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Confucian philosophical argumentation skills

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ABSTRACT: Becker argued Confucianism lacked of argumentation, dialogue and debate. However, Becker is wrong. First, the purpose of philosophical argumentation is to justify an arguer's philosophical standpoints. Second, both Confucius' *Analects* and Mencius' *Mencius* were written in forms of dialogues. Third, the content of each book is the recorded utterance and the purpose of dialogue is to persuade its audience. Finally, after Confucius, Confucians' works have either argued for those unjustified standpoints or re-argued about some justified viewpoints in the *Analects*.

KEYWORDS: Becker, Confucianism, argumentation, Confucius, Mencius

1. INTRODUCTION

Confucianism is sometimes viewed as philosophy, and sometimes as religion. As a kind of religion, Confucianism has been the most prevalent and influential ones in China. While as philosophy, Confucianism has been an essential element of Chinese philosophy and culture so far. According to Fung Yu-lan, one of the 20th century authorities on the history of Chinese thoughts, Confucius (Kong-Fu-Tsu or Master Kong, 551-479 BC) is often known as the father of Confucianism, whose influence in Chinese history can be compared with that of Socrates in the West (cf. Riegel, 2006). Accordingly, the *Analects* (Mandarin Pinyin: Lúnyǔ) of Confucius is usually regarded as that of Holy Bible to west.

The theory of "Sangang" (three-cardinal-guides) and the "Wuchang" (five-constant-virtues) are fundamental components of the traditional Chinese culture. The former was presented by legalist Han Fei (280–233 BC), having nothing to do with Confucianism, which means that a subject should absolutely obey to his/her ruler, that a son/daughter should be at his/her father's command, and that a wife should take orders from her husband. The latter is called the "*ren-yi-li-zhi-xin*" ethical system, which is a system of everyday conduct guide that delivers the basic Confucian philosophical views developed by Confucius, Mencius (Mandarin Pinyin: Mèng Zǐ, 372-289 BC) and Tung Chung-shu (Mandarin Pinyin: Dǒng Zhòngshū, 179–104 BC). According to their interpretation, *ren* refers to benevolence or humanness, *yi* to propriety, *li* to observance of rites, *zhi* to wisdom or knowledge, and *xin* to sincerity, respectively. In the beginning, Confucius only constructed an ethical system containing *ren*, *yi* and *li*. Later, Mencius, on the basis of that, introduced *zhi*

(wisdom), and Tung Chung-shu added *xin* (sincerity) to complete the present “*ren-yi-li-zhi-xin*” Confucian ethical system.

2. DID THERE EXIST LOGIC/ARGUMENTATION IN ANCIENT CHINA?

According to Becker (1986), there existed some ideas on speech communication in Confucius’ teachings *Analects*, but no argumentation, dialogue, and debate involved. His reason was, according to Confucius, “To fail to speak to a man who is capable of benefiting is to let a man go to waste, but to speak to a man who is incapable of benefitting is to let one’s words to go waste. The wise man lets neither men nor words go to waste.”(Confucius, 2008, p. 281) It seems that it is preferable for Confucius to simply adopt some old solutions to solve the present problems rather than creating and discussing some new solutions, since for Confucius, the emphasis has always been laid on being humble and respectful, rather than being bold, assertive or innovative. Hence for Confucius, it seems unnecessary to argue for or against some standpoint(s) or to employ persuasive speeches to influence others. Nevertheless, Becker thinks that it is not always true that there never exist logic in China. For example, the School of Names or Ming-Chia (Mandarin Pinyin: Míngjiā) is a class of analogous in role and history to the Sophists of Greece. In ancient China, they became well-known for their debating on whether a white horse should belong to the class of horses and on whether a criminal should belong to the class of men. In fact, their discussions were just based on logical arguments (Becker, 1986).

