DEBATE WITH ZHUANGZI:
EXPOSITORY QUESTIONS AS FICTIVE INTERACTION BLENDS IN AN OLD CHINESE TEXT[1]

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Abstract

This study deals with the use of expository questions as discourse strategy in *Zhuangzi* (4th c. B.C.), a foundational text of Daoism. We treat this particular type of non-information-seeking questions (e.g. "*Why?* Because…") as a manifestation of conversational monologues, which are themselves fictive kinds of interactions between the original writer and subsequent reader(s) (Pascual 2002, 2014). We further analyze expository questions as constructions of intersubjectivity (cf. Verhagen 2005, 2008), involving a viewpoint blend (Dancygier and Sweetser 2012), integrating the perspectives of the writer, the assumed readers and the discourse characters. We hope to show that–counter to what is commonly assumed in discourse studies–conversationalization is not restricted to modern institutional discourse (Fairclough 1994) or spoken informal speech (Streeck 2002).

Keywords: Conversational monologue; Expository questions; Intersubjectivity; Viewpoint blending; Fictive interaction; *Zhuangzi.*

1. Introduction

If in infancy we are already able to engage in intersubjective interaction, in childhood we partly learn to communicate through question-answer pairs, which contribute enormously to our language development (Sarles 1977: 75) and overall cognitive growth (Piaget [1959] 2005). Questioning is probably a basic and general cognitive capacity that pervades human cognition and plays an important role in problem solving,

concept formation and knowledge acquisition (Kearsley 1976: 373; Seuren 2010: 386). Indeed, as Chuska (1995: 7) states: "All learning begins with questions. Questions cause interactions: Thought, activity, conversation or debate".

In this paper we examine a particular type of questions, namely expository questions, which has barely been studied (but see Ilie 1999; Pascual 2002, 2006b). Despite their interrogative forms, expository questions are non-information-seeking, as they do not call for an overt answer from the Addressee. These questions are used as discourse-organizing device, their corresponding answers being either directly provided or presupposed in the discourse. Thus, expository questions belong to what Chang (1982) called 'nonstandard questions', since they are not produced to make actual inquiries, as opposed to so-called 'standard questions'. Considering this characteristic feature, we can describe expository questions either as 'non-genuine' questions, following Clark and Gerrig's (1990) characterization of some kinds of demonstrations, or as 'virtual' or 'fictive' questions in the sense of Talmy ([1996] 2000), Langacker (1999), and Pascual (2002, 2006b, 2014).

Since conversation is a more basic form of communication than monologue (Clark 1996), and fictivity arises from factuality (Talmy [1996] 2000), expository questions in monologues probably come from actual questions in face-to-face conversation, where they can occur freely together with their corresponding answers (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). By way of illustration, consider first the following instance of expository questions (in italics) from a prosecutor's closing argument to the American jury in a high-profile murder trial (Pascual 2006b: 389):

(1) [...] *Did he log onto a computer that night at work?* No. *Did he log onto a computer at home?* No. *Did he make any phone calls from work?* No. *Did he use the fax machine?* No. *Did he call his sister when he allegedly got the phone in his hand to go up—in that morning?* No. *Did he call his sister as he was going up the stairs with the cordless?* No. *Did he get a receipt from Burger King or Jack-in-the-Box?* No. *Is there any proof, other than the defendant's word, that he wasn't there that night?* No.

In this example, we have a succession of eight yes-no questions with their corresponding answers. These polar questions are not produced to elicit answers from the Addressees, since jurors cannot answer back and the answers are already provided by the speaking prosecutor himself. Instead, these questions serve to organize the arguments the prosecutor is presenting by inviting jury members to join in the reasoning process, thereby enhancing the arguments' persuasive power. Interestingly, these discourse-organizing questions also correspond to actual questions this prosecutor had asked the defendant in cross-examination, to which the defendant had answered negatively.

According to Ilie's (1999: 987) analysis of expository questions in talk shows, expository questions can be used to introduce a new topic of discussion or preface a conclusion, as well as problematize a controversial issue or emphasize the dichotomy between two opposite standpoints. In terms of argumentative orientation, expository questions are generally argument-eliciting, since they often challenge the Addressee to conceptually contribute to the ongoing discourse with their own silent answers in their

minds (Ilie 1999: 988).[2] However, not all expository questions are argumentatively oriented.

Expository questions can be distinguished into three subtypes on the basis of their degree of argumentative orientation: (i) topic-introducing questions, (ii) argument-prefacing questions, and (iii) argument-eliciting questions (Ilie 1999: 988-989). Topic-introducing questions, as the term suggests, present a new issue into the discourse for further elaboration. These questions usually occur at the beginning of a piece of discourse and are not always followed by direct answers. In certain cases, the new topic to be introduced may be embedded in the conceptual structure of the questions themselves. Argument-prefacing questions are Addresser-oriented and they typically occur in monologic pieces of discourse. These questions are usually followed by responses from the Addresser him- or herself, as in example (1). Argument-eliciting questions are Addressee-oriented and can prompt not only a mental response but also factual verbalized answers from the Addressee. It should be pointed out that, as opposed to Ilie (1999), we argue that all non-genuine questions, including expository questions (rather than just the argument-eliciting subtype), involve the elicitation of mental responses on the part of the Addressee, and possibly also a potential Bystander. These argument-eliciting question-answer pairs constitute a prominent feature of dialogues (cf. Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The above three subtypes of expository questions can occasionally occur together with other types of non-genuine questions, such as rhetorical questions. Moreover, the distinction between argument-prefacing and argument-eliciting expository questions is not perfectly clear-cut. There are some peripheral instances of expository questions that can have both an argument-prefacing and an argument-eliciting reading, just as some argument-eliciting questions may also have a rhetorical reading (Ilie 1999).

Apart from occurring in oral discourse such as courtroom monologues (Pascual 2002, 2006b) and talk show interactions (Ilie 1999), expository questions may also be observed in written texts. Expository questions can become manifested as both yes-no and wh-questions. Occasionally, they may have such pragmatic markers as the first and second person pronouns, referring in written texts to the Addresser and Addressee, thereby presupposing intersubjectivity. Indeed, expository questions are modeled or structured by the intersubjective experience of situated face-to-face conversation. As it is, the basic conversational structure underlying expository questions – and other non-information-seeking questions, for that matter – is characterized by the alternation of the Addresser and the Addressee roles, and involves cognitive engagement in which the Addressee is presented as sharing the Addresser's common ground (cf. Oakley and Tobin 2014). Indeed, the processing of expository questions involves the cognitive coordination of the epistemic stances of the Addresser and the Addressee. The Addressee will have to negotiate with the Addresser's commitment to a particular viewpoint expressed in a follow-up or presupposed answer, and ideally get convinced

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[2] Ilie's (1999) use of the term 'argument-eliciting' refers to both the characteristic discursive function of expository questions and one particular subtype of them. The major motivation to categorize the third type of expository questions as argument-eliciting (as opposed to topic-introducing questions or argument-prefacing), is its comparatively higher argumentative value and its higher degree of response elicitation. Despite its potential for confusion, we still adopt Ilie's preliminary classification of expository questions as a starting point for our analysis.

by reaching alignment. It is in this sense that we understand expository questions as being intersubjective in nature and thus invariably involving mixed viewpoints.

