

“Zhengming–Yongming” and the Study of the History of Chinese Logic —Comment on *A New Theory of the Historical Development of Logic in the Pre-Qin Era*

Zeng Zhaoshi 曾昭式, *A New Theory of the Historical Development of Logic in the Pre-Qin Era* 先秦逻辑新论, Beijing: Science Press, 2018

A New Theory of the Historical Development of Logic in the Pre-Qin Era by Zeng Zhaoshi 曾昭式, Institute of Logic and Cognition, Sun Yat-sen University, is an excellent research achievement on pre-Qin logic, which was listed into the National Achievements Library of Philosophy and Social Sciences (2017). Based on a profound summary and reflection of the research on the history of Chinese logic over the past one hundred years, this book gives a systematic interpretation of the thought of logic in the pre-Qin era. It represents the author’s profound thinking on the logic of the pre-Qin era (actually also Chinese logic) and on how to study it.

It has been well recognized in the academia of the study of the history of ancient Chinese logic that China, together with ancient Greece and India, is deemed as the cradle of logic. However, the academia has been arguing about how to study the history of Chinese logic for a hundred years. Concerning this problem, professor Zeng Zhaoshi distinguishes two paradigms in the study of the history of Chinese logic. One paradigm is the research represented by Liang Qichao 梁启超, which has the following characteristic: on the assumption of universality of logic, ancient Chinese logic is studied by means of deductive logic and inductive logic of the West. Therefore, it can be called Liang Qichao paradigm of Chinese logic study. The other is the research represented by Zhang Dongsun 张东荪, called Zhang Dongsun paradigm. It is dissatisfied with the practice of choosing and judging relevant theories in Chinese ancient books with the help of Western logic and advocates a study of traditional Chinese logic on the basis of the characteristics of particular cultural types. This kind of research from the perspective of “logic and culture” has undermined the standing of an assumed universality of logic. ([5]) *A New*

Received 2021-04-15

Theory of the Historical Development of Logic in the Pre-Qin Era can be regarded as a highly innovative work that "follows up" the study of logic in the pre-Qin era from the perspective of "logic and culture".

Feng Youlan 冯友兰 points out in the *Zhongguo Zhexueshi* 中国哲学史 (A History of Chinese Philosophy) that philosophers and ordinary people have their own views on the universe and life, but what makes philosophers different from ordinary people is that in making claims, philosophers would take to producing strict proofs. ([1], pp. 5–6) So, there were supposed to be argumentation when ancient Chinese thinkers were establishing their systems of thoughts. Given the existence of argumentation, how can the specific features of such argumentation in ancient China be accurately understood? *A new theory of the historical development of logic in the pre-Qin era* examines the logic of the pre-Qin era with regard to such thinking. The word "logic" originally comes from the west, but it is now adopted to study the argumentation in the Chinese culture. In adopting the concept of logic, there arises a need to make a clear explanation of the view of logic. Therefore, the author first clarifies the meaning of logic in this book: "logic is the study of argument structure and its rules." ([6], p. i) On this basis, the author points out that ancient Chinese thinkers appealed to the "zhengming-yongming" 正名-用名 type of argumentation, which reflects the characteristic of value. "Zhengming" 正名, to rectify the meaning of name, is the embodiment of the philosophical function of name; based on "zhengming", "yongming" 用名 which literally means correct application of the name rectified above in the argumentation, is the embodiment of the argumentative function of name. This argumentation type takes values as the rule and embodies the value characteristic of ancient Chinese logic. ([6], pp. v–xiii) The author also points out that, because it is a kind of value logic, the arguer and the purpose of argument must be taken into account in the research. ([6], p. 44) Thinkers of the pre-Qin era had already made some relevant expositions of "zhengming" and "yongming" (e.g., Xunzi 荀子). There also has been some research about "zhengming" and "yongming" in the study of the history of Chinese logic. However, it is the author of this book who points out the internal logical connection between "zhengming" and "yongming"; and who regards "zhengming-yongming" as the basic argumentation type of ancient Chinese logic. In a sense, the proposal of "zhengming-yongming" has helped to connect the *Mingxue* 名学和 *Bianxue* 辩学 of the pre-Qin era, the former encompassing "zhengming" while the latter "yongming".