However, even in the West there are scholars who didn’t agree with Becker’s view. For instance, Graham (1919-1991) regarded all the ancient Chinese philosophers as disputers of the *Tao* (philosophical standpoint), and observed that their disputation were grounded on philosophical arguments (Graham, 1989). The ancient philosophers whom he mentioned in his book are Confucius, Mencius, Micius(470-391 BC), Tsengtzu (Mandarin Pinyin: Zēngzǐ, 505–436 BC), Laocius (Mandarin Pinyin: Lǎozǐ, 570-471 BC), Yang Chu (Mandarin Pinyin: Yáng Zhū, 440-360 BC), Kung-sun Lung (Mandarin Pinyin: Gōngsūn Lóng, 325-250 BC), etc. In his opinion, all these philosophers’ philosophical viewpoints are based on philosophical arguments. Since their academic duty was to argue for their own *Tao*, we could believe that it is totally wrong for Becker to conclude that the Chinese philosophical theories, including Confucianism, lack of argumentation, dialogue and debate.

Early at the beginning of last century, Leung Chi-tso (Mandarin Pinyin: Liáng Qǐchāo, 1873-1929) and Wang Kuo-wei (Mandarin Pinyin: Wáng Guówéi, 1877-1927) were the first figures who launched a debate whether there existed logic (Mandarin Pinyin: LùnLǐXué from Japanese “論理学”) in Ancient China. In 1904, on the one hand, Leung’s answer was “YES” in his paper *Logic of the Mohist School* published by *New Citizen Journal (Xinmin Congbao)*. On the other hand, Wang alleged in his article *The Input of New Term* that there was not logic but argumentation or debates that indeed ever existed in the Ancient China. In 1912 Wang even suggested in his work *Lecture Notes on Logic* that there had never been logic in Eastern Asia, notwithstanding that Buddhist Hetuvidyā resembles western

logic, and the so-called *Ming-Chia* seems to be close to studying logic (cf. Cheng Zh.T., 2006). And this debate on the Chinese logic seems to be continued till now.

3. TWO ARGUMENT(ATION) THEORIES AND TWO LOGICS

What I appreciate very much is Sartor's view of logics. In discussing the logic of legal reasoning, he thought that the two "logics" - formal symbolic logic and argumentation theory - had been separately developing in reciprocal incomprehension and in no open clash for a long time (Sartor, 1994). Furthermore, we have to accept such a viewpoint that there have actually been two argument(ation) theories since Aristotle era or earlier if we agree with Sartor. However, it was until 1970s, had argumentation theory and dialectics been revalued in academic society, for formal logic which studies formal arguments became so mighty after Frege.

According to formal logician, an argument is any group of propositions of which one is claimed to follow from the others, which are regarded as providing support or grounds for the truth of that one (Copi & Cohen, 1994, p. 5). In fact, what most formal logicians have focused on is only how the conclusion follows necessarily from the premise set. That is to say, formal logicians concern little the truth or acceptability of each premise in reality, and their attention is paid solely on whether the premise set can logically and semantically infer the conclusion regardless of its pragmatic dimension. This means, from the point of formal logician, an argument is based on zero-agent and is static. It has nothing to do with the pragmatic factors which greatly influenced our everyday arguments, such as the arguer, audience, and purpose.

Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 7) put forward that the term "argument" had at least these two uses: (1) an interaction, usually verbal and usually between two or more people, that was normally occasioned by a difference of opinion; (2) what someone made or formulated (reasons or evidences) as grounds or support for an opinion (the basis for believing it). Concerning to the latter, an argument seems to be regarded as a kind of one-agent, interaction-free (maybe) and monologue activity. With respect to the former, it amounts to argumentation, which is a kind of multi-agent, interactive, audience-dependending and purpose-directing social activity.

