ

"No thing is not a finger."

Zhuāngzǐ's adaptation of the first clause is as follows:

物無非彼， 物無非是。 (Z1)

wù mò fēi bǐ, wù mò fēi shì

"no thing is not that, no thing is not this."

Note that the term *zhǐ* 指 ('finger') is replaced with *bǐ* 彼 ('that') and *shì* 是 ('this'), respectively.

As for the second clause,

指非指 (G2)

zhǐ fēi zhǐ

"a finger is not a finger",

it is quoted verbatim in 'Qíwù lùn'. Apart from nominalizing it by inserting the subordinate particle *zhī* 之, Zhuāngzǐ does not modify this clause as he does the first (G1). Rather, speaking of it on a meta-level, he gives an instruction regarding how to proceed in trying to explain it:

⁷ Leaving aside the question of who is the respective author of the texts quoted, in this chapter the authors of the texts in the *Zhuāngzǐ* and the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* will be called Zhuāngzǐ and Gōngsūn Lóng, respectively.

以‘指’喻 指之非指 不如 以‘非指’喻 指之非指。 (Z2)

yǐ ‘zhǐ’ yù zhǐ zhī fēi zhǐ bù rú yǐ ‘fēi zhǐ’ yù zhǐ zhī fēi zhǐ

“To explain that a finger is not a finger by what ‘finger’ means is not as good as explaining it by what ‘is not a finger’ means.”

Immediately following this instruction, Zhuāngzǐ repeats (Z2), replacing the term *zhǐ* 指 (‘finger’) with the term *mǎ* 馬 (‘horse’):

以‘馬’喻 馬之非馬 不如 以‘非馬’喻 馬之非馬。 (Z3)

yǐ ‘mǎ’ yù mǎ zhī fēi mǎ bù rú yǐ ‘fēi mǎ’ yù mǎ zhī fēi mǎ

“To explain that a horse is not a horse by what ‘horse’ means is not as good as explaining it by what ‘is not a horse’ means.”

The fact that Zhuāngzǐ deems the second clause (G2) to be in need of explanation shows that he recognizes its violation of the principles of logic. Instead of simply accepting the clause as an intended paradox, he sees it as expressing content of sufficient importance to merit restoring a non-paradoxical meaning to it. For him, the key lies in the special sense in which ‘finger’ is used here. Even more important, as Zhuāngzǐ emphasizes, is the logical function of the negative copula *fēi* 非 (‘is not’). Both considerations also bear on the meaning of the first clause (G1), since “no thing is not a finger” is equally nonsensical. In fact, both considerations are essential in order to show that, with the help of the instruments Zhuāngzǐ provides, the whole of statement G can be understood to say:

物莫非指而指非指。 (G)

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

“No thing is not an element of a class of things, but the class of things as such is not an element of a class of things.”

In trying to justify this interpretation, one is well advised to follow Zhuāngzǐ’s recommendation and proceed in two steps. Therefore, the first assertion to be substantiated is that the term *zhǐ* 指 (‘finger’) is used in a non-literal way, to mean ‘a class of things’. Although Zhuāngzǐ does not say so explicitly, he provides ample circumstantial evidence to support this thesis.

First, he replaces the term *zhǐ* 指 (‘finger’) with nominal expressions, such as the unspecified demonstratives *shì/bǐ* 是/彼 (‘this/that’) and the noun *mǎ* 馬 (‘horse’), thus denoting a certain kind of thing. Thus, for him, *zhǐ* 指 denotes a variable which can take on other variables or specific classes of things as values – in other words, a generic term for items of this kind.

Next, both Gōngsūn Lóng and Zhuāngzǐ speak of the totality of things. This is formally indicated by the double negation *wù mò (wú) fēi* 物莫(無)非 (“no thing [of things none] is not”), which means “every single thing without exception is”. As the expression for this totality (*wàn wù* 萬物, ‘ten thousand things’) implies, things are countable objects that are individually distinct from each other. Taken together, they form the universal set that is the discursive universe of both texts. For this “realm of things”, Gōngsūn Lóng and Zhuāngzǐ use the terms ‘all under heaven’ (*tiānxià* 天下) and ‘heaven and earth’ (*tiāndì* 天地), respectively. Both are concerned with how this is related to what ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ expresses using the term *zhǐ* 指.

From this perspective, Zhuāngzǐ views the way human beings experience the world as a sequence of four levels of perception. The first level is:

有以為未始有物者。 (Z4)

yǒu yǐ wéi wèi shǐ yǒu wù zhě

“(At the outset) there were those who thought there had never been things.”

The second level is:

其次以為有物矣，而未始有封也。 (Z5)

qí cì yǐ wéi yǒu wù yǐ, ér wèi shǐ yǒu fēng

“Next, they thought there are things, but not yet any delimited domains of things.”

The third level is:

其次以為有封焉，而未始有是非也。 (Z6)

qí cì yǐ wéi yǒu fēng yān, ér wèi shǐ yǒu shì fēi

“[N]ext, they thought there are delimited domains of things, but not yet a subjective accepting or refusing of things.”

The fourth level is characterized by the appearance of what Zhuāngzǐ calls ‘yes/no’ (*shì/fēi* 是非) judgments arising from the subjective predisposition to assigning values to things perceived.

On the second level, the world is perceived as the universal set of individual things without distinction as to their properties; in this way, it is the underlying theme of both texts. Moving from the second to the third level, human cognition adds a new feature to the perception of the world of things, namely “delimited domains” (*fēng* 封). These domains divide the undifferentiated multiplicity of things into collections of things, such as horses, which are determined by human recognition of and interpersonal agreement on certain criteria, such as

specific properties. On this level of cognition, things are no longer seen simply as the unique individuals they are on the second level, but as elements of various sets of things denoted in the *Zhuāngzǐ* as “delimited domains”.

How these sets come into being is described in chapter 25, ‘Zéyáng’ 則陽, where the *Zhuāngzǐ* analyzes the mechanics of this process:

合異以為同，散同以為異。 (Z7)

hé yì yǐ wéi tóng, sàn tóng yǐ wéi yì

“Unite differences to form a sameness, disperse the sameness to restore the differences.”

In terms of logic, simply uniting a number of different items (*hé yì* 合異) is determining an arbitrary subset of the totality of things (*wàn wù* 萬物). Adding a criterion of sameness (*yǐ wéi tóng* 以為同) turns the subset into a “class” of individuals sharing the same criterion, and thereby marked by an equivalence of some sort. The *Zhuāngzǐ* thus introduces this concept of class, assigning to it the term ‘delimited domain’, as discussed above. As soon as the criterion of sameness is disregarded, the individuality of the things reappears, and the subset dissolves into the universal set. Accordingly, the sentence quoted above can be regarded as evoking the transition from the second level of perception to the third and also the reversal from the third level back to the second. This can be seen as the processes of classifying and declassifying things, or the formation and dissolution of classes of things.

Zhuāngzǐ has a precise conception of a delimited domain (*fēng* 封) as a class of things. Using the class of horses as an example, he describes the definition of such a class of things. One way to do this is to enumerate all the items intended to belong to the set; the other way is to name a criterion by which to identify these items. For the class of horses, enumerating all the horses is not feasible. *Zhuāngzǐ* therefore chooses the other option:

指馬之百體而不得馬。 (Z8)

zhǐ mǎ zhī bǎi tǐ ér bù dé mǎ

“Pointing to the hundred body parts of a horse will not get you a horse.”

But note also:

而馬系于前者，立其百體而謂之馬也。 (Z9)

ér mǎ xì yú qián zhě, lì qí bǎi tǐ ér wèi zhī mǎ yě

“When a horse is tied up in front and it exhibits the hundred body parts proper to a horse, then you call it a ‘horse’.”

Pointing out the specific properties shared by all horses, *mǎ zhī bǎi tǐ* 馬之百體 (i.e. what they have in common, what Zhuāngzǐ calls the ‘same’ [*tóng* 同]) is not pointing at a flesh-and-blood horse, as a single individual that is ‘different’ (*yì* 異) from all the others. It only refers to the criterion defining the class, a certain delimited domain. If there is a specimen, however, such as a horse tied up out front, that fits the criterion, then it can be “called a horse” (謂之馬 *wèi zhī mǎ*). To ‘call it a horse’ is to pronounce the predication “(this) is a horse” (馬也 *mǎ yě*), meaning this is an element of the ‘class of horses’ (*mǎ* 馬).

The class is defined, therefore, by ‘pointing out’ (*zhǐ* 指) the “hundred body parts of a horse” (馬之百體 *mǎ zhī bǎi tǐ*). Individual items, which are distinct from each other but share a number of predetermined features, are considered to form a class of similar objects – in the present case – horses. This process is what the Zhuāngzǐ calls “uniting differences to form a sameness” (*hé yì yǐ wéi tóng* 合異以為同). The word ‘horse’ (馬 *mǎ*) is being used as the ‘name’ (名 *míng*) denoting the class. Note that the word ‘finger’ (*zhǐ* 指) in (Z8) above is used in its verbal connotation of ‘pointing out’, as the action performed with a finger. By renominating the verb ‘pointing out’ (*zhǐ* 指) to denote the result of the action⁸ (i.e. the class as defined by what is pointed out), one arrives at the point of reading the resulting noun *zhǐ* 指 as a generic term for classes of things.

On the strength of this result, the term ‘delimited domain’ (*fēng* 封) in the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the Zhuāngzǐ and the term ‘finger’ (*zhǐ* 指) in the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ both denote a class of things. In this way, both texts turn words in ordinary language into technical terms in the realm of logic and language.

Finally, Zhuāngzǐ characterizes the relationship of classes of things and the realm of things as whole, reminding us that

道行之而成，物謂之而然。 (Z12)

dào xíng zhī ér chéng, wù wèi zhī ér rán

“a way comes to be by walking on it; things become what we take them for by naming them.”

By this he means that the classification of things is the result of human intervention. But in reality, absent this intervention, as Zhuāngzǐ underlines,

⁸ Compare ‘to select’ and ‘selection’, as the sample obtained.

天地一指也，萬物一馬也。 (Z11)

tiāndì yī zhǐ yě, wàn wù yī mǎ yě

“the realm of things blends all classes into one; the ten thousand things include the horses in their totality.”

This means that the world of things in their ineffable individuality remains untouched by this human intervention. This finding is in perfect agreement with the logical tenet that the universal class is the union of all its subsets or classes. At the same time, the finding is the result of the declassification of things, or as Zhuāngzǐ says,

散同以為異

sàn tóng yǐ wéi yì

“Disperse the sameness to restore the differences.”

All the foregoing considerations together constitute the sum of the circumstantial evidence in the *Zhuāngzǐ* to the effect that the word ‘finger’ (*zhǐ* 指) found in the opening statement of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is interpreted in the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter in the *Zhuāngzǐ* as ‘a class of things’. Zhuāngzǐ has a clear conception of the classification of things and is perfectly aware that ‘finger’ and what he calls ‘delimited domain’ refer to the same thing. From now on, therefore, based on the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the term ‘class of things’ (*zhǐ* 指) can be used to render the opening statement (G) of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the revised version (G’) of which would be as follows:

物莫非指而指非指。 (G’)

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

“No thing is *not* a class of things, but a class of things is *not* a class of things.”

Following Zhuāngzǐ’s first recommendation to clarify the meaning of the term *zhǐ* 指 results in this new version (G’) of the original (G). But changing *zhǐ* 指 (‘finger’) into *zhǐ* 指 (‘class of things’) does not resolve the logical nonsense, since things are not classes and classes *are* classes, contrary to what the sentence (G’) says. Obviously something is amiss with the phrase *fēi zhǐ* 非指 if it is read as “is not a class of things”. This is precisely the reason why Zhuāngzǐ urgently recommends clarifying the meaning of *fēi zhǐ* 非指 in addition to the meaning of *zhǐ* 指. This second recommendation will prove to be decisive. As it happens, this clarification is precisely what the text of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter

of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, which follows the opening statement (G), is trying to establish.⁹

In order to show that by heeding the second recommendation one arrives at the final version (G'') of the original sentence (G), we must now turn our attention to analyzing the seeming ambiguity of the negative copula *fēi* 非 ('is not'):

物莫非指而指非指。 (G')

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

"No thing is not an element of a class of things, but a class of things as such is not an element of a class of things."

Again, *Zhuāngzǐ* does not make his position explicit. Left to one's own devices and such devices as he provides, it pays to examine the discursive background of both texts. *Zhuāngzǐ* and *Gōngsūn Lóng* are both dealing with the Realm of Things (天地 *tiāndì* or 天下 *tiānxià*, respectively), with the things contained within it, and with classes of things formed by human cognition. These entities can be related in three different ways:

1) Identity

"Entity a and entity b are identical."

a 即 *jí* b 也 *yě*.

Formula: $a=b$.

Negative: "a and b are not identical", a 非 *fēi* b.

2) Element-set relation

"Thing a is an element of class P."

a P 也 *yě*.

Formula: $x \in P$.

Negative: "Thing a is not an element of class P", a 非 *fēi* P.

3) Subset-set relation

"Class A is a subclass of class B."

AB 也 *yě*.

Formula: $A \subseteq B$.

Negative: "A is not a subclass of B", A 非 *fēi* B.

⁹ See the translation in appendix II.

We must note that, although in each instance the relation being negated is different, in the Chinese version, the negative copula is the same in all cases.¹⁰ Zhuāngzǐ may have had this in mind when he made a point of recommending the analysis of the meaning not only of the phrase *fēi zhǐ* 非指, but also of the phrase *fēi mǎ* 非馬 (“is not a horse”), thus hinting at a potential difference in the meaning of the negative copula in both cases. Instead of looking at the clause *zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指, one can therefore begin by first considering the clause *mǎ fēi mǎ* 馬非馬 as expressing each of the relations enumerated above in order to ascertain which of the respective meanings of *fēi* 非 (‘is not’) makes the clause a valid proposition. Let us return to our three different relations:

1) Identity

“The class of horses (非) is *not identical with* the class of horses.”

馬 ≠ 馬.

This is invalid for contradicting the principle of identity.

2) Element–set relation

“The class of horses (非) is *not an element of* the class of horses.”

馬 = ∉ 馬.

This is valid, since any element of a class of things must be a thing and not a class of things.

3) Subset–set relation

“The class of horses (非) is *not a subset of* the class of horses.”

¬ (馬 ⊆ 馬).

This is invalid, since every set contains itself as a subset.

The result is that the clause *mǎ fēi mǎ* 馬非馬 is a valid proposition only if *fēi* 非 is interpreted as “is not an element of” and thus turns out to mean:

馬非馬 (E)

mǎ fēi mǎ

“The class of horses is *not an element of* the class of horses.”

The original Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ proposition is:

物莫非指而 指非指。 (G)

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

¹⁰ For a detailed analysis, see Vierheller 2011.

This expresses the difference of things and classes in how they are related to classes of things. Specifying the class (*zhǐ* 指) to be the class of horses (*mǎ* 馬) allows the proposition to be particularized:

此物馬也而馬非馬。 (F)

cǐ wù mǎ yě ér mǎ fēi mǎ

“This thing is a horse, but the class of horses is *not an element of the* class of horses.”

The same can be said of sheep, dogs, or any other class of things. Every single thing is an element of some class or other. But in asserting this, terms such as ‘every’, ‘some’, ‘any’, and ‘all’ automatically impose themselves. Any general proposition concerning things and classes must include a quantification. Gōngsūn Lóng duly recognizes this fact and provides quantification in proposition (G), which is nothing but a generalization of proposition (F) (above) to include all classes. Therefore the meaning in (F) of the negative copula *fēi* 非 (‘is not an element of’) must be preserved in the general statement (G), resulting in the final version (G’):

物莫非指而指非指。 (G’)

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

“No thing (非) is *not an element of any* class of things, but a class of things (the same 非) is *not an element of any* class of things.”

The clumsy wording – repeatedly using the expression “an element of” – can be tolerated with a view to the precision of the presentation. In this way, the difference in meaning of the negative copula *fēi* 非 in connection with the specified class of horses (*mǎ* 馬), as opposed to in connection with the generalized class (*zhǐ* 指) of classes, makes itself felt. Whereas the specified statement *mǎ fēi mǎ* 馬非馬 can be rendered as “the class of horses is *not a* horse”, the general statement *zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指 cannot be rendered as “the class of classes of things is not a class of things”.¹¹ The generalization of *mǎ fēi mǎ* 馬非馬 (“the class of horses is *not a* horse”) must be expressed as *zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指 – “*any* class of things (非) is *not an element of any* class of things.” This is supported by the ingenuity of (G)’s author’s use of double negation: “no thing is *not an element of any* class (非指) of

¹¹ An insight mentioned expressly in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’; see sentence 20 in appendix II below.

things, but any class of things *is not an element of any* class of things (非指)", which thereby makes the predicate the same in both clauses.¹²

In conclusion, a less formalized rendering of the opening statement of 'Zhīwù lùn' in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is the one proposed at the outset of this chapter:

物莫非指而指非指。 (G")

wù mò fēi zhǐ ér zhǐ fēi zhǐ

"No thing is not an element of a class of things, but a class of things as such is not an element of a class of things."

Or:

"Every thing belongs to a class of things, but a class of things is not itself a thing."

The validity of this proposed interpretation has been demonstrated by relying exclusively on the utterances in the 'Qíwù lùn' and 'Zéyáng' chapters of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. With this result, we can now see the origin of (G), the 'Zhīwù lùn' chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, from a new perspective, based on the way its opening sentence was received by a roughly contemporary author in the *Zhuāngzǐ*. I will provide a fresh translation of 'Zhīwù lùn' in the light of this result in appendix II.

On this reading, the original proposition in 'Zhīwù lùn' formulates a profound insight: while each thing can be appointed to belong to certain class of things, a class of things as such is not a thing. It does not partake in the realm of things in the same way as things do – that is, as an element of a set. It partakes in the realm of things in the form of a subset of the universal set and therefore on a plane of existence radically different from that of ordinary things. The author of 'Qíwù lùn' learns this new insight¹³ from the proposition (G) in 'Zhīwù lùn', and based on this, he finds a way to apply it as part of his own reasoning. Note that this result has not been obtained by projecting Western conceptions onto ancient Chinese texts,¹⁴ but simply by examining the relation between two texts belonging to roughly the same era of intellectual discourse.

¹² See the note on sentence 20 in appendix II below.

¹³ An insight which brings to mind Bertrand Russell's theory of types.

¹⁴ Rather the other way round.

2 Context in ‘Qíwù lùn’

After what we have learned above regarding Zhuāngzǐ’s interpretation of the opening proposition in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, it is interesting to note how the insights developed in the process are applied to the line of argument chosen in ‘Qíwù lùn’. As I have mentioned above, the theme of the chapter is the human propensity to react to the outside world based on an irrational assessment, whether to accept (*shì* 是, ‘yes’) or to reject (*fēi* 非, ‘no’) external things in their perceived relation to the subject’s self. In its entirety, the chapter makes a case for overcoming this propensity. The author uses the intersubjectivity of language as a paradigm for a sphere unadulterated by subjective ‘yes/no’ (*shì/fēi* 是非) reactions, thus substantiating the essential neutrality of things in their relation to the self. He devotes an entire section of the chapter to this project.¹⁵

In that chapter, Zhuāngzǐ only refers to the opening sentence (G) of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ and leaves the rest of that chapter in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* untouched. He treats the sentence as the autonomous, self-sufficient statement of an idea with which he unreservedly agrees and which he can consequently apply as a building block in a theory of his own. Moreover, he treats the (G1) and (G2) clauses of (G) separately, thereby underlining the importance he attaches to each of them independently, with a view to using them as stepping stones in his own reasoning.

As a first step, he takes the first clause:

物莫非指 (G1)

wù mò fēi zhǐ

“each single thing is an element of a class of things”

and turns it into:

物無非彼，物無非是 (Z1)

wù mò fēi bǐ wù mò fēi shì

“no thing is not that, no thing is not this”

Zhuāngzǐ thus derives from (G1) an observation which proves central to his argument: by delimiting and defining a class (*zhǐ* 指) of things, a second class is inadvertently created which contains all the rest of the things that are not in the first class. The totality of things is thus bisected into the class defined by

¹⁵ For the location of the section, see appendix I.

‘this’ (*shì* 是) and a complementary class defined by ‘that’ (*bǐ* 彼).¹⁶ Generally, therefore, when things are classified, this classification is a dual one: on the one hand forming the classes, and on the other hand forming all the relevant complement classes. Consequently, a horse is at the same time something other than a dog.

Note that it is the first ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ clause (G1) which leads Zhuāngzǐ to this important development of its content. The distinction between class and complement is not addressed in ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’, but it proves crucial to the argument in ‘*Qíwù lùn*’. There it provides the logical condition for the possibility of positive/negative, ‘yes/no’ (*shì/fēi* 是非) judgments involved in the human propensity toward valuation. By insisting on one kind of thing as acceptable, all the other things are doomed to be refused, based on the dual classification into ‘this’ (*shì* 是) and ‘that’ (*bǐ* 彼).

On the other hand, undoing the dual classification would remove the logical basis for distinguishing between ‘this’ (*shì* 是) and ‘that’ (*bǐ* 彼), and thereby serve to overcome the propensity to apply ‘yes/no’ (*shì/fēi* 是非) judgments. As ‘*Qíwù lùn*’ says:

彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞。 (Z10)

bǐ shì mò dé qí ǒu wèi zhī dào shū

“When neither that nor this will find their opposites, then that is called the hinge the Dao turns on.”

There is only one situation where no class has a complement class. That is when the realm of things or the universe of discourse is considered as a whole. Only the universal class is without a complement.¹⁷ This is when things are perceived in their original individuality without regard to specific properties, and this is precisely what Zhuāngzǐ refers to as the second level of human cognition, as mentioned above. Things are thus perceived as neutral entities on an equal footing among themselves, not distinguished by any class to which they might be affiliated. They are ‘declassified’ or ‘equalized’ (*qí* 齊)¹⁸ and thus no longer amenable to being distinguished by class and complement or, as it were,

¹⁶ The text actually speaks of two different dichotomies: 此/彼 (‘something/other’) and 是/非 (‘approved/disapproved’), but both are instances of the same dual classification which is in question here. For further details, see Vierheller 2011.

¹⁷ Strictly speaking, the complement is the empty set.

¹⁸ The expression *qí* 齊 does not appear in the text of ‘*Qíwù lùn*’, but it is used in its title and is of unknown origin.

by ‘yes/no’ judgments. This insight is the first of the two steps mentioned above, and it is ultimately derived from the first clause (G1) of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’.

But on what grounds can one disregard classification? After all, classification is the basis of language and is indispensable for human orientation and communication. This leads to the second step in the argument of ‘Qíwù lùn’, which provides these grounds and, in the process, again relies on ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, this time on the second clause (G2):

指非指 (G2)

zhǐ fēi zhǐ

“any class of things is not an element of any class of things (i.e. it is not a thing).”

‘Qíwù lùn’ does not elaborate on this point. It only offers a methodological instruction regarding how to explain it, given its strange use of ‘finger’ (*zhǐ* 指). Nevertheless, this is crucial: a class is not a thing. It is not an item in the realm of things, and therefore it belongs to another level of cognition. Incidentally, this understanding is endorsed in the rest of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter, where it says precisely this:

指也者，天下之所無也。¹⁹ (G3)

zhǐ yě zhě tiān xià zhī suǒ wú yě

“The realm of things does not include classes as elements of it.”

This is because:

物也者，天下之所有也。²⁰ (G4)

wù yě zhě, tiān xià zhī suǒ yǒu yě

“Only things are what the realm of things contains as elements.”

‘Qíwù lùn’ puts this in the following words:

天地一指也，萬物一馬也。 (Z11)

tiāndì yī zhǐ yě, wàn wù yī mǎ yě

“The realm of things blends all classes into one; the ten thousand things include the horses in their totality.”

¹⁹ See sentence 4 in appendix II.

²⁰ See sentence 5 in appendix II.

Things, it turns out, require no effort to be declassified. They are declassified by their nature. Without the intervention of human cognition, which categorizes them according to intersubjectively perceived characteristics, their totality remains undivided into delimited domains. Therefore, making subjective distinctions of value between things or classes of things is utterly uncalled for, since these distinctions have no basis in reality.

Since classes have no seat among things in reality, ‘Qíwù lùn’ shows them to be figments created by human intervention:

道行之而成，物謂之而然。 (Z12)

dào xíng zhī ér chéng, wù wèi zhī ér rán

“A way comes to be by walking on it; things become what we take them for by naming them.”

The world in its virgin state is without paths or roads. Then one person goes from one place to another. Other people follow in their footsteps simply out of habit. By and by, a routine is established, from which a footpath comes into being. After a while, a whole network of paths connecting places evolves through human action alone.

In the same way, humans coordinate their perception of differences in properties of things and recognize things that have similar properties, uniting them under these similarities to form classes and giving them names to identify them.²¹ Thus a whole network of classification is ‘projected’ (*zhǐ* 指) onto the realm of things, which in themselves are totally untouched thereby. As all of this is purely an effect of human cognition, the human attitude toward things can be changed. To authorize declassifying or ‘equalizing’ things, all that is required is a rational reflection in the manner demonstrated in ‘Qíwù lùn’. Demonstrating this is the aim of the second of the two steps of the argument presented in ‘Qíwù lùn’. This step draws on the second clause (G2) of the opening sentence (G) of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’.

Together, these two steps provide the intellectual means of moving toward overcoming the impugned propensity to adopt a subjectively distorted attitude toward the world. Reflecting on the essential neutrality of things provides a rational foundation upon which to refrain from making evaluative ‘yes/no’ (*shì/fēi* 是非) judgments. In ‘Qíwù lùn’, this is proposed as the first leg of a journey toward *Dào*, moving from the fourth level of cognition mentioned above to the third, and then the second, and ultimately to the first level, on which the distinctions between individual things are merged into the One.

²¹ See sentences 14 and 17 in appendix II.

3 Conclusion

The author of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* is pursuing the universal theme of the human attitude toward the world and attempting to bring this more into line with his view of reality. In the course of this process, he comes across a proposition which tradition hands down to us as the opening sentence of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. The substance of this proposition remains controversial to this day. Zhuāngzǐ, however, recognizes the fundamental importance of this proposition and applies it to his own line of thought, for which it provides essential material. The author of ‘Qíwù lùn’ perceives the proposition as pronouncing that the totality of things is exhaustively divided up into classes, without thereby affecting the reality of things, which remain essentially unclassified. This thought becomes a key element of the substance of ‘Qíwù lùn’. And as it turns out, the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* leaves a deep imprint on the philosophy of the *Zhuāngzǐ*.

Tradition holds that ‘equalizing things’ (齊物 *qíwù*) is one of the chief tenets of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, and of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter in particular, as it appears in the latter’s title (齊物論), which can be translated as: “On Equalizing (or Declassifying) Things”. On the strength of the foregoing observations, however, this idea appears to have been anticipated in the opening sentence of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’. One might even see ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ as being no less about declassification than ‘Qíwù lùn’ itself, but for the latter’s awareness of its relevance in a wider philosophical purview.²²

How this result may affect the way in which the rest of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ is interpreted will be seen in the translation in appendix II. How it fits with the known textual history of both ‘Qíwù lùn’ and ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ will remain an object of controversy.²³ However, we can hardly deny the fact that the author of ‘Qíwù lùn’ was aware of the opening sentence of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’.

Moreover, there is a striking similarity between the titles of the two chapters in these separate anthologies: ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 (On Classifying Things) in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論 (On Declassifying Things) in the

²² The wider philosophical scope will be presented in a study of ‘Qíwù lùn’ by the present author in due course.

²³ In their commentaries on ‘Qíwù lùn’, neither Guō Xiàng 郭象 (d. 312 CE) nor Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英 (fl. 631 CE) address any relationship with the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*. See Guō 1982: 63n13, 14. However, modern commentaries recognize a relationship between the two texts. See for example, Chén 1983: 59n1. The problem with respect to this relationship, arising from the biographical dates of Zhuāngzǐ (c. 370–285 BCE) and Gōngsūn Lóng (c. 320–250 BCE), has equally been noted. See Wáng 2007: 60n11.

Zhuāngzǐ. Regardless of when and by whom these titles were phrased and affixed to these chapters, one is tempted to take their similarity as hinting at the relationship between the two texts, in which the “classification” of one becomes seminal to the “declassification” of the other.

Appendix I: List of Sources

Quotes from ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ are taken from Tán Jièfǔ 譚戒甫 (1967).

物莫非指而指非指	(G) 18
物莫非指	(G1) <i>ibid.</i>
指非指	(G2) <i>ibid.</i>
指也者，天下之所無也	(G3) 19
物也者，天下之所有也	(G4) <i>ibid.</i>

Quotes from the *Zhuāngzǐ* are taken from *Zhuāngzǐ Yīndé* (1966), page/chapter/line.

物無非彼，物無非是	(Z1) 4/2/27
以指喻指之非指 不如 以非指喻指之非指	(Z2) 4/2/31
以馬喻馬之非馬 不如 以非馬喻馬之非馬	(Z3) 4/2/32
有以為未始有物者	(Z4) 5/2/40
其次以為有物矣，而未始有封也	(Z5) 5/2/41
其次以為有封焉，而未始有是非也	(Z6) 5/2/41
合異以為同，散同以為異	(Z7) 71/25/60
指馬之百體而不得馬	(Z8) 71/25/60
馬系于前者，立其百體而謂之馬也	(Z9) 71/25/61
彼是莫得其偶，謂之道樞	(Z10) 4/2/30
天地一指也，萬物一馬也	(Z11) 4/2/33
道行之而成，物謂之而然	(Z12) 4/2/33

The relevant section of ‘Qíwù lùn’ 4/2/23–47

Appendix II: Translation of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’

Chapter in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

Preliminary note

The ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* opens with a conundrum in the form of the statement “no thing is not a finger, but a finger is not a finger”. This proposition remains contradictory, unless ‘finger’ takes on a non-literal meaning. Anyone who tries to figure out what the author is saying is constrained to construe such a meaning. An early example is the author of ‘Qíwù lùn’, the second chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. He recognizes this constraint and provides the argument for reading ‘finger’ as ‘a class of things’. Since the author of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, on the other hand, seems to take the meaning of ‘finger’ for granted and never gives a hint of what it is supposed to mean, one is free to adopt Zhuāngzǐ’s reading, as long as it leads to a coherent interpretation of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ as a whole. What is remarkable, however, is the fact that Zhuāngzǐ recognizes a further problem, which lies in the logical ambivalence of the negative copula *fēi* 非 (‘is not’). This problem is precisely what the author of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ is trying to come to grips with in the text that follows the chapter’s opening sentence.

The subsequent translation is based on the findings in the chapter above, reading ‘finger’ in the way Zhuāngzǐ does, as ‘a class of things’, paying attention to the role of 非 *fēi* (‘is not’), and adhering to the following guidelines:

1. 指 *zhǐ* is used as a noun.
2. 指 *zhǐ* denotes a class of things, being a generic term for specific classes, such as the class of horses.
3. 非指 *fēi zhǐ* as used in the opening sentence of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ is ambiguous. The negative “x 非指” can be read in one of two ways: either “x is not a class of things” (not an element of the class of classes), or “x is not an element of a class of things” (not a horse nor a dog nor . . .). Which of the two is valid depends on what x stands for. If the item x represents a thing, wù 物, then “a thing is not a class” is trivial, while “a thing is not an element of a class of things” is possible (as on the second level of perception given in ‘Qíwù lùn’, where things have not yet been organized in delimited domains) but undecided. If, on the other hand, x represents a ‘class’ (*zhǐ* 指) of things, then “a class of things is not a class of things” is a contradiction, while “a class of things is not an element of a class of things” is a very pertinent proposition.

4. The ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* decides upon the latter meaning of *fēi* 非 – that is, “is not an element of” – as the appropriate one in understanding the opening sentence of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*.
5. This translation follows the ‘Qíwù lùn’ reading, as developed in the chapter above.

‘Zhǐwù lùn’ 指物論 (On Classes and Things)²⁴

- 1 物莫非指，而指非指。

“Of things, none is *not an element of* a class of things, but a class of things is *not an element of* a class of things (and consequently is not a thing).”

Note:

Rendered in this way, this statement is applied in the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* in support of its own argument. Sentence 1 can therefore be regarded as a self-sustaining proposition which is not in need of an explanation. Using the analogy of a football match,²⁵ the meaning turns into:

Each player on the playing field is a member of a team, but teams are not members of a team (teams are not players).

On the playing field, accordingly, there are no teams, there are only individual players belonging to teams (you cannot pass the ball to a team, but only to another player). The players can be ‘identified’ (指 *zhǐ*) as members of ‘teams’ (指 *zhǐ*) only after they have put on their respective jerseys.

The need for an explanation arises from the literal translation:

“Of things, none is not a finger, but a finger is not a finger.”

This, of course, is nonsense. Following the author of ‘Qíwù lùn’, ‘finger’ (指 *zhǐ*) must first be replaced by ‘a class of things’. The sentence then reads:

(*) “No thing is not a class of things, but a class of things is not a class of things”, or simply: “All things are classes, but classes are not.”

That does not, however, eliminate the inherent contradiction. Again following the author of ‘Qíwù lùn’, the reading of the phrase *fēi zhǐ* 非指 (‘is not a finger’ or ‘class of things’) should be taken to mean “*is not an element of* a class of things”, which leads to the translation given above.

²⁴ For the text, see Tán 1987: 18–24. Punctuation has been partially changed.

²⁵ This text was conceived at the time of the World Cup in 2014, hence the metaphor.

The rest of the ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ chapter provides its own explanation of how to avoid misunderstanding its opening sentence. It proceeds in a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* by elaborating on the contradiction inherent in the translation marked (*) and showing how it can be overcome by reading “is not a class” in an alternative way.

2 天下無指，物無可以謂物。

“In the world of things there are no classes of things, and there is nothing on the basis of which attributes can be appointed to things.”

Note:

天下 *tiānxià* (‘all under heaven’) is an expression for the world of things, what ‘Qíwù lùn’ calls “heaven and earth” (天地 *tiāndì*), the universal set of things. Only ‘things’ (wù 物) are the elements of this universal set. Classes of things, on the other hand, are subsets of the universal set and may not be considered elements of it. This distinction belongs to the elementary properties of sets. In the absence of classes categorizing things with reference to certain properties pertaining to them, there is no way of characterizing things. They are nothing but discrete items in their ineffable individuality.

3 非指者天下，而物可謂指乎。

“In a world made up of non-classes, can things be called classes?”

Note:

Hardly, but that is just what the first clause of sentence 1 does when it is taken to mean “all things are classes”.

4 指也者，天下之所無也；

“Classes of things are what is not present in the world.”

Note:

In ‘Qíwù lùn’, this is said to be the second level of human perception, on which there are things, but not yet ‘delimited domains of things’ (*fēng* 封) or classes.

5 物也者，天下之所有也。

“Things, however, are what there is in the world.”

Note:

This is why things cannot be classes. Therefore the first clause in sentence 1 cannot be read to affirm all things to be classes, as in the translation marked (*). Consequently, in order to overcome this contradiction, some other reading must apply.

6 以天下之所有為天下之所無，未可。

“To regard something which is present in the world as something which is absent from the world is not admissible.”

Note:

Precisely! But that is what the first clause of sentence 1 affirms, if it is meant to read “all things (present in the world) are classes (not present in the world).” That again is why the reading ‘is not a class’ for *fēi zhǐ* 非指 cannot apply in this instance.

7 天下無指，而物不可謂指也。

“In the world there are no classes, and therefore a thing may not be called a class.”

Note:

The answer to the question in sentence 3 is settled here: No!

8 不可謂指者，非指也。

“What cannot be called ‘a class’ is not a class.”

Note:

If something can be addressed as a class, then it must be a class. Otherwise it is not.

9 非指者，物莫非指也。

“Being something which in itself is not a class, no thing ‘is not (in another sense)’ a class.”

Note:

That can be so, provided that *fēi* 非 (lit. ‘is not’) is taken to mean ‘is not’ in another sense, so that “no thing ‘is not (in another sense)’ a class” turns into a meaningful utterance.

10 天下無指而物不可謂指者，非有非指也。

“Although in the world there are no classes and a thing may not be addressed as a class, it is nevertheless false (*fēi* 非) that there should be things which ‘are not (in another sense) classes’ (*fēi zhǐ* 非指).”

Note:

It has been sufficiently established that things are not classes. Therefore the clause “no thing is not a class”, read in the straightforward way, cannot be true. The opposite must therefore be true: “There is something which is not a class.”

But, following sentence 9, this is *not* true when ‘*is not*’ is taken in another meaning, so that the first clause in sentence 1 (“no thing ‘*is not*’ a class”) turns into a meaningful utterance. Sentence 11 says exactly this. See also sentence 18.

11 非有非指者，物莫非指也。

“Saying ‘It is wrong that there is something which “*is not* (in another sense)” a class’ (非指 *fēi zhǐ*) is just what is meant by ‘no thing “*is not* (in another sense)” a class’.”

Note:

See sentence 9. That the first clause of sentence 1 is inherently contradictory when taken to mean “no thing is not a class of things” has been discussed at length. The contradiction can be avoided, however, by applying an alternative reading of ‘*is not*’ a class (非指). What that reading might be has not yet been addressed, but will presently be introduced.

12 物莫非指者，而指非指也。

“Whereas no thing ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ a class, a class as such ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ a class.”

Note:

The alternative reading of the first clause of sentence 1 must also be extended to the second clause. Here the double negation contained in the first clause comes into effect, making the predicate phrases identical in both clauses. Sentence 12 concludes the explanation of how not to misunderstand the proposition of sentence 1. What the alternative reading of ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ a class (非指 *fēi zhǐ*) should be, is developed next.

13 天下無指者，生于物之各有名，不為指也。

“That in the world there are no classes of things results from the fact that, just because each thing has the name (of a class), the thing does not qualify as a class of things.”

Note:

This establishes a relation between things and the classes to which they belong. Each thing is said to bear the name of a class, implying of course that different things may bear the name of the same class. All such things make up the class denoted by this name, but individually they are by no means identical with this class, and therefore cannot qualify as a class. However, see sentence 14.

14 不為指而謂之指，是兼不為指。

“If something which does not qualify as a class is (nevertheless) being addressed as a ‘class’, then that is based on grouping (*jiān* 兼) together (to form a class) items which in themselves cannot be considered to be classes.”

Note:

Sentence 14 is preparing the alternative reading of ‘is *not* (in another sense) a class’. Things are not classes, but they can be bundled (*jiān* 兼) into classes, making them members of a class. Remember, we have already seen *Zhuāngzǐ* describing the process involved: “Uniting differences to make a sameness” (*hé yì yǐ wéi tóng* 合異以為同).

15 以有不為指之無不為指，未可。

“To proceed from ‘*there is something which does not qualify as a class*’ to saying ‘*there is nothing which does not qualify as a class*’ is not admissible.”

Note:

This sentence repeats and confirms sentence 6 in order to underline that sentences 13 and 14 in no way contradict it.

16 且指者天下之所兼。

“By the way, all classes are comprised within the world of things.”

Note:

This is an important aside. If all things are bundled (*jiān* 兼) to make up classes, then all the things in all the classes put together make up the realm of things. In the words of the *Zhuāngzǐ*: “*tiāndì yī zhǐ yě, wàn wù yī mǎ yě*” 天地一指也，萬物一馬也 (“the realm of things blends all classes into one”, or “the ten thousand things include the horses in their totality”). If ‘*Zhǐwù lùn*’ is being read in terms of the ‘universal set’ (*tiāndì* 天地) and ‘subsets’ (*zhǐ* 指) thereof, then this proposition is in perfect keeping with the concept of sets – a set being considered the union of all its subsets.

17 天下無指者，物不可謂無指也。

“(Just because) in the world there are no classes, things cannot be said to *have* no classes.”

Note:

The first clause again concedes sentence 15 to be correct. But after confirming that only things can be elements of the universal class, to the exclusion of classes, the text now points to the relationship that exists between things and

classes, as referred to in sentence 13: just as every single thing has a *name* identifying a class of which it is an element, it also “has a *class*” to which it belongs, being grouped together (*jiān* 兼) with other things to form this class (see sentence 14).

Incidentally, sentences 13 and 14 allude, however indirectly, to the role of language in the establishment of classes. In the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, this is a central theme.

18 不可謂無指者，非有非指也。

“That one cannot say (a thing) ‘*does not have*’ (*wú* 無) a class means precisely that it is wrong that there is a thing which ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ (*fēi* 非) a class.”

Note:

The alternative reading, first suggested in sentence 9, of ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ a class is now being identified as ‘*does not have*’ a class to which it belongs, being bundled together (*jiān* 兼) in a class with other things. And that means it ‘*is not an element*’ of a class.

19 非有非指者，物莫非指。

“It is wrong that *there is something* which ‘*is not* (in another sense)’ (*fēi* 非) a class (指) (in the way defined in sentence 18). Therefore no thing ‘*is not an element of*’ (*fēi* 非) a class of things.”

Note:

Sentence 19 is merely reasserting the proposition in sentence 11, applying the present alternative reading ‘*is not an element of*’ (*fēi* 非) a class (*zhǐ* 指). With this, the elucidation of the first clause of sentence 1 comes to an end.

20 指非非指也。指與物，非指也。

“It is by no means the case that a class of things is not a class. But side by side with things, a class *is not element* of such a class.”

Note:

The text now turns to the second clause of the opening proposition 1, *zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指, to which the alternative reading of ‘*is not*’ (*fēi* 非) must be extended, since the literal meaning ‘a class is not a class’ is a contradiction not intended by the author of the text: of course classes are classes. Rather, *zhǐ fēi zhǐ* 指非指 means that a class of things is not side by side with the things it includes an element of itself – or for that matter, of any class – let alone the realm of things (*tiān xià* 天下).

Based on the ingenious construction of sentence 1, applying double negation and thereby making the predicate phrases of both clauses identical, no more is needed in order to elucidate the second clause. After all that has gone before, this laconic observation concludes the explanation of the opening sentence, which can now be rendered formally as:

$$\forall x \in \text{物} \exists y \in \text{指} (x \in y) \wedge \forall y, z \in \text{指} (y \neq z)$$

For every single thing there is a class of things, of which it is an element, but any two classes of things are not elements of each other (and therefore they are not things). The rest of the chapter is a coda exploring various hypothetical worlds or realms of objects.

- 21 使天下無物，²⁶指²⁷誰徑謂非指？

“Supposing there are no things in the world, who would rashly say of a class that it is not a class?”

Note:

When there are no things (as well as under any other circumstances), there would be no point in saying that a class of things *is not* a class.

- 22 天下無物，誰徑謂指？

“(Supposing)²⁸ there are no things in the world, who would rashly say (of a class) that it is a class?”

Note:

Nor would it make sense to say that a class is a class. Taken together, sentences 21 and 22 seem to say that where there are no things, there is no point in talking about classes of things. In fact, the realm of things without things is the empty set. There are no subsets in the empty set.²⁹ So there can be no speaking of classes of things.

- 23 天下有指無物，指誰徑謂非指，徑謂無物非指。

“(Supposing) there are in the world classes but no things, who would rashly say of a class that it is not a class, or rashly say that ‘*there are no things which are not an element of a class*’?”

²⁶ Change of punctuation: Tradition puts the comma after 指. See Tân 1987: 23.

²⁷ 指 is the topic of what follows. Traditional punctuation makes the phrase 物指 the topic.

²⁸ The function of the hypothetic 使 is taken to extend to sentences 22 and 23.

²⁹ Except of course the empty set itself, according to modern usage.

Note:

If classes rather than things form the elements of the universal set, then it would be meaningless to assert either of the clauses in the opening sentence (1). The three hypothetical cases above seem to underline the fact that speaking of classes is only appropriate in connection with things. In other words, classes are subsidiary to things.

In a very interesting way, sentences 21 through 23 are considering two different kinds of ‘realms’ (天下) or universal sets. The first kind of universal set is considered the empty set. This would be what Zhuāngzǐ addresses as the first level of human perception: “(At the outset) there were those who thought there had never been things.” The second kind of universal set is one where there are classes of things, but no things. It can be thought of as the set of all the subsets of the original realm of things – in other words, its ‘power set’. At the same time, it calls to mind something like Plato’s realm of Ideas.

24 且夫指固自為非指，奚待于物而乃與為指。

“Besides, in any case a class of things is in itself not eligible to be an element of such a class (including of itself), how then would it need things in order to form a class along with them.”

Note:

Here, the author seems to express a logical situation in which no individual can be considered a set of which it is itself an element. This can be represented formally as $\neg(x \in x)$, here applied to a class as a logical individual. Much less can a class of things be added to this class as a further element.