Under the guidance of the thought of "zhengming-yongming", this book makes a detailed exploration of the logics of *Daojia* 道家 (Taoism), *Rujia* 儒家 (Confucian-

ism), *Mingjia* 名家 (School of Names), *Mojia* 墨家 (Mohism) and *Yixue* 易学 (Study of Changes) in the pre-Qin era, and explains their logical thoughts and their applications in terms of “*zhengming*” and “*yongming*”. Take his study of the *Lunyu* 论语 (The Analects of Confucius) for example. The author points out that “*zhengming*” in the book is embodied as follows: The *Lunyu* has obligatory connotations with regard to the names of *Ren* 仁 (Kindness), *Yi* 义 (Righteousness), *Li* 礼 (Propriety), *Zhi* 智 (Wisdom), *Xin* 信 (Faithfulness) and so on, the obligations of which are manifested in various perspectives by way of narration and are mainly related to the political and ethical views of Confucius. The thought of “*yongming*” in the *Lunyu* is embodied in Confucius’ “*body argument*” 身体论证 and the theory and application of the “*lunshi*” 论式 (argument pattern). The so-called “*body argument*” refers to Confucius’ implementation of rectified names, as a set of social norms and ethical requirements, into specific behaviours in ordinary life. With regard to “*lunshi*”, Confucius puts forward three kinds, and they are quotative argument (引言论证), analogical argument (譬式论证) and narrative argument (述式论证). Confucius resorts to these three argument patterns in order to present the political and ethical names he has rectified (“*zhengming*”). ([6], pp. 94–104) With such an effort, the book leads the readers into the logical world of pre-Qin era under the framework of “*zhengming–yongming*”, and reveals that the logic in the pre-Qin era is, in nature, a logic based on values. Besides, the author holds that, syllogism is concentrated on the inferential relationships among terms and it takes on a scientific feature. Whereas, *Hetuvidyā* takes the Buddhist belief as its basis, thus taking on a doxastic feature. These two logics make distinct differences in terms of identity with ancient Chinese logic which takes on a feature of value. ([6], pp. xv–xvii) It can be seen that the author, with regard to his “*zhengming–yongming*” value logic position, has gone through profound thinking on the cross-cultural comparison of the studies of logic history, and this position clearly reflects the intimate relationship between logic and culture.

It is indicated in the book that “*zhengming–yongming*” is not only the main argumentation type of the thinkers in the pre-Qin era, but also the main argumentation type throughout ancient China. Here in this paper, Wang Yangming’s Mind Theory (王阳明心学) in *Song–Ming* Neo-Confucianism (宋明理学) will be taken as an example to make a brief analysis. Under the guidance of the Western logic, exiting literature of the study of the history of Chinese logic shows little attention paid to the argumentation in Wang Yangming’s Mind Theory. However, as a system of thoughts, Wang Yangming’s Mind Theory has its own argumentation. With regard to his argumentation, a proper understanding could be reached from the perspective of “*zhengming–yongming*”.

Wang Yangming lived in the middle Ming Dynasty. At that time, the intellectual world was dominated by *Song-Ming* Neo-Confucianism. In order to cope with the impact of Buddhism and Taoism on the Confucian value system and to consolidate the ethics and disciplines of Confucianism, the *Song-Ming* Neo-Confucianism concentrated its attention on the theme of how to become a saint by way of practicing moral cultivation, that is, to further enrich Confucianism from the perspective of Ontology, Mind-Nature Theory and Effort Theory. However, in Wang Yangming's time, Zhu Xi's Theory of *Li* (朱熹理学), which had already be recognized as the official philosophy, had gradually become dogmatized and become a tool to pursue fame and fortune for scholars who no longer practised moral cultivation which should have been done. Therefore, Wang Yangming sets up the Mind Theory in order, on the one hand, to correct the deviation in Zhu Xi's Theory of *Li* and, on the other hand, to urge scholars to conduct moral practice.

Wang Yangming's Mind Theory, in specific argumentative processes, mainly adopts the strategy of interpreting classics. Classics here refer to the *Four Books* 四书 and *Five Classics* 五经 of Confucianism. Just as Feng Youlan says, for most thinkers after Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 of the Western Han Dynasty, they usually construct their systems of thoughts in the name of the study of Confucian classics (经学), and the expression of such thoughts also mostly relies on the terms in classics. ([2], pp. 3–4) Indeed, the topics discussed by Wang Yangming are mainly from the Confucian classics, such as natural law (天理) and human desires (人欲), mind (心) and nature (性), studying things (格物) and acquiring knowledge (致知), emotion-burst (已发) and emotion-holding (未发) and so on. However, concerning the theme of how to become a saint, it gives them richer meanings. It can be seen that the primary concern of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory is the reference of the name, which itself is "*zhengming*". For Wang Yangming, once the reference of the name is determined, the interpretation of the classics can be carried out systematically, the latter of which encompasses the process that Wang Yangming implements his argumentation, which itself is "*yongming*". In the following, this paper will focus on these two aspects respectively.

