

## Symposium

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Comparative Rhetorical Studies in the New Contact Zone: Chinese Rhetoric Reimagined

### **Introduction: Double Trouble: Seeing Chinese Rhetoric through Its Own Lens**

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Several years ago a Korean graduate student in a history of rhetoric course completed a term project entitled “Confucius Say, ‘Socrates, You Talk Too Much.’” The class had been reading excerpts from Stephen Owens’ *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, particularly those portions of Confucius and Mencius that provide striking and often-discussed parallels to Plato’s and Aristotle’s views of language and rhetoric. However, studying rhetoric comparatively from the perspective of comparative literature has received criticism on several fronts. Comparative literature scholars are often not very well versed in rhetorical studies. Even within rhetorical scholarship, for too long we have looked at Chinese and other non-Western rhetorical traditions “Under Western Eyes,” to borrow Joseph Conrad’s title, relying exclusively on the classical rhetorical models that have been central for so long to our teaching and practice of rhetoric. In

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*Comparative Rhetoric*, George Kennedy acknowledges this problem and proposes several directions for moving beyond the find-and-match methodology, though, more often than not, he ends up applying the Aristotelian paradigm to Chinese and other non-Western rhetorical practices. The essays in this special symposium on Chinese rhetoric join the work of other cross-cultural rhetorical scholars in proposing new contrastive as well as comparative approaches and exploring structures that are dialectical and literary as well as rhetorical. In this work can be observed the formation of a new contact zone. In both rhetorical and philosophical senses Confucius might well say, "Socrates, you talk too much." We examine what that might mean from Chinese perspectives, in these encounters with Western rhetorical practices and traditions. Our understanding of our students as well as our understanding of rhetoric can only be improved by taking this unusual opportunity to observe a contact zone in the making from both ends.

Western appraisals of Chinese rhetoric past and present have often looked at its surface and gone no further, finding there flowery and allusive language that seems to bear little relationship to logic, argumentation, and dialectic. There seemed to be no rhetorical or essay tradition focused on civic and political issues. Over the past ten years, further study of Chinese rhetorical traditions has revealed numerous practices of logic and argumentation, layer upon layer of double meanings and allusions; parallelisms that link past and present, levels of meaning, and layers of meaning that are far more intricate than allegory, symbolism, parable, analogy, and similar double structures as they have been practiced in Western rhetoric and literature. Imagine living in a world in which most things are said through the words of others amid some highly structured, radically asymmetrical relations of power, through what Westerners would think of as allusion, quotation, and paraphrase. Add to that a high priority on thinking in twos, in pairs, of being able to see similarities and families of meaning among different ideas, images, and events. There are oppositional, contrastive, and dialectical logics within Chinese rhetoric that are virtually invisible to Western eyes, ears, and practices of reading. If we re-examine these Chinese rhetorical traditions and their present practices, we can better understand the habits of speaking, writing, and thinking that Chinese students bring with them to the composition classroom and can correct Westerners' frequent misunderstandings of Chinese rhetoric today, both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, we will then be better situated to cultivate a common ground, to create a contact zone where different rhetorical traditions can talk with one another in the classrooms and scholarship of the West.

Taking a different angle, the approaches to rhetoric developed here characterize how Western and Chinese rhetorics and the teaching of English have been perceived and received in China and by Chinese in both China and the United States. Rather than taking one position on the value of either comparative or contrastive rhetoric, the essays present contributions to a discussion, and sometimes a debate, that has already begun, and highlight both the promises and the challenges such studies entail. As background for the individual essays, we begin with a description of the historical contexts that continue to shape Chinese rhetorical understandings and practices. Pre-imperial China, during what are now commonly known as the Spring and Autumn (722–479 BCE) and the Warring States (479–221 BCE) eras, was one of the most tumultuous and formative periods in Chinese history. During this period ancient China witnessed the steady decline and decay of the Zhou dynasty and the rise of the vassal states jockeying for power through violence and warfare.<sup>1</sup> One result was increased social mobility, as many competing schools of thought emerged to fill in the ideological vacuum created by the loss of the tradition of the golden age of the early Zhou where the Way (*Dao*) prevailed—hence the use of the expression *bai jia zheng ming* (“contentions of one hundred schools of thought”) to characterize this period. Some of these ideological contentions concerned the function and purpose of language use, reflecting the participants’ abiding interest in the vexing relationship, for example, between form and expression, meaning and intention, as well as (individual) originality and (collective) authority. Terms that emerged from these debates continue to be relevant to the contemporary study of Chinese rhetoric in general and to this symposium in particular.

The Chinese term most commonly used to translate the English *rhetoric* is *xiuci* (修辞). Translation cannot yield equivalences of meaning between a host (source) and a guest (target) language,<sup>2</sup> because meanings get lost, transformed, or even invented in the process, especially when two languages in question—one phonemic and the other logographic—are so radically different. The term *xiuci* (修辞) consists of two monosyllabic characters, *xiu* and *ci*, and conveys two different, but related, meanings for rhetoric. On the one hand, *xiu* means “decorate” or “embellish,” and *ci* means “speech” or “discourse,” which is synonymous with *yan* (言). The meaning of *xiuci* concentrates on how to embellish or beautify one’s speech or discourse. On the other hand, *xiu* also means “adjust” or “make appropriate,” and *ci* means “explanation, eloquence, and poetic performance.” Combined this way, they suggest a focus on how to enhance one’s discursive or poetic performance relative to specific or particular

occasions of use. *Xiu* and *ci* used together as one single phrase first appeared in the *Classic of Changes* or the *Changes of Zhou (Yijing)*, first of the five Confucian classics: “*xiuci* aims to establish one’s integrity” (*xiuci li qi cheng* 修辭立其誠) (qtd. in Cheng: 3).<sup>3</sup> Here *xiuci* is defined more in line with the second, broader interpretation, emphasizing that the appropriate use of language can help cultivate or secure one’s integrity, which will no doubt contribute to one’s credibility as well as authority.

What seems to have most concerned Chinese thinkers and educators in pre-imperial China was whether or not the use of language may end up impeding meaning and, worse still, compromising virtue (*de*) or humaneness (*ren*). It was with this in mind that Confucius advised his students not to unnecessarily embellish their language at the expense of meaning: “It is enough that the [unadorned] language one uses should get the point across” (159; bk. 15, par. 41). For Confucius, it was rare to find anybody with a glib tongue and an ingratiating appearance to be humane or benevolent (3; bk. 1, par. 3). At the same time, Confucius never rejected *ci* or *yan* because “one has no way of judging others unless one understands words” (205; bk. 20, par. 3). In fact, practicing *ci* or *yan* should not be condemned at all as long as one is sincere in what one says (83; bk. 9, par. 25)—a position that is not so dissimilar to Plato’s and Augustine’s views of rhetoric, which emphasize using rhetoric to seek truth and condemn the manipulative and deceitful use of discourse.

This advocacy and quest for plain, sincere discourse was very much shared by other prominent thinkers during the same tumultuous period. Both Mencius (385?–312? BCE) and Xunzi (310–219? BCE) despised or opposed flowery or clever language that could deter or destroy meaning. Mencius identified and criticized four such types: *bi ci* (諛辭 biased speech), *yin ci* (淫辭 immoderate speech), *xie ci* (邪辭 abnormal speech), and *dun ci* (遁辭 evasive speech) (31; bk. 2, part A). Similarly, Xunzi was quite concerned about how vulgar and narrow-minded teachers of his time used language to spread falsehoods and to confuse the young minds, thus blurring the boundary between right and wrong, between true and false. He characterized such speeches as examples of *jian yan* (奸言 treacherous speech), *e yan* (惡言 evil speech), and *liu yan* (流言 rumor). He saw the rectification of names as the only way to confront these language practices and to reconnect the word to the real world. He also went so far as to assert that ambiguous and flowery language is the symptom of a chaotic time (qtd. in Cheng 19).

Perhaps nowhere was this concern for the separation between reference and referent more directly expressed than in the *Spring and Autumn Annals of*

*Master Lü* (239 BCE) compiled by Lü Buwei. Lü, then prime minister of the state of Qin, committed suicide in 235 BCE after he lost favor with King Zheng, the future First Emperor. Lü recruited as many as three thousand scholars to create what has been referred to as a great encyclopedia that “dealt with everything in heaven and earth, comprising all ancient and all modern knowledge” (Yang and Yang 153). Reflecting a view that Westerners would regard as semiotic, he emphasized how words “catch” thoughts:

Words are used to convey our ideas [*yi* 意]. When the words we use are at odds with our ideas, we suffer misfortune. It is common in a chaotic state for there to be frequent wayward usage of words and for no heed to be paid to the reality [*shi* 实]. Some are bent on blaming each other, others on praising each other. When those who are blamed and praised form factions, their clamor blazes up to the sky, and the truly worthy are not distinguished from the worthy. . . . Now, propositions are the signposts of ideas. To take a warning from the signpost while discarding the ideas is madness. Thus, the men of old cast aside the words once they grasped the idea. Those who listen to the words must use them to perceive the ideas. If in listening to the words the ideas cannot be known, there is no difference between the language employed and idle nonsense. (Knoblock and Riegel 452–55)

To differentiate language from idle talk, one must determine if the former is in accord with reality (*shi*) and if it allows its audience to comprehend the ideas it represents.

The use of language going awry and creating falsehood and deception also helped to propel the School of Daoism to advocate talking less (*xi yan* 希言) or advocate against talking too much (*duo yan* 多言), making non-action (*wuwei* 无为) or spontaneity as the basis for speech and argumentation (Lu 233–34). The *Tao Te Ching* (*Daodejin*)<sup>4</sup> teaches that “truthful words are not beautiful; beautiful words are not truthful. Good words are not persuasive; persuasive words are not good” (117). However, the School of Daoism did not oppose speech or discourse indiscriminately—a characterization that has often been mistakenly imposed in the past. Rather what it opposes was “beautiful language” (*mei yan* 美言) or “flattering language” (*chan yan* 谗言) that deliberately severs the word from the world and that makes one’s speech either ill-suited for the occasion of use or vacuous in *yi* (ideas) altogether.

To rid such ills that attended much of the discourse during this period, the School of Moism appealed to *zhi* (substance 质), which could serve as the guiding principle to adjudicate one’s speech and action. More specifically, *zhi* was realized or secured not by searching for some perfect or most beautiful form but by applying *san biao* (three principles 三表): foundation, verifiability,

and applicability (Lu 204). That is to say, for a given speech to possess *zhi* and thus truth and knowledge, it must base itself on “the authority and experience of the past, the effects on ordinary people in the present, and the future benefits for the state and its people” (Lu 205). The School of Moism looked to the virtues of the ancient sage-kings, instead of those of individual authors of its time, for moral authority and justification, an emphasis that continues to be relevant to contemporary examinations of the relationship between authority and originality, between ethos as individual character and ethos as habitual activity reflecting the experience of the past.

Debates over how to deploy language to best represent ideas and reality continued well beyond pre-imperial China. Such terms as *ci* (speech, discourse, or discursive performance), *yan* (speech), *zhi* (substance), *yi* (idea or meaning), and *shi* (reality) served as important points of reference through succeeding dynasties and into the twentieth century. The fact that *xiuci* could admit at least two different meanings may have spawned countless discourses and disputes concerning the need either to embellish one’s discourse so that it could stand the test of time or to enhance one’s discursive or poetic performance so that it could best serve particular occasions of use. At times, much emphasis was placed on form, on finding and codifying the most ideal form and genre. Carried out to an extreme, such formalism led a total separation between the word and the world or creating a yawning gulf between words and ideas. No example was more telling in traditional China than that of the “eight-legged essay” (*baguwen* 八股文) which, if followed slavishly, could represent a form run amok, containing eight rigid structures and yielding stereotyped, lifeless essays.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, when the concern shifted to *xiuci*’s broader meaning, to how one can best use language based on substance to convey meaning and reality, we saw a genuine, sustained search to find a working balance between form and meaning. In *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*wenxindiaolong* 文心雕龙), a comprehensive text on literary theories, writing heuristics, and the study of *xiuci*, literary critic Liu Xie (465–522 AD) best summarized the effort as follows:

We put sentences together to form beautiful patterns for the purpose of making our ideas clear. If the patterns become too florid and the rhetoric too eccentric, our ideas will be rendered vaguer than ever. We know very well that to fish with fancy kingfisher-feather line and cassia bait is to lose the catch. The saying “Reason is covered up by flowery expressions” probably means just this. (177–78)

Only by securing such a balance can one ensure that “the substance will not be

damaged by the literary adornment, and the mind will not be drowned in a mass of erudite information” (Liu Xie 178).

The debates reviewed so far over the relationship between the word and the world in ancient China were entirely home-made and remained so until late in the nineteenth century. The twentieth century saw the mobilization of outside forces, contributing to a large influx of neologisms into the Chinese language through Japanese as well as through Western cultures. The Japanese used *kanji* (Chinese characters) to translate European terms after the Meiji Revolution, and Chinese students sent to Japan to revitalize China during the same period imported many of these neologisms back into Chinese. One group of Chinese characters that the Japanese used came from classical Chinese, and these classical expressions, often with a radical change in meaning, such as *geming* (revolution), *wenhua* (culture), as well as *xiuci*, were then re-introduced to modern Chinese. As is clear in Hui Wu’s essay, when the Japanese scholars used 修辭 (*xiuci*) to translate the English “rhetoric,” they seemed to have selected its narrower meaning, focusing on how to embellish the aesthetics of the written word. When 修辭 was brought back into the Chinese language, the same emphasis was retained, rekindling this centuries-old debate over form and meaning and over *ci* and *shi*.

The essays in this symposium represent *our* efforts to engage with *xiuci* and to connect to or to recover those voices that have preceded us but that have not been sufficiently listened to and heard. Not only do we want to bring to light those discursive forms and practices in Chinese rhetorical traditions that have so far been ignored or misunderstood, but we also intend to show how we can move in some different directions in our approaches to Chinese rhetoric so as to shed new light on the meanings of *xiuci* and on the study of rhetoric both in the United States and in China. The collected essays represent several years of panels at CCC meetings, informed by energetic correspondence with colleagues in China seeking a more integrated and reciprocal dialogue on our understanding of rhetoric.

A number of themes are examined in our essays, providing different directions for thinking anew about the object of our study as well as about the methods and purposes of our study. What exactly should we be looking for when studying Chinese rhetoric? What methodology should we use? What are the values of contrastive and comparative rhetoric? Is translation even possible? What do we gain and lose in translation? When we examine Chinese or other non-Western rhetorics, what subgenres do we and should we include? Liter-

ary memoir, novel, essay, school essay, policy essay, political speech, history, textbook, canonical readings required of all students, uses of those readings and other models in compositions, argument, logic, dialectic? The list grows longer and longer in comparative studies, illustrating how complex it is to study rhetoric without turning everything into rhetoric, thereby running the risk of turning rhetoric into nothing. One of the most interesting subtopics in these essays has to do not with genre but with voice, the understanding of the speaking or writing subject, and the ways in which authorship and agency, originality and innovation, are taught and practiced. The misunderstanding of the presence or absence of the speaker in the speech, the author in the text, the individual in what the individual says, may be one of the most interesting cultural gulfs in Chinese-Western comparative rhetorics. Westerners often pride themselves on originality and innovation when in reality they are employing, even imitating, models of an independent voice. Chinese are often seen, heard, and read as quoting or paraphrasing, or emulating authoritative texts or views when in many cases they are speaking through these voices to say something original, contentious, or innovative.

We begin this symposium with LuMing Mao's essay, "Returning to Yin and Yang: From Terms of Opposites to Interdependence-in-Difference." Terms of opposites, such as direct and indirect, deductive and inductive, logical and analogical, and speaking in one's own voice and speaking through the voice of others, have often been used to describe Chinese rhetorical practices and to compare them with their Western counterparts. Such exercises have material and symbolic consequences if we fail to fully unpack what these terms actually connote and promote. Mao calls our attention to yin and yang, a twin concept that is central to Chinese thought, culture, and language that has often been mistakenly regarded as a counterpart to Western oppositional binaries, including dialectic. His essay aims not only to correct such misunderstandings, to reconsider these terms of "opposites," but also to recover and further develop the yin-yang rhetoric as an integral part of Chinese rhetorical traditions. Such rhetoric further serves as an example of how to cultivate a relation of interdependence between form and substance, between appearance and reality.

Another misunderstanding about Chinese rhetoric concerns classical Chinese essay writing. Because of a heavy reliance on secondary sources and an exclusive focus on the eight-legged essay, our understanding of classical Chinese essay writing has been simplified, stereotyped, and even exoticized. In "Confucians Love to Argue: Policy Essays in Ancient China," Xiaoye You and Yichun Liu present a more complex view of expository and persuasive writing

in ancient China by examining policy essays, one of the three academic genres along with the eight-legged essay and the discourse essay. Their study further highlights the urgency to move beyond the traditional paradigm or the Western lens in studying Chinese rhetorical traditions.

The next two essays featured here—Bo Wang’s “Writing to Connect Minds: Bing Xin as a Feminist Rhetorician” and Weiguo Qu’s “The *Qi* Rhetoric of Persuasion and Political Discourse”—recover and expand Chinese rhetorical traditions by defining new ways to simultaneously engage Chinese rhetoric and advance comparative work. Bo Wang examines Bing Xin (1900–1999), one among a group of modern Chinese women writers. In the early twentieth century, soon after gaining access to literacy, women writers began using writing to make social changes in China. Bing Xin experimented with the genre of *xiaopinwen* (the vernacular lyrical essay) and used it to explore various societal issues, especially issues related to women and children. In spite of her tremendous literary accomplishments, Bing Xin has been relegated to a less important position in modern Chinese literary histories. Wang offers a rereading of Bing Xin’s literary texts, particularly her essays, from a feminist rhetorical perspective. She argues that by appropriating Western literary modes and depicting women and children’s life experiences and feelings, Bing Xin inserted a female voice into the dominant patriarchal discourse, indicating that her discourse is rhetorical for both its time and culture, and that her writing sheds light on the relationship between rhetoric and poetics.

Much attention has recently been directed at Chinese political discourse and at the rhetorical strategies deployed in such discourse. According to Qu, scholars in the West tend to evaluate Chinese political rhetoric through the lens of the Chinese political system—an approach that at best is limited and thus limiting. Qu argues that the rhetorical strategies in Chinese political discourse owe their genesis to a particular rhetorical practice and that a complete understanding of this practice will in turn help us better understand the reasons for this monophonic political discourse in the past and for some emerging changes in the current political discourse. Qu dubs this practice “the *qi* [energy] rhetoric of persuasion”—a holistic and experiential rhetoric that appeals to analogy, emotion, and imagery in engaging the audience. Not surprisingly, the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion further illuminates the workings of yin-yang rhetoric that Mao develops in his essay.

For much of its history, Chinese rhetoric has been largely homegrown, reflecting, deflecting, as well as shaping political, social, and cultural issues and concerns within China. However, starting from the beginning of the twentieth

century Chinese intellectuals began to engage with Western rhetoric as well as other Western ideologies. Hui Wu's essay, "Lost in Translation: Modern Chinese Conceptualization of Rhetoric," provides an example of such encounters. Using translation and other archival materials, Wu demonstrates how the process of translation was one of intense social struggle where meaning was not simply translated but in fact was transformed and even created, and how modern Chinese rhetoric began to take shape by assimilating both Western rhetoric and traditional Chinese rhetoric, culminating in Chen Wangdao's *An Introduction to Rhetoric* first published in 1933.

Another outcome of such encounters was the import of Marxism and its dialectical materialism—a subject that Liu Lu picks up in her essay, "Luoji (Logic) in Contemporary Chinese Rhetoric and Composition: A Contextualized Glimpse." Challenging the view espoused by some comparative and contrastive rhetoricians that Chinese writing may seem "illogical" according to Western standards, Liu argues that contemporary Chinese rhetoric and composition in fact value both formal logic and dialectical logic. Because of the emphasis placed on dialectical thinking in China's intellectual history, the Chinese readily embraced dialectical logic as part of Marxism when it was first introduced to China in the early part of the twentieth century, making dialectical logic a preferred mode of reasoning for treating complicated issues. Such a study can then begin to turn the mirror back at Western rhetorics and remind us that there have long been Western rhetorical dialectics focused more on balance and harmonizing alternate views and on understandings of dialectic as a method for discovering truth.

The symposium essays conclude with C. Jan Swearingen's "Ren, Wen, and Baguwen: The Eight-Legged Essay in Rhetorical Perspective," bringing us full circle. Using the eight-legged essay as a point of reference, she points out that this unique genre both exemplifies and explains canonical beliefs and practices and that it differs from the Western emphasis on agonistic debate, logical analysis, and persistent challenging of older views. Further, Chinese rhetoric as embodied in the eight-legged essay speaks through the words of others to express "new" understandings or insights. *Wen* ("literary" style) and *ren* (the quality of being cultivated, educated) are both measured and enacted through rhetorical practices that continue to be shaped by juxtaposing allusions, analogies, and concepts. Not only does Swearingen's essay remind us of what *xiuci* is all about—its perennial search for a working balance between form and meaning, between tradition and originality—but it also illustrates how any given form or genre can be at once normalizing and generative, once

again pointing to the challenges facing those of us engaged in the study of Chinese rhetoric or any other non-Western rhetoric.

Let us return to that Korean student, with whom we began this introduction. In his paper he made a very good point: to Confucius, Socrates does indeed talk too much, in several senses. He goes on and on with seemingly no point or purpose; he talks about himself too much; and he asks annoying questions to which his interlocutors, he knows, have no answers. Compare this Confucian view of Socrates with Portuguese Jesuits' view of Chinese practices in the seventeenth century: "In outward appearance and in their inner hearts they are just like women: if one shows them one's teeth they will humble themselves, and whoever makes them subject can put his foot on their necks" (Spence 43). How much does this view of Chinese culture—and rhetoric—as effeminate persist in Western and in Chinese thinking? To put the question another way, what lens or terministic screen are we deploying when being confronted with a form of rhetoric that calls for an understanding of *xiuci*, yin and yang, policy essays, *xiaopinwen*, *qi*, dialectical logic, or *baguwen*?