Sentence 24 describes precisely the situation prevailing in the ‘power set’ of the realm of things. In the power set (i.e. the set of all the subsets of the universal set), classes of things are no longer ephemeral entities based on the real existence of things. Here, they must be considered as elements in their own right, constituting the reality of this realm independently of any relationship to things. The kind of reality thus conceived would be something like a world of ideas.

These astounding observations, contemplating alternative interpretations of the world, are far beyond the scope of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’. They open up an ontological query distinct from that of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* and not readily associated with the way the logician Gōngsūn Lóng was assessed in Chinese antiquity. In the process, the author of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ also demonstrates a remarkable grasp of the properties of sets, two thousand years before the latter commanded attention in the West.

Concluding note:

The text of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ has been variously parsed as a dialogue between the proponent and the opponent of the thesis put forward in its opening sentence. The foregoing translation simply renders both the content and the intent of the text, without regard to its constituting a dialogue. If the present rendering of ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ can be seen to reveal some degree of coherence, it represents the *elucidation* of the thesis given at the outset, rather than a *defense* thereof. If read in the way put forward in the translation above, the explanation ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ gives of its opening sentence is in perfect agreement with the way the latter has been made use of in the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*.

On the reading developed above, the original proposition in ‘Zhǐwù lùn’ formulates a profound insight: while each thing can be appointed to belong to a certain class of things, a class of things itself is not a thing. It does not partake in the realm of things in the same way as things do – that is, as an element of a set. Rather, it is a subset of the realm of things and therefore on a plane of existence radically different from that of ordinary things, constituted solely through the intervention of human cognition and interpersonal understanding. It is just this idea which the author of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* recognizes as a groundbreaking idea for his own theoretical endeavor.

In arriving at this conclusion, the use of terms originating in Western traditions has been restricted to sets, elements of sets, subsets, and classes. This does not, however, introduce alien content or thought into the subject matter. The indigenous term ‘the ten thousand things’ (*wàn wù* 萬物), used for the totality of things, establishes a countable infinity of discrete items – in other words, a universal set. Thus things are elements of this universal set and of any subsets thereof. The term ‘class’ denotes a set, the elements of which are characterized by a relation of equivalence. This corresponds to what ‘Qíwù lùn’ refers to as “uniting differences to form a sameness” (*hé yì yǐ wèi tóng* 合異以為同). The present treatment of the subject matter may be seen as an effort not to overstep the framework of original thought in ancient China, to avoid distorting it by prematurely relating it to what is found in Western philosophical traditions.

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Rafael Suter

12 Buddhist Murmurs? – Another Look at the Composition of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*

This chapter follows the research of A. C. Graham (1919–1991) and Shěn Yǒudǐng 沈有鼎 (1908–1993) on the textual history of the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* 公孫龍子 (hereafter *GSLZ*). After a few introductory remarks in the first section, the second section illustrates the secondary nature of the *GSLZ* by giving a concise overview of the various ways its compilers drew on the “dialectical chapters” of the *Mòzǐ* (Mohist ‘Canons’). In the third section, I gather evidence for the medieval renaissance of Mohist dialectics, which was closely associated with the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng from its beginning, in order to suggest that it was in the light of this renewed interest in language and argument that the extant *GSLZ* was composed. If the *GSLZ* is indeed as late as this, its compilation would coincide with a period during which Buddhist scholastics enjoyed increasing influence in China. Thus the main part of the chapter is dedicated to disclosing traces of a Buddhist impact on the argument, structure, and compilation of the *GSLZ*, or some of its parts. Even if the *GSLZ* lacks manifest traces of Buddhist influence, such as quotations of Buddhist works or explicitly Buddhist terminology, there is evidence to suggest that a strong Buddhist background informed the compiler(s) of the work. In section four, I show that the argument in the ‘Discourse on Hard and White’ (*Jiānbái lùn* 堅白論, hereafter JBL) closely resembles a line of reasoning in a Buddhist work translated in the early fifth century CE. In section five, I demonstrate how certain Buddhist discourses about the nature of causation, time, and language provide the very rationale that structures the ‘Discourse on Penetrating Change’ (*Tōngbiàn lùn* 通變論, hereafter TBL) and the ‘Discourse on Names and Substances’ (*Míngshí lùn* 名實論, hereafter MSL). The sixth section explores the composition of JBL and its pivotal role in the compilation of the entire *GSLZ* from the perspective of three of its crucial terms and their probable Buddhist implications. Section seven returns to Graham’s and Shěn’s arguments for dating the composition of the received *GSLZ* as late as in the second half of the seventh century CE. On the basis of various Buddhist references, this section attempts to gain additional insights into the possible history of compilation of the *GSLZ*. The peculiar nature of the parallels in Buddhist texts, along with internal evidence in JBL and TBL, suggest that the *GSLZ* – and especially these two chapters – possibly assumed their present shape through two different stages of editorial activity, in the fifth and the late seventh centuries CE, respectively.

1 Introduction

Doubts regarding the “authenticity” or, in somewhat less biased diction, the pre-imperial composition of the *GSLZ* harken back well into the late imperial period. Between its first mention in the bibliographical section of the *Hànshū* 漢書 (The History of the Former Hàn),¹ completed in 110 CE, and its reappearance in the *Jiù Táng shū* 舊唐書 (The Older History of the Táng), compiled in the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, 907–960 CE,² the *GSLZ* is conspicuously absent from official bibliographies for almost a millennium. As early as the seventeenth century, this led the bibliophile and textual scholar Yáo Jìhéng 姚際恆 (1647–c. 1715) to question the authenticity of the text.³ The modern scholar Huáng Yúnmei 黃雲眉 (1898–1977) reaffirmed these misgivings in an updated and extended edition of Yáo’s work.⁴ To be sure, Yáo’s verdict, which was based exclusively on the absence of the *GSLZ* from the Suí 隋 (581–618) imperial catalogue, struck Bernard Karlgren (1889–1978) as so unconvincing that he chose this particular case as a warning against the indiscriminate use of the traditional method of authenticating texts on the basis of their uninterrupted presence in subsequent bibliographical lists.⁵ Nonetheless, the situation has changed considerably since Yáo’s time, and the evidence suggesting a late date of composition for at least parts of the *GSLZ* has increased and has in fact become overwhelming in the course of the twentieth century. The philological restoration of the *Mòzǐ* 墨子 by scholars such as Bì Yuán 畢沅 (1730–1797),⁶ Sūn

1 *Hànshū*, ‘Yìwénzhì’: “*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in fourteen [bamboo] bundles” (公孫龍子十四篇), in Liú 1955: 32.

2 *Jiù Tángshū*, ‘Jīngjì zhì’, j. 47, ‘míngjiā’: “*Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* in three [silk] scrolls/fascicles. Written by Gōngsūn Lóng; with the commentary of Jiǎ Dàiyīn in one scroll, and the commentary of Chén Sīgǔ in one scroll” (公孫龍子三卷。公孫龍撰。又一卷賈大隱注，又一卷陳嗣古注), in Liú 1975: 2031.

3 On this topic, see e.g. Graham 1956/7: 168.

4 See his *Gǔ jīn wěishū bǔzhèng* 古今僞書補證 (Additional Evidence on Forged Books from Antiquity to the Present), in Huáng 1972. See also Shěn 1992c (1989): 333, cf. 444.

5 “The method [of inferring from gaps in the continuous record of a text in subsequent bibliographies that it is a forgery (R.S.)] must be handled with care. The following example is given as a warning. Concerning the philosopher *Kung-sun Lung-tsi* Yao Tsi-heng (p. 22a) says: ‘It is recorded in the *Han chǐ* [...] but not in the *Suei chǐ* [...]; what doubt can there be that it is spurious?’ We again find the Kung-sun Lung-tsi already in the *Kiu T’ang shu* bibliography, so that Yao’s verdict is based on its absence in *one* ancient catalogue! There is nothing astonishing in the fact that, in the work of one man, among hundreds of book titles one has been skipped”; Karlgren 1929: 168.

6 Published in a punctuated version by Wú Xùnmín 吳旭民 in 1995. See Bì 1995: 140–163.

Yìràng 孫詒讓 (1848–1908),⁷ and Liáng Qǐchāo 梁啟超 (1873–1929)⁸ has allowed us to determine more precisely the nature of the striking similarities and textual overlaps between the so-called “dialectical chapters” (chapters 40–44) of the book and large parts of the extant *GSLZ*. Based on the findings of these scholars, the eminent British sinologist A. C. Graham and the logician and intellectual historian Shěn Yǒudǐng have presented a wealth of evidence to prove the medieval origin of most of the materials transmitted in the received *GSLZ*. Their detailed investigations into its relation to the dialectical chapters of the *Mòzǐ* leave little room for doubt that three of the five extant chapters of the *GSLZ* draw heavily on the Mohist ‘Canons’. A considerable number of passages is directly copied from that source, while others are modeled on this Mohist precedent.⁹ The focus and the limits of the present chapter do not allow for an exhaustive discussion of these cases of borrowing and imitation,¹⁰ and I will restrict my presentation to a handful of unquestionable examples that illustrate how the *GSLZ* adopts and emulates materials from the ‘Canons’.

The core of the present chapter will concentrate on a different problem: in spite of the fact that there are no *obvious* references in the *GSLZ* to Buddhist texts, whether terminological borrowings or quotations from specific texts, there are three peculiarities of the text which I consider indicative of a Buddhist influence on (1) the argument, (2) the structure, and (3) the composition of parts of the extant *GSLZ*. First, the main line of argument about the relationship between perception and conception in the Mohist-inspired JBL resembles a similar argument presented in the Buddhist *Chéngshílùn* 成實論 (**Satyasiddhi-śāstra*/**Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, Śāstra on the Establishment of Truth¹¹), translated

7 *Mòzǐ Xiángǔ* 墨子閒詁 (Casual Notes on the *Mòzǐ*), in Sūn 1978 (1936): 190–242.

8 Liáng 1989 (1920).

9 The “dialectical chapters” are chapters 40–41, the so-called ‘*jīng*’ 經 (‘Canons’), together with chapters 42–43, the corresponding ‘*shuō*’ 說 (‘Explanations’). I will collectively – and admittedly somewhat imprecisely – refer to these as the “Mohist Canons” in what follows. There are good reasons to include the subsequent chapters 44–45 (‘*Dàqǔ*’ 大取 and ‘*Xiǎoqǔ*’ 小取 [“Major” and “Minor Selections”, which Graham refers to as “Greater Pick” and “Smaller Pick”]), which – just like parts of chapters 40–43 – are also concerned with language and argumentation, that is, with what since the twentieth century has come to be referred to as ancient Chinese “logic” (for a critical perspective on the assignment of this attribute to the “dialectical chapters”, see Kurtz 2011). The *jīng* are terse and highly condensed “guidelines” or even “principles”, while the *shuō* are usually the corresponding illustrations or further specifications, rather than explanations in a narrow sense.

10 For a more comprehensive discussion, see Suter, forthcoming.

11 Lambert Schmidthausen has argued that the Sanskrit title was **Tattvasiddhi* rather than **Satyasiddhi* (cf. Krause 2003: 17), and Whalen Lai suggested that this title had no equivalent

into Chinese in 412 CE,¹² to a degree which strongly suggests that it may have been composed, if not directly on the basis of this text, at least quite probably under the influence of scholarship related to this Buddhist treatise, which seems to have enjoyed a scholarly reception well beyond Buddhist circles, notably (and not least) as a manual for the art of disputation.¹³

Second, apart from JBL, textual overlaps that result from the integration and imitation of materials from the ‘Canons’ up to a length of a dozen continuous characters accumulate in clearly delimited sections of the *GSLZ*. This results in a distinctive pattern which contrasts these passages with the remaining parts of the book: the sections that consist almost entirely of material taken from the ‘Canons’ alternate with passages that have no apparent relation to the *Mòzǐ*. This can be observed both in MSL and in TBL. Arguably, both texts contain long sections adopted from other ancient sources – the passage on “left and right” in the former,¹⁴ and the discussion about the relation between ‘things’ (*wù* 物), ‘substances’ or ‘actualities’ (*shí* 實), and ‘names’ (*míng* 名) in the latter – which they link with materials from the ‘Canons’. Strikingly, neither of these chapters offers an explanation which would allow us to link these consecutive but seemingly unrelated parts. However, as soon as they are read against the backdrop of Buddhist discussions that seem to have reached China from the fourth century CE onward, the ostensibly arbitrary arrangement of the texts becomes comprehensible. This strongly suggests that these chapters were composed under the influence of these Buddhist discourses. If this is true, the Mohist-inspired chapters of the *GSLZ* cannot have been composed prior to the medieval period, even though the ‘Canons’ from which they so heavily draw were possibly corrupted into incomprehensibility as early as in the first century BCE.¹⁵

Third, both Graham and Shěn have argued that the extant version of the *GSLZ* was only composed in the early decades of the Táng period – that is, as late as in the seventh century CE. Apart from the observation of Early Táng taboos in the doxographical ‘Jǐfǔ’ 跡府 chapter (Storehouse of Traces, hereafter JF), their argument crucially hinges on their assessment of the ephemeral appearance of a so-called *Discourse on Preserving White* (Shǒubái lùn 守白論),

in Sanskrit, but was in fact an innovation introduced by Kumārajīva (Chin. Jīumólúoshí 鳩摩羅什, 343–413), who translated the text into Chinese; see Lai 1978: 340.

¹² One source gives 406 CE as an alternative date. In his detailed study, Krause argues that the evidence supports the later date (411–412 CE); see Krause 2003: 37–44.

¹³ Krause 2003: 143. This may be related to the form of the treatise as a dispute which establishes its own position in a series of refutations of contrary views; cf. Krause 2003: 17.

¹⁴ Graham 1965: 150–152; Shěn 1992a: 507; Shěn 1992c (1989): 446.

¹⁵ Graham 1978: 65.

which was attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng for a short period of time at the turn from the Suí (581–618) to the Táng 唐 (618–907) dynasties and identified by some scholars with the *GSLZ*. While both Graham and Shěn accept this equation, they refuse the corollary implied by scholars such as Mei Yi-Pao 梅貽寶 (Méi Yībǎo, 1900–1997) and Wáng Guǎn 王琯 (Wáng Xiàntáng 王獻唐, 1896–1960), who further posited a continuity between the *Discourse on Preserving White* and the *GSLZ*, as listed in the second-century CE *Hànshū*.¹⁶ Shěn more specifically suggests that the *Discourse on Preserving White* and the *Discourse on White and Horse* (Báimǎ lùn 白馬論) were two different texts, which were likewise attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng, but which circulated independently of each other. If Shěn is right, we might question why a purported seventh-century compiler of our extant *GSLZ* would not only have taken these two books together, but why he additionally complemented his work by including the highly obscure ‘Discourse on Pointing Things’ (Zhǐwù lùn 指物論, hereafter ZWL). The present chapter argues that the terminological interrelation between JBL, ZWL, and BML hints at a Buddhist background that may have encouraged this peculiar way of connecting them. Moreover, it proposes that even the combination of these three texts with MSL and their inclusion in the same collection might have been inspired by one particular Buddhist text.

In order to substantiate these admittedly daring claims, the present chapter will proceed in several steps. In the following section, I will present several instructive examples which illustrate the adoption and reinterpretation of chunks of the Mohist ‘Canons’ in the *GSLZ*. This shows that its compilers must have used a written, corrupted version of the ‘Canons’, and that the recontextualization of Mohist fragments in several instances forced the compilers to fundamentally reinterpret the original Mohist notions.

In the third section, I will provide a short discussion of the largely elusive Mohist renaissance, which is only palpable in a few scattered textual witnesses from the medieval period, most famously in Lǚ Shèng’s 魯勝 late third-century CE *Preface to a Commentary on the Mohist Disputations* (Xù Mòbiàn zhù 敘墨辯注). A closer look at this piece reveals considerable terminological affinities with the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* 孔叢子¹⁷ – a collection of

¹⁶ Wáng Guǎn 1992: 9–10; Mei 1953: 408–409.

¹⁷ Yoav Ariel remarks that the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* was “in all likelihood” compiled by the early third-century CE scholar Wáng Sù 王肅 (195–256) or someone in his milieu (Ariel 1989: 4). He considers it a traditionalist Confucian polemic against the contemporary florescence of rival schools, most prominently “dark learning” (*xuánxué* 玄學), and he also explicitly mentions the Mohists and the partisans of the “School of Names” (p. 5). In his review of the book, A. C. Graham questions Ariel’s dating, not least by referring to one of Ariel’s strongest pieces

anecdotic accounts of the life and teachings of the debater, which also contains what is arguably the most elaborate among early attempts to analyze his dictum of the white horse, provided we exclude the dubious *GSLZ* itself from consideration. The close association of Mohism with the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng is equally attested in a passage from the late third or early fourth century CE *Lièzǐ* 列子,¹⁸ in which two out of seven theses attributed to the pre-imperial debater are actually taken from the Mohist ‘Canons’ – a fact already recognized by the early medieval commentator Zhāng Zhàn 張湛 (late fourth century CE).¹⁹ The admittedly scarce evidence of a Mohist revival from the late third century CE onward, along with its strong connection to the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng, suggests that those chapter sections of the *GSLZ* which are based on the *Mòzǐ* are also a product of this time.

In the fourth section, I shall present a short sketch of the main arguments of JBL, the *GSLZ* chapter which is most obviously based on the model of the ‘Canons’. I shall contrast this sketch with a couple of arguments transmitted in the *Chéngshílùn*, which was translated into Chinese in the early fifth century CE.²⁰ Based on this comparison, it will become clear that some of the arguments collected in the Buddhist *śāstra* bear a striking resemblance to those presented in JBL. The texts are similar to a degree that makes one wonder whether the latter was in fact construed on the model of the former – intentionally crafted in more archaic language. Given the fact that the *Chéngshílùn* dominated large parts of the intellectual scene even beyond narrow Buddhist circles throughout much of the fifth and early sixth centuries CE, this does not seem unlikely *a priori*.

In the fifth section, I will show that TBL and MSL offer their readers virtually no indication as to how to correlate their different sections, which are clearly set apart from each other in terms of stylistic features and intertextual references. Some of them draw heavily on the Mohist ‘Canons’, while the rest do not. And although at least TBL explicitly claims an analogical relationship that is said to interconnect its three thematically distinct parts, the underlying

of evidence, namely the peculiar and distinctly late formulation of the “white horse” sophism (*bái mǎ fēi bái mǎ* 白馬非白馬 [“white horse is not white horse”] vs. common *bái mǎ fēi mǎ* 白馬非馬 [“white horse is not horse”]); see Graham 1990b: 572–573.

18 For the date of the *Lièzǐ*, see Graham 1960/1: 141–143; Barrett 1993: 299–301.

19 In his commentary on the explanation of Gōngsūn Lóng’s thesis that “a shadow does not move because it is replaced” (影不移者說在改也) in *Lièzǐ*, Zhāng Zhàn 張湛 points to a largely identical formulation in the *Mòzǐ* (墨子曰影不移說在改為也); see Zhāng 1978: 48. Likewise, regarding the thesis that “a hair will draw a weight of thousand *jūn*” (髮引千鈞), he remarks that the *Mòzǐ* “also has this explanation” (墨子亦有此說); see Zhāng 1978: 48; cf. Graham 1960: 89.

20 The translation was overseen by Kumārajīva and conducted in Cháng’ān, which was then the capital of the Later Qín 秦 dynasty (384–412 CE).

principle that is supposed to bridge the obvious caesuras that divide the Mohist-influenced paragraphs from sections which apparently draw on other materials remains largely obscure from an intratextual perspective. Only by turning to Buddhist translations from the fifth through the sixth centuries CE, which discuss a number of peculiar correlative terms, do we find that it is precisely these stock examples which surface in subsequent sections of the *GSLZ* chapters under investigation here, and which thus seem to provide the very rationale for connecting them. This strongly suggests that the editors who assembled the respective *GSLZ* chapters were guided by Buddhist models they adopted – whether consciously or not.

The sixth section will then start from the key role JBL seems to play in inter-connecting at least three of the remaining four chapters of the extant *GSLZ*. Its terminology and also some of its syntactic constructions seem directly adopted from BML and ZWL. As Graham has argued, both of these chapters mainly consist of materials dating back to the early Hàn period, possibly even the pre-imperial period.²¹ One of the key terms JBL shares with ZWL – namely, the expression *jiān* 兼 – appears to be directly adopted from these materials. However, the received ZWL seems corrupt and reveals more or less obvious traces of late editorial interference. The very form of the relevant argument in ZWL strongly suggests that the character 兼 is a graphic corruption of an original *wú* 無. Regardless of this detail, JBL in tandem with ZWL allows for a reinterpretation of two of the most dazzling and popular sophisms current in the medieval period: the claim that “pointing is non-pointing” (指[之]非指) in the *Zhuāngzǐ*²² and the phrase, already associated with the name of Gōngsūn Lóng in pre-imperial sources, “Jack has three ears” (臧三耳).²³ What is striking about the analysis of the relationship between ‘subsistents’ (‘hidden qualities’, *cáng* 藏) and ‘pointings’ (‘indicating qualities’, *zhǐ* 指) in JBL and ZWL is that it strongly resembles the distinction in the *Chéngshílùn* according to which invisible primordial qualities – among them ‘hardness’ or ‘solidity’ (*jiān* 堅) – become manifest as the sensual base (Sanskrit *rūpa*; or, in Chinese, *sè* 色) which provides the material for the mind’s construction of things, which are therefore considered essentially ‘detached’ or ‘separate’ (*lí* 離) from the material base.

²¹ See his Graham 1956/7.

²² *Zhuāngzǐ*, ‘Qíwù lùn’ 6 (Guō 1978: 33).

²³ The variant 臧三耳 (“Zāng has three ears”) is transmitted in the early medieval ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kōngcóngzǐ* (Fù 2011: 283) and in Liú Shào’s 劉邵 (fl. 224 CE) “Zhàodū fù” 趙都賦 (Rhapsody on the Capital of Zhào), quoted in *Tàipíng Yùlǎn*, fasc. 464 (Lǐ 1960: 2135), which, like the *LSCQ*, has 藏 instead of 臧.

Taking these observations together, it thus seems plausible that the author of JBL was not only influenced by the *Chéngshìlùn*, but that he was at the same time the compiler of a collection which already came close to our received *GSLZ*.

In the seventh section, I will return to Shěn Yǒudǐng's suggestion that ZWL was integrated into the *GSLZ* from its alleged predecessor, the *Discourse on Preserving White*, only in the second half of the seventh century. It is clear that Shěn's assumption that JBL was already part of the *Shǒubái lùn*, if correct, would preclude the crucial role ZWL played in the arrangement of JBL, as the latter would have circulated independently of the former. However, if Shěn is right and BML and ZWL indeed circulated independently of the *Discourse of Preserving White* up to the early decades of the Táng period, then there are indications that even the very compilation of the *GSLZ* in its received form might have occurred under the direct influence of a prominent Buddhist text. These indications are closely related to MSL, which would thus appear to have been included in an earlier version of the *GSLZ* or one of its predecessors. As I consider the interdependence of JBL and ZWL evident, Shěn's hypothesis seems plausible only if it is adjusted in one additional respect: since JBL is unlikely to have been composed independently of ZWL, its composition can hardly predate the inclusion of ZWL into the *GSLZ* or its predecessor(s). This also implies that the *Discourse on Preserving White* either contained neither JBL nor ZWL, or that it included both of them. If Shěn is right, and if the inclusion of ZWL in the *GSLZ* took place only in the seventh century CE, then this would also indicate the time when JBL itself was composed. However, the Buddhist references implicit in the *GSLZ* point toward the possibility that this might have happened considerably earlier.

On balance then, and in spite of its exploratory character, the present study identifies a few more or less tangible cases of hidden Buddhist influence in the *GSLZ*.

2 The Mohist “Building Blocks”: Textual Borrowing and Imitation in the *GSLZ*

Informed by traditional accounts on the intellectual history of pre-imperial China, many specialists in the early twentieth century interpreted the obvious similarities between the *GSLZ* and the Mohist ‘Canons’ in terms of topics and vocabulary as indicative of a common origin in a shared intellectual milieu, or as an effect of the systematization and explanation of Gōngsūn Lóng's ideas by

the allegedly more recent Later Mohists.²⁴ The decisive clue for determining the exact relationship between the two texts was provided by the reconstruction of the internal reference system between the ‘Canons’ and the corresponding ‘Explanations’. Originally, the latter were tagged by a reference character, usually the first character of the respective lemma in the ‘Canons’. It was on these grounds that a specialist in Mohist studies, Wú Yùjiāng 吳毓江 (1898–1977), identified the first instance in which a passage from the Mohist ‘Canons’ doubtlessly predates the corresponding parallel in the *GS LZ*.²⁵ Compare the following passages:

- [1] *GS LZ*, ‘Jiānbái lùn’ (DZ, 1172 [fasc. 840], j. 3, p. 3r [17r], col. 2–5):²⁶
 曰：於石一也，堅白二也，而在於石。故有知焉，有不知焉，有見焉 { 有不見焉 }²⁷
 故知與不知相與離，見與不見相與藏。藏故孰謂之不離？

B says: “Insofar as they are [instantiated] in a stone [hard and white] are one, insofar as they are hard and white [they] are two [items], although they are situated in the stone. Therefore, there is something in it [= the stone] that is perceivable, and something that is unperceivable; there is something in it that is visible {and something that is invisible}. What is perceivable and what is unperceivable are thus separate from each other; what is visible and what is invisible are contained from each other. Therefore, as they are contained from each other, who would thus say about them that they are not separate?”²⁸

- [2] *Mòzǐ*, ‘Mòjīng’, ‘Mòjīngshuō’ B 37:²⁹
 Jīng: 於一有知焉，有不知焉，說在 (DZ/1176/10/4r=503³¹/9.2–9.12)
 {存} [= 在]。³⁰

²⁴ See Graham 1956/7: 157; for an overview of these various positions, see Johnston/Ping, this volume, pp. 45–85.

²⁵ Graham 1956/7: 157; Graham 1967: 368.

²⁶ Hereafter, references to the *Dào zàng* 道藏 will be given as follows: DZ, vol. 1172, fasc. 3, p. 3r [17r], col. 2–5 = DZ/1172/3/3r=17r/2–5. If the character number is indicated, it follows the period after the line number.

²⁷ This has been emended on account of parallelism; see Páng 1979: 40.

²⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

²⁹ Graham 1978: 404.

³⁰ This has been emended according to Liáng Qǐchāo (1989 [1920]: 127), as quoted in Graham 1956/7: 157.

³¹ In quotations from the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, page numbers following the equal sign refer to the page number in the reprint of the DZ version in Graham 1978: 499–525.

Shuō: 於：石一也，堅白二也，而在石。故有 (DZ/1176/10/
智焉，有不智焉，可。³² 13r=511/4.17–6.2)

C[anon]: In one single thing there is something known and something unknown. Illustrated by “Being in it”.

E[xplanation of]: “IN...”: A stone is one, hardness and whiteness are two, but are in the stone. Therefore, it is possible to have knowledge of one but not of the other.³³

These two passages from JBL and the Mohist ‘Explanations’ (hereafter MS) B 37 are almost identical. The only difference is the presence of the preposition *yú* 於 in the phrase “*zài yú shí*” 在於石 in JBL. Graham presents this example as “decisive proof that the original context of the common sentences is that of the *Mòzǐ*”.³⁴ Tán Jiěfǔ 譚戒甫 (1887–1974) has also noted that this passage is identical with the MS, but he speculated that the ‘*yú*’ was inserted by a later copyist who adapted the passage to the MS.³⁵ However, the passage of JBL quoted in [1] rather suggests that it was the compiler who “corrected” the text which he adopted from the MS by repeating the preposition *yú* from the beginning of the Explanation (MS) in the second instance of the phrase “in the stone” (*zài shí* 在石) later in the sentence. This clearly supports Graham’s thesis. If this is true, then the compiler of JBL must have ignored the fact that *yú* in the MS did not belong to the syntactic structure of the following explanation. Concealed by the sequential rearrangement of the MS sometime in the final century BCE, this reference system interconnecting the ‘Canons’ and the ‘Explanations’ fell into oblivion for many centuries, until it was restored by Qīng philologists.³⁶ Judging from this single instance, Graham’s case could possibly still be challenged, because the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ (‘*Mòjīng*’ and ‘*Mòjīngshuō*’, respectively; henceforth MJS) in their transmitted form are highly corrupted and just as unique in the record of alleged pre-imperial literature as the *GSLZ* itself. One might further argue that this almost verbatim similarity reflects a common

³² Quoted following Graham 1956/7: 157.

³³ Graham 1956/7: 158. See also Graham 1967: 368. Graham is confident that the author of JBL is mistaken in relating the topic of the two inseparables which “hard and white” are said to represent to the additional problem of their belonging to the two different senses of ‘touch’ and ‘sight’.

³⁴ Graham 1956/7: 158.

³⁵ Dù Guóxiáng (1962: 88) adopts this view.

³⁶ For a summary of philological studies on the *Mòzǐ* during the Qīng period, see Graham 1978: 70–72.

intellectual context with a shared set of stock examples or ready-made formulas for discussing certain philosophical problems. Or one might point out that it is implausible to exclude, at least *a priori*, the idea that the reference system in the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ does not allow for the possibility that the reference characters which introduce the ‘Explanations’ might actually be integrated into its syntax. However, Shěn Yǒudǐng and Graham have identified at least one more explicit instance of an analogous example,³⁷ and Graham has suggested a third case.³⁸ Taken together, these cases of accidental and apparently unnoticed integration of head characters into the running text of JBL seems an almost watertight proof for the hypothesis that it was in fact the composers of the *GSLZ* who copied from the ‘Canons’.

Moreover, there are instances of other parallel passages, such as [3] below, in which the *GSLZ* interprets as a single line of argument what in the Mohist counterpart seems to be a simple list of pairs of equivalent examples illustrating different instances of a common kind of binary relationship:

[3a] *GSLZ*, ‘jiānbái lùn’ (DZ/1172/3/2r[16r]/7–8; 2v[16v]/1–3):

曰：得其白，得其堅，見與不見離³⁹。與不見離，一一不相盈，故離。離也者，藏也。

A: “Having got its whiteness and its hardness, *its visible [part] and invisible [part] are separate. As it (= the visible, white) is separate from the invisible, the [first] one (= visible/white) and the [second] one (= invisible/hard) do not pervade each other. Therefore, they are separate. Being separate, they are contained (from each other).*”

37 JBL (DZ/1172/3/1r[15r]/2.3–2.6 [無堅得白]) corresponds *verbatim* to MS B 15 (DZ/1176/10/10v=509/8.8–8.11; in the Mohist parallel, – DZ page 8, line 8 – 無 is the reference character); see Shěn 1992a: 505. In a revised version of his original article, Graham included this example, which was missing in the original paper, see Graham 1990a: 139–140. It was already adopted in Graham 1967: 368.

38 JBL (DZ/1172/3/2v[16v]/1–2; 曰石之白，石之堅，見與不見 二與三，若廣修而相盈也，其非舉乎?) vs. MS B 4 (DZ/1176/10/10r=508/5.1–5.13; 見不見離 一二 不相盈 廣循 堅白), where the negative 不 in MS stands for the reference character which occurs in the second rather than first position of the explanation, according to Graham. Cf. MJ B 4 (DZ/1176/10/2v=501/10.1–10.17; 不可偏去而二 說在 見與俱 一與二 廣與循). See also Graham 1967: 368. Possibly, the ‘fēi’ 非 in “fēi jǔ” 非舉 (JBL DZ/1172/3/3v[16v]/3.1–3.2) is analogous in reflecting the head character ‘bù’ 不 in MS B5, which immediately follows (DZ/1176/10/10r=508/5.14–5.16; 舉不重 [. . .]).

39 Insertion of 離 follows *Shuōfū* 說郭 (Táo 1986 [1927]: vol. 8, fasc. 47, p. 5r, l. 10). For a detailed discussion on the *Shuōfū* version of the *GSLZ*, see Indraccolo 2009: 70–79; Indraccolo 2013.

B: If the stone's whiteness and the stone's hardness, *its visible and its invisible [parts], [if] these two combine, then the three (whiteness, hardness, stone) come to pervade each other mutually by spreading (into each other) in their entire width and length. And this could be a case of its (= the stone's) non-selection?*

[3b] *Mòzǐ*, 'Mòjīng', 'Mòjīngshuō' B 4:

不可偏去而二。說在見與俱，一與二，廣與循。 (DZ/1176/10/2v=501/10.1–10.17)

Non-reducible twofoldness. Illustrated by *seeing and appearing, one and two, breadth and length*.

|見|不|見離，一二不相盈，廣循堅白。 (DZ/1176/10/10r=508/5.1–5.13)

"NON...": *Seeing and appearing are separated, one and two do not fill each other up, breadth and length [are coextensive like] hard and white.*

The case of [4] below is somewhat different. Here, the recontextualization of the Mohist snippets forces a reinterpretation of crucial terms, which is obviously alien to the original:

[4a] *GSLZ*, 'Tōngbiàn lùn' (DZ/1172/2/4v[12v]/10–5r[13r]/1; 5r[13r]/5–6):

青白不相與，而相與，反對也。不相鄰，而相鄰，不害其方也。不害其方者，反而對，各當其所。若左右不驪。

Green and white [as such] are not combined with each other, but if one combines them with each other, they oppose each other as counterparts. [As such] they are not adjoining with each other, but if one adjoins them with each other, *they do not intrude into their [respective] domains*. Those *not intruding into their [respective] domains* oppose each other as counterparts, each of them fitting its own position. Like left and right, they do not get mixed.

[4b] *Mòzǐ*, 'Mòjīng', 'Mòjīngshuō' B 65:⁴⁰

一法者之相與也盡，若方之相召也。說在方。 (DZ/1176/10/4r=502/5.11–6.10)

一：方貌盡。俱有法而異，或木或石，不害其方之相台[=合]也盡。貌猶方也。物俱然。 (DZ/1176/10/15v=514/4.12–6.6)

40 Cf. Graham 1978: 437, also for possible emendations.

The mutual relation of elements with one and the same criterion is perfect [uniformity]. It is like the mutual correspondence of squares. Illustrated by squareness.

“OF ONE AND THE SAME”: The characteristic of squares is perfect[ly uniform]. This is because in case elements are different although they both have a [specific] criterion, one being in wood, the other in stone, *this does not interfere with the fact that the matching of these squares is perfect*. Their characteristic is that they match in squareness. These things are both (lit. all) like this (i.e. alike in having the property of being square).

Even without going into further detail, it is obvious here that the original meaning of the phrase from the ‘Canons’ underwent a fundamental reinterpretation due to its recontextualization in TBL. This is most obvious in case of the term ‘*fāng*’. Its specific Mohist interpretation as the geometrical form of squareness is lost in the *GSLZ*, which replaces it with the general meaning ‘domain’, by which it refers to a coherent area filled in with a certain color. One could argue that the brevity of this passage hardly allows for the far-reaching inferences drawn here. However, it is important to consider that this short sequence occurs at the beginning of the third part of TBL, only a few lines after the second part with its animal examples, which are most probably adopted from the ‘Canons’; a look at the ‘Explanations’ reveals that the discussion about the perfect uniformity of geometrical forms in [4b] (B 65) *immediately* precedes the illustration of the union of classes of natural kinds into combined classes, exemplified by ‘ox-plus-horse’ (B 66), which is the source informing the second part of TBL.⁴¹

There are even examples, such as [5] below, in which a single Mohist phrase was used as a model to construe two slightly varied parallel sentences in the *GSLZ*. Both passages are far from unambiguous. What we can observe is

⁴¹ The section of TBL which Graham has identified as essentially adopted from MS B 66 and 67 contains a total of 139 characters. If we ignore repetitions, *verbatim* correspondences amount to a total of 53 characters (38%). In addition, there are 10 cases of slight variation where identical constructions are varied by replacing the animal terms of the original. If one includes the variant characters 唯 (TBL) and 惟 (MS), there are a total of 66 characters in TBL that are identical with MS B 66 and 67 (47%). Due to the fact that one phrase in TBL sometimes has parallels in both B 66 and B 67, the number of correspondences is actually higher than the total number of characters in TBL which have correspondences in the the two lemmas of MS. All in all, roughly half of the material in TBL has literal correspondences in the MS. Moreover, all the characters in MS except 用, 難, 說, and 偏 also occur in TBL. The compilers of the latter thus seem to have exploited almost the entire textual material available in their source. On this, see Suter, forthcoming.

that the Mohist version uses the demonstratives *cǐ* 此 and *bǐ* 彼 exclusively in their pronominal sense, while relying on a verbal use of anaphorical *shì* 是 to refer to the *kind* of thing a referent belongs to, rather than to the respective object itself. In this way, it serves to “identify” the kind of thing to which both entities – determined by the opposite demonstrative pronouns – commonly belong, and thus it describes a classification based on a sort of inductive inference advancing from one “such” thing to the next.⁴² In contrast, the *GSLZ* parallel removes the character 是 altogether and cannot be interpreted without assuming that the demonstratives 此 and 彼 are given both a verbal and a (pro-)nominal meaning. I will provide no translations at this point and abstain from any further analysis; not only might it become even more controversial than what I have already written, but a translation would certainly divert us from what is essential in the present context: the *GSLZ*’s almost literal adoption of the Mohist formulation, in two slight variations:⁴³

[5a] *Mòzǐ*, ‘*Mòjīngshuō*’ B 33:⁴⁴

知是之非此也，有知是之不在此也。 (DZ/1176/10/12v=511/8.5–9.1)

[5b] *GSLZ*, ‘*Míngshí lùn*’ (DZ/1172/3/6r[20r]/4–6):

知此之非{此}也， 知此之不在此也，明[=則]不謂也。
知彼之非彼也， 知彼之不在彼， 則不謂也。

These few examples clearly substantiate the hypothesis that considerable parts of the extant *GSLZ* were copied from and/or written on the model of the ‘Canons’. JBL contains seven passages – ranging from one to twenty characters in length – which are copied verbatim from the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. Out of some 600 characters, 75 characters (or 12.5%) are cited from that source. The second part of TBL, drawing on the animal examples adopted from MS B 66 and B 67, consists of some 139 characters. Depending on how one counts the Mohist borrowings, between 53 (38%) and 70 characters (50%) occur in sequences directly adopted from the ‘Canons’. Some 25 characters (11%) of the total 229 characters in MSL are literally culled from the MS, and one passage of 13 characters in

⁴² Graham (1978: 400 n. 402) says this in a somewhat circuitous fashion: “*shih* ‘the thing in question, what we judge the object to be’ contrasting with *tz’ü* ‘to object/place here’ [...] the former belongs to the realm of names, the latter of objects.”

⁴³ Bold text indicates the *GSLZ*’s literal borrowing from the MJS. Highlighted passages show slight variations in the text borrowed from MJS.

⁴⁴ Cf. Amano 1968: 225–226.

length is additionally construed on this model.⁴⁵ As Graham stressed, the remaining parts of the *GSLZ* have no such literal parallels with the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’.

3 *Gōngsūn Lóng* and the Medieval Renaissance of Mohism

The first more or less accurately datable textual evidence for the existence of the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ is a short fragment by the late third-century CE scholar Lǚ Shèng 魯勝, which is preserved in the *History of the Jin* (*Jìnshū* 晉書), compiled under the guidance of Fáng Xuánlíng 房玄齡 (579–648) and completed in 648 CE.⁴⁶ Lǚ’s preface to his *Commentary on the Mohist Disputations* (*Xù Mòbiàn zhù* 敘墨辯注) mentions a division of the text by this name into “canons” and “explanations”. It is mainly due to this description of the content of what it calls *Mohist Disputations* that scholars usually identify them with the “dialectical chapters” – books 40–44 of the extant *Mòzǐ*. Lǚ’s text is crucial for Graham, as it explicitly states that, in Lǚ’s time, the writings of the “School of Names” had long been lost.⁴⁷ This implies that the *GSLZ*, which was still listed in the bibliographical section of the dynastic history of the Western Hàn (*Hànshū*, completed in 110 CE), must already have disappeared when Lǚ wrote his commentary. However, it is clear that Lǚ’s preface itself draws upon what the *Hànshū* has to say about the “School of Names”; hence it is of little independent value for the reconstruction of the intellectual history of the Warring States period. At the same time, it is still highly relevant as a witness to the intellectual landscape of the late third century CE.

First, Lǚ’s preface speaks about names in a seemingly peculiar way, which nonetheless seems symptomatic for this period: although the relevant passage is obscure and seems to have suffered from textual corruption,⁴⁸ what it

⁴⁵ For details, see Suter, forthcoming.

⁴⁶ Cf. Graham 1978: 66–67. Graham assumes that Lǚ was already dealing with a “corrupted version” of the ‘Canons’, and thus suggests that his understanding must have been rather limited. The limited materials on which Graham bases his own sketch of the history of Later Mohism rest on pre- and early imperial sources, the dating of which is highly problematic.

⁴⁷ Graham 1956/7: 179–180

⁴⁸ The text as quoted in the *Jìnshū* starts with the phrase “*bì yǒu*” 必有 (“Necessarily, there is”). Sūn Yíràng, who includes the preface in his *Mòzǐ xiàngǔ*, emends the subject ‘*míng*’ 名. Likewise, Sūn complements ‘*xíng*’ 形 as the direct object of ‘*chá*’ 察 in the second sentence.

basically claims is that there is no better way to ‘discern’ or ‘specify’ (*chá* 察) the ‘shape’ (*xíng* 形) of a thing than to ‘distinguish colors’ (*bié sè* 別色).⁴⁹ These words by the first commentator on the Mohist ‘Canons’ to be recorded are reflected, almost verbatim, in Kǒng Chuān’s 孔穿 explanation of the “white horse” argument in the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*. His analysis is based on an opposition between ‘looking’ (*dǔ* 睹) and ‘discerning’ or ‘specifying’ (*chá* 察) – the former grasping white, the latter ‘recognizing’ (*zhī* 知) a horse in it. Moreover, although the next sentence is not very clear, it doubtlessly identifies the color with the ‘outside’, while it seems to associate ‘recognition’ with the ‘inside’, clearly attributing a ‘distinguishing’ (*bié* 別) function to color.⁵⁰ Even if the brevity of the two passages hardly allows one to conclude with a degree of certainty that both Lǚ’s preface and the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter present the same analysis, it is still clear that both use precisely the same vocabulary – a vocabulary which is distinctly medieval.⁵¹ Our only textual

These emendations seem modest, but they modify the passage in a decisive way that implies far-reaching consequences for its interpretation. See Sūn 1978 (1936): appendix, p. 13.

49 *Jīnshū* 94, ‘Lièzhuàn’ 64, Lǚ Shèng, in Fáng 2008: 1540.

50 睹之得見其白，察之則知其馬，色以名別內由外顯，謂之白馬，名實當矣。I suggest: “Looking at it, you come to see its whiteness; discerning it, you come to recognize its horse-ness. Color is distinguished by means of a name, what is internal (= concept/name) is presented through what is external (= color); in calling it ‘white horse’, name and substance match each other”; *Kǒngcóngzǐ*, ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ 2; cf. Fù 2011: 280. For a less literal translation, cf. Yoav 1989: 132.

51 While the collocation *dǔ sè* 睹色 seems absent in Hàn and pre-Hàn texts, the expression *chá xíng* 察形 occurs in a number of late Eastern Hàn texts, such as Xú Gàn’s 徐幹 (171–217) *Zhōnglùn* 中論 (‘Guì yàn’ 貴驗 2), Dàdài Lǐjì 大戴禮記 (‘Bǎo fù’ 保傳 24; on dating this collection to the second century CE, see Riegel 1993: 456), and the slightly later *Kǒngzǐ jiāyǔ* (‘Guān Zhōu’ 觀周), compiled by Wáng Sù (195–256). The phrase is related to the mirror metaphor with which it co-occurs in all three instances. While the expression *dǔ sè* is absent from the early medieval *Lǎozǐ wēizhǐ lìlüè* 老子微指例略, most probably authored by Wáng Bì 王弼 (226–249) (cf. Wagner 1986: 93–96), it is nonetheless palpable in its definition of *wēi* 微 (‘infinitesimal/subtle’) as “what is taken from the infinitesimally obscure and cannot be seen” (取於幽微而不可睹) (cf. Wagner 1986: 109). Notably – in a polemic against rival schools, such as Confucians, Legalists, and Mohists – this text moreover characterizes the representatives of the “School of Names” according to their specific bias on the secondary issue of “inspecting their [= things] delimitation and fulfillment [of the visual field] (or/and: assignment and fulfillment [of duties/functions]?”) (睹其定真). I do not follow Wagner, who takes the possessive *qí* 其 as referring to “some of the arguments in the Laozi” and relates the passage to biased readings of this classic; see Wagner 1986: 114. In his commentary on the *Xìcí* 繫辭 roughly one century later, Hǎn Kāngbó 韓康伯 uses similar phrasing when he notes that “what has no form can neither be investigated by virtue of names, nor envisioned by virtue of forms” (无形不可以名尋，不可以形睹) (*Zhōuyì zhù shū*, fasc. 12, p. 276).

witness which reflects a heightened interest in the Mohist ‘Canons’ during the medieval period thus speaks a language which is clearly reflected in one of the first explanations of Gōngsūn Lóng’s white horse argument as well – a fact which seems hardly accidental.

