Guiguzi 鬼谷子

On the Cosmological Axes of Chinese Persuasion

Daniel Coyle

GUIGUZI 鬼谷子:

ON THE COSMOLOGICAL AXES OF CHINESE PERSUASION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

PHILOSOPHY

DECEMBER 1999

By

Daniel Coyle

Dissertation Committee:

Roger T. Ames, Chairperson

Eliot Deutsch

Graham Parkes

David Chappell

Edward L. Davis

CONTENTS

PART II
A "PHILOSOPHICAL" INQUIRY INTO THE *GUIGUZI*:
BEING A COMPARATIVE *QUEST FOR COHERENCE* THROUGH WHICH THE
DISCOURSES OF PHILOSOPHY, RHETORIC, AND CHINESE THOUGHT COME
TO BEAR ON THE TEXT

GUIGUZI 鬼谷子:
ON THE COSMOLOGICAL AXES OF CHINESE PERSUASION

Yuan Ji was fond of reading ancient texts, and he considered the *Guiguzi* so very worthy that he wrote an introductive summary of several thousand characters. The gist of the *Guiguzi* is "not grasping." During the time of the Han Dynasty, Liu Xiang and Ban Gu wrote bibliographies without mentioning *Guiguzi*. The *Guiguzi* afterwards appeared, it is extremely dangerous and unscrupulous. Fearing its grossly absurd expressions might disorder the generation and be difficult to believe, scholars appropriately did not discuss it. However those of later generations who spoke of *zongheng* often preserved the text. Later on, even more texts appeared unaccountably. The "Seven Arts" chapter is even more strange and erroneous, so much so that it can't be surveyed or collated. The expressions become more peculiar and the *dao* more narrow. The *Guiguzi* will drive a person to madness and insanity and loosen his perseverance such that he might easily fall into depravity. Fortunately, those who preserved the book have been few. Now Master Yuan has written an introductive summary. Alas! His fondness for these arts is excessive.

<div align="right">Liu Zongyuan (773-819 C.E.)</div>

Guiguzi's book--with its resourceful wisdom and plans, its numerous arts and methods, it's fickle cunning, its language and inter-locution--surpasses the expressions of the various scholars of the Warring States. Its "one opening and one closing" resonates the spirit of the *Yijing* and its "one contracting and one expanding" spans the *crux* of *Laozi*. Yet the art of Guigu often reaches levels beyond "closing and opening" and "contracting and expanding"; it spiritualizes and illuminates things, even to the extremes of self-release--like a dike breaking, it is unopposable! I once observed the various editions of the *Yinfu*, which execute the functions of Heaven and infringe on the privacy of people, as well as hidden plans and wily secrets that are not completely covered in the *Jinkui* and *Taolüe* military manuals, and yet Guigu exhaustively realizes and exposes them. Is he not also a hero of a generation?

<div align="right">Gao Sisun (fl. twelfth century C.E.)</div>

INTRODUCTION

Prologue: An Archeology of the *Guiguzi*, Past, Present, and
Future

> Each person who tries to see beyond his own time
> must face questions to which there cannot yet be
> proven answers.
> > *The Illustrated Man*

The *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子, or *The Master of Ghost Valley*, is

traditionally said to be a text named after an anonymous

recluse who withdrew himself to the mysterious "Ghost

Valley" (*Guigu* 鬼谷)[1] to teach a secret art. Master Guigu

(*Guigu xiansheng* 鬼谷先生) is canonized as a Daoist immortal

and as the ancestral teacher of diplomats and military

strategists. He is the first "teacher" specifically

associated with the "art of persuasion" in pre-Qin China,

---

[1] *Guigu* 鬼谷 can be translated in various ways: "Ghost
Valley" is the most literal, but "Demon Valley" (Legge 1865)
or even "Ghost Gorge" are sound renditions. Friedrich Hirth
(1911) and Joseph Needham (1956) render it "Devil Valley,"
but this might entail too many negative theological
connotations; Alfred Forke (1901-1902) interprets it as
"Dragon Valley." Philological and etymological questions
such as this will be addressed in the body of the
dissertation itself.

1

and the *Guiguzi* text is perhaps the only pure exemplar of the extremely precarious "*zongheng* lineage" (*zonghengjia* 縱橫家).[2] Guiguzi is most likely the enigmatic figurehead of a school of diverse scholars during the early Warring States period concerned with elocutionary, strategic, and military arts. The writer/writers of the *Guiguzi* resonates with the mystique of the *Laozi* and the strategic and military insights of the Sun lineage; yet unlike these "classics," *Guiguzi* has been ostracized by the Chinese academic tradition.

Let us begin by projecting ourselves into the world of Warring States China (ca. 403-221 B.C.E.). Mainland Chinese archeological excavations of the last thirty years have produced a plethora of "recovered" texts, as well as many older versions of extant classics of the pre-Qin period.

---

[2] The term *zongheng* 縱橫 is difficult to translate: in the retrospective bibliographical context of the Han, *zonghengjia* 縱橫家 (or the "*zongheng* lineage") refers to the so-called "vertical and horizontal lineage," said by Liu Xiang to be derived from the ancient regal office of diplomatic emissaries. The rubric is commonly understood as having to do with diplomatic "alliances and counter-alliances" (Nienhauser 1994, et al.), "uniting and disuniting" (Forke), or "inter-State intrigue" (Waley) in a general sense. David Knechtges defines *zonghengjia* as "a loose appellation for Warring States writers and thinkers who specialized in rhetoric" (1982, 44). Yet in other contexts *zongheng* may also be translated "disarray" (Ames), "manifold," "unrestrained," "curving," "persuasion," and so on. The scarcity of *zongheng* texts and the difficulties surrounding the term *zongheng* and the *zonghengjia* are addressed in detail below.

2

Not only have the discoveries opened up new areas of philological and philosophical research on the classical corpus, they have also facilitated the reexamination of previously neglected texts. The recent excavations of texts at Mawangdui (1973), Dingzhou (1973-1993), Yinqueshan (1972-73), and Guodian (1993) have facilitated improved textual studies and proven many texts traditionally considered "counterfeit texts" (*weishu* 偽書) "posing as Zhou and Qin Masters" actually to be genuine pre-Qin texts, that is, texts written and collated before the Qin unification in 221 B.C.E.[3]

---

[3] The question of textual "authenticity" with regard to classical Chinese texts will be treated in greater detail in chapter 5. However, it is worth noting here that the question of whether a text is "genuine or counterfeit" (*zhenwei* 眞偽) does not become a major issue *per se* until the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 C.E.); because traditional Chinese bibliographies through the Ming Dynasty only record the title, number of volumes, and author of a text, with no mention of whether or not a text is genuine or counterfeit (see Tsao 1985, 15). Authenticity of authorship is not of central importance from the classical Chinese perspective; rather, what is important is the transmissibility of a text and how it has been treated by the tradition, that is, acquisitively or pedantically. Nowadays the term *weishu* 偽書 generally refers to ancient texts falsely written under the name of older Masters.

The *Zhuzi Jicheng* (or *Collection of the Various Masters*) published in the 1930's classifies the *Guiguzi* as one of the "forgeries under the name of Zhou and Qin Masters" that must have been written by someone during the Nan-Bei Dynasties (420-589 C.E.). This is in fact the general opinion of the academic world today. However, texts such as the *Liutao* 六韜, *Heguanzi* 鶴冠子, *Weiliaozi* 尉繚子, and *Wenzi* 文子, which all have parallels with the *Guiguzi*, have recently been reassessed and re-authenticated as pre-

Since the time of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.), the *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子 has almost without exception been deemed a *weishu* or "counterfeit text." Recently though, a few Chinese scholars have noted many similarities between the Mawangdui *Boshu* 帛書 silk documents and certain portions of the *Guiguzi*, thus providing a new incentive to reassess the *Guiguzi* as a whole. *Guiguzi*'s "Fuyan" chapter 鬼谷子符言篇 typically has been labeled a "plagiarism" of the *Guanzi* "Jiushou" chapter 管子九守篇. However, now it is clear that the *Guiguzi* "Fuyan" is evidently more similar to the silk Mawangdui manuscripts than to the *Guanzi* "Jiushou" and is not a "counterfeit" text.[4] In addition, the *Liutao* 六韜 text discovered during the Yinqueshan excavation contains many passages that look to be copied from the *Guiguzi* "Fuyan" or some earlier text (Li 1994, 99-100). Moreover, other chapters from the *Guiguzi* overlap with much of the fragmentary *Dengxizi* 鄧析子 and even parts of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. The archeological finds and textual overlaps,

---

Qin texts (Li 1994, 98).

[4] Li Xueqin notes that the "Cheng" chapter of the *Huangdiboshu* 黃帝帛書 contains a section almost identical to the initial sentences of the "Zhuwei" section of *Guiguzi*'s "Fuyan" chapter 鬼谷子符言篇 "主位." Moreover, the first sentence of the "Fuyan" also occurs in *Guanzi*'s "Shi" chapter 管子勢篇, but not in "Jiushou," and other sentences do not occur in the *Guanzi* at all. Thus Li concludes the *Guiguzi* "Fuyan" chapter is actually closer to "Huang-Lao" thought and "is indeed an original work" (1994, 98-100).

4

combined with internal textual connections between the "Fuyan" chapter and other preceding chapters of the *Guiguzi* itself, suggest that the text is much earlier than previously thought.[5]

These excavations have been of enormous importance to Sinology in reconfirming the authenticity of many pre-Qin and Han texts, yet research on the *Guiguzi* has been comparatively scant. Despite the fact that there has been an increase in Chinese publications on the *Guiguzi* in recent years, most of these documents emphasize "strategical astuteness and resourcefulness" (*moulüe* 謀略) with an eye on contemporary business management (reproducing "The Art of War for the Marketplace"), with little or no concern for philosophical or philological questions. The reasons underlying this trend are complex, but the deepest and foremost is perhaps that the *Guiguzi* represents an ostensible countercurrent to the orthodox Confucianism which has dominated Chinese scholarship since the Han Dynasty, and

---

[5] Li also points out that the textual structures of the excavated bamboo slips and silk manuscripts provides new evidence that *Guiguzi*'s "Fuyan" chapter originates from bamboo slips and is "definitely not a forgery of an ancient document." Some of Li's insights into the structure of certain ancient texts are based on the bamboo-strip edition of the *Shijing* 詩經 that was unearthed in Shuanggudui of Fuyang in Anhui province (1977-79). In the excavated *Shijing*, each sub-section is formulaically followed by a section-title; the *Guiguzi* "Fuyan" has the same structure (Li 1994, 99-100).

thus the text has been perceived as philosophically subversive, remaining clandestine throughout the tradition.

The Warring States period of Chinese history is recognized as not only a time of unprecedented sustained warfare, but also as unequaled in deception and intrigues. It is a period in which "efficacy" in its most general sense supplants traditional Confucian moral codes as the dominant criterion for political order. The harshness of the times necessitates a radical "inclusivity" which is apparent in François Jullien's definition of the classical Chinese notion of "efficacy":

> Art, or wisdom, as conceived by the Chinese, consequently lies in strategically exploiting the *propensity* emanating from that particular configuration of reality, to the maximum effect possible. This is the notion of efficacy. (1995, 15)

Survival depends on employing all means imaginable to "tilt the scales in one's favor" (*quan* 權), and the "*dao* of deception" (*guidao* 詭道)--*Sunzi*'s very definition of warfare--becomes pervasive (see *Sunzi* A1/1/16). Despite a theoretical distaste for warfare on the whole, the

6

inescapableness of violence in ancient China necessitates traditions of *bingfa* 兵法 or "military models,"[6] and so-called *zongheng* 縱橫 or "diplomatic persuasions."

Yet the methods of these "cunning" traditions, as Lisa Raphals characterizes them in *Knowing Words*, rudimentary in the *Sunzi* and explicitly exemplified in the *Guiguzi*, are almost antithetical to Confucian orthodoxy as transmitted from the Zhou tradition. Orthodox Confucianism rejects the "*dao* of deception" wholesale in favor of moral models. Thus a certain tension emerges within the Chinese tradition: from the Warring States onward the "culturally refined" (*wen* 文) sage-minister as prescribed by the Confucian lineage (*rujia* 儒家) is, according to Mark Lewis, in "complete contradistinction" to the "martial" (*wu* 武) sage-commander who is "a master of deceit and illusion."[7] The Mawangdui

---

[6] Apparently a Warring States term, *bingfa* connotes both the arts and methods of warfare. The prototype example of a "*bingfa*" or "model for military action" is the *Sunzi bingfa*, which was probably ingathered (from oral traditions) around the late fourth century B.C.E., though the earliest extant text dates between 140-118 B.C.E. The question of dating the *Sunzi* is still open for debate (see Ames 1993; Smith 1994).

