Human nature and governance: soulcraft and statecraft in eleventh century China

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Introduction

> Zigong said, "The Master's cultural accomplishments one can get to hear about; the master's talks of nature and the way of Heaven one cannot get to hear about."
> 子貢曰："夫子之文章，可得而聞也；夫子之言性與天道，不可得而聞也。"
>
> — *The Analects*, 5.13

Systematic study of individuals' political thought remains fundamental in reconstructing Song politics.[1] This dissertation contributes to the reinvention of Chinese political history[2] with a comprehensive account of Wang Anshi's 王安石 (1021-1086) political theory, touching also upon its practice, arguing that it was centered on transforming human nature with statist values against the mid-eleventh century humanist mainstream.[3]

Intellectual historical studies of Wang Anshi over the past three decades have been focused on how he envisioned the relationship between government and society: from the early 1990s, in a number of book chapters and articles, Peter Bol has been showing how Wang's method of learning where everything fit together in an integrated whole as they did in Wang's antiquity justified an activist government.[4] Building on this, Jaeyoon Song meticulously demonstrates how this vision was legitimized in Wang's commentary on the *Rituals of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮).[5] In two dissertation chapters, Douglas Skonicki argues that this vision was grounded in Wang's

[1] De Weerdt, "Recent Trends in American Research in Song Dynasty History," 27.
[2] De Weerdt, "Reinventing Chinese Political History."
[3] Zhang Chengzhong has located the premise of Wang Anshi's political thought at his view of human nature ("'Yi Zhongren Wei Zhi'"). This current study spells out the content of the values as well as the transformation procedure and does not see Wang's main theoretical source as "Legalism." As Zhang's dissertation is unavailable to me, I am using his published work to infer his main arguments on Wang's political thought. About the term "Legalism": notwithstanding its many issues, as Paul Goldin ("Persistent Misconceptions about Chinese 'Legalism'") and many others have been reminding us, I use it as a convenient designation to refer to the group of political thinkers focusing on using laws and methods of administrative control to strengthen the state, aware they probably neither identified themselves as forming a "school" nor had made self-conscious efforts at forming one. For similar uses, see Makeham, "The Legalist Concept of *Hsing-ming*," 87n1; Pines, "Legalism in Chinese Philosophy"; and Harris, "Legalism."
[4] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours*," chapter 7; "Government, Society, and State"; "Whither the Emperor?"; "Emperors Can Claim Antiquity Too"; "Wang Anshi and the *Zhouli*"; and "Reconceptualizing the Order of Things in Northern and Southern Sung." In "Wang Anshi and the *Zhouli*," Bol points out that the *Zhouli* is perhaps better taken "not as a source of policies but as a model for programmatic policy making, in contrast to those who saw governance as responding to circumstances" (251). Using the essays where Wang's approach to governance was first systematically formulated, I shall demonstrate that Wang's statecraft was indeed not for meeting human needs after they arise but programming which needs ought to arise beforehand.
[5] Song, *Traces of Grand Peace*.

cosmological views,[6] while Yinan Luo contends that the reform Wang architected[7] failed not because the activist vision was wrong, but because Wang did not supplement it with practical knowledge on state economy.[8] Compared with the immediate postwar generation of Wang scholars, whose main drive was to settle the verdict on Wang – "what manner of man was Wang Anshi"? Was he a misguided Confucianist, a foresighted statesman, a dictatorial politician or an unusual reformer?[9] If the last, was he practical? –,[10] their work has greatly advanced historical understanding of the unprecedented government interventionist reform officially launched in 1069/2.

How Wang's political vision provided a legitimate rationale for government activism, however, does not exhaust all we can know about Wang's thought that guided the reform. In his engagement with Jürgen Habermas, John Rawls pointed out that the idea of legitimacy "imposes weaker constraints on what can be done," because "it allows a certain leeway in how well sovereigns may rule and how far they may be tolerated."[11] In the case of this study, examining Wang's efforts at legitimization from multiple perspectives is yet to fully answer a number of questions on the specifics in Wang's political theory. For instance, we all know a central agenda of the reform was to unify morality (*yi daode*[12] 一道德), but what were the values this morality was made up of? And through what procedure to get it uniformly upheld? Based on his study of Wang's method of learning, Bol has given a preliminary answer to the first question: "Part of the

