

# Critique of “Judgment” in Gongsun Long’s “Zhiwu lun”—A Comparative Reading in the Light of Hölderlin’s “Judgment and Being”

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## Abstract

This paper has attempted to characterize “Zhiwu lun” as the presentation of the incapacity of object-oriented knowledge to represent the realm of “things”, highlighting Gongsun Long’s epistemological and ontological value beyond a logical one. This paper proposes that only based upon this assumption does “Zhiwu lun” allow a thorough interpretation of “Mingshi lun”, whereby the intuitive function of “names” provides a better solution to the cognitive limits imposed by object-oriented (self-)consciousness. Methodologically, this paper mainly considers the Heidelberg School’s interpretation of Hölderlin’s critique of judgment in “Judgment and Being” to be both a complementary justification and reconstruction of the implicit structures of Gongsun Long’s view. This paper has presupposed the interpretation of Gongsun Long’s key concept of 指 as “judgment” in Hölderlin’s sense, in contrast to “things” (物) and “name” (名), then verified this hypothesis, as well as the relationships amongst these translations, by a close textual analysis and new translation of “Zhiwu lun”.

**Keywords:** Gongsun Long, the Heidelberg School, Hölderlin, critique of judgment, pre-reflectivity

## Kritika »presoje« v Gongsun Longovem delu »Zhiwu lun« – primerjalno branje v luči Hölderlinovega dela »Presoja in bivanje«

### Izvilleček

Članek poskuša opredeliti delo »Zhiwu lun« kot prikaz nezmožnosti na objekt osredotočenega znanja, da bi predstavljal svet »stvari«, pri čemer osvetli Gongsun Longovo epistemološko in ontološko vrednost kot takšno, ki presega zgolj logično vrednost. Članek nadalje predpostavlja, da je samo na ta način mogoče interpretirati besedilo »Mingshi lun« s pomočjo razumevanja besedila »Zhiwu lun«, pri čemer intuitivna vloga »imen« ponuja boljše rešitev za kognitivne omejitve, ki jih povzročajo na objekt osredotočeno (samo) zavedanje. Na metodološki ravni članek večinoma obravnava interpretacijo Hölderlinove

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kritike presoje v »Presoji in bivanju«, ki jo je podala heidelberška šola, ne samo kot komplementarno upravičenje ampak tudi kot rekonstrukcijo implicitnih struktur Gongsun Longovega pogleda. V članku najprej podam razlago Gongsun Longovega ključnega koncepta *zhi* 指 kot »presojo« v Hölderlinovem pomenu, v nasprotju s »stvarmi« (*wu* 物) in »imenom« (*ming* 名), v nadaljevanju pa s pomočjo podrobne besedilne analize in novega prevoda besedila »Zhiwu lun« preverim ter potrdim to podmeno kot tudi odnose med temi prevodi.

**Ključne besede:** Gongsun Long, heidelberška šola, Hölderlin, kritika presoje, predreflektivnost

To this day, Gongsun Long 公孫龍 remains one of the most controversial figures in the history of Chinese thought. The reason why his thought attracts such special attention not only from Chinese scholars but also from Western sinologists, even though it is expressly divorced from such mainstream thought as Confucianism, is that most of his texts demonstrate a strong logical connotation, an interest shared by the Western tradition. The Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), the first Westerner to have studied Chinese thought in general, initially examined Gongsun Long's text from a Western perspective comparing him with Aristotle (Zhang 2019). Ricci, who wished to convert the Chinese through natural reason and Christianity, believed that Gongsun Long's *white horse paradox* (白馬論) could be found resolved in the Aristotelian notions of substance and accident (ibid., 4). His interpretation of the *Gongsun Longzi* in the light of a rationalistic dialogue with the West is seen as promising by most contemporary scholars, but in fact such an interpretation is profoundly misleading. The majority of subsequent research followed this *rationalistic, logical-linguistic* perspective.

Amongst contemporary scholars, derived from Emil Benveniste's comparative linguistic approach, Zhang concluded that the justification for Gongsun Long's claim "A white horse is not a horse" is a result of the different syntaxes of Chinese and Western languages. Since there is no copula "is" in the Chinese language which calls for predication, 白馬非馬 can only be read as inclusion and not identity (Zhang 2019). There is also the difficulty which Zhang recognized herself, which is that this claim cannot explain the remainder of or the integrity of the "Baima lun" ("White horse treatise"), as the linguistic approach based on the specificity of Chinese language is misleading. The authors<sup>1</sup> of the *Zhuangzi* (莊子),

1 There were no properly organized schools of thought during the Warring States, except for Confucianism and Mohism. Moreover, early Chinese philosophical "Masters" were not necessarily actual existing authors, and that their texts have almost not been compiled by them, in most cases these

the *Xunzi* (荀子), and so on, all criticized the *GSLZ* (公孫龍子) for “playing with words”, without regarding their corresponding reality in the “Baima lun”, and they of course spoke the same Chinese language as the author of the *GSLZ*. This fact leads to the claim that the linguistic perspective outlining the influence of the Chinese language, if indeed playing an important role due to its grammatic and semantical divergence from Western languages in the interpretation of ancient texts, cannot be counted as decisive. Apart from the perspective of language, this claim also led us to the perspective of self-consciousness, which is a phenomenon with a greater universality amongst different cultural settings.

Although studies from a logical, rationalistic and linguistic perspective did contribute to the presentation of early Chinese logic, they also fragmented and missed Gongsun Long’s point as a theoretical whole. As a matter of fact, the apparent logical approach in his dialogues serves only as a method of demonstration, a rhetorical play for exhibiting his more fundamental epistemological and ontological ideas. Thus Gongsun Long’s main idea should be considered diametrically opposed to the Aristotelian logic of non-contradiction and the law of identity ( $A=A$ ).

Nevertheless, from an anti-rationalistic perspective, Rieman (1977) related Gongsun Long to Wittgenstein on linguistic scepticism, interpreting Gongsun Long as playing with words, sceptical about linguistic designation while favourable about its practical use. Thompson (1995) developed a similar idea that the apparent *white horse paradox* comes from communicative functions, instead of logical and judgmental functions. The practical side of the “language use” only seems to be an interesting path, since neither Rieman nor Thompson has drawn any further conclusions which enable the interpretation of the remaining chapters of the *GSLZ*.

In two successive papers (1980, 1981), Rieman further developed the idea of “language use” in Gongsun Long, relating it to the Confucian political “rectification of names”, subsequently claiming it to be the key idea of Gongsun Long. However, within the whole work, the textual suggestion for political interpretation can only be found in the last proposition of “Mingshi lun” (名實論),

How perfect were the ancient farsighted kings! They examined names and their corresponding realities and were careful about their designations! (Perleberg 1952, 123)

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figures are more fictitious characters than actual historical people (Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan 2003). However, in this paper Gongsun Long is referred to as the author of the text for the sake of convenience and simplicity.

The interpretation clearly has a narrower scope than what Gongsun Long intended. Instead, this proposition should be considered as an illustrative segue of the epistemological ideas of "Mingshi lun".

Pang Pu argued that 指 in "Zhiwu lun" (指物論) should be interpreted as "mind" or "consciousness" in contrast to "matter" in the Western sense. Zhu Qianhong and Zeng Xiangyun understand it from the perspective of Western semiotics. While those threads of analysis are in close alignment to the perspective adopted by this paper, their definitions of the meaning of 指 often lack textual evidence (Liu 2020, 252). Therefore, this paper hopes to provide a thorough textual analysis of "Zhiwu lun" as it relates to "Mingshi lun" and other issues.

