

**The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine
in China's Political Discourse**

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Bemerkung zur Veröffentlichung

Bei der vorliegenden Arbeit handelt es sich um eine von der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln angenommene Dissertation.

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Preface

In this book, the role of the globally known Traditional Chinese Medicine will be discussed. The hypothesis offered by the title **The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse** leads to various follow-up questions. While, on the one hand, one such question is that of the *invention* of a so-called traditional Medicine in China, on the other hand, another question takes the form of the investigation of the distinction between what has been deliberately invented, what sort of traditions evolved historically, and how this role of TCM¹ is embedded in the realities of the respective political discourse in China².

The above-assumed definition of the term is of great benefit to the understanding of the matter at hand because it drives the observation of Chinese medicine differently than how it is usually perceived. A narration, it is hypothesized here, is a sort of storytelling about a given matter that is oftentimes associated with the creation of a myth. Myths typically serve the interests of a certain group and are therefore *political*, at least to a degree. Therefore, here an investigation follows about the story that is repeatedly told in China and around the world about the rich and abundant corpus of medicine in China.³ Furthermore, it is of interest *how* this story is mediated. This, however, does not put into question how complex and possibly effective Chinese medicine is. The matter is a different one here. Throughout this book, it will be learned how homogeneous, or imposingly heterogeneous, the techniques, ideas, and theories in the Chinese medicinal field really are. For now, it shall suffice to understand that, especially in constructionist thinking, a narration is oftentimes comprehended as a constructed and therefore invented story about something or someone. In this regard, the question frequently asked in this book will be how Chinese medicine is being employed (or exploited) to constitute certain *political* matters that are means to higher ends. The here conducted structuralist approach, by quite regularly, but not always, applying semiotic methods, predominantly leads to the questioning of modern narratives of a 'traditional' medicine in China. Thereby, it is aimed at going beyond the commonly perceived image of Chinese medicine today, which I hypothesize to be that of an overly exoticized western admiration for the alternative, so-called harmonious practices of Chinese medicine.

While the research title includes the appendix "...in China's Political Discourse..." this further motivates the question of how and where the whole matter of discussion is taking place.

¹ The commonly used abbreviation for the term 'Traditional Chinese Medicine'.

² In this book, **China** is referred to as a fixed entity, whereas in constructionist thinking, this is highly debatable. In the latter view, there is no such thing as *China*. Thereby, the collective mind of the *Chinese people* must be comprehended as the outcome of processes in the societal realm which construct an alleged common identity.

³ As will be learned later, this *story* is likely constantly changing in-order-to serve certain goals.

For me, as a sinologist with a background in the studies of political science, the discussion about the emergence of the role of TCM in China is not only limited to China. The terminology “...in **China’s** Political Discourse” does not restrict the discussion to the material location of China⁴, instead it generally includes everyone and everything who or which is engaged in constituting this discourse on a 'traditional' medicine in China. This, however, does certainly not mean that every aspect of the matter can be thematized in this book. Naturally, the observation must be limited in scope. The analysis in this book will finally come down to an interpretation of cultural processes that are related to the realm of Chinese identity-building processes. Resultantly, I argue that the Chinese people comprehend themselves as a proud nation today, and they are thus sensitive towards foreign influences mingling with their national discourses. As will be shown, all research, debate, and discussion about the matter, globally and domestically, is part of the discourse, as it potentially shapes and alters the very discourse itself. This knowledge will be brought to the reader over the course of this book.

Another issue is the question of what the term '**political discourse** in China' means. According to my understanding, the definition of the word 'political' includes all social and cultural processes as belonging to the *political* realm. While political processes (policies and polities) about the creation of a 'traditional' medicine in China will be discussed in this book, the research in this book is not solely limited to the political field in the sense that only governmental actions will be investigated. As a matter of fact, such measures are only one part of the overall *political* investigation on Chinese medicine in the here outlined research.

Further, economic interests will be highlighted, as these also help to explain the motivations that led to the creation of the modern concept of TCM. Thereafter, in the last part of this book, the linkage between Chinese medicine and what is commonly called *culture* will be analysed in detail. Through the accumulation of such a body of knowledge, a deeper insight into the role of 'traditional' Chinese medicine in the Chinese political realm, the Chinese economic realm, and the Chinese cultural realm is given. These three sections of this book thus provide a comprehensive study of the multi-causality of the (partly) socially constructed cultural elements in the discourse on Chinese medicine.

It is my hope that by the end of this book, the reader will have gained a profound insight about why the human world is always somewhat socially constructed and how the narration of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine must be comprehended or can be observed in such a context. Respectively, the applied constructionist approach offers hints to the understanding of the

⁴ When talking about China in this book, I am always referring to mainland China, as in the PRC.

social world that humans live in. A viewpoint that is usually not widely discussed in the lives of people outside of such a specific research field. When assuming that the world⁵ is somewhat always political, even if one does not focus on the big stage of national and international politics, the observer starts to understand human behaviour a little differently from the common view. The *political*, which I refer to here, is that which every individual is subject to whenever he or she enters social relations with other human beings. In this respect, the individual is always part of a *political* context, I argue. Through such sociopolitical interaction, the self and the other, the inner and the outer, or the in-group and the out-group⁶ are being created and determined. This is of utmost importance to the research in this book because similar processes can be found at the macro-level of society. It is the resulting conclusion of my work that, besides certain common practical applications of Chinese medicine or the political strategies, policies, and economic matters of it in China, Chinese medicine mainly plays a huge role in the formation of the cultural realm. A discourse about such matters, then, is not simply referring to the talk and discussions about the whole debate of TCM in China; it must also deal with and shed light on historical processes that led to the creation of the myth of a Traditional Chinese Medicine in general. Accordingly, the clear differentiation between the terms TCM, a 'traditional' Chinese medicine, and Chinese medicine is of great importance, as will be explained in this book.

However, before delving into these issues, it must be clarified how the term *discourse* shall be defined since the discussion will constantly revolve around it. The terminology itself is filling many bookshelves in libraries. Certainly, one of the more famous authors in this field is Michel Foucault. Defining the term after his explanations, as I see it, in all discourses, there are usually bigger players and smaller forces involved, which are regularly shaping the overall discourse. As will be shown later in a more profound analysis of the Chinese political discourse, the Chinese government is one such major actor. On the other hand, I will argue that the political frame of Chinese politics, culture, and societal structures is not only being shaped by this latter actor. There are many other influential actors and factors, one of which is Chinese society itself. Thus, in-order-to comprehend the social (and political) makings of a given country, more than just one element must be taken into focus. A discourse is shaped by what is discussed by all constituting forces in the discourse. But in a discourse, in the discussion usually only that is thematised which constitutes the main discourse, this means the dominant

⁵ Not the material world, but the socially constructed world.

⁶ In Chapter 12 of Section 3 in this book, explanations by Aleida Assmann will provide more in-depth knowledge on the understanding of the *in-group*, the *out-group*, and the so-called *we-group*.

opinion on something. It is either driven by the state authorities or by those who are influential in a society. Contrarily, I argue, one must not forget that also that which is not being promoted by the main discursual opinion is part of the discourse⁷, although a dominant discourse about a given subject is, so-to-speak, dictating that *which can be said* and that *which cannot be said*. In a society, the dominant discourse is thereby (to a certain extent) controlling and steering public opinion. As Lawlor and Nale claim after Foucault, that which is normal and abnormal is determined by the main discourse in-a-given social group.

The concept of the “abnormal” emerges within (and contributes to the construction of) Foucault’s understanding of normalization – a key techniques that constitutes and bridges two general forms of modern power: disciplinary power and biopower. The abnormal is the “other” that defines the “normal”; it is the object that gives rise to criminal psychiatry (as an attempt to treat, or at least explain, abnormality), and it also becomes a linchpin of modern racism. This presentation shall work from the general to the specific, starting from an identification of the forms of modern power in which the concept of the abnormal functions, through the particular techniques of normalization, to the details of how the abnormal has functioned within these contexts and its significance.⁸

Although the above quote contains various other core ideas of Foucault, the wisdom that can be taken away from this is that the distinction is made between that which is normal and that which is thought to be abnormal. Towards the end of the quote, the authors of this entry in *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon* argue that this kind of differentiation is rather typical for modern power discourses. I do agree and disagree with this claim at the same time, because as I understand it, it must have been first-and-foremost a core function of the human brain to define one thing by exclusion of what it is not, since human beings have started to develop a certain degree of logical thinking. From that point on, explaining what a thing is always entails explaining what it is not, and thereby, choosing one thing means rejecting another, at least if they are profoundly opposed to each other. This, at least, is my understanding of logical deduction and how distinction as a class on its own must function in our thinking. An idea that seems easy to grasp. In brief, outlining that which is normal necessitates the specification of that which is abnormal, and both constitute each other. Such definitions then say much less about the reality of things than what they tell about a certain norm that has been socially constructed through the act of these opposing forces.

After this explanation, it is easier to comprehend that discourses always feature a dominant part which (by social construct) deems certain aspects of a matter to be correct, while conse-

⁷ See the quote below.

⁸ Leonard Lawlor and John Nale (ed.), *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, pp. 3.

quentially their antagonistic aspect *must* be incorrect. As can be remembered, at one point in history, a certain discourse determined the opinion of most folks as they claimed that the earth is flat. After Copernicus, the discourse took a complete turn. By such an example, it becomes clear that a discourse is thus either a social mechanism to determine that which apparently poses the truth about a given matter, or a discourse – as I argue – includes everything that is said, written, or thought about a subject, regardless of the location where it is taking place (this is of course referring to social processes). The reason the latter makes more sense than the former is that a more complete picture of reality is being recreated. Further, by this assumption (and definition), this book on the matter of Chinese medicine is thus also part of the discourse on a *'traditional' Medicine* because it inevitably adds to the knowledge about the matter. It therefore has the potential to influence the overall discourse or the stance from which researchers may approach the subject in their future research.

In the same sense, the researcher Peter Ullrich, sociologist, and researcher in cultural studies, describes discourse as not necessarily being a rigid or inflexible term. As for any other subject, there are many schools of thought about *the theories of discourse*. Without any doubt, different approaches, and different understandings of what discourse is exist. However, as Ullrich writes, most starting points for 'discourse analysis' in scientific research hypothesize that communication processes play a major role in how humans constitute their world. Therefore, processes of interpretation, negotiation of such processes, and commonly accepted knowledge about how the world functions are being constituted through language and thus the way people see the world because language itself is understood as a system of symbols. This means, according to Ullrich's explanation, that language structures the thinking, and as a result, what *we see in the world* and what *we* therefore perceive as real is mostly restricted by the limits that are posed by the respective language in which the discourse is held.⁹ Resultantly, in linguistics it is of great importance to differentiate the signified and the signifier. In my understanding, the underlying feeling or thought regarding a phenomenon must therefore always be understood as the signified, whereas the written or spoken word is the signifier or sign. As Ferdinand de Saussure explained: *the sign is arbitrary*¹⁰, meaning it is largely interchangeable. Also, Roland Barthes writes: "The writer's language is not expected to *represent* reality but to

⁹ See Peter Ullrich, *Diskursanalyse, Diskursforschung, Diskurstheorie. Ein- und Überblick.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰ Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, edited by Roy Harris, *Course in General Linguistics*, pp. 78.

signify it.”¹¹ Hence, the analytical rapprochement on signs will therefore be of interest in the last section of this book.

In respect to the definition of discourse, Michelle Foucault writes in his essay *L'ordre du discours* - which goes back to a lecture held by him for his accession to his professorship at the Collège de France – that discourse always takes place in a certain framework. “Der Akt des Schreibens, wie er heute im Buch, im Verlagswesen und in der Persönlichkeit des Schriftstellers institutionalisiert ist, findet in einer »Diskursgesellschaft« statt, die vielleicht diffus, gewiß jedoch zwingend und einschränkend ist.“¹² In this sentence, Foucault explains how the writing procedure of a given author in a given society is constricted by institutionalization. The latter part of the sentence claims that the act of writing occurs in a 'discourse society' which is embedded or rather reflected in publishing structures and the overall discourse of that society. He writes in the above quote that ...*sometimes this whole issue may be a diffuse matter, but certainly it is mandatory and restricting*. While Foucault thereby informs that discourses are always part of other discourses or a series of discourses, I will most times use a slightly different terminology when speaking about the *discourse* or the *meta-discourse*. A discourse, as he also writes in the above-quoted text, is always part of something, or it further constitutes that something. Additionally, a discourse consists of what is said and what is not said. This is stated in the following hypothesis, which he presents in the essay *Die Ordnung des Diskurses*:

Die Hypothese, die ich heute Abend entwickeln möchte, um den Ort – oder vielleicht das sehr provisorische Theater – meiner Arbeit zu fixieren: Ich setze voraus, daß in jeder Gesellschaft die Produktion des Diskurses zugleich kontrolliert, selektiert, organisiert und kanalisiert wird – und zwar durch gewisse Prozeduren, deren Aufgabe es ist, die Kräfte und die Gefahren des Diskurses zu bändigen, sein unberechenbar Ereignishaftes zu bannen, seine schwere und bedrohliche Materialität zu umgehen.

In einer Gesellschaft wie der unseren kennt man sehr wohl Prozeduren der *Ausschließung*. Die sichtbarste und vertrauteste ist das *Verbot*. [...] ¹³

Hence, discourses are usually somewhat political, as the discourse usually determines what a given group or society *is allowed to think* and *what shall be done*. In the provided quote, this is called *Ausschließung* (exclusion). Also, Peter Ullrich argues that a discourse essentially determines the direction in which a debate is held on a certain topic. Thereafter, it could be called pre-structured.¹⁴ As a result, through the [dominant] discourse, the moral and that

¹¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 136.

¹² Michel Foucault, *Die Ordnung des Diskurses* (translated and edited by Konersmann), pp. 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁴ Cf. Peter Ullrich, *Diskursanalyse, Diskursforschung, Diskurstheorie: Ein- und Überblick*, pp. 22.

which one shall come to think is massively influenced.¹⁵ In effect – I conclude - this is what media, politics, and social institutions are constantly doing. They are *producing* what the collective 'must think'. In the mentioned text, Foucault thus explains that discourses always determine what is proper to be said and what is deemed taboo. This appears to be the case in any given social group or society. Now, one could elaborate on the fact that, i.e., Germany is called democratic while China is called autocratic, and surely differences in the political systems can be identified, but if going down this road, one would simply define which is good and which is bad. I am in no way treating these two forms of political meta-structure as equal in this paper. In my approach, however, I will rather observe which factors can be found in-order-to understand that each of these discourses builds on different culture-forming processes.¹⁶ Through the study in this book, the overall significance of the so-called 'traditional' Chinese Medicine in such political discourse in China will gradually be defined. This appeal has brought about many findings as to why the modern image of a 'traditional' Chinese Medicine is constantly being reproduced in China.

Moreover, the discussion in this book is also termed an investigation of the *political discourse* because it certainly touches upon political issues in China, but what is more important, is that the cultural element of *Chinese medicine* is deeply embedded in a huge *network-like discourse* that is not only political in its nature but also constitutes part of the broader Chinese identity itself. It is surely possible to appoint this scheme of shaping the Chinese identity to the Chinese government alone, but as I comprehend it, the process is much more complex. In my view, it is not only the Chinese government that performs this whole process, but the discourse is driven by various other actors such as the economy, society, and the forces that *produce* culture. Although it is widely known that nationalist themes (nation-building processes) usually contain the deliberate production of such culture (and this is part of the following investigation), I aim to stay realistic in the sense that not only the Chinese government is controlling the game. Quoted authors in this book, such as Bruno Latour or Stefan Kramer, have mentioned the term discontinuity (as will be shown in later chapters). Such terminology seems helpful in-order-to understand that certainly the Chinese culture, as well as every other culture and nation, is historically rather a web of discontinuities that, due to the widespread nationalist ideology that exists today, are frequently coercively merged under the umbrella of the *Chinese nation* or any *other nation*, respectively. Although the semiotic approach in this

¹⁵ Although it-is-clear that a society is not a homogenous being, the here-used expression rather hints at a certain collective *Zeitgeist*.

¹⁶ I suppose any other kind of approach would have to be called orientalist. See, in: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-5. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978.

book helps to understand such deliberate actions of the modern Chinese state, one should not forget that behind myths there are often factual truths supporting the myth itself (like historically grown structures of alliances or affiliations that lay the roots for most modern nation states). Myths usually distort the truth in-order-to achieve certain results. They are regularly *blowing up* facts.¹⁷ Therefore, a critical approach (by using constructionist methodology) is helpful, but as I have mentioned above, in a later step it is still advisable to not go overboard with such a theoretical approach. Essentially, the basic idea behind this is that the Chinese nation and the Chinese culture, including the element of (traditional) Chinese medicine, are not just simply products of the contemporary government but possibly the result of centuries – if not millennia – of a historical causality chain.¹⁸ Certainly, this book will only partly touch on this matter, as the focus lies on investigating the narrative of a *'traditional' Chinese Medicine* (as outlined in the headline). But, logically approached, every discourse is usually interwoven with multiple – possibly countless – other discourses to which it poses an alternative, a subordinate, or to which it may be thought of as being superior, if that makes sense.

The discourse outlined in this paper is therefore not a one-directional communication process but rather a multi-directional process in which the different actors impinge on each other. The back-and-forth between the government and the society¹⁹ (as well as other actors and influential factors) therefore greatly adds to the constituting of the discourse, and the resulting realities are in effect the product of this ongoing process. I therefore argue that it would be too easy to only blame the outcome of the political and societal realities in modern China on the obviously dominant and autocratic government. Although, this omnipotent force must play an immense role in the process, it would be wrong to go ahead like this. Further, I would think this to be highly unscientific. All actors, meaning all major forces, in China are part of this discourse. The analysis of *The Narrative of a 'traditional' Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse* and the overall uncovering of the construction of culture in this network-like composition will help to understand how the discourse constitutes and holds together the current Chinese *reality* and how it effectively supports structuring modern Chinese society.

¹⁷ Which will be gradually explained going further along.

¹⁸ Despite all discontinuities!

¹⁹ In effect, the *people* in the government are also members of society.

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Introduction

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has many facets, and the modern narratives about it likewise influence the minds of millions of people around the globe. This book aims at bringing light to how and why TCM is, on the one hand, a methodological medical system that gradually emerged over time as much as it brings about certain effects and results in the field of natural medicine, and, on the other hand, a system employed by certain groups and actors to achieve manifold other goals not necessarily related to the medical realm. It is thus my self-imposed task to bring to the reader the historical and analytical context of this latter field. By doing so, I have no intention to classify the emerging results as either good or bad. In this paper, I am not aiming at creating any moral judgment; instead, one must deconstruct the issue at hand as-a-means to understand and demystify matters, but not necessarily as-a-means to abolish certain views or standpoints. The results of this research will speak for themselves. Humans produce culture, as I see it, this is an act to categorize, structure, and bring organization to the aspects of human social life. I argue that it is an intrinsic method invented by humans to provide themselves with structure in the world they live in. In this respect, Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron write in their book *Analyzing Cultures, An Introduction & Handbook* that:

By about 100,000 years ago, the making of art, communication by means of language, and communally-established systems of ethics became the distinctive attributes of the first human *tribes*. Since then *culture*, in the sense of individuals living together, thinking and planning consciously, transmitting skills and systems of social relationships to each other through language, and working together to modify the environment, has become the defining attribute of the human species.²⁰

Hence, in such respect, the bringing to light of the strategies, methods, and policies of various actors and factors that employ TCM for political means will thereby help to improve the understanding of *modern* Chinese medicine as it takes its place in an increasingly interconnected, globalized, and scientific world. The accumulated knowledge then offers a view and understanding about how the myth of TCM is created and how it links the participation of things and people in a structuralist view. It will be shown that, in the interpretation of these research results, TCM is not only a medical practice but also functions as part of a Chinese identity narrative that ensures the material and cultural existence of China. Here, 'the material' often serves economic measures while 'the cultural', so-to-speak, protects what could be comprehended as the *soul* of the Chinese cultural heritage and identity. As a result, various realms of

²⁰ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures: An Introduction & Handbook*, pp. 3.

different subjects must be observed in-order-to be able to comprehend the discourse-connections that intertwine the political, social, economic, and the personal aspirations of the participating players who benefit from a narrative about modern Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The three main sections in this book will therefore elaborate on the different settings in which TCM is each playing a different role in-order-to strengthen either the political, economic, or the cultural aspects of modern Chinese realities. These sections open the door to a broader understanding of the reasons for the deliberate creation of a new TCM. It is thus necessary to tap into the history of Chinese medicine, into Chinese history as-a-whole, into Chinese philosophy, and into the economy as much as into political matters. This will further lead to the answering of the question about how culture and identity are being *invented*, or more generally, how culture evolves. Those elements, as will be shown later, are part of the targeted understanding of the Chinese political discourse.

The dissemination of Chinese culture, including Traditional Chinese Medicine, by the Chinese government through the Confucius Institutes is part of Section 1 of this book. In Section 2, it will further be learned that matters like the economic benefits of TCM have repercussions not only in China but also worldwide. A case study in Section 3 about the Chinese TV series *Dazhaimen* gives insights into the creation of the myth about China's identity and culture. It is noteworthy, that here the term myth must be comprehended in a semiotic manner, as this methodology poses an important theoretical approach in this paper. However, although semiotics and the thereby applied de-constructionist method of this theory is repeatedly used in this book, it shall be understood that *a semiotic point of view* is only one possible perspective to converge on the subject at hand. It is a useful theoretical approach, as such analysis helps to uncover connections that have been constructed by certain interest groups. The application of the theory of semiotics is thus of great benefit to the understanding of hidden structures. Thereby, a critical embarking on-the-subject-of Traditional Chinese Medicine is possible. This method allows lifting the veil of myth because, as will be explained in this book, myths bridge discontinuities and artificially create a correlation where there formerly had not been such a strong connection. Myths distort realities (they carry a hidden intention)²¹ in-order-to serve the goals of those interest groups who bring them into being.

²¹ Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 122-123.

Further, *The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse* also reflects historical and present influences on China. These can be understood as internal and external challenges which the Chinese state and the Chinese people have been compelled to react. Through the respective investigations on these aspects, the reader gets the chance to understand why and how *the Chinese* had to counteract such measures as the intrusion of western ideology and, consequently, how they reacted to it as a means of cultural survival and national development. As I interpret it, for the Chinese people, this all came down to the necessity of ensuring their cultural existence, a good life, and the shaping of a nation that had undergone various acts of defiance throughout, at least, the past century. A century of humiliation, if you will, which, by the power of its traumatic experiences, largely motivated the countermeasures that had been taken as-a-means to overcome a collective trauma. Accordingly, by the analysis presented in this book, it will be unravelled that the Chinese state and the Chinese people have (partially) reconstructed their identity with the help of a political narrative on Chinese medicine through its symbolic power as a cultural sign. Because culture is usually a matter of continuous reinvention, the modern Chinese nation thereby found its way back to reconnect with its history and its former identity. Or, more precisely, a new identity had been shaped by recurring on old traditions and values. Hence, as will show, what is commonly called tradition is often the creation of something new that is - at least partly – rooted in old ideas and values. This is what applies to the here investigated *Traditional Chinese Medicine*, too.

It will therefore be revealed that, according to the title *The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse*, the therein mentioned narration is a medium to construct (and assists in constructing) a Chinese self-image. This image is that of a collective self-understanding that is being formed and altered by the actors and factors in the discourse. The Chinese nation recreates itself day-by-day, like every other nation, and TCM poses a key-element in this reproductive process of a cultural understanding about the Chinese self. This is a cumulative process between the state and the people that builds on a long history and nevertheless gets shaped anew every single day. These hypotheses will be tested over the course of this book.

It will show that the political discourse addressed in this book first-and-foremost refers to the political identity of the people and the nation of China. In this context, it will be highlighted why identity is always a process that connects the past, the present, and the future. As much as for the individual, society (the macro unit) also roots its self-understanding in that which has been, it then comes to an interpretation of its own constitution in the present (influenced

by past traumas and joys), and, as a result, desires and future goals are then formed in either the individual or the collective mind.

As a result, the matter is always linked to a proclaimed identity - the way one sees himself or herself. The same applies to society at large. In this respect, one key element of Section 1 of this book is the analysis of the proclaimed harmonious Chinese cultural tradition that is propagated by modern Chinese politics and put forward through channels like the Confucius Institutes outside of China. This type of politics could be deemed propaganda, but I argue that it is more about strengthening a narrative that is profoundly interwoven with the way the Chinese would like to be perceived by others. Thus, most sub-studies in this book uncover the political and ideological processes at work, while side issues are brought to the surface that offer profound insights into why certain measures were taken by Chinese thinkers and leaders in the past.

Therefore, in this book, I chose to use exemplary aspects from different standpoints to explain the struggle of the Chinese nation in the 20th century, because these serve to unravel the reactions of the Chinese state and the Chinese people, and they provide the reader with more freedom to come up with his/her own conclusions. As will be shown by highlighting the processes and mechanisms of different standpoints, opinions, and research results used in this book, the reader will come to understand how the individual is always opinionated. This is often as true for the distinguished researcher as it is for the manager or the so-called ordinary folk. Opinions, biases, and subjective views play a part in the identity building process of the self. Subjectivity is as good as it is bad, I argue, because subjective thinking is the root of individuality, but objectivity is the aim of good research. It is, however, hard to achieve. When aware of this fact, better and more objective results may be the sum of a researcher's or the reader's conclusions. The overall compilation of materials and the direction of research, however, are always inevitably driven by the conscious or unconscious choices made by the author and researcher.

That said, it is my hope that the results in this book are representative and meet the requirements of good, objective research.

Then, hereafter, before Chapter 1, a summarized overview of the *State of Research on Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse* will be given, as it provides the reader with a scope of narrative variety concerning the given subject within China.

State of Research on Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse

In this account of the research situation on Chinese medicine in China, the focus does not lie on the general medical studies of the latter but on the discourse in the political debate, which matters concerning the content of this book. Further, this brief overview is not a full-fledged comparative study between views in the western scientific domain and the Chinese research world, but against all complexity, it moves in on the subject to show *the internal discussions*, so to speak. The hereafter provided views highlight the fact that the approach chosen in this book is a rapprochement towards the 'traditional' medicine in China, which is new and uncommon to the research conducted by Chinese researchers.

While the overall research method used in this book is closely connected to that of a semiotic toolbox, this being a theoretic model brought into the world by western scientists, the following views about certain understandings among Chinese researchers differ greatly from those expounded later in this book. This first approach uncovers a variety of existing narratives, which provide the reader with a broad scope of Chinese medicine narrations in China's political discourse. In the process, mutual respect between researchers from China and the West²² is paramount. Although some quoted views may tempt the reader to judge that a particular view is nonsensical or that certain ideas are not founded on proper scientific methods, it is advisable to avoid such prejudice.

In the Chinese realm of this research field, there are conflicting debates in the discourse on Chinese medicine. My preparation for this book has shown that these disputes within China usually revolve around the question of the level of scientific legitimacy of Chinese medicine as-a-whole.

The research perspective in this book differs from this convergence because it targets a comprehensive study of the reasons behind certain narratives on the matter. Therein, the scientific legitimacy of Chinese medicine is a rather unimportant factor because it does not explain how the different stories told about Chinese medicine have evolved or why they came about. But the legitimation issue is nonetheless closely interlinked with the topic because the *scientific legitimacy conflict* and the question about the coming about of 'culture-specific narratives' originate from the same roots.

²² Here I want to add that one could question what it means to talk about *the West*. For the reader asking such a question, I admit that there cannot be *the West, the Chinese, or the Germans*. Nevertheless, I will use this term as the common reader will associate a certain group of people or countries with it.

In China, it is common to yield this specific cultural view on the legitimization issue of Chinese medicine. Exemplary, for researcher Gu Yaling 谷亚玲 at the Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine, the case of TCM and, in general, that of Chinese medicine is profoundly entrenched in the field of the broader category of Chinese culture. In her article [*A Brief Analysis of the Linkage between Chinese Medicine and Chinese Culture*] 浅析中医与中华文化之关系 she argues that the most fundamental written work of Chinese medicine, the Huangdi Neijing 黄帝内经, and its theoretical core build on the systematic cosmology of the Book of Changes (the Zhouyi 周易). By such an argumentative chain, Chinese medicine gets entangled with the essence of the ancient traditional Chinese culture itself.²³ Thence, for Gu, it is no question that Chinese medicine is of utmost importance and value to the cultural heritage of the current Chinese civilization.

To strengthen this statement, Gu explains the intimate relations between the ancient books of Zhouyi 周易, the Daodejing 道德经, and the Huangdi Neijing 黄帝内经. Thereby, she shows how the intricately profound principles of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements 五行 stem from the holistic Chinese cosmology formulated in the Zhouyi which then further laid the foundation for partial theories in the Huangdi Neijing and the Daodejing. As a result, Gu thinks that it is not feasible to discuss Chinese medicine without setting it in the broader context of traditional Chinese culture, as she writes as follows: “挽救, 保护, 发展中医, 久不能不研究中华民族的传统文化。”²⁴

The most important detail that one can take from this appears to be that Gu Yaling as well as other Chinese researchers of Chinese culture and Chinese medicine, found the answers to the connection between the former two canonical books in the other above-mentioned ancient works. Thereafter, what is resembled in the literary evidence allegedly proves how the holistic approach towards Chinese culture and medicine are the therein shared features as much as the frequently derived resurfacing quest for balance and harmony. Not only does the Zhouyi thereby provide the assumed basis for modern science and technology narratives in China, but it is also the root for Chinese medicine, says Gu. Here, she adds a short saying that likely is meant to explain that 'like a tree needs its roots, water must have a spring' (a place from where

²³ Over the course of this book, it will be analysed how this 'traditional' view is certainly an element of the historicity of the Chinese civilization, but it will also be explained why, in a critical reductionist view, such a view itself presents a **narration**. In this context, the reader will then come to understand the scope of what constructionist research terms *socially constructed* realities.

²⁴ Gu Yaling 谷亚玲, *Qianxi Zhongyi yu Zhongguo Wenhua zhi Guanxi* 《浅析中医与中华文化之关系》. [A Brief Analysis of the Linkage Between Chinese Medicine and Chinese Culture].

it originates).²⁵ Analogously, presumably the foundation of Chinese medicine must have a source, which she then identifies as the Book of Changes. Moreover, as these matters are commonly shared in the mentioned ancient works, this is where the origin of Chinese medicine is to be found, she writes.²⁶ While it is not my aim to discredit this interpretation at all, such a view resembles a commonly shared argumentation about the origins of Chinese medicine in China. From the taken position of critical constructionist research, it must be suspected that most probably a particular (identity) narrative is at work here. This will be investigated and explained in later chapters of this book. Grasping this notion of Gu's viewpoint, she proceeds to conclude in her paper how Chinese culture as much as Chinese medicine shall be understood as precious gifts (as in: "cultural heritage") not only for the Chinese civilization but for all humankind. This, she expresses in a sentence in the conclusion of her paper, as shown in the following partial quote: "...是中国人对全人类健康事业做出的最大贡献, 是最宝贵的世界文化遗产。"²⁷ In result, according to Gu, Chinese medicine can and must be appreciated as one of the pillars of Chinese traditional culture which provides good for all humankind.

This standpoint is further deepened by the explanations of social scientist Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛 (Chinese School of Social Sciences in Beijing²⁸) in his article on the Chinese concept of Daoxue 道学 which, according to him, adds to the comprehension of Chinese medicine. Although this philosophical school is sometimes associated with the term Neo-Confucianism, it rather resembles the profound Chinese philosophical thoughts and doctrines of the Daoist notion. In the article [*Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective*] 从道学文化看医学的发展前景, the author explains in much detail how modern Chinese medicine is rooted in the Daoist school of thought. It is thereby not only the case of Chinese medicine resultantly being linked to the Chinese cosmology, but Hu goes beyond the argumentation of Gu Yaling by uncovering that many ancient canonical works of Chinese medicine can be backtracked to their origins in the Daoist convention. Through this approach, Hu's thinking connects Chinese medicine to various concepts, which pave the way to a holistic comprehension of Chinese medicine as a thorough methodology that gives rise to an understanding of Chinese medicine as indispensable to humankind. This specifically applies

²⁵ Gu Yaling, [A Brief Analysis of the Linkage Between Chinese Medicine and Chinese Culture].

²⁶ See Gu Yaling, [A Brief Analysis of the Linkage Between Chinese Medicine and Chinese Culture], she writes: "前面讲了中医和中华文化几个直接相互印证和关系的问题。不难看出"医易相通", "医易同源"的关系。因此, 可以说《周易》是现代科技和中文化的总源头, 也是中医的总源头, 唯木有本, 水有源。"

²⁷ Gu Yaling, [A Brief Analysis of the Linkage Between Chinese Medicine and Chinese Culture].

²⁸ Chinese University of Social Sciences 中国社会科学院, Beijing (China) 中国 北京.

when Hu Fuchen compares modern Western medicine with the natural Chinese medical practices.²⁹ He thence brings up the Chinese tradition of Yangsheng 养生, which can vaguely be described-as being one of the fundamental principles of Chinese medicine. The concept of Yangsheng is obviously described by Hu, in-order-to outline the greatly differing approach of Chinese medicine to that of modern Western medical practices.

In his essay, which had also been a contribution to the 14th Congress of the Asian College of Psychosomatic Medicine 第十四届 亚洲心身医学大会 in the year 2010, he repeatedly stresses the differences between the two. In his view, Chinese medicine is surely a very advanced healing practice. More than once, Hu analyses, highlights, and disapproves of the Western medical systematology by which usually organs in the body are examined and treated separately. He further criticizes the prescription of chemical drugs in Western medicine as much as the therein only in the last century uprising psychosomatic approach to the healing of sicknesses. To him, all this differs greatly from the Chinese healing arts. As he writes, in the case of Yangsheng, which could be broadly translated as meaning “healthcare”, the curing of patients had traditionally been, and still is, much more holistic. The idea of Yangsheng must be understood as a concept to *maintain life* and *care for it*. What shows here is [assumably]³⁰ not so much some wishful and strange handling of health affairs, but instead a complex conception of the inseparable link between the body and soul, which most Westerners have only gradually come to understand in past decades, says Hu. Although the phrasing and using of specific terminology by Hu may sometimes sound unscientific to some researchers, most of his argumentative chain concerning this matter does make sense (the exception being that, in contradiction to his claim, Western medical professionals are also knowledgeable about the linkage of the body and the soul, but his belief that this insight is rather new in the West may not be wrong after all).³¹ Thereby, the contradiction between those who categorize Chinese medicine merely a proto-science and those who deeply believe in its value is revealed. The convictions put forward by Hu, however, may drive scientists, who ask for hard scientific proof away when they hear him speaking about the harmony in the universe – which (i.e.,) he links to the causality of the emergence of new viruses and the like. Hu advocates tremendous wisdom which comes with such medical concepts as Yangsheng. He posits that by not only looking at the body’s organs separately, as is often the case in Western medicine, but by con-

²⁹ Cf. Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛, *Cong Daoxue wenhua kan yixue de fazhan qianjing* 《从道学文化看医学的发展前景》, [Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective].

³⁰ My additional note.

³¹ Cf. Hu Fuchen, [Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective].

sidering the processes (and thereby the organs) as interdependent, as is expounded in the doctrines of Yin and Yang as well as the Five Elements, a much more holistic understanding of the body is opened-up than has traditionally been the case in Western medicine. Additionally, he concludes that Yangsheng prioritizes focusing on the avoidance of illnesses by proper nutrition through healthy food intake, good physical exercise, massage practices, moxibustion, acupuncture, and seeking the balance of the heart-mind plane.³²

It is my understanding that Hu's mentions of such medical guiding principles³³ like the three conceptual factors of Jing 精, Qi 气, and Shen 神 give forth three levels of the human individual, which somewhat must all be attended to, and possibly they then must be brought into some sort of balance. To Hu Fuchen the precursors of this concept had already been laid out in the Mawangdui texts³⁴ which have been dated around the beginning of the second century B.C.E. after being excavated from a tomb near Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, in the 1970s.³⁵ When understanding *Jing* as the rational mind, *Qi* as life energy (physical strength and health)³⁶, and *Shen* as the soul or the heart, then what Hu likely attempts to express throughout his text may be that the rational mind, the heart or the soul, and the physical energy are linked. Here, the soul and the heart must be assumed to correlate with the subconscious mind, the emotions, and the like. All the layers of stuff, if you will, that neither clearly belong to the rational mind nor to the physical body. It seems this is where the Cartesian thinking has caused a blind spot, or, let us say, science has caused it resultantly. In western sciences (except in philosophy or religion), it appears there is no space for something like the soul. It is almost as if there were only the body and a rational mind. But everybody knows people have emotions. It is in this realm, I argue, where hard science is floundering and struggling. Although, this cannot be discussed here in detail, researchers like James Miller argue that...

[n]ature in the worldview of modernity, deals with objective reality, the world "out there," to be theorized by science, transformed by technology, and made productive by economic activity. As a consequence, religion is pushed inward toward spirituality or upward toward theology.³⁷

³² Cf. Hu Fuchen, [Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective].

³³ In Chinese Medicine.

³⁴ 马王堆.

³⁵ For date ascertainment of the Mawangdui text, see Paul Unschuld, *Traditional Chinese Medicine, Heritage and Adaptation* (Chapter 6, Columbia University Press, 2018).

³⁶ For lack of a better term.

³⁷ James Miller, *China's Green Religion, Daoism and the Quest for a Sustainable Future*, pp. 15.

In brief, it is argued that in the *modern* worldview with its scientific root of understanding, there is no space for anything that cannot be proven by the inherent scientific parameters. This may explain why Hu strongly advocates the alleged holistic Chinese approach to this matter, as it differs from the former.

To him, the western medical thinking is clearly flawed. His view expresses how surgical practices and chemical drugs widely used in modern Western medicine often result in partial healing or, contrary to popular belief harmful side effects. Apart from this, he repeatedly emphasizes the great profit that Chinese medicine and Chinese culture embody, which could possibly benefit all humankind. He thinks the natural medicines and herbs applied in Chinese medicine, as well as the holistic approach to health provision and healing methods, have many benefits over large parts of Western medicinal treatments. This conceptuality of Chinese Medicine thereafter is probably not some mystical concept of a weird cosmology of heaven, earth, and the human being, but when Hu explains the links between the universe and the above-mentioned three realms of human existence, then, in my understanding, this all makes quite some sense if one keeps in mind that the *modern way* of living is not as superior as people would like to think. It could be claimed that the *moderns*³⁸ always think they are doing it all right, but the results in the environment and in the emotional sphere appear to show a very different picture from what these people think. Events like the modern climate crisis, the stressful lifestyle in the industrial societies, and all related matters unearth this factual truth. James Miller therefore argues that “[t]he source of this economic and ecological unsustainability is the inability of modern neoliberal ideology and its attendant cultural forms to conceptualize and operationalize a way of being in the world that inscribes human prosperity within the prosperity of planetary life.”³⁹ Through such a lens, the conclusion enunciated by Hu; that of an ungrudging and enthusiastic open-mindedness towards the fusion of Chinese medicine and Western medicine, does appear very desirable.⁴⁰ Certainly, thorough testing and systematic examination of the practices and drugs involved will still be required. However, while this discussion is fascinating, it is not the core objective of this book to discuss whether Chinese medicine is efficient or not. The study on the *Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse* leads to a very different converge towards Chinese Medicine.

As will be shown later in this book, some of the viewpoints that have been sketched out above have to be suspected of positing a certain agenda through their narrative form. Further, light

³⁸ A term that derives from Bruno Latour and is further explained in a later chapter.

³⁹ James Miller, *China's Green Religion*, Introduction, pp. XIV

⁴⁰ Cf. Hu Fuchen, [Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective].

will be shed on the conflict between Chinese and Western medicine. The latter is an immense matter of interest in this book.

Be that as it may, while the above-given accounts on the subject are very widespread among Chinese medicine scholars, others, like the researcher Wang Songjun from the Military Academy of Medical Sciences (in the Research Department of Health Services and Medical Documentation)⁴¹ maintain more criticism for the aforesaid kind of conclusions. In his article [*Arduous Philosophical Thoughts Expressed about Chinese Medicine*] 对中医鸣的哲学忧思, he discusses several important issues about the plausibility of many such positions in the research on Chinese medicine today.

He argues that the approach of many scholars to Chinese medicine is problematic because all too often their research is not free of subjective judgments, while some scholars confound scientific domains like those of the natural and the social sciences. Wang writes that many Chinese academics who claim that Chinese medicine altogether belongs to the natural sciences are simply wrong. In his argument, he points out that only the physiological elements of Chinese medicine shall be subject to the natural sciences, whereas the psychological aspects are to be put under scrutiny by the domain of Psychology and therefore belong to the broader field of the social sciences. Further, Wang discusses the stubbornness with which scholars twist and turn in their circular argumentative fashion, thereby, he thinks, their rhetoric as-a-means-to avoid undesired discussions about the origins of Chinese medicine can be unmasked. Often, when criticized by others, the advocates of Chinese medicine do not hesitate to denounce the critical scholar towards their cause by chastising him/her for simply not being knowledgeable enough to grasp the profound meaning of ancient philosophical concepts and works. Through the implementation of such manipulative strategies, discussions are quickly suffocated in their beginnings, says Wang.⁴² For him, it-is-clear that not only in rare cases, the roots, and the alleged importance of Chinese medicine within the broader Chinese culture are being immensely exaggerated. In this respect, he writes: »...中国传统文化是“道“, 中医是“器“, 或”艺“; 中国传统文化是“源“ ...«⁴³ Hence, Wang is convinced that traditional Chinese culture is the *way*, Chinese medicine is the *utensil* or the *instrument*, and thus traditional Chinese culture is the *source*. In this exegesis, his understanding of this aspect is in accord with that of the researcher Hu Fuchen, but Wang also clarifies the constitutive order of these ele-

⁴¹ 军事医学科学院卫生勤务与医学情报研究所.

⁴² Cf. Wang Songjun 王松俊, *Dui Zhongyi ming de Zhexue yousi* 《对中医鸣的哲学忧思》, [*Arduous Philosophical Thoughts Expressed about Chinese Medicine*].

⁴³ Ibid.

ments. His reasoning is that the circular argumentation that the Chinese tradition is long-standing and therefore unquestionably scientific does not infrequently assign false proof to the integrity of Chinese medicine by employing traditional Chinese culture as its root, while on the other hand, apparently traditional Chinese culture is validated through Chinese medicine. Here, Wang points out that traditional Chinese culture offers much more than only Chinese medicine. Beside astronomy, folk songs, traditional opera, calligraphy, folk customs and traditions, the art of war, and religion, the traditional Chinese culture consists of a lot more than just medicine. Yet some scholars, he says, amplify and overemphasize its importance by far. The order is then clear: Chinese medicine only poses a certain (partial) component of the overall traditional culture. It is exactly here where Wang criticizes the over-magnification of Chinese medicine because only if one follows such causality, it can serve the agenda of some *ideologists*⁴⁴ to revive the traditional Chinese culture-as-a-whole. In his view, saying that Chinese medicine (and the study thereof) is the backbone of traditional Chinese culture (“中医学是中国文化的脊梁”) is groundless as author Jiage Lü⁴⁵ (quoted by Wang) argues because the motivation behind it usually can be identified as a certain kind of patriotism and nationalism. To Wang Songjun, such sort of argumentation means to leave appropriate scientific grounds because it reflects a confusion about the objective of science as-a-means to increase knowledge production. He strictly opposes such scholarly practice and believes that for the good of Chinese medicine, for science, and for Chinese culture in general, factual reality ought to be taken-into-account.⁴⁶

Consequently, Wang writes that a reasonable amount of respect for scientific evidence as well as a mutual respect between Western and Chinese scholars must be maintained in-order-to step forward into the future. After all, he argues that the provision of health services is a matter of maintaining better health for humankind as a whole (“中医”，“西医“，之所以还有争论的前提和必要，就是因为有一个共同的目标——治病球人，提高人民健康水平，为人民服务。⁴⁷). Here, his wording sounds a lot like that of the former contributors. But I argue that, undoubtedly, the amelioration of health services for all individuals on earth contains a fine humanistic intention. Hence, the perception and largely varying position of Wang Songjun in comparison to scholars like Gu Yaling and Hu Fuchen provide a critical insight on the matter.

⁴⁴ My choice of wording, for lack of a better term.

⁴⁵ See: Lü Jiage 吕嘉戈, *Wanjiu Zhongyi* 《挽救中医》, [Rescuing Chinese Medicine] (Guangxi Normal University Press 广西师范大学出版社, 2006).

⁴⁶ Cf. Wang Songjun, [Arduous Philosophical Thoughts Expressed about Chinese Medicine], pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

Nevertheless, it is not necessarily an easy endeavour to prove either of them wrong in all argumentative aspects. Wang argues for the importance of clean and standardized scientific norms, the other authors build their argumentative chain on alleged historical and cultural matters.

When listening to what Chinese researchers Guo Xinghua⁴⁸ and Cao Xinfang⁴⁹ have to say by analysing and reporting about this field of inquiry in their essay [*Chinese Medicine: From Being Instructed to Setting Out Anew*] 中医: 从被规训到再出发, they come up with yet another strategy to make their stand. While it is known that modern-day science can always only reflect a reductionist image of reality, it is reasonable that they point to the (assumed) holistic methodology of Chinese medicine, and they thereby ask whether-or-not in the thinking of the 'Systems Theory', Chinese medicine could possibly still be comprehended as a qualified science. If following Wang Songjun's thought, he would most likely argue why such enhancement of the matter is groundless, too. A broader understanding of the claim, however, can be achieved by taking a short course in General Systems Theory. This is important here because Guo and Cao refer to this theory to build the theoretical framework in their paper.⁵⁰ Accordingly, in 1951, Ludwig von Bertalanffy had already argued that:

General Systems Theory would be an exact doctrine of wholeness as a “pure natural science” or *reine Naturwissenschaft*, to use Kant's expression, -that is, it is a hypothetico-deductive system of those principles which follow from the definition of systems and by the introduction of more or less special conditions. In this sense, system theory is *a priori* and independent of its interpretation in terms of empirical phenomena, but it is applicable to all empirical realms concerned with systems. Its position is similar to that, for example, of probability theory which is in itself a formal mathematical doctrine but which can be applied, by way of empirical interpretation of its terms, to different fields, from games to thermodynamics, to biological and medical experimentation, to genetics, to life insurance statistics, and so on. Speaking more precisely, fields of application of system theory are all levels of science: first, the level of physical; second, of biological; third, of social units. Essentially, it represents a generalized kinetics and dynamics which is applicable not only to physical systems, but to phenomena of any kind.⁵¹

Therefore, reacting to Guo's and Cao's claim, it is my understanding that by utilizing this theory, they try to hint at the possible scientific legitimacy of Chinese Medicine. As has already been highlighted above, in the political discourse and in the related research on Chinese

⁴⁸ Guo Xinghua 郭星华.

⁴⁹ Cao Xinfang 曹馨方.

⁵⁰ See Guo Xinghua 郭星华 / Cao Xinfang 曹馨方, *Zhongyi: Cong bei guixun dao zai chufa* 《中医: 从被规训到再出发》, [*Chinese Medicine: From Being Instructed to Setting Out Anew*].

⁵¹ Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *Problems of General Systems Theory*, pp. 304.

medicine in China, the debate usually revolves around this question. The question here, then, is how the term 'science' is defined. The answer first lies in the ontological method chosen to investigate the object of research.

In the first two explanations above, the ontological *modus operandi* is not that of objective research **if** Chinese medicine were assumed to be scientific *a priori*. The same applies to parts of the paper by Guo and Cao, but their methodology is mixed in the sense that certain arguments (i.e., the historical recount of the Chinese past) appear to fulfil the hard evidence standards of objective research. Whenever pronouncements with a notion of a subjective manner enter the domain, it shall be clear that respective assertions are of the interpretive kind. In my humble view, the differentiation between different culturally derived scholarly methods must be comprehended as belonging to the realm of social constructivism.

Therefore, by arguing and employing the mentioned theoretical framework, Guo and Cao highly advocate that the Chinese medical system cannot always be completely understood, analysed, or judged by modern scientific research methods. On this point, it is not difficult to follow their argument. When these authors then conclude that Chinese medicine must be understood as *science* according to the definition of the 'Systems Theory' then this is possibly not altogether wrong. As von Bertalanffy explains, different levels of science exist. If I am not wrong, this means that if reliable knowledge and information can be derived from the practices and methods of Chinese medicine, then by his definition, Chinese medicine cannot be denied being scientific in at least some sense. But until scientific proof is obtained, the knowledge accumulation therein somewhat belongs to the field of *interpretivism*. Here, it is necessary to distinguish between a positivist and a constructivist epistemology. In positivist epistemology, what usually follows is an objectivist ontology. On the other hand, when the research object is investigated with a constructivist epistemology, it most times contains an interpretive ontology. Accordingly, the epistemology most times determines which ontological method is used (positivist or constructivist). Either is defined as a technique in scientific research.

Subsequently, deducing that Chinese medicine represents a *science a priori* is still not feasible because, as usual, the scientific nature of it must first be demonstrated by scientific evidence, no matter which accepted scientific methodology is chosen to achieve this goal. Anything else concerning this matter is highly speculative. Here, Guo and Cao argue that Chinese medicine cannot be proven by measures of a positivistic epistemology. They don't use this terminology

and therefore find fault with the reductionist standard of objectivist research. But there is a reason for reductionism. Von Bertalanffy explains that:

Modern science is characterized by its developed specialization which became necessary because of the vast amount of facts and the complication of scientific techniques, experimental as well as theoretical. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency towards generalized systems of scientific laws which is based upon the insight that important developments frequently arise on borderlines and by way of a synthesis of formerly unconnected fields.⁵²

Hence, science would be impossible without reductionism because it would simply not allow specialization, which would then overwhelm the capacities of the researcher and the reader. Also, comprehensive research is being conducted in terms of the profundity of the details of the research object or area.

In addition, Guo and Cao argue that Chinese medicine had been of utmost value to health provision when it contributed immensely to curing patients in the SARS epidemic, by the discovery of the malaria drug invented on the basis of an ancient Chinese medicinal prescription using the active ingredient of artemisinin (which won the respective researchers a Nobel Prize), and when Chinese medicine proved highly efficient in combining Chinese and Western-based medical prescriptions and practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hard to evaluate these pretensions for nonmedical professionals, but it-is-clear-that the efficacy of Chinese medicine must be evidence based before the respective cures can be accepted by modern scientific standards. Until then, it appears reasonable to doubt certain medications and to suspect culturally induced bias in statements that sound all too enthusiastic.⁵³ It thus appears that Guo and Cao want to avoid this discussion. Remembering Wang Songjun's standpoint, such a claim appears to be unscientific, and likely creates false information, because, while certain aspects of Chinese medicine may not be detectable, the overall effect of cures⁵⁴ should be measurable through clinical testing or at least with empirical methods like quantitative or qualitative research schemes.⁵⁵ Therefore, it can be concluded that although the research of the afore-mentioned researchers is laid out in great detail and generally with profound academic expertise, a bias (possibly a kind of religious belief) or an agenda can be suspected to be at play. This is also what Wang states as he explains how argumentation of the

⁵² Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *Problems of General Systems Theory*, pp. 303.

⁵³ On the other hand, humanity surely can only hope to get the proof of efficacy rather sooner than later.

⁵⁴ This means the health improvement of a patient. Although, such a method probably cannot define or distinguish the influential factors of a placebo effect.

⁵⁵ The latter part of the sentence is based on my understanding of science.

latter kind may simply echo a certain nationalistic narrative about Chinese medicine, which is then inevitably saturated by the cultural and political thinking of the respective writers.⁵⁶

Further, similarly, the researcher Li Juan from the Hunan Normal University in Changsha⁵⁷ investigates another aspect used in this book: that of the TV Series *Dazhaimen* 大宅门. Regarding this topic, she provides background information on the story of the TV play and informs about her view on the story. In her essay [*The Framework of Chinese Medicine Culture in TV Plays*] 中医文化在电视剧中得建构, it is suggested that in the macro-story (which resembles the theming of Chinese medicine) a micro-story can be detected that revolves around the storyline of the various individual characters and the relationships among them. She concludes that the TV series *Dazhaimen* and other TV series' concerning the matter have been of utmost importance in spreading the cultural and scientific wisdom contained in Chinese medicine with its long-standing tradition.⁵⁸

Accordingly, she concludes that the media presentation of Chinese medicine was a pressing issue for the Chinese nation and of high relevance *to the people of the world* at the time of production. Thus, allegedly, the dissemination of the existence of Chinese medicine and its benefits through medical treatment for the world population was the reason to produce the respective TV series.⁵⁹

As a result, the differing positions on this subject in China's political discourse are rather heterogenic, and in sum, this appears to pose a cultural-specific narrative interpretation. Thus, the investigation on the hypothesis of *The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse*, which is attended to in this book, converges on narrative forms concerning Chinese medicine as it approaches the matter from a perspective that questions opinions like the ones above. It is here that this research hypothesis rapprochement deviates from the above-mentioned debate on the scientific legitimization in-order-to draw nearer to an understanding of the intentions of various narratives concerning this matter. The above-mentioned issue of the relevance of Chinese culture regarding its role concerning traditional Chinese medicine⁶⁰ and the related political or otherwise motivated intentions will be intensively analysed in this book. Circulated narratives are manifold, and their existence has reasons. This

⁵⁶ Cf. Wang Songjun, [Arduous Philosophical Thoughts Expressed about Chinese Medicine].

⁵⁷ Li Juan 李娟, Hunan Normal University 湖南师范大学.

⁵⁸ Cf. Li Juan 李娟: *Zhongyi Wenhua zai Dianshiju zhong de Jiangou* 《中医文化在电视剧中得建构》, [*The Framework of Chinese Medicine Culture in TV Plays*].

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ and vice versa.

can already be concluded. Therefore, in contrast to the usual approach among Chinese researchers, the main intention of my research is the unmasking of existing narratives and myths in the given discourse. In this sense, it greatly differs from the accounts given above as it seeks to bring to light how and why such constructed views have come into existence.

I. Historical, Philosophical and Political Matters

As initially highlighted above, in this first section of this book it will be analysed why the invention, and the deliberate production of a certain positive image of the Chinese state and nation is a reasonable endeavour which includes the production of the self-image of the Chinese nation internally as much as it does in-order-to create a certain external image. Internally, it serves the function of constructing a thorough collective identity and self-understanding. Externally, the image of the Chinese nation, its culture, and its political goals are paramount to the role of the Chinese state as a global political and economic entity. Chinese medicine and the significance of its modern role as a *traditional* element of culture but also as-a-means to create a national myth is a political matter that finds its roots, at least partially, in the history of China. As one can imagine, and as Benedict Anderson noted, *imagined communities* are, for example, constituted when a common print language is created.⁶¹ In the case of China, this goes back as far as the era of the emperor *Qin Shi Huang* of the Qin Dynasty. Thus, the roots of a constructed and imagined community had already long existed in China before the modern Chinese nation-state was established in 1949.

The term TCM, which is the commonly used acronym for the concept of *Traditional Chinese Medicine*, has come a long way. Today, most people, at least in the industrialized Western nations, have some knowledge about TCM, or have at least heard of it in one way or another. This paper analyses the methods of instrumentation of Chinese medicine and hypothesizes that the modern narrative of TCM serves various other purposes than just the dissemination of ideas concerning medicinal products and practices. The reason for this assumption lays in the obvious: As logic and linguistics tell the attentive investigator, the term *Traditional Chinese Medicine* must refer to a traditional kind of medicine that originated in China. But when delving deeper into the subject, it becomes evident that the today widely used term TCM at least partly relates to something else.⁶² Though, of course, it is rooted in certain traditional principles of Chinese medicinal practices, this new concept called TCM only refers to fragments of the ancient Chinese medicine, it is argued. It will be shown that the myth of TCM also relates to the broader concept of traditional Chinese culture, which, in part, is employed to create a specific image of China's culture, its state, and the nation.⁶³

⁶¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 44

⁶² As will be proven in more detail in the following chapters.

⁶³ Here, it is worth noting that what is recognized as the Chinese nation state today only exists since its founding in 1949, but the Chinese society and collective mind had long been an entity before the founding of the PRC.

TCM, as it appears on the global stage today, is a success story. It is now a concept known worldwide. In South Africa⁶⁴, in Australia⁶⁵ and in Great Britain⁶⁶, to name just a few, specific branches of the Confucius Institute have been opened for the teaching of Chinese language and Chinese culture, including 'Traditional Chinese Medicine'. The latter has entered the global stage via various channels. According to Paul Unschuld, a sinologist, and medical historian, TCM has thereby become an export good. While this in-itself is a huge achievement, it is important to note that the concept of TCM does not necessarily reflect a historical or otherwise conceptually independent or full-fledged holistic system. Unschuld exerts, that what is known as Traditional Chinese Medicine today is in many cases not all too deeply rooted in Chinese medicine and, further, the ideas about TCM adopted by Western medical practitioners are all too often very bloomy as to think that Chinese medicine is a system of “harmonious” and “soft” approaches, which, on the other hand, in the opinion of some is neither the case with Western medicine.⁶⁷ Unschuld gives several examples of how throughout history, Chinese medicinal principles had regularly been related to harsh practices of governing (the state) and reigning over the people.⁶⁸ He elaborates that Chinese medicine and Chinese culture, or at least the commonly used principles, methods, and cures in today's TCM are regularly rather fragments of a system that has never been canonized as a complete and uniform medical system. Following this, Unschuld describes the various similarities and obvious differences between modern Western pharmacology, modern Chinese medicine, and ancient Chinese medicine.

Modern Chinese pharmacology serves an end similar to that of modern scientific pharmacology. Based on the natural laws of systematic correspondence as expressed in the yin-yang and five-agents doctrines, traditional Chinese pharmacology offered an explanation of the activities of individual substances in the organism. Using the theoretical and empirical tools at their disposal, Chinese naturalists sought to trace the paths of therapeutic drugs and food, and they published theoretical models specifying the locations and times of activities of individual substances, as well as the effects exerted in the organism. The one major difference between traditional Chinese pharmacology and its modern counterpart is the exclusive reliance on theory in the interpretation of observed and assumed effects.

To establish conceptual links between physiological and pathological processes assumed to occur in the organism, on the one hand, and the qualities of individual substances, on the other, both must be interpreted by means of the same theoretical model. Such a model was supplied in ancient China by the yin-yang and five-agents doctrines of systematic correspondence. Once the organism, its parts and sections, and the nor-

⁶⁴ i.e., Confucius Institute at the University of Western Cape and at the University of Johannesburg.

⁶⁵ i.e., RMIT University, Australia, in collaboration with Nanjing University.

⁶⁶ i.e., The Confucius Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine at London South Bank University.

⁶⁷ As has been highlighted in the preceding chapter on the *Research State* withing China.

⁶⁸ See Paul U. Unschuld, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 113-122.

mal and abnormal processes occurring in it had been associated with specific yin-yang and five-agents categories, a bridge could be built to the properties of individual substances, whose qualities were likewise associated with the categories of systematic correspondence.⁶⁹

Here, Unschuld points to the fact that ancient Chinese medicine was based on theoretical medicinal models of the time. Even if these models would be called proto-scientific today, they were what was available to the ancient Chinese practitioners then. Unschuld, however, provides a first hint that there had been a break between ancient Chinese medicine and that which is called Traditional Chinese Medicine today. Naturally, the understanding of the practitioners of ancient pharmacology, ancient medicine, and ancient anatomy was limited due to the conditions of the time. Likewise, at the time, medicine in the West must have been no different. But the important question here is a different one, because the hypothesis of this paper leads to the question of whether the employment of a myth of TCM may be found in the contemporary political realm, rather than just thinking that the suffix “traditional” simply refers to an older form of practice in Chinese medicine.

If an older form of medicine is what is called Traditional Chinese Medicine, what then contrasts it as its modern form in China, one may ask. What can be observed here is that the correct addressment of terminology is of utmost importance. I argue that one could talk about the ancient Chinese medicine by using the term Traditional Chinese Medicine, but the fact is that what can be found are the different terms of ancient Chinese medicine, or simply Chinese medicine, and that which is now called Traditional Chinese Medicine. By the latter term, a new form and designation of 'TCM' entwines a new compilation of some older elements of the medical corpus mixed with new ideas, it is argued. This will become clear shortly.

In the book *Chinesische Medizin*, Unschuld uncovers why there are many misunderstandings about TCM today. Therein, the above-mentioned issues are further explained. What he calls the *loss of diagnostic-therapeutic independence of the former traditional Chinese medicine* refers to the impact of the arrival of the Western medicinal practices in China and the systematic re-invention of Chinese medicine by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1950s. The latter had a deep impact on the condition of the historical (ancient) medicine in China, and it gave rise to the new concept now known as TCM. It was Mao Zedong who demanded the renewal of the canon of Chinese medicine after he understood the differences between

⁶⁹ Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 301-302.

Western and Chinese medicinal practices.⁷⁰ Consequently, a novel orientation in the matter had been approached.

The struggle for Chinese medicine started much earlier, though. Paul Unschuld unravels that Chinese medicine underwent changes as early as the 17th century, which caused it to split into various disjointed schools and theoretical approaches. This occurred alongside several transitions of reign from the Song dynasty, while continuing to proceed well into the Ming and Qing dynasties. Unschuld explains that when protestant missionaries arrived in China in the beginning of the 19th century, they found that there was only a disparate conglomerate of ideas and practices among Chinese medical practitioners and healers.⁷¹ While before that, Chinese medicine underwent a development that lasted at least two millennia, there had never existed a uniform and canonized medicine in China, says Unschuld. Instead, an almost endless quantity of practices and healing methods had been available, of which most still have to be evaluated and tested in trials by modern scientific studies today.

[N]o single monograph will adequately convey the entirety of the Chinese traditions of health care, first, because, of the more than twelve thousand works extant from earlier centuries, not even a handful have been translated in a philologically serious manner, and second, because the wealth of the history of traditional Chinese medicine requires a library of Western secondary literature, and not just footnotes.⁷²

Hence, elements of Chinese medicine known in Western countries today seem to reflect only a tiny part of the vast range of historical healing practices in China, as much as that which is today disseminated as TCM. By means of this modern TCM, an image of *the harmonious way of the human being in the world* is propagated. This is what Unschuld laments about. According to his findings, new TCM books in the West regularly refer to the “Harmony of Yin and Yang” and the “Balance of the Five Elements”. Unschuld claims that there is a purpose behind this kind of narration in-order-to *capture* the Western consumer of TCM. He writes that the demand for alternative (and exotic) medicines among patients in Western industrial nations was one of the reasons for creating a product called TCM, which now appears to satisfy the desires of many Western customers. But as a matter of fact, says Unschuld, these ideas lead to many misinterpretations in the West, especially when consumers are not knowledgeable about the underlying Chinese philosophical, medical, and political concepts.⁷³

⁷⁰ See Paul U. Unschuld, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 88-90.

⁷¹ Cf. Paul U. Unschuld, *Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 89.

⁷² Paul Unschuld, *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine*, pp. 1.

⁷³ See Paul U. Unschuld, *Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 120–125.

Thus, uncovering the motives of certain actors, groups, and institutions who use respective narratives must be one of the key motifs of this book. Understanding the narration of the TCM myth and understanding the foundational myth for the creation of TCM in the political discourse of China thus drives the study at hand. Further, the afore-mentioned agents all, in one way or another, seem to benefit from the enforcement of the form in which this modern myth is narrated. Nevertheless, most likely, each interest group will have its own objectives.

One of the most prominent actors in the invention of this project was Mao Zedong. In 1954, he requested to modernize and systematize Chinese medicine. A chain of events led to the creation of the new concept of TCM. Mao demanded a unification of Western and Chinese medicine to make use of the strengths of the available elements from conventional Western medicine in-order-to combine them with a wide range of Chinese medicinal practices. This 'fusion' was supposed to be a selective process through extensive scientific evaluation. While this utilization of Chinese medicinal concepts is still being evaluated on a one-by-one basis up to this day, another idea got promoted as early as 1955. The responsible cadres and experts quickly understood that the creation of a new key term would greatly help to draw benefits from the already existing demands in Western countries. For this purpose, the term *Traditional Chinese Medicine* was created. This name had only been created for the use in the Western world, while in the Chinese language the well-established term *zhongyi* 中医 was kept. In contrast to the creation of the new English term, which was predetermined to misunderstanding and a blurred perception of the matter, the Chinese term *zhongyi* as opposed to other Chinese terms like *old medicine* and *national medicine*, did not clearly distinguish the differences between the old and the new. In Chinese, *zhongyi* simply means 'Chinese medicine'. With time passing on and even more rapidly with the reform period under Deng Xiaoping, the designation TCM became a worldwide known trademark.⁷⁴

1. The Myth of a 'traditional' Chinese Medicine in Confucius Institutes

Gradually, the Chinese state took advantage of this kind of trademark and the related form of narration. While the economic benefits of the exploitation of the TCM narrative will be discussed in Section 2 of this book, a specific state institution took advantage of this new opportunity. The institution Hanban, subordinate to the Chinese Ministry of Education, built upon

⁷⁴ Cf. Paul U. Unschuld, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 88-90.

the concept of the new Traditional Chinese Medicine. Particularly, this is the case with Hanban's sponsoring of extracurricular activities in Confucius Institutes (CIs).⁷⁵

As a result, what shall be called the myth of TCM and the myth of a *Traditional Chinese Culture* have thereby been interlinked and mutually strengthened.⁷⁶ While the curricular activities of Confucius Institutes mostly cover a great variety of language classes, the extracurricular activities include academic conferences, film festivals, Chinese medicine workshops and cultural activities.⁷⁷

Jennifer Hubbert, an anthropologist at the University of Hawaii, assumes the standpoint that the overall political self-description of the Chinese Communist Party is usually professing to be following a path to the creation of a 'harmonious' world. As will be more fully explained later in this section, many western critics doubt this sort of humanist motif. Therein lies one of the reasons why the critical views about China's dissemination of a harmonious culture will be discussed here in more detail. The image portrayed in the myth of TCM may, after all, appears to be congruent with what the Chinese government wants to propagate about Chinese culture. TCM, put forward by the narrative of the myth in question here, is portrayed as a systematic medicine which creates harmony in the body, and likewise, about how the global player China does act in this globalized world.⁷⁸ It is important to note that surely a rising economic and political giant like China is shaking the global market as well as the existing world of politics. Without question, it is an important aim of the Chinese state to convince other political stakeholders that China is not a threat to anyone. Also, it becomes clearer later that China's self-image is inherently connected to what is conveyed through the creation of a national myth. Nevertheless, I argue that labelling China as an actor of good or bad behaviour in world politics shall not be the focus of this paper because such an approach would only stoke biased conclusions. The research purpose here is to uncover the role that *The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine occupies in the Political Discourse of China*. The benefits of the dissemination of the myth of a 'traditional' Medicine are manifold, as will be proven soon. Shedding light on the functions, mechanisms, actors, and beneficiaries of these processes is a core task of this book.

Thus, returning to the reasons for the exoticism of Chinese medicine in the West, Paul Unschuld argues that nowadays western people oftentimes turn away from their own religious

⁷⁵ Cf. Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 5.

⁷⁶ This will be analysed in more detail in Section 3 of this book.

⁷⁷ Cf. Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 16.

⁷⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

beliefs, and as a result, they are just as often searching for alternatives to fill the void. Driven by the dissatisfaction of their own culture, religion, daily distress, and the frustration with conventional medicine, Chinese natural philosophy and Chinese medicine appear to pose a very attractive alternative. It appears to be a kind of otherness that attracts and creates the *wishful* belief that TCM is a conflict-free and good-natured alternative to Western medicine. While this excitement for the medicinal methods of Traditional Chinese Medicine can be called a sort of mysterious exoticism, oftentimes a blind eye may be turned towards reality, says Unschuld.⁷⁹ What the common Western reader will regularly stumble upon is simply a narrative of 'traditional Chinese culture and medicine', says he. Paul Unschuld explains that it is a known fact in China that the terminology and tonality in the old Chinese medicinal works have often been rather belligerent. Instead of harmonious methods, he writes, traditional medicinal texts in China often state that medicinal drugs are like *soldiers who enter the battlefield and prepare for a fight within the body*:

...Stattdessen wurden die Arzneien von Autoren als «Soldaten» bezeichnet, die in den Kampf im Organismus eingreifen. Ärzte wurden als «Heerführer» bezeichnet, die die Soldaten im Kampf lenken. Die Terminologie der Übergriffe von einem Organ im Körper auf andere wurde mit militärischen Begriffen gleichgesetzt und entsprechend bezeichnet.

Davon findet sich in den heutigen westlichen Texten der TCM rein gar nichts mehr; die kreative Rezeption hat diese Medizin zwar einem Verlangen vieler sensibler Menschen in den westlichen Industrienationen nach Harmonie und Frieden angepaßt, aber «chinesisch» ist diese Medizin in dieser Aneignung nicht geblieben. Sie war ein kulturelles Produkt in China, und sie ist ein «systemisches Kunstprodukt» in ihrer westlichen Adaptation – dieses als «natürlich» zu bezeichnen, liegt weit ab von der Wirklichkeit.⁸⁰

In sum, numerous terms in old Chinese medicinal texts did refer to warlike scenarios, Unschuld explains. While medications were perceived as the *soldiers* in a battle, the doctor had often been viewed as a military leader. Also, the encroaching of diseases from one organ to another had frequently been described in military vocabulary in older texts on Chinese medicine. Such kind of terminology cannot be found in the modern texts on TCM distributed in the West. The whole wording, says Unschuld, was creatively adjusted to what sensitive recipients in the Western industrial nations would like to hear. As a result, the modern TCM texts cover harmonious and peaceful processes, but this is not the reality of the former *Chinese* medicine, he writes.⁸¹ This newly created *medicine* had been a cultural project in China, which is, what

⁷⁹ Cf. Paul U. Unschuld, *Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 121-124.

⁸⁰ Paul U. Unschuld, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 117-118.

⁸¹ This, however, does not imply at all that effective cures, practices, and herbs do not exist in Chinese medicine.

Unschuld calls, a “systemic artificial product”. A product which had purposely been created for the Western consumer. Such constructed narration about the Chinese medicine couldn’t be further away from the truth, says Unschuld, because it is not natural, neither true, at all.⁸² As-a-consequence, the today well re-known product called TCM is a man-made creation, and therefore it is not equal to, nor covering the depth and wide range of historical Chinese healing methods. It can thus be identified as storytelling – a narration; in short: a myth.

In his book on the *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* (The Yellow Emperors Inner Classics Basic Questions), Paul Unschuld thoroughly analyses the origin, the re-writing, and the historical meaning of the Yellow Emperors Inner Classics. Besides the fact that there had been many alterations to the original texts over the millennia, it had also been edited by various commentators since its presumed coming into existence in the Han Era. The *Suwen*, as it is abbreviated, offers profound insights into the early stages of development of ancient Chinese medicine. In fact, the first data in the *Suwen* verifies that by the influence of the *Suwen*, Chinese medicine had been drastically renewed by turning away from the earlier used paradigm of Chinese demonology to a more systematic and somewhat more fact-based approach on physiological healing methods.⁸³

Furthermore, the Yin-Yang principle and the Five-agent doctrine had been established then. The nowadays used Yin-Yang ideas in TCM, however, are often overly simplified, Unschuld writes. In his analysis on the *Suwen*, he finds that the ancient thought system of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements are intertwined with other doctrines such as the “The Fourfold Subcategorization”, the “The Sixfold Subcategorization”, and the “Eightfold or Tenfold Subcategorizations”.⁸⁴ In addition, there had existed multiple other principles like “The Body and its Organs” which covered the head and the extremities as much as the afore-mentioned organs. Thereafter, other relevant categories had been used, which at the time of the beginning of the systematic correspondence in ancient Chinese medicine had been granted great importance. They had been called the “Depots, Palaces, Containers, and Officers”.⁸⁵

This appears to hint to the fact that ancient Chinese medicine already had been very complex in the period of the late Han Dynasty. The investigation of such historical facts reveals that Chinese medicine in the 20th Century had been taken advantage of by re-presenting it in a rather simple narrative form of a 'harmonious Chinese medicine' to the modern consumer.

⁸² See Paul U. Unschuld, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp. 117-118.

⁸³ See Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 181.

⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 83-104.

⁸⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 124-143.

This is best understood through proof of the at times, harmful and violent nature of Chinese medicine, says Unschuld. Like the 'soldier analogy', many practices in the history of Chinese medicine had been associated with methods reflecting respective methods of state governance throughout Chinese history.⁸⁶ Unschuld based the here quoted findings on his evaluations of the *old* Chinese medicine (that which existed before the invention a so-called Traditional Chinese Medicine) through the translation of the book *I-hsüeh Yüan Liu Lun* 医学源流论 from 1757 by the writer Xu Dachun⁸⁷. In this book the author describes in great-detail how methodology, and especially terminology, in ancient Chinese medicine had often been aggressive and harmful because there-in the analogy of an aggressive state and respective cruel methods had often been adopted by medical writers. On top of this, Xu claimed Chinese medicine being highly violent because it had killed many patients as-a-result of false medical treatment by Chinese doctors throughout history.⁸⁸ In my view, this however does not generally discredit Chinese medicine as-a-whole, but it does rather emphasize how important treatment with the correct herbal cures, at the right time, is when such medicine is being applied. Such debate is probably very similar to modern discussions about the effectiveness and the possible harmfulness of herbal medicine in the West. Also, the question then is whether Chinese medicine had been harmful, or, whether mal-educated doctors had been the problem. Nevertheless, the argument opposes the thinking that Chinese medicine had been only and always *harmonious*. Further, as will show later, Chinese historical accounts on warfare and conflicts are also part of the Chinese history as much as they are historical truth for almost all historical kingdoms, nations, or collectives on planet earth. It is therefore hard to believe that the Chinese culture is somewhat more harmonious than all the others, and suspicion arises that by such argumentative thread a certain notion shall be produced. Similarly, according to Unschuld, the dissemination of a distorted view of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine has culminated in various conflicting issues. He points this out as follows:

Problems have been created, in this regard, by those who abstract some very specific ideas and practices from a rich tradition of Chinese health care, and present them to occidental readers as “Chinese medicine” simply for the fact that they seem to represent what Western medicine appears to lack. It is perfectly legitimate for anyone questioning the basic assumptions of current Western medicine as ultimate wisdom to search the history of European, Asian, or any other culture’s health care heritage for traditions that might promise alternative ways of therapy and prevention; that is, towards a definition and handling of illness. Progress, or change, in medicine has, as far

⁸⁶ See Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 335.

