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Meaning-Construction in warring states philosophical discourse : a discussion of the palaeographic materials from Tomb Guōdiàn One
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Chapter 3

“QIÓNG DÁ Yǐ SHÍ” 窮達以時

3. “*Qióng dá yǐ shí*” 窮達以時 (Failure and Success Appear at their Respective Times)

Having discussed the feature overlapping structure by looking at the technique of meaning-construction in the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”, I shall now shift my focus to another argument-based text from Guōdiàn One: the “*Qióng dá yǐ shí*” (Failure and Success Appear at their Respective Times) with its highly elaborate and distinguishing type of argument-construction.

3.1. Introduction

The preceding discussion has described the various functions of the web-like structure underlying the makeup of an argument-based text: the feature ‘overlapping structure’, we have seen, technically marks off the core junction of an argument in an argument-based text.¹ The consistent use of the feature discussed can furthermore define the confines of a textual unit itself,² by which the text attains stability. In this context it was instructive to see that the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào” as a whole attains the form of the individual building block, that is, the macro structure of the text mimics the pattern of the individual building block, the basic constituent of the text.³ In this, the formal structure of the text reflects the contents of the same: the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào” describes the sovereignty over a political space that exceeds to everywhere, including the cosmic elements Heaven and Earth. This is reflected in the text’s structure, in which the formal perfection of the account spans over the entire text, just like the ruler’s transformative power of proper conduct (we might call this his *dé* 德) also spans over the entire world. It seems that form and content of the text are in congruence with each other.

As the subsequent discussion shows, even though the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is organized in a radically different fashion as compared with the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”; its structure, nevertheless, fulfils the same integrating function.

¹ In texts like the “Lǚ Mù gōng wèn Zǐsī” or the “Táng Yú zhī dào”, central claims are phrased in the form of the feature discussed above; in the case of the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”, the reverse happens: at the core junction of the argument-construction, the text breaks away from the ‘overlapping structure’ that otherwise coherently patterns the entire “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”.

² In a text like the “Lǚ Mù gōng wèn Zǐsī”, the feature overlapping structure closes the text and thus functions as a final stamp that defines the confines of the same; the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”, for its part, on the whole takes on the form of the overlapping structure, thus defining its textual confines.

³ The overlapping structure sanctions the memorability of a particular building block. By providing the entire text in the form of the overlapping structure, a text as a whole gains the stability of such a building block.

3.2. The Text on Bamboo

According to the reconstruction put forward by the editors of the Húběi Province Museum, Jīngmén (Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 湖北省荊門市博物館),⁴ the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” consists of 15 bamboo strips. The complete strips have a length of circa 26.4 cm each. The strips are tapered towards both ends. As we can judge from the marks on the strips that remain visible to the present day, two cords have previously connected the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” at a distance of 9.4-9.6 cm.⁵ As for the shape of the strips and the style of calligraphy, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” closely resembles the “Lǚ Mù gōng wèn Zǐsī”.⁶

The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is relatively well preserved. Of the 15 strips, two have both ends broken off. The missing parts probably contain some 17 graphs. The extant number of graphs is 289. This means that the text as it was placed in the tomb probably consisted of a total of circa 306 graphs.⁷ Despite the small scale of textual loss, its reconstruction proves to be highly difficult.⁸

So far, there is no consensus among modern scholars how to arrange the strips. Some readers, such as Ikeda Tomohisa 池田知久 and others hold that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” in its current form is incomplete. They assume that a certain number of strips should be added, preferably between strips 8 and 9.⁹ In contrast to this position, Chén Wěi 陳偉¹⁰

⁴ Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, pp. 27-28; 145-146.

⁵ Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, p. 145.

⁶ The “Lǚ Mù gōng wèn Zǐsī” 魯穆公問子思 (Duke Mù of Lǚ enquires of Zǐsī) consists of 8 bamboo strips. The text is composed in the form of a dialogue between Duke Mù of Lǚ and Zǐsī, and Duke Mù with the otherwise unknown minister Chéngsūn Yì 成孫弋 respectively. The text ends with a long apologia by Chéngsūn Yì held in support of Zǐsī, so as to convince Duke Mù that Zǐsī should be regarded to be a loyal minister *par excellence*, despite his direct displeasing to Duke Mù’s enquiry. Chéngsūn Yì’s apologia in support of Zǐsī is phrased in the pattern overlapping structure. Despite the physical similarity of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” with the “Lǚ Mù gōng wèn Zǐsī”, the two texts share no apparent textual relationship (and their argumentative pattern deviate completely from each other).

⁷ Among the different textual units consisting of 804 strips (some 730 of which inscribed) and inscribed with a total of about 13,000 graphs, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is of middle size in length.

⁸ For a detailed philological discussion of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, see the Appendix 2: “Reconstruction: “Qióng dá yǐ shí” 窮達以時” (chap. 10).

⁹ See Ikeda Tomohisa 池田知久 2000.1, p. 152. Several Chinese scholars subscribe to Ikeda’s assumption that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is incomplete. See for instance, Zhào Píng’ān 趙平安 2002, p. 20.

¹⁰ See Chén Wěi 陳偉 2002.

and Chén Jiàn 陳劍,¹¹ among others, feel that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is complete. Nonetheless, both scholars oppose the sequence of strips as suggested by the editors of the Húběi Province Museum and propose a substantially new arrangement of the text.¹² Despite this, as argued elsewhere,¹³ I contend that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” in its current organization¹⁴ is indeed complete and the sequence of strips is largely correct.¹⁵

3.3. Thought and Contents

“The dichotomy of Heaven and [M]an is one of the constants of Chinese thought,” Graham points out.¹⁶ His remark applies as well to the mid to late Warring-States treatise under discussion, whose precise dating and philosophical affiliation are an issue of continuous debate among modern scholars.¹⁷

¹¹ See Chén Jiàn 陳劍 2004, especially pp. 316-322.

¹² Chén Wěi suggests the following sequence of strips: 1-6, 8, 7, 14, 9-13, 15-end. Chén Jiàn, for his part, puts forward the arrangement of the strips as follows: 1-8, 14, 9-13, 15-end. Both scholars’ proposal of a new sequence of the strips poses problems in relation to both the structure and grammar of the text (except the minor change proposed by Chén Wěi to interchange strips 7 and 8 with each other, which I also put forward). With reference to the new arrangement of the strips, it is ineluctable that both scholars from time to time resort to far-fetched arguments. I shall refer to these positions in the appendix (chap. 10) under [J].

¹³ See Dirk Meyer 2005/2006 [2007].

¹⁴ As presented in Húběi shěng Jīngmén shì bówùguǎn 1998, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵ Except for the minor change to interchange strips 7 and 8 with each other.

¹⁶ Angus C. Graham 1989, p. 107. I have capitalized Man to stress the classical dichotomy of the two.