[6] Skonicki, "Cosmos, State and Society," chapter 5.
[7] Instead of calling the reform "Wang Anshi's," I see it as being owned by emperor Shenzong, who employed Wang to design it and spearhead its initial execution. For the literature on Shenzong's agency, see the first note in the last paragraph of chapter 1 section II.
[8] Luo, "Ideas in Practice," chapter 1.
[9] James Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, blurb.
[10] Meskill ed., *Wang An-Shih: Practical Reformer?* A generation later, Winston Lo still sought to address "a facet of Wang Anshi's personality" ("Wang An-Shih and the Confucian Ideal of 'Inner Sageliness,'" 41). The pre-war work of H. R. Williamson was driven by a similar motive (*Wang An Shih, Vol. I*, viii). R. Bin Wong notes that earlier generations of Japanese and Western scholars, like the majority of post-1949 mainland Chinese scholars, "have often offered sympathetic accounts" of Wang Anshi, explaining his failures in terms of unhelpful extraneous factors ("Dimensions of State Expansion and Contraction in Imperial China," 54-55). This can also be seen from the need Robert Hartwell felt to defend his negative comment on Wang in an article published in 1971 ("Historical Analogism, Public Policy, and Social Science in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century China," 727). For a sketch of some western studies on Wang Anshi over the past three centuries, see Zhang Chengzhong, "Jin sanbai nian lai xifang xuezhe yanzhong de Wang Anshi." For a survey of Chinese research on the reform since the Southern Song, see Li Huarui, *Wang Anshi Bianfa yanjiu shi*.
[11] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 427-28. Rawlsian political philosophy has come under profound critique recently. See, for example, Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice* and Nelson, *The Theology of Liberalism*. This, however, does not mean some of his insights could not remain valid. For a recent account of Rawls' intellectual development that led to his *A Theory of Justice*, see Gališanka, *John Rawls*.
[12] On the issues involved in translating this term, see chapter 1.

orthodoxy was that there should be an orthodoxy, that what was right was to think that everyone could have the same values and opinions and would be the better for it."[13] He also notes that educational institutions "could serve as a means of leveraging social change."[14] The goal of this study is to turn from "how" to "what," hoping to thereby know more about Wang's learning.

Going beyond discussing the reform as one of government activism can also help us see how it was different from the Qingli reform of the 1040s,[15] which held a similar position on the relationship between government and society and yet was never remotely as controversial.[16] Indeed, focusing on their shared method of learning and the rhetoric of antiquity, scholars mainly see a continuity between the two reforms.[17] If we look at the core values they respectively advocated, however, there shows a rupture.[18] It seems in order to understand why it was Wang's statecraft rather than that of those former Qingli reformers' that attracted emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1067-1085) in the first place and why scholarly views remain divided on it to this day, we need to go beyond Wang's political vision, which we can now take as a given, and dig deeper.

This study focuses on the *content* of Wang Anshi's learning, i.e., his writings on *daode* (道德, literally, the way and its power) and *xingming* (性命, nature[19] and destiny).[20] Regarding what

[13] Bol, "Whither the Emperor?" 117-18. Jaeyoon Song (*Traces of Grand Peace*, 224-28) and Douglas Skonicki ("Cosmos, State and Society," 508-09) noted the value of austerity; Luo Chuanqi and Wu Yunsheng itemized some moral categories and norms that Wang Anshi had discussed (*Wang Anshi jiaoyu sixiang yanjiu*, 122-34).
[14] Bol, "Whither the Emperor?" 118-19.
[15] For a comprehensive comparison of the two reforms from the perspective of bureaucratic politics, see Smith, "Anatomies of Reform."
[16] Charles Hartman notes the contrasting receptions of these two reforms in the Southern Song (*The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 29, 45, 82, 170, 236). Wang Ruilai points out the different reputations Wang Anshi and Fan Zhongyan, leader of the Qingli reform, had among later people (*Tiandi jian qi*, 4). It should be noted that Fan's not being able to fully realize his ambition could have played a role in this.
[17] See, for example, Lu Guolong, *Song ru weiyan*, 2-3, 26-27, 39-40; Yu Yingshi, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie* (SDX Sanlian shudian edition), chapter 3, esp. 195.
[18] Zhu Gang has noted that Wang Anshi's success marked the end of the ancient prose movement (*Tang Song "Guwen Yundong" yu shidafu wenxue*, 335). Zhang Chengzhong points out the need to go beyond the rhetoric of returning to antiquity that Wang Anshi shared with the mainstream literati and look at what he actually referred to ("'Yi zhongren wei zhi,'" esp. 25-26, 31, 35).
[19] Because Wang is mainly concerned with human nature and in English "nature" alone does not always convey this sense, *"xing*" is frequently translated as "human nature" in this study. Some philosophers question if *xing* means human nature (see, for example, Ames, "The Mencian Conception of *Ren xing* 人性"). For a defense, see Bloom, "Biology and Culture in the Mencian View of Human Nature."
[20] On the central place these occupy in Wang's learning, see Hou Wailu ed., *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi, IV-1*, 423; Ma Zhenduo, *Zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi de zhexue sixiang*, 144; Chen Zhi'e, *Bei Song wenhua shi shulun* (Zhongguo shehui kexue edition), 235; Zhang Yuhan, "Bei Song Xinxue yanjiu," 14; Hu Jinwang, *Wang Anshi de zhexue sixiang yu* Sanjingxinyi, 10. Wang Anshi's only mentally healthy son Wang Pang, who had been working closely together with his father in governance, was also known to be an expert on *daode* and *xingming* (Liang Jiong, Daodezhenjing *jizhu*, 13.105).

