

# THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

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# **The Power of Language:**

**Correcting Names in Chinese Thought and Society Past and Present**

**Symposium organized by the Chiang Ching-kuo International Sinological Centre  
at Charles University, Prague**

**November 18–19, 2022, Prague, Voršilská 1, Czech Republic**

Na obálce použít obraz Dalibora Chatrného: Spektra,  
1972 (Muzeum umění Olomouc, foto: Markéta Lehečková)



# FACULTY OF ARTS

## Charles University

International Sinological Center at Charles University

The Power of Language:

Correcting Names in Chinese Thought and  
Society Past and Present

Interdisciplinary symposium organized by the Chiang Ching-kuo International Sinological Centre at Charles University in Prague dedicated to the topic of “correcting names” (*zheng ming* 正名) and its multiple repercussions throughout Chinese thought and society from antiquity to the present day.

November 18–19 (Thursday to Saturday)

無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。

What does not have a name is the beginning  
of Heaven and Earth; what does have a name  
is the mother of all things.

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The relationship between names and reality has been a cardinal topic in philosophy East and West. It is also the topic that exposes, in the most blatant way, some long-standing cross-cultural gaps in understanding. While the problem of language is traditionally framed as epistemological rather than ethical, we often find it difficult to account for the close link between names and cosmology, or names and power, made in classical Chinese texts. Yet, the very questions regarding the topic of names are largely determined by our underlying ontological assumptions that may or may not be cross-culturally valid. An ontology based on relatively stable and discrete entities will give rise to a whole different set of questions than the one emphasizing process, continuity, and change.

With a shift of ontological perspective, the emphasis on “correct names” could be interpreted as a logical response to the need for at least provisional stability and accountability in an ever-changing world. Rather than labelling of objects, naming could be seen as a structuring act through which the world is appropriated. This view,

however, opens a whole new range of questions: such as the role of names as a basis of social cohesion and political order, or the relationship between naming and authority. At the same time, any licentious use of language represents a potential threat to social stability, and civilisation itself (Xunzi 22: “to mince words and recklessly create names ...is just like the crime of forging tallies and measures.”). Finally, those who hold the power over language can use it to create, manipulate and distort reality for others. Therefore, the problem of naming can no longer be treated separately from the questions of agency, ethics, and political power.

In the present interdisciplinary symposium, we hope to bring together a group of scholars working on different periods of Chinese history, including contemporary China, to discuss the phenomenon of “correct naming” in different manifestations and contexts. Contributions from the disciplines of philosophy, history of ideas, literature, linguistics, anthropology, social and political studies and any other perspectives are all welcome.

The possible topics for discussion include:

- 1) Instances of *zheng ming* 正名 in different contexts and periods of time
- 2) Language, power, and manipulation – using language as a tool for shaping reality
- 3) What is specific about Chinese view of *zheng ming* 正名 as compared to linguistic orthodoxy or manipulation in other parts of the world
- 4) Cases of free use of language as a creative act, an act of rebellion, a way to self-understanding, or a challenge to shared value system.
- 5) How the *zheng ming* 正名 tradition transformed in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century China

# The Power of Language: Correcting Names in Chinese Thought and Society Past and Present

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November 18–19, 2022, Prague, Voršilská 1, Czech Republic

## DAY 1

9:00 – 9:30

Opening remarks by Olga Lomova

9:30 – 10:30

Keynote: Carine Defoort  
University of Leuven, BE

Unfreezing and Untangling the Modern  
Notion of Zhengming 正名: From Kang  
Youwei to Hu Shi

10:30 – 10:45

coffee break

10:45 – 13:00

Panel 1 – Early China

Chair: David Machek University of Bern, CH

Federico Brusadelli  
University of Naples  
“L’ Orientale” , IT

Building Sovereignty Through Names:  
The Concept of Ming 名 in the Han Feizi  
韩非子

Kateřina Gajdořova  
Charles University, CZ

Creating and managing the world  
through names: ming 名 between Daoism  
and Legalism

Ivana Buljan  
University of Zagreb, HR

From grasping to shaping reality:  
Ming/shi in the Statecraft chapters  
of the Chunqiu fanlu

13:00 – 14:00

lunch + coffee

14:00 – 15:30

Panel 2 – Comparative perspective

Chair: Tea Sernelj University of Ljubljana, SI

Dawid Rogacz  
Adam Mickiewicz  
University in Poznan, PL

Rectification qua operation: operational  
definitions as a logical basis for  
the program of zheng ming

David Machek  
University of Bern, CH

Correct Naming in Chinese  
and Greco-Roman Tradition:  
the big picture

15:30 – 15:45

coffee break

15:45 – 17:15	<b>Panel 3 – Medieval thought and neo-Confucianism</b>	<b>Chair: Federico Brusadelli</b> <b>University of Naples“L’Orientale”, IT</b>
	Dušan Vávra Masaryk University, Brno, CZ	Correct naming in early medieval China
	Ming Tak Ted Hui University of Oxford, GB	Wang Anshi and his “Rectification of Names” : How the Concept was Used and Understood in the Song Dynasty?

**18:30**

**Dinner (Restaurant Dynamo)**

## DAY 2

9:30 – 10:30	Keynote II: Jana Rošker University of Ljubljana, SI	Ming 名 and shi 实 as Concepts and Objects: A comparative approach to Gongsun Long and Adorno
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**10:30 – 10:45 coffee break**

10:45 – 12:15	<b>Panel 4 – Modern and contemporary philosophy</b>	<b>Chair: Kateřina Gajdošová</b> <b>Charles University, CZ</b>
	Jan Vrhovski University of Ljubljana, SI	Correcting the Logic of Names: Zhengming in the Analytic Modernisation of Chinese Academic Philosophy, 1920s-1940s
	Margus Ott Tallinn University, EE	Contextualization, decontextualization, interpenetration: dimensions of language through zhèngmíng 正名, xíngmíng 刑名, and wúmíng 無名.

**12:00 – 12:30 coffee break**

12:30 – 13:15	<b>Panel 5 – Contemporary Politics</b>	<b>Chair: Olga Lomová</b> <b>Charles University, CZ</b>
	Ralph Weber University of Basel, CH	The Politics of Naming Reality: From Confucius to Xi Jinping

**13:15 – 13:45 Wrap-up Round Table**

**14:00**

**lunch**

# Unfreezing and Untangling the Modern Notion of Zhengming 正名: From Kang Youwei to Hu Shi

Carine Defoort, KU Leuven, Belgium  
Keynote address

## Abstract

The notion of *zhengming* 正名, or the “correction of names,” is a popular research topic in the field of Chinese philosophy. Inspired by Hannah Arendt’s idea of “thinking” about “frozen thoughts,” this paper tries to unfreeze this modern discourse by tracing the entanglements of its historical emergence at the turn of the twentieth century. The two main protagonists are Kang Youwei in his portrayal of Confucius as a reformer and Hu Shi in his recreation of an indigenous Chinese philosophy.

