3 Accounts of social space in traditional Chinese thought

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I have firstly elucidated the epistemic frameworks which underwrite the absolute, relative, and relational conceptualizations of space in the European philosophical field, showing how they make distinct spatial analysis and explanation possible and deemed valid. I have then shown how they are transposed into the social domain, laying the partial groundwork for three types of relational social-spatial conceptualizations, granting them unique analytical purchases. I have concluded on the methodological implications of employing each of the spatial notions. In this chapter, my intended subject matter is 'social space' conceived in traditional Chinese thought. Ideally, it would be most convincing to analyze the representative 'conceptual equivalents' and the epistemic genealogy of such spatial concepts in the Chinese scientific realm in the same way as I did in the last chapter. However, as indicated earlier, it is impossible to identify conceptual counterparts for the absolute space, relative space, and relational space from traditional Chinese philosophical and scientific discourses. The examinations (section 3.3 and 3.4), thus, could only be carried out on various fundamental epistemic 'building blocks' and 'causal agents' concerning the social space constitution. The building blocks and causal agents were made explicit in the previous chapter: the social-being, the natural-being and the forms of their interrelations.

    This chapter's concrete subject matter is not the conceptualization of 'social space,' but the epistemic building blocks and causal agents of (relational) social space – the constellation of epistemic forms and principles that allow thinkers to attend to and express the meaning of social space. The ways in which their attributes are conceived and the attributed epistemic rules could shed light on the possible conceptual account of relationality in traditional Chinese thinking. In 3.5, I arrive at various *claims* regarding the accounts of social space in traditional Chinese thought, which may be seen as potential, complementary conceptual tools for understanding common spatial phenomena occurring in contemporary urban China.

3.2   The scope of Chinese literature and abductive reconstruction

Before commencing the analysis, it is worth explaining what I mean by 'Chinese thought' and what I have chosen to derive the building blocks that constitute 'the Chinese' spatial imaginaries, experiences and conceptions. I am aware that there is a great danger of being called an essentialist when using terms like 'the Chinese,' 'the European' or 'the Western' tradition. By employing these notions, I do not mean that specific ideas or ways of thinking grow solely out of national heredity without exchanges with the other, nor do I see China or Europe as a bounded territory for homogenous culture. Despite the danger, I find it necessary to explain the *differentiations* deployed by particular subjects in today's globalized and post-plural world at a given time and place. I often hear comments like "the Europeans are on strike again" either on the Chinese media or from my Chinese friends in everyday life. It is not very likely that 'the European' in these comments refers concretely to European nations' overall population. Instead, it stresses the differences perceived by the knowing subject in relation to what they know at 'home.' Depending on the context and the kind of differentiation one aims to make, 'the European' might represent anyone 'non-Asian,' 'non-Chinese,' or simply 'not me.' It is a practice of *Auseinandersetzung*, which sets the ideas and ways of thinking in relation (from my standing point). This perceived relation manifests as a sense of *difference and distance* between the 'other' and 'me.' Therefore, I use these notions in a relative than substantive sense to address the Sino-European differences in thinking of space relationally from my point of view.

To justify which literature and discourses I deem as Chinese, I shall clarify my own positionality a bit further. To start with, I do not equate Chinese literature with that written by scholars living in China or with Chinese nationality. As I will show in Chapter 4, now more than ever, scholars practicing in Chinese academia are situated in knowledge discontinuities, unpredictable epistemologies, and plural conceptualizations. Considering particularly, since the May Fourth Movement in1919, generations of Chinese thinkers have advocated for wholesale westernization regarding social-political ideas and technology. Thus, much quasi-sociological knowledge is not generated from examining the particular subjects nor from critically reconstructing classic Chinese philosophical threads. In this context, to me, Chinese literature shall be the ones addressing social-spatial phenomena situated primarily in a *Chinese discursive world*. At stake is the epistemic than normative attributes (such as the nationality of examined social actor, the locale), for the following reasons. Firstly, language is the primary carrier and transmitter of meaning, especially the culturally rooted ones. Secondly, discourse encompassed epistemic entities, stabilized by specific institutional-organizational contexts. Thirdly, practices, material bodies can be highly trans-local and mobile in our time. Their mean-

ing can be interpreted differently depending on the epistemic framework hold by the interpreter.

Then, the epistemic tools and approaches deployed in Chinese literature should not be directly adapted from western epistemic frames nor purely deductive. In that case, most likely, studies reproduce given epistemic presuppositions rather than uncover situated knowledge. Negative examples include literature such as *Capitalism Without Democracy* (Tsai 2007), *Neoliberalism with Chinese Characteristics* (Harvey 2005). These studies engage with epistemic frames as universally valid while ascribing the incompatibility between theoretical predictions and the observational terms acquired from immediate experience to the Chinese exceptionalism (discussion on this point, see, e.g., Fukuyama 1997). I refer to anthropological studies *grounded* in Chinese epistemic context to be Chinese literature, i.e., those that derive their theoretical claims inductively from situated narratives and social-spatial practices. Such examples include *From the Soil* (Fei 1992 [1947]), *A History of Chinese Civilization* (Gernet 2008 [1982]), *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Lewis 2006), *The Cultural Gene of Ancient Chinese Space* (Zhang 2012). I consider the knowledge produced by these authors to be quintessential Chinese. For me, at stake for being taken as Chinese literatures, are their admission of data and frames of meaning from the local context, openness to revise presupposed epistemic forms and rules. The 'Chinese' here is irrelevant to an authors' nationality and institutional affiliations.

Furthermore, although some works have intricately integrated or belong to so-called Chinese classics – such as ancient philosophical cosmology – I reckon only those that register a connectedness on the level of meaning, to discourse and practices entailed in a social-spatial phenomenon under study. I find *relevancy* to be core in defining Chinese thoughts. From the 1990s onwards, along with the rise of the Chinese state as an economic and political player in the global arena, more and more contemporary scholars have started picking up and advancing their knowledge production from traditional Chinese thinking, especially from that embedded in Confucianism tradition[1] (see, e.g., Yan et al. 2013; Fan and Yu 2011; Jiang 2018). Yet, it does not mean that all Confucian norms are once again relevant to construct Chinese people's everyday experiences. Instead, this trend is largely propelled by the sensible strikingly change in the social life in China and many East Asian countries. Scholars resort to Confucianism to account for the particular version of modernity observed (see Bell 2010; Du 1997). These practices are undoubtedly driven by the state-building aspirations imposed by the political authorities.

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[1]   One illustration could be, "Learning to be Human", an important topic in Confucian philosophy, is deployed as the theme for the 24th World Congress of Philosophy, held in Beijing in 2018.

The socialist core values designated by Xi Jinping echo with the core moral values prescribed in Confucianism. Intellectual practices funded by state money are inevitably instrumentalized for constructing a new state ideology espousing political sovereignty and social coherence. In this context, the Confucianism classics are relevant in explaining the rationale under the state-building project and the professional practice of the involving intellectuals, but not necessarily the everyday experiences from Chinese social actors.

The subject matters, style, and the sheer number of Chinese philosophical texts make epistemic exploration and reconstruction challenging. There is a plethora of philosophical schools that take on very different intellectual stances, metaphysical claims, and topics of focus that are subject to transformations in Chinese history. Therefore, in the discussion that follows, I have carefully selected the theoretical discourse whose frames of meaning are relevant to explain my own experience and observations in my field study. This selection may be partial, biased, but grounded and relatable. To serve the purpose of this chapter – how the epistemic forms (the subject, object, and the forms of their relation) are formulated differently in traditional Chinese thought than in previously discussed European ones – I draw on normative discourses about being from Confucianism and Daoism.

I am aware that such a selection would induce much skepticism. The first one might be, the Confucian and Daoist discourses are known to be difficult to translate into ontological and epistemological terms, then, how can one carry out comparisons? To solve this problem, I resort to many works from comparative philosophers who have well translated the classics into analytical terms. The second question might be, "Chinese philosophy.... is directly or indirectly concerned with government and ethics... All [its branches] are connected with political thought in one way or another", which do not separate the natural from the social world (Fung and Bodde 1997, 7), how can one derive the separate epistemic forms regarding social and natural entities? To put my solution simply, I consciously choose Daoism writing, as it has laid the ground for natural and cosmological views of the world among all the ruling philosophical schools. Confucianism is the humanist school of philosophy, contributing mostly to ideas around the ethical, social, and political order of social reality in traditional Chinese society. Thus, I deem them legitimate to excavate the spatial building blocks concerning social and natural entities. Besides, as both epistemic views are built upon cosmic principles set in the *Book of Changes*, emphasizing humans as an integral part of nature[2] and that substance and activity have the same origin[3], no fundamental epistemic collision exists between the discourses from these two traditions. The third question that might arise is how I can prove these epistemic premises have empirical relevance to studying

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2   Tian Ren He Yi (天人合一).
3   Ti Yong Yi Yuan (体用一源).

contemporary urban China? To navigate that, I would not stop presenting a-temporal differences but develop claims on the accounts of space concealed in traditional Chinese thought. At the end of the discussion, I would employ my account to explain a common social-spatial phenomenon that occurs in contemporary Chinese society. I will also employ these claims in my empirical analysis of the artworld in chapter 5, show thereby their analytical relevance to the empirical phenomenon of our time.

3.3 The social subject, self-hood and self-other relations

3.3.1 Relationality as postulation and priority

As previously indicated, in the European social-science domain, scholars often take the 'individual subject' or the 'homogeneous social group' as the basic unit of study, addressing their rational or rule-abiding agencies. More explicitly, the transition from positivism to hermeneutic traditions has re-associated the individual back with 'sociality' and 'social relations.' Moreover, the symbolic interactionist and constructionist traditions require one not to attribute agency to agnostic individuals but socialized subjects, whose perceptions and practices are deeply embedded in and shaped by socially and materially intertwined domains. These epistemic forms, the *'social subject' and 'subjectivity,' 'social relations,' and 'sociality'* become ineluctably interdependent. As shown in chapter 2, the relational epistemic frameworks differ, not only in how they define these necessary entities and at particular analytical levels, but also (though not always) which attribute is given the causal primacy to explain the change. In this section, I look at the narratives[4] about 'personhood' in Confucian classics and commentaries regarding its postulated attributes about the social subject. I will elucidate how 'social subject' is logically related to other epistemic entities like social relation in explaining social change.

To delve into the definition of 'social subject,' I take *ren* (仁), a polemical concept often translated as 'human-heartedness,' 'benevolence,' and 'authoritative humanity' as my departure point. Scholars generally agree that the concept of *ren* is a central, if not the most fundamental concept regarding the fundamental understanding of human existence in Confucianism (see Tu 1968, 29). The fact that it appears 105 times in 58 out of 499 passages in the book *Analects (Lunyu)* implies both the profundity of its meaning and the difficulty in interpreting it. A coherent

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4   Here I use sayings and concepts rather than definitions, because: 1) ancient Chinese scholars use a metaphorical style of drawing definitions, 2) the Confucian classic is written not in an analytical way, but in ordinary language. It is explained in the form of dialogues between Confucius' explanations and his followers' inquiries in the Analects.

and rigorous definition of *ren* is absent in Analects. The interpretations of *ren* fall primarily under three categories: as an inner virtue of a subject, as outward and extended consciousness, and as a dynamic process of self-cultivation. The three interpretations allude to three different conceptions of 'social subject' or 'subjectivity.' How social subject come about to be 'social' are also divergently conceived. I will briefly compare them and argue why I find the third interpretation most convincing. From there, I would arrive at my claims on the Confucianist conception of the social subject, and how different forms of social relations are derived from subjectivity.