The earliest textual occurrences of *bingfa* understood in common usage are found in the *Shiji* (ca. 86 B.C.E.) and *Zhanguoce* (ca. 26 B.C.E.). The term occurs only once in the *Sunzi* at A4/4/1 which looks to be an abbreviation for the phrase *bing zhi fa* 兵之法 at A2/1/25 and A3/2/27.

[7] For example, Ban Gu, a devout Confucian, in his "Discourse on the Military" rejects the entire tradition of "military model-texts" (*bingfa*) and the related writings of

7

Huangdisijing "Jingfa" chapter 黃帝四經 經法 makes it clear that *wen* and *wu* are thoroughly correlative terms, yet the Confucians construe the pair in an overly moral sense, which contrasts with the tone in military literature that is one of *realpolitik*.[8] Thus the division among Chinese schools of thought extends from one extreme from the Confucian "moralists" to the so-called "realists."

The pressing issue during this period is crisis management, and the Confucian moral codes are relatively ineffective. In fact, interstate conflicts generally are effectively resolved by only two means: military (*bing*) invasion or diplomatic (*zongheng*) negotiation. Just as the military commander may control the army and the state, so the "diplomat-persuader" or *youshui* 游說[9] may control the fate of a country. "Persuasion" as understood in Chinese idiom is a form of logomachy, that is, as a "battle of the tongue" [*chunqiang shezhan* 唇槍舌戰] (cf. Tsao 1985, 170). The difference between *zongheng* and *bing* is one of emphasis: between the psychological and the tactile. In this light, *wen* and *wu* are parallel with *zongheng* and *bing*: both pairs

---

zonghengjia (Lewis 1985, 374).

[8] See the "Historical Background" section of chapter 1 for further discussion on the dichotomization of *wen* and *wu*.

[9] This term is discussed below.

may be understood as "diplomacy" or "military force" respectively (see Ryden 1997, 70-100; Fang 1995z, 7-9). Yet the Confucians do not admit the craft of *zongheng* persuasion into their understanding of *wen*. The problem is that persuasion may really be the only "moral" act to avoid physical violence.

Raphals construes the so-called *wen-wu* controversy by reference to the Greek concept of *metis* or "cunning intelligence": "Both Confucians, who distrust skills of metic intelligence, and militarists, who rely on them, share two central concerns, the creation and maintenance of order and the skill of foresight and prediction" (1992, 51).[10]

---

[10] Cf. 116, 125, 206. The focus of Raphals' study is to investigate to what extent the Greek word *metis* has resonances in the classical Chinese tradition. *Metis* has no equivalent in English or Chinese, but generally, it refers to resourceful or cunning intelligence--it is the "intelligence not of Apollo but of Athena" (1992, xii). According to Jim Tiles:

> People with *metis* seize opportunities that ordinary people would overlook or devise strategies or tricks--either fair or foul--that enable them to prevail in adversity without exceptional physical strength. *Metis* requires the exercise of continual alertness, careful control, and unfailing concentration. A person with *metis* is unpredictable, inventive, and many-sided--or, as the Greeks expressed it, many-colored, *poikilos*. (Tiles, 1994, 387)

In Raphals' quest to find a counterpart to the Greek *metis* in the Chinese tradition she identifies two genres which "admit and admire craft per se: military manuals (*bingfa*) and works of persuasion and rhetoric (*zongheng*)." Texts

Ultimately, the argument is over the art of rulership, and during times of war, power-and-expediency (*quan* 權) eclipses moral rectitude (*zheng* 正) as a paragon of efficacious socio-political order.[11]

In this context, then, the *Guiguzi* is not considered a text of *bingfa* in the strict sense. Rather, it is traditionally labeled *zongheng*, though the question of what actually constitutes *zongheng* arts is still much debated. Furthermore, the term is not associated with Guiguzi until the Han Dynasty. Yang Xiong (53 B.C.E. - C.E. 18) only hints that the term has something to do with political

---

from these genres offer two approaches to the "transformation of apparent reality through deception." On the one hand, *bingfa* "by creating misleading circumstance or perceptions," and on the other, *zongheng* "by using language to create a desired impression." In contrast to the moralistic schools, *bingfa* and *zongheng* philosophies espouse a point of view in which "cunning is not only acceptable, but necessary to wisdom" (101-102).

Jullien also invokes the Greek idea of *metis* to provide a possible European analogue to the Chinese understanding of efficacy in which the practical means-to-ends conceptual constructs of the Greek philosophers are inapplicable (see Jullien 1996). See chapter 4 below regarding the appropriateness of this term.

[11] According to Lewis, by the third century B.C.E. *wen* and *wu* are separated into "complementary" spheres which indicate the emergence of a new political order--that of the supreme ruler who embodies "the political realm in his person" (Lewis 1985, 281). For example, Lewis argues that the stories of Su Qin's (d. ca. 317 B.C.E.?) exploits display a reciprocity between *wen* and *wu*--both are means to a general art of rulership.

order.[12] Wang Chong (ca. C.E. 27-100), in his inquiry into whether or not the "cunning, artful, and eloquent" (*ning* 佞)[13] is something inherent or learned, provides an analogical but vague definition of *zongheng*:

> People themselves possess the knowledge to deceive others, but when they are to persuade rulers they need a special art (*shu* 術) to motivate the superiors--just as superior men [i.e., superior commanders] themselves possess a powerful braveness that inspires awe in others. When one fights wars, he needs *bingfa* to advance the masses (*jin zhong* 進眾)[14]. This art [of motivation] as a rule is *zongheng*, and the model-teacher is Guigu. (*Lunheng* "Daning" chapter 論衡 答佞篇, 9.3)

In this passage *bingfa* appears as a sort of *charismatic*

---

[12] See *Fayan* "Yuanqian" chapter, section 8, quoted in the "Wandering Persuaders and the (Moral) Value of Diplomacy" section of chapter 1 below.

[13] Harbsmeier translates "*ning* 佞" as "rhetorical nimbleness" (1998, 346), which lacks the negative connotations of the Chinese. *Ning* is discussed in the context of the Confucian *Lunyu* below.

[14] *Jin zhong* 進眾 can also be interpreted as a technical military term meaning "to advance a battalion" or command troops to attack.

power of effective leadership, and *zongheng* an "art" of *psychological motivation*. In the mid-Han, then, we can surmise that *zongheng* is seen as an analogue of *bingfa* employed politically to "advance the masses," which suggests a form of "persuasion" conceived as the power to move people and things.[15] Wang Chong elaborates on the so-called *zongheng* arts of persuasion, associating them with Master Guigu:

> The Records say that Su Qin (d. ca. 317 B.C.E.?) and Zhang Yi (d. ca. 310 B.C.E.) learned and practiced *zongheng* from Master Guigu, who dug a cavern (*keng*) in the earth, and said: "if one of you can descend [into the cavern] and persuade me so that my tears flow out, then you will be able to divide and share the territories of the feudal rulers." Su Qin descended [into the cavern] and persuaded. Master Guigu's tears fell and

---

[15] "*Bingfa*" does not occur in the *Guiguzi*, and according to the classification system established in the Han the *Guiguzi* belongs to the "*zongheng* lineage" (*zonghengjia* 縱橫家) rather than the "military lineage" (*bingjia* 兵家). However, Kang Youwei of the Qing Dynasty does regard the *Guiguzi* as a text of *bingfa* (Xiao 1984, 4-5). Joseph Needham and Krzysztof Gawlikowski suggest that while the *Guiguzi* embodies the coherence and cogency of a *bingfa*, its "theory of action" is more elaborate (1994, 5.6:31). The problem of classifying the *Guiguzi* is discussed in detail below in chapter 3.

moistened his lapel. (ibid.; cf. Forke 1962,
2:51-53; cf. *Taipingyulan*, 463.2b)

J. L. Kroll, in his study "Disputation in Ancient Chinese
Culture," admits that Master Guigu's "methods" are left
"unexplained," but he suggests that the significance of the
cavern is to train and test a disciple's eloquence. If one
can persuade the master to tears with sheer *power of voice*,
that is, from within a dark cavern where one's gestures and
facial expressions cannot be seen, then one has surely
mastered persuasive speaking (1987, 124, 140n.38).

About all one may glean from the Han Dynasty accounts
is that Guiguzi's art of persuasion involves some sort of
speaking to the emotions that ultimately involves political
intrigue. Yet this conclusion is derived from thin
associations, based on only a few very brief biographical
accounts (such as the one's above) or on certain passages
from the disputable *Zhanguoce* 戰國策 (*Intrigues of the
Warring States*), rather than factual textual support.

Certainly, the *zongheng* arts thrive long enough during
the Warring States to constitute a central academic lineage
of pre-Qin thought, for the "*zongheng* lineage" (or
zonghengjia 縱橫家) makes up one of the canonical "Nine
Streams and Ten Lineages" (*jiuliu shijia* 九流十家)

13

documented in the Han. Yet after the Han, it seems only to persist as a rather porous, largely discarded bibliographical classification. The fate of so-called *zongheng* texts is one of extinction probably at the hands of Confucian orthodoxy: not a single "*zongheng*" text listed in the Han court bibliographies survives. From Han sources we see that Guiguzi is the undisputed ancestor of the so-called *zonghengjia*,[16] yet the *Guiguzi* text is absent from official bibliographies until the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.). This absence is typically credited to the text's being a later counterfeit, but it is more likely that the *Guiguzi* and other *zongheng* texts were "consigned to the flames" during the Qin-Han interregnum, for these texts no doubt posed the threat of overturning any power structure, as the name implies.[17] Recent scholars such as Xiao Dengfu, Fang Lizhong, Li Xueqin, Wang Yu, *et al.*, argue that *Guiguzi* is not only an original pre-Qin text but also the "only surviving exemplar" of Warring States' *zongheng* doctrines (see Wang Yu 1995, 782). The reasons why the *cunningly astute resourcefulness* (*moulüe* 謀略) of the *zonghengjia* has

---

[16] Just as with Laozi and Zhuangzi, we cannot assume Guiguzi to be a determinable "individual," but rather a sort of "figurehead" to the "school of Guiguzi" that collected and transmitted the text/s bearing his name.

[17] The disappearance of the *zonghengjia* is treated below in chapter 4.

14

been overlooked are complex; but these reasons are due, in part, to the Confucian devaluation of metic intelligence. For example, in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) Confucius is generally suspicious of "glibness" and cunning persuasions, as a few passages illustrate:

The Master said: "It is rare, indeed, that clever or crafty speech (*qiao yan* 巧言) and an insinuating face accompany *ren* 仁.[18]" (1.3; repeated at 17.17; cf. Lau 1971, 59; Ames and Rosemont 1998, 71.)

Someone said, "[Ran] Yong is *ren* 仁 but not cunningly eloquent (*ning* 佞)." The Master said,

---

[18] *Ren* 仁 has generally proven one of the most difficult Chinese concepts to translate into English. Fundamentally, the character denotes "human kindness" and balanced or appropriate "human relations." However, it must be stressed that a person of *ren* is in a highly ritualized socio-religious structure:

The Master said: "If a person is without *ren*, what has he to do with the Sacred Rites (*li* 禮)? If a person is without *ren*, what has he to do with the Joyful Music (*yue* 樂)?" (*Lunyu* 3.3)

With respect to "speech," Confucius stresses: "A *ren* person is careful in his speech" (12.3). Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont note that Confucius here defines *ren* paronomastically as *ren* 訒, to be careful or "slow to speak" (1998, 250n.190. See *Lunyu* 12, passim; and the discussion by Ames and Rosemont (1998, 48-51).

15

"What is the use of cunning eloquence? One who

disputes with verbal effluence often procures

enmity from others. I do not know if he is *ren*,

but what is the use of cunning eloquence?"