International Sinological Center at Charles University, Prague

The Power of Language:  
Correcting Names in Chinese Thought and Society Past and  
Present

November 17-19, 2022

PAPER PROPOSAL

**Building Sovereignty Through Names: The Concept of Ming  
名 in the *Han Feizi* 韩非子**

Federico Brusadelli

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Han Fei (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE), retrospectively declared the “guiding spirit” of an intellectual lineage that the Han came to call the “Legalist School” and irredeemably associated to the rise and fall of the First Empire, has often been neglected as a philosopher, being judged rather as the cunning and cultured author of a manual for the construction, consolidation and exercise of power, with no regard whatsoever for the understanding or definition of “higher principles”.

In the last two decades, a renewed interest – also expanding to other authors labeled as “Legalists”, as Shang Yang or Shen Dao – has managed to reevaluate the *Han Feizi*, disentangling it from the biography of its presumed author and from the Qin tyranny, and most importantly highlighting its rhetorical, literary and philosophical texture.

In my talk I wish to explore how the concept of “name” (*ming* 名) constitutes a pivotal element in the *Han Feizi* (with a special focus on **chapters 5 and 8**), as it represents the conjunction between **cosmological, psychological, and political** layers in the philosophical architecture of the text.

By this token, Han Fei’s description of the process of association between “**names**” and “**reality**” will be analyzed as the justification of and the foundation to those “**objective norms and standards**” through which the sages can build sovereignty and efficiently administer the State. The “rectification of names”, in this sense, means their politicization and **bureaucratization**, in other words the expansion of **sovereignty** over language.

In its “theory of names”, the *Han Feizi* also intervenes in the debate over the **natural** or **artificial** origin of social values and political system, providing fascinating, but often ambiguous answers. Han Fei’s theory of the political use of “correct names” will finally be compared to other “realist” thinkers and considered as entailing profound (and to some extent, profoundly relevant) views about human nature, free will, **decision-making**, social control techniques, and authority.

Analyzed passages:

### 《主道》

道者、萬物之始，是非之紀也。是以明君守始以知萬物之源，治紀以知善敗之端。故虛靜以待令，令名自命也，令事自定也。虛則知實之情，靜則知動者正。有言者自為名，有事者自為形，形名參同，君乃無事焉，歸之其情。

### 《揚權》

用一之道，以名為首。名正物定，名倚物徙。故聖人執一以靜，使名自命，令事自定。不見其采，下故素正。因而任之，使自事之。因而予之，彼將自舉之。正與處之，使皆自定之。上以名舉之，不知其名，復脩其形。形名參同，用其所生。二者誠信，下乃貢情。謹脩所事，待命於天。毋失其要，乃為聖人。聖人之道，去智與巧，智巧不去，難以為常。民人用之，其身多殃，主上用之，其國危亡。因天之道，反形之理，督參鞠之，終則有始。虛以靜後，未嘗用己。凡上之患，必同其端。信而勿同，萬民一從。

夫道者、弘大而無形，德者、覈理而普至。至於群生，斟酌用之，萬物皆盛，而不與其寧。道者、下周於事，因稽而命，與時生死。參名異事，通一同情。故曰道不同於萬物，德不同於陰陽，衡不同於輕重，繩不同於出入，和不同於

燥溼，君不同於群臣。凡此六者，道之出也。道無雙，故曰一。是故明君貴獨道之容。君臣不同道，下以名禱，君操其名，臣效其形，形名參同，上下和調也。

### 《八經》

明主之道，臣不得以行義成榮，不得以家利為功。功名所生，必出於官法；法之所外，雖有難行，不以顯焉；故民無以私名。設法度以齊民，信賞罰以盡民能，明誹譽以勸沮，名號、賞罰、法令三隅，故大臣有行則尊君，百姓有功則利上，此之謂有道之國也。

# Creating and Managing the World through Names:

## *ming* 名 between Daoism and Legalism

Kateřina Gajdořov

(Charles University in Prague)

Premise: Every philosophical question is embedded in a larger referential framework of pre-understanding of the universe and its functioning; this framework often remains non-reflected and non-thematized. However, our contemporary philosophical devices allow us to identify and move between different ontological frameworks ('switch perspectives'), without necessarily postulating one universal framework. Doing 'comparative philosophy' should therefore come down to doing systemic philosophy in the present time.

Main points:

- All phenomena discussed in early Chinese texts are tied to a broader framework of **cosmology of oneness, continuity, and perpetual change** (things flow, emerge and relapse, cycle back and return).
- This cosmology does not offer a source of 'ontological reliability' other than **a repeated pattern** (there is no absolute, no transcendent realm, no substance, no *eidos* or timeless essence in it); therefore, things 'ex-sist' only provisionally, they arise from a continuum and relapse into it.

- In this framework, a thing is defined by its **boundary** with what it is not; **names are** a way (an act) of **posing a boundary** between what a thing is and what it is not, or what it should and should not be (shi 是/fei 非).
- During the great social disruption of the Warring States period, the reliability of names was undermined; the traditionalists (Ruzhe 儒者) sought to re-establish stability through **solidifying the patterns** of old and **protecting boundaries** (established by names).
- Anti-traditionalist strands of WS thought embrace the unstable character of things and the instrumental character of names in establishing the shared reality; Daoists-Legalists are those aware that **boundaries can be shifted**, and names can be used to carve things out in a different way, i.e., that the **link between names and things is not given**.
- **Names are recognized as a powerful tool** through which boundaries are imposed (or abolished); some prefer to use this tool **to gain a radical sense of freedom** from constraints imposed by the society; others have spotted the opportunity to use it **to pursue their practical goals**, from effective persuasion through demagogy to manipulation; the utmost expression of the instrumental character of names is the system of (written) **laws and standards**.
- Because they impose boundaries on what is fundamentally boundless (and continuous with the rest), **names naturally involve an element of constraint or restriction**.