In most contemporary interpretive works, *ren* has been interpreted as a psychological notion – *ren* representing 'human-heartedness,' 'benevolence,' 'love,' 'agape,' 'compassion,' 'magnanimity,' 'perfect virtue,' 'goodness,' etc. – as a kind of virtue or a subjective inner state of mind, feelings and attitudes. Such interpretations are primarily drawn based on the sayings from *Zi Zhang, who asked Confucius about authoritative humanity*. Confucius replied, "a person who is able to promote the five attitudes in the world can be considered *ren*." When Zi Zhang asked what they are, Confucius replied, "Courtesy, tolerance, trustworthiness, diligence, and kindness"[5] (2007 [1983], 17.6). Follow the idea in this narrative, Tu Wei-Ming has developed his interpretation:

> Ren is not primarily a concept of human relations, although they are extremely crucial to it. It is rather a principle of inwardness. By in-wardress, it is meant that ren is not a quality acquired from outside; it is not a product of biological, social or political forces... Hence, ren as an inner morality is not caused by the li (ritual act) from outside. it is a higher-order concept which gives meaning to li. Ren in this sense, is basically linked with the self-receiving, self-perfecting, and self-fulfilling process of an individual. (Tu 1968, 33–34)

Tu's reading of *ren* clearly shows that he favors a substantial-individualistic understanding of subjectivity. For him, *ren* represents the source of virtue feelings in one's psyche, from where the ritual conduct (*li*) arises. It precedes and explains the formation of social values and norms. This subject-predicate interpretation is criticized by many. Fingarette, for one, contends that there is a tendency for scholars from the west to 'psychologize' *ren* as a 'natural move' from the substantial ontology that they are familiar with. To revoke this argument, Fingarette highlights the lack of reference to any inner psyche-related language such as in the original text of the Analects 'will,' 'freedom,' and 'inner states' (2004 [1972], 45).

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5   In Chinese: 子张问仁。孔子曰: 能行五者于天下,为仁矣。请问之。曰: 恭, 宽, 信, 敏, 惠。恭则不侮, 宽则得众,信则人任焉,敏则有功,惠则足以使人。

Instead, Fingarette argues for an 'outer' or a 'normative principle of conduct' reading of *ren*. He conceives *ren* as a particular, individual form of moral practice. He argues, "*li* and *ren* are two aspects of the same thing. *Ren* is the aspect of conduct that directs our attention to the particular person and his behavioral orientation as the actor" (ibid.,14). Fingarette further explains:

> It is not simply abandoning one's own person in assuming the persona of another; rather, it is projecting oneself personally into the circumstances of another, responding to those circumstances as one deems most appropriate. One acts by extending the parameters of one's own person to embrace the defining conditions, perceived attitudes, and the background of the other person in order to effectively become 'two' perspectives grounded in one judgment. Further, this one judgment is continually conditioned and refined by the relationship between it and the changing circumstances with which it is engaged. (ibid., 16)

This perspective draws mainly from the sayings of *Fan Chi asking about ren*. The master replied, "in private life, be courteous; in handling affairs, respectful; in dealings with others, loyal. Even if you go among the *Yi* or *Di* tribes, these rules can never be put aside." (ibid., 13.19). Nevertheless, this behavioral reading of *ren* underscores an implicit claim – in the process of extending oneself into the circumstances of another, one's cultivated principles are retained as a coherent whole. This echoes with the assumptions underpinning Nietzsche's master morality theory, in the sense that *ren* is seen as the superior consciousness that can be extended outwards by the practice of the masters. Whoever has 'slave consciousness' is disproportionately affected by the master's practice and is subordinate to it. The problem of this interpretation lies in its one-directional outward extension, which cannot be better criticized than using Deleuze's arguments, "consciousness is always the consciousness of an inferior *in relation to* the superior to which it is subordinated or 'incorporated.' Consciousness is never self-consciousness, but the consciousness of ego in relation to the self that is not conscious. It is not the master's consciousness, but the slave's consciousness in relation to a master who does not have to be conscious himself" (2006, 39). Following this line of argumentation, the second interpretation equates *ren* as a form of particular normative practice. It fails to explain why 'the inferior actor' has not internalized *ren* in the first place, nor how can such a consciousness-practice be kept intact through transactions in such asymmetrical relations.

The two interpretations above share the idea that there is a virtue aspect in *ren*. They both have difficulties in giving such a love-based and 'un-selfish' virtue proposition a plausible, logical ground from an individualistic point of view. This proposition is logical in Christian tradition because unselfish love (agape) is conceived to originate from God. Taking God's existence and virtual as given, individuals can approximate and express such love in their behaviors simply because they are seen

as the vehicles for God's love. After all, there are *two* figures involved. As there is no God-like transcendental figure presumed in Confucianism, it is only logical to argue for an ontological ground for *ren* from communal living.

The third interpretation of *ren* suggests this virtual consciousness could only be deemed valid when admitting a premise of '*transcendent relationality*.' The arguments begin from an etymological explanation of the sign *ren* (仁). It consists of (人) (*ren*, meaning man[6]) on the left side, and 二 (*er*, meaning 'twoness') on the right side. Considering the virtue connotation on the level of meaning, the third group of scholars (e.g., Boodberg; Hall and Ames) insists that *ren* as the human-virtue state can emerge only from the intended aspect of affect, presuming the co-existence of social beings in subject's perception. Supporting discourse from Confucian classics include: "*ren* is the character of the man, and it is foremost to love family. The moral character of benevolence is inborn, and it is essential to love one's own family" (Zi Si 1980, Chapter 20). This saying has made an explicit inference from a perceived, affect-bound social relation to *ren*, specifically from familial relations to *ren*. Relation within the family is conceived as the necessary social ground from and through which social actors develop and exert *ren*. This is affirmed by Confucius' illustration of the utmost interdependent interactions between an infant and his/her parents – the most emotionally charged human interaction.

So far, we can see that the disputes among various forms of interpretations arise from different postulations regarding human subjectivity, and subsequently, the logical order between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The first interpretive approach attributes a transcendental status to the individual subjectivity as a conscious and moral state, assuming inherent subjectivity to be a social actor's source of knowledge and meaning. From apodictic subjectivity, sensible, representational and normative relations or sociability are conceived to arise. This approach presupposes a knowledge condition close to that of the Newtonian and Kantian synthetic *a priori* discussed in 2.3. The second perspective evades the source of subjectivity and reads *ren* as a normative principle of conduct embodied by individual social subjects, which echoes with the postulations of the social subject in the Marxist dialectic social structure discussed in chapter 2.4. We can now have a quick review of this line of thinking before returning to discuss the third interpretive approach. As stated previously, the mundane knowing subject in the absolute-relative space conceptualization is conceived as an impartial rational observer, however, Newton did not justify the source of such intelligence. Along this line of thinking, Kant has later clearly stated that the 'proper self' is located in the pure and rational will, or the 'noumenal self' of an agent, rather than in one's feelings, natural impulses, or inclinations. In contrast to Confucianism, the Kantian discussion of marriage

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6   According to Nisbett and Peng (1999, 52), there is a lack of comparable vocabulary of "I" in the traditional Chinese, Japanese and Korean thoughts.

and family comes in the form of property relations, contractual and formal. The difference lies in that Kant defines autonomy principally as "the property of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)" (cite in Wood 2007, 106). The subjective autonomy is central in Kant's and many later scholars' ethics, for it is in one's membership in the intelligible world that Kant locates freedom. Therefore, even in his practical philosophy in which he conducts a pragmatic, impure, and empirical study of human behaviors, Kant perceives interpersonal relationships as guided by independent, rational, teleological intentions.

We can identify the premise of a 'subject-predicate principle' also in the later European conceptual paradigms of space. Phenomenologists (upon which Löw's and partly Thrift's relational conceptualizations are grounded) admit that space is not only *pre*-constituted in cognition and senses as an intentional object but also *post*-structured by one's habitus and practical knowledge – one's experience in the lifeworld. Husserl argues that subjectivity, "understood as that which naively pre-gives the being of the world and then rationalizes or objectifies it" (1989, 69). It means, in plainer words, subjectivity should be deemed a transcendental condition for the possibility of objectivity and the world as such. Thus, Husserl's investigation of the lifeworld starts from a straightforward '*first-person perspective*' to a sensible '*shared lifeworld*' and bridging the two with the principle of 'empathy' and 'inter-subjectivity.' The later phenomenologist Heidegger created the new term of being, '*Dasein*' – conflating the subject and object in explaining the mode of human existence. Dasein (being-in-the-world) is still conceived singular. No differentiation is drawn between '*the self*' and '*the other*' in Dasein's lifeworld. Thus, the 'thrown-ness' and the 'projection' of the Dasein's past conditions how Dasein encounters the world of the future. In both lines of thought, the conceptual self and his/her subjectivity are re-embedded in the social condition. The singular subjectivity constitutes and is thereby constituted by the social rules and shared cultural normativity (as a form of collective subjectivity) from a given lifeworld.

Returning to Confucianist discourse, I would argue, Confucius has ascribed the locus of meaning creation to 'relationality' in the family, especially between the father and the son. The primordial epistemic status of normative social relations is made more explicit by some disciples of Confucius. The first person to register relationships as the basis of social order was Dong Zhongshu[7], who coined them as *Three Cardinal Guides or Bonds* (san-gang[8]). Dong believed that the three cardinal bonds are not just constructions of social norms but real in the sense of embodying and actualizing the cosmological principles of *yin* and *yang*. In *the History of the*

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7   Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒) (197– 104 BCE), the great Han dynasty Confucian philosopher and statesman.

8   San-gang (三纲).

Han he wrote: "The lord is *yang*, the retainer is *yin*; the father is *yang*, the son is *yin*; the husband is *yang*, the wife is *yin*. The way of *yin* cannot proceed anywhere on its own[9] [...] The retainer depends on his lord to gain merit; the son depends on his father; the wife on her husband, *yin* on *yang*, and the Earth on Heaven [...] The Three (fundamental Bonds) of the kingly way can be sought in Heaven" (Han Shu, Ch. 53). Later, in *Mencius*, one can find five rather than three social relationships deemed real and primal. Some ethical norms are further attributed to these proto relationships "between father and son; there should be affection; between sovereign and subordinate, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between elder brother and younger, a proper order; and between friends, friendship" (Mencius, 3A.4).

I find these ancient and contemporary Confucian philosophers' emphasis on the dyadic relationality insufficient to ascertain a *relational social ontology* in classic Confucianism. It is not easy to read Confucian discourses analytically, as they were not formulated in analytical terms. Moreover, no immediate equivalent terms such as subjectivity, consciousness, perception, or social structure can be directly identified in the narratives. It can be noted that the aforementioned proto relationalities are composed not in abstract terms, like 'subject and the other,' but in the form of normative categories, i.e., social roles. One can thus only re-read the conversations *abductively* between Confucius and others to shed light on this issue.

I find it worthwhile to elucidate the logical relations between these categories further. In the example of a father-son relationship, it is logical and self-evident that there can be no son without a father. Furthermore, by definition, either father's or son's awareness of their relational self is developed by virtue of perceiving the presence of the other and the normative relation between them. We can also find that such interpersonal relationalities are *legitimated* through drawing analogies to the polarized epistemic terms in classical Chinese cosmologies, i.e., the *yin* and *yang* or heaven and earth. Interestingly, these epistemic pairs are also not conceived as mutually exclusive but rather as constitutive to each other, indicating their mutual dependence. Chang's interesting discussion on the east-west definition could also support my hypothesis of a relational ontology:

> In western logical definition, it is necessary to make the sign of equation between the "definiendum" and the "definiens." For example, "a triangle is a portion of a plane bounded by three straight lines." However, in Chinese thought, the problem

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9   In general, Confucian ideas were shaped for the purpose of consolidating a society that has been ordered by patriarchal principles. In this dissertation, I would certainly not espouse the substances of such patriarchal norms, nor arbitrarily justify its relevancy to the social norms in China of today. The citations are made for the purpose of deriving the possible epistemic forms and rules that may linger in many people's minds today, shaping the way they think and behave.

of the equation between the two is never thought of. For example, 'wife' is denoted as 'a woman who has a husband.' (Chang 1952, 213)

In addition, the discussions on human emotions in Confucianism could also be read as supporting evidence to a hypothesized relational account of subjectivity. The strong association between personhood, a moral and affectionate self, the prioritization of affect as a primary attribute of personhood is made clear in the volume of *Nature Coming Out Of Fate*[10]. It is shown in the narrative "Dao originates from affection (feeling, emotion), and affection comes from nature. The beginning is close to affection, and the end is close to righteousness" (Guodian Chumu Zhujian, n.d.). The epistemic and causal primacy of 'affect' in defining 'personhood' is also justified in the phonetical identicality between *ren* (仁, partly meaning human kindness) and *ren* (人, meaning human) in later Confucian classics such as *Mencius* and the *Zhong Yong (The Doctrine of Mean*[11]). They state explicitly that *ren* (仁) means personhood. To bring focus on the presumed first-order relationality in *ren*, Boodberg argues that "one could employ *ren* as a Latin synonym of "manship" a term such as "homininity" (with "hominine" and "hominate," as corresponding adjective and verb), that is, a derivative from homines, rather than one from the singular homo" to interpret *ren* (Boodberg 1953, 329–30). Among others, Hall and Ames further argue that *ren* reflects a degree of qualitative achievement of *ren* (man), 'two' is attached to the notion of 'human being' which would indicate, such an achievement is attainable only in a communal context through an interpersonal exchange (1987, 116). These arguments constitute the third interpretive approach of *ren*.