Bo Mou distinguished between a semantic referent, "A white horse is a horse", and a pragmatic referent, "A white horse is not a horse" ("double reference account", Mou 2007). In order to avoid dualism within the principles of explication as well as propose a solution to "Baima lun", Bo Mou claims that the two perspectives should be complementary to one another. However, while this distinction does exist and is important for "Baima lun" and the *GSLZ*, there is no sign of Gongsun Long having assigned equal value to the semantic referent and the pragmatic referent, as his conclusion in "Baima lun", "A white horse is *not* a horse", attests to. Rather, his attitude towards the linguistic and logical (or "semantic" as according to Mou) explication is *a clear refutation*. This refutation is confirmed through the key proposition of "Zhiwu lun" (4<sup>2</sup>) which radically separates the apparent linguistic and logical sphere from that of "things" ("Judgments/designations/pointings (指) are what do not exist in the world; things are what exist in the world. To identify what exists in the world with what does not exist in the world, this is not right (指也者/天下之所無也/物也者/天下之所有也/以天下之所有為天下之所無/未可)"). Failing to recognize this distinction, Mou claimed that Gongsun's "pre-theoretical" solution of "due place actuality" in "Mingshi lun" was not to be found in the *GSLZ*, but instead in the philosophy of Xunzi (Mou 2020, 42). However, it is precisely this deconstruction of the rational, logical sphere (指), which not only constitutes the central topic of "Zhiwu lun" but equally functions as the starting-point of Gongsun Long's holistic reflection that allows for the elaboration of "names" in "Mingshi lun" as the epistemological counterpart of 指, thereby rendering it *possible to deduce* all the qualities of "name" (名) as opposed to the ones of 指 listed in "Zhiwu lun". Therefore, only after the elucidation of this crucial distinction does it become tenable to thoroughly interpret "Mingshi lun" in relation to "Zhiwu lun".

2 The words or propositions are numbered throughout the article according to their initial numbers given by the 1952 version of *The works of Kong-Sun Lung-Tzu* (Perleberg 1952). Therefore, readers can refer to the original Chinese text where these words or propositions are located.

There are more rival interpretations of the “Zhiwu lun” than of any other document in early Chinese philosophical literature, not to mention the sheer amount of competing translations. The diversity of interpretations can be partly attributed to Ricci’s false suggestion of interpreting Gongsun Long under a rationalistic framework and linguistically, from the difficulty of translation of Gongsun Long’s texts both for Chinese and western scholars.

I will attempt to propose a new reading of “Zhiwu lun”, mainly based upon the theoretical framework of the Heidelberg School’s interpretation of Hölderlin’s critique of self-consciousness and its judgmental form in German idealism in the fragment “Being and Judgment”. In equal parts a critique of Fichte’s absolute principle of self-consciousness (“I am I”) as well as building upon Kant’s identification of thinking and judging (Frank 2004, 97–126), Hölderlin understands “judgment” not only emphatically in the semantic sense as “making a judgment about something”, but *in the broadest sense of the term*, and thereby as the “original separation” (*Ur-theil*) between subject and object in (self-)consciousness. This *separation* functions as the basis of all our object-oriented, predicative and conceptual knowledge in opposition to that which is “separated” by judgment, *ergo* “Being”.

For this reason, I will attempt to translate Gongsun Long’s key term 指, *which also seems to encompass a wide range of mental activities*, as “judgment” *in this sense* and interpret “Zhiwu lun” against this framework as the radical critique of judgment in a pre-rationalistic and pre-logic way. Methodologically, I will *presuppose* to interpret 指 as judgment in Hölderlin’s sense in contrast to things (物) and name (名), then verify the feasibility of this hypothesis as well as the relationships among these translations through a close textual analysis.

Although Gongsun Long of course did not use Western terms such as pre-reflectivity, Being or self-consciousness, the reasons why I consider this approach to be better than the rest are as follows. First, “Being and Judgment” and “Zhiwu lun” textually demonstrate common points of view; second, while almost all the other interpretations remain fragmentary and even contradictory until now, “Being and Judgment” would allow the interpretation of “Zhiwu lun” in relation with “Mingshi lun” and “Baima lun”, as well as opening the possibility of interpreting “Tongbian lun” and “Jianbai lun” in line with the first two fragments, as I will attempt to show the key features of these parallels. Thus, I consider the Heidelberg School’s interpretation of Hölderlin to not only be a complementary justification, but also a valid reconstruction of the implicit structures of Gongsun Long’s view. This is not saying that I will impose a Western view and concepts upon the Chinese thinker, which is the most criticized aspect in these debates, nor that Hölderlin would be the only appropriate reference in the Western tradition. As

the author of the *GSLZ* sometimes defended his thesis on the grounds of logical demonstration, its epistemological and ontological value, which exceed its mere logical value, became veiled to modern readers by this cynical game of logic. Thus, in order to enable the Heidelberg School’s interpretation of Hölderlin to explain what Gongsun Long means, the main methodology is to examine how he arrives at said meaning where the two texts indeed demonstrate common theses.

As the *GSLZ* has found consensus neither in translation nor interpretation, I will retranslate, subdivide and comment on each proposition cited in this paper.<sup>3</sup>

### Critique of Judgment in the Heidelberg School’s Interpretation of Hölderlin’s “Judgment and Being”

The less than 400 word fragment entitled “Judgment and Being” (“Urtheil und Seyn”) was only published for the first time in the 1960s after the philosophical significance of its linguistic obscureness had been rediscovered and restructured by Dieter Henrich. At that point, it became a paradigm shifting critique of and breakthrough to the theoretical impasse presented by the problem of self-consciousness in early German idealism. Ever since, this interpretation has not only achieved scholastic consensus within the field of study of German idealism, but “Judgment and Being” has also profoundly redefined the interpretation of Hölderlin’s works, especially his philosophical contributions.

Judgment and Being, traditionally concepts of knowledge, are unconventionally opposed one to another. “Judgment” (*Urtheil*) is the “original separation” (*Ur-theil*)<sup>4</sup> of subject and object, while being, their seamless unity. We should distinguish between the object of knowledge (*Objekt des Wissens*) and “Being”. “Being”, as this original unity between subject and object, is what precedes their relation, and therefore can never be identified with an object of knowledge. Consequently, Being can only be depicted by a boundary concept “intellectual intuition”, where subject and object are in such absolute unity. In contrast, the form of knowledge

3 The Chinese original text used in this article is *The works of Kong-Sun Lung-Tzu* (Perleberg 1952). Although a new edition (*The Mingjia & Related Texts* (2019)) is available, however, both the Daozang and the modern version are provided with suggested subdivisions of propositions which do not entirely suit my interpretation of the text. Thus, I have rather chosen the 1952 version which does not contain any subdivision and have provided my original subdivision in correspondence with my own translation and interpretation.

4 Waibel discovered a direct precursor of Hölderlin’s interpretation of judgment in Fichte himself, who claimed that: “Judging (*Urtheilen*), is to originally divide (*ur-sprünglich teilen*)”. The idea of this division innately involves the notion of the reciprocal relation of subject and object to one another, and presupposes a whole of which subject and object are only constituent parts (Frank 2004, 104).

provided by self-consciousness is different, for there, subject and object are still separated (Henrich 1997, 75–76; 2004, 40–48).

This text is an intervention by Hölderlin in an ongoing philosophical argument of his time, namely, in his critique of the early Fichte and Schelling. Semantically, if our self-consciousness (as well as consciousness of external objects) is described on the basis of the *dual* form of judgment of  $A=A$  (in the case of consciousness of external objects,  $A=B$ ) or a first principle of self-identity (“I am I”) as the early Idealists did, it cannot provide this seamless ground for its own existence, and thus needs to presuppose a “Being” that can no longer be characterized by means of self-consciousness and judgment:

Yet this Being must not be confused with identity. If I say: I am I, the subject (‘I’) and the object (‘I’) are not united in such a way that no separation could be performed without violating the essence of what is to be separated; on the contrary, the I is only possible by means of this separation of the I from the I. How can I say: ‘I!’ without self-consciousness? Yet how is self-consciousness possible? In opposing myself to myself, separating myself from myself, yet in recognizing myself as the same in the opposed regardless of this separation... Hence identity is not a union of object and subject which simply occurred, hence identity is not = to absolute Being. (Hölderlin 1988, 37–38)

In other words, according to Hölderlin Being characterizes an *absolute, seamless unity*; Judgment conversely, *only* introduces an “original division” of Being into a subject and an object (even if the object is the subject itself in the case of self-consciousness) *and* the formal reunification of them into a *logical* identity, which is only secondary and relative, in contrast to its pretended absoluteness. Thus, judgment is finite and dualist by its structure and can never represent Being in its unity and totality.