¹⁷ The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” employs the two concepts *qióng* 窮 ‘to fail’ and *dá* 達 ‘to succeed’ throughout. These also appear as a pair in the *Mèngzǐ* 孟子 “Jìn xīn shàng” 盡心上 and the *Lúnyǔ* 論語, “Wèi Líng-gōng” 衛靈公, for which reason Zhāng Liwén 張立文 1999 (a), pp. 218, 220 locates this text close to the late *Mèngzǐ*, or slightly thereafter; but certainly not prior to the *Mèngzǐ*—whatever that may mean [note that the *Mèngzǐ*, such as most early texts, is not one single entity but rather a ‘library’ that combines works reflecting different chronological origins. In his preface to the *Mèngzǐ*, Zhào Qí 趙岐 (d. 201 AD) already pointed out the difference between the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ chapters (see D.C. Lau 1993, p. 331, 332). Alluding to “internal variations of language, content, and form” Bruce Brooks presumes the *Mèngzǐ* to be heterogeneous in origin (see idem 1994, p. 52)]. Lǐ Cúnshān 李存山 (2002) carefully demonstrates similarities of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” with the transmitted texts of the *Mèngzǐ* and the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子. Wáng Zhìpíng 王志平 (2004), for his part, holds that the ideas of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” correspond closely to those of the *Xúnzǐ*, for which reason he conjectures that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” could be a work of a postulated ‘Xúnzǐ school’. In this regard his position is not so far from that articulated by Paul R. Goldin put forward in 2000, in which he assumes that the Guōdiàn One manuscripts—among others the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”—can be imagined to be “what Xúnzǐ learned in school” (ibid, p. 146) because Xúnzǐ’s positions appear “more systematically argued than anything to be found in the Guōdiàn manuscripts” (ibidem). For this reason Goldin concludes that there can be “little question” that Xúnzǐ was “influenced by the same

The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is fully in line with texts pinpointing to a seeming inequity caused by the power of Heaven over Man,¹⁸ culminating in Sīmǎ Qiān’s 司馬遷 moving account of Bó and Yí in the *Shǐ jì*.¹⁹ The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” does not set out to solve the apparent conflict between Heaven and Man. Instead, it rather aims to provide Man sort of a *Leitfaden* that allows him to deal with life’s imponderables, caused by Heaven.

The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” was unknown to modern readers prior to the excavation of Guōdiàn One. It pins down an intrinsic tension between Heaven and Man, which is innate in their relationship vis-à-vis each other, as the author(s) of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” assert. The text succinctly argues that, although Man can act, he has no means to decide the outcome of his action. This lies with Heaven. As a consequence, only when offered opportunity by Heaven, Man can succeed; otherwise he fails. Since Man cannot decide the outcome of his action anyway, he proves to be a *jūnzǐ* ‘gentleman’²⁰ only if not aligning his action with a certain goal, which he cannot predict to achieve anyway. Instead, the true gentleman as presented by the author(s) of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” only values his personal worthiness; worries about either failure or success are not of his concern. As we shall see later on, this exclusive focus on his own worthiness helps the gentleman (*jūnzǐ*) to free himself from the vicissitudes of (political) life, in which failure and success (imposed on Man by Heaven) may come in unpredictable, and often undeserved, ways.²¹

doctrinal set” (ibidem). As already stated in chapter 2 (p. 51, n. 4), I do not think that it is very helpful to draw such succinct (and speculative) lines of philosophical affiliations.

¹⁸ See, for instance, the *Xúnzǐ* “Yòu zuò” 宥坐, *Lúnyǔ* “Wèi Líng-gong” 衛靈公, *Hán shī wài zhuàn* 韓詩外傳, 7, *Shuō yuàn* 說苑 “Zá yán” 雜言, among others.

¹⁹ *Shǐ jì* 史記, Memoir 1.

²⁰ Whereas the “Zhōng xīn zhī dào” (chap. 2) denotes the ruler *jūnzǐ* ‘gentleman’, in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” this designation clearly refers to the group of ministers, advisors and so forth, which constitute the next layer beneath the ruler of a state.

²¹ See also Dirk Meyer 2005/2007 [2007], p. 183.

3.4. Structure and Thought

The decisive concern of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, namely the intrinsic tension between Heaven and Man, is expressed also in the formal structure of the entire composition. At every level throughout the text, a duality such as that of Heaven versus Man, success versus failure, *yǒu* 有 ‘have’ (or ‘be’) versus *wú* 無 ‘not have’ (or ‘not be’), among others, also applies to the formal structure of this text. As I shall argue in this chapter, the compositional pattern of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” bears a resemblance to the so-called ‘logic’ structure of the argument,²² and this is more than a mere device for patterning the text. Instead, I hold that *the compositional structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is consciously designed to mimic the so-called “logical” structure of the argument, which the texts aims to transmit.* In other words, it is a philosophically relevant element of meaning-construction in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. This has a direct implication for our analysis of this text. Being a philosophically relevant element of meaning-construction, the formal structure of composition requires explicit analysis. Otherwise, we may fall shy of understanding the subtleties of the philosophical intentions of this text.²³

The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” consists of two parts. These can furthermore be divided into six units, to which I refer with “sub-cantos”.²⁴ My analysis of the argument-construction as processed in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” follows two lines: first, a horizontal analysis of argument-construction; that is, a description of how the text generates a gradually rising tension from one sub-canto to the next, thus developing a linear argument. Secondly, a vertical analysis of argument-construction; that is, a description of how the text

²² Here and further below in my discussion of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, I use the word “logic” not in its rigorous sense: it is not meant to be a formal device for the study of the principles of valid inference on the one hand, that is, the process of drawing a conclusion based on what one knows, and demonstration on the other hand. Instead, in this context it is purely meant to contrast the reasoned level of the argument against the formal level of the compositional structure.

²³ The following account reflects a heavily rewritten aggregation of my earlier discussion of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. See Dirk Meyer 2005/2006 [2007]. A detailed discussion of the philological reconstruction of the text is left to the appendix (chap. 10).

²⁴ Just as the particular building block, sub-canto is a unit that should be elaborated in application to the individual text. To provide an auxiliary explanation for this concept (and to avoid using “section” as one would probably do in modern compositions), we can define the unit of a sub-canto to be the larger self-contained unit after the building block, which due to its particular structure (or by other means) obtains a certain stability in the composition overall. I shall discuss this in more detail further below.

constructs the hierarchical structure of its argument. Interestingly, both types of analysis reveal different conclusions concerning the relationship of Heaven and Man vis-à-vis each other. Nonetheless, at the end it should become clear that the apparent conflict, which is part of the text’s argumentative strategy, is solved in an overall synthesis.

3.4.1. First Part: Heaven – Man’s failure

3.4.1.1. Sub-Canto One: Introduction to the Problem

^{Q1} 有天有人，天人有分；
 察天人之分，而知所行矣。
 有其人，無其^{Q2}世；
 雖賢弗行矣。
 苟有其世，何難之有哉？

Theme

Development of the theme

^{Q1} There is Heaven and there is Man, [yet] there are distinctions between Heaven and Man;
 [Only by] investigating the distinction between Heaven and Man, [one] will know what they act upon.

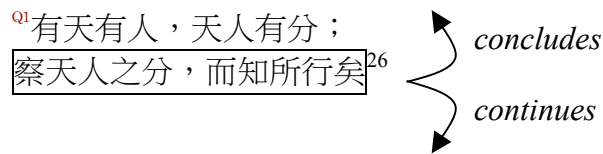
There might be the right man, but not the right ^{Q2} times;
 Although he [might be] a worthy, he does not act [his worthiness] out.
 However, were there indeed the right times, what difficulties could there then be?

Sub-canto one of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” reads like a general introduction to the problem. It is structured in a highly dualistic fashion. As we shall see later on, dualistic patterns are not only characteristic of individual building blocks or sub-cantos of the text, but moreover, are the predominant characteristics of the compositional structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” on the whole. The introduction can accordingly be divided into two parts, which I call the ‘theme’ and the ‘development’ of the theme.

