

The Homological Cosmos

*Ontology, Epistemology, and Ethics in Yi Jing
Prediction*

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Declaration

I, William Edward Matthews, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis investigates cosmological theories among practitioners of *Yi Jing*-based prediction in Hangzhou, China. The principle focus is upon analogical reasoning as manifest in predictive practice, ontological assumptions, epistemology, and ethics, from the perspective of specialists. These aspects of cosmology are explored through a combination of ethnographic data and textual analysis, adopting a position informed by the anthropology of cosmology, ontology, and divination and related debates in the cognitive sciences and Sinology. From the perspective of predictors, *Yi Jing* prediction operates via the reduction of situations presented by clients to cosmic laws, from which highly specific predictions can be derived. *Yi Jing* hexagrams are metaphorically substituted for clients' situations, which are then metonymically incorporated into an understanding of the cosmos as particular configurations of *qi*. This argument is contextualised in relation to the role of analogy in the *Yi Jing* itself. The ontological assumptions of predictors are rooted in resemblances between phenomena based on shared intrinsic qualities, rather than in analogical similarities between distinct ontological types. This mode of identification, which I term 'homologism', directly informs epistemological assumptions based on hexagrams' 'resemblance' to natural phenomena. This is discussed in relation to broader conceptions of 'science', 'religion', and 'superstition', along with salient epistemological categories employed by predictors. Emphasis on the accuracy of prediction and its identification with 'science' are characteristic of predictors' ethical discourse, grounded in a homology between cosmos and society but complicated by considerations of ethical practice. Finally, the distinction between analogy and homology is applied to the development of Chinese 'correlative thought', which is revealed to encompass three distinct types. Implications of the thesis are discussed for the anthropology of cosmology, ontology, and divination, and the study of Chinese cosmology, with particular focus on issues of scale and purpose.

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Notes

Transliteration and Terminology

Romanisations are given in *pinyin*. When Chinese terms are used, the traditional characters are provided along with the *pinyin* in the first instance. In the case of extended quotations, such as those from texts, only the traditional characters and English translation are provided. The only occasions on which simplified characters are used are instances of direct quotation from a text produced in simplified characters. Traditional characters have been favoured given the thesis' engagement with classical Chinese texts and overlap with Sinology.

Texts and Translation

Extracts from classical Chinese texts are taken from the Chinese Text Project (ctext.org) unless otherwise stated. English translations of extracts from the *Yi Jing* are taken or adapted from Richard John Lynn's *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the "I Ching" as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (1994). English translations for hexagram names are also from Lynn (1994).

Currency

Monetary values are presented in *yuan* (¥); during fieldwork, the exchange rate was approximately ¥10 to £1.

Names

With the exception of those individuals who expressed a wish for me to use their real names, all names are pseudonyms.

Introduction

Scope of the Thesis

This thesis is concerned first and foremost with the explicit ideas of individual cosmologists about the nature of the cosmos, the internal dynamics of those ideas, and their relationship with cognition. Its object of study is the body of cosmological and predictive knowledge and practice known as ‘Eight Trigrams Prediction’ (八卦预测 *ba gua yuce*), a collection of various predictive methods held together by common assumptions of a cosmos knowable through correlations between phenomena. These are analysed in this thesis in terms of how they are understood by expert practitioners and in terms of how they are presented in the *Yi Jing* 《易經》 (*I Ching* or *Book of Changes*), from which Eight Trigrams Prediction is derived. My concern is with explicit cosmological representations, how they are rationalised, and the mechanics by which they are employed during prediction, an important argument being that my informants’ concern is with the accurate description and explanation of the cosmos – this, for them, is the proper object of prediction and also the ultimate standard against which they judge the legitimacy of their practices. This thesis thus makes an original contribution to the anthropology of cosmology, the role of analogy in cosmological and divinatory reasoning, and to the study of Chinese ‘correlative thought’, taking an approach to explicit cosmology informed both by historical concerns and relevant findings from the cognitive sciences. Within the context of Eight Trigrams Prediction and the *Yi Jing*, it addresses the following broad questions:

- 1) What role is played by analogical reasoning in the rationalisation of cosmological theories and their mobilisation in prediction?
- 2) How are similarities between phenomena accounted for, and what is their epistemological and ontological status?
- 3) What relationships exist between assumptions of ontological similarity, cosmogonic accounts, and the purposes of divination?

In addressing the above questions my engagement with ethnographic and textual evidence is informed by four specific foci. These are the way in which cognitive operations of metaphor and metonymy contribute to classification and predictive reasoning; what lends coherence to categories in Chinese ‘correlative thought’; the relationship between moral and ethical

judgements and cosmological theories; and the means by which Eight Trigrams cosmology is justified in relation to other accounts of the cosmos.

In addressing the above issues, this thesis contributes directly to current debates in anthropology concerning cosmology, ontology, and divination, and their relationship with cognition. This thesis provides the first extended ethnography focusing on the content of Eight Trigrams cosmology in the contemporary People's Republic of China, complementing existing studies concerning the revival of Confucianism and folk religion, and is of relevance to Sinological engagements with the philosophy and historical use of the *Yi Jing*, which may now be compared to lived understandings. Ethnographically, this thesis illustrates the importance of accurate cosmological knowledge to Eight Trigrams cosmologists, demonstrating the inadequacy of treating their knowledge practices solely in terms of broader social trends. Theoretically, this thesis contributes a sustained analysis of the role of analogical cognition and the 'play of tropes' (Fernandez 1986a) in divination, and advances an approach to cosmology and ontology centred on individual variation, developing an analytical perspective that accounts for 'ontology' at different levels of abstraction and expertise sensitive to ethnographic nuance and cognitive approaches. This builds on recent attempts to develop cross-cultural typologies of 'ontology', notably that of Philippe Descola (2013), by introducing the category of 'Homologism' to describe key ontological assumptions held by Eight Trigrams cosmologists. In establishing a typology of 'correlative thought' (see below), this thesis is of value to ongoing Sinological debates on this subject, and its theoretical conclusions are applicable to both modern practices and the historical record. This research is thus of relevance to cross-disciplinary concerns in social anthropology, cognition and culture, and Sinology.

I proceed now to an overview of terminology used throughout the thesis. This is followed by an introduction to Eight Trigrams cosmology and a review of studies concerning Chinese cosmology and its revival in contemporary China. I then present the theoretical orientations of the thesis concerning analogical reasoning, divination, and cosmology and ontology. Having discussed methods, informants, and textual sources, the Introduction closes with an overview of the subsequent chapters.

Terminology

Eight Trigrams Prediction – a direct translation of the emic 八卦預測 *ba gua yuce*, which refers collectively to the various methods of prediction based on the eight trigrams of the *Yi Jing*. I use this to refer generally to these practices; specific methods, such as Six Lines Prediction (六爻預測 *liu yao yuce*) are labelled accordingly.

Eight Trigrams Cosmology – an etic term by which I refer to the cosmological theories which underlie Eight Trigrams Prediction. Again, this is a general term and is intended as an approximation of the beliefs of many individuals, whose particular understandings vary.

Eight Trigrams Cosmologist – a dedicated adherent of Eight Trigrams cosmology, either for professional or personal reasons. Most of my informants fall into this etic category.

Predictor – a direct translation of the emic 預測者 *yucezhe*, used here to refer to the professional practitioner of Eight Trigrams Prediction. I have chosen this over the term ‘fate-calculation man’ (算命先生 *suanming xiansheng*) to avoid both awkward phrasing and the pejorative associations which can (but do not necessarily) accompany the latter Chinese term.

Prediction – a direct translation of the emic 預測 *yuce*, the term by which one of my key informants, Master Tao, refers to his practice. This term can also designate prediction or forecasting as it relates to the weather, financial trends, and so on. I have chosen it over the emic ‘fate calculation’ (算命 *suanming*) primarily because it emphasises the deductive character of Eight Trigrams Prediction and because the term is more immediately associated with the practice known as ‘birth date eight characters’ (生辰八字 *shengchen ba zi*) which assesses one’s life’s fortune rather than the more specific, proximate concerns of Eight Trigrams Prediction. I have also generally chosen to refer to ‘prediction’ instead of ‘divination’ in order to avoid any of the supernatural or mystical connotations of the latter, given that there is nothing obviously ‘divine’ or mysterious about Eight Trigrams Prediction as understood and practised by my informants. However, where I make reference to the anthropological literature, to relevant historical examples, or to practices which are more obviously ‘divine’ or mystical, I do use the term.

Correlative Thought – this term, or variants on it, is used widely in the Sinological literature to describe the ordering of natural and human phenomena in correspondence with one another, and I use it in this sense. This may involve, for example, the correlation of certain directions

with colours, flavours, body parts, animals, and so on, a practice which becomes increasingly evident in the material from the late Warring States period of Chinese history (475-221 B.C.), and became systematised in the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220)¹.

This thesis deals extensively with ‘cognition’, by which I refer to the mental processes by which knowledge is gained, understood, and manipulated. I also distinguish between ‘intuitive’ and ‘reflective’ cognition, defined in detail in the section *Ontology and Intuitive and Reflective Beliefs* below.

Eight Trigrams Cosmology in Context

This section provides a brief history of Eight Trigrams cosmology and prediction, a discussion of the revival of traditional beliefs and practices in contemporary China, and an overview of existing anthropological studies of Chinese cosmology and divination.

Cosmology and the *Yi Jing*

My intention here is to present the reader with sufficient background to contextualise the following chapters; Chapter Six presents a more detailed discussion of the early development of correlative cosmology, its integration of the *Yi Jing*, and the development of Eight Trigrams Prediction in something resembling its current form.

Eight Trigrams Prediction traces its origins to the *Yi Jing*, the received text of which dates to the second century B.C. and lays out a conception of a dynamic cosmos based on the *dao* 道 or ‘Way’, according to which the cosmic forces of receptive *yin* 陰 and active *yang* 陽 interact. The dynamics of this cosmos are knowable via the sixty-four hexagrams (卦 *gua*), diagrams of six broken (*yin*) and unbroken (*yang*) lines composed of different combinations of the eight trigrams (八卦 *ba gua*) of three lines each; the hexagrams are held to encompass all possible situations of the cosmos. Eight Trigrams Prediction is rooted in this cosmology, but also adds further notions which are explained in Chapters One and Two, and attempts to predict based on this cosmological knowledge.

As it is currently practised, Eight Trigrams Prediction combines the *Yi Jing*’s account of the cosmos with additional principles which began to take hold in cosmological discourse during

¹ Nylan (2010) provides an incisive review of both the evidence for correlative thought in early China and uses of the term in the Sinological and anthropological literature.

the late Warring States period (475-221 B.C.) and were fully integrated into a comprehensive cosmology by the Eastern Han dynasty (A.D. 25-220). Principal among these is the notion that the entire cosmos is composed of *qi* 氣, a dynamic matter-energy in a state of continual transformation². Universal *qi* is itself understood to transform according to a cycle of Five Phases (五行 *wu xing*), Metal (金 *jin*), Wood (木 *mu*), Water (水 *shui*), Fire (火 *huo*), and Earth (土 *tu*). The Five Phases operate according to two cycles, one of ‘production’ (生 *sheng*) and one of ‘conquest’ (克 *ke*), relating to secondary cycles of masking and control which will not be detailed here (see Feuchtwang 1974: 41–42). Wood produces Fire; Fire produces Earth; Earth produces Metal; Metal produces Water; Water produces Wood. Wood conquers Earth; Earth conquers Water; Water conquers Fire; Fire conquers Metal; Metal conquers Wood. The Phases are best understood as processes – Fire ‘flaming upwards’, and Water ‘soaking downwards’ (Lloyd 2014: 23). The Five Phases can be considered in terms of spatiotemporally variant configurations of *qi*; like the trigrams, discussed in Chapter One, the Phases correlate with phenomena, process, direction, and so on, the salience of which depends on scale. As I will argue, *qi* is differentiated fractally, such that whilst a given object in space-time may be considered, say, Fire at a certain scale, that scale nonetheless manifests an aggregate configuration – the object in question will contain within it, at lower scales, *qi* in all five Phases. At the same time, *qi* transforms according to the Phase cycles both temporally and spatially. The development of this *qi*-based cosmology went hand in hand with the unification of China under the Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.), and the subsequent consolidation of imperial power during the Western Han (206 B.C. – A.D. 9).

As for the *Yi Jing*³, it can be divided into two portions, the *Zhou Yi* (《周易》 *Zhou Changes*), comprising the sixty-four hexagrams, their names, judgements on their meaning, and statements concerning each hexagram’s component lines, and the *Ten Wings* 《十翼》 *Shi Yi*, which consist of later commentaries. These were combined with the *Zhou Yi* to create the received text, canonised in 136 B.C. under the reign of Wu Di as one of the ‘Five Classics’ (五經 *wu jing*), an event crucial to the consolidation of ‘Confucian’ state ideology and one which would allow the text to exert profound influence over subsequent Chinese history. The *Zhou Yi* most likely has its origins in the Western Zhou period (1050-771 B.C.), based on the social

² *Qi* can have various meanings – in this thesis I refer to it in terms of its meaning the universal matter-energy just described, unless otherwise stated.

³ For the sake of clarity, I follow here an established tradition in Western Sinology of defining the *Yi Jing* as the received text.

customs mentioned in the text, and came to exist in its received form in the late ninth century B.C. (Rutt 2002: 30–33). Its wording is terse and abstract, difficult to understand even for experienced predictors today.

Although the *Zhou Yi* had achieved its present form no later than the Western Zhou (1046–771 B.C.; Shaughnessy 1999), until the late Zhou ‘it was used exclusively for divination’ (Smith 2008: 7), not beginning to achieve its cosmological significance until the third century B.C. Indeed, references to its use in the *Zuozhuan* 《左傳》 historical chronicle suggest that the line statements themselves were used as prognostications, not yet incorporated into a correlative system (Shaughnessy 1999: 341–342). By the third century B.C., however, the hexagrams, now consisting of broken and unbroken lines rather than the odd and even numbers by which they had previously been denoted, were being speculatively linked to *yin* and *yang*, as was explicitly done in the *Ten Wings*. The history of the *Yi Jing*, its exegesis, and associated predictive methods is extremely complex and cannot be reviewed here beyond some very general remarks. The reader is referred to Smith’s (2008) English-language history or Zhu Bokun’s (1995) four-volume account of its exegesis from the Spring and Autumn to Qing periods for comprehensive studies.

In the early Han period, the cosmology laid out in the *Ten Wings* was increasingly integrated with *qi* and the Five Phases, and it is to this period that the methods of Eight Trigrams Prediction can be traced – particularly to the figure of Jing Fang, who is credited with the development of ‘Attached Stem Divination’ (納甲筮法 *najia shifa*) of which Six Lines Prediction as discussed in this thesis is one variant. The Han dynasty saw a flourishing of cosmological scholarship on the *Yi Jing*, which exerted a continuing influence on subsequent dynasties. In particular, during the Song scholarly culture turned again to the text as a source of political and moral as well as cosmological guidance (Smith et al. 1990), and divination based upon it continued to play a significant role in Chinese society during the Qing period (see Smith 1991). The text was widely seized upon as a means of making sense of the profound changes that hit China at the end of the Qing dynasty, particularly as a means of reconciling newly-imported Western ideas with China’s cultural heritage (Smith 2008: 196–201), a trend which continued into the Republican era, an intriguing example being the scholar Liu Zihua’s use of the *Yi Jing* to predict the existence of a planet (Homola 2014). After the communist revolution of 1949, and especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), together with other remnants of ‘feudal superstition’ the *Yi Jing* and divination in general were vigorously suppressed (Smith 2008: 205–

207; see Bruun 2003 Ch. 3 for a detailed account of government policies towards fengshui in the same period). However, in spite of its official condemnation as superstition, prediction based on the *Yi Jing* has experienced a massive resurgence since Mao's death and the implementation of Reform and Opening Up under Deng Xiaoping. It is in this context that my informants operate, and to which I turn in the next section.

Tradition, Legitimacy, and the Pursuit of Explanation

Although officially still considered 'superstitious' (迷信 *mixin*), practices such as Eight Trigrams Prediction, particularly in cities like Hangzhou, are now increasingly popular and freely practised in public. This, though, is a relatively recent phenomenon; practitioners of mantic arts such as divination and *fengshui* were targeted for re-education during the 1982-1984 crackdown on 'spiritual pollution' (Goossaert & Palmer 2011: 324). The *Yi Jing* itself has seen a resurgence in popularity, typified by the 'Yi Jing fever' of the 1980s and 1990s (Smith 2008: 207; see Homola 2013: 138 on a parallel trend in Taiwan), which saw a proliferation of books, training courses, and societies amid a general fascination for matters cosmological (Goossaert & Palmer 2011: 275–281). This can be seen as part of a broader enthusiastic revival of practices and traditions suppressed during the Mao era. These include the rapid development of popular religion, particularly in rural areas (Chau 2006; Goossaert & Palmer 2011 Ch. 10), the revival of folk traditions such as paper-cutting, storytelling, and spirit cults (Wu 2015), *qigong* breathing practices (Chen 2003; Palmer 2007), self-cultivation techniques (Farquhar & Zhang 2012), and Confucianism (Bell 2010; Billioud & Thoraval 2015; Hammond & Richey 2015; Sun 2013 Chs. 8 & 9).

All of this has occurred in the context of state shifts away from socialism in practice, if not in rhetoric, and a widely-perceived loss of guiding moral principles or 'spiritual crisis' (Smith 2008: 207) intimately tied to economic transformations, which Yan (2009a, 2009b, 2013) has linked to the individualisation of society. It is thus tempting to explain the resurgence of traditional practices and beliefs in terms of a reaction to a moral or spiritual vacuum; whilst such an approach has value, I do not pursue it in this thesis, focusing instead on individual motivations as they relate to the explanatory concerns of cosmologists. Approaches based on recourse to broader social trends cannot explain everything; most importantly, they fail to explain why a particular person pursues a particular body of cosmological knowledge. Hence, the focus is on individual representations and cognition. I cannot hope to answer questions of the relation between cognition and individual predilections based on either my material or my training, but

I will argue in this thesis that for my informants, the legitimacy of their practice, whilst obviously influenced by proximate interactions and broader social trends, is first and foremost a matter of accurately accounting for reality. Eight Trigrams cosmologists are interested in understanding the world, and much of their criticism of alternative cosmologies stems from doubt in their empirical validity. As such, in discussing questions of legitimacy, it is not enough, for example, that the prestige of 'science' (科學 *kexue*) may be accrued to Eight Trigrams Prediction by casting the latter as 'scientific'. This clearly occurs in contemporary China, and the legitimating value 'science' can lend to traditional practices has been well-documented in *qigong* (Palmer 2007 Ch. 4) and popular Confucianism (Billioud & Thoraval 2015 Ch. 5). 'Science' is the positive polar opposite of 'superstition', with which mantic practices have been identified since the Republican period (Homola 2013), and the identification of prediction with it certainly represents an attempt to distance the practice from superstition. However, what is of primary concern to this thesis is the *content* of representations; *particular* aspects of 'science' are chosen – typically physics – and other cosmological accounts, such as religion and Marxist theory, are dismissed based on their failure to describe reality. Both Eight Trigrams cosmology and physics are seen as accurate, observation-based explanatory accounts – and this is why they are important to cosmologists. On that note, I turn to anthropological and Sinological engagements with Chinese cosmology.

Anthropological and Sinological Studies of Chinese Cosmology

Anthropological studies of Chinese cosmology and divination have by and large focused on their social aspects, as opposed to cognition and the content of representations which are the subjects of this thesis; this is true also of Homola's (2013) study of *Yi Jing* divination in Taiwan. Studies of this nature are numerous, including comprehensive accounts of the social function of cosmological ideas in Chinese society (Freedman 1979a; Granet 1977; Wolf 1974; Yang 1961), more specific accounts of the social situation of *fengshui* (Bruun 2003), the interplay of popular religious cosmology with community-formation and politics (Chau 2006; Feuchtwang 2004; Sangren 1987) and the history of spatial organisation (Wang 2009), ritual and ethical aspects of cosmology (Ahern 1981; Steinmüller 2013) and their relation to kinship (Freedman 1979b, 1979c), cosmology as a lens through which to view migration (Chu 2010), and the role of cosmology in shaping medical practice (Farquhar 1996; Hsu 1999; Zhang 2007). Whilst such studies have of necessity dealt with the content of cosmological representations, this has not been their primary focus; Feuchtwang (2014a), however, provides an overview of the tenets of

Chinese cosmology broadly considered, focusing on practices of centring. Likewise, Feuchtwang's *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy* (1974; see also Bruun 2008 for an overlapping account), which painstakingly maps out the central cosmological ideas of *fengshui* and their practical application, focuses on these principles as understood by practitioners. Also writing about *fengshui*, Freedman (1979d, see also 1979e), like Feuchtwang, touches on certain 'psychological' aspects, including emic perceptions of the relationship between psychology and cosmos and issues of scepticism, both subjects which I discuss in Chapter Four. Cognition *per se*, however, has not been a focus of sustained engagements with Chinese cosmology, the exceptions being Stafford's references to divination in his discussions of pattern recognition in thinking about the future (2007) and numerical cognition (2009), and Homola's comments on analogical reasoning in Liu Zihua's linkage of the *Yi Jing* and astrophysics (2014: 738–741).

It should be noted that *fengshui* and the numerological divination systems described by Stafford are cognate fields with Eight Trigrams Prediction. However, whilst they are considered mutually compatible, employ many common concepts, and exhibit epistemological parallels, it is important not to overstate the similarity – in practice, their purposes differ and apparently shared concepts can be employed in quite different ways. Similar comments can be made regarding traditional Chinese medicine. These fields can nonetheless be considered different in kind from religion and divination based on communication with supernatural beings. Feuchtwang (1974: 195) comments that *fengshui* practitioners 'consider themselves as natural scientists and literati and scorn religion and priests'; as will be seen, such identification and disdain is shared by Eight Trigrams cosmologists. I will not say more about the broader domain of Chinese divination here – a survey of techniques is provided by Ahern (1981 Ch. 4) and many of the studies of Chinese religion cited above mention divination at least in passing.

Discussions of cognition and its relation to the content of cosmological theories continue to constitute an important domain of Sinology, particularly in discussions of the intellectual history and philosophy of early China. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Six, but it is useful to provide a short overview of the literature here. Crucial to these discussions, and of considerable theoretical relevance to this thesis, is the ongoing debate concerning the character of 'correlative thought'. This debate has primarily been concerned with whether the correlative ordering of phenomena according to concepts such as *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases betrays a way of thinking distinctly different from that historically prevalent in the West (Bodde 1981a; Graham 1986, 1989, especially Part IV; Hall & Ames 1995; Lloyd 1996 Ch.

5; Schwartz 1985, especially Ch. 9), and the origins of a comprehensive correlative cosmology, often discussed in relation to the formation of the unified Qin and Han empires (Henderson 1984; Lloyd & Sivin 2002: 253–272; Needham 1956; Nylan 2010; Puett 2004; Wang 2008). Related concerns regarding mind-body dualism considered in light of cognitive science are pursued by Slingerland (Slingerland 2013; Slingerland & Chudek 2011), and Farmer, Henderson, and Witzel (2000) have proposed a research framework for the comparative study of correlative cosmologies which pays particular attention to cognition and neurobiology. Such concerns have, naturally, also led to discussions of ontology in comparative perspective (Lloyd 2007, 2014, 2015), historical studies of ontology (Ng 1993), and concerns with similarity and difference in early Chinese thought (Puett 2004, though he does not use the term ‘ontology’; Sterckx 2002; Ziporyn 2012, 2013). These issues are of central relevance to the characterisation of ‘correlative thought’ as a system of knowledge, a topic dealt with in Chapter Six. In particular, the diversity of approaches to this subject suggests that whether ‘correlative thought’ constitutes a single kind of thinking remains an open question. The scope and purpose of particular examples of ‘correlative thought’ must be taken into account when considering their implications for the cosmological and ontological assumptions of the people concerned, both past and present, and how these fit into a comparative perspective. On this note, I turn to the theoretical orientations of this thesis.

Theoretical Orientations

This thesis engages with a number of theoretical debates concerning which an extensive literature exists. Those aspects of the literature relevant to specific issues raised by my own research are treated in detail as appropriate in the subsequent chapters. The purpose of the following review is to present the broad theoretical orientation of the thesis as a whole, concerning cognitive aspects of analogy (including metaphor and metonymy), divination, and cosmology and ontology. These are all extensive fields, and I cannot hope to provide a comprehensive survey of them; as such I confine the following remarks to those debates directly related to the aims and arguments of the thesis.

Analogical Reasoning

Chinese thought has been characterised variously as emphasising analogy over causal logic (Granet 1968, in Descola 2013: 206; Hall & Ames 1995), as being non-rational (Weber 1951), or simply as radically other to Western thought (Jullien 2011). Without delving too deeply into

concerns of human universals and particulars and attendant debates concerning ‘rationality’, a question that would soon deviate substantially from the aims of this thesis (see Hollis & Lukes 1982; Wilson 1970 for representative examples), I follow Shore’s argument that ‘the choice between characterizing humankind in terms of psychic unity or psychic diversity is based on a false dichotomy and an overly essentialistic biology’ (1998: 312, emphasis removed). Human cognition is, as he puts it, ‘eco-logical’, or ‘autopoetic’ (Toren 1999), a product of individual cognitive history in which genetics, ontogeny, and the natural and cultural environment dynamically interact. Differences in cognition are thus best understood in terms of individual variation and the apparently fundamental differences between groups noted by anthropologists and historians pertain to a certain level of cognitive activity known in the literature as reflective beliefs – they have no necessary implications for intuitive cognition (Boyer 2010; Sperber 1997). Particularly when reflective beliefs are subject to rigorous reflection and development, a very broad range of different perspectives can arise concerning causation and analogy (Lloyd 1996, 2015), and whilst the intellectual tradition of a complex literate society such as China’s might demonstrate general tendencies of argument and reflective belief towards particular conceptualisations and degrees of concern with correlation over causation (Lloyd 1995), these are nonetheless *tendencies* abstracted from the aggregate plethora of individual reflective understandings. As Lloyd (2014: 59) points out for ancient Greece, it is difficult to characterise the intellectual landscape of a society based on generalities, given the ‘proliferation’ of theories produced by individual thinkers. However, all such theories are the product of sustained reflection and do not reveal anything about the way in which the individuals concerned intuitively (that is, without any degree of reflection) perceive and engage with the world. Thus, whilst abstraction to the level of ‘cultures’ or ‘civilisations’ may illuminate broad trends in reflective beliefs, these differences cannot themselves justify the attribution of a certain character to the reflective beliefs of, say, all Greeks and all Chinese, and *certainly* by themselves cannot be extended to assertions of fundamental cognitive alterity.

Therefore, whilst differences, many of them profound, exist between the philosophical traditions of China and the West, the ascription to China of a particular proclivity for analogy requires qualification, especially when it is opposed to linear causal thinking, as by Hall and Ames (1995; see Slingerland 2011 for an opposing view)⁴. A moment’s reflection will reveal that the dichotomy is a false one. Causal knowledge and analogical inference are intimately

⁴ This debate is revisited in Chapter Six.

enmeshed, causal relations being essential to analogical transfer (Lee & Holyoak 2008); the following pages are replete with examples of causal analogies, and analogy, particularly in the form of metaphor, has been repeatedly shown to be an essential cognitive tool in science (Brown 2008; Dunbar 2001; Feist 2006; Hesse 1963; Holyoak & Thagard 1996: 185–209; Knorr Cetina 1999)⁵. The capacity to reason analogically can be unproblematically taken as a human universal; indeed, analogical reasoning has also been observed in chimpanzees (Oden et al. 2001), Old and New World monkeys (Fagot & Maugard 2013; Kennedy & Fragaszy 2008), and crows (Smirnova et al. 2015). What ought to be the object of comparative study as regards analogical reasoning, then, is the matter of *which* analogies are made, for what purpose, and how they are evaluated – likewise, the same might be said regarding causation. For a nuanced approach to such enquiry, taking into account both important cross-cultural differences in reflective beliefs *and* relevant findings from the cognitive sciences, see the works of Geoffrey Lloyd (especially 1990, 1996, 2007, 2015).

The Cognitive Basis of Analogical Transfer, Metaphor, and Metonymy

Analogical reasoning involves the identification of relations of similarity, including relations between the relations prevalent in two or more domains (Gentner et al. 2001); this is a pervasive feature of human thought, cognitive scientists Hofstadter and Sander going so far as to describe it as the core of human cognition (Hofstadter 2001; Hofstadter & Sander 2013). Holyoak and Thagard (1996: 5–6) identify three constraints that inform and direct analogical reasoning: *similarity* or common properties of the phenomena compared, one-to-one *structural parallels* between the function of their constituent elements, and the *purpose* for which the analogy is developed. Analogical reasoning functions by finding isomorphisms between two mental models, rather than between a given representation and the external world, such that improvements may be made to the target model based on the source (Holyoak & Thagard 1996: 32–33). A distinction can be drawn between analogies based on direct perceptual attributes of the phenomena compared and those based on relational similarity (Shore 1998: 352); analogies mobilised to explain a target domain or solve a given

⁵ One implication of the arguments advanced in Chapter Five of this thesis is that Eight Trigrams cosmology and modern materialist science share important structural similarities which make both different from what Descola (2013) calls ‘Naturalism’, identified broadly with the post-Enlightenment West, and from what he calls ‘Analogism’, with which he identifies China. As such, even on the level of highly elaborated cosmological ideas, the dichotomy between analogical China and the logical West is misleading.

problem rely on identifying isomorphisms between the relevant causal relations within each domain (Holyoak & Thagard 1996: 34–37). This process is described as ‘structure-mapping’, a theory developed by Gentner (1983) in which the relations between objects, rather than their attributes, are mapped from source to target, and these mapped relations are characterised by ‘systematicity’, meaning that they are themselves connected by higher-order relations within the source domain; the relations that participate in this higher-order relation are likely to be mapped onto the target, but relations which do not are not. Experiments by Gick and Holyoak (1983; see also D’Andrade 1995: 45–48 and Shore 1996: 353–354 for a discussion) suggested that this process is facilitated by what they call ‘schema induction’, a process of eliminating the differences between analogues and thereby inducing an abstract schema which can be transferred to future analogues more efficiently than direct analogue-to-analogue mapping. As will be seen in Chapters Two and Five, structure-mapping is an essential cognitive operation in making predictions and in drawing comparisons between Eight Trigrams cosmology and physics.

Analogy, Metaphor, and Metonymy in Anthropology

Within anthropology, whilst ‘analogy’ discussed as such has only infrequently been the primary object of analysis, when it has been considered it has been particularly useful for clarifying cultural aspects of reasoning (metaphor and metonymy have been considered more frequently, and I deal with these below). Tambiah (1985; see also Durrenberger & Morrison 1977; Hesse 1959), for example, differentiated between ‘conventional persuasive’ and ‘scientific predicative’ analogies in order to elucidate distinct cognitive processes at work in magic and science; these two forms of analogy are examined in detail in Chapter One with respect to analogy in the *Yi Jing*, and I will not anticipate this discussion here. More generally, Shore (1998: 343–373) has drawn extensively on the cognitive science literature to develop an account of cultural behaviour in which analogical transfer plays a central role in mediating between what he calls personal, conventional, and institutional models at the individual and social level. Moreover, he argues that analogical transfer operates at four levels of cognition: basic pattern recognition, cross-modal associations such as synaesthesia, self-conscious associations between relations, and ‘structural metaphor’, which schematises the relations between cultural models and pertains to the integration of specific experiences and cultural models into increasingly abstract cognitive schemas (Shore 1998: 365–371).

Descola (2013) makes similar points regarding the role of analogical reasoning in connecting individual experience with so-called collective representations, though his argument is

apparently more speculative and less grounded in the cognitive scientific literature. He posits the existence of 'integrating schemas' which introduce a degree of within-group psychological conformity based on shared experiences, and which apparently promote the coherence of practices and beliefs across various domains of social behaviour. I evaluate his arguments concerning 'the schemas of practice' (2013: 91–111) in more detail in Chapter Five, in terms of my own ethnographic material concerning ontological assumptions and in light of the distinction between intuitive and reflective beliefs mentioned above. There and in Chapter Six, I also engage extensively with his concept of 'analogism' as a 'mode of identification', or set of ontological assumptions. This will not be discussed further here, except to note this important anthropological engagement with a specific definition of analogy as a means of overcoming assumed discontinuities between phenomena.

In contrast to 'analogy', the subject of metaphor and metonymy has been a perennial anthropological concern, and a considerable literature has developed on these topics. Structuralist anthropology was notably influenced by the work of Roman Jakobson (1956), whose distinction between metaphor as relations of similarity and metonymy as relations of contiguity, echoing Frazer's (2009) distinction between homeopathic and contagious magic, was taken up by both Lévi-Strauss (1974) and Leach (1976) as it pertains to means of classification, discussed further in Chapter One. Discussing Ilongot classification, Rosaldo (1972: 92) describes metaphor as the means by which 'men discover relevant resemblances between categories which are not ordinarily related to one another'. Metaphor taken as a cognitive rather than purely linguistic operation is thus closely related to the phenomenon of analogical transfer, as I will argue – and is a fundamental means by which new domains of knowledge are understood. However, as Jakobson acknowledged in his original distinction, metaphor and metonymy are inevitably used alongside one another, even if one may be given preference in a particular domain of cultural activity (1956: 76). This interplay, along with the subject of 'polytropy', or the ability of a symbol to function as various tropes dependent on context, has been the subject of a number of studies (Friedrich 1991; Ohnuki-Tierny 1991; Shore 1998; Turner 1991), along with the role of metaphor in ritual symbolism (Barth 1975; Turner 1975a).

This 'play of tropes' (Fernandez 1986a) has been the subject of extensive study by Fernandez (Durham & Fernandez 1991; Fernandez 1986a, 1986b). Identifying metaphor and metonymy with harmony and melody in music (also noted by Leach 1976: 15), he suggests that metaphoric and metonymic identification, operating in what he calls the 'argument of images',

allow the bringing together of different domains of knowledge and experience and their integration into 'wholes', lending cosmological coherence to cultural experience (Fernandez 1986b). Fernandez (1986c: 60) argues that '[c]ulture in its expressive aspects rests upon metonymic and metaphoric predications of sign-images upon inchoate pronomial subjects'; that is, metaphoric substitution from a known domain to an unknown or 'inchoate' domain identifies the two as similar, in turn allowing for the *metonymic* incorporation of both domains into a greater whole (Durham & Fernandez 1991). I discuss this process in detail as it relates to prediction and classification in the *Yi Jing* and Eight Trigrams cosmology in Chapters One and Two.

In summary, in this thesis I take 'analogical reasoning' to be a universal and pervasive cognitive mechanism, of which metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation are two specific forms. Analogical reasoning can occur at various levels of reflection and abstraction; further refinements of the concept are provided as necessary in subsequent chapters. Now, I turn to theoretical questions regarding divination.

Divination

Whilst divination in the form of prediction is an essential subject of this thesis and a practice engaged in by all my key informants, I discuss it very much in terms of the wider cosmology in which it is rooted. My concern with the topic pertains entirely to its practice and exegesis on the part of the predictor or cosmologist, and the objects of analysis comprise the reasoning by which predictions are made within the logic of the system and the means by which prediction is cosmologically integrated as an epistemologically valid practice. I am interested in questions of the interplay between explicit cosmological theory and prediction and the means by which this mobilises analogy. The social context of Eight Trigrams Prediction is therefore discussed only insofar as it motivates cosmologists to justify the epistemological validity of their beliefs and practices as accurate accounts of reality against competing alternatives. As such, my analysis of divination sits closer to an anthropological tradition of concern with divinatory reasoning and its integration into cosmological and symbolic frameworks. This comprises a vast range of studies concerning all manner of ethnographic contexts and deriving from a broad spectrum of theoretical perspectives, and foci of study have included catalogues of techniques (Ahern 1981 Ch. 4; Beattie 1967; Turner 1975b Ch. 5), typologies and accounts of forms of reasoning (Boyer 1994; Devisch 1991; Parkin 1991; Peek 1991; Swancutt 2006; Tedlock 2010; Werbner 1973; Zeitlyn 1987, 1990, 2012), concerns with epistemology and 'rationality' (Evans-Pritchard 1976; Holbraad 2012a; Shaw 1991), and engagements with

cosmological and symbolic systems (Bruun 2008; Feuchtwang 1974; Swancutt 2012; Turner 1975b Ch. 4). Here, I establish some theoretical orientations concerning divinatory cognition and reasoning as they have been discussed in anthropology.

Cognition and Reasoning in Divination

The first thing to note is that ‘divination’ covers a huge range of practices and can involve a wide range of different beliefs. In the following section, I note six criteria which characterise Eight Trigrams Prediction, all of which may be shared with other divination systems to different degrees. The comments I make concerning Eight Trigrams Prediction therefore cannot necessarily be extended to all, or even most, kinds of divination, and the unique combination of characteristics the practice exhibits makes it more akin to predictive systems which would not typically be considered divinatory, such as meteorology. Indeed, this suggests that divination proper and other predictive practices may exist on a number of continua quite apart from the empirical validity of their premises, a subject returned to in the conclusion; Zeitlyn (2012), for example, compares divination to economic forecasting, which demonstrates some obvious parallel concerns. In the same paper, he also draws a helpful distinction between ‘diagnosis’, or divination as applied to the present and past, and ‘prediction’, applied to the future, as modes of divination. In what follows I do not use ‘prediction’ in precisely this sense, rather adopting it for the reasons outlined in the above section on terminology. However, Eight Trigrams Prediction is often concerned with the diagnosis of present circumstances, and this should be borne in mind throughout. Indeed, insofar as it ‘predicts’ (*sensu* Zeitlyn) anything at all, it always does so based on a diagnosis, by projecting fixed cosmic laws on the basis of the current cosmic configuration revealed by a hexagram.

Boyer (1994: 246) identifies divinatory utterances as instances of ‘nonintentional production’, the content of which is determined by techniques – such as the derivation of a hexagram by the throwing of coins – rather than by the intention of the diviner; in most non-divinatory contexts, the veracity of an utterance would be judged based on the assumption that it conveys a mental representation on the part of the speaker which corresponds to (and is thus the effect of) a real occurrence (Boyer 1994: 243–244). This forms part of a broader case he makes for the salience of abductive reasoning, or ‘induction in the service of explanation’ (Holland et al. 1986: 89 in Boyer 1992: 208) which constrains ‘the indefinitely large number of explanations compatible with any event’ (Boyer 1992: 208), in religious belief (Boyer 1994). On this account, the experience of divinatory truth derives from ‘direct causal interpretation’

(1994: 250–251), in which the mental representation of the diviner is irrelevant to the judgement of a divination's veracity, which is nonetheless accepted owing to intuitive assumptions concerning mental processes and causality. Holbraad (2012a: 64–67) takes issue with this account on the grounds that it is tautological – if a verdict is true this is because it is caused by what it describes (which must be assumed to be true itself) and, in Holbraad's view, this does not explain why it is taken as true in the first instance. However, in this respect he has misunderstood Boyer's argument, which is rather that the very fact that a divinatory utterance is represented as a direct effect of the state it describes, in the absence of a potential source of misrepresentation of that relationship (because the cause-effect relationship bypasses the diviner's mental representation), is itself sufficient for it to be intuitively supposed to be true. Boyer's point concerns intuitive assumptions, whereas Holbraad is concerned with explicit reflection.

Boyer's argument is well-taken, but I would add the proviso that, at least in the context of Eight Trigrams Prediction, it pertains primarily to the experience of the client (it would presumably apply to the non-expert observer of any circumstance in which an expert utterance appears caused by an external factor, which would be true of many scientific procedures as well as religious and divinatory ones). For the predictor, the causal account of a hexagram's derivation is explicit and specified in terms of cosmic *qi*, the matter-energy of which the entire cosmos consists – and *qi* does not fit Boyer's criteria for semantically meaningless 'empty concepts' (1986). Moreover, the predictor is aware of his own mental representation of the hexagram during interpretation and, unlike the believing client unfamiliar with the specified causal account, does not necessarily assume the veracity of his interpretation, attributing to himself an accuracy rate of only around 70%. Boyer argues elsewhere (1992: 208) that anthropological accounts of causal thinking tend to consider only deductive processes, whereas abduction is far more common. However, in a highly elaborated system closely tied to a long textual tradition like Eight Trigrams Prediction, in which the predictive process is highly specified according to detailed and clearly defined cosmological principles, deduction can play a more salient role. In fact, given that it operates via the reduction of interpretive possibilities based on fixed correlations, the predictive process conducted by the diviner involves a very strong deductive component alongside the inductive and abductive operations by which particular experiential referents are selected (see also Tedlock 2010: 19–23). What is certainly abductive, though, is the assumption of the veracity of the underlying cosmological system – paraphrasing Boyer (1992: 209), the cosmos is observed,

a cosmological system is such that it can reasonably account for the observed cosmos, and therefore that cosmological system does account for the cosmos.

Parkin (1991: 183) argues that divination involves an interplay of ‘simultaneity and sequencing’, in which ‘jumbled ideas and metaphors...give way to their ordered sequencing’ and the causes of the client’s problem are finally classified. He identifies this process with *bricolage* as defined by Lévi-Strauss (1974; see also Peek 1991: 203–204), suggesting that the gradual ordering of circumstances depends on the continual interaction of diviner and client. This feature is also notable in Eight Trigrams Prediction – a hexagram yields a wealth of information about a specific spatiotemporal point, which must then be ordered. Again, however, the cosmological foundations indicate that the process is not simply one of *bricolage*, or a combination of *bricolage* and art, but corresponds more closely to what Parkin, following Lévi-Strauss, characterises as modern science, in which the interplay between surface semantics (*bricolage*) and deep-structure semantics (art) is subject to the use of ‘reflexive surface semantics’ (1991: 186) according to established conceptual structures which are not, as they would be in *bricolage*, only pieced together ad-hoc from available images. Likewise, the ‘liminality’ of the Eight Trigrams predictor as a medium between appearance and reality, again given the specified cosmological theories according to which he proceeds, appears closer to that of the physicist describing observed reality according to underlying rules rather than the spirit medium exhibiting ‘non-normal modes of cognition’ in communication with another realm (Peek 1991). Indeed, I will make repeated comparisons, as do my informants, between Eight Trigrams cosmology and prediction and scientific accounts; the extent to which such comparisons reflect genuine structural commonalities is sadly beyond the scope of the thesis (an obvious point of difference is the absence of rigorous experimental methods in Eight Trigrams Prediction, but such does not characterise all of what is generally considered ‘science’). Nonetheless, the many valuable instances of such comparison, together with the difficulties presented by identifying Eight Trigrams Prediction with examples of divination from the comparative literature, do suggest that the category of ‘science’, contrasted to *bricolage*, art, religion, or magic, may encompass more than the particular thinking and methods of its modern Western incarnation, a point recognised by scholars of Chinese intellectual history (Lloyd 1996; Needham 1956).

A note should be made concerning divination deriving from texts. Zeitlyn (2001: 227) also argues that in divination systems which rely on texts, ‘diviners must satisfy themselves and

their peers...that most diviners would agree with the interpretation given'. Whilst the *Yi Jing* is not quoted directly in Eight Trigrams Prediction, the correlates of hexagrams, especially in Six Lines Prediction, are fixed and elaborated on in an extensive literature, and thus subject to similar constraints. Zeitlyn notes the similarity between text-based divination and literary criticism, given a fixed textual source necessarily subject to interpretation; this aspect is less the case for Six Lines Prediction given that no room for interpretation exists for the fixed line correlates – interpretation is possible only insofar as certain correlates are deemed relevant in a given instance. In discussing the *Yi Jing*, Henderson (1999) argues that divination can be considered a form of exegesis, and this more precise description better fits the character of Six Lines Prediction, in which every prediction effectively amounts to the cataloguing of a new instance of phenomenon described by one of the *Yi Jing*'s hexagrams. Indeed, as Henderson argues in the case of the *Yi Jing*, textual exegesis itself ultimately constitutes an extended, layered process of divinatory interpretation, later scholars reading the classics as sources of foreknowledge but not necessarily conducting divinations (1999: 81). It was through such traditions of exegesis that the *Yi Jing* and Eight Trigrams Prediction became thoroughly cosmological in character – and it is to cosmology that I now turn.

Towards a Cognitively-Informed Study of Cosmology: 'Getting Our Ontology Right'

In the opening chapter of his classic *Cosmologies in the Making*, Barth admonishes that anthropological analysis requires that we 'always struggle to get out ontological assumptions right' (1995: 8, emphasis removed; see also the Introduction to Scott 2007). This injunction precedes a masterly analysis of the dynamic, generative process of cultural change driven by the cosmological creativity of individuals among the Mountain Ok peoples of Papua New Guinea. His focus on the role of individuals as cosmological innovators instantiating their ideas through practice and in a dynamic interplay between wider aggregate conceptions and individual reflection is one I broadly share in this thesis. With respect to the study of cosmology – and in the case of Eight Trigrams cosmology, cosmology in the fullest sense of the term as explicit theories which account for the cosmos as a whole – getting our ontology right involves recognising the nature of cosmological theories as collections of mental representations on the part of individuals, which are nonetheless modified and generated via participation in a wider sociocultural environment. As Barth (1995: 80) argues, the making of cosmologies involves 'an interplay of (largely divergent) processes of individual creativity and modification and (largely convergent) cross-influence and borrowing arising from compelling ideas and charismatic initiators'. It is a truism of such an approach that 'cosmology' does not

exist beyond its mental representation, and that to talk of a 'culture' as in possession of a 'cosmology' is fundamentally mistaken. The relevant scale of analysis is thus the individual cosmologist, the dynamics of his or her representations, and the factors which contribute to the generation and modification of those representations. As Barth puts it, the cosmologist is 'an individual embedded in social relations engaged in producing his particular expression or representation' (1995: 87). In this section, I elaborate on this position in order to establish the ontological coordinates of the subsequent chapters.

In a comprehensive review of recent anthropological engagements with cosmology, Abramson and Holbraad (2014, see also 2012) make the essential point that the study of cosmology in comparative perspective is necessarily a cosmological exercise (2014: 4). A central theoretical question concerning the study of cosmologies, then, is that of the cosmology (and of necessity, the *ontology*) which anthropology itself should adopt, as Barth (1995) argued. Abramson and Holbraad (2014: 10) opt ultimately for an approach in which the philosophical basis (rather than simply the content) of the anthropological position is continually up for grabs, facilitating experimental, non-representational, and non-explanatory engagement with ethnographic material which can reframe the terms of anthropological analysis. The extent to which such an approach is possible is open to question; it may be said, though, that its value is contingent on an assumed purpose of investigating matters cosmological. As a creative practice of concept-generation and reflexive criticism, it is doubtless effective. However, as a theoretical stance it is inadequate for the comparative analysis and explanation of cosmological production and variation as an aspect of human behaviour, a thoroughly representational task. Such is the agenda to which this thesis aims to contribute, and this requires the adoption of a quite different cosmological standpoint, outlined in the following paragraphs. In this view, assumptions made from said standpoint ought to be subject to continual reflection and revision in light of ethnographic, historical, and psychological evidence, but the standpoint itself cannot be based on the adoption of new perspectives based solely on their ethnographic alterity. This relates directly to three criticisms Abramson and Holbraad direct at past anthropological approaches to cosmology.

Their first objection is to the tendency of such accounts to take cosmologies as 'wholes unto themselves', as indigenous accounts of 'their culture taken as a *totality*' (Abramson & Holbraad 2014: 5, emphasis original). Of course, the degree to which such totalising enterprises pertain to the purpose and, indeed, scope of what might be called 'cosmologies' varies both between

groups and individuals – a point to which I return in the discussion of ontology below. Another aspect of this kind of approach was a tendency to treat cosmologies as monolithic and static, which Abramson and Holbraad identify with concerns with classification, structure, and cognitive schemas. It should be noted in relation to ‘all-encompassing “systems of classification”’ (2014: 5) that certain cosmologies, as entertained and developed by certain individuals, do indeed do this – Eight Trigrams cosmology is an example – but again, this is not necessarily true of what has counted as ‘cosmology’ in general in anthropology. An objection is due, though, to Abramson and Holbraad’s characterisation of cognitive approaches with this tendency – I shall have more to say on this matter below. Their second broad criticism concerns the tendency to see cosmology as a part of a cultural whole which must be fitted together with other parts, such as kinship and economic organisation. This, of course, makes the problematic assumption that ‘cultures’ as wholes are things that really exist – as will be clear, I maintain that this is not the case, cosmology necessarily being an aspect of individual variation.

Abramson and Holbraad’s third objection, though, deserves further consideration here as it is common in social anthropological criticisms of cognitive and evolutionary approaches to ‘culture’. This concerns the degree to which prior approaches to cosmology assumed a hierarchy of perspectives, in which that of the anthropologists is granted priority as an account of the world by virtue of its capacity to describe the others. This, again, relates directly to the question of the *purpose* of investigating cosmology. For any given purpose, one can absolutely speak of a hierarchy of perspectives. An explanatory approach which seeks to account for cosmologies as aspects of human behaviour is necessarily concerned with what variation exists and how it fits in with the rest of the cosmos, including what is known about humans as psychological, biological, and physical organisms. It is highly unlikely that most cosmologies exist for this exact purpose – but what *is* inevitable is that any cosmological system makes certain assumptions about what exists. An understanding of a given cosmology requires taking such claims seriously. This involves adapting one’s own conceptions as necessary to understand these claims in their own terms – but if, having done so, it remains clear that those claims account for reality in a way incompatible with those held by the anthropologist, taking them seriously amounts to subjecting them to the same rigorous assessment that would be expected of the anthropologist’s own claims. Put another way, it means allowing that people get things wrong. An explanatory approach to cosmologies is not thereby concerned with disproving the cosmological claims of the Other – but insofar as it makes claims about reality it

is ethnocentric. However, the fact that it is ethnocentric in this sense, providing it does make efforts to understand indigenous conceptions on their own terms, is irrelevant to the value of the enquiry. The mere fact that, say, Ifá diviners conceive of truth in a manner unlike that by which we represent the world is in itself of no relevance to whether our understanding provides an accurate account of the world – and vice-versa. Or, with reference to my own material, a belief in a ‘soul’ (靈魂 *linghun*) may contradict our assumptions about the world. As my informants describe it, though, it is claimed to exist, and in this respect is open to assessment as much as our own claims are; it can thus be legitimately described as a cosmological claim made by certain individuals *and* discounted as a valid claim in terms of our own analytical endeavours, providing the evidence suggests such a conclusion⁶.

The approach I have just set out is precisely of the order of that which Abramson and Holbraad criticise as evident of a ‘reductive impulse’ (2014: 8), which they argue has led to the neglect of cosmology in certain areas of anthropology. One manifestation of this impulse might be called ‘upward reduction’, in which cosmologies are seen as reactive functions of larger global processes. I will touch on this briefly (and critically) in Chapter Six (see Sahlins 1993 for a critique of this sort of approach), but of more direct relevance to the theoretical orientation and aims of this thesis is the ‘reductive impulse’ of cognitive anthropology, and its tendency to ‘traduce’ cosmological reckonings ‘merely as instances of cognitive processes at work in the human brain’ (Abramson & Holbraad 2014: 8). Were such an objection to cognitive approaches to stand, it would need to answer the questions of what, if not cognitive processes, constitute cosmological reckonings, and where, if not in brains, they are located. As Sperber (1996 Chs. 1 and 2) demonstrates, social anthropology has primarily been concerned with interpretation over explanation, its hostility to ‘reduction’ stemming from often-unexamined ontological assumptions. Assuming a materialist perspective, *explanation* requires that anthropology’s analytical categories correspond to the ‘natural joints’ (Sperber 1996: 6) of the social domain, something which is rarely true of the interpretive family resemblances typically identified as objects of anthropological analysis, such as ‘religion’, ‘marriage’ (1996: 23), and, indeed ‘divination’ and ‘cosmology’. This in itself is not problematic, and such interpretive terminology

⁶ Some claims appear to contradict our own assumptions in this way but are in fact compatible. The notion that the cosmos is composed entirely of *qi*, for example, makes a claim about the cosmos not made by Western science, but is ultimately tautological and thus in itself perfectly compatible, discounting additional claims – physics describes the universe in terms of matter, particles, energy, and so on, but these are parts of the cosmos and thus by definition are *qi*.

can play a crucial role in explanatory accounts; the terms themselves, however, do not correspond to natural categories. Sperber thus proposes his ‘epidemiological’ account of culture, in which cultural phenomena are understood as dynamic distributions of mental representations among individuals. This account has the explanatory advantages of being grounded in material phenomena – in Sperber’s words, ‘mental representations are brain states described in functional terms, and it is the material interaction between brains, organisms and environment which explain the distribution of these representations’ (1996: 26). As for reductionism, as Sperber points out (1996: 59–60) it is not the case that cultural phenomena *reduce* to psychological phenomena, but equally not the case that they pertain to a separate domain of reality – rather, they are ‘ecological patterns of psychological phenomena’. However, when it comes to the subject of a particular ‘cosmological reckoning’, as Abramson and Holbraad put it, then this *is* a psychological phenomenon insofar as it pertains to the beliefs of an individual, something which in no way discounts the influence of distributed beliefs and institutions on the mental representations involved.

Here it is worth returning to Abramson and Holbraad’s charge that accounts of cosmology based on cognitive schemas and similar notions assume holism and stasis. Such criticism is mistaken; the fact that cultural behaviour, including that labelled ‘cosmological’, depends on mental representations (including schemas and models) *in no way* assumes this. All that such accounts imply is that fully-functioning humans produce and manipulate mental representations via common cognitive mechanisms, not that this results in unchanging uniformity of representations across individuals. Human cognition is inherently dynamic (van Gelder 1998) and mental representations are continually modified (Connell & Lynott 2014). Any organism, humans included, is shaped via the continuous interaction of its biological inheritance with environmental and developmental contingency, a process Toren (1999) describes as ‘autopoiesis’. Cognitive and evolutionary approaches are thus more than capable of accounting for ‘cultural’ variation, including in intuitive beliefs (Boyer 2010).

Now, it is by no means the case that this thesis engages *only* in attempts at explanation in the sense just discussed. Interpretation is essential and inevitable. However, a principle aim is to ensure that what is interpreted is compatible with an explanatory account which accommodates cognition; as Bloch argues, ‘cognition is *always* central to what is at issue’ in anthropological discussion (2012: 7, emphasis original). An important point in this regard is made by Boyer (1994) in his cognitive account of religious belief. He argues, in a similar vein to Barth’s comments on ontological assumptions and Abramson and Holbraad’s concerning

holism, that anthropological accounts of religion have tended towards a ‘theologistic bias’, explaining religious beliefs as ‘integrated and consistent set[s] of abstract principles’ (1994: 40). Against this, Boyer distinguishes between ‘epistemic’ and ‘cognitive’ viewpoints (1994: 46–52), the former describing religious representations as statements about the world, and the latter describing the processes by which those representations come about (1994: 50). The problem for Boyer is that epistemic accounts are often unwarranted, describing what people might say were they prompted to make sense of their own religious behaviour (leading naturally to the concerns of the ‘rationality debate’ mentioned above). However, cosmological experts, especially in literate societies, *are* likely to engage in this kind of systematic consideration and establish comprehensive theories of what the world is like. These, though, as highly abstract representations of the cosmos, must be distinguished both from lower-level representations *and* the means by which they are produced; it is for this reason that, in Chapter Five, I draw a distinction between *implicit* and *systematic* reflective ontologies as objects of analysis. The discussion of the content of explicit cosmological theories, such as those developed by my informants, is epistemic and, given that it is the preserve of dedicated cosmologists, once again necessitates an adherence to methodological individualism. It also necessitates a distinction between intuitive and reflective beliefs (Boyer 2010; Sperber 1997), which I discuss below in relation to the analytical concept of ‘ontology’ in anthropology.

Ontology and Intuitive and Reflective Beliefs

I define ‘ontology’ here as the most basic categories of being held to exist, according to which phenomena may be regarded as fundamentally similar or different. As an object of analysis, this may be considered in terms of implicit or explicit assumptions made about the nature of reality, as revealed in behaviour and discourse – the latter being my primary concern here. This definition thus aligns the following arguments with the body of anthropological literature on ontology that includes the work of Descola (2013), Lloyd (2014, 2015), and Scott (2007), and which may be considered in a broader tradition relating to discussions of cosmological and ‘mythic’ thought including Lévi-Strauss (1974), Sahlins (1987), and Valeri (2014); similar themes are addressed in Sinology by Puett (2004, 2015) and Ziporyn (2012, 2013), though not necessarily via the term ‘ontology’. Against this are positioned the concerns of the so-called ‘ontological turn’ associated with figures such as Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell (2006), Holbraad (2012b), Latour (2004, 2013), and Viveiros de Castro (2004), which, in posing ‘ontological’ questions about the perspectival contingency of anthropological knowledge, are

engaged in an enterprise quite different from the more traditional interpretive and explanatory projects of the former group. This latter use of 'ontology' is not my concern, and I align this thesis theoretically with the former group.

Taking ontology as an object of anthropological analysis, it is necessary first and foremost to draw a distinction between two mental levels at which ontology as defined above can be considered. Following Boyer (2010), any comparative study of cultural variations in 'ontology' needs to be grounded in evolved cognition – and this involves distinguishing between *intuitive* understandings and *reflective* beliefs. Boyer defines these as follows. Intuitive understanding 'is simply the occurrence of some information that is potentially consciously accessible and directs the agent's expectations and behaviours, although the pathways that led to holding that information are not accessible to conscious inspection' (2010: 377). In contrast, reflective beliefs involve 'consciously held information that has the effect of extending, making sense of, explaining, justifying, or communicating the contents of intuitive information' (2010: 378). In Boyer's description, the former includes, for example, the expectation that solid objects will not fuse together on contact, whereas the latter would include an explanation of this expectation in terms of force. Intuitions, as products of ontogenesis and learning which tend to be contextually appropriate, naturally vary according to cultural context (they do not necessarily equate to universals), but at the same time, reflective beliefs are not always culturally specific, cross-culturally common notions in moral explanation being a case in point (2010: 379–380). Following Sperber (1997: 77–78), the psychological category of intuitive beliefs can be further divided into *perceptual* and *inferential* beliefs; for example, a child being shown a bird and told that it is a sparrow spontaneously forms the perceptual belief that what is observed is a bird, along with the inferential belief that sparrows are birds. Intuitive ontology may be similarly defined as comprising '(1) a set of broad perceptually grounded categories and (2) a set of aspect-specific inferential principles activated by these categories' (Boyer 1998: 879). Beliefs, including intuitive ontological ones, rely on repertoires of concepts, which themselves are either intuitive or reflective (Sperber 1997). Reflective beliefs result from humans' capacity for meta-representation (the ability to mentally represent mental representations), and 'are introduced by explicit theories that specify their meaning and the inferences that can be drawn on their basis' (1997: 79). Such are, among Sperber's examples, prime factors or chemical formulae – concepts which can be reflexively understood but not intuitively grasped, requiring explicit deliberative reasoning. Over time, reflective concepts can become intuitive, and vice-versa (such as when they are challenged by variant reflective

concepts) – but whilst intuitive concepts can contribute to both intuitive and reflective beliefs, reflective concepts are confined to reflective beliefs only (1997: 79–80).

As Boyer (1998) argues, within the context of the two forms of beliefs described here, vast domains of acquired cultural representations are counter-intuitive – that is, they violate expectations based on intuitive ontological beliefs. This is true, for example, of religious representations, cartoons, and scientific theories. What is essential to note here is Boyer’s observation that counter-intuitiveness is not the same as unfamiliarity, and vice-versa (1998: 881, 2010: 382). Crucially, representations such as religious concepts do not rely solely on counter-intuitive beliefs but are combined with intuitive beliefs such that, for example, inferences about a counter-intuitive god with extraordinary cognitive capacities are made based on intuitive expectations about the behaviour of intentional agents (Boyer 1998: 881); in practice the reflective belief about the god is at odds with the intuitive. Such religious representations thus combine both intuitive and reflective beliefs such that what is counter-intuitive is understood against an intuitive background. On the basis of Boyer’s subsequent discussion, a further refinement can be made in the case of counter-intuitive representations that ‘(i) invariably use external material representations of concepts, (ii) generally appear in literate groups, and (iii) very often require long and sustained training’ (1998: 882) – such include science, abstract philosophy, scholarly theology, and, crucially for our purposes, ‘explicit conceptions of “nature” and the cosmos’. Boyer argues that such representations are constrained by intuitive ontology, and rather than *replacing* intuitive expectations ‘provide support for their meta-representation’ (1998: 882). What this means is that a written text, for example, does not encode the mental representations of its authors but rather triggers mental representations of its representation of speech on the part of the reader. Such a text thus does not replace existing intuitive beliefs but rather provides, via the reader’s mental representations, *reflective* alternatives (1998: 883).

All of this has vital implications for what is referred to analytically by the term ‘ontology’ and, as Boyer points out, the ‘ontologies’ discussed by scholars such as Lloyd and Descola ‘denote a reflective, explicit understanding of the kinds of things the world is made of’ (Boyer 2010: 381)⁷. This *reflective ontology* may be contrasted with ‘intuitive ontology’ (Boyer 1998, 2010;

⁷ Whilst Lloyd (2014 Ch. 1) does discuss both Descola’s ideas and cognitive scientific and evolutionary psychological approaches to cognition, he does not differentiate between levels of cognition on which

Boyer & Barrett 2015), referring to intuitive forms of inference based on broad domains such as PERSON, ANIMAL, PLANT, or ARTEFACT (Boyer 1998: 878). Intuitive ontology operates on a *very basic level*, and is often recognisable only when its expectations are violated; Boyer and Barrett (2015: 96–97) present the instructive example of faces, which are intuitively recognised and processed as a particular domain of phenomena based on configuration of elements, despite neither being subject to reflection or corresponding to a real natural category (our intuitive ontological category of faces is easily fooled by objects or visual elements arranged into a face-like pattern). As such, intuitive ontology must not be taken to mean simply anything not subject to explicit theorisation; the paradigmatic ‘ontological’ case of Amerindian perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1998), for example, may not be subjected to extended metaphysical speculation by many of its adherents (though it is by some), but this does not make it intuitive. It remains thoroughly reflective, in the sense used here, in that it relies on active consideration and judgement of animals, humans, and other phenomena, even if these are not explicitly rationalised. Intuitive ontology is often ‘philosophically incorrect’ (Boyer & Barrett 2015: 98), specific domains of intuitive experience not always corresponding to real - or reflective - ontological kinds. As Boyer (2010: 380–382) points out, the fine points of intuitive understanding are not amenable to assessment via traditional ethnographic practice; deliberate action and exegesis do, however, provide a wealth of information regarding reflective understandings and, for our purposes here, reflective ontology. Considering the example of the god belief mentioned above, the assertion of the god’s omniscience falls squarely into the domain of reflective ontology; the proximate, experimentally-assessed attitudes to it as an agent correspond to intuitive ontological assumptions about agents, suggesting the existence of two parallel God concepts mobilised in different settings by the participants (Barrett & Keil 1996).

In summary, we can thus draw distinctions between 1) intuitive and reflective beliefs, 2) perceptual and inferential intuitive beliefs, 3) intuitive and reflective concepts, and 4) intuitive and reflective ontology. These will be returned to and elaborated in Chapter Five. For now, given the preceding discussion, the following suppositions can be made concerning reflective ontology:

- 1) Ethnographic and historical evidence for ontological assumptions constitutes evidence for reflective ontological assumptions only.

different understandings might apply, presenting them rather as alternatives which might be reconciled on the same level as ‘cultural’ understandings.

- 2) The degree to which reflective ontological assumptions influence behaviour is limited by intuitive ontological assumptions.
- 3) Claims concerning the diversity of ontologies, cosmologies, philosophies, epistemologies, ethics, political theories, and so on across human populations constitute claims about the diversity of reflective beliefs; they do not necessarily reflect corresponding variation in intuitive ontology.

Having established the basic theoretical orientation of the thesis, I turn now to questions of the ethnographic and historical context of Eight Trigrams cosmology.

Ethnographic Fieldwork and Textual Sources

In this section, I outline the conditions of fieldwork followed by brief biographies of two cosmologists with whom I worked, Master Tao and Ma Jianglong. This is followed by a summary of their perceptions of the development of the *Yi Jing* and its place in Chinese culture. Finally, I consider the place of textual sources in the thesis.

Fieldwork

This thesis is based on a combination of ethnographic research with predictors and their students and associates⁸ who engage with the *Yi Jing*, or *Book of Changes*, and the analysis of cosmological texts, particularly the *Yi Jing* and a commentary on it written by two of my informants (Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013), with reference to other works. Following a preliminary trip during which I visited Hangzhou, Chengdu, Changsha, and Beijing as potential fieldsites, ethnographic fieldwork proper totalled nine months, between September and December 2012, January and May 2013, and August to September 2015.