This connection becomes even more evident in Lǚ Shèng’s remark at the end of his sketch of the method of distinguishing colors in order to discern shapes, where he notes that “this is the reason why there is the analysis (*biàn* 辯) of ‘hard’ and ‘white’”. Taking into account the fact that commentators since the Later Hàn period have consistently associated ancient references to Gōngsūn Lóng’s sophism on “hard and white” with his claim about the “white horse”,⁵² it is almost certain that this coda actually points toward the famous white horse argument. Additional details in Lǚ’s text seem to further corroborate this: although the conciseness of the passage hardly allows for any definite conclusions, it clearly talks about the investigation of ‘having/being there’ and ‘not having/not being there’ (*yǒu* 有 vs. *wú* 無) as the main method for defining the domains of the instantiation of names – or rather concepts – (*míng* 名),⁵³ further proceeding from ‘classifying something as identical’ and ‘not classifying something as identical’ (*shì* 是 vs. *bù shì* 不是) to ‘allowing’ and ‘not allowing’ (*kě* 可 vs. *bù kě* 不可). Yet this procedure does not quite resemble what we find in the Mohist ‘Minor Selections’ (Xiǎoqǔ 小取, ch. 46), for example, in which a method of semantic disambiguation advances from the identical classification (*shì* 是) of things (*wù* 物) to the assignment of properties to different instances of the things

52 Graham 1956/7: 175; Graham 1967: 366; Hé 1967: 178.

53 The little the text does specify about *míng* is that they belong to the “inner” realm of a human being. Moreover, we can infer that they are thought to be involved in a kind of insight termed “*chá*”, which is explicitly contrasted with mere visual perception. It therefore seems plausible to assume that names were conceived of as parts of the mental apparatus of human cognition, rather than an external realm of language. This essentially “non-linguistic” character of the term speaks in favor of an interpretation in the sense of ‘concept’ or ‘notion’ rather than ‘name’ or ‘word’. Such an interpretation moreover parallels the use of the term in roughly contemporaneous Chinese Buddhist texts that identify the ‘nominal’ (*míng*) with the fallacious construction of objects in the mind, as opposed to the ‘material’ base (*sè*) on which the imagination of mind allegedly operates. This is indeed very reminiscent of how Buddhist *Sarvāstivādin*s understood conception: “Mental perceptual consciousness not only apprehends the particular characteristic of an object-field in its generic category, for example, visible material form like the color blue, but also apprehends the designation, ‘this is blue.’ Thus, unlike the five externally directed types of perceptual consciousness, mental perceptual consciousness operates by means of designation (*adhivacana*), or names” (Cox 1988: 36). The translation of *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* texts into Chinese set in in the late second century CE (Willemen et al. 1998: 129; cf. also Dessein 2016) and thus roughly coincides with the renaissance of the “School of Names” under discussion here.

thus classified – or the participation of these things in relations with other things (both referred to by the term *rán* 然).⁵⁴ Rather, the sketch Lǚ provides is much more reminiscent of discourses like those preserved in the extant BML, in which one of the problems discussed is whether the attribution of a specific quality to identically ‘classified’ (*shì* 是) things (a horse vs. a *white* horse) ‘invalidates’ (*bù kě* 可) the inference that the thus-classified thing (the horse) indeed ‘exists’ (*yǒu* 有). As is well known, BML famously argues that the further qualification of a ‘horse’ as ‘white’ (*báimǎ* 白馬) invalidates the conclusion that there is a ‘horse’ (*yǒu mǎ* 有馬). Toward the end of his preface, Lǚ Shèng eventually returns to what he mentioned as the first function of names at the very beginning of his text: the “distinction between sameness and difference” (*bié tóng yì* 別同異). This, however, is nothing less than one of the first topics consistently associated with Gōngsūn Lóng since antiquity – a problem which some medieval commentators also relate to the white horse argument.⁵⁵ Even if the exact relationship between the renaissance of Mohist disputation, as exemplified in Lǚ’s preface, and the

54 Cf. Mòzǐ, ‘Xiǎoqǔ’, Sūn 1978 (1936): 150–154; Graham (1978) discusses this under the title “names and objects”; see his Graham 1978: 476–494; on the structure of the arguments and an interpretation of these technical terms, see esp. pp. 482–484. For the fundamental difference between *shì* 是 and *rán* 然 in judgments, see my sketch in Suter 2016: 387. Graham believes that the little which the preface reveals about the text on which Lǚ comments allows us to conclude that he did not know the ‘Xiǎoqǔ’ (Graham 1978: 67). Based on this assumption, our observation would hardly be surprising. However, it is worth noting that Simǎ Biāo’s 司馬彪 (d. 306) roughly contemporaneous commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ* imitates one of the sentence patterns presented in the ‘Xiǎoqǔ’ (“to be [like] this in one case, not to be [like] this in the other”; *yī shì ér yī fēi* 一是而一非 [Bì 1995: 171]). When he explains one of the paradoxes transmitted in the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter (白狗黑; “a white puppy is black.”), he seems to modify an example from the ‘Xiǎoqǔ’, simply replacing the phrase “(the) horse is blind” (*mǎ pàn* 馬盼) from the Mòzǐ with “blind (one-eyed) puppy” (*miǎo gǒu* 眇狗): “If the eyes of a puppy are blind, one calls it a blind puppy. If the eyes of a puppy are big, one does not say a ‘big puppy’. This (= saying so) is in one case right ([like] this), in one case wrong (not [like] this). But when the eyes of a white puppy are black, one can also call it a black puppy” (狗之目眇, 謂之眇狗。狗之目大, 不曰大狗。此乃一是而一非。然則白狗黑目, 亦可謂黑狗。). Cf. *Jīngdiǎn shìwén*, p. 405; cf. also the ‘Xiǎoqǔ’ parallel: 之馬之目盼, 則為之馬盼。之馬之目大, 不謂之馬大。 (“If the eyes attributed to a horse are blind, then one thinks of it that the horse is blind; if the eyes attributed to a horse are big, one does not say of it that the horse is big”); (Bì 1995: 171). Even if Guō’s imitation of the pattern may not be entirely accurate, it is highly plausible that he took it from the ‘Xiǎoqǔ’, or from a textual fragment very similar in kind, which thus must have been available to him at the turn from the third to the fourth century CE.

55 This appears to be the case for Gāo Yōu 高誘 (168–212 CE) and is made explicit by Simǎ Biāo 司馬彪 (d. 306 CE). Cf. Graham 1956/7: 178.

renewed interest in the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng since the turn from the second to the third century CE remains a moot point, there can be little doubt that both phenomena are closely interrelated.

Further supporting this assumption is the close association of Mohism with the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng in the ‘Zhòng Ní’ 仲尼 (Confucius) chapter of the *Lièzǐ* 列子, a text apparently composed at the turn from the third to the fourth century CE.⁵⁶ Out of the seven theses which are attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng in this chapter, two are directly adopted from the ‘Canons’,⁵⁷ a fact which did not escape the attention of the late fourth-century CE commentator Zhāng Zhàn, as mentioned above.⁵⁸ Of the remaining five theses, the one about *zhǐ* 指 which does not ‘arrive at/reach’ [*zhì* 至] (the aim?) seems to be taken from the ‘Tiānxià’ 天下 (All Under Heaven) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*,⁵⁹ where it is attributed to the ‘debaters’ (*biànzhe* 辯者) in general, rather than to Gōngsūn Lóng in particular.⁶⁰ A second thesis is arguably a modified extract from that source, replacing the *Zhuāngzǐ*’s orphaned calf with a foal.⁶¹ Another thesis is the debater’s claim about the white horse, which seems to have been associated with Gōngsūn Lóng at least since the time of Liú Xiàng’s 劉向 (77–6 BCE) *Biélù* 別錄.⁶² The first thesis listed seems to refer to a passage in the Western Hàn *Yántiělùn* 鹽鐵論 (Discourses on Salt and Iron),⁶³ which is among the oldest sources to attribute any specific claim to the debater.⁶⁴ A final thesis is of unclear origin, although scholars have speculated that it is also taken from the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter, where it is said that having ‘arrived/reached’ [*zhì* 至] (the aim?) is not being ‘disrupted/disconnected’ (*jué* 絕) [from the beginning?].⁶⁵

56 Barrett notes that the work was mentioned by Zhāng Huá 張華 (d. 300 CE), and Graham has observed that it copies material from a Buddhist text translated into Chinese in 281 CE. See Barrett 1993: 299; Graham 1961: 197. For a detailed account of Buddhist influences in the *Lièzǐ*, see also Jì Xiànlín 1957.

57 This is true for the fourth (“a shadow does not move”) and the fifth theses (“a hair will draw a weight of a thousand *jūn*”), which correspond to B 17 and B 52, respectively. See *Lièzǐ*, ‘Zhòngní’, in Zhāng 1978: 48; cf. e.g. Graham 1960: 88–89; Graham 1978: 373–375 (B 17); 420–421 (B 52).

58 Cf. n. 17, pp. 433–434, above.

59 Zhāng 1978: 48; for the *Zhuāngzǐ* parallel, see Guō 1978: 478.

60 Guō 1978: 480.

61 Zhāng 1978: 49; cf. Guō 1978: 479.

62 Zhāng 1978: 48. The relevant *Biélù* passage is quoted in Péi Yǐn’s 裴駰 fifth-century CE *Shǐjì jǐjiě* 史記集解, in Simǎ 1973: 2370.

63 Fasc. 7, ‘Zhēnshí’ 箴石, in Wáng Lìqì 1992: 405; Huán/Bái 2012: 157.

64 Zhāng 1978: 48.

65 Guō 1978: 478.

Féng Yǒulán has hypothesized, not least on the basis of the *Lièzǐ* parallel, that the character 至 in the *Zhuāngzǐ* is a miswriting of original 物.⁶⁶ It is likely that the *Lièzǐ* collected these theses from various written sources: two from the Mohist ‘Canons’, two or three from the *Zhuāngzǐ*, and one from the *Yántiělùn*. That the compiler of the *Lièzǐ* did in fact gather these materials from other sources seems to be supported by their sequence: he starts with the oldest statement unambiguously attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng, then adds two statements which the *Zhuāngzǐ* associates with the debaters in general (yet without failing to mention Gōngsūn Lóng), eventually turns to a saying commonly identified with Gōngsūn Lóng, and concludes with another statement taken from the *Zhuāngzǐ* and two adopted from the Mohist ‘Canons’ – which, as we have seen, are closely related to Gōngsūn Lóng in other contemporary sources. In spite of this apparent reliance on written texts, nothing in this list seems to suggest that its author would have been aware of the *GSLZ* as we know it. And while the adoption of some of these theses from the Mohist ‘Canons’ in this Gōngsūn Lóng pericope seems of limited relevance to the whole of the *Lièzǐ*, there is an arguably analogous example which also seems to be of some significance to our investigation of the *GSLZ*.

One of the passages from the ‘Canons’ which is quoted in the seven theses and attributed there to Gōngsūn Lóng is the definition of “dynamic equilibrium” (*jūn* 鈞) in B 52. It is (in its variant form 均) developed into a fundamental term capturing the essential notion of “universal equanimity” later in the *Lièzǐ*.⁶⁷ It is illuminating to see that the composers of the *Lièzǐ* elaborated on what was originally a *technical* term from the ‘Canons’ to capture a *philosophical* concept central to their own philosophy. This method of adopting short passages from the ‘Canons’ and reinterpreting them by integrating them into a new text strikingly resembles the integration and imitation of *Mòzǐ* passages in the extant *GSLZ*. Shěn Yǒudǐng has pointed out this use of specific medieval compilations to turn the sometimes rather crude sayings of ancient debaters into

⁶⁶ Féng 1934: 178; cf. Kou 1953: 79; Perleberg 1952: 47; Moritz 1973: 154–155. The *Lièzǐ* passage is also reminiscent of Ruǎn Jí’s 阮籍 (210–263 CE) roughly contemporaneous *Dá Zhuāng lùn* 達莊論 (Discourse on Understanding *Zhuāngzǐ*); see Ruǎn 1978: 32; trans. in Holzman 1976: 102–109.

⁶⁷ ‘Tāng wèn’ 湯問 8: “Equilibrium is the highest principle in the world. It is like this also in the connection of shapes [= bodies] and things. A balanced [thread as thin as a] hair will [keep] suspend[ed] in mutual balance the lightness and heaviness [of two weights]. If the hair snaps, this is due to the hair’s being out of balance. When it comes to snapping, as long as it is balanced, no [hair] will snap” (均, 天下之至理也, 連於形物亦然。均髮均縣輕重而髮絕, 髮不均也。均也, 其絕也, 莫絕。); Zhāng 1978: 58. Cf. Graham 1960: 105; 106 n. 1.

refined philosophical arguments.⁶⁸ Thus, more important than the fact that the evidence from the *Lièzǐ*, on the whole, hardly supports the assumption of the existence of anything resembling our extant *GSLZ* is the observation that the way it seems to employ ancient sources is strongly reminiscent of what we observe in the *GSLZ*. This clearly hints at the possibility that the received text of the *GSLZ* (or at least parts of it) might indeed have arisen from the same intellectual background and at roughly the same time as the *Lièzǐ*. The peculiar role of both the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng and materials from the Mohist ‘Canons’ in these processes of reinterpretation within the *Lièzǐ* clearly testify to the intimate association of the debater with the *Mòzǐ*.

Lexical and topical correspondences of the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kōngcóngzǐ* – and thus also of Lǚ Shèng’s preface – with Liú Shào’s 劉邵 (fl. 196–249 CE) *Rénwùzhì* 人物志 (Human Temperaments), a prominent medieval work of the “School of Names”, hint at a continued interest in the art of disputation, most probably spurred by the Mohist ‘Canons’.

This is also confirmed in Liú Bǐng’s 劉炳 (fl. 400–421 CE) commentary on Liú Shào’s work, which invokes the white horse argument as an example of bad rhetoric, though without attributing this argument to Gōngsūn Lóng.⁶⁹ Moreover, one finds a couple of casual notes in the biographies of Buddhist scholars from the fifth century CE which suggest that, in addition to Confucian and Daoist texts, they had also studied Mohist writings – whatever these may have been.⁷⁰ The *Xù Gāosēngzhuàn* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographical Accounts of Eminent Monks) records that the scholar-monk Fǎchǒng 法寵 (451–524) abandoned his Buddhist studies in the last years of his life to engage in what the text calls “*míngjiào*” 名教 – literally, “doctrine of names”⁷¹ – a polemical term used by both Daoists and Buddhists to refer to their adversaries.⁷² This suggests that at the turn from the fifth to the sixth century CE, there were circles interested in the problems of names that were considered neither Buddhist nor Confucian. It is certainly possible that the term refers to representatives of the “School of Names”, as reflected in the various sources discussed above. Taken together, this admittedly scarce evidence suggests that from the Later Jin period (317–420)

68 Shěn 1992c (1989): 282, 447.

69 *Rénwùzhì*, ‘Cáilǐ’ 才理 25. See Wáng 2008: 107; Shycrock 1937: 71–72.

70 See the *Gāosēngzhuàn*’s 高僧傳 (Biographical Accounts of Eminent Monks) biographies of Tánfēi 曇斐 (443–519 CE) (T 2059, no. 50, p. 382) and Huīfēn 慧芬 (406–485) (ibid., p. 416).

71 T 50, no. 2050, p. 473a10–11. Cf. Krause 2003: 108.

72 This expression usually refers to Confucians (see e.g. Mather 1976: xii). In this particular context, Carsten Krause assumes a different referent, yet without providing further details; cf. Krause 2003: 108, n. 306.

onward, and throughout the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–581), there were intellectual contexts in which representatives of a Mohist-informed “School of Names” were in exchange with Buddhist scholars. It thus seems safe to assume not only that many of the school’s propagators were familiar with Buddhist debates and texts, but also that there were Buddhist scholars who were aware of and possibly even conversant in the “Mohist-informed” “art of disputation”.⁷³ This permeability between different intellectual milieus is hardly surprising given the overall doctrinal promiscuity over long stretches of the period, as famously highlighted in the accounts of the *Shishuō Xīnyǔ* 世說新語 (A New Account of Tales of the World).⁷⁴

4 On Seeing Whiteness and Knowing Hardness: JBL and the *Chéngshílùn*

As a next step, we shall now take a closer look at how various chapters of the *GSLZ* make use of the materials adopted from the ‘Canons’ and how this might be indicative of a specifically Buddhist background. To begin, we turn our attention to the ‘Discourse on Hard and White’ (JBL). It is perhaps not an exaggeration to consider this chapter the pivot of the *GSLZ* as we have it today. BML is much more an illustration of the kind of quick-witted dispute commonly associated with ‘debaters’ than a rigorous attempt to provide a comprehensive, coherent explanation of the initial thesis that “a white horse is not horse”. ZWL is repetitive and obscure to the degree of incomprehensibility, and TBL and MSL are both marked by major ruptures and longer passages in which the argument appears, if not obscure, at least implicit. In contrast, and in spite of some controversial passages, JBL is characterized by a consistent line of argument which develops – from the example of a hard white stone – a more or less definite philosophical position. This position is marked by a strict separation of sensual perception from intellectual conception, and the view that what we take for concrete ‘things’ are in fact mental constructs or ‘syntheses’ of the mind, which are based on the percepts presented to the senses. The overall clarity of the essay has even prompted early

⁷³ Krause (2003: 143) notes that the *Chéngshílùn*, which has possibly left its imprint on JBL, was appreciated not least as a model of the art of disputation.

⁷⁴ For a sketch of the intellectual world of early medieval China and the mutual relationship between Daoism, Buddhism, and also Confucianism, see Mather 1976: xviii–xxvi; Dessein 2016. See also Thomas Jansen’s study on the court culture of the Southern Qi 齊 (479–502) and Liáng 梁 (502–557) in Jansen 2000.

modern readers such as Alfred Forke (1867–1944) to compare it with Kant’s epistemological critique.⁷⁵ Crucial technical terms such as *lí* 離 (‘separation/isolation’), *jiān* 兼 (‘synthesis/combination’), *wù* 物 (‘concrete thing’), and *dìng* 定 (‘define/circumscribe’) are more or less precisely elaborated or at least contextualized in this piece, and these also recur in other parts of the *GSLZ*, mostly in BML (*lí*, *dìng*) and ZWL (*jiān*, *wù*), though in rather casual and unsystematic ways. Thus JBL at least implicitly refers to some of the other chapters of the extant *GSLZ*, and it stands out from the others in providing a couple of key terms that point beyond the chapter itself and lend themselves as interpretative guidelines for the entire collection. Consequently, Shěn Yǒudǐng has accorded it a crucial role in the interpretation of the whole book.⁷⁶

However, once seen against the background of Shěn’s and Graham’s detailed textual studies – which have disclosed another, rather vexing characteristic of JBL – this eminent position appears in a rather problematic light. The chapter is replete with parallel passages to the ‘Canons’, but also to other writings that were prominent during the medieval period, such as the *Zhuāngzǐ*. I have already provided selected examples in the second section above, and I shall not discuss these parallels and their possible relationship to JBL in further detail here. The following synopsis highlights JBL passages which parallel other texts and gives an idea of the degree to which it is apparently pieced together from other sources:

[6] Parallel Texts and Probable Sources of JBL⁷⁷

JBL	Parallel passages
「堅、白、石、三，可乎？」	<i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , ‘Tiānxià’ 7: 「黃馬、驪牛三」 <?> ⁷⁸
曰：「不可。」	
曰：「二可乎？」	
曰：「可。」	
曰：「何哉？」	

75 Forke 1901–1902: 37.
76 Shěn 1992a: 495, 497; Shěn 1992b (1961): 268.
77 In the table, dark grey highlighting marks literal adoptions from other sources. Light grey highlighting marks variations such as character replacements, but also constructions modeled on the suggested source passages listed in the right-hand column.
78 On this issue, cf. also Shěn 1992a: 506.

(continued)

JBL	Parallel passages
曰：「 <u>無堅得白</u> ，其舉也二； <u>無白得堅</u> ，其舉也二。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 15: <u>無：堅得白必相盈也</u>
曰：「得其所白，不可謂無白。得其所堅，不可謂無堅。而之石也，之於然也，非三也？」	
曰：「視不得其所堅，而 <u>得其所白者</u> ， <u>無堅</u> 也。拊不得其所白，而得其所堅。 <u>得其堅也</u> ， <u>無白也</u> 。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 15: <u>無：堅得白必相盈也</u>
曰：「 <u>天下無白</u> ， <u>不可以視石</u> 。 <u>天下無堅</u> ， <u>不可以謂石</u> 。 <u>堅白石不相外</u> ， <u>藏三</u> ， <u>可乎</u> ？」	<i>Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ</i> , 'Zhīwù lùn': <u>天下無指物不可以謂物</u> <i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' A 66: <u>堅白不相外也</u> 。 <i>Lǚshì Chūnqiū</i> , 'Shěnyìnglǎn', 'Líwèi' 18 ("臧三牙"); Líu Shào 劉邵 (fl. 224 CE), 'Zhàodū fù' 趙都賦; <i>Kǒngcóngzǐ</i> , 'Gōngsūn Lóng' ("臧三耳")
曰：「有自藏也，非藏而藏也。」	
曰：「其白也，其堅也，而石必得以相盛盈，其自藏奈何？」	
曰：「得其白，得其堅， <u>見與不見離</u> 。 <u>不見離</u> ， <u>一一不相盈</u> ，故離。離也者，藏也。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 4: <u>見不見離。一二不相盈。廣循堅白</u>
曰：「石之白，石之堅， <u>見與不見</u> ， <u>二與三</u> ，若 <u>廣修而相盈</u> 也，其非 <u>壘</u> 乎。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīng' B 4: <u>見與俱，一與二，廣與循</u> <i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 4 B 5: <u>見不見離。一二不相盈。廣循堅白，<u>壘不重</u></u>
曰：「物 <u>白</u> 焉， <u>不定其所白</u> 。物 <u>堅</u> 焉， <u>不定其所堅</u> 。不定 <u>者兼</u> ，惡乎其石也？」	<i>Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ</i> , 'Báimǎ lùn': <u>曰：白者不定所白</u> <i>Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ</i> , 'Zhīwù lùn': <u>且指者天下之所兼</u> <?>
曰：「循石， <u>非彼無石</u> ， <u>非石無所取</u> 乎白。石不相離者固乎。然其無已。」	<i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , 'Qíwù lùn' 3: <u>非彼無我，非我無所取。</u>
曰：「 <u>于石一也</u> ， <u>堅白二也</u> ，而 <u>在于石</u> 。故有 <u>知焉</u> ；有 <u>不知焉</u> ； <u>有見焉</u> ， <u>有不見焉</u> 。故知與不知相與離，見與不見相與藏。藏故，孰謂之不離？」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 7: 於：石一也，堅白二也，而在于石。故有知焉，有不知焉
曰：「目不能堅，手不能白。不可謂無堅，不可謂無白。其異任也，其無以代也。堅白域於石，惡乎離？」	

(continued)

JBL	Parallel passages
曰：「堅末與石為堅，而物兼。末與物為兼，而堅必堅；其不堅石、物而堅。天下未有若堅而堅藏。」	<i>Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ</i> , 'Báimǎ lùn': 白末與馬為白
「白固不能自白，惡能白石物乎？若白者必白，則不白物而白焉，黃黑與之然。」	<i>Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ</i> , 'Zhīwù lùn': 指固自為非指，奚待于物 <?> <i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 70: 若白者必白
「石其無有，惡取堅白石乎？故離也。離也者，因是。」	<i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , 'Qíwù lùn' 5: 因是因非，因非因是。是以聖人不由，而照之于天，亦因是也。 'Qíwù lùn' 6, 9.
「力與知，果不若因是。且猶白以目以火見，而火不見。則火與目不見而神見。神不見，而見離。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 5: 舉不重，不與箴非力之任也。為握者之顛倍，非智之任也。 <i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , 'Qíwù lùn' 5, 6, 9.
「堅以手，而手以捶，是捶與手知而不知。而神與不知。神乎，是之謂離焉。」	<i>Mòzǐ</i> , 'Mòjīngshuō' B 47: [智]以目見，而目以火見，而火不見。 <i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , 'Tiānxià' 7: 目不見 <?>
「離也者天下，故獨而正。」	<i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> , 'Chōngdéfú' 1: 受命於天，唯舜獨也正 <?>

To be sure, in spite of the variety of the suggested sources of JBL listed above, none of the literal parallels encountered are from a *Buddhist* text. There can be no doubt that JBL squarely lacks any manifest traces of Buddhist impact, whether quotations from Buddhist sources or obvious terminological borrowings.

In spite of this solid evidence regarding the literal surface of JBL, I suggest in what follows that the chapter is nonetheless deeply influenced by Buddhism on another, much more substantial level. It will emerge that the line of reasoning in JBL closely resembles a widely analogous argumentation in the *Chéngshìlùn*, a Buddhist text that was translated into Chinese in the early fifth century CE and dominated intellectual discourse in Buddhist circles and beyond from the second half of the fifth and well into the sixth centuries CE.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See *Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, 2936–2937. On the respective 'school' (zōng 宗), see *Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, 2932–2933. See also Tāng 1991: 718–730; Lai 1978: 339–340. Tāng Yòngtóng remarks that reports about this *śāstra* had already reached China during the Eastern Jin period (317–420 CE). Tāng quotes the retrospective (and ideologically tainted) account by the *Madhyamaka* scholar Jizàng 吉藏 (549–623) that it was for this reason that the king of the short-lived Western Qin (385–431 CE) dynasty asked Kumārajīva to translate this *sūtra*, and

However, before our excursion into the historical and intellectual contexts of the *Chéngshílùn*, I would first like to provide a short – and admittedly rather schematic – sketch of the major steps in JBL’s line of argument. For this purpose, I shall concentrate on the claims of the “debater”, whose arguments are usually associated with the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng. The point of departure is the claim (T) that a *hard, white stone* is two – rather than three, as suggested by the opponent on the basis of the number of terms or concepts involved. The first four steps of the argument try to substantiate this contention by claiming that (E1) hard and white do not occur in conjunction, but arise from two different judgments (*jǔ* 舉); that (E2) this is based on different sensual perceptions (hard is present in touch, white in sight), and that therefore hard and white never concur; and as percepts – that is, without assuming an unperceivable function that unifies the two – they are unmediated, and hence (E3) self-contained (*zìcáng* 自藏) and (E4) separated or isolated (*lí* 離) from each other. The next two steps

that the latter only translated this *hīnayānic* text because it chimed with the *Madhyamaka* criticism of the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* (Tāng 1991: 719). Krause notes that in the Northern Wèi dynasty, *Chéngshílùn* scholarship reached its peak in the 460s (Krause 2003: 74), and he considers it likely that, in the early years after its translation, knowledge about it remained restricted to people who had studied the text with Kumārajīva or his personal students. In the south, the appreciation of the *Chéngshílùn* appears to have culminated in the last years of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth centuries, when it was already largely discredited as *hīnayānic* in the north (Krause 2003: 91). Emperor Míng 明 of the Liú Sòng 劉宋 dynasty (465–472) organized the first public lecture on the *Chéngshílùn* (Krause 2003: 140), and Xiǎo Ziliáng 蕭子良 (460–494) arranged two subsequent lectures on the text and commissioned an abridged version of the treatise in 489/90, during the Qí 齊 dynasty (Krause 2003: 7, 165; see also Jansen 2000: 262). The shortening of the text reflects didactic concerns rather than a depreciation of the *sāstra* as its later critics suggested (Krause 2003: 144). The majority of Buddhist clerics in Xiǎo’s entourage were followers of *Chéngshílùn* scholarship (Jansen 2000: 111), and the final years of the fifth century also mark the time when lay Buddhists and non-Buddhist scholars in southern China became involved in discussions about the treatise (Krause 2003: 106). The prominence of the *Chéngshílùn* persists well into the Liáng 梁 dynasty (502–557), and while many sources from this period already adopt a critical *Madhyamaka* perspective on it (Krause 2003: 15), Krause finds no evidence for the wholesale refutation of the treatise by Emperor Wǔ 武 (r. 502–549), as purported by the later *sānlùn* tradition, which depicted the emperor as a pointed adversary of *Chéngshílùn* scholarship (Krause 2003: 205–216). And although critical voices multiplied over the course of the sixth century, even Jízàng himself still had to argue against influential contemporary partisans of the *Chéngshílùn*, such as Zhìtuō 智脫 (541–607), at the end of the century, before tradition made him the unrivaled victor in the doctrinal controversy. The main object of criticism was the allegedly wrong understanding of the two truths (*èr dì* 二諦 or *sú dì* 俗諦 [*saṃvṛtisatya*] and *zhēn dì* 真諦 [*paramārthasatya*]) in the *Chéngshílùn* (Krause 2003: 7). The most comprehensive study on this text and related scholarship appears to be Krause 2003.

assert that (E5) hard and white, as sensual qualities that are present in different senses, do not themselves determine or define (*dìng* 定) what it is that they actualize or render manifest through their presence, and that (E6) the qualities (white, hard) located (*suǒ* 所) by their extension do not reveal the nature of their location (*zàiyú* 在於; i.e. the stone). *Either one or the other* quality contained *in that* location is perceivable, but never the location itself. These two statements hold that the senses cannot grasp *what kind of thing* it is which their presence renders manifest. The third, larger step forward in the argument then claims that (E7) the ‘self-contained’ (see E3) qualities subsist independently of their participation in concrete things, which are conceived as ‘conjunctions’ (*jiān* 兼) (and thus, we may infer, these qualities subsist outside of time and space; cf. E3). Nonetheless, (E8) admits that these qualities, *when* present to our senses, provide the basis for conceptual specification (literally ‘taking something for this’; *shì* 是). These two lines of argument thus make the case that qualities are independent of their particular manifestation in the senses and yet provide the sensual basis for judgments. (E9) then excludes the sense organs, external causes such as light or the action of hitting, as well as the combination of sense organs and external causes as the faculty that enables a person to see things. Instead, it claims that it is the mind (*shén* 神, ‘spirit’) in combination with the sense organs which recognizes things. The mind is said to recognize them by conceptually specifying a thing (a location, the stone) by predicating upon the mutually unmediated qualities (the located separates or isolates) it contains. In other words, (E9) holds that the mind is the faculty that is able to synthesize the unmediated qualities present in different senses by conceptually determining the unperceivable (and, we may assume, intellectual or conceptual) thing which subsumes both. In (E 10), the text concludes with the claim that, as self-contained isolates or separates, qualities in the world are adjusted or oriented⁸⁰ in themselves. This formulation is (also) rather vague, and I will hint at a possible interpretation below. Given this elaborate understanding of the correlation of the mind and the senses in cognition, one understands why it has evoked comparisons with eighteenth-century European epistemology.

However, as briefly indicated above, this speculation equally resembles the way in which cognition is discussed in the *Chéngshìlùn*. This text is attributed to a

80 This is my translation of *zhèng* 正. If interpreted in accordance with MSL, this term in the *GSLZ* appears to refer to the localization of entities in space. Insofar as the kind of perceptual qualities under discussion here are not correlative in themselves, their very presence defines their position.

certain Harivarman, who is said to have lived in third-century CE Kashmir.⁸¹ Unlike most early Chinese exegetes in the fifth and sixth centuries CE, later doxographers widely refuted this text due to its *hīnayānic* tenets. In contrast to the *Madhyamaka*, the “School of the Middle Path”, whose adherents promoted an inflated notion of ‘emptiness’ (*kōng* 空), it propagates a path that advances through two subsequent levels of truth and eventually culminates in the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. ‘Emptiness’ is here understood as an attitude that translates into continual efforts to annihilate all the causes of suffering. Although suffering is thus thought to have real causes, this very reality of causation also implies the possibility of turning it against itself and leading it to its final exhaustion. This “nihilistic” penchant of the *Chéngshìlùn*, which directly mirrors its substantialist assumptions, was the main target of later *māhayānic* criticism. For us, it is important to note that the text propagates a positive notion of ‘substantiality’ (*shí* 實)⁸² – even though, in the end, it attempts to overcome it. From the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*⁸³ it adopts the claim that all perceptible stuff or matter (*rūpa*, *sè* 色, ‘color’) is based on the ‘reality’ or ‘substantiality’ (*shí fǎ* 實法) of the integrated whole of the “four elements” (*sì dà zhǒng* 四大種).⁸⁴ Unlike entities that emerge from the mind’s conception and which are referred to by merely “nominalist” designations (*jiǎmíng* 假名), the presence of sensual qualities is considered non-conceptual and immediate. It is only due to their inherent participation in these substantial qualities that the *Chéngshìlùn* is able to consider the four elements as substantial or actual (*shí* 實) – since everything abstracted from actuality would have to be considered nominal.⁸⁵ Since they provide the material basis for the mind’s conception of empty or void objects, qualities constitute the link which refers all objects that are separated in

⁸¹ Little is known about Harivarman. He is said to have lived in third-century CE Kashmir, where he allegedly studied the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*. However, the reliability of his hagiography, written by Xuānchàng 玄暢 (414–497), is questionable, and it is clear that it was composed in a specifically Chinese context; see Krause 2003: 17.

⁸² For a short summary of the central doctrinal positions of the *Chéngshìlùn*, see *Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, 2933–2936.

⁸³ For a detailed account of the development of *Sarvāstivāda* scholarship, see the comprehensive *Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Scholasticism* by Charles Willemen, Bart Dessein, and Collett Cox (Willemen et al. 1998).

⁸⁴ For a comprehensive overview of the category of *rūpa* in *Sarvāstivāda* scholasticism see ch. 8 (“The Category of Matter (*rūpa*)”) in Dhammajoti 2007: 242–272. On the inseparability of the elements, see pp. 253–256.

⁸⁵ It is crucial to note here that, unlike the *abhidharma*, the *Chéngshìlùn* does not consider these substantial or actual qualities and the four elements inherent in them as ‘existing’ (*Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, 2934). Rather, they are neither ‘existing’ nor ‘empty’, but obviously evade conceptualization. Thus ‘substantial’ or ‘actual’ (*shí* 實) is *not* equivalent to ‘existing’ (*yǒu* 有), as the latter implies a step of abstraction and hence belongs to the dimension of the ‘suppositional’ or ‘nominal’.

the mind's imagination back to an underlying or substantial unity that is reflected in the mutual causal ties between these objects.

Interestingly for us, the third fascicle of the *Chéngshílùn* contains a discussion about the status of what appears in the Chinese translation as *jiān* 堅 ('hard'). The background to this is the claim that the four elements (earth, fire, water, and wind) are the seeds of the four *qualities* of solidity, heat, moisture, and movement.⁸⁶ "Real" solidity is thus said to arise concomitantly with any perceptible matter. The following excerpts are taken from the discussion of the substantial character of 'hardness' or 'solidity' in the *Chéngshílùn*:

[7] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 3, sect. 42 (T 32, no. 1646, p. 264):

自觀金石，則知是堅，觸非眼可得，是故無堅。以此因緣，軟等諸觸，亦皆無。

From looking at [a piece of] metal or a stone, you know that it is hard, but [this] tactile sensation cannot be grasped by the eye; therefore, solidity does not exist. Because of this, all tactile sensations such as softness etc. do not exist either.⁸⁷

This argument is attributed to the opposite position, which the text seeks to invalidate. It starts from the claim that someone looking at something like a stone knows that it is hard, and then proceeds to the statement that touch cannot be grasped by our eyes, eventually concluding that therefore hardness does not exist. The claim suggests that one cannot know a stone's hardness merely by seeing it. Since this attribute lacks a sensual basis, the argument seems to suggest that it has to be refuted as unsubstantiated and hence nonexistent. By means of analogy, this claim is then generalized for all other tactile qualities. Strikingly, not only the crucial terms, but the very structure of the argument itself closely resembles JBL: a stone cannot be said to be hard because sight, on the basis of which we allegedly recognize the stone, is incapable of grasping its hardness. Just like JBL, the above argument then concludes that tactile qualities simply do not exist. Note, however, that here this is apparently meant as a generalization, while JBL only claims that hardness does not exist *in sight*. Still, the pivotal terms – albeit not their

⁸⁶ The four elements are considered to form unitary atoms, which are considered to be without parts and dimensionless. While their proportion is thus constant, they are thought to vary in their capability (*sāmatthiya*); cf. Ronkin 2005: 56–57.

⁸⁷ Krause criticizes Sastri's English translation of the *Chéngshílùn* as incomplete and imprecise (Krause 2003: 17). Nevertheless, I provide it here for comparison with my own suggestions: "On looking at things like the gold and the stone one knows that this is hard. No touch can be cognized by the eye. Therefore, hardness does not exist. For the same reason, softness, etc. are also not there as separate elements"; Sastri 1978: 86.

interpretation – such as ‘to grasp’ (*dé* 得) or ‘to not exist’ (*wú* 無),⁸⁸ as well as the quality (‘hard’) and the object (‘stone’) discussed, are the same as in JBL.⁸⁹

Before looking at the text’s explication of the reasons why sight cannot know about hardness and why this is no proof against the existence of the latter, let us first have a look at how the *Chéngshílùn* argues in favor of the existence of ‘hardness’:

[8] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 3, sect. 43 (p. 264):

[...] 人見欽拔羅，生疑為堅為軟。是故，觸非眼可見。是故，有堅等諸觸，又實有堅等。

[...] 若無堅者，何所分別。

If a person sees a woolen blanket,⁹⁰ this raises doubts as to whether it is hard or soft. Because of this, [we know that] tactile sensations are nothing that can be seen by the eye. [But] because of this [we also know that], if there are tactile sensations of solidity etc., there also really is solidity etc.⁹¹

[...] If there were nothing solid, by which means/how would we distinguish?⁹²

In the above passage, the author of the *Chéngshílùn* admits that sight does not allow one to ascertain the tactile quality of a piece of fabric before one’s eyes. As a consequence, sight lacks the means to settle this question. However, the very fact – simply claimed by the *Chéngshílùn* – that there are sensations of hardness (among others) allows one to conclude that these tactile qualities are substantial, and hence *really exist*.⁹³ This is eventually further corroborated by

⁸⁸ However, the *Chéngshílùn* uses a distinctly medieval vocabulary, such as e.g. *yǎn* 眼 – originally ‘pupil of the eye’ – rather than *mù* 目 for ‘eye’.

⁸⁹ When the *Chéngshílùn* repeats this claim for refutation, it reformulates it as: “Seeing a stone you know [its] hardness” (見石知堅; fasc. 3, sect. 43, p. 264), leaving out the second example of a lump of metal.

⁹⁰ This is a transcription of Skrt. *kambala*, for which see Monier-Williams 1872: 204a.

⁹¹ “The person, again looking at the ‘rug’ (*kambala*) doubts whether it is hard or soft. Therefore, the touch is not visible”; Sastri 1978: 87. Unfortunately, Sastri leaves the last sentence untranslated.

⁹² “If hardness does not exist, what would be discriminated?”; Sastri 1978: 87.

⁹³ This is reminiscent of a cognitive primacy of tactile sensation with regard to the four elements, as documented e.g. in Paramārtha’s commentary on and translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* (阿毘達磨俱舍釋論 *Āpidāmōjūshè shílùn*; T 1559, trans. 566–567 CE). It reads: “These four elements I only identify as the cause of touch. The four qualities, such as hard etc., are nothing the eye etc. sees. [...] Touch I identify as [something] entering from outside, or I identify it as the four

the implicit contention that such substantial qualities in fact underlie all distinctions of objects. Refuting them entails the negation of the very possibility of knowing about any distinctions at all. Our text thus suggests that the sensation of hardness in touch has an immediacy which directly bespeaks its substantiality, and it further holds that such sensations are also the basis for distinguishing between different objects.

As we have seen above, JBL does not turn its initial claim about the unmediated character of qualities sensed by different organs into anything like a refutation of the cognitive relevance of perception. Rather, it claims that when a quality is present – or, in the language of the *Chéngshílùn*, when it actually or “really exists” (*shí yǒu* 實有) – it provides the ‘basis’ (*yīn* 因) for judgments, which in turn underlie all conceptual distinction. Again, JBL makes a similar point to the *Chéngshílùn*, which also considers qualities the basis of conscious distinctions. Also, just as in JBL, after discussing eyesight, the above passage shifts the focus to touch, to which it accords an analogous function of accessing qualities – though tactile rather than visible ones. The discussion of tactile qualities continues as follows:

[9] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 3, sect. 43 (p. 264):

[...] 亦所作業異，謂打、擲等。

Moreover, the actions it effectuates are different; one could name hitting, throwing away, etc.⁹⁴

[...] 又以能持因緣，故名為堅。又能障礙手等，故名為堅。

Again, it is because it is able to be a conditioning cause of bearing (namely as the object borne) that one names it solid. And it is because it is able to block one’s hands and other things that one names it solid.⁹⁵

This passage illustrates the doctrinal relevance of the claim about the substantiality of qualities such as hardness. Qualities provide the substantial conditions and causes that enable or prevent certain human actions. For this reason,

elements; in some cases it is [only] based on the four elements; I identify it as *what is produced by the four elements*.” From this perspective, colors – just like certain tactile sensations, such as ‘smoothness’ – are only produced by the elements, but they are not the elements themselves; see T 29, 1559, fasc. 1, p. 168; cf. Willemen et. al. 1998: 136.

⁹⁴ Sastri, again rather freely, has: “It causes its own thought. The act of chiselling and chopping, etc. is directed towards the hard thing”; Sastri 1978: 87.

⁹⁵ “There is hardness because it is the causing factor of retention, *Sandhāraṇa* and because it obstructs our hand and others”; Sastri 1978: 87.

names for qualities are not void, but rather designate something real or substantial. In spite of the crucial importance of this argument in the context of the *Chéngshílùn* – it allows one to understand why the assumption of a substantial base of perception, and hence of language, is crucial to the very possibility of karmic retribution and thus Buddhist liberation – it has no equivalent in JBL's argument. However, given the overall similarity of both the structure and the line of argument in JBL with what the *Chéngshílùn* discusses here, it is still plausible that its reflections on the role of the hand and the resistance by which it senses hardness in cognition mirror the above passage, where both the hand and its potential to perceive obstruction are readily available.

Now that we have delineated the *Chéngshílùn*'s argument in support of the existence of tactile qualities such as hardness and softness, we can return to the opponent's claim, which this argument attempts to refute. So far, we have only learned that the *Chéngshílùn* accepts its adversaries' contention that sight does not recognize tactile qualities, and hence has to leave open the question of whether a stone that one sees is indeed hard. The following is the explanation of why the adversaries are allegedly wrong:

[10] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 3, sect. 43 (p. 264):

不可以眼知堅，以先觸故比知。如見火知熱，熱非可見。

[Refutation] You cannot know hardness by your eyes; it is by previous tactile sensations that you know it by analogy, just as when you see a fire and know that it is hot, this hotness cannot be seen.⁹⁶

In other words, the propagators of the substantiality of qualities readily admit that the connection between the sight of a stone and the knowledge of its hardness is not one of immediate sense perception. Yet this is not tantamount to directly confuting hardness as a quality of the stone.⁹⁷ The evidence for this claim is not sensual, but rather arrived at by inference – or more precisely, by

⁹⁶ “The last argument that hardness on looking at stone, etc. [is] experienced by the eye is also invalid. It is not at all experienced by the eye, but it is inferred in the wake of contact with things, gold, etc. We, e.g. understand the heat on looking at the fire. But the heat is not visible”; Sastri 1978: 87.

⁹⁷ It should be emphasized that this formulation inverts the situation as conceived by the *Chéngshílùn*: there, it is the sensual qualities, the material basis of distinction, which are fundamental, while the stone is but a secondary nominal distinction superimposed on them. Thus, in a way, speaking about the quality or even the attribute of a stone distorts the ontological hierarchy suggested in the Buddhist text – at least if it is supposed to imply the underlying existence of a stone as the substance bearing these qualities.

analogy to previous tactile perceptions of the hardness of stones. Inference, however, is something which is rightly based on sensual perceptions but which is, in a way, superordinate to them, as it is able to bridge the gap between the mutually exclusive domains of the various senses. Just like JBL, the *Chéngshílùn* presents the mind as the faculty able to synthesize the various sense perceptions into a unified object, although here this is termed ‘heart’ (*xīn* 心) or ‘thinking and cognition’ (*yìshí* 意識) rather than ‘spirit’ (*shén* 神).