In this paper we draw on a combination of the theory of conceptual integration or 'blending' (Fauconnier and Turner 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002) and Pascual's (2002, 2006a, 2014) idea of fictive interaction, and treat expository questions as so-called 'fictive interaction blends'. According to Brandt (2008, 2013), fictive interaction blends appear to be a standard argumentative structure in Western philosophical texts. We claim that the use of fictive interaction configurations can also be found in the Eastern philosophical tradition. In what follows, we present a case study of manifestations of fictive interaction in an old Chinese philosophical text *Zhuangzi* (4th c. B. C.).

2. Fictive interaction blends

In the present study we analyze expository questions as instances of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 1994, 1996, 1998, 2002), more specifically as fictive interaction blends (Pascual 2002, 2008a, 2008b). Expository questions and their possible follow-up answers are prototypical conversational structures, as they are characterized by an alternation of the Addresser and the Addressee roles. Contrary to what occurs in information-seeking questions, the questioner and answerer set up by expository questions need not only correspond to the actual Addresser and Addressee in the situated context of communication. In this sense, expository questions constitute a conceptual configuration that structures or presents something as something else, namely what more often than not is not conversational (an oral or written monologue) as (part of) a kind of conversation. Hence, they can be regarded as instances of fictive interaction (Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2014). Fictive interaction is fictive in the sense of Talmy ([1996] 2000), since it is utterly conceptual in nature and as such ontologically different from the genuine communicative occurrence in which it is embedded or an altogether fictitious conversation in a movie or novel. Despite its fictive reading, fictive interaction is still a relevant type of interaction. It provides a template for the conceptualizer to organize an utterance or discourse, or represent something that may be abstract or not easily graspable in a way that makes it possible to manage different viewpoints and attitudes at once (cf. Turner 2010).

Pascual (2002, 2008a, 2008b) defines fictive interaction blends as simplex blends resulting from the conceptual integration of a mental space (Fauconnier [1985] 1994) with the frame of ordinary conversation. Abstracted from the intersubjective experience of situated face-to-face interaction, the Conversation Frame is a clear instance of a natural and familiar frame (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) that involves only the Addresser(s) and the Addressee(s) with the intention to exchange information, eventually for the benefit of Bystander(s).[3] One peculiar feature of fictive interaction blends is that their internal interactional structure cannot be overtly observed in the

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[3] With 'Bystanders' we mean conversational participants who are purposely included in the conversation by the Addresser (as opposed to the neighbor overhearing the conversation by accident or by placing her ear against the door) and who thus constitute the ultimate Addressees of a piece of discourse not explicitly presented as addressed to them (Goffman 1963: 88-99). Tobin (2014) and others construe readers mostly as overhearers, 'Bystanders' in our terminology. We want to emphasize that we share the same view as these authors and thus only differ in the terminology used.

communicative situation of production and interpretation or in some kind of Reality or Fiction space. Indeed, Turner (2010) defines fictive interaction blends as involving an on-going interaction between two or more individuals in the blend, whereas there was no interaction at all in the input spaces. Turner argues that the blend creates a fictive interaction that helps us readers or listeners understand the configuration that is anchored by the blend. In other words, fictive interaction blends can provide a human scale understanding, which is ultimately the overarching goal of conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Turner 2010, 2014).

Fictive interaction blends may highlight the very structure of turn-taking between Addresser and Addressee or Bystander in the Conversation Frame. This is the case for fictive interaction at the discourse level, which we term as 'conversational monologue'. Conversational monologues are apparent monologic pieces of written or spoken discourse conceptualized and structured as simultaneous dialogues with readers or listeners. These may eventually also involve Bystanders, who are the ultimate Addressees of a piece of discourse not presented as addressed to them (Goffman 1963: 88-99), thereby turning apparent monologues into 'trialogues' (Pascual 2002, 2006b, 2008a). This type of fictive interaction may occur in both the here and now, where language is produced and interpreted, and in the discourse introduced, namely the story. At the level of the discourse context of written texts, we have the Here-and-Now Space, in which the writer is conceptualized as directly speaking to potential future readers in the conventional writer-reader blend (e.g. Herman 1999; Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Pascual 2002, 2014). Alternatively, the writer can engage in talking with him or himself, while the readers become the Bystander of this fictive conversation (Xiang forthcoming). In other words, the Addresser and the Addressee(s) are present at the same moment in the blend and they are jointly attending to the onstage scene presented by the writer. The writer and reader(s) sometimes can be mutually aware that they are in different times and conditions outside the blend, as instantiated by the use of the 'epistolary present tense' in personal correspondence (Recanati 1995; Pagán Cánovas and Turner forthcoming). In the content of discourse, that is, in the story itself, discursive fictive interaction becomes manifest in the form of dialogues between characters in the plot, who speak for the author. At that level, we have the 'Current Discourse Space' (Langacker 2001, 2008, 2013),[4] in which the discourse characters in the fictional world or the so-called 'Story-Viewpoint Space' (Dancygier 2012) are integrated with not only the writer but also the reader. In this second case, we hasten to add, the story characters may be actual or imaginary individuals (Xiang forthcoming).

Various studies have dealt with the use of interactional structures as discourse organizing and argumentative devices in different genres (see overview in Pascual 2014, Pascual and Sandler forthcoming). These studies suggest that fictive interaction constitutes a successful communicative strategy and that an underlying dialogic or even trialogic structure of (mostly) monologic discourse may serve specific purposes (Pascual 2002, 2014). The discourse power of fictive interaction should not be underestimated, as is evidenced by its use in persuasive discourse where the stakes are particularly high, such as murder trials (Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2014). In the present study, we view expository questions as a manifestation of conversation monologues in

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[4] The 'Current Discourse Space' is defined as "the mental space comprising those elements and relations construed as being shared by the speaker and hearer as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse" (Langacker 2001: 144).

the Here-and-Now Space (between writer and reader) and the Current Discourse Space (between discourse characters).

3. Data and methodology

This paper presents an analysis of expository questions in the entire *Zhuangzi* text, the second foundational text of the Chinese Daoist philosophical and religious tradition (Roth 2008). Zhuangzi (c. 369-c. 286 B.C.), the putative author of the text bearing the same name, is perhaps the greatest of the early Daoist thinkers and embodies the third phase of the development of early Daoism (Fung [1948] 1997). The *Zhuangzi* text is composed of thirty-three chapters, which are further divided into the 'Inner Chapters' (1-7), the 'Outer Chapters' (8-22), and the 'Miscellaneous Chapters' (23-33). In each chapter there are several argumentative episodes, in a variety of literary styles, such as didactic narratives, poetry, and very short prose essays (Roth 2008). These argumentative episodes can be further distinguished into two general categories on the basis of their discourse structure: Monologic argumentative episodes and dialogic argumentative episodes. The monologic argumentative episodes include short argumentative essays and poems, while the dialogic argumentative episodes are presented exclusively in the form of philosophical dialogues. It may be worth mentioning that according to Fung ([1948] 1997) the *Zhuangzi* text is not the work of a single author, and there exists no consensus on the authorship of the 'Outer Chapters' and 'Miscellaneous Chapters' (for a most recent comprehensive overview, see Liu 2015). Graham ([1979] 1990), for instance, identified at least five authors of the text, namely: (i) the historical Zhuangzi, who wrote the 'Inner Chapters'; (ii) later followers of Zhuangzi; (iii) followers influenced by the individualist thinker Yang Zhu; (iv) a 'Primitivist' Daoist author whose ideas were akin to those in the *Dao De Jing* text; and (v) the 'Syncretist' Daoist authors, who compiled the first recension of the *Zhuangzi* text. Despite the possible identification of different authors, we can be almost certain that all the authors other than the historical Zhuangzi, while writing the text, intended it to be read as authentically written by Zhuangzi himself. This may be suggested by the likeness of the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters to the thought and style of the historical Zhuangzi (Mair 2000: 36-37). For instance, in terms of style there exists massive rhetorical use of philosophical dialogues and the intertextual recurrence of some argumentative episodes from the "Inner Chapters" in the later "Outer Chapters" or "Miscellaneous Chapters". These recurring argumentative episodes are most often dialogues with the same discourse participants and thematically interrelated conversational exchanges, which may even include discourse fragments directly copy-pasted from their corresponding source in the "Inner Chapters".