(*Lunyu*, 5.5; cf. 4.24, 15.17, 17.16, 14.4)

Yangmeng Liu in a recent article stresses the "central

role played by argumentation in the production--and

interpretation--of pre-Han texts" (Liu 1996, 33). He wants

to explicitly place Confucius in the role of a "'disputer'

of the *dao*" by stressing that the frequent denunciations of

"cunning words"/"clever or crafty speech" (*qiao yan* 巧言),[19]

"cunning eloquence" (*ning* 佞),[20] and "glib-tongued talkers"

(*li kou* 利口)[21] in the *Analects* "are likely to have more

specific references than just any abusive use of

language."[22] Rather, we should read Confucius' disapproval

---

[19] Cf. *Lunyu* 1.3, 5.25, 15.27, and 17.17.

[20] Cf. *Lunyu* 5.5, 6.16, 14.32, 16.4 (*ning* 佞); 11.25 (*ningzhe* 佞者); 15.11 (*ningren* 佞人).

[21] For example in 17.18: The Master said: ". . . I detest sharp talkers who overturn states and families."

[22] Liu notes that "even those scholars who have done the most to promote the argumentative perspective," such as A. C. Graham and Chad Hansen, balk when it comes to interpreting early Confucian discourse in terms of "argumentative discourse." He thinks that the inertia of the old interpretative paradigm, that ancient Chinese were "nugatory" as "controversialists" (Waley 1939, 145), is

16

of "cunning" as representative of an established non-Confucian intellectual current that illuminates an argumentative polarization within the various intellectual communities.

> Confucius himself, in fact, comes close to
> confirming the existence of such an opposition
> ideology in the *Analects* when he distinguishes
> between the *junzi ru* ^{scholar-cum-exemplary person} [君子儒]
> and the *xiaoren ru* ^{scholar-cum-small person} [小人儒] (6.12).
> The distinction shows that Confucius himself was
> consciously aware of a split among the
> practitioners of discourse (*ru*) of his time into
> two opposing camps. (Liu 1996, 35)

---

still present. For example, despite the title of Graham's last book, *Disputers of the Tao [Dao]*, he "makes no effort to present Confucius as a 'disputer' of the *dao*. . . . Rather, the sage is portrayed as the originator of all discourses whose seminal ideas may have triggered subsequent disputes and yet his own thought was generated through his private contemplation of and conservative reaction against a 'breakdown of the world order decreed by heaven,' and he himself was above the theoretical bickering and fracases in which other masters were deeply involved" (1996, 34; cf. Graham 1989, 9-33). Chad Hansen, likewise, "goes out of his way to stress the master's lack of interest in debate or his refusal to 'encourage debating as a method.'" According to Hansen, Confucius "did not view himself as participating in or resolving a debate between schools." (Liu 1996 34; cf. Hansen 1992, 59). For passages that may be interpreted as Confucian argumentation see *Lunyu* 1.14, 2.13, 4.22, 4.22, 12.3, 14.20, 14.27, 15.27.

17

Insofar as Confucius construes *xiaoren* 小人 ("small persons") as *ru*, they have a demarcatable doctrine. "And insofar as they are identified by Confucius as *xiaoren*, their doctrines must be anti-Confucian or at least non-Confucian. . . . The *xiaoren ru* he condemned were the custodians of not just a discourse, but one so persuasive and forceful as to cause him much anxiety" (Liu 1996, 35-36).

By rethinking Confucius from an "argumentative perspective," we may bring his unspoken antagonists more to the fore. This is necessary to Liu's project, because "unless an opposition ideology or discourse *contemporaneous with* Confucius can be reconstructed, the idea that Confucianism was the product of a dialogic contention would remain an idle speculation" (1996, 35). Confucius seems skeptical about "speech" (*yan* 言) in general, and the fact that he makes a "negative epithet" out of cunning eloquence (*ning*), "which appears to be a positive or at least neutral term in the ordinary usage of his time," suggests that Confucius is indeed arguing against a "counter ideology" (ibid., 46).

However, the reconstruction of this "counter ideology" is difficult because the counter voices have been silenced by the traditions in power. From the ancient past to the

18

present, it is clear that there is no room for an ostensible
counter-current in the context of Chinese authoritarian
government.[23] However, "the 'surfacing' of ideological
clashes in the dialogues between Zilu and Confucius shows
that with a heightened sensitivity to the 'background
noises' or subtextual signification of an ostensibly
nonargumentative text (such as the *Analects*), an adversary
discourse can always be reconstructed, and one does not have
to wait until Mozi to have 'the first opponent of
Confucianism'" (ibid., 37). Confucius clearly states what
he "hates": "cunning eloquence" (11.25); "inflexibility"
(14.32); the disintegration of Zhou traditions, customs,
music, and culture; "sharp talkers" who overturn states and
families (17.18); and the immoral, impolite, and
uncultivated (17.24). Confucius's rival schools remain
unnamed until the *Mencius* [*Mengzi*], and today, most of these
remain only as phantoms, having likely been extinguished
during the Qin-Han unifications.[24]

---

[23] See Randall Peerenboom's article "Confucian Harmony
and Freedom of Thought: Right thinking versus the right to
think," ed. de Bary and Tu, *Confucianism and Human Rights*
(1998).

[24] The *Mencius* specifically names the *Yang* (followers
of Yang Zhu) and the *Mo* (followers of Mo Di) schools, as
well as various other representative "Legalists,"
"Diplomats," and "Militarists" such as Gongsun Yan, Zhang
Yi, and various warlords (i.e., users of *bing*, the weapons
of war). All in all, to Mencius, schools other than his own

19

With the exception of scattered stories throughout the
Zhanguoce and the recently excavated *Zhanguo zonghengjiashu*
(originally titled *Mawangdui boshu Zhanguoce*) the writings
of the *zonghengjia* are completely lost. *Guiguzi* remains the
only trace of a classical Chinese "theory of persuasion."[25]
Given the absence of textual materials, today the
zonghengjia is arguably one of the most confounding and
perplexing rubrics in classical Chinese catalogia.[26]

Ru are made up of nothing but "heretical sayings" (see
Mengzi 3.B.9, passim).
     Compare the *Zhuangzi* "Xu Wugui" chapter (ca. fourth-
third century B.C.E.), which distinguishes five prominent
schools contemporary with Mencius: 1) Ruists, 2) Mohists, 3)
Yangists, 4) Bingists [assumed to refer to followers of
Gongsun Long, i.e., the school of "names" (*ming*), but Graham
says this is an as yet "unidentified" school (1989, 277)],
and 5) the school of Hui Shi [a writer of laws and
paradoxes] (24/38-45; cf. Graham 1981, 101).

     [25] This statement does not consider so-called
"Confucian persuasion" as a strict theory of persuasion, it
is "corrective" rather than "manipulative." Confucian
persuasion employs poetic allusion, aesthetic
interpretations of the *Odes* and the application of *fu* (賦
rhapsodic prose-poems) to transmit tradition; whereas,
Guiguzi manipulates language in accord with cosmological
processes in order to achieve a desired effect (see Haun
Saussy 1993). Aesthetic theories on the *Odes* and *fu* are
discussed in Part I.

     [26] Despite the fact that *zonghengjia* constitutes one of
the celebrated "Nine Streams and Ten Lineages" of Chinese
intellectual and cultural history in the *Hanshu*, which is to
say that so-called *zongheng* doctrines flourished during the
Warring States, by the late Han the lineage is obscured.
Moreover, even in modern scholarship, as Fu Jianping notes,
all intellectual histories and histories of philosophy
published in China after 1949, aside from Ho Wailu's
Zhongguo sixiang tongshi (*A History of Chinese Thought*

20

Lingering concerns that the *Guiguzi* itself is a counterfeit have caused scholars to treat it as relatively unimportant. A survey of the Chinese literary corpus reveals that the *Guiguzi* only receives brief mention in a handful of texts; and Western sinological publications referencing *Guiguzi* comprise no more than a few pages or a footnote, and are generally misinformed.[27] Only recently has the genre of business strategy and guerrilla marketing become so popular among modern Chinese entrepreneurs that the text has finally been noticed for its strategic and psychological relevance. Economic multinationalism has facilitated the emergence of what many would consider some of the "darker" aspects of Chinese culture--drives which say *efficacy at any cost*. This cunning tradition, central to all Chinese strategic thought and exemplified in the *Guiguzi,* has by and large remained esoteric throughout

---

Through History), avoid discussing *zonghengjia* at all (Fu 1995, 20).
  The problems surrounding the Mawangdui *Zhanguo zonghengjiashu* are discussed below.

  [27] The problems with Chinese accounts of the *Guiguzi* are discussed in the following pages. In Western languages, Alfred Forke allots Guiguzi a small section in his *Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie* (1927); a partial German translation with a brief explication of the first 2 *juan* has appeared in *Asia Major* (Kimm 1927); *Guiguzi* has received passing comments in Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilisation in China* series; and A. C. Graham briefly mentions it in later works (1989; 1989h).

21

Chinese history, not only because it is fundamentally in opposition to exoteric Confucian orthodoxy, but also because it is at the inner core of Chinese moral authority, which some argue ultimately rests on a "logic of manipulation." Jullien, for example, asserts that in the classical Chinese socio-political setup, "moral behavior" is ultimately the product of manipulation: "A soldier is brave and a subject loyal [*sic*] thanks not to fine virtues they are supposed to possess but simply because they have no option." Whether from "the relationship of force established by position" or from "the transforming influence of morality," efficacy in the Chinese world stems from dispositional determinations which are managed through an "art of manipulation. . . . Social and political reality is always conceived as a setup to be manipulated" (see Jullien 1995, 59-71).

Sinologists have traditionally given little value to those texts previously labeled *weishu* (counterfeit), or even to other Han texts lacking orthodox filiation. Nondoctrinaire texts such as *Guiguzi*, *Heguanzi*, and *Wenzi* are typically judged "minor thinkers" of little or no philosophical value (Hirth 1911, 307; Bokenkamp 1986, 147; von Falkenhausen 1996, 341). Yet these are the texts that will give us new insight into uncharted regions of the Chinese cultural landscape. New archeological finds are

almost daily showing us that China is still a largely
undiscovered country. The challenge will be to overcome the
trend of treating nonpartisan texts as unimportant, opening
them up to philosophical interpretation. In these texts,
there lies a clue to a different kind of coherence original
to Chinese thinking.

Guiguzi 鬼谷子: On the Cosmological Axes of Chinese Persuasion

Both A. C. Graham and Harold Roth argue that complete
textual knowledge precedes philosophical analysis. In
particular, Graham asserts that whenever we are dealing with
a text bearing the name of a pre-Han philosopher but lacking
bibliographical evidence before post-Han records we must
question its genuineness, and that, regardless of its
"philosophical value," the text "becomes usable only when
dated sufficiently firmly to establish its intellectual
context" (1989h, 504). Roth distinguishes four types of
evidence--biographical, bibliographical, commentarial, and
textual--which may answer questions of authorship,
historical context, and transmission (1992, 9-10). Thus our
first task is to authenticate and give as full as possible a

23

contextual account of the *Guiguzi* to provide the historical, bibliographical, and philosophical background out of which the text emerged.

The central issue of this dissertation's first part (chapters 1-5) is therefore classificatory, seeking to disclose in a comparative way how we and the ancient Chinese order *things* and thus the world. Graham--taking Nietzsche's cue that grammar envisions worlds by marking the unconscious "possibilities of world-interpretation" (*Beyond Good and Evil* 20)--suggests that there are deep structural differences between Western and Chinese languages, manifesting a disparity of assumptions which preclude certain world-interpretations (Graham 1990a, 322). Since linguistic and cosmological assumptions may not be divorced from classificatory systems, we must take care to see how the Chinese themselves classify *Guiguzi*. Western philosophical labels must be avoided so as to display the Chinese tradition on its own terms and avert what Jullien labels "naive assimilation," that is, the transposition of reading one culture into another, and the equally simplistic "comparativism" which assumes the existence of ready-made hermeneutic models. Relying on the integrity of Chinese terms themselves to divulge the *Guiguzi* will not only make a contribution to the understanding of Chinese philosophy, but

also "deepen our own comprehension of the state of things."
For by scrutinizing and disclosing a neglected or obscure
ancient Chinese text or concept, we renew the basic human
(philosophical) drive to question and thereby, as Jullien
puts it, "rediscover the joys of inquiry." By invoking and
comparing ancient Chinese vistas we gain not only indirect
avenues into the appropriation of the other, but also new
perspectives on ourselves. We are thereby able to step out
of our inherited perspectives--"informed by the implicit
categorizations of speculative reason, and oriented by a
characteristic aspiration toward 'truth'"--and to some
extent, escape the fabric of Western thought woven by Indo-
European language systems (Jullien 1995, 18; Ames 1996b,
458).