⁸⁷ See Paul Unschuld, *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine*.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

as we can see today, never been a happy and harmonious adding of new stones to an edifice of truth and successful healing. Progress and fundamental changes in medicine have been stimulated by the most diverse, and often unexpected and unpredictable, sources - and, the historian may add, have occurred usually against vehement opposition by representatives of established ways. Hence, given a widespread feeling of discontent with high technology and chemistry, and given also an increasing feeling of uneasiness vis-à-vis modern medicine, one may witness today a process that has occurred again and again in the history of medicine, that is, the breaking away of minorities from mainstream practices and thoughts. Whether this movement will lead to any viable alternative is, of course, impossible to predict.

One of the more outstanding parallels history offers in comparison with current developments in the beginning of the reacquisition of ancient European medicine at the peak of the middle ages. A difference, though, may be seen in centuries of philological work opening access to the writings of the ancients and preceding or accompanying an application of knowledge exiled for almost half a millennium in the civilization of Arabia. The encounter with Oriental medicine today has an advantage over learning from ancient Greece and Rome eight or nine hundred years ago in that the interest is focused on a tradition that is still alive. It needs to be emphasized here, though, that “Chinese Medicine” has many facets and levels of theory and practice, and that it is simply inaccurate to assume that so-called “traditional Chinese medicine” today is a mirror image of traditional Chinese medicine as it was propagated or practiced in China centuries or millennia ago.⁸⁹

Here it is revealed that the developmental process of Chinese medicine is probably not too unlike other ancient medicinal systems. It appears that all medical corpuses, and all matters, in the history of the world develop and go through change (ongoing transition). Sometimes this process leads to advance and sometimes to eradication. Without question, all progress also bears obstacles. That seems to be out of question.

However, the claims made here by Unschuld show that Traditional Chinese Medicine today only covers a fraction of what the larger body of Chinese medicine has to offer. The content of the created concept of TCM is thus only highlighting desired elements of the ancient practices, because, on the contrary, it would presumably be impossible to sum up all-of the existing Chinese medical practices and theories in a compact manner. Thus, it becomes more obvious that it is very likely that a myth is at work here. A myth which builds on historical matters, but which rather employs fragments of the former historical foundation of the subject in order-to facilitate other means for an end.⁹⁰ One such means can be identified by analysing the mechanism of soft power, which is exercised through institutional channels in the Chinese Confucius Institutes. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

⁸⁹ Paul Unschuld, *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine*, pp. 33-34.

⁹⁰ The definition and properties of myth are comprehended here in a semiotic sense, as explained by Roland Barthes. This will be discussed thoroughly in Section 3 of this book.

2. Traditional Chinese Medicine and Culture: Political Soft Power

As China entered the global market after the opening reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping⁹¹, it had been ready for progress and required sustained economic development. Presumably, this mechanism made it necessary to move forward with all possible strength and effort. In this context, Jennifer Hubbert views the Chinese economy and the political China more like a new *source*⁹² in the globalization process than only a mere recipient. Historically, she says, "...the arrival of new global powers has brought tension and conflict"⁹³. In response to the frequent demonization of China by the United States and Europe, China had little chance to explain itself properly, she says.⁹⁴ That is why political soft power is an effective, and necessary, response to the atrocious image which others may have of China. The results of her research project, using interviews as a main source, have shown that many Confucius Institute (CI) teachers have been convinced foreigners would perceive China in a better light, if they only had the chance to really get to know China and its culture. Hubbert explains that this is also stated in a *People's Daily Article*⁹⁵ titled "China Threat Fear Countered by Culture".⁹⁶ It seems feasible to say that China's stance as a rather recently risen global player⁹⁷ is not an easy one, and, it also seems plausible to think that China, its people, and their diverse culture can only be comprehended with a profound understanding of its cultural and historical background as much as through the grasping of the interests of other political players in the global realm. Then, I argue, it is possible to grasp that when a new global player like China rises, the established global players may conjointly perceive such new entry as a big threat. Certainly, the other stakeholders don't want to lose power or money. Hence, anxiety may arise. It also is not hard to understand that today's world market is highly competitive to the extent that certain global actors will do almost anything to keep their status quo, including all kinds of storytelling (counter myths). As a result, usually, a political and economic entity is thereafter defined by its actions and the measures it chooses; internally and externally. Hubbert explains this as follows:

...the United States has historically amassed soft power through the spread of its popular culture, private technological innovation, and commercial brands, to mention a few, whereas its government-sponsored image management efforts are often re-

⁹¹ For further information, see: Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments: The Making of the Twentieth-Century Chinese State*, pp. 40.

⁹² In the sense of being highly influential, I interpret.

⁹³ Cf. Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 9.

⁹⁴ ...and in such a situation, avoiding conflict is first and foremost a smart thing to do, I argue.

⁹⁵ A newspaper belonging to the Chinese state media.

⁹⁶ See Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁷ Hubbert's work *China in the World* was published in 2019.

ceived with controversy [...]. In contrast, China's soft power endeavors are explicitly and deeply embedded within the Communist Party structures of power.⁹⁸

Hence, as much as the United States and other nations do, China employs its culture as a means of political soft-power (externally). But it also uses it as-a-means to convey its self-image to the Chinese nation itself (internally). Going along it will be shown that critique towards the actions of the Chinese government, including those of the Confucius Institutes, can be harsh. Such standpoints, however, are important to observe as they pose an integral part in the overall political discourse in which Chinese medicine is embedded. After all, the varying opinions on this subject are shaping the political discourse in China, because China does not exist in a vacuum, but in a globalized world with innumerable interactions and interdependencies with other nations. Thus, it is hypothesized that certain actions by the Chinese government are posing responses to the different notions which are maintained in the very discourse itself. To be clear, China is one player in the global net of actors, and it is compelled to compete in the capitalist system as much as any other participant.

Accordingly, the opinions of Jennifer Hubbert, which appear to reflect commonly expressed views in the West, are surely helpful to understand the realities of the context in which China finds itself in a globalized world today. In this view, Confucius Institutes have been China's most widespread and systematically planned soft power project. The organization of CIs has helped to shape China's image around the world. Many colleges worldwide applied to become hosts for Chinese Confucius Institutes, but the hosting of such Chinese cultural facilities does also hold its implications, says Hubbert. Sponsored host universities may feel pressure to self-censor their opinions on China. When professorships are sponsored by Hanban in certain Western elite colleges, these measures not infrequently have disadvantages. Hubbert writes that the common Hanban practice is to insist that the selected professors may not engage in *uncomfortable* topics about China in the Confucius classrooms.⁹⁹ Thereby, the Chinese government provides a maximum soft power impact by exerting these measures within the framework of the Confucius Institutes. She explains that at first it looks like CIs are based on philanthropic and culture-centric language programs modelled after similar programs by other nations such as France's Alliance Française, Germany's Goethe-Institutes or Spain's Instituto Cervantes. CI programs typically are targeted at children and the youth. As mentioned above, these institutes are usually embedded in host universities and colleges because that makes it

⁹⁸ Cf. Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 12.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-16.

possible to use existing infrastructures to be cost-effective and to exercise the desired influence. Strategically, the curricular and extracurricular classes of Confucius Institutes focus on language classes and traditional Chinese culture instead of discussions on political or military matters. This, writes Hubbert, is done purposely as to avoid any conflict and to provide the aspired *harmonious* image of China.¹⁰⁰ Critics, says she¹⁰¹, have expressed concerns that lessons in Confucius Institutes may mask the real intentions of the state propaganda. This kind of measure potentially changes the reception of China and possibly undermines Western academic and philosophical values.¹⁰² I agree with Hubbert that this method of procedure is somewhat strange, as thereby the Chinese state may just achieve the opposite of what it desires. It would possibly be more beneficial if free discussion would be emphasized, or at least not prohibited. This, paired with a peaceful approach in politics, would appear to be more advantageous. In my view, the dissemination of a *harmonious culture* in combination with restrictions on free discourse only intensifies the animosities which are held by critics. It may therefore be a counterproductive avenue. On the other hand, by foreclosing the free speech on certain topics in Chinese Confucius Institutes, the Chinese government achieves the goal to obscure the matter before awareness about its limitations arises. Only by raising awareness about it would young people attending CIs classes come to understand the difficulty of such a fact. Nevertheless, such tactics by means of ideology are not limited to the Chinese power discourse; they also exist in Western democracies when the ideological power discourses limit what can and cannot be said in that respective society. I argue that there is pressure to conform in any society, but surely the degree varies with different state systems, as those range from liberal democracies to autocratic or even harsher state structures.

However, the myth of TCM and the narrative of a *peaceful and harmonious* Chinese culture, it is hypothesized, are part of the CCPs strategical policy. The harmonizing of the Chinese society itself raises questions about whether-or-not the non-democratic path of the Chinese Communist Party is what one would understand as being *harmonious*. On Chinese social media, the word “harmony” is associated with the fact that it usually results in the limitation of speech, writing, and expression.¹⁰³ Likewise, the CIs can be expected to have huge influence on the Chinese diaspora. As can already be observed here, the term *harmony* is so complex that it shall therefore be discussed separately in a succeeding chapter. Although many west-

¹⁰⁰ See Jennifer Hubbert, *China in the World*, pp. 17.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Ibid, pp. 18.

¹⁰² In December 2020, such criticism had been expressed by a student group at the German University of Bonn; see Martin Wein, *Kritik am Konfuzius-Institut: Junge Liberale protestieren gegen Chinas Einfluss*.

¹⁰³ See Magnus Fiskesjö, *Who's afraid of Confucius?*, pp. 232.

erners often-times share among themselves similar ideas about what harmony means, obviously understanding China's internal processes makes it necessary to, at times, be critical about stereotypical euro-centric viewpoints, too. It will show that is so because in the same vein these views are built on ideological myths as well.

Historically, in the recent Chinese past, the doctrine, or philosophy, of Confucianism had been seen critical in China, too. This has been the case in the period after the breakdown of the last Chinese dynasty until the late Mao era. Even if Mao Zedong had done damage to the Chinese society himself, it is not surprising that he himself feared the risk of Confucius being reinstated because he apparently knew this would once more increase inequality in China. Confucius, Mao analysed, was to be seen as an arch-conservative figure much too entangled with the feudal system of ancient China. Magnus Fiskesjö, anthropologist at Cornell University (New York), writes:

His fear was that if the Confucius of the emperors was rolled out again, this would mean that his Communist-revolutionary dream had been set aside by a new ruling class seeking to build a Confucian-style, fundamentally conservative reverence for an unequal social status dressed up as "harmony."¹⁰⁴

Interestingly, the argumentation against harmony of the feudal sorts had thus been interpreted as creating unequal social stratifications and a return to somewhat unwanted feudal values. Hence, how the term harmony is perceived depends on the standpoint of each interest group or individual. As quoted above, according to Fiskesjö, Mao did detest of the Confucian kind of harmony, yet Confucius Institutes nowadays disseminate the sort of image that resembles a kind of Confucian ideal. This is quite confusing at first. The matter is complex, on the one hand, and not so difficult to understand on the other hand.

To Fiskesjö all the attempts and arguments to purport the idea of a 'harmonious Chinese culture' are simply rhetorical¹⁰⁵ and this somewhat points to - and supports - the assumption that a myth is being told. At first glance, teaching traditional culture and teaching Chinese language in Confucius Institutes easily passes for an altruistic service to the world, as would be suspected by the provision of such services by other institutes like the German Goethe Institutes or the Cervantes of Spain. It should be clear, that all those institutes aim to transfer certain knowledge, ideas, and myths – including their very own political doctrines – to the recipient. A difference, however, in Confucius Institutes is the strict ban of critical thoughts about the political system of China and its government's actions. This may hint to the fact that the

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Magnus Fiskesjö, *Who's afraid of Confucius?*, pp. 226.

¹⁰⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 234.

broader myth of a harmonious Chinese culture is employed to deflect from certain realities (as had been argued following Jennifer Hubbert above).

For David Shambaugh, this is clearly the case. He critically interprets what Xi Jinping had announced in as early as 2014. Then Xi said that China's soft power should be expanded and therefore a good narrative about the Chinese nation would be important to improve relations with the world. After all, which leader wouldn't want that for the nation? In the essay titled *China's Soft-Power Push*, David Shambaugh refers to the Chinese Scholarship Council as an institution which tries to *win the hearts and minds of exchange students*. He also ascertains the scope of how massively Hanban with its Confucius Institutes had exerted influence by the year 2015. Within the past decades (since 2004) Hanban has opened about 475 CIs operating in 120 countries worldwide. Such enormous involvement is sound investment, as these programs offer an effective way for the Chinese government to grow and cultivate relationships with up-and-coming politicians and young leaders around the world.

Through his research, Shambaugh is convinced that in all the efforts of Hanban there is one thing missing; it is the freedom of speech and concurrently the denying of political freedom in Confucius Institutes around the world as much as in China itself. Without the necessary amount of opening-up, it will be hard for the Chinese government as well as Chinese businesses to establish good relations worldwide, he says.¹⁰⁶ It can be added here that his view must certainly reflect the view of many politicians and individuals from Western nations with a so-called democratic mindset. For other nations, for example those involved in the Belt and Road Initiative in the Middle East or in Asia, this estimate may show differing results, although the BRI may hold benefits for the participators as much as it may have its disadvantages. However, to my knowledge, no country is being forced to participate in the Belt and Road program.

On the contrary to Hubbert, Fiskesjö, and Shambaugh, researchers Rana Mitter (from Oxford University) and Elsbeth Johnson (from the MIT Sloan School of Management) see the lack of western scientists and economists to sufficiently comprehend China and its political system in its profundity. To them the system is simply different from western industrialized nations, and they think that unless the West comprehends these differences, it will be hard to get into a decent rapport with China.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ See David Shambaugh, *China's Soft-Power-Push*, pp. 99-107.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China. Three Fundamental Misperceptions*.

Almost similarly to Mitter's and Johnson's understanding, Sinologist Karl Kraatz thinks that one shall not forget how China had been struggling throughout the 20th century in respect to the crisis of identity which China had been going through. His inquiry does evaluate the Chinese invention of the new Confucius ideal in an understanding manner towards the Chinese national project. To Kraatz, it had been the identity crisis which largely had been inflicted on China by the infalling western powers that caused the search for a somewhat modern Chinese identity. Highlighted here should be that the West with its semi-colonization in China certainly left deep scars in Chinese society, but also that no one can ever know whether-or-not the Chinese feudal system would have continued if the western imperial powers would have not involved themselves in actions in China. I argue that the last Chinese dynasty had been weakened at that point and the Chinese *nation*¹⁰⁸ stood at a crossroads anyway.¹⁰⁹ So, one must be careful with accusations which are too undifferentiated. This applies not only when the discussion thematizes western actions, but, as has been shown above, when all too quickly the Chinese governmental strategies are simply being deemed as bad. In my view, all parties are involved in the good and the bad. It is usually hypocritical when one actor is always deemed the foe and the other is frequently being glorified. Such argumentation shall always raise the attentiveness of the reader. Ultimately, all action of individuals or nations is interest-bound. Regarding the matter of the revival of Confucianism, it appears that although Confucian ideals had been rejected by intellectuals of the May 4th movement and intellectuals in the 1920s, the concept later had been picked up again in-order-to create a new myth. It appears the narration of the Chinese traditional Confucian thinking had been (and still is) a means to serve the re-achievement of confidence in respect to the Chinese cultural heritage and Chinese self-perception. In this sense, it might have been a countermeasure as an act to defend the Chinese cultural roots against the overwhelming influx of western ideology and in-order-to establish a new Chinese-ness after the feudal system had been abolished.¹¹⁰ The Chinese society had to reinvent itself, and it had to find a new governmental structure to govern the territory they inhabit. One could go as far as to think that the rumble and ramble throughout the first half of the 20th century simply reflects that *the Chinese* had not found their 'new Self' after feudalism

¹⁰⁸ Technically speaking, China had not been a nation in the sense of a nation-state back then.

¹⁰⁹ Either way, it has been a conflict about modernization issues in which China found itself at the time. This will become clearer to the reader over the course of this chapter.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 69-70.

had been overthrown. Accordingly, Peter Zarrow writes: “The 1911 revolution ended the dynastic system, but it led to dictatorship, warlordism and further revolution.”¹¹¹

Through the different standpoints above, one comes to understand that a lot had been going on in China’s recent past, and this past connects with the present. Certain present involvements of the Confucius Institutes must be seen critical, but it is also important to comprehend how certain convictions about China are frequently being (re-)produced.

Hereafter, the analysis of a variety of standpoints on the concept of *harmony* in China will provide a more profound understanding of Chinese philosophy as it is useful because the understanding of what *harmony* can mean, helps to produce more differentiated insights. It adds to the comprehension of why Chinese medicine is part of the greater myth of Chinese culture if the matter is approached from a constructionist¹¹² angle. For the non-constructionist thinker, however, Chinese medicine may simply remain a medicinal system based on natural herbs and practices. But, deconstructing the matter from the view of the socio-political domain, the explanation of the concept of harmony with its multiple forms of interpretation inform the reader why the grand narrative of a *harmonious Chinese society* must certainly be understood to be a myth.

3. Harmony in Philosophy and Governance

Throughout Chinese history, many different schools of thought have shaped the understanding of the concept of harmony. To comprehend the varying positions on the terminology, it helps to contemplate that probably not a single kingdom, country, or state on earth has ever had the chance to stay away from inner or outer political conflict. Consequently, it is common sense that throughout history, China most likely also had been involved in many conflicts. And it factually did. A look into a history book on China clearly proves this.¹¹³ Although it is a wonderful utopian idea, the proposition that China and its culture are *greatly harmonious* seems to be rather hard to believe; highly exaggerated, one could say. The same conclusion should be true for other countries on the planet. Especially, if those are nation states. I argue that the term nation state implies that a territory had been occupied, often by some sort of force, in-order-to claim it being a nation. And, even before nations existed, many territories

¹¹¹ Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments: The Making of the Twentieth-Century Chinese State*, pp. 29. In: *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture*, edited by Kam Louie.

¹¹² Note here the clear difference between the terms: constructionist and constructivist, which is even being confused in scientific papers. My insight comes from the quoted paper by Jacques Pollini (see bibliography).

¹¹³ For example, see: Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*.

had been occupied by tribes or kingdoms and the like. Claiming and protecting such a territory almost inevitably creates conflict with other groups at some point or another.

As will be highlighted on the following pages, a glimpse into historical events shows that all through the Warring States period and even after the Qin era, there had been many wars, conquests and territorial conflicts in the area that is today known as China. As Kurtis Hagen and Steve Coutinho put it in their book *Philosophers of the Warring States*, the views on the term harmony vary greatly depending on whether Daoists, Confucians, Mohists or Legalists interpret the matter. Here is a short excerpt:

Harmony is a fundamental goal of the pre-Qin philosophers. The Daoists strive to cultivate a harmonious spirit that is in accord with the functioning of the natural world, while the Confucians aspire after social harmony. For the Confucians, ritual propriety (*li* 禮) is the key to its achievement. A follower of Confucius, Master You, says “Of the uses of *li* 禮 (ritual propriety), producing harmony (*he* 和) is the most valuable.” He goes on to imply that harmony cannot be achieved without the guidance of ritual propriety (*Analects* 1.12). Similarly, according to Xun Zi, rituals are devised such that, by following them, “people can most reasonably live together in a harmonious (*he* 和) and unified community” (*Xun Zi* 19.9c). For Confucians, harmony doesn’t just happen. According to the *Zhong Yong*¹¹⁴, “Harmony (*he* 和) is the spreading of the way (*da dao* 達到) throughout the world (*tian xia* 天下)” (*Zhong Yong* 1). [...] In contrast, while the Mohists shared the goal of social harmony within a state, and harmony throughout the world, their understanding in practice was very different. For the Mohists harmony requires uniformity or sameness (*tong* 同). The Mohists, like the Legalists, were afraid that difference contains the potential for social disruption and so should not be tolerated. Uniformity is to be imposed from above and deviation is to be punished severely.¹¹⁵

Thus, in the period of the Warring States, there had been several competing views about the definition of harmony. Obviously, then existed the Daoist belief that harmony in the world and in nature a sort of peaceful state of the world whereas among Confucians harmony meant something more related to a societal coherence. Legalists (although very distinct in their conceptual thinking from the Mohists’) shared a few similarities with the Mohists’ as shows in the quote above.

As James D. Sellmann explains in his essay the *Hundred Schools of Thought*, there have been existing more than just the above-mentioned schools of thought. The expression of the 'hundred schools' does not mean that there had been literally a hundred schools. It rather refers to the fact that there had been a great many schools, which often differed quite a lot even

¹¹⁴ 中庸 *Zhōng Yōng* – A Chapter in the Book of Rites 禮記.

¹¹⁵ Kurtis Hagen / Steve Coutinho, *Philosophers of the Warring States: A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (keyword: *he* 和).

if they all belonged to the same branch. This is to say, that of course the thoughts of Mengzi, Xunzi or Gongsun Long all distinguished from each other although they and many others are reckoned to be followers of the Confucian school.¹¹⁶ Sellmann writes that throughout the Warring States period (475-221 BCE) “...there were a large number of diverse philosophical systems, or schools of thought, in China.”¹¹⁷ In this context, it is worth noting that during the earlier Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE) existed as many as 170 mostly small states (in the territory somewhat similar to that of today’s China) which were eventually unified through warfare and thereafter constituted seven more powerful and bigger states. This preceding status of the early China had most likely not been a very *harmonious* place.¹¹⁸ Sellmann writes:

As the kings expanded their territories, they opened new agricultural lands. The surplus food helped grow the population, and the enlarged population provided more soldiers for the warring kingdoms. The use of iron and other developments in metallurgy improved military technology. Improvements in carriages and chariots and the rise of a cavalry changed military strategy and tactics. [...] The political, social, economic, and cultural changes that accelerated during the Warring States period provided a context for new philosophies to develop. The practice of universal education, even for commoners, that Confucius 孔子 (551-479 BCE) had begun in the late Spring and Autumn period became popular during the Warring States period because of the growing need for highly trained knights, scholars, officials, and skilled craftspeople. [...] Everyone had to do his or her part for society to function properly. Most of the philosophers looked back to a past golden age to set a standard for complete and comprehensive harmony among people and with nature. Aside from these few general commonalities, for the most part the various philosophers disagreed about the means for achieving harmony and educating the ruler, ministers, and commoners.¹¹⁹

Accordingly, the methodology of the hundred schools in the Warring States period varied widely. In Sellmann’s text, he further explains how *Confucius believed that the Zhou imperial family and the feudal lords had lost the way of the former king*. Consequently, Confucius thought that *the golden age of perfect harmony* had been lost, which he sought to reinstate by means of virtue and moral education. In his view, the rites (*li* 禮) were the basis to promote the proper human kindness (*ren* 仁). All people, but especially government officials, had to demonstrate trustworthiness (*xin* 信), and they had to follow certain behavioural standards which he called rightness (*yi* 義). Further, all people under the rule of the emperor were expected to practice moral wisdom (*zhi* 智). These tenets of moral education are called the “five

¹¹⁶ Cf. James D. Sellmann, *Hundred Schools of Thought*, pp. 31.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Ibid., pp. 31.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 32.

virtues”. If everybody in the empire would follow these virtues, then the whole state would be in harmony, so Confucius believed, says Sellmann. The Legalists, on the other hand, were rather promoting a strict system of a rigid kind of law and order; a form of rule **by** law.¹²⁰

They acknowledged that society needed reform so that it could establish peace based on law and order. They argued that Confucianism and Mohism, which promoted morality over the law, were the problem because morality justified protecting special interests, not the law.¹²¹

Hence, it can be concluded that whenever certain interest groups desired to rule by law, then usually specific interests of a selected group of people must have been at stake.

As explained in the below cited entry *Legalism in Chinese Philosophy* from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the term “Legalism” itself is an afterwards designated label of an intellectual current, which is not equal with the term *fa* 法 because the latter term is much broader than the term “law”, and it also refers to other methods, standards and impersonal regulations. The word *fa jia* 法家 is not congruent with “the rule of law”. Sima Qian’s father Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 BCE) first mentioned the term in an essay about the *six schools of thought*. Therein he describes the *fa jia* methods as being very strict and without any consideration of status or kinship relations of the offender. Later texts on the subject, of which ten circulated until about a millennium ago; only two texts are still relatively intact today. Two other texts survived in fragments. One of the two oldest texts surviving almost intact is the *Book of Lord Shang* (*Shang Jun Shu* 商君書)¹²². The main protagonist in the book, *Lord Shang* had been a major reformer in the rise of the state of Qin 秦. The second surviving text is the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 which is attributed to Han Fei; a famous figure who tried to convince the imperial ruler to apply his methods, but later was put to death in custody by the King of Qin. The other fragments of texts mentioned earlier were attributed to a former chancellor called Shen Buhai of the state of Han in the book *Shenzi* 申子 and a similar sounding book by the name of *Shenzi* 慎子¹²³ which refers to another figure known as Shen Dao 慎到 (ca. 300 BCE). These are the four main surviving texts of what today is labelled Legalism.¹²⁴

Legalism with its strict implementation of laws was what followed on the collapse and disintegration of the Zhou Empire 周國 towards the end of the Spring and Autumn period (Chun-

¹²⁰ Cf. James D. Sellmann, *Hundred Schools of Thought*, pp. 32-33.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33.

¹²² Also attributed to Shang Yang (aka Gongsun Yang 公孫鞅 or Lord Shang/Lord of Shang 商君).

¹²³ Note: The two terms are pronounced phonetically different in Chinese.

¹²⁴ Cf. Yuri Pines, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy*.

qiu 春秋, 770-453 BCE). This era of struggle among political rivals and between powerful nobles, lords and aristocrats entirely destabilized the Zhou Empire.

By the fourth century BCE, a degree of re-centralization in individual polities was achieved, but interstate warfare further intensified, giving, in retrospect, the new era an ominous name: the age of the Warring States (Zhanguo 戰國), 453-221 BCE). As wars became ever bloodier and more devastating, and with no adequate diplomatic means to settle the conflicts in sight, most thinkers and statesmen came to an understanding that unity “All-under-Heaven” (*tianxia* 天下) was the only means to attain peace and stability (Pines 2000)¹²⁵. How to bring this unity about and how to “stabilize” All-under-Heaven” became the central topic addressed by competing thinkers. In the final account, the Legalists’ ability to provide the most compelling answer to this question became the singular source of their ideological appeal.

Crises and bloodshed aside, the Warring States period was also an age rife with opportunities for intellectually active individuals. It was an exceptionally dynamic period, marked by novel departures and profound changes in all walks of life. Politically, the loose aristocratic entities of the Springs-and-Autumns period were replaced by centralized and bureaucratized territorial states (Lewis 1999)^{126, 127}.

In sum, starting as early as in the end of the Zhou period, the formerly strong empire fell apart. For this reason, new modes of thinking were on the rise. This led to the increase of different schools of thought. Thus, it can be assumed that the turmoil of the time and the sociopolitical instabilities caused alterations in thought and, hence, in the political sphere. Eventually, this resulted in war and bloodshed. It is note-worthy that allegedly a great many thinkers and statesmen came to the consensus that only a mighty, strong ruler could unite “All-Under-Heaven”. As-a-consequence of these events, the necessity of a strict way of ruling and tight control over the political sphere gave rise to the Legalists. In this way, the preconditions produced the outcome.

This development offers an insight into the exact opposite of the often by the contemporary Chinese Communist government propagated *harmonious Chinese way*. Rather, traditional Chinese culture and policies in the Legalist age and the Warring States period were extremely “inharmonious” or harmony in this context must be understood as a means of unification and forceful state control. Therefore, if it is claimed that Chinese culture, especially Chinese traditional culture, is and has always been harmonious, this can hardly be believed under the scope of such close observations. But there is no substantial difference in Chinese or European his-

¹²⁵ Pines, Yuri, 2000, *The One That Pervades All' in Ancient Chinese Political thought: The Origins of 'The Great Unity' Paradigm*, In: T'oung Pao 86 (4-5): 280-324.

¹²⁶ Quoted from: Lewis, Mark E., 1999, *Warring States: Political History*, In: *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 587-650.

¹²⁷ Yuri Pines, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy: 1.2 Historical Context*.

tory when it comes to warfare and state-building, I argue. Possibly modern China is very different from China in ancient times, but this does not eliminate the fact that the referring to the 'tradition' being *harmonious* appears to be untenable.

For a deeper understanding, it will be further analysed how Confucians and Legalists differed in their views; although it should be clear by now that changing political measures and policies are usually due to the predominant development at a given time in-a-given territory. While conflicts appear to be an inherent part of human social interaction, these findings confirm the obvious in Chinese history, too. It seems to be reasonable to think that harsher state control usually followed political instability as a means of an attempt to regain 'control and order' in the territory at question. This will be in no way different in any territory controlled by whatever group or nation it may be. Such conclusion, however, does not take the potential value away from an effectiveness of Chinese medicine as it could now simply be interpreted as also not being harmonious (or useful) at all, but the above finding explains that the declaration that Chinese culture and Chinese medicine are of a very harmonious origin is probably not very correct. At least, if harmony is understood as something soft and tender or something where respective elements go hand in hand. On another account, if harmony is understood as social harmony by oppression, then it may be true that Chinese traditional culture is harmonious. To the critical audience however, if Chinese culture – including TCM – is conveyed by the Confucius Institutes as being very harmonious, it appears to simply reflect a myth. Or, at least, the narration about Traditional Chinese Medicine and the harmonious balance of its capacities seems to be contradictive.

The case of the proclaimed harmonious Traditional Chinese Medicine will therefore be discussed again after understanding in more detail how harmony must inherently always be an ideology and a common theme which provides group cohesion. Some exert it in a softer way, some exert it with a lot of force, but after all the concept of harmony always covers normative values which are being spread in a society or group in-order-to produce the desired group cohesion and possibly some sort of *social harmony*. I argue that anywhere, group cohesion always leads to neglect of individual freedom as-soon-as the rules in that given social group are rolled out too extensively. Or, simply said, in a group the individual loses freedom because in a group the individual is always bound to comply with certain rules. No matter how flat the hierarchy may be. This is also described by researchers Marcel Danesi and Paul Peron when in a social and cultural context they discuss what it means to have consensus in-a-given collective:

In a collectivity of any kind, consensus implies adherence to the norms of behavior and communication that are deemed appropriate by the collectivity as a whole. [...]. Those who do not comply with such norms risk censure, punishment, and / or marginalization. [...].¹²⁸

As-a-consequence, social conduct regarding the normative social and cultural discourse is an issue in any group or as Danesi and Perron call it: in any *collectivity*. It will be learned further below that such coercive group adherence is profoundly interwoven with the concept of harmony. Further, in the context of Legalism in early China, the author Wing-Tsit Chan writes in the *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* that Legalism had been the most radical of all ancient Chinese philosophical schools. Legalists favoured harsh punishment over the moral education that Confucians believed in. In Legalism, laws were put in place to control the populace. As stated above, compared to the Confucian world view, the Legalists did not believe that the cultivation of virtue could lead to *social harmony*. Their view was rather pessimistic, in the sense that they did not trust the human predisposition to be kind-hearted, and they therefore did not believe that moral education would suffice to guide the people. Thus, political control was the prevailing method of the Legalists. They simply didn't have the faith that people would be interested in self-cultivation.¹²⁹

Thence, Legalists relied on the implementation of laws and regulations as they tightly monitored people's compliance through an extensive bureaucracy and control mechanism. "Their strongly pronounced suspicion of scheming ministers and selfish officials was conducive to the promulgation of impersonal means of recruitment, promotion, demotion, and performance control."¹³⁰ As the afore-mentioned pessimism and lack of trust in human nature is a continuous theme in Legalism, particularly, the views of Han Feizi 韩非子 reflect a constant notion of betrayal and mistrust. In Han Feizi in Chapter 8 (Yang Quan 揚權) it says 黄帝有言曰：上下一日百戰¹³¹ which translates to:

The Yellow Emperor said: "A hundred battles a day are fought between the superior and his underlings." The underlings conceal their private [interests], trying to test the superior; the superior employs norms and measures to restrict the underlings. Hence when norms and measures are established, they are the sovereign's treasure; when the cliques and cabals are formed, they are the minister's treasure. If the minister does not murder his ruler, it is because the cliques and cabals are not formed.¹³²

¹²⁸ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures*, pp. 29.

¹²⁹ Cf. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Chapter 12: *Legalism*, pp. 251-257.

¹³⁰ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy*, 4. *Maintaining the Bureaucracy*.

¹³¹ The complete original paragraph can be found on Ctext.org, Han Feizi 韩非子, Yang Quan 揚權, Section 6.

¹³² Translation from *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy*, 5.2 *Entrapped Sovereign* but thereby cited from Chen, Qiyou 陳奇猷, *Han Feizi with new collations and commentary 韩非子新校注*, Shanghai: Guji.

Probably, whether the here offered view is cynical or realistic depends on the eye of the beholder and his or her personal experiences in life. This explanation raises the question of why political control of the society in China today is so important. According to these findings, I argue that there are at least three possible hypotheses: 1. The state and the leaders are just tyrants, 2. Former historical events and turmoil make tighter control necessary, 3. The Chinese moral and value system differs from, for example, which Christian nations in Europe are made of.

As for the tyrants, some scholars like Creel, Rubin or Fu Zhengyuan call the Legalists' "totalitarians".¹³³ In the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* it is also claimed that times of tighter and looser control are determined by the necessary actions and underlying circumstances in-a-given society. For example, after the Qin dynasty had perished, Legalism was also gradually declining. Under the reign of emperor Wu in the Han dynasty (r. 141-87 BCE), Legalism did not get fully abandoned, but it was largely replaced by Confucian ideology. Because, this was a rather superficial movement, some might say that Legalism only lost its *full* grip on state control. The fact that it re-emerged at the turn of the twentieth century shows that it possibly never had been given up completely. Or perhaps the Legalist practices were partly rehabilitated by the new generation of intellectuals because the overall societal- and political implications made stricter methods necessary again. This change then, I argue, was likely motivated by the events of the early 20th century, wherein the Chinese state proved its inability to reconstitute as a powerful state. It is possible that as a result, those harsher methods and strategies re-attracted the attention of some thinkers. Among the endorsers of a new Legalism in the Republic era, such figures like the major liberal thinker Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), the Guomindang 國民黨 leader Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 (1879-1936) or later Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) can be found.¹³⁴ Although this may sound contradictory, possibly a stronger state had then become necessary to regain control in-order-to bring the country back to flourishing. It is somewhat not surprising to hear that a figure like Mao Zedong blossomed by the consumption of Legalist ideas.

The endorsement of Legalism peaked under Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976). Mao's intellectual activism started, incidentally, with a high-school essay written in praise of Shang Yang (Schram 1992-2004, Vol. 1: 5-6)¹³⁵, and his positive view of Shang Yang and of the Qin dynasty strengthened as time passed. In the last years of Mao's life, under the infamous "anti-Confucian" campaign, Legalism was openly endorsed and

¹³³ Cf. Yuri Pines, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy*, Section 6.

¹³⁴ See *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese History*, 7. Epilogue.

¹³⁵ In: Schram Stuart R. (ed.), 1992-2004, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe).

hailed as “progressive” intellectual current both in its outlook and its historical role (Li Yu-ning 1977)¹³⁶; attempts were even made to position it as a direct predecessor of Mao Zedong’s Thought (see, e.g., Liu Zehua 2012)¹³⁷.

After Mao’s death, this grotesque politicization of Legalism discontinued. [...] Most recently, this trend is changing, and the academic community is rediscovering the richness of Legalist thought. Without excessive endorsement or disparagement, scholars can investigate this set of ideas, which was highly effective in the context of the Warring States period, but proved less applicable to other historical circumstances.¹³⁸

Hence, it can be observed that in stereo-typical Western scholars thinking, Legalism is usually affiliated with tight state control and the oppression of the people. In a way, Legalism is playing its part in the ruling of modern China as well, says Matthew H. Hurlock. He states “...that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends [the suppression of liberty, equality, and human rights in a western sense], it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it... [abolishment of the respective government].¹³⁹

Hurlock’s research presents differing insights on the state and the people in a comparison of the situation in the United States and in the People’s Republic of China. By contrasting with the 18th century Declaration of Independence in the United States of America, he assesses that there is no such constituting paper to secure the natural and human rights of the people in China. In the Chinese constitution, the interests of the state and the collective are assumed to be more important than those of the individual. Since this is not the case in the United States of America, the function of the law in China is largely different to that of the U.S. (or other democracies¹⁴⁰). But as shows shortly, traditionally, in China, the role of the family and the collective are of far greater importance than that of the individual. Consequently, the individual has-to obey a whole variety of measures which bring good to the collective. Although there were numerous changes and adjustments over the centuries and millennia in the Chinese law system, the basic concept of the relationship between the family and the state stayed much the same, as the following explanation by Hurlock’s and Dutton’s shows.

This relational scheme only slowly started to change since the Western influence in China increased after the Opium Wars (1839-42). The Western powers tried to modify the Chinese law system, as it did not match their own understanding of law and order. But restructuring the Chinese law mostly failed because the western concepts structurally conflicted with the

¹³⁶ In: Li Yu-Ning, (ed.), 1977, *Shang Yang’s Reforms and State Control in China* (White Plains, NY: Sharpe).

¹³⁷ In: Liu Zehua 劉澤華, (ed.), 1996, *Zhongguo Zhengzhi Sixiang Shi* 中國政治思想史 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, Vol. 3).

¹³⁸ Yuri Pines, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Legalism in Chinese Philosophy, 7. Epilogue*.

¹³⁹ Matthew H. Hurlock, *Social Harmony and Individual Rights in China*, pp. 1318.

¹⁴⁰ My additional note: Of course, all democracies differ greatly in form and function as well.

Chinese ideas of state, law and family.¹⁴¹ Hurlock describes this as follows: “However, Western penal concepts that focused primarily on policing and reform of the individual failed to take root, because this conflicted with Chinese perception of the family as the basic social and disciplinary unit.”¹⁴² As a consequence, all Western attempts except one failed to drastically alter the Chinese understanding of the law. It was due to the “...Marxist ideas, imported by the Chinese Communist Party, [which] provide[d] the only example of Western ideas that have had a sustained influence on the traditional Chinese concept of the individual subject.”¹⁴³ Hurlock’s argumentation builds on Michael Dutton’s¹⁴⁴ observation that the Chinese Communist Party had been successful in transmuting certain former Confucian beliefs by embedding them in the Marxist ideology. Hurlock writes:

Dutton argues [...] that the Communist Party’s success lay in its ability to bend China’s traditional collectivist notions to serve the imported Soviet ideas of the collective. The fundamental philosophical change was away from the idea of the “worthy” person as one who adhered to traditional Confucian values, and towards ideas of laborers as the privileged group and of the person as a part of the centralized socialist economic plan.¹⁴⁵

In brief, the old Confucian narrative had been partly replaced with a new narrative whereby the latter had been attached to core values of the traditional Chinese society. A new narrative which reinterpreted existing values in-order-to fit a new era and a new political regime had been created. The conceptual bond to keep society together was thus altered but stayed somewhat the same.

Delia Lin, a researcher of Political Culture at the University of Adelaide, also states, how according to Donald Munro and partly to the Historian Qin Hui China’s political system had been altered with the emergence of the Communist state. She writes:

In his seminal work on the concept of man in traditional and contemporary China, Donald Munro sees much convergence between the Chinese Marxist and Confucianist understandings of the malleability of the social nature of humans.¹⁴⁶ The remodeling and reshaping of a new socialist person has not, however, been free from punitive measures. Reflecting the Legalist strategy of social control, the Party’s civilizing campaigns have always coupled the idea of granting rewards for compliance with exerting harsh punishment for transgressions. Historian Qin Hui argues that, if imperial society in China was Confucian on the surface and Legalist at the core (*rubiao falì*), contem-

¹⁴¹ See Matthew H. Hurlock, *Social Harmony and Individual Rights in China*, pp. 1321-23.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 1323.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1324.

¹⁴⁴ In: Michael R. Dutton, *Policing and Punishment in China*, pp. 351 (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1992).

¹⁴⁵ Matthew H. Hurlock, *Social Harmony and Individual Rights in China*, pp. 1324-25.

¹⁴⁶ Munro, Donald J. (1971) *The Malleability of Man in Chinese Marxism*, No. 48, *The China Quarterly* 609-40.

porary society can be seen as Marxist on the surface and Legalist at the core (*mabiao fali*).¹⁴⁷ Qin points out that, although the moral and ideological principles may have shifted from a Confucianist to Marxist paradigm, the subordination of the individual, to filial obedience in imperial times and to the nation under socialist rule, remains unchanged.¹⁴⁸

Thus, while on the surface Chinese governments have long left the feudal methods of ruling, it appears that the fundamentally underlying power-structures in China are still relying on very similar principles like those of the past. As can be noted, concerning the concept of **harmony**, there are multiple ways to discuss the matter. The term harmony must always be debated in its proper context. Hurlock emphasizes that in Chinese society, harmony of the collective was historically preferred over the individual rights.¹⁴⁹ This helps to understand the historical focus all through the imperial dynasties on the maintenance of the concept of *social harmony*. 'Social harmony' in China usually means that social order is always preferred over protecting individual rights.¹⁵⁰ In authoritarian regimes, this often seems to be the case in-order-to maintain the authoritarian state's legitimation and to keep people in check. For Hurlock, individual rights will never have a "...secure basis for protection in China until they are given priority over the needs of the state".¹⁵¹ Whether, on the one hand, social harmony or, on the other hand, individual rights have priority is therefore a matter of how the law in a respective country is applied. As far as could be shown here, most laws and regulations in China are instruments to correct occurring disturbances on the desired harmony. Hence, traditional Chinese legal culture and the Western concept of legal culture are very different at their core.¹⁵² It therefore appears to be somewhat ignorant if Western scholars and politicians request that the Western ideology must be applied to China because the whole process of change in a society requires a comprehensive developmental process towards new sets of ideas. For now, such alteration has not taken place in China, I argue. Of course, this view is somewhat debatable, but after all, what collides here are firstly two different ideologies, and two different concepts of state governance.

¹⁴⁷ Qin, Hui (2015), *Zouchu Dizhi: Cong wan Qing dao Minguo de Lishi huiwang* 走出帝制: 从晚清到民国的历史回望, [Out of the Imperial Institution: A Historical Retrospective of Late-Qing to the Republic], Beijing: Qunyan Press.

¹⁴⁸ Delia Lin, *Creating a Virtuous Leviathan: The Party, Law, and Socialist Core Values*, pp. 50.

¹⁴⁹ See Matthew H. Hurlock, *Social Harmony and Individual Rights in China*, pp. 1327.

¹⁵⁰ He here mentions the example of the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989. The mentions by Hurlock refer to modern-day China, they are not thematizing earlier accounts of different Confucianist approaches like those of Mencius.

¹⁵¹ Matthew H. Hurlock, *Social Harmony and Individual Rights in China*, pp. 1327.

¹⁵² See *Ibid.*, pp. 1327-29.

4. Cosmological Harmony, State Governance, and Chinese Medicine

Hence, the concept of harmony is a complex matter. The individual's value system may greatly differ from the normative discourse, depending on a subject's socialization, and this is not necessarily a bad thing. One's comprehension of terminologies may be dependent on such factors as the societal, ethical, educational and many other influences which affect the formation of the derivation of the personal definition of a matter. So, while every person has his or her own opinions, these opinions are very likely influenced by the group. As Martin P.J. Edwardes writes in *The Origins of Self* "...the anthropological approach [to this subject] both starts and finishes with the group. The self needs to be seen as a socially defined phenomenon, created by both the impression of the group upon the individual and the expression of the individual upon the group."¹⁵³ However, although individuals also play their part in shaping the group, the focus here will firstly lay on the role of the group, the collectivity or the state on the individual. After all, such socio-political structures shape the degree of harmony within a given society.

Looking into the ancient past of China, Paul Unschuld comes-to-a-conclusion which I sum up as follows: The decline of the Zhou dynasty, in what is often referred to as the starting point to the Warring States period, and the rise of the Qin as much as the later Han brought about a new worldview. It can be hypothesized, says Unschuld, that the creation of increasingly complex state structures consequently led to new forms of government. He writes that "an increasingly complex bureaucracy served as the necessary mediator between the interests of the sovereign and his people."¹⁵⁴ This, on the other hand, had an impact on different groups negotiating about the most suitable form of state philosophy as well. The matter at stake was not only a philosophical matter but also a question of law and order through governance. According to Unschuld, opposing the above-highlighted Legalist/Confucianist scheme, at the end of the Zhou era, there were two major groups in a clinch about the proper ways of governance.

The two groups whose interests were at stake were the Legalists and, in their footsteps at the end of the Zhou era and in the early Han period, the proponents of Huang-Lao philosophy.¹⁵⁵

Here, Unschuld points to the fact that when turning to Daoist thinking, the term harmony may unambiguously be understood in the way that harmony is determined by a rather mystic view of how nature and society are being balanced by the ruler. As a result, even this mysticism

¹⁵³ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self*, pp. 27.

¹⁵⁴ Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 325.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 325.

appears to be an instrument of ruling, as it poses yet another form of ideological doctrine. It may then be understood that the assumed thinking that the Daoist doctrine is everything, but state control, is wrong. As Horst Helle writes in his Book, *China: Promise or Threat? – A Comparison of Cultures*:

The book [the *Daodejing*] had an effect on the evolution of government and law in China because it is designed to guide the behavior of a ruler. The king or emperor is advised in the text to govern in a way that makes his rule as unnoticeable as possible.

That ruler was encompassed with an aura that imposed upon the king or emperor abstinence from action. At the same time, it nourished the expectation that the man in charge of the country, by mastering the correct cosmology, could act as priest, guaranteeing harmony in nature and society. This emphasized the religious overtones of government: The ruler's adherence to the instructions and admonitions of the *Tao-te ching* had the potential of making him the guardian of the equilibrium of the universe which was to subject itself in obedience of his priestly person.¹⁵⁶

As the ruler in Daoism, in the sense of the *Daodejing*, would have to mediate the luck of his worldly subjects, harmony was a very complex and rather mystic concept relying on the interaction of principles like Yin and Yang 阴阳. As is widely known, the most significant term in Daoism is probably the word Dao 道 – the way¹⁵⁷. The Daoist system must therefore be comprehended as a sort of religious system of governance, which could be categorized being a subordinate ideological system. Contextually, James Miller writes that "...Daoism has, from its inceptions, functioned as a powerful dissonant note in China's complex civilizational history, and as an alternative to Confucianism's dominance in state politics."¹⁵⁸

In accordance with the Daoist way, many interpretations and views of the latter can be found. The term Dao is indeed subject to countless books and an inestimable number of scientific research studies. However, what is called Daoism today covers various categories, such as the Medicinal School, the Daoist School of thought, and the religious branch of Daoism. Naturally, at the time of its formation, it was not called 'Daoist'. As Cheng Lesong writes, the Daoist belief system has had a very long and complex history of forming and developing its specific views. It neither exists of a single school of thought, nor can it be tied to one isolated theme. It is the result of the integration of various fusions and interactions of folk beliefs and has deep roots in ancient Chinese thought and life.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, discussing statements from the *Daodejing* 道德经 or referring to schemes deeply embedded in religious Daoism is always a very extensive endeavour. The accounts given here must thus be somewhat limited in scope.

¹⁵⁶ Horst Helle, *China: Promise or Threat? A Comparison of Cultures*, pp. 73-74.

¹⁵⁷ or the *method*.

¹⁵⁸ James Miller, *China's Green Religion*, Introduction, pp. XVIII.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Cheng Lesong, *The Symbolism of the Body in Daoism*, pp. 54-59.

In citing Catherine Despoux, Cheng Lesong states that in religious Daoism the human body and the world existing outside the individual are believed to be interconnected in a 'micro-macro' cosmos related system.

According to Daoist belief, the human body is a small universe correlating with the 'big' one. It is a world with rich imageries of both natural scenes and mythic paradise. Various parts of the body are necessary venues for practicing internal alchemy. [...] The human body is often likened to the universe, so that there is the distinction between the small and great universe. [From Catherine Despoux, *Xiu Zhen Tu: Daojiao yu Renti* 《修真图》: 道教与人体, pp.2, pp. 72, 2012]¹⁶⁰

Following such a statement, *harmony* in religious Daoism depends on the human and the body in correlation to the greater sphere of the universe. This can be noted in the theory of *Zangxiang* 藏象, the doctrine of the hidden inner properties and their external manifestations, as well:

In the theory of *zang xiang* (visceral and their manifestations, i.e. the heart is the monarch-like organ, the spleen is an granary-like organ, the liver is a general-like organ, the gallbladder is a judge-like organ), for example, the functions of the viscera are compared to the system of the court.¹⁶¹

Like stated above by Miller, Cheng also elaborates that evidence hints at the fact that Daoism in ancient China had many political implications, as it reflected opposition to the existing authority and government of the time. With the uprising of the Qin, as stated in the entry “Daoism” in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Legalist thought and Huang-Lao thought increased in popularity. By the time of the Han dynasty, intellectuals began reconstructing past classical history by calling Daoism, which, in fact, must have contained the content of Huang-Lao thought. In the Han era, Confucianism became the official state philosophy, but after four centuries of Confucian dominance, a change occurred with the decline of the Han. Because intellectuals were thirsting for new intellectual ideas, they turned to Lao-Zhuang (Laozi/Zhuangzi) thought. This movement is now identified as Neo-Daoism. It furthermore overlapped with the integration and introduction of Buddhism to China. The latter formed Chan Buddhism.¹⁶²

The term *harmony* therefore must be carefully examined in the light of whether it poses a construct of somewhat metaphysical (i.e., religious) ideas, or whether it is a construct of a political agenda. Conclusively, the thus far accumulated knowledge reveals that all-of these concepts of harmony have a political component. Throughout history, harmony is thus often a

¹⁶⁰ Cheng Lesong, *The Symbolism of the Body in Daoism*, pp. 67.

¹⁶¹ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 8.

¹⁶² Cf. Chad Hansen, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Daoism: 1. The Definition of “Daoism”*.

terminology containing tools to produce a certain sociopolitical order. Broadly speaking, in Huang-Lao thought, the governing structures are based on natural law. Natural law is different from positive law, as well as it is different to the rule of law. Following Peerenboom, natural law, though it has been discovered by humans, is apparently not determined by human order. Natural law is not dependent on context, it is rather universal and immutable, it does not connect to specific beliefs, customs, or social institutions. A major work, the *Huang-Lao Boshu* 黄老帛书 extending on the natural law of Huang-Lao philosophy, is built on an extensive cosmology. The *Way* (Dao) is therein achieved by following the natural laws and the natural order.¹⁶³ Consequently, therein human behaviour shall follow the principles of the natural law, as is expounded in the following statement: “To be productive during three seasons and to harvest and execute during one season is the way of heaven and earth.”¹⁶⁴ Obviously, here one shall follow the order of nature, which the human being cannot change unless nature is manipulated and overruled by force; as can be observed all over the globe today. However, the portrait of nature in the *Boshu* is one of constancy¹⁶⁵. Huang-Lao thought, of course, is propounded by various writers such as Shen Dao or Shen Buhai – and is hence as much multilayered as any other school of thought. Therefore, although the author of the *Boshu* has been pounding on the natural law in such way as Peerenboom writes that “[t]he skeletal ideal expressed here that the government must comply with the forces of nature is later fleshed out in terms of yin and yang”¹⁶⁶. Thereafter, Peerenboom does also inflict the narrative of “natural law” with political motives, such as the nobility being higher up in the hierarchy than the ordinary people, which consequently uncovers the real motifs of the so-called natural order. See quote below:

One point which has not been given the attention that it deserves, however, is the way in which foundational naturalism, as a metaphysics of a predetermined, single order, coincides with and lends support to political agenda of many philosophers of the period from the late Warring States to the early Han. Perhaps the author, in an effort to buttress his political theory calling for a unified empire headed by a single ruler, turned to a metaphysics which would provide the foundation for such a view. At the very least, his foundational naturalism proves very convenient in supporting the newly arisen landowners’ attempts to justify the class differences inherent in his hierarchical and centralized feudal system. As he puts it, “Heaven and earth have their constant norms; ...the nobility and the lowly have their constant positions.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Cf. R. P. Peerenboom, *Natural Law in the “Huang-Lao Boshu”*, pp. 315.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 316.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Thus, recurring themes connected to the various interpretations of *harmony* are political motifs of certain actors in-a-given society which are laying the basis for whole cosmologies; or they take advantage of them. Deconstructing such themes and myths therefore sheds light on the understanding of inherent intentions. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand from which stance a given philosophy, medical text or law-making standpoint is coming. As Paul Unschuld explains in his analyses of the *Huangdi Neijing Suwen*, specific law-maker's terms like

Fa and *ze*, "laws" and "rules", are mainstays of Legalism and Huang-Lao philosophy. In other words, if medicine is to be practiced in a way that relieves people of its ailments, its practitioners had better follow the same precepts that the Legalist and Huang-Lao worldview had prescribed for society.¹⁶⁸

As a result, I argue, all human actions contain political motifs. This applies to the behaviour of the individual, the group, or the state.¹⁶⁹ When debating about *motifs*, it is also of importance to grasp the usually existing necessities underlying such processes. Hence, it is easy to comprehend the statement that "...Confucianism, like all other social philosophies conceptualized in ancient China, had emerged during a period of increasing social disorder."¹⁷⁰

Still, this should be understood in a differentiated kind of manner. Nathan Sivin argues that the shaping of state structures, even though one may be tempted to simply imagine a ruthless ruler in need for oppressive measures to maltreat his subjects, may be too reductionist in its own-right. Sivin writes: "The link was a great deal more than a simple causal relationship. Cosmology was not a mere reflection of politics. Cosmos, body, and state were shaped in a single process, as-a-result of changing circumstances that the new ideas in turn shaped."¹⁷¹ In the third century B.C., Sivin says, "...intellectuals bound the structure of heaven and earth, and that of the human body, to that of the state. This was not unprecedented in China, but now the links were made systematic and tight."¹⁷² Political authorities then were concerned with the effectiveness of the state and sought to bind the microcosms and the macrocosms in a resonant system in which the emperor functioned as an indispensable mediator. Throughout the millennia the functions of the Chinese government changed as did its size and the ruling dynasties. The concept of the 'Son of Heaven' outlasted all through the period of the existence of imperial rulers, and the common feudal structures and rules made opposition to the ruler im-

¹⁶⁸ Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 344.

¹⁶⁹ If goal-oriented social interactions are comprehended as political action.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen*, pp. 345.

¹⁷¹ Nathan Sivin, *State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.*, pp. 7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 7.

possible. Questioning the ruler necessarily resulted in severe punishment. Heaven - the macrocosm - became the basis for policymaking, as it expedited social organization and norms of personal conduct.¹⁷³ Hereby, one comes to understand the link to the medical field again. The human body, on the other hand, "...was not only an ensemble of functions, but it posed the respective microcosm."¹⁷⁴ As explained below, the dysfunction of the body was equivalent to dysfunction in society or in the political world; clearly interpreted as disorder. By these means, body, and cosmos were comprehended to be part of the greater cosmic rhythm of heaven and earth, which had to be harmonized. The harmonization of the body and the state were accordingly related to each other and thus mentioned in a correlating context, like for example in the following passage of the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Lushi Chunqiu* 吕氏春秋):

Human beings have 360 joints, nine body openings, and five yin and six yang systems of function. In the flesh tightness is desirable; in the blood vessels (*hsueh mai* 血脉) free flow is desirable; in the sinews and bones solidity is desirable; in the operations of the heart and mind harmony is desirable; in the essential *ch'i* regular motion is desirable. When [these desiderata] are realized, illness has nowhere to abide, and there is nothing from which pathology can develop. When illness lasts and pathology develops, it is because the essential *ch'i* has become static.

Analogously, water when stagnant becomes foul; a tree when [the circulation of their *ch'i* is] stagnant becomes worm-eaten; grasses when [the circulation of their *ch'i* is] stagnant becomes withered.

States too have their stases. When the ruler's virtue does not flow freely [i.e., when he is out of touch with his subjects], and the wishes of the people do not reach him, this is the stasis of the state. When the stasis of a state abides for a long time, a hundred pathologies arise in concert, and a myriad catastrophes swarm in. The cruelty of those above and those below toward each other arises from this. The reason that the sage kings valued heroic retainers and faithful ministers is that they dared to speak directly, breaking through such stases.¹⁷⁵

As shows in the paragraph above, in the respective era, governance, and the governments' relation with the people as well as the sickness in the physical body both were viewed as following similar structural paradigms. The scheme of body functions and state bureaucracy accordingly had to follow certain uniform principles to achieve *harmony*. Thus, it can be said that neither the state nor the body relied on mystic principles, but on patterns of systematic procedures. However, the last sentence of this paragraph also shows that possibly criticism addressed at the ruler had been possible at some point, as it might have helped to prevent further disorder. Therefore, it appears that flatter hierarchies often produced more equality and

¹⁷³ Cf. Nathan Sivin, *State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.*, pp. 9-14.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Lüshi Chunqiu in Chen Ch'i-yu quoted from Nathan Sivin, *State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.*, pp. 21.

possibly another sort of harmony. In any way, Sivin's analysis continues to focus on the political aspects of the link between the physical body and the state structures.

By quoting Judith Farquhar, Sivin writes that the model of "...yin-yang is a clarifying model"¹⁷⁶. It had also been a matter of great prestige for medical writers in ancient China if the content of their writings had been in accord with the respective state doctrine. Sivin furthermore explains that the body became the microcosm because in the "...main-stream of political philosophy in the first century B.C., the authors, physicians and presumably not officials, found quite relevant the symbology of empire already prominent in general writings."¹⁷⁷ The language of yin-yang, the five phases, and other such specific terminology most likely later provided the basis for more sophisticated changes in the conceptional understanding of the somatic body. While officials in ancient China, writes Sivin, were usually rather non-confrontational in the royal court, officials instead valued and emphasized a certain degree of consensus.¹⁷⁸ This, I conclude, appears to support the assumption that the usage of the political doctrine in the understanding of medical matters had simply been a sort of making it up to the political *Zeitgeist* which either helped the respective authors to gain respect by the state, or it may have, on the other hand, protected them from aggression (punishment) by the ruler. Further on, as the unsteady Warring States continued, Legalism reached its climax. From 475 to 221 B.C. the *Fa Jia* 法家, a near-totalitarian regime, sought "...social control based on the principles of *fa* 法 (law), *shu* 术 (management), and *shi* 势 (power)."¹⁷⁹ Employing these measures, the ruler had been able to dominate the people through harsh penal law. Each-and-every person, even the highest ministers, were subject to this law, except the ruler himself. The so-called 'two-handles' of government had been built on reward and punishment, rewarding desired behaviour, and punishing unwanted conduct. In-order-to maintain the power of the ruler, especially ministers and officials were monitored tightly because they frequently posed a certain risk for deceit and usurpation. Mass surveillance, mutual social observation and reporting enhanced the level of control over the people. Under Qin Shi Huang, who unified the Warring States and founded the Qin dynasty - and though his reign did not last long-term - Legalism lay the basis and later merged with Confucianism. This had a persisting impact in Imperial China for centuries to come.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Nathan Sivin, *State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.*, pp. 26

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 30.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-37.

¹⁷⁹ Samuel J. Parsons, *Legalism and Social Credit System*, pp. 74.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 75.

In stark contrast to the legalist control system Wai Wai Chiu analyses - quoting Chenyang Li – that the Confucian way to generate harmony is sometimes not far off from the Daoist approach, he writes:

...at least for those Confucians whose view on *xing* is similar to Mencius, *wuwei*¹⁸¹ is both natural and moral, a smooth process of self-actualization and social harmonization. This makes them very close to Li's Daoists, who harmonize with the world rather than harmonizing the world.¹⁸²

Hence, as explained in the essay of Wai Wai Chiu, in Confucian philosophy the weaving of a harmonious world is rather depending on the right behaviour, moral code, and the right action to achieve such circumstances. In Chiu's essay, the view of the Confucians is generally contrasted by the Daoist view, in which apparently humans are not so actively engaged to 'change' the world. By such statement, it is not claimed that Daoists are mostly inactive or passive. The above voiced opinion is rather that following the social order, or the natural order, delivers different consequences for either mainstream Confucians or Daoists.¹⁸³ Chiu explains this as follows:

The difference lies in whether one acts, or guides others to act, by taking morality seriously and devotedly. This does not mean that Daoists reject morality and Confucians embrace it. Rather, Daoists allow the existence of morality if it happens to coincide with spontaneity, yet Confucians only use spontaneity as a means to actualize morality. At the practical level, sometimes they may yield the same guidance while at other times there is disagreement about the importance of *li* 禮. However, if one can always act morally and spontaneously, one can simultaneously exist as Confucian and Daoist.¹⁸⁴

Even if Chiu criticizes Li substantially throughout his essay, and even if he does have doubt that certain models proposed by Li are doomed to being unrealistic, he agrees that the 'merging of ideas from different schools' would be desirable.¹⁸⁵

In brief, Li exalts Confucian values in various ways. Insofar, observing Li's outlook on Confucianism and its historical role throughout Chinese history may be overly positive but at the same time, and that's where Chiu appears to agree, harmonization can possibly be understood as a dynamic process instead of mere suppression of other value systems and ideas. This is

¹⁸¹ Sinologist Volker Klöpsch translates *wuwei* as not interfering with the natural way of things (»nicht in den natürlichen Lauf der Dinge eingreifen«), Cf. Volker Klöpsch, *Sunzi, Die Kunst des Krieges*, pp. 117.

¹⁸² Wai Wai Chiu, *A Comment on Chenyang Li's "The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony"*, pp. 243.

¹⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 241.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 243.

¹⁸⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 244.

how the oppressive notion of the above-mentioned negative outlook on harmonization processes can be interpreted in a more positive light.

When Li asserts that *he* 和 (harmony, harmonization) has its origin in traditional Chinese philosophy, he comes a long way from the earliest Confucian texts dating back to the Shang and Zhou Dynasty (Shang Dynasty: 16th to 11th century B.C. and Zhou Dynasty: 1066 to 256 B.C.). Many appearances of the term *he*, therein, point to harmonious responses or sounds of i.e., birds and songs by the people. He writes, »...in the *Yijing* 易經 [it is stated], “A crane sings in the woods and its young respond (*he*) to it” (鶴鳴在陰, 其子和之)«. ¹⁸⁶ The response of the offspring, so he explains, can therefore not just be any kind of response, but to call it harmonious it must be in tune with the parental bird. Li offers similar examples from the same book, which is also called *Zhouyi* 周易, and from the Analects (*Lunyu* 論語). He sums up that “...*he* as harmony comes from the rhythmic interplay of various sounds, either in nature or between human beings, that is musical to the human ear, and that the prototype of *he* is found in music.” ¹⁸⁷ From there he moves on to claim that analogous to those findings, this would be the foundation of harmony in a more general view. But, noteworthy in his claim is the emphasis on the fact that harmonizing the people and the state by Confucian means can never be mere state control or oppression, as had been the case with the legalist methods. Diversity and different value systems are part of real harmony, he thinks. The main distinctions he uses here are lucidly explained with a differentiation made by using the arguments of the scholar *Yan Zi* 晏子 (*Zuozhuan Shaogong* 20 昭公二十年), in the 'cooking soup analogy'. The focus in this story is put on the balancing of various flavours in the preparation of a soup. Contextually, the demarcation of harmony and sameness (*tong* 同) is one of paramount importance. Where sameness would result in a no-tolerance scheme, harmony must rather be comprehended as a sort of compromise. His claim is that the concept of harmony comes closer to the necessity of analogously blending and balancing different ingredients in a soup in-order-to achieve a *harmonious* result. Therefore, the right amount of each ingredient and flavour is crucial, otherwise the soup becomes tasteless or unpalatable. Going along with this assertion, one can therefore not simply take the same amount of each ingredient and then think that this is harmonious. When moving the subject to the political realm, simply giving the same to every individual may not lead to the desired result of harmony and fairness. ¹⁸⁸ In this context, the question could be raised whether equal pay at work would create equality among workers?

¹⁸⁶ Chenyang Li, *The Confucian Ideal of Harmony*, pp. 583.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 584.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 584-586.

Well, I argue, most probably not because in such manner the lazy and the poor would get the same, and educational levels would not matter either. This then reveals that pursuing sameness is rather inappropriate when aiming for harmony.

Accordingly, Li further elaborates on Mencius and Xunzi, and proceeds, saying, that the ideal of a harmonious society is one of harmonious coexistence. An 'over-presence of sameness', as he calls it, will inevitably cause conflict.¹⁸⁹ He writes:

Ancient scholars emphasize the difference between harmony and sameness because people often confuse them, taking mere sameness as harmony. Strictly speaking, the over-presence of sameness is a lack of harmony, and is therefore a kind of disharmony.¹⁹⁰

Similarly, Li propagates that harmony in the Confucian sense is a dynamic process, which necessarily includes stages of disharmony. Long-term harmony may thus be the outcome of balancing different ideas and values. If such negotiation is not attempted, the result will be a recurring dispute between different actors or groups. By building on Mencius' idea of the 'goodness of human nature', Li asserts: "Therefore, harmonization, rather than elimination, should be the primary consideration in dealing with problems in the world."¹⁹¹ Correspondingly, harmonization is a process of **minimizing conflicts between actors**, a process of compromise, and the product of faith in the ideal of harmony.¹⁹² Here, certainly, it is worthy to add that China has got 56 different ethnic groups. It obviously is a major task to *harmonize* such huge amount of diverging cultural groups. Which is why later, in Section 3 of this book, a more profound discussion about culture will follow in-order-to understand why the created *Chinese-ness* – of which Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Chinese culture are an integral part – is so important to the current Chinese nation.

The 'Harmonious Confucian World', as Li calls it, can only be built on value pluralism. The elementary truth behind this is the manifold diversity of the understanding of the idiom harmony itself, says he.¹⁹³ » **It is possible that what is called "harmony" by one person may be disguised oppression to another.** «¹⁹⁴ Further, Li is also aware that the Confucian concept of harmony is not the ultimate measure to overcome every problem in this world, but he thinks that the distribution of value pluralism and the consequential balancing of such variety

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Chenyang Li, *The Confucian Ideal of Harmony*, pp. 586-591.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 591.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 595.

¹⁹² For the claims in this paragraph: Cf. Chenyang Li, *The Confucian Ideal of Harmony*, pp. 594-595.

¹⁹³ Cf. Chenyang Li, *The Confucian Ideal of Harmony*, pp. 596.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 596.

of values as much as tensions between different individuals and cultures may reach a level where the proclaimed harmony can be achieved. Then, while diverging value systems often each have their own legitimacy, it is likely that each has its own strengths and weaknesses. Mutual adjustment and mutual accommodation are the solution to such issues, says Li. Accordingly, to understand harmony, Li propagates the Confucian Model, which poses stark contrast to how Samuel Huntington's "Clash of the Civilizations" model interprets the interaction of different cultures. Huntington predominantly points to potential conflict between various cultures and value systems. Resultantly, Li thinks that in Huntington's mind, clashes inevitably lead to destructive ends.¹⁹⁵ Li, on the other hand, thinks: »The question is whether "clashing" is the solution or an inevitable outcome of conflict.«¹⁹⁶ Although Li admits that such clashes between cultures and different interest groups must inevitably occur, he believes in the potential which such clashes offer instead of mere destructive and bad results. Eliminating an enemy, on the other hand, is hence not the type of action which Confucianism is aiming for, says he, but he acknowledges that certainly, sometimes clashes or wars are inevitable. He concludes this standpoint as follows:

Harmonization requires action and resolve to overcome disharmonious elements in the world. However, you must understand that in the long run, the best life is one that is lived in harmony and peace. Therefore, you should avoid doing extreme things that create or perpetuate your enemy, and even when you engage in fighting with your enemy, you should try to turn conflict into harmony. In other words, one should maintain a harmony mentality rather than the combatant mentality. The *Zhouli* "Dongguan" 冬官 states that "harmony results in peace" (和则安). Peace cannot be obtained and maintained without harmony. Temporary peace through oppression and suppression is not real peace, and it does not last. In order to achieve real peace and to maintain peace throughout the world, we would do well to learn from the Confucian ideal of harmony.¹⁹⁷

While peace and harmony in such thinking are a virtue's objective, the present reality is still far away from it. Samuel J. Parson points out that recent development in China is worrying in the sense that...

President Xi Jinping makes frequent references to legalist writers in his speeches and books, as well as to the legalist notions of 'wealth and power' 富强 and the 'rule of/by law' 法家, which the eighteenth Party Congress in 2012 listed as Core Socialist Values 社会主义核心价值观.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Chenyang Li, *The Confucian Ideal of Harmony*, pp. 599-600.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 600.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Samuel J. Parson, *Legalism and Social Credit System*, pp. 77.

As-a-consequence, I argue that the rise of China as a global powerhouse is increasingly perceived as a threat to other global actors. This is not a new development, as the above quoted statement shows. In the article *The Rise of China: Challenges, Implications, and Options for the United States* the author Nguyen Thi Thuy Hang argues that China is certainly perceived as a rising force which substantially challenges the current U.S. hegemony.¹⁹⁹ China has grown rapidly, and it has become a powerful actor in world economics and politics; this cannot be ignored. Discourses in the field of Political Science have long existed on this matter; and conclusions to future scenarios are manifold. The conclusion made by Hguyen Thi Thuy Hang emphasizes the fact that "...China's constructive integration into the global economy has led to closer interdependence between the United States and China."²⁰⁰

As William A. Callahan investigates in his essay *Chinese Exceptionalism and Politics of History*, authors like Yuan-Kang Wang (*Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics. New York: Columbia University Press*), David C. Kang (*China Rising Peace Power and Order in East Asia. New York: Columbia University Press*) or Martin Jacques (*When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order. New York: Penguin*) are offering interpretations of how, on the global level, China will behave in the future. Building on past events from the Song and Ming Dynasty, Callahan by no means predicts a peaceful rise of China whatsoever. In quoting Yuan-Kang Wang, he writes: "While many look to a peaceful past, Wang charts a history of violence and conflict."²⁰¹ The other books explain, says Callahan, that many of the facts presented by Wang are not wrong, but to Callahan they are posing a distorted interpretation. Such approach, according to Callahan, was built on the lack of proper distinction between Confucian pacifism and Realist power politics.²⁰²

Historically, China had long been a superpower. Although formerly stricken by Western powers, up until the Mao era, China still requested tribute from countries like Thailand. From 1953 to 1956 the Chinese People's Liberation Army invaded and occupied Burma. Though the latter was related to the Guomindang forces fleeing to Burma and the Burmese Communist Party asking for support against the insurgency, Mao Zedong still made clear that if Burma would not implement Communist values, then they would be seen as an enemy to the

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Nguyen Thi Thuy Hang, *The Rise of China: Challenges, Implications, and Options for the United States*, pp. 59.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59.

²⁰¹ William A. Callahan, *Chinese Exceptionalism and Politics of History*, pp.43.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp.44.

Communist cause. The either *friend or foe* dichotomy of his 'anti-imperialist' campaign had been a coercive tactic which was not unique to the Maoist regime, but rather had been exerted by Chinese dynasties before and consequently affected many East Asian kingdoms in the past. In imperial China, many neighbouring countries of China merely had the status of vassals – or tributaries - to the Chinese empire.²⁰³

The impact of historical relations is of utmost importance for a more profound understanding of this matter. Whether neighbouring countries have a harmonious relationship with China or not, according to Kangkyu Lee, further depends on the identity perceived of oneself by one's neighbour, and by the way one perceives the self. He therefore contrasts the *proclaimed identity* of a state with the *perceived identity* of a state by other states. The reputation of a state can be perceived differently by varying states as political allies may have a diverging perception to the perception which an enemy has concerning the matter.²⁰⁴ But, state identities are socially constructed and according to the political leadership of the respective country, the understanding of a given country can possibly be changed or altered, because "...the process of change in identity occurs naturally through social interaction involving values, norms, beliefs, role conceptions, attitudes, stereotypes, and other cognitive phenomena."²⁰⁵ Hence, investigating harmony as a matter of self-perception and perception of the *other* helps to understand the stance of a given country. This topic is deeply linked with the political myths in respect to Chinese medicine. as it reveals mechanisms in the process of the creation of the Chinese self-image and identity.

Accordingly, Kangkyu Lee's research offers a glimpse into China's relations with its direct neighbours, the international sphere of politics and a somewhat more profound impression of how China, as a nation, may perceive itself in the world today. The matter at question here is whether understanding China's foreign politics and its role in the process can possibly add to the comprehension of China's harmonious or non-harmonious behaviour in the world. After all, the forming of identity (proclaimed vs. perceived) does have an impact on state foreign policy. Hence, identity building is closely connected to the broader subjects of narrating a certain myth about a nation. Creating an identity is essentially a narrative about the self²⁰⁶; in this specific case, it is the building of the myth which narrates the desired identity of China as how Chinese state leaders wish other countries to perceive China (the proclaimed identity).

²⁰³ See William A. Callahan, *Chinese Exceptionalism and Politics of History*, pp. 47-50.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Kangkyu Lee, *Identity, Culture, and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 12-14.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15.

²⁰⁶ As will be outlined in detail in Section 3 of this book.

Here, it shall be remembered, that in this context the Confucius Institutes play a crucial part as they convey a certain image of the nation. And, as had been shown above, in one way or another – be it a Daoist narrative or a pluralist Confucian kind of harmony narrative – China chooses to disseminate a positive self-identity image via the channels of the Confucius Institutes. Presumably, this is following the makings of how the political leaders or even non-governmental actors 'think and feel' about their own country.

What is perceived by the opposing countries, or countries on the outside, on the other hand, is what is called the perceived identity. Such view certainly varies from the proclaimed identity, but the issue can also be addressed by the respective government (see quote below). For the Chinese case this means that in-an-attempt-to purport a better view of China, the Chinese Confucius Institutes disseminate the image of the *harmonious Chinese culture*, I argue. Realistically and factually, however, the perceived identity of China by its neighbours is profoundly determined by the experiences they have had with China in the past. Lee writes:

[B]oth proclaimed and perceived identities are foundational to the foreign policymaking of a state. However, the roles of the two identities are somewhat different. Proclaimed identity has more influence on the proclaiming state's behaviors and consequently affects the other state's perceived identity of the proclaiming state, while perceived identity has more influence on one state's reaction to another state's behavior, whose identity is being perceived.²⁰⁷

Kangkyu Lee goes deeper into this subject by differentiating a few core relations: the Chinese state's identity in relation to the North Korean state, the Chinese state's identity in relation with South Korea, and the Chinese state's identity in relation with the Japanese state; as well as the relations in an international scope.²⁰⁸ This is insofar useful to the discussion about Chinese medicine as it offers an insight into China's relations with its neighbours. And, as will be explained, these relations are shedding light on the identity of the Chinese nation.