My PhD project had originally been conceived as a study of the cosmological underpinnings of 'tea arts' (茶藝 *cha yi*) and their relationship to practices of self-cultivation via 'nourishing life' (養生 *yangsheng*); it was for this reason that my fieldsite became Hangzhou. However, an experience of having my 'fate' (命 *ming*) 'calculated' (算 *suan*) near a large temple in Changsha, along with the predictor's attempt to 'swindle' (騙 *pian*) me by demanding several times the advertised fee based on the wealth I would subsequently gain, piqued my interest in matters divinatory. I felt pushed further in this direction following a long conversation with a friend I

⁸ Where I did not receive explicit consent or expression of desire that I use informants' personal names, I have used pseudonyms.

made in Chengdu, to whom I explained my experience in Changsha and who then insisted at some length that the topic of ‘fate calculation’ (*suanming*) was a lot more interesting than the study of teahouses. By the time I arrived in Hangzhou to start long-term fieldwork, I felt the same way, and did my best to seek out somewhere where I could learn more about divination. Early on, whilst looking for accommodation, I visited a family in the nearby village of Zhuantang – and the father’s hostility to the subject of divination did not seem promising. However, I was soon able to secure a rented room⁹ to the northwest of the city centre, and my host was extremely obliging in recommending, and taking me to see, places of potential interest, including a large Buddhist temple about twenty minutes’ cycle from our flat. There, I got to know a group of temple volunteers whom I went to see most Wednesday mornings – and I soon discovered that a few predictors operated on a nearby street. One of them, Master Tao, was there every day, and I approached him to learn more about what he was doing. He was extremely eager to meet a foreigner interested in prediction, and offered to teach me and let me observe his practice. It is from that encounter that the whole thesis ultimately stems.

The vast majority of the ethnographic data presented in this thesis is ultimately traceable back to my work with Master Tao. Most of it is based on observations of his consultations and in-depth discussions of cosmology and related issues with him and his students, local acquaintances, and passers-by. The other pre-eminent figure in the subsequent discussions is Ma Jianglong, whom I met when a friend (who I knew via Master Tao) took me to see a lecture on ‘national studies’ (國學 *guoxue*). I typically visited Master Tao three to four times a week, sitting with him by the side of the road, observing consultations, asking him about cosmological issues, and receiving his take on ‘traditional culture’ (傳統文化 *chuantong wenhua*) until one of us judged that we were finished for the day. Given the public nature of his practice, and its tendency to gather small crowds of onlookers, I did not record our conversations, but kept constant notes. Early on, Master Tao gave me several tables of cosmological correlates to learn, and continued to present me with further information. By the time I left Hangzhou in May 2013, I had a good knowledge of the underlying principles of Six Lines Prediction, along with its cosmological principles. However, it was not until my return visit from August to September 2015 that I felt I had a good grasp of the mechanics by which Six Lines Prediction works. It is incredibly complex – and even now, whilst I understand the essential correlates involved in prediction and the logic by which diagnoses and predictions are

⁹ Being based in the centre of a huge city precluded the possibility of easily finding a room with people involved in prediction.

made, I am painfully aware that many, many deeper layers of correlates and contingent principles continue to elude me. I make no claim to expertise on the art of Six Lines Prediction – but I am confident that the data I present concerning its practice is accurate.

My work with Master Tao also led to new contacts among the local residents, regular clients, and other passers-by, as well as some of Master Tao's students, most of whom study Six Lines Prediction as a hobby. Typically, my interactions with them occurred in the context of sitting with Master Tao by the roadside – or standing if his collection of commandeered beer kegs was insufficient to provide adequate seating¹⁰. As my primary interest was in the internal logic of the predictive system, its cosmological underpinnings, and expert reasoning concerning these, Master Tao was the central figure in my fieldwork. Later on, however, and especially during my return visit, my work with him was complemented very well by my work with Ma Jianglong. Ma Jianglong, a predictor and *fengshui* consultant, operates as a private consultant primarily for businesspeople. This unfortunately meant that despite his promise that I could attend a consultation if the client were willing, no such opportunities arose. As such, my work with him consisted of a series of long discussions, beginning at his office in the early afternoon and continuing into his home and late into the evening. As such, unlike my time spent with Master Tao, which remained within the sphere of his work aside from the odd coffee or restaurant meal¹¹, my time with Ma Jianglong extended to dinners with his family and a day trip to Zhuge Eight Trigram Village (諸葛八卦村 *Zhuge bagua cun*)¹² along with his colleague Li.

The first eight months of fieldwork proceeded organically based on the circumstances of my informants – I would turn up to see Master Tao, for example, and what we discussed and what I discovered would be determined by the people who came over and what Master Tao considered I ought to learn next. His teaching methods were very informal and not necessarily what might be described as 'systematic' – the result being that I acquired a *bricolage* of predictive concepts with which I attempted to make sense of his predictions, asking for clarification when necessary. However, for my return visit following a year of writing up, I armed myself with a set of specific questions I felt still needed to be addressed, resulting in a

¹⁰ The discovery on my return in August 2015 that he had now acquired a real chair – and that he and most of his clients still preferred the old seating arrangements, leaving the chair free – was truly joyous.

¹¹ These were invariably suggested by one of his students, Master Tao apparently having little liking for formalised dining.

¹² A village in Zhejiang province famous both as the hometown of Three Kingdoms hero Zhuge Liang and for being laid out such that from the air it resembles the Eight Trigrams.

more structured and intensive style of fieldwork in which guided conversation and direct questions became much more important – and this approach was welcomed enthusiastically by both Master Tao and Ma Jianglong.

During fieldwork I got to know a number of other groups of people who, whilst not becoming primary informants concerning the subject of this thesis, nonetheless played important roles as friends and teachers during my time in Hangzhou, as well as providing me with an understanding of wider conceptions of the *Yi Jing*, prediction, and matters of cosmology and belief beyond the realm of experts. Many of them had opinions on these subjects, and my time with them certainly contributed to my understanding of the sociocultural context of prediction and correlative cosmology in contemporary Hangzhou. In particular, time spent with the Buddhist temple volunteers, during which I asked them about their own beliefs, their opinions of the *Yi Jing*, and their view of fate calculation, yielded perspectives informed by quite different cosmological principles. Likewise, the group of ‘national studies’ (國學 *guoxue*) activists with whom I became socially involved provided perspectives on ‘traditional Chinese culture’ judged primarily on the basis of national and cultural pride, an informative foil for the cosmological concerns of predictors and their students. Both of these groups have informed the subsequent discussion, and their contribution is particularly evident in Chapter Four. Indeed, both can be seen as part of the same overall trend in contemporary China which has seen the revival of interest in ‘traditional’ culture in the wake of economic and social liberalisation. At the same time, my understanding of these matters has also been informed by the various other friends and acquaintances I made in Hangzhou – but particularly the community of folk musicians and others centred on a restaurant in the old town, with whom I spent a large proportion of my leisure time, providing a familiarity with the broader social environment in Hangzhou.

Master Tao

Master Tao is retired, now in his sixties, and moved to Hangzhou some years ago. He lives with his wife in a neighbourhood close to the pedestrian street on which he works, and several of his daughters, one of whom also studies Six Lines Prediction, live nearby. The term of address translated here as ‘Master’, *shifu* 師傅, is a general term of respect, rather than indicating a particular rank or level of attainment as a predictor; Master Tao is known to his students and clients as Tao *shifu*. However, his level of experience and his predictive skills are highly regarded, and he attracts clients from across Hangzhou and beyond, many of whom return to him repeatedly.

He was taught Six Lines Prediction as a schoolboy in the early 1960s, by an elderly Master who worked near his school. His teacher was a Buddhist, and taught him for four years until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution saw the school's closure. Master Tao was taught orally, only later coming to read the *Yi Jing*; I suspect, however, that the fact that he has read the original text in addition to studying the practical use of the hexagrams marks him out among roadside predictors. During the Cultural Revolution, he was posted to Xinjiang as part of an army unit tasked with guarding nuclear facilities. He continued to conduct predictions for his comrades, making do with grains of rice in lieu of coins.

After retiring many years later, he decided to dedicate his time to his interest in Six Lines Prediction, which he describes as a 'hobby' (愛好 *aihao*). For the past five years, weather permitting, he has sat at the same roadside spot every day, offering predictions for the price of ¥50. Though he acknowledges that the amount of time spent on a given prediction directly contributes to its accuracy, in order to live to a satisfactory standard in a city like Hangzhou conducting more, shorter predictions is the best strategy. In addition to Six Lines Prediction, he offers Eight Characters (八字 *bazi*) fate-calculation based on time of birth, as well as naming (起名 *qi ming*), name-changing (改名 *gai ming*), physiognomy (面相 *mianxiang*), *fengshui* consultation, and stick divination (抽籤 *chouqian*). However, Six Lines Prediction is by far the most frequent, followed by Eight Characters and naming; I only ever observed a few instances of clients requesting stick divination, heard about two *fengshui* consultations, and never saw him conduct physiognomy. He maintains records of recent predictions, but no longer keeps them in the long term as there have been too many; he does, though, possess an excellent memory for predictions he has carried out, doubtless helpful in providing accurate predictions and maintaining relationships with returning clients.

His clients include not only regulars but also a good number of passers-by who stop out of interest. Among the regular clients are those who visit occasionally, perhaps on important dates of the lunar calendar such as around the Spring Festival, Tomb-Sweeping Festival, or Mid-Autumn Festival, or when they have a particularly pressing problem (this is true of several of the examples detailed in subsequent chapters). There are also those who visit much more frequently – a local resident and close friend of Master Tao, Little Fang, for example, who enjoys looking through the notes of the day's predictions, or Mrs Ge, a source of great amusement to Master Tao who visits every few days on her scooter to work out the most auspicious directions in which to go shopping and what time to drink alcohol. Though I did not

systematically assess the demographics of Master Tao's clients, the regulars are predominately female and middle-aged to retired. Passers-by are more mixed, but include a significant proportion of young people of both sexes. Master Tao has sufficient reputation to attract students, who in his estimation now number more than fifty. Of these, I met only a few who are based in Hangzhou. Others have since moved on, including one who now operates a successful online prediction service. Those I did meet all study Six Lines Prediction as a hobby rather than with a view to practising it professionally, including financial securities worker Xiaoping, student Zhen, and Little Tan, an employee of a nearby ceramic shop.

Master Tao is well-known and liked by the people who live and work in the area, and his patience, honest demeanour and general affability no doubt contribute to his success as a predictor. On the same street, a few other fortune-tellers using various methods appeared and remained for different lengths of time during my fieldwork – but none approached Master Tao in terms of popularity or seemed to be as integrated into the neighbourhood. The street where he works is part of a recently renovated pedestrian area constructed in the traditional architectural style of the region, nested between the Buddhist temple and the Grand Canal. The streets are occupied by residences, restaurants, up-market teahouses, and expensive craft shops, some of which also offer music lessons. The area is thus a product of Hangzhou's economic success and prosperity, but also self-consciously 'traditional'.

Ma Jianglong

Ma Jianglong, unlike Master Tao, conducts exclusively private consultations. He uses the *Yi Jing*, but via different methods from Six Lines Prediction (see Chapter Three), and also conducts *fengshui* consultations in which casting hexagrams plays a central role. Ma Jianglong runs his own business, and in addition to consultation this involves educational training. His clients are primarily business people, and his consultation fees run into six figures. He has designed video-based courses for using what he calls the 'Yi Jing thought model' (易經思維模式 *Yi Jing siwei moshi*) in everyday life and business, as well as an exercise regime inspired by the sixty-four hexagrams which he calls 'dark polarity boxing' (玄極拳 *xuanji quan*), and along with his wife Chang Weihong has published a commentary on the *Yi Jing, My Reading of the Zhou Yi* 《周易我读》 *Zhou Yi wo du* (Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013). His business has a strong online presence and he is active on the social media application WeChat, the whole operation being run from an office near his flat in the northeast of Hangzhou. When I last saw him in September 2015, he and his business partner Li, a former student of his courses, were planning

to set up a campus to teach and improve his courses, including one for children, as well as a research institute to explore the origins of the *Yi Jing*.

Ma Jianglong, like Master Tao, was keen (and patient) to teach me his take on the *Yi Jing* and the hexagrams, and made a point of having his son and one of his employees film our conversations, something which he said he does as much as possible in order to use different perspectives to improve his course material. He has been professionally concerned with the *Yi Jing* since 2008, but describes himself as having ‘paid attention’ (注意 *zhuyi*) to it for twenty to thirty years, originally learning about it from his father. Now considering himself an atheist (無神論者 *wushenlun zhe*), like Master Tao, Ma Jianglong previously defined himself as a Buddhist, then a Daoist. His emphasis is on the superiority of the *Yi Jing* and its hexagrams as an explanatory form of knowledge, alongside the need to practice prediction in order to fully understand it. Like the ‘national studies’ activists I got to know, he is critical of the state education system, considering much of the curriculum useless, geared only towards passing the university entrance exams, and as such home-schooling his teenage son. However, unlike the ‘national studies’ activists, this criticism is based more on the relative utility of different forms of knowledge than on the perceived moral superiority of Chinese ‘wisdom’ (智慧 *zhihui*) over Western ‘knowledge’ (知識 *zhishi* – see Chapter Four).

Folk History of the Eight Trigrams

It is worth briefly describing here how Master Tao and Ma Jianglong perceive the history of the *Yi Jing* and its prediction methods. Broadly speaking, their perceptions are in line with traditional popular accounts, and reinforce the moral and epistemological authority, increasingly reasserted in society at large, of the Chinese people’s ‘ancient ancestors’ (老祖宗 *lao zuzong*). It is fair to say that both predictors see themselves as continuing a knowledge practice that has existed for millennia on the basis of its efficacy, even if, as Master Tao argues, the methods involved have been simplified over time¹³, from the original complex manipulation of yarrow stalks to the throwing of coins and the numerological manipulations that characterise ‘Plum-Blossom Change Mathematics’ (梅花易數 *meihua yishu*), a system developed by Shao Yong (1011-1077) in the Song dynasty.

¹³ He described this as part of a broad trend in the historical development of Chinese culture, which he did not expand on beyond citing the simplification of the Chinese writing system as another example.

In the traditional popular view, the Eight Trigrams were derived by Fu Xi 伏羲, first of the three legendary sage rulers who laid the foundations for Chinese civilisation, whose reign Ma Jianglong dated to around 5500 B.C. He is credited with formulating the trigrams in the 'Former Heaven' (先天 *xiantian*) sequence, according to the waxing and waning of *yin* and *yang* (Feuchtwang 1974: 74). A second key figure in this account is King Wen of Zhou (周文王 *Zhou Wen wang*), whose name appears in one of the alternative monikers for the *Najia* or Six Lines predictive system, 'King Wen Eight Trigrams' (文王八卦 *Wen wang ba gua*). He rebelled against the last Shang dynasty emperor in the eleventh century B.C., and during his subsequent imprisonment is said to have developed the 'Later Heaven' (後天 *houtian*) sequence of the trigrams, based on the points of the compass (Feuchtwang 1974: 75). This sequence is considered of greater practical use, Master Tao describing it as the 'practical Eight Trigrams' (實用八卦 *shiyong ba gua*). The third key figure in the traditional account of the development of the *Yi Jing* was Confucius, to whom are attributed the line statements appended to each hexagram, as well as the *Ten Wings*.

As such, as a source of cosmological knowledge the system of the *Yi Jing* is perceived as steeped in history, and by being attributed to the figures Fu Xi, King Wen of Zhou, and Confucius, is seen as integrated into Chinese culture from its very inception, intimately bound up with its defining figures. This is reflected in further popular associations, including the military strategist Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 of the Three Kingdoms (三國 *sanguo*) period, who purportedly used tactics inspired by the trigrams and remains famous as a character in the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (《三國演義》 *Sanguo yan yi*) and its numerous televised versions. More recent associations include one endorsed not only by Master Tao and Ma Jianglong but also non-specialists – that of Mao Zedong, who is cited as an adept user of the *Yi Jing* in implementing his own policies, despite suppressing 'superstition' publicly. Thus, the *Yi Jing* is identified with the *longue durée* of Chinese cultural history as well as more recent prestigious figures, a tradition in which both Master Tao and Ma Jianglong self-consciously participate.

Texts and Their Importance

In addition to ethnographic fieldwork, this thesis is based on analysis of the *Yi Jing* itself, my reading of which has drawn on the received text in combination with the commentary and contemporary Chinese translation of Ma Jianglong and Chang Weihong (2013) and a widely-available popular contemporary Chinese edition (Yang Tiancai & Zhang Shanwen 2011). The

primary English translation I have consulted has been Richard Lynn's translation of the *Yi Jing* along with the commentary of the third-century scholar Wang Bi (Lynn 1994). Ma and Chang's book has also been an essential source in terms of analysing their own cosmological arguments. Additionally, the broader concern of this thesis with the nature of 'correlative thinking' has involved the analysis of relevant sections of other classical texts, as evident from the discussion of this issue in Chapter Six.

Given the considerable attention paid to textual sources, especially in Chapters One and Six, it will be evident that what follows does not necessarily fit the standard model of an anthropology thesis – though texts, particularly religious ones, have by no means been outside the remit of anthropological enquiry, either as the sole object of analysis (Douglas 2009; Leach 2000) or as part of broader ethnographic accounts (Harding 2000). However, it is my strong contention that no study of *Eight Trigrams cosmology* can stand up to scrutiny without engaging with the original work, particularly given the importance placed on it by the kind of practitioners with whom I worked; indeed, in the highly literate society of China, classical texts and modern interpretations are very widely available and accessible. It would, moreover, be disingenuous to assume that social anthropological study of those forms of Chinese cosmology so heavily rooted in literary tradition could proceed without consideration of the problems identified and dealt with by the Sinological literature, just as it would be to assume that either of these enterprises can ignore the findings of cognitive science and their implication for the claims they make. I reiterate here that my concern is the means by which cosmological experts reason reflectively about the world, and the properties of the theoretical systems they thereby construct, rather than with what might be called the social aspects of practice. The *Yi Jing* itself is thus important as a source of my informants' ideas, but also as an example of the cosmological enterprise in its own right; the same is true also of the other instances of correlative cosmology I discuss. My reading of these texts is doubtless coloured by my experiences with my informants, and I have tried to strike the balance between fidelity to the textual evidence and maintaining the relevance of the textual chapters to the theoretical and ethnographic questions of the thesis as a whole.

In dealing with explicitly-formulated cosmologies and the processes of logic and reasoning by which they are constructed, the analyst is encountered with a subject which is better known through oral and textual exegesis than participation. The most fruitful exchanges during fieldwork were those in which my informants laid out the principles with which they

rationalize their practices, which provided evidence for the explicit logic according to which their cosmologies make sense. By engaging in many such conversations, I was able to build up a comprehensive picture of my informants' explicit cosmological beliefs, assess their internal consistency, and compare them with those of other informants and the *Yi Jing* itself. As Feuchtwang (1974: 13) writes, '[a]nthropological analyses which concern themselves with the ideologies of communities more often infer the ideal from practice', the advantage being that 'the observer is made fully aware of the variations between the different versions of it'. What I hope to show is that such variation, but also commonalities and a clear sense of cohesion, is found also between the justifications for such practices and the texts upon which they draw. Much as Feuchtwang (1974: 13–14) argues regarding *fengshui*, there exist both variations between cosmologists and methodological schools *and* something that can coherently be labelled 'Eight Trigrams Prediction'. My concern is with the manner in which this broader body of knowledge is considered by individual practitioners and what the features of their theories are that make them of a type. All to some extent, if only by manipulating the trigrams, interpret the content of the *Yi Jing* and see it as an ultimate source of wisdom; the text thus provides a common substrate for their own cosmological formulations.

Indeed, China's long literary history and high levels of literacy today have led other anthropologists to engage significantly with textual sources, particularly those concerned with Chinese medicine (Farquhar 1996; Hsu 1999), as well as food and sex (Farquhar 2002) and self-cultivation practices (Farquhar & Zhang 2012). Chinese medicine provides perhaps the best analogue to Eight Trigrams Prediction, involving many overlapping cosmological theories and a long written tradition of manuals traceable back to important classical texts. As Hsu (1999: 122) remarks regarding Chinese medicine, what is important for practitioners is 'the interrelation between text and practice'. Texts are used by professionals as 'means of justification' (1999: 122) for practice – though I would argue also that in the case of Eight Trigrams Prediction, the *Yi Jing* is spoken of as though infallible, even if (as discussed in Chapter Three) its theoretical authority does not always translate directly into practical utility, predictors drawing on certain aspects of it for their own purposes. Hsu also argues that an anthropological approach to Chinese medicine requires 'the recognition that contemporary concepts and practices are the result of complex historical processes and that their shades of meaning can be identified through study of their history' (1999: 79); again, the same may be said of Eight Trigrams Prediction, particularly if our concern is with the logic of explicit cosmological theories. An anthropological analysis which takes such historical tradition seriously is able to account for

the role played by texts in allowing the temporal transfer of ideas (Boutcher 2013), whilst accepting Boyer's observation that texts do not encode anything beyond visual representations of speech, their meaningful content being 'a reliable effect only against a particular representational background in the mind of the reader' (1998: 882). Indeed, as Singer argues for Hinduism, an anthropological approach provides a specific spatiotemporal 'context' for the more systematised content of religious texts, and one which does not account for texts 'will more closely approximate the "world view" of popular Hinduism than the systematic "cosmology" of any school of Sanskritic Hinduism' (1972: 40); my concern, of course, is with systematic cosmology.

An additional reason for looking at the text itself relates to the complexity of the *Yi Jing* and, especially, the method of Six Lines Prediction and the cosmologies constructed when the *Yi Jing* is combined with readings of other classical texts, mantic principles, ideas from physics, and so forth. The correlative cosmology which integrates the sixty-four hexagrams, the Five Phases, *yin* and *yang*, and *qi* is phenomenally complex, and an initial focus on what can be gleaned from the *Yi Jing* itself allows certain fundamental analytical points to be made more clearly before proceeding to the intricacies of the thought of Master Tao, Ma Jianglong, and their associates. Thus, Chapter One, which focuses entirely on the *Yi Jing*, lays not only important historical groundwork but also theoretical points necessary for a full understanding of the subsequent chapters. The structure of these is outlined in the following section.

Structure of the Thesis

The main body of this thesis comprises six chapters, which may be considered in three pairs. Broadly speaking, the first two deal with analogical reasoning in prediction, the second two with questions of epistemology and ethics, and the final pair with questions of ontology. The first chapter is text-focused, the following three ethnographic, and the final two are more theoretically-oriented.

Chapter One is concerned entirely with the *Yi Jing* itself in order to both address the text in its own right and present several key aspects of Eight Trigrams cosmology, along with important theoretical points, with greater clarity than would be possible were they presented immediately in the context of my informants' practices. The structure of the received text of the *Yi Jing* is introduced and its history summarized. Particular attention is paid to the concept of 'Images' (象 *xiang*) as epistemological devices based on analogy. This is contextualized in

terms of the *Yi Jing*'s own account of the trigrams and hexagrams as analogical means of knowing the cosmos.

Chapter Two begins by introducing Six Lines Prediction, the form of Eight Trigrams Prediction practiced by Master Tao and his students. The method and key principles are described, and two detailed case studies presented. Building on Chapter One's arguments, the predictor's reasoning is shown to depend on a cognitive operation of classification via analogical transfer. Greater specificity of diagnosis or prediction is assured via the introduction of contingent variables based, for example, on correlates of the date; the accrual of further information in this way renders prediction a process of reducing the potential for alternative interpretations.

Chapter Three turns to the question of explicit epistemology, beginning with an account of Ma Jianglong's Image-based methods of hexagram interpretation. These are discussed in relation to the epistemological status of 'resemblance' (像 *xiang*). Ma Jianglong and Master Tao's distinctions between theory and practice are compared and examined in relation to notions of what cannot be known and the means by which modern phenomena may be explicable in terms of Eight Trigrams cosmology. The chapter ends with a discussion of the epistemological basis of moral values.

In Chapter Four, the focus shifts to questions of ethics and legitimacy. The environment in which Master Tao operates requires frequent justification of Eight Trigrams Prediction, and in addition to casting the practice as 'benevolent' (仁 *ren*), he presents it as 'scientific' (科學的 *kexue de*) in opposition to 'superstition'. This occurs in a social environment in which a number of positions are taken in relation to science, including by Eight Trigrams cosmologists. What they have in common is a belief in the value of a given knowledge system deriving from its ability to account for reality, accompanied by a concern for the practical utility of cosmological knowledge.

Chapter Five examines the ontological assumptions of Eight Trigrams cosmology, beginning by proposing a three-layered framework based on the distinction between intuitive and reflective ontology. Using the example of *fengshui* fish tanks, differences between two levels of reflective ontological assumption are demonstrated with reference to the expertise of practitioners. Reflective ontological assumptions of Eight Trigrams cosmologists are examined concerning *qi*, soul-like entities, and cosmogony, as well as explicit structural comparisons between the cosmology of the *Yi Jing* and modern physics, as instances of a mode of identification I term 'Homologism'.

Chapter Six builds on Chapter Five to address the problem of Chinese ‘correlative thought’. With reference to the historical development of correlative cosmology during the period from the late Warring States to the early Han, three distinct kinds of correlative thought are identified. It is argued that historical shifts towards a Homologist mode of identification in early China facilitated shifts from divination based on communication with the divine to impersonal predictive systems, of which Eight Trigrams methods are part.

The Conclusion returns to the three research questions and four specific foci outlined at the beginning of this Introduction. Scale and purpose are identified as themes running through the empirical data presented and the theoretical issues it raises. Eight Trigrams cosmology is reviewed in comparative perspective, and characterized as fractal, the nature of its categories being contingent on the scale of phenomena under consideration and the purpose of their classification. Theoretically, scale of analysis is revealed as central to the study of cosmology and ontology, and the case is made for a focus on individual variation in the study of these topics. Finally, limitations and possibilities for further research are discussed.

1 Analogy, Category, and Scale in the *Yi Jing*

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the content of the *Yi Jing* and the role played by analogy within it. The subsequent chapters of this thesis, dealing with contemporary (and historical) uses and understandings of the *Yi Jing* and its cosmology, of necessity must be understood in relation to the text itself. An initial focus on the *Yi Jing* specifically similarly provides an opportunity to set out some important analytical themes of this thesis prior to dealing with them ethnographically; this chapter thus lays much of the groundwork for subsequent chapters considering contemporary forms of *Yi Jing*-based prediction and cosmology, the relative complexity of which is more easily dealt with if one understands something of how cosmology and divinatory symbols are presented in the text itself. I begin with a brief overview of the *Yi Jing*'s structure, before moving on to discuss the important concept of Images (象 *xiang*) in the text in relation to two forms of analogy. I then move on to look at how analogy is presented as a means of knowing the world, and how its operation can be analysed in terms of metaphor and metonymy. This is followed by a final section which brings the discussion to bear on the nature of cosmological categories presented in the *Yi Jing*, and how these are affected by scale. It should be noted from the start that the *Yi Jing* is an incredibly rich text which, over the millennia since its compilation, has generated thousands of commentaries and analyses. The arguments in this chapter are based on the received text, as available to Chinese consumers today, and are not necessarily relevant to past understandings of the work.

The Structure of the *Yi Jing*

A brief overview of the history of the *Yi Jing* has been provided in the thesis Introduction; here I present a summary of the text's structure. It will be recalled that the text is divisible into the *Zhou Yi* and the *Ten Wings*. The *Zhou Yi* text beyond the hexagrams and their names is rarely referred to by the predictors with whom I worked. Of far more use to them are the *Ten Wings* – though their role is explanatory rather than divinatory. Even my informants Ma Jianglong and

Chang Weihong, who have published their own commentary on the *Yi Jing* (2013), devote far more exegetical attention to the *Ten Wings* than the *Zhou Yi*¹⁴. The *Ten Wings* date from the late first millennium B.C., and are written in language closer to Middle Chinese than the Old Chinese of the *Zhou Yi* – the original meaning of the latter was no longer known, and the new commentaries betray the influence of correlative cosmological ideas unknown to the *Zhou Yi*'s authors (Rutt 2002: 39–40). The *Ten Wings* reinterpret the *Zhou Yi* as a work of cosmology, bestowing upon it a significance far beyond its original purview as a divination manual. They systematise its content into a cosmology based on change and correlation, couched in terms of the complementary principles of *yin* and *yang*. When understood in combination with the concept of *qi* as the matter-energy comprising the universe and transforming according to a continuous cycle of, and interaction between, the Five Phases, the cosmological framework of the *Ten Wings* provides the basis for the cosmological, ontological, epistemological, and ethical outlooks of my informants, to the examination of which the subsequent chapters are devoted. An understanding of the *Ten Wings* is thus essential for an understanding of contemporary practice. In light of this, the focus of this chapter is the received text as it is widely available to consumers in contemporary China, and how it presents problems of cosmological knowledge, rather than a historical account of changing interpretations of the text over time (for such a study, see Smith 2008). The *Ten Wings* comprise separate commentaries, addressing different aspects of the *Zhou Yi*. They are detailed below in **Fig. 1. 1**.

Section	Structure and Content
《周易》 <i>Zhou Yi</i>	Sixty-four entries, each comprising a hexagram, its name, its judgement, and a statement on each of its component lines
<i>Commentary on the Judgements</i> 《彖傳》 <i>Tuan Zhuan</i>	In two parts (upper 上 <i>shang</i> and lower 下 <i>xia</i> , referred to here as I and II). A commentary on the judgement texts of the <i>Zhou Yi</i> , in modern editions typically presented with the relevant entries following the corresponding judgements of the <i>Zhou Yi</i> .

¹⁴ It should be noted that the distinction I have made, following Western Sinological convention, between the *Yi Jing* and *Zhou Yi* is of less salience to my informants, who use both terms to refer to what I am calling the *Yi Jing*; Ma and Chang's book is entitled 《周易我讀》 (*My Reading of the Zhou Yi*), but addresses the full content of the *Yi Jing* as I define it.

<p><i>Commentary on the Images</i> 《象傳》 <i>Xiang Zhuan</i></p>	<p>In two parts, as above.</p> <p>A commentary on the Image (象 <i>xiang</i>) conveyed by each hexagram and its component lines, in modern editions distributed throughout the <i>Zhou Yi</i> text as above</p>
<p><i>Appended Phrases or Great Commentary</i> 《繫辭》 <i>Xi Ci</i> or 《大傳》 <i>Da Zhuan</i></p>	<p>In two parts, as above.</p> <p>Wide-ranging exegesis of cosmology, cosmogony, the role of the hexagram Images in relation to the cosmos and the sage (聖人 <i>sheng ren</i>), the role of the sages in deriving the hexagrams, and the logic of divinatory procedure</p>
<p><i>Words of the Text</i> 《文言》 <i>Wenyan</i></p>	<p>A commentary on the first two hexagrams, <i>Qian</i> ☰ 《乾》 (extreme <i>yang</i>) and <i>Kun</i> ☷ 《坤》 (extreme <i>yin</i>)</p>
<p><i>Explaining the Trigrams</i> 《說卦》 <i>Shuo Gua</i></p>	<p>An exegesis of the structure and correlates of the Eight Trigrams which, when paired, comprise the hexagrams</p>
<p><i>Hexagrams in Sequence</i> 《序卦》 <i>Xu Gua</i></p>	<p>An exegesis of the logic of the sequence in which the hexagrams are presented in the <i>Zhou Yi</i></p>
<p><i>Hexagrams in Irregular Order</i> 《雜卦》 <i>Za Gua</i></p>	<p>An ordering of the hexagrams based on logical pairings and complementary meanings</p>

FIG. 1. 1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE *YI JING*

The Role of Images (象 *xiang*) as Two Kinds of Analogy

The concept of Image (象 *xiang*) is central to the *Yi Jing*, particularly insofar as it considers the relationship between human perception and the cosmos. In addition to being the subject of

the *Commentary on the Images*¹⁵, it appears in the *Commentary on the Judgements* and the *Appended Phrases I*. The term ‘Image’ typically refers to the diagrams of each trigram and hexagram together with the phenomena associated with them; this is best illustrated by an example, in this case from the hexagram *Bo* 剝 《剝》, ‘Peeling’. The first line is the hexagram text of the *Zhou Yi*.

剝：不利有攸往。

《象》：剝，剝也，柔變剛也。不利有攸往，小人長也。順而止之，觀象也。君子尚消息盈虛，天行也。

《象》：山附地上，剝；上以厚下，安宅。

Bo (Peeling): It would not be fitting should one set out to do something.

Commentary on the Judgements: Bo means “bo” (peeling), for here the soft and weak are making the hard and strong change. “It would not be fitting should one set out to do something,” for the petty man is in the ascendancy. One should try to restrain things in such a way that one remains compliant with circumstances, for this is to observe the image. The noble man holds in esteem how things ebb and flow, wax and wane, for this is the course of Heaven.

Commentary on the Images: The Mountain is attached to the Earth: this constitutes the image of Bo (Peeling). In the same way, those above make their dwellings secure by treating those below with generosity.

(Adapted from Lynn 1994: 280)

Here, the hexagram text is elaborated by the text of the *Commentary on the Judgements* and *Commentary on the Images*. The *Judgements* elaborates the meaning of the hexagram name, the reference to ‘soft and weak’ (柔 *rou*) and ‘hard and strong’ (剛 *gang*) pertaining respectively both to the *yin* and *yang* lines of the hexagram and the lower and upper trigram (see below); read in conjunction with the *Appended Phrases*, change is conceived as the complementary waxing and waning of *yang* and *yin*, hard/strong and soft/weak, *Qian* (extreme *yang*) and *Kun* (extreme *yin*). Hexagrams are read from bottom to top; here five *yin* lines precede a lone *yang* line, indicating *yin*’s increasing prevalence and *yang*’s complementary decline. Therefore, to ‘set out to do something’ would be inauspicious, at odds with prevailing

¹⁵ This comprises two commentaries, corresponding to the former and latter sections of the *Zhouyi* material (hexagrams 1-30 and 30-64 respectively), each of which is divisible into a *Daxiang* section, referring to a hexagram’s constituent trigrams, and a *Xiaoxiang* section, referring to a hexagram’s individual lines. See Redmond and Hon (2014: 253–254) and Nielsen (2003: 272–273) for an explanation.

conditions, as *yang* is considered an initiating force (see Ziporyn 2012: 238–243 for a discussion). An understanding of this Image, in which the ‘soft and weak’ are effecting change, consists in remaining ‘compliant with circumstances’ (順 *shun*). The Image constitutes a conceptual means through which a person can understand a situation of the type *Bo*.

In the passage from the *Commentary on the Images*, the Image of *Bo* is described based on the Images of its component trigrams, comprising *Kun* ☷ 《坤》, the Image of the Earth (地 *di*), below *Gen* ☶ 《艮》, the Image of the Mountain (山 *shan*). This is presented alongside an analogical statement, ‘those above make their dwelling secure by treating those below with generosity’ (上以厚下, 安宅 *shang yi hou xia, an zhai*). ‘Those above’ are linked to the Mountain, *Gen*, and ‘those below’ to the Earth, *Kun*. Here, it must be noted that *Kun* is a *yin* trigram, and *Gen* a *yang* trigram; apart from *Qian* and *Kun*, the remaining six trigrams are considered *yin* or *yang* based on the minority line, their coherence as *yin* or *yang* depending not on the sum of the trigram’s parts but on their overall position (Ziporyn 2012: 233–234). If ‘those above’ are *yang* and active with respect to ‘those below’, *yin* and receptive, the two are complementary. Thus, in spite of the dangers of initiating action, to embrace the situation as complementary (‘by treating those below with generosity’) is to be secure in one’s own position. If considered in combination with the correlates of the component trigrams listed in *Explaining the Trigrams*, discussed below, the possibilities for analogical interpretation are multiplied considerably.

But what is the nature of such analogical interpretation? In his comparison of magical action and science, Tambiah (1985) distinguishes between two types of analogy, ‘scientific predicative’ and ‘conventional persuasive’. The former can serve as a scientific model to generate hypotheses and comparisons, which can then be verified via inductive reasoning. In one of his examples (1985: 70), the properties of light can be compared analogically with the properties of sound, as shown in the diagram reproduced below.

	Similarity Relations	
Causal Relations	<i>Properties of Sound</i>	<i>Properties of Light</i>
	Echoes	Reflection
	Loudness	Brightness
	Pitch	Colour
	Etc.	

FIG. 1. 2 A ‘SCIENTIFIC PREDICATIVE’ ANALOGY BETWEEN SOUND AND LIGHT. ADAPTED FROM TAMBIAH (1985: 70).

In this analogy, horizontal pairs (between individual or aggregate properties of sound and light) are similar, and vertical pairs (between properties within each vertical category) are causally related or at least co-occurrent 'in that certain properties are necessary or sufficient conditions for the occurrence of other properties' (Tambiah 1985: 70). He provides a second example of the same form of analogy based on horizontal similarities of structure and function and vertical relations of parts to wholes 'depending on some theory of interrelation of parts' (1985: 70):

	Similarity Relations	
Co-occurrence	<i>Bird</i>	<i>Fish</i>
	Wings	Fins
	Lungs	Gills
	Feathers	Scales

Fig. 1. 3 A 'SCIENTIFIC PREDICATIVE' ANALOGY BASED ON STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BIRDS AND FISH. ADAPTED FROM TAMBIAH (1985: 70).

Such analogical models allow predictions to be made regarding the constituents of one vertical category based on what is known of the constituents of the other, providing that 'the vertical relations of the model are *causal* in some scientifically acceptable sense and if those of the *explicandum* also promise relations of the same kind, and if the essential properties and casual relations of the model have not been shown to be part of the negative analogy [i.e. the properties not shared by the two vertical categories] between model and *explicandum*' (Tambiah 1985: 70, emphasis original). In principle, such predictions should be verifiable by observation.

Tambiah's second form of analogy is labelled 'conventional persuasive', which he distinguishes sharply from analogies of the kind used in scientific practice. He gives the following example:

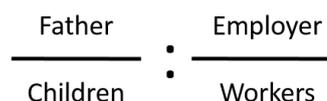


Fig. 1. 4 A 'CONVENTIONAL PERSUASIVE' ANALOGY BETWEEN FATHERS AND CHILDREN AND EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS. ADAPTED FROM TAMBIAH (1985: 71)

In this case, the purpose of the analogy is to evoke rather than predict – for example, to persuade workers to hold certain attitudes to their employer. In such an analogy, Tambiah explains, ‘the vertical relations are not specifically causal’ and there is no ‘relation of similarity between the terms, except by virtue of the fact that the two pairs are up to a point *related by the same vertical relation*’ (Tambiah 1985: 71, emphasis original). Keeping to the purpose of persuading workers to hold certain attitudes, the analogy works by transferring the properties of the father-children relation to that of employer-workers. It is precisely this purpose of transfer rather than prediction that Tambiah goes on to argue characterises magical action, drawing particularly on examples from Evans-Pritchard’s work on the Azande; for example, the use of the Araka creeper, the leaves of which are shed as part of its growing process, to treat leprosy expresses the wish that the loss of extremities, analogous to the loss of leaves, be followed by growth rather than degeneration and death (1985: 73–74). Tambiah takes this to thus constitute symbolic rather than causal action.

However, before applying this framework to the hexagram *Bo*, it is worth considering that whilst Tambiah’s aim is to distinguish these two forms of analogies in order to elucidate the different purposes of scientific and magical thought and action, the two forms of analogy are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Whilst the distinction between scientific predicative and conventional persuasive analogies is particularly illuminating, the *Yi Jing*’s Images can function as both dependent on scale. Anticipating arguments made in later chapters, by this I mean that the relevant form of analogy results from how far the hexagram is considered to yield an answer to the question of what should be done as opposed to the question of what will happen (Curry 2004a: 57), the first of which may be considered symbolic action, and the second, cosmological in scale, causal.

The *Zhou Yi* judgement for the hexagram *Bo* can be read as advice on proper course of action: ‘it would not be fitting should one set out to do something’ (不利有攸往 *bu li you you wang*). Likewise, the entry from the *Commentary on the Judgements*, ‘one should try to restrain things in such a way that one remains compliant with circumstances, for this is to observe the image’ (順而止之，觀象也 *shun er zhi zhi, guan xiang ye*)¹⁶, reads similarly as advice on action. Considering Tambiah’s argument, in light of these suggestions the Image of *Bo* can be schematised as the following ‘conventional persuasive’ analogy:

¹⁶ Departing from Lynn’s translation, this phrase may be rendered as ‘restraining things so as to comply with circumstances is to observe the Image’. Lynn’s inclusion of the English ‘should’ conveys the general tone of the sentence but is not explicit in the Chinese.

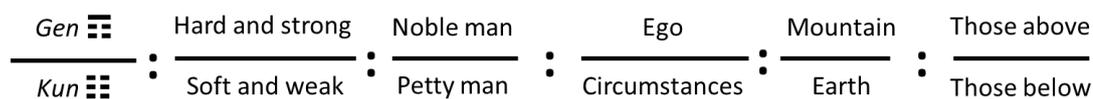


FIG. 1. 5 THE HEXAGRAM IMAGE *Bo* AS A 'CONVENTIONAL PERSUASIVE' ANALOGY

Here, the five pairs of contrasts made regarding *Bo* in the *Commentary on the Judgements* and the *Commentary on the Images* are presented alongside the hexagram's component trigrams, *Gen* and *Kun*. The similarities posited between horizontal elements, in this case, stem from their sharing the same vertical relation. We have seen already that the predominance of *yin* in this situation leads a *yang* process of initiating action to be undesirable. This is described in the text in terms of the 'hard and strong' (*yang*) being caused to change by the 'soft and weak' (*yin*), the relationship between these pairs being comparable to that between a 'noble man' (君子 *junzi*) when the 'petty man is in the ascendancy' (小人長也 *xiaoren chang ye*). The relationship between ego, that is, the person who 'observes the Image' (觀象 *guan xiang*), is similar. Within the passage from the *Commentary on the Judgements*, then, the enquirer (ego) is positioned analogically in relation to circumstances in the same relation as that between the 'hard and strong' and the 'soft and weak'. The noble man, observing 'how things ebb and flow, wax and wane' (消息盈虛 *xiao xi ying xu*), allows himself to be compliant with circumstances, here the 'ascendancy' of the 'petty man', as the 'hard and strong' are caused to change by the 'soft and weak'. Ego is thus advised to transfer the properties of the vertical relationships 'hard and strong'/'soft and weak' and 'noble man'/'petty man' to his own relationship with his circumstances. Moving to the entry from the *Commentary on the Images*, the Image of *Bo* is identified with the vertical relationship between Mountain (the trigram *Gen*) and Earth (the trigram *Kun*). The ability of 'those above' to 'make their dwellings secure' is presented as a direct function of their ability to transfer the properties of the vertical relationship between Mountain and Earth to their own vertical relationship with 'those below'.

However, whilst this understanding of the Image as a conventional persuasive analogy may be considered a proximate motivator to action on the part of ego, the relationships between vertical pairs are open to further interpretations. The most obvious of these is that the vertical pairs 'hard and strong'/'soft and weak' and 'noble man'/'petty man' in the *Judgements* text for *Bo* clearly describe a prevailing situation, that denoted by the hexagram, itself comprising the vertical pair Mountain/Earth or *Gen/Kun*. The actions taken by ego in relation to circumstances or 'those above' in relation to 'those below' are appropriate precisely because of the situation

described by the other vertical pairs. Breaking this down further, ‘the petty man [being] in the ascendancy’ can be considered a phenomenon that *co-occurs* with ‘the soft and weak...making the hard and strong change.’ In this sense, a causal relation exists between the vertical pairs ‘hard and strong’/‘soft and weak’ and ‘noble man’/‘petty man’, changing the nature of the analogy between them. Moreover, taking this situation, denoted by *Bo*, into consideration, the vertical pair ‘those above’/‘those below’ in the *Images* text may be considered similarly causally related. If ‘those above’ are to ‘make their dwellings secure’, then a particular course of action must be taken, and this particular course is causally related to the vertical pairs ‘hard and strong’/‘soft and weak’ and ‘noble man’/‘petty man’. In fact, it can be *predicted* based on the vertical relationships of the latter two pairs. This similarly applies to ego’s relationship with circumstances if ego wishes to achieve an auspicious outcome. Considered this way, the various pairs which comprise the Image of *Bo* can be schematised as a ‘scientific predicative’ analogy, in which the conventional persuasive version is rotated, as it were, by ninety degrees:

	Similarity Relations	
Co-occurrence	<i>Kun</i>	<i>Gen</i>
	Earth	Mountain
	Soft and weak	Hard and strong
	Petty man	Noble man
	Those below	Those above
	Circumstances	Ego

FIG. 1. 6 THE HEXAGRAM IMAGE *BO* AS A ‘SCIENTIFIC PREDICATIVE’ ANALOGY

Considering both forms of analogy, whilst ego’s motivation to normative action (what *should* be done to achieve an optimum outcome) may be proximately derived (as advice) from a conventional persuasive analogy, in which the properties of the vertical relations between ‘hard and strong’/‘soft and weak’, ‘noble man’/‘petty man’, and Mountain/Earth are transferred to that between ego and circumstances, ultimately the specific properties of that normative action can be *predicted* based on the co-occurring or causal relations between the remaining pairs. When presented in this way, the component trigrams *Gen* and *Kun*, and their Images Mountain and Earth, appear not as symbolic referents for normative action but as categories of phenomena, like the properties of sound and light in Tambiah’s example. Moreover, whilst the similarity between the vertical relations of the conventional persuasive analogy is retained, a second axis of similarity has been introduced. Whilst *Kun* and *Gen* (as trigrams) or ‘petty man’ and ‘noble man’ (as types of person) retain their relationship of

similarity, a new, necessary similarity has been introduced between *Kun* and ‘petty man’ and *Gen* and ‘noble man’. Considering the Images in this way suggests that an understanding of them as scientific predicative analogies requires a systematic theoretical framework based ultimately on integration of the *Zhou Yi*’s hexagrams with a conception of *yin* and *yang* as cosmic forces. Having considered analogies implicit in the hexagram Images, in this case for *Bo*, in the next section I explore their epistemological status in the *Appended Phrases*.

Analogy in the Epistemology of the *Appended Phrases*

The role of Images in the cosmology of the *Ten Wings* is made explicit in the *Appended Phrases*. Turning to the *Appended Phrases I*, section one¹⁷, the Images are described as the product of things coming together according to kind:

方以類聚，物以群分，吉凶生矣。在天成象，在地成形，變化見矣。

Those with regular tendencies gather according to kind, and things divide up according to group; so it is that good fortune and misfortune occur... In Heaven this (process) creates images, and on Earth it creates physical forms; this is how change and transformation manifest themselves.

(Lynn 1994: 47)

Here, Images are situated as Heavenly (天 *tian*) counterparts to Earthly (地 *di*) Forms (形 *xing*). Elsewhere in the *Appended Phrases I*, section twelve, these terms are described as follows: “[w]hat is visible is called an image, what has physical form is called an object” (見乃謂之象形 乃謂之器 [*jian nai wei zhi xiang, xing nai wei zhi qi*])’ (Nielsen 2003: 277). Change (變化 *bianhua*) is visible through Image and Form, which correspond to natural (or real) kinds. The correspondences of the trigrams described in *Explaining the Trigrams*, discussed below, include both Images and Forms; the overall impression given by the *Ten Wings* is that Forms may thus be classified according to trigram and hexagram Images. In section eleven of the *Appended Phrases I*, Images are granted implicit priority as the observable aspect of change:

一闔一闢謂之變；往來不窮謂之通；見乃謂之象。

*One such closing and one such opening [the alternation of *Kun* and *Qian*, *yin* and *yang*] is referred to as a change, and the inexhaustibility of their alteration is called their free flow. What one sees of this is called the images.*

¹⁷ Sections of the *Appended Phrases I* and *II* are numbered following Lynn (1994).

(Lynn 1994: 65, emphasis original)

Indeed, the association in section one of the *Appended Phrases I* of Heaven with Image and Earth with Form is itself an example of this, Heaven and Earth being identified with the prototypical hexagrams *Qian* (extreme *yang*) and *Kun* (extreme *yin*) respectively; the Heavenly Images and Earthly Forms of section one themselves exist in a process of change, perceptible as Images. This conception of Images as the percepts of groupings of natural kinds is integral to hexagram Images as scientific predicative analogies; without it, they would not have predictive power.

The *Appended Phrases* describes the creation of the hexagram Images and their role in terms of analogy, including through the use of the character 擬 *ni*, meaning to be similar or analogous to (類似 *leisi*) or to imitate or simulate (模擬 *moni*)¹⁸. This character is used in sections eight and twelve of the *Appended Phrases I* and section nine of the *Appended Phrases II*. Section eight of the *Appended Phrases I* describes the creation of the hexagram Images by the ‘sages’ (聖人 *shengren*) based on their observations of the phenomenal world:

聖人有以見天下之賾，而擬諸其形容，象其物宜，是故謂之象。聖人有以見天下之動，而觀其會通，以行其典禮。繫辭焉，以斷其吉凶，是故謂之爻。言天下之至賾，而不可惡也。言天下之至動，而不可亂也。擬之而後言，議之而後動，擬議以成其變化。

The sages had the means to perceive the mysteries of the world and, drawing comparisons to them with analogous things [擬], made images out of those things that seemed appropriate. This is why these are called “images.” The sages had the means to perceive the activities taking place in the world, and, observing how things come together and go smoothly, they thus enacted statutes and rituals accordingly. They appended phrases to the hexagram lines in order to judge the good and bad fortune involved. This is why these are called “the line phrases.” These line phrases speak to the most mysterious things in the world, and yet one may not feel aversion toward them; they speak to the things in the world that are the most fraught with activity, and yet one may not feel confused about them. One should only speak after having drawn the appropriate comparisons (as offered in the Changes) and only act after having discussed what is involved. It is through such comparisons [擬] and by such discussions that one can respond successfully to the way change and transformation operate.

(Adapted from Lynn 1994: 56–57)

¹⁸ These modern Chinese definitions are from the Shanghai Cihai *Gudai Hanyu Dacidian* (擬 *nǐ* [Def. 2] 2007).

In this account, Images are derived as a response to the problem of understanding the ‘mysteries of the world’ (天下之曠 *tianxia zhi ze*, lit. ‘the mysteries of All Under Heaven’). This problem is solved by virtue of the sages’ ability to know the world via analogy (擬 *ni*); the mysteries are perceived, their appearances used as a basis for comparison with other things, and from these analogically suitable things, the Images are derived. Observing the processes of the world, the sages ‘enacted statutes and rituals accordingly’; their ability to do so depended on an understanding of ‘good and bad fortune’ (吉凶 *jixiong*). Describing how the sages used this understanding to derive the ‘line phrases’ (爻 *yao*) of the hexagrams, the text acknowledges once again the value of analogy, embodied in the hexagram Images, in understanding and operating effectively in the world; the line phrases’ exegesis of these Images allow accessible and clear understanding of ‘the most mysterious things in the world’ (天下之至曠 *tianxia zhi zhi ze*). The first step in making sense of what may otherwise cause ‘aversion’ (惡 *wu*) or ‘confusion’ (亂 *luan*) is therefore to make comparisons by using the Images; only then can one speak (言 *yan*) of the phenomenon concerned, as it is through the Images that knowledge of the world is acquired. Only after deliberating (議 *yi*) on this should one act (動 *dong*). Hence, there exists a sequence for ideal action by which ‘one can respond successfully to the way change and transformation operate’ (以成其變化 *yi cheng qi bian hua*): observation (見 *jian*) → comparison by analogy (擬 *ni*) → deliberation (議 *yi*) → action (動 *dong*). As Puett (2004: 188–196) argues, it is thus only via the system presented in the *Yi Jing* that the non-sage can know the world.

In fact, Puett further argues that the sages themselves are presented paradoxically not only as the creators of this epistemological system, but also as subservient to it (2004: 192–193). In the *Appended Phrases I* section two, the sage-king Bao Xi (more popularly known as Fu Xi), mythical creator of the trigrams, is presented ‘as purely an observer of patterns in the natural world’ (2004: 192):

古者包犧氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物，於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。

When in ancient times Lord Bao Xi ruled the world as sovereign, he looked upward and observed the images in heaven and looked downward and observed the models that the earth provided. He observed the patterns on birds and beasts and what things were suitable for the land. Nearby, adopting things

from his own person, and afar, adopting them from other things, he thereupon made the eight trigrams in order to become thoroughly conversant with the virtues inherent in the numinous and the bright and to classify the myriad things in terms of their true, innate natures.

(Adapted from Lynn 1994: 77)

This passage presents an important distinction not made explicit in the section just discussed, that between the appearance of things ('images in Heaven' 象於天 *xiang yu tian*, 'patterns on birds and beasts' 鳥獸之文 *niao shou zhi wen*) on the one hand and 'virtues inherent in the numinous and the bright' (神明之德 *shen ming zhi de*) and the 'true, innate natures' (情 *qing*) of the 'myriad things' (萬物 *wan wu*). The epistemological problem with which Bao Xi is confronted is how to understand the latter when he is able to perceive only the former. This problem is dealt with by a process of mediated analogical transfer; the known properties of appearances serve as a basis from which inherent qualities and inner natures may be considered. However, a simple transfer of outward patterns to inner natures is inadequate. What Bao Xi does is to parse the appearances of things into a series of eight trigrams. It follows from this that the appearances of particular phenomena may be abstracted back from the trigrams, the implication being that they correspond to a more fundamental aspect of the cosmos. Assuming this is the case, the eight trigrams should therefore allow knowledge of that which is initially unknowable to human perception – the inherent virtues and inner natures of things.

Two points can be made regarding this. The first is that the *Yi Jing* draws an epistemologically significant distinction between appearance and inner nature. Knowledge of the former is available via human perception, but knowledge of the latter – full knowledge of the cosmos – requires the trigrams, and, by extension, the hexagrams; Puett (2004: 188–196) makes a similar point. This may be extended. Following Descola (2013), this distinction between appearance and inner nature can be taken as an elaborated instantiation of the universal distinction humans draw between 'physicality' and 'interiority'. As Descola argues, the relationship posited between these two aspects of being has profound implications for ontology, cosmology, and sociocultural life in general. This is discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Six, but for now it must be said that the epistemological distinction the *Appended Phrases* draws between appearance and inner nature does not imply an ontological discontinuity between the two. Both aspects of being are knowable via a single means, the trigrams, and for such a means to be valid the analogies drawn between the two aspects must be grounded in genuine similarity.

This leads to my second point, which is elaborated in the remainder of this chapter and developed in the next in relation to contemporary divinatory practice; this concerns what Raphals (2013: 336–337) describes as ‘two parallel systems of signs’ in the *Yi Jing*, the cosmos itself and the *Zhou Yi*. The foregoing discussion of hexagram and trigram Images reveals that they possess dual referents, which I refer to as phenomenal (occurrent in the cosmos) and symbolic (the mental representation of a hexagram or trigram reified in the *Zhou Yi* as a diagram). For example, a hexagram Image considered as a conventional persuasive analogy in this understanding constitutes a symbolic construct, the primary value of which is to provide a framework for normative action. An Image considered as a scientific predicative analogy, in contrast, refers to a natural kind based on cosmic principles; its primary value is as a means of cosmological explanation. Similarly, considering the example of Bao Xi, the trigrams as facilitators of analogical transfer serve as symbolic constructs, but insofar as they are established as valid means of knowing the cosmos in all its aspects, they constitute referents to cosmic principles. Having established this notion of dual reference, I will subsequently differentiate between the two usages by referring to either trigrams/hexagrams-as-symbols or trigrams/hexagrams-as-phenomena. In the next section, I expand this discussion into the realms of metaphor and metonymy.

Hexagrams, Metaphor, and Metonymy

Before proceeding to discuss how the distinction between trigrams/hexagrams-as-symbols and trigrams/hexagrams-as-phenomena relates to metaphoric and metonymic operations, it is necessary to briefly establish definitions for metaphor and metonymy. In a famous paper (1956), Roman Jakobson discussed two forms of linguistic aphasia, which he used as a basis for a discussion of these operations. The first type of aphasia, ‘similarity disorder’ (1956: 63–70), is characterised by an inability to substitute terms with similar meanings (such as ‘bachelor’ and ‘unmarried man’) and a tendency to group objects by experiential contiguity rather than attributes such as colour and shape. The second type, ‘contiguity disorder’ (1956: 71–75), is characterised by an inability to identify things based on context, leading to a tendency to identify objects based on similarity (for example, a patient may identify a microscope as a spyglass (1956: 72)). Jakobson argued that ‘[m]etaphor is alien to the similarity disorder, and metonymy to the contiguity disorder’ (1956: 76). He similarly describes an experiment in which young children are told to provide the first words they think of based on a stimulus word, in his example ‘hut’, to which responses are of two kinds, labelled ‘substitutive’ (e.g. ‘cabin’, ‘hovel’)

and 'predicative' (e.g. 'thatch' 'poverty'), respectively manipulating connections of similarity and contiguity (1956: 76–77). The former constitute metaphoric responses, and the latter, metonymic; as Fernandez (1986d: xii) puts it, metaphor concerns relations between domains and metonymy those within domains. I follow these definitions here.

As Jakobson argued, all symbolic processes, 'either intrapersonal or social', involve both devices (1956: 80), but one or the other is likely to become prevalent (he cites romantic and realist literature as favouring metaphor and metonymy respectively). Such an interrelation is demonstrated in Lévi-Strauss' analyses of the relationships between humans and animals in France, as well as his comparison of totemism and sacrifice (1974: 204–208, 224–228); in both cases, a given group of animals or social system is predominantly metaphoric or metonymic, but each trope is accompanied by its counterpart. Thus, for example, whilst birds are given Christian names by virtue of their similarity, as a group, to human society, the names themselves form a contiguous set drawn from human society. The result is that the relationship between human society and the society of birds is metaphorical, based on the selection of certain similar features (themselves thrown into relief by the plain difference of birds from humans, which makes them appear as another society); the relationship between bird names and human names, however, is metonymic in that the former are drawn from a subset of the latter, a relationship of part to whole.

Durham and Fernandez (1991), drawing on the work of Edward Sapir, take the relationship between metaphor and metonymy further, arguing that metonymic association can follow as a result of metaphor. They define metaphors as operations of understanding a target, or inchoate (Fernandez 1986c) domain by mapping onto it salient features of a source domain – as Nisbet puts it, 'a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious, flash of insight to some other thing that is, by remoteness or complexity, unknown to us' (1969: 4). Thus, for the hexagram *Bo*, for instance, ego's situation, as yet unknown, is knowable via the mapping onto it of the hexagram Image. The function here is one of substitution of the Image for the situation. However, following Durham and Fernandez's argument, ego's situation and the hexagram *Bo* are, via this metaphorical substitution, drawn together into a 'more encompassing whole' (1991: 198) in which they are associated metonymically. In this way, they argue, metaphor and metonymy are capable of effecting profound changes to conventions, and even worldviews. Not disagreeing with this conclusion – the persuasive power of such 'metonymic manipulation' being demonstrated by Durham and Fernandez's ethnographic account – I nonetheless suggest

that the process of metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation can also serve to reinforce particular understandings, such as a cosmos knowable via trigrams and hexagrams. Indeed, this is what Nisbet (1969) suggests regarding the enduring metaphor of growth as a Western theory of social development, which he traces from ancient Greek thought to modern social science; for him, the ancient origins of this metaphor remain evident today in spite of the weight of intellectual history, but the root metaphor itself has continually accommodated and been accommodated by shifts in understanding of the world.

Following this dynamic understanding of the relationship between metaphor and metonymy, we can return to the fluidity of conventional persuasive and scientific predicative analogies discussed above. It is not difficult to imagine that particularly salient conventional persuasive analogies, if widely used within a population, may become axiomatic. Taking *Bo* as an example, the transfer of relational properties from, say, the vertical pair Mountain/Earth to noble man/petty man would no longer serve a persuasive function, as the similarity of relations would be accepted. It is but a small step from accepting this similarity of relations to suggesting that a genuine similarity exists between Mountains and noble men on the one hand and Earth and petty men on the other, in addition to, or stemming from, the similarity of vertical relations between the two pairs. In such a case, an individual can consider it reasonable to make predictions regarding a noble man based on their knowledge of Mountains, quite apart from the similarity between the vertical relationships Mountain/Earth and noble man/petty man, *within a certain type of situation*. Thus a series of conventional persuasive analogies can become a scientific predicative analogy, as demonstrated above. In such a case, the metaphoric relationship between Mountain and noble man or Earth and petty man, based on substitution of terms along the horizontal plane, becomes a relationship of metonymy. Mountain, noble man, those above, the hard and strong, and so on, become a metonymic series of co-occurrent phenomena. This series, in the context of a hexagram Image, is ultimately encompassed by the dyad *Gen/Kun*, the two components of which exist in dynamic relation. This dynamic dyad is accorded the label *Bo*, itself therefore constituting a metonymic category encompassing both vertical series shown in **Fig. 1. 6**. However, this does not mean that metaphor has no place in the scientific predicative analogy; whilst elements within a column are metonymic (contiguous), they maintain metaphoric relationships with their counterparts in other columns. From the perspective of taxonomic structure, to understand the category *Gen* the known category *Kun* can be substituted, allowing an understanding of

Gen as also referring to a metonymic class with elements of certain types (natural phenomena, material qualities, social positions, etc.).

A crucial question remains, though, and that concerns the status of the vertical pair ego/circumstances in FIG. 1. 5. Whilst the hexagram and component trigram Images may be unproblematically considered metonymic categories, this is not so straightforward for this pair. I have already shown that the hexagram Image functions by persuading ego to adopt a relationship with circumstances analogous to that between the described dyads. Likewise, I have shown that this operation stems from an ability to predict the optimum relationship between ego and circumstances based on the remaining dyads insofar as these refer to the characteristics of a type of situation. We are now in a position to frame this mechanism in terms of metaphor and metonymy, as follows. From the perspective of the *Yi Jing*, at the beginning of the interpretive process all horizontal pairs in FIG. 1. 6 except ego/circumstances compose the metonymic categories *Gen* and *Kun*, together constituting the metonymic category *Bo*. These refer to a particular kind of situation, *Bo-as-phenomenon*, itself a dynamic composite of *Gen-as-phenomenon* and *Kun-as-phenomenon* taking the form of a scientific predicative analogy. *Bo-*, *Gen-*, and *Kun-as-phenomenon* are known domains. Consulting the *Yi Jing*, ego is interested in discovering appropriate action given her circumstances, a problem which itself depends on rendering these circumstances knowable in terms of an existing framework. The first cognitive operation she conducts is therefore one of metaphoric substitution; the known domain *Bo-as-phenomenon* (and its constituent trigrams-as-phenomena) is mapped onto the unknown domain of ego/circumstances. Now, the referent *Bo-as-phenomenon* is too complex for all its entailments to be meaningfully considered; ego's understanding of it is better facilitated by drawing on salient features, producing the mental representation *Bo-as-symbol* (the pair *Gen-as-symbol/Kun-as-symbol*). It is this construct which is substituted for the mental construct ego/circumstances-as-symbol; this process consists in following a conventional persuasive analogy, as shown in FIG. 1. 5. Once this operation of metaphoric substitution has been completed, facilitated by conventional persuasive analogy with the hexagram-as-symbol, ego/circumstances-as-phenomenon has been rendered knowable. The effect of this is to metonymically incorporate ego/circumstances-as-phenomenon into the category *Bo-as-phenomenon* (here a scientific predicative analogy). Cognitively, this can be taken to have altered ego's understanding of both *Bo-as-symbol* and *Bo-as-phenomenon*, but in terms of cosmology, ego/circumstances-as-phenomenon is subsumed into an extant category of situations. As discussed in the next

chapter, this has important implications for understanding contemporary Eight Trigrams Prediction as an exercise in classification, as well as ontological implications when considered in relation to the monist cosmogony suggested by the *Appended Phrases* and elaborated in contemporary practice in relation to *qi*, which I discuss in chapter five. Having thus formulated a model for the interplay of analogical forms in trigram and hexagram Images, considering both as real-world phenomena and cognitive symbolic devices, I turn now to how the trigrams are presented as categories in *Explaining the Trigrams*.

The Nature of Categories in *Explaining the Trigrams*

Historically ‘extremely influential in the development of Han and later Chinese correlative metaphysics’ (Redmond & Hon 2014: 254), the commentary *Explaining the Trigrams* presents a conception of the cosmos ordered according to the trigrams and their correlates. The trigrams are correlated with various aspects of the external world, including natural forms or phenomena, which constitute their primary associations (Heaven, Earth, Mountain, Lake, Thunder, Wind, Water, and Fire), cardinal directions, animals, body parts, horses, and kinship relations. Some of these associations are tabulated in Figure 1.7. Whilst these correlates constitute the main body of the text, it begins with a description of how the sages created the trigrams (sections one and two):

昔者聖人之作《易》也，幽贊於神明而生著，參天兩地而倚數，觀變於陰陽而立卦，發揮於剛柔而生爻，和順於道德而理於義，窮理盡性以至於命。昔者聖人之作《易》也，將以順性命之理，是以立天之道曰陰與陽，立地之道曰柔與剛，立人之道曰仁與義。兼三才而兩之，故《易》六畫而成卦。分陰分陽，迭用柔剛，故《易》六位而成章。

In the distant past the way the sage made the Changes is as follows: He was mysteriously assisted by the gods (神明 shenming, lit. ‘the numinous and the bright’) and so initiated the use of yarrow stalks. He made Heaven three and Earth two and so provided the numbers with a basis. He observed the changes between yin and yang and so established the trigrams. As the trigrams are begun and are dispersed through the movement of the hard and soft lines, he initiated the use of such lines. He was in complete accord with the Dao and with Virtue (德 de), and the principles involved conform to rightness. He exhausted principles to the utmost and dealt thoroughly with human nature, and in doing so arrived at the workings of fate (命 ming).