And then Johnson further distinguished two different views of argument: the structural and pragmatic one. Johnson critiqued that Copi & Cohen's definition only had the structure of argument as defined, but that was not sufficient to qualify it as an argument. There is some validity to the structure view. However, in reality, when we engage in the practice of argumentation, we always seek to persuade someone of something, and to achieve it rationally. From the pragmatic point of view, an argument is a discourse directed toward rational persuasion (Johnson, 2000, pp. 147-149). According to Walton (1990), any argument must serve a persuasive purpose. As Walton claims, reasoning can be aimless but argument is essentially goal-directed, and in the context of argumentation characteristic of "proving your point" in a critical discussion, reasoning goes forward from your opponent's premises to your own conclusion.

Van Eemeren et al (1996, p. 5) defined argumentation, which seems to be equivalent to the first sense mentioned above, as a verbal social activity of reason and increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of proposition intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge. From this point, on the one hand, van Eemeren's viewpoint of argumentation seems to be one-agent. But, on the other hand, he also holds that the ideal of argumentation should be a critical discussion, involving the two agents – the protagonist and the antagonist (van Eemeren et al., 2002, pp. 24-25). Therefore, actually van Eemeren's concept of argumentation involves double agents.

Walton distinguished logical semantics from logical pragmatics. The former is called theoretical logic, while the latter is called practical logic. According to Walton (2008, p. 1), logical semantics is centrally concerned with the propositions that make up an argument, while logical pragmatics is concerned with the reasoned use of those propositions in dialogue to carry out a goal. It is concerned with what is done with those propositions in a context of dialogue, what use is made of them, to convince another arguer. Hence, there seems to be two logics and two argument(ation) theories in Walton's framework.

In a word, from the perspective of argument(ation) based on the two logics, an argument or argumentation is always related not only to the formal structure from its premise set to its conclusion, but also to some key pragmatic elements such as the arguer, audience, purpose, and topic. So it has at least six functions: (1) To find a right or acceptable conclusion; (2) To help one understand a concept or statement, i.e., knowing why you believe something; (3) To avoid belief perseverance; (4) To know why others believe; (5) To refute the other party's argument; (6) To persuade the intended audience of accepting the arguer's standpoint(s). Anyway, when evaluating an argument or argumentation to be good or bad, besides its logical form, we have to take into consideration at least three pragmatic factors: (1) Who is the arguer? (2) Who is the intended audience? (3) What is the arguer's purpose?

4. CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTATION

As philosophers, Confucians always use argument(ation) to serve for their philosophical standpoints. As mentioned before, Confucians were conservative in view of social behaviour because what they endorse is that people should behave humbly and respectfully toward each other rather than being bold and innovative when engaging in social relationship. Hence their mission was to justify the social situation at that time, and their purpose of argumentation was to convince people of believing that the present social reality was reasonable and could not be changed. Accordingly, throughout the history of China, Confucian philosophical argumentation theory was mainly consisted of three branches as below.

The first branch is the theory of Heaven Destiny. The destiny view which had been argued by Confucians was interpreted in two ways. In the first interpretation, one's fate is the heaven's will and command, each monarch regulates his own state and his power is appointed by the heaven. The representative scholars who hold this interpretation are Confucius, Tung Chung-shu, Han Yu (768-824), Ssu-ma Kuang

(Mandarin Pinyin: Sīmǎ Guāng, 1019-1086) and so on. In the second interpretation, one's destiny is the necessity of nature and natural law, but s/he can make full use of the destiny to bring benefit to the entire human being. However, Confucius would not promote blind faith, and hence he suggested that one can make himself an integral part of nature by personal cultivation every day, this interpretation was explored by Hsün Tzu (Mandarin Pinyin: Xún Zǐ, 312-230 BC), Liu Tsung-yuan (Mandarin Pinyin: Liǔ Zōngyuán, 773-819), etc.