Excerpts:

### **Shen Buhai 申不害, 1.4**

名者，天地之綱，聖人之符。張天地之綱，用聖人之符，則萬物之情無所逃之矣。

Names constitute the main cord of the net of heaven and earth; they are the tallies of the sage giving him authority over all things. When the ruler casts out the main cord of the net of heaven and earth, and makes use of the tallies of the sage, then no aspect of ten thousand things can elude him.

### **Guanzi 管子, Xinshu shang 心術下**

凡物載名而來。聖人因而裁之，而天下治，實不傷不亂於天下，而天下治。

It is ever so that things come bearing names. The sage relies on these to make decisions so the world will be well regulated. If actualities are not misnamed, there will be no confusion in the world and the world will be well regulated.

### **Han Feizi 韓非子, Yang quan 揚權**

用一之道，以名為首。名正物定，名倚物徙。故聖人執一以靜，使名自命，令事自定。

Following the method of the One, one must take names as a starting point. When names are adequate then things are settled. When they are slanted then things go astray. That is why the sage, holding on to the

One, remains quiet and lets the names be attributed by themselves, lets the tasks to be defined by themselves.

### **Heng xian 恆先 (excavated text from the Shangbo collection)**

有出於域，生出於有，音出於生，言出於音，名出於言，事出於名。

Something defined arises from the boundaries; the living arises from the defined; sound arises from the living; speech arises from the sound; names arise from the speech; things to do arise from names.

凡言名：先者有疑，荒言之。後者校比焉。

In general, when using the names to speak: at first people use them vaguely, without precision. Those who follow compare and contrast them.

舉天下之名，虛樹。習以不可改也。

As regards the names in the world, at first they are established as empty. But once they have become habitual, they cannot be changed.

# From grasping to shaping reality: Ming/shi in the Statecraft chapters of the Chunqiu fanlu

Ivana Buljan

In my talk I will focus on the conceptual pair *ming* 名/*shi* 實 in the »Statecraft chapters« of the *Chunqiu fanlu*. These chapters establish a kind of naturalistic approach to rulership that seeks normativity in the realm of nature. It is built around an ultimate goal: maintaining the ruler's political power and authority. In these chapters the pair *ming/shi* (»the notion of accountability«) is advocated as the main technique of administering bureaucracy.

Hypothesis: The conception of *correct naming* is shaped by the paradigm of cosmos and its processes, such as the process of constant change and the process of gradual accumulation which is the basis of any creation.

- The conception of correct naming implies an idea that *shi* (lit. fruition, harvest (Sellman)) is not stative, but rather is everchanging. It has not only situational, but also temporal (and processual) dimension. Hence, the epistemic problem with the correct naming is the problem of grasping the changing (and accumulated) reality.
- The second problem is that one's *shi* is often hidden. Thus, the act of naming which starts with the grasping of reality requires the epistemic position of non-action (*wu wei*).
- As the reality is always changing, *zhengming* is an endless process.
- Regarding the question of what does the practice of correct naming consist in and what is the purpose of correcting names, I hold a view

that correct naming consists in grasping (hitting) (*ji 擊*), labelling, structuring, translating the inner reality to outside, but its main purpose is generating the new reality. This new reality is self-generative (if the process of correcting names is done properly, i.e., if it follows the process of nature.) . This supports my view that the concept of correcting names has to be understood in a processual, active and dynamic way. In this context, language is not only a medium of knowledge of the world, but also an activity that produces far-reaching consequences on human experience and action. Hence, the role of language is not only “grasping”, but also shaping reality.

Excerpts:

Chapter 20 (Bao wei quan):

故為君，虛心靜處，聰聽其響，明視其影，以行賞罰之象。

其行賞罰也，響清則生清者榮，響濁則生濁者辱，

影正則生正者進，影枉則生枉者絀，

擊名考質，以參其實。

賞不空施，罰不虛出。

是以群臣分職而治，各敬而事，爭進其功，顯廣其名，而人君得載其中，此自然

致力之術也。

聖人由之，故功出於臣，名歸於君也。

Therefore, one who acts as a ruler empties his mind and dwells in stillness, acutely listens to their echoes, sharply watches their shadows, in order to carry out a model (*xiang*) of rewards and punishments

His carrying out of rewards and punishments is as follows:

When the echo is clear then one who caused the pure echo will be honored, when the echo is impure then one who caused the impure echo will be disgraced.

When the shadow is straight then one who caused the straight shadow is promoted,

when the shadow is crooked then one who caused the crooked shadow will be demoted.

**[In examining an official], he questions his nature (*zhi*) on the basis of his reputation (*ming*) in order to examine his actual situation (*shi*).**

Rewards are not given for nothing, punishments are not handed down for nothing.

For this reason, his many ministers divide their tasks and so the country is governed,

each respectfully carries out his duties and strives for and advances his achievement (*gong*), **and makes visible and expands his own fame (*ming*)** and then the ruler of men attains and holds their appropriateness (*zhong*).

This is the technique by which to naturally (*zi ran*) bring forth achievement.

The sage follows this, and therefore, **achievement (*gong*) exudes from his ministers,**

**and reputation (*ming*) is returned to the ruler.**

## Chapter 21 (Kao gong ming):

考績綏陡，計事除廢，有益者謂之公，無益者謂之煩

擊名責實，不得虛言，有功者賞，有罪者罰，功盛者賞顯，罪多者罰重。

不能致功，雖有賢名不予之賞；官職不廢，雖有愚名，不加之罰。

賞罰用於實，不用於名，賢愚在於質，不在於文。

故是非不能混，喜怒不能傾，姦軌不能弄，萬物各得其真，則百官勸職，爭進其功。

He examines [official's] merit and then demotes (*chu*) or promotes (*dou*), he sums up the results of his undertakings, and after that, he assigns him to a post or dismisses him, those who have done beneficial works are called „public-spirited“ (*gong*),

those who have not done beneficial works are called „problematic“ (*fan*).

**[In examining the official], he demands actual performance (*shi*) on the basis of his reputation (*ming*), and he is not satisfied with empty words.**

Those who have attained achievements are rewarded, and those who have committed misdeeds are punished. Those whose achievement is abundant are visibly rewarded.

Those who have committed many misdeeds are heavily punished.

**Those who are unable to attain achievement, despite possessing a reputation for worthiness, will not be granted rewards.**

**When official duties are not neglected, then despite an official has a reputation for foolishness, he will not be subjected to punishment.**

**Rewards and punishments are administered according to the actuality [of his performance], and not according to his reputation. Both the worthy and**

**the foolish exist according to their substance, and not according to their ornament (*wen*).**

Therefore, right and wrong cannot be mixed, happiness and anger cannot be overturned,

villains and traitors cannot prosper,

when each of the ten thousand things obtains its authenticity then hundred offices are stimulated to perform their duty (*zhi*) and they strive to advance their achievement.