In his discussion, Lee observes that China often employs contradictory tactics when it comes to international relations. The oxymoron here is that regularly when China can benefit from financial support from other nations or when it comes to the necessity of showing responsibility in the climate change debate, China claims hardship due to it still being a developing country. On the other hand, when necessary - or beneficial - to China, China presents itself as a powerful player on the international stage and in the UN Security Council. It then proclaims the identity of a great power (Daguo 大国).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Kangkyu Lee, *Identity, Culture, and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 16.

²⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-19.

²⁰⁹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 19-25.

While such behaviour appears to be quite paradox, it is most probably not unique in international politics. Even if it is concluded that such conduct is improper, one may give the Chinese state some credit, as China had been a great power for at least hundreds of years, and now it finds itself in an uprising but still not fully recovered position. Therefore, on the one hand, a mixed political strategy which gives China more time for economic growth until it can take full responsibility as much as action against climate change seems to be reasonable. On the other hand, I argue, China as an uprising economic, military, and political power must act increasingly confident, while sometimes acting modest enough, to find its new place in the political world order. A certain degree of differentiation is thus expedient in this debate.

Following Lee's arguments, from a Western standpoint, China for quite some time has been perceived as a threat to the hegemony of the United States. Some behaviour might have caused global agitations, for instance: China did also abstain in the UN Security Council Resolution 825 when it first came to nuclear issues with North Korea because the latter had withdrawn from the NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear-Weapons). Of course, it is easy to condemn the Chinese government for such actions, but when considering the historical bond of China and North Korea as communist comrades, certain decisions of China's state administration become more reasonable (although this does not necessarily make such decisions just). After all, Chinese and North Korean troops had been fighting together in the communist cause throughout the Korean War. Besides historical events reaching further back into the past, North Korea at the time became an ally in the communist bloc and had long been of crucial importance to China because of its geopolitical position. Apart from that, according to the chain of events in the 20th century, China has progressively taken more responsibilities in international politics. Tensions with North Korea increased as China slowly opened to trade and friendlier relations with the South Korean state. In fact, formerly China had not even recognized the sovereignty of South Korea, who had been the common enemy in the former Korean War. Moreover, yet another actor on the East Asian stage had been Japan, who had once more invaded China from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s. The humiliation of this occupation as well as former conflicts like the defeat of China by Japan over the conflict of supremacy on the Korean peninsula in 1894-1895 had created harsh animosity between China and Japan. Nevertheless, Lee's conclusion that China increasingly comprehends itself as a responsible leader in the region may be a reasonable statement, as China overall had improved its relations with its neighbours. The friendship with North Korea did change over the years due to North Korea becoming more aggressive in its nuclear weapons programs and as

China improved its economic ties with South Korea (the former arch enemy of North Korea), China consequently did have to cope with North Korea's leader's actions. Nonetheless, North Korea and China have friendly relations until this day. Some degree of it may be due to the historical ties, the common communist identity, and the geopolitical importance of North Korea as a buffer zone for China. In result, Lee points out that the perception of China's identity by North Korea may have changed, and that it may be very different from the diplomatic identity that China may proclaim considering its behaviour towards North Korea. No matter what, the relations are still maintained, but the perceived identity of China by the North Koreans may somewhat have ruptured. The reason being that China has greatly improved its relations with South Korea. Though the rapprochement of the two countries was not an easy process, today China and South Korea enjoy deepened economic relations, friendly bonds, mutual large scale tourism exchange, and even joint-venture military programmes.²¹⁰

When South Korea (Republic of Korea) and Japan endured conflicts over the territoriality of the Dokdo Islands, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said:

China hopes that the ROK and Japan can appropriately settle relevant issues through dialogue and consultation. I must point out that territorial disputes between Japan and its neighbors all stem from Japanese militarism's wartime aggression and colonial rule. The Japanese side should deeply reflect on history and take real actions to win trust from its Asian neighbors.

(Foreign Ministry of China 2014)²¹¹

On the one hand, this statement and accordingly the Chinese government's behaviour can be interpreted as that of a responsible great power in the region; and possibly as the diplomatic neighbour who wants to maintain peace in the region. Such view about China is also stated by James Miller when he writes that "[t]he achievement of China's people over the past century has been one of the most important contributions to world peace, social justice, and gender equality."²¹²

Against all criticism, as has been shown above, the conflicts between China and Japan stem from long-standing historical events. By quoting *War, Myths, and National Identity Formation* by Yinan He²¹³, Lee also offers a deeper understanding of the rejection of the Chinese towards the Japanese and vice versa. Thereafter, China as the former great imperial empire had created its own contemporary standing with Japan. Lee writes, in the past, "...Japan had

²¹⁰ Cf. Kangkyu Lee, *Identity, Culture, and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 27-38.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39.

²¹² James Miller, *China's Green Religion*, Introduction, pp. XVII.

²¹³ Yinan He, *War, Myths, and National Identity Formation: Chinese Attitudes toward Japan*, In Gérard Bouchard (ed.) *National Myths: Constructed Pasts, Contested Presents* (pp. 223-242). New York: Routledge, 2013.

long been placed at the bottom of the Asian hierarchy, created by China, during its own period of ascendancy in earlier eras.”²¹⁴ Therefore, the above quoted statement of China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Chunying Hua must be taken with a grain of salt. If anything, it reflects the deep cut existent between China and Japan. These conflicts frequently resurface in nowadays disputes between the two countries over the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands or the Yasukuni Shrine where Japanese war criminals are being worshipped, says Lee. Although, Chinese and Japanese state leaders had times of warming their relations, like when Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan and President Xi Jinping of China met for the first time in 2012, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, the overall relations – despite the existence of strong economic relations - are still strenuous. In sum, both countries most likely perceive the other side not quite as what each of them proclaims to be. China and Japan, both see each other as a military threat in the area, and they are both claiming supremacy over the region, states Lee.²¹⁵ As this conflict does not seem to get resolved any time soon, the bigger picture shows that conflicts and events on the greater political stage must be observed closely to arrive at a less distorted view of current politics. It appears that Japan had formerly been oppressed by the Chinese empire, then Japan had repeatedly invaded China. This all forms a context.

In conclusion, understanding the narration of the self (of the state), which is equal to the proclaimed identity, is a way to come to understand how states, and in specific their political leaders, influence the formation of the perceived identity. This, apart from the distribution of Chinese language and -culture, appears to be the biggest desire of the Chinese state in the increasing numbers of Confucius Institutes opened all over the globe. I, thus, argue that the myth of a *harmonious* Traditional Chinese Medicine can thereby be understood as one pillar in the strategy which employs the myth of a *harmonious* Chinese culture. In short, it is a matter of the proclaimed and desired conveying of this image about China to the world. With this knowledge, the analysis can return to the Confucius Institutes and interrelated mechanisms. As will show in the next chapter, i.e., publishing houses are heavily involved in disseminating the desired state narrative.

²¹⁴ Kangkyu Lee, *Identity, Culture, and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 40.

²¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

5. Chinese State Literature – Standardization of Chinese Medicine

Confucius Institutes belong to the Chinese Ministry of Education, as had been learned before. In the Chinese state apparatus, the Confucius Institute and Hanban are accompanied by, and overlooking, various publishing houses such as the China Intercontinental Press which is under authority of the State Council Information Office (SCIO) or the Beijing Language and Culture University Press. The corpus of publishing institutions promoting the modern state narrative of China are copious. Falk Hartig states, such publishing houses are likely to take responsibility to publicize the ideas of the current Chinese leadership. See:

Another publisher that exists under the SCIO is China Intercontinental Press. Established in 1993, according to its mission statement, it is one of China's leading international publishing companies, producing 200 new titles per year, half of which are in English. Its 'mission is to present China, especially the information of Chinese culture, to the world and share the traditional and modern China's essence with everyone on earth' (China Intercontinental Press, 2009).²¹⁶

The literature produced by these influential state-owned publishing houses is mostly available in Confucius Institutes, as I was told by a Confucius Institute teacher. Even if this claim cannot be further proven here, the portrayed narrative of the modern Chinese state and its traditional history emerges as being very homogenous. When reconsidering the broader subject of Traditional Chinese Medicine, in an exemplary China Intercontinental Press book called *Traditional Chinese Medicine – Understanding Its Principles and Practices* the following explanation is printed in its foreword:

In ancient China, four well-developed areas in the civilization were astronomy, arithmetic, agronomy and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). They were generally accepted as systems of knowledge and techniques with Chinese traditional colors, despite the fact that some people denied they were "sciences". In modern China, TCM is the only surviving subject among those four that hasn't been replaced by Western science, and it still plays a significant role in most Chinese people's life.

Since it was established at a time without the support of advanced science, how can TCM survive in today's society when modern health care is almost able to cover all the medical needs? Is TCM a science or cumulative experiences? Is it able to go further along its own path of development, or is it meant to be replaced by mainstream Western medicine? Questions like these concern many people.

In most people's eyes, TCM is a medicinal system that dates back several thousand years, and its theories, experiences and techniques are all derived from the same origin – "tradition". However, when Western medicine is spreading across the country, its new system, which is greatly contradictory to that of TCM, takes turns to dominate the academy. It was known as a "revolution" in Chinese medical community. If fact²¹⁷, if we pay close attention, we will find a revolution in the history of TCM itself. After

²¹⁶ Falk Hartig, *Chinese Public Diplomacy: The Rise of the Confucius Institutes*, pp.90.

²¹⁷ It should be „In fact“. This mistake exists in the original text.

many big and small revolutions, today's Chinese medicine has become "contemporary TCM", which greatly differs from TCM in ancient times. So sharing a same region does not exclude changes.

Traditional medicine in China did not go through big setbacks compared to traditional medicine in other countries. It has always continued in social life and in the career of health care. Some say TCM is right alongside Western medicine, and many scholars from both home and abroad believe the reason is that Western medicine has still not become fully popular. So TCM is needed as a complimentary part of medicine, especially in rural areas. However, the most popular places for TCM are not in the most developed big cities. Correspondingly, many people in the countryside hope to get modern treatments when they are sick. In big cities, people are afraid of infections from medical examinations, as well as the potentially toxic side effects from chemicals and drugs, and many do not accept surgeries easily. They prefer to seek alternatives in TCM, in hopes of a more "natural" treatment. Such concern is growing day by day. This phenomenon might be seen as the "renaissance" of the traditional medicine in China in our contemporary age. Out of such needs, we can foresee that TCM will not die against the threat of Western medicine but will continue to exist in its own special role.²¹⁸

When reading this introduction in the afore-mentioned book by the author Liao Yuqun, published by the China Intercontinental Press, evidently the narrative built is one of various key features of contemporary Chinese thinking, but it is also an account of how Chinese medicine can also be perceived. So, while discussing and critically analysing the assistance of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine in the makings of the political discourse in China throughout this paper, it must be recognized that what is expressed in the quoted paragraph appears to reflect another reality of Chinese medicine. Chinese medicine is a historically grown medical system which is not only posing the basis for the construction of a social- and political myth. But this, as I wrote in the introduction of this book, is not questioned here.

In the first two paragraphs of the above quote, the traditional key features and therefore the importance of tradition for Chinese culture are being emphasized. TCM is described as a good with age-old history, and the general notion produced here is that of a stable and very complex nature of TCM. Nonetheless, the author points to what he calls the "revolutions" in the ancient TCM which essentially leads the reader to perceiving a picture of a historically grown medicine that reflects a long medical history. Interesting is the phrase »today's Chinese medicine has become "contemporary TCM", which greatly differs from TCM in ancient times« through which is revealed that the ancient Chinese medicine may not exactly be congruent with what today is being called TCM. This either strengthens the suspicion of the existence of an underlying myth, or it points to the renewal and therefore a change in certain principles in Chinese medicine. While any respective writer (of any given country) for the myth-building

²¹⁸ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 1-2.

matter would depict his own culture in the brightest colours, the last part of the quoted paragraph of the foreword is of interest, too. Therein, TCM is yet again outlined as being natural, and obviously modern medicine is being sketched as toxic; or as producing toxic side-effects. This claim had already been thematized in the first chapter of this book, when the research situation in China had been discussed. Also, in the quote by Liao, Western medicine and thereby somewhat Western culture is marked as a threat to Traditional Chinese Medicine. Traditional Chinese Medicine as depicted by Liao is comprehended as a “contemporary TCM”. This points to the fact that Chinese medicine had been re-invented in some aspect. As discussed before, it is debatable whether Chinese medicine is natural or harmonious, and whether Western medicine does have a lot of toxic side effects. Probably both medicinal systems have their pros and cons. As for the “natural” Chinese medicine, it is worth to hear out Paul Unschuld through his translation of a part of the *Yixue Yuan Liu Lun* 医学源流论 from the year 1757. Although it can be argued that a text from the 18th century cannot be compared to a modern TCM text, it is rather unlikely that TCM thoroughly changed in its nature over the course of a few hundred years. Like in any medicinal practice, parts of Chinese medicine will have been altered and changed, but not all of it (and most certainly not a core matter like the following). The picture of Chinese medicine portrayed in the *Yixue Yuan Liu Lun* by the author Xu Dachun 徐大椿 repeatedly discloses how important the profound knowledge of the attending physician will be for the outcome of the patients’ illness. Xu lived in the first century of the reign of the Qing dynasty. According to Unschuld, who himself is a professor emeritus of Sinology and a medical historian, Xu’s scholarship and his works are outstanding.²¹⁹ More importantly, considering the above stated “natural” characteristic of TCM, Xu Dachun surely did not argue that Chinese medicine does not cover natural substances and pharmacology, but he offered an insight into the realities that he observed at his time. For him, all too often physicians had not been profoundly educated, and they read (if they had read them at all) the classics too superficially. The application of inappropriate drugs and the application of wrong prescriptions can have terrible results, he said. This is especially the case when applying hot natured drugs.²²⁰ Xu wrote: “Only drugs with a very hot or very dry [nature] kill people in a most violent way. The reason is that hot natured drugs are often toxic.”²²¹ Consequently, it appears that Chinese medicine can be dangerous, too, but it may still be a medicine of natural substances which help the body, if applied in light doses, as Xu Dachun ex-

²¹⁹ See Paul Unschuld, *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine*, pp. 1.

²²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-224.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 216.

plained.²²² His perception of Chinese medicine in the era of the early Qing dynasty is rather negative. In a recurring manner, throughout the *Yixue Yuan Liu Lun*, his arguments are somewhat in opposition to what is being told through the contemporary narrative on Chinese medicine. To him, outstanding physicians had been rare in his epoch, although any diligent student could become a good medical practitioner. Xu saw a lot of problems with medical practice in his time. This had been the result of many issues which included unknowledgeable physicians and such who merely knew a handful of prescriptions as much as those who erroneously came to fame. According to Xu, there had also been such physicians who cheated the people and were only after their money.²²³

In the book *Traditional Chinese Medicine – Understanding its Principles and Practices* by Liao Yuqun, however, another view is offered to the reader. This, it must be assumed, is a more modern view which poses the narrative that is propagated by the Chinese Communist state, or it is simply not such a negative understanding about Chinese medicine as that of Xu Dachun.

Following this stance, Chinese medicine is built on analogies of heaven and earth and like-minded dualities. By the argumentation of Liao Yuqun, Chinese medicine had always undergone change due to foreign influences. Such influences, he writes, can be traced back to interferences during the late Ming dynasty until the early Qing dynasty. Indian, Arabic as much as southern Asian doctors and traders frequently introduced new herbs and medicines to the corpus of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This surely is no different to other natural medicinal corpuses, which through migration of people must always have profited from external knowledge input as well. As much as such merging of ideas and materials gave rise to transformation of techniques and methods in Chinese medicine, the same, according to Liao, has happened by the mingling of Western biomedicine with Chinese medicine. Although the formerly mentioned medicinal practices were rather closely connected to Chinese medicine because they too were founded on natural medicinal patterns, the modern western medicine changed Chinese medicine differently.²²⁴ It, nonetheless, boosted traditional Chinese medicine doctor's motivation to eliminate wrong theoretical theories and complement them to merge into more accurate views of the body and its functions. One such example is the adjustment of the theory of the *jing luo* (channels and meridians) which had been formerly be-

²²² Cf. Paul Unschuld, *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine*, pp. 302.

²²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 324 | pp. 360.

²²⁴ Cf. Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 12-14.

lieved to correspond with actual blood vessels.²²⁵ The same overhauling applies, says Liao, to the establishment of schools and training programs modelled after Western style school patterns.²²⁶ Liao writes:

As a continuity of the collision between TCM and Western medicine in a special period in history, the compilation of textbooks of TCM in 1958 by several colleges of TCM under the supervision of [the] Health Ministry had epoch-making significance. Ever since then, there appeared a course known as Essentials of TCM and the concept of Basic Theory of TCM. To compile a new-styled textbook of TCM is of course a systematic study of TCM. But it is more like a re-establishment of the traditional ideas about medicine, selecting the essential parts as the basic foundation of TCM through carefully differentiating the false from the truth. Several decades later, the basic structure and content of TCM textbooks have almost remained unchanged, though textbooks have been re-compiled and revised for several times.

In this re-constructed “tradition,” the theory of Channels no longer includes the ideas that “the visible ones in the body surface are Collaterals while the ones running deep in the viscera are Channels” and that “the bluish color of the vessels indicates cold while the reddish color of the vessels indicates heat.” According to the revised theory of TCM, *wu zang* (five *zang*-organs) and *liu fu* (six *fu*-organs) are defined as a “physiological unit,” not equivalent to the anatomic organs and no longer relating them to the hierarchy of [the] imperial court.²²⁷

Above, the statement about the existence of a “re-constructed” tradition can be noted. The selection of certain contents which were identified as being crucial to Chinese medicine, and the detachment of modern TCM from the formerly existing evidence about the historical link between Chinese medicine and the hierarchy of the empire, must thereby be acknowledged. As a result, there are two different sides of the story. Delving deeper into understanding the different methods of TCM, possibly it can be asserted that techniques applied today are not as superficial, shallow, and disconnected from the theories of the past as has been hypothesized in an earlier chapter of this paper. One major difference that likely will be uncovered through this investigation might be that the contents taught in TCM colleges today are more profound than the layman expects and what he/she knows about TCM in the West. For such investigation, it would nevertheless be crucial being an expert in the fields of medicine and Chinese medicine, which I am not.

However, it is not surprising that Chinese medicine had been altered, as the practitioners and experts in the field had gotten new influx to re-verify theories of Chinese medicine when they learned about the knowledge which Western medicine brought to the table.

²²⁵ Cf. Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 15.

²²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-16.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16.

Further, there must be significant legitimation for TCM in contemporary China in-order-to prevent its abolishment alongside Western medicine; apart from the already widespread acceptance of TCM in traditional Chinese culture and society. Conclusively, the picture drawn in *Traditional Chinese Medicine – Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, is at times a diametrical opposite of what some Western scholars claim it to be, but at other times it is quite congruent. Which view then is correct? Are they both correct? Or are only parts of it correct? Or is it like Bruno Latour writes in *We have never been Modern* when he talks about the dilemma which he, in his anthropological thinking, describes as the 'nature-culture' problem? In his example, he speaks about the way nature and culture are woven together in a narrative. But is a narrative only a narrative, or does it likely always include facts and reality? He writes:

The tiny networks we have unfolded are torn apart like the Kurds by the Iranians, the Iraqis and the Turks; once night has fallen, they slip across borders to get married, and they dream of a common homeland that would be carved out of the three countries which have divided them up.

This would be a hopeless dilemma had anthropology not accustomed us dealing calmly and straightforwardly with the seamless fabric of what I shall call 'nature culture', since it is a bit more and a bit less than culture [...] ²²⁸. Once she has been sent into the field, even the most rationalist ethnographer is perfectly capable of bringing together in a single monograph the myths, ethnosciences, genealogies, political forms, techniques, religions, epics and rites of people she is studying. Send her off to study the Arapesh or the Achuar, the Koreans or the Chinese, and you will get a single narrative that weaves together the way people regard the heavens and their ancestors, the way they build houses and the way they grow yams or manioc or rice, the way they construct their government and their cosmology. In works produced by anthropologists abroad, you will not find a single trait that is not simultaneously real, social and narrated. ²²⁹

Hence, hereafter, it must be all of the above: when writing about a subject from different standpoints, from different ways of thinking which are heavily determined by the way people were socialized, and by the way they were politically educated by the political system in their respective home-country, the narrative they believe in is a (social) construct of reality, of their social circumstances, and in part simply what is narrated about the respective context or situation they find themselves in. Thereby, constantly new myths are being created.

Everything that has been analysed so far about Chinese culture, Chinese medicine, and Chinese philosophy can be interpreted to be a social construct, but certain aspects are at the same time factually true. This gets clearer by giving an example: If an individual is born into a

²²⁸ The diminished reference refers to another section, which is not of importance here.

²²⁹ Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 7.

working-class family but then changes his/her luck by his/her own actions, is it then right that this person bases the narration of his/her own story (self-identity) on the fact that he/she came from a working-class family, or on the newly obtained status? Where then is the line between the socially constructed and the real?

As shows here, the de-constructive approach of semiotics helps to understand how such a myth about the persons' identity assists to grasp the processes which led to the interpretation with which the respective person came up about his/her past. This theoretical approach however does not change the realities the person lives in. Thus, overemphasizing the constructivist point of view can quickly become very unrealistic and confusing. In the account given on the alteration of Chinese medicine over the influence of the incoming Western medicine, beginning in the 19th century, it must therefore be understood that naturally the incoming Western medicine and the Western ideology had an impact on Chinese culture and medicine.

I argue that the book by Liao Yuqun (who graduated from Beijing Second Medical College in 1981), likely tells a specific version of the narrative about Chinese medicine as it is part of his Chinese self-perception; and it can be suspected that the book which was published by the Chinese state media apparatus also makes it necessary to follow certain political expectations. Further, his writing is embedded in the dominant discourse of the given subject within China. Therefore, presumably his account on the history of Chinese medicine is one of continuous growth and canonization of TCM, although he stresses that the collision with Western medicine caused practitioners and experts to improve Chinese medicine in the 1950s.

His book is subdivided in the main chapters: "Approach to Traditional Chinese Medicine", "The Classics of TCM", "Basic Theory of TCM", "Internal and External Therapies of TCM", "Knowledge of Materia Medica", "Stories about Famous Doctors in History", "TCM and Life Cultivation" and "Inheritance and Development of Modern TCM". Contrary to the statement of sinology professor emeritus Paul Unschuld, who claims that Chinese medicine had never been thoroughly canonized, Liao Yuqun lays a different emphasis on the *Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經; as is presented below. Even though the distinction of the two parts of the *Neijing* (*Suwen* and *Lingshu*) is also made by Unschuld, the less complicated nature of Liao's text appears to provide a well-structured overview of those elements which Liao obviously identifies as most important to the understanding of a modern day TCM. The books' content is profound enough for beginners as much as well-structured and easy-to-read at the same time. Certainly, to get a deeper understanding, one would have to do more in-depth reading about the many specific subjects. As for the canonization of TCM, it is the view of Liao that for

instance the above-mentioned *Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經 as a single entity already constitutes a comprehensive canon.^{230 231} Because of that, the *Neijing* is thereafter translated as the *Yellow Emperor's Canon of Medicine*. Hence, the term *Jing* 經 here is simply translated as canon. In the basic explanation, Liao takes up a differentiation between the *Suwen* 素問 and the *Lingshu* 靈樞. The content of the *Suwen*, here translated as 'Plain Conversation', "...discusses the principles of *yin-yang*, cultivation of health in different seasons as well as the physiology and pathology of viscera and channels."²³² The *Lingshu*, on the other hand, which he (or the translator of the book) translated as the 'Spiritual Pivot', "...mainly deals with acupuncture and moxibustion."²³³ Both of the books "...seldom mention specific treatment with drugs, just discussing viscera, diet and the compatibility between drugs based on the theory of *Wu Xing* (Five Elements)", writes Liao.²³⁴ After this basic explanation follow details about each of the books and its specific content. The same approach is chosen for the clarification of the *Shennong Bencao Jing* 神農本草經 (Agriculture God's Canon of Materia Medica) and the *Shanghan Zabing Lun* 傷寒雜病論 (Treatise on Cold Diseases and Miscellaneous Diseases). Above all this, Liao also points to the existence of numerous other books which were lost throughout history, and he highlights the importance of the constant accumulation of new knowledge in TCM.²³⁵

In the chapter "Basic Theory of TCM" the author informs the reader about the theories of Yin-Yang as much as the Five Elements, and how in TCM a unique theoretical framework had been established on-the-basis-of these doctrines. Thereafter, he further writes about the "Viscera and Their Manifestations", the "Channels and Collaterals", the "Etiology" of TCM (reasons for the formation of illnesses) and "Diagnosis" according to pulse diagnosis as well as palpation (touching and feeling the body in examining the patient's body to check the texture and consistency of the body in the respected area of examination). He then proceeds to

²³⁰ In Elisabeth Hsu, *Outward Form (Xing 形) and Inward Qi 氣: The 'Sentimental Body' in Early Chinese Medicine* she writes that "[Martin] Kern stressed that not only received books but also manuscript texts are compilations.", pp. 106.

²³¹ On page 23 in Liao Yuqun's book, the author writes: "...*Huang Di Nei Jing* (*Yellow Emperor's Canon of Medicine*), the earliest **canon** of TCM, is composed of two parts..."

²³² Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 23.

²³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

²³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-32.

differentiate the meaning of Acupuncture and Moxibustion.²³⁶ Medical prescriptions are mentioned in the chapter “Internal and External Therapies of TCM”.²³⁷

In the chapter “Knowledge of Materia Medica”, Liao describes the establishment of Chinese pharmacology. Of the three important kinds of materials used in Chinese medicine, he lists minerals, animal parts, and herbs, of which today’s herbs are the most significant. He talks about the collection, the processing, and storage of such herbs as well as toxic risk of malpractice. Sources of further historical writings such as the *Zhenglei Bencao* 證類本草 (Detailed Studies on Materia Medica) from the Song Dynasty which pose a precursor to the *Bencao Gangmu* 本草綱目 compiled by Li Shizhen 李時珍, are also being mentioned here.²³⁸

The then following chapter provides an overview of various Chinese doctors in the history of Chinese medicine. Among them, Bian Que 扁鵲, who is reckoned to have lived in the Warring States era, before the Qin dynasty. Known as one of the great medical doctors of his time, he had also been mentioned in the *Shiji* 史記 (Analects of History) by Sima Qian 司馬遷. Various other Chinese physicians and their achievements throughout Chinese history are mentioned in this chapter. The list features Zhang Zhongjing 張仲景 – famous for his *Shang Han Lun* 傷寒論, Wang Shuhe 王叔和 – known for the compilation of the *Maijing* 脈經 (Canon of Pulses), Huang Fumi 皇甫謐 – who compiled the *Zhenjiu Jiayi Jing* 針灸甲乙經 (A-B Classics on Acupuncture and Moxibustion), Sun Simiao 孫思邈 – the great Chinese doctor from the Tang dynasty who was author of the book *Qianjin Yaofang* 千金藥方 (Golden Prescriptions), and various other doctors alongside an illumination on *The Four Great Schools* in the Jin and Yuan dynasty. Last of all in this chapter, Liao describes the progress in Chinese medicine purported by Wang Qingren 王清任 who tried to correct errors in Chinese medicine around the year 1830, but due to the limited scientific knowledge in the late Qing dynasty, he did advance in some aspects and created new errors in other areas, says Liao.²³⁹ This is also backed by a research study from the medical research team around Mario Loukas and Mohammadali M. Shoja, which led to the publishing of their article “Anatomy in ancient China: *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon of Medicine* and Wang Qingren’s *Correcting the Errors in the Forest of Medicine*”. The abstract of their essay states:

Although clouded by mysticism and ancestral worship, early Chinese civilization did make many important and often overlooked contributions to our current understanding

²³⁶ Cf. Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 59-72.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Cf. Ibid., pp. 74-92.

²³⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 95-110.

of human anatomy. This article reviews these early contributions and focuses on the landmark writings of two of the most influential Chinese texts, the *Huang Di Nei Jing (The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon of Medicine)* attributed to Huang Di, and Wang Qingren's *Yi Lin Gai Cuo (Correcting the Errors in the Forest of Medicine)*. These sources made significant contributions to the Chinese understanding of anatomy and served to promote the study of human anatomy both in early China and in regional countries like Japan.²⁴⁰

Similarly, Liao asserts that Wang Qingren's studies were quite preliminary, but Liao does not go into further details about this assumption. This may be due to the reductionist nature of his book. He explains Wang Qingren's false conclusions about the bladder, as follows:

In a time when correct understanding of the physiological functions of renal circulation and urine production was impossible, it was naturally believed that urine permeated through the stomach and intestines into the bladder. Due to historical limitations, Wang Qingren's experimental studies were quite preliminary.²⁴¹

Liao's argumentation then builds on the stringent presentation of facts which culminate in his last chapter "TCM and Life Cultivation" to conclude that according to the classic *Neijing*, man and nature must follow the important principle of the four seasons. In addition, he writes, in the respective subchapter "Integration of Food and Medicines" how dietetic therapy in TCM is another integral part to make use of herbs and plants in-order-to live healthy. "Dietetic therapy may mean to take food as medicine or to combine food with medicine. The latter is now known as medicated food, which is developed by taking the advantages of the medical property and dietetic taste of certain herbs, plants and crops."²⁴² In brief, health can be strengthened as a measure to prevent and heal illnesses. Another part of the life cultivation of TCM mentioned here is "Sports and Health", a brief explanation of Daoyin 導引, an ancient form of gymnastics and breathing exercises, which had been first discovered when unearthing the tomb of Mawangdui 馬王堆. In combination with the intake of sufficient quantities of natural vitamins and fibrins, these gymnastics help to ensure the physical support to increased blood flow and a proper digestion. Through the thus achieved strengthening of the immune system, the body is more likely to be protected against diseases, he writes.²⁴³

Here, the reader shall be reminded that the researcher Hu Fuchen earlier in this book, when discussing the research status on Chinese Medicine in China, had likewise emphasized the

²⁴⁰ Marios Loukas *et al.*, *Anatomy in ancient China: The Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon of Medicine* and Wang Qingren's *Correcting the Errors in the Forest of Medicine*.

²⁴¹ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 109-110.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 117.

²⁴³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-122.

early in China existing method of Yangsheng 養生.²⁴⁴ This is what Liao refers to here, too. As had been proclaimed in the chapter on the research status in China, too, Liao further states, that Chinese medicine classics like the *Huangdi Neijing* 黃帝內經 did already point to the importance of the emotions in certain medical works in antiquity. In this context, Liao quotes the *Neijing* as follows:

Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow Emperor's Canon of Medicine) says “All kinds of diseases are caused by disorder of *qi*. Excessive anger drives *qi* to flow upwards, excessive joy slows the movement of *qi*, excessive grief exhausts *qi*, excessive terror drives *qi* to movement downwards, excessive fright disturbs the flow of *qi* and excessive contemplation stagnates *qi*.”²⁴⁵

This sort of statement is broadly reflected by modern research, as Elisabeth Hsu exhibits in her essay “Outward Form (Xing 形) and Inward Qi 氣: The ‘Sentimental Body’ in Early Chinese Medicine”. She writes: “A manuscript text in the Zhangjiashan *Yin shu*, which with rather great certainty dates to the late Warring States and/or early Han, clearly states that illness arises from feelings that are in disharmony.”²⁴⁶ The assumption of Liao Yuqun that Chinese medicine maintained a *holistic* view of the body and the psyche early in ancient history is thus not in question.

Lastly, Liao arrives at a conclusion in his last chapter called “Inheritance and Development of Modern TCM” which presents a more profound view into the reasons for the initiation of the transformative process from an ancient Chinese medicine to that which today is now called TCM. Liao writes:

As Western modern science spread across China in the mid-19th century, many negative and provoking remarks about TCM were surfaced. Under such critical situation, the TCM community took the challenge and defended its position. After a lengthy debate, the TCM community had a clearer understanding of the relationship between the TCM and Western medicine. However, when Western medicine spreads across the country, its new system, which is greatly contradictory to that of TCM, takes turns to dominate the academy. Established on different cultures (especially philosophy), the two have their own understanding and treatment of human life, health and diseases. Therefore, both of them have their pros and cons. They can complement each other but are difficult to merge into one.²⁴⁷

In so far, the here presented version of the events differs from the view that Chinese medicine and its trademark titled TCM had been introduced in-order-to mainly satisfy the demand of

²⁴⁴ See Hu Fuchen, [Looking at the Development of Chinese Medicine from the Daoxue Culture Perspective].

²⁴⁵ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 121.

²⁴⁶ Elisabeth Hsu, Outward Form (Xing 形) and Inward Qi 氣: The ‘Sentimental Body’ in Early Chinese Medicine, pp. 107.

²⁴⁷ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 125.

Western customers (Unschuld). Liao's standpoint is more focused on the processes which were underway in China, instead of a focus on demand for TCM by Western consumers.

After the 1950s, TCM institutions of higher learning were established throughout China, which prompted the birth of unified TCM textbooks and standard system of subjects. *Zhong Yi Xue Gai Lun (Essentials of TCM)*, mainly edited by Nanjing Medical Academy in 1957, was the first textbook taught at medicine colleges and universities nationwide. This book not only introduced basic TCM theories and clinical framework, but also embodies the concept of "wholeness" (to see traditional Chinese medicine as a whole system) and "syndrome differentiation." In early 1960s, the Ministry of Health began to organize experts to compile the national standard TCM textbook for students at colleges and universities. The compilation was also a development of the medical system. By the end of the 20th century, through the continuous amendments, supplements, adjustments and improvement, six editions of textbooks were completed. Up to now, there are more than 30 subjects for majoring in Chinese medicine. A relatively complete system of TCM was formed.²⁴⁸

In contrast to the claim by Paul Unschuld that TCM had been invented because of a demand by Western consumers, here Liao proceeds to explain how Chinese medicine had been compiled and regulated into a canon of **holistic** and comprehensive methods. I argue both claims could be correct; and provide a broader perception of the matter because the process to develop Chinese medicine had also been initiated by challenges brought to China through the influx of Western ideology and science. Going along, more will be learned about the respective transformation that had various reasons stemming from internal and external factors which the Chinese nation had to react to.

The explanations given by Liao, however, show how Western medicine over the course of the past 100 years had contributed to the understanding of the pathology of many diseases but that the "...pathogen of some chronic diseases is still not clear according to Western medicine"²⁴⁹. Hence, while some diseases still cannot be cured by modern scientific medicine, in certain cases TCM has a special role as it offers treatment less inflicted with side effects, says Liao. It is my view, that here one may recognize that neither Western medicine nor Chinese medicine are perfect, but that ideas from the different systems could possibly contribute to improved medical practice if they would be merged. Accordingly, Liao argues that the Chinese government had been insisting on the integration of TCM with Western medicine.²⁵⁰ The combined dual use had been based on the Western method to diagnose diseases as well as the so-called syndrome differentiation typical in Chinese medicine. Tang Haitao *et al.* confirm this and

²⁴⁸ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 125-126.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 127.

²⁵⁰ This information seems to be based on the events initiated by Mao Zedong, which had been discussed earlier.

write: “Compared with modern Western medicine, which focuses on detailed molecular targets, TCM though takes an overall approach and pays attention to syndrome differentiation based on an overall analysis of the illness and the patient’s condition.”²⁵¹ This can, according to Liao, “improve the effect by taking advantages of both, and reduce the toxic [effects] and side effect of Western medicine”.²⁵² Consequently, herein he mostly praises the effectiveness of Chinese medicine. On the other hand, the only mention of toxic side effects of Chinese medicine is made about Ginseng²⁵³ in the chapter “Knowledge of Materia Medica” and in the Chapter “Classics of TCM” when he declares that herbs are differentiated into three classes according to the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing*.

These herbs were classified into three grades, first grade, second grade and third grade. The first grade of herbs can be used to invigorate the body and prolong life; the second and the third grades of herbs are toxic and thus can be used to treat diseases. But they cannot be taken more and for a long time.²⁵⁴

In comparing Western medicine and TCM in his last chapter, Liao emphasizes TCM features like “natural therapies” and “green therapies”.²⁵⁵ In the afore-mentioned discussion hinting to psychosomatic problems, Liao uses a comparison between Western and Chinese medicine. Because emotional or psychological issues in Chinese medicine were being considered for the diagnosis of a disease since antiquity, and, because these psychological symptoms were considered an element of the respective disease, Liao states: “However in the West, people with mental problems were regarded as criminals and evils even in the 18th century and were punished physically.”²⁵⁶ Certainly, through such statements, Liao points to the effectiveness of Chinese medicine. He concludes that contemporary Chinese medicine is not an outdated form of medicine, but that in its revised version, it is highly conducive to the health of human beings. This sort of wording has appeared several times in the beginning of this book. Similarly, Liao writes that »Undoubtedly the secret based on which TCM continues its progress is not “backwardness”«.²⁵⁷ The claim of being backward had been bothering China for a long time, as will be expounded in a later following discussion about China’s many struggles in the 20th century. A label which had been put on Chinese culture, medicine, and society since the first missionaries arrived in China. It appears factually obvious that technologically the Western

²⁵¹ Tang Haitao et al., *SWOT Analysis and revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*.

²⁵² Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 129.

²⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 92.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-131.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 52.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7.

powers had been more advanced at the time of their intrusion. This, however, cannot be a valid parameter to discriminate and mug another nation and its culture. Anyhow, before this matter is discussed, it shall first be looked-into the theoretical foundation for the formation of a new Traditional Chinese Medicine.

6. *Bianzheng Lunzhi* - A New Foundation for Traditional Chinese Medicine

As Bridie Andrews points out in her book *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960*, there have been existing various policies concerning the integration of Western and Chinese Medicine in the 20th century in China. Some policies drove the matter strongly towards an orientation following the respective Western discourse, but in the 1950s the Chinese Communist Party gradually turned back to a more Chinese converge on medicine in the field as-a-means to introduce a non-Western medical approach. She writes and partly quotes from Volker Scheid and Ruth Rogaski:

In 1953, the policy of creating a new medicine by educating Chinese-style practitioners reversed, and, instead, the emphasis was placed on making doctors of Western medicine study Chinese medicine. As Scheid notes, the full reasons for this change are not entirely clear, but they certainly included a desire to rectify 'the undesirable ideological tendencies of Western-trained doctors,' a need to deploy medical personnel more efficiently and to avoid social unrest from Chinese-medical doctors, and an increasing national pride. This was also the period of the Korean War and the 1952 Patriotic Hygiene Campaign, which mobilized millions of urban Chinese to clean up the streets, exterminate insects, and catch vermin in order to minimize the risk of germ warfare attacks from the United States. The intense Cold War politics of this period only increased CCP doubts about the political reliability of urban professionals. The first class began in 1955, and the Ministry of Health initiated the production of the first national textbook of Chinese medicine, the *Zhongyixue gailun* 中医学概论 (*Outline of Chinese Medicine*), published in 1958, ironically as teaching material for these doctors of Western medicine.²⁵⁸

While the quotation from Bridie Andrews informs about the initiation of a systemization process in the new 'traditional' Chinese medicine – similar-to what Liao has already shown – another researcher in Chinese medicine, Ronda Chang, explains how the new standardization had been put into action with the adaption of a new theoretical foundation. In her essay *Making Theoretical Principles for a New Chinese Medicine*, she unravels the implications of the Chinese Communist Party with the shaping of the new Traditional Chinese Medicine. She once again stresses the importance to differentiate the Chinese Medicine known in China and the world today. The common term used in China today is *yi*. Chang refers to *yi* 医 because it

²⁵⁸ Bridie Andrews, *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960*, pp. 209.

highlights the medical aspect of the matter. Her distinguishing the terminologies implies that she detects an abandonment of critical core values of the former Chinese medicine within the newly created TCM. In fact, to her, the departure from those *yi*-methods, which were mainly based on Yin-Yang and the Five Elements doctrine, effectively results in a critical turn in Chinese Medicine. Chang's essay builds on the implementation of the *Bianzheng Lunzhi* 辨證論治 (Dialectical Theory of Policy) under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party. This turn insofar supports Liao's statement of a modern and integrated (with Western medicine) Chinese medicine as a means for the search on an improved and standardized TCM which had been aimed at confronting TCM with Western medicine,²⁵⁹ but Liao doesn't express the changes as dramatic – or negative – as Chang does. In-order-to compare these matters, here is what Liao writes about it:

The debate towards the abandon of TCM arose [as-a-result-of the] self-examination among [members of the] TCM community and inspired them to systematize TCM literatures, discuss basic theories, and research into different schools of thought. The move laid the foundation for further improvement and standardization of TCM.²⁶⁰

Following this statement, his focus lies on the *Zhong Yi Xue Gai Lun* (Essentials of TCM) which, according to his explanation, constituted the foundation for a renewal of Chinese medicine.²⁶¹ He proceeds to inform the reader about expert groups being appointed,²⁶² but he doesn't mention the *Bianzheng Lunzhi*, and the thereby inflicted turn in methodology. Although, he profoundly informs about the principles of *Yin-Yang* and *Wu Xing* (Five Elements), he does not explain the details of the modernization of TCM. In contrast, Ronda Chang writes: “It is understandable that, under the Communist regime, revelations of the construction of the system of *bianzheng lunzhi* have been largely muted so that any practical understanding of *yinyang* theory among physicians and the wider population has been effectively obscured.”²⁶³ In the following, it shows how Chang arrives at this conclusion.

Chang bases her argument on the biomedical principles underlying the new Chinese medicine. In her view, the nature of Chinese medicine has been changed drastically as *Yin-Yang* and *Wu Xing* have been excluded from the new TCM by the structural guidelines in the *Bianzheng Lunzhi*. These principles, she claims, were central to (the former) traditional Chinese medi-

²⁵⁹ Cf. Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 67-73.

²⁶⁰ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 125.

²⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 125.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 80.

cine.²⁶⁴ In brief: The changing and the struggle of Chinese medicine had at least started when China had been confronted with Western style ideas. With the introduction of Western-styled schools in 1904, and with the abolishment of the traditional Chinese civil service examinations in 1905 the respective change was initiated. In 1911, the republican government newly created the Chinese Ministry of Education. While *yi*-practice had been continued until the Chinese communist regime took power in 1949, the greatest adjustments in the transformation of the Chinese medical system occurred under the rule of Mao Zedong.²⁶⁵

Instead of mandating the abolition of *yi*, Mao gave a superficial assurance that its practice would be continued. [...] Mao was hoping to develop a new medicine of global significance with Chinese characteristics that had to be based foremost on western medicine and science. *Yi*, or medicine in China as it had been practiced before the 1900s, would quietly disappear when this new medicine was developed, although it could still provide cosmetic touches to the appearance of the new medicine.”²⁶⁶

Chang further explains that although *Yin-Yang* and the *Five Elements* had been very important for more than 2000 years since the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE), it then was slowly pushed into unofficial abolishment through a string of essays written by various Chinese authors closely associated to the CCP. These medical scholars instructed by Mao formulated the new theory called *Bianzheng Lunzhi*. According to Chang, the renowned Chinese medicine educator and physician Wang Yuchuan (one of the developers of the *Bianzheng Lunzhi*) knew that the term *Bianzheng Lunzhi* only appeared in medical texts after 1911. He noted that the term was still not mentioned in the Xie Guan’s *Dictionary of Chinese Medicine (Zhongguo Yixue Da Cidian)* published in the year 1921. It only appeared in the mid-1950s.²⁶⁷ “Although the terms *bianzheng* and *lunzhi* had prior general usage, their conflation within medical terminology was, as Deng [Tietao]²⁶⁸ indicates, a recent development.”²⁶⁹ The developers of the new Chinese medicine frequently referred to the theory in order to embed it in *yi*-practices of ancient times and to bolster its credibility.²⁷⁰ Relying on the article *Achievements of Chinese Medicine after Forty Years of State Building* (建国 40 年中医药科技成就) published in 1989 by the State Bureau of Chinese Medicine Administration in the *Journal Science and Technol-*

²⁶⁴ Cf. Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 67.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 68.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 69.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 69-72.

²⁶⁸ See also: Deng Tietao, *Bianzheng Lunzhi Is the Soul of Clinical Chinese Medicine*, *Chinese Archives of Traditional Chinese Medicine* 20, No. 4 (2002): 394.

²⁶⁹ Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 72.

²⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 72.

ogy, Chang builds on the research of Chinese scholars Xu Yanchun and Du Jiehui²⁷¹ to conclude that, Zhu Yan, the author of the text ignores "...*yinyang* as a central diagnostic guide and assert[s] that classical medicine proceeded from the initial step of recognising symptoms of illness in relation to pathogenic stimulants, and that the method of *yi* were to influence pathological and physiological functions."²⁷²

In short, Zhu provided a new narrative to the ancient diagnostic methods by ignoring the principles of *Yin-Yang*. The conflating of *yi* was further deepened in another article published by Ren Yingqiu in 1955. His article *The System of Chinese Medicine Bianzheng Lunzhi* tackled the *Yin-Yang* theory by reduction of the same theory to explain observed symptoms, but he thereby further supported the manipulation of the underlying logic which had been the basis of the complete medical system. In 1957, Qin Bowei (1901-1970) published the 'Outlines of Chinese Medicine *Bianzheng Lunzhi*' and thereby consolidated the exclusion of *Yin-Yang* and *Wu Xing*.²⁷³

These classifications of ancient principles such as the core value of the *Yin-Yang* theory as well as the *Wu Xing* doctrine provide the logical turn of Chinese medicine that Ronda Chang talks about. Chang writes, though this new interpretation is not thoroughly wrong, it produces a false or at least very divergent understanding of the respective principles. It greatly alters the importance which Yin and Yang formerly posed as this principle used to constitute the foundation for an extensive cosmology instead of presumably being the sole element of a certain kind of symptom category. See following quote:

This comprehensive and proper recognition in *bianzheng lunzhi* did not consist in the recognition of symptoms, syndrome, and disease in relation to *yinyang wuxing* transformation but instead made *yinyang* a component of the symptoms, syndromes, and diseases such as true cold and false heat syndrome.²⁷⁴

To Chang, it-is-clear that the State Bureau of the Chinese Medicine Administration used these grounds to further consolidate the newly given importance to the *Bianzheng Lunzhi*. After the Cultural Revolution, in 1978, the textbook *Foundations of Chinese Medicine, Bianzheng Lunzhi* had been published.²⁷⁵ In this context, Ronda Chang recalls that in her undergraduate studies as a medical practitioner in Chinese medicine, which she started in 1978, the theory of

²⁷¹ For further reading: Xu Yanchun and Du Jiehui, eds, *Forty Years of Scientific and Technological Achievements in Chinese Medicine After the Establishment of the Communist Government* 建国40年中医药科技成就 (Beijing: Chinese Medicine Ancient Texts Publishers, 1989), 70.

²⁷² Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 73.

²⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77.

²⁷⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 78.

Bianzheng Lunzhi "...was presented as the only logic for using herbs and acupuncture; there were no indications of its recent creation at all."²⁷⁶

Other researchers, like Eric Karchmer, "...found a certain positive utility in *Bianzheng Lunzhi* and because he focuses on the hybridity of Chinese medicine, his analysis of the differences between contemporary Chinese medicine and *yi* is limited."²⁷⁷ Further, Ronda Chang mentions another Chinese doctor called Cao Minggao to have been playing a key role in implementing the Party's demands to alter the core principles of Chinese medicine. After he had attended a meeting of a group of experts for the revision of the National Chinese Medicine College teaching material in 1961,²⁷⁸

Cao revealed that during this meeting all of these important decisions for the future of *yi* and Chinese medicine were made. They were made 'according to the Party's demand' and the group had 'completed the revisionary work of 18 subjects for the teaching materials [of Chinese medicine]²⁷⁹, and received significant improvement.'²⁸⁰

Hence, the analysis conducted by Chang leads her to conclude that: "The radical withdrawal and disavowal of *yinyang wuxing* as the core theoretical foundation cleared the way for the installation of *bianzheng lunzhi* as the central premise of Chinese medicine."²⁸¹ Contextually, a statement by Liao Yuqun about the modernization of Chinese medicine seems to correspond with these findings. Liao writes: "Since the 20th century, especially since the 1950s, the TCM practitioners have started to explore and sum up experiences from clinical practice."²⁸² Possibly due to the limited scope of his book by giving only an introductory overview on Traditional Chinese Medicine, he may have not explained in detail how the procedure of the process of the 'modernization' of Chinese medicine had been accomplished. Liao, however, did clarify that it was the Chinese government who did initiate changes of Chinese medicine, as shows in the following paragraph:

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese government has always insisted the policy of "integration TCM with Western Medicine"²⁸³ and advocated to encourage the modernization of Chinese medicine. The integrated Chinese and Western medicine is China's unique medical model; it has developed into one of the major pillars in China's health care.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁶ Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 78.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 79.

²⁷⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

²⁷⁹ Original information was added by Ronda Chang.

²⁸⁰ Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 81.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 82.

²⁸² Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 126.

²⁸³ The wording and the false syntax are part of the original text.

²⁸⁴ Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine*, pp. 128.

Liao continues thereafter to distinguish the differences in Western disease-oriented diagnostics and Chinese syndrome-oriented diagnostics. He, however, does not relate all of this to the changing paradigm in the core principles of Chinese medicine.²⁸⁵ Whether this course of action in his writing is intentional or not, can hardly be clarified here. On the other hand, Ronda Chang quotes three arguments, by the above-mentioned Cao Minggao, to prove the massive alterations Chinese medicine had undergone since the 1950s. To her, these three elements are helpful for readers who otherwise may assume that contemporary Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which in China today is still called *Zhongyi* 中医, would solely be derived of traditional non-Western practices. Chang writes:

Cao included three important elements which readers could use to realise that although it is called *zhongyi*, with its association of traditional non-western practices, fundamental innovations occurred to make Chinese medicine. First, the core theory of Chinese medicine related to organs and meridians whereas *yi* theory had been based on *yinyang* and *wuxing*. Second, the substitution and abandonment of *yinyang* theory was under the Party's influence as a matter of 'correction'. Finally, the purpose of *bianzheng lunzhi* was to give the new medicine the appearance of a more scientifically sound and acceptable practice in a time and social environment where only science and scientific investigations held universality. The presence of *yinyang* and *wuxing* in traditional cosmology and specifically *yi* may have been an embarrassment to the scientifically committed Chinese Communist Party through the second half of the twentieth century, but whether the aims of a more scientific and logical system of medicine has been achieved is doubtful. What remains a perennial objective of health authorities, researchers, and practitioners is concrete scientific evidence of Chinese medicine's efficacy. Calls for the abolition of Chinese medicine also surface from time to time but the common refrain is that Chinese medicine *is* scientific but only awaits definitive scientific proof.²⁸⁶

The first important point here is to note that what the various Chinese researchers in the first chapter of this book have claimed so rigorously; they insisted that Chinese medicine is scientific, unfortunately often without the mentions of the addition *that it only awaits definitive scientific proof*. Such finding would be very desirable, but if the evidence is not there yet, it is somewhat speculative to the ignorant person (an outsider to Chinese medicine) to believe in certain aspects of Chinese medicine. For the experienced practitioner in the field, however, such announcement may simply pose what he/she sees and knows as being true from his/her daily practice.

However, in sum, building on the accounts provided by Ronda Chang above, contemporary TCM is now somewhat cut off from its former core methods and the traditional cosmology of

²⁸⁵ Cf. Liao Yuqun, *Traditional Chinese Medicine: Understanding Its Principles and Practices*, pp. 128-130.

²⁸⁶ Ronda Chang, *Making Theoretical Principles for New Chinese Medicine*, pp. 82-83.

Chinese medicine. This appears to be what had been quoted after Paul Unschuld in Chapter 1. His argument informed the reader about the *loss of diagnostic-therapeutic independence of the former traditional Chinese medicine*. And that's exactly what the new theoretical framework of TCM appears to be. Modern TCM had been altered to fit (Western) scientific expectations as well as the demands of the Chinese Communist Party. Expressed in a colloquial way, one could say, the former Chinese medicine appears to be no more than a shadow of its former self. Volker Scheid in his essay *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition* broadly agrees with this view, but he comes to the finding that the theory of adaptation had been based on a theory called *Jichu Lilun* 基础理论.²⁸⁷ He partly quoted Kim Taylor and David Gordon White when writing that Chinese intellectuals had to adjust their indigenous medicine according to the influx of Western ideology.

Instead, in a 'funhouse mirror world' indigenous experts assimilated western ideologies and knowledge into their ancient practices in order to sell them back to western audiences thirsting for initiation into the mysteries of the East. Chinese physicians thus made a conscious decision to refer to their medicine as 'traditional' when writing for a western audience, even as they were busy creating for that tradition a new basic theory (*jichu lilun* 基礎理論) in order to make it resemble more closely the scientific modernity of western medicine.²⁸⁸

The above-quoted text section reminds of the statement posed by Paul Unschuld about how the exotism of TCM resulted from a demand by Western audiences; allegedly, this was the main reason for the transformation of Chinese medicine in the 1950s. Further, it shows that either way the former Chinese medicine was usually not referred to as 'traditional medicine' but simply as 'medicine'. It had deliberately been put into new gowns in-order-to be accepted and applicable in the new Chinese political and economic context and in the new global reality. This reveals how Chinese medicine as it exists today and is famous worldwide, has been transformed to suit the above-explained demands of the CCP in-order-to gain acceptance in the West.

Additionally, I argue this resembles the tension between *modernity and tradition*, which is often employed by certain thinkers to distinguish and discriminate between that which is already developed and that which is not developed (usually connotated as underdeveloped). This discrimination is often said to be typical of Western imperial powers and their successors. For this reason, a short detour to understand *the Moderns* is feasible.

²⁸⁷ Which is again another term to title the matter. *Jichu Lilun* simply means "basic" or "foundational" theory. But the most important issue here is not how a theory is called but what content it contextualizes.

²⁸⁸ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 60.

7. Modernity - A Concept of Western Discrimination?

The hereafter considered views influenced by Bruno Latour's thinking will strengthen the reader's understanding of the findings above. They will possibly help to put into perspective what has been learned before about judgmental opinions on China, as much as about the narrative myths that go around concerning the common euro-centric bias towards China. This is to say that it must be suspected that each respective authors' standpoint commonly contains a preposition which stems from his/her personal education and *socialization*. Therefore, the issue shall best be observed with the awareness that all statements (opinions) contain certain amounts of prejudice. By reflecting Latour's ideas with the assistance of other scientist's interpretations of his works, this chapter will highlight two aspects: first, - as already shown in the chapter on the invention of the *Bianzheng Lunzhi* - the Western concept of modernity added movement to the invention of the new TCM, and second, although the utilized constructionist approach frequently used in this book poses a theoretical model which offers profound opportunity to grasp the structural foundation of myth creation, such understanding of the theoretical mechanisms does not necessarily change factual realities.

The deconstruction of the social and cultural mechanisms behind the invention of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine is, thus, strictly to be comprehended as a theoretical analysis which simultaneously restricts and broadens the researcher's understanding. Consequently, this method itself must be subjected to a degree of scrutiny. Besides this, understanding what it means to be *modern* and whether-or-not the concept poses a stereotyping and categorizing Western concept is therefore one of the questions at hand. I find that certain concepts in Latour's thinking can greatly add to the discussion in this book. One is the broader concept of modernity, which, in my understanding, can be exploited as an instrument to dominate those whom he calls the *pre-moderns*. The other is the differentiation between the two terms nature and culture. Quite importantly, the latter terms are frequently thematized in the comprehensive concept of social constructionism and in the social sciences.

In the book *We have never been modern*, Latour deconstructs – and identifies - 'modernity' as a power ideology. Contrasting the concept of the 'constitution' which is the foundation of modern nation states that have adopted the so-called Westphalian system, he comes up with the concept of an imagined 'new constitution'. Thereby, in his view, modernity, and the underlying principles of the way the Westerners describe the world as much as the world of the others has been erroneous. When it comes to time and history, he explains how certainly there had existed a valid timeline, which does not necessarily justify the way *the moderns* have

been brewing history (a quote which he borrows from Péguy).²⁸⁹ Throughout his book, he talks about the *moderns* and the *nonmoderns*. To prove the fact that humans have never been modern, he traces the origins of the phenomenon back to what he identifies as the beginning of it in Western science and technology. Accordingly, he concludes, that by applying Western methods, the world has been divided by the moderns. As-a-consequence, this created the entities of the *moderns* and the *others*. This divide creates a rather false ideology and hierarchy instead of clean scientific results, he writes.

Peoples without history' were invented by those who thought theirs was radically new (Goody, 1986)²⁹⁰. In practice, the former innovate constantly; the latter are forced to pass and re-pass indefinitely through the same rituals of revolutions, epistemological breaks, and quarrel of the Classics against the Moderns.²⁹¹ [...] We have never moved either forward or backward. We have always actively sorted out elements belonging to different times. We can still sort. *It is the sorting that makes the times, not the times that make the sorting*. Modernism – like its anti- and post-modern corollaries – was only the provisional result of a selection made by a small number of agents in the name of all. If there are more of us who regain the capacity to do our own sorting of the elements that belong to our time, we will rediscover the freedom of movement that modernism denied us – a freedom that, in fact, we have never really lost. We are not emerging from an obscure past that confuses natures and cultures in order to arrive at a future in which the two poles will finally separate cleanly owing to the continual revolution of the present. We have never plunged into a homogenous and planetary flow arriving either from the future or from the depth of time. Modernization has never occurred.²⁹²

Latour remarks that time and modernization, as it is commonly understood, are products of sorting and classification. As a result, what people assume to be modern is, thus, simply dependent on the significance and interpretation that get attached to certain things and thoughts. Here, I find the basic theory of semiotics helpful to grasp what he means. I argue that if time is understood as something that is only rooted in the fact that on-a-daily-basis the sun rises and by night it disappears again, and that with every day passing man gets older, then it can be understood how time does, on the one hand, exist, but that, on the other hand, time is a social construct too. By the latter, I mean that i.e., the assigned year of 2023 which this current year in human history is referred to, is in fact only a number designated by humans that goes back to the Christian date of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that humans have roamed this planet long before that. The mere fact that many places on earth use the Christian

²⁸⁹ Cf. Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 68.

²⁹⁰ Jack Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁹¹ Such a claim by *the moderns* appears to be highly racist and discriminatory, as it asserts that there are some groups among Homo sapiens that never accumulate new knowledge. But as is widely known, this was the instrumented ideology that was characteristic throughout the colonization epoch.

²⁹² Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 76.

dating mechanism is therefore somewhat strange. What can be taken from this is that even on the designation of the setting of time and date, there must have existed a political power discourse which led to the current system - a dominance that had been exerted over *the others*.

But one important aspect of what Latour essentially points to are the differences which *the moderns* had identified between the *moderns* and *the pre-moderns*. In brief, an ideology that put *the moderns* on a pedestal while the *pre-moderns* were doomed to belong to the unworthy kind. First-and-foremost, Latour shows how this claim is nonsense. Consequently, the aspect of modernity which Latour deconstructs is that of an ideology which dominates and subordinates *the others*.²⁹³ James Miller contributes to this understanding as he writes:

...the way moderns see the world today must by definition be “better” than what has gone before or what takes place elsewhere. This assumption has empowered and justified a thoroughly colonial discourse toward non-Western “others.” Since those others are “others” not simply to the West, but also to “modernity,” they must by definition be regressive, deficient, or inferior to the modern, Western way of seeing the world. This worldview is truly the bane of cultural politics across the globe: it inspires people across the world to look, do, and be Western,” and it imperils the development of a genuine critical consciousness toward what modernity entails.²⁹⁴

In addition, when talking about science and the path people have chosen to distinguish between nature and culture, Latour acclaims that nature and culture (as is the case in today’s social studies) cannot be bracketed off from each other. Constantly, being treated as if the one has no connection with the other is false, he says. Therefore, he thinks that the separation of these two realms creates a paradox. He states:

Here lies the entire modern paradox. If we consider hybrids, we are dealing only with mixtures of nature and culture; if we consider the work of purification, we confront a total separation between nature and culture.²⁹⁵

The problem addressed here is that *the moderns* divided not only people but the world into two realms, as Fien Veldman explains by referring to Latour’s argument. In

nature (science) and culture (politics) – but at the same time, in our daily lives, we constantly deal with hybrids between these two groups. But this division renders ‘the work of mediation that assembles hybrids invisible, unthinkable, unrepresentable’

²⁹³ “Century after Century, colonial empire after colonial empire, the poor premodern collectives were accused of making a horrible mishmash of things and humans, of objects and signs, while their accusers finally separated them totally – to remix them at once on a scale unknown until now...”. in: Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 39.

²⁹⁴ James Miller, *China’s Green Religion*, pp. 17.

²⁹⁵ Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 30.

(35)²⁹⁶. As Latour succinctly puts it: ‘the modern constitution allows the expanded proliferation of the hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies’ (35).²⁹⁷

In brief, this means Latour uncovers an epistemological error that has made it possible for *the moderns* to dominate the others as they are supposedly capable of dominating nature. A notion created by the *moderns* that is obviously false, too. Yet, this myth circulates in many *modern* societies. In Latour’s thinking, it appears that what modern people think of what it means to be modern has simply been a construct to disconnect them from the other; ‘the other’ here is then possibly resembling other people as much as nature itself. The focus in the following, firstly, lies on them and the other people. In what Latour calls the asymmetry of anthropology, he thinks to reveal the makings of this issue. Western anthropologists, he writes, would have to apply the same methodology to observe themselves as they view the others; the problem is, they traditionally don’t. In-order-to regain symmetry, Fien Veldman states:

To analyse this new field of study²⁹⁸, anthropology should ‘come home from the tropics’, as Latour puts it. In the paragraph aptly titled ‘There Are No Cultures’, he states that anthropology, firstly, should use the same terms to explain truths and errors; secondly, it should study the production of humans and nonhumans simultaneously; and finally, it should refrain from making any *a priori* declarations as to what might distinguish Westerners from Others (103).²⁹⁹

In this context, Latour writes: The moderns separate “...the relations of political power from the relations of scientific reasoning while continuing to shore up power with reason and reason with power, the moderns have always had two irons in the fire. They are invincible.”³⁰⁰ Respectively, anthropologist Julian Warner elucidates that the above-mentioned separation of political power from the relations of scientific reason is like what Benjamin Franklin reported about the ‘white education’ of young Native Americans from a new perspective; the perspective of Native Americans themselves which has been documented as follows:

Several of our Young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly; were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, or Counsellors; they were totally good for nothing.^{301 302}

²⁹⁶ Referring to page 35 in *We have never been Modern* (English version, translated by Catherine Porter).

²⁹⁷ Fien Veldman, *Into Latour*.

²⁹⁸ Is it a new field of study or simply the correct symmetric approach to the matter?

²⁹⁹ Fien Veldman, *Into Latour*.

³⁰⁰ Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 38.

³⁰¹ Julian Warner, *Review of We Have Never Been Modern by Bruno Latour and Catherine Porter*, pp. 359-360.

Hence, Julian Warner argues that the core issue of what Bruno Latour addresses as the problem must be found in the function of the hybrids. He follows Latour's analysis and finds that hybrids are being ignored by science while they are "...objects and events that are at the same time local and global, social and natural [and therefore they are] mixing disciplinary interests."³⁰³ The main issue seems to be that in science these hybrids are denied because everything is categorized into rather strict domains, but the hybrids are of utmost importance in the formal and informal communication networks between scientists and their experimental apparatus. The ignorance of the latter fact provides the main platform to distinguish *pre-moderns* from *the moderns* in the way it has been done in contemporary science and societies. It is rather important to note here that the term *modern* must not be confused with the term modernity, as it is used in literary modernism. Accordingly, concerning Bruno Latour's book *We have never been modern*, Warner states: »The "modern" of its title refers not to the literary modernism of the early twentieth century but to the nebula of beliefs associated with post-seventeenth-century scientific rationality.«³⁰⁴ Essentially, what Latour identifies in his book is as much the forceful creation of a means to divide *them* and the *others* as a certain kind of forced supremacy by the Western scientific societies.

Respectively, I argue that in human social groups, there will always exist *them* and the *others*. In my understanding, this stems from the symbolizing process which takes place in the human brain, if one believes i.e., Jacques Lacan's explanation. A mechanism through which 'the self' is literally producing itself and whereby the rational mind is, on the one hand, rationalizing the emotional core of the self and, on the other hand, resultantly the external world is then perceived and described by thoughts and language, which function as the foundation of the brain's work by creating symbols all along.³⁰⁵ This, however, remains a theory as Martin P.J. Edwardes shows by quoting Benjamin Libet's work in the neurological scientific field. He writes that "[...] the physical electrochemistry of the brain can be measured while we are being aware of ourself, but the self itself is not a substance or entity that be scientifically measured."³⁰⁶

³⁰² Quote taken from: Benjamin Franklin, „Remarks concerning the Savages of North-America,” in *Autobiography and Other Writings*, edited by Ormond Seavey (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 311-18, quote on pp. 313-14.

³⁰³ Julian Warner, *Review of We Have Never Been Modern by Bruno Latour and Catherine Porter*, pp. 359.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 359.

³⁰⁵ See Jacques Lacan, *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*, [Lecture] Delivered on July 17, 1949, in Zurich at the Sixteenth International Congress of Psychoanalysis.

³⁰⁶ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self: An Anthropological Perspective*, pp. 18.

However, can such important aspect be simply ignored? It appears Latour somewhat neglects this underlying protocol while he is focusing on the mentioned ideological colonization scheme. I do agree that colonization has brought about many long-lasting and destructive results. Obviously, Latour is not wrong when it comes to thinking that *the moderns* created an ideology that appeared to make them invincible. They thereby exerted a lot of power over the *others*. And this is the reason why I find this argument important for the investigation in this book. Quite clearly, the Westerners had left their mark on Chinese society³⁰⁷, and the Chinese then had to invent mechanisms to protect their own values as much as they possibly could.

Further, Latour's assertion is that "just as the moderns have been unable to keep from exaggerating the universality of their sciences [...] symmetrically, they have been unable to do anything but exaggerate the size and solidity of their own societies."³⁰⁸ Here, Julian Warner seems to agree with Bruno Latour in the sense that suggesting the removal of the disavowance between the *moderns* and the *pre-moderns* is beneficial and highly indicated.

Removing the disjunction of the modern from the premodern, denying the claims of scientific practice to an ahistorical and uniquely privileged form of rationality, would then open the possibility of an anthropological analysis of modern societies. From such a perspective, the hybrids constructed by science would become objects of investigation, to be viewed in their social and cultural context, not, for instance, as scientific apparatus, epistemologically neutral ways of giving access to knowledge of external nature. Moderns could also then be seen to have confused products with processes: to have believed that the production of bureaucratic rationalism presupposed rational bureaucrats, and that the production of universal science depended on the universal scientists. [...] In an extension of this, a university could be seen not just as an institution for the reproduction of knowledge but, as its occurrence as a free text retrieval term might suggest, as a building, a locale, or a social context for the transition from adolescence to adulthood.³⁰⁹

Concerning each respective approach, for instance, the latter possible interpretations of the representation of a university, one should comprehend that universities are not just places to achieve diplomas but that they must serve people to achieve knowledge and personal cognitive growth as much as they must benefit humankind as-a-whole. In this regard, what Warner seems to explain is the notion that always swings along with the science of *the moderns*.

In respect to this theme, James Miller writes: »This assumption has empowered and justified a thoroughly colonial discourse toward non-Western "others." Since those others are "others"

³⁰⁷ And not only on the Chinese, as a swift look into history books on *colonization* informs the reader. In addition, *colonization processes* have surely always occurred since larger groups of humans have roamed this planet.

³⁰⁸ Bruno Latour, *We have never been Modern*, pp. 120.

³⁰⁹ Julian Warner, *Review of We Have Never Been Modern by Bruno Latour and Catherine Porter*, pp. 359.

not simply to the West, but also to “modernity,” they must by definition be regressive, deficient, or inferior to the modern, Western way of seeing the world.«³¹⁰

The, by Latour, described ideological system is shaping the social world as it functions now. This resembles a highly dominant cultural (and therefore political) ideology, I argue.³¹¹ As a stark contrast, - and presumably a positive example - would be, to imagine a group of people living in traditional ways in the rainforest. One could be sure that their notion of 'common sense' would likely be linked to the way they have-to use their senses in that specific environment.³¹²

Latour's thinking can be grasped more profoundly by the explanations of Hans Harbers (a former associate professor in philosophy of science, technology, and society at the Department of Philosophy of Groningen University). In his review on Latour's book, he starts off by mentioning the 1992 crash of an F-16-type military aircraft nearby the Twente Air Base in Hengelo (Netherlands). He raises a question that refers to Latour's theoretical model by applying it and asking whether the crash had been the result of technical or human failure, or not limited to either or the other alone (hybrid). Harbers explains the “hybrid-issue”³¹³ as follows: He argues that there are no boundaries between man and machine, or nature and society (or nature and culture) – and that they are “...irreducible to one or the other of these domains. Only we who call ourselves modern, only we make and remake this distinction between the human and the nonhuman.”³¹⁴ Through, what Latour calls the *Modern Constitution* – in essence that which he thinks to be the cornerstone of the apparent *modern* world and its principles – they are capable of distinguishing *themselves* (the moderns) from the *others* (pre-moderns), and they cut themselves off from *the world* in-order-to dominate nature. This constitution, and this probably is the reason why he chose the term: is constituted by three principles. See below:

Modernism, [...], implies first the scientific domination of nature, second the political emancipation of humanity, and third the maintenance of a strict division between these two activities. The scientific representation of things should not be mixed up with the political representation of people. That would imply an intolerable confusion between science and politics, facts and values, knowledge and power. This third founding prin-

³¹⁰ James Miller, *China's Green Religion*, pp. 17.

³¹¹ In Section 3 of this book, it will be explained more profoundly what such cultural ideology entails.

³¹² As will be analysed in detail in the chapter *Culture - A Concept of Self-Perception* in Section 3 of this book.

³¹³ “Latour's (1999) second argument is that environmentalism deals not with nature but with hybrid nature-culture objects that are the outcome of social practices. This hybridity would render the concept of nature meaningless.”, In: Jacques Pollini, *Bruno Latour and the Ontological Dissolution of Nature in Social Sciences: A Critical Review*, pp. 29.

³¹⁴ Hans Harbers, *We Have Never Been Modern* [Review], pp. 271.

principle of modernity is essential for the success of the other two. Only these three founding principles together distinguish us from other cultures and from our own past – from Them and Then. They lay the foundations for our very idea of scientific and political progress, of permanent revolution. Die, thou old thoughts and habits. *Vorwärts und schnell vergessen!*³¹⁵

Hence, these three principles made it possible to constantly distinguish *them* from the *others*; and they made it possible to detach *themselves* from *their own past*. Thus, in contrast to the so-called *pre-moderns* and through what had been perceived as a revolution (the Enlightenment age), *they* created (constructed) an image of themselves that portrayed them as being *modern*.

Harbers certainly has criticism for Latour as he thinks that Latour's methodology is at times too asymmetrical, an issue that Latour himself criticizes when analysing anthropology and social studies. Hans Harbers also accuses Latour of compiling different dichotomies all too hastily and thinks Latour's methodology is opportunistic, but he continues to explain how to unveil the hybrids that Latour talks about. The hybrids, so to speak, are given a voice through Latour's work, he says. The new constitution by Latour called the *Nonmodern Constitution*, accepts the hybrids, and provides them the space they need, but at the same time, he strives to limit them to a certain degree as they have been the cause of either stagnation or mobility, depending on their respective scales in size.³¹⁶

In the final chapter of the book Latour marks the contours of this new constitution by maintaining the advantages of premodernism, modernism, and postmodernism, while at the same time avoiding the disadvantages of each. Latour wants to retain the monism of the premoderns: their acknowledgement of the hybrids, but he rejects their obligation always to link the natural and social order, the main cause of stagnation and immobility. From the modern he wants to retain their final separation between a transcendent, objective nature and an immanent, free society – the very guarantee of innovation and mobility. But he rejects their philosophical codification of this distinction into a universal Great Divide between Nature and Culture, between Knowledge and Power, the very source of the clandestine practices of mediation and translation. From the postmoderns Latour wants to retain the sensitivity to reflexivity and constructivism, but he does not want to go along with their self-destructive cynicism, their nihilism, and their desperation.³¹⁷

By doing so, Latour tries to slow down and regulate the hybrids. In his *Parliament of Things*, he therefore attempts to provide an idea to merge-together the representation of people and the representation of things to overcome their former separation through the Modern Constitution, says Harbers. To him, Latour is not able to pull all the way through to represent *things*

³¹⁵ Hans Harbers, *We Have Never Been Modern* [Review], pp. 271.

³¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-274.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-274.

properly in his new Nonmodern Constitution, which he thematises in the book *The Parliament of Things*. The problem, analyses Harbers, by also comparing it to the philosophy of Habermas, lies in the fact that things cannot speak for themselves, and these nonhuman *actors*, therefore, are always being represented by humans. This is what Harbers calls *the treason of Latour*, although he acknowledges that this problem had been solved by Latour in later writings. Then, going back to the simple example of the crash of the F-16 fighter, according to Harbers, the paradox can be uncovered through an explanation as follows: He thinks that whether the jet crashed because of human failure or because of nonhuman failure, at least in this sort of analysis, can always be traced back to human error. In his view, this is so because all technology, and hence the nonhuman actors (in the technological realm), have initially always been created by humans. Hence, the failure of nonhumans or machines in such cases always relates to human productivity. Similarly, this can be assumed for empirical experiments and/or the construction of many processes in the sociological field.³¹⁸

The most valuable verdict one may take from this discussion, however, is the critique that Latour offers to the existing system and what he thereby adds to the solution of the underlying problems. As a side effect, on a simplistic level, this tells the observer that in science, in philosophy, and in every-day life, there is neither only one viewpoint nor are there ever only two points of view. This would be a dichotomy – a dualistic perception – but there are always multiple standpoints. The whole argument, about something being right and something else being wrong, is wrong-in-itself. Such a view would simply create a world in black and white. Possibly, in any given context, all the actors are right, and at the same time, all of them are wrong. The question is whether people are-capable-of seeing what is between, in the middle, the mixture of it all; the hybrid Latour might say, which is not the same as the nature-culture argument, but it appears this is where Latour's thinking leads to. That, in my view, is a great achievement.