The theme states the self-evident truth that there exist two entities, Heaven and Man; evidently, these are distinct. The final sentence of the theme further draws upon this by

noting that when investigating the truism named above, one will, by definition, know what Heaven and Man (can) act upon.

With this statement, the final sentence concludes the theme; yet, it also raises an expectation, which continues the thought of the theme. I tentatively call this the ‘double-directed function’ of one particular segment or component.²⁵



The feature ‘double-directed segment’ connects two parts. In the case of the introduction, the statement cited ‘bridges’ the concern of the theme to the subsequent development of the same. I should add that the passage quoted here is not the only instance in which we encounter the feature of a double-directed segment.

The development of the introduction deepens the discussion about the differences between Heaven and Man. It names two preconditions that must coincide so that Man can drive his actions to success: first, the individual must be a worthy;²⁷ second, the times must be right.

The development, as I call it, further opens up a polarity between two contrasting positions: these are *yǒu* and *wú*; they are used in two strictly parallel sentences “有其人，無其世”.²⁸ If we now compare this statement with the first line of the ‘theme’ (有天有人),²⁹ we notice that the development of the introduction brings into play the concept *shì* ‘times’, where—given the parallelism of the first line of the theme—one might expect

²⁵ Note the similarity of this feature with the overlapping structure discussed at some length in chapter 2.

²⁶ Final sentence of the theme (introduction), which features as overlapping feature.

²⁷ This passage terms him *xián rén* 賢人, ‘worthy’.

²⁸ Note that the theme of the introduction had already pointed to the polarity of the two categories Man versus Heaven.

²⁹ “There is Heaven and there is Man”.

the word *tiān* ‘Heaven’. Interchanging *tiān* (Heaven) with the concept *shì* 世 (times), the author(s) of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” construct a contiguity of the two concepts.³⁰ This technique of introducing new terms by relating them with each other by means of reiterated parallel patterns seems to be an established standard in Warring States period. I have discussed this at many instances.³¹

3.4.1.2. Sub-Canto Two: Legendary Materials and the Crucial Matter of *yù*

Having stated the basic concern of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, namely the tension between Heaven and Man, sub-canto two sets out to assemble narrative material so as to deepen the discussion of the right times. The author(s) of the text discuss Man’s dependence on outside influences, by which they demonstrate that (even) the worthy depends on someone in power:

³⁰ As already stated above, the second subset of the final sentence of the theme (而知所行矣) features as overlapping element, which characteristic it is to bridge the information gained in first part of the discussion to its adjoining part. Also, the second part of the introduction reiterates a statement taken from the first part (有其人), which was used earlier on to define the distinct categories of Man versus Heaven. The adjoining and strictly parallel statement then changes *tiān* 天 into *shì* 世 and thus constructs a relatedness of the terms.

³¹ See my discussion for instance in Dirk Meyer 2005 [2006] and also 2005/2006 [2007]. See also chapter 2 in my discussion of the feature overlapping structure, p. 59, n. 25.

(1) 舜耕於歷山，^[A]
 陶拍^{Q3}於河滸。^[B]
 立而為天子，遇堯也。³²

Shùn ploughed [the fields] at Mount Lì, and he made pottery^{Q3} at the banks of the Yellow River. †
 The reason he was established and became Son of Heaven, was his encounter with Yáo.

(2) 邵謠衣枲蓋帽經蒙巾，^[C]
^{Q4}釋板築而佐天子，
 遇武丁也。^[D]

Shào Yáo wore a hemp coverlet, covered [his head] with a hemp hat, and swathed himself with a [protecting] scarf; †³³
^{Q4} The reason he became the assistant of the ruler by escaping the wooden barriers for building earthen walls was his encounter with Wǔ Dīng.

(3) 呂望為臧棘津，戰監門^{Q5}棘地；^[E]
 行年七十，而屠牛於朝歌。
 舉而為天子師，遇周文也。

Lǚ Wàng acted as a slave at the ford of Jí, trembling he^{Q5} watched the gates of the territory of Jí; †
 Seventy years had to go by during which he slaughtered oxen at Zhāogē.
 The reason he was elevated to act as the tutor of the Son of Heaven was his encounter with [King] Wén of Zhōu.

(4) ^{Q6}管夷吾拘囚束縛；^[F]
 釋械桎，而為諸侯相，
 遇齊桓也。

^{Q6} Guǎn Yíwǔ (Guǎn Zhòng) was detained in prison where he was bound and tied up;
 The reason he became minister for many lords, freed from [the threatening of] weapons and his prisoner's cage, was his encounter with [Duke] Huán of Qí.

³² The letters in brackets refer to the philological discussion in the appendix, where the interested reader may find a philological discussion of my reconstruction of the Chinese text and its translation.

³³ This should point to his poverty.

(5) ^{Q8} 孫叔三斥期思少司馬；^[G]
出而為令尹，
遇楚莊也。

^{Q8} Sūnshū (Sūnshū Ào) thrice declined [the position of] Vice Minister of War at Qīsī;

The reason he became the senior official although he left, was his encounter with [King] Zhuāng of Chǔ.

(6) ^{Q7} 百里[奚]轉賣五羊，為伯牧牛。^[H]
釋板[?]而為朝卿，†^[I]
遇秦穆。

^{Q7} Bǎilǐ [Xī] was sold on for the price of five rams and became the elder of oxherds.

The reason he became Minister at the court, freed from [?], was his encounter with [Duke] Mù of Qín. †

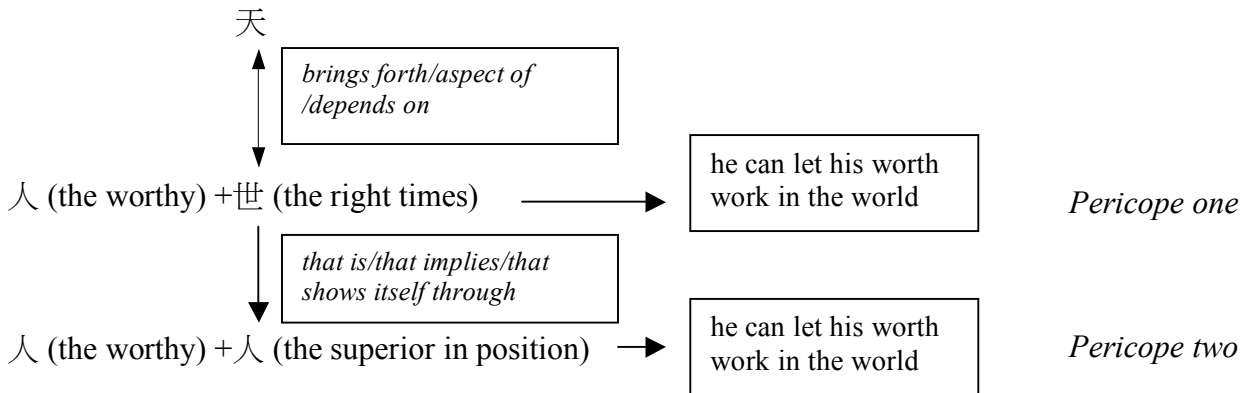
From sub-canto one the audience of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” already knows that the worthy must encounter the right times for letting his worth work in the world so that his talents become widely apparent. Sub-canto two continues from this insight. Drawing upon a pool of cases that reflect the cultural memory of a particular period and a particular group,³⁴ the account describes the encounter of a humble person with someone in power. Correlating sub-canto two with sub-canto one, it seems that the author(s) of this text equal (or correlate) the right times (*shì* 世) with the encounter (*yù*) of a worthy with the right man in power.