However, the superordinate character of its synthesis is no source of higher appreciation – quite the contrary. In one passage, the faculty in charge of analogical inference and synthesis is presented as follows:

[11] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 11 (p. 328):

意識於眾生等中動謂，心是眾生，色等是瓶，離色有瓶，如是等。實法中心定不動，不得言我見色亦見聲等。

In their relation to the manifold beings, thinking and cognition become active, engaging in assertion, so that, when the mind specifies (any of the) manifold beings, the color (sensual qualities; lit. *rūpa*) is (e.g.) specified as a jar, so that it (= mind) has (or: “in the mind there is”), separated from the sensual qualities, a jar. In actual entities, the mind is still and inactive, and it is not possible to say (here) that an ‘I’ is seeing color, perceiving (lit. seeing) sound and the like.⁹⁸

According to the *Chéngshílùn*, the colors and sounds that provide the material substance of our concepts of reality are provided independently of the mind’s activities. It is in fact precisely this which establishes their real or substantial, rather than merely construed or superimposed character. In contrast, the conception of things in thought involves the activity of thought and cognition. This activity is said to consist in predicating on or ‘designating’ (*wèi* 謂) the material presented by the senses. In this way, the mind ‘specifies’ (*shì* 是) qualities as

⁹⁸ Sastri’s translation differs considerably. In order to account for the substantial deviations from the Chinese text, a closer look at the re-sanskritized version underlying Sastri’s English translation would seem necessary. In view of the merely illustrative character of this example, I shall forego the detailed investigations this would require. What is more, my own translation – which is exclusively based on the Chinese version – appears to me not only more consistent, but also more tied up with the topic under consideration. Sastri translates as follows: “Likewise, non-sensuous consciousness wavers in regard to *sattva* etc. whether the body is the *sattva* or the mind is so and also in regard to a pitcher whether the visible etc. are the pitcher or it is other than the visible, etc. The mind does not waver in regard to the absolute thing. One can say: I see the visible, but he cannot say: I hear the visible”; Sastri 1978: 338.

individual members of certain classes of things, such as jars. Such objects exist only in the mind, and they are supplementary to – and separate from – the sensual basis of perception, which is substantial and on which they rely. Such complex entities arising from the mind's synthesis are only nominal, and hence considered essentially void or empty.

While JBL hardly allows for overly far-reaching conclusions regarding its relationship to the *Chéngshílùn*, the similarities are still striking. First, on a terminological level, we have here a use of the word *wèi* 謂 (lit. 'to call') which, however, is clearly related to the specification of objects by means of names (or rather: concepts) – that is, it is used metaphorically for processes such as forming judgments, which are considered internal or mental. This is precisely how the word is used in JBL 7, where it occurs in the phrase "*wèi shí*" 謂石 (meaning 'to determine', rather than to designate, the hard as a stone), parallel to the preceding "*jiàn shí*" 見石 ('to see', i.e. 'to recognize as a stone'). Similarly, and unlike other contemporary texts, the *Chéngshílùn* uses *shì* 是 not as a copula, but in its older sense of a verb meaning 'to specify as' or 'to identify/classify as a specific kind of thing' in the passage quoted above, a usage which is arguably also present in JBL.

Second, crucial aspects of the arguments presented in JBL are equally manifest in the *Chéngshílùn* passages just discussed. The claim in [7] against which the *Chéngshílùn* argues holds that the quality of 'hardness' attributed to a stone cannot arise from sight. And it infers from this that, due to a lack of sensual evidence, 'hardness' does not exist at all. The premise of this challenged contention is that sight and touch perceive separate entities (a stone and hardness, respectively), which neither sense is able to mediate with the other. This is evidently equivalent to the debater's claim (E2) in JBL that 'hard' and 'white' are separate items that appear to different senses, and it implies what JBL makes explicit in (E4) – namely, that items manifest in sight and items perceptible to touch are unconnected, and hence separated from each other. The claim in [7] further seems to presuppose that the existence of things has to be warranted by one single sense, which closely resembles JBL's view, presented in (E1), that the identification of a stone via qualities provided by two discrete senses arises from two separate sensual judgments, and that therefore the stone's hardness does not exist according to our sight, whereas its whiteness is beyond the grasp of our touch. Hence, what is provided through the different senses are different things. And although the arguments of the *Chéngshílùn* in support of the existence of tactile qualities [8] have no direct equivalent in JBL, we can at least observe that JBL seems to subscribe to the view that what the senses present to us is in fact "real". Thus, like the *Chéngshílùn*, JBL does not accept the assumption

that the absence of hardness in sight is conclusive evidence for the non-existence of hardness. Rather, JBL limits the term *wú* 無 (‘to not have’) to the various sensual domains: *sight* does not have hardness; *touch* has no whiteness. However, this is not a judgment about the existence of the object(s) expressed through these qualities. In [11], when the *Chéngshílùn* eventually presents ‘mind’ (*xīn* 心; lit. ‘heart’) as the faculty which identifies those qualities that are immediately present in the senses as instances of certain kinds of things, this (as noted above) is obviously reflected in JBL’s claim (E9) that it is the ‘mind’ (*shén* 神; lit. ‘spirit’) which assembles the various qualities as disclosed through different senses to constitute a unified object (the ‘thing’). Thus, [11] also shows that the *Chéngshílùn* agrees with JBL (E8) in considering the qualities present to our senses as the material basis for the mind’s conceptualizing activities. This means that the *Chéngshílùn* also implies what JBL claims in (E5) and (E6) – namely, that the perceptible sensual qualities do not determine the thing which they render manifest, and that the senses are therefore unable to disclose this thing (the ‘location’) in its entirety.⁹⁹ When the *Chéngshílùn* eventually asserts that the presence of these qualities is entirely independent of the activities of the cognizing mind, it implies that they constitute an independent realm of their own, which is essentially separate from the mind. This, however, is tantamount to claiming that the qualities are real, irrespective of whether they are objects of the conceptualizing function of the mind, or as JBL (E3) has it, that – from the perspective of the mind – they are self-contained, and as JBL (E7) holds, that these qualities exist (or rather ‘subsist’) independently of the ‘things’ which the mind conceives based on them. Even JBL’s rather opaque claim that qualities are self-contained and separate entities “adjusted in themselves” may point toward the *Chéngshílùn*: there, not only is the presence of qualities argued to be independent of the mind’s conceptualizing activity, but qualities are also grounded on the non-perceptual basis provided by the elementary fundamental qualities – such as ‘hardness’ – through which the four elements (earth, fire, water, and wind) are thought to provide the material texture of the world.

⁹⁹ It should be emphasized that, from the perspective of the *Chéngshílùn*, this formulation is possibly overly assertive. Even if it admits the reality of the things we capture with nominal designations such as ‘cart’ or ‘jar’, it only does so in a qualified sense, because of the fact that it admits that there is a substantial basis on which they are “superimposed” by the mind. Thus the mind does not actually disclose, but rather construes things – so that the reality of its constructions is only indirect, as this hinges on the actuality of the underlying sensual basis and the reality of the causal efficacy this basis expresses.

It goes without saying that, in spite of these astonishing similarities, JBL – and, to a lesser degree, the *Chéngshìlùn* as well – simply remain too vague in too many respects for us to determine the precise nature of these remarkable parallels. However, that this similarity in their argumentative frameworks is accompanied by a considerable overlap, both in parts of the technical vocabulary and in the choice of examples, suggests that this is indeed the result of JBL reflecting discussions found in the *Chéngshìlùn* (or related texts), rather than an entirely accidental convergence of two mutually independent reasonings about qualities, objects, and their mutual relationship.

As we have seen, the Buddhist text emphasizes that while sensual qualities as the material basis of cognition are unconditioned by an individual mind, this mind is to be held responsible for the processes of thought and cognition. On this basis, the mind abstracts objects such as jars, to which we might add stones, pieces of cloth, or (as the following example shows) horses. These objects, the text states, exist in the mind, separated or ‘abstracted’ (*lí* 離) from the material base which has conditioned their construction. In other words, the text presents a picture of the basic ingredients and processes of cognition which establishes the same fundamental line between ‘color’ (the material basis of conception given in perception) and the objects of conception (illustrated here by the stock example of the jar) which JBL draws between the qualities of hard and white on the one hand, and the concept of stone on the other, and which BML fixes between white and horse, ‘color’ and ‘shape’.

However, we should also note that JBL uses the crucial term ‘separation’ in a very different sense than the *Chéngshìlùn*. In the Buddhist text, this term is used to designate the abstract status of ‘object concepts’ in the mind, as opposed to the concrete presence of qualities to the senses, while JBL arguably conceives of this as a relation that holds between qualities belonging to different senses, such as ‘white’ and ‘hard’. In spite of an overlap in the basic lines of argument, as well as some degree of convergence in terminology, the positions of the *Chéngshìlùn* and JBL thus obviously do not simply coincide. As I have already suggested, the latter’s thought was most probably influenced by, but certainly not simply copied from, the Buddhist precedent.

However, there is one surprising detail about the use of the term ‘separation’ in the *GSLZ* that seems relevant to the question of its possible date of compilation. In the following example, the *Chéngshìlùn* illustrates how the mind wavers between various possibilities when it attempts to determine or conceptually grasp the material laid open to the senses – something which is directly reflected in people’s conflicting opinions about what it is they see:

[12] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 11 (p. 328):

如人見馬或言見馬尾。或言見馬身。或言見皮。或言見毛。

It is like when people see a horse, some say they see a horsetail, some say they see a horse body, some say they see the skin, some say they see the coat.¹⁰⁰

The origin of such divergence or uncertainty lies in the fact that nominal designations for objects as construed by the mind are ‘abstracted’ (*lí*) from the sensual basis of perception and persist in the mind as ‘separated’ or ‘abstracted’ (*lí*) items (cf. [11] above). Their application to what the senses present at any given moment relies on their assignment to this sensual material by the activity of the mind. This lack of immediacy and certainty in nominal designations contrasts with the immediate presence of the qualities to our senses. As I have mentioned above, the crucial term *lí* 離 (‘separate’) in the extant *GSLZ* occurs not only in JBL, but also in BML. There we find the following explanation of why one cannot infer the presence of a horse from the presence of a white horse, while at the same time, the presence of a white horse does not allow one to claim the absence of a horse:

[13] *GSLZ*, ‘Báimǎlùn’ (DZ/1172/1/7r/4–5):

曰：有白馬，不可謂無馬者，離白之謂也。不離者有白馬不可謂有馬也。

A: That, when there is a white horse, it is inadmissible to assert that there is no horse, is due to its being an assertion which abstracts (separates) from white. When we don’t abstract (separate), it is inadmissible to assert that there is a horse, when there is a white horse.

This short passage is all BML has to say about ‘abstraction’. Yet, in spite of its extreme brevity, we clearly see that this use of *lí* 離 (‘to abstract’ or ‘to separate’) not only differs from JBL, but that – surprisingly enough – it is actually in

¹⁰⁰ The horse example illustrates the view that, unlike *rūpa* (sè 色), the sensual qualities we immediately perceive (lit. ‘find’), the objects construed by the mind (*xīn* 心; *prajñapti*) are conceptually mediated. While qualities are thought to disclose singularities, nominal designations refer to complex mental constructions. One and the same phenomenon can be determined to belong to different kinds of things. Here there is an aspect of variety, polyvalence, ambiguity, and hence instability, that is absent in the case of qualities. Sastri translates the passage above as follows: “In respect of *prajñapti*, the mind wavers; e.g. a man seeing the horse says: I see the horse. Another man says: I see the body of the horse; still another says: I see the skin”; Sastri 1978: 338.

accordance with the analysis of the *Chéngshílùn* [11]. As we saw in that passage, separation refers to abstracting, from a concrete sensual impression, the bare *notion* of a jar. Accordingly, we draw, from a white patch presented to our eyes, an ‘abstracted’ – and sensually emptied – notion of ‘horse’. Thus, what does not exist “out there” is not the flesh-and-blood horse, but the purely mental notion of ‘horse’.

Now, one might ask what sense it makes to compare one of the apparently “genuine” parts of the *GSLZ* with a Buddhist text whose translation dates from the early fifth century CE. Instead of a detailed argument, I restrict myself to pointing out two things. For one although the textual materials from which the extant BML has been composed show no obvious traces of post-Hàn language use, it has long been observed that the text is marked by ruptures and inconsistencies which could well result from later editorial interferences.¹⁰¹ For another, one of the caesuras in BML is marked by a causal construction of the form [yǐ 以 + clause (cause) wèi 謂 + clause (effect)], which seems unparalleled in other pre-imperial and Hàn texts. It appears to have evolved from the construction [yǐ 以 + clause (cause) gù 故, wèi 謂 + clause (effect)], which was common in the early medieval period, and strikingly enough, it is attested in this form precisely in the *Chéngshílùn*.¹⁰² If this particular construction is indeed a trace of medieval editorial intrusion, it is thus certainly imaginable that its originator(s) also integrated into the piece a then-current explanatory pattern that would lend itself to making good sense of one of Gōngsūn Lóng’s crucial claims about the white horse. In view of the fragmentary and isolated character of these pieces of evidence, we can hardly hope to be able to settle this question of possible medieval traces in the extant BML with any degree of certainty. However, what remains extraordinary in the present case is the fact that BML uses the term *lǐ* in a different way than JBL, and that it is the former, which – unlike JBL – is free of more manifest signs of Buddhist influence or inspiration, which seems to share the Buddhist use of the term.

As I have shown in the second section of this chapter, extensive passages of JBL are copied from or modeled on the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. And although the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng as a debater (*biànzhe* 辯者) has been consistently associated with the topic of “hard and white” since his first occurrences in pre-imperial sources, the specific example of their interpenetration in a stone is restricted to the ‘Explanations’.¹⁰³ The Mohists use the expression “hard–white” as a technical term for the coextension of two different items,

¹⁰¹ Cf. Graham 1965: 135, passim; Hé Qīmín 1967: 220–222; Amano 1967, esp. 131–132.

¹⁰² For details, see Suter, forthcoming.

¹⁰³ ‘Jingshuōxià’ B 4 (DZ/1176/13r=299/4.17–6.2). See [3b], p. 440 above.

but nothing suggests that they related this term to the kinds of epistemological problems raised in JBL.¹⁰⁴ Still, our discussion suggests that it is almost certainly from the ‘Explanations’ that the compiler of JBL adopted this example. Assuming that the Mohist ‘Canons’ are pre-imperial, they would be the only early witness pointing toward a possible problem to which this expression might originally have referred. While Wáng Chōng – in the first century CE, in one of the earliest records of a treatise by Gōngsūn Lóng – gives its title as ‘Hard and White’, we can observe, at the same time, that ever since the white horse topic came to be connected with the figure of Gōngsūn Lóng in the mid-Hàn period, commentators have been associating the ancient problem of “hard and white” with the theme of the white horse.¹⁰⁵ To my knowledge, the only explicit collocation of the terms ‘white’, ‘hard’, and ‘stone’ in ancient and early medieval sources is in Sīmǎ Biāo’s 司馬彪 (d. 306 CE) commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ*, which simply treats “hard stone” as an example analogous to “white horse”.¹⁰⁶ Thus, unlike JBL – and, for that matter, the Mohist ‘Canons’ – he does not address ‘hard’ and ‘white’ in terms of ‘attributes’ qualifying a stone. And as we have just seen, the passages from the *Chéngshìlùn* which we have discussed thus far, in spite of the fact that they address the problem of “seeing a hard stone”, do not mention the term ‘white’ at all. However, there is one passage in which our Buddhist text does in fact mention the Chinese equivalent of “white stone” (*bái shí* 白石), though in a very peculiar context:

[14] *Chéngshìlùn*, fasc. 3, sect. 43 (p. 264):

如嘗白石蜜味，以黑石蜜為苦。嘗呵梨勒味以黑石蜜為甘。若以相待故無，則味亦無。問曰：黑石蜜中，有二種味，亦甘亦苦。答曰：疊中亦有二觸，亦堅亦軟。

If you taste the flavor of white stone sugar,¹⁰⁷ you deem black stone sugar bitter. If you taste the flavor of a *harītakī* pill, you deem black stone sugar sweet. If you [infer] that, because [sweet and bitter] are relative to each other, they do not exist, then flavor does not exist either. There was a question: “Are there, inside black stone sugar, two kinds of flavor, both

104 ‘Jingxià’ B 4 (DZ/1176/10/2v=278/10). On “hard-and-white”, see e.g. Graham 1956/7: 180; Graham 1967; Hé 1967: 168–181. See also [3b], p. 440 above.

105 Graham 1956/7: 175; Graham 1967: 366; Hé Qīmín 1967: 220.

106 Graham 1956/7: 178.

107 The production of jaggery involves the addition of limestone. The Chinese term *shí mì* (lit. “stone sugar”) thus most probably refers to jaggery. I thank Samira Müller for bringing this to my attention.

sweet and bitter?” I answer: “In a piece of cloth there are also two [sensations] of touch, both hardness and softness.”¹⁰⁸

Regardless of how one translates the term *shímì* 石密 (lit. ‘stone honey’), it is clear that it refers to a sugarloaf rather than a stone. Moreover, it is also clear that this passage is talking about taste rather than sight. The optical property of the “white stone sugar” plays no role – as white probably refers to the color of the limestone used to produce the sugarloaf rather than to one of its properties. What the passage discusses is the question of whether the qualities sensed by the taste buds are real. Analogous to the argument about the reality of ‘hardness’ in [8] above, the *Chéngshílùn* holds that they are. The claim that sweetness and bitterness reflect something substantial, which is immediately present in taste, is then explicitly compared to the analogous example of the presence of hardness in a piece of cloth. And it is here, in terms of vocabulary, that the word ‘hard’ comes into play. Thus, although a sugarloaf is arguably hard, the example of the “white stone sugar” containing the relevant phrase “white stone” does not occur as an example of solidity. Neither sight nor touch, the crucial senses involved in JBL, are of immediate relevance to this example. At the same time, the example of the sweet (or bitter) sugarloaf is *compared* to the analogon of a hard (or soft) textile. Furthermore, the example is raised in the larger context of a passage arguing for the substantial status of ‘hardness’ as an elementary quality. In sum, despite gathering the relevant words, the passage is at best only faintly related to the hard white stone of the Mohists. Yet it is still possible that the collocation of the crucial terms ‘white’, ‘stone’, and ‘hard’ in this *Chéngshílùn* passage may have reminded a putative Chinese reader familiar with the ‘Canons’ of the example of the two qualities coextensive in a stone. If so, it would come as no surprise that a scholar aware of both the *Chéngshílùn* and the Mohist ‘Canons’ might have come up with the idea of addressing the problem of the inseparability of the hard white stone in terms of the mutual relationship of different senses and their common connection to the mind.

That this is in fact plausible is suggested by one of the earliest textual witnesses on Gōngsūn Lóng scholarship from the early Táng period. Dating from the year 672 CE, the report, entitled *An Essay on the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (*Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ lùn* 擬公孫龍子論), is the first source to mention all the chapter titles in the

¹⁰⁸ Sastri summarizes the passage and renders it as follows: “The person, e.g. who has tasted the sugar-candy feels other tastes unsweet. The person having tasted *haritaki* feels sweet taste of things other than the sugar-candy. If the relative things do not exist, then the taste itself will become a non-entity. If you say that things other than the sugar-candy have two tastes, the piece of cloth also will have two sorts of touch; hard and soft”; Sastri 1978: 87.

extant *GSLZ* by name. In it, the narrator reports what he did the day after his erudite host presented him with a copy of the *GSLZ* during a learned conversation:

[15] *Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ lùn* 擬公孫龍子論,¹⁰⁹ *Quán Táng wén*:¹¹⁰

遂和墨襞紙，援翰寫心，篇卷字數，皆不踰公孫之作。人物義理，皆反取公孫之意。觸類而長，隨方而說。質明而作，日中而就。以事源代迹府，因意而存義也。以幸食代白馬，尋色而推味也；以慮心代指物，自外而明內也；以達化代通變，緣文而轉稱也；以香辛代堅白，馮遠而取近也；以稱足代名實，居中而擬正也。或因數陳色，或反色在數，或棄色取味，或以氣轉形，明天下之言，無所不及也。發沉源而迴驚，闢榛路以先軀，庶將來君子，有以知其用心也。¹¹¹

Afterwards I rubbed my ink and folded my paper, took up my brush and wrote down my thoughts. In all the many characters across chapters and scrolls, I did not go beyond the work of Gōngsūn [Lóng]. In terms of persons and things, meanings and patterns, I consistently referred back to Gōngsūn's intention. I unfolded my thought in analogies of kind (lit. in touch with the kinds of things) and I elucidated them following the method [of Gōngsūn]. I started writing at dawn and had completed the piece by noon. When I replaced 'repository of traces' (= the title of the introductory chapter) with 'tracking actions', I followed his [= Gōngsūn's] intention and preserved his sense. When I replaced 'white horse' with 'delicious food', I transferred the inquiry into color to (the domain of) taste; when I replaced 'pointing things' with 'projecting mind', I turned away from the outside to elucidate the inside; when I replaced 'understanding alternation' with 'capturing change', I relied on the text and substituted the formulations; when I replaced 'hard white' with 'fragrant bitter/hot', I removed what is distant and chose what is nearby; when I replaced 'reality of names' with 'sufficiency of designations', I kept to the balance and sketched what is correct. Sometimes I exposed color on the basis of mental constructions,¹¹²

109 *Qín dīng Quán Táng wén*, fasc. 987, 26r–28v, in *Quán Táng wén* 1965: vol. 20: 12921–12922.

110 *Quán Táng wén* 1965: 12922.

111 Cf. Hé 1967: 214–216; see also the translation in Kandel 1974: 134–135. Kandel considers this section a continuation of the preceding quotation. On this basis, he assumes that the “followers of Gōngsūn Lóng” mentioned there are the implicit subject of this passage. I think that the passage rather relates what the author did the day after his discussion with his host.

112 *Shù* 數 (lit. ‘number’) in Buddhist contexts is also a technical term for ‘knowledge’ or ‘mental content’ (cf. Soothill/Hodous 1937: 438). The term *xīnshù* is an alternative designation for *xīnsuǒ* 心所 (Skt. *caitasika*; ‘mental concomitants’). It is therefore imaginable that what the author describes here is the game of combining sensual qualities (such as ‘white’) with mental

sometimes I turned color back into the position of mental construction, sometimes I discarded color and chose taste, sometimes I replaced body/shape with breath/stuff/*qì*. In explaining the sayings of the world, there is nothing which could not be captured (like this). Tapping a well as profound as this, [Gōngsūn] was unrivaled, breaching this path he was a vanguard. If only future gentlemen will recognize his intention!

However enthusiastic this flowery passage may appear, it does not tell us much about how its author interpreted the *GSLZ*. Still, it is clear that there was a practice of varying the text attributed to the master, not least by substituting terms from one domain or category with terms chosen from another. The author explicitly mentions varying color by substituting taste, an example he illustrates with the replacement of ‘white’ with ‘delicious’ (*xìng* 幸) in the expression “white horse” (*bái mǎ* 白馬) and, notably, with ‘bitter/hot’ (*xīn* 辛) in the phrase “hard white”! This early witness of Gōngsūn Lóng scholarship thus clearly testifies that, among his self-declared followers, there were people analogizing the sensual domains of sight and touch, as illustrated in the extant *GSLZ* with the age-old example of “hard and white”, with the dimensions of smell and taste. Of course, we have no chance of clarifying whether this practice was inspired by or even connected to the discussions about the relation of sensual perception and conception in Buddhist texts such as the *Chéngshìlùn*. Nonetheless, it seems plausible that someone who was used to this game of varied analogies and who came across modes of reasoning like those in the *Chéngshìlùn* sections discussed above would readily adapt them, possibly even without grasping – or being interested in – the details of their philosophical backgrounds. It is hardly imaginable that such a person would have had any qualms in associating the Buddhist piece about the sweet “white stone sugar” (or: ‘jaggery’) with the “hard, white stone” of the Mohists, or with the ingenuity of Gōngsūn Lóng, which allegedly enabled the debater to disentangle “hard and white”.

That there might indeed be more to this connection between the playful variation of terms from different sensual spheres in the *Essay on the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* and Buddhist texts is suggested by another source. In the mid-seventh century CE, the scholar-monk Xuánzàng 玄奘 (602–664) directed the translation of the major works of the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*.¹¹³ The following

constructions (such as ‘horse’), as described in the *Chéngshìlùn*, and as arguably inspired by JBL and BML’s distinction between the qualities hard and white as against a stone and ‘color’ vs. ‘form’, respectively.

113 For the history of *abhidharma* studies in China, see Willemen et al. 1998: 131–137; Dessein 2010: 50–54.

passage from the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (T 1545)¹¹⁴ discusses the relationship between the distinctive marks (*lakṣaṇa*, xiàng 相) of discrete phenomena and what *Sarvāstivādin*s consider their “real” basis – namely, causal efficacy (*kāritra*, yè 業),¹¹⁵ the four elements (*mahābhūta*, dàzhǒng 大種),¹¹⁶ and the matter derived from them, which provides the material basis of perception (*upādāya-rūpa*, zào sè 造色).¹¹⁷

[16] *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, fasc. 127 (T 27, no. 1545, p. 664):

問諸內外事其相各別。內事別者。謂諸衆生若百若干集會一處威儀形相各不同。外事別者。謂果石等。或青或黃或赤或白。香味等相各各不同。如是相別。爲由業異。爲由大種異。爲由造色異。

Let me ask: Now, each and every mark of all inner and outer phenomena is distinct. As for the distinctness of the inner phenomena, I say that each and every one of the sentient beings [even] when one hundred or one thousand [of them] gather at one place are not the same in their forms of conduct.¹¹⁸ *As for the distinctness of the outer phenomena, I say that a fruit, a stone, etc. is sometimes green, sometimes yellow, sometimes red, and sometimes white, that its scent, taste, etc. in each and every case are not the same.* As they are distinct like this, do you consider them different from karmic efficacy, do you consider them different from the four elements, do you consider them different from derived matter?

The text here uses the fruit, along with the stock example of the *stone*, to illustrate the ‘mode of being’ (*bhava*, lèi 類)¹¹⁹ of derived matter; those modes of being which are conceived of as ‘shared marks’ (*gòngxiàng* 共相) are contrasted with the particularized *qualities* or tropes the senses perceive them as, the ‘individual marks’ (*zìxiàng* 自相),¹²⁰ which are exemplified by the four cardinal

¹¹⁴ This is a copious commentary on the *Jñānaprasthāna*. On its extant translations into Chinese, see Willemen et al. 1998: 118–119, and for a detailed discussion, pp. 229–239. The authors note that there is no easy way to identify the root text on which the different recensions are based (p. 234).

¹¹⁵ See Dhammajoti 2007: 252.

¹¹⁶ Dhammajoti 2007: 251–253.

¹¹⁷ Dhammajoti 2007: 249–251.

¹¹⁸ Lit. ‘respect inspiring deportment’; Soothill/Hodous 1937: 299.

¹¹⁹ See Westerhoff 2018: 64; cf. T 1545 (*Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*), fasc. 77, p. 396.

¹²⁰ More precisely, individual marks are not only perceived by the senses, but also conceived by mind: “Eye consciousness grasps the individual mark, thought consciousness (*manas*) grasps both the individual and the shared marks” (T 1545, fasc. 133, p. 689; 眼識取自相, 意識取自相共相。).

colors accepted by the *Sarvāstivādins* – namely green, yellow, red, and *white*. The question at the end of the passage shows that it is dedicated to the relationship between such distinct phenomena and the underlying but unperceivable elements of earth, water, fire, and air, as well as their distinctive marks of hardness, moisture, heat, and movement. Furthermore, on *hardness*, the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* elsewhere clearly states that it is from this ‘intrinsic nature’ (*svabhāva*, *zìxìng* 自性) that touch (*sparśa*, *chù* 觸) – as opposed to the other senses – is able to derive the substantiality (*tǐ* 體) of the element of earth.¹²¹ Thus this short passage not only assembles the two crucial terms ‘stone’ and ‘white’ and relates them to derived tactile matter such as hardness – just as the *Essay on the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* it moreover complements the dimension of color with the sensual spheres of taste and smell, although these are presented differently from sight in that the text simply mentions these senses instead of listing the prototypical qualities they provide. As we have seen above, the *Essay* was composed in the 670s, while Xuánzàng’s translation of the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* was accomplished between 656 and 659 CE.¹²² Moreover, even if it seems unlikely that the similarities between the above passages reflect a kind of *direct* intertextual relation between these sources, such as borrowing or imitation, they still suggest that the flourishing of the peculiar kind of *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* scholarship documented in the *Essay* was stimulated by the renaissance of *abhidharma* studies in China, which was in turn spurred by Xuánzàng’s translation of various *Sarvāstivāda* texts only a few years earlier.¹²³

Returning to JBL, on balance, the collected evidence strongly suggests that whoever composed it not only recycled textual material he found in “indigenous” writings such as the Mohist ‘Canons’ or the *Zhuāngzǐ*, but that he moreover developed his argument under the strong influence of the *Chéngshìlùn*, and possibly even of texts from the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*. While the former had dominated Buddhist discourse throughout much of the fifth and sixth centuries CE, the latter was influential before the raise of *Chéngshìlùn* scholarship, in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, and experienced a revival in the

121 T 1545, fasc. 133, p. 689: 地云何。答顯形色此是世俗想施設地謂諸世間於顯形色。依共假想施設地名。如世間說青黃地等。長短地等。地界云何。答堅性觸。此是勝義能造地體。 (“What is earth? Answer: On the level of visible shape and color, conventional imagination applies the designation ‘earth’ to shapes and colors visible in time. Based on common presuppositions, one imagines and applies the name ‘earth’. It is like when we speak about green or yellow earth etc., about long or short [pieces of] earth etc. in time. What is the sphere of earth? Answer: It is contact with the intrinsic nature of hardness. From this one is able to derive, in an ultimate sense, the substance of earth”). Cf. also Dhammajoti 2007: 250.

122 Willemen et al. 1998: 233.

123 Willemen et al. 1998: 136.

seventh century CE. The specificities of its potential Buddhist background would thus seem to allow us to roughly date JBL to this – admittedly rather long – period. That the various similarities discussed thus far are indeed indicators of a Buddhist impact on JBL is also strongly suggested by the following discussion, which shows that other chapters of the *GSLZ* also bear manifest traces of Buddhist influence.

5 Caesuras in TBL and MSL as Evidence of a Buddhist Subtext

In the present section, we turn our attention to the other two Mohist-influenced chapters in the *GSLZ*: TBL and MSL. We will first concentrate on two passages in each of these chapters in which it is difficult to identify any straightforward link between the topics and the vocabularies of two adjacent sections. These two cases are parallel in that they both juxtapose a textual unit that is clearly composed on the model of the Mohist ‘Canons’ with another one that lacks any obvious relation to them and, at least in one case, is unanimously recognized as a larger piece of integral text, possibly dating from the early imperial or even pre-imperial period. In the case of TBL, this seemingly old material revolves around the relative directions ‘left’ and ‘right’ and the numerals ‘one’ and ‘two’, while the subsequent section discusses groupings of natural kinds – such as oxen, sheep, horses, and chickens – and their relationship to common or distinctive properties. MSL begins with deliberations on the relationship between names and their corresponding substances, which is then followed by a somewhat repetitive and redundant discussion revolving around the demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’.

5.1 TBL

In the case of TBL, both Graham and Shěn have argued that the first of its three parts is a fragment originating from the Warring States period.¹²⁴ This rather short section discusses relational terms, such as ‘one’ and ‘two’ or ‘left’ and ‘right’, which refer to a single entity but imply the existence of a second one. The second part deals with adequate and inadequate groupings of animal

124 Shěn 1992a: 507; Shěn 1992c (1989): 446; Graham 1956/7: 182; Graham 1965: 150–152.

kinds, and as I have mentioned above, it is clearly based on materials adopted from two subsequent lemmas of the ‘Canons’ (B 66 and B 67). Yet although TBL claims an analogy between the relation of animal kinds and different colors and the question of “left and right”,¹²⁵ it fails to specify the precise nature of this analogy. In fact, only a few commentators have tried to come up with an analysis. While one of the commentaries transmitted as part of the so-called *Old Commentary* (Jiùzhù 舊注) – wrongly attributed to the Sòng scholar Xiè Jiàng 謝絳 (Xishēn 希深, 994–1039) in the spurious preface to the *GSZ*¹²⁶ – patently fails to make sense of the so-called “animal examples”,¹²⁷ Graham has identified this passage as sheer “nonsense”,¹²⁸ while Shěn Yǒudǐng asserted that the composer of the second and third parts of TBL lacked even the slightest concept of logical reasoning¹²⁹ and went so far as to claim that he must have been mad.¹³⁰ Independently from this overall obscurity we can observe that what structurally connects the first and second sections is that they both discuss the relation between entities with different names on the basis of what they ‘have’ (yǒu 有). In the first part, the text discusses why left does not “have” right and why two does not “have” one, although there is a one included in two, and although anything properly called “left” implies there being something to its right. The second part is more difficult to summarize. Basically, it attempts to explain why the combination of the kinds ‘ox’ and ‘sheep’ leads to both horses and chickens being excluded from the resulting set of animals – although there are many properties sheep and oxen have in common with horses, which set all three apart from chickens. The text invokes properties – the term used in Chinese is simply yǒu (‘to have’) – such as ‘horns’, ‘(upper) front teeth’, and

¹²⁵ TBL, DZ/1172/2/4r[12r]/5–6 (on the similarity of the relationship between left/right and various animal kinds): 若舉而以是猶類之不同若左右猶是舉。 (“If you choose [elements] by positive designations, and if it comes to the[ir] kinds being not the same, it is like left and right, which [in this case] come to [be] like the choice by positive designations” [?]); TBL, DZ/1172/2/5r[13r]/5–6 (on the similarity of the relationship between left/right and green/white): 不害其方者反而對, 各當其所。若左右不驪。 (“As they do not intrude into each other’s domain, [green and white] turn to each other as opposites, each matching its place. [In this] they are like the case of left and right that do not intermingle”).

¹²⁶ See Graham 1956/7: 169–170; Kandel 1974: 139 n. 7.

¹²⁷ It attempts to read the first part – about “one and two” and “left and right” – on the basis of the assumption that a single thing, while engaging in the process of changing, can therefore not be split into separate things. While this line of thought succeeds in making sense of the first part of TBL, it patently collapses when it has to deal with the “animal examples”.

¹²⁸ Graham 1956/7: 162.

¹²⁹ Shěn 1992c (1989): 446.

¹³⁰ Shěn 1992a: 508.

‘(horse) tails’ – which one might invoke to distinguish or unify these kinds. These minor details in fact turn out to be crucial to the following discussion: the first example invoked immediately after the discussion of the relation between left and right is the problem of oxen and sheep having horns.

In what follows, I present a number of sources which provide what I consider the discursive contexts that explain the apparent argumentative gaps between the sections of TBL. One of the clues is found in Guṇabhadra’s (394–468)¹³¹ translation of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*.¹³² When discussing his entrance into the world of suffering and karmic retribution, the Buddha here explains that he is *neither* different *nor* not different from it. This somewhat elusive claim is then illustrated in the following way:

[17] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, fasc. 4 (Léngqié ābāduōluó bǎo jīng 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, T 16, no. 670, p. 505):

若二者應有異。如牛角相似，故不異，長短差別故有異。[...]

If they (= Buddha and the world made up of the five aggregates [*skāndhas*; *yīn* 陰]) are two they need to have a difference. Just like one does not consider different the horns of an ox because they are similar, but considers long and short different, because they are set apart from each other.

大慧，如牛右角異左角左角異右角。如是長短種種色各各異。

Mahāmāti, it is like the right horn of an ox being different from its left horn, just like the left horn of an ox is different from its right horn. Like this, a long and short item of each and every kind of matter (*rūpa*; lit. color) will be different.

The Buddha here not only explains the relationship between different kinds of animals with respect to their having or not having horns, he also relates these expositions both to the problem of duality and non-duality and to the relation between left and right. The passage thus combines in one single illustrative example precisely the same crucial terms which occur in two subsequent sections of TBL.

While in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* the relationship is simply illustrated by means of an analogy, the following excerpt, transmitted in the *Chéngshìlùn*, offers a proper explanation of the connection between the notions of ‘right’ and ‘left’ and a cow’s horns:

¹³¹ Guṇabhadra (求那跋陀羅 Qúnàbātuóluó) is said to have reached China around 425 CE.

¹³² Léngqié ābāduōluó bǎojīng 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經.

[18] *Chéngshílùn*, fasc. 40 (p. 262):

一時生法，則無相因。如二角俱生，不得言左右相因。

If entities (*dharma*s) arise at (one and) the same moment, then there is no mutual causation for them. It is like two horns that arise together, when one cannot say that [the] left and [the] right [horn] cause each other.¹³³

The terms familiar to us from their loose association in the first two sections of TBL are here related to each other in a perfectly transparent way. The reason for associating the problem of “left and right” with the topic of bovine horns is patently related to the problem of causation. What is the relation between the single terms in combined phrases such as “left and right”? Obviously neither of them can be identified as the other’s cause – the arising of the left horn of an ox is not caused by its right horn, and vice versa. This example is significant, since historically it was raised by the Sautrāntikas against the idea of the simultaneity of causation, as developed in *Sarvāstivādin* scholasticism.¹³⁴ The Sautrāntikas called for a return to what the Buddha taught in the *sūtras* and dismissed the commentarial literature collected in the *abhidharmas*. Many of the specific doctrinal innovations they developed against the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* also found their way into *mahāyānic Yogācāra*.¹³⁵ In view of these close ties between *Sautrāntika* and *Yogācāra*, it is thus no surprise that we find the example of the two horns of an ox both in the *yogācāric Laṅkāvatārasūtra* and in the anti-*Sarvāstivādic Chéngshílùn*.

The focus on this particular notion of causality is also reflected in Buddhist “logic”, which – at least on Chinese soil – Buddhists themselves referred to as a “science of causes” (*yīnmíng* 因明; from Skrt. *hetuvidyā*). The clarification of whether the appearance in combination – be it temporal succession or spatial adjacency – of two different entities is “substantial” (i.e. the effect of a causation) or whether it is mere imagination was at the core of this “science”. This problem is of immediate relevance to the realm of language or names as well. It is crucial for so-called ‘suppositional’ or ‘conventional’ names (*jiǎmíng* 假名) that they refer to complex concepts construed on the basis of perceptual entities, such as colors and sounds, as their material basis. As these basic percepts

¹³³ Sastri only provides a summary, rendering this as follows: “Of things that arise simultaneously one does not become the cause of the other, e.g. the horns on the head of a cow”; Sastri 1978: 80.

¹³⁴ Westerhoff 2018: 68–69.

¹³⁵ On Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhaṣya* and its relevance for the relationship between *Sautrāntika* and early *Yogācāra*, see, e.g., King 1998; Kritzer 2003.

are thus the conditioning causes of the concepts referred to by “suppositional” names, the manifestation of the complex constructions they refer to hinges on the previous manifestation of their constituents. The same constitutive role is accorded to conceptual constructions, which are themselves constitutive parts of even larger conceptual constructions: there is no cart without an axis, and there is no cow – the examples suggest – without horns. In fact, the relation of body parts to their respective bodies was a favorite example for illustrating the composite character of so-called ‘collective names’ (*zǒngmíng* 總名), such as ‘cow’ or ‘cart’. This is evident from the ubiquitous stock examples of “hare horns” (*tù jiǎo* 兔角; Skrt. *śaśaśṛṅga*) and “turtle fur” (*guī máo* 龜毛; *kacchapaloman*) for insubstantial, merely illusionary entities – there simply is no instance of the appearance of a horn that would partake in the conditioning of the subsequent manifestation of a hare.

The earliest extant work on “Buddhist logic”, the *Rúshílùn* (如實論 **Tarkaśāstra*), which only survives in Paramārtha’s Chinese translation¹³⁶ from 550 CE, already illustrates two argumentative fallacies (*sìyīn* 似因; lit. ‘apparent causes’; Skrt. *hetvābhāsa*) in the relation of animal kinds to the property of having horns:

[19] *Rúshílùn* (**Tarkaśāstra*) (T 32, no. 1533, p. 36):

一不成就者。譬如有人立馬來。何以故？見有角故。馬無角。角為因不成就。不能立馬來。

二不定者。譬如有人立秦牛來。何以故。見有角故。有角不定牛。羊鹿等亦有角。角為因不定。不能立秦牛來。

First: Unsubstantiated [cause] (*asiddha*): For example, there is a man maintaining that a horse is coming. For what cause? Because he sees that it has horns. Horses do not have horns. Horns as a cause are unsubstantiated. It does not enable [one to] maintain that a horse is coming.

Second: Indefinite [cause] (*anaikāntika*): For example, there is a man who maintains that there is an ox coming. For what cause? Because he sees horns. Having horns does not define an ox. Sheep, deer, etc. also have horns. To consider horns as the cause is indefinite. It does not enable [one] to maintain that an ox is coming.

These two fallacies are related to a fault of the ‘cause’ (*yīn* 因) in a Buddhist inference. From the logical point of view, the ‘cause’ corresponds to the minor premise in a syllogism. In the first example, someone mistakenly concludes

136 Chin. Zhēndì 真諦 (499–569).

from the fact that something “has horns” that it “is a horse”. This is clearly invalid, because the major premise (technically expressed in Buddhist logic by the ‘analogous example’, yù 喻, *udāhāraṇa*) “just like everything having horns is a horse” is obviously false, as it is unsubstantiated. The ‘cause’, the presence of horns, (minor premise, “this is a horn/these are horns”) thus does not substantiate, and hence fails to validate the conclusion that “this is a horse”. In the second example, someone considers the presence of something “having horns” a valid cause for inferring that “it is an ox”. This is invalid as well, because the analogon (i.e. the major premise) “whatever has horns is an ox” is obviously wrong. Yet it is not false either. This is not because oxen do not have horns (“whatever is an ox has horns”), but because, technically speaking, the middle term (‘ox’) is undistributed. Not everything that has horns is an ox – as the text makes explicit, something that has horns can just as well be a sheep, or a deer, or something else. The use of animal examples in discussions about what we would interpret as clarifications of the relationship between properties and kinds was thus firmly established in Buddhist contexts.

Returning to the *GSLZ*, we have noted that TBL fails to explain why it connects the problem of the directions ‘left’ and ‘right’ and the numbers ‘one’ and ‘two’ in the first part with the seemingly unrelated discussion about the role of the property ‘having horns’ in the relationship of oxen to other kinds of animals in the second. In contrast, the excerpts from fourth- through sixth-century CE translations of Buddhist texts, as discussed above, provide arguments in which all of these terms are related to each other in a detailed, comprehensible manner. This suggests that the authors of TBL may indeed have composed their piece under the influence of arguments like the ones presented above.¹³⁷ It goes without saying that this does

137 Marginal observations that seem to speak in favor of this assumption include the fact that TBL opens its arguments in both section two and section three with a chiasmic structure. Just as the Buddha in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (T 16, no. 670, p. 505) somewhat redundantly repeats his statement about the difference between the right and left horn of an ox – possibly so as to underline the non-directional character of this relationship (如牛右角異左角左角異右角) – thereby leaving the chiasmus *right left* – *left right*, the authors of TBL famously start their second and third analysis or disputation (*biàn* 辯) with “羊合牛非馬牛合羊非雞” (part 2 [DZ/11721172/2/3v[11v]/2–4]) and “青以白非黃白以青非碧” (part 3 [DZ/1172/2/4v[12v]/9–10]) – that is, with the (logically unnecessary) chiasms *sheep ox* – *ox sheep* and *blue white* – *white blue*. Graham has already noted this (1956/7: 150) and has interpreted it as evidence of the influence of parallel medieval prose (*pián wén* 駢文). Perhaps the tendency to resort to this style was additionally enforced by the Buddhist model – where, *nota bene*, the repetition can be considered to make sense for the reasons stated. Moreover, the Mohist ‘Canons’, from which part two of TBL takes the animal examples of the horse and the ox, never talks about a sheep (or a chicken, for that matter). Our example [19] from the *Rúshílùn* shows that the sheep in that

not imply that they also understood – or even attempted to understand – the Buddhist reasoning. It is equally imaginable that someone accustomed to disputations inspired by the Mohist ‘Canons’ who came across such passages in Buddhist texts might have considered it an intellectual challenge to make sense of them.¹³⁸

5.2 MSL

Turning our attention to MSL, we note that, unlike TBL, this chapter does not consist of thematically discrete parts. The delimitation of the single sections and the identification of their mutual relation is therefore more difficult here. What is evident, however, is that the piece consists at least of two main portions which are largely unconnected.