The shortage of historical material on the *Guiguzi*
makes our task particularly difficult. Nevertheless, by
establishing the sinological background of the *Guiguzi* and
revealing bibliographical problems of classification which
have influenced the text's fate, we will be able to locate
the text in the Chinese intellectual tradition. The
conclusions concerning classification will lay the
groundwork for the conceptual and philosophical study in
Part II.

The *Guiguzi* pays special attention to the correlativity

of language. The text stresses a "polar continuity" (e.g., the continuity between the microcosmic and macrocosmic realms of activity, the person and the world)--a continuity not only pervasive, but cardinal in Chinese thought. Not only does a binomial correlative polarity play out in Chinese language itself, but it extends to the onto-cosmological[28] realm as well. Language effects changes in the world that may be manipulated by the speaker or writer. This view is not linguistic determinism, but rather an *ars contextualis*, languages contain world-views with multiplicities of perspectives. Languages frame cultural horizons within which one may move from psychology to cosmology. Observation of these processes brings to light fundamental workings of and differences between Chinese and Western thinking.

Part II appropriates Jullien's proposal that efficacy in the Chinese world stems from dispositional determinations which are managed through an "art of manipulation" that rejects "all efforts at persuasion," for the logic of

---

[28] "Ontology" in a Chinese context must be thought of in terms of the study of transformative and correlative "beings," rather than "being" as such. Moreover, "beings" are "self-so" (*ziran* 自然) and thus *self-ordering* to the degree that they bidirectionally resonate cosmic world-orders. In the Chinese view, then, "ontology" understood as the study of beings and "cosmology" understood as the study of world-orders are inseparable. Thus the rather cumbersome term "onto-cosmological."

manipulation "rests on profound distrust of the power of words, a distrust characteristic of the ancient Chinese world (in contrast to the Greek world)." In ancient China the position (*shi* 勢) of the sovereign establishes him as "the pivot of the whole world and the source of all regulation" (1995, 59-69). If he rules well, that is, *wuwei* ("not doing"), his manipulations are in accord with the "natural" course of events, and in effect, unseen. This viewpoint requires a re-conception of "persuasion." We must return to the ancient Greek Persuasion (*Peithó*), the "pre-philosophical" goddess, who Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.E.) deems "the charmer to whom nothing is denied" (Aeschylus, *Suppliant Maidens* 1039f.); for as Michael Naas observes, Plato will turn persuasion into the product of rhetoric, the evil other of philosophy (Naas 1995, 6, 10). The Platonic prejudice against the "'concept' or 'activity'" of persuasion inappropriately polarizes philosophy and rhetoric--the two voices in practice are inseparable. Jullien's attempt to distinguish Greek persuasion from Chinese manipulation leads him to characterize "Chinese persuasion" as *antirhetorical*. Yet this terminology is misleading in that it unconsciously perpetuates the Platonic polarization, since the "*antirhetorical*" is analogous to the *philosophical* among certain academic communities. Naas

27

advises that, "the concepts of philosophy cannot be used to analyze that which 'precedes' the philosophic" (Naas 1995, 12). Indeed, nor can they be used to investigate the "non-philosophical"[29] classical Chinese. The thought of the *Guiguzi* is especially difficult to communicate because it at once fully utilizes and embodies the classical Chinese conception of efficacy (manipulation resistant to persuasion, according to Jullien) while exploiting the correlative counter-current (persuasion lacking manipulation) within the process itself. By specifically examining *jian* 間 (or intervals)--a notion central not only to the *Guiguzi*, as each chapter of the text is somehow dealing with intervals, but to all Chinese strategic and cosmological thought--it will be shown that within the Chinese tradition the *Guiguzi* has a unique *axial* perspective on the ontological, psychological, and persuasive power of speech and language, for *turning* on intervals is at the heart of all persuasion.

At least four characteristics that distinguish this text from other pre-Qin and Han books will reveal themselves in the course of this study: 1) the so-called "semi-naturalistic" processes of "opening" (*bai* 捭) and "closing"

---

[29] This label is used in a technical sense that will be made clear in Part II.

(*he* 闔), and the way they are implemented in relation to *yin* and *yang*, are peculiar to the *Guiguzi*, and as Joseph Needham says "not much found elsewhere" (1956, 2:206.2). 2) We encounter a new definition of the "Sage" (*shengren* 聖人) which incorporates, but is quite distinctive from, the "Daoist" or *Ru*ist prototypes. The Sage is described (in a Nietzschean way): cosmologically occupying the interval of a past-becoming-future continuum, and working intra-ethically-and-morally "beyond good and evil"--towards a cosmic efficacy. 3) The text is overtly psychological, in the sense that it generates a complete program of "psychological warfare" out of traditional Chinese cosmology, and yet goes beyond the "Daoist" and militarist indifference to the socio-moral-centrism characteristic of the mainstream Confucian tradition--one must work within a tradition to *effect natural change*. 4) The text is consciously "occult" in the sense that it is *not* written for a ruler or noble, rather it is to be hidden from them. *Guiguzi* is directed toward the aspiring "opportunist" who works privately and discretely to seek out and manipulate certain advantages in secret. Also, the fact that the language is unusually obscure in certain places and that the text is constantly stressing "secrecy" suggests an esotericism at work. The use of metaphor and image in esoteric teachings is another

way to *see* the world--esotericism is not necessarily an obscuring, but can also be an illuminating, process. These distinguishing characteristics also reflect the hermeneutic problems which accompany novelty. The enigmatic style of the *Guiguzi* is characterized by Needham and Gawlikowski as "abstract and sometimes difficult to understand" (1994, Vol. 5, No. 6, 31). Indeed, the structure and content of the *Guiguzi* not only fit the rubric of an esoteric model but exemplify it.

The main implications of the above points and the significance of this study will be to demonstrate that, for the classical Chinese, mastering an art--whether warfare or gardening--entails a comprehensive understanding of an organic world in which all things are interrelated. Thus in a Chinese scheme of continuous intersections, a comprehensive "art of war" or "art of persuasion" will not be limited to one field, but will onto-cosmologically reveal and reflect the whole cultural vista.

PART I

A SINOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE *GUIGUZI*:
BEING THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND FROM WHICH
WE WILL BRING THE EREMITIC ARTS OF THIS TEXT TO LIGHT

In the past when Cang Jie created written
characters, ghosts shed tears. I do not know what
the ghosts did when Guiguzi wrote his book.
                              Lai Hu (ca. 860 C.E.)

CHAPTER 1

THE WORLD OF GUIGUZI

Historical Background

To contextualize and understand the *Guiguzi*, it is
first necessary to rehearse briefly the social, political,
and cultural changes that lead to the collapse of the Zhou
Dynasty and the philosophical milieu of Warring States China
(ca. 403-221 B.C.E.). This period is characterized by a
fall of political sovereignty resulting from long-standing
clannish feuds among the Zhou states and increasingly
ferocious warfare. Warfare, initially the occupation of the
gentry, increasingly becomes an industry that pervades all
strata of society.

Mark Lewis, for example, construes the period from the
Shang dynasty through the Western Zhou (1045-770 B.C.E.) as
the "era of the aristocracy of violence in ancient China":
warfare is strictly an activity of the nobility or an
endeavor of men of rank. Moreover, during the Spring and

32

Autumn (Chunqiu, ca. 722-481 B.C.E.) period, warfare is not

only pervasive, but a "warrior aristocracy" dominates every

aspect of social order and has a complete monopoly on all

forms of violence.[30] Before the Warring States, wen 文

(cultural refinement) and wu 武 (martiality) are not

dichotomized in the political realm; rather, they are

"inseparably linked as aspects of a common vision of

majesty" (1985, 259-260).[31]

---

[30] The basic forms of "sanctioned violence" in early
China include: warfare, hunting, sacrifice, punishment, and
vengeance (see Lewis 1985, 170; 1990, 54-67).

[31] For example, in the Shijing the adjective wen 文 is
only applied to royal ancestors, the paraphernalia of
warfare (wu 武), and great knight-warriors. During the
Zhou, wen is not an antipode to wu, but rather its necessary
correlate. In the same way, the relationship between
"power" (de 德) and "punishment" (xing 刑) is adjunctive--
correlative with wen and wu--both are inseparable from a
ruler's violence and necessary to hegemony. As late as the
fourth century B.C.E., de appears "in the old sense of a
general potency which includes both a charismatic power of
command and the rule of force" and is thus a part of wen not
clearly separated from wu--both wen and de "stem from the
use of weapons" (Lewis 1985, 261-274; also see Lewis 1990,
274n.50).
    According to Lewis, even Confucius is trained in
(certain aspects of) the ways of the warrior; for example,
archery and charioteering are two of the celebrated Six Arts
(liuyi). Granted Confucianism emphasizes the development of
moral character and personhood rather than technical
abilities, yet Confucius still accepts "the traditional
definition of the political realm as sacrifice and warfare"
(1985, 277; see Zuozhuan zhu Lord Ding year 10, Lord Ai year
14; and Lunyu chapters: 3, 8, 10, 17, 19; Liji ch. 35;
Zhouli zhengyi ch. 26).
    It is not until the Warring States period that wen and
wu begin to become dichotomized. Specialists are employed
to serve the newly emerging political order inaugurated by

By the late Zhou period (ca. 770-256 B.C.E.), a massive
expansionist policy on the part of the Zhou Dynasty causes
an escalation of feudalism, which allows feudal lords to
become more and more autonomous. Within the increasing
disorder and conflict, there emerges tyrannical "hegemons"
(*ba* 霸) who take advantage of the chaos and enlarge their
principalities. According to Hsiao Kung-chuan: "All the old
ceremonial behavior and customs that in the past had bound
people together intellectually and spiritually" lose their
original significance.[32] The situation is not unlike
Nietzsche's characterization of a "collapse of values" in
the Western tradition. Social order begins to breakdown,
decadent tendencies increase, authority wanes, and new
rulers reject the traditional network of noble ties.

The Spring and Autumn epoch is distinguished by
unprecedented internecine warfare, unparalleled political
treachery, treason, and greed--more than a hundred states

Qin. *Xiang* 相 or "ministers of the state" specialize in
rituals and civic affairs [*wen*], and *jiang* 將 "commanders of
an army" specialize in military affairs [*wu*] (see Lewis
1985, 259-80; Lewis 1990, 97-135, 281; Rand 1977, 7-30).
Wang Fuzhi sees the strict separation of *wen* and *wu* into
separate realms as part of an ineluctable "situation-
tendency" (*shi* 勢) concomitant with the establishment of the
Qin empire in the third century B.C.E. (see Jullien 1995,
180-186).

[32] *A History of Chinese Political Thought* by Kung-chuan
Hsiao, quoted from *The Indiana Companion to Traditional
Chinese Literature*, "Chu-tzu pai-chia."

are "annexed or extinguished" (Sawyer 1993, 9). Conflicts
are not simply intra-Zhou, but also inter-state and inter-
cultural--inner and outer turbulence, North, South, East,
and West. As central authority slowly disperses to the
peripheries and the centralized feudal structure collapses,
independent, competing "central states"[33] emerge.

The cultures and traditions of the central states on
the great plain are constantly being threatened by each
other, and especially by the outlying "barbarian" states of
Qin to the West and Chu in the South. As "barbarian
culture" infiltrates the central states, the Zhou military
is forced to extend the practice of warfare beyond the
aristocracy down to the common folk, thus "courtly warfare"
becomes a relic of the past (Gernet 1968, 77). Warfare
becomes a socially pervasive interclass arena instead of the

---

[33] By the end of the Spring and Autumn period, years of
war had left only a small group of "central states" or
zhongguo 中國. This is the expression the Chinese still use
to refer to themselves, and this term, as Ames suggests, is
properly understood not as the singular "Middle Kingdom,"
but as a plurality of "Central States" or "Central
Kingdoms"--"the diverse states that together made up the
world of Zhou China" (Lau and Ames 1998, 44). The English
term, "China," probably originates from the state of Qin
which was the ultimate victor and great unifier of the
Warring States in 221 B.C.E. (Ames 1993, 277).
    Despite the imperial unification of the Qin, which
ended the Warring States, plurality has remained the
hallmark of China. Its key emblem is *long* 龍, the "dragon"
stretching "back across history to represent fluidity,
diversity and inclusivity--the porousness and absorbency of
the Chinese polity and its culture" (Lau and Ames 1998, 44).

estate of nobility: peasants are recruited into the
military, feudatories diminish greatly, and serfs become
land tenants.[34]   J. L. Kroll notes that the dispersion of
authority, political disunity, the growing emphasis on
"cultural and intellectual pluralism and diversity," and the
"appearance of private property" facilitates an
unprecedented attitude of "individualism" and the emergence
of a new *shi* 士 class.[35]   Just as the practice of warfare
distends to the people at large, so the *shi* begin to cross
social borders, leaving their homes "in search of a teacher
or patron, career, and fame" (1987, 119, 128-129).