As to what is right or wrong about someone's viewpoint, the question then arises whether such a judgment can be feasible. Most times, different standpoints clash with each other because the underlying interests are contradictory. Certainly, this is not a claim to relativize and tolerate the deeds of dictators, murderers, or criminals. But when there are daily clashes about right and wrong among ordinary people, often the judgment being made stems from a certain cultural or societal background, and this is accordingly founded on the subjectivity of value judgments, I argue. The issue then always becomes a moral justification, which builds on a

³¹⁸ Cf. Hans Harbers, *We Have Never Been Modern* [Review], pp. 274-275.

specific narrative that is founded on certain value sets of the respective group, society, culture, or civilization to which one belongs. Hence, the judgment is related to the way an individual has been *socialized*.

In the discussion about the hybrids, Jacques Pollini aims to clarify the wording that is being used by Latour. His view is that the meaning of the terms nature and culture is regularly confused. Certainly, he says, everything that has been *touched* and altered by humans is a product of the cultural realm, or at least the *object* (material or immaterial) has been somewhat *culturalized*³¹⁹ by humans. His discussion, in this respect, revolves around the issue of whether the real world is something that is independent of human activity. To Latour, it appears that mostly all things of nature and culture are hybrids. This could be assumed to be true, as the greater part of nature on this planet has been affected by man's actions.

On the other hand, Pollini writes, humans themselves are a product of this very nature.³²⁰ Therefore, it is true that nature and culture cannot be separated, but, at the same time, the dominance of human agency must be understood in all its profundity and clearly distinguished from that which is unaffected by human agency and then belongs to the realm of nature. To Pollini this must be understood as follows:

Nature can then be defined as the dimension of the world that is not the outcome of human agency. These two dimensions are exclusive, meaning that everything that is natural is not cultural and conversely, but are also inseparable, because the natural world is the substratum upon which human agency produces culture. The destruction of nature, thus, is the diminution of the natural content of things in favour of cultural content. In other words, the corollary of the destruction of nature is the production of culture. [...] Or, as culture itself is a production of nature, we can say that nature has the capacity to destroy itself, by the creation of more culture. But no moralisation should be attached to these assertions: saying that nature is transformed into culture says nothing about whether either of the two is better than the other. Only humans can decide whether something is good or bad.³²¹

This explanation of Pollini is intriguing as it facilitates a better understanding of that which is supposedly a product of human agency and that which is not. I agree with most of his view, but to me, it remains less convincing whether human agency, although the existence of humans derives from nature itself, is in this sense part of nature, too. Certainly, the development of the rational mind of man is a product of nature. As a result, Pollini is correct, and nature has-a-tendency-to destroy itself. But, on the other hand, we shall probably distinguish human

³¹⁹ My italics.

³²⁰ Cf. Jacques Pollini, *Bruno Latour and the Ontological Dissolution of Nature in the Social Sciences: A Critical Review*, pp. 36.

³²¹ Jacques Pollini, *Bruno Latour and the Ontological Dissolution of Nature in the Social Sciences*, pp. 37.

agency from the workings of nature, which is paradoxical when Pollini opens the divide by saying that what is cultural cannot be natural, and conversely (although he includes humans). Instead, it appears to me that what humans do is not so much natural anymore because many acts of the-human-race are results of their rational mind, which oftentimes, by its actions, plays against the favour of nature. Maybe one could say that humans are a product of nature, but all too often they act against nature through their deliberate decisions. Then, also, one could look at it as if the human rational mind is a product of nature, but that human agency through free will³²² is, in a sense, disconnected from nature. If one didn't look at the issue in this way, then any act of humans could be justified as being *natural*, and it would not demand any moral responsibility from humans. The political leader commanding a genocide could then refer to it as being natural. Wouldn't that be too easy? Hence, I claim that human agency is not a natural result of the sort that Pollini acclaims. Humans have-to show responsibility for their actions. That, among other characteristics, makes them human.

On the other aspects of the quote, I agree with Pollini (and Latour), that it is fair to speak of hybrids because it opens-up a comprehensive field of discussion for the in-betweens. But when social constructionists start to doubt the existence of the *real* world, both of us appear to disagree with them. Pollini highlights this and writes:

We speak, indeed, of this hybrid object that is made of nature and culture. The environment is, by definition, an anthropocentric concept, in contrast to nature, which refers, by definition, to an otherness, or to the otherness, the mysteries, within ourselves. The environment, as well as its representations, are socially constructed, at least in part, whereas nature, by definition, is not socially constructed (only its representations are). The thing that the social constructionists call produced or second nature might thus just be the environment.³²³

It appears that one can say that Latour and the other quoted scholars have greatly contributed to the understanding of the issue at hand. Latour claims that the *moderns*, in essence, formerly the Westerners³²⁴, had created an ideology that helped them to dominate others by means of argumentative and rhetorical manipulation through their rational ideologies of society, culture, and science. This is important knowledge that deepens understanding through further analysis of the actions of the Chinese civilization in the 20th century. Further, an understanding of the

³²² Although the concept of a *free will* is a highly controversial topic among neuroscientists and psychologists, this would mean Pollini is still correct if this free will were only a product of our formerly formed ideas and subconscious values. Think of Freud's concept of the Über-Ich and the like. For further reading, see: Anna Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, Kapitel 1: Das Ich als Stätte der Beobachtung, pp. 7-12. Kindler Verlag, 9th Edition, Munich, 1977.

³²³ Jacques Pollini, *Bruno Latour and the Ontological Dissolution of Nature in the Social Sciences: A Critical Review*, pp. 38.

³²⁴ Probably not all Westerners, but a specific group of influential people.

divide between nature and culture is indicated when one wishes to unravel the difference between that which is human-made and that which is not. It sets the referential framework for the applicability of *social constructionism*, as it thereby demarcates the limits of this theoretical model. This is so because reality still exists out there, a nature that, if untouched by humans, has nothing to do with human production of culture. Accordingly, that which has not been affected by humans remains natural, and that which has been altered and taken over by humans becomes culturalized or, often enough, even transmutes into what is being called culture. In Section 3 of this book, it will be explained why this differentiation is so important.

In conclusion, Latour's model adds to the analysis of the invention of a new Traditional Chinese Medicine. His claims help to understand how the struggle of Chinese medicine must be comprehended in a much broader context. It was the influx of Western ideology that threatened Chinese culture, state mechanisms, society and much more. This process must be understood as one ideology haggling with the other. Resultantly, Chinese intellectuals had been striving to constitute a new system of Chinese-ness in-order-to be able to rescue elements of their identity. The concept of *modernity* versus the concept of something that is *traditional* has very profound political implications. Described by Latour, here one finds a dualist concept, which works as a dichotomy that discriminates the latter (the pre-modern or the traditional). It will be shown soon in further detail that modernity and traditionalism rub off on each other.

As will be learned towards the end of this section, rupture has been the case in China. In the respective processes, foreign influence certainly had its impact, as it suddenly confronted Chinese society with new ideas. But before investigating this issue, it will be analysed how modern-day China is mediating itself to contemporary audiences, and it will thereby be learned how China constantly reproduces the myth of its culture as being *traditional*.

8. Tradition in Modern China and Its Mediation in Chinese State Media

Another aspect of the political realm in the creation of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine is that of mediated self-perception. In many countries, nationalist myths are effectively conveyed to the people by the mass media. In this context, Andrew Lohrey writes in *Nationalism as Myth* that »...nationalism should be seen as a symbolic and mythological construct, produced and reproduced for the coercive manipulation of the “normalized” and compliant “subject.” Nationalism therefore represents a form in which our identities are constructed for us.«³²⁵ This, I

³²⁵ Andrew Lohrey, *Nationalism as Myth*, pp. 15.

argue, is no different in China today. In that sense, the *modern* myth of 'the nation' has taken over in China, too. The Chinese mass media has the potential to reach foreign recipients as much as Chinese citizens, and it thereby constructs the concept of the nation. This unity of the nation, nevertheless, is simply the current form to strengthen the imagined community of 'a people'. To achieve such an objective, multiple formats can be used. These include such mediums as TV, popular movies or even reports about certain events. Like Ding Ersu, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Lingnan University of Hong Kong, writes, the 2008 Olympics in China were instrumentalized in this way. On this occasion, the media had been massively utilized to purport Chinese-ness and Chinese culture, as well as the development of Chinese innovation and technology, to the world. He writes:

The uniqueness of culture, of course, lies in “China’s 5,000 year history” which the organizers wanted to “fully display” at the opening ceremony of the 29th Summer Olympic Games. For an extended period of time, that is, from the beginning of the 20th century to the notorious Cultural Revolution which ended in the late 1970s, there was a general mood in China to completely break away from its “feudal past” in the nation’s maddening drive toward modernity. After 100 years of struggle, especially after the last 30 years of reform and opening to the outside world which has produced considerable wealth and prosperity for its 1.3 billion population, China is now seeking to reestablish links with its past which has made the country what it is today. In other words, China now considers itself as belonging to an alternative tradition in relation to Western culture which has dominated the Olympic Games in the past. Theoretically speaking, the 29th Olympics were supposed to be an occasion for cultural exchange and improvement of international understanding which is part of the Olympic Movement for world peace through sport, and the organizers certainly wanted to take this opportunity to convey to the world that, different as it is, Chinese culture has much to contribute to the totality of human civilization, hence another line of symbolism that ran through the opening ceremony.³²⁶

Through this paragraph, it can be understood that, on the one hand, mass media events are being employed to convey a certain ideology of culture and the like. Interpretation of such events can be very dim, but they can also be understood as-a-means to portray the uniqueness of Chinese culture. Such programmatic always bears the ideological component, but this being a cultural, national, or ideological theme does not mean that such a process is instantly only to be understood as a negative matter in consideration of inner or foreign policy³²⁷.

In his essay, Ding analyses how the Summer Olympics 2008³²⁸ have been employed as a major tool to enhance certain views about China among its own citizens and the global community. This image, according to Ding, certainly included themes of national unity, innovation in

³²⁶ Ding Ersu, *Emaciated Chineseness*, pp. 52.

³²⁷ Even in the most basic sense, that very group-coherence scheme is a political matter.

³²⁸ The artistic director of the opening ceremony was the famous movie director *Zhang Yimou* 张艺谋.

the high-tech field, and China becoming greener and eco-friendlier. The Olympics, being an event that is viewed by great numbers of Chinese and foreigners alike, therefore has a huge impact on the process of disseminating desired myths about China.

While the focus of this paper is concerned with the political discourse of TCM in China, similar evidence can be found when analysing Chinese movies and TV dramas, I argue. Many of these shows are usually aimed at influencing Chinese recipients and/or viewers in the Chinese diaspora. Although Chinese medicine had been the only medicine common in China before the entry of Western merchants and missionaries well before the first Opium War, the modern discourse oftentimes does not clearly distinguish between the new and the old Chinese medicine, as has already been learned. Through the production of movies or TV dramas, myths of any kind can be brought to a great number of recipients, as will be shown shortly.

Movies and films represent stories in different ways from how issues are portrayed and perceived on theatre stages. The camera, as an apparatus and medium between the audience and the actors changes the whole perceptive experience. Through the instrumentalization of a camera, the view angles determined by the producers and the final cut by the film-cutter are just some of the influences that manipulate the overall perceived result. Further, the actor in film (as opposed to the actor on stage, who is in constant contact with the audience) has no possibility to adjust his acting as-a-result of an interaction with the audience because the audience is simply not present and therefore cannot give him any feedback. This, wrote Walter Benjamin, is, in part, withdrawing the otherwise immanent aura of the art piece. However, while in epochs before filmmaking, paintings and other such imagery were contemporaneously only available to limited groups of people, the matter substantially changed with the emergence of films, movies, and television. Movies bring drama and world news to an otherwise enclosed barroom or living room. They can thereby produce certain kinds of a new realities for the masses.³²⁹ Besides movies, there are other events that influence the collective mind in China, such as the internet today. The internet today and classical television have big potential to influence the masses. On television, when such occurrences as the Beijing Olympics are used to reproduce nationalist themes and an image of Chinese-ness, the conveyed content seeps into the minds of the audience, especially when a certain myth is constantly being reproduced. Ding Ersu writes:

The state-sponsored opening ceremony of the 29th Olympic Games was certainly no place to cater to the Orientalist discourse which might otherwise bring individual art-

³²⁹ See Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, pp. 10-37.

ists a small share of the Western market of cultural products; the clear mission and objective of the event was to make known to the world that China is a peace-loving nation that has contributed to the world civilization in more than one ways.³³⁰

It can be assumed that such implementation of cultural representation takes place in all countries when hosting the Olympics, which is an event of pride for all nations and therefore provides an opportunity to present what one has to offer. Certainly, this method of myth construction presents a very large platform to construct whatever the nation desires to portray to the global community, as well as whatever goal the respective state representatives wish to convey to their own citizens. I argue that it is through such media as much as through channels like the Confucius Institutes that the Chinese state is-able-to disseminate a certain image of the nation. This will again be highlighted in Section 3 of this book. In sum, the account given here reveals that new technology and mass events have long arrived in China. Through such instrumentation, the state has the opportunity to shape its perceived identity. This includes the perception of overall Chinese-ness and, on the other hand, the Chinese writing of history in what is chosen to convey about the modern Chinese nation.

It is a rather semiotic analytical viewpoint that helps to delve into the field of the construction of the Chinese national self through the concept of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China. In the following chapter, it will be unravelled how the specific implementation and use of the myth of Chinese medicine are being employed to portray the desired Chinese self-understanding. Further, analytical results will show that part of the greater political discourse of Chinese medicine is also founded on the understanding that foreign researchers have about the issue. Not only is it the view inside China that determines Chinese culture and Chinese medicine, as can be understood through the argument of the proclaimed identity, but also the image that is disseminated and conveyed by the global community. This includes foreign consumers as well as foreign researchers who either hold a certain conception about the issue in their own minds or who publish their findings about the matter publicly. As had been explained earlier, the overall discourse holds both that which is the *main* discourse and that which is possibly not desired by the main actors in the process. As a result, certain opinions and the evaluation of Chinese medicine always vary according to the observer's stance and are thereby founded on the respective observer's *point of view*. A point of view is commonly not just a *simple* opinion; but it is based on a whole set of values and a comprehensive interpretation of a given matter. These claims will be further clarified in the next chapter.

³³⁰ Ding Ersu, *Emaciated Chineseness*, pp. 53.

9. The Existence of a Political Culture vs. Medical Practicability

In their essay *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine: A Typology of Main Issues*, Pierre-Henry de Bruyn *et al.* find reasons to believe that all respective classifications of Chinese medicine are built on certain grounds. Usually, such grounds are based on each researcher's own worldview and his or her social background, which pose a constituting process of socialization that forms character and behaviour. De Bruyn observes that, for instance, Volker Scheid and Manfred Porkert, who are not only researchers in the field of Chinese studies but also Chinese medicine practitioners, generally tend to have a strong defensive opinion when Chinese medicine is subjected to criticism. Others, like Paul Unschuld and Kim Taylor, he argues, each-in-their-own-right, categorize Chinese medicine as a kind of religious doctrine *that one must either believe or doubt*.³³¹ For De Bruyn *et al.*, this clearly reflects the "old Western debate between science and religion"³³². Therefore, no matter how objectively an author or researcher may claim to approach a subject, grading and classification are always an inherent part of the process. However trenchant and eloquent the author might analyse a subject, his or her sublime personal educational and sociopolitical background will influence the subsequent outcome and final stance about the respective subject.

Possibly that is the reason why De Bruyn *et al.* have criticism for Western scholarship and write that the deeper implications about science and religion, mentioned earlier, are typical for Western scholarly projects. They, thus, provide a different insight into the common explanation concerning the medical efficacy of Chinese medicine. De Bruyn *et al.* are convinced that the holistic cosmology in Chinese medicine mainly derives from Daoist beliefs because this cultural and philosophical foundation had been the hotbed for core principles and concepts of Chinese medicine.³³³ The focus, they argue, should not so much be concentrated on religious motivation and slip away into mysterious conclusions, but it should rest on the factual realities of the Chinese past.³³⁴ Of course, this does not mean that one should not inquire about historical and epistemological roots in Chinese medicine, but one shall also investigate the practical reasons for the application of Chinese medicine. Risking that some may find this approach too reductionist, De Bruyn *et al.* argue that it is this very approach that is more appropriate to uncover the essence of the Chinese healing arts. But it is not the sole answer to the issue. Therefore, they write:

³³¹ Cf. Pierre-Henry de Bruyn *et al.*, *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, pp. 24.

³³² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

³³³ Insofar, their view accords with authors like Gu Yaling or Hu Fuchen, who explained the links between ancient Chinese works like the *Book of Change* and the *Daodejing*.

³³⁴ Cf. Pierre-Henry de Bruyn *et al.*, *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, pp. 25.

However, to insist excessively on the Taoist roots (Confucian or Buddhist) of Chinese medicine would also risk obscuring the epistemological status of the latter rather than helping to define it. It is therefore better to consider the problem by going back to what is essential in the act of healing: this is what Chinese have done over the centuries in transmitting their medical traditions.³³⁵

In their words, the core doctrine of Chinese medicine, including numerous local medical traditions, had always been concentrated on healing illnesses. As a result, the Chinese approach to healing has been very practical. The confrontation with Western medicine, beginning in the 19th century (including all its political implications), brought about massive turmoil in the self-perception and epistemological understanding of Chinese medicine and its practitioners. Theories and doctrines then suddenly had to contend with the incoming Western theories of medicine. Ever since, Chinese medicine has been in crisis, which has driven practitioners and politicians to call for modernization and reform. Certainly, among Chinese medical doctors, researchers, and other experts, there have been and are still manifold viewpoints in existence concerning this matter. Such include attempts to fully deconstruct the validity of Western scientific medicine and instead support the uniqueness of Chinese medicine (as has been shown by the accounts given on *the Research Status of Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse* at the beginning of this book). Nevertheless, most modern Chinese scientists seem to embrace the importance of quantitatively measurable results and therefore prefer the modernization of Chinese medicine.³³⁶ Like already concluded above, De Bruyn *et al.* also note that the modernization was largely driven by the authorities of the PRC starting in the 1950s. In an indirect quotation from Kim Taylor, De Bruyn *et al.* write:

Such strong political support for Chinese medicine by PRC authorities does not, however, justify the reduction of Chinese medicine to a mere political medical system, or to deduce that the interest of “the West” was attracted more to the “traditional” aspects of Chinese medicine than its “scientific merits”.³³⁷ In fact, if the political character of TCM is often decried, this does not detract from its scientific or above all therapeutic merits.³³⁸

According to the quoted essay from 2011, the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国国家中医药管理局) and the Confederation for the Universalization of Chinese Herbal Medicine (重要全球化联盟) were founded with the purpose to promote TCM and to develop its standards and its institutional-

³³⁵ Pierre-Henry de Bruyn et al., *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, pp. 25.

³³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 26.

³³⁷ For further details, see: Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945 – 1963: A Medicine of Revolution* (Routledge, 2004).

³³⁸ Pierre-Henry de Bruyn et al., *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, pp. 26.

zation.³³⁹ Interestingly, in the above quote, De Bruyn *et al.* point to the issue of overemphasizing the politicization of Chinese medicine. As will be learned throughout this book, the myth of Traditional Chinese Medicine is certainly widely linked to political motivations. But the fine distinction between Chinese medicine and the myths about it is key. The former is not the same as the latter. In the constructionist (semiotic) view, it is not only a matter of the differentiation between the signifier and the signified, but also about the many currents that historically existed in Chinese medicine and those that have been produced to achieve a modern Chinese medicine.

The next chapter will strengthen the understanding of historical matters that further clarify the development of a modern TCM as much as the historical events that are interlinked with it.

10. A Historical Explanation – Recovering from the Past

As has been highlighted in the first chapters on the implementation of the Confucius Institutes and the following chapters about how China is often perceived as a threat to other countries, it is now time to understand the conflicts that China has had to go through in the past two centuries. According to researchers Guo Xinghua and Cao Xinfang, the end of Chinese superiority was initiated with the arrival of Western missionaries in China. Resultantly, as they argue, the confidence of Chinese medical practitioners and scholars of other fields started to diminish gradually.³⁴⁰ In this interpretation, Chinese medicine had been adapted to Western science and Western values after China had been invaded. Certainly, China, as a nation-state and as a people, has (and had) needs and consequently must act accordingly, I argue. Naturally, in a global capitalistic world, China poses a threat because it is a competitor in the global system and thereby poses a potential risk to the established players in global economics and politics. Another strong player in the game is undesirable to those existing actors because they surely want and need to keep their status quo. I suppose that nobody would claim the political and economic global arena to be a fair and friendly game, although this would indeed be desirable. Quite the opposite appears to be the case. The power games in politics and economics are not only of an economic nature; they also pose ideological conflicts. By this, I mean that different value systems clash. Not only are these ideologies leftist or rightist, but they also consist of apparent democracies against apparent authoritarian states. Without a doubt, these different political systems are quite divergent in the way they offer *good* to the people, but it appears to me that almost every country on the planet has adopted a capitalist system. Critically viewed,

³³⁹ See Pierre-Henry de Bruyn et al, *The Institutional Transmission of Chinese Medicine*, pp. 26-27.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Guo Xinghua and Cao Xinfang, [Chinese Medicine: From Being Instructed to Setting Out Anew], pp. 70.

one could then ask what role the individual plays in a capitalist market society. To me, the various state ideologies generally all seem to disguise the fact that the ordinary worker has to obey the market rules. Whether the individual lives in China or Germany does not make much of a difference in this respect. However, this has probably been the case all over the world since industrialization processes first took over. Also, this surely influenced the Chinese society as it transformed from an agrarian society to an industrial state. I argue that such alterations in China in the 20th century have forced the Chinese society to adjust its internal processes to the resulting changes. Transformation surely has not only taken place in the economic sphere but also hugely in the *spiritual* realm of Chinese society, as is revealed by the following explanations.

Historically, in China, the concept of harmony has always been advocated by manifold schools with different visions, as has been discussed above. China's internal history, however, bears its own uniqueness. Taking into scope the role of China in the late 19th and 20th centuries, sinologist Karl Kraatz points out that in this time-period, China had undergone three major phases of struggle. According to his accounts, Chinese intellectuals from 1861 to 1895 had already initiated something that could be called a *self-strengthening movement*. This, however, had been a reaction to the *overriding* of Chinese values and ideas by Western science and ideology. Chinese philosophers and analysts at the time came-to-the-conclusion that the strength of the West had not only been based on their strong military power, but even more so on their scientific and rationalist approach towards the understanding and subjection of the world (what Latour calls the concept of being *modern*). The new orientation of this era was then rather Eurocentric and imperialistic, instead of being based on Chinese values. After the *Xinhai Revolution*, the new Chinese elites comprehended Confucianism as an anti-modern and conservative ideology that had to be abandoned. The internal tensions and the non-identification of Chinese people with their own cultural heritage had been caused by the events, which were due to – or at least brought to the surface by - the invasion of the powerful Western powers. This standpoint offers a look at history from a rather Chinese perspective. It shows how both sides of a story matter. Kraatz identifies this period in China as a process of Westernization. He writes that after the failed new republic and the confusion until approximately 1925, the Chinese nation had been experiencing a civil war period that had been marked by terror and violence. Some forces within the country were supported by Anglo-American stakeholders, which strengthened the warlords, while others did lean towards Japanese factions. Between the years of 1923 and 1927, the GMD (Guomindang, the Chinese Na-

tionalist Party) and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) had, however, started to fight against northern warlords and Japan at the same time.³⁴¹ This united front later fell apart as they turned against each other, and the main fight against the invaders had been continued by the troops of the Communists.

From this time on, Chinese intellectuals started to realize that the *total Westernization* of their country and culture could not sufficiently solve their internal problems. Meanwhile, translations of Western books and works had increasingly become available to the Chinese reader. According to Kraatz, all this led to a more moderate – or realistic - understanding of Western culture, its claimed superiority, and the wrong belief that Western ideas, science, and philosophy would make China stronger. Then followed a period, which Kraatz calls *Western Synthesis*, which roughly lasted from 1920 to 1980. Throughout this period, Chinese intellectuals began to criticize the former elites for their thinking that Westernization would be equal to modernization.³⁴² On a sidenote, this reveals how the impact of *the moderns*, as explained by Latour, literally resulted in the suppression of the Chinese identity. Hence, that which followed gradually initiated the next level of recovering Chinese confidence. In a quote by Vera Schwarcz, Kraatz points out how the *May 4th Movement* (a movement away from feudal values) had been perceived more critically in the following decade.³⁴³

Aware of the limitations of May Fourth anti-feudalism, they tried to appear more moderate in their criticism of tradition. Zhang Shenfu's writings in 1937 reflect this need to create a *synthetic* modern culture, one that would combine elements of both Western and Chinese traditions. Unlike conservative nationalists, he believed that 'modernity' could not be *either* Chinese or Western, but had to be *both*.^{344 345}

Here, the argument is based on the views of the Chinese philosopher Zhang Shenfu. It had been he who, according to Kraatz, had advocated the new slogan “Rescue Confucius!” at the time. It thus becomes clear how Chinese intellectuals, and resultantly the Chinese state and society, had already undergone a painstaking and disastrous time from the downfall of the Qing dynasty towards the first third of the 20th century. As Kraatz further explains, at the beginning of this struggle, the loss and search for identity in China were due to the incoming Western ideology, but the downfall of the last Chinese empire went hand in hand with the initiation of the rejection of feudal values. Confucius and Confucianism were first perceived

³⁴¹ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 70-72.

³⁴² Kraatz reveals that this latter argument is mainly built on ideas by the Chinese philosopher Tu Weiming.

³⁴³ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 71-73.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.72-73.

³⁴⁵ In: Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986).

as the root of all evil and backwardness, as they strongly represented the feudal system. In the following process, such scholars, like Zhang Shenfu, came to the understanding that giving up all Chinese tradition and culture would not lead to the desired results but would instead cause a complete loss of tradition and, thus, identity. Confucianism therefore started to be revitalized and reconstructed. In this context of a search for a new Chinese identity grounded in tradition, Kraatz also further mentions how Chinese Marxism had been another model that had been invoked in-order-to build a new ideology that nevertheless could be linked to the former cultural heritage.³⁴⁶

Many of these findings also accord with the early quoted research results of Chinese researchers Guo Xinghua and Cao Xinfang. Their essay also highlights the course of the revival and strengthening of Chinese medicine, which, as they argue, had been possible due to the growing strength and confidence of the Chinese nation as it gradually became economically and politically more powerful in the modern global hierarchy.³⁴⁷ The process of achieving an improved national confidence is inevitably linked with the production of a new national myth. It had been created in-order-to to create the new Chinese identity and its confidence in the old and new values. This points back to what had already been learned when discussing the term *harmony* and the respective alterations that Mao implemented in-order-to create a new society. Here, the differing angle to the matter is that the new Chinese society had been in search of a new identity, and it must be hypothesised that the warlord period and the like reflect the very process of finding such an identity. At the same time, in accordance with this process, it presumably accorded with the finding of a new form of state structure to institutionalize and govern the country. As now known, this new form culminated in the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Further, Kraatz informs the reader that in the process of the revitalisation of Confucianism, the Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan (冯友兰, 1895-1990) had been very influential. What he had in mind was an increase in the value of Chinese philosophy. According to Kraatz, it had been Feng's opinion that, generally, Chinese philosophy is building on a much longer tradition than Western philosophy and that it is much more systematic than the latter. Although he certainly based his work on a rationalized Western methodology, he nonetheless succeeded in establishing a new theory of Confucianism, which led to Neo-Confucianism.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 73-76.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Guo Xinghua and Cao Xinfang, [Chinese Medicine: From Being Instructed to Setting Out Anew].

³⁴⁸ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 73.

In the way Karl Kraatz interprets this, the whole process of revitalisation had been a quest for identity because, after the abolishment of Confucianism and a certain portion of Chinese culture, there had been a sort of spiritual void in-regard-to the Chinese self-consciousness. The re-constitution of Chinese identity thus became essential to strengthening what could be called Chinese-ness. Without a doubt, this rekindling had to be found in the Chinese cultural heritage and history after the feudal shackles had largely been overcome. The new Confucianist movement started to produce pride and certainty in Chinese culture again. With the following era, which included the founding of the Chinese People's Republic and the - by Mao Zedong - initiated campaigns like the *Great Leap Forward* and the *Cultural Revolution*, the Chinese nation nevertheless continued to pass through tough times. Caused by the former campaign but also by floods, draughts and the forced collectivization of the farming sector, China experienced one of the most horrible – if not the worst - famines in human history. After the death of Mao Zedong, the new leader of the CCP, Deng Xiaoping, had come to a crossroads, a dilemma between the old communist revolutionary ideology, which opposed capitalism and democracy, and the need for economic growth. Deng then decided on the *Open-Door policy*, which had a huge effect not only on China's economy but also on its society. In this new era, starting in 1978, Deng initiated the transition from revolutionary politics to that of reform politics. In-order-to strengthen the Chinese identity, Neo-Confucianism and the term *Socialism with Chinese characteristics* were created.³⁴⁹ In this respect, Karl Kraatz uses a quote by Xianling Song from her book *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The 'Cultural Craze' and New Confucianism*³⁵⁰ as shown below:

At a time of drastic social, cultural, and, most of all, economic change, to reestablish the notion of social order after the chaos of the cultural revolution undoubtedly served the interests of a government desperately in need of a stable social environment to push for economic reform. Confucianism as a Chinese ideology could help to provide the people with some sort of national identity. National Confucianism could serve as a bulwark against the ideological impacts from³⁵¹ the west following rapid modernization.³⁵²

This last period of China's re-invention of its self-identity is allocated by Kraatz from 1980 until today. He calls this the period of *Chinese Synthesis*. Strikingly, the latter quote and all the views put forward after Karl Kraatz provide an insight into the suffering and the long pe-

³⁴⁹ Cf. Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 74.

³⁵⁰ In: Song Xianling, *Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The 'Culture Craze' and New Confucianism*, published in: *New Confucianism*, by John Makeham (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003).

³⁵¹ Obviously, a misspelling by either Xianling Song or Karl Kraatz, I suppose what is meant here is "from".

³⁵² Karl Kraatz, *Die vermeintliche Rückständigkeit Chinas*, pp. 75.

riod of approximately 150 years in which the Chinese leadership as well as the Chinese people constantly had to adapt to internal and external challenges. Again, one should not forget that a greater portion of this struggle was probably also linked to Western involvement. However, the deeper implications of such a statement would have to be analysed carefully.

Nevertheless, there is certainly no doubt about the fact that China desperately had the need to stabilize the country with a strong nationalist ideology. Thus, the creation of the new Confucianism as it is propagated through state media, literature or the worldwide established Confucius Institutes has not only to do with the dissemination of a certain image to the outside world. The internal and external identities cannot be cleanly taken apart from each other. If Western scholars find that China is pursuing certain political goals with its Confucius Institutes, this is probably not wrong, but as has been explained here, there is a flipside to it. The two aspects are woven together. Internally, I argue, the Chinese nation had to strengthen itself again, it had to re-gain confidence. In this light, there is not much that could be criticized about the matter. Maybe it should be rather humbly accepted that this whole process had been a matter of dignity, and that it had been a process of the reconnection of a nation with its cultural past.

After instability lasted several decades, it was of utmost importance to the Chinese people to restore harmony, peace, and economic growth in China. Volker Scheid sums this up in regard-to the invention of traditional Chinese medicine in contrast to what formerly had simply been called Chinese medicine in China.

The origins of this process date to the late nineteenth century, when the military superiority of colonial powers forced China's intellectuals to question and ultimately abandon beliefs regarding the universality and superiority of their own intellectual and scientific traditions. Comparison and selective assimilation soon gave way to more radical attempts at refashioning identities and imagining the future, including that of indigenous medicine. 'Chinese medicine' (*zhongyi* 中醫) thus came to be differentiated from 'western medicine' (*xiyi* 西醫), even if much of the latter entered China via Japan. But it was not until after a dual healthcare system had been established in Maoist China that 'Chinese' and 'western' medicine became standard terms.³⁵³

Through the first part of this paragraph, it is understood that 'modern' and 'traditional' are a binary terminology in which the traditional appears to be often assumed as the inferior antonym. Chinese intellectuals did not just change terms because they were in the mood. Pressure arose in the struggle with the colonizing powers, which, at least partially, had initiated this process. No one knows whether the Chinese feudal system had collapsed without the in-

³⁵³ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 60.

volvement of the Western imperialists, but the atrocities committed by Western powers surely weakened China immensely. In Section 3 of this book, when attending to the analysis of the TV series *Dazhaimen*, it will be laid-out how the Chinese narrative about China's past is certainly conveying China's struggle as-a-result of the invasion of Western colonizing powers. While part of it acts to disseminate the modern myth about Chinese history in-order-to legitimize the Chinese Communist Party's leadership, another side surely reflects the factual reality of China's past. A past in which China had been invaded, subjugated, and humiliated by the Western colonizers.

Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson point out that common misconceptions about China, its politics, and its people are portrayed as follows below. The article *What the West gets wrong about China* appeared in the Harvard Business Review in May 2021. The authors' report explains the motifs and characteristics of the Chinese government as much as its people from a Chinese-based perspective. It provides a standpoint that helps to comprehend the internal needs of a nation, as also outlined above by Kraatz and Scheid, that had to tackle many obstacles throughout the past century.

Mitter and Johnson describe how China was so different from what it is today when they first visited the country in the early 1990s. While many people still dressed in Mao suits and cycled everywhere, it was obvious how the Maoist era had left its mark on society. Traditional customs and values were still to be found everywhere.³⁵⁴ I argue that this possibly reflects how values and customs usually change slowly.³⁵⁵ Probably a lot has changed in China since the end of the Qing dynasty and throughout the Mao era, but certain cultural traditions and rites are either hard to take away from the people or they are constantly brought back to the collective mind.³⁵⁶

In the Mao era, say Mitter and Johnson, not only had communism been accepted and used as a new ideology, but at its core lay Marxism, which had been fused with Leninist ideas. This approach served the goals of the CCP best in achieving its interests, as had been shown earlier by the quoted argument of Dutton. The fighting of the Japanese and the thereby won war,

³⁵⁴ Cf. Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

³⁵⁵ This conviction of mine goes back to the research results of Ronald Inglehart, in which it is explained that old values and norms only slowly change over time as older cohorts of societal groups pass away and new pupils move along. In: Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, pp. 108-130 (Princeton University Press, 1997).

³⁵⁶ More on this in Section 3 of this book.

according to Mitter and Johnson, continuously function as a strong legitimation for the Chinese Communist Party up to the present.³⁵⁷

The Leninist nature of politics is also evidenced by the language used to discuss it. Political discourse in China remains anchored in Marxist-Leninist ideas of “struggle” (*douzheng*) and “contradiction” (*maodun*) – both seen as attributes that force a necessary and even healthy confrontation that can help achieve a victorious outcome.³⁵⁸

Hence, the notion of a struggling nation, which will also later be investigated and analysed in the context of the Chinese TV series *Dazhaimen*, is a common theme in Chinese inner politics. This theme legitimizes and strengthens the role of the CCP, as it provides the grounds for the repeated narration of the myth of the humiliated nation. It is important to note here that it is a myth that is used for certain political motivations, but at the same time, history proves that China was invaded and mistreated by the Western forces and the Japanese. Mitter and Johnson also point out that a frequent Western misunderstanding is that capitalistic economy and democracy belong together and that processes of industrialization, in the long run, must always lead to the people’s demand for more freedom.³⁵⁹ In this respect, Ronald Inglehart, professor of political science emeritus, had already shown in his book *Modernization and Postmodernization* that democracy is not just an idea but how, in a process of democratization, respective institutions in the state structure must be built in-order-to realize a democratic state system.³⁶⁰

Following Mitter’s and Johnson’s reasoning, China must not, and probably will not, go down this path. Mitter and Johnson explain that, rather recently, the Chinese people seemed to be very content with their government. According to a July 2020 research study conducted by the Ash Harvard Kennedy School of Government, the report...

revealed 95% satisfaction with the Beijing government among Chinese citizens. Our own experiences on the ground in China confirm this. Most ordinary people we meet don’t feel that the authoritarian state is solely oppressive, although it can be that; for them it also provides opportunity.³⁶¹

Such opportunities, it is explained in the article, can be chances like that of a journalist employed by a state-owned magazine who now has-the-opportunity-to fly around the world to cover stories, or that of a cleaner who worked hard in the past and thereby now owns several apartments. While these arguments are only mildly convincing, in my view, it may still be

³⁵⁷ Cf. Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization*, pp. 215.

³⁶¹ Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

correct that the economic growth, which the government has more-or-less constantly provided over the past decades, is temporarily enough to keep people satisfied. In the quoted article, the authors literally highlight in bold printed letters that “Many Chinese believe that the country’s recent economic achievements have actually come about because of, not despite, China’s authoritarian form of government.”³⁶²

A *stronger* government, this gives reason to think, is-capable-of-pushing and enforcing certain policies for growth differently than a democratic government, and this, in fact, may be of benefit to the nation even if certain opinions are neglected in the process. On the other hand, in this context, it is being argued again by Mitter and Johnson that the CCP had fought off the Japanese invaders from 1937 to 1941 and that the political Marxist-Leninist system had provided the state with control.³⁶³ All this can be interpreted as typical features of an oppressive authoritarian regime, but as Mitter and Johnson argue, the many necessities of the Chinese people are the foundation for their support of the Chinese government.³⁶⁴

The first of the reasons to believe in the government is the repeated struggle that the Chinese nation had to go through over the course of the past century. Peter Zarrow writes:

Over the last century and a half, efforts to turn China into a cohesive nation and powerful state have led down many twisting paths. Whether consumerist patriotism can serve as a binding ideology, and how ordinary people are to claim rights as citizens, are not, of course, questions that only Chinese face today. Chinese culture will continue to reflect these tensions in this new age of globalization.³⁶⁵

Thus, one can imagine that a return to the unstable society of former times is certainly not desirable for anyone in China. Mitter and Johnson reason that China must be understood from the inside out and not from the outside in. In the matter of the Confucian revival, Mitter and Johnson, explain it differently from what Kraatz has provided to the reader. They argue that the concept of hierarchy is much more significant and differently accentuated than what may appeal to Westerners.³⁶⁶ In their argumentation, they are highlighting the concept of *social harmony* in Confucian societies that had been explained earlier in the chapter *Harmony in Philosophy and Governance*. They write:

Such ideas [of the nature of the Chinese authoritative state] may appear very different from the outward-facing, Confucian concepts of “benevolence” and “harmony” that China presents to its international, English-speaking audience. But even those con-

³⁶² Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

³⁶³ Cf. Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments: The Making of the Twentieth-Century Chinese State*, pp. 44.

³⁶⁶ Cf. Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

cepts lead to considerable misunderstanding on the part of Westerners, who often reduce Confucianism to cloying ideas about peace and cooperation. For the Chinese, the key to those outcomes is respect for an appropriate hierarchy, itself a means of control. While hierarchy and equality may appear to the post-Enlightenment West to be antithetical concepts, in China they remain inherently complementary.

Recognizing that the authoritarian Marxist-Leninist system is accepted in China as not only legitimate but also effective is crucially important if Westerners are to make more-realistic long-term decisions about how to deal with or invest in the country.³⁶⁷

Hence, the sole comparison between a Western democratic state and the Chinese system without taking the specific characteristics of each of them into account is inappropriate. Mitter and Johnson provide an understanding in the sense that the contemporary political system in China has a cultural and historical foundation. This is not only rooted in a certain myth, but it is one that Chinese society has somewhat naturally developed according to its specific background. This background is obviously very different from that of, say, Germany, France, or the United States of America. As learned before, the Confucian society historically and traditionally emphasises a system in which hierarchical control is stressed differently. That's the argument here.

When criticizing the Confucius Institutes for deliberately portraying and disseminating a harmonious image of Chinese culture and the Chinese state, one could ask why they wouldn't or shouldn't do it. To be fair, which nation would not deliver a positive self-image? If such action is understood as a kind of self-advertisement, then it is obvious how, usually, in advertisements, companies and entrepreneurs do not mention the flaws of a product. Mitter and Johnson write:

One reason that many people misread China's trajectory may be that – particularly in the English-language promotional materials the Chinese use overseas – the country tends to portray itself as a variation on a liberal state, and therefore more trustworthy. It often compares itself to brands with which Westerners are familiar. For example, in making the case for why it should be involved in the UK's 5G infrastructure rollout, Huawei styled itself the “John Lewis of China,” in reference to the well-known British department store that is regularly ranked as one of the UK's most trusted brands. China is also often at pains to suggest to foreign governments or investors that it is similar to the West in many aspects – consumer lifestyles, leisure travel, and a high demand for tertiary education. These similarities are real, but they are manifestations of the wealth and personal aspirations of China's newly affluent middle class, and they in no way negate the very real differences between the political system of China and the West.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

Thus, as has been shown here, there are huge differences between the Chinese system and that of many Western nations. It is easy to misread China. And, certainly, one can have reasonable criticism for its political system, but one must understand the comprehensive state system of China and its state structure, which are the result of the complex history of the nation. Mitter and Johnson, therefore, point out in the latter paragraph that China is portraying itself in a certain way, which is presumably how the Chinese perceive themselves. The Chinese Confucius Institutes are part of the state apparatus. As a result, the construction of a desired self-image, including the cultural object of Traditional Chinese Medicine, is a political and cultural matter. This has been uncovered in detail in Section 1 of this book, but the matter is more complex. For the Chinese state and the Chinese people, this subject is related to a history of humiliation. As China had undergone invasion by the Western powers, it had experienced the downfall of the Qing empire. The installation of the republic in 1911 followed, and then came the warlord era. Inner wars, and the struggle between nationalists and the communist party, the (re-)invasion of the Japanese, the founding of the PRC, and later the *revolutions* that Mao had initiated followed.³⁶⁹

On top of it all, the West, with its *modern* doctrine, exerted a lot of power with its science and ideology. This created a tough fight for survival with respect to Chinese culture and tradition. The resulting struggle had a strong effect on the creation of a new Traditional Chinese Medicine. Therefore, the modern narration of the myth of a 'traditional' medicine is an invention of a new medicine, which had been adapted to serve manifold purposes. It is part of the national myth of Chinese self-identity. Hence, the creation of a new Traditional Chinese Medicine has benefitted the indigenous medicine in China and helped to create a strong TCM, which has rescued Chinese medicine against the threat of Western medicine.

In the next section of this book, it will be analysed how the re-creation and canonization of TCM have also strengthened a part of the economy in China as the product of Traditional Chinese Medicine became an important good in the pharmacological sector of China's industry and amongst practitioners of Chinese medicine. This following section thereby moves away from the unearthing of the societal and political reasons for the invention of a new 'traditional' Chinese medicine. But by this account, it will become clear why the profitability of TCM poses a critical scheme for the modern Chinese state and economy. After this rather short section, the focus of research will shift to the discovery of the cultural realm of myth production, and the reader will then come to grasp how all sections of this book add up to

³⁶⁹ For further reading, see Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*.

create an understanding that helps to gain a comprehensive insight into the appeals for the invention of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine.

II. Political Matters Towards Economic Means

The economic sector is deeply linked to the political realm. Investigating how and why TCM serves economic targets enhances the understanding that has been hinted at in the first section of this book. When the argument is being made that TCM provides the answer to a certain Western demand, then looking into the economic sector of Chinese medicine not only in China but also globally opens up the perspective on why the economic realm of TCM is of such great importance to the investigation in this book. It explains the economic reasons why the Chinese government and the Chinese people profit from engagement in the creational process towards a 'traditional' Chinese medicine.

In this section, it will be shown that the marketing and practice of TCM are highly profitable to many actors and groups, not only in China. The political myth creation, but also reasonable political policies, as revealed here, serve the economic interests of Chinese entrepreneurs in as much as certain Chinese state agencies. These considerations add much to the overall comprehension of the *Political Discourse of a 'traditional' Medicine in China*, as they pose key elements in the meta-discourse of the TCM narrative. Understanding how important the industry of TCM is to China's economy brings the reader to grasp that besides political motifs towards the rescuing of Chinese medicine, there are plain economic reasons to boost the worldwide distribution of TCM.

1. The Global Market Profitability of a 'traditional' Chinese Medicine

As early as in 1999, Volker Scheid already wrote in the article *The Globalisation of Chinese Medicine* that the dissemination of TCM had spread Chinese medical practices and cures to approximately 140 countries all over the world. Thus, after Chinese medicine had almost been abolished by the republican Chinese government in 1929, 70 years later, it was thriving enormously. Scheid notes that TCM is now actively used by the Chinese government to promote Chinese culture. In regard to the medical field, Scheid also describes the recent TCM as a hybrid of Western biomedicine and traditional Chinese medicine.³⁷⁰ This conclusion of his is building on facts like those that have been explained earlier when talking about the creation of a new foundation for modern Traditional Chinese Medicine (*Bianzheng Lunzhi*, etc.).

For Scheid, the statement that “Biomedical ideas and concepts have been assimilated into Chinese medicine, that biomedical drugs are routinely prescribed in Chinese-medicine wards and outpatient departments, and that TCM physicians face pressure from hospitals to use rev-

³⁷⁰ Cf. Volker Scheid, *The Globalisation of Chinese Medicine*.

enue-generating biomedical diagnostic facilities...³⁷¹ reflects how the fusion of TCM and Western medicine has had a huge influence on the development of Chinese medicine. This further becomes transparent through such subjects as the usage of endangered species in Chinese medicine for the preparation of certain drugs, which has now become highly controversial in the effort to improve the perception of TCM in countries abroad, says he. On the other hand, the globalization of Chinese medicine increased its acceptance by, for example, German health-insurance companies, which now refund partial costs of acupuncture treatment provided by specifically trained doctors. Furthermore, as early as 1995, a branch of the famous Beijing pharmacy for Chinese medicine, *Tong Ren Tang* had been opened in central London, in the United Kingdom. Also, degree programs in Chinese Medicine became part of the curricula of British universities and European medical schools.³⁷²

The insights Scheid provides through the publishing of his brief article from 1999 are only posing a fractional part of the worldwide spread of TCM today. Therefore, it only provides a first glimpse into the magnitude of the impact the project has had on practitioners, their training facilities, and the income revenues in several branches of the industry. Further details about the economic benefits of the spread of a new TCM will be revealed in the following chapters.

2. Benefits of a Regulated and Normed TCM

According to the article, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Does its Contemporary Business Booming and Globalization really reconfirm its Medical Efficacy and Safety?* the market output value of TCM has hugely increased since the late 1990s. “In 2010, the output value of TCM amounted to RMB 317.2 billion (about €36.8 billion), which increased 24%. The net yield and profits of TCM production are much higher than the average for the country’s medical industry.”³⁷³ The market share of TCM is further estimated to reach €96.2 billion by the year 2025. However, in the recited article, Xu Juncai and Xia Zhijie claim the efficiency and efficacy of some TCM methods and products to be highly questionable. In their paper, from the year 2019, they sum up that an often-used argument to bolster TCM is made by solely relying on the long history of its cultural heritage. They respectively write: “Thousand years’ experience on practice is not a rationale to use TCM, we must keep the quality up to unveil its

³⁷¹ Volker Scheid, *The Globalisation of Chinese Medicine*.

³⁷² Cf. Ibid.

³⁷³ Xu Juncai / Xia Zhijie, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Does its Contemporary Business Booming and Globalization Really Reconfirm its Medical Efficacy & Safety?*, pp. 1.

mystery.”³⁷⁴ Hence, overall, the authors Xu and Xia prefer scientific proof to rhetorical arguments like the one just mentioned. They nevertheless delve into the investigation of the reasons for the unbroken popularity of TCM in China. Regarding their findings, research polls conducted from 2007 to 2010 have shown that 31% of the 100,000 respondents in the survey “...said they turned to TCM as their first choice when they needed medical advice, while only 6.8% preferred western medicine.”³⁷⁵ The main reasons for the common Chinese consumer to decide in this manner had been mainly argued to be based on Chinese people tending to feel more comfortable with traditional Chinese medicine as it has a long history that is commonly announced to reach back about 5000 years.³⁷⁶ That, I argue, is part of the narrated myth that surrounds Chinese medicine and Chinese culture in general. On the other hand, it can be assumed that a certain feeling of trust is also building on the fact that Chinese medicine is deeply linked to the Chinese people’s own culture.

Additionally, Xu and Xia proceed to say that most respondents have more trust in Chinese medicine as it is generally believed to inflict fewer side effects than Western biomedical pharmaceuticals, and research results suggest that Chinese people often believe that TCM doctors on average have more time for their needs than doctors of Western medicine. In general, Xu and Xia describe the situation as such that Chinese doctors who apply methods of modern Western medicine only have several minutes to examine each patient, and this, in turn, appears to be a consequence of big hospitals and modern health service conditions.³⁷⁷

Further, researcher Liu Lihong writes that Chinese patients often seem to reason that TCM is a method best applied for chronic diseases, whereas Western medicine is to be chosen when acute remedy is needed. This is commonly expressed in the Chinese saying *Xiyi zhi biao, Zhongyi zhi ben* (西醫治標, 中醫治本), which expresses that Western medicine only cures symptoms, but Chinese medicine treats the root of a disease.³⁷⁸

Though, the authors Xu and Xia are critical of the often inefficient and unsatisfactory state of research conducted on TCM methods, like, for instance that on acupuncture and medicinal herbs, they offer their viewpoint on the reasons for the lack of such evidence. While, i.e., acupuncture may often be effective due to placebo effects, other Chinese medicine can cause se-

³⁷⁴ Xu Juncai / Xia Zhijie, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Does its Contemporary Business Booming and Globalization Really Reconfirm its Medical Efficacy & Safety?*, pp. 4.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 2.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp. 2.

³⁷⁷ Cf. Ibid., pp. 3.

³⁷⁸ See Liu Lihong, *A Few Words about Studying and Researching Chinese Medicine*, pp. 3.

rious harm, they claim.³⁷⁹ As a result, Xu and Xia argue that Chinese medicine cannot be easily compared to Western medicine because “[i]ts concept about diseases cannot be explained by modern theory.”³⁸⁰ Above, however, it was brought to light that such rapprochement has been aimed at through the installation of the new *Bianzheng Lunzhi* theory. The Chinese medicinal herb industry, notwithstanding, appears to use the argument of non-comparability to serve its own interests in production and distribution, as shown here.

Historically in China, the herbal industry was not required to conduct any research rigorously in randomized controlled trials (RCT). Some experts such as Dr. Jingling Tang advocate applying RCT and reliable data to assess TCM, yet herb medicine companies argued that it was difficult to do herb medicine studies because of numerous reasons they can list (personalized treatment, no way to have control group, etc.). However, in order to promote their products, companies had sponsored so-called clinical trials, [and] claimed that positive results of the clinical trials on herbal products were reported in recent years.³⁸¹

Certainly, it appears to be obvious that to the medicinal herb industry and its lobby, the questioning of the effectiveness of Chinese medical herbs is not desirable, but instead, it seems rather logical that the lobby resorts to using clinical studies in-order-to boost their turn-over on the global market. It would not be surprising if the necessary clinical trials were conducted by those companies themselves instead by third-party laboratories. The main ground for justification here seems to be stimulated by the argument of the alleged impossibility to compare one patient with another, and as-a-consequence, it is argued that control groups in clinical trials cannot be set up effectively, say Xu and Xia (see above).

This gives reason to think that if scientific and medical trials show the ineffectiveness of herbal drugs on a large scale, this would be quite negative for the TCM industry, in-particular the respective branch of this industry in China. Therefore, opting against, or phlegmatically slowing down efforts to provide more scientific data on Chinese herbal drugs serves the interests of the pharma lobby in the Chinese TCM industry.

Yet, the data and milestones provided in the above-mentioned article show ambitious targets set by the Chinese government for the near future concerning the Chinese health care industry. As outlined by the CPC Central Committee in 2016, the general health of China is aimed at being greatly improved according to the *Healthy China 2030 Plan*. Regarding the further development of TCM, new plans have been issued frequently by the State Council in-order-to

³⁷⁹ Cf. Xu Juncai / Xia Zhijie, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Does its Contemporary Business Booming and Globalization Really Reconfirm its Medical Efficacy & Safety?*, pp. 2-3.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 2, Section 4.

³⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 3.

enhance the strategic growth of TCM. Resultantly, the TCM industry has been growing very rapidly in recent years.³⁸² Xu and Xia state, "...[p]romoting the globalization of TCM, Traditional Chinese medicine has been spread to 183 countries and regions around the world."³⁸³ These figures from the year 2019 contrast the 140 countries that Volker Scheid identified as having adapted certain TCM practices and methods by the year 1999. Since then, numerous new medical products in the field have been added to the product list. To the formerly existing drugs, in their various forms, there are now TCM products available in modern capsule-form as much as they are often accessible in tablet-form.³⁸⁴ The driving factors for the growth of TCM are summed up by Xu and Xia as follows:

TCM has developed very quickly despite many challenges were faced in recent years. The rapid growth of traditional Chinese medicine has been spurred by several factors. The foremost one is that with great interest and belief in TCM, the practitioners strongly support and promote its development. The industry also plays an essential role in its fast growth. With easier access to the market and large investment in promotion, the TCM industry soared dramatically in the past years. It was reported by the World Bank that the trade in medicinal plants, herbal drug products and raw materials is growing at an annual growth rate between 5 and 15%. China's annual herbal drug production is worth US \$48 billion with export of US \$3.6 billion, 70% of which are raw herbs with much less added value. Another key factor is the government's support. To expand the market of TCM so as to promote the economic growth in China, the State Food Drug Administration (SFDA) has continuously deregulated the restrictions on TCM drug sales: The government began to classify prescription and OTC drugs in 1999. To date³⁸⁵, 60,000 TCM and ethnic minority medical drugs have been approved, and 2088 pharmaceutical enterprises that have been approved by the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) of Medical Products are manufacturing Chinese patent medicines.³⁸⁶

This reveals a massive industrial branch, which, as was announced by the General Office of State Council in the Plan for TCM Health Services (2015-2020), poses an »...integral part of China's implementation of the "Belt and Road" strategy.«³⁸⁷

The development of TCM is therefore not only the boosting of some industry in China but an element of structural importance to the development of overall economic growth in China. As Muhammad Ovais *et al.* write in the paper *Traditional Chinese Medicine Going Global: Opportunities for Belt and Road Countries*, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was first presented by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. Mainly initiated as an infrastructure program, it

³⁸² Cf. Xu Juncai / Xia Zhijie, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Does its Contemporary Business Booming and Globalization Really Reconfirm its Medical Efficacy & Safety?*, pp. 1-2.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1.

³⁸⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 2.

³⁸⁵ The article by Xu and Xia was published in March 2019.

³⁸⁶ Xu Juncai / Xia Zhijie, *Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)*, pp. 2.

³⁸⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 1.

“...further stimulates investment in trade, health and medicine. Almost 90 countries which add one third of global GDP have committed to join the BRI program. Under this program China has signed deals worth 5 trillion USD to augment trade volume in the BRI countries.”³⁸⁸ While the authors of the mentioned essay mainly focus on the advantages that the BRI potentially brings to Pakistan, they apply (and provide the reader with) a positive outlook on the knowledge transfer of natural remedies like the herbal and animal drugs of TCM to the country. They also identify parallels with the Ayurveda tradition in India.³⁸⁹

As a result of their analysis, they conclude that the BRI initiated a new *Health Silk Road* which offers access to Chinese medicinal materials and products through cooperation with the Chinese state and industry.³⁹⁰ In their opinion, the presumed well-known benefits of Chinese medicine compared to Western medicine, once again supposedly inflict lesser or no side effects and pose low costs in the development of new prescriptions in TCM compared to the very costly and time-consuming development of synthetic drugs. The authors support the view that TCM is a holistic approach to the healing of sickness. Ovais *et al.* also open-up on the implementation of new TCM colleges and university programs in cooperation between Chinese and European universities, in which, for example, Spain’s University of Barcelona participates in collaboration with the University of Pompeu Fabra and the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. The offered Masters’ degree program is just one example of inter-Sino-relations in the Chinese medical sector, which enhance cooperation with European as well as Arabic institutions. Through such initiatives, training-education centres, health clinics and trade centres are being strengthened.³⁹¹ As far as Ovais *et al.* are concerned, the Belt and Road Initiative brings many benefits, including the upswing in medical provision of additional health services to the people of Pakistan and other neighbouring countries of China. And “[i]n addition to infrastructure development, these countries are improving in the development of science-technology, education standard, innovation transfer and development in collaboration with the world.”³⁹² This is insofar important as the deeper laying motives of the Chinese government and its Belt and Road Initiative become clearer. For Traditional Chinese Medicine, the BRI as an economic project is providing a valuable foundation to spread TCM on a global scale. The WHO noted that this endeavour is a dire need for many countries in the world, as it allows access to medicinal cures in those countries that are in-need-of better medical assis-

³⁸⁸ Muhammad Ovais et al., *Traditional Chinese Medicine Going Global*, pp. 21.

³⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 22.

³⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 22.

³⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 22.

tance.³⁹³ As is reported further, "...the BRI project is a significant effort in promoting the combined effort of BRI countries for the prevention of communicable diseases, improvement in health policies, medical training, TCM, health education and disaster management system."³⁹⁴

Certainly, the availability of health care in less developed countries is an influential factor determining the further development of these respective countries. It must thus be speculated that TCM is an efficient healing method, at least to a certain degree. To bring about the respective scientific evaluation (including validation and falsification), however, is the task of future generations of medical researchers.

The distribution of Chinese medicine today offers various possibilities for the future, but it is also an endeavour with multiple challenges, as Chinese researcher Tang Haitao and colleagues point out in their analysis on the internationalization of Chinese medicine. In the article *SWOT Analysis and Revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*, the research team offers insights into the market strengths and weaknesses of traditional Chinese medicine from a Chinese point of view. In their analysis, they find that the internalization of Chinese medicine still faces many problems, which broadly reflect the persisting criticism of Chinese medicinal products like herbal cures and botanical pharmaceuticals in developed countries. However, overall, the authors see the international market for Chinese medicine accelerating. That-being-said, up until now, the biggest market for traditional Chinese medicine still lies within China itself. This is due to the long history of Chinese medicine in China, and it builds on the belief of many Chinese people that their *own* medicine, is effective in its own way. Tang Haitao *et al.* write that the roots of syndrome differentiation and the holistic diagnostic approach in TCM are much less controversial within China than they are among researchers abroad. As mentioned before, the authors also conclude that among the Chinese public, Chinese medicine is oftentimes perceived as more natural than Western medicine, and it is often believed to have fewer toxic or undesirable side effects. The issue of the international dissemination of Chinese medicine can thus be found in similar causes, but consequently in inverse reasoning to the views of critics.³⁹⁵

Tang Haitao *et al.* present the concern for a large-scale worldwide distribution of TCM in herbal remedies and the therein contained ingredients as an issue of lack of transparency in the matter. The main problem is claimed to be a result of the DNA structures of single-

³⁹³ See Muhammad Ovais *et al.*, *Traditional Chinese Medicine Going Global*, pp. 22.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 22.

³⁹⁵ Cf. Tang Haitao *et al.*, *SWOT Analysis and Revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*.

ingredient herbal medicines, often still uncontrolled processes in production, pesticide contamination, misidentification of botanical origin, and low levels of quality control. Consequently, the respective products are not easily accepted by the authorities of developed countries. Although, Chinese medicine is highly praised within China for its achievements against various severe long-term diseases like, for example, tumours, chronic liver diseases, chronic kidney diseases, malaria, or the management of milder diseases and progression in SARS cases, Western institutions and health regulatory state organs in the United States or the European Union are still restricting the entry of many Chinese medicines to their markets today. According to Tang *et al.*, the deeper plight of this matter can be found in the still existing lack of understanding in the West about the Chinese medical system itself, in the uneven quality of herbs in production processes, in insufficient quality control mechanisms in production, and in the deficiency and shortage of investment in scientific research on Chinese herbal materials. Other reasons can be found, they claim, in the outdated hardware and technology of production in many such Chinese manufacturing facilities that produce medicinal herbs and related products. High quality standards are demanded in developed countries, and the failure of Chinese enterprises to comply with these demands therefore poses great obstacles to entering the international market. This is so, albeit recurring governmental policies support the sector, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, the support by the Chinese government to increase Chinese medicine exports has massively increased.³⁹⁶ Nevertheless, as shown above, the development of the Chinese medicine industry is currently confronted with standards set by the international community and through China's becoming a member of the WTO. Tang *et al.* highlight that:

The practice standards of China's TCM industry remain in the progress of standardization. After entering the WTO, China had to align its standards with international standards. However, many countries, restrict foreign products entering their territory through various administrative measures and requirements, high-tech trade barriers and the "green trade barriers" threshold, including measure for medication safety and protection to strengthen the supervision of imported drugs; develop or improve relevant technical requirements, such as quality standards for heavy metal residues, pesticide residues, aflatoxin and others; standardize the technology of plant extracts and environmental standards; and so on.^{397 398}

³⁹⁶ Tang Haitao et al., *SWOT Analysis and Revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Parts of the content and its meaning are quoted by Tang Haitao from Gong F. Liang et al., *Information Theory Applied to Chromatographic Fingerprint of Herbal Medicine for Quality Control*. *J Chromatogr A*. 2003; 1002 (1-2): 25-40.

For these reasons, Tang and colleagues deduce that there is still great potential for the Chinese medicine industry to grow if the core issues in quality control and scientific production monitoring are addressed effectively.

Further, difficulties can be found in the realm of patent provision and the protection of the intellectual property rights for Chinese medicines, Tang *et al.* write. According to their research, the implementation and protection of herbal formulas as well as Chinese medicinal cures are not as widespread among Chinese enterprises in the sector as compared to how Western enterprises protect their formulas. Therefore, resources of Chinese origin are under threat of being taken advantage of by large-scale pharmaceutical enterprises in the West, which, by the nature of the matter, have a desire to obtain rights for medicinal products and consequently may include those in their portfolio in-order-to increase their own profits. Also, China's domestic pharmaceutical market is experiencing competition from foreign producers from India, Korea, and Japan. Besides the necessary measures, and although the distribution of TCM products has already reached more than 150 countries, further research and development must still be conducted. Botanical and natural medicines, if properly tested and approved, most certainly bring benefits through the possible treatment of numerous diseases, but the 12,807 TCM resources in China, including medicinal animal ingredients, medicinal minerals, plants, and artificially cultivated materials, are yet to be scientifically approved in-order-to meet the high standards of modern medicine. Once again, according to Tang *et al.*, natural pharmaceuticals are oftentimes much cheaper to produce and test than Western chemical drugs. Yet, as of 2017, Chinese medicinal drugs still pose a rather small market share in the West.³⁹⁹ They write: "China's botanical drugs have only a small share. Less than 5%, of the international botanical market, 2% in the United Kingdom and the US, 0.2% in Germany."⁴⁰⁰ In conclusion, says Tang, big challenges for the worldwide distribution of TCM are to be found in the improvement of quality control, in stricter production measures, in scientific approval of substances and their effects, as well as in the protection of trademarks as a means to protect Chinese hereditary intellectual property rights. Therefore, if Western standards (scientific approval) can eventually be met, this will have widespread positive results for the internationalization of TCM. It is assumed that the standardization of the respective methods will lead to a greater level of acceptance of Chinese medicine on a global scale.⁴⁰¹ In any case, the general interest in Chinese medicine seems to be unbroken. On top of that, I conclude,

³⁹⁹ Cf. Tang Haitao et al., *SWOT Analysis and Revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. Ibid.

Chinese medicine will likely be welcomed in many developing countries, while China is expanding its influence and cooperation with many countries through its Belt and Road Initiative.

The beneficiary actors in the production of herbal drugs and TCM products in China are "...industries related to TCM, such as Chinese herbal planting, research and development; the manufacture and marketing of pharmaceutical equipment; TCM transportation; and many other supporting industries [...]".⁴⁰² Apart from the producing industry of TCM goods, there exist many other actors in such sectors as education in TCM methods on the domestic Chinese market as well as globally. It is noteworthy here that training facilities, teachers, and the like in the field of, i.e., Taijiquan, commonly known as Taichi, and related physical programs that are believed to benefit physical and mental health also belong to this sector.

For the medicinal applications of herbs and services offered by practitioners of Chinese medicine, however, inexpensive traditional Chinese medicines are on the rise in several emerging economies in the regions of Asia Pacific and East Asia. As has already been pointed out above, this appears to be a direct result of the expansion of China's Belt and Road Initiative and its subsequent infrastructure building programs. Also, developing economies in countries like India, Brazil, and some African countries are creating considerable revenues by means of the production and use of Chinese medicines. As these medicines are found to be helpful in maintaining health and physical strength, it is claimed in the article *Traditional Chinese Medicine Accounted for 40% of China's Pharmaceutical Market in 2019* that there are multifaceted opportunities for TCM to gain popularity among the people from all over the world. Because many developed and developing countries are increasingly open to accepting these 'alternative pharmaceutical products', also, in this article, the growth of the Traditional Chinese Medicine market is largely anticipated. Growing urbanization, especially in developing countries, is a key factor in the growth of the health sector. This matter is further driven by the availability of health insurance provision for an increasing number of individuals, today. Therefore, the modernization of these countries leads to an improved situation in overall health care, which, alongside Western medical treatments, also stimulates the growing market for traditional Chinese medicines. Chinese herbal therapy, food therapy and acupuncture ther-

⁴⁰² Tang Haitao et al., *SWOT Analysis and Revelation in Traditional Chinese Medicine Internationalization*.

apy are thought to have positive effects on balancing the processes in the body and as a result, certain benefits for the body and soul can be expected.⁴⁰³

Without being a medical expert, I do agree with this when herbs and foods are consumed correctly. After all, an apple that is fresh and not poisoned with pesticides will likely always be healthier than an industrially produced candy with chemically supplemented additives. In the quoted article, it reads:

Although not scientifically proven and thus not recommended to be a standalone treatment, Traditional Chinese Medicine has been accepted as a supportive treatment in the cure of many diseases. In a systematic review by a group of scientists based in the UK, herbal therapy was found to have been efficient enough to improve the quality of life in non-small cell lung cancer patients, where better weight stability reduction in the chemotherapy side effects such as anemia, has also been observed. These results elevate possibility of using Traditional Chinese Medicine as adjuvant in non-small cell lung cancer chemotherapy to improve compliance. The external treatment of acupuncture has also been proven effective in providing pain relief for conditions such as chronic shoulder pain and migraine.⁴⁰⁴

Thus, despite its reputation as being highly unscientific, TCM obviously does have its benefits and is likely to improve overall health if applied properly. According to the here quoted article, "...many renowned hospitals outside the region of Asia Pacific, like Johns Hopkins Hospital of Maryland, USA, and University College London Hospitals of London, UK, have set up a specialized department on alternative forms of medicine, with TCM being one of the key areas of focus."⁴⁰⁵ Considering such development, it is worth investigating how Traditional Chinese Medicine is being promoted and used by key actors in the various fields of TCM practitioners domestically (in China) and around the globe.

3. Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners in Germany

According to the short article *Traditionelle chinesische Medizin könnte herzkranken Patienten nutzen* published in the German Journal *Ärzteblatt*⁴⁰⁶, Traditional Chinese Medicine sometimes offers the potential to decrease the medical conditions of patients who suffer from certain heart diseases. The article builds on research results by researcher Zhao Yuxia from Shandong University (China), which were then published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. Although the author of the article⁴⁰⁷ offers critiques about the efficacy of

⁴⁰³ Cf. insightSLICE, *Traditionelle Chinese Medicine Accounted for 40% of China's Pharmaceutical Market in 2019*.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ A renown journal for German general medical practitioners published by Deutscher Ärzteverlag GmbH.

⁴⁰⁷ Remains unknown.

herbal cures, which hint at the often-unknown active ingredients of herbal plants and their effects, the author quotes researcher Zhao insofar as there have seemingly been positive findings from the application of herbal cures in the treatment of heart failure, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, or diabetes. The positive effects of TCM treatments in these cases, according to the study titled *Traditional Chinese Medicine for Cardiovascular Disease: Evidence and Potential Mechanisms*⁴⁰⁸, are being criticized by many readers commenting on the article. It can be assumed that most of the readers are medical doctors themselves. Their criticism stems from the broader opinion that non-scientifically proven cures, whether, for instance, of Chinese or Indian (ayurvedic) origin, must be viewed very critically. Thus, one commentator argues that such scientifically unsupported herbal remedies should never be used due to the unknown effects and risks involved in their treatment. The study mentioned is behind a paywall and cannot be accessed freely, and the reacting readers are rather sceptical about the credibility of the claims made. Further, another argument therein is that Chinese scientists would still try to prove the underlying ancient principle of *Qi* and the Five Elements. In this case, a reader is expressing in his comment that he does not believe in the old cosmological philosophy of Chinese medicine. Yet, another reader is offering a much stricter opinion as he states that by publishing such articles in the German *Ärzteblatt*, the journal is risking its own reputation as such unscientific, or at least doubtful, research results should be investigated thoroughly before dissemination. But there are also supporting comments on the application of TCM remedies. A user by the nickname »Wiebrecht« defends the potential advantages of TCM products.⁴⁰⁹ His (or her comment; for if the unknown person is female or diverse) comment with the headline *Chinesische Medizin nähert sich einer Evidenzbasierung* reads as follows:

Es ist zu konstatieren, dass das wissenschaftliche Niveau der Chinesischen Medizin wächst. Eine Substanz (Xuezhikang), die schon im 16. Jahrhundert als Heilmittel erwähnt wurde – in moderner Terminologie würde man übersetzen mit “die Fließeigenschaften des Blutes verbessernd“ – wurde in einer großen methodisch hochwertigen-Studie (Jadad-Score=5) unter Einschluss von 4870 Patienten nach Myokardinfarkt untersucht. Nach einem Follow-up von durchschnittlich 4,5 Jahren lag die Anzahl eingetretener kardiovaskulärer Ereignisse mit 5,7% signifikant niedriger als unter Placebo (10,4%). Die Heilwirkung der Statine wurden in China entdeckt, ohne dass man damals diese Verbindungen kennen konnte. Auch die Endpunkt-Studien bei Herzinsuffizienz beeindruckten. Eine Untermauerung der Ergebnisse durch weitere Forschung könnte neue Handlungsperspektiven eröffnen bzw. für manche Überraschung gut sein.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Thematisiert in *Ärzteblatt: Traditionelle chinesische Medizin könnte herzkranken Patienten nützen.*

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. *Ärzteblatt: Traditionelle chinesische Medizin könnte herzkranken Patienten nützen.*

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

The statement of the unknown author above reports on a study that was conducted around the active ingredient Xuezhikang (*Monascus purpureus*). Apparently, this herb had already been known in the 16th century, and the writer of the comment explains that certainly modern scientific methods were unknown to Chinese medical doctors of that era. Nonetheless, he/she quotes an unknown study that showed that the treatment of cardiovascular disease with this TCM remedy had significantly higher efficacy rates than a mere placebo effect. Although the writer of the comment does not reveal the exact title of his source, his/her opinion appears to be based on scientific results. Although it also appears unscientific to quote such an opinion here, it shall be said that most findings in this dissertation up to this point possibly support such claims. This standpoint, as shown in previous chapters, reflects that Chinese medicine is neither a miracle cure for all diseases nor is it thereby automatically completely useless. The truth lies somewhere in between these matters and obviously must be based on sound scientific trials and studies. By providing this example of a discussion among doctors in Germany, the above-mentioned illustration appears to provide a decent example of the controversies among many Western physicians. It shall be added here that the discussions about herbs and natural cures, including food-therapies, may obviously have benefits. As garlic is known to thin the blood, natural fruits, plants, and herbs surely have certain effects. This is my understanding in the sense that natural foods are the source of life itself, but as most people know, in nature many plants are also poisonous. Thus, certainly, the correct intake of foods and remedies is key.

Apart from herbs and foods, certain practices and methods are of utmost importance in the field of TCM. Alongside the general medical system in Germany consisting of governmentally accredited practitioners, there are numerous TCM doctor's offices or practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) today. In the report *CAM Europe – A Roadmap for European CAM Research* – an explanation of the legal status of CAM practitioners in Germany reads as follows:

CAM given by non-physicians has been legally regulated in Germany since 1939 by the passing of the “Heilpraktikergesetz” (HeilprG), which also established the protected title “Heilpraktiker” (120, 121). According to the Heilpraktiker act practitioners of homeopathy must be registered after passing an exam administrated by local healthcare authorities in order to prove that they possess sufficient knowledge in medicine and healthcare legislation (50, 121).

[...]

In order to practise medicine or carry out specialty training in Germany, all physicians must be in possession of a valid full or temporary licence to practise (122). The “Bundesärztekammer” offers additional certificates in some CAM treatments, so

called "Zusatzbezeichnungen", treatments are naturopathy, acupuncture, homeopathy, manual medicine, physiotherapy.⁴¹¹

Although this report does not fully explain to which category Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners belong, they most likely fit in the category of the Heilpraktiker. In the mentioned report, it is elucidated that:

Only medical doctors and Heilpraktiker (non-medically qualified practitioners) are allowed to provide CAM treatments, but there are restrictions on the performance of particular medical acts (28, 41). Only medical doctors are allowed to treat sexually-transmitted, communicable and epidemic diseases, deliver specific medications, give or provide anaesthetics and narcotics, practise obstetrics and gynecology, take X-rays, perform autopsies and issue death certificates (28, 123).⁴¹²

The practice of "...[a]cupuncture is regulated by law as a distinct therapeutic system (Besondere Therapierichtung)"⁴¹³, but the broader field of Traditional Chinese Medicine, including herbal therapies, is not. Surprisingly, here it is stated, "No specific regulation has been found on TCM except acupuncture"⁴¹⁴ because in a report by the German *Ärzteblatt* from 2011 it is stated that practicing pulse and tongue diagnosis, acupuncture, acupressure, moxibustion, tuina massage and other reflex zone massages had been decided to necessitate a permit for practitioners by the higher administrative court in Lüneburg (Lower Saxony).⁴¹⁵ Thus, practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine conducting pulse diagnosis and respective treatments usually need the approbation of a Heilpraktiker, or they must be a qualified medical doctor.⁴¹⁶

Further, when conducting an internet search on Google with the term "Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin in Deutschland (Traditional Chinese Medicine in Germany)", thousands of entries on TCM associations and TCM practitioners can be found. Among them are clinics like the TCM-Klinik Bad Kötzting (www.tcm.info) or associations like the Verband Chinesischer Ärzte e.V. (www.tcma-verband.de), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (www.dgtm.de) as well as information on webpages from associations of Heilpraktiker like the Fachverband Deutscher Heilpraktiker e.V. (www.heilpraktiker.org/traditionelle-chinesische-medizin). These are only examples; the entries are countless. Further, there are many journals publishing on the subject, such as the *Qi-*

⁴¹¹ Vinjar Fønnebø, *Legal Status and Regulation of CAM in Europe*, pp. 107.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 107.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 109.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 111.