By tentatively accepting *ren* as an affective attribute of subjectivity built on a relational ontology, I move on to hypothesize, in the Confucian tradition, *the spatial dimension is prioritized as the structuring principle of experience.* As my analyses in chapter 2 have shown, relationality can be admitted on the epistemological level (like in the Leibnizian), or on the ontological level (like in the hypotheses Confucian frame). I would argue, in these two contexts, time and space are conceived to play different roles in structuring people's life experiences. When one starts from a first-person perspective (as in constructionism) and equips with a relational epistemology, the experience is conceived to arise from the individual's consciousness, in the form of constant creative activity. As discussed briefly before, in line with the logic of identity, *time* is attributed as a subjective and dynamic structure in the idealist (e.g., the Leibnizian) and phenomenological traditions. They both postulate individual temporal consciousness structure subsequent (possible) displacement of bodies from the current (actual) ones. In the former cases, temporality is deemed the primary structure of experience.

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10   Xing Ming Zi Chu (性自命出).
11   Zhongyong (中庸).

Let me elaborate further on this point. In the European context, before the phenomenology tradition, individual consciousness was conceived to be structured by rationality, detached from a social context. The surrounding world is taken as static and passive (the Newtonian absolute and relative space). In the epistemic tradition of phenomenology, a social subject's perceptual experience is conceived to entail a phenomenologically deep micro-structure constituted by time-consciousness (see Miller 1984). Provided with such a structure of temporal-consciousness, the social subject is conceived to experience time as a flow due to the momentary structures of 'retentions,' 'original impressions,' and 'protentions.' Moments are conceived as continuously constituted (and reconstituted) in the form of past, present, and future. When an experiencing subject is conceived to rely on the structure of consciousness (horizon of meaning) as such, his/her experience of the real world is gained incrementally, following a principle of coherence and correspondence, i.e., the same representations are perceived the same *over time*. In this tradition, only time is admitted as a dynamic structure, according to which social subjects' perceptual experience *form*. For a subject, his/her experiences shall reinforce the sense of his/her identity consistently. Thus, time is premised on the dispositional 'higher-order sense' or something akin to the 'constant inner perception' of *the subject*, which cannot be doubted.

The primacy of a temporal structure applies even to Heidegger's conception of *Dasein*, a notion that integrates 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity-to-be-known,' which is conceived as always already being-in-the-world. Dasein's world is primarily conceived as the locus for historical facticity and is hence convened into time. Alfred Schutz made an even more radical claim along this line of thought: "the problem of meaning is a time problem" (1967, 12). However, for Schutz, it is not time that is a "given to consciousness," it is "consciousness that unfolds time" (cite in Muzzetto 2016, 6).

On the other hand, I would claim, space, over time, is taken as a primary structuring force of experience in Confucian thought. Evidence can be found in the discourse illustrating the normative meaning of *xiao* (filial piety). For instance, in Analects 2.8, "the master said: '*xiao*[12] lies in showing the proper countenance, as for the young, contributing their energies when there is work to be done and deferring to their elders when there are wine and food to be had. How can merely doing these things be considered *xiao*?" (cite in Hershock and Ames 2006, 70). *Xiao* (filial piety) is often referred to as a key virtue and the origin of the absolute character of submission in Chinese culture. Here, again, such an intended moral virtue strikes social relations at its core of constitution, over self-sustenance. In Analects 1.11, Confucius stated: "While his father is alive, observe his intentions. After his

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12   Xiao (孝).

father is dead, observe his actions. If after three years he has not changed his father's way of doing things, then you can call him filial." (ibid.) Here, we can notice more explicitly that, a consciousness of social relation (with one's father), even in the imaginary form – without the physical presence of a father, is necessary for actualizing *xiao*.

The other evidence that supports my argument for spatialized social relationality as a primordial structure of consciousness is that, the Confucian proto relationalities are conceived as *asymmetrical.* We can assume that, when social actors are embedded in the three-principal relationship, their social interactions s are most likely to induce 'emotional resonance,' 'simultaneity among the consciousness,' 'expressive movements and acts' and 'the shared context of meaning-sign systems.' In these prototypical social relations, the level of experienced physical intimacy seems to be comparable with Schutz's formulation of a face-to-face scenario. I have noticed, by definition, the father is *different* from the son, the husband *different* from the wife and, and the sovereign *different* from the subordinate. Aside from three or five defined principal bonds, following a directive of asymmetrical relationality, the Chinese never seem to tire of further differentiating roles and norms. As Chang describes below, the Chinese language has excessive categories of consociates, contemporaries, and predecessors, providing ample intentional indexes to anchor one's subject experiences.

> It is interesting to note that the most numerous terms in China come from two realms; the one, kinship, illustrated by *po* (father's elder brother), *shu* (father's younger brother), *fang* (paternal cousin), *piao* and *yi* (other forms of cousins); the other from the realm of ethics, illustrated by *chung* (loyalty), *xiao* (filial piety), *lien* (frugality in taking) and *chien* (frugality in spending). All the fine shadings in Chinese terminology in these two fields may be lumped together in such English terms as brothers, uncles, cousins, frugality. (Chang 1952, 222)

I see the attribute of *asymmetry* as a crucial aspect for clarifying the distinctive inferential orders between subjectivity and sociality in classic Chinese and European thought. Despite 'inter-subjectivity' is introduced as a crucial epistemic form by phenomenologists, elucidated especially by scholars such as Schutz. It is nevertheless conceived as a *derivative* of subjectivity. For example, from a first-person perspective, Husserl conceived intersubjectivity to emerge from 'empathic acts' – when one perceives the other as a subject, rather than a mere body or a material extension. Here, Husserl and later phenomenologists' fundamental premise is that 'the other' appears, behaves, thinks, and feels more or less *like* 'me.' In other words, 'we' are equal. Under this implicit premise, the way in which the 'other' perceive the world is assumed to be *similar to* my own. However, we are positioned differently, thus having different egocentric viewpoints. Regardless I experience the world in the same way as you do by making the analogy with one's own past experiences.

It is exactly upon this epistemic premise of equal/indistinct beings, could the social subject be conceived to attribute intentional acts to others immediately or 'a-presentatively,' i.e., analogous with one's own case, with no necessity of drawing any further forms of reference. Heidegger's *Mit-sein* (being in the social relationality) is conceived to be positioned among the *same* beings in their lifeworld. Even for Schutz, a steadfast advocate for intersubjectivity as the ground for meaning construction, who famously writes, "the world of daily life is by no means my private world but is from the outset an intersubjective one," share the 'same' postulation with his predecessors (1982, 312). Schultz and Luckmann write with clarity that "all experience of social reality is founded on the fundamental axiom positing the existence of other beings 'like me'"(1995, 62). In other words, my subjectivity and that of the other are conceived as the same in form. The social relation is taken as 'symmetrical' in our reciprocal perceptions. It is thereby logical that my perception of a co-existing other would not necessarily affect how my own perceptual experience is constituted and the meaning I generate to interpret this experience. In this train of thought, Schutz has proposed a two-dimensional 'structure of the lifeworld' scheme: one spatial dimension in terms of the increasing zones of anonymity that radiate out from the ego to the spatial zones of the world within 'actual' or 'obtainable' reach. The other is temporal, in terms of 'predecessors' (Vorwelt) and 'successors' (Folgewelt) (ibid.). According to this scheme, my *own* identity construes my consciousness of the world in the now, as the locus of my meaning production towards the future. The spatial dimension unfolds in two quadrants (as with the temporal dimension) of physical immediacy and intimacy. It subordinates to the temporal dimension in structuring meaning.

At stake here for drawing the difference – the betweenness of spatial dimension – is highlighted by Japanese philosopher Watsuji. He (1989) argues that the phenomenologists have missed one essential aspect of consciousness: "the fact that consciousness of the other is simultaneously the consciousness of me by the other". To act *upon* a relational consciousness where 'the other' or the 'represented self' is perceived as different from myself is more than 'ap-presentation.' It is to act within a context in which some basic evaluations and differentiation are constructed based on the sense of other's immediate reactions. Thus, the perceiving subjects act on a perceived relationality between a self and a represented self, which is interpreted as how the other is relating to me. This relation could even be 'not relating,' Which is well illustrated in the following example:

> When friends come upon each other, they remark on the weather. This is the common sense of Ningen- betweenness. They do not reflect on the reason why they speak of the weather. When they speak of it, they know that they do not concern themselves with knowledge of the weather but only the mutual relationship thereby expressed. (Watsuji, Seisaku, and Carter 1996, 39)

I can now finalize my claim regarding the form of (spatial) relational subjectivity, the inferential relation between subjectivity and social relations in the Confucian tradition. When social relations are presumed primordial and asymmetrical – if 'the other' were perceived as intrinsically and dynamically (not only normatively) *different* from me, manifested in terms of seniority, gender, and other prescribed social roles – 'the other' will not simply appear passively as 'ap-presentation' in my perceptual experience. In this case, the temporal consciousness will also cease to be the primary structuring force of one's experience and subjectivity. Instead, when my senses of the other's immediate sense of me were dynamic, the other will be constantly differentiated in my reflective projected act (in spatial terms, with regard to the extent of immediacy and intimacy). When 'the other' exhibit multiple roles in the course of our continuous encounter, one can never stop reaffirming or re-actualizing the reciprocal perceptions. Such perceptions and senses will affect and re-direct social interaction forms, hence structure and participate in constituting one's experiences and subjectivity.

Provided the sensible social relationality was interpreted varyingly from moment to moment in one's consciousness, and the meaning of it does not grow incrementally, the relational and spatial consciousness can thus be seen as the primary structuring forces of meaning-making activity. The interpreting and re-interpreting processes end only when a sense of relationality ends in perception, expectation and memories, which will affect not only a face-to-face encounter but potential future encounters. Chang's example regarding the notions of *lien* (frugality in taking, virtuous) and *chien* (frugality in spending, flawed) shows that the Chinese language is especially rich in addressing directed value judgments regarding the same practice. These categories help one to materialize the spatialized experiences constituted by asymmetrical (spatial) relational perceptions.

I would argue that a relational subjectivity is embedded implicitly in Confucianism, presuming that one can and shall *react* in the now. The senses of '*asymmetrical relationality*' constitute the subjective experiences. It differs from what Schutz has argued that "the whole present, therefore, and the vivid present of our self, is inaccessible for the reflective attitude. We can only turn to the stream of our thought as if it had stopped with the last grasped experience. In other words, self-consciousness can only be experienced *modo praeteritio*, in the past tense" (1962, 173). Furthermore, it also counters the statement "meaning is seen as the product of the intentionality inherent in the reflective projected act," embedding meaning to a more outward, directed intentionality. In contrast, my proposal stresses that subjective meaning can be derived from one's senses in the moment and in the context. One can sense such an experience while occurring or while we are living in it.

Now, I would like to make my first claim more clearly. In the context of Confucian thinking, the spatial is conceived as a prioritized structure ordering the social subject's perceptual experience (the sense of asymmetric relationality). Social ac-

tors are predicated as *different* from one another. The difference materializes as social status, gender, age and so on, which are sensible. When defined as ontologically real and asymmetric, the sensible social relationality is actively employed (consciously or subconsciously) by social subjects, informing their meaning-making perceptions and experiences.