The second branch is the theory of the Heaven Tao. The theory of the Heaven Tao was popular during the Spring and Autumn period. The Heaven Tao originally referred to the change of astronomical phenomena and contained some blind faith such as prediction of good or ill luck, and weal or woe. Afterwards Laocius introduced ontology into the theory of Heaven Tao. Confucian claimed that the Tao of Heaven should be related to humanitarian. Its meaning refers both to some mysterious necessity and to some natural laws and rules. Although different Confucians present different account with respect to the Heaven Tao, all of them claimed that there existed some relationship between the Heaven and humanitarian. For example, according to Lu Jia (240-170 BC) in Han Dynasty, the Heaven Tao gave birth to and brought up anything, and then the sages set up the criteria of humanitarian according to the paradigm of the Heaven Tao, legislating those human relations that a monarch should be prior to his subjects, a father to his son(s), a husband to his wife or wives, and an older to a younger. That means the humanitarian unites the Tao of Heaven which cannot be changed.

The last branch is the theory of Heaven Principle. Neo-Confucianism was developed by Han Yu (768-824) and Li Ao (772-841) in the Tang Dynasty, and became prominent during the Song and Ming dynasties. Before Neo-Confucianism, the concept of Heaven Principle mainly refers to natural law and rule, while Neo-Confucians' Heaven Principle was a mysterious cosmological ontology. They tried to argue the order between the current society and nature is timeless and the Heaven Principle is the highest standard between the nature and society. As Chu Hsi (Mandarin Pinyin: Zhū Xī, 1130-1200) said, the Heaven Principle is the highest master of the universe and the supreme principle of all things, therefore, those who governs a state must follow it.

For short, the core of Confucianism is well indicated by the following paragraph of *the Great Learning* by Tsengtzu: The monarch, who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout his empire, first ordered well his own State. Wishing to order well his State, he first regulated his family. Wishing to regulate his family, he first cultivated himself. Wishing to cultivate himself, he first rectified his mentality. This is the basic Confucianism idea of "rectifying his mentality, cultivating himself, regulating his family, ordering well his state, and illustrating his empire." We should note that the final conclusions that Confucians have tried to reach is that everyone should investigate things, carry his/her knowledge to the utmost, make his thoughts sincere, rectify his/her mind, and so on (Tseng Tsu, 2011, pp.24-31), while The Destiny, Tao, and Principle of Heaven are their initial premises.

5. CONFUCIUS' *ANALECTS* AND ARGUMENTATION

Confucius positioned himself a transmitter of the ancient culture, especially in Zhou Dynasty, so he claimed, "I transmit but not innovate; I am truthful in what I say and devoted to antiquity." (Confucius, 2008, Book VII, 1). From this point, it seems that Confucius did not put forward his own standpoint in most cases; hence it is unnecessary to ask him to present an argument. Meanwhile, Confucius' identity was a teacher if we focus only on the text of *Analects* which documented his teaching activity. It is obvious that Confucius is much more knowledgeable than any other of his interlocutors mentioned in the *Analects*, thus anyone else is consultants. Not only so, his followers regard him as the God when Confucianism becomes almost a religion. Accordingly, they seem to prefer to believe that his standpoints are always right rather than to question them. In Walton's words, the dialogue between Confucius and his disciple belongs to the information-seeking type (Walton, 2008, p. 7) rather than to the persuasion dialogue type.

Nevertheless, it is not right for Becker to conclude that there are no arguments or argumentation in the *Analects*. Among Confucius' students, some were strongly argumentative while some others were modest and keen to learn. Those argumentative students like Tsu-lu and Tsai Yü always argue with Confucius. For example, a fantastic debate once happened between Confucius and Tsu-lu (Mandarin Pinyin: Zǐ Lù, 548-480 BC). Tsu-lu says, "if the monarch of Wei is waiting for you to come and administer his state for him, what would you measure first?" The Master says that it would certainly be to correct names (usage of language). Tsu-lu says, "Can I have heard you alright? Surely what you say has nothing to with the matter. Why should language be corrected?" And then Confucius proposed his argument (Book XIII, 3). If we analyze this argumentation by Pragma-dialectics developed by van Eemeren et al, the difference of opinion between Confucius and Tsu-lu only involves one standpoint rather than two opposing standpoints (van Eemeren et al, 2002, pp.8-9).