⁴¹⁵ As well as by other administrative courts in Germany. See *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (TCM) nur mit Erlaubnis nach dem Heilpraktikergesetz*.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Barbara Berner, *Heilpraktikererlaubnis bei Ausübung von TCM-Therapien*.

Zeitschrift für Chinesische Medizin, the journal *Chinesische Medizin* published by Springer Verlag or the sophisticated quarterly journal *Akupunktur Praxis* by the Thieme Publishing House, just to name a few. Certainly, many books on TCM are also being published in Germany. Practitioners, publishing houses, and associations on and for TCM are widespread in Germany. Hereby, one can already grasp the magnitude of alternative medical practices and, in specific the widespread implementation of TCM practices, publications, and associations. Thereby, the reader can come to understand that even in Germany, the turnover in the economic field of the overall TCM business is huge.

The boom of TCM in Germany, as well as globally, nevertheless builds on what was mentioned earlier when quoting Paul Unschuld. He hinted at the reasons for the use of alternative medicines in Germany and many other countries as alternative treatments for those who are dissatisfied with the modern medicinal health approaches in their own countries. Such an argument is also being used in the report *Alternative Gesundheitsvorstellungen und –Praktiken in der deutschen Therapielandschaft* (Alternative Health Reception and Practices in the German Therapeutic Landscape), issued by Hansjörg Dilger and Max Schnepf of the Freie Universität Berlin. Therein, it is stated that patients often opt for alternative medicine practices because they are not pleased with the impersonal relationship (or insufficient attention) given by conventional medicine practitioners: “An Alternativmedizin interessierte Patienten kritisieren oft das unpersönliche Verhältnis zum Arzt”.⁴¹⁷ Thus, according to this claim, patients are often unhappy about the short time available that Western medicine practitioners have in attending to their clients. The positive experience with alternative healers and, on the other hand, the insufficient cure of chronic diseases by conventional medicine therapies as much as the fear of side effects are additional motives to consult practitioners of CAM in Germany.⁴¹⁸ Interestingly, this corresponds with what had been found earlier when it was explained why Chinese people often prefer Chinese medicinal practices over Western medical treatments.

For the German market, this also results in a range of available educational programs on Traditional Chinese Medicine. For instance, the Department of Sport and Health Sciences at the Technical University of Munich (Technische Universität München) is offering a Master program called *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*. This Master of Science program is aimed at medical doctors with work experience who wish to extend their curriculum with further quali-

⁴¹⁷ Hansjörg Dilger / Max Schnepf, *Alternative Gesundheitsvorstellungen und –Praktiken in der deutschen Therapielandschaft*, pp. 5.

⁴¹⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 14.

fications and knowledge in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. In the information about the program, it is stated that the demand for general practitioners with the additional qualification is high.

Über die Hälfte der Bevölkerung wünscht sich Ärzte mit einer zusätzlichen alternativen/komplementären medizinischen Ausbildung. Hier steht die Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (TCM/Akupunktur) ganz vorne.

Zurzeit gibt es im deutschen Sprachraum keinen universitären Bologna-konformen Studiengang. Mit diesem Masterstudiengang wird nicht nur hochschulpolitisches Neuland betreten, sondern einem seit Jahrzehnten bestehenden Bedarf Rechnung getragen. Viele Hochschulinstitute und Kliniken wollen einen Bereich für TCM aufbauen, im ambulanten Bereich besteht ein extrem hoher Bedarf.

Die Attraktivität auf dem Arbeitsmarkt ist als exzellent zu bezeichnen, da gut ausgebildete Ärzte dieser Fachrichtung in allen Einrichtungen, aber auch in der ambulanten Versorgung, dringend benötigt werden.

Daher ist anzunehmen, dass die zunächst angestrebten 30 Absolventen pro Jahr lediglich einen geringen Prozentteil des deutschlandweiten Bedarfs abdecken können.⁴¹⁹

Essentially, the college, in the above-quoted statement, argues that the need for professional doctors with additional qualifications in traditional medicine is very high in Germany. The data sheet was first issued in 2013, and the program is still in place today. It can be hypothesized that growing interest in complementary medicine, including traditional Chinese medicine, has a firm position in the German health sector. The costs for this 2-year full-time program at this college vary in price but must be anticipated somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand Euros.⁴²⁰ Obviously, this opportunity to achieve additional qualification in the field is embraced by a certain number of general practitioners; otherwise, most probably, the program would have already been abandoned. For now, one can only speculate about the individual practitioner's motives to take advantage of such additional education, but financial revenues, personal interest in the subject, and the wish to follow the request of many patients to get treated with Traditional Chinese Medicine treatments may likely be the grounds for such a choice.

The potential for TCM practitioners and GPs with additional qualifications in acupuncture seems to be the highest in the TCM spectrum in Germany. As early as 2002, the German Robert Koch Institute stated in a report with the title *Gesundheitsberichterstattung des Bundes* that acupuncture had been the single largest method in the alternative medicine sector (calculated by the national statutory health insurance department). Therein, it is argued that acu-

⁴¹⁹ TUM Studiengangsdokumentation: *Masterstudiengang Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*, pp.6.

⁴²⁰ Cf. *Ibid*, pp. 11.

puncture has been the largest single cost factor in the alternative medicine sector for the private health insurance companies in Germany. The Deutsche Ärztegesellschaft für Akupunktur (DÄA) had also been listed in the report as being the number one large-scale association for acupuncture in Germany. With an estimated 7,200 members in 1996, the number had risen to approximately 11,000 by the year 2000. The organisation then assumed the total number of acupuncture practitioners to rest somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand individuals. Other estimates, it says in the report, provide figures between forty and fifty thousand practitioners applying acupuncture in Germany.⁴²¹ It shall be noted here that these estimates date back to the year 2002.⁴²²

Similar additional qualifications for general practitioners in Germany are also offered by the University of Ulm as is a more widespread course offer at the TUM in Munich. Seminars and courses to achieve further education in acupuncture at the University of Ulm are also not free of charge. The certification of participants in Ulm is carried out by the Landesärztekammer (state medical association). On the main homepage, *Akupunktur und Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin* (Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine) by the University of Ulm, a full curriculum to study not only acupuncture but also additional subjects of traditional Chinese medical practices, is available. Acupuncture, it says on the webpage, is already an established form of therapy in Germany.⁴²³

This is backed by Iven Francis Tao's research in the essay *The Critical Evaluation of Acupuncture Research*. Accordingly, "83% of Germans are in favour of naturopathy" (the data stems from a 2003 poll by the German Allensbach Institute). Acupuncture practice in Germany developed differently from Chinese medical practices in the USA, where it opened-up a new category of medical practices including psychological and spiritual elements. In contrast, in Germany, "acupuncture is dominated by the biomedical establishment"⁴²⁴, Tao writes. The further above-given figures of acupuncture practitioners in Germany are much like the data set provided by Tao. Here, figures on existing acupuncture societies and associations around the turn of the millennium are also given:

More than 40,000 medical doctors practice acupuncture and more than 40 acupuncture societies offer certified teaching programs that cater mostly to physicians and, to smaller extent, to "Heilpraktiker" (naturopaths). While the majority of these societies

⁴²¹ Cf. Gerd Marstedt et al., *Gesundheitsberichterstattung*, Heft 9, pp. 7.

⁴²² It could be criticized here that the used data is too old to be representative. I don't agree because what I aim to present here is a certain tendency. Therefore, the older data suffices and offers sound insights.

⁴²³ Cf. Universität Ulm, *Akupunktur und Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin*.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Iven Francis Tao, *A Critical Evaluation of Acupuncture Research, 1.1 Dissimilarities in Reception and Development of Chinese Medicine in the USA and Germany*.

are dominated by doctors trained in biomedicine, the great number of practicing acupuncturists (both doctors and naturopaths) reflects the high demand for this therapy.⁴²⁵

I argue that the number of physicians and naturopaths practicing acupuncture will have risen immensely since this data was collected. According to the statement of Tao, rather a great majority of patients “treated with methods of Chinese medicine in Germany are satisfied”.⁴²⁶ Reasons for patients’ preference to use Chinese medicine, acupuncture, and other complementary medicine, according to Tao, can be found in their perception of the treatment. On the one hand, acupuncture in Germany is reflecting postmodern views because patients are alienated by the “increasingly technologized biomedicine”. This reflects and proves the former assumption by Paul Unschuld about the general dissatisfaction of Western patients. Other reasons likely are the earlier mentioned side effects of chemical drugs in long-term medication, which “can be severe and may even cause death”.⁴²⁷ Iven Francis Tao writes: “A 2003 study of the Institute of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Hanover estimates that each year, 58,000 patients die because of medication errors and side effects.”⁴²⁸ I argue that this shows that the claim of side effects concerning chemical drugs is most probably not groundless. There are good reasons to choose different ways of treatment than just conventional clinical medicine. Above all this, Tao explains that certain complementary healing practices like Hahnemann’s homeopathy or Kneipp’s hydrotherapy have long existed before the emergence of modern biomedicine in Germany. Naturopathy, in the form of Kneipp’s Ordnungstherapie, very broadly similar-to parts of Chinese medicine, also “aims at activating the self-regulating properties of the human system through a balanced and natural lifestyle, [and it] has to a large degree influenced modern concepts of naturopathy.”⁴²⁹ Thus, “irregular, non-orthodox, alternative, complementary, or integrative healing”⁴³⁰ has been long known in Germany. In brief, following this argumentation, it appears rather understandable why Chinese medicine and acupuncture became very popular in Germany.

The associations through which practitioners can achieve qualification (and certification) are manifold, and they most probably serve the interests of each group. Further beneficiaries are certainly the individuals who experience health improvement through the application of effective alternative health treatments. In conclusion, this reflects how the implementation of TCM

⁴²⁵ Iven Francis Tao, *A Critical Evaluation of Acupuncture Research, 1.1 Dissimilarities in Reception and Development of Chinese Medicine in the USA and Germany*.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter: 1.1.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.2.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.2.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.2.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.2.

health cures creates massive economic turnover in Germany. By having a glimpse into the pharmaceutical industry of this sector in Germany, this claim will become even more obvious.

4. TCM Pharmaceutical Industry in Germany

In a 2005 GENIOS report titled *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (TCM) – Immer neue Erfolge lassen Marktvolumen in Deutschland kontinuierlich steigen* (Traditional Chinese Medicine – continuously increasing Success Boosts Market Volume in Germany) the DGTCM – Deutsche Gemeinschaft für Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (German Society for Traditional Chinese Medicine) estimated a market value turnover of one billion Euros in Germany with an increasing tendency. Back then, about 500 tons of Chinese pharmaceuticals were processed annually. Besides pharmaceuticals, the further mentioned TCM practices and methods are listed as follows: acupuncture, acupressure, moxibustion, cupping, tuina massage and Qi Gong-related activities. Herbal therapy, which includes applications of healing herbs, roots, leaves, minerals and animal substances, is therein described as being an integral part of treatments in Traditional Chinese Medicine.⁴³¹ As already learned above, according to the *Zielmarktanalyse China* by the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (Target Market Analysis by the Federal Ministry of Economy and Energy) from February 2021 China plans to invest and cooperate, by means of the Belt and Road Initiative, to aim at becoming the strongest economic power globally by building new market entrance mechanisms, by building massive new infrastructures on land and sea, and by building telecommunication networks, gas pipelines and transport networks. Thereby, the Chinese government under Xi Jinping targets to largely increase its share in the global economic value chain. The focus of these projects lies on ten core sectors, including such economic and industrial fields as automated robotics, aerospace equipment, marine equipment, rail transport equipment, new drive vehicle equipment, equipment in the energy sector, agricultural equipment, new resources and materials, as well as **biopharmaceutical** materials and medical products.⁴³²

In an article by the German company ConPhyMed GmbH, the matter is highlighted as more controversial. It refers to what has been described earlier about regulatory measures by medical state institutions in the export chain regarding consumption of TCM products outside of China. In this view, again, phyto-pharmaceutical products cannot easily enter the German market, and similarly, the European market, because of the high standards and strict regula-

⁴³¹ See A. Schneider, *Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin (TCM) – Immer neue Erfolge lassen Marktvolumen in Deutschland kontinuierlich steigen*.

⁴³² Cf. trAIDe GmbH, *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, Zielmarktanalyse China – Gesundheitswirtschaft mit Fokus Biotechnologie*.

tions for pharma products in Europe. Conventions in the statutes of the European Union therefore pose a big obstacle for Chinese pharma products to generate high market values in Europe.⁴³³

In 2019, ConPhyMed Pharmaceutical initiated a cooperation with the German Rats-Apotheke in Stralsund (a German pharmacy in the city of Stralsund) and provided a machine that could mix Chinese herbal granulates. ConPhyMed's Chinese partner, the Anhui Jiren Pharmaceutical Group, provides the necessary source materials. According to a report by the UKE (University Clinic in Hamburg-Eppendorf), the used resources and the planting, harvesting, and conservation methods assure high quality standards that hold up against the high demands of the European pharmaceutical regulations. The achieved improvements had also been welcomed by Dr. Sven Schröder, the head of the HanseMercur Zentrum für TCM am UKE in Hamburg (The HanseMercur Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine at the University Clinic in Hamburg-Eppendorf).⁴³⁴ Unfortunately, as of September 2023, the afore-quoted article is not available online anymore, but the homepage of the respective *HanseMercur Zentrum für Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin* at the university hospital in Hamburg-Eppendorf now states (beginning of October 2023) that the TCM department of the hospital has been opened in 2010. Online, the latest achievements, and available programs in the field are presented. Among the information, a Master Program in Traditional Chinese Medicine can be found.⁴³⁵

In sum, it can be concluded here that economic turnover and the general reception of TCM treatments, cures, and practices are generally high and increasing in Germany. Through this short excursion into the German pharmaceutical and medicinal market, it shows how the narrative of modern TCM, besides other motifs, involves the interests of many market players in China and abroad who benefit from the distribution and dissemination of the specific narrative on a harmonious (new) Traditional Chinese Medicine. In the following chapter, the investigation focuses on the initiatives within China, which are nonetheless massively interwoven with global markets.

⁴³³ See *Confidence in Phytomedicine: Chancen der TCM Produkte in Europa*.

⁴³⁴ TCM am UKE, *Startschuss für Kompaktat-Konfigurator unseres Allianzpartners ConPhyMed Pharmaceutical*.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Homepage of the HanseMercur Zentrum für Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin am Universitätsklinik Hamburg-Eppendorf. For the link to this internet page, see Section "Online Resources" in this book.

5. The Domestic TCM Market in China

In 2016, the overall sales turnover of TCM products in China accounted for 107.5 billion euros, which constituted 28.55 percent of the complete pharma industry in China.⁴³⁶ In 2014, the German pharma giant Bayer AG planned, and later completed, the purchase of one of the leading pharmaceutical enterprises in China's TCM market. The subject of interest, the Dihon Pharmaceutical Group, had been estimated to have a total turnover of 123 million euros in 2012. Mainly generating its income on the OTC market (over-the-counter medicine), the Dihon enterprise from Yunnan province sells products in the herbal medicine sector that belong to the traditional Chinese medicine field, as well as products available without prescription that relieve hair dandruff or medicines that counteract such medical conditions as skin fungus.⁴³⁷ As Bayer's then CEO, Marjin Dekkers stated, these strategic acquisitions strengthen Bayer's life-science portfolio. These new products offer a wider range of products available to Bayer's customers.⁴³⁸ In the article, *Bayer Completes Takeover of Dihon Pharmaceutical*, it is stated:

Dihon is one of the leading consumer health care companies in China, mainly providing innovative and effective chemical medicines and traditional Chinese medicines. Dihon brands are sold in China as well as other countries such as Nigeria, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia. It generated sales of EUR 123 million in 2013.⁴³⁹

Consequently, the market for foreign pharma cooperations and conglomerates in China seems to have many facets. In the report *Diese Chancen bietet die chinesische Pharmaindustrie deutschen Zulieferern* (These are the Chances the Chinese Pharma-Industry presents to German Suppliers) from July 2020, it has also been illuminated that the Chinese pharma-market is constantly growing. It is currently the second-largest pharmaceutical market globally. That's why, according to the author of the article, a kind of *gold rush mood* in the pharma sector is recognizable. Predictions for the Chinese pharma market are promising immense growth. A big part of the imports to the Chinese pharmaceutical market is provided by the German industry. On the other hand, based on statements of the China National Pharmaceutical Industry Information Centre, within China, among the 4800 pharmaceutical enterprises, about 49% produce raw materials for pharmaceuticals, 30% produce goods in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, and 16% specialize in the production of biotechnology. According to the findings of the author, Anke Geipel-Kern, which build on information from the German

⁴³⁶ See *Confidence in Phytomedicine: Chancen der TCM Produkte in Europa*.

⁴³⁷ Cf. German Newspaper. *Welt: Bayer steigt in traditionelle chinesische Medizin ein*.

⁴³⁸ See Zou Yanping, *Bayer Completes Takeover of Dihon Pharmaceutical*.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

Trade & Invest (Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Economic Development Company of the Federal Republic of Germany), there had still not been any Chinese pharma giant operating in the year 2020 that had the capacity to compete on the same level as such companies as Novartis or Roche & Co. in the sector of chemical health drugs. German Trade & Invest argued that this is due-to-the-fact that the Chinese population is still largely favouring traditional Chinese medicinal products. Further, Chinese people would rather mistrust chemical pharmaceuticals produced by Chinese companies (as-a-result of many fake products and quality issues), it is claimed therein. Therefore, the market share of Western pharmaceutical enterprises in China is much larger than that of domestic producers. But change is underway as the Chinese State Council has released new rules and regulations for this sector.⁴⁴⁰

The Chinese government has been actively promoting TCM in China and the world. This matter had been represented by several mentions of actions in formerly issued five-year plans. In 2016, the so-called White Paper put a clear focus on the subject:

The State Council Information Office published Traditional Chinese Medicine in China (White Paper) in December 2016, which was translated into several foreign languages including English, French, Russian, German, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, *etc.* The White Paper discoursed [the] current process of TCM development in four aspects: the historical development of TCM, policies and measures on TCM development, carrying forward the tradition and ensuring the international communication and cooperation in TCM. This document raised the status of TCM to a higher level contributing to the economy progression in China.⁴⁴¹

Hence, the Chinese government (through the Chinese State Council) thoroughly targets the growth and promotion of the Traditional Chinese Medicine market as much as it holds incentives to disseminate new narratives on the matter in-order-to achieve certain goals. Contrary to these targets, the author of the essay, *Is Traditional Chinese Medicine “Mainstream” in China? Trends in Traditional Chinese Medicine Health Resources and Their Utilization in Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospitals from 2004 to 2016* comes to the result that Traditional Chinese Medicine practices and medicines are not always the main goods and methods used in TCM Hospitals, which, as the name alludes to, profess to be specifically designed for the application of TCM medicines and TCM practices. According to the study, TCM services did make progress in the use of TCM in 60% of the cases, but the goals of the CCP and the

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Anke Geipel-Kern, *Diese Chancen bietet die chinesische Pharmaindustrie deutschen Zulieferern.*

⁴⁴¹ See Wang Wan-Ying et al., *Current Policies and Measures on the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China*, 3.2.2..

realities in the usage of TCM products appear to diverge.⁴⁴² Practicality of TCM applications and state ideology therefore seem to be two different stories that, in the view of the Chinese government, shall be merged into one.

In the early 1950s, TCM was an ideological and practical component in China's health care system, but China's 1970s market reform and opening-up saw the use of TCM as contrary in a society committed to modernization. From 1991 to 2004, the percentage of people consulting TCM doctors in the formal health sectors declined from 25% to 20% in urban China and from 16% to 14% in rural China.

But, TCM is central to Chinese health provision, with few studies published in English on the trend of TCM use in mainland China, especially given the national health care reforms since 2009. China is the only country where both Western medicine and TCM are practiced alongside each other in hospitals and primary care facilities. TCM has its own department at the Ministry of Health and at provincial and county bureaus of health, as well as its own medical schools, hospitals, and research institutes. Among these, TCM hospitals were the main providers of TCM services, which combine the use of medicinal herbs, moxibustion, acupuncture, dietary therapy, massage, and therapeutic mind/body practices. In TCM hospitals, TCM and modern medicine are practised together to improve human health.

According to government regulations, TCM hospitals should maintain their mainstream status as Chinese medicine providers in terms of human resource allocation, department structure, and health care delivery. However, modern medicine practices posed dilemmas for TCM, including the lack of TCM practitioners and unwillingness of hospitals to provide TCM services. In contrast, the Chinese government has a long history of supporting the development of TCM. This was confirmed in the 2016 Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan, which guided the improvement in China's national health by setting out a series of measures to support and develop TCM. These measures included advancing the historical place of TCM in health care, improving the ability to provide TCM services, and promoting innovation of TCM. Given the unique role of TCM in China, whether TCM services were mainstream in health care delivery at TCM hospitals is of great importance to understanding health care provisions and policy in China.⁴⁴³

As proved here again, traditional medicine in China is certainly being supported by the Chinese government. Although it 'naturally' has its historical place in Chinese society, the above quoted text passage hints at difficulties that appear in the daily practice and treatment of patients. In the drawn study, "Chinese medicines, which can only be prescribed by TCM physicians, accounted for, on average, less than half of the total drug prescriptions in TCM hospitals. Just one-third of the drug revenue was from Chinese medicines at TCM hospitals."⁴⁴⁴ Thus, Shi *et al.* conclude that Chinese medicines and TCM services are financially less lucrative than treatment with Western medicines. By the following statement, the controversy in

⁴⁴² Cf. Shi Xuefeng et al., *Is Traditional Chinese Medicine "Mainstream" in China?*, pp. 7.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 6.

the competition with Western medicines and the application of TCM becomes even more transparent:

In the 1980s, the Ministry of Health encouraged the establishment of TCM hospitals, creating a complete network of TCM hospitals, with each province, prefecture city, and county having their own TCM hospitals. How to balance Chinese medicine and Western medicine at TCM hospitals has been a long and serious concern of health policy planners. Early in the 1990s, scholars started criticizing the westernization of TCM hospitals, where Western health care services have been increasingly provided due to the higher profit relative to TCM treatments.⁴⁴⁵

On top of the profit issue, the incremental raising of the proportion of TCM physicians and pharmacists had been yet another obstacle in this process. Many TCM practitioners and TCM hospital managers viewed the application of TCM treatments, often only, as being (medically) complementary to the Western medicines. A viewpoint, which is very common in the West, too. Further, because salaries and future career development options for potential TCM doctors had been slimmer than those for the average general practitioner of Western medicine in China, the TCM hospitals experienced a shortage of trainees in the TCM sector. But as Chinese health policies increased the support of TCM, doctors of Chinese medicine were thereby financially incentivized to prescribe more Chinese medicines.⁴⁴⁶ The data of the research group also found varying results between TCM hospitals that are privately owned and those in the public sector. “[...] Public TCM hospitals were only allowed to generate markup profits from traditional medicines, and private TCM hospitals were allowed to make profits by prescribing both Western and Chinese medicines.”⁴⁴⁷ This likely was a result of the TCM supportive policies that the Chinese government controls and by which it incentivizes spending in the public health sector. As the authors of the report *Current Policies and Measure on the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China* sum up, the development of Chinese medicine is deeply connected to the improvement of health care in China and the government’s *Healthy China 2030* plan. When carefully reading the following excerpt, one can find that the motivation for the promotion of TCM in China (and globally) certainly involves various factors. Some of those motivations are likely to be national pride in Chinese culture, the promotion of the myth of Chinese strength, cultural and financial incentives, soft power issues, and the wish for global acceptance as a nation and economic power. The following abstract highlights some of these aspects very well.

⁴⁴⁵ Shi Xuefeng et al., *Is Traditional Chinese Medicine “Mainstream” in China?*, pp. 6.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 6.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7.

The development of TCM has achieved enormous progress after the 18th CPC National Conference. The primary reason is the emphasis and support from the National People's Congress and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China. From the point of improving the healthcare status of Chinese people, central government and local regulatory departments issued a series of policies and measures. The strategic status of TCM has advanced significantly since the announcing of effective actions on TCM. Therefore, the innovation and heritage of TCM has experienced breaking through improvement including the Nobel Prize and the award for scientific and technological advancement. The system of TCM prevention, diagnosis and treatment has kept on completing and enhancing by the establishment of TCM hospitals from rural to urban areas. The prosperity of TCM treatment system has also brought the prosperity of industries related to TCM such as tourism, agriculture and elderly care. The enhancement of TCM is not limited domestically, the overseas influence of TCM is expanding to a larger scale ever since. Foreign people are not only getting [into] contact with Chinese culture by introduction of TCM, but also adopting TCM as a therapeutic method. This meaningful period of time witnessed the renaissance of TCM to a higher level.

It is clear that with these achievements and opportunities of developing TCM also brought in a number of challenges. Although there exist large number of incentives for using TCM, China and other member states are facing several regulatory issues related to practices of TCM. The lack of research data about the mechanisms to control and regulate herbal products and medicines, the lack of expertise in national health authorities and control agencies, the lack of sharing information between different channels and the lack of educating and training TCM practitioners *etc.* are all the difficulties to be considered. Most of these challenges have their corresponding strategic actions in the policies and measures reviewed in the article including the understanding and recognizing of the role of TCM, the construction of the generation and sustaining of TCM resources, the recognition of regulating the quality and safety of TCM products and medicines, the encouragement of TCM education, training and skills development *etc.* As for the detailed situations in China, current proportion of healthcare related production only occupies 5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in China, which is only half of those in the developed countries. With the implementation of Healthy China 2030 outlines, the healthcare related market size could be three times bigger than the present status. The major plans issued regarding the development of TCM are from different aspects and the crucial purpose is to establish a TCM healthcare service system embedded with technology and innovation. As the implementation of the Law on TCM, it is the opportunity of completing and improving the system and mechanism of TCM. The level of TCM healthcare service is expected to be increased to fulfil the medical care requirement of people across China. The innovation and heritage of TCM would still be supported by all-aspects collaboration according to the policies and measures. Starting from the material basis of TCM, the cultivation of medicinal plants affects the quality of subsequent TCM crude drugs and TCM patent drugs. More detailed regulations regarding quality control process of medicinal plants based on Drug Administration of the People's Republic of China should be formulated in the future. A well-defined path is required to indicate the transformation from medicinal plants to TCM products or service in the future policies. The main tasks in the Outline of the Strategic Plan on the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine (2016-2030) have included most of the key issues relevant to TCM such as the medical service, scientific innovation and industry transformation *etc.* but the more detailed management policies

are still required for the development in each prospective. The overseas development and corporation of TCM with foreign countries would also enlarge the level and scale of TCM services. TCM culture should widely be promoted guided by the principle of creative transformation and innovative development. Most importantly, cultivation of a TCM talent team would serve as the foundation of TCM revitalization. By 2030, the TCM medical healthcare service system could cover every community of China with modernized medical equipment, high-level professionals and safe & efficient TCM drugs. Consequently, with the prosperity of Chinese national power, TCM would be accepted all over the world not only as a carrier of Chinese culture but also as a medical science to prevent and cure diseases.⁴⁴⁸

It can be noted here that the authors' focus lies on the widespread innovation of TCM, its heritage, and its acceptance around the world. In the last sentence, they also point to the fact that Traditional Chinese Medicine is a carrier of culture but that it is not limited to this *function*. Thereby, the functional *carrier-part* of TCM is closely connected to what has been designated *the narration on TCM* in this paper. The myth, which is being narrated, serves economic goals, while, on the other hand, the economic distribution of TCM reciprocally strengthens the myth about TCM, Chinese culture in general, and the national identity scheme, which itself can be identified as the meta-narrative to which the TCM-myth belongs and caters.

Thereby, the narration about the *harmonious* Chinese medicine gains huge importance. As this medicine supposedly provides an alternative to modern Western medicine, huge profits are being generated, and the Chinese state as well as Chinese enterprises are certainly not the only ones interested in the growth of the TCM sector. As explained above, large German enterprises like Bayer did, and most likely will continue, to muscle in on the Chinese pharmaceutical market. TCM being one of the sectors of growth, it can be hypothesized that other global pharma giants like Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sanofi, Novartis, and Roche also want bigger pieces of the cake as the Healthy China 2030 project is being pushed forward. The earlier mentioned improved refund system of Chinese health insurances will play a huge role in this respect, as stated in the article *Warum China zur großen Hoffnung von Big Pharma wird* (Why China becomes the Great Hope of Big Pharma), which was published in 2019 in the German news outlet Handelsblatt. In the article, the US group Merck & Co. (part of the German Bayer Pharmaceuticals Conglomerate) is reported to have had an increase of 87% in its performance in the Chinese pharma market in 2019. Their market value in China has risen to 900 million Dollar in the third quarter of 2019.⁴⁴⁹ In April 2021, an article in the *Business*

⁴⁴⁸ Wang Wan-Ying et al., *Current Policies and Measures on the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China*, 6. Discussion and Future Perspectives.

⁴⁴⁹ See Dana Heide et al., *Warum China zur großen Hoffnung von Big Pharma wird*.

Chief addressed the fact that Merck & Co. had entered a partnership with Guangzhou Pharmaceutical Holdings Limited (GPHL).

Leading German multinational science and technology company, Merck, has entered into a strategic partnership with Guangzhou Pharmaceutical Holdings Limited (GPHL), China's leading pharmaceutical company.

[...]

In addition to its strengths in traditional industries such as proprietary Chinese medicines and herbs, chemical raw materials and preparations, GPHL is now developing a wider capacity for R&D and the manufacture of biological medicines and full suite of health products, and developing business logistics, distribution and healthcare services.⁴⁵⁰

This being just an example of how closely pharma enterprises are interconnected globally, I argue that the matter represents and involves the business interests of gigantic global players. It further highlights how the political discourse on medicine in China cannot just be observed from a perspective which only takes China into scope. In the industry, global relations have been long since established, as seen above. GPHL, according to *China Daily*, did create \$23.21 billion in sales in 2020. By 2021, their sales had increased by 18.6 percent. GPHL has thereby become “one of the world’s top 500 companies and the first to enter the Fortune Global 500 with traditional Chinese medicine as its main business”.⁴⁵¹ This example once again offers an insight on the magnitude of the TCM industry in China (and worldwide). If this is thought through more thoroughly, the single market value of the GPHL provides a sound idea of why, from an economic stance alone, the Chinese government is more than willing to promote the spread of Chinese medicine on a global level. Thus, I conclude that one of the main incentives for the government to create a modern myth of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine may be the financial aspect of the project. After all, the government derives its legitimation from ongoing economic growth for its citizens.

Also, as had been hinted to before, the overall simplified access to the Chinese pharma market for foreign companies is further clarified in the article *Reich der Mitte verspricht Pharma große Absatzchancen* (published in June 2021 in the German *Ärztezeitung*). Instead of long and complicated admission procedures for medicines and pharmaceuticals in China, registering new products in the field is now much easier. These changed conditions are a direct result of the Chinese leadership’s decision to stimulate the market to reach the Healthy China 2030 target. Along with these eased procedures, the former joint venture structures, where foreign

⁴⁵⁰ Kate Birch, *Merck accelerates Biopharma Innovation in China*.

⁴⁵¹ See Qiu Quanlin, *Guangzhou Pharmaceutical enters Fortune Global 500*.

companies had to partner up with respective Chinese enterprises, are now also simplified for the sector. Foreign companies thereby gain somewhat more possibilities for action, although the Joint-Venture structure as-a-whole is still a requirement. This further liberalization of the Chinese pharmaceutical market has already increased the turnover of corporations like Siemens Healthineers. In the last quarter of 2020, the venture recorded an increase in sales of 25% in the market for diagnostic and therapeutic appliances. Similar results can be noted for Novartis, who increased sales by 16%. This is enough encouragement for Novartis to plan the release of 50 new medicinal drugs into the Chinese market by 2024 – and it is estimated that they will thereby double their sales turnover. For those companies, including Johnson & Johnson, which already entered a joint venture in China in 1979, China is the biggest growth sector of their business globally. AstraZeneca has been operating in China since 1993, and the company today employs more than 18,000 employees in China. The overall market for medicinal products and appliances includes chemical drugs, biopharmaceutical drugs, herbal drugs, diagnostics, and other medical technical appliances and materials, from bandages, to surgical masks to syringes. Thus, the magnitude of investment and growth potential in the pharmaceutical and medical markets in China are huge; TCM is one branch in this market.⁴⁵²

According to the president of Siemens Healthineers Asia-Pacific, Elisabeth Staudinger, the Chinese market will develop into a key growth momentum for new medical drugs and the pharma industry as-a-whole („Der chinesische Markt wird zu einem entscheidenden Wachstumstreiber für neue Medikamente und der gesamten Pharmabranche“).⁴⁵³ Therefore, it can be expected, that the Chinese pharmaceutical market, including the TCM sector, is growing immensely by huge investments involving cooperations from all over the world.

As a result, the increasing support for the TCM sector by the Chinese government to distribute Chinese medicine not only within China but also as a trademark all over the globe is easy to understand. The economic sector is a field that largely supports the CCPs own goals to stay in power and serves the interests of the Chinese people. The benefits range from the dissemination of a national image through the narration of the myth of TCM to the pure economic benefits within and outside China. Further, partnerships for participating countries in the Belt and Road Initiative may be expected to be of utmost importance to these countries as they are thereby able to increase the health services for their own citizens. This reveals how the myth of a new Traditional Chinese Medicine supports the cause, as the narrative about a *natural*

⁴⁵² Cf. Richard Haimann, *Reich der Mitte verspricht Pharma große Absatzchancen*.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

and *harmonious* medicine provides the foundation for the worldwide recognition and application of TCM.

III. The Cultural Narration: Evolution of Culture and Self-Identity

As has been hinted at various times before in this paper, the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of the narrative of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's political discourse are entangled in a cross-over kind of fashion. I have offered a view into the former two dimensions as they are building the foundation for what follows. The now-provided cultural dimension is, however, not a standalone subject in this network-like structure. While clear political motifs are playing a huge role in the dissemination of the myths that surround TCM, the economic reasons have been clarified in the latter section. Now it is time to analyse in more depth how the narrative of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine supports the coming about of a comprehensive self-image of the Chinese nation and how this shapes the overall discourse.

I argue that the production of a self-image and the shaping of a collective consciousness, a collective self-image and a collective mind are partially a matter of the cultural and historical evolution of the Chinese nation. On the contrary, in the discourse, the Chinese state is at least as important an actor as other grassroots societal forces that bring about culture and self-identity rather naturally based on the identification process of every individual, which then constitutes the larger group called Chinese society. This will be investigated and untangled in the following chapters.

As an integral part of the political discourse of China, this section first informs about the narrative form of the myth of Chinese medicine in the TV Series *Dazhaimen*, which then leads to the assumption that Chinese medicine is largely functioning as a 'cultural object' in the construction of the Chinese identity; I will commonly refer to this identity as *Chinese-ness*.⁴⁵⁴ As will be shown in later chapters of this section, the function of a cultural object is also closely interwoven with the social sphere and the collective mind of a given society.

In the story of *Dazhaimen* the TV broadcaster CCTV, as a state actor, holds large portions of power to influence the discourse about Chinese history and culture. Although, the Chinese state certainly poses one of the most influential forces driving this collective experience, the following analysis will also show how culture is a product of group cohesion itself. This, I argue, means that society is largely constituting itself. In such thinking, it could further be asked whether the state is a product of society or society is a product of state actions. A sort of *chicken-and-egg* paradox. Nonetheless, it-is-clear that the Chinese state acts as a power that deliberately attempts to counter external threats by constituting or altering modern Chinese

⁴⁵⁴ A term that I have taken from the earlier quoted article by Ding Ersu.

self-awareness, collective consciousness, and confidence as a measure to withstand external pressure and ensure further national development. The thereby invented identity of the Chinese individuals thus influences and partly shapes the coming about of the invented community. I deduce that it is therefore not possible to clearly differentiate which force drives the other. This is the question of whether the state dictates all opinions, or whether the state structure is an actual result of how the Chinese people perceive themselves and their culture. Two facts, however, appear to be certain: the Chinese state does deliberately influence the overall process, but all state actors are inevitably also Chinese citizens.

Through the following detailed film analysis of the TV series *Dazhaimen* the reader will be further introduced to core aspects of how Chinese society has been confronted with several struggles. The hypothesis that TCM serves as a cultural object will thereby be investigated in a step-by-step process. After that, the procedures in this section will lead to a more thorough understanding of the ways in which culture derives from the past, the environment, and the milieu and how this consequently shapes society in its self-identifying mechanisms, which thereby produce the collective Chinese consciousness.

1. Case Inquiry: The Myth of Chinese Medicine in the TV Series *Dazhaimen*

The Chinese TV Series *Dazhaimen* 大宅门 (English title: The Great Mansion Gate) had first been broadcasted on CCTV in the year 2001. It was produced in a soap kind of TV series style, which narrates the rise and fall of the Bai family. Therein, the Bai family 白家 is depicted as a wealthy and famous family of doctors professionalizing in Chinese medicine as well as operators of the likewise famous pharmacy called the *Baicaoting* 百草厅. Beijing is the location where the play takes place. The name of the *Baicaoting* does refer to the 100-year-old tradition of the pharmacy instead of directly to the family name Bai, which in Chinese, as shown above, is written differently and has a deviating tonal pronunciation.⁴⁵⁵

This TV program consists of an overall 40 episodes and is well-known in China. It is set in the era of the late Qing dynasty and starts the tale in the year 1880, although background matters of the overall narration reach back as far as the year 1669. By telling the Bai family's story in *Dazhaimen* the historical events of the well-known Chinese medicine brand *Tongrentang* 同仁堂 are being resembled. Therefore, the events portrayed in the play represent, or draw close to, historically existing figures from the Le family 乐家, their successors, and parts of the family's real historical and social environment. The screenwriter by the name of Guo

⁴⁵⁵ [Link information, see Online Resources] <https://baike.baidu.com/item/大宅门/13886>

Baochang 郭宝昌 held interpersonal ties with the *Tongrentang* pharmacy's owner in the 20th century. He therefore incorporated facts and knowledge of the *Tongrentang* history in-order-to write his story of the Great Mansion Gate. As Guo reveals in the preface of his book with the same title, he had been sold to some family on a streetcorner by his mother when his own family had been in a hunger and poverty crisis. His name formerly had been Li Baochang 李保常 which had been changed to Guo Baochang 郭宝昌 when he had been bought (he literally had been re-sold like some material product several times) by the Guo family. Through these personal events, he became the heir of the privileged Le family - the owners of the *Tongrentang* - and he learned much of the mischievous behaviour of the Le family's patriarch. The Le family is referred to in his preface as the wealthiest family in Beijing of the time-period. In this preface, Guo Baochang briefly sums up the story of his life and tells how he attempted various times to write the play for *Dazhaimen*. Experiencing the Labour movement and the Cultural Revolution in China, he had to cope with many problems but finally succeeded in finishing the writing process of the play in the 1990s, which led to the TV series being filmed and directed by him at the end of the century/millennium. Besides historical obstacles, his endeavour had been opposed by his adoptive mother and the family clan, as they did not want their family's story – even if it is blurred in many ways – to be made publicly available.⁴⁵⁶ The main character of *Dazhaimen* called Bai Jingqi seems to resemble the real historic person (who had *adopted* Guo Baochang) by the name Le Jingyu 乐镜宇 (1872-1954). He had been the one, according to the author Zhou Ping, who had opened the *Hongjitang* 宏济堂 as a branch of the *Tongrentang* in Jinan (Shandong province).⁴⁵⁷ The story is therefore somewhat autobiographical.⁴⁵⁸

In the first episode of *Dazhaimen* the audience is informed on screen that it is the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu 光绪帝 in the Qing dynasty. The screen title says in Chinese characters that the location of the events is Beijing in the year 1880. Historically proven, it is known that this was not long before the end of the Qing dynasty, the last Chinese dynasty. The emperor had still been a child then.⁴⁵⁹ In the beginning of the TV series, the eldest daughter of the Bai family, already in her thirties, or so it may be assumed, is giving birth to a male

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. Guo Baochang 郭宝昌: *Dazhaimen* 《大宅门》, [The Great Mansion Hall].

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Zhou Ping 周萍: *Dazhaimen li de Hongjitang* 《大宅门》里的宏济堂 [The Hongji Hall in the Great Mansion Gate].

⁴⁵⁸ Diverging names and figures are explained by another author, but I chose to omit these references here in-order-to avoid unnecessary confusion. See Li Juan, [The Framework of Chinese Medicine Culture in TV Plays].

⁴⁵⁹ See Keith Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History*, pp. 41-52.

heir, but to the surprise of the whole family, the baby boy does not cry as it would be normal for a newborn child. Instead, when slapped slightly on the back by the aunt, the baby starts to laugh. For the viewer, this is confusing, and it might be interpreted as a bad omen because other strange things are being described as happening around the same time. The aforementioned aunt then goes to see the patriarch of the family, Bai Mengtang 白萌堂, also called Baiye 白爷. Before the aunt enters the mansion of the latter, the servant tells her not to go inside. She, however, proceeds to enter Bai Mengtang's mansion and finds him writing calligraphy. After she tells him that he now has a new baby grandson who has just been born, he snaps at her to leave him alone. He, who is obviously in a bad mood, leaves the viewer puzzled. Here, the audience really has no clue about what is going on. The episode has only been running for about 6 minutes, and the viewers are already drawn into speculations and imaginations about what these first scenes are all about.

After the patriarch of the family writes down the name for the newborn baby, tensions further increase in a new scene in the drug store nearby. Before customers enter this pharmacy, the TV audience is introduced to the name of the drug store in big Chinese characters, which read *Baicaoting* 百草厅. Although it is not necessarily known by all viewers of the series at this point, it soon becomes more obvious that this drug store belongs to the Bai family. In the shop, people ask for their decoctions and prescriptions, as would be expected from customers in such a shop. While the head of the pharmacy, referred to as Daye 大爷, seems to have gone to an outer imperial palace mansion to pay a visit to a patient, the audience gets introduced to another character in the play. This man, now being the temporary responsible in the pharmacy, is called Erye 二爷. In the back office, a staff member then approaches him. Being somewhat irritated, he reacts to the message passed on to him and leaves to see an elderly lady in another official's home. This mansion and its residents appear to be part of the greater imperial family, too, as soon dawns on the viewer. After Erye diagnoses a minor disease by employing the pulse diagnosis method, he concludes that the illness of the elderly lady is rather harmless. However, since he's already there, he is asked to also examine the pulse of a person called Gege 格格. The Chinese characters on the lower end of the screen provide information that this Gege 格格 appears to be a female person. This is so because the latter name, referring to the woman, who is not shown in the scene (hidden behind a curtain), indicates that she must be a Manchu princess⁴⁶⁰. The Chinese terminology clearly refers to her status.

⁴⁶⁰ The last Chinese dynasty was ruled by Manchurians.

After the Chinese doctor Erye 二爷 successfully examines the princess, the patriarch of the mansion, who, as is then revealed, just recently returned from the palace in Inner Mongolia, returns to the residence. He is first pleased to see Erye conducting the doctor's call, although he had expected another member of the Bai family, the above-mentioned Daye. When hearing that the Manchu princess Gege is pregnant, the happy expression leaves the man's face. He, the patriarch Wangye 王爷⁴⁶¹, the term referring to "Your Highness", is turning cold and very unfriendly. Not only that, but he simply leaves the room. The doctor Erye is then puzzled. When he asks a servant for his payment fee, he is refused. Upon leaving the small palace, his horse is slayed, and the carriage destroyed. The scene is very dramatic. When he finally returns home to the Bai mansion, everyone is waiting for him because they have been worrying about him. The seeing of his own newborn son, which under different circumstances would most probably have been the happiest day in his life, is mixed with some bittersweet feelings because the earlier event must have possibly been the worst thing that had ever occurred in Erye's life. This tension is creating an uncanny feeling. The form and context of combining the horse being slayed and the baby being born in the same time frame produce an unconventional feeling in the spectator. Members of older Western movie audiences may know such a dramatic filmic method from the classic childbirth scene in the movie *The Crime of M. Lange* by Jean Renoir, where the baby is stillborn. In that scene, similar weird feelings are being produced by the movie script as the pregnancy of the female character Estelle was the result of her being raped.⁴⁶² Though these two scenes are not completely comparable, the storyline in *The Crime of M. Lange* produces a similar emotional outcome to the described scene in the Great Mansion Gate. It is the strange mixing together of paradoxical events that creates intense and unsettling emotions in the TV or movie audiences of such projects. Filmic conventions like these create strong motifs that drive the story. In the *Dazhaimen* scene, a tension is being built up, which creates suspension and anticipation in the spectator as to how the story will proceed.⁴⁶³ Of course, when Erye is seeing his baby for the first time, both he and the baby are fixated by a close-up shot of the camera, as is usual in these sorts of scenes, to intensify the emotional reaction in the spectator. The viewer can literally feel Erye's unlimited happiness when seeing his baby, which very soon turns into a burdened mixed emotion because of the day's events.

⁴⁶¹ Zhan Wangye 詹王爷 – An imperial prince who was born in Mongolia.

⁴⁶² See Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 60.

⁴⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-70.

Up to this point, the viewer of *Dazhaimen* can only wonder what is going on. Straight from the start of the first episode, the audience is overwhelmed and kept rather breathless by the quick follow-ups of new events in each-and-every new scene. Most scenes are kept open, meaning that the viewer is not informed about the reasons behind all those things happening. This, of course, creates enormous tension and excitement. The drama of *Dazhaimen* thereafter is slowly unfolding. It draws the spectator in. The viewer starts to contemplate and fill in the meaning of the events that he has just been exposed to.⁴⁶⁴ By telling the story in such a way, the director is building up the cornerstones of the narration. This, however, is only the starting point, as the here-retold incidents of this very first episode only account for about 25 minutes in the play.

Usually, the episodes of *Dazhaimen* have a screen duration of about 45 minutes. It will be shown that the story is regularly packed with different plots in-order-to develop it and to introduce the viewer to the main characters and circumstances in the play. Here, it is worth noting what media scientist David Bordwell writes about the mechanisms of film in his book *Poetics of Cinema*. Although the statement is woven into the context of art films, the argument appears to be applicable to most films and TV series, too. He writes: “The film initially trains the viewer in its distinctive storytelling tactics, but as the film proceeds, those tactics mutate in unforeseeable ways.”⁴⁶⁵ This is what happens in the outlined story outtake above. The alterations and turns in storytelling in a TV series, however, are more complex than in cinema movies and TV films, as variations in plot and methodical patterns can possibly be changed with each new episode.⁴⁶⁶

The here given kind of plot segmentation will later be helpful to further analyse and understand a certain portion of the given narration and its motivations. It also builds the foundation for a deeper analysis of the elements of Chinese medicine in the TV series, which will further strengthen the understanding of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China today. After all, what must be identified through this analysis is a so-called *motif* for the production and airing of such TV series. Thereby, the aim is to obtain an understanding of how and why such stories are being retold in China time and again.

Thus, firstly, a more profound analysis of the storyline and the applied filmic methods is needed. As the sequel continues, after the family members have finally eaten dinner, a new

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizite Leser*, pp. 315-316.

⁴⁶⁵ David Bordwell, *Poetics of Cinema*, pp. 165.

⁴⁶⁶ See Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television*.

character that had been given a glimpse of before is introduced. It is the younger brother of the Bai family by the name Bai Yingyu 白颖宇, who appears to be quite a mischievous fellow. At the table, he is involved in a discussion with the earlier-mentioned aunt. Meanwhile, in another theatrical shot, the patriarch Baiye and his son-in-law Erye reason about what might have gone wrong earlier. Thus, in the following scenes, a servant of the Bai family is sent out to find out about the reasons for these disastrous happenings of the day. Meanwhile, the spectators also get introduced to a character that will reappear a few episodes later as the in-house teacher of the grandson of the family. Besides that, the patriarch of the Bai family is told that the problem with the monarch and the princess was that the princess stayed secluded in Inner Mongolia and should not have had any opportunity to get involved in any sort of romantic liaison (here it must be considered that all events depicted in the TV series are taking place in the late 19th century in feudalistic China). It soon shows that the princess had not obeyed the social rules of conduct, and she must have had an unwanted romantic love affair. Consequently, this leads to the monarch, Wangye (her father), losing his temper because the princess is not married yet. In his fury, he then had the horse of Erye slaughtered, and his carriage destroyed as-a-means to relieve his anger. This is weird, as, so to speak, *the messenger's horse has been killed while he simply delivered the message*. But, as a matter of fact, this initial scene already uncovers the massively unbalanced character of the monarch. His fiendish personality is given away very early.⁴⁶⁷ Likely, this plot serves two functions: first, it marks the onset of a conflict that is foundational to the Bai family story, and second, it informs the audience about the character of the monarch. These are simple *informants* inserted by the producer of the play to set the environment for narrating his story.⁴⁶⁸

Further, within the story, the events appear to give a huge loss of face value to the Bai family, as everybody in the city soon hears about the implications. One may assume that it is not Erye's fault unless it is considered a court rule (or: moral question) to not report such *undesired* news (of pregnancy). This is what the viewer may contemplate, especially if he or she is a foreigner to Chinese culture. Maybe, the older brother, Daye, would have acted differently. Maybe, he would have known how to avoid such a conflict, as he frequently visited the imperial courts. Such a kind of contemplation may be induced in the viewer's mind by the confusing but still openly portrayed events in the plot of this drama. It can be assumed that either

⁴⁶⁷ According to the Chinese article *Dazhaimen zhong Zhan Wangye de yuanxing shi shei* 《大宅门中詹王爷的原型是谁》 his character traits are based on the hardships that he experienced at the imperial court and throughout his career as a military commander, as well as the difficult relation of his daughter (a concubine) to the emperor.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 94.

these manifold portrayals of morally right or wrong decisions have been intentionally implemented by the playwright or that they belong to a kind of subconscious message that is constantly being mediated inside the respective discourse in China. By reading Umberto Eco, who has been writing about the *Role of the Reader* in the process of perception and interaction with a text, it becomes clear that such methods are often used in movies and TV plays as much as in texts. I argue in this fashion because films, movies, and TV plays are, effectively, based on text as well. In respect to the above-mentioned situation of Erye, the following clues by Umberto Eco are worth contemplating: 1. The author of a story makes decisions about the deep semantic structure of a text or play. 2. The reader is involved in a process to decode the written world. 3. The reader gains knowledge when reading a text or watching a movie, and thus constantly actualizes his or her conclusions.⁴⁶⁹ This means that the viewer is somewhat part of the story. At least, by drawing the spectator in, the author and director of the play make sure to produce enough tension and excitement to keep the viewer in front of the TV screen. Also, it can be suspected that the viewer is influenced or even educated as moral questions are thematized in the show. This question will be attended to again later in more detail.

Further, in the following conversation between Grandfather Bai and Erye it is agreed upon that Erye won't mention any of the unlucky events to outsiders. In a scene at 40 minutes into the first episode of the play, the oldest son of the Bai family, Daye, is giving a massage to a client by the name of Bei Leye 贝勒爷 who gets very irritated when Daye tells him that the Manchu princess is pregnant. This leaves room to speculate whether Bei Leye is somewhat involved in the coming about of this pregnancy.

In one of the subsequent scenes, Baiye 白爷, however, pays a visit to the monarch Wangye 王爷 to make amends and offer his apologies in-order-to calm the situation down. The monarch has already digested the whole matter and is friendly, but he leaves when Baiye offers to see the princess again to diagnose her pulse once more. This happens after Baiye meets another physician at the entrance of the mansion before entering, who simply tells Baiye the princess would not have any illness worth mentioning. Here, it can be speculated that this unknown physician might have been smarter than Erye who openly announced the pregnancy to the father of the princess. Quite evidently, this shows that Erye most probably had just been a fool to report the pregnancy. His father-in-law, Baiye, who now pays a visit to the palace, seems to be conducting some sort of *damage control*. After taking the pulse diagnosis, he writes down a prescription, which can be expected to abort the pregnancy. Then the first episode ends.

⁴⁶⁹ See Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, pp. 14-19.

Although this excerpt only roughly renders the events of the first episode, it offers good amounts of material as a starting point for interpretation and analysis. In-order-to gain a more complete understanding of the TV series, further episodes or rather, cornerstones of the development of the storyline throughout the series, will be necessary and helpful. Nevertheless, the mentioned story already shows various clear clues and cues to understand the importance of this TV series for Chinese society, I argue. It is markedly full of elements of typical Chinese traits, which can be termed Chinese culture or Chinese tradition.

In the attempt to trace back the myth of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine in the TV series *Dazhaimen*, one must therefore dare to take-a-look behind the curtain. Naturally, the spectator of such a TV drama gets drawn into the storyline and the plot, leaving little room for speculation about the empirical truth of the content of such a sequel. As mentioned earlier, the author of the play built the narrative of *Dazhaimen* on certain historical facts about the *Tongrentang* pharmacy, enterprise, and family. This, however, does not say much about the production of a myth or narrative on this matter.

As are the features of myths and narratives, it is likely that the values conveyed in the TV series *Dazhaimen* (no matter how they are to be interpreted ideologically) will certainly have an impact on Chinese society. Deducing from the popularity of the show it can be assumed that millions and millions of Chinese citizens of almost all age groups have consumed the TV series at some point or another. Therefore, a TV drama like the one mentioned here has colossal potential to convey a certain image of moral values, cultural values, or political ideological thought into Chinese society at large.⁴⁷⁰ This seems feasible, as French philosopher Michel Serres says: “Yes, knowledge feeds and reverses vision.”⁴⁷¹ This, in my understanding, simply expresses that knowledge production is a powerful tool. In short, no one is arguing about the factual existence of a Chinese medicine in Chinese history. The question, or the focus, here is on the fact that how we tell a story potentially alters the message⁴⁷² that is produced. What Serres therefore must mean is that the knowledge that is fed to the people surely shapes their comprehension of an object, context, or subject.

The question that must be asked then is why it is of interest to retell the story of the *Tongrentang* in the TV series *Dazhaimen*. The answer could be manifold. It could simply be that Guo Baochang had been eager to become a famous writer and director, but why then had this story

⁴⁷⁰ This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter when thematizing the *historical TV series*.

⁴⁷¹ Michel Serres, *The Incandescent*, pp. 5.

⁴⁷² For further reading, see Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message*.

been interesting to the Chinese TV station that broadcasted the show? Is it simply for the sake of informing today's television viewer about what happened in Chinese history in the past century? Is it for the fun of watching a TV drama about Chinese doctors, their pharmacy, and the fate of the Bai family? Yes, all of this can be very entertaining for the restless minds of people in modern societies. Accordingly, I want to come up with a first assumption by referring to *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* by Adorno and Horkheimer, that people's minds can be kept busy with some sort of drama and fast-speed cut scenes, which apparently helps them *relax* when they are coming home from a tough day at work.⁴⁷³ Well, that could be true, and it has an economic side effect. If the TV series is a media-success, then it produces huge economic profit for the production company, the TV station, the playwright, and all involved participants.

If, on the other hand, one goes about questioning the deeper motivations, then the result could be that it is revealed how media like TV, the movies, the cinema, novels, and advertising usually follow a grand theme. The earlier expressed view, by Li Juan 李娟, that Chinese medicine is important to humanity, and that it has been a pressing issue to inform the world's people of its efficacy and existence,⁴⁷⁴ could be posing such a theme. But there are many ways to approach this topic.

By attending to the research of Wimal Dissanayake it can be understood that the self is produced according to a certain image. He says *the self is constructed* and explains that the "self is produced through the instrumentality of narrative, and what all narratives end up with is an image or complex of images of the self."⁴⁷⁵ In brief, anything said, written, or otherwise conveyed to the self or to the external world serves a purpose and a means, although it may often be that the purpose is not obvious at first, as is the case with this TV series. In Dissanayake's statement, it becomes clear that everything happening in an individual's personal world potentially shapes his or her experience. While this is true for this micro-level approach, it can be deduced that the same is true for the macro-level. The individual produces an image of self,⁴⁷⁶ and society at large employs similar mechanisms. Werner Meissner argues that "individual identities can only be established within group identities."⁴⁷⁷ In brief, the image of a society is

⁴⁷³ German Title: *Dialektik der Aufklärung (Philosophische Fragmente)*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

⁴⁷⁴ See page 16.

⁴⁷⁵ Wimal Dissanayake, *Self as Image in Asian Theory and Practice*, pp. 8.

⁴⁷⁶ Again, referring to Jacques Lacan's explanations on the mirror stage in the psych. development of the infant.

⁴⁷⁷ Werner Meissner, *China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp. 41.

a complex matter. This will be highlighted in more detail in the Chapter *State Ideology or a 'Natural' Identification Process by the People* (Section 3, Chapter 13).

Before that, attention focus will be given to narratives in TV films, movies, and novels. Serres says those have-to-be loaded with tension in-order-to be entertaining. According to him, ruptures, dramatic turns, and bifurcations are a *must* in good storytelling. He writes:

Tension, calm, dramatic turn of events, tension, calm, dramatic turn ... reduce here to simple laws of mechanics. Few narratives deviate from this sequence of punctuated equilibria or, if they do, boredom and displeasure will arise; no one will continue to read; everyone, blind and deaf, will leave the show. All art of recounting, all enchantment it brings is held in the distribution and succession of the ruptures and plateaus, in the length or brevity of the latter, in the surprise provoked by the improbability, with and without miracle, of the former. A good storyteller follows a line and then abruptly bifurcates; if, after autumn, the leaf doesn't fall too quickly, it maintains suspense, but not too slowly either, at the risk of boredom.⁴⁷⁸

This statement reflects how *Dazhaimen* cannot just be a back-and-forth of dramatic turns without reason. In storytelling, these spins have a narrative function. This can be observed in the reporting on political and social issues in modern media (like newspapers and the like) as well. Tension and commotion are selling papers, I would argue. Otherwise, as Serres states above, the audience turns away in boredom. In TV shows, films, and movies, as media scientists David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson write in their book *Film Art*, every story, and thus each film, has a *form*. The form of the movie is a system. Thus, in-order-to create a good, dynamic movie, it must follow certain patterns. The form of a film is described by Bordwell and Thompson as follows:

We think that every component functions as part of a pattern, big or small, that engages the viewer. So we'll treat as formal elements many things that some people consider content. From our standpoint, subject matter and abstract ideas all enter into the form of the artwork. They may cue us to frame certain expectations or imagine certain possibilities. The viewer relates these elements to one another dynamically. Consequently, subject matter and ideas become somewhat different from what they might be outside the artwork.⁴⁷⁹

This includes such elements as reappearing characters or scenes, surprising elements, or similar phenomena where the expectations of the viewer, at least for a while, are being suspended in-order-to build up tension. Expectations produced in the audience may then later be fulfilled or not. In general, in storytelling, there are many such techniques available to guide or mislead the expectations, emotions, and reactions of the audience. Stories told in movies can be

⁴⁷⁸ Michel Serres, *The Incandescent*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁷⁹ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 53.

widely different from real-life circumstances without even being ridiculous. They don't always have to be built on factual truth and must therefore not necessarily be realistic, as, for example, in the case of fiction.⁴⁸⁰

In-order-to delve deep into the form of a movie, then understanding certain techniques of analysing methods is helpful. Some methods provide sound tools to deconstruct intentional, unintentional, conscious, or subconscious meanings in narratives. While the focus here is put on the form of a movie, the suggested 4-fold instrument of analysis by Bordwell and Thompson splits into referential meaning, explicit meaning, implicit meaning, and symptomatic meaning. The four categories broadly summarize the various meanings that can be embedded in the respective story and its context. Categories like these each focus on a distinctive aspect of the narrative. By referential meaning, some reference knowledge is being referred to. If the viewer does not have specific knowledge or does not know about a place's history, he or she may miss certain information that can be important to understanding the overall plot. Further, explicit meaning rather refers to the overall plot of a movie. Bordwell and Thompson say: "The explicit meanings of a film arise from the *whole* film and are set in dynamic formal relation to one another."⁴⁸¹ On the contrary, implicit meaning "should not leave behind the particular and concrete features of a film".⁴⁸² Nevertheless, implicit meaning is that which is said or implied implicitly in the story. It usually leaves a lot of room for speculation and interpretation. Lastly, symptomatic meaning is most often used to refer to a symptom of a story, a character, or a society. Not infrequently, such symptoms reflect the ideology of a person, group, or society.⁴⁸³

Therefore, harbouring suspicion when contemplating the narrative of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine in the context of modern China is building on the knowledge that has been acquired in Section 1 of this book that TCM, as it is known today, is largely fabricated. Chinese medicine existed in empirical history, and it still does exist today, but what is referred to when talking about TCM is suspected to be a myth-in-itself. The terms 'fabricated' and 'constructed' mean the way in which many narratives (not only literary or theatrical ones) in social processes as well as in historical processes are oftentimes produced in a mythological way. Roland Barthes, Clifford Geertz, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm have been profoundly looking into such myths, webs of significance, imagined communities, and invented traditions.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 54-61.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 62.

⁴⁸³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 60-63.

Investigating the TV series *Dazhaimen* helps to distinguish empirical and historical facts from those that the actual representations of the myth convey to the recipient.

The TV series must thus be referred to as a **probable representation of the myth**. As has been clarified by the above-mentioned authors, culture is an ongoing process. Culture can never be static, but it is always changing or evolving, as Werner Meissner explains when talking about culture and identity.⁴⁸⁴ This will be further explained in the last chapters of this book. From this point of view, Chinese culture, of which Traditional Chinese Medicine is one fragment, is consequently constantly changing as people's living conditions are ever-changing. At the same time, culture, but particularly myths, must be reproduced over-and-over-again in order to continue legitimizing what they've been fabricated for.

All myths and their narratives usually follow a motif; they are *given* an internal motivation to convey a certain image *of something* to the recipient. That's the preposition of semiotic theory. One must thus be aware that every text or otherwise disseminated story is pointing towards something, and that all text strikes the reader or viewer with a certain amount of pre-knowledge and experience. This means that every interpretation is influenced by the perceiving individual's preconditioning. Consequently, this entails that every person is always biased in one way or another.⁴⁸⁵

Whether the story's content about a 'traditional' Chinese medicine in *Dazhaimen* is a vehicle for other sorts of inventions of traditions in, for example, Hobsbawm's⁴⁸⁶ sense or whether it may purport other profound political significations and affiliations will be further investigated in the following steps. Throughout the following observation, surely a positivistic (deterministic) view that the world is given is never the foundational assumption; instead, it is hypothesized that the *world* and all the social contexts in it are constructed, presumably socially constructed.

In the online article *David Bordwell Shows How Critics "Make Meaning" Out of Films* by Tim Nicholas, the earlier mentioned analysis method of Bordwell is illuminated. He mixes Bordwell's standpoint with his own when quoting from *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*⁴⁸⁷. Tim Nicholas recites that meaning and interpretations, according to Bordwell, are either imposed on the story and content of a movie or that

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Werner Meissner, *China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp. 42.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, pp. 20-22.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 8.

⁴⁸⁷ In: David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Harvard University Press, 1991).

meaning is at the same time extracted from films.⁴⁸⁸ The same, I argue, applies to the TV series *Dazhaimen*, because, as Nicholas explains: »[i]nterpretation is a process of building up, not digging in. “Meanings are not found but made.”«⁴⁸⁹ As a result, meaning is created by the reader or audience, people impose meaning on something, whether the object of interpretation is a movie, a song – every kind of art interpretation really – or whether it is the decoding one comes up with about every aspect of his or her daily subjective reality. Building on Bordwell’s model of the interpretation and making of meaning, Nicholas summarizes extended ideas to grasp the content of storytelling and plots in filmmaking, which further constitute the film in its semantic setting.

First the critic picks out “cues.” A cue could be an image, a location, a line of dialogue, a gesture, an entire scene, or an aesthetic element like a camera movement or choice of color – any element of the film, large or small, can serve as a potential carrier of meaning. These will then be “mapped” onto by “semantic fields.” A semantic field is “a set of relations of meaning between conceptual and linguistic units.” These are drawn from whatever fields of knowledge the critic is familiar with as well as from their common sense understanding the world. They’re typically organized according to one of four basic types: doublets (i.e. nature/culture), clusters (loosely related concepts like race/class/nationhood), hierarchies (i.e. self/family/community/nation), and proportional series (one critic assigns different characters from *Alien* the labels human/anti-human/not-human/not-anti-human).

My use of temporal language in the last paragraph isn’t completely accurate, however. In reality, there’s no set order to how these processes are used. A critic will probably initially have cues trigger associations with semantic fields almost automatically while they’re viewing. Once they’ve decided that a particular semantic field may be fruitful, they will likely go back through the film (mentally or actually) in search of further cues which they can connect with terms in that field. They may also focus on a cue or set of cues that seem salient without initially knowing how a particular semantic field could be mapped onto them or even what semantic fields would be relevant, trying mapping out mapping different fields in different ways to see what fits and what doesn’t. The entire process is a large-scale act of creative problem solving.⁴⁹⁰

Here, Nicholas summarizes the overall process of how people interpret film scenes as much as daily life events. Accordingly, the mentioned semantic fields are always a combination of words in a context, through which the context and the single terminologies inevitably become meaningful in one way or another, usually through the respective context itself. In other words, people choose a first standpoint. The ordinary moviegoer (and TV audience) does not necessarily actively select the standpoint, he or she simply *has* a standpoint that derives from the preposition or predisposition of that person. So-to-speak, it springs up from the socialisa-

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. Tim Nicholas, *David Bordwell Shows How Critics “Make Meaning” Out of Films*.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

tion of an individual with all his or her background. Such bias, in my view, is interconnected with literally everything that defines a person. It starts from where a person grew up, whether the person has suffered or strived in the past, what country, nation, or ethnicity this person belongs to, is he/she brought up in a liberal country or not, did his/her parents understand him/her emotionally or not, did he or she have support by his/her parents and the extended network of his/her social relations, how is he/she connected to his/her past, did former generations suffer from war (i.e., being refugees or not), did his/her parents suffer, did he/she have the chance to attend higher education, were his/her parents the warm-hearted type or overly rationalistic people, how did the political system and the respective society influence him/her. I argue that all such questions and many other factors define an individual, whether one is aware of them or not. Contextually, this is also expressed by Martin P.J. Edwardes in *The Origins of Self* as he writes:

The stories we tell about being human are the stories of our own humanity; the evidence we rely on is our own experience of being human; and when we hear stories, we understand them through the filter of our own experience.⁴⁹¹

Hence, thereafter, the interpretive standpoint builds on the traits of a person's character and his or her acquired value system. Consequently, to a degree, the ordinary TV audience as well as the film critic are *restricted* by the overall worldview that they bring along. The critic, whether he or she is a journalist or a scientist, is, however, professionally obliged to aim at overcoming this biased view in-order-to achieve a maximum degree of objectivity (see next page).

As Nicholas quotes Bordwell, he points out that all of this is not new to media scientists. In the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called symptomatic approach to the interpretation of popular entertainment followed mainly two paths: 1. The psychoanalytical, and 2. The Marxist approach. In the former, many scholars relied on methods built on Carl Jung's ideas. Those were later updated or rather replaced by followers of Jacques Lacan's theories.⁴⁹² The ideas expressed above are likely to broadly reflect some of those thoughts, as can be understood by engaging more profoundly with the four-fold category of how people supposedly *make* meaning. This uncovers how different approaches produce different interpretations and outcomes. Nicholas writes:

⁴⁹¹ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self*, pp. 25.

⁴⁹² Cf. Tim Nicholas, *David Bordwell Shows How Critics "Make Meaning" Out of Films*.

We can see how this process works in Lacan's interpretation of "The Purloined Letter." His familiar semantic fields are the ones of his own brand of psychoanalysis, and so he is inclined to map "the symbolic order" or "the phallus" onto characters or objects in Poe's story. Likewise, a Lacanian-feminist film critic might map the binary of "scophiliac voyeurism" and "narcissism" onto the cues of characters' "gazes" or the camera's "gaze." **Simply put, the same concepts we spend time thinking about outside the theatre are the ones we are likely to find reflected back at us on the screen.**

Although critics who claim allegiance to one interpretive school or another may assert that their method is wholly unique and inherently more sophisticated than prior approaches, Bordwell disagrees. Any given interpretation may be more or less complex or simple, more or less nuanced or clunky, but the underlying processes involved are always drawn from the same relatively small toolbox. He asserts that "when spectators or critics make sense of a film, the meanings they construct are of only four possible types": *Referential meaning* refers to the diegesis, the fictional world created by the spectator, including and extending outward from events we see directly on screen. When we see a character exiting a taxi cab, his action of getting out of the car is a referential meaning, but so is the cab ride itself, which we did not see but can infer and roughly imagine. *Explicit meaning* is usually what spectators mean when they talk about a film having a "point." The film is assumed to "speak directly" by, for instance, using stereotyped images such as the scale of justice, or including dialogue that makes clear thesis statements (i.e. "There's no place like home."). *Implicit meaning*, on the other hand, is assumed to be covered or indirect. "Units of implicit meaning are commonly called 'themes,' though they may be identified as 'problems,' 'issues,' or 'questions.'" The last type is *symptomatic meaning*, which is said to be divulged "involuntarily," usually in contradiction to explicit and implicit meaning.

Journalistic or essayistic critics (i.e. non-academic ones) will often focus on creating evocative descriptions of the first two levels. By sticking to the literal, it may seem that these critics aren't doing interpretation at all. But simply translating an audio-visual experience into words inherently entails the mapping of semantic fields onto cues. As Bordwell reminds us, "perceiving is structural and categorical. Perception is not a mere grasp of abstract shape or a flicker of vivid sensations; it is an 'effort after meaning' - though not necessarily implicit or symptomatic meaning."⁴⁹³

Though this view of Nicholas after Bordwell can also be deemed false by those who perceive these findings critically, it provides room for what I have explained above. Interpretation, which is also my conviction, is unequivocally connected to the methodical thinking that people apply. I argue that each of such methods goes back to fundamental processes that are interlinked with the thought structure of the individual who interprets the issue at hand.

Simplifying the matter to get a better hold of the workings in our mind, one may want to comprehend it in the sense of the Hegelian (building on Fichte) idea of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. It is not only the concept of Lacan or some other psychoanalyst but rather the idea that the human mind creates a first assumption (thesis) which is then proven as correct or be-

⁴⁹³ Tim Nicholas, *David Bordwell Shows How Critics "Make Meaning" Out of Films*.

ing falsified (antithesis) and as a result one arrives at newly accumulated knowledge/meaning about a given subject (the synthesis).⁴⁹⁴ This then gives rise to a new cycle of the same process, in which the synthesis becomes the new (hypo-)thesis.⁴⁹⁵ If taken-into-account that such pre-assumptions do not come out of nowhere but that the context (or bias) for any given assumption is springing from an individuals' socialisation, upbringing, his/her current circumstances and his/her making-sense of it, the above stated argument appears to ring true. Truth, if there is such a thing, is therefore always somewhat subjective or dependent on the argumentative foundation and the background of the given individual, I conclude.

Secondly, Tim Nicholas shows that there have been approaches to film analysis in the 1960s and 1970s where researchers argued in a Marxist fashion. Through-the-use-of Marxist, Hegelian or Weberian ideas, writers like Adorno or Horkheimer are commonly assigned to the Frankfurt School. Thereafter, in any text, *invisible* cultural forces are assumed to be at work, says Nicholas.⁴⁹⁶ In such a view, any interpretation of any given subject can be interpreted through a lens that is deeply embedded in a political discourse. This might as well be called ideological indoctrination. Unquestionably, there are movies and TV series on the market which mediate such a message.⁴⁹⁷ One must only think of what is widely called propaganda. The scientist must uncover such knowledge, and he/she must point out the existence of such structures and hidden messages.

Nonetheless, for the ignorant (unknowledgeable) viewer, a deeply political film could possibly deliver a different message. This was shown in the explanation given for the four categories, of which referential meaning most certainly *refers*, in the literal sense of the word, to what the audience usually does not see in a movie or what is being hinted at in the respective film. Symptomatic meaning, however, connects to what has just been looked into above. Ideological meaning, on the other hand, can be implicit or explicit. This depends on the purpose of the movie. Tim Nicholas states that interpretation and making meaning in the most basic sense are not the only goals of film analysis. As he comprehends Bordwell's thinking, Nicholas concludes:

When looking at particular films, he says, scholars should be asking "what processes brought it into being (for example, to what problems does its composition represent an attempted solution?) and what forces have mobilized it for various purposes." His approach doesn't need to run counter to interpretation as an endeavour. More attention

⁴⁹⁴ It may be important to note that such a method is not fully considered logical but rather heuristic.

⁴⁹⁵ Cf. Werner Hartkopf, *Die Dialektik Fichtes als Vorstufe zu Hegels Dialektik*, pp. 174-180.

⁴⁹⁶ See Tim Nicholas, *David Bordwell Shows How Critics "Make Meaning" Out of Films*.

⁴⁹⁷ Or it can be hypothesized that all movies include political messages as they always reflect a narration of something, and as all narrators inevitably have a social, political, and cultural background (a bias).

paid to how and why films are constructed and what effects they produce can help lay the groundwork for a more informed criticism and act as a corrective to critics' more outrageous claims.⁴⁹⁸

As a result, the here explained categories and the specific argumentation in the above quoted statement can serve as a sub-preposition to the approach of the overall matter in the analysis of the TV series *Dazhaimen*. Of course, it would be easy to converge on the series in a one-sided political direction. The question then would be whether *Dazhaimen* is conveying a political ideology wrapped into a melodramatic TV show set in a historical context. Although it can be hypothesized that this television drama is mediating some sort of nationalist ideology, it would be wrong to limit the research to this aspect all too hastily. Certainly, this is one way to interpret the matter, but it is possibly just one feature of this TV series. Instead, it shall be asked what else the composition may be constructed for or what it, in turn, constructs. Further accumulation of knowledge shedding light on new angles to comprehend this TV series will help to make more sense of its multi-faceted imagery. In the further investigation, the *agency* of Chinese medicine, therefore, will be brought into focus.