Wang wrote on these topics, most of which found in volumes 63-70 of *Collected Writings of Mr. Linchuan*,[21] Yu Yingshi takes them as being about "inner sageliness,"[22] that is, moral self-cultivation in the Confucian tradition. This was one main aspect of what Yu thinks Wang shared with the Neo-Confucians. Other scholars who have studied this body of work in Wang's oeuvre, like Douglas Skonicki and Yinan Luo, also see Wang in a similar light.[23] Through close analysis of key concepts in context and differentiating rhetorical strategies from what was meant, I shall show in chapter 2 that Wang's discussions of human nature were integral to his political thought on governance[24] and that what he advanced as the gist of his learning was an anti-humanist soulcraft centering on using statist values to transform self-regarding humans into subjects who would unreflectively think in the interest of the state. It was cultivationist rather than self-cultivationist,[25] as Wang designed a full procedure to firmly establish these values – otherwise foreign to humans in his view – into people's hearts through externally imposed behavioral regulations.

By conceptual analysis, I mean that practiced by Hannah Arendt and carried forward by Reinhardt Koselleck.[26] Concluding that cooperation with the National Socialists was the rule

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[21] Wang Anshi, *Linchuan xiansheng wenji* (Zhonghua shuju edition, hereafter *LCJ*. "Linchuan" is the choronym of Wang's ancestral home). My grounds for identifying these as where they are are presented towards the end of this Introduction. Their date of composition is discussed in the Appendix. In *"This Culture of Ours*," Bol briefly discussed some essays in these volumes. In line with his focus on Wang's method of learning, he finds in them "a justification for activism" (224-28, quote at 226).

[22] Yu Yingshi, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 39-40, 51, 57, 100, 102. For critiques of Yu's terminology, see Mei Kuang, "'Neisheng Waiwang' kaolüe" and Chu Ping-tzu, "Ping Yu Yingshi xiansheng de *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*," 264–65.

[23] Skonicki takes Wang's ruler as one in the Confucian tradition who cultivates his personal ethics and by this sets an example for the people to emulate ("Cosmos, State, and Society," chapter 5); Luo thinks Wang was, like the Neo-Confucians, concerned with the literati's self-cultivation ("Ideas in Practice," 80).

[24] Studies of Wang Anshi's writings on human nature are many. See, for example, Hu Jinwang, *Wang Anshi de zhexue sixiang yu* Sanjingxinyi, chapter 2 and Appendix 2; Xu Hu, "Wang Anshi zhi renxing lun jiqi kaizhan." Some scholars have attempted to link Wang's view of human nature to his political thought on governance, like Liang Tao, "Wang Anshi de xin waiwang zhengzhi zhexue" and Bi Mingliang, "Wang Anshi zhengzhi zhexue yanjiu." It seems we can go further in integrating the two.

[25] On this distinction, see Ivanhoe, "Hanfeizi and Moral Self-Cultivation."