Another wonderful example is the debate about the three-year mourning period between Confucius and Tsai Yü (Mandarin Pinyin: Zǎi Yü, 522-458 BC). Tsai Yü put forward his viewpoints that the three-year period was too long and that one year was enough. Against the first viewpoint, he provides two reasons: first, if gentlemen suspend their practices of the rites for three years, the rites will certainly decay; and second, if for three years they make no music, music will certainly be destroyed. If it would be added the third reason that in a year the old crops have already vanished, the new crops have come up, and the whirling thrills have made new fire, then surely one year would be enough. And then, the Master asks Tsai Yü, "Would you then after a year feel at ease in eating good rice and wearing silk brocades?" Tsai Yü says, "Quite at ease". In the next movement, the Master says, "If you would really feel at ease, you do so. But when a true gentleman is in mourning, if he eats dainties, he does not relish them, if he hears music, it does not please him, if he sits in his ordinary seat, he is not comfortable. That is why he abstains from these things. But if you would feel at ease, there is no need for you to abstain." When Tsai Yü went out, the Master says, how inhuman Tsai Yü is! Only when a child is three

years old does it leave its parents' arms. Three-year mourning is the universal mourning everywhere under the Heaven. And Tsai Yü – was he not the daring of his father and mother for three years? (Confucius, 2008, Book XVII, 21) Here it's obviously a matter of fact that both Confucius and Tsai Yü present their own standpoints and supporting reasons, so this is typically argumentation, involving two opposing standpoints, if seen from the perspective of Pragma-dialectics.

According to Chen (2010), there are at least three types of recorded utterance in *the Analects*. First, there are many sentences with the indicators "the Master said" or "Confucius said" as the beginning of each sentence. The second are question-and-answer dialogues. Generally a disciple first asks some question, such as "somebody asked about", or "somebody asked", and then Confucius answers. For example, Zi-gong asked about gentleman, and the Master answered, "He puts into effect his words before allowing them to follow the deed." (Confucius, 2008, *Book II*, 13) As another example, Zi-gong asked, "Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one's life?" Confucius answered, "It is perhaps the word 'forgiving'. Don't impose on others what you yourself do not desire." (Confucius, 2008, Book I, 23) This shows that it is not right for Becker to say that Confucianism was lack of dialogue. Third, utterances in *the Analects* contain different cases. Some are describing Confucius' behaviours, having nothing to do with arguments or argumentation, some others are recording some disciple's monologue, and there are still some others which report the comments from his follower or others.

As we all know, the *Analects* was recorded by his disciples according to Confucius' ordinary utterances because Confucius himself advocated "to transmit but not to innovate". This point can be proven by Chu Hsi's comments that the *Analects* was recorded by many disciples so some of its sentences are long while some are short (cf. Chen, 2010). Since he was a tutor, it should be understood under the context of the Chinese Culture of that time that his disciples made an utmost effect to maintain Confucius' great figure. We cannot hastily conclude like Becker that Confucianism is lack of argumentation because we have sufficient reasons to believe that there existed argumentation which was not recorded in the book, for some of Confucius' viewpoints were expressed not by means of declarative sentences but rhetorical questions, which took place between Confucius and his disciples in their real-life.