# **Rectification qua operation: operational definitions as a logical basis for the program of *zheng ming***

Dawid Rogacz, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań, Poland)

The idea of the “rectification of names” (*zheng ming*) relates to a performative operation of retrieving the original meaning of the respective term in a way that accords with its “correct” social function. Hence, it cross-refers to the particular way of defining that was employed by Confucius and his disciples, which was, as I shall argue, operational in its nature.

The notion of operational definition comes from Percy Bridgman’s *The Logic of Modern Physics* (1927) and means that the definiendum is defined by a set of operations that results in determining the meaning of the term in question. This results in there being various yet not mutually inconsistent definitions of one term and in “paradigmatic examples” playing a crucial role. This mode of defining things had major implications for the content of Confucius’ thought, particularly for the scope and metaphysical implications of the Confucian rectification of names.

## **1. Operationalism: excerpts**

“In general, we mean by any concept nothing more than a set of operations; the concept is synonymous with the corresponding set of operations.” Bridgman 1927:5

“To say that a certain star is  $10^5$  light years distant is actually and conceptually an entirely different kind of thing from saying that a certain goal post is 100 meters distant.” Ibidem:17-18

“To know the meaning of a term used by me it is evident, I think, that I must know the conditions under which I would use the term.” Bridgman 1938:116

“If we have more than one set of operations, we have more than one concept, and strictly there should be a separate name to correspond to each different set of operations.” Bridgman 1927:10

“Many of the questions asked about social and philosophical subjects will be found to be meaningless when examined from the point of operations. It would doubtless conduce greatly to clarity of thought if the operational mode of thinking were adopted in all fields of inquiry as well as in the physical” Ibidem:31-32

Robert H. Ennis (1964): if-and-only-if formulation (conditionally) instead of strict equation.

$$\forall x [Cx \rightarrow (Ox \equiv Mx)]$$

when C – circumstances, O – operation, M – meaning

## 2. Operational definitions in the *Analects*

12.1-2 顏淵問仁。子曰：克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。

仲弓問仁。子曰：出門如見大賓。

[1] In the situation of subduing one’s emotions for one day, if you can return to ritual propriety, then it means you are benevolent.

[2] In the circumstances of being abroad, if you behave toward everyone as if you were receiving a great guest, then it means you have benevolence.

17.6 子張問仁於孔子。孔子曰：能行五者於天下，為仁矣。

Everywhere you go, if you practice five virtues, then it means you are benevolent.

1.11 三年無改於父之道，可謂孝矣。

In the circumstances of your father having died, if you adhere to his ways for the next three years, then it means you are filial.

2.6 孟武伯問孝。子曰：父母唯其疾之憂。

When your parents are alive, if you do not upset them [so that the only reason for their sadness is not dependent on you, e.g., it is caused by their sickness], then it means you show filial devotion.

12.6 子張問明。子曰：浸潤之譖，膚受之愬，不行焉。可謂明也已矣。

In the circumstances of facing with slanders or hasty accusations, if you do not base your actions upon them, then it means you are intelligent.

12.14 子張問政。子曰：「居之無倦，行之以忠。」

Should you be appointed an official position, if you occupy it without wearying and practice it dutifully, then it means you are prepared for governing.

Confucian operational definitions are:

- nominal (可謂)
- partial
- propertional
- context-dependent
- pragmatic

Bridgman, Percy. 1927. *The Logic of Modern Physics*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

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Rogacz, Dawid. 2022. "Operating with Names: Operational Definitions in the *Analects* and Beyond" *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 21: 19-35.

# Correct Naming in Chinese and Greco-Roman tradition: the big picture

David Machek

From the workshop “hypothesis”:

Rather than labelling of objects, naming could be seen as a structuring act through which the world is appropriated. ... Those who hold the power over language can use it to create, manipulate and distort reality for others. Therefore, the problem of naming can no longer be treated separately from the questions of agency, ethics, and political power.

To what extent can this approach to language be regarded as distinctive for the Chinese tradition? (G. Lloyd: the Greek concern is the discovery of truth, the Chinese concern is good action and administration)

- What does the practice of correct naming *consist* in?
  - is one supposed to correct or even invent names (T3), or rather reform the way one is using the names that already exist, as T1 and T2 suggest?
  - In both Chinese and Greek/Roman traditions, names are correctly used when they match underlying realities (T1, T2, T3); what about values -- are they realities as well?
- What is the *purpose* of correct naming?
  - enable or facilitate effective communication (T1, T2)
  - discover the truth about facts and values (T3 but also T1)
  - establish norms of conduct (T4, T5)

**T1** Claims such as “To be insulted is not disgraceful”, “The sage does not love himself” and “To kill a robber is not to kill a man” are cases of confusion about the use of names leading to disordering names. .... When objects (*shi* 實) are not understood, then one engages in naming. When the naming is not understood, then one tries to procure agreement. When the agreement is not understood, then one engages in persuasion. When the persuasion is not understood, then one engages in demonstration. Thus, procuring agreement, naming, discrimination, and persuasion are some of the greatest forms of useful activity, and are the beginning of kingly works. **When a name is heard**

**and a corresponding object is understood**, this is usefulness in names.  
(Xunzi, *Zhengming* 140-3; 171-9, transl. Hutton)

「見侮不辱」，「聖人不愛己」，「殺盜非殺人也」，此惑於用名以亂名者也。...