In the logic of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, *tiān* 天 hence brings forth the right times, *shì* 世 (or the right times are an aspect of *tiān*). The right times (*shì*) are in turn characterized by the hierarchically superior who recognizes the worthy as a worthy and employs him as such;

³⁴ For reason of simplicity, I shall henceforth refer to this pool of cases as “legendary materials”. For the contemporary audience of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, these cases nevertheless did *not* belong to the realm of legends. Yet, I hope that the anachronistic term legendary is justified as a short way for referring to oral or written stories that together make up a group’s remembered history. The term ‘cultural memory’ (kulturelle Gedächtnis) was introduced by Jan Assmann 1999, esp. pp. 19-24.

or he is a manifestation of the same. Otherwise, it could be that the author(s) regard the worthy's encountering the superior man as dependent on the right times. This is the aspect described as *yù*, as shown in the following table.³⁵

Figure 6: *The Right Times and the Encounter of the Right Person*



The analysis reveals that the paradigmatic examples, which quote the lore of legendary materials, themselves are presented in a highly structured way. The six examples are advanced in alternating mode of parallel A and B-types;³⁶ each of these presents three cases:³⁷

³⁵ Cf. the statement 遇不遇時也 as it appears in the first chapter of the *Lùnhéng* 論衡 by Wáng Chōng 王充 (vol. 1, p. 1), which is very close to the statement as it appears in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. It seems that *yù* in later philosophical discourse has the function of a *terminus technicus*, and it may well be that already in the time of the production of the *Guōdiàn* One manuscripts *yù* was seen as a term of highly philosophical relevance.

³⁶ Type A: line 1: name of the worthy and certain information added (e.g. 舜耕於歷山); line 2: information concerning his deprived situation (e.g. 陶拍於河澗); line 3: resolving the situation (e.g. 立而為天子，遇堯也). Type B differs mainly in the second line, which always states that person X was *freed* from his deprived situation by meeting person Y. Only 3A differs slightly from this pattern in terms that line 1 is longer and contains all information needed so as to advance the example.

³⁷ To arrive at this scheme, we have to interchange strips *q8* (孫叔三斤期思少司馬 出而為令尹 遇楚莊也) with *q7* (百里奚轉賣五羊 為伯牧牛 釋板[?]而為朝卿 遇秦穆), for which we have good evidence, besides the fact that we then gain the highly structured scheme of alternating A and B-types. For further evidence, see my discussion in the appendix (chap. 10) under [G].

(A) 舜耕於歷山，
陶拍^{Q3}於河滸。
立而為天子，**遇**堯也。

(A) 呂望為臧棘津，戰監門^{Q5}棘地；
行年七十，而屠牛於朝歌。
舉而為天子師，**遇**周文也。

(A)^{Q8} 孫叔三斤期思少司馬；
出而為令尹，**遇**楚莊也。

(B) 邵謠衣泉蓋帽經蒙巾，
^{Q4}釋板築而佐天子，**遇**武丁也。

(B)^{Q6} 管夷吾拘囚束縛；
釋械桎，而為諸侯相，**遇**齊桓也。

(B)^{Q7} 百里奚轉賣五羊，為伯牧牛。
釋板[?]而為朝卿，**遇**秦穆。

The strictly parallel pattern that presents the legendary materials in alternating A and B-types is used to fulfill three functions: First, the parallel form highlights the basic principle that underlies these stories and myths: a person of humble social origin realizes the highest merits by his encounter with the right counterpart. The latter understands the person's worth and employs him. Seen from this parallel scheme, it seems most likely that (the account of) the stories are tailored to fit the message of this unit.³⁸ Second, the formal perfection of the account adds to the credibility of the stories themselves.³⁹ Third, the strict scheme of alternating A and B-types provides this account with a distinguishing form, and thus with certain stability. This unit must thus be regarded as a stable element in its own right. Accordingly, the strict form of this passage stresses the common truth underlying these stories, and it features as a medium to highlight the crucial notion presented therein.

³⁸ This claim is further substantiated by the fact that certain stories (e.g. the example of Lǚ Wàng) rather represent traditional representation instead of 'historical truth'. See my discussion in appendix (chap. 10) under [C]. Cf. also Sarah Allan (1981), pp. 3-25.

³⁹ Cf. this with what Wolfgang Behr describes as structures that are capable of embedding intricate arguments by imbedding them into a "persuasive aesthetic environment". In his analysis, however, Behr only looks at sound correlated figures. See idem 2005 [2006].

3.4.1.3. Sub-Canto Three: Construing a Principle from the Legendary Materials

The account of the legendary materials from sub-canto two has made clear that the worthy needs the encounter with the superior so that he can be lifted into the adequate position that allows him to work in the world. Sub-canto three continues on the basis of this insight and construes a general principle from the observation made in sub-canto two. It declares that the changing fate of a worthy, such as described in sub-canto two, does not derive from an alteration of his essential trait, which the text identifies with charisma, *dé* 德, and wisdom, *zhì* 智:

^{Q9} 初韜晦，^[J]
後名揚，^十
非其德加；

子胥前多功，^[K]
後戮死，
非其智^{Q10}衰也。

^{Q9} [Thus, the fact that] in the beginnings [these worthies] may have been of little value and in obscurity, [and yet], later their names were praised, is not because their charisma (*dé*) has been added to;

[Just like the fact that Wǔ] Zǐxū was very meritorious at first, [and yet] he later fell into disgrace and was put to death, is not because his wisdom^{Q10} had weakened.

Sub-canto three recognizes the general truth behind the various stories from the legendary account of sub-canto two, namely that the changing fate of previously humble worthies did not answer to an increase of their charisma. Additionally, it also remembers the well-known case of the decline of Wǔ Zǐxū 伍子胥. This validates the insight of the preceding account concerning the changing fate of a worthy for both directions: ‘failure’ as expressed in the humbleness of the worthies may not only turn into success; instead, ‘success’ as expressed in Wǔ Zǐxū’s merits, may likewise turn into failure—at any time. The strokes of fate are fully unpredictable; they even might be undeserved. The formal

structure of this passage stresses the similarity of these cases: sub-canto three is composed of two nearly identical strings. Of these, the second appears as the exact negative image of the former:

Figure 7: Reproducing the Underlying Thought of Sub-Canto Three

	[---]	初滔晦， 後名揚，	(failure) (success)	
→		非其德加	(not because of +)	+
	[子胥]	前多功， 後戮死，	(success) (failure)	
→		非其智衰也	(not because of -)	—

The highly structured pattern with almost no aberration between the positive and negative statement communicates the idea that the particular instance of someone’s failure (humbleness) turning to success underlies the same principle as that of the reverse case. Moreover, the structure of this passage also sanctions the stability of this unit. Note, by highlighting the fact that success in one case may turn into failure (unexpected and maybe even undeserved) underlies the same principle as failure turning into success, this unit furthers the process of argument-construction. Yet, although adding additional information, the present sub-canto does not yet close the matter. It remains open in that the recipient would expect further information. Sub-canto three keeps the conflict between failure and success unresolved. No conclusion settles the issue. I call this form of adding new information without resolving the matter an ‘open argument’.