A contestant in a recent Beijing reality game show, *Ying Zai Zhonguo* (*Win in China*), remarked that the "age old ethic of stability was part of the reason China had fallen so far behind Western countries," and even now, "Chinese culture does not facilitate creativity very much." Another competitor said she hoped that "potential entrepreneurs would learn the importance of both perseverance and passion. There is no religion in China, so it is very important to promote the right kind of values. Today the entrepreneur can be our hero" (Fallows 78). The competition in *Win* is a three-minute lightning elimination known as "Power Kill" in online games. "One opponent issues a question, challenge, or taunt, and the other tries to answer, outwit, and provoke the first. Once done speaking, a competitor slams a hand down on a button, stopping his or her clock and starting the opponent's. Faster and faster, each contestant tries to manage the time so as to get the last word. The audience gasps, cheers, and roars with laughter at the jibes—and at the end one contestant is 'killed' as determined by audience vote or a panel of judges" (Fallows 73). Wang Fen, the producer and on-camera host of the show, explained that she had higher goals for the show than American counterparts such as *The Apprentice*. "We want to teach values. Our dream for the show is to enlighten Chinese people and help them realize their own dreams" (Fallows 73). One contestant remarked that the game teaches a very un-Chinese value that people need to learn in the new push toward entrepreneurship: "The only one I can rely on is myself" (Fallows 73). James Fallows comments that if *Win in China* is reduced to a moral, it teaches

that individuals now have chances for self-advancement never before available to their compatriots. “The didactic and uplifting ambitions of the show could be considered classically Chinese, the latest expression of a value-imprinting impulse that stretches from the Analects of Confucius to the sayings of Chairman Mao. Or, they could be considered, like the Horatio Alger novels of young, muscular America, signs of an economy at an expansive moment when many people want to understand how to seize new opportunities” (73). Fallows’s commentary on *Win in China* illustrates both the need for and the perils of cross-cultural analysis: do “we” see “them” through our lens, or theirs? Only a collection of studies of both kinds can begin to fill in these gaps and define new topics for study. And only when we learn to see the other’s rhetoric through its own lens can we begin to see through our own blind spots and develop a new binocular vision to see us and them through the contact zone.

### Notes

1. The Zhou dynasty is generally divided into the Western Zhou (1045/1040?–771 BCE) and the Eastern Zhou (771–221 BCE)—the latter came into existence after the Western Zhou was toppled by a coalition of Chinese and “barbarian” soldiers and after a surviving member of the royal family set up a new capital farther to the east. But the king of the Eastern Zhou was only a figurehead as the dynasty was characterized by the escalating internecine conflicts and wars, which eventually led to its demise in 221 BCE when its titular reign was replaced by the first centralized feudal state built by Emperor Qin.
2. For a discussion of the problems embedded in the naming of a source and a target, and for the use of the terms *host* and *guest* in this context, see Lydia Liu (26–27).
3. The *Classic of Changes* purports to predate Confucius’s time (551–479 BCE). It consists of two parts: (1) a basic text giving clues to the interpretation using the method of divination based on sixty-four hexagrams and (2) a number of appendixes or “wings,” elaborating upon the metaphysical significance of the interpretations. The basic text is attributed to ancient times, dating back as far as 5,000 BCE, and Confucius was traditionally credited with having provided the “wings” (Watson, Nivison, and Bloom 24–26).
4. The legendary Laozi has often been credited with the authorship of the *Tao Te Ching*, though it was most likely compiled by many individuals across an expanse of time culminating in the early or mid-fourth century BCE.
5. An “eight-legged essay” consists of eight parts: (1) *po ti* (“breaking open the topic” with only two sentences, 破题); (2) *cheng ti* (“continuing the topic,” 承题); (3) *qi jiang* (“initiating the explanation,” 起讲); (4) *ru shou* (“transitioning from

preliminary to formal explanation,” 入手); (5) *qi gu* (“initial leg,” 起股); (6) *zhong gu* (“center leg,” 中股); (7) *hou gu* (“rear leg,” 后股); and (8) *shu gu* (“mop-up leg,” 束股). The first four parts represent an elaborate beginning. Each of the four legs in the next four parts includes two parallel statements or paragraphs both in rhyme and meaning—since *gu* (股) in Chinese means “parallel.” There is a total of eight legs or parallels in the essay—hence the “eight-legged essay.”

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## Returning to Yin and Yang: From Terms of Opposites to Interdependence-in-Difference

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In the context of doing comparative rhetoric in North America, I often come across terms of opposites used to describe Chinese rhetorical practices and to compare them with Western rhetorical practices. These terms include, but certainly are not limited to: *direct* and *indirect*, *deductive* and *inductive*, *logical* and *analogical*, and *speaking in one's own voice* and *speaking through the voice of others*. The use of such terms in and of itself may or may not be necessarily flawed. After all, as the distinguished historian of classical philosophy and science G. E. R. Lloyd points out, "whether or not the terms are divided into a 'positive' and a 'negative' pole, opposites provide a simple framework of reference by means of which complex phenomena of all sorts may be described or classified" (*Polarity* 80). Or as Peter Elbow has long advocated, contraries can serve as productive, rather than handicapping, heuristics, and they can lead us to "a new system with a wider frame of reference, one that includes the two elements which were felt as contradictory in the old frame of reference" (243). Problems do arise, however, when one deploys these terms in comparative studies without first fully investigating what they actually encode and what they may actually promote.

The failure to engage these terms of opposites critically is problematic on two levels. First, when used to characterize Chinese rhetoric, these terms tend to convey the meaning of hierarchical polarity, where the first part is valued or privileged over the second part, and where dominance, not interdependence, underpins their relationship and serves as the prevailing mode of understanding. Second, when Chinese rhetorical practices are characterized, without sufficient or nuanced analysis, as embodying or favoring patterns of communication that are indirect, inductive, analogical, or speaking through the voice of others, reification or abstracting from particularizing occasions of use is likely to occur, inevitably giving rise to misrepresentations and stereotypes. Under such paradigms of polarity, Chinese rhetoric easily becomes, or is seen as, the antithesis of Western rhetoric.

As is always the case, reification creates its own cultural and discursive reality. Such a reality then serves to further influence and condition our subsequent encounters with Chinese rhetoric, and it becomes our dominant lens

through which every Chinese rhetorical practice gets examined and evaluated. It comes as no surprise that more stereotypes, misrepresentations, and even exoticisms should result from such studies, often with serious material and symbolic consequences.

To help us rethink these terms of opposites, and to advocate an interdependent, rather than a hierarchical, view about them, I propose that we turn to Chinese yin and yang, and that we use the yin-yang dynamics to inform our understanding of these terms of opposites. In so doing, we can begin to correct and demystify the existing stereotypes or misrepresentations about Chinese rhetoric. Using the yin-yang dynamics as our new lens, we can begin to rediscover Chinese rhetoric and to advance an understanding of balance and interdependence for both Chinese and Western rhetorics.

### **Yin-Yang Dynamics at a Glance**

What, exactly, are Chinese yin and yang? How can we use them to help us shed some light on polarity in general and on these specific terms of opposites in particular?

Yin and yang have regularly been regarded as two major cosmological concepts in the history of Chinese science and philosophy. Yin and yang initially referred to the shady and sunny sides of a hill or banks of a river before the fourth century BCE (Needham 227, 273). Between the third and first centuries BCE they began to take on more general meanings, representing “paired, complementary divisions for any configuration in space or process in time,” and serving as the central paradigm to discuss “the interaction of active and reactive, growing and dwindling, masculine and feminine” (Lloyd and Sivin 197).

According to Nathan Sivin, yin and yang convey the general idea of “opposed but *complementary* pairs into which phenomena can be analyzed, and out of which a unitary understanding of phenomena can be formed” (63; emphasis added). The relationship between yin and yang is one of mutual interdependence and interpenetration. What is yin in one context can be yang in another, and neither can exist independent of the other. As part of the Chinese correlative cosmology, yin and yang, together with a vast array of numerical manifestations, became the organizing concepts for a variety of proto-sciences in ancient China, including astronomy, medicine, music, divination, alchemy, and geomancy (Raphals 139). Further, yin and yang began to be deployed to interpret, and subsequently to shape, social and cultural reality during a time known as the Warring States (479–221 BCE), when China was gripped with social upheaval, violent consolidation between different feudal states, and in-

tense competition for doctrinal supremacy. In other words, yin and yang were being used to fashion a new discourse and to help invent a new political order where the individual, the state, and the cosmos were unified and marked by resonance, harmony, and completeness.

Further, yin and yang refer to aspects, not “constituents, forces, or pure abstractions,” of particular phenomena, and they are deeply rooted in concrete experiences (Sivin 63). This characteristic about yin and yang is worth underscoring. Once they are abstracted from particular occasions of use or once they become abstract symbols of opposites, yin and yang can easily be turned into a “stand-in” for a hierarchical, and even irreversible, relationship between two opposing constituents. For example, when woman as yin and man as yang are removed from their specific communities of practice, they become no more than essentialized or intractable properties. They thus serve to perpetuate the division between, for example, man belonging to the “outside” and woman to the “inside,” privileging man over woman and reinforcing man’s dominance over woman. On the other hand, if placed in particularizing contexts or in specific processes where interdependence and interconnectedness are our *modus operandi*, woman as yin and man as yang can be seen as embodying two interconnected, interdependent aspects or phases. Or to quote Zhu Xi, the prominent philosopher and neo-Confucian thinker in the Sung dynasty (962–1279), “Yin and yang are one and the same *qi* [energy]. The retreat of yang is the birth of yin; it is not that once yang has retreated, a yin separate from it is born” (64).<sup>1</sup>

In addition, when yin and yang are generalized to stand for polarizing constituents or forces without fully investigating their attending circumstances, a value judgment usually follows, further deepening the polarity between them. That is, yin and with what it is associated are often stereotyped as negative, if not evil, whereas yang and with what it is associated are generally regarded as positive and good. These kinds of associations in turn reinforce and promote the existing social structures of power. On the other hand, such attribution of negative and positive social values to yin and yang certainly was not present in the third century BCE in ancient China. In fact, according to Needham, it was not present at all in the Chinese formulations of yin-yang theory (277).

If the yin-yang dynamics are to be fully appreciated, we must also make an effort to understand how yin and yang are used to characterize the latent and active phases of any process in space and time or to describe sequences of change or relationships. For example, the regular and predictable daily cycle of the sun can be described in terms of a phase of light that peaks at noon and a phase of darkness that peaks at midnight. Doing so allows us to see the

interdependence, not the essentialized polarity, between light and darkness. Similarly, man as yang can be viewed in terms of a masculine-feminine relationship where the masculine assumes the active phase, and woman as yin can be viewed in terms of a masculine-feminine relationship where the feminine assumes the active phase. And just as we study yin and yang as an integral part of the Chinese correlative cosmology, so we must engage man and woman, or any other terms of opposites for that matter, as part of an overall discursive order within its own social and cultural context.

One more point has to be entered here in our discussion of the yin-yang dynamics. While I want to highlight the interdependent dynamics of yin and yang, I am not implying that the division between yin and yang can be dissolved or that yin and yang can be yoked together to engineer a stable fusion. In other words, interdependence does not mean the end of difference or division in any pair of opposites. Rather, it is interdependence-in-difference that must be emphasized and cultivated. Practicing interdependence-in-difference also means nurturing and exploring points of balance or equilibrium between yin and yang, and between these terms of opposites. That is, we must learn to discern and cultivate spaces where two opposites are “in preparation for new relations between active yang and responsive yin” (Sivin 69). Opening up such spaces allows us to further foreground the generative, transformative characteristic in the yin-yang dynamics. We experience such an example in nature in the momentary balancing at the two equinoxes in the annual cycle when day and night are everywhere of equal length and when a new relationship is about to emerge. Similar examples can also be found in our discursive practices—in such meta-discursive phrases as “To use an analogy for illustration” or “Allow me to illustrate yin and yang using inductive reasoning.” The use of such expressions opens up a space where logic and analogy or deduction and induction are in a momentary balance prior to initiating a new set of relationships between them. It is these moments—be they of nature or of discursive practices—that deserve our attention and that help exemplify interdependence-in-difference.

### **Rethinking Terms of Opposites: A Yin-Yang Perspective**

A few contemporary rhetoricians and communication scholars in North America have studied yin and yang in the recent past. It seems, however, that these studies have generally associated yin and yang with the *Dao* (the Way) in the *Daodejing* only. A philosophical text whose authorship has often been credited to the legendary Laozi (“The Old Master”), the *Daodejing* was most likely compiled by many individuals across an expanse of time culminating in

the early or mid-fourth century BCE (Ames and Hall 2, 7). For example, one recent study attributes yin and yang to the indescribable Dao, characterizing them as representing the rhythm and design of the universe (Combs 25–26).<sup>2</sup> Another study treats yin and yang as the single most important symbols of the *Daodejing*, as two complementary principles expressing many different aspects of the Dao (Kowal 367). Still another study, which explicitly aims to study the *Daodejing* from a rhetorical perspective, illustrates the dynamics of yin and yang through the paradoxes, which usually contain oppositions or contrasts such as those between light and dark, smooth and rough, high and low, and spoken and silent (Xiao 141–43).

Instead of limiting yin and yang to the *Daodejing*, I want to broaden them and take them beyond the transcendental realm of the *Daodejing* in order to help initiate a different kind of discourse in practicing comparative rhetoric—just as yin and yang were used to help launch a new political and social order in China in the third century BCE. I want to explore how yin and yang can be appropriated to inform the use of terms of opposites in our ongoing comparative studies. In particular, I want to see how a yin-yang perspective can take us beyond the hierarchical and polarizing impulses that these terms of opposites seem to have both connoted and promoted in the past.

There is another impulse that must be kept in check. My effort to engage the yin-yang dynamics must not be conceived of as trying to rationalize yin and yang, to replace a relationship of interdependence with one of cause and effect. Doing so, directly put, amounts to framing yin and yang in a context that is entirely not their own. On the other hand, uniting yin and yang with their attending social and political surroundings brings out yin and yang's inherently human, and thus rhetorical, dimension, enabling us to experience and interact with them on every specific occasion of use.

Allow me now to make three general recommendations using examples from the past and to illustrate how a yin-yang perspective can be properly developed. First, we can now characterize direct and indirect, deductive and inductive, logical and analogical, and speaking in one's own voice and speaking through the voice of others in terms of a relationship of interdependence and interpenetration where one necessarily depends on, but remains distinctively different from, the other. Therefore, when we characterize certain Chinese rhetorical practices as examples of indirection or as examples of analogical thinking, we are in fact relying on directness and logical thinking as a point of reference and as part of our own discursive positioning. More important, since

what is yin in one context can be yang in another and vice versa, examples of indirection or analogical thinking in one rhetorical situation can potentially become those of directness or logical thinking in another—not to mention the fact that directness and logic can very much be in the eyes (and hands) of their practitioners.

For example, in the *Zhanguo* (Strategies of the Warring States), a collection of nearly five hundred historical anecdotes compiled during the Han dynasty (202–9 BCE) from earlier materials (300–221 BCE), we encounter a variety of persuasion techniques deployed by advisers of different types in their efforts to persuade their one-ruler audience to adopt certain courses of action. One of the persuasion techniques, which can take different forms, has been referred to as “doubled persuasion” (Crump 42) or as “dilemmatic argument” (Lloyd, *Adversaries* 76). In one type, the persuader recommends a course of action both positively *and* negatively, and he or she presents the negative recommendation by exploring the consequences of its non-adoption (Lloyd 76). Such a technique may strike Western rhetoricians as quite indirect or simply too weak for presenting an argument. But if we situate this form of persuasion in the overall context of Chinese preference for parallelism and antithesis, it could very well be quite direct and persuasive—reminiscent of *baguwen* (the eight-legged essay), of its predilection for rhetorical symmetry as is discussed in C. Jan Swearingen’s essay.

In the same text, we also experience many analogical arguments, where, for example, the analogue can be a historical precedent, a set of actual or reported events, as well as a folktale or fable, with or without explicit conclusions to be drawn. So, here is the famous story called “The Tiger and the Fox”:

“I hear that the North fears Chao His-hsu,” said King Hsuan to his ministers. “What say you to this?”

None of them replied, except Chiang Yi, who said, “The tiger hunts all the animals of the forest, devours them, but once when he caught a fox, the fox said, ‘You dare not eat me. The Lord of Heaven ordained me chief among beasts; if you now kill me you will be disobeying the will of Heaven. If you doubt it, follow behind me through the forest and watch the animals flee when they see me.’” The tiger did indeed doubt the fox and therefore followed him. Animals saw them and fled, but the tiger didn’t know that the animals ran because they feared him. He thought they were afraid of the fox.

“Now your majesty’s country is five thousand li square and in it are a million first-class troops, all of whom are under Chao His-hsu. Therefore when the North fears His-hsu, in reality it fears your majesty’s name, just as the animals of the forest feared the tiger.” (*Zhanguo* 226–27)

Here through a folktale like the tiger and the fox, the adviser is able to reinterpret who is the real object of that fear.

Such instances are quite susceptible to being perceived as lacking (the use of) logic—such a perception, incidentally, continues to plague our understanding of contemporary Chinese rhetoric and composition as can be seen in Lu Liu's essay. However, the logic of such analogical arguments becomes clear if we can see beyond the lens of cause and effect, and if we can focus on the correlational implications between those points of similarity or difference. Or to state the matter another way, as part of discursive features on a shifting discursive continuum, direct and indirect and logical and analogical simply represent two sets of related features, and their rhetorical status—active or latent—depends on how they are clustered with other attending features in each and every rhetorical situation and how they are collectively perceived and practiced relative to the ethos of their own time (Mao 114–16).

This kind of position yields two positive outcomes. On the one hand, we no longer have to buy into the hierarchical polarity between direct and indirect or between logical and analogical. On the other hand, social and cultural values that invariably accompany these terms of opposites begin to reveal their constructed relevance and power, because directness or logical thinking now amounts to no more than one of the two phases within the dynamic cycle of order and transformation or on this discursive continuum consisting of shifting clusters of discursive features.

Second, as I have stated above, yin and yang do not stand for any two opposing abstract qualities or attributes, nor do they suggest that these qualities or attributes are fixed or intractable. Because yin and yang are deeply rooted in particularizing occasions of use, they can never be separated from each other and from their corresponding discursive contexts. So, if we are to use the deductive-inductive polarity to characterize Chinese and Western rhetorical practices, our characterization must be based on each and every situated speech event. Further, both deductive and inductive reasoning can very well be associated with either Chinese or Western rhetorical practices—a point that becomes abundantly clear in Xiaoye You and Yichun Liu's analysis of policy essays in ancient China, also in this symposium.

For example, in a well-known chapter on the difficulties of persuasion from the *Han Feizi*, Han Fei, one of the leading legalists (*fajia*) in the third and second century BCE, uses deductive reasoning in general because he begins with a general statement (the claim) before providing his reasons, evidence, and warrants. So, the key to success in persuasion, Han Fei begins, lies in “know[ing]

the mind of the person one is trying to persuade and to be able to fit one's words to it" (72). Then he goes on to establish his reasons and to provide his data to support his statement. However, in the process of supplying his examples, Han Fei inserts inductive reasoning a couple of times, because some of these examples are deployed to make some additional statement or claim. In short, Han Fei draws from both deductive and inductive reasoning in developing his argument and in providing a sophisticated analysis of how persuasion works. Neither reasoning—to appropriate Stanley Fish's characterization of the binary between philosophy and rhetoric—"can ever gain complete and lasting ascendancy because in the very moment of its triumphant articulation each turns back in the direction of the other" (501).

Let me use another example to illustrate this point. Chinese rhetorical practices have been described in the past as exhibiting the characteristic of speaking through the voice of others at the expense of originality and authority. To substantiate such a claim, one cannot just resort to the absence or opposition of Western individualism. Just as yin and yang co-exist with each other, alternating between two poles in relation to their shifting social and cultural circumstances, so speaking through the voice of others and speaking in one's own voice can never be too far apart, or one or the other can never completely recede into the background. One finds strong and vibrant expressions of Chinese individualism or Chinese personhood in the school of neo-Confucianism in the Sung dynasty within the overarching context of Confucian ideology that espouses ritual action, harmony, or collectivism. Zhu Xi's "learning for the sake of one's self" is just one such example expressive of "a Confucian personalism which affirms the importance of the self or person as the dynamic center of a larger social whole, biological continuum, and moral/spiritual community" (de Barry 332).

Third, like yin and yang, these pairs of opposites—direct and indirect, deductive and inductive, logical and analogical, and speaking in one's own voice and speaking through the voice of others—are capable of creating their own moments of balance and of contributing in the process to a new set of relationships and understandings. So, as we use these terms of opposites to engage both Chinese and Western rhetorical practices, we should seek and cultivate these moments of balance rather than mistaking their differences as irreversible opposites. We should learn to discern those discursive interstices so that we can practice interdependence-in-difference to advance our understanding of both Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions.

For example, we should look for how Chinese analogical thinking embeds

or anticipates logical thinking, or how the act of speaking in one's own voice in Western rhetoric resonates with that of speaking in the voice of the other or with that of practicing ritual action. Similarly, we should further explore how these moments of interdependence become possible and desirable, and how they in turn challenge the existing social and cultural paradigms or expectations and promote or encourage new ways of thinking and speaking. For example, in the *Analects* Confucius unabashedly tells his students that he wants to be a transmitter, not an innovator, of his tradition (57). This desire certainly reveals his profound reverence for, and ritualized connection to, the past or what has been lost but cherished. At the same time, we should not miss the opportunity to explore how such a desire has also allowed Confucius to both communicate with and enrich the tradition in some very distinctive and unique way, and to develop and advance a new relationship between him and the past and between him and his disciples. In other words, Confucius is able to speak in his own voice by speaking through the voice of the past.