   The idea of *shi* 士 is especially difficult to
translate, for not only does the textual meaning and
implication of the term *shi* change in the course of changing
socio-political structures during different periods, but the
title also has different connotations and denotations as it
is applied by different traditions and different
intellectual movements.   In the Early Zhou, *shi* originally

---

   [34] Lewis notes: "According to received accounts, the
process of expanding military service and identifying the
army with the people began with Guan Zhong [Guanzi] and his
policy of 'lodging the army amidst the people' in the Qi
state in the early seventh century" (1990, 54-67; cf. Sawyer
1993, 10).

   [35] The *shi* 士 class generally refers to the "office-
holding class" (Graham 1989, 3); the subtleties of the term
are discussed below.

refers simply to a "minor rank of nobility"--*shi* are
"knights," "scholars," "literati," and others of some rank
adept in both *wen* and *wu*. Similarly, as Chichung Huang
comments on the difficulty of finding an English translation
for *shi*, in the context of the Confucian *Analects* (ca. 517-
479 B.C.E.), *shi* are "a class of people between ministers
(*daifu*) and commoners (*shuren*), composed of minor officials
and scholars" (1997, 32). But as the gentry assumes the
authority of command in a context of professionalized
military (*bingjia*), *shi* comes to mean "officer," and by the
Warring States period the term includes "warriors" in
general (Sawyer 1993, 408).[36] In the *Guiguzi*, *shi* 士 is

---

[36] Ames and Rosemont note: "In the *Book of Poetry* [c.a.
1000 - 600 B.C.E.], for example, the term *shi* is used for a
man of middle social status, at other times for a retainer,
and yet again to designate a servant. It also appeared to
be the term for a lower level functionary of a lord, perhaps
a man of arms, somewhat akin to the old English knight (and
Waley so translates the term)" (1998, 60). In the Confucian
Analects, shi refers to gentlemanly "scholar-officials" who
are serving on a sort of moral and spiritual apprenticeship
to government service and eventual sagehood (cf. *Lunyu* 8.7,
4.9, 14.3). In fact, as James Crump notes, it is precisely
their "morality" that distinguishes Confucian *shi* from
others (Crump 1964, 5). Their goal is long-term moral order
rather than momentary political or military "advantage,
profit, or gain" (*li* 利). Confucians generally frown upon
the idea of *li* 利 because of its connotations of selfish
gain. For example, the *Analects* reads: "The *junzi*
[exemplary person] is conversant with appropriateness (*yi*
義). The small person (*xiaoren* 小人) is conversant with
profit (*li*)" (*Lunyu* 4.16; cf. *Mengzi* 1.A.1). According to
Ames and Rosemont's reading of the *Analects*: "The major goal
toward which the *shi* is striving is to become an exemplary

modified by "brave," suggesting a "knightly" aspect (see
10/9/12) and a Warring States dating. In this context,
warriors do not just engage in conventional warfare, but
bellicosity of every sort: cultural warfare, psychological
warfare, and verbal warfare. The emergence of *bingfa* marks
a great transition in intellectual and overall socio-
political activity: intellectual battles are waged in the
form of political advisory to win over the ruling policy.
Out of such a world the hundred contending schools of
thought emerge. Most texts of the "Various Masters and
Hundred Lineages" (*zhuzi baijia*), which now make up the
classical corpus, are originally canny submissions to rulers

---

person, or *junzi*. The *shi does*, while the *junzi* more nearly
is." The Confucian program is an ascending continuum of
"learning and doing." Hierarchically: the *shi* is first, the
junzi is second, and the *shengren* [sage] is highest--"all
sheng are *junzi*, and all *junzi* were formerly *shi*, but the
converse does not hold" (1998, 62-63). It is stressed that
this hierarchy is not simply vertical but inter-relationally
performative, as exemplified in the following *Xunzi* passage:

> Only the *shengren* is able to understand the
> observance of ritual propriety. The *shengren*
> understands this observance with clarity; the *shi*
> and *junzi* perform it with ease; the official
> maintains it, and the common people use it to
> create their own customs. In the hands of the
> *junzi*, it becomes the way of humanity; in the
> hands of the common people it becomes the business
> of the ghosts and spirits. (*Xunzi* 75/19/121;
> *trans*. Ames and Rosemont 1998, 65)

The notion of the *shengren* is discussed in detail in Part
II.

38

competing for the "party line" (Gernet 1968, 71f.; Defoort 1997, 106).

Given this environment it is easy to establish the importance of *bingfa* and *zongheng* texts. Kidder Smith has provided a bibliographic assessment of pre-Qin *bingshu* 兵書 ("military texts")[37] which asserts three main points: 1) military issues are omnipresent in pre-Qin Warring States texts; 2) virtually "all books" from this period are anthological, that is, collected and edited from earlier materials and "assembled over time"; and 3) traditional bibliographic classifications have not clarified textual taxonomy, but rather "acted to distort the nature" of texts, particularly shadowing the diversity and importance of military texts (1994, 237-239). The conspectus from these arguments is that *bingshu* do not fit nicely into a single bibliographical classification.

Both Chinese and Western approaches to bibliotics are

---

[37] The term *bingshu,* lit "military text" or "military writings" first appears in the *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi" (ca. C.E. 75) where it makes up one of the six major bibliographical classes of literature. *Bingshu* are divided into 4 sub-sections: 1) strategical "assessing and planning" (*quanmou*), 2) tactical "dispositions and force of circumstances" (*xingshi*), 3) *yinyang*, and 4) engineering "skills and craft" (*jiqiao*), of which the strategical (*quanmou*) subsumes and comprehends all the others (see the *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi Bingshulüe"; and Smith 1994, 232 & 237). The significance of the *bingshu* and the importance of understanding the *Guiguzi* as representative of the "*bingshu* formula" is discussed in chapter 2.

problematic: On one hand the traditional Chinese bibliographic categories constructed by the *Ru* tend to conceal the importance and "ubiquitous" nature of military (*bing*) and *zongheng* writings during the pre-Qin period, and on the other, the Western proclivity to make logical distinctions and neatly compartmentalize fields of inquiry hinders our appreciation of the inter-relational coherence which is at the very heart of what "Chinese" means. Chinese thinking is not limited by (subjective) categories that would isolate fields of inquiry as we are accustomed to in the West. To "categorize" Chinese systems in the Aristotelian sense and thereby ignore the inter-relationality fundamental to Chinese thinking is to overlook the inherent order of those systems.

The various schools of the pre-Qin period are organically interconnected and constituted in such a way that they flower in an absorptive syncretism. From the pre-Qin into the Han, military philosophy is integral to all intellectual speculation--equally important as moral and political thought, if not more--the military texts of the Warring States are, according to Roger Ames, in fact a form of philosophical literature.[38] The pontifications of the

---

[38] The earliest extant bibliographic classification distinguishes *bingjia* as a distinctive lineage, but most all the classical Chinese schools address military affairs in

military masters and *zongheng* persuaders extend throughout
the realm of Chinese thought.

By the mid to late-Warring States period, the
decentralization of political authority and the dissipation
of rigid social class boundaries open up a field in which
intellectuals become *free agents* of a sort, that is, a
floating stratum of itinerant intellectual advisors, the

---

some manner, as Ames notes: "It is a seldom advertised fact
that many if not most of the classical Chinese philosophical
works contain lengthy treatises on military thought: the
Master Mo, Master Hsün [Xun], Master Kuan [Guan], the *Book
of Lord Shang*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lü*,
the *Master of Huai Nan*, and so on. In addition, other
central texts such as the *Analects, Mencius, Lao Tzu, Master
Han Fei*, and the recently recovered *Silk Manuscripts of the
Yellow Emperor*, contain extended statements on military
thought. In fact, in the imperial catalog included in the
History of the Han Dynasty, the military writers are listed
under the 'Philosophers' (*tzu*) [*zi*] classification (Pan Gu
1962, 1731). The military writers are listed under the
Taoist [Daoist] school. It might be fair speculation to say
that, in the philosophical literature of the classical
period, a text would be perceived as less than complete if
the conversation did not at some point turn to an extended
discussion of military strategies and even tactics. . . .
This abiding interest in military affairs is a particularly
curious situation for a culture in which warfare is neither
celebrated nor glorified, and in which military heroism is a
rather undeveloped idea. When it comes to social status,
the warrior in China did not have the benefit of having
Greek and Roman forbears. Even in those Chinese treatises
which deal exclusively with military affairs, instead of a
self-promoting militarism, we generally find the same
paternalistic concern for the welfare of the people familiar
to us from the Confucian literature, and an explicit
characterization of warfare as an always unfortunate last
resort." (Ames 1993, 39-40)

41

youshui 游說 or "wandering persuaders"[39] opens up. The *youshui* are strategists and power-brokers of a sort, whose perceptions presented as advice to rulers and feudal lords marks yet another transition in the *wen-wu*, psychological-tactile, *zongheng* (diplomatic persuasion)-*bing* (martiality) polar nexus. In an early article on "Peripatetic Rhetors of the Warring Kingdoms," James I. Crump and John J. Dreher characterize the *youshui* as "one of the most interesting factors working against central authority":

> Adept in persuasion, quick of wit, owing no
> allegiance to anything beyond their own
> aggrandizement, these men traveled the empire
> professing to first this prince, then that,
> turning one against the other with cleverly turned
> arguments. While admittedly interested only in
> their own fortunes, these *You-shwei* [*youshui*] have
> had far reaching effects on history, in one case,
> for instance, being instrumental in putting Chin

---

[39] According to David Knechtges, the *youshui* 游說 are closely related to the emergence of sophisticated rhetorical writings of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., many of which later become identified with *zonghengjia* 縱橫家 and subsequently the art of *fu* 賦 poetry (1976, 21). The writers of *fu* are considered to be Qin-Han counterparts to Warring States' *youshui*. Zou Yang and Mei Zheng of the Han are called "remnants" of the *zonghengjia* (Knechtges 1982, 44).

Shr-hwang [Qin Shihuang] on the throne.   (Crump
and Dreher 1951, 16)

In a later work Crump stresses that we must be careful with
this terminology: all *shi* were "persuaders" in the sense
that they all acted as *advisors* of one sort or another, that
is, they sought to effect change either through textual
submission or personal persuasion. However, the several
major traditions held widely different attitudes toward the
role of the *shi* and the idea of persuasion in general. The
direct threat of political disunification posed by the
youshui fostered an irreversible contempt for them among the
orthodox. And thus as Tsao Ding-ren notes: "historically
and culturally, Chinese have held persuasion overall with
suspicion and reservation" (Tsao 1985, 173). Thus we must
be careful in our understanding of Chinese persuasion, for
as Jullien informs us, efficacy always operates indirectly,
which is in direct contrast to the "face-to-face *agon* in the
agora" seminal to the classical Greek art of persuasion.
The Chinese tradition is "resistant to persuasion."
Manipulation of a setup, *not* "persuasion," is the orthodox
Chinese way (Jullien 1995, 68). Moreover, the adept
manipulator never reveals his disposition or powers in any
way, the people think they are acting on their own accord.

43

The logic of manipulation presupposes an
ideological view of our relation to others that
rests on the postulate of having other peoples'
minds at one's sovereign disposal, instead of
treating them themselves as an end (the reverse of
the Kantian position). This logic also implies
the rejection of all efforts at persuasion. . . .
(Jullien 1995, 68-69)

Indeed, from the perspective of a unified, yet labyrinthian
bureaucracy, all attempts at persuasion seem futile.
Jullien argues that a "logic of manipulation" characterizes
the Chinese experience, yet it is perceived so intuitively
and is so pervasive that it never becomes "the subject of
theoretical discourse in Chinese civilization . . . it is
never fully explained for us, but simply taken for granted"
(ibid., 69-70). Indeed there is no room for "liberty," in
the terrible specter of the Warring States, and ultimately,
resistence is futile.