Guanxi and social relationality

The concept of *guanxi* (social ties) from Chinese cultural studies affirms my first claim about relational subjectivity strongly. Literarily, g*uanxi* means 'connections,' 'social ties,' or simply 'relations. It implies the subjects' deep embeddedness in inter-personal relationalities and the constitutive role such relational perceptual patterns play in meaning-making.

Chiao (1982) has once listed a range of social practices in Chinese society in which *guanxi* is employed: matchmaking; receiving a quota to have a baby; entering a school; moving residential registration (from rural to urban, from small town to big town); getting a job or changing jobs, and so on. Although not all these practices remain common in today's Chinese society, studies continually demonstrate the prevalent employment of *guanxi* in social actors' everyday practices.

As a sociological concept, scholars generally agree that *guanxi* refers to the kind of enduring asymmetric relationships perceived by two parties. It incurs through reciprocal social obligations and the solicitation of special favors in each interaction between the participating parties. What has been transacted entails both material (gifts), economic (money and information resources), and symbolic capitals (reputation and face) (see Yang 1994). According to Lin et al., *guanxi*'s most crucial feature is that it contains at least two parties in asymmetrical and unbalanced positions. There is always a seeker (petitioner) and a giver (allocator) favoring each *guanxi*-driven transaction. It also implies an actor's agency in a social encounter is affected by their sense of positionality in *guanxi*. The practice of *guanxi* corresponds with my previous claim of relational, asymmetrical subjectivity.

Furthermore, what gives *guanxi* transactions an asymmetrical nature is not necessarily the amount of capital that each party possesses and transacts but its sentimental basis. 'Qing[13]' (sentiments or emotion), or *ren-qing* (human feelings), is a central element of *guanxi* (So, Lin, and Poston 2001, 157). The sentimental basis of relations hinders any symmetric exchange in each transaction. Namely, a favor given is not met with favor in return right away. Thus, the primary causes of inequality do not lie in the individual or group possession of the capital of whatever forms, but rather in their position in the unfolding relations, in the enactment of affect. In Charles Tilly's words, the "bonds, not essences, provides the basis of durable inequality" (1999, 136).

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13   Qing (情).

Lin et al. argue that economic, social, and affective entities are evoked in each *guanxi*-driven transaction. But the efficacy of a transaction is more dependent on one's position in social relationality in which transactions occur. On the normative level, scholars stress that *guanxi* takes on significance in a society where social standing (e.g., social relations and social recognition of one's placement in the web of social networks) is deemed valuable for actions and that individuals and institutions share the same dominant *exchange* ideology (ibid., 159-162) grounded in asymmetrical social categories. Instrumental transactions are considered a means to maintain *guanxi*-relationships, with decision making based primarily on the gain of relational social capital (credit, reputation, face). The social interactions associated with *guanxi*, rather than formal and contractual relationships, are believed to have led to the emergence of social structures with the increasing complexity of positions, authority, rules, and agency in Chinese society (ibid., 165). In short, the asymmetrical and affect-laden feature of *guanxi practice* and the processual and reciprocal feature of *guanxi* transactions derived by the cultural scholars, are congruent with my proposal of the relational subjectivity.

3.3.2 Two sensual coordinates and relationalities

In my own inference, two sets of questions arise from my first claim about a relational social ontology hence a relational subjectivity. The first one is: when the instantaneous affection emergent between the subjects are conceived as the driving force for developing relational consciousness and establishing intimate social relations, how would a person develop a constant sense of self in the Confucius tradition, if at all? Secondly, if the meaning of wider social relationalities can be generated by drawing an analogy to family relations – the basic units of social relations? What inferential modality justifies such analogy? How are social parts assumed to be associated as a whole in Confucianism? Would a hierarchical normative social ordering system allow a common ground for a shared meaningful social world (Sozialzusammenhang)?

I begin with analyzing the second set of questions, as there are already straightforward answers to them in the Confucianist philosophical scheme. His followers have repeatedly confronted Confucius with such inquiry regarding if the guiding principles in the proto-social relations apply to an ideal social whole. In that social-historical context, the primordial relational principles are conceived to reinforce the power relations in an aristocratic society. First, Confucius denied that, laws – the external legislative norms could cultivate the ultimate good, hens establishing ideal social order. The supporting discourses can be found in "in hearing lawsuits, I'm no different from other people. What we need is for there to be no lawsuits!" (ibid., 12.13). The Confucian solution was to integrate the intricate social interrelatedness within a simple scheme of three (and later five) principal bonds. On one

occasion, Confucius answered about the principle of 'governscraft,' "let the ruler be a ruler, the ministers minister, the fathers father, and the sons son" (ibid., 7.11.).

In the previous sector, I have already introduced the normative content of three or five principal bonds. In this section, I would like to walk you through my second claim that, the social subject is conceived to have a 'two-dimensional,' 'affect-based' sensible-consciousness structure that orders their experience and process of 'meaning-making.' I arrive at this claim by deriving their distinct affective principles, and by refering to the five cardinal relationships in parallel with the 'we-relationship' concept proposed by Schutz. Both Confucius and Schutz have conceived the form of primordial social relations in which all other social relationships are rooted and to which all relations can be referred. When I draw on the affective principle of intimacy and anonymity from Schutz to characterize the form of primordial relations in Confucianism, it is evident that three out of five relationships are located within the family (intimate sphere), one 'friend-friend' relation is located in the semi-mediated sphere, and one relation "between sovereign and subordinate" is located in the anonymous sphere. Yet, I find these one-dimensional affective measures not adequate to describe the concatenations among these cardinal relationships. Inspired by Chang and Shun's interpretation of *Li*[14], I find it possible to identify *two* distinct affective and cognitive structures that underwrite the meaning constitution of these relationships. The first one is *ren (affection and intimacy)*, and the second one is *li (reverence and hierarchy)*. The two coordinates are positively correlated because they can both be evaluated by 'closeness and distance' and 'center and periphery' in the affective dimension. If it were the case, we could further legitimate the inter-relatedness of these seemingly normative social relations. It then allows me to explain how one's primordial social experiences can be extended into other social scenarios.

I will first justify how 'affect' can be conceived as a joint base in these two structural axes. Manifested as both intimate 'affect' and 'reverence,' the affect-based relational subjectivity enables the social actor to infer their experiences from the familial sphere to the social sphere. Concerning the differential and relational interpretation of *ren*, and its embeddedness in the prescribed familial relationships, it appears logical to align the senses of *ren* in the dimension of *affection and intimacy*. A broad body of commentaries supports such an argument. According to Ames and Hall's interpretations, in the text of *Shuo-wen*, *ren* is defined more explicitly by the character *qin*[15] , which carries the underlying meaning of extending affection to those close at hand (ibid., 119). This argument corresponds with the humanity-making perspective – the third interpretation of *ren*, which infers from subjectivity to a moral endeavor among fellow men. There, *ren* is interpreted as an act of

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14   Li (礼).
15   Qin (亲).

extending affection from the self to the other. Furthermore, this claim can be affirmed as the term *qin* can refer not only to affection that is extended to others, but also to the *person* extending the affection (themselves[16]) and the *recipients* of that affection (parents, kin, intimates[17]).

According to Confucius, affections could be extended from the core relationship outwards, following a naturally descending gradation. When asked why he conceives *ren* love to be biased rather than universal, beginning with family members and extending outwards into one's society, Confucius answers: "The gentleman [exemplary person] operates at the root. When the root is firm, then the Way may proceed. Filial and brotherly conduct – these are the root of humaneness, are they not?" (ibid., 1.2). However, one shall also not neglect that, the Confucianism schemata is conceived for supporting the social cohesion in the imperial society. Thus, the *ren-affection-intimacy* coordinate axis is by definition, extends primarily within the consanguineous domain.

Then, by analyzing the concept of *li*[18], I have concealed a second reverence-based sensible-cognitive axis embedded in the Confucianism schemata. *Li* is usually translated as rites, rituals, ceremonies, propriety, etiquette, and so on. Most often, it is interpreted as the representations of institutionalized social norms that regulate social behaviors. As Benjamin Schwartz explains:

> The word *li* on the most concrete level refers to all those 'objective' prescriptions of behavior, whether involving rite, ceremony, manners, or general deportment, acting roles within the family, within human society and with the numinous realm beyond... What makes *li* the cement of the entire normative sociopolitical order is that it largely involves the behavior of persons related to each other in terms of role, status, rank, and position within a structured society. (Schwartz 1985, 67)

As the interpretation above indicates, *Li* is often interpreted as external structures of praxis than an internal structure of the sense and consciousness. In Confucian thinking, *li*'s conceptual significance is comparable to *ren*. In the Analects, *li* is conceived to result from *zheng-ming*[19] (rectifying [ordering] of names). I thus examine *zheng-ming* as a logical predecessor and examine the meaning it confers to understand *li*. In the Analects, when a disciple asks Confucius what his first action would be if he were to rule a state, Confucius replies, "if I had to name my first action, I would rectify names [*zheng-ming*]" (ibid., 13.3). The doctrine of *zheng-ming* has appeared several times in the Analects, deployed by Confucius to justify a first step of establishing the social order. Most frequently, *names* refer to the social positions

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16   Qin-zi (亲自).
17   Qin-ren (亲人).
18   Li (礼).
19   Zheng-ming (正名).

in society, including 'father,' 'minister,' 'son,'…and so forth. As Kuan Tzu describes, names are crucial to administrative practices, which are "the means whereby the sages organize the myriad phenomena." The two seemingly mutually constructive notions, "*ming* and *li*" (names and ritual practices), represent the normative and embodied social conventions sanctioned by the authority. However, Hall and Ames argue that one cannot separate the idea from the action when interpreting the concept of *zheng-ming*. They assert that "not only are names used to name the order, they are also used for effecting order in what is to be named, to name is a prompting to 'actualize' it, similar to ritual action (*li*)" (1987, 272–73). The interpretation of *li* from Schwartz is congruent with this view, which subsumes *li* under a set of formal-external rules, corresponding to the names. By this reading, the normative orders are assumed to be fully internalized by social actors from diverse social hierarchies and embodied in their day-to-day practice.

In support of such interpretation, we can find narratives include Confucius' account of his own personal development "by thirty I had found my footing (*li*[20])" (ibid., 2.4). Here, the notion *footing* (*li*) is also related to the concept of 'rank' or 'position' the general posture that one strikes and pursues as a person, and the 'names'(*wei*[21]). It means that, for social actors to enact these ritual activities, one shall have a sense of proper place. It also means that if one did not understand the ritual procedures, he would not know where to stand (*li*). Thus, a mutual reinforcement between *zheng-ming*[22] (ordering of names) and *li* is expected to be found in the practices of social actors, whereby *li* is conceived to be conjoined with and inferred from of *zheng-ming* by the governors. Normatively speaking, after the ordering of names, the society consists not only of social roles bond to differentiated ranks (*wei*) but roles assigned with performative rituals (*li*). So far, these two concepts appear to be analogous to 'social position' and '*doxa*' from Bourdieu's field theory, but one logical caveat remains. How did Confucius justify the claim that the prescribed *li* are to be fully internalized by mundane social actors and reproduced through their social practices?

Chang has once adeptly discovered a *hierarchical* element entailed in *ordering names*. To me, it alludes to a new affective-epistemic principle underlying the definition of primordial social relations. Chang writes that "the aim of *zheng-ming* lies in the discernment between what is above and what is below, the determination of the superior and the inferior and the distinction between good and evil. Its aim lies in human affairs rather than logic" (1952, 221). Moreover, in paper *Ren and li in the Analects*, while clarifying the difference between *li* and *yi* (good form), Shun points out that "norms governing polite behavior such as ways of presenting a gift

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20   Li (立).

21   Wei (位).

22   Zheng-Ming (正名).

are described as a matter of *yi* (good form) but not *li*. *Li* relates to norms of conduct governing those in a higher and those in a lower position, to proper ways of governing a state, and to the proper relation between rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, older and younger brothers, husbands and wives, and mothers and daughters-in-law. Proper observance of *li* is supposed to be the basis for an orderly society and the ideal basis for government" (1993, 457–58). These discourses suggest that, in the normative framework, *li* is logically associated with hierarchy. I would argue, hierarchy – more than a static representation of the arrangement of social roles and norms – is deemed a 'structuring structures' bridging the prescribed normative rules and social actors' distinct and distinctive practices.