Instead of resolving the tension between two opposing matters, sub-canto three serves a different goal: by summing up the previous account with a general rule, the unit under review closes the description as advanced in sub-canto two. Adding further information to the overall problematic of the text as indicated in sub-canto one (the introduction) without yet resolving the matter causes sub-canto three to raise an expectation. In this, sub-canto three attains a function similar to that of the last statement of the theme in sub-canto one: it bridges the observations made above to the next unit of the text.

Accordingly, sub-canto three features in the function of a ‘double-directed segment’ in that it connects the account of sub-canto two (account of legendary materials) with that of sub-canto four below. Due to the fact that in this case the double-directed segment does not feature on the micro level of the text (such as seen in sub-canto one), but instead works on the macro level of the composition in that it connects the account of different sub-cantos, I call this a ‘distanced’ type of this feature.

3.4.1.4. Sub-Canto Four: Formulating a ‘Closed Argument’

Sub-canto four takes the discussion one step further. Just like sub-canto three above, the present unit also contrasts failure with success (or stated in more general terms: the negative with the positive). However, whereas sub-canto three did not resolve the tension between the two contrasting aspects, sub-canto four, for its part, synthesizes the conflict by adding a concluding statement (c).⁴⁰ Accordingly, the unit under review formulates a self-contained argument. In the context of the argument-construction of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, I call this, a ‘closed argument’:

Figure 8: The ‘Closed Argument’ of Sub-canto Four

A	驥厄張山，騏控於邵棘； 非亡體壯也。	—
B	窮四海，致千 ^{Q11} 里， 遇造[父]故也。†	+
C	遇不遇，天也。 ^[J]	=

[That] the thorough-bred horse becomes distressed at the Mountain of Zhāng,
[and] the black-mottled grey horse halts at the thorns of Shào is not because their
have lost their physical strength;⁴¹

⁴⁰ I have signaled this tension-releasing conclusion with an equal sign.

⁴¹ Both the ‘thorough-bred horse’ and the ‘black-mottled grey horse’ should be understood in the sense of ‘fine horses’ (see also [J] of the “Reference matter”).

[That they] cover everywhere within the four seas, reaching as far as a thousand
^{Q11} *lǐ* [in each direction],
 is on the account that they encountered the [excellent rider] Zào Fù. †

To encounter or not—this lies with Heaven.

By formulating a ‘closed argument’, the unit under review must be regarded a core junction of what has been stated so far. It brings the first part of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, which I call ‘canto one’ to its logical end. By presenting the previous discussion in metaphorical terms,⁴² it removes any specific, that is, any historical addressee of this account. Accordingly, the thorough-bred and fine horse can feature as a metaphor for the worthy, while the Mountain of Zhāng and the thorns of Shào reflect his humble situation. By means of this, the metaphors translate the previous discussion into a general truth, open to the gentleman (he will be first named in canto two of this text); the subsequent account must thus be read through this generality, which names Heaven as the decisive factor settling on Man’s failure or success, not Man. Naming the decisive entity of Man’s fate, the unit under review exposes the limits of Man in a rather ungentle way. The text could have ended here. The message delivered is all but promising. Man appears as a mere cue ball of Heaven’s will.

⁴² Sub-canto four rather employs animals in its argumentation instead of (semi-) historical figures.

3.4.2. Second Part: Man – his Success

3.4.2.1. Sub-Canto Five: Inferences from the Conclusion

動非為達也；

故窮而不^{Q12} □□□ [怨；隱非] 為名也。†^[N]

故莫之知而不吝；

□□□□□□ [芝蘭生於幽谷] †^[O]

^{Q13} □□□□ [非以無人] 嗅而不芳 †^[P]

瓊瑤瑾瑜包山石，不為 □□□ (□?) [無人知其] ^{Q14} 善 †^[Q]

怀己也。†^[R]

[Thus], to move does not [necessarily mean] to succeed;

From this follows that [the worthy] does not^{Q12} {harbour resentment} even if failing; †

{He [simply] hides and does not} achieve a name. †

From this follows that he is without regret even if nobody knows [him].

{The [flower] zhīlán grows in dark valleys},^{Q13} {it is not because it cannot be} smelled {by man} that it is not fragrant. †

The beautiful stone of jade is covered in mountain stones, it is not because {no one knows its}^{Q14} goodness that it neglects itself. †

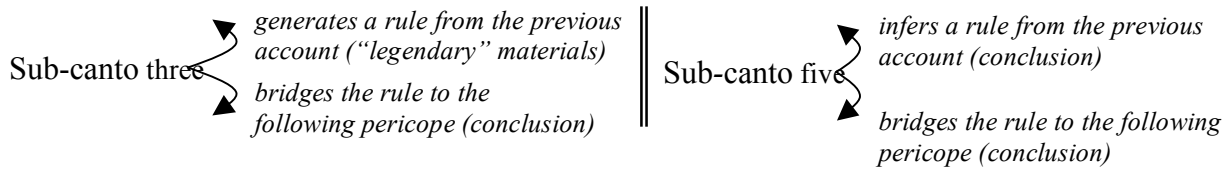
The structure of this particular unit in various respects is comparable to that of sub-canto three. To begin with, as could be seen from the discussion above, sub-canto three derives a general principle from the account of the legendary materials presented in sub-canto two. By adding further information to the account presented in sub-canto two, expectations were raised so that the train of thought was continued into the subsequent account of sub-canto four. Thus, sub-canto three functions as a bridge that connects the account of sub-cantos two and four with each other.

Sub-canto five, then, infers a rule from the insightful conclusion articulated in sub-canto four, in which the author(s) of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” have made clear that action does not necessarily also yield the expected results. By implication, sub-canto five continues from

the insight of the previous conclusion and provides the addressee of this text with the additional information that even though deliberate action does not of necessity also yield the result one might have looked for, this nevertheless should not imply resentment or regret—even if failing.

This turnaround in the process of the argument leaves the audience with the expectation that there must be a reason for this. What, one may think, should be the source of hope that is implied in this statement, now that we know that even the worthy might fail? Despite this, sub-canto five does not yet settle the issue by elaborating the reason for this turnaround in further detail. Hence, just like sub-canto three, the unit under review also draws a general rule from the preceding account. However, just like seen above, it does not yet settle the issue. In the same fashion in which sub-canto three has created an expectation by the addressee of the text thus leading over the train of thought to the account that was to follow, sub-canto five also bridges the conclusion articulated in sub-canto four with the account that is to follow below. Accordingly, just like sub-canto three, the unit under review conforms to the feature of a double-directed segment in that it links two sub-cantos together. What is more, just like sub-canto three, sub-canto five should be regarded as ‘open argument’. From this we see that the structure of sub-canto five in the overall process of meaning-construction in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” strongly resembles that of sub-canto three. Compare the following figure:

Figure 9: The Function of Sub-Cantos Three and Five as ‘Double-Directed Segment’



Sub-canto five compares the worthy with the fragrant flower *zhīlán* 芝蘭 in a dark valley,⁴³ and a beautiful but forgotten gem of value in a mountain of stones. Adding the information that even though action does not of necessity also yield the expected success, but that this nevertheless should be no source of frustration, or renunciation of one’s value, sub-canto five opens up a more positive perspective, after the audience has just faced the more somber conclusion of canto one in sub-canto four.