實不喻，然後命，命不喻，然後期，期不喻，然後說，說不喻，然後辨。故期命辨說也者，用之大文也，而王業之始也。名聞而實喻，名之用也。

**T2** Preconceptions (*prolepseis*) are common to all men, and one preconception does not conflict with another. For which of us does not assume that the good is expedient and choiceworthy and that in every circumstance we should go after and pursue it? ... So when does the conflict arise? In fitting preconceptions to particular entities, as when someone says, "He acted nobly, he is brave", and another says, "No, he is crazy". This is the source of men's disagreement with one another. ... What is education? **Learning to fit the natural preconceptions to particular entities in agreement with nature.**"  
(Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.22.1-9)

**T3** Suppose, for example, that we undertake to cut (*temnein*) something. If we make the cut in whatever way we choose and with whatever way we choose, we will not succeed in cutting. But if in each case we choose to cut in accord with the nature (*hoi pephuke*) of cutting and being cut and with the natural tool for cutting, we'll succeed and cut correctly. If we try to cut contrary to nature (*para phusin*), however, we'll be in error and accomplish nothing. ... And if speaking or saying is a sort of action, one that is about things, isn't using names also a sort of action (*to onomazein praxis tis estin*)? ... So if we are to be consistent with what we said previously, we cannot name things as we choose; rather, we must name them in the natural way for them to be named and with the natural tool for naming them. In that way we'll accomplish something and succeed in naming, otherwise we won't. ... Don't we instruct each other, that is to say, divide things according to their natures? – Certainly. – So just as a shuttle is a tool for dividing warp and woof, **a name is a tool for giving instructions, that is to say, for dividing being** (*organon diakritikon tes ousias*). (Plato, *Cratylus* 387a-388c)

**T4** Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about governing. Confucius responded, "Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons." The Duke replied, "Well put! Certainly if the

lord is not a true lord, the ministers not true ministers, the fathers not true fathers, and the sons not true sons, even if there is sufficient grain, will I ever get to eat it?" (Confucius, *Analects* 12.11; transl. Slingerland)

齊景公問政於孔子。孔子對曰：「君君，臣臣，父父，子子。」公曰：「善哉！信如君不君，臣不臣，父不父，子不子，雖有粟，吾得而食諸？」

### T5 How Can the Acts Appropriate To Man Be Discovered From the Names Applied To Him?

... Remember, next, that you are a son; and what is a person's calling in his character as a son? To regard everything that is his as his father's; to obey him in all things: not to revile him to another; to give way and yield to him in everything. Next know, likewise, that you are a brother. ... If, furthermore, you are on the council of any city, you should remember that you are a councillor. **For each of these names, if rightly considered, always points to the acts appropriate for it.** (Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.10.1-11)

# Correct naming in early medieval China – handout

Dušan Vávra

1) The texts share a general framework concerning the dichotomy between names and corresponding realities. All three texts suppose that there is an inner “reality” (*shi* 實) of a being/person out of which naturally arises the corresponding „name“ (*ming* 名), if the conditions are favourable.

2) I read Xu Gan’s *Balanced Discourses* as a treatise in which a Confucian scholar expresses his views on social/political questions he finds important. One of these questions are the conditions under which a scholar can succeed in acquiring a name (fame, reputation) properly. Wang Bi takes the *Laozi* as a text that – unlike the Canon – discusses the principles of ideal political/social order directly, and thus is the most important textual source for *understanding* those principles. I read Wang Bi’s text as a blueprint for ideal rule, in which names are „self-named“, that is arise naturally from reality due to the ideal world order being present. Guo Xiang seldom uses the term *ming* 名 (and where he uses it, it usually means „fame“) and his term forming the dichotomy with *shi* 實 is not *ming* 名 but *ji* 迹/跡 – „traces, footprints“. The manifested reality is not a natural expression of *shi* 實 in its corresponding „name“, but expression of *shi* 實 as formed by the actual conditions, the „terrain“ in which the footprints are imprinted. For Guo Xiang, the inner reality remains „mystery“ and the footprints do not reflect the nature of the walker, but the terrain. I will argue that the *Zhuangzi*, for Guo Xiang, is a text reflecting the same basic principles Wang Bi identifies in the *Laozi*, but viewed from outside (the perspective of things) and not inside (the perspective of ideal ruler). Furthermore, the outside perspective in Guo Xiang’s commentary reflects an imperfect world, in which the manifestation of inner reality is always distorted by the imperfect „terrain“.

Xu Gan: 名者、所以名實也，實立而名從之，非名立而實從之也。故長形立而名之曰長，短形立而名之曰短。非長短之名先立，而長短之形從之也。(…) 故偽名者皆欲傷之者也。人徒知名之為善，不知偽善者為不善也。惑甚矣。

A name is that which is used to name an actuality. When an actuality has been established, its name follows after it; it is not the case that a name is established and then its actuality follows after it. Thus if a long shape is

established, then it will be named 'long' and if a short shape is established, then it will be named 'short'. It is not the case that the names 'long' and 'short' are first established and then the long and short shapes follow after them. (...) Hence false name makers are all those who would harm names. People are aware only of the good that is done by names and are ignorant of the bad that is done by false name makers. They are greatly confused! (trans. by J. Makeham)

Wang Bi: 故仁德之厚，非用仁之所能也，行義之正，非用義之所成也。禮敬之清，非用禮之所濟也。載之以道，統之以母，故顯之而無所尚，彰之而無所競，用夫無名，故名以篤焉。用夫無形，故形以成焉。守母以存其子，崇本以舉其末，則形名俱有而邪不生。

That is why the abundance of the capacity of kindness cannot be brought about by making use of kindness; the correctness of the practice of righteousness cannot be achieved by making use of righteousness; and the purity of rituals and respect cannot be effected by making use of ritual. By supporting them [the entities] by means of the Way, controlling them [the processes], by means of the mother, [a ruler would] let [his kindness and righteousness] radiate without [the other entities] having anything to value highly; let [his understanding of ritual and respect] shine forth without [the ambitions] having anything to busy themselves about. Only by making use indeed of the Nameless, names will thereby be made straightforward! Only by making use indeed of the Shapeless, shapes will thereby be completed! If the mother was kept to as the means to maintain her [the mother's] offspring, the root was emulated as the means of keeping up its [the root's] outgrowth, then the shapes and names [of the ten thousand entities] would persist in their completeness and evil would not arise. (trans. by R. Wagner)

Guo Xiang: 夫堯實冥矣，其迹則堯也。自迹觀冥，內外異域，未足怪也。世徒見堯之為堯，豈識其冥哉！故將求四子於海外而據堯於所見，因謂與物同波者，失其所以逍遙也。然未知至遠之所順者更近，而至高之所會者反下也。若乃厲然以獨高為至而不夷乎俗累，斯山谷之士，非無待者也。奚足以語至極而遊無窮哉！

The actual Yao is a mystery, and it is merely the footprints he left behind that constitute "Yao." If one moved from looking at these footprints to observing

the mystery that he was, it should be no surprise that the inner and the outer turn out to be different realms. Since the common run of people merely saw the “Yao” that was “Yao,” how could they have ever recognized the mystery that he was! This is why they had him seek the Four Masters beyond the seas, while investing “Yao” in what they saw of him. This is why they said that he suffered the same vicissitudes of life as ordinary people and completely missed how he exercised spontaneous freedom. This is because they failed to understand that the way to comply with the most far-reaching is to revert to what is close at hand, and the way to join with the most lofty is to return to what is lowly. If one rigidly holds that only the lofty is perfect and won’t come level with the realm of vulgar attachments, such a gentleman of mountains and valleys will never be free from dependency, so how could he possess the wherewithal to talk about such things as “reaching the ultimate” and “wandering in the limitless”! (translation by R. J. Lynn)

