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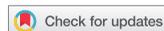
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Hu Shi's Model of Rhetorical Pragmatic Argumentation

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ABSTRACT

During China's Republican Period, scholar and reformer Hu Shi advanced a rhetorical pragmatic project for democratic reform. In this essay, I argue that the dissertation Hu wrote under the advisement of John Dewey, "The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China," was itself a groundbreaking piece of rhetorical invention that functioned as part of Hu's project by reinterpreting ancient Chinese classics as the foundations for a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation.

The story is told of Confucius who passed by the foot of Mount Taishan and heard a woman crying plaintively. He asked her what was the cause of her deep sorrow. She said, 'My father was carried away by a tiger; recently my husband was killed by a tiger and now my son was devoured by a tiger.' 'Why don't you run away from this place infested by such ferocious tigers?' And the woman said, 'There is no tyrannical government here.' Confucius thereupon turned to his disciples and said, 'Remember this! Tyrannical government is more oppressive than ferocious tigers!'

—S. Hu ("Historical Foundations" 170)

Hu Shi used this story in his 1941 lecture at the Institute of World Affairs in Los Angeles. He was speaking to reassure an American audience that China should be trusted as an "ally fighting on the side of the democracies" (S. Hu "Historical Foundations" 170). Hu was searching for Western assistance in China's fights against the Japanese and Communists, but Americans questioned China's commitment to democratic principles and were hesitant to offer the aid.

Democracy is not so foreign to the Chinese as it might first appear, he assured the audience. There are, he explains, "a few powerful philosophical ideas" that have shaped China's social and political development and are compatible with democratic thought (S. Hu "Historical Foundations" 170). The story of the tiger, for instance, illustrates the idea that rebellion against tyranny is justified. The other two powerful and compatible ideas include: 1) the Confucian notion that human nature is essentially good; and, 2) that a subordinate is duty-bound to critique the wrong actions of his superiors (S. Hu "Historical Foundations" 170–1).

Westerners weren't the only ones questioning where the Chinese stood in relation to democratic and other Western thought. Leigh Jenco explains, Chinese reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were engaged in "theoretically rich ... debates" about if and how China should engage "Western learning ... to produce knowledge along what were often identified as 'new' ... or 'Western' ... lines rather than 'old' ... or 'Chinese' ... ones" (2). Jenco describes "Western learning" as referring to certain "forms of knowledge – particularly of mathematics, technology, and the natural sciences, as well as of politics and society" (6–7). The reformers were reacting to an "unexpected challenge from Western powers" (4). They were concerned that their own modes of knowledge might be so "historically situated" that they "may embody only very local, not global, insights" and may not be helpful in confronting this challenge (4).

Among the Chinese reformers who advocated for Western learning, there were disagreements about how it should be engaged. Hu's approach was shaped by the pragmatic perspective. Hu completed his PhD under the advisement of John Dewey and American pragmatist thought was apparent in Hu's approach to both education and reform. He should be placed in the pragmatist tradition alongside figures like Jane Addams, who realized that "attending to, promoting, and cultivating specific forms of rhetorical practice" is "the best way to build a social democracy" (Danisch xiii). Like Addams, Hu also advanced the pragmatist project to the stage of applied rhetoric in the name of enabling a deliberative ecology.

Although the term "rhetoric" is one that Hu did not use, his reform had clear rhetorical aims. This essay attempts to first, situate Hu Shi on the rhetorical end of the pragmatist tradition and second, illustrate his rhetorical method by arguing that his dissertation, "The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China," was itself a groundbreaking piece of rhetorical invention that tried to reinterpret ancient Chinese classics as the foundations for a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation.

Both purposes of this essay are new contributions to scholarship on the pragmatist tradition and Hu Shi. The first continues work by Nathan Crick to ground American pragmatism in the Sophistic tradition and work by Robert Danisch to both highlight the rhetorical side of pragmatism and expand study of the public intellectuals who practiced it. The second continues the work of Jerome Grieder, whose comprehensive intellectual biography of Hu Shi acknowledges the pragmatic origins of his ideas broadly but does not undertake a detailed investigation of the influence of pragmatism on an individual piece of Hu's work.

Rhetorical Pragmatism

Figures like Addams and Hu bridged the divide between philosophy and reform by making pragmatism rhetorical. Danisch explains the difference

between philosophical pragmatism and rhetorical pragmatism as the difference between accounting for the world and changing it (xx). “*That* this happens is a matter for philosophy to explain, but *how* this happens is a matter for rhetoric” (Danisch xxvii).

Hu displays rhetorical concern with *how* in his frequent references to Greek Sophistic thought in relation to China’s reform. The Greeks saw rhetoric as “a dynamis,” or a catalyst for social deliberation (Danisch xx). “Rhetoric referred to a powerful capacity for doing ... for making and constructing the world through language” (Danisch xx). Internationally, Hu sought to construct a world that saw China as a friend to democracies. At home, he wanted to refashion the intellectual and social landscape to equip the Chinese with the rhetorical means for public deliberation.

His reform was a natural extension of the pragmatist project (xiv). As Danisch explains, “pragmatism’s most important and enduring contribution to American intellectual history and political theory was the argument that democracy was a way of life and not just a system of government” (p. xi). Hu was trying to give China the tools needed to live that life. His reform was consistent with the goals of pragmatism. Pragmatism turns “philosophical questions about truth, moral logic, aesthetics, or language into rhetorical questions about the best methods or practices for citizenship, leadership, deliberation, public argument, and community building” (Danisch xiii). Reform shouldn’t simply change who held power or what form of government was used. Such changes would be artificially imposed and short-lived. To last, changes needed to develop as natural long-lasting expressions of a democratic landscape. Hu urged Chinese intellectuals to leave politics alone to concentrate on cultural and intellectual transformation instead (Grieder 176).

I refer to the model Hu developed as a model of *argumentation*, rather than of *philosophy* or *reform theory*, because it was designed to be “the site of an activity” (Tindale 1). Argumentation is the means of daily *rhetorical citizenship*, which refers to engagement in practices that shape and direct social experience (Danisch 222). Argumentation is the means of engaging these practices. It is in argumentation that “reasons are given and appraised, where beliefs are recognized and justified, and where personal development is encouraged” (Tindale 1). To fully live the life of social democracy, one must be involved in the rhetorical ecology, which necessitates involvement in the competition of ideas.

Competitive ideas arise from critical appraisals of social life. Critical appraisal is dependent on belief in *possibility*, without which logical developments like the scientific spirit or social developments like respect for individuals, remain out of reach. Belief in *possibility* refers to the imaginative ability to conceptualize oneself in a different predicament with a different set of skills and different set of expectations. This notion of rhetorical

argumentation is consistent with Aristotle's, for whom, "rhetorical argumentation deals ... with what 'could be other than it is'" (Tindale 14).

Hu practiced a critical, rhetorical, and optimistic pragmatism. Hu was a critic of Chinese culture, but only to the extent that he thought it handicapped the Chinese from adjusting to the modern environment. He identified China's "Five Great Enemies, namely: Poverty, Disease, Ignorance, Corruption, [and] Disorder" (S. Hu, "Which Road" 76). Hu's dissertation was an attempt on the third enemy, ignorance. He says Professor Dewey taught him that "All the greatest discoveries of truth ... depend upon [thinking well]" (S. Hu, "Essay" 95). Only sound critical thought would enable China to confront all five great enemies.

Unlike other early pragmatists, Hu lived as a rhetor; he did not separate the work of a philosopher from the work of a reformer. For Hu, the "sympathetic understanding of the true philosopher" can be had only when a "philosopher ... lives his philosophy" (S. Hu, "Introduction" xi). Hu writes:

I have the strongest desire to make my own people see that these methods of the West are not totally alien to the Chinese mind, and that on the contrary, they are the instruments by means of which and in the light of which much of the lost treasures of Chinese philosophy can be recovered. (S. Hu, *The Development* 9)

Hu's project was optimistically connected to a larger spiritual endeavor. He disagreed with those who argued that China had a better developed spiritual culture and might develop the mechanical and technical implements of modern western civilization while maintaining the native spirituality. Instead, Hu saw spirituality in the ideals of equality, liberty, the search for truth, and material progress, which he said is "the necessary condition for liberating humanity from the pitiful struggle for a mere subsistence and for uplifting it for higher and more valuable things" (S. Hu, "The Renaissance" 23). This is not to say that Hu was blind to the dark trappings of western technologies (S. Hu, "The Renaissance" 23). For him, modernization was not synonymous with possession of machines. Rather, modernization meant inventive solutions to unique problems.

Western Learning

In Chinese rhetorical history, Hu is part of the movement for Western learning. However, he has little in common with the first strain of this movement, *self-strengthening*. The *self-strengtheners* "aimed at using particular lines of Western applied knowledge, especially in industry and the military, to "enhance, rather than transform, received modes of Chinese knowledge" (Jenco 103). He has more in common with later proponents of Western learning who advanced *China-origin thought*, which maintained that ancient Chinese texts held within them "prototypes of algebra, logic,

astronomy, and architecture” consistent with Western developments (Jenco 70). Jenco explains the China-origins thesis as something “historians often read ... as a rhetorical or political strategy advanced by radicals to quell conservative doubts,” which could more easily serve “goals of conservative retrenchment” (68–70). However, she acknowledges that the “ironic ‘continuity of difference’” actually worked to “authorize future social and political transformation along novel lines” (76).

Hu shares the most in common with later *Bianfa* reformers who agreed that Western knowledge needed to be integrated into pre-existing Chinese modes of knowledge production but held that this could not be accomplished without first changing the practices that enshrine those modes of knowledge. Jenco calls it a movement from epistemology to politics (92). It is synonymous with the expansion Danisch describes from philosophical pragmatism to rhetorical pragmatism. *Bianfa* thought is a shift from knowledge to knowledge enabling behavior.

For Hu, the contention that comparable modes of knowledge production had existed in China’s intellectual past was not merely a rhetorical ploy. He actually saw these points of similarity. Likewise, he was not reaching for obscure strands of thought that had been dormant for so long as to have grown culturally unrecognizable. The strains of thought he sought were still visible in late nineteenth century China. For instance, Liang Qichao had some success with his reforms in 1898 when, under advice from Liang’s teacher, Kang Youwei, the Guangxu emperor authorized experiments in governance and innovation, which included “the possibility of memorializing to anyone, not just high officials” (Jenco 108). To memorialize is to petition for a grievance to be addressed. There was already a long tradition of memorializing to high officials, which, Hu explains, developed from the critical spirit of China’s most canonical philosophers. Over time, the spirit had been constrained to the ritualized process of memorializing to high officials, but the spirit itself had been there, had persisted to some degree, and could be reignited.

Key Figures in the Development of Logical Method

Hu says the political, social, and intellectual conditions at the time of Confucius “were to no small extent responsible for the rise of logic in ancient China” (S. Hu, *The Development* 1). It was a politically, intellectually, and morally chaotic time. These conditions first gave rise to an “age of the Poets” who criticized and lamented the society crumbling around them. Then, “with the dawn of the sixth century B. C., China passed from the age of the Poets to the age of the Sophists,” which “constituted the era of Enlightenment in Ancient China” (S. Hu, *The Development* 10).

The Sophists continued in the critical vein of the poets. They “represented the spirit of the age: the spirit of criticism and protest” (S. Hu, *The Development* 11). The Chinese Sophists played a similar social role as the Greek Sophists and they also suffered similar criticism. The remainder of this paper surveys the primary figures Hu unearths in his search for the development of logical method in ancient China in order to review what each contributed to a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation.

Deng Xi. Perhaps Deng Xi’s most outstanding contribution to the model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation is the way he challenged hierarchy and put argumentative power into the hands of the people. Hu says Deng Xi is “the best known and perhaps the most interesting of the Sophists;” he “taught the doctrine of the relativity of right and wrong, and employed inexhaustible arguments” (S. Hu, *The Development* 12). Deng wrote a code of penal law which was later used to put him to death after persistent opposition to government policies set him at odds with the state. The story is that he first ran afoul of the state when “hanging up ‘pamphlets’ in public places, a practice which had become so prevalent as to cause disquiet on the part of the government” (S. Hu, *The Development* 12). He then evaded the law by delivering the pamphlets. Once the law caught up with him there, he began smuggling the pamphlets by including them in deliveries of other things. Deng Xi enraged the government with his ability to influence the people. He claimed that “with him right and wrong had no fixed standard, and yea and nay changed every day” (S. Hu, *The Development* 12–3).

Laozi. Hu referred to Laozi as the Chinese Protagoras (S. Hu, *The Development* 13). Laozi’s primary contribution to the model is his “spirit of courageous doubt” (S. Hu, “*The Scientific*” 29). He had a naturalistic conception of the universe that basically maintained that nature will steamroll anyone who stands in the way of its inevitable path. The best state to live in, Laozi maintained, was a state of non-interference, where people live in accord with, or without resistance to, the movements of nature. Humans had overcomplicated the world with institutions and regulations for social relations. They would need to strip away centuries of artificiality and find a path back to simplicity. This subversive and revolutionary element of Laozi’s philosophy lays the foundation for constructive philosophies. As Hu explains, “the age of Sophistry was fading into the age of Logic” (S. Hu, *The Development* 19).

The idea of re-evaluating social institutions is an essential constructive element in the logical consciousness Hu sought. While Deng Xi opened the idea that argumentative power might belong in the hands of the people, Laozi introduced the spirit of courageous doubt that would give a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation grounds for functioning. Hu wanted to nurture the spirit of skepticism passed down from the rebel Laozi. Same as in

Greek Sophistry, Hu understood that deconstructive thinking is necessary to clear the way for something new.

However, the deconstructive spirit can go too far, and Hu believed that it did for Laozi. Laozi's idea of the *dao* is a significant element in Chinese thought because it represents two important tendencies: first is a tendency to find a way of living predicated on an understanding of one's place in the world; second is the tendency toward the path of least resistance. The first tendency is associated with most of the constructive elements of Daoist philosophy and the second is associated with the most destructive. One way this destructive tendency manifested is in the drive toward a world of "namelessness."

Names create artificial categories and artificially defined relations. "Distinctions such as good and evil, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, etc., were the symptom, if not the cause, of the degeneration of the original innocence of mankind" (S. Hu, *The Development* 16). Laozi advocated a reversal of naming to return to a natural system of "namelessness," which was too deconstructive for Hu. Still, Hu took the fact that Laozi was talking about names at all as evidence that Chinese intellectualism was beginning to pass from the undisciplined stage of cynicism into an age where culture and society would be subject to a disciplined kind of critical examination.

Confucius. Confucius brought about the next major stage of development for disciplined criticism and the first major stage of development for constructive philosophy. Hu highlights "Confucian skepticism" and the discussions of logical theory contained in the classic *Book of Change* as the most significant of the Confucian contributions to the development of logical method and counted them among the rhetorical resources for cultural reform. Conversely, Hu saw the conservative focus of Confucianism as one of the most detrimental aspects of the Chinese philosophical tradition, a regressive orientation that ran counter to reform.

Hu presents three noteworthy theories of logic in the Confucian *Book of Change*. The first is the theory of names, which involves the process of rectifying names. To rectify names, one must first determine the original meaning of a name, free of the baggage it later accumulated. Second, the relationship or institution represented by the name must be re-evaluated considering the uncovered meaning. Third, institutions should be realigned with their names. So, if it is found that an institution does not function in accord with the original meaning of its name, it must be made to function as it ought to. In this way, Confucius advocated for a "judicious" use of names.

Hu explains the "judicious" use of names is exemplified by the *The Chun Qiu* (The Spring and Autumn Annals), a history of the State of Lu that employs rhetorical methods for pragmatic ends. Hu says that the text appears to be a dry chronical but has deeper meaning. First, it exhibits the desirability of "linguistic exactitude" (S. Hu, *The Development* 19). Take for example this one detail from

a famous story in *The Chun Qiu*: “Year 16 ... in Spring, First Month of the Imperial Calendar, the first day of the moon, there fell stones (i.e., meteors) in [Song], five of them” (S. Hu, *The Development* 49). *Kung Yang*, one of the most famous commentators, offered the following interpretation:

How is it that the text first says there fell and then stones? There fell stones is a record of what was heard. There was first heard something falling. On examining what had fallen, it was found to be stones. Further inquiry showed that there were five of them. (S. Hu, *The Development* 49)

This focus on “linguistic exactitude” is both beneficial and detrimental to Hu’s model of argumentation. On the one hand, it is detrimental because “it tends to a mechanical and pedantic view of literature” (S. Hu, *The Development* 50). On the other hand, it is helpful because language works better as “an instrument of logic” when it is exact (S. Hu, *The Development* 50).

The Chun Qiu implies ethical judgment through the judicious use of names. Events are recorded with particular attention to what aspects of the situation are emphasized through word choice. For instance, across many instances of rulers killed by heirs, ministers, or subjects, in some cases, the murderer is emphasized to highlight “the extraordinary unnaturalness of a crime which is parricide” (S. Hu, *The Development* 51). In other instances, a verb simply meaning “to kill” rather than a verb meaning “to kill a person of higher rank” was used to indicate that “the murdered ruler was himself a murderer or a usurper” (S. Hu, *The Development* 50).

The second noteworthy theory of logic is the theory of ideas. Like Laozi, Confucius conceived of change as continuous and unfolding, from the simple toward the complex. The first step in the Confucian process of intellectually reorganizing society is returning to the stage of greatest simplicity, “characterized as the quest for the ... ‘embryonal,’ ... the minutest beginning of an activity or ... a good or evil” (S. Hu, *The Development* 34). To know the embryonic, is to be “god-like” (S. Hu, *The Development* 34). The ancient sages had come closest to this ideal. “To be thus god-like is the ambition of the statesman and reformer” (S. Hu, *The Development* 34). The focus on origins made history of great importance for Confucian scholars. The value attributed to history is reflected in the fact that many recorded histories are referred to as mirrors to suggest that the present is reflected in the past (S. Hu, *The Development* 33).

Hu stressed the Doctrine of the *xiang* as the most important logical doctrine in the *Book of Change* (S. Hu, *The Development* 35). The *embryonic* are located in *xiang*, which can be translated as *symbols* (Wu 99) or *image-signs* (Yang 39). The word *xiang* originally meant elephant and, according to the ancient account given by logician Han Fei, the term was chosen because although few people have seen live elephants, many have seen ivory and visual representations of an elephant. “Therefore, all that men conceive in

imagination is called [*xiang*]" (S. Hu, *The Development* 35). The *Book of Change* represents these ideas, or *xiang*, through combinations of *gua*, "lineal figure[s] made of three or six whole or divided lines" (S. Hu, *The Development* 28). For example, "the idea [*xiang*] of 'triumph' or 'success' [is] suggested by the overcoming of [the] fire [*gua*] by [the] water [*gua*]. Reverse the order, and we have [the] represent[tation of] the idea of 'defeat' or 'failure'" (S. Hu, *The Development* 35).

The theory of *judgment* is the third important logical theory in the *Book of Change*. The *Book of Change* is structured around relationships between *xiang*, *gua*, and *judgments*. *Gua* are combined to create representations of *xiang*. The *xiang* function "to reveal things" while the *judgments* function "to tell things" about the revealed (S. Hu, *The Development* 42). The *judgments* provide "functional definitions" that tell "whither something is tending," or "what is good and what is evil" (S. Hu, *The Development* 43). For example, the *judgment*, phrased without a copula, as is common in Chinese, "Humility succeeds' ... tells something about 'humility': it indicates to what it will lead" (S. Hu, *The Development* 43). Such *judgements* are good for a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation because they work critically to evaluate history, influence behavior, and improve experience in daily life.

Hu likes the purposeful intellectual reorganization at the root of the Confucian theory of names and the critical discernment involved in the "judicious' use of the names" (S. Hu, *The Development* 26). The theory of ideas offers a constructivist view of people as active and capable agents in the world who are able to engage history through a disciplined method of investigation to make judgments as practical guides for action. Here, Hu defines practical using John Dewey's definition in *Experimental Logic*. A judgment is practical when it suggests "it is better, wiser, more prudent, right, advisable, opportune, expedient, etc., to act thus and so" (S. Hu, *The Development* 44).

However, there is much in Confucian thought that Hu would want to avoid in a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation. Hu called the willingness to accept things on authority alone, "the most formidable enemy to innovation and progress" (S. Hu "Intellectual China" 6). This willingness became a habituated tendency of thought, or what we might call an orientation. Orientations are important, as Scott Stroud explains, because a strong orientation can be one of the biggest constraints to reform. While an orientation "readies the agent for certain types of activities," it also "'incapacitates' them in regard to other lines of action" (Stroud 54).

Mozi. Hu respects the bravery of Mozi's rebellious pragmatic spirit. Mozi's philosophy was developed as a reaction against "the ritualism and formalism of the Confucians who were busily engaged in the task of codifying the traditional customs, rites, and moral laws into an elaborate system of rules regulating every human relationship and every phase of human conduct" (S.

Hu, *The Development* 56). Mozi had a strong religious temperament and, Hu points out, he was the only Chinese to ever actually found a religion (S. Hu, *The Development* 57). Mozi “was disgusted with the early Confucians who accepted the ancient institution of ancestral worship, and devised extravagant rituals for funeral and burial, but who were mostly atheists, and at best agnostics” (S. Hu, *The Development* 56). *His best contributions to a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation came from the way he pushed against Confucian determinism and “rebelled against their ... refus[al] to consider the practical consequences of beliefs, theories, and institutions”* (S. Hu, *The Development* 56).

Mozi’s push against determinism was connected to his religious outlook. He maintained “that the salvation of the individual depends on his own efforts to do good” (S. Hu, *The Development* 57). To do good, a person must engage in proper judgment. Accordingly, Mozi advanced three laws of reasoning for proper judgment that Hu found desirable for a modern model of argumentation. First, reasoning must have a “basis or foundation,” which can be derived from studying “the experiences of the wisest men of the past” (S. Hu, *The Development* 49). The second law of reasoning held that one must take a “general survey” (S. Hu, *The Development* 49). The general survey acts as the bridge between the present time and the past. The general survey requires an examination of the fidelity between the foundational experiences of the past and actual experiences in the world today. Third, proper reasoning must culminate with “practical application” (S. Hu, *The Development* 49). The final test of sound reasoning is actual public experimentation. For reasoning to be complete there must be a test of “whether or not it is conducive to the welfare of the State and of the People” (S. Hu, *The Development* 50). Because it accounts for the particularity of present circumstance, acknowledges the benefit of guidance from the past, and judges decisions based on their practical impact, Hu says that “as a system of thought, Mohism has much in common with Utilitarianism and Pragmatism” (S. Hu, *The Development* 57).

However, Mohism was not fully pragmatic and there were aspects of it that would need to be avoided in Hu’s model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation. As Hu explains, there are many perils that come attached to using the pragmatic method in an uncritical way (S. Hu, *The Development* 77). For instance, “[Mozi] ... seems to have on certain occasions ignored the qualitative distinction between consequences,” which is to say what is immediately practical versus what may prove to be practical down the road (S. Hu, *The Development* 76). Hu recounts a story of Mozi spending:

“three years in making a wooden bird which, when completed, flew up into the air and remained there the whole day, and then, falling to the ground, was dashed to pieces. Upon being congratulated on his new invention, [Mozi] said: ‘I would rather make the axle of a vehicle which can be made out of a small piece of wood in a short time and which, when finished, can [b]ear the weight of thirty.’ If the story be true. [Mozi] should certainly be held responsible for having retarded mankind’s conquest of the air for over two thousand years!” (S. Hu, *The Development* 76–7).

It is also detrimental to employ logic as a tool of validation according to Mozi. Hu gives the example of how Mozi used a test of practicality to support offerings to ghosts and spirits. He asserts that even if ghosts and spirits do not exist, it is not wasteful to make offerings to them because the offerings are not expensive and we will enjoy the time spent with family and neighbors on these occasions. Hu takes serious issue with this explanation. As Hu suggests:

Might it not be possible that such attempts to justify a conception the validity of which has not been seriously subjected to the pragmatic test, have been one of the causes which conspired to discredit Mohism in the later days of materialism and atheism. (S. Hu, *The Development* 75)

Neo-Mohism. The Neo-Mohists have the most to offer a model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation. The Neo-Mohist logical method “is essentially a method of scientific classification” that relates similar things into classes and differentiates by way of “individual variations” (S. Hu, *The Development* 128). The Neo-Mohists jointly used the method of agreement and method of difference for a true method of scientific induction. Thus, the Neo-Mohist approach was the most rigorous and exact. In terms of practical application, the Neo-Mohists were the most rhetorically concerned. Hu explains that the Neo-Mohist

use of logic is sixfold: (1) to distinguish the right from the wrong (which is the Chinese way of saying ‘to tell truth from falsehood’); (2) to inquire into the causes of the success and failure of human institutions; (3) to learn the points of agreement and difference between things; (4) to find out the relations between substances and predicables; (5) to determine the good and the evil, and (6) to be able to meet difficult and doubtful situations. (S. Hu, *The Development* 93)

The idea of “the good,” for example, is a practical idea that aims to develop “right desires or aversions” through moral education (S. Hu, *The Development* 91). As Hu writes, “A thing is a ‘lesser evil’ or a ‘greater good’ in proportion to its social value; that is, either directly to society or to the individual conceived with reference to his worth to society” (S. Hu, *The Development* 91). These desires and aversions are supposed to guide individual behavior in ways that will be most beneficial to the community. Thus, the Neo-Mohist idea of “the good” is very pragmatic. It requires critical

observation of what is making life difficult, judgment about how life might be better, foresight to determine what behaviors would lead to the desired end, and education to shape desires and aversions.

Neo-Mohist logic was poised as a natural antecedent to argumentation. “The Neo-Mohists never were skeptical. For them, the principle of contradiction was the canon of argumentation” (S. Hu, *The Development* 141). Since the Neo-Mohists found truth in consensus, there was no way that contradicting ideas could simultaneously be right. In a debate, there cannot be two winners. “If there can be no winner, what is the use of argumentation? In a debate, one says aye and another says nay. The one who says it right will win” (S. Hu, *The Development* 142). In an effort to eradicate contradictions and seek the truth, “the dialecticians of the age [sought] to perfect the instrument of thought and argumentation” (S. Hu, *The Development* 142).

Hu referred to Neo-Mohists, like Huizi and Gongsun Long, as “dialecticians” or “Sophists” (S. Hu, *The Development* 130). “A century later, when logic had become a lost science,” they became known by “the name ‘the school of logicians’” (S. Hu, *The Development* 130). They were both great dialecticians that worked with paradoxes largely concerned with ideas related to “the infinite divisibility of time and space” and issues of “potentiality and actuality” (S. Hu, *The Development* 120, 121). Many of the paradoxes are more intelligible when considering that around the same time “the theory of organic evolution had come into existence. The general tenor of the theory recognizes that all organisms come from some elemental germ common to all species” (S. Hu, *The Development* 121). Paradoxes like “the frog has a tail” and “a dog may be a sheep” start to make sense as considerations of animals’ overlapping origins. As Hu writes, “we are unable to say whether these paradoxes were the precursor or merely an echo of the theory of organic evolution” (S. Hu, *The Development* 122). What can be said is that “they deal with the problem of potentiality and actuality” that was at the forefront of considerations in an age of “biological speculations” (S. Hu, *The Development* 122). Though beneficial in the exploration of truth, the paradoxes obscured the logical theories of Neo-Mohism, attracted ridicule to the school, and played a role in the downfall of the school (S. Hu, *The Development* 129).

Conclusion

Hu wanted reform to happen gradually. He did not want wholesale Westernization, nor did he want China to stubbornly cling to outmoded tradition. He believed in the ability of practical reasoning and procedural science to bring about beneficial change, even if the benefits were not immediately visible. These characteristics form the general tenor of the pragmatic mind Hu hoped to develop. Hu points to the elements in China’s traditional thought that would be constructive additions to a native

model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation. Beyond the intellectual traditions discussed in this essay, Hu also takes up the logic of law presented by the legalists Han Fei and Li Si, both of which have made worthy contributions to the model of argumentation but could not be discussed in this essay due to restraints on space. Hu also endeavored to add various contributions from later installments of the foundational philosophies, like Neo-Mohism and Neo-Confucianism.

Hu Shi embraced what we understand as rhetorical pragmatism in his attention to the necessity of critical doubt, his focus on context and practical consequences, both immediate and far-reaching, and an appreciation of the value of history in informing judgments on present-day problems. From Deng Xi, he drew the value of rebellion against traditional hierarchy to put the power of argumentation in the hands of the people. From Laozi, he drew the spirit of courageous doubt. From Confucius, Mozi, the Neo-Mohist and Neo-Confucian schools, Hu drew the following characteristics: an understanding that naming is important but names are flexible and based on consequences, an understanding of conduct as the completion of knowledge, the methodical procurement of knowledge, social institutions and organizations informed by knowledge, and an appreciation of the role education plays in nurturing the scientific mind. While Hu's project was certainly informed by reflections on the Western logical tradition, the model of rhetorical pragmatic argumentation advanced in *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China* is built from characteristics that originated in the Chinese intellectual tradition.

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