HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

Week 2: Confucius
Section 1: Role and Identity: Self-Conception, Attention and Orientation

- How much of our 命 *ming* [identity/role] is 天 *tiān*[natural] and how much is 人 *ren*[human] ?
- My first role in life: male/son is a biologically 天 *tiān*[nature:sky] role
- It shapes many things about me: attractions, interests, focus...
- My self-identity gives me normative roles that are both natural *and* human
    - You hear your name at a party, you look around
    - If your sister says 哥哥 *go go*[elder brother] you look around…
    - …but if somebody else says it, you don't
    - Your attention is conditioned by a sense of your identity expressed as named roles, normative statuses in social relations with reciprocal ritual performances
- Status roles from our past continue to shape our attitudes and behavior
    - The name of my old high school
    - My home town
    - My baseball team from where I went to grad school
- Our names and roles command our attention and ready us for some role performance
- In Chinese thought, this is portrayed as more *sociological* while, in the West, as more *psychological*