Wang Yangming holds that: "From the perspective of things, the Mind is the natural principle; from the perspective of the way to receive things, it is righteousness; and the perspective of the human nature, it is goodness. Names vary as references differ but they in fact all fall within the purlieu of the mind. There is nothing outside the mind, there is no affair outside the mind, and there is no principle outside the mind." (夫在物为理，处物为义，在性为善，因所指而异其名，实皆吾之心也。心外无物，心外无事，心外无理) ([4], p. 175) Wang Yangming posits everything is in the mind, em-

phasizing that nothing comes out of it. Qin Jiayi 秦家懿 points out that the meaning of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory can be expressed in a single word "mind", which is the beginning and end of his philosophy. ([3], p. 49) The word "mind" encompasses the whole system of thoughts of Wang Yangming. Hence, all the names are only speaking this "mind". It can be said that "all in the mind" is the basic principle of "*zhengming*" of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory. The "mind" here is not an abstract category, but emphasizes its practical aspect of moral cultivation, which embodies the practical value required of "*zhengming*" of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory.

In the resort-to-classics-interpretation process of "*yongming*", the classics serve as the reasons and the interpretation of the classics serves as the claim, thus forming the classics-to-interpretation argumentation of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory. So, it requires us to examine the rules about "reason" and "reason-to-claim" in "*yongming*". As to the rule about "reason", that is, the rule for understanding the classics, some clues could be found in some statements Wang Yangming has made. He says, "The *Four Books* and the *Five Classics* only make an elaboration on this Mind." (盖《四书》《五经》不过说这心体) ([4], p. 17) Here, Wang Yangming emphasizes that all the connotations of classics can not be detached from the Mind. Therefore, it can be said that "all in the mind" in "*zhengming*" constitutes the rule of understanding the classics in his Mind Theory. Concerning the rule about "reason-to-claim", that is, the rule used in the process of interpreting classics, Wang Yangming carries out the principle of "attaining conscience" (致良知). As Wang Yangming once said, "All my lectures in my life are just the following: attaining conscience." (吾平生讲学, 只是“致良知”三字) ([4], p. 1091) This means that Wang Yangming takes "attaining conscience" as the guiding principle (the rule about "reason-to-claim") to use the rectified name in order to explain the relevant classics. For example, *Daxuewen* 大学问 (The Great Learning Asking), which represents the core ideas of Wang Yangming, is an explanation of the first chapter of *Daxue* 大学 (The Great Learning). In *Daxuewen*, Wang Yangming interprets "acquiring knowledge" in *Daxue* as "attaining conscience", on the basis of which he makes an explanation of the three principles and eight items (三纲八目) in *Daxue*, which in essence is an understanding of *Daxue* based on "all in the mind" and which fully embodies the basic value position of his Mind Theory.

From the discussion, it can be seen that the analysis centering on the classics interpretation of Wang Yangming's Mind Theory above can indeed show the "*zhengming-yongming*" value characteristic of Wang Yangming's argumentation for his ideas. More detailed analysis could have been conducted about the argumentation in Wang Yang-

ming’s Mind Theory. Considering the space limit, this paper will not go on with such detailed analysis. However, through the brief analysis, it is demonstrated that the theory of “zhengming–yongming” is significant in the sense that it can provide some guidance in the study of argumentation of ancient Chinese thinkers.

References

- [1] Y. Feng 冯友兰, 2009, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (I) 中国哲学史 (上), Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing Group.
- [2] Y. Feng 冯友兰, 2009, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (II) 中国哲学史 (下), Chongqing: Chongqing Publishing Group.
- [3] J. Qin 秦家懿, 2011, *Wang Yangming* 王阳明, Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company.
- [4] S. Wang 王守仁, 2011, *The Complete Works of Wang Yangming* 王阳明全集, Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House.
- [5] Z. Zeng 曾昭式, 2015, “History of Chinese Logic: Introduction” 中国逻辑史专栏: 编者导语, *Studies in Logic*, **8(3)**: 1–2.
- [6] Z. Zeng 曾昭式, 2018, *A New Theory of the Historical Development of Logic in the Pre-Qin Era* 先秦逻辑新论, Beijing: Science Press.

Qifei Lu

Institute of Logic and Cognition and Department of Philosophy, Sun Yat-sen University

1149737678@qq.com