2. *Dazhaimen* – A Historical TV Series in the Meta-Discourse

In his book *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*⁴⁹⁹, Stefan Kramer, sinologist, and media scientist, covers the role of television in mainland China. His findings are of particular interest as they shed light on the afore-mentioned subject. His book had been published in 2004, which is helpful because it broadly covers the understanding and coverage of television during the time in which *Dazhaimen* had been broadcasted. The series first aired in 2001. This is important insofar as the temporal setting of the program must be understood in two relevant time frames. One is the era in which the TV series was produced, and the other is the period that is covered in the story world of *Dazhaimen*.

However, for the time period of the production of the TV program, it is relevant to comprehend the state of the production and financing as well as the broadcasting circumstances at the time. As Kramer writes, television in China had slowly matured around the time he conducted his research. Chinese television had reached a second media-historical change, through which it had gained vast influence on the cultural processes in China. In this context, he sums up that TV in China had come to be the only medium that had the capacity to transmit news or other events in real time to the audience. No other medium comprised this feature in 2004 to such a

⁴⁹⁸ Tim Nicholas, *David Bordwell Shows How Critics "Make Meaning" Out of Films*.

⁴⁹⁹ Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden: Fernsehen und kulturelles Selbstverständnis in der Volksrepublik China*.

large extent except the then slowly emerging internet. Back then, Kramer imagined that the internet could become the number one contender for television. As is now known, the internet is extremely powerful at transporting any sort of message into homes and across continents. Nevertheless, in 2001 and for some more years to come, the television medium was most powerful through its use of repeatedly broadcasted programs and events. It is therefore argued in this chapter that television had, and still has, massive potential to shape the collective perception (Wahrnehmung) of the Chinese people.⁵⁰⁰

This power of impact is not a specific feature of TV in China but rather a universal force in the realm of TV media globally. Generally, television, although at first glance it appears to be a *neutral* broadcasting technology, can be used as a powerful instrument to produce collective culture. Kramer – by referring to Marshall McLuhan, Benedict Anderson, the System Dialectic of Wu Jie, the Cultural Studies of Raymond Williams, and John Fiske - shows how cultural and social processes as much as their inherent discourses reciprocally constitute a cultural identity. He strongly points out that the intermingling of reality and fiction in China is highly influenced by the powerful Chinese elite. In this respect, society and ideology are contextualized in the program structures of Chinese TV stations. While there is the national Chinese broadcaster CCTV, other stations like BTV, STV and OTV are also involved in such processes. However, the main point made here is that some broadcast on a national level and others on a local level.⁵⁰¹ Thus, their program content may either focus on national, global, or local issues. The broadcasting enterprises allow (or dominate) the viewer to *consume* information and entertainment while he or she is sitting in an armchair at home.⁵⁰² It can be imagined that a national broadcaster reaches more individuals than a local broadcaster. Respectively, a message that is conveyed nationally can have a greater impact on overall society.

In such a context, it is important to know that, according to Marshall McLuhan's essay *The Medium is the Message*, the media is never just broadcasting information in a neutral fashion. Media always plays a role in choosing content and/or how to present it; thus, the respective information is always being filtered.⁵⁰³ Hypothetically, thereby, the media in China, particularly the national television, is used by the political Chinese power holders to mediate a certain image of the nation.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 373-374.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 373-378.

⁵⁰² See *Ibid.*, pp. 376.

⁵⁰³ Cf. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Chapter 1.

In this context, Stefan Kramer explains the bipolarity⁵⁰⁴ of a reconstructed history and that of the reproduced present time. On Chinese TV, he writes, this double feature is constantly including references to the past while at the same time Chinese history, culture, and tradition are being (re)constructed. Commonly repeated themes in this mediation process are the fight against imperial forces, the developments achieved by the Chinese Communist Party, and the founding of the PRC in 1949. By referring to Benedict Anderson's concept of the *imagined community*, Kramer outlines how such processes 'constitute' the modern Chinese nation.⁵⁰⁵ As a result, it can be said that the Chinese nation is thereby constructed and constantly reconstructed in the minds of the recipients.

Similarly, when Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger write about *The Invention of Traditions*, they explain that these often build on certain historical facts. They state: "A large store of such materials is accumulated in the past of any society, and an elaborate language of symbolic practice and communication is always available."⁵⁰⁶ While traditions, myths, narratives, and cultural history are different terminological (and factual) categories from what is referred to here, they follow the same basic principles, I argue. According to Kramer, the national Chinese discourse is strongly shaped by Chinese television. This impact, he says, is even stronger than the power that Chinese cinema has on influencing the national ideological discourse. This is so because the television is a medium that is highly convenient to the consumer. In the 2000s, TV sets were coming more and more to Chinese homes. Not to speak of today, I want to add, where large parts of Chinese society will have access to television. Hence, while the historical past of China and the present are repeatedly influencing the Chinese populace through TV program structures, the perceptions of time and space are also being shaped. Through the mediated and reconstructed Chinese history on TV, often the reproduced realities diverge immensely from historical facts. In the dissemination of the claimed 5000 years of Chinese cultural history, many discontinuities are presumably deliberately obscured. Thereby, and by making use of certain narrative forms concerning matters like the anti-imperialistic fight, the communist revolution and the present actions of the communist state, a certain national myth is created in-order-to reach national unity.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 376.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 376-377.

⁵⁰⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*, pp. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ The information above, except my own arguments and the quote after Hobsbawm and Ranger, can be found in: Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pages 373-384.

In this context, I argue, one relevant factor in the production of the myth of the Chinese nation goes back to the Chinese territory. The territorial concept of a nation becomes clearer by the following paragraph in the essay *Nations, States and Territory*, written by Anna Stilz. It briefly explains how a nation, its identity and its link with the territory are commonly established:

The identity argument claims that the fact that a territory is central to the identity of a cultural nation provides a strong reason for granting that group rights over the territory. A group's identity tie might have been established because important events in the nation's history occurred on that territory or because the territory features prominently in the group's myths or traditions. But when the identity tie is strong enough that the group considers a territory its "homeland," this gives it an interest in residence on and governance over that territory.⁵⁰⁸

In consequence, the idea is that nation-states are always linked to a territory. In this sense, China is no exception. The *fabrication* of the modern nation through the influence of television and other media follows the same basic principles in China, Germany, the United States of America, India or what have you. As highlighted above, for Stefan Kramer, the potential influence of television to literally construct the image of a nation is enormous because it finds people at home. Broadcasted shows and ideas are projected into people's living rooms. In brief, the television has been (is) a massively influential medium to mediate knowledge to the masses in China as it is anywhere else.

Moreover, as a result, Chinese cultural identity is not only a historical matter with continuities⁵⁰⁹ and discontinuities (one must only think about the different ruling entities throughout the history of Chinese dynastic empires)⁵¹⁰ but it is also largely *made* by social discourses and even more so shaped by political discourses, which are greatly influenced by the state, the people, and the media. The TV in China constructs and retells a myth – that of the Chinese nation – which plays an immense role in the cultural and collective self-understanding of the Chinese people.⁵¹¹ This issue is mentioned by Peter Zarrow in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture* when he writes:

In 1644 a Manchu-led coalition of forces from the northeast, outside the Great Wall, led an invasion of China that created the Qing dynasty, the latest in a line of 'orthodox succession' that traditional historiographers have traced back (somewhat mythically) 4000 years.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Anna Stilz, *Nations, State, and Territory, Ethics*.

⁵⁰⁹ In his book, Kramer speaks of "historische Kontinuität" on page 378.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. *Stefan Kramer, Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 379.

⁵¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 383.

⁵¹² Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments*, pp. 21.

Here, an example is given about the existence of created continuities in historical processes. This gives reason to think that, likewise, in the TV series *Dazhaimen* history is creatively constructed. How this mediated history in the TV series (that is, in the story world) is depicting the alleged historical reality of the time⁵¹³ will be outlined soon.

Thus far, I conclude that for the discourse on the nation, the above-found issues mean that China is not just 'the nation of China' because it simply exists in modern reality, but that China as a nation and *being Chinese* in the sense of a cultural identity are constantly being reproduced. The self-understanding of the citizens is massively dominated by this process. While this is not unique to the Chinese nation-state, according to Kramer, the Chinese television has a huge effect on the formation of Chinese cultural identity, nationalistic ideology, and collective memory.⁵¹⁴

Kramer explains how the genre of the *historical TV series* is part of this greater discourse in China. He writes that *Dazhaimen* 大宅门 belongs in this category. Thereafter, it represents one of the TV programs that reproduce, renew, and refabricate the Chinese past in-order-to achieve a certain congruent image of the Chinese nation. Consequently, the mechanism at play is part of the production of the national discourse on *what it means to be Chinese*, and thereby, the media constitutes a strong force in the shaping of the meta-discourse of Chinese culture and identity.⁵¹⁵ Similarly, it is my hypothesis that the fictional characters and the plot in the TV series *Dazhaimen* distort certain historical facts and events that aid in fabricating the image of the present Chinese nation state. When historical facts are portrayed in this fashion, it usually serves to create a myth. In such respect, Roland Barthes writes, „Der Mythos wird als ein Faktensystem gelesen, während er doch nur ein semiologisches System darstellt.“⁵¹⁶ This means that the myth is understood as a system of facts [which it pretends to be], but it is only a semiotic system. In a semiotic system, the meaning of a thing is employed (or exploited) in-order-to serve a certain goal. It is a symbol for something else, as shown in the following paragraph by Roland Barthes.

For instance, a whole book may be the signifier of a single concept; and conversely, a minute form (a word, a gesture, even incidental, so long as it is noticed) can serve as a signifier to a concept filled with a very rich history.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Cf. Markus Kuhn, *Narratologie*, pp. 237.

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 418-419.

⁵¹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

⁵¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, pp. 115.

⁵¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 119.

In the former sense, the TV series *Dazhaimen* may act as a signifier in the overall cultural discourse in China. Also, Stefan Kramer explained that a whole variety of historical TV series had been produced and are still being produced to retell the stories that the nation-builders want to convey to the Chinese people. This makes sense, as the institutional form of the modern Chinese *nation* and its leaders is legitimized by the fabrication of a beneficial, positive image of the historical Chinese past. Consequently, symbolically, this historical past must be imagined and conveyed in a favourable light when concerning the present nation-state. The alleged 5000 continuous years of history, the anti-imperialistic fight and the communist revolution of 1949 are common themes in this respect. The genre of historical TV series and films therein oftentimes functions as a media outlet to constitute the imagined past.⁵¹⁸

The mentioned *historical* TV dramas are immensely influential in shaping what every Chinese citizen ought to perceive the Chinese nation to be today. I argue that probably most citizens of modern nation-states do not question the narrative by which *their* country is being constituted. Obviously, belonging to a national collective is usually not considered a social construct by large portions of people in such societies. This is not surprising if one understands how subtle such mechanisms are in *manipulating* the populace. In this context, Kramer explains how historical breaks and discontinuities are overcome and how these create the trans-medial national meta-discourse of the Chinese historical past and present.⁵¹⁹

Respectively, Kramer refers to the overall hegemonic medial construction and reconstruction of the past and present of the Chinese nation at the time. It is highly important to grasp how breaks in history are just being downplayed through the creative narratology about the Chinese history. Through the created myth, reality is being twisted and exploited. What I mean to point out here is the simple fact that historically, the Chinese nation had been unified and fallen apart in many ways throughout the dynastic ages but in-order-to create a modern Chinese nation, such discontinuities are rendered less important, or these are being obscured altogether. Although, the different cultures and dynastical emperors within the territory that is today called China are colourfully displayed in various TV series (for example: *Hongjun Dongzheng* 红军东征⁵²⁰ or *Qu Yuan* 屈原⁵²¹) and cinematic films, one must be stunned by the fact that it is possible to weave the imagined modern nation together through a strong *national myth* that bridges all discontinuities. Through such deliberate action, the social and national

⁵¹⁸ See Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 383.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 380-382.

⁵²⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 381.

⁵²¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 384.

myths are being constructed, I argue. A short statement from the American writer Walter Lippmann (quoted by Bruno Latour) supports this interpretation as he states: »Neither the public, nor the common, nor the “we” exists; they must be brought into being.«⁵²²

Importantly, Stefan Kramer shows that the characteristic of Chinese historiography has always contained a certain idiosyncrasy. Kramer quotes *Chinese Narrative - Critical and Theoretical Essays* by Andrew Plaks when he writes that historiography and narratology have never been strictly separated from each other in China. Resultantly, Kramer refers to the mediumship of television through technology and media. By this, it is claimed that the technological possibilities to inform and influence the audience through the medium of television do have immense implications. Simply put, this means that television offers the technological potential to (re-)shape the world of millions of viewers in front of their TV sets (as has already been outlined above). To Kramer, this fact first shows how powerful technology can be. Further, the nucleus of the problem between historiography and narratology is resembled by how history and narration have frequently fused with each other over the course of the Chinese past. In brief, the way to tell history in China has always been different from how others may approach the matter. The argument here is that Chinese history has never only been based on facts. The German word *Geschichtsschreibung* may be helpful to differentiate here. It can be understood as *the writing of history* as opposed to the science of history, meaning *historiography*. The latter describes the aim of discovering as many objective facts as possible. As Kramer exclaims, the sort of *writing of history* as it has frequently been applied in China differs greatly from this scientific accumulation of knowledge.⁵²³ This seems to be hinting at a history-writing of *how one needs the world to be*.

Hence, symbolically, the genre of the *historical TV series* as much as respective TV documentaries are having the profound effect that the above-mentioned problem of historiography fictionalizes history, and it thereby almost annuls the difference between history (*Lishi*, 历史) and stories (*Gushi*, 故事).⁵²⁴ This effect is very strong in the television media in China. The annulment between historiography and fiction results in fictionalized historic continuity through television. By using strong images and symbols, the television, with its often-times daily broadcasting of specific programs, has become enormously influential concerning the cultural self-perception of the individual in China. Following Benedict Anderson's core con-

⁵²² Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, pp. 352.

⁵²³ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 418.

⁵²⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 384.

cepts, Kramer thus asserts that *historical* TV programs (like *Dazhaimen*) support the creation of the myth of the *nation* as symbolism becomes interweaved with narration.⁵²⁵

Die historischen Fernsehfilme verwandeln Geschichte in ein narrativ-symbolisches Geschehen und knüpfen damit durchaus an die Geschichtsklitterungen des kommunistischen Propagandakinos an.⁵²⁶

Here it is explained how the historical TV films transform historiography into a narrative-symbolic occurrence and that they thereby distort historical facts, much like the cinematic propaganda of the communists. Various factors appear to be at work here, which include the metaphoric scheme of the ideological project, the meta-discourse of cultural self-perception, and the power of television. It is the extraordinary potential of broadcasting technology to construct and convey stories that appear as 'reality' while thereby shaping the self-understanding of the individual and the collective. What Kramer calls *Metaraum*⁵²⁷ (meta space), I would like to understand as a collective space of mind that is created by the TV program. Whatever is being broadcast at any given time, say, a historical TV series like *Dazhaimen*, is potentially reaching many millions of people. The same would be true for the news or the transmission of a huge event like the Olympics. These programs are coming to people's homes. By using the example of the evening news, one can easily comprehend how a meta-space is being created by the TV. This is not to say that the matters conveyed are not true, but through the programs, common *facts* are being created because these create a space where many citizens suddenly share equalized opinions if they take for granted what is mediated to them.

Therefore, the television is not a neutral technology to broadcast or transmit messages and content.⁵²⁸ Presumably, the manner, in which program content and program structures are created substantially influences the outcome. No message is sent in its *pure* form, as the content is always rated and processed by humans. These people usually have an agenda, even if it is simply a matter of how to increase profitability for TV stations. Kristin Thompson elicited this as follows:

Popular films and television series tell stories in an entertaining easily comprehensible fashion. They seem simple, yet often the audience must keep track of several characters, multiple plotlines, motifs, and thematic meanings. Television viewers often face the additional challenge of frequent interruptions – for commercials, for week-long gaps between episodes, and even for stretches of time between seasons. Yet they man-

⁵²⁵ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 380-387.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 387.

⁵²⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 388.

⁵²⁸ See the conclusion built on McLuhan's argument on the next page.

age, remarkably, to keep track of not only a single long-running narrative, but often several simultaneously.⁵²⁹

While this quote only broadly hints at the understanding of television as a potentially manipulative medium, it already provides valuable knowledge about the fact that TV stations plan their scheming very well. The claim that content is filtered and adjusted, however, will become more evident further below.

Before that, it shall be highlighted how Kristin Thompson also describes in her book⁵³⁰ that many television stations and researchers believe in the concept of *flow*. Flow means that all offered content must be aligned with a certain cause. For a single episode of a TV series, this may mean that the advertisements (commercials) shall not be seen as an interruption of the episode, but as an inherent part of the *flow*.⁵³¹

Thompson argues that this concept is somewhat controversial⁵³² as the question is often raised whether TV audiences are mere passive recipients or whether they are the ones in control of the content which they consume and whether-or-not they are being influenced by the media. Certainly, this is a significant question to ask. This *passive* recipient vs. the *active* recipient argument about the viewer's position is explained by Thompson in the following quote below. Therein, she is referring to Raymond Williams, who first wrote about the topic in 1974. In her analysis from 2003, Thomson comes to the following conclusion:

Within the cultural-studies area, there have been attempts to analyze television with a more active viewer in mind. Most authors point out that technology has changed since Williams's day, usually in ways that encourage the spectator to control the sequence of viewing. The remote control allows viewers to move easily among networks, while cable and satellite systems have provided many viewers with a hugely expanded selection of channels. Home video and the Internet have created further alternatives to the television broadcast schedule.⁵³³

In brief, above, the argument is being made that the TV viewer is in full control. This view somewhat contrasts the claim by Kramer that a meta-space is created through the media. If the viewer is in full control, then no meta-space could be created. But this would only be true if the individual consciously decided not to participate in such *manipulation*. A quote from Marshall McLuhan, however, points to the fact that the issues here discussed are quite frequently not obvious to the viewer. This appears to prove that the indoctrination by myth is very subtle.

⁵²⁹ Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television*, Preface.

⁵³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁵³¹ For further reading, see Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Routledge, 2003).

⁵³² Cf. Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television*, pp. 10.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10.

Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the “content” of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind. The effect of the medium is made strong and intense just because it is given another medium as “content.” The content of a movie is a novel or a play or an opera. The effect of the movie form is not related to its program content. The “content” of writing or print is speech, but the reader is almost entirely unaware either of print or of speech.⁵³⁴

Consequently, I argue, it must be concluded that the medium of television is not neutral. The complete argument of McLuhan goes further as to how the medium itself is changing people and their behaviour.⁵³⁵ The applied mechanisms are not always accessible or obvious to the observer. For example, by creating heroism in storytelling or by reviving and putting emphasis on selected narratives and on morality, political and lawful behaviour can be encouraged (or discouraged).

The television (aside from the other media outlets like newspapers, the internet, etc.) is thereby powerful enough to be called the largest leading media in China, which dominated the meta-discourse in China when *Dazhaimen* was aired. I deduce that through this ruling over the meta-discourse, the individual viewer at home is *pushed*⁵³⁶ into the collective unless he or she turns the TV off, does not interact with other humans in that given society anymore, and excludes himself or herself completely from the normative discourse in that given society.

Like this powerful mechanism dominated the hegemonial discourse in China in the early 2000s, it likely still dictates large portions of the current meta-discourse of Chinese culture.⁵³⁷ When comprehending the media as the sender and the audience as the receiver of content (and information), this fact is easy to grasp. On the contrary, as will be shown later, the discourse nonetheless gets shaped by those recipients themselves. However, in the sender-recipient logic, one of the core issues posed is that the discourse is powerfully dictated by the TV producers as they create so-called facts. By this, I mean that the common TV viewer or otherwise approached recipient may mistake what the media presents to him/her as factual truth. Stefan Kramer explains this as follows:

Die medial reproduzierte Realität soll als Wahrheit verstanden werden. Dabei handelt es sich ja immer um eine Wahrheit, die sich nicht aus dem Vergleich mit der außermédialen Realität konstituiert, sondern vielmehr im Kommunikations- und Wahrnehmungsprozeß selbst begründet liegt. Dieser transformiert das Fernsehgeschehen aus der Vergangenheit in die Gegenwart. Er expédirt es aus der Fiktion und Narration, aus seinen Zeichencodes, in die immerwährende und sich in der ständigen Wiederho-

⁵³⁴ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Chapter 1, pp. 8.

⁵³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁵³⁶ I deliberately use the negatively co-notated term.

⁵³⁷ See Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 388.

lung in den unterschiedlichsten Medien und deren Kommunikation miteinander wie mit dem Publikum konstituierende Realität der privaten und zugleich kollektiv erlebten Fernsehrezeption, welche zugleich zur Alltagswahrnehmung generiert. Aus dieser Gleichzeitigkeit bezieht die Serie ihren Anspruch, nicht nur ein Historienspektakel und ein moralisches Lehrstück zu sein, das die Traditionslinie in die Gegenwart verlängert, sondern zugleich auch ein Symbol und eine Utopie der chinesischen Nation darzustellen, aus der sich das individuelle wie in gleicher Weise kollektive Selbstverständnis der fernsehenden Menschen wie deren Perspektive auf die eigene Lebensrealität formen soll.⁵³⁸

Essentially concluded, what Kramer writes is that television reproduces reality and presents it as if it were the truth. But this sort of truth is one that is not necessarily constituted by involving reality or factual truths. Those are external to the media, he says. What is then actually produced is a reality that is founded on the communication process and the perception process itself. This method to mediate the *alleged* reality transforms the past and the present. Through this movement, it turns fiction and narration into the perpetual reality of the individual and the collective. In short, as he writes in the last sentence of the quote, certain values are symbolically mediated to the individual. These values constitute the utopian Chinese nation because, by making the individual believe in the nation, likewise the self-image of the collective is also produced.

Kramer makes this whole process clearer by exemplifying it in the context of the aforementioned historical TV series called *Qu Yuan*. Therein, the hero is a statesman in the Warring States period. Consequently, this TV series, as well as most of those belonging to the category of *historical TV series*, mediates the narrative about the (imagined) Chinese nation. Through such production processes, the TV media company behind the TV series intentionally⁵³⁹ transforms the understanding of the past of Chinese history. It impinges on the self-understanding of the Chinese viewer, which thereby influences his or her present existence.⁵⁴⁰ Hence, the ideas concerning the identity of the Chinese populace are effectively manipulated by such TV series. Many historical TV productions in China are, so-to-speak, *taking care of* the construction of the collective Chinese identity. As a result, television technology is making it possible to lift old heroic tales into the consciousness of Chinese people's present lives. While print media has never been able to reach and influence so many people at once⁵⁴¹, the

⁵³⁸ Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 395.

⁵³⁹ aligned with the expectations of the CCP.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 385-388.

⁵⁴¹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 37-46.

television medium is easily constructing myths by this mass-media kind of fashion.⁵⁴² Television is thereby creating myths on many levels. These myths constitute something new, but while they exploit historical matters, they creatively reconstruct the past and diverge from real historical facts. This matter is prominently resembled by the example given by Roland Barthes when he talks about the »Negro-soldier«. Certainly, while his language is outdated and one would say 'person of colour' today, his explanation refers to a picture in which a soldier with black skin becomes the object of the production of the myth of French imperialism. In the respective context, the picture of a saluting French soldier of African descent is being exploited by a myth. Because the soldier happens to have black skin, the picture's meaning is somewhat distorted. The former meaning is not erased; it is exploited by other means to fabricate a different *story* (outcome).⁵⁴³ The result is that such myths disfigure reality.

Similarly, historical events that are re-told on Chinese television are often misrepresented in this sense, too. As Kramer points out, such shows become the element of linkage between the individual viewer, the in the TV play created locality, and the 'imagined Chinese community'.⁵⁴⁴ Although some may argue that in factual reality exists a nation-state called *the People's Republic of China*, it is hence argued here that the portrayal of *the nation* in movies and TV shows is the very act of repeatedly renewing this *imagined* community, and thereby the state itself is literally strengthened. It is this constructionist approach that is applied here in-order-to deconstruct what is socially constructed. Resultantly, it is my conclusion that, from such a point of view, one could say there is no such state, nor is there a Chinese community. Or, as Ernest Gellner writes⁵⁴⁵ "...Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist."⁵⁴⁶

Respectively, the TV series *Dazhaimen* and other historical dramas on television surely have a huge effect on the individuals' identification with the idea of the state. Consequently, through such action, the self of each Chinese individual is put into context with the nation. As shown above, Stefan Kramer uncovers the mechanisms of the television medium as much as he goes into describing the 'making' of the nation. Therefore, I argue that the invention of an idea of the nation is equal to the creation of the myth of the nation.

⁵⁴² Nevertheless, it must be noted here that Benedict Anderson partly identifies the fixing of languages in print as the forebearer of modern nation states. See: *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ See Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, pp. 101-105.

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 384.

⁵⁴⁵ Anderson does not agree with Gellner's connotation of the expression, but for the sake of simplicity, I will still use this argument here.

⁵⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 6.

In fact, the production of myths has been profoundly explained by Roland Barthes. Myths always *lean* on existing matters and factual realities. The myth uses these facts and arguments to convey a new meaning. Oftentimes, such myths are political and help to disseminate an ideology. A former meaning on the first semiotic level is then distorted to serve the spread of the new meaning on the 2nd semiotic level.⁵⁴⁷ The idea transmitted through the myth is thereby *naturalized*.⁵⁴⁸

This means that in the same way Kramer describes how the ordinary viewer of TV shows and series simply assumes that the content of the show is either entertaining, political or of the aesthetic kind, other means are seeping through unrecognized (but not necessarily hidden). The 'ignorant' TV consumer⁵⁴⁹ may perceive all contents broadcasted in his or her home country as *naturally true* and does not question the deeper implications and values conveyed through such measures. Just like almost no one would question the legitimacy of the nation-state, the matter in question here is not the delegitimization of the state but the coming to an understanding about how societies, communities, and states are always – at least to a degree – socially constructed.

It is not always a matter of intelligence to uncover a myth, it rather appears that the *naturalizing* of the intent takes away clear understanding. The myth blurs and deforms. Myths are a form of rhetoric manipulation to convince people of something that they would otherwise not believe.⁵⁵⁰

For the reproduction of history on Chinese TV stations, I argue that Kramer's explanation demonstrates how cyclic movements in Chinese film and television always carry the past into the present. All the above-mentioned elements, like the repeatedly broadcasted films about the 5000 years of history, the Chinese culture-as-a-whole (including Chinese traditional medicine), the overcoming of the feudal system, the fight against imperialism, and the communist liberation fight, aid in constituting the idea of a nation without discontinuities. These discontinuities are openly shown, but old matters are woven together in a new fashion. They create an overall meta-discourse. This meta-context legitimizes the present Chinese nation, and it mingles past with present, says Kramer.⁵⁵¹ Similarly, I argue that characters from TV films, cinematic films, and individuals from history, as well as individuals still alive, get mixed together

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, pp. 115.

⁵⁴⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

⁵⁴⁹ 'Ignorant' as in *not knowing*.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, pp. 112.

⁵⁵¹ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 402-403.

in modern myths in China. The hero in a TV series like *Dazhaimen* acts out certain character traits and moral views. I therefore argue that the character can thereby ascend to the stance of a role model, as shown in the following example.

A good example of such constructed role model is the former communist-leader Mao Zedong. He had been established as a hero and godlike figure in his own right. Such distortions function as immaterial symbols for the myth creation which serve the new Chinese nation-state. They constitute the state as an *imagined community* through the means of symbols and shared values, as will be explained below. Television is not the only medium creating such myths. As Benedict Anderson showed, other earlier forms to dominate discourses had been the invention and dissemination of print media and the creation of languages-of-power⁵⁵²; which in China had been the standardization of Mandarin (Putonghua 普通话). It functioned as a power-tool to the reign of emperors, long before the rise of nationalism. Respectively, Kai Vogelsang mentions in his book *Geschichte Chinas* (History of China) how it was the early widespread use of the standardized written Chinese language that gave the early Qin-reign the opportunity to install well-organized bureaucratic institutions throughout their territory.⁵⁵³

Moreover, what can be noted by observing the use of television in China, around the turn of the millennium, is a sort of medial processing that works in favour of the current CCP leadership. Stefan Kramer argues that the existing hegemonic historiography of the communist leadership in China exploits all the above-mentioned methods to construct the idea of the Chinese nation in-order-to to legitimize the power of the CCP and as-a-means to shape the self-perception of the Chinese people. Kramer therefore repeatedly takes up the example of the Red Army (*Hongjun* 红军) in the film *Hongjun Dongzheng* 红军东证 (The Eastern Fight of the Red Army) and elaborates how the Red Army is thus literally glorified.⁵⁵⁴ Similar mechanisms are at work by using the myth of Mao Zedong. When contemplating why the Mao portrait is still installed above the Gate of Heavenly Peace (*Tiananmen* 天安门) in Beijing, one may ask what function this serves. It could be asked: Is this a remembrance of the past, and why is the portrait still up there? In my opinion, the installation is part of the myth about Mao Zedong, which is part of the greater myth about the Chinese nation. Sinologist Angelo Cimino also comes to this conclusion in his book, *The Mediated Myth of Lin Zexu*. It is not hard to grasp that the Mao portrait must carry some sort of symbolic meaning in creating and re-producing the myth of Mao Zedong. It has been...

⁵⁵² See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 45.

⁵⁵³ Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 131-132.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Vom Eigenen und Fremden*, pp. 411.

[...] naturalized by means of its design and appearance, and reflected by people's visual measure established in relation to an object that is seen, and to which one does not belong [...]; but by seeing it as the natural and eternal (traceable in history) convergence and expression of the bond (a bloody one) between the people and the territory, that sacred soil that still today may be homage by the citizens visiting it, or more simply by consuming it through a photograph [...].⁵⁵⁵

Hence, the portrait of Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square has a *naturalizing* character in the constitution of the respective myth. To Roland Barthes, thereby, it does not cover its intention, but it is capable of not having to lie about its intentions because the observer will most likely not discover how it is interest-bound.⁵⁵⁶ It must be hypothesized that the same process is at work here in the television series, and, as a result, the narration about Chinese medicine somewhat functions as a similar vehicle. As shown above, the meta-narrative is influenced by the television medium, this much can be concluded here already. The TV series *Dazhaimen* as well as many other *historical* Chinese dramas, are part of this meta-narrative.

According to Kramer, the role of the television is one that constructs fictional events or reconstructs realities and transmits them through medial communication into the perception of the modern recipient. Because of the symbolic strength of such occurrences, they often become more powerful than the realities themselves. That's how television as a medium became the most important constructor of meaning, culture, and identity (around the year 2000).⁵⁵⁷

In conclusion, this paints a clear picture of one of the functions of television in China. It appears that the most definite function of such TV series as *Dazhaimen* is the deliberate construction of the hegemonic meta-narrative of the Chinese communist state. Another example of this is described by Stefan Kramer in his essay *Kultur der Katastrophen und die Katastrophen der Kultur* (Culture of Disaster and the Disasters of Culture). Therein, it is explained that the viewers of TV programs are subjected to the myth of national identity as they are confronted with other symbolic acts through the mediumship of television. For instance, myths like the overcoming of natural floods, etc., are thereby symbolically resembling the victory of the People's Liberation Army over its former enemies. In effect, Kramer writes that the triumph of the Chinese nation over natural disasters metaphorically substitutes (and recurs on)

⁵⁵⁵ Angelo Maria Cimino, *The Mediated Myth of Lin Zexu*, pp. 138.

⁵⁵⁶ „Wir sind hiermit beim eigentlichen Prinzip des Mythos: er verwandelt Geschichte in Natur. Man versteht nun, wie *in den Augen des Verbrauchers von Mythen* die Intention des Begriffes so offenkundig bleiben kann, ohne deshalb als interessengebunden zu erscheinen.“ – Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags*, pp. 113.

⁵⁵⁷ See *Ibid.*, pp. 419.

the former fight against intruding enemies.⁵⁵⁸ Hence, these symbolic acts shape the viewer's opinions in multiple ways, and therefore, myths alter people's perceptions.

Furthermore, while the observation has been focusing on the mediation of ideological myths until now, there are still other ways to interpret and understand Chinese television programs, especially with respect to the structure of the TV series *Dazhaimen*. This is in-so-far important as it adds to the understanding that the here taken semiotic analysis is not the only method to analyse the position of such TV series.

3. The Genre and Filmic Modes of *Dazhaimen*

When watching *Dazhaimen* for the analysis, I had the option to watch the series on the internet. My platform of choice had been the internet home page of the CCTV (Chinese Central Television)⁵⁵⁹ which provided me with an overview of all the episodes of *Dazhaimen*. Proceeding in this way there are no interruptions for commercial breaks in the viewing process. However, it is recognizable that there are obvious differences between a modern TV program and online video on demand, the first of which is the meagre quality of the film material. Also, the volume seems to be low even if turned all the way to the maximum. These do not come as a surprise, as the first episodes of *Dazhaimen* were aired and therefore produced before the year 2001. Of course, modern productions offered by platforms like Netflix or the Chinese platform iQiyi would satisfy the modern audience more. But these minor differences may not be of any importance to the analysis.

One question of interest could be in which genre *Dazhaimen* must be located if one wants to deviate from the category *historical TV series* that Stefan Kramer had assigned to it. Delving into the matter in such a way offers an insight into more filmic details and the deeper conceptual framework of TV productions. In this context, Kristin Thompson counters the "political agenda" argument, which might somewhat reduce this sort of TV production to a mere political program. She provocatively asks:

Why have television programs so seldom been studied from an aesthetic perspective? Indeed, why have they so seldom been treated as entertainment rather than as evidence of some aspect – usually negative – of modern society?

This presents a new angle on the matter. It opens-up a new realm to comprehend *Dazhaimen* as an aesthetic television production or a *work of art*. Thereby, one may look at it as an artisan product for entertainment, and the categorization into the realms of entertainment, art media

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Stefan Kramer, *Kultur der Katastrophen und Katastrophen der Kultur*, pp. 12.

⁵⁵⁹ [Link information, see Online Resources] <https://tv.cctv.com/>

projects and storytelling is changing the overall perspective. It may be noted that while the semiotic approach of this research usually leads to a political interpretation of the matter, widening the analysis to the field of artesian film methodology may result in a more complete understanding of the TV series. Even if the investigation may return to the deconstructionist view later.

Thus, when categorizing genre, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson explain how a clear distinction of genre is almost never possible. In chapter 9 of their book *Film Art*, they describe that the differentiation of genre usually provides the possibility to place the *work of art* in a kind of category. Such categorization can help the viewer and the marketing department of the movie production company address a certain clientele.⁵⁶⁰ Bordwell and Thompson write:

Most scholars now agree that no genre can be defined in a single hard-and-fast way. Some genres stand out by their subject and themes. A gangster film centers on large-scale urban crime. A science-fiction film features a technology beyond the reach of contemporary science. A Western is usually about life on some frontier (not necessarily the West, as *North to Alaska* and *Drums Along the Mohawk* suggest). Yet subject matter or theme is not so central to defining other genres. Musicals are recognizable chiefly by their manner of presentation: singing, dancing, or both. The detective film is partly defined by the plot pattern of an investigation that solves a mystery. And some genres are defined by the distinctive emotional effect they aim for: amusement in comedies, tension in suspense films.⁵⁶¹

Consequently, it is not the easiest task to categorize the TV series *Dazhaimen* and ascribe it to a specific genre. In *Dazhaimen* there are clear elements of what Stefan Kramer identifies as a *historical TV series* as the story spreads from 1880 well into the period of the second Japanese invasion of China and further. Kramer, in my understanding, focuses on the typical *historical TV series* in China, which plays a role in the ideological meta-narrative of the Chinese nation. On the one hand, in *Dazhaimen*, there is the overarching story covered under the umbrella of the historical and political changes in China over the course of the 40 episodes of the TV series. On the other hand, the story provides blurred personal details of the (real world) Le family. The main protagonist, the patriarch Bai Jingqi (the name used in the story world) rises to power and fame as a medical doctor in the family enterprise. As will be shown below, further information leads to the conclusion that the TV series is stylistically close to the classical Beijing opera or that it resembles a melodramatic narrative of a family's history. As a result, what Thompson refers to above will likely provide the investigator with a variety of insights that add to the analysis of Chinese medicine in the TV series *Dazhaimen*.

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 319.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 319.

When going back to the question of genre, Bordwell and Thompson argue that the filmic mode and the filmic methodology (although here a TV series is investigated and not a film) are constitutive parts in the *creation* of genre. The way a story is told and produced thus determines the genre. Structural functions of characters and scene plots, as well as the above-mentioned modes of drama or comedy, are established through such schemes.⁵⁶²

The protagonists of stories always have a function.⁵⁶³ For instance: One important character in the story is the female family head called Ernainai, whose complete family name (in the play) is Bai Wenshi.⁵⁶⁴ The other character, who later becomes the main protagonist, is Bai Jingqi, the son of Ernainai. Both characters are very important to the storyline, as they, so to speak, carry the story world *on their shoulders*. They are the most dominant characters in *Dazhaimen*. To the narration, they are what Bordwell and Thompson call *causal agents*.⁵⁶⁵ Besides them, there are also others who play important roles. The whole net of relations adds to the creation of the story. Some characters are causal agents and main informants of the story, while others may simply have the function of providing certain landmarks to the audience in-order-to to understand the story well enough. Turns of relationships and twists of fate - embedded in historical events - give way to the development of the story. For instance, the character Duke Wang serves the function of the antagonists in the narration of *Dazhaimen*. Opposing characters like him provide a counterforce to the motif of the main character. Otherwise, there would be no tension or conflict in the story.⁵⁶⁶ Bordwell and Thompson explain this as follows:

[...] there is a counterforce in the classical narrative: an opposition that creates conflict. The protagonist comes up against a character whose traits and goals are opposed to his or hers. As a result, the protagonist must seek to change the situation so that he or she can achieve the goal.⁵⁶⁷

Accordingly, in movies or films, there always exist characters and circumstances that are glorified, and at the same time, these necessitate the counterforce of an antagonist. In the TV series here, many other matters get thematized. Besides the mentioned personal accounts, there are hints and substantiations of cultural, traditional, and social experiences conveyed by the show. Certainly, those include the sometimes more and sometimes less predominant portrayal and informing about Chinese medicine as much as the personal stories of the leading

⁵⁶² Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 319-320.

⁵⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65.

⁵⁶⁴ Bai Wenshi 白文氏.

⁵⁶⁵ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 94.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 95.

characters of the story that also re-narrate the lives of the historic figures to whom the story refers.

However, regarding the question of genre, David Bordwell thinks that the mixing of genres is rather the norm than the exception, or that new genres are simply being created by the audience that aims to categorize a new film which does not fit or comply with certain genre conventions. Genre-categorization is therefore a sort of dresser drawer in which the individual viewer places the TV series. On the other hand, genres are usually divided into subcategories. For example, in the genre of the thriller, there are such differentiations as the supernatural thriller, the political thriller or the spy thriller.⁵⁶⁸ Now, certainly *Dazhaimen* is not a thriller, it is not even thrilling unless one would think that the slaughtering of the horse makes it a thriller. That specific scene is certainly cruel, but overall, *Dazhaimen* does not fulfil the conventions of a thriller, like dark-lighting or off-screen monsters, which are conventions in thrillers. It is interesting, though, how Bordwell and Thompson describe a seemingly typical feature of thrillers when talking about them, which can also be identified when watching *Dazhaimen*. This feature, therefore, is not limited to thrillers but resembles a filmic tool applied in many genres. As Bordwell and Thompson write, in thrillers, the authors often create a law-breaking character who nevertheless becomes the hero of the story. By the counterforce of a villain with more evil character traits, the hero becomes the good guy without being completely morally integral.⁵⁶⁹ Therefore, through a moral explanation or a somewhat understandable reason for the wrongdoing (in specific, in comparison with the villain, who is much worse in character) even unmoral behaviour can be justified. Accordingly, a hero does not have to be perfect in that sense. In *Dazhaimen* the son of the Bai family (Bai Jingqi) is displayed in such a light. When he is still a child, he is a talented and smart boy, but he is also portrayed as a very mischievous fellow. This gradually becomes clearer as the show moves on, but already after birth, the child Jingqi is being shown as a not-so-ordinary individual. Soon after his birth, the patriarch of the family passes away. He, the grandfather, by the name Bai Mengtang⁵⁷⁰ is the head of the family until episode 7. This story-element is an account early in the plot and the characterization of *Dazhaimen*. Presumably, the early conflict with the monarch Duke Wang, the exiling of the elder brother Bai Yingyuan⁵⁷¹, the introduction of various other characters, in-

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, Chapter 9, *Film Genres*.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-323.

⁵⁷⁰ 白萌堂.

⁵⁷¹ 白颖园.

cluding Sanye⁵⁷², and the general introduction of the reputation and social standing of the Bai family must be understood as a substantiation of the foundational framework in the storyline for later episodes.

According to Bordwell, the story and the narrative, as well as the characters, have to be *built up*. The construction of characters, their traits, and the story have a narrative function. Details of characters, including many aspects from special physical skills in, for example, the character Jingqi (who is good with the sword when being an adult), psychological drives, and other qualities that distinguish the character, all serve to constitute the individual being portrayed in a specific fashion. They form the desired attitudes and habits conducive to the overall understanding of the plot.⁵⁷³ Most all such effects are implemented to cause distinct outcomes in the narration.

If narrative depends so heavily on cause and effect, what kind of things can function as causes in narrative? Usually, the agents of cause and effects are *characters*. By triggering and reacting to events, characters play roles within the film's system.⁵⁷⁴

Accordingly, the creation of the characters in the TV program aims to construct the overall diegesis (the total world of the story action)⁵⁷⁵. And therefore, the above-described characters and the mentioned formation of the story as-a-whole are unfolding in the early episodes of *Dazhaimen*. The death of the grandfather, Bai Mengtang consolidates the new diegetic function of Ernainai and the other characters in the story. It further provides background information about the professional medicinal trade of the Bai family, and it stretches out the relationships between certain characters as much as it prepares the viewer for more to come. In Episodes 6 and 7, slowly but surely, Grandfather Bai hands over the reins to Ernainai. After the elder brother had been exiled, the younger brother, Sanye, expected to become head of the family. In anticipation of his own passing away, the grandfather, however, chooses his daughter Ernainai to take over the responsibilities of the family and the family business. This sets the starting point for many more conflicts to come, and thereby marks the initiation of one of the overarching plotlines. It is the disappointment and frustration of Sanye that thereafter drive the imagination of the spectator. Meanwhile, the husband of Ernainai and other less dominant characters are introduced to the story in more detail.

⁵⁷² 三爷 who's proper name in the story is Bai Yingyu 白颖宇.

⁵⁷³ Cf. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 77-78.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76.

The rise of Ernainai is broadly plotted out as she struggles and contends to build her own reputation in the city of Beijing in-as-much as in the family business. Exemplary scenes like kneeling down at the family shrine and the crying of Ernainai in front of her deceased late father's picture maintain the reproduction of traditional Chinese cultural elements conveyed in the production of *Dazhaimen*.⁵⁷⁶ Over the course of the following episodes, the character Jingqi gradually moves to the foreground of the narration. The viewer may already expect the boy – who until episode 12 is growing up and meticulously involved in his profound studies of Chinese medicine – to play an important role in upcoming episodes. In the middle of episode 12, Jingqi (after having been insubordinate once again), confronts his mother when she is about to take a swing at him for a beating. He stops her in her movement to do so. Here, a turn in the dominance of the protagonists is indicated. Soon after, in this episode, the grown-up Jingqi (depicted as a young man) is displayed for the first time. From there on until the end of the 40-episode span of *Dazhaimen* the character Jingqi gradually becomes more dominant in the play. New plots are introduced in every episode. Usually, cliffhangers are erected to keep the viewer returning for the next episode. The outbreak of the war initiated by the invasion of the Eight-Nation Alliance coincides with the beginning of Jingqi's love affair with the girl named Huang Chun⁵⁷⁷. At this point, most family members of the Bai family escape to the city of Xi'An, with the war actions increasing in the capital city. Jingqi, Huang Chun and Sanye, as well as an aunt of Jingqi and a few others, stay in Beijing. Ernainai and most of the relatives find refuge in Xi'An, in the residence of the Shen family⁵⁷⁸.

Before these events, there had been two main plots, which oscillated mostly between the Bai family and the relations with Duke Wang. The main plots then switch to other paralleling plots between the Bai family, which resides in Xi'An and the family members who deliberately stay behind in Beijing to take care of the family's dwellings. This movement between two dominant plots is a typical feature of *Dazhaimen*'s narrational structure. In this sense, the diegesis of the series is straight-forward and easy to follow. It is not like in Art Films when plots, which occur early in the story's narration, appear at the end of the storytelling or other confusing matters in that sense. In *Dazhaimen*, cues are being offered at many points of the narration in-order-to create suspense and dangling causes. Many times, the story moves on, and the viewer gets reminded rather suddenly that there had been a dangling cause because it had

⁵⁷⁶ The repeating of traditions, which reinforces and strengthens the self-understanding of a Chinese culture.

⁵⁷⁷ 黄春.

⁵⁷⁸ In episode 14, the character *Shenye* 沈爷 appears. He is played by film director *Guo Baochang* 郭宝昌.

been suspended for such a long time. This sort of narrative elements has an effect on the viewer. As Bordwell says, “Films are *designed* to have effects on viewers.”⁵⁷⁹

Although the narration of *Dazhaimen* continues with Jingqi’s life experiences, it can be said that it overall conveys traits of historical events (in a more-or-less political context), cultural events and social events that are woven into the story of the generational changes within the Bai family. Some authors, like Guo Wulin, a researcher in the Chinese Department of Yibin University (Sichuan, China), interpret *Dazhaimen* as a hybrid of drama and Beijing opera, as obvious elements of typical theatre play can be found in it when, for example, the extended family comes together at the big dinner table and eats together; or, like Guo writes, often when the plot comes to a climax and the typical Beijing Opera *gong and drum* background music can be heard. He further interprets the plot around the 70th birthday of Ernainai as such an event when a Chinese opera performance is watched by the whole extended family, and everybody is happy and cheerful. The far-away shots with the camera capturing all the family members in conversation as-much-as their laughter and quarrelling fundamentally remind of such a kind of play.⁵⁸⁰

Generally, without any flashbacks, with a congruent story and plotline, and without special effects, this TV series easily fits the genre of drama. Furthermore, referring to Kristin Thompson, typical features of the episode-like TV series are that they widely differ from features commonly used in the cinematic movie industry. She exclaims that, certainly, the nature of narratives in TV productions, in specific TV series and sequels, differs from those in the movie-making industry, like those in the cinematic realm. There are “similarities and differences between the storytelling tactics of film and television”⁵⁸¹, she writes.

In movies, the creation of twists and tensions is done differently than in television programs, and the interweaving of plotlines is often, but not always, somewhat simpler than in TV series. Of course, possibly movies are composed of multiple plotlines as well, but conventionally, the narrative structure in the multi-simultaneously narrated plot sense is more typically found in TV productions. In cinemas, movie plots can spread over 2 or 3 hours, on TV, the usual length for TV episodes is between 30 and 60 minutes. Individual episodes are therefore part of the whole television sequel and thus somewhat need closure at the end of each episode, but

⁵⁷⁹ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Guo Wulin 郭五林, *Dazhaimen de Wenhua Tezheng* 《大宅门》得文化特征, [The Cultural Characteristics of *Dazhaimen*], pp.106.

⁵⁸¹ Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television*, Preface, pp. X.

one way or another, the plot must also be interwoven with the overall theme of the series.⁵⁸² Such features can be found in *Dazhaimen*. Stylistically, it is therefore not extravagant in this sense. The settings usually revolve around or inside traditional-style Chinese houses, more-or-less in the Siheyuan 四合院 tradition, which resemble residences of the feudal-era upper class with an enclosed inside yard. Items found in these houses are sometimes quite simple, and other times they show a huge degree of the wealth of the Bai family (*mise-en-scene* objects). On this material level, the buildings in the play, the environment, the food and beverages, the dresses of the family members, and the professional trade of Chinese medicine synthesize a 'culture', as Guo Wulin writes. These features clearly resemble (and assist in creating the notion of) the time-period in which the TV series is set. This kind of arrangement further duplicates the atmosphere of Beijing of this era with the Hutongs (胡同), the alleys and lanes typical for the Beijing of the late Qing dynasty. All of this locates *Dazhaimen* in a setting that is typical for the 'old' Beijing, with its capital city flavour; says Guo.⁵⁸³

4. Social Function and the Arts

The makings of the TV series set in the narrative and in the broader context of affiliation with certain social values are informing about the identification with a specific circumstance in life. It is likely that such problems are deliberately addressed in the TV series *Dazhaimen*. As Martha Montello posits, TV shows often serve a function that attaches or detaches the audience from real social problems. An interpretive approach of this kind exceeds the political sphere. For the viewer who is not interested in political matters, it is therefore possible to consume the TV series without worrying about political matters at all. Rather, the story could work as a reflective process about the personal life of the viewer.

On such occasions, sequences may cause the spectator to feel connected to the problems that the characters in *Dazhaimen* have to go through because he/she may relate to their struggles and experiences. This is what Martha Montello refers to when she writes: "Being present to tragedy elicits catharsis in the spectator, said Aristotle, who, as a physician's son, liked to use medical terms. That is, by being drawn into tragic stories, we are purged of strong emotions ...".⁵⁸⁴ The term catharsis obviously refers to the psychoanalytical process of regurgitating elements of a trauma. Thus, in relating to TV characters, the individual viewer may symbolically see himself or herself going through happy and unhappy times in life. As a result, in

⁵⁸² Cf. Kristin Thompson, *Storytelling in Film and Television*, Preface.

⁵⁸³ Cf. Guo Wulin, [The Cultural Characteristics of *Daizhaimen*], pp.106.

⁵⁸⁴ Martha Montello, *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*, pp. 222.

such a case, a kind of symbolic reflection in the viewer's mind can be detected. Therefore, it is also possible that this sort of motivation drives the audience to watch a TV series.

An example could be a situation in *Dazhaimen's* episode 22 when Jingqi returns to Beijing because he has gotten notice of his very sickly father. Upon arrival at the Bai residence in Beijing, he finds out that his father has already passed away. For anyone who has experienced any form of inter-relational difficulties or suffering with beloved ones, this is probably one of the most touching scenes in the entire TV series. Compared to Jingqi's forced leave for Jinan, this is threefold more heartbreaking. After about four or five years, he, the son, returns home only to find that he did not make it in time. The father who missed him so dearly has gone before his homecoming. In the scene, Jingqi throws himself down before the feet of his mother in the kowtow fashion. Sad, swelling background music and a close-up camera shot of Bai Jingqi's face, which reinforce the sadness of the moment, accompany the scene as-a-means to produce an atmosphere of strong emotional grievance. Without a doubt, this is aimed at drawing the audience in. There might not be a single regular viewer who will refrain from shedding some tears here.

This being not so much political in context but set in a social conflict, Jingqi's leave a few years earlier clearly had inner-familiar reasons because he did not obey the family rules of good conduct. Certainly, this can be seen in the context of filial piety. The matter is a question of social conflict instead of being a political matter, although it becomes clear later that almost all social conflict can (in a constructionist view) be approached and interpreted as having a sociopolitical dimension.

The death of his father gives Jingqi the chance to meet his wife Huang Chun again as well as his now four-year-old son. In the respective scene, emotions are again of the bittersweet kind. While Huang Chun knows that Jingqi now has a concubine in Jinan, she is happy to see him. His 4-year-old son, however, does not feel drawn to his father since this is the first occasion on which he ever meets him. Apart from this, other, more political issues are discussed in this episode as part of the story plot. Officials of the new government are being bribed, and the issue of the lawsuit from more than 20 years ago, which revolved around the issues concerning the oldest brother Daye 大爷, is coming up again. Political in a way, this issue may just be understood as part of the implications and complications of the Bai family, as the Bai family must constantly handle a lot of obstacles and social demands. Although here the depiction portrays a family high in status, the overall events in the program are most probably something that any head of family in modern-day China can relate to.

In the same vein, in episode 22, the matriarch can be observed handling other pressing issues. She sends Jingqi and Sanye - who here is being instrumented for the diegetic narration to inform the audience about his deep affection for Jingqi - out to investigate, handle and solve some troubles. As argued above by quoting Martha Montello, such conflicts in a TV series can cause catharsis in the individual viewer or they may function to distract the person from difficult situations in his or her own life. Consequently, films can involve the audience in reacting to profound emotional experiences through the act of TV consumption. Also, I argue that a TV series can have an educational character. The traits of the characters and the relations that are established in the Great Mansion Gate have the potential to let the individual viewer study complex knowledge about social ties in traditional Chinese society and, furthermore, about new ways to react to - and handle - any sort of social conflict that may arise in his or her personal life. By closely observing the matriarch's guidance of family members in her tonal approach as much as through her sometimes soft and sometimes harsh approach, much can be learned.⁵⁸⁵ She is portraying, so to speak, the prototype of a strong family head (and so does Jingqi as he gradually matures) who simply tries her best to let all family members strive as-much-as she aims to *keep the ropes together*. Thus, moral questions are also addressed in this TV series. Respectively, concerning the genre issue, Bordwell and Thompson elucidate how the repeated mediation of such social values impacts the audience.

The fact that every genre has fluctuated in popularity reminds us that genres are tightly bound to cultural factors. Why do audiences enjoy seeing the same conventions over and over? Many film scholars believe that genres are ritualized dramas resembling holiday celebrations – ceremonies that are satisfying because they reaffirm cultural values with little variation. At the end of *Saving Private Ryan* or *You've Got Mail*, who can resist a surge of reassuring satisfaction that cherished values – self-sacrificing heroism, the desirability of romantic love – are validated? And just as one can see these ceremonies as helping us forget the more disturbing aspects of the world, the familiar characterizations and plots of genres may also serve to distract the audience from real social problems.

Some scholars would argue that genres go further and actually exploit ambivalent social values and attitudes. [...] It is common to suggest that at different points in history, the stories, themes, values, or imagery of the genre harmonize with public attitudes.⁵⁸⁶

As a result, this knowledge can contribute to understanding the Chinese TV series *Dazhaimen*. Most likely, the programmatic of the production scheme intentionally causes the audience to feel *connected* to the events in *The Great Mansion Gate*. Respectively, when Ernainai is having troubles with her Chinese medicine shop and with the people who now sell medicine in

⁵⁸⁵ Even if that would lead the viewer to conclude *how not to do things*.

⁵⁸⁶ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 326-327.

her name, or when she has-to cope with her brother Sanye or with her mischievous son Jingqi, those are surely matters that the audience can relate to. Such plots may simply distract the audience from their own daily problems. The same may be true for situations that concern the political and social implications that are portrayed in *Dazhaimen*.

As history shows, China has been rapidly changing in many aspects over the past century. The economy has been growing since Deng Xiaoping opened the country. Before that, China went from feudalism to a new republic, on to the warlord era, and into the fight between nationalists and communists, just to mention a few landmarks in history.⁵⁸⁷ Thus, it is no surprise that civil society has ever been changing and needing to adapt to new circumstances. An example of such a change is the situation when Jingqi moves to Jinan because he refuses to leave Huang Chun and, consequently, both-of-them are forced to leave the residence of the Bai family in Beijing. In effect, cultural norms inflict behaviour such as praying to the deceased father, placing importance on the use of Chinese medicine, or having to leave the family when wrongdoing is discovered. These are being reproduced and enforced by the TV series.

In this respect, Guo Wulin uncovers that the Bai family matriarch's insisting on family rules is expressing moral standards that secure the families' existence throughout the time-period of invasion by foreign forces, the warlord era with bandits striving around, and times of corrupt bureaucrats.⁵⁸⁸ These mediated values are probably well received by the Chinese audience because they presumably resemble the people's own thinking and *traditional* background.

Further, from a methodological view of filmmaking, this plot poses a break or a transformation from the mischievous child Jingqi to the new dominant character in the TV series. Regarding this instance, I argue that the makers of the show instrumentalize the forbidden romance of the couple and the resistance of Jingqi to the traditional norms in-order-to install him as the hero of the story. Thereafter, he dares to go his own way and meets many difficulties. By doing so, he (for the time being) maintains his integrity. Thereby, he is the kind of *hero* that had been described earlier as impertinent. This tension in his character adds drive to the narrative because it gives him some degree of unpredictability.

It leads the viewer to empathize with Jingqi and to doubt him at the same time. In episodes 18 and 19, when he initially struggles to start his own business in Jinan, the viewer perceives the notion that Huang Chun (his then girlfriend) is slowly starting to doubt his abilities. In the respective scene, Jingqi rather reacts to the doubting behaviour of Huang Chun with a mixture

⁵⁸⁷ For further reading, see Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*.

⁵⁸⁸ See Guo Wulin, [The Cultural Characteristics of Daizhaimen], pp. 103.

of patience and indifference. However, soon after success follows – and this may lead the audience to think of him as a keeper - he is portrayed with a certain self-awareness and confidence. When selling some high-quality winter clothing to a pawnshop, he tries to trick Huang Chun by telling her that the money he received had been from his earnings as a doctor. She, however, sees through it. I argue that these kinds of actions in the plot of the couple in Jinan are also constituting the narrative, and they, in specific, constitute and reveal further details of Jingqi's character to the audience.

Further, such TV scenes resemble and reflect social situations among individuals in real-world society. Conflict is part of all human lives, and its signification must not be overlooked. An analysis of such elements instead of the mere political level, which could also be called the super-text of the narrative, therefore has-to be taken-into-account. By distinguishing political, historical, psychological, social, and artistic perspectives, the relationship between the observer and the movie can be further understood. In this regard, James Monaco clarifies details about the function of the interaction between the artist and the audience of a film.

Whether we approach the artistic experience from the point of view of production or of consumption, there is a set of determinants that gives a particular shape to the experience. Each of them serves a certain function, and each in turn yields its own general system of criticism. [He then provides a table of the determinants which are explained in written form by him as follows.]⁵⁸⁹

These determinants of the rapports de production function in most human activities, but their operation is especially evident in the arts, since it is there that the economic and political factors that tend to dominate most other activities are more in balance with the psychological and technical factors.

Historically, the political determinant is primary: it is this factor that decides how an art – or work of art – is used socially. Consumption is more important here than production. Greek and Roman theories of art as an epistemological activity fit under this category, especially when the quest for knowledge is seen as quasi-religious. The ritualistic aspect of the arts as celebrations of the community is at the heart of this approach. The political determinant defines the relationship between the work of art and the society that nurtures it.

The psychological determinant, on the other hand, is introspective, focusing our attention not on the relationship between the work and the world at large, but on the connections between the work and the artist, and the work and the observer. The profound psychological effect of a work of art has been recognized ever since Aristotle's theory of catharsis. In the early twentieth century, during the great age of psychoanalysis, most psychological analysis centered on the connection between the artist and the work. The work was seen as an index of the psychological state of its author – sort of a profound and elaborate Rorschach test. Recently, however, psychological attention has shifted to the connection between the work and its consumer, the observer.

The technical determinant governs the language of art. Given the basic structure of the art – the particular qualities of oil paintings for example, versus tempera or acrylics

⁵⁸⁹ My additional note.

– what are the limits of the possibilities? How does the translation of an idea into the language of art affect the idea? What are the thoughtforms of each particular artistic language? How have they shaped the materials the artist utilizes? These questions are the province of the technical determinant. The recording arts, because they are grounded in a much more complex technology than the other arts, are especially susceptible to this kind of analysis. [...]

Finally, all arts are inherently economic products and as such must eventually be considered in economic terms. Again, film and the other recording arts are prime examples of this phenomenon. Like architecture, they are both capital-intensive and labor-intensive; that is, they involve large expenditures of money and they often require large numbers of workers.⁵⁹⁰

Here Monaco refers to some aspects that have also been raised by quoting, for example, David Bordwell and Martha Montello. It is learned that movies, TV productions, and films require budgets. Whether the financial expenditure is big or not determines the work as to whether it becomes a large production or whether it becomes an independent movie.⁵⁹¹ The quote above further clarifies statements that I have made before in the sense that the recent *psychological attention [is] shifted to the connection between the work and its consumer, the observer*. As can be seen in the quoted text by James Monaco, a movie or – as in my example – a TV series can be perceived as a work of art. He also highlights that in the arts, *the economic and political factors that lend to dominate most other activities are more in balance with the psychological and technical factors*. I take from this that all those aspects can be relevant to the audience. Hence, this points to the fact that such an observation on the interaction between the film and the observer poses an interpretation belonging to the field of psychological analysis. On the other hand, if the novel *Dazhaimen* and the TV series are being perceived as *products* of the arts, then there must be ways to interpret them in this respect. Thus, interpretation can occur from very different angles. From the approach in this book, the most important aspect of analysis is the inquiry about *Dazhaimen* and its implementation of Chinese medicine in the overall political discourse in China.

Therefore, it must be asked why the storyline of the Great Mansion Gate constantly orbits around the subject of Chinese medicine without really thematizing it in depth. It could be asked: is this merely a part of the story that Guo Baochang has written, or are there deeper implications for this diegetic element in the series? In-order-to get hold of this, it is imperative to first learn more about general narrative strategies.

⁵⁹⁰ James Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, pp. 31-33.

⁵⁹¹ See David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, Chapter 1.

5. Narratives and Diegetic Elements

As the *Dazhaimen* story perpetually revolves around the chronological history of the Bai family, the main narrative spans over a period of about six decades. Obviously, political issues that come with the disturbances in China's history during this time-period are part of the narration because the family in the story is forced to react to these events. Located in Beijing and, by their profession, frequently engaging with the royal family, the Bai family serves as medical doctors to some members of the wider imperial family outside the palace walls. Besides this general scope, the individual members of the family, but in specific the members placed in focus, are presented as Chinese upper-class citizens who make transactions in the field of *traditional* Chinese medicine. In this regard, James Monaco's, as much as Bordwell's and Thompson's, comprehension of film analysis – and interpretation of TV productions alike – provides key methodologies for the investigation, which helps to unravel the complex nebula of methodologies on film diegetics and narrative functions. Respectively, Bordwell and Thompson explain that storytelling is always generating a time and space continuum through the structural forms of narration. They also raise awareness about how to differentiate the meaning of the terms, the *story*, and the *plot*.

We make sense of a narrative, then, by identifying its events and linking them by cause and effect, time and space. As viewers, we do other things as well. We often infer events that are not explicitly presented⁵⁹², and we do recognize the presence of material that is extraneous to the story world. In order to describe how we manage to do these things, we can draw a distinction between *story* and *plot* (sometimes called *story* and *discourse*).⁵⁹³

Therefore, it must be clarified that, on the one hand, everything in a novel or film that is depicted and thereby shown to the viewer is called the plot. On the contrary, the elements that are not shown to the viewer must be inferred – imagined – by the viewer, this is called the (overall) story.⁵⁹⁴ In this respect, films are not all that different from novels, in which the reader is given certain information and where some details of the respective story must be created, inferred, or imagined by the reader's mind. Nevertheless, films and TV series are different from novels in the respect that in them many details are portrayed, while in novels nothing is *put into pictures*. Despite this fact, novels are also either providing a lot of cues or leaving the content more open. Umberto Eco differentiates such matters in the form of calling

⁵⁹² Implicit meaning.

⁵⁹³ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 76.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 76.

a text either an *open text* or a *closed text*.⁵⁹⁵ Through the term *diegesis* the difference between story and plot is further clarified by Bordwell and Thompson as follows:

The total world of the story action is sometimes called the film's diegesis (the Greek word for "recounted story"). In the opening of *North by Northwest*, the traffic, streets, skyscrapers, and people we see, as well as the traffic, streets, skyscrapers, and people we assume to be offscreen, are all diegetic because they are assumed to exist in the world that the film depicts.

The term *plot* is used to describe everything visibly and audibly present in the film before us. The plot includes, first, all the story events that are directly depicted.⁵⁹⁶

As a result, the storyline of *Dazhaimen* very early on comprises the diegetic element of Chinese medicine, but as a matter of fact, this segment of the story hardly appears in the plots that are directly depicted and shown to the viewer. Every viewer comprehends quite soon after the TV series starts that the Bai family belongs to an upper-class family that practices Chinese medicine. The various members of the family, like the male patriarch of the family, his eldest son, and the husband of the soon-to-be female head of the family, Ernainai, are all shown as very talented and highly respected doctors of Chinese medicine. All-of-those three, except Ernainai, at some point in the story, pay a visit to the mansion of Duke Wang in-order-to examine various patients with the pulse-diagnosis method. They then write down prescriptions and give medical suggestions. Also, the TV audience gets a glimpse into the medicine shop (the pharmacy), which belongs to the family. Later, Jingqi – still a child - puts some medicine which is unexpectedly harmful into the fish basin in the yard of the Bai mansion. All fish die. The story continues, and the plots often move around the business and around sickly people who are being medically treated by the Bai doctors. Meanwhile, Jingqi slowly grows up and diligently studies Chinese medicine with his new inhouse teacher. Years later, when the Eight-Nation Alliance occupies Beijing, Jingqi and Huang Chun take shelter in the underground cellar, where big stacks of precious Chinese medications, herbs and ingredients are being stored by the Bai family. But these medicines are hardly ever shown. Only the containers in which medicinal herbs, etc. must be assumed to be are being presented, and the viewer is informed by the dialogue between the protagonists that it is so. Thus, as a part of the story-world Chinese medicine is unequivocally a part of the overall diegesis, but it is hardly ever *plotted* out in detail. When Jingqi forcibly moves to Jinan, the capital of today's Shandong Province in China, it is the first time he is presented as practicing Chinese medicine regularly. Routinely applying Chinese medicine is the family's profession, but in the plots, this story

⁵⁹⁵ See Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Introduction.

⁵⁹⁶ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 76.

element is seldomly predominant, as all the viewer gets to see are the discussions about sicknesses and the rather few occasions when the pulse diagnosis is being conducted. Constituted by the diegesis, on the other hand, this praxis and proof of medical professionalism had been present from the beginning of episode one. But as-a-result of rather *few mentions* about it⁵⁹⁷, this diegetic element is kept rather in the background and is only moved more to the foreground (into the plot) when Jingqi starts his enterprise in Jinan. Through this, when the restriction of the distribution of such knowledge – in this case, about Chinese medicine – takes place, it has “...effects that [the] narration can achieve by manipulating the range of story information. Restricted narration tends to create greater curiosity and surprise for the viewer.”⁵⁹⁸ An important question to ask in such context is: “Who knows what when?”⁵⁹⁹ This refers to how much and what the audience, the characters in the film, or the narrator (if there is one in the film) know at any given time. In movies (and novels), these levels of knowledge can vary widely. A narrator may inform the viewer about aspects that are unknown to some characters in the film, or this information gets retold in-order-to inform the audience about what a specific character knows and observes. It is also common that the audience is informed by the different events of various characters in different plots. As a result, what the protagonists know and what the viewer knows may greatly differ. Given that this is the case, the viewer can sometimes “...anticipate events that the character cannot.”⁶⁰⁰

As outlined before, in the case of *Dazhaimen* the character Jingqi is one of the most dominant characters in the play. The individual character Jingqi drives the narrative through his actions, as does his mother, whose importance for the story slowly fades as the TV series moves on through the episodes. And here again, individual characters like those function as causal agents, as has already been explained.

This conception of narrative depends on the assumption that the action will spring primarily from *individual characters as causal agents*. Natural causes (floods, earthquakes) or societal causes (institutions, wars, economic depressions) may affect the action, but the narrative centers on personal psychological causes: decisions, choices, and traits of character.⁶⁰¹

Consequently, I argue that in *The Great Mansion Gate*, many of the mentioned causes are at work. Filling the narrative with such causes as the war periods, economic depression, suffering as-a-result of these causes, and the linking of the family’s business to the profession of

⁵⁹⁷ I mean the rare plotting out of this professionalism.

⁵⁹⁸ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 90.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 90.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94.

Chinese medicine, all these matters drive and build up the complexion of the narrative. They are providing many angles to interpret the story. The actions of Jingqi or his mother, as well as the actions of the other *supporting* characters, are – as Bordwell and Thompson state in the above quote – affected by these actions in their environment; these events shape their world to a large degree. I argue that the choices, decisions, and traits of character of the main protagonists either depend on these *external* circumstances and/or are even being shaped by those causes, which are woven into the fabric of the narration. Accordingly, the doings and the character of Jingqi, who grew up in this prosperous family of Chinese doctors, are immensely influenced by this background matter. He is *made* to be the cornerstone of the story.

In the narration, historical events and Jingqi's family background shape his character and give rise to his later profession and business attitude. The abandonment by his own mother (due to his liaison with Huang Chun) weighs heavy on him and must be comprehended as having an impact on the development of his character traits. All of this presumably leaves traces that could be followed up on in-order-to understand his desire to become who he becomes. In the book *Film Art*, it is explained that such "...desire propels the narrative, causality is defined around traits and goals, conflicts lead to consequence, time is motivated by plot necessity, and narration is objective, mixing restricted and unrestricted passages."⁶⁰²

The same, it must be hypothesized, is the case for the diegetic element of Chinese medicine. In the overall story, **it must have a function!** Certainly, it is perfectly thinkable that the subject of the tradition of Chinese medicine had been implemented into the story deliberately. Obviously, the author Guo Baochang re-narrated and created the story from his (creative) memory, and therefore the insertion of this subject does not imply any necessary intention other than to retell the story of the *Tongrentang* owners or a story that is closely related to the real events. However, it shall be noted that Guo had been attending the Beijing film school when going through his adolescence.⁶⁰³ This points to a certain degree of professionalism in the field of filmmaking and storytelling.

As a result, I argue that this diegetic element⁶⁰⁴ must have a certain function in the narrative construction. The embedding of this subject has an impact on the overall perception of the story. Besides, it must be noted that to the observer, there never seems to be real doubt about the effectiveness of Chinese medicine. Throughout the TV series *Dazhaimen*, the efficacy of Chinese medicine is never strongly questioned or thematized. In this regard, the discourse on

⁶⁰² David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 97.

⁶⁰³ See Guo, Baochang 郭宝昌: *Dazhaimen* 《大宅门》, [The Great Mansion Hall], Preface.

⁶⁰⁴ **Chinese medicine.**

this subject in China has a strong tendency towards belief in the benefits of Chinese medicine.⁶⁰⁵

In the episodes of Jingqi's new life in Jinan, he starts to adapt to the local tradition of medicinal practice, and he applies his profound knowledge of Chinese medicine to improve prescriptions and recipes. Thinking about the function of this narrative element, is it then possible that this TV production of the 2000s was bringing back the popularity of Chinese medicine into the collective consciousness?

As elaborated earlier by researcher Li Juan⁶⁰⁶, it had been important to present the rich corpus of Chinese medicine to the world, and, further, according to other researchers mentioned earlier, it had also influenced the views on Chinese medicine within China.

Additionally, the author Lü Tu, in his article *The Great Mansion Gate Reshaped the Image of the Old Brand* 大宅门 重塑了老字号形象⁶⁰⁷ states that the character portrayed by Bai Jingqi had been modelled after the cousin of the *Tongrentang* owner Le Puzhai 乐朴宅. His name was Le Jingyu 乐镜宇. This reveals how novels are oftentimes modelled after real events, and then *minor* details appear to be somewhat twisted. There is no mention in the text about the abandonment or sending into exile of this person. But it is reported that Le Jingyu started the medicine brand *Hongjitang* 宏济堂 in Jinan in 1907. In comparison, it seems that Bai Jingqi in the storyline of the TV series may have started his business a little earlier in Jinan, but dates of time are only given sporadically in *Dazhaimen* so it is hard to verify these landmarks in accordance with the real historical events. However, these are minor details that are not important in the overall storyline. More significant is that the brand rose to fame in Jinan and that it was closely related to the famous medicine brand *Tongrentang* (in the TV series, it is called *Baicaoting*). Following Lü Tu's essay, it is claimed that the popularity and glory of those two brands and an additional brand called *Darentang* 达仁堂 - from the city of Tianjin - had been renewed and brought back to the conscious minds of people in Jinan by the TV series. Even more so, Lü says, this literally initiated a process of *remembrance* on the national level. Accordingly, the TV series brought back the tradition, fame, cultural value, and the benefits of proprietary Chinese medicine into the minds of Chinese people. Further, it is stated that the old building of the *Hongjitang* in Jinan had been turned into a museum of Chinese

⁶⁰⁵ As has been shown by the accounts given in the first chapter on *the State of Research on Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse* in this book.

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. Li Juan, [The Framework of Chinese Medicine Culture in TV Plays].

⁶⁰⁷ Lü Tu 吕途, *Dazhaimen chongsu le Laozihao Xinxiang* 《大宅门》重塑了老字号形象, [The Great Mansion Gate Reshaped the Image of the Old Brand].

medicine and that the *Hongjitang* later merged into the Jinan Hongjitang Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. 宏济堂制药有限责任公司 which today is part of the Linuo Pharmaceutical Group 力诺集团 in Shandong province (China).⁶⁰⁸ The article by Lü Tu elucidates the fact that the TV series *Dazhaimen* had-an-effect on the view of Chinese medicine in the political, economic, social, and cultural discourse of China.

This then provides another clue about how the diegetic element of Chinese medicine affects the Chinese meta-discourse. In-order-to delve deeper into this, the findings of James Monaco are helpful. As Monaco writes in his book *How to Read a Film*, certain content of films and TV productions is denotative, and other content is connotative. This approach to film analysis goes back to the systematic study of language and ideas, which had earlier been referred to as semiotics. This theory has long been widely applied in film analysis over the past decades, although with specific adaptations. In Monaco's explanation, the comprehension of a movie is compared with the understanding of a language system. They are not the same, but these systems share certain structural features. The main component that is shared by these two *systems* is their essence of being symbolic. He writes:

Considering the strongly denotative quality of film sounds and images, it is surprising to discover that these connotative abilities are very much part of the film language. In fact, many of them stem from film's denotative ability. [...] film can draw on all the other arts for various effects simply because it can record them. Thus, all the connotative factors of spoken language can be accommodated on a film soundtrack while the connotations of written language can be included in titles (to say nothing of the connotative factors of dance, music, painting, and so forth). Because film is a product of culture, it has resonances that go beyond what the semiotician calls its "diegesis" (the sum of its denotations). An image of a rose is not simply that when it appears in a film of *Richard III*, for example, because we are aware of the connotations of the white rose and the red as symbols of the houses of York and Lancaster. These are culturally determined connotations.