In the distant past, the way the sages made the Changes was as follows: It was to be used as a means to stay in accord with the principles of nature [性 xing, i.e. the intrinsic nature of something] and of fate. It was for this reason that they

determined what the Dao of Heaven was, which they defined in terms of yin and yang, what the Dao of Earth was, which they defined in terms of soft and hard, and what the Dao of Man was, which they defined in terms of benevolence and righteousness. They brought these three powers [三才 san cai] together and doubled them; this is why the Changes forms its hexagrams out of six lines. They provided yin allotments and yang allotments, so their functions alternate between soft and hard; this is why the Changes forms its patterns out of six positions.

(Adapted from Lynn 1994: 119–120)

Section one establishes the cosmological validity of the trigrams by rooting their initial creation as symbols in sagely observation of the patterns of nature, as similarly described in the *Appended Phrases I* discussed above. Here, though, the emphasis is less upon the analogical mapping of appearance onto inner nature than upon the trigrams as models of cosmic processes. Indeed, the purpose of the *Zhou Yi* is here described as the creation of ‘a means to stay in accord with the principles of [inner] nature and of fate’ (以順性命之理 *yi shun xing ming zhi li*). The trigrams thus not only allow an understanding of inner natures across space but also an understanding of how these change over time; time and space are thus united via a common set of principles, the effects of which are elaborated in the hexagrams. This is seen in the very structure of the hexagrams, read as proceeding from bottom to top; as Lin (1995: 94–95) puts it, in the *Yi Jing* ‘[t]he meaning of a time is a function of [a hexagram line’s] position, the significance of a position also depends on time. A certain position will be a place at a certain time.’

The sentence Lynn translates as ‘[the sage] was in complete accord with the Dao and with Virtue, and the principles involved conform to rightness’ is translated by Ziporyn (2012: 244) as ‘[h]armonizing [the change between *yin* and *yang*, hard and soft] to make it comply (和順 *heshun*) with the (human) Dao and its Virtue, they separated into coherent groups what was appropriate to each (理於義 *li yu yi*).’ Ziporyn’s translation is more instructive, both because it better conveys the use of 理 *li* here as a verb, which might be most effectively rendered as ‘to make subject to a principled order’ or simply, ‘to principle’, and because it adheres more closely to the rhythm of the Chinese (the sage observes and establishes, then develops and creates, then harmonises and ‘principles’). What Lynn translates as ‘rightness’, 義 *yi*, should be taken in the sense of appropriateness, the grounds upon which ‘principling’ makes the most sense. This is, incidentally, morally appropriate given that moral virtue is presented in the *Yi Jing* as human accordance with cosmic principle (see Chapter Three). Implicit here is the tripartite conception of the cosmos as comprising the realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity

made explicit in section two; Ziporyn (2012: 244) describes this as a ‘two-termed “pendulum range”...in three parallel realms’, each of which has its own *Dao* or ‘course’ the sustainability of which depends on a ‘dyadic alternation’. Accordance with the inherent nature of things is thus presented as the pursuit of benevolence (仁 *ren*) and righteousness (義 *yi*) in harmony with the ebb and flow of their Heavenly and Earthly counterparts, *yin* and *yang* and soft and hard. Ziporyn argues that what I termed above the ‘principling’ of things consists in the emergence of coherence across the three realms. Each trigram thus expresses a particular configuration of these realms, and the six lines of a given hexagram correlate with the duality of *yin* and *yang* across the three realms. It follows once again that the trigrams and hexagrams refer both to manipulable symbols and cosmic phenomena. As demonstrated by the further text of *Explaining the Trigrams*, the trigrams-as-phenomena may be understood as cosmic principles; the hexagrams, containing within them information concerning the three realms and both aspects of their dyads, may be understood as particular configurations of cosmic principles at specific spatiotemporal points. The three realms can be understood as a scientific predicative analogy, in which optimum action in the Human realm can be determined based on the configurations of *yin/yang* and soft/hard in the Heavenly and Earthly realms. Once again, knowing the appropriate human action requires a metaphoric operation in which the relationships between *yin* and *yang* and hard and soft are substituted for that between benevolence and righteousness, but what constitutes appropriate human action is a metonymic function of the configuration of Heaven and Earth.

The character of trigrams-as-phenomena as cosmic principles is well illustrated by sections three to five of *Explaining the Trigrams*:

天地定位，山澤通氣，雷風相薄，水火不相射，八卦相錯。數往者順，知來者逆，是故《易》逆數也。

雷以動之，風以散之，雨以潤之，日以烜之，艮以止之，兌以說[悅 *yue*]之，乾以君之，坤以藏之。

帝出乎震，齊乎巽，相見乎離，致役乎坤，說[悅]言乎兌，戰乎乾，勞乎坎，成言乎艮。萬物出乎震，震東方也。齊乎巽，巽東南也，齊也者、言萬物之絜齊也。離也者、明也，萬物皆相見，南方之卦也。聖人南面而聽天下，嚮明而治，蓋取諸此也。坤也者、地也，萬物皆致養焉，故曰：致役乎坤。兌、正秋也，萬物之所說也，故曰：說[悅]言乎兌。戰乎乾，乾、西北之卦也，言陰陽相薄也。坎者、水也，正北方之卦也，勞卦也，萬物之所歸也，故曰：勞乎坎。艮、東北之卦也。萬物之所成終而所成始也。故曰：成言乎艮。

神也者、妙萬物而為言者也。動萬物者莫疾乎雷，撓萬物者莫疾乎風，燥萬物者莫熯乎火，說萬物者莫說乎澤，潤萬物者莫潤乎水，終萬物、始萬物者、莫盛乎艮。故水火相逮，雷風不相悖，山澤通氣，然後能變化，既成萬物也。

乾，健也；坤，順也；震，動也；巽，入也；坎，陷也；離，麗也；艮，止也；兌，說也。

As Heaven (Qian, Pure Yang) and Earth (Kun, Pure Yin) establish positions, as Mountain (Gen, Restraint) and Lake (Dui, Joy) reciprocally circulate material force [氣 qi], as Thunder (Zhen, Quake) and Wind (Sun [Xun], Compliance) give rise each to the other, and as Water (Kan, Sink Hole) and Fire (Li, Cohesion) do not fail to complement each other, the eight trigrams combines with one another in such a way that, to reckon the past, one follows the order of their progress, and, to know the future, one works backward through them. Therefore, the Changes allow us to work backward (from the future) and reckon forward (from the past).

It is by Thunder that things are caused to move, by Wind that they are dispersed, by the Rain that they are moistened, by the Sun that they are dried, by Restraint that they are made to stop, by Joy that they are made happy, by Pure Yang that they are provided with a sovereign, and by Pure Yin they are harbored [sic].

The Divine Ruler (帝 di)¹⁹ comes forth in Zhen (Quake) and sets all things in order in Sun [Xun] (Compliance), makes them visible to one another in Li (Cohesion, i.e. Sun, Fire), gives them maximum support in Kun (Pure Yin, i.e. Earth), makes them happy then in Dui (Joy), has them do battle in Qian (Pure Yang), finds them thoroughly worn out in Kan (Water Hole), and has them reach final maturity in Gen (Restraint). The myriad things come forth in Zhen; Zhen corresponds to the east. They are set in order in Sun [Xun]; Sun corresponds to the southeast. "Set in order" means that they are fresh and neat. Li here means brightness. That the myriad things are made visible to one another here signifies that this is the trigram of the south. The fact that the sage (king) faces the south to listen to the whole world and that he turns toward the brightness there to rule is probably derived from this. Kun here means the Earth. The myriad things all are nourished to the utmost by it. This is why it says: "gives them maximum support in Kun." Dui here means autumn at its height, something in which the myriad things all find cause to rejoice. This is why it says: "makes them happy in Dui. (As for) "has them do battle in Qian," Qian here is the trigram of the northwest, so this signifies where yin and yang exert pressure on each other. Kan here means water. It is the trigram of due north. It is the

¹⁹ My informants' understandings of *Eight Trigrams cosmology* are not theistic. For example, in their book Ma and Chang (2013: 127) gloss 'the Divine Ruler' (帝 di) as the modern Chinese 天帝 *tiandi*, translatabe as 'celestial ruler', which they elaborate as the hexagram *Qian* (extreme *yang*), understood as a cosmic principle (i.e. *Qian*-as-phenomenon in my terminology) representing Heaven (*tian*), the prosperous *yang qi* of which gives rise to the Ten Thousand Things. That is, whereas Lynn's translation suggests a personal divinity (whether a god-emperor or transcendent personal creator), Ma and Change present this as a metonym for an original creative *yang qi*.

trigram of wearisome toil. It is here that the myriad things all find refuge. This is why it says: “finds them thoroughly worn out in Kan.” Gen is the trigram of the northeast. It is here that the myriad things reach the end of their development. This is why it says: “has them reach final maturity in Gen.”

As for the numinous [神 shen], it is the term used for that which invests the myriad things with the marvel of what they are and do. Of things that make the things move, none is swifter than Thunder. Of things that make the myriad things bend, none is swifter than the Wind. Of things that make the myriad things dry, none is a better drying agent than Fire. Of things that make the myriad things rejoice, none is more joy giving than the Lake. Of things that moisten the myriad things, none is more effective than Water. Of things that provide the myriad things with ends and beginnings, none is more resourceful than Restraint. This is why Water and Fire drive each other on, why Thunder and Wind do no work against each other, and why “Mountain and Lake reciprocally circulate.” Only in consequence of all this can change and transformation take place, thus allowing the myriad things to become all that they can be.

Qian (Pure Yang) means strength and dynamism, Kun (Pure Yin) means submissiveness and pliancy; Zhen (Quake) means energizing; Sun (Compliance) means accommodation, Kan (Water) means pitfall; Li (Cohesion) means attachment; Gen (Restraint) means cessation; Dui (Joy) means to delight.

(Adapted from Lynn 1994: 120–122)

Here, the trigrams are set out in sequence, suggesting a fundamental natural process of endless generation and regeneration (Redmond & Hon 2014: 150). Sections three and four refer to the trigrams metonymically via the natural phenomena with which they are associated. As Ziporyn (2012: 244–245) points out, section three presents the trigrams as four contrasting pairs with certain functions, and section four describes the specific function of each trigram-as-phenomenon. He rightly argues that the correlates of each trigram are not obviously derivable from the three-line symbols themselves, but many of them pertain to the natural phenomena outlined in sections three and four. Thus Water (i.e. the trigram *Kan*), referred to metonymically in section four as ‘rain’ (雨 *yu*) which ‘moistens’ (潤 *run*), in section seven is described as a ‘pitfall’ or, in Ziporyn’s translation, ‘danger’ (陷 *xian*); as he argues, neither meaning is easily discernible from the trigram symbol, but both are properties of water. *Explaining the Trigrams* thus classifies various groups of experiential phenomena metonymically according to trigram. Some of these correlates are tabulated in **FIG. 1. 7**; *Explaining the Trigrams* goes on to list many more, including far more specific groups such as kinds of horse and qualities of tree.

Trigram	<i>Qian</i> ☰	<i>Kun</i> ☷	<i>Gen</i> ☶	<i>Dui</i> ☱	<i>Zhen</i> ☳	<i>Xun</i> ☴	<i>Kan</i> ☵	<i>Li</i> ☲
Natural Form	Heaven 天 <i>tian</i>	Earth 地 <i>di</i>	Mountain 山 <i>shan</i>	Lake 澤 <i>ze</i>	Thunder 雷 <i>lei</i>	Wind 風 <i>feng</i>	Water 水 <i>shui</i>	Fire 火 <i>huo</i>
Action	Ruling 君 <i>jun</i>	Storage 藏 <i>cang</i>	Restraint 止 <i>zhi</i>	Pleasing 說[悅] <i>yue</i>	Setting in motion 動 <i>dong</i>	Dispersal 散 <i>san</i>	Moistening 潤 <i>run</i>	Drying 恒 <i>heng</i>
Direction	North-west	(South-West)	Northeast	(West; the height of autumn)	East	South-east	North	South
Quality	Strength 健 <i>jian</i>	Compliance 順 <i>shun</i>	Cessation 止 <i>zhi</i>	Delight 說[悅] <i>yue</i>	Energising 動 <i>dong</i>	Entering 入 <i>ru</i>	Pitfall 陷 <i>xian</i>	Attachment 麗 <i>li</i>
Animal	Horse	Ox	Dog	Sheep	Dragon	Chicken	Pig	Pheasant
Body Part	Head	Stomach	Hand	Mouth	Foot	Thigh	Ear	Eye
Family Member	Father	Mother	Youngest Son	Youngest Daughter	Eldest Son	Eldest Daughter	Middle Son	Middle Daughter

FIG. 1. 7 SELECTED CORRELATES OF THE TRIGRAMS IN SECTIONS FOUR TO NINE OF *EXPLAINING THE TRIGRAMS*

A further point must be made here concerning metaphor and metonymy. The discussion so far in this chapter has focused on the interdependence of the two devices, and this interdependence is crucial to understanding the correlates laid out in *Explaining the Trigrams*. Leach (1976: 15) argued that the designations ‘metaphor’ and ‘metonymy’ are approximately equivalent to symbol/sign, paradigmatic association/syntagmatic chain, and harmony/melody. Whilst this conception is valuable, it can obscure the degree to which relationships of metaphor and metonymy are functions of perspective and scale. Considering vertical categories in FIG. 1. 7, a Leach-inspired view of the table might conclude that the metaphorical relationship exists between a trigram-as-symbol and the members of its column, such that it may be substituted for them (*Qian*-as-symbol for Heaven, for example). Likewise, the relationship between any horizontal dyad may be substituted for its vertical counterparts (Heaven is to Earth as ‘ruling’ is to ‘storage’); this may extend to the substitution of the relationships between the components of an entire row for those between the components of another (the relationships between all natural forms for the relationships between all actions, for example). This tells us about the relationship between members of experiential classes (i.e. classes of entities generally perceived as of a type, such as animals; rows in FIG. 1. 7), but not about the relationship between members of trigram classes (columns). To understand these, we must recognise that, from a taxonomic point of view, columns and vertical dyads may be similarly related metaphorically. Thus, *Qian* and all members of its class may substitute for *Kun* and all members of its class from the perspective of taxonomic structure, as in the scientific predicative analogy illustrated in FIG. 1. 6. As such, in Jakobson’s terms, relations of similarity

may be found along both axes; vertically, similarities (and grounds for substitution) consist of an element's belonging to a trigram category (any *Qian-Kun* dyad can substitute for another, e.g. Heaven : Earth :: ruling : storage), and horizontally, similarities consist of elements belonging to an experiential category (e.g. Heaven : ruling :: Earth : storage).

However, the fact that the components of a given trigram column can be predicted by those of another indicates that, although in cognitive manipulation *Qian*-as-symbol can substitute for any of the *Qian* column's elements, the relationship that exists *within* a column in **FIG. 1. 7** is one of metonymy; that is, each column comprises a contiguous group composed of a natural form, an action, a direction, and so on. As such, following Fernandez (1986c: 44), the relationships within categories are akin to those between cause and effect and part and whole. Thus, the metonymic category *Qian* corresponds to *Qian*-as-phenomenon, a real-world class of co-occurrent phenomena. Such metonymy is spatial; referring back to sections three to five of *Explaining the Trigrams*, they are also positioned in a sequence of generation and regeneration. This complicates the structure illustrated in **FIG. 1. 7** further, indicating a temporal metonymy along the horizontal plane, analogous to melody but accompanied by metonymic continuity in the vertical (spatial) plane. This, though, takes us to a different scale, as the metonymic category on the horizontal plane comprises all eight trigrams, which on this level cease to be the relevant taxonomic category as they themselves represent stages of transformation of a larger category, the cosmos itself. This is important, but diverges from the present discussion; it will be returned to in Chapter Six.

At this point, we arrive at another of the central questions of this thesis, which can be put here in terms the role similarity and difference play in correlative cosmology. *Explaining the Trigrams*, taken alone, is ambiguous in terms of how far it can help answer this question, particularly considering that it predates the wholesale adoption of a systematised cosmology based on universal *qi* constantly transforming in a cycle of Five Phases. It does, however, illustrate the problem very effectively, and so provides a useful basis from which to proceed to exploring how it plays out in contemporary divination and correlative cosmology more generally. Here, it is worth considering Ziporyn's (2012: 245–249) analysis of coherence in the categories we have been discussing. He argues that the horizontal categories tabulated in **FIG. 1. 7** should be understood as 'coherent wholes' each composed of eight points, which balance one another. These coherent wholes all follow analogous arrangements, and may contain within themselves other coherent wholes; the coherent whole of the animal kingdom, for

example, contains the coherent whole 'horses', different kinds of which are grouped according to the trigrams *Qian*, *Zhen*, and *Kan* in sections eleven, thirteen, and fifteen. Horizontal coherences, moreover, comprise groups which may be *experienced as* natural kinds. This is not especially problematic.

The problem arises, as Ziporyn acknowledges, when we turn to the 'vertical coherences'. He argues that the trigram groups are based on 'relations of parallelisms of position and function' (2012: 246, emphasis removed); among animals, for example, the ox is 'compliant' and 'earthlike' (easily domesticated and used to plough) and therefore *Kun*. Similar coherent relationships exist – or would have existed for the text's authors – between each element of a trigram category and the qualities of the trigram-as-phenomenon to which it is metonymically related. Ziporyn argues that whilst it may be tempting to then identify each member of a trigram category as instantiating a particular quality or essence, this is made problematic by nested coherences, such as that of horses within animals. Horses as animals are *Qian*, but a horse that is 'good at neighing' (善鳴 *shan ming*) is *Zhen*. The question is whether the neighing horse is thus somehow *both Qian and Kun*, or whether, as Ziporyn argues, which it is is a function of its horizontal coherence – *Qian* with respect to animals as a whole but *Zhen* with respect to horses as a whole. In this conception, '[h]orses are not first Qianlike and then included in the class Qian. Rather, by being put into parallelism with other Qian items, and assuming a position within the coherent whole of the animal kingdom, horse [sic] manifests Qian-ness' (2012: 248). Ziporyn's argument presents itself as opposed to the notion that the trigrams are held to somehow describe natural kinds the members of which 'instantiate a form of universal' (2012: 246); in his view, they are implicitly human-imposed terms describing relational properties which facilitate organising phenomena coherently. It should be borne in mind here that his comments form part of a larger argument much of which rests on the contention that an explicit concern with sameness and difference is alien to traditional Chinese thought, which he sees as concerned with 'coherence', in opposition to the tradition of Western philosophy, broadly conceived. Regarding the trigrams, as he puts it, '[s]ameness is a function of coherence, not the other way around' (2012: 247). I suggest that the inverse is true, and present three objections. The first two concern the trigrams as human-imposed, but do not preclude their relational contingency. They do, however, suggest that the trigrams somehow describe natural kinds, which renders the relational perspective more complicated. The third concerns the knowability of the cosmos.

First, considered in terms of the account given in sections two and eight of the *Appended Phrases I* discussed above, the view of human-imposed relational categories is at odds with the description of the trigrams' derivation from direct observation of natural patterns and consequent accordance with cosmic principles. Even considered in relation to *Explaining the Trigrams* alone, it is rather undermined by the account given in sections one and two; if the movements of lines are derived from observations of the ebb and flow of *yin* and *yang*, and the trigrams and hexagrams are to be used to effectively accord with the inherent nature of things, then they must sufficiently resemble natural kinds of phenomena. Second, as the foregoing discussion of the hexagram *Bo* established, appropriate human action is *predictable*; it is hard to see how this could be tenable if a hexagram, and by extension its component trigrams, are not considered to accurately reflect the state of the cosmos at a given spatiotemporal juncture. Both of these objections assume that, for analogical reasoning to be practically effective (in the manner these accounts present it to be), on some level *genuine similarity* must exist between metonymically related phenomena.

Nonetheless, Ziporyn's point about trigram-ness being a function of context cannot be easily dismissed, especially when, as he points out, we consider the status of horses in *Explaining the Trigrams*. His point here is similarly well-illustrated by his example of the trigram *Dui*, whose metonymic correlates include 'delight', 'sheep', and 'mouth' (see FIG. 1. 7). He concludes that the connection between the three is not one of resemblance but of harmonisation; the three terms go together 'because "lamb" is "pleasing" to the human "mouth"' (Ziporyn 2012: 247). These arguments suggest a fractality of coherences on the horizontal plane – hence a horse can be *Qian* in one category and *Zhen* in another, in each case being identified as such not because it has a *Qian* or *Zhen* essence (or is of a kind), but because by being placed in a particular configuration of entities it manifests *Qian*-ness or *Zhen*-ness (2012: 248). Thus, the horse is 'only locally coherent', its 'global coherence [being] restricted to seeing the totality [of all contexts] as a totality only, and in connection with the disambiguating decisions of the sages in making these particular connections' (2012: 248, emphasis original).

This is all well and good if we are concerned with human perception alone; the problem – my third objection - arises when, unlike Ziporyn, we consider the author(s) of *Explaining the Trigrams* as cosmologists whose concern is not simply describing relational properties but, as has been shown, knowing via the trigrams that which is *unknowable* to ordinary human perception; an obvious corollary of something unknowable to human perception is that it may

not make obvious sense, regardless of its actual correspondence with cosmic reality. None of Ziporyn's arguments – even that concerning the delights of lamb consumption – rules out the possibility that however bizarre the connections between trigram-category members may seem, the reason that trigram-category coherences work is that their members all share a set of common characteristics or embody a certain cosmic principle or configuration. Such a view implies a vertical fractality as well as a horizontal; that is, in addition to the nesting of, say, horses within animals, *Qian* can also be nested into *Kun* depending on the scale of phenomenon being considered. It will be recalled that sections three to seven of *Explaining the Trigrams* describe a process of transformation, each phase of which is embodied in a trigram. If this is taken to work across scales, it follows that each phase of the cycle may be subdivided into analogous phases, such that phase *Qian* may proceed diachronically through stages of *Zhen*-ness, *Xun*-ness, *Li*-ness and so on. This view preserves both the relational properties of the trigrams *and* allows for their existence as 'real' cosmic principles. Our friends the horses in this view take on a hierarchy of trigram-ness. As an animal, a horse embodies *Qian*-ness as an inherent characteristic, *but* this *Qian*-ness itself can be subdivided into *Zhen*-ness, *Xun*-ness and so on at different scales. Thus, considering a group of horses, whilst all are *Qian* entities, keeping in mind this *Qian*-ness stepping down a scale, those which are good at neighing possess a more *Zhen*-like *Qian*-ness. Likewise, keeping in mind the metonymic character of each trigram category, this point may be phrased in terms of *Zhen*-as-phenomenon *causing* good neighing in horses, and *Qian*-as-phenomenon *producing* horses among animals. So actually, *contra* Ziporyn, a horse that neighs well *is* both *Qian* and *Kun*. The *Qian*-ness of all horses is simply not relevant when considering a particular horse in relation to other horses; what is relevant is the particular trigram-ness of that *Qian*-ness. Trigram-ness is thus both absolute *and* a function of scale; exactly what scale of trigram-ness is *relevant* depends on the purposes of the observer. Admittedly, *Explaining the Trigrams* alone does not provide sufficient exegesis to confirm either interpretation. It has, however, revealed some of the problems involved in dealing with sameness and difference in correlative cosmology, and thereby set the stage for further discussion in relation to the predictive act in contemporary Eight Trigrams Prediction (Chapter Two), contemporary epistemological concerns involving the hexagram Images (Chapter Three), and the role of continuity, discontinuity and cosmogony in the ontology of contemporary and early Chinese correlative cosmology (Chapters Five and Six).

Conclusions

This chapter has presented a number of arguments concerning analogies and categories in the *Yi Jing*, and in so doing laid the conceptual groundwork for further analysis in subsequent chapters. I began by exploring Tambiah's (1985) distinction between conventional persuasive and scientific predicative analogies, both of which I showed to be integral to an understanding of hexagram Images. Conventional persuasive analogy constitutes the means by which the *Yi Jing* advises on normative action on the part of an individual, but the reason why such normative action is appropriate to a given situation is explicable via scientific predicative analogy. Having established this, I moved on to discuss how analogical reasoning is presented in the *Appended Phrases*; Images are conceived as being derived analogically from the observation of outer appearances, and can then be used to know the otherwise unknowable inner natures of things. This amounts to an epistemological distinction between appearance and inner nature, but assumes an underlying ontological continuity between the two. At the same time, the *Yi Jing* presents a distinction between tri-/hexagrams as cosmic phenomena and tri-/hexagrams as symbols. Drawing on this, I distinguished between tri-/hexagrams-as-phenomena and tri-/hexagrams-as-symbols, the former of which refer to natural kinds of cosmic principle and the latter to the cognitive devices by which the properties of the former are mapped onto unknown situations.

I followed this with a discussion of metaphor and metonymy, defined according to Jakobson (1956) in terms of relations of similarity and contiguity. Combined with Durham and Fernandez's (1991) analysis of the interplay of metaphor and metonymy, this was integrated with the two forms of analogy to produce a model for understanding how hexagram Images function. Ultimately, the appropriate action of the inquirer, ego, in a given situation is predictable via a scientific predicative analogy based on the correlates of a hexagram's component trigrams. Proximately, from the perspective of ego, these correlates are applied to the situation via a conventional persuasive analogy, in which the hexagram-as-symbol (itself comprising two trigrams-as-symbols) is metaphorically substituted for the situation in question (here the pair ego/circumstances). This facilitates the metonymic incorporation of the situation into an existing category of hexagram-as-phenomenon. This category is itself structured as a scientific predicative analogy; the correlates of each of a hexagram's component trigrams are related metonymically, but each trigram category may be metaphorically substituted for another in terms of its structural composition.

Finally, in dialogue with Ziporyn's (2012) discussion of coherence in the *Yi Jing*, I examined the nature of trigram categories as presented in *Explaining the Trigrams*. We saw first that this text conceives the trigrams and hexagrams as tools for keeping in accordance with the inner nature of things and as means of knowing both space and time, and that the trigram and hexagram diagrams, considered as comprising referents to the three realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity, also constitute scientific predicative analogies, as knowledge of the first two realms facilitates appropriate action in the third. Turning to the phenomena that this text groups according to trigram, I built on the argument made in the previous section to demonstrate that whilst trigrams may metaphorically substitute for any member of their categories, and whilst the *relationship* between analogous members of two or more trigram categories may be metaphorically substituted for that between other analogous members of the same categories, members of a single trigram category are not related metaphorically but metonymically. However, from the point of view of taxonomy, the structure of any trigram category can be substituted for another. This led to a discussion of the role of similarity and coherence within trigram categories. I argued that, when considered in light of the *Yi Jing* as a whole and the cosmological concerns of *Explaining the Trigrams*, members of a given trigram category can be taken as sharing inherent characteristics providing that trigram transformation is taken to occur fractally. This interpretation allows the trigrams to function as cosmic principles of change whilst also preserving their relational character, as from the perspective of an observer a phenomenon's relevant trigram-ness is a function of scale.

Having established that hexagrams function via a process of metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation, that they may be taken as conventional persuasive or scientific predicative analogies depending on perspective, and that members of trigram categories (and by extension hexagrams) embody shared, fractally-ordered cosmic principles the relevance of which shifts according to the concerns of an observer, we are in a position to examine the process of prediction in practice. This is the subject of the next chapter.

2 Six Lines Prediction: Metonymic Classification and Reducing Meaning

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed in detail the role of metaphor and metonymy in the *Yi Jing* text, along with their role in its interpretation via conventional persuasive and scientific predicative analogies. These operations allow an unknown or inchoate situation to be metaphorically substituted by a hexagram-as-symbol, and thus incorporated metonymically into a category of hexagrams-as-phenomena. This process constitutes the overarching principle of Eight Trigrams Prediction, and is common to all its schools. However, in practice the methods of prediction can be far more intricate, depending on the particular practice. In this chapter I will discuss the method of Six Lines Prediction (*liu yao yuce*) used by my informant Master Tao and his students.

I provide an overview of the information yielded and methods used in Six Lines Prediction, followed by further cosmological principles directly relevant to it and frequently employed in hexagram interpretation. This is followed by a theoretical discussion with reference to two case studies of predictions made by Master Tao in August and September 2015. This builds on the argument of the previous chapter, focusing on cognitive aspects of analogical transfer to view Six Lines Prediction as an operation of classification; from the predictor's perspective, previously unknown client situations are rendered knowable in terms of cosmological principles. This is followed by an examination of how the massive number of potential interpretations of a hexagram is systematically reduced via accounting for contingent variables such as the time of prediction and specific information elicited from the client. Finally, the means by which correlates are selected is framed in terms of relevance theory.

Hexagrams and *Qi*

Chapter One established that the trigrams of the *Yi Jing*, considered as trigrams-as-phenomena, refer to cosmic principles and that hexagrams-as-phenomena constitute particular

spatiotemporal configurations of such principles. Before proceeding to examine the methods of contemporary Six Lines Prediction, something must be said concerning how these understandings of trigrams are elaborated in this practice. Most important is the accommodation of the *Yi Jing*'s system of trigrams and hexagrams into a cosmology based on *qi* and the Five Phases, as discussed in the thesis Introduction. To understand how this relates to the hexagrams, it is necessary to explain the concept of the *qi*-field (氣場 *qichang*), which refers to the configuration of *qi* at a particular spatiotemporal point. The *qi*-fields of different objects and situations can thus affect one another by virtue of their proximity; a Water object will have a 'conquering' effect on a Fire object, for example. *Qi* is not confined to 'physical' objects; thought and emotion are themselves considered functions of *qi* transformation, an understanding which should be borne in mind throughout the discussion of Six Lines Prediction. The dynamics of *qi* and its ontological and epistemological implications are complex, and discussion of these will be reserved for subsequent chapters.

For the purposes of this chapter, the foregoing comments should be sufficient. What remains to be said is how this relates to the act of prediction. Prediction is based on the derivation of a hexagram, typically by throwing coins. The way in which the coins falls is held to be determined by the local *qi*-field. As such, throwing the coins provides a means of determining the *qi*-configuration of the cosmos at a given spatiotemporal point, and this is expressed as a hexagram; in this sense, like signs in other divination systems, the hexagram is a 'metonymic field', a device or schema 'that invite[s] the attribution of pattern and interpretive narrative' (Sneath 2009: 79; see also Devisch 1991) and is causally connected to the cosmos as a whole. The spatiotemporal point is thus identified as a member of a category of hexagrams-as-phenomena. An understanding of how *qi* is configured according to the Five Phases allows further interpretation of the hexagram than that limited to the trigrams only. At this point it becomes harder to explain this further without recourse to detailed examples; before turning to these, I provide an overview of the prediction method and additional concepts concerning hexagrams and the Five Phases, as they pertain to Six Lines Prediction.

The Method

The *Yi Jing* text is not physically referred to during prediction – in fact, it is perfectly possible to conduct predictions based on a familiarity with the hexagrams and their correlates and cosmology only, acquired via a teacher or a popular manual (whilst not the case for those informants with whom I am most concerned, many roadside predictors will never have read

the original text). Indeed, Master Tao criticises simple consultation of the text as too vague and difficult to interpret – as will be seen, Six Lines Prediction is capable of yielding far more specific predictions. As shown in the previous chapter, the most useful content of the *Yi Jing*, aside from the vital trigrams and hexagrams and their correlates, is found in the *Ten Wings*' systemisation of the content of the *Zhou Yi*. Similarly, Ma Jianglong, whose methods differ from Tao's and are discussed in Chapter Three, described such direct consultation of the text as 'extremely amateur' (非常初級的 *feichang chuji de*). For him, the *Yi Jing* provides the basis, but a true practitioner has fully absorbed its wisdom and is able to practice without constant reference to it.



FIG. 2. 1 MASTER TAO'S EQUIPMENT: THREE REPLICA QIANLONG COINS IN A BOWL HE DECORATED WITH THE *TAIJI* SYMBOL AND EIGHT TRIGRAMS, A HOLLOW TURTLE SHELL, A TEN THOUSAND YEAR CALENDAR (萬年曆 *wan nian li*), AND A FOLDER CONTAINING A CHART OF THE EIGHT PALACES, PREDICTION NOTES, AND A BOOKLET OF PHYSIOGNOMIC DIAGRAMS.

Six Lines Prediction is typically carried out using coins, a simplification of the original method based on the manipulation of yarrow stalks (著草 *shicao*), which is detailed in the *Appended Phrases I*, section nine. The coin method is considerably faster and thus more practical for roadside use, taking about a minute. Six Lines Prediction is ideally conducted using Qing-dynasty Qianlong Emperor coins (r. 1735-1796) or replicas thereof, which are printed on one side in Manchu script and on the other in Chinese. The *qian* character in the reign name *Qianlong* 乾隆 is the same as the name of the first Hexagram (乾), consisting of six unbroken (*yang*) lines, itself composed of two *Qian* trigrams. The coins are round with a square hole in the centre, for stringing, this combination of shapes representing Earth's (地 *di*)

encompassment by Heaven (天 *tian*), as well as the union of being (有 *you*) and non-being (無 *wu*) or fullness (實 *shi*) and void (虛 *xu*) (Robin R. Wang 2012: 57–8).

The coins may be shaken in a freshwater turtle shell – Master Tao uses one given to him by a former student – though clients may also, and often do, simply use their hands. The turtle shell is cosmologically significant, and has been used in divination since at least the Shang dynasty (c.1600-1046 B.C.), though not in the same way. The shell’s segments correspond to cosmological referents. A round carapace over a square plastron again symbolises Heaven’s encompassment of Earth. FIG. 2. 2 shows the cosmological correlates of the carapace and plastron (images by Yang Denggui (n.d., n.d.), from Yang Haoran 2014). The three central segments of the carapace correspond to Heaven, Humanity, and Earth. These are surrounded by a ring of ten segments symbolising the Ten Heavenly Stems (天干 *tiangan*), and a further outer ring of twenty-four small segments representing the twenty-four Solar Terms (節氣 *jieqi*). The plastron (Earth) consists of twelve main segments corresponding to the twelve Earthly Branches (地支 *dizhi*), the spaces for the turtle’s legs (clockwise from top right as shown in FIG. 2. 2) representing the four seasons, Spring (春 *chun*), Summer (夏 *xia*), Autumn (秋 *qiu*), and Winter (冬 *dong*).

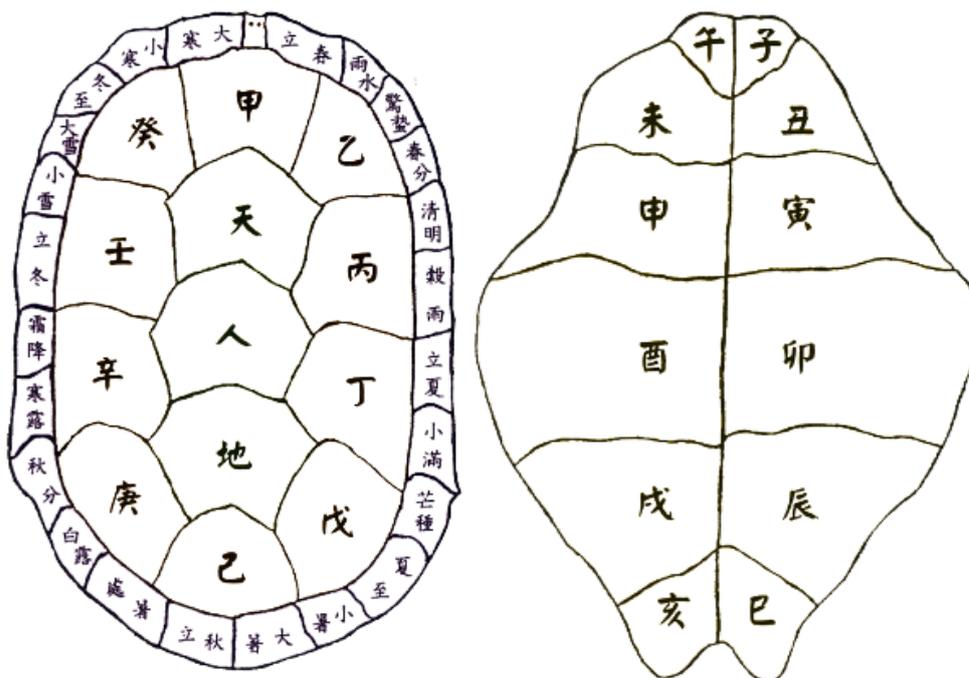


FIG. 2. 2 COSMOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF THE FRESHWATER TURTLE CARAPACE (LEFT) AND PLASTRON (RIGHT) (IMAGES BY YANG DENGGUI (N.D., N.D.); SOURCE: YANG HAORAN 2014).

The three coins are placed in the hollow shell, ideally from the head end; the shell is shaken, and the coins are dropped via the tail opening (though the specifics are not especially important). The combination of Manchu and Chinese coin sides specifies the type of line, which may be *yang* (solid), old *yang* (老陽 *laoyang*, solid changing to broken), *yin* (broken), or old *yin* (老陰 *laoyin*, broken changing to solid). Master Tao's written explanation of the method is as follows:

用中国清朝乾隆钱三只，用双手握住摇动丢下，有满文的为准，一个满文为一点，二个为两点，三个为一圈，三个都是“乾隆通宝”者为一 X，一点为阳，二点为阴。一圈为阳，一 X 为阴，一圈为阳动，主过去之事，一 X 为阴，主未来之事，每一卦为六次称为六爻。前三次为下卦，后三次为上卦，然后上、下两卦点出卦名。

*Use three Chinese Qianlong coins. Using both hands, shake the coins and drop them. Take the Manchu script as standard. One Manchu [side] gives one dot ['], two give two dots ["], three give a circle [o], three all reading 'Qianlong tongbao 乾隆通宝' [in Chinese characters] give an X. One dot is yang, two dots are yin, a circle is yang, an X is yin. A circle is yang moving [i.e. old yang changing to young yin], and governs past events. An X is yin [old yin changing to young yang], governing future events. Each hexagram [卦 *gua*] constitutes [this being done] six times, and this is called the six lines [爻 *yao*]. The first three times are the lower trigram [卦 *gua*], the second three times are the upper trigram. Then the upper and lower trigram marks yield the hexagram name.*

Master Tao cautions clients before they consult him, explaining to them that they should not cast a hexagram without good reason – they 'should not calculate chaotically' (不要亂算 *bu yao luan suan*), as discussed further in Chapter Four. In brief, 'chaotic prediction' is held to be by definition inaccurate as a result of lack of care or concentration on the part of the inquirer. For the same reason, one ought not to cast a hexagram if one does not believe in its effectiveness. In Master Tao's words, if you treat the hexagrams as a joke (玩笑 *wanxiao*), they will treat you as one (this should not be taken to indicate that the *Yi Jing* or hexagrams possess some sort of intentionality).

Having established that the client has a genuine problem, or having failed to persuade them otherwise, Master Tao will tell them to throw the coins – but with the proviso that they 'say nothing' (一點也不說 *yidian ye bu shuo*) about what they are asking. The client throws the coins six times, sometimes waiting to be prompted, and Master Tao records the results using the dots, circles, and crosses, from bottom to top. This is followed by a silence of several

minutes whilst Master Tao establishes the Generation and Resonant lines (see below), and annotates the hexagram lines with their corresponding Earthly Branches, *Yongshen* referents, and Six Beasts (these terms are explained in the following section). Having done this, he turns toward the client, typically raising a pointed finger and bringing it down as he issues his opening comment, before leaning back and usually grinning or looking grave. Typically he begins with a general statement about the hexagram, such as its name or whether it is a hexagram of Six Accordances or Six Conflicts (see below), or he suggests the topic of the enquiry. Occasionally, the hexagram will reveal several potential issues, in which case he will ask the client directly what they are enquiring about. He will often ask for the client's year of birth, as this provides a broad indication of their fate (命 *ming*); this is governed by a particular Phase and therefore important in determining exactly which phenomena will be beneficial or detrimental to the client, and in what ways (see below). In certain cases, Master Tao will calculate a client's Eight Characters (*bazi*), corresponding to the year, month, day, and hour of their birth, for a more detailed framework of their fate as part of the Six Lines Prediction (usually this is a separate service as it deals with events on a different scale). The time spent explaining the prediction typically varies with the complexity of the issue – a simple question concerning, say, recovery from a minor ailment or the best time for a meeting, will take five to twenty minutes. Complex or more serious questions can take considerably longer, depending in part on how much time Tao is willing to devote to the client or if there are others waiting, as well as how well he knows them. The content of each prediction is different, and depends very much on the specific questions asked by the client following casting the hexagram.

Although my focus in this chapter is the way in which Master Tao interprets hexagrams, it is important also to briefly outline the behaviour of clients during predictions. Regular clients are familiar with the method, and those who come back frequently often understand certain relevant principles to varying degrees. However, Master Tao also attracts many passers-by, who typically have no prior knowledge of Six Lines Prediction, and often consult him out of interest. To them, Master Tao will explain the procedure of throwing coins, usually without prompting. Some clients make the mistake of explaining their question first – though Tao is usually quick enough to tell them not to before they start. Clients who do not seem to have a serious question tend to be discouraged (see Chapter Four). Clients typically sit quietly on one of Master Tao's commandeered crates, beer kegs, or folding stools, and wait for him to finish writing. They usually wait for him to speak first, and, especially if they are unfamiliar with the procedure, tend to be reactive in asking questions about his interpretation. Frequent regulars,

such as Little Fang, whose relationship with Tao is now one of friendship, may join in the interpretation as well. Typically, though, clients demonstrate little emotional reaction to predictions themselves, particularly those which simply present more or less auspicious times and locations for action – but they are often emotive about the issues under discussion (usually they are worried). Once Master Tao has explained a certain amount, the client may spend the rest of the time asking additional questions, some of which may require further interpretation. They tend to leave once they have a specific answer – a small range of dates or an auspicious direction, perhaps, or the ideal birth date of a potential partner. Occasionally clients will continue to discuss the issue until a queue starts to build up (this is rare, although roadside prediction frequently attracts an audience); in these situations, Master Tao will make very clear that there are other people waiting.

Before turning to specific case studies of predictions in order to examine the process of reasoning involved, it is first necessary to introduce some important principles relevant to Six Lines Prediction.

Basic Principles

The principles introduced here build on those concerning trigrams and hexagrams described in Chapter One. These are integral to the methods of Eight Trigrams Prediction known as ‘Added Stem Divination’ (納甲筮法 *najia shifa*), one of which is Six Lines Prediction as examined here. These principles stem ultimately from the integration of the *Yi Jing* into a cosmology based on the Five Phase cycle of *qi*, a process described in more detail in Chapter Six. The principles illustrated here are those which Master Tao referenced most frequently during his consultations, and which he explained to me in detail. There are many more principles of interpretation based on the relationships between Earthly Branches, hexagram lines, the calendrical system, and so on, which Tao also uses. I make no claim to expertise on the art of Six Lines Prediction; popular and classical manuals typically run into the hundreds of pages, and writing about the interpretive process has required further post-fieldwork communications with Master Tao, along with the consultation of manuals and numerous Internet searches, as analysis of every aspect of every line reveals yet further exceptions, obscured relationships, changes, and so on. So the following is by no means exhaustive; for a standard comprehensive manual recommended by Master Tao, see the Qing-dynasty work

Bushi Zhengzong (《卜筮正宗》 *Orthodox Divination*) by Wang Hongxu 王洪緒 (Wang Hongxu & Sun Zhengzhi 2012).

Before going through these principles, something should be said about the relationship between time and space in Eight Trigrams cosmology, and its fundamental relevance to prediction. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the *Yi Jing* presents the trigrams as descriptors of both time and space; in Six Lines Prediction, this space-time continuum is maintained and elaborated, the object of prediction, knowable via a hexagram, being a cosmic configuration transforming over time. Indeed, Wu (1995: 18) sees this ‘spatiotemporal interpenetration’ as fundamental to the ‘predominantly historical and metaphorical’ tendencies of traditional Chinese thought in general. Thus it makes more sense, as in modern physics, to speak of ‘space-time’ as the object of cosmological theory; the Mandarin for ‘cosmos,’ 宇宙 *yuzhou*, literally means ‘space-time,’ and ‘cosmology’ may be glossed as either ‘space-time discourse’ (宇宙論 *yuzhoulun*) or, with a meaning closer to ‘worldview,’ ‘space time view’ (宇宙觀 *yuzhouguan*). This conception of space-time in the cosmologies of my informants is most simply considered a cycle of spatially-distributed *qi* continuously transforming through Five Phases. As *qi* is spatial and temporal, the terms used to describe its variation describe both aspects of the cosmos. I turn now to the terms with space-time is described in Six Lines Prediction.

The Eight Palaces

Six Lines Prediction organises the *Yi Jing*’s sixty-four hexagrams into eight groups, known as the Eight Palaces (八宮 *ba gong*). Each hexagram here is referred to by its name in the *Yi Jing*, preceded by the natural phenomena correlated with each component trigram. For example, the hexagram *fu* 《復》 ☱☷ (see FIG. 2. 3 below), composed of *Zhen* 震 below, denoting Thunder (*lei*), and *Kun* 坤 above, denoting Earth (*di*), is referred to in practice as *di lei Fu* (《地雷復》), a trend also apparent in popular publications on the *Yi Jing* and its associated predictive systems. According to the Eight Palaces system, each Palace is headed by a ‘pure’ hexagram (純卦 *chun gua*); these are simply the eight hexagrams created by doubling the trigrams, so *Qian* ☰ (*Qian* ☰ above and below), *Kun* ☷ (*Kun* ☷ above and below) and so on. The Palaces are arranged in the Later Heaven sequence based on their associated cardinal direction, beginning with *Qian* in the northwest and working clockwise around the compass; according to the Song scholar Zhu Xi, attributing it to Shao Yong, this sequence is based on section four of *Explaining the Trigrams* (see Chapter One), ordering the trigrams according to

their transformative cycle (Nielsen 2003: 107–110). The seven additional hexagrams in each Palace are classified based on line-by-line alterations to the original. They are arranged according to which line in the hexagram is the ‘Generation line’ (世爻 *shi yao*; translation following Nielsen 2003: 211), which represents ego (本人 *ben ren*, i.e. the client). This is complemented by a Resonant line (應爻 *ying yao*), which occupies the same relative position in the other component trigram. The Resonant line represents, in Master Tao’s words, ‘the subject of the enquiry’ (所問的事情 *suo wen de shiqing*) or the ‘opposite party’ (對方 *duifang*). For example, in the hexagram *Fu*, the first (bottom) line is the generation line, and the fourth is the resonant line:

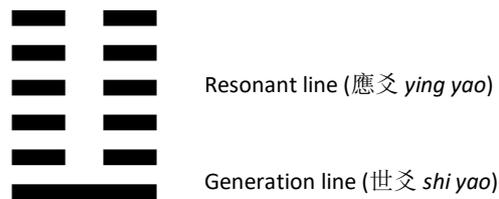


FIG. 2.3 ‘GENERATION’ AND ‘RESONANT’ LINES OF THE HEXAGRAM *FU*

FIG. 2.4 below shows Master Tao’s own chart of the Eight Palaces, along with their associated Earthly Branches, which are discussed in the next section.

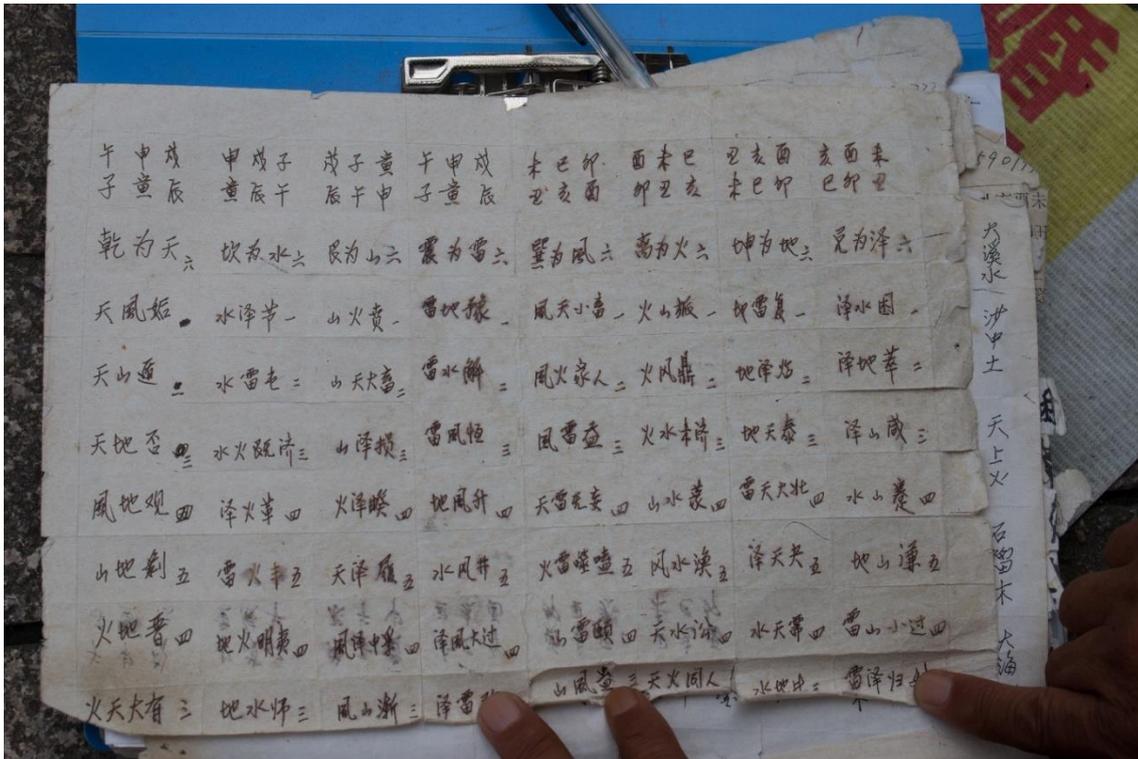


FIG. 2. 4 MASTER TAO'S CHART OF THE EIGHT PALACES, ALONG WITH THE EARTHLY BRANCHES OF EACH TRIGRAM (AT THE TOP) AND THE NUMBER OF EACH HEXAGRAM'S GENERATION LINE (AT THE LOWER RIGHT OF EACH HEXAGRAM NAME)

The Earthly Branches

The Twelve Earthly Branches (十二地支 *shi'er di zhi*) are a key component of the Lunar Calendar (in combination with the Ten Heavenly Stems 十天干 *shi tian gan*) and integral to the system of correspondences used for hexagram interpretation. In combination with the Heavenly Stems they provide a framework for describing cyclical change through space and time. Each line in a hexagram is associated with a fixed Earthly Branch – these are set for each component trigram, depending on whether it is the inner (内 *nei*, i.e. bottom) or outer (外 *wai*, i.e. top) trigram. Examples of this are given in Fig. 2. 5 for the hexagrams *Shi* 《師》 ䷆ and *Bi* 《比》 ䷇. Despite sharing constituent trigrams, the two hexagrams have completely different Earthly Branches because their positions are reversed.

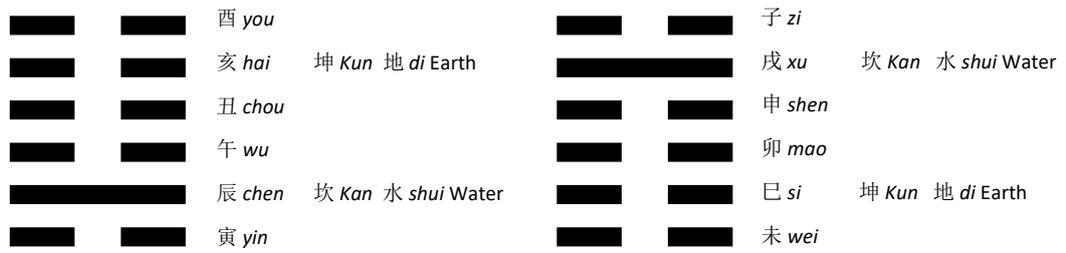


FIG. 2. 5 EARTHLY BRANCHES OF THE *SHI* AND *BI* HEXAGRAMS

In addition to their use in the hexagrams, the Earthly Branches are also part of the fundamental theory of *fengshui*, and, as described to me by a *fengshui* master in the nearby city of Jiaxing, are held to be derived from the relationship between the orbits of Earth and Jupiter (which completes an orbit approximately once every twelve Earth years), Jupiter’s influence being the largest of all the planets’ owing to its size. They are associated with the Five Phases and the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac (生肖 *sheng xiao*), along with cardinal directions, lunar months, and times of day. Note the fact that their association with both months and times of day suggests equivalent processes of change occurring on different temporal scales. The correlates of the Earthly Branches are illustrated below in Fig. 2. 6. These correlates are crucial in making predictions, as will be shown. As with the trigram correlates presented in Fig. 1. 7, the correlates of each Branch are metonymically related, and the same metaphorical operations may be applied.

Branch	子 zi	丑 chou	寅 yin	卯 mao	辰 chen	巳 si	午 wu	未 wei	申 shen	酉 you	戌 xu	亥 hai
Phase	水 shui water	土 tu earth	木 mu wood	木 mu wood	土 tu earth	火 huo fire	火 huo fire	土 tu earth	金 jin metal	金 jin metal	土 tu earth	水 shui water
Animal	鼠 Shu Mouse	牛 Niu Ox	虎 Hu Tiger	兔 Tu Rabbit	龍 Long Dragon	蛇 She Snake	馬 Ma Horse	羊 Yang Sheep	猴 Hou Monkey	雞 Ji Chicken	狗 Gou Dog	豬 Zhu Pig
Direction	正北 zheng- bei True North	東北 dong- bei North- east	東北 dong- bei North- east	正東 zheng- dong True East	東南 dong-nan South- east	東南 dong- nan South- east	正南 zheng- nan True South	西南 xi- nan South- west	西南 xi- nan South- west	正西 zheng- xi True West	西北 xi- bei North- west	西北 xi- bei North- west
Lunar Month	十一月 shiyi yue 11	十二月 shier yue 12	正月 zheng yue 1	二月 er yue 2	三月 san yue 3	四月 si yue 4	五月 wu yue 5	六月 liu yue 6	七月 qi yue 7	八月 ba yue 8	九月 jiu yue 9	十月 shi yue 10
Time	11p.m.- 1a.m.	1a.m.- 3a.m.	3a.m.- 5a.m.	5a.m.- 7a.m.	7a.m.- 9a.m.	9a.m.- 11a.m.	11a.m.- 1p.m.	1p.m.- 3p.m.	3p.m.- 5p.m.	5p.m.- 7p.m.	7p.m.- 9p.m.	9p.m.- 11p.m.

FIG. 2. 6 CORRELATES OF THE TWELVE EARTHLY BRANCHES

The Earthly Branches have further significance beyond these correlations. Relationships of conflict and harmony exist between pairs of Branches, notably including (but not at all limited

to) the Six Conflicts (六冲 *liu chong*) and Six Accordances (六合 *liu he*). These relationships are important in determining the overall auspiciousness of a hexagram, as they reveal potential conflicts and accordances in a person's life. They also serve as the basis for assessing marriage compatibility through their correspondence with zodiac animals; a person born in the year of the horse, for example, corresponds with the Earthly Branch 吳 *wu*, and thus will be a good match for someone born in the year of the pig (corresponding to 亥 *hai*), but incompatible with someone born in the year of the mouse (corresponding with 子 *zi*). The Six Conflicts and Six Accordances are illustrated in FIG. 2. 7 below.

The Six Conflicts (Conflict between each horizontal pair)		The Six Accordances (Accordance between each horizontal pair)	
子 <i>zi</i>	午 <i>wu</i>	子 <i>zi</i>	丑 <i>chou</i>
丑 <i>chou</i>	未 <i>wei</i>	寅 <i>yin</i>	未 <i>wei</i>
寅 <i>yin</i>	申 <i>shen</i>	卯 <i>mao</i>	申 <i>shen</i>
卯 <i>mao</i>	酉 <i>you</i>	辰 <i>chen</i>	酉 <i>you</i>
辰 <i>chen</i>	戌 <i>xu</i>	巳 <i>si</i>	戌 <i>xu</i>
巳 <i>si</i>	亥 <i>hai</i>	午 <i>wu</i>	亥 <i>hai</i>

FIG. 2. 7 THE SIX CONFLICTS AND SIX ACCORDANCES

The Yongshen Referents

In Six Lines Prediction, five types of relationship are identified as being interpretable from a hexagram, each line concerning one of them (thus a hexagram may contain two lines dealing with the same aspect). These are termed the 用神 *yongshen*, renderable in English as 'miraculous referents,' and are taken as the 'principal' (主 *zhu*) correlates of the hexagram lines. These five referents are expressed by the following terms: 'Father and Mother' (父母 *fumu*), 'Sons and Grandsons' (子孫 *zिसun*), 'Officials and Ghosts' (官鬼 *guangui*)¹, 'Wives and Wealth' (妻財 *qicai*), and 'Brothers' (兄弟 *xiongdi*). What is referred to by each is by no means limited to the content of these terms; rather, these terms serve as metonyms for ego's

¹ Note that, despite the name of this referent, 'ghosts' and other supernatural entities *never* figure in Six Lines Prediction as practised by Master Tao.

relationships with any given person, entity, or situation. The character of the relationship in question is derived from classical Confucian hierarchy, hence the androcentric emphases on sons, grandsons, and brothers. Thus, for example, if ego is female, ‘Officials and Ghosts’ also designates her husband or male partner, as in Confucian ethics a wife should be subservient to her husband as a commoner is to an official or, in today’s usage, an employee is to her employer (this corresponds with the doctrine of the Three Followings described in Chapter Three). The link with ‘Ghosts’ derives from the fact that both officials and ghosts are capable of exerting power and thus potentially harm on ego. If ego is male, then his wife or female partner will be denoted by ‘Wives and Wealth,’ both of which occupy a similar relation to him in this system (for a discussion of how this system deals with homosexual relationships, see Chapter Three).

These relations are not limited to those between persons. For example, the category ‘Father and Mother,’ according to Master Tao, fundamentally describes a protective relationship toward ego (對我有保護的 *dui wo you baohu de*), and thus among other things may also refer to clothing, vehicles, and, interestingly, writing (文字 *wenzi*) – practically, in the form of writing produced by ego and perhaps instrumental to solving a particular problem, such as the form completed to access medical treatment in Example Two below (or, in the case of one prediction Master Tao conducted for me, this thesis). Which hexagram line corresponds to which referent depends on the Phase of the hexagram and the Phases of its constituent lines. The hexagram Phase is derived from that of the Pure Hexagram of its Palace in the Eight Palaces categorisation. These are shown in **FIG. 2. 8** below.

Palace 宮 <i>gong</i>	Qian 乾	Kan 坎	Zhen 震	Gen 艮	Xun 巽	Li 離	Kun 坤	Dui 兌
Phase 行 <i>xing</i>	Metal 金 <i>jin</i>	Water 水 <i>shui</i>	Wood 木 <i>mu</i>	Earth 土 <i>tu</i>	Wood 木 <i>mu</i>	Fire 火 <i>huo</i>	Earth 土 <i>tu</i>	Metal 金 <i>jin</i>

FIG. 2. 8 GOVERNING PHASES OF THE EIGHT PALACES

Recall that each line of a hexagram has a corresponding Earthly Branch (see ‘The Earthly Branches’ above), and that each Earthly Branch corresponds with a Phase (see **FIG. 2. 6** above). The particular aspect discernible from a given hexagram line is a direct function of the Phase relationship between that line’s Earthly Branch and the Palace to which the entire hexagram belongs. The relationships were described to me by Master Tao as follows:

生我者為父母，
 我生者為子孫，
 克我者為官鬼，
 我克者為妻財，
 比我者為兄弟。

*That which produces [the Palace Phase] is Father and Mother,
 That which [the Palace Phase] produces is Sons and Grandsons,
 That which conquers [the Palace Phase] is Officials and Ghosts,
 That which [the Palace Phase] conquers is Wives and Wealth,
 That which is comparable with [the Palace Phase] is Brothers.*

This is demonstrated below for the Hexagram Qian 乾 ☰, the Palace Phase of which is Metal.

	Earthly Branch	Phase	Yongshen Referent
☰	戌 <i>xu</i>	土 <i>tu</i> Earth	父母 <i>fumu</i> Father and Mother
☰	申 <i>shen</i>	金 <i>jin</i> Metal	兄弟 <i>xiongdi</i> Brothers
☰	午 <i>wu</i>	火 <i>huo</i> Fire	官鬼 <i>guangui</i> Officials and Ghosts
☰	辰 <i>chen</i>	土 <i>tu</i> Earth	父母 <i>fumu</i> Father and Mother
☰	寅 <i>yin</i>	木 <i>mu</i> Wood	妻財 <i>qicai</i> Wives and Wealth
☰	子 <i>zi</i>	水 <i>shui</i> Water	子孫 <i>zisun</i> Sons and Grandsons

FIG. 2. 9 EARTHLY BRANCHES, PHASES, AND YONGSHEN REFERENTS FOR THE HEXAGRAM QIAN

The Phase relationships here, from bottom to top, are as follows: Metal produces Water, so the first line is Sons and Grandsons. Metal conquers Wood, so the second line is Wives and Wealth. Metal is produced by Earth, so the third line is Father and Mother. Fire conquers Metal, so the fourth line is Officials and Ghosts. Metal and Metal are comparable, so the fifth line is Brothers. Metal is produced by Earth, so the sixth line is Father and Mother. The *Yongshen* referents are thus relational products. As all relations are products of the interaction of different Phases of *qi*, the referents of each metonymic *Yongshen* category are homologues. Hence, if one knows which types of *qi* will interact, as shown above, one knows on which relationships to focus. We can also see here that the cosmology at play has a fractal structure² – even though Palace hexagrams are characterised by a particular Phase, they ‘contain’ within themselves other Phases, and so on. These interact with the Palace phase to produce the particulars of a given hexagram and the *Yongshen* referents to which it is relevant.

² This fractality is simply indicated in the *taiji* symbol ☯, in which *yin* and *yang* are held to contain a small amount of the other within themselves.

The Six Beasts

The ‘Six Beasts’ (六獸 *liu shou*), also known as the ‘Six Spirits’ (六神 *liu shen*) are a further set of correlates which are instrumental in determining the auspiciousness of a prediction. According to Master Tao, they have an ‘auxiliary function’ (輔助的作用 *fuzhu de zuoyong*) in interpretation, allowing the determination of particular aspects of the client’s life which are especially problematic or prosperous. The Six Beasts correspond to each line of the hexagram, beginning at the bottom and going up. They have a fixed sequence, but the Beast which begins the sequence varies based on the day’s Heavenly Stem according to the Lunar Calendar, illustrated in FIG. 2. 10 below. Of these, the Green Dragon is, generally speaking, especially auspicious and the White Tiger inauspicious. These are not always referred to in prediction, but are noted as every situation involves these effects.

Sequence (from the bottom to the top of the Hexagram)	Beast	Days on which it begins the sequence, designated by Heavenly Stem
1	青龍 <i>qinglong</i> Green Dragon	甲乙 <i>jia, yi</i>
2	朱雀 <i>zhuque</i> Vermillion Bird	丙丁 <i>bing, ding</i>
3	勾陳 <i>gouchen</i> Qilin ³	戊 <i>wu</i>
4	騰蛇 <i>tengshe</i> Winged Snake	己 <i>ji</i>
5	白虎 <i>baihu</i> White Tiger	庚辛 <i>geng, xin</i>
6	玄武 <i>xuanwu</i> Dark Tortoise	壬癸 <i>ren, gui</i>

FIG. 2. 10 THE SIX BEASTS

Calendrics

The Lunar Calendar (農曆, *nongli* lit. ‘agricultural calendar’) is divided into twelve months, each correlated with an Earthly Branch (see FIG. 2. 6), and involves twenty-four Solar Terms (節氣 *jieqi*), which in prediction practices are used as orientation markers for when changes are likely to occur. However, these twelve months, in addition to their set Earthly Branch correlates, also operate as part of sixty-month cycles, which are in turn part of sixty-year cycles and comprise sixty-day cycles. This system is known as the Sexagenary Cycle (六十花甲 *liushi huajia*), and is constructed at its most basic level from the combination of Heavenly Stems (numbering ten) and Earthly Branches (numbering twelve). The Phase relationships of the Earthly Branches describe changes over time as well as in space, as discussed above, and thus may be used to

³ A mythical beast with antlers, hooves, and scales, frequently (if rather oddly) translated into English as ‘unicorn’.

deduce auspicious and inauspicious occasions for conducting certain activities. Moreover, the cycles of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches play a limiting role in terms of the scope of predictions. This is because in each cycle of Heavenly Stems, there will be two Earthly Branches which have no pair. When this occurs in the sixty-day cycle, such days are considered 'empty' (空 *kong*), and because of this, if their Earthly Branches appear in a Hexagram as Lines, those lines could be considered irrelevant (the issue is more complicated, but this suffices for the examples discussed below). The Heavenly Stems are taken as the standard of the cycle, as shown in **FIG. 2. 11** below. This is based on the cycle of days, not months, in which the prediction occurs.