Frank followed and expanded Henrich’s interpretation, reading the word “*Objekt*” in “*Subjekt und Objekt*” not only as object-oriented knowledge in the broad sense, but also analytically as *predicate*, emphasizing the semantic understanding of the separating essence of judgment. First, the *dual form* of judgment, which divides the expression into a subject and a predicate, contradicts its *content*—for with respect to content, it is supposed to be the absolute unity of subject and object which is named “Being” with infinite possibilities of predicates. Second, in the judgment, the predicate only provides a *partial* “image” of the subject. It picks out only one characteristic among the infinity of characteristics that the subject possesses. For example, “Socrates is an Athenian”. “Athenian” is not sufficient to describe the

integrity or the "Being" of Socrates, because it is only one quality among the infinite qualities that Socrates possessed. In this sense, judgment reveals and conceals Being. Thus, in the relation of subject and predicate, the meaning of judging is the relativizing of, the original Absolute position which we express through the term "Being", or stated simply, the separation of the inseparable. Even in the particular case of the self-consciousness articulated in the judgment "I am I", there is also differentiation; an original division separates the I as subject and the I as predicate, for otherwise any self-consciousness would be impossible. However, what is expressed in the judgment is precisely the non-distinctness of subject and object—their absolute fusion; the form of the judgment consists, however, in distinguishing these non-distinct terms (Frank 2004, 104).

Hölderlin draws the following conclusion: If, on the one hand, I can gain no knowledge about a state of affairs unless I make a judgment about it, depriving it of its absolute identity and if, on the other hand, a judgment must refer to and depend on an underlying, non-relative unity in order to be a relation of something to something, then the synthesis that takes place in judgment, must be distinguished *fundamentally* from this pre-judgmental, pre-predicative, non-relative unity—Being. Judgment remains a logical, relative and empty identity, while Being should be an absolute, seamless and pre-reflective unity. It cannot be thought of or grasped conceptually, for to think is to judge (following Kant), and to judge is to differentiate (Frank 1997, 705).

The distinction between the unified Being and the originally dividing act of apprehension, forces us to distinguish between the objectifying act of (self-)consciousness and the non-objective intuition in which *Being is self-evident*. Hölderlin calls this latter "intellectual intuition". As intuition it is immediate, therefore placing no distance between itself and what it is conscious of, even if of itself. Awareness of this originally unified Being is thus neither conceptual nor pre-predicative, for what is known through predicates and concepts is grasped only mediately (according to Kantian terminology) in a fundamental separation. I will particularly rely on some of the basic characteristics of the "intellectual intuition" to elucidate Gongsun Long's key idea of "names".

Although the respective interpretations of "Judgment and Being" by Henrich and Frank emphasize different epistemological aspects of the text, they are complementary to one another and are both widely accepted in the studies of German Idealism and of Hölderlin. As a result, I will make use of both perspectives as a reference for the elucidation of Gongsun Long.

However, what the Heidelberg School has not expressly highlighted is the fact that since "Judgment and Being" belongs to one of Hölderlin's earlier texts, its



critique is deepened and, in various forms, extended to an *existential* dimension in his later theoretical and poetic works. For example, the separation of self-consciousness from Being is also described as “The Beautiful” (*das Schönheit*) of life as degradation from its origin in the “divine nature” in “Hyperion”, as well as “The Tragic” (*Das Tragische*) of human subjectivity in challenging fate in vain in his “Remarks on Sophocles’ Oedipus and Antigone” (She 2016). These themes draw the practical dimension of action into the scope of Hölderlin’s critique of self-consciousness, and thus add an ontological aspect to the epistemological interpretation of the Heidelberg School.

Moreover, as the intellectual intuition of the absolute union of subject and object can last but only an instant and is “too unconscious of itself”, Hölderlin complemented it with “feeling” and “intellect” in the concept of “transcendental sensation” (*transzendente Empfindung*) in “On the operation of the poetic spirit” (“Über die Verfahrensweise des poetischen Geistes”) (Hölderlin 1988, 135).

A similar analysis of the limit of our object-oriented cognition and its solution was presented some 2,000 years earlier in China.

### Textual Analysis of “Zhiwu lun” (《指物論》 “Theory on Judging Things”)<sup>5</sup>

Guest: Things are all about judgments, but judgments are not what they judge / judgments are non-judgments.

物莫非指/而指非指. (1)<sup>6</sup>

Although the author does not give a definition of “things” here, there is a possible answer in “Mingshi lun” (“Theory on names and their corresponding realities”): “Things are Heaven and Earth and what they produce 天地與其所產焉/物也” (“Mingshi lun”, 1); “A thing is a thing and does not exceed what it is. This should

5 The words or propositions are numbered throughout the article according to their initial numbers given by the Perleberg’s 1952 version of *The Works of Kong-Sun Lung-Tzu*. Therefore, readers can refer to the original Chinese text where these words or propositions are precisely located.

6 非指 (non-judgment) is apparently a concept created by Gongsun since it appears throughout *Zhiwulun*. However, 物莫非指 should be broken into 物/莫非/指 (instead of 物莫/非指) to mean: Nothing is not about judgments (double negation with 莫 and 非). 而指非指 should be broken into 而指/非指 with the concept of 非指. Some translations are based on 物莫/非指, 而指/非指, taking the first 非指 as a fixed concept just as the second, and thus fell into Gongsun’s playful language trap.

be reality 物以物其所物/而不過焉<sup>7</sup>/實也” (“Mingshi lun”, 2). “Mingshi lun” views “things” in terms of nature, since they are, “Heaven and Earth and what they produce”, and “do not exceed what it is”. Namely, they remain in their state of nature as products of “Heaven and Earth” (“A thing is a thing”, 物其所物<sup>8</sup>), in opposition to the products of human mind. This is the proper “place” (位 “Mingshi lun”, 4) of things and why only “things” can be called “reality” (實 “Mingshi lun”, 2) or “existence” (天下之所有, “Zhiwu lun” 4), as an antonym of emptiness or absence (曠).

What is in *opposition* to “things” and described as “absent” (曠 “Mingshi lun”, 3), non-“real” (實 “Mingshi lun”, 2), “out of its place” (所位非位 “Mingshi lun”, 4)<sup>9</sup> and should thus be “rectified” (正 “Mingshi lun”, 4)? Gongsun Long did not name it directly in “Mingshi lun”. However, we can find the answer in 指. Precisely in “Zhiwu lun”, the spheres of 指 and 物 (nature or things in themselves) are mutually *radically opposed to each other*, and only things are considered as belonging to the realm of reality (existence, substance), just as in “Mingshi lun”. In contrast, 指 belongs to the realm of fiction (abstraction) or absence (non-existence): “Guest: 指 (presupposed *for now* to be the “original separation” of subject and object in self-consciousness, it can encompass object-oriented knowledge in general, such as judgments, conceptualizations, designations, pointings and pointers, syntheses, associations, signs, signifiers, symbols ... etc., namely, all perceptual and conceptual references) are what do not exist in the world; things are what exist in the world. “To identify what exists in the world with what does not exist in the world, this is not right (指也者/天下之所無也/物也者/天下之所有也/以天下之所有為天下之所無/未可)” (“Zhiwu lun”, 4).

If we borrow Hölderlin’s and Schelling’s interpretation of the various ways of positing of the absolute self-consciousness to different modes of being, i.e. possibility, reality and necessity (Frank 2004, 105), it would comparatively strengthen the

7 焉 appears from 1-4 (“Mingshi lun”) according to a parallel structure as “... 焉, ... 也”. Since it appears each time at the end of the semi-clause, thus as a final clause marker (天地與其所產焉/物也 1; .....而不過焉/實也 2; .....不曠焉/位也 3; .....位其所位焉/正也 4), I have translated it accordingly as affirmation instead of questions or other significations which would require 焉 to appear at other places of the clause.

8 物以物其所物: literally, the first 物 is a noun and the subject, the second 物 is the main verb of the expression, the third 物 is the verb of the subordinate clause. Literally, “A thing ‘denotes’ what it ‘denotes’ (the third 物)”. Thus, I’ve translated it as “A thing is a thing”, standing in radical opposition to what does not “denotes” what it “denotes” and “exceeds itself”—the mind or the judgment. This translation is confirmed by “Zhiwu lun” (4). (“Guest: Judgments are what does not exist in the world; things are what exists in the world. To identify what exists in the world with what does not exist in the world, this is not right”).