The first is reminiscent of “cosmological” speculations in ancient texts such as the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子,¹³⁹ the *Zhuāngzǐ*,¹⁴⁰ and also the *Lùnhéng* 論衡 (Balanced Discourses),¹⁴¹ which – under the obvious influence of *Lǎozǐ*

text is the first stock example of an animal with horns, listed immediately after the ox. For an alternative explanation, see Suter, forthcoming. Additionally, the opening line of the second part of TBL seems to be the only element of the entire section which is taken neither from the ‘Canons’ nor from the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*.

138 For a detailed analysis of the arrangement of TBL, see Suter, forthcoming.

139 ‘Jīngshénxùn’ 精神訓 5, in Zhāng 1997: 737–738; ‘Chùzhēnxùn’ 俶真訓 1–2, in Zhāng 1997: 137–138. Cf. also the *Guānzǐ*, ‘Báixīn’ 白心 1, which defines “heaven and earth” as “the largest collection containing all things” (*bāo wù zhòng* 苞物衆); Lí/Liáng 2006: 788. Perhaps this is a pun, as 苞 also means ‘root stem’, and thus might point toward the role of “heaven and earth” as the engendering source of all things.

140 I have in mind the speculation about ‘having’ or ‘being there’ (有) and ‘not having/not being there’ (無) and the third source of both (*wèi shǐ yǒu wú* 未始有無 ~ *wú wú* 無無) in sections such as ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論 8, in Guō 1978: 79; ‘Tiāndì’ 天地 8, in Guō 1978: 424; ‘Zhīběiyóu’ 知北游 8, in Guō 1978: 759–760; and as clearly reflected in the much more explicit ‘Chùzhēnxùn’ 俶真訓 chapter of the *Huáinánzǐ* (paragraphs 1–2 and 17), in Zhāng 1997: 199.

141 ‘Zìrán’ 自然 6, in Huáng 1964: 780. In a way, this links the pre-Qín and early Hàn discussions to those of the early medieval period. It opposes the idea of a ‘self-emergence’ or ‘self-emanation’ (*zì rán* 自然) of things to the conception of “heaven and earth” as their creator, while the third-century CE scholar Ruǎn Jí apparently has no problem using both terms to refer to the same thing in his discourse about the *Zhuāngzǐ* (Ruǎn 1978: 32). This is different from the slightly younger Wáng Bì 王弼 (326–349), who subordinates “heaven and earth” to ‘self-emergence’ and consequently refutes their creative function (cf. Mather 1976: xxiii). See also Liú Tishèng’s reference to the Guō Xiàng commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ* and to apocryphal literature on the *Classic of Changes* (*Yìjīng* 易經) earlier in this volume, pp. 273–274.

40¹⁴² – ponder over “heaven-and-earth” (*tiān dì* 天地) as the producer of all other things. This kind of speculation remains current until the medieval period, and it gains renewed prominence among thinkers living at the turn of the third to the fourth century CE, such as Ruǎn Jí 阮籍 (210–263) and Guō Xiàng 郭象 (d. 312).¹⁴³ It is possibly no less relevant that, in its discussion of the problem of identifying single, individual things manifest before one’s eyes, MSL uses the term *guò* 過 (‘to go beyond?’). With this term, it seems to suggest that one should concentrate on this particular item rather than proceeding to other things. Although this passage is far from clear, it seems plausible that its author intends to make the point that when one uses a name with the intention of designating one individual entity, one has to suppress the potential for a name to refer to more than one thing – that is, to be employed as a class term referring to collections rather than to a single individual. Applying a name to a single entity requires us to suspend its classifying function, for which it is constitutive to *go beyond* what is present in one particular place. Such a use of names to refer to more than one entity is precisely what the Later Mohists in B 33 termed ‘*guò*’ (lit. ‘going beyond [itself]’, according to Graham). This interpretation seems to underlie their technical term ‘*guòmíng*’ 過名, which stands for quantifiers such as *huò* 或 (‘one of them [i.e. at least two]’). Given its very semantics, this word implies that, apart from the particular entity to which a word is referred by the speaker

142 *Lǎozǐ* 40: “The ten thousand things are born from (or: inside) having/what is there; having/what is there is born from not having/what is not there” (天下萬物生於有，有生於無。); Wáng 1978: 25. The closest parallel to MSL I was able to find is in the *Héshàng gōng* 河上公 commentary (first century CE?), which states that: “Each of the ten thousand things is born from heaven and earth. Heaven and earth have shape and position. Therefore, it says ‘they are born from (or: inside?) having/what is there’” (萬物皆從天地生，天地有形位，故言生於有也。); see Zhèng 1971: 242. “Heaven and earth”, just as in the above-mentioned passage from *Guǎnzǐ* ‘Báixīn’ 1, are identified as things, but it is striking that the commentary further characterizes heaven and earth with the attributes of having ‘shape’ (*xíng* 形) and ‘position’ (*wèi* 位), two of the key terms discussed in the *GSLZ*, the latter notably in the first part of MSL, which is under investigation here.

143 This is especially so in Guō’s commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ*. In our case, however, the most instructive case in point is Ruǎn’s cosmological speculation in his *Discourse about Understanding Zhuāngzǐ*, which develops its ideal of an undivided unity of the world on a potentially infinite progression of the mutual inclusion (‘unification’; *tóng* 同) and exclusion (‘distinction’; *yì* 異) of classes of things defined by ‘names’ (*míng* 名) of varying degrees of generality; see Ruǎn 1978: 32.

(e.g. *mǎ huò* 馬或; roughly “one [of the] horse[s]”), there exists at least one other entity of the same kind.¹⁴⁴ It is quite possible that it is precisely this collective or “classifying” use of single names to refer to several entities which the author of MSL cautions his reader to avoid. The first part of MSL also resembles the language of a passage in the *Guānzǐ* 管子 which describes how the sage, in designating things accurately, associates the sound of the names resounding in his ears with the shapes manifesting themselves before his eyes.¹⁴⁵ The sage’s infallibility in this matter is said to allow him to correctly name whatever he encounters. Such mastery is moreover illustrated here by the purported fact that he “never raises his finger to point at the void”. This is, by the way, one of the few extant early Chinese passages – apart from the notorious ‘*Qíwù lùn*’¹⁴⁶ – which closely connects the terms ‘thing’ (*wù* 物), ‘to point at’ (*zhǐ* 指), and ‘naming’ (*mìng* 命). Given that there is some evidence to suggest that the notoriously obscure ZWL of the *GSLZ*, in spite of more or less obvious traces of later editorial interventions, was actually written at roughly the same date as the Mohist ‘Canons’,¹⁴⁷ the connections between the first part of MSL and the ancient sources mentioned above might not only be indicative of a comparatively early date of composition; they might also contain valuable hints at a possible contextualization of ZWL. Even if none of these references, taken by itself, compellingly points toward a relationship with MSL, taken together they clearly show that not only is it possible to identify plausible connections to older texts, but that these connections are manifold and fairly heterogeneous. Hence, the probability of a

144 Graham uses the term ‘complement’ (Graham 1978: 401). Cf. *Mòzǐ*, ‘*Xiǎoqǔ*’: “One horse is a horse. One (of the) horse(s) is (a) white (one), is two horses, one of which is white; it is not one horse, one of which is white” (一馬，馬也。馬或白者，二馬而或白也，非一馬而或白。); Bì 1995: 171.

145 *Guānzǐ*, ‘*Báixīn*’ 7, in Lǐ/Liáng 2006: 802. Although the details of this passage are unclear, it is intriguing that the sage’s quasi-natural authority over names and things (including the subjects of the sage) is contrasted with administrative efforts to keep records of the achievements and failures of officials.

146 The findings of a recent publication by Esther Klein (2011) show that quotations from the “Inner Chapters” throughout the Western Hàn period are scarce. She therefore concludes that the “Inner Chapters” are late, possibly even the most recent part of the collection. McCraw’s (2010) studies, which are based on the analysis of rhyming patterns, point in the opposite direction: they identify the ‘*Qíwù lùn*’ as one of the most conservative and thus possibly oldest pieces of the *Zhuāngzǐ* corpus.

147 The vocabulary of the last paragraph is rather unique in the whole of received classical Chinese literature, but there are parallels in the ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. Unlike in the case of the remaining chapters of the *GSLZ*, however, we can exclude the idea that these parallels were copied from there. For details, see Suter, forthcoming.

unilateral adoption from one single source – as in the passages based on the Mohist ‘Canons’ – seems unlikely.

In stark contrast to this, the second part of MSL is not only full of terminological parallels with the Mohist ‘Canons’, but as suggested by example [5] above, it can be shown to have been literally construed on their model, at least in certain parts. Instead of attempting to further substantiate the difference between these two constitutive parts of MSL, I would simply like to summarize the central terms around which they revolve. As the title suggests, the first part of the discourse addresses the question of how, starting from an analysis of the substance (lit. ‘filling’ or ‘stuffing’, *shí* 實) of a thing located in front of us, we can proceed to its correct designation or name. The crucial terms invoked are thus ‘name’ (*míng* 名) and ‘substance’ (*shí* 實). The second part of MSL, however, consists of lengthy disquisitions about ‘this’ (*cǐ* 此) and ‘that’ (*bǐ* 彼), some of which are clearly copied from the ‘Canons’.¹⁴⁸ And while it readily lends itself to a more or less straightforward interpretation, its precise relation to the first part of the essay about ‘name’ and ‘substance’ remains unclear.

To prepare the next step in our argument, we have to return to the words of the Buddha in the excerpt from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* quoted above:

- [17] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Léngqié ābádūluó bǎo jīng 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, p. 505):
大慧, 如牛右角異左角左角異右角。如是長短種種色各各異。

Mahāmāti, it is like the right horn of an ox being different from its left horn, just like the left horn of an ox is different from its right horn. Like this, a long and short item of each and every kind of matter (*rūpa*) will be different.

The relationship between the right and the left horn of an ox is symmetrical, and as we have already seen, neither is the cause or the effect of the other – a fact which is reflected in the argumentatively sterile repetition which turns the first part of the above passage into a chiasmus.¹⁴⁹ For our present purpose, however, the second part of this statement is more important. For the relation between left and right, the text here introduces the analogon of short and long. This leads us to the following passage from the *Dàzhì dù lùn* 大智度論 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*), translated by Kumārajīva in 405 CE:

¹⁴⁸ See [5a], p. 442 above.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. note 52.

[20] *Dàzhì dù lùn* 大智度論, fasc. 12 (T 25, no. 1509, p. 147):

相待者，如長短、彼此等，實無長短，亦無彼此，以相待故有名。長因短有，短亦因長；彼亦因此，此亦因彼；若在物東，則以為西，在西則以為東；一物未異而有東、西之別，此皆有名而無實也。如是等，名為相待有，是中無實法，不如色、香、味、觸等。

‘Correlative’ attributes are those like ‘long’ and ‘short’, ‘that’ and ‘this’, etc. In reality there is neither ‘long’ nor ‘short’, and there also is no ‘that’ or ‘this’. It is due to their being correlated to (lit. ‘depending on’) each other that they have their name. ‘Long’ follows from there being ‘short’, and ‘short’ equally follows from there being ‘long’. ‘That’ also follows from there being ‘this’; ‘this’ likewise follows from there being ‘that’. It is just like in the case when one is east of a thing, then one will take it for western, and when one is in the west (of it), one will take it for eastern. One single thing by itself cannot be distinguished with respect to a separation between east and west; all of these (words) are instances of there being only a name but no reality (i.e. they are nominal rather than substantial). Examples such as these are called ‘correlative’ attributes (or: beings). There is no real (substantial) entity in them. They are not like color, smell, taste, touch, etc.

Like suppositional names for mentally construed entities, such as carts or cows, terms for correlative attributes are considered “unsubstantial”. They are different from qualities, which are passively perceived and thus allegedly given without the mind’s active interference.¹⁵⁰ At this point, it is more important to direct our attention to a small detail in this passage: the second example of a pair of correlative terms is the demonstrative pronouns ‘this’ (*cǐ* 此) and ‘that’ (*bǐ* 彼), which are so prominent in the second, Mohist-based, section of MSL. As distinct from sensual qualities, which involve real or substantial entities (*shífǎ* 實法), correlative names are only defined through their mutual relation: this entity is “this” only due to its opposition to something else which is “that”, and vice versa. To summarize, we thus note that ‘this’ and ‘that’ belong to the stock examples of names of correlative – and thus unsubstantial – attributes.

¹⁵⁰ This shows that the three sections of TBL deal with terms which, according to the taxonomy of the *Dàzhì dù lùn*, belong to three different categories of names: names of correlative attributes (directions, numbers); conventional or suppositional names (animal names, body parts such as horns and teeth); and names of colors – that is, actual or substantial entities directly presented to our senses. The very fact that TBL arguably attempts to establish a communality rather than a difference between these three classes of words suggests that its author may not have been aware of this distinction.

At this point, we need to return to MSL. As we have noted above, the concluding section of this chapter contains an extended and somewhat verbose discussion of the relationship between ‘this’ and ‘that’. And while it is more difficult to condense the first part of MSL into a couple of central terms, it is clear that, as is already announced in the title itself, the text deals with the relationship between ‘names’ (*míng* 名) and ‘substances’ (*shí* 實).

Let us now have a look at an excerpt from the *Zhàolùn* 肇論, a collection of essays composed by the scholar-monk Sēng Zhào 僧肇 (384–414 CE):

- [21] Sēng Zhào 僧肇 (384–414 CE), ‘Bù zhēn kōng lùn’ 不真空論 (Discourse on Not Taking Emptiness as Authentic) (*Zhàolùn* 肇論, T 45, no. 1858, p. 152):
夫以名求物，物無當名之實。以物求名，名無得物之功。物無當名之實，非物也；名無得物之功，非名也。是以名不當實，實不當名。名實無當，萬物安在？
故：《中觀》云：「物無彼此。」而人以此爲此，以彼爲彼。彼亦以此爲彼，以彼爲此。此、彼莫定乎一名，而惑者懷必然之志。

Now, if you rely on names to look for things, no thing will match as the substance of a name. If you rely on things to look for names, no name will meet with the function of a thing. If no thing matches as the substance of a name, this negates things. If no name meets with the function of a thing, this negates names. Hence, names do not match substances, and substances do not match names. But if there is no match between substances and names, where, after all, are the ten thousand things?

Therefore: The *Treatise on the Middle Path* says: “No [single] thing is *this* or *that*”, but people consider this to be *this*, and they consider that as *that*. It is also through *this* that that is considered *that*, and [this] is considered as *this* through *that*. None of them, neither *this* nor *that*, is defined by one single name. But the deluded harbor the conviction that it must be like this.¹⁵¹

The above passage consists of two subsequent paragraphs. We shall refrain from providing a further analysis here. Suffice it to say that Sēng Zhào’s position seems directed against the idea manifest in the categorization of names in the *Dàzhì dù lùn*, as discussed above. The latter suggested that certain names – namely, those for sensual qualities – imply some substantial factors which are materially caused and not mere products of the imagination. On the contrary,

151 For translations, see also Liebenenthal 1948: 65–66; Robinson 1967: 226–227.

Sēng Zhào contends that all names fail to grasp anything substantial, so that neither the reference of a name to a purported real effect of causation nor the correspondence of an allegedly real entity to its name are possible. In view of the alleged impossibility of correlating names and real substances, the paragraph ends with a rhetorical question, which calls into doubt the very existence of the ten thousand things.

The conclusion, in which Sēng Zhào actually comes up with the purported solution to the problem, emphatically opens with a ‘therefore’, which is followed by a quotation from the newly translated *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāśāstra* (*Zhōnglùn* 中論). Its somewhat enigmatic claim that in no thing is there a ‘this’ or a ‘that’ is then elaborated upon in a way with which we are familiar from the definition of “correlative” attributes in the *Dàzhì dù lùn*, as quoted above.¹⁵² First, it is human beings who are responsible for making things into ‘these’ and ‘those’, and second, the meaning of both terms, rather than pointing toward anything essential outside of themselves, is simply defined through their mutual relation. Consequently, neither of them can be determined or defined by a single name. This rhetorical move is all too obvious: as a true follower of the middle path of non-duality, Sēng Zhào universalizes what has been acknowledged as the specificity of one particular kind of names. Assimilating all names to correlative names like the demonstratives under discussion, he raises “correlativity” and as its corollary, insubstantiality, to the level of a general characteristic of all names. For our present purpose, however, we can omit the details and problems of Sēng Zhào’s approach. What is important to note here is that, from his perspective, it makes perfect sense to proceed directly from the problem of the relation between names and reality to the discussion of the correlative terms ‘this’ and ‘that’.

Note that this sequence of topics is mirrored in the division of MSL, which is also organized into two subsequent parts: the first one dealing with ‘names’ and ‘reality’, the second with the demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’. However, the connection here is not even remotely comparable to the rigor of Sēng Zhào’s treatise. Rather, the piece gives the impression that its author took the link between the problem of correlating names and realities and the discussion of the demonstratives for granted, and thus felt no need to spend any effort commenting on it. We may thus assume that he was aware of the discussions that contextualized the problem of the relation between language and reality within a discourse invoking the demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’.

¹⁵² See [20], p. 483 above.

We might even wonder whether the author – or rather the editor – who complemented the apparently earlier first part of MSL with the discussion of ‘this’ and ‘that’, which he partly copied from the ‘Canons’, was unaware of the precedent of Sēng Zhào’s short treatise. We shall come back to this point in section seven below. To conclude the present subsection, I will now add one last observation which, in spite of its preliminary nature, seems to provide another indication that speaks in favor of the assumption of a strong Buddhist context informing the composition of MSL.

For this purpose, we must take one step back in order to have another look at the peculiar way in which MSL modifies its Mohist model:

[5a] *Mòzǐ*, ‘*Mòjīngshuō*’ B 33:¹⁵³

知是之非此也，有知是之不在此也。 (DZ/1176/10/12v=511/8.5–9.1)

[5b] *GSLZ*, ‘*Míngshí lùn*’ (DZ/1172/3/6r[20r]/4–6):

知此之非{此}也，知此之不在此也，明[=則]不謂也。

知彼之非彼也，知彼之不在彼，則不謂也。

We have already noted that the passage in MSL differs from its Mohist precedent in its replacement of the anaphoric *shì* with the near and distant demonstratives *cǐ* and *bǐ*. We have also seen that the verbal use of the former, as exemplified in the Mohist example, was already common in the pre-imperial period, both in the common sense of ‘to consider correct/right’ and in the technical sense of ‘to identify sth. as (of) the same (class)’. In stark contrast, the verbal use of the demonstratives *cǐ* and *bǐ*, as exemplified in MSL, seems unattested in pre-Qín and Hàn texts – with the exception of a handful of highly opaque cases in the ‘Canons’. Again, we find a very specific use of these terms in a context we have already come across above, toward the end of our discussion of JBL: a *Sarvāstivādic* text, the *Abhidharmayāyānusāraśāstra* (*Āpídámó shùn zhènglǐ lùn* 阿毘達磨順正理論, T 1562),¹⁵⁴ translated by Xuánzàng between 653 and 654 CE,¹⁵⁵ explains why the correlativity of names does *not* justify the claim that they lack a substantial foundation. After arguing that there are distinctive marks such as ‘hardness’ which are directly sensed in touch and immediately testify to the reality of substantial elements such as ‘earth’, the discussion

¹⁵³ Cf. Amano 1968: 225–226.

¹⁵⁴ The text is marked by “sharp sectarian polemics” (Willemen et al. 1998: 247) and intends “to safeguard Kāśmīra Vaibhāṣika orthodoxy by demonstrating the erroneous interpretations in Vasubandhu’s auto-commentary” (i.e. the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*) (p. 244).

¹⁵⁵ Willemen et al. 1998: 245.

addresses the problem of correlative designations such as ‘heavy’ and ‘light’, which are clearly “correlative”. With regard to these, the text states:

- [22] *Abhidharmanyāyānusārasāstra* (*Āpídámó shùn zhènglǐ lùn* 阿毘達磨順正理論, T 29, no. 1562, p. 353):

又言輕重相待成故。非實有者。此非善說。

Moreover, if one says that light and heavy are not really there (do not really exist), because they are constituted in mutual dependence, this is not a good theory.

譬如因果。輕重亦然。非即待此復名為 果。 謂如一物待此名因。待彼名果。非即待彼復名為因。

If we take the example of cause and effect, then light and heavy are like these. I say that basing oneself on this to name a thing the cause is not the same as basing oneself on this to name it the effect. Basing ourselves on that to name it the effect is not the same as basing ourselves on that again to name it the cause.

如是一物待此名輕。非即待此復名為重。待彼名重。非即待彼復名為輕。因果既實。此如何假。

In this way, naming one thing light on the basis of this is not the same as to again name it heavy on the basis of this. Naming it hard on the basis of that is not the same as again naming it light on the basis of that. As cause and effect are real, how could these (= light and heavy) be (merely) superimposed?

故唯能詮相待不定。非所詮體而有改易。

Therefore, it is only the notion (the interpretation; lit. “what enables one to interpret”) which is mutually dependent and not fixed; it is not the case that the substance (object) interpreted would indeed have moved or been exchanged.

又如彼此岸。輕重性亦爾。謂於彼物立彼岸名。非說此岸令體改易。或於此物立此岸名。非說彼岸令體改易。

Again, it is like this or that side [of a river]. And with the nature of light and heavy, it is also like this. If for that thing I establish a name of that side, this is not to say that this side makes (its) substance move or change. Alternatively, if I establish for this thing a name of this side, this is not to say that that side makes (its) substance move or change.

The text here argues that the replacement of correlative names only implies a change in perspective,¹⁵⁶ but the perspective does not change anything about the reality that is conceived or expressed in words. The demonstrative pronouns *cī* and *bī* thus clearly refer to the opposite terms, which may well be relative, but which only mark the opposite ends of a scale. Depending on my vantage point, I may name something ‘heavy’ or ‘light’, but this has absolutely no consequence for the reality of the thing I refer to; as another example ingeniously shows: “Reducing a fire means cooling down so that there is only a reduced concentration of warmth. Based on this (the former, i.e. ‘cool’) one calls it by the name of ‘cool’; based on that (the latter, i.e. ‘warm’), one calls it by the name of ‘warm’. Yet, although the name is not fixed, the substance is real.”¹⁵⁷ This is a crystal-clear analysis of the correlative terms ‘this’ and ‘that’, which refutes the assumption that their mutual dependence implies the lack of a real basis of designation.

Due to the lack of illustrative examples, it is unclear how exactly the compilers of MSL understood the relation between ‘names’, ‘reality’, and correlative terms, as summarized by the demonstratives *bī* and *cī*. Nevertheless, it seems highly plausible that discussions of the kind presented above provide the background for its compilation. Moreover, while Xuánzàng’s translation is late, the earliest *Sarvāstivādin* commentaries on the *abhidharma* were translated into Chinese as early as in the late fourth century CE. As we have seen above, this took place only shortly after the medieval renaissance of Mohist disputation set in.

To summarize these observations, in both TBL and MSL we note a clear caesura separating the parts with obvious parallels to the ‘Canons’ from the parts that lack such parallels. While neither TBL nor MSL makes any palpable effort to explicate the precise relationship between the topics discussed in these neighboring sections, a look at several relevant Buddhist texts reveals precisely the rationale that seems to bridge these gaps.

¹⁵⁶ My interpretation of the passage must remain preliminary. As Willemsen et al. observe, the arguments of the text “often present interpretative difficulties for the modern reader, in as much as they presume intimate familiarity with the entire system of Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika thought and often hinge upon subtle distinctions or obscure details of doctrine” (Willemsen et al. 1998: 248).

¹⁵⁷ “又如：汝說。微火爲冷。有微煖聚。待此名冷。待彼名煖名雖不定而體是實。” (T 1562, fasc. 29, p. 354).

5.3 Further Buddhist Traces in TBL

To complete our picture of possible Buddhist reverberations in the Mohist-inspired chapters of the *GSLZ*, another look at TBL seems instructive. There are hints that this chapter not only adopts various topics from an explicitly Buddhist context, but that even its very name might be related to these particular references. We have already suggested that the thematic continuity between the first and the second parts – between the discussion of left and right and the subsequent disquisitions on animal properties, first and foremost the horns of oxen – possibly reflects an argument of the *Sautrāntikas* against the *Sarvāstivādins*: the example of the simultaneous appearance of the left and the right horns of an ox was intended as proof of the impossibility of the *Sarvāstivāda* theory of simultaneous causation.¹⁵⁸ However, TBL is possibly even more deeply infused with Buddhist elements than one sees on the surface. To demonstrate this, a textual variant of TBL is revealing: a short passage from the beginning of the first part of TBL, dedicated to the discussion of the numbers one and two and the positions left and right, as transmitted in the comparatively early *Shuōfú* 說郛 edition of the *GSLZ*, stands out in one significant aspect:

[23] *GSLZ*, ‘Tōngbiàn lùn’:

Dào zàng (DZ/1172/3r[11r]/1–4)

Shuōfú (Táo 1986 [1927]: vol. 8, fasc. 47, p. 5r, l. 8–9)¹⁵⁹

A 曰：右可謂二乎？

Can right be called two?

A 曰：右為二位乎？

Can right be considered two positions/the position (of) two?

B 曰：不可。

It cannot.

B 曰：不可。

It cannot.

A 曰：左可謂二乎？

Can left be called two?

A 曰：左可為二位乎？

Can left be considered two positions/the position (of) two?

B 曰：不可。

It cannot.

B 曰：不可。

It cannot.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Westerhoff 2015: 68–69.

¹⁵⁹ For an investigation of the *Shuōfú* edition, see Indraccolo 2013.

A 曰：左與右可謂二？
Can left and right
be called two?

B 曰：可。
They can.

A 曰：左與右可謂二？
Can left and right be called two?

B 曰：可。
They can.

This synopsis shows that the two versions differ in two respects. Besides replacing the first two instances of the verb *wèi* 謂 ('to call') with *wéi* 為 ('to consider'), the *Shuōfū* (SF) version – like MSL – speaks about 'positions' (*wèi* 位).¹⁶⁰ Graham long ago proposed that the short dialogue at the beginning of TBL, from which the excerpt above is taken, refers to the counting rods that were used in China before the introduction of the abacus.¹⁶¹ In our present context, it is highly relevant that the example of the counters in an abacus was one of the four major accounts the *Sarvāstivādin*s developed to argue that all dharmas exist – in spite of their different temporal characteristics of being past, present, and future.¹⁶² The counters in an abacus do not represent different numbers as intrinsic differences. Their difference is one of relative position or state, rather than a difference in substance – in the abacus, the counter for thousands is not bigger than the counter for hundreds. This argument for the insubstantiality of temporal properties is attributed to Vasumitra (Chin. Shìyǒu 世友, second century CE) and referred to as a "difference of state" (位有異 *avastahā-anyathātva*).¹⁶³ And while

160 This technical term also occurs in *Zhōuyì* scholarship. However, unlike in the *GSLZ*, where it refers to the relative position of a thing in space, here it only refers to the line positions in a hexagram.

161 Graham 1965: 151–152.

162 For a detailed discussion of this problem and its historical development, as well as extensive translations, see Dessein 2007.

163 Willemen et al. 1998: 22; Westerhoff 2018: 64–65. Cf., e.g., *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣaśāstra* (T 1545, fasc. 77, p. 396): 說位異者。彼謂諸法於世轉時。由位有異非體有異。如運一籌置一位名一。置十位名十。置百位名百。雖歷位有異而籌體無異。如是諸法經三世位。雖得三名而體無別。此師所立世無雜亂。 ("Those who argue for the difference of position say that the alternation of the temporal characteristics of dharmas derives from a difference of position and not from a difference of substance. It is just like moving a counting rod. When you place it in the position of one, you name it 'one'; when you place it in position ten, you name it 'ten'; when you place it in position hundred you name it 'hundred'. Although there is a difference in the position it passes through, the substance of the counting rod has no difference. In this way, all dharmas pass through the three times. Even though they receive three different names (past, present, future), their substance is not distinct." For an alternative translation, see Dessein 2007: 332–333. Dessein shows that while this argument is already present in the oldest version of the *Vibhāṣa* compendium (*Vibhāṣaśāstra* T 1547 [Pīpōshālùn 鞞婆沙論],

Chinese translators before Xuánzàng coined terms for this “difference of state” that lacked the word *wèi*,¹⁶⁴ this crucial term itself already occurs in the short outline of the argument in the earliest *Vibhāṣa* compendium translated into Chinese in the late fourth century CE. Interestingly enough, here it has the specific meaning of a single horizontal row on an abacus which, depending on its relative position, counts the ones, tens, hundreds, and thousands (etc.), respectively.¹⁶⁵ This image is particularly interesting, as the multilayered structure of the rows of an abacus closely resembles the arrangement of the six lines in a hexagram – and it is precisely to single line positions in a hexagram the technical term *wèi* was referred in contemporary Chinese scholarship about the *Changes*, that is, the most authoritative indigeneous source for the conceptualization of change.

In view of the way the editors of JBL and TBL seem to have written their pieces – namely, by integrating into their own compositions passages from ancient texts or fragments that contain crucial terms disputed in their own time, such as ‘hard’, ‘stone’, ‘left’, ‘right’, or ‘ox horn’ – it appears plausible that the variant transmitted in the SF version might in fact be earlier. If we assume that Graham and Shěn are right in identifying this first part of the extant TBL as pre- or early imperial, it seems plausible that its compilers came across this fragment and were struck by the occurrence, in an ancient text, of the crucial term *wèi* (‘position’), which was so prominent in contemporary discussions about the nature of change and time, and thus integrated it into their own essay on this topic. As we have already seen, the example of the left and right horns of an ox also arose from the controversies over the *Sarvāstivādin* concept of time, though more specifically referring to their theory of simultaneous causation. The fact that it appears immediately after the discussion of ‘position’ in TBL is thus hardly coincidental, even more so

extant in a Chinese translation from 383 CE), the attribution to Vasumitra only occurs later (Dessein 2007: 335).

164 *Vibhāṣaśāstra* (T 1547) has *shíyì* 時異 (“difference in moment of time”, p. 962); *Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (*Zá āpītán xīn lùn* 雜阿毘曇心論, T 1552) has *fēn fēn yì* 分分異 (“difference according to the subdivisions [of time]”, p. 295).

165 *Vibhāṣaśāstra* T 1547, p. 962: “Those [holding] that the point in time is different explain that the factors (dharmas) receive their names according to the moment in time. And as [the difference] is one in the moment of time, it is not substance (lit. ‘the seed’) [that is different]. It is like a counting rod. When you move it to the lower position for the first time, the ones turn into tens, [then you] reach the hundreds and the thousands. This single rod gets its name according to the changing moment in time” (時異者說彼法隨時得名。時故非種故。如算子初下位，一轉十，至百千。彼一算子隨轉時得名。).

as this might also prove helpful in explaining why this chapter came to be called “*tōng biàn lùn*”.

Taken in isolation, the word *tōng* in this title is ambiguous. Read as a verb, it can mean ‘to understand’; referring to a state, it means ‘constancy’, and it thus represents the lexical opposite of ‘change’, the second term in the title. While it is impossible to decide which interpretation is preferable on the basis of TBL itself, the present discussion strongly suggests that the first is more likely. Both examples – the relative position of the counting rods as a symbol of the merely relative difference of temporal properties and the example of the simultaneous appearance of the horns of an ox – pertain to the overall problem of *understanding* the principles underlying change. Given the prominence of the phrase “*tōng biàn*” in the *Xìcí* 繫辭 commentary on the *Zhōuyì* 周易¹⁶⁶ in the context of fourth-century CE “dark learning” (*xuánxué* 玄學),¹⁶⁷ when the first *abhidharma* texts were translated into Chinese,¹⁶⁸ it would not seem far-fetched for a Chinese scholar conversant in *Zhōuyì* exegesis and aware of the *Sarvāstivādin* discussions about the nature of temporal properties to choose the expression “*tōng biàn*” as the title of his text – even if this forces a reading of the term *tōng* in the sense of ‘understanding’, which is possibly more specific than the common interpretation of this term in discussions about the *Changes* as ‘penetrating’, an interpretation which maintains the connotations of both knowledge and persistence or constancy.

While an unstated relation to Buddhist debates about change and time seems highly probable in the case of the first part of TBL, the passage about the ox horns which introduces the second part, with its discussion of animal kinds, may also conceivably be informed by another Buddhist attempt to come to terms with the problem of change. The oldest *Sarvāstivādin* attempt to reconcile the doctrine of the existence of all dharmas with their varying temporal properties, as transmitted in the *abhidharma*, is attributed to a certain Dharmatrāta (Fǎjiù 法救). He characterized the distinction between the temporal properties of a *dharma* as a difference in modes of being (*bhāva-*

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Zhōuyì zhù shū* 周易注疏 (fasc. 11, p. 248): 通變之謂事。 (“What persists through change is called (one’s) affairs/duties [or: events]”).

¹⁶⁷ Bart Dessein has in fact suggested that “it might have been Buddhism that stimulated creativity in Chinese philosophy, thus forming *xuanxue* thinking”, a supposition which, according to him, is “corroborated both in terms of chronology and content” (Dessein 2016: 291).

¹⁶⁸ Hán Kāngbó 韓康伯 (fl. second half of the fourth century CE) comments the *Xìcí* passage quoted above as follows: “When a thing is exhausted it changes; what persists after changing is life/reproduction, from which affairs/duties/events arise” (物窮則變，變而通之，事之所由生也。); *Zhōuyì zhù shū*, fasc. 11, p. 248. In his commentary, Hán uses the phrase “*tōng biàn*” half-a-dozen times.

anyathātvā, *yǒu lèi yì* 有類異) such as shape (*ākṛti*, *xíng* 形) or quality (*guṇa*, *shì* 勢), rather than substances.¹⁶⁹ That the Chinese translators around Xuánzàng decided to capture the technical Buddhist term ‘mode of being’ (*bhava*) with the Chinese expression *lèi* 類 (i.e. ‘kind’ or ‘class’) would at least have provided a putative compiler of TBL with a good reason to include not only the topic of numbers and directions, but also that of animal kinds in his discussion of change. And while earlier translations in the fourth through the fifth centuries CE adopted different Chinese terms (*shì yì* 事異, *fēn yì* 分異) for *bhāva-anyathātvā*,¹⁷⁰ it appears of some relevance to our case that the *Samyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*, a comparatively early *Vibhāṣa* text translated into Chinese in 434, attributes this theory of differences in “modes of being” to the “*Sarvāstivādin* of *change*” (*zhuǎnbiàn sàpódūo* 轉變薩婆多) in general, rather than to a particular master.¹⁷¹

The intricacies of the *Sarvāstivāda* in and *Sautrāntika* doctrines sketched above are as complex as TBL remains elusive in many respects. This, along with the limits of space, forces me to restrict myself to an account of a number of more or less salient similarities between TBL and these theories. However, TBL contains one possible reference to a text from the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* that is more explicit than those discussed so far. This nicely complements our examination, as it comes in the discussion of genuine and mixed colors in the third and last part of TBL. The *Āryavasumitrabodhisattva-saṅgītīśāstra* (*Zūn Póxūmì púsà suǒjī lùn* 尊婆須密菩薩所集論, T 28, no. 1549),

169 Willemen et al. 1998: 21; Westerhoff 2018: 64. Cf. *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣaśāstra* (T 1545, fasc. 77, p. 396): 說類異者。彼謂諸法於世轉時。由類有異非體有異。如破金器等作餘物時形雖有異而顯色無異。又如乳等變成酪等時捨味勢等不捨顯色。如是諸法從未來世至現在世時。雖捨未來類得現在類。而彼法體無得無捨。 (“Those who explain the differences as modes hold that the change of the dharmas in time derives from the fact that their modes have differences, not from the fact that their substance would have differences. It is like destroying a golden jar etc. When you make it into other things, the shape may well be different, but the matter has no difference. Again, at the time when milk etc. changes to become curd etc., it may well lose dispositions such as taste, but it does not lose its matter. It is like this when the dharmas move from the future to the present. Although they lose the future mode to receive the present mode, the substance of their dharmas has nothing it would lose or receive”). Cf. Dessein 2007: 332.

170 See *Vibhāṣaśāstra* (*Pípóshālùn* 鞞婆沙論, T 1547, p. 466) and *Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya* (*Zā āpītán xīn lùn* 雜阿毘曇心論, T 1552, pp. 961–962), respectively. The former uses *zhōng* 種 for *dravya* (‘substance’), the latter *shì* 事 (T 1552, p. 962).

171 Dessein 2007: 336. Unlike Xuánzàng’s *lèi*, these early translations obviously have no correspondences in TBL and do not invite speculations about possible *Sarvāstivādin* influences on the text.

translated during the Former Qín dynasty in 381 CE (Fú Qín 符秦, 351–394),¹⁷² discusses the interactions of the four elements, their characteristics, and the derived visible matter they produce. It offers the example of heating an iron ball. This process is said to make the iron – which is hard by nature – both soft and light. The analysis explains this as an interaction of the four elements. Fire is said to focus the power (*jīn lì* 筋力) accumulated in the firewood. The emerging qualities of lightness, softness, and purity are attributed to the functions of wind, water, and fire respectively, while the loss of hardness is explained according to the intrinsic nature of the element of earth. Hardness, the elementary quality of earth, is said to diminish when exposed to heat. The empirical observation that, for this reason, iron sometimes exhibits the property of heaviness and sometimes that of lightness reflects the varying strength of the four elements, which are considered its material constituents. In a subsequent step, the text proceeds to discuss how the mutual relation of the elements is reflected in the *color*¹⁷³ of iron. The passage runs as follows:

[24] *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra*, fasc. 4 (T 28, no. 1549, p. 758):

生彼鮮明者。由地種生。當言與火相應。應如四大所造青色四大所造黃色耶。或作是說。青色微妙。或作黃色。非青色[。]如青黃石。復次餘四大所造青色。餘四大所造黃色。或依微妙或依黃。非以一色微妙相依。如是青赤。如是青白。如是黃赤。如是黃白。如是赤白是謂六。

What generates its (= the iron's) brilliance arises from the element of earth. When you say that it interacts with fire, is this interaction like the green color (visible matter) produced by the four elements or like the yellow color produced by the four elements? Some adopt this explanation: green color minimizes. Some say the yellow color negates the green color. But when it comes to a green-yellow stone, this again is the green color produced by the remaining [ones of the] four elements and the yellow color produced by the remaining [ones of the] four elements. Some of it is based on the minimization (of green); some of it is based on yellow

¹⁷² The translation is attributed to *Saṅghabhadra (Zhòngxuán 眾賢), Dharmanandin (Tánmónántí 曇摩難提 ~ Fǎxǐ 法喜, fl. 381–391), Gautama Saṅghadeva (Jùtán Sēngjiātípó 瞿曇僧伽提婆), and Zhú Fóniàn 竺佛念. Its history and sectarian affiliation is unclear; see Willemen et al. 1998: 159. It is considered contemporaneous with the latest stratum of early *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* texts (pp. 163–164).

¹⁷³ On the *Sarvāstivāda* assumption about atoms of color and shape, see Dhammajoti 2007: 261.

(negating it). It is not the case that it is due to the minimization of a single color (alone); (the colors) are based on each other (one minimizing, the other negating it). So it is with green and red, green and white, yellow and red, yellow and white, and red and white. This is what I call the six (colors).

Even if the details of the above passage are difficult to assess in isolation with any degree of certainty, the main issues raised are nonetheless clear: assuming that all visible matter is derived from the four elements, the passage attempts to explain how the colors we actually see are derived from the four cardinal colors of yellow, green, red, and white, which are attributed to the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind, respectively. The explanation hinges on the notion of brilliance: the color which is dominant at a particular point in time affects the visual sense and effectuates the appearance of a color in the eye consciousness. The actual colors are thus considered an effect of the varying strength of the elements¹⁷⁴ at some particular point, as well as of the mutual interaction of neighboring colors. The change in color is interpreted in terms of the decreasing strength of one element and the concomitant strengthening of another element, the color of which negates (*fēi*) the waning color of its weakening predecessor.

Even this coarse sketch is sufficient to demonstrate that the passage contains almost the same basic traits as the third part of TBL. There, the cardinal colors of Chinese tradition are understood as reflecting the dominance of the five conflicting phases or elements of wood, earth, metal, fire, and water, as well as their mutual subjugation. As in the Buddhist example above, it addresses the problem of mixed or intermediate colors, which are explained as an unsettled conflict between the elements. In its basic outlines, the color section in TBL resembles this kind of *Sarvāstivādin* elementary physics and optics so closely that one wonders if it may not simply be a variation of it, transferred and adapted to a specifically Chinese context.¹⁷⁵ While this overall similarity might not be strong enough evidence to really substantiate this suspicion, one last observation provides, if not a proof, at least a piece of further evidence that TBL indeed draws on this Buddhist source.

¹⁷⁴ The elements are said to be equally distributed in matter – that is, every atom contains one of each of the four elements. Change therefore cannot be interpreted in terms of a varying ratio between them.

¹⁷⁵ On the practice, in *abhidharma* circles and beyond, of matching Buddhist “numerical categories” (*shìshù* 事數) with non-Buddhist terms, see Dessein 2016: 287–288; on the “four elements” and the “five phases”, see p. 287.

In this last step, we first have to return to our previous discussion of the textual overlap between the extant *GSLZ* and the Mohist ‘Canons’. In a detailed comparison of the relevant parallel passages, we can observe a peculiarity in the method of compilation used by the editors of the *GSLZ*: when they composed a text on a particular topic, they sometimes used all the material available *except* the crucial phrase that had most probably brought the passage to their attention in the first place. As an illustration, let us return to the following example from our previous discussion. When they wrote their piece on “hard and white”, the editors included almost all the phrases from the Mohist precedent, except the key expression “*jiān bái*”:

- [3b] *Mòzǐ*, ‘*Mòjīng*’, ‘*Mòjīngshuō*’ B 4:
 不可偏去而二。說在見與俱，一與二， (DZ/1176/10/2v=501/10.1–10.17)
 廣與循。
 |見|不|見離，一二不相盈，廣循 堅白。 (DZ/1176/10/10r=508/5.1–5.13)

- [3a] *GSLZ*, ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ (DZ/1172/3/2r[16r]/7–8; 2v[16v]/1–3):
 曰：得其白，得其堅，見與不見離。與不見離，一一不相盈，故離。離也者，藏也。
 曰：石之白，石之堅，見與不見，二與，三若廣修而相盈也。其非舉乎？

For a translation and discussion of these lines, see above.¹⁷⁶ For now, let us return to TBL.

The following is the beginning of the third part of TBL, with its discussion of genuine and mixed colors and their mutual relation:

- [25] *GSLZ*, TBL (DZ/1176/2/4v[12v]/9–10; 5r[13r]/1–6):
 曰：青以白非黃。白以青非碧。
 曰：何哉？
 曰：青白不相與而相與反對也，不相鄰而相鄰不害其方也。
 不害其方者反而對各當其所，若左右不驪。

The beginning of this third part of TBL repeats the chiasmic structure which introduces the second part that deals with kinds of animals – a structure that possibly

¹⁷⁶ See above, p. 440.

imitates a passage from Guṇabhadra's translation of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (T 16, no. 670).¹⁷⁷ The formulation of TBL's initial claim (青以白非黃) strongly resembles the above passage from the *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra* (T1549, p. 758), where it says that some people claim that "yellow color negates green color" (黃色非青色). We have noted above that part of the ensuing explanation for the relationship between green and white in TBL is adopted from the Mohist 'Explanations' (B 65).¹⁷⁸ Let us now look at how the investigation into the nature of the colors and their relationship to the underlying four elements is introduced in the *Sarvāstivāda* treatise named after Vasumitra, which I quoted in [24] above:

[26] *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra* (p. 757):

頗有一色不前不後四方盡現耶。或作是說。無也。一色微妙彼不可見。方不成就。是故無也。

Is it really true that there is one single color (visible matter?) which neither advances nor retreats and is completely visible on all four sides (lit. squares) (of the world)? Some adopt this theory: This does not exist. One single color is minute. It cannot be seen. Therefore a [visible] side (lit. square) is not accomplished. This is why it does not exist.

My translation remains preliminary at this point. What the passage may refer to is the idea that single atoms are minute, and hence the visible matter they produce remains too weak to give rise to visual perception. It is only in collections of the same type (*héjí* 合集) that such minimal bits of matter gain visibility.¹⁷⁹ For this reason, a single piece of colored matter in isolation must remain invisible.¹⁸⁰

These specificities are obviously irrelevant for our present purposes. What is striking is the observation that the very passage of the *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra* which demonstrates extremely close similarities with the third part of TBL, in terms of both themes and formulations, is introduced with a sentence which collocates the two terms *fāng* ('square') and *jìn* ('exhaust', 'complete'). To see the relevance of this point, we need to have another look at the

¹⁷⁷ See n. 137, p. 478 above.

¹⁷⁸ See above, p. 440.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītīśāstra* (T 28, no. 1549, p. 755). On the term *héjí* 合集, see Dhammajoti 2007: 262.