Importantly, the writing style of the *Zhuangzi* text is highly conversational, much resembling Plato's *Dialogues* (Fung 1964: 5). Indeed, seventy percent of the entire *Zhuangzi* text, which comprises about 80,000 Chinese characters, are dialogues (Huang 2013). The discourse characters of these dialogues are: Real historical or contemporary figures, entirely fictitious characters, deities or personified entities such as animals or plants, as well as abstract concepts (Xiang forthcoming). Critically, even when involving historical figures (e.g. actual Chinese philosophers, like Confucius or Zhuangzi himself), these dialogues actually never happened (Lu 1981: 364). Although

the dialogues are entirely made up and hence fictitious, they are not introduced for entertaining purposes. Modeled by the frame of intersubjective face-to-face communication, these non-genuine dialogues serve as a rhetorical device to present something that is very real, namely, the philosopher's actual thought (Zhang [1948] 2007; Ye [1979] 2004; Wang 2013)[5]. This is best described by the philosopher himself in Chapter 27 'Fables': "the ninety percent of my talk which is fable-like relies on other people to expound my thoughts" (Wang 1999: 475). Thus, the philosopher's voice can be 'heard' through all the characters, he is like a puppeteer or ventriloquist (cf. Cooren 2010, 2012) behind all the fable-like dialogues. In this sense, despite the abundant occurrence of non-genuine dialogues, the *Zhuangzi* text is essentially a monologic piece of written discourse that displays a large number of non-information-seeking questions, including rhetorical questions and expository questions.

The version of the original *Zhuangzi* text used in our analysis comes from *Zhuangzi yinde* ('A Concordance to Chuang Tzu'), complied by the Harvard-Yenching Institute (1956). This edition reproduces the recension of the text in the most comprehensively annotated *Collected Commentaries on Zhuangzi* (Guo [1894] 2013). Since classical Chinese is grammatically highly underspecified and context-dependent (Bisang 2008, 2013) and there is no punctuation in the original *Zhuangzi* text, it was further necessary to consult translations of the text in English, which show a much more overt grammatical structure. The English version we mostly used for reference is translated by Burton Watson ([1968] 2013), which has been accepted in the Chinese Series of the Translations Collection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and is regarded as one of the best English renditions of the text. We occasionally also consulted Wang Rongpei's (1999) translation for a proper identification and interpretation of expository questions in the text.

In order to count the number of expository questions, we first carried out a manual identification of the possible candidates in terms of the characteristic formal features of interrogatives in classical Chinese (Pulleyblank 1995; Yang and He 2001; Yi 2005) and the discursive functions of expository questions that Ilie (1999) observed in talk shows. Admittedly, certain features and discursive functions of expository questions might be genre-specific or only occur in either the oral or the written mode, but this could not entirely rule out the possibility of adopting Ilie's (1999) characterization as a general guideline when identifying expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text. Indeed, despite the possibly enormous discrepancy between frivolous talk shows and serious canonical philosophical texts, we still find it worthwhile to explore whether the way the interactional inner structure of a modern oral informal kind of discourse can also be observed in an ancient formal written text. Since we claim that the *Zhuangzi* text is structured by the Conversation Frame, it is particularly informative for us to look at the text in the light of actual conversations with a clear turn-taking pattern. Given the possible co-occurrence and overlapping of different types of non-genuine questions (cf. Ilie 1999), we finally carried out a double check of ambiguous cases against their counterparts in modern Chinese commentaries of the text (Chen 2007; Zhang [1948] 1997). Altogether we counted 965 questions in the *Zhuangzi* text, 229 out of which are

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[5] The use of dialogues as discourse strategy has also been observed in Aesop's Fables, the Socratic dialogue illustrated by the works of Plato and Xenophon as well as *The Soliloquies*, written in the fourth century by Saint Augustine of Hippo (Pascual 2014: 6). See also Goldhill (2009) for other similar use of dialogues in ancient texts.

instances of expository questions. Table 1 presents the distribution of expository questions in the three sections of the text: 80 instances in the "Inner Chapters", 101 instances in the "Outer Chapters" and 48 instances in the "Miscellaneous Chapters".
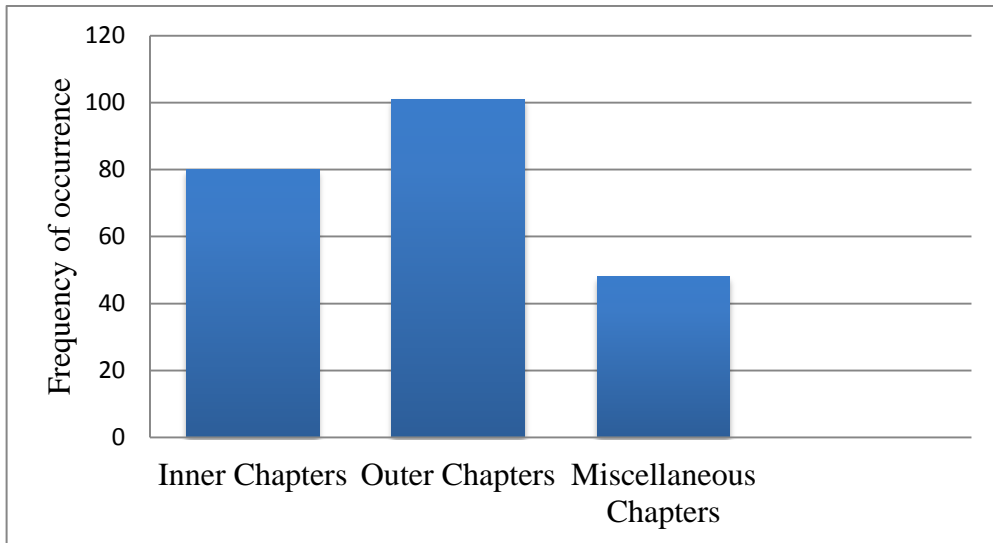

Table 1 Distribution of expository questions in the sections of the *Zhuangzi* text

For clarification purposes and following Liu (2008), we use question marks in the examples to be discussed, both in the classical Chinese original and in the English translation(s).[6] In all our examples, expository questions and the occasional occurrence of rhetorical questions in the original text are further indicated with emphasis marks (.), their corresponding English translations being italicized. The pragmatic markers presupposing intersubjectivity appear underlined in both the original and the translations. When citing examples from the original text, we follow the Yenching convention by indicating the page, chapter, and line number(s) from left to right (Harvard-Yenching Institute 1956: v-vi).