6. AN ARGUMENTATIVE CONFUCIAN: MENCIUS

Comparing with Confucius, Mencius, whose influence in China is like that of Plato in Western culture, prefers to construct an argument or argumentation in his theorizing and writing. When the disciple Gongdu asked Mencius, "Master, the people beyond our school all speak of you as being fond of disputing. I venture to ask whether it be so." Mencius replied, "Indeed, I am not fond of disputing, but I am compelled to do it." (Mencius, 2011, Book VI, 6.8) As to the human nature, Confucius only mentioned, "Near together by nature, but far part by practice" (Confucius, 2008, Book XVII, 3). After developing Confucius' ideal account of the self-cultivation process, Mencius proposed his famous theory of original goodness of human nature. However, his view was subsequently challenged by Hsün Tzu (Mandarin Pinyin: Xún

Zi, 312–230 BC), another major Confucian thinker, who defended the alternative view that “human nature is evil”. This again sufficiently shows that there is not lack of argumentation among Confucians.

Although *Mencius* appears to be a recorded utterance in the form of a question-answer dialogue, however, according to Chen, it is not recorded but written because recording is to make extracts from the spoken presentation while writing is to write a text in characters (Chen, 2010). As Chen said, from the style of discourse, the contents of *Mencius* are not only to transmit the forefather’s idea but also to argue his own view that reflects the specialty of Mencius’ Confucianism. Mencius intended to convince his opponents or audiences through arguments or argumentation. For instance, he first contended that there was some universality among all people via the universal hobby shared by one’s sensory organs such as eyes, ears, nose and mouth, and then argued that all men had a sense of compassion, following from the case that almost everyone can have sympathy when s/he saw a child fall into a well.

Mencius extended Confucius’ “*ren-yi-li*” ethical system into “the four sprouts or virtues”, namely, the “*ren-yi-li-zhi*” ethical system, among which the *zhi* means wisdom or knowledge. Although Confucius never stated whether a man was born good or evil, noting only that ‘By nature men are similar; by practice men are wide apart’, Mencius developed his own theory of original goodness of human nature. According to his theory, the feeling of commiseration belongs to everybody; so do that of shame and dislike; and that of reverence and respect; and that of approving and disapproving (Mencius, 2011, Book XI, 11.6). Everyone has the four ethical attributes, among which the feeling of approving and disapproving is the beginning of wisdom or knowledge, the feeling of shame and dislike is the sprout of propriety, the feeling of modesty and complaisance is the start of observance of rites, and the feeling of commiseration is the origin of benevolence. Among them, the feeling of commiseration implies the benevolence; that of shame and dislike, the observance of rites; that of reverence and respect, the propriety; and that of approving and disapproving, the wisdom. What are the reasons for Mencius to claim that everybody has the feeling of commiseration? According to Mencius, if men suddenly see a child is about to fall into a well, without exception they will experience a feeling of alarm and distress. And they will feel so, not because they may seek the praise of the child’s parents, nor because they may seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing. In a negative way, those guys who are lack of the feelings of commiseration, shame-dislike, modesty-complaisance, and approving-disapproving, don’t really belong to the scope of human being (Mencius, 2011, Book III, 3.6). It is thus clear that it is not true either to say that there is lack of argumentation in the *Mencius*.

7. NEO-CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTATION

Neo-Confucianism (Chinese Pinyin: Sòng-Míng Lǐxué) is the synthesis of Taoist cosmology and Buddhist spirituality around the core of Confucianism which

concerns with society and government. It originated with Han Yu and Li Ao (772-841) in the Tang Dynasty, and became prominent during the Song and Ming dynasties. Neo-Confucianism is classically categorized into two different schools of thought. The most dominant one was the Cheng-Zhu school (Mandarin Pinyin: Chéngzhūlǐxué), based on the ideas of Ch'eng I, (Mandarin Pinyin: Chéng Yí, 1033-1107), Cheng Hao (1032-1085), and Chu Hsi. Chu Hsi is known as a generation of great master of Confucianism, whose academic influence ranks only second to Confucius and Mencius in Chinese history of philosophy. The less dominant and also opposing school was the Lu-Wang school (Mandarin Pinyin: Lùwángxīnxué), based on the thoughts of the scholars Wang Yangming(1472-1529) and Lu Jiuyuan((1139-1192). Thus it shows again that there existed differences of academic opinion, and hence there is argumentation between the Cheng-Zhu School and the Lu-Wang School.

Neo-Confucian presented their own system of thoughts by integrating Buddhism and Taoism, in the Tang Dynasty where these thoughts were developing parallel in academic society, and the dominant position of Confucianism was challenged by Buddhism and Taoism. The integration made Song and Ming dynasties become another peak in their status during history of Chinese philosophy and culture. Neo-Confucian's main grounds and issues discussed were related to the Four Book, i.e., *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Means*. They not only argued about traditional Confucian ideas but also developed out new topics such as *li-qi* (principle-matter) and *gewu* (the investigation of things). Chu Hsi, who was well known for his work of annotation of great philosophic writing collections *the Four Books* and *the Five Classics*, is the symbolic figure of Neo-Confucian. He believed that the Tao of Heaven was expressed in principle or *li*, but that it is sheathed in matters or *qi*. In the Neo-Confucian's formulation, *li* in itself is pure and almost-perfect, but with the addition of *qi*, base emotions and conflicts arise. Human nature is originally good, the Neo-Confucians argued (following Mencius), but not pure unless action is taken to purify it.

The rationalism of Neo-Confucianism is in contrast to the mysticism of the previously dominant Chan Buddhism. Unlike the Buddhists, Neo-Confucians believed that reality existed, and could be understood by humankind, even if the interpretations of reality were slightly different depending on the school of Neo-Confucianism (Craig, 1998, p. 552). However the spirit of Neo-Confucian rationalism is directly opposed to that of Buddhist mysticism. Buddhist mysticism insisted on the unreality of things, whereas Neo-Confucianism stressed their reality. Buddhism and Taoism both asserted that existence came out of, and returned to, non-existence; however Neo-Confucianism differs from them in the following sense: Neo-Confucianism regarded reality as a gradual realization of the Great Ultimate... Buddhists, and to some degree Taoists as well, relied on meditation and insight to achieve supreme reason; besides, the Neo-Confucians chose to follow reason (Chan, 1946, p.268). It can reasonably conclude that Neo-Confucianism doesn't lack of argumentation and logic.

To sum up, Neo-Confucianism, on the one hand, is based on argumentation with Buddhists and Taoists and they advocate rationalism. Therefore, obviously it is not right to say that Confucianism was lack of argumentation and debates. On the

other hand, Neo-Confucianism did not merely annotate works of the previous Confucians but also re-argued and even developed basic philosophical viewpoints of Confucianism by integrating ideas from Buddhism and Taoism.

8. CONCLUSION

To conclude, Confucians believe the Destiny, Tao, or Principle of Heaven, which function as basic premises of their philosophical arguments. The conclusions of their philosophical thinking are that one should investigate things, carry his/her knowledge to the utmost, make his thoughts sincere, rectify his/her mind, cultivate himself/herself, regulate his/her family, and order well his state. The purpose of Confucian philosophical argumentation is very specific. Their ultimate purpose is to justify philosophically the social reality and to convince all people of its reasonableness at their own time. To realize the above purpose, Confucians strive to argue for positions such as everyone should have five ethical attributes, i.e., *ren* (benevolence), *yi* (propriety), *li* (observance of rites), *zhi* (wisdom), and *xin* (sincerity). Actually, all these views are the conclusion of Confucian philosophical arguments.

In evaluating Confucian philosophical arguments, we cannot simply depend on symbolic logic because formal logic never relies on the pragmatic factors of argument or argumentation. Therefore, we have to introduce another type of logic, namely informal logic or argumentation theory, which is another kind of logic parallels with formal logic in Sartor's sense. In other words, we must take full account of these pragmatic elements such as the arguer, the audience, and the purpose of argument or argumentation. In Confucian philosophical argumentation framework, the arguers are Confucians, the audiences are all people including a monarch and all citizens, and the purposes of argument are to persuade everyone of accepting the present social reality.

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