Thus the *shi* 士 becomes a "fluid class," which during
the Warring States emerges in society as a stratum of self-
educated advisors and envoys (*shi* 使) to the various rulers
and feudal lords on all affairs. These *shi* 士 are, more or
less, encompassed in the term "persuaders" as Crump so

44

translates. They are "a new breed of self-made persuaders" whose activities make possible "the vivacious political scene of the Warring States" and the blooming of the hundred lineages of thought (Tsao 1985, 39; Graham 1989, 3). This is the audience, the "knightly persuaders," to which the *Guiguzi* is addressed.

Wandering Persuaders and the (Moral) Value of Diplomacy

> Thus even if one has the *dao* of the Late Sage
> Kings and the plans of sagely wisdom, unless he
> fathoms the essential psychological *affects*
> (*chuaiqing* 揣情), specifically the "secret and
> hidden," there will be no way to explore
> processions. This is the [great] root of planning
> (*mou* 謀) and the method (*fa* 法) of persuasion.
>
> (*Guiguzi* 7/6/19-20)

Gernet argues that by the fourth century B.C.E., personal one-to-one relationships subsume the archaic *meng* 盟 (ancestral blood covenants), and thus individual "persuaders" are able to place themselves in positions of great social and political power (1968, 81-84). Lewis adds that the political order of the Warring States uses bonds (yue 約) in the same way its predecessors used ancestral blood covenants (*meng*) as oaths of alliance and solidarity:

45

the *zongheng* alliances which define the diplomatic structure of the Warring States are simply ones of "multi-state bonds" and like the earlier leagues they have a master (*zhu* 主) or senior (*zhang* 長) "who directed their concerted actions" (1990, 68, et al.).

The social mobility at the twilight of the Zhou allows the new *shi* and/or *youshui*, to access the nobility and rulers without birthrights. Xiao Dengfu characterizes the crucial role these clever persuaders play in the time of the Warring States:

> They rely on logomachic disputations to seize wealth, rank, dignity, and honor; in the morning they may be agrarian folk and by evening become high officials; they look upon sovereigns as infants and toy with monarchs in the palm of their hand, yet they themselves hold the safety or danger of the world Under Heaven for numerous decades. (1991, 1)

In the midst of Warring States, the pivots of power lie in individuals of orational eloquence; a common person with intellectual or elocutionary talent can rise from peasant to courtier within the span of a conversation. As recorded in

the Mawangdui silk documents, "through discourse he knows the locus of survival or demise, rising or falling" (*Jingfa* 28-29, trans. Lewis 1985, 311). The fount of verbal discourse is the organ of speech, and the "mouth," as defined in the *Guiguzi*, is "the gateway of the heart-and-mind," that is, a metaphorical *gateway* to all expressions and impressions (1/1/23f.). It is "the pivot (*ji*) and 'gateway to the frontier' (*guan* 關)--that by which one checks and closes up psychological affects (*qing* 情) and intentions (*yi* 意)" (9/8/5). This term, *qing* 情, is crucial to all forms of persuasion. According to Tsao, *qing* is the very "foundation of persuasion" in the Chinese tradition (see 1985, 135-137).[40]

---

[40] The concept of *qing* 情--an idea which includes both human "psychological affects and states," as well as world-psychological affects and "realities"--warrants a study in itself. Previous translations and discussions oscillate between awkwardness and distortion, inadequately conveying the range of meanings of the Chinese term. Etymologically, the character is composed of the *xin* 心 (heart-and-mind) radical combined with the *qing* 青 phonetic, which signifies the "colors of nature." The general idea of the graph is the psychological experience and perception of the world. The *Shuowen* Han Dynasty lexicon gives a very obscure definition: "Qing refers to a person's *yin qi* 陰氣 and desires." The *yin qi* may refer to the dark, feminine, as well as subconscious, life-energies. English translators are divided by the degree of "essentialism" they bring to the term. For example, James Legge (1865, 1893, 1895, 1899) translates the term variously: "feelings proper to humanity," "truth" (as opposed to "hypocrisy" [*wei* 偽]), "reality," "sincerity, the real state of a case," or that which is "most precious." Similarly, D. C. Lau (1970, 1979)

Guiguzi prescribes a practice of reading environmental and psychological signs, finding a crucial interval, then exploiting the differential to one's advantage. The text argues (in the tradition of *bingfa*, but more abstractly)

---

translates: what is "genuine" to a thing, "sincere," or "the truth." Though awkward, Christopher Rand captures the relationality of the term by translating *qing* as "the disposition of . . . mind-*qi* [氣]" (Rand 1974, 72). Chad Hansen (1992) translates the term with electronic-computeresque language: "reality registers," "reality feedback," and "reality-feedback inputs." Richard John Lynn (1994) understands it as the "true innate tendency of things" or just "innate tendencies" (Lynn 1994). Irene Bloom (1994) similarly translates *qing* as "genuinely human tendencies." Ames and Rosemont (1998) settle for "what really happened."

Graham seems most sensitive to the problematic nature of the term, but still chooses language that favors an essentialistic understanding as opposed to a relational one. For example, he attests that in general usage the term translates something like "fact," irrespective of name, description, or disguise: "how things and situations are in themselves, independently of how we name or describe them" (1989, 99, 478). Yet in the works of Warring States' intellectuals, such as Xunzi, Zhuangzi, Mengzi, and Later Mohists, *qing* appears as a technical noun, "with which we cope as best we can by phrasing with the adjective 'essential.'" Graham stresses that we must avoid "contamination by the Being of Western philosophy": *qing* is close to the Aristotelian idea of "'essence' except in being tied to naming" (1989, 99). In Xunzi's "Discourse on Heaven," the term refers to "the 'authentic' in man, how he is without moral training, primarily the passions": "liking and disliking, being pleased with or angry with, sadness and joy" are *qing* from Heaven (Graham 1989, 242, 479; cf. *Xunzi* 22, 23/75, passim). This is to say, *qing* refers to essential feelings, sentiments, and emotions. Having said all this, Graham still translates Zhuangzi's use of *qing* with the metaphysically laden "identity," which reflects a fundamentally essentialistic as opposed to a relational understanding. In the *Guiguzi qing* is best translated "psychological affects."

48

that no matter how much disparity we find between different
things and situations, there is always some kind of hidden
connection or microcosmic variable that can be manipulated
to attain macrocosmic effects. Human order and natural
order are part of a continuum, and this micro-macro
relationship is also construed in terms of inner-outer
resonances that are symptomatic of each other. The opening
passage of the text frames this bipolar perspective:

> . . . the ancient Sages lived in the interval
> between Heaven and Earth and they were the
> forerunners of the living multitudes:
> comprehensively watching the openings and closings
> of *yin* and *yang* so as to name the life-order of
> things" [名 命 物] (1/1/3).

From this axial position the Sage exploits the Daoist method
of polar opposition through the power of language (or
"naming") expressed on the continuum. The process itself is
bidirectional--cosmo-locutionary and psycho-locutionary,
that is, the Sage may extend the order of the cosmic cycles
of Heaven and Earth to the human realm psycho-
linguistically, and vice versa, expand human order to the
cosmological. Moreover, finding this interval is the key to

49

persuasion: once this interval, understood as a fulcrum is found, one can occupy the pivot and freely move things in any direction with the force and confidence of one employing an Archimedean lever. According to Guiguzi's doctrine:

> The *dao* of opening and closing uses *yin* and *yang* to test things. . . . Use the inferior to seek the small and use the lofty to seek the great. From this dictum nothing whatsoever does not go out or enter in, nothing whatsoever is impossible. One can persuade people, one can persuade families, one can persuade states, and one can persuade the entire world under Heaven. (1/2/6-7)

Thus, literally and metaphorically the mouth is "the Gateway of the heart-and-mind" (1/1/23) and "the pivot and 'gateway to the frontier'" (9/8/5).

The *Guiguzi* further remarks on the dangers associated with speech:

> The ancients have adages which say: "the mouth can eat, but cannot speak" [since] speech may have certain taboos, and "many mouths can melt gold" because speech may warp reality. (9/8/8-9)

50

These lines call to mind the magical, the alchemical, even

the ontological powers of speech. It is not difficult to

see how the wandering persuaders (*youshui*) come to wield

great power and be feared more than the fiercest of

generals. Moreover, their persuasions pose a great threat

to the central Confucian concern of the appropriate use of

language (*zhengming* 正名), and by extension, appropriate

empowerment, which by Confucian standards must accord with

the transmitted (Zhou) tradition.[41]

---

[41] It is important to note that *zhengming* is not an
impositional "rectification of names" based on transcendent
principles; rather, it is better understood to be a self-
ordering process of "appropriating names." This is to say
that in the world there exists an inherent correspondence
between things and names which emerges of itself. *Zhengming*
maps itself out; "cunning speech" (*qiao yan*) as conceived by
the Confucians may distort this natural mapping. The mental
capacity for being adept at *zhengming* has nothing to do with
cunning--indeed the *Analects* explicitly contrasts *ren* 仁 and
zhi 智 (wisdom) from cunning speech (see *Lunyu* 13/3, 11/16,
13/13; cf. Raphals 1992, 28, 33; Ames and Rosemont 1998,
162).
    According to the Confucian understanding the entire
social, political, and aesthetic world-order depends on
zhengming. The inappropriate use of names results in chain
reaction of cosmological breakdown:

    When names are not used properly, language will
    not be used effectively; when language is not used
    effectively, matters will not be taken care of;
    when matters are not taken care of, the observance
    of ritual propriety (*li*) and the playing of music
    (yue) will not flourish; when the observance of
    ritual propriety and the playing of music do not
    flourish, the application of laws and punishments
    will not be on the mark; when the application of
    laws and punishments is not on the mark, the

These itinerant diplomats of no fixed allegiance are scorned early on by the Ruists as is attested in the *Mencius* (371-289 B.C.E.):

> Jing Chun[42] of Wei once remarked: "Gongsun Yan and Zhang Yi[43]--were not they genuinely great men? With one temper tantrum the feudal lords were terrified, but when they were at peace, the Empire under heaven was spared the conflagration of war."
>
> Mencius said: "How can they be considered

---

people will not know what to do with themselves. Thus, when the exemplary person puts a name to something, it can certainly be spoken, and when spoken it can certainly acted upon. There is nothing careless in the attitude of the exemplary person toward what is said. (Lunyu 13.3; trans. by Ames and Rosemont 1998, 162)

It is also important to stress that in this view, the appropriate use of language means to be efficacious *within the tradition*, within a *prescribed* world. The performative and perlocutionary function of language commands a world into being. Thus, inappropriate use of language disorders all strata of existence.

[42] Jing Chun was a student of Mencius and a politician. Legge says he was a practitioner of the *zongheng* art, i.e., "one who plumed himself on his versatility" (1895, 264).

[43] Both Gongsun Yan (fl. 333-315 B.C.E.) and Zhang Yi (d. 310 B.C.E.) are deemed "traveling persuaders" and originally from the State of Wei. Yang Kuan suggests that the term *zongheng* first comes into common usage to describe he activities of these two men (see Lewis 1999, 634).

52

great men? Have you not learned the *li* 禮 (Sacred

Rites)?[44] . . . to take compliance (*shun* 順) as the

proper course of action is the *dao* of the

concubine (*qiefu* 妾婦)."[45]   (*Mengzi* 3.B.2)

---

[44] Legge says that *li* here refers to the *Yili* 義禮
text, which Mencius subsequently quotes indiscriminately
(1895, 264-265). Lau does not comment on *li*, but adds that
this portion of the text is "probably defective" (1970,
107).