[26] On the shared intellectual lineage and political sentiments between Arendt and Koselleck, see Hoffman, "Koselleck, Arendt, and the Anthropology of Historical Experience." Niklas Olsen points out that understanding the historical conditions that led to the rise of German National Socialism and modern totalitarianism and what could be done to prevent these from happening again drove the work of them both (*History in the Plural*, 43). Compared with Arendt, whose attitude was perfectly captured in the title of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's excellent biography (*Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*), Koselleck, a forty-fiver (Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past*), held a pessimistic view of human nature (*Critique and Crisis*), seeing humans, by nature conflictual beings to him, as destined for oppositions (*Sediments of Time*, 252). This view of human nature had led him, like Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno did earlier (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1-34), to put the blame on the Enlightenment, implying that the use of intellect led to human self-destruction. For defenses of Enlightenment values, see Pagden, *The Enlightenment* and Pinker, *Enlightenment Now*.

among intellectuals, Arendt left Germany swearing never to "have anything to do with 'the history of ideas' again."[27] Rather, through conceptual analysis, she "traced political concepts back to the concrete historical and generally political experiences which gave rise to those concepts. She was then able to gauge how far a concept had moved from its origins and to chart the intermingling of concepts over the course of time, marking points of linguistic and conceptual confusion."[28] Taking conceptualization as social action, Koselleck notes conceptual change can take place through having an existing term mean substantially differently.[29] Unpacking the specific conceptual content a term was used to refer to without assuming there was a dictionary meaning is crucial for getting right about Wang Anshi, who carried out his conceptual revolution mainly through couching new concepts in old terms and playing with different meanings of the same word,[30] not infrequently in one sentence. This requires us to carefully investigate the novel meanings he had conventional terms to take on. For this reason, while trying to provide contextual rendering as much as possible, I have in some cases left the key terms un-translated before revealing what they meant through my analysis.

Contextualization is a common methodology among intellectual historians of middle period China.[31] The difference here lies in the new context I identify for Wang's political thought in chapter 1: the humanist statecraft newly emerging in the aftermath of An Lushan rebellion (755-763) – literati self-governance[32] that was first theorized by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) in "Tracing the Way" (*yuan dao* 原道),[33] and became the mainstream during the Jiayou and Zhiping periods (1056-1067), thanks mainly to Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007-1072) leadership in the ancient prose movement. It was against this that Wang Anshi worked out his statecraft, so as to restore the lost

[27] Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 108. It is interesting to note that at a time when Arendt is enjoying a renewed rising appeal, so is the history of ideas she strongly criticized. On the latter, see, for example, McMahon, "The Return of the History of Ideas?"
[28] Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, 318.
[29] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, chapter 5, at 82. On the need to differentiate words from ideas, see Bol, "Words and Ideas."
[30] Ma Zhenduo has noted this (*Zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi de zhexue sixiang*, 77). Douglas Skonicki explains this as Wang's not attempting "to establish a rigid philosophical vocabulary" ("Cosmos, State and Society," 458). I see it as intentional.
[31] Although recently, students of Euro-American intellectual history have been trying to break free from its constraint. See, for example, Gordon, "Contextualism and Criticism in the History of Ideas."
[32] What I mean by this term is explained in chapter 1.
[33] Shao-yun Yang translates it as "Tracing the Way to Its Source" (*The Way of the Barbarians*, 6). I find the abbreviated form "Tracing the Way" adequate, as "trace" has in itself the meaning of "find the source, origins, or roots of," which matches the openness of the Chinese character "*yuan*" very well. For such a rendering, see Bol, "Review of *The Way of the Barbarians*." On Han Yu being a humanist, see Bol, "Words and Ideas."

moral unity in the world given the moral individualism and value pluralism inherent in the practice of writing ancient prose.

Rhetorical strategies are frequently used by writers to reinforce the point they make, as we shall see in the cases of Han Yu and Ouyang Xiu.[34] The situation was, however, different with Wang Anshi, whose aim was not always to get his point across, but rather to make it not immediately apparent to everyone, given his awareness of the controversial nature of his statecraft.[35] Moreover, to reduce the force of expected opposition to his ideas and later to facilitate the smooth implementation of the reform designed with them, he attached great importance to language, including bending grammar in his writings,[36] wielding Laozian dialectics to reverse definitions of what is good and what bad, and devising a new "dictionary" to create a systematic mismatch between name and reality.[37] Not only does this lead present-day Wang scholars who read the same texts of his to arrive at different conclusions, but even some of Wang's contemporaries thought he discarded his learning after having come to power.[38] This requires us to pay particular attention to his linguistic maneuver and not take his words at face value.