Hierarchy as a prevalent value orientation can be easily identified in the Chinese language's common expressions, which is often mistakenly understood as normative or transcendental. The examples abound. In the case of describing motions from place to place, to go from the local districts to the central government is "to go up[23]" as in the expression "to go up west" and "to go up north" and to go from the central government to the local regions is to "to go down[24]," such as to "go down south," to "go down east." More implicitly, the same motion is expressed in different words according to the enacting actor's social status. Chang noticed that "to kill a king is called murder or *shi*[25], implying a violation of the superior by the inferior. The killing of an inferior by a superior is called execution or *zhan*[26], implying a justifiable punishment according to law" (ibid, 221). When reading hierarchy as a fixed norm, the logical caveat remains, how can the designated differentiation, materialized by the names and ritual rules, get diffused, received and reproduced in the broader social sphere? What ensures people's following and voluntary adaptations of these norms in various real-life situations?

In *Hsun Tzu*, Confucius recourses to the principle of *dao* to legitimate the social order he constructed. *Li*, the essence of rites, good customs, traditional observances are exalted into the cosmic principle.

> *Li* is that whereby heaven and earth unite, whereby the sun and moon are brilliant, whereby the four seasons are ordered, whereby the stars move in their courses, whereby rivers flow, whereby all things prosper [...]. It causes the lower orders to obey, and the upper classes to be illustrious; through a myriad change, it prevents going astray. If one departs from it, one will be destroyed. Is not *li* the greatest of all principles? (Hsun Tzu 1966, 223)

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23   Shang (上).
24   Xia (下).
25   Shi (弑).
26   Zhan (斩).

A correlative logic (rather than a causal one) is employed to validate the association between the cosmological principles and the orders conceived for regulating human society[27]. This argument is confirmed by Schwartz, who saw *dao* as a legitimate principle to justify the familial relationship between the king and heaven, thus the social orders prescribed by the king, as it is commonly shared *belief* among the ancient Chinese. By conforming to the *li* in worshiping the royal ancestor, the king has also worshipped heaven. As the son of heaven (*tianzi*), he shows the citizens his qualification through getting the mandate from Heaven (*tianming*) to rule over the kingdom (Hsun Tzu 1966 [n.d.], 114). When following a correlative logic, the symbolic representation and thereby the material manifestation of *li* are legitimated due to the postulated linkage between kinship and kingship, family and state, the social and political pillars of traditional imperial China.

I do not mean to discuss the validity of such arguments but to reveal the hidden causal propositions deployed and the modality of justifying such an argument. I would then try to fill the logical gap uncovered. Again, the epistemic gap lies in that *li* – norms that the royal family prescribes and performs – differ not only in content but also in form with that followed by laypeople. The prescribed meaning of such rules will inevitably transcend the actual and potential reach of everyday people's experiences. Thus, the question regarding a knowledge condition where *li* get voluntarily received and enacted by everyday people has not yet been fully answered. Against a nominative understanding of hierarchy, I would claim, a twofold affect-based cognitive and perceptual structure is embedded in the father-son relationality. In this structure, there is a perfect positive correlation between the *ren-affection-intimacy* and *li-reverence-hierarchy* principles. It is crucial to recognize such a structure in order to fill the logical gap we have noted so far.

To argue for such a two-fold affect-based cognitive and perceptual structure, we need to examine the principal familial relations with an eye for reverence. As narrated, the family is constantly addressed by Confucius as 'roots.' It can be seen as a basic social realm where the participants have the fullest access to each other's cognitive, affective and bodily symptoms. Following Shun's (1993) argument of reverence as a cognitive structuring principle, namely, "what gives unity to the various things that have come to be included in the scope of *li*[28] is presumably *jing*[29] (reverence)," one can infer a proposition of such affect-cognitive structure can serve to justify the sensible inferior-superior relation rooted in the father-son, husband-

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27   The constituent dyads Hsun Tzu referred, are derived from *yin* and *yang*. They are the most basic conceptual category that is well known and applied in ancient Chinese society. It implies a pair of unequal but complementary forces that drive to further generating subcategories in a system of correlated arrangements.

28   The character *li* originally refer to the rites of sacrifice.

29   Jing (敬).

wife, elder and younger brother relationship within the family. *When one is conceived to acquire both the ren-intimacy and li-hierarchy sensible-perception principles from family relationships during primary socialization, it is logical that such 'structuring structures' enables one to give meaning to the extended relationships along each axis.*

The three principal 'we-relationships' exhibit the attributes of *ren* and *li* with different degrees of intensity, which can be deemed three proto-schemas. If my claim were true, one could logically anchor the other two social relations, relations between friends and sovereign-subordinate, in relation to the family realm in the actor's perception. The analogy is possible, as social actor deeply believes, thereafter could 'space them out' in perceptual practices following the two-dimensional spatial coordinates. In other words, these two hierarchical sensible-cognitive cardinals enable one to position an unknown other on an analogous category. One could thereby relate to any social 'other' from symbolic to potential reach. Other forms of empirical social relations, in addition to or despite their substantive content (age, gender, class, etc.), can always be ordered in subjects' perceptions and practices.

3.3.3 Spacing and synthesis as divided agencies

I have just made two claims about relational subjectivity and how social subject relates to social others in the Confucianism normative. The first one is relational subjectivity, whereby a spatial sense of relationality is prioritized on the first order in structuring human experiences. The second one is a more specific claim about how such subjectivity is related to social relations. I argue that, when a two-dimensional spatial consciousness is conceived, in identifying the hierarchical magnitude of intimacy and reverence, one can make sense of and position oneself appropriately in each and every asymmetrical social relation. The inference from principal social relation to forming relational subjectivity and social relation is then logically possible. However, the questions about how the self-hood is conceived in classic Confucianism thinking remain underexamined.

As discussed in 2.4, scholars following historical materialism like Lefebvre assume the social subject's agency to correspond with one's position in the class-based stratified social structure. In contrast, scholars following constructionism or structuration tradition like Löw see an individual's agency to arise from the reflexive and pre-cognitive structures cultivated in a situated, enduring socialization process. In the latter case, a social actor's practice is deemed as the manifestation of the internalized social structure. As social actors perceive and internalize social structures only partially, conflicts arise among social actors at the interface of embodied individual habitus. In other words, in both epistemic frames, a sense of self or a consistent internal orientation (given or cultivated) is assumed to pre-structure the social actor's continuous behavioral stream daily, shaping what one receives from and constructs to the 'external world.'

When discussing the meaning association between *ren* (man) and *ren* (humanity), I suggest that the Chinese *men* are primarily conceived to fall into a social world constituted by a wealth of relationships and social transactions with one's fellow men and women. However, notions expressing the sense of personal self (*wo*[30]) and reflective self (*ji*[31]) also exist in Chinese discourses since antiquity. In an attempt to explain the Confucian meaning of 'self,' Tu Wei-Ming maintains that in Confucian thought, the self is a "dynamic, holistic, open system, just the opposite of the privatized ego" (1985, 8). Drawing on Löw's epistemic divide between the spacing and synthesis, I further explore Confucianism discourses to see if and how this ever-present, dynamic, open, spatial consciousness is logically coherent with a sense of coherent self, and continuous experiences?

Having these two questions in mind, I have identified two revealing categories[32] of personhood in Confucianism, i.e., the *exemplary man* (*junzi*[33]) and the *sage man* (*sheng-ren*[34]), as the relevant epistemic forms for my examinations. When reading at its face value, the discourses about and the definitions of 'exemplary person' and 'sage man' constructed by the Confucianism scholars involve supernatural mysticism. I am not intended to give value or normative judgments on these discourses here, but to explore the idea of selfhood embedded in the 'exemplary person' and 'sage man.'

Briefly speaking, the 'exemplary man' is ascribed by the Confucian scholars to represent the subject, endorsed with the capacity to comprehend, actualize and reproduce meanings of the existing social-space normative orders. The 'sage man' is coined to address the kind of social subject, who is able to *name*, i.e., to synthesis the *potential* and possible arrangement and utility between the social and material entities and construct the form anew. Here, I draw on two analytical terms developed by Löw. It is 'spacing' – coined to describe the process of erecting, deploying, or positioning practices, and 'synthesis' – describe how goods and people are amalgamated to spaces by way of processes of perception, imagination, and memory. According to Löw, in the everyday act of space constitution, operations of synthesis and spacing are simultaneous because an action is always processual. She also

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30   Wo (我).

31   Ji (己).

32   Confucius has developed a meticulous system of categorizing social actors by their moral, wisdom capacity and performances. The examples from the Analects include sage (*sheng ren*), exemplary person (*jun zi*), good/adept person (*shan ren*), person of superior quality (*shang ren*), complete person (*cheng ren*), scholar-official (*shi*), great person (*da ren*) and small person (*xiao ren*). Both 'exemplary person' and 'sage' are conceived as the elite social class, in contrast to the mass (*min*).

33   Jun-zi (君子).

34   Sheng-ren (圣人).

points out how such operations could also be carried out by different social actors, considering the distribution of labor in society:

> However, the operation of synthesis is also possible as an operation of abstracting without associated spacings, that is, spacings directly subsequent to it; examples can be found in scientific work, but also in art, planning, and architecture. In these fields, objects are linked to spaces on the drawing board, in a computer simulation, or on paper. Though these links can guide further action, they do not directly lead to resultant spacings. (ibid., 135)

Inspired by such a separation, I put forward my *third claim* regarding the types of social agency and their casual relation to normative social-spatial order derived from the Confucian discourses. I contend the *spacing and relational synthesis are conceived enacted by different parties situated in an asymmetrical relation*. Also, in the ideal social order, *only the superior figures are entitled to materialize ones' spatial synthesis after their negotiations and attunement with the inferior figures*.

One can find many supporting arguments from the discourses in the Analects. For example, Confucius' famous statement, "to discipline oneself and practice *li* (ritual action) is to become an exemplary person[35]"(The Analects 12.1). According to Hall and Ames, this process shall be more accurately interpreted as "the process of dissolving the barrier between the self and its social environment involves discipline the ego-self and becoming a person-in-context" (1987, 93). Leaving this generalization aside, in the following analysis, I would unravel the tangible aspects in the conceived self-developing process by teasing out the discussions on the necessary achievements of an exemplary person. The three conceived forms of agency to be discussed are *ren* (becoming humane/benevolent), *zhi* (to know/being wise), and *yi* (to appropriate/being appropriate).

Departing from the discourses of *zhi* (to know/being wise), I would argue, an 'exemplary person' is conceived to be able to internalize, act in accordance with, and reproduce the norms in the society. The norms are expected to be so deeply internalized (*zhi*) in one's psychology that (s)he never 'stop and think,' 'leaving the stream of durée' when practicing them. When (s)he encounters novel situations, (s)he is able to adapt the known rules properly to the context. In this way, his/(her) *ren*-moral value is manifested in maintaining and reproducing the social norms. Departing from *yi* (to appropriate/being appropriate, proprietary), I notice that an exemplary social actor is also expected to constantly adjust one's synthesis in harmony to that of others in the context, to achieve a condition of being *yi* (proprietary). As I have elaborated enough on the epistemic dimensions of *ren*- in the previous part, I would now focus only on de-construct *zhi* (to know/being wise) and

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35   Keli-fuji-jiwei-ren (克己复礼即为仁).

yi (to appropriate/being appropriate), in order to reveal the underlying premises about 'self' or 'selfhood.'