# **Wang Anshi and his “Rectification of Names”: How the Concept was Used and Understood in the Song Dynasty?**

Ming Tak Ted Hui (University of Oxford)

## **Abstract**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) enacted a sweeping reform program. One of Wang’s policies was to rectify the official titles and clarify the social responsibility of each office. His New Policies, supported by Chen Yi 陳繹 (1021-1088), sparked a new round of discussions concerning the proper relationship between names and reality. This paper will first examine how Wang and Chen used the concept of “rectification of names” to promote their own political ideals. I argue that Wang and Chen sought to use the rectification of titles to (1) justify the expansion of their political power; and (2) introduce a mechanism of rewards and punishment. Then the presentation will investigate how various statesmen and philosophers respond to Wang’s ideals and explain the range of responses the Song scholars made. The criticisms of Wang show how the administrative ideals of Wang and his opponents were built on different assumptions: namely, how an official was motivated in the political system.

1. Extracts from Wang Anshi, “Careful Examination of the Miscellaneous Deliberations”

看詳雜議

今散官、勳官、檢校官，既不足以為人榮辱利害。為人榮辱利害者，唯有職事官與差遣而已。今若令內外官正其名稱，出則正刺史、縣令之名，入則還臺、省之名，則是丞郎知州謂之刺史，京朝官知州亦謂之刺史，不知職事官之貴賤，何以別乎？又其祿秩位次，不知當復如何？若同之則理不可行，若不同則與未名之時又何以異？

Now that the conferment of ‘Unoccupied Officials,’ ‘Meritorious Officials’ and ‘Inspecting Officials’ could no longer bring honour and prestige, nor could they cause insult and demerit. The only thing that could bring honour and prestige and cause insult and demerit is the conferment of the titles of the ‘Functioning Officials’ and ‘Commission Officials.’ Now assume we order the rectification of the names of all the metropolitan and provincial officials, commanding those who were sent out to have the titles ‘Regional Inspectors’ and ‘District Magistrate’ and returning the titles of the ‘Censorate’ and the ‘Department’ to those who entered the court. Then an aide sent to administer a prefecture would be called a ‘Regional Inspector,’ and a metropolitan official sent to administer a prefecture would also be called a ‘Regional Inspector,’ how would we distinguish the degrees of the noble and the mean of these functioning officials? Moreover, in terms of their official ranks and salaries, how should we deal with that then? If we set the same salary for them, this would be incompatible with the principles. If they were given a different salary, wouldn’t this be identical to the situation before we changed their titles?

臣以為今州郡長史謂之知州，非不正名，所領職事官，乃與前代刺史等帶檢校官無異，何傷於正名而欲改之乎？且漢以丞相史刺察州郡，謂之刺史，今欲名州郡長更為刺史，則何得謂之正名？

I believe that referring to the local government officials as the ‘Prefectural Prefect’ is not a problem of not ‘rectifying their names.’ The Functioning Officials these Prefects brought with them are no different from the Unoccupied Officials led by the Regional Inspectors in the previous age. Why were we stuck with the “rectification of names” and attempting to change their titles?

Moreover, the Han dynasty sent out the Censors of the Counselor-in-Chief to inspect each administrative region, which is why they were called 'Regional Inspectors.' If we change the titles of the administrators of each province and prefecture to 'Regional Inspectors,' how is this 'rectification of names'?

## 2. Extracts from Wang Anshi, "On Remonstrance Officials" 諫官論

今之諫官者，天子之所謂士也，其貴，則天子之三公也。惟三公以安危治亂存亡之故，無所不任其責，至於一官之廢，一事之不得，無所不當言。故其位在卿大夫之上，所以貴之也。其道德必稱其位，所謂以賢也。至士則不然，修一官而百官之廢不可以預也，守一事而百事之失可以毋言也。稱其德，副其材，而命之以位也。循其名，係其分，以事其上而不敢過也。此君臣之分也，上下之道也。

The remonstrance officials today are the *shi* of the Son-of-heaven. Those who are more distinguished would be His Three Preceptors. But since the Three Preceptors were responsible for the state's rise and fall, stability and turmoil, they took responsibility for every single matter. Even removing an officer or prohibiting one matter, they should advise on everything. This is why their ranks are higher than other officials. This is to show their superiority. Their virtues must match their positions, and this is what we call appointing the men of worth. But *shi* were different. He should simply work on the tasks of an official and should never interfere with the removal of all other ministers. He should limit himself to one affair and would not need to discuss all other faults. With the corresponding virtues and talent, they were thus appointed to their positions. They would follow their titles, take up their responsibilities, serve their superiors, and not dare to transgress. This is the duty of the ruler and his subjects and the Way of the superiors and subordinates.

今命之以士，而責之以三公，士之位而受三公之責，非古之道也。孔子曰：「必也正名乎！」正名也者，所以正分也。然且為之，非所謂正名也。身不能正名，而可以正天下之名者，未之有也。

Now people are appointed to the position of a *shi* but given the responsibility of the Three Preceptors. The fact that they have the rank of a *shi* but the task of

the Three Preceptors is not the Way of the ancient times. Confucius said, “What is necessary is to rectify names!” To rectify names is to clarify the duties. What we have done is not the rectification of names. It is impossible for those who cannot rectify their own names to correct the names of the world.

3. Extracts from Chen Yi 陳繹, “A Record of the Newly Constructed Eastern Office”  
新修東府記

古制文武弛張，名器有等，大小尊卑，靡不遵序。夫名者禮之分也，位者處其名之器也。名既正，然後任責之理得，而百事修明；名不正，則任責之理廢，而百事隳。必使望其器可以知其職，問其職可以知其人。

Under the rules of ancient times, the civil and military powers were in balance. There were different grades of name and capacity. The more honourable and the lower observed the order of rank. Now, names discern the ranks in rituals, and the positions show the capacity of a person who occupies the name (or the rank). If the names are rectified, there would be a clear principle on how the responsibilities are assigned – everything would be managed and comprehensible. . If the names are not rectified, there would be no principle on how the duties are assigned – everything would fall into chaos. We must ensure that when we look at a person’s capacity, we can then know his responsibility, and when we ask about his responsibility, we can then know the person.