While these moments of balance and becoming are always in a flux, the yin-yang dynamics do present us with an unmistakable opportunity. It will now enable us to use these terms of opposites without buying into the hierarchical and oppositional paradigm, but with an understanding of how difference or opposition can be recast and reimagined on a discursive continuum and through the acts of interconnectivity. Further, such dynamics will lead us to practice and promote a different kind of rhetoric or what Xing Lu calls "multicultural rhetoric." This rhetoric "recognizes and celebrates a diversity of rhetorical styles and persuasive discourse," and it is "capable of honoring both universal values and cultural insights in the practice and formulation of rhetorical perspectives" (308–9). Incidentally, it is a rhetoric that unmistakably embodies the characteristic of interdependence-in-difference.

### **Conclusion**

The recommendations I have so far made are brief and perhaps limited. However, they do represent my effort to draw upon the yin-yang dynamics in the Chinese context to engage a group of terms of opposites that have been frequently used in comparative rhetoric in North America. More specifically, my turn to Chinese yin and yang was in part mobilized by my desire to introduce and evaluate them on their own terms and in their own contexts. I wanted to apply their rhetorical features to such terms as direct and indirect, deductive and inductive, logical and analogical, and speaking in one's own voice and speaking through the voice of others. I sought to use yin and yang or what they can offer to reconfigure these terms so that we can develop a more informed

understanding of the Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions, and so that we can begin to nurture a discourse that is marked not by hierarchy and polarity, but by resonance and interdependence. In so doing, I hope to contribute to our ongoing conversation on comparative rhetoric and on our effort to forge “the common bonds and sense of identification that are the glue holding together a society or culture as well as the basis for visions that lead people to try to fulfill their hopes and dreams” (Zarefsky 386).

In the process of writing this essay, I also realized that the very subject of this essay—the yin-yang dynamics—has also become my method of study, guiding me to resist the temptation to describe and evaluate Chinese and Western rhetorical practices in polarizing terms and to develop a different way to engage Chinese rhetoric. Such a method not only helps to rein in my own essentializing impulse but also provides those of us doing comparative rhetoric with a critical heuristic with which to reflect on our own rhetorical practices. That is to say, as we pursue comparative rhetoric on this side of the Pacific, we can now use the yin-yang dynamics to develop a meta-commentary on our own comparative undertakings. For example, we can ask ourselves: Have our own studies been guided and informed by the yin-yang dynamics? To what extent are they being anchored within their own local contexts, and to what extent are they being mobilized by our own locations and by our own subject positions? Can our studies allow us to develop new terms of contact and to think of new relationships and new perspectives? And in what ways can we use our studies to shed light on what’s familiar and what’s foreign, and on how to transform the familiar “foreign” and the foreign “familiar”? Or more concretely, how can our studies make Confucius and his *Analects* “foreign” again but policy essays in ancient China “familiar,” and the eight-legged essay “foreign” again but Chinese contemporary composition “familiar”? In the process, we can raise our comparative work to a higher level where both our subject matter and our meta-discourse are constitutive of the yin and yang dynamics, and where the prospect of forging the common bonds becomes brighter.

## Notes

1. The Chinese word *qi* has seen many English translations, including “energy,” “ether,” “vapor,” and even “breath.” Sivin defines *qi* or its use in Chinese writing about Nature by about 350 AD “as simultaneously ‘what makes things happen in stuff’ and (depending on context) ‘stuff that makes things happen’ or ‘stuff in which things happen’” (47). For more on the rich meanings of *qi*, see Sivin (46–53), as well as Weiguo Qu’s essay on the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion in this special symposium.

2. This tendency to associate yin and yang with the Dao finds one support in the *Daodejing*: “Dao gives birth to one, one gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, and three gives birth to the myriad things. The myriad things carry yin on their backs and yang in their front, and blend these two *qi* together to achieve harmony” (chap. 42, 142).

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## Confucians Love to Argue: Policy Essays in Ancient China

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Contrastive studies of Chinese rhetoric have been haunted by several myths. First, there has been an overemphasis upon the eight-legged essay, tested in the imperial civil service exam for centuries, as virtually the sole representative of expository and persuasive writing in ancient China. Robert Kaplan, Carolyn Matalene, and Guanjun Cai, for example, have concurred on the centrality of the essay in traditional expository and persuasive writings. As Cai claims, "It thus constituted the basic framework of expository and persuasive writing in classical Chinese and has since influenced academic writing in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and modern China" (282). However, Bernard Mohan and Winnie Lo disagree. They suggest that the eight-legged examination essay is one among several rhetorical and literary forms in classical Chinese writing. The second myth concerns the rhetorical patterns of Chinese expository and persuasive writings. Kaplan claims that "Oriental" writing tends to be circular and indirect rather than linear or direct. A subject is not discussed directly but is approached from a variety of indirectly related angles ("Cultural"). Third, and closely related to the question of rhetorical patterns, is the issue of self and personal voice. Ron Scollon agrees with Kaplan that Chinese writers are indirect in presenting their thoughts. He attributes indirectness to different views of the self in Chinese and Western cultures. In modern English writing, an individual's experience and voice are emphasized, and the individual is encour-

aged to seek and express his or her true self in explicit and unequivocal terms. Scollon argues that the Chinese perception of self as a member entangled in various human relations makes it difficult for the Chinese writer to be direct, to express a point of view in a thesis statement at the beginning of a piece of writing, and as a result to employ deductive reasoning.

These myths, we believe, have two points of origin. First, most scholars have relied heavily on secondary sources to make inferences about classical Chinese writing. Second, these mythic issues have come from the extensive scholarly attention paid to the eight-legged essay. Sustained by an orientalist mentality, as Mary Garrett, Yameng Liu, and Ryuko Kubota and Al Lehner have remarked on various occasions, early contrastive rhetoricians found the eight-legged essay ideal in representing their perception of exotic Asian rhetorical patterns. Assuming the essay to be the archetypal Chinese essay, contrastive rhetoricians projected their understanding of this essay on all Chinese expository and persuasive writings. The heavy reliance on secondary sources and the exclusive focus on the eight-legged essay has confused and oversimplified our understanding of classical Chinese essay writing and its diverse rhetorics.

We would like to present a more complicated view of expository and persuasive writing in ancient China by examining a time-honored literary genre, less familiar than the eight-legged essay: the policy essay. The policy essay is one among three essay genres tested in the imperial civil service exam, the other two being the eight-legged essay and the discourse essay. We may understand the subject matters of these three essays by comparing them with the Aristotelian categorization of the three Greek rhetorical genres. Epideictic rhetoric addresses issues of the present; deliberative rhetoric is concerned with issues of the future; and judicial rhetoric deals with events of the past. The eight-legged essay is chiefly epideictic because it sets up a stage for the writer to display both his erudition of Confucian precepts and the maturity of his literary style. The policy essay is deliberative, as the writer discusses how to solve issues related to agriculture, economy, government, and national defense. The discourse essay is judicial in the sense that the writer makes comments or judgments on historical figures or events, hoping to enlighten current political and cultural debates.

Over the years, contrastive rhetoricians have neglected both the policy and the discourse essays, which date back much earlier than the eight-legged essay. When the imperial academy was first established in the Western Han dynasty (206 BC–24 AD) to recruit literati for government service, students were only tested on the policy essay. The eight-legged essay came into existence

about one thousand years later in the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). In the process of recruiting scholars for government service, Emperor Wu of the Western Han dynasty wrote questions on bamboo strips regarding various subjects of national significance. The event marked the beginning of the imperial civil service exam.

Policy essays are worthy of scrutiny for at least two important reasons. First, it is the oldest genre in the Chinese academy and was tested in the civil service exam from the very beginning. While students ceased to write eight-legged essays once they had passed the exam, they continued to compose policy essays in government services as memorials. Being a pragmatic genre, historically the policy essay brought as great, if not greater, an impact on essay writing as the eight-legged essay. Second, the policy essay embodies the essence of Chinese academic culture. It originated from the political discourse of Chinese feudalism and was repositioned as a pedagogical discourse, reflecting the Confucian ideal of education; that is, an individual advances the Way (*dao*), or the cosmological order and truth, through ritualizing himself and others in light of the antiquity and by assisting the ruler in governing the State (You). It is this ritualizing function that Chinese academic writing has traditionally performed.

Our assessment of policy essays will focus on an anthology of classical Chinese writings. The anthology, *Gu Wen Ci Lei Zuan* (A Sorted Collection of Classical Writings), was compiled by a Confucian erudite, Yao Nai (1731–1815), more than two hundred years ago. To facilitate students' mastery of classical writing in their preparation for the civil service exam, Yao collected 690 classical pieces in the anthology. The anthology gathered twenty policy essays, and three were composed by Dong Zhongshu (197 BCE–107 BCE) of the Western Han dynasty in response to Emperor Wu's inquiries in 134 BC. In these three essays, Dong answered the emperor's questions on how to rule the empire according to the Heavenly mandate. In the end, Dong suggested that an imperial academy be established to recruit Confucian scholars for government service. Emperor Wu adopted Dong's suggestions on educational reform and other reforms, thus turning the three policy essays into exemplars of effective political discourse in Chinese feudal history. The other seventeen essays were written by Su Shi and Su Zhe, another two renowned Confucian scholars in the Northern Song dynasty. Our rhetorical analysis of these twenty policy essays employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first analysis, of Dong's essay, identifies some key rhetorical features that provide a model for examining all twenty samples, providing a more comprehensive view of the policy essays' structure and purposes.

In his first two essays, Dong replies to Emperor Wu's questions. More impressed by Dong's answers than by those of other scholars, the emperor rephrases his concerns and asks Dong in person for further clarification. Dong's third essay offers an elaborated response to the emperor's concerns. The emperor's questions function as a prompt, first defining a writer-and-reader relationship that determines the nature of Dong's response and potentially affect some rhetorical strategies later adopted by Dong. The emperor poses the following questions:

What one says about Heaven will be verified on earth. What one says about the antiquity will be verified in the present. Therefore I (*zhen*) humbly inquire (*chuiwen*) about the responsiveness between Heaven and earth. People praised Emperor Yao and Shun but pitied Emperor Jie and Zhou. The Way that some dynasties gradually rose and gradually fell guides me in adjusting my governance. You (*zidafu*) are expert in the Ying and the Yang of the universe and versed in the Way of sages. However, your [previous] words are not thorough. Are you puzzled by current matters? As you did not expound your thoughts thoroughly, I (*zhen*) fail to fully get them. In terms of what the three great emperors have taught us about the Way, they reigned in different times and all made mistakes. Some say that the Way does not change in time; but does the Way mean different things for the emperors? You (*zidafu*) fully understand the Way and have explained how to cease the social turmoil. You have studied these issues carefully. Does not the *Book of Songs*<sup>1</sup> say, "Listen to that, you gentleman. And do not forever take your rest. The spirits, they are listening, and will give you blessings for evermore"? (Yao, Book 21, 9)<sup>2</sup>

Emperor Wu raises three issues for Dong's deliberation—first, the connection between Heaven and earth; second, the gradual rise and fall of previous dynasties; and third, the seemingly different manifestations of the Way with the three great emperors. In addition, he institutes a hierarchy of emperor-and-official relations defining roles for this courtly, academic/political discourse. The emperor (*zhen*) inquires about puzzled matters with his officials (*dafu*). He uses "*chuiwen*" ("to inquire humbly") to soften the unequal power relations. In this, he testifies to the nature of academic writing in ancient China; writing ritualizes the writer into the Way so that he can advise the ruler and facilitate his governance. Dong's role is rhetorically ritualized through the permission given.

Let us further explore the ontology and epistemology implied by the emperor's inquiry. Emperor Wu expresses his concerns about the relationship between Heaven and earth, both the enlightened (Yao, Shun, and Yu) and the tyrannous emperors (Jie and Zhou), and the way that these emperors governed their states. In other words, Emperor Wu is concerned about the relationship

between the universe and human society, and he believes that history is a repertoire of knowledge from which he and his officials can draw to furnish the governance of the state. Among Confucian classics, the key historical documents are the *Book of History* (*Shang Shu*) and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun Qiu*). As Dong was specialized in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, he was an opportune person to resolve the emperor's concerns. At the end of the prompt, the emperor quotes a verse from the *Book of Songs*, another Confucian classic, to show his humbleness and determination to govern the country wisely. To perform his Heavenly duty, he needs the assistance of his officials/scholars. Therefore, the prompt presupposes a shared ontology and epistemology between the emperor and Dong.

Dong begins with some polite words to confirm the power relationship established in the prompt, thus building up both the ethos and pathos of his arguments to come. He first thanks the emperor for offering him special attention and then apologizes for not having thoroughly explained his thoughts in previous essays:

I (*chen*) heard from the *Analects*, 'It is only the Divine Sage who embraces [the Way] in himself both the first step and the last.'<sup>3</sup> Now Your Majesty (*bixia*) keep a learned official stay and listen to him. You posed questions again to inquire on his thoughts and to fully understand the virtue of the sages. The kind of persistence in seeking out the Way I (*yü chen*) don't possess. In my previous replies, my words are not thorough and thoughts incomplete. The fault is derived from my shallowness and ignorance. (9)

In these words, Dong accepts the power relations imposed by the emperor's prompt by using *chen* (an official refers to himself as *chen*, or "I," when speaking with an emperor) or *yü chen* ("I being unwise") to refer to himself and *bixia* ("Your Majesty") for the emperor. Dong also quotes a verse from the *Analects* to praise the emperor for seeking the Way persistently. Through these humble and pleasing terms that confirm an emperor-official relationship, Dong establishes his pathos, as well as his ethos, for the elucidation of the emperor's concerns that he turns to next.

Dong addresses the emperor's three issues one by one. For each issue, he repeats the emperor's original words and then states his own thoughts. Here, for the matter of convenience, we will analyze Dong's response to the emperor's third concern, which is the shortest of all in length. The emperor asks, "In terms of what the three great emperors have taught us about the Way, they reigned in different times and they all made mistakes. Some say that the Way does not

change in time; but does the Way mean different things for the emperors?" Dong's response is as follows:

I heard that the Way prevails when music does not lead to chaos, or it haunts without sounding tiring.<sup>4</sup> When the Way prevails, the world is devoid of corruptions. Corruptions rise when the Way falls. The Ways of previous emperors had their own deviations and inefficacy, thus their governance sometimes stifled, and they amended corruptions with deviations. The Way of the three emperors occurred in different times. It is not that their Ways were opposite but that they encountered different circumstances in salvaging the nation. Therefore Confucius says, "Among those that 'ruled by inactivity' surely Shun may be counted."<sup>5</sup> Shun only changed the first month of the calendar and the color of court dress to follow the Heavenly mandate. As he largely adopted the Way of Emperor Yao, why did he need to change anything else? Therefore the emperors only changed some regulations but not the Way. However, the Xia Dynasty valued loyalty, the Yin Dynasty respect, and the Zhou Dynasty culture—the right way to amend what is left from the previous dynasty. Confucius says, "We know in what ways the Yin modified ritual when they followed upon the Hsia (Xia). We know in what ways the Chou [Zhou] modified ritual when they follow upon the Yin. And hence we can foretell what the successors of Chou [Zhou] will be like, even supposing they do not appear till a hundred generations from now."<sup>6</sup> That means all emperors will emulate the three dynasties in their governance. The Xia followed the Yin without people speaking of its modification of ritual because they share the Way and value the same thing. The grandness of the Way originates from Heaven. Heaven does not change, nor does the Way. Therefore, when Yu succeeded Shun, and Shun succeeded Yao, they passed the empire from one to the other, preserving the single Way. They did not have any major corruption; therefore we don't talk about how they modified the Way. From this perspective, inheriting a prosperous nation, the Way of governance stays the same. Inheriting a tumultuous nation, the Way needs to be adjusted. Han rose after a tumultuous nation, thus it needs to embrace the culture of the Zhou and the loyalty of the Xia. (11–12)

Modern readers, including native Chinese speakers, may be dismayed by the heavily culture-ridden language in Dong's exposition. This comes with no surprise, as both the emperor and Dong are well versed in Chinese classics, particularly classical thoughts on the Way, music, the three great emperors/sages, and the alternation of the Xia, Yin, and Zhou dynasties. It was on the grounds of shared cultural knowledge that Dong addresses the emperor's concerns.

The rhetoric of the passage exhibits a full-fledged argument structure. Dong first announces, in Stephen Toulmin's terms, two warrants—the relationship between the Way and governance and all previous governments having their deviations or corruptions. Then he raises the major claim, or the thesis

statement, in this passage: “It is not that their Ways were opposite but that they encountered different circumstances in salvaging the nation.” Next, he provides the example of Emperor Shun as evidence, or data, to back up his claim. Dong wants to show that Shun only changed some regulations in his governance instead of changing the Way. After that, Dong offers two more pieces of evidence. First, the Xia, Yin, and Zhou dynasties all changed their priority of values as a way to amend the corrupted. However, again they largely upheld the Way. Second, although the three great emperors made some mistakes in their regime, they did not significantly modify the Way. Between these two pieces of evidence, Dong states another warrant: “The grandness of the Way originates from Heaven. Heaven does not change, nor does the Way.” Based on his claim that the Way might need to be adjusted in some circumstances, he finally draws an inference about what values the Han Dynasty should prioritize, which testifies the ultimate goal of the policy essay, that is, to enlighten the emperor for wise governance.

In Anglo-American models of essay writing, formal logic is often divided into induction and deduction. An inductive pattern frontloads warrants and data and places the claim at the end, moving the argument from particular to general. A deductive pattern places the claim in the front and supports it with warrants and data, moving the argument from general to particular. Dong’s reasoning pattern is deductive in general because he places a general statement (the claim) before the particulars (the data). But because he states some warrants first, he positions the claim in the middle of the passage. The heavy reliance on historical events and classical texts as the backing of Dong’s argument reveals a particular line of rhetorical reasoning, or enthymeme. In Dong’s rhetorical reasoning, history reflects the Heavenly mandate and the Way; therefore, what happened in the past can be a reference for the present and the future. This particular view toward history constitutes the key premise of Dong’s rhetorical syllogism. As Dong claims in the passage, “The grandness of the Way originates from Heaven. Heaven does not change, nor does the Way.” In the same conversation with Emperor Wu, Dong also asks, “Heaven of the ancients is also the same Heaven of the present. Underneath the same Heaven, the country was ruled peacefully and harmoniously in the ancient times. [. . .] Gauging the present with the ancient standards, why the present lags far behind the ancient times?” (12). In other words, the Way of Heaven (the universe) does not change; therefore, the Way of the ancients can be studied and restored in the present human society. It is due to this view of history that Dong mobilizes historical events and sages’ words as premises to back up his claim.

After Dong answers the emperor's three concerns, he moves on to voice his suggestions for the government, which forms the climax of the essay. He first asks, since Heaven remains the same in both ancient and present times, why the present cannot match the ancient times in which the society was blessed by peace, harmony, and lack of crimes. He suggests that Heaven has its own design for living beings. "Someone holding a government post does not depend on manual labor to make a living. He receives the big therefore should not take the small, which is the Heavenly design" (12). Various corruptions in the society are derived from the greed of some officials who seize things that the masses are entitled to. Finally, Dong makes an ideological suggestion that has shaped Chinese educational system for more than two thousand years:

Nowadays people study different Ways and hold different thoughts. Hundreds of schools teach different meanings about the Way. As there is no unified thought in government, and state regulations change constantly, the masses do not know which regulations to follow. I (*chen*) humbly think that those that fall out of the *Six Classics* and the Confucian school should be eradicated. When heresies die off, thoughts in government will be unified, regulations become clear, and the masses know what to follow. (13)

In the above suggestions, despite his humility, Dong's voice is resoundingly clear. Thanks to Dong's persuasive writing, Emperor Wu took his suggestions and waged a series of reforms, one of which established the imperial academy to promote Confucian thoughts and to recruit Confucian scholars to study the Way of Heaven and earth. The Western Han became one of the prosperous and strong dynasties in Chinese history. The history-making reforms embodied in Dong's essays testify to the political weight of the policy essay.

The rhetorical features of Dong's essay are exhibited in different proportions in the remaining essays. Deduction is the most predominant logical structure used. Among the 88 key points that we have identified in the twenty essays, 18 points (20 percent) are reasoned following induction, and 70 (80 percent) following deduction. Dong expresses his independent opinions on issues in question, voices his particular concerns, and makes suggestions for action. To measure the extent of the authors' voice, we have counted the uses of *chen* as the subject of a sentence, in which case the word means "I." Among the twenty policy essays, the average uses of *chen* are 5.1 per essay.

Historical anecdotes and analogies are found across all the policy essays. Historical anecdotes are used for comparison or contrast when the authors make an argument. Altogether 78 historical anecdotes are used in the twenty

policy essays. Analogy, or a comparison of some similar aspects of two dissimilar objects, is also relatively common. There are altogether 19 instances of analogy in the twenty essays. Clearly, giving directions is an important value in academic essay writing because deductive patterns prevail in the policy essays. To address the emperor's concerns and to propose plans of action, the authors have to write in their outspoken voices while remaining polite and courteous. Like previous scholars, we find in these policy essays ample use of reasoning by analogy and historical anecdotes. However, we argue, the wide use of these methods of argument has as much to do with the historical view toward the universe shared by the Confucian literati as the traditional social hierarchy as previous scholarship tends to suggest. Through a firsthand study of the twenty policy essays, our findings have clarified some confusions about ancient Chinese essay writing previously caused by the exclusive scholarly attention devoted to the eight-legged essay.