4. Analysis

In this section, we discuss expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text, treated as fictive interaction blends in both the Here-and-Now Space and the Current Discourse Space. In the Here-and-Now Space, we have the writer(s) writing and the reader(s) reading the *Zhuangzi* text. The possible different authors of the text and the subsequent readers along the centuries become massively compressed into one single fictive writer and one

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[6] In the most comprehensively punctuated and commented recensions of Old Chinese texts, expository questions—and all non-information-seeking questions, for that matter—sometimes end with full stops or exclamatory marks. This may be misleading and should be interpreted as a reflection of different interpretations of the unpunctuated original texts by later philologists. In the case of rhetorical questions, full stops and exclamatory marks added to the unpunctuated original conform to and in fact reinforce the rhetorical reading of these questions as strong assertions. This observation, however, does not apply for other types of non-genuine questions.

single fictive reader in one single fictive interaction blend. In our discussion below, when we write 'the writer', we refer to the fictive writer/narrator or what Combs (2005: 28) calls 'rhetorical persona', who in actuality is a blended identity of different authors (cf. Watson [1968] 2013). There are generally two different interactional channels in the fictive writer-reader blend: (i) the writer conceptualized as directly speaking to the reader (Herman 1999; Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Pascual 2002, 2009); and (ii) the writer engaged in talking with himself, the readers becoming the Bystander party of this fictive conversation and observing it from the sideline (Xiang forthcoming). The latter case applies to the fictive interaction involved in the expository questions in the monologic argumentative episodes of the *Zhuangzi* text. In the Current Discourse Space, we have the discourse characters in the non-genuine dialogues blended with not only the writer and reader in the writer-reader blend but also the conversational roles in the Conversation Frame. As a consequence, the discourse characters are engaged in a fictive conversation, taking the roles of fictive Addresser and fictive Addressee alternately. When it comes to expository questions in the non-genuine dialogues, one discourse character acts as the fictive questioner and the other character as the fictive answerer, providing the corresponding answer in the fictive interaction blend. Such question-answer adjacency pairs are genuine in the Story-Viewpoint Space but fictive in the Current Discourse Space, since they are produced to present the writer's ultimate philosophical message for the benefit of prospective readers (Xiang forthcoming).

We further view expository questions as instances of the split-self imagery. The split-self is a general cognitive mechanism in which one individual in one conceptual domain is construed as two or more individuals in a different domain (Mead [1934] 1955; Fauconnier [1985] 1994; Lakoff 1996). In the *Zhuangzi* text, the writer conceptually splits himself up into two or more selves, taking the roles of either the fictive questioner and answerer in the writer-reader blend or the conversing discourse characters in the Story-Viewpoint Space. Figure 1 shows the basic fictive interaction blending configuration of expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text.

4.1. *Expository questions in the Here-and-Now Space*

In this section we analyze expository questions in the Here-and-Now Space. Despite the fact that the Here-and-Now Space naturally applies through the entire *Zhuangzi* text, as shown in Figure 1, we restrict our discussion to its linguistic manifestation in the discourse content, namely in the monologic argumentative episodes. These chiefly include the short argumentative essays in the *Zhuangzi* text, as no instance of such questions has been observed in the poems. An example is:

(2) 天下有至乐无有哉？有可以活身者无有哉？今奚为奚据？奚避奚处？奚就奚去？奚乐奚恶？夫天下之所尊者，富贵寿善也；所乐者，身安厚味美服好色音声也；所下者，贫贱夭恶也；所苦者，身不得安逸，口不得厚味，形不得美服，目不得好色，耳不得音声。若不得者，则大忧以惧，其为形也亦愚哉！(46/18/1-4）
'*Is there such a thing as supreme happiness in the world, or isn't there? Is there some way to keep <u>yourself</u> alive, or isn't there? What to do, what to rely on, what to avoid, what to stick by, what to follow, what to leave alone, what to find happiness in, what to hate?* ' This is what the world honors: wealth, eminence, long life, a good name. This is what the world finds happiness

in: a life of ease, rich food, fine clothes, beautiful sights, sweet sounds. This is what it looks down on: Poverty, meanness, early death, a bad name. This is what it finds bitter: a life that knows no rest, a mouth that gets no rich food, no fine clothes for the body, no beautiful sights for the eye, no sweet sounds for the ear. People who "can't get these things" fret a great deal and are afraid - this is a stupid way to treat the body.' (Watson [1968] 2013: 139)
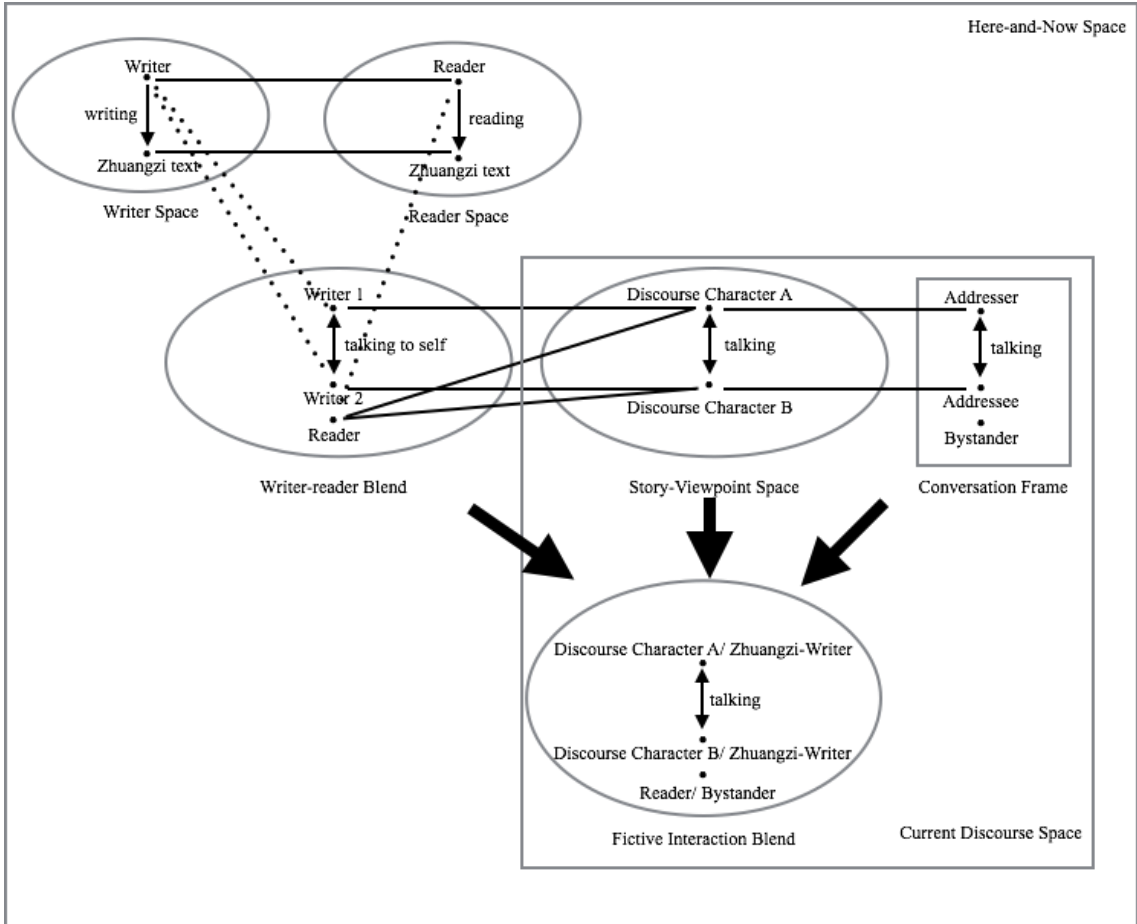

Figure 1 Fictive Interaction Blends in the *Zhuangzi* text[7]

In the above extract, we have a succession of 6 expository questions occurring at the very beginning of Chapter 18, which are used to introduce a new topic into the discourse. The title of the chapter ('Supreme Happiness') directly represents the first expository question ("*Is there such a thing as supreme happiness in the world, or isn't*

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[7] The integration network diagram in Figure 1 is highly simplified. Instead of following the notational convention of using dotted lines to indicate projections into the fictive interaction blend, we only use thick lines with arrow. The main reason for breaking this convention from the literature is merely to avoid overlapping lines in the diagram, which could be confusing and difficult to understand. For the sake of parsimony, we also omitted diagramming the split-self of the reader in the fictive interaction blend in the Current Discourse Space. While reading the non-genuine dialogues, the reader will also mentally simulate the fictive conversation and thereby also take the viewpoints of the discourse participants.

there"). By using these expository questions, the writer sets the scene for his discussion in the entire chapter. These questions belong to what Ilie (1999: 987-988) classified as topic-introducing questions, which can also appear in exactly the same position in talk shows. The primary function of the expository questions cited here seems to be drawing the readers' attention and get them cognitively involved in the discussion. The answers to the above questions are to be developed and elaborated later in the discourse.