3.4.2.2. Sub-Canto Six: Directive for the Individual

窮達以時，
 德行一也，譽毀在旁。
 聽之一母，緇白^{Q15}不釐；
 窮達以時，幽明不再。
 故君子惇於反己。^[L]

Failure and success appear at their respective times.
 [Even if] conduct and charisma (*dé*) are one, fame and slander stand by the side.
 [However, if] acuity reaches its ‘one mother’, black and white need not be distinguished. †⁴⁴
 Failure and success appear at their respective time, [yet] dark and bright do not alternate.
 It is for this reason that the gentleman esteems self-examination.

⁴³ On the rhetorical function of flowers in Chinese poetic texts and problem of Latinized translations, see Martin Kern 1994.

Other texts from the Warring States (or later) also use the *zhīlán*-flower to express ideas similar to those put forward in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. It thus seems that by late Warring States, the flower *zhīlán* conformed to a *topos* expressing a remote or unused worthy.

⁴⁴ The terms ‘one mother’, and ‘black’ and ‘white’ will be discussed below.

Sub-canto six culminates the entire discussion about the apparent arbitrariness of failure or success of Man’s deeds in the newly introduced word *shí* 時 ‘time’, thus showing that failure and success appear at their respective time—irrespective of other circumstances.

The notion that failure and success depend on more than only on Man himself can already be seen as an established truth. Sub-canto six now applies this notion explicitly to the gentleman. It formulates the conclusion of canto two of this composition.

I deem it indispensable here to use some space and discuss the elaborate structure of this particular unit in more detail. This is necessary to understand the specific function which the structure of sub-canto six fulfills in the process of meaning-construction in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. The crux with the unit under review is that it is a vital element in the communication of the overall message of the text. At the same time, sub-canto six is remarkably difficult as it contains some enigmatic ideas. I believe that the analysis of its structure can provide the key to resolving the matter.

Sub-canto six is composed of four strings of mostly parallel segments. However, not every segment reappears in each string of the scheme [see the figure below]. The sentences tentatively called ‘B1’ and ‘C2’ function as the connecting parallel bridges within this unit. Compare the following figure:

Figure 10: The Scheme of Sub-Canto Six

1:	A	—	B1	—	C1
2:			B1	—	C2
3:	A	—			C2
4:	<i>gù</i>		B2		

thus:

1:	A	窮達以時	B1	德行一也	C1	譽毀在旁
2:			B1	聽之一母	C2	緇白不釐；
3:	A	窮達以時			C2	幽明不再。
4:		故	B2	君子惇於反己		

Before discussing this passage in greater detail, it should be remarked that this should be understood as an attempt of approaching the meaning as advanced in sub-canto six. It cannot serve as a definitive reconstruction of this passage.

Two features of this scheme must be highlighted to appreciate its function. The ‘gap’ indicated in the figure seems irritating;⁴⁵ yet it has a function. It must be considered a structurally meaningful feature of this passage. Contextually, the informed reader bridges the gap by repeating the missing segment from the previous line. That is, the segment ‘A’ must be repeated in line 2; the segment ‘B1’ in line 3. The particle *gù* 故 ‘therefore’ in line 4, then, signals that in line 4 not only the missing segment ‘A’ from the previous line is to be repeated; instead, the argument as a whole should be reiterated here. Yet, the primary function of these structurally significant gaps is not to indicate that the previous segment is to be reiterated; instead, in every instance of this scheme, the gap signals a turn in the reading of an otherwise continuous thought. We can assign to it something like an “if – then”, or “even – if” turn. In the following table, I have indicated the added segment in each gap by setting it in italics; the “if – then”, or “even – if” turn is marked by underscoring it:

⁴⁵ This is the case before the segment B1 in line two (the segment A is absent); in line three the segment B1 is missing. The last gap appears in line 4; here, again, the A segment is absent.

1:A	Failure and success appear at their respective time,	B1	[and even if] conduct and charisma (<i>dé</i>) are one,	C1	fame and slander [nevertheless] stand by its side.
2:A	[<i>Failure and success appear at their respective time</i>],	B1	[<u>and yet</u>] [if] acuity reaches the ‘one mother’,	C2	[then] black and white need not be distinguished [<u>anymore</u>]!
3:A	Failure and success appear at their respective time,	B1	[<i>but if acuity reaches the ‘one mother’</i>],	C2	[then] dark and bright do not alternate [<u>anymore</u>].
4:A	[<i>Failure and success appear at their respective time (A), and fame and slander stand by its side (C1); <u>but because</u> black and white need not be distinguished anymore (C2), and dark and bright do not alternate anymore (C2) <u>if the conduct is unified according to charisma</u> (B1), and <u>if acuity reaches the ‘one mother’</u> (B1), then (gù) it is for this reason that</i>				

Accordingly, the gap in line 2 turns the segment B1 into an “and yet” reading, of which consequence it is that “black and white need not be distinguished [*anymore*]” for the person whose acuity reaches the ‘one mother’ (C2). The next turn appears in line 3. The reader repeats the segment *B1* from above, which likewise leads to the conclusion that “dark and bright do not alternate [*anymore*]” if following the same principle. The last gap appears in line 4. The statement starts with a “gù 故” ‘for this reason’, clearly marking the conclusion of this part. As is typical for ‘gù-statements’, the information that leads to

“*gù*” appears in front of this marker. Accordingly, the informed (or guided) addressee of this text bridges this last gap in front of the “*gù*” with the entire information from above. Thus, when reading this passage through its formal structure, we can contextualize the reference of the statement “for this reason the gentleman lays all importance in self-examination”, which otherwise would remain unclear. Accordingly, this last statement turns sub-canto six into a ‘closed argument’. Like the previous units of this text, sub-canto six becomes a stable element in constructing the overall concern of the “*Qióng dá yǐ shí*”.

The passage under review has caused many modern commentators considerable headache.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, I am confident that paying close attention to its formal structure can help us make sense of it. Accordingly, the parallel position of the term *yī* 一, ‘one’ in lines 1 and 2 of the scheme suggests that they share the same referent. The ‘one mother’, in turn, seems to denote the one principle along with which the gentleman should consistently align his behavior.⁴⁷

In a similar vein, we can use this approach to reconstruct the referent of the awkward terms that appear in the two parallel components C2 in lines 2 and 3 (緇白不釐 and 幽明不再). The referent of these does not explicitly appear in the segment C1 (譽毀在旁); nonetheless, the clear parallel structure suggests that the segments C2 in lines 2 and 3 denote something similar to what is expressed in C1. As a result, black and white (C2, line 2), just like dark and bright (C2, line 3), should be understood as manifestations of success and failure (or positive and negative). Just like slander and fame (C1, line 1), they might befall the individual at certain times. However, if Man indeed exclusively aligned his focus and conduct along with *dé* 德, ‘potency’, thus arriving at the guiding principle,

⁴⁶ See my discussion under [L] of the Reference matter “Reconstructing the “*Qióng dá yǐ shí*”” (chap. 10).

⁴⁷ Cf. also the various occurrences of the term *mǔ* 母 ‘mother’ such as appearing in the *Lǎozǐ*. See, for instance, the transmitted chapter 25 (可以為天下母 “it can be taken for the mother of heaven and earth), or chapter 20 (我獨異於人而貴食母 “I alone am different from the others in that I honor this nourishing mother”), of which the former also appears in the *Guōdiàn* One manuscript “A”, strip *a*21/20. Most commentators agree that the term ‘mother’ as appearing in the *Lǎozǐ* denotes the *dào* 道 ‘way’, or ‘principle’. It seems that by the time of ‘production’ of the “*Qióng dá yǐ shí*” (in whatever sense), the term ‘one mother’, or ‘mother’ has already developed into something like a *topos*, whose appellation was not at odds with conventions shared by certain Warring States’ philosophers.

which the text calls the ‘one mother’, manifestations such as failure and success would then not appear to him in such contrast like that of black and white, or dark and bright. For the gentleman, these manifestations become irrelevant; the consciousness of his worthiness provides him a steady imperturbability.