After a contextualized reconstruction of Wang's political theory in the first two chapters, I turn to discussing its implementation in chapter 3. Taking the reform as mainly about the economic policies carried out during Shenzong's reign, most scholars think it had failed, hence their being occupied with explaining why.[39] The central topic of Wang's famous myriad-word letter to Renzong that later became his reform blueprint[40] was, however, using government school education to make the kind of humans useful to the state. Given the severely declined imperial authority[41] Shenzong inherited from the previous two reigns, to put this grand design into practice, it had to proceed step by step, including most importantly neutralizing anti-reformers, whose effective opposition lasted through the early twelfth century, even taking back control of the

[34] Part of my inspiration on this came from Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians*.
[35] See, for example, Wang Anshi, "Shang Renzong Huangdi yan shi shu," in *LCJ*, 410-11. Wang turned the small number of students who had gotten the gist of his learning into in-laws, marrying his daughter to Cai Bian, niece to Gong Yuan (Liu Chengguo, *Jinggong Xinxue yanjiu*, 79, 66), and sister to Shen Jichang (Li Tao, *Xu Zizhitongjian changbian* (*XCB* hereafter), 229.5570).
[36] See, for example, Wang Anshi, "Yuan jiao," in *LCJ*, 69.731: "化[於]上."
[37] On the latter two, see chapter 2.
[38] For instance, Sima Guang ("Yu Wang Jiefu shu," in *Sima Wenzhenggong chuanjia ji* (*CJJ* hereafter), 60.723), Fu Bi, and Fan Chunren (Luo Jiaxiang, *Bei Song dangzheng yanjiu*, 51).
[39] Li Huarui, *Wang Anshi bianfa yanjiu shi*, 479.
[40] Tuo Tuo et al., *Song shi*, 327.10542.
[41] The actual power the emperor was able to exercise also declined as a consequence. For a discussion of the difference between power and authority, see Wood, *Limits to Autocracy*, x, 2-8. I discuss what I mean by authority in chapter 1.

government between 1085 and 1093. It was only after 1104, when, through blacklisting, they had been made unable to obstruct the central government's agenda that this education as governance was able to be carried out across the state, as can be seen from the exponential growth in student number and the widespread building of schools.[42]

In chapter 4, I seek to enrich our understanding of the discussions in the preceding chapters by presenting the discovery of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101),[43] Wang's foremost critic, on the nature of Wang Anshi's statecraft that was made around the turn of the twelfth century. Using material from Su that has not been discussed in English, this is also to address anew the relationship between Wang Anshi and his main theoretical source Mencius. This relationship has been studied by many scholars, including Li Huarui, who in a recent book chapter argues that Mencius' political thought on humane governance guided the reform Wang architected.[44] In chapter 2, I have begun proposing an alternative explanation based on Wang's own writings on human nature. Here, closely studying Su Shi's engagements with Mencius in a project designed to oppose Wang Anshi's statecraft, I hope to show how Mencius, with his insight into human nature, provided the most important theoretical foundations for Wang's soulcraft.

In the Conclusion, I summarize main findings in the four chapters while situating Wang Anshi in the history of Chinese political thought, arguing that his soulcraft as statecraft went one step further than that of the so-called Legalists, who although similarly pursuing greater state power did not work on changing human nature.

While this dissertation is meant as a contribution to the reinvention of Chinese political history, its approach is not that of political history, but intellectual history, more specifically the historical study of political theory. At a metalevel, it sets up a contrast between two theories of governance – humanist and statist – in Tang-Song China. The former, advocated by ancient prose proponents like Han Yu, Ouyang Xiu, and Su Shi, sees the government's job as meeting human needs and guiding the people towards greater humanity, whereas the latter, upheld by Wang Anshi and his followers who sought to end the ancient prose movement which to them had led to the loss of moral unity in their world, pursues greater state power in governance and for this reason finds humanist values counterproductive. Neither theory was able to achieve a full success – at the height

[42] Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 78, 84; Hu, "Cultivating Merit," 132-40.
[43] On their being perceived as archrivals in popular culture, see Idema, "Poet versus Minister and Monk."
[44] Li Huarui, "Northern Song Reformist Thought and Its Sources."