However, the task of achieving a complicated view of essay writing in ancient China does not stop here. We have only focused on policy essays, one of the three essay genres that ancient Chinese literati practiced inside—and outside—the academy. After additional research is done on the eight-legged and the policy essays, future studies should explore the other academic genres such as the discourse essay. Only after the three genres have been systematically examined can we more confidently make claims about essay writing in the Chinese academy and literary culture past and present. As Yao Nai's collection of classical Chinese writings suggests, once we move beyond the academic essays, there is a vast family of Chinese essays composed in different sociocultural contexts and for markedly different audiences. Collections of classical Chinese essays, such as Yao Nai's, are treasure troves for comparative rhetoricians. Therefore, the next step in studying Chinese essay writing, we suggest, should focus on firsthand, systematic examination of these texts. It is through a firsthand study of primary texts that we can hope to fend off both essentialism and orientalism in comparative studies of non-Western rhetorics and writing.

### Notes

1. The verse was quoted by Emperor Wu from the last stanza of the song "Minor Bright." The complete stanza sings, "Listen to that, you gentleman, / And do not forever take your rest. / Fulfill the duties of your station. / God loves the upright and straight. / The spirits, they are listening, / And will give you blessings for evermore" (*Book of Songs* 192). Here, we adopt the English translation of Arthur Waley.

2. All Chinese sources are our translations unless specified otherwise.
3. The English translation of this verse is adopted from Arthur Waley (Confucius 227).
4. This sentence conveys the Confucian thoughts on the mythic power of music and government. Dong seems to have quoted the two ideas about music (i.e., music does not lead to chaos; music haunts without sounding tiring) from *On Music (Yue Ji)* and *History by Zhuo (Zhuo Zhuang)*, which is an elaborated annotation of the *Spring and Autumn Annals (Chun Qiu)*.
5. The English translation of this verse is adopted from Arthur Waley (Confucius 193).
6. The English translation of this verse is adopted from Arthur Waley (Confucius 93).

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## Writing to Connect Minds: Bing Xin as a Feminist Rhetorician

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With the development of the May Fourth Movement (1919–1925), the first group of modern Chinese women writers emerged from the backdrop of radical social and cultural changes in the early twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Their work was neither a continuation of traditional Chinese women's writing nor a simple transplantation of Western feminist literature. Awakened by the new culture, women writers assumed the historic mission of enlightenment. Writing with an earnestness born of the May Fourth Movement, Bing Xin (1900–1999), essayist, fiction writer, and poet, shared with her contemporaries a belief in the power of language and felt strongly that this power could and should be acquired and claimed by common women as well as men.<sup>2</sup> Like many new intellectuals, Bing Xin insisted that writers should break the bonds of *wenyanwen* (classical Chinese) and use *baihua* (the vernacular) that is based on popular spoken language. This call for the use of the vernacular is, in essence, a move toward a modern democratic society in the area of language reform. As a pioneer of vernacular Chinese, Bing Xin experimented with the genre of *xiaopinwen* (the vernacular lyrical essay) and used it to explore various societal issues, especially issues related to women and children. Her writing opened up a new area of women's and children's literature by broadening the range of subject matter in modern Chinese literature.

Bing Xin's work, however, was criticized as "not reflecting society but only reflecting herself" (Mao Dun 192–93). In spite of her tremendous literary accomplishments, Bing Xin has been relegated to a less important position in modern Chinese literature histories. Bing Xin as a writer and stylist deserves more attention not only in literature but also in rhetoric studies. Only when we locate Bing Xin in her own social and historical context and analyze her work from a gendered perspective can we demystify those grand historical narratives and reveal the masculine values embedded in the criticisms of her work. Different from male writers of her time, Bing Xin espoused a feminine mode of belle lettres and employed various discursive strategies to critique the traditional culture and awaken her countrywomen. By writing in vernacular Chinese, by depicting women and children's lives in a new era, Bing Xin bravely challenged the feudal patriarchal mores and ethics and contributed significantly to the development of a new public discourse.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, I offer a rereading of Bing Xin's literary texts, particularly her essays, from a feminist rhetorical perspective. Western feminist historiographers and rhetoricians such as Susan Jarratt, C. Jan Swearingen, Cheryl Glenn, Krista Ratcliffe, and Jacqueline Jones Royster's works on Western women rhetors and writers have informed my study. My purpose is to recover Bing Xin's contributions to the development of modern Chinese rhetoric. Toward this end, I first locate Bing Xin as a feminist rhetorician in early twentieth-century China. Then I explore how her essays may be read as theorizing a new rhetoric of modernity and as modeling its strategies.<sup>4</sup> Her essays, I argue, are discursive practices that disrupted the dominant patriarchal discourse and spread the new culture.

### **Bing Xin and the May Fourth Movement**

Born in Fujian Province in 1900, Bing Xin was the only daughter of her family. Her father, Xie Baozhang, a patriotic naval officer, fought in the Sino-Japanese War and established Yantai Naval Academy. Her mother, Yang Fuci, who came from a scholar's family, taught Bing Xin and her siblings how to read and write. In 1914 Bing Xin went to Beijing Beiman Girls' School, a missionary school where she was exposed to the Bible and Christianity. This exposure contributed to her philosophy of love, a major theme expressed in her lyrical essays during the early period of her career.

Bing Xin mentioned more than once: "It's the thunder of the May Fourth Movement that shook me onto the path of writing" (*Jishi Zhu* 90).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, without the May Fourth Movement, there would not be a writer named Bing Xin. At the time, Bing Xin served as secretary of the Student Union at Xiehe Women's College and public relations writer in Beijing Women's Academic Association. She wrote in her memoir:

This epoch-making patriotic new culture movement drew me out of the small world of my home and missionary school; gradually I noticed various social problems in the semi-feudal and semi-colonized China. [...] With great enthusiasm, I spoke in public on the street, made donations, and attended meetings during the day and wrote *wenti xiaoshuo* [question fiction] at night. (*Jishi Zhu* 228)

Evidently, the May Fourth Movement changed Bing Xin's life. During this period, Chinese new intellectuals advocated women's liberation as part of their effort to attack the Confucian tradition and build a modern democratic nation. Feminist movements launched in the United States and Europe in the early twentieth century also provided theoretical reference for the new intel-

lectuals to discuss and solve Chinese women's problems. Thus, the connection between women's liberation and the nation's modernization made women's rights, women's education, and women's liberation a major theme in the new culture. The development of modern education prepared a large number of readers for the new public discourse. It is within this social and historical context that Bing Xin wrote and published her works. In other words, Bing Xin was writing to address the problems in a cultural background in which her audience's experiences and needs were entwined. In 1921 Bing Xin joined Wenxue Yanjiuhui (Literature Research Association) and was one of its first few women members. Endorsing realism and taking common people's lives as subjects, Bing Xin published a series of "question fiction" to explore various issues related to life, women, family, culture, and society. She believed that art is created for life's sake and that literature embodies life. She wrote literature in order to "touch society," "alert people," and "change the situation"—hence, question fiction (*Jishi Zhu* 241). Bing Xin enacted her view of writing through many essays and short stories she composed in the May Fourth period.

### **Writing to Connect Minds: Bing Xin's Literary Theory**

Since she published her first short story in 1919, Bing Xin had adopted and appropriated the Western literary mode of realism. From Bing Xin's essays on writing, we can see that she emphasizes both the expression of the writer's individual personality and its connection with the audience. Influenced by both the traditional Chinese literary thought and Western literary modes, Bing Xin developed a literary theory centered on *gexing* (individual personality), *tongqing* (sympathy, emotion), and the author's social and moral responsibility to the public.

One concept in her theory is *gexing* (personality), which emphasizes the author's individual personality and true feelings expressed through writing. Bing Xin's emphasis on the expression of *gexing* would seem on the surface to have more in common with Western romanticism than with realism. Yet the Chinese assumption of the subjective origins of writing distinguishes itself from the Western romanticism that views literature as pure self-expression with a sense of the self as an isolated entity disconnected from society and history.<sup>6</sup> Although this concept was also discussed by other writers, Bing Xin took it to another level in both her theory and practice. She related it to the making of "real" literature, by which she means the kind of writing that connects the writer with the reader through the writer's depiction of her individual personality and true feelings. *Gexing* adds to the Western realism a dimension of the

writer's subjectivity in the creative process. In Bing Xin's text, *gexing* could also be seen as an important way in which the writer establishes her ethos so as to reach her audience.

Bing Xin recognized *tongqing* (sympathy, emotion), another important literary concept discussed by the writers of her time. Bing Xin views *tongqing* through the relationship between author, text, reader, and world. She sees *tongqing* as a link through which the writer reaches the audience. According to Bing Xin, the ideal literary encounter is a *jingshen jiechu* (spiritual contact) through which *tongqing* can emerge. *Tongqing*, as an ideal state that a literary work can produce in the audience, could be considered as pathos in the Chinese context with which a writer moves her audience. Thus, Bing Xin saw literature as a communicative act. The writer writes to convey her feelings to the reader so as to deliver her message to her audience.

Bing Xin was also concerned with the social responsibilities of the writer. The purpose of literature is not only to stir the reader's sympathy but to change attitudes and connect minds. When responding to some critics' comments on the tragic characters in her fiction, she wrote in an essay titled "When Writing Fiction, I Am Not Pessimistic": "My goal in writing fiction is to influence society, so I put all my efforts into describing the bad situation of old families in old society, so that people will become alert and try to improve the situation" (*Jishi Zhu* 243). Here Bing Xin implies that the writer bears a social responsibility to her readers when it comes to depicting the tragic realities of the contemporary society. Therefore, realism for Bing Xin is an important literary mode that provides the writer with an analytical tool to examine society and evoke moral responses from the reader. In an essay titled "The Cultivation of Moral Character and Composition," Bing Xin also pointed out that the writer's moral character will inevitably affect the reader and society through her writing; a writer should first cultivate her moral values before she writes (*Jishi Zhu* 39). Thus, there is a deep social, moral, and spiritual orientation in Bing Xin's view of writing. In my view, to a certain degree Bing Xin's emphasis on the writer's social engagement and moral character reflects the influence of traditional Chinese literary thought, which stresses the moral function of literature. Or put another way, although she opposes a narrow didacticism that makes literature convey some particular external political principles, Bing Xin carries forward quintessential elements of the Chinese literary tradition to call for the writer's and reader's moral responses to the social problems of their time. Bing Xin recognizes the communicative, persuasive, and informative functions of language and also speculates how these functions could be used to promote

the common good of a modern society. In this sense, her literary theory could be seen as performing rhetorical functions, though in the Chinese tradition rhetoric and poetics have always been closely interrelated since the antiquity.

### **A Eulogy of Love: Bing Xin's Lyrical Essays**

In Chinese literature, the essay is one of Chinese writers' favorite genres; its history traced back to 476 BCE. Prior to the May Fourth Movement, *Tongcheng* School was one of the leading schools of classical prose literature. Its originators, including Fang Bao (1668–1794), Liu Dakui (1698–1780), and Yao Nai (1731–1815), were famous for their styles characterized by elegance and purity of language. *Tongcheng* School dominated the Chinese literary field until the fall of the Qing dynasty. The May Fourth new intellectuals attacked it for its didactic principle that literature should convey the *Dao*. Creating a new culture entails innovatively transforming old literary genres into new ones that best serve the writers' political purpose at that historical moment. *Zawen* (argumentative essays) and *xiaopinwen* (lyrical essays) are two vernacular genres the new intellectuals employed to argue against conservatives and express their feelings. In fact, Bing Xin was the first modern Chinese writer to compose a lyrical essay (Yang 1). Since the May Fourth period, Bing Xin began using the essay to express herself and communicate with her readers.

In 1923, Bing Xin graduated from Yanjing University with honors and also received a scholarship offered by Wellesley Women's College in the United States. Right before she left for Boston, she suggested that *Chenbao Fujian* (Morning News Supplement) initiate "Children's World"—a column designed for child readers. On the second day after this column was set up, Bing Xin wrote a lyrical essay, "Ji Xiao Duzhe" (To Child Readers: Letter One), in a specially warm and gentle tone. Bing Xin wrote twenty-nine letters that recorded her life and study abroad. The letters enjoyed great popularity and were loved so much by children as well as adult readers that there were twenty-one reprints within ten years. In addition to "To Child Readers," Bing Xin also composed the lyrical essays "Wangshi" (Past Events) and "Shanzhong Zaji" (Miscellaneous Notes in Mountains) and other pieces. Bing Xin presented a natural and smooth model of vernacular prose. Having the vernacular as the bulk of her language, she integrated the flavor and charm of classical poetry and creatively applied many vigorous phrases and sentence structures in classical Chinese, which creates a fresh and feminine style that has the ease and freedom of the vernacular as well as the elegance and rhythm of the classical Chinese. This

unique style was named *Bing Xin ti* (Bing Xin Style) and was imitated by many young writers of her time.

Bing Xin's essays reflect her literary theory. In her lyrical essays, she fully expresses her individual personality, using the vernacular—a hybrid of classical Chinese and Western language structures. From *Ji Xiao Duzhe* (To Children Readers) and other essays in her early years, we learn about Bing Xin's experiences and feelings—her memories of her childhood, her love for her mother, her longings for the ocean, and her nostalgic feeling for her country. Even her depiction of nature becomes a means of expressing these emotions. She wholeheartedly shared with her readers the smiles and tears of her soul. This sharing distinguishes her from the traditional essayists and enables her to establish credibility as a modern Chinese woman writer during the May Fourth period. Given the fact that her lyrical essays instilled in the reader modern moral values and aesthetic tastes, which broke the traditional view of writing as a vehicle of the *Dao*, Bing Xin's work could be considered rhetorical in its own social and cultural context.<sup>7</sup>

In many of her lyrical essays, she advocated her philosophy of love, which is centered on maternal love, child innocence, and the beauty of nature. In essence, Bing Xin's philosophy of love is a moral philosophy or a pursuit of an ideal human character. In her writing, she explored the positive aspects in human relations and attempted to use love to influence her readers so that they could act and change the dark and corrupted society. Take, for example, her essay "Xiao" (Smile), which describes three "beautiful pictures" after the rain:

The rain gradually stops. [. . .] I stand beside a window for a while and feel the slightly cool air. Turning around, I suddenly find other items in the room fading in the moonlight; only the *anqier* [angel] in the picture, bathed in the light, dressed in white, holding flowers, spreading its wings, smiles to me. "This smile looks like a smile I have seen before; when, I saw [. . .]" I unconsciously sit down, thinking deeply.

The closed curtain of my heart draws apart slowly and an image of five years ago rises. A long ancient path. The mud under the donkey's hoofs was slippery. The water in the field ditch murmured quietly. The green trees in the nearby village were shrouded in the mist. Like a bow, the moon hung over the top of the trees. Walking along the path, I vaguely saw a boy holding a bunch of white things. The donkey passed by; I turned around unwittingly; bare-footed, he was holding flowers and smiling at me.

[. . .] I saw the moon rise from the sea and suddenly realized that I left something behind. I stopped and turned around. The elderly woman in the thatched cottage, leaning on the door, holding flowers, smiled at me.

The same subtle expressions, like gossamer, drifting and rippling closer, tie together. At this moment, I feel calm and peaceful as if I walked into paradise and went back to my hometown. The three smiles before my eyes melt into the harmony of love and cannot be seen clearly any more. (*Bing Xin Wenji* 16-17)<sup>8</sup>

As this essay illustrates, Bing Xin uses “smile” as a thread to tie up three related “pictures.” Applying the approach of reiterative paragraphs and sentences frequently used in classical Chinese poetry, she repeatedly describes “smile” in order to foreground the theme of love. “Smile” is a concrete image of love. The smile of the “angel,” the “boy,” and the “elderly woman” symbolizes maternal love and love of children. With the backdrop of the moonlight, the misty trees, and the sea, Bing Xin also depicts the beauty of nature. This eulogy of love is a challenge to the feudal patriarchal social norms that trample on humanity and suppress individuality. It is also a challenge to the old literature that spoke for the ancient sages and hypocritical feudal moralists.

In the eyes of some literary critics, Bing Xin’s description of women’s experience and feelings was not “profound” and therefore not serious enough to be listed together with male writers in the history. Situating her writing and its implication within the specific social and cultural context, I am able to see that Bing Xin’s praise of maternal love is different from that of the conservatives who used “virtuous wife and good mother” to restrict women within the household. Her paean of maternal love is in essence a different approach to reflect on women’s painful experiences and the causes of their suffering. Instead of offering an explicit political critique of society, Bing Xin attended more to using a moral philosophy as a way to solve social problems. In a patriarchal society in which every cultural activity was designed for men, Bing Xin’s representation of women and children from a female perspective is a feminist and anti-feudalist action. In the Chinese cultural and historical context, by extolling the beauty of nature, Bing Xin expresses her own personality and emotions as an individual, which reinforces the new cultural values celebrating individuality and liberty. In this sense Bing Xin’s lyrical essays formed a unique female voice in the new public discourse.

### **Implications of Bing Xin’s Rhetoric**

Though Bing Xin advocated feminist concepts through her writing, her ideas could only reach and empower the new women—educated women from middle- or upper-class background. Due to poverty and illiteracy, the majority of women did not have material resources to receive the feminist ideas and live the

human life described by Bing Xin. To a contemporary Western audience, Bing Xin's texts might not sound as feminist as their Western counterpart; however, considering their specific historical and cultural background, they present a Chinese version of feminism that was liberatory in early twentieth-century China. Thus, Bing Xin's texts indicate that our reading of what is feminist writing should be contextualized and based on what can be identified as feminist within a specific culture rather than the categories of a universal feminism. While a certain type of women's texts may have little significance to women in another culture, the same texts may form great challenges to cultural values and social norms within their own cultural context. Thus, we should take into consideration women's issues in different cultural settings and avoid forcing upon women in non-Western cultures a Western conception of feminism and seeing it as a set of universal principles.

In the context of my study, Bing Xin is important for another reason: she was among the first group of modern Chinese writers to experiment with the vernacular in their works. Bing Xin is expert in blending the vigorous phrases and sentence structures of classical Chinese with modified Western language structures to create a new written language. Bing Xin also formed her well-known prose style—*Bing Xin ti*, which fostered the new ideas and concepts during the May Fourth period, influenced writers of several generations, and contributed to the establishment of the dominant position of vernacular literature. A pioneer in using the vernacular, Bing Xin illustrates what many Chinese rhetoricians found difficult to accomplish—the creative innovation of a new rhetorical means that revives the national culture in the crosscultural rhetorical encounter.

The rhetorical dimension of Bing Xin's critical and lyrical essays invites us to reconsider the boundary between rhetoric and poetics. Her emphasis on creative writers' moral and social responsibility reflects a different perception of poetics in the Chinese rhetorical/literary tradition. As modern Chinese rhetorical theorist Chen Wangdao points out, rhetoric is "a discipline that is interrelated with linguistics and literature"; it has "an interdisciplinary character" (302). Chinese rhetoric is more or less embedded in its historical, philosophical, and literary texts. Therefore, literary criticism and other genres such as essay, fiction, and poetry have been considered an important part in Chinese rhetorical studies since the classical period (fifth to third century BCE).<sup>9</sup> Bing Xin's rhetorical lyrics shed light on how we define rhetoric and help us to view the relationship between rhetoric and poetics in a more integrated way, a way that focuses more on the social and communicative nature of literary texts.

## Notes

1. On 4 May 1919, students in Beijing demonstrated in protest against the Chinese government's humiliating policy toward Japan. A series of strikes and associated events resulted that led to social ferment and an intellectual revolution. This social movement was soon dubbed by the students the May Fourth Movement, a term that acquired a broader meaning in later years than it had originally.
2. Bing Xin's real name is Xie Wanying; Bing Xin is a pen name she used when she published her first short story, "Liangge Jiating" (Two Families) in *Chenbao* (Morning News) in 1919. In Chinese, *Bing Xin* means "a pure and noble heart," which comes from an ancient Chinese poem.
3. In this article, the *new public discourse* refers to the kind of discourse encompassing speeches, essays, letters, short stories, and other genres employed in the early twentieth century in China, a discourse that was preoccupied with critiquing the old, traditional culture and advocating a new culture informed by various Western ideological principles, and that opposed the classical written form and advocated the vernacular.
4. By *modernity*, I mean a cluster of notions such as progress, newness, enlightenment, science, democracy, and gender equality that Chinese new intellectuals employed in cultural transformation in response to a specific historical context of imperialism and domestic social crisis. For a detailed discussion of modernity in the Chinese social context, see Leo Ou-fan Lee, "In Search of Modernity," 109–35.
5. The passages quoted from the original texts are my translations unless noted otherwise.
6. For a detailed discussion of modern Chinese romanticism, see Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*.
7. The traditional essayists represented by the *Tongchen* School held that literature should convey the *Dao* and speak for the ancient sages. Their essays often imitate the ancient writers, are filled with clichés, and have no individual personality of the author.
8. "Xiao" is considered to be the first lyrical essay written in *baihua* (the vernacular) in modern Chinese literature history.
9. The connection between rhetoric and poetics has been well explored among the twentieth-century theorists in the West. Wayne Booth, Donald Bryant, Lynette Hunter, and Jeffrey Walker, among others, have contended that literature should not be isolated from persuasive discourse and have established what they refer to as a rhetorical dimension in literature. For instance, in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth argues that although authors of fiction do not intend to affect their audiences' actions in the world, they expect certain attitudes from audiences during the act of reading. These scholars' work provides a foundation

for studying the rhetorical effects in literary discourse. In her study of Anglo-American feminist writers, Krista Ratcliffe makes a further move by using extrapolating—rereading nonrhetoric texts such as essays, fiction, diaries, and etiquette manuals as theories of rhetoric—as an approach to recuperate women's rhetorics (4). I see a connection between these scholars' arguments in terms of reconfiguring rhetorical theory and broadening the conception of rhetorical action.