From this perspective it should become clear that, even though failure and success are aspects that may return at any time (as the word *shí* 時 at the beginning of this section plainly showed), and that are unpredictable even for the gentleman; according to the authors of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, they nevertheless do no harm to him, because the gentleman is armed with a consciousness that merely concentrates on his own charisma.⁴⁸

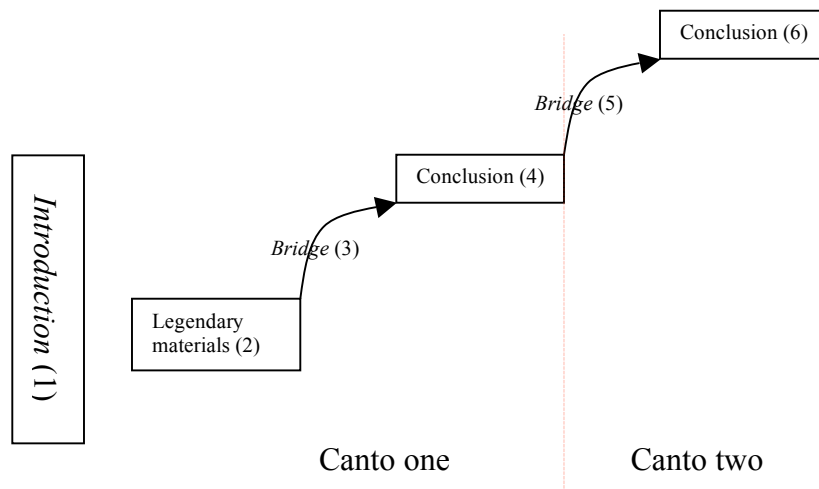
3.4.3. The Macro Structure of Composition

3.4.3.1. A Horizontal Line of Analysis

From the analysis of the individual units we have seen that, from one sub-canto to the next, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” carefully develops a linear argument. Beginning with sub-canto one, which expresses the introduction to the philosophic concern of this text, each textual unit builds on and contributes to the insight gained from the previous sub-canto. We can thus represent the linear argument-construction of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” graphically as follows:

⁴⁸ In a way, this approach allows him to live with a lack of success in his political career, something that must have been quite common to users of this kind of text.

Figure 11: The Linear Type of Argument-Construction of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”



As the figure above shows, each step in the construction of the overall argument of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”, which corresponds to one sub-canto respectively (numbered 1 to 6 in the drawing), draws upon the argument of the former and thus continues on a previous insight. Let me take sub-canto three as an example: this unit ‘bridges’ the legendary materials of sub-canto two to sub-canto four by deducing from it the notion that success and failure are not only connected to a man’s charisma or knowledge. Accordingly, sub-canto three builds its contribution on the observation made in sub-canto two; it thus arrives at a higher level of insight. The same holds true throughout. This shows that of the two conclusions, that is, the two ‘closed arguments’ of the text, the latter (sub-canto six) must be the one that articulates the crucial insight. Sub-canto six transports the main message that the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” aims to communicate.

3.4.3.2. A Vertical Line of Analysis

The following analysis deals with the hierarchical structure of argument-construction in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”. This further adds to our understanding of the philosophic subtleties of this text.

As discussed, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” contains two conclusions, each of which closes one canto of this text (sub-cantos four and six). The decisive characteristic of such a conclusion in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is that it breaks away from the mere dualistic pattern that is so typical of this text. The ‘closed argument’ advanced in these conclusions dissolves the dualistic contrast between positive statement (success) and negative statement (failure) by adding to it a synthesizing element, ‘c’. Accordingly, the account is lifted onto a new meaningful level. As I shall discuss below in further detail, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” as a whole is composed according to the same principle. Just like the ‘closed arguments’ (sub-cantos four and six), the hierarchical structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” consists of two conflictive elements, namely ‘failure’ and ‘success’, or Heaven and Man, but also a synthesizing element that leads the entire argument onto a higher level of insight.

For the moment, I want to focus on the compositional structure of the two conclusions to investigate their place in the development of meaning in the text overall. As can be seen, the two conclusions (four and six) share structurally identical features: despite the fact that canto two of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is decidedly shorter than canto one, the two resemble each other strongly in terms of organization. Each of the two conclusions is headed by a sub-canto functioning as double-directed segment (sub-cantos three and five), bridging the previous account to a subsequent conclusion. Sub-canto three transforms the account from the legendary materials of sub-canto two by validating the process described also for the opposite direction (success may turn into failure notwithstanding one might be a worthy). Sub-canto four concludes that failure or success fully rely on Heaven’s will. Sub-canto five, then, draws on this insight and notes that this nonetheless is no reason for frustration or the renunciation of one’s value. Sub-canto six, finally,

draws on the ‘open argument’ of sub-canto five and concludes that for the gentleman who esteems self-examination black and white or dark and bright (that is, failure and success) lose their threat.