In addition to these influences from the general culture, film has its own unique connotative ability. We know (even if we don't often remind ourselves of it consciously) that a filmmaker has made specific choices: the rose is filmed from a certain angle, the camera moves or does not move, the color is bright or dull, the rose is fresh or fading, the thorns apparent or hidden, the background clear (so that the rose is seen in context) or vague (so that it is isolated), the shot held for a long time or briefly, and so on. These are specific aids to cinematic connotation, and although we can approximate their effect in literature, we cannot accomplish it there with the precision or efficiency of the cinema. A picture is, on occasion, worth a thousand words, as the adage has it.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. Lü Tu, [The Great Mansion Gate Reshaped the Image of the Old Brand].

⁶⁰⁹ James Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, pp. 162.

Drawing from this passage from Monaco's book, it can be noted that film and language are different in many ways, while still sharing similar structural features. In the given context, Monaco further explains how different languages vary in the quantity of their words, but how languages with less vocabulary may as well be of great complexity and capacity to express issues due to their multiple possibilities to connotate single words.⁶¹⁰ The latter is reflected in the above-presented quote, as it informs about these issues on the level of cinematic methods. While the diegesis, as Monaco claims, is usually mostly denotative, the cinematic arrangement of a sequence, a scene, a shot, or even a single picture in the frame can hold various levels of connotation. Monaco appears to refer to the idea of *mis-en-scene* in which the contents of a single picture can be full of details, and he goes beyond this concept. He mentions this in the quote above to the degree that the camera angle, the length of the shot, or the coloration of the object constitute the message conveyed through the picture. This is to say that many details in a single frame about a person and/or an object (or multiple objects) placed as background matter are shaping the outcome of the message.⁶¹¹ Briefly said, when pointing to semiotics, Monaco states that the denotation of the overall story is revealed in the-very-obvious shots and frames that the audience sees, but the connotation lies on the level below that (rather on the sub-conscious level). As known from Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, subjects and objects – in combination with the complex cinematic methods⁶¹² – reveal the unconcealed denotative message while the connotation, like in language, depends on context and deeper meaning.⁶¹³ On a plain level, this is like the rose, which is a rose but often not only a rose. As Barthes showed, a rose (and that's where Monaco above comes in with the cultural argument) in Western culture also signifies the meaning of romantic attachment, for example, when it is given to a woman that one adores.⁶¹⁴

Hence, I conclude that in the TV program *Dazhaimen* the framing of Chinese medicine, the filming of the art of Chinese pulse diagnosis, or shots of medicinal ingredients are firstly a matter of denotative portrayal. But the question that arises here is how this feature is to be interpreted in the connotative stratum. This means picking up on the embedded message about why Chinese medicine is an integral element in the TV series and how it is conveying meaning. I argue that, in the semiotic sense, Chinese medicine in *Dazhaimen* must therefore be a *sign*. But a sign for what? Well, as has been shown above, when hearing Lü Tu, Chinese med-

⁶¹⁰ Cf. James Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, pp. 162.

⁶¹¹ See also David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 112-161.

⁶¹² My additional note.

⁶¹³ See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 121.

⁶¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

icine appears to constitute a tradition and/or value in Chinese culture. According to him, this tradition is renewed and brought back strongly to the conscience of the Chinese TV audience by such programs as *Dazhaimen*. Thus, there must be more to the signification of it. This will be clarified next.

6. Semiotic Signs of Chinese Medicine in *Dazhaimen*

In semiotics, words and things are often observed as having a symbolic meaning. Or, more precisely, the word (the term in-a-given language) is the signifier of the signified; the word that exists about a thing or matter is not the same as the *thing* itself.⁶¹⁵ Often this difference is ignored or overlooked. As Martha Montello writes in her book *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*, symbols have a huge impact on the individual⁶¹⁶. The motif of Chinese medicine in *Dazhaimen* likely represents such a symbol. It is not a real narrative within the narrative or a story within the story, but it adds essence (sub-context) to the overall story. Certainly, this element in the story of the Bai family could be interpreted to be meaningless or just coincidental, as the story content could be simply interpreted as something that Guo Baochang had experienced in his own life, and he then used it for his novel. The semiotic view, however, does not neglect the fact that Guo wrote down his personal accounts. Moreover, it would be too simple if one ignored and overlooked the importance that the TV series appears to have in the overall political discourse of China. This gives reason to think about how the story of *The Great Mansion Gate* might have turned out if the family business motif had been built on, i.e., a construction business or if the family had been engaged in a strict financial enterprise, like investment or banking. The overall story world would have changed greatly. Accordingly, the medicinal background of the family adds certain profound notions to the diegesis of the story, I argue. The symbolic potential of the sign that Chinese medicine embodies is therefore of utmost importance to the investigation in this book.

As Alexander Altmann writes in his essay *Symbol and Myth*, a symbol serves a function, it "...is the synthesis of type and allegory. It combines the representation of the particular through the general (type) and the representation of the general through the particular (allegory). In the symbol both are one."⁶¹⁷ Chinese medicine, thus, possibly even nurtures a specific cultural tradition because Chinese medicine is one of the core matters of Chinese culture. It

⁶¹⁵ See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 110-113.

⁶¹⁶ See quote on the next page.

⁶¹⁷ Alexander Altmann, *Symbol and Myth*, pp. 163.

has symbolic value, I argue, and it mediates deeper levels of meaning (connotative). Regarding this matter, Martha Montello writes:

It is clear that human beings create symbols and are, in turn, transformed by them. Although there is an old debate about the chronological relation of language to thinking, most people believe that symbols develop shortly after language does. (Language is itself symbolic, of course, in that it only *represents* reality and is not the concrete thing itself.) Therefore, small children already have some ideas about such common symbols as a red traffic light and the American flag. Older children and adults are very nearly awash in the effects of symbolism, for good or ill. [...] Moreover, all of us with normal functioning brains are vulnerable to symbolic stories.⁶¹⁸

While Montello does not clearly say this, it is my conviction that language is entirely symbolic. Language expresses something that exists in our minds and feelings. All language *tools* are therefore a means to express the wish to signify something. Therefore, words can always just be descriptive, they cannot put forward the signified, for example, the emotion, directly. This is highlighted by what Roland Barthes writes in the book *Mythologies*: “The writer’s language is not expected to *represent* reality, but to signify it.”^{619 620}

If Chinese medicine is comprehended as a *sign*, then the repeated use and mentioning of Chinese medicine in the TV series has some effect, and it is fair to look at it as carrying some symbolic meaning. It could also be assumed that Chinese medicine, so to speak, has fallen victim to the story of *The Great Mansion Gate*, as it would then be a *victim* of a myth. In the interpretation of Roland Barthes (“...myth has in fact a double function: it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us.”⁶²¹), it is feasible to think that this specific story-information is being exploited. It could be asked: Who uses it? Why has it fallen victim to a myth? What does this mean, anyway?

Remembering what James Monaco said about film, he looks at this as some sort of communication system, in one way or another, as a (symbolic) language system itself.⁶²² When adding the semiotic methodology to it, then film is filled up and constituted by *signs* and symbols. While the idea of the following explanation goes back to Charles Sanders Peirce, the quote used by James Monaco comes from Peter Wollen’s book *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. It summarizes the differentiation of the sub-terms of the word *sign*. Below, Wollen differentiates the so-called *trichotomy of signs* by Peirce. It explains the taxonomy of different classes of signs:

⁶¹⁸ Martha Montello, *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*, pp. 221.

⁶¹⁹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 136.

⁶²⁰ The quote had already been used on page V in the preface of this book.

⁶²¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 115.

⁶²² See James Monaco, *How to Read a Film*, pp. 203.

A sign is either an *icon*, an *index*, or a *symbol*.

An **icon**, according to Peirce, is a sign which represents its object mainly by its similarity to it; the relationship between signifier and signified is not arbitrary but is one of resemblance or likeness. Thus, for instance, the portrait of a man resembles him. Icons can, however, be divided into two sub-classes: images and diagrams. In the case of images 'simple qualities' are alike; in the case of diagrams the 'relations between the parts'. Many diagrams, of course, contain symboloid features; Peirce readily admitted this, for it was the dominant aspect or dimension of the sign which concerned him.

An **index** is a sign by virtue of an existential bond between itself and its object. Peirce gave several examples.

I see a man with a rolling gait. This is a probable indication that he is a sailor. I see a bowlegged man in corduroys, gaiters and a jacket. These are probable indications that he is a jockey or something of the sort. A sundial or clock indicates the time of day.

Other examples cited by Peirce are the weathercock, a sign of the direction of the wind which physically moves it, the barometer, the spirit-level. Roman Jakobson cites Man Friday's footprint in the sand⁶²³ and medical symptoms, such as pulse-rates, rashes and so on. Symptomatology is a branch of the study of the indexical sign.

The third sign, the **symbol**, corresponds to Saussure's arbitrary sign. Like Saussure, Peirce speaks of a 'contract' by virtue of which symbol is a sign. The symbolic sign eludes the individual will. 'You can write down the word "star", but that does not make you the creator of the word, nor if you erase it have you destroyed the word. The word lives in the minds of those who use it'. A symbolic sign demands neither resemblance to its object nor any existential bond with it. It is conventional and it has the force of a law.⁶²⁴

Thus, if the observation of *Dazhaimen* is being conducted by means of these classes of signs: any tool to conduct Chinese medicine, like the little cushion on which patients rest their wrists in-order-to have the Chinese doctor apply the pulse diagnosis, including the prescriptions that are written down or the occasional herb, all these things that the viewer gets to see are all to be found in the realm of the icon. They are simple signs, especially in the movie, because they are like the word that names a thing. In film and TV production, they resemble the very things that those objects claim to be. In this sense, this is referential meaning in the broader context of the diegetic film element that Chinese medicine poses. However, the class of indexical signs appears to be much more interesting for this analysis. As shown above, such signs consist of, and inform about, something. They are indications that help the analyst get clues about the person, the thing, or the process of interest. It would probably be too far off to claim that the specific clothing of Jingqi and the other characters is indicating their belonging to a certain trade, as their dresses are rather resembling (*indicating*) the financial status of the family, I argue. When, in *Dazhaimen*, seeing the outside walls of the prosperous medicine shops and

⁶²³ Referring to the story of Robinson Crusoe.

⁶²⁴ Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, pp. 122-123.

the writing above the entrance stating the words *Baicaoting Baijialaohao*⁶²⁵ (the brand name of the Bai Family's medicine brand), it is a sign of the indexical category, which literally indicates the existence and the location of the pharmaceutical store that is owned by the Bai family. Such indexical signs are repeatedly found in *Dazhaimen*, and they inform the audience about the story's alleged reality, which is being created through filmic aids. It is therefore not necessary to show many details about Chinese medicine if the goal is to embed this element in the diegetic context. The icons and indexical signs suffice to make the viewer believe in the storyline.

In conclusion about the function of these signs, it becomes clear that, for the investigation in this book, the most important category of signs is that of the *symbol*. As Wollen shows (quote above), *a symbolic sign demands neither resemblance to its object nor any existential bond with it*. This reveals the power of symbols and their symbolic meaning. The matter at hand also came up when talking about the rose. A rose may be a symbol for romantic love. In the same manner, Peter Wollen briefly explains other symbols in the passage that has been quoted above. In the following text in his book⁶²⁶, Wollen talks about the scales of justice, a statue in front of many court buildings in Western societies that *symbolizes* the meaning of the law *or* the force of the law and resembles a certain understanding of the law in the given society. Another example, the Christian cross near many old farmsteads in Germany, in churches or when Christian believers wear a chain with a cross around their neck, is such a symbol, too.⁶²⁷ As a result, I find that while the iconographic and indexical signs in *Dazhaimen* repeatedly establish the presence and existence of the Chinese medicine motif for the audience, the symbolic meaning of the matter may have much deeper implications.

This, once again, brings awareness to the suspicion that there is a myth created in this TV series. It appears to be hard to discover whether this had been the goal from the very start by the production company and the TV station, but it seems unquestionable that a myth is being presented through the symbolic signs in the narrative. A myth that can be hypothesized to circulate in the Chinese social and political discourse. After all, all regular viewers know what kind of business the Bai family engages in. A certain percentage of the Chinese audience may also know that it refers to the *Tongrentang* tradition. Whenever presents are given to incoming guests or when the eldest brother, Daye, examines sickly patients in front of his house, the

⁶²⁵ 百草厅 百家老号. This can be found, for example, in Episode 25.

⁶²⁶ Cf. Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, pp. 123.

⁶²⁷ Wollen, however, does not specifically speak about the Cristian cross in Germany, etc.; he simply mentions that the Cristian cross is another example of Peirce's "symbols", See Peter Wollen, pp. 123.

audience is reminded of the professionalism of the respective member of the family. Therefore, the image conveyed is almost never that of inability or incompetence. When Jingqi arrives in Jinan, he shortly after engages in working as a medical doctor, and because of his superior talent, he quickly builds himself a strong reputation.

Further, after Jingqi had started his business in Jinan, he did not mention his proper family name. But later, when his secret is discovered, everyone respects him even more. The relationship with his Tangjie 堂姐 (older female cousin on the male side of the family) then helps him sort out certain problems with the bureaucrats in Jinan. I argue that the so-called concept of Guanxi 关系, which consists of good relations with influential people, sometimes seen as favouritism or nepotism, and the status of the Bai family always benefit its family members, as becomes obvious throughout the television series. Certainly, many difficulties are also being simply solved by bribing officials and giving money to future allies. However, the weaving together of these fractional elements produces a rather clear picture of the family trade, the family, the culture, and the portrayed Chinese traditions. It is unclear whether the viewer will always easily differentiate these conveyed values and images from the modern-day reality in which he or she consumes the TV series. Through the ups and downs for Jingqi, his concubine, and his mother, many hot topics are thematized. These surely tempt the individual viewer to contemplate moral values. Whether values are understood in one way or another, probably depends on the individual himself or herself. Jingqi's character constantly appears to hover between the warm-hearted, brave man and the heartless coward (or bandit). An example of this is his reaction to the taking away of his and JiuHong's (his first wife's) baby by Ernainai. It can be argued that when he actively returns the child to Ernainai (to have the child grow up with her instead of growing up with the biological mother JiuHong), he simply obeys the rules of filial piety, which must have been very strongly emphasized in Chinese society around the year 1910⁶²⁸; and presumably somewhat still are today. But another less traditional viewer of the show may perceive these actions as unbearable. On the contrary, one could ask (this builds on my personal observations about Chinese society) why values like filial piety are still so strong in China today. This whole matter, it appears, is linked with the image, which is produced about Chinese culture, about the Bai family, about the character traits in the TV show, the family rules of conduct, and the conflicts with adversaries in their daily

⁶²⁸ The period-of-time in which the event in the story takes place.

business and life, and not to forget the historical changes and repeated overthrows of governments.

In Guo Wulin's view, the fact that the family is rich and of high social status resembles one of the core themes of *Dazhaimen*. He thinks that the family, although it is closely involved with the government, does not participate in politics⁶²⁹, but that this resembles the tradition, the class level, and the daily necessities of a rather typical noble family in that given time period.⁶³⁰ Their spendings on good clothing, housing, cuisine, and all sorts of pleasure time activities reflect their high status, while at the same time traits of the common people – and even vulgar behaviour – can be observed in the characters of the members of the Bai family. As Guo Wulin writes, these features (cultural customs, doctrines, and principles) as much as legal customs in the TV series had been followed with huge interest by a large TV audience in China.⁶³¹ In addition to the revived cultural atmosphere of the Beijing of the late Qing era and the early 20th century, the Beijing culture is reproduced, and it thereby manifests unique features of nationalism, global culture, and even artistic notions. Also, global historical events are identified by Guo when he points to landmarks portrayed in *Dazhaimen*. One such example is the impact that the foreign powers entering China had on the development of the country.⁶³²

7. The Myth and the Re-Invention of Tradition

Through the examination of the factors above, it has become evident that not only the iconographic, indexical, or symbolic signs in the TV series can be scrutinized. When talking about symbolic meaning, the interplay of the isolated components must be seen in the context of the broader context. All *ingredients* constitute a combination of signs and symbolic meaning that arises from the overall context of the analysed narrative. Through the analysis of Chinese medicine in the context of *Dazhaimen* the impression arises that, for the Chinese audience, a model of interacting elements concerning culture and tradition is always at work. As Guo Wulin argues in the article *Cultural Characteristics of Dazhaimen*⁶³³ there are at least three predominant modes detectable in the TV series:

⁶²⁹ Although one could argue that their actions and mingling with governmental officials are, in a social sense, very political.

⁶³⁰ This supports my afore-mentioned personal observations.

⁶³¹ Cf. Guo Wulin, [The Cultural Characteristics of *Dazhaimen*], pp. 106.

⁶³² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 106.

⁶³³ *Dazhaimen de Wenhua Tezheng* 《大宅门》的文化特征.

宅门文化由物质文化，艺术文化，精神文化 3 个层面构成。但这个层面又不能截然分开，它们浑然一体不可分割得结合在一起，凸现出宅门文化得具体特征。⁶³⁴

This statement of his points to the opinion that the three modes mentioned here, which consist of the elements of material culture, artistic culture, and spiritual culture, shall not be understood as single *actors* but that they must be comprehended as a unity because they are profoundly mixed and intermingled.

This is a rather usual feature in narrative film, as Bordwell and Thompson exclaim. “All of the relationships among elements in a film create the total filmic system.”⁶³⁵ Bordwell literally calls this *unity*. It is a cinematic convention that often shows in films, for instance, when a German audience watches a movie that is set in a medieval background, where the hero defends his countrymen (and women) against the incoming enemy, and as a side-product, he also gets to marry the beautiful *princess* that every man in the country adores. Similarly, above the fact that here the focus lies on the impact that the TV series *Dazhaimen* has on the political discourse in China, the protagonist Jingqi also gets the girl, and he even engages in a romantic relationship with another woman later.

While such plots are often established in accordance with other plotlines that occur at the same time, the combination of all the threads of the story creates the total filmic system. But not only the differing plots constitute the overall diegesis, including the element of Chinese medicine. By taking Bordwell’s expression as a guideline about the unity of narrative elements, these threads also contain all other elements of the film. This means all elements are important to the overall story, I argue. Thereby, the motif of Chinese medicine must belong to this category, and consequently, it is one of the narrative elements⁶³⁶ in the TV series.

Further, bringing in semiotics as a tool of interpretation, the aspects that are relevant to a semiotic analysis or deconstruction are those elements that carry the myth at play in the TV series. Semiotics focuses on the uncovering of the *naturalization* processes and the subsequent exploitation of specific goals by the myth.⁶³⁷ As has been the basis for the hypothesis all along in this paper, Chinese medicine clearly appears to be part of the cultural heritage of China. Cultural aspects, however, are always entangled in a *political* discourse. This will show later when engaging with Hobsbawm’s and Anderson’s works again. Culture is a highly controversial topic today, as it has political implications. A brief introduction to the field of culture

⁶³⁴ Guo Wulin, [The Cultural Characteristics of Dazhaimen], pp. 102.

⁶³⁵ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 70.

⁶³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-82.

⁶³⁷ Cf. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 128.

shall be given here through a definition provided by the German sociologist Dr. Müller-Lyer which he wrote for the preface of his book *Phasen der Kultur*. It helps the reader understand some foundational sociological assumptions.

Bekanntlich ist die menschliche Gesellschaft aus unscheinbaren Anfängen im Verlauf unermesslicher Zeiträume zu immer verwickelteren und höheren Formen des Daseins aufgestiegen. Erst waren es vereinzelt kleine Horden, die in ganz tierähnlicher Weise in den Wäldern umherschweiften; dann vereinigten sich die Horden zu Stämmen, die Stämme später zu Völkern, die Völker zu Staaten, die Staaten wiederum zu Großstaaten, und jetzt sind fast alle Völker der Erde durch den Welthandel zu einer einzigen großen Arbeitsgemeinschaft verbunden. Und während so Schritt für Schritt die Menschheit zu höher organisierten Gruppenbildungen überging, wurde jede Generation die Lehrmeisterin der folgenden und die Errungenschaften der Kultur häuften sich zu einem immer mächtigeren⁶³⁸ Reichtum an. Die Menschen bildeten die Sprache, den eigentlichen Kulturträger, und das Werkzeug aus, sie zähmten das Feuer, dann schritten sie fort zur Erfindung des Ackerbaus und der Tierzucht, zur Gewinnung und Verarbeitung der Metalle, sie ersannen Religionen, Künste und Wissenschaften, schufen allerlei sinnreiche Maschinen und lernten mehr und mehr die Natur zu beherrschen.⁶³⁹

While I will abstain from translating the complete paragraph from German to English, it is noteworthy to hear from Müller-Lyer how culture, in his view, has developed. Obviously written in 1908, the content of the book may be outdated in some respects, but when I read this passage, it captured me for the fact that Müller-Lyer explains how humans had started living together in small groups, then in tribes, later in states and how in the *modern* age the globe is interconnected as one huge *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (working group or society). This is interesting because the book is from 1908, and not 2008. However, Müller-Lyer proceeds to explain how humans tamed the fire and made use of it, how they domesticated animals, and how they started farming. Further, he thematizes the invention of religion, art, economy, and machinery, which now *help humans* to gradually [try to] dominate nature.⁶⁴⁰ I chose this paragraph because it enlightens the reader about the very fact that *culture* has either slowly naturally *developed*, or it must be comprehended as rather being *created* by people. Culture is something that has evolved. And certainly, it is not a fixed entity by this understanding. Samuel Huntington⁶⁴¹, although the broader context of his text is about democratizing processes, stated in the *Third Wave* that “cultures are historically dynamic, not stagnant. The dominant beliefs and attitudes in a society change. While maintaining elements of continuity, the prevail-

⁶³⁸ Müller-Lyer’s style of writing.

⁶³⁹ Franz Carl Müller-Lyer, *Phasen der Kultur, Richtungslinien des Fortschritts*, Vorwort.

⁶⁴⁰ At least, people believe they have the capability to dominate nature. The climate crisis shows other results.

⁶⁴¹ And, although he apparently, is considered to be a rather conservatist writer and researcher.

ing culture of a society in one generation may differ significantly from what it was one or two generations earlier.”⁶⁴²

Respectively, the creation of a myth about Chinese medicine resembles the creation of a Cultural tradition, as will be gradually explained hereafter. Below, it is first elaborated why culture, myth, and ideology are schemes that are deeply interconnected. David Bidney writes in *Myth, Symbolism, and Truth*:

The effectiveness of myth depends in large measure upon ignorance or unconsciousness of its actual motivation. That is why myth tends to recede before the advance of reason and self-conscious reflection. But myth has a perennial function to perform in providing a basis for social faith and action. Our myths are rooted in collective unconsciousness, and we are most in their power when we are unconscious of their origin.⁶⁴³

Isn't it then interesting that it seems so hard to uncover the reason for the medical myth in the TV series *Dazhaimen*? And not only that, some plots and twists in the TV series oftentimes seem like mysteries, while other aspects lay openly at hand. This is the case, as Bidney says, because often myths are rooted in the collective unconscious (about the existence and motivation of the myth). Hence, is it a coincidence that the core of the matter is so hard to come by, or is this in fact the very nature of the myth in general and about Chinese medicine in the here thematized TV program? The question is what Chinese medicine in *Dazhaimen* is signifying. As Bidney explains, the myth of Chinese medicine in the TV series must be hidden, but this does not mean that it does not exist. After all, it is building the context, or background, of the play. As stated before, one can then also ask, does this background have meaning? Or can it simply be ignored? I argue that it can't be ignored because it is an *actor* in the structure of the film.

Therefore, referring once again to the comparison between various other professions in which the Bai family could have possibly specialized, this helps to understand that the deployment of the diegetic element *Chinese medicine* is in fact constituting a context. It is logical that, for example, a picture taken of a person on a beach differs from one taken in an office. The overall context therefore changes, and accordingly, this results in an alteration of the delivered meaning. From this point of view, if the respective picture is analysed, the background setting can likely not be neglected. In this respect, Roland Barthes says in *S/Z* that texts⁶⁴⁴ are filled with codes, and through the codes, people make meaning of the text or film. He writes that “each code is one of the forces that can take over the text (of which the text is the network),

⁶⁴² Samuel Huntington, *Democracy's Third Wave*, pp. 30.

⁶⁴³ David Bidney, *Myth, Symbolism, and Truth*, pp. 390.

⁶⁴⁴ Aren't movies very much like texts translated into filmic processes to convey a story?

one of these voices out of which the text is woven.”⁶⁴⁵ Thus, it can be learned from Roland Barthes that a text – and in our example, a movie – is a network. Similarly, after Bordwell, this was called the total filmic system. I argue all this resembles a network in which all constituting variables are of importance because each of them is crucial to the construction of a unique novel, movie, or, in general terms, a narration. In sum, this means that how and how much, one gives importance to specific structural elements shapes and influences the interpretation and understanding of a respective work.

Michel Foucault seems to have followed similar ideas, as will be shown below. The background elements can never be ignored, background is context, background is part of the network of the story, and the story as narrative is also part of a greater network that goes beyond that. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he writes:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of reference to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. And this network of references is not the same in the case of a mathematical treatise, a textual commentary, a historical account, and an episode in a novel cycle; the unity of the book, even in the sense of a group of relations, cannot be regarded as identical in each case. The book is not simply the object that one holds in one’s hands; and it cannot remain within the little parallelepiped that contains it: its unity is variable and relative. As soon as one questions that unity, it loses its self-evidence; it indicates itself, constructs itself, only on the basis of a complex field of discourse.⁶⁴⁶

In acknowledgement of these statements, I argue that the medical background of *Dazhaimen* must therefore also be seen in a greater web of significance. One that might be called a meta-context that exists and (re-)constitutes itself, and which further shapes the overall signification and symbolisation of Chinese medicine in the cultural and political discourse of China. It is then not hard to imagine the position, reception, and understanding of what a Chinese doctor in the profession of Chinese medicine means in the cultural context and in the historical context. How Chinese doctors are perceived in China is shaped and embedded in a context with all other existing materials and ideals about this matter, in short: the respective discourse. Stories, novels, or, for example, other movies like *The Magic Chinese Doctor Ye Tianshi*⁶⁴⁷ or *The Excellent Doctor from Hejian*⁶⁴⁸ - and an innumerable number of other movies - are as much part of this meta-network of knowledge as the real-world Chinese doctors and all institutes entangled with the profession. It would thus be a mistake to isolate the meaning of it in

⁶⁴⁵ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 21.

⁶⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse of Language*, pp. 23.

⁶⁴⁷ *The Magic Chinese Doctor Ye Tianshi* 《医痴叶天士》央视电影频道节目中心, 中国大陆, 2008 年.

⁶⁴⁸ *The Excellent Doctor from Hejian* 《河间圣手》北京鸿博先锋影视文化有限公司, 中国大陆, 2018 年.

Dazhaimen and limit it, or condemn it, to simply being background matter. The movie, with its referential elements, is woven into the broader networking discourse about a 'traditional' medicine in China. Certainly, the same is true for the historical events dramatized in the episodes of the television program. Focusing on Chinese medicine here, anything that belongs to the referential framework of Chinese medicine in the collective discourse of Chinese medicine can therefore be of importance to the matter because it transforms and constitutes the meta-context.⁶⁴⁹

In *The Great Mansion Gate*, writes Guo Wulin, the members of the Bai family have been studying Chinese medicine intensively for decades and generations, and when out to see patients or when residing in the pharmacy, they always stress the fact that their medicine is of very high quality. Also, they regularly invent new secret recipes, and when harder financial times arise, the Bai family clan continues to produce high-quality medicine instead of producing lower-quality medicine in-order-to cut costs. This becomes most obvious when the son of Bai Jingqi mixes an ingredient of inferior quality into a recipe for a highly expensive medicine, which Jingqi then destroys in his rage over the act, because otherwise this would have immediately damaged the prestige and good reputation of the brand. After this high standard is recognized by outsiders and customers, it further strengthens the reputation of the Bai family.⁶⁵⁰ On the one hand, this issue is one of the strongest motivations in *Dazhaimen*. The reputation of the brand and, hence, the wealth of the family are inseparable in their significance throughout the story. I argue that therein lies a deeper meaning for the profession of Chinese doctors, as it determines the pros and cons of a *good* Chinese doctor for the real-world discourse on the topic. In this sense, it is a matter of reliability. No one will consult an unprofessional or incapable physician. Here, then, the narrative *moral* refers to the greater social and historical discourse about the perception of medical practitioners in China. A good reputation is necessary in any business, as may be agreed. Through the diegesis of *Dazhaimen* it appears that the upholding of high standards is a matter of long-standing conventional heritage in China. Such a *reference to a historic past*, however, is, says Eric Hobsbawm, very usual for the invention of tradition.⁶⁵¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger sketch out the differences between customs and traditions clearly in the book *The Invention of Tradition*. Therein, they further unravel details about the symbolic significance of invented traditions and their linkage to existing and/or former customs.

⁶⁴⁹ The meta-discourse.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Guo Wulin, [The Cultural Characteristics of *Dazhaimen*], pp. 104.

⁶⁵¹ Cf. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 2.

The difference between 'tradition' and 'custom' in our sense is indeed well illustrated here. 'Custom' is what judges do; 'tradition' (in this instance invented tradition) is the wig, robe and other formal paraphernalia and ritualized practices surrounding their substantial action. The decline of 'custom' inevitably changes the 'tradition' with which it is habitually intertwined.

A second, less important, distinction that must be made is between 'tradition' in our sense and convention or routine, which has no significant ritual or symbolic function as such, though it may acquire it incidentally. It is evident that any social practice that needs to be carried out repeatedly will tend, for convenience and efficiency, to develop a set of such conventions and routines, which may be de facto or de jure formalized for the purposes of imparting the practice to new practitioners. [...] Inventing traditions [...] is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition. [...] There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned which has not seen the 'invention' of tradition in this sense. However, we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carries and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side. [...] Adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes.⁶⁵²

The formerly assumed practice of Chinese medicine had therefore been a custom and a medicinal practice, which certainly varied immensely in its form within the vast area of Chinese territory. Clinging to the standards of high-quality production of medicine is, according to the example given further above, a matter of staying in business for the Bai family because it ensures a good reputation for the family enterprise. But traditions also, as is shown in the quote after Hobsbawm and Ranger, not seldomly erupt in a strongly revived fashion when society is experiencing rapid change.

Such situations occurred rather frequently in China in the 20th century. How important the hanging on to traditions is often – or the invention of new ones had been - can be explained when understanding how the influx of Western powers threatened the Chinese cultural heritage. As John Makeham writes in his discussion about the characteristic Chinese way of learning and studying - called *Guoxue*⁶⁵³ – the Chinese system of learning had been alienated from its own nature due to the Western impact. He writes that scholars like Pengchang Gong⁶⁵⁴ stressed the fact that...

⁶⁵² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 2-5.

⁶⁵³ 国学.

⁶⁵⁴ For further reading, see also Gong Pengcheng 龚鹏程, *Guoxue Rumu* 国学入门 (An Introduction to Guoxue) Beijing: Peking University Press, 2008.

...the difference between Western schemes of knowledge classification and Chinese approaches to learning is analogous to the difference between the holistic approach of the practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine and the analytic approach of the practitioner of Western medicine.⁶⁵⁵

Through this statement and the broader meaning of the essay by Makeham it is pointed out that Chinese medicine and Chinese culture in general have been pushed back since they were confronted with Western science and cultural themes.⁶⁵⁶ This has also been partially highlighted in Section 1 of this book.

As Hobsbawm and Ranger explain, societal transformations like those that break loose when a society is altered by strong impact often result in the revival of old cultural values, customs, or traditions.⁶⁵⁷ While for Hobsbawm these changes are rather *natural* in societies, the fact that change occurs appears to be reason enough for the Chinese state and society to reproduce old patterns. Reading Hobsbawm and Ranger clarifies which processes are at work when certain cultural values and *traditions* are repeatedly reconstructed. Such actions appear to be 'warning signs' for the alert observer, as they inform about the fabrication of a tradition or myth. In the discourse of China, as Kramer has shown, the replication and referencing of historical events and *old traditions* have a function. This function is profoundly explained by Hobsbawm and Ranger, below. They identify a paradox that is usually found in so-called modern nation-states. One could ask: What does the terminology 'modern nation-state' signify? Are nation-states not modern by default? How does this reference to the past? Hobsbawm and Ranger write:

We should not be misled by a curious, but understandable, paradox: modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition other than the self-assertion. Whatever the historic or other continuities embedded in the modern concept of 'France' and 'the French' – and which nobody would seek to deny – these very concepts themselves must include a constructed or 'invented' component. And just because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern 'nation' consists of such constructs and is associated with appropriate and, in general, fairly recent symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as 'national history'), the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the 'invention of tradition'.⁶⁵⁸

It is here where one starts to grasp the significance of such elements in *The Great Mansion Gate*, which hint to the 'tradition' of Chinese civilization, to the historical past, and to presum-

⁶⁵⁵ John Makeham, *Disciplining Tradition in Modern China: Two Case Studies*, pp. 103.

⁶⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 89-104.

⁶⁵⁷ See Hobsbawm's and Ranger's quote about the relationship between *traditions* and *customs*.

⁶⁵⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 14.

ably deliberately chosen content in the production of the TV series *Dazhaimen*. When investigated from this angle, evidently, *Dazhaimen* is full of corresponding references. Notably, this motif in the political discourse of China is not unique to the Chinese nation-state. As Hobsbawm and Ranger elucidate, it is a feature of all modern nation-states. Casually speaking, one could compare it with a company producing a new product, which, in-order-to claim its long-standing tradition, refers to any sort of available proof, which then conveys the illusion that the product has a long successful history.⁶⁵⁹ Such an argument can add strength and stability to the image of the product, and this provides a sense of reliability to the product. It deliberately creates a referential framework with the past. Therefore, in a similar sense, the *motif* of Chinese medicine through the narrative of *Dazhaimen* (even if it would not be intentionally the case) produces a myth as it inevitably references the meta-narrative of Chinese medicine and the Chinese cultural past. Hence, I argue that Chinese medicine, as a cultural good, serves the function to recur on Chinese culture as a general value, and its heritage.

This, in turn, is one of the foundational pillars of what Benedict Anderson calls an Imagined Community. In his text, *The Origins of National Consciousness*, it is explained how, throughout history, various types of media have influenced the collective consciousness of groups. As briefly mentioned before, he elaborates on the influences of print technology in Europe and how, in accordance with the use of a particular language, it drove the development of certain religious groups (like Protestants or Catholics) towards the constitution of a collective *body*. His remarks show how such an alleged shared community is being imagined (and thereby also socially constructed). In China, he writes, such developments were different from those in continental Europe, but nevertheless the core-principle remained the same. The latter propagates that there usually exists a set of cultural values that connect a certain group.⁶⁶⁰ Chinese medicine, as in the present study, can be such a feature, just as vernacular language may fill such a position. A shared language, like Mandarin in China, certainly has a huge impact on the feeling of belonging together as a rather homogenous group within the nation state.⁶⁶¹ The unification of, for example, a first standardized system of written language had been introduced in China in the Qin period.⁶⁶² Mainly functioning as a bureaucratic tool, it nevertheless laid part of the foundation for what today is representing the People's Republic of China. In the context of the dissemination of Latin in Europe in the late Middle Ages, Benedict Anderson contrasts its political repercussions with those in late Imperial China, as is revealed here:

⁶⁵⁹ Of course, in contrast, other products exist where the modernity of the new product is explicitly emphasized.

⁶⁶⁰ Which will be proven further below.

⁶⁶¹ Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 37-40.

⁶⁶² Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 132.

Third was the slow, geographically uneven, spread of particular vernaculars as instruments of administrative centralization by certain well-positioned would-be absolutist monarchs. Here it is useful to remember that the universality of Latin in mediaeval Western Europe never corresponded to a universal political system. The contrast with Imperial China, where the reach of the mandarin bureaucracy and of painted characters largely coincided, is instructive.⁶⁶³

Consequently, the Mandarin language in *China* during the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC⁶⁶⁴) already had a constitutive effect on the building of a somewhat common *Chinese* identity. As Werner Meissner writes in *China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, this finding of a national, or collective, identity is and has been a constantly ongoing process. Meissner says this is certainly not a unique process to China but, not surprisingly, to all nation-states.

Individual and national identities are not static, but are changing continuously. Each individual, group and nation always tries to redefine his/her/its identity when it is challenged, endangered or broken. This is understood as an identity crisis. The search for a redefinition of a new identity is a process of adaptation, in which a new equilibrium is sought between traditional elements and new challenges. The identity crisis is solved as soon as a new equilibrium, however temporary, is achieved.⁶⁶⁵

In this light, *Dazhaimen*, on the one hand, retells the events of Chinese history roughly from the period after the opium war until the middle of the 20th century. Politically, the country had undergone massive changes in this time-period. This is thematized in *Dazhaimen* and resultantly, the television series recurs on traditional and historical elements.⁶⁶⁶ When Meissner writes: *The search for a redefinition of a new identity is a process of adaptation, in which a new equilibrium is sought between traditional elements and new challenges*, it once again becomes clear that identity is at least as much a narrative as it is built on a somewhat historical chain of events. This issue will be delved into further below.

In an article by the researcher Zhou Ping⁶⁶⁷ the more exact date of the time frame of the story told in *Dazhaimen* from 1872 to 1954, is given.⁶⁶⁸ That which Werner Meissner hints to had already been analysed in Section 1 in this book. Factually, China underwent several unraveling periods and changes to the state system throughout this time. In 1840, the identity crisis

⁶⁶³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 40-41.

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 97.

⁶⁶⁵ Werner Meissner, *China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp. 2.

⁶⁶⁶ Stefan Kramer called this a *historical TV series*.

⁶⁶⁷ 周萍.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. Zhou Ping, [The Hongji Hall in the Great Mansion Gate], pp. 64.

of China began due to the defeat by Western powers⁶⁶⁹ and “the West challenged the essence of Chinese culture and the fundamentals of the elite’s self-perception.”⁶⁷⁰ The following massive impact on Chinese education defied and altered the classic paradigm, and a merged concept of Chinese learning as essence (or substance) and Western learning for application (or as function) (*Zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong* 中学为体，西学为用) were the result, while in 1894 China lost the war against Japan.⁶⁷¹

Further, at least since the Opium Wars, China had struggled under the weight of what was called *concessions*. As-a-consequence, in 1898, the *Hundred Days Reform* was introduced. In 1900, the Eight-Nation Alliance fell into Beijing. Before this, the Chinese elites tried to overcome the Western threat, but they didn’t succeed. Reformers like Tan Sitong, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao are now considered to have been the spearheads of the following philosophical and political movements: Coming under threat in China, they fled to Japan. In exile, they learned about the concept of a 'nation' and each of them compiled works about the endeavour to produce a modern Chinese nation-state. While drawing up plans for a republic, the so-called *boxers* revolted against the Qing empire and the Western powers, as well as floods and droughts that came over the land and caused unemployment, famine, and poverty. Not suppressing the boxers, the Qing started to support those common people in their fight. This led to the Eight-Nation Alliance bringing its military forces to China. Because the Qing Empire had already suffered from inner disruption and weakness, it was an easy process to take over Beijing when the foreign forces, consisting of 8,000 Japanese soldiers, 4,800 Russian soldiers, 3,000 British soldiers, 2,100 American soldiers, 800 French soldiers, 58 Austrian soldiers, and 53 Italian soldiers, moved into the capital city. As is depicted in *Dazhaimen* soldiers of the German military forces occupied Beijing, too. They came when the city had already been in the hands of the Allies. Under the reign of the German emperor Wilhelm the 2nd, a total of 17,000 German troops arrived in the city.⁶⁷²

This is only a very rough recounting of the events that are part of the story of *Dazhaimen* until the year 1900. And the recount could go on as the TV series proceeds. Important here is that China underwent many more periods of political restlessness and agitation, of which huge parts were presumably inflicted by the external powers. The ideological re-construction of the

⁶⁶⁹ See Werner Meissner, *China’s Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp. 4.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

⁶⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

⁶⁷² Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas: Das lange 19. Jahrhundert (1793-1911), Funktionale Differenzierung und die Erfindung der Nation*, pp. 440-492.

past may therefore also be closely connected to the identification of a collective *trauma*, but other interpretations are also possible, as will show later.

As is well known today, the following historical events led to the establishment of the republic and its failure through the betrayal of Yuan Shikai.⁶⁷³ But before this occurs in *Dazhaimen* the founding father of the republic, Sun Yatsen, is announced as now being the newly inaugurated president of the young republic in episode 25. In reaction to the political changes, the leaving of Jihong to return to Jinan, or because Jingqi's mother attempts to take the second child away from them, Jingqi cuts his hair. It can be interpreted that through this plot sequence, the modernization of China with the upcoming republic is also symbolized. This also goes along with the installation of electrical light in episode 25. A turning point in history is vividly indicated here. As is shown in the TV series, there have been more drastic changes (resembling real history) throughout the time drawn up in the TV series. More inner conflicts and wars followed, and these inner tensions only slowly started to calm down when the Maoists founded the Chinese People's Republic in 1949 after they came out as winners of the civil war against the nationalists.⁶⁷⁴

According to this story content and the recurring reference to real historical events, including the making of and involvement in Chinese medical practices, the network established in the TV series addresses a historical period in China, which certainly references the constant struggle of the Chinese *nation* throughout this period-of-time. Culture, as shown above, played a key role in the establishing processes of the nation's building.

Hence, the *myth of the nation* must constantly be renewed and brought back to people's consciousness, I argue. How this all connects will be elaborated in the next chapters. Essentially, it can already be said that Chinese medicine poses an element of utmost importance in the socially constructed concept of the modern Chinese nation.

8. Culture – A Concept of Self-Perception

When talking about culture, it is important to notice how literally every view about a subject constitutes an interpretation, or a myth, for that matter. This will be explained hereafter. Certainly, differences in profundity can vary greatly. The narration of the story world in *Dazhaimen* is not the same as what happened in factual history, but it constitutes and enters a discourse with it.

⁶⁷³ Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 493-502.

Further, broader information on the matter is also provided in Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments: The Making of the Twentieth-Century Chinese State*, pp. 30.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 500-536.

It is part of the greater discourse of Chinese culture, or, to be precise, referring to this research project, the greater political discourse of medicine in China. The knowledge presented in this book is no different. It literally adds to the discourse because it enhances it and, at the same time, recurs on the already existing discourse. In this sense, there is a lot of embedded or *implicit meaning*⁶⁷⁵ in the TV series, as has been revealed when reflecting on the historical events of the time, which are often just merely hinted at in *Dazhaimen*. Such historical knowledge is usually known by the respective nations' citizens (here: the Chinese people), but it can be suspected that it is updated and conveyed in a slightly altered fashion to the people⁶⁷⁶. Therefore, this goes in accordance with how *we* “construe the world we biographically inhabit...”⁶⁷⁷, and in turn, this will alter the meta-narrative and the self-perception of the recipients of the myth, I conclude.

In the same vein, Wimal Dissanayake provides information about how the image of the self is linked to what is widely referred to as *culture*. In his logic, the self, the image of the self, and culture are always interlinked.

To think of self in terms of image is to open up an important avenue of understanding of self. Here I use the word “image” in its broadest sense to include graphic, optical, perceptual, mental, verbal, and conceptual dimensions. Self and image are inextricably linked, and an inquiry into the complex functioning of images in human communication at various levels would underline their inseparably close linkage.⁶⁷⁸

It is thus an image that is created when people talk about or display the self. In relation to the cultural environment, Dissanayake writes »Irving Hallowell has pointed out the significance of what he has termed the “behavioral environment” on the formation of self, and this behavioural environment, as he saw it, was essentially culturally constituted.«⁶⁷⁹ In brief, the behavioural environment is shaped by the cultural system in which an individual is living or acting. Concerning this matter, in his book *The Origins of Self* anthropologist Martin P.J. Edwardes also concludes that the formation of the individual self is “...not simply an internal thing, for our self is defined by others as well as ourselves...”⁶⁸⁰ I, thus, argue that the normative behavioural standard in a cultural environment obviously exerts a certain power over the norms of behaviour in the respective group or society. Clifford Geertz agrees with Hallowell insofar as that “becoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under the guidance

⁶⁷⁵ As explained by Tim Nicholas before.

⁶⁷⁶ ...as to create the myth...

⁶⁷⁷ Although this passage has been contextually used slightly differently by Clifford Geertz, in *Common Sense as a Cultural System*, pp. 9.

⁶⁷⁸ Wimal Dissanayake, *Self as Image in Asian Theory and Practice*, pp. 3.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5.

⁶⁸⁰ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self: An Anthropological Perspective*, pp. 28.

of cultural patterns, **historically created systems of meaning**, in terms of which human beings impart form, order, point, and direction to their lives.”⁶⁸¹

Here, the significance of such TV programs as *Dazhaimen* and the impact that such programs can have on the constitution of the self is revealed. Therein, Chinese medicine (and the historical recounts of it), by the way it is portrayed in the story, has a symbolic meaning, and emphasizes the values that come with it. It is worth noting that, therefore, “self can be best understood in terms of narration, and the end product of narrative is a powerful image or complex of images related to the character or characters in a narrative.”⁶⁸² In other words, the self is like a story that people narrate about themselves. It is a set of imaginations about the self that are entangled with the cultural, historical, and social realms in which the individual lives. Certainly, differing psychological theories about his matter exist. However, another approach that further supports this idea is summarized by Martin P.J. Edwardes. It goes back to the psychologist Jerome Bruner as follows:

Jerome Bruner (1986) [...] saw the self as a product of a continuing narrative, an autobiography that we generate through a lifetime of experiences [...] We are all extremely aware of our own personhood at a practical level, but the person of which we are aware is changeable, and constantly being incremented by the process of living. The *me* now is not the *me* of yesterday, and it will not be the *me* of tomorrow; but there is a continuity of memory between those selves that gives them a single wholeness, or *me-ness*. [...] Bruner’s approach [...] provided a timely reminder that the self is a social construct as well as a personal one, and that it needs to be addressed as such.⁶⁸³

The self is thus constituted and shaped by how an individual comprehends himself or herself and how one perceives the self in interactions with others and in a network of inner and outer parameters. The discourses and interactions between individuals and society as-a-whole therefore determine the discourse of self and the discourse of a given society. When talking about such influential TV shows as *Dazhaimen* in China, another discourse is thereby also being formed, affecting what Jan Assmann calls the *collective memory*. In conversation with other individuals, the person’s feelings, actions, and communication are subject to alteration. As the early reflections on Kramer’s observations have already shown, movies and films (and TV productions) have the capacity to influence an individual’s perception. By re-narrating history, awareness of cultural and historical events may thus be transmuted. Contextually, Assmann points out how, according to Freud, the collective memory of disasters may *grow-into-us* under the strong influence of the collective discourse. In essence, this means that in certain in-

⁶⁸¹ Wimal Dissanayake, *Self as Image in Asian Theory and Practice*, pp. 5.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 8.

⁶⁸³ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origin of Self*, pp. 14.

stances, the human mind can be pushed to a point where personal perception and collective memory blend into one and the same thing. As a result, the external discourse can become part of what the individual thinks and feels. This is subconsciously happening when, for example, what an individual has read in books or seen on TV cannot be distinguished from one's own memories anymore.⁶⁸⁴

Even an example like the individual's conviction about his or her own nationality provides access to understanding such processes. The common citizen in-a-given country usually comprehends himself or herself as being German, Chinese, American, or of any other given nationality. This is where the implementation of the myth and the concept described by Assmann can be detected. It is so because the semiotic approach informs about how such concepts of self are construed. According to Nietzsche, says Assmann, this *Process of Culturalization* (Kulturationsprozess) has been the worst of all mechanisms in human history through which the individual has been (and still is) forced to function in a certain way in society. "Angezüchtetes Verhalten" is what Nietzsche called this. The terminology signifies that behaviour and specific habitual traits are *burned* into an individual's mind. *Angezüchtet*, in the German language, comes from the word *züchten*, which refers to *breeding*, like breeding a certain species of dog. What is being referred to here, accordingly, expresses how, to Nietzsche, culture is *bred-in*. It is therefore not surprising that Sigmund Freud referred to similar processes by calling them *trauma*. On a side note, it is worth mentioning here that Freud comprehended religion as a sort of collective compulsive neurosis.⁶⁸⁵ James Miller, on the other hand, quotes Emile Durkheim by stating:

... as Durkheim explained, religious traditions are particularly important for the formation of group identities at a larger scale than that of the clan.⁶⁸⁶ Religions forge the shared values that help human beings transcend their genetic ties and form into larger social networks such as those that enabled people to cooperate in the development of large-scale civilizations.⁶⁸⁷ Some religions, such as Buddhism or Islam, have been so successful in this regard that they spread across the world, helping to forge multinational collective identities that assist in the development of global trade networks, and, alongside nation-states and their armies, play important roles in geopolitics to this day.⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁴ Cf. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Wahrnehmen – Erinnern – Vergessen*, pp. 63-67.

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

⁶⁸⁶ Miller quotes: Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York Free Press, 1965).

⁶⁸⁷ Here, Miller quotes: Robert Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2011).

⁶⁸⁸ James Miller, *China's Green Religion*, pp. 3-4.

I thus conclude that this clearly reveals how society *socializes us*, for better or worse. Socialization can therefore be viewed quite critical, as it attempts to make the individual function in-a-given society (according to the standards and demands of that society). Jan Assmann delves deep into this. He writes that the collective memory is very fragile when it comes to political forms of remembrance (“Das Kollektivgedächtnis ist besonders anfällig für politisierte Formen der Erinnerung”⁶⁸⁹). The installation of memorials and monuments, which link the desired historical or political outcome to a specific myth, is as effective as the appointment of ceremonial national celebrations and rituals. In embracing these rituals, the collective is reminded of specifically chosen historical myths, and, on the other hand, the individual consents to them in order to feel a notion of *belonging* to the collective.⁶⁹⁰ Through such instrumentalization, the narration of a myth creates a specific normative past (normative *Vergangenheit*).⁶⁹¹ In short, people are *brainwashed* by the society (and the cultural system) in which they live. This goes as far as what Clifford Geertz explains in his essay on *Common Sense as a Cultural System*. Therein he uncovers how even what is called common sense, a term which one would hardly ever question, is quite an important matter in this discussion because *common sense* is subject to the influence of the collective conviction of what is a sense that is *common* in the embedded cultural framework.

This analytical dissolution of the unspoken premise from which common sense draws its authority – that it presents reality neat – is not intended to undermine that authority, but to relocate it. If common sense is as much an interpretation of the immediacies of experience, a gloss on them, historically constructed and, like them, subjected to historically defined standards of judgement. It can be questioned, disputed, affirmed, developed, formalized, contemplated, even taught, and it can vary dramatically from one people to the next.⁶⁹²

This proves that the concept of common sense, as explained here, follows similar structural methods as myths do. In fact, it is a dogma, or, one could say, a way of thinking, that is taught to people by the society in which they live. In that given society (and this must be true for all societies), individuals literally learn what is right and what is wrong. This, however, does not tell anything about whether these values are factually right or wrong. But it can be noted that every culture forms a comprehensive *belief and value system*. As Geertz writes (in the quote above), it relocates authority over thought.

⁶⁸⁹ Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Wahrnehmen – Erinnern – Vergessen*, pp. 69.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 76.

⁶⁹² Clifford Geertz, *Common Sense as a Cultural System*, pp. 8.

Hence, in the overall discussion conducted here, it is certainly not claimed that the individual human being does not have the capacity to make his or her own decisions. Notably, the discussion and investigation here, on the contrary, shed light on the causes by which various factors (commonly without conscious recognition and without consent) influence the self-perception and the feeling of belonging to a cultural or national *body*. As it is always the case with myth production, this is the so-called *naturalization* process of it.⁶⁹³ If the subject of the respective group does comprehend his or her belonging to the group, nation or society as given, then this clearly reflects how the myth is already successfully naturalized. In nation-states, this surely is the goal in-order-to have citizens feel like they are part of the collective. Nationality and belonging to a collective are therefore built on myths.

Likewise, the functionality of the concept of common sense goes hand in hand with such myths. It literally caters to the inherent logic of the respective collective, which is produced by the myth. In-order-to briefly sum up the core of the problem of *common sense*, an example given by Geertz (referring to a study by Levi Strauss) about the difference in varying environments may make this clearer:

Common sense for a city dweller, who knows how to behave in his or her urban environment with traffic and the lot, varies immensely from that of the Pygmies in the rainforest, for whom common sense involves knowledge in the domain of certain botanical classifications or herpetological observations. Although, hard to imagine at first, the significance and spanning theme of such common sense probably leaves the city dweller speechless.⁶⁹⁴ The former “meets intellectual requirements rather than or instead of satisfying needs.”⁶⁹⁵

This reveals how cultururation and proactive *education* of the nation’s citizens are not unique to China. All nations, in-deed all individuals thinking processes, are *constituted*, or at least largely influenced, by the external world and by people’s ways of consuming *knowledge*. By this, I mean that the knowledge that people are being *fed* produces a certain outcome in the ways they commonly think. How deliberate action by the Chinese Communist Party is part of this formation of the collective mind of the nation can be observed through the analysis of documentation on recent speeches⁶⁹⁶ of President Xi Jinping and further political analysis on the matter. However, in the context of TV dramas, an example of this is given by George Dawei

⁶⁹³ As already explained after Roland Barthes, before.

⁶⁹⁴ Cf. Clifford Geertz, *Common Sense as a Cultural System*, pp. 21.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21.

⁶⁹⁶ For further reading, see Xinhua: *Speech by Xi Jinping at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the CPC*.

Guo (a researcher in the Department of Media Arts at the University of London) in his text *Contemporary Chinese Historical Television Drama as a Cultural Genre*.⁶⁹⁷ He writes:

[...] the historical drama provides Chinese audiences with a dramatized account of the past and traditional Chinese society at a time when major change is taking place in contemporary China. It also provides the Chinese viewing public with a televised forum to reflect on their Confucian cultural traditions and spiritual heritage as well as [to] reconsider their orientation in a changing order of political culture in contemporary Chinese society.⁶⁹⁸

In sum, the above-outlined processes describe the constituting elements of the collective self in China. As mentioned earlier in this book, Stefan Kramer also writes that Chinese TV and Chinese media in the 1990s established ways to reflect on and cope with the historical events of the past. By his and Dawei Guo's observations, it can be concluded that Chinese media and Chinese society constituted a new self for the nation. Obviously, trauma inflicted by the colonizing forces has been addressed through TV series like *Dazhaimen*.

Chinese medicine, as well as historical and personal accounts in *Dazhaimen* are divisions of China's cultural self-identification process. In the scope of film analysis, such influential elements as Peter Rist's interpretation of David Bordwell's ideas in *Making Meaning: Interference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* are ambiguous and subject to many scholars' discussion. He writes:

Bordwell's cognitive approach, with its emphasis upon human perception, cultural experience, schemata and heuristic procedures, institutional norms and practices, leads us to the rather scandalous conclusion that 'meaning' is not intrinsic to the film but extrinsic, and constructed by the spectator. This is either disturbing – particularly for those who see film primarily as vectors for dominant ideology and the like – or profoundly liberating. My money is on the latter.⁶⁹⁹

Evidently, Peter Rist indicates that there are different ways to possibly interpret this subject. Some argue that the identification process is a *given* value that is dominantly conveyed and determined by the film itself. Others, like Bordwell, allude that meaning is *made* by the spectator. I argue that both viewpoints are probably right. After all, a film with different motifs, themes, and plots is a network and a discourse. Thus, some viewers may almost completely ignore certain historical or political matters in the film. Others may say that it is impossible to overlook such dominant aspects of a given story. But it is like in real life, some people are experts, or they are interested in the political discourse that surrounds them, others are simply

⁶⁹⁷ A text from the year 2015.

⁶⁹⁸ George Dawei Guo, *Contemporary Chinese Historical Television Drama as a Cultural Genre*, pp. 386.

⁶⁹⁹ Peter Rist, *Bordwell, David: Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*.

doing their daily job to survive, and they may thus be totally ignorant of politics. The latter kind of individual may consume a film weaved into a political framing, and he or she may still only focus on the other story elements, concentrating on the ongoing interaction between the main characters in a human-to-human type of plot interpretation. Then the film would just work as a cathartic process, which functions as a relief mechanism for individual issues through the consumption of the TV series.

I follow Bordwell in the sense that presumably all elements in a movie form a discourse about the perception of the given story-world and that this world is shaped by the spectator's self-perception. But the impact of the surrounding cultural environment on the individual cannot be neglected because it has already shaped the individual in a certain way unless the respective individual can see through all this myth creation and can thereby abstain from indoctrination (his or her cultural bias). On the contrary, that is almost impossible, I would argue, as one could say that all thinking is built on myths. All conceptual thinking is constructed of fixed conceptual ideas, even if these are altered by the individual over time. The individual, so-to-speak, jumps from one myth to another as he learns and hopes to become more *open-minded*. As a result, this means that the higher the degree of ignorance (in this sense of not knowing about the social constructs) of the individual, the more likely the individual is to be highly indoctrinated by his or her social or cultural group.⁷⁰⁰ Thereafter, as argued in the beginning of this chapter, all subjective standpoints pose individual interpretations of a respective matter.

Further, the TV series *Dazhaimen* offers insights into the medicinal context linked to the political discourse in China. Through related processes of cultural self-identification and the role of Chinese medicine in them, the researcher Zhang Juwen elaborates how, in specific, the fifth and sixth generations of filmmakers in China have been reconstructing Chinese cultural identity by means of *Filmic folklore*. Zhang writes:

[...] Such filmic representation of folklore, whether as a short or long shot or a storyline, is characteristic of what I call filmic folklore. It fulfills the functions of folklore as entertainment, a reinforcement of social rituals and ethical values, and the stabilization of cultural behavior. Filmic folklore itself offers an interpretation, not explanation, of the culture on which it is based, whereas for other folkloric forms, scholarship offers an interpretation of the practice (Oring 1976)⁷⁰¹. Likewise, films with filmic folklore have produced a body of folklore or culture that needs scholarly scrutiny. It establishes a discourse between the traditional and the modern, and between insiders (Chinese) and outsiders (non-Chinese). It creates an artistic communication between the

⁷⁰⁰ My deduction.

⁷⁰¹ For further reading, see Elliot Oring, *Folk and Lore*, presented at the Western States Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Eugene, Oregon, April 16, 2005.

filmmakers and their films' viewers, and between the viewers of one language (or culture) and the viewers of another, but, most importantly, it exhibits, it reflects and refracts traditional behavior for those who share the filmic folklore as part of their entertainment and group identity.⁷⁰²

Resultantly, films and TV series not only create, constitute and influence discourses of the historical realm, but all these matters potentially add to the myth of cultural identity. Characteristics named by Zhang, such as social rituals and/or ethical values, can be traced in *Dazhaimen* as has been proven earlier. In the TV series *Dazhaimen*, these values are embedded in the discourse on the profession of Chinese doctors as much as they are expressed in the sequel through the family rules and societal influences. The cultural identity of an individual or group, however, has many dimensions, of which social and psychological traits resemble certain sub-conditions, as explained as follows.

Like the sociologists Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski write in the essay *Cultural Identity: A Sociological Analysis of the Phenomenon*, "Culture decides not only the content and shape of identity, but also the composition of the component elements, and their functions."

⁷⁰³ The question that emerges here, then, is: What is culture? And, as Paleczny and Zielinski write, I ask: How is it that *culture decides [...] the composition of the component elements* that it constitutes and shapes? Based on the findings above, I argue that Chinese medicine - or rather, 'the myth of Chinese medicine' - is constituted by the cultural discourse in China, and at the same time, tautologically, it thereby shapes the individual's thinking through the constitutional process of the construction of Chinese culture. Ergo, it must be investigated how culture is constructed because it evidently functionally employs many myths. How *objects of culture* appear and how the dominant cultural discourse comes about will be shown in the following chapter.

9. How Culture Evolves: Culture and Individuality

Before starting, it shall be mentioned that I am aware of the existence of debates in the field of cultural racism. It is, however, my view that the definition and elaboration of cultural processes present the core of the developmental processes of culture itself. Thus, the investigation aimed at here does not pose any sort of value judgment about whether one culture is superior to another or not. The processes described here rather help to comprehend that different cultures simply exist. Although, from a semiotic perspective, they can be called myths, they are a

⁷⁰² Zhang Juwen, *Filmic Folklore and Chinese Cultural Identity*, pp. 272-273.

⁷⁰³ Tadeusz Paleczny / Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity: A Sociological Analysis of the Phenomenon*, pp. 356.

reality in this world. Cultures and identities are somewhat imagined, but they are what creates different standpoints and varying personalities. I argue that they are both at the same time: divergence and unity. In this respect, Martin P.J. Edwardes summarizes how:

...each individual has an individual relationship with their Cultural self, which varies according to their need or wish to conform, whether they see their Cultural self as attainable and (at the subconscious level) whether the Cultural self is more or less fit for them than other self-models. It is in the Cultural self that dispassionate self-sacrifice begins, so the Cultural self is the key to a large number of our anxieties and self-doubts; the Cultural self supplies both the angel on our right shoulder and the devil on our left. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn put it, 'The battleline between good and evil runs through the heart of every person.'⁷⁰⁴

Consequently, it can be concluded that one side of cultural processes acts as a force that coerces individuals to behave in certain normative ways.

Thus, as has been learned hitherto, there are many factors which influence the utilization of Chinese medicine and its dissemination as a *Traditional Chinese Medicine*. Unquestionably, medicine in China, in all its heterogeneity, is a historically evolved subject. Despite, or rather as a basis for, the understanding of its political or economic use, the necessary fundamental knowledge to be achieved here is how culture and cultural objects are arising. At first sight, and especially when not given any deeper thought, one may assume that culture is a given matter (this would be a determinist view), but it has been explained above that things are not that simple. While approaching this dissertation with the theory of semiotics, this matter needs to be further deconstructed. I claim that culture evolves around certain localities and is always connected to humans. Without humans, there is no culture. Culture is a mechanism of culturalization by human beings, as has already been elaborated. Nonetheless, this issue will be analysed more profoundly hereafter.

In-order-to get a grip on the understanding of the many factors that shape 'culture' the Polish sociologists Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski provide valuable insights. As will be outlined, they link the subject of a cultural system to identity-building processes. This is significant to the analysis in this paper due-to-the-fact that Chinese medicine contributes to the cultural Chinese ideology because it is a cultural element. Hence, Chinese medicine poses a vital part of the overall discourse of Chinese culture and the here thematized political discourse in China. After all, the investigation of the formation of the identity of individuals – or, in this case, a national identity – is inseparable from the broader concept of culture.

⁷⁰⁴ Martin P.J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self*, pp. 177.

Culture, if seen from the constructionist standpoint, follows general principles, but these universal factors can be manifold. They cover a range of psychological, social, and cultural dimensions. This simply means that outsiders, observers, or scientists can investigate the matter from different points of view, which to a degree all describe the same thing. Culture consists of factors that build the context of an identity, as those strands form the basis for certain views, opinions, and beliefs of the individual, which can be summed up and termed a *value system*. Values and opinions distinguish the in-group from the out-group. In this sense, such specific values and traditions are simply posing the values that are at stake here. These values, as has been shown throughout this book, are forming a discourse, too. Respectively, it is the role of, and thereby connected to, the values of Chinese medicine to strengthen Chinese culture and the Chinese identity-as-a-whole. I thereby rather follow a Milieu theory than a determinist standpoint. To Paleczny and Zielinski

[t]he psychological perspectives on identity, treat human identity, consciousness, the sense of one's own 'self' in the world, as a complex process of interaction between the environment that surrounds man and the man himself. Identity is a derivative of individual, bio-psychological characteristics and those flowing from the outside, from the cultural environment, impulses, stimuli and the ready-made interpretations of reality in all its dimensions: spiritual and material, real and symbolic.⁷⁰⁵

Thus, I argue that human identity is influenced by a multitude of inner and outer events. By taking this approach, the individual, although he or she may be very conscious of all the processes and events around him, is always a product of his or her past and socialisation. Further, although the person may attempt to change his thinking, he may still be linked to past events or subjected to matters that shaped his life because he simply does not (or did not) have control over those events. An easy but terrible example could be the outbreak of a war in the individual's home country.

Following Aleida Assmann, it is rather simple to comprehend that an individual and his or her respective reactions to certain events are subjected to inner psychological processes and that external events have an immense impact on the person, whether those happened in the past or are taking place in the present. The individual is a product of these happenings.⁷⁰⁶ The same, I argue, is true for the identity of the people of a nation. The individual as much as the group (because the group consists of individuals) are subject to a history and an environment that has the power to shape the way these people see themselves. Thus, their perception of identity is based on historical events, their socialization, and their personal interpretation of these

⁷⁰⁵ Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 356.

⁷⁰⁶ Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 22-30.

events. Every person chooses how to find himself in such an environment. This means that the individual could surely come to his (or her) own personal interpretation of things. However, the grand theme of the context in which the individual exists is shaped by what is called culture. But the individuals also shape this very culture. In the book *Analyzing Cultures, An Introduction & Handbook* Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron write:

The emergence of *Homo culturalis* onto the evolutionary scene can be traced originally to the development within the human species of an extremely large brain, averaging 1400cc/85.4 cu. in., more than 2 million years ago. Humankind's ability and disposition to think and plan consciously, to transmit learned skills to subsequent generations knowingly, to establish social relationships in response to need, and to modify the environment creatively are the felicitous consequences of that momentous evolutionary event. The brain's great size [...] has made it possible for *Homo culturalis*, in effect, to step outside the slow forces of biological evolution and to meet new environmental demands by means of conscious rapid adjustments...^{707 708}

Through this statement, the reader can grasp how the culturization of the social and material environment is a process of adaptation by human beings.

When thinking full-on constructionist, one may assume that culture is most likely actively produced by the Chinese state. Typically, in the West, a debate about authoritarian states versus democratic states would erupt at this point, but as is known, the *production* of cultural elements and national myths is not unique to China (or to certain types of government). Therefore, I argue that the quantity of deliberately created ideological myths may vary in different nation-states, but in the end, all national states create myths. Those myths then support certain (ideological) culture. However, culture is not a product of state action alone. It is always a product of the group and the ways in which a certain group reacts to inner and outer circumstances. As Danesi and Perron further state:

By about 100,000 years ago, the making of art, communication by means of language, and communally-established systems of ethics became the distinctive attributes of the first human *tribes*. Since then *culture*, in the sense of individuals living together, thinking and planning consciously, transmitting skills and systems of social relationships to each other through language, and working together to modify the environment, has become the defining attribute of the human species.
So, the question of what is culture is hardly a trivial one.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁷ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures: An Introduction & Handbook*, pp. 2.

⁷⁰⁸ In their book, Danesi and Perron stress that “[t]he term [*Homo culturalis*] is a rhetorical figure, meant to highlight the fact that in the evolutionary heritage of human beings, culture stands out as a truly remarkable attainment. pp. 4.

⁷⁰⁹ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures*, pp. 3.

Therefore, although a semiotic view may appear to, at times, almost neglect the importance of the existence of culture, culture is far too important to be disregarded. As for Chinese medicine, it has now been observed that it has obviously existed and been practiced in China for thousands of years. The question here, then, is not so much whether this cultural element is a truly existing medicine. When talking about it as a cultural element, however, the matter is rather approached from a constructionist point of view about its significance in the social environment. As has been shown before, it is clear that modern TCM has been deliberately re-constructed as a compact package of knowledge that can be provided and sold to Western consumers. A concept that increases economic income by *exploiting* that which is mythically built on the Chinese cultural heritage. As will be understood soon, the deliberate myth creation of the Chinese state may then simply be a reproduction of what the Chinese cultural collective desires.

The process of building culture, however, is created by the environment, the physical needs of the people and the environmental surroundings, like, for example, available nutrients, plants, and other food sources. The weather and the climate can influence the culture, but in the social realm of this culture-building process, the most influential entity is the individual mind in the collective discourse. Part of this argument has already been explained by the quotation of Danesi and Perron above. Through the surrounding collective in which an individual grows up, formative thoughts in the individual are established. This means the overall conviction of morality, customs, values, and norms is formed in-a-given societal environment, in the in-group.⁷¹⁰ But, the process of personality formation starts much earlier. It is what Lacan points out. In-order-to become conscious of himself or herself, the individual creates an image of the self, a symbolic image, so-to-speak.⁷¹¹ Thus, in the formative process in the early years of an individual, certain values about right-and-wrong and other social norms are established in the mind. By these means, the individual then starts to “see-himself” in a certain light. Literature professor Robert E. Seaman of Texas University sums this up briefly as follows.

The speaking subject in psychoanalysis since Freud and Lacan has replaced the individual, the self, or the human subject characteristic of liberal humanism. Specifically, for Lacan, the speaking subject is not only divided into the famous ego/superego and id for Freud, but its very understanding or recognition of itself is split into two conflicting modes of psychical being, what Lacan has called *connaissance* and *meconnaissance*, or the scenes of recognition and misrecognition. When the speaking subject recognizes itself as a conscious being, however, such an act, according to Lacan, is a

⁷¹⁰ In a broader context, my understanding of societal processes and group indoctrination also stems from: Peter Lauster, *Statussymbole: Wie jeder jeden beeindrucken will*, pp. 23-41.

⁷¹¹ Highlighted after Lacan’s ideas on the mirror stage.

necessary illusion that is a constituent element of human knowledge. Consciousness is a kind of secondary effect of the unconscious. It is an ideology of the self, the “false consciousness” of independent individuality.⁷¹²

Accordingly, after this explanation, the whole process of the concept of the self is not only constituted by certain values that are *proposed* to the individual by the external world, but the individual subject in Lacan’s thinking, when it is very young, starts to induce symbolic meaning about the self in its own mind. This goes hand in hand with a structural change in the infant’s mind. Therefore, according to Lacan, the creation of symbolic meaning is a process inherent in the mind of the human being. This lays the foundation for what can be observed about how human beings make sense of themselves in the world.

When it comes to culture and cultural elements, these are usually developing out of political or social necessity (here, social interaction in a group can also be understood as a political act of the individual), or they evolve *naturally* as the individual living in-a-given group finds himself in a particular environment. One just has to contemplate that what is called culture here may possibly give rise to varying features in an environment like that of the Inuit in the Northwest Territories of Canada compared to that of the Tuaregs in the deserts of Africa. These different settings, one can easily imagine, are likely to produce different customs and traditions, and they most probably shape the living conditions of the respective group in either environment.⁷¹³ Of course, one should not forget that the personal attitude of the leaders in such a collective may forge very different (political) forms to lead that group. All such factors will shape the structure of a cultural group. In the social dimension, however, as Paleczny and Zielinski sum up, the emphasis is laid on core principles as follows:

'Social,' cultural identity connects man with the world of group phenomena; not with the cosmos, the self, absolute spirit, instinct, enlightenment, mysticism, or God, but rather with the concrete, real world of family, work and structure of human interrelations. Cultural identity influences the processes of synthesis, of connecting the elements of identity from all three dimensions. Culture decides not only the content and shape of identity, but also the composition of the component elements, and their functions. Cultural identity is a kind of consciousness of individuals, which is ordered as a group, on the basis of the common elements of heritage, tradition, symbols, values and common norms. It makes individuals similar to each other, or different from one another, and they are located in the social space closer or further from each other. Cultural identity holds together all ingredients of identity, imparting to them order and sense. By this token, cultural identity imposes on man a place in the world that is known or unknown, gives him personal characteristics that are comparable, and relativistic to the social context. Identity orders the world, reconciles man to himself and his environment. It is

⁷¹² Robert E. Seaman, *Lacan, Poe, and the Descent of the Self*, pp. 196.

⁷¹³ Further elaborated on the subsequent pages.

a fundamental function of identity, when we assume that an individual can fully participate and function in the environment that is known to him and is benign.⁷¹⁴

Further, according to Paleczny and Zielinski, the main spheres of cultural matters running their course are therefore the spiritual, psychological, and cultural dimensions. These characterize each type and kind of cultural individual in a group setting.

The first dimension, which connects man with the cosmos, nature, logos, the transcendent world, God, the sphere of the sacred and is of a nativistic character. The second dimension is dependent upon the heredity process and of the influence of the social environment. The third dimension differentiates identity and makes it relative in regard to the relations that connect an individual with other people through their cultural affiliation. All three dimensions have an influence on the content and structure of the identity of each individual. Identity is determined both by a world view, 'spirituality,' which is a phenomenon that belongs to each human being, as well as to such factors as, age, gender, skin colour, ethnic and national background, wealth, education, position in the social structure, prestige and many others. In the spiritual sphere, identity is based on the world view that has been shaped by group ideologies, magic, religion, and myths. In the psychological dimension, it functions in the sphere of attitudes, including cognitive, affective and axiological elements. The socio-cultural dimension shapes these elements of identity, which are connected with the sphere of values, norms, symbols (language included), aesthetics, morality and group bonds.⁷¹⁵

As previously argued, Paleczny and Zielinski conclude that effects on the individual can largely vary, as these are multidimensional in the context of culture. When hearing their arguments, one comes to the insight that culture is shaping the reality of each-and-every individual. Cultural objects, social elements, and environments are partly constructed and at-the-same time, they are constituting factors for such a reference system, too.

Effectively, every group with shared values develops something like a *culture* of the group. These are the common grounds of agreed⁷¹⁶ rules and norms that lay the foundation for the respective circle of these people. In this respect, Werner Meissner concludes that "individual identities can only be established within group identities."⁷¹⁷

Moreover, necessary group cohesion always motivates a certain amount of coherence in the collective⁷¹⁸; as summed up in Klaus Hansen's book on cultural processes. Also, as previously highlighted, Paleczny and Zielinski point to the fact that culture shapes the way the individual perceives himself/herself, but that, consequentially often, for the individual, there is no clear-

⁷¹⁴ Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 356.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 358.

⁷¹⁶ Even if the individual has not consciously given consent to these rules.

⁷¹⁷ Werner Meissner, *China's Search for Cultural and National Identity from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, pp. 41.

⁷¹⁸ See Klaus Hansen, *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaft*, pp. 248-254.

cut line between belonging to one group or the other. A person from the south of China can be Cantonese (which is a very broad term itself), and he then *is* also Chinese, as in belonging to the Chinese nation, at the same time. China has about 56 different ethnic groups. Therefore, a Chinese citizen can be part of either one of these ethnic groups and still belong to the overall national Chinese collective. Of course, this entire concept can go farther, as some people have parents from different nations or ethnicities. For example, an individual with an African American father and a Chinese mother belonging to the Han ethnicity would therefore be eligible to claim to belong to each of these groups. Or a person may belong to a tennis association⁷¹⁹ at the same time as he or she is part of some other club. On such occasions, the person moves about as being part of various *cultures*.⁷²⁰ Further, Paleczny and Zielinski highlight that...