4. Extract from *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (*Classified Conversations of Master Zhu*)

或云：「始者昭文館大學士兼同中書門下平章事，富鄭公等為之。後改為左右僕射，則蔡京、王黼首居是選。及改為左右丞相，則某人等為之。名愈正，而人愈不逮前，亦何預名事？」

Some may say, “At first, Fu Bi 富弼 (1004-1083) and his fellows served as the Academician at the Institute for the Glorification of Letters who jointly managed the Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery. Later, the titles were changed to the Left and Right Attendant Archers. Cai Jing (1047-1126) and Wang Fu (1079-1126) were among the first selected to take the roles. Then the

titles were changed to the Left and Right Prime Ministers, and others were promoted to that position. The names became more and more rectified, yet the people could barely be a match to their predecessors. How is this related to the affairs of the names?"

曰：「只是實不正，使名既正而實亦正，豈不尤佳？」

Zhu Xi replied, "This is just because the actual conduct is not rectified. Isn't it better when the names are rectified and the actual conduct is also proper?"

又曰：「人言王安石以正名之說馴致禍亂。且正名是孔子之言，如何便道王安石說得不是！使其名果正，豈不更佳？」

Zhu also said, "Some argued that Wang Anshi's use of the theory of the 'rectification of names' led to chaos and disaster. Yet, 'rectification of names' is Confucius' word. How can they simply say Wang Anshi was not right? Isn't it better if the names are truly rectified?"

# *Ming* 名 and *shi* 实 as Concepts and Objects: A comparative approach to Gongsun Long and Adorno

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## Second keynote

- The paper offers a contrastive analysis of the similarities and differences between Adorno's and Gongsun Long's conceptions of names and realities in the sense of concepts and objects
- The present account will focus on a single, narrowly defined aspect of their respective thought, namely their views on the nature and function of the above relationship as described in the two text fragments presented below.
- The two fragments were chosen because they summarize their respective views on the problem with which we are concerned. In the context of this problem, they can be considered representative.
- Nevertheless, in the contrastive analysis of these text fragments, I will also consider their respective contexts, that is the broader background of their theories contained in Adorno's important book *Negative Dialectics* and Gongsun Long's collection of essays *Gongsun Longzi*.
- The contrastive analysis will show that Adorno's critique of identitarian dialectics could be supplemented by the traditional Chinese principle of correlative complementarity, whereas Gongsun's discourse on concepts and objects could be enriched by the idea of the intrinsic value of the non-conceptual void, because it is precisely this transcendental realm that is a necessary condition for the possibility of conceptualizing actualities.
- Text fragments:
- 1. Adorno, *Negative dialectics*, 2004, p. 5: Yet the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify. Conceptual order is content to screen what thinking seeks to

comprehend. The semblance and the truth of thought entwine. The semblance cannot be decreed away, as by avowal of a being-in-itself outside the totality of cogitative definitions. It is a thesis secretly implied by Kant—and mobilized against him by Hegel—that the transconceptual “in itself” is void, being wholly indefinite. Aware that the conceptual totality is mere appearance, I have no way but to break immanently, in its own measure, through the appearance of total identity. Since that totality is structured to accord with logic, however, whose core is the principle of the excluded middle, whatever will not fit this principle, whatever differs in quality, comes to be designated as a contradiction. Contradiction is non-identity under the aspect of identity; the dialectical primary of the principle of contradiction makes the thought of unity the measure of heterogeneity. As the heterogeneous collides with its limit it exceeds itself. (Adorno 2004: 5)

- 2. 公孙龙，公孙龙子，名实论：天地與其所產焉，物也。物以物其所物而不過焉，實也。實以實其所實而不曠焉，位也。出其所位，非位，位其所位焉，正也。以其所正，正其所不正；以其所不正，疑其所正。其正者，正其所實也；正其所實者，正其名也。其名正則唯乎其彼此焉。謂彼而彼不唯乎彼，則彼謂不行；謂此而此不唯乎此，則此謂不行。其以當不當也。不當而當，亂也。故彼彼當乎彼，則唯乎彼，其謂行彼；此此當乎此，則唯乎此，其謂行此。其以當而當也。以當而當，正也。故彼彼止於彼，此此止於此，可。彼此而彼且此，此彼而此且彼，不可。夫名，實謂也。知此之非此也，知此之不在此也，則不謂也；知彼之非彼也，知彼之不在彼也，則不謂也。

# Correcting the Logic of Names: *Zhengming* in the Analytic Modernisation of Chinese Academic Philosophy, 1920s-1930s

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One of the main currents of the modernisation of Chinese philosophy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was fuelled by the introduction of analytic philosophy and modern logic to China. Amongst other intellectual phenomena, these introductions gave rise to the formation of the so-called Neo-Realist philosophical current, which was centred around the group of philosophers at Tsinghua University. Although conjoined by a common name and theoretical propensities, this group of philosophers was far from homologous in the ultimate realisations of their philosophical projects. Moreover, their research output also shifted in accordance with the current trends and developments in Chinese intellectual world, being swayed and propelled by changes in political and social climates. Thus, by the early 1930s, the results of their modern projects started to incorporate historical, retrospective modernisations of the Chinese philosophical roots, resulting in a series of new histories of Chinese philosophies, which sporadically also assessed the contemporary (modern) value of its core ideas in light of the modern scientific method and logical analysis.

## *Research Questions and the Main Approach:*

In my presentation I will be led by the research question: How did the introduction of modern early analytic philosophy into Chinese philosophical discourse influence the understanding of 正名? Striving to answer this question, I shall focus on the histories and philosophical treatises of Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 and other members of the Tsinghua school of philosophy. One of the main goals will be to assess the main characteristics of the occurrence and the approach

towards *zhengming* in the works of Feng Youlan. To pinpoint the broader intellectual-historical significance of my findings, I will also try to contrast them against or contextualise them in perspective with other related material from the time.