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## The *Qi* Rhetoric of Persuasion and Political Discourse

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The role Chinese rhetorical traditions play in the traditional Chinese political discourse has not received much attention. Despite some marked differences in their analytical approaches, scholars in the West have basically adopted a top-down view by measuring the Chinese political rhetoric against China's current political system, ignoring the intricacies not explicable in the Western paradigm, with the implication that if the system were of a different nature, the rhetorical strategies practiced so far might be different (Ji; Kluver; Lu; Pye; Schoenhals; X. Yang). Although I have no intention of disputing their observations here, I want to argue that the rhetorical strategies evidenced in the political discourse in China are the outcome of a unique rhetorical practice and that any discussion of the Chinese political discourse should take into consideration this rhetorical practice and its wide-ranging significance. Understanding this practice in its own light will not only help us comprehend how political rhetoric works in Chinese society but also appreciate the diversity of the rhetorical practices in different cultures.

The traditional Chinese rhetoric, like all other rhetorical practices, functions to persuade, but it operates along a different line, not according to logical inference in its practice as is the case in the Western tradition.<sup>1</sup> Chinese rhetorical persuasion works for a holistic arousal that is more or less similar to religious or aesthetic experience. The key concept that dominates and orchestrates the rhetorical practice is *qi*, a term not easily translatable into English. *Qi yun shengdong* or the effectiveness of *qi* is all that matters. Put simply, rhetoric in China is not to argue with logic but to affect with *qi*, which may explain why in traditional Chinese argumentative writings colorful figures or tropes are much preferred and appreciated.

Numerous concepts in Chinese rhetoric and philosophy have received meticulous attention in the West, but there is not much research on *qi*, a concept of great significance for comprehending the Chinese culture, and rhetoric in particular. Perhaps this may have to do with the Western tradition of downplaying the importance of the nonrational elements starting from Plato, and it may also be related to the elusiveness of the meaning of the Chinese character *qi* so much so that it defies any scholarly attempt to contain it within the Western paradigm. Robert L. Oliver made an interesting observation on the Western practice of academic validation:

It is tempting to look in the philosophy for what appear to us to be rhetorical universals, such as invention, disposition, style, delivery, and memory, and the three Aristotelian modes of proof—ethos, pathos, and logos. In effect unless we find a Western rhetoric, it is a temptation to conclude there is no rhetoric there at all. (261)

Mary M. Garret is among the few who have studied in detail the notion *qi* in the discussion of Chinese rhetoric. Her translation of the word *qi* is “configured energy.” But from the title of her paper “*Pathos* Reconsidered from the Perspective of Classical Chinese Rhetorical Theories,” we can see that for all her respect for the “other” rhetoric, she is still trying to accommodate the notion within the Western rhetorical analytical framework.

A variety of English translations for *qi* have been attempted. The examples I have gathered here so far, while certainly far from exhaustive, may be enough to demonstrate the difficulty in pinning down the meaning of the intransigent term in another language: “pneuma” (Lin 141); “passion-effort,” “passion-nature” (Legge 188, 189); “vitality” (Shih 1959); “ether,” “force of life,” “breath of life” (Rickett 152, 158); “energy” (Lu, *Rhetoric* 155); “ch’i” or “configured energy” (Garret 24); “breath” (Egan 106); “spirit” (Plaks 172); and “qi” (Owen 184). I use *qi*, the phonetic transcription or *pinyin*, for want of a better translation in my discussion, as I find the existing English translations tend to overstress some but bypass other meanings of the term.

The term *qi*, which originated as a philosophical concept about cosmos and life in the early traditional Chinese philosophy, has been traced to Zhuang Zi, who referred to it as something that constitutes the quintessence of all the things in the universe.<sup>2</sup> He thought of life as essentially a result of the operation of *qi*: “When *qi* gathers, man lives but when it disperses, man dies” (185). Wang Cong (29–99 AD), an important philosopher in a later age, echoed the view: “The essence of *qi* is the source of human life. When people die, *qi* perishes as well.”

*Qi* is intangible and omnipresent, moving like force and functioning as magnetic power. Lihui Xiong, a contemporary Chinese scholar, puts it this way:

It is formless and shapeless, with yin and with yang, hard and soft, passing through things unobstructed, no matter how solid they are. It operates and varies, existing in everything. There is *qi* of the heaven, of the earth, and of things. Human beings are part of nature, so there is *qi* of human kind. *Qi* of human kind is divided into *qi* of body and of will. *Qi* of the heaven, of the earth, and of things all have respective characteristics. So moralists even regard moral principles as part of the natural *qi* of human kind. (545)

The ethereal and ubiquitous *qi* has established for the Chinese a view of life that is essentially holistic. *Qi* governs, regulates, and has a role to play in almost every aspect of life. This is best testified by the common phrases in the Chinese language. For example, when one dies, it has to do with “the stoppage of *qi*” (*duanqi*). When some one suffers some essential loss, one describes such loss as “the loss of the essence of *qi*” (*shang yuanqi*). When one loses the will to fight, it is called “loss of *qi*” (*xieqi*). Encouragement is a way to “pump *qi*” (*guqi*). People may even say that “one lives just for the sake of *qi*” (*zhengkou qi*). Ill fortune is referred to as “ominous *qi*” (*huiqi*), but good fortune is “*qi* of luck” (*fuqi*). Emotions take the form of *qi* as in: “*qi* of anger” (*nuqi*), “*qi* of joy” (*xiqi*), and “*qi* of complaint” (*yuanqi*). Bravery is related to *qi* as in “*qi* of courage” (*yongqi*), and intelligence is linked to “*qi* of cleverness” (*lingqi*). Will power has to do with “*qi* of will” (*zhiqi*). Talent is a display of *qi*: “*qi* of talent” (*caiqi*). The list can go on and on.

This holistic approach to life with *qi* as the essence of everything has exerted an enormous influence on the traditional Chinese culture, because it indicates that problems in life involve the proper handling or manipulation of *qi*. This is especially prominent in the traditional medicinal practices. A significant number of medicinal therapies are set to administer the flow of *qi*. The Chinese traditional rhetoric is another domain where the influence of the holistic *qi* approach reigns, setting the basis for the classical Chinese rhetoric of persuasion. Because as mind and heart often differ, reasoning alone is not sufficient to do the job. Logic can only convince the audience on rational terms, but more often than not we are logically convinced yet still remain emotionally resistant to the idea. Persuasion is successful when one is aroused and worked up in a holistic way, which can only be realized when proper appeal to the all-governing *qi* is made. Hence various rhetorical strategies were developed in the traditional Chinese rhetoric for the purpose of manipulating *qi* in writing.

Meng Zi is credited as among the first who made explicit reference to *qi* and consciously manipulated *qi* in his writings to enhance the persuasive power.<sup>3</sup> Many critics believe that the logical structures of Meng Zi's arguments are not so easy to delineate, but few Chinese readers will deny the vibrating *qi* in his writings. The affective power of his writing has been chiefly attributed to his dexterous control and use of *qi* (Z. Yang; Yuan). Meng Zi himself explained that he was persuasive simply because he was conscious of and "good at cultivating *qi* of grandeur."

Cao Pi is said to be the first who offered a theoretical account of *qi* in writing<sup>4</sup>:

*Qi* is the ruling force in writing. *Qi*, which is both light and heavy, cannot be accessed by force. It is just like music. Melodies can be evenly paced, and rhythm can be well spaced. The different uses of *qi* will reveal dexterity or clumsiness. Even with the father or the brother being the tutor, the subtle use of *qi* cannot be passed on. (60)

Liu Xie offered a systematic account of *qi* in rhetoric in at least four chapters of his famous book *Wenxin diaolong*.<sup>5</sup> He argued that *qi* is persuasive and omnipresent, affecting every aspect of discourse (Shih). Zeng Guofan, a famous classical essayist of the Qing dynasty, believed *qi* to be the lifeline of discourse. He thought that the reason that people of his time were not able to surpass the ancient classics simply had to do with the ancient masters' superb management of *qi*.<sup>6</sup> In fact, *qi* or *qishi*, a modern term for it, is still commonly used to evaluate the strength of an argumentative essay.

While the role of logical inference, such as induction or deduction, should not be denied, the rhetorical pursuit for a holistic arousal with optimal appealing to *qi* inevitably curtails its importance, reducing it to one dimension in the process of rhetorical persuasion. On the other hand, a proper appeal to *qi* requires a mobilization of all the faculties necessary for such operations as imagination, feeling, imaging, and so forth. In a sense, we may say that the classical Chinese rhetoric of persuasion is experiential. One feels or experiences as well as reasons.

But how is this holistic *qi* rhetoric of persuasion technically possible?

The traditional rhetoric of persuasion, as has been noticed by many, cannot be easily substantiated in the syllogistic pattern. It relies on analogy for confirmation or explanation; that is, it is the analogy that establishes the relation between the premise and the conclusion. In other words, the conclusion is not necessarily logically derived from the premises but is constructed

on a set of relational assumptions. Here is one typical example from Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong* of how analogy works:

A pheasant, with all its colorful feathers, is limited in its scope of flight to a hundred paces, because it is fat-fleshed and has little or no vigor. An eagle may not have beautiful plumage patterns, but its wings carry it high in the sky, because of its strong bone structure and mighty vitality. Strength of literary talent is comparable to these cases. If we had the wind and the bone without colors, we would have a group of eagles in the forest of literature; but if we had colors without the wind and the bone, we would have a crowd of pheasants jumping about in a garden of letters. Only when a literary piece has both beautiful colors and the ability to soar high do we have a singing phoenix in the world of literature. (Shih 163–64)

Analogy works in specificity. As shown in the above example, it concretizes an abstract hypothesis by setting up a more accessible concrete analogue, thus making it easier for the audience to imagine, to feel, to reason, and to experience. Literary talent in the argument is reconfigured in terms of vivid images of a pheasant and an eagle. The reconfiguration invokes a multidimensional response on the part of the audience, and it is this multiplicity that makes a holistic experiential rhetoric possible and persuasive.

Analogization through reconfiguration, in a sense, is metaphorical translation. With a specific analogue, it translates the reality into a rhetorical construct, constructing a kind of Baudrillardian simulation or simulacrum that assumes independence for the universe of discourse by securing a distance between the rhetorical construct and abstraction or factuality. Once the analogy is established and accepted, symbolism takes over, and it is the rhetorical construct or simulacrum that grabs the focus of persuasion. Nonrhetorical evidence loses relevance, and discourse is only construable within that particular symbolic system. Translation is of crucial importance for the *qi* rhetoric to work because it is through this process, aided with other rhetorical devices such as parallelism, a much valued device for its power in building rhythm and crescendo both semantically and acoustically, that persuasion metamorphoses into an aesthetic or religious experience in nonpropositional terms.

This may explain why in the traditional rhetorical persuasion there is an enormous presence of rhetorical devices. Many of the terms in arguments are stated figuratively rather than explicitly or precisely defined. In lieu of a logical definition, the Chinese classical tradition has denomination, or *zhengming*, which gives a name to a referent so that it can be represented in the simulacrum.<sup>7</sup> Ge points out that denomination or *zhengming* in the tradition is mainly to offer

a procedure of perceiving things and a way to establish a certain relationship or order between the perceiver and the perceived (293).

When analogy rules, factuality yields to rhetoricity; abstraction is replaced by concretization; and precision gives way to vividness. The dominance of analogy that allows for a multidimensional rhetorical experience in persuasion minimizes or marginalizes the role of deductive or inductive logic. The validity of the conclusion depends on the strength and the acceptability of the analogy. If an analogy stands, the argument will hold.

As the validity of an analogy cannot be confirmed by logic, the burden of appraising strength and acceptability in most cases rests on canonized discursive authority. Maybe we can say that while analogy helps bridge the premise and the conclusion, it is authority that clinches the validity of an analogy. Trust in or reliance on the discursive authority is another feature of the rhetorical practice. Liu Xie in his *Wenxin diaolong* succinctly summarized the point for us:

In discussing questions, one must seek the guidance of the sages, and in one's efforts to understand the sages, one must make the Classics one's teachers. (Shih 15)

Heavy reliance on authority, as can be witnessed in the classical Chinese writings or even modern writings, leads to an idolization of the canonized discourse, which is seen by the fact that the traditional Chinese writings teem with allusions to the past classics, and rhetoricians savor the practice of intertextuality. Frequent recurrence of allusions or high intensity of intertextuality is the most effective way to justify the legitimacy of an analogy, as the classics are the proven source of *qi*, and reference to them can lend *qi* to the writing. We may say that in the traditional practice of persuasion, one seeks authoritative textual evidence rather than factual evidence to support their claims.

*Qi* not only invokes a multidimensional rhetorical mode of persuasion but also specifies the relation between the rhetor and the audience. To arouse the audience, the rhetor is supposed to be good at cultivating *qi* himself or herself, possessing the indisputable authority, a capability achieved through conversation with the canonized discourse. A rhetor failing in this respect can never produce an argument that appeals to *qi*. Given the diversity of audience, seeking common ground on which an analogy can make sense and hereafter be accepted is another important prerequisite for the success of *qi* manipulation. Granted the abstruse nature of *qi*, not everybody is capable of feeling or experiencing its power on the same level. The ability to appreciate the appeal of *qi* in discourse is something very similar to what Bourdieu labels as "taste:"

A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. (2)

Audience is thus divided into different classes according to the discriminatory nature of “taste” or ability. In the rhetorical literature, there are interesting discussions on the hierarchical categorization of audience. Xun Zi made it very clear that *qi* was wasted and lost on the people who were not worth it or did not have the ability.<sup>8</sup>

The audience may not be all that passive when they are confronted with the discourse since they, too, tend to lean toward the canon for the legitimacy of their understanding of the discourse. They find or construct their discursive positions in the process. Kress’s notion of “discursive construction of the reader” may be relevant here:

The construction of a reading position has at least two effects. On the one hand, it positions readers precisely in a text. On the other hand, it constructs readers as certain kinds of linguistic and social beings. In this latter effect it is quite like the discursive construction of the reader. (39)

When the authority of a rhetor is established, perhaps what is more important for the audience then is to identify with and be able to respond to the rhetor so as to be qualified for the process of rhetorical persuasion, in which they are transformed discursively from outsiders to insiders.

“Politics, at its core, is about persuasion” (Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1), and it persuades to arouse action for the sake of interest rather than truth. The holistic rhetorical approach—one that uses analogy as the main mode of cognition, authority as its guaranteed mode of perception, with the rhetor in possession of *qi* and the audience left in a position for identification and for arousal—seems to fit in well with the political discourse that aims to mobilize the masses for certain prescribed political ends. In a sense we may say that marginalization of inference and the analogical translation of reality in the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion agree well with the nature of the monophonic political discourse of the traditional society, where the dissenting voices are not supposed to be heard, and where the rationality of the message is not to be questioned, and only action of compliance is expected. When the established analogue or simulacrum replaces the factual reality, it nullifies perceptions incompatible with the canonized framework and pressures for identification on the part of the audience. This is what Edelman describes when metapho-

rization, which, broadly construed, may include analogization, takes over in the political discourse:

Metaphor, therefore, defines the pattern of perception to which people respond. . . . Each metaphor intensifies selected perceptions and ignores others, thereby helping one to concentrate upon desired consequences of favored public policies and helping one to ignore their unwanted, unthinkable, or irrelevant premises and aftermaths. (67)

Lu has made an astute observation about the traditional Chinese political discourse: "Form invites the reader to surrender to the version of reality constructed by the rhetor" (*Rhetoric* 38). Thanks to the habituation to the practice of the *qi* rhetoric in the general discourse, there is an indifference to the translation of factuality to rhetorical construct that withholds information necessary for reasoning and to the canonization of a certain authority in the political discourse. Such indifference becomes almost second nature with the audience, who are trained in and well conversed with the practice.

A quick look at an example of the political discourse may help illustrate this central point. The piece under discussion was a speech delivered in 1957 by the late premier Zhou concerning the snail fever caused by blood flukes in many rural areas in the late 1950s. As typical of the political discourse at the time, the document analogizes the campaign against the natural disaster to a war or, to be specific, to a continuation of the war fought against the old enemy of the Communist Party. The war analogy is significant since, in addition to a simple polarization of the social reality, it sets up a mode of perception that requires everything to be cognized on that plane of simulacrum. Anything bad can be easily attributed to the enemy, and any failure can be imputed to the evil old regime. Since the flukes in the rhetorical reality appear to be the remnants of the old regime, to eradicate them means eradicating the old regime.

The use of the statistics in the first part of the document is illustrative of the point. People would normally expect the statistics to be an accurate description of the current situation, but the statistics presented in the document frustrate that expectation.

China has been long affected by schistosomiasis, which has caused great damage to the people's health. The epidemic has spread to 350 counties [towns] in 12 provinces [city] such as Jiangsu, Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian and Shanghai. More than ten million people have been affected and more than one hundred million people are under the threat.

... For instance, in Gengtou Village in Baifu District of Fengcheng County, Jiangxi Province, there had been more than one thousand families one hundred years ago, but in 1945, there were only two people left; more than 90% of the people died of schistosomiasis. (Zhou)

One marked feature of the statistical presentation is the ambiguity of time reference articulated in the formally atemporal Chinese language. But if we construe it from the war metaphor, that is, on the plane of analogy, it is not difficult to realize that the statistics are not to be interpreted to reflect the gravity of the actual circumstances, but to symbolize the crimes and the disastrous failures of the old regime. The metaphorical translation saves the embarrassment of explaining the happenings or failures within that lapse of time between the overthrow of the old regime and the publication of the document. Precision and objectivity are not rhetorically relevant.

The document is filled with words of pomposity that aim to pump up the courage and will for action on the part of the audience to fight against the alleged enemy. It is definitely no coincidence that the word *fight* appears for twenty-three times in the document. The war also helps construct the discursive relation between the rhetor and the audience. On the one hand, it likens the rhetor to a commander-in-chief invested with an authority not to be challenged. On the other, it forces identification on the part of the audience, reducing the audience to the status of compliance and obedience. As is the case in a war, soldiers are not supposed to question but are to follow orders.

The *qi* rhetoric of persuasion in Chinese rhetorical traditions is certainly far more complicated than what has been outlined, and there are many other rhetorical forces, which are not discussed here and which in no small measure contribute to rhetorical persuasion. In addition, although the influence the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion has exerted on the Chinese political discourse cannot be easily denied, there are some important changes to the way the political discourse has been practiced since China opened up to the outside world. I believe these changes are rhetorically significant and deserve our immediate attention as well. In short, a study of the current political discourse in China in terms of the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion may reveal much about the direction in which the political reform in China will take. It remains to be seen how much of this rhetorical practice will survive in the final analysis.

## Notes

1. It would certainly be absurd to conclude that logic, induction or deduction, is alien to Chinese thinking. This is only to suggest that logic as such is

traditionally not treated as a core component of rhetorical persuasion. It is equally fallacious to say that the rhetoric of persuasion in the West relies exclusively on logical inference.

2. For more systematic discussions along this line I refer readers to Li. Zhuang Zi (369–286 BC) was a famous philosopher in ancient China and the second-most important thinker in the Daoist tradition.

3. Meng Zi (ca. 371–ca. 289), also known as Mencius, was one of the most important philosophers in the Confucian tradition.

4. Cao Pi (187–226), Emperor Wen of Cao Wei, was known for his talent in poetry.

5. Liu Xie (ca. 465–ca. 520) was a famous Chinese literary critic and rhetorician, known for his book *Wenxin diaolong*, translated as *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*.

6. Please refer to Xiong for a systematic discussion of *qi* in ancient Chinese literature.

7. The term is sometimes translated as *rectification*.

8. Xun Zi (313–238 BC) was a famous philosopher in the Confucian tradition.

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## Lost in Translation: The Modern Chinese Conceptualization of Rhetoric

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While comparative studies of Chinese rhetoric have become increasingly resilient, China's transnational reproduction of Western rhetoric is still an under-explored area. Although Chinese rhetorical notions and practices are examined broadly, China's books primarily or entirely devoted to rhetorical theory have yet to be visited and examined. Chinese think that *xiuci* (修辞) means "rhetoric," but scholars on this side of the Pacific do not know why the Chinese limit rhetoric "narrowly" and merely to the study of stylistic devices, modes of speech, and features of language (Lu 113). There seems to be some communication gap among international academic communities, a gap that has largely stemmed from our complacency in the Western theory and practice we have mastered and esteem. For example, it is said that Anglo-American rhetoric "enriched modern Chinese rhetoric," helping "revitalize and retrieve the extremely rich Chinese rhetorical tradition in modern Chinese writing instruction" (You 166). At the same time, this optimistic view leaves out the debate between two powerful factions of rhetoric—the most influential textbook writers who introduced Western rhetoric and oppositional figures who tried to preserve Chinese literacy tradition.

History reveals that Chinese assimilation of Western rhetoric has never been a peaceful process, not even in a time period when Western scientific approaches dominated the conversation about education and the teaching of writing. As Xiao Xiaosui defines, the process of assimilation of Western learning is a site of social struggle, a struggle over meaning that oftentimes results in one social group claiming the power to signify (122). As a process of signification, or a process of meaning building, mostly through the form of written texts, "not only [do] native interpreters often have to play a crucial role in the reading of these foreign ideas and thoughts, but various historical, social, and rhetorical factors also affect the process of interpretation" (Xiao 123). Xiao's speculation leads to a series of questions: why, even after the May Fourth New Cultural Movement (1915–1925) when Western rhetoric made its way into the modern Chinese composition classroom, does rhetoric remain an equivalent for *xiuci* (ornate prose). If translations of Japanese and Anglo-American rhetorical works played a significant role in the process of assimilation, as You narrates, how

did the translators' reading affect the meaning building of rhetoric, or 修辞, in China? If there was any debate, or resistance to Western rhetoric for Chinese language studies, who participated in the debate? What was written as a result of the debate? Chinese scholars of rhetoric all agree that Chen Wangdao's 1932 book 修辞学发凡(*An Introduction to Rhetoric*) established the principles and foundation of modern Chinese rhetoric. Did he represent the powerful group that conflated traditional rhetoric into modern rhetorical theory?

This essay tries to answer these questions. It demonstrates how Western oratory tradition was lost in translation in Japan where Chinese students made contact with Western rhetoric and how Western rhetorical concepts were translated or transformed, particularly the concept of rhetoric itself, into their own theories about writing studies in China. Put differently, this essay is part of a historiography that centers on an intellectual pursuit and debate in early twentieth-century China, where foreign-trained and native scholars tried to revise, modernize, and preserve native literary and literacy traditions, consequently forming their own rhetorical theory that today's Chinese call *xiuci*, an equivalent, they believe, for *rhetoric*.

In order to understand how the Chinese conceptualized modern rhetoric as theory and methodology for prose study and writing instruction, we must first look at the Chinese study-abroad programs in Japan. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, China sent about 10,000 students to Japan to develop national wealth and power, including the earliest leading figures in modern Chinese rhetoric. By 1905–1906, between 8,000 and 9,000 Chinese were studying in Tokyo (Harrell 2). One of the reasons to choose Japan as the study site was that the Japanese *kanji* was largely the same as Chinese characters in form and meaning. This choice reduced language barriers that Chinese students would have encountered if they had been studying in Britain or the United States. Even though incapable of speaking Japanese, Chinese students encountered little difficulty in reading the language. From their Japanese professors, such as Takada Sanae, Shimamura Hōgetsu, Igarashi Chikara, and Kikuchi Dairoku, Chinese students learned about Western rhetoric, but with a twist.

As Massimiliano Tomasi observes, Japanese scholars translated *rhetoric* into 美辞(“beautiful prose”) or 修辞(“ornate prose”) in the 1890s when Japanese rhetoric gradually turned into a discipline serving the concerns of belles lettres and literary criticism after Kikuchi Dairoku's translation of Hugh Blair's

*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* into *bijigaku* (修辞及華文, literally meaning “Rhetoric and Beautiful Prose”). The emphasis on the aesthetics of literary writing consequently severed rhetoric from its Western oral tradition and the fledgling study of oratory in Japan (Tomasi 65). The works of Takada, Shimamura, and Igarashi, as well as Kikuchi’s translation, all played significant roles in forming modern Chinese rhetoric that, similar to its Japanese forefather, served more as a source of an aesthetic model for prose criticism and composition rather than as a practical guide for oratory.

What had been lost in the Japanese translation snowballed when Japanese-trained scholars returned to China. In writing their own textbooks for Chinese students, they closely followed their Japanese teachers’ theories on rhetoric but revised some of the definitions and examples to adapt Western rhetorical theories to Chinese literacy tradition dominated by classical commentary. Among those Chinese teachers, Tang Zhengchang (汤振常) and Long Bochun (龙伯纯) were the earliest leading figures (see Table 1).

Tang Zhengchang’s *A Textbook for the Study of Rhetoric and Composition* (修词学教科书) was published in 1905 and was reprinted in 1906 (Zheng and Zong 142–43). As Tang declared in his preface, his book was based on Takada’s *Rhetoric* (美辞学), which promoted Western rhetoric as a “discipline that was scientifically sound and based on a system of rules that, if well applied, could benefit all of Japanese literature” (Tomasi 68). Tang, however, defines rhetoric as techniques in language use, not as knowledge about aesthetics. He further defines the student of rhetoric as one engaged in a discipline that teaches how to use language properly to express ideas and sentiments (Zheng and Zong 146).<sup>1</sup> To study rhetoric, Tang believes, one must learn, first, the principles, or the rules of language use, to construct sentences, paragraphs, and passages, and second, the methods to arrange and express ideas in beautiful words (qtd. in Zheng and Zong 147). The objectives for studying rhetoric, as Tang prescribes, are achieving the ability to evaluate merits and weaknesses in any writing and to master methods to illustrate how sentences compose passages, why paragraphs flow, and how a piece of writing comes together. Tang believes that these methods can apply to any expository writing, narratives, descriptions, and commentaries (qtd. in Zheng and Zong 147). When explaining rhetorical principles, Tang quoted Jonathan Swift’s phrase “proper words in proper places” for emphasis but transliterated Swift’s name to 斯明顿 (or maybe borrowed Japanese transliteration), making it impossible to track the name back to its English version. As a result, today’s Chinese rhetoric scholars, including his-

torians Zheng Ziyu and Zong Tinghu, are still wondering who “Mr. Smington” is (Zheng and Zong 148).

In 1905, the year Tang’s book came out, another book by another Japanese-trained scholar was published—Long Bochun’s (龙伯纯) *Introduction to the Prose and Word: Rhetoric* (文字发凡.修辞学). Declaring that his book compiled terminologies and concepts from more than fifty Eastern and Western books yet without documenting any sources, Long defined rhetoric as techniques or ways of combining sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into prose (Zheng and Zong 160). Meanwhile, he inherited not only Shimamura’s theory of “rhetorical phenomena,” phenomena that occurred through the “process of ‘extension of thoughts and emotions’” (Tomasi 84), but also the written form, Japanese *kanji* for terminologies and concepts in Chinese. He noted that “my book contains many concepts borrowed from the East and the West. Although tempted to rename these concepts in Chinese, I decided to keep their original forms for fear of losing their original meanings” (qtd. in Zheng and Zong 160). Like his Japanese teachers, Long divided the use of words into two categories—the form (外形) and the content (内容) (cf. Tomasi 70–71). The form includes two kinds of language use: passive and active, the former meeting the minimum requirements of language use and the latter, being “rhetorical” (metaphorical), meeting the maximum requirements. Long defined passive language use as the proper use of correct, concise, and precise sentences, and active language use as expressiveness through interesting and vivid words. Because of Long’s introduction of these concepts, the “passive” and “active” divisions of rhetorical phenomena in Japanese *kanji* were adopted later by other Chinese scholars and canonized as “native” Chinese rhetorical concepts. Today’s Chinese still use passive rhetoric to refer to plain, clear expressions, and active as ornate metaphorical expressions.

In addition to the Japanese influence, modern Chinese rhetoric is also heavily influenced by modern American rhetorical practice. The New Culture Movement, or the May Fourth Period from 1919 to the late 1930s, saw a boom in publications on rhetoric amid radical intellectual, cultural, and social changes. More scholars trained in Japan and the United States returned and brought with them modern ideas about the humanities, literacy, science, technology, and education. Their embracing of Western methods for education, research, and practice prepared Chinese academics for Tang Yueh’s textbook influenced by Anglo-American rhetoric. Tang Yueh’s book appeared when three competing schools of rhetoric were engaged in a heated debate about the future of modern

Chinese rhetoric, including the school influenced by modern Anglo-American rhetoric, the nativist school, and the school influenced by modern Japanese rhetoric, the most powerful one led by Wang Yi and Chen Wangdao.

Tang Yueh's (Yueh Tang) *Figures of Speech* (*xiuci ge*, 修辞格) was published in 1923 and reprinted six times afterward. With a PhD in psychology from Harvard University, Tang Yueh based his book purely on Anglo-American rhetoric. Interestingly, however, Tang's translation of figures of speech into *xiuci ge* (修辞格) went hand in hand, in both form and meaning, with the ideas imported from modern Japan, further narrowing rhetoric to the study of metaphor and diction. Following the Western model of definition and classification, his book has been critically acclaimed as the first "scientific" book on rhetoric (Chen 280–81), for before Tang, native studies of or commentaries on Chinese classics were not able to separate grammar from rhetoric, literary criticism from linguistics, and aesthetics from prose composition (Chen 279). Indeed, what distinguished Tang's approach from those of others was his orderly categorization of metaphors based on the Western model. However, Tang only borrowed the chapters on figures of speech from J. C. Nesfield's *Senior Course of English Composition* (1903) and James C. Fernald's *Expressive English* (1918), less than one tenth of the contents of these two books, which dealt with various topics of rhetoric that ranged from linguistic description of the English language to composition.

Ironically, in spite of his declaration that figures of speech constituted only a small segment of rhetoric, Tang Yueh's translation of figures of speech into *xiuci ge* (修辞格) replaced Tang Zhengchang's *ciyang* (辞样) borrowed from Japan, and his juxtaposition of Western and Chinese figures of speech seemed to deepen the impression that rhetoric meant the study and application of metaphors. In modern Chinese rhetorical history, he is recognized for standardizing rhetorical terminologies, separating rhetoric from grammar and linguistics, and demonstrating that prose could be studied with "scientific" methods of naming, classification, and division, methods from the Western convention.

Tang's critical acclaim inspired Wang Yi, a professor at the National Central University in Nanjing, to publish his book *修辞学* (*Rhetoric*) in 1926, which later was expanded to *修辞学通论* (*A Complete Guide to Rhetoric*). Wang's book largely followed Western classical rhetoric with a combination of a few modern Japanese rhetorical terms, those from Shimamura Hōgetsu's *New Rhetoric* in particular (probably through Long Bochun's book because no record showed that Wang Yi studied in Japan). Wang Yi differed from his

predecessors in recognizing the long-established Chinese literacy tradition as a rhetorical tradition. Unlike Tang Zhengchang, Long Bochun, and Tang Yueh, who mainly promoted Japanese or Western theories and methodologies, Wang Yi's treatise esteems the Chinese rhetorical tradition by tracing the naming of rhetoric to the Confucian classics. For example, to define rhetoric as a discipline, he begins with the statement that "the idea of rhetoric came from the Book of Changes that says 'using language artistically to enhance integrity,' meaning to beatify speech and prose. . . . *ci* (辞) means expressive speech and prose, and must be learned" (*xiu*, 修). The primary purpose of *xiu* (修) is to articulate meanings without errors, and its ultimate purpose is to achieve aesthetic effects. To reach these goals, studying theories and methods is a must, which is thus called "the study of writing [rhetoric, 修辞]" (7). All in all, Wang's treatise embraced both Chinese and Western classical theories on language, eloquence, and writing, while adopting some Japanese terminologies imported by Long Bochun, terminologies that have become established Chinese concepts, such as "rhetorical phenomena" and two categories—the form (外形) and the content (内容). Finally, Wang's treatise was the first to identify rhetoric as a subfield of linguistics to supplement writing instruction and grammar.

However, the Western approach of Tang Yueh and Wang Yi encountered no small resistance, despite their critical acclaims and the many reprints of their books. The issue of whether Chinese prose study and composition should assimilate or adopt foreign theories was heatedly debated during the New Culture Movement. Zheng Dian (郑奠), a native scholar, and Yang Shuda (杨树达), a Japanese-trained continental linguist, openly criticized Tang and Wang, though without naming the names (see Table 2). Zheng Dian published his *Methods for the Study of Chinese Rhetoric* (中国修辞学研究法), a book that derived from a series of lectures at Beijing University in the 1920s. In the preface he deplored the heavy borrowing of foreign theory and proposed to adhere to the Chinese classical tradition:

Amidst enthusiastic admirations for foreign methodology, foreign rhetoric has been greatly promoted. Bound so much by the imported theories, Chinese rhetoric no longer holds its independent thinking due to the superficial imitation without an understanding of the essence. This type of mimicking is much flawed. Today, we need to reexamine Chinese classics in order to recognize rhetorical concepts and rules long in practice. Therefore, I propose to follow the classical model to learn rhetorical strategies and ancient treatises to establish rhetorical theories. (qtd. in Zheng and Zong 350; Chen Wangdao 281)

Indeed, he went through hundreds of classics—prose, treatises, and commentaries—to track various definitions of *ci* 词, *ci* 辞, *xiu* 修, key concepts in the Chinese rhetorical tradition.

After Zheng, Yang Shuda pressed the same charge against Western approaches in spite of his Japanese training in continental linguistics. The first print of his *Chinese Rhetoric* (中国修辞学) was in 1933. The new expanded edition came out in 1953 and was reprinted in 1954, 1957, and 1988. Yang asserted:

Differences between Chinese and other languages prescribe different aesthetic standards for writing . . . , which form the foundation of language and prose studies. The so-called “rhetoric” is nothing more than studies of aesthetic appeal of the text. . . . Different nations have naturally developed their own techniques to achieve aesthetic results. China, since the ancient times, esteems the competence of composing elegant prose as one’s most important achievement. For this reason, the belief that our methods of prose study and composition are the same as those in Europe is a false conviction. (*Expanded Edition of Chinese Rhetoric: 增订本中国修辞学*1)

As vehement as Yang’s criticism of Westernized approaches and as many examples as he drew from ancient texts, his adoption of continental linguistics to the grammatical study of Chinese classics has further reinforced the westernization of Chinese prose studies. His heavy emphasis on the functions of words and sentences resulted in an incomplete discussion of rhetoric. Perhaps due to this imbalance, his *Chinese Rhetoric* has never been as highly critically acclaimed as Chen Wangdao’s *An Introduction to Rhetoric* (修辞学发凡), at least not in mainland China (see Table 3).

Chen Wangdao’s *An Introduction to Rhetoric* was developed from his teaching notes at Fudan University in Shanghai during the 1920s and was classroom-tested by several other professors. Since its publication in 1932, Chen’s book, like Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in the West, has been recognized as the milestone in the history of modern Chinese rhetoric. Drawing upon many examples from both classics and modern prose, Chen systematically synthesized concepts and theories that his predecessors or colleagues had coined or imported from Japan and the West. Though an eclectic mix, Chen’s book has been critically acclaimed as the native breed of rhetoric immediately after its publication. Although many books before or after Chen’s were used extensively in high schools and colleges (for example, Yang Shuda’s book has been adopted as a major textbook on language study in Taiwan since the 1950s, and Zhang

Yiping's *Lectures on Rhetoric* [修辞学 讲话] dominated secondary language education in the 1940s), only Chen's *An Introduction to Rhetoric* (reprinted twelve times) is recognized as the authoritative text in terms of terminology and theory. Since its publication, "rhetorical phenomena," "passive" and "active" rhetoric, and "style" have become standard terminologies, and his adoption of Tang Yueh's naming of "figures of speech" as "辞格" and his subcategories based on Tang's classification are now standard rhetorical concepts. Along with two previously published books, *Lectures on Composition* (作文法 讲义) in 1922 and *An Introduction to Aesthetics* (美学概论) in 1926, Chen's treatise officially separated rhetoric from grammar and ended the traditional practice of limiting prose study to mere commentary. Yet, somehow, rhetoric continued to be considered a linguistic topic, which is still the case in today's China.

In conclusion, modern Chinese rhetoric is a hybrid conceived in the traditions of ancient China, modern Japan, and the West. Because of Japanese and Chinese scholars' innovative adaptation, oratory in the Western classical tradition was lost when "rhetoric" was translated into an Eastern practice. While Western rhetoric is primarily practical without much emphasis on aesthetics, which is the task of literary criticism and poetics (Walker),<sup>2</sup> modern Chinese rhetoric is and has always been primarily aesthetic and poetic, but its aesthetic principles are applicable in writing instruction. For this reason, it is constantly and consistently utilized in writing studies and instruction, a hybrid of concepts and practice that holds its own tradition, despite the loss of Western oratory in the process of translation. In other words, modern Chinese rhetoric, *xiuci* (修辞), refers mainly to prose study, focusing on the aesthetic effects and stylistic features. It emphasizes the end result of composition from the audience's viewpoint, mostly supplementing writing instruction at a more advanced level of literacy in that it provides theory and principles for assessment and criticism. Although rhetoric and composition (修辞与作文, *xiuci yu zuowen*) are often associated in writing instruction, *xiuci* (修辞) largely stands for principles of writing studies and writing modes and rules. As such, the loss in the Chinese reading of Japanese and Western rhetorics may not be a loss at all. History demonstrates that by selectively reproducing knowledge from other countries, China has developed its own modern rhetorical tradition, a tradition they continue to esteem, build on, and practice.

Table 1. Key Figures and Texts

Author	Book Title and Publication Year	Influence and Key Concepts
Tang Zhengchang (汤振常)	修词学教科书 ( <i>A Textbook for the Study of Rhetoric</i> ), 1905	Takada Sanae, Japanese rhetoric scholar Figures of speech = 辞样 (Japanese <i>kanji</i> )
Long Bochun (龙伯纯)	文字发凡: 修辞学 <i>Introduction to the Prose and Word: A Rhetorical Study</i> , 1905	Based on sources from Japan in <i>kanji</i> and from the West 修辞现象 rhetorical phenomena 消极修辞 passive rhetoric (plain clear expressions) 积极修辞 active rhetoric (ornate metaphorical expressions) 外形 the form 内容 the content
Tang Yueh (唐钺)	修辞格 <i>Figures of Speech</i> , 1923.	J. C. Nesfield's <i>Senior Course in Composition</i> (1903) and James C. Fernald's <i>Expressive English</i> Figures of speech = 修辞格 replacing 辞样
Wang Yi (王易)	修辞学 <i>Rhetoric</i> , 1926, expanded to 修辞学通论 <i>A Complete Guide to Rhetoric</i> Definition of rhetoric: A study of how writing achieves its aesthetic effects. "The idea of rhetoric came from the Book of Changes that says 'using language artistically to enhance integrity,' meaning to beatify speech and prose. . . <i>ci</i> (辞) means expressive speech and prose, and must be learned ( <i>xiu</i> , 修). The primary purpose of <i>xiu</i> (修) is to articulate meanings without errors, and its ultimate purpose is to achieve aesthetic effects. To reach these goals, studying theories and methods is a must. Thus rhetoric means "the study of writing [修辞]"	Classical Chinese rhetoric Western rhetoric Partially based on Long Bochun (龙伯纯)

Table 2. Opponents to Imported Theory

Author	Book	Criticism
Zheng Dian 郑奠	中国修辞学研究法 <i>Methods for Studying Chinese Rhetoric</i> , a collection of teaching notes in the 1920s discussing hundreds of classics—prose, treatises, and commentaries—to track various definitions of <i>ci</i> 词, <i>ci</i> 辞, <i>xiu</i> 修, key concepts in the Chinese rhetorical tradition.	Bound so much by imported theories, Chinese rhetoric no longer maintains its independence due to the superficial imitation without an understanding of the essence. This type of mimicking is much flawed. . . . I propose to follow the classical model to learn rhetorical strategies and ancient treatises and to establish rhetorical theories.
Yang Shuda 杨树达	中国修辞学 <i>Chinese Rhetoric</i> in 1933	Differences between Chinese and other languages set up different aesthetic standards for writing. . . , which form the foundation of language and prose studies. The so-called “rhetoric” is nothing more than studying aesthetic appeal in the text. . . . Different nations have naturally developed their own techniques to achieve aesthetic results. China, since ancient times, esteems the competence to compose elegant prose as one’s most important achievement. For this reason, the belief that our methods of prose study and composition are the same as those in Europe is a false conviction.

Table 3. The Canon

Author	Book Title and Year	Influence and Key Concepts
Chen Wangdao (陈望道)	修辞学发凡 <i>An Introduction to Rhetoric</i> , 1932 (reprinted 12 times)  *The authoritative treatise in modern Chinese rhetoric, still in use in today’s China	Synthesis of Japanese, Western, and previous Chinese theories  修辞现 rhetorical phenomena 消极修辞 passive rhetoric 积极修辞 active rhetoric 形式 the form, replaced 外形 内容 the content 辞格 figures of speech replacing Tang Yueh’s 修辞格  *These are now standard terminologies in Chinese rhetoric

## Notes

1. My research in the Shanghai Library did not yield Tang's and Long's original books. As a result, I am quoting from Chinese secondary sources. Based on these books, it is certain that Tang's work was influenced by both Japanese and British rhetorical traditions. Because of the easiness with which he switches codes between Japanese and English, today's Chinese scholars conjure that Tang studied in Japan.
2. Jeffrey Walker's study demonstrates that rhetoric "originated from an expansion of the poetic/epideictic domain, from 'song' to 'speech' to 'discourse' generally" (ix). He also points out that "Western notions of 'poetry' and poetics (or literary theory more broadly) have typically appropriated 'rhetoric' as a name for figurality, or 'metaphor,' while resisting a fuller notion of rhetoric as argumentation and persuasion" (viii). Apparently, the Japanese and Chinese scholars chose to import only these modern Western notions.

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## ***Luoji* (Logic) in Contemporary Chinese Rhetoric and Composition: A Contextualized Glimpse**

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In *The Anatomy of Rhetoric*, an early definition of contrastive rhetoric, Robert Kaplan points out that the logic that guides reasoning in writing is not culturally universal; Chinese writing does not seem to be logical according to Anglo-American standards. Similarly, Carolyn Matalene reminds American instructors that “logics different from our own are not necessarily illogical” (806). Most recently, comparative analysis of American and Chinese online pedagogical materials on argumentative writing has pointed to the legacy of dialectical materialism, especially dialectical logic in the instruction of Chinese written argumentation (Liu L.). What constitutes logic in contemporary Chinese rhetoric and composition?

*Luoji*, according to the Chinese *Cihai* (Sea of Words), was the transliteration of logic from English by the famous Chinese translator Yan Fu. Today the Chinese use the term widely. The discussion of *luoji* (logic) by three scholars of contemporary Chinese rhetoric and Chinese language arts education—Chen Wangdao, Zhang Zhigong, and Ye Shengtao—presents a contrast to discussions of *luoji* in two sets of popular Chinese language arts textbooks, one published in the 1930s and the other in the 2000s. Yet both scholarly discussions of rhetoric and pedagogical materials testify to the continuing presence of formal logic and dialectical logic but exhibit a stronger emphasis upon dialectical logic. If we examine dialectical logic more closely, we can form a better understanding of contemporary Chinese rhetoric and composition described in its own terms.

### **Scholarly Discussions on Logic in Contemporary Chinese Rhetoric**

Recent Chinese language arts educators and scholars have been pivotal to the formation of contemporary Chinese scholarship in rhetoric and contemporary Chinese language arts instruction. The three scholars chosen for this study—Zhang Zhigong, Chen Wangdao, and Ye Shengtao—due to their profound impact on both theory and practice in Chinese rhetoric and composition, are considered *san lao* (three masters) in Chinese language arts education. Their books have been used as textbooks across the country both before and after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. While Ye has been more active

in language arts education and textbook compilation, Cheng and Zhang have established themselves as eminent scholars in contemporary rhetorical studies.

Chen Wangdao is the author of the first contemporary Chinese monograph on rhetoric, *Xiucixuefajian* (An Introduction to Rhetoric) published in 1932, considered a landmark in contemporary Chinese rhetorical studies. He taught during the 1920s in the Chinese language department of Fudan University, one of the leading universities in China. His *An Introduction to Rhetoric* has been widely used as a textbook at the college level and was printed more than ten times (Yuan and Zong). Chen's view of the role of logic in rhetorical studies, with an emphasis on the usefulness of dialectical logic in theorizing Chinese rhetoric, is articulated in an article on how to study grammar and rhetoric. He acknowledges the need for both formal logic and dialectical logic in research on rhetoric and highlights the need for dialectical logic. Chen characterized his era as one of transition from traditional Chinese rhetorical studies to a modern approach. He calls for a synthesis of different schools in the field of rhetoric by integrating scholarship from both the past and the present, both Chinese and foreign, in order to advance knowledge building in Chinese grammar and rhetoric. He calls this new school "Marxist-Leninist" and asserts: "The Marxist-Leninist school needs to use formal logic, too, but formal logic does not serve the discussion of developments well, and therefore we must resort to dialectical logic" (Fudan Daxue Yuhuan Yanjiushu 240). Chen calls for the synergy of Chinese traditional rhetoric and Marxist theories: "To study rhetoric today, we need to preserve and continue the traditions of ancient (Chinese) rhetoric, but we should not stop at that. We should emphasize the use of theories and theorize under the guidance of Marxism and Maoist thoughts" (308). This statement dovetails with his emphasis on dialectical logic, which is part of Marxism.

Master number 2, Zhang Zhigong, a renowned Chinese linguist and language arts education expert, had been one of the chief writers and editors of Chinese Language arts textbooks adopted nationwide in China from 1954 to 1962. Since 1981, Zhang has been vice chief editor of People's Education Press, official publisher of Chinese textbooks for primary and secondary schools. Zhang is also the chief editor of the popular textbook for adult education, *Xiandaihanyu* (Modern Chinese) and author of the entry "Chinese rhetoric" for the *Chinese Encyclopedia's* volume on language.

While Chen emphasizes the importance of dialectical logic in solving theoretical issues in Chinese rhetorical studies, Zhang Zhigong stresses both formal logic and dialectical logic in discussing specific composition issues.

When writing on one of the basic requirements for organization of writing in Chinese, *xietiao xing* (coordination), he asks writers to pay attention to rules stipulated by formal logic: *tongyilun* (the law of identity) and *maodunlun* (the law of contradiction). In addition, he urges writers to pay attention to the relationship between formal logic and dialectical logic. He tries to illuminate the relationship by discussing how formal logic and dialectical logic treat contradictions differently. For example, by formal logic: A is not non-A. It is either A or non-A. Dialogical logic, however, acknowledges the unity of opposites. Some things are at the same time A and non-A, he writes, because in reality this kind of borderline or transitional phenomenon exists. Therefore Zhang advises writers to heed formal logic, yet he cautions: “Meanwhile faced with complicated things and phenomena, we should take note of dialectical logic, namely the unity of opposites and transformation of the two sides of a contradiction into each other” (*Hanyu* 132).

Moreover, in another article (*Hanyu*) and an encyclopedia entry (*Zhang*) on Chinese rhetoric, Zhang underscores dialectical thinking as a Chinese cultural tradition and its status in Chinese rhetoric. He discusses the relationship between the Chinese Han (the largest ethnic group in mainland China) traditional philosophy and Chinese rhetoric. He also asserts that in many areas of Han culture, a simple dialectical outlook is widely adopted, and it applies to writing, especially arrangement, with no exception.

Things are considered to be the unification of two opposite factors. The two factors are categorized as *shi* [concrete] and *xu* [abstract]. The relationships between the two categories are: “they are within each other and generate each other.” In rhetoric, this also applies. No matter it is a poem or an article, they both contain “concrete writing” and “abstract writing.” The two parts support and complement each other. Together they may create a sense of suspense, aid the readers in understanding while maintaining brevity, or provoke readers to think or echo emotionally. Therefore another character of Chinese rhetoric is to consciously apply the ideas of *shi* and *xu* in language use. (*Zhang* 569)

The above ramifications of dialectical logic by both Chen Wangdao and Zhang Zhigong reveal salient emphasis on dialectical logic in contemporary Chinese rhetorical studies and composition. Both Chen and Zhang concede that formal logic is useful, but both emphasize that for complicated, dynamic issues or things, dialectical logic is more useful than formal logic. Their discussions suggest that contemporary research on Chinese rhetoric and composition draw from both Chinese and Western traditions. The terminology used to explicate formal logic suggests its origin in Western sources. The fact that dialectical

logic is part of Marxism and dialectical thinking is part of the Chinese Han cultural tradition has paved the way for the synergy of two paradigms in contemporary Chinese rhetorical studies: Marxist and Chinese traditional. The next section presents evidence for such coupling of formal logic and dialectical logic in materials for writing instruction widely adopted in secondary schools.

### **Pedagogical Manifestations**

The pedagogical manifestations of an emphasis on dialectical logic reside in contemporary Chinese language arts textbooks for beginning writers. Two sets are examined here. One is *Guowen Babai Ke* (Eight Hundred Lessons of the Chinese Language). The authors, Xia Mianzun and Ye Shengtao, are two of the most prominent Chinese language arts educators. In the 1930s, they wrote and compiled this set of textbooks for Chinese primary schools. The whole twelve-volume set was very popular and went through more than forty reprints in ten years. After the People's Republic of China was founded, Ye served as head and chief editor of People's Education Press. In the 1960s, he was in charge of the writing and compiling of the new set of Chinese language arts textbooks (twelve volumes) for Chinese secondary schools. Since 1979, he has served as a consultant for Chinese language arts textbooks for primary schools and secondary schools. The second set of Chinese language arts textbooks (including readers) for the Chinese language arts (*Yuwen*) is published by People's Education Press. For several decades after the founding of the People's Republic of China, People's Education Press published officially designated textbooks for China's secondary schools. Although schools have other options in textbook adoption today, the sets published by People's Education Press are still among the most popular.

In "Guowen Babaike" (Eight Hundred Lessons of the Chinese Language), Xia and Ye list three modes of reasoning for *Yilunwen* (expository argumentation): induction, deduction, and *bianzheng* (dialectical) reasoning. They explain why dialectical reasoning is needed by pinpointing the limitations of inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. According to Xia and Ye, inductive reasoning considers things as conceptual beings, static and independent, ignoring changes and interconnections. Based on specific cases, deductive reasoning views each case equally without considering changes. They point out that in reality, things change and are closely related to other things. They then caution: "When we make a judgment about a certain thing, if we do not regard many actual circumstances in flux as conditions, the judgment will be unrealistic and the argument will not hold water" (399). Based on this discus-

sion, they introduce *bianzhengfa* (dialectics), a mode of reasoning that values actual circumstances and does not deal with things as concepts. Xia and Ye also add a disclaimer: “These principles of dialectics are listed just for the sake of exposition (for better understanding), not as laws or formulas. That is because the spirit of dialectics is to dismiss a static and isolated view of things and regard them as dynamic and developing” (400). They move on to list three principles of dialectics without further elaboration. Nor did they give an example of dialectical reasoning.

A more elaborate version of Xia and Ye’s exposition of the three laws of dialectical logic appears in one of the readers of *Yuwen*:

1. *maodun de duili yuanze* (the opposition of contradictions). Deduction is based on the *tongyi* (unity) in things and does not acknowledge the existence of contradictions. Dialectics, however, considers contradictions a starting point. Contradictions in things in the world are inherent. For example, life and death are opposites. As a creature grows every day, it approaches the day of its death.
2. *liang yinxiang dao zhi* (changes in quantity leads to changes in quality). For example: if we heat water till a hundred Celsius degrees it will become vapor. When we lower the temperature to below zero it will become ice.
3. *fouding de fouding* (negation of negation). Any development of things in the world follows the developmental order of negation of negation. For example, when a grain grows into a seedling, the grain is gone. This is one negation. When the seedling grows up and matures, it withers and what is left will be new grains—another negation. This is how things develop. (344)

Xia and Ye’s explication of dialectical logic is somewhat abstract. A more explicit description of the relationship between writing and dialectics is made in the Chinese language arts textbook published by People’s Education Press, *Yuwen*, where there is a section on how to conduct dialectical analysis in writing argumentative essays. It advises students to look at issues dialectically in the process of analyzing and reasoning, learn to analyze things in an objective, holistic, and realistic manner. In particular, it advises students to “conduct in-depth analysis of things from the surface to the essence, from this to that, grasp the essence of things and improve their ability to do dialectical analysis” (3:146).

*Yuwen* does not elaborate much on dialectical analysis, probably because it is covered in students' philosophy or moral education courses, a compulsory course for Chinese students. How dialectical thinking, analysis, and logic play out in writing is only briefly explained in the *duben* (readers) of *Yuwen*. Liu Gaoli's "Zenyang Xie Yilunwen" (How to Write Argumentative Essays) provides a brief explanation of dialectical analysis. After stating that the method of analysis is dialectical, he suggests that students should look at things in an all-around manner and avoid one-sided, extreme views, but like the textbook section on dialectical analysis, he does not provide much elaboration (333).

The most comprehensive treatment of the relationship between dialectical logic and writing in the textbook series is Yu Qing's article, entitled "Guanyu Yilunwen De Luoji" (On Logic in Expository Arguments), which appears in two volumes of readers (vols. 3 and 5) of readers for Chinese senior high school language arts students. The reprint of Yu's article suggests the importance the textbook publisher has attached to it. Yu expounds how that kind of argumentation is achieved through an integrated application of dialectical logic and formal logic, in other words, through what the author calls "flexible application of analysis, synthesis, and induction and deduction" (348). In an analysis, the whole is divided into components, contradictions are identified, and in-depth discussion of each contradiction is carried out. Therefore, the integration of analysis and synthesis along with the integration of induction and deduction can enable one to "release and hold, leave and return to the thesis, and probe the specifics without forgetting the general. After some ups and downs, in a snowballing manner the essay will be rendered in-depth, rich, detailed and complete" (348–49). The snowballing metaphor Yu adopts characterizes a gradual process. Discussing the use of logic in argumentative writing, Yu proposes that in writing an argumentative essay, the author has to deal with many contradictions by following the dialectical logic way of understanding the world. Yu suggests that writers should train themselves to express thoughts by handling contradictions well. In other words, their writing should demonstrate more dialectic. Both sets of textbooks examined here exhibit a strong pedagogical emphasis on dialectical logic.

### **The Significance of Terms and Reflection**

Apart from identifying assumptions about the role of dialectical logic in Chinese rhetoric and composition, another important implication of this study is the significance of understanding a non-Western rhetorical tradition in its own

terms. Raised first by Oliver and seconded by many comparative rhetoricians (Garrett; Mao), the need to describe non-Western rhetorics in their own terms has been unanimously agreed on, yet attempts to locate these terms have been few and far between. “Logic” appears frequently in the literature, but, ironically, scholars have neglected it for years. Logic has been used in comparative rhetoric and contrastive rhetoric largely in its narrow sense, referring to formal logic. That narrow sense, however, as demonstrated in this article, is insufficient for the understanding of reasoning in Chinese rhetoric because the Chinese trust dialectical logic to serve reasoning concerning complex and dynamic issues. The Anglo-American polarization of the writing process and the writing product may also have rendered the understanding of other composition pedagogies difficult.

What comparative rhetoricians have been engaging in for years is an attempt to understand other rhetorical traditions. Another line of research that can benefit from comparative rhetoric is critical reflection on Anglo-American rhetoric, its cultural implications, and its limitations. This article also encourages moving beyond existing explorations of Chinese rhetoric by engaging in what LuMing Mao calls “reflective encounters,” namely, to hold the rhetorical traditions under comparison and contrast to critical scrutiny. If we understand better what modes of reasoning are valued in Chinese rhetoric, we may in turn pose some questions about Anglo-American rhetoric. For instance, what does logic mean in Anglo-American rhetoric? In recent years, Western rhetoricians and philosophers have also realized the limitations of formal logic and proposed informal logic. What exactly does informal logic mean? Is it relevant to dialectical logic? Is it important to teach students informal logic? These are important questions for comparative rhetoricians and compositionists to grapple with.

### **Conclusion**

I have provided a contextualized glimpse into the discussion of logic as an important concept in contemporary Chinese rhetorical research and composition textbooks. This glimpse reveals that dialectical logic holds a special place, often unrecognized by Westerners, in theory and practice in contemporary Chinese rhetoric and composition. This Chinese concept of “logic” may not be the “logic” to which Kaplan and Matalene were referring. It is high time that comparative rhetoric and contrastive rhetoric went beyond the stage of using Western terms exclusively with little reflection on the Western rhetorical tradition. Only by better understanding important terms and practices such as dialectical logic

and their rich implications can we advance our understanding of Chinese rhetoric and composition “from the surface to the core.” Furthermore, critical reflections on these terms and beliefs may enable different rhetorical traditions to interact with each other and generate productive dialogues and synergy.

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## **Ren, Wen, and Baguwen: The Eight-Legged Essay in Rhetorical Perspective**

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### **Octopartite Parables: Living in a Parallel Universe**

The octopartite or “eight-legged essay” *bagu wen* was developed over many centuries as an instrument of examining candidates for the Chinese civil service examination. Somewhat like progymnasmata in classical rhetoric, and later taxonomies of argument taught in Western European universities, study and training for the octopartite essay required extensive reading, a highly developed ability to emulate the styles of different exemplary authors, and a fluency in exegesis that combined subtle commentary juxtaposed with deft use of allusions. While the discussion in this essay focuses primarily on the octopartite or *bagu* essay, other essays in this symposium, particularly those by Lu Liu and Xiaoze You, warn against reducing Chinese rhetorical history and practices to the *bagu* tradition and the related misunderstanding that Chinese rhetoric avoids logic and adversarial argumentation. The correction of these and other misunderstandings is an important and valuable focus of recent comparative studies of Chinese with Western rhetorics. Careful examination of similarities as well as differences between the two traditions forms a dialectic that can improve our understanding and set new directions for comparative studies.

Like their peers in European universities, Chinese students in the Ming and Qing dynasties prepared for the civil service examination by reading and memorizing ancient texts composed two thousand years earlier, during the Chou and Han dynasties (Elman 16). Like medieval Latin university education, preparation for tests and the eight-legged exam essay required competence in a written language that diverged from vernacular Chinese of later imperial China. In order to pass the tests and become certified as officials, students

acquired a new spoken dialect—Mandarin as a second language and a written language—classical Chinese, whose linguistic terseness, thousands of unusual written glyphs, and archaic grammatical forms required memorization and constant attention from childhood through manhood.

Four hundred thousand characters' worth of textual material had to be memorized to master the examination curriculum—the Four Books (Mencius and Confucius predominantly) and Five Classics (Songs, Documents, Changes, Spring and Autumn Rites) by the age of eleven, poetic composition by the age of twelve, and composition of the *pa ku*, or *bagu*—the eight-legged essay (Elman 16). Although the civil service examination was abolished in 1910, and the *bagu* along with it, the style of the *pakuwen* had long since become recognized as one of the stylistic features of formal verbal performance, discourse, and rhetoric in elite society. In practice, the habits shaped by the *bagu* continued and still continue to exercise a powerful influence on argumentation in popular culture. Literary depictions of exam anxiety and popular satire of the empty formalism in exam essays portray only one aspect of a centuries-long system of highly standardized education that inculcated a common bureaucratic and social language for a huge, linguistically diverse culture. The parallels to Latin rhetorical, literary, and philosophical education in medieval Europe deserve much more study than they have received. In both political and social terms, the Confucian educational agenda served state interests, contributing to a social transformation from a medieval aristocracy to a gentry society (Elman 13). The state's minimum requirement that the educational system must serve to reinforce and inculcate political, social, and moral values that would maintain the dynasty was inseparable from Confucian rhetoric exalting the sanctity of learning and the priority of civilian values as the absolute measure of social worth. Much remains to be done in comparing this social history of Confucian education in China with the "secular humanism" prominent in neo-classical, Deist, Scottish Enlightenment, and modern educational systems. In Europe as well as in China a classical education became a seal of cultural approval. Similarly, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Europeans crossed over from vernacular to classical Latin; Scots in the eighteenth century learned both Latin and the English of the English elite; today's students engage in the same crossing over from their regional and cultural vernaculars to the standard "educated" English that is a requirement for upward mobility and professional success. (Joseph R. Levenson's *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* [1:114–15] emphasizes the consumerism Jonathan Swift depicts in such works as "The

Battle of the Books,” and goes on to detail how late this European classical culture began to dissolve. Anthony Grafton’s *New Worlds, Ancient Texts* is a similar assessment of the alternating dependence on and rejection of classical learning in Western culture and education.) In this similar history we can begin to recognize one aspect of our parallel lives, but several important differences as well.

Of particular interest to students of rhetoric is the way in which the Confucian Chinese civil service examination in general and the *bagu* essay in particular defined the terms of cultural consensus and conditioned the forms of reasoning and rhetoric that prevailed in elite society (Elman 23). In the early 1970s, Robert T. Oliver’s *Communication and Culture in Ancient China and India* warned that we would fail in our attempt to understand Chinese rhetoric if we simply looked for counterparts to Aristotelian and later Western rhetorics. Yet even recent studies of Chinese and Western rhetoric—George Kennedy’s 1998 *Comparative Rhetoric*, for example—continue to do just that. The result has been a list of rough parallels to Western concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos, to Western rhetorical schemes and tropes, and to Western conceptualizations of proof, persuasion, and logical argumentation. Xing Lu, Mary Garrett, Karl S. Y. Kao, and Hui Wu, among other recent scholars, emphasize finer demarcations and subtleties in comparing Chinese and Western rhetorics. Apart from matching Chinese practices to Western rhetorical models, which began with Jesuit missionary scholars in the sixteenth century, attempts to understand Chinese rhetoric in its own terms have been slow to emerge. Examples of a new understanding are Xing Lu and Mary Garrett, who emphasize that if we define rhetoric as all modes of persuasion, there is no Chinese counterpart; the study of rhetoric was not defined as a discipline or practice separate from literary figuration and philosophical wisdom. We should note however, that rhetoric has not always rested alone, even in the West. In his history of medieval rhetoric, Richard McKeon observed that if rhetoric is considered “a method without a subject matter” (4), for example, then it has no history in the European Middle Ages. The disciplinary location and definition of rhetoric in Western and Chinese education and high culture is but one aspect of the study underway. Political and social practices of rhetoric outside of the academy are also inviting renewed study and comparison, revealing underlying dissimilarities between Chinese and Western concepts of individualism, consensus, debate, virtue, even humanity (*ren*). The quality of being educated, civilized, and well schooled in literary and philosophical classics (*wen*) carries with it the very quality of being

human (*ren*), of being worthy of belonging in the body politic that makes up and governs society and culture. Women, children, and slaves need not apply. In a sense, this is not so different from Western practices in the past and even the present, for we are far from a world in which all are equally enfranchised to participate in political life and social congress. Recent discussions of how Western concepts of human rights are being imposed on cultures that do not share them have heightened our awareness that universal human rights is far from a universally held belief or value. How can the study of Chinese and Western rhetorical traditions illuminate this difference?

Whereas Western democratic and philosophical traditions have emphasized rhetoric as a system for negotiating compromises through adversarial debate, expressing individuals' opinions and implementing the will of the general population through consensus and vote, Chinese rhetorics have often been seen as emphasizing the maintenance of harmony and the status quo (Oliver 259). Originality—at least as Westerners understand it: as challenging tradition, expressing individuals' insights, and constantly innovating—was often discounted and discouraged in Chinese teaching and practice. More recent studies such as Xing Lu's deftly dispels many canonical myths about Chinese rhetoric in the West: emphasis on harmony, low regard for all speech, lack of logic and analysis, and calls for alternate methods of analysis. Confucius (*Analects* 7:1) says that he “merely transmits” what has been said before—however, he is highly selective in arranging what has been said before. In this resides an important difference between Chinese and Western understandings of where innovation or originality take place: in the rearrangement of existing ideas and sayings, or in the creation of entirely new ideas and expressions? Likewise, *bagu* writers “transmit” the classics through allusion, but in their choices of allusions have a degree of rhetorical license. Indeed, that is precisely the skill they are demonstrating: the deft allusion to relevant traditional sources to advance their view of a subject. Yet in Confucian teaching and in the *baguwen* essay alike teachings and practices regularly emphasize the reciprocal responsibility of speakers and listeners directed toward the general advantage of the society as a whole; listeners were advised not only to be attentive but also to bring to the problem of interpreting the speaker's meaning all their learning and resources since any one individual speaker by definition, by common assumption, could be wrong or ignorant, could lack skill, or through selfishness could ignore the good of the community. This emphasis is not without its counterparts in Western traditions of community, responsibility, and ethics. Augustine, for example,

instructs the audience of *On Christian Doctrine* above all to be sure they speak with care for the souls of the community they address, and he blames audiences if they seek only delight and entertainment and not the truth.