9 In 所位非位, the first 位 is a verb, the second 位 is a noun—“to occupy” the “wrong position”. 出其所位非位/正也, leaving the “wrong place” that it “occupies” equals being “rectified”.

thesis in “Zhiwu lun” and reconstruct its implicit structures, while also aiding me in partially explaining my attempt at translating 指 as “judgment” *in the epistemological sense*, aligning with Hölderlin’s sense of the term as the “original separation” of (self-)consciousness from Being. This separation finds its semantic expression in the dual form of judgment.

According to Schelling, Being, or the original positing act of the absolute self-consciousness, does not correspond to pre-reflective “reality”, but instead exists in contrast to what is “real” and thus, corresponds to a “logical, objective possibility” which acts as the foundation of all other categories. Absolute Being then becomes absolute position of self-consciousness expressed in the fundamental judgment “I am I”. For Hölderlin, in contrast, Being in the existential sense is not a logical possibility of self-consciousness to posit itself intentionally in a judgmental form. Instead, similar to “things” for Gongsun Long, Being is reality only, and it essentially transcends all forms of reflectivity, conceptuality, object-oriented cognition, categories. Reality cannot be mediately grasped by dualist judgments based on the various activities of (self-)consciousness in its reflective, predicative expression, but only by non-dualistic intuition. Being transcends the act of dualistically positing or not (thus, possibility) of (self-)consciousness and its judgmental form. In other words, the sphere of reality logically and ontologically precedes that of possibility and inherently enables the latter, since (self-)consciousness is nothing but the secondary, one-sided “segmentation” of the initially seamless unity of reality.

Consequently, within this cognitive framework, everything encompassed within Gongsun Long’s term of 指 is comparable to the Western category of possibility corresponding to (self-)consciousness in the widest sense as separation between the knowing subject and the object known, and 物 (things, “Mingshi lun”, 1, 2; “Zhiwu lun”, 4) to Being. Thus, I will first list some possible reasons for translating 指 as judgment within Hölderlin’s cognitive framework.

First, 指 designates “what does not exist in the world” (“Zhiwu lun”, 4), namely, it is ontologically secondary to “things”, for things are “what (does) exist in the world” (“Zhiwu lun”, 4), namely, only things are realities. In terms of Hölderlin, Gongsun expresses the ontological priority of Being over (self-)consciousness as the characterization of things as existence/fullness/realities (不曠, “Mingshi lun”, 3) and that of 指 as non-existence/absence/illusion (“Zhiwu lun”, 4).

Second, 指 is radically separated from things or nature (“Zhiwu lun”, 4). It is unreal—“non-existent”. Therefore, it can be said to be a “fiction”, a mere “possibility” of our (self-)consciousness, and thus includes all possible orders of object-oriented cognitive activities—judgments, syntheses, designations, pointers, signs, symbols, etc. These activities can be categorized under the banner of “(self-)consciousness”

in Hölderlin's sense, a basic term designating the most fundamental epistemological act and which finds its basic expression in the form of "judgment".

Third, in the common sense, the character "指", which means "pointing at something which is *not* contained in itself", attests to the dual structure of judgment as according to Hölderlin, i.e. the intentionality of (self)-consciousness to step out of "Being" or the nature to which it belongs (its "position" 位, "Mingshi lun", 4) to reach for a "goal", an object *outside of* its initial state of being.

Fourth, for Hölderlin, the fallacies of early Idealism were firstly to have confused judgment with Being, and consequently to deduce reality (Being as such) from the thetical judgment of self-consciousness as possibility, and the false determination of the superiority of the category of possibility over reality (Frank 2004, 104). However, only pre-dualist, pre-reflective and pre-categorical Being is reality, since it enables self-consciousness as well as its judgmental form as possibility. Similarly to Hölderlin, Gongsun Long makes the same *radical* distinction between the spheres of "things" and that of 指 ("To identify what exists in the world with what does not exist in the world, this is not right". "Zhiwu lun", 4). Thus, we can deduce that Gongsun Long also characterizes things as *pre-dualist, pre-predicative, pre-conceptual and pre-reflective*, transcending the fictional construction of human (self)-consciousness, *ergo* the realm of knowledge.

Fifth, "A thing is a thing and does not exceed what it is" (物其所物而不過, "Mingshi lun", 2), this is its reality (實). This confirms that for Gongsun Long, things are pre-conceptual and pre-predicative. When a thing is judged/attributed to/designated in whatever way, it "exceeds" (過) its reality or nature. Since the thing judged is inferred by human reflectivity, predication and conceptuality, it is consequently pulled from the "place" (位) of its initial state (its pre-reflective being or nature) to an object (a concept) outside of itself and thus, "exceeds" its nature. This is best described by the dual structure of judgment.

Sixth, we can relate "Baima lun" to "Zhiwu lun" via *a theoretical continuity* if we consider this debate on the *judgment* "A white horse is not a horse" as confirmative of the theorization of 指 as critique of judgment ("Guest: If you only require a horse, then yellow and black ones all can meet the requirement. If what you require is a white horse, yellow and black ones cannot (曰/求馬/黃黑馬皆可致/求白馬/黃黑馬不可致)", "Baima lun", 5).

Within this framework, we can first presuppose that Gongsun defines things (物) by relegating them to reality (實) which corresponds to the realm of Being (Hölderlin) and lies beyond the category of possibility incarnated in the dualist (self)-consciousness and its judgmental expression (指). Things in themselves, or

“Being” as such, are those which do not “exceed” themselves, namely, those which are not yet inferred through judgments (predication, conceptuality, objectivation and their semantic references). The proposed translation should be a logical hypothesis, and its feasibility and coherence must stand the rigors of a detailed examination of all the propositions of “Zhiwu lun”.

“Zhiwu lun” begins with the statement: “Things are all about judgments”. It is an empirical fact that we make judgments about things all the time. This proposition demonstrates a helpless paradox of human consciousness and language. Nonetheless, judgment (object-oriented knowledge or (self-)consciousness in a general sense) and things can never be identified with each other (“Zhiwu lun”, 4). However, we are generally unable to gain any knowledge about a state of affairs unless we make a judgment about it, namely, by objectifying it through consciousness. This is nothing less than the cognitive effort of human consciousness, attempting the impossible.

Semantically, judging is the act of attributing a *predicate/concept*, in some cases by means of a copula, to a subject of *intuition* in the dualist form. Although the copula “be” is mostly bypassed in a judgment in Chinese due to the syntax of the language, the separation between subject and object and the minimal intentionality of the speaker as reflectivity and (self-)consciousness exist, albeit to a weaker degree, in the signification of judgment, as for example in the claim, “A white horse (is) a horse” (白馬/馬也). In this sense, judgment in the both Chinese language and consciousness shares the basic features of judgment in Western languages and constitutes a fact in the cognition of the Chinese.

“But judgments are not what they judge/are non-judgments/fail” (“而指非指”). What judgments refer to through the use of a predicate (or general object-oriented knowledge) can never be what they *meant* to refer to, namely, things considered in themselves. The knowledge provided by an object-based (self-)consciousness is in no way what it aims to render—“things”. This leads to “Zhiwu lun” (4). Gongsun Long makes this radical distinction between things in themselves and the general object-oriented knowledge we obtain from them or judgments we make about them, and further develops this idea throughout “Zhiwu lun”.

To clarify this claim of Gongsun Long, Frank’s interpretation of “Judgment and Being” would provide a critique of judgments understood as concepts/predicates. What a judgment intends to refer to, namely in its content, is the subject considered in its absolute, seamless unity, its “Being” or the integrity of its existence (“things” in Gongsun Long’s term), without separation between itself and its object. However, in its constitutive structure and form, judging a thing means depriving the thing of its original identity, separating it into a subject and an

object and only *afterwards* formally reuniting the two. Thus, judgment represents only a split-second segmentation, a partial capturing of what was an inseparable unity of Being. For example, in the judgment "Socrates is an Athenian", although "Athenian" does belong to the various identities of Socrates and has been correctly attributed to its subject, however Socrates as a living being is not *only* an Athenian, but also a man, a philosopher, a citizen, etc. Thus, the concept of "Athenian" never exhausts the totality of Socrates' identities, his whole existence as a person identified by the "name" of Socrates, *ergo* his thoughts, the meaning of his life, the incessant change that he underwent at every instant of his life, even ineffable mysteries about his life. In short, since the content of "All that is Socrates" is the aggregate of an *infinity* of characteristics and potential "judgments/predicates", it is bound to undergo perpetual change and *the radical unknown* when viewed from the perspective and narrative of a single-sided judgment. Similarly to the film *Citizen Kane*, the greatness of which is not derived from a rational and thorough understanding of the complex life of Kane, but instead from the idea surrounding the mystery of his life, epitomized by his last words "Rosebud", an act that we can never be completely judgmental about.