### *Primary Findings:*

- Contrary to expectations, the work of Feng Youlan does not contain in-depth theoretical reflection on the contemporary meaning of *zhengming* 正名, but rather, as emphasized by Jin Yuelin (1934), a “neutral” attitude towards history, without subjective preconceptions and theoretical inclinations.
- However, this cannot be said about certain other segments of Feng’s historical scholarship, for example, his active interpretative engagement with the content of Gongsun Long’s philosophy (1930) – focus on relations between individuals and universals – or his contextualising Neo-Confucian philosophy (e.g. Zhu Xi’s *li* 理) in the framework of New Realism (1932a-d).
- The importance of understanding the contemporary Chinese discourse on the history of Chinese logical thought. There were at least two contending approaches: one emphasized (Neo)Mohism and the other aimed at (re)discovering logic in the Mingjia 名家, especially Gongsun Long. Feng was inclined towards the latter.
  - Example in Feng’s opus: 墨子以為是亂之源，起於此等舊信仰之失墜，故竭力提倡此等舊信仰，而有天志明鬼等學說。此亦猶儒家者流以為世亂之源，起於傳統的制度之崩壞，故竭力擁護傳統的制度，而有正名等學說。(Feng 1935, 30-1)
- In historical regard, Feng distinguished between *zhengming* and *zhengming-ism* (*zhengming zhuyi* 正名主義; Feng 1934). The latter pertains primarily to socio-political order (functions) and current circumstances in the world (*luanshi* 亂世). *Zhengming* is to a larger part within the domain of Confucianism and Legalism (*zheng ming-shi* 正名實).

- Confucianism: *Ming* 名 is thus not *ci* 詞 in the domain of traditional “logic”. 因名不正而亂，故正名救時之弊也。(Feng 1934, 86)

# Contextualization, decontextualization, interpenetration: dimensions of language through *zhèngmíng* 正名, *xíngmíng* 刑 名, and *wúmíng* 無名.

Margus Ott, Tallinn University

1. In the **Confucian** “rectification of names” *zhèngmíng* 正名, the “names”, or language in general, help to take care of the community in its cultural and historical **context**. This does not preclude change, but this should be evolutionary. The criterion is implicit. It can be verbalized, but the verbalization depends on the context (who, where, when). One has to acquire a good embodied knowledge (especially through ritual and music) in order to be able to have a say in the correctness or incorrectness of designations.

“If names are not rectified, speech will not accord with reality; when speech does not accord with reality, things will not be successfully accomplished. When things are not successfully accomplished, ritual practice and music will fail to flourish; when ritual and music fail to flourish, punishments and penalties will miss the mark. And when punishments and penalties miss the mark, the common people will be at a loss as to what to do with themselves. This is why the gentleman only applies names that can be properly spoken and assures that what he says can be properly put into action. (13.3)

“Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about governing. Confucius responded, “Let the lord be a true lord, the ministers true ministers, the fathers true fathers, and the sons true sons.”” (12.11; Slingerland 2003: 139 and 129)

2. **Legalist** “form and name” *xíngmíng* 刑名. Legalist, as well as Neo-Mohist “name” serves as a claim. A Mohist claims that this is an ox; a Legalist claims that he will perform a certain action. It can be verified, whether it was an ox, or whether he performed that task (without under- or overperforming). Verification is easy because it is **detached** from contextual considerations.

“If the ruler wishes to bring an end to treachery then he examines into the congruence of *xíng* 刑 (form/standard) and claim (*míng* 名).” This means to ascertain if words (*yán* 言) differ from the job (*shì* 事).

A minister sets forth his words and on the basis of his words the ruler assigns him a job. Then the ruler holds the minister accountable for the achievement (*gōng* 功) which is based solely on his job. If the achievement fits his job and the job fits his words, then he will be rewarded. If, however, the achievement does not fit his job and the job does not fit his words, then he will be punished. (Han Feizi, "Two handles", tr. Makeham 1994: 72) (人主將欲禁姦，則審合刑名者，言異事也。為人臣者陳而言，君以其言授之事，專以其事責其功。功當其事，事當其言，則賞；功不當其事，事不當其言，則罰。)

3. **Daoist** "no-name" *wú míng* 無名. The Daoist "no-name" is a special expression that refers to a state *before* the actualization of situations, contexts, states of affairs, to their **interpenetrating** phase. Yet, it is still a linguistic expression and hence juxtaposing with other expressions. This manifests self-sublation in language.

"Nameless/No-name is the beginning of heaven and earth; Named/With-Name is the mother of all things" (無名天地之始；有名萬物之母; LZ §1)

"The simplicity of the Nameless is free from desires. Without desires and still, everything in the world settles by itself." (無名之樸，夫亦將無欲。不欲以靜，天下將自定; LZ §37)

# The Politics of Naming Reality: From Confucius to Xi Jinping

Ralph Weber (University of Basel)

Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (1983):

"Reality is that which is. The English word real stems from a word, which meant regal, of or pertaining to the king. Real in Spanish *real* means royal, reality is that which pertains to the one in power, is that over which he has power, is his domain, his, is his estate, is proper to him. The ideal king reigns over everything as far as the eye can see, his eye, what he cannot see is not royal, is not real. He sees what is proper to him. To be real is to be visible to the king. The king is in his counting house."

## 1. Ancient China

I argue that the Confucian *zhengming*-articulations should be read as political and in conjunction with the more realist tradition in ancient China, illustrated by this famous passage in the *Shiji*.

### 指鹿為馬

趙高欲為亂，恐群臣不聽，乃先設驗，持鹿獻於二世，曰：「馬也。」二世笑曰：「丞相誤邪？謂鹿為馬。」問左右，左右或默，或言馬以阿順趙高。或言鹿（者），高因陰中諸言鹿者以法。後群臣皆畏高。

vs. *Lunyu*: 13:3, 6:23, 12:17, 12:11, read as politics, not philosophy (and Defoort 2021)

## 2. Contemporary China and Xi Jinping

I illustrate how the politics of naming reality has well survived into modern times, particularly in the language politics of the CCP between deliberately reversing right and wrong, confusing black and white, while insisting on the moralistic discourse of *zhengming* when opportune or helpful in order to discipline.

Xi Jinping and 正名

## 盐铁论

明者因时而变，知者随事而制。

...quoted by Xi in speech at opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia (2013)

...quoted by Xi at 全国宣传思想工作会议 (2013)

### 3. The Politics over Naming Reality

- From “Chinese characteristics” to redefining terms: democracy, human rights, etc.
- White Book (2021) on *China: Democracy that works*: “Democracy is a concrete phenomenon that is constantly evolving. Rooted in history, culture and tradition, it takes diverse forms and develops along the paths chosen by different peoples based on their exploration and innovation.”
- Xinjiang: Vocational Skills Education and Training Centers (VSETCs, 职业技能教育培训中心)
- Levelling vocabulary and *zhengming* in the post-truth politics era

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