	Stem Sequence (name of sequence is highlighted, i.e. <i>jiazi</i> , <i>jiaxu</i> , <i>jiashen</i> etc.)										Empty Branch	
Stem	甲 <i>jia</i>	乙 <i>yi</i>	丙 <i>bing</i>	丁 <i>ding</i>	戊 <i>wu</i>	己 <i>ji</i>	庚 <i>geng</i>	辛 <i>xin</i>	壬 <i>ren</i>	癸 <i>gui</i>		
Branch	子 <i>zi</i>	丑 <i>chou</i>	寅 <i>yin</i>	卯 <i>mao</i>	辰 <i>chen</i>	巳 <i>si</i>	午 <i>wu</i>	未 <i>wei</i>	申 <i>shen</i>	酉 <i>you</i>	戌 <i>xu</i>	亥 <i>hai</i>
Stem	甲 <i>jia</i>	乙 <i>yi</i>	丙 <i>bing</i>	丁 <i>ding</i>	戊 <i>wu</i>	己 <i>ji</i>	庚 <i>geng</i>	辛 <i>xin</i>	壬 <i>ren</i>	癸 <i>gui</i>		
Branch	戌 <i>xu</i>	亥 <i>hai</i>	子 <i>zi</i>	丑 <i>chou</i>	寅 <i>yin</i>	卯 <i>mao</i>	辰 <i>chen</i>	巳 <i>si</i>	午 <i>wu</i>	未 <i>wei</i>	申 <i>shen</i>	酉 <i>you</i>
Stem	甲 <i>jia</i>	乙 <i>yi</i>	丙 <i>bing</i>	丁 <i>ding</i>	戊 <i>wu</i>	己 <i>ji</i>	庚 <i>geng</i>	辛 <i>xin</i>	壬 <i>ren</i>	癸 <i>gui</i>		
Branch	申 <i>shen</i>	酉 <i>you</i>	戌 <i>xu</i>	亥 <i>hai</i>	子 <i>zi</i>	丑 <i>chou</i>	寅 <i>yin</i>	卯 <i>mao</i>	辰 <i>chen</i>	巳 <i>si</i>	午 <i>wu</i>	未 <i>wei</i>

FIG. 2. 11 THE STEM SEQUENCES AND 'EMPTY' BRANCHES

Thus, on any day appearing in the ten day cycle beginning *jiazi* (top two rows of **FIG. 2. 11**), hexagram lines corresponding with the Earthly Branches *xu* and *hai* will be 'empty' and could thus be irrelevant to the prediction. Likewise, in the next cycle of ten days, beginning *jia xu* (the same *xu* that was not included in the previous *jiazi* cycle and thus 'empty'), *shen* and *you* are unpaired and 'empty.'

Six Lines Prediction in Practice: Two Cases

Having laid out some of the basic principles necessary for an understanding of the process of hexagram interpretation, in this section I will illustrate how these principles play out in practice. The primary focus is on Master Tao's interpretation and the cognitive operations involved in drawing conclusions from hexagrams. These examples are based on notes taken whilst observing casting and interpretation, along with post-prediction discussions with Master Tao. It must be remembered that predictions typically last no more than twenty minutes or so, a time limited by client satisfaction with the information provided, or Master Tao's willingness to provide further details. This massively limits the amount of information divulged⁴, meaning that the majority of correlations and their details go unremarked, the emphasis being on the most salient. Example One presents a relatively general prediction based on a broad question concerning financial disputes. Example Two illustrates the great degree of complexity involved in answering specific queries with specific answers, in this case selecting dates for a hospital appointment. In both cases, as is typical, Master Tao annotated the hexagram, thus gaining some insight into the clients' situations, prior to them explaining with what they were concerned. In Example One, the interpretation of the situation as concerning personal wealth was arrived at by Master Tao without prompting from the client. In example two, however, the client explained her questions to Master Tao, and the more complex reasoning involved in his prediction is in part a function of searching for the relevant correlates within the hexagram.

Both examples give a flavour of the kind of operations Master Tao conducts when interpreting hexagrams. Example One demonstrates relatively broad conclusions that can be drawn from a hexagram, including general points about a client's health and a forecast regarding her current financial disputes across the next few years. Example Two demonstrates the degree of detail and range of variables based on correlates taken into account when arriving at highly specific predictions. Both case studies illustrate the interplay of various correlative series across scales, and their application to both spatial and temporal phenomena. Similarly, both indicate the capacity of these series to describe psychological and emotional states. Crucially both demonstrate that of the huge potential quantities of information contained within a hexagram, very little is actually used. Much is excluded from interpretation, which focuses on either the salient correlates of the Generation and Resonant lines (Example One) or the specific correlates relevant to a stated subject of enquiry (Example Two).

⁴ There are also ethical reasons for not divulging certain forms of information, discussed in Chapter Four.

Example One – A Question of Personal Wealth

The first of these cases comprises a prediction given to a passer-by, a woman with her young son. Master Tao's clients include many such one-off visitors (I do not know if she subsequently returned), some of whom have particular issues they wish to deal with, but also many who are interested in the *Yi Jing* or Eight Trigrams Prediction themselves, or are simply curious. The interpretation Master Tao gave here can be considered primarily diagnostic, using the hexagram to describe the dynamics of a current state of affairs, following the distinction between diagnostic and predictive divinatory modes made by Zeitlyn (2012). Prediction in this sense occurred only towards the end, based on the diagnosis.

The hexagram she cast was *Fu* ䷗. Master Tao described its overall meaning as 'overturning' (反過來 *fan guo lai*), indicating major change. Having obtained the hexagram via the method described above and annotated it, Master Tao wrote down the hexagram name together with the lunar date of the prediction, in this case the *yihai* 乙亥 day of the *jiashen* 甲申 month. As this is part of the *jiashen* cycle of days, the Earthly Branches *shen* and *you* lack a unique Heavenly Stem pairing, and are thus 'empty' (*kong*) – in this case this means that any hexagram lines corresponding with *shen* or *you*, along with their metonymic referents, are irrelevant to the client's concerns. Line six (at the top) is *you* 酉, and denotes Sons and Grandsons; anything existing in the Sons and Grandsons relationship to the client is thus of no relevance to this enquiry. The prediction notation is annotated and expanded in **Fig. 2. 12** below.

<i>Yongshen</i> Referent	Earthly Branch	Notation and Symbol	Line	Six Beasts	Referent of Six Beasts	Phase	Relationship with Palace Phase
Sons and Grandsons	<i>You</i> 酉	" --	Empty <i>空 kong</i>	Dark Tortoise	Thieves and Bandits <i>盜賊 daozei</i>	Metal	Earth produces Metal
Wives and Wealth	<i>Hai</i> 亥	" --		White Tiger	Inauspicious and Harmful <i>凶傷 xiongshang</i>	Water	Earth conquers Water
Brothers	<i>Chou</i> 丑	" --	Resonant <i>應 ying</i>	Winged Snake	False Alarm <i>虛驚 xujing</i>	Earth	Comparable
Brothers	<i>Chen</i> 辰	" --		Qilin	Worry/Anxiety <i>憂慮 youlü</i>	Earth	Comparable
Officials and Ghosts	<i>Yin</i> 寅	" --		Vermillion Bird	Quarrel <i>口舌 koushe</i>	Wood	Wood conquers Earth
Wives and Wealth	<i>Zi</i> 子	' —	Generation 世 <i>shi</i>	Green Dragon	Auspicious <i>吉祥 jixiang</i>	Water	Earth conquers Water

FIG. 2. 12 ANNOTATIONS FOR THE HEXAGRAM *FU* CAST ON THE *YIHAI* DAY OF THE *JIASHEN* MONTH. GENERATION AND RESONANT LINES ARE HIGHLIGHTED.

Along with recording the hexagram, Master Tao asked for the client's year of birth. In this case, it was 1977, the year of the Snake, *dingsi* 丁巳 in the Sexagenary Cycle. This means her fate, from the perspective of the year, is 'Earth in the Sand Fate' (沙中土命 *sha zhong tu ming*). Among other things, this knowledge allows Master Tao to assess which recent and upcoming years will be auspicious or inauspicious (see below).

In interpretation, particular attention is paid to the Generation and Resonant lines, in this case the first (bottom) line and the fourth line. Recall that the Generation line refers to ego, and the Resonant line to the subject of enquiry. Hence, the client's question in this instance concerned wealth in relation to 'Brothers'. Attention is also paid to the second line, as this is adjacent to ego. As such, the hexagram is also concerned strongly with the 'Officials and Ghosts' *Yongshen* referent. Regarding the latter, Master Tao interpreted the second line as revealing a health issue, illness (疾病 *jibing*) being part of the 'Officials and Ghosts' category of relationships. Specifically, in this instance the client should 'pay attention to the situation of her liver and gall

bladder' (注意肝膽方面 *zhuyi gan dan fangmian*). This is indicated by the fact that line two is in the Wood Phase, Wood conquers Earth (the fate Phase of the client – the fact that it is also the hexagram's Palace Phase is not relevant here), and in terms of organs, Wood metonymically classifies the liver and gall bladder (hence these are likely to cause problems). In terms of *qi*-field this means that the client is characterised by *qi* in the Earth Phase, which is detrimentally affected by the Wood Phase *qi* of these organs. Moreover, line two is associated with the Vermillion Bird, which has the moderately negative effect of 'Quarrels' (口舌 *koushe*), indicating an aspect of the client's current 'Officials and Ghosts' relationships.

The main question, however, concerns the client's personal wealth (財 *cai*), as this is the subject of the Generation line. This is because line one is the Earthly Branch *zi* 子, metonymic with Water, and Water is conquered by Earth, the Palace Phase of the hexagram; hence, in this hexagram, it refers metonymically to wealth. The Resonant line, meanwhile, indicates the issue of concern – the Brothers relationship. Master Tao explained that 'the Brothers [relationship] indicates the people contesting [the client's] wealth' (兄弟為爭財的人 *xiongdi wei zhengcai de ren*). He later explained to me that 'Brothers' indicates one's financial competitors because, in traditional Confucian kin relations, a man's wealth would posthumously be divided equally among his sons. From the information gleaned from the Generation and Resonant lines – Earth, the Resonant line, conquers Water, the Generation line - Master Tao drew the conclusion that '[the client's] wealth is currently not flourishing' (現在她的財是不旺的 *xianzai tade cai shi bu wang de*). However, the client does not currently harbour negative feelings towards her competitors – in fact, her 'disposition' toward them is 'calm and decent' (心態是平靜善良的 *xintai shi pingjing shanliang de*). This is because the Earthly Branches of the Generation and Resonant lines, *zi* and *chou* respectively, are 'in accord' (合 *he*) based on the system of Six Accordances.

Having established particulars of the client's current situation, Tao moved on to suggest a time-frame for her concerns' resolution. In this case, this is done based on her year of birth (see above). 2016-18 will be auspicious, as they will be Fire years, and Fire produces Earth (her fate), thus having a nurturing effect. However, she will need to pay close attention to the issues raised by the hexagram in 2019 – a Wood year, because Wood conquers Earth. Moreover, this year will be *sihai* 巳亥 in terms of the Sexagenary Cycle, and the Earthly Branch *hai* 亥 appears in the hexagram as metonymic with the White Tiger (line five), indicating

inauspiciousness and harm. Likewise, Master Tao surmised that 2013 had been a relatively bad year as it was Water, and Earth conquers Water, producing conflict (though not as serious as that brought by Wood, which conquers Earth).

Analogical Transfer and the Creation of Cosmic Intimacy⁵

In the previous chapter I argued that hexagrams function as both metaphors and metonyms as means of encompassing and incorporating new phenomena, creating a new familiarity with previously unknown aspects of the universe. Here, I argue that the potential of hexagrams to function in this way is borne out in practice, and in the case of Six Lines Prediction is not confined to the hexagram as a whole but exists as a potential of each line, granting access to an interpretive system of staggering complexity and apparent coherence. Hexagrams-as-symbols thus contain lines-as-symbols, and hexagrams-as-phenomena, lines-as-phenomena. We find in the metaphoric substitution of hexagrams- or lines-as-symbols what Fernandez (1986c: 31) describes as ‘the predication of a sign-image upon an inchoate subject.’ In this case, that subject is the situation in question, and the substitution of the hexagram-as-symbol, following Fernandez, provides its identity. This allows its metonymic encompassment and is thus the first step in knowing the situation. Following Durham and Fernandez’s (1991) description of metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation as rendering the unknown or target domain ‘intimate’ or knowable, from Master Tao’s perspective the act of prediction or diagnosis renders the client’s situation knowable according to cosmic principles – it creates cosmic intimacy.

The basic mechanisms of this process were described in the previous chapter and will not be reiterated here. However, it is worth briefly considering some further aspects of analogical transfer given that Six Lines Prediction is considerably more complex than the use of hexagrams in the *Yi Jing*. In dealing with a human predictor, rather than inferences from a text, further factors must be taken into account, particularly the experience and expertise of the predictor. In Example One, Master Tao is first presented with an unknown, the client’s situation. The subject of her enquiry remains unknown until after the hexagram has been derived and annotated. Hence, apart from his expectations based on previous predictions and his knowledge of the limits of Six Lines Prediction, all Master Tao has to go on is his structural knowledge of the hexagram. Recording each line as the coins are thrown, the hexagram-as-

⁵ Parts of this argument were made in a paper presented at EASA 2016 (Matthews 2016). I thank the panel participants and audience for the comments and suggestions which contributed to its refinement here.

symbol is substituted for the client's situation, an operation of analogical transfer in which its structure is mapped onto that of the target domain.

As Novick (1988) demonstrated via experiments with students of mathematics, experts at certain forms of problem-solving demonstrate more effective abilities of analogical transfer to similar problems than do novices. Specifically, her experiments revealed that unlike novices, experts engage in substantial positive (effective) transfer even when the source and target share structural but not superficial similarities. Experts' representations 'include abstract, solution-relevant (structural) features of a problem' (1988: 511) - that is, induced schemas which facilitate transfer more readily than direct analogue-to-analogue mapping (Gick & Holyoak 1983). It should be noted, though, that later work by Dunbar (2001) suggests that in naturalistic rather than experimental settings structural analogies are readily generated by experts and non-experts, providing they are generating their own analogies; he also found that subjects instructed to generate analogies based on a story they had read readily did so, as did those who anticipated the possibility of generating analogies provided that they were presented with thematic retrieval cues – that is, cues which emphasised the relational structure of the original story. However, Kretz and Krawczyk's (2014) study of economists in the setting of an academic reading group did suggest that expertise influences the ability of subjects to generate structural analogies; moreover, they observed frequent use of analogies in the form of real-world examples being presented as instances of theoretical models. The context of Six Lines Prediction lies somewhere between the laboratory and naturalistic contexts discussed in the literature. Whilst it is not an experimental situation, Master Tao does not generate his own analogies but rather works with a given repertoire of structural relations; in this respect, Six Lines Prediction resembles the experiments of Novick (1988) and Gick and Holyoak (1983) in that the predictor is presented with given source and target domains.

Based on this evidence, I suggest that Master Tao's expertise allows him to efficiently employ an abstract representation of the hexagram, the hexagram-as-symbol, to interpret the (initially) separate domain of the client's situation. In such a representation, the surface dissimilarities between the hexagram as a correlative model and the human minutiae of any situation of which a client may enquire are ignored. What is important is the structure of the hexagram as consisting of six elements positioned in specific relation to one another, together comprising a metonymic whole. It is this which is recorded by Master Tao, a written representation of the hexagram-as-symbol (written or mental representation of the real-world hexagram-as-

phenomenon would be as impossible as any other attempt to fully represent the external world). By mapping the structure onto the client's situation, Master Tao represents that situation as a metonymic whole comprising six elements, each defined as a class of objects of a specific *Yongshen* referent, related to one another in various ways determined by the interaction of various Phases of *qi*. Hence, for example, in Example One the client's financial competitors and wealth are understood via a direct mapping of the relationship of conquest between the hexagram-as-symbol's Resonant and Generation lines. As Boyer (1992: 202) points out, 'the application of a causal schema to any singular event or state of affairs presupposes the identification of those singular objects as belonging to certain types'. In this case, via the above-described operation of analogical transfer the client's situation is presupposed to belong to the same type as the referent of the hexagram-as-symbol; it is referred to an existing conceptual classification (Swancutt 2006). This, of course, is the natural category of hexagram *Fu*-as-phenomenon, of which the client's situation is now understood to constitute one instantiation. This natural category of *qi* configurations is thus expanded to accommodate this instance, classified via the creation of cosmic intimacy. This has a determinative effect on the subsequent diagnoses and predictions drawn concerning the situation, cosmic intimacy functioning as a classificatory schema which dictates and excludes certain associations (Fernandez 1986c: 44).

Such limitation of associations is necessary for an accurate prediction; the huge amount of information yielded by a single hexagram in Six Lines Prediction already provides an *excess* of potential interpretations about a given situation, which must be subject to selection by the predictor; how this is done is discussed in the next section. The hexagram-as-symbol can thus be divided into lines-as-symbols, and so on, which similarly function as association-limiting causal schemas. Indeed, whilst the hexagram-as-symbol is the source from which cosmic intimacy is created, Master Tao's primary focus is on the specifics of the component lines, their correlates, and their relationships with one another, rather than the general overall meaning of the hexagram. An exhaustive analysis of every instance of metaphor and metonymy in a given consultation would run to many pages, so I will confine my analysis here to particular lines and their correlates. Any analysis of a prediction beyond the superficial quickly reveals a fractal interpretive structure of metonymic categories within metonymic categories and their associated metaphors. I will refer to this tendency of metonymic systems as 'fractal metonymy.' This may be illustrated by a further look at Example One.

Each line belongs to a metonymic category based on its Earthly Branch, and each line category may be considered a subset of each hexagram category in which Earthly Branches and Phases are fractally reproduced (phenomena may be characterised by Branch and Phase on all scales, in the same way that I argued trigrams could be in Chapter One). The Earthly Branches are used as metaphors for particular aspects of the situation in question, and thus reveal those aspects as being part of ‘real’ categories; thus, just as we distinguished between hexagram-as-symbol and hexagram-as-phenomenon, so we may distinguish between Earthly Branch-as-symbol and Earthly Branch-as-phenomenon (a similar distinction may be made for every class within the correlative system, including, for example, the Five Phases and the *Yongshen* relationships). For example, line two in Example One refers to the *Yongshen* category ‘Officials and Ghosts.’ This is because line two is part of the Earthly Branch category *chou* 丑, which is related metonymically to the Wood Phase. This metonymic relation holds true for both symbolic and phenomenal categories; so, *chou*-as-symbol is metonymic with Wood Phase-as-symbol, and *chou*-as-phenomenon is metonymic with Wood Phase-as-phenomenon, owing to shared characteristics of their configurations of *qi*. Now, the hexagram in Example One, *Fu*, belongs to the *Kun* Palace, a category of eight hexagrams which, in determining the *Yongshen* relationships of each line, are metonymically related by a common Phase, in this case Earth. As we have seen, the Wood Phase ‘conquers’ the Earth Phase and thus in this hexagram line two denotes the *Yongshen* relationship ‘Officials and Ghosts.’ This category is itself metonymic, comprising all instances of a certain type of relationship with ego, all of which share a common causal mechanism based on the interaction between Phases of *qi*. In this case, that relationship is manifested as illness.

This all works very well in abstract interpretation, but what exactly is this interpretation referring to phenomenally? Recall that a hexagram-as-phenomenon is a particular spatiotemporal configuration of *qi*. This configuration comprises six main parts which are amenable to interpretation, denoted metaphorically by the hexagram lines-as-symbols. Each line denotes a particular configuration of *qi* within the larger configuration represented by the hexagram, and the relationship between the lines is a direct function of the relationships between their particular configurations of *qi*. These nested configurations are all relationally constituted. Thus in a *Kun* Palace hexagram, *Yongshen* relationships are contingent on the Phase relationship between each line’s Earthly Branch and the Earth Phase. This means that the overall configuration of *qi* in any given hexagram-as-phenomenon has a mutually

deterministic effect on the smaller-scale configurations of *qi* of which it is constituted (hexagram lines-as-phenomena). Moreover, a hexagram expresses the configuration of *qi* from a particular spatiotemporal perspective, that of the client. Thus the *Yongshen* relationships of a hexagram-as-phenomenon are a direct function of the interaction between ego's *qi*-field and all other *qi*-fields in the hexagram-as-phenomenon at all scales. So, for example, in a *Fu* situation, ego is subject to an 'Officials and Ghosts' relation from line two, resulting from *qi* configurations.

Ego is substituted metaphorically by the Generation line, and the 'opposite party' by the Resonant line. However, these substitutions result in metonymic encompassment such that, for example, in a situation of *Fu*-as-phenomenon, ego is part of the metonymic category line one-as-phenomenon, indicating specific relationships with *Fu*'s particular configuration of *qi*. It is worth distinguishing here between *absolute*, *semi-relative* and *fully relative* metonymy with respect to the Six Lines system. The metonymy of Phases and Earthly Branches is absolute – their metonymic categories are constant, so for example *chou* 丑 is always metonymic with Wood. Similarly, the metonymy of *Yongshen* relations is absolute (e.g. Officials and Ghosts is always metonymic with illness whether or not illness is relevant to the prediction in question), and is always the product of relations between the metonymically absolute Phases of line Branches and Palaces. However, the Six Lines system depends on the metonymic semi-relativity of ego and the 'opposite party' to the hexagram(s) in question (they are positioned differently, and thus belong to different metonymic categories of Earthly Branch and *Yongshen*, in each hexagram, but are metonymic absolutes for every instance of that hexagram – line two is *always* 'Officials and Ghosts' in *Fu*). In the next section, I will discuss examples of fully relative metonymy in terms of contingent variables in hexagram interpretation, such as date, fate, and the Six Beasts, none of which hold any absolute connection to particular hexagrams but which are connected absolutely to particular temporal points. To illustrate this, I first turn to a second example.

Example Two: Buying a New Shop and Making a Hospital Appointment

The following example is a prediction for a returning client. She had been to see Master Tao over half a year earlier, and he recognised her but could not place exactly who she was. However, he has a very good memory for predictions and I suspect that he thus considered this client's previous prediction in interpreting this hexagram. Master Tao had advised the client to come back to see him around the Spring Festival or Qingming festival; she explained

she had not had time until now (September, or the seventh lunar month), but returned because he was a good fortune-teller.

She asked about two issues – what to do about leaving her current shop and buying a new one, and when to schedule an operation. This example thus reveals two kinds of question, one simply of what will happen (will she secure a new shop?), and another concerning the optimum time for action (when to schedule the hospital appointment). The latter question, of course, is dependent on knowing what will happen (there will be an appointment), but the purpose of the hexagram is not to determine whether this will be the case but rather to align it auspiciously with cosmic processes. A greater emphasis on the predictive mode (Zeitlyn 2012) is evident here than in Example One. The client’s hexagram is detailed in **FIG. 2. 13** below. The hexagram she cast was *Tongren* 《同人》 ☱ (‘Fellowship’), composed of *Li* 《離》 ☲ below and *Qian* 《乾》 ☰ above, and belonging to the *Li* 《離》 Palace, thus being of the Fire Phase.

<i>Yongshen</i> Referent	Earthly Branch	Notation and Symbol	Line	Six Beasts	Referent of Six Beasts	Phase	Relationship with Palace Phase
Sons and Grandsons	<i>Xu</i> 戌	‘—	Resonant <i>应 ying</i>	Winged Snake	False Alarm <i>虛驚 xujing</i>	Earth	Fire produces Earth
Wives and Wealth	<i>Shen</i> 申	‘—	Empty <i>空 kong</i>	Qilin	Worry/Anxiety <i>憂慮 youlü</i>	Metal	Fire conquers Metal
Brothers	<i>Wu</i> 午	‘—		Vermillion Bird	Quarrel <i>口舌 koushe</i>	Fire	Comparable
Officials and Ghosts	<i>Hai</i> 亥	‘—	Generation <i>世 shi</i>	Green Dragon	Auspicious <i>吉祥 jixiang</i>	Water	Water conquers Fire
Sons and Grandsons	<i>Chou</i> 丑	“ --		Dark Tortoise	Thieves and Bandits <i>盜賊 daozei</i>	Earth	Fire produces Earth
Father and Mother	<i>Mao</i> 卯	‘—		White Tiger	Inauspicious and Harmful <i>凶傷 xiongshang</i>	Wood	Wood produces Fire

FIG. 2. 13 ANNOTATIONS FOR THE HEXAGRAM *TONGREN* CAST ON THE *GENGCHEN* DAY OF THE *JIASHEN* MONTH. GENERATION AND RESONANT LINES ARE HIGHLIGHTED.

In this hexagram, the object of the enquiry or the ‘opposite party’ (*duifang*) is the client’s ‘old’ (i.e. current) shop (老店 *laodian*), represented by the Resonant Line, which may be taken as

specifically representing the 'boss' (老闆 *laoban*). The Resonant line is considered in relation to the Generation line, which represents the client. The Phase relationship of these two lines forms the basis of the interpretation (the Palace Phase relationships serve simply to elucidate relationships identified by different lines, but in this case the fact that the Resonant Line represents the object of inquiry supersedes the fact that the line's Palace Phase points to Sons and Grandsons relationships, under which the client's relationship to the shop boss would not be classified). Similarly, the Phase relationship between client and opposite party as manifest in their fate is not of primary relevance here. Rather, Master Tao's interpretation is based on the relationship between the two lines' Earthly Branches and corresponding Phases. Here, the Generation line, representing the client, is *hai* 亥 and Water, whereas the Resonant line, representing the opposite party, is *xu* 戌 and Earth. Earth 'conquers' Water, and therefore 'the boss and [the client] are mutually destructive' (老闆對她是相剋的 *laoban dui ta shi xiangke de*). Master Tao also identified from the hexagram that the client was agitated about the situation (though she was obviously worried about it given the questions she raised), particularly regarding buying a third shop adjoining the new one in order to expand it. In a written description of certain aspects of the interpretation that he sent me three months later, after my return from Hangzhou, he noted that there is a saying that 'if the Generation Line is supported by Officials and Ghosts, it is hard [for ego] to be settled' (官鬼持世世難安 *guangui chi shi shi nan an*). His advice to the client was that she could safely abandon the old shop – she had been concerned that she was worrying too much about it. Moreover, Master Tao advised her to refrain from discussing buying the new shop for the next fifty days (a number presumably based on correlations within the hexagram), as the owners, also counting as an 'opposite party,' are in a similarly potentially destructive relationship with her. She should wait until business calmed down, and 'absolutely not worry, that shop is [hers]' (千萬不要著急, 這個店是你的 *qianwan bu yao zhaoji, zhe ge dian shi nide*).

The client's second question concerned selecting an auspicious date for an operation during the eighth month (a time-frame presumably designated by her doctor); Master Tao subsequently told me that in his experience, the combination of the Earthly Branches *mao* 卯 and *xu* 戌 (lines one and six) often indicates that the client is suffering from a tumour or cancer. In selecting the date for the operation, the same logic operates temporally as did in determining the specifics of the situation above. The reasoning here is complex, and involves an assessment of various Phase characteristics of the situation in question in order to select an auspicious date. In the hexagram, that an operation will take place is revealed by the first line

(at bottom), concerning the Father and Mother *Yongshen* referent. The logic here is that operations occur in hospitals which, as bureaucratic institutions, require the signing of forms in order to go ahead with an operation. As such, the crucial factor is Written Language (*wenzi*), which exists in the same *Yongshen* category as Father and Mother (and hence in homologous relation to ego)⁶. Moreover, in this hexagram on this day, the first line is identified with the White Tiger, suggesting something inauspicious and harmful, fitting the need for an operation. Master Tao advised the client to pay attention to this aspect, as the period from 8th September to 8th October (*dinghai* of the seventh month and *dingsi* of the eighth month), would involve ‘disputes’ (口角 *koujiao*) regarding wealth – i.e. having to pay a hospital bill (the Brothers *Yongshen*, associated with financial transactions, appears here with the Vermillion Bird, indicating quarrels).

In the Eight Lunar Month, the seventeenth is the day *bingshen* 丙申 in the Sexagenary Cycle, and is relevant to the enquiry as a possible date for a hospital appointment. On this day, financial loss (冲財 *chong cai*) will occur, and, given the nature of the enquiry, this will involve the payment of a hospital fee. The reasoning here extends several levels of complexity beyond what has been laid out in this chapter, but proceeds as follows. The hexagram shown in **FIG. 2. 13** was cast on a *chen* 辰 day; *chen*, according to the principle of Six Conflicts, conflicts with the Resonant line, *xu* 戌. When the day Branch conflicts with a line Branch, this is known as ‘hidden movement’ (暗动 *andong*), which causes the affected line to influence other lines (Wang Bingzhong 2010: 214–215). In this case, *chen* on line six accords with *mao* 卯 on line one, the line denoting hospital bureaucracy, which has the effect of producing Fire. Fire, in turn, conquers line five (Metal, *shen* 申), which here denotes wealth. Hence, on a *shen* day, money will be lost, making it appropriate for the appointment.

Meanwhile, for the Generation line to ‘move’ (動 *dong*), i.e., for what it denotes to occur, a day is required with a destructive relationship with its Earthly Branch, *hai* 亥 (Water). Such are *si* 巳 days, which conflict with *hai* but accord with *shen* (line five). The Generation Line should be ‘produced’ (*sheng*) in the seventh or eighth Lunar Months. The fact that this line ‘faces’ (臨 *lin*) the Green Dragon indicates this will bring a ‘happy event’ (喜慶之事 *xiqing zhi shi*). As such, the Generation line may change on the *guisi* 癸巳 day. The Resonant line (subject to ‘hidden

⁶ Note that Master Tao did not relate it to Officials and Ghosts, which would typically be identified with ‘illness’ (*jibing*) itself, not the bureaucracy associated with a medical procedure.

movement') is caused to move on the day of consultation, which in combination with line one produces Fire, indicating a conflict with line five (wealth). As such, a *shen* day will have the effect of financial loss (hospital payment), so the most appropriate day for the operation is *bingshen*. As such the potential period selected for the operation to take place is between the *guisi* and *bingshen* days of the eighth lunar month.

In its capacity to refer to Written Language and thus the bureaucratic aspect of a hospital appointment, line one is crucial in determining the date. Its Earthly Branch, *mao*, conflicts with that of the Eighth Month, *you* 酉, which is inauspicious. Here, however, a compromise had to be made because the operation would inevitably occur during the eighth month. Thus, although in theory *shen* and *you* are both suitable times for operations as their being of the Metal Phase matches them with the Phase of the operator's scalpel, conflict between *mao* and *you* is here best minimised. Whilst the client will have the operation in the eighth (*you*) month, the effect may be mitigated by selecting a *shen* day.

Contingency and Reduction

Returning to the subject of fractal metonymy, even from the limited exegesis I have provided for Example Two it should be evident that the potential quantity of information derivable from a hexagram is vast – and far beyond what would be practically manageable, certainly in the context of relatively brief roadside predictions. The effect of this is that in practice, whilst highly specific diagnoses and predictions are made, some degree of ambiguity invariably remains. That is, a hexagram presents an excess of *interpretive potential*, in which various possibilities may still be entertained. This may appear superficially similar to the idea of an 'excess of meaning' in magic and divination systems, allowing for a range of interpretations (e.g. Holbraad 2012a: 191; Sneath 2009: 87) – though the complexity generated by fractal metonymy is subject to absolute laws and a great deal of potential meaning has already been excluded by identifying the correlates of each hexagram line. Therefore, I argue here that Six Lines Prediction hinges not on generating an excess of meaning but on reducing interpretive potential to a very narrow range of highly specific empirical diagnoses or predictions (cf. Werbner 1973). This involves reducing the interpretive potential of the hexagram by taking account of contingent variables, most of which are temporal. Reduction of interpretive potential thus requires the introduction of additional information.

In practice, the degree to which excessive interpretive potential is reduced is limited by the time devoted to a prediction and the interests of the client. Master Tao's predictions typically

take ten to twenty minutes, but on more than one occasion he explained to me that a detailed prediction could potentially take many hours; indeed, just before I returned from Hangzhou in September 2015, he kindly carried out an extremely detailed prediction for me, which took considerably longer than usual and yielded far more, and more specific, information than most that he conducts for clients. The more information provided, the further interpretive potential can be reduced and the more specific a prediction can be made; indeed, Master Tao explained that the very best predictors will take into account very small details of the situation in which a hexagram is cast, such as a bird calling at the moment the coins are thrown. For the most part, though, reducing interpretive potential is done in three ways, which I explore here: via the hexagram itself, via the use of contingent variables to different degrees, and via direct elicitation of specific information from the client.

The limits imposed by the hexagram have largely been covered. A hexagram's constituent lines are fixed, and therefore their metonymic potential is limited, including the types of *Yongshen* relationships involved and the position of ego and the 'opposite party' – a hexagram cannot mean whatever one wants it to. Moreover, any temporal predictions made through the hexagram are necessarily limited by that referred to by the hexagram – hence, in Example One, the forthcoming *hai* 亥 year is predicted as bad, but *only for the events with which the hexagram is concerned* (a generally bad year is not predicted). Two contingent variables are always noted by Master Tao: the date according to the Sexagenary Cycle (including the metonymically relative 'empty' Branches discussed above), and the Six Beasts. Occasionally, a third contingent variable is noted in the form of the client's fate, which operates in a similar way as the date with respect to metonymy and categorisation. I will discuss the Six Beasts first.

The Six Beasts

The Six Beasts are metonymically relative with respect to hexagrams, as they depend entirely on the Sexagenary date. As such, they constitute one means of accounting for temporal variation between hexagrams of the same type, and, though this was never remarked upon by Master Tao, increase the number of different situations knowable via the Six Lines system to 24 576 (4096 hexagrams and hexagram changes x 6 Beasts). One consequence of this is that it becomes highly unlikely that any client will meet another who obtained exactly the same hexagram and date combination. When the full details of the Sexagenary date and the client's fate are accounted for, this number is multiplied by further orders of magnitude, reducing the

likelihood of even the predictor encountering the same result twice. Thus, in common with cognate Chinese numerological systems of prediction, Six Lines Prediction restricts possible interpretations (there is, at least in theory, a 'correct' answer), but also disaggregates those events from all others, and in doing so, as Stafford (2009: 118) argues, disaggregates the client's fortune as independent from that of the collective.

Whilst the Six Beasts are metonymically relative to the hexagrams, they are absolute in terms of the effects they reveal. In Example One, Master Tao was thus able to inform the client that her health problems would be associated with 'disputes' (*koushe*) as Line Two corresponded to the Vermillion Bird in the Six Beasts sequence. The Vermillion Bird substitutes metaphorically for its effect, 'disputes,' but the effect is read as part of line two-as-phenomenon. As such, the effect is metonymically encompassed as a correlate of Earthly Branch *chou* 丑, the Wood Phase, and the 'Officials and Ghosts' *Yongshen*. However, the relationship between Lines and Six Beasts is not as simple as that between, say, Earthly Branches and Phases, in that it is not merely correlative as a result of a common *qi* configuration, but is implicitly causal – a dispute will arise as a product of the client's health concerns. In Example One, line five, the Earthly Branch *hai* 亥, 'is' (是 *shi*) the White Tiger, indicting harm, and on this basis Master Tao predicted that 2019, a *hai* year, would be inauspicious. This indicates a metonymic incorporation of harm as a correlate of the Earthly Branch *hai* in terms of this hexagram and the situations with which it is concerned. In Example Two, the White Tiger occurs in line one, with the *Yongshen* relationship 'Father and Mother,' here expressing 'Written Language'. Master Tao's conclusion was that the harm expressed metaphorically by the White Tiger indicated the *need for* an operation, rather than a consequence of it. However, Master Tao also advised the client to pay attention to issues relating to the payment of hospital bills, which may also be related to the presence of the White Tiger. In general, members of metonymic categories are manifestations of a common configuration of *qi* – but as such they are correlates. *Chou* is a manifestation of Wood *qi* at a particular scale – it is not 'caused' by Wood *qi* as such. Causation is rather attributed to the *interaction* of metonymic categories. Thus a Six Beasts effect is generated by the interaction of the line's metonymic category and the date's Heavenly Stem metonymic category.

The Client's Fate

In addition to the role of the Six Beasts, the client's fate introduces a further contingent variable, as we saw in Example One. Recall that in that instance, line two referred to illness and

belonged to the metonymic category of Earthly Branch *chou* and the Wood Phase. Knowledge of the client's fate being in the Earth Phase allowed Master Tao to specify the likely type of disorder she could face; the illness would arise in these organs, to which the client was advised to pay attention. As such, the broad category of 'illness' is reduced to two possible organs. The provision of information external to the hexagram thus has the effect of reducing the interpretive potential of the hexagram. This example also demonstrates a conception of causation as the result of interaction between metonymic categories (there is no causative relationships *within* such categories though there is one of co-occurrence) – the metonymic category of the Wood Phase (line two) is positioned in a relationship of 'conquest' with the metonymic category of the Earth Phase (the client's fate), causing change to occur in the form of illness.

Here, the vocabulary of the Phases, Branches, and so forth-as-symbols stands metaphorically for the phenomenal relationships predicted to occur in the client's *qi*-field; in turn, this particular *qi*-field configuration is subsumed into the broad category 'Fu line two'-as-phenomenon. It is highly unlikely that the exact circumstance of this hexagram have been predicted by Master Tao before, so now, for him, they form a real member of this category rather than simply a potential member. Interpretive potential is thus reduced by the same process of metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation as occurs for the hexagram as a whole during interpretation. It should be noted, though, that whilst 'Fu line two'-as-phenomenon constitutes a metonymic category based on a shared configuration of *qi*, each instance within that category, whilst contiguous, will be slightly different from the others. So actually, the reduction of interpretive potential renders the metonymic category of the hexagram line in itself *insufficient* to account for all aspects of the situation. For members of this category, the configuration of *qi* is common but is modified by the spatiotemporal environment in the form of contingent variables. The result is a nested taxonomy of potential situations sharing various degrees of metonymic contiguity (from vague to specific: *Fu*-as-phenomenon - - 'Fu line two'-as-phenomenon - - 'Fu line two meaning Illness'-as-phenomenon - - 'Fu line two meaning Illness interacting with Earth fate'-as-phenomenon - - 'Fu line two meaning Illness interacting with Earth fate on the *yihai* day of the *jiashen* month'-as-phenomenon, etc.). What is true for fate as a contingent variable is also true for the date on which a hexagram is cast – an additional correlate is added to that hexagram's metonymic

category, and its metonymic fractality is similarly expanded, increasing the specificity of prediction.

Eliciting Information from the Client

Finally, it should be noted that the interpretive potential of a hexagram is invariably reduced by direct elicitation and volunteering of information from the client. Although Master Tao instructs clients to say nothing about their questions prior to or during casting the hexagram, once he has finished annotating it, he and the client will converse, sometimes at length, about the latter's specific questions and how to deal with them. This type of information is generally easily categorised into the five *Yongshen* referents, which, as shown above, allows Tao to identify the most relevant lines and their effects. Whilst it is theoretically possible to know exactly what the problem is from a hexagram, in practice the specifics beyond the *Yongshen* referent may be unclear. In general, though, the modification of a prediction using client-provided information follows the overall pattern of creating cosmic intimacy through metonymic encompassment. Lines, for example, metaphorically substitute for real phenomena (a new shop, a hospital form, financial rivals), but thereby incorporate these phenomena into metonymic categories. This process, while not couched in the language of anthropology and cognitive linguistics, is generally explicit, and expressed with the verb *shi* (是 'to be') – a line *is* ego, *is* the opposite party, *is* the client's wealth during the process of hexagram interpretation.

Master Tao will generally describe the salient aspects of a prediction or suggest an issue of concern to the client after annotating the hexagram; otherwise he will ask them directly what the issue is, and explain what the hexagram says about it. This may involve an explicit process of elimination, which does not appear to detract in any way from the efficacy of the specific prediction or the method as a whole. For example, during my return visit to Hangzhou, I became mildly ill and cast a hexagram with Master Tao to determine when it would pass. Having annotated it, he turned to me and said with great confidence that my question was about Wealth– the hexagram's Generation line was Wealth, as was the adjacent fourth line. When I said my question was not about wealth, he asked if it was about 'emotional aspects' (感情方面 *ganqing fangmian*) or 'friends' (朋友 *pengyou*), as the hexagram's Resonant line was Brothers, metonymic for these aspects, as was line two, adjacent to the Generation line. However, when I explained I was asking about a health issue, he was easily able to determine what it was and gave a reasonable prediction about recovery, demonstrating the interpretive potential of the hexagram as well as the productivity of reducing it to certain options. Having

limited the interpretive potential of the hexagram to health issues, Master Tao concluded that, because the Earthly Branch of the Generation line was *chen* 辰, of the Earth Phase, the problem concerned (correctly) the digestive system (脾胃道 *piwei dao*), which in Chinese medicine is governed by Earth. Moreover, given the situation, the Resonant line being Brothers indicated a financial exchange (recall Example One above), here the purchase of medicine, itself indicated by line five, Sons and Grandsons (medicine operates in this relation to ego). This Line's Earthly Branch was *si* 巳, Fire, indicating medicine which could 'remove cold *qi*' (把寒氣去掉 *ba hanqi qudiao*), which was the source of my complaint. This ought to be Western medicine (西藥 *xiyao*), as this is governed by Fire, as opposed to Chinese medicine's Water. This was coupled with advice to buy the medicine after 5 p.m. that day, take it that evening, and get enough for three days (this may simply have been based on Tao's general knowledge of medicine). Here we can see clearly the process by which interpretive potential decreases as 'real' information, and thus predictive specificity, increases.

Contingent variables based on the principles of correlative cosmology allow for very specific predictions and suggestions to be made. This is seen particularly in the identification of auspicious times for certain actions, as we saw in Example Two. This process of reasoning is essentially a continuation of that by which date and fate are accounted for in interpretation. The limits of a hexagram's inherent interpretive potential, combined with the further limits imposed by contingent variables, in turn necessarily constrain the range of times which may be considered auspicious for action. Of course, the same cosmological principles apply to the future as to the present and past, and change continues to be the product of interactions between metonymic categories of phenomena. As shown in Example Two, the selection of an auspicious date may be extremely complicated, especially if the client requires the predicted time to fall within a certain range or have a certain degree of specificity (it is considerably simpler to derive predictions for months than days and hours, which introduce extra fractal sets of Earthly Branches). Relationships between lines may also be considered examples of metonymic incorporation. In Example Two, lines three and six have the Earthly Branches *xu* 戌 and *hai* 亥, which exist in a relationship of 'conflict' (*chong*). In interpretation, this conflict between Branches, themselves part of metonymic sets of Branches-as-symbols, substitutes for the relationship between the client and opposite party. This metaphorical reasoning allows, as for the hexagram as a whole, the accommodation of the phenomenal relationship between client and opposite party into the metonymic category 'xu-hai conflict'-as-phenomenon.

Relevance

So far I have demonstrated that, for the predictor, Six Lines Prediction relies on reducing interpretive possibilities via accounting for contingent variables. One question, however, remains – and that concerns the process by which Master Tao selects lines and correlates in order to arrive at specific diagnoses and predictions. To account for this, I turn to relevance theory as formulated and elaborated by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson (Sperber & Wilson 1995; Wilson & Sperber 2012). In particular, I follow their ‘cognitive principle of relevance’ that ‘[h]uman cognition tends to be geared towards the maximisation of relevance’ (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 260), meaning simply that ‘cognitive resources tend to be allocated to the processing of the most relevant inputs available, whether from internal or external sources’ (1995: 261), a process which is true of metonymy (Radden & Kövecses 1999: 50–51). This is fundamentally a cognitive means of discriminating between inputs, hypothesised to have evolved under selection for cognitive efficiency. An input is considered relevant when it produces a ‘positive cognitive effect’ – that is, a contextual effect which ‘contributes positively to the fulfilment of cognitive functions or goals’ (1995: 265).

In the context of Six Lines Prediction, this may be described as follows. Having completed the operation of analogical transfer and metonymically incorporated the client’s situation into the causal schema of the hexagram-as-symbol, the predictor’s first action is to select relevant inputs. Typically, this is done by focusing on the Generation and Resonant lines, as in Example One, and their specific *Yongshen* referents – in general, these lines and their correlates provide a relevant starting point from which interpretive potential can begin to be reduced. As just discussed in relation to my prediction, however, the correlates of these lines are not necessarily relevant to the client’s enquiry. Thus, further inputs are elicited, in this case by directly asking about the subject of enquiry. Once he knew it concerned health, Master Tao was able to revise his assessment of which information from the hexagram was relevant. The problem of finding a suitable date for a hospital appointment in Example Two provides an excellent illustration of how a wide range of contingent variables influence which inputs are relevant. First, a line is selected based on its relevance to the problem – in this case, line one, the relevant correlates of which are the *Yongshen* referent ‘Father and Mother’ and the White Tiger. In selecting a day, the imposition of a specific time-frame on the part of the client required the introduction of additional principles in order for relevant inputs to be presented. Moreover, the selection of an auspicious date relied on assessing the relevance of indicated phenomena not directly invoking medical procedure – such as identifying a likely occasion of

financial loss. As such, the entire process of hexagram interpretation, from analogical transfer to the reduction of interpretive potential, constitutes an exercise in maximising relevance with respect to addressing the client's enquiry.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the theory and practice of Six Lines Prediction, and used this to build on the arguments concerning metaphor and metonymy begun in Chapter One, presenting a case that the predictor's processes of reasoning are best understood in terms of cognitive operations of classification via analogical transfer, guided by continual re-assessment of the relevance of the hexagram-as-symbol's structural features. Analogical transfer, a two-stage process of metaphoric substitution and metonymic incorporation, involves the predictor, an expert at this form of reasoning in these contexts, mapping the abstract structure of a hexagram-as-symbol onto an unknown domain, the client's situation. This cognitive operation identifies the client's situation as a metonymic field governed by the same causal relations as the hexagram-as-symbol, thus identifying it as an instance of a real-world category of the corresponding hexagram-as-phenomenon, a specific type of *qi* configuration – the unknown situation is rendered cosmically intimate.

Once understood as such, diagnoses and predictions can be made regarding the client's subject of enquiry. Proceeding from the correlates of the Generation and Resonant lines, relevant inputs from the hexagram-as-symbol are used to arrive at solutions relevant to the client. The metonymic fractality of any hexagram is such that myriad interpretations are possible; this means that whilst predictions are incredibly specific, whatever subject is asked about may be dealt with via any given hexagram. This is accounted for by the fact that Six Lines Prediction is fundamentally concerned with homologous relations between ego and other phenomena, epitomised in terms of the *Yongshen* referents. Changes in these relationships are understood in terms of interactions between these metonymic categories. The process of making a diagnosis or prediction is one of excluding potential interpretations. This is done by accounting for contingent variables which themselves operate according to the same absolute metonymic categories as do the hexagram lines (hence they may influence prediction), but which for all interpretive intents and purposes arise independently of the hexagram cast (though theoretically, of course, they are not independent but, along with all other cosmic phenomena, influence its casting). This is true also of phenomena which are not generally

spoken of in the language of cosmological theory – that is, the information provided by the client. However, as cosmological rules are held to be universal and constant, all such information may also be translated into such terms and thus interpreted in terms of the hexagram. Classification of a client’s situation is thus followed by an exercise of reducing possible interpretations via the accrual of additional contextual information. A relevant diagnosis or prediction is one which is able to parse the cosmological data yielded by the hexagram as accurately as possible for the circumstances in question. In this way, Six Lines Prediction relies on a cognitive process perhaps more akin to that found in predictive practices such as meteorology than in many forms of divination; it is in fact to meteorology, as a form of ‘prediction’ (*yu*ce), that Master Tao likens his craft. Such identification with scientific practices is an important aspect of Eight Trigrams cosmologists’ discourse, and will be discussed further in Chapter Four. First, however, I address resemblance as an epistemological concern, and the relationship this has with morality.

3 Imagery Epistemology and Analogical Morality

Introduction

Having examined forms of analogical reasoning in the *Yi Jing* and in Six Lines Prediction, I turn in this chapter to further questions of epistemology and its relationship with moral values as articulated by cosmologists. The focus is particularly on the notion of ‘resemblance’ (像 *xiang*), elaborated in detail by Ma Jianglong and Chang Weihong (2013), as well as Ma’s colleague Li. ‘Resemblance’ between entities is considered a reliable indicator of shared characteristics. The arguments already made concerning analogical transfer and reductive explanation are broadly applicable to Ma and Chang’s approach, though they differ on specifics of method and certain points of exegesis. These are described in the first part of the chapter, followed by an exploration of distinction made by Ma and Chang and Master Tao between theoretical and practical knowledge. This is followed by a discussion of Master Tao’s understanding of what cannot be known via prediction, before moving on to an examination of Ma and Tao’s attitudes to the classification of modern phenomena. Finally, the extent to which moral values are analogically linked to the epistemology of prediction is considered, along with implications for the position of morality in the *Yi Jing* cosmos.

An Epistemology of Images

Both Ma Jianglong and Master Tao emphasised certain epistemological concepts in their discussions with me. The concepts they emphasised were different, however, and these differences mirror the differences between their predictive methods. Master Tao’s Six Lines method was examined extensively in Chapter Two, revealing an epistemology based on the reduction of social phenomena to a limited number of cosmic principles. In this section I focus on Ma Jianglong’s methods of hexagram interpretation, but return to Master Tao later in the chapter. My understanding of these is based entirely on his explanations, as I was unable to attend sessions with his clients. Most of my interaction with him consisted of in-depth discussions at his office and home, often with his colleague Li and his wife and co-author

Chang Weihong. Nonetheless, these meetings yielded a wealth of information concerning his understandings of cosmology and epistemology. Ma operates in very different socioeconomic strata from Master Tao, and his clients, whom I gathered to be primarily business people, probably also including officials, are charged fees of ¥20 000 per hour for general consultations, with *fengshui* consultations starting at ¥100 000 and increasing based on the size of the property. Such consultations are private affairs, and clients are apparently considerably less likely to be willing for outsiders to observe (quite unlike Master Tao's very public operation). This is doubtless exacerbated by the current government crackdown on extravagant expenditures, ongoing during fieldwork, particularly among people connected to the Party, which continues to condemn 'superstition' (see Chapter Four), particularly among its members.

Ma's use of Eight Trigrams Prediction, though, is not confined to client services. Like Master Tao, he will cast hexagrams himself, though the methods he employs are quite different. He describes these as 'dark studies' (玄學 *xuanxue*) or 'Dark Ultimate Changes' (玄極易 *xuanji yi*), comprising various techniques including numerology, intuitive conclusions based on the appearance of individuals or objects, and the manipulation of hexagrams' constituent lines. Here, I focus on the latter two, as these methods were far more prominent in our discussions and are those emphasised in Ma and Chang's book (Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013); these run parallel to his personally-devised *Yi Jing*-based exercise regime, 'Fists of the Dark Ultimate' (玄極拳 *xuanji quan*), which consists of *taiji*-like martial arts routines for each hexagram, which he considers integral to a true understanding of the *Yi Jing*'s principles. Conclusions concerning appearances draw heavily on the concept of Images (象 *xiang*), the concept discussed in the context of the *Yi Jing* itself in Chapter One, which relies on homological connections between phenomena (see Chapter Five). The manipulation of hexagram lines, to which I turn shortly, constitutes a means of assessing situations from the perspectives of multiple actors or as they change over time; this is the only aspect of Ma's predictive practice that approaches the Six Lines method in terms of technicality.

At its core, Ma's cosmology is founded on the principle that sensible differences stem from differences in *qi*-field, and that these differences, and thus the character of entities and events, may be determined by 'imitation' (模擬 *moni*, directly related to the word 擬 *ni* used in the *Appended Phrases* to refer to analogy – see Chapter One), in the form of repeating configurations of *qi*. The corollary of this is that a particular configuration of *qi* can be constructed by manipulation of objects so as to resemble it; this is the logic behind his physical exercises, which in imitating a particular hexagram promote the *qi* configuration described by

that hexagram. Resemblance is a reliable indicator of real similarity; a sleeping person *resembles* a corpse, for example, and this resemblance correlates with the perceived absence of the soul from the body in both situations (see Chapter Five). At the same time, as all entities and events are interconnected, and ‘humans are not autonomous’ (人是沒有自主性的 *ren shi meiyou zizhuxing de*), their actions being dictated by broader *qi* configurations, in principle any given entity may be used to provide information about others. Ma and Li illustrated this point with a story of a blind Ming dynasty monk, who was able to determine all sorts of information about a person based on holding a small piece of jade he was carrying, as its *qi*-field had been influenced by that of its owner, in turn influenced by the environment in which he had grown up.

Ma’s methods of hexagram interpretation give the impression of being more intuitive and fluid than Tao’s Six Lines Prediction – though as the above description indicates, they are founded on the same basic principles of *qi*-fields. The primary contrast with Six Lines Prediction is Ma’s focus on the overall appearance of the hexagram rather than the cosmological correlates of each line, which never appeared in his explanations (though it should be noted that, when asked, he said that Six Lines Prediction was a valid alternative method). This should in no way be taken to mean that he does not subscribe to correlative cosmology; rather, whereas Master Tao takes the line as the primary epistemological unit, Ma takes the entire hexagram, in its status as an Image of a particular configuration of *qi*. Interpretation involves either focusing on the hexagram’s visual appearance or manipulating its component trigrams and lines. I will give examples of both these processes, but first it is worth considering again what an Image is. Here, it is essentially the same concept as the Images found in the *Yi Jing*, discussed in Chapter One, but Ma and Chang (2013) elaborate its epistemological status in some detail. The Images constitute hexagrams-as-symbols insofar as they amount to mental constructs corresponding to real-world phenomenal categories. As such they amount to abstractions of the structural features common to all members of the corresponding category of hexagram-as-phenomenon. In this sense Images play the same role that the hexagram-as-symbol does in Six Lines Prediction, discussed in the previous chapter. However, in Ma and Chang’s usage, as will be seen, this mental representation, the hexagram-as-symbol, *is itself explicitly recognised as an instantiation of the corresponding hexagram-as-phenomenon*, a conception implicit in Six Lines Prediction but not articulated. A hexagram Image expresses a metonymic relationship with all other members of its category of hexagram-as-phenomenon, all of which possess shared

characteristics. That is, whilst *Qian*, for example, is the Image of ‘Heaven’, this is not because *Qian* refers to Heaven or vice-versa, but because both are predicated on the same configuration of *qi*, instantiated at different scales.

An Image therefore constitutes a metonymic expression of a whole category of real phenomena unified by a common configuration of *qi* – that is, Images are instantiations of real-world natural kinds, and function as prototypes for all members of their metonymic classes. In Ma and Chang’s view, Images are positioned relationally based on ‘resemblance’ (*xiang*), and it is through resemblance that we are able to understand the true nature of things. In their commentary on the Hexagram *Qian* ☰, they state that ‘Images are borne of meaning’ (象之所生，生于义也 *xiang zhi suo sheng, sheng yu yi ye* (Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013: 160)), human constructs which meaningfully illuminate real entities. Epistemologically, Images facilitate the comprehension of entities which are otherwise ‘veiled in mystery’ (神秘莫测 *shen mi mo ce*), and better understood in terms of ‘a symbolic system of mutual resonance between pattern and Image’ (文象互应的符号系统 *wen xiang hu ying de fuhao xitong*) devised via observation of the world by the ‘Chinese ancestors’ (中华先祖 *zhonghua xianzu*) (2013: 160). This, they argue, is why hexagrams are used in place of the phenomena they stand for; *Qian* is used rather than ‘Heaven’ (*tian*) because ‘Heaven is the name of a fixed entity, [but] *Qian* is a label for theory and practice. ‘*Qian*’ is a meaningful Image, but ‘Heaven’ is too stark and direct’ (“天” 是定体之名， “乾” 是体用之称。 “乾” 是意象的，而 “天” 则过于直白！ *Tian shi dingti zhi ming, qian shi tiyong zhi cheng. Qian shi yixiang de, er ‘tian’ ze guoyu zhibai*) (2013: 160). Heaven is indeed part of the category *Qian*-as-phenomenon, but *Qian*-as-Image (i.e. as a prototype for all *Qian*-as-phenomena) provides a far wieldier concept for epistemological manipulation, functioning as a point of reference for any entity or situation in the category. Further aspects of this are discussed in the next section – first, though, I will illustrate some of the predictive methods used by Ma.

I will illustrate Hexagram manipulation first, with an example Ma gave me based on a visit to see a Master (大師 *dashi*) in Guangzhou. The cast hexagram is known as the Principal Hexagram (主卦 *zhu gua*), and is held to correspond to Heaven (*tian*) and, of more practical importance, the client’s current situation. In this example, the Principal Hexagram is ‘Greater Domestication’ 《大畜》 *Da Xu*. From the Principal Hexagram, a ‘Mutual Hexagram’ (互卦 *hugua*) can be derived, a concept formulated by Jing Fang, founder of the school of *Yi Jing* prediction of which Six Lines Prediction is part (Rutt 2002: 97). This is done by using sets of

lines within the Principal Hexagram to produce derived trigrams, which can then be used to assemble a second Hexagram. Lines two to four are treated as the Mutual Hexagram's lower trigram, in this case *Dui* ☱; the upper trigram is similarly derived from lines three to five, in this case *Zhen* ☳. Thus, the Mutual Hexagram here is 'Marrying Maid' 《归妹》 *Gui Mei*, shown below. The Mutual Hexagram corresponds to Humanity (*ren*), and, in practical terms, the process (過程 *guocheng*) of change which the client's situation will undergo.

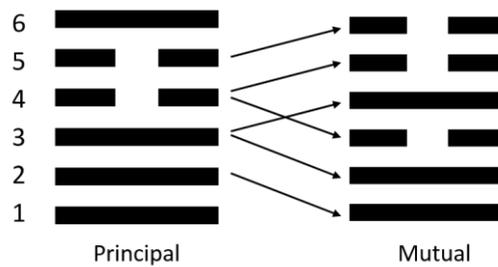


FIG. 3. 1 GENERATING A MUTUAL HEXAGRAM

Third in the sequence is the Changed Hexagram (变卦 *biangua*), corresponding to Earth (*di*) or the future situation as a result of the process of change. In this case, line two of the Principal Hexagram changes, giving 'Elegance' 《贲》 *Bi*. This hexagram is derived in the same way as it would be in Six Lines Prediction (see Chapter Two), via the transformation of a single line.

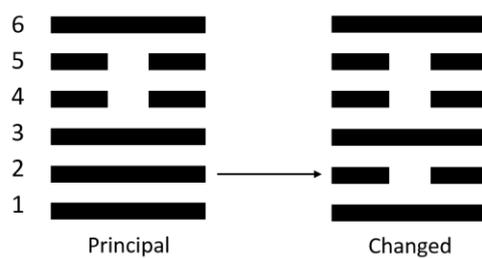


FIG. 3. 2 A HEXAGRAM CHANGING ON THE SECOND LINE

In addition to revealing the process of change, the Principal or Changed Hexagram can be manipulated to reveal the situation in question from the perspectives of others. The opposite party's perspective can be revealed through the 'Composite Hexagram' (綜卦 *zonggua*), which is the upside-down version of the Principal Hexagram, in this case 'No Errancy' 《无妄》 *Wu Wang*:

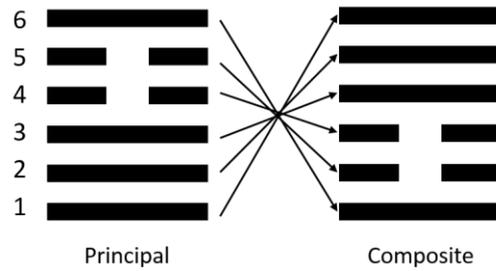


FIG. 3. 3 GENERATING A COMPOSITE HEXAGRAM

Finally, the Principal or Changed Hexagrams can be inverted to produce an ‘Interlocked Hexagram’ (錯卦 *cuogua*); here, each broken line becomes unbroken and vice versa. The Interlocked Hexagram allows one to examine the situation from the perspective of a ‘third party’ (第三者 *di san zhe*). In this case, the Interlocked Hexagram of the Changed Hexagram is ‘Impasse’ (《困》 *Kun*).

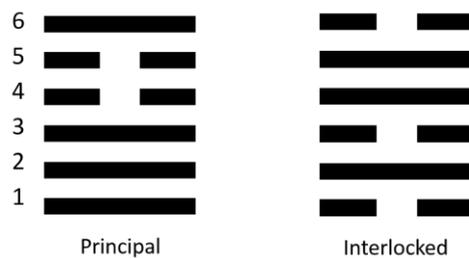


FIG. 3. 4 GENERATING AN INTERLOCKED HEXAGRAM

Composite and Interlocked Hexagrams can be further manipulated to produce more Mutual, Composite, and Interlocked Hexagrams to examine the situation from further perspectives.

Ma also takes a less technical approach based on the connotations of component trigrams. For example, he showed me a hexagram, *Bo* (《剝》) (‘Peeling’), cast by a client whose mother was ill, and whom on the basis of the hexagram Ma predicted would die. His judgement was based on the associations of the component trigrams. The lower trigram was *Kun* (☷), which refers metonymically to the mother. However, the upper trigram was *Gen* (☶). It will be recalled that *Gen* is metonymic for ‘Mountain’ – and, as Ma explained it, a traditional tomb (*fen* 墳) is shaped like a hill. Hence, the hexagram shows the client’s mother beneath (i.e. in) a tomb, indicating that she will die. Based on similar reasoning, he explained that the hexagram *Huan* (《換》) is auspicious for *fengshui* practitioners, because it consists of the trigram *Xun* (☴) (Wind) above *Kan* (☵) (Water).

However, his emphasis on hexagram appearance frequently goes beyond the generally accepted metonymic categories, which are ultimately derived from *Explaining the Trigrams* and the accommodation of the correlative cosmology of the *Ten Wings* with that of *yinyang* and the Five Phases. For example, Ma explained that the Hexagram ‘Lesser Domestication’ 《小畜》 *Xiao Xu* ☱ may be seen as indicating a need or potential to ‘save money’ (存錢 *cun qian*) because the broken fourth line, alone among solid lines, gives the appearance of the slot in a money box. Moreover, the Hexagram ‘Greater Domestication’ 《大畜》 *Da Xu* ☱ appears to have a larger slot, and thus may indicate the ability to save more money. Ma describes this type of reasoning as ‘figurative thought’ (形象思維 *xingxiang siwei*), integral to his general methodological and teaching approach of ‘opening up the *Changes* brain’ (易腦開發 *yi nao kaifa*), a key topic of his book which draws heavily on ideas of developing both left and right-brain potential. The epistemological implications of this approach will be discussed below, along with salient epistemological concepts employed by both Ma Jianglong and Master Tao.

Epistemological Categories

My conversations with both Ma Jianglong and Master Tao led them to refer to several forms of knowledge classification. For Master Tao, this issue arose in response to my own questions concerning the role of the *Yi Jing* in interpretation. In contrast, for Ma Jianglong, who for the purposes of teaching has attempted to create a unique approach to the *Yi Jing* and the use of its theories, questions of knowledge categories are explicitly dealt with as part of his work, including in his book.

Regarding the *Yi Jing*, Master Tao drew a distinction between *dao* 道 and *li* 理, two characters which, among various meanings, may both be glossed as ‘laws’ or ‘principles’, and which together form the word *daoli* (道理 reason, principle; cf. Ziporyn's ‘coherence’ (2012, 2013)). Art historian Chen Zhuanxi (2006), discussing painting, describes *dao* as referring to a more general set of principles (typically those governing the cosmos), and *li* as denoting specific, concrete principles governing a specific entity. Indeed, Master Tao described *dao* in terms of the ‘theoretical aspects’ (理論方面 *lilun fangmian*) of prediction. For him, the *Yi Jing* provides a *dao*, a set of general principles from which the Six Lines method he uses is ultimately derived but which is not specific enough in practice – any interpretation based purely on the content of the *Yi Jing* will be ‘unclear’ (說不清楚 *shuo bu qingchu*, lit. ‘that which cannot be related

clearly’) and therefore inadequate.⁷ He further described the content of the *Zhou Yi* as ‘extremely difficult to understand’ (非常難懂 *feichang nan dong*); indeed, like most predictors, in his perception, he was taught orally, and only later read the *Yi Jing*. He illustrated his point further with reference to the difference between communism in theory and in practice. Marx and Engels, he explained, elaborated a communist system but did not address the practicalities of its implementation, which became apparent only when the theory was actually put into practice. It is for this reason, Tao argued, that the CCP adopted the idea of ‘Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (中國特色社會主義 *Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi*), which represents communism-in-theory as practically adapted to Chinese reality. In the same way, Six Lines Prediction constitutes an *Yi Jing*-rooted method adapted as necessary for practical use (a key implication of Jing Fang’s original formulation of ‘Added Stem Divination’ as cosmologically valid prediction, as discussed in Chapter Six).