Consequently, the necessarily partial, static truth, captured by the judgment through its formal claim of true knowledge about Socrates in a logical bond between subject and predicate, becomes a dogmatic distortion and intentional ignorance of the reality underlying it, "non-judgment". Judgment belongs to the realm of knowledge, not to that of Being.

If we adopt the same approach with the Chinese example, in a Chinese judgment, with the absence of the copula, for example, "is" in "White horse (is) horse" (白馬/馬也), what the integrity and individuality that the "White horse" judgment designates as such—its "Being"—cannot be completely entered by its logical bond with the concept of the horse. It is, therefore, destined to be segmented by the latter, since the infinite amount of characteristics contained in the intuition of the existence of "white horse" can never be completely rendered by the single aspect provided by the concept of the horse. Thus, the identity in this claim is valid only in a logical sense of inclusion and partially, not *existentially and absolutely*.

How about the judgment "Horse (is) horse" (馬/馬也)? For Hölderlin, based on the Idealist judgment of self-consciousness "I am I", a horse as conceived by the speaker in the subject of a judgment cannot be identical with the concept of the horse in the predicate, since the self-consciousness and individuality of the speaker changes at every instant and can never retain a logical identity with itself ("In opposing myself to myself, separating myself from myself, yet in recognizing myself as the same in the opposed regardless of this separation. Yet to what

extent as the same?” (Hölderlin 1988, 38)). Moreover, the being of the horse also changes incessantly during the time of the enunciation of the judgment based on consciousness of the speaker. Thus, from the moment of enunciation, the speaker views the horse at time T1 of the enunciation of the subject already in a different manner from the horse at time T2 of the object. Therefore, due to the nature of the structure of judgment and consciousness, this identity is only logically—and, more precisely, tautologically—valid, as there still exists a separation between the subject and the object *due to this time interval*. This in turn results in the formation of an empty logical relationship through the doubling of the same concept (A is A), which is inherently not an existential one in the sense of depicting the inseparable, living integrity of the “thing”—the horseness in its pre-reflective and pre-predicative existence or “Being”. In this sense, it is not different from the judgment “A white horse is a horse”.

Taking judgmental tautology for Gongsun Long’s last word is a perspective shared by various modern commentators. However, it is a serious misunderstanding which not only hindered the development of novel insight on Gongsun Long’s interpretation, but is one which can also be easily avoided based on “Baima lun”:

Guest: The claim that “having a white horse is not having no horse” is a claim which separates whiteness (from white horse). If not separated, you would claim that having a white horse does not mean having a horse. So, if you take a horse (for a white horse), you only take a horse for a horse and not the white horse for a horse. As a result, we cannot say that “A white horse is a horse”. Instead, we should call a horse “horse” and nothing more.

曰/有白馬不可為謂無馬者/離白之謂也/不離者/有白馬不可謂有馬也/故所以為有馬者/獨以馬為有馬耳/非有白馬為有馬/故其為有馬也不可/以謂馬/馬也。 (“Baima lun”, 15)

“You only take a horse for a horse” does not equal to “We should call a horse ‘horse’ and nothing more”. To call a “horse” “horse” via names (the latter case) *does not mean* the reconstruction of the tautological judgment “A horse is a horse” (the former case), even in such a judgment, subject and object are the same. To call a horse “horse” by its “name” implies *intuiting all the possible qualities* of the horse whilst being open to the possibility of being exposed to yet unknown qualities. In contrast to the semantic emptiness of the tautological judgment or the corresponding object-oriented knowledge, this semantic richness provided by intuition implies that to apprehend a horse in its totality one should not “separate” oneself from the horse through a *dualist* form of consciousness, and semantically, to judge it. In order to be able to gather all the possible attributes of a thing (its “fullness”, 不曠,

"Mingshi lun", 3), it is of paramount importance to first avoid any act of judging, as in a judgment only a single attribute is designated at each time. Only the broader apprehension of a thing transmitted through its "name" corresponds to its "reality", "place" and "fullness": "實以實其所實<sup>10</sup>/不曠焉/位也" ("Reality is reality, not an illusion/absence. This is its place." "Mingshi lun", 3); "其正者/正其所實也/正其所實者/正其名也" ("To rectify (the expression of) a thing, is to rectify it by its reality; to rectify it by its reality, is to rectify its name", "Mingshi lun", 6).

Moreover, in "Mingshi lun" Gongsun Long clearly states that if we wish to have true apprehension about the reality of things and avoid the "chaos" (亂 10) of judging, we should avoid *any* attempt at combining "names" one with another, namely in this framework, relegating one of them to the role of subject and the other to the role of predicate in the form of judgment: "Calling 'that' and 'that' is not limited at 'that', this is not the right way of calling 'that'" ("謂彼/而彼不唯乎彼/則彼謂不行", 8). Namely, "Calling 'that'" by its name must stop at the holistic feeling or intuition transmitted through the "calling" of its name, and nothing more—without adding any additional concepts to its name to designate or further qualify it (even if it is the same concept as its name) within a judgment. *Any* object-oriented, predicative and conceptual referent to the reality of the thing "exceeds" the pure intuition of said "thing", thus, exceeding our pre-dualist, pre-reflective awareness of the integrity of the thing.

Likewise, in "Zhiwu lun", Gongsun Long radically separates the spheres of judgment and things ("... and things cannot be named judgments" "Zhiwu lun", 5), denying all possibility for judgmental (thus including tautological judgment) and object-oriented knowledge to gain access to the true apprehension of things.

However, how to explain that Gongsun Long's conclusion in "Baima lun" still left a judgment "White horse (is) not horse" (白馬非馬)? Although this is indeed a judgment, and thus a separation of the absolute identity and integrity, the Being of "whiteness-horseness" through the concept of the horse, it might be a better claim than "White horse (is) horse" with its extra negation. The structural fallacy of the judgment "White horse (is) horse" is partly resolved by the negation of the mere logical bond between subject and object, and exists as the distortion of the distortion of reality, or more precisely, as ironical and rhetorical self-relativization of the initial, partial and dogmatic perspective provided by "White horse (is) horse". Ironically, "White horse (is) not horse" transcends the one-sided

10 實以實其所實: the same structure as 物以物其所物 and 所位非位, see footnote 8 and 9. The first 實 is a noun and the subject (the "reality"), the second 實 is the main verb of the expression, the third 實 is the verb of the subordinate clause. Literally, "Reality realizes what it realizes". So, I've translated it as "Reality is reality".



reflectivity and knowledge represented in the single judgment of “White horse (is) horse”, thus becoming dialectical.

Novalis might be of help here. The essence of reflection (*Spiegelung*) is an *ordo inversus*, for as the name “reflection” indicates, thinking is like reflecting in a mirror, it renders the left side of its object on the right and its right side on the left. The way of dealing with this unavoidable paradox of our thought and self-consciousness is to once again overturn this inversion in a second and opposite reflection, re-establishing the right relation between judgment and Being in an act of “unknowing of the known” (Frank 1989, 257), “displacing” (所位非位 “Mingshi lun”, 4) the “displaced” judgment in order to “rectify” (正 “Mingshi lun”, 4) it. Therefore, the famous “White horse (is) not horse” is most likely an ironical critique of judgment by a judgment, a self-negation rather than affirmation.

Host: If there are no judgments in the world, things cannot be named things.

天下無指/物無可以謂物。(2)

Host: If the world is full of non-judgments, then, can things be named judgments at all?