of practicing the humanist approach to governance when Ouyang Xiu and his like-minded fellows dominated the central government between 1056 and 1067, Wang Anshi finished building his statist political theory and gained rising influence through circulating his writings and teaching; when Wang Anshi and his followers were setting the direction toward which the state was heading under the commission of emperor Shenzong and his two sons from 1069 to 1125, adherents to the humanist political theory resisted effectively, even taking back control of the government from 1085 and 1093 and tilting the direction toward their vision from 1100 to 1101. However, a political theory, once adopted as the government's guideline, sets the agenda for political life across the state, having the vast majority of the population head toward it and forcing its opponents, no matter how successful they were, to invest their energy in opposing it rather than focusing on implementing their own agenda. As such, a comprehensive study of Wang Anshi's statist political theory that was devised as an antidote to the humanist one can refresh our understanding of Northern Song political history from the source.

It is necessary to add a note on my translating *ru* 儒 as "Confucian." While I understand the underlying concerns of scholars who are uncomfortable with this rendering, I think we need a convenient, albeit imperfect, designation. As for which word to use, it seems "classicist," the preferred choice of scholars like Michael Nylan,[45] unnecessarily narrows down a rather broad concept to but one aspect of it – the study of a shifting group of texts considered to be classics belonging to the *ru* tradition –, and more importantly assumes the non-*ru* traditions do not have their own classics[46] or study the *ru* classics.[47] On this issue, I share Paul Goldin's critical choice of "Confucian," in the literal sense of "of Confucius," i.e., followers of the tradition in which Confucius was taken to have played a shaping role.[48] Unlike Goldin, however, I do not take Confucianism as just a philosophy featuring "think[ing] for oneself."[49] Rather, the identifier of the Confucian tradition of statecraft that shall emerge from this study is governing according to the

[45] Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 364-65; Yang, *The Way of the Barbarians*, 16; DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance*, 16. Bol renders *ruxue* as *shi* 士 (literati) learning (*"This Culture of Ours,"* 15-18), as does Elman ("Rethinking 'Confucianism' and 'Neo-Confucianism' in Modern Chinese History," 531). Note Nylan does not object to using the word "Confucian," but only tries to reserve it for the "self-identified ethical followers of Confucius" (*The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 365).
[46] Which they have, like the *Classic of Daode* in the Daoist tradition.
[47] Mozi, for instance, did, as Paul Goldin points out (*Confucianism*, 5).
[48] For a similar position, see Harris, "Han Feizi's Criticism of Confucianism," 426-27.
[49] Goldin, *Confucianism*, 1-2.

principle of *renyi*, that is, broadly loving humans and doing so appropriately.[50] It is for this reason that I apply the technical term "humanist" onto this tradition, given its advocacy of the core value *ren* – humanity, while calling those seeking to remove this value in governance "anti-humanist."

With regard to the sources, scholars have been cautioning us against seeing Wang Anshi through the biased eyes of his critics.[51] In this study, I primarily base my argument on two major pieces of work Wang produced by the late 1050s:[52] *Miscellaneous Theories from Huainan*[53] (*Huainan zashuo* 淮南雜說) and *Commentary on the "Great Plan"* (*"Hongfan" zhuan* "洪範" 傳).[54] The latter was included in *Collected Writings of Mr. Linchuan* in full,[55] whereas the former did not survive as a standalone book. However, given that it was still extant when Wang's writings were being put together under an imperial decree during Huizong's reign and put to print in early Southern Song,[56] unless there is a convincing reason for why the work Wang Anshi was best known for would have been left out,[57] I share the view with scholars like Hou Wailu and Liu Chengguo that key pieces from this book were included in *Collected Writings of Mr. Linchuan* as well,[58] making it unnecessary to continue transmitting on its own.

As for where they are, Hou Wailu suspects volumes 65-70,[59] a view Liu Chengguo[60] and Wang Shuhua[61] agree with. Ma Zhenduo objects to this, mainly on the grounds that the gist of several essays in volumes 66-68 are obviously at odds with relevant content in the *Mencius*,[62] a