We analyze the expository questions above as involving the writer conceptually splitting himself up into two selves, assuming the roles of both the questioner and the answerer, fictively talking with himself. The possible future factual readers become fictive Bystanders of this inner conversation. While reading this piece of discourse, readers will simultaneously mentally simulate the questioning, thereby taking the writer's perspective, and ideally come up with possible answers in their mind, which they will cognitively coordinate with the writer in the flow of discourse before reaching alignment (cf. Stanfield and Zwaan 2001; Gibbs and Matlock 2008; Bergen 2005, 2012). The philosophical message the writer wants to convey by asking these questions is in the follow-up discussions, which can be viewed as indirect but relevant answers to these questions. The successful interpretation of the expository questions in (2) thus involves the resolution of mixed viewpoints of the writer/narrator and the potential readers in the writer-reader blend. This alignment of different viewpoints requires the writer to make mental contact with the common ground of potential future readers, so as to provide an answer from their perspective. In their turn, readers will have to adopt the assumed perspective of the narrator and thus that of the original writer in order to come up with their own answer. This is made possible by the bidirectional mental simulation of the writer and the reader. Typically, the writer chooses to represent and elaborate extensively on one particular simulation within a possibly larger scope, which he or she anticipates as receptively positive on the reader. In other words, the reader's simulation is presupposed by the writer's (Hogan 2013: 5-6).

Consider now another instance of an expository question with parallel self-answered responses:

(3) [......] 庸讵知吾所谓天之非人乎？所谓人之非天乎？且有真人而后有真知。何谓真人？古之真人，不逆寡，不雄成，不谋士。[......] 古之真人，其寝不梦，其觉无忧[......]。古之真人，不知说生，不知恶死；[......] 其一与天为徒，其不一与人为徒，天与人不相胜也，是之谓真人。(15/6/3-6)

'[…] *How, then, can I know that what I call Heaven is not really man, and what I call man is not really Heaven?* There must first be a True Man before there can be true knowledge. *What do I mean by a True Man?* The True Man of ancient times did not rebel against want, did not grow proud in plenty, and did not plan his affairs. […] The True Man of ancient times slept without dreaming and woke without care; […] The True Man of ancient times knew nothing of loving life, knew nothing of hating death. […] In being one, he was acting as a companion of Heaven. In not being one, he was acting as a companion of man. When man and Heaven do not defeat each other, then we may be said to have the True Man.' (Watson [1968] 2013: 42)

In the above piece of discourse, we have a co-occurrence of two rhetorical questions and one expository question in the middle of an argumentative episode. The first two rhetorical questions are marked by the adverbial marker of rhetoricity 庸讵 ('yōng jù'), followed by an explicit answer (à la Ilie 1994: 106). Given the similarity in syntactic structure, the second rhetorical question is elliptic, leaving out the same marker of

rhetorical questioning, the main verb 知 'zhī' ("know"), as well as the inverted subject 吾 'wú' ("I").[8] The corresponding answer not only conveys the strong negative assertion of the rhetorical questions but also introduces a new topic into the discourse for further discussion and elaboration. In this sense, the first two rhetorical questions, despite the unique marker of rhetorical questioning, can also be viewed as expository questions.

After reading the first two rhetorical questions and their corresponding answer, any curious reader will start to wonder what the true man is. Through mental simulation, the writer makes contact with this possible question in the reader's mind, overtly asking the question for the reader and subsequently providing a corresponding answer himself in a long stretch of text. This instance of expository question corresponds to what Ilie (1999: 988) classified as argument-prefacing questions, which is characteristic of monologic discourse. The writer conceptually splits himself up into two selves, simultaneously assuming the roles of the questioner and the answerer, thereby engaging in a debate with himself for the benefit of readers. The readers become the fictive Bystanders of this fictive conversation, as they mentally simulate the questioning, thereby taking the writer's perspective. The philosophical message that the writer wants to convey lies in the self-answered response directly following the expository question. In the writer-reader blend, the possibly different viewpoints between the writer and the assumed readers are resolved and become aligned. Thus, there is a fictive kind of interaction underlying the text that cannot be observed in the Here-and-Now of the writer or reader.

4.2. *Expository questions in the Current Discourse Space*

In this section we analyze expository questions in the Current Discourse Space, i.e., expository questions in the fable-like dialogues in the *Zhuangzi* text. The non-genuine dialogues prototypically comprise one or more turns between two story characters. The ultimate philosophical message of these dialogues is presented for the benefit of the subsequent readers of the text by one of the discourse characters. Occasionally, some dialogues involve a third discourse participant as Bystander, who overhears the ongoing dialogue and makes relevant conclusive comments, which in their turn constitute the very moral of the story (Xiang forthcoming). In the case of expository questions, the ultimate philosophical message may often lie in the follow-up answers provided by the fictive Addressee in the fictive interaction blend. These dialogues suggest that there exist multiple viewpoints in the text and that we can observe a blending chain of perspectives in the fictive interaction blend embedded in the Current Discourse Space.

In the following we examine three different types of expository questions in the fable-like dialogues, each with distinctive features. Consider first a succession of expository questions at the beginning of a piece of conversation between two fictitious characters, an anonymous imaginary character and the equally imaginary shaman Xian:

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[8] The ellipsis in the classical Chinese original also appears in the corresponding English rendition, in which the first two rhetorical questions are translated as one sole rhetorical question involving coordination.