The concept of *zhi* (to know) is characterized as an intentional act. It is written in *Chung-yung* that "completing oneself is 'person-making' (*ren*); completing things and events are '*zhi*' (realizing)." According to Hall and Ames' interpretation, "*zhi* refers to a propensity for forecasting or predicting the outcome of a coherent set of circumstances of which the forecaster himself is a constituent and participatory factor" (ibid., 51). When we read *zhi* as "to know and to realize the meaning in a context," we are implying that *zhi* entails a non-differentiable continuous process from subjectively intended action (action; Handeln) to the completed act (actum; Handlung), similar to the social action defined by Weber. I cite as follows:

> Social action is the action which by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), takes account of the behavior of others, and is thereby oriented in its course.... In "action" is included all human behavior when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Action in this sense may be either overt or purely inward or subjective; it may consist of positive intervention in a situation, or of deliberately refraining from such intervention, or passively acquiescing in the situation. (Weber [1972] 2013, 88)

In Weber's definition of social action and Hall and Ames' reading of *zhi*, an *other-oriented-ness* is addressed. The social-spatial relation remains static and intact in the subjects' inner consciousness. When taking my previous claim into concern, namely, 'the other (subject or object)' is conceived as immanently dynamic, changing, organism different from me (whose emotional and cognitive activity remains ever active in my sensation-consciousness), then we come to tell *zhi* and Weber's 'social action' far apart. Famously, Weber's conceptualization of social action is criticized for not distinguishing the 'projected act' from the 'completed act,' the confusion and conflation between the meaning of an action with its motives, i.e. "the meaning-complex which he takes to be the meaningful ground of his behavior" (Schutz, Walsh, and Lehnert 1972, 28). I see *zhi* – a type of subjective other-oriented action elicits toward a changing or dynamic other. *Zhi* shall then be understood as *trans-active* than *subjective-intentional* or *inter-subjective* action. It entails a process when the acting subject's motive gets continuously modified in response to the momentaneous affect and symbolic intercourses emergent from the context.

We can find supporting shreds of evidence when reading the meaning of *zhi* from other parts of the Analects. *Zhi* is frequently characterized as a process of dispelling doubts (*huo*[36]). It is illustrated in sayings like "a person with *zhi* is not of two minds" (The Analects 9.29), "to *zhi* is to influence the process of existence within the range of one's viable possibilities" (ibid., 12.22). I find the emphasis on

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36   Huo (惑).

'non-distinguishing' and 'deciding over possible alternatives' implies that *zhi* requires to take all the perceived contextual elements and the emergent attributes in the context into concern, ordering them by adapting learned rules-*li*. Regardless of the empirical content of *zhi*, whether it consists of positive intervention in a situation, or deliberate refraining from such intervention, the 'exemplary man' here, is conceived to resume the order through enacting *zhi*.

Complementarily, the concept of *yi*[37] (appropriate, be appropriate) alludes to the sensible-affective dimension of the conceived agency of *junzi*. In *Mencius*, it is written that "the heart-and-mind of shame (*xiu*[38]) and disgrace (*wu*[39]) is the starting point of *yi*." Although emotions like shame (*xiu*) and disgrace (*wu*) are context-dependent in the sense that they presuppose someone else's presence and resonance, their affect can only be known by the experiencing self. Due to the non-fixed, multivalent nature of the consciousness-in-context, the person's sense of *yi* (appropriateness) cannot be derived solely from referring to the external norm. To achieve *yi*, the exemplary person figure is not supposed to surrender to prescribed principles but to *evoke* one's *internal* moral standard (*ren*) creatively to comprehend and gauge each encounter's uniqueness in Confucianism. One would then be able to implement the entire process of the *zhi*- know the pre-given ritual rules (*li*) while also taking the immediate emergences from the context into concern.

Plenty of empirical studies show that, in imperial China, the name 'exemplary person' exists not just as a constructed ideal figure, but often reified by actual local gentries[40], who are well-educated and respected senior people from the family of major lineage in a place. According to Hu (2015)'s historical studies on local administrations in imperial China, the local gentries have long complemented the central government's inactive performance on the local level, which accounts for the core position ensuring social and political stability. They are also deemed crucial figures who contribute to the reproduction of cultural values and rituals in traditional Chinese society where both physical and social mobility is slow. In a similar vein, Fei Xiaotong (1946) argued that the gentry is an important social class between the state and the peasants, responsible for reproducing social structure in traditional Chinese society. The gentry's role in acculturation affirms our discussions about the *reproductive effect* of practicing as exemplary men (*junzi*):

> The gentry differs from the aristocracy in the West in that the former does not form a political party with the responsibility of running a government. ...owing to their pivotal position in the power structure, the gentry has through long history acquired a set of codes of professional ethics. They preach the doctrine of

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37   Yi (宜).

38   Xiu (羞).

39   E (恶).

40   Shi-shen (士绅).

order: everyone should behave according to and be satisfied by the position one occupies in the social structure…The gentry's interest is not in possessing political power but in maintaining order irrespective of who the monarch is. They will serve him as long as he behaves as a benevolent ruler, but if he becomes despotic and suppresses the peasants too hard, the gentry will exert their pressure against him. On the other hand, if peasants revolt against the ruler and disturb the social order, they will fight on the side of the monarch. This is their social responsibility. Being a privileged class themselves, they are never revolutionary. Order and security are their sole interests. (Fei 1946, 9–10)

The notion of *sagehood* in Confucianism refers to one's capacity of integrating all the moral achievements, and above all, of being innovative and creative. In contrast to the narratives about the exemplary man, "the practice of *li* and to the notion that mastery of *li* was the path to *sagehood*" and the ones Confucius used to reject a credential of *sagehood* was that he regarded himself to be "someone who transmits but does not create" (The Analects 7.1). In Chinese historical text, the *sagehood* title is often used to address the achieved imperials like in the 'sage-kings' or intellectuals who work for the state – 'sage-counselor.' Sage, the symbol for the utmost elites, is conceived to have extra-ordinary intelligence and endorsed with exclusive authority and power, i.e., the right to *zhengming* (ordering the names). Noticing that, in these empirical applications, the notion is strongly associated with political status, privilege, and power, apart from personal achievements. The stories from *Sun Zi* suggest that sages are the ones who can observe and communicate, rearrange the situation by changing the ordering of the existing elements and give new definitions accordingly. Sage is also conceived to make the most use of the temporal-spatial momentum and achieve one's goals effortlessly. The sage attunes oneself into the context so much that "the sage has no (disclosed) self[41]."

As we have just discussed, to *know (zhi)* in Confucianism refers to the actors-exemplary persons' compacity to consciously perceive the emergent compacity of social and material beings in the trans-active context, than the static essence of them. It is followed by actualizing the figuration of the contextual constituents according to the learned normative order-*li*. To *create (be the sage)*, assumes the compacity of figuring out the meaningful coherency among the selected heterogeneous constituents and their relationalities, based on the knowledge of the emergent attributes of things and social subjects alike, and the scheme of relevance the sage figure holds to be true. It is not creation *ex nihilo*, namely, creating something new with no connection to the existing things and social beings, but recognizing the

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41   The phrase, Shengren-Wuji (圣人无己), originates from the article Xiaoyaoyou (逍遥游), by Zhuangzhi.

mutual resonances among people of different understandings and things of different names. The sage man is also expected to re-associate things, establish new sense relations between then, and assign new name. At the end of the chapter, I would draw briefly on a contemporary phenomenon to show how such epistemic divide regarding social agencies offer explanations to contemporary events.

3.4   Things, names and truth-conditions

We have already discussed, the transcendental-substantial epistemic traditions in antique Europe gives rise to an understanding of the 'thing' as 'substance' whose nature lies in its unchanging form. The substantial view is so profound that it shapes how 'things' are represented and categorized in the commonsensical domain. This section examines '*things*' in traditional Chinese thoughts, with particular attention paid to the following issues: how is the nature of things conceived? How are things known and named?

3.4.1   Things and a correlative system of classification

To elucidate the conceptualization of 'things' and how 'things' relate to the social-spatial order in traditional Chinese thought, I take the ancient Chinese book *Yi Jing* (*The Book of Changes*) as a departure point. It is commonly deemed as the beginning of all Chinese metaphysical discussions. The discourses about two systems of categorization – *yin-yang*[42] and *wuxing*[43] *(the five phases)* – build on metaphysical propositions from *Yi Jing*, serve as the base material for my analysis. In *Yi Jing*, the cosmos of things – including heavens, earth, men, animals, and myriads – originate from one unitary source, a chaotic state (*taiji*[44]). In this context, as contemporary philosopher Tang Junyi has once asserted, the cosmos "is only flow, a dynamism," all things "can only be in process, beyond which there's no fixed reality as substratum" (Tang 1988, 9-10, cite in Li and Perkins 2015, 4). If Tang were right, the epistemic postulations upon which this conception of things is built has differed from that in the classic Newtonian and Leibnizian ones (as discussed in 2.2 and 2.3 in this book).

To foreground how things are conceived in Chinese philosophy, my comparative analysis draws on Aristotle's definition as the epistemic reference. Aristotle has

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42   The concept originats from the *Book of Changes*, which estimately dates back to 1000-750 BCE. It is further developed by the Yin-Yang School, Daoist and Confucian traditions.

43   Wuxing (五行). It is believed to be founded by Tsou Yen, who lived approximately between 350 and 270 BCE.

44   Tai-ji (太极).

famously formed the line 'things are beings.' He has proposed a system of ten categories in defining things, among which the 'substance' (the eternal and immutable 'form') – represents the 'principle and a cause of being' – is the primary category (see Studtmann 2018). Perkins claims a Sino-European meta-epistemic difference is as follows: "European metaphysics has tended to center on problems of *reconciliation* (how ontologically distinct things can interact), Chinese metaphysics has been more concerned with problems of *distinction*" (Perkins, 1, italics original).

Within *Yi Jing*'s most influential and interpretational book, *Xi Ci*[45], *yin* and *yang* are identified as two primary 'generative forces.' Upon interaction, they give firstly rise to four, then eight subtypes. Overall, eight 'patterns of motion' are conceived and represented by trigrams (*Qian, Kun, Zhen, Xun, Kan, Li, Gen,* and *Dui*[46]). In the book called *Shou Gua (Discussion of the Trigrams)*[47], a list of such 'patterns of motion' is presented, among which, "the creative [*Qian*] is strong; the receptive [*Kun*] is yielding; the arousing [*Zhen*] means movement; the gentle [*Xun*] is penetrating; the abysmal [*Kan*] is dangerous; the clinging [*Li*] means dependence; keeping still [*Gen*] means standstill; the joyous [*Dui*] means pleasure" (Tang 2015, 43). To demonstrate such emergent properties or property-like items, tangible 'things' from the natural world are deployed as *instantiations*. For instance, the 'south side of a mountain,' which receives the sun is employed as a typical 'thing' to instantiate *yang*. The 'north side of a mountain' instantiates *yin*. In a similar vein, the eight sub-*patterns of motion* are often instantiated by the sky, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain, and marsh.

At first glance, the 'patterns of motion' in *Yijing* is easily confused with Aristotle's 'acting category,' or Leibniz's *prima materia* discussed in Chapter 2.3. For Aristotle, 'acting' is the *inherent* property of things that cannot stand apart from their substance. He assigned essential locations and modes of motion to the five fundamental elements identified in the universe: earth, air, fire, water, and aether. Air and fire naturally move upwards, while the earth moves downwards, and so on. To clarify, the particular 'patterns of motion' are not fixed to things as subject-predicate (substantial) attributes derived from a transcendental source. A plurality of things can be deployed to instantiate one pattern of motion, *yang*. One particular thing (e.g., a mountain) can be deployed to demonstrate different patterns of motion at different points of circles (e.g., *yin* or *yang*).

In the Aristotelian framework, 'things' can be distinguished by their *material boundary* and *location*. A '*movement*' is understood as the change of location in an absolute, homogeneous space in the Newtonian sense. 'Things' in *Yijing*, I would claim, do not predicate a fully actualized material (bodily) boundary against the others or

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45   Xi-Ci (系辞).

46   Qian (乾), Kun (坤), Kan (坎), Li (离), Zhen (震), Xun (巽), Gen (艮), Dui (兑).

47   Shuo-Gua (说卦).

an absolute background. How can one draw a fixed line between the sunny and the shady south side of the mountain? When one 'pattern of motion' is instantiated by a thing, it is a thing in a relationship with a counter-acting other(s).