¹⁸⁰ It is possible that this is an implicit reference to Śrīlāta who is said to have claimed that even a single atom is visible (cf. Dhammajoti 2007: 314).

passage of the *Mòzǐ* from which the authors of TBL adopted a four-character phrase to discuss their crucial notion of *fāng*:

[4b] *Mòzǐ*, ‘Mòjīng’, ‘Mòjīngshuō’ B 65.¹⁸¹

一法者之相與也_盡，若方之相召也。說在方。 (DZ/1176/10/
4r=502/5.11–6.10)

一：方貌_盡。俱有法而異，或木或石，不害其方之 (DZ/1176/10/
相合 [= 合] 也_盡。貌猶方也。物俱然。 15v=514/4.12–6.6)

In the present context it does not seem necessary to repeat the translation. What this passage has in common with the Buddhist text just discussed is the prominence of the term *jìn* 盡, which here stands for the ‘completeness’ or ‘perfectness’ of the unity established by the formal criterion of ‘squareness’ (*fāng*). The term *fāng* here is thus only an *example* of a formal criterion, not a technical term. In contrast, we have seen that the compilers of TBL interpret it in the sense of the ‘region’ or ‘domain’ filled in with a certain color. It is obvious that this interpretation closely resembles what appears to be the use of the term in the above example [26] from the *Sarvāstivādin* treatise attributed to Vasumitra. Note that, in the short excerpt from the MS in [4b], *fāng* occurs no less than three times, while *jìn* – the term for the concept it illustrates – appears twice. Note further that in the brief passage from the *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra*, the term *fāng* not only occurs twice, but in one case it immediately precedes the pivotal term *jìn*. The Buddhist treatise thus uses the same word as the passage from the *Mòzǐ* – though with the common adjectival meaning of ‘complete’ or ‘exhaustive’, rather than in any technical sense. In view of the impressive degree of similarity between the basic traits of the arguments presented in TBL and in the above passage from the *Sarvāstivādin* treatise, and also in view of some basic vocabulary (*huáng* 黃, *qīng* 青, *bái* 白) and phrasing (*qīng* [. . .] *fēi huáng* 青非黃 vs. *huáng fēi qīng* 黃非青) the two share, we may thus ask ourselves whether these opening lines of the third part of TBL do in fact contain traces of the same principle of composition which we also saw at work in the case of the integration of materials from the ‘Canons’ into JBL. When that editor left out the phrase “*jiān bái*”, which had possibly brought the passage to his attention in the first place, he arguably did so to cover his tracks. The compiler of TBL might have used the Mohist and Buddhist texts under discussion here in precisely the same way, leaving out the crucial term *jìn*, which

181 Cf. Graham 1978: 437, also for possible emendations.

occurs both in the ‘Canons’ and in the Buddhist treatise, and which possibly inspired him to connect these two texts.

As we have seen, a considerable number of TBL’s peculiarities suggest that its compiler was strongly influenced by Buddhist debates and texts. If this is true, we can also trace the reason his attention was caught by the short passage from MS B4. In this passage, the Mohist text discusses the term 法 and contains several instances of the character 相, and while in the Mohist original these stand for the term ‘criterion’ and the common adverb ‘mutually’, it is easy to see why a Buddhist-inspired compiler sometime after the late fourth century CE might have understood them in the sense of ‘dharma’ and ‘distinguishing mark’ (*lakṣaṇa* / *nimitta*), subsequently associating them with the problem of the relation between entities and their varying temporal characteristics. It is precisely this problem – which is the core of *Sarvāstivādin* speculations about the reality of past, present, and future *dharmas* – that TBL seems to allude to in its remaining sections. Again, while it is clear that any of these observations in isolation cannot be conclusive, these single pieces of evidence weave a whole web that pervades the entire TBL. And while the well-documented cases of similar textual borrowing from the Mohist ‘Canons’ and their concomitant reconceptualizations are no proof of a suspected Buddhist influence, they doubtlessly lend our hypothesis more credence.

In sum, it appears that MSL and especially TBL are replete with traces that point toward a Buddhist background that informed their putative medieval compilers. Moreover, these traces seem so strong at times that it is hard to imagine that the editors even tried to conceal them. Rather, it appears that these allusions were invoked on purpose. As for the date of composition, it is again difficult to be precise. However, while the Buddhist references in JBL – with the exception of the *Chéngshìlùn* – point toward the early decades of the Táng period, the texts that are possibly reflected in TBL mostly date from the early fifth century CE and earlier. We will take up the problem of the *GSLZ*’s possible date of composition again below.

6 A Buddhist Capstone? Paradox and Subtlety in JBL and ZWL

Two terms are widely considered key to an interpretation of the *GSLZ*: *cáng* 藏 (‘to contain/to conceal/to hide’) and *zhǐ* 指 (‘to point/to mark’). Both only occur in a single chapter section – the former in JBL, the latter in ZWL. Thus the *GSLZ* presents no *explicit* discussion of their mutual relation. Nevertheless, there are

terminological commonalities between these two chapters that can be read as “signs” of an underlying conceptual connection. As indicated above, both use the terms *jiān* 兼 (‘to combine’) and *wù* 物 (‘thing’), and the crucial – though admittedly short – passage from JBL suggests that it considers concrete things (*wù*) as ‘conjoining’ (*jiān*) a perceived quality and a conceived thing.¹⁸² As we saw above, JBL holds that qualities subsist in the hidden (*cáng*), even if they are not manifest in any concrete thing – that is, even if they are not actually perceived. However, qualities turn into the ‘markers’ or ‘indicators’ that point out a concrete and particular thing as soon as they are combined with an intellectual – and hence necessarily abstract – “thing concept”. It seems to be these concrete things that the ZWL subsumes under the compound expression *zhǐ wù* 指物 – something like “indicated things”.¹⁸³ The term ‘thing’ in the *GSLZ* would thus be used equivocally in referring to both concrete perceptual things (“individuals”) and abstract intellectual things (“universals”).¹⁸⁴ Although this interpretation of the relation between ‘subsistents’ and ‘pointers’ closely follows Shěn Yǒudǐng,¹⁸⁵ most modern interpreters generally agree – if not necessarily on the details – at least on the relevance of the relationship between these two crucial concepts for any sustained understanding the *GSLZ*.

In contrast to other scholars, Shěn combines his analysis with an additional observation. He notes that the technical interpretation of *zhǐ*, in the sense of a quality “signaling” a thing through its attributes, is unattested in other purported Warring States texts, such as the Mohist ‘Canons’ or the *Xúnzǐ*. He argues that the word there is generally used in the concrete sense of ‘finger’ or in the derived verbal sense of ‘to point at’, which was common during the pre-imperial period.¹⁸⁶ This is the major reason why Shěn concludes that ZWL is an early medieval compilation. Unlike Graham, who is convinced of its antiquity, Shěn thus thinks that it was composed at roughly the same time as JBL – which, as we have seen, is partly culled from the ‘Canons’. Moreover, the close

182 “Hard is hard even when not yet joined with stone, [thus] constituting a thing combination (?). Even when it has not yet formed a combination with a thing, hard is necessarily hard; it does not make a stone hard, [i.e.] it is not hard as a thing. Even when there is nothing like hard in the world, hard is already contained (in the hidden)” (曰：「堅未與石為堅，而物兼。未與物為兼，而堅必堅；其不堅石、物而堅。天下未有若堅而堅藏。」).

183 Shěn 1992a: 495–497.

184 Cf. the analogous analysis in roughly contemporaneous Buddhist sources, which characterize perception via the presence of qualities as “individual marks” (*zìxiàng* 自相) and conception via the combined presence of both “individual” and “shared marks” (‘universals’; *gòngxiàng* 共相), as briefly mentioned above, p. 471.

185 For Shěn’s analysis of ZWL, see his 1992e.

186 Shěn 1992a: 495.

terminological connections between the two chapters, as well as the fact that JBL seems to provide the essential conceptual specifications for making sense of ZWL, have led him to assume not only that both were written by the same author,¹⁸⁷ but that ZWL was in fact composed on the basis of, and hence after, JBL.¹⁸⁸

Graham, who considers ZWL ancient, has in turn pointed out the similarities between a couple of formulations in JBL and their parallels in ZWL. He suggests that JBL in fact imitates ZWL, an assumption which obviously contradicts Shěn's idea that ZWL is older than JBL.¹⁸⁹ The following is one of the passages in JBL which, according to Graham, is formulated on the precedent of ZWL:

<p>[27] <i>GSLZ</i>, JBL (DZ/1172/3/2v(16v)/6):
不定者兼，惡乎其石也？</p> <p>If two undefined entities [i.e. the hard and the white] are combined, how could they be a stone?</p> | <p><i>GSLZ</i>, ZWL (DZ/1172/2/2r[10r]/5):
且指者天下之所兼。</p> <p>Now, as for pointers, they are what the world combines.</p> |
|---|---|

If the translations I've suggested are accepted, then JBL argues that the combination of something white and something hard does not allow one to determine the kind of thing to which these two qualities are attributed. The stone, which one wrongly believes one sees, is only contributed via one's conception. In other words, the combination of various perceptions into a single thing is a function of the mind. The parallel in ZWL seems to hold that 'markers' of things are those 'places' in the world highlighted by qualities which partake in combinations – that is, places which have been attached to a specific kind of thing in one's conception. Regardless of the accuracy of this interpretation, since the first modern commentator Yú Yuè 俞樾 (1821–1907), many scholars have argued that the character 兼 in the ZWL passage above is in fact a corruption of an original 無 ('to not exist').¹⁹⁰ It is to Páng Pú's 龐樸 (1928–2015) credit that he

¹⁸⁷ Shěn attributes the composition of these two chapters to the early fourth-century CE scholar Yuán Yú 爰俞; see Shěn 1992a: 497–498 (ZWL), 507 (JBL). Kandel has also suggested that Yuán is the compiler of the entire extant *GSLZ*; see Kandel 1974: 23–24.

¹⁸⁸ Shěn holds that ZWL was “deeply influenced” by JBL; cf. Shěn 1992a: 497. This obviously implies that JBL is earlier than ZWL.

¹⁸⁹ Graham 1956/7: 181, esp. n. 4. JBL also evinces striking parallels with BML, but not with the remaining chapters of the *GSLZ*. For details, cf. illustration [6], pp. 451–453 above.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. the following character variants of 兼 and 無: 兼 (兼, clerical script, *Wáng Jīduàn bēi* 王基斷碑, Three Kingdom period, third c. CE, *Zhōngguó shǔfǎ dà zìdiǎn*, 'Lìshū', p. 65) vs. 兼 (無, clerical, Jūyán bamboo slips 居延, Hàn, 'Lìshū', *ibid.*, p. 334); 兼 (兼, regular script, Ōuyáng

pointed out that it was primarily the undesirable disappearance of 兼 from ZWL that may have prevented scholars from adopting Yú's proposal.¹⁹¹ *Jiān* 兼 is one of the rare "technical" terms which occur in more than one chapter of the *GSLZ*. It thus seems to allow for a consistent interpretation, if not of the entire collection, then at least of JBL and ZWL. However, a closer look at the context of the sentence in ZWL reveals that it is in fact embedded in a larger argument, which is mostly parallel in structure to another argument at the beginning of ZWL. This formal criterion clearly supports Yú's emendation.¹⁹² How are these two kinds of conflicting evidence to be weighed against each other? Do we decide in favor of philosophical consistency in an attempt to preserve the received formulation of ZWL? This would lead to an interpretation in accordance with the manifestly parallel passage in JBL. Or do we have to privilege the kind of intra-textual consistency which would clearly support Yú's emendation?

While we are not forced to take sides, our observations still allow us to draw a conclusion that is relevant to Shěn's hypothesis regarding authorship. If Yú's emendation is correct – as I think it is – then the presence of 兼 in ZWL is an accidental result of textual corruption and cannot be interpreted in Shěn's sense as an intentional choice made by its author on the basis of the term's definition in JBL. Yet if we stick to the hypothesis that JBL is a medieval production which imitates and copies from a whole array of other texts, we have to infer that we should follow Graham and invert the direction of influence Shěn suggested: it must have been JBL which was influenced by ZWL, rather than the other way round. Whether or not ZWL is ancient, we can with some degree of plausibility exclude the assertion that it was construed on the model of JBL. The aspect of Shěn's hypothesis that claims the opposite appears untenable. Rather, it seems that the unknown composer of JBL construed his piece with reference to an already corrupted version of ZWL. The importance he attributed to the term 兼 thus most likely results from his reinterpretation of ZWL. Below, we shall return to the issue of the relevance of this term as well as to the problem of the relationship between ZWL, its key term *zhǐ*, and JBL.

Xún 歐陽詢 (557–641), op.cit., 'Kǎishū', p. 72) vs. 無 (無, regular, Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–581), ibid., p. 381).

¹⁹¹ Páng 1979: 22–23.

¹⁹² For a detailed discussion, see Suter, forthcoming.

6.1 藏/臧 – Turning a Personal Name into a Philosophical Term: Possible Buddhist Implications

At this point, we first turn our attention to the term *cáng*, as used in JBL. It appears that this term has no precedent in ancient literature. However, the character that captures this crucial notion is a variant of 臧 *Zāng*, a common personal name in ancient China, which was used by the Mohists as a standard example for an individual constant – Graham has consistently rendered it as “Jack”.¹⁹³ *Zāng* is a well-known figure. Crucially, he appears in what is probably the earliest account of Gōngsūn Lóng’s rhetorical quick-wittedness: an anecdote transmitted in the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋, completed around 239 BCE. This text, in which Gōngsūn Lóng is first and foremost portrayed as a prudent, moderating political adviser, reports that, in a debate with a member of the Kǒng 孔 clan, he succeeded in convincing his patron, the lord of Píngyuán 平原 (Zhào Shèng 趙勝, 308–251 BCE), chancellor of the state of Zhào 趙, that this very *Zāng* had “three front teeth” (*sān yá* 三牙). After the defeated descendant of Master Kǒng, in a private conversation, convinces the lord of Píngyuán of the untenability of Gōngsūn Lóng’s claim, the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* tells us that the latter forbids Gōngsūn Lóng to undertake any further disputations with Kǒng.¹⁹⁴ One of the oldest reports on our debater’s eloquence is thus, at the same time, an account of his shameful repudiation.

The incident at the lord of Píngyuán’s court is also included in the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*.¹⁹⁵ And it is this version of the story which also corroborates the fact that the claim which eventually provoked Gōngsūn Lóng’s rebuke was indeed about *Zāng* – the name of this all-purpose guy is corrupted to 藏 in the older *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* account. The variant transmitted in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* further clarifies that the debate revolved around the question of whether this person had three ‘ears’ (*ěr* 耳) rather than three ‘teeth’ (*yá* 牙). The portrait of Gōngsūn Lóng in the eponymous chapter of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* – most probably a work dating from the third century CE – exhibits striking parallels with the introductory JF chapter of the *GSLZ*. Apart from a rather formalized introductory section and a short sketch of the “white horse” argument at the very beginning, all the incidents of Gōngsūn Lóng’s life that JF reports are also contained in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*. While a quotation from the medieval scholar Liú Jùn 劉峻 (styled Xiàobiāo 孝標, 462–521 CE) suggests that a previous version of the

¹⁹³ Graham 1978: 226–227.

¹⁹⁴ *Lǚshì Chūnqiū*, Shěnyínglǎn 審應覽, ‘Líwèi’ 離謂, in Gāo 1996: 226.

¹⁹⁵ *Kǒngcóngzǐ*, ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ 3, in Fù 2011: 283.

Kǒngcóngzǐ might also have contained an outline of the white horse argument,¹⁹⁶ the *GSLZ* stands out due to one suspicious omission: while the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* chapter underlines the superiority of Kǒng Chuān 孔穿, the descendant of Confucius who eventually prevailed over Gōngsūn Lóng, by concluding its report on the debater's life with the anecdote about their controversy concerning Jack's three ears, the *GSLZ* does not mention this incident at all. However, one phrase in the *GSLZ* – more precisely, in *JBL* – is worded in a way that is suspiciously reminiscent of the rather uninspiring hoax about Jack. At one point, the dialogue has Gōngsūn Lóng's opponent suggest, partly in the words of the Mohist 'Canons', that "given that the hard, the white, and the stone [within a hard white stone] are not outside each other, isn't it admissible to say that [the area they fill up] contains three?" (堅白石不相外, 藏三, 可乎?).¹⁹⁷ While the similarities between the phrases 藏三可, 臧三耳 (*Kǒngcóngzǐ*), and 藏三牙 (*Lǚshì Chūnqiū*) are evident,¹⁹⁸ it is interesting that the *Old Commentary* has the following to say about this passage:

[28] *Jiùzhù* (DZ/1172/3/2r[16r]/7a¹⁹⁹–2v[16v]/1b):

夫物各有名，而名各有實。故：得白名者自有白之實，得堅名者亦有堅之實也。然視石者見白之實，不見堅之實。不見堅之實，則堅離於白矣。故曰：見與不見謂之離，則知之與不知亦離矣。於石一也，堅與白二也。此三名有實，則不相盈也。名不相盈，則素離矣。素離而不見，故謂之藏。
呂氏春秋曰：公孫龍與魯孔穿對辭於趙平原家藏三耳，盖以此篇為辯。

¹⁹⁶ In his commentary on the *Shishuō Xīnyǔ* 世說新語, he quotes from the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* a summary of the white horse argument, which is today only transmitted in BML: 馬者所以命形，白者所以命色。夫命色者非命形。故曰白馬非馬也。 (“‘Horse’ is something by which you name a shape, ‘white’ is something by which you name a color. Now, what names a color is not what names a shape, and therefore it says, white horse is not horse”); *Shishuō Xīnyǔ*, ‘Wénxué’ 24, in Xú 1989: 117; BML, DZ/1172/1/5r/2–4. Cf. Kandel 1974: 128.

¹⁹⁷ *JBL*, DZ/1172/3/1v[15v]/4–5.

¹⁹⁸ Shěn Yǒudǐng points toward the similarity of the characters 耳, 牙, and 可 in cursive script and seems to waver between attributing this modification of the phrase in *JBL* to an innocent reinterpretation by the compiler (Shěn 1992a: 504) or to an intentional distortion (Shěn 1992c [1989]: 452: “I suspect that the author of *JBL* suppressed this record of the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* on purpose, thinking that these passages [...], which show disdain for Gōngsūn Lóng, did not align with the facts, and that the character 臧 has a deep meaning, namely what the extant *JBL* calls *zì cáng* 自藏 (‘self-contained’).” In an earlier publication, Shěn called this reinterpretation downright ridiculous; see Shěn 1992d [1978]: 272.

¹⁹⁹ Lowercase letters indicate the column numbers of the commentary. The columns in the original commentary are only half the breadth of those of the main text.

Now, among things, every one has a name, and among names, every one has a reality. For this reason, what receives the name ‘white’ is something which has in itself the reality of whiteness, just as something that receives the name ‘hard’ has in itself the reality of hardness. But if you look at a stone, you see the reality of whiteness, you don’t see the reality of hardness. And as you don’t see the reality of hardness, hardness is already separate from whiteness. Therefore it says: when what is visible and what is invisible are called separate (from each other), then to be conscious and unconscious of something are also separate (from each other). To be in a stone is one, hard and white are two. If these three names have their reality, they do not fill each other up. And as names do not fill each other up, they are genuinely separate. They are genuinely separate and invisible, and that is why one calls them contained (‘hidden’). *When in the Lǚshì Chūnqiū it says that Gōngsūn Lóng and Kǒng Chuān from Lǚ at the home of the lord of Píngyuán disputed about “[the inside] simply contains three” (a.k.a. “Zāng has three ears”), then it was this chapter about which they were debating.*

This commentary was already being quoted in the Táng period, a fact which clearly disproves the claim in the preface of the *GSLZ* that attributes it to the Sòng scholar Xiè Xīshēn.²⁰⁰ For our preliminary summary here, it is enough to note that the commentator, whoever he may have been, explicitly relates the argument about the “three hidden” entities of hard, white, and stone in JBL to the anecdote about Zāng’s three ears. We can infer that the compilers of the *GSLZ* – possibly in an attempt to avoid the unedifying story about the debater’s purported abasement – omitted the latter story from the introductory JF chapter, which otherwise seems to be largely based on, or at least an elaboration of, the same anecdotal material as the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*.²⁰¹ At the same time, the compiler of JBL seems not only to have exquisitely woven a variation of the fatal phrase into his piece, but also to have drawn one of the key terms of his philosophy from it. And indeed, the

200 Graham 1956/7: 169–170; Kandel 1974: 139 n. 7.

201 The main section of JF looks like a thorough revision and rearrangement of the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* (Fù 2011: 280–296). It gathers the very same anecdotes. It only omits Zīgāo’s 子高 (Kǒng Chuān’s) rather detailed refutation of Gōngsūn Lóng’s white horse argument – situated by the authors of the *Kǒngcóngzǐ* in a public audience rather than in a private conversation, as in the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* –, a somewhat displaced story about Zīgāo’s assessment of a certain Cáo Liáng 曹良, and most notably, the Confucian’s triumph in the debate about Jack’s three ears.

commentator – let us assume he was somebody other than the compiler himself – seems to join in his game: after providing a short explanation of the crucial term *cáng*, he goes on not only to associate this sophisticated notion with the famous story about the dispute between Gōngsūn Lóng and the scion of the house of Kǒng, but also to indicate that the sophist's apparent defeat was in fact an overwhelming victory, even though neither Gōngsūn Lóng's contemporaries nor the subsequent tradition were able to grasp the gist of his argument. Apparently, the compiler's elevation of the term *cáng* to the status of a cue for understanding the entire *GSLZ* – whether wittingly or unwittingly – laid the groundwork for a marvelous inversion of the deepest blemish on his career into a hidden yet compelling intellectual triumph. It is indeed hard to imagine a more formidable rehabilitation of Gōngsūn Lóng!

However, while early texts such as the *Xúnzǐ* relate verbal and deverbal uses of the term 臧 (and its equivalent 藏) to functions of the mind,²⁰² nothing seems to suggest that its technical meaning in JBL has any straightforward precedent in the ancient literature. And if, as suggested above, JBL is a rather late compilation, the spread of the character 藏 as an equivalent to the Sanskrit *garbha* – conventionally rendered as ‘womb’ –²⁰³ in the context of the translation of the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* and related texts from the fifth century CE onward,²⁰⁴ would have provided a manifest source of inspiration for designating something conceived of as subsistent and virtual, as opposed to existent and actual, with precisely this word. Although this background seems to point in a different doctrinal direction than the Buddhist sources discussed thus far, it is still worth taking into account the fact that Kumārajīva – the translator responsible for the *Chéngshìlùn* with its reverberations in JBL – also produced a Chinese translation of the rather marginal *Fóshuō huāshǒu jīng* 佛說華手經

202 Thus the *Xúnzǐ* uses this term (written 臧) to capture the human potential to feel several emotions which provide the basis for various evaluations (‘Tiānlùn’ 天論 4, in Wáng 1997: 309). Moreover, it is used to refer to intentions stored up in one’s mind for future realization having the potential to lead to biased views, and hence misjudgments (‘Jiěbì’ 解蔽 8, in Wáng 1997: 395–396).

203 Zimmermann (2002: 30 n. 14) has plausibly suggested that the translation of *garbha*, which – besides ‘embryo’ or ‘womb’, as in established translations of the term – can also mean an ‘interior chamber’, can be traced back to the use of the word *zàng* (today written 臧) in the sense of ‘inner organ’, a notion which, in traditional Chinese medicine, has a distinct sense of a chamber or an abode, or more simply put, a ‘container’ of different agencies. Radich (2015: 194–197) suggests that the semantic dimension of secrecy in translations, such as ‘to hide’ and ‘to conceal’, may also have played a role.

204 The *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* was first translated by Buddhahadra (Fótuóbátuóluó 佛陀跋陀羅, 359–429) in 420 CE. Cf. e.g. Liu 1989.

(T 16, no. 657, **Kuśalamūlasamparigrahasūtra*, Sūtra of Grasping the Fruits of Karmic Retribution) in 406 CE. While this *sūtra* is not commonly attributed to the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition, it reports that Buddha, in his instruction of bodhisattva Sāramati (Chin. Jiānyì 堅意 [!]),²⁰⁵ resorts to the term 藏 to capture the idea of “hidden containers” from which all manifest differentiations arise. However manifest and fundamental the differences between this interpretation and JBL may appear, this early fifth-century CE translation is still instructive, as it uses the term 藏 for a plurality of non-localizable, subsistent, or virtual containers understood as the source of distinguishable elements. Importantly, these containers are further attributed to different categories, most notably including *rūpa* (Chin. sè 色). Notwithstanding these similarities to the use of the term *cāng* in JBL, the relevance of this evidence to the question of the composition of the latter obviously remains unclear. At the same time, we should keep in mind that the reasons for dating JBL to the fifth century (or later) are completely independent of any suggested relationship to Buddhist sources. If the chapter indeed

205 *Fóshuō huāshǒu jīng* 佛說華手經 (T 16, no. 657, fasc. 10, p. 203): “堅意！無礙際者即無邊際，無邊際者即是一切眾生性也，是名際門。入是際門，則能開演千億法藏。此法藏者，即非藏也。堅意！如來眾法藏中，有所說法，皆說是際。復有色藏，受、想、行、識藏，是藏，非藏，不自在藏，是名諸藏以阿字門入。” (“Sāramati! The confines of the unobstructed coincide with the confines of the unlimited, and the confines of the unlimited coincide with the nature of all sentient beings. It is this (nature) I call the ‘gate to the confines’ (of non-obstruction and non-limitation). If you enter this gate to the confines (of non-obstruction and non-limitation), you will be able to disclose the (hidden) container that deploys the myriad factors (*dharmas*). Coincidentally, however, this container of factors (*dharmas*) is *not* in fact a container. Sāramati! When inside the container of all factors (*dharmas*) there are any factors (*dharma*) which can be explained by the thus-come, they all explain this confine (of the non-obstructed and non-limited). Moreover, there are also the containers of matter-form (*rūpa*), the containers [of the four mental *skandhas*] of feeling, ideation, action, and cognition. These containers are not containers; they do not contain in the sense of resting in themselves. The containers [bearing] all of these names are entered through the ‘gate’ of the letter ‘a’.”). However difficult this passage appears when read in isolation, it obviously appeals to the double function of the Sankrit vowel ‘a’ as an *alpha privativum* (a negative prefix) and as the inherent vowel which, in Indic writing systems – technically known as *abugidas* or *alphasyllabaries* – is implied in all basic consonants and, if rendered explicit, is listed first in the series of vowels. The analogy seems to suggest that just as all words – and therefore linguistic marks of distinction – arise from the implicit vowel ‘a’, all arising distinctions derive from and are contained in the hidden confines of the unobstructed and unlimited, which can only be approximated through the gate of negation. The letter for the vowel ‘a’ also stands at the beginning of the Buddhist *arapacana* syllabaries that spread to China from northwest India, in which this first letter was also explicitly associated with the negative prefix (see Brough 1977; Salomon 1990). In Tantric Buddhism, the co-occurrence of the first letter and vowel with the negative prefix later resulted in the shortest version of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, which was condensed into the single letter ‘A’ (cf. Conze 1973: vii).

appeared as late as this, then the theories about Buddha–nature which were gaining a foothold in China precisely at this point in time would doubtlessly have provided a likely source of inspiration for the reinterpretation of the crucial term *cāng* by the compilers of JBL.

6.2 指 – The *Topoi* of the ‘Pointing Finger’ and the ‘Touching Finger’ in Medieval Discourse on Language and Consciousness: Possible Implications for the *GS LZ*

As a second step, we now turn our attention from JBL to ZWL, the single chapter section of the extant *GS LZ* to (extensively) use the term *zhǐ*. As outlined above, the formulations in JBL suggest that the meaning of this word – which is nowhere explained, let alone defined – is closely related to its own notion of ‘sub-sistence’. With the notable exception of the seventh-century CE *Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ lùn* mentioned above,²⁰⁶ there is not a single textual witness to the existence of a ZWL before the eleventh century CE, when the Daoist scholar Chén Jǐngyuán 陳景元 (fl. 1084 CE) related it to the ‘Qíwù lùn’ 齊物論 chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*. There, the Daoist classic subscribes to the isolated and hence rather obscure (and formally contradictory) claim that “*zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*” (指非指) – paralleled by the apparently analogous contention that “horse is not horse” (馬非馬). He further suggests that it is preferable to convey the purported “inscrutability” of reference by means of the negative phrase “non/is not-*zhǐ*” (and “non/is not-horse”) rather than by the positive term ‘*zhǐ*’ (and ‘horse’). Ever since, a majority of scholars has not only acknowledged this similarity, but has in fact assumed that this allusion in the *Zhuāngzǐ* refers to the ZWL chapter of the *GS LZ*, which was thus thought to predate it. The difficulty with this supposition is that, apart from this three-character phrase in the *Zhuāngzǐ*, ZWL does not contain a single (obvious) passage that parallels any other pre- or early imperial text. What is more, none of the surviving medieval commentaries on the relevant phrase in the ‘Qíwù lùn’ chapter – or, for that matter, those on a similar passage in the ‘Tiānxià’ 天下 chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*²⁰⁷ – ever quotes ZWL or the *GS LZ*, or

²⁰⁶ See pp. 468–470 above.

²⁰⁷ “A finger/pointing does not reach (what it points at?)” (指不至); Guō 1978: 4: 1106. This three-character phrase is given in a list of claims attributed to the debaters. It is neither commented upon nor contextualized. Isolated as it stands, it is very difficult to interpret. The first commentary by Sīmǎ Biāo 司馬彪 (d. 306) connects it with the ensuing three-character phrase (至不絕). He takes 指 in the literal sense of ‘finger’ and (somewhat helplessly) comments: “When a finger catches a thing, it is unable to catch it by itself. It needs to rely on a[nother]

even mentions the name of Gōngsūn Lóng. And while the second and third of the seven theses associated with the debater in the late third- or early fourth-century *Lièzǐ* revolve around the notions of *zhǐ* and *wù*, ('thing'), they seem to take up these examples from the twenty-two propositions which the 'Tiānxià' chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ* associates with the debaters in general – here, the name Gōngsūn Lóng only figures as one paradigmatic example of this dubious ilk of equivocators. Not only does the *Lièzǐ* thus allude to the *Zhuāngzǐ* rather than to a purported ZWL,²⁰⁸ but it seems to understand the term *zhǐ* in the sense of 'to target', a meaning also attested in the Eastern Hàn *Shì míng* 釋名 (Explanation of Names),²⁰⁹ and further suggested by the fact that the *Lièzǐ*, before introducing its seven famous theses, relates two of Gōngsūn Lóng's stories about the skill of archers whose arrows reach their targets without touching them, and indeed without even leaving the bow.

As we have seen, Shěn Yǒudǐng considers ZWL to be a medieval production,²¹⁰ while Graham assumes it is ancient.²¹¹ While my own findings suggest that parts of ZWL might indeed be at least as old as the Mohist 'Explanations',²¹² Graham and Shizuo Amano 天野鎮雄 (1915–), the renowned Japanese expert on the *GSLZ*, have independently noted that while ZWL argues in some detail for the first part of its initial claim – namely, that “no thing is not a *zhǐ*” (物莫非指) – the second part of this first line, which contains the similarity to 'Qíwù lùn', and according to which “*zhǐ* are not *zhǐ*” (指非指), is only taken up again much later in the piece and is not actually argued for. While Graham concludes that it therefore must have been a corollary to the first claim,²¹³ Amano, in his reconstruction

thing, and catches it on this ground. However, relying on a[nother] thing itself [still] depends on (lit. 'derives from') not being detached from the finger. One (commentator?) says: 'When a finger takes fire, it does so by means of a match. When it spears a rat, it does so by means of a lance. Therefore, it relies on a[nother] thing. It is these [things such as fire and rats that] a finger does not catch' (夫指之取物, 不能自至。要假物, 故至也。然假物, 由指不絕也。一云: 指之取火以針, 刺以錐。故假于物。指是不至。); Guō 1978: 4: 1109. On this passage and its possible relations to the *Lièzǐ*, cf. pp. 447–448 above.

208 This seems to suggest that Shěn Yǒudǐng pointed in the right direction when he claimed that the crucial phrase in ZWL, “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*”, may in fact have arisen from paradoxes such as the ones transmitted in the 'Tiānxià' chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*; see Guō 1978: 478; cf. Shěn 1992c (1989): 456.

209 *Shì míng* 釋名, 'Shì bīng' 釋兵 3: 天<矢>, 指也, 言其有所指向迅疾也。 (“‘Arrow’ is ‘to point at’, is to say that [an arrow] has a place (= the target) it points to and that it is sudden and swift”); see Liú/Hé/Zhū 2002: 7.3.76.

210 Shěn 1992e (1963): 267.

211 Graham 1956/7: 177.

212 See Suter, forthcoming.

213 Graham 1955: 293.

of the ZWL materials, considers it a late interpolation.²¹⁴ In spite of their divergent conclusions, Graham and Amano still agree that the crucial phrase “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*” in the extant ZWL is somehow left dangling in the air. What seems to speak in favor of Amano’s view is an observation on the structure of ZWL: the sections of the received text show two clearly distinct modes of argumentation. Passages which explicitly disclose contradictory assumptions alternate with sections that consist of longer, repetitive strings of only loosely interconnected phrases. Two details are worth mentioning here. While the use of *yǐ wéi* 以爲 structures in the more explicit passages closely resembles the argumentative structure of BML and thus seems to suggest that they might be roughly the same age, the only repetition of the crucial phrase “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*” in ZWL, apart from the initial line, concludes an extended passage in the second style, which is marked by parallel lines made up of pairs of repeated phrases and connected only by the interchanging particles *yě* 也 and *zhě* 者. Graham has identified this structure as a distinctive criterion that sets the allegedly “authentic” BML and ZWL apart from the “spurious” chapters (TBL, JBL, and MSL).²¹⁵ While this criterion does indeed draw a line between these two groups of texts, a cursory survey of early and medieval texts reveals that, while sequences of identical phrases subsequently serving as topic and comment, and merely interconnected by *yě* 也 and *zhě* 者, are not regularly used in early imperial or even pre-imperial texts, they do occur in Wáng Bì’s 王弼 early third-century CE essays on the *Zhōuyì* (*Zhōuyì lüèlì* 周易略例) and the *Lǎozǐ* (*Lǎozǐ wēizhǐ lìlüè* 老子微指例略). Moreover, it is precisely this structure which the compilers of TBL have employed to incorporate a short quotation from the Mohist ‘Canons’ into their text.²¹⁶

Additionally, it is worth considering that these same passages, with their repetitive strings of largely unvaried and unclear phrases, provide ZWL with an aura of profundity and obscurity. And while this characteristic seems unparalleled in the record of pre- and early imperial literature, there is one piece that contains a comparably dumbfounding degree of repetitiveness, written by the sixth-century CE Buddhist monk Rèn Dàolín 任道林. In a memorial to the emperor of the Northern Zhōu dynasty dating from 577 CE, which is transmitted in the *Guǎng hóngmíng jí* 廣弘明集 (Extended Collection on the Elucidation of the Path, compiled by Dào Xuān 道宣, 596–667), he invalidates the ruler’s comparison of the differences between their respective stages of spiritual development with the *Zhuāngzǐ*’s contrast between the phoenix and the sparrow (or the

²¹⁴ Amano 1967: 144.

²¹⁵ Graham 1956/7: 150.

²¹⁶ Cf. ex. [4] above, pp. 440–441.

swallow) with the following words, which obviously draw on the Daoist philosopher's relativist elimination of all distinctions:

- [29] *Zhōu Gāo zǔ xún Yè chútiǎn fófǎ yǒuqiánsēng Rèn Dàolín shàng biǎo qǐng kāi fǎshì* 周高祖巡鄴除珍佛法有前僧任道林上表請開法事 (Petition of Abbot Rèn Dàolín to Establish Buddhist Ceremonies on the Occasion of the Inspection by Emperor Gāozǔ of the Northern Zhōu Dynasty of the Obliteration of the Dharma in the Capital of Yè), *Guǎng Hóngmíngjī*, fasc. 52 (T 52, no. 2103, p. 156):

仰承聖旨。名義深博宗源浩污。究察莫由。事等窺天。誰測其廣。又同測海。寧識其深。若以小小於大。無大而不小。以大大於小。無小而非大。大無不大則秋毫非小小。小無不小則太山非大大。故使大大非大小。小小非小大。是則小大異於同。大小同於異。無大小之異同。何小大之同異。方知非異可異同。寧有同可同異。無同可同異非異同。無異可異同無同異。是故無同而同非同。無異而異非異。何同異而可異同。非異同而可同異。

I humbly receive your wise instruction. The meanings of its words are deep and all-encompassing, its fountainhead is abundant and overflowing. Even [when I try] to investigate and scrutinize it, there is no point from which [I] could proceed. [Someone like me] viewing the sky through the peephole of his daily affairs, how would he gauge its vastness?! This, moreover, is just the same as with the sea: how could he fathom its depth? If you assume that small[ness] is made small by big[ness], [then] there would be no big [thing] that would not be small. If you assume that big[ness] is made big by small[ness], then there would be no small [thing] that would not be big. Now, as for big[ness], if there were nothing that would not be big, then the [tip of the] thinnest hair would not be determined as small through small[ness], and if there were nothing that would not be small, even Mount Tai would not be determined as big through big[ness]. Therefore, if you assume that determining big [things] through big[ness] is not [the same] like determining small [things] through big[ness], this then [means] that small [things] and big [things] would be different in their [same]ness, and that big [things] and small [things] would be the same in their difference. If there would be no sameness of the difference of big and small, how would big [things] and small [things] in their difference be the same? Now, as we know that we have to negate that difference is able to render different what is the same, how would there be a same[ness] that would be able to render the same what is different? That there is no sameness that is able to render the same what is different, negates that different [things] are the same. That there is

no difference that is able to render different what is the same, [is to say] that there is no same [thing] that would be different. Therefore, there is no same[ness] such as to render the same what is not the same, and there is no difference such as to render different what is not different. How come the fact that by rendering the same what is different, we are able to render different what is the same, is not just to say that by rendering as different what is the same we are able to render the same what is different?

Although admittedly different from ZWL in its form – there is a patent absence of the syntactical markers so prominent there – this piece nonetheless proves that around the sixth century CE, the time of the probable editorial insertions into ZWL, there was not only a heightened interest in the paradoxical language of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, but also that examples of literary productions which came close to the kind of unusually repetitive, convoluted language that characterizes large parts of the extant ZWL abounded. At least in this respect, it does not seem unjustified to assume that this atmosphere might also have encouraged the ornamentation of a possibly much less pretentious, older version of ZWL with a “false front” of highly repetitive and intentionally allusive diction.²¹⁷

With all due caveats, these observations seem to suggest the possibility that the phrase “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*”, rather than being original, might indeed be the result of a secondary editorial intervention into the text. Moreover, if we leave aside the questionable case of ZWL itself, we can further observe that references to the relevant ‘*Qíwù lùn*’ passage are absent from other works until the third century CE, when we find the crucial terms *zhǐ* and *wù* in a fictitious dialogue by Ruǎn Jí 阮籍 (210–263 CE), who uses it to establish a radically relativist “philosophy of language”, which culminates in a mystical transcendence of language.²¹⁸ Given the general prominence of the *Zhuāngzǐ* in medieval speculations about the relation between language and reality – established, at the latest, by Wáng Bì’s (226–249 CE) commentary on the *Yijing* and Guō Xiàng’s 郭象 (d. 312 CE) commentary on the *Zhuāngzǐ* – it is hardly imaginable

²¹⁷ Out of a total of some 250 characters, 指 alone occurs 49 times, 非 appears 25 times, and 物 occurs 18 times. This predilection for repetition is also reflected in the poetry of the court culture of the late Southern dynasties. One contest in educated circles consisted in reaching the highest possible number of repetitions of a single character in a poem of a fixed format and length. Thus Xiāo Yì 蕭繹 (508–555), later Emperor Yuán 元 of the Liáng dynasty, is reported to have used the character 春 23 times in a poem of 90 characters, to which his friend Bāo Quán 鮑泉 (d. 552) responded with a poem of the same length that repeated the character 新 30 times. See Jansen 2000: 88.

²¹⁸ See his *Dà Zhuāng lùn* 達莊論, in Ruǎn 1978: 31. Interestingly, Ruǎn’s use of the terms differs slightly from that attested in the received version of ‘*Qíwù lùn*’.

that a presumed medieval scholar coming across a fragmentary text, such as a possible predecessor of ZWL, which explains why “every thing is also a *zhǐ*” would not immediately have been reminded of this key passage from the *Zhuāngzǐ*. It is therefore certainly plausible that the argumentatively displaced and syntactically disconnected nature of the phrase “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*” in ZWL indeed suggests that it was added by a medieval compiler, possibly with the intention of using this catchphrase from the *Zhuāngzǐ* to attract the attention of his audience.²¹⁹

On a more general level, and quite independent of these possibly unresolvable questions about the textual history of ZWL, we can observe that the term *zhǐ* played an eminent role in medieval discourses about language. This is true not only for the Daoists, referring to the passage from the ‘*Qíwù lùn*’ mentioned above. The notion is at least as prominent in Buddhist texts, such as the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*²²⁰ or the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*,²²¹ which were translated into Chinese in the first half of the fifth century CE. These texts make use of one of Buddha’s parables – namely, the illustration of the relationship between his words and their genuine import with the image of the moon and the finger. According to the Buddha, whoever wants to understand his words has to leave them behind and proceed to what they mean, just as one is unable to understand what someone pointing at the moon intends to convey unless one shifts one’s attention from the finger to the moon. From this example, the *Dàzhì dù lùn* derives a rather precise assertion about the relationship between language and meaning (*yì* 義; Skrt. *artha*). In its view, words (*yǔ* 語; Skrt. *vyañjana*; lit. ‘mark/letter’) are not meanings themselves, but are only ‘indexes’ (*zhǐ*) of meanings.²²²

Looking at the semantics of *zhǐ* since the Warring States period, we note that its meaning has undergone a far-reaching generalization involving lexicalization processes deriving from different connotations of the original concrete meanings,

219 A similar observation pertains to the famous *non sequitur* at the beginning of the extant BML, which infers from the fact that ‘horse’ denotes a shape while ‘white’ denotes a color that white horse is not horse (rather than that horse is not white); see e.g. Graham 1989: 82, 85. In spite of its weakness, this argument is attested at least since the Hàn period and eventually seems to have developed into a standard gloss for the “white horse” argument in medieval times. It is thus backed by the authority of tradition – a factor which might have motivated the compilers of the extant BML to integrate it into their text in such a prominent position, in spite of the fact that it is not really developed later on in the chapter. Not least for its argumentative sterility, Amano considers it a later interpolation; see Amano 1967: 118–119.

220 *Léngjiā ābádūluó bǎojīng* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, T 670, fasc. 4, p. 506.

221 *Dàzhì dù lùn* 大智度論, T 1509, p. 1229.

222 Cf. Lamotte 2001: 425.

such as ‘finger’ or ‘to point’, which were still dominant in pre- and early imperial texts. These are gradually supplemented by more abstract meanings, such as ‘essential point’ or ‘import’, during the Hàn period. By the third century CE at the latest, the word became a synonym for *zhǐ* 旨 and took on the general sense of ‘lexical meaning’.²²³ This new interpretation of *zhǐ* as ‘denotation’ – rather than designation – is crucial to the common Buddhist use, which contrasts the literal meaning (*zhǐ* 指) of a doctrine with its metalinguistic sense “義” (for disambiguation), as well as derivations of this paradigm, as exemplified in the above-mentioned definition in the *Dàzhì dù lùn*.²²⁴ At the same time, it is important to note that, in spite of these semantic developments, the original literal meaning of *zhǐ* (‘finger’ and ‘to point’) also remained intact in Buddhist interpretations of the term, as we see in the finger-moon metaphor. However, it is still debatable whether the original meaning of the term – in the particular case of the passages from the *Zhuāngzǐ* discussed above – was to be taken as literally as this. The only way to get an approximate idea of what the original meaning of the term in the *Zhuāngzǐ* might have been is to have a look at *early* interpretations of the crucial passages. What is clear is that none of the earliest surviving *Zhuāngzǐ* commentaries, dating from the third century CE onward, relates the occurrences of our term *zhǐ* 指 in the relevant passages of the ‘Qíwù lùn’ and ‘Tiānxià’ chapters to the then well-established interpretation of the term as ‘literal meaning’. Rather, they either take it in the concrete sense of ‘finger’ (as in Sīmǎ Biāo’s commentary on ‘Tiānxià’ 7)²²⁵ or associate it with the notion of *tǐ* 體 (‘unit’, ‘part’) (as in Guō Xiàng’s and Cūi Zhuàn’s 崔譔 [Eastern Jin, 317–420 CE] commentaries on the ‘Qíwù lùn’, and also in Ruǎn Jí’s *Dá Zhuāng lùn*, as already mentioned). In spite of its prominent role in medieval discourses about the relationship between language and reality, the common focus – at least in Buddhist contexts – on the relationship between the letter of the texts and their genuine import seems only distantly related to most interpretations of *zhǐ* in the ZWL chapter of the *GSLZ* which have been suggested in the literature.