(4) "天其运乎？地其运乎？日月其争于所乎？孰主张是？孰维纲是？孰居无事推而行是？意者其有机缄而不得已邪？意者其运转而不能自止邪？云者为雨乎？雨者为云乎？孰隆施是？孰居无事淫乐而劝是？风起北方，一西一东，有上彷徨。孰嘘吸是？孰居无事而披拂是？敢问何故？"巫咸祒曰："来！吾语女。天有六极五常，帝王顺之则治，逆之则凶。九洛之事，治成德备，监照下土，天下戴之，此谓上皇。"(36/14/1-5)

'"*Does heaven turn? Does the earth sit still? Do sun and moon compete for a place to shine? Who masterminds all this? Who pulls the strings? Who, resting inactive himself, gives the push that makes it go this way? I wonder, is there some mechanism that works it and won't let it stop? I wonder if it just rolls and turns and can't bring itself to a halt? Do the clouds make the rain, or does the rain make the clouds? Who puffs them up, who showers them down like this? Who, resting inactive himself, stirs up all this lascivious joy?* The winds rise in the north, blowing now west, now east, whirling up to wander on high. *Whose breaths and exhalations are they? Who, resting inactive himself, huffs and puffs them about like this?*" The shaman Xian beckoned and said, "Come - I will tell you. Heaven has the six directions and the five constants. When emperors and kings go along with these, there is good order; when they move contrary to these, there is disaster. With the instructions of the Nine Luo, order can be made to reign and virtue completed. The ruler will shine mirror-like over the earth below, and the world will bear him up. He may be called an August One."' (Watson [1968] 2013: 108)

The entire argumentative episode, consisting of a single question-answer adjacency pair, occurs at the very beginning of Chapter 14. The anonymous speaking character produces 15 genuine fictitious questions to the shaman in a non-genuine dialogue that only exists in the story. As in example (2), the answer-seeking questions by the anonymous character serve to introduce a new topic into the discourse and set the scene for discussion and elaboration in the rest of the chapter. The title of the chapter ('The Turning of Heaven') also comes from the first expository question ("*Does heaven turn?*"). In this sense, these questions can be categorized as topic-introducing questions (Ilie 1999: 988). Meanwhile, they should elicit mental responses from the Addressee, so they can also be viewed as argument-eliciting questions.

The dialogue serves as a rhetorical means to present the philosopher's worldview, intended for the benefit of subsequent readers. Therefore, these fictitious, factive questions in the story also serve fictive purposes to introduce the philosopher's point, through the voice of the fictional shaman. While reading the above argumentative episode, readers will also mentally simulate the questioning. They will thereby take the perspective of the anonymous questioner to whom the shaman answers and come up with possible answers in their mind. In the Here-and-Now Space, we have the conventional writer-reader blend, in which the viewpoints of the writer and the assumed readers are aligned. In the Current Discourse Space, the projected viewpoints of the imaginary anonymous character and the shaman are integrated in the fictive interaction blend, so that they can identify and interpret the message they want to convey. Hence, the successful interpretation of the expository questions in (4) involves the mixed viewpoints of the writer/narrator and the assumed readers, as well as the perspectives ascribed to the story characters (i.e. the anonymous character and the Shaman Xian).

Take now the following instance of expository questions in an embedded monologue:

(5)"既使我与若辩矣，若胜我，我不若胜，<u>若</u>果是也？<u>我</u>果非也邪？我胜若，若不吾胜，<u>我</u>果是也？<u>而</u>果非也邪？其或是也？其或非也邪？其俱是也？其俱非也邪？我与若不能相知也。则人固受其黮闇，<u>吾</u>谁使正之？使同乎<u>若</u>者正之？既与若同矣，恶能正之！使同乎<u>我</u>者正之？既同乎我矣，恶能正之！使异乎<u>我</u>与<u>若</u>者正之？既异乎我与若矣，恶能正之！使同乎<u>我</u>与<u>若</u>者正之？既同乎我与若矣，恶能正之！然则我与若与人俱不能相知也，而待彼也邪？" (7/2/84-90)

"'Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, *then are <u>you</u> necessarily right and am <u>I</u> necessarily wrong?* If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, *then am <u>I</u> necessarily right and are <u>you</u> necessarily wrong? Is one of <u>us</u> right and the other wrong? Are both of <u>us</u> right or are both of <u>us</u> wrong?* If you and I don't know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. *Whom shall <u>we</u> get to decide what is right? Shall <u>we</u> get someone who agrees with <u>you</u> to decide?* But if he already agrees with you, *how can he decide fairly? Shall <u>we</u> get someone who agrees with <u>me</u>?* But if he already agrees with me, *how can he decide? Shall <u>we</u> get someone who disagrees with both of <u>us</u>?* But if he already disagrees with both of us, *how can he decide? Shall <u>we</u> get someone who agrees with both of <u>us</u>?* But if he already agrees with both of us, *how can he decide?* Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can decide for each other. Shall we wait for still another person?'" (Watson [1968] 2013: 17)

This piece of monologue is embedded in and occurs at the near end of a non-genuine dialogue enacted between two fictitious characters, 瞿鹊子 'Ququezi' and 长梧子 'Changwuzi'. Altogether we have a succession of 13 expository questions: Some used to problematize a controversial issue; others used to preface an argument. The answers to these questions are all indirect, either presupposed in the immediate context or presented as conditional clauses with rhetorical questions as their apodoses (e.g. "But if he already agrees with me, *how can he decide?*"). These expository questions can be classified as both argument-prefacing and argument-eliciting questions, since they occur in a monologic part of a conversation and are followed by a self-answered response. At the same time, they can also elicit a mental response from the intended Addressee involved in a non-genuine dialogue (i.e. a story character).

In (5) we have the rarely abundant use of such pragmatic markers as the first person singular 我 'wǒ' and 吾 'wú' and the second person pronoun 若 'ruò', which presuppose intersubjectivity. These personal pronouns can have both a definite and an indefinite reading. In the story, these pronouns refer to the historical characters Changwuzi and Ququezi, the two conversing characters in this passage. Since the characters speak for the philosopher, we first have the writer conceptually splitting himself up into two selves, taking the roles of both the Addresser and the Addressee of the non-genuine dialogue. Meanwhile, Changwuzi, the speaker of the above monologue, also takes the roles of the questioner and the answerer through a split of the self. Changwuzi as character needs to make mental contact with the possible questions that Ququezi could have in his mind, thereby taking his interlocutor's viewpoint. He then provides corresponding answers to these questions, which constitute the very message the character Changwuzi is presented as wanting to convey. In their turn, these answers naturally also represent the philosophical message that the writer Zhuangzi intends to put forward to subsequent readers. While reading the piece of discourse in (5), the

reiterating first and second person pronouns prompt readers to mentally simulate the ongoing debate by imagining themselves taking the perspective of the writer (cf. Bergen and Chang 2005; Brunyé et al. 2009; Herman 2002). The successful interpretation of the expository questions above involves the alignment of the mixed viewpoints of the writer/narrator, the assumed readers, and the imaginary story characters Changwuzi and Ququezi. Thus analyzed, expository questions in example (5) involve a blending chain of intersubjectively aligned perspectives.

Finally, consider an instance of expository question-answer pairs occurring both in the middle and at the near end of a non-genuine dialogue:

(6) 曰：“回！无受天损易，无受人益难。无始而非卒也，人与天一也。夫今之歌者其谁乎？”回曰：“敢问无受天损易？”仲尼曰：“饥溺寒暑，穷桎不行，天地之行也，运物之泄也，[......]执臣之道犹若是，而况乎所以待天乎？”“何谓无受人益难？”仲尼曰：“始用四达，爵禄并至而不穷，物之所利，乃非己也，[......]吾若取之，何哉？[......]”“何谓无始而非卒？”仲尼曰：“化其万物而不知其禅之者，焉知其所终？焉知其所始？正而待之而已耳。”“何谓天与人一邪？”仲尼曰：“有人，天也；有天，亦天也。[......]”(53/20/54-54/20/61)

(Confucius said,) "'Hui! It is easy to be indifferent to the afflictions of Heaven, but hard to be indifferent to the benefits of man. No beginning but has its end, and man and Heaven are one. Who is it, then, who sings this song now?" Hui said, *"May I venture to ask what you mean when you say it is easy to be indifferent to the afflictions of Heaven?"* Confucius said, "Hunger, thirst, cold, heat, barriers and blind alleys that will not let you pass – these are the workings of Heaven and earth, the shifts of ever-turning things. […] And if he is thus faithful to the way of a true minister, *how much more would he be if he were to attend upon Heaven?"* *"And what do you mean when you say that it is hard to be indifferent to the benefits of man?"* Confucius replied, "A man sets out on a career, and soon he is advancing in all four directions at once. Titles and stipends come raining down on him without end, but these are merely material profits and have nothing to do with the man himself. […] *What business would I have, then, trying to acquire such things?* […]" *"And what do you mean by saying, 'No beginning but has its end'?"* Confucius said, "There is a being who transforms the ten thousand things, yet we do not know how he works these changes. *How do we know what is an end? How do we know what is a beginning?* The only thing for us to do is just to wait!" *"And what do you mean by saying, 'man and Heaven are one'?"* Confucius said, "Man exists because of Heaven, and Heaven too exists because of Heaven. […]"'" (Watson [1968] 2013: 163-164)

The four question-answer sequences in (6) convey the quintessential message of this argumentative episode, which is a conversation between two historical figures, Confucius and his most favorite disciple, Yan Hui. Yan Hui is presented as producing four genuine questions to Confucius to inquire about the Daoist philosophical propositions in the preceding discourse, which ends with an open philosophical question ("*Who is it, then, who sings this song now?"*). In his responses to Yan Hui's inquiries, Confucius also produces two information-seeking questions and two rhetorical questions.

It should be noted that the above piece of discourse is no quote from an actual conversation between these two historical figures, as the dialogue could never have happened (Lu 1981: 364). As it is, Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, is presented here as giving his own philosophical view, corresponding in the text with Daoism rather than with Confucianism, which in fact has an opposite position on life. Daoist

philosopher Zhuangzi makes use of this imagined conversation for his own rhetorical purposes. Note too that the actual philosophical message of this non-genuine dialogue is presented through the question-answer sequences between Yan Hui and Confucius, whose answers are claimed to possess certain evidential value and are used to "put an end to further argument" (Wang 1999: 475). Hence, these six fictitious information-seeking questions are further used fictively as expository questions. The four questions Yan Hui asks can be categorized as prototypical argument-eliciting questions, which can elicit not only mental responses but also actual verbalized answers from the character Confucius. The two information-seeking questions in Confucius' response to Yan Hui's third question are followed by an indirect answer and can thus be viewed as argument-prefacing questions. Therefore, Confucius is here engaged with talking to himself by assuming the roles of the fictive questioner and answerer through a split-self.

Given that Confucius and Yan Hui are no Daoist philosophers, their actual perspectives are necessarily blended with the Daoist writer as narrator. While reading the text, the readers will mentally simulate the conversation, thus also adopting the viewpoints of the discourse characters. Furthermore, in his response to Yan Hui, Confucius also needs to be construed as making mental contact with the possible questions that the latter could have in his mind, thereby taking his interlocutor's viewpoint so as to provide a corresponding answer. The successful interpretation of the four question-answer pairs above lies in the alignment of the viewpoints of the writer and the assumed readers as well as those ascribed to the discourse characters, Confucius and Yan Hui, so that they can identify and interpret the message each is presented as intending to communicate.

5. Summary and discussion

In this study we examined the use of expository questions in the entire *Zhuangzi* text (4th c. B.C.). Our analysis suggests that the position of expository questions in an argumentative episode can be very flexible. They may occur at the very beginning (egs. 2 and 4), in the middle (eg. 3) and/or at the near end (egs. 5 and 6). Moreover, expository questions may be preceded by short discourse fragments, as in examples (3) and (6). The flexibility of position, coupled with the occurrence of preceding discourse fragments, disapproves Ilie's initial generalization regarding the usual position and immediate linguistic context of expository questions (1999: 980). Prototypical expository questions are more often than not followed by direct answers (egs. 3 and 6). Answers may alternatively be indirect and presupposed in the immediate context (egs. 2, 4 and 5). Expository questions may also occur in isolation (eg. 3), and more often in a cluster (maximally 15 in a row), as in examples (2), (4) and (5). Additionally, they may be used together with other types of non-information-seeking questions, such as rhetorical questions (egs. 3, 5 and 6). Parallel expository questions with exactly the same skeletal formal structures may occur in a cyclic manner in a succession (egs. 2, 4 and 5). That is, a set of expository questions with a similar syntactic structure may be followed immediately by another set of expository questions with a different syntactic structure. Likewise, answers to expository questions can appear as parallel structures

(eg. 3). Finally, expository question-answer adjacency pairs may also occur in parallel, as in example (6).

Given the high underspecificity and context-dependence of classical Chinese (Bisang 2008, 2013) and the lack of punctuation in the original *Zhuangzi* text, the readers' identification of expository questions can be achieved partly through the presence of final particles in yes-no questions and that of interrogative pronouns or adverbs with or without final particles in wh-questions, and partly through mental simulation. This is due to the fact that the occurrence of final particles is not always sufficient, since the same final particle can sometimes also occur in declaratives or exclamatives. Additionally, the word order of interrogatives in classical Chinese is mostly SVO and will only be reversed in a few exceptional cases, for instance when the interrogative pronoun or adverb is used as the object of the verb (Pulleyblank 1995). In this sense, fictive interaction in the *Zhuangzi* text, as illustrated by the use of expository questions, is mostly underspecified.

As shown in Table 2, our statistical analysis of the distribution of expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text suggests that out of the three subtypes, the most frequent type are argument-eliciting questions, with a total of 125 instances, as opposed to topic-introducing questions, with 24 instances, and argument-prefacing questions, with 80 instances. This contradicts Ilie's conclusion that expository questions in talk shows "tend to be more argument-prefacing" (1999: 997), which suggests that the distribution and characteristics of expository questions in discourse might be genre-specific. We further observed that Ilie's (1999: 988) category of expository questions as argumentatively oriented is not a clear-cut one. We found overlaps of topic-introducing and argument-eliciting questions (in example 4), and argument-prefacing and argument-eliciting questions (in example 5). In terms of argumentative value, there is a difference among the three subtypes of expository questions. Argument-eliciting questions, which involve an elicitation of mental responses from the Addressee, have a higher argumentative value than topic-introducing and argument-prefacing questions.

In this paper we analyzed expository questions as instances of fictive interaction in the Here-and-Now Space and the Current Discourse Space. In the *Zhuangzi* text, the writer conceptually splits himself up into two or more selves and talks to himself in a ventriloquial manner by taking the roles of both the Addresser and the Addressee (cf. Cooren 2010, 2012; Blondell 2002). These may either be the fictive questioner and answerer in the writer-reader blend or the discourse characters in the Story-Viewpoint Space. The subsequent readers become the Bystanders of this fictive conversation. We argue that the use of expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text constitutes a discourse strategy. Modeled by the pattern of ordinary face-to-face conversation (Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2014), expository questions can help turn the text more engaging.
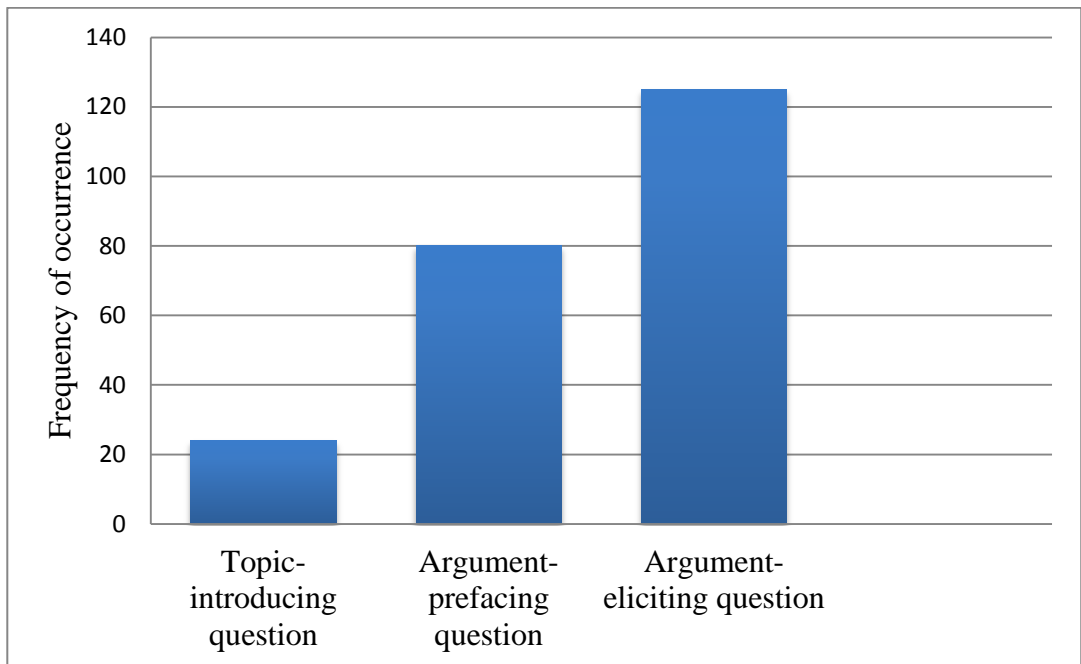
Table 2 Distribution of the subtypes of expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text[9]

Expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text are intersubjective in nature, as they are used to express the narrator's position on a particular issue, which is to be jointly attended to and resolved in the reader's mind. Their ultimate goal is to convince the reader of the provided or presupposed answer to the question asked by exploring the mutually shared information. In short, expository questions are intersubjectively grounded, since they involve the mutual sharing and management of the viewpoints of the Addresser and the Addressee (i.e. the philosopher) as well as the Bystander (i.e. the reader) (cf. Verhagen 2005, 2008; Zlatev et al. 2008). In *Zhuangzi,* the writer integrates his own perspective with that of the assumed readers through non-information-seeking questions, ascribed to the narrator or to the discourse characters, in order to convince them of his original insights into human nature and the universe. Meanwhile, the readers will also mentally simulate the questioning in the short argumentative essays or the fictive conversations and thereby take the viewpoints of the writer or the discourse participants. In a text with multiple viewpoints, expository questions may be viewed as intersubjective mixed viewpoint constructions, whose interpretation is closely related to the common ground (immediate situated context, world knowledge, etc.), as has been claimed for rhetorical questions (Oakley and Tobin 2014).

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 [9] In Table 2, we only present the distribution of the subtypes of expository questions as defined by Ilie (1999). We intentionally omitted the distribution of the overlapping instances of expository questions, as they are statistically insignificant. In addition, when it comes to the overlapping cases, there is always a primary reading of the question under analysis according to Ilie's definition. Furthermore, the basic statistical result in Table 2 is presented with a view to helping readers gain a general idea of the representativeness of the examples discussed in Section 4 against the overall occurrence of expository questions in the *Zhuangzi* text. Thanks to one anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.

6. Conclusions

Our analysis suggests that, despite the possible differences pointed out in the summary section, expository questions display parallel features (e.g. successive occurrence) and discursive functions (e.g. organizing argument) in as different discourse types as the philosophical text *Zhuangzi*, talk shows (Ilie 1999) or courtroom monologues (Pascual 2002, 2006b). This indicates that conversationalization, namely "the modeling of […] discourse upon the discursive practices of ordinary life, 'conversational' practices in a broad sense" (Fairclough 1994: 235), is a widespread phenomenon. It is thus certainly not restricted to modern institutional discourse (Fairclough 1994; Vis 2011; Vis, et al. 2012) or spoken informal speech by the contemporary youth (Streeck 2002). Indeed, counter to the common assumption in discourse studies, the use of conversational structures in discourse, such as non-genuine questions, is far from new. It can be found in ancient written texts, such as the Bible (Miller 1996), the Quran (Badarneh 2003), witchcraft pamphlets (Chaemsaithong 2013, forthcoming), or, as we have shown, the *Zhuangzi* text.

We further showed that expository questions in the dialogic argumentative episodes of *Zhuangzi* are genuine questions produced by story characters in fictitious conversations that serve as discourse-organizing device. This suggests that fiction may be embedded in factuality and used for fictive purposes (Xiang forthcoming).

The repetitive use of parallel expository questions or follow-up answers with exactly the same syntactic structure in the *Zhuangzi* text is reminiscent of oral literature. Stories that were told for generations before they were ever written down often have these kinds of repetitive sequences, which presumably helped the narrator remember the text. But maybe the repetition also served the function of allowing the listener to engage with the developing 'story': If you as a listener know what is coming up, you can almost recite along with the narrator, helping you engage in the story-telling experience. The reader can 'sing along', as it were, with the writer when such 'refrains' occur, and eventually pass the text on to the next generation.[10] Indeed, ancient texts contain heavy oral residues, what we refer to as 'oral traces', at various levels. These are not confined to communal formulaic sayings, proverbs, or rhetorical devices such as parallelism, balance and antithesis, used in oral cultures for mnemonic purposes (Ong [1982] 2002). Rather, they also include conversational structures such as question-answer sequences, as those discussed in this paper. The pervasive orality features in ancient texts are definitely not the direct leftovers of an oral culture, as the term 'oral residues' may suggest, but rather 'footprints' or 'traces' from a predominantly oral culture that survived in these written texts. We propose that this orality feature of ancient texts also reflects the fact that they were meant to be read aloud or performed and commented on in a community (Bowery 2007). More generally, it is our contention that the ubiquitous conversational structures in both ancient and contemporary discourse emerge from the intrinsically conversational mind of us interacting social beings (Brandt 2013; Pascual 2014).

The abundant occurrence of non-genuine questions in general in ancient Chinese philosophical texts such as *Zhuangzi* seems to instantiate Bakhtin's view that language, of which texts are made of, is conversational in nature. According to Bakhtin ([1975]

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[10] Thanks to Alan Cienki for pointing this out to us.

1981), language is a dialogic phenomenon by nature, which emerges from the interaction of those who use it. Holquist further elaborates on this view, stating that "language, when it *means*, is somebody talking to somebody else, even when that someone else is one's own inner Addressee" (Bakhtin [1975] 1981: xxi). Bakhtin ([1979] 1986) treats every piece of discourse as an instance of language use, structured dialogically by a multiplicity of voices, instantiating a compilation of different texts. This understanding can account for the pervasiveness of intertextuality and multi-voicedness and the phenomenon in which an author 'speaks' through different characters such as historical and imagined figures, as well as animals, plants or deities, as in the *Zhuangzi* text (Xiang forthcoming). The contemporary version of Bakhtin's dialogic view of language can be observed in the 'from discourse to grammar' framework, according to which linguistic structures are usage-based (Langacker 1987, 1991) and thus emerge from discourse or more specifically, from situated talk-in-interaction (cf. Li and Thompson 1976; Sankoff and Brown 1976; Givón 1983; Du Bois 2014). Language and discourse thus reflect their mode of use. Clearly, the primacy of face-to-face conversation and the predominant audio-visual mode of communication exert a profound influence on both the structure of discourse and the form grammar takes.

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