非指者天下/而物可謂指乎 (3)

Most of human experience is essentially articulated through language and (self-) consciousness. In this sense, except in rare, artistic or even mystic states of mind, we usually obtain the totality of our apprehension of things from a conscious, reflective, dualist and conceptual state of mind, namely, by attributing concepts to things, by objectifying and judging them (2). The fact that our access to things is generally conditioned by our objectifications and judgments of them echoes the statement in the *Gongsun Longzi* that claims that “Things are all about judgments” (1). In this case however, when the guest simultaneously claimed that these unavoidable “judgments” and object-oriented knowledge all failed in rendering reality (“If the world is full of non-judgments”), the host asked this incisive question, which caused the guest to announce the thesis central to the whole dialogue (4): can things be named/identified with/depicted by judgments after all? (3)

Guest: Judgments are what does not exist in the world; things are what exists in the world. To identify what exists in the world with what does not exist in the world, this is not right.

指也者/天下之所無也/物也者/天下之所有也/以天下之所有為天下之所無/未可。(4)

Both Hölderlin and Gongsun Long agree on the fundamental Kantian distinction between things in themselves and their phenomenal appearances to our understanding. Thus, Being or things in their integral existences are meant to be pre-predicative and pre-conceptual realities, radically transcending the object-oriented cognitive sphere, which could be subsumed under the basic form of judgment. For Hölderlin, this is because judgments are nothing more than the original act of the separation of the representation of Being, and thus, they can encapsulate the latter in only a partial way, and should never be identified with Being. We cannot gain any object-oriented knowledge of Being without separating it in two reciprocally referring *relata* in the form of judgment and intentionality of (self-) consciousness.

Contrary to what Bo Mou claimed (2007), together with "Zhiwu lun" (4) and "Mingshi lun" (13), there is *no possible way* for semantic and judgmental knowledge to have *any* access to the actual knowledge of things. By their very nature, "Judgments are non-judgments", and will always remain non-judgments—they are not judging any "thing", as demonstrated by Gongsun Long, who provided a logical justification for the priority of things over 指 in "Zhiwu lun" (17–18).

Another explanation for judgment's absent, illusory ("non-existent", "what do not exist in the world", non-"real"/實 "Mingshi lun", 2) character is that, as the first part of this paper showed, being only a partial rendering of the reality that it aims to grasp, it nevertheless *claims* to be an integral depiction of reality. In the act of judging, the copula/intentionality of consciousness separates the original unity of the being of the thing in question into a subject and a predicate/an object and only formally, partially and logically rebinds them. Judgment takes the part (one single perspective of the thing concerned—a predicate or a concept which represents only one characteristic of the thing) for the totality of the thing. The integrity of the thing in question actually possesses an infinity of characteristics. For example, "This horse is white". This separation in consciousness takes the originally inseparable unity of the horse, and through a dualist construction divides it by the concept of whiteness. Consequently, the judgment one-sidedly takes the characteristic of whiteness to stand for the infinity of the characteristics of a horse.

Host: There are indeed no judgments in the world, and things cannot be called judgments.

天下無指/而物不可謂指也。(5)

Host: What cannot be called judgments are non-judgments.

不可謂指者/非指也 (6)

Now, the host had no choice but to agree with the guest and finally grasped the answer to his question in (3). Things in themselves are 非指 (non-judgments), a concept created by Gongsun Long which appeared several times throughout “Zhiwu lun”. Things are non-judged/non-judgeable entities in themselves and should be separated from the judgments that we make of them. Only things in themselves can be conceived as “existent” and “real” beings (“Zhiwu lun” 4 echoes “Mingshi lun” 2, “A thing is a thing and does not exceed what it is. This should be reality (物以物其所物/而不過焉/實也)”). Judgments are “non-judgments”, because they are only object-oriented, reflective and fictional claims about things from the human mind, while things should be understood as pre-reflective (“Things cannot be named judgments”) due to the separating structure of the judgment (Hölderlin 1988).

Moreover, as Novalis stated, in German reflection means *Spiegelung*, “reflecting in a mirror”, so everything that (self-)consciousness as thought provides us with would be a reversed, and consequently unreal image of Being, just as the reversed image of things that we see in a mirror (Frank 1989, 257). This is another explanation for Gongsun Long’s “non-existent” nature of judgment. Things in themselves (物) transcend any intentional, predicative, conceptual and theoretical means of comprehension. For both Gongsun and Hölderlin, this is a harsh critique of the cognitive capacities of rationality and (self-)consciousness, as well as the thoughts and language articulated in it.

Guest: (Although they are) non-judged (in themselves), things are all about judgments.

非指者/物莫非指也。(7)

Guest: There are no judgments in the world and things cannot be named judgments, however, there is nothing which is not judged.

天下無指/而物不可謂指者/非有非指也。(8)

Guest: There is nothing which is not judged, things are all about judgments. Things are all about judgments, but judgments are not what they judge.

非有非指者/物莫非指也/物莫非指者/而指非指也。(9)

After establishing this distinction between things and judgments, the guest continued to explore the nature of judgment, and again revealed its contradictory nature. He provided a further explanation for his claim in (1). Although things (Gongsun Long) or Being (Hölderlin) cannot be described entirely by conceptual

means and should be radically separated from them ("Although things are not judged in themselves"), however, we seem to have no other method of accessing knowledge of them, except by judging them. They are "all about judgments". This is an empirical fact both in China and in the West. Although things in themselves and judgments about them are theoretically non-commensurable one with the other ("There are no judgments in the world and things cannot be named judgments"), it must be noted that in most situations we have no other relation to things except via the way of objectifying and thus, of judging them ("There is nothing which is not judged"). (9) resumed (7), (8) and returned them to (1).

Host: Judgments do not exist in the world. This arises from the idea that things have their own names and cannot be judged.

天下無指者/生於物之各有名/不為指也。(10)

Together with (4), this is another central claim of "Zhiwu lun". "Judgments do not exist in the world", namely, judgments through which we believed that we may have accessed knowledge about things are only fictions of human thought. They are, existentially speaking, unreal and "do not exist" as "things" exist. The reason why things could not be judged, is that each thing has its own "name". That is to say, a name is neither a predicate/concept nor is it determined by a predicate/concept, since things "cannot be judged". Although Gongsun Long does not yet specify the nature of names here, he already distinguishes them *radically* from concepts, proposing names as the epistemological solution to the paradoxical nature and impotence of judgment, as well as the finitude of (self-) consciousness.

Gongsun Long further developed this idea in "Mingshi lun" and posited a detailed description of the nature of names. In a different paper, I have brought forth the hypothesis of interpreting "names" as *the vehicle, or a new system of language for pre-conceptual, pre-reflective, pre-judgmental, non-dualist mental activities of different orders, such as pre-reflective awareness, feeling or intuition, etc.*, which transcend both the logical and practical spheres, as I will later show. I have tested the thorough feasibility of this hypothesis through a close textual examination and new translation of "Mingshi lun", of which I will provide several reasons for this parallel here.

First, Gongsun Long can make legitimate and direct claims about a thing's characteristics in contrast to judgment, such as it never "exceeds" (過) its "place" (位) ("Mingshi lun", 2), etc. Thus, he seems to believe that we can have direct intuition of things independent from conceptual means.

Second, when things possess all the opposite characteristics of judgments as reflectivity, as he claimed in “Zhiwu lun” (4), our knowledge of things belongs necessarily to the general realm of pre-reflectivity.

Third, a comparison between Hölderlin’s concept of intuition and the key propositions of “Mingshi lun” lends theoretical support to specifying Gongsun Long’s characterization of the qualities of “name”. In Hölderlin’s concept of intuition, the intuiting subject and its object intuited are intimately fused, so the object is not separated from the intuition of the subject. Thus, we can say that the intuition of a thing as such is not “separated” from the initial unity or integral existence of the thing in itself (its “Being”), which functions as an original “place” (位). Therefore, intuition fulfils the function of rendering the integrity and singularity of a thing, because it is not “pulled” to a secondary “place”—that of its “predicate” or “object”, as in a judgment. As such, intuition as unity without dualist separation never “exceeds” (過 “Mingshi lun”, 2) the original “place” of the initial unity of the thing. Only this original unity of the thing as it is (its “Being”, in Hölderlin) rendered by intuition, or its original “place”, in the form of its “name” (Gongsun Long), is “reality” (“Mingshi lun”, 2), “what exists in the world” (“Zhiwu lun”, 4). In contrast, judgment (指) is illusion or emptiness, absence (曠, “Mingshi lun”, 3). In its separating and free act of “pointing”, 指 is “absent” from the “fullness” (不曠), the original position and the unity of its being and occupies a secondary “place” of the object. According to Gongsun Long, it “exceeds” (過, “Mingshi lun”, 2) its place and is “out of place” (所位非位, “Mingshi lun”, 4). Within Hölderlin’s framework, this can be explained as follows: by the very structure of a judgment, the intuition of the thing as it is, is detached and “pulled out” from the original position of the unseparated, integral unity of itself to the secondary position of the object as predicate (being “separated” by the object of thought/predicate from *itself*).