Ma Jianglong makes a related distinction between epistemology and methodology, which he describes as existing in a dialectical relationship: ‘epistemology determines methodology, and methodology advances epistemology’ (認識論決定方法論，方法論促進認識論 *renshilun jueding fangfalun, fangfalun cujin renshilun*). He relates ‘epistemology’ (認識論 *renshilun*) to ‘theory’ (理論 *lilun*) – that is, an abstract system of knowledge – and ‘methodology’ (方法論 *fangfalun*) to ‘principle’ (道理 *daoli*) and ‘practice’ (實踐 *shijian*). ‘Principle’ here is to be understood in the sense of fundamental cosmic principles, formulated as ‘the *dao* that legislates the self-so [i.e. the cosmos or ‘nature’ in its broadest sense, including humans]’ 道法自然 *dao fa ziran*. What this view suggests is that method is what provides access to the real world, the implication being that methods may be more or less accurate. ‘Epistemology’ constitutes a theory of knowledge, and different epistemologies, in Ma’s view, may reveal different aspects of the same reality (see also his comments regarding binary logic and *yinyang* as discussed in Chapter Five). These can strengthen methodology, in accordance with cosmic principles, in a mutually-reinforcing relationship. The relationship between these concepts in the thought of Ma and Master Tao is summarised in **FIG. 3. 5** below. As the table suggests, theory and practice, and the relationship between them, are understood in broadly similar terms by both Ma Jianglong and Master Tao. As has been discussed, however, the two cosmologists do demonstrate subtle differences in their understanding of this relationship. For Master Tao, practice, whether of *Yi Jing* prediction or of socialism, implies potentially

⁷ The category of ‘that which is unclear’ is important, and will be returned to later in this chapter.

substantial modification of the original abstract theories, a position which coheres with his insistence on the fallibility of human observation as evinced by the accuracy of real-world predictions, discussed later in this chapter, as well as his constant methodological recourse to the fixed correlations of the cast hexagram. Of course, like Ma Jianglong Master Tao subscribes to the notion that the cosmology of the *Yi Jing* is ultimately derived from observation of the cosmos, and as such acknowledges a degree of correspondence between human perception and external reality; the difference is one of emphasis. Ma Jianglong focuses more on the mutually-enforcing relationship between theory and practice as opposed to a need to modify an inadequate theory, the inadequacy of which is implicitly inevitable. This similarly reflects his own methodological emphasis on intuitive connections, which themselves constitute evidence for the validity of his epistemology. Again, I note the caveat that Ma likewise comments on the limitations of human thought, but his emphasis in practice is on the inherent capacity of humans to understand the cosmos by comprehending the principles of Eight Trigrams cosmology and an acceptance of constant change. Thus, in contrast to Master Tao's emphasis on fixed cycles of correspondence, Ma focuses on intuitive flexibility of methods dependent on client and circumstance. For him, 'transformation is the soul of the *Yi Jing*; if methods [of prediction for individual humans and animals] are all the same, then that's religion, not the *Yi Jing*' (變易是易經的靈魂，如果方法都一樣，那是宗教，不是易經 *bianyishi yijing de linghun, ruguo fangfa dou yiyang, na shi zongjiao, bu shi yi jing*). Ma's views on religion are discussed further in Chapter Four.

	Theory/Abstract	Practice/Concrete
Master Tao	'Way' 道 <i>dao</i>	'Principle' 理 <i>li</i>
	Marxism	Socialism with Chinese Characteristics
	<i>Yi Jing</i>	Six Lines Prediction
Ma Jianglong	Epistemology 認識論 <i>renshilun</i>	Methodology 方法論 <i>fangfalun</i> , Practice 實踐 <i>shijian</i>
	Theory 理論 <i>lilun</i>	Cosmic Principle 道理 <i>daoli</i>
	<i>Yi Jing</i> Thought Model 易經思維模式 <i>Yi Jing siwei moshi</i>	Comparison of Category Images 比擬類象 <i>bini leixiang</i>

FIG. 3. 5 A COMPARISON OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONCEPTS CONCERNING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE THOUGHT OF MASTER

TAO AND MA JIANGLONG

In their book, Ma and Chang outline their epistemological position in some detail, relating it explicitly to the content of the *Ten Wings*, commentary by commentary (2013: 010–017), as part of their ‘thought model’ (思維模式 *siwei moshi*), and beginning with the proviso that ‘any type of scholarship is the product of a particular thought model’ (任何一门学问都是某种思维模式的产物 *renhe yi men xuewen dou shi mou zhong siwei moshi de chanwu*), that in question being found in the *Appended Phrases* (2013: 10). They acknowledge here that the hexagrams may be approached from different angles, and that these are reflected in the commentaries. In particular, they draw a distinction between Judgements (*tuan*), and Images (*xiang*, as discussed in Chapter One), corresponding to the *Commentary on the Judgements* and *Commentary on the Images*, and referring respectively to a hexagram’s ‘inner moral character’ (内在品德 *neizai pinde*) and ‘outer moral character’ (外在品德 *waizai pinde*) (2013: 11). The Judgement provides a definition, but the Image, the outer appearance, or an example or analogy of the hexagram. Following this, they describe the ‘comparison of category images’ (比擬類象 *bini leixiang*) as an important thought model in *Changes* studies – and central to their epistemological approach is the relationship that this comparative exercise has to reality. It is worth here quoting at length from their book (translations are my own). The first quotation follows immediately from a discussion of the relationship between Heaven, Earth, and Humanity, which concludes with the comment that the Ten Thousand Things (*wan wu*) are all products of the interaction of *Qian* ☰ (the first hexagram, extreme *yang*, comprising six unbroken lines) and *Kun* ☷ (the second hexagram, extreme *yin*, comprising six broken lines), and that humans are no exception. An important implication of this is that the remaining sixty-two hexagrams are similarly products of *Qian* and *Kun*; the categories *Qian*-as-Image and *Kun*-as-Image are metonymic with *yang* and *yin* in their purest states (though these states of course contain the potential for change). Ma and Chang’s description is as follows:

人既然也是乾坤交感所形成的一份子，那就可以给人看象了。

怎么看呢？

第一步，把握乾坤的特性。

通过由乾影响的日、月、星所造成的这个文得出乾的特性，再通过由坤影响的山、川、野所造成的理得出坤的特性。

第二部，根据文理给人看象。

可以推测人的性格类型、喜怒哀乐的特点。我们可以根据所观之人的大象，来推测所含的日、月、星的成分；日、月、星属于发光的东西，因而也是一种灵气的显现。

如果此人含日的成分多，那么，此人一定热情大方；如果含月的成分多，那么，此人也许志、慧相伴——既有志气又有足够的智慧。

当然，这种成分并不是太阳、月亮、星星的某一部分，而只是作为一种类比，即类象。

(Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013: 14)

Since humanity is one element of that formed by the interaction of Qian and Kun, then it is possible to look at the Images of people.

How can we look at them?

The first step is to grasp the specific properties of Qian and Kun.

By means of the patterns created by the Qian-influenced Sun, Moon, and stars, the specific characteristics of Qian can be derived. Again, through the texture of the Kun-influenced mountains, rivers, and wilds, the specific characteristics of Kun can be derived.

The second step is to look at people's Images according to these patterns.

It is possible to infer the type of a person's disposition, and the characteristics of their full range of emotions. Based on the broad Image of the person we are observing, we can infer the elements of the Sun, Moon, and stars that they harbour. The Sun, Moon, and stars are part of [the category of] luminous things, and so also a kind of manifestation of spiritual influence.

If the person in question harbours many Sun elements, then they are definitely enthusiastic and generous; if they harbour many Moon elements, then they are probably a combination of ambitious and wise – then they have ambition as well as sufficient wisdom.

Of course, this type of element does not constitute a piece of the Sun, Moon, or stars, but is only an analogy, a category of Image.

What is evident here is an epistemology based fundamentally on resemblances. Indeed, later on, in their commentary on the *Appended Phrases I*, Ma and Chang argue that a focus on 'resemblance' (*xiang*) constitutes a fundamental point of difference between Eastern (read: Chinese) and Western culture, whose emphasis on 'being' (是 *shi*) implies that 'resemblance' is epistemologically irrelevant:

东方人喜欢说：“像”。比如说，那个云彩像马，所以叫天马行空；这棵树像龙，所以叫龙树。

西方人严谨，喜欢说：“是”。云彩就是云彩，树就是树。

(Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013: 6)

'Easterners like to say 'resembles'. For example, that cloud resembles a horse, so it is called a heavenly horse running through the skies; this tree resembles a dragon, so it is called the dragon tree.

Westerners are strict, and like to say 'is'. Clouds are clouds, trees are trees.'

The question of *why* someone resembles something is crucial. Ma and Chang address this point:

同样，我们也可以根据所观之人的大象来判断其山、川、野的情况。如果是像长江，那么他就有长江的特性；如果是像泰山，那么他就有泰山的特性。像长江，则此人热情奔放；像泰山，此人就比较内敛文静。

总之，长江之所以是长江，泰山之所以是泰山，肯定由于受到大地的布局影响形成的，而大地的布局又是受什么支配呢？

是受坤支配的！

以上这些是华夏先哲特有的方法，通过自己的切身体验，来探讨宇宙的本来面目。

既然我们根据宇宙的原理获知了对事物的诊断原理，那么反过来通过掌握对事物的诊断原理，我们也可以知道乾坤的特性。

人类的认识首先是从客体出发，而积累到一定程度后就可以从主体去认识客体。从这一点来看，我们还是强调人认识社会、改造社会的主观能动性的。

(Ma Jianglong & Chang Weihong 2013: 014–015)

Likewise, based on the broad image of the person we are observing, we can assess the situation of that image's mountains, rivers, or wilderness. If [the person's image] resembles the Yangzi River, then he has the specific characteristics of the Yangzi River; if [he] resembles Mount Tai, he has Mount Tai's specific characteristics. In the case of resembling the Yangzi, the person is enthusiastic and unrestrained; the person resembling Mount Tai is relatively reserved and gentle.

In short, [the fact that] that of the Yangzi is therefore the Yangzi, that of Mount Tai is therefore Mount Tai, is definitely the product of the influence of the Earth's composition; but what governs the composition of the Earth?

[It is] *governed by Kun!*

Those described above were the specific methods of China's ancient sages, [who] through their personal experience inquired into the original appearance of the cosmos.

Since based on the principles of the cosmos we can learn of the diagnostic principles of things, conversely through grasping the diagnostic principles of things we can know the specific characteristics of Qian and Kun.

Human understanding begins from the objective, yet after accumulating [it] to a sufficient degree one may understand the objective via the subjective. Looking at it from this point of view we are still emphasising the subjective dynamic role of humans' understanding and transformation of society.

This passage anticipates points made in the Chapter Five – apparently analogical resemblances between disparate entities are in fact the product of *common* laws and configurations, in this case *Kun*, which may be read here as *Kun-as-phenomenon*. This principle allows for a number of epistemological conclusions. Firstly, 'resemblance' is a reliable indicator of the specific qualities of a given entity. That is, one may trust one's perceptions of similarities between entities as pointing to real shared characteristics. Secondly, as the characteristics of the Yangzi or Mount Tai are the products of their geographical and geological configuration ('the product of the influence of the Earth's composition'), both must be products of a common principle, *Kun*. As such, the characteristics of *Kun* may be ascertained via the investigation of the Earth's composition. Likewise, the reverse is true. Hence, by applying the objective principles of the cosmos, the world may be known – and an accumulation of knowledge provides a foundation for an intuitive grasp of these principles and their manifestations. Overall, this presents an epistemology based on these principles and their manifestations, which demonstrate one another in a tautological relationship. Recourse is made to 'China's ancient sages' as a means of drawing authority for this position. This link is made on top of the intuitively satisfactory formula that knowledge of principles may be derived from the observation of patterns of resemblance between entities, and that having been formulated, such principles may serve as a predictive explanatory framework. The appeal to traditional knowledge, though, adds legitimacy to this way of knowing as a specifically Chinese practice, and is particularly important to Ma and Chang, as they subsequently argue that this approach, which they term 'dark studies', both encompasses and is superior to science (*kexue*); insofar as this is the case, the appeal to ancestral cultural authority serves also to defend against the challenge of alternative knowledge systems such as Western science, discussed further in Chapter Four.

‘That Which Cannot Be Spoken of Clearly’

Thus far this chapter has examined how the world can be known via use of the hexagrams as part of an epistemology of Images, particularly focusing on the methods of Ma Jianglong, as well as salient categories related to epistemology and methodology in Eight Trigrams Prediction. Here I focus again on Master Tao, and in particular on his beliefs concerning what cannot be known, as touched on in the previous section.

It bears repeating here that Tao often states that Six Lines Prediction is not one hundred per cent accurate, and that one should mistrust anyone who says they can predict with such accuracy. He rates his own predictions as having a success rate of seventy or eighty per cent (a returning client had it at sixty to seventy per cent). However, it is theoretically possible to predict with one hundred per cent accuracy, because the *Yi Jing* system encompasses everything in the cosmos – humans, though are fallible. As a result, all predictions have ‘accurate’ (準 *zhun*) and ‘inaccurate’ (不準 *bu zhun*) aspects; this is seen as inevitable in any predictive system, including modern meteorology. In one of my early meetings with Master Tao, he explained that inaccuracies can be attributed to three different causes: the client’s ‘heart-mind lacking integrity’ (心不正 *xin buzheng*), the fortune-teller’s knowledge being insufficient, and imperfections in the interpretive system owing to its age. As the third point seems at odds with the general impression given that the ancestors and their works constitute a supreme authority, I take it to refer to the way in which the system is applied to new types of situation or complex situations unknown to its original developers. This is supported by what Master Tao told me immediately after about guarding against these three problems: the client needs to believe in the efficacy of the system, the fortune-teller must have sufficient knowledge, and one ought to confine oneself to ‘judging one situation with one Hexagram’ (一卦斷一事情 *yi gua duan yi jian shiqing*) or making ‘one judgement per thought’ (一思一斷 *yi si yi duan*). Regarding belief in the efficacy of the system, the fact that human mental activity itself derives from *qi* means that the mental state of the client has a direct causal relationship with the coins being thrown – this may be logically extended to the mental states of others in the vicinity, including the predictor (and indeed all thought at that moment across the cosmos). Lack of belief in the system has the effect of reducing the accuracy with which the yielded hexagram reflects cosmic reality.

We can see from this explanation that inaccuracy is held to occur primarily as the result of human error. Likewise, recall that as discussed above Master Tao assumes that human-

produced theories, including that found in the *Yi Jing*, necessarily require modification if they are to have real-world efficacy. This perception of human fallibility should also be contextualised in relation to both general tendencies in certain forms of Chinese correlative cosmology, which have existed since the system began to be formed in the late Zhou, and in terms of Master Tao's individual understanding. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six, correlative cosmology has never been monolithic, and whilst certain correlative cosmologists have embraced a central role for humanity, many others have denied humanity any privileged cosmic position, and the human capacity to know the world has frequently been questioned. Master Tao echoed these sentiments from a different angle when I asked him about the relative positions of humans and animals in the cosmos. He accepts an evolutionary account of human origins, pointing to the *Homo erectus* ('Peking Man') fossils from Zhoukoudian as evidence, and whilst he told me that he did not believe that any other Earthly species could arise with human levels of perception, he accepted the theoretical possibility, and the possibility of intelligent alien life, about which he was more optimistic. Both possibilities would result in beings with equivalent status to 'Humanity' (人 *ren*) between Heaven and Earth; these views are shared by Ma Jianglong, with the exception of the idea of human evolution, which he considers impossible (see Chapter Six). As such, Master Tao sees humans as evolved beings with no inherently unique position (that is, *ren qua Homo sapiens* are not inherently privileged), fully capable of erring in their judgement and generally unable to form accurate theories without careful adjustment in practice.

The most interesting aspects of Tao's view of what is and is not knowable came out of a conversation with him and Xiaoping concerning the existence of 'souls' (see Chapter Five). After discussing this for some time, Tao ultimately said that such things 'cannot be spoken of clearly; [they are] very complicated' (說不清楚, 很複雜 *shuo bu qingchu, hen fuza*). He explained that Eight Trigrams Prediction provides a 'logic' (邏輯 *luoji*) for phenomena; it can tell you, for example, that you will meet a certain kind of person in a certain kind of place. What it cannot do, however, is tell you why it is the particular individual that it will be; such things 'have no logic' (沒有邏輯 *meiyou luoji*). Like Ma, he likened the *Yi Jing* and Eight Trigrams to an 'equation' (方程式 *fangchengshi*) – though unlike Ma, he added that they are not part of 'dark studies'. This is theoretically extremely important, and demonstrates that Tao's attitude to the *Yi Jing* diverges significantly from that of important Western theorists of divination, including Jung and his take on the *Yi Jing* (1989), and Willis and Curry (2004).

Master Tao, professional predictor and part of a traditional lineage of practitioners, occupies exactly the position derided by Willis and Curry as ignorantly Western, modernist, and scientific. For them the whole point of divination is that it is not reductive, that it provides an excess of meaning and re-enchants the world (i.e. makes it mysterious). For Tao, there is clarity or lack of clarity. Unnecessary mystery is 'swindling' (騙 *pian*), and that which cannot be spoken of clearly cannot be addressed through fortune telling, even via a system which is held to fully explain the cosmos. Indeed, the inability of Six Lines Prediction to provide the enchanted 'metic' truth lauded by Curry, characterised by ambiguity and potential for many interpretations relevant to the moment of divination (2004b: 104–106), provides further support for my argument that it is fundamentally an exercise in explanatory reduction. In theory, given universal knowledge of all *qi* and *qi*-fields, one could doubtless determine these specifics, but such is beyond the means of human predictive methods; in any case, Master Tao's emphasis on that which cannot be spoken of clearly suggested the ineffable, numinous aspects of such experience. Indeed, when I asked him about whether or not the predictive system could be improved in future, Master Tao responded by saying that in the future people may have different ideas of what 'cannot be spoken of clearly'; as ever, he had a phrase to back this up, expressing the changes China had undergone in the previous century and the radically different understandings of the world they brought: 'electric lights, telephones, foreign Chinese, foreign foods, no need for an ox to plough the land, no need for oil to light a lamp' (電燈電話洋華洋靛, 耕地不用牛點燈不用油 *diandeng dianhua yanghua yangba, geng di bu yong niu dian deng bu yong you*). On this note, I turn now to the means by which modern objects and phenomena are addressed by Eight Trigrams cosmology, maintaining a focus on Ma and Tao's own ideas rather than their social legitimacy.

Contemporary Concerns and Issues of Classification

Classifying Modern Objects

Ma Jianglong explained to me that taking account of modern objects relied on incorporating them on the basis of the 'basic meanings' (本義 *benyi*) of the Eight Trigrams. Indeed, his colleague Li, in preparing materials for their upcoming training course on using the *Yi Jing* in business, has compiled a list of all kinds of objects and phenomena classified by hexagram. Unfortunately, I was unable to study it in detail as access is restricted to participants on the course, which is prohibitively expensive. The classification employed by Ma and Li varies depending on the specific aspect of an object being considered, as well as whether that object

is being considered in relation to others in a particular class. The chief epistemological consideration in such classifications is ‘elasticity’, or capacity to change according to circumstances (靈活 *linghuo*). The result is that the same object may be classified according to different Trigrams in different situations. Ma’s classifications are based on resemblances (as discussed at the beginning of the chapter), which may be manifest visually or conceptually. For example, an air conditioner may be classified as *Xun*, metonymic with wind, and electricity as *Li*, metonymic with fire. Equally, a table can be classified as *Gen* based on a visual similarity with the trigram (☶). In differentiating between similar objects, a particular attribute may be considered; in the case of telecommunications, the primary means of information transfer determines classification, a traditional telephone (電話 *dianhua*) being classed as *Dui*, which is related to the mouth (口 *kou*) and speaking (說 *shuo*), and a mobile phone (手機 *shouji*), relying on ‘beautiful’ (美麗 *meili*) coloured images, being classified as *Li*, metonymic with fire and beauty.

Ma took this further with examples of how trigrams may be used to classify vehicles, paying particular attention to the appearance of their symbols. ‘Cars are *Kan*’ (車是坎 *che shi Kan*) because the symbol, ☵, resembles a car viewed from above. Cars can also be related to water, as in the expression ‘carriages [like flowing] water, horses [like a swimming] dragon’ (車水馬龍 *che shui ma long*), indicating heavy traffic (this sort of linkage is typical of Ma). He emphasised that such a classification should be taken to mean that ‘*Kan* resembles a car; one cannot say “it is”’ (坎像個車子，不能說‘是’ *Kan xiang ge chezi, bu neng shuo ‘shi’*). That is, the defining metonym of the category cannot be taken to *be* any one of its constituents, but one can say that ‘cars are *Kan*’ (車是坎 *che shi Kan*). Members of a category may be defined by that category, but the reverse is not true. However, all Trigrams may ‘represent cars’ (代表車 *daibiao che*) based on their appearance (such as *Kun* ☷ representing a bus full of passengers) or qualities (such as *Xun*, metonymic with Wind, representing a fast car). Once again, though, such ‘representation’ can only be taken as metaphoric (i.e. substitutional) insofar as it is confined to language; in manipulating the trigrams and hexagrams, insofar as these constitute *phenomena* they are not representational but metonymic, *Xun* embodying the same underlying characteristics as the bus on a given scale.

Challenges to *Yinyang* Classification: Homosexuality and Transsexuality

The classification of modern objects thus does not present any particular problem for Eight Trigrams cosmologists, but what about phenomena which more directly call into question its foundational principles? During my return visit to Hangzhou I decided to ask Master Tao how Six Lines Prediction might deal with relationships which do not neatly fit into the Confucian framework which defines the *Yongshen* referents, particularly given Eight Trigrams cosmology's axiom that everything within the cosmos is explicable in terms of the trigrams. Following a discussion of the natural referents of the trigrams and how these related to the *Yongshen*, I asked him how Six Lines Prediction deals with homosexual relationships and transsexual individuals, given the system's focus on Confucian kinship and gender norms (these are described in more detail in the next section). Master Tao was greatly entertained by this, and clearly considered it a very good question – and apparently one he had considered before, as he told me that he had several homosexual clients. He explained that for them, 'the reaction [of the hexagram] is very strange' (反應很奇怪 *fanying hen qiguai*), though the client's sexual orientation 'cannot be seen from' (看不出來 *kan bu chulai*) the Hexagram itself. However, as regards romantic relationships, their partner (對方 *duifang*) is metonymic with the *Yongshen* referent 'Brothers', regardless of their gender. In this sense they are seen cosmologically as equal, rather than complementary, partners, with no hierarchical relationship implied between them. Hence, according to Master Tao, whilst homosexual relationships remain 'unacceptable' (不接受的 *bu jieshou de*) from the perspective of 'proper morality' (正確道德 *zhengque daode*), they can still be accounted for by the cosmological principles upon which that perspective is based. Tao didn't express a personal opinion on this, but related it to the shift in morality from the traditional model of 'men as the roots and women as the branches' (男根女支 *nan gen nü zhi*) set in motion by the May Fourth Movement and the implementation of gender equality under Mao. Some such changes may be visible in hexagrams, such as when 'a wife wrests authority from her husband' (妻奪夫權 *qi duo fuquan*). Transsexuality, according to Tao, is more difficult for the system to deal with, as transsexuals are positioned at the intersection of *yin* and *yang* – however, this does not prevent predictions concerning their affairs.

I asked Ma Jianglong about the same issue whilst we were driving back to Hangzhou following a visit to Zhuge Eight Trigrams Village and dinner with his friend, an entrepreneur who also offers business courses based on the *Yi Jing*. He was far less interested in the question than Master Tao, and dismissed it as the product of my overall lack of understanding of *Yi Jing*

thought before moving on to an extensive commentary on the misunderstandings of the friend we had just been to see. In retrospect, his reaction was less surprising. Compared with Master Tao, Ma is given to more intuitive explanations, and an emphasis on overall impressions of individuals and events as they can be understood in terms of trigram and hexagram Images, rather than in terms of the specific metonymic relations between individual hexagram lines and particular kinds of relationship to which they refer. Whilst I do not discount a degree of defensiveness in his response to a potentially challenging question, I expect it was as much to do with his emphasis on intuitive understanding of *Yi Jing* thought as a primary goal of study; in fact, given his typical willingness to address my ignorant questions his response in this instance was fairly unusual, perhaps due also to his frustration with the perceived inadequacies of his friend's understanding.

Grounding Ethics in Cosmology, by Analogy

So far in this chapter I have established that the epistemology employed by Ma Jianglong relies on a notion of resemblances between entities and phenomena indicating genuine shared characteristics; despite a number of methodological differences, this basic premise echoes that of Master Tao in Six Lines Prediction. I have also discussed attendant assumptions concerning what is and is not knowable, followed by concerns with modern objects and phenomena. Building on this, I turn now to questions of ethics, particularly concerning gender, as these are intimately connected with the epistemological principles of Eight Trigrams Prediction. Six Lines Prediction as practised by Master Tao is the focus here, but the general principles apply equally to other related practices, including those of Ma Jianglong. What I propose, however, is that whilst moral concerns are intimately related to predictive practice, the cosmos of which they form part cannot be properly considered moral, and predictions themselves are amoral in character. Whilst moral or immoral actions have cosmological consequences, these consequences do not arise out of the actions' moral quality per se. Rather, humans perceive certain actions as moral or immoral, and this perception is a product of amoral cosmic principles, being subsumed, along with all other conscious experience, to the transformation of *qi*. I argue here that the moral dimensions of Eight Trigrams cosmology are thus related analogically to cosmic principles, broadly through the association of moral goodness with socio-cosmic harmony and moral badness with socio-cosmic disharmony. Thus, moral truths are not knowable in the same way as cosmic truths; harmonious relations are discernible and predictable *within* the objective domain of the cosmos via the resemblance-based

epistemological strategies so far outlined, but their value is the product of analogy *between* the objective domain of the cosmos and the subjective domain of morals, a different kind of resemblance. These arguments are elaborated below in terms of Master Tao's understanding of gender relations.

The subject of gender relations was one to which Master Tao returned briefly time and again, and stems ultimately from his concern with Confucian (儒家的 *rujia de*) relational ethics, which are an important underlying feature of Six Lines Prediction. For Master Tao, they serve as a normative frame of reference for ethical judgements, but one which is grounded in cosmic laws rather than moral prescription (a conscious merging of what he sees as 'Confucian' rules governing conduct and 'Daoist' theories regarding nature). Briefly, the Confucian relational and gender norms are encapsulated for Master Tao by the Five Cardinal Relationships (五倫 *wu lun*) and the 'Three Followings' (三從 *san cong*). The Five Cardinal Relationships are strongly concerned with filial piety (孝 *xiao*), and express relationships of custodianship in exchange for deference and respect, respectively, between ruler and minister, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and between friends. The 'Three Followings' are broad guidelines for the relational ethics of women: in Master Tao's words, 'in the home, follow the parents; married, follow the husband; after the husband's death, follow the eldest son' (在家從父母，家出從丈夫，夫亡從长子 *zai jia cong fumu, jiachu cong zhangfu, fu wang cong zhangzi*). The only time when the situation is reversed, according to Master Tao, is on the wedding day, when the man must defer to the woman. These are related to the 'Three Principles and Five Virtues' (*san gang wu chang* 三綱五常); the Three Principles are relevant here, and state simply that ruler guides minister, father guides son, and husband guides wife.

As described in Chapter Two, the position of women in relation to men is illustrated by the categorisations of relationships in hexagrams by the *Yongshen* referents. From the point of view of a man, women with whom he is or could be romantically involved come under the category Wives and Wealth; from the point of view of a woman, men come under the category of Officials and Ghosts. Here, women clearly occupy a subordinate position in relation to men; to them, men are superior and sources of authority, whereas to men, women are assets like wealth. However, unlike the various Confucian formulae just discussed, the *Yongshen* system is not intrinsically tied to morality or ethics. Rather, it constitutes a reflection of the natural kinds of relationship into which humans can enter. Here, then, the hierarchical relationship between men and women is a cosmic principle, and any relationship between man and woman is intrinsically of this character. Cosmic forces naturally produce a certain type of relation, and

one of ontological significance; this is reflected elsewhere in the principles of Eight Trigrams cosmology. The relationship between man and woman is metonymic with that between Heaven and Earth, and as discussed above in relation to hexagrams-as-Images, as well as being metonymic with the relationship between the hexagrams-as-principle *Qian* (extreme *yang*) and *Kun* (extreme *yin*). Owing to the resonant character of the cosmos, if a single aspect of it is disharmonious, this will have a greater or lesser disharmonising effect on the rest of the system, as explained in terms of the interaction between *qi*-fields.

Master Tao's remarks concerning the relationship between Heaven and Earth and men and women led him to comment, when I asked him about the consequences of not paying attention to the Three principles, that 'a wife must listen to what her husband says; if she doesn't, then she is not following a woman's proper path' (妻必須聽丈夫的話，如果不聽，為不守婦道 *qi bixu ting zhangfu de hua, ruguo bu ting, wei bu shou fudao*). He added that such ideas, which he ascribes originally to the *Analects* of Confucius (《論語》 *Lunyu*), are nowadays weakened and people no longer care about them⁸. Our conversation in this instance related broadly to general Confucian values, including the idea that the nation should be governed according to Confucian teaching. However, the examples to which Master Tao returned invariably concerned gender. This was the case whenever such topics arose, and I suspect it owes much to the large proportion of his customers who come to him with marriage problems or about extra-marital affairs, either of their own or their spouses (see below). Now, only the older generations remember the time before Mao's implementation of gender equality; Confucian values such as the Three Virtues and Three Followings, as with anything 'from the past' (過去的 *guoqu de*), were discarded as 'feudal things' (封建的東西 *fengjian de dongxi*). In fact, on hearing Master Tao repeat the Three Followings, a young man standing nearby remarked that now it's the opposite, that now men must follow women. During my previous meeting with Master Tao, he had explained that women's changing position had caused many quarrels resulting from going against the natural order arising out of the cycle of *yinyang*. Fundamentally, this discourse demonstrates the general point that '[i]n China, the morality of kinship provides the foundation for one's closest relationships and the basis of engagements with friends, with more distant associates and personal conduct within wider

⁸ Similar concerns have been widely noted in contemporary China – see for example Yan 2003.

society' (Roberts 2013: 155); in this case, a woman's proper role is ultimately dictated by her core kinship relations, her attitudes to which have a knock-on effect on wider social stability.

However, the validity of the *Yongshen* conception of gender relations is an epistemological question rather than an ethical one. If we consider Master Tao's remarks, we find on the one hand cosmological axioms such as 'Heaven [is to] Earth [as] man [is to] woman' (天地男女 *tian di nan nü*), ontological claims about possible kinds of relationships, and epistemological principles concerning the knowability of the cosmos via such relationships and their correlates, and on the other hand statements of moral values (it is a woman's duty to listen to her husband, for example). How are these statements and their attendant beliefs connected? As has been demonstrated, the former group of principles are rationalised via a highly complex and sophisticated body of cosmological theory. The latter, though possess no logical connection to this. Rather, Master Tao implicitly equates moral rectitude with the harmony of cosmic forces (which produces optimal results), and he does so purely analogically via the operation harmony : disharmony :: morally good : morally bad. This is not quite the same as equating moral goodness with what is 'natural' – as shown earlier in relation to homosexuality, for example, morally unsound phenomena remain fully explicable in terms of cosmic laws, so they cannot be said to somehow go against them (as they would in the naturalistic fallacy). What is morally bad is rather equated with that which, in line with cosmic principles, produces sub-optimal conditions for human society – i.e., that which produces disharmony or chaos in the human realm and the wider cosmos (such chaos nonetheless remains governed by the same unalterable cosmic principles as harmony).

This raises the question of how far the cosmos thus conceived can be considered 'moral' or, as Holbraad puts it, whether divination, via its concerns with normativity, might '[rescind] the distinction between morality and cosmos' (Holbraad 2010: 268). Holbraad argues that the moral character of divination presents a problem analogous to that of 'truth' in divination. He describes both the truth and morality of Ifá divination as inherent properties of it – a genuine divinatory verdict cannot but be true and moral, and therefore, so his argument goes, no distinction is made between the realms of cosmology and morality. No such conflation exists in Six Lines Prediction, and as I have shown consultations yield sets of auspicious dates, directions, and so on which may be acted upon in order to optimise the situation in question. Moral pronouncements are nowhere part of the predictive process and any misfortune is attributed to impersonal, amoral, and constant cosmic forces; morality and ethics come into play only in the prior and post-hoc evaluations of client and predictor. Any attribution of moral

responsibility is absent from the prediction itself; even if a client is the victim of behaviour regarded as morally bad, this behaviour is explained in terms of amoral cosmic principles, something true also of *fengshui* (Feuchtwang 1974: 223; Freedman 1979d: 211). In this sense, blame is actively externalised from the situation, recalling Laidlaw's (2010: 159) comments regarding the capacity of institutions and practices to 'expand and distribute agency', in this case to the amoral purview of cosmic forces.

We can see this in the context of an ethnographic example concerning a client's marital difficulties. He had gone with his female cousin to visit Master Tao, as he had concerns relating to his marriage and how this was affecting his family and work. On this occasion, despite the consultation taking place in a secluded courtyard away from the usual roadside spot, Master Tao was joined by a local friend and keen amateur cosmologist, Mr Shu, who took to pitching in advice whenever he felt it was called for. From the cast hexagram, Master Tao concluded that the client's house was positioned against him in a relationship of 'mutual destructiveness' (相剋 *xiang ke*), and that he and his wife were also poorly matched, which was disadvantageous for the children. These factors, stemming from the hexagram, constitute statements relating to the nature of the cosmos in relation to the client. Careful to emphasise that his statements were based on the hexagram and not on the 'attitude' (心態 *xintai*) of the client, Master Tao explained that whilst the client's wife was beautiful, she was also given to 'peach blossoms outside the walls' (牆外桃花 *qiang wai taohua*), a euphemism for sexual promiscuity. Notably, the emphasis on this information coming directly from the hexagram, alongside information about the Eight Characters pertaining to the fate of the client and his wife, couched these statements in entirely cosmic terms. The client's marital difficulties were presented as a cosmological problem, *not* an ethical one. Moreover, the client's response was to suggest possible solutions, including moving house and moving in with his parents-in-law, rather than express explicit ethical concerns (or emotional ones, despite his visible distress). Master Tao, keeping to the question of efficacious solutions, said simply that these options would not help the situation, because a major problem revealed by the hexagram was that the client and his wife 'do not help each other' (沒有互相幫助 *meiyou huxiang bangzhu*). It was not until after the client had left that Master Tao explained to me that the client's wife was in fact seeing another man, but once again this information was presented purely in terms of the hexagram content (when the client had pressed for details about what might happen, Master Tao had been evasive, saying simply that the situation was 'very complicated' (很複雜 *hen*

fuzha), an aspect of professional ethics discussed in the next chapter). Examples like this demonstrate that, for Master Tao, clients' situations present epistemological problems – the key question is what can be determined about a client's circumstances via cosmological principles. The problem for the client is epistemological too, but for him there does exist an ethical element in terms of a desire to know how to act. This ethical dimension, however, is external to the consultation, within which the question is rather 'what actions will produce a given outcome', the answer to which is purely cosmological and emphatically not moral. This, though, is precisely the point – having been presented with a cosmological explanation, the client is left blameless, and his wife's shortcomings are ascribed to cosmic forces rather than her own moral badness.

As I have discussed, moral judgements on the part of the predictor are made outside the context of client consultation, and are justified by analogy between distinct and professionally separate domains of morality on the one hand and objective cosmic principles on the other. This is not to say that the conduct of Eight Trigrams Prediction is not itself subject to moral scrutiny or unrelated to questions of ethical behaviour, topics examined in the next chapter; it is simply to say that such questions of value are not answerable in the same way as predictive questions; that is, they are not accessible via predictive epistemology. Unlike metic forms of divination, and in keeping with Master Tao's pronouncements on those numinous qualities of experience which cannot be spoken of clearly, the purview of Six Lines Prediction remains what does, rather than what should, happen. Nonetheless, moral judgements and ethical behaviour remain explicable in cosmological terms; whilst in aggregate the cosmos makes no moral judgements, insofar as humans constitute part of that cosmos and both their capacity for moral judgement and the cognitive processes of making such judgements are functions of the transformation of *qi*, the human component or scale of the cosmos *is* moral on the level of individual perspectives. However, this moral sense cannot exist apart from humans or equivalently-endowed species (i.e. those that occupy the position of 'Humanity' in the tripartite formula Heaven, Earth, and Humanity). It may thus be said that certain components of the cosmos have moral capacity, but the cosmos as a whole does not maintain moral judgement. When Master Tao makes the moral judgement that wives should behave in a certain way towards their husbands, and justifies this in terms of a distinction between harmony and chaos, insofar as he universalises this principle he does so purely by analogy and without appeal to any externally valid criterion. As one of many subjective judgements

produced by individual humans, however, his moral judgement is a causal product of the transformation of *qi*.

Conclusions: Epistemological and Ethical Resemblance

The primary concern of this chapter has been the epistemological status of resemblance. I began by outlining what I called an 'epistemology of Images', Ma Jianglong's orientation to knowledge in which 'resemblance' between entities or phenomena is taken to be a valid indication of real similarity owing to underlying common *qi* configurations. In this epistemology, 'resemblance' and underlying similarity are best talked about in terms of Images, which may be taken as prototypic members of metonymic categories of phenomena. 'Resemblances' may be identified intuitively and, given the interconnection of everything via repeating configurations of *qi*, any given object may be used to diagnose broader cosmic circumstances.

Both Ma Jianglong and Chang Weihong on the one hand, and Master Tao on the other, are concerned with the relationship between epistemology and theory, both drawing distinctions between abstract 'theoretical' concepts and practical use. However, whilst Ma and Chang place a good deal of faith in human perception, Master Tao is more sceptical, emphasising the need to modify theories for practical implementation, repeatedly maintaining that human error introduces a margin of inaccuracy to predictive practice, and arguing that prediction does not account for the numinous specificities of human situations, precisely the aspect that certain theorists of divination consider the hallmark of the practice.

Both Ma and Tao see Eight Trigrams cosmology as capable of dealing with modern phenomena. Whilst Master Tao emphasises specific cosmic principles manifest within hexagrams, both in terms of classifying phenomena based on the Five Phases and in considering transsexuality in terms of *yin* and *yang*, Ma Jianglong is concerned primarily with hexagram imagery, classifying objects and phenomena based on resemblances which depend on circumstance and perspective. This strategy suggests that whilst resemblances shift according to the purpose and perspective of ego, such resemblances remain epistemologically valid regardless; from any given point in the cosmos, the world is knowable via the same set of principles embodied in the hexagrams even though their metonymic referents may shift.

It should be noted that, epistemologically, Ma and Chang and Master Tao differ primarily in terms of emphasis rather than fundamental assumptions; the arguments made so far about analogy, reductive explanation, and so on, apply to all of them, the differences between them stemming from personal predilections and the very different socioeconomic environments in which they operate. As shown in the previous chapter, Master Tao's Six Lines Prediction similarly relies on a notion that resemblances reveal genuine similarities. His practice couches this much more in terms of the principles of the Five Phases, *yin* and *yang*, and Earthly Branches as opposed to Ma and Chang's focus on hexagram Images. However, whilst resemblance constitutes a reliable epistemological guide to cosmic similarity, this is complicated when it comes to moral and ethical concerns. Whilst Master Tao, like other Eight Trigrams cosmologists, links moral principles to cosmic situations that promote harmony, he cannot escape the fall of Hume's guillotine between what is and what ought to be. Whilst states that promote harmony and disharmony are invariably explicable in terms of cosmological principles, the ascription of moral value to such states relies on an analogical link, even though the value itself, a function of an individual's capacity, ultimately derives from those principles. Indeed, in predictive practice, which as has been shown is primarily an act of epistemology and classification, moral and ethical concerns are absent from the prediction. Whilst predictors do describe moral codes for their practice, these once again may be considered as optimising the local *qi*-field for effective prediction insofar as they affect prediction. They similarly play a strong role in justifying prediction as a legitimate practice, to which I turn in the next chapter.

4 Ethics, Knowledge, and the Legitimacy of Prediction

Introduction

The last chapter examined epistemologies of prediction along with their link to moral frameworks and the externalisation of ethical judgements from the predictive act. This dual focus continues in this chapter, but the theme shifts from the predictive process itself to the relationship of prediction, and predictors, to the broader landscape of competing knowledge systems and moral frameworks surrounding beliefs in which they operate, particularly in terms of how such knowledge systems are compared to Eight Trigrams cosmology. In the last chapter I presented an ethnographic vignette concerning a man worried about his marriage. Master Tao had given advice based on the prediction, but had withheld the finding that the man's wife was engaged in an adulterous affair; I begin this chapter with an examination of Master Tao's concern with the proper ethical conduct of a predictor and how this is connected to concerns with moral legitimacy. I then move on to look at the wider moral climate in which Eight Trigrams Prediction takes place, addressing concerns of legitimacy as they relate to the concept of 'superstition' (迷信 *mixin*). Following this, I pay particular attention to discourse concerning 'science' (科學 *kexue*), exploring way in which Master Tao and Ma Jianglong situate Eight Trigrams Prediction in relation to it. This is discussed with reference to their perceptions of 'religion' (宗教 *zongjiao*) and 'superstition'. Finally, I consider concerns regarding the moral status of 'wisdom' (智慧 *zhihui*) and the relevant focus of study of the *Yi Jing*. Throughout, the focus is on justifications of prediction and cosmological knowledge as they are relevant to the concerns of individual cosmologists, rather than in terms of their social role.

Practising Prediction Ethically

As has been discussed, Master Tao may withhold certain information from clients. There is of course the possibility that such decisions are motivated at least in part by concerns with

potential inaccuracies.⁹ However, on the occasions in which Master Tao explained client situations to me in fuller detail once the client had left, the matter was always serious – infidelity, serious illness of a family member, or even the predicted death of the client. Doubtless anxiety over potential inaccuracies plays a role in choosing not to reveal such serious information, but Master Tao presents a particular ethical position from which such decisions logically follow.

When studying Six Lines Prediction with his teacher, an elderly Buddhist monk, in the four years leading up to the Cultural Revolution, he learned a particular code of conduct. According to his teacher, a predictor should only ever share with his clients ‘an approximation’ (一個大概 *yi ge dagai*) of the information yielded in a prediction, and be especially careful of saying too much positive or negative information. Too much good information, and the client will always come back, but with too much negative information, the client will feel pressured. Master Tao explained that he typically reveals around sixty per cent of the information he derives from a prediction.

Master Tao sees this as an ethical responsibility; predictors ought to observe a code of conduct similar to that of ‘doctors’ (醫生 *yisheng*). He explained that if, for example, a client is likely to experience severe illness, he will not tell them but will inform the family. In the one incident I observed of this type, Master Tao apparently did not know the client, to whom he did not reveal the full extent of the prediction. He advised her, a woman in her early fifties, to pay attention to particular aspects of her health; after she left, he explained that the hexagram indicated she would die the following year. To provide information which could give someone ‘even more pressure’ (更多的壓力 *geng duo de yali*) or ‘very unhappy thoughts’ (思想非常不愉快 *sixiang feichang bu yukuai*) would be ‘unethical’ (沒道德 *mei daode*). Master Tao related an example which he considered a good illustration of how to observe these principles. Immediately before the Spring Festival, a middle-aged woman brought her father to see him. The hexagram revealed that the father would die, but Master Tao advised the woman to stay with her father until the Lantern Festival, the fifteenth day of the lunar new year and end of

⁹ I discount the possibility here that such information is withheld because Master Tao does not *really* believe in the efficacy of what he is doing. He is willing to provide life-affecting predictions regarding personal relationships, employment, and so forth, his advice to clients in cases when he does withhold information is consistent with the information withheld (see the examples below), he conducts predictions on serious matters for personal friends (again, see below), he conducts predictions for himself, he is vehement in his criticism of practices which he sees as genuinely superstitious (below), he has practised Six Lines Prediction for fifty years, including in secret during the Cultural Revolution, and the general impression one gets from spending time with him is that he is sincere in his beliefs.

the Spring Festival celebrations. The woman asked him if her father would die, to which Tao's response was 'why would you ask?' (幹嘛問 *gan ma wen*). Her father did die, and she later returned to ask Master Tao why he had not told her this would happen. His response was that he had told her to stay with him. Cases such as this demonstrate that whilst the act of prediction itself is amoral, the interactions which occur before and after are enmeshed in ethical concerns.

These ethical decisions can, of course, be couched in cosmological terms, unhappy thoughts or feeling under pressure directly affecting a client's *qi*-field and hence fortune. However, Master Tao articulates them less in such terms than in terms of 'benevolence' (仁 *ren*), again drawing comparisons between predictive and medical practice: 'practitioners of medicine and of the *Changes* have the hearts of the benevolent' (醫易者仁者之心 *yi yi zhe ren zhe zhi xin*). Considering the services he offers, he describes himself as 'much the same as a psychiatrist' (和心理醫生差不多 *he xinli yisheng chabuduo*). This orientation towards 'benevolence' may be considered ethical in the sense of a 'second-level reflection' (Steinmüller 2013: 13) of 'embodied morality' (Zigon 2008: 17), as opposed to institutional morality and morality in public discourse. In this sense, ethics are a product of reflexive problematisation of potentially harmful situations. Whilst 'benevolence' itself may be considered a moral, rather than ethical, virtue, its articulation in terms of prescriptions for professional practice goes beyond 'everyday habitus or discourse' (Steinmüller 2013: 13). It is mobilised for ethical purposes; here we see it considered in light of morally problematic, life-and-death situations.

It bears consideration, however, that ethical rationalisations of moral judgements are, like cosmological rationalisations, post-hoc constructions (Haidt 2001); cognitive scientific treatments of moral and ethical reasoning consistently demonstrate that 'automatic emotional processes tend to dominate' in the moment of decision-making (Greene & Haidt 2002: 517). Moreover, whilst moral evaluation in this sense is automatic, both it and post-hoc rationalisation are biased in favour of maintaining social relationships and defending against threatening ideas (2002: 517). In light of this we can consider the decision to avoid causing emotional harm an automatic one subsequently rationalised ethically in terms of 'benevolence'. Given that this links amoral predictive practice to medical *care*, necessarily ethical, this form of rationalisation has greater salience in terms of maintaining social relationships than the cosmological rationalisation. Even though traditional Chinese medicine is a cosmological practice cognate with Eight Trigrams Prediction, the aspect of it with which

Master Tao identifies is affective, the moral goodness of the care-provider. Greene et al. (2004: 398), based on a neuroimaging studies of moral decision-making, conclude that preference for deontological or utilitarian judgements in moral decision-making games depends on whether the judgement in question is 'personal' (involving the actor inflicting harm directly on another individual, as in pushing someone off a bridge to prevent a trolley killing five people) or 'impersonal' (the deflection of harm from one individual or group to another, as in pulling a lever which redirects a trolley from killing five people to killing one). They further characterise this distinction as one between 'authorship' and 'editing' of moral situations (Greene et al. 2004: 389). In the course of everyday social action, 'personal' violations are salient, and Greene et al found that such judgements are associated with increased activity in brain areas responsible for emotion and social cognition, whereas 'impersonal' judgements correlate with activity in brain areas associated with abstract reasoning and problem-solving. The decision not to reveal potentially harmful information in prediction, a product of weighing up the merits of full disclosure and prevention of emotional distress, constitutes a 'personal' moral judgement. It thus follows that a rationalisation based on emotion, in the form of 'benevolence', presents a more salient post-hoc justification than the amoral calculations of cosmological rationalisation, which would appear to have more in common with abstract utilitarian judgements. This is particularly so given that post-hoc justifications tend to bias towards maintaining social relations; the predictor's relationship with the client finds more common ground in the shared ethical concept of 'benevolence' than in the specialist amoral technicalities of Eight Trigrams cosmology. These post-hoc rationalisations, of course, reflexively inform future intuitive judgement (Haidt 2001: 817).

However, an appeal to 'benevolence' is not only explicable in terms of its salience as post-hoc ethical rationalisation. The association with medical care identifies Eight Trigrams Prediction with a legitimate and prestigious body of knowledge, and identifies the predictor with a highly regarded professional group (see Jankowiak 2004). By casting himself as a provider of expert care, Master Tao claims moral legitimacy for himself and his practice. Moreover, 'benevolence' itself is a concept strongly associated with good Confucian ethical conduct. In this context it is seen as an ultimate goal, a 'dynamic process of making' based on self-cultivation (Yan 2013: 268; see also Schwartz 1985). Thus, an emphasis on 'benevolence' accrues further legitimacy. Confucian morality enjoys growing prestige, partly as a result of perceived moral decline accompanying increasing consumerism (Yan 2013), particularly in urban areas. This is part of a broader trend towards the revival of Confucian ideas at official and grassroots levels (Billioud &

Thoraval 2015; Hammond & Richey 2015), which I observed first-hand in Hangzhou through friends involved in the promotion of ‘national studies’ (*guoxue*). Appeals to Confucianism accrue prestige for prediction based not only on moral virtue, but also on appeals to renewing popular pride (including nationalism) in a traditional culture conceptualised as uniquely Chinese, and on the intellectual authority of that tradition. Moreover, for the individual predictor, an appeal to a specific Confucian notion not only appropriates the positive, legitimising connotations of that notion but serves also to demonstrate his own erudition – which in turn confers legitimacy in the form of intellectual authority or ‘culture’ (文化 *wenhua*). Master Tao, though, is modest about his ‘cultural level’ (文化水平 *wenhua shuiping*). This concept is closely tied to education, individuals with more education generally being considered to have more ‘culture’ (see Kipnis 2011: 99); self-effacing comments such as ‘I have no culture’ (我没有文化 *wo meiyou wenhua*) are common, particularly among older generations. Nonetheless, Master Tao is greatly respected by his students and regular clients for his knowledge, and he himself considers other forms of prediction, such as physiognomy, to be simpler and more suitable for ‘people without culture’ to practice; Master Tao also considers physiognomists to be particularly prone to ‘swindling people’, discussed later in this chapter.

Honesty about the limits of one’s knowledge also forms an important aspect of ethical practice. In the previous chapter I discussed Master Tao’s epistemological concerns with what cannot be spoken of clearly, including his maxim that Six Lines Prediction is typically seventy to eighty per cent accurate. This epistemological position is accompanied by a moral injunction against dishonesty regarding predictive efficacy. Master Tao argues that the accuracy rate of his predictions is based on his ‘experience’ (經歷 *jingli*), and that studying the *Yi Jing* is not a process which one ever finishes. As such, ‘there are no great masters of the *Yi Jing*’ (《易經》没有大師 *Yijing meiyou dashi*), and ‘there are none in China who have brought their skills to a point of perfection’ (在中國没有爐火純青登峰造極 *zai Zhongguo meiyou luhuo chunqing dengfeng zaoji*, lit. ‘in China there are none who have burnt the stove until it is pure and green or scaled the peaks to create an extreme’). It follows that anyone claiming to be an expert is ‘swindling people’ (*pianren*). Explaining that ‘it is through coming to understand that one attains awareness of fundamental principle’ (悟出道理 *wu chu daoli*), Master Tao argues that ‘the master leads the way through the door, the cultivation [of the art] is located in the person [i.e. the student]’ (師傅領進門，修行在個人 *shi fu ling jin men, xiuxing zai geren*), meaning

that a teacher is necessary, but that ultimately comprehension comes through experience and cultivation of the person. A predictor should thus be honest about his degree of experience and accept that his understanding is necessarily limited by it. In practice, this is reflected by Master Tao's reluctance to conduct physiognomic assessments, as he is not trained in this and must rely on a manual. Even though he always displays this manual open on a page with physiognomic diagrams (an obvious indication of predictive services), I never saw him actually conduct an assessment, despite enquiries. He does, however, conduct *fengshui* consultations, if rarely, and explained to me that he does this based on his understanding of Six Lines Prediction as he has not been formally trained in *fengshui*. He showed me his compass and a gold cloth on which he places it during consultations, which he jokingly described as 'something to swindle people' (騙人的東西 *pian ren de dongxi*), as it gives an illusion of professionalism.

Incidentally, it is his experience which he believes sets him apart from predictors who pursue money over interest, notably the old Yunnanese man who operated on the other side of the road during my first period of fieldwork. When I asked about him, Master Tao said that his predictions were based simply on 'reading from books' (念書 *nian shu*). Moreover, having spent most of his life in a remote part of Yunnan, poetically but somewhat derisively described by Master Tao as 'born in the mountains by the river and growing up in the forest, seeing lots of trees but rarely seeing people' (生在澗山長在林，多見樹木少見人 *sheng zai ji shan zhang zai lin, duo jian shumu shao jian ren*), his limited experience of life in a major city led him to see everything as strange (少見多怪 *shao jian duo guai*, lit. 'little seen, lots strange'), and thus to misinterpret.¹⁰ As the discussion in the previous chapter showed, in Master Tao's opinion simple consultation of texts is seen as inadequate in comparison with experience. This does not mean, however, that the texts are unimportant – on the contrary, becoming an experienced predictor is possible only when one has gained an intimate working knowledge of Eight Trigrams cosmology such that one does not need to constantly refer to them.

Thus, moral value is attached to both honesty about the limits of one's knowledge *and* to one's experience, both of which reflect concerns with the validity of prediction. A better predictor is one with more experience and thus a higher success rate, and one who does not attempt to 'swindle people' by giving the impression of greater but unsubstantiated expertise. Concern

¹⁰ Compare this to Johnston's (2013) analysis of 'moral geography' in an Anhui village, in which movement downhill from agricultural land into the town is associated with modernisation, success, and opportunity.

with predictive success also underlies proscription of certain questions. Returning to the comparison with medical practice, there is a taboo against self-consultation regarding major life issues (exempting minor consultations such as Master Tao's habitual predictions of his daily earnings), as well as a responsibility against 'wanton reading' (雜念 *za nian*, lit. miscellaneous readings) or 'chaotic calculation' (亂算 *luan suan*) of the hexagrams, that is, consultation for no reason or without a properly thought-out problem in mind. This leads Master Tao to warn potential clients against asking for the sake of asking and to insist to clients or curious passers-by that there is no pressure to consult. Such injunctions are based on the principle that the act of prediction can itself change fate; there thus exists an ethical responsibility on the part of the predictor to collaborate in potentially fate-changing acts of prediction only if the client is particularly concerned about something. This is accompanied by concerns with the potential impact of such questions on the client's *qi*-field, which could result in inaccurate predictions; once again, ethical judgement is couched in epistemological concerns. This is also part of the justification for warnings against private consultations. In principle, the 'opposite party' should be able to observe the prediction. Master Tao consequently charges more than the typical ¥50 for private consultations, ranging from ¥200 if they take place on the ground floor of a nearby teahouse to ¥1000 or more if they take place at a client's home.

An exception exists for Master Tao when it comes to predicting for government officials. His usual fee for Six Lines Prediction is ¥50, pricier than others, who typically charge ¥20-30; when challenged about this by prospective clients, he tells them without hesitation that if they want a cheaper service, they should go to the predictor up the road. For the seven officials who visit him every lunar new year, the fee is ¥600-1000 each for a prediction for the whole year (though this remains low compared to Ma Jianglong's rates). I was not able to observe their consultations, as the clients insist on them being conducted indoors, in private – were they to be seen consulting a roadside predictor they would find themselves in serious trouble. Master Tao's opinion of these officials is not particularly high (such an opinion of local officials is far from uncommon), and when I returned to Hangzhou in August 2015 he was very open about increasing his fees for them given increased demand for his services spurred by the government crackdown on corruption. They do not believe prediction to be efficacious, Master Tao says, but they fear being demoted or purged, so they come to see him; consultation in the absence of belief marks them as morally suspect given the ethical injunctions surrounding

prediction described above (and this may also impact on the prediction's accuracy). As he sees it, they tend to stay in a position until they have earned some money, then leave for somewhere else. He related with particular pleasure how several year ago he advised one of them to change jobs before the Qingming festival, or he would be purged; at the Mid-Autumn Festival that year, the same man returned to him with a gift to thank him, as he had followed the advice, whereas five of his former colleagues had been dismissed.

However, there remain other situations in which Master Tao will not perform a prediction, which he summarised as follows: 'if there is no issue, do not divine [占 *zhan*]; if the heart [of the predictor or client] is not honest, do not divine, and if [the predictor or client] has been drinking to excess, do not divine; do not divine about [actions which could] bring disadvantage to the country or society; do not divine for individuals who do not respect you [as a predictor]' (無事不占，心不誠不占，酗酒不占，對國家對社會不利不占，不尊重本人不占 *wu shi bu zhan, xin bu cheng bu zhan, xujiu bu zhan, dui guojia dui shehui bu li bu zhan, bu zunzhong benren bu zhan*). All of these proscriptions may be considered in terms of an ethical practice oriented towards 'benevolence' and the avoidance of harm, as has been discussed, and all may be similarly justified in terms of concerns with their impact on a client's *qi*-field and decreasing accuracy with an increasing scale of problem – but again, these are post-hoc justifications. These proscriptions similarly legitimise prediction as an ethical practice in which the welfare of client and society are paramount, backed up by the authority of Chinese tradition. These, however, are not the only strategies of legitimacy relevant to Eight Trigrams Prediction; I turn now to an examination of strategies of legitimation related to the *Yi Jing*, 'science', and concerns with 'superstition' and 'swindling people'.

Superstition and the *Yi Jing*

Moral hostility to divination as 'superstition' is an important aspect of state discourse. Under Mao, divination of all kinds was suppressed, along with religion (*zongjiao*)¹¹, Confucian values (e.g. in the 'Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius' (批林批孔 *pilin pikong*) campaign), and anything else deemed 'feudal' (*fengjian de*). In many ways the Communists continued on the modernist anti-traditionalist path set out by their Republican predecessors¹², and in fact analogous state crackdowns on ideologically suspect beliefs, such as witchcraft, have

¹¹ See Bruun (Bruun 2003: 81–111) for a detailed overview of post-1949 policy regarding the cognate practice of *fengshui*.

¹² For an account of developments in Taiwan after 1949, including the promotion of divination forms as preserved Chinese traditions, see Homola (2013).

antecedents in the Qing dynasty (Kuhn 1990) and even as far back as the Han (Loewe 1974 Ch. 2). During the Cultural Revolution, Master Tao had to practice prediction in secret, using rice grains saved from dinner instead of coins – but he assured me he had no shortage of clients. Incidentally, this does not prevent him, and other predictors including Ma Jianglong, from frequently insisting that Mao was a great aficionado of *Yi Jing* divination. ‘Fate-calculation’ (*suanming*) was designated ‘superstition’, and this attitude remains common. The state continues to use allegations of ‘superstition’ to besmirch the reputations of disgraced officials (e.g. Zhongguo jijian jiancha bao 2016; Zheng Shu & He Qiang 2016), and Master Tao explained that until a few years ago he would occasionally be moved along by the police¹³. This no longer occurs, at least in this area of central Hangzhou, but popular perception often continues to associate prediction with superstition.

Despite the ubiquity of various forms of ‘fate-calculation’ and the plethora of popular books available on the subject today (including many ‘teach yourself’-style guides), negative attitudes to it remain widespread; even the standard encyclopaedic dictionary *Dacihai* defines ‘fate-calculation’, first and foremost, as ‘a type of superstition’ (一種迷信 *yi zhong mixin*); the example given is Eight Character (*ba zi*) divination (算命 *suàn mìng*, vol. 4 2011). Very early on in my fieldwork, whilst searching for accommodation, I visited a family in the nearby tea-producing village of Zhuantang to enquire about a room. I spent some time discussing my research with the family. When I mentioned that I was interested in ‘fate-calculation’, the son and mother laughed, but the father became very serious. He insisted that there was no fate-calculation in this part of Zhuantang; it happens on the other side of the main road, in people’s houses, but not on the street, as the government doesn’t allow it because it is a means of ‘swindling people’. He didn’t like it, and said explicitly that he would not be happy to show me such things – if I wanted to find out about it, I should talk to the government. The attitude in Hangzhou proper is far less severe, and passers-by often see the opportunity to speak to Master Tao as one to question the category of ‘superstition’. The question, often asked in a curious or mildly sceptical, rather than hostile, tone, ‘Is this a form of superstition?’ is common. Master Tao’s inevitable answer is ‘no’, that ‘superstition is not good’ (*mixin shi bu haode*); some conversations end with this, but others lead to people asking for a prediction.

¹³ Compare this with the gathering of fortune-tellers into ‘fortune-telling streets’ (算命街 *suanming jie*) by local municipalities in Taiwan (Homola 2013: 129).

I discussed above how Master Tao accrues a degree of legitimacy to his practice by identifying it with ‘benevolence’, associating it with medicine-like care and Confucian ethics. The latter strategy confers legitimacy in part by appeal to the prestige of Chinese cultural heritage. In the case of Six Lines Prediction and related practices, practitioners are particularly well-placed to capitalise on this prestige owing to their practices’ roots in the *Yi Jing*. The *Yi Jing* is widely regarded positively as a source of wisdom and pillar of ‘traditional Chinese culture’ (中國傳統文化 *Zhongguo chuantong wenhua*), and this respect can extend to its efficacy in prediction (non-*Yi Jing* forms of which may not be considered efficacious as they lack this basis). A common remark from non-specialists, with no particular interest in the *Yi Jing* itself, is that the *Yi Jing* is ‘formidable’ (厲害 *lihài*), and, along with the *Huangdi Nei Jing* 《黃帝內經》 (*Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*, a foundational text of Chinese medicine), considered essential for a full understanding of Chinese culture. Along with being ‘formidable,’ it is also popularly described as ‘profound’ (深奧 *shen’ao*), making it difficult for the non-specialist to understand (contrast this with Ma Jianglong’s view that it is ‘easy’, one of the meanings of the character 易 *yi* in the title). Prestige derives both from the cultural capital of the text and its difficulty – I was frequently met with astonishment at the idea of a foreigner researching this text and the predictive methods associated with it. This popular perception, combined with major scholarly interest in ‘Changes studies’ (易學 *yixue*, the study of the *Yi Jing*) and a broad popular revival of interest in traditional practices, mean that the *Yi Jing* occupies a unique place in popular perception. This leads some to consider *Yi Jing*-based prediction to be outside the scope of ‘fate-calculation’; on one occasion, a prospective client spent a good deal of time trying to insist that what Master Tao was doing was not *suanming* but *Yi Jing* – she wanted to *suanming*, and this was not what she expected (the phrase is particularly associated with Eight Characters prediction). Master Tao rather testily explained that actually it was *suanming*, and she was eventually persuaded. Similar opinions are raised relatively frequently. However, as far as Master Tao is concerned Eight Trigrams Prediction is *suanming* by definition, but not at all ‘superstitious’ despite prevalent rhetoric; he held no preference for the more formal term ‘arts of enumeration’ (數術 *shushu*), as Homola (2013) reports among predictors in Taiwan, where the term *suanming* is considered derogatory.

It should be noted, however, that not all opinion of *Yi Jing* divination is positive, even among scholars of the work; renowned *Yi Jing* scholar Zhu Bokun, for example, criticises use of the text for divining personal fortune (Zhu Bokun et al. 2011: 4). Similarly, some scientifically-educated young people (and die-hard Marxists) are sceptical of the entire system; scepticism

in these cases is not necessarily directed at particular predictors but rather at the entire cosmology. Other objections come from the religious (Master Tao is resolutely atheist, and the *Yi Jing* is not considered a religious text outside Daoism). These range from outright rejection based on incommensurability with one's beliefs – a young man walked past and declared, 'fate calculation - I don't believe it – I believe in Jesus' (算命, 我不相信, 我相信耶稣 *suanming, wo bu xiangxin, wo xiangxin yesu*) – to scepticism regarding the practice of prediction for money rather than prediction in and of itself, an attitude which resonates with Evans-Pritchard's observation that among the Azande people would voice scepticism of a particular oracle in ways that vouchsafed the oracular institution or principle as a whole (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 163). Such an attitude was taken by a friend who volunteered at the nearby Buddhist temple, a retired university lecturer. On Wednesday mornings when she and her sister volunteered there, I would typically spend the morning at the temple and go to see Master Tao in the afternoon. My friend's attitude to the *Yi Jing* was similar to that of various lay Buddhists I met in Hangzhou – it was extremely important for Chinese culture, and a source of profound wisdom compatible with Buddhist teachings. However, when she first discovered I was going to see Master Tao (whom she did not know), she became serious, and warned me that he would probably try to 'swindle' me. Once it became clear that I was meeting him regularly, her serious warnings gradually became joking questions along the lines of, 'has he swindled you yet?'

Whilst the association of Six Lines Prediction with the *Yi Jing* grants it a certain degree of legitimacy, this is insufficient to guard against all accusations of 'superstition', from both specialists and laypeople. The discussion has so far focused on questions of accruing legitimacy by appealing to prestigious sources and knowledge systems, at the threshold between amoral Eight Trigrams cosmology and outside claims regarding knowledge and ethics. In the next section, I turn to how the category of 'science' is viewed, and then to ways in which Master Tao and Ma Jianglong approach belief systems outside Eight Trigrams cosmology and how this relates to how they, as individual cosmologists, know the world.