[45] Lewis notes that in the Warring States there is
abundant evidence that links the ties between rulers and
subjects, or lords and ministers, with those between
"spouses or lovers." The relationship between kings and
officials is commonly allegorized as one of estranged
lovers, and the role of the minister is commonly identified
with that of the wife. However, "women and ministers were
mutually exclusive because they stood in an identical
relation to the ruler; if one occupied the slot, then the
other had to be removed." Thus wives and concubines were a
direct threat to officials. In classical Chinese political
thought, the household is a microcosm of the political realm
(Lewis 1990, 73f.; cf. *Hanfeizi* 3:187; *Zhanguoce* 3:125, 129;
22:804; 29:1049, 1074). Moreover, the concubine is
hierarchically lower than a wife, and thus has very little
legitimacy in this socio-political continuum.
   Confucians generally understand *shun* in the sense of
"compliance" in a negative way. Compliance stands in
opposition to the idea of appropriate (relational)
rulership, i.e., "the ability to bring all the constituents
of society into a harmonious relation, to create an order
that is in fact concrete and implicit in its constituent
members to the relations that obtain among governed
constituents" (Stroble 1997). In contrast, the traditions
of *Yi* and *Dao*, as well as *Guiguzi*, understand the idea of
shun as a key to obtaining "responses." "Great *shun*"
resonates with the cosmic processions of Heaven and Earth,
and by extension, all activity (cf. *Zhouyi* 16/20/25-27,
Laozi 65). In the *Guiguzi*, *shun* is necessary to all
"reckoning," and one must "comply" with "language" and
"likes" if successful persuasion is to be achieved (3/3/15,
3/3/18, 10/10/1).

Mencius advocates strict obedience to the traditional *li*, even in delicate matters of diplomacy. He denounces the "persuaders" as mere panderers,[46] who practice (a sometimes deceptive) compliance (*shun*). According to the Ruist doctrine, one should practice "straightforwardness" (*zheng* 正) in all circumstances and avoid any type of "crafty" give-and-take (*qi* 奇). *Zheng* is understood as a "rectification" or "punitive expedition" based on a set tradition.

Contrast the *Guiguzi* in which the goal of efficacy is situated amid constantly changing circumstance; given this milieu one must adapt to any and all circumstances. Thus, "regularity (*zheng*) is not as good as irregularity (*qi*); [since] irregularity (*qi*) flows without any stops" (10/9/20). Confucian discourse is accommodating to the extent that all participants are forthrightly implicated in a communal harmony set out by the *li*. The "indirect" skills of strategy and persuasion are devalued by the Confucian moral tradition from the Han Dynasty onwards, and the *zongheng* lineage is said to ignore moral standards, and

---

[46] Compare Plato's *Gorgias* in which Socrates says, "The whole of which rhetoric is a part is not an art at all, but the habit of a bold and ready wit, which knows how to manage mankind: this habit I sum up under the word 'pandering'" (463a; cf. 527).

54

teach instead a *dao* of ruin and disorder (Fu 1995, 29; Raphals 1992, 124).

The ongoing debate about the persuaders is a moral one: whether or not the persuaders (later deemed *zonghengjia*[47]) helped pacify the Warring States or deceived the world for personal gain. An excerpt from Yang Xiong's *Fayan* (*Model Sayings*) illustrates both sides of this issue:

> Some ask: "Zhang Yi and Su Qin studied Guigu's art and learned *zongheng* doctrines; each put the central states at peace for more than 10 years, is this true?"
>
> Reply: "They were deceivers (*zha ren* 詐人). Sages despise them." ("Yuanqian pian," section 8)

Contrast the more broad-minded Liu Xiang, who is charitable to "uncanny plans" and "extraordinary intelligence" normally denounced by the orthodox Ru (Confucians) of the Han. Aware of the predicament of the age, Liu seems for the most part to stand alone in his evaluation of the persuaders. Although he laments the fact

------

[47] Some of the persuaders later identified as *zonghengjia* include: Zhang Yi, Fan Ju, Cai Ze and Gan Mao in the State of Qin; and Su Qin, Su Dai, Su Li, Gongsun Yan, and Yu Qing in Shandong (Xiao 1992, 1; Fu 1995, 46).

55

(with other Ruists) that during the Warring States the "Confucian virtues" (such as *ren* 仁, *yi* 義, and *li* 禮) are neglected in favor of deception (*zha* 詐) and cunning (*jue* 決), still he defends the persuaders' actions:

> But they were officials of great talent. They estimated the capacities of rulers of their age. . . . They transformed danger into peace, death into life, in a manner both delightful and worthwhile. (Preface to the *Zhanguoce*; cf. Crump 1964, 41-42; 1979, 6, 11-13; Raphals 1992, 125-126; Fu 1995, 28)

During the Warring States, the collapse of the centralized feudal socio-political structure demands the appropriate use of diplomatic and tactical strategies to ensure safety and survival. The distinction between the arts of the persuader and the military commander is not a crucial one. The *Zhanguoce* (or *Intrigues of the Warring States*) and *Guiguzi* explicitly assimilate the logomachic *zongheng* arts with those of commandeering military (*bing*) ones. These texts, according to Lewis, assimilate "the arts of the rhetorician and the military commander" and identify "the procedures of the commander with those devices by which a debater" masks

56

his true plans, lures adversaries into revealing their true intentions, and strikes unexpectedly where no defense has been prepared (1985, 287-298; 1990, 101; also see *Shiji* 69; *Zhanguoce* chapters 8, 14, 19, 22, 26, and 29).

Aside from the *Guiguzi*, no extent text in classical Chinese literature articulates so explicitly an inclusive art of persuasion; the *Zhanguoce*, a text said to document the words and exploits of the greatest persuaders of the Warring States period, only recounts speeches in a form Crump argues is akin to "*suasoriae*."[48] The *Guiguzi* conceives techniques of persuasion as anticipatory powers that become "martial analogues" (Rand 1974, 72). Just as the military commander determines the "dispositional shapes-and-forms and forces of circumstance" (*xingshi* 形勢) before acting, so Master Guigu *prescribes* a very explicit methodology for determining the imperceptible *xingshi*. The *Guiguzi* "Fanying" (Reversing and Responding")[49] chapter discourses on "responding" "listening" and "fathoming";

---

[48] In 1925 Henri Maspero argued that much of the *Zhanguoce* was fiction, but Crump suggests that it should be regarded not only as fiction but as *suasoriae*: a technical Greek and Roman rhetorical term that refers to using historical or legendary situations to give advice about a course of action as if you were actually there. The *suasoriae* usually target what we call the problem of "conscience" in the West (1064, 103, passim).

[49] The *Taipingyulan* encyclopedia titles this chapter "Fanfu": "Reversing and Retracing."

though couched in esoteric rhyme,[50] it should be quoted in full:

> The great transformers of antiquity emerged together with imperceptible shapes-and-forms. Reversing to *see* what has gone past, retracing to test what is forthcoming; reversing to know the ancient, retracing to know the present; reversing to know the other, and retracing to know oneself. When the veins-and-patterns of motion and stillness, ineffectuation and effectuation, do not coincide with the present, reverse to the ancient to seek them out. That things-affairs-events-and-situations have reversibility and attain retraceability is the hearkening of the Sages: inspection is imperative.

> The speech of others is motion,
> The silence of oneself is stillness.

---

[50] See Michael Robert Broschat's textual study of the *Guiguzi* (1985). Broschat "subjects the text to textual analysis, specifically through the use of new microcomputer programs for this purpose developed by Vinton A. Dearing." Broschat identifies most of *Guiguzi*'s rhymes with this program.

58

Accord (*yin* 因) with the speech of others and
listen to their language. Speech has
incoherences, reverse and seek them out, then the
other's responses will necessarily come out.

    Speech has images (*xiang* 象),
    Things-affairs-events-and-situations
        (*shi*) have appositions (*bi* 比).
    Since these have images and appositions,
    Use them to *see* what comes next.
    Images are images of things-affairs-
        events-and-situations.
    Appositions are appositions of language.

Use imperceivable shapes-and-forms to seek
perceivable tones-of-voice (*sheng* 聲). If one
lures with words which connect or coincide with
things-affairs-events-and-situations, then one can
gain a person's effectuation. It is like
spreading out a net to ensnare and catch animals:
spread it wide over the intersections and watch
over it. *Dao* connects things-affairs-events-and-
situations, others will go out into it of
themselves--this is the network of luring-and-

hooking people. Constantly hold this net to drive them.

If others do not speak and are without appositions, then change or adapt (*bian*) for them; use images to move them in order to establish a rapport with their heart-and-mind; see their psychological affects (*qing*), follow (*sui*) and tend (*mu* 牧) them. One reverses to what has gone past, another retraces to what is forthcoming. Speech has images and appositions; follow these to decide a foundation: repeat them, suit them, reverse them, or retracing them--the myriad things-and-affairs will not lose their [associative] language. Those whom the Sages allure, both the foolish and the wise, will have no doubt in their affairs.

Thus the ancient adepts were ones who reversed and listened, then they changed and adapted ghosts and spirit-daemons (*guishen*) to reach the other's psychological affects *(qing)*. Their changes were appropriate and their tending of things careful. If one tends things carelessly, then apprehending the *qing* will be unclear. If one apprehends *qing* which are

unclear, then deciding a foundation will be careless. Changing images and appositions will necessarily have adverse language, so circle around and listen to them.

> When desiring to hear another's tone-of-
> voice, reverse and be silent;
> When desiring to expand, reverse and
> contract.
> When desiring the lofty, reverse and
> descend;
> When desiring to hold fast, reverse
> and offer up.

One who desires to open *qing* should imitate (*xiang*) and appose (*bi*) the other in order to tend his language. Similar tones-of-voice call each other in resonance; efficacious patterns-and-models return the same.

> Some will accord with this, some will
> accord with that;
> Some are used to serve superiors, some
> are used to tend inferiors.

This is listening for the genuine and
     counterfeit, knowing similarities
     and differences, reaching into
     another's psychological affects and
     deceptions (*qing zha*).
Move, act, speak, and silence: with
     these go out and enter in.
Joy and anger sprout from these and are
     the means to see another's
     patterns-and-styles;
All use predeterminations for their
     models of action.

Use reversion, seek retraceability, and *see* what
others rely on: thus is one who uses/employs
these.

One (should) desire equanimity and stillness to
Listen to a person's language,
Inspect his affairs,
Sort (*lun*) the myriad things,
Differentiate the masculine and feminine.

Even if opposing a person's affairs, see the

subtleties and know the kinds. It is like
fathoming another by dwelling within him,
measuring his abilities, and piercing his
intentions.

> The tallies and responses are not lost--
> Like that at which the Teng snake points
> Like the drawing of an arrow by Archer Yi.

Thus the embryonic beginning of knowledge is
oneself: knowledge of others only comes after
self-knowledge.

> This is interrelational knowledge, like
>   that of the Bimu fish (flatfish):
> They see shapes-and-forms, like a bright
>   light's accompanying shadow.

Let us inspect speech and not deviate, just as a
needle is attracted to a loadstone, or a tongue is
attracted to barbecued ribs. When one's dealings
with others is subtle, one's perception of *qing* is
quick.

Just as *yin* accompanies *yang*, [like *yang*
    accompanies *yin]*;
Just as the circle accompanies the
    square, [like the square
    accompanies the circle].
When shapes-and-forms have not yet been
    seen use the circle to guide (*dao*)
    them;
After shapes-and-forms have been seen
    use the square to deal with them

Advance, withdraw, to the left, and to the right:
by these means manage and watch over them. If one
does not make predeterminations, then the tending
of others will not be correct. When affairs are
handled with no technique, this is called
forgetting and neglecting *qing* and losing *dao*. If
one carefully makes predeterminations while
tending others, and masks [his] plans with
imperceptible shapes-and-forms, then none will see
his *gates*: this is called Heavenly spirituality.
(2/2/16-2/3/5)

From this passage it becomes clear that the *modus operandi*

64

in play is to allow others to reveal their imperceptible *xingshi* on their own accord while concealing one's own *xingshi* by employing *adaptive* devices to glean the *qing* ("psychological affects"), or as Rand interprets, to discover the "disposition" of the other's "mind-*qi*" or "*qi*-information," and in turn discern the other's "outward dispositions" (1974, 72).

In a sense, the persuader's art is a pro-active form of Sunzi's *bingfa*, stressing the psychological over the tactile. For example Su Qin, one of the arch-persuaders in Chinese history and legend, explicitly identifies "persuasion and diplomacy as superior forms of warfare in his lengthy critique of reliance on military force" (Lewis 1990, 101; 286n.15). What many perceive to be "immoral" deception is in many cases a "moral" alternative to war.