In Chinese teaching and practice, authority—the quotation of and allusion to traditional sages and literature— and analogy were the main forms of proof, and even these were not thought of as exclusively rhetorical but rather as a combination of literary and practical moral philosophy and teaching (Oliver 263; Kao, “Comparative Literature,” 128). Kao observes that if metaphor is the master figure in the West, parallelism or *tui ou* (pron: *dway oh*) is its counterpart in Chinese tradition. But this parallelism is not simply parataxis, a string of likenesses observed. It is simultaneously a syntactic structure based upon a monosyllabic spoken language (128) and a structure of thought and language, of compact, terse, and elegant expression. The *pa ku* essay formalizes and exemplifies all of these aspects of analogy and parallelism at work. The “topic” of the essay is set forth with a quotation from the classics: often Confucius or Mencius. The ideas expressed by the author must conform with those of earlier orthodox exegetes in both style and content. And the author must emulate the style of his exemplars in a manner accurate enough to be recognized immediately by the reader. The total number of words in an essay is similarly prescribed: 450–600.

A characterization of the parallel universe invoked in the *baguwen* essay is described by Kao, who begins by noting that metaphor and analogy are central figures in Chinese philosophy and poetry, used in a variety of forms and combinations. But it is parallelism that is the “master trope in Chinese tradition” (“Rhetoric,” 128). “It is a rigorously defined figuration of language that has much to do with the language’s monosyllabic nature. It is basically a syntactic figure, but it operates over the various levels of the language simultaneously. Pervasive in all belletristic writings, it is dominant in the fu and also becomes the chief generic feature of parallel prose, or *p’ien wen*” (128).

Andrew Lo provides a translation of four examination essays of the Ming (ca. 1500) dynasty. He introduces them with the following characterization. “The *baguwen* were different from what is commonly known as Parallel Prose in that they did not employ the four-character-six character form, had no rhyme or tonal rules, and did not admit figures of speech or historical allusions. Antithetical structures being natural to the Chinese written language, they were not as difficult to compose as they might seem” (Lo 168). By the late fifteenth century the infamous “eight legs” (four sections each consisting of two exactly

matching passages) had become practically obligatory. “Looked on simply as an exercise in the exposition of a topic, the *baguwen* model has much to say for it. The sequence of steps it follows are, after all, mirrored to a greater or lesser extent in ‘free’ discursive essays from all over the world” (168).

Classical Western training in *prosopopoeia*, which continued into medieval and Renaissance schools, included emulating the style and voice of another, or what today we often define as allusion and quotation. Erasmus, for example, speaks through the voice of Folly, a form of impersonation that is itself a classical trope: *Moriae*, foolishness, the falsely wise but ultimately foolish woman. Understanding this folly of Erasmus requires, in turn, the rich traditions of discussions of wise and foolish that permeate the Hebrew scriptures, the Christian New Testament, and the classical rhetorical schools and practices that sustained the wise-foolish trope as a standard topic for debate as well as literary invention. On a similar note, Lo observes: “Modern readers are at a disadvantage in following the literary logic of *baguwen* in that they are not immersed in Confucian texts and teaching. To the writers and readers of the *baguwen* the briefest reference could stand for a position that has been exhaustively argued” (168). Much as is the case in Talmudic and Midrashic practice and in medieval *florilegia* traditions of biblical commentary, there was an obligation to know the existing arguments embedded in the numerous “quotations” from classical texts and to be able to marshal them in the composition of “new” arguments, within the stylistic contours set by the topic at hand.

Today, Chinese students are still taught methods of composition that include literary invention and metaphor alongside exposition and logic (You, Liu, in this symposium). Visiting Shanghai in May 2003, I unexpectedly encountered one of these school exercises when a group of identically dressed high school girls approached me and asked politely if I was a native English speaker, a low-risk question given my height and appearance. Their exercise required a native English speaker to check their translations of metaphors from English into Chinese and back again. The bulk of the sayings and metaphors were from Shakespeare’s plays. The difficulty of translating them, much less “using” them appropriately, illustrates the complexity of metaphors, parables, and the parallels they convey. These are rarely simple “allusions” or “quotations.”

The school exercise required each student to take Shakespeare quotes, proverbs, and sayings, translate them into Chinese, find Chinese proverbial counterparts, and then translate those sayings back into English. Then, the students were to verify the validity of the parallel with a native English speaker.

On the list but without a Chinese parallel were four sayings that, as it turned out, they could not understand:

To thine own self be true. “Why would you want to be true only to yourself?”

My horse my horse a kingdom for a horse. “What king would give up his kingdom for an animal, even a very fine horse?”

The writing is on the wall. “What does the writing say?” “Why is it on a wall?”

The play’s the thing. “Is this about a sports event?”

Quotations to which students readily found a Chinese counterpart illustrate the literary, rhetorical, and philosophical complexity of metaphorical language (see Kao “Comparative”) and the difficulty of cross-cultural translation, not to mention understanding:

The pen is mightier than the sword. “Paper is stronger than stone.”

Seeing is believing. “Hearing it a hundred times isn’t as good as seeing it once.”

Between a rock and a hard place. “Hearing the sounds of Chou on four sides” (Be afraid of both head and tail).

Kill two birds with one stone. “Kill two birds with one arrow.”

Eat your words. “Get fat eating your own words.”

A blessing in disguise. “The old border man loses his horse.”

Speak of the devil. “Say Cao Cao and Cao Cao comes!”

The pot calling the kettle black. “Those who walk 100 steps laughing at those who walk 50.”

Last hurrah. “Gai Shia song.”

It is a testament to the universality of certain forms of parallel thinking, or at least to the universality of certain school exercises, that these equivalences were drawn in understandable and artful ways. Much more could be said about the lack of equivalence between many of these translations, and their implications for cross-cultural understanding, and misunderstanding. The deeper the background we can bring to our cross-cultural readings the better.

Reporting the inaugural speech of Taiwan's first indigenous Taiwanese president, Chen Shui-bian, in May 2000, the Taipei *United Daily* provided an English text translation. It included what Chinese listeners would immediately and universally recognize as Confucian "quotes" or sayings. "When you practice benevolence at home people will come from far away." And, "It is good when old friends return from far away." In the immediate setting the allusions referred to the ongoing struggle to defend simultaneously Taiwan's autonomy and continuing economic openness to the People's Republic. But in a larger historical setting the words enacted the shared tradition of Confucian literary, cultural, and political allusions. Even Mao and the Cultural Revolution had not eradicated these, despite efforts to do so (You, this symposium). Even in the midst of a wildly popular populist and nativist victory Chen invoked the most traditional, widely shared Chinese literary and political/rhetorical traditions. For an outsider to spot these multiple levels of meaning would be as difficult as it was to explain "a horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse" to the teenage girls in the Eslite bookstore.

The legacy of the *bagu* essay merits much further study if we are to understand the rich multitude of parallel worlds in which Chinese culture, literature, and rhetoric think themselves. What seem to many Westerners and English speakers to be simple or even simplistic analogies are understood in their home settings as elegant understatements, subtle allusions, nuanced insights, and glimpses of truth that languish unrecognized without extensive knowledge of the often multiple and simultaneous referents. If we hope to enter these parallel words and worlds we must catch up not only with their content but also with the forms of thought through which they are spoken. As we do so, we can perhaps recognize the blunt overstatements and redundancies in our rhetorical traditions, particularly how these are perceived by those outside our paradigm.

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## Afterword: A Dialogue on Dialectic and Other Double Matters

C. Jan Swearingen and LuMing Mao

*In late September 2007 the Composition and Rhetoric Forum at Miami University invited C. Jan Swearingen to speak to Miami English faculty and graduate students on comparative rhetoric. Jan's talk, entitled "Women, Chinese, and Other Wise: Recent and Not-So-Recent Approaches to Comparative Rhetoric," generated a number of meaningful conversations about how best to advance comparative rhetoric in the age of globalization and about both the objectives and methodologies of comparative rhetoric. And many questions centered upon how non-Western rhetoric, such as Chinese rhetoric, can be studied in ways that do not just dwell on simple and thus simplistic comparison and contrast and that transcend orientalist or essentialist logic. These discussions have since challenged*

*us to think of our research projects—including this special symposium—in some new directions. Thanks, too, to these discussions, we have also been asking each other questions on issues central to comparative rhetoric in general and to Chinese rhetoric in particular. We thought it fitting to share with you some of this ongoing dialogue between us here. We hope to use our exchange to open up space for more dialogue on this topic in our field and to develop different approaches to, and new visions for, the study of Chinese rhetoric.*

**LuMing Mao:** From your perspective as someone who has long studied Western rhetorical traditions, how has the study of Chinese rhetoric informed and interrogated your understanding of your own and of Chinese traditions? What lessons can your experience teach our colleagues about studying non-Western rhetorical traditions and about pursuing comparative rhetoric?

**C. Jan Swearingen:** I find the study of Chinese rhetoric infinitely fascinating because its emphasis on complementarity, harmonic opposites, and parallelism resembles an often-suppressed tradition in Western rhetorics beginning even with the pre-Platonic sophists. Empedocles in particular celebrates the harmony of the universe that binds all things together and is disrupted by discord and argument. Plato's truth-seeking dialectic and dialogue is a similar model for reconciling or accommodating oppositions, letting them speak together in an ongoing quest for "truth." Similarly, a long line of Western language theories has held that language is ultimately incapable of representing thought or truth, but that it can approach and suggest truth, especially through metaphor and symbol, poetry and image. Informing our considerations of these longstanding intersections of rhetoric and poetics are recent studies of contact between China and Greek city states via the trade routes now known as the Silk Road. In the formulation of ideas governing correct or productive verbal interactions and defining language, there are more similarities and possibly even more common origins than at first meet the eye, leading us to ask, how many of these "differences" are a product of our interpretive methods, our present-day preferences, beliefs, and assumptions concerning the "exotic" Other?

**LM:** How do you deal with charges of essentialism and tokenism often leveled against the kinds of work we do in Chinese rhetoric? Do you have any specific suggestions, theoretical or pragmatic, for scholars interested in studying Chinese rhetoric or any other non-Western rhetorical tradition?

**CJS:** A logical extension of essentialism is to forbid the use of nouns entirely! For example, many women's studies programs have recently moved from the nomenclature of *women's studies* to *gender studies* for two reasons: to be more inclusive—of masculinity and transsexual studies, among other topics—and to avoid the essentialism inherent in *women*. When critics say “that’s essentialist” to a study using the word *women*, or *Chinese*, or *Western*, they need to say more, because “that’s essentialist” by itself says little more than “stop that” or “you are wrong.” It tends to be used as a bludgeon, not an invitation to further discussion. I am reminded of current political debate exchanges in which one interlocutor says to another, “that’s political.” Well, of course it is political. Say more. In discussing women, or Chinese rhetoric, or Western logic, we have to use nouns in a shorthand that thoughtful scholars will recognize is not to be taken too literally or narrowly. A similar debate has long surrounded the field of literacy studies, with the objections that were satirically leveled at the “Great Leap” theory of literacy. Walter Ong and others responded that the literacy-orality contrast was never intended as anything other than an heuristic, enabling us to suggest some patterns and draw conclusions for further inquiry: the ongoing process of all research and scholarship. If we are to talk about *Chinese* or *Western* at all, we will have to use nouns every now and then, and not take up most of the discussion dealing with how problematic it is to use generic nouns and adjectives.

**LM:** Is Chinese rhetoric gendered? Given your expertise, what can we learn from Western feminist rhetoric, from Western feminist historiography in our study of Chinese rhetoric? Are there any meaningful parallels to be drawn between these two traditions in terms of how women practiced rhetoric and advanced social and political causes?

**CJS:** We could probably come up with an SAT analogy question here, matching up the various contrasts that have been developed in studies of Chinese and Western rhetorics. Chinese rhetoric is to Western rhetoric as: 1. Women are to men; 2. Fluid subtlety is to blunt oversimplification; 3. Old age is to youth; 4. Indirection is to linear logic. There are at least twenty more pairs we could think of in drawing this contrast, which now has a four-hundred-year-old history, beginning with Matteo Ricci in the sixteenth century. In the past fifteen years, many of my Chinese students in women's studies and rhetoric classes have said, when we looked at Ong's *Orality and Literacy* and *Fighting for Life*, or Deborah Tannen's studies of argument and gender: “Well, what you describe for oral language and thought [Ong] and women's language

[Lakoff, Tannen], is exactly what we Chinese value most highly in educated thought and language.” All of this addresses as well your earlier question about essentialism. Chinese rhetoric, viewed by Westerners, has been termed *effeminate* (Ricci), but does this make it *gendered*? I think not. The key word is *it*. The language, the rhetoric is not gendered, but our perceptions of it are shaped by constructions of gender tied to language in our culture. Do Chinese see Western rhetoric and logic as “masculine” or “brutish”? Many Chinese I’ve talked to about this say they see most of our argumentative patterns, from Freshman English essays to conventions of conversational argument, to be simplistic, uncultured, rude. Further, they are at a double disadvantage because when they are perceived as not being willing to argue back, Westerners find them weak, or shy, or unfamiliar with logic, a misreading that the Asian student interacting with a Western teacher is constrained from pointing out! There are stylistic issues as well. Putting the thesis first spoils the fun for someone accustomed to an elegant ending that reveals the “main point” only after a quiet walk through the woods. Is that *feminine*? Combative and confrontational arguments are not unknown in Chinese culture, but they are not highly esteemed, either. Bo Wang’s essay on how Chinese women adopted some essayistic traditions for political writings is an interesting examination of several hybrids concerning culture and gender.

**LM:** One of the themes that we try to develop in this symposium is learn to listen to the other’s voice. In your study of Chinese rhetoric, how did you learn to listen to the other? How did you react when you were “surprised” by what you found or when you were dissatisfied by claims/conclusions based on simple contrasting or comparing?

**CJS:** I have learned from numerous conversations and scholarly exchanges over the past ten years. The first contact zone in the mid-1990s presented itself in Hui Wu’s enthusiasm for Chinese counterparts to the enthymeme that she examined in her dissertation. My son’s Chinese studies and fluency have contributed in numerous ways to my ongoing interest in Western models of harmony and complementarity. I became engaged in learning more about how the *baguwen* essays worked conceptually and allusively—not the empty school exercise *baguwen* but the more substantive earlier versions that were considered to have literary and philosophical merit. Learning about the role played by silence and understatement in Confucian teachings concerning rhetoric and language, the emphasis upon an economy of words, reminded me once again of Empedocles, one whose rhetorical tropes were a

pair of oppositions but also complementarities: silence and voice. I continue to be amused by the “Westernness” of today’s politically correct discourse and doctrine, even while denouncing Western hegemonies: blunt statements of positions and views, slogans that go on bumper stickers and placards. These very Western forms of “free speech” and “democracy” even when they are adopted by Chinese or African or Middle Eastern demonstrators, are nonetheless regarded within those cultures as rude, rough-cut, thesis-first, no-room-for-discussion modes of communication. One contemporary bumper sticker reads: “You’d better be nice to us, or we’ll import democracy to your country, too.” Discovering that thesis first and strong oppositional discourse is regarded as somewhat primitive, simplistic, and uncultured by many cultures around the world is something we really need to hear and think about before we undertake our next regime change or curriculum revision. What alternatives to blunt oppositional debates have been developed in other rhetorical traditions? Turning to how “they” see “us” (with apologies for essentialism), let me ask “you” a few questions!

**CJS:** What are the meanings and forms of “dialectic” in Chinese rhetorical logics past and present, be they Marxist or non-Marxist, Western or non-Western? You have said that these have been “naturalized,” and that they have affinities with earlier Chinese complementary and yin-yang logics. How are such dialectics understood and practiced and valued today?

**LM:** Chinese rhetoric has been characterized in the past as not having (Western) logic or as following a different kind of logic. We have now seen study after study demonstrating that Chinese rhetoric not only has logic but also practices the same kind of deductive and inductive logic that is at the core of Western rhetoric. While these efforts are all worthy and necessary, what lurks behind these studies, I often feel, is a certain degree of defensiveness or a desire to prove that Chinese rhetoric is worthy of being spoken in the same breath as Western rhetoric. What gets overlooked in the process, as Lu Liu has argued in her essay, is the use of dialectical logic in the Chinese context. What is most fascinating, I think, is how dialectical logic came into China and how soon it took on a distinctive Chinese characteristic or became “naturalized.” Namely, *dialectic* and *logic*, like so many other neologisms, came into Chinese at the turn of the twentieth century through Japanese or through direct transliteration from English. Once dialectical logic became part of the Chinese discourse, it began to seek affinities with, and became a modern version of, yin-yang logic—one that is in harmony with the Marx-

ist and Maoist ideology. This discursive history of dialectic logic, or of many other neologisms for that matter, can tell us a lot about how different logics or rhetorics grapple or engage with one another in the contact zone and how they translate and transform meaning in the process. To put the matter another way, dialectical logic, with its emphasis on the interdependence of opposites, mediates between yin-yang logic and Marxist dialectics. It now represents a vital form of *Chinese* logic in contemporary Chinese discourse.

**CJS:** Talk about your unease with using Confucius or *baguwen* as a paradigm for understanding Chinese rhetorical traditions. What are the issues involved in using one emblematic example? What gets left out? On the other hand, what useful things does this allow us to see and do?

**LM:** Let me be clear about one point first: I have no problem in us studying Confucius or *baguwen* as important parts of Chinese rhetorical traditions. As a matter of fact, I believe such studies are useful and necessary. However, as I have indicated before, what becomes problematic is when Confucius and *baguwen* begin to serve as a paradigm for understanding Chinese rhetorical traditions, as if to suggest there were only Confucius (read as “exemplary rhetoric”) or *baguwen* (read as “rhetoric run amok”) in Chinese rhetorical traditions. Either representation is simply not accurate, guilty of being reductive at its worst—because there are other rhetorics (the *qi* rhetoric of persuasion) and other essay genres (policy essay and discourse essay). Our colleagues in this symposium have certainly given us ample evidence of the rhetorical diversity and complexity in the Chinese traditions. Simply put, the central issue is not so much about Confucius and *baguwen* per se as about the ways in which they are being represented or used as a token for good or bad rhetoric—another unsustainable binary, by the way. On the other hand, I see nothing wrong in using Confucius and *baguwen* as a starting point or as an example to illustrate something unfamiliar, something unknown. The knowledge acquired by this study will in turn make the familiar—or what we think we know about Confucius and *baguwen*—less familiar, thus calling on us to challenge our earlier assumptions about or our prior knowledge of them. It is only through this kind of dialectical process that we can begin to advance the study of Chinese rhetoric or of any other non-Western rhetoric in meaningful and productive ways.

**CJS:** If current East-West rhetorical studies are a real live contact zone, and I believe they are, what have been some of the noteworthy appropriations, misunderstandings, and hybrids? What have we learned so far that will help

us understand and communicate more effectively? What will, in I. A. Richards's phrase, help "minimize misunderstandings"?

**LM:** I agree that our current East-West rhetorical studies can be seen as constituting a real live contact zone. As you well know, Western rhetorical theories have been appropriated in the study of Chinese rhetoric. Rhetorical concepts—such as three artistic means of persuasion, three species of discourse, five canons, enthymemes, and common and special topics—have been extensively utilized within contrastive or comparative contexts. Similarly, work by contemporary Western theorists like Pierre Bourdieu, Kenneth Burke, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Harbermas, and I. A. Richards has also played a significant role in influencing how we conceptualize or problematize the study of Chinese rhetoric. At the same time, we have also seen a few appropriations in the other direction. For example, there is the imagistic and analogical approach toward linguistic and rhetorical criticism practiced by Western scholars—an approach that is often associated with the Chinese. Further, we continue to see the ongoing efforts to explore and explicate the epistemological and ontological implications in Chinese, a logographic language that raises questions about those long-held assumptions in the West about the relationship between speech and writing, between signifier and signified, and between appearance and reality.

These kinds of studies have greatly contributed to a more informed understanding of both traditions in ways that would otherwise be unimaginable. On the other hand, they should not delude anyone into thinking that encounters of this nature are conflict-free or ideology-neutral. Rather they are fraught with asymmetrical relations of power and they often privilege, however implicitly or however inadvertently, the Western paradigms over the Eastern ones. In addition, I think we sometimes are lured by inertia to assume that we should always use Western models or methodologies to study Chinese rhetoric, but not the other way around. By and large, the West has been, and still is, asking the questions and framing the discussion. Such inertia—the cause of which is a topic for our future conversation—not only elides the interactive and innovative dimensions of these encounters but also perpetuates a form of orientalist logic that sees the West as *the* point of origination or adjudication.

As I participate in comparative rhetorical studies, I experience an unmistakable sense of copresence or interdependence. The process of this copresence or interdependence has yielded new discursive forms that

challenge the existing structures of power and that give voice to different cultural and ethnic experiences. The emergence of these new forms has been further accelerated and enriched by the recent advances in digital technology. One hybrid form that has lately drawn my attention is Chinese English, which marks its presence with its particular linguistic features and with its rhetorical dimensions. Given the role Chinese English is playing in China's rise in the twenty-first century, it is imperative that we study its linguistic, rhetorical, as well as political significances. Equally meaningful is to compare Chinese English of China with Chinglish of North America—the latter being a contact language that grew out of the colonial context and that continues to lend a distinctive linguistic, ethnic, and discursive identity to its speakers. I am convinced that these kinds of interlocking studies will go a long way toward minimizing misunderstandings, toward practicing what the late American philosopher Donald Davison calls “the principle of rational accommodation,” and toward generating many more forms of interdependence-in-difference.