Varying Attitudes to 'Science'

We have already seen that Ma and Chang argue that Eight Trigrams cosmology is associated with an Image-based 'thought model' which they distinguish from science. Before examining their position on this, along with the views of Master Tao and his associates, it is necessary to

make some general observations concerning the relationship between ‘traditional Chinese culture’ (*Zhongguo chuantong wenhua*) and ‘science’.

In addition to working with predictors, during my time in Hangzhou I interacted regularly with several other groups of individuals who were not directly involved with the *Yi Jing* and prediction, as discussed in the thesis Introduction; all of these individuals had their own opinions of Chinese tradition, ‘superstition’, and ‘science’. An official discourse exists concerning all these categories, most ambiguous in relation to ‘traditional Chinese culture’, though this, particularly in its Confucian forms, is increasingly lauded by Party and state rhetoric (Bell 2010). ‘Superstition’ is condemned as holding China back from development and modernisation. ‘Science’, though, is uniquely positive, constituting a key concept in the state’s vocabulary of development, modernisation, and civilisation (as in the ‘Scientific Outlook on Development’ (科學發展觀 *kexue fazhan guan*), an ultimate marker of prestige and progress – the antithesis of ‘superstition’. These categories, though, are subject to continual negotiation. Whilst ‘superstition’ is invariably negative, what *counts* as superstition, as has already been shown, can be questioned. ‘Science’ is highly regarded, and linkage of ‘science’ to traditional cosmologies is also found in popular Buddhism (the volunteers I met at a local temple were particularly vocal regarding this) and even among ‘national studies’ (*guoxue*) activists, who despite prevailing anti-Western sentiments draw on developmental psychology to justify learning strategies. Such approaches to the compatibility of ‘science’ and traditional cosmologies are often accompanied by a notion that all religions essentially converge on the same idea (typically expressed as ‘love’ 愛 *ai*), and that as such all could be considered equally valid; I met a number of laypeople who actively read popular works on Buddhism, Christianity, and the Chinese classics, with the explicit goal of combining them into a system meaningful to themselves as individuals. My interaction with these various groups indicated a broad tendency to explore the relationship between different belief systems that is given a detailed and specific direction by individuals such as Master Tao and Ma Jianglong.

All individuals I met who were engaged with belief systems or cosmologies beyond the level of passing fancy had something to say about ‘science’. Even more than Buddhism and Daoism, any cosmologists worth their salt need to position their outlook in relation to it. Such positioning is not, however, limited to cosmological specialists, and popular attitudes to it vary, from the no-nonsense, ‘science’-as-given attitude of various young, university-educated people I met to the vehemently anti-‘science’ nationalism of certain individuals involved in ‘national studies’. Broadly speaking, as often attitudes will vary towards different kinds of

'science', for example, and individuals may hold different attitudes in different circumstances, the attitudes to 'science' in relation to other beliefs held by individuals that I encountered can be characterised as follows:

1) The belief in question *is* scientific

This attitude is most notably held by Master Tao. For him, Six Lines Prediction, *fengshui*, and cognate practices are empirically verifiable systems based on observation of natural phenomena. For example, when a passing young man informed him that rather than fate-calculation, he believed in science, Master Tao replied, 'Isn't this science?' (這不是科學嗎? *Zhe bu shi kexue ma?*). This attitude is hinted at by many others when they describe Fate Calculation as 'scientific' (*kexue de*) – but such individuals may not subject their general belief system to the same level of reflexive rigour as Master Tao.

2) 'Science' supports the belief system in question, but is epistemologically inferior

This is a common attitude, and I identify it here with that of Ma Jianglong and the Buddhists mentioned above. What these individuals have in common is an acceptance of 'science' and a respect for it as a system of knowledge, but one which in itself is insufficient to account for all phenomena (hence Ma's juxtaposition of 'science' and 'religion', discussed below, which require a 'bridge' in the form of the epistemologically superior 'dark studies').

3) 'Science' is *compatible* with the belief system in question, but typically the two systems are better at resolving different kinds of questions

This attitude is closely related to 2), which requires a degree of epistemological commensurability. It is perhaps best considered as an attitude which individuals who otherwise generally hold one of the other attitudes adopt when expedient. Xiaoping's observations concerning the similarity between *yin* and *yang* and negative and positive electrical charge, discussed in the next chapter, fall into this category, particularly when he argues that the former are best tailored to explaining human psychology and the latter to more typically 'physical' questions.

4) 'Science' is simply *epistemologically inferior* to the belief system

This attitude was relatively uncommon among people I spoke to, but represents a stronger form of 2). It is employed selectively, for example, by Ma Jianglong. Whilst respecting physics,

he opposes the theory of evolution, arguing that it is simply wrong because the development of humans is rather explicable in terms of the interaction of *yin* and *yang qi* at the moment of conception, as types of animal are defined by specific configurations of *qi* which are essentially fixed. In this case, the theory of evolution is rejected as it provides an inferior or incorrect explanation. This attitude is often implicit in 5).

5) 'Science' is morally inferior to the belief system

This attitude was not voiced by any of the Eight Trigrams cosmologists I met, but is common among individuals involved in national studies. In this conception, 'science' is rejected primarily because it is seen as Western, and is juxtaposed as inferior 'knowledge' (知識 *zhishi*) to the superior 'wisdom' (智慧 *zhihui*) of the Chinese classics. This attitude tends to be accompanied by 4).

6) 'Science' is implicitly one of various belief systems, from which one may pick and choose

This is a common lay attitude, as discussed above. What is taken to be 'science' in this case may be very broadly defined. For example, a conversation on beliefs with the employees of a local heating company also involved discussion of the purportedly scientific 'experiments' detailed in a popular book called *Water Knows the Answer* (《水知道答案》 *Shui zhidao da'an*), which supposedly demonstrate that the formation of ice crystals can be influenced by emotions directed at the water or the exposure of water to various genres of music.

I now turn to how these attitudes play out in the context of Eight Trigrams cosmology.

Science and Other Knowledge Systems in Eight Trigrams Cosmology

Here, I focus on the attitudes of Master Tao and Ma Jianglong particularly, and how these relate to other aspects of their cosmological ideas. First, I discuss Master Tao's attitudes to 'science', 'superstition', 'religion', and 'swindling people', before looking at Ma Jianglong's approach to 'science' and 'religion'.

Master Tao on Swindling People, Speaking Concretely, and Psychological Consolation

The various attitudes to 'science' outlined above are by no means exclusive – they are intended simply as broad orientations, and most individuals will adopt different ones in different situations, including expert Eight Trigrams cosmologists like Master Tao and Ma

Jianglong. For example, whilst he typically adopts position 1), in one of our early meetings Master Tao, like Ma, described Eight Trigrams Prediction in terms of ‘dark studies’ and added that, along with Mayan divination, ‘basic science’ cannot explain it. Over the subsequent months in which I worked with him, he never again made such statements, despite repeated mentions of Mayan divination, for which he maintains a particular curiosity. On other occasions he defended his work against allegations of ‘superstition’ on the basis that it is ‘science’. The over-arching impression he gives, particularly in light of his commitment to atheism, predictive accuracy, and materialism, is that he considers Eight Trigrams Prediction ‘scientific,’ and that as such, whilst what is generally labelled ‘science’ (i.e. the natural sciences) does not adequately address the predictive powers of the Eight Trigrams (hence, ‘basic science’ does not explain them), Eight Trigrams cosmology *does* provide a ‘scientific’ framework based on the trigrams, and its legitimacy is thus derived as a form of science which broadens the purview of ‘science’ narrowly conceived.

This is suggested by various attitudes Master Tao holds to other belief systems and fortune-telling methods, and his concerns regarding these are at once epistemological and ethical. Principally, ethical issues of epistemology for Tao relate to ‘swindling people’, and whilst in his view such practices may be engaged in deliberately, their ultimate fault lies in their lack of accuracy rather than suspect motivation. This point is well-illustrated by his open disdain for religion in general and popular Buddhism in particular. It is not that he takes every single aspect of religion to be bad – he respects Christianity’s emphasis on ‘love’ (*ai*), for example – but he objects to any claims of the existence of the supernatural or anything that relies on ‘belief’ (信仰 *xinyang*) rather than ‘knowledge’ (*zhishi*). Here, I focus specifically on three aspects of his attitude to knowledge practices: hostility to non-verifiable ‘beliefs’ the importance he places on ‘speaking concretely’ (說具體 *shuo juti*) about phenomena, and the attendant distinction he draws between methods which are effective because they ‘speak concretely’ and those which are effective simply as ‘psychological consolation’ (心理安慰 *xinli anwei*).

Master Tao subscribes to a certain hierarchy of prediction methods. Whilst he holds that all methods of casting hexagrams are ‘accurate’ (準確 *zhunque*), including the use of coins and the more traditional use of yarrow stalks in various quantities, some methods are more accurate than others. The fact that the coin and yarrow methods yield different probabilities of ‘moving Lines’ (動爻 *dong yao*) is of little consequence to him, but both are considered more

accurate than the numerological method of Plum Blossom Change Mathematics (*meihua yishu*). The latter, in Tao's view, is suitable only for asking narrowly-defined questions of whether 'an affair will be successful' (事會成功 *shi hui chenggong*). The former methods however, as techniques of Attached Stem Divination, comprise 'the methods of the great ancestors' (大宗之法 *dazong zhi fa*); the ascription of any method to the 'great ancestors' grants it an immense amount of epistemological validity, intimately intertwined with the moral legitimacy it provides. Reliance on the *Yi Jing* alone does not allow one to 'speak concretely' about phenomena, despite its broad theoretical validity; as explained in Chapter Three, Master Tao contrasts theoretical and practical understanding, the latter including Six Lines Prediction, legitimised as an *Yi Jing*-based practice which improves upon the original text by yielding specific and accurate predictions.

Master Tao's attitudes to alternative methods of fortune-telling are articulated in terms of their ability to 'speak concretely.' Broadly, all methods cognate with Six Lines Prediction are considered accurate in this sense – this includes *fengshui*, physiognomy, palm-reading, Eight Characters, and so on, all of which are rooted in common correlative cosmological principles. However, such methods, like Six Lines Prediction itself, are plagued by 'swindling'. In Master Tao's estimation, this is especially true of physiognomy, a commonly-seen form of roadside fortune-telling; he considers many practitioners to simply assess clients' demeanours as more or less happy or sad and go from there. In this case, 'swindling' is to be understood primarily as 'cheating'; what is questionable is not the theoretical basis of the practice but the motive and ability of the practitioner. Unlike Master Tao, in his own estimation, such predictors practice for money rather than as a 'hobby' (*aihao*). This disdain for profiteering on the part of predictors who 'self-identify as the guarantors of virtuous and technical knowledge' is remarked on by Homola (2013: 130), who similarly identifies a rejection of 'accusations of superstition and swindling' on the part of non-professional predictors.

Master Tao similarly describes religion as 'swindling people', though in this case the phrase is better understood as 'deluding' people, encouraging them to accept false beliefs. Rather than simply being a moral criticism, in such cases it is both moral and epistemological – much of the weight of moral criticism stemming from the epistemological invalidity of religious beliefs. When I asked Master Tao whether Eight Trigrams cosmology conflicts with religions, he responded that it only 'conflicts' (衝突 *chongtu*) with 'Christianity' (基督教 *jidujiao*, i.e. Protestantism), and slightly less so with Islam, which he associates with a Sinified form practised by the Hui ethnic group. Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism do not conflict with

Eight Trigrams cosmology, in Tao's words – but this does not contradict his own sceptical position regarding Buddhism and Daoism. Their cosmologies are compatible with the key tenets of Eight Trigrams cosmology (indeed, Daoism, as an indigenous religion, is in many ways cognate with non-religious Eight Trigrams cosmology). He explained to me that his point in describing Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism with the popular epithet 'the three teachings join as one' (三教合一 *san jiao he yi*) was that they are easily mutually translated – 'the three teachings discuss the *Dao*' (三教論道 *san jiao lun dao*). This does not prevent them from getting the *Dao* wrong, of course. Entities such as Daoist 'Immortals' (仙 *xian*), for example, are no more than 'beliefs' (*xinyang*), 'not real' (不是實實在在的 *bu shi shishi zaizai de*). Again, he likened this to communism in theory, which he also considers not to refer to anything real, unlike the applied Socialism with Chinese Characteristics; however, his criticisms of supernatural beliefs are frequent, unlike his criticisms of theoretical Marxism. Whilst Master Tao never expressed any views to me in which Marxist ideology was presented as 'swindling people', he was happy to discuss religion in these terms. To say that the venerated sage Laozi was immortal, as is done in certain strands of Daoism, for example, is to 'swindle [delude] people.' Similarly, he dismissed the advice I had been given to recite Buddhist sutras (念佛 *nian fo*) by another fortune-teller as nonsensical, and later asked rhetorically if anyone had ever seen the Western Paradise (西天 *xitian*) taught in Buddhism. Obviously not, he continued – to preach such things is to 'swindle [delude] people'. He further distinguished Buddhist 'worship' (拜 *bai*), in the form of burning incense and bowing before statues, from similar practices regarding Confucius, arguing that worshipping Confucius was an act of 'respect' (尊重 *zunzhong*) rather than religious belief. As far as Master Tao is concerned, all 'worship' (崇拜 *chongbai*) is 'superstition.' He has no shortage of examples, typically concerning Buddhists at the nearby temple and Hangzhou's Buddhist Academy (佛學院 *foxueyuan*), close to his former home, and how they are all 'fake' (假的 *jia de*). Buddhist monks and students of the academy, he argues, proclaim their faith but continue to marry, drink, and eat spring onions (which are forbidden as 'pungent' foods). Many people, in his view, say they are Buddhist or Christian simply so that others will consider them 'good people' (好人 *hao ren*). Such criticisms are directed both at the empirical basis of Buddhist cosmology *and* the moral character of its practitioners – who may not even believe the false principles they proclaim. This, of course, contrasts directly with Eight Trigrams cosmology, which is epistemologically valid – but it

should be recalled that Master Tao openly concedes that not all of its adherents are of upstanding moral character.

These examples indicate that in Master Tao's view, religious perspectives are epistemologically suspect because they posit the existence of unverifiable entities or places. This amounts to 'swindling [deluding] people,' all the more so given that many so-called practitioners routinely flout their own doctrines. In contrast, the elements of Eight Trigrams cosmology, such as the Five Phases, are real, and not just metaphysical constructs; all would exist regardless of the existence of humans. In his words, 'humans separated from Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth cannot exist' (人離開金木水火土是不可存在的 *ren likai jin mu shui huo tu shi bu ke cunzai de*). Buddhist monks, among others, may *think* they can transcend the Five Phases, but they cannot. *Yinyang* and the Five Phases can be both visible and 'unobservable' (看不見 *kan bu jian*); an object such as a watch, being made of metal, constitutes an observable instance of the Metal Phase, whereas the fact that Western China is Metal is based on the relationality of directions, and so 'is unobservable to us' (我們看不到的 *women kan bu dao de*). However, what verifies Eight Trigrams cosmology for Master Tao is not so much the correspondence of objects or places with certain Phases, but the fact that as far as he is concerned Six Lines Prediction works. His perception of this appears to be reinforced by patterns which he observes himself – recall his observation of certain lines indicating cancer, or other observations he makes about particular days having a preponderance of inauspicious hexagrams. This perception is echoed by his friend and regular client Little Fang, who lives close to Tao's spot on the roadside. When I asked her whether she 'believes in' (*xiangxin*) the effectiveness of Six Lines Prediction, she was reluctant to give a committal answer beyond simply that it is 'good fun' (很好玩兒 *hen hao wanr*). She went on to say that it seems one can say all sorts of things based on the hexagrams – but she is very interested in looking at them, and frequently consults Master Tao (too frequently and trivially for it to be effective, in his opinion) and examines other people's hexagrams with him. Ultimately, she likes to see if a hexagram works before she decides whether it is suitable (Tao once told me that she always waits until the following day before paying him, to make sure the prediction was a good one). She told me that her interest in the Eight Trigrams began when she was young – she had been ill, and treated with Chinese medicine, which had been effective. She realised that Chinese medicine shared the same underlying logic as the *Yi Jing*, and she certainly believes in the effectiveness of the former – so despite certain reservations, she sees the potential for Six Lines Prediction to be effective.

Returning to Master Tao, for all his devotion to concrete methods he also offers Stick Divination (抽籤 *chouqian*) as a service. This form of divination is very widespread, and often found in temples (see also Ahern 1981: 47–49). It involves shaking a pot of sticks until one of them comes out – the number on the stick is then looked up in the accompanying book, which provides a short description. Tao described this method as a substitute for the *Yi Jing*, and like the *Yi Jing* it involves the derivation of ‘images’ (象 *xiang*) and ‘judgements’ (斷 *duan*), as well as short poems explaining their meaning. However, the predictions are vague, the means of arriving at them extremely basic, and one must pay more for a better prediction (the best stick requires an additional payment of ¥35); this practice thus embodies all the characteristics of ‘swindling people,’ though Tao never described it in such terms. Nonetheless, Master Tao is extremely frank about the utility of stick divination; in his words, it is ‘thoroughly inaccurate, lacking any sound basis, and merely a means of seeking psychological consolation’ (沒有什麼準確，沒有什麼道理，只求心裡的一個安慰 *meiyou shenme zhunque, meiyou shenme daoli, zhi qiu xinli de yi ge anwei*). Nonetheless, he charges for the service, and seems a little selective in choosing whom to tell his real opinions. Frequently it is done for fun by young people with their friends, but on one occasion, an older client spent a good half an hour repeatedly doing it, until she had clocked up a bill of around ¥200. Master Tao simply let her get on with it. It is tempting to view this cynically, but I cannot but think that as far as he was concerned, it should have been obvious to the client that repeatedly doing stick divination until she got an answer she liked was not the best strategy for accurate prediction.

On my return to Hangzhou in August 2015, I noticed that Master Tao had a new set of sticks. He said they were better than the old ones, which had been given to him by a local *Yi Jing* association, and related to the Bodhisattva Guanyin. Nonetheless, they were still empirically useless, providing ‘nothing concrete’ (沒有什麼具體 *meiyou shenme juti*). Master Tao considers the sticks helpful only as a psychological consolation, reflecting his attitude to other forms of divination, such as Tarot, which in his view have no empirical basis but do serve a psychological purpose. (The one apparent exception to this is Mayan divination, which Tao respects as effective, but not quite as accurate as *Yi Jing*-based systems.) This parallels his attitude to religious practices, which we discussed together with Xiaoping after I asked them if they knew anything about *fengshui* fish tanks, discussed in Chapter Five. Although he obviously subscribes to the logic of *fengshui*, and indeed advises on it himself, Tao argued that the placement of trinkets, along with other practices such as Buddhist *fangsheng* (放生, ‘releasing

life,' in which animals, typically fish bought from a market, are released back into the wild to gain merit), count simply as 'dispelling [doubts]' (化解 *huajie*, referring in this context to remedying inauspicious personal circumstances). In Tao's view, such actions are of little real benefit, but do provide 'a lot of psychological consolation' (很多心理安慰 *hen duo xinli anwei*), though such practices lead some people to think they can simply spend their way out of difficulty. Whilst Tao obviously subscribes to the ability of objects to influence one's *qi*-field, he has little sympathy for people who do not think they need to put in any personal effort, a view also held by Ma Jianglong (see Chapter Five). Xiaoping, whose attitudes to Buddhism are considerably more sympathetic, described *huajie* as being akin to investing in stocks, bringing benefits in one's next life (needless to say Tao shares no such view).

Overall, for Master Tao the virtue of *Yi Jing*-based systems resides in their empirical validity – concerns of psychological consolation arise in relation to these only in terms of the ethics of information disclosure, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and the effects that the psychological state of a client can have on her *qi*-field and thus on the cast hexagram. Above all, Tao holds that when considering the *Yi Jing* and Eight Trigrams, one must 'absolutely not be superstitious' (千萬不要迷信 *qianwan bu yao mixin*), and pay attention only to what is 'real' (實實在在的 *shishi zaizai de*). Six Lines Prediction derives legitimacy precisely from the fact that it conforms to these principles; thus not only is it morally legitimate but also epistemologically legitimate, sharing attributes with 'science' and positioned at odds with 'superstition' and 'swindling', which for Master Tao are epitomised by insincere Buddhism. I turn now to Ma Jianglong's conception of Eight Trigrams cosmology in relation to science and religion.

Ma Jianglong and the Promise of Dark Studies

Whilst Master Tao distinguishes between methods and beliefs which are effective for empirical and psychological reasons, for Ma Jianglong this distinction is far less clear-cut. As discussed in Chapter Five, he describes objects manipulated in *fengshui* as 'reminding' (提醒 *tixing*) their users of cosmological concerns, as well as having a direct impact on their *qi*-field. For Ma, this psychological aspect of *fengshui* is embraced rather than dismissed, though like Master Tao he cautions that the manipulation of objects in and of itself is not enough to guarantee the achievement of a desired set of circumstances. In Ma's conception, the psychological benefits of cosmological activity are conflated with cosmological principles, psychology, like everything else, being the product of *qi* flows (a similar point is made by Freedman 1979d: 192). This view

is of course shared by Master Tao, but as has been shown he has a clear epistemological bias in favour of 'scientific' mechanisms. In contrast, consider Ma's attitude to religion. He told me that when he was younger, he considered himself a *Chan* (Zen) Buddhist, but later went on to study Pure Land Buddhism and then Tantric Buddhism. Now, however, he considers himself a 'Daoist' (道家 *daojia*), using the term denoting the Daoist 'school' of thought, allied with Warring States thinkers such as Laozi and Zhuangzi, rather than the Daoist 'religion' (道教 *daojiao*), suggesting the more secular affinity appropriate to his self-definition as an atheist. He considers all religions to have a common goal in the form a belief in a unifying 'Way' (*dao*), whether it be that of the Buddha or the Christian God. Moreover, Ma sees religion as a basic human impulse, arguing that humans are attracted to things they perceive as better than themselves, specifically that which they feel they lack. In these terms, the attraction of religion is explicable in the same way as is the popularity of celebrities – and these phenomena, in Ma's view, are to be understood in terms of the mutual interaction of *yin* and *yang* as complementary forces. In this conception, psychological needs and their effective consolation provide evidence for a universally-valid *qi*-based cosmology.

Whilst introducing me to the logic by which he had laid out his apartment, one of the examples of good *fengshui* practice he gave me was the avoidance of placing mirrors directly at the foot of one's bed. This practice can of course be explained in terms of Eight Trigrams cosmology, but one of the reasons Ma gave, which stood out for its unexpectedness, was that waking up in the middle of the night and seeing one's reflection staring back from the foot of the bed would be a nasty surprise. Such an explanation seems on the surface to be the explaining away of the sceptic – mirrors at the end of the bed aren't *really* bad, they just make you jump. But in Ma's explanation, and taking into account his general cosmology, the fact that the mirror could be frightening is in itself evidence of its negative effect on one's *qi*-field, which is after all affected by psychological states. This perspective was also suggested by Ma's colleague Li's sharing of an article on the social media app WeChat – the article criticised what the author saw as a current trend for young men to wear clothing sporting printed images of fierce animals such as tigers. Both it and Li's accompanying comment suggested that the fierceness of the animals depicted would have a negative impact on the wearer's *fengshui*, and implied that this impact would manifest in the form of changes in mood reflecting the perceived characteristics of the animals depicted.

Ma is thus open to a considerably more intuitive approach to knowledge than Master Tao. This, though, does not prevent him from ranking knowledge systems based on their 'degree of inclusiveness' (包容程度 *baorong chengdu*). Religion in his conception clearly has psychological benefits, for example, but lacks the empirical value of 'Zhou Yi thought' (*Zhouyi sixiang*), with which it 'has no relation whatsoever' (沒有任何關係 *meiyou renhe guanxi*). What Eight Trigrams cosmology can do, in Ma's opinion, is 'bridge' science and religion, accommodating and going beyond both the empirical value of the former and the psychological value of the latter. This is directly related to the idea of 'degree of inclusiveness,' which pertains to a given knowledge system's epistemological object and approach. This classification contains a moral element – Ma relates 'degree of inclusiveness' directly to 'a people's [degree of] civilisation' (一個民族的文明 *yi ge minzu de wenming*), the latter increasing with the former. He illustrated this with the example of 'ancient [i.e. pre-Republican] China' (古代中國 *gudai zhongguo*), with a high 'degree of inclusiveness', to Mao's regime, with a low degree. When I asked him to elaborate, he explained that Marxist knowledge is characterised by dialecticism (辯證法 *bianzhengfa*), which on a basic level depends on 'separating single things into two' (一分為二 *yi fen wei er*), in contrast to the flexibility of 'the *Dao* following *yinyang*' (道法陰陽 *dao fa yinyang*). The latter is capable of 'including' (*baorong*) the former, but not vice-versa, and this is because Marxism is capable only of dealing with 'measurement' (量 *liang*), whereas *Yi Jing* thought, constituting 'a kind of philosophy' (一種哲學 *yi zhong zhexue*), is capable of dealing with not only 'measurement,' but also 'nature' (性 *xing*, as in inherent characteristics) and 'quality' (質 *zhi*); in fact, Ma went on to say, 'the *Dao* is greater than philosophy' (道大於哲學 *dao da yu zhexue*) and hence also capable of 'including' it. Having identified *Yi Jing* thought with philosophy, and also as transcending it, Ma went on to identify it with 'science,' arguing that unlike *yinyang* theory, Marxism is 'unscientific' (*bu kexue de*), and hence illegitimate, failing to respect the natural divisions between things, cutting them up to fit its own assumptions and hence giving rise to the Marxist 'theory of contradiction' (矛盾學說 *maodun xueshuo*).

This reveals some important assumptions underlying Ma's epistemology. Contradiction, in his view, cannot exist in the external world, and an effective epistemology necessarily follows natural divisions between things. In common with many forms of traditional Chinese epistemology, Ma identifies a number of possible epistemic objects, including measurement, nature, and quality, and mobilises these categories to develop a hierarchy of knowledge systems. Broadly, their 'degree of inclusiveness' correlates with the number of epistemological

objects they are capable of addressing, and in this sense his thinking constitutes a form of epistemological holism. As such, it is able to accommodate both philosophical and scientific approaches to knowledge, and he illustrated this hierarchy as follows: the *Dao* constitutes the ‘intrinsic laws [of the cosmos]’ (本質規律 *benzhi guilü*); these incorporate ‘philosophy’ (哲學 *zhexue*), which constitutes ‘epistemology’ (*renshilun*); this in turn incorporates ‘science’, which constitutes a ‘methodology’ (*fangfalun*). ‘Science’ here is accepted as a valid mode of inquiry, but is insufficient to explain everything; for example, as far as Ma is concerned, ‘science’ has no means of explaining the spirit writing practised by his mother, whose literacy is poor but who can divine by writing down certain Chinese characters. ‘Dark studies’ allows for such phenomena to occur in terms of *qi* interactions.

Recall at this point Ma’s exegesis of the relationship between ‘epistemology’ and ‘methodology’ discussed in Chapter Three, in which the former determines the latter, which in turn advances the former, and we can see how Ma is able to at once endorse ‘science’ and claim that it is inadequate as a means of fully explaining the world when compared with ‘dark studies.’ ‘Dark studies,’ by definition, is maximally capable of ‘including’ other systems. Being aligned with the intrinsic laws of the cosmos, it may naturally be applied to various epistemologies and methodologies, providing they have at least some common ground. Hence, ‘science,’ the findings of which as far as Ma is concerned are in many instances congruent with ‘dark studies,’ constitutes a valid, if limited, knowledge system, as do religions insofar as they concern a unifying ‘Dao.’ Marxism, however, does not constitute a valid system as it fails to conform to natural categories. An important implication of Ma’s notion of ‘degree of inclusiveness’ is that ‘dark studies’ or the ‘*Yi Jing* thought model’ is capable of accommodating new information, providing that it accords with existing understandings of the intrinsic principles of the cosmos. For Ma, the legitimacy of Eight Trigrams cosmology thus derives from its epistemological capacity – it is simply the best, most inclusive means of accounting for phenomena. This allows it to accrue the moral legitimacy of ‘science’ and Chinese tradition, as well as religion, whilst at the same time going beyond each of these fields. This capacity is associated with the moral concept of ‘civilisation’, closely related to the idea of ‘culture’ discussed earlier in relation to Master Tao. Moreover, his rejection of Marxism taps into an increasingly vocal discourse surrounding ‘national studies’, which explicitly rejects foreign ideas introduced to China since the May Fourth Movement of 1919 – including Marxism. However, Ma does not subscribe to the more extreme forms of such discourse, and his

rejection of Marxism can be seen in light of both his epistemological concerns and broader societal debates about where China should look for guiding principles; he simply expresses out loud the implicit and widespread acknowledgement that Marxist ideology is no longer up to this task (compare this to Master Tao's rhetorical alignment with Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, despite scepticism of theoretical Marxism). Before concluding this chapter, I turn to an encounter between Ma and Mr Jian, a 'national studies' activist, which demonstrates Ma's emphasis on understanding the principles of the *Yi Jing* over the specifics of its content.

Wisdom as a Matter of Concern

In early March 2014, Mr Jian invited me to accompany him to a talk being given by two notable 'national studies' figures at classically-themed teahouse. We arrived two hours late, but had tea with one of the participants – Ma Jianglong, whom I was meeting for the first time, along with his son. Jian is an extremely enthusiastic amateur student of 'national studies', and continually emphasises the difference between Chinese 'wisdom' (*zhihui*), as found in the classics, and Western 'knowledge' (*zhishi*). Jian explained this distinction to Ma, who praised it as much out of apparent agreement as of politeness. However, as our conversation proceeded, a number of differences emerged between the two men concerning the definition of 'wisdom' and, especially, how the study of the *Yi Jing*, and the classics in general, is best approached.

This became apparent when Jian (mortifyingly) suggested that I recite part of the *Yi Jing* for Ma. Mercifully, Ma insisted that recitation would not be necessary and that doing so in the afternoon was not a good idea anyway, for *fengshui* reasons concerning the influence of *yin qi*. Jian then asked whether it was not important to 'rote-memorise' (背 *bei*) the classics. He was visibly distressed by Ma's negative response, particularly as he had already talked at length about his son's rote-learning prowess. Ma's response was effectively that rote-memorisation is unimportant; reading through the *Yi Jing* even a thousand times may not lead one to understand it, but its underlying logic is 'easy' (容易 *rongyi*, a pun on the 易 *yi* in the title). In his view, 'wisdom' comprises three aspects: memory (記憶 *jiyi*), 'thought' (思維 *siwei*), and 'creativity' (創新 *chuangxin*). Of these three aspects, he singled out 'thought' as most important; only once one has developed one's 'thought' can one go on to develop one's 'memory' and 'creativity'. He cited the popular example of Steve Jobs – whom Jian derisively pointed out didn't rote-memorise. Ma gave no indication that he considered this to be an issue; his emphasis is on developing intuitive understanding of the underlying principles of the *Yi Jing*,

and by his own logic it would seem that what Jian considers ‘wisdom’ is, in Ma’s conception, ‘knowledge’ only. For Ma, ‘knowledge’ in and of itself is insufficient to produce ‘wisdom’ – what counts for him is the mode of thought being used, and epistemologically he prioritises an understanding of principle over a knowledge of specific cases. During this conversation, I asked Ma how we can know that the system of the *Yi Jing* works. Jian did not seem happy about this, but Ma took up the question and addressed it by likening it to mathematics: the system of the *Yi Jing* works universally across time and space, and given that ‘everyone acknowledges [its effectiveness]’ (大家都認可 *dajia dou renke*), it does not require ‘verification’ (證明 *zhengming*). Whilst legitimacy for Jian lies in the mastery of an authoritative canon and a consequent ability to act according to the ‘wisdom’ it instantiates, for Ma Jianglong rote learning is not enough – Eight Trigrams cosmology is legitimate insofar as it constitutes an accurate and effective means of apprehending and acting in the world, and this requires an understanding of the *Yi Jing*’s principles and how they can be applied rather than simply an ability to memorise the text.

Conclusions: Ethical and Epistemological Legitimacy

This chapter has examined various ways in which Eight Trigrams Prediction is framed as an ethically and epistemologically legitimate practice. I began with an examination of moral prohibitions against causing harm to clients, which are framed in terms of ‘benevolence’. Whilst this may be considered a moral value, decisions taken by a predictor in real-world situations, such as those concerning what information to reveal to a particular client, are properly considered ethical as they occur in situations in which the applicability of an established moral code, that of the predictor, is called into question. In light of recent cognitive scientific findings concerning moral decision-making, such decisions constitute ‘personal’ moral judgements. The decision itself is intuitive, and it is only the post-hoc rationalisation of it as a benevolent action which is properly ‘ethical’. Moreover, the emotional appeal of ‘benevolence’ renders it a more salient source of ethical justification than readily available cosmological justifications. Appeals to ‘benevolence’ also accrue moral legitimacy via explicit association of prediction with medical practice and Confucian ethical conduct, which brings with it the prestige attached to traditional Chinese culture. The ethical legitimacy of predictive practice is further bolstered by the value placed on knowledge gained through experience and a set of situations in which prediction is proscribed. These situations can be justified ethically in terms of avoiding harm to the client or society, and in terms of the negative impact they

have on the accuracy of prediction. However, there are exceptional situations, such as consulting for local officials, in which certain ethical codes, such as those concerning belief in the system, are relaxed.

Eight Trigrams Prediction is widely considered 'superstition', and thus morally and epistemologically suspect. As such, predictors adopt various strategies to establish the legitimacy of their practice. In part this is achieved via an emphasis on their practices' roots in the *Yi Jing*, an appeal to common favourable perceptions of the classic and its role in shaping Chinese culture. However, this in itself is not necessarily sufficient, and predictors not only distance themselves from 'superstition' but position their practices in relation to the positive category of 'science'. As such, these categories of knowledge practice are subject to constant negotiation.

I distinguished between six positions granted to 'science' in relation to an individual's beliefs and practices. Individuals adopt different positions in different contexts, but may show general preferences for particular positions (Master Tao frequently adopts position 1), and Ma Jianglong position 2)). Master Tao positions his outlook as scientific, emphasising 'speaking concretely'. By examining his attitude to religion and other forms of fortune-telling, I demonstrated that he values knowledge based on its accordance with observable evidence and practical efficacy, something also valued by his friend and client Little Fang. As such, he considers religion to be a means of 'swindling people', morally problematic for its propensity to 'delude' people based on false beliefs. By taking alternative systems as means of psychological consolation, Master Tao allows for them having certain effects on clients but at the same time renders them inaccurate by definition, being artefacts of phenomena more accurately explained by Eight Trigrams cosmology. Whilst Ma Jianglong shares many underlying cosmological assumptions with Master Tao, his approach to other knowledge systems is considerably different. In contrast to Master Tao's emphasis on concrete observations, which necessarily discounts other beliefs as incorrect, Ma emphasises the 'inclusivity' of Eight Trigrams cosmology, accepting psychological effects of beliefs as evidence for their efficacy. This is related to his focus on understanding explanatory principles, which for him legitimise Eight Trigrams cosmology as a superior knowledge system; as shown by his encounter with Mr Jian, this focus on epistemological validity puts him at odds with the view that rote-learning of the classics is virtuous in and of itself.

In the next chapter, I turn to how comparisons between Eight Trigrams cosmology and science, particularly physics, relate to the ontological underpinnings of my informants' theories.

5 Fish Tanks and Physics: the Ontology of Eight Trigrams Cosmology

Introduction

So far, this thesis has presented a framework for understanding the importance of analogical transfer and certain issues of classification in Eight Trigrams Prediction and cosmology, as well as explored its epistemological assumptions and its relationship with other belief systems as conceived by its adherents. As such, we are now in a position to ask questions concerning the ontological assumptions underlying Eight Trigrams cosmology as conceptualised by my informants. This chapter begins with a typology of 'ontology' as an analytical concept relevant to anthropology and the study of cognition. This is followed by a discussion of homophony, a particular and, in China, widespread form of analogy which can help to reveal certain underlying ontological assumptions. Focusing on the practice of creating *fengshui* fish tanks, lay uses of homophony are distinguished from the assumptions made by cosmological experts, which are rooted in an explicit understanding of the cosmos as composed entirely of *qi*. Engaging in detail with Philippe Descola's (2013) typology of four distinct 'ontologies' based on conceptions of continuity and discontinuity, I argue that Eight Trigrams cosmologists' understandings are of a type not accounted for by this framework. As such, I distinguish between Descola's 'Analogism' and a mode of identification I term 'Homologism', and explore the implications this has for Descola's fourfold model. For clarity, these specific uses of Analogy and Homology as modes of identification are capitalised.

Cognition and Ontology

The remit of this chapter falls squarely into the realm of reflective ontology as discussed in the thesis Introduction – and I argue that this is similarly how Descola's (2013) fourfold typology should be understood. This position is apparently at variance with Descola's own intention, to which I will come in a moment. First, though, it is worth rehearsing his argument concerning 'modes of identification'.

Descola posits a framework of four 'ontologies' or 'modes of identification', each of which derive from a fundamental and universal 'awareness of a separation between an internal self and a physical self' (2013: 119); he refers to these as physicality and interiority, and I will follow his usage. Identification is defined here as 'the ability to apprehend and separate out some of the continuities and discontinuities that we can seize upon in the course of observing and coping practically with our environment' (2013: 115), and the nature of relations subsequently established between entities. He presents this as the ascription or denial to other entities of a physicality and/or interiority similar to those of the subject. The four modes are logically derived from the possible relationships which may exist between physicality and interiority, and are as follows: Animism, which rests on an assumption of ontologically continuous interiorities across beings, but discontinuous physicalities; Naturalism, the inverse of Animism, positing a continuity of physicality and discontinuity of interiority; Totemism, characterised by a continuity of *both* physicality and interiority; and Analogism, built upon discontinuous interiorities *and* physicalities (the inverse of Totemism). Descola argues that these fundamental distinctions may be elaborated in all manner of ways, giving rise to the full range of human cultural diversity, but also that they have far-reaching implications for cosmology, classification, personhood, and social structure, such that certain commonalities of culture and society may be observed between societies dominated by a given ontological type.

Descola devotes his chapter 'The Schemas of Practice' (2013: Ch. 4) to grounding this typology in cognitive terms; his discussion elaborates various kinds of cognitive schema, the relationship between which is not always well-defined. Most salient, though, are 'integrating schemas' – abstract, thematic, and adaptable to a wide range of circumstances (2013: 104) – and of which the four modes of identification and six modes of relation elaborated in the rest of the book apparently constitute examples. Descola considers integrated schemas to be 'nonreflective', a point apparently at odds with my above contention that the modes of identification constitute examples of reflective ontology. He distinguishes nonreflective and 'explainable' schemas (2013: 103–104), corresponding to their degree of elaboration as explicit models, and argues that 'nonreflective schemas do not rise to the surface of consciousness' (2013: 104). He provides an illustrative example concerning artistic perspective, on the one hand a scholarly topic of art theory and on the other internalised and unreflectively employed when viewing a painting, an exercise in which the explicit model is not mobilised. This example is telling, indicating a fundamental misidentification of forms of belief. Descola supposes that we

intuitively comprehend artistic perspective based on an internalised model – a reflective belief based on social exposure to art theory that has become intuitive, if put in Sperber’s (1997) terms. However, an individual’s intuitive understanding of perspective when confronted with an artistic image has no necessary relation to that individual’s exposure to art theory. Rather, artistic perspective is effective precisely because it exploits a basic property of human perception, like any optical illusion. As an object of explicit reflection, artistic perspective constitutes precisely the kind of metarepresentation discussed by Boyer and Sperber (Boyer 1998; Sperber 1996) reviewed in the thesis Introduction, informed by intuitive expectations that objects at a distance appear smaller. So the first objection is that, in this example, the distinction Descola draws between nonreflective and explainable schemas amounts to a category error.

A second objection to his characterisation of nonreflective schemas is as follows. In his view, ‘integrating schemas’ (a kind of nonreflective schema) constitute unconscious mechanisms by which collective practices are integrated into a coherent whole – according to this view, a mode of identification constitutes a particularly wide-ranging integrating schema which governs and is transferable across virtually all domains of collective existence. For example, the integrating schema of Analogism would amount to an intuitive belief that all entities differ in terms of interiority and physicality. Now, the universal distinction between interiority and physicality as aspects of the self may be unproblematically considered intuitive, but this is not true of the *ascription* of these aspects to other beings (Boyer 2010: 383; this will be discussed further below in relation to ‘physicalism’ and the materialist conception of consciousness). The mode of identification as an integrating schema, though, appears problematic, primarily because Descola makes two unsupported assumptions. The first is that individual minds integrate collective experience into a single coherent schema. The second is that such integration is *possible* in the first place. Whilst he refers to the literature on analogical transfer as a means of schema induction (Gick & Holyoak 1983), he does not provide evidence that schemas thus induced are integrated into an over-arching schema (Gick and Holyoak make no such claim – they simply argue that it is more cognitively efficient to map from a source analogue to an abstract schema than to a target analogue in a given instance of analogical transfer). Whilst Descola’s argument that individuals within a collective gradually accrue similar schemas, accounting for similarities of understanding and allowing the mapping of such similarities, is well taken, it is at best orthogonal to the implications of the existence of integrating schemas. Rather, the ‘integrating schema’ appears in fact to be an artefact of

Descola's own assumptions that common identifying factors across practices and beliefs within a collective must evince a single underlying cognitive structure. Instead, the four modes of identification amount to reasonable assertions of the conditions of possibility for worlds in which various coherent beliefs and practices of a collective would be ontologically validated. That is, a collective which adheres to beliefs in spirit possession, groups phenomena according to correlates, and orders entities according to an immutable discreet hierarchy would require a universe in which all entities comprise ontologically discontinuous singularities along the axes of physicality and interiority in order for its beliefs and practices to be validated. This by no means necessitates that all members of that collective believe intuitively or reflectively that the universe as a whole is thus constructed. It simply suggests that their beliefs and practices *can be* rationalised into such a conception of reality. Moreover, all of these beliefs, including those which justify social and ritual praxis, are reflective in the sense discussed above; these are after all the beliefs amenable to ethnographic investigation and elicited primarily by talking to people (see Boyer 2010: 380–383). It follows, therefore, that the analytical conjecture of a 'mode of identification' is the product of reflective beliefs – the reflective ontology that arises if those beliefs are taken to their logical conclusions.

At this point a further distinction needs to be made between two forms or levels of abstraction of reflective ontology. Descola's concern in *Beyond Nature and Culture* is primarily with large-scale cross-cultural comparison. Observing, for example, the tendency in many societies to group phenomena based on correlations, he identifies an underlying assumption within them of discontinuity of interiority and physicality, which he terms Analogism. Now, for many or most members of such a society, sustained reflection on the constituent elements of reality is likely of little consequence. Nonetheless, they may identify a particular medicinal herb, say, as 'hot' or 'cold', thereby betraying an assumption that there exist 'hot' and 'cold' things – on the basis of this and similar behaviour the anthropologist may construct a 'mode of identification'. In the same society, however, a medical or ritual specialist, whose day-to-day existence involves continuous engagement with such ideas, is likely to have considerably greater awareness of what, in that particular social and cultural context, is supposed to exist. It is well-established that lay members of a society differ, perhaps radically, from experts or specialists in their understanding of the basis of ritual and other cosmologically-informed behaviour (e.g. Barth 1995; Lloyd 2014; Turner 1967); any discussion of reflective ontology must take into account such differences. Insofar as members of the former group make reflective ontological

assumptions in the manner described above, they do not generally formulate these in terms of a comprehensive theoretical model in the manner of experts. I therefore propose a distinction between *implicit reflective ontology* and *systematic reflective ontology*. The former refers to the non-conceptualised and unarticulated ontological conditions presumed by a given reflective belief or action (so the belief or action is conceptualised by the actor but its ontological conditions are not; they are constructed by an observer), and the latter to fully self-aware attempts on the part of an actor to integrate reflective beliefs into a comprehensive account of reality. Neither form of reflective ontology can serve as a basis for predicting intuitive ontology, but both may be described in terms of Descola's fourfold typology. At the same time, the two forms of reflective ontology are not to be considered mutually exclusive within collectives and individuals (a point Descola also makes). For example, during prediction an Eight Trigrams cosmologist draws on a systematic reflective ontology, but in the course of other activities he may make judgements which implicitly presume ontological assumptions at variance with this. However, if he takes a moment to consider the ultimate reasons for such actions, he will likely frame them in terms of the same systematic reflective ontology. Indeed, it is the nature of systematic reflective ontology that it necessarily accounts for anything. Likewise, a layperson with a particular interest in a certain domain of knowledge, say physics, is likely when engaging with that domain to be thinking in terms of a systematic reflective ontology. Finally, it should be noted that any comprehensive cosmological theory *necessarily proposes a systematic reflective ontology* by virtue of the fact that it posits the existence of distinct types of phenomena or beings and relations between them. Thus, in spite of the objection made by Feuchtwang (2014b) that Descola fails to account for the fact that certain societies (such as China, in his view) are not necessarily preoccupied with a philosophy of 'being' in the manner of the Western philosophical tradition¹⁴, no society – indeed, no fully-functioning human - has ever failed to suppose that things do or do not exist and, insofar as this is subject to systematic reflection, the existence of those things is problematized; it is in this analytical sense, rather than the sense of a specified tradition of philosophical enquiry, that I use the term 'ontology' here. Whilst I agree that Chinese thought generally accords process and relation primacy over substance and intrinsic identity, those very processes and relations require existence; in Eight Trigrams cosmology, all things are composed of *qi*, for example – and, as discussed in the next chapter, before they were considered processes what are now known as the Five Phases were considered materials (材 *cai*).

¹⁴ Indeed, the same objection could be raised against the term 'philosophy' as applied to Chinese knowledge traditions (OuYang 2012).

Armed with these distinctions and qualifications, I turn now to the subject of implicit and systematic reflective ontologies in the context of Eight Trigrams cosmology, beginning, naturally, with a discussion of *fengshui* fish tanks.

Homophony and the Analogist Aquarist

Fish keeping is a popular activity in Hangzhou, as elsewhere in China, and is closely associated with *fengshui*. The Mandarin word for fish, *yu* 魚, is a homophone for the word ‘abundance’ *yu* 餘. As such the fish is a popular auspicious symbol, particularly at the lunar new year, when paper cuttings or images of fish may be pasted on walls and windows, to symbolise the wish ‘to have abundance year after year’ (年年有餘 *nian nian you yu*). For this reason, fish tanks are a very common site in the lobbies of large businesses, frequently placed at the entrance to encourage financial ‘abundance’ to flow in, drawing an analogy based on the sounds of words. This practice, though, is elaborated to different degrees by different people, and this is catered to by the market. Hangzhou ‘flower and bird markets’ (花鳥市場 *hua niao shichang*) have large fish sections, in which four general types of fish shop may be discerned: general pet stalls selling very cheap goldfish alongside mice, turtles, and other animals, targeting impulse buyers and parents with children; general fish shops selling fairly cheap fish of various species, catering to pet owners and those after a cheap *fengshui* solution; well-kept tropical fish stalls, catering to dedicated hobbyist fish keepers (with ichthyological rather than cosmological concerns); and large, professional *fengshui* fish shops, catering to customers who take their *fengshui* (and/or personal or company prestige) seriously.

It should be noted, then, that not everyone with a fish tank is cosmologically inclined, and those who do keep fish for their auspiciousness vary in terms of their level of dedication. A friend in Hangzhou who owned a teahouse, for example, had recently opened a new restaurant when I returned in August 2015, and installed two fish tanks at the entrance, one filled with goldfish (the cheapest fish commonly regarded as especially auspicious), and one with ‘wealth fish’ (發財魚 *facai yu*), a mid-priced species the use of which is fairly self-explanatory, its ability to accrue wealth owing to its round shape and bright red colour. Over the course of my return visit the fish grew progressively sick and fewer in number, yet this appeared to be of little consequence to my friend or the assistant manager apparently tasked with looking after them. One of the waitresses did express some concern for the fish, but by the time I left nothing had been done. However, no one raised any concerns about the

potential effects of the fish deaths on the restaurant's ability to make money. Conversely, another friend, the owner of a heating company, took considerable pride in showing me the large (and very expensive) dragonfish he had installed in his office's lobby, and a friend of the teahouse owner who invited a group of us to his office in the outskirts to play music spoke similarly about his huge office aquarium full of healthy wealth fish, which he proudly explained are difficult to care for. From these few examples it should be clear that the choice to keep fish, whilst rooted in the homophony of 'fish' and 'abundance' and further concerns with *fengshui*, elaborated below, is not always considered in terms of a broader cosmology, and the choice of fish kept can be influenced by concerns with social status.

Others, however, take homophony, and other analogies of a similar order, that much further. In March 2014, I was invited to visit the husband of one of Master Tao's clients in the nearby city of Jinhua. The flamboyant owner of a botanical face-mask company, Cancan had invited me to be part of an 'advert' for his company. In the event, this entailed spending most of the visit to his office having my picture taken holding various products and posing with members of staff, images which subsequently appeared regularly on WeChat as part of his social media advertising. Nonetheless, we still had time to discuss the no-holds-barred approach to *fengshui* he had taken in decorating his office, in which just about every free space was occupied by auspicious trinkets of one kind or another. These included a pair of *qilin*¹⁵ on a desk near the door, a three-legged toad, and a small terrapin kept in a planted bowl for longevity, along with so many plants that the whole effect resembled a sort of *fengshui*-themed garden centre. His interest in *fengshui* was apparently that of the enthusiastic amateur. He explained that he was also interested in Daoism, and presented me with a heavy book of texts he had received from a Daoist master. He had not had time to read it, he explained, and so was passing it on to me. It seemed he also did not have the time to delve deeply into *fengshui* – his primary motivation was that *fengshui* created a 'comfortable' (舒服 *shufu*) atmosphere, and a 'spiritual feeling' (神奇的感覺 *shenqi de ganjue*). That his interest was that of a casual amateur is further suggested by the comments of other informants concerned professionally with cosmology, such as Ma Jianglong and Master Tao, to the effect that trinkets alone are insufficient to effectively cultivate good *fengshui*.

¹⁵ The auspicious composite animal also referred to as one of the Six Beasts in Six Lines Prediction (see Chapter Two).

Cancan also had a fish tank, positioned in the lobby near the entrance. Rather than simply housing a collection of wealth fish or even a dragonfish, Cancan's tank contained one gold dragonfish (see FIG. 5. 1), one silver dragonfish, wealth fish, several dyed parrot cichlids,¹⁶ a pair of striped cichlids, a black and a red oscar cichlid, three suckermouth catfish, a number of potentially huge catfish, and crowning it all, a young alligator gar (a predator capable of growing in excess of two metres).



FIG. 5. 1 A DRAGONFISH OR ASIAN AROWANA (*SCLEROPAGES FORMOSUS*) FOR SALE AT A FLOWER AND BIRD MARKET

Cancan, however, was more concerned with getting me to pose for advertising photographs than discussing his aquatic exploits. Nonetheless, he did explain the rationale behind some of the species he kept. The red oscar is auspicious for similar reasons to the wealth fish discussed above, and the black oscar wards off evil (辟邪 *bixie*). The striped cichlids represent the idea of 'smooth-sailing' (一帆風順 *yi fan feng shun*), and the pair of them encourages 'stability' (穩定 *wending*). The others also had similar effects but Cancan could not recall them (the impression I got was that he had concentrated on cramming as much auspiciousness as possible into one tank with little regard for the fish themselves, some of which when adult would exceed the length of the tank several times, having consumed their tankmates along the way). Cancan's unfettered ichthyological zeal was already causing problems – the tank water was stained

¹⁶ Cichlids are a diverse group of fish popular as pets; these are the same hybrid as wealth fish, but pale in colour. The practice of dyeing live fish via injection of pigment remains common in China. In the case of parrot cichlids, dye is injected in the form of crude images, commonly of flowers, or with the English words 'I love you' for Valentine's Day.

yellow with medicine as several fish had fallen sick (unfortunately I was unable to follow up on what happened as a result, as Cancan moved to Singapore).

Cancan's attempts at *fengshui* reveal a preoccupation with the kind of analogical reasoning Lévi-Strauss (1974) referred to as *bricolage* or 'the science of the concrete' - a way of thinking intimately bound up with the interplay of metaphor and metonymy and in some form universal among humans. In this sense, *bricolage* finds a home within all four of Descola's modes of identification - what matters in defining those is rather the precedence granted to it. *Bricolage*, for example, is not at all absent from the Naturalist West - as Lévi-Strauss' discussion of art well illustrates (1974: 22-29) - even if it is explicitly subordinated to other ways of thinking. Likewise, as Evans-Pritchard (1976) famously demonstrated, attention paid to the *bricolage* logic of witchcraft did not come at the expense of the Azande's understanding of linear causation. However, whilst both forms of thinking are universal, they may be said, in particular sociocultural contexts to have more or less salience as regards what can be said about reflective ontology. Consider the keeping of 'fish' for 'abundance' based on the homophony of the two words, or Cancan's pet turtle for longevity. Such cases are characterised by the identification of a similarity; in Lévi-Strauss' terms they can be seen as 'going together' (1974: 9), one based on an analogy of sound and the other based on an analogy of life history. In this respect they are of the same order as, for example, painting or carving bats (*fu*) on temple eaves for 'good fortune' (*fu*). The purpose of such analogies may thus be considered, following Lévi-Strauss, first and foremost a conceptual ordering of entities rather than an explanatory framework. Indeed, homophonic analogies of this kind are ubiquitous in China, regardless of the broader cosmological commitments of the people concerned, and it is often impossible to discern whether people engage in homophonic practices out of genuine belief in their efficacy or merely out of custom. During fieldwork, the only instances in which homophony was elaborated on beyond simple explanations like 'fish sounds like abundance' were when I asked Eight Trigrams cosmologists about it - and their accounts comprised denying it any effectiveness and, in Master Tao's case, positing an explanation of psychological consolation.

This conceptual ordering of entities constitutes precisely the kind of ethnographic data Descola targets as a source of evidence for ontological assumptions. After all, keeping fish for abundance and turtles for longevity does apparently presuppose that the practices have effects - even if the mechanisms by which these may be achieved are not articulated by lay practitioners in any terms more complex than the homophony or other similarity that

provoked the initial connection. By installing fish tanks in their workplaces, the various businessmen I mentioned above evoke financial abundance, but they do not necessarily situate this in terms of well-articulated or even considered cosmological principles. No wider 'integrating schema' is presupposed by their actions – but the analyst can gather many instances of this kind of reasoning and action, and draw conclusions regarding what the world would need to be like were such action to be taken seriously. That is, aggregate actions can be used as the basis to assess the implicit reflective ontology that underlies them, in this case one which fits well with Descola's Analogism (2013: 201–231), in which the observed connections drawn between disparate entities and concepts like fish and abundance *imply* a world of discontinuous singularities of which sense can be made only when analogical connections are established between them.

As I argued above, implicit and systematic reflective ontologies are not necessarily exclusive. Turning from the businessmen to Cancan, it is clear from his actions and how he articulated the logic behind them that his understanding of the fish tank extends beyond simple homophony, and the basic *bricolage* principle of 'going together' is stretched considerably. The combination of various species of fish relies on further associations – that the black oscar wards off evil derives from the associations of its colour, for example. Unlike homophony, in this case there is no obvious 'going together' of a black oscar and warding against evil; rather, the logic appeals to prior associations between colours and shapes and phenomena which have been elaborated and standardised as part of correlative cosmology. Cancan appeared to consider these associations in a similar way to homophony – and whilst he explained that although homophony was important in the role of the fish tank, the tank itself was also important as it is of the Water Phase, which corresponds with wealth, he made no mention of any broader cosmological ideas. Unlike Master Tao or Ma Jianglong, both of whom rely on cosmology for a living and spend a great deal of time considering ordinary life events in cosmological terms, Cancan seemed to confine such consideration to his personal engagements with *fengshui* as he understood it. His practices certainly suggest an implicit reflective Analogism, but given that his broader articulation of cosmology was confined to his use of *fengshui* as he understood it, what his practices reveal can hardly be taken as solid evidence of a systematic reflective ontology, certainly not one which extends beyond the

sphere of the practices I have described.¹⁷ The contrast between implicit reflective ontologies, which may be systematised to various degrees in different domains of experience, and systematic reflective ontologies, is well illuminated by considering Ma Jianglong's perspective on the *fengshui* fish tank, to which I now turn.

The *Fengshui* Fish Tank from Analogism to Homologism

A couple of weeks after visiting Cancan, Ma Jianglong invited me for tea at his apartment. During a long conversation about how he had organised his apartment along *fengshui* principles, I asked him about Cancan's fish tank, commenting that it appeared rather unusual compared to most others I had seen in offices. Ma's attitude towards the capacity of fish to bring one good fortune was somewhat more sober than Cancan's. Filling a fish tank with wealth fish, or indeed planting a 'wealth tree' (發財樹 *facai shu*) or using other trinkets in the manner just discussed, may well be part of encouraging good fortune, as well as serving psychologically as a 'reminder' (提醒 *tixing*), but one cannot simply set up a tank of wealth fish, sit back, and wait for the money to pour in. Homophony, meanwhile, was entirely irrelevant.

Regarding fish, Ma Jianglong told me about a particular kind of '*fengshui* aquarium' (風水魚缸 *fengshui yugang*), though he had never set one up himself. He explained to me that one can set up such an aquarium based on the cosmogony described in the *Appended Phrases I* commentary of the *Yi Jing* (see Chapter One), using a stock of fish broadly similar to those in Cancan's tank. The quotation from the text is as follows:

是故易有太極，是生兩儀，兩儀生四象，四象生八卦。八卦定吉凶，吉凶生大業。

Therefore, in change there is the great [supreme] ultimate. This is what generates the two modes (the yin and yang). The two basic modes generate the four basic images, and the four basic images generate the eight trigrams. The eight trigrams determine good fortune and misfortune, and good fortune and misfortune generate the great enterprise.

Adapted from Lynn (1994: 65–66).

Each cosmogonic stage is correlated with a fish, as follows: a gold dragonfish for the 'Great Ultimate' (太極 *taiji*), two red dragonfish for the Two Basic Modes (兩儀 *liang yi*, referring to

¹⁷ It is worth noting that his face-mask company, judging on the basis of its promotional materials, relies on scientific uses of botanicals which appear at odds with the implicit Analogism of his *fengshui* practices, a variance which is unlikely rationalised based on any 'integrating schema'.

yin and *yang* or the hexagrams *Qian* and *Kun*), four suckermouth catfish for the Four Basic Images (四象 *si xiang*, referring to young and old *yin* and *yang*), and eight other fish for the Eight Trigrams (八卦 *ba gua*). These final eight may also be correlated with the Eight Characters (八字 *ba zi*) of an individual's birth, comprising the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches of the lunar year, month, day, and two-hour period. Such an aquarium, stocked in line with cosmogonic principles, produces an 'ecosystem' (生態系統 *shengtai xitong*), in part because the four catfish supposedly consume the waste of the other fish, but also because it constitutes a 'small universe' (小宇宙 *xiao yuzhou*) based on the same principles. In this sense the set-up of the *Yi Jing* fish tank is analogical (with a small 'a'). The gold dragonfish, for example, is not the Great Ultimate, but is here taken to correspond with it (it is, however, causally related to it by virtue of its existence). Likewise, the two red dragonfish are not *yin* and *yang qua* cosmic principle, though they may exist with one another in a relationship determined by that principle.

This by itself would make it little different from Cancan's Analogist fish tank. However, when we consider it in light of Ma's own cosmological theories, it becomes clear that Analogism *sensu* Descola is inadequate as an explanatory framework in this case. This is best seen in terms of the causal relations by which it works. For Ma Jianglong, Master Tao, and other Eight Trigrams cosmologists, a central concern is the concept of *qi*-field, introduced at the beginning of Chapter Two. It will be recalled that this refers to the spatiotemporal configuration of *qi* as manifest in a particular entity or situation. Cancan's description of his own aquarium, and indeed the passing references to homophony common among non-specialists, make no reference to this concept (though most people probably have a vague idea of its meaning). For them, the connection between fish and their effects stops at the point of 'going together', as has been discussed. For Ma, however, the *qi*-field of the aquarium (or indeed anything else) is the product of the very real types of *qi* configured within it, and the Phases to which they belong – Cancan hinted at this when he mentioned the role of Water in bringing wealth. The *qi*-field of the aquarium of necessity causally interacts with the *qi* flowing around it through surrounding *qi*-fields. Therefore, given the relationships of production and conquest between Phases of *qi*, placement of the tank is very important – and it may not be suitable for all people. Ma explained that the suitability of a fish tank depends on the Phase governing your fate. An individual's fate is determined by the particular configuration of the cosmos at birth, and this subsequently influences one's individual *qi*-field as it transforms over time. For

someone with a fate governed by Wood, a fish tank is a very good idea – this is because the Water Phase ‘produces’ the Wood Phase and the *qi*-field of the person concerned will thus benefit directly from the Water *qi* of the fish tank interacting with it.¹⁸ Conversely, a fish tank would have a highly detrimental effect on someone with a Fire-governed fate, owing to the destructive effects the Water *qi* would have on their *qi*-field. As such, unlike *bricolage* but like scientific thought, in Levi-Strauss’ framing (1974), the explanation’s accordance with reality is crucial, and is articulated in terms of a direct causal relationship based on the interactions between forms of a common energy-substance.

The fish tank may serve as an analogue of the cosmos in its role as a conceptual device, but its efficacy is a result of its being a Homologue, not a convergence of two ontologically distinct levels (fish tank and cosmos) based on a search for apparent similarity, as would be the case in Analogism, but the inverse: the recurrence of particular configurations of the same common substance at scales differing in degree but not in kind. I borrow this distinction between analogy and homology from evolutionary biology (see e.g. Atran 2004: 25). Analogy here refers to resemblance between two unrelated lineages driven by functional convergence (such as a bird’s and a butterfly’s wings, unrelated but functionally similar). Homology, in contrast, refers to characteristics derived from a common original trait, which may or may not demonstrate functional similarity (such as a bird’s wing and a human arm, broadly similar in form and function and both deriving from the same ancestral limb). Homology in this sense provides a causal explanation for the fractal recurrence of patterns. In terms of reflective ontology, the relevant distinction is that between the ontological discontinuity of Analogous pairs and the ontological continuity of Homologous ones, with obvious cosmogonic implications which are discussed below (taxonomic implications are discussed in Chapter Six). Consider, for example, the eight fish in Ma’s hypothetical tank which are chosen based on the Eight Characters of the owner’s birth. These denote aspects of the cosmic configuration of *qi* at the moment of birth, and the fish are chosen because they are manifestations of those same configurations and therefore have particular causal relations with the subject’s *qi*-field. Likewise, for Ma, a round, red wealth fish is not significant because something about its roundness and redness ‘goes together’ with wealth (as was the case for the businessmen), but because its roundness and redness are the outward manifestation of *qi* configurations also

¹⁸ This is heavily simplified in order to aid explanation. In fact, the fish tank contains a plethora of Phases of *qi* owing to all the non-Water components – plants or rocks inside for example, or electrical components – all of which influence its *qi*-field and which, as per the description of hexagrams-as-phenomena, are fractally composed.

present in situations of wealth gain; the presence of the fish thus directly helps to create a cosmic situation of wealth gain by altering its local *qi*-field. Such a view requires a conception of the cosmos as a whole and its governing principles, into which all aspects of existence are subsumed; it is a systematic reflective ontology. What follows constitutes an elaboration of Homologism as a systematic reflective ontology instantiated in the thought of Eight Trigrams cosmologists like Ma Jianglong and Master Tao. As I argue later, this logically replaces Totemism in Descola's fourfold typology.

Qi, the Soul, and Ontological Continuity

It is worth elaborating briefly on the implications of the concept of *qi* for systematic reflective ontology. It should by now be well-established that Eight Trigrams cosmologists conceive of the cosmos as being composed entirely of *qi* as a constantly transforming energy-substance, the fundamental processes of which recur at different scales. The laws of its transformation are fixed and constant, resulting in causal relations existing between *qi*-fields. The previous discussion has demonstrated how this can be done via the manipulation of objects, but as the previous chapters have shown, affective experience also influences *qi*-fields – because such experiences themselves, together with emotions, memories, thoughts, and so on, are all held to be the product of *qi* transformations. In Ma Jianglong's words, 'Heaven, Earth, Humanity, and the Ten Thousand Things are of one body; therefore they mutually influence [one another]' (天地人萬物一體，所以相互影響 *tian di ren wanwu yiti, suoyi xianghu yingxiang*).

