

## 8 THE END OF EMPIRE AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Dear Mr. Chen:

In an earlier essay of yours you strongly advocated the abolition of Confucianism. Concerning this proposal of yours, I think that it is now the only way to save China. But, upon reading it, I have thought of one thing more: if you want to abolish Confucianism, then you must first abolish the Chinese language; if you want to get rid of the average person's childish, uncivilised, obstinate way of thinking, then it is all the more essential that you first abolish the Chinese language. (cited in Ramsey 3)

The letter above was written by Qian Xuanton, a member of the Chinese Language and Literature Department of the then Imperial Peking University (now Beijing University) in the early years of the twentieth century. It was written to a fellow member of the Department, Chen Duxiu, who is better known as one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist party.

While Qian's view that China needed to get rid of, not only Confucianism, but also the Chinese language was doubtless an extreme one, arguments for the replacement of the Chinese script with a phonetic script were common in the early years of the twentieth century. To help explain this it should be remembered that the percentage of Chinese who were literate at the time was low, possibly no more than 5% of the population. However, we must be careful here, as literacy can be defined in different ways. Rawski has suggested that between 30-40% of males were literate in that they could read and write to some extent. However, as Woodside and Elman (532) point out, the new education ministry that had been established in 1908 predicted that it would take until 1917 to make "even 5%" of the population literate, with literacy here being defined as

“politically active literacy,” “of the type needed to understand constitutions and parliamentary elections.” At the same time, many scholars were jealous of their privileged literate status, and were therefore unlikely to encourage an increase in literacy numbers and the government had an interest in “controlling the growth of politically empowering literacy” (Woodside and Elman 531). Yet literacy and mass education were seen to be crucial for modernisation, so there was felt to be an urgent need to consider ways of increasing literacy levels and quickly. A further motivation was provided by Japan, as it had developed into a major power and had developed katakana and hiragana syllabaries, and these were seen to be key in increasing literacy levels in Japan (Li and Lee). Japan’s status as a modernised country also explains why so many Chinese intellectuals chose to study in Japan at this time. An added impetus for the reform of the Chinese language was provided by Western missionaries developing alphabetic scripts for minority languages. For example, Samuel Pollard developed a script for the Miao people in 1905. While the primary reason for this was to ensure that the Miao could read the bible, “the new script expanded beyond its religious focus to cover all of Miao life and thought” (Woodside and Elman 538).

The desire to modernise needs to be seen in the context of a China which had been routinely humiliated by Western powers from the second half of the nineteenth century, with China’s defeat in Opium Wars perhaps providing the nadir. Some scholars see China’s defeat in the first Opium War (1838-1842) as marking the beginning of foreign imperialism (Hsu 246–7) and thus the beginning of China’s realisation of the need to modernise in order to be able to withstand and repel the foreign powers that were carving up China’s territory. The education system was held largely to blame for China’s backwardness. In the early years of the twentieth century, Huang Yanpei pronounced the Qing imperial education system “bankrupt” (Woodside and Elman 525) and felt that only the adoption of Western educational practice could save China. His pro-Western prejudice can be seen from his characterisation of the Western and Chinese systems, as he paints the Western system as white and the Chinese as black. The Western system treated the sexes equally, encouraged individuality and creativity and taught people to do good and serve society. The Qing system segregated the sexes, demanded uniformity and focussed on the self (Woodside and Elman 525).

Although the official date of the reform movement is usually given as 1898, attempts at reform were seen earlier. One of the earliest was the establishment of the Tong Wen Guan in 1862. This is of linguistic significance, as it was a school for interpreters where English and other foreign languages were taught. The concerns about the ability of Chinese to act as a medium of modernisation also fuelled the need for China to learn foreign languages. There was a view that “traditional native literacy education was inadequate in the pursuit of

national modernization” (You, *Writing* 6). Many of the Tong Wen Guan’s teachers were Western missionaries and so introduced Western methods of learning, textbooks and styles of writing to the classroom. The Tong Wen Guan not only taught languages. It later introduced science subjects for which Western, primarily American, textbooks were also used. In this way, the Tong Wen Guan developed a comprehensive curriculum and at the time of the actual Reform Movement of 1898 became part of the new Imperial Peking University (Lin X. 27). Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) developed the first curriculum and he attempted to integrate a holistic Confucian knowledge with Western disciplinary specialisations. It is perhaps not surprising to learn that he was the author of the famous saying “*zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong*” (Lin 9), a phrase which translates as “studying from China for the essence, studying from the West for practical knowledge.” This dichotomy between Chinese essence and Western practice became known as the *ti-yong* debate. As we shall show, this debate continues.

Zhang Zhidong’s curriculum—modeled on those at the Imperial Tokyo and Kyoto universities—aimed at synthesising Chinese and Western learning. There is some debate about the precise number of disciplines (Lin 19ff) but they included history, Chinese language and literature, philosophy, education, law, political science and psychology. The university also opened a School of Translation (*Yixueguan*) in 1903, based on the Tong Wen Guan, whose aim was to train translators and diplomats and “to introduce Western learning into China” (Lin 27).

The Chinese Language and Literature Department played two major roles. Linguistics was seen as an important ally in justifying and promoting the Western-driven historicism movement on the one hand, and in providing the theoretical basis and practical skills for the reform of the Chinese language on the other. That is to say, one role was associated with history and the other with future reform. Both roles, however, were inspired by an agreed agenda for China’s need to reform and both, historicism and the language reform movement, were clearly inspired by Western scholarship. One definition of historicism is:

the belief that an adequate understanding of the nature of any phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value are to be gained by considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role which it played within a process of development (Mandelbaum, cited in Ankersmit 146 ff)

In the Chinese context, historicism thus allowed Chinese history to disavow the past and to break from the Confucian model. The past was now to serve

as a *reference* for the past. It was not to serve as the *standard* for the present (Lin X. 90). As such, historicism argued that historical changes were not simply cyclical events in a largely unchanging world. Linguistics' role in this centred around philology, defined as "the textual exegesis and identification of the meaning of ancient words through pronunciation and word parts" (Lin 46). This was important in China's move to change as there was a desire to find primary historical sources that would allow scholars to contextualise Confucianism as a product of a particular time and thus allow for a debate as to its value for contemporary China. This also allowed scholars to question the dominant place given by the Qing court to the Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty. Philology was used politically to attack neo-Confucian orthodoxy (Woodside and Elman 553). The importance attached to philology can be seen in that two of the University's Chinese Language and Literature Department's three majors were philology and archaeology, with the third being literature.

The second role linguistics played was in language reform. As we have seen above, one member of the department considered going as far as calling for the abolition of Chinese altogether.

In this chapter we provide the context in which reform—particularly with regard to language and rhetoric—took place and summarise the major contributions to this reform by leading Chinese intellectuals. This is the period when the final dynasty of the Chinese imperial system collapsed and was replaced in 1911 by the new Republic of China. This was the period when, in 1905, the imperial civil service exams were finally abolished. This was the period which saw the famous May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919 when thousands demonstrated against the terms of the Versailles Treaty through which Chinese possessions previously held by European powers were handed over to Japan, in direct disregard of China's wishes. This was the period of the New Culture Movement, when many new ideas were circulated and many new authors began to be heard. It was a time of intellectual, political and social ferment.

Not surprisingly, this time of ferment and the importation of ideas caused significant changes. Before considering how Western rhetoric influenced Chinese at this time, however, we provide a brief review of various definitions of Western rhetoric in the same way that we showed, in Chapter 1, how concepts of Chinese rhetoric changed over time. Here we show how the concept of what constitutes "Western" rhetoric has changed and explain why, by the turn of the twentieth century, rhetoric had come to be primarily associated with writing rather than speech in the United States. This is important as it was this "written" view of rhetoric that the Chinese intellectuals who studied in the States at the turn and beginning of the twentieth century came across.

## WESTERN DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTIONS OF RHETORIC

At the 2007 Fuzhou Forum on Rhetoric organised by Liu Yameng at Fujian Normal University, John Gage provided a list containing a selection of conceptions or definitions of rhetoric within the Western tradition starting from Gorgias (425 BCE) through to Wayne Booth. Gage's list (reproduced below) neatly illustrates how these conceptions have changed over the periods. Gorgias was considered the first formulator of the art of rhetoric (Corbett and Connors 490). He devised a system of pleading civil cases in the law courts brought by citizens after the expulsion of the tyrants from Syracuse in 467 BCE. Thus "Western" rhetoric has its origins in the law courts. This gave it specific characteristics: it was primarily oral—although speeches were written and then delivered orally; and the competing participants were equals who were presenting arguments before a judge. These two characteristics—oral and equal—represented significant differences between Western and Chinese rhetoric of the same period.

Gorgias' definition was:

"The power of using words to persuade, or to affect the condition of the soul by producing belief."

Others in Gage's list are:

Plato (*Gorgias*, 360 BCE), "Rhetoric is not an art but a knack, a kind of flattery, dangerous because it is useful only to make the worse appear the better."

Aristotle (*On Rhetoric*, 332 BCE), "Let rhetoric be defined as an ability (faculty) for perceiving the available means of persuasion in each particular case."

*Rhetorica ad Herennium* (87 BCE), "The art of persuasion, consisting of invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery."

Cicero (*De Oratore*, 55 BCE), "The art of effective disputation, as practiced by the good man in speaking."

Quintilian, (*De Institutione Oratoria*, 93 CE), "The knowledge and ability to speak well, thus forming the basis of the complete education of an ideal statesman."

Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine*, 426 CE), “The art by which the Christian orator acquires, through exercise and habit, skilful use of words and abundance of verbal devices to teach the truth of scriptures.”

Boethius (*On Topical Differences*, 510 CE), “The method of argumentation.”

Agricola (*Dialectical Invention*, 1480 CE), “The art of inquiry by means of dialectic.”

Erasmus (*De Copia*, 1500 CE), “The practice of eloquence; verbal abundance and variety.”

Peter Ramus (*Dialectique*, 1555 CE), “Style (figures and tropes) and delivery (voice and gesture), invention and arrangement belong to dialectic.”

Henry Peacham (*Garden of Eloquence*, 1577 CE), “Figures and schemes of verbal ornamentation.”

Francis Bacon (*Advancement of Learning*, 1605 CE), “Rhetoric is subservient to the imagination, as Logic is to the understanding; and the duty and office of rhetoric is no other than to apply and recommend the dictates of reason to imagination, in order to excite the appetite and will.”

Bernard Lamy (*L'arte De Parler*, 1675 CE), “Speaking so as to affect the passions of the mind.”

George Campbell (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1776 CE), “That art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end, using all the powers of the mind “to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, and to influence the will.”

Hugh Blair (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 1783 CE), “The cultivation of good taste to prepare oneself for speaking or composition.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (*Biographica Literaria*, 1817 CE), “Rhetorical caprices” are at worst inorganic artifice and as such are

dissociated from powerful thought and sincere feeling, constituting “the characteristic falsity in the poetic style of the moderns.”

Richard Whately (*Elements of Rhetoric*, 1846 CE), “Addressing the Understanding to produce conviction and the will to produce persuasion.”

Alexander Bain (*English Composition*, 1866 CE), “Writing instruction, based on the study of stylistic means of provoking and combining associations according to the mental laws uncovered by psychology.”

I.A. Richards (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1935 CE), “Rhetoric is ‘the study of misunderstanding and its remedies’ through knowledge of the semantic functions of metaphor.”

Kenneth Burke (*A Rhetoric of Motives*, 1950 CE), “...rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continuously born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means on inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols.”

Wayne C. Booth (*Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent*, 1977 CE), “... rhetoric: the art of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving those beliefs in shared discourse. The ‘philosophy of good reasons.’”

Of particular relevance is the explicit mention of “writing instruction” in Alexander Bain’s definition. Bain was extremely influential in the United States where, at around the beginning of the twentieth century, rhetoric had become associated with written composition. This is the time when Hu Shi and other Chinese intellectuals went to study in the United States.

## RHETORIC AND WRITING IN THE UNITED STATES

While at Oxford rhetoric had become more a historical study than one of contemporary practice by the end of the nineteenth century, the situation in the United States was quite different (Corbett and Connors 518). The increasing

democratisation of the United States, along with people's increased access to reading and writing as education became more widely available, led to the development of new rhetorics, particularly in the area of writing instruction. Four books which were of great influence were:

- Alexander Bain's 'English Composition and Rhetoric' (1866),
- A.S. Hill's 'Principles of Rhetoric' (1878),
- John Genung's 'Practical Elements of Rhetoric' (1886), and,
- Barrett Wendell's 'English Composition' (1890).

The major reason why these books were so influential is that they announced a shift from a rhetorical focus on oral discourse to a focus on written discourse (Corbett and Connors 525). It is, for example, Alexander Bain who describes a paragraph as a "collection of sentences with unity of purpose" and the notion that a "topic sentence" is followed by subsidiary sentences that develop or illustrate the main idea, contained in the topic sentence. Coherence is obtained by ensuring that all the sentences in a paragraph are related to those around them and to the topic sentence (Corbett and Connors 527). We shall see this advice reiterated in Chinese textbooks of rhetoric and composition. While Bain was himself not American—he was Professor of Logic and Rhetoric at Aberdeen University in Scotland—his work was stimulated by the need to provide a course in remedial English to cater to the increasing number of Scottish students who had not received a traditional education. This was particularly important in Scotland, as there education was seen as a public and state responsibility and the universities offered a more general education than the traditional education available at Oxford and Cambridge (Ferreira-Buckley and Horner 196). This role was mirrored to a certain extent in the new redbrick universities that sprung up in England at around this time. The relative massification of education led to a need for the teaching of writing (Ferreira-Buckley and Horner 195).

A.S. Hill, Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard developed Bain's ideas and it is Hill all American undergraduate students have to thank for the first year writing requirement. His exasperation at the perceived poor quality of people's writing is strikingly familiar:

Those of us who have been doomed to read manuscripts written in an examination room—whether at a grammar school, a high school or a college—have found the work of even good scholars disfigured by bad spelling, confusing punctuation, