

2012

China's 20th century Sophist: analysis of Hu Shi's ethics, logic, and pragmatism

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CHINA'S 20TH CENTURY SOPHIST:
ANALYSIS OF HU SHI'S ETHICS, LOGIC, AND PRAGMATISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by
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May 2012

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Acknowledgements

I owe a great deal of thanks to Nathan Crick, my mentor and friend. Thank you for your patience and resolve. Thank you for leading by your example. Most of all, I want to thank you for always getting excited too.

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Abstract

This is a study of the theory of critical Sophistic logic that underwrote Hu Shi's involvement in China's 20th century reform period known as the Chinese Renaissance. Hu Shi was a radical liberal reformer who played a leading role in the New Culture Movement. He pursued a two-pronged project for cultural reform. One side of the reform was focused on developing a critical pragmatic logical theory. This side was aimed at the intellectual class and appealed to the heritage of the Confucian literati. The other side of the reform was focused on lifting the people's vernacular language from vulgarity to serve as the foundation for an aesthetically developed and nationally shared knowledge. The national language and body of knowledge would equip the common people with tools for communicating with one another to share experiences and coordinate judgments about situations of public contingency. This side of the reform appealed to the heritage of the oral tradition. Hu Shi conceived of the two sides of the reform in coordination. They would bridge the traditional divide between the intellectual and common class and unify the nation in critical rhetorical language. Hu developed the Literary Revolution to pursue goals on both sides of the reform. It would make the vernacular language the national language by elevating its status and expanding the accessibility of written materials. He wanted to make cultural exposure and education common for all. With education and literacy, the people could gain a sense of the future, a body of shared experiences, and the ability to address the most pressing problems of the day.

Introduction ♦ Hu Shi (胡适), “Optimist in the Sea of Pessimism”

“When the first volleys of sentimental fire are over...”

Students swarmed the streets of Peking on May 4, 1919 to air their frustration over Japan’s successful claim to territory at the Paris Peace Conference and the Chinese Nationalist government’s submissive acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles.¹ They had organized on the pages of student run periodicals, the likes of which played a fundamental role in the spread of radical ideas during the Chinese Renaissance. In 1919 alone, approximately four hundred new student publications appeared across the nation. They were written in *pai hua*, the spoken vernacular language that was popularized by Hu Shi, leader of the Literary Revolution.² One of the earlier radical student publications, *The New Youth*, is particularly to thank for spreading Hu Shi’s ideas and advancing him as a major figure in China’s New Culture Movement.³ *The New Youth* ran an article that Hu wrote while he was in America, where he studied at Cornell University for his B.A. and one year of graduate study (1910-1914), and then earned his Ph.D. under the advisement of John Dewey at Columbia University (1914-1917). Hu’s article was called “Tentative Proposals for the Improvement of Literature.” Hu’s tentative proposals were given a much more radical bent by the support of the journal’s editor, who interpreted the proposals as the makings of a “literary revolution,” thus christening Hu’s role as father of the Literary Revolution.⁴ After this fervent show of support, *The New Youth* adopted much of Hu’s platform for its operative policies.

Primary among the adopted guidelines was Hu’s contention that Chinese intellectuals leave politics alone to instead concentrate on nonpolitical cultural and intellectual transformation. From 1917 to 1919 the journal upheld this sentiment.⁵ In 1919, however, the journal was caught in the crosshairs of competing concerns between reform and revolution. Jerome Grieder explains in his study of Hu Shi and Liberalism during the Chinese Renaissance, “1919 marked a turning point that made such a preoccupation with literary and cultural concerns appear to many only peripheral to the vital issues of the movement.”⁶ The liberal reformers agreed that China had so far failed in achieving a republican government and that any attempt at responsible government was continuously marred by warlords, preservationist monarchists, and militaristic factions. They also agreed that China needed cultural and intellectual rejuvenation and the means of standing unaided in the modern world. The contention was essentially about sequence; which should come first, political or social reform? Hu was “convinced that intellectual and cultural regeneration must take precedence over political reform.”⁷ His view of political versus nonpolitical activity is a bit different from how readers might first think of it. The “political,” for Hu, referred to interactions with established political people, which, at that time, included the “rascals” of “warlord governments” and “corrupt regimes.”⁸ The “nonpolitical” realm included nonpolitical people, such as students and merchants.

The activities of nonpolitical people, like students and merchants, included those contemporary readers will likely associate with democracy, “demonstrations and street orations and the boycott.”⁹ For Hu, these activities are “non-political forces.” This is an especially important distinction to bear in mind throughout this study. Up until this point, China had no experience with democracy as a political system. However, Hu pointed out that China did have experience with some fundamental characteristics of democratic thought. He sought to see China through the natural development of democracy from these ancient intellectual origins.

Hu regarded democracy... less as a concrete system of political institutions than as a state of mind conducive to the maintenance of a particular social condition. It followed

logically that the creation of a democratic society would be essentially an intellectual rather than a political accomplishment.¹⁰

Hu had mixed feelings about the nonpolitical forces acting in 1919. Initially after the student movements, when hundreds of student periodicals that adhered to the principles of liberal reform sprung up around the nation, he applauded the students' efforts. He said that the events of 1919 had imparted a "new lesson," that activities like these could be "democratizing forces," "new channels of activity... to rebuild a new foundation for Chinese democracy."¹¹ Later in his life, however, "Hu described the May Fourth movement as 'a most unwelcome interruption' of the work initiated in 1917 and 1918, a blow from which the New Culture movement never fully recovered."¹² This is largely due to the fact that nonpolitical forces, even when they seem to arise from new intellectual awareness, can be employed for antagonistic political ends, thus making for a predicament Hu faced time and time again throughout his career.

A good amount of Hu's involvement in the New Culture Movement was spent trying to talk fellow radicals off of the revolutionary path in favor of a tempered, gradual reform. This was a difficult task for Hu because as Grieder writes, he lived in "an era when revolutionary agitation engulfed the streets of China's cities and filtered even into the narrow alleys of hinterland villages."¹³ Anger had been brewing in China for a long time. It was rooted in subjugation at the hands of foreigners like the Manchu dynasty, the British Opium trade, and Japanese exploitation of China's political corruption and national resources. Further stoked by the Paris Peace Conference and Treaty of Versailles, "the students of Peking took to the streets on May 4 to vent their anger."¹⁴ United in this way, they "realized for the first time their power as a political force."¹⁵ After this experience, many liberal intellectuals did not want to give up this feeling of power, or political might, in favor of Hu's gradual approach to intellectual and cultural reform. However, Hu maintained that without adequate intellectual grounding, political might could be easily co-opted and directed toward unintended or unbeneficial ends. He believed "that new social values must supersede the old before a satisfactory political settlement could be effected."¹⁶ China's traditional society was grounded in an intellectual and cultural system that was too strong to simply give way following the addition of something new. A new political system had to follow from the firm establishment of an entire system of thought, culture, and values.

This dissertation is a study of the theory of critical Sophistic logic that underwrote Hu Shi's involvement in the 20th century reform movement known as the Chinese Renaissance. It traces the path by which Hu Shi attempted to forge this new political system through reforms in logic, aesthetics, and public intellectual culture in China. Chapter one is a preliminary treatment of the early social and political conditions that shaped Chinese rhetoric leading up to the twentieth century. Chapter two surveys China's ancient intellectual traditions of humanism and rationalism beginning with the "Socratic Tradition of Confucius," which he describes as "the tradition of free discussion, criticism, and intellectual honesty," the original "spirit of courageous doubt" in the Taoist's early naturalistic conceptions of the universe, and the practical advance of theories of logic in neo-Mohism. Hu holds the reclamation of these traditions as most necessary for China's transition into the modern world. Each major tradition is addressed with regard to the resources it provided for confronting the contemporary predicament, the limitations of the tradition in light of Hu's ambitions for cultural reform, and the choices he made to practically appropriate the tradition or to leave it behind. Chapter three looks at the aims of Hu's literary revolution, such as the expanded availability of all literature written in vernacular and the creation of new progressive works to introduce and accustom people to progressive cultural and

scientific ideas, and thus develop a shared logical consciousness among the people. Here I discuss Hu's vision for the formulation of a communicative literary moral figure that would speak to the people in their own language and consolidate rapid, and sometimes drastic, social changes into a stable cultural whole.

Trained Incapacities

Perhaps the most daunting challenge Hu faced was overcoming the centuries-old Confucian paternalism that had been indoctrinated into the elite. During the Republican Period it was carried forward and translated into terms of nationalism and civic duty. Jan Kiely explains how Nie Qijie, a Shanghai industrialist and philanthropist, who promoted the spread of traditional morality books in the early twentieth century, made this cognitive transition.

Like many public moralists of the day, Nie considered his moralism to be consistent with the Confucian gentleman's duty... Like his father, he also saw this enterprise as serving the modern nation. But he now added the notion that the moral education of the masses would foster commitment to civic duties as an expression of popular sovereignty.¹⁷

If taken in reverse, the twentieth century translation of traditional morality into national sovereignty is reminiscent of the Han period amplification of hierarchal boundaries. The hierarchy was used to strictly separate people by their level authority in the family home or in the state. The primary focus of this hierarchy was maintaining the reverence people of the lower ranks held for people of the higher ranks. Amplification of hierarchal boundaries came at the expense of the classic Confucian principle of mutuality, which focused on reciprocal lines of responsibility. The lower ranks had duties to fulfill for the higher ranks and the higher ranks had duties to fulfill for the lower ranks. The twentieth century translation of morality books into printed popular literature revived the spirit of mutuality as a nationalistic impulse toward moral self-cultivation. Kiely's description of moralist Nie Qijie helps illustrate the similarity.

Of course, he was quite clear that these moral citizens would have to subordinate their private interest to the interest of state, society and the dominant moral culture and that the way to achieve this was through practices of moral self-cultivation.¹⁸

This translation is consistent with a well-known legacy of the Chinese philosophical tradition, that is, to subsume new thoughts into the traditional culture.

Hu's reform was hampered by the traditional culture's capacity to maintain cultural consistency. The ability was developed in response to the need for socio-political unification across a vast land. It was a process of translating new and different influences into the old philosophical structure, thus negating the disruptive potential of the new thoughts. Hu Shi offers an example of this process explaining that Taoism was essentially a reassertion of the old Sinitic religion disguised along the lines of the foreign Buddhist influences it sought to subsume.¹⁹ However, this capacity to maintain cultural consistency became a "trained incapacity" during the twentieth century, when new needs faced off against an old culture.

By subsuming or altering new thought, Hu explained, traditional philosophy does not allow the people to confront and adequately deal with new problems; the people are suffering because of the resistance to change inlaid in their culture. A "trained incapacity" is explained by Kenneth Burke as a tendency in thought or action that developed as a capability, or "capacity," but is no longer beneficial in light of new and different conditions. Rather, as a "trained incapacity," the thought or action can actually be harmful to the thinker or actor.²⁰ The Republican Period was wrought with tension between the Traditionalists, who saw the nation's future in revival of traditional morality, and the Leftists, who imagined a modern China as very

similar to the modern west. Hu maintained that both groups were reactionaries; neither side was willing to consider any alternative to what they proposed, and as Hu understood things, both sides had selected a faulty set of means.

Hu's rhetorical predicament revolved around the need for appropriate means-selection. A "trained incapacity," As Burke says, is a matter of the measures you will take or the tools you will put in your toolkit. In other words, it is a "matter of means-selecting."²¹ There are a variety of things that prevent people from selecting adequate means, including means selected and carried forward from the past, intellectual ability, and cultural attitudes.²² Hu wanted to create an intellectual space in the spirit of scientific inquiry. An idea should neither be accepted nor rejected on the basis of its origin or professed moral aptitude. Rather, domestic and foreign ideas should be judged on equal footing according to their practical merit within a particular situation of need.

Every step of Hu's project was directed toward overcoming some trained incapacity that came attached to a faulty selection of means. Hu's literary revolution was intended to confront the impenetrability of the classical language for the benefit of the common people. In accord with the central focus of ancient and imperial Chinese intellectualism, the language that could open the passageway between man and the heavens was fortified and ornamented in procedure and style no less than one would expect the citadel of a great city to be physically buttressed and adorned. According to Walter Ong, it was also constructed in much the same way, artificially as an official language.²³ Its inaccessibility is widely understood. David Ze, who employs Ong's paradigm to study Chinese literacy, notes that "learning the classical style was not very different from learning a foreign language... [it was] drastically different from oral language."²⁴ Jack Goody explains the inaccessibility of the classical language with his 1987 argument on "restricted literacy," which explains how the oral characteristics of partially literate societies can "be ideologically employed by imperial rulers for the consolidation of central control."²⁵ Restricted literacy, Goody writes, is "literacy restricted by factors other than the technique of writing itself."²⁶

Hu also worked to free the intellectual-elite from the bounds of their own cultural superiority. The firm divide between the two strata of society kept the intellectual-elite, who might have otherwise given the people the tools they needed to effectively confront modern challenges, too separate from the experiences of the common people to fully understand the trials faced by the common people or the living philosophy that guided them. Likewise, the future was uncertain for the elite class following the abolition of the civil service examination system. As Wang Ke-wen writes, "with the collapse of its institutional basis in 1905, the gentry ceased to be an active class. Its various social and political roles were gradually assumed by landlords, bureaucrats, merchants, or local bullies, in the twentieth century."²⁷ Without the examination system, a hole was left in Chinese society and which created panic for young people who now saw no clear means of social or political advancement. Hu Shi sought to preserve this divide; he asked intellectuals to abstain from dealing with the established political system and political people, to instead help develop the cultural groundwork capable of giving rise to an alternative, responsible system of government.

A Legacy for Modern Times

Hu Shi steps into the foreground of China's reform in the first half of China's 20th century, when three of the most foundational movements in the making of modern Chinese thought and political communication rose to prominence. Wing-Tsit Chan records these

foundational movements as follows: Western philosophy was introduced, the Confucian tradition lost its dominance, and alternative forms of traditional Chinese philosophy were resurrected.²⁸ For all three of these changes, Hu Shi played a primary role. The ambassador of American pragmatism to China, Hu's reform ambitions were one of four distinct nationalistic impulses shaping China's rhetorical climate during the early 1900s. The others included: the Nationalist movement as it was led and implemented by Sun Yat-sen, anti-Manchu nationalism, and nationalistic sentiment in its more standard anti-Western-imperialist variation.

Hu's struggle in the reform movement was complicated by clashing reform factions and an increasingly hostile external environment of international war and imperialistic aggression by Japan and the West. Changes in Chinese leadership did little to quell the stress. By the time the Republic of China was officially established, General Yuan Shikai had already gained control of China's strongest military force, the Beiyang Army. Shortly thereafter, he gained legal control in Beijing. Acting as president, Yuan's rule became increasingly more autocratic, and by the time World War II broke out, he had sabotaged the parliament and had allowed political divisions to subsume whatever cohesiveness had been remaining in political leadership until that point. Even Huang Hsing, the first commander-in-chief of the Republican Party, who had worked to achieve the initial revolution with Sun Yat-sen, began questioning the future of Chinese Republicanism. Furthermore, the competition between reformers was compounded by the power aspirations of former elites, as well as Russian Cominterns, spreading the ideas of Communism. Sun Yat-sen would take office again, but only with the help of the Cominterns, and for which he had to accept Chinese Communist Party members into the Guomindang. In 1916 China fell into a new Warlord Era, thus creating the prime conditions for communist aspirations to take root. Yet, even after Mao's revolution, Hu struggled on, continuing his work in whatever capacity he could.

The political climate of the reform years was a disorderly array of competing elite, intellectual, and military powers in which the voice of the peasant class was virtually non-existent. The nation's political future rested on altering the form and medium of political communication. Advancing forward under the guidance of American pragmatism, Hu held public participation as fundamental to any reform capable of withstanding the political tumult of the day. He considered public participation to include: who had access to language and exchange, how they expressed themselves, what resources they had to draw upon for judgment, and in what forum they could put their ideas before one another. In this sense, Hu's battle was both theoretical and practical. Theoretically he would need to engage the philosophical changes already at play to advance the movement away from the Confucian political model. As Hu notes of the Chinese Renaissance movement at large, "Its leaders [including Hu] know what they want, and they know what they must destroy in order to achieve what they want."²⁹ Once the Confucian base was dismantled, people need to be given direction and the tools to fill the newly acquired intellectual and cultural space. Hu explains they would need "a new outlook on life which shall free them from the shackles of tradition and make them feel at home in the new world and its new civilization."³⁰

On the practical end, he would need to direct this shift toward democratic forms of judgment, communication, and behavior. Such direction would entail a pedagogical methodology to train the public in the practice of democratic participation. Hu found his method in the Sophistic spirit and rhetorical arts. They would be the vehicles and resources for public communication. Hu describes the goals of movement leaders in this way:

They want a new language, a new literature, a new outlook on life and society, and a new scholarship. They want a new language, not only as an effective instrumentality for

popular education, but also as the effective medium for the development of the literature of a new China. They want a literature that shall be written in the living tongue of a living people and shall be capable of expressing the real feelings, thoughts, inspirations, and aspirations of a growing nation.³¹

Hu wanted to change the ordinary practices of Chinese people. To do this, he formulated the Literary Revolution within the larger movement. It was intended to be a renaissance of Chinese language, literature, and philosophy; freeing Chinese thought from its classic bonds and giving it new voice in the Chinese people's everyday life experiences with ethics, writing, style, and exposure to alternative forms of literature. Yet, all these changes would be predicated on the consistent use of a living vernacular.

Hu remains a pinnacle figure in contemporary studies of rhetoric because his contributions are important to the studies of both the western rhetorical tradition and the development of Chinese rhetoric. Hu lived between the Chinese and Western cultures, old and new. In many ways, Hu was constantly teetering on the crux of something new: Old and new forms of language, old and new forms of social dynamics, old and new developments in thought, etc... Hu's ability to help the culture make these transitions is what qualifies him as a practitioner of the rhetorical arts. Artists of all kinds, such as rhetors, literary artists, and visual artists, are the most significant players in the Literary Revolution. It is the artist who merges modern forms of thought with the daily life experiences of the common people.³² It is also the artist who helps the audience move between particular points of perception and the larger shared social experience to invent strategies of cultural change that are effective for both the individual and the society.³³

Hu's Renaissance stands out for its foundation in Chinese tradition. Rather than looking to import Western methods, as many intellectual reformers did at that time, Hu searched for the source material of these methods within China's own ancient development of logic and scientific thought so they might develop organically from within China, rather than stand at odds with Chinese understanding as a foreign importation. Hu based his exploration of ancient Chinese logic on the metaphor of the ancient Greek Sophistic character as the modern Chinese public intellectual capable of seeing China through that period of uncertainty to China's modern age.

The conscious element in this movement is the result of long contact with the people and civilization of the West. It is only through contact and comparison that the relative value or worthlessness of the various cultural elements can be clearly and critically seen and understood... Contact with strange civilizations brings new standards of value with which the native culture is re-examined and re-evaluated, and conscious reformation and regeneration are the natural outcome of such transvaluation of values. Without the benefit of an intimate contact with the civilization of the West, there could not be the Chinese Renaissance.³⁴

Guided by the Sophist metaphor, Hu sought to recover a certain love of language, education, experimental thought and practice that was advantageous for democratic practice and organic to China. Hu recognized that waiting in China's past were the key elements needed for long lasting political and cultural change; they needed only to be recovered. By highlighting an appropriate base, new forms of political thought, public judgment, public communication, and thus, political organization could follow.

Consistent with John Dewey's democratic philosophy, Hu viewed education as the first step in changing the standard of public participation. As he said in a lecture:

Let me first state the problem for which the literary revolution offers the solution. The problem was first seen by all early reformers as the problem of finding a suitable language which could serve as an effective means of educating the vast millions of children and of illiterate adults. They admitted that the classical language which was difficult to write and to learn, and for thousands of years incapable of being spoken or verbally understood-was not suited for the education of children and the masses. But they never thought of giving up the classical language, in which was written and preserved all the cultural tradition of the race.³⁵

Hu wanted a new model of intellectual leaders, people capable of forming and transforming the public through the action of ideas in practice.

In this project, that new model of an individual leader is referred to as China's new Sophist, marked by the following characteristics: an understanding of opportunity (*kairos*), courage, wisdom, a critical approach, creativity, tolerance, self-sufficiency, and eloquence. The new Sophist would engage rhetoric to unite the people in confrontation of the era's most pressing problems. Hu's promotion of the new Sophist via the Literary Revolution can be viewed as analogous to the social function the new Sophist was intended to play. In many ways, Hu was the embodiment of China's modern public intellectual who is propelled by the Sophistic spirit to rhetorically engage the situation confronting him.

Apart from Hu's many published academic and artistic works, he has also held multiple positions of great academic and social influence. After he finished his studies in America, Hu returned to China and became a professor at the prestigious Peking University. In 1945 he became the chancellor of Peking University. He served as the Nationalist government's ambassador to Washington from 1938 to 1942. Once the Communists came to power, he returned to America once again. In 1957 he was Nationalist China's representative to the United Nations. He spent the remainder of his life in Taiwan, where he presided over the Academia Sinica until his death in 1962 at age seventy-one.

The legacy of Hu and his project says a lot about the power of perspective and imagination. Daily, these things translate into the choices individuals make. One can better appreciate the difference cultural foundations like the perspective of literacy and the kind of imagination that is encouraged by causal logic can when considering how just a small difference in attitude can set two people of the same culture down drastically different paths.

With regard to Chinese rhetoric, I mostly see my role with this dissertation and future projects, as helping to restore the legacy of Hu Shi. His legacy remains relevant because China of today and China of Hu's time share much in common. However, work must be done to reclaim Hu's legacy from the Communist and Marxist campaigns to purge Hu's influence from Chinese intellectual life in the lead up to the Chinese Revolution. Just a few years before his death, Hu returned to Columbia University to record his oral history. He says that his personal endeavor can be summarized according to the nine points that the Marxists and Communists worked hardest to purge.

1. His philosophical ideas.
2. His political ideas.
3. His historical point of view.
4. His ideas on literature.
5. His idea of history or the history of philosophy.
6. His idea of the history of Chinese literature.

7. His idea on the place and function of evidential research in the study of history and classical literature. Classical literature, he said, includes anything written before the revolution including great novels written in the vulgar tongue.

8-9. The last two points are specific to the Chinese novel Dream of the Red Chamber. Hu says the purge of his ideas began with this novel, because “I was supposed to be a great authority on that novel.”³⁶

He concludes the list saying: “This list gives me the idea that even today the Communists think that I have done some work and have left ‘poison’ in each of the first seven theories.”³⁷ This study is part of the work to restore Hu’s thought to its original form, interpretation, and intention.

For Western rhetoric, Hu’s contributions are relevant to many contemporary discussions. In particular, relevance can be seen with educational initiatives to promote study of classical theorists and theories from a modern point of perspective and to better integrate disciplines and emphases of study, to better explore and utilize the practices in comparison. In the oral history, Hu recounts the ambitions he shared with other liberal reformers for a new education. He says:

We propose to remedy the old fundamental defect of the dearth of comparative material from the outside. Since this is outside the narrow scope of classical studies, we asked those in the University to resort to all kinds of reference material, all forms of comparative studies.³⁸

Hu also advanced a genetic study of history that shares much in common with comprehensive contemporary approaches to history. He explains:

After the so-called May Fourth Movement... It was time for the University professors...

To settle down on one aspect in which they, as scholars, could play their role, namely, the movement for systematic investigation of the whole cultural history of China.³⁹

Hu attributed democratic abilities of thought, communication, and judgment to the knowledge begot by these characteristics of a new education: expansive referential materials for comparative studies and systematic historical investigations.

This is a study of Hu Shi’s attempt to direct criticism by rooting it in democratic forms of intelligence and experimentalism. Twentieth century China was a conflagration of diversity. Nationalism pulsed with intense variation, sustainable political action was stalemated by autocratic ambitions and public disfranchisement, and the asynchrony of intellectual restlessness exasperated political discontent. Criticism abounded, but it was mostly criticism of the undirected and unrestrained variety. This project offers rhetorical studies a genealogy of criticism in modern China, as it was introduced, expanded, and then altered. Seen as a function of historical continuity, this project offers Chinese communication studies an investigation of the Western tradition of criticism as it functioned according to Hu’s aspirations, as well as the competitive space it occupied in China’s complex rhetorical environment circa 1920. My research includes primary data such as Hu Shi’s dissertation under John Dewey, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, *The Haskell Lectures* delivered by Hu Shi in 1933, *The Chinese Renaissance*, *A Collection of Hu Shih’s English Writings*, and a variety of other essays Hu Shi has published in English, or that were later translated into English by other people.

For Hu, the Western tradition was intended to operate only as a guide, directing a return to ancient China’s own logic of “criticism,” so as to restore its logical origin as the basis for a distinctly Chinese reform. As intellectual competition, the Western tradition operated much differently, at times being used as the very sustenance of Hu’s rivals. Beyond variety, much of the time’s turmoil can be attributed to the instability that naturally accompanies transition. Views

regarding the benefit or threat of external ideas and materials were changing, as was the selection of who would be named heretical in the face of nationalistic sentiment and which branch of competition had the primacy of naming them; changes which, at some point in time, led to the coalescence of nationalism, thus resulting in the nation's preparation for self-seclusion and what Dewey would call a fiction of national interests, of which logical criticism was a casualty.⁴⁰ Hu was not willing to make this compromise; he wanted a nation that could not only fight for itself, but could also think for itself while creating an art and culture that could inspire the young generation of a new age.

End Notes

¹ Jerome B. Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 176.

² Hu Shih, "Intellectual China in 1919," *The Chinese Social and Political Review* 4, no. 4. (1919), pp. 345-355, in *Hu Shih Yingwen Wencun* (胡適英文文存, A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings). Compiled by Chih-P'ing Chou (周質平). 3 vols. (Taipei: Yuanliu chuban, 1995), 110.

³ Grieder, 76.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 176.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 175.

⁸ Ibid., 178.

⁹ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 114.

¹⁰ Grieder, 178.

¹¹ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 113-14.

¹² Grieder, 176-77.

¹³ Ibid., 175-76.

¹⁴ Ibid., 176.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 175.

¹⁷ Jan Kiely, "Shanghai Public Moralism Nie Qijie and Morality Book Publication Projects in Republican China," *Twentieth-Century China*, Volume 36, No. 1, (Maney Publishing, 2011), 14.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures 1933* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 86.

²⁰ Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd Ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 7.

²¹ Ibid., 10. “The problems of existence do not have one fixed unchanging character, like the label on the bottle. They are open to many interpretations—and these interpretations in turn influence our selection of means.”

²² Ibid.

²³ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (NY: Routledge, 2002), 33.

²⁴ David Ze, “Walter Ong's Paradigm and Chinese Literacy,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 20, no. 4 (1995): accessed September 30, 2011, <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/894/800>. Accessed 9/30/11.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 198. He identifies particular characteristics that are common to societies of restricted literacy, all of which are consistent with China, such as “family schools... long years of textual learning (between 12 and 24 years of age), [and] the persistence of oral modes of instruction.” (p. 12)

²⁷ Wang Ke-wen, *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, (Wang Ke-wen, 1998), 67.

²⁸ Wing-Tsit Chan, “Hu Shih and Chinese Philosophy.” *Philosophy East and West* 6, no. 1, (1956).

²⁹ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 65. This is very similar to McLuhan’s understanding of the artist as “the man in any field, scientific or humanistic, who grasps the implications of his actions and of new knowledge in his own time. He is the man of integral awareness.”

³³ Ibid., 243. Whereas “non-artists always look at the present through the spectacles of the preceding age,” reformers understood the artists to be the members of society that “know that they are engaged in making live models of situations that have not yet matured in the society at large.”

³⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hu Shih, “Reminiscences of Shih Hu: Oral History, 1958,” in *Chinese Oral History Project*, interviewed by Te-kong Tong. (New York: Columbia University, 1976), 226. Page numbers for this resource are based on what I personally counted when reading the oral history microfiche transcript. I may have omitted some of the preliminary pages.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 223.

³⁹ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁰ John Dewey, *The Later Works of John Dewey, Volume 3, 1925 - 1953: 1927-1928, Essays, Reviews, Miscellany, and "Impressions of Soviet Russia"* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 155.

**Additional note: First Subheading quoted from p. 115 in collection "Intellectual China in 1919"

Chapter One ♦ History and Problems

Greek Analogy

The ancient Greek rhetorical tradition provided Hu Shi with an outline of how logical and investigative attitudes developed in the West. Hu saw the western tradition as reference material that could inform judgments about China's own intellectual course. He did not see it as a blueprint for developing these attitudes in China, nor did he see the western outline as entirely fit to the Chinese circumstance. Rather, Hu adopted the outline in much the same way that architects provisionally adopt the generic principles of structurally sound buildings. They are guidelines based on previous experiences that always come attached to caveats: no two buildings are constructed atop exactly similar ground, there is a great deal of variation between the integrity of natural materials, each construction team is comprised by the skills and setbacks of its members, and even atmospheric variations like humidity can substantially affect the course of events. The Greek outline was a resource for Hu and it can be a resource for contemporary western rhetorical scholars who are trying to gain access to the burgeoning field of Chinese rhetoric.

One way for Western scholars to apprehend Chinese traditions in rhetoric is by identifying places of parallel between the origins of rhetoric in ancient Greece and the origins of rhetoric in ancient China and how these origins account for respective developments in rhetorical culture. Differences in communication are rooted in differences of culture, and differences of culture extend all the way back to the curvatures of the earth we settle on. Therefore, to address the concerns of communication we must begin by understanding their historical foundations. We can start by looking at the basic political economy of China, i.e. where did people create communities, what did they eat, how did they travel, what brought excitement, and what were the causes of concern?

The rise of Crete and Greece from early Mesopotamia brings the contrasting rise of China, or the Middle Kingdom, 中国 (Zhōngguó), into sharp focus. Both the Greek and Chinese civilizations developed when dispersed communities congealed under a single, central authority. There can be no denying Sarah Pomeroy's assertion that the movement, "from a loose community of towns and villages into a centralized state changed the course of human history."¹ However, the process of centralization happened differently in China than it did in Greece. The first upsurges of western civilization followed from the formation of states. Agricultural advancements drew people into large groups around fertile ground. Towns became cities and cities continued to grow larger and larger. "In the fertile irrigated areas, the largest and most powerful city dominated the towns and villages and drew them into a single political unit, administered from the capital."² People literally came together.

The social conditions in Greece led to the development of the rhetorical arts. The city-states were individual political units. Each had its own agricultural resources and social stratification. As separate entities, the Greek city-states fought for dominance over one another. As Pomeroy notes, that is "the natural reflex of states that border on one another."³ The social hierarchy took shape, in part, according to these shows of domination. "A powerful city-state would intimidate and conquer its weaker neighbors, becoming the capital city. Its ruler would then become the great king over a number of vassal states."⁴ The formation of cities translated into great advancements in such things as artistry and craftsmanship, writing, and architecture.⁵ In western city-states, the products of intellectual and technological advancements were put to work in support of the social hierarchy. The conquerors capitalized on the labor of the conquered

to magnify their wealth. The toil of the conquered kept them subject to their state and new technologies, like metallurgy, reinforced the connection between the physically dominant and wealthy class, due to the effectiveness of bronze weaponry and the cost of bronze respectively.

Taking the Greek for Granted

The problem of using this analogy as an in-road to Chinese culture and rhetoric is the propensity of western scholars to take the Greek characteristics for granted. There is a particular political development in each of the ancient civilizations, Greece and China, which becomes decisive in the development of that civilization and sends them down divergent paths. For the Greeks, it was the development of the *polis* and cultivation of democracy. For the Chinese, it was consolidation of the entire Middle Kingdom under a single source of power known as the Mandate of Heaven.

Just as scholars of western rhetoric have realized the significance of the social and political conditions of ancient Greece to the development of rhetorical traditions, the same kind of intelligent cultural access is necessary to understand the rhetorical traditions of a different and distinct civilization. This kind of intelligent cultural access comes from knowledge about the historical and political conditions that put people into contact with each other in communities and grouped people according to shared interests. The multiple localities of Greece spurred on the development of rhetoric because it encouraged wagers of power between small individual units. Rhetoric developed differently in China. Histories like *China: A New History* by John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman provide the groundwork for western scholars interested in the historical conditions behind cultural development. However, they do not provide adequate cultural access for addressing the concerns of communication scholars.

Viewed as a vast communicative land tied together by human interactions based in cultural traditions of oral communities, communities of restricted literacy, and morally and ritually based political ethics, it is easy to see the great rhetorical significance of China. In some instances these traditions are uniquely Chinese, some traditions are common to Asia, and still, there are some traditions in China with similarities to the traditions developed on the other side of the globe under seemingly very different social and political conditions. In these similarities, scholars of rhetoric have the opportunity to learn about the aspects of human communication that are perhaps universal. Insight into differences and similarities between Chinese and Greek rhetorical traditions also provides scholars of western rhetoric with a new perspective from which to observe and approach their own culture. For a long time a Euro-centric paradigm has dominated the field of communication scholarship. I second Guo-Ming Chen's advocacy for multicultural co-equality in communication scholarship.⁶ The insight one can gain about his/her own culture via the perspective of another culture is, I believe, foundational to co-equality between an Asiatic paradigm and a Euro-centric paradigm. The process of viewing one's own cultural traditions from another's cultural perspective is uniquely capable of developing the researcher's respect for the intricacies and special qualities of each culture's traditions.

Cultural Accessibility

If we do not take the characteristics of Greek culture for granted when investigating the social and political conditions that directed China's rhetorical development, the Greek analogy can be a significant resource for those places where authentic overlap exists. Hu Shi drew from this resource to develop his plan for China's cultural reform. He used comparisons and contrasts

between ancient China and ancient Greece to gain new insight into China's intellectual legacy. He was particularly drawn to incidents of overlap.

Readers might better understand Hu Shi's project of studying ancient China with perspective from ancient Greece if they think of his approach in terms similar to Tocqueville's introduction of America to Europe. Tocqueville addressed the issue of cultural inaccessibility by introducing America to Europeans according to America's foundational values. He differentiated the New World from its ancestral European countries by highlighting America's single founding principle, democracy. He set the democratic principle apart from the others it still contended with in the old European societies, and thus, set America apart from the old world where it could be considered on its own terms, according to the values of its founders and the inspiration of its people.

This introduction of America confronted the difficulty of one culture trying to gain intelligent access to another culture. Tocqueville understood that such access requires historical insight into the intellectual and spiritual motivations of another culture. It did not surprise him that democracy looked different in America, because he knew that un-tempered and unencumbered as it was in America, democracy would necessarily be different. Rather than being reshaped or altered by collision with competing principles, American democracy shaped everything else. From all the political and social beliefs of Europe, it was the democratic principle alone that American emigrants took with them; and they laid it as the bedrock of the government, economy, and civil society. Thus, Tocqueville writes, "It has there been able to spread in perfect freedom and peaceably to determine the character of the laws by influencing the manners of the country."⁷ He saw this principle as inseparable from the New World, but different as it was, he maintained that by understanding how it functioned where the democratic revolution was "a fact already accomplished," Europeans would better understand the revolutions happening at home.⁸

Rhetoricians still need a Tocqueville to bring China's political and rhetorical traditions within this kind of intelligible reach. Early on in his academic life, Hu Shi demonstrated a great ability to see beyond the culture of his own time and national land. When he studied in America he demonstrated the great lengths to which his cultural intelligence could extend. Still, and perhaps most impressive, Hu Shi returned to China to show that his cosmopolitan gains were not at the expense of his sensitivity to the nuances and longevity of national cultural legacies. Yet, Hu's kind of expansive awareness is uncommon and he never tried to play the role of a Tocqueville in total. Rather, Hu followed in the Chinese philosophical tradition and grounded himself in the complimentary theories of pragmatism. From this vantage point, he tried to furnish understanding via a teacher's cultural guidance and practical instruction.

Hu Shi was essentially a reverse Tocqueville; he gleaned insight about his own culture from his understanding of another. He then called on the Greek analogy to teach his fellow academics about the scientific and democratic attitudes that he believed to belong in the modern Chinese civilization.

His role as a teacher is consistent with the prevalence of teaching in China's philosophical tradition. As Mary Garrett points out in her case study of *Pathos* during China's Classical Period, "There is no Classical Chinese term for 'philosophy.'"⁹ The intellectuals of China, who would be considered philosophers in the West, were not the sort who "engaged in a disinterested search for a transcendental Truth."¹⁰ This is a very important aspect of China's intellectual legacy, which Hu Shi made sure to point out to an American audience in 1933. He gives the example of an associated Chinese word, 教 (chiao) [jiào], which means teaching or

system of teaching. This word covers a wide array of teaching, he says. “To teach people to believe in a particular deity is a (chiao) [jiào]; but to teach them how to behave toward other men is also a (chiao) [jiào].”¹¹ Hu played the role of philosopher in the sense of a cultural teacher. His work functioned as a philosophical bridge between the East and West in terms of explaining China’s intellectual tradition to the West and incorporating Western pragmatic and procedural traditions into projects for cultural reform in China. However, as Hu focused on his philosophical roles as teacher and reformer, he tended not to focus on historical translation of the political and economic communicative background. This background is still needed if western scholars are to gain intelligent access to China’s communication culture.

Tocqueville's insight informs our present need in a couple significant ways. First, his intelligent assessment of the American culture and its founding political and rhetorical traditions is a model of the type of cultural exploration needed in order to gain intelligent access to those same traditions in China. No principle capable of inspiring revolutions is free of impurities. In America, Tocqueville writes that he saw “the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions.”¹² This image of democracy, he thought, would give Europeans a sense of both “the evils and the advantages which it brings.”¹³ He explains, “I have examined the safeguards used by the Americans, to direct it, as well as those that they have not adopted, and I have undertaken to point out the factors which enable it to govern society.”¹⁴

Second, Tocqueville explores the principle of equality as a condition attendant to democratic communities. He explains the far reach of effects, expanding to habits, ideas, and customs, and the drastic extent of change, equal to changes in the political world, which the principle of equality has wrought on civil society.¹⁵ The civic conditions that embody the principle of equality are revealed on both ends of their social institution. The characteristics of democratic civil society are, in some circumstances, symptomatic of political principle and, in other circumstances, the preconditions. Tocqueville’s project clearly draws illustrative connections from one characteristic to another and, taken in comparison, reveals aspects of Hu Shi’s cultural insight less clearly articulated in the formulation of his project for cultural reform. For example, Hu understood that society needs to be preconditioned for democratic living and he maintained that democratic life paves the way to an ethical economy, or what he later called a spiritual democracy. Hu had difficulty expressing these conclusions among his contemporary intellectuals in China. His meaning would often get sidetracked in the struggle to adequately define his terms. Or, like the *mélange* of principles that competed with democracy in Tocqueville’s Europe, the concepts Hu drew from the American pragmatic perspective would collide with the array of other Western conceptual imports.

Social and Political Foundations

The most significant characteristics of ancient Chinese society and politics are rooted in China’s agriculture. The rice economy is the bedrock of Chinese society. In his study of peasant life and rural development in the Yangzi Delta, Philip Huang, explains that there is a “presumption of the interdependence of natural environment, social-economic structure, and human agency” that is central to his work.¹⁶ While any one region of China is not suitable to represent all of China, each region individually operates as its own ecosystem comprised of these three interacting elements. Until recent times, these ecosystems were tied together by China’s rice economy, in which an “unfavorable population-land balance” necessitated reliance on rice. In effect, rice played a significant role in the unification of the Chinese civilization because it was one of two major native crops, and Fairbank and Goldman explain, it could yield twice as

much food as the other.¹⁷ Agricultural unification was reliable because until the latter half of the twentieth century, Barker, Herdt, and Rose note, most “Asian rice economies lacked the capacity for technical change that would permit rapid growth in rice production to create the food surpluses needed for economic development.”¹⁸ A food surplus is a necessary precondition of economic development, without which there can be no profit for the producer.¹⁹

The physical construction of society impeded the development of logic just as much as the intellectual construction of society. Max Weber characterizes China as a “familistic state,”²⁰ which is similar to saying it is a clan state, for “the Chinese clan structure is a logical extension of the Chinese type of kinship in which all Sons inherit equally.” The historical situation that Hu contended with was like a structure of building blocks; the political development is related to the intellectual development, which is related to the organizational development, which is related to the land on which it all started.

The entire mass of China needed to operate as a single economic unit due to differences in topography and the pressure of population on the land, which Barker, Herdt, and Rose point out, has historically been most severe in East Asia.²¹ However, economic unification called for political unification, which was no easy task given the difficulties created by the expanse and challenging terrain of the land. Like Greece, warfare was continual in Classical China. Garrett notes that the period of time referred to as Classical China, roughly 500-200 B.C.E., was also called the “Warring States period.”²²

It witnessed nearly-continuous and brutal warfare between many city-states struggling for hegemony, or, less ambitiously, for survival. At the same time a series of dramatic technological and cultural changes, such as growing literacy, rapidly increasing urbanization, the buying and selling of land, introduction of money, and a shift from feudalistic and familial forms of rule to ever-more impersonal, centralized, and bureaucratic government relying on written laws and procedures, all weakened the hold of tradition.²³

Further, many of the problems faced by twentieth century reformers had to do with the fact that extreme measures had to be taken by Chinese rulers to consolidate land and disparate peoples. Inhospitable climates and geographic isolation kept some regions of China relatively autonomous from political centers.

A common mistake is to assume the Chinese and Chinese culture emerged from some single ethnic stock, the origins of which could be linked to a particular place and time. But rather than attesting to such a common source, the evidence points to a pattern in which, over time, many distinct groups were blended and absorbed into the composite that we now think of as the people of the Han-names for the dynasty that constituted one of China's golden eras. This blending an amalgamation would be far less complete in the absence of the dynastic system for which China is famous.²⁴

The tough agricultural traditions of China gave rise to the placement of the Chinese people and the old religious practices that held agricultural and nomadic communities together. Likewise, the spread of these communities over an expanse of various difficult terrains led to a political culture that valued unity above all.

The next portion of this chapter will discuss five of the most significant aspects in the shaping of traditional Chinese culture:

1. The Mandate of Heaven
2. The Old Sinitic Religion
3. Traditions of Stratification and Officialdom

4. Common Orality
5. The Literary Elite

This is by no means a thorough overview of these five characteristics, nor should this brief overview be taken to imply that other characteristics of China's cultural development might not be equally significant, or even more-so, depending on the perspective of another investigation. This overview should be understood to assert the following: These five cultural characteristics are of especial importance to the development of China's intellectual heritage, and as such, are exceedingly significant to Hu's project for China's cultural reform. As we look at these characteristics some interesting angles of Hu's project will become more apparent, such as places where Chinese traditions become helpful to explaining Western traditions in China, places where Western traditions become helpful to explaining Chinese traditions in the West, and conversely, places where Chinese traditions can be explained in China by referencing traditions of the west, and in turn, western traditions can be explaining in the West by referencing traditions of China. After discussing these characteristics, I will give a brief overview of the kind of changes China was facing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which amplified a few important aspects of Hu's rhetorical situation, namely that the western world is aggressive (in might and thought), the old world is not sustainable under the weight of the new world's (systemic) changes, and the risk of China following the path of Japan.

The Mandate of Heaven

Questions about power, who had it and who might take it, were constant between Greek localities. In China, on the other hand, all of the Middle Kingdom was unquestionably subject to the power of Heaven. In essence, the Mandate of Heaven was the very definition of power. It sanctifies the right to rule and appoints the leader, or emperor, as Son of Heaven, the legitimate authority over all people. To understand traditional China, the Mandate must be understood in terms of political unification and structure. The geopolitical factors mentioned earlier, such as population pressure, harsh terrains, and food supply, both necessitated a sturdy political structure, and enabled total unification under the Mandate. An all-encompassing definition of power, similar in kind, would not have been possible in water-based cosmopolitan Greece. Socially, Heaven's Mandate permanently connects the interests of the elite and the common stratum of Chinese society, which otherwise, share very little in common. Two beliefs, at the crux of the Mandate, function as the binding tie. The first of these is the belief that "Heaven is a causal agent that affects the course of human history."²⁵ The Confucian philosophy of the elite and the Taoist philosophy of the common people overlapped at the implementation and honor of Heaven's Mandate. Excepting this, the elite and common stratum were divided by daily belief. The common people were most concerned with a Taoist understanding of the universe, which made the most sense in light of their daily experiences living on the land and at the mercy of the elements. For them, the universe seemed a cruel place and the Taoist notion of non-intervention, which called for living in accord with nature instead of challenging it and incurring a brutal kickback, made sense. "The connection between man and the heavens lies at the core of virtually all ancient Chinese discussions about both society and nature."²⁶ The ability to communicate with heaven meant being able to communicate with the brutal force that accounts for the predominate focus of the old Sinitic religion and Taoism. Zhang Dai-Nian explains, "What is called heaven in ancient China had various implications, but after the middle period of the warring States most thinkers mean mainly *nature* by Heaven."²⁷

The language used by the elite stratum was most concerned with Confucian principles of duty and authority based on the idea that social stability results from the moral rightness of its constituent relations. *Rightness* could be found in the original ideas determined by the sages of old, held within the Confucian Canons, and communicated in the Classical language. The Mandate was conferred to the best of the scholar officials, who through great knowledge of the Classics and great skill with the Classical language, was positioned in closest proximity to heaven. The ruler is the pinnacle of the social hierarchy, and thus, the moral compass for all of society. His directives are passed down through the chain of command, and eventually, reach the common people who day to day live furthest from the throne. For both strata, common and elite alike, the will of the universe, played a directive role.²⁸

The scholar is elevated in society by the second core belief in the principle of mutual reliance. It unites the people under the Mandate by contending that the people need the ruler and the ruler needs the people. For society to function harmoniously the people and the ruler must be faithful to their respective roles; the ruler must be benevolent and the people must be loyal. Benevolent rule begins with a ruler who is fit to be an exemplar. Education in the classics equates to social power because to be “classically literate” is to be literate in the ways of heaven. The common people who strive to live in accord with the heavens rely on the scholar’s insight into the ways of the universe. A scholar gains access to the secrets of nature held within the classical texts in turn, they become indispensable to the common majority who has no access on their own. It was important to lead by example because scholars had difficulty communicating these secrets to the common people.

On the one hand, the common people had no spare time and were mostly illiterate. They had to work the land, and as Fairbank and Goldman aptly put it, the people survived by supplementing “natural recourses with unremitting human endeavor.”²⁹ Many of the common people were also illiterate or merely functionally literate. Until printed materials became widely available, this was no great matter. Once printing became widespread during the Northern Song (960-1126) elites would find it more in their interest to deter literacy than to advance it.³⁰ After all, education begot power, and “printed matter was the life-blood of the expanding Song educated elite.”³¹

According to the Confucian principle of mutuality, the common people should not have considered themselves at any great disadvantage for lack of literacy. The principle of mutuality is the ethical backbone of “rightful” authority; it accounts for a chief inconsistency in Confucian theories of social hierarchy, and yet, a major foundation for the success of these theories in the political realm. The principle of mutuality is a primary element of all Confucian Relations. The principle is most easily understood in Western terms as friendship. Friendship, is one of the five relationships, and is consistent in meaning to the Western notion. Friendship, is “based on neither rank nor age, [it] is the paradigmatic expression of the spirit of mutuality.”³² It is essentially the idea of exchange, or reciprocity. It says that although people fill different social roles, all people benefit, and to some extent rely on, the roles being played by others. The people need a ruler and the ruler needs the people. It is a symbiotic relationship that fits society together like a puzzle each piece holding the other pieces in place. It is only interrupted when the functions of one role or another are not being fulfilled as they are supposed to. Such interruption will either prevent other people from performing their roles adequately, or will create the type of animosity and intention that naturally arises when a few are left to take on more than their share of responsibility.

Mencius, a Confucian philosopher who lived during the Warring States period, was a strong advocate of the duty and responsibility bound relationships derived from the spirit of mutuality.³³ The relationships prescribe standards of interaction based on one person's relation to another within the filial or social unit. They exist between parents and children, ruler and minister, husband and wife, and between older and younger.³⁴ Mencius records his thoughts on the principle of mutuality as he reflects on conversations he had with various rulers of the disintegrated states.³⁵ Here he recounts the words of the ruler Yao, of the Tang state.

Encourage them, lead them,
Reform them, correct them,
Assist them, give them wings,
Let them 'get it for themselves.'
Then follow by inspiring them to Virtue.³⁶

According to Yao, this is the correct kind of behavior for the "ruler" of any relationship. A parent should encourage their child, a ruler should enable their minister, and a husband should inspire his wife. In turn, the "subject" of any relationship attends to the necessary and lowly tasks of life so that the ruler can fulfill his potential. This is the principle of the division of labor.

Confucius said, 'great indeed was Yao as a ruler. Only heaven is great, and Yao patterned himself after heaven. How vast, how magnificent! The people could find a name for it. What a ruler was Shun! How lofty, how majestic! He possessed the Empire as if it were nothing to him.' As Yao and Shun ruled the empire, it could not have been done without their fully devoting their minds to it, but they did not devote themselves to tilling the fields.³⁷

The principle of the division of labor, Mencius explains, enables the ruler to function as a ruler, which he cannot do if he were to spend his time working on the land.³⁸ The people must till the land and the ruler must rule. The ruler needs the goods of the land and the people who spend their time with the land need a ruler.

The division of labor exhibits the principle of mutuality; it enables everyone to contribute their skills to society so that the entire society benefits. Mencius says that some work with their minds and some work with their muscles, they are the people who govern and the people who are governed respectively. The governed support those who govern, and those who govern do so for the good of the governed.³⁹ The rulers serve the needs of society and the common people serve the basic needs of life.

According to this exchange of skill, the king has a great responsibility to the many endeavoring below him. If the ruler fails to discharge his duties in accordance with the mutual agreement, the failure is evidence of his loss of the Mandate, and hence, loss of rightful authority to rule. Loss of the mandate is revealed a variety of ways, as Mencius says "Heaven does not speak but simply reveals the mandate through actions and affairs."⁴⁰ This could be the sickening of the king, a great flood of the state, or simply an overthrow of the throne. Of this element in "the established religion of Confucianism of the Han Empire (206 B.C.-A.D. 220)," Hu Shi writes, "great catastrophes (such as floods, famines, and great fires) and strange anomalies (such as comets and eclipses of the sun) were warnings of an all-loving Heaven to terrify the rulers to repent and reform their acts of misrule."⁴¹

The Old Sinitic Religion

The original faith of the Chinese common people, what Hu Shi calls, the old Sinitic religion is a primary base of Chinese culture, a product of an agrarian and nomadic society in

which the daily life experience of the common people coalesced with the simple mythology and limited ritual of a basic racial religion.⁴² Hu maintained, that the old Sinitic faith accounts for certain forms of thinking antithetical to modern politics and economy. It developed from “a series of historical factors... which tended to make the Chinese people less other-worldly than the other historical races of the earth.”⁴³ These factors include China’s geographical position in the north-temperate zone and other philosophical developments that further simplified the already simple religion of old.⁴⁴

In the twentieth century, Chinese reformers wrestled with the characteristic of passivity that was common among the people. Passivity enters the culture as the legacy of topographic conditions that made life hard for inhabitants of the land and shaped their faith. “The bounty of nature was never abundant and the struggle for existence was always hard.”⁴⁵ The toilsome life produced people who work diligently, live simply, and imagine little. Day-to-day survival required so much energy that too little remained for intricate religious developments. The agrarian experience in old China must have seen something of an uphill battle to the people. No matter where one lived, there were a variety of factors that worked to make food scant and survival hard. From climate, to an overabundance of people on just a small bit of arable land, to seasonal catastrophes like floods and droughts in different regions of the nation, to ground conditions that allowed the people to farm only one season of the year and rely on shipments over rough terrain from other parts of the nation for the rest, all of these factors came together to create a faith relevant to experience. The resulting faith was one with dictates of hard work and minimal expectations and joined by the passivity of acceptance and patience, to simply let nature move on.

The old Sinitic faith of the common people tended to suppress critical thinking because it taught people to “follow the course of nature,”⁴⁶ which for the farmer, moved in cycles and wholes far from the control of man. Then, Hu Shi explains, “This already very simple religion was further simplified and purified by the early philosophers of ancient China.”⁴⁷ Lao-tze, for example, taught that “there was only a natural process which he called the ‘Tao,’ or way.”⁴⁸ For the common people, living on the land, Hu writes, “the bounty of nature was never abundant and the struggle for existence was always hard;” the people had little time to partake in complex and speculative metaphysical notions, and would naturally welcome a faith that acknowledged the cruelty of the environment and offered a way to avoid its wrath.

In a sense, China’s philosophical landscape had emptied and was primed for constructive thinking. All philosophy was directed “in search of the tao, a word which” Hu says “has been unnecessarily mystified by amateurish translators but which simply means a way or a method; a way of individual life, of social contract, of public activity and government, etc. in short, philosophy had set out in quest of a way or method of ordering the world, of understanding it and bettering it.”⁴⁹

Traditions of Stratification and Officialdom

As the pinnacle of cultural thought, the Mandate of Heaven shaped Chinese society by maintaining a highly polarized, though connected, social strata and by limiting oppositional forces among the elite members of the society. The Chinese common people, the majority, who lived day to day steeped in the cultural characteristics of orality, comprised one stratum. Across the divide, stood the elite members of society who were classically educated, and thus, powerful. The elite class experienced daily life very differently; theirs hinged on cultural characteristics of literacy.

In China's traditional rhetorical culture, "literacy," in the sense of being classically educated, translated directly to "agency." To varying degrees, functional literacy existed among the illiterate common people, but this was not the kind of literacy they needed to change their "common" status. The term "literacy" is used here the same as used by Alexander Woodside who additionally explains that in late-imperial China, there existed two kinds of literacy: "significant literacy [that] brings with it power," and the insignificant form of literacy used by the common people in daily life.⁵⁰ The imperial state had an "inherent desire to limit politically empowering literacy."⁵¹ Literacy, he notes, is something "which all societies ration" to some degree.⁵²

In traditional China, to gain power, one had to be classically literate, and thus, prepared to place through the civil service examinations. Literacy, to this "significant" degree, was a very difficult thing for the common people to obtain. It required a great expense of time. Time was greatly costly to the people tied to land, on which harsh conditions necessitated "unremitting human endeavor."⁵³ Time translated directly into food for most common people. "The gentry mainly produced the 'scholar-gentlemen' (*shi*) who carried on the great traditions of calligraphy, painting, literature, philosophy, and official life."⁵⁴

Class relations were regulated in the minutest detail in dynastic China. As Hu Shi notes, the privileged class played a paternalistic role to the unprivileged class by overseeing the social and moral behavior.⁵⁵ As it was believed, it was the "Confucian gentleman's duty to educate to morally transform (*jiaohua*) the people," writes Jan Kiely.⁵⁶ This form of moral teaching functioned as an apparatus of the Confucian philosophy, which had been engineered to pull the nation out of the throes of the warring states period to a stable and harmonious time like the Zhou Dynasty. For the sake of stability, the philosophy was equipped with many mechanisms that had the express intent of limiting anything that resembled something of a social impulse to change the status quo. The classical language is perhaps the most effective of these implements. The elite class or educated scholar-officials, or scholar-gentry, acted as marshals of the language and guardians of society. They stood atop the cultural hierarchy and wielded all of the power in the configuration of Confucian relations.

The sanctity of the scholar official's relation to the heavens, thus the legitimacy of their social power, required cultural reverence for of the classical language, the classic texts, and the examination system. The examination system played an essential role in Chinese society.

From Song until the end of Qing (1644-1911) the examinations not only served as almost the exclusive means for Chinese men to enter the prestigious officialdom but shaped the values and structure of society.⁵⁷

The exams kept access to power limited. They were very difficult and required much preparation. The scholar also had to study the complex mechanics of classical Chinese writing, in particular, the "eight-legged essay," the standard form of essay for the civil service exams that constituted the principal framework for Chinese expository and persuasive writing in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.⁵⁸ Essay writers had to be extremely well versed in the classic texts to meet the demands of the eight-legged essay form. They would have to write in the form of classical phrases and use many examples memorized from the canonical texts like the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*. All emphasis was placed on memorization; there was no tolerance for "individual self-expression, considered socially harmful."⁵⁹

Even though the authority of the classical language faltered after China's contact with the modern civilization west, intellectuals and government officials were one in the same in the traditional system of officialdom. So unlike the role intellectuals commonly play in the west, as

critics of the state and cultural institutions, the Chinese intellectual class was kept from criticizing the government.

After the Confucian social hierarchy had been firmly established, the division between the people mutated into a harsher version of its original form. Something very similar happened during the Bronze Age in Greece. Only the wealthy elite could afford bronze and other metal products and “possession of these and other prestige items set them further apart from the mass of the population.”⁶⁰ In Greece, like China, the elite used their power to perpetuate their status. The elite Greeks became exploiters of their labor force and the Chinese elite became exploiters of their moral obligates.

Han period (206-220 B.C.) scholar-officials perverted the principle of mutuality, the ethical backbone of the Confucian social hierarchy, into a device of political control. Originally, mutuality meant that “one acts on behalf of the community.”⁶¹ Legalist Han scholars then revived an obscure portion of Confucian philosophy known as the “Three Bonds,” which are often “depicted as three forms of bondage,” Tu writes.⁶² Duties and pieties attached to the bonds, based on hierarchy, age, and gender, began to overshadow the spirit of mutually beneficial relationships.⁶³

Han scholar-officials recast the Confucian philosophy from a philosophy of morality to a philosophy of authoritative power. In turn, the Mandate of Heaven lost its ethical strength even while preserving its social strength. By highlighting the three bonds over the spirit of mutuality, the Han ideologists, Tu notes, “drastically altered the Mencian intention.”⁶⁴ Wei-Ming Tu notes, they must have seen legitimacy in the altered emphasis, from the “morality of rule” to the “right to rule,” for the persuasive advantage it gives to the political authority of ruler and husband. In a hierarchic and patriarchal society, ruled by scholars who still longed for the Zhou ideal praised in the Confucian classics, such legitimacy would have seemed to hold great promise. The ruler, and in turn, the husband become “the interpreter, the executor, and the judge of the moral code.”

Indeed, the primary task of the scholar-officials at the top of the pyramid was to understand the classic words of the sages and apply them to the complex social situations of their present day. Words were seen as elements functioning in complex contexts, “One feature of classical Chinese language is its brevity, suggesting that a single term can encompass several meanings, only decipherable in context,” Xing Lu explains, “For instance, the term *yan* can mean speech, talk, or language in general; however, in a given situation or textual meaning might be argumentation, persuasion, eloquence, or explanation.”⁶⁵ The scholar-official sought to first, understand a term as it was originally intended, and second, to socially restore the thing denoted by the word to its original meaning.

Common Orality

The day to day experience of the Chinese common people was heavily marked by the cultural characteristics of orality. Oral societies lack the ability to draw space between social memory and social awareness, as well as between the individual and the collective. In other words, nothing ranks as more important than a person’s present social experience. Therefore, orality can be described as a way of communicating, and the characteristics of oral communication are one and the same as the characteristics of oral culture.

In oral communication, emotional experiences are undiluted and immediate. It is easy to see the similarities between orality and the old Sinitic religion. The old Sinitic and Taoist attitudes revolve around the same hopes, fears, and endurance that define orality. Like Veeck, Pannell, Smith, and Huang explain, contemporary China is the result of how people and

activities have been spatially organized and the effects of the human-environment interactions. Villages arose and families clung to one another to face the challenges of the land. Belief in a Tao gave people hope for a harmonious existence despite the ever present fear of the universe's cruelty.

The only way to break free from orality is to gain the significant form of classical literacy, but the oral culture of the unprivileged results from, and reinforces, restricted literacy. Building on Walter Ong's foundation, David Ze proposes that "the static development of Chinese science and technology" can be linked to the culture of orality that existed along the majority of Chinese people.⁶⁶ Oral residue can be found in just about every aspect of Chinese society. Ze notes how the culture of orality is deeply inlaid into traditional Chinese education, where educational texts are designed for students to memorize and recite, rather than to practice and explore.⁶⁷ "The main body of Chinese educational texts was Confucianism, including Confucian canons, commentaries by Confucian scholars, and standard histories that intended to verify Confucian political theories."⁶⁸

A strong presence of a culture of orality not only indicates the lack of literacy, but also indicates presence of a characteristic that is common to societies which restrict literacy, "the tendency to secrecy."⁶⁹ The density and difficulty of becoming literate in the classical language gives it the characteristic of secrecy. Likewise, the neo-Confucian literati sent books to all corners of the nation, limited the number and chose materials that were made to be read or sung aloud rather than individually read or used as a tool to teach reading. "Such restrictive practices tend to arise wherever people have an interest in maintaining a monopoly of the sources of their power."⁷⁰ Oral traditions of learning by memorization and recitation orient learning toward the "traditionalist direction... initial instruction places more emphasis on the repetition of content than the acquisition of skill. Under these conditions book learning takes on an inflexibility that is the antithesis of the spirit of enquiry which literacy has fostered elsewhere."⁷¹ The long term result is that 'secrecy' invades other areas of learning not because of the specific content but because under restricted literacy all books tends to take on a special value through the scarcity of interpreters."⁷²

Even after the onslaught of print technology, the common people remained in the middle of a tug of war between traditional and modern influences. As Jan Kiely writes, "the first half of the twentieth century saw an unprecedented expansion of the production and circulation of the Imperial-era morality books and related new-style popular ethical guide in part because of the emerging mechanized print industry and new transportation networks."⁷³ In the new conditions of the 1900s, the old lessons would resonate in different ways.⁷⁴

The Literary Elite

The face of China changed dramatically during the Song Period, from 960 to 1279.⁷⁵ The population surged from 55 million people to 100 million and the national income rose 33 percent per head.⁷⁶ The role to be played by the most elite members of Chinese society greatly changed as well. The political upheaval of the antecedent Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdom Period, and the rising threat of the Qidan, the Mongol people from North China who would become China's first alien rulers, inspired a push to preserve China's traditional culture and social hierarchy. Greater emphasis was placed on the civil service examination system, which was responsible for shaping China's elite class of ruling intellectuals who were known as the literati. The literati filled the ranks of civil service following in depth education in the classics and successful performance on exams. The amplified integration of the intellectual and bureaucratic class is a

distinguishing marker of Song Period China. It marks a historically specific entanglement of politics, society, and rhetoric of vital importance to the rhetorical development of dynastic China from then until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912.

The classical language completely pervaded the lives of the literate elite strata of society; as per its institutional function, the structure of social hierarchy had grown completely dependent on its maintenance and veneration. A special name of respect was given to the scholars who acted as the conduit between heaven and the common people; they were called the “literati.” Honor for the classical language created a huge constraint for reformers of the literary revolution. The reformers who advocated the vernacular language for the entire gamut of cultural writings, academic, official, and popular, became acutely aware of what it meant to pull the classical language from its throne. To contradict the reverence that, over centuries, had been instilled in the Chinese people was to simultaneously contradict an ancient cultural tradition, contradict the structure of power from which the reformers themselves derived their scholarly authority, and contradict the foundation for political legitimacy and cultural morality affecting nearly half a billion people.⁷⁷

The neo-Confucian literati are a group of particular importance to understanding the social and intellectual constraints that Hu Shi and other scholars of the twentieth century Chinese Renaissance faced. The neo-Confucian literati were able to do what the preservationist scholar-officials of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were unable to do. The inability of the later literati is attributable, in part, to the severity of the changes China endured under the force of the modern western civilization of the twentieth century, particularly as the civilization first began to physically wrought China under the names of England and Japan. However, the inability is also attributable to the cultural gulf in Chinese society of the literati’s own making. The neo-Confucian literati had created a cultural gulf between themselves and the people that over time, had separate the groups to such an extent as to become un-crossable.

The neo-Confucian literati of the Song and Ming dynasties mirrored many of the social ambitions of Confucius. Confucius lived during the Spring and Autumn Period, which corresponds to the Eastern Zhou dynasty running from 770 to 481 B.C. This was a time of political, social, and intellectual transition very similar to Song Period China. Loewe and Shaughnessy call it “a Jaspersian ‘Axial Age’ of civilization.”⁷⁸ In response to anxieties of social flux, Confucius sought to restore the order of the early Zhou dynasty, when virtuous leadership, filial piety, and respect for rituals and authority subdued the people and ruled the land.⁷⁹ The literati of the Song Period responded similarly with a Neo-Confucian creed,⁸⁰ which they developed as a practical philosophy to guide daily life decision making on the basis of the Confucian classics.⁸¹ To spread their creed, the Neo-Confucian literati developed a rhetorical implement known as the Community Compact.

With the Community Compact, the neo-Confucian literati, or educated ruling elite, introduced a new way of communicating with the illiterate common people. Meetings of the Community Compact were local monthly assemblies used to transmit the Neo-Confucian Creed. Fairbank and Goldman explain these meetings as an “institution,” seen “as fusing together private and public interests and as mediating between state and family.”⁸² The significance of these meetings resounds in practically all aspects of the rhetorical development of China up until the Chinese Renaissance. The Community Compact meetings mark the first conscious union of the vernacular language and the masses that can account for the stigma vernacular carried at the time of the Literary Revolution. Printed materials became widespread during the Song period. Rather than expand literacy, printed materials were distributed to Community Compact meetings

around the country that were written in vernacular and intended to be sung to the audience. The literati had no interest in expanding literacy among the common people as the security of their own position was being threatened by steadily rising numbers of educated elites. Fairbank and Goldman explain that “printed matter was the life-blood of the expanding Song educated elite.”⁸³ The meetings were designed in such a way as to utilize the available print technology without undermining the social hierarchy. At this moment in history, epideictic forms of rhetorical speech and philosophic and religious aspects of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism become entangled with the security of the elite, the legitimacy of the dynasty, and the changes brought by trade and the development of print.

Changes

Half a century before the New Culture Movement, the Chinese thinker Wang T’ao, said “The steamship and the railway are the carriages of the ways of life.”⁸⁴ Hu Shi was looking to develop in China a “way of life” suitable for the modern world. He conceived of that way as coming from both Chinese and foreign stock. Some of the Chinese stock would be known to the Chinese, and still, some would be reclaimed from a long forgotten era. These characteristics would weave together and create an integrated society.

This vision stands in contrast to the quickly disintegrating society of the early twentieth century. The disintegration seemed to have been propelled with each instance of China's exposure to the West. As new tools and ideas countered old tools and ideas, relationships changed including “the breaking-up of old homes, [and] the removal from family and clan ties.”⁸⁵ As the transfer of technology continued, the puzzle became more complete. Goods that were once novel luxuries became standard necessities. The adoption of western technologies followed a pretty standard pattern. Hu notes that first the material good were accepted. These were the goods that were most useful in fulfilling and executing the daily needs of human existence, and at first appearance, one could not suspect them of “being prejudicial to the existing social life and institutions.”⁸⁶ The clock, for example, was among the first tier of accepted technologies. It was introduced by Portuguese traders and Jesuit missionaries. “Slowly and imperceptibly, but irresistibly, the imported goods found their way into the villages and farms, and replaced all their rivals of native make.”⁸⁷ The luxuries become necessities in the city, and eventually, necessities in the country. In part, material goods become woven into the daily activities of people by replacing old functionally comparable technologies. Some of the first replacement items in China included matches, the kerosene lamp, vegetable oil, cigarette, and English style piece goods. Further, trading companies and sales agents became known in China once again. The merchant class was elevated from the lowest rungs of moral society to among the highest. New forms of transportation and communication, such as “the steamship, the railway, the new road, the telegraph, [and] the post service,”⁸⁸ carried people, goods, ideas, and manners of life around the nation. Besides rapid migration, Hu counts two other developments as significant in the spread of change.⁸⁹

The political revolution opened the door to cultural change, but in China, change met with resistance and the integration of new technologies happened gradually. China's gradual adoption of western technological influences set the stage for the reforms of the Chinese Renaissance. As Hu notes, “Radical social revolutions are made possible by the removal of the forces which were once the bulwarks of the institutions and usages of the old society.”⁹⁰ With the old culture dethroned, the New Culture Movement was intended to develop the cultural capacity for new attitudes, new logic, and new social institutions.

When western observers looked at China in the years following the revolution, they were quick to notice how Japan, also a traditional Asian society, seemed to respond to western exposure so differently than China. Japan appeared to adapt fast and purposefully. China, on the other hand, went through a much longer period of resistance. In the years of the Qing restoration, the 1860s, when the Imperial rulers realized that change could no longer be avoided and tried to greet the change and simultaneously preserve their power. They advanced a doctrine of “Chinese learning as the fundamental structure, Western learning for practical use.” Fairbank and Goldman remark that the doctrine was “attractive though misleading.” However, “the generation of 1860-1900 clung to the shibboleth that China could lead halfway into modern times, like leaping halfway across a river in a flood.”⁹¹ Meanwhile, Japan had a powerful ruling class who could make decisions about what to change and carry out changes from a point of centralized control. China also had rulers, but their political authority was predicated on cultural stability. Their power came from within the traditional culture. With centralized control, Japan's modernization has been “orderly, economical, continuous, stable, and effective,” Hu writes.⁹² The problem with such fast and deliver change is that it is based on the observable superficial characteristics of culture. One might think of this process as a game of cultural costuming, which like any activity of dress-up, amplifies a few characteristics and abandons or oversimplifies the rest. Meanwhile, China has been changing slowly. China's changes have been “sporadic, and often wasteful, because much undermining and erosion are necessary before anything can be changed.”⁹³ Yet, Hu notes that there is undeniable advantage to gradual change, which is now being revealed in China's contrast with Japan. In 1940, Hu said that while Japan has demonstrated great aptitude with the technique and machines of the West, Westerners are now observing in Japan “the most strange phenomenon... ‘immunity to the dialectic play of deep-lying evolutionary forces,’ ... being ‘devoid of dialectic and dynamic.’”⁹⁴ In China, on the other hand, the old has-been eroded before the new has been adopted so that everything,

From the lipstick to the literary revolution, from the footwear to the overthrow of the monarchy, all has been voluntary and in the broad sense ‘reasoned.’ Nothing in China is too sacred to be protected from the contact and contagion of the invading civilization of the West.⁹⁵

The ruling class of Japan was a militaristic class based on the old feudal code. They quickly adopted technology to “build up a Western war machine” to protect themselves from the threat of invading Western troops and ideas.⁹⁶ Originally, they just wanted a technological wall of protection, but then, having constructed machine so successfully, the wall worked to reach solidified Japan's medieval culture and effectively ward off any substantial change in thought and attitude. In other words, Japan was made immune to the dialectical interplay of Western logic.

Quick to construct a protective war machine out of Western technologies, Japan turned into China's aggressor number one. Japan's sparse natural resources must have contrasted with China to make the latter appear an Eden ripe for the raping. Further, Chinese officialdom was so handicapped by corruption that wanting Japanese officials could have easily mistaken the whimpers of a self-dissolving institution as Chinese officials begging for exploitation. The Japanese had worked into positions from which they could cause the most crippling damage to China. Who gave many examples of how the Japanese came to wield so much power over Chinese affairs. They worked like the makeshift rigging for a crumbling house, positioned at essential points for the structure that once in place, could not be disturbed lest the whole structure came toppling down. Boycotts of Japanese stores and goods offer one example of how

committed the Chinese team to ridding themselves of this influence. Still, many young intellectuals would have preferred to rip the entire building down rather than let Japanese power grow in China anymore. Their frustration is of course understandable. You must incipience of Japan's power was had by exploiting China's own failings.

Corruption among officials greatly strained the everyday lives of regular people. This became particularly apparent in terms of natural resources when the corrupt leasing of land to Japanese companies prevented the Chinese from gaining access to nearby resources, like coal. "In corruption," Hu writes, "China certainly leads the world. Not only is there an open and organized sale of offices in the State, not only has there been for twenty-five years no system of examination for government posts, but there is also the universal habit of bribery in every branch of Chinese society... in polite language [it] is called 'dipping one's fingers,' and in the common language, 'rubbing oil.'" Hu points out that in China "good" officials are recognized with the monument, but in "civilized" societies, officials are expected to be "good." Corrupt officials get the special treatment; they get sent to jail.⁹⁷ Tim Wright gives evidence of the extent of this problem, "The export of Chinese coal, almost all to Japan," he writes, "increased very sharply in the early 1910, as the output of Chinese mines came on tap."⁹⁸ People couldn't overlook these kinds of daily problems.

Many Chinese students felt the conditions had become too shameful and unbearable and they were no longer willing to stifle their discontent. The following passage is from *The Nation*, which described itself as "a weekly journal devoted to politics, literature, science, drama, music, art, and finance."⁹⁹ It aptly illustrates the qualms and emotions that were common among students.

Chinese students have recently organized and carried to a successful conclusion a series of popular demonstrations against the Shantung settlement which have resulted in the removal of three high Government officials accused of having betrayed their country into the hands of Japan The following article embodying the students point of view appeared in The China Press for June 10:

For the first time in the history of China a genuine democratic movement has appeared The entire Chinese people has risen No officials head this movement No great men have attached their names to this cause Spontaneously out of the schools among boys and girls among shopkeepers and merchants among laborers and coolies has arisen this historic defence of the rights of China this demand for good government...

On the anniversary of the Twenty one Demands when the Chinese people were in mourning because of the shame their country had suffered at the hands of Japan news arrived that China had been defeated at the Paris Peace Conference For months previous to this day since the signing of the armistice China had high hopes that she would have an opportunity to develop as a nation that the wrongs which she had suffered from militarism while the nations of the world were fighting militarism in Europe would be righted But now China was hopeless In Peking was a government corrupt to the core In one year it had borrowed \$220,000,000 from Japan ceding to her the richest resources of the land Coal mines iron mines forests future railroad rights control of the army control of finances control of the few great industries of the country have been thrown away for a mess of pottage Great China the land richest in resources richest in man power richest in territory had become a plaything because of the militarism of Japan and the corruption of her own officials The Manchus were driven out by a small band of intrepid revolutionists

in league with enlightened officials But the Chinese people took no part in the first revolution.¹⁰⁰

The students saw this as a do-or-die moment for the nation. "This demonstration awakened the entire student body of China to the fact that immediate action was necessary. In every city of China the students left their books and went out on strike."¹⁰¹ A feeling of crisis coursed over China's young intellectuals, thus creating a very difficult situation for reformers like Hu that wanted to strike a balance between preserving cultural tradition and integrating western technology and science. Most of all, Hu wanted to implement change gradually, but China's intellectual atmosphere was thick with hostility.

Hu's worry was that China, having already bore repeated blows of destruction, could not withstand further destructive force from within. These things could not be solved with violent force. Education was the primary resource of the New Culture Movement. Education, rather than gun boats or ammunition would save the Chinese from their real enemies. Hu writes:

Our real enemies, as I have pointed out, are poverty, disease, ignorance, corruption and civil war. None of them can be conquered by recourse to violent force. The real revolution which shall overthrow these five devils, has only one path to pursue, namely, the royal road of peace-meal reformation under conscious and intelligent guidance. We must first clearly identify our real enemies and define our real problems, and then concentrate our energy and intelligence on the difficult and strenuous task of solving these problems step by step, and bit by bit. Every inch is a gain and leads so much nearer to our goal.¹⁰²

Corruption, he said, is one of the "five devils" hampering China's creation of a "new nation." "The destruction of the five devils is simultaneously the creation of our new nation."¹⁰³

He asserted that reform requires revolution, or in other words, construction requires destruction. Yet, one must be wary of even necessary events. "Revolutions also bring into power new groups of people who are energetic, unscrupulous, and capable of fishing in troubled waters. The rise of the new politicians and the military man is particularly noticeable."¹⁰⁴ Revolutions break up the old guard and rip apart old institutions.

They release the individual from the collective responsibility of the whole family, and recognize in him the new rights and duties of an independent member of a larger society. The old framework has gone to pieces, not because of external attacks or criticisms, but because it was incapable of holding itself together in the face of the new forces which claim its members, men or women, for the school, the factory, the shop, and the world at large.¹⁰⁵

The problem following the revolution in China, he explained, is that "Nobody was leading; and everybody seemed lost in a sea of uncertainty."¹⁰⁶ This is why education played such a significant role in the Renaissance.

In the haze of revolutionary thought, Hu said people act "blindly."¹⁰⁷ We must remove the impetus to act without forethought or regard for the consequences of our actions. With education, he believed people would become dissatisfied with things like foot-binding, arranged marriages, and all superstitions.¹⁰⁸ By dissolving the power of tradition in developing a new culture, China would find a permanent and self-perpetuating kind of change. He wanted to make sure that China did not go down a path similar to Japan's technocratic construction of a war machine. John Dewey reached the same conclusion, as he wrote:

Asia has come to consciousness, and her consciousness of herself will soon be such a massive and persistent saying that it will force itself upon the reluctant consciousness of

the West, and lie heavily upon it conscious, and for this fact, China and the Western world are indebted to Japan.¹⁰⁹

Hu considered this sort of thing to be a violent and wasteful output of energy that ultimately would and without significant result. Hu favored the creative forces that followed from education. “The new education... was meant for everybody who came to take it; it was planned as education for citizenship.”¹¹⁰ In the wake of the throne’s destruction, when no other leaders are there to be found, and no old guard is there to block the way, the educated people will know how to lead themselves.

End Notes

¹ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 7.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 8.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Chen, Guo-Ming. “Asian Communication Studies.” *The Review of Communication* 6, no. 4 (2006).

⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, “Author’s Introduction,” to *Democracy in America, Volume I*, (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), 13.

⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹ Mary M. Garrett, “Pathos Reconsidered from the Perspective of Classical Chinese Rhetorical Theories,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 79(1993): 23.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hu Shih, “Religion in Chinese Life,” in *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures, 1933*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 79. In this text, the pinyin chiao is used instead of jiào.

¹² Tocqueville, “Author’s Introduction,” 14.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, “Author’s Preface,” to *Democracy in America, Volume 2*, (New York: Vintage Classics, 1990), v.

¹⁶ Philip C. Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1988*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 21.

¹⁷ John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, 2nd enlarged edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 16.

¹⁸ Randolph Barker, Robert W. Herdt, and Beth Rose, *The Rice Economy of Asia, Volume 1* (Washington D.C.: Resources for the Future and The International Rice Research Institute 1985), 2.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Fairbank and Goldman, 20.

²¹ Barker, Herdt, and Rose, 2.

²² Garrett, 21-22.

²³ Ibid., 22.

²⁴ Gregory Veeck, Clifton W. Pannell, Christopher J. Smith, and Youqin Huang, *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic, and Social Change*, 2nd Edition, (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2011), 50.

²⁵ Bryan W. Van Norden, *Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 97.

²⁶ Richard G. Olsen and Richard Olson, *Technology and Science in Ancient Civilizations*, (Richard G. Olson, 2010), 61.

²⁷ Zhang Dai-Nian, "Theories Concerning Man and Nature in Classical Chinese Philosophy," in *Man and Nature: the Chinese Tradition and the Future*, edited by Yijie Tang, Zhen Li, and George F. McLean, (Lanham: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, University Press of America, 1989), 3.

²⁸ Note that heaven and universe are used interchangeably.

²⁹ Fairbank and Goldman, 11.

³⁰ Fairbank and Goldman, 88 and 94. The dates of the Northern Song are on 88 and the statement about widespread printing is on 94.

³¹ Ibid., 94.

³² Wei-Ming Tu, "Probing the 'Three Bonds' and 'Five Relationships' in Confucian Humanism," Chapter VII (p. 121-136) in *Confucianism and the Family*, edited by Walter H. Slote and George A. De Vos, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 129.

³³ *Mencius* translated by Irene Bloom, Edited and with an Introduction by Philip J. Ivanhoe, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), ix. traditional dates of Zhou dynasty given in the citation: 1122-249 B.C. Warring States Period (403-221 B.C.). "Mencius" is the Latinized version of "Mengzi."

³⁴ Ibid., 57.

³⁵ Ibid., ix.

³⁶ Ibid., 56-58. Hou Ji is noted as Shun's minister of agriculture. Fangxun is noted as Yao, a sage-ruler who could foresee the progress of human civilization.

³⁷ Ibid. Hou Ji is noted as Shun's minister of agriculture. Fangxun is noted as Yao, a sage-ruler who could foresee the progress of human civilization.

³⁸ Walter H. Slote and George A. De Vos, *Confucianism and the Family*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 124.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Van Norden, 97.

⁴¹ Hu Shih, "The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2, Preliminary Report on the Third East-West, Philosophers' Conference Apr. - Jul., 1959, (University of Hawai'i Press), 30.

⁴² Hu Shih, "Religion in Chinese Life," Chapter Five in *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures 1933*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 80-81. Hu says the faith "never had a generic name, and I have elsewhere proposed to call it 'Siniticism.'"

⁴³ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 80-81.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁹ Hu Shih, *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Oriental Book Co., 1922), 17-18.

⁵⁰ Alexander Woodside, "Real and Imagined Continuities in the Chinese Struggle for Literacy," in Ruth Hayhoe (ed.), *Education and Modernization: The Chinese Experience*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992), 37.

⁵¹ Ibid., 26.

⁵² Ibid., 37.

⁵³ Fairbank and Goldman, 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁵ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, electronic edition, 47.

⁵⁶ Jan Kiely, "Shanghai Public Moralism Nie Qijie and Morality Book Publication Projects in Republican China," *Twentieth-Century China*, Volume 36, No. 1, (Maney Publishing, 2011), 14.

⁵⁷ Wang Ke-wen, *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, (Wang Ke-wen, 1998), 67.

⁵⁸ Ulla Connor, *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Pomeroy, 8.

⁶¹ Tu, 6.

⁶² Ibid., 122.

⁶³ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 122.

⁶⁵ Xing Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China, Fifth to Third Century, B.C.E.: a Comparison with Classical Greek Rhetoric*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 90.

⁶⁶ David Ze, "Walter Ong's Paradigm and Chinese Literacy," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol 20, No 4 (1995), <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/894/800>. Accessed 9/30/11.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁷¹ Ibid., 14.

⁷² Ibid., 236.

⁷³ Kiely, 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid. For example, the print-produced morality books could have a modernizing effect on readers by "affiliating age-old terms and concepts with emerging ideologies and social images identified with a new, urban, modern world."

⁷⁵ "The Song Dynasty." Marilyn Shea 2010. *China Bibliography Collection of Resources*. <http://hua.umf.maine.edu/China/song.html>. Accessed August 31, 2011.

⁷⁶ Chai, Joseph C.H. 2011. *An Economic History of Modern China*. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 20.

⁷⁷ "China: Historical Demographical Data of the Whole Country," "Populstat" Website, compiled by Jan Lahmeyer, (1999/2003) <http://www.populstat.info/Asia/chinac.htm> last accessed 26 April 2012. In 1921 China's population had reached 473673,000 people.

⁷⁸ Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 545.

⁷⁹ Lu, 98.

⁸⁰ *Dictionary of Ming biography, 1368-1644, Vol. II*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang. (NY: Columbia University Press, 1976), Association for Asian Studies, Ming Biographical History Project Committee.

⁸¹ Fairbank and Goldman, 95.

⁸² Ibid., 99-100.

⁸³ Ibid., 94.

⁸⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 94.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 96-97.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 100.

⁹¹ Fairbank and Goldman, 217.

⁹² Hu Shih, "The Modernization of China and Japan," In *Freedom: Its Meaning*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1940), pp. 114-122, in in *Hu Shih Yingwen Wencun* (胡適英文文存, A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings). Compiled by Chih-P'ing Chou (周質平). 3 vols. (Taipei: Yuanliu chuban, 1995), 815.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 817.

⁹⁷ Hu Shih, "Which Road are we going?," in *China's Own Critics*, reprint edition, (Westport: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1981), 15.

⁹⁸ Tim Wright, *Coal Mining in China's Economy and Society, 1895-1937*, (NY: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1984), 70.

⁹⁹ "China and the Shantung Settlement," *The Nation*, Vol 109 No 2823, pp. 185, in *The Nation, Volume CIX from July 1, 1919 to December 31, 1919*, a book collection of volumes from the original weekly Journal of the same name, New York: The Nation Press, Inc. pp. 333-34.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Hu, "Which Road are we going?," 20.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 98.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁰⁷ Hu, “Which Road are we going?,” 21. “The essential point is to replace the blind activities which are now termed revolution by conscious and intelligent reform. What are such blind activities? To act without a clearly defined objective, or without regard of the consequences of one's action, or without a clear recognition of the relative values of the acts being contemplated—this is the blind man's way.”

¹⁰⁸ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 97. “If the education does not give the people new capabilities, it has at least taught them to be dissatisfied with their lot and with their old environment.”

¹⁰⁹ John Dewey, *China, Japan, and the U.S.A.*, (Lexington, Wildside Press, 2010), 20-21.

¹¹⁰ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 97.

Chapter Two ♦ Searching for Logical Consciousness

Logical Consciousness

For Hu Shi, the lack of a scientific spirit stood out as chief among China's twentieth century dilemmas. He understood the "scientific spirit," as a "critical consciousness," or in other words, a way of apprehending the physical and social world that values situational analysis, views history as relevant to present day events and attitudes, and has the ability to bring ideas and behaviors into accord. The roots of this consciousness are found in "humanistic and rationalistic" traditions, which Hu maintained, are present in China's intellectual history and can be "resurrected" by the scientific and democratic touch of the new civilization of the west. Hu's intellectual project revolved around the method of pragmatic judgment. He wanted contemporary decisions to value both new and old, and foreign and Chinese ideas equally so as to judge them purely on the basis of their merit in relation to situational needs and future goals. The same sort of judgments should be made in the process of reevaluating China's intellectual legacy for the foundations of China's own path to modern development. He exhibits this intention with his own search, *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China*, his dissertation written under the advisement of John Dewey. Here, he investigates the characteristics of what he calls the "Chinese Sophist" and the original spirit of "courageous doubt." He finds the Chinese Sophist beginning with the "Socratic Tradition of Confucius," which he describes as "the tradition of free discussion, criticism, and intellectual honesty." He then locates the "spirit of courageous doubt" in the Taoist's early naturalistic conceptions of the universe. This chapter surveys the intellectual traditions of humanism and rationalism that Hu holds as most necessary for China's transition into the modern world. Each major tradition is addressed with regard to the resources it provided for confronting the contemporary predicament, the limitations of the tradition in light of Hu's ambitions for cultural reform, and the choices he made to practically appropriate the tradition or to leave it behind.

China has been in close contact with the West for a hundred years and spent an equal amount of time in a state of "unfortunate resistance" to this exposure, Hu told a London audience in 1926.¹ After the success of the anti-Manchu revolution and abdication of the Qing dynasty, China's time to modernize arrived. However, Hu notes, the Chinese people have not been able to successfully adopt popular government.

The Republic has failed, not because modern China has failed—there has never been a modern China—but because in all these processes the changes have been superficial and have hardly touched the fundamental issues of political transformation. There has been practically no modern leadership, practically no genuine admission of our real weaknesses, no recognition of the spiritual possibilities of the new civilisation.²

The intellectual climate during the Republican Period was saturated with tension. Young China continually struggled against the old guard and Chinese Renaissance reformers who favored gradual changes, like Hu, undertook their reforms while bearing the constant threat of imperial imposition. Hu called for a reawakening of ancient Chinese humanist traditions.

A major goal of Hu's involvement in the Chinese Renaissance was to overcome the cultural divide that split Chinese society into two strata, and subsumed the constructive tenants of Confucianism into China's combined political and intellectual structure of authority. The difficulty of this task was extraordinary because it required de-honoring the most honorable aspects of the traditional society. Further, the fact that politicians and intellectuals were in large part members of the same group, if not the same people, was also crippling to the movement. As

members of the same class, the interests of intellectuals and politicians were vested in one another. Even those intellectuals who wanted to change society did not necessarily want to do so if it meant undermining their own authority. Wang Ke-wen explains that “abolition of the examination system paved the way for the Qing dynasty’s own downfall.”³

Hu and his contemporaries on the intellectual scene, many of whom had studied abroad and none of whom had come into academia via the classical examination system, must have easily seen how the old system of scholar-officialdom continued in unofficial replication without a viable alternative. Hu, himself, struggled to draw a line between politics and intellectualism. He maintained that he wanted to reform whatever political system was already instituted, that he did not want to be charged with the political role of creating or leading a political system. Likewise, conservatives and liberals were further separated within the ranks of the intellectuals by whether they had received classical or progressive educational rearing.

Logic and technological progress was impeded by reverence for the significant form of literacy, the institutions that maintained that standard of literacy, and the oral traditions that persisted among the majority of the people who could not achieve that height of literacy. Even those who could gain significant literacy, and thus, attendant forms of social and political power, had limited agency. The emperor’s power extended over the entire life of the scholar-official, as Fairbank and Goldman write, “his books and education—the system of learning and its transmission.”⁴ Similarly, R. Kent Guy observes: “writing and ruling had become, in some sense, opposite sides of the same coin, characteristic and interrelated expressions of landed literati dominance of the Imperial China.”⁵ In the Western civilization the arts of ruling and the arts of writing usually served different functions. When the intellectual class and political class are kept apart, each develops its own set of critical tools to function on its own and resist the influence of the other. In America, for example, academics claim rights of intellectual freedom. Scholars are often the strongest critics of the state. In China, on the other hand, writing developed as a function of ruling. The classical civil service examinations guaranteed that scholars would not criticize the state because the scholars comprised the state. Hence, the interests of academics and the interests of rulers ranged from closely entwined to precisely the same.

Like the European Renaissance, the Chinese Renaissance was a reform movement grounded in the principles of humanism that consisted of two motions: one to revive the characteristics of pre-science like skepticism, attention to nature, and focus on everyday life issues from the ancient secular philosophies of the respective culture, and another to develop the spirit of individualism.⁶ Socially and culturally, Europe and China shared much in common at the time of their Renaissance. Steven Kreis explains that in Europe, the Renaissance period marked a time when Europe straddled two worlds. “The humanist mentality stood at a point midway between medieval supernaturalism and the modern scientific and critical attitude... Modern historians are perhaps more apt to view humanism as the germinal period of modernism.”⁷ Thus, the basic experiences of everyday life highlighted the growing tension between faith and reason.⁸

The “germinal” movement in humanism, is aptly described by Kreis as a “pre-scientific age.”⁹ The humanism of the Renaissance “did not free the mind from subservience to ancient authority... They shifted authorities rather than dismissed them.”¹⁰ The spirit of science was brewing, but it had not yet developed a methodology or the security of being a common mode of practice and thought. The Renaissance was a time of intellectual fission, violent in the way that any process of splitting or ripping must necessarily be. Oftentimes, studies of this period in Chinese intellectualism miss foundational similarities between the European and Chinese

Renaissance. In particular, assumptions of causality get in the way of understanding Renaissance humanism as a naturally occurring philosophy in societies that crave cultural reform on account of either desire or of necessity. In other words, we need to be wary of assuming that one period of Renaissance mimicked another just because it happened later in time. In fact, as far as assumptions go, it would probably be more accurate to claim that China's Renaissance faced extra difficulty because it occurred after the European Renaissance.

The humanistic tendency toward "recovery" did not require the in depth treatment in the European Renaissance that it did in the Chinese Renaissance. For one, the violence of the intellectual split between the traditional authorities and the new authorities of the individual, the natural sciences, and procedure naturally begets cultural anxiety and prompts the search for cultural reassurance. In Europe, the search inward, for ancient traditions of humanism, did not have to be explained in light of competing cultural influences. It was not posed as a search for something "authentically" European rather than something imported and foreign. Chinese intellectuals, on the other hand, felt the same pull of humanistic recovery¹¹ but were compelled to explain it in relation to the conversation about westernization, or modernization at the expense of the authentically "Chinese." Such forced explanation antagonizes the practice of reform by drawing lines of division between reformers who root their sense of cultural security in subscription to one particularly defined interest over another. The conversation becomes one of distinguishing what is "Chinese" from what is "Western" without realizing that humanistic recovery of latent cultural thought is merely the same "process" that was taken in the West and the fact that it is naturally occurring in China is testament only to the idea that China is following a path of modern development that seems to be aimed at more or less the same place as was the path of European development.

The strength of the humanist philosophy in cultural reform is revealed here; doubt, investigation, and individualism function in the face of forces that operate by disabling or restricting. In Europe, for example, the Renaissance brought a resurgence of individualism, which "had been suppressed by the rise of the caste system in the later Roman Empire, by the church and by feudalism in the Middle Ages," Kreis writes. The Chinese social hierarchy functioned similarly to the European caste system and authority of the church in that it held people in their respective places in relation to the structure of authority built around the classical language and the power held within.

Medieval Christianity restricted individual expression, fostered self-abnegation and self-annihilation, and demanded implicit faith and unquestioning obedience furthermore, the church officially ignored man and nature.¹²

In Medieval society, the individual, standing alone, had little importance in the feudal regime. "The individual who attempted to challenge authority and tradition, matters of thought or action, was either discouraged or crushed."¹³ The European Renaissance undercut the power of the church and caste by encouraging doubt and individualism. "Individualism and the instinct of curiosity were vigorously cultivated."¹⁴

Hu Shi saw the similarity between China's ancient intellectual legacy and the Greek traditions recovered by the Renaissance in Europe. The name of the movement in 20th century China, "The Renaissance," was coined by a group of Peking students in 1918 when they launched a monthly magazine under the same name.¹⁵ The relationship between the traditions of literacy and the state worked against China's philosophical tradition of doubt. There needed to be a reassertion of the tradition of critical doubt if there were to be a modern China.

One of the reasons doubt had been lost in the development of Chinese thought, as identified by Hu Shi, was the way investigation into things never developed to far-reaching inquiry into natural causes. Instead, it was relegated to the immediate ethical and practical benefits of something at best, and still more often, focused only on the sphere of general social relations.¹⁶ Reserving investigation for matters of social relations, Hu maintains, retarded the formation of rational principles, the creative potential of language, and natural affairs as a source or virtue of knowledge. Likewise, preservation of cultural hierarchy undercut development of empirical methodology and the corresponding scientific spirit.

Hu had to look to a time before the stronghold of Confucianism. Developments in logic suffered during both the Sung and Ming periods because the Neo-Confucians read Confucianism into logical theories it didn't belong to. So, while Hu says the Neo-Confucians of the Sung period were right to interpret the process of *investigation* as a search for logic and meaning, the influence of Confucianism caused the philosophers to overlook experimental procedure, the active and directing role of the mind in the process of investigating things, and worst, they took things to mean affairs. Similarly, the influence of Confucianism thwarted the development of logic during the Ming period, when philosophers moved further away from procedural forms of investigation into the natural world as they turned toward intuitive contemplative philosophy.

Hu follows the lead of James B. Conant, an American chemist and educator contemporary to Hu, who said "it was the Humanist's exploration of antiquity that came nearest to exemplifying our modern ideas of impartial inquiry."¹⁷ Conant understood science to offer "opportunities for the expansion of the human mind and spirit," James Hershberg writes.¹⁸ Science, for Conant, wasn't only a tool for understanding and affecting the composition of nature, but it was also a means of answering "philosophical, theological, and political quandaries."¹⁹ Science provided a way of thinking and learning. This realization had a similar result for Conant as it did for Hu. Conant also devoted himself to teaching scientific thought to regular people who had no scientific training and to reforming public education so as to develop the tools of scientific thought in all Americans. Scientific thought promised to see America through the confusing social and technological changes of the twentieth century. While the particularities of the problems in America were very different from the problems in China, both nations faced the kind of confusion that follows on the heels of great social and technological change. Hu's conclusion was no different from Conant's; scientific thought, Hu maintained, will see China through to a modern era. We must remember that Conant and Hu wanted the same things of the humanist philosophy that their intellectual ancestors had wanted so long ago; respectively, to usher ancient Greece out of the throes of warfare and division and restore ancient China to a place of social and moral unification remembered from the golden years of the ancient Zhou.

Conant offers a good comparison to Hu because they held very similar ideas about the role of science in everyday social life. Rather than a particular "subject" they both understood science as a type of inquiry or mode of thought applicable to all aspects of life. Likewise, both men knew that a mode of thought had to be cultivated in the thinker. This is a hard idea to express to a Western audience who has themselves been so completely inculcated in this manner of thought as to accept it as innate. It is not uncommon for an American child to angrily retort "that doesn't make any sense!" Reared in literacy and science as we are, it is hard for children and adults alike to conceive of a logic that makes sense in a way that is entirely different from the logic that we know—that something could be "illogical" but still make "sense." American's of today are the product of Conant's "faith in neither science nor religion but in secular institutions that would give Americans the means to develop."²⁰

Humanist doubt, the germ of scientific thought, developed in the west with the Sophists. In China, Hu notes, “the spirit of doubt has ingrained itself in the Chinese mentality ever since the days of Lao Tzu and Confucius.”²¹ Confused ideas about the Chinese Renaissance mimicking the European Renaissance, rather than developing on its own the same as the European Renaissance had done, can be attributed to comparisons drawn by Chinese reformers who sought to explain the legitimacy of their reforms to other Chinese reformers who had decided that China’s modernization relied fully on things outside of China. For example, Hu Shi wrote “And let us remember the early admirers of the West—from Wang T’ao down to K’ang Yu-wei—they, too, were thinking that the modern civilization of the West, in the words of Wang T’ao, ‘embodied the best ideals of our classical antiquity.’”²² Liberal Chinese reformers faced a constant struggle; they were stuck between advocates of wholesale westernization and extreme preservationists. In truth, liberal Renaissance reformers wanted things from both the west and China’s past. Yet, positioned as they were between people who supported extreme variations of both ends of their platform, any effort the liberal reformers made to explain one aspect or another of their agenda, was interpreted either as fodder for one of the oppositional groups or in the extreme terms of one of the groups.

Hu Shi tried to overcome the divisions and misunderstandings by explaining the genealogy of the spirit of doubt in Chinese intellectual culture.

This spirit of doubt has always manifested itself in every age in a critical examination of our own civilization and its ideas and institutions. Such self-critical examination of one’s own civilization is the prerequisite without which no ‘profound and sweeping’ cultural changes are ever possible in any country with an old civilization. All such great and fundamental changes in the history of China--whether they be the result of China’s own reformers or the natural outcome of China’s coming into long contact with a foreign culture--have always been brought about by a critical examination of the older civilization and a profound dissatisfaction with its institutions.²³

The spirit of doubt created the foundation for scientific thought in Chinese intellectualism, but a legacy of doubt was not substantial enough to usher China through a modern Renaissance, and the practical element of creative doubt had been bred out of traditional philosophy long ago. China needed to reinvigorate a particular kind of doubt from very early on. As Hu writes, “it was the spirit of doubt—of what Goethe called ‘creative doubt’—which initiated, inaugurated, and animated the classical age of Chinese thought, the age of Lao Tzu and Confucius, down to Mencius, Chuang Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han-fei.”²⁴

As Hu developed his pragmatic theory of logic for China’s modern development, he realized that pragmatic logic was not only the means to a modern China, but also an end goal in and of itself. China had the groundwork of logic, but the foundations had been overgrown and had become obscured by the classicism, conservatism, and stratification that had become the mainstays of Chinese society. Thus, Hu’s could not simply teach a new kind of thought to the Chinese people because tools needed to work with that kind of thought had been buried or disguised. If pragmatic logic were to thrive, it needed fertile ground. The people needed the skill set to cultivate it and the environment needed the health to sustain it. As Hu surveyed the landscape he saw that it had been shaped by three general tendencies of thought, which included: 1) a critical but passive tendency rooted in oral traditions; 2) the bureaucratic classical tendency rooted in highly literate traditions; and 3) a conformist tendency rooted in argumentation traditions. Hu associated these tendencies with the foundational philosophies of Taoism, Confucianism, and Moism respectively.

Three great leaders, Lao Tze, Confucius, and Mo Ti, arose within the brief space of less than two hundred years (about 570-420 B. C.) and laid the foundation of Chinese philosophy for all the centuries to come. All three can only be best understood in their respective relation to the tottering Sinitic religion and to the critical and skeptical atmosphere of their times. Broadly speaking, Lao Tze stood at the extreme Left in the attitude towards the old religion; Confucius occupied the Centre with strong leanings towards the Left; and Mo Ti, founder of the Mo Sect, represented the Conservative Right. Lao Tse was a rebel in religion and a revolutionary in philosophy; Confucius was a Humanist and an Agnostic; and Mo Ti was a religious leader who sought to save the old Sinitic religion by purifying it and giving it a new significance.²⁵

Each tendency is here discussed in light of what Hu understands to be its major intellectual contributions and limitations to the construction of a modern form of pragmatic logic. In his investigation into the ancient development of Chinese logic, Hu finds many beneficial aspects of these tendencies.

Whenever China had sunk deep into irrationality, superstition, and otherworldliness, it was always the naturalism of Lao Tzu [Lao Zi] and the classical Taoists, or the humanism of Confucius, or a combination of the two that arose to rescue her from her sluggish slumbers.²⁶

However, he also finds that none of them are adequate to the task of developing a modern form of thought that can see China into a new age. Further, not one of these tendencies has escaped molestation from the others. Some of the secondary amalgamations produced new contributions to the development of logic and others created new barriers.

After discussing the resources of the foundational philosophies, Hu's theory of pragmatic logic is pieced together along with the ideas he pulled from subsequent periods of cultural and intellectual development, such as Neo-Moism and Neo-Confucianism, when the grounds of their parent philosophy underwent some change significant to the development of logic in ancient China and Hu's agenda for logic in modern China. Contributions are discussed with regard for the philosophical significance Hu Shi attributed to them in relation to his agenda for cultural reform, its limitations in light of the reform agenda, and finally, the aspects of each contribution that Hu thought should be cultivated and practically engaged in a modern theory of logic specifically, and more generally, in practical communication.

Taoist Order

The tendencies of thought that arise from the Taoist philosophical tradition are critical but passive and communicated in the oral tradition. Lao Zi "revolted against the anthropomorphic and teleological conception of a Supreme God;" he tried to replace it by a reverence for the innocent state of nature. He maintained that the problems of his day, like corruption and violent crime, were the results of a fictitious social structure constructed against the ways of nature. He believed the problems could only be solved if people were to do away with the unnatural constructs of society and return to a natural and innocent state, where people lived according to *Tao*, that is, the pattern natural to their existence. When people stop trying to live according to unnatural structures of social organization they will stop suffering. Conversely, the longer people live unnaturally, the longer they will suffer, because they will be acting against *Tao* and *Tao* does not yield.

Lao Zi was a critic, a doubter, and a rebel; Hu Shi calls him "the Protagoras of ancient China."²⁷ As an individual figure, Hu saw Lao Zi as beneficial to the advancement of logic in

ancient China because he was a bold critic of the established social order. He scrutinized accepted traditions and institutions, and thus, served a critical function akin to the Sophists of ancient Greece. Hu also counted certain aspects of the Taoist philosophy as contributions to the development of logic. The idea of *tao* was chief among these beneficial aspects. *Tao* essentially represents a method of conducting one's daily affairs in accord with the varying energies of nature. In total, however, Lao Zi's philosophy lacked the essential elements of logical theory. The philosophy was too "destructive and iconoclastic;" Lao Zi was too much of a "philosophical nihilist."²⁸ The critical aspect is good, Hu maintained, but if the destructive energy is taken too far, and not directed into a constructive medium, criticism is unable to advance logic or pragmatic reform.

Criticism: The First Transvaluation

The first major tendency in Chinese thought developed out of the critical attitude of Taoism. This tendency has remained a recurrent theme in the progression of Chinese thought and it is the aspect of Chinese thought that should be thanked for making the twentieth century period of Renaissance possible, same as all periods of Renaissance that came before. Hu likens the tendency of criticism to Nietzsche's concept of transvaluation, which he described as a signature characteristic of the modern age.²⁹ Transvaluation is a process of question and transforming the way values are determined and understood. It calls for the questioning of every accepted value and is found in any age of major social change. The transvaluation of Taoism was triggered by ancient China's shift from the age of poetry to the age of logic, when figures like Lao Zi criticized society and wanted to change the way people lived from day to day.

The time of the old Sinitic religion, the religion of ancient China that worshipped a Supreme God (developed as *Tien* or Heaven), the spirits of the dead, the forces of nature, belief in good and evil retribution, and a belief in a variety of divinations, based on the daily life experience in an agrarian or nomadic society,³⁰ had long passed. So too had the stable age of the great Zhou dynasty, from 11th century BC to 7th century BC, when social life was highly ritualized and social relations were regulated down to the smallest of details.

After the fall of the Zhou, the imperial state turned dark. Hu writes that it began to "decay... under weak and wicked emperors."³¹ The poets record the desperate conditions of the times:

You awe-inspiring Ministers of State, why are you so unjust? Heaven is multiplying its afflictions; the people are grumbling, and yet you do not correct nor bemoan yourselves!³²

The strict social system of the Zhou dynasty had held society stable for centuries. "The Emperor, or 'Son of Heaven,'" Hu explains, "was not only the temporal but also the spiritual head of the empire, ruling in the name of Heaven to which he alone was privileged to sacrifice."³³ The emperor was lord atop a feudal pyramid. In descending order below the emperor there were "five ranks of vassal lords, the Grand Officers, the knights (sze), and the common people," all of whom were "governed by rules prescribing inter-class and intra-class relations and duties."³⁴ This system had kept society stable when it was head by a strong and benevolent emperor. Yet led, as Hu says, by weak and wicked leaders after the Zhou dynasty fell, the entire system turned weak and wicked in turn. While poets like the one mentioned above continued to appeal to the righteousness of the old order, other poets believed they were experiencing the disdain of Heaven itself. Hu mentions one such poet "who, in bitter distress and despair," acquiesced that his fate must be the unfortunate "decree of Providence."³⁵

The people are now in peril, In vain they look to Heaven:
All is dark and dumb.
Let its determination be fixed
And there is none whom it will not overcome.
There is the great God
Does He hate anyone?³⁶

Lao Zi enters the scene as part of this fatalistic crowd. The tradition of critical doubt in the Chinese intellectual tradition, Hu maintains, began with “the spirit of courageous doubt so early manifested in the postulation of a naturalistic conception of the universe by Lao Tzu and the philosophical Taoists.”³⁷ Lao Zi likely would have responded to this poet by saying that God neither hates nor loves nor cares at all. Heaven, for Lao Zi, is indifferent. He was a “Sophist” like the “Greek Sophists with whom we have been made familiar through the Platonic dialogues,” Hu writes.³⁸ His philosophy was fueled by skepticism and creative doubt. He juxtaposed the warped and malfunctioning imperial order of his time with life earlier, during the time of the old Sinitic faith, before the detailed rules and regulations that now bound the Chinese common people to the pain of their maltreated lot. The old Sinitic religion considered only what was relevant in daily experience. The people lived on the land and experienced the cruelty of the elements very much as if they were part of the land. This sentiment had much more fidelity than the conception of a benevolent Son of Heaven in the world Lao Zi knew. “Nature,” he says, “is not benevolent: it treats all beings as if they were mere grass and dogs.”³⁹ He thought the existing political and social hierarchy was “foolishly civilized and refined and artificial.”⁴⁰ Worse, not only was the social organization contrived, but it had also become dangerous to those who partook in its foolishness. Hu explains how Lao Zi uses the “Master Executioner” as an analogy for “nature”:

There is always the Master Executioner who kills. To undertake executions for the Master Executioner is like hewing wood for the Master Carpenter. Whoever undertakes to hew wood for the Master Carpenter rarely escapes injuring his own hand.⁴¹

Essentially, Lao Zi maintained that nature will steamroll anyone who stands in the way of its inevitable path. The best state to live in, Lao Zi maintained, was a state of non-interference, where people live in accord with the movements of nature, or in other words, without resistance.

As natural a course as this may be, humans had overcomplicated the world with institutions and regulated social relations. They now had to strip away centuries of artificiality and find a path back to simplicity. Much like Plato’s Allegory of the cave, the process of acclimating to a type of existence never before experienced would be jarring and difficult. This subversive and revolutionary element of Lao Zi’s philosophy lays the foundation for constructive philosophies. As Hu explains, “the age of Sophistry was fading into the age of Logic.”⁴²

This idea of re-evaluating social institutions is essential to the constructive form of logical consciousness Hu is trying to develop. Courageous doubt is an essential aspect of Lao Zi’s philosophy that Hu wants to reinvigorate. Hu wanted to use this spirit to nurture in contemporary Chinese intellectualism some of the spirit of skepticism passed down from the Chinese Protagoras, the rebel Lao Zi. Same as in Greek Sophistry, Hu Shi understood that nihilistic deconstructive thinking is necessary to clear away the way for something new.

Tao: The “Native Innocence”

Tao is a significant element in Chinese thought because it represents two important tendencies in Chinese thought: 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 the associate of most of the constructive elements of Taoist philosophy. The second tendency is the associate of most of the destructive elements of Taoist philosophy. For people to shake away the artificialities of life and successfully set down a path of authentic and simple living they would need a method of living, or what Lao Zi called a *tao*. The *tao* is the natural course of life determined by one's nature given purpose. Hu offers a commentary from 3rd century BC that he finds particularly accurate.

Nature produces no grass for dogs, but dogs eat the grass. Nature produces no dogs for men, but men eat the dogs. Nature does nothing for anyone, but everyone seeks to be fit for his own purposes. When that is realized, all is well.⁴³

The idea of *tao*, Hu notes, has grown complicated over the years. He describes it simply as a "method; a way of individual life, of social contact, of public activity and government."⁴⁴ Tao is not the way of nature itself, but rather, Tao is the way of acting in accord with nature so as to not struggle against a force infinitely stronger than you. To explain another way, the Taoist conception of nature is a lot like the western notion of natural laws. The universal law of gravitation, for example, says that a force called gravity pulls objects toward the earth and causes them to accelerate. As a natural law, gravity is morally indifferent and acts on every object irrespective of what kind of object it is. Gravity does not acknowledge any difference between a person, a dog, or a boat; gravity will act like gravity regardless of what it acts on. Therefore, human beings, breakable as we are, must respect gravity lest the indifferent pull smash us into the ground. This conclusion is much like the Tao, it is a way of life that coincides with nature.

For Lao Zi, a good life is synonymous with a simple life, free of fictitious constructs and regulations and a good government is a government that goes unnoticed and does not meddle in the daily affairs of its constituents. Lao Zi's philosophy contributes to the humanistic aim of the Chinese Renaissance because, even though it is so iconoclastic, it aims at a technique for living peaceably in the world. He was like other Chinese intellectuals of antiquity, in that he was "primarily interested in a happy, adequate, and efficient life here on earth."⁴⁵ Taoist intellectualism sought to directly confront the pressing problems of everyday life by returning to the more simplistic time characterized by the old Sinitic faith. In this sense the connection between Lao Zi's philosophy and Renaissance humanism is clearly visible. "Humanism," as Kreis explains, "directly and indirectly revived the pagan scale of virtues."⁴⁶

Nihilism: The Undermining of "Self-Activity"

The aspect of thought implied by *Tao*, that people tend toward the path of least resistance, is the bedrock of most of Taoism's nihilistic qualities. This tendency of thought is detrimental to Hu's agenda for pragmatic logic because it undermines individual choice and willful activity, or what John Dewey referred to as "self-activity." When Hu Shi hosted John Dewey's visit to China from 1919 to 1921, Dewey advocated for the experimental method in education, which Hu writes, "shattered our belief in a rigid and uniform educational system, and challenges us to carry on innovations and experiments without which an educational system is lifeless."⁴⁷ Dewey pointed out the social aim of education and explained how an education in the scientific method develops the "natural powers" and "self-activity" of the child. It was imperative to the Chinese Renaissance that the Taoist concept of "*wu-wei*, of doing nothing."⁴⁸ This aspect of Taoist philosophy had been spawned by the rebel zeal of "Lao Zi," who Hu explains, "doubted almost everything... he doubted the benevolence of Heaven... he doubted the efficacy of war and resistance to evil... he doubted the usefulness of too many laws and too much government... he doubted the utility of all the artificiality and over-refinement civilization."⁴⁹ Hu saw all of this

doubt as good and absolutely necessary to the reform of Chinese intellectualism and culture. However, to the extent that this doubt went too far and undercut constructive change, to the extent that is destroyed but did not create in turn, this doubt was detrimental to the reformers' desires to build a modern China in place of the old civilization. Destruction without creativity, Hu maintains, results in the stagnancy of civilization. The state of *wu-wei*, Hu maintained, is a state of "over-simplicity" that must be gotten rid of. Lao Zi's philosophical answer to the dilemma of his day was to erase the defunct social and political organization, and then to remain there, doing nothing to manage one's interactions with and in the world.

Hu gives an example of the specific sort of risk that is inherent in the drive for over-simplification. He explains that Lao Zi understood the act of naming things, like objects and roles, as something that arose with institutions. In accord with Hu's pragmatic understanding of names, Lao Zi said that names were designed to give order to the world and help people avoid perils. However, Lao Zi continued to explain that as man-made, unnatural constructions, names also create over ambition and strife.

We name the things that we create. We create things to temporarily alleviate the stresses of disruption. However, each disruption begets more disruptions, which result in more categories; more artificially defined relations, labels, and socially constructed things. Hu explains, "such 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." Lao Zi maintains that things like "benevolence," "wisdom," "knowledge," "filial piety," and "loyalty" are the result of an unnatural, disorderly, inharmonious, corrupted life. In other words, "righteousness" and "innocence" cannot coexist. Righteousness is not born alone; its companion is corruption. When people feel the need to start distinguishing between the righteous and the corrupt, innocence is pushed from the frame. "When the world knows beauty to be beauty, there is ugliness... When 'wisdom' and 'knowledge' appear, there is great hypocrisy."⁵⁰ To counter the problems that had been created by names, Lao Zi advocated a reversal of naming to return to a natural system of "namelessness." Lao Zi elevated the natural state of "namelessness" to such a degree that it made names seem wholly degrading and useless. All in all, the idea of devaluing names so totally so as to achieve complete namelessness was too deconstructive for Hu. However, the fact that Lao Zi was talking about names at all, was for Hu, evidence that Chinese intellectualism was beginning to pass from the undisciplined stage of cynicism and entering an age where culture and society were subject to a disciplined kind of examination and criticism.

Confucian Humanism

The Confucian philosophy gave rise to bureaucratic and classical tendencies of thought steeped in traditions of high literacy. Confucianism, for Hu Shi, was 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 Confucian text, *Book of Change*, as the most significant of Confucianism's contributions to the development of logical method in ancient China, and subsequently, to his own program for cultural reform. Conversely, Hu understood the conservative focus of Confucianism to be one of the most detrimental aspects of the Chinese philosophical tradition. The regressive aim of Confucian conservatism, he maintained, runs counter to the objectives of a modern pragmatic reform.

Confucius was not a common kind of philosopher, "he was concerned with drawing up a set of rules for human conduct... [not] the elaboration of theories."⁵¹ This aspect of the

Confucianism shaped the philosophy into bureaucratic form. He was more tempered in his criticism than Lao Tze. “His philosophy was a compromise” between the naturalistic influence of the sixth century and the cautious attitude toward traditional values he maintained as a statesman.⁵² “Whereas Lao Tze’s naturalism was radically nihilistic,” Confucianism can be called a philosophy of moderation.⁵³ It favored the stability of consistency, and thus, promoted a highly stable bureaucracy as a structure of authority. Legitimacy of the authority came from a literary tradition revolving around universal original ideas recorded by the sages of antiquity. Due to the reverence Confucius attributed to the history and institutions of the literary tradition, he was called the “father of Chinese history.”⁵⁴

Skepticism: “Doubt is Rarely Purely Negative”

“Doubt is Rarely Purely Negative. It leads to inquiries which in most cases lead in turn to positive reconstructions.”⁵⁵ The positive kind of doubt is exemplified by what Hu calls, “Confucian skepticism,” part of the “‘Socratic Tradition’ of Confucius—the tradition of free discussion, criticism, and intellectual honesty.”⁵⁶ Unlike the Taoist style of criticism, intended to fully deconstruct all systems of social organization and social naming, the process of critique involved in Confucian skepticism was but the first step in a larger constructive process. First, Confucianism sought to critique and deconstruct, but then, to re-*form* whatever had been broken down.

Confucian skepticism asserted “the right to doubt” that became part of the Chinese philosophical tradition with the courageous rebellion of Lao Zi, Hu explains. Confucius said that some things, like death, fall outside of our ability to know. We should not claim to know about topics we cannot know, he insisted. Such skepticism held the focus of society on the secular world and prevented the formation of metaphysical beliefs, such as belief in an afterlife. This wholly secular focus worked to further simplify the old Sinitic religion that already had little mythology or ritual but maintained some important practices, like practices of burial and ancestor worship. Confucian skepticism demanded that one “maintain an attitude of courageous doubt even in matters traditionally regarded as sacred or sacrosanct.”⁵⁷

Logical Theory of Change: Scientific Roots in Divination

Confucian determinism is rooted in the ancient belief in divination, which was the “logical outcome of the naturalistic conception of the universe,” Hu explains.⁵⁸ The concept of determinism maintained that things happen according to fate, or *ming*, which literally means “an order or ordaining, which had come to mean ‘what has been allotted’ to the individual.”⁵⁹ This belief maintains that man should not be concerned with trying to appease the gods because his lot has been pre-ordained by Heaven’s hand; now his main concern is abiding by his lot.⁶⁰

The tradition of divination informed man of his particular position in the world. If a culture has a history of divination, the culture has a history of records, which Hu translates to a history of chronology, history, and of literature. “This, too, marked the beginning of literary education and of an intellectual class.”⁶¹ This tradition is also a telling aspect of history because it is one of the first places where the roles of priests, scientists, and philosophers are clearly merged. They read the oracles and interpreted them as guides for moral behavior. They looked into the skies and made the calendar. They recorded their findings and they maintained the structure of their class.⁶²

While Confucian class organization led to the bureaucratic tendency of thought, Confucian intellectual organization accounts for the constructive aspect of the Confucian

philosophy. Confucius was responding to the same conditions as Lao Zi, roughly his contemporary. Confucius attributed the “moral perversity and degradation of his age” to a “long and gradual process of intellectual disorganization, decadence of beliefs and convictions, and relaxation of duties and relations.”⁶³ Like Lao Zi, Confucius conceived of change as continuous and unfolding, as a natural sequence of events moving away from the simple toward the complex. Social disorder accompanies intellectual disorder, or in other words, wrong practice follows from wrong belief.

Discussions of logical theory were naturally attendant to the Confucian conception of change. Hu explains this connection via the Confucian campaign for the rectification of names. Like the Taoist movement toward namelessness, Confucian rectification was a critical campaign premised on the idea that institutions and relational roles no longer functioned as originally intended. However, rather than aim at a state of namelessness and non-action, the process of rectification consisted of re-evaluation, intellectual re-organization, and ultimately, aimed to reform. First, one must determine the original meaning of a name, free of the baggage it has accumulated throughout the years. Second, the political or social institution represented by the name must be re-evaluated in light of the uncovered meaning. Third, institutions should be realigned with their names, meaning, if it is revealed 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. In all, Hu saw the entire Confucian program, the reform oriented process of critiquing, judging, and molding in response to social disorder, as an essentially practical affair. Judgments made about the original meaning and value of the name “tell whither things are tending, point to what is good and what is evil, and thereby ‘inspire the activities of the world.’”⁶⁴ To reform on the basis of names, is to change the system of practice be re-working the structure of belief.

Hu also saw signs of China’s “age of constructive thinking” in the parallel he saw between Confucian and Platonic logic.⁶⁵

It has been said that the Platonic logic originated as a reaction against the Heraclitean doctrine of change; that, impressed by the all-pervasiveness of change, Plato sought and found stability in the changeless ‘ideas.’ It is significant that the book which, in my opinion, contains most of the basic doctrines of the Confucian logic is known as the *Yi*, or Book of Change.⁶⁶

This book has not been recognized for the contributions it makes to the development of logic in ancient China because for centuries, Hu writes, “occultism and the moralisticism... have prepossessed the minds of the critics... [and] obscured the meaning of the book.”⁶⁷ Like Platonic logic, discussions of logic in the Book of Change connect intellectual stability to changeless ideals. Stability is achieved when there is intellectual organization around the ancient sages interpretations of the *Eight Kwas*. Confucius says that “the Eight Kwas may be used to determine all good and evil, and therefrom arises the great complexity of life.”⁶⁸ The best of the ancient sages deciphered the *Kwas* and recorded each interpretation as “a *hsiang* [*xiang*]... an image or ‘idea’ which one forms of a thing” each meaning they interpreted from the universe.⁶⁹ Having no means other than language, the sages of antiquity expressed the *xiang*, or original ideas, in the form of names.

The theory of *xiang*, original ideas, impacts society in two extremely significant ways. First, since the sages impressions of the universe and the perfect ideals are held in names, language, and the keeping of language, becomes a very important affair. In the Classical Language, a scholar will find all the tools needed for intellectual reorganization; authority is

predicated on moral strength, which is obtained by vigorous study of the words and meanings of the sages. Classical literature becomes the corridor to “the simple,” unadulterated meanings of names in the past. Since scholarship in the classics means access to the moral authority of the sages, scholarship in the classics becomes the gateway to social power. Second, since instruments, customs, and institutions are developed as social representations, or implementations, of these names, historical record of these developments becomes extremely important tool for social reform and intellectual reorganization. Hu notes that for Confucius, the history of these developments is a record of the attempts people have made to realize the “‘ideas’ or perfect heavenly ideals” into the things of practical life. Intellectual organization is achieved when the things align most closely with their ideals.

The arts of writing became inextricably linked with the arts of ruling in traditional society because of the importance of names and histories in society’s moral and intellectual organization. Following from the original premise of Confucian scholarship, classical scholarship was employed to govern behavior by organizing the belief. The intangible quality of the original ideas, *xiang*, behind the name of each object, device, or institution guaranteed the possibility for revision depending on the state’s political or cultural need. The original ideas are by nature complex and elusive, being the impressions of wise men from antiquity who understood aspects of the universe that only few have been privy to. Likewise, after centuries of reinterpretation and reorganization, the original idea is sure to become even more difficult to locate and decipher. Still, once understood, one could never be sure they had interpreted the idea behind the name correctly. To understand how elusive the original ideas must have seemed to classical scholars, imagine for a moment a large gallery in an old English manor house. It begins at the entrance and extends deep into the center of the building. The walls are lined with great commissioned portraits from each generation. Each portrait is larger and more ornate than the one before. Each member of the family is depicted more handsomely and with more regalia than the one before. Far into the house, long after your trip through the gallery began, a salon comes into view at the end of the hall. You continue moving toward it, but you can never get quite close enough to take stock of who is in the room. The salon at the end of the hall is like the highest realm of our human world, where the wisest sages of antiquity gained access to the meaning of the phenomena of the universe. The figures in the salon are like the names the sages gave to the ideas. The names are the sages’ best attempts to translate the ideas of heaven into the language of humans. The portraits spread out along the walls are the generations of interpretations of the name, each one representing the values and ambitions of its position social, economic, and political time.

Conservatism: Blocking Change with Deductive Habits of Mind

It has been justly said that the greatest obstacle to progress in China is the deductive habit of mind; that is, the willingness to accept things on authority, to acquiesce in ideas and ideals without questioning whence they are derived and whether they are true or not. A quotation from the classics is sufficient argument for national policy, and a serious saying of Confucius is good enough to justify the existence of any obsolete custom or institution. This habit is the most formidable enemy to innovation and progress.⁷⁰

While the Confucian program for reform contributed to the constructive turn in philosophy, the constructivist elements were ultimately overshadowed by the philosophy’s conservative aim. Even the campaign to rectify names, which originates from the discussions of logic that Hu attributes Confucianism’s biggest contributions to, exhibits the strength of

Confucianism's regressive tendencies. The critique and judgment of the name was the only practical aspect of rectification. Unlike the pragmatic kind of reform that Hu advocated, where problems are assessed in light of their historical bearings and situational context, and then remedied by actual changes in the bearing of history or contemporary context, the success of rectification could not be checked against the situational context. One cannot judge the efficacy of restoring a name to its originally meaning by checking to see if a practical problem has been remedied. After all, social disorder will persist so long as intellectual disorder persists and while restoring one name to its original meaning is a step in the right direction, it is hardly enough make a practical difference in such a disorderly world. Furthermore, rectification is never complete. As change is a continual process of unfolding from the simple to the complex, every arduous step back toward the simple is countered by another shift somewhere else toward the complex.

Since the rectification of names is never a finished reform, classical scholarship must also rely on the study of history to direct social order. Hu explains that it is because of the traditional philosophy of history that "histories are entitled 'mirrors.'"⁷¹ The implication, he explains, is that reflections of the past can shed light on conflict in the present.⁷² The present is understood to be a reflection of the past in the same way that an adult reflects the child they once were. Some fundamental aspects of the adult and child, such as fingerprints, remain exactly the same. Some features of the adult and child maintain a similar appearance, such as the shape of their lips. Other features change over the course of time, testifying to the transition from childhood to adulthood, like creases in the forehead, a hardened look in the eyes, and worn skin. We could extend this analogy even further to describe the ambition of Confucian reform. Confucius "conceived of human history as a continuous process of gradual development from crude ways of living to complex forms of civilization... it is therefore necessary, in order to understand the complex and confused institutions and activities of the present, to begin with a study of the earlier and simpler forms of the past."⁷³

Hu explains that investigation of the past would be good if it was used to determine what lessons are applicable and helpful to understanding the complexities of the present circumstance. However, for Confucius, the reason to investigate the past was to "manifest what has come before," to turn away from the complex and retreat to the simple. This regressive tendency, Hu maintained, must be excised from modern Chinese intellectualism. A culture should not be forced to stand still despite the continual movement of the world around it.

The Confucian doctrine of determinism, however, held that the less a culture changes, the happier the people of that culture will be. Like Lao Zi, Confucius understood change as a continual process from simple to complex forms of civilization and social organization. Also like Lao Zi, Confucius would call the road of complexities the "easy" way; the road back to the "simple" is difficult. For Lao Zi, a return to the simple meant a complete return to nature, the complete deconstruction of all social constructions. For Confucius, a return to the simple meant vigorous intellectual reorganization, a complete reshaping of the ideas from their morphed forms back to their original forms.

Even though Confucianism introduced constructivist elements into Chinese intellectualism, it is important to point out that Confucianism, like Taoism, is essentially a passive philosophy in the sense of its final aim. Both Taoism and Confucianism wanted to end the disorder that plagued society in their time. Both philosophies tried to determine a method of limiting the kinds of disruption that seemed to antagonize and play into this disruption. Confucius maintained that "all change... arises from motion, which is produced by the pushing

of that which is active against that which is passive,” Hu writes.⁷⁴ Thus, for Confucius, to be “passive” is to remain simple and close to the original ideas. In this idea of change, the “passive” is natural, good, and difficult. The “active” is the unnatural, bad, and easy. All of the other major elements of the Confucian philosophy must be considered in this context. Confucian education gave the society access to the original ideas that all things should closely adhere to. Further, since Confucian determinism maintained that “wealth and honors are in the hands of Providence,”⁷⁵ and since Confucian skepticism prevented belief in an afterlife, all of man’s energy should be focused into the one thing over which he has any control, which is, keeping man’s institutions aligned with their ideal purpose.

Mohist Pragmatism

The philosophy and religion of Moism gave rise to tendencies of thought that encouraged behaviors of conformity. The Mohist philosophy also developed critical tendencies of thought with argumentative traditions. The polemic machinery of Moism was engineered to counter the protests of atheist rebels and agnostic reformers with a united religion of altruism. Mo Zi “openly condemned the Confucians as ‘atheists’ who denied the existence of gods and ghosts and yet ceremoniously practised all the rites of ancestral worship!”⁷⁶ He said it was useless to practice the rituals premised on belief in the gods, but at the same time, deny the gods. “That is as meaningless as throwing a fishing net where you are sure to find no fish!”⁷⁷ With the intention of defending his theism against the atheists and agnostics that Mo Zi “invented the logic of three-fold argument,” which maintained the importance of history and the sages of antiquity, but which also developed the importance of practicality. In short, the most pragmatic of the leaders in the foundational Chinese philosophies, Mo Zi, was also the most conservative. For him, there was nothing inherently impractical about theism. Theism became impractical when theistic practices were maintained in the absence of belief; at that point, how could the practices serve any utility at all?

Mo Zi was a great religious leader and reformer born around 10 years after the death of Confucius (490-415 B.C.).⁷⁸ Hu likes Mo Zi as a character; he explains him as the type of person who was strong enough, and could endure enough, to advance a different kind of thinking. In particular, Mo Zi aimed at reducing doubt.

Mo Tzu doubted the doubters, and wanted to restore faith and belief in the traditional religion of the people--the religion of God's Spirit. He believed that all evil came from doubt, from freedom of thought and belief, especially from diversity and standards of right and wrong.

Hu understands Mohist thought as very similar to utilitarian and pragmatic thought.⁷⁹ It focuses on practical questions about the benefits of things and ideas in light of present day circumstances. As a historical figure, Hu maintains that Mo Zi represented important characteristics that create leaders in heavy concentrations and create modern scientifically minded individuals in lower concentrations.

Mo Zi rebelled against Confucian ritualism and formalism, the atheism and agnosticism begot by Confucian skepticism, and the doctrine of determinism, and most importantly, “he rebelled against their attitudinarianism which refused to consider the practical consequences of beliefs, theories, and institutions.”⁸⁰ Mo Zi worried that people would lose the capacity for practical judgment if they did not exercise it. He believed that Confucian naming tended to bring about this sort of regression by keeping the intellectual and ruling class focused on the classical literature written by the sages rather than the practical world surrounding them. The rulers would

continue to be drawn into the literature until they became very distant from society and its problems.

By constantly confining one's mind to defining and re-defining general principles without testing their validity by examining the kind of conduct and character they are fitted to produce, one gradually loses one's sense of proportion and valuation and tends to 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.'⁸¹

Both Mo Zi and Hu believed that knowledge involves the process of choice; knowledge is not related to the ability to name, but the ability to choose, to make a practical judgment.

Practical Reasoning: "The Best Antidote"

The Confucian deductive habit of mind, that accepted the prevalence of a truth without practical assessment, disabled the constructive potential of Confucian principles of intellectual reorganization. The best doubt to the deductive habit of mind, Hu said, "is found in the scientific attitude which seeks to find out truth for oneself and refuses to [believe] in anything without sufficient evidence of its credibility."⁸² The difference between Confucianism and Moism is essentially the difference between what and how.⁸³ While Confucianism asked *what is good government?* Moism said, *we know what good government is; how do we make it happen?*

Applicability of the Confucian model to Hu's reform includes criticism of the current institution and investigation into its origin but it cannot extend any further because the Confucian model did not allow for ideas or institutions to be revised into anything other than what they were. The Mohist model realizes that the original idea of an institution was conceived in relation to the circumstances of the originating day. Thus, the principle should stay the same but not necessarily the institution.⁸⁴ Hu uses the following passage from Mo Zi to show where the Mohist method separated from Confucianism.

Now a blind man may say, 'That which shines with brilliancy is white, and that which is like soot is black.' Even those who can see cannot reject these definitions. But if you place both white and black things before the blind man and ask him to choose the one from the other, then he fails. Therefore I say, 'A blind man knows not white from black, not because he cannot name them, but because he cannot choose them.'⁸⁵

Confucianism does not consider the practical results when setting a course for the ideal. Moism considers the ideal, considers the practical results, and then, sets a course. This shift is important for the consideration of practical consequence, but also because it incorporates the aspect of choice into the philosophical equation. One must consider the possible outcomes, weigh them against the ideal, and make a judgment about the relative value of each. For Hu, this is a great stride toward the scientific spirit.

For proper judgment, Mo Zi advanced three laws of reasoning. First, reasoning must have a "basis or foundation," which can be derived from studying "the experiences of the wisest men of the past."⁸⁶ The second law of reasoning held that one must take a "general survey."⁸⁷ 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."⁸⁸ 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."⁸⁹

As the first law of reasoning shows, Mo Zi continued the respect for history demonstrated in the Confucian philosophy. However, he revamped it and changed it into something much

more favorable to Hu's idea of logic and the scientific spirit. While the history could lend us theories, a theory was useless unless it was proven to be compatible with "the facts of experience."⁹⁰ Mo Zi contended that the problem with society didn't have anything to do with how far it had drifted from history; rather, the problems are the result of condemning belief in fatalism and the attendant belief that only the sages of antiquity who had ever, or would ever, get a glimpse of the larger meaning and ideal arrangement of the fated world. Determinism, he said, does nothing good for society. It makes officials dishonest and leaves rulers unprotected. It makes people lazy and irresponsible. Most important, determinism undermines people's ability to learn through experience.

The second law of reasoning called for a survey of the actual experiences of people living in the contemporary world. "This reliance on direct observation was historically of no small significance," Hu writes.⁹¹ Although this was but a first attempt at empiricism in Chinese intellectualism and had a flawed method that relied too heavily on easily fallible forms of sense observation, Hu was enthusiastic about what it meant for the development of logic. By advocating for a process of learning based on direct observation, Mo Zi was protesting the "ready-made knowledge" that Confucianism revolved around. It said that learning is something that must happen in the experiential world.

Universal Laws of Action: Throwing the Net at the Fish

Interestingly, Mo Zi's motivation for developing the art of polemics, which accounts for the model of practical reasoning discussed before and the Mo Zi's conception of universal laws of action discussed here, was to refute the destructive thinking of the atheists and agnostics like Lao Zi and Confucius respectively and to found the Mohist religion. It is actually Mo Zi's doctrine of altruism, the most supreme of all universal laws and the foundation of the Moism religion that accounts for the furthest reaching agenda of Hu's reform. Likewise, the test of practicality for the universal law of altruism is very similar to Hu's understanding of the principles of democracy. "Democracy... is no more and no less than the sum-total of all the democratized and democratizing forces, social, economic, moral and intellectual."⁹² The principle of democracy, in other words, must be practically resilient in all veins of cultural life: social, economic, moral, and intellectual. For Hu, the source of democracy's practical resilience is much the same as Mo Zi's explanation of the founding principle of Moism, the universal benefit of altruism. Mo Zi, Hu writes,

Was essentially a believer in one Supreme God who wills, feels, and watches over his human world with unlimited love. 'The will of God is love,—love for all and without distinction.' This was the greatest contribution to the history of Chinese religion. He was trying to purify the old religion and give it a new meaning which he found in the idea of 'love for all.'⁹³

Mo Zi worked hard to disprove the Confucian belief in determinism. He thought it was impractical to practice the rituals of Confucianism without believing in their religious foundations. To do so, Mo Zi said, "is as meaningless as throwing a fishing net where you are sure to find no fish!"⁹⁴ Moist faith was conceived of as something truly practical in the respect that it could be shown to improve the lives of those who partook in it according to the Mo Zi's three laws of reasoning. When something can be proven practically beneficial time and time again, like the altruistic foundation of the Mohist faith, it can be called a universal law of action. For Mo Zi, the process of learning, or of building knowledge, revolved around developing universal laws of action. The laws are like rules of habit, or general principles that act as

guidelines to reasoning, choice, and action. “To perpetuate a general principle,” Hu explains, “is to work it into our habits, to generalize as widely as possible, to establish it as a universal law.”⁹⁵ Hu credits Mo Zi with the beginning of logic in China, and notes, “Truly, as John Dewey has long ago pointed out, logic always arose as an instrument for the defense of a faith that was in danger of being overthrown.”⁹⁶

Narrowness: Another Enemy to Innovation

Hu called the willingness to accept things on authority alone, “the most formidable enemy to innovation and progress.”⁹⁷ Also quite detrimental is to employ logic as a tool of validation or to require practical evidence but accept too narrow a range of evidence. Hu offers Dewey’s critique of employing logic to either *vivify* or *validate* rather than to *criticize* and *revise*. The kinds of judgment intended to bolster rationalistic philosophies rather than to continually alter pragmatic theories on the grounds of experience, Hu explains, is not conducive to the scientific sensibility. On the one hand, logic applied like this merely verifies a decision already made, and on the other hand, it is too short sighted.

He explains that Mo Zi did not always acknowledge short term verse long term consequences, “the difference between that which is immediately practical and that the practical worth of which cannot be immediately seen.”⁹⁸ Fundamentally this problem Hu has with the philosophy of Mo Zi is the same problem he has had with all of Chinese philosophy leading up to this point. He understands that there is a leap of faith, inherent in science, that discoveries will be beneficial down the road even if they register no immediate viability. This is a pragmatic assertion that allows for investment in science—*I don’t see the consequences yet but I will know them when I do*. Further, Hu maintained that there are practical consequences that have to do with the aesthetic and larger sense of life. These are consequences of quality that should not be viewed or judged in terms of instrumental value—*while I don’t understand the value of the things I see right in front of me, I know that they are of a large and encompassing value*.

Pragmatism, for Hu, refers to practical consequences that are both near and far reaching. He criticizes the pragmatists of China’s past for defining practical consequences with too narrow a scope. Just like Hu is trying to develop the more nuanced and inclusive conception of science as a “spirit” that touches all aspects of daily life and thought, he is also trying to introduce a more mature and expansive conception of pragmatism with which reformers will be willing to introduce the kinds of changes that do not promise quick returns, but that stand on strong grounds and indicate a strong likelihood that they will reshape culture in broader and more lasting forms. Hence, when Hu critiques the pragmatists of China’s past, in his critiques we can see how he is choosing to define pragmatism for modern China.

Hu’s critique of Mo Zi’s short sightedness is very telling of the difficulties Hu faced in pursuit of intellectual reform. When practicality was mistaken for immediate utility, even purported proponents of pragmatic reform would mistakenly judge knowledge based on the exceedingly limited criteria of knowable benefit. As an advocate for gradual reform, the kind that is founded in tendencies of thought, encouraged by institutional changes, and only becomes visible much later, Hu needed people to understand that the practical benefits of the scientific spirit are rolling, the causal line is not always immediately apparent. The Mohist structure of practical reasoning calls for people to act based on an informed premise, the accuracy of which is revealed in the immediate wake of the action. Hu asks people to act on the basis of an informed premise, with faith in knowledge and the future.

Hu's Pragmatic Theory of Logic

Reform, for Hu, should be a gradual process. He equated the pattern of pragmatic thought with gradualism; it is not acutely utilitarian and it does not expect grand, sweeping, and immediate changes, the likes of a revolution. It has faith that practical reasoning and procedural science will bring forth benefits and it understands that some of the benefits will not be immediately recognized for what they are or could one day be. These characteristics form the general tenor of the pragmatic mind Hu hoped to develop. He would begin development on the grounds of the traditional tendencies of thought discussed in this chapter. Then he endeavored to add various contributions from later installments of the foundational philosophies, like neo-Mohism and neo-Confucianism.

From the traditional tendencies of thought Hu's pragmatic theory of logic included the following characteristics: the ability to doubt and criticize, attention to one's situation and immediate practical consequences, also a far-reaching vision of consequences, an appreciation of history as a resource for re-construction, and an ability to form knowledge from various forms of reasoning. From 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 thoughts on pragmatic thought were certainly informed by the Western logical tradition and it is plain to see that the characteristics listed above are all present in the Western logical tradition, Hu's theory of logic is built from characteristics that originated in the Chinese intellectual tradition.

The previous section accounted for the constraints to the development of logical consciousness as well as the foundations for development of logical consciousness with explanation of the three dominant tendencies in Chinese thought: 1) the critical but passive tendency rooted in oral traditions; 2) the bureaucratic classical tendency rooted in highly literate traditions; and 3) the conformist tendency rooted in argumentation traditions. The following section provides an overview of the system of logic Hu tried to construct on the foundation of these tendencies along with the contributions he pulls from the neo-Mohist and neo-Confucian schools.

One of the things that Hu realized needed to be added to the formula for logical consciousness is the understanding of plural causality. Hu realized the importance of this idea after his mother died; he rethought a doctrine he had learned when he was young that said immortality can be achieved through virtue, service, and wise speech, or in other words, through words, work, and words. As he mourns his mother's death and observed the other mourners, his face is clearly displayed the great impact his mother had on them, Hu decided that "*everything* is immortal."

Everything that we are, everything that we do, and everything that we say is immortal in the sense that it has its effect somewhere in this world, and that effect in turn will have its results somewhere else, and the thing goes on in infinite space and time.⁹⁹

Then, in 1923, after a long debate on science and the philosophy of life between China's top thinkers, which lasted the better part of the year, Hu set forth his credo on the topic. He called it a "Naturalistic Conception of Life and the Universe."¹⁰⁰ It is not a "scientific credo" he explained, but rather, it is "a framework for new philosophy of the universe and life."¹⁰¹ Essentially it was his attempt to outline, as conclusively as possible, the direction he would like to see thought tend instead of where it had thus far been tending. He was proposing an outline of logical

consciousness that could provide the foundation on which a scientific credo, or credo on human morality, or credo on spiritual democracy, could find sturdy footing.

Hu's "Naturalistic Conception of Life and the Universe" had 10 major points dealing with the following topics: space, time, movement and change, the biological struggle for existence, the human species, historical and biological evolution, the law of causality, the mutability of religion and morality, the perpetual motion of matter, and social immortality. Every assertion he makes on any one of these topics is made on the grounds of some category or history of knowledge. "Specialized histories," meaning such categories as the history of language, the history of literature, history of economics, political history, history of international communication, and so on, should be developed on their own terms to enable a thorough and systematic approach to comparative studies. These histories along with welcome use of source materials of all kinds, rather than just those traditionally accepted and scholarship, will enable China's intellectuals to develop a method of evidential analysis capable of specifying the most acute problems and developing plans capable for attending to them. In the framework of philosophy and life outlined in 1923, Hu grounds his assertions in the following histories and categories of knowledge: astronomy, physics, geology, paleontology, the scientific method, biology, physiology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, religion, morality, physics, and chemistry. This kind of inclusive comparative approach to knowledge of the vast array of human experiences allows once you make judgments, informed to the best extent possible, about the course of their life as an individual and part of the larger social being. It is a testament to Hu's views about the considerable intellect and imagination each human being is imbued with, and simultaneously, his respect for the power and forces of the natural world. He explains that man both acts on and is acted on by the world. "Every change follows laws of nature,... Causality governs man's life and the struggle for existence spurs his activities-- in such a universe man has limited freedom indeed."¹⁰² Yet part of the naturalistic universe, as man is, he possesses causal significance.

Yet this tiny animal of two hands has his proper place and worth in that world of infinite magnitude. Making good use of his hands and a large brain, he has actually succeeded in making a number of tools, thinking out ways and means, and creating his own civilization.¹⁰³

Understanding his own worth and legacy, as respecting the nature of which he is part, man can even make use of the law of causality. Rather than render man helpless in a stream of brutal events, "the law of causality not only enables him to explain the past and the future, but also encourages him to use his intelligence to create new causes and obtain new results."¹⁰⁴

The old causes, of traditional Chinese intellectualism, included such things as Taoist iconoclasm and the concept of *wu-wei*, or non-action, the conservatism of Confucian deductive thought, and the Mohists' too narrow appreciation of practical applicability. Hu's "Naturalistic Conception of Life and the Universe" outlined the new causes that would develop a logical consciousness among the people or the establishment of China's modern civilization. It's major premises can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The universe extends over infinite space
- 2) The universe extends over infinite time
- 3) The universe is governed by natural laws of movement and change
- 4) All creatures struggle for existence in the biological world
- 5) Man is an animal, different from other animals in degrees but not in kind
- 6) The history and causes of biological and social evolution are important

- 7) Psychology is also dependent on the law of causality
- 8) The causes of moral and religious change can be scientifically studied
- 9) Matter is not static; it is full of motion
- 10) The individual self will die but the individual's achievements live on in social immortality.

“To live for the sake of the species and posterity is religion of the highest kind.”¹⁰⁵ In these assertions we can see those remnants of China's foundational philosophers that brought China into the age of logic: Lao Zi, Confucius, and Mo Zi. The naturalistic conception of movement and change, the position of humans as animals among animals in an unconcerned biological world, the importance of procedural and historical study, and investigation into changes in morality are all ideas carried over from the foundational philosophies.

To develop logical consciousness needed a stronger emphasis on conduct. He pulled some of these missing elements from the neo-Mohist school. Who understood conduct as the culmination of perception, mind, desire, and knowing. Desire, for him, is akin to the Aristotelian notion of rational desire, as a directing force behind behavior. When we lack some needed amount of knowledge, we find ourselves in a doubtful situation. The doubt functions to check desire by causing hesitation. “Morality... is an art,” Hu writes; “the end of moral education is right desires and right aversions.”¹⁰⁶ Moral conduct, for Hu, is an art the same as would be practiced by a potter, welder, or any other artisan. It requires a wide enough breadth of knowledge that the least informed of our thoughts, our desires, tend in the right direction.

Hu also needed stronger emphasis on causality, specifically the multiplicity of causes. Hu understood the importance of investigating into the causes of social institutions. As mentioned earlier, he maintained that man's agency in the world comes from his causal significance. That man could understand the law of causality and will it is what set him apart from the dogs and the grass. In this respect, the neo-Mohists developed an aspect of pragmatic logic that Mo Zi could not. It is a division between types of causes, which for Hu, is necessary for developing the scientific spirit. There are major causes and there are minor causes. A major cause is a complete cause and a minor cause is only a partial cause. There are multiple minor causes. This sense of plurality in causation was indicated earlier by Hu's description of social immortality, that each seemingly insignificant individual leaves the facts on the social being by the combination of his contributions. Further, the plurality of causes counters the deductive thought of Confucianism, which had such a detrimental effect on the development of investigative thought. By appreciating that an array of causal forces act together, logic is no longer dominated by the idea of single finite causes.

Hu also pulled a couple missing pieces for the development of logical consciousness from the neo-Confucian school. Social institutions and organizations must be informed by knowledge. In particular educational institution must play a decisive role in nurturing the scientific minds. Progress, Hu maintained, is nurtured triumphing over nature. This is how Hu understands the social role of science, as the apparatus for leveraging change and inspiring new ways of thinking. Science and the study of nature give people outside of entrenchment in human convention to see life from a different perspective. Hu believed that as long as society maintained respect for natural inquiry, then there would always be opportunities to break from conventions. Likewise, the ongoing process of and respect for natural inquiry is related to the most important ability to comprehend consequences that are not immediately beneficial but that possessed long-reaching benefits for problems that are not yet perceptible, or as yet, only barely perceptible.

In Communication

Standards of logical consciousness correspond with certain characteristics of social communication. The kinds of communication that are most necessary are those that allow people to educate and be educated, exchange ideas, and deliberate on ideas without feeling beholden to them. There needs to be opportunities for social reflection, discussion, and argument. Moreover, people must possess the means of learning, articulating, and deliberating. In other words, they must possess language. The foundational philosophies of traditional China made contributions to the communicative round that corresponded with their contributions in the logical realm each of the three founding philosophers was advancing a particular way to live as an acting individual, as a moral individual, as an acting social being, and as a moral social being, each of which employee communication and language in particular and different ways.

For Lao Zi, language represented the crux of the social problem. With language, people had tried to redirect the world they could feel at ease and. Yet, every step they took away from natural innocent, the more troubled a feast and discomfort they felt. In response, they made more rules and names more things, with every addition mounting their stress. The answer was the “exaltation of the non-being.”¹⁰⁷ This was the core of Lao Zi’s philosophy, Hu explains.

By a kind of metaphysical analogy, he conceived of a ‘State of Nature’ as a state of extreme simplicity and natural innocence, as a state of non-activity. Therefore he constructed his utopia as ‘a small country with few people’ where, ‘though there be ships and carriages, there is no occasion to ride in them; and, though there be armor and weapons, there is no occasion to use them’ where ‘knotted cords are to be revived (in place of writing).’¹⁰⁸

The Taoist philosophy translated into tendencies of destructive and defeatist thought. In communication, Taoism translated into tendencies of pacifism. For a Taoist society, a good government is one that would be barely noticed by the people.¹⁰⁹ It would not be an argumentative society because there would not be many occasions for disagreement; no one would try to state any claims or exert any control. People would focus mostly on their daily experience in the world this is the communicative form that comes closest to what Hu termed Siniticism, the old simple religion that was based around elements of the world that people had experience with. There are no elaborate ritual practices, and the rituals that do take shape, develop out of naturally occurring events, such as death and birth. In this society the ‘world’ would be spoken about in the abstract because anything outside of the realm of the people’s daily experiences would not be known in any tangible way. Even the immediate world would not be known in concrete terms, or there would be no artificial names or divisions. The environments would be known according to its natural signals time, cycles, and continuity. There would be no clocks ticking through uniform segments of the day. Divisible units would seem arbitrary. The attempt to name community associations and record their functions explicitly and words would seem arbitrary too. People in a Taoist communicative world would be much more interested in performing their duties than in naming them.

Confucian thought is regulated by a higher authority. The finite ‘good’ can go in the face of experience. It is a deductive logic that asserts that contradictions between experience and moral authority simply mean that the world is so maligned that the ‘good’ cannot be experienced. The same influence of authority holds true in the communicative world of Confucianism. Communication happens in highly literate forms. It is staunchly recorded and very hierarchal. Practical communication in the Confucian system is a very cognitive affair, as opposed to the

world Lao Zi would like to see, where record-keeping would grow no more complex than how it was originally done in China, by knotting cords.

Communicative authority would follow from the hierarchy of cognitive authority. Hi literacy equates with social power. For example, by literacy gives scholars access to the ethical judgments recorded by the stages of antiquity in the dead classical language. In turn, be scholar-officials become the executioners of classical morality. This role does not translate into a legal system per se, because the features of social authority that hold rulers in close proximity to Heaven does not lend itself to a code of law with attendant penalties applicable to all. Thus, the communicative lines of authority are further cemented in an atmosphere of paternalism where the scholars are trusted to self-regulate their behavior and to oversee the behavior of the common people who cannot self-regulate.

Perhaps as should be expected, and ironic aspect of the Confucian communicative world occurs where the lines of authority and doubt me. Confucian doubt is the bedrock of the Confucian philosophy of education, which says “that men are near to each other by nature, that only practice sets them apart and that ‘with education there will be no classes.’”¹¹⁰ The civil service examination was founded on the idea that all people should have the opportunity to fulfill their calling. Like many aspects of the original Confucian philosophy, the examination system took shape in traditional China as something very different from its original conception. For example, in traditional education, the student is supposed to memorize classical texts. Outside of the teacher’s explanation of what the text means, there is no other discussion. If the student were to ask a question, the teacher might understand it as a critique of their inadequate explanation. This is very different from what Hu explains that Confucius expected of his students.

What Confucius expected of his favorite students was the exercise of the right to doubt, to question, and not to be pleased or satisfied with whatever a great master or authority might say. Confucius himself fully exemplified this right to doubt and his teaching. On several occasions, he expressed satisfaction that his students were able to ‘come back’ at him and to ‘stir me up.’¹¹¹

Although students in traditional China were not encouraged to *stir their teachers up* as Confucius might have preferred, the civil service examinations preserve the pathway to power for those who had been selected by Heaven as moral leaders of their fellow man.

The Confucian rectification of names was central to execution of solid moral leadership. “The final aim of the rectification of names,” Hu notes, “is to reestablish on earth the ideal relations of society, to make every prince a prince, every minister a minister, every father a father, and every son a son.”¹¹² This final aim is also known as the *li*, “a body of positive rules of propriety.”¹¹³ Essentially *li* accounts for the rules to practically order a society.

Moism promoted conformist tendencies of thought. Since Mo Zi was most concerned about the loss of religious faith and believe that doubt was the worst offender of faith, he was trying to establish a religion that was completely philosophically sound and with universal laws of action to function as unquestionable gods of action. Thus, the communicative realm of a Mohist society would be argumentative with a very utilitarian and final end in mind—to remove doubt and to restore faith in religion and faith in actions guided by religion. Mo Zi reasoned that the doubters, Lao Zi and Confucius, had used criticism and logic to undermine religion, so he, doubter of the doubters as Hu called him, would use criticism and logic to restore it.

Hu worried about the kinds of communicative reasoning Mo Zi undertook that combined his “religious temperament” and “his pragmatic method” to “a conception the validity of which has not been seriously subjected to the pragmatic test.”¹¹⁴ Another tendency of Mohist based

communication that worried Hu was the conformity inspiring doctrine of “Agreeing Upward.”¹¹⁵ It is a politico-religious doctrine that maintains first, that general principles of action are necessary for accomplishing action. Second, general principles of action become universal law when they have been so widely spread and deeply ingrained that they are in our habits. Third, that social order should be maintained by a standard of conformity with the universal law. What does this mean for communication? Essentially, it means that society respects argumentation, but there is definitely a time and a place to employ it, but more often, one should be content to toe the line. Hu quotes the following example:

Anyone who acts must have some rule of action... Even the artists and have their standards of action. They make squares by a try-square; circles by compasses. All artisans, skillful or stupid, conform to these standards. While the skillful ones may hit upon them (without actually using them), the unskillful ones may thus be unable to work according to the standards, and to accomplish much more than if they worked without them.¹¹⁶

Hu worried about the totalitarian tendency of Agreeing Upward, or which social communication aims at unifying everyone and all action under the “highest standard of right.”

However, other social communicative aspects of the Mohist religion were more pleasing to Hu. For example, Mo Zi denied Confucian determinism; he insisted that a person can earn their salvation through good efforts and actions.¹¹⁷ Since salvation is possible, a key feature of the Mohist religion was asceticism,¹¹⁸ which corresponds to communication focused around the individual’s personal motivations and efforts to self-actualize. Above all, Hu appreciated the kind of social communicative environment that follows from Mo Zi’s fundamental doctrine of “love all.” Moism held that altruism is the highest of the universal laws.¹¹⁹ Hu believed that a spirit of altruism is the cornerstone of a good democracy. It is enabled by access to wealth in a marketplace of goods and it is encouraged by access to innovation in a marketplace of ideas. In a society where people learn, imagine, and aspire, they can more easily recognize the value of their own life, and in turn, the value of their fellow man.

The origin of logic, and thus the scientific spirit and democratic spirit, and everything else that can follow is doubt. “The spirit of doubt in criticism does not spring up of itself. It is always the outcome of the new vision and new when a few. There must be sufficient data for comparison and reflection before the mind is freed from the shackles of the old standpoint which had long been taken for granted.”¹²⁰ All of these thousand new points of view are expressed on the many pages of the new periodicals that have sprung up that almost every educational center.” All this has not been done merely to keep pace with the fashion of the world, but largely to furnish the nation with sufficient material for comparison and suggestion in dealing with our own problems.”¹²¹

The logical consciousness that Hu aims to develop is a “new mental attitude” comprised of the “willingness to look facts in the face and... boldness to raise unpleasant and unwelcome questions... the critical and problem-loving habit of mind” that enables progress.¹²² To accomplish the end of logical consciousness, the people needed to reform of the language of high literacy, they needed to raise the status of the vernacular language. Hu realized that if he was going to see social change, he would need to see a change in logic, which would necessitate changing the standard ways of thinking, reading, and communicating. People need to learn how to think and read and discuss in a way that allows for and promotes the critical and pragmatic functions of logic. Hu saw the need for a common spoken language that can be used for “educational purposes.” Thus, “for popular dissemination of useful knowledge,” Hu and his

fellow liberal reformers undertook the Literary Revolution with “advocacy of the vulgate tongue as the only legitimate literary medium.”¹²³

End Notes

¹ Hu Shih, “The Renaissance in China,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (Nov., 1962), 266.

² Ibid., 269.

³ Wang Ke-wen, *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, (Wang Ke-wen, 1998), 67.

⁴ John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, 2nd enlarged edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 70.

⁵ R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State In Late Ch'ien-lung Era*, (Cambridge: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1987), 13.

⁶ Steven Kreis, “Lectures on Modern European Intellectual History: Renaissance Humanism,” *The History Guide*, 2000, accessed 1-11-2012, <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/humanism.html>. Steven Kreis notes, “indeed, it was during the humanist era that the freedom of individual expression and opposition to authority was first brought to the surface and became an integral part of the Western intellectual tradition.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. “The leading intellectual trait of the era was the recovery, to a certain degree, of the secular and humane philosophy of Greece and Rome.”

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Hu Shi, *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures 1933*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 44.

¹⁶ See Hu Shi's writing on the Mohists in his dissertation for explanation of the better, but still sorely lacking, of the developments

¹⁷ Hu Shih, “The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 9, No. ½, Preliminary Report on the Third East—West Philosophers' Conference (Apr.-Jul., 1959), 29.

¹⁸ James G. Hershberg, “James B. Conant: Harvard to Hiroshima and the Making of the Nuclear Age,” (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 578.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hu Shih, "The Right to Doubt in Ancient Chinese Thought," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Jan., 1963), pp. 299.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. He also writes, "and, needless to add, the leaders of the intellectual and cultural renaissance of the last sixty years have been men who knew their own cultural heritage intimately but also critically, and who had the moral and intellectual courage to criticize and condemn its weaknesses and shortcomings."

²⁴ Ibid., 296-287.

²⁵ Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," *Symposium on Chinese Culture*, Edited by Sophia H. Chen Zen, Prepared for the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations Hangchow—October 21 to November 4, 1931. Published by China Institute of Pacific Relations, Shanghai—China, 1931. In *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 443.

²⁶ Hu, "The Scientific Spirit," 29.

²⁷ Hu Shih, *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Oriental Book Co., 1922), 16.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Hu Suh, "Intellectual China in 1919," *The Chinese Social and Political Review*, 1919-December. Volume 4, Number 4. Pp. 345-355. In first volume of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 116-117.

³⁰ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 80-81. Hu says the faith "never had a generic name, and I have elsewhere proposed to call it 'Siniticism.'" He proposes to call it Siniticism in Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," *Symposium on Chinese Culture*, Edited by Sophia H. Chen Zen, Prepared for the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations Hangchow—October 21 to November 4, 1931. Published by China Institute of Pacific Relations, Shanghai—China, 1931. In *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 441.

³¹ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 9.

³² Ibid., 12. Hu cites it in Pt. II, Bk. IV, VII in the Book of Poetry preserved by Confucius.

³³ Ibid., 9.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 13.

³⁶ Ibid., 13. Hu cites the Book of Poetry (Pt. II, Bk. IV, VIII)

³⁷ Hu Shih, "The Scientific Spirit and Method in Chinese Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 9, No. ½, Preliminary Report on the Third East—West Philosophers' Conference (Apr.-Jul., 1959), 29.

³⁸ Ibid., 14.

³⁹ Ibid., 17. (Hu gives citation #5)

⁴⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁴¹ Ibid., 17. (Hu gives citation #74)

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- ⁴² Ibid., 19.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 17.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Kreis, "Lectures on Modern European Intellectual History: Renaissance Humanism."
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 115.
- ⁴⁸ Hu, "The Right to Doubt in Ancient Chinese Thought," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Jan., 1963), pp. 297.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 16. Quotes from Part 2 and 18 of Lao Zi's *The Way* respectively.
- ⁵¹ Confucius article in *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Vol. 1, 431.
- ⁵² Hu Shih, "Confucianism." Edwin R.A. Seligman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* Vol. 4. NY: Macmillan Co, 1931, pp. 198-200, in *Hu Shih Yingwen Wencun* (胡適英文文存, A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings). Compiled by Chih-P'ing Chou (周質平). 3 vols. (Taibei: Yuanliu chuban, 1995), 431.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 116.
- ⁵⁶ Hu, "The Scientific Spirit and Method," 29.
- ⁵⁷ Hu, "The Right to Doubt," 296.
- ⁵⁸ Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History," *Symposium on Chinese Culture*, Edited by Sophia H. Chen Zen, Prepared for the Fourth Biennial Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations Hangchow—October 21 to November 4, 1931. Published by China Institute of Pacific Relations, Shanghai—China, 1931. In *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Vol. 1, p. 445.
- ⁵⁹ Hu, "Religion and Philosophy," 445.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 440.
- ⁶² Ibid., 441.
- ⁶³ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 21.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 33.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁷ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 25.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 26. Hu quotes from (Book of Change, App. I, Pt. I, 11).

⁶⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁰ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 116.

⁷¹ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 27.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 26. If a man lives aimlessly in a continuously changing universe, without the guidance of tao, all the things with which he associates will change continuously too. They will move further and further away from their original form because, left unrestrained, this is the easiest course. The path of continuous change is "the easy." On the other hand, if a man lives according to the guidance of the scholars, the things with which he associates can be managed and directed back toward their original form. The closer into alignment the things are brought with their original form, the closer they will exist to the early stage of development when they were "the simple." To find "the simple" one has to struggle against "the easy." To persist and succeed in this struggle is to demonstrate moral strength.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁷⁶ Hu, "Religion and Philosophy," 446-447.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 447.

⁷⁸ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 39-40 and Hu, "Religion and Philosophy," 446.

⁷⁹ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 41.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 40.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 116.

⁸³ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 44.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 46-48.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 49.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 50.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

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- ⁹¹ Ibid., 53.
- ⁹² Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 113.
- ⁹³ Hu Shih, "Religion and Philosophy," 447.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 55.
- ⁹⁶ Hu, "Religion and Philosophy," 448.
- ⁹⁷ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 116.
- ⁹⁸ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 52.
- ⁹⁹ Hu Shih, "My Credo and its Evolution," *The People's Tribune*, No. 4, February 16, 1934, in Vol. II of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 585-586.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 588-589.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 588.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 589.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 588.
- ¹⁰⁶ Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 61.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 16.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 17.
- ¹¹⁰ Hu, "The Right to Doubt," 297.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid., 295.
- ¹¹² Hu, *The Development of Logical Method*, 34.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 35.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid., 51.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid., 55.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Hu, “Intellectual China in 1919,” 117.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 117-118.

¹²³ Hu, “A Literary Revolution in China,” 1919.

Chapter Three ♦ Building a Literary Aesthetic Awareness

The New Education of Hu Shi: How “Fitness” Became his Name

When Hu Shi began to develop his theory of modern logic, he considered it the means of achieving social reform. Yet, from his survey of China’s intellectual and cultural legacy, he realized that development of a logical consciousness was, in fact, an end in itself. China’s path to reform would not simply be a matter of engaging new tools for a new end. Hu realized that the people were not predisposed to appreciate the implements of scientific thought, such as methodological practices or exploratory investigations into the natural world. They might learn to use the tools of science, but without the scientific attitude, they would never inhabit the spirit of the modern civilization.

Without belief in *possibility*, logical developments like the scientific spirit or social developments like respect for the individual, remain out of reach. The spirit of doubt, Hu explains, has long been present in Chinese thought. However, it has not been intellectually cultivated to the point of constructive attitudes, like belief in *possibility*. This means imagination, the ability to conceptualize oneself in a different predicament with a different set of skills and different set of expectations than they have at present. It is the feeling of capability, inspiration, and optimism that propels a young person out of their home and toward *something*. Stated simply, it is the existence of choice, judgment, and personal responsibility.

In essence, Hu understood China’s situation as a stacked problem; the problems of society are rooted in problems of thought, and problems of thought are culturally reinforced. Hu’s ideas on reform were formulated to address particular challenges culture posed to social change. Recounting his experiences as a leader of the New Culture Movement for Columbia University’s oral history project, Hu explains that the movement was split in two parts, the first part focused on linguistic reform, and the second part focused on developing new thought. Hu held that particular ways of thinking enable particular kind of thought. Intellectual patterns of critique enable scientific investigations. The exercise of imagination enables anticipation of alternative futures.

The Literary Revolution was designed to apprehend the cultural challenges related to language, such as the authority of the classical language and subsequent social stratification, the stagnancy of cultural development, and the characteristics of oral culture that kept people mentally and physically bound to their locality. We can better understand the cultural challenges of the age by looking at Hu Shi’s personal encounters with them.

The Master, (Shèngsēng 圣僧): A Learned Youth

A primary cultural challenge of the age was the authority of the classical language and the heavy focus on the traditions of classical education at the expense of educating the individual child. This aspect of the culture is reflected in Hu Shi’s first experiences with education. Hu began his schooling at a traditional school, where the day lasted about twelve hours and the students bowed to both the teacher and a large portrait of Confucius before leaving for home in the evening.¹

The universal experience of the authority of the classical language was felt by the extraordinary weight academic success brought to bear on the potential a person had to succeed in all venues of life dealing with social ranking and social legitimacy. Hu’s mother had married into a less than ideal situation in part because of the importance placed on classical academic success. Hu’s father was thirty years older than his mother. His father had been married and

widowed twice before and had seven children from the second marriage. After he lost his second wife, he told his family he would “marry a girl of the good, sturdy stock of the farmer class.”² The girl he found came from a farming family of meager means. Her mother worried that if their daughter married a man thirty years older than her, with children from a previous marriage that were older than her, people would think they had sold her to an official for money and prestige. Yet, the prospective husband was known to be kind and he was respected as a scholar and official. Since the parents were divided over the issue, they turned the decision over to the girl.

The experience of Hu’s mother was typical for a culture so heavily focused on the integrity of classical education; she genuinely respected his father’s accomplishments. Further, she saw her father struggling to support his family as a farmer and tailor. She knew that her own father had come from a respectable family, which may have increased the hope she had for the capabilities of her offspring. Her father’s family had been massacred during the Taiping rebellion. Her father was the only one who survived. He was kidnapped and made to serve with the Taiping army. He eventually managed to escape and make it back to his destroyed home where he has been laboring, carrying six loads of stones a day in addition to his work in the fields, to rebuild the family home. Hu’s mother would have known that the marriage would be hard for her, as Hu says, “the position of a Chinese stepmother is proverbially difficult.”³ Yet, she would have seen hope in the proposal. She believed Hu’s father had great abilities as a scholar and administrator.

The standard day at a traditional school consisted of little more than a rigorous exercise in memory. To study meant to memorize; students were expected to read aloud and recite by heart.⁴ The objects of study, the classic texts, were written in the dead language of classical scholarship. The European comparison would be studying classical Latin works while speaking Middle English vernacular. Thus, the task of a young student in a Chinese village was something akin to a child in Medieval England memorizing a philosophical treatise written by Cicero.

Although this aspect of culture was reflected in Hu’s situation, his personal experience was exceptional in an extremely significant way—Hu was taught to understand the meaning of what he memorized. First, he learned to read at an early age. Hu’s father passed away when he was only four years old, but by the time Hu was three years old his father had already taught him eight hundred characters on flash cards. Second, Hu’s mother continued the commitment to his education with extra pay for Hu’s teacher. Because of this extra amount, Hu explains, “I alone... enjoyed the rare privilege of having every word and sentence of the readings explained to me, that is, translated from the dead language into the colloquial dialect.”⁵ Before Hu was eight years old, he could already read the classics with little help. He also began reading novels written in *pai-hua*, or the spoken language. “They taught me life, for good and for evil, and gave me a literary medium which years later enabled me to start what has been called ‘the Literary Renaissance’ in China.”⁶ Hu was an exceptional pupil and he memorized ten of the classical texts in nine years. He was nicknamed “the Master,” (Shèngsēng 圣僧).

A religious blend of Taoism and Buddhism was practiced in most peasant households. Although Hu’s father had been a classical scholar and, as Hu describes him, “a stern follower of the neo-Confucianist rational philosophy,” the uneducated members of Hu’s family, including his mother, worshipped deities and practiced the rites of ancestor worship as was common for the peasant class.⁷

Again, Hu’s experience deviated from the common experience in a significant way that allowed him to see his environment from a different perspective. Even though Hu was immersed in the idolatry of the common religion,⁸ he was aware of competing ideas. Since Hu was able to read and understand on his own, he was able to pursue other works on his own and think on a

variety of topics that the other children had no exposure to. Hu recounts a few instances from his childhood when he went against the grain of thought. At one point he read that the soul is part of the body, and so, they die and decay together. This led him to the radical conclusion that there is no such thing as an afterlife. Another example is when he left for Shanghai. He says that he left to seek out his education “in the great world all alone armed only with a mother’s love, a habit of study, and a little tendency to doubt.”⁹ In an environment of strong traditional education and religious influences, where any deviation was suspect to cultural sanction, Hu’s “tendency to doubt” was surly formulated on his own time by reading and thinking about the ancient philosophers, for whom we have seen, doubt was common.

Shanghai Days: Hu’s Education in Evolution, Revolution, and Pessimism

Hu had the chance to pursue what was called a “new education” in Shanghai. It was the year 1904 and was thirteen years old. Many common teenagers did not even get to continue their education; most certainly didn’t get to do it in a place like Shanghai, where the revolutionaries of the first wave of Young China had begun offering a non-traditional education that covered such things as history, geography, English, mathematics, and bits of natural science. Yet, even in Shanghai, Hu’s experience was something of exceptional among the exceptional.

The universal experience for students in Shanghai was heavy exposure to revolutionary propaganda and strong advocacy of westernization. “Students in Shanghai” Jerome B. Grieder writes, “had easy access to such contraband publications as Liang Ch’i-ch’ao’s reform paper, the *Hsin-min ts’ung-pao*, and the *Min-pao*, the propaganda organ of Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary T’ung-meng hui, both published in Tokyo and smuggled into the city.”¹⁰ The new, or modern, education in Shanghai was engrossed by issues of China claiming status in the world and making sense of the calamities that had overrun the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹¹

Students in Shanghai had access to novels translated from English and other European languages. Liang Qichao, part of the first wave of Young China and a proponent of Westernization, spread the ideas of Western thinkers like Hobbes, Descartes, Rousseau, Bentham, Kant, and Darwin. Works like John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* and Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* were available in translation.¹² Huxley’s work, in particular, received warm reception among Chinese intellectuals who believed “the Darwinian hypothesis, especially in its social and political application, was a welcome stimulus to a nation suffering from age-long inertia and stagnation.”¹³ Terms and phrases associated with evolution became something of a trend. They appeared often in journalism and people even took them as names. “Numerous persons adopted them in naming themselves and their children, thereby reminding themselves of the perils of elimination in the struggle for existence national as well as individual.”¹⁴ Even Hu’s name reflects the evolutionary vogue of the time. He adopted Shih on his brother’s suggestion. It means fitness, in reference to the slogan “survival of the fittest.” In 1910 he officially took it as his permanent name.¹⁵

Hu was exposed to the same things in Shanghai as the other students, but his reactions to them were very different. He had a different political temperament and different objectives than his classmates in Shanghai. His experience with the new education was unusual, Grieder writes, “for while other young students were even then embracing political revolution as the means through which to accomplish the great tasks of modernization, he remained outside the revolutionary movement from the beginning.”¹⁶ Later, when studying in America, Hu developed his ideas on political temperament more fully and called himself a pacifist, but one can see that these tendencies were already influencing him in Shanghai.

The experiences of Shanghai foreshadow many of the troubles Hu would encounter as a leader in the reform later on. Financial troubles compelled Hu to leave school in 1908. Between 1908 and 1910 he taught classes in English and Chinese to send money home to his family. He lived among revolutionary-minded friends who had participated in some of the provincial revolutions happening throughout China and now had to live under the radar as political fugitives. He describes those years as a dark period in China and his personal life. Many of his friends had grown cynical and pessimistic. They spent much of their time fearful and drunk. The zeal of vogue thought and the pessimism of fearful idealists are troubles that Hu faced time and time again throughout his career. Perhaps because of the historical perspective Hu gained from being able to independently study and understand the classics so early on, he could not adjust to the Shanghai temperament and did not stay there for long. At his core he was too optimistic and he resolved to shake off the malaise and get back on course with his studies.

From Apples to Pragmatism: An American Education

The Chinese students who studied in America were part of the second wave of Young China, many of whom felt their education should have a patriotic imperative. They went abroad seeking practical degrees in fields like mathematics and science where higher education in China was most lacking. They hoped to bring these new tools home to help build the infrastructure of a modern nation.

Hu reflected this sentiment when he chose to major in agriculture at Cornell University.¹⁷ Typical to agricultural programs, students in Hu's program focused on the agriculture local to that region. For Hu, at Cornell, this meant apples. Hu studied all kinds of American apples that he had never seen in China and would likely never see in China. Further, he struggled on his apple exams, which asked him to describe many apple varieties in terms of shape, color, texture, taste, and smell, in ways that native English speakers could do easily but non-native speakers had much more trouble with. He began to question the actual practicality of his degree in the applied sciences.

A modern nation's infrastructure, Hu realized, is built with intellectual and cultural tools as well as physical ones; practicality should not be thought of merely as that which is immediately applicable or most likely to yield some specific outcome. Rather, practicality is determined over a range of time and across an array of results. He understood that China's cultural predicament poised as it was between an old and new world had developed slowly. Society had taken its initial shape from the geopolitical landscape. Then, it was altered and seasoned over centuries of political and intellectual developments. Advances in agricultural yields undoubtedly benefitted Chinese society in the late nineteenth century, but for China to complete the transition from the old world to the new world, the twentieth century needed contributions of a wholly different sort of practicality. Hu transferred to the Sage School of Philosophy at Cornell University and, as he says, "never regretted the change."¹⁸ He completed his undergraduate and master's studies there.

The reactive and revolutionary temperament that was common in Shanghai had carried over and was also common among Chinese students studying in America. Just as he had avoided it in Shanghai, Hu was opposed to the revolutionary temperament in America. He thought that the character of revolutionary thought was too destructive. He knew that the detrimental aspects of China's old culture had to be destroyed in order for Chinese society to move forward, however, he believed in destroying by replacing, or in other words, dethroning the old by legitimating something new. "Destruction of the 'false' and 'dead,'" he said, "would follow

naturally from... creation.”¹⁹ The classical language must lose its authority, but the most effective way to accomplish that, Hu maintained, was by elevating the language of the people. He wanted his fellow students to focus on the potential of creative forces rather than the immediacy and retributive qualities of destructive ones.

In Shanghai, Hu warned his peers to resist revolutionary propaganda explaining that war is a “crude” and “wasteful use of force.”²⁰ He lamented how young intellectuals are often taken by propaganda that encourages prejudice and exclusionary nationalism. The propaganda stokes their anxieties, and warns them about the dire consequences guaranteed by nationalistic shortcomings.²¹ This kind of propaganda worked in Shanghai by painting a dystopic picture of “China’s deficiencies as a nation,”²² and encouraged the students to pull together against the forces aimed at destroying Chinese civilization. The students felt like they were pitted against a ravenous enemy in a heroic battle, and in a desperate sort of excitement, would just as fast destroy the nation as demonstrate their love for it. Propaganda, Hu said, has very real destructive powers; it can destroy opportunities for cultural renewal and incite blind preservation of deficient traditions, and worse, it can provoke war.

Having understood that appropriate intellectual apparatuses are just as necessary for erecting a modern nation as is the appropriate physical infrastructure Hu did not want to lose the support of the young intellectual class who were most equipped to confront the nation’s intellectual needs. When Japan presented China with its offensive list of Twenty-One Demands, some Chinese students urged for declaration of war,²³ and once again, Hu used this opportunity to urge his peers to commit themselves to a tempered course of reform. Hu responded to the fevered pitch of his fellow students with “A Plea for Patriotic Sanity.”²⁴ In it he said, “My Brethren, it is absolutely useless to get excited at such a critical moment. No excitement, nor high-sounding sentiments, nor sensational suggestions, have ever helped any nation.”²⁵ He urged:

*Let us apply ourselves seriously, calmly, undisturbedly and unshakenly to our studies, and PREPARE OURSELVES to uplift our father-land, if she [sic] survives this crisis—as I am sure she will—or to resurrect her from the dead, if it needs be!*²⁶

Hu spent much of his life urging people toward intellectual temperament.

Hu’s sentiment is most aptly displayed by the following Huxley quote Hu chose for two commencement addresses he delivered at American universities in the 1940s and then referenced again in his *Living Philosophies* essay.

The great English scientist and philosopher, Thomas H. Huxley, has said: “The most sacred act of man’s life is to say and feel ‘I believe such and such to be true.’ All the greatest rewards, and all the heaviest penalties of existence, cling upon that act.” The discipline and training of the mind in judgment, thought, and belief are necessary for your successful performance of this “most sacred act of a man’s life.”²⁷

His faith in the potential of rationality and consciousness and the subsequent potential of the human species to improve the quality of their existence is the bedrock of his unrelenting optimism for reform. Once in America, he writes, “the naïve optimism and cheerfulness of the Americans impressed me most favorably.”²⁸ The pragmatic theory of logic that Hu developed while studying in America, the ten year plan he devised to reform China’s universities, the vernacular movement’s push into primary schools, and his larger plan for a new system of learning and scholarship in every vein of Chinese culture, all testify to Hu’s fundamental belief in the sacred potential of humans and the absolute necessity of disciplining and training one’s mind for this pursuit.

Hu determined to see China down a path of real and gradual change and this is how his study of the history of Chinese logic, discussed in the last chapter, came to pass. In 1915, he went to Columbia University for his PhD. He wrote his dissertation, "The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China," under the guidance of John Dewey. He became, what he calls, "a historical research worker," that thinks "genetically."²⁹ Rather than rip the culture and society to shreds, he wanted to uncover specifically what was there and then nurture it to develop gradually.

By genetically investigating the development of Chinese thought, Hu had come to understand which characteristics of modern thought were already present and which remained lacking. He developed the Literary Revolution as a way to teach people the processes of thought and judgment that would develop the capacity for modern thought. The remainder of this chapter discusses Hu's agenda for gradual reform, that is, his plan to change society by changing its tools of thought.

The Literary Revolution: Cultural Utensils of Logical Thought

The Literary Revolution aimed to practically confront universal cultural challenges. Hu developed it with the insight of his own experience with those universal problems and the other exceptional experiences he had that allowed him to view the culture from a different perspective. The major theme underwriting all of Hu's exceptional experiences is the belief in "possibility" and the creative potential of cultural forces. Even his very first experiences with school amount to a lesson on the significant difference alternatives can make in a child's education.

Considering that Hu generally looked on "revolutionary" temperament with disfavor, one might wonder why he referred to the linguistic reform as the "Literary Revolution." The answer to this question is twofold. First, Hu did not choose the name entirely by himself. Hu first began pursuing linguistic reform while he was studying in the United States. Aside from a couple of people, he did not receive much support from his fellow Chinese classmates. However, after writing a more or less reserved article about sensitive reforms in Chinese literature, which appeared in *The New Youth* in January 1917, he earned the impassioned support of Mr. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who took notice, supported the article, and published his own much less reserved article called "On a Revolution in Literature."³⁰ In it "he described what he called the 'eighteen demons' who had obstructed the task of the revolution in literature already started throughout the Sung and particularly the Yuan (the Mongol) periods, when the novels and plays were beginning to be produced in the vulgar tongue."³¹ This enthusiastic endorsement furnished the initial power of the movement and provided Hu with the support he needed to get the movement off the ground.

Second, "revolution" is an accurate term because, for Hu, destruction is a necessary part of creation. This point must be completely clear: revolution equates with destruction; Hu acknowledges that there are things in culture that must be destroyed; Hu's Literary Revolution was a campaign to destroy those detrimental aspects of Chinese culture. However, above all else it was a "reform," meaning a creative thing. The twentieth century reform movement needed a strategy that could bridge the divide between the literate elite and the illiterate masses. By understanding new influences in light of the concerns and judgments that made tradition what it is, there could be a "new synthesis of written and oral education" to reverse restrictions on literacy, lift the vernacular language from its vulgar state, and to engage print for the structure of thought it inherently imparts rather than the moral dictums the classical words preserve within.³²

Loss of the old is necessary for creation of the new. A "new culture" equips people for "new thought;" institutions buckle under the weight of new thought and society takes a new form.

The “new thought” portion of the New Culture Movement would develop on the cultural foundation laid by the Literary Revolution. Just as Hu had diagnosed the cultural cause of China’s institutional stagnancy as the product of a social hierarchy founded on the authority of classical language and subsequent stratification of society, the Literary Revolution would till the ground for something different. Each practical aspect of the Literary Revolution would bring a particular quality to bear on the cultural landscape. Cumulatively, they would create fertile conditions for logical consciousness. The remainder of this chapter discusses what I have surmised as the seven primary qualities that Hu intended the Literary Revolution to establish in Chinese culture. In preview, the seven qualities can be summarized as follows:

1. Form a linguistic and imaginative nationalistic infrastructure for a nation of individuals.
2. Give each individual access to education via the vernacular language.
3. Elevate the status of the vernacular language, and thereby, enable the creative potential of the common people.
4. Encourage the competition of ideas, and thus, the people’s exercise of doubt, judgment, and choice.
5. Undertake a comprehensive education reform, particularly to include a variety of subjects and methodological approaches, such as comparative and genetic analysis.
6. Cultivate imagination and the sense of possibility among the people.
7. Cultivate the role of the arts and the artists in society so as to enable full use of habits and language among the people.

Build Toward a Nationalistic Consciousness

Our task is, therefore, very clear. It is to do our part to remove a bit of the backwardness. It is to contribute our utmost to the future building of the nation. Our task is of the *future*. At present, we can’t do very much. We should dedicate ourselves to the great task of eliminating our backwardness and of building up the future of our national life. We are builders; at least, workers of the future China.³³

All of the gradual and deliberate intellectual changes produced by the Literary Revolution, including those changes in cultural patterns and social designs, would culminate in a nationalistic consciousness that would enable development of the ethical and spiritual society Hu desired for modern China. The next chapter takes up this stage of Hu’s plan for social reform, once substantial cultural changes had been made and the national future came more clearly into focus. At that stage of the reform, nationalistic consciousness would function as a means to an end. Conversely, for the Literary Revolution, the development of a nationalistic consciousness, or more specifically, development of the linguistic and imaginative infrastructure that would comprise the nationalistic consciousness, was the primary goal. All of the other cultural qualities were directed toward this end. As Hu explained, a nation of individuals is held together by a linguistic and imagined nationalistic infrastructure. Multiple veins of the Literary Revolution converge in nationalistic consciousness. Consciousness requires connection. We are conscious of something when we are aware of it. To have nationalistic consciousness, then, is to have awareness of the nation: its structure, its constituent parts, and its identity. Increased access to education, heightened respect for the vernacular language, a space for competitive ideas, an independent system of education, and an optimistic spirit come together to log the groundwork for a linguistic and imagined nationalistic infrastructure.

When the reactive anti-imperialist nationalistic sentiment ran high, Hu warned:

National salvation is not something that can be achieved in a short period of time... *The salvation of the nation must begin with the salvation of yourself!* In a time of ferment and chaos, you cannot consider that you have discharged your patriotic duty simply by chasing after others and, by running and shouting. Over and above this you have another more difficult and more precious obligation: to be able, in the very midst of the shouting, to plant your feet firmly on the ground, to make your plans, to save yourself, to struggle to turn yourself into something useful!³⁴

Throughout China's political history *power* is intimately connected with the *national mind*, meaning the body of thought that is *imagined* and *held* as part of the social and political construction known as *nationalism*. For centuries, the classical language stood at the pinnacle of the cultural imagination, and hence, as the embodiment of power. Therefore, one should see the connection between the movement for China's educational independence as a movement to rebuild nationalistic consciousness free from the vestiges of old forms of cultural power.

Hu maintains that changes in national language will necessitate changes in all other aspects of life. It will give the people the intellectual tools they need to take what they have observed from other cultures and use this information to "re-examine" and "re-evaluate"³⁵ their own culture and then consciously reform those aspects of culture that have been proven detrimental to Chinese interests in the modern day. This will be China's "transvaluation of values," a process for which "nothing is too high or too low... [or] too sacred to be allowed to pass without criticism."³⁶

By the latter part of the Chinese Renaissance, the term *renaissance*, "*wenyi fuxing* became an emblem of new birth and of many forward looking features of modernity and progress," Zhou notes.³⁷ Reformers wanted a new type of thought in China, a system of consciousness grounded in the accumulation of knowledge, or in other words, a systematic process of knowing. "A renaissance as a period of liberation, a period when individuals are freed from the bondage of tradition, echoed perfectly the iconoclastic spirit of the New Culture Movement."³⁸ Other terms associated with the Renaissance also reflected this desire. For example, rather than use a term that literally denotes "modernity," Jones explains that words like "development," and others like "growth," "evolution," and "progress" appear much more often.³⁹ The term "*wenming*," or *civilization*, for example, shifted use between classical and vernacular literature. In classical, it "had been used in a far more restricted sense... as a laudatory term for literary élan."⁴⁰ In vernacular writings, "*wenming*... signifies both an intransitive state and the transitive process required to attain that state: a process of development that implicitly posits the divide between those who are already developed, those who develop, and those who [are] still in need of development."⁴¹

In addition to changes in language, changes to the social strata, the old family system, and the improved means of transportation have worked to weaken "the old hold of the elder over the younger generation." He continues:

The young students who leave their homes to get an advanced education in the cities find it difficult to return to live and work. They have come under new intellectual influences and new social contacts which make them dissatisfied with the old ways of life back in their ancestral villages. They break their old betrothals and even marriages, and often carry out what they commonly call 'revolutions of the home'... All these disintegrating tendencies soon began to worry the conservatives in the old society. For a time they tried to make scapegoats of the leaders of the new intellectual movements, and rallied their attacks on them.⁴²

Yet Hu points out that the disintegration of one form of the society signals the formation of a new form, what he calls a, “new social consciousness,” with new codes of morality, new cultural aspirations, and a new sense of identity.⁴³

Educate the Individual: Gaining Access through Vernacularization

The line of power in traditional Chinese society runs between those who have received an amount of classical education worthy of the civil service examinations and those who have not, or in other terms, the literate elite and the illiterate masses. In this sense, “illiterate” does not strictly refer to the inability to read or write, but rather, it refers to a lack of training in the classical language, and thus, a lack of social power. The ruling class and the literate class remained synonymous throughout China’s imperial history. Power was predicated on extensive training in classical literacy. Hence, so long as the majority of people did not have access to extensive training, the power of the ruling elite was secure.

This sort of social stratification prevented modernization because it kept the masses bound to the oral culture of tribal communities while the ruling elite balanced atop a power structure predicated on stagnancy. Any hint of a constructive social impulse would appear threatening to their authority. Therefore, the cultural role of the ruling elite was to keep the people disinterested in the power structure all together. Correspondingly, the political role of the ruling elite was to serve the system rather than act as leaders of the people.⁴⁴

The ruling elite kept language out of the reach of the common people by elevating it as the worldly form of heaven. The literate elite functioned as heaven’s medium. “People worshipped written words and subsequently the persons who knew the words,” David Ze explains.⁴⁵ The ideograms of classical Chinese were like “mystic charms,” each symbol “embodied profound meanings, but only experts could interpret them.”⁴⁶ The sacred meaning of scholastic literacy set it apart from common literacy, “such as informal narratives, miscellaneous notes, recorded tales, songs, folk lyrics, and informal letters” that circulated among the common people.⁴⁷ By maintaining a sacral divide between the scholastic language and the common language, education took a central position in the power schema of imperial China.

The function of the educated class, as interpreters of the word of heaven for those who could not interpret it but who lived under its control nevertheless, made sense to the common people of the tribal communities. In the oral culture of tribal communities, sacred meanings readily translate into real-world experiences. Oral cultures are ruled by the cosmos; the life of the common man is an insignificant part of a much larger and more powerful cosmic system. Hence, the people of tribal communities must stay attuned to the natural pattern of the cosmos and find a way to live in accordance with it. If he resists it, it will crush him. Marshall McLuhan called this kind of world a “tyrannical cosmic machine,” more severe than anything dreamed up by the Western literate world.⁴⁸ Thus, the people of tribal communities are patient and passive.⁴⁹ They do not think they can exercise control over the world; further, they believe that the world will not hesitate to crush anyone who pushes against it, and so, all they can do is wait and believe.

The separation between the literate elite and illiterate masses intensifies as time wears on because they experience the world in wholly different ways. The oral experience of the tribal masses is intense. In oral culture people “feel” change more intimately, suffer more deeply, and have no ability to structure causal arguments or political policies.⁵⁰ The tactile emphasis in oral cultures leads to perceptive and expressive communities. Unlike visual emphasis which fashions experience according to the patterned observances of the eye, experience in oral culture is tactile, directed by sensory based stimuli and reactions situated in the environment. The people of oral

cultures have little recourse for expectations, they can make predictions based on what they believe about the large cosmic universe of which they are apart, but these predictions are based on day to day interactions with the natural world that controls them. There is no cause or cultural memory to make predictions about anything else.

Vernacularization gives the common people access to education, and in turn, education gives people access to everything else. Without recourse for expectation, without the ability to predict, imagine, or propose, there will be no modern civilization, Hu maintained. Had it not been for his mother's belief, his father's early tutoring, and his teacher's translations of the classical texts into vernacular, Hu would not have learned to understand the classics on his own, let alone win the scholarship to study in the United States.

To break away from the old social trappings, the people need a means of cultural escape; vernacular language provides this means. Although writing has been seen as sacred, "a rare gift of the gods to the favored few," Hu writes, "the efficacy of the *pei hua* has emancipated the youths from this timidity... The spirit of Young China was never at ease in its ancient garments."⁵¹ The Chinese Renaissance is a movement to free the people "from the shackles of tradition."⁵²

Elevate the Vernacular Language: Breaking through to the Other Side

In expanded use, the vernacular language functions to separate public and private interests. The vernacular language, or *pai-hua*, has a rich history in Chinese society. Hu notes that it was the linguistic medium used for some of the greatest works of Chinese poetry. It was also the linguistic medium employed to mold the traditional structure and to bind public and private interests together. The state run morality outreach programs developed by the Neo-Confucians used the vernacular language to keep the people informed of state dictates. The neo-Confucian, Zhu Xi, developed local monthly assembly meetings known as the *community compact*. The assemblies were held in every village across China. The local people would gather together to hear the latest codes of morality and conduct from their rulers. The announcements were laid out in vernacular, but since the villagers would possess varying degrees of functional literacy, and some none at all, a village official would read the announcements aloud. In some cases, the announcements would be sung aloud so the people would be better able to understand and remember. The meetings also featured other activities, like public accolades to reinforce the messages. The institutional function of the meetings was to join private and public interests and act as an intermediary between the state and the family.⁵³

With vernacular language, traditional society effectively delayed the development of print culture. By uniting private and public interests in this way, the vernacular language was used to reinforce social stratification. Chinese rulers had devised a means of employing print technology to communicate out from a central hub of authority over vast distances. Yet, by also using local assemblies and vernacular announcements, the rulers preserved the traditions of orality and local webs of tribal authority. In essence, rulers had managed to utilize the printed word without sacrificing the subservience of the people to the explosive qualities of print technology.

The vernacular movement of the Literary Revolution attempted to reclaim the vernacular language as a tool of empowerment for the common people. Besides elevating the vernacular language, the Literary Revolution had to provide "clear and conscious recognition that the classical language was long dead."⁵⁴ Scholars struggled to reconcile the traditional understanding of scholarly prestige with the demands of the reforms. Intellectuals worked to overcome this

hurdle by reappraising the despised language according to new ideas from the West and the classical legacy of the vernacular language long before it was employed toward neo-Confucian ends. Reappraisal of the language enabled the intellectuals to appreciate the beauty of the novels they once loathed.⁵⁵ Yet, even though intellectuals could appreciate novels and dramas created in the vulgar tongue, the problem remained that they were not necessarily excited to use the vulgar language in their own academic work. Just as Hu's mother had so greatly respected the academic and administrative abilities of Hu's father, scholars felt pride for their achievements and had difficulty shaking the cultural allure of their scholarly status. The language of the people struggled, but it did catch on, and "the result has been that the taboo of the year ago has become a fashion of the day," Hu writes. "From Peking to Canton, from Shanghai to Chengtu, there is hardly one educational center which is not at least one vulgate paper of its own. Never before has China had so many new writers."⁵⁶

The vernacular language can be defined both in terms of what it can do for speech and what it can do for thought. As it pertains to the Literary Revolution, vernacular language is a linguistic medium, *pai-hua*, the vulgar tongue of the common people. As it pertains to the Chinese Renaissance at large the rise of the vernacular language signals tension between the common and official strata of society. Vernacular language connects the common people across different localities and dialects. Foreign ideas are digested and made accessible with vernacular language. Further, after an idea's initial reception, the vernacular language functions as a distillery, gateway, or chamber that signals the progression of an idea through a population, until eventually, it becomes popularized and the new corresponding terminology is adopted into vernacular. Andrew Jones explains how discourse on evolutionary biology went through this process during the Chinese Renaissance. The ideas circulated "as narrative frames and images that were localized, fragmentary, easily assimilable across different media, and generative of new forms of social and political and cultural practice."⁵⁷ The larger discourse worked its way into popular understanding by spreading out in smaller conceptual pieces, like *development*, *natural selection*, and *inheritance*.

Exercise Doubt and Judgment: Choosing between ideas on Equal Ground

The Literary Revolution took direct aim at deductive habits of mind by spreading literacy, and thus, enabling the exercise of doubt, judgment, and choice. A more thorough definition of literacy, as it was conceptualized by proponents of the Literary Revolution, includes the universal ability to read and the plentiful availability of materials made accessible by vernacular.

Before literacy, the value of each member of a tribal community is determined in relation to the community. Apart from the community, there is no way to conceptualize the value of an individual. Value is determined according to one's social role and function. Subsequently, the community judges the individual by determining if that particular role and function has been satisfactorily fulfilled.

Literacy reverses the direction of judgment; it enables the individual to judge the community.⁵⁸ The techniques of literacy, thinking and writing, impact our relationship to the content of language. During the Chinese Renaissance, preservationists echoed the sentiment voiced by Lao Zi nearly twenty-five centuries earlier. Hu writes:

[Lao Zi] doubted the utility of the artificiality and over-refinement civilization and advocated a return to the simplicity of the state of Nature, in which all human inventions 'that multiply the power of man by ten times or a hundred times' shall not be used and man will discard all writing and restore the use of knotted cords.⁵⁹

Like Lao Zi, the preservationists worried about the ramifications of changing people's perspective of society.

The Chinese Renaissance shared much of the spirit of the European Renaissance; in particular it shared the humanist emphasis on individualism. In the beginning, this emphasis was expressed as the spirit of revival, in *individualism* functioned promises new insight, (i.e. *I can see things in the classics that I could not see or that I was prevented from seeing before.*) This form of expression was "consciously cultivated... between the European Renaissance and the May Fourth Literary Revolution," Gang Zhou explains.⁶⁰ Early on, she writes, "*wenyi fuxing* (a revival of literature and art) had already become the standard Chinese equivalent of *renaissance*."⁶¹

Vernacular language, however, is a practice that turns against the rules and hierarchy of the classical language.⁶² It later encouraged individualism to find new expression in the spirit of rebirth, wherein the rules and hierarchy of the classics are questioned to such a degree that they are entirely toppled from their foundation and alternatives are considered in their place (i.e. *I can look back at the origins of Chinese culture and imagine a China that could have been.*)

The idea of cultural alternatives is most tangibly seen in the effects of "vernacularization," translation from classical language into the living language.⁶³ The spread of vernacular language impacts society in both practical ways and conceptual ways. Andrew Jones explains that vernacularization, tends toward a revised version of the original. "The notion of the vernacular, in short, may help us approach from a fresh angle the question of how new epistemologies and new kinds of knowledge were appropriated and disseminated in this period."⁶⁴ In other words, the vernacular language, *pai-hua*, worked to spread new ideas and modes of thought not only because it gave more people access, but also because the vernacular provided a habitat and vehicle for the new ideas and modes of thought.⁶⁵

The preservationists during the Chinese Renaissance worried about the consequences of these kinds of re-evaluations and conceptual habitats. What would provide for social stability once the Chinese culture had been scrutinized and toppled? The Renaissance preservationists, on the other hand, worried what would be left of "knowledge" once stripped from its home in the classical language and subjected to "vernacularization," (or "vulgarization," as the preservationists undoubtedly would have preferred to call it). The predicament of the preservationists was similar to that of Mo Zi, who employed logical reasoning to doubt the doubters, and to advocate for social return to the old morality.⁶⁶

Lao Zi also wanted to return to a previous manner of living, but he wanted to return to the time before the old morality had been conceived of. He wasn't concerned about what society *might* amount to. He had seen what it amounts to; he wanted to backtrack to the time before the technologies of society had complicated and disrupted the functioning of the world. Lao Zi maintained that he had witnessed the bitter result of words invested with too much meaning and the struggles these artificial symbols and meanings are certain to bring. Proponents of the Literary Revolution agreed that Confucian habits of deductive thought have many detrimental tendencies. For one, deductive habits of thought amplify the tendencies already common in oral culture to view things in terms of a struggle between polar opposites, like good and bad, or right and wrong.⁶⁷ In oral culture, social interactions are of the highest importance and instances of interaction are characterized as right or wrong, good or bad, with no in between. Oral cultures tend to have the structure of a tribal, or clan based, community. Oral cultures primarily rely on the spoken word over literacy; although, communities are likely to have varying degrees/rates of

functional literacy, and the occasional person with some level of classical training, usually of the local ruling family. Social interactions are marked by the tension between right and wrong behavior, and people are characterized as virtuous or vital. The tension of moral polarization amplifies the feeling of struggle that is already a prevalent part of the experience of the common life tied to the earth. The neo-Confucians put the moral battle into a ritualistic a theatrical form by giving commendation and disgrace an audience and record at meetings of the community compact. Such displays would highlight a person's moral aptitude, or lack thereof, by recounting how that person either demonstrated, or failed to demonstrate their commitment to fulfill the duties prescribed to them by lot and clan.⁶⁸

Hu understood the willingness to accept ideas on authority to be a key weakness in Chinese thought. Although Confucius, a reformer himself, encouraged the exercise of doubt, he did so in the restricted sense. Questions should be aimed at things like institutions and social roles and they should ask whether or not that thing is performing the function that its name indicates you should. For example, *is a father acting like a "father" should?* Confucian doubt does not question if the role of the father should change according to changes in circumstance. The most learned scholars might investigate the description of the father's role as reported by the ancient sages to see if the stages have been accurately understood by later scholars. The salience of their decree, however, should not be made the subject of staring. Limitations on doubt were intensified by the neo-Confucians who amplified distinctions of social hierarchy. With stricter guidelines money was appropriately qualified to doubt and the circumstances under which they should exercise it, the downward direction of knowledge was further cemented into Chinese culture.

By encouraging the exercise of doubt, proponents of the Literary Revolution sought to level the playing field for ideas. The Chinese Renaissance, Hu maintained, will give them a "new outlook on life" that will "make them feel at home in the new world and its new civilization."⁶⁹ By elevating the vernacular language, proponents of the Literary Revolution endeavored to level the playing field between those who confused the classical language and those who could not, and thus, to enable the creative potential of all people. The people, however, can affect little if they feel compelled to support an idea on the authority of its source rather than practical merit. Competing ideas are not worthy opponents without equal footing. When ideas are advanced because the people have judged them to be of pragmatic value, then people will understand what it means to *choose*, Hu maintained. Then, the people will understand *possibility*.

It should be noted that placing ideas on equal footing does not mean considering an idea for no other reason than the fact that it has been proposed; this quality of the Literary Revolution is not underwritten by the value of inclusion or inclusions date. Ideas must practically achieve their place in public consideration. Rather this quality is underwritten by the value of pluralism; cultural respect for pluralism challenges cultural respect for moral polarity. All old ideas should face the same fate as all new ideas; both would undergo the people's exercise of doubt, criticism, and choice.

Expanded abilities of valuation are deeply entangled with literacy. The exercise of doubt, and thus the breakdown of moral polarity, requires the capacities of language. Language, Hu maintained, is one of the most powerful mechanisms for changing culture and society because of the tools it gives its users to doubt, judge, criticize, and re-evaluate. He calls language "the most important vehicle of thought and of expression,"⁷⁰ because its initial effects are instantaneous, and its subsequent effects are self-perpetual. In time, language can reach out to even the most secluded members of society. For example, when language is accessible, meaning when it can

stand apart from the authority of the classics and can be employed to construct and compare new ideas, language user gains a new perspective of the old morality. They can detach from what the old morality means with regard to their personal relations and stations in life, and can see it in comparison and contrast with ideas from other cultures as well as alternative ideas latent in Chinese culture.

Reform Education: Educating for Possibility

Hu changed the path of his own higher education when he realized that a degree in philosophy could fill just as practical a need in China as a degree in agriculture. In 1938, Hu spoke before a group of Chinese students in Chicago, IL. China was then confronting the crisis of imminent war with Japan. He told the students:

Today, it is too late to do anything of immediate effectiveness. But to prepare for the future, you are never too late... This is high time to work hard...If there were any religion worth believing now, it is this new religion of hard work.

He said they should focus on their individual abilities and aptitudes. Don't worry about what China needs, he said, because China needs everything. Further, he said, "If you are good for nothing at present, you may be good for the future. So follow your own interests and aptitudes and prepare yourselves!"⁷¹

The Literary Revolution aimed at developing the kind of education system that would cultivate the sense of possibility in Chinese thought. This quality would confront such challenges as the inaccessibility of education to even the youngest of China's students, China's dependence on universities in other nations for modern higher learning, and the lack of other technologies of the new civilization.

To appreciate the difficult task of reforming education in China, Hu says it must be viewed with historical perspective. Hu took issue with the pessimistic attitude that seemed to pervade the age. He says that this pessimism results from lack of historical perspective, without which, it is impossible to grasp the great deal of time that must be spent doing the work of destruction and re-construction at the foundational level of Chinese thought. Hu gives the example of primary school textbooks. In 1910, just seven years before the official launch of the Literary Revolution, primary school textbooks were still filled with classical text written in the classical language, meaning that teachers would have to translate the content of the books into *pai-hua* if students were to understand the content of the words they memorized. This was true even in the most progressive city of Shanghai, Hu notes.⁷² If one knows the historical backdrop of China's situation, they can better appreciate that in the 11th year of the Republic, five years after the start of the Literary Revolution, a national ruling was passed that all primary and middle school students were to have textbooks written in the contemporary language.⁷³ Another example he gives is of the mammoth task of dethroning the classical language. He explained that it was the great power of the classical language, socially reinforced by the civil examination system that held China in a cultural stalemate in the days of the Empire. Until the structure was disrupted, nothing else could be done. He writes, "It is therefore no mere accident that the revolution in Chinese literature came ten years after the abolition of the literary examinations in 1905, and several years after the political revolution of 1911-12."⁷⁴ Further, one must realize that the effects of centuries under the authority of the classical language and its institutional compliments cannot be easily or quickly undone. Hu offers the example of the eight legged essay:

[The] mechanical and exacting form of literary composition known as the Octopartite, which had been required as the standard form in Allstate examinations, and for the

mastery of which the best years and energies of the whole educated class of the past six centuries had been sacrificed.⁷⁵

The ramifications of the examination system extend further than the authority of the classical language that it was used to enforce and the subsequent social stratification it helped perpetuate. The ramifications of the exams include centuries of lost talents and minds.

To change the standards of education, Hu maintained, modern China requires an independent system of higher education. The lack of adequate educational facilities, modern curricula, and graduate programs to produce skilled researchers and teachers presented a grave challenge to intellectual and social reform. Hu believed that a plan for university development was imperative for China's scientific and technological advance. This is something that he devoted himself to for many years. In 1947, he laid out his ideas on higher education reform most explicitly with the four characteristics he wanted to see developed as markers of China's academic independence.⁷⁶

1. China's universities should be capable of training students in the basic sciences.
2. Institutions need the equipment and capable teachers for training students in science.
3. There should be enough research institutions and experts to assist governments and private people with their problems concerning Pure Science, Industry, Medicine, Public Health, and National Defense.
4. Researchers and research institutes in China should be able to cooperate with the development of science and technology world-wide.

The nation's most capable universities, like Peking University, should act as "operation bases for the movement of national academic independence."⁷⁷ For ten years, the focus should only be on improving the existing universities; no new universities should be built until the existing ones are up to par. Hu was determined to not perpetuate the outmoded style of education any longer. Further, he wanted an infrastructure of higher education the Chinese people could take national pride in. He writes that it is an "unsound psychology that to be an expert one has to go abroad for further studies," and that must be corrected.⁷⁸

The plan Hu outlines for China's independent system of education includes the institutional, or systematic, elements of infrastructure, criteria for standards, leadership, and training. It is also a plan for national unification in that it looks to make a self-reliant and self-perpetual mechanism for continuing the intellectual and technological advancements of the Chinese people. Still, it includes a third characteristic that makes it most comprehensive, necessary, and Hu maintained, effective for dealing with China's educational obstacles. Part of the overall plan to reform education included the plan Hu outlined in 1923 for a "new revival of learning." Hu frequently referred to the reform in terms of a revival, rebirth, and renaissance. Likewise, he always maintained that matters of logic and aesthetics are of utmost significance to the development of a modern culture. The 1923 plan for new learning stands out as one intellectual strain from among many that Hu grew increasingly committed to. This strain is important because it is indicative of Hu's culminating rhetorical synthesis. Whereas the revival sought to dig logic out of obscurity and the rebirth was expressed as an aesthetic awakening of the scientific spirit, Hu's idea of Renaissance, a fusion of revival and rebirth, becomes more clearly defined with his plan for new learning.

The plan for new learning was sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of China's existing educational system. Hu took into account the fact that Chinese scholars could not quickly feel at home in a foreign academic environment, such as the laboratory, with different forms of methodology, different equipment, strange sterility, and even the odd lab coat attire. Hu

and the other proponents of educational reform during the Chinese Renaissance had reintegrated around the pursuit of scientific, critical scholarship, which was reinforced by the legacy of the New Text scholars such as Cheng-yi and Chu Hsi whose scientific spirit “lived on and brought about an age of scientific scholarship in the humanities.”⁷⁹ Chu Hsi, for example, had “raised numerous problems for critical study: textual criticism, philological reconstruction of the meaning of old words, and the determination of authorship and date of ancient texts.”⁸⁰ When the Chinese scholars were not able to feel at home in the laboratory, they were able to feel at ease exercising laboratory methodology in the world of words and texts.⁸¹ Both Cheng-yi and Chu Hsi “were conscientiously scientific in their methods... [and] this scientific spirit and methodology placed the new scholarship on a solid basis, and produced the age of scientific research in the humanistic and historical studies during the last three hundred years.”⁸²

Hu continued in the critical vein of the New Text movement by advancing his genealogical methodology, advocating for the comparative study of histories, and advocating for the inclusion of formally excluded source materials. Hu maintained that scholarship should advance study of particular histories, or genealogies, such as the history of language, history of literature, history of economics, political history, history of the international communication of ideas, and so on, to open scholarship up to reference materials of all kinds. With specialized histories and ample sources for comparison, Hu reasoned that China’s intellectuals could develop a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of causal forces in the social, political, economic, geographic, and technological world, and thus, a method of evidential analysis capable of specifying the era’s most acute problems and developing plans suitable for attending to them.

Chinese society, Hu said, must embrace the technologies of modern civilization, that is, the technologies that coordinate and accelerate. Subjects that had traditionally fallen outside the realm of Chinese education, such as science, math, and geography, will play an especially significant role in China’s transition into the modern world. For Hu, the technologies that played an important role in the European Renaissance had an important role to play in the Chinese Renaissance as well.

He distinguished the Chinese civilization from the Western civilization by differences in thought that developed into differences in tools. “The civilization of a race is simply the sum-total of its achievements in adjusting itself to its environment,” he writes; such adjustments are made by intelligently creating and importing “necessary and effective tools.”⁸³ The Chinese felt at odds with the new civilization of the West only because they were not equipped with the tools that are necessary and effective for that kind of civilization.⁸⁴ “Renaissance” in China, meant rebirth and revival; it also meant refurbishment in the sense of inheriting these same kinds of technologies that we know to characterize the Western Renaissance, such as typography, organization, the clock, industry, centralization, nationalization, printing, uniformity, and a national language.⁸⁵ One of the most important qualities of education in math and science combined with the new technologies of coordination and acceleration is the self-perpetual effects they have on society. These subjects enable the creation and implementation of the effective technologies, but further, “the print culture those efforts produced,” as Jones explains, became a conduit for mathematical and scientific learning. “[The] textbooks, primers, children’s stories, monthly magazine, and multivolume ‘treasuries’ for school libraries serves as one of the most important conduits for the vernacularization of biological knowledge and, along with it, the evolutionary episteme.”⁸⁶

Technology carries information and vernacularization adopts the ideas therein. Hu maintained that logical minds engender the scientific spirit. The evolutionary episteme, in particular, can awaken a sense of possibility among the people it touches. While emphasis on evolutionary survival can prompt the revolutionary spirit that Hu experienced in Shanghai, emphasis on progress can do something wholly different.

Encourage Optimism: Cultivating the People's Imagination

A society's cultural vision, or cultural imagination, must exceed the scope of tradition if that society is to enable real, that is, lasting and self-perpetuating forms of social reform. Time needs to be divisible for causality to be discernible. The present must be separable from the past and future and the future must become visible in the social imagination. If the developments of time are understood as causal events, alternative futures become a possibility. And, if alternative futures are imaginable, they can be contrasted and judged in relation to one another. Thus, new ideas can earn consideration on level ground with the old.

With perspective, the language user can reaffirm or delegitimize the old value.⁸⁷ Hu offers the example of "the spirit" of western civilization, which emphasizes scientific reason as a constructive power. John Dewey's philosophy on force greatly impacted Hu's ideas on pacifism, optimism, efficiency, and progress.⁸⁸ Hu gives the quote from Dewey's article, *Force and Coercion*, in his Oral History: "Power or energy... denotes effective means of operation; ability or capacity to execute, to realize ends."⁸⁹ Hu understood power in complimentary terms, as that which is cooperative, constructive, and hopeful. He explains:

If the two parties agreed to combine forces in the common fight against nature for life and sustenance, both are liberated and they have found that partnership the true economy: still better, they have found in it the true basis of human society and its spiritual possibilities. For there can be no union without some measure of faith in the agreement on which it is based, some notion of rights. It indicates the true policy, whether national or international--agreements for united action against the common enemy, whether found in nature or in the passions and fallacies of men.⁹⁰

Conversely, without cooperation, when resistance is met with force, the result is weakness and wastefulness. Both winner and loser are weakened by their relationship; the latter is subjugated by the former and the former is trapped by the need to maintain power over the latter. Bound in struggle, forceful energies and resisting energies faceoff. "Thus," Hu concludes, "two energies are canceled and end in sterility or waste."⁹¹

The spirit of reason is connected to the cultural ability to conceive of the future, Hu maintained, and conceptualization of the future requires conceptualization of the past. Even though Hu's attempts to coordinate the efforts of intellectual proponents of reform were repeatedly frustrated, and despite the staunch pessimism of many of the Chinese intellectuals that surrounded him, he remained defiant in his optimism. For him, an optimistic outlook is a marker of utmost significance. He loves the naïve sense of optimism he encountered in America, where everywhere he felt a sense of forward-looking hope. Americans, he understood, are optimistic because they believe in the possibility of a future that is different from the present. Today is not a condemnation of tomorrow, but rather, each day is its own. The events of yesterday weigh on today, but they do not determine its end. This sense of possibility enables creativity and imagination because a dream can be made into reality if the dreamer takes the initiative to thus affect their situation.

The cultural imagination is enabled by causal understanding of events, the kind that developed in literate communities. The experience of oral culture is the world in the round, so to speak, whereas literate communities experience the world as a lineal string of events. Once an experience is recorded as a single event, in a line of events, before some and after others, the recorder is able to view the event on a time continuum, part of an ongoing causal string. Further, readers of this record understand the event from a point of view, or a place of perspective, along the string of events. This point of view enables the reader to understand himself/herself as an individual person, separate but in relation to a larger group and ancestral legacy.⁹²

Each person is implicated by a chain of events but does not have to play puppet to this chain.⁹³ When the majority of the population can read and write, and have the cause and materials to regularly do so, the effect is a culture capable of imagination. Chinese culture, proponents of the Literary Revolution maintained, is in desperate need of imagination. This need was acknowledged across the board. Jones notes that even reformers focused on children's literature felt that a devastating deficiency among children of that era was a lack of imagination.⁹⁴

Material progress, Hu maintained, is a precursor to spiritual progress. "Raising the level of man's enjoyment of material objects and increasing his material advantages and security... leads toward the liberation of mankind's abilities and enables men to do more than dedicate their every energy and thought to survival alone; [it] furnishes men with a reservoir of strength which allows them to seek the satisfaction of their spiritual demands."⁹⁵ Unlike members of the first wave of young China, such as Liang Qichao, who became concerned about the brutality of materialism after political revolutions rocked industrialized European democracies, Hu Shi defended materialism. He maintained that spirituality is not hindered by materialism; but quite the opposite, the material liberates the spirit. Physical demands prevent people from satisfying their spiritual demands. When people are liberated from physical need, they are able to pursue spiritual development. Further, he maintained that science without intelligence is spiritually bankrupt. He was not arguing for a technocratic application of science. He was arguing for a pragmatic application, where guided by reason, people can find freedom and can become creative. Reason does not cause despair; reason lifts the human spirit. Reason allows for optimism because a culture that is guided by reason is a culture that believes it can change itself.

When a society can imagine an alternative future, they can affect an alternative future; in other words, they can progress. Imagination is enabled by the causal perspective cultivated in literacy. Cultural understanding of causality disposes a culture to scientific and mathematic pursuit. Further, the literate perspective enables one to appreciate specialize roles that are created by the technological and mechanized products of scientific and mathematical pursuits in relation to the bigger picture. Therefore, people are willing to play specialize roles in the mechanized production of good because they see value in each role. The increased availability of material goods leads to increases in material sustenance and well-being. Once humans are no longer enslaved by hunger and basic necessities, they can pursue a more valuable existence. Hu emphatically offers the following example.

All those who have been in the Far East and have seen those millions of human beings toiling under that peculiarly Oriental form of human slavery, the *rickshaw*, or 'man-power carriage,' cannot fail to agree with us modern Chinese thinkers, that there is much spirituality in material progress which has at least relieved that much of human slavery by means of mechanical inventions.⁹⁶

When people are freed from physical slavery, they will be better able to appreciate the value of their existence. The less often humans can be observed working like beasts of burden, the more unforgivable such a site will appear. As material well-being increases, so too does the human capacity to care for oneself and others. This, Hu insisted, is the groundwork for a truly “spiritual” civilization. After all, he asks, “what spirituality is there in a civilisation which has maintained a caste system for thousands of years, or which has bound the feet of its women for a thousand years, and has sought justification in claims of duty and beauty?”⁹⁷ The tools of reason and language enable cultural understanding and appreciation of new ideas, even where experience is minimal, because analogies can draw out the similarities between the unusual experience and more common experiences. In turn, the increased capacity for understanding reveals causal relationships between particular forces of culture and certain kinds of social and political experience.

Cultivate the Arts and the Artists: Rearranging Aesthetics and the National Future

The final aspect of developing a nationalistic infrastructure is aesthetic rearrangement, the cultivation of the arts and the artists to enable full cultural use of habits and language. The culminating quality of the Literary Revolution is cultivation of the arts and artists for a comprehensive nationalistic cultural infrastructure. The cultural benefits of a national living language extend beyond reading and learning. A nationalistic culture also thinks and creates in the national vernacular language. The written arts create an aesthetic infrastructure for a nation which accounts for as much of the national identity as the nation’s geographical boundaries. The aesthetic infrastructure is begun with periodicals, fastest of the literary ventures. As the case was for Hu and his associates, they began with academic articles, political exposes, and social editorials written in *pai-hua*. Then, there are new artistic creations, like poetry and short stories. A bulk of the infrastructure is also composed of translated works, scholarly and common alike. The crowning literary achievement, however, is the novel. The novel gives the aesthetic infrastructure its national identity, it accounts for the character associated with the national culture. As Jones says, the novel is “the presumptive endpoint of most histories of the development of vernacular fiction in the West.”⁹⁸ The novel was also the final aim of this vernacular movement in China.

Proponents of the Literary Revolution did not achieve a novel. The famous May Fourth writer Lu Xun did not, nor did any of his contemporaries. The lack of the novel “became a defining feature of the May Fourth rewriting of Chinese literary history,” Jones points out.⁹⁹ He suggests that the novel was too difficult to accomplish because of the daily demand for copy and “perhaps the difficulties of producing a sustained narrative effort in an era of ever-increasing temporal fragmentation and political crisis.”¹⁰⁰ Chinese society, during the Republican Period, was continuously rocky, never allowing for the kind of cultural cohesiveness or consistency that Hu understood to give rise to artists or the naturally occurring cultural function of art.

Reformers saw the end stage of the Literary Revolution as the organized expression of the democratic spirit. Hu maintained Dewey’s belief that this spirit “must be a transforming growth from within,” as Dewey writes.¹⁰¹ Following the spread of literacy, there will be artists who step out of the mass and give it voice in print. The success of the Chinese Renaissance would hinge on the artists who could question and shake seemingly impregnable institutions of belief and create the opportunity for new institutions, legitimately founded on an understanding of the reasons for their development. Just as reading and writing changes the individual by providing a point of perspective apart from the community, and hence, releasing the individual

from continual social immersion to develop a reflective identity, as well as to look upon, and to judge the community.¹⁰²

Vernacular and literacy is to bring the illiterate masses into the fold, so to speak. The vernacular movement is to create a language whereby the masses could bridge the differences of location and clan to find their sufferings and common experiences. Creative individuals who stand out from the masses may then articulate those experiences in literature that will connect the common people to the elite by communicating the sufferings of the masses to the elite who have lost a sense for the day to day life of the people.

Each form of literature written in the living language brings something different to the experience of the reader. Books, for example, give the reader imagination. New works written in the living language of the day; give the reader an invaluable experience national spirit. For example, “the lyrical poems of love,” Hu notes, “reveal the innermost part of the soul of the nation better than anything else.”¹⁰³ Other works encourage literate thought by reflecting on social problems. As Hu notes, there is a “distinct group” of “poetry that deals with the concrete problems of social life, written sometimes in the manner of realistic presentation, sometimes in the form of satirical criticism, but mostly in the spirit of protest.”¹⁰⁴ The use of vernacular language not only makes universal literacy much more plausible, but also, frees language of classical meanings, and thus, enables literature to apprehend, playback, process, and judge the situations of the day.¹⁰⁵

The academic reformers tried to encourage expansion of the arts with their own contributions. Hu Shi’s *Experiments*, for example, was one of the first attempts to write new poetry in the vernacular language.¹⁰⁶ The final version of *Experiments* contained 63 poems, only 14 of which are written in the vernacular language.¹⁰⁷ Hu had difficulty performing the artistic role of the poet. As Leonid Cherkassky notes in a review of *Experiments*, Hu often relies on “old principles and methods of depicting reality” to construct poetic images.¹⁰⁸

Yet, Hu was more successful with highlighting the importance of experiences in his poetry.¹⁰⁹ As an example of the significance Hu attributes to “experience” Cherkassky offers the following portion of the translated version of Hu’s poem “Kai-yu Hsu.”¹¹⁰

Once intoxicated, one learns the strength of wine.
Once smitten, one learns the power of love;
You cannot write my poems
Just as I cannot dream your dreams.

Hu thought that Poetry fused with respect for experiential knowledge would orient readers to two ideas that ran counter to traditional teachings. First, is the idea that things to be known, *can be known*, such as objects (wine), emotions (love), perspective (personal poetry), and individual motivation (dreams). Second, is the association between personal investigation, thus removing knowledge from the divine realm, which had kept it inaccessible to most, partially accessible to some, and fully accessible only to the son of heaven and sages of old.

Even though *Experiments* was not wildly successful as a collection of poetry and although Hu wrote only part of it in the vernacular language, he bravely used the medium of poetry to express his theoretical outlook and lead the Literary Revolution by example. As Cherkassky contends,

Hu Shi’s *Experiments* cannot claim the honour of being the first collection of the new Chinese poetry, as it contains almost no new *poetry*. Rather, the book is the predecessor of the new poetry that was created by the efforts of Liu Bannong 刘半农, Liu Dabai 刘大白, Shen Yinmo 沈尹默, Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 and many other May Fourth poets.¹¹¹

There are three primary concepts involved in Hu's take on the cultural function of arts and artists: *aesthetics*, *experience*, and *experimentalism*.¹¹² He associates an *aesthetic* understanding with the way one would understand a "rhythm."¹¹³ It is not as explicit as "intellectual recognition;" it is something more sensual than that. Likewise, the *experience* is not as explicit as a situation; it is not merely an event or occurrence at a particular point in time. Rather, an *experience* includes everything an individual brings into a situation, such as attitudes, values, and beliefs, and the meaning of an *experience* is not necessarily something of immediate perceptibility.¹¹⁴ Like the pragmatic benefits of reason and science, the value of an experience can be revealed right away or it can resonate and be revealed somewhere down the road. In short, "an esthetic experience, the work of art in its actuality, is *perception*."¹¹⁵ Or, in other words, a work of art takes affective form in the historical moment it is encountered in a culture, as it resonates in cultural memory, within the individualized but also culturally connected context of the viewer, and in the potentiality it has to take new creative shape and receive new artistic life by the will of any one of its viewers. In this way, Hu's conception of an aesthetic experience blends Dewey's two notions: "art product" and "work of art."¹¹⁶ For the latter, emphasis is on *work*. A *work* of art is "active and experienced."¹¹⁷ Poetry, for example, is a social and creative act, or *work* of art. The poetic *work* is of primary importance to cultural progression and aesthetic rearrangement. As Hu explains, cultural change lives in poetic content.¹¹⁸ Poetic technique, conversely, is like the formal housing of poetic content. The formalities of poetry, the technique, can do more harm to poetry than good "when applied without an adequate content or when it restricts rather than helps the free development of the poetic content."¹¹⁹ To think of this once more in structural terms, the technique is like a school building and the content is the curriculum. If the conditions of the school building enhance the children's ability to master the curriculum, the building can be said to have functioned appropriately. If, however, the school building is a shoddy structure with leaks, creaks, and bugs that disrupts the learning process, it can be said that the building is impeding the *work* of education. The stress of "art product," on the other hand, is on *product*. Dewey describes the *product* as "physical and potential."¹²⁰ An example of the art *product* is Hu Shi's *Experiments*, "the predecessor of the new poetry... created by the... May Fourth poets."¹²¹ As a *work* of art, Hu Shi's poetry is not very noteworthy, but it proved significant as an art *product*.

With literary arts, artists unify the people by offering them a reflection on the experiences common to all. This stage, of artistic cultural cohesion, is the final stage of the Literary Revolution. With the Literary Revolution Hu sought to change society by changing the culture that shaped it. To change the culture, he sought to change the morality preserved it. To change the traditional morality, he sought to give people the cognitive ability to break free of it. For people to progress beyond the initial change, he called on artists to ground the culture in unity with reason.

No one is more capable of establishing the living language as the standard and respected language of the people than "the poets, the novelists, the great prose masters, and the dramatists," Hu maintains.¹²² These artists "are the real standardizers of languages."¹²³ They understand language as a tool that equips the individual to be simultaneously self-reflective part from the group and part of the community. Further, the artist can make sense of the function new technologies play in coordinating and spreading the communal appreciation of the artists' reflections of socially shared experiences.¹²⁴

To achieve the creative potential of aesthetic experience, Hu believed the artist must experiment. Without experimentalism, it is difficult for a culture to steer clear of preservationist

trappings. Hu writes, “Vocal classicism, that which preaches rather than enacts as does that which genuinely *becomes* classic, is always based on fear of life and retraction from its exigencies and challenges.”¹²⁵ Such was precisely the case with the development of classicism in China. Hence the role of the artist: to keep the energy moving in the way of creation and negating the stress of new technologies by employing those technologies to creative and cohesive ends.

End Notes

¹ Hu Shih, Essay in *Living Philosophies*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1931), pp. 235-263, in *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Volume I, 387.

² Ibid., 383.

³ Ibid., 385.

⁴ Ibid., 389.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 390.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 394.

¹⁰ Jerome B. Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 21.

¹¹ Ibid., 21.

¹² Hu, Essay in *Living Philosophies*, 395.

¹³ Ibid., 396.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 396-397. The fashion of evolutionary theory was also demonstrated by the startup of *The Struggle*, a student run journal at the China National Institute. Hu's classmates began the journal and asked him to contribute to it. A year later, when Hu was sixteen years old, he became the journal's sole editor. *The Struggle* marks the first occasion Hu had to work with *pai-hua* as a literary medium. The journal was intended to spread new ideas to the common people, and so, the students chose to use the only language the people would be able to understand it.

¹⁶ Grieder, 33.

¹⁷ Hu, and the others to first study in America, went there on scholarships that were included as part of the Boxer Indemnity Settlement included scholarships for Chinese students to attend University in America. After a competitive exam selection process in Peking, Hu was able to secure one of these few coveted scholarships.

¹⁸ Hu, Essay in *Living Philosophies*, 400.

¹⁹ Grieder, 86.

²⁰ Ibid., 60.

²¹ Ibid., 57.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 61.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hu Shih, "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity: An Open Letter to All Chinese Students," *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, 10.7:425-426 (April 1915).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Hu Shih, "Intellectual Preparedness," 1940, A Commencement Address at Union College, June 10, 1940. This was also the commencement address given before Purdue University in 1941. In *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, Vol. II, 829.

²⁸ Hu, Essay in *Living Philosophies*, 398.

²⁹ Ibid., 403.

³⁰ Hu, Oral History, 158.

³¹ Ibid., 159

³² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 71.

³³ Hu, "National Crisis and Student Life," 764.

³⁴ Grieder, 215. The translated text used here is from Grieder. He gives the following citation: Hu Shih, "Ai-kuo yün-tung yü ch'iu-hsüeh" (The patriotic movement and getting an education), HSWT III, ix, 1146, 1149, 1150-1153. First published in Hsien-tai p'ing-lun, 2.39:5-9 (Sept. 5, 1925).

³⁵ Hu Shi, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 47. This process is meant to solidly refute the opposition to the Literature Revolution, who never used historical arguments, but rather, met only with blind forces of reaction, being defended for no reason other than an inclination on the part of the defender that it was the right thing to do.

³⁶ Hu Shih, "The Renaissance in China," 273.

³⁷ Zhou, Gang. "The Chinese Renaissance: A Transcultural Reading," *The Modern Language Association of America*, (2005), 787.

³⁸ Ibid., 786.

³⁹ Andrew F. Jones, *Developmental Fairy tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 15. Also on p. 19: "Chinese intellectuals of the early 20th century, modernity have not yet taken on its present-day sense of a universal endpoint for which China was compelled to search. Modernity—understood as China's humiliating and unequal participation in the globalized historical time of the modern interstate system—had already arrived, and its logic of struggle and survival was undeniable. Development, on the other hand, was understood as a means of managing the consequences of modernity, one that necessarily invoked *wenming* as a pedagogical process."

⁴⁰ Jones, *Developmental Fairy tales*: 18.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Hu, Chapter VI, "Social Disintegration and Readjustment," in *The Chinese Renaissance*.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 8. Hu Shi says of the examination system: "But this bureaucracy was one of civil servants and was never born and bred to undertake the leadership of the nation."

⁴⁵ David Ze, "Walter Ong's Paradigm and Chinese Literacy," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol 20, No 4 (1995)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 156. "primitive man lives in a much more tyrannical cosmic machine than Western literate man has ever invented."

⁴⁹ Ibid., 155. He lives according to "a cosmic clock and a sacred time of the cosmogony itself."

⁵⁰ Ibid., 84. "Tribal cultures" have a great "range and delicacy of... perceptions and expressions," McLuhan notes.

⁵¹ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 112.

⁵² Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 46.

⁵³ John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, 2nd enlarged edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 99-100.

⁵⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 61.

⁵⁵ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 62.

⁵⁶ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 112.

⁵⁷ Jones, 68.

⁵⁸ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (NY: Routledge, 2002), 54-55. Lack of familiarity is precisely the point: an oral culture simply does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorizations, formally logical reasoning processes, definitions, or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis, all of which derive not simply from thought itself but from text-formed thought.

⁵⁹ Hu, "The Right to Doubt," 297.

⁶⁰ Zhou, 787.

⁶¹ Ibid. For information about Renaissance humanism see Steven Kreis, "Lectures on Modern European Intellectual History: Renaissance Humanism," *The History Guide*, 2000, accessed 1-11-2012, <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/humanism.html>. Renaissance humanism "intensified the assertion of personal independence and individual expression." "Zeal for the classics was a result... Men thus affected – the humanists – welcome classical writers who revealed similar social values and secular attitude."

⁶² Jones, 67.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Example of how cultural products harbor new ideas and carry them across culture. Jones comments on the “promiscuity with which they [evolutionary ideas] move between and across widely divergent disciplines, discursive registers, literary genres, and media.”⁶⁵ full accounts for this spread it calls for examination of “the vernacular context in which they came to be reproduced, recycled, and refashion.”

⁶⁶ Also like Mo Zi, who used the conceptual tools of the age to make his point against the changes of the age, the preservationists of the twentieth century had been part of the new text movement, which instituted new methods of scholarship toward the end of the nineteenth century. They were versed in the methods and structure of contemporary academic arguments.

⁶⁷ Ong, 43-45. Ong explains, “orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle.” The oral world is a “highly polarized, agonistic, oral world of good and evil, virtue and vice, villains and heroes.”

⁶⁸ Ibid., 45. “Name-calling or vituperation,” and conversely, “fulsome expression of praise... [are] found everywhere in connection with orality.”

⁶⁹ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 46.

⁷⁰ Hu, “The Renaissance in China,” 273.

⁷¹ Hu, “National Crisis and Student Life,” 765.

⁷² Hu, “An Optimist in a Sea of...” 621.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 61.

⁷⁵ Hu, “An Optimist Looks at China,” 639.

⁷⁶ Hu Shih, “Ten-Year Plan,” in *Hu Shih Yingwen Wencun* (胡適英文文存, A Collection of Hu Shih’s English Writings). Compiled by Chih-P’ing Chou (周質平). 3 vols. Taipei: Yuanliu chuban, 1995., 1195.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1198.

⁷⁹ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 69 and 88. “The new intellectual life, which was characterized by the development of the humanistic and historical studies, was a continuation of the tendency traceable back to the early days of the Chinese revolt against Buddhism.”

⁸⁰ Hu, “Intellectual Life, Past and Present,” 69.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 69-70.

⁸³ Hu Shih, "The Civilizations of the East and the West," in *Whither Mankind a Panorama of Modern Civilization*, first edition, edited by Charles A. Beard, (NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), 27.

⁸⁴ Multiple times throughout his writing, Hu has noted that the adoption of tools has been the primary difference between China's reaction to the Western world and Japan's. Since Japan had a social structure that enabled cultural adoption of new set of tools much more rapidly than China, Japan took a very different course.

⁸⁵ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 148-149. McLuhan offers the clock as an example from the European Renaissance: "In the Renaissance the clock combined with the uniform respectability of the new typography to extend the power of social organization almost to a national scale. By the nineteenth century it had provided a technology of cohesion that was inseparable from industry and transport."

⁸⁶ Jones, 24.

⁸⁷ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 155. McLuhan explains the visual emphasis as a desacralizing force that pulls the tribal man out of cosmic time. He writes, "the visual desacralizes the universe and produces the 'nonreligious man of modern societies.'"

⁸⁸ At this period of time, Hu refers to his pacifism as his "new pacifism" because it is not the same as the pacifism he originally asserted. But I was beginning to change in the year 1915 in 1916. In one of the intellectual forces that influenced me was Norman Angell-- one of the greatest minds of the Anglo-Saxon world and the author of the famous book *The Great Illusion*. *The Great Illusion* came out in 1909, and it was considered one of the most eloquent appeals for new constructive pacifism. (Oral History 75-76)

Mr. Norman Angell's pacifism was called a new pacifism because it was not of my earlier type which was based primarily upon non-resistance. (Hu, Oral History 77).

⁸⁹ Hu's oral history 79 quoted from John Dewey's article "Force and Coercion."

⁹⁰ This is a quote from Hu's diary that Hu quotes in his oral history recording. The diary citation can be found on page 77 of oral history.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 285. The literary reformers understood the effect of literat arts in much the same way as McLuhan maintains they are understood by the literat artist. "The business of the writer or the film-maker," he writes, "is to transfer the reader or viewer from one world, his *own*, to another, the world created by typography."

⁹³ Ibid. Literature is able to affect a culture that would otherwise ward of change because "those undergoing the experience," the readers, "accept it... without critical awareness." In other words, rather than being asked to accept a new belief wholesale, the reader has time to adjust to new ways of thinking. Print, McLuhan says, engenders imagination, imagination usurps reality, and the reader becomes a dreamer.

⁹⁴ Jones, 123.

⁹⁵ Grieder, 152. Grieder translates quote from Hu Shih, "Wo-men tui-yü Hsi-yang chin-tai wen-ming ti t'ai-tu" (Our attitude toward modern Western civilization), HSWT III, I, 6. The following is another quote from the same page: "The level at which modern Western culture is able to satisfy the spiritual demands of mankind is far away beyond the dreams of the old civilization of the Orient... Modern Western civilization is not at all a materialistic civilization; it is, rather, idealistic, it is spiritual."

⁹⁶ Hu, "The Renaissance in China," 275-276.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 275.

⁹⁸ . Jones, 13.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Dewey, *Characters and Events*, 294.

¹⁰² McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 45. McLuhan writes that reading and writing changes the individual by making “possible the discovery of individualism, introspection and so on.”

¹⁰³ Hu Shih, “The Social Message in Chinese Poetry,” *The Chinese Social and Political Review*, 1923-Jan. Vol. 7, pp. 66-79, in Vol. I of *A Collection of Hu Shih’s English Writings*, 138.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Hu notes the prevalence of this kind of poetry at the dawn of the age of logic, leading up to the nihilism of Lao Zi some 2600 years ago. He gives many examples from the *Book of Poetry*.

¹⁰⁵ Availability of print must follow literacy; (Ong 55) print includes publications of all kinds (pleasure reads and politics) Types of things derived from “text-formed thought” (Ong 55) Logic is a technological product, “logic itself emerges from the technology of writing.” (Ong 169)

¹⁰⁶ Leonid Cherkassky, Review of Hu Shi, *Experiments*, in *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature, 1900-1949, Volume 3, the Poem*, edited by Lloyd Haft, European Science Foundation, (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill), 136-139.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. Examples of Hu’s “‘modernised’ images are generally paler and less rich than their classical models.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. Clearly, Cherkassky notes, “Hu Shi is a champion of poetry based on experience.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² In some of Hu’s writings he uses the spelling “esthetic,” rather than aesthetic.

¹¹³ Hu, “The Social Message in Chinese Poetry,” 137. Rhythm is something that extends over time. Rhythm can take time to mature and it can fade away. “What was once the most vivid imagism may become the sordid poetic convention of to-day.”

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 169.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (NY: Penguin Group, 2005), 168.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 138. On “content,” Hu writes, “poetic expressions” reveal “the true explanations of the life and institutions of the people.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 136-137.

¹²⁰ Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 168.

¹²¹ Cherkassky, 136-139.

¹²² Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 57.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*. The materials of print play a motivational role as well. The newspaper, for example, encourages an intelligent form of communal playfulness by recording and distributing recent local events. "Experience translated into a new medium literally bestows a delightful playback of earlier awareness," McLuhan writes. "The press repeats the excitement we have in using our wits, and by using our wits we can translate the outer world into the fabric of our own being." (211). The playfulness of translated experiences in the newspaper is similar in kind to the way books create "an inward world of fantasy and dreams." (292).

¹²⁵ Hu, "The Social Message in Chinese Poetry," 175. "Demand for variety is the manifestation of the fact that being alive we seek to live until we are cowed by fear or dulled by routine. The need of life itself pushes us out into the unknown."

Chapter Four ♦ The Chinese Sophist: Hu Shi's Model for a New Public Intellectual

The New Sophist

The primary contribution of this study is clear articulation of the rhetorical figure Hu Shi tried to shape and bring to life during the Chinese Renaissance as a social actor capable of changing culture in substantive ways. Hu aimed at enabling and inspiring a particular type of player to see China through the process of modernization and to secure a future that would be made stable by way of continual change. Generally, the figure he envisioned for China's "new Sophist" is akin to Nathan Crick's conception of the Sophist as a "public intellectual," marked by the characteristics of *reflexive thought* and *social productivity*.¹ The idea of the "public intellectual" is helpful to our understanding of Hu Shi because the work of the public intellectual is both situated, and able to transcend their particular situation. Crick explains that when we think of the public intellectual we must think in terms of the "philosophical situation"² to which they respond. This means that we must think of the public intellectual in relation to their sociohistorical situation, theoretical work, and the potential of their work as a productive art, to people in their own time as well as to other people in other times.³ As a public actor, it is inevitable that the public intellectual be historically situated, and at the same time, as an intellectual he works in the realm of the timeless and the true.⁴ "Public intellectuals are those who react to the problems of their sociohistorical situation by creating enduring works that broadly influence cultural habits and institutional practices during their lifetimes."⁵ The figure is equipped with the tools of the *sophistic attitude* such as experimentalism, a wide foundation of contemporary knowledge, historical perspective, and an integrated approach to logos and aesthetics. Engaging the Chinese public with arts and logic, the new Sophist can engender what we might call a *Sophistic Tao*, an ongoing practice in life, or way of living that experimentally blends knowledge and practice to produce creative solutions to handle the ongoing contingencies of a continually changing society.⁶

For Hu and other liberal reformers of the Chinese Renaissance, the "ideal" state is a moral democracy built around a continually changing society, established on educative democratic institutions, and propelled by new ideas and ambitions. The notion of a moral democracy considers democracy "as a social and intellectual environment."⁷ A continually changing society is one that respects "new ideas" and "new ambitions."⁸ Hu believed that when a society thrives on new ideas it will be immune to the destructive pull of social revolutions.⁹ Education is the gateway to new ideas, he maintained; it initiates the cycle of continual change. Democratic "institutions themselves perform an educative function."¹⁰ Democratic institutions function in two ways: first, to allow citizens to exercise the democratic spirit in all venues of social life; and second, to help citizens cultivate a "civic morality,"¹¹ Hu explains that democratic morality can be learned in practice. "Although political life is not so simple a thing as electricity and the telephone, it is in actuality only a kind of organized life," he writes, and "this kind of organized life can be learned."¹²

As Hu's rhetorical project, the Literary Revolution demonstrates how Hu's understanding of rhetoric aligns with the Sophistic notion. Hu developed the Literary Revolution as the rhetorical means of achieving the ideal state. Already, this origin puts Hu's project on Sophistic ground. For the Sophists, as John Poulakos explains, "rhetoric came about as an activity grounded in human experience."¹³ Sophistic rhetoric is situated on a historic timeline and is undertaken by an association of people who desire something. A rhetorical undertaking is

triggered by a situation of need; the rhetorical project is a “movement originating in the sphere of actuality and striving to attain a place in that of potentiality.”¹⁴ In short, “Rhetoric is the art which seeks to capture in opportune moments that which is appropriate and attempts to suggest that which is possible.”¹⁵ To change the actual into the potential, rhetoric accounts for the “how, the when, and the what of expression and understands the why of purpose.”¹⁶ *When*: The Literary Revolution took the opportunity of the Republican Period, allowed for by the overthrow of dynastic rule and abolishment of the civil service examinations. *How*: Hu’s Literary Revolution used a new sort of rhetorical discourse, an aesthetic literature, to articulate imaginative possibilities and change Chinese society. *What of Expression*: The new rhetorical discourse would enable the spirit of mind that encourages the methods of logical inquiry to reinvigorate development of the Sophistic attitude, and thus, enable a new rational consciousness capable of seeing China transition into modern civility. *Why of Purpose*: To develop the ideal state, based on the kind of society that gives perpetual rise to public intellectuals, hence continually advancing a culture of logical and aesthetic rhetorical discourse in the more developed and sophisticated secondary forms.

Taken in total, one can see how the other characteristics of the Sophistic attitude—experimentalism, a wide foundation of contemporary knowledge, historical perspective, and an integrated approach to logos and aesthetics—are interwoven with Hu’s rhetorical project. This chapter will construct a clearer image of Hu’s understanding of the Sophistic character with regard to China’s transition to a modern, moral, and democratic civilization by describing the rhetorical function of the *new Sophist*, a public intellectual who combines logic and aesthetics within a rhetorical discourse that is intended to move people to action in particular circumstances, all the while aiming at the imagined end in view, the ideal state. This new sophistical discourse challenges people to think critically about situations while at the same time embedding judgments within a larger aesthetic possibility of a new nationhood. The responsibility for this type of discourse falls on a generation of *new Sophists*, like Hu, who use aesthetic vernacular and rational logic to combine classical and modern insights for experimental judgment and advocacy on specific contemporary controversies.

Having studied Western philosophy under John Dewey, Hu Shi drew from his understanding of intellectual and cultural development in the West to gain a new perspective on the latent, glossed over, or altered parts of China’s own ancient intellectual development. Articulating the rhetorical figure of the *new Sophist* involves describing the type of rhetorical art they would use.

Ancient Radicals

Rhetoric was a radical invention that appeared in ancient Greece with the rise of democracy. Rhetoric functions to guide human affairs through the power of the human mind to craft logoi and to order appearances through the arts. Before the organizing and reasoning functions of rhetoric, tradition and faith in the gods ruled human affairs. The most influential theories in classical Western rhetoric share three major characteristics in common, Lloyd Bitzer notes, including the community context, often referred to in civic or political terms, normative goals, and view of rhetoric as an “art.”¹⁷ The “art” of rhetoric refers to a “systematic method, the object of which was to guide practice toward the best activity permitted by circumstances, and they assigned it tasks of the first order.”¹⁸ The power of the art aligns with the power of language to move people to act together, in the context of a community. Democracy enables the power of language because with democracy comes faith in the arts and faith in the power of human reason

and speech. Rhetoric arises in responses to particular needs (“tasks of the first order”) and is shaped in response to the situation, or circumstances, that are present at that particular time of need.

The most key ties between ancient and contemporary western rhetoric involved in the present study originated with the Sophists. The Sophists are most well-known for instructing people in ways of oral defense, persuasion, and style. Yet, the Sophists made a far greater contribution to western rhetoric than what they are commonly given credit for. *Social knowledge*, for instance, the foundational democratic principle that all people can attain and employ knowledge to make judgments about and take action on their world and society, originated with the Sophists. This concept attests to the resonating effects of rhetoric that live on past their original conception and become integrated into cultural practice.

The Sophists account for the democratic portion of what Poulakos calls the Greek trilogy.¹⁹ “Without the Sophists,” he says, “our picture of the rhetoric that came out of the Greek experience is incomplete.”²⁰ The Sophists grounded the abstract thought of their predecessors in the everyday experiences of the Greek people. They “were the first to infuse rhetoric with life.”²¹ Or, as Farrell says, “Formally speaking, rhetoric is the collaborative art of addressing and guiding decision and judgment.”²²

Hu Shi approached the Sophists in a way very similar to his teacher, John Dewey, who writes:

The Sophists taught that man could largely control the fortunes of life by mastery of the arts... Through instrumental arts, arts of control based on study of nature, objects which are fulfilling and good, maybe multiplied and rendered secure. This road after almost two millennia of obscurity and desertion was refound and retaken; its rediscovery marks what we call the modern era.²³

Both Dewey and Hu found in this precursor to the rhetorical philosopher a tie to the practical world that they wanted to reclaim and use to enable social progress in their modern world. The Sophist had represented a new phase in the spirit of Greek democracy before being eclipsed and replaced by reflective discussions about *a priori* truths. At different times in both China and the West, the skills of the Sophists resurfaced to be put to work for ends to which they were not intended.²⁴ Yet, *the Sophistic attitude* behind the skills was revived to pursue the constructive ends of the humanists and pragmatics. Both of these theoretical turns saw the Sophists as a beneficial lens for viewing the problems of their day because the Sophistic spirit carried the idea that humans could control their fates through the use of language and arts.

The pedagogical legacy of the Sophists attests to their *real* radicalism. The Sophists have long been known according to Plato’s accusations of them as profit driven subversives, who were as unethical as they were nihilistic and skeptical. However, as Crick explains, the approach taken by the Sophists was so novel because they gave people skills they didn’t have before in a social context that was shaken up by this exchange.²⁵ Far from complete nihilists, the Sophists taught people how to create things. By imparting the skills of rhetoric, the Sophists equipped people with tools to make sense of their experiences in life. As Farrell writes, “Rhetorical questions attempt to provide an appropriate caption for our ongoing experience with appearances.”²⁶ Rhetoric arises out of problematic, and often confusing, situations. With rhetoric we make sense of events by establishing their order, causes, and meanings. We check our understanding against the understanding of others’ in a community. In this practice, we reaffirm democratic values by legitimating individual perspectives. Further, those people who share the same problem join together to make sense of it. Enabled by the assistance of others, people who

could not have remedied the problem on their own find that they have new capabilities as part of a group. Thus, rhetoric provides “for the continual reinvention of human *agency*,”²⁷ meaning one’s ability to act *effectively*.

Rhetorical Power

Agency is the power of rhetoric. Rhetoric responds to pressing conditions and relies on arguments from citizens to persuade other citizens of the most beneficial course of action for all who are concerned. It empowers the audience with the capacity for judgment and ethical responsibility. It appeals to the audience with reason as well as with emotion, by calling on the empathetic bonds we create in civic life with strangers who have similar life experiences as our own.

The rhetorical arts were understood as so significant to the ancient philosophers precisely because they could affect particular social actions and ongoing cultural practices in this way. The philosophers understood the social currency of rhetoric, or in other words, the force it had to move a community to act, think, and believe.²⁸ The notion of force relates to ideas about the movement of the natural world as well as the destructive and constructive potential of human communities and human desires. Force is also related to ideas about the aim of rhetoric and the means employed to achieve that aim. Some force is effective and some is not. Some force is wasteful and some is not. Different situations require different kinds of force and different tools for applying it.

The experimental aspect of Sophistic rhetoric is remedy to the human inability to obtain permanent knowledge about the world. The Sophists acted in ways “aware of the human limitations and the acquisition of knowledge,” Poulakos explains.²⁹ Every notion was born of experience and aimed at future experience. We can also say that Sophistic rhetoric is defined by the speaker’s sense of urgency. “During times of stress we feel compelled to intervene and, with the power of the word, to attempt to end a crisis, redistribute justice, or restore order.”³⁰ Sophistic rhetoric, then, involves people with one another while helping them confront and experimentally overcome the most trying moments of life. Social knowledge arises out of these experiences, shared with our neighbors, when we experimentally confront hardships. “Rhetoric may thus be seen as the principal art responsible for the shape and coloration of public character.”³¹ The rhetorical enterprise is thus a risky affair that needs good timing, bravery, camaraderie, and public memory to get along. It is then no wonder why rhetoric arises as a companion to democracy and perpetually strengthens communal bonds.

The Sophists Spread the Power

The Sophists spread the power of rhetoric among the members of a community. In ancient Greece, they were a class of itinerant teachers who roamed about teaching a new class of citizens the arts of politics so that they could appear before others and have a hand in guiding affairs. They are also “teachers of culture,”³² as Poulakos writes. Like contemporary institutions that “teach culture,” the education system, government, military, and so on, the Sophists trained people in the ways of public decorum, public thought, and public action. They were the trainers of the people who sought to stake some sort of social claim.

The Sophistic identity is built up around the idea of potential. As Poulakos explains, rhetoric is an “art which seeks to capture in opportune moments that which is appropriate and attempts to suggest that which is possible.”³³ With the arrival of Sophists, people must have been able to feel potential on the air of Athens. Crick notes, “The Sophists marked a distinct change in

mood in the ancient world.”³⁴ Individual citizens had ever increasing opportunities “to participate in culture and politics.”³⁵ In practice, the Sophists saw the potential of discovering new theories and pedagogies, which were in turn put to work to develop new forms of practice.

The sophists taught rhetorical competencies. It was a cyclical adventure, certainly a “novel approach to rhetorical invention.” The Sophistic spirit was one of experimental creation, Crick writes, in “which ideas and actions were allowed to interpenetrate and inform one another across a situated and temporal horizon.”³⁶ The Sophists would seem radical because they were giving people something they didn’t have before; they gave people the ability to affect the operations of society by giving them the ability to create new operations for society. The Sophistic spirit is therefore the spirit of introduction, whereby people gain new capacities to shake up the old guard and feel engaged in the world. A Sophist is one who teaches an art and maintains a spirit of creation and endurance in the midst of challenges. Hence, a Sophist is a radical because a Sophist is a bearer of change who uses pedagogy to infiltrate the old structure. This is what sets Sophism apart from rhetoric. Whereas rhetoric is an art, Sophism is a spirit. It accounts for a type of person who experiments, creates, teaches, and brings change.

To teach rhetorical arts means to train a particular kind of person with a particular set of competencies. The Sophists taught “competencies crafted by the arts of practical reason,” Farrell writes.³⁷ These competencies are things like “reading situations creatively, setting out positions clearly, [and] appraising alternatives with prudence and practical judgment.”³⁸ As anyone who has tried to teach these skills, or learn these skills, will know, all of them require a great deal of practice. These are competencies of behavior, intellect, and emotion. They “are not simply impersonal, neutral capacities. They admit—indeed require—some qualitative differentiation.”³⁹ On the one hand, the practitioner of rhetoric will naturally be devoted to the cause of their practice, because by the very nature of rhetoric, the cause will be something connected to the rhetor’s life. Rhetoric, naturally hits close to home. Thus, the practice of rhetoric will necessarily merit the interest of the rhetor. However, I might ask my reader to consider if he or she has ever side-stepped a competency of behavior, intellect, or emotion in a moment of reactionary impulse, intellectual turmoil, or emotional exhaustion? “It is not only that the rhetorician studies what is the capacity of human nature—that is, the direction of human agency through discourse—but that the systematic study, this technique, is also a potential that must be prodded or coaxed into existence in order to be realized.”⁴⁰ There is technique in the rhetorical art and there is technique in the practice of rhetorical arts. Thus, the teachers, practitioners, and “theorists of rhetoric are absorbed in an enterprise that is unmistakably of ethical, aesthetic, and normative significance.”⁴¹ Social judgments of all kinds are inlaid in the techniques of rhetoric.

The Sophists can be said to “spread the power” because it is their experimental and practical orientation that keeps the rhetorical enterprise, and judgments therein, in the hands of all the people. The Sophists who understand the power of rhetoric and seek to pass it along aim at “richer human experience. Enlightened civic participation. The explicit goals may differ, but usually they have something to do with the advancement of civic discourse.”⁴² So how does the Sophistic attitude take shape in the context of the China’s twentieth century Renaissance? The remainder of this section illustrates the new Sophist, or in other words, the teacher and public intellectual that Hu Shi tried to develop.

A New Type of Teacher: The Relevance is in the Metaphor

Hu asserted that to change the trajectory of China’s intellectual development, the intellectual leaders of New China must lead the nation through a conscious reform, directed by

“creative intelligence.”⁴³ Creative intelligence, he defined as the ability to use critical thought to break away from “enslavement to cause and effect.”⁴⁴ Hu maintained that man is capable of consciously altering the sequence of cause and effect. By investigating history we can find particular “causes of historical fact.”⁴⁵ If then, we implement new causes; we can create new historical facts.⁴⁶ Principally, this is the culmination of Hu’s ideas on causality, genealogy and gradualism. Its basic premise is that laws of causality enable man “to explain the past and predict the future,” but they also, like chapter two attested, embolden man “to use his intelligence to create new causes and attain new results.”⁴⁷

If man is to put the laws of causality to work in his conscious favor, he must be knowledgeable about his intellectual heritage, the qualities of social life he wants to achieve, and what ideas and beliefs are likely contributors to the favored qualities. As mentioned earlier, Hu said the Chinese needed to access “with critical candor the nature of their inheritance.”⁴⁸ Only this would allow for their rescue “from the relentless mechanism of the universe.”⁴⁹ Confucianism had proven especially “relentless” in its self-perpetuation. Like the Sung and Ming periods show, whatever thought systems were not ground out by Confucianism at their origin, were subsumed or substantially subjugated by it later on.

Hu needed to establish a “new cause” for a critical, logical spirit. He explains a cause like a social prerequisite. To have knowledge of cause is to have knowledge of something manageable to work with, a tangible canvas for sketching out a new trajectory of cultural development. Hu had to look for a more appropriate cause further back in China’s intellectual development, before Confucianism’s overwhelming influence. Taking the American democratic spirit as guide to the social qualities he sought, he then took the characteristics of a Greek Sophist as the cause he was searching for. Hu understood the slow nature of his undertaking, and he believed that its gradual nature would be part and parcel to its lasting effect. As he writes, “I have come to hold that there is no short-cut to political decency and efficiency... Good government cannot be secured without certain necessary prerequisites.”⁵⁰

The characteristics Hu found would be the makings of a “new individual” who is “critical, tolerant, creative, intellectually his own master, seeking to mold his natural and cultural surroundings to suit his own benign purposes, and thus moving ever toward richer and more satisfying life experiences.”⁵¹ He wanted the democratic and scientific spirit to cultivate a sense of agency and accountability in Chinese thought; he hoped the Chinese people would “become the masters of their history, not, as in the disastrous century just behind them, its slaves.”⁵²

The Greek Sophistic model aided Hu’s endeavor to create new causes in two primary ways: first, it was a model that could prompt questions about the idea of pious models; second, it functioned as a tangible starting point, a precursor of critical logic. It was something upon which the Chinese could build the “qualities of intellectual independence that must be the mark of the individual’s emancipation.”⁵³ Grieder explains the individual character Hu sought, he writes:

He envisioned an individual strong enough in intellect and character to be able continuously to subject all standards of conduct and value, not excluding his own, to critical re-examination, and to deny any claim upon him to which he was unwilling to give intellectual assent. Hu was convinced that for China, as for the rest of the world, only the acceptance of this kind of ‘critical attitude’ could prepare men to move into a more promising future. ‘In examining the demands of this age of ours,’ Hu wrote in 1922, ‘we must recognize that the greatest responsibility of mankind today, and its greatest need, is to apply the scientific method to the problems of human life.’⁵⁴

In ancient Greek and Chinese intellectual history alike, the critical attitude—that responsibility and need of mankind described above—showed its first signs of life in the Sophistic precursor. At origin, the characteristics of Greek Sophistical style included: teaching, intelligence, reflection, action, testing, focus on history, imagination, and dialogue.

The Sophistic character is important to this project because Hu borrowed the metaphor of the Western Sophist as precursor to the western democratic civilization in order to show that there are characteristics in China's past that are of great significance to China's modern future that have similar grounding in China's history as they do in western history. While simultaneously, there are characteristics that developed from those grounds in the west and were unable to develop in China that are now required in this modern age. Although these characteristics might appear foreign, they are analogous to the sophistical age, and thus, can find accommodation in China's intellectual legacy.

The Sophistic attitude plays a radical role in society by prompting questions about the idea of pious models through a pedagogical philosophy that aims at giving people something they didn't have before.⁵⁵ In ancient Greece the Sophists gave the people perspective and social access. The new Sophists of the liberal Chinese reformers were no less radical. They were giving people the power of language, the quintessential part of the potion in the hierarchy of traditional China. With language, the common people could close the gap between the two strata of traditional society. A common and elevated vernacular language gave the Chinese people a path directly into the mechanisms of society. With the civil service examinations abolished and the Qing dynasty dismantled, a mass of people connected and empowered by a common tongue could affect real and radical change.

Further, like the ancient Greek Sophists, the new Sophist of modern China would teach people the rhetorical arts. As Farrell notes, "rhetoric is a way of looking at things."⁵⁶ To teach people the rhetorical arts means to teach a particular way of looking at things. As discussed earlier, rhetoric is an art that deals with issues of public need and the uncertainties that people encounter when they are stuck in the midst of change. "Rhetoric is the only art which evokes the capacity for practical reason from situated audience."⁵⁷ So, in essence, we are thinking about a kind of thinking public made up of individuals with personal perspectives who are also connected to one another in situation and concern. Rhetoric helps this public join together, exercise their individual strengths, synthesize their judgment, and act. "*Rhetoric is an acquired competency... that... helps us to invent public thought.*"⁵⁸ Hu saw developing the Sophistic rhetorical attitude as synonymous with developing in people the capacity to conceive of the world, and their individual place within the world, in a wholly new way.

The remainder of this chapter constructs the new Sophistic attitude that Hu wanted for modern China for the eventual aim of a moral democratic state. I will show how Hu sought to strengthen and advance China's own Sophistic foundations by merging them with western pragmatic rhetoric and experimentalism. Also, this section gives examples of how vernacular was intended to function to get people to tell stories about themselves, and in turn, see themselves in a new light. Here I look at the characteristics of China's new Sophist: an understanding of opportunity (*kairos*), courage, wisdom, a critical approach, creativity, tolerance, self-sufficiency, and eloquence.

Opportunity

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant turning points in modern Chinese history is the abolishment of the civil service examinations in 1905. Wang Ke-wen writes that the

examinations came under severe criticism after the mid-nineteenth century, when “reform-minded Chinese... attacked the system for its exclusion of Western learning, which China’s self-strengthening required.”⁵⁹ Empress Dowager Cixi of the Qing dynasty abolished the examination system as a result of domestic and international pressure. The effects of this action were monumental. “The action liberated the minds of educated Chinese which, in a sense, had been imprisoned by this institution for nearly one thousand years. Yet, it also produced far-reaching repercussions in the society in the decades that followed.”⁶⁰

Doubt and discontent about China’s place in the world and traditional placement of individuals in Chinese society brought about a moment that shook the bedrock of Confucian tradition. The mechanism that had produced and protected the gentry class had been removed and the government had not replaced it with any clear alternative system of modern education.⁶¹ As Wang notes, “no clear pattern of advancement, therefore, was available to those who were ambitious or interested in pursuing a government career.”⁶² At this point, the young Chinese people of the educated-ruling class had no clear path to obtaining government positions and they knew of no other of making a comparable living. Further, the lack of options brought the foreign rule of the Qing dynasty into sharp relief. The realization could not be avoided that even the most well-to-do members of Chinese society could not assuredly claim that their future was their own. With no other options, many students left to study abroad.

The anxiety about their own futures, combined with the shocking foreign experiences, created a profound sense of crisis that in the end marginalized and radicalized a generation of Chinese youth. The abolition of the examination system paved the way for the Qing dynasty’s own downfall.⁶³

Chinese society had reached an unmistakable moment of potential.

Certainly the young intellectuals of China in the early twentieth century had little certain means of changing their situation, nor could they have clearly known what they should aim at. Yet, for the Sophists, Poulakos explains, such a situation was simply known as “*kairos* (the opportune moment).”⁶⁴ *Kairos*, as it applies to the new Sophists of Hu’s vision, is related to the larger trajectory of China’s historical timeline.⁶⁵ Crick describes this “notion of *kairos*” as a historical moment, “that includes one’s entire sociohistorical situation.”⁶⁶ If we view the “opportunity” within the larger framework of social history, the practical meaning of the moment is more obvious. As Crick explains, the question of *kairos* “is whether intellectuals such as philosophers, scientists, or artists merely *reflect* qualities of their situations or whether they *act* as agents of change.”⁶⁷ Certainly a moment would not be considered opportune if not for some potentiality. Further, this potential must be in the direction of some previously considered end. With no end in view, there would be no way to distinguish one moment’s potentiality from the next. The young intellectuals of the early 1900s had a revolutionary end in view. *Kairos* followed on the heels of the abolition of the civil service examinations. The revolutionaries sought destruction of the imperial dynasty and, in 1911, they achieved it.

Like the ancient Greek Sophists, Hu and his cohorts arrived on the scene after the revolution; they were not revolutionaries. As opposed to other radicals of the same time who were still inspired by revolutionary fervor, Hu did not want his efforts to be reactive or destructive. Hu had returned to China in 1917, five years after the Republican government had been established and even though the Republican state had thus far proven ineffective, Hu maintained that to revolt against it would be a further waste of energy.

As a historically situated opportunity, *kairos*, means the ability to affect change. Hu understood this when he said that the Republican government has failed. The failure of the

Republic has been the result of superficial changes, he writes, which “have hardly touched the fundamental issues of political transformation.” A successful Republic needs “modern leadership,” a “genuine admission of our real weaknesses,” and “recognition of [the] spiritual possibilities of the new civilization.”⁶⁸ He maintained that none of this has been accomplished because the energy of the Renaissance has thus far only been put to destructive ends. There must be a constructive use of force if reformers are to take advantage of this opportunity in social-historical time.

Hu was looking for the attitude that could unite the reflective and practical arts “without collapsing them”⁶⁹ This attitude was found with the Sophists, for whom Crick explains, “*kairos* extends through time and space, expanding our notion of ‘situations’ beyond our immediate experience.”⁷⁰ Unlike their common description as subversive radicals, the Sophists were not revolutionaries either. They too understood the constructive properties of force. The Sophists shared in the critical, doubting attitude of the revolutionaries; however, they did not want to bring the system down. Rather, the Sophists wanted to engage doubt and criticism, along with a wide foundation of contemporary knowledge and historical perspective to develop novel and more effective ways of confronting and handling the problems of society from within site. In essence, they aimed at strengthening and stabilizing society; method of doubt and criticism exposed social weaknesses so they can be gotten rid of. It is only by regularly questioning the social that the social system can be known to be strong.

For Hu, the concept of effectively applied force was at the crux of multiple topics, such as Sophistic doubt, nonresistance, and *Tao*. Even the function of social institutions like law and government, for Hu, represented the effective application of force to enable fulfillment of those opportune moments as they appear along the social-historical timeline. Perhaps Hu’s ideas on force are best approached via his understanding of *Tao*. Lao Zi, Hu explains, conceived “of a well-ordered universe wherein the Way of Heaven (which also means the law of nature) rules apparently indifferently and nonchalantly, but always effectively and absolutely.”⁷¹ “Nature” and “heaven” are interchangeable expressions in ancient Chinese philosophy; these terms are also exchanged with terms like “universe” and “cosmos.” Generally, these terms blend the ideas of a natural world and other-worldly fate. Rather than focus on *the maker*, as in a God or some power in the universe, they focus on *the made*, as in the subjects or creatures on Earth. Moreover, these terms relate to the forces that Earthly creatures will most definitely encounter. There is nothing human about the forces as Lao Zi describes them. Fate, nature, heaven, or whatever one might call it, does not think about things as a human would; there is no emotion and there is no indecision. The rules of Nature are absolute, and when left unobstructed, the Way of Nature is seamless and seemingly still; it is “an order which seems to do nothing yet achieves everything.”⁷²

The Way of Nature is the single most effective use of force. To watch it would be like looking at a gigantic fast moving river in which the water appears totally still. The riverbed is as smooth as polished marble and there is no rough sediment, no boulders, nor any bushes intruding from the banks. There is nothing at all standing in the way of the quickly flowing water, and hence, it does not appear to be moving quickly at all. With no rocks to push against there is no foam or contrast. It is calm but it is quick, just like the Way of Nature is said to be nothing but everything at once.

The same principal applies to the creatures on the Earth; one can either disrupt the river like a boulder in its course or one can stay up on the bank. On the one hand this can seem to be a fully passive philosophy, and it has often been interpreted this way. On the other hand, it is a

philosophy of strength. Hu points out that this philosophy is also present in Western thought, and here too it is known as a philosophy that is both passive and strong.

It is, therefore, a mistake to think that the great teachers of nonresistance have intended that we should condemn all use of force. Under certain circumstances, passive resistance may prove more effective force than physical violence. But under other circumstances even the great teacher of nonresistance did not hesitate to use force drive the vendors and money-changers out of the Temple of God.⁷³

If the Way of Nature is this unceasing and unalterable force, than the *way* of living efficiently in the midst of it is *Tao*.

All human progress in law and government, internally and internationally, is in a sense an imitation, however imperfect, of that supreme moral order implied in the doctrine of nonresistance, by creating on earth some higher power to which all interested parties in a dispute may resign their private and 'natural' rights of redressing injury and administering rough justice by themselves.⁷⁴

As Hu explains, part of his philosophical endeavor is to "clear the way for a more positive conception of the nature of force and its place and function in human society."⁷⁵ This philosophical interest has a rich legacy in Chinese intellectualism, as we have seen. It is also an inheritance from his mentor, John Dewey, who in 1916 posed what Hu called "the acute question of social philosophy in a world like that of today."⁷⁶ Dewey asked "*What is force and what are we going to do with it?*"⁷⁷ Dewey's answer, Hu explained, is that "force figures in different roles." It can play the role of "energy," "coercion and constraint," and "violence."⁷⁸ "Energy is power used with a eulogistic meaning; it is power of doing work, harnessed to accomplishment of ends."⁷⁹ In short, the ability to direct energy, to make it constructive at times and destructive at others, is the only way to capture the opportune moment.

Courage

A person needs courage to seize an opportune moment and make appropriate decisions for particular situations. It is precisely what sets rhetoric apart from episteme that makes courage such a vital part of rhetoric. "In distinction to *episteme*," Poulakos explains, "rhetoric does not strive for cognitive certitude, the affirmation of logic, or the articulation of universals."⁸⁰ Rhetoric arises from contingency; it is the constructive response to a problem surrounded by uncertainty.

Rhetoric can draw on similarities of previous circumstances preserved in social knowledge, but since the problem is unique to its own situation, time, and participants, crucial aspects of it will require the wise judgment of those who are involved with no idea of outcome more guaranteed than as a likely probability. Take for instance the situation mentioned in the previous chapter, when Hu was studying in America and Japan released the infamous list of the Twenty-One Demands. Hu's fellow students were outraged by the demands and thought the Nationalist government should take a stand and assert itself, even declare war if necessary. Some students wanted to return to China to take up the cause. Hu urged for calmness. He said the students will better serve their country by completing their education and that continued destruction will do nothing good for the nation in its present state. His request was published as an open letter to Chinese students called, "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity."⁸¹ His fellow students responded to him in anger and called him a traitor. Hu could not have been certain what the result would have been if his pleas were followed. He could also not be certain about how his

insistence on temperance might alter the situation itself. Nonetheless, feeling that the time called for him to voice his concern, he courageously did so.

The most compelling example of the way Hu embodied the courage of the new Sophistic attitude was after the death of his mother. A coincidental turn of events placed his mother's death just days before Hu was scheduled to speak on the reform of traditional Chinese mourning rites. The following excerpt is from an article translated by E.T.C. Werner's *Autumn Leaves* that Hu wrote after tending to his mother's funeral arrangements and reflecting on the experience.

The date for the address was fixed for the 27th day of the 11th month. Unexpectedly, on the 24th day of that month I received a telegram from my home informing me of the death of my mother. Thus, before I had even begun my address it had become a question of myself actually taking a practical part in the 'reform of mourning rites!' On the 25th I made haste to return to the South; and when I was about to set out on my journey; two scholars came to see me, and said: 'We have come to-day, first, to bid you godspeed on your journey; secondly, you, sir, have in times past referred to the subject of introducing reform into the mourning ceremonial. Now that, unfortunately, this great grief has befallen you, we very much hope that you will change the old forms of ceremonial.' I thanked them for their kind thought, and then, entering my carriage, took my departure.⁸²

E.T.C. Werner, British diplomat who studied Chinese culture and witnessed China's transition from the Qing dynasty to the Republican Period, translated this article noting the significance of Hu's courage in both thought and action. "Mr. Hu has had the courage not only to publish but also to act up to his unorthodox beliefs."⁸³ Werner maintains, that Hu's "courage and example cannot but do good in helping to free China from the trammels of superstition."⁸⁴

The primary conclusion Hu reached after dealing with his mother's funeral, and the only direct advice he offered to readers, is to approach every action and decision by asking "why?" "If we can in every act find the 'Why?' we naturally shall be unwilling to follow the various mean customs for which we cannot assign a reason. If in everything we neglect to ask the reason for our conduct, then our conduct is based on meaningless custom. That is the conduct of the lower animals. It is shameless conduct."⁸⁵ One should not mistake Hu's for looking down on others for such conduct. Rather, he writes that this was a lesson that he is ashamed to have learned the hard way. After he heard of his mother's death, he set about preparing to travel home. He moved through the initial preparatory tasks, like preparing his chief mourning clothes, without giving too much thought to what he was doing. It was only after he began the trip, when he had a moment to sit still and think about it, that he realized the habitual path he had set out upon. "Careful thinking convinced me that I had not yet rid myself of the influence of the supernaturalism of the archaic customs; I was still afraid of what people would say!"⁸⁶ Then later he writes, "Truly the influence of habit is terrible!"⁸⁷

As Hu handled the funeral affairs, he broke from many of the traditional mourning rites, such as the customary way of composing the death announcement, the gift's he said the family was willing to receive, how weeping was handled, how the biography of the deceased was written, the conduct of the sacrificial ceremonials, the inclusion of ceremonial masters from outside the family, and allowing sacrificial feasts to be given by relatives.⁸⁸ He explains that many of these practices have become absurd and unnecessary. A couple of the most telling examples he gives are of the gifts customarily given to the family and the customary practice of wailing. With regard to the first example, the gifts, Hu explains the custom and why he limited the items and amounts people could give to his family.

Our custom at Hui Chou is, when a death occurs in a family, the related clan and one's own family must all present tin-foil, white paper, and incense; and especially fastidious people send as well 'winding satin,' paper clothes and hats, paper furniture, and other things. The tin-foil and white paper sent by all the various families is often in superabundance; so much, in fact, that it cannot all be burned. Accordingly, when the funeral is over, the mourning family often strike a bargain with the storekeeper to sell it back to him at a discount! Extravagant expenditure of this sort is certainly unreasonable.⁸⁹

To get an even better idea of the amount of items these things would amount to, Hu explains that spectators of town, who realized the expanse of Hu's family relations, actually opened shop to cater to everyone who would need paper funeral articles specifically for this funeral. "I having unexpectedly excluded all these things," Hu notes, "the new paper shop had no alternative but to close its doors."⁹⁰

Another aspect of the funeral activities that has grown especially absurd, Hu writes, is the practice of wailing. The customary importance of weeping is highlighted in everything from the death announcement, to the time of condolences, to the funeral procession. Death announcements traditionally follow one of a few conventional formats, such as the phrase "The mourning orphans So-and-So and other with tears of blood and clothed in mourning garments prostrate themselves, knocking their heads on the ground."⁹¹ Similarly, in funeral processions, the chief mourner, in this case, Hu as the eldest son should be so bereaved as to be utterly exhausted and unable to walk without the support of walking stick. However, it is during the time of condolences that Hu explains people go to the most absurd lengths.

The ordinary custom at the time of condolence is:—Drums are beaten outside the house, inside the 'spirit-curtain' is hung up. The master of the house and the men and women of the establishment wail. The condoling guests having left, the wailing ceases. What absurd behaviour! Men of olden times 'wailed until they wept'; but this weeping was surely not done for the condoling guests! In order to use the weeping as a pretense of 'filiality' people of wealth in whose establishments the condoling guests are numerous invariably spend money on hiring people to come and weep for them.⁹²

Some of the old customs were, at their time of origin, attached to very practical reasons, Hu explains. For example, the customs that involve external literati, such as the ceremonials and signing of the death register, were probably begun because families without education needed the assistance of someone who could read and write.⁹³

Habit should aid life by lessening the amount of energy one needs to exert. However, the customs are so far removed from any of the current behaviors, needs, and in most cases, beliefs of the people, that the habits of mourning rites cause unnecessary trouble and exhaustion.

All these and others of like kind are evidence that the present mourning regulations are fixed anyhow and are entirely dependent upon social custom. There is no principle to be expounded; there is no beacon to be kept in view. All is upside down and confused. Not a single thing is right. The pecuniary waste need not be mentioned; but besides this the vexations are very difficult to bear. I had thought of selecting a set of mourning rules which would meet people's desires, be reasonable, and serve as a standard, but I could not find any.⁹⁴

However, the reasonability of one's actions is sometimes a weak comfort in the face of the distress that can be incurred by breaking with tradition. Hu knew the likely negative effects of breaking with tradition, particularly in relation to customary mourning rites, which involve the

entire clan system and are sure to attract a lot of attention made even more unbearable by the fact that the loss of a loved one already makes for such a difficult time.⁹⁵ Hu was particularly worried about this when writing his mother's biography; telling the truth about his mother would involve memories of people who are still living that might not present them in the best light. Yet, Hu decided that it is a worse irreverence to misrepresent the memory of his mother for the benefit of the living.⁹⁶

Even though Hu was not shy about breaking from custom, there were a couple customs that he judged better to follow in his particular circumstance, rather than attract so much attention to himself and his intentions as to possibly negate the meaning of the entire endeavor. For example even though Hu was fully qualified to make the inscription on the death register, he asked his friend to do it. Likewise, rather than forego the traditional mourning clothes of the funeral march altogether, which would have made him stand out in sharp contrast to the other mourners, Hu decided to wear an abridged version of the traditional outfit. In these choices we can see how Hu tried to inhabit courage as well as a respect for *kairos*. Hu's article reflected on his personal experience confronting traditional mourning rites.

My object was only to set forth my experiences and feelings arising from an examination of one of the most dreadfully distressing events of my whole life; to indicate the parts most needing reform in the present mourning ceremonial, and the trend they will most probably assume in the future.⁹⁷

He was not trying to command people to follow his lead, but rather, he offered the article to people to share the perspective he gained from this experience.

A Critical Approach

The ancient Greek Sophists juxtaposed abstract otherworldly ideas and denied the existence of a singular truth, to place value instead, on the individual subjective experience. "The core spirit of the sophistical attitude," Crick writes, "is marked by respect for the diversity and reality of human experience."⁹⁸ In ancient Greek intellectualism, the Sophists are the contrast to the Platonic conception of Truths just as the new Chinese Sophists are the contrast to what Hu Shi describes as the problem of "isms," which is essentially an ideology that has become forceful in society. In the 1940s Hu grew increasingly concerned about the forceful thrust of "isms." He said the world is in the midst of a very "real conflict among the several contradicting and opposing systems of ideas about life, society, economic organization, and political institutions."⁹⁹ Toward the end of Hu's life, in the oral history recorded at Columbia University, he tried to clarify once again.

I said the greatest dangers of these isms is to make people, particularly young people, feel easily satisfied that they have found the final solution for the fundamental resolution of all problems, ken-pen chiai-chueh ('a fundamental or radical solution of all problems').¹⁰⁰

Always, Hu had to try to make people see the value of the tempered, or gradual, course. Hu worried about "cure all" ideas in any form. Confucianism had engendered a culture of deductive habits of mind that the Chinese people were, in many ways, still struggling beneath. He did not want to free Chinese thought from the domination of one "ism" just to get trapped beneath another.

The threat of totalitarian ideologies also greatly troubled Hu. "Wherever there was confusion, disorder, and discontent, there was fertile soil for the rise and growth of dictatorship."¹⁰¹ He calls the spread of totalitarianism a forceful despotism, but even worse, it is spread by propaganda, which gives it a sense of "vigor, freshness, and glamour."¹⁰² In his

dissertation, "The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China," Hu wrote about a very similar concern he had much earlier regarding the philosophy of Mo Zi, doubter of all doubters, who worked to re-solidify the complete social authority of Confucianism. Mo Zi's philosophy was compelling in a similar sort of way because he applied the reformers' theories of logic to support the old hierarchy. Mo Zi had a "politico-religious doctrine" of "Agreeing Upward," which aimed at universal laws to guide all action in times of inconsistency or uncertainty. Hu explains, "In politics, he desired to see a unitary sovereignty and a universal system of laws; in religion, he taught the Will of Heaven as the most universal standard of right and wrong."¹⁰³ He worried about the totalitarian potential of this kind of political philosophy. His concern was supported by the influence the Nazi Party claimed of Platonic ideals. As Guthrie notes, the aim of the Nazi party was "described in its official programme, was the production of 'guardians in the highest Platonic sense.'"¹⁰⁴ There is great danger in this kind of political thinking, Hu maintains. The appeal to isms is nothing more than "shameless politicians utilizing these labels and doctrines to mislead the public for their own selfish ends."¹⁰⁵ In short, the use of "isms" in politics is nothing more than "intellectual laziness."¹⁰⁶

"Isms" have a place in social thought; "I do not advocate or advise people to abandon the study of theories or isms," Hu says.¹⁰⁷ "All theories and doctrines are part of our tools for the study of concrete problems. They help us to get suggestions and formulate hypotheses; they help us in thinking out possible consequences of the particular suggestion or hypothesis."¹⁰⁸ However, he maintains that the mere empty talk of "isms" is not helpful to the problems China is facing.

All doctrines were originated as concrete suggestions for the solution of concrete problems facing the originators of such doctrines. If we do not begin by observing and studying our own social, political, and cultural needs, I said, I'm years lavish importation of abstract doctrines, without regard to their origin in concrete problems of a particular agent locality would be useless.¹⁰⁹

It is also not helpful to overemphasize imported "isms" for which China has not yet developed the intellectual and cultural foundations. Most of all, focusing on the doctrine before the particular problem is putting the cart before the horse.

Creativity

Rhetorical power is embedded in the imagination of its aim. As Farrell writes, "The very aim of rhetorical theory has always been to define and articulate a vision of what the highest potential of rhetorical practice might be."¹¹⁰ Creativity, as it describes the new Chinese Sophist, means an innovative and experimental spirit that mixes the old and new and binds art with reason and practice to develop, try, and test new ideas. Grieder hits directly on this characteristic as it was embodied by "Hu's vision, [which]... gave expression to an ideal that had no precedent in the traditions of Chinese social thought."¹¹¹

The courage required of the Sophist to face troubling situations under the ever-present risk of timing and uncertainty about the adequacy of available knowledge, is tempered by the experimentalist approach. The experimentalist approach brings some standard of reliability into the contingent situation by way of objectivity and methodology. As Farrell writes, "apart from rhetoric, there is literally no systematic way of exploring particular, probable issues of choice and avoidance."¹¹² With the experimental attitude, the Sophist blends the productive and reflective arts without collapsing them into one another.

Often, Hu argued for the benefits of historical perspective to objective thought. Hu saw value in studying old works in new and modern ways because of the cultural perspective that could be gained by understanding which forms of thought and action prevailed at different points on the historical timeline. The appreciation for this perspective is a primary characteristic of the Sophistic attitude, Crick writes, because the Sophist understands that “valuable perspectives are preserved in words.”¹¹³

The character of the Sophist is best represented by experimentalism. Following from the Chinese intellectual legacy of the old Sinitic religion and Taoism, and even the common person's experience of neo-Confucianism, one can see how the idea of the Sophist, as a public intellectual who takes an integrated approach of practice and reflection to problems of daily experience, is well-suited for a China that is to possess the best characteristics of modern civilization and the best characteristics of the ancient Chinese civilization. Crick explains that “in Homeric times, to possess knowledge of any kind was to possess a practical acquaintance with how things come to be and pass away.”¹¹⁴ “In short, to possess knowledge was to know how to bring a preferred reality into being over time through active engagement with the things and people of the shared environment.”¹¹⁵ As we have discussed previously, this idea of knowledge is both at home and foreign to Chinese intellectualism. On the one hand, it is consistent with how the old Sinitic religion and Taoism understood people's position as an integrated part of the world in which insight into the movements of the world or in other words, “a practical acquaintance” with it so as to live in harmonious accord with it, or in other words, to achieve “a preferred reality” in “a shared environment.” On the other hand, this approach to knowledge is foreign to Chinese intellectualism because it calls for a more methodological understanding, rather than mere insight, that can translate into *active* and *directing* engagement with the surroundings, rather than purposive passiveness of the Taoist version of Tao. Rather than the purposive passive Tao, Hu sought a pragmatic version of Tao, a practical and theoretical *Way* of getting along in the modern civilization.

With regard to the characteristic of experimentalism, the Sophist serves the creative role of an artist to reshape basic cultural attitudes. This is the aspect of reform rhetoric that integrates and diffuses a new epistemological rationale.¹¹⁶ This process of integration and diffusion is just like what Andrew Jones explains happened with the spread of ideas on evolutionary biology. They were absorbed into Chinese culture and spread among the people via the vernacular language. Jones traces the beginning of the spread of evolutionary ideas through Chinese vernacular to the naval officer from Fujian, Yan Fu (1854-1921), who was sent by the Qing dynasty “to the Naval Academy in Greenwich to learn from the British the secret of their superiority.”¹¹⁷ The Qing government was motivated by forced exposure to the imperialist threats of the west, which led them to view the capitalist modern world as a Hobbesian reality.¹¹⁸ “It is of course no accident that Chinese intellectuals first began to view their own situation in Darwinian terms just as the age of imperialism reached its apogee.”¹¹⁹ Yan Fu “became one of the first and most important conduits for the entry of Darwinism into the Chinese discursive realm.”¹²⁰

Yan Fu used “idiomatic literary Chinese” to transpose the vocabulary and assumptions of Victorian science, Jones explains. In Yan Fu's rendition of *On Evolution* (*Tianyan lun*), he reframes national history in terms of natural history, passing China as an actor in the unfolding of a vast and tumultuous world-historical drama, one in which species, races, and nations alike were caught up in a relentless struggle for survival. He also shared with Spencer a sense that “progress consists in a change from the homogeneous to the

heterogeneous... [and from] the simple into the complex.' Yan Fu offered Chinese readers and writers not only new terminology, but a new *narrative mode*, a way of telling stories about the growth and progress of nations and national subject in their relation to other nations and the natural world.¹²¹

After their initial entry into China's intellectual circles, evolutionary ideas first circled only among the elite educated class, but by the early 1930s there was a "nearly universal purchase of evolutionary ideas,"¹²² which resulted from their spread through vernacular popular media, such as the "print culture to cartoons and cinema, as well as of their penetration into a variety of practices and social spheres."¹²³ The adoption of evolutionary ideas into the vernacular language, subsequent development of a new national narrative based on these ideas, and the spread of this narrative through popular culture is a prime example of how the Sophist's idea of social knowledge is constructed and altered when people share in the institution of a national vernacular language.

Hu understood the creative arts as playing an extremely significant role in re-orienting Chinese intellectualism precisely because new thought was up against a tradition of all-encompassing intellectual rearing. In the tradition of Confucianism, Chinese rulers did not argue or plead with the masses. Rather, as Garrett explains, they desired "a deep imprinting of particular attitudes, loyalties, and predilections in the entire population so that pleading or coercion on specific occasions would not be necessary, only the issuance of directives and occasional exhortations."¹²⁴ Even "cognitive activities were... assumed to involve physical movement of the heart."¹²⁵ The movements of the heart are understood much like Aristotle's idea of attitudes. As it was understood in ancient China, the charge of the heart was "to make sensory perceptions intelligible and to think, but it also remembers, is anxious, wills, intends, and dreams."¹²⁶

The *Sophistic Tao* is wrapped up with experimentalism and the arts.¹²⁷ It is not just about experimentalism, but experimentalism in the venue of the arts, where knowledge and novelty have a cultural home. This home essentially de-revolutionizes experimentalism in the sense that it counters its destructive qualities and gives consistency to novelty. The product of art passes on a message in the form of logos. Logos is thus the means of social change. It gives a rational to the novel ideas that arise based on social knowledge, the situation, and the audience.¹²⁸

In ancient Greek intellectualism, the Sophists filled the same need as they were intended to in ancient Chinese intellectualism. The primary difference is that in Chinese the need persisted, unfulfilled, to haunt Hu's undertaking in the modern day. Crick writes that before the Sophist, there had been two prevalent attitudes about knowledge in ancient Greece. One held art, or *technê*, as completely entwined with the practical sciences, where it functioned as if in the chokehold of practical applicability narrowly defined, the same as that which Hu lamented of China's Mohist thinkers. The other, "emancipated *epistêmê* from these narrowly practical ends in an effort to give the speculative imagination freedom to roam."¹²⁹ This latter attitude was even better known in ancient Chinese thought; it originated with Taoist nihilism and continued to perpetuate an assumption—primarily that humans are either unable to know things about their world or that more damage than good will be wrought by any attempt to know—over the course of intellectual development.

The similarity between the functions Crick understood the Sophistic attitude to play in ancient Greece and the functions Hu understood the Sophistic attitude to play in modern China, can be seen in the similarities between their analyses of Gorgias' *Ecomium of Helen* and Li Ju-Chen's *Flowers in a Mirror* respectively. *Ecomium of Helen* is an example of how a work of art

can demonstrate creativity and novelty by presenting the audience with “methods of reasoning and style” to demonstrate the way logos can lead people through a contingent situation.¹³⁰ Like Hu’s advocacy of fair consideration for all ideas, the Sophistic attitude looks for possibility and novelty. “The Sophistical Attitude,” Crick writes, “approaches the arts and sciences as resources for rhetorical invention to master contingencies and reduce uncertainty in the midst of conclaves and turmoil.”¹³¹ Gorgias uses his performance of *Helen* to demonstrate mastery of public knowledge (i.e. areas of public consensus on related topics) “invent[ing] radical new arguments out of what had become commonplace materials.”¹³²

The Sophistic understanding behind a work like *Helen* is that an artistic product, like a short story, poem, or speech, houses multiple things, such as a manner of thought, a summary of knowledge, and the artist’s reflections on the experiences he/she shares with others in the community. In the event that the art product reaches its full potential, it will also house a novel take on thought or action that will either help the community makes sense of some particular predicament or will help the community move beyond it. In Dewey’s terminology, same as Hu’s, Crick summarizes the democratic potential of the sophistical attitude understood as such. “The Sophists discovered a method of bridging the instrumental (or ‘logical’) and consummatory (or ‘aesthetic’) qualities of language within a single discursive form capable of generating common action in response to a shared exigence.”¹³³ Thus, a work of art is an exercise in democracy and every experience with a product of art is an interaction with Democratic thought and a step toward development of the Democratic ethos.

Hu likens Li’s novel to Swift’s “Gulliver’s Travels,” and he explains it as serving a very similar rhetorical function to what Crick describes of *Helen*.¹³⁴ Not only did Li Ju-Chen devise a phonetic system of notation, but he also worked the system into a popular novel lest it be lost to the general public on the pages of a “weighty philological book.”¹³⁵ The novel is historically situated during the reign of Emperor Wu (690-705). Each chapter of the book is devoted to one of thirty different countries, “strange lands abroad... the imaginary inventions of the author, designed to serve as contrasts to the Chinese Empire.”¹³⁶ Hu writes, “This novel is of interest to us today as a monumental work of social criticism and propaganda. Undoubtedly, Li Ju-Chen was profoundly dissatisfied with many social customs and institutions of his time.”¹³⁷ Multiple times throughout the novel the author displays deep interest “in the inequality of the sexes.” The author’s interest on this topic is so great that Hu says “the whole book may indeed be called a Chinese declaration of the Rights of Women. In this novel the author has raised many disquieting questions concerning the treatment of women.”¹³⁸ Topics about the unequal treatment of women include such things as the double standard of sexual morality, the practice of foot-binding, other aspects of “womanisation,” such as clothing, adornments, station in the family, place in the home, etc.¹³⁹ Further, Hu points out, “Li Ju-Chen was no mere negative critic of the position of women. On the constructive side, he advocates education for all women,” which he notes, “was no less radical than granting the vote to women, for in China the state examinations and proper channels of civic advancement and political participation.”¹⁴⁰

To give the readers a better idea of how Li Ju-Chen addressed social topics in a manner similar to Swift’s *Gulliver*, I will describe one chapter in particular, which focuses on the Country of the Black-toothed People. The country of the black-toothed people was, Hu explains, “apparently his utopia of universal education for women.”¹⁴¹ In the Country of the Black-toothed People, all of the people have black skin and black teeth. Hu explains that the people of this land were described as a very ugly race. However, this land was the utopia of universal education for

women, and the people were so refined by their education that their honors took precedence over their unseemly appearance.

The girls spend no money on cosmetics, because powder or rouge on their dark faces would only enhance their native ugliness. Other savings are spent on buying books and stationery, because there are no class distinctions in the country and their only aristocracy is that of learning and scholarship. No man would want a woman for marriage until she has reached the age of maturity and attained some reputation for literary ability. She will have to remain unmarried if she has no talent or learning, even though she may be born in a great family. And our author emphatically characterizes the profound learning of two black girls of this utopian nation in whose presence the two visiting scholars from the Chinese Empire felt themselves intellectual dwarfs.¹⁴²

Li Ju-Chen believed in the efficacy of literary examinations and for equal rights in the education and examination system for women.¹⁴³ He uses the novel to highlight different manners of thought and to show how common social knowledge can be re-invented in novel ways capable of altering the cultural attitudes of the audience.

As the above examples demonstrate, there is an exceedingly close relationship between rhetoric and culture in any given society. As Farrell explains, "Social knowledge comprises conceptions of symbolic relationships among problems, persons, interest, and actions, which imply (when accepted) certain notions of preferable public behavior."¹⁴⁴ The symbolic relationships that make up the meat of social knowledge run the gamut of cultural thought from ideas about who has the authority over knowledge, to ideas about what kind of logic "makes sense," to judgments about what kind of rhetorical aims are humane.

Because of its dependence upon some *subsequent* decision and action, social knowledge is characterized by a state of 'potential' or incipience. Yet even in its incipient state, social knowledge is functionally a covert imperative for choice and action; and pragmatic parlance, it is 'live' knowledge.¹⁴⁵

Social knowledge is a vast web of information, imagination, and judgments. It cannot be formed from one or a few rhetorical situations, and yet all rhetorical situations feed into the body of social knowledge that gives future action its potentiality, energy, or rhetorical force.

Tolerance, Patience, and Self-Sufficiency

When Hu Shi made "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity" to his fellow Chinese students in America, he demonstrated the relationship between courage and tolerance. The other Chinese students were itching for a fight with the Japanese. They wanted a nationalist government that would demonstrate pride. Yet, with great courage and tolerance for those who disagreed and insulted him, Hu asked the Chinese students for something of the same. He asked them to distinguish between acting on behalf of the nation's long-term good and acting on behalf of short-term satisfaction. Hu maintained that with effort, everything is changeable. Focus on the institution and change it, because people and their psychology can change. People are not the enemy, the institutionalized cultural beliefs are. This is why eloquence is so important, because it has people focus on the whole instead of the particular parts, such as the particular beliefs or particular group of people that one might feel intolerance toward.

Hu's approach to tolerance and patience is based, in large part, on his appreciation for historical perspective. With historical perspective, one can appreciate how short a single life is when considered within a span of 1,000 years. The following passage is an excerpt from Hu's article, "China's Chances of Survival," published in *The People's Tribune* in 1937. In it, he

discusses some of the great changes that Chinese culture has undergone in just the short course of his own life. He shows just how rapid these changes are when considered within the context of history.

Herbert Spencer once said that nature was kind, and not acquired characteristics are not transmissible, or, if they were, the feet of the descendants of the Chinese mother of bounds feet would become smaller and smaller throughout the generations. The same consideration applies to all the evil institutions of our ancestors, which, though great evils in themselves, or man-made and capable of being unrooted by human effort. Once the Chinese girl is freed from the fetters of blood-binding and is given the benefits of modern schooling and physical exercises, she bursts forth in full blossom as one of the most beautiful and graceful species of womanhood. And her brother, when he gives up the octopartite composition and submit himself to the discipline of the modern school and the scientific laboratory, is capable of surprising the world by his dexterity in handling the test to answer the microscope, and by his quick understanding and creative ingenuity and scientific research. Six centuries of wasteful literary gymnastics apparently have not disabled the Chinese mentality any more than 1,000 years of foot-binding have permanently crippled the feet of the Chinese girls.¹⁴⁶

With historical perspective we might resist the urge to approach change so hastily. Further, we might see the problems of culture for what they are, that is, products of institutions rather than markers of a people. As he writes, “The sins of our fathers are merely institutional, social, and educational. They are not biological or racial.”¹⁴⁷ Great psychological change can take place in a single lifetime.¹⁴⁸

For Hu, belief in the strength of each individual to affect his/her future is directly related to belief in the possibility of a modern moral democratic state. *Belief* is an essential part of a modern moral democracy; it is at the crux of the scientific spirit, imagination, and the kinds of social contracts necessary for founding a democratic state. Individuals with a “self-directing power of personality,” according to L.T. Hobhouse’s definition of “new liberalism,” should be the foundation that the community and society are built upon.¹⁴⁹ As Jerome Grieder does well to point out, Hu ascribed to this conception of new liberalism.

The ancient Greek Sophist also understood the connection between “*to dynaton* (the possible)” and “*pistis* (belief),” which Poulakos explains was one of the aims of rhetorical art.¹⁵⁰ Laws, customs, and conventions are all matters of human agreement. One can trace the democratic underpinnings of ancient Greece to the development of the social contract in the European Renaissance. Hu understood how integral the same development of belief would be to the success of social contracts in modern China. The new Sophist would think of *possibility* and *belief* in the sense of a striving and reaching individual. By finding an individual perspective in the present, the new Sophist is able to look ahead, and by looking ahead they become self-sufficient. One can now piece together a more comprehensive picture of temporality for the new Sophist. The past provides historical perspective and social knowledge used to make intelligent judgments and tempered actions in the present. The human capacities exercised over the course of the past and present create belief in our human ability to affect different possibilities for the future.

Wisdom

Wisdom is the combined result of the previously mentioned characteristics of the new Sophist: courage, criticism, creativity, and tolerance. Wisdom is the characteristic that carries the

“essential virtue of rhetoric,” that is, “proper choices at propitious moments,” Farrell explains.¹⁵¹ This is the kind of person who can make a *good* decision at the *right* time and who can maintain self-discipline and excitement simultaneously. “The Greek words *sophos*, *sophia*, usually translated ‘wise’ and ‘wisdom,’ where in common use from the earliest times,” Guthrie writes.¹⁵² Initially wisdom meant skill, as in the quote Guthrie gives of character from the Iliad who argued against Agamemnon and who then got chased out of the room by Odysseus for being impudent: “Thersites a contemptible character but *sophos* with his tongue.”¹⁵³ Later “this sense merges easily into that of generally knowing or prudent.”¹⁵⁴ He also associates *sophos* with teaching; “the name was often applied to poets, for in Greek eyes practical instruction and moral advice constituted the main function of the poet.”¹⁵⁵

The teaching function served by the Sophists of ancient Greece is very similar to the function Hu understood democratic institutions, like education and government, to serve. By practicing the ways of these institutions, one comes to understand their underlying rationale. As mentioned earlier, although political life is not a simple thing, Hu maintained that “this kind of organized life can be learned.”¹⁵⁶ Further, some institutions prepare people for later participation in other institutions. Hu offers the example of student unions that arose during the new educational movement in 1919.

They are organizations of young men and women, not for athletic or gladiatorial exhibitions, but for a serious and noble purpose. There can be no doubt that the associated life and organized activities of these unions will go very far towards training leadership and co-operation.¹⁵⁷

Here we return to the focus on *social knowledge* in contemporary rhetoric. Institutions function to integrate principles of organization into the daily lives of their participants. Founders of the institutions learn about the organizing principles of the institutions by an experimenting with them. The insight gained in the foundation of the institutions becomes reflected in the operation of the institutions. In turn, participants in the institutions become accustomed to the ins and outs of operation. They come to expect particular events and results. Those events and results set standards for how participants think things should happen. Thus, when new situational stimuli interrupt the fulfillment of participant expectations in an unfavorable way, the participants can set about experimental solutions, and once again, integrate the insight they gain into the operation of the institution for acclamation into the body of social knowledge perpetuated by that institution.

All knowledge must be put on objective ground. This is an aspect of Western rhetoric in its developed modern form, from origins similar to those in China but left undeveloped. Hu wants to merge it with the ancient foundations in China. Further, Bitzer says that rhetoric is now accepted as something which all people use because all people make judgments and seek agreement with others.¹⁵⁸ This movement from restricted conceptions of knowledge, like the ideal Truths of Platonic rhetoric, to the acceptance of a *social knowledge*, which all people have and which all people put to work in rhetoric, is an important connection between contemporary rhetoric and the original democratic rhetoric of ancient Greece.

Like ancient rhetoric, contemporary rhetoric is normative, not only in terms of style and judgment, but also in terms of intellectual agreement about the constitution of knowledge. As Farrell notes, in order to understand rhetoric, we must give attention to the connection between rhetoric and its “philosophic context.”¹⁵⁹ As he explains, in the early 20th century, western rhetoric was impacted by a “growth in restrictive and restricting theories of knowledge.”¹⁶⁰ Increases in technology and a growing base of scientific knowledge led to more complicated and

toughened standards of empirical validity. Although information was growing more abundant, one's ability to become involved in the production of knowledge, and further, one's ability to achieve the level of professional or expert in a field of scientifically and technologically grounded knowledge grew more difficult. Although an abundant amount of information became available to the public, a less accessible form of knowledge translated into a less accessible form of rhetoric. Hence, western civilization experiences a "paradoxical implication:" information increased while public dialogue decreased.¹⁶¹ Thus, there is a common correlation between changes in the social conception of knowledge and changes in the social conception of rhetoric.¹⁶²

However, the increased availability of information has also corresponded with an increase in ideas about what constitutes acceptable knowledge. To handle this plurality, Farrell notes Thomas Kuhn's contribution of the notion of "paradigms," or "consensual agreements on a structured universe of discourse," to the field of rhetoric.¹⁶³

Writers such as Kuhn force us to turn our attention to the kinds of cooperation which are necessary and possible in various fields of inquiry. For this much is apparent: no criterion for knowledge can be polemically proclaimed; at the very least, it must require the cooperation of others in some form.¹⁶⁴

Once again, we see the connection between contemporary philosophy and the idea of public consensus from rhetoric's ancient democratic origins. Farrell then turns to John Zimmerman approached the idea of public consensus with his work, *Public Knowledge*. "The rationale of the 'scientific attitude' is not that there is a set of angelic qualities of mind possessed by individual scientists that guarantees the validity of their every thought... but that scientists learn... to further the sensible end."¹⁶⁵ In short, the scientific attitude encourages the progress of social consensus.

By integrating thought, speech, and civic practice, the wisdom of the Sophists arises from the ancient Greek democratic experience, which is an experience in contingencies. Farrell notes, "Rhetoric has always been a practiced imperfection."¹⁶⁶ Rhetoric doesn't exist in the realm of polished Truths. However, with the combination of historical perspective and a critical attitude, rhetoric is an intelligent affair. Take for example Hu's reasoning in the following passage.

While conservative Chinese scholars still look down upon the living spoken language as the degraded jargon of the vulgar and the illiterate, the student of comparative languages can easily convince himself that the living national tongue is the culmination of over twenty centuries' linguistic revision and reform, and is consequently by far superior to the long dead classical language.¹⁶⁷

Hu is looking at historical examples like the great poetry of the "Tang Dynasty (c. 620-900) [that] owes much to the influence of the popular songs of the pre-Tang period. It is safe to say that the best poems of Tang are either written in the popular tongue or in a style nearest to it."¹⁶⁸ He is also looking at the prose of literati from the Tang dynasty. "The great teachers of the *Chuan* or *Zen* School of Buddhism first used it in preaching and recording sayings and discourses. The style proved to be so effective in philosophical writings that the Neo-Confucian philosophers of Sung and later dynasties had to adopt it in most of their philosophical discussions."¹⁶⁹ With historical perspective and a critical willingness to spot the life of a similar kind of idea obscured in a completely different context, Hu can decipher the continuity of linguistic revision and reform, and thus, can invent novel logos.

Eloquence

The culmination of the new Sophist is eloquence. Eloquence describes the kind of personal character that can move China beyond perceived humiliations and deficiencies, not by ignoring them or playing on them to inspire a reactive and exclusionary sort of nationalistic excitement, but to own up to cultural faults, to display courage and wisdom, and to create a rhetorical art to unite the people and enable them to step out of the past and move toward the possibility of a rhetorically imagined future. “A rhetorical culture is first and foremost an idea,” Farrell writes.¹⁷⁰ The Chinese people, Hu would say, have not effectively apprehended the idea of a modern rhetorical culture.

The Republic has failed, not because modern China has failed—there has never been a modern China—but because in all these processes the changes have been superficial and have hardly touched the fundamental issues of political transformation. There has been practically no modern leadership, practically no genuine admission of our real weaknesses, no recognition of spiritual possibilities of the new civilisation. Such reforms as were carried out were regarded as necessary evil and were never directed by men trained for such great tasks.¹⁷¹

As Hu explains, true leaders, meaning eloquent and inspiring rhetors, are willing to make admissions and have the creative optimism to imagine novel future scenarios. The audience believes in the knowledge, honesty, and capabilities of an eloquent rhetor. “Eloquence,” is defined by Emerson as “*the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak.*”¹⁷² This idea of eloquence is not refer to voice intonation alone, but total translation, which includes pronunciation but also the characteristics of culture and thought that are found in the structure and the meaning of speech.

Further, an eloquent speaker would be able to help the audience make sense of both the good and bad aspects of China’s history. Farrell notes two particularly important aspects of rhetoric for the situation Hu perceived of China’s failed Republic. First, rhetoric helps to create “a meaningful cultural story,”¹⁷³ and second, “reason involves facing up to what we have done, picking up the pieces, and moving on.”¹⁷⁴ Rather than moments of shame, the eloquent speaker helps the audience revision stumbling points as points of progress. “Eloquence shows the power and possibility of man,”¹⁷⁵ Emerson says. The eloquent orator is found in a particular kind of situation. Eloquence functions as a “provocation.”¹⁷⁶ He gives six essentials of eloquence: clear perceptions, memory, power of statement, logic, imagination, passion, and a grand will. Imagination, he says, is “the skill to clothe your thought in natural images.” The grand will refers to “*character.*”¹⁷⁷

In 1954 Hu spoke on the topic “An Oriental Looks at the Modern Western Civilization.”¹⁷⁸ In it he exhibits many qualities of eloquence.

In my brief life of a little over sixty years, I have gone through two critical periods of cultural conflict in which I had to choose a side and take a stand. In my younger years, I was faced with the great conflict between the old civilization of the East and the young, vigorous, expanding, and aggressive civilization of the Western world. In that struggle, I came out openly and unequivocally as a severe critic of the oriental civilization and a steadfast defender of the occidental civilization.

In my more mature years, I had to face a new era of cultural conflict in the war of the totalitarian systems against the Democratic civilization of the free peoples of the West. That new conflict led me to review and rethink what I had said and published on the

subject, and I came out once more an unequivocal defender and supporter of the civilization of the democratic world.¹⁷⁹

Hu presents himself as a learner, someone who is critical, creative, and knowledgeable, and who continues to grow more critical, creative, and knowledgeable. This is integral to eloquence because it connects the speaker to the audience as a single person in a world of complexities. By admitting the difficulty of this position, Hu allows the audience to trust in the fruits of his labor. The audience can see that his conclusions are the products of his own effort. How terrible it would be to find out we are the third party in a string of deceptions.

The audience of an eloquent speaker also appreciates the continuity of the development of thought. For example, Hu mentions a topic that originally concerned him and then continued to, that is, the misuse of the phrases “spiritual civilization” and “materialistic civilization.”¹⁸⁰

That civilization is materialistic which is limited and conquered by matter and incapable of transcending it, which feels itself powerless against its material environment and fails to make the full use of human intelligence for the conquest of nature and for the improvement of the conditions of man. Its sages and saints may do all they can to glorify contentment and hypnotize the people into a willingness to praise their gods and abide by their fate. But the very self-hypnotizing philosophy is more materialistic than the scanty food they eat and the clay and wood with which they make the images of their gods.¹⁸¹

He says that his original praises of the modern western civilization “were written and published at the height of postwar prosperity.”¹⁸² He shows the audience the development of his thought in narrative form, with significant historical events as markers, and characteristics of the historical mood for the audience’s sympathetic emotional memory. Then, he says, a series of events forced me to rethink all of my praises. The era of the New Deal under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the approach of the Second World War, and “the great miracle of American war production and American military leadership in the great war of civilizations,” together, “forced me to take a renewed interest in the fate of the modern civilization of the Western democracies.”¹⁸³ Both times Hu reflects on the differences between the new democratic civilization of the west and China’s old traditional civilization, he comes to the topic of materialism. In the first discussion it was about the misuse of the term. Second, it comes as a more developed discussion of the social philosophies attendant to each civilization.

During those years of the Second World War, I could not help asking myself the question: does the taking of older of Western technology by Japan really make her a ‘Western civilization’? Did not Germany, the great master of science and technology, become completely alienated from the Western democracies after Hitler had destroyed the German Republic and established totalitarian regime? And the Soviet Union has certainly been devoting herself to the task of taking over the technology of the West; but has that made her a ‘Western civilization’?

And I would ask further: what is that third element of the modern Western civilization which long ago I had vaguely labeled as Democracy or ‘the religion of Democracy’? What is it that has enabled the Western democracies, in particular the Anglo-Saxon democracies to survive so many national and international crises and keep their democratic institutions intact? What was it that has, for instance, made it possible for the American nation to go through the Great Depression without a revolution, to affect its economic and industrial recovery without a dictatorship, and to mobilize its entire national economy for war production and put twelve million men into active war service without bringing about a military dictatorship or a militaristic system?

From such questioning and reasoning, I have come to the conclusion that what really differentiates the democracies from the undemocratic and anti-democratic countries is the principal and the effective machinery of democratic control of the authority and power of the government. A democracy is a government in which the authority and power of the state are ultimately and effectively controlled by the will of the people.

The effective control of the governmental powers of the state has always been the most difficult problem that has troubled the political thinking of all times. And the greatest positive contribution of Anglo-Saxon liberalism to the political thinking of the world lies exactly in its traditional emphasis on this problem. No other people in history has exceeded in devising a workable system for the effective control of that great 'Leviathan,' the State.¹⁸⁴

Hu leads us through his inquisitive process. He takes us bit by bit through the particular aspects of his observations that intrigued and excited him, and as I read along, I too am intrigued and excited. Yet, it's the kind of excitement that has an objective quality; it is an intellectually driven excitement, with something to focus thought on. He is leading me somewhere and I can continue to pursue the train of thought once he has finished. Crick says eloquence has the ability "to channel passionate action by thoroughly remaking the relationship between human beings and their environment so as to produce the experience of being different people acting in a different world."¹⁸⁵ Hu is working to create a different conception of the people's relationship to the government. It would be as difficult to explain to a western audience as it would be to a Chinese audience because both require conceptualizing a wholly different dynamic. Hu's ability to translate that dynamism to the audience will be part of what determines his eloquence as a rhetor.

To be an eloquent speaker, Hu must transfer his own creative optimism to the people by weaving together a "meaningful cultural story" that "faces up to" the past and translates a "truth" into the cultural language of the audience. Hu frequently achieves this goal. Take the following selection from the 1933 Haskell lectures for example. The Chinese Renaissance of the 20th century is but the most recent installation in a series of Renaissance movements in China's cultural history, Hu explained. This period of Renaissance differs from the others because it is conscious of its goals and will go far enough to uproot and destroy the old traditions so that new traditions may develop and thrive in their place. Changes in China have also been complicated by political instability. Hu writes on this point:

When the Republic was established it soon found itself constantly menaced by the danger of domination by reactionary forces backed by the military, and by the difficulty of reestablishing authority of the central government against the powerful centrifugal forces of provincialism. So 20 more years have been wasted in the long political struggles, which, though extremely chaotic and confusing to the casual observer, are historically intelligible as phases of one great movement—that of a new China seeking to build up a unitary modern state in the face of strong forces of reaction and disintegration.¹⁸⁶

He differentiates between the cultural responses of Japan and China to Western influence::

Under such conditions, a study and orderly progress in the work of cultural readjustments, such as has taken place in Japan, is not expected in China. China's cultural readjustment was doomed to be slow, spasmodic, discontinuous, and wasteful. For orderly and continuous reformation must of necessity rely upon some stable political order as a nucleus, as a center of gravity, around which all separate and individual efforts may gravitate, accumulate, and be perpetuated into a continuous whole.¹⁸⁷

There is a great history of literature written in the living language of the people, what Hu calls China's "living literature." Yet, like the Renaissance movement at large, he says movements in the living literature have never been "conscious and articulate" enough to break the classical authority.

There were a number of writers who were attracted by the irresistible power and beauty of the literature of lowly and untutored peasants and dancing girls and street reciters, and who were tempted to produce their best works in the form and the language of the literature of the people. But they were so ashamed of what they had done that many of the earlier novelists published their works anonymously or under strange noms de plume. There was no clear and conscious recognition that the classical language was long dead and must be replaced by the living tongue of the people. Without such articulate challenges the living language and literature of the people never dared to hope that they might some day usurp the high position occupied by the classical literature.¹⁸⁸

Hu does a wonderful job of connecting the present to the past and encouraging the audience to feel integrated into the long and historical narrative he tells from a place of passion and wisdom. Further, from a great breadth of historical knowledge, Hu makes conclusions with the kind of certitude that makes them seem obvious.

The death knell of the classical language was sounded when it was historically established that it had died at least 2000 years ago... Once the table of values was turned upside down, once the vulgar language was consciously demonstrated to be the best qualified candidate for the honor of the national language of China, the success of the revolution was beyond doubt. The time had been ripe for the change. The common sense of the people, the songs and tales of numberless and nameless men and women, have been for centuries unconsciously but steadily preparing for this change. All unconscious processes of evolution are of necessity very slow and wasteful. As soon as these processes are made conscious and articulate, intelligent guidance and experimentation become possible, and the work of many centuries may be telescoped into the brief period of a few years.¹⁸⁹

I believe this example demonstrates that Hu possesses great rhetorical eloquence. He excuses the audience from thinking about the particularities of their actual situation while taking them to an imagined place built from the memory of a time that left a significant impression on his thought. He wants us to be impressed by the great historical legacy of the vernacular language the way he is, so he reminds us of the legacy by describing how the most lauded writers of China found the vulgar tongue to be irresistible. He explains the failings of the earlier movements in literature and imbues the audience with the optimism of a novel alternative future by showing how they are no longer plagued by the conditions that caused the previous failings.

We, the audience, are able to go to Hu's place of excitement with him. He brings us there because it gives us access to the crux of his thought, the instructional aspect that allows us to see the bigger picture, across multiple spaces and times like he does. Yet still, within this imagined place, the memory focuses on a particular part of the puzzle, a major road mark on the map to a different social dynamic. The official announcement of the death of classical language is a particular appearance, Hu's memory of our destination. Eloquence acknowledges both the individual and the bigger picture. It says that each person and each event plays a vital role in the outcome of our endeavor. It seeks to change the audience's relationship to their surroundings emotionally, personally, cognitively, and actively. Eloquence makes an audience feel as if they

are in the presence of the *whole*; and they can know it because eloquence is the sign of it. The effects of eloquence are transformative.

End Notes

¹ Nathan Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude and the Invention of Rhetoric," 28. Crick describes the Sophist as a public intellectual, "those who use all the resources of reflective thought to bring forth productive transformations in a complex and changing environment."

² Nathan Crick, "Rhetoric, Philosophy, and the Public Intellectual," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 39(2) (2006): 134.

³ Ibid., 132.

⁴ Ibid., 130.

⁵ Ibid., 131.

⁶ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 31. Hu Shih, "The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China," (Shanghai: Shanghai Oriental Book Company, 1922), reprinted by General Books, 89. The idea of a *Sophistic Tao* is a blend of Hu's description of Tao as a method or way of life and Crick's definition of the Sophistic attitude. As Hu writes, "the Tao which Lao Tze and Confucius sought was nothing but a 'way' for the ordering of the world." Crick describes the Sophistic attitude as an "experimental attitude toward knowledge in which theory was a means for generating novel perspectives and guiding situated practices within *kairotic* moments" as an ongoing method, or way, of life.

⁷ Jerome B. Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 197 and 213. Hu saw the American model of democratic morality, in particular, as compatible with China's needs because it could teach people in the ways of social democratic life. He referred to the American spiritual heritage as a "New liberalism," which Grieder explains Hu tried hard to separate "from the classical laissez-faire liberalism for which he entertained so little sympathy," and which his contemporaries had come to associate with capitalism at large.

⁸ Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures 1933*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 44. Americans have pursued science, machinery, organization and legislation, and in so doing, they have grown to respect the function of "new ideas," and he says, new ideas give way to "new ambitions." And in Grieder, 212. Grieder explains, by giving "new expression to an intellectual and social tradition" inherited from the European Renaissance

⁹ Hu Shih, "Man-yu ti kan-hsiang," HSWT III, I 58-59. 1927

¹⁰ Hu Shih, "*Cheng-chih kai-lun hsü*" (Preface to Outline of politics by Chang Wei-tz'u), HSWT II, iii, 19-23.

¹¹ Ibid. He says democratic institutions show citizens how to attain a "higher level of civic knowledge and morality."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ John Poulakos, "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (1983), 35.

¹⁴ Ibid., 36.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bitzer, "The Concept of Rhetoric," in *Landmark Essays on Contemporary Rhetoric*, edited by Thomas B. Farrell, (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1998), 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Poulakos, "Toward a Sophistic Definition," 35. "If Greek rhetoric is indeed a trilogy," Poulakos writes, "we need to concern ourselves with its first part."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 36.

²² Thomas B. Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 1.

²³ Nathan Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 25. Crick quotes this from John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*.

²⁴ The Mohist use of doubt and the neo-Confucian use of vernacular, for example.

²⁵ Nathan Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 26.

²⁶ Farrell, 28.

²⁷ Ibid., 32.

²⁸ Bitzer, 2. Plato's maintained that such a force should operate in the realm of reason and beauty. Bitzer explains: Plato called for rhetoric devoted to the health of the soul—both the soul of the individual and the collective soul of the polis. His noble rhetor would be physician to the audience, the medicine being those truths, values, and persuasive messages sufficient to keep the audience in health or return it to health.

²⁹ Poulakos, 36.

³⁰ Ibid., 39.

³¹ Farrell, 62.

³² Poulakos, 35.

³³ Poulakos, 36.

³⁴ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 26.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 28.

³⁷ Farrell, 3.

³⁸ Ibid.,

³⁹ Ibid.,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴² Ibid., 4.

⁴³ Grieder, 106.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 68-69. Hu shapes this idea with “Buddhist terminology,” calling it “*tsao yin*, meaning to create fundamental new causes which would serve to activate new consequences.”

⁴⁷ Ibid., 106.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 284.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 106.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 69.

⁵¹ Ibid., 327.

⁵² Ibid.,

⁵³ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁴ Ibid.,

⁵⁵ Farrell, 2. “During its richest and most influential periods of existence, rhetoric was part of the pedagogical philosophy.”

⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁹ Wang Ke-wen, “Civil Service Examinations,” entry in *Modern China: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, (Wang Ke-wen: 1998), 67.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Poulakos, 36.

⁶⁵ Nathan Crick, “Rhetoric, Philosophy, and the Public Intellectual,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Vol. 39, No. 2, (2006), 133. Crick says *kairos* is “appropriateness within the measure of historical time.”

⁶⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Hu Shih, "The Renaissance in China," *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (Nov., 1926), pp. 269.

⁶⁹ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 31.

⁷⁰ Nathan Crick, "Rhetoric, Philosophy, and the Public Intellectual," 133.

⁷¹ Hu Shih, "Peace Has to be Enforced," *Asia Magazine*, 1942-May. Vol. 42. No. 5. pp. 263-266., in Vol. II of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 1019.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* By "today" Hu means "a generation which has the held the most stupendous manifestation of force in all history."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* More on Dewey's theory: "The most important thing in this theory is that it completely ignores the conventional connotation and treats force as power or energy which achieves ends. It becomes 'violence' only when it runs wild and results in waste or destruction."⁷⁹ "The other important contribution made by Dewey is his theory of law as the formulation of the conditions of the organization of force. Law and government are instrumentalities instituted to deal with the situation of 'actual or potential conflict and resulting waste in the absence of some scheme for distributing the energies involved.'"⁷⁹ This theory can help us achieve a lot Hu says. "It will help us to understand that the real tragedy of mankind today is that the nations have never learned to use force effectively and efficiently, that a stupendous amount of power is being expended in most wasteful and destructive ways, and that force cannot prevail when it is not organized and directed towards some common beneficial end... It will help us to realize that probably the most efficient and economical use of force in human society is to socialize and internationalize it—to place overwhelming force behind the maintenance of international peace and order."

⁸⁰ Poulakos, 37. Rhetoric is not aiming at episteme, Poulakos explains. "Conditioned by the people who create it, rhetoric moves beyond the domain of logic and, satisfied with probability, lends itself to the flexibility of the contingent."

⁸¹ Hu, "A Plea for Patriotic Sanity."

⁸² Hu Shih, "Reform and Chinese Mourning Rites," in E.T.C. Werner, *Autumn Leaves*, (Shanghai: Kelley and Walsh, 1928), pp. 69-95. Notes: This is an English translation (by E.T.C. Werner) of Hu Shih's "Wo tui-yu sang-li te kaike," HSWT I, pp. 709-723. Volume 1 of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 283-284.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 283. Werner also notes that Hu's courage will likely pave the way for a new standard of procedures "because the system followed by him will, in all probability, be that generally adopted in the present transition period of Chinese thought."

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 307.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 296.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 291. Hu also changed the traditional ceremonial offerings; he asked people to replace gifts to be buried with the deceased for use in the afterlife with declarations of respect by the living, or eulogies as they are known in the West. He also disregarded notions of the directional flow of *qi* when choosing a burial plot, and instead, made the choice to bury his mother beside his father.⁸⁸ This custom, in particular, is noted by Dewey, as a hindrance to China's modern infrastructure because the belief led people to obstruct construction of the railroad.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 286.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 287.

⁹¹ Ibid., 285.

⁹² Ibid., 288.

⁹³ Ibid., 289.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 302.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 288.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 302.

⁹⁸ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 41.

⁹⁹ Hu Shih, "The Conflict of Ideologies," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 218. Public Policy in a World at War (Nov., 1941), 27.

¹⁰⁰ Hu, *Oral History*, 208

¹⁰¹ Hu, "The Conflict of Ideologies," 27.

¹⁰² Ibid., 28.

¹⁰³ Hu, *The Development of Logic*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ Guthrie, *The Sophists*, (Cambridge University Press: 1969), 10.

¹⁰⁵ Hu, *Oral History*, 207

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 208

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 206-207. "I stress that all thinking should originate from a concrete situation of perplexity or difficulty whether it be social, individual, institutional, or political difficulty. That was my pragmatic approach to this question."

¹¹⁰ Farrell, 3.

¹¹¹ Grieder, 329

¹¹² Farrell, 48.

¹¹³ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 34.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Mary M. Garrett, "Pathos Reconsidered from the Perspective of Classical Chinese Rhetorical Theories," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 79 (1993): 19. Garrett explains fundamental assumptions about psychology and epistemology differed greatly. Reform rhetoric had to integrate and diffuse a new epistemological rationale into culture.

¹¹⁷ Andrew F. Jones, *Developmental Fairy tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Garrett, 22-23. "This goal is considerably more ambitious than that of most Western rhetoric, and from a Western standpoint this aspect of Chinese rhetoric might seem closer to persuasion campaigns, propaganda, or social engineering."

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Crick, "The Sophistical Attitude," 30.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹³⁴ Hu Shih, "A Chinese 'Gulliver' on Women's Rights," *The People's Tribune: An Organ of National-Revolutionary Thought and Opinion*, 1934-Aug-1. Vol. 7. No. 3. pp. 121-127, in Vol. II of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, pp. 610.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 609.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 610.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 611.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 613.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 613-614.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 614.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 615.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas B. Farrell, "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 62. No. 1. (1976), 4. Further, Farrell says it is "a kind of knowledge which must be assumed if rhetorical discourses to function effectively."

¹⁴⁵ Farrell, "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory," 4. Farrell notes that William James first coined the term 'live' to describe knowledge in "The Will to Believe," *Pragmatism and Other Essays*, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 194.

¹⁴⁶ Hu Shih, "China's Chances of Survival," in *The People's Tribune*, 1937, March 1. Vol. 16. No. 5. pp. 373-382. Vol. II of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 711. Notes: except for the opening, the rest of this article was published again under the title, "My People and the Japanese."

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ L.T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, (London, 1911), 123. In Grieder.

¹⁵⁰ Poulakos, 36.

¹⁵¹ Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, 39.

¹⁵² Guthrie, 27.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁶ Hu, "*Cheng-chih kai-lun hsü*," 19-23.

¹⁵⁷ Hu, "Intellectual China in 1919," 115.

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- ¹⁵⁸ Bitzer, 3.
- ¹⁵⁹ Farrell, "Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory," 3.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁶² Ibid., 2-3. "With each alteration in our conception of knowledge, then, the art of rhetoric—which seems to depend upon a kind of collective knowledge—altered its status and function accordingly."
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 3.
- ¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 3-4. From John Zimmerman, *Public Knowledge*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 78.
- ¹⁶⁶ Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, 1.
- ¹⁶⁷ Hu Shih, "The Literary Revolution in China,," in *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, 1922, Feb. Vol. 6. No. 2. Pp. 91-100. Notes: Dr. Hu's article is dated February, 1922. Appears later in *China Today Through Chinese Eyes*, London: 1922. Pp. 56-66. In volume 1 of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 122.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 123.
- ¹⁶⁹ Ibid.,
- ¹⁷⁰ Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, 1.
- ¹⁷¹ Hu Shih, The Renaissance in China, *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (Nov., 1926), pp. 269.
- ¹⁷² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Ralph Waldo Emerson Birthday Book*, compiled and with an introduction by J.P. (Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo, Hay, & Mitchell, 1890), free eBook digitized by Google.
- ¹⁷³ Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, 81.
- ¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 17.
- ¹⁷⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Eloquence," in *The works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume 1*, Rutledge's Popular Library of Standard Authors, (Taylor & Francis, 1913), 453.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Inspiration," in *The works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume 1*, Rutledge's Popular Library of Standard Authors, (Taylor & Francis, 1913), 492.
- ¹⁷⁷ **Emerson, "Eloquence," 455.**
- ¹⁷⁸ Hu Shih, "An Oriental Looks at the Modern Western Civilization," in *Modern Education and Human Values*, (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), pp. 47-60. Notes: Pitcairn-Crabble Foundation Lectures. In Vol. III of *A Collection of Hu Shih's English Writings*, 1383. He begins his speech saying that "this age has been called an age of ideological conflict or ideological warfare. But an ideological warfare is in reality a war of civilizations." "The target of attack," he continues, "has always been the modern Democratic civilization of the West. The attack has come from the totalitarian systems of both the Right and the Left."
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 1387.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,1391.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1392.

¹⁸³ Ibid.,1393.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 1394-1395.

¹⁸⁵ Nathan Crick, *Democracy & Rhetoric: John Dewey on the Arts of Becoming*, (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 168-169. And “eloquence alters our worldview by changing not only the landscape on which we stand, but transforming the very people who stand upon the ground.”

¹⁸⁶ Hu, *The Chinese Renaissance*, 22.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 61.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 62.

Conclusion ♦ For a Rhetorical Synthesis

A Reform for Two Audiences

Perhaps as a testament to the human drive for self-actualization no matter what the cost, China's old guard was ripped down by its newest members.

The Manchus were driven out by a small band of intrepid revolutionists in league with enlightened officials. But the Chinese people took no part in the first revolution. The monarchist movement of Yuan Shih-k'ai was killed by Peking officialdom. But the people of China were silent. Chang Hsun's attempted restoration of the Manchus was squelched by the very officials who are betraying their country today. But the people took no interest. Since then a great war has been fought in Europe. On the fields of France and Belgium the fairest sons of the great nations of the west had given their lives that democracy and justice might exist upon the earth. Throughout the world like the voice of a prophet has gone the word of Woodrow Wilson strengthening the weak and giving courage to the struggling. And the Chinese people have listened and they too have heard... They looked for the dawn of this new millenium but no sun rose for China. The masses of the people looked toward Peking. There they found only corruption and treason... They found that they were inadequately prepared to offer a practical plan to save the country. The merchants lacked initiative they were looking for a leader. And the leadership came from school boys and school girls who were ready to sacrifice their future careers liberty and life that China might continue to exist. The students of China refused to study refused to participate in the usual affairs of life until China was free.

They clogged the machinery of the nation. They brought the issue to a head.¹

The intellectual class and the common class account for the two primary audiences of Hu's project. Intellectual institutions, like Peking University in particular, functioned as the hubs for radical ideas.²

Hu targeted the common class with aesthetics; he appealed to the bardic elements of common life. The poets, painters, and novelists who spoke the vulgar tongue spoke to the heritage of the oral tradition. Cultural change was made possible by accessible language. New ideas, new products, multiple points of perspective, and a communal sense of shared experience prompted the common class to look up from their daily toil. With literacy and available literature, people who earlier had only thought of themselves as part of the family or community could now see themselves as an individual on a historical timeline related to others by experiences shared across space and time.

Hu aimed at the educated public intellectual class, politicians, students, critics, and philosophers with the logical side of his project. This aspect of the reform spoke to the heritage of the Confucian literati. It sought to ready the elite group for that time when the common people would turn to look toward them. Logic would enable the intellectual class to be ready to help the common class with a practical plan.

By speaking to both groups, who traditionally were severely separated, Hu hoped to produce "unity" between them. Only a unified society could achieve the goal of his reform. His goal was the reason that makes the labor of reform worth it, that is, the ability to participate in the constant creation of a world of your own making.

Further, only a unified society could help China avoid falling into the technocratic clutches the likes of which had got ahold of Japan. As mentioned in the introduction, Up until this point, China had no experience with democracy as a political system. Yet, Hu maintained that China did have experience with some fundamental characteristics of democratic thought and

he sought to develop these tendencies within China. He realized the necessity of developing his vision from within China because of the alternatives that would be risked by doing it any other way. On the one hand, the risk was to import an overly operational and caricatured version of western technology and science. On the other hand, the risk was to allow a partial importation to be subsumed by the larger homegrown and historically ruthless structure of traditional thought.

The Historical Society

Many aspects of Confucianism, as originally conceived, are amenable to the development of a modern civilization that is directed by the scientific spirit. For instance, Hu pointed to the Confucian doctrine of change as a positivist development as a counter to the destructive Sophism of Laotze. He said this aspect of Confucianism functioned similarly to the way Platonic logic countered the nihilism of late Sophistry.

It has been said that the Platonic logic originated as a reaction against the Heraclitean doctrine of change; that, impressed by the all-pervasiveness of change, Plato sought and found stability in the changeless 'ideas.' It is significant that the book which, in my opinion, contains most of the basic doctrines of the Confucian logic is known as the *Yi*, or Book of Change.³

Likewise, Hu understood that constructive characteristics existed alongside preservationist characteristics in the Confucian principle of the Five Relationships, which detailed relationships of duty between different peoples of higher and lower status. Wei-ming Tu notes that "the underlying structure of the Five Relationships suggests a strong concern for social ethics,"⁴ which was a particular concern of Hu's and guided his judgment on economic and political theory.

Hu also saw a strong presence of Humanism in the Chinese intellectual tradition, which was paramount to his ambition for a "transvaluation" of all values.⁵ Already, the importance of history was highly regarded in Chinese intellectualism. The kind of perseverance needed for gradual and lasting reform, Hu found, was also present and highly regarded in the intellectual tradition. He locates perseverance in the idea in traditional Chinese intellectual life of *hsin-an li-te*. He explains it according to a discussion on the scholars of the Song and Ming dynasties who studied *li-hsüeh*, the study of Reason who were often persecuted and died under the staff at court, in prison, or in special prison camps. Vincent Y. C. Shih, writes of Hu using this explanation to show how "in the ancient Chinese culture, there was little that may be called submissive."⁶ Chinese scholars are driven to persevere by the traditional idea of *hsin-an li-te*. Often mistaken for a negative attitude, it is actually a positive and progressive attitude of protest. "One will keep silent only when one's mind is at ease and when the principle prevails. Should a person feel ill at ease as a result of one's conviction that the moral principle was lacking, he should not remain silent; he should protest."⁷ Hu Shi saw that there are many progressive attitudes in China's intellectual tradition that were masked by the conservative ends to which they were employed.

The Contemporary Society

Issues of "citizenship" and protest, like Hu was concerned with, are wrapped up in some of the most pressing problems of China today, many of which have to do with property interests. Chinese scholars have taken a renewed interest in Hu Shi. In particular, this is because of the prevalence of ideas like these, on citizenry and public intellectualism, in present-day China. For example, David Kelly's study, "Citizen Movements and China's Public Intellectuals in the Hu Wen Era," focuses on concepts of neoliberalism, citizenship formation, and citizen movements. He explains, These are especially salient questions in the rapidly evolving new style of

government ushered in by the transfer of power between 2003 and 2005 from Party Secretary Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji, to the new guard of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao.”⁸

“Citizenship” is an especially important term in today’s heavily censored Chinese media, because it can be used where other more risky terms, like democracy and freedom cannot.⁹ The term citizenship, on the other hand, is attached to “abstract norms” that provide “a protected discursive space.”¹⁰

David Kelly’s article looks at three specific segments of property interests, all of which have increasingly taken up space in the headlines of international news: “migrant workers, urban homeowners, and groups with closely related property interests.”¹¹ There is overlap between today’s discussions of citizenship and the discussions taking place in twentieth century China, however, “this citizenship discourse is analytically distinct from earlier discussions of civil society in China.”¹²

The relevance of Hu Shi to Chinese intellectuals of today can be seen in one piece of overlap in particular, that is, “the stratum of public intellectuals,” which Kelly identifies as “another shaping force in contemporary China.”¹³ Today’s public intellectuals are increasingly found among the ranks of lawyers and journalists and citizen activists. This is because the issues of citizenship/property rights that tend to boil over into a public rhetorical space are related to “the ‘opportunity structures’ created when the state fall short in the delivery of promised rights and protections. Citizenship, as the ‘right to hold rights,’ is in itself an opportunity structure of special intensity and volatility.”¹⁴ This category of public controversy has been termed the category of “rightful resistance,” and it is for issues of rightful resistance that lawyers, journalists, and citizen activists are most likely to get involved.¹⁵

Another category of contemporary controversy in China for which Hu becomes particularly relevant is the category of political identity dilemmas, which Kelly notes, takes up significant space in discussions of citizenship and intellectualism.¹⁶ While the description of a political identity is constructed out of “a range of attributes,” it is specifically “the *recognition* of this identity, by oneself or by others, that puts it into play politically.”¹⁷ Hu considered self-identity and national identity as vital to the rhetorically imagined democratic state, and in turn, all specifically situated democratic practices.

In China the nation-state is strongly fused with anxieties concerning unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Xenophobia and suspicion of hybrids coexist with secular, cosmopolitan and outward-looking sources of identity. The future of political civilization and social harmony is bound up with the balance of power between these forces, because while Chinese political civilization is destined to remain Chinese, this does not preclude it from being a hybrid—a Chinese citizen society.¹⁸

The “value commitments,” “anxieties about unity,” and other nervous topics Kelly mentions, such as “historical destiny, political culture, and national interest,” are all consistent with the anxieties that Hu was responding to in the 1900s.¹⁹

Studies on Hu Shi stand to make increasingly significant contributions to China’s contemporary rhetorical landscape. Furthermore, scholarship between China and the U.S. is growing evermore ready to be bridged in meaningful ways. As an American scholar of Chinese communication studies, I have experienced the need for comparative and expository studies across the humanities firsthand. I hope that the present study has fulfilled my intended contribution to the body of scholarship that provides the vital means of intelligent access to other cultures.

State of the Field

Guo-Ming Chen, in his survey of Asian Communication Studies, says that by always contrasting the Asian culture with European cultural characteristics and then amplifying this contrast, Asian and Western scholars tend to devalue or excuse the other cultural view. "On the behavioral level, this contrasting view inevitably leads to the dichotomy of Eastern collectivism versus Western individualism."²⁰ This kind of overgeneralization stands in the way of critical investigation and obscures the meaning of actual foundational values.

Another superficial distinction too often exaggerated is between communication styles. Chen describes the tendency of communication scholars to rely on characterized descriptions of the western communication style as direct and confrontational and the eastern communication style as indirect and harmonious. "The convenience of the harmony vs. confrontation distinction is not without its pitfall when real interactions on both sides are observed. For instance, no human society can be conflict-free, and a conflict can be resolved by adopting either a harmonious style or a confrontational style in any society."²¹ A culture might tend toward one style or the other, but a tendency is only a leaning, or predilection. It is not guaranteed; and any researcher who always expects this tendency or relies on it to explain communication situations without due investigation will necessarily undermine the potential value of their work. Superficial dichotomies and the domination of the Eurocentric paradigm have strained efforts to advance Chinese communication studies in the United States. However, "the oppressive situation is the stage for change," Chen maintains.²² He urges scholars of Asian communication studies from the United States and Asia to pursue the goal of the Tao, which is to find "unity in multiplicity, a wholeness of parts... a realm of grand interfusion (da tong) that is free from all determinations and contradictions."²³ To reach this state, "it is critical for scholars of Asian communication studies to foster their ability to know the nature and relationship of difference and similarity and to cultivate their ability to negotiate the differences."²⁴ Chen is looking for communication scholarship of "multicultural co-equality" that can lift scholars out of "dichotomized struggle[s]" of empty meaning and allow them to achieve the reliable results they are after.²⁵

The kind of research, characterized by "unity in multiplicity, a wholeness of parts..." to which Chen refers is precisely the kind of rhetorical synthesis Hu was working toward with the theories on comparative scholarship and reform culminating that he increasingly dedicated himself to in the latter part of his life. From early on, Hu frequently referred to the reform in terms of a revival, rebirth, and renaissance. Likewise, he always maintained that matters of logic and aesthetics are of utmost significance to the development of a modern culture. The 1923 plan for modern learning stands out as one intellectual strain from among many that Hu grew increasingly committed to. This strain, in particular, is important because it indicates the culmination of Hu's rhetorical thought. Whereas the revival sought to dig logic out of obscurity and the rebirth was expressed as an aesthetic awakening of the scientific spirit, Hu's idea of Renaissance, a fusion of revival and rebirth, becomes more clearly defined with his plan for modern learning.

He highly valued historical studies and advanced his own genealogical approach to study China's intellectual and cultural legacies. In 1958, four years before his death, Hu Shi recorded his oral history, *Reminiscences of Shih Hu*, at Columbia University. In his oral history, he recounts the plan he outlined for a "new revival of learning" in the first article of the journal *Kuo-ksueh chi-k'an (the Journal of Sinological Studies)* in 1923.²⁶ The plan consisted of three methods of modern Chinese scholarship that were intended to remedy the defects of traditional

scholarship—primarily that its scope of investigation was too narrow. Generally, the plan aimed at a systematic approach to comparative studies.²⁷ It culminated with Hu's suggestion for Chinese intellectuals to form "specialized histories," meaning the history of language, history of literature, history of economics, political history, history of the international communication of ideas, and so on, to open scholarship up to reference materials of all kinds.²⁸ With specialized histories and ample sources for comparison, Hu reasoned that China's intellectuals could develop a method of evidential analysis capable of specifying the era's most acute problems and developing plans suitable for attending to them.

The concept that relief from present-day dilemmas could be found in the light shed by genealogical investigation and comparative analysis is the foundation of Hu Shi's pragmatic philosophy of reform. At different times in his life, perhaps for reasons of age, academic maturity, and historical situation, Hu expressed this platform in different ways. While studying in America, he tried to direct his classmates down a path of enlightenment by contrasting and exposing the distinction between patriotism and nationalism. During the pinnacle of his reform involvement he tried to show his associates a third option for China's reform, beyond wholesale westernization and traditionalism, by comparing an originating point of the scientific civilization of the West, the spirit of sophistic doubt in ancient Greece, to the seedlings of that same tradition of doubt in ancient Chinese philosophy. He hoped this comparison would show his associates an alternative model of development for China, in which "modern" and "Chinese" are not mutually exclusive. He also tried to contrast American democracy with European democracies to show how different economic models lead to different social structures. He hoped such a comparison would teach his Chinese associates that they had choice and could play a directing role in the development of a modern China.

Hu Shi understood causality as connected to hope. The ability to understand the pattern of cause and effect frees a person from the trappings of the present, and makes history a tool for shaping the future. But he also knew that it is only through communication that this understanding is made possible. Therefore, Hu Shi's Literary Revolution aimed at promoting a rhetorical culture where publics with common interests could come together in rhetorical dialogue regarding some problem shared in a particular situation. Hu Shi's goal will always be relevant.

End Notes

¹ "China and the Shantung Settlement," *The Nation*, Vol 109 No 2823, pp. 185, in *The Nation, Volume CIX from July 1, 1919 to December 31, 1919*, a book collection of volumes from the original weekly Journal of the same name, New York: The Nation Press, Inc. pp. 333.

² Ibid. "The democratization of the Chinese language the development of a modern Chinese literature the growth of political discussion centered about the Peking Government University"

³ Hu Shih, *The Development of Logical Method in Ancient China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Oriental Book Co., 1922), 24.

⁴ Wei-Ming Tu, "Probing the 'Three Bonds' and 'Five Relationships' in Confucian Humanism," Chapter VII (p. 121-136) in *Confucianism and the Family*, edited by Walter H. Slote and George A. De Vos, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 122.

⁵ Vincent Y. C. Shih, "A Talk with Hu Shih," *The China Quarterly*, No. 10 (Apr.-Jun., 1962), 156.

⁶ Ibid., 160.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kelly, 184.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ David Kelly, "Citizen Movements and China's Public Intellectuals in the Hu Wen Era," *Pacific Affairs*: Vol. 79, No. 2—Summer 2006, 184.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 185.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 186.

¹⁹ Ibid., 185-6.

²⁰ Guo-Ming Chen, "Asian Communication Studies," *The Review of Communication*, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 2006, 302. For further reference see Geert Hofstede, *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001).

²¹ Ibid., 302-303.

²² Ibid., 306.

²³ Ibid., 305.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 306.

²⁶ Hu Shi, *Reminiscences of Shih Hu*: oral history, 1958. Interviewed by Te-kong Tong, (The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York, 1976), 220.

²⁷ Ibid., 221.

²⁸ Ibid., 222-223.

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