That is, *qi* possesses an ambiguous physicality-interiority (see also Ng 1993 for a discussion, in different terms), meaning that, as hinted at in the above example, the manipulation of objects never amounts to a simple manipulation of what we might, from a Naturalist perspective, consider the 'physical.' Indeed, this is the whole point of an exercise such as Six Lines Prediction – the configuration of cosmic *qi* as revealed by falling coins allows the diagnosis and prediction of human behaviour. The transformation of *qi* fields is also cited beyond the context of prediction. Master Tao, for example, does not wish to stay in Hangzhou for more than five to seven more years as by that point his *qi*-field will have changed such that his luck with earning money will have as well. Xiaoping, one of Master Tao's students, added that one's *qi*-field is also affected by one's beliefs, as well as other actions such as going to temples, and that the state of a given person's *qi*-field is visible in how they behave, discernible in terms of a 'feeling' (感覺 *ganjue*) one gets from them. Similarly, regarding private consultations

(discussed in Chapter Four), Master Tao expresses some unease; in principle, the opposite party should have the opportunity to witness the prediction, and denial of that, based on a client's lack of openness, causes problems with the *qi*-field. As such, in Descola's terminology, both physicality *and* interiority are reducible to *qi*, and as such, are continuous across entities and with each other. The fundamental discontinuity of both physicalities and interiorities which is the hallmark of Analogism is entirely absent. This can be shown further by examining soul beliefs and cosmogony, which I treat in turn.

The continuity of physicality and interiority extends to Eight Trigrams cosmologists' attitudes toward the component parts of the person, a question I put directly to Master Tao, Ma Jianglong, and Master Tao's student Xiaoping, because it forms an important component of Descola's theory of Analogism (and is not readily apparent in Eight Trigrams practice). Descola characterises the Analogist person as one inherently separable into component parts – hence the apparent proclivity of Analogist ontological systems for spirit possession and beliefs in multiple soul-like entities.

It is of course true that spirit possession is a common theme in Chinese society, particularly in rural areas (see e.g. Chau 2006; Feuchtwang 2004); indeed, Ma Jianglong's mother was a 'witch' (巫婆 *wupo*), able to hear the voices of spirits and write their messages in spite of her own illiteracy. With regards to this issue it is once again worth reiterating the distinction between implicit and systematic reflective ontologies – a belief in spirit possession, or a soul separable from the body, which is unexamined beyond incidents of possession and so on, is open to analytical interpretation both as Analogism and Homologism. Such examples are of implicit reflective ontologies – and I concede that the most parsimonious elaboration of such implicit beliefs in ontological terms is as Analogism in Descola's sense. Given the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, though, the parsimony of an Analogist explanation is best attributed not to a single unconscious integrating schema but simply to the fact that separate instances are never systematically connected with other sociocultural phenomena which might betray similar assumptions¹⁹. However, the systematic reflective ontologies of my informants demonstrate that a belief in the separability of body and soul, for example, is entirely compatible with the assumptions of continuous physicalities and interiorities characteristic of Homologism.

¹⁹ It is of course possible for such beliefs to be systematised into an Analogist systematic reflective ontology – the Renaissance Great Chain of Being, also discussed by Descola (2013: 202–206).

Master Tao, for his part, was amused by the question of the separability of body (身體 *shenti*) and 'soul' (靈魂 *linghun*). He told me in no uncertain terms that there is no 'soul', reiterating that he is an atheist – like Ma Jianglong, but unlike Xiaoping, who told me he rarely visits temples but describes himself as Buddhist. Master Tao added, however, that this sort of belief, along with attendant beliefs in spirit possession, does exist as part of Daoism (道教 *daojiao*). Moreover, he said there is a 'way of speaking' (說法 *shuofa*) in Eight Trigrams Prediction that the person may continue in subsequent lives, but that in his understanding this involves simply the continuation of a person's *qi*-field after the loss of the corporeal body (肉體 *routi*). This is so insofar as a person's 'spirit' (精神 *jingshen*) may continue to influence others after death. He explained that this idea of 'spirit' is to be understood as something existing in the minds of others, in the form of memories of the deceased and their actions, not a 'soul' in the sense of an ethereal counterpart to the body. After some discussion of these ideas, Master Tao said that ultimately these constitute things which 'cannot be spoken of clearly'.

Master Tao's opinions on this matter represent an extreme case – he remains the only person I met who stated unequivocally that no 'soul' exists, and whose views of any afterlife do not allow for anything beyond continued existence of memories and decomposed substance, the *qi* continuing to exist simply by virtue of its constant transformation. The views of Xiaoping and Ma, however, involved the existence of a separable 'soul', but one also composed, like the body, of *qi* - but in a non-solid state. From Ma's perspective, the *qi*-based 'soul' separates from the body when people dream (hence the very real feel of dreams – the 'soul' is in fact somewhere else) or experience phenomena such as extra-sensory perception.²⁰ Ma also described *qi* as a form of 'energy' (能量 *nengliang*), the continued existence of which after death is explicable in terms of the 'law of the conservation of energy' (能量守恆律 *nengliang shouheng lü*), a direct borrowing from physics – of which more later. This formed part of his description of the nature of the 'soul', properly called the *yuanshen* (元神, 'primordial spirit'). It has two aspects, *yin* and *yang*, of 'one thing' (一個東西 *yi ge dongxi*) whose 'energy fields are not the same' (能量場不一樣 *nengliangchang bu yiyang*), the former of which (*yin*) is invisible and able to move at the speed of light as 'energy'. Thus, whilst Eight Trigrams cosmologists may posit the existence of a separable 'soul', it is nonetheless explicable in terms

²⁰ This contrasts to his attitude to ghosts (鬼 *gui*), which he described as beyond the purview of current knowledge but probably explicable as aliens or other undiscovered beings or phenomena.

of the same common substance shared by the entire cosmos – no *ontological* distinction is drawn between the physicality and interiority of body and ‘soul’ (to take them as ontologically distinct entities would be similar to taking water as ontologically distinct from steam in chemistry, which would be to render the continuous transformation from one to the other inexplicable in terms of physical process alone).

The systematic reflective ontology presented here further demonstrates the need to separate this type from both intuitive and implicit reflective ontology. This is because these accounts of soul beliefs, and indeed the exegesis of Six Lines Prediction, do not simply posit ontological continuities of physicality and interiority *across* beings, but also collapse any ontological distinction between the two; physicality and interiority are not *ontologically* separated.²¹ Here it is worth considering Descola’s passing comments on ‘materialist theories of consciousness’, which he sees as proposing a concept of the person founded ‘on physicality alone’ (2013: 119). As he points out, such a conception meets great resistance at least in part because it affronts common experience – but it ought to be remembered that a materialist conception of consciousness does not deny the subjective experience of interiority, it simply collapses it into a physical substrate. It should be noted that the idea that no distinction exists between physicality and interiority, as in Eight Trigrams cosmology, is equally counter-intuitive – even though it does not reduce one aspect to another in the same way (though it does suggest that for analytical purposes the two conceptions may be of a type – a point returned to later). This demonstrates all the more the pressing need for an analytical distinction between the levels of ontology which I have proposed. It can be stated unproblematically that a belief in no distinction between physicality and interiority, at least as regards humans, cannot be an intuitive belief and certainly cannot be part of intuitive ontology; as Sperber remarks, it is true of many scientific beliefs that they are well-understood but remain beyond the remit of intuitive beliefs (1997: 77). I would also suggest that the existence of implicit reflective ontologies which make no distinction is also extremely unlikely, because the basic intuition that the two aspects are separate is essential for all social practice, which constitutes the evidence for this form of ontology; at best, such an ontology may be identified as presuming continuity of physicalities and continuity of interiorities between entities. As such, a belief in no ontological distinction between physicality and interiority is necessarily a component of

²¹ It should be noted that the collapsing of this distinction is not necessarily a defining feature of Homologism, which is defined simply by continuity of both physicality and interiority. Descola notes that Analogist systems often demonstrate an ambiguous relationship between physicality and interiority *within* entities (2013: 207).

systematic reflective ontologies only – even the most hard-line materialist cannot actually go about life without distinguishing between these two aspects. The same is true for Eight Trigrams cosmologists as for neuroscientists – such ideas make sense only in the limited context of systematic and explicit reflection on what exists.

The Importance of Cosmogony

Such explicit conceptualisation ultimately relies on explicitly-formulated cosmogony – or some account of a lack of one (as in conceptions of an eternal cosmos). Cosmogony is important for Eight Trigrams cosmologists as it provides an ultimate account of the differentiation of *qi* into the myriad entities and phenomena which compose the cosmos. We have already seen Ma Jianglong's recourse to the cosmogony of the *Appended Phrases I* in explaining the logic of the *fengshui* fish tank – this same account was similarly drawn on by Xiaoping in his comparison with physics, discussed below, and is one of various statements of cosmic unity frequently repeated by my informants. Others include, for example, a famous line from the *Dao De Jing*, 'the *Dao* produces the one, the one produces the two, the two produce the three, the three produce the Ten Thousand Things' (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物 *dao sheng yi, yi sheng er, er sheng san, san sheng wanwu*), and the aphorism, popular with Master Tao, that 'Heaven and Humanity are joined as one' (天人合一 *tian ren he yi*). It is noteworthy that all such references are succinct, but sufficient to account cosmogonically for the practically more important cosmic principles mobilised in activities such as prediction. Cosmogony is an essential element in justifying these laws – they make sense only in light of the monism required by *qi*-based ontological unity – but overall Eight Trigrams cosmologies may be considered 'legislative' (as opposed to 'mythic'), following Valeri, 'invoking the constant operation of eternally valid laws' (2014: 264)²².

The importance of cosmogony is something which Descola overlooks in his account of Analogism, under which he groups Chinese cosmology – an absence noted by others (Scott 2014). However, as Scott argues, 'cosmogonic myths not only offer accounts of the origin of all things, they also often explicitly formulate the relations and distinctions thought to exist in the cosmos' (2007: 4) – that is, they are extremely important if one is concerned with the question of systematic reflective ontology. Cosmogony must be taken seriously, and Descola's

²² See Bodde (1957, 1981b) for a discussion of early Chinese textual evidence for conceptions of 'natural laws'.

characterisation of Chinese cosmology as one in which myriad ontological singularities are mapped together (2013: 206–207) seems quite at odds with the above conceptions of differentiation from a single origin. The question of whether this monist conception is itself a historical product of efforts to integrate and manage an Analogist conception of the cosmos (a possibility raised by Scott 2014) will be addressed in the next chapter; for now, though, we need simply note that in formulating their own cosmologies, my informants do not need to repeat this process on an individual level but can simply derive monism fully-formed from classical cosmological texts.

A *Dao* of Physics? ²³

A cosmos in which energy-substance differentiates from a single origin in a process of continuous transformation according to constant universal laws of change has obvious structural parallels with the cosmology of modern physics – a fact which has gone unnoticed neither by my informants nor Western authors (Capra 1991). **FIG. 5. 2** below illustrates Xiaoping’s conception of the relationship between the cosmogony of the *Yi Jing* and that of modern physics, in his understanding. It will be recalled from Chapter Four that identification of Eight Trigrams cosmology and prediction with ‘science’ is an important part of accruing legitimacy – though I contend that, additionally, Xiaoping’s diagram evinces a genuine personal concern with understanding the cosmos and reconciling persuasive accounts of it (Xiaoping, after all, pursues the study of Six Lines Prediction as a hobby rather than a career).

In the diagram, Xiaoping identifies structural similarities between the two cosmogonies in a manner similar to that employed in Six Lines Prediction as described in Chapter Two. Each cosmogony constitutes a metonymic field in which elements are causally related – and in this case, a one-to-one correspondence is identified between the constituent elements of each field, resulting in a complete mapping of one to the other (Gick & Holyoak 1983: 7). Xiaoping compared the Big Bang with the idea of ‘the Limitless’ (Nielsen 2003: 253), existing prior to, and bringing into being, the ‘Supreme Ultimate’ (*taiji*), encompassing *yin* and *yang* (as denoted by the *taiji* symbol ☯). In turn, positive and negative principles were created (*yang* and *yin*), just as the Big Bang gave rise to positive and negative electrical states or charges. *Yin* and *yang* ‘continued to transform’ (繼續變化 *jixu bianhua*) over time, branching out into a relational system; similarly, in physics, expressed for Xiaoping by the equation $E=mc^2$ (also used by Ma to explain the workings of the *yuanshen* described above) energy and mass are mutually

²³ Borrowed from Capra (1991)

convertible, which he understood in terms of the dynamic interaction between the static (靜止 *jingzhi*) and the moving (動 *dong*).

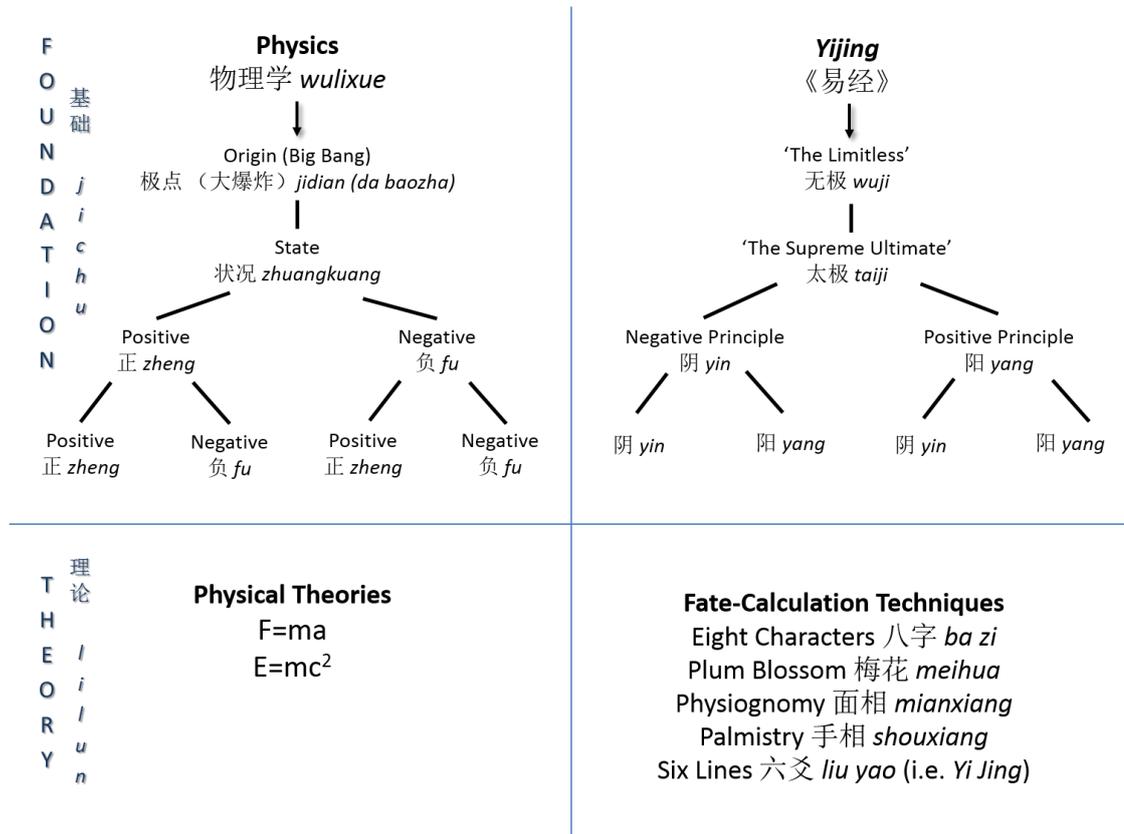


FIG. 5. 2 COSMOGONY IN PHYSICS AND THE *YI JING*. ADAPTED FROM THE DIAGRAM DRAWN FOR ME BY XIAOPING. I HAVE REPRODUCED IT AS HE DREW IT, BUT THE PARALLEL OF 'POSITIVE' STATES IN PHYSICS IS WITH YANG, AND VICE-VERSA.

Moreover, Xiaoping drew direct comparisons between physical theories and various methods of prediction or fate-calculation, explaining that both play similar roles, with specific reference to Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking. Both physical theories and fate-calculation methods, in this view, constitute predictive systems based on cosmic laws, ultimately derived from the systematic observation of nature (recall accounts of such observation in the *Appended Phrases I*, examined in Chapter One); as a student of Six Lines Prediction, Xiaoping is familiar with this account of the derivation of the trigrams and hexagrams, despite not having read the original text of the *Yi Jing* himself. Such a conception makes these techniques, as understood here, quite different from what Curry (2004b: 106) describes as 'metis', concerned not with what will happen but what should be done. The idea of metis is intrinsically bound up with the idea

of ‘enchantment’ which, as discussed in Chapter Three, is excluded from the remit of Six Lines Prediction. On this note, also, it is worth pointing out that the ‘randomness’ in divination with which Curry associates ‘metis’ (2004b: 106) is not seen as random by the Eight Trigrams cosmologist – throwing coins *does not* produce a random result but depends on the current state of the cosmos, which is precisely the point of it. Unlike astrology as Curry conceives it (2004a: 57–58), Xiaoping’s exegesis renders the question of ‘what will happen’ well within the capabilities of fate calculation, which thus bears more resemblance to the ‘scientific astrology’ Curry derides (2004b). This difference suggests a deeper one between Analogist and Homologist reflective ontologies; ‘metic’ divination’ is the product of a system which either elevates *bricolage* into an all-encompassing system or does not consider divination in cosmological terms, a system incapable by its very nature of predicting ‘what will happen,’ as it is based on analogical similarity rather than causal continuity.

Returning to **FIG. 5. 2**, Xiaoping explained that ‘different methods resolve different problems’ (不同的方法解決不同的問題 *bu tong de fangfa jiejie bu tong de wenti*), the physical theories dealing with the physical (物理 *wuli*), and the fate calculation methods dealing with the ‘psychological’ (*xinli*) and ‘relations between people’ (人與人的關係 *ren yu ren de guanxi*).²⁴ These ‘definitely do not conflict’ (一定沒有衝突 *yiding meiyou chongtu*), but rather refer to different scales of phenomena; nonetheless, he added that they are mutually convertible in the manner of binary and decimal numeration – that is, the two systems can be used to ‘prove’ (解決 *jiejue*) one another. Indeed, when we consider the one-to-one structural mapping presented in the diagram in combination with the fact that both cosmogonies address the entirety of what exists, it becomes clear that the two systems are seen as mutually-enforcing means of describing the same underlying reality (recall Ma Jianglong’s views on the ‘degree of inclusiveness’ of Eight Trigrams cosmology, discussed in Chapter Four). Both the physics- and *Yi Jing*-based systems, in Xiaoping’s analysis, are ‘objective’ (客觀 *keguan*), and both have been developed from long-term observations of natural phenomena (天地 *tiandi*, lit. ‘Heaven and Earth’). This view was echoed by Master Tao, and Ma Jianglong, as far as I know no acquaintance of Xiaoping, drew a similar table paralleling binary numeration, positive and negative charge, and *yin* and *yang*, summarising them as ‘one meaning, different expressions’ (一個意思，不同的表達 *yi ge yisi, bu tong de biaoda*).

²⁴ Note, in connection with the above discussion of distinctions between physicality and interiority, that here Xiaoping slips into differentiating between the two.

The cosmogony of physics appears to lend itself particularly well to analogical transfer from the cosmogony of the *Yi Jing* – a point to which I will return later, as it has implications for classifying systematic reflective ontologies. In closing this section, I make a further observation that, given both the cosmogonies of physics and the *Yi Jing* are derived from a common source – observation of the natural world – and are presented as having a one-to-one structural correspondence with one another – then strictly speaking, from the point of view of an Eight Trigrams cosmologist, they constitute not Analogues but Homologues.

Homologism as a Mode of Identification

Having established the roles of cosmogony and the continuity of *qi* across physicalities and interiorities, we are now in a position to characterise Homologism as a mode of identification in relation to Descola's fourfold model. I first consider the manner in which Eight Trigrams cosmologists approach alternative cosmologies based on different modes of identification, followed by an examination of Homologism in relation to Analogism, and an argument for why it necessarily replaces Totemism as Analogism's counterpart.

Other People's Ontologies

Descola titles his chapter on Analogism 'The Dizzying Prospects of Analogy' (2013: Ch. 9), his point being that this mode of identification is capable of near-infinite expansion to accommodate all manner of phenomena through the linking of surface similarities. Superficially, Eight Trigrams cosmology appears to do the same, manifest in the form of its elaborate correlative cosmology; however, this question of 'dizzying prospects' may be considered in relation to the way in which Analogism and Homologism deal with alternative ontological systems. The discussion above demonstrated that modern physics, as understood by my informants, is readily accommodated with Eight Trigrams cosmology via structure-mapping – and as we have seen, in terms of general assumptions the two accounts of the cosmos do demonstrate genuine structural commonalities (monist cosmogony, legislative cosmology, continuous energy-substance, fractal structure, conflation of physicality and interiority, space and time not being considered separate on a cosmic level, and so on). However, as was shown in Chapter Four, Eight Trigrams cosmologists' willingness to accommodate other viewpoints does not extend to religion, for example –Christianity is notably singled out as incompatible, even if not as the object of the most vehement criticism. Nor is the implicit Analogism of homophony taken seriously. Whilst certain superficial

analogies may be drawn with other systems of thought, in many cases these do not hold up when the initial partial mapping between two cosmologies requires extension into a one-to-one structural correspondence (see Gick & Holyoak 1983). Consider Ma Jianglong's assessment of Marxism from the previous chapter; comparison is possible given that both Marxism and Eight Trigrams cosmology involve epistemologies and methodologies, for example, but a one-to-one structural comparison between the two is impossible, as each system of thought divides reality differently. Compatibility in the manner of Xiaoping's example is thus impossible. In contrast, Buddhism is considered compatible (even if it is also considered false by Master Tao) – though none of my informants ever demonstrated how this was the case; Xiaoping mentioned it in connection with his diagram but made no further additions, and it is likely that a long history of accommodations and syncretism between Buddhism, Daoism, and popular religion has led to the notion of compatibility becoming axiomatic if often unexamined. The key point, though, is that not all alternative cosmologies are amenable to accommodation into a Homologist system, given that it rests on the continuity of physicalities and interiorities. This demonstrates an important difference from Analogism, the discontinuous physicalities and interiorities of which, constituting myriad singularities, are capable of subsuming any other perspective as yet another singularity. As Descola argues, Analogical collectives are characterised by an extreme flexibility in accommodating foreign deities for precisely this reason (2013: 275), and this may be considered true of the implicit Analogism of Chinese popular religions and their shrines not only to the many gods of the 'Buddhist' and Daoist pantheons but also to Mao, Jesus, and Allah. In Analogism, discontinuity is taken as first principle – but in Homologism, the reverse is true, and its all-encompassing monism can only do epistemological violence to any non-monist perspective.

Homologism as Analogism's Counterpart

It is the case that superficial resemblances do exist between Eight Trigrams cosmology and Analogism and Descola does, of course, classify Chinese thought as Analogist. Perhaps the most obvious criterion meriting this inclusion is the correlative nature of the principles of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases – though as Feuchtwang (2014b: 386) points out in response to Descola, these are properly seen as processes rather than elements. Responding to Feuchtwang's objection, Descola (2014: 436) argues that the crucial question is the point at which differences of this kind, raised in order to contrast Chinese cosmology with that of ancient Greece and Europe, 'become relevant according to the type of contrast that one wishes to emphasize'. I agree – but here, if the contrast we wish to emphasise is that between

modes of identification, the question of cosmogony and attendant monism must once more take centre-stage. An Analogist assumption of polygenesis, a corollary of the ontological discontinuity of singularities, does indeed render Feuchtwang's objection moot, as each process may thereby be considered ontologically separate from every other. However, if the processes are not separate but govern the constant transformation of a continuous energy-substance, we are immediately confronted by an entirely different mode of identification, Homologism, in which the notion of elements as ontologically distinct essences is rendered meaningless. The legislative character of Eight Trigrams cosmology as practised by my informants *requires* such continuous transformation, contrasting markedly with an Analogist system in which 'the ordinary state of the world is one of [ontological] difference infinitely multiplied, while resemblance is the hoped-for means of making that world intelligible and bearable' (Descola 2013: 202).

One might caution at this point that perhaps the continuity supposed by my informants is merely retrospective (see Scott 2014), that their initial apprehension of the world consists of an apprehension of infinite difference, and that their theoretical endeavours are thus merely convenient ways of ordering this difference. However, as I showed at the beginning of this chapter Descola is necessarily concerned with reflective ontology rather than the intuitive ontology by which the nature and behaviour of phenomena is unconsciously assessed, and I have shown that the reflective emphasis on continuity in my examples is such that my informants thus engage with the cosmos on the assumption of ontological continuity on the level of reflective beliefs. Conversely, the discontinuity that is essential to Analogism is necessarily absolute. It is helpful here to consider the idea of the pre-modern West's Great Chain of Being, one of Descola's supporting examples, which illustrates the difference from my examples nicely (see also Koyré 1968; Lovejoy 1976). The Great Chain of Being was based ultimately on immutable Platonic ideals (which were explicitly considered as such), and was fully characterised by discontinuity; in Descola's words, 'the genera are fixed, the species are indivisible, and living creatures are arranged in accordance with the degree of their perfection, each in its place in a *scala naturae* that also takes account of the differences in the functions of the types of souls with which each organism is endowed' (2013: 203). Here, discontinuity is given order via the application of an ostensibly objective standard – degree of perfection, with God, creator of each separate type, absolute perfection. A standard such as this is necessarily a retrospective assessment of the results of creation, in which it plays no *causal* role other than

as an attribute of the Creator. Moreover, placement on a graded scale of degrees of perfection necessitates evaluation based on Analogical resemblances; to describe entities as differing in degree of perfection necessitates ontological discontinuity as it is based on qualitative difference on a cosmic scale (something is either perfect or it is not – so any degree of resemblance an imperfect entity displays to a perfect entity may be based on superficial analogical similarity only). This is quite unlike the unifying principle of *qi*, which is not a standard of comparison but a fundamental energy-substance, the transformation of which *causes* variation between entities and thus endows them with continuity. The principles of cosmic order for Eight Trigrams cosmologists are not standards of comparison but laws of continual change.

As regards Analogism, two further questions are relevant, one raised by Scott (2014) in relation to whether an Analogical system can eclipse its own premises of discontinuity to become a system unaccounted for by Descola's model, and another raised by Feuchtwang (2014b: 386) regarding whether the correlative system of Chinese cosmology is of a type with those found in other Analogist systems such as the Renaissance Great Chain of Being. These questions are important, and will be addressed in Chapter Six.

Totemism with Chinese Characteristics?

Scott (2014) also raises the question of what a mode of identification based on cosmic-level continuity of both physicality and interiority might look like, pointing out that this is not the case for Descola's Totemism. It should be clear by now that such is Homologism, and this is precisely why it logically replaces Totemism as Analogism's counterpart. Whilst Descola's Totemism does posit twin continuity, it does so only within a limited number of ontologically distinct classes. The relationship between Totemic classes is in fact characterised by discontinuity of both physicality and interiority, which if we are to take the level of the cosmos as the relevant scale for analysis (as it is for Animism, Naturalism, and Analogism) renders Totemism a highly derived subset of Analogism (Lambek 2014 similarly argues that Totemism and Analogism exist on different levels of abstraction). In fact, this discontinuity between Totemic classes is essential to their function as a basis of collective existence, which is built on the establishment of relations between these classes (see e.g. Descola 2013: 148–157, 265–267). At the same time, at least in the paradigmatic Australian case, Totemic classes are held to descend from polygenetic Dream beings with whom within-class continuity is identified, meaning that on a cosmogonic level ontological discontinuity is prior to the continuity within classes. It is thus hard to escape the conclusion that if Totemism is considered on the same

analytical level as the other three modes, then its existence as a distinct mode ceases to be justified – Totemism in fact constitutes a series of bracketed sub-cosmic Homologisms within a cosmic Analogism. More can be said about how this concerns the relationship between reflective ontology and issues of classification; I address this problem in Chapter Six.

Conclusions

Addressing Descola's typology of 'modes of identification', this chapter drew a distinction between *implicit reflective ontology*, an analytical extrapolation of what the cosmos must be like in order for the assumptions implicit in sociocultural action to be validated, and *systematic reflective ontology*, pertaining to explicit theories concerning what exists. I demonstrated the validity of this distinction by examining the use of, and exegesis surrounding, *fengshui* fish tanks.

Based on an assessment of Ma Jianglong's exegesis, and in combination with what has already been established in foregoing chapters, I argued that the systematic reflective ontology of Eight Trigrams cosmologists evinces a distinct mode of identification, Homologism, not accounted for by Descola's fourfold model. Further evidence for this was provided concerning the continuity of *qi*, conceptualisations of the separability of the person, and the implications of monist cosmogony. Xiaoping's comparison of Eight Trigrams cosmology and physics further demonstrated this, as well as indicating that these two systems demonstrate structural similarities. Homologism amounts to the logical counterpart to Analogism, thereby displacing Totemism in Descola's typology as a system of physical and interior continuities on a cosmic scale.

In closing this chapter, we are thus in a position to summarise some salient features of Homologism as a mode of identification:

- 1) Continuity of physicality and interiority across beings resulting from ontological monism (in contrast to Analogist ontological pluralism).
- 2) Dual continuity on the level of the cosmos (this may, at the level of systematic reflective ontology, be considered in terms of a collapsed distinction between physicality and interiority)
- 3) No ontologically discontinuous components of the person by virtue of ontological monism. Where the person is held to be separable into parts, such as body and 'soul,'

both are held to be distinct, but ontologically continuous, states of the common energy-substance.

- 4) A fractal cosmos. Configurations of energy-substance cause the apparent replication of structures across scales. Unlike in Analogism, this is not the result of identifying similarities by analogy but the result of homologous development governed by the continuous flow of the energy-substance.
- 5) A legislative cosmology which allows for the development of cosmologically-rooted predictive empirical models. Unity of energy-substance allows all phenomena in principle to be causally explicable in terms of it. Predictive models such as Eight Trigrams Prediction are thus considered empirically valid rather than simply 'good to think with'.
- 6) No inherent privileging of humanity. Whilst humans are endowed with the ability to consider the cosmos, use language, and so on, there is nothing immutably human about these characteristics. Theoretically, aliens or animals could exist elsewhere that are capable of doing the same. This would, in Eight Trigrams cosmology, mean that they too occupy the role labelled 'humanity' (人 *ren*). This point is explored further in the next chapter.

The point bears repeating that what I have defined as Homologism in this chapter are the ontological assumptions of my informants as cosmological experts, *not* of China as a whole or necessarily of prediction clients. In particular, I have been concerned primarily with systematic reflective ontology, which is necessarily the preserve of cosmological experts whose conceptions are likely to differ markedly from those of laypeople. I suggest also that the affinity of Eight Trigrams cosmologists for physics is indicative of genuine structural commonalities in terms of conceptions of continuity on a cosmic scale – and that Homologism as a mode of identification may be considered also to include the modern, nondualist natural sciences.

6 Historical Dimensions of Correlative Cosmology: Implications for Classification and Divination

Introduction

The previous chapter examined assumptions of continuity in the systematic reflective ontology of my informants, paying particular attention to the importance of *qi* as a unifying energy substance and its role in cosmogony and beliefs concerning the separability of the person. I characterised these systematic reflective ontological assumptions as Homologist – evincing a mode of identification based on continuous physicalities and interiorities across beings on a cosmic scale and, in this particular form, a collapsing of the distinction between physicalities and interiorities into *qi*. This discussion raised a number of questions which this chapter will address. The first of these, also raised by Scott (2014), concerns whether Analogical systems can eventually eclipse their premises of discontinuity via their efforts to impose unity on the cosmos. In this chapter I argue that the Homologism of Eight Trigrams cosmology represents precisely the product of such a process. The second question concerns the nature of correlates in Eight Trigrams cosmology and, following Feuchtwang (2014b: 386), whether they are of a type with those found in what Descola (2013) calls Analogism. In addressing this question, I pay particular attention to classification and the role of conceived natural kinds. Having made the case that Homologism can result from a historical shift from Analogism, and that Homological and Analogical correlates and classification systems are of fundamentally different types, I turn to the implications this has for the function of divinatory practice as perceived by diviners.

These three related concerns follow directly from what this thesis has already established regarding the nature of divination and classification in the *Yi Jing*, analogy in divination, the epistemological status of resemblances, relative value accorded to divergent belief systems, and the systematic reflective ontology of Eight Trigrams cosmologists. Nonetheless, they are necessarily historical and comparative in orientation, and speak directly to a broader debate in

Sinology concerning the nature of ‘correlative cosmology’, a debate historically influenced by and directly relevant to anthropological investigations of cosmology. As such, in this chapter I turn to the formative stages in the development of Eight Trigrams cosmology and correlative cosmology more generally, examining these questions in the context of shifting conceptions of the cosmos during the late Warring States and early Han periods (roughly the fourth century B.C. to the beginning of the first century A.D.). It will be clear from the discussion that follows that an understanding of cosmological change in this period is essential to a proper understanding of such ideas in China today. Examining this period has the further advantage of demonstrating the applicability of the evidence and theories thus far advanced to a wider context. On that note, I begin by orienting the subsequent discussion in terms of the relationship between cosmology and the individual cosmologist.

Cosmology, Systematic Reflective Ontology, and the Individual

So far this thesis has been very much concerned with individuals and their own cosmological understandings and explicit theories. In turning to historical cases, I maintain this analytical focus on the grounds that broad changes in cosmological ideas over time are properly understood as aggregate tendencies in beliefs across individuals. As the discussion below will demonstrate, whilst correlative cosmology became increasingly prevalent over the period under discussion, it was not universally welcomed, and the formulations of correlative schemas in different texts by different authors often vary considerably. Moreover, as established in the previous chapter explicit cosmological theories and their attendant systematic reflective ontologies are largely the preserve of specialists – and given that the sources of cosmological ideas in the later Warring States and early Han consist primarily of the writings of literate experts and scholar-officials, they cannot be expected to reflect the beliefs – even the implicit reflective ontologies – of the lay population. Insofar as the subsequent discussion pertains to ontology, therefore, it pertains to the systematic reflective kind.

As Lloyd (2014: 59) remarks of ancient Greece, we see in late Warring States and early Han China ‘an amazing proliferation of ontologies, of accounts of what there is’ – that is to say, there are as many systematic reflective ontologies as there are cosmologists. As a corollary of this, two forms of diachronic change in systematic reflective ontology may be distinguished. One constitutes a shift in the aggregate tendencies of systematic reflective ontologies over time within a population; this, in combination with similar shifts in implicit reflective ontologies, amounts to what Descola hypothesises as shifts from Analogism to Naturalism in

Europe (2013: 205) and Animism to Analogism in north Asia (2013: 366–377). The other form of diachronic change, important as a driving force of the first but beyond the scope of this chapter, is that of shifts in an individual's own systematic reflective ontology – the reassessment of beliefs which might be brought about, for example, when an Eight Trigrams cosmologist begins to read about physics (see Sperber 1997 for further discussion of changes in intuitive and reflective beliefs). Cosmological understandings and systematic reflective ontologies are thus individual in character; differences inevitably exist between the apparently 'shared' ideas of any two individuals, which are the products not only of transmission but of the historical development of the individual in the environment, what Toren (1999: 6–12) describes as 'autopoiesis'. As such, in the following discussion I am making no claim concerning 'China' as a whole. This is true also of what I argue concerning Homologist systematic reflective ontologies developing within a context of widespread Analogism; the period under discussion created the conditions for such conceptions to begin to appear plausible, but this does not necessarily mean that aggregate understandings underwent a wholesale shift from one mode of identification to another.

From Four Quarters to Five Phases

Before proceeding further with the theoretical argument, it is necessary to provide a brief account of the development of correlative cosmology in the late Warring States and early Han periods. This process may, however, be traced back even further, to the Shang period (c. 1600–1046 B.C.) and the concept of the 'Four Quarters' (四方 *sifang*) by which the Shang rulers conceptualised their state in relation to alien polities. The Four Quarters system was associated with cardinal directions, and each Quarter was associated with a wind (Wang 2008: 29); the corollary of this system was the existence of a superior centre in the form of the Shang king, and his ritual connection to his ancestors as a bridge across the ontological divide between humanity and the Shang high god *Di* 帝. The subsequent Zhou dynasty transformed this system into a means of classifying the area over which the Mandate of Heaven (天命 *tianming*) extended. This concept was used to justify the Zhou conquest, and was based on interpretations of astronomical observations, particularly of the clustering of the five visible planets (Pankenier 1995a, 1995b, 2015), correlating celestial movements with dynastic change. The Zhou kings continued to act as a pivot between the ontologically separate realms of Heaven and Earth, 'above' and 'below' (上下 *shangxia*), and communicating with ancestors

who sat at the hand of the high god (Wang 2008: 71–72). As Puett (2004: 54–79) convincingly argues, following the Zhou conquest of Shang, in spite of the doctrine of Heaven’s Mandate ritual activity and belief remained predicated on an often agonistic, rather than harmonious, relationship between humans and deities, stemming from a fundamental discontinuity between humanity and the divine.

771 B.C. marked the end of the Western Zhou, forced from their capital and thereafter increasingly losing their authority over their vassal states. This shift in hegemony was accompanied by the development of a new cosmology, no longer based on the king’s person as a conduit for ancestor worship but directly related to Heaven (*tian*) (Wang 2008: 76). The latter part of this period, that of the Warring States, saw the proliferation of diverse philosophical schools and the development of the foundations of something approaching the received correlative cosmological system. Early indications of this system are to be found among the figures Harper (1999: 813) terms ‘natural experts’ - ‘astrologers and almanac makers, diviners, physicians, musicians, and others’ - later grouped together as the *fangshi* (方士 ‘recipe gentleman’) by Han scholars, rather than among philosophers such as Confucius, Mencius, or Zhuangzi. The textualisation of this knowledge was crucial in granting magico-religious and naturalistic thinking ‘a significance apart from religious belief and practice’ and increasing influence over the intellectual landscape (Harper 1999: 817). The monopoly on cosmological knowledge had shifted away from the ruler to a rising class of literate specialists, upon whom rulers increasingly depended (Wang 2008: 78–79).

By the fourth century B.C. antecedents of received correlative cosmology were already in evidence. Of particular importance to understanding correlative thinking in this period is the *Zuozhuan* 《左傳》, a text dating from the late fourth century which purports to be a chronicle of the Spring and Autumn period immediately preceding the Warring States. Wang (2008: 82–84) notes references the work makes to a ‘field allocation’ (分野 *fenye*) predictive system, which drew astrological correlates with different polities and described shifts in political power. In a different context, the ‘Offices of the Five Phases [Processes]’ (五行之官 *wuxing zhi guan*) are mentioned, referring to Wood, Fire, Metal, Water, and Earth (Wang 2008: 84). Wang (2008: 84) points out that the Five Processes²⁵ of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth were conceived as belonging to Earth (*di*). The Five Processes at this point lacked any

²⁵ *Wu xing* 五行, translated here following Harper (1999: 863) to distinguish them from the received Five Phases (also 五行). Whilst the latter are considered phases of a continuous flow of *qi*, the former were conceived as processes characteristic of each of the Five Materials (Harper 1999: 861).

conceptual link with *qi*, which provided the basis for a classification based on the Six Vapours (六氣 *liu qi*) of Heaven (Graham 1986; Harper 1999: 863–864). *Qi* at this time was not considered a unifying substance, the Six Vapours rather constituting atmospheric influences which directly generated the Six Inclinations (六志 *liu zhi*) of the people, which could be modulated via correlated musical notes, flavours, and colours (Graham 1986: 72). The *Zuozhuan* also contains notions of ‘Five Materials’ (五材 *wucai*), Fire, Metal, Water, Wood, and Earth in a substantial rather than processual form, considered as Earthly resources, as well as the ‘Six Stores’ (六府 *liu fu*) with the addition of grain; these, though, were not the prime correlates of colour, sound, flavour, and so on (Graham 1986).

Over the course of the fourth century B.C., the idea of *qi* as the ‘basic stuff of human life and of other things in nature’ became increasingly established (Harper 1999: 861), though it had different meanings in different (including non-cosmological) contexts (Graham 1986: 71–72; Nivison 1999: 775–776). *Yin* and *yang*, whilst associated with *qi*, were similarly not yet fitted into an all-encompassing correlative schema (Graham 1986: 9; Harper 1999: 861). By the third century B.C., classification in sets of five had become a common discourse, but basic principles were still not commonly recognised, being employed by different individuals to serve different purposes (Wang 2008: 90–91). Towards the end of this period the Six Vapours system became subsumed within the pentadic classification, which like *yinyang* had become a means of classification based on types of *qi* (Harper 1999: 866). The key cosmological innovator of the final decades of the Warring States was Zou Yan 鄒衍, a man known only from secondary sources who was active around 250 B.C.. He is recorded by the Han historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 as developing the notion of Five Virtues (五德 *wu de*) of Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire, and Water proceeding in a historical cycle (Harper 1999: 865; Nivison 1999: 810). Zou Yan abstracted ‘virtue’ or ‘power’ (德 *de*) from the Five Materials and their characteristic processes, allowing the Five Virtues to be considered as forms of *qi* (Graham 1986: 78; Harper 1999: 865), a theory restated in the compendium *Lüshi Chunqiu* 《呂氏春秋》 (*Springs and Autumns of Master Lü*, c. 239 B.C.), discussed below.

Throughout the subsequent Han dynasty, commonly-recognised principles of correlative cosmology based on *qi*, *yinyang*, and the Five Phases, became increasingly consolidated, though as Puett (2004) points out they remained the subject of ongoing debate. Loewe (1986: 654–655, 2005: 6–16) broadly distinguishes between ‘four attitudes of mind’ observable in the

received texts of the period, those focusing on the order of nature in which humanity plays but a small part (a conception exemplified by the *Huainanzi* 《淮南子》, a work which draws extensively on correlative cosmology, discussed below); those considering humanity to occupy a privileged position as evinced by the ritual trappings of civilisation (here he includes the correlative cosmologist and imperial ideologue Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, also discussed below); those focusing purely on the needs of government and strengthening the state; and those emphasising reasoned scepticism. Like Wang (2008), Loewe sees the increasing consolidation of correlative cosmology as intimately tied to the political project of governing the Han empire, stemming from a need to impose intellectual and cultural uniformity as part of ruling all under Heaven (1986: 655). Nonetheless, it remained the case that even as the fundamental concepts of correlative cosmology were increasingly shared the specific understandings of these and their cosmological importance remained particular to individuals.

Types of Correlative Thinking

The above account has illustrated the broad changes which occurred up to the Han period in terms of the development of various and increasingly convergent systems of correlative cosmology. However, the nature of these systems has been the subject of intense debate in Western Sinology, and this debate has important implications for anthropological concerns with systematic reflective ontology and issues of classification. In particular, Sinologists have been divided over the issue of whether so-called 'correlative thought' constitutes an entirely distinct form of thinking from that historically predominant in the West. The case for fundamental difference is made perhaps most strongly and systematically by Hall and Ames (1995), drawing heavily on the approach of Angus Graham (1989), whereas figures such as Slingerland (2011) concentrate on cross-cultural similarities. However, all agree that the two modes of thought contrasted, correlative and causal (or analogical and rational, etc.) are universal human capacities; the question is more properly concerned with the relative degree to which each mode was emphasised and developed in China and the West. This is, of course, a huge and ongoing debate the full consideration of which falls beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it does provide the context in which we might consider the previous chapter's distinction between Analogical and Homological reflective ontologies, responding to Feuchtwang's (2014b: 386) question of whether correlative systems found in diverse cultural settings are of a common type. Some of the issues considered here were anticipated by the discussion of *Explaining the Trigrams* at the end of Chapter One. In that discussion, against Ziporyn's (2012: 245–249) argument that the classes of trigram correlates ought to be

understood in terms of relational coherence, I made the case that these classes can also be understood in terms of shared characteristics among members which are more or less relevant at different scales, provided that the trigram classes and their process of transformation are taken to occur fractally, that is, repeating at different scales. That discussion stemmed from the consideration of metaphor and metonymy in correlation. Now, though, we are in a position to return to these issues in relation to the historical development of correlative cosmology and from the perspective of systematic reflective ontology.

Analogism by definition makes use of correlative thinking, as does Homologism in the case of contemporary Eight Trigrams cosmology. This already indicates that what counts as 'correlative thinking' may actually consist of more than one kind of intellectual enterprise. In this section I argue that the distinction between these two types of reflective ontologies arises from three variables. The first is the purpose of the correlative scheme in question, specifically whether it seeks to classify according to meaningful associations or based on perceived natural kinds, and the second is the degree of systematic reflection to which it is subjected – that is, whether it constitutes a more or less implicit or systematic reflective ontology. The third variable is the scale of phenomena considered – is that scale cosmic, or is it confined to a particular domain, say living things? The first variable necessarily influences the other two – a correlative system which aims simply to order phenomena in an arrangement meaningful to ego need not make any explicit claims regarding what kinds of things exist. It does, however, implicitly presume the existence of certain kinds by virtue of arranging them in time and space. In this sense, linking, say, a kind of animal with a natural landform does not claim ontological affinity between those two elements, merely taxonomic affinity contingent on ego's purpose – but it does presuppose the existence of ontological kinds brought together in arrangements which are not cosmologically relevant. Conversely, a correlative scheme which classifies according to perceived natural kinds by definition makes explicit claims about the kinds of things that exist and necessarily constitutes a systematic reflective ontology, at least within the domain of phenomena considered. As such, we may first distinguish between non-cosmological correlative *taxonomies* which nonetheless presuppose attendant implicit reflective ontologies, at least within a certain domain, and correlative *cosmologies* which define systematic reflective ontologies. The latter may be either Analogical, each taxon imposing relations on discontinuous singularities, or Homological, identifying members of each taxon based on ontologically common characteristics and subsuming all taxa into a greater

ontologically continuous whole. I will refer to non-cosmological correlative taxonomies, Analogical correlative cosmologies and Homological correlative cosmologies, in which the latter two make explicit systematic reflective ontological assumptions.

Descola (2013: 241–242) raises the same issues in his discussion of ‘prototypic’ and ‘contrastive’ modes of classification. Prototypic classifications group entities based on shared intrinsic properties, and Descola sees this as the dominant form of classification in both Animist and Totemist modes of identification; members of a Totemic class are thus ‘materializations of the same generative model’ (2013: 242). It should be clear from the preceding chapter that this is true of categories within Homologism, as it is also of all entities at the level of the Homological cosmos (this is not true of Totemism, which at the level of the cosmos defines each Totemic class contrastively, by similar attributes (Descola 2013: 242), further strengthening my case that it is in fact a species of Analogism). Contrastive classifications rely on grouping entities based on attributes which contrast with the attributes of other classes. Following Descola (2013: 242–243), this form of classification characterises Analogism and Naturalism. The predominance granted to either prototypic or contrastive classification with reference to a particular mode of identification necessarily pertains to how that mode of identification delimits ontological classes; thus Naturalist humans as an ontological class are defined by possession of physicality *and* interiority, whereas Animist humans instantiate a particular form of intentionality (Descola 2013: 241–244). As Descola points out (2013: 240–241), and as will become clear in the following discussion, all taxonomies use both forms of classification depending on the particular relationships they seek to emphasise. However, this is all problematic with respect to extreme forms of Analogism, because in such modes of identification classes do not correspond to ontological divisions owing to the fact that every entity which exists constitutes an ontological singularity, taxonomies being imposed for clarity.

In light of the three possible forms of correlative taxonomy defined in the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that non-cosmological and Analogical taxonomies rely on contrastive classification, the latter emphasising discontinuity at the level of the cosmos, and that Homological taxonomies rely on prototypic classification, emphasising causal continuity at the level of the cosmos. However, as will be shown, contrastive and prototypic classifications may be combined by existing at different scales.

Non-Cosmological Correlative Taxonomy

The first form of correlative taxonomy can be illustrated with reference to a famous example cited by Descola in his discussion of this very subject (2013: 242–243), the ‘Hong Fan’ chapter of the *Shang Shu*. This text was extremely influential on Han dynasty developments of correlative cosmology, ‘quoted in all extant philosophical compendia’ of the period, including the *Huainanzi* and *Chunqiu Fanlu* (《春秋繁露》 *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*) (Nylan 1992: 45). The ‘Hong Fan’ presents a cosmologically-oriented guide to rulership which draws on the ‘Five Processes’; as Nylan (1992: 118–119) argues, the use of the term *wu xing* 五行 here does not meet the criteria necessary to unproblematically characterise them as Five Phases of cosmic *qi*. The sections of the text relevant to our purposes proceed as follows (translation based on Nylan 1992: 15–16, and Legge, in Nylan 1992: 156–158):

一、五行：一曰水，二曰火，三曰木，四曰金，五曰土。水曰潤下，火曰炎上，木曰曲直，金曰從革，土爰[sic]稼穡。潤下作鹹，炎上作苦，曲直作酸，從革作辛，稼穡作甘。

First, of the Five Processes: the first is Water, the second Fire, the third Wood, the fourth Metal, the fifth Earth. Water is characterised by soaking and descending, Fire is characterised by blazing and ascending, Wood is characterised by curving and straightening, Metal is characterised by malleability and changeability, Earth is characterised by seeding and harvesting. Soaking and descending make for saltiness, blazing and ascending make for bitterness, curving and straightening make for sourness, malleability and changeability make for acidity, seeding and harvesting make for sweetness.

The dating of this text is contentious, not least because the possibility exists that different sections of it date from different periods. Nylan (1992: 103–146) offers an extensive discussion of contending hypotheses before finally dating the ‘Hong Fan’ to the late Warring States period, and Lloyd likewise has it between the mid fourth and early third centuries B.C. (2014: 23 note 30). Following them, the ‘Hong Fan’ is roughly contemporaneous with other correlative accounts but significantly predates the unambiguously *qi*-based Five Phases systems of the Han.

A number of points can be made about the taxonomy presented here. Firstly, each of the processes, Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth, is ‘characterised’ (曰 *yue*, following Nylan’s translation) in a certain way; that is, each is attributed certain kinds of process, and these contrast with those attributed to the others. However, at the same time the Five Processes are

associated with flavours, but the relationship posited between Process and flavour is not one of analogy but of *causation*; the process of soaking and descending ‘make for’ (作 *zuo*) saltiness. As such, within the narrow taxonomy of the section quoted above, we find both contrastive classification of Processes and their corresponding flavours as they are defined against other Processes and flavours, but also prototypic classifications of *particular* flavours as causal manifestations of specific Processes. This is illustrated below in **FIG. 6. 1**.

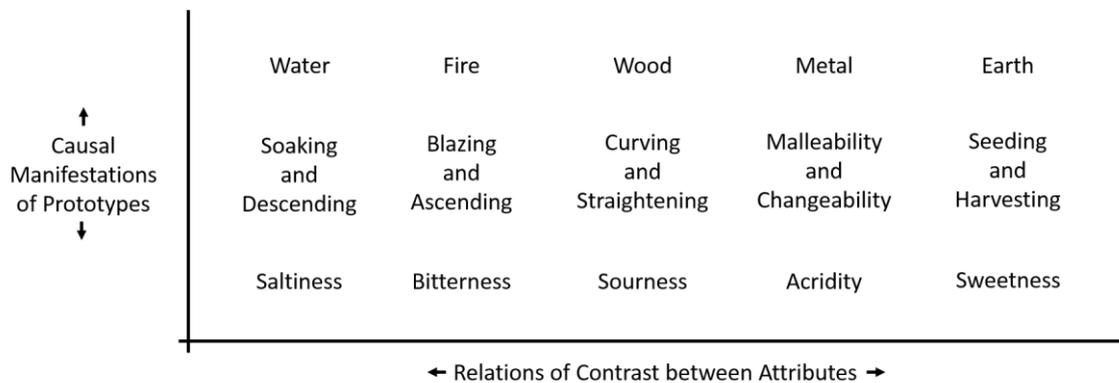


FIG. 6. 1 NON-COSMOLOGICAL CORRELATIVE TAXONOMY IN THE 'HONG FAN'

As such, the ‘Hong Fan’ presents a taxonomy similar in structure to that of Descola’s Totemism – the phenomena grouped together with Processes in **FIG. 6. 1** are manifestations of a common principle by virtue of their explicit causal relation, whereas at the level of the whole system of Five Processes within the content of this section, each vertical class is defined contrastively based on attributes. It is significant that even in this paradigmatic example of Chinese ‘correlative thinking’, causal relations within categories are explicit – ‘saltiness’, for example, is not vaguely associated with soaking and descending but is the product of those processes. Notably absent from this correlative taxonomy are a notion that the Five Processes are linked to one another in a broader process of transformation (in contrast, say, with *Explaining the Trigrams* and with the dynastic sequence presented in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, discussed below), and any explicit conception of these Processes as attending to phenomena on a cosmic scale. Although the order in which the Processes are presented comprises what in the Han was defined as the ‘cosmogonic order’ (生序 *shengxu*) (Needham 1956: 253–255; Nylan 1992: 15 note 4), the earliest commentary, dating from the early Han, describes the Processes here as relating to the ‘resources of the empire’ (Nylan 1992: 15) – akin to the Five Materials described above. The best we can do, if we wish to remain true to what the text makes explicit, is to consider the ‘Hong Fan’ to present a *non-cosmological correlative taxonomy*, which was only later re-read in terms of the explicitly cosmological Five Phases. The ‘Hong Fan’ does, though,

suggest implicit reflective ontological assumptions on the part of its author(s) insofar as it posits Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth as actual kinds of things which have specific causal effects. In the absence of any cosmological elaboration²⁶, we cannot make any assumptions concerning reflective ontology beyond the fact that the Five Processes are considered distinct within the domain under consideration.

Homological Correlative Cosmology

To illustrate the nature of Homological correlative taxonomies, we must turn to later periods. An example of this type is found in the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, a compendium dating to approximately 239 B.C. commissioned of various authors by Lü Buwei, prime minister of the Qin state, as a comprehensive philosophical and cosmological foundation for a universal empire (Knoblock & Riegel 2000). This work, whilst not yet evincing an unambiguous synthesis of *qi*, *yinyang*, and the Five Phases, nonetheless presents a highly elaborated correlative cosmology which can be considered an example of Homologist systematic reflective ontology. By considering its separate sections individually and in turn, it also demonstrates the importance of scale in typifying forms of correlative taxonomy. In a famous passage, the ‘Five Virtues’ (*wu de*), elsewhere attributed to Zou Yan, are fully elaborated in what would become known as the sequence of ‘mutual conquest’ (*xiang ke*) of the Five Phases (Graham 1986: 80–81; Harper 1999: 865), as still used today. The passage, ‘Ying Tong’ 《應同》 (‘Resonating with the Identical’, *Lüshi Chunqiu* 13/2.1), describes the relationship between changing Virtues and dynastic succession, cosmologically justifying the Qin state’s right to rule along with the actions the Qin ruler should adopt, and proceeds as follows:

凡帝王者之將興也，天必先見祥乎下民。黃帝之時，天先見大螾大螻，黃帝曰「土氣勝」，土氣勝，故其色尚黃，其事則土。及禹之時，天先見草木秋冬不殺，禹曰「木氣勝」，木氣勝，故其色尚青，其事則木。及湯之時，天先見金刃生於水，湯曰「金氣勝」，金氣勝，故其色尚白，其事則金。及文王之時，天先見火，赤烏銜丹書集於周社，文王曰「火氣勝」，火氣勝，故其色尚赤，其事則火。代火者必將水，天且先見水氣勝，水氣

²⁶ The ‘Hong Fan’ does present other sets of correlates, notably the ‘Five Duties’ (五事 *wu shi*) and the personal qualities and meteorological ‘verifications’ (徵 *zheng*) they cause. However, as Nylan remarks, the Five Duties ‘do not reflect the same cosmogonic sequence’ as the Five Processes, and are unlikely to have been intentionally correlated with them (1992: 15 note 7). The possibility that the section concerning the Five Processes and flavours is itself a later interpolation should not be discounted (Graham 1986: 80; Nylan 1992: 15) – though even if this were the case the remaining correlates would still constitute a similar non-cosmological correlative taxonomy.

勝，故其色尚黑，其事則水。水氣至而不知，數備，將徙于土。天為者時，而不助農於下。

類固相召，氣同則合，聲比則應。鼓宮而宮動，鼓角而角動。平地注水，水流溼。均薪施火，火就燥。山雲草莽，水雲魚鱗，旱雲煙火，雨雲水波，無不皆類其所生以示人。

Whenever an emperor or universal king is about to arise, Heaven is certain first to manifest good omens to the people below. At the time of the Yellow Sovereign [黃帝 huangdi], Heaven first caused giant mole crickets and earthworms to appear. The Yellow Sovereign announced, "The ethers [氣 qi] of Earth are in ascendance [勝 sheng]." Since the ethers of Earth were ascendant, he honoured the colour yellow and modelled his activities on Earth. When it came to the time of Yu, Heaven first caused trees and grasses to appear that did not wither in autumn and winter. Yu proclaimed, "The ethers of Wood are in ascendance." Since the ethers of Wood were ascendant, he honoured the colour green and modelled his affairs on Wood. When it came to the time of Tang, Heaven first caused metal blades to appear coming forth from Water. Tang proclaimed, "The ethers of Metal are in ascendance." Since the ethers of Metal were ascendant, he honoured the colour white and modelled his affairs on Metal. When it came to the time of King Wen, Heaven first caused a fiery-red crow to appear and alight on the altars of Zhou, holding in its beak a document written with cinnabar, King Wen proclaimed, "The ethers of Fire are in ascendance." Since the ethers of Fire were ascendant he honoured the colour vermilion and modelled his affairs on Fire. The successor of Fire is certain to be Water. Heaven has again first given signs that the ethers of Water are in ascendance. Since the ethers of Water are ascendant, the ruler should honour the colour black and model his affairs in Water. If the ethers of Water culminate and no one grasps that fact, the period when it is effective will come to an end, and the cycle will shift to Earth. "Heaven makes the season, but will not assist farmers here below."

Things belonging to the same category naturally attract each other; things that share the same ethers naturally join together; and notes that are comparable naturally resonate to one another. Strike the note gong on one instrument and other strings tuned to the gong note will vibrate; strike the note jue and other strings tuned to the jue note will vibrate. Water flowing across levelled earth will flow to the damp places; light evenly stacked firewood, and the fire will catch where it is driest. Clouds above a mountain look like shrubs; above water they resemble fish scales; above an arid landscape they look like leaping fire; above a flood they resemble rolling waves. Without exception, everything manifests signs that show men it shares the same category with that which creates it.

(Adapted from Knoblock & Riegel 2000: 282–284)

Presented here is a far more systematic account of Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire, and Water as forms of *qi*, emanating from Heaven and proceeding in a fixed cycle of ascendance, along with

their correlates. The passage also provides an explanation for correlation based on shared *qi*, identified with musical harmonisation – that is, the correlates of each type of *qi* are classified together first and foremost not because they share attributes but because they instantiate a prototype. Once again, this stems from the explicitly *causal* relations between the members of each class. However, for the purposes of illustrating the necessary actions of the next would-be sovereign, the relations presented between classes are contrastive. Thus the actions of Qin should be defined by a set of attributes corresponding to Water, in contrast to the Fire attributes of the Zhou.

In section 13/2.1, an implicit division exists between Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. When a given form of *qi* is in ascendance, Heaven causes certain things to appear on Earth. However, whilst this has historically heralded the arrival of a new emperor, later in the text it is implied that this results from the ability of humans to correctly identify Heavenly omens as indicators of changes in ascendant *qi*. So, whilst portents in the realm of Earth are a direct result of Heaven’s response to ascending *qi*, this is not so of appropriate human action. The would-be sovereign has a limited time-frame in which to harmonise with the state of the cosmos by behaving in a manner appropriate to the ascendant form of *qi*, by modelling his ‘affairs’ (事 *shi*) on it and adopting an appropriate colour. Within the context of the passage, this amounts to an analogical response via the manipulation of attributes. These relations are illustrated below in **FIG. 6. 2**.

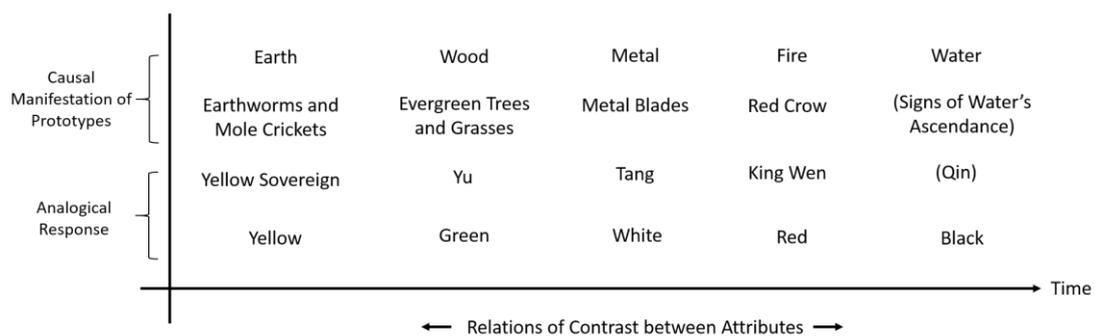


FIG. 6. 2 CORRELATIONS IN *LÜSHI CHUNQIU* 13/2.1

Within the taxonomy as it appears in section 13/2.1, discontinuities exist between the members of each vertical class *and* between classes. That is, whilst the set (Fire + Red Crow) is prototypic, the set (Fire + Red Crow, King Wen, Red) appears attributive. At first glance this instance of correlation appears Analogical, as the full vertical classes are contrastive and bring

together apparently disparate phenomena. Moreover, humans have a choice as to whether they harmonise with the cosmos. If we also consider section 13/1, which immediately precedes the section above, we find an account of the beginning of Heaven and Earth (13/1.1) which, initially separate, came together in harmony, amounting to ‘the grand principle of all creation’ (生之大經 *sheng zhi da jing*; Knoblock & Riegel 2000: 278). However, if we look further we find that sections 1-12 comprise almanacs identifying the correlates of each month of the year and the very real consequences of failing to act on them. Thus, despite the separation between the realms of Heaven and Humanity, they are causally connected – human action is able to foster a more or less hospitable environment for ascendant *qi* to manifest its natural effects. Additionally, as Puett (2004: 172–181) points out, elsewhere in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (e.g. 5/2.1) we find arguments that humans fulfil the cosmological function of completing that initiated by Heaven, ultimately stemming from a single cosmic origin, the Great One (太一 *taiyi*). From the Great One are produced *yin* and *yang*, Earth and Heaven, and it is by drawing on this principle that humans are able to regulate the cosmos, for example via music (Puett 2004: 174–175). So whilst the correlative taxonomy of *Lüshi Chunqiu* 13/2.1 appears Analogical, viewed from the scale of the cosmos it is in fact Homological. The apparently analogical response of humanity to Heaven in fact constitutes a means by which the would-be sovereign manifests the prototype of the ascendant *qi* – something he is able to do via a common ontological principle. Moreover, the distinctiveness of the five forms of *qi* is revealed to be non-ontological in character. This Homological correlative cosmology is shown below in Fig. 6.3. Thus, in spite of lacking evidence of a fully integrated theory of *qi*, *yinyang*, the Five Phases, and the eight trigrams, the correlative cosmology of the *Lüshi Chunqiu* can be considered of a type with that found among modern Eight Trigrams cosmologists.

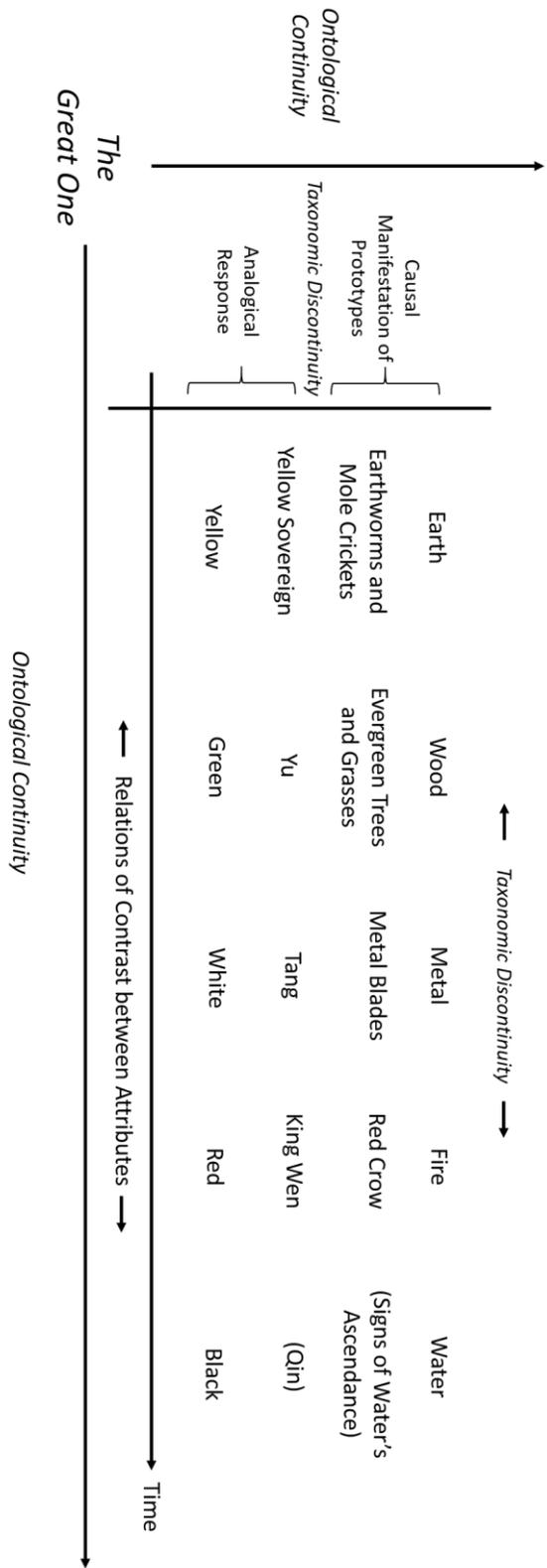


FIG. 6.3 HOMOLOGICAL CORRELATIVE COSMOLOGY IN THE *LÜSHI CHUNQIU*

Analogical Correlative Taxonomy

The question then arises of what an Analogical correlative cosmology might look like. Unproblematic diagnosis of such a cosmology would require evidence of an explicit rejection of a monogenetic cosmos such that, unlike the Homological correlative cosmology described above, all of the elements in a contrastive taxonomy *cannot* be subsumed into a single overarching category. To my knowledge, no such thing exists within the body of received texts commonly referred to as ‘correlative cosmologies’ in China. As such, for an example of this kind we must turn away from the realm of systematic reflective ontology to that of implicit reflective ontology, as this is the only form from which such a conclusion can be sensibly, if provisionally, drawn. The following extract comes from a ‘daybook’ (日書 *rishu*) or almanac excavated from the tombs at Shuihudi 睡虎地, dated to 217 B.C. (Shuihudi *Rishu* A):

金勝木，火勝金，水勝火，土勝水，木勝土。

東方木，南方火，西方金，北方水，中央土。

Metal conquers Wood, Fire does Metal, Water does Fire, Earth does Water, Wood does Earth.