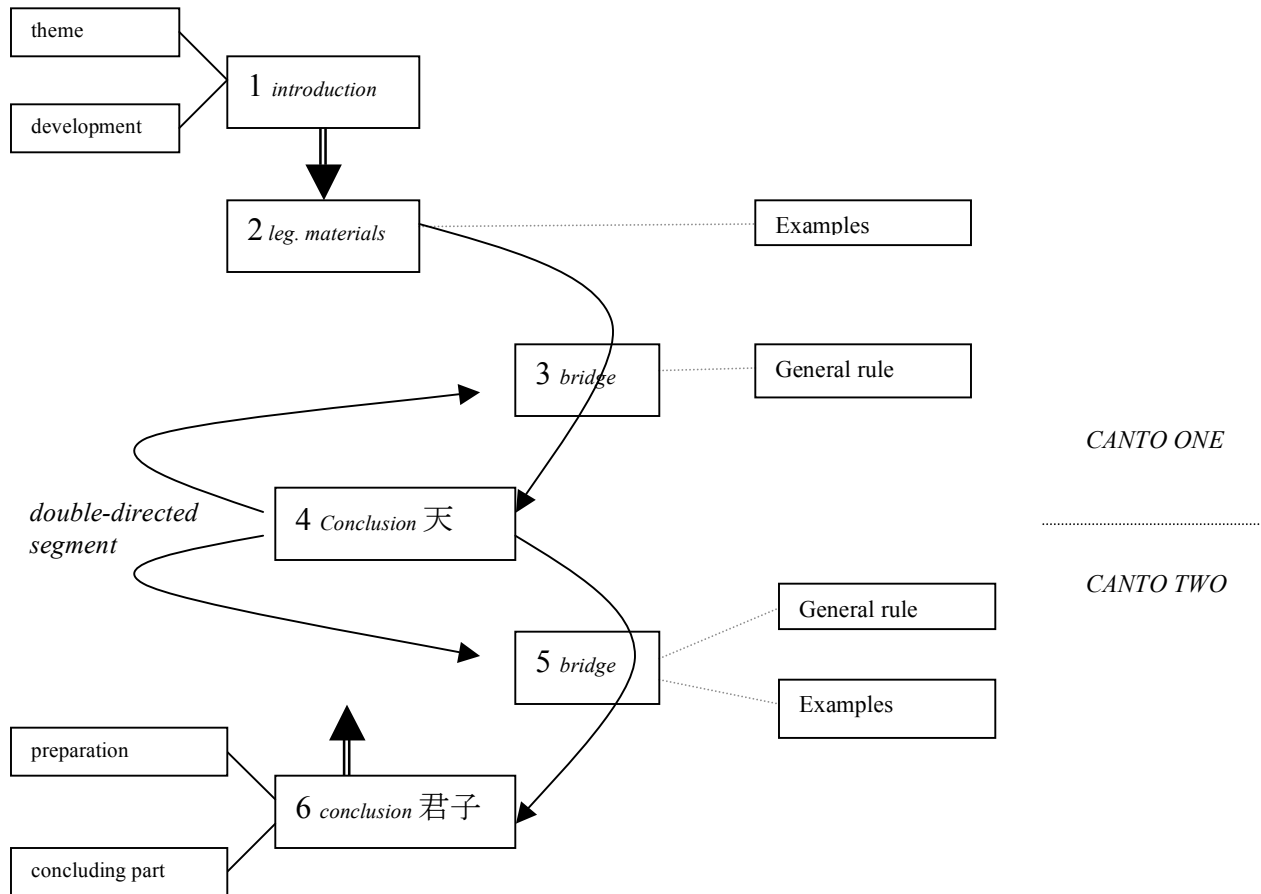
The analysis of the macro structure of the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào” has shown that the overall structure of an argument-based text can indeed resemble the structure of the individual building blocks of which the text is made up. In the case of the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”, the macro structure reproduces the overlapping structure of the ‘1ab 2ab c’-scheme, in which each of the sub-cantos (which in the case of the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào” is identical with the building block) can be seen as one slot in that scheme.⁴⁹ Something similar, I argue, holds true also for the composition of the macro structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”: the basic characteristic of this text is to express the tension between two matters, such as ‘failure’ and ‘success’, or Heaven and Man. This tension is carried on also on the compositional level of the text’s macro structure: theme of canto one is Heaven (or: Heaven’s triumph over Man); that of canto two is Man (or: Man’s triumph over Heaven).

Each of the two conclusions advanced in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is composed in the fashion of a ‘closed argument’ that synthesizes the conflict between two contrasting matters (such as failure versus success). If we now consider, first, that sub-canto four sums up the first part of the text, that is, canto one, and thus brings this part to its meaningful close, and that, second, canto two, draws on the insight expressed in sub-canto four so as to develop the overall train of thought one step further, it then appears that sub-canto four not only features as a connecting link in the development of a linear argument; it also functions as a double-directed segment in that it connects two greater parts, namely canto one and canto two on the macro level of composition. On the hierarchical level of meaning-construction, sub-canto four thus appears to be the synthesizing link between the two otherwise contrasting cantos one (Heaven) and two (Man). Thus, as in the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào” where the compositional structure of a text as a whole mimics the pattern of the individual building block, the overall makeup of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” also mimics the

⁴⁹ See chap. 2, figure 4, p. 67.

structure of a ‘closed argument’ as advanced in sub-cantos four and six. The figure below follows from this:

Figure 12: The Hierarchical Argument-Construction of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí”



3.5. Conclusion

The “Qióng dá yǐ shí” is a well-crafted composition, and it is difficult to imagine that it was created on the spur of the moment. Just like the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”, the hierarchical structure of the overall arrangement of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” reflects the structure of individual sub-cantos. Just as seen from the composition of ‘closed arguments’ in sub-cantos four and six, the macro structure of the text also advances a ‘closed’ system in that it resolves the tension of two contrasting entities (Heaven and Man) in a ‘closed argument’. The difference of a ‘closed argument’ as seen on the micro level of composition (sub-cantos four and six) with that of the hierarchical line of meaning-construction on the macro level of composition lies in the fact that, in the latter case, the synthesizing element of the new argument is placed at its center, whereas it appears at the end of the argument in sub-cantos four and six respectively.

Resembling the structure of a sub-canto, the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” as a whole seems to advance a closed system in its own right. The present organization allows that this text articulates a sound argument—both on the micro- and macro level of composition. None of the present units could be relocated without heavily distorting the structure of a ‘closed argument’ spanning over the composition at large. Both the intrusion of further elements or the deletion of any of the present units would disfigure the bow of tension (Spannungsbogen) that is so carefully developed on the linear level of meaning-construction in the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” as a whole. The same holds true also for the individual sub-cantos of the text. As can be seen accordingly, the overall structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” fulfills the same integrating function as that of the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”; even though the structure of the two could hardly be more different, in both cases the organization provides stability to the text overall. As a result, these texts could not be split up or rearranged without destroying the argument overall.

Closing the present chapter, I want to remark the following: it seems that the vertical line of analysis (hierarchical structure of the argument) contradicts the horizontal line of analysis (linear structure of the argument). According to the linear argument-construction

of the text, the second of the two conclusions (sub-canto six) proves to be the main thought, which the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” aims to communicate.⁵⁰ The vertical analysis of the hierarchical structure of the argument, on the other hand, suggests that sub-canto four fulfills a pivotal function in the organization of the argument as it connects canto one with canto two, and hence is the synthesizing element that accounts for a coherent system. Creating a ‘closed argument’ on the macro level of composition, it becomes clear that Heaven is the decisive factor, deciding over failure and success of Man’s deeds. The fact that sub-canto four is placed at the center of the composition further stresses the importance of Heaven over Man. This looks like a contradiction between the horizontal- and the vertical line of analysis; or is it simply a misinterpretation of the case?

The ‘closed argument’ of the macro structure indeed states that Heaven is the greater power over Man. By locating it at the center of composition, the structure moreover stresses the central position of Heaven for deciding over human failure and success. Despite this, sub-canto six concludes on the horizontal level that by making charisma one’s only concern, the gentleman is no longer troubled by matters such as failure and success, dark and bright, slander and fame. From this follows that Man should not align his conduct with a defined goal, which he cannot predict to achieve anyway. Quite to the contrary, the gentleman proves to be a gentleman if he merely values the *quality* of his conduct, not its *outcome*. In this respect, he frees himself from the threat that success might turn into failure, bright into dark, fame into slander. As a consequence, the gentleman not only emancipates himself from the seemingly absolute impact of these issues, which are imposed on him by Heaven. Moreover, by making his worthiness the only matter of importance, he does also free himself from the imponderables of life. In sum, Man emancipates himself from the decisive power of Heaven itself!

Thus, the vertical analysis has demonstrated that Heaven is the stronger entity of the two, deciding over failure or success of Man’s actions. The horizontal analysis has shown that

⁵⁰ On the horizontal line of argument-construction, we have identified sub-canto four to be the mere preparation for final conclusion of sub-canto six: as we have seen, sub-canto five bridges the thought of sub-canto four (conclusion of first canto) to sub-canto six (conclusion of the second canto). Sub-canto six hence does not merely conclude canto two; by applying the insight from sub-canto four to Man in sub-canto six, it also becomes clear that this should also be the all-embracing conclusion of the entire text.

Man can nonetheless overcome this threat posed on him. Accordingly, the apparent contradiction of the two is solved. The structure of the “Qióng dá yǐ shí” thus fulfils the same integrating function of thought and content that we have recognized also for the “Zhōng xìn zhī dào”.