“此此當乎此/則唯乎此/其謂行此/其以當而當也/以當而當/正也 (Taking this for this, this is limiting oneself at this (唯乎此) and partaking (行) in this. Taking what it is for what it is, this is rectification). (“Mingshi lun”, 11) “此此止於此/可 (Taking this for this and stop at this (止乎此), this is admissible). (“Mingshi lun”, 12) We should not associate our holistic intuition of whiteness-horseness to the concept of horse (“Baima lun”), the intuition of stoneness to the concept of hard and white [“物白焉/不定其所白/物堅焉/不定其所堅/不定者/兼 (White does not (integrally) determine the thing (the stone) it qualifies, hard does not (integrally) determine the thing it qualifies, the thing that is undetermined, is shared (by other determinations than white and hard) “Jianbai lun”, 10], the intuition of the person of Socrates to the concept of philosopher, etc. in the form of judgment. In this way, our intuitive or pre-reflective apprehension of each thing would occupy exactly its original “place” in the sense of having not yet become contaminated

by a concept/a qualification (another "name") which only "pulls" this intuition out of its unique place to the alien place of a single predicate which cannot render the integrity of the features of the thing. Judgment is not an absolute identity, but can only be a *logical identity* (synthesis).

A thing, either considered as material existence (i.e. a horse) or "immaterial" quality (i.e. whiteness), are all products of nature opposed to the products of human mind 指 ("Mingshi lun", 1). Considered in itself, a thing has infinite characteristics (Horseness has infinite attributes; Whiteness has infinite shades). Only intuition, which does not separate the intuiting subject from the object intuited by a linear focus on only one characteristic, can encompass this cognitive infinity and integrity which is *unique* in each thing (existence or quality). The intuition of the coexistence of these infinite and infinitely differentiated characteristics precisely constitutes the unexchangeable *singularity* of the existence/quality and transcends the single *abstract* characteristic (a concept) provided by judgmental cognition.

In intuition, we would be able to distinguish the respective, concrete singularities of things one from another and apprehend ox/ram/fowl as ox/ram/fowl [acknowledging the specific colour, species, shape, etc. of each animal in its singularity and as distinguished from one another ("牛合羊非雞 (Ox with ram does not make fowl)", "Tongbian lun", 通變論, 8)], whiteness/blueness/greenness as whiteness/blueness/greenness [acknowledging each colour in its singularity and not as associated one to another as its predicate ("青以白非黃 (Blue and white does not make yellow)", "Tongbian lun", 16), since in nature we can detect an infinity of different nuances of whiteness/blueness/greenness], the respective qualities of stoneness/hardness/whiteness as stoneness/hardness/whiteness [acknowledging each thing/quality in its singularity and as distinguished (離 "Jianbai lun", 堅白論, 12) from one another ("堅未與石為堅/而物兼 (Hardness is not a mere attribute, an abstract predicate of the stone. As a specific kind of touch, it is also shared by many other hard things and is thus concrete in itself)", "Jianbai lun", 14. Thus, hardness is "concealed" 藏 from the focus of human consciousness and judgments)), instead of attributing them one to another in judgments by our consciousness (神 "Jianbai lun", 18)] and Socrates as Socrates pre-reflectively and pre-conceptually, so that they "each occupy their respective places" ("各當其所", "Tongbian lun", 19).

Only our intuition or pre-judgmental, pre-reflective awareness of things could render the totality of their "realities", presenting the linguistically indescribable mysteries about their existence, without intentionally fragmenting and fixing them in consciousness with extra conditions, qualities and predicates, arbitrarily judging—and thereby necessarily narrowing and associating their beings as such

with a determined predicate, consequently confusing their singularities one with the other, such as “A white horse is a horse”; “This stone is white and hard”; “Blue and white makes green”; “Socrates is a philosopher”, etc. In essence, we can have a more holistic understanding of things and a better grasp of their existence in its entirety as compared to what a dogmatic judgment could one-sidedly provide.

In other words, to have true apprehension of the individuality and singularity of each thing is to pierce directly, without the mediation of predicates and concepts, into the whole existence of it, intuiting it pre-reflectively by means of its name, “limiting oneself at” (“Mingshi lun”, 11) or “stopping at” (“Mingshi lun”, 12) the pure intuition or the pre-judgmental awareness of its integrity, without the interference of predicates which only freeze the eternal movement of the pre-reflective realm of life of the thing in itself. “Rectification” can only be achieved pre-reflectively, for only pre-reflectively can we be in fusion with the integrity of the thing, participating in its changing process across ages and spaces, “partaking in” (“Mingshi lun”, 11) it, whereas in a judgment, the concept already separates us as knowing and contemplating consciousness/subject from our object—the thing in question—so that we can only partake “outside of” it or “towards” it, namely, dualistically.

This dimension might also nullify the consideration of the pragmatic referent as the “absolute principle”. Interpreting Gongsun Long pragmatically is a view shared by various commentators (Rieman 1977; Thompson 1995; Bo Mou 2007, etc.). However, in the realm of action, the separation between subject and object is still present (in the form of the agent who only *strives* to be in fusion with an “object” *outside* of him), and thus, it is difficult to totally “partake” in the flux of the thing.

To be in this state, a pre-reflective, almost meditative intuition behind the “calling” of the name of each thing (“To call a horse ‘horse’ and nothing more (以謂馬/馬也)”), “Baima lun”, 15) is needed. First, in non-dualist, pre-reflective intuition, we can encompass the integrity of the infinite elements which constitutes the individuality of a thing/quality, transcending judgmental cognition. Second, this state of intuition could both be an *absolute* union of subject and object similar to the unconscious “intellectual intuition” as proposed by the early Hölderlin, or a *relative* one, namely, a kind of non-objectifying, correlative awareness with a *lesser degree of subject/object opposition than in judgment*, allowing one to be tentatively non-dualistically and pre-reflectively “aware” of the singularity of the object, without surpassing the threshold where one enters in fusion with it subsequently rendering one’s self completely unconscious of it and of one’s self. Gongsun Long’s fragments seem to be more in line with the second interpretation, since assigning names to things nevertheless requires a certain degree of intellectual engagement.

The wrong way is “彼此/而彼且此/此彼/而此且彼/不可 (Taking this for that, and taking that and this, taking that for this, and taking this and that, this is not admissible)” (“Mingshi lun”, 13). This can be proven through Hölderlin’s theory of judgment: it is wrong when we take the predicate “horse” (“this”), which is only one characteristic among the infinite characteristics of the intuition “white horse” occupying the “subject” position (namely, the intuitive “whiteness-horseness”, including the predicates “white” and “horse”, but *not excluding* other possible, implicit predicates, such “height”, “weight”, “temperament”, “pearl white”, “ivory”, etc.), for the infinite characteristics of the intuition “white horse” constituting a singular existence (“that”) in the judgement “A white horse is a horse”. This is taking “white horse” and “horse” together (“taking that and this”), one (“white horse”) intuitively (as whiteness-horseness) and the other one in the conceptual, predicative form (“horse”), mingling their initially individual, respective intuitions “whiteness”, “horseness”, “whiteness-horseness” one with the other, instead of intuiting without concepts horseness for horseness (“taking this for this, this is limiting oneself at this”, “Mingshi lun”, 11), and whiteness-horseness for whiteness-horseness (“taking that for that, this is limiting oneself at that”, “Mingshi lun”, 11).

A “name” should be distinguished from a concept as logical identity of the noun with itself, free from its reference to experience, or a predicate, when it is semantically applied in a judgment. In both cases, a concept belongs to the realm of cognitive reflection and abstraction, such as in the case of the early Idealism’s central claim of “I am I”. In contrast, a “name” is the concrete, intuitive and pre-reflective apprehension of each thing in its integrity and singularity. This unity with the thing, the participation in the infinity of its ever-changing reality of the initially finite (self-)consciousness consequently gives rise to the pre-reflective, pre-dualist, pre-conceptual overcoming of the judgmental expression and object-oriented thought.