Yet aside from a small counterculture tradition championed by Su Xun in the Song Dynasty which emphasizes the historical and political "contingency" and "circumstantiality" of values in the establishment of certain texts as orthodox, the mainstream tradition frowns upon any connections with *zongheng* texts.[51] Zeng Gong

---

[51] Su Xun (1009-1066 C.E.) is a famous poet and literary critic identified as one of the "Eight Great Prose Masters," and is known to have studied *zongheng* writings, specifically treasuring the *Zhanguoce,* most often but always "in secret" (Crump 1964, 43-44; Tsao 1985, 20). He is

(1019-1085 C.E.) in his highly "orthodox" Preface to the
Zhanguoce specifically criticizes the *youshui* and advocates
an inflexible *Ru*ist view:

> Confucius and Mencius . . . alone understood the
> *dao* of the former kings and believed that it must
> not be changed. . . . But the persuaders of the
> Warring States were not of the same stamp. . . .
> Su Qin, Shang Yang, Sun Bin, Wu Qi, Li Si and
> their ilk lost their lives, while Qin and the old
> Feudal Lords who employed them lost their states.
> Clearly they were a catastrophe to their times--
> and yet their age never awakened to this fact.
> Only the *dao* of the Former Kings, through all the

---

generally identified with the Warring States *zonghengjia* not
because of anachronism but because his heterodox values were
a "social anomaly." Su Xun modeled his doctrines on the
eclectic "Confucian" political thinker and poet Jia Yi (200-
168 B.C.E.) [later deemed *zongheng* by Zhu Xi], and on the
polemicist Lu Zhi (745-806 C.E.). George Cecil Hatch, Jr.,
characterizes his thought as somewhere in between the
"irrelevant" dogmatism of Dong Zhongshu (ca. 179-104 B.C.E.)
and the excessive "Legalistic" artifice of Chao Cuo. He
seeks to synthesize the *zongheng* (persuading) "arts of Su
Qin and Zhang Yi" with the unflinchingly loyal "heart of
[Guan] Longfeng and Bigan [two ancient ministers who were
killed despite their loyalty]. This is to undercut "empty
words" and impracticality of Confucian authority in favor of
efficacious sovereignty. Xun's vision of the radical
contingency of "good and evil" on circumstances seeks to
raise the *youshui* from "ignominy to substance" (Hatch 1972,
178ff.; cf. *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese
Literature*, "Su Hsun").

changes of time and differences of law, can be examined and show now flaw, used and reveal no weakness [*sic*]. This is why the sages of the past would never change it for another. (*Zhanguoce muluxu*, trans. Crump 1979, 5-6; cf. Raphals 1992, 125)

The *Zhanguoce* itself is viewed as a "wicked book" and a transgression of official morality (see Crump 1964, 3, 5-6; 1979, 2). Raphals concludes that regardless of whether the *Zhanguoce* is a collection of real "historical" accounts or merely a series of "exercises in persuasion," orthodox *Rujia* rejects deception entirely (1992, 125). For example, in the *Sanguozhi*, Li Quan requests a copy of the *Zhanguoce* from Qin Fu (ca. 230 C.E.) so that he may broaden his understanding in the manner of a *junzi*. Qin Fu replies:

The *junzi* widens his understanding, but if it is not according to the [sacred] rites [*li*], he does not look at it. Now the *Zhanguoce* rehearses again and again the arts [*shu*] [Zhang] Yi and [Su] Qin used to preserve themselves and kill others. This destruction of others for self-preservation is exactly what the [Confucian] *Canon* abominates.

67

Therefore, Confucius, in his struggle to come out
with the *Chunqiu*, placed the greatest emphasis on
rectitude [*zheng* 正]. (*Sanguozhi* 38, 4.973-74,
trans. in Raphals 1992, 124)

After a brief attempt to vindicate Su Qin (*Shiji* 69),
the generally pluralistic Sima Qian ends his discussion of
the famous persuaders in an unflattering (orthodox
Confucian) tone:

In short this pair [Su Qin and Zhang Yi] were
truly men capable of ruining a country! (*Shiji*
70:2304, Nienhauser, 146)

Overall, the Confucian tradition expresses a distaste for
obsequiousness of any kind, moreover, the art of diplomatic
persuasion and the new individualism concurrent with the
emergence of the *youshui* are continually devalued.

Despite the Ruists' (and the Daoists') distaste for
polemics, the pluralistic socio-political dynamic during the
Warring States makes disputation a necessary practice. In
fact, as Raphals says, "All philosophers of the Warring
States period" are "in a sense persuaders, including
Confucius himself" (1992, 118). Mencius himself takes on

68

the role of a *youshui* in his excursions to Qi and Liang.
Crump even argues that the "art of persuasion" is part of
the "basic education" of Warring States China, just as the
art of rhetoric is essential to the Greeks at nearly the
same time in history, and that the Confucians are fully
equipped with their own rhetoric to persuade (Crump 1964, 6-
7). Ultimately, persuasion is a method of controlling the
interpretation of the world. Confucian persuasion is only
in the service of perpetuating *ren* 仁 and *yi* 義 to maintain
sovereignty irrespective of socio-political efficacy, and
this point is evident from the excessive ("moral") hypocrisy
displayed throughout Chinese history.

When asked by his disciple Gongduzi about the charges
from "outsiders," or non-Confucians, that Mencius is fond of
disputation (*bian* 辯), Mencius replies: "Indeed, I am *not*
fond of disputing, but I am compelled to do it" (3.B.9.1).
He then speaks at length about the Confucian heroes and
quotes from *Shijing* (*Book of Odes*). The reason, according
to Mencius, why he must engage in disputation, is to defend
Confucianism from "heretical sayings" and the "pernicious
doctrines" of Yang Zhu and Mozi, the latter being fully
committed to disputation. He goes on to describe a macro-
historical proclivity of how sovereignty rises and falls in
cycles, and deems his own age a time of disunity and decay.

Just as Yu channeled the floods, the Duke of Zhou brought order to the States (even to the barbarian regions), and Confucius completed the *Chunqiu* to dissuade the villains, so Mencius desires to carry on the "rectifications" (*zheng* 正) of the great Sages, stop the "heretical sayings" and "licentious language," and "carry on the work of the three sages," that is, Yu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius. He concludes the argument with a repetition:

> Indeed, I am *not* fond of disputing, but I am
> compelled to do it. Whoever is able to gainsay
> (*yan ju* 言距) Yang and Mo is a disciple of the
> Sages. (3.B.9.13; cf. *Mengzi* 2.B.2; Legge 1894,
> 278-284.; Shun 1997, 172)

Ultimately, Mencius is forced to slacken off traditional rejection of disputation. Crump reads Mencius' reply as "proof that he is a persuader and is fully equipped with his tradition's own brand of rhetoric to help him persuade" (1964, 6).

The problem with the Mencian/Confucian approach is that it holds obstinately to an outdated and ossified Zhou tradition, unable to respond to the necessities of the times. Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692 C.E.), as interpreted by

70

Jullien, specifically criticizes this inherited "moralist view" which advocates a sort of "creative heroism" in the form of an appropriation of tradition.[52] Contrary to this "moral idealism," which asserts that disorder is cured by great *moral* "Sages," the historical process is seen to have within itself an ineluctable "tendency towards alternation" grounded in "internal necessity" (see Jullien 1995, 180-89).

Anticipating this insight, the *Guiguzi* gives a recurring sense that the old orthodox tradition--the traditional *dao* of the ancient Sage Kings as understood by the Confucians--is insufficient to deal with the complexities of the harrowing Warring States and the inner workings of this "historical necessity." Moreover, the *Guiguzi* focuses on the psychological conditions and socio-political contingencies of those who play into this necessity. The times require ingressive, extraordinary and clandestine procedures, which, as seen above, are denounced by the orthodox:

> Thus even if one has the *dao* of the Late Sage
> Kings and the plans of sagely wisdom, unless he
> fathoms the essential psychological *affects*

---

[52] Wang Fuzhi of the Ming-Qing interregnum can be considered to be in the same interpretive tradition of Su Xun from the Song Dynasty.

(*chuaiqing* 揣情), specifically the "secret and hidden," there will be no way to explore processions. This is the [great] root of planning (*mou* 謀) and the method (*fa* 法) of persuasion. (*Guiguzi* 7/6/19-20)

In one sense, *chuai* 揣 ("psychological fathoming and figuring out") and *mou* 謀 ("planning") are the crux of the *Guiguzi*: for the link between psychological conditions and interstate diplomacy (as well as cosmological processions) is paramount in the text. According to Dong Zhongshu: "Heaven and man harmonize as one";[53] yet Confucian moral teachings are insufficient to deal with the imperceptible. One must penetrate to the crux of things and secretly draw out the inner realm. *Guiguzi* stresses that the understanding of hidden plans (*qian mou* 潛謀) and imperceptible shapes-and-forms (*wuxing* 無形) are of utmost importance to offensive and defensive socio-political stability:

Wisdom should be applied to that which the masses are unable to know; abilities should be applied to

---

[53] *Tian ren he yi* 天人和一.

those places where the masses are unable to see.
(10/10/6)

Necessity demands ingression, and indemnity requires secrecy
to secure the efficacy of one's plans. The *dao* of the Late
Sage Kings must be reinterpreted beyond traditional
guidelines:

> So the *dao* of the Late Sage Kings is *yin* 陰 (lit.
> "dark"). They have a saying that goes: "The
> transformations of Heaven and Earth lie in both
> the heights and depths; the [regulating] *dao* of
> the Sages lies in both secrecy and hiddenness."
> It is not merely being "faithful" (*zhong* 忠),
> "trustworthy" (*xin* 信), "kind" (*ren* 仁), or
> "just" (*yi* 義); rather it is more being "centered
> and upright" (*zhong zheng* 中正)[54]. (10/10/8-9)

---

[54] The phrase *zhong zheng* is common throughout the
Yijing. According to Lynn, it refers to the fifth line of a
hexagram, the "noble ruler" which is "central ('holding to
the Mean') and correct ('imbued with rectitude')" (1994,
264n.4). *Zhong* signifies "middle positions" of the lower
and upper trigrams, i.e., lines two and five. These middle
positions are "the territory of proper and balanced behavior
and action," *yin* and *yang* respectively. "The line in the
fifth position--whether *yin* or *yang*--turns out to be the
ruler of the hexagram as a whole, for it is the 'most noble'
place, the 'exalted position'" (1994, 17-18).
    During the Warring States, *zheng* is usually contrasted

73

Obvious prescriptions and strict conformity to the Confucian tradition are contrasted with efficacious imperceptibility and hidden plans necessitated by the Warring States.

The challenge in the world of Guiguzi is how to ensure efficacy in a shattered world. The various philosophical lineages of the Warring States have a common goal: to provide a unified ideology that will ensure political order. The acumen of the *Guiguzi* is to discern the patterns and order in apparent chaos and then emulate this order to a maximum strategic advantage--cosmologically approximating *wuwei* ("not doing").[55]

---

with *luan* 亂 ("disorder") or *xie* 邪 ("depravity") and has to do with "correction" understood as a "punitive" act towards efficacy. Liu Kwang-Ching in his essay on "Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China" argues that the moral connotation of *zheng* is a later accretion. The Shang oracle bones suggest that the original image of *zheng* is "an effective goal-oriented action," the root meaning is "successful." *Zheng* is a "pro-active" term that etymologically evolves from "(1) military action, which gives rise to (2) a political dominion, which is given (3) a moral justification" (1990, 29, 31).

[55] Guiguzi's conception of *wuwei* is explored in Part II.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL AND TEXTUAL HISTORY

The enigmatic personage behind the mask of *Guiguzi*, the "Master of Ghost Valley," is as spectral as the toponym indicates. Tsao Ding-ren [*sic*] remarks: "His name is readily recognized by a contemporary Chinese, but scarcely any more than a recognition of the name accompanied by some sense of awe" (1985, 10-11). In Chinese, the character *gui* 鬼 ("ghost") predominantly has negative connotations, but not always. *Gui* also evokes positive ideas such as "clever," "stealthy," "remarkable," or "extraordinary." The name "Guigu" (Ghost Valley) cuts through the exceedingly practical and widely materialistic Chinese world-view, and immediately evokes some gut level feeling of the supernatural and perhaps even a vague idea of immortality. Though Master Guigu is historically connected with key diplomatic and military strategists of the Warring States period, in the extant texts from pre-Qin through the Han

75