[50] Note what is reconstructed as the "Confucian" approach to governance from early to middle period China in this study is dramatically different from the version advocated by self-identified contemporary "Confucian" thinkers. On their agenda, see Jiang and O'Dwyer, "The Universal Ambitions of China's Illiberal Confucian Scholars." For the larger context, see Veg, "The Rise of China's Statist Intellectuals."
[51] See, for example, Li Huarui, *Wang Anshi bianfa yanjiu shi*, 135-49; Levine, "A Performance of Transparency."
[52] For this dating, see the Appendix.
[53] Or "South of the Huai [River]."
[54] On these being Wang's representative works, see the quote from Lu Dian in chapter 1 section III.
[55] Again, see Appendix for issues involved in its dating.
[56] For a detailed discussion of the textual history, see Zhu Shangshu, *Song ren bieji xulu*, 316-35. Wang's collected writings were put to print in 1140 and 1151, the two origins of the modern editions we use. In the entry on *Miscellaneous Theories* in his book completed between 1151 and 1187, Chao Gongwu did not report its being lost (*Junzhai dushuzhi jiaozheng*, 525-26). See also what Liu Chengguo wrote in Wang Anshi, *Wang Anshi ji (jiexuan)*, 20.
[57] Completeness was aimed for when Wang Anshi's great-grandson was compiling his writings under the imperial decree (Zhu Shangshu, *Song ren bieji xulu*, 318).
[58] Hou Wailu, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi,* IV-1, 446; Liu Chengguo, *Wang Anshi nianpu changbian*, 663-64. Ma Zhenduo thinks it was lost (*Zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi*, 40).
[59] Hou Wailu, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi,* IV-1, 446.
[60] Liu Chengguo, *Wang Anshi nianpu changbian*, 663-64, 2301.
[61] Wang Shuhua, "Jinggong Xinxue zhushu kaobian," 524.
[62] Ma Zhenduo, *Zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi*, 39-40.

view Gao Keqin adopts.[63] This objection does not stand up to close scrutiny – that *Miscellaneous Theories* rang a bell with *Mencius* among its readers does not mean their contents were in agreement with each other. It could have been caused by the mere fact that both feature extensive talks of human nature,[64] as well as their shared normative outlook.[65] As we shall see, no matter how much Wang Anshi drew upon *Mencius*, he was no copier of Mencius' ideas, nor anybody else's for that matter.

Nevertheless, we can perhaps add more precision to Hou's view.[66] Judging by generic similarity, it seems the starting point should be volume 63, while the latter part of volume 70, consisting of documents for official communication from "On Tea Law" 議茶法 onward, do not belong.[67] In what follows, I take the expositional essays from volume 63 through the first half of volume 70 as from *Miscellaneous Theories*. The ultimate proof for this attribution shall become clear by the end of chapter 2, as main pieces in these volumes, together with *Commentary on the "Great Plan,"* do formulate a systematic theory of *daode* and *xingming* that according to Wang's biography cited in chapter 1 began gaining influence after his *Miscellaneous Theories* went into circulation. Moreover, as we shall see in that chapter, some of the ideas found in these two works had been integrated in the long letter Wang wrote Renzong – the so-called "Myriad-Word Letter" – between late 1058 and early 1059[68] into a sweeping reform blueprint.

Another major source I use is Wang's *Diary*, where he recorded his daily communications with Shenzong for when he was spearheading the reform during the Xining period (1068-1077). In it Wang explicated some of the ideas he formulated in *Miscellaneous Theories* and *Commentary on the "Great Plan"* to the emperor, explaining what they meant in actual governance. About this diary, Kong Xue recently produced a detailed discussion of its origin, process of circulation, and

[63] Gao Keqin, "Wang Anshi zhushu kao," 86-87. The "Kongzi" in Gao's text seems a typo for Mencius. Cf. Ma Zhenduo, *Zhengzhi gaigejia Wang Anshi*, 40.
[64] Wang Shuhua, "Jinggong Xinxue zhushu kaobian," 524.
[65] On Mencius' view being "normatively infused" in general, see Ivanhoe, *Three Streams*, 2. On his take on human nature being normative, see Virág, *The Emotions in Early Chinese Philosophy*, 111.
[66] Gao Keqin, "Wang Anshi zhushu kao," 87.
[67] Volume 62 also has expositional pieces, but they differ by being official communication documents, like those in the latter part of volume 70.
[68] Liu Chengguo dates the submission of Wang's myriad-word letter to early 1059 (*Wang Anshi nianpu changbian*, 473), the reason being that only then did Wang arrive at the capital to take up the position of Administrative Assistant in the Bureau of General Accounts (*duzhi panguan* 度支判官) to which he was appointed in 1058/10.

value as a primary source.[69] An exchange between Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126) and emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1085-1100) in 1097 tells its importance:

> Cai Jing said: "I have seen that Wang Anshi had a *Diary*. What's in it were all repeated discussions between the late emperor and Anshi on affairs under Heaven, as well as the intention to change the methods and measures during the Xining period, from beginning to end, all complete. I wanted to ask for having it slightly compiled for presenting [to Your Majesty] to read."
> The emperor said: "There was originally a copy in the palace and I have read it in detail for multiple times."
> 京言："竊見王安石有《日錄》一集，其間皆先帝與安石反復論天下事，及熙寧改更法度之意，本末備具。欲乞略行修纂進讀。"
> 上曰："宮中自有本，朕已詳閱數次矣。"[70]

In 1122, on the grounds that "in it military strategies and statecraft often survived in detail" 其中兵謀、政術往往具存, Zhao Zishu 趙子書 (?-?) submitted a memorial asking for banning its commercial sale. Taking Zhao's point made out of concerns for national security, the court granted this, ordering a state-wide destruction of the prints and a ban.[71] While the book did not survive intact, a number of entries in it were quoted in multiple sources, including Li Tao's 李燾 (1115-1184) *Long Draft Continuing* Comprehensive Mirror to Aide Governance, Chen Guan's *Collected Writings in Reverence of Yao*,[72] and Yang Shi's collected writings,[73] allowing cross-examination in many cases. Recently, two editions of partial restoration were published. The one I use is *Xining zoudui rilu* (*Diary on Imperial Audiences during the Xining Period*. *Diary* hereafter).[74]

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[69] Kong Xue, Wang Anshi Rilu *ji jiao*, preface.
[70] Li Tao, *XCB*, 492.11678. Yang Zhongliang seemed to mistakenly call it "*Shilu*" (Xuzizhitongjianchangbian *jishi benmo*, 92.1595. *JSBM* hereafter. I am using the Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe punctuated edition out of convenience, while checking it against the Beijing tushuguan chubanshe edition). For the various names by which it was called, see Kong Xue, Wang Anshi Rilu *ji jiao*, preface, 7.
[71] Liu Lin et al. eds., *SHY*, *xingfa*, 2.86.8329. De Weerdt discussed this in "What Did Su Che See in the North?" 479.
[72] Chen Guan, *Song Zhongsu Chen Liaozhai Siming zun Yao ji*.
[73] Yang Shi, *Yang Shi ji*.
[74] This is only because I had this edition when conducting this research. Future scholars might want to use Kong Xue's Wang Anshi Rilu *ji jiao* as the basis, as it was published earlier and is equipped with more scholarly apparatuses.

Aside from these main sources, I also use other relevant writings by Wang Anshi himself,[75] his son, and his students, as well as some historiographical works, like Li Tao's *Long Draft* and Yang Zhongliang's 楊仲良 (fl. early 13th century)[76] *Chronicling Events in* Long Draft Continuing *Comprehensive Mirror to Aide Governance*.[77] The biases in the latter type of sources have been systematically critiqued by Charles Hartman.[78] In the sense that history was written by humans with agency, no work was free of their author's agenda, whether they upheld *Daoxue* ideology or not. Being aware of this, however, does not mean they cannot be used as historical sources critically, nor should historians therefore be deterred from going beyond textual and linguistic analysis to know what actually happened in the world under study.[79] As is the case throughout this study, I build my argument on careful examination of primary sources and submit the rest to the reader.

[75] Like his commentary on *Laozi*. Some scholars think this commentary was written after he had permanently retired. Given that that of his son Wang Pang's was produced in 1070, plus the crucial importance of Laozi's idea of *daode* in his political theory as we shall see in chapters 1 and 2, even if Wang Anshi commented on *Laozi* much later than his son did, we should assume it was integral to his work on statecraft. Indeed, from the early 1040s, Wang Anshi had expressed his consistent view that writing should be about governance ("Yu Zu Zezhi shu," in *LCJ*, 77.812). I did not tap into Wang Anshi's intellectual relationship to Buddhism.
[76] For this dating, see Hartman, "Bibliographic Notes on Sung Historical Works."
[77] Yang Zhongliang, *JSBM*.
[78] Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History*.
[79] Hartman himself does not deny this (*The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 47, 333), and his projected second volume promises to tell "the political and social realities behind that discourse" (ibid., xiii). Even in this first volume, when he is accounting for historical events, he still uses the historiographical works whose political agenda he unravels as primary sources (e.g., 250n7, 252n12).