²²³ For a detailed discussion, see Suter, forthcoming.

²²⁴ Strikingly, this contrast is the exact opposite of the older usage attested in early Hàn texts. Here, it is the literal meaning that is expressed by the term *yì*, while it was *zhǐ* which was used in the sense of what a speaker intended his words to mean or to designate. Cf. *Chūnqiū Fánlù* 春秋繁露, ‘Zhúlín’ 竹林 2.1, in Zhōng 2005: 83–84, attributed to Dǒng Zhōngshū 董仲舒 (c. 179–104 BCE). In its attempt to explain contradictory uses of the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’, this text distinguishes the literal meaning (*yì*) of these terms from what they are intended to convey in a particular context (*zhǐ*).

²²⁵ For a translation, see n. 208, pp. 508–509 above.

Still, there is one interesting exception in the corpus of Buddhist literature which seems conspicuously close to ZWL, in terms of both its formulations and its suggested sense. The *Śūraṅgamasūtra* (*Léngyán jīng* 楞嚴經) was reportedly translated into Chinese between 705 and 713 CE,²²⁶ and thus almost certainly postdates the compilation of the *GSLZ* by at least a few decades. At the same time, it is important to add that the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* was early on suspected to be an apocryphal Chinese text without a Sanskrit original, which would thus have arisen from a genuinely indigenous context.²²⁷ Despite divergent voices,²²⁸ a majority of contemporary specialists maintain this view.²²⁹ And although a reported manuscript discovery points in the opposite direction,²³⁰ it is thus not *a priori* mistaken – even in view of its obvious Indic background – to assume that it indeed expresses the concerns of an educated Chinese public in the late seventh and early eighth centuries CE. If this is true, the following excerpt and the discussion it concludes might be of some relevance to our case. In an exchange between the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the Buddha, the latter argues against the distinction between perception (*jiàn* 見) and perceived objects (*wù* 物):

[30] *Śūraṅgamasūtra* (大佛頂首楞嚴經 *Dà Fódǐng Shǒuléngyán jīng*, T 19, no. 945, p. 112):

是以，汝今觀見與塵種種發明，名為妄想。不能於中出是非是。由是精真妙覺明性，故能令汝出指非指。

Now, it is for this reason that we name your sight and all kinds of dust particles (= objects) appearing therein mistaken imaginations. Inside of them, you cannot evade the distinction between “this” and “not this” (yes and no). It is because this pure and subtle awareness realizes your (true) nature that it allows

²²⁶ Cf. *Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, p. 5493.

²²⁷ These doubts are almost as old as the *sūtra* itself and can be traced back to a Japanese controversy in the eighth century; see *Fóguāng dà cídiǎn*, p. 5493; Epstein 1976. Early twentieth-century specialists such as Liáng Qǐchāo (1956: 10) and Lǚ Chéng (Lǚ 2012: 71–85) both doubted the authenticity of the *Śūraṅgamasūtra*.

²²⁸ Epstein 1976.

²²⁹ Cf. Hurvitz 1967: 482, 484; Faure 1991: 231 n. 3.

²³⁰ According to a recent overview by Lǐ Xuézhú, there are reports of a fragment of the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* in Sanskrit, in a palm leaf manuscript of some 200 pages in length, dating from the Táng period, preserved in the Pǔtí 菩提 monastery in Nányáng; see Lǐ 2010: 55–56.

you to evade the distinction between “*pointed out*” and “*not pointed out*”.²³¹

This passage is noteworthy for two reasons: First, assuming that the formulation “*zhǐ fēi zhǐ*”, a common allusion to the *Zhuāngzǐ* in other medieval texts, is indeed intended to invoke the Daoist master, this would mean that, by the early eighth century CE, the two *topoi* of the ‘index’ and the ‘moon’ and the ‘index’ and the ‘horse’ would have merged into one. Second, and possibly more importantly, the term *zhǐ* is not only used here in the literal sense of ‘forefinger’ or ‘index’, but is applied to a much more concrete situation than in the reflections on the signifying relationship between language and meaning in texts such as the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* or the *Dàzhì dù lùn*.

This becomes evident when we look at the discussion preceding the Buddha’s instruction to Mañjuśrī, as mentioned above. There, Ānanda queries the Buddha about the nature of ‘perceiving’ and ‘perception’ (*jiàn* 見, *jiànjīng* 見精). Their dialogue culminates in Ānanda’s insight that both the claim that perception is *in* or *among* the things perceived and the opposite contention that it is *not* in them must be refuted. The following are the two crucial passages of this dialogue:

[31] *Śūraṅgamasūtra* (p. 112):

阿難言：我今於此重聞
講堂遠泊恒河上觀日月
舉手所指縱目所觀，指
皆是物無是見者。世尊
如佛所說，況我有漏初
學聲聞，乃至菩薩亦不
能於萬物象前剖出精見
離一切物別有自性。
[...]

Ānanda said: Now, looking from the many towers of this lecture hall high up to the moon or sun above the Ganges, *whatever* I lift my hand to *point at*, whatever my eyes rise to, *all of it is a thing, and there is none that would be sight*. World Honored One, if it is as the Buddha has explained, no one starting from us, who are still in the stream of contamination and only at the beginning stage of listeners (*śrāvakas*), up to the Bodhisattvas would be able to dissect from the images of the ten thousand things in front of him [that] *some essential sight as separated from and additional to all things would have its own being (existence)*. [...]

²³¹ A more idiomatic translation by Charles Luk reads as follows: “Therefore, if you discern seeing and its objects and give rise to all kinds of (mental) creation, this is wrong thinking which will prevent you from getting out of this dual condition of ‘is’ and ‘is not.’ (If you look into them by means of) this true, essential, wonderful, bright, and enlightened Nature, it will enable you to avoid this duality”; Luk 1966: 73.

阿難言：我實遍見此祇陀林不知是中何者非見，何以故？若樹非見，云何見樹？若樹即見，復云何樹？如是乃至若空非見，云何為空？若空即見，復云何空？

我又思惟是萬象中，微細發明無非見者。[...]

Ānanda said: Why is it that from among all I see from this Jetavana grove I don't know what inside of it would not be sight? If the trees would not be sight, why would I see trees? If the trees simply were sight, then why again would they be trees? So it goes on to transparency (lit. emptiness). If it would not be sight, why would I take it for transparent? And if transparency were just sight, why then would it be transparent?

I moreover think that among all the ten thousand phenomena (images), *even the faintest ones that show up, there is none that would not be sight.* [...]

The first excerpt is interesting in that it contains an isolated instance of *zhǐ* (lit. 'index' or 'to indicate') in the same sense as the explicit relative construction "*suǒ zhǐ*" ("what is indicated/the one indicated") in the preceding clause. It is precisely this reading of an unmarked *zhǐ*, in the sense of what surfaces as a passive participle in the translation, that underlies many current interpretations of ZWL, which assume that *zhǐ* has to be taken in the literal sense of 'to point'.²³² This is relevant because, as far as I can see, in the pre- and early imperial literature there is no uncontroversial evidence for this use of *zhǐ* with a meaning of 'the pointed out' that would be comparable to this example from the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*. And although Ānanda and Buddha only discuss the things they are able to see from their actual position in the Jetavana grove – rather than the domain of all things that exist – the formulation resorts to a universal claim: whatever can be pointed out is a thing; none of these is sight or perception, which lacks an existence or a presence comparable to that of things. Although this proposition ("nothing pointed out is not thing") is obviously the inversion of what ZWL claims – at least according to certain interpretations ("no thing is not pointed out") – it still pertains to a purported connection between the same *relata*.²³³

²³² This is true of Graham's influential interpretation (1986: 101–106, repr. in Graham 1990a: 193–215, and taken up again in Graham 1989: 90–94). It also holds for Cheng and Swain (1970: 138), who translate *zhǐ* both as "act of reference" and as "object of reference".

²³³ The relationship is also more complex than in ZWL. While in the ZWL there is a binary relation between 'things' and 'indexes' the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* invokes a tripartite relation between 'things', 'indexes/indicatables', and 'sight/perception'. 'Indication' is first used as a criterion to separate 'things' (the 'indicatables') from 'sight/perception' (the 'non-indicatable'). The first quote above thus claims that 'indicatable' is equivalent to 'thing' and excludes 'sight/perception', which is a 'non-thing'. The second passage then negates this distinction, claiming that all 'indicatable things' are also 'sight/perception' – in the sense that their presence

In the final passage of the second excerpt, the focus eventually changes. Here, Ānanda establishes a connection between the terms ‘thing’ and ‘sight’ – the latter of which was only implicitly or negatively referred to previously as “what is not (a) thing”. He now proceeds to claim that “no thing is not sight” – that is, every thing is sight. This step evidently involves an implicit qualification of the very term in question: while ‘sight’ (*jiàn*) in the first case was understood in the sense of the faculty or activity that *sees*, it is now interpreted in the sense of a phenomenon that is *seen*. Thus, *jiàn* (that which is *seeing*) is not *jiàn* (that which is *seen*). This is precisely the structure underlying certain interpretative strategies of contemporary readings of the opening line of ZWL, only that there the “ambiguous” term is not *jiàn* (seeing/seen), but *zhǐ* (pointing out/pointed out). Note that the language of the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* explicitly equates *zhǐ* with *suǒ zhǐ*, just as it also uses *jiàn* in the sense of *suǒ jiàn* – that is, unlike pre-imperial Chinese, it allows for a passive reading of an unmodified *zhǐ*. Note also that the discourse of pointing is situated in a context of ‘specifying’ designations into ‘such’ (*shì* 是) and ‘non-such’ (*fēi* 非) – that is, into a discourse of *naming*. To be sure, the concept of ‘seeing’ plays no role whatsoever in ZWL itself. But let us keep in mind that it is the *relationship* between JBL and ZWL which we are addressing in our present discussion. As soon as we shift our attention to JBL, we find in the final section a prolonged reflection on the ‘agent’ who synthesizes perceptions into unified conceptions. This passage concludes that it is *shén* 神 (‘mind’ or ‘spirit’) – rather than the senses – which *sees* (*jiàn* 見) (and ‘perceives’, *zhī* 知) qualities *as* attributes of complex things. Even if the problem of perception was possibly not at issue in a putative original ZWL, the integration of this text into the larger whole of the *GSLZ*, together with the explicit references in JBL, clearly complement this dimension.

Thus we could argue that the core of the discussion in the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* above, the problem of the relation between perception and perceived things, is imposed on ZWL due to the specific way it was included in the *GSLZ*. Note also that although this degree of explicitness and similarity to ZWL is unique to the *Śūraṅgamasūtra*, other Buddhist-inspired Táng texts dating from the seventh century CE – roughly the time when the extant *GSLZ* was most probably composed – also engage in a similar discourse on the relation between pointing and designation or naming.²³⁴

involves the actuality of the presenting faculty of sight. Thus we have the contradictory claims that no thing is sight and that all things are sight.

234 An admittedly isolated and therefore difficult case is the *Xuánzhū lù* 玄朱錄 (Accounts of the Black Pearl) by Wáng Xuánlǎn 王玄覽 (a.k.a. Wáng Huī 王暉, 626–697, compiled by Wáng Xiāo 王霄, fl. 671) (see De Meyer 2004).

Our discussion of the comparatively late dialogue between Buddha, Mañjuśrī, and Ānanda on the relationship between seeing and being seen has thus brought us to the problem of consciousness. And it is precisely in this context that the idea of the finger has long played a crucial role in Buddhist debates, though not in its function as an index pointing at things, but rather as the organ of touch. The *Sarvāstivādin*s refuse the notion of self-awareness on the basis of their view that nothing can cause or condition itself. Among other means, they illustrate their conclusion that awareness can therefore only act as a condition of things *other* than itself with the example of the fingertip which cannot touch itself.²³⁵

This example is in fact pervasive in Buddhist texts well beyond the *abhidharma* literature. Its standard formulation in Chinese, as documented in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (T 1545), is taken up in anti-*Sarvāstivādin* texts of *hīnayānic* and *mahāyānic* orientation alike. The examples below are taken from the translations of the *Chéngshílùn* and the *Lānkāvatārasūtra*, respectively:

[32a] *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (T 27, no. 1545, p. 43)

世間現見，指端不自觸，刀刃不自割，瞳子不自見，壯士不自負。是故，自性不知自性。	What we see in the world is the following: <i>the finger-tip cannot touch itself</i> ; the knife-blade cannot cut itself; the pupil cannot see itself; the strong man cannot carry himself. Thus [awareness] in itself cannot know itself. ²³⁶
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[32b] *Chéngshílùn*,²³⁷ fasc. 68 (p. 278):

又若心是一。一識應能取一切塵。說多心者，隨根生識。是故不能取一切塵。若心是一，以	It is also like mind being one. As one single consciousness it should be able to grasp all dust particles (= i.e. objects of
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²³⁵ See Yao 2005: 52–53.

²³⁶ Translation by Yao 2005: 52. Italics are mine.

²³⁷ A second reference to the example of the finger-tip appears in another discussion about self-awareness in fasc. 191 (p. 364): “In the *sūtra* it is said: The twofoldness (combination) of causes and conditions engenders consciousness. Because of this, there must be no consciousness which conditions itself. Again, all knowledge that would not have causes and conditions would have to be exemplified by a substance in itself that would be able to condition itself. [But] this is just like *the finger-tip unable to touch itself* or the eye unable to see itself. [the *Sarvāstivādin* position, R.S] Answer: The thing you say regarding the twofoldness of causes and conditions that engender consciousness is not definite. There is also the case that knowledge arises under the absence of conditions. Not all [knowledge] is engendered by the twofoldness of causes and conditions. Moreover, the sixth consciousness has no conditions among the sense

何障故？不取一切，故知多心。又可取法異故，能取亦異？如人或自知心，云何自體自知？如眼不自見，刀不自割，指不自觸。故心不一。

the senses). That we say that there are many minds follows from the fact that consciousness arises from roots (= sense organs). This is why [one mind] is unable to grasp all dust particles. If mind were to be identified as one, by what (kinds of objects) would it be obstructed? Because it does not grasp all (of them), we know about the multiplicity of minds. Moreover, because the *dharma*s which can be grasped are different, what is able to grasp (them) is also different. When some human being himself knows his mind, why should this be a self substance knowing itself? It is like the eye which does not see itself, the knife which does not cut itself, *like the finger which does not touch itself*. Because of this, the mind is not one.²³⁸

bases themselves. And because it has no visible factors (*dharma*s), this consciousness is unable to condition factors like colored matter (*rūpa*) etc. In case it would be able to condition them, a blind human also should see colored matter. At this time, the manifold factors (*dharma*s) in his various consciousnesses would be either in the past or in the future. But as in the past and the future there are no factors (*dharma*s) what should they condition? It is only to negate a distinguishing spirit (soul) that you say (it) like this.” (經中說：二因緣生識。是故不應有自緣智。又諸智無有因緣譬喻能緣自體。如指端不能自觸，眼不能自見。答曰。汝說二因緣生識此事不定，亦有無緣生智。非一切皆從二因緣生。又第六識於自陰中都無所緣。無現法故是識不能緣色等法。若能緣者盲人亦應見色。此人爾時心心數法，在去來中。去來無法爲何所緣。但遮計神故如是說。). For Sastrī’s slightly diverging translation see Sastrī 1978: 474.

238 Sastrī’s partial translation runs as follows: “If it is one, the same mind will cognize all objects. For the advocate of several minds the consciousness arises in accordance with each sense organ. If it is one, by what impediment does it not cognize all things? The subject differs on account of its different object; e.g. certain person experiences his own mind sometimes. How does the self form experience of its own self? The eye does not see its self and the finger does not touch its own tip. Hence the mind is not one.” (Sastrī 1978: 142).

[32c] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (*Dàshèng rù léngqié jīng* 大乘入楞伽經), tr. Śikṣānanda (Shíchánántuó 實叉難陀, 652–710) (T 16, no. 672, p. 634):

心雖成二分，而心無二相。
如刀不自割，如指不自觸，
而心不自見。其事亦如是。

Although mind constitutes from two parts (seeing and being seen, R.S.), it still does not have two (independent, R.S.) marks of distinction. Just like the knife which does not cut itself, like *the finger which does not touch itself*, the fact that mind does not see itself is also like this.

Although one should probably not overestimate the simile of the finger which essentially serves an illustrative purpose, it is still notable that, as we have already seen earlier in this chapter, *Sarvāstivādins* considered touch the privileged sense, as, in their view, it is only through tactile sensation that the substantiality (*tǐ* 體) of the five elements is immediately accessible.²³⁹ In their view, sensible matter as caused by these external elements is the generative cause of sensible perception, while conception as a thought concomitant is only one of the conditions of the arising of object consciousness.²⁴⁰ The finger example thus leads us to the core of *Sarvāstivādin* realism. As this example is clearly coined for tactile sensation, Chinese translations usually render the phrase ‘to touch itself’ as “*zì chù* 自觸”. However, it is highly relevant to our context that the oldest extant version of this passage from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* in Chinese, translated by Bodhiruci (d. 527 CE) in 513 CE, differs in precisely this respect. The following is his wording of what we have presented in [32c] in the more recent translation by Śikṣānanda:

[33] *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (*Rù léngqié jīng* 入楞伽經), tr. Bodhiruci (Pútíliúzhī 菩提流支, d. 527 CE) (T 16, no. 671, p. 578):

應有二種心，而
心無二相。如刀
不自割，指亦不
自指。如心不自
見，其事亦如是。

There must be two minds, but mind has no two distinctive marks. It is like the knife which does not cut itself, *the finger which also does not touch itself*. When it comes to the fact that mind does not see itself, it is also like this.

It is instructive to see that Bodhiruci chooses the word *zhǐ* 指 to render the meaning ‘to touch’. While the reason for this translational decision seems to be

²³⁹ See the respective quotation from *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣaśāstra* above, note 121, p. 472.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Cox 1988: 61–62.

a moot point, there can be no doubt that the choice is intentional and that the word refers to the realm of the tactile rather than to sight and pointing, as we would expect judging from our previous discussion. While this is also clear from the following example, this choice obviously bears the seed of ambiguity.

The *Śataśāstra* (Bǎilùn 百論, T 1569), attributed to Āryadeva (Típó 提婆), was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 404 CE. It is one of the three *Madhyamaka* treatises at the center of the so-called *sānlùn*-school 三論 which thrived in sixth-century CE China and which developed into the harshest opponent of *Chéngshìlùn* scholarship. When this text elaborates on the example of the fingertip unable to touch itself, it also does so by resorting to the Chinese term *zhǐ* 指:

- [34] *Śataśāstra* (Bǎilùn 百論), Āryadeva (Típó 提婆), tr. Kumārajīva (T 30, no. 1569, p. 176):

眼非見相。外曰。如指眼雖見相。不自見眼。如指端不能自觸。如是眼雖見相。不能自見。內曰。不然。觸指業故觸是**指業非指相**。汝言見是眼相者。何不自見眼。是故指喻非也。

The eye is not a distinctive mark of seeing (sight) [i.e. a distinction of seeing]. The outsiders say: Just as a finger, the eye, in spite of seeing distinctive marks, does not see the eye itself. It is just like *the fingertip which is unable to touch itself*. Even if, like this, the eye sees distinctive marks, it is unable to see itself. The insiders say: *It is not like this. Because touching is the activity of the finger. Touching is the activity of the finger and not the distinctive mark of the finger. As you say that seeing is the distinctive mark of the eye, why should it not see the eye itself? Therefore, the simile (example) of the finger is wrong (false).*

It is notable that, in this passage, the *Śataśāstra* explicitly distinguishes between the object a finger touches, that is, a perceptual distinction (*zhǐ xiàng* 指相), and the touching function of the finger, that is, touch as a distinguishing activity (*zhǐ yè* 指業). We thus have here a case of a distinction that is analogous to the contrast between ‘seeing’ (jiàn 見) and ‘seen’ ([suǒ] jiàn 所見) in the above example from the *Śūraṅgamasūtra*, but this time involving the term *zhǐ* 指, even if only in its nominal meaning of ‘finger’. Remarkably, the *Śataśāstra* thus explains nothing less than the very reason why *zhǐ* is *not zhǐ* (指非指)! This is no contradiction, because the superficial identity of the two occurrences of *zhǐ* conceals a fundamental difference between a perceiving distinction and a perceived difference. And even if this observation is not of immediate relevance for the ZWL, it is notable that another of the three influential *Madhyamaka* treatises explains what this has to do with ‘ideation’ (*saṃjñā*) (and conception), that is with two of the aggregates

(*skandhas*) associated not with ‘matter’ (*rūpa*, sè 色) but with ‘naming’ (*míng* 名, *nāma*) – and thus one of the core issues of the *GSLZ* as a whole. The *Dvādaśanikāyaśāstra* (*Shí’èr mén lùn* 十二門論), translated by Kumārajīva in 408 CE, was the second of the *Mādhyamikan* treatises revered by the so-called *sānlùn*-school:

[35] *Dvādaśanikāyaśāstra* (*Shí’èr mén lùn* 十二門論), Nāgārjuna, tr. Kumārajīva, (T 30, no. 1568, p. 164):

如是於可相中少分名相。是故或相即可相。或相異可相。或可相少分爲相。汝言一異不成故。相可相不成者。是事不然。答曰。汝說或相是可相如識等。是事不然。何以故。以相故可知名可相所用者名爲相。凡物不能自知。如指不能自觸。如眼不能自見。是故汝說識即是相可相。是事不然。

Like this, a small part inside something distinguishable is called (its) distinctive mark (distinction). Therefore, some distinctive mark coincides with the distinguishable. Some distinctive mark is different from the distinguishable. A minor part of something distinguishable is (its) distinctive mark. You say that distinction (i.e. distinctive mark) and distinguishable are not established, because neither the oneness nor the difference (of distinction and distinguishable) is established. I hold that in fact it is not like this. Answer: You say that any distinction (distinctive mark) specifies something distinguishable, as in the case of consciousness etc. I hold that in fact it is not like this. Why so? It is because of distinction (its distinctive mark) that the knowable is named distinguishable, and the place on which it applies is called distinction. Every thing is unable to know itself, just as *a finger-tip is unable to touch itself*, as the eye is unable to see itself. Therefore, when you say that consciousness identifies the specification of both distinction (distinctive mark) and distinguishable, I hold that this is in fact not like this.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ “Thus the characterizable is partially identical with characteristics. So characteristics are either the same as, or different from, or partially the same as the characterizable. Your thesis that since sameness and difference cannot be established, characteristics and the characterizable cannot be established, is untenable. Answer: Your thesis that characteristics are the characterizable, just as with consciousness and so forth, is not tenable. Why? Because that which can be known through characteristics is called the characterizable; what has been used in knowing is called characteristics. [But] a thing cannot know itself. For example, a finger

This passage is part of a proof that all things are empty. It starts from a description of the process of distinction as the cognition of so-called distinctive marks or characteristics in distinguishable matter. It suggests that either the distinguishing mark perfectly matches with the distinguished matter, or that it does not neatly correspond to it so that there is no identification between the two. The former suggestion amounts to the claim that distinguishing mark and distinguished matter are identical – so that there can be no combination, because what is identical cannot be combined. The second one implies that distinguishing mark and distinguished matter are different. In this case, there is no identification: What is different remains different so that there can be no genuine combination either. The *Sarvāstivādin* position against self-awareness of cognition is thus invoked here as an argument against the idea of an inherent bipolarity of perception, as suggested by the opponent who considers it as implying the combination of a perceiving sense consciousness with a section of the sensual matter perceived at a particular point in time. If this were true, distinction would involve the conjunction of two different factors, something the *Mādhyamikan* considers impossible. Of course, he does not endorse the opposite position but simply brings the *Sarvāstivādin* view in play to support the first part of his contention: Distinction involves no difference. It holds between items which are the same, so there is merely identity or sameness, and no relation can be established. It is clear that the *Sarvāstivādin* view, according to which consciousness is the cause that has to accompany the combination of the visual sense organ with colored matter in order to raise it to the level of cognition, is equally unacceptable from a *Madhyamaka* perspective, as it also implies the idea of combination.

It is remarkable that this peculiar use of the *Sarvāstivādin* simile of the finger unable to touch itself seems to have prepared the ground for a reinterpretation of the finger as a stock example of something self-identical rather than combined: This can be nicely illustrated in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the third of the *sānlùn* treatises translated by Kumārajīva in 409 CE:

[36a] *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Zhōnglùn 中論), Nāgārjuna, comm. *Vimalākṣa 青目, tr. Kumārajīva (T 30, no. 1564, p. 8):

一則無合。何以故。一 If something is one, it is without combination.
 法云何自合。如指端不 Why so? Why should one single element combine
 能自觸。若以異法合, with itself? It is like the finger-tip which is unable
 是亦不可。何以故。以 to touch itself. When it comes to [saying] that

cannot touch itself and an eye cannot see itself. Therefore your thesis that consciousness is both a characteristic and the characterizable is untenable.” (translation in Cheng 1982: 82–83).

異成故。若各成竟不須
復合。雖合猶異。復次
一異俱不可。

different elements combine, this also is not acceptable. Why so? Because the difference is (already) established, and if each (of the differents) is complete it need not further be combined (with something else). Even if combined they amount to be different. Consequently, oneness and difference are both unacceptable.²⁴²

[36b] *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, p. 19:

是法不自合，異法亦不
合。合者及合時，合法
亦皆無。是法自體不
合，以一故。如一指不
自合。異法亦不合。以
異故。異事已成不須合
故。如是思惟。合法不
可得。是故說合者合時
合法。不可得。

‘This’ same (= self-identical) element (*dharma*) does not combine with itself, ‘different’ elements also do not combine. Hence, the fact of combination, the time of combination and the elements of a combination do not exist. [Comment:] ‘This’ same (= self-identical) element is itself a unit, it is not combined, because it is one. *Just like one finger does not combine with itself.* Different elements also do not combine, because they are different. As different things (phenomena), they are already established (in themselves); they need no combination. If you think about it like this, a combination of elements cannot be attained. For this reason, I say that the fact of combination, the time of combination, and the elements of combination all cannot be attained.²⁴³

Just like the previous excerpt from the *Shí’èr mén lùn* these two passages pertain to the topic of the impossibility of combination both between what is the same and what is different. In its argument, the text interestingly refers to the two crucial terms of classification: *shì* (‘to be [of] this [kind]’) and *yì* (‘to be different’). The wholesale refutation of the idea of combination is thus presented with reference to the names associated with the distinctive marks of things, as raised in the discussion from the *Shí’èr mén lùn* presented above. It is noteworthy that this basic line of argument is in full agreement with the gist of those

²⁴² The passage is part of Vimalākṣa’s commentary.

²⁴³ 14.8: Siderits and Katsura translate from the Sanskrit version of Nāgārjuna’s verses: “It is not correct to say that conjunction is of this with itself, nor that there is the conjunction of this with another. The presently being conjoined, the conjoined, and that which conjoins – none of these exists.” Vimalākṣa’s commentary is missing. (Siderits/Katsura trans. 2013: 151).

parts of the *GSLZ*, such as BML, which argue for the integrity of names like ‘horse’ or ‘white’ and which refute their ‘combination’ into phrases like ‘white horse’. Strikingly, it is precisely in discussions about the inconceivability of both sameness and difference in terms of combinability, that the very notion of *zhǐ* 指 is raised in the *sānlùn* texts under consideration here. And while this co-occurrence is obviously a weak basis for farther-reaching conclusions, it is noticeable that the unity of finger and object in touch – and its simultaneous distinctness from tactile consciousness – would thus have been chosen as a general illustration of the integrity of units which cannot be combined from smaller constituent parts. While these *Mādhyamika*n discussions show a certain resemblance to the final discussion of JBL about sight, touch and self-awareness, an assessment of their possible implications for the highly opaque ZWL must await further enquiry. What is noticeable is that, just like the *Chéngshílùn*, the three texts from the *Madhyamaka* tradition discussed above were translated by Kumārajīva at the beginning of the fifth century. We have already seen that JBL most probably reflects discussions in the *Chéngshílùn*: In view of this, its additional similarities to the *sānlùn* treatises just discussed seem to support the idea that it might indeed have been composed in the larger context of the debate between early Chinese *Mādhyamika*ns and partisans of the *Chéngshílùn*. More detailed investigations will be necessary in order to clarify whether the implicit references in JBL (and other parts of the *GSLZ*) to Buddhist discussions even allow for a clearer positioning of this chapter (and the entire collection) in this internal conflict in medieval Buddhism. However, regardless of the precise nature of the conspicuous similarities of (parts of) the *GSLZ* with Buddhist texts, it is striking that the topic of *zhǐ* has led us to yet another dimension of possible Buddhist traces in the *GSLZ*.

On the whole, it thus seems that what appears to be an arbitrary choice on the part of early translators to render the notion of ‘touch’ in Buddhist writings about perception with the Chinese term *zhǐ* prepared the ground for the prominent appearance of this term in subsequent discussions about self-awareness. And while the rather detailed analyses presented in the *Madhyamaka* treatises discussed above clearly refer to the notion of touch and the finger as an organ of tactile sensation, it was possibly due to the prominence of the term in other contexts, such as the finger-moon and the horse-finger metaphors, that the focus of the discussion about *zhǐ* subsequently shifted toward the notion of ‘pointing’ and eventually gave rise to the kinds of dialogues about pointing and consciousness exemplified by the dialogue from the *Śūraṅgamasūtra* quoted above.

Thus Buddhist discourses from the early fifth century CE onward provided the term *zhǐ* with rich philosophical connotations, ranging from questions of language to the problem of cognition and self-awareness. Whoever may have

been responsible for the medieval compilation of the extant ZWL, it is clear that (t)he(y) could play on a vast variety of possible philosophical allusions of the term. Furthermore, as we have seen, Buddhist reflections on the nature of sensual perception would even have offered them a ready-made analysis of the apparently contradictory claim that “*zhǐ* is not *zhǐ*”, which they chose to integrate so prominently at the very beginning of their piece.

While it is clear that the parallels between ZWL and several Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources dating from the fifth through eighth centuries CE do not allow for any specific conclusions regarding its composition, it can thus be demonstrated that an intellectual climate in which the term *zhǐ* was used in discussions about the relationship between perception, designation, and conceptualization prevailed during that period. This interpretation of the term is not only much more specific than its common usage in Buddhist contexts in the sense of ‘linguistic symbol’ or ‘sign’; it is also much closer to its apparent use in ZWL. Again, I should stress that my suspicion that ZWL might have undergone editorial modifications as late as the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties or even the Táng dynasty has been reached independently of any assumptions about intellectual parallels to allegedly contemporaneous Buddhist or Daoist texts. Yet once we look for possible sources of inspiration that might have encouraged the medieval compiler(s) to modify the text in the way (t)he(y) apparently did, not only the *Zhuāngzǐ*, but also Buddhist texts provide highly plausible points of reference. It thus seems clear that a purported seventh-century CE compiler of the extant *GSLZ* who integrated ZWL into his collection would have lived in an intellectual milieu in which the problem of pointing and its relevance for potentially detrimental conceptual distinctions was common currency.

6.3 The Pivotal Notion of 兼: Enmeshed in A Net of Buddhist-Daoist Allusions?

To conclude the present section, we now shift our attention to the crucial term *jiān* 兼, which explicitly connects JBL with ZWL, and which I argued originated in a miswriting of 無. *Jiān* is used in the JBL to refer to the mind’s conceptual ‘combination’ or ‘synthesis’ of various perceived qualities into a single object. What it connects are (at least) two heterogeneous items: On the one hand, there are the qualities which – unless hidden – are laid bare to the senses. They circumscribe and isolate certain areas by contrasting them with their respective backgrounds (i.e. they are what metaphysicians call ‘tropes’). On the other hand, there are the ‘shapes’ or ‘forms’ which the mind adjusts or matches to the patterns presented by the senses. The result is the construction of a thing through the conjunction of one

or several sensual qualities with an intellectual form, which yields the kind of concrete objects which JBL exemplifies in the “hard white stone”. It is easy to see that the process constituting the object in the mind, as presented in JBL – in spite of its use of the (equivocal) term ‘thing’ rather than ‘shape’ – on the one hand represents what BML calls ‘color’ and ‘shape’, and on the other is reminiscent of the opposition encountered in the Buddhist *Chéngshìlùn* between *rūpa* (*sè*), the sensual basis of distinction, and the intellectual objects, such as the concept of a jar or a cart, which the mind abstracts on this basis.

For the next step in our argument, it is important to consider another level of intertextual references at play in JBL. As we have seen, Graham has already argued that the following passage is construed on the basis of two sections in ZWL and BML, respectively (cf. [27] above):

[37a] JBL (DZ/1172/3/2v[16v]/5–6):

曰：「物白焉，不定其所白。物堅焉，不定其所堅。不定者兼，惡乎甚（=其）石也？」

A: “Now, as for a thing, what is white in it does not determine the [nature of] what it makes white. Just as what is hard in a thing does not determine the [nature of] what it makes hard. Now, if two undetermined entities are combined, how could it be that they are a stone?”

[37b] ZWL (DZ/1172/2/2r[10r]/5–6):

且指者天下之所兼。天下無指者，物不可謂無指也。

Now, as for pointers, they are what the world combines. That the world has no pointers does not allow for saying that things have no pointers.

[37c] BML (DZ/1172/1/7r/9–7v/2):

曰：「白者不定所白，忘之而可也。白馬者，言白定所白也。定所白者，非白也。」

A: “In ‘white’ one does not determine what it makes white. It is admissible to forget about it. Saying white in [the expression] ‘white horse’ determines what it makes white. That which determines what is made white is not the white.

As we have argued above, the character 兼 in ZWL [37b] is a corruption of 無, unnoticed or disregarded by the compiler of the JBL parallel [37a]. Now we are in a position to understand the implications of [37a]: the ‘combination’ or ‘synthesis’ which yields the concrete palpable ‘things’ is effected by the mind. ‘Mind’ is also the faculty which is able to contribute the concepts of ‘form’ or ‘thing’ to which the

notion of a stone belongs. However, taking together two heterogeneous but equally sensual qualities such as ‘hard’ and ‘white’ fails to specify the kind of thing of which they are attributes. There seems to be a certain conflict here with what [37b] says: here the ‘world’ occurs in the subject position of *jiān*, so that it appears as if it were the world rather than the faculty of the mind which effectuates the ‘combination’ of ‘markers’ or ‘pointers’ with ‘thing concepts’ to yield the appearance of perceptible things. Note, however, that this is possibly a projection favored by the English translation: in Chinese, the noun *tiānxià* in the subject position can unproblematically refer to the location rather than the agent of a following existential verb. Thus it might possibly be more accurate to render the first sentence of [37b] as follows: “as for pointers, they are the places in the world that are combined”, which would leave open the question of the cause of these combinations.

However, in spite of their far-reaching implications, these interpretational details seem to be of limited relevance to our case. What is far more important is the following observation: if [37a] is not only modeled after [37b], but equally imitates the BML passage in [37c], we can be certain that its composer was well aware of the word immediately following the phrase 所白 in BML, namely the verb *wàng* 忘 (‘to forget/to disregard’). This suggests that the peculiar way in which the formulation of [37a] collates excerpts of passages from both ZWL and BML was chosen to invoke the collocation of *jiān* 兼 and *wàng* 忘. The phrase *jiān wàng* 兼忘 alludes to the ‘*Tiānyùn*’ 天運 (Revolution of Heaven) chapter of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, in which it captures the culmination of a development of progressive emancipation from other people and things: starting with the refutation of a privileged emotional relationship with one’s parents, the process is eventually accomplished by disengaging from the entire world.²⁴⁴ Since the fourth century CE, this phrase came to be adopted in Buddhist contexts as a metaphor for the simultaneous refutation of two opposites, and hence of non-duality. The first example I am aware of is Dào’ān’s 道安 (312–385) preface to his commentary on the *Ānbān shǒuyì jīng* 安般守意經 (**Ānāpānasamṛtisūtra*), a classic work on respiratory techniques in meditation (*ānāpāna*, *ānbān* 安般),²⁴⁵ in which he

244 “[When] venerating one’s parents by means of respect is easy, venerating them with love is difficult; [when] venerating one’s parents with love is easy, forgetting one’s relatives is difficult. [When] forgetting one’s relatives is easy, having one’s relatives forget oneself is difficult. [When] having one’s relatives forget oneself is easy, entirely forgetting the world is difficult. [While] entirely forgetting the world is easy, having the world entirely forget oneself is difficult” (以敬孝易，以愛孝難；以愛孝易，以忘親難；忘親易，使親忘我難；使親忘我易，兼忘天下難；兼忘天下易，使天下兼忘我難。); *Zhuāngzǐ*, ‘*Tiānyùn*’ 天運 2, in Guō 1978: 498–499.

245 Zacchetti 2010: 421–422.

characterizes the stage of *nirvāṇa* (literally something like ‘non-engagement’ or ‘disengagement’ [wú wéi 無爲]) in Zhuāngzǐ’s words as the level on which one succeeds in “having the world forget one’s self”. This refers to a stage where “self and other are both destroyed” (彼我雙廢).²⁴⁶ His disciple Sēngruì 僧睿 (371–438) writes about “forgetting both the trap of [linguistic] distinction and the self” (筌我兼忘) as an approximation of reality (*shí* 實) in which the difference between *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra* (èr jì 二際) is overcome.²⁴⁷ Richard Mather has observed the crucial role of the idea of 兼忘 – which he translates as “total forgetting” – in the work of the eminent poet, scholar–historian, and lay Buddhist Shěn Yuē 沈約 (441–513), who considers it a method by which to achieve “all-encompassing illumination” (*jiān zhào* 兼照).²⁴⁸ Mather stresses the popularity of the *Chéngshílùn* during Shěn’s lifetime. In his words, it opposed the “extreme nihilism” of the *Madhyamaka*, holding that, at one level, all *dharma*s are indeed real and need to be reduced to emptiness via repeated efforts to analyze and eventually dispel them.²⁴⁹ It should be noted, however, that prior to Jízàng 吉藏 (549–623), even Buddhist clerics usually felt no contradiction between engaging in *Chéngshílùn* exegesis and the concomitant study of *Madhyamaka* texts – possibly, as Krause suggests, due to the former text’s strong anti-Sarvāstivādic bent. Regardless of these inner-Buddhist tensions, the *jiān wàng* phrase from the Zhuāngzǐ eventually ended up as a cipher for the dictum of non-duality²⁵⁰ – as in expressions such as *yǒu wú jiān wàng* 有無兼忘 (“concurrent forgetting of both being there and not being there”)²⁵¹ or *kōng yǒu jiān wàng* 空有兼忘 (“concurrent forgetting of both emptiness and being there”).²⁵²

246 *Chū sānzàng jì jí* 出三藏記集, T 55, no. 145, fasc. 6, p. 43.

247 See the preface to the *Dvādaśanikāyaśāstra* (*Shí’èr mén lùn* 十二門論), preserved and attributed to Sēngruì in *Chū sānzàng jì jí* 出三藏記集 (11: 77) and contained in *Shí’èr mén lùn* (T 30, no. 1568, p. 159) and *Shí’èr mén lùn shū* 十二門論疏 (T 42, no. 1825, fasc. 1, p. 173).

248 Mather 1988: 150–151.

249 Mather 1988: 136.

250 For an excellent discussion of this kind of Daoist-Buddhist “metaphor-blending”, see Plassen 2015.

251 *Chūsānzàngjì jí*, T 45, no. 2145, fasc. 55, p. 48.

252 *Guāng Hóngmíngjí* 廣宏明集, T 52, no. 2103, fasc. 52, p. 206.

Given the prominence of this phrase at least since the fifth century CE, it thus seems highly probable that an educated compiler who came across our purported ZWL fragment – which, like the original passage from the ‘Tiānyùn’ chapter, contained the salient character 兼, and which also featured prominent occurrences of the term ‘*tiānxià*’ – would be likely to maintain the arguably miswritten character 兼. And we would moreover surmise that it would have been attractive for him to do what he apparently did in phrasing the passage from JBL quoted above – namely, to relate the passage to BML and its admission of ‘forgetting’, under certain circumstances, the kind of object highlighted by the color white. Finally, let us note that the notion of *jiān*, as developed in the *GSLZ*, refers to the mental co-ordination of intellectual entities such as forms or shapes and sensual qualities such as colors. These belong to what the *Chéngshílùn* (just like previous *Sarvāstivāda* treatises) attributes to two heterogeneous domains – the sensual basis that makes up the matter of distinctions on the one hand, and the mental constructions and corresponding nominal designations superimposed on sensual perceptions on the other. At the same time, the *Chéngshílùn* considers that both of these domains equally need to be overcome. Assuming that the *GSLZ* is indeed a medieval compilation, the co-ordinated “perception-cum-conception” which it develops could thus be a reflection, if not an *intentional* inversion, of the concerted efforts of some contemporaneous Buddhist currents to eventually eclipse both conception and perception alike. Not least given its implicit allusions to both *Sarvāstivādin* and *Mādhyamikan* sources, we may even speculate that the *GSLZ* – or at least parts of it – reflects a tacit refutation of the program of the prospective dissolution of all distinctions propagated in the *Chéngshílùn*.

Even if our investigations into possible Buddhist traces in the vocabulary of JBL, ZWL, and BML have to remain both tentative and speculative, we have been able to depict the lines along which a medieval compiler might have integrated two previously independent texts – BML and ZWL – into a new collection arranged around the newly composed JBL. Although the assumption that their editorial decisions were substantially informed by a palpable Buddhist background ultimately cannot be proven, it seems to me that my observations at least provide *plausible* explanations for a number of editorial decisions to assemble, modify, and compose the fragmentary constituent texts of the received *GSLZ* collection precisely in the way it has been preserved and handed down to us.

7 Buddhist Inspiration? A Possible History of the *GSLZ*'s Composition

In this section, I present a discussion of Shěn's suggestion that ZWL was integrated into the *GSLZ* or its alleged predecessor, the *Discourse on Preserving White*, only in the second half of the seventh century CE. Based on Shěn's additional assumption that JBL was already part of the *Shǒubáilùn*, it is clear that the accuracy of this assumption would exclude the constitutive role ZWL played in the arrangement of JBL (as suggested above), as the latter would have circulated independently of the former. However, if Shěn is right in another respect – namely, in his assumption that BML and ZWL indeed circulated independently of a *Discourse on Preserving White*, which allegedly only consisted of the “neo-Mohist” chapters of the *GSLZ* up to the early decades of the Táng period – this state of affairs may point toward another clue as to its history of composition. But as I consider the interdependence of JBL and ZWL evident, Shěn's hypothesis seems plausible only if it is adjusted in one crucial respect: because JBL is highly unlikely to have been composed independently of ZWL, its compilation can hardly predate the inclusion of ZWL in the *GSLZ* or any of its predecessors. Therefore, if Shěn is right, then JBL itself – at least in its received form – could not have been compiled any earlier than in the first half of the seventh century CE.²⁵³

Let us develop our argument step by step. As we have seen, the book title *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* is first attested in the bibliographical list transmitted in the *Hànshū* (History of the Former Hàn), which stretches back to materials compiled around the beginning of the common era, some 250 years after the presumed lifetime of the debater, and resurfaces again only in the early seventh century CE. Even though in the last century BCE, Sīmǎ Qiān's 司馬遷 (145–86 BCE) *Shǐjì* 史記 (Records of the Grand Scribe) states that there were numerous writings by Gōngsūn Lóng extant, the “Grand Scribe” does not provide the titles of any of these works.²⁵⁴ Except for the roughly contemporaneous *Hànshū*, with its isolated mention of a *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the eastern Hàn scholars Huán Tán 桓譚 (23–56 CE) and Wáng Chōng 王充 (27–97 CE) specify for the first time the

²⁵³ In fact, as Graham has shown, its first mention (by the Buddhist monk Fǎlín in 621 CE) occurs in precisely this period; see Graham 1956/7: 179.