Eastern fang [quarter or direction] is Wood, Southern fang is Fire, Western fang is Metal, the Centre is Earth.

(Chinese from Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組 1990: 223; English translation adapted from Wang 2008: 116)²⁷

The almanac comes from the tomb of a Qin administrator, and does not appear to be intended as a systematic cosmological treatise or for use by experts. What the text does is simply to correlate Wood, Fire, Metal, Water, and Earth with the East, South, West, North, and Centre respectively. However, unlike the ‘Hong Fan’, this text does suggest that the *wu xing* are to be taken as cosmologically-applicable principles, given that they are presented in the same order of ascendancy as that found in *Lüshi Chunqiu* 13/2.1. In the absence of further elaboration, the correlates here *can* be taken as an example of Analogical correlative cosmology, providing this is qualified as pertaining to implicit reflective ontological assumptions. Indeed, the daybooks are primarily concerned with day-to-day affairs rather than cosmological theorising; Harper (1997) provides a detailed description of some of their contents, including a diagram based on

²⁷ Wang (2008: 116) cites this as an example of how the older Four Quarters system was subsumed into the increasingly prevalent pentadic classification, the Centre being equated with Earth and thus stripped of its superior status.

the prognostication of character via the correlation of birth date with body parts, as well as a demonological treatise concerning, for example, the probability of a *yang* demon stealing the *qi* in an otherwise inexplicably ineffectual stove and the resolving of such a quandary via the burning of pig faeces (1997: 245). Thus, this set of correlates may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it can be taken as presuming that Wood, Fire, Metal, Water, and Earth are taxonomic means of relating distinct phenomena – in this case cardinal directions – based entirely on attributes. In this view, Wood, Fire, and so on do not denote real categories (as they have in the above examples) but serve only to link myriad singularities based on superficial similarity – a textbook case of Analogism *sensu* Descola (2013). The second possibility is that they represent distinct ontological classes. Given the probable use of the almanac as a guide to day-to-day living rather than as a treatise for cosmological study, I am inclined towards the first interpretation, as it fits most parsimoniously with implicit rather than systematic reflective ontological assumptions. A system of the second type would appear as that illustrated in **FIG. 6. 2**, with the amendment that the relations of contrast along both axes reflect *ontological* as well as taxonomic divisions.

Natural Kinds and Taxonomic Scale

The typology presented above has demonstrated a need to differentiate between divisions which are purely taxonomic, and those which are ontological. This may be refined further to distinguish between 1) taxonomies with no basis in natural kinds, 2) taxonomies which reflect natural but not ontological kinds, and 3) taxonomies which reflect ontological kinds. Analogical correlative cosmology in the sense described in the previous section can involve taxonomies of type 1), by virtue of the fact that every entity constitutes its own ontological singularity and that the way these are classified serves a purpose of creating meaning alone. In such a cosmology there are as many natural ontological kinds as there are singularities, so *any* classification brings together unrelated phenomena. It is difficult to imagine that such a conception could be rigorously adhered to as a *systematic* reflective ontology which accounts for cosmogony. Rather, an Analogical correlative cosmology would be more likely to take the form of an ontologically contrastive version of **FIG. 6. 2**, in which ontological continuity would exist within narrowly-defined classes – this would amount to a taxonomy which reflects ontological kinds, type 3) (this is true of Totemism and even for a paradigmatic case like the Great Chain of Being). As it stands, in the context of Homological correlative cosmology, **FIG. 6. 2** represents a taxonomy which reflects *natural but not ontological kinds*, type 2) – the five

kinds of *qi* and their correlates comprise natural categories, but are all subsumed within the continuous ontological whole of the Great One (Fig. 6. 3), itself an example of type 3).

A further comment can be made regarding the scale on which natural kinds are viewed. I have shown that in a Homological correlative cosmology, whilst correlations are explicable based on continuity, depending on one's purposes emphasis may be placed on *discontinuities* at a less fundamental scale. That is, there exists no obstacle preventing a Homologist systematic reflective ontology from creating *apparently* analogical taxonomies based on natural kinds – and of course, at the same time, there is nothing preventing it from creating taxonomies with no 'natural' basis whatsoever. Indeed, if we consider again the example of evolutionary biology, from which I first drew the distinction between analogy and homology, we can see that the analogy between a bird's and a butterfly's wing is based on discontinuity at the level of comparative anatomy, but on a more fundamental level, the wings of both creatures are structured by common substances and principles, be they biological, chemical, or ultimately physical. Likewise, nothing prevents an Analogist systematic reflective ontology from creating *genuinely* homological taxonomies at a less fundamental scale – this is implicit in the non-cosmological correlative taxonomy of the 'Hong Fan', in which distinct Processes create distinct flavours, and is of course fundamental to Totemism as presented by Descola (2013).

In considering natural kinds and scale, we come to a problem implicitly at the heart of discussions of correlative cosmology, which is the reconciliation of correlative taxa with more obvious kinds such as animals or landforms – a problem touched on in Chapter One. Indeed, correlative cosmology cries out for explanation precisely because it groups together entities from such apparently disparate kinds as animals, colours, and directions, the logic of which is not always readily apparent (even if it does not extend to the bizarre extremes of Borges' fictional 'Chinese encyclopaedia' famously cited by Foucault (2002: xvi–xvii)). It can first be pointed out that such a problem does not necessarily require rationalisation on the level of implicit reflective ontology – the users of the daybooks, like Cancan with his *fengshui* dabbles, likely gave such questions little thought beyond what was immediately relevant to the days ahead. Continuing our focus on the level of systematic reflective ontology, I have already extensively elaborated the Homological character of my informants' cosmologies, and demonstrated that conceptions similar in kind, if not detail, are to be found in texts as early as *Explaining the Trigrams* and the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. In Chapter One I proposed a means of accounting for both the obvious relational character of such groupings *and* their instantiation of common cosmic principles. The *Lüshi Chunqiu* example illustrates this further through its

clear differentiation between the Heavenly, Earthly, and Human realms – *qi*, or the Great One, exists in distinct forms, constituting natural kinds, and these configurations manifest themselves differently, but coherently, at different scales. Considering the thought and practice of my contemporary informants, we find a clear conception of cosmic principles manifesting fractally, such that a given phenomenon, be it a hexagram-as-phenomenon or a *fengshui* fish tank, contains within it *qi* configured according to all Five Phases, the relevance of each of which is brought out with respect to the scale under consideration. However, the objection may still stand that the cosmos so considered only makes sense holistically; that is, it cannot be *reduced* to a single unifying principle but rather relies on the irreducible totality of all its elements acting in concert. Indeed, this is precisely what Ziporyn (2012) argues. This objection does not stand up to the contemporary examples provided in previous chapters, in which cosmologists routinely reduce human and other phenomena to the fundamental basis of *qi*, including in dialogue with physics, but what about the historical examples at the forefront of debates on correlative cosmology? Once again, in discussing systematic reflective ontology cosmogony is of essential importance – and it is to this that I now turn.

The Question of Cosmogenesis

Lévi-Strauss (1969: 161) touched briefly on *yinyang* classification as ‘the most systematic application’ of a general principle of creating integrating wholes, like the *dao*, from oppositional categories; his general structuralist approach enjoys frequent discussion in the Sinological literature, and was particularly influential on the approach of A. C. Graham (1986, 1989). Puett (2004: 1–29) provides an excellent overview of some of these debates, and though he does not use the term ‘ontology’, his arguments concerning the relationship between humans and spirits and the role of cosmogony speak directly to the questions raised in the foregoing discussion.

On the subject of integrating wholes through opposition, Descola (2013: 302) suggests that Analogist modes of identification, such as Chinese correlative cosmology in his view, may integrate themselves to the point that they develop hypostasized concepts of unity (he cites the *dao*; had he selected *qi* here, his conclusions may have been different); however, he characterises such concepts as hard to pin down, the true mode of identification remaining predicated on ontological discontinuities. That is, cosmic unity here is a function of all singularities and their various oppositions taken as a whole – a constructed unity rather than a

constructing one. Puett (2004: Ch. 4) similarly argues that monist correlative cosmology was a means of self-divinisation based on a presumption of discontinuity, designed to critique claims of a separate spirit-realm with power over nature by bringing this realm within the purview of human knowledge (a critique which must assume discontinuity as its starting point, continuity being the end goal). This presents two problems. These are the priority he grants to reactive explanations (in which particular texts are treated as political responses to prevailing modes of ritual conduct), and his conflation of assumptions of discontinuity on a ritual and cosmogonic level. Dealing with these two issues is essential not only to the immediate question of the development of correlative cosmology, but also to the questions thrown up by the cosmologies of my informants and the relationship between cosmology and ontology in general.

Following Sahlins' arguments concerning continuity and discontinuity in Polynesian cosmology, Puett (2004: 160) argues that 'a correlative claim of continuity between humanity and nature was designed, and continues to function, only in opposition to an opposing claim of discontinuity.' It should be noted here that Puett *does* assume, as I do, that monogenetic correlative cosmology is predicated on continuity. However, he considers it purely as a reaction to opposing claims, specifically those concerning the necessity of sacrifice and divination in communicating with spirits, and thus amounting to finding means of getting around a real underlying discontinuity. Such reactions deliberately shifted intimacy with the divine to within reach of humanity as embodied by the sage, a situation quite unlike that which prevailed during the Shang and Western Zhou periods. Some thinkers did this by positing a common substance, *qi*, which could be progressively refined via self-cultivation until one's *qi* was like that of a spirit (神 *shen*), also composed of *qi* (an example of ontological monism), as in the 'Xinshu' 心術 ('Arts of the Heart-mind') and 'Neiye' 內業 ('Inner Cultivation') chapters of the *Guanzi* 《管子》 (Puett 2004: 170–172), a wide-ranging politico-philosophical text with sections dating from perhaps the fifth century B.C. to the early Han (Rickett 1993: 244). Other authors suggested a monist cosmogony, as in the *Taiyi Sheng Shui* 《太一生水》 (*The Great One Gave Birth to Water*) manuscript from the Guodian tombs (late Warring States), an understanding of which allows the sage to operate effectively in the world by exploiting cosmic forces, to which the spirits are reduced (Puett 2004: 160–164), similar to the account of the *Lüshi Chunqiu* as described above. The *Yi Jing's Appended Phrases* similarly suggests that the sage may operate effectively by attuning himself with cosmic forces via divination according to the hexagrams, themselves derived directly from sagely observations of the world (see Puett

2004: 188–196), as discussed in Chapter One. For Puett, divination here ceases to be an act of communication and coercion of the divine, becoming a means of attaining knowledge of cosmic processes. In all of these cases, the cosmos as a whole is knowable via its reduction to something more fundamental – *qi*, the ‘Great One’, or the hexagrams – *not* via the holistic consideration of myriad irreducible elements.

All of these examples, Puett acknowledges, suggest monism and continuity, but for him this indicates a deliberate imposition on an assumption of discontinuity. I agree that historically, they may be understood as reactions to prior assumptions of separation between humanity and the spirits, and also that they demonstrate shifting attitudes in relation to similar contemporaneous beliefs and practices; as Henderson (1984: 24) argues, the concept of a cosmos unified by *qi* was retrospectively applied to notions of resonance. However, Puett’s argument that ‘in all these practices, monogenesis is the goal, not an assumption’ (2004: 199) requires qualification. Undoubtedly, the goal of many of the authors concerned was at least in part to promote the acceptance of their ideas, and insofar as this was the case then a wider acceptance of monogenesis was the goal. However, whilst these authors may well have begun their intellectual endeavours with assumptions of discontinuity and posited monogenesis as an alternative, once they had done this their reflective ontological assumptions had shifted considerably. The formulation, elaboration, and dissemination of cosmogonic theories would require an inordinate investment of time and effort for the purposes of a mere ‘rhetoric of critique’ (Puett 2004: 200); rather, it suggests a genuine intellectual dissatisfaction with the premise of ontological discontinuity on the part of the author, who presented an alternative precisely because he took it to be a better account of the cosmos. From that point on, the starting assumption of such an author in subsequent cosmological endeavours would have been monogenesis, unless he was convinced otherwise. Upward reduction of this individual or historical shift to the realm of the socio-political or of ‘rhetoric’ is problematic precisely because it fails to account for the nuances of individual cosmological thought – but as the variety of conceptions of monogenesis cited by Puett demonstrates, the intellectual history of each individual is vital for a full explanation of cosmological change and shifts in ontological assumptions on a societal level, which must be understood as aggregate shifts among individual thinkers. Moreover, such reductionism reduces in the wrong direction, and as such is guilty of an ontological error of a different order. In order to reduce the thought of individuals to a wider social phenomenon, one must posit the social as ontologically prior to

the individual, an operation which, when put in these terms, is clearly ludicrous. If we accept, broadly following Sperber (1996: 31), that socio-cultural phenomena are ‘ecological patterns of psychological phenomena’, or indeed Toren’s emphasis on the individual as autopoietic (1999: 6–12), then the individual is clearly granted priority. Reduction in this direction, of the social to the individual, is in no way to deny the social properties of aggregate behaviour or their richness, but simply to incorporate them into a causal framework.

This approach allows us to avoid the problem of treating China as a whole. Whilst Puett (2004: 200) acknowledges that ‘[c]orrelative cosmology should not be interpreted as a general “Chinese” way of thinking’, he does this in order to argue that, rather, it *should* be interpreted as an attempt to ‘transcend the conflict between humans and spirits by overcoming the world of spirits altogether’. Again, whilst this was doubtless true for many of the authors concerned, the resultant systems do represent genuine shifts in beliefs about the cosmos. They are not, and were not, representative of China as a whole, to be sure, both owing to the differences between expert and lay understandings already elaborated and because each thinker presents different ideas. As Puett repeatedly points out, we should be wary of generalisations across societies – but we should also be wary of generalising the ontological assumptions of individuals, both diachronically during an individual’s intellectual development, as I have just discussed, and synchronically, across different levels of abstraction. Both Puett and Descola (2013) make this point; Descola distinguishes between forms of schema, for example, and Puett discusses the Han scholar-official Dong Zhongshu’s assertion of a cosmic monism but equal emphasis on discontinuity between humans and gods (2004: 320–321). However, in the course of their arguments these distinctions appear less clear-cut; in Puett’s discussion of the *Appended Phrases*, for example, he argues both that it posits cosmic monogenesis and positions Heaven and humanity as ‘fully separated’ (2004: 199). His point is well-taken, but monogenesis necessarily prevents ‘full separation’; in the *Appended Phrases*, these realms are separate, to be sure, connectable via divination, but their separation is not absolute; that is, it is not ontological in character. Puett is correct to repeatedly point out that throughout these early Chinese texts continuity and discontinuity are preferentially emphasised in different contexts for different purposes, but he is incorrect when he conflates this with context-differentiated assumptions of monogenesis (continuity of humans and spirits) and polygenesis (full separation of humans and spirits) (2004: 196–200). Indeed, as he acknowledges when critiquing K. C. Chang’s opposition between Chinese monism and Western dualism, ‘[s]pirit journeys and ascensions cannot be linked to any one type of cosmology’ (2004: 203). The same

is true for any kind of ritual, including divination and sacrifice; what is significant, though, is the transformation of the nature of such rituals via a shift in cosmogonic assumptions, because this transforms the ontological status of the ritual. Thus divination in the *Appended Phrases* is an entirely different practice from Shang scapulimancy, relying on a system of observed patterns to determine change on the same ontological plane as opposed to forging a connection in order to gain knowledge from an ontological other. The *Appended Phrases* suggests that, with respect to divination, the evolution of at least one branch of cosmological thought involved a shift in the conditions of possibility for communication between Heaven and humanity. In the *Appended Phrases*, discontinuity was not an ontological problem but an epistemological one. Human degeneration from the time of the sages had created this discontinuity, but the epistemological tools the sages developed remained in the hexagrams of the *Zhou Yi*. I turn now to a discussion of the effects that the development of Homological systematic reflective ontology had on the nature of divination as a practice.

Divination from Divine Communication to Human Prediction

The earliest written records in Chinese history are records of divination, the oracle bones (甲骨文 *jiaguwen*), which provide some evidence of the beliefs and concerns of the Shang dynasty kings. The cosmology they hint at was one based on the high god *Di*, considered 'above' the human world and capable of commanding natural phenomena, particularly rain, as well as of destroying dynasties, much like the personified *Tian* ('Heaven') of the subsequent Zhou dynasty (Keightley 1999: 252). *Di* headed a pantheon of nature powers, former lords, and ancestors. The ancestors, to whom divinations were directed, were conceived as retaining very human concerns. Shang divination via scapulimancy and plastromancy appears to have been conceived as a form of communication with them, ancestors' responses providing 'both basis and justification' for the actions of the king (Chang 1980: 202) who, as the figure closest to the ancestors, would speak the prognostication (Field 2000). Chang (1980: 202) groups Shang divinations into four main types, concerning further ritual actions, the king's fortune during a given period, the potential outcome of an action, and the interpretation of independent events such as dreams or natural phenomena; Keightley (1997: 30–41) provides a more detailed breakdown of divinatory questions.

Whilst we can know little beyond the divinatory records, the types of divination documented, suggest that from an anthropological perspective questions can be considered of two types. As

I have discussed, the predictive divination of Six Lines and other practices is meaningfully distinct from the 'metic' divination described by Willis and Curry (2004) and considered by Holbraad (2012a, 2012b). Of the forms of Shang divinatory questions, those concerning the outcomes of actions, such as military expeditions and hunts, suggest a genuine belief in divination's predictive efficacy. However, they are found alongside purely metic forms, such as those concerning the interpretation of dreams and the appropriateness of ritual action, as well as a form which could be interpreted either way, concerning the fortune of the king. In asking the question 'What did the Shang diviner think he was doing?' (1988: 367), Keightley suggests that oracle bone divination charges framed as two alternative outcomes, 'may be understood as spells applied to the future' (1988: 372), the inscription of a charge on the bone marking the future itself via analogical magic. In particular, he argues, the presence of negative, unpaired charges, such as 'there will be no disaster', suggests these divinations functioned as attempts to avoid calamity rather than discover what would actually happen. Paired charges, meanwhile, tended to abbreviate the negative outcome and accentuate the positive. Where 'display inscriptions' concerning the accuracy of prognostications are found, they invariably confirm the predictions, reinforcing the 'passive infallibility' of the royal diviner (1988: 373). Whilst the inscription of the charges constituted a magical act, this was tempered by a need for them to accord with the dualistic balance of reality, the act of divination yielding the particular balance at a given moment. This introduced an ambiguity – the balance may be favourable, but the possibility of it swinging back was always present. In a telling passage (1988: 377–378), Keightley cites Lévi-Strauss' *Totemism*, but argues that the binaries of Shang metaphysics do not permit a complementary union in the manner of sky/earth or red/white – they consist in bifurcations such as rain/not rain or curse/not curse, explicit and dialectic rather than mythical in character (indeed, Keightley compares them to Newton's third law of motion).

Wang (2012: 444–445), following Chen Mengjia, argues that the Shang pantheon of *Di* and celestial deities, nature powers or terrestrial deities, and human spirits indicates a systematic separation that was inherited by the succeeding Western Zhou as a triad of heaven, earth, and human spirits. The Zhou supreme god *Tian*, identified with *Di* following the conquest of the Shang, 'had a decisive effect on human affairs, including the succession of political authority, length of life, and good or bad fortune' (2012: 446). Puett (2004) argues that the Western Zhou continued to worship the high god in a manner similar to the Shang, via ritual attempts to make him work according to a human-imposed order. Indeed, the evidence from Shang divination and cosmology suggests ontological assumptions which can be characterised as

Analogue: metemeric divination (alongside predictive divination) predicated on divine communication, a discreet supernatural hierarchy of nature powers and ancestors headed by a high god, and a binary view of the world based on polar opposites. Indeed, Puett's (2004: 44–54) analysis of the Shang pantheon suggests a hierarchy in which humans are forced to influence immediate ancestors, who in turn may influence higher ancestors (who have been dead for longer), who in turn may influence *Di*, who in Puett's reading was not an ancestor at all (see also Wang 2008: 39). Puett goes on to argue that far from being coterminous with humanity, the Shang gods and spirits were entirely other, and had to be transformed via ritual such that they could be incorporated into a human hierarchy (Puett's whole argument in this section reads as a textbook demonstration of Analogism). Likewise, Wang (2008: 46) argues that the connection between Heaven and Earth required constant establishment through ritual.

To the development of Homological correlative cosmology, defined by the union of monist cosmogony and correlative taxonomy, may be attributed the development of something much closer to the systems of prediction I have described in the previous chapters. This became particularly evident during the Han dynasty, during which Homological correlative cosmology became a dominant expert view promoted by the state. This can be seen, for example, in the writings attributed to scholar-official Dong Zhongshu, who married correlative principles with Confucian morals, arguing that the sage who understands the laws of *yin* and *yang* as forms of *qi* may manipulate them in order to effect change (Puett 2004: 290–291). Dong Zhongshu's cosmos is thus dynamic, legislative (*sensu* Valeri 2014), and rooted in *qi*-monism; it may be considered unambiguously Homologist. The notion of a monogenetic cosmos raises the possibility of being able to manipulate that cosmos based on an understanding of its unifying principle – we have already seen examples of this in the previous section. It also follows that the behaviour of such a cosmos can be predicted based on this knowledge. The possibility is thus raised of cosmically-informed forms of prediction which are no longer primarily concerned with creating meaning, and no longer require communication with ancestors, spirits, or gods in order to yield prognostications. Such forms would have been impossible within the cosmology of the Shang, for example, in which knowledge of the cosmos depended on access to the divine.

Divination in the Han period had become a widespread practice of the educated classes and was a pervasive feature of state practice, though differences existed between its practice by officials and by laypeople (Kalinowski 2010). Since the sixth century B.C. the text of the *Zhou Yi*

had been used as ‘a source of wisdom in its own right’ as well as simply a divination manual (Loewe 2005: 73). The *Yi Jing* was canonised as one of the ‘Five Classics’ officially endorsed by the Han state in 136 B.C., beginning an ongoing series of commentaries and interpretations. These included efforts to fully integrate the hexagrams and trigrams, along with the principles of the *Appended Phrases*, with the notion of universal *qi* and the Five Phases. One such effort was that of Jing Fang the Younger²⁸, who was instrumental in the development of the cosmological prediction system in which my informants now engage. The only surviving work attributed to him is the *Jing Shi Yizhuan* 《京氏易傳》 (*Jing Fang’s Commentary on the Changes*), of a reputed thirteen *Yi Jing*-related texts (Smith 2008: 67)²⁹. Jing Fang is credited with the development of Attached Stem Divination and the Eight Palaces method of grouping hexagrams, both of which remain at the core of contemporary Six Lines Prediction as practised by Master Tao and his students; Jing Fang is also credited with the discovery of ‘mutual hexagrams’ (*hugua*) (Rutt 2002: 97) as used by Ma Jianglong.

‘Attached Stem’ originally referred to the correlation of the Eight Trigrams with the Ten Heavenly Stems, resulting in the necessity of granting *Qian* and *Kun* two Stems each in order to make the two sets fit (Henderson 1984: 14), *Qian* and *Kun* then as now being considered pre-eminent among the trigrams as extreme *yang* and extreme *yin*. Jing Fang’s further contribution was to incorporate the Five Phases and Earthly Branches, massively expanding the explanatory potential of the hexagrams and, for certain cosmologists, dispensing with the need to refer directly to the line statements of the *Zhou Yi*.³⁰ As Nylan (2001: 236) documents, Jing Fang attempted to correlate the lines of the hexagrams (6x64=384) with the days of the year in order to assess systems of cosmic change, including astronomy, mathematics, and music, building on the system developed by Meng Xi (Smith 2008: 62–66). This was accomplished by using four Standard Hexagrams to mark the solstices and equinoxes, leaving the remaining three hundred and sixty lines to described the changes in *qi* over the approximately three

²⁸ In addition to being instrumental in the development of *Yi Jing* correlative cosmology, Jing Fang was an experimentally-minded music theorist (Cullen 2010: 330) prior to his execution for sedition in 37 B.C. (Loewe 2005: 205).

²⁹ The authorship of this work is disputed by modern scholars, some attributing it entirely to Jing Fang the younger (Wang 2008: 131 note 2), others denying his authorship (Loewe 2005: 205), or attributing it to the less well-documented Jing Fang the Elder (Hulsewé 1986).

³⁰ Jing Fang was one of various Han cosmologists who sought to reconcile the *Yi Jing* with other correlative systems. At least one such figure, Yang Xiong, developed a new system of tetragrams out of dissatisfaction with the disjuncture between the hexagrams and other correlates (Loewe 2005: 79). See Smith (2008: Ch. 3) for a general account of Han approaches.

hundred and sixty days of the year (Smith 2008: 62–66; see also Henderson 1984: 14)³¹. He was also known for co-ordinating weather patterns with the hexagrams (Loewe 2008: 204). The result of these developments was an integrated system which served both divinatory and wider explanatory purposes (Smith 2008: 67). As Loewe (2005: 75) argues, by the time of these cosmological developments ‘the whole system of divination by [means of the Hexagrams] had undergone a change of purpose’, divinations now yielding not simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers but indicating the situation of the cosmos and its potential for auspicious action (2005: 75-76). The successful integration of the hexagrams with *qi*-based Five Phases and *yinyang* cosmology enabled genuine prediction via the classification of phenomena into ‘sixty-four known and identifiable types’ (2005: 76).

This level of cosmological integration meant that, just as remains the case for my informants, meteoric divination was rendered impossible via the hexagrams. Even if the answer requested is to the question ‘what should I do’ rather than ‘what will happen’, it is nonetheless answered in terms of the latter. As demonstrated by Dong Zhongshu’s immanently moral Homologism, this does not prevent ‘what will happen’ from possessing moral character. But once divination had become a fully cosmological act, a discipline rooted in the same foundations as the changes of *qi* as manifest in weather patterns and musical theory, its mystical aspects shifted from the unknowable to the knowable. The act of divination had become an act of cosmological prediction, fully accommodated with laws of transformation of *qi* and, therefore, an effective means of yielding accurate information about the world and explaining human situations. I do not pretend that with the Han synthesis and the work of Jing Fang the evolution of correlative cosmology and its divinatory applications somehow stopped; over time, these methods were further developed, including by others in the Han (Henderson 1984: 14–16) and later – and they continue to be developed today by cosmologists like Master Tao and Ma Jianglong. Nonetheless, during the Han dynasty the idea of a monist cosmos explicable via dynamic systems of correspondence was established in a form that more or less resembles that in use today in terms of its ontological assumptions.

³¹ Sixty was an important number for Jing Fang, who developed the existing twelve-note pitch pipe scale into sixty different sequences, expanding a system correlated with the twelve months into one correlated with six-day intervals; the twelve pipes, differing in length according to a mathematical ratio (and hence producing the twelve notes), were buried in sequence and filled with ash as part of an empirical project of observing the transformation of *qi* throughout the year, the theory being that the changes in *qi* would be observable via the ash being blown from the pipes at the appropriate temporal juncture (Bodde 1981c: 354–356).

Conclusions

This chapter has extended the discussion begun in Chapter Five to the question of Chinese ‘correlative cosmology’ more generally. The continuous development of correlative cosmology must be understood in terms of the ideas specific to individual cosmologists, and the systematic reflective ontologies developed by experts cannot be generalised to the population at large.

It is possible to distinguish three types of correlative thinking: non-cosmological correlative taxonomies, which group phenomena based on meaningful relations which do not necessarily reflect perceived natural kinds or make ontological claims; Analogical correlative cosmologies, which correlate ontologically discontinuous phenomena; and Homological correlative cosmologies, which identify taxa based on shared causally-related characteristics and subsume all taxa within an ultimate continuous taxon. The ‘Hong Fan’ chapter of the *Shang Shu* is an example of a non-cosmological correlative taxonomy, the *Lüshi Chunqiu* of Homological correlative cosmology, and the daybooks of Shuihudi of Analogical correlative cosmology. These distinctions can be further refined by identifying taxonomies with no basis in natural kinds, taxonomies which reflect natural but not ontological kinds, and taxonomies which reflect ontological kinds. This enables us to account for the existence of apparently Analogical taxonomies within ontologically Homologist systems, and vice-versa. The fact that Homological correlative cosmology assumes monogenesis and the human capacity to know the cosmos means that its unifying principle, be it *qi* or the ‘Great One’, is understood in terms of ontological reduction rather than holistically. Finally, as I showed via a discussion of the changes that occurred between Shang oracle bone divination and the development of the *najia* system in the early Han dynasty, systematic reflective ontology affects the nature of divination as a practice, a knowable, monogenetic cosmos permitting detailed, explanatory prediction but preventing metic divination.

Scott’s (2014) question of whether a system predicated on ontological discontinuity can overcome itself can be tentatively answered in the affirmative, given the available evidence. Feuchtwang’s (2014b: 386), of whether Chinese correlations are of a type with those of Analogist Europe, can be answered with a confident negative in the case of certain expert systematic reflective ontological accounts, but positively in other, non-expert cases. The correlates posited by the systematic reflective ontologies discussed in this chapter correspond to natural categories, rather than creating a meaningful map between ontological singularities.

In closing, it is worth returning to the question of fractality and scale. What I have demonstrated about Homological correlative cosmology leads to an inescapable conclusion about categories, providing we take the cosmological claims of these correlative systems seriously: what we perceive as natural kinds such as animals, colours, and so on, are not in fact so in these systems. Rather, they are different scales at which the real natural kinds, differentiated kinds of *qi*, manifest themselves. This may be counterintuitive – but as we have seen, reflective beliefs often are. It is worth here reflecting on a conversation I had with Ma Jianglong, in which he insisted (unlike Master Tao), that the theory of evolution should be dismissed as incompatible with Eight Trigrams cosmology. In that conversation, he likened *qi* configurations to the mixing of chemicals. A human, or any other kind of animal, is a manifestation of a particular *qi* configuration – no more and no less – as is anything else. The creation of a given entity arises from the coming together of kinds of *qi* in a particular configuration – that is, on that particular scale.

Conclusions: Of Scale and Purpose

Introduction

The subject of this thesis has been the content of Eight Trigrams cosmology as understood and practised by contemporary predictors, along with the cosmological and predictive principles set out in the *Yi Jing* and historical cosmological texts, and the cognitive processes involved in the implementation and rationalisation of cosmological representations. I opened the thesis with three broad research questions and four specific foci of study. In addressing them, this thesis first explored analogy and classification in the content of the *Yi Jing*, and analogical transfer and reduction in Six Lines Prediction. It then examined the epistemological status of resemblance and the analogical relationship of moral values to the Eight Trigrams cosmos, and the grounding of predictive ethics and legitimacy in accurately accounting for the cosmos. The last two chapters concerned the reflective ontological assumptions underlying Eight Trigrams cosmology, and the forms of classification that characterise Chinese 'correlative thought' more generally. We are now in a position to answer the original questions. I will draw some broad conclusions related to the three research questions first, before discussing the four specific research foci and what can now be said about Eight Trigrams Prediction in relation to the comparative anthropology of divination. This discussion will be followed by a summary of the theoretical contributions of this research, a discussion of its limitations, and scope for future studies on the basis of its findings. My focus is on thematic conclusions drawn from the research taken as a whole; each chapter has included a summary of its specific arguments and findings.

Analogy and Resemblance in Eight Trigrams Cosmology

This study has demonstrated that analogical reasoning is a pervasive cognitive process in categorisation, crucial to the act of prediction, the creation and expansion of cosmological categories, and the accommodation of alternative cosmological accounts. It also plays an important role in explicit cosmological representations, forming the basis of the connection between moral values and cosmological principles.

In discussing its role as a means of systematically accounting for resemblances between phenomena in cosmological terms, I have distinguished between Analogy and Homology. Homology, in this sense, represents one means of rationalising analogical resemblances in cosmic terms, by positing a systematic reflective ontology based on cosmic unity; as such I

have argued that it is the province of cosmological experts. Resemblances between phenomena are thus of primary epistemological importance; indeed, in the *Yi Jing* itself, in prediction, and in cosmological exegesis, resemblances provide the means by which the cosmos can be known. It is axiomatic of Eight Trigrams cosmology that similarities reveal genuine common characteristics in the form of shared cosmic principles across a range of phenomena; indeed, they constitute the perceptible aspect of the continuous flow and differentiation of *qi*. Ontologically, then, perceived similarities between phenomena reveal them as members of a natural kind on a certain scale. Ontologically significant similarity, though, does not only exist within classes. A crucial aspect of Eight Trigrams cosmology is that classes resemble one another; their differentiation for comparative purposes is based on perceived natural divisions, but not ontological ones. Thus, whilst in general categorisation relies on metaphorically contrastive classes of metonymically related elements, or contrastive comparisons of prototypes, when they are considered as products of a monist cosmogony the structural resemblances between classes are themselves revealed to be Homological. Their structural similarity is revealed to stem from the fact that they are all groupings of *qi* according to a kind of cosmic principle, whether a hexagram, a trigram, a Phase, and so on. It is entirely by virtue of this combination of scale and fractality that the Eight Trigrams cosmos is coherent.

Put simply, resemblances are the epistemological means by which ontological similarities are identified. These similarities are ordered according to fractal and dynamic principles which are nonetheless constant. The fact that they are constant, and the fact that resemblances are epistemologically reliable, means that principles can be identified and predicted; this in turn means that their surface effects, as manifest in human action, can also be diagnosed and predicted. The thoroughly predictive character of Eight Trigrams Prediction, contrasted with other, 'metic' forms of divination, is thus an inevitable consequence of the cosmology's axiomatic principles. It would not be obvious from the ethnographic data alone whether the principle of a monist, legislative cosmos is inferred by practitioners from the predictive system or vice-versa – but as the examination of early Han cosmological developments revealed, the predictive system followed historically from the development of a Homologist cosmology. In the next section I address findings relevant to the four specific research foci.

Research Findings

- 1) The role of cognitive operations of metaphor and metonymy in classification and predictive reasoning

I have demonstrated that metaphor and metonymy, understood as cognitive operations of substitution and incorporation, are fundamental to the process of prediction, itself properly understood as an act of classification, and to the accommodation of alternative ideas. With respect to prediction, in both the *Yi Jing* and Six Lines Prediction this assumes the conceptual duality of hexagrams. Hexagrams-as-symbols are to be understood as abstract cognitive schemas which facilitate operations of analogical transfer via structure-mapping. Hexagrams-as-phenomena, meanwhile, refer to perceived natural categories which are mentally represented but which are too cumbersome to be mobilised in the same way. Thus, the cognitive operation of metaphor involves the temporary substitution of the hexagram-as-symbol for the situation to be diagnosed, but once this first stage of analogical transfer has been completed, a thorough one-to-one mapping of hexagram correlates can be attempted, which metonymically incorporates the situation into a broader category of cosmic phenomena. Thus, the crucial elements and participants in a situation like a financial problem are identified with the lines of a hexagram, the correlates of which then allow specific conclusions to be drawn concerning the kind and quality of relationships involved, rendering the situation explicable as a specific instance of a configuration of cosmic principles.

The categories thus established are themselves metonymic with respect to the relations between their elements. This creates a huge number of potential interpretations, but also facilitates the reduction of this potential based on the relationships between classes, as seen in the example of choosing a date for a hospital appointment. However, just as the process of analogical transfer involves the close interplay of both metaphor and metonymy, so does the structure of correlative categories. The metonymic structure of a given trigram or hexagram class can be mapped metaphorically onto another category; that is, the structural properties of additional classes are predictable via analogical transfer in the same way that unknown situations are predictable from the structural properties of known phenomenal types. Moreover, in another domain of reflective representations, that of cosmogony, compatibility is achievable by exactly the same operations, allowing the identification of *Yi Jing* cosmogony with that of physics. The evidence thus suggests that analogical transfer is a pervasive feature of classification in reflective thought.

2) The coherence of categories in 'correlative thought'

This question is closely related to the first. I have shown that taxonomic classes cohere based on metonymic – that is, causal – relations. However, this in itself does not fully address the question, which requires also accounting for representations of the totality of the cosmos – systematic reflective ontologies. As such, insofar as it relates to the classic Sinological question of 'correlative thought', the issue is one of the scale being considered. On the most abstract level (or if you prefer, the most fundamental), that of ontology, coherence is a function of cosmogony. In Eight Trigrams cosmology and in certain early Chinese cosmological accounts, what lends ultimate coherence to the broadest class, that of the cosmos itself, is unity of substance and singularity of origin. On lower levels of abstraction, my ethnographic material demonstrates that resemblances between entities and phenomena are considered diagnostic of genuine commonality, a corollary of which is that groupings based on trigrams, hexagrams, and Phases of *qi* constitute natural categories, the coherence of which is a function of common cosmic principles or *qi* configurations. This is also an implication of early monist accounts of cosmology. The apparent problem arises from the fact that the same entity, such as a horse, can be categorised differently in different situations (in relation to different phenomena), which has led some Sinologists, such as Ziporyn (2012), to argue that in effect correlative classes are functions of perspective (and thus quite different from 'Western' classifications based on essential characteristics). My ethnographic material suggests that this is not entirely the case, and the textual evidence from the *Yi Jing* also supports my conclusions. It is true that correlative categories are relational, but it is also the case that the principles by which they cohere are fractal (this is precisely the basis on which Six Lines Prediction operates). Thus it is not so much that a horse manifests a particular characteristic in relation to a given set of phenomena, but rather that in relation to certain phenomena particular intrinsic characteristics of it are more or less relevant. This, incidentally, does not contradict the notion that the cosmic principles involved are continuously transforming.

Scale is also important in a different sense, which I explored in detail in relation to classic Sinological examples of 'correlative thought'. As well as being an attribute of the phenomena compared, scale is an attribute of the scope and purpose of comparison. I have shown with reference to those examples how contrastive and prototypic classifications are inevitably both involved in a given taxonomy. Thus it is entirely possible to emphasise continuity on a given scale for the purpose of describing natural kinds but simultaneously create classifications

based on non-natural categories for other purposes, such as emphasising contrasts. This is why taking stock of cosmogony is fundamental in determining a given taxonomy's ontological assumptions.

3) The relationship of moral and ethical judgements to cosmological theories

An important characteristic of Eight Trigrams Prediction is that it provides a purely explanatory account of a situation in terms of cosmic principles. No moral imperative is imparted by the content of a prediction itself. Rather, it presents as objective information the notion that certain outcomes may be achieved by promoting certain cosmic configurations. It does therefore allow for the manipulation of cosmic principles to moral ends, such as dealing with family problems, but such purposes are confined to the individual concerned. The cosmos itself is not considered moral, and prevalent moral values, such as those governing gender relationships, are justified in terms of harmony with optimal cosmic configurations; whilst the cosmic principles underlying the relationship between man and woman are Homologues of those underlying the relationship between Heaven and Earth, the *ethical* character of the relationship is a result of individual human judgements. Thus, moral values are only Analogically related to cosmic principles; they are not directly derivable from them in the way that predictions are. Moreover, the capacity for morality itself is considered a product of cosmic principles, as all human affective states are explicable in terms of *qi*. The cosmos itself can thus only be considered moral insofar as beings that occupy the cosmological position of 'Humanity' (*ren*) have moral capacity.

The same is true of ethical concerns surrounding the practice of prediction as they pertain to individual cases. In fact, in that context cosmological rationalisation plays a subsidiary role to rationalisation in terms of 'benevolence', which makes sense in light of cognitive psychological studies of the post-hoc justification of moral judgements. However, when speaking in general terms about different systems of knowledge, cosmology does become the focus. It is not that ethical judgements are rationalised based on cosmic principles, but rather that a moral value is accorded to accuracy and explanatory power. Thus, ethical judgements concerning religion, for example, are predicated on its falsehood, a necessary condition of its capacity to 'delude'.

4) How Eight Trigrams cosmology is justified in relation to other accounts of the cosmos

As the ethnographic material has shown, this is closely tied to the question of morality and ethics in terms of the content of representations, and to the role of analogical transfer in

establishing common ground with physics. As regards representations, continuing from the preceding discussion we can say that a crucial aspect of Eight Trigrams Prediction's justification is its presentation as an accurate account of the cosmos. In fact, this informs all other aspects of its justification, given that accurate cosmology is the primary concern of cosmologists. As such, concern with accuracy as much as with social legitimacy motivates the description of Eight Trigrams Prediction as 'scientific'; it likewise follows that methods lacking the rigour of this practice are described as 'superstition', and that deviation from the purpose of accurate description, whether by unethical Eight Trigrams predictors or by religious specialists, is described as 'swindling' or 'deluding' people. It also follows that 'benevolence' as a virtue shared with doctors and Confucian sages is a function of accurate description, mitigated only when necessary to avoid causing harm. Likewise, the practical utility of Eight Trigrams cosmology depends on its accuracy and explanatory capacity, and for this reason understanding is valued over rote learning.

Eight Trigrams Prediction in Comparative Perspective

This thesis has made three principle arguments concerning the character of divination and prediction. The first is that (at least) two modes can be distinguished, one of which I have called 'predictive', including Eight Trigrams Prediction and overlapping considerably with predictive practices generally *not* considered divinatory. The other is 'metic', after the usage Willis and Curry (2004) make of the Greek term *metis*, or cunning intelligence, which embraces ambiguity and, in the context of divination, the purpose of which is not arrival at truth but 'to allow contingency to take a form relevant to the exigencies of that moment' (Curry 2004b: 106). As shown in Chapter Two, Eight Trigrams Prediction is a quite different enterprise based on the reduction of meaning to arrive at specific conclusions. The second argument has been that the represented purpose of a given divination system is contingent on the reflective ontological and cosmological assumptions of its practitioners, a point explored in Chapters Five and Six. The third has been that in Eight Trigrams Prediction, prediction amounts to the cosmic classification of a given set of circumstances and, as such, the presumption of a fixed causal framework revealed by the terms of prediction. This may be true of all forms of predictive divination, but presumably is not true of the metic mode (though this does of course involve causal judgements). This argument is made largely in support of the predictive character of Eight Trigrams Prediction, the cosmological assumptions which accompany it, and the

cognitive mechanisms by which the predictor proceeds; it is thus the first two arguments which are of greater relevance to the comparative anthropology of divination.

I have referred to Eight Trigrams Prediction as *prediction*, not divination, as it is in fact quite unlike many other ethnographically documented cases, including certain forms of Chinese divination, for seven reasons which alone may be less significant but taken together deserve consideration. I suggest these constitute criteria by which all divination systems can be compared. All of these assume the perspective of the predictor rather than the client. First, there are **no gods, spirits, or ancestors** involved in Eight Trigrams Prediction (Ahern (1981: 45) and Homola (2013: 125) distinguish between Chinese divination systems which involve communication with other beings and those which do not). Second, *from the perspective of the predictor*, the questions answered by Eight Trigrams Prediction concern **what will happen rather than what should be done**, unlike divination as conceived by Curry (2004a: 57–58). Third, **it purports to explain how events occur**, and as discussed in Chapter Three, its practitioners deny its ability to account for the numinous exigencies of ‘why’ in the manner Evans-Pritchard (1976) famously attributed to Zande conceptions of witchcraft as revealed by oracles. Fourth, diagnosis and prediction proceed according to **a progressive reduction of interpretive possibilities** to create increasingly specific answers, like the Kalanga divination discussed by Werbner (1973), but the inverse of the widening scope of interpretation identified in Cuban Ifá divination by Holbraad (2012a: 191). Fifth, this reduction nonetheless relies on a **staggeringly complex cosmological system** which, as Stafford has remarked concerning cognate systems (2009), renders repeated occurrence of a specific prediction phenomenally unlikely, even in the experience of the predictor. This complexity is such that contradictory information, if there is any, is near-impossible to spot, unlike in ‘mechanical’ divination systems (i.e. those in which results are determined by mechanical processes rather than spiritual communication) based on yes-no answers such as the Mambila spider divination discussed by Zeitlyn (1990).

The remaining two reasons deserve a little further clarification in relation to established theoretical positions in the literature. The sixth is that **fallibility is an explicit aspect** of Eight Trigrams Prediction, particularly Six Lines Prediction, a corollary of its **representational character**. Incorrect predictions are a theoretical possibility of any kind of ‘mechanical’ divination (Zeitlyn 1990: 659), and practitioners typically ascribe Eight Trigrams Prediction an accuracy rate of around 70% owing to human error, being suspicious of claims of 100% accuracy; Eight Trigrams Prediction thus does not produce ‘truth beyond doubt’ as described

by Holbraad (2012a, 2012b) for Ifá divination in Cuba. Holbraad (2012a) centres his analysis of Cuban Ifá divination on the concept of 'truth', arguing that the indubitable character of divinatory pronouncements renders them non-representational and thus rests on a conception of 'truth' quite other to that to which we are accustomed in the West. Critiquing the accounts of Evans-Pritchard (1976) and Boyer (1994), he argues that rather than divinatory truth being 'a function of the meaning that diviners and their clients ascribe to their oracles' pronouncements', divination denies this, the point of an oracle being that what it pronounces is true by definition (2012a: 70). To doubt a given divination is not to doubt its truth but to doubt its 'divinatory character' (2012a: 71). But Eight Trigrams Predictions are not considered infallible by the predictors – some predictions are considered better, or more accurate, than others. Moreover, whilst the predictors subscribe to the cosmological underpinnings of the predictive system, the truth of *predictions* is derived not from the act of prediction but from assumed cosmological principles. It is on this kind of recourse to consistency with other beliefs that Holbraad (2012a: 67–69) criticises Evans-Pritchard's approach to Zande divination, on the basis that it allows alternative explanations of the divinatory verdict to be presented. Yet this is precisely what happens in the environment in which Eight Trigrams Prediction is practised. Chapter Four showed how predictors deal with alternative explanations in order to defend and justify their practices. Holbraad acknowledges that such is also the case in Cuba, but counters that divinatory verdicts present themselves to practitioners as indubitable (2012a: 69–69). Whilst Eight Trigrams predictors may consider predictions to be more or less accurate based on human error in interpretation, it nonetheless remains true in such cases that the hexagrams derived accurately reflect the state of the cosmos. However, under certain circumstances the hexagram itself will be inaccurate – that is, not only the predictor but also the oracle may be fallible (see Swancutt 2006: 331–332 on error in Mongolian divination). This fallibility, it is true, is attributed to lack of belief or insincerity on the part of the client – but this is rationalised in terms of the cosmic interference created by that insincerity, meaning that in such instances the 'oracle' *does not accurately reflect cosmic conditions*. Holbraad defines 'oracular truth' as follows: 'to doubt oracular truth is to doubt whether it is oracular' (2012a: 69). By this definition, Eight Trigrams Prediction is not oracular - it is not divination.

It may also be added that the 'truth' of Eight Trigrams Predictions is absolutely representational – the hexagram and its correlates describe the configuration of the cosmos at a particular spatiotemporal point, and this epistemological position is explicit both in the

discourse of practitioners and in the *Yi Jing* itself. It is also justified in terms of the accordance of predictions with lived experience and the fact that it is derived from observations of natural patterns and processes. *Contra* Holbraad (2012a: 74), in Eight Trigrams Prediction ‘truth is conceived as a relationship between a representation [the hexagram and its correlates] and a fact [the actual state of the cosmos]’ – and so predictors make no claim to indubitability. Eight Trigrams Prediction is thus representational in the sense used by Swancutt (2006), ‘representational divination’ being based on referring possibilities to existing conceptual classifications. However, the reductive aspect of Eight Trigrams Prediction already mentioned more closely resembles what she calls ‘conjectural divination’, in which definite answers are derived via successive stages of analysis. Indeed, Swancutt remarks that the two strategies are often combined; in Chapter Two I made the related argument that in the practice of Six Lines Prediction, the gathering of more and more information is itself what allows for the reduction of interpretive potential and arrival at a highly specific conclusion.

Finally, the seventh reason is the **absence of random chance**. Whilst Six Lines Prediction involves the throwing of coins, and thus an apparently random element, other forms of Eight Trigrams Prediction do not require this and can be conducted based on the date and time or other observed phenomena. Moreover, the apparent randomness of the coins’ falling is *not considered random*, but a reflection of the state of the cosmos at a given moment – at exactly the same spatiotemporal point, they could not have fallen otherwise³². However, as Swancutt (2006: 332) argues against the accounts of Turner (1975b) and Park (1967), divination ‘is not a matter of chance’, as participants frequently take steps to modify the results. About this two things may be said concerning Eight Trigrams Prediction. The first is that once derived, a hexagram has a fixed set of correlates which are, as it were, non-negotiable. The second concerns distinguishing between what *appears* random and what is *considered* random in terms of broader cosmological beliefs. Swancutt’s arguments concern whether or not the actions of participants influence the chance of a given outcome – participants may nonetheless be unaware of this influence. This is quite a different question from that of whether the appearance of clay beads (Turner 1975b), the spread of cards (Swancutt 2006), or the fall of coins is *considered* to be a product of chance by the participants. In fact, the case of Eight

³² Ahern (1981: 57) argues that *Yi Jing* divination does involve randomisation, but does not go into detail regarding specific methods. Whilst she also briefly suggests that the form of *Yi Jing* divination may derive from earlier forms based on divine communication, following the canonisation of the *Yi Jing* in the second century B.C. and its integration into a broader cosmological system the form of divination based upon it changed considerably, as was discussed in Chapter Six.

Trigrams Prediction, and especially Six Lines, is distinct because of the combination of a means of hexagram derivation which is extremely difficult to manipulate (throwing coins or the date, for example) and the fact that the correlates of a hexagram are fixed. Thus, unlike the examples cited by Swancutt (2006), participants can effectively do nothing to influence the framework from which predictions are derived. What they *can* do is select particular correlates to emphasise, but each correlate is fixed in terms of what conclusions may be drawn from it, as was shown in Chapter Two.

Taken together, these seven aspects of Eight Trigrams Prediction make it more akin to practices such as meteorology – a comparison which practitioners draw themselves – than to many of the other divination systems so far mentioned. Fundamentally, Eight Trigrams Prediction constitutes a method of diagnosis and prediction of circumstances based on effective knowledge of constant, universal laws governing the cosmos. I turn now to the theoretical contributions of this thesis as they relate to issues of scale and purpose in ontology, correlative thought, and metaphor and metonymy.

Theoretical Contributions: Scale and Purpose

The findings of this thesis, both ethnographic and textual, can be summarised theoretically as relating to *scale* and *purpose*, both in terms of anthropological (or Sinological, or cognitive) analysis and in terms of the reflective beliefs studied. In arriving at these conclusions, this thesis has demonstrated the value of cross-disciplinary engagement to the study of cosmological beliefs and the processes of reasoning involved, not only between anthropological and Sinological approaches on the one hand and cognitive science on the other, but also between ethnographic and textual sources.

I have shown that, contrary to the arguments of Abramson and Holbraad (2014), taking account of human cognition in the study of cosmological representations need not be a reductive exercise. Providing, following Boyer (2010), we allow that ethnographic and textual research yields information about reflective beliefs, and bearing this constraint in mind do not overstate the influence of these beliefs on intuitive beliefs, then a rich account of such beliefs and how they are supposed by cosmologists to relate to the world and impact domains as diverse as ontology, epistemology, ethics, and prediction, is entirely compatible with, and not at all diminished by, an account of the cognitive processes involved. This does, however, require acknowledging the limits of what can be learnt from both sides. It will be clear that the

analysis I have presented does not make any claims regarding the relationship between cognitive processes and the specific content of representations; it has simply described how such processes are involved in the mental manipulation of such content (at best, appropriately enough, some analogy exists between the two)³³. At the same time, conclusions drawn based on explicit representational content are limited to the domain of reflective beliefs; they pertain to how subjects consider their behaviour rather than to the actual cognitive dynamics of that behaviour. Whilst the cosmological theories of individuals such as Master Tao and Ma Jianglong are comprehensive accounts, it would be misleading to suppose that all their actions adhere to the principles they advocate, particularly beyond the domain of cosmological exegesis and practice.

In light of these limitations, my argument has built on existing anthropological approaches to ontology, most notably that of Descola (2013), which similarly attempts to combine cognitive and more traditional social anthropological approaches. In engaging with his work and critiques it has generated (Feuchtwang 2014b; Scott 2014), considering my own ethnographic material and in light of questions of reflective and intuitive beliefs (Boyer 1998, 2010; Boyer & Barrett 2015; Sperber 1997), two theoretical conclusions can be drawn relating to scale and purpose, in addition to the proviso mentioned in the previous paragraph. The first of these is the need to account for the different levels of expertise and cosmological concern among individuals. Hence, whilst individuals such as Cancan clearly engage in practices and make comments concerning matters which can be considered cosmological, on this basis alone it cannot be concluded that they devote considerable time to the rationalisation and development of these ideas into unitary, coherent conceptions of cosmos. The second is that, as a corollary of differential expertise and concern between individuals, a distinction between reflective and intuitive ontology inspired by Boyer's (1998) and Boyer and Barrett's (2015) work on the latter is itself insufficient. As such, within the domain of reflective beliefs a distinction must be drawn between ontological assumptions *implied* by cosmological practice and *explicit* or *systematic* ontological propositions.

Accordingly, this thesis has generated two theoretical contributions of value to subsequent anthropological investigations of ontology. The first of these is a threefold analytical distinction between intuitive ontology, implicit reflective ontology, and systematic reflective ontology. Whilst the two scales of reflective ontology are related, it should be borne in mind that the

³³ Whether, and how, cognition and the content of representations determine one another is a pressing question which extends far beyond the scope of a single thesis.

presentation of implicit reflective ontologies as coherent systems, in the manner of Descola (2013) and as criticised by Boyer (1994: 49–52), though neither identify them as such, is an analytical construction of the ontological conditions of possibility for practices and utterances to be coherent; the existence of an ‘integrating schema’ (Descola 2013: 104) *cannot* be assumed based on such evidence. The second contribution in this regard constitutes a modification to Descola’s fourfold typology of ‘modes of identification’, which can be applied to both forms of reflective ontology. This modification consists of the replacement of Totemism with Homologism, the logical counterpart to Analogism based on ontological (cosmos-level) continuity of physicalities and interiorities. Totemism is revealed to be a subset of Analogism, again based on scale of abstraction. The elaboration of Homologism in Chapters Five and Six further demonstrated the necessity of separating implicit and systematic reflective ontologies, given that on the level of the former, the same practices could plausibly be identified as Analogist or Homologist in spite of the fundamental differences that exist between their systematic reflective equivalents.

At the level of systematic reflective ontology, accounting for conceptions of cosmogony is crucial, and has formed an important part of my critical engagement with both Descola and Puett’s (2004) take on early Chinese cosmology. Once again, the issue is scale, the role played by discontinuity, in Puett’s case between humanity and the divine, being contingent on the scope of the account under scrutiny. This extends to a general need to account for scale and purpose in Sinological discussions of ‘correlative thinking’, which I have shown to be divisible into at least three types (non-cosmological correlative taxonomies, Homological correlative cosmologies, and Analogical correlative cosmologies) based on whether the schema concerned is intended as taxonomic (like the ‘Hong Fan’) or cosmological (like the *Lüshi Chunqiu*), and whether, if cosmological, contrastive classes constitute discontinuous ontological (that is, cosmos-level) types. Taken together, these conclusions concerning the importance of scale and purpose in the study of cosmology and ontology point once more to the necessity of considering the individual as the primary focus of study; consider the differences between Cancan’s and Ma Jianglong’s accounts of *fengshui* fish tanks. The exact nature of cosmological representations, particularly those which can be described as systematic reflective ontologies, is a direct function of a given subject’s level of expertise and purpose – the scale of his or her enquiry – which in aggregate with the representations of other individuals gives rise to a ‘proliferation of ontologies’ (Lloyd 2014: 59). The inescapable implication of this is that the

anthropological and historical study of cosmology amounts to the study of the synchronic and diachronic distribution of cosmological representations across individuals – precisely the epidemiological approach to culture advocated by Sperber (1996).

Scale and purpose are also crucial considerations in the study of the mechanisms by which representations are manipulated. As Jakobson (1956) argued, and as has been amply demonstrated by the work of Durham and Fernandez (Durham & Fernandez 1991; Fernandez 1986b, 1986c), metaphor and metonymy are inherently interrelated, and the salience of one or the other is itself a function of scale (Fernandez 1986c: 54–55). This thesis has demonstrated that the same is true of the conventional persuasive and scientific predicative analogies based on which Tambiah (1985) distinguished between magic and science, and is also true of the distinction between contrastive and prototypic classifications, a fact recognised by Descola (2013: 240) but which does not lead him to acknowledge its implications for Totemism as a mode of identification. The same is true also, as I have shown, of Analogy and Homology, which may be mobilised alternately for different purposes at different scales, whether cosmological or simply taxonomic, again necessitating the distinctions between two forms of reflective ontology and three types of ‘correlative thought’. It is thus insufficient to simply claim one part of the dyad as salient – its salience must be specified according to scale and purpose. All of these pairs represent variations – again, of scale and purpose – on an underlying concern with the means by which similarities are identified and related, returning us once more to the pervasiveness of analogical (with a small ‘a’) reasoning in cosmological practice and representation. I turn now to the limitations of the present study and scope for future research.

Limitations and Prospects for Future Research

Any research project is inevitably constrained by time, resources, and scope. Obvious empirical limitations of this study include the relatively low number of informants involved and, given time constraints, the number of textual sources which were consulted. Further work could expand in both directions, comparing the cosmological ideas of a larger number of contemporary predictors across a wider range of fieldsites, and investigating the role of analogy not only in the *Yi Jing* itself but within the exegetical tradition, including in works of importance to the development of Eight Trigrams Prediction. The contingencies of fieldwork inevitably mean also that the relevance of ethnographic material often becomes clear only in retrospect, and key informants, like Ma Jianglong, may not be met until relatively late. Both

factors were mitigated by my return visit to Hangzhou in 2015, a significant advantage of concentrating on the content of cosmological representations being that data is elicited primarily through explicit discussion rather than practice.

In addition to empirical limitations, it is of course inevitable that not every area of theoretical relevance can be addressed. An obvious area which has not been addressed is the act of reading and learning from cosmological texts, and, in broader terms, the role played by literacy and the command of textual knowledge traditions in the formation and development of cosmological ideas. A related limitation concerns the ethnographic focus on the act of prediction and exegetical discussion, to the inevitable detriment of focus on the wider social context of prediction and the lives of predictors. As such, particularly concerning predictive reasoning, I have been largely unable to specify and account for the impact of predictors' knowledge gained in other settings (consider, for example, what role Master Tao's own experience with medicine may have played in his recommendations to me discussed in Chapter Two). Finally, an important question, but one which extends far beyond the scope of this research, is that put by Sperber (1996) of why certain representations are attractive, and thus likely to spread. This, of course, has direct relevance to the diachronic questions of cosmological change explored in Chapter Six, and whilst I could speculate that the complexity, completeness, and apparent coherence of Eight Trigrams cosmology lend it a particular capacity for analogical transfer and explanation, such speculation could be only tentative, and would not follow directly from the evidence I have presented.

What these limitations have done, however, is provide this research with a particular focus, the better to explore in detail the topics studied. A strong ethnographic focus on the act of prediction from the perspective of the predictor has yielded a detailed understanding of the processes of analogical transfer, reduction of interpretive potential, and cosmological classification involved, so thorough an investigation of which would not have been possible if the study intended also to address broader social concerns. The same may be said also concerning the focus on explicit cosmological theorising. This has allowed definite conclusions to be drawn concerning systematic reflective ontology, epistemological attitudes, and so on, which otherwise could only be inferred from practice, avoiding attendant methodological problems regarding implicit reflective ontology and the 'upward reduction' of individual behaviour to a function of a broader social processes. Similarly, the study has yielded very detailed accounts of individuals' ideas, illuminating the similarities and differences between

people engaged in similar pursuits; the same may be said of the *Yi Jing*. Drawing on both ethnographic and textual sources has also helped illuminate the continuities between text and practice, and the reflective nature of textualised cosmological ideas allows them to be compared with systematic reflective ontologies of living individuals. The same might be said of the theoretical limitations. Focus on the role of text and literacy is necessarily at the expense of the content of those texts, and serious consideration of what it is about certain cosmological representations that render them more likely to spread would have resulted in an entirely different project which would have struggled to address the topics which have been dealt with.

This brings us to the question of future research directions; the findings of this research of course suggest many new avenues of further enquiry, including those addressing some of the theoretical concerns just mentioned, but I confine the following to four salient possibilities. The first among these concerns the role of analogical reasoning in prediction, and would go some way to ameliorating concern with sample size. The meticulous observation of analogy formation and reasoning 'in the field', as opposed to in laboratory experiments, has been pioneered in the psychology of science by Dunbar (2001). There is no reason that the investigation of this topic could not proceed similarly in the context of Eight Trigrams Prediction, or the study of divination more generally. Such a study would be able to combine ethnographic sensitivity with the statistical rigour of coded psychological observation of larger numbers of practitioners, strengthening the body of cognitive evidence concerning analogical reasoning in prediction.

Secondly, the hypothesis put forward in Chapter Six deserves considerable further investigation. Given the vital importance of accounting for individual variation, scale, and purpose, the question of aggregate changes in systematic reflective ontology from Analogism to Homologism in Warring States and Han China could proceed in three dimensions. Firstly, individual works, themselves the work of individuals or groups, could be analysed in light of the criteria proposed, paying particular attention to the role of cosmology and the scope of classifications and, if relevant, the perceived function of divination. Secondly, cosmological works could be grouped according to such criteria and, where possible, according to known influences of certain individuals or works on others, in order to produce a diachronic account of individual cosmological variation. Thirdly, and more ambitiously, such a programme could be extended to the comparative analysis of historical change in cosmological assumptions. Combined with sensitivity to broader historical circumstances, such a programme could begin

to shed light on why certain ideas, such as unitary cosmic *qi*, not only took hold in the first place but remained salient.

Thirdly, the clear link this study has demonstrated between cosmological theory and the perceived purpose of divination deserves further comparative investigation. Studies of divination frequently present typologies – and this thesis has been no different. However, it remains to be seen whether in comparative perspective types of divination are necessarily associated with particular cosmological ideas. Does predictive divination always require the assumption of a legislative cosmos (*sensu* Valeri 2014), for example? A secondary question is that of the nature of any such link. Does explicit cosmology result in the development of certain theories of divination, as suggested by the Eight Trigrams material, or are cosmological justifications for divination retrospectively applied? How does this relate to the role of cosmological experts, and are diviners necessarily members of such a category?

Finally, this thesis has repeatedly drawn comparisons between Eight Trigrams Prediction and science, analytically as well as in the presentation of emic perceptions. This deserves particular attention, particularly in terms of the comparative validity of Homologism as an analytical category. Future research could engage in extensive comparison of the structural features of scientific systematic reflective ontologies with those of Eight Trigrams Prediction and other systems which similarly suppose cosmic unity.

Closing Remarks

This thesis has demonstrated that analogical reasoning is a pervasive feature of classification in Eight Trigrams Prediction, and established that resemblances between phenomena are the key focus of its epistemology and ontology. By focusing in detail on the cosmological representations of a number of cosmologists alongside the cognitive mechanisms involved in their manipulation, I have demonstrated the central importance of accounting for scale, purpose, and individual variation in the anthropological study of cosmology and ontology, or, as Barth (1995) put it, of ‘getting our ontology right’. In doing so, I have addressed the research questions and foci presented in the Introduction and suggested avenues for taking this research forward. The problems of similarity and difference which concern Eight Trigrams cosmologists are not so different from those that concern the explanatory-minded anthropologist of cosmology. How can variation be reconciled with unity in a way that accurately accounts for reality? For them, this involves coherence between the universal and

the particular across scales, in which constant principles govern continuous transformation. For us, it involves an acceptance of common cognitive processes in the minds of individuals generating a diversity of cosmological representations mobilised at different scales of abstraction, but ultimately of common origin. We both, it can thus be said, dwell in a homological cosmos.

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