When motion is deemed relational and ontologically real, an abstract, absolute, and static notion of space play no role. No such a notion of space is necessary, as an 'unmoved mover,' to account for how things move. Nevertheless, Chang has noted, in ancient China: "the conception of space is not homogenous, entailing regions-orientations different in status (the east-south-west-north-middle sides are defined with different relational status). Time is neither conceived in terms of era, like from ancient to now nor in terms of cycles like in spring-autumn. It ignores the eternal progressive sense of time" (1946, 30). These coordinates – mark how things move in relation to the sun and the earth.
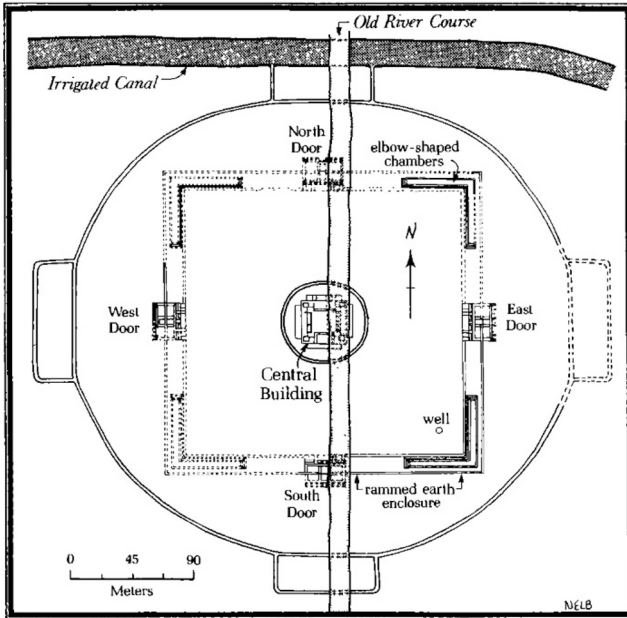
Before diving into abstract metaphysics any further, I will draw on some examples to demonstrate how ideas of things and space are embodied in the everyday practices and material figurations in ancient China. *Ming Tang*[48] is a well-documented example. Needham has once depicted such a bedroom of a Chinese emperor: "in the proper pavilion of the *Ming Tang* or the Bright House, no less his dwelling-place than the temple of the universe, the emperor, the clad in the robes of color appropriate to the season, faced the proper direction, caused the musical notes appropriate to the time to be sounded, and carried out all the other ritual acts which signified the unity of heaven and earth in the cosmic pattern" (Needham 2005 [1956], 287). Drawing on a particular *Ming Tang* built by Wang Mang (fig. 5), Wang has described how its architectural layout embodies *wuxing* categorization principles: "the central hall and four side chambers represent the five phases (*wuxing*), with each side chamber symbolizing one phase and one season, and the central room symbolizing the phase of earth and the middle of the year.... Wang Mang's ritual complex, therefore, submitted the hall of the five phases and the emperor occupying it to the authority of heaven (symbolized by a circle) and earth[49] (symbolized by a square), materializing the moral cosmology represented in the textual structure of '*wuxing zhi*'" (2006, 171).

Similarly, Bodde observed how a sense of relational coordinates underwrite the trivial details in the Chinese way of life: "it is to be found all the way from the formal arrangement of the furniture in a Chinese room to that rigid layout of city streets along north-to-south and east-to-west axes" (Bodde 1939, 201). He also believed that "the Chinese possess an amazingly acute sense of direction. When in China,

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48   Ming-Tang (明堂).

49   According to Zhu (2016), until the end of 19th century, the Chinese scholars still withhold the inherited cosmological conception of the earth, seeing it as square rather than sphere. Such a conception of earth is shaped by and has consolidated the ritualistic practices and material arrangements of state in longue durée.

Figure 5 Plan of the site of the ritual complex built by Wang Mang as a reconstruction of 'Ming Tang' from antiquity. (Illustration from Wang, Aihe. 2000. Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China. Cambridge studies in Chinese history, literature, and institutions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 170, fig. 4.1)

for example, one wishes to have a table moved to a different part of one's room, one does not tell the servant to shift it to his right m to his left, but to 'move it a little east' or west, or whatever the direction may be, even if it is a matter of only two or three inches" (ibid.).

The alignment between the 'bedroom's orientation,' the 'color of the robe from the emperor,' the orientation of 'a dining table' and 'street,' suggest the common categorization structures followed by a Chinese person in imperial times: *the yin-yang* or *five phases (wuxing*[50]*)*. In both systems, 'things' are categorized according to their ways of acting and reacting. Meanwhile, 'things' under the same category are

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[50]   Wu-xing (五行). More on the conceptual constitution, it's cultural and political implications, and historical developments of *wuxing* system, see Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China, by Aihe Wang (2000).

deemed to share the same tendency of change and have a positive mutual response (enhancing resonance[51]) with one another. Those under opposite categories are deemed to neutralize each other's generative forces and momentum when placed together. By following these principles, social actors can ensure the enactment of favored spatial configurations and the transformation of the unfavored ones. *Feng Shui*, the famous ancient Chinese geomancy strategy,[52] represents the culmination of such principles.

Regarding these categorization systems, Comparative philosophers like Needham (2005 [1956]), Chang (1952), Graham (1986), and many others have argued that, instead of subsuming one concept under another, the Chinese display their conceptions through 'side by side' relations. They argue, a *correlative way of thinking* is embedded in constructing "the symbolic correlations or correspondences all formed part of one colossal pattern" (Needham 2005 [1956], 281). The *wuxing system*, a derivation of the early *yin-yang* system, result from the same epistemic rules, which categorizes things (e.g., east, wood, green, wind, wheat) into a certain class, based on the assumed ways in which they interact and affect things in the other class. According to Needham, the five elements (*wuxing*) gradually came to be associated with every conceivable category of things in the universe, classify everything in fives (2005 [1956], 261). Table 4 shows only the tip of the iceberg of such an all-encompassing system. It differs drastically from the objective 'genius-species' logic in Aristotelian categories, as well as that from a social constructivist point of view. It is also worth noting that the sense relations between categories are legitimated by a particular type of experiencing subject (e.g., the sages), suggesting weak anthropocentric views[53].

To reiterate, I do not intend to verify if such systems are plausible by any criteria. For me, it materializes an (orthodox) correlative way of thinking about things by a myriad of 'symbolic ap-presentations' of things. To compare with the law of order in the Newtonian epistemic frame, Needham argued, in the Newtonian worldview, "if a particle of matter occupied a particular location in space-time, it was because another particle had pushed it there" (ibid., 285). In *wuxing* worldview, it was taking up because of "its place in a field of force alongside other particles similarly responsive. Causation was not particulate but circumambient" (ibid.). It resembles the Leibnizian *material seconda*, whereby *dao* is conceived as the universally valid general law.

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51   Gan-Ying (感应).

52   Feng-Shui (风水).

53   I draw on the thesis of 'weak anthropocentric' from Fan (2005). Fan argues, the Confucianism thinking entail primarily human-centered value, attend to human phenomenon. This anthropocentrism is 'weak' insofar that it is oriented toward cosmic principles.

Table 3 The five elements/phases (wuxing) categorization system, entailing symbolic corre-
lations among both social and natural things. (Needham, Joseph. 2005 [1956]. Science and
Civilisation in China: History of Scientific Thought 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 263, table 12)

Elements *hsing* 行	Rulers *ti* 帝	Yin-Yang 陰陽	Human psycho- physical functions *shih* 事	Styles of government *cheng* 政	Minist ries *pu* 部	Colou ssu 色	Instruments *chihi* 器
WOOD FIRE EARTH METAL WATER	Yü the Great [Hsia] Wen Wang [Chou] Huang Ti[pre-dyn] Thang the Victorious [Shang] Chihin Shih Huang Ti [Chhin]	Yin in Yang or lesser Yang Yang or greater Yang Equal balance Yang in Yin or lesser Yin Yin or greaterYin	demenaour vision thought speech hearing	Relaxed Enlightened Careful Energetic Quiet	Agricul ture War The capital Justice Works	green red yellow white black	Compasses Weights& measures Plumblines T-squares balances

The *wuxing* system has integrated the logic in *yin-yang* categorization system, which has profoundly informed how symbolic and material things are known and ordered in Chinese history. Hence, from my perspective, such a *correlative logic* is a crucial epistemic rule to explain studying the constitution of space in ancient China. Furtheremore, the entrenched ways of knowing about 'things' and correlative categorizing and arranging principles *might* remain in the current-day practices.

3.4.2   Naming as a mode of differentiating and cohering

In the above discussion, we have compared the epistemic rules applied in categorizing things by Aristotle with that in *yin-yang* and *wuxing* system from traditional Chinese thoughts. Categories are deemed universal when the designator entrusts a substantial-realist ontology and provides an inventory of every object that is actually and possibly exists. This speaks to the 'categorial realism' in Aristotle's primary and secondary substance (i.e., quantity, quality, relation, place) (see Studtmann 2018). They are also deemed conceptually universal also when the nature of the mind and their 'cognitive objects' is conceived to be the same. It applies to the 'categorial conceptualism,' such as Kant's twelve pure concepts (see Carr 1987, 6).

Yet, the later scholars, subscribing to either realist or idealist spirits, realize the necessity to develop two separate systems of categories for characterizing things' two different but correlated *dimensions*: the dimension of meaning and objects. The realist philosopher John Stuart Mill once differentiated the 'concrete name' from the 'abstract name' by their association to the 'singular' or 'general' category of things. A concrete name is a name that stands for a thing (as an object, having material bodies), while an abstract name is *qua* 'ideal object' which stands for an attribute of a thing (meaning). Thus, John, the sea, this table are names of things. White, also, is a name of a thing, or rather of things" (see Mill 2009 [1875], 16–17). Langer, from the

idealist tradition, introduced the particular perceiving subject in the equation. For Langer, on a concrete level, 'signs' indicate the existence – past, present, or future – of a thing, event, or condition. Signs are deployed as proxies for their objects, which are announced to the 'subjects.' Thus, the sign-thing relation is a triadic one: subject, sign, and object (2007 [1942], 42–68).

When it comes to the Chinese language, the taken-for-granted epistemic divide between the general and the particular, abstract and concrete, run into question. For example, Hansen noticed the 'count noun' and the 'principle of identity' were nowhere to be found in the Chinese language:

> Western languages mark this intuitive distinction with different kinds of nouns – count nouns and mass nouns. The river is a count noun. Water is a mass noun. A count noun has a principle of individuality built in. To understand the noun is to know how to count the objects it refers to. The principle of identity for a count noun allows it to gain and lose matter and still remain the same individual. (Hansen 1983, 46–47)

According to Ziporyn, to understand sign-things relations in Chinese philosophical thought, only two categories are needed: 'names' and 'stuff.' He states that "Chinese epistemology functions based on only names and stuff, no other entities, such as properties, attributes, essences, ideas, universals, or particulars, are necessary" (2012, 51). I would further argue that the fundamental categories in *yinyang* and *wuxing* – based on the assumed *patterns of motion* and conferred to the *dynamic tendencies* of things exhibiting in a particular context – are incongruent to the count and mass noun system. Such categorical systems do not speak for the constant, inherent attributes of thing(s) independent from time and space but for the relational property of things that emerged in context and the subject's perceptions. To be more specific, it assumes types of mutual resonance, feelings, and responses between human beings and things, which is essentially anthropocentric. Such systems also offer immediate information on the way in which things can be controlled, influenced, or disrupted by purposeful human beings. Human beings' socialized perceptions subject to such relational categorization (as indicated in table 3) and constitute the categorizations. The legal definition of the neighborhood from the Qin Dynasty can be used to highlight this point:

What does 'neighborhood' (silin[54]) mean?
'Neighborhood' means the members of one's mutual responsibility group

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54   Si-Lin (四邻).

(wuren[55]).

(Shui Hu Di Qin Mu Zhu Jian[56], 194, cite in Harbsmeier and Needham 1998, 55)

Similarly, neither *yin/yang* nor green/yellow/red/white are categories of things independent of the existence of perceiving subjects. The significance of human perceptual and expressive capacity in drawing the categorical system is explicitly addressed by Confucian philosopher Xunzi, in that: "When different forms make contact with the heart, they make each other understood as different things. If the names and their corresponding objects are tied together in a confused fashion, then the distinction between noble and base will not be clear, and the like and the unlike will not be differentiated." (Xunzi 2016 [n.a], 237)

A secondary question remains, how does the sign-thing association become consolidated and legitimated in ancient Chinese society? A common understanding is that the ancient Chinese denies the univocal correlation between 'names' and 'things.' It is also clearly stated in *Xunzi* that "names have no predetermined appropriateness. One seeks agreements in order to name things. Once the agreement is set and has become custom, then they are called appropriate, and what differs from the agreed usage is called inappropriate. Names have no predetermined objects." (ibid., 239). It acknowledges the arbitrariness regarding the association between the conceived name and the actual objects being referred to, as well as stresses the role of convention in consolidating such associations, suggesting an epistemological normativism.