Cultures are also determined materially and biologically, apart from their spiritual dimension. The material basis of cultural differentiation is linked with nature, with different living conditions, of managing, with the principles of social organization that are adjusted to these conditions. Culture is something like a 'superstructure' over the natural conditions of human existence – a notion that was picked up by many theories, and not only Marxism. Culture develops and changes together with group forms of organisation. National groups represent a different kind of 'culture' than tribal communities, and civilizations are not a simple sum of component cultures. The opposition of nature and culture becomes artificial in contemporary societies and sociological theories, in the situation where the 'natural' environment of man living in great urban agglomerations becomes more and more 'synthetic,' created as a result of technology and culture. The genetic basis of culture, which was studied for over one hundred years by cultural anthropology, is connected with the constant overcoming and crossing the border between what is natural (material, biological) and what is artificial, created by man. Culture becomes in anthropology, a characteristic of man understood as a social, thinking, and creative being that subjugates the powers of nature. Cultures of primeval groups that existed and were described in the first half of the twentieth century, such as the tribal societies of Trobriand, Zuni, Hopi, Maori and Samoa were different forty or fifty years ago in a fundamental and essential way from the national cultures of Germany and France, and even more from the multi-cultural, post-nationalistic American or British civilizations.⁷²¹

After this paragraph, the authors go on to describe how the mentioned post-nationalistic societies are basing their cultural values on something other than how cultural groups in earlier times did. This points to the fact that in different societies or countries, the idea of culture may vary largely. Post-nationalistic societies construct their cultural affiliation differently than

⁷¹⁹ Cf. Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 370.

⁷²⁰ Klaus Hansen calls this *multi-collectivity*. See Hansen, page 265.

⁷²¹ Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 367-368.

societies in common nation states.⁷²² In this sense, I argue that by looking at the unification of all Chinese people with the 56 different ethnic groups belonging to the Chinese nation, or whether one looks at the multicultural United States of America with its many different ethnicities under the US flag, it appears that a *cultural* group always builds on a connecting ideology for the group identity, a common theme. As Paleczny and Zielinski write, “Identity is an attribute of an individual that functions in a group. Human identity reflects cultural and social variety. Hence, it is a social and cultural phenomenon, a characteristic of the existence and functioning not only of people but also of the groups created by them.”⁷²³ Such cultural groups produce material and immaterial culture, as will be explained in the next chapter.

10. Immaterial Culture and Cultural Objects

Identity is profoundly connected to the above-stated social and cultural phenomena. Hereafter, it will be shown that these also encompass *objects of culture*. Chinese medicine, on the one hand, embodies such cultural objects⁷²⁴, and, on the other hand, poses an accumulation of ideas surrounding the very subject of medicine in China. It is therefore imperative to understand how cultural objects, as well as historical issues concerning these objects, constitute culture.

Contemplating and researching the idea of the “cultural biography of objects”, researchers Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall state that objects can (and must) be elevated from the mere position of being material objects to that which includes their biography, which is commonly established through the link between individuals and objects. These objects become symbols, which signify meaning. As Gosden and Marshall put it, “The central idea is that, as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other.”⁷²⁵ Gosden and Marshall conclude that people do get either attached to things or that things often carry a meaning because of people. In quoting anthropologist Ruth Tringham, they proceed to explain that “the biographical approach taken here, seeks to understand the way objects become invested with meaning through the social interactions they are caught up in.”⁷²⁶ Hence, the biography of an item or object becomes relevant because objects are often linked to historical or biographical events in the lives of people. Gosden and Marshall further write:

⁷²² Cf. Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 368.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 364.

⁷²⁴ While the conglomerate of Chinese medicine must be understood as *immaterial* cultural.

⁷²⁵ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, pp. 169.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 170.

Not only do objects change through their existence, but they often have the capability of accumulating histories, so that the present significance of an object derives from the persons and events which it is connected to.⁷²⁷

Referring to this, Gosden and Marshall provide an example of a necklace made of whale teeth and coconut fibre in the 19th century in the Fiji Islands. The necklace once belonged to King Thakombau of a local tribal community and was then gifted to the Christian missionary James Calvert. Through the act of being given to Calvert by the King, the necklace (the cultural object) thereby accumulated additional meaning in contrast to its former significance in the tribal context. Later, the necklace was carried to England and donated to the Pitt River Museum by the heirs of Calvert. As a result, the necklace, as a *cultural object*, can first be seen as something that exists in the real material world. But before that, the item had been assembled by tribal members, resulting in the necklace being made from whale teeth and other materials. After being constituted as a tribal symbol of strength and honour it was given to King Thakombau, who himself later gave it to Calvert, presumably expressing his gratitude. After bringing it back to England, descendants of Calvert granted it to the museum in Oxford. Through these events, the biography of the object changed. Therefore, it does not only contain one particular-meaning. Instead, this former cultural object of a tribal community in the Fijis accumulated a specific history through the act of being given away as a present to the English man. Through the history of possession by later generations in the Calvert family and the donation of the object to the museum, the item gained another set of *meanings*. Consequently, the necklace is linked to a complex history, including that of the colonial past of the British Empire as well as the historical epoch of tribal history in the Fijis. If understood in this way, objects, particularly cultural objects, are not mere material things anymore. The study of an object then possibly reveals the ideas that are (or have been) symbolically and biographically connected to it. Such a view about *cultural objects* helps to grasp the notion of the link between humans and material matter.⁷²⁸

In this context, Gosden and Marshall further write: “At the heart of the notion of biography are questions about the links between people and things; about the ways meanings and values are accumulated and transformed.”⁷²⁹ Therefore, it is noteworthy that some individuals are very attached to material stuff, whereas others simply see most material items as tools for daily use. The attachment to property can be observed more neutrally when grasping the link-

⁷²⁷ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, pp. 170.

⁷²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-172.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172

age between people and their material belongings. While people and their stories may give meaning to objects – through which *things* become cultural objects⁷³⁰ – a person can also be defined by the things that he or she owns, at least partially, say Gosden and Marshall. They argue...

[a] person is ultimately composed of all the objects they have made and transacted and these objects represent the sum-total of their agency. A person's agency may then have effects at quite a considerable distance from the individual's body and may continue to have effects after they are dead.⁷³¹

These objects, as well as all other opinions and values in a certain group or society, are thus adding to the constitution of the culture of that group. Like stated above, cultural objects may not change people literally, but these objects are evidence of their acts and their *agency*.

Consequently, if the agency of a given person constitutes an object as a *cultural object*, the object is thereby symbolically laden with certain values and beliefs of the respective person. It connects the cultural object to a person and his or her specific personal discourse in life. An object can thereby be the carrier of a narrative, which possibly entangles with the biography of one or many people. It accumulates a biography by itself, as has been highlighted above. This leads to the fact that an individual's biography can thereby (at least partly) be reclaimed by investigating the history of the individual's material belongings. An individual's story, however, may still be much more profound than what can be observed through the history of certain objects. The main point being made here is that people's agency can be detected in objects and linked to them. Thus, the biography of the necklace of the former Fiji king can be traced back to him and will always be linked with him. This must be true for all the other historical events and the plurality of ownership connected to them.

As a result, an idea, a cultural object, or a cultural history is always subjected to a context or a discourse on that matter. Without the context, the necklace would just be coconut fibre and whale teeth, but as soon as the analysis goes beyond this, one must almost automatically start to re-cover its history. The understanding that the object is a *cultural object* with a story to tell adds symbolic meaning to it. It becomes the sign for a certain meaning. As Gosden and Marshall point out in their essay, one should then commonly ask questions like: where did the necklace come from, who did it belong to, and who made it? Through such thinking, links are being (re)established. Without this, it is just some material object (possibly) without greater meaning. Moreover, even if one did not see the complete necklace but only one of its parts,

⁷³⁰ As argued above by referring to Nietzsche's statement about the *culturalization process*.

⁷³¹ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, pp. 173.

i.e., a single whale tooth, it could be asked where it came from. The analyst would then contemplate what happened to the whale, how big it was, and the like. Accordingly, I conclude that almost every material thing – especially if it has been *culturalized* by human beings⁷³² - exists in a context that constitutes a more-or-less complex discourse.

This is relevant to the discussion about the role of Chinese medicine in the TV series *Dazhaimen*⁷³³ because it opens-up an understanding of the discourse of medicine in China. While getting a hold of the discourse, it immediately shows how everything becomes political in a social sense. Cultural objects, I argue, are part of the culture to which they belong; they are subject to it, but they are also constituting it. As a result, Chinese medicine is deemed to function as a two-fold tool because it is a cultural object and constitutes culture at the same time. The immaterial nature of the broader idea of Chinese medicine does not deviate from this fact. In Gosden's and Marshall's words, "Objects can be understood only through looking at the cultural contexts which originally produced them and the new circumstances into which they later moved. The histories of many objects are composed of shifts of context and perspective."⁷³⁴ The meaning of a cultural object is, hence, not static, and not necessarily always staying the same. If anything, over the *lifetime* of a cultural object, it does not lose any meaning, but meaning will further increase.

Naturally, one would think that this is always a matter of the amount of documentation and how much historical knowledge is being remembered or rediscovered. In this sense, Chinese medicine could play a totally different role in China today than it did a thousand years ago. And it is very likely that its role as a cultural object has changed. Thus, it can be understood how cultural objects can be linked to people's biographies, or how cultural objects have a biography of their own, almost like they were people.

Further, this discussion about the meaning of objects and their function in material culture uncovers how myths around objects and practices can be advocated for consumerism. For Joseph Scarpaci, trained in economic and cultural geography, Western examples of such consumerism are the myths and movies about American cowboys, which have been promoting a certain image of American culture. This sort of American self-image had then also been linked to the consumer industry as advertising mechanisms for blue jeans trousers, cigarettes,

⁷³² See the earlier argument (Section 1 of this book) by Jacques Pollini.

⁷³³ As much as in the investigation of the overall political discourse of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine.

⁷³⁴ Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, *The Cultural Biography of Objects*, pp. 174.

and beer (later even automobiles) had all been symbolic carriers of a specific way of life.⁷³⁵

Insofar objects can be instilled with lifestyle or other ideological myths.

As had been discovered when discussing the role of the Confucius Institutes earlier in this book, the myth about the *greatness* of the American cowboy and the myth about the *harmonious* modern TCM share certain similarities because they promote a distinct view about the given subject. In relation to this, Scarpaci points out that, in-order-to create myths, old folklore and ancient myths have been used by writers throughout history to “meld facts with fiction”⁷³⁶. Like it was explained above by Gosden and Marshall, Scarpaci also states that »[t]he meaning of objects change[s] over space and time, and understanding their cultural constructs serves as a window into the many physical and cultural geographies of “things.”«⁷³⁷ Respectively, this finding gives reason to contemplate the significance Chinese medicine has in contemporary Chinese history.

Hitherto, it must be concluded here that, through the outlined cultural processes, Chinese medicine also poses a cultural object. As learned above, this means that if awareness is raised about the biography of an object, one gets informed about the cultural context in which it is (or was) used. In a semiotic view, the cultural object must always be understood as a sign. This means it carries a more profound meaning that can only be discovered by an informed observer. As a result, context, history, and the signification for which it is used must be made accessible to the investigator.

Regarding this understanding, Chinese medicine poses a signifier in the cultural, social, and ideological spheres of the political discourse in China (and in the TV series *Dazhaimen*). Therefore, in the next chapter, it shall be analysed how the history of this cultural object is connected to Chinese identity.

11. TCM – A Cultural Object in the Process of Strengthening “Chinese-ness”

When revisiting the findings of earlier chapters in this book, it can be concluded that Chinese medicine exists in, and constitutes, a historical context. It had further been webbed into certain constructed historical contexts, for example, in the story-world of *Dazhaimen*. Also, the question had been raised of how and why Chinese medicine had been chosen by the playwright Guo Baochang as the background matter for the story of the Great Mansion Gate. As expressed before, the conclusion could be that he simply wrote down what had occurred in

⁷³⁵ Cf. Joseph L. Scarpaci, *Material Culture and the Meaning of Objects*, pp. 1-3.

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4.

real life around him. Nevertheless, to fill the story with excitement and tension, he might have used his imagination to add fictional story plots. This makes sense and gives reason to think that it is common for novelists to *spice up* their stories in-order-to make them more entertaining. Superb writers write superb content in-order-to entertain, move, or influence an audience. Presumably, sometimes authors have politics in mind when they write a story, and sometimes they simply write a story. Some authors simply want to achieve fame or economic success, as can be assumed. Thus, it shows that reasons to write a plot in one way or another can be manifold. On the other hand, now knowing that the Chinese state is heavily involved in disseminating its ideology, one can hypothesize that the cultural element of Chinese medicine, as well as the characteristics of the overall story of *Dazhaimen*, had been coming in handy for the Chinese Communist Party after the 1990s. How the use of symbols connects to such political issues is revealed below.

As Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger write in *The Invention of Tradition*, often signs and symbols are employed deliberately when it comes to strengthening a group mentality, when club membership is to be strengthened, or when national matters are at stake. Quoted from an official Indian government commentary, Hobsbawm and Ranger write:

The National Flag, the National Anthem and the National Emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty, and as such they command instantaneous respect and loyalty. In themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation.⁷³⁸

Now, one could ask, what has this got to do with Chinese medicine? I argue that the answer is that in the political discourse of China, Chinese medicine is posing such a symbol as well. In the modern debate, discourse, and culture of China, Chinese medicine is not just some cultural object. In my understanding, it is at least as important to the overall discourse of Chinese culture as the Chinese national flag or the national anthem. Like the Terracotta Army, the Great Chinese Wall, or the Forbidden City in Beijing, the *cultural good* called Chinese medicine is likewise a carrier of symbolic meaning that helps to constitute the *spirit* of the Chinese nation. The listed historical sites and many other items are material objects of culture, and their significance for the building process of Chinese culture can be found in historical, political, symbolic, or even emotional meaning. Another example of this was given in the discussion about the Mao portrait in Tiananmen Square. But the criteria for such symbols will be highlighted once more in the argument by Danesi and Perron on the next page.

⁷³⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 11.

Thus, these culture-building elements are very similar in relevance to those of the overall reference system of Chinese culture in its own discourse. Chinese medicine as a system of knowledge and practice is not directly comparable with historical sites because it resembles an immaterial myth, but the procedures in its discourse are analogously structured. They thereby act as symbols. Obviously, cultural objects are not necessarily material in nature. I argue that an idea or a canon of knowledge can be a non-material cultural object. And, as I comprehend it, Chinese medicine is such sort of cultural object. As a result, it is one of the cultural elements that are repeatedly renewed in-order-to reinforce the foundation of the cultural framework in China. Through this mechanism, the so-called *tradition* of Chinese medicine and Chinese culture is repeatedly being re-constructed.

Other such cultural objects in modern-day China must be themes like calligraphy, the Chinese language or even the specific rules of conduct in modern society with its characteristics (moral). In this context, Danesi and Perron explain how groups create an internal *signifying order*. The symbols in this process function as a comprehensive framework for mutual norms and understanding.

For the present purposes, suffice it to say that the *signifying order* is the aggregate of the *signs* (words, gestures, visual symbols, etc.), *codes* (language, art, etc.), and *texts* (conversations, compositions, etc.) that a social group creates and utilizes in order to carry out its daily life routines and to plan its activities for the future. Each culture, no matter how technologically advanced it may be, traces its origins to an early tribal signifying order. Human *culture* can thus be defined as *a way of life based on a signifying order developed originally in a tribal context that is passed along through the signifying order from one generation to the next.*⁷³⁹

Consequently, the internal mechanisms of a group establish shared symbols that allow comprehension and cooperation among its members. The above highlighted aspects must all be hypothesized to resemble such necessary signs, which constitute the overall *signifying order* of Chinese culture.

Moreover, I argue that the deliberate mingling of the Chinese Communist Party can be identified through such actions as those revealed by Ding Ersu about the myth production implemented in events like the Olympic Games or when learning from Stefan *Kramer* how the Chinese state is heavily involved in bridging discontinuities through the instrumentalization of TV productions that influence the perception of the modern TV audience. However, as learned so far, and as seen in the quote above, it must be doubted that the state alone constitutes Chinese culture. Resultantly, I argue that Chinese society can either be comprehended as

⁷³⁹ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures*, pp. 22-23.

a counterforce to the state or as a power that is at least constituting itself. In such context, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger write: “For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement group cohesion.”⁷⁴⁰ Thus, the representation of Chinese culture in the TV series *Dazhaimen* must serve as an instrument that adds coherence to the myth of Chinese culture. Certainly, therein the Chinese state clearly must be at work. *Dazhaimen* had been aired in the early years after the turn of the millennium. When delving somewhat deeper into the historical context, it can be understood that the CCP had been working on the unification of the nation to avoid a return to turmoil like that which the Chinese people had experienced since the opium wars until about the midst of the 21st century. Evidence for such action can be found in the following arguments.

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall initiated the breakdown of the socialist regimes in Eastern Germany, the Soviet Union, and the eastern socialist states. This, as Li Wei, professor of history at Beijing University, writes, must be comprehended as a huge challenge for the Chinese communist government. The collapse of those socialist regimes intensified the critical views of many Chinese citizens toward the state, in specific those of students and certain Chinese elites. Leading to the Tiananmen incident in 1989, it also resulted in actions by the PRC government. In a move to smoothen inner tensions afterward, the Chinese government officially supported the re-unification of the two German countries and knitted a web of interpretive ideas about how the German people from both countries could benefit from a unification of their states. As a result, a narrative was invented to view the reunited country as a preferable outcome. An interpretation that surely served to strengthen political stability within China, says Wei. See below:

On the issue of Germany’s re-unification, the Chinese government was able to prevent itself from being influenced by its ideology. This is primarily due to the following reasons: Firstly, East Germany had already collapsed. It was no longer credible to cite East Germany to illustrate the superiority of socialism or as a correct approach of reforming socialism. If East Germany was to be utilised in the ideological arguments, it will have to be cited as a source for “learning from mistakes”.

Secondly, it is detrimental for China’s domestic affair and effort to maintain nation[al] integrity to place emphasis on the ideological aspect of the issue of Germany’s re-unification. When the People’s Republic was founded in 1949, it did not only signify the implementation of socialism in China, but also marked the re-unification of China.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 12.

⁷⁴¹ Li Wei, *The Fall of the Berlin Wall in the Eyes of China*, pp. 102.

This quote and further information by Li Wei⁷⁴² uncover how the worldwide turmoil concerning the socialist ideology also had its repercussions in China. It somewhat reflects usual processes through the interconnectedness of the modern, globalized world. Thereafter, by indicating that the reunification of Germany must be seen in a positive light, the CCP did make-up a narrative that also supported acts in favour of the reunification of China with its *lost territories*. This, and other information in this book (for example, accounts by Karl Kraatz), reveals that China has manifold internal needs (i.e., economic and political).

Evidently, as sociologist Zhu Tianbiao of Zhejiang University writes in his paper *Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy* for the Journal *China Review* in 2001, China has been confronted with many issues in the political and economic realm throughout the past century.⁷⁴³ In his essay, he points out how the Chinese communist government had to meet innumerable domestic challenges throughout the course of its existence. Accordingly, it seems highly relevant that the production of culture, national ideology, and national identity simply poses a means to invent or construct a certain image of the self, which, in the collective realm - I argue - must be identified as the narration of the modern Chinese nation. Zhu Tianbiao writes:

The history of China's foreign relations since 1949 suggests that China should not avoid contact with the existing international political and economic system. Rather, it should use the system to protect and strengthen itself, and as it becomes strong, to make the system more equal and fair. However, to stay in the international system, China must continue to adjust and readjust the relationship between the means and the goal of Chinese nationalism and the conduct of China's foreign policy, in order to match its growing economic and political power. At the same time, China should adjust its understanding of the goal of promoting and preserving national independence, in order to match the political and economic trends of the world development. Only by doing this will China continue its rapid economic development and become a more stabilizing force in the regional and international affairs.⁷⁴⁴

Hence, the above-quoted paragraph adds to the argument about the internal needs of the Chinese nation. In this sense, as has been revealed in this paper, themes of culture, identity and *tradition* serve as means to strengthen group cohesion. As Klaus Hansen quotes Clyde Kluckhohn he writes that “[s]ome degree of internal coherence which is felt rather than rationally constructed seems to be demanded by most of the participants in any culture.”⁷⁴⁵ I, thus, argue that the cohesion within a group and the resulting distinction between the in-group and the

⁷⁴² See Li Wei, *The Fall of the Berlin Wall in the Eyes of China*, pp. 102-106.

⁷⁴³ Cf. Zhu Tianbiao, *Nationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy*, pp. 1-12.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

⁷⁴⁵ Klaus Hansen, *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaft*, pp. 254.

out-group is a *natural*⁷⁴⁶ social process (the non-natural development is the deliberate forging of group cohesion by the state). Although, this appears to also be the root of such unwanted effects as racism and all sorts of discrimination, the former is the case because it is first and foremost the distinction between *the self* and *the other*. James Miller accordingly writes that “Group identities are always asserted over and against another group’s identity. Identity, whether religious identity, national identity, or gender identity, is always created in relation to the Other.”⁷⁴⁷ In my view, this must not, and shall not, entail any value judgment.

A potential racism scheme, thus, depends on whether two (or more) different groups are respectful with each other or not and whether the division between them and the others leads to conflict or not. Such difficulties, however, do not eliminate the existence of *the self* and *the other*.

As a result, the deconstruction of this matter shows that culture is a phenomenon that is partly socially constructed, but it must be emphasized here that it is not only a social construct. It poses an adaptation process to the environment, as the conclusion of the results of this study shows. Paleczny and Zielinski revealed that the natural environment (i.e., deserted lands or green pastures) does shape the specifics of how a certain culture evolves.

Cultures are also determined materially and biologically, apart from their spiritual dimension. The material basis of cultural differentiation is linked with nature, with different living conditions, of managing, with the principles of social organization that are adjusted to these conditions.⁷⁴⁸

In conclusion, I interpret Paleczny’s and Zielinski’s statement in the sense that the environment matters as a parameter that influences the evolution of a certain culture. Therefore, culture becomes more than just a socio-political ideology because it is literally caused by everything that influences and surrounds the individual (and/or the group). It thereby shapes further related procedures for how the individual perceives himself or herself. But the latter is only one aspect of culture. A very important one, though, I argue.

Respectively, in this social sense, the invention of tradition is paramount. In-regard-to this context, Volker Scheid sums up how Chinese medicine became subject to the invention of *tradition* and how it therefore poses an element in the constitution of the *imagined community* in China. He briefly explains this issue as follows:

⁷⁴⁶ *Natural* in the sense that obviously group interaction always follows such principles.

⁷⁴⁷ James Miller, *China’s Green Religion*, pp. 4.

⁷⁴⁸ Tadeusz Paleczny and Bogdan Zielinski, *Cultural Identity*, pp. 367.

Uncovered everywhere, from the construction of Shinto wedding rites in Japan to the founding of Women's Colleges in Cambridge, invented traditions were soon discovered in the history of Chinese medicine, too. In each case, the shaping of medical knowledge and clinical practice, of institutions and technologies of learning, and of social relationships among physicians were found to be closely tied to issues of social identity that connect medicine as an 'invented tradition' to society as an 'imagined community'.⁷⁴⁹

On top of this finding, Scheid criticizes Ralph Crozier for his inconsistent conclusions in the 1968 book *Traditional Medicine in Modern China*. Scheid finds a paradox hidden in his thinking. He writes:

The historian Ralph Crozier explained that he was motivated to write his authoritative study *Traditional Medicine in Modern China* (1968) by 'a simple paradox and main theme – why twentieth-century intellectuals, committed in so many other ways to science and modernity, have insisted on upholding China's ancient prescientific medical tradition'. His answer – that the nationalist orientation of many intellectuals prevented them from accepting modernity without compromise – conveniently ignores that nationalism is a product of the same modernity Crozier himself embraces.⁷⁵⁰

Interestingly, this explanation leads back to the terminology of nationalism. Scheid criticizes Crozier for the inconsistency in his argument, but at the same time he shows that Chinese elites obviously had not been willing to fully accept the Western concepts of modernity. The system of a nation-state, however, they adopted for their own state structure. It may be reasonable to accept that each nation implements those elements in its nation-building process which it finds useful to the achievement of its specific goals. Obviously, the Chinese elites did exactly that. They created a nation with Chinese characteristics, which apparently meets the needs of the Chinese nation.

When connecting the dots and contemplating nationalism in China, it is obviously that through this action by political leaders, a new Chinese *in-group* had been created. Namely, that of the People's Republic of China. It is my interpretation that this cohesion by a nationalistic narrative certainly must be comprehended as a political institutionalization. However, the root of this process probably rests on the long-standing existence of the collective of the Chinese people. I argue that the Chinese collective existed long before the modern Chinese nation-state had been created. Thereafter, nationalism serves as a new form to keep the Chinese cultural *in-group* (although internally it is surely not homogenous) together. Resultantly, as highlighted by James Miller's argument that *identity is always created in relation to the other*, this explains how thereby the imagined Chinese community is strengthened in the minds of

⁷⁴⁹ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 64.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 62.

the Chinese people. As the Chinese collective has been existing in some form or another for millennia, it must be hypothesized that the modern state structure is rather the result of the underlying imagination of belonging together instead of being founded on the mere coercive creation of a modern Chinese nation by politicians. Societal forces are at work here, and in this sense, the society itself is the political actor in the political discourse of Chinese identity. As-a-consequence, in-order-to further clarify the question whether traditions do evolve *naturally* or how they are constructed *artificially* will be investigated in more detail in the next chapter.

12. The Origin of Tradition: The Tension between Benefit and Detriment

Starting off with the explanation and de-construction of what is termed *tradition*, it must be said that obviously every term has to be circumscribed and delimited for the fact that otherwise the reader may misunderstand what one tries to express. This is a common problem that people always run into with the use of language. Time and time again, it is easy to forget that language is only a tool. Basing this argument on a rather semiotic explanation, this means that specific terms in language can only pose the signifier, they are never the signified. I argue in this way⁷⁵¹ as it seems rather obvious that a human emotion or thought must always be the source of what language tries to express. Therefore, the emotion or thought is the signified (the source), and a word used to express this matter simply poses a signifier or a sign. This can also be understood as certain emotions are expressed in different languages with diverging terms. As a result, the given emotion stays the same, whereas the signifier changes due to the other language system. Thus, one must try to evade misunderstanding by using certain concepts, which often come with further connotations themselves.

When using the term *tradition*, Volker Scheid points out in his essay *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition* that it is commonly defined as the counterpart – the obverse – of the Western concept of *being modern*. Scheid therefore reminds the reader that these terms can easily be understood in the light of colonization processes. He writes that the whole matter of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is closely interlinked with the fact that Chinese medicine was confronted with Western scientific medicine in the early twentieth century. His findings also hint at the colonial past and the frequent overpowering by Western occupational forces through their ideology. As shown in Section 1 of this book, this criticism is also brought up by Bruno Latour. Scheid, notwithstanding, focuses on the definition of what *tradi-*

⁷⁵¹ Based on earlier provided evidence by Saussure and Barthes (Preface).

tion means in Western languages. His account is somewhat etymological. This approach, however, seems not to be helpful for the analysis here. It would deviate from the core analysis in this paper, as then the discussion would revolve around the signifier, not around the signified. As a result, his explanation of whether the English word *tradition* accurately resembles the Chinese word *chuantong* 传统 is of minor importance here.⁷⁵²

Consequently, this gives reason to highlight once more what I have already summed up above: cultures always evolve following the same general principles. This means the principles of a *cultural system* are universal, but the content of cultures is always unique. By this claim, I do not mean to say that all cultures are the same or that they are at different stages of development, as had been falsely postulated by early ethnologists like Lewis Henry Morgan. Far from it, this would simply pose a discriminating stance, which again would reduce other cultures to an inferior status.⁷⁵³

Distinctively, it is my understanding of the explanations given by Klaus Hansen in his book *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaft* that one major aspect of the cultural scheme is always that of the cohesion between individuals in-order-to form a group (collective).⁷⁵⁴ Further, the work of Paleczny and Zielinski has been revealing many other aspects concerning this matter. As a result, it can be summed up that the content, values, and norms of each culture differ from each other, but all cultures are systems of some sort of values and norms. This seems indisputable, no matter where an individual is coming from. I argue that the functions of cultural mechanisms are the same while the content is exchangeable. As Klaus Hansen presents to the reader, the norms and values in different cultures have the purpose of standardizing and setting conventions for the individual in that given group. Examples of standardisations mentioned by Hansen are the standardization of communication, the standardization of thinking, the standardization of sensation as well as the standardization of behaviour and action.⁷⁵⁵ For one or the other reason, for better or for worse, these effect the equalization of behaviour and action.

Apart from this general idea of culture, the differentiation between tradition and that which has been chosen to serve as such is of utmost importance. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger write:

⁷⁵² Cf. Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 60-61.

⁷⁵³ See Klaus Hansen, *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaft*, pp. 248-251.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 229.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

...the study of invented traditions cannot be separated from the wider study of the history of society, nor can it expect to advance much beyond the mere discovery of such practices unless it is integrated into a wider study.

Second, it throws a considerable light on the human relation to the past, and therefore on the historian's own subject and craft. For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement group cohesion. [...] The element of invention is particularly clear here, since the history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.⁷⁵⁶

As a result, as Hobsbawm and Ranger state, it is the selection process in the writing of history and the thereon built traditions that matter in-order-to make certain ends meet.⁷⁵⁷ As is shown above, the difference between *real* traditions and invented traditions poses a very thin line. By choosing certain content as 'that which matters' certain goals are being met. In such a manner, firstly, it is not of special interest whether this sort of *imagined tradition* constitutes a nation-state, another kind of state, or a social movement. As anthropologists Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin write in *Tradition, Genuine or Spurious*, tradition is itself an imagined concept. It resembles the remembrance of practices and ideas of the past. Tradition is a sort of recollection of certain practices, rites, and values that made sense in the past and may or may not make sense in the present but are still being continued and comprehended as tradition by those who practice (and use) them. But there is more to it. Handler and Linnekin argue:

The prevailing conception of tradition, both in common sense and in social theory, has envisioned an isolable body or core of unchanging traits handed down from the past. Tradition is likened to a natural object, occupying space, enduring in time, and having a molecular structure. Society, since it is defined by a distinctive tradition, is similarly modeled after a natural object – bounded, discrete, and objectively knowable. This naturalistic view of tradition, and of society as constituted by tradition, has dominated Western social thought at least since the time of Edmund Burke, who was the first modern theorist of tradition. [...] Burke's discussion is dominated by the idea of an object – as concrete as a castle, as a natural body – that changes incessantly yet nonetheless maintains an essential identity.

Against the naturalistic paradigm, which presumes boundedness and essence, we argue that tradition is a symbolic process: that "traditional" is not an objective property of phenomena but an assigned meaning. When we insist that the past is always constructed in the present, we are not suggesting that present-day acts and ideas have no correspondence to the past. But we argue that the relation of prior to unfolding representations can be equally well termed discontinuous as continuous. Ongoing cultural representations refer to or take account of prior representations, and in this sense the present has continuity with the past. But this continuity of reference is constructed in

⁷⁵⁶ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁵⁷ As already elaborated when discussing the distinction between the writing of history (Geschichtsschreibung) versus a scientific historiography.

the present, and, as Herzfeld (1982:3)⁷⁵⁸ has argued in his account of nationalism and folklore in Greece, the construction of continuity is never “a question of pure fact.” Rather, the establishment of continuity depends on “the observer’s ... prepositions ... about what traits really constitute acceptable ... evidence for some sort of link.” On the other hand, because continuity *is* constructed, it includes an element of discontinuity. To refer to the past, to take account of or interpret it, implies that one is located in the present, that one is distanced or apart from the object reconstructed. In sum, **the relationship of prior to present representations is symbolically mediated, not naturally given**; it encompasses both continuity and discontinuity. Thus we can no longer speak of tradition in terms of approximate identity of some objective thing that changes while remaining the same. Instead, we must understand tradition as a symbolic process that both presupposes past symbolisms and creatively reinterprets them. In other words, tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present through making reference to the past.⁷⁵⁹

Subsequently, when Handler and Linnekin write that tradition is *never a question of pure fact*, it is understood that history in-itself is a difficult matter. I argue that history is always an account of something that has occurred before the historian’s time, or, on other occasions, it is a record of contemporary witnesses who have experienced a certain time or event. In any case, everything experienced by an individual that is later reported must always be a memory of that which has happened. Such memory then is always a subjective standpoint, I argue. The historical account is then always *symbolically mediated*, to quote Handler and Linnekin. Thus, to stay close to their explanation, tradition stems from something that had been valued for one reason or another by the subject or the collective in the past, but the putting together of it in the present is then necessarily an interpretation of the past. Although, clearly, it must be distinguished between the degree of writing history and the recovery of historical facts, it is my conviction that scientific proof usually only resembles an approximation of the real historical events. However, I agree with the explanation of Handler and Linnekin because it uncovers how many of the matters that have been explained in this paper are built on how individuals construct their world. The world one lives in consists of a past, a present, and a future to come. It, or the interpretation and attributing of it, constitutes the individual world. The selective process of *tradition* and the remembrance of the past that is applied by an individual, a group, or a government therefore defines its present role in the respective environment (or territory). Consequently, the past is *symbolically* mediated in the present, as Linnekin and Handler say. Certainly, history is an important part of this reconstructive process. China had been subjected

⁷⁵⁸ Referring to: Herzfeld, Michael, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

⁷⁵⁹ Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, *Tradition, Genuine or Spurious*, pp. 286-287.

to the imperialistic impact that had been discussed here before, and China as a nation is a part of the global community. As a result, the Chinese nation must constantly reconstruct its past, I argue. The constituting of the self-image cannot be separated from historical events, but the interpretation of certain events, customs and *traditions* is a matter of choice. It is the standpoint from which the individual or collective interprets the continuity and discontinuity of the past, and it is a question in respect to the outlook of the individual or group regarding how and why the past is reconstructed in the way it is being reproduced. In such a way, the Chinese nation today repeatedly reconstructs its past and its traditions in a very nationalistic fashion. Just as the German nation once did when it built big monuments and memorials of the apparent Germanic war hero Arminius in the Teutoburg Forest, which reminds the people of the victory of the Germanic tribes that had defeated the Roman commander Publius Quinctilius Varus almost two millennia before the monument had been built. Remembering the past in this way obviously involves a creative reconstruction of the past as-a-means to construct the desired image of how being German would be interpreted in the mid- to late 19th century.⁷⁶⁰ It is argued and thematized various times in this book that, in a similar pattern, the modern Chinese government is reconstructing the past for the modern imagined community, which today is bracketed by the concept of the People's Republic of China. This certainly does not mean that there is no People's Republic of China in existence, but if one considers the man-made nature of such constructs as nation states, the mechanisms of such a myth can be deconstructed. In this light, the above quote from Handler's and Linnekin's study reveals that the whole narrative behind such myths is symbolic, just as the traditions of any group are. This symbolism constitutes and gives way to the construction of an imagined community.

Thus, a 'traditional' medicine in China likewise resembles a symbolic process. As has already been learned in Section 1 of this book, the term TCM was deliberately invented by the Chinese governmental sub-panels to serve specific interests in the dissemination of Chinese medicinal products and medicinal practices to Western consumers. That which had been hypothesized before as being the more profound reasoning behind this project is further unravelled by sinologist Volker Scheid. He identifies the reason for the invention of the English term Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a coping mechanism for what is being called modernity. In his essay *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, he writes:

⁷⁶⁰ See *Das Hermannsdenkmal, Mythos: Arminius, Thusnelda und die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald*.

In the West, but not only in the West, Asian medicines continue to be understood and promoted through a discourse that emphasises their status as 'traditions'. Chinese medicine, widely referred to throughout the world as 'Traditional Chinese Medicine' (TCM), is an obvious example. The problematic nature of this practice, which uses tradition as the 'other' of modernity, has often been criticised, yet no alternative has emerged.⁷⁶¹

Here one finds the reason for the invention of a 'traditional' Chinese medicine, as opposed to just calling it 'Chinese medicine' (as is the case by using the term *zhongyi* 中医 within China), which reveals the immanent tension between the West and China. The core of this view stems from an understanding that has been explained before by quoting Bruno Latour. Thereafter, the Western ideological theme presents the West as apparently modern, and pushes the Chinese scheme, and condemns it as non-modern. As already discussed earlier, Chinese intellectuals, as well as several Chinese governments since the early 20th century, have had to react to this overpowering impact of Western ideology. If Westerners had not *brought* their modern Western medicine to China, then the necessity to call their own medicine 'traditional' would likely not have occurred. As a result, it can be inferred that calling their own, in the Western view pseudo-scientific, medicine 'traditional' was an attempt to ensure its survival when confronted with Western medicine. This argument goes hand in hand with the interpretation that the Chinese nation had been seeking means to (re)construct its self-identity to regain national confidence in the later part of the 21st century. As has been concluded earlier in this paper, Scheid also concludes that Chinese intellectuals thus formulated a new theory that had been drafted in-order-to satisfy Western consumer demands for Chinese medicinal practices and ideas. In his argument, he partly quotes Kim Taylor and David Gordon White.

[...] experts assimilated western ideologies and knowledge into their ancient practices in order to sell them back to western audiences thirsting for initiation into the mysteries of the East. Chinese physicians thus made a conscious decision to refer to their medicine as 'traditional' when writing for a western audience, even as they were busy creating for that tradition a new basic theory (*jichu lilun* 基礎理論)⁷⁶² in order to make it resemble more closely the scientific modernity of western medicine.⁷⁶³

Hence, according to Scheid, Chinese medicine had been adjusted and renamed for a Western audience. Therefore, I conclude that as the essence of Chinese medicine had been threatened by the competition of Western medicine and Western ideology as-a-whole, which the Westerners thought of as being superior to Chinese medicine, this recreation of Chinese medicine had been the key to its survival. From today's standpoint, it can thus be said that this strategy

⁷⁶¹ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 59.

⁷⁶² The term literally means, *basic theory*.

⁷⁶³ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 60.

worked out to be beneficial on the level that the now termed 'Traditional Chinese Medicine' could be marketed to customers on a global level. It also ensured the continuous existence of TCM, although it adjusted or cut off its roots at the core.

However, this development did not necessarily suppress the existence of the manifold different branches of the former medicinal range of medical practices in China. The way Scheid interprets it, the applied strategy rather resulted in the regulation and canonization of what is today known as TCM. Nevertheless, in his understanding, the *new* TCM is only one branch of Chinese medicine among many others in modern China. He writes:

Today, another type of Chinese medicine exists side-by-side with this older tradition. A Chinese medicine that has grown out of such currents and remains attached to them by way of multiple articulations, but that in terms of its emphasis on systematisation, regularisation, and scientisation embodies the McDonald's approach to food rather than that of *haute cuisine*. Like McDonald's, it is widely welcomed and globally successful. Yet, it embodies different values, different practices, and different types of social relationships. However, just as McDonald's is forever (re)inventing itself in order to stay alive – a process in which it feeds on and, in turn, feeds into other traditions of preparing and enjoying food – so Chinese medicine, too, is a living system made up of many currents that constantly weave into and out of each other.⁷⁶⁴

Therefore, according to Scheid's findings, TCM today is one of many currents in the broad array of Chinese medicine. Along with Scheid's research results and with the knowledge acquired thus far in this book, I argue that TCM today is a modern re-interpretation and canonization of Chinese medicine that serves modern political and economic goals. The myth behind the narration of a 'traditional' medicine in the political discourse of China consequently reflects the above-described creation of *tradition*, which is instrumentalized in multiple ways.

Hence, it can be concluded that the goals of instrumentalization include the various domains of the political, cultural, social, and economic dimensions. As a cultural object, Chinese medicine thus serves the creative remembrance of cultural history and the ideological nation-building process alike. The content of the *Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in the Political Discourse of China* does play a crucial role in the context of nation-building as much as the invention of a national identity. One must only remember the official number of 56 different ethnic groups in China. In-order-to merge these groups together under a national identity theme, I argue that a strong national ideology has the function of creating the desired, imagined Chinese community. This myth serves the goal of exerting internal political control and stability. Chinese medicine poses one element of the binding together of the many discontinu-

⁷⁶⁴ Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine and the Problem of Tradition*, pp. 69.

ities in history and ethnic differences. Although it has been proven that culture, to a degree, comes about *naturally* in any group, this process still resembles the creation of a myth.

In a way, this sort of aim for group cohesion is natural to humans' social interactions. Nevertheless, the question remains how much of the intentional part of the creation of such a myth is enforced by the Chinese Communist Party. As Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson state in their article *What the West Gets Wrong About China*, the thinking that the Chinese organisational form of state would not be desired by the people seems to be wrong. Mitter and Johnson write: "Many Chinese believe that the country's recent economic achievements have actually come about because of, not despite, China's authoritarian form of government."⁷⁶⁵

A strong nation-state and a strong national economy must evidently be of utmost importance to the Chinese people. The average Chinese person may therefore simply desire what many so-called developed countries' citizens already possess. Although, the Chinese state structure could be discussed here, I refer to the discussion about the different historical processes concerning harmony within China and its discourses of the past. It can be asserted that the Chinese nation has faced massive obstacles and trouble throughout the past century. Modern TCM, with its global success, can thus be seen as an economic stroke of luck for the Chinese industry and the Chinese nation as-a-whole. To-a-large-extent, this accomplishment is built on the narration of the myth that presents Chinese medicine as a harmonious and effective alternative to Western medicine. On the contrary, concerning the struggle of the Chinese nation throughout the past century, the implementation and deliberate construction of a myth of the harmonious Chinese nation – partially held up by the myth about the cultural object of Chinese medicine – has deeper implications for the collective memory of Chinese society. As revealed, parts of the narration have been deliberately created by the Chinese Communist Party, as it is the state organ and institution that oversees achieving national development. But it shall also not be forgotten that the Chinese people have suffered deep trauma since the Western colonial powers came into the country. These events certainly left their mark on Chinese society. One only has to open a history book and look up Chinese history of the mid-20th and 21st century.⁷⁶⁶

After-that-being-said, in the next and last chapter of this book, it will be delved deeper into the differentiation between that which has been created deliberately through the narration of

⁷⁶⁵ Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, *What the West Gets Wrong About China*.

⁷⁶⁶ For example, see; Kai Vogelsang, *Geschichte Chinas*, pp. 440-579; or Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments: The Making of the Twentieth-Century Chinese State*, pp. 20-45.

the national myth and that which *has grown naturally* in Chinese society, considering the relevant processes of self-identity building.

13. State Ideology or a 'Natural' Identification Process by the People

According to Aleida Assmann in her book *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit* (The Long Shadow of the Past), the individual, the social, the cultural, and the political memory can be affected by strongly influential historical events. She argues that memories are first based on the individual and are almost always further formed in a social context. This social realm can be called the “we-group” (or the in-group) to which all humans somehow belong. Some of such group affiliations are self-chosen, like the membership of a sports club, as has already been highlighted, but belonging to a family, an ethnic group, or a nation can usually not be chosen. However, certainly, one can change some of these affiliations by migrating to another country or by converting to another religious faith.⁷⁶⁷

This insight, I argue, strengthens the thinking about how self-identity and group-belonging are always socially constructed but that they also evolve *naturally* inflicted by the environment in which the individual grows up. In this sense, this description of a “we-group” confirms what has been learned about the general subject of culture before in this book. According to Aleida Assmann, who widely elaborates on the formation of the above-mentioned kinds of memories, it is certain that individual memories are fading over time. It can be said that when an individual dies, the individual’s memory also perishes. The memories of the dead may then partly be remembered by others, especially through material proof of past times, like photographs, documents, or other historical artefacts, but the personal memory of the individual is being lost. These memories remembered by others or by material evidence about what the individual had experienced are thus a reductionist form of the personal memory, as they only pose what people know about the individual memory of the deceased person.⁷⁶⁸ However, when alive, the individual memory and the perspective on past events of an individual form the personality of that person. Every narration of a past event, according to Assmann, is volatile and unstable, but the contextualisation of such a past event by the individual is put in perspective by the way in which the story is narrated and how it is woven into a historical or otherwise relevant (to the individual) context. Usually, such narration is deeply embedded in the social environ-

⁷⁶⁷ Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 21-22.

⁷⁶⁸ Here the resemblance with the memories attached to cultural objects can be noted.

ment of the individual, and it is somewhat remembered by later generations within the family, often lasting over several generations.⁷⁶⁹

The social memory of people is thereby shaped by the worldview of former generations. Assmann writes that generational change actualizes social memory roughly every thirty years. Conversations about the past and its events, including traumatizing experiences, are thus shaping the memory of these past events, while the past is also being re-constructed through such memories. The collective memory builds on this and can be understood as an agreement within a given society, ethnic group, or nation that reflects the main discourse that has been chosen in-regard-to how the memory of the “we-group” must be interpreted. In this process, symbols such as narratives, locations, memorial sites, or ritual practices are the instruments through which this collective memory is kept alive.⁷⁷⁰

Thereafter, it can be concluded that in Chinese society, this collective memory is driven by many rituals and practices, one of which is Chinese medicine (practice) and the modern narration of a Traditional Chinese Medicine. The holistic concept of the narration of the Chinese nation is built on this element as much as on many others, as has been shown throughout this book. Apart from the political re-constitution of Chinese-ness, historical evidence proves that Chinese medicine had existed for many millennia.⁷⁷¹ The re-constitution of the matter is therefore a question of the chosen perspective in the act of creating identity.

Confirming earlier findings in this paper, Aleida Assmann also writes that all cultural artefacts are constructed. In the centre of the re-constitution of cultural memory are the symbolic mediums, which are themselves constructed. They are the objects of ongoing social and individual communication, through which symbols are constantly re-constituted. In collective memory, the process of remembrance is constantly updated. Unlike individual memory, which is limited to symbols and artefacts, a remembered history is not limited to a generational time frame but can be potentially re-constructed in a timely and unlimited fashion. In contrast to individual memory, collective memory is detached from personal memory because it is founded on more abstract symbols. Cultural recollection is based on external mediums like texts, pictures, monuments, and rites. Thereby, it is different from the memory of the individual or that of the family. It uses symbolic stanchions in-order-to bind the present generation to the constructed past. Through such monuments, memorial sites, national holidays, and rites, the collective memory becomes transgenerational. Later generations thereby get involved with

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 22-25.

⁷⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.

⁷⁷¹ See i.e., in Chapter *State of Research on Chinese Medicine in China's Political Discourse*.

the purported memories of the past without having experienced the very event themselves.⁷⁷² This confirms the respective aspects discussed before.

Again, on the one hand, a connection is thus fabricated where there is no connection, and on the contrary, this connection has always been there by heritage.⁷⁷³ Although it can be said that new myths are being built on old myths⁷⁷⁴ and thereby the real factual past may increasingly be blurred, in the identity building process, particularly that of the individual, the form of remembrance is always an act of “choice”⁷⁷⁵ of the individual.

Altogether, says Assmann, the process described here is one that is the basis of every “in-group”. A collective is thereby constituted, which builds not only on the individual but also on past generations and epochs. This mechanism creates a strong loyalty bond among the members of the group. As a result, the concept of the “we-group” is being strengthened.⁷⁷⁶

In brief, as is revealed here, this is the foundation of the formation of any group, even if it is constituted by only two individuals. Social construction of this kind must have existed ever since more than one individual roamed the planet. This also showed in the earlier quote by Danesi and Perron in which it had been stated that since 100,000 years ago, human tribes planned consciously and created social relations among each other.⁷⁷⁷ Resultantly, in every group, the agreement or manipulation into agreement on common symbols forms the mechanism of the described process. As a result, culture, with its shared values as well as its sub-elements of shared ideas and behaviour, is the basis of every in-group.

To Assmann, it-is-clear that the memory of the social group is likely to change over time and that the national memory of a given nation is much more uniform than that of the social group, which means that it must be produced and imposed from above onto the citizens by political institutions. This is what she calls the political memory. Much more than in the personal individualistic realm, according to this view, it is thus important for the cohesion of a nation to keep the memory of the past alive through **deliberate** action in-order-to constitute that national collective.⁷⁷⁸

That is why Assmann says that the adulteration of history cannot simply be criticized as ideology. The exaggeration of specific historic events is not only myth in the political sense

⁷⁷² Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 32-35.

⁷⁷³ But with breaks and discontinuities.

⁷⁷⁴ See “second-order semiological systems”, in: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, pp. 113.

⁷⁷⁵ This is not a definite statement about whether this ‘choice’ has been conscious or subconscious.

⁷⁷⁶ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 36.

⁷⁷⁷ Cf. Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures*, pp. 3.

⁷⁷⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

through policy but also a cultural construction process.⁷⁷⁹ Therefore, the national memory can, on the one hand, be understood as an ideological state-driven project and myth, while, on the other hand, the whole issue can also be traced back to how a nation or group interprets its own past. This *myth*, however, Assmann claims, is not necessarily a political ideology but, as I understand her, a myth production in the light of identity construction on the social or individual plane.⁷⁸⁰ The myth produced then can not only be reduced to the actions of the government because it is rather a striving of the nation (or a respective group) for group cohesion and identity, which are essential to this process. I have also highlighted this fact before.

Consequently, Assmann's research confirms many earlier results in this book. I thus conclude that, like the individual, the group does, in its collective memory, produce a present-day discourse in-order-to constitute itself. Like the individual, the group therefore chooses to interpret the past and its historical facts to make sense of those past events as much as a means of a procedure through which one defines himself or herself (this certainly must be correct for the larger group). The own identity is thus constituted and resulting through the parameters of interpretation of such an event. Here, it shall be clear that something good or bad that happened in the past can always be interpreted in varying ways.⁷⁸¹ The thereafter concluded standpoint will usually depend on the impact that the phenomenon had on the individual or group, and it is determined by the attitude with which these experiences are being met by the individual, I hypothesize.

When Assmann refers to Ernest Renan, she confirms this and highlights how the interaction of the past, present, and future forms a psychological core mechanism of human motivation. Accordingly, Assmann argues:

Die Nation hat nach Renan einen in die Zukunft gerichteten gemeinsamen Willen. Dieser Wille muss jedoch, um wirksam zu werden, durch die Konstruktion einer gemeinsamen Vergangenheit untermauert werden. Es ist diese gemeinsame Erinnerung, die der Gegenwart einen Sinn verleiht, indem sie sie als Stufe einer langfristigen und notwendigen Entwicklung deutet. Das mytho-motorische Potential der gemeinsamen Geschichtserinnerung liegt in eben dieser zeitlichen Orientierung: sie stiftet Sinn, indem sie die Gegenwart als Zwischenstufe einer motivierenden Vergangenheit und Zukunft übergreifenden Erzählung aufweist.⁷⁸²

This means the national memory is founded on what Renan understood as the *shared will* of the nation. It can only be put into effect when it is backed up by a constructed collective past.

⁷⁷⁹ ...*Culturalization* process...

⁷⁸⁰ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 40-41.

⁷⁸¹ This is why I argued that the individual has a choice above.

⁷⁸² See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 42.

It is this (re-constructed) collective past that endows the present identity with a meaning that must also be understood as only a stepping-stone for the future and the development of the nation. Thus, it is this mytho-motoric potential that connects the past, present, and future of the given nation. A myth about a shared past is created, which then serves as a means of motivating the past into the future. In short, by constructing a collective past, the group members are linked together. As a result, they *feel* affiliated because they seem to look back on a shared past, which, united as they are then, brings them together in the present. This, in turn, motivates them – if the myth is kept up – to proceed with a shared project for the future.⁷⁸³

When then thinking about the sometimes negatively connotated statements of how the Chinese government may use methods to indoctrinate the Chinese people into feeling this group cohesion, it is, in contrast, noted in a very positive light by Aleida Assmann that it is the duty of a national government to produce such a collective self-image.⁷⁸⁴ The leadership and state organs of the nation by the nation's legal constitution must opt for group cohesion, I argue. Consequently, in nation-states, an imagined community must be a state project. Apart from this, concluding after Assmann, much of the mentioned elements – including that of the cultural object of Chinese medicine, I need to add – are not only politically produced, but they are also reflecting the self-perception of the Chinese people. The common ground of the people stems from the *connectedness* that the Chinese feel. It could therefore be hypothesized that this process goes back to the first partial unification under the emperor Qin Shi Huangdi. Most certainly, all dynasties and governments since then have repeatedly constructed myths to attain group cohesion and an imagined community. Factually, however, the history of China is so long and complex that by now, citizens from the many Chinese ethnic groups are likely to naturally perceive themselves as *Chinese* citizens. The whole process of the we-group in China must have started when small groups started to perceive themselves as Chinese (or whatever signifier had been used in the past) in the territory that is today called China. I therefore argue that the development of Chinese culture throughout the millennia has, on the one hand, been a political project, but that, on the other hand, the natural processes that are at work in human societies have produced this outcome. By this, I mean that it is obviously hard to distinguish between deliberate governmental actions throughout the ages to produce this imagined community, on the one hand, and the development of factually shared events and

⁷⁸³ From this, I deduce that the same mechanism must apply to the individual. His or her past determines the present, and this in turn motivates goals for the future.

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 43.

traits that led to the Chinese (imagined) community, on the other hand. The whole process appears to be far too complex and entangled to clearly distinguish one from the other.

Nevertheless, for Ernest Renan it is evident that going through hard times together usually creates far greater group cohesion and a deeper bond between people than only glorious and victorious experiences. Assmann quotes him as stating that...

...gemeinsam gelitten, gejubelt, gehofft zu haben – das ist mehr wert als gemeinsame Zölle und Grenzen, die strategischen Vorstellungen entsprechen. Das ist es, was man ungeachtet der Rasse und Sprache versteht. Ich habe soeben gesagt: «gemeinsam gelitten zu haben». Jawohl, das gemeinsame Leiden verbindet mehr als Freude. In den gemeinsamen Erinnerungen wiegt die Trauer mehr als die Triumphe, denn sie erlegt Pflichten auf, sie gebietet gemeinschaftliche Anstrengungen.⁷⁸⁵

To have suffered, rejoiced, and hoped together is more valuable than mere shared taxes, borders, and strategical conceptions [of the state]. This is what must be understood regardless of race or language, writes Assmann quoting Renan. In the statement, the influence of shared suffering by a group of people is stressed. It is claimed that this establishes a bond much stronger between members of a group than if they had solely shared the pleasures of life. Grief, Renan states, connects strongly, even more firmly than triumph, because it demands a collective effort [to overcome the suffering].

Although Aleida Assmann's book is concerned with the different kinds of memory in order to analyse the reasons and traces of the WW2 holocaust, it adds to the here needed understanding because it provides a profound look into the parallelling grief which the Chinese people had gone through in their contemporary past. Assmann's recounts and findings aid in understanding the necessity for group cohesion in the modern Chinese nation-state. As seen above, historical myths often serve as-a-means to endow identity. Such a collective theme, if a group or nation has undergone traumatic circumstances, is nudging a collective coping mechanism to overcome the distress of those hard days gone by. The sequence of such catching up with history is typically not just straight forward. It is a complex operation.⁷⁸⁶

Hence, it is my conclusion that after traumatic events, like the overpowering by the Western imperialists, the warlord period, and the civil war period in China, it is not uncommon that memories of such painful events are repressed in the individual's memory or in the memory of society at large. Getting to grips with suffering and trauma can take a long time. In this light, the constant repetition of the suffering of the Chinese nation through respective myths

⁷⁸⁵ See Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, pp. 42.

⁷⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-97.

but also the victory (the Chinese Civil War ended in 1949)⁷⁸⁷ over the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang) can be seen as tools to construct a certain politico-ideological myth but, on the other hand, also as part of the national memory, which resembles a psychological healing process, I argue. In such a view, the collective mind employs manifold reasoning and mechanisms to manage the resulting emotions.

Another question that is most intriguing and important for the conclusion of this paper remains. Its investigation would answer whether the state structures (broadly the government) are dominating the political discourse in China, or whether it is society that determines the outcome. This issue is very complex. Nevertheless, it shall be attempted to provide a brief insight into the matter in-order-to to clarify the situation a bit further.

In this respect, I hypothesize that the myth of the nation, which exploits the myth of Chinese medicine as being harmonious and holistic, poses an element in the collective memory of China. It plays a vital role in the (re-)production of the Chinese self-identity. Chinese medicine is historically proven a method and a medicinal practice, which means it is factually more than just a cultural object. However, the modern myth discussed in this paper serves many other functions as it supports the constitution, the creation, and the production of the grand narrative of the Chinese nation. From this structuralist standpoint, I argue, it is also deeply interlinked with political projects like the Great Rejuvenation, which the Chinese Communist Party is aiming for.⁷⁸⁸ The grand narrative that is socially and politically constructed is thus of utmost importance to the self-perception of the Chinese collective. It ensures the continued development of the Chinese economy, politics, and culture.

When following Aleida Assmann's argument referring to the political memory and the national memory, it can thus be understood that the differentiation of the two realms is important. After all, it must be noted that even political leaders and actors are part of the overall society.

Linked to the question of who dominates the academy when discussing the myth of the nation, ideas by the historian T. J. Jackson Lears provide some valuable insight into this question. His thinking, however, does not completely solve the problem. By linking the general question of the dominating forces in cultural and political discourse to Antonio Gramsci's concept of *Cultural Hegemony*, he writes:

⁷⁸⁷ Cf. Peter Zarrow, *Social and Political Developments*, pp. 34-37.

⁷⁸⁸ See Xinhua: *Speech by Xi Jinping at a Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the CPC*.

Unlike functionalist theory, a Gramscian approach does not try to match all cultural manifestations with the demands of “the social system.” It allows one to analyze the systemic features of a society characterized by its inequalities of power without reducing that society to a system. Nor does Gramsci reify society into a being that has needs and interests apart from human agency; rather, he stresses the human creators of culture, with their particular, socially shaped needs and interests. Further, a Gramscian approach allows one to integrate the insights of symbolic interactionism and cultural anthropology with an awareness of power relations. Many historians have used Clifford Geertz’s work, for example, to illuminate the integrative significance of cultural symbols within particular communities, but they have often failed to link those symbols with larger economic or political structures, allowing inequalities of power to be subsumed by an implicit functionalist “cultural system.” From a Gramscian perspective, that pitfall is avoidable. People indeed create their own symbolic universe (Gramsci’s spontaneous philosophy) to make life understandable and tolerable, and those symbolic universes do come to have an apparently “objective” validity, particularly over generations as they spread from scattered individuals to broad social groups. But a given symbolic universe, if it becomes hegemonic, can serve the interest of some groups better than others. Subordinate groups may participate in maintaining a symbolic universe, even if it serves to legitimate their domination. In other words, they can share a kind of half-consciousness complicitly in their own victimization.⁷⁸⁹

As Jackson Lears elaborates here, the symbolic universe that every individual creates through symbols in his or her own life is usually not taken up consciously in every aspect of the process. This hypothesis is consistent with the more general explanations earlier in this book. Under such circumstances, the individual is literally being “socialized”. When Jackson Lears argues that *those symbolic universes do come to have an apparently “objective” validity, particularly over generations as they spread from scattered individuals to broad social groups*, then this seems to explain how individuals in every social group are so-to-speak indoctrinated into being “social” as time moves on. A cultural set of values is then an accumulation of experiences and thoughts that are, on the one hand, a product of the individual’s or the group’s experiences and, on the other hand, a result of the slowly seeping socialization process that has, at any given time, been dominated by the respective dominant group that establishes the discourse in the life of a person.

An assumption made by Gramsci had been that the hegemonic and dominant group that drives the main public discourse can change at any point in time by the building of *historical blocs*.⁷⁹⁰ One such example would be that at the time of the late Qing dynasty in China, the discourse had mainly been decided by the ruling caste and the elites, while by the time of the early Chinese communist state, the discourse had largely been influenced by the CCP under

⁷⁸⁹ T. J. Jackson Lears, *The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities*, pp. 572-573.

⁷⁹⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 571.

Mao. Consequently, the discourse must have been acknowledged by the Chinese populace as supporting the Communist cause.

After Gramsci, and that has been one of the main hypotheses in this paper, a discourse is always driven by a dominant group. Such a group does not always have to only resemble the elite's stance or governmental views. But as a result, the body of people that mainly determines such public discourse usually takes over the power in-a-given state or society. According to the concept of Gramsci, such *cultural hegemony* does not necessarily have to be exerted through forceful dominance.

Hence, his choice of terminology in favour of the word *hegemony*. In this context, Jackson Lears attempts to outline the deeper meaning of the concept, as described in the next quote.

GRAMSCI'S TRANSLATED WRITINGS CONTAIN no precise definition of cultural hegemony. What comes closest is his often-quoted characterization of hegemony as "the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production."⁷⁹¹ To have Gramsci "define" the concept in this way is merely to begin unravelling its significance. The process sounds mechanical: ruling groups *impose* a direction on social life; subordinates are manipulatively persuaded to board the "dominant fundamental" express.

It would be a mistake, though, to rest with that conclusion. The concept of cultural hegemony can only be understood within a variety of historical and intellectual contexts. To rely on a single "definition" is misleading. To give Gramsci his dues, we need first recognize that the concept of hegemony has little meaning unless paired with the notion of domination. For Gramsci, consent and force nearly always coexist, though one or the other predominates. The tsarist regime, for example, ruled primarily through domination – that is, by monopolizing the instruments of coercion. Among parliamentary regimes only the weakest are forced to rely on domination; normally they rule through hegemony, even though the threat of officially sanctioned force always remains implicit. Ruling groups do not maintain their hegemony merely by giving their domination an aura of moral authority through the creation and perpetuation of legitimating symbols; they must also seek to win the consent of subordinate groups to the existing social order.⁷⁹²

Through this excerpt from T. J. Jackson Lears, Gramsci's conviction about the power discourse in society becomes quite clear. This whole matter is useful to the analysis of the role of the Chinese people and the Chinese state when trying to define which of those entities determines the political discourse in China. Certainly, this is just one standpoint for the interpretation of social, cultural, and political processes. Gramsci's view fits the bill of the general

⁷⁹¹ Here Jackson Lears quotes from: Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971), 12.

⁷⁹² T. J. Jackson Lears, *The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities*, pp. 568-569.

preposition taken up in this book. It is not a determinist view, as the outcomes are always subject to change if social forces move their positions in the respective system. The interpretations arrived at here, therefore, imply that certain features of the accounts given in this book must be interpreted according to the latter findings. For the conclusion about who the dominant forces are in the construction of the myth and the *Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse*, these theoretical instruments are of high value because thereby it can be understood which other elements are entailed in this discourse. Naturally, other prepositions, however, may lead the investigator to differing results.

Conclusion

Throughout this book, it has been analysed how various elements are playing a part in the construction of the myth of a 'traditional' medicine in China's political discourse. Over the course of this study, the investigation covered the roles of several large actors who participate in the discourse as well as interwoven discourses that recur in the former. These two realms, however, resemble two different dimensions in scope, as will be revealed shortly. The dimensions, referred to here, frequently intermingle with each other, and it is easy to get them mixed up in a manner that would blur the conclusive outcome.

On the one hand, it has been shown through the investigation of the term *harmony* that the kind of Confucian 'social harmony', which has been emphasized for centuries in China, is not congruent with the stereotypical view of Western harmony. Through this discovery, specific characteristics of the Chinese civilisation can be identified. When contemplating the function of the Confucius Institutes, the common projection scheme of the dissemination of a harmonious Chinese culture was located in the realm of the self-perception of the Chinese people but, further, as an instrument of soft power politics that are implemented by the Chinese Communist Party. Because of the findings in this paper, it can thus be stated that the Chinese government's foreign and internal policies are hardly more *harmonious* in scope than those of many other modern countries. Instead, many Western critics will hold the conviction that the authoritarian Chinese state system is far from harmonious. With such debate, however, the question of the dominant group in the shaping of cultural, social, and political discourse is inevitably connected. Additionally, the circulation of a distinctive image of the Chinese state and nation is a matter of perceived and proclaimed identity.

Respectively, the analysis revealed that this is the case in all societies, although the degree of freedom of individualistic expression may vary among different nations. The societal structures and the government of any given country always seem to resemble a complex system of interaction between the state and the people. I argue that society produces the state as-much-as the state and society dominate the people.⁷⁹³ As had been explained after Gramsci, the power holders of the dominant public discourse can change over time, yet the public discourse is inevitably regularly driven by one dominant group or another in society. The consequences are that the pupils in the given country (or group) always have-to follow certain rules of discourse, which are being implemented from the *above*, if you will, as socialization through the

⁷⁹³ Analogous to the general findings on interaction between the individual and the group in socio-cultural processes.

mechanisms of the in-group is determining the norms and values of the group and its members. My conclusion is that the state mainly functions as the institutional form that follows the wishes and desires of the cultural meta-discourse. Here, different forms of state structure may change the outcome accordingly. This question appears to be the most complicated issue in this paper, as critics will argue that authoritarian states are simply overpowering the people. If one trusts in the explanations given by the concept established by Gramsci, however, this is not reflecting the matter in all its profundity.

When looking at the modern myth of a 'traditional' medicine in China's political discourse, it can be said with great certainty that the modern myth building process had been initiated by the Maoist government in the late 1950s, but the mechanisms from which it emerged had been a consequential result of tensions between Chinese culture and the externally induced impact. The coming about of the national grand narrative of the Chinese people, and thereby the shaping of Chinese culture, is nonetheless a process that began thousands of years earlier. It is connected to what Gramsci called the creation of a symbolic universe, which over generations, as I would call it, *naturalised* cultural myths and other discourse components that led to the *socialization* of the individual in China. On the other hand, for the construction of the modern myth, several other reasons can be identified.

First, when Western imperialists made their way into China before the Opium Wars, missionaries and all sorts of companies brought their own ideologies with them. As must have often been the common colonist practice, these first-arriving *messengers* often viewed their own ideology as superior to the Chinese culture. When the Qing empire collapsed and the new 1911 republic was established, Chinese elites aimed to overcome their own feudal shackles by temporarily abandoning their Chinese cultural and philosophical heritage to a large degree. With the revitalization of Confucianism (among others supported by Feng Youlan), this slowly changed, and a re-collection of Chinese values occurred. The resurgence of Chinese-ness then was a result of the understanding that a new Chinese nation could only be built and be rooted in Chinese traditional ideology and philosophy. It was here that the former antagonism between Chinese ideology and the Western impact produced respective outcomes. Thus, the terminology 'ideological warfare' may make sense in this context as, in my view, China underwent a long-lasting period of struggle against Western ideology, which, with the dominant imperialist attitude, threatened the Chinese culture, philosophy, values, and self-understanding. One such element of humongous ideological power has been the strong force of Western science, which by its nature opposes everything that is not built on the same logic. Hence, West-

ern science and the conceited belief in Western medicine then functioned as a systematic and oppressive mechanism that deemed Chinese medicine unscientific, or at the very least proto-scientific.

When Mao Zedong was in power, he thought that Chinese medicine should be adapted to the scientific Western standard and that it should thus be merged with the Western medical approach. In the following years, the modern label of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was invented through the redefining of the foundational system of Chinese medicine by such theories as the *Bianzheng Lunzhi*. As has been uncovered in this book, Volker Scheid argues this is a McDonald-like solution to the matter. By his account, the new TCM does not cover the full range of real traditional medical practices and cures, but it solely resembles the production of a commodity called TCM, which is today catered to the desires of a Western consumer audience. On a similar token, today the TCM label and its commodities are further disseminated through the expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative to many other countries, including many third-world nations. On a side note, the explanation given here does in no way deny the probable efficacy of many aspects of Chinese medicine as a healing practice.

As has been analysed in Section 2 of this book, the narration of modern Traditional Chinese Medicine can then be categorized not only as a mechanism for the proclamation of a certain Chinese identity through soft power politics but also as a marketing strategy. Through the creation of TCM, with its alleged coating of being *traditional*, it functions as a powerful instrument to support and generate economic revenues. The scale of the industry profiting from this *advertising* myth is enormous, and it is not only limited to companies within China; huge global players are involved in the business. As a result, the economic growth of China's GDP is partly dependent on this industry. Therefore, TCM also functions as an important element in the achievement of the Chinese dream announced by Xi Jinping.

Moreover, when delving into the analysis of the TV series *Dazhaimen*, it was shown that the series recurs on various historical events, while the TV production always revolves around the subject of Chinese medicine. Here, the differentiation between Chinese medicine (CM) and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is of great importance. That which is presented to the Chinese audience is not directly linked to the narrated myth, which was initiated by Mao's cadres and elites. The story content of the TV series rather constantly revolves around Chinese medicine as a general cultural object. Through the clarification of the structural function behind cultural objects via the application of semiotic analysis methods, the symbolic weight of cultural signs has been illuminated for the reader. Consequently, it has been shown how

some sub-discourses of the political discourse in China are being exploited to achieve governmental targets. The repeatedly narrated myth of the Chinese nation through the TV series *Dazhaimen* and other filmic productions keeps the struggle for Chinese identity alive in the Chinese collective mind. This is a major theme in the self-legitimization of the Chinese Communist Party, I argue. But as has been observed through the quotations on Aleida Assmann's ideas, the overcoming of manifold problems that stem from the 20th century is likewise a matter of national memory and the induced trauma to the Chinese collective.

On the one hand, it can thus be stated that a myth is deliberately created through the respective narration by the Chinese government, which ponders on the factual history of the continuous crisis and turmoil in contemporary China's past. The political processes in that time-period have been compared and uncovered throughout this book. These reflect a search for the rekindling of what I would call the *Chinese collective soul*. A return, or an upgrade, to what it means to be Chinese.

It must be highlighted that the narration of a modern⁷⁹⁴ 'traditional' medicine through the myth that had been created by the CCP under Mao Zedong diverges from the myth that is linked to Chinese medicine as a general immaterial cultural object. Through the overall investigation of this book, it has been shown that these myths are frequently interwoven. This corresponds with the general finding about *The Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse* that not only one myth on the matter exists but that various forms of the narration are each employed to target a specific issue. All the existing sub-discourses are of importance in this investigation of a 'traditional' medicine in China.

Hence, all these elements constitute the meta-discourse on a 'traditional' medicine in China. Ultimately, the medicine thematized in the TV series *Dazhaimen* without a doubt resembles that which is understood as the *old* medicine in China. In fact, it appears that most people do not differentiate between the modern concept of TCM and the other myths about *Chinese medicine*.

Lastly, the deconstruction and analysis of the TV series *Dazhaimen* led to the understanding that such *historical* TV series like *Dazhaimen* serve the grand narrative that is aimed at by the Chinese government in-order-to enforce the collective understanding that constitutes the modern perception of traditional Chinese culture, which in turn adds to how Chinese people (as the collective) interpret their modern Chinese identity.

⁷⁹⁴ *Modern* because it is a new compilation of certain elements of Chinese medicine that are aimed at resembling and being rooted in old practices and methods.

With the understanding that the resemblance of Chinese medicine symbolizes a signifier for the generally perceived Chinese culture by the Chinese TV audience, it is my conclusion that Chinese medicine and Chinese culture are core matters in the building process of the nation. A nation-building project that is then predominantly put in place by state actors as they function as the institutional authority of the Chinese nation. However, the underlying hegemonic authority, after Gramsci, may simply lie with the people of the nation. This explanation is driven by the belief that the development of culture is a complex process that starts in the smallest groups of society and is essentially shaped by individuals. These, on the contrary, are being *socialized* by the dominant discourse of power in the respective group.⁷⁹⁵ Culture, thus, always reflects some sort of mechanism of consent between the individual and the group.

In conclusion, the discussed topics in this book vary immensely in their scope on the question of state interference or the role of the individual in the culture-building process in China. Nonetheless, do all these sub-discourses add to the understanding of a 'traditional' medicine in the country. The most valuable insight that can be taken away from this is the culturization process that has been occurring in China. It informs about general procedures in the evolution of cultures and uncovers how the Chinese populace has gone through long-lasting hardship in the past century. Thus, I argue that through the effect of identifying Chinese medicine as an immaterial cultural symbol first-and-foremost, it has been revealed how this cultural heritage entails symbolic but also real-life meaning for the Chinese people. The modern narration of the myth at hand frequently recurs on what must be called Chinese identity, which, in turn, entails the symbolic mechanism that produces common signs for the in-group. Resultantly, the comprehensive analysis in this book works in favour of the resurfacing of the constitutive processes that re-construct Chinese distinctiveness. This partially resembles and explains the evolution of the modern Chinese nation, with its specific characteristics. Therein, the economic means of the TCM myth represent an important factor because it must be assumed that economic growth in the domestic Chinese context serves the strengthening of the nation and the self-perception of the Chinese collective.

⁷⁹⁵ This understanding of the world, which all humans live in, must be comprehended as a sort of symbolic order of the comprehension of the world and the self. Such thinking goes back to Jacques Lacan's ideas as much as the perception of how *ideology* is always at work when humans socialize with each other. Louis Althusser practically states in this sense that people are always *in* ideology. For him, ideology is the thought-practice that provides the *imaginary relation to real relations*. All human beings do this. The only exception somewhat exists when the scientist attempts to arrive at the meta-level, from which she tries to obtain objectivity. The latter, however, is another mode of *being in ideology*. To Althusser *man is an ideological animal by nature*. – In: Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, In: Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, pp. 142-7, 166-76. Translated by Ben Brewster (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

Effectively, this book therefore reflects the political discourse on a 'traditional' medicine in China, which frequently invites the reader to contemplate the identity crisis that the Chinese people have experienced in the contemporary past. It locates the position of Chinese medicine in the structural mechanism by which the collective is involved in the emergence of culture and by which it is a receiver of cultural subjugation through the dominant discourse. Consequently, while the symbolic myth built on Chinese medicine circulates in Chinese society as a narration of *traditional* cultural values, Chinese culture constantly reconstitutes itself through the discourse. These means are an instrument to construct and frequently re-constitute the current 'imagined community' of China. As a result, *the Narration of a 'traditional' Medicine in China's Political Discourse* is not a medical study about Chinese medicine, but an inquiry into the various utilisations of narrative concepts that have Chinese medicine at their core. These concepts have been identified as being founded on myths revolving around topics such as the Chinese identity, the overcoming of an identity crisis, a Chinese discourse on culture, and a matter of myth construction to induce group cohesion among the people in the People's Republic of China today. Such myths and narratives, it can be summed up, are vehicles for the cultururation process in human societies. Wherever there are humans, social cultururation is shaping the form of interaction between individuals, groups, and the environment in which they reside and act.

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