²⁵⁴ See *Shǐjì*, ‘Mèngzǐ Xún Qīng lièzhuàn’ 孟子荀卿列傳 12, in Sīmǎ 1973: 2349. The text mentions the debater's ‘disputations’ (*biàn* 辯) about “hard and white” (*jiān bái* 堅白) as well as “sameness and difference” (*tóng yì* 同異), thus apparently referring to two topics discussed in Gōngsūn Lóng's writing rather than their titles.

title of a work allegedly authored by Gōngsūn Lóng in the early written record. Both attribute a *Discourse on Hard and White* (*Jiānbái zhī lùn* 堅白之論) to the “sophist”.²⁵⁵ However, while Wáng remains entirely silent about the theories of this text, the short excerpt from Huán’s *Xīnlùn* 新論 (New Discourses) – which is only attested in a tenth-century CE encyclopedia harkening back to the sixth century CE – associates the work with the “white horse” argument. As has been observed by Graham and others, this equation of the *topoi* of “hard and white” and “white and horse” is common only since the later Hàn period.²⁵⁶ However, records about a *lùn* 論 (‘argument’ or ‘treatise’) on “white and horse” do not appear before the medieval period. Moreover, while it is not clear whether the fourth-century CE occurrence in *Shìshuō Xīnyǔ* refers to a text – rather than an *argument* – about this topic,²⁵⁷ the late fourth-century CE commentator on the *Lièzǐ*, Zhāng Zhàn, not only quotes from the ‘Discourse on White and Horse’, but in fact remarks that a text under this title was extant and widely discussed during his lifetime.²⁵⁸ While a text entitled BML and attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng is thus attested as early as the late fourth century CE, the first source to identify him as the author of a ‘Discourse on Hard and White’ under the same title as the received chapter – ‘*Jiānbái lùn*’ rather than ‘*Jiānbái zhī lùn*’ – appears to be the apologetic *Pòxié lùn* 破邪論 (Discourse on the Rebuttal of Distorted [Teachings]) by the Buddhist scholar Fǎlín 法琳 (572–640) at the turn from the sixth to the seventh century CE.²⁵⁹

Graham somewhat enthusiastically inferred from this record of medieval and early Táng references that there is unambiguous evidence for the existence of a

255 Wáng Chōng mentions the work in his *Lùnhéng*, ‘Ānshū’ 案書 3, in Huáng 1964: 1159. The *Xīnlùn* fragment is transmitted in the *Tàipíng Yùlǎn* 太平御覽 (compl. 983, based on a medieval compilation from 572), fasc. 464, in Lǐ 1960: 2134. Cf. Graham 1956/7: 175; Graham 1967: 366.

256 Graham 1956/7: 175. See also Hé 1967: 178.

257 *Shìshuō Xīnyǔ*, ‘Wénxué’ 24 (in Xú 1989: 117) is a fifth-century CE work traditionally attributed to Liú Yìqīng 劉義慶 (403–444 CE); but see the discussion in Mather (1976: xii), who suggests that it came under Hé Chángyú’s 何長瑜, d. 446 CE) editorship. Shěn Yǒudǐng assumes that the incident recorded in the medieval collection refers to a discussion about the *topic* of the white horse rather than a text by this name. He even speculates that the very essay which the Eastern Jin (317–420 CE) scholar Ruǎn Yù 阮裕 is said to have composed in order to explain this *dictum* is in fact the extant BML (see Shěn 1992a: 488–489, 490; Shěn 1992c [1989]: 445). Graham, in contrast, takes the reference as evidence for the existence of a BML which he identifies with the received chapter of the *GSLZ* (see Graham 1956/7: 176).

258 Graham 1956/7: 176. Shěn assumes that the BML Zhāng Zhàn is referring to was actually a medieval composition, speculating that it might even have been the text on the ‘white horse’ *topos* composed, according to the *Shìshuō Xīnyǔ*, by the Eastern Jin erudite Ruǎn Yù; see Shěn 1992c (1989): 445–446.

259 T 52, no. 2109, p. 4. Cf. n. 253, p. 532 above.

BML since Hàn times.²⁶⁰ At the same time, there are no hints suggesting the existence of a text corresponding or even similar to the received JBL chapter of the *GSLZ* prior the early seventh century CE. In spite of the Hàn records of a ‘Discourse *about* Hard and White’ attributed to Gōngsūn Lóng, as mentioned above, this conspicuous absence of explicit references to JBL in later medieval records eventually led Graham to conclude that this chapter must have been compiled only later.²⁶¹ Together with the observation of early Táng taboos in the introductory ‘Jìfǔ’ chapter,²⁶² he took this as evidence that the *GSLZ*, as we know it, was only compiled as late as the seventh century CE.²⁶³ Graham also subscribes to the thesis that an early version of the *GSLZ* had circulated under the title *Shǒubáilùn* 守白論 (Discourse on Preserving White) in the early seventh century.²⁶⁴ Shěn Yǒudǐng, who considers the entire *GSLZ* (with the exception of the first third of TBL²⁶⁵) a medieval composition, not only concurs with Graham’s assumption regarding its date of compilation,²⁶⁶ but he also identifies the *Shǒubáilùn* as an early version of this text.²⁶⁷ However, while Graham remains silent about the exact time and context of the composition of the Mohist-inspired “forged” chapters (JBL, TBL, and MSL), Shěn considers all the texts, as collected in the extant *GSLZ*, to be products of the Jìn dynasty (265–420 CE).²⁶⁸ Like Graham, he thus assumes that they already existed *before* the received *GSLZ* was compiled. Basing his argument on what the sources say about the *Shǒubáilùn*, he presents a rather detailed account of the alleged process of its compilation; his hypothesis revolves around the *Zhuāngzǐ* sub-commentary by the Daoist scholar Chéng Xuányīng 成玄英 (fl. 631 CE). Shěn observes that Chéng attributes two different texts to Gōngsūn Lóng. While in most cases he writes about the debater’s *Shǒubáilùn*, he once attributes to him the composition of a BML. Based on this,

260 Graham 1956/7: 175. “It would be unreasonable to doubt that the Essay on the White Horse existed in substantially its present form at least as early as in the 1st c. AD.”

261 Graham 1956/7: 177.

262 Graham 1956/7: 172–173

263 Graham 1956/7: 181–183.

264 Although he admits that the scarce evidence renders futile any attempt to ascertain which parts – the Mohist-influenced chapters or the “authentic ones” – of the extant *GSLZ* were already contained in the *Shǒubáilùn* collection; see Graham 1956/7: 169.

265 Shěn 1992a: 507. In this respect, he agrees with Graham (see Graham 1951: 150–152). Shěn admits that BML, in spite of being a medieval compilation, has preserved some of the alleged argumentative strictness characteristic of the texts of ancient debaters (see Shěn 1992: 509).

266 Shěn 1992a: 502.

267 Shěn 1992a: 505.

268 Shěn 1992c (1989): 444.

Shěn draws the conclusion that these two texts were still circulating independently of each other in the early seventh century CE.²⁶⁹

Shěn then adds an argument *ex silentio*: as we have already mentioned, the *Zhuāngzǐ* is the only pre-imperial text to contain a few passages that are similar to ZWL. At least one of these – the expression “zhǐ zhī fēi zhǐ” 指之非指 in ‘Qíwù lùn’, discussed above – was indeed interpreted as a reference to the *GSLZ*, though not before the eleventh century CE. In view of this, Shěn considers it remarkable that Chéng’s sub-commentary, in spite of referring to Gōngsūn Lóng on several occasions, mentions no ZWL at all.²⁷⁰ Based on this conspicuous lack of references to one of the core pieces of the received *GSLZ*, Shěn concludes that ZWL was not yet included in the version of the *Shǒubáilùn* which Chéng had to hand.²⁷¹

Taking his two hypotheses together, this alleged immediate predecessor of the *GSLZ* – which, according to Shěn, was compiled during the Jin period – would have contained neither BML nor ZWL, but only what Graham called the “spurious” chapters. Only a few sources mention a text by the name of *Shǒubáilùn*, and even fewer associate it with the name of Gōngsūn Lóng. Except for Chéng’s *Zhuāngzǐ* sub-commentary, only a passage in the introductory JF chapter of the *GSLZ* itself mentions the debater as its author. The notorious entry of a text under this title in the bibliographical section of the *Suǐshū* does not attribute the work to Gōngsūn Lóng. None of these sources predates the seventh century CE. Another source which makes ample use of the expression “shǒu bái” 守白, but which has been largely ignored in the research, is the so-called *Old Commentary* (舊注) on the *GSLZ*. This was probably ignored because it was assumed to be a Táng or even a Sòng dynasty work. It is interesting, as it seems to be pieced together from (at least) two different commentaries – one developing a political interpretation of the text, and the other much more interested in logical and epistemological problems.²⁷² Strikingly, the crucial expression “preserving white” (*shǒu bái* 守白) occurs exclusively in the commentaries on BML and on the introductory JF chapter, but nowhere else in the work. The phrase is associated with a peculiar

269 Shěn 1992a: 494.

270 Chéng’s sub-commentary on the famous passage from ‘Qíwù lùn’ takes *zhǐ* in the concrete sense of ‘finger’. The second term, *mǎ* (lit. ‘horse’), is identified as a ‘game chip’ (*xìchóu* 戲籌) (see Guō 1978: vol. 1: 69). In some contrast to this, his commentary on the occurrence of the term *zhǐ* in the ‘Tiānxià’ chapter seems more closely related to the topic of ‘pointing’. It reads: “Now, with a finger, you point at a thing, but not at a finger (?). Therefore, the finger does not reach (what it points at). But it is from the finger that you grasp the thing. This is why it (= the thing) is not detached (from the finger) even after you have reached it” (夫以指指物而非指。故指不至也，而自指得物。故至不絕者也。); Guō 1978: 4: 1110.

271 Shěn 1992a: 502.

272 Kandel 1974: 139.

interpretation of the white horse argument as an admonition against nepotism and ethnocentrism. This part of the commentary demonstrates close resemblances to the pre-Táng *Yǐn Wénzǐ* 尹文子,²⁷³ in terms of both *philosophical concerns*²⁷⁴ and *phrasing*.²⁷⁵ If these similarities²⁷⁶ are indeed indicative of a common context of composition, this would imply that this part of the commentary is considerably older than the rest. Thus it would seem possible that it might have been attached to a precursor of the extant BML, which possibly circulated independently of the remaining chapters of the extant *GSLZ*.²⁷⁷ If true, this would demonstrate an intimate connection between the expression “preserving white” and the “white horse” argument – a connection which, incidentally, seems to speak against Shěn’s view that the designations *Shǒubáilùn* and *Báimǎlùn* referred to different texts.²⁷⁸ The passage in JF also unmistakably shows that the expression “*shǒubái*” 守白 is a variation on the much more frequent (and older) “*jiānbái*” 堅白 (“hard and white”),²⁷⁹ an expression which, as we have seen, had been associated with the white horse argument since the middle period of the Hàn dynasty. While it is thus unclear in what form the various texts gathered in the extant *GSLZ* were circulating before they

273 The literary catalogue of the *Suǐshū* lists a work by this name in two chapter sections (see Chángsūn 1955: 76). It thus seems to have been extant before the Táng period.

274 Most notably, this includes a discourse on the status of kinship in ‘favoring’ (*qīn* 親) and ‘dismissing’ (*shū* 疏/疎/疎) candidates for appointments to administrative posts. Cf. *Yǐn Wénzǐ*, ‘Dàdào shàng’ (hereafter DDS) 10, 30, in Qián 1996: 2, 5; *Yǐn Wénzǐ*, ‘Dàdào xià’ (hereafter DDX) 17, in Qián 1996: 8, vs. *GSLZ Jiùzhù* (hereafter JZ), BML [DZ/1172/1/5r/5; 5r/10; 5v/4–5; 6r/2, 6; 7r/10–7v/1; 7v/9–8r/3]. In the *GSLZ* commentary, 親 occurs only once outside of BML!

275 Examples include the opposition between the ‘correspondence’ (*yīng* 應) and the ‘divergence’ (*guāi* 乖) of name and reality (cf. YWZ, DDS 8, in Qián 1996: 2; DDX 1, in Qián 1996: 8, vs. *GSLZ JZ*, TBL [DZ/1172/2/14r/9–14v/3]), the use of ‘name’ 名 and ‘implement’ 器 for office title and office holder (cf. YWZ, DDS 1, in Qián 1996: 1, vs. *GSLZ JZ*, JF [DZ/1172/1/1r/5], MSL [DZ/1172/3/20v/1]), the use of *lián* 連 as a technical term for connecting names (cf. YWZ, DDS 11, in Qián 1996: 2, vs. *GSLZ JZ*, BML [DZ/1172/1/5r/9; 7r/8]). Additionally, there is an almost *verbatim* parallel in the definition of the relation between name and reality: “A name names a shape/reality; a shape/reality corresponds to a name” (名者名形者也, 形者應名者也), in YWZ, DDS 8, in Qián 1996: 2, vs. 名者命實者也, 實者應名者也 in *GSLZ JZ*, TBL (DZ/1172/2/6r[14r]/9).

276 However, there are systematic differences, e.g. when the *GSLZ* commentary consistently writes 實 where YWZ has 形. Obviously, a closer investigation is needed to elucidate the precise relationship between these two texts.

277 Note that the parallels to the YWZ in the *GSLZ JZ* in chapters other than JF and BML occur in the generalizations at the end which are only loosely tied to the specific content of the chapters which they conclude.

278 Shěn 1992a: 494.

279 This is evident from the parallel passage in the *Xīnlùn* by the Western Hàn scholar Huán Tán, preserved in the *Tàipíng Yùlǎn* 太平御覽; see Graham 1956/7: 175.

found their way into the collection, it is well possible that they were transmitted independently of each other, perhaps well into the seventh century CE.

To develop our argument further, a short excursion seems appropriate at this point. Interestingly, neither Shěn nor Graham – nor any of the studies known to me – have identified what seems to be the most ancient quotation of the *GSLZ*, which mentions the title and also provides a passage that can be unmistakably identified in the received version of the text:

[38] *Sēng Zhào shū* 僧肇疏 (Sub-commentary on the works of Sēng Zhào, T 45, no. 1859, p. 116):

公孫龍子名實論云：天與地，其所產焉，物也。
The ‘Discourse on Name and Substance’ in the *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ* (or by master Gōngsūn Lóng) says: “Heaven combines with earth. Whatever they produce in it (= this combination/themselves?) is a thing.”

This quotation of the initial line of MSL is taken from the sub-commentary to Sēng Zhào’s 僧肇 (374–414) ‘Wù bù qiān lùn’ 物不遷論 (Discourse on Things Not Moving), written by the Buddhist *Mādhyamikan* and *sānlùn* scholar-monk Yuánkāng 元康, who was active during the Zhēnguān period (627–649 CE). Yuánkāng’s commentary, composed sometime in the first half of the seventh century CE, shows that a text associated with Master Gōngsūn Lóng was so well-established that a Buddhist monk relied on it to define a key concept in the revered text he set out to interpret. Due to the fact that the passage he quotes under the title “Míngshí lùn” can be identified, with some degree of confidence, with the opening line of the homonymous chapter of the extant *GSLZ*, it thus seems almost certain that the expression “Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ” here not only refers to the name of the debater, but to his text. While the references to the *Jiānbáilùn* and *Shǒubáilùn* discussed above, which are probably slightly older, seem too elusive to draw any definite conclusions as to their relationship with the extant *GSLZ*, we can thus be rather confident that a text by the name of *GSLZ* existed around the mid-seventh century, and that it contained a passage identifiable with an – almost – *verbatim* parallel in our extant collection. This suggests that a text by this name featuring at least some of the chapters of the received text was already established and widely known.

In spite of this fortuitous citation, we nevertheless have to admit that this single line is possibly too short to allow for more far-reaching conclusions. Still, what is remarkable here is the fact that what appears to be the oldest quotation from the *GSLZ* is not only found in a Buddhist commentary, but that the Buddhist text commented upon is none other than the *Zhàolùn*, a collection of

essays which we have already come across earlier in our study, and which is possibly of particular relevance to the *GSLZ*. As shown in section five of the present paper, the MSL quoted by Yuánkāng is one of the chapters that appear to consist of two very heterogeneous and not explicitly related parts – the first one probably ancient, the second one obviously written on the model of the Mohist ‘Canons’. We have suggested that the *Madhyamaka* discourse claiming the relativity of all designations might present the “missing link” that joins these two unconnected parts dealing with ‘names’ and ‘reality’ and the relative demonstratives ‘this’ and ‘that’, respectively. Moreover, we have specifically noted that Sēng Zhào’s ‘Discourse on Not Taking Emptiness as Real’ in fact advances in precisely the same way – from the relation between name and reality to the relativity of the prototypical correlatives ‘this’ and ‘that’ – in an obvious attempt to turn the notion of a universal relativity of names into a “weapon” against assumptions about their substantial meaning. We therefore suggested that the compiler of MSL might have been aware of Buddhist debates about language and possibly even of specific texts, such as Sēng Zhào’s treatise.

The following additional observation is interesting in our present context: regarding our discussion of a plausible rationale informing the possible inclusion of ZWL in the *GSLZ*, it seems intriguing that, a few lines after discarding the idea of a substantial meaning of names via the universal claim that all names are correlative in nature, Sēng Zhào justifies *Madhyamaka* scholars’ use of what modern readers identify as contradictory assertions with an explicit reference to the *Zhūāngzǐ*’s “profound and far-reaching words” (*shēn yuǎn zhī yán* 深遠之言) about the similes of ‘finger’ and ‘horse’ (*zhǐ mǎ zhī kuàng* 指馬之況).²⁸⁰ This is relevant to our case for two reasons: First, here Sēng Zhào unambiguously refers to the precedent of the *Zhūāngzǐ* – or, more precisely, to ‘Qíwù lùn’ – rather than to Gōngsūn Lóng and his ‘Zhǐwù lùn’, although the latter would have provided a contradictory statement in its very first sentence. Second, his text, composed at the turn of the fourth to the fifth century CE, obviously wants his readers to understand the contraction “finger and horse” as a cipher for the *Zhūāngzǐ* and its thought in general, as the allusion to the Qīyuán 漆園 garden, *Zhūāngzǐ*’s alleged place of employment, clearly suggests.²⁸¹ This is significant, especially when contrasted with the *Nǐ Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ lùn* mentioned above. The author of this latter text, who lived some 250 years after Sēng Zhào, reports that it was when their discussion touched upon precisely this topic of “finger and horse” that his host

²⁸⁰ *Zhàolùn shū* T 1859: 174a10.

²⁸¹ According to his biography in the *Shiji*, *Zhūāngzǐ* was in charge of the Qīyuán garden. Cf. ‘Lǎozǐ, Hán Fēi lièzhuan’ 9, in Simā 1973: 2143.

presented him his copy of the *GSLZ*. Without overestimating the weight of this isolated account, we can thus still observe that what Sēng Zhào doubtlessly intended as a more or less transparent allusion to the *Zhuāngzǐ* became associated not with the gardener of the Qīyuán grove, but with Gōngsūn Lóng and his work. ‘Zhǐ’ and ‘mǎ’ are no longer related to ‘Qíwù lùn’, but are taken as acronyms of the most prominent chapters in the *GSLZ*: ZWL and BML.

Instead of simply suggesting, on a very general level, a fundamental change in the tacit interpretation which listeners in the mid-seventh century would have associated with the phrase *zhǐ mǎ*, which combines the terms for finger and horse, these observations may be relevant for the compilation of the *GSLZ* in a more specific way. As we have already seen, there is a salient structural resemblance between MSL and Sēng Zhào’s text, in that both conclude their discussion of the relationship between names and reality with a section on the correlative terms ‘this’ and ‘that’. While this sequence of topics appears as nothing more than an accidental collocation in MSL, it marks a necessary step in the context of Sēng Zhào’s argument. It seems uncontroversial to me that this points toward an imitation of Buddhist precedents – regardless of whether this is intentional or not. Moreover, it does not seem implausible, especially in view of the prominence of Sēng Zhào’s work as early as the sixth and seventh centuries, to assume more specifically that it was indeed this ‘Discourse on Not Taking Emptiness as Real’ which inspired the modification and amendment of an older version of MSL. If we further assume that the inclusion of ZWL – and possibly also of BML – in the *GSLZ* or its predecessor occurred at a later point in time than that of MSL, then the fact that the reference to *Zhuāngzǐ*’s ‘finger’ and ‘horse’ in this particular text by Sēng Zhào occurs *immediately* after the passage discussing the relationship between names and realities in terms of demonstrative pronouns seems to suggest that the neo-Mohist conclusion at the end of MSL results from the same editorial interference as the inclusion of ZWL (and possibly also of BML) in the *GSLZ* collection. As an illustration of this point, I reproduce here the relevant section of Sēng Zhào’s treatise.²⁸²

[39] Sēng Zhào 僧肇 (384–414 CE), ‘Bù zhēn kōng lùn’ 不真空論 (Discourse on Not Taking Emptiness as Real) 2:

Text

[1] 夫以名求物，物無當名之實。以物求名，
名無得物之功。物無當名之實，非物也；

Topic discussed

Names and realities
do not match

²⁸² For a translation of the first two parts, see [21], p 484 above.

名無得物之功，非名也。是以名不當實，實不當名。
名實無當，萬物安在？

[2] 故：《中觀》云：「物無彼此。」而人以此爲此，以彼爲彼。彼亦以此爲彼，以彼爲此。此、彼莫定乎一名，而惑者懷必然之志。

Generalization:
names are correlatives
(‘this’ and ‘that’)

[3] 然則彼此初非有，惑者初非無，既悟彼此之非有，有何物而可有哉？故知萬物非真，假號久矣！是以《成具》立強名之文，園林託指馬之況。如此，則深遠之言，於何而不在！

Summary and reference to authoritative sources

[...]

[3] However, both *that* and *this* are not originally being, while the deluded/delusion is not non-being. But now that we have realized that *that* and *this* are not being, what thing would there be of which we could admit its being? Therefore, one knows that the ten thousand things [= all kinds of things] are not real; they are never more than merely supposed designations. For this reason, the **Prabhāśasamādhisādhayatisūtra* (說成具光明定意經)²⁸³ establishes the formulations of forced names and [*the writing from*] the [*Qī*]-*Yuán* grove brings forward the examples of the ‘finger’ and the ‘horse’. And since it is like this, where would you *not* find [these kinds of] profound and far-reaching words?²⁸⁴

While our observations are obviously no *proof* for our specific – and rather speculative – hypotheses about the composition of the *GSLZ*, it is still notable that a *Madhyamaka* scholar like Yuánkāng held the *GSLZ* in such high esteem that he

283 There is no extant Sanskrit or Tibetan version of this *sūtra* (T 15, no. 639). Tradition attributes its translation to Zhīyào 支曜 (fl. 184–189 CE). Zürcher (1991) and Nattier (2003) both doubt its authenticity (Pu 2008: 27–28), but recent scholarship has argued for the accuracy of the inherited account (Pu 2008: 46). On the references in Sēng Zhào’s texts, see Pu 2008: 34–35. The quotation refers to p. 454, where the mind of the *bodhisattva* is characterized by its neutrality with regard to oppositions such as inside and outside, enlightened and common, arising and ceasing, and importantly for Sēng Zhào, also being and non-being (*yǒu wú* 有無). The instruction they concentrate on is that which has no distinguishing characteristics at all, and because “such an entity (*dharma*) has no place where it would be there, one forces its name (namely ‘instruction of the achievement of the bright light concentration’ [成具光明定意之教]) on it” (是法無所有法故，強為其名).

284 For a translation, see e.g. Liebenenthal 1948: 65–66; Robinson 1967: 227.

resorted to it for a definition of a crucial technical term. While any particular reconstruction of the precise relationship between a *Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*-informed Buddhist like Yuánkāng and the alleged Buddhist-inspired compilers of the extant *GSLZ* will have to remain moot, this quotation proves that there was a perception in the seventh century CE that what the *GSLZ* had to say was also relevant in a Buddhist context. In view of this, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that a presumed compiler of the extant *GSLZ* who was active during this period not only may have been conversant in central *Madhyamaka* texts, such as the *Zhàolùn*, but that he moreover might have “amended” an older version of *MSL* with passages that take up – if not conceptually, at least in their wording – a *Madhyamaka* discourse on the universal relativity of all designations, even though he seems to have surreptitiously turned the original argument into something like its opposite. Additionally, if these references to the *Zhàolùn* are not mere chance, if they indeed played a role in the compilation of the *GSLZ* (as suggested above), it does not seem overreaching to assume that the compiler(s) of the received *GSLZ* also took Sēng Zhào’s appeal to the similes of ‘finger’ and ‘horse’ as an incitement to include an assumed predecessor of the extant *ZWL* in their collection.

Eventually, however the compilation of the extant *GSLZ* actually took place, given the intricate relation between *ZWL*, *BML*, and *JBL*, we can almost certainly exclude the possibility that the latter circulated independently of the former two. It certainly does not predate the inclusion of *BML* and *ZWL* in a common collection, be this the received *GSLZ* or some predecessor under whatever name. This implies that Shěn is wrong in assuming that, prior to the establishment of the *GSLZ*, *JBL* was contained in a purported *Shǒubáilùn*. If my line of argumentation is correct and the compilation of the *GSLZ* indeed only occurred in the seventh century CE, then the *received* versions of all three chapters can hardly have been composed as early as the Jin period, as Shěn would have it.²⁸⁵

I would like to conclude this investigation into possible Buddhist traces in the *GSLZ* with two final remarks. There are – at least – two aspects of the connections between the *GSLZ* and various Buddhist texts discussed above that seem problematic at first sight. First, we have noted, on the one hand, the similarity in both vocabulary and argument between *JBL* and the *Chéngshílùn*. Second, we have observed that passages in *TBL* – and possibly also in *MSL* – contain clear references to *Sarvāstivādic* texts. Additionally, we have shown that *MSL* resembles Sēng Zhào’s ‘Bù zhēn kōng lùn’ in various respects. We have thus demonstrated connections to at least three texts from competing Buddhist traditions. This also has

²⁸⁵ The attribution of the composition of the received *GSLZ* to Jin scholars, as also suggested by Kandel 1974: 23–24, would thus be wrong.

implications for our hypothesis regarding the composition of the *GSLZ*. Our assumption that *JBL*, with its close resemblance to the *Chéngshílùn*, was composed at the same time as the compilation of the extant *GSLZ* collection as a whole seems to come into conflict with our second hypothesis: that the compilation of the *GSLZ* – or an immediate predecessor with a different title – was encouraged by one particular passage from the *Zhàolùn*, an early *Madhyamaka* text. However, this particular dogmatic tension might be a mere phantom; at least some of the scholar-monks who studied the *Chéngshílùn* throughout the fifth and early sixth centuries also considered themselves propagators of *Mādhyamikan sānlùn* scholarship.²⁸⁶ In the first decades after its translation, the *Chéngshílùn* scholars appreciated the text because it refuted the scholastic “realism” of the *Sarvāstivādins* from an explicitly *hīnayānic* stance, and later because it was itself considered an adequate introduction to *hīnayānic* scholasticism.²⁸⁷ For this reason, Carsten Krause emphasizes the function of the *Chéngshílùn* as a bridge between *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* scholarship.²⁸⁸ And while warnings that an erroneous understanding of the *Chéngshílùn* might prompt nihilism arose as early as the late sixth century,²⁸⁹ the particular view that it is outright *incompatible* with *Madhyamaka* is thus comparatively late. It seems to gain momentum only over the course of the sixth century, and it culminates in Jízàng’s (549–623) wholesale rejection of the text due to its *hīnayānic* character.²⁹⁰ However, up to the early sixth century, this perspective seems to be of limited relevance. At the same time, what has been said also demonstrates that the frontline between the *Chéngshílùn* and *Madhyamaka* on the one side and *Sarvāstivāda* scholasticism on the other seems to have been fairly clear since the translation of the *Chéngshílùn* in the early fifth century. In view of the *Sarvāstivādic* reverberations in parts of the *GSLZ*, it is thus highly probable that it does not reflect a particular dogmatic perspective, but rather a general setting in which the engagement with *Mahāyāna* texts did not exclude the concomitant study of *Hīnayāna* works – also from the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition – even if only for propaedeutic purposes.

286 A case in point is Sēng Dǎo 僧導 (362–457), who assisted Kumārajīva with his translation of the *Satyasiddhiśāstra*. He wrote commentaries not only on the *Chéngshílùn*, but also on uncontroversially *Mādhyamikan* texts; see Cui 2016: 130, 134; cf. Tāng 1991: 720.

287 Krause 2003: 144.

288 Krause 2003: 126.

289 The respective warning from Zhilín 智琳 (409–487) also pertains to *Madhyamaka* texts and suggests that he considered the *Chéngshílùn* as representative of *Madhyamaka* thought. See Krause 2003: 151.

290 Cui 2016: 134.

Second, we have to explain why the practitioners of the kind of dialectical analysis manifestly inspired by the Mohist ‘Canons’, who apparently composed some and at least edited the other chapters of the received *GSLZ*, should refer to the *Chéngshílùn* (of all things) in the first instance. While the case is probably so complex and the material so limited that this question almost necessarily frustrates any attempt at a unidimensional explanation, there are some clues which point in a potentially helpful direction. Thus it may be relevant to take into account the reason Buddhist exegetes before Jízàng, most notably Kumārajīva himself, recommended the study of the *Chéngshílùn*, in spite of being aware of its *hīnayānic* tenets. As Tāng Yòngtóng 湯用彤 (1893–1964) has emphasized, it was for the sake of its detailed analysis of terms and concepts as well as its systematic structure that this text was considered a useful reference work for beginners in Buddhist studies.²⁹¹ This is indicated by the fact that the *Chéngshílùn* inspired the structure not only of Buddhist scholastic treatises, but arguably also of mundane texts, such as the sixth-century CE *Wénxīn diāolóng* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), one of China’s first comprehensive literary critiques.²⁹² At the same time, the propaedeutic character of the *Chéngshílùn* may explain why the text quickly lost prestige over the course of the seventh century CE, and it also hints at a possible answer to our question as to why the allegedly non-Buddhist compilers of the *GSLZ* would at least implicitly have referred to it. It has been suggested that while its role as an introduction to Buddhist scholasticism was gradually taken over by other texts – such as Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośakārikā*, which was used as a propaedeutic in *Yogācāra* contexts – other compendia on cognition and argumentation, such as Xuánzàng’s 玄奘 (602–664) *Chéngwéishí lùn* 成唯識論 or his translation of *hetuvidyā* texts such as Dignāga’s **Nyāyamukha* (*Yīnmíng zhènglǐ mén lùn* 因明正理門論), soon eclipsed the *Chéngshílùn* both in their degree of elaboration and in the systematicity of their exposition of the conceptual framework of Buddhist scholastics.²⁹³ At the same time, the propaedeutic character of the *Chéngshílùn* in the second half of the fifth and the early sixth centuries explains why it was current far beyond narrow Buddhist circles, and thus how it plausibly reached the Mohist-inspired composers of the treatises transmitted in the *GSLZ*. The fact that it was broadly cherished not only as a manual of Buddhist analytical nomenclature, but explicitly as a model of argumentation, neatly explains why non-Buddhist specialists

²⁹¹ Tāng 1998: 515.

²⁹² Cui 2016: 130, 135–136.

²⁹³ Cui 2016: 137.

in conceptual analysis and argumentative debate, such as the anonymous authors of the *GSLZ*, might have been aware of it. Moreover, their appreciation of the arguments of the *Chéngshìlùn* does not necessarily imply an awareness of their doctrinal implications or even an affinity to a particular Buddhist school. The fact that they avoided explicit references to Buddhist works further suggests that they intended to adopt the arguments and topics by concealing their Buddhist origin – possibly in an attempt to counter the dialectical subtlety of Buddhist scholastic texts with arguments cloaked in an explicitly Chinese guise. However, if we assume that the *Chéngshìlùn* played a constitutive role for JBL, and if we moreover maintain that this chapter does not predate the compilation of a text that comes close to the extant *GSLZ*, then the rapid decline of the *Chéngshìlùn*'s reputation by the end of the sixth century seems to countervene the idea that JBL, and hence the *GSLZ*, was composed only in second half of the seventh century, when records on a *GSLZ* containing six chapters become palpable.

As far as I can see, there are two possible ways to explain this apparent anomaly. First, the JF chapter, which observes Táng taboos that cannot predate the reign of emperor Gāozōng 高宗 (649–683), is set apart from the remaining parts of the *GSLZ* not only in terms of its introductory character, but also on a conceptual level. Terms like *shí* ('reality'), which have a very specific meaning throughout much of the remaining five sections of the *GSLZ*, are here used in a rather general sense. Its loose relation to the remaining chapters thus suggests that it could indeed be a later addition. Second, the Táng taboos in the JF chapter might simply point toward the date of an edition rather than that of the compilation of the extant *GSLZ*. Regardless of the date of this introductory chapter, the close connections between at least four of the main core chapters show that they were composed more or less at the same time, and possibly even by the same hand. In spite of the admitted lack of positive evidence, it thus seems imaginable that even the core of the extant *GSLZ* considerably predates the second half of the seventh century, possibly harkening back to the sixth century CE or earlier. The fact that it might have circulated under another title does not seem to contradict this assumption, and given the constitutive role of 'Jiānbáilùn' in its compilation, it would not seem surprising that this chapter title – and a modification of it, such as 'Shǒubáilùn'²⁹⁴ – should also have been used metonymically for the entire work. While this idea seems attractive, it is evident that the scarce records that have survived imply that most of the early processes of compilation and transmission of the *GSLZ*, including the details of

294 Shěn 1992a: 494.

the texts' relationship to contemporary Buddhist discourses, will remain in the shadows of history.

What appears to be promising is the investigation of the precise nature of the relationship of the *GSLZ* to Buddhist sources associated with the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*, but also with *Mādhyamikan sānlùn* scholarship, which have been only casually discussed in this study. We have observed that the *Essay on the Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ*, the earliest witness to the existence of a text arguably identifiable with our *GSLZ*, displays close similarities with *Sarvāstivādic* speculations about the cognitive status of the senses and their mutual relationship. We have also noted that *Sarvāstivāda* scholasticism flourished again in the aftermath of Xuánzàng's translation of considerable parts of the *abhidharma* literature – and it is no surprise that it is in Xuánzàng's translation of the encyclopedic *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣāśāstra* that we find a discussion of the metaphysical relation of entities such as stones, tropes such as whiteness, and elementary properties of matter such as hardness. And although the unchangeability of substance, as exemplified by the movement of one and the same counter through different levels of an abacus, already resorts to the term *wèi* ('position') in the earliest Chinese translation of this illustrative example from 383 CE,²⁹⁵ it is still notable that, as far as I can see, it is only in Xuánzàng's translations that the theories of Dharmatrāta and Vasumitra on the character of temporality are explicitly referred to in a terminology that is relevant to the initial part of TBL.²⁹⁶ If further research should confirm such an influence of Xuánzàng's translations on parts of the extant *GSLZ*, this would suggest that the Mohist-based parts of the *GSLZ* as we have them were not completed before the seventh century, a dating that would dovetail nicely with the bibliographical observations made by Shěn and Graham. However, what is striking is the fact that – with the possible exception of the allusions to the explanations of time and change by various *Sarvāstivāda* masters in its initial section – TBL shows no parallels with the *Sarvāstivāda* treatises translated under Xuánzàng's guidance. Notably, the clearest parallel to any *Sarvāstivādic* text in the *GSLZ*, which might even involve a case of textual borrowing, relates TBL to an

295 The *Vibhāṣāśāstra* was translated by Saṃghabhadra (Sēngqiébáchéng 僧伽跋澄), Dharmānandin (Tánmónántí 曇摩難提), Buddharaṣa (Fútúluóchà 佛圖羅刹), and Mǐnzhì 敏智 in the late Eastern Jin period (383 CE).

296 Elaborating on a hypothesis of Erich Frauwallner, Bart Dessein has shown that, with the exception of the oldest available item of *vibhāṣa* literature, the four views on the relationship between the three time periods do not occur in the relevant sections on the three time periods (Dessein 2007: 339). This, along with the fact that their attribution to the four *Sarvāstivāda* masters is only attested in later versions (Dessein 2007: 335), suggests that these views were no longer considered to represent the most advanced position on the issue, but were rather considered as a sort of doxographical appendix. See Dessein 2007: 333, 335.

abhidharma text that was translated into Chinese as early as in the late fourth century CE, and which thus even predates the *Chéngshìlùn*. This observation seems to open a new possibility in conceiving the history of compilation of the *GSLZ*: it is notable that traces of textual corruption in the extant *GSLZ* are not restricted to the so-called ‘authentic’ chapters (BML, ZWL), but also heavily affect the second part of JBL. It is thus certainly imaginable that both TBL and an earlier version of JBL were indeed composed under the impression of the *Chéngshìlùn* and its anti-*Sarvāstivādic* program, possibly even leaning toward *Sarvāstivādic* positions, and that they were modified later in the second half of the seventh century, when the extant *GSLZ* was composed. If this is true, the early Táng editors of the *GSLZ* who came across the original versions of JBL and TBL (or fragments thereof) might even have been unaware of the similarities between these old documents, composed some two hundred years earlier, with the *Chéngshìlùn*. Ignoring these references, they may have interpreted and complemented the pieces in the light of more recent intellectual developments, such as the alleged renaissance of *Sarvāstivādin* scholasticism. And while speculations about possible compilers of the original JBL and TBL – with their more or less manifest references to the *Chéngshìlùn* and the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma* – may seem elusive, it is worth noting that even the scarce records that have survived attest the existence of people entrenched in both Buddhist scholasticism and non-Buddhist traditions: Tánfēi 曇斐 (443–519), a *Mahāyāna* scholar–monk who had studied Mohist texts in his youth,²⁹⁷ was a close friend of Zhōu Yōng 周顒 (d. 493), a lay Buddhist who modeled his own theory of the two truths on the *Chéngshìlùn* and who was conversant with Xiāo Zǐliáng 蕭子良 (458–493), one of the official propagators of the *Chéngshìlùn*.²⁹⁸ Zhōu Yōng is also said to have rejected the intermingling of Buddhist and Daoist views allegedly propagated by his contemporary Zhāng Róng 張融 (443–497). That this same Zhāng Róng, who was no Buddhist himself, challenged Dào mèng 道猛 (411–475), a scholar–monk and expert in the *Chéngshìlùn* at the time, to a public debate on the text illustrates the popularity of the Buddhist treatise well beyond Buddhist circles.²⁹⁹ Additionally, there is the case of Fǎchōng 法寵 (451–524), whom I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter, a specialist not only in the *Chéngshìlùn*, but also in the *Sarvāstivāda abhidharma*, of whom it is moreover said that, late in his life, he discarded his Buddhist studies and engaged in *míngjiào*.³⁰⁰ Last but not least, Liú Jùn 劉峻 (462–521), famous for his commentary on the *Shìshuō xīnyǔ*, knew the *Chéngshìlùn* well enough to provide, on two

²⁹⁷ *Gāosēngzhuàn* 高僧傳, T 2059, no. 50, p. 382.

²⁹⁸ Krause 2003: 172–173.

²⁹⁹ Krause 2003: 106.

³⁰⁰ Krause 2003: 108; Willemen et al. 1998: 134.

occasions in his commentary, rather subtle references to the text.³⁰¹ Like his contemporary Liú Xié 劉勰 (d. 522), whose work on literary criticism also reflects influences from this Buddhist treatise, and who estimated Gōngsūn Lóng's rhetoric brilliance – though apparently being ignorant of a work named after the debater –, Liú Jùn also mentions Gōngsūn Lóng: In his note on an episode about the futile attempt by the Eastern Jin (317–420) scholar Ruǎn Yù 阮裕 to explain, to one of his contemporaries, the *lùn* on the “white horse”, he quotes what corresponds to the opening lines of the extant BML, though not from the *GSLZ* or *Shǒubáilùn*, but from the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*, most likely from the ‘Gōngsūn Lóng’ chapter where it misses today. This indicates not only that he was unaware of any text by the title “Gōngsūn Lóngzǐ”, but moreover that he understands the term *lùn* rather to refer to the *argument* about the white horse than the homonymomous treatise. Even if reports about a written *Báimǎ lùn* by Zhāng Zhàn predate him by almost a century, Liú's lifetime thus may still be considered, with some degree of plausibility, as a *terminus post quem* for the composition of our extant *GSLZ*. Regardless of the correctness of this particular hypothesis, all of this demonstrates that, although a search for the authors of a Buddhist-informed *GSLZ* would obviously be futile, the possible milieu in which these people were active is well documented.

The observations presented in this chapter are obviously preliminary and in need of further scrutiny. However, at least with respect to the *Chéngshílùn*, the prospects for this are rather dim. The decline of *Chéngshílùn* scholarship has resulted in the loss of the entirety of more than twenty-four commentaries on the text – and this is just the number mentioned in hagiographies of the *Gāosēngzhuàn* 高僧傳 (Biographical Accounts of Eminent Monks).³⁰² In this way, the very documents that might have shed some light on the relation between *Chéngshílùn* scholasticism and the Mohist-inspired renaissance of disputation documented in the *GSLZ* seem irretrievably lost, from a Buddhist perspective as well.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Krause 2003: 106.

³⁰² Cui 2016: 133. Tāng Yòngtóng mentions 27 commentaries (1991: 728–730); cf. Krause 2003: 10.

³⁰³ Krause (2003: 8) notes that there are no more than “roughly half-a-dozen very short texts” left that were written by persons who dealt with the *Chéngshílùn* in a positive way.

8 Summary and Conclusion

The present investigation has highlighted various specificities of the extant *GSLZ* which seem to betray an implicit Buddhist influence on its composition. Following a sketch illustrating the composite and derivative nature of much of the received *GSLZ* – which is based on older textual materials, most notably the Mohist ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ – I gathered materials documenting the renaissance of Mohist disputation from the late third century CE onward, arguing that it was not only essential for the rehabilitation of the semi-fictional figure of the debater Gōngsūn Lóng, but also to provide the intellectual context in which the received *GSLZ* was eventually compiled. I then tried to show in some detail that the main line of argument in JBL has a close parallel in the *Chéngshìlùn*, a Buddhist text held in high esteem in China throughout much of the fifth and sixth centuries CE. I have suggested that this similarity might be the result of the Buddhist text influencing JBL, an assumption which seems plausible not least in view of the similarities present in other chapters of the *GSLZ*, such as BML. Then I showed that two chapters of the *GSLZ* – TBL and MSL – are marked by salient caesuras between passages which stand out due to their obvious dependence on Mohist precedents, on the one hand, and sections that are largely unaffected by Mohist influences, on the other. I have suggested that while the *GSLZ* makes little effort to bridge these gaps, they can be readily filled in when one takes into account contemporary Buddhist sources that make plain the connections between crucial terms and topics alluded to in the *GSLZ*. The Buddhist discourse thus seems to complement a rationale for the composition of parts of the *GSLZ*. In a subsequent step, I discussed the connections between JBL, ZWL, and BML, arguing that the former might have been construed in order to conjoin the two latter chapters, which seem to have pre-existed in some form or other. I have shown that the term *zhǐ*, so prominent in ZWL, played a crucial role in Buddhist disputes about self-awareness, and that the term *jiān*, which connects JBL and ZWL, played an eminent role in meditative practices in Buddhism and beyond in fifth- and sixth-century China. I have also illustrated that the concepts it arguably interrelates – the term *cáng* (‘subsistence’) in JBL and the term *zhǐ* (‘index/pointer’) in ZWL – can both be associated with a rich variety of *topoi* in Buddhist discourses from the fifth through the early eighth centuries CE. While these references are less self-evident than the previously discussed cases, it nonetheless seems that various Buddhist discussions provided specifications of these three prominent terms that would have encouraged their adoption in a contemporary text such as the extant *GSLZ*. Additionally, in a final section, I presented a series of clues which the *Zhàolùn* possibly provides regarding the compilation of the extant *GSLZ*. I

suggested that not only the Buddhist-inspired modification of MSL discussed in section five, but also the inclusion of ZWL (and possibly also BML) in the *GSLZ* collection might actually have been inspired by the work of Sēng Zhào. This would imply that Shěn Yǒuding was wrong in assuming that an alleged predecessor of the extant *GSLZ* under the title *Shǒubáilùn* contained only TBL, JBL, and MSL. While I attempted to establish the interdependence between JBL, ZWL, and BML in section six, the evidence provided in the concluding section (section seven) – which is related to MSL – additionally points toward a possible motive for gathering these three texts into a single collection. As this motive is intrinsically related to MSL, it seems unlikely that they circulated independently of this latter chapter. The only “isolated” chapters which thus remain are TBL and the introductory JF chapter.

It is clear that the sequence of sections in the present chapter proceeds from more established insights to ever more speculative views. In sum, this investigation – however tentative and speculative it must remain – has shown that, in spite of the obvious lack of *explicit* references to Buddhist texts or concepts throughout the entire *GSLZ*, argumentative and structural peculiarities of the text render it more likely than not that it was composed against a strong Buddhist background. While many of the single observations presented in this chapter remain inconclusive in isolation, the mosaic which results from combining these single pieces of evidence lays bare various layers of unmistakable Buddhist traces in the vocabulary, argumentation, and arrangement of the *GSLZ*.

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