Host: (Things) cannot be judged. However, if we still identify them with judgments, this is doubling (兼) the unjudgeable nature of things.

不為指/而謂之指/是兼不為指. (11)

Things can never be entirely grasped by means of the dualistic form of judgments: what has been said about the subject intuited in the dual form of judgment is nothing but *one aspect* of the infinity of characteristics that the thing possesses in its total being. What happens in the judgment is the unavoidable separating activity of human intellect, by which the inseparable Being in the original sense with the infinity of its qualities is separated, narrowed down, and only one-sidedly understood.



For Gongsun Long, in this case, if we confuse things with judgments about things and if we do not tentatively consider judgments as just for themselves, this is “doubling the unjudgeable nature of things”. First, things in themselves are already non-judgeable, veiled to our theoretical access. Then, in comparison to the non-theoretical means of approaching Being, which according to Hölderlin (via artistic and poetic expressions) and Gongsun Long (via names) would better articulate reality in a non-judgmental way, judgmental and object-oriented knowledge represents the unjudgeable nature of Being through an internal paradox. According to Frank’s interpretation (2004), this is because judgment attempts (since judgment due to its constitutive form promises to represent truth or the absolute reality) to represent the non-representable (while its content is destined to render only partially what it aims to achieve). This is an essential feature of judgment. In their attempt to reach for the impossible, the finitude of judgment and the human (self-)consciousness articulated within it again demonstrate the unjudgeable nature of things.

Host: To correspond the non-judgeable to the all-encompassing act of judging, this is not admissible.

以有不為指/之無不為指/未可. (12)

Repetition of (4). Consciousness articulated by judgments is finite by its internal structure, and should be fully separated from Being or things (“the non-judgeable”), which transcend the grasping of all object-oriented knowledge via the unavoidable form of judgments constituting the most common cognitive form in our acquaintance with things. The tension between these two poles arises from the paradox of the activity of human (self-)consciousness itself and its judgmental form, not from things in themselves. Both Hölderlin and Gongsun Long (“Judgment entails already in itself its own deconstruction, does it need to relate itself to things in order to be judgment at all?” 19) agree on this claim.

Host: Moreover, judgment is that which is common in the world.

且指者/天下之所兼. (13)

Guest: Judgments are non-existent in the world, yet things cannot be called non-judged. Because they cannot be called non-judged, there are none which are not judged.

天下無指者/物不可謂無指也/不可謂無指者/非有非指也. (14)

Guest: There is nothing which is not judged, things are all about judgments.

非有非指者/物莫非指. (15)

This is a repetition of some of the previous arguments (1–3) on the unavoidability of judging in our cognitive acquaintance with things and the inner paradox of human thought. The affirmation of this unavoidability is expressed through a double negation.

Guest: Judgment is not (in itself) non-judgment, however, when a judgment is considered as judging things, it becomes non-judgment.

指非非指也/指與物/非指也。(16)

“Non-judgment” means all the possible fallacies of a judgment: non-“real” (實 “Mingshi lun”, 2), absent (曠 “Mingshi lun”, 3), “out of its place” (所位非位 “Mingshi lun”, 4). Following Hölderlin, we can say that the act of judging is essentially subjective and only provides a rationalistically single-sided perspective on the reality it tries to grasp, as its one-sidedness is unavoidable by its very structure. Nevertheless, the content that we obtain from judgmental claims is not absolutely false, not “non-judgment” (非指) in the strict sense, if we consider the one part of truth it renders *only as one part* and not the integrity of truth. Namely, it *nevertheless* renders one individual, particular perspective of the thing. Its “fiction”, “absence”, the fact that it is “out of place” might be necessary and even helpful for our apprehension of things. That’s why Gongsun Long says it should be “rectified” (正 “Mingshi lun”, 4) by “names”, and not absolutely *negated*.

But in which sense does it become truly false (“non-judgment” in itself) then? When it is considered as judging *things*. In the moment in which a judgment is considered to be made about a thing in its integrity, namely, considered in its formal vocation—providing an absolute knowledge about the thing, the content it renders becomes false, because it is incomplete. Thus, the moment in which a judgment, due to its very form, claims to provide the absoluteness or truth about its object, its content simultaneously demolishes its own formal validity, contradicting what its form claims to have achieved.

This dilemma reveals a problematic characteristic of human subjectivity, namely that there is an intrinsic paradox in the vocation and essence of the judgment. When judgment is considered in its positing for the all-encompassing, absolute knowledge of Being, which constitutes the essential objective of its pursuit, it encounters the pre-dualist transcendence of Being, and consequently obtains the exact opposite of what it wished to attain in the first place: finitude, dualism and separation.<sup>11</sup> Gongsun Long’s claim throughout “Zhiwu lun” is based precisely on the non-commensurability of the spheres of things and judgments (4).

11 Kant provided a demonstration of this thesis by the antinomies of pure reason.

Host: If there were no things to be judged in the world, who would claim that things were non-judged? If there were no things in the world, who would call them judged?

使天下無物指/誰徑謂非指/天下無物/誰徑謂指。(17)

Guest: If there were judgments in the world and things to be judged did not exist, who would claim that things were non-judged? There were in fact no things for anyone to claim to be non-judged.

天下有指/無物指/誰徑謂非指/徑謂無物非指。(18)

In Hölderlin's terms, Being, or in Gongsun Long's terms, things, both understood as a pre-reflective sphere, are essentially the hidden condition for the legitimacy of the unconditional positing of judgment.

According to the Heidelberg School, Fichte and Schelling attempted to deduce Being from the logical identity of the fundamental judgment of "I am I". Hölderlin instead took the inverse initiative and demonstrated the ontological priority of Being over self-consciousness and judgment. This is also his contribution to the critique of the absolute self-consciousness by the early Fichte and Schelling (Frank 2004, 97).

For Gongsun Long, the central thesis of (4) is demonstrated both ontologically and logically: ontologically, "what does not exist" naturally should be "rectified" (6) according to "what exists": "To rectify (the expression of) a thing, is to rectify it by its reality (其正者/正其所實也)", "Mingshi lun", 6). Being or things, are not only the conditions of possibility for all our conscious activities about said things but are also the only criteria for measuring the correctness of these activities.

Logically, Gongsun Long demonstrated (4) with a paradox. Without "things" or pre-reflective reality ("If there were no things to be judged in the world"), any attempt at judging ("who would call them judged?") or not ("who would claim that things were non-judged?") becomes meaningless and is even non-existent. Without presupposing the "existence" or "reality" of things, any judgment about them becomes nonsensical, from both the logical and semantic point of view. This is demonstrated by first assuming the opposite of his thesis, then demonstrating that it is logically invalid, eventually validating his thesis.

Guest: Moreover, judgment entails already in itself its own deconstruction (its own "non-judgment"), does it (judgment) need to relate itself to things in order to be judgment at all?

且夫指/固自為非指/奚待於物/而乃與為指?(19)

The nature of judgment finally reveals itself. Although it is through its formal claim for the absoluteness of things that judgment unveils its inner paradox, this paradox by no means comes from things, since things "cannot be judged" as things, taken in themselves, are not attributed to or inferred through object-oriented human intellect. It is instead derived from the dualist judgment itself, and its subsequent inadequacy to represent the seamless unity of Being or things without objectifying them. This unavoidable contradiction simultaneously constitutes the essence of judgment and its self-destructive force ("固自為非指"), and thus shares no commonalities with things (4).

### Concluding Remarks

This paper has attempted to characterize "Zhiwu lun" as the presentation of the inability of reflectivity and object-oriented knowledge to represent the realm of "things". Only if understood in this way could "Zhiwu lun" prepare the way for discussion on the pre-reflective function of "name" in "Mingshi lun" as a better solution to the cognitive limits of reflectivity and objectification. I would thus characterize it, together with "Mingshi lun", as the core chapters in contrast to other dialogues with more logical and rhetorical connotations, which are rhetorical confirmations to the ontological and epistemological ideas of "Zhiwu lun" and "Mingshi lun".

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