Hansen's insight into the Chinese language has affirmed and exemplified Xunzi's statement as above. He noticed that Chinese nouns are not pluralized and thereby argue, this is both the cause and the consequence of the non-substantial ontology. He proposed a semantic and epistemological hypothesis in which "count nouns represent stable and unchanging objects in the Indo-European language, yet Chinese use mass nouns to refer to constantly changing *stuff* out of which objects are made" (Hansen 2000, 48, italic added). Furthermore, after conducting thorough anatomy of several schools of Chinese linguistic theory, Hansen proposes the 'mass-noun syntax' and a 'part-whole model' for explaining the logic underlying the name-thing relation. He elaborates further that "the world is a collection of overlapping and interpenetrating stuff or substances. A name … denotes … some substance. The mind is regarded not as an internal picturing mechanism that represents the individual objects in the world. Instead, it is seen as a faculty that discriminates the boundaries of the substances or stuff referred to by the names." (ibid., 243)

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55   Wu-Ren (伍人).
56   Shui Hu Di Qin Mu Zhu Jian (睡虎地秦墓竹简)

The idea that to name is the act of 'discrimination and distinguishment' for the experiencing subject resonates with other Chinese classics narratives. It is also consistent with the anthropocentric understanding of perception and conception. For instance, as Xunzi puts it, "what makes humans is that they can make distinctions . . . birds and beasts have fathers and sons among them but not the intimacy of father and son; they have male and female but not the division of male and female. Thus, the essence of being a man involves making distinctions." (ibid, 35). What remains to be discussed in Hansen's linguistic theory, however, are the more specific rules followed in the act of naming and how truth is recognized despite the inconsistent names.

To bring more lucidity to the weak anthropocentric epistemic rules, we still need to ask, i.e., who names and how? As I have indicated in section 3.3.3, 'naming' is conceived by Confucius scholars as a privileged capacity and exclusive right for 'the sages.' Normatively speaking, the sages are deemed entitled to 'order the names', i.e., setting socio-political rules for other inferior members. In empirical reality, 'the sage' usually refers to the authoritative figures in a community, the elder in the family, the gentry in a village, or the emperor of a kingdom[57]. According to the earliest classic Chinese literature, the origin of names of natural things, as well as names of human-invented artifacts, is attributed by the sage-like figures. The yellow emperor[58] is one of them, who assigned the correct designations to the various things[59]. Throughout history, the validity of names is dominantly legitimated by the sage's credentials and the incumbent political system (Hall and Ames 1987; Hansen 2009 [1992]). In this context, 'names' are not justified by 'logical acts' (analytic judgments), reflection, abstraction, or democratic public consensus. The sage-centered view explains why the most drastic name system changes correlate with the overturn of political regimes in Chinese history.

In addition to the principle of conventionality and coherence, Hansen's argument also brings non-correspondence, non-representational, and affective and contextual principles into understanding traditional Chinese thought's knowledge conditions. He argues, in short, despite the Chinese language's pictographic nature, signs are not conceived to *represent* objects or events. It calls for a designator's active mental context and convention to tie language to the world (ibid., 38). By comparing the rules according to which poems were written in Chinese and Greek tradition, Jullien (2000) has made this point especially clear. He argues that the Greeks conceive poetry in terms of *representation*, whereas the Chinese relate

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57   The living elder in the family, not the parents of the new-born have to right to name the newborn baby.

58   The yellow emperor (黄帝).

59   Zhengming-Baiwu (正名百物).

it to *incitement*. He further elaborates that the act of representing is to "put before the eyes," "create a tableau," and to "give a convincing impression of its truth" (2000, 162-163). To incite is to "borrow from external reality to introduce what one feels to unburden oneself" and to "stir up the readers' emotions" (ibid. 142). This calls for an "external co-anesthesia" arise "on the level of subjective emotional response." It is more "immediate than analogical" because the analogical "entrust[s] it to the external realities, the incitatory veritably stirs an interiority reacting to the stimulation of the world." (ibid., 152-153). Jullien's thesis coincides with my claims in 3.3 regarding the affect-based relational subjectivity. These theses have also affirmed that normative epistemic standards for validifying knowledge in traditional Chinese society are anthropocentric. Truth is partly constituted by the legislator's perception of the attributor's social position, the emotional response or resonance from perceiving subjects and trading off among all these elements.

In the previous section, I have discussed naming's regulative social function, particularly regarding the naming of social positions. According to Hansen, the act of naming and the names of things always engender and express actors' motivation, with implications for action. He argues that the Chinese are more concerned with the practical *effects* of language in behavioral terms than *representations* as – the ground for truth or fallacy of propositions. He proposes a *behavioral nominalist* perspective to account for how ideas, and the enforcement of such ideas, are integrated into names. The performative dimension of naming or names and the relationship to meaning is demonstrated in the fact that name (*min*[60]) is frequently considered "to cause certain possibilities to be realized (*ming*[61])."

Lastly, I arrive at my claims regarding the conceptualization of 'things,' how 'things' relate to the social-spatial order, and knowledge conditions in traditional Chinese thought. *Firstly*, a 'thing' is not considered to be fully actualized and predicated with fixed properties. Things are conceived to entail emergent capacity in a relational and interactive context. *Secondly*, subjects, particularly entitled and privileged social actors, are conceived as indispensable designators, to name things. Names are designated to discern forms of emergent relations among things and re-establish a correlative and hierarchical order.

3.4.3   Names, social bodies, and the city

I will now use a short anecdote about the re-naming of a city to illustrate how my claimed epistemic rules and truth conditions may be deployed in explaining the spatial phenomenon of our time: the renaming of a city. In 1988, a town-level city

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60   Ming (名).
61   Ming (命).

called Dayong[62] was upgraded into a prefecture-level city by the central government. The previous town center was designated as the location for the central administrative office of three adjacent townships. In 1994, the then little-known city of Dayong (from 1321-1994) was renamed after Zhangjiajie[63] – originally the name of a national park located in its jurisdiction. The park was enlisted as a UNESCO natural heritage site in 1992 and has become a well-known and popular destination for tourists ever since. According to a published interview, the urban administrators' intention to renaming the city from Dayong to Zhangjiajie is to extend the city's positive reputation as a UNESCO heritage site to the entire jurisdiction may attract the hotel and service industry to these areas (see Chinanews, January 24, 2011). The practice of renaming a city after its newly uncover potentiality – an emergent attribute – was perceived by Zhangjiajie's urban administrators as "a practical strategy for city branding, a strategy of consensus and common sense" (ibid., translation added).

In the post-reform era, Chinese cities' names often get altered. In Zhangjiajie's story, renaming is enacted by urban administrators and accepted by the local citizens without many opposing concerns. It reveals the notion 'city' refers neither to a place with a fixed territorial boundary nor inherent identity/form, prescribing a structuring force for future development. A particular name (e.g., Dayong) is also not conceived as the representation of such material or symbolic entities. The report mentions that older locals would still prefer to address themselves as a Dayong-er rather than Zhangjiajie-er, indicating this name has constituted part of the local citizens' identity. However, both the administrators and the citizens are pleased to expect that the 'outsiders' such as tourists will associate the newly extended area (including the old Dayong area) with the name Zhangjiajie. In renaming, the new name addresses mainly an emergent possibility, i.e., how the area would be perceived by future visitors. Meanwhile, along with the new name, the urban administrators also initiated a new orientation for the local development plan – to relocate the administrative center and redirect the city's future development model (pattern of motion) towards tourism. The new name suggests the new movement which the name designator hopes to enact: to be part of the UNESCO heritage and its tourism program. It indicates that a city's name plays less of a role in representing a material form, a location, or a perceived historical identity (corresponding to and preserving a substantial unchanging attribute). Its major role is to address the change to be propelled.

In ancient Chinese cities, the name-territory-social bodies also always do not 'match.' Max Weber declared that traditional China was an empire without true cities, without what he called 'complete communities.' His normative standpoint

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62   Dayong (大庸).
63   Zhangjiajie (张家界).

reflects the self-governing Western European city model, with its name, local citizenry, and material boundary extending back to the sixteenth century (1959 [1951], 13). The work of Skinner et al. on Chinese cities in the late imperial period has clearly demonstrated a disjoint name-territory relation has its historical roots:

> A capital city had no corporate existence apart from the total administrative territory of which it was the node and the symbol. Capitals were known by the name of their administrative units, the generic included, no distinction is made in either written or spoken Chinese. The word for the province, *Sheng*[64] was also used to mean the provincial capital city. It is entirely in keeping with Chinese cognition in general that the geomantic (*feng shui*) fate of a county was held to derive from the sitting of its capital city (taking the surrounding into consideration). (Skinner et al. 1995 [1977], 262)

The asymmetrical agency between the urban administrator and the citizens is also addressed:

> Social organization in the city are vastly distinct from that in the western cities. Citizens don't have urban identities, administrative center Yamen, or the court is seen as quintessential of urbanity, normally located in the central place of the city, was supposed to be the central institution of administration, the most immediate and frequent encountered form of imperial authority for the residents in its jurisdiction. In fact, 'towns and counties were alike governed.' (ibid., 275)

The contemporary anecdote and the two historical narratives imply a city-country continuum model in traditional Chinese society that stands in direct contrast to the autarkic, homogenous, and bounded city-state model in ancient Europe. In this case, the part-whole principle illuminates how such a reality is associated with a name. The *name* of the central part (the capital city) is deemed a driving force for developing the whole province at a territorial scale. Undoubtedly, only the subjects who hold the highest political position are entitled to name and demarcate. Authorities dominant the agency to name, make rules and mobilize resources, i.e., to actualize its envisioned mode of change.

3.5   Summary

In this chapter, I have elucidated how the 'social subject,' 'things,' and their sense relations on a collective level are conceived in traditional Chinese philosophy. In 3.2, I have focused on the postulations about the nature of the 'social subject' and the formation of subject-subject relations. I argue that the Confucian thinking has

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64   Sheng (省).

prescribed a causal primacy to relational, sensual subjectivity than individual, re-flective subjectivity. More concretely, my *first* claim is that: in defining subjectivity, a spatial-relational property is prioritized, in terms of affective and cognitive structures to account for the constitution of social practice and experience. *Secondly*, I identified *two-fold* spatial-relational properties prescribed in the prototype social relations prescribed in Confucianism. One is *ren-affection-intimacy*, and the other is *li-reverence-hierarchy*. The two coordinates correlate positively in the sensible magnitude of *closeness-distance*. It legitimates the logical relatedness across the primordial normative social relations, as well as the possibilities for extensionality. Thirdly, a sense of social *relationality* is conceived *asymmetrical and affect-laden*, which actively emerges from and get re-defined by the mind-senses of the participating social actors in the course of their social interactions. As a causal agent, relationality is firstly conceived real on the level of affect, which is then inferred to explain the relationality in perception, social practice, and normative orders.

My analysis of 'things' and 'names' in chapter 3.4 suggests that, firstly, *thing(s)* is assumed to possess emergent capacity, which exhibits in relational, interactive contexts than substantial attributes independent of the others and the perceiver. The *yin-yang* or *wu-xing* categorical system demonstrates a correlative epistemic logic of ordering things. Hence, the placement of the things according to/reversing such epistemic order is believed to either enhance or interrupt the mutual resonances between the things, enable administrating or maneuvering the motion of things. Secondly, the names of things fall between the abstract and concrete, or the purely conceptual and actual representational categories. Names are constructed in accordance with the conceived emergent properties of the things. Naming is normatively defined as a privileged agency entitled to the social elites. To name, for the 'exemplary' and the 'sage man,' means to reproduce a certain social order and to enforce a starter of a new process of reordering.