

# Three Relations between the Symbolic Words of the *Book of Changes*

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the relationship between symbolic-numerical systems and philosophical interpretations in *Zhouyi* (*Book of Changes*) scholarship, focusing on three core questions: whether Yi studies can operate independently of symbolic-numerical frameworks, the existence of unified standards for interpreting symbols, and the feasibility of achieving complete correspondence between symbolic texts and their corresponding images. Through historical textual analysis and close reading methods, this research systematically examines the theoretical frameworks and practical implementations of Yi scholars like Wang Bi and Yu Fan across dynasties, analyzing both macro-level theoretical traditions and micro-level textual commentaries. The analysis yields three principal findings. First, Wang Bi, traditionally regarded as the founder of the philosophical school, extensively employed Han-Dynasty symbolic-numerological techniques—such as “opposition,” “interconnecting,” “ascent and descent,” and “hexagram transformation”—in his *Zhouyi Commentary*, revealing that his interpretations remained grounded in symbolic-numerological principles. Second, the Yi Zhuan (Ten Wings), particularly the Shuogua Zhuan (Treatise on the Trigrams), established a universally acknowledged standard for symbol interpretation accepted by both the philosophical and symbolic-numerological schools. Third, the classical compilation principle of “observing the images to compose the judgments” provides a theoretical foundation for the possibility of full text-image correspondence. The study concludes that: Yi studies cannot be divorced from symbolic-numerical systems; symbol interpretation should adhere to the unified standards set by the Yi Zhuan; while strict adherence to these standards achieves complete correspondence, scholars must avoid “lost images” beyond the Zhuan’s scope to prevent excessive proliferation of symbolic-numerical interpretations.

**Keywords:** *Zhouyi*; Symbolic-numerical vs. Philosophical; Symbol interpretation methods; Correspondence between symbolic texts and images

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## 1. Introduction

As a cornerstone of ancient Chinese philosophy and culture, the interpretive tradition of the *Zhouyi* has evolved over millennia, resulting in a long-standing dichotomy between the two major schools: the School of Meaning (Yili) and the School of Symbolic Numbers (Xiangshu). This divergence pertains not only to the exegesis of the *Zhouyi* text but also profoundly shaped the cosmology, epistemology, and methodology of traditional Chinese culture. However, through a textual analysis of works by seminal scholars like Wang Bi, this study reveals that these traditionally opposed schools actually shared a degree of methodological integration. Specifically, Wang Bi, a paragon of the School of Meaning,

extensively employed Han-Dynasty symbolic-numerological methods such as “opposing hexagrams” and “hexagram transformation” in his Annotations on the *Zhouyi*. The research further demonstrates that the *Yizhuan* (especially the Shuogua Zhuan) provided a unified standard for symbolic interpretation acknowledged by both schools. Moreover, the very compilation process of the *Zhouyi*—governed by the principle of ‘observing images to attach the statements’—established the theoretical basis for the correspondence between text and symbol. Thus, this study challenges the rigid binary framework dominating contemporary Yiology, offering a new perspective for re-examining the Chinese Yi-studies tradition.

## 2. Can the interpretation of Yi be separated from the Symbolic-Numericals?

This issue has a long history, and scholars of the *Zhouyi* have long debated it. When we look back at history, it is not difficult to find that this question can be replaced by another one more familiar to scholars: “Is Wang Bi’s approach of interpreting the Yi through principles<sup>[1]</sup> and discarding symbolic-numerical interpretations valid?” The reason this transformation is possible lies in Wang Bi’s integration of Confucian and Daoist approaches to interpret the Yi<sup>[2]</sup>, while rejecting symbolic-numerical interpretations—such as “the six-line transformations... all dismissed<sup>[3]</sup>. “ After the Han Dynasty Yi studies renowned for their symbolic-numerical approach, he became the progenitor of the principle-based school and consistently represented the pinnacle of interpreting the Yi through principles in Chinese history<sup>[4]</sup>. This influence was so profound that Kong Yingda of the Tang Dynasty cited him as the blueprint for interpreting the Yi when compiling the Five Classics Commentary<sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, if even Wang Bi, hailed as the “pinnacle of principle-based Yi interpretation, “ could not escape the framework of symbolic-numerical approaches, we have reason to believe that interpreting the Yi cannot be separated from symbolic-numerical methods.

With the continuous exploration of the academic system of Wang Bi’s interpretation of the Yi, the traditional view that Wang Bi’s interpretation of the Yi rejects the image and number but only respects the principle is in danger: From the perspective of the macro inheritance of Yi studies, Wang Bi’s study of Yi interpretation was inherited from Fei Zhi, which is the general consensus of scholars in successive dynasties.<sup>[6]</sup> Feizhi said in the *Book of Changes* that “there are no chapters and sentences, but only ten chapters of text and explanation of the upper and lower classics in the Tuan, Xiang and Xici” (*The Book of Han*, Confucian Forest Biography). It can be seen that Fei Zhi explained the Yi only in accordance with the Yi Zhuan, and this school of thought was passed down to Wang Bi, who took the return to the Yi Zhuan as his main purpose<sup>[7]</sup>. The *Yi Zhuan* contains numerous symbolic interpretations in its key sections such as the Tuan, Xiang, and Xi Ci.

For instance, the Tuan passage describes the Tun hexagram: “When hardness and softness first interact. . . movement occurs amidst peril. “ The hexagram’s structure features Kan above and Zhen below. Kan represents the middle female trigram while Zhen signifies the eldest son, forming a pattern of softness above and hardness below.

As the thirty-four hexagrams begin with Qian and Kun (the primordial forces of heaven and earth), the Tun hexagram stands as the third hexagram marking the initial formation of heaven and earth. This explains the phrase “hardness and softness first interact. “ Furthermore, the *Yi Zhuan Shuo Gua* (Commentary on the Hexagrams) describes Kan as “perilous” and Zhen as “movement” —with Zhen positioned below Kan, thus illustrating “movement occurring amidst peril. “ This demonstrates that while the \*Yi Zhuan\* emphasizes philosophical principles, it also values symbolic-numerical interpretations. Wang Bi’s core mission was to return to the \*Yi Zhuan\*, it was impossible for Wang Bi to focus exclusively on principles to the complete exclusion of image-number methods. Through persistent research by modern scholars, it has been revealed that Wang Bi’s annotations extensively employ symbolic-numerical approaches, including theories like the main line theory and line position theory. Some of his interpretations even closely align with those of symbolic-numerical scholars<sup>[8]</sup>. Consequently, some scholars have advanced the argument that Wang Bi did not disregard Symbolic-Numerical, but advocated the theory to hide the Symbolic-Numerical in the interpretation of the Yi, so as to correct the excessive overuse of Symbolic-Numerical in the interpretation of the Yi during the Han Dynasty<sup>[9]</sup>.

From the perspective of the micro text of the *Book of Changes*, Wang Bi's Commentary on the Zhou Yi did not completely break away from the "Han Dynasty" system of interpreting the *Book of Changes*. For example, he notes the sixth two of the Yi hexagram, saying: "By being soft and staying in the center, one can obtain the position; by staying in the center and dwelling in the Yi, one can achieve harmony."

The Yi comes from outside without being summoned, coming without first doing anything. Then the turtle and the cockerel offer advice together, just like the sixth five of the Shang hexagram<sup>[10]</sup>. "The commentary on the third line of the Gua hexagram states: "Nuo (meaning 'surface power') refers to the upper six lines. As they occupy the highest position, it is called 'power'. The third line of the Pei hexagram corresponds to yang virtue. When yang prevails, the path of the noble person flourishes; when yin dominates, the ways of the petty become dominant. Therefore, it is virtuous to support yang in a yin-dominated situation, but disastrous to assist softness in a rigid environment<sup>[10]</sup>. "His note on the ninth line in the second place ( 九二 ) of the Xiao Xu (Small Domestication) hexagram states: "To be in the middle of Qian and ascend to the fifth of Xun. The fifth is not the extreme of animal husbandry, nor is it a person who is stubborn<sup>[10]</sup>. "Modern scholar Zhang Pei points out that it follows the "opposition", "interconnecting" and "elevation" from the "Han Dynasty Symbolic-Numerical<sup>[11]</sup>". Beyond the three aforementioned "Han Dynasty Xiangshu" principles, Wang Bi's commentary on the \*Yi Jing\* incorporates numerous other "Han Yi Xiangshu" concepts. The most notable among these is the "hexagram transformation interpretation of the \*Yi Jing\*": For instance, regarding the second line of the \*Dian\* hexagram, Wang Bi notes: "The upper six positions of Kun (Qin) occupy the second position, embodying the principle of softness manifesting as strength; while the second line of Qian (Qin) occupies the upper position, representing the principle of firmness manifested as softness. " Song dynasty scholar Zhu Zhen commented: "This is precisely hexagram transformation. Yet despite Wang Bi's well-documented criticisms of hexagram transformation, he nevertheless utilized the fundamental relationship between the second and fifth lines<sup>[10]</sup>. "Regarding the fourth line (which can be either a Yin or Yang line in different contexts) of the Huan (Dispersion) hexagram, Wang Bi's commentary states: "The second line is strong and comes from within, but does not exhaust the danger; the fourth line is soft and obtains its position outside, and is in harmony with the upper<sup>[12]</sup>. "Jiao Xun of the Qing Dynasty commented on it: "It uses the example of the two of the four of the hexagram change, but does not mention the self-falsification<sup>[13]</sup>. "Ming Dynasty scholar Dong Shouyu also said in his book "A Brief Study of The Changes of the Hexagrams" that Wang Bi and Kong Yingda's works on the *Book of Changes* all discussed the transformation of the two hexagrams from the Tai hexagram. Therefore, Zhu Bokun concluded that Wang Bi did not completely reject the concept of hexagram change<sup>[14]</sup>.

From this, Professor Wen Haiming further proposed that hexagram change is the inherent meaning of the *Book of Changes*<sup>[15]</sup>, and regarded hexagram change as the general principle for understanding the hexagram and line texts of the *Book of Changes*<sup>[16]</sup>.

Therefore, whether examined from a macro perspective of academic tradition or a micro perspective of specific hexagram interpretation, Wang Bi's Commentary is shown to have originated from, and remained inseparable from, Han Dynasty image-number scholarship. For millennia, Wang Bi has borne the reputation of "sweeping away the images"<sup>[8]</sup>, as scholar Liu Yameng explains. This tradition continues the Yi Jing interpretation approach from Meng Jing onward<sup>[17]</sup>, evolving from<sup>[18]</sup> "external analogical comparison" to "internal deductive reasoning." Grounding his work in Daoist philosophy (e. g. , Zhuangzi) and theories on the limitations of language<sup>[19]</sup>, Wang Bi developed his signature principles of "grasping images while forgetting words" and "understanding essence while discarding imagery<sup>[20]</sup>. " From a critical perspective of selective retention, he restructured Han Dynasty I Ching scholarship, aiming to revive the ancient tradition of emphasizing philosophical depth in *Yizhuan* commentaries while eliminating the rigid fixation on hexagram symbolism<sup>[21]</sup>. His hermeneutic project sought to restore the balance between symbolic imagery and textual explanations as envisioned in \*Xici\* (Commentary on the Attached Phrases), where "a noble person observes symbols and contemplates their meanings" – a balanced approach that values both visual interpretation and textual analysis<sup>[18]</sup>. The main thought is concentrated in the "Brief Examples of the Zhou Yi": "The image is the one that gives rise to the idea... To grasp the idea is to forget the image, and to grasp the image is to forget the words<sup>[22]</sup>. "Since Wang Bi's interpretation of the \*Yi

Jing\* is inseparable from symbolic-numerical elements, and he himself was the foremost scholar in history to reject symbolic-numerical interpretations through philosophical reasoning, no other scholars have been able to interpret the \*Yi Jing\* without such elements — thus confirming that the \*Yi Jing\* cannot be understood apart from symbolic-numerical principles. As for Wang Bi's other related ideas, the author will not elaborate further.

### 3. Is there an unified standard for image interpretation?

Having established that \*Yijing\* interpretation cannot be separated from image-number analysis, the next crucial step is to determine if there exists a universally recognized standard for its application. This is precisely the core question this section explores: “Does image-number interpretation have a unified standard?”

Before such a standard emerges, we should examine it through both historical and contemporary perspectives. Historically, this standard should originate from the era when the *Zhouyi* was compiled. As King Wen's *I Ching* drew from a time-honored tradition, the passage of time has led to significant deviations between modern interpretations and its original intent. To restore the *Zhouyi*'s authentic meaning, this standard must derive from the earliest extant texts available to contemporary scholars.

From a contemporary perspective, it must gain consensus among modern interpreters of both principle-based and symbolic-numerical schools. Throughout the *Zhouyi*'s evolution, Yi studies have traditionally divided into principle-based and symbolic-numerical schools. If this standard achieves mutual recognition between these two schools, it essentially gains the endorsement of the entire modern Yi studies community<sup>[10]</sup>. When we explore whether there is a unified standard for taking images in both historical and realistic aspects, the answer can only be the *Yizhuan*.

Historically, the *Yi Zhuan* (Commentary on the Book of Changes) remains the earliest extant ancient text providing systematic interpretations of the *Zhouyi*<sup>[23]</sup>, exerting an enduring influence on generations of scholars. This is an indisputable fact<sup>[24]</sup>.

Although academic debates about whether the *Yi Zhuan* was authored by Confucius have evolved from Ouyang Xiu's Northern Song-era theory<sup>[25]</sup> — “it wasn't Confucius but a Confucian work” — to Chen Guying's assertion that “it's not a Confucian but a Taoist text”<sup>[26]</sup>, “these developments do not diminish its status as the earliest and most authoritative foundational text for interpreting the *Book of Changes*”<sup>[27]</sup>.

From a practical perspective, the *Yi Zhuan* has long served as the foundational text for both the School of Meaning (Yili) and the School of Image-Number (Xiangshu) in interpreting the *Book of Changes*. Professor Zhang Wenzhi from Shandong University has explicitly stated that both schools trace their origins to the *Yi Zhuan*. He further explains that Han Dynasty scholars neglected the study of meaning-principles, while Wei-Jin scholars overemphasized symbolic-numerology<sup>[23]</sup>.

The millennia-long debate between these two schools ultimately originated from this divergence. This reveals that despite their historical disputes, the *Yi Zhuan* remains the universally acknowledged source of *Book of Changes* interpretation.

Based on the above two arguments, the Commentary on the *Book of Changes* deserves to be called the unified standard of image-taking in academia. In addition to the important chapters such as the upper and lower chapters of the Commentary on the Attached Phrases, the upper and lower chapters of the Commentary on the Tuan, and the large and small Commentary on the Images that involve image-taking, the analogical image-taking of the Eight Trigrams is especially common in the Commentary on the Explanation of the Trigrams<sup>[28]</sup>. Many of the texts in the upper and lower parts of the Commentary on the Symbol, the upper and lower parts of the Commentary on the Tuan, and the large and small Commentaries on the Image that involve the use of images need to cite the eight-trigram analogies from the Commentary on the Explanation of the Hexagram for their interpretation. For example, the Commentary on the Symbol Lower quotes the upper sixth line of the hexagram “Explanation” from Thunder Water: “The common man uses a falcon to shoot at the high wall”<sup>[29]</sup>. “In his commentary on the “Shooting the Falcon” hexagram”<sup>[30]</sup>, Qing scholar Zhang Huiyan

explained in *Zhouyi Yushi Yijian Duan* (Annotated Commentary on the *Book of Changes*): “Li (Bow) and Kan (Arrow). “

This interpretation suggests that the third, fourth, and fifth lines of the Jie hexagram form the Kan trigram (symbolizing arrows), while the second, third, and fourth lines create the Li trigram (representing bow-strings). Thus, the symbolic composition features a bow positioned below with an arrow above, symbolizing upward flight—hence the name “Shooting the Falcon. “ It should be noted that both “Li bow” and “Kan arrow” imagery originate from the *Commentary on the Hexagrams*: “Ka... represents the bowstring... Li... signifies the spear weapon<sup>[31]</sup>. “For instance, the *Commentary on the Hexagram of Fire* in the *Book of Changes* states: “Civilization requires restraint. “ This implies that the lower trigram Li’s pattern must be halted by the upper trigram Gen’s restraint. Both the Li hexagram’s imagery of “civilization reaching brilliance” and Gen’s imagery of “restraint” originate from the *Commentary on the Hexagrams*: “Li signifies splendor; Gen signifies restraint. “ Similarly, the *Commentary on the Lesser Image* explains the sixth line of the Shu hexagram: “The eldest son leads the army by following the central path, “ which is derived from the mutual trigrams of the second<sup>[32]</sup>, third, and fourth lines forming the Zhen hexagram. The imagery of the eldest son thus substantiates this interpretation.

The symbolism of Zhen Changzi also originates from the “Shuo Gua Zhuan” (Commentary on the Hexagram Explanation): “Zhen. . . represents the eldest son. “ From this perspective, based on the unified standard of imagery in Yi Xue (the study of the *Book of Changes*) taken from the “Yi Zhuan”, the “Shuo Gua Zhuan” in the Yi Zhuan is particularly worthy of scholars’ attention during the process of imagery selection.

#### 4. Can We Achieve Full Correspondence between Text and Image by Using the Yizhuan Standard?

When the *Yi Zhuan* (Commentary on the *Book of Changes*) established symbolic interpretation as the unified standard for interpreting the *Book of Changes*, questions arose about its applicability: Should only a limited portion of the text be interpreted through symbolism, most texts, or all texts? This raises the critical question: “Can the Yi Zhuan’s standards achieve complete correspondence between symbolic interpretations and their corresponding texts?” The author’s response is unequivocal: While full correspondence is attainable, it demands strict adherence to the Yi Zhuan’s symbolic framework.

The theoretical possibility of full correspondence is rooted in the very composition of the *Book of Changes*. The *Yi Zhuan: Xi Ci Zhuan* provides a detailed explanation: “The sage perceives the profound mysteries of the world and models them through symbolic representations that mirror their proper forms, hence these are called ‘symbolic images’. “ (Xi Ci Shang) Furthermore, it states: “The sage establishes hexagrams, observes symbolic patterns, and interprets them through symbolic associations to clarify auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. “ (Xi Ci Shang) From this, we can clearly discern that the compilation of the *Book of Changes* underwent two distinct phases<sup>[33]</sup>: The first stage involves creating hexagrams through the observation of symbolic representations, as stated in the “Xi Ci Xia”: “*The Book of Changes* is about symbols. Symbols are manifestations. “ The second stage entails associating these hexagram symbols with corresponding texts, a process we term “observing images and attaching statements. “ Tang Dynasty scholar Li Dingzuo elaborated: “King Wen observed the symbolic representations of the sixty-four hexagrams and three hundred eighty-four lines, then linked them with corresponding texts to clarify auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. “[34]Therefore, the words of the Yi are all written by King Wen when he looked at the hexagrams and lines of the Yi in the past, and the original elements of the Zhou Yi should be arranged in the order of “image, line and word”<sup>[35]</sup>. Consequently, since the hexagrams and lines remain unchanged, modern scholars working backward from King Wen’s texts should, in theory, be able to recover the corresponding images for every word, achieving complete text-image correspondence. That is, the words and images can all correspond.

Why then is strict adherence to the Yizhuan’s imagery essential? The argument that “the Yi Zhuan serves as the unified standard for interpreting the Yi” has already been demonstrated above and need not be restated. Here, the author aims to highlight that throughout the history of interpreting the \*Yi\* in China, there have been brilliant and extraordinary Zhouyi commentators—who achieved the monumental feat of “comprehensive text-image correspondence” through



their rich imagination and extraordinary creativity. However, due to their failure to strictly follow the imagery from the *Yi Zhuan* during interpretation, they caused the malpractice of “excessive proliferation of symbolic numbers,” which has been criticized by later Zhouyi scholars for thousands of years. The most representative example is Yu Fan. As is widely recognized, the symbolic-numerical studies of the *Book of Changes* during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) saw continuous innovations in interpreting its principles through concepts like hexagram qi, eight palaces, flying and resting positions, and line cycles<sup>[36]</sup>. While enriching the symbolic-numerical system for \*Yi\* interpretation, these developments also intensified divisions between the principle-based school and its symbolic-numerical counterpart<sup>[37]</sup>. Yu Fan emerged as the definitive synthesizer of this symbolic-numerical tradition during the Han era. He said: “Previous scholars mostly played with chapters and sentences. Although there were secret theories, they were too broad in their interpretations of the classics...”

Since the beginning of the Han Dynasty, few talented people in the country who read the *Book of Changes* understood it<sup>[23]</sup>. “This shows that he combined the aspirations of the two Han Dynasty schools of symbolism and numerology in Yi Jing. Therefore, Yu Fan integrated various symbolic and numerical theories into one furnace, and found corresponding symbols for each scripture text, which served as the fulcrum for his interpretation of Yi Jing<sup>[38]</sup>. However, the diversity of doctrines adopted by it was soon reflected in the excessive “unconventional images”<sup>[39]</sup> when it took images, which were considered as far-fetched by commentators of various dynasties. For example, Wang Yinzhi, a Yi scholar of the Qing Dynasty, said: “Did Yu Fan (Yufan) force his own theories upon the unoriginal meanings of the classics, as if they were perfectly aligned? The reasoning is forced, the text is discordant, and there is no evidence that it was an unshakable theory. “Shang Binghe<sup>[40]</sup> a Yi scholar of the Republic of China era, also remarked: “The additional symbols in the right section... few people recognize them, yet they remain indispensable for scriptural commentators, thus necessitating the designation of ‘unofficial symbols’. Given that the characters in scriptures inherently vary in quantity and form across different editions, how can such distinctions be meaningful? Therefore, while selective adoption is permissible, labeling them as unofficial symbols would be a misnomer.”<sup>[41]</sup>

It is evident that later Yi scholars viewed Yu Fan’s use of “lost images” beyond the scope of the *Yi Zhuan* as “not entirely detached from antiquity,” while the *Yi Zhuan* was closer to ancient traditions and thus considered the primary standard for interpreting symbolic meanings. For instance, Wang Yin’s Commentary on the Classics critically analyzed Yu Fan’s “orthodox interpretations” of symbolic numbers, almost entirely citing the *Yi Zhuan* as their source<sup>[42]</sup>. If we want to repeat Yu Fan’s feat of “corresponding to all the symbols,” we must learn from his failure experience which was not recognized by the academic circles. It should be noted that the Commentary on the *Book of Changes* is the first standard of image selection and interpretation closely connected with the *Book of Changes*<sup>[43]</sup>, and it is regarded as the main source when interpreting the *Book of Changes*.

The analysis thus far clarifies the paramount importance of “image” in the sagely creation of the Book of Changes of the ancient sages’ work on the *Book of Changes*<sup>[44]</sup> so much so that Ming people came to know that De said: “Therefore, image is like a mirror. If there is a mirror, all things are reflected; if there is no mirror, there is no reflection. The ancient text “*Yi Jing*”<sup>[45]</sup> (*Book of Changes*) contains no diagrams, yet it remains fully readable. Qing scholar Shang Binghe famously stated: “The *Book of Changes* embodies symbolic imagery, where imagery mirrors reality.”<sup>[46]</sup>

Modern philosopher Hu Shi emphasized: “The entire *Book of Changes* contains but one ‘symbol’.”<sup>[47]</sup> “Contemporary scholar Liu Dajun further noted: “Interpreting the text through symbolic imagery has been the predominant approach in Yi studies for over two millennia.”<sup>[48]</sup> “Therefore, it is entirely possible to interpret the Yi to achieve the full correspondence of words and images, and it is necessary to pay special attention to the strict use of images in accordance with the unified standard of the *Yi Zhuan*.

## 5. Conclusion

Through an in-depth examination of the relationship between image-number (xiangshu) systems and philosophical

principles (YiLi) in the history of Yijing studies, this study demonstrates that interpretations of the classic cannot be divorced from its image-number foundations. Even Wang Bi, a paragon of the philosophical school, extensively employed Han Dynasty image-number methods—such as “opposition” and “interconnecting”—in his Annotations on the *Book of Changes*. Furthermore, the Yi Zhuan (especially the Shuogua Zhuan) established a unified standard for image interpretation, serving as a crucial reference for later scholars. While the compositional principle of “observing images and attaching statements” (Guanxiang Xici) theoretically ensures complete correspondence between image and text, achieving this in practice necessitates strict adherence to the Yizhuan’s framework and avoiding the use of “lost images” beyond its scope. Consequently, this study calls for moving beyond the simplistic dichotomy between image-number and philosophical approaches by recognizing their intrinsic connections. The findings point toward the development of an interpretive system grounded in the unified framework of the Yi Zhuan, one that maintains historical continuity while aligning with modern academic standards. Such an approach offers a more coherent framework for the interpretation and inheritance of this cornerstone of Chinese traditional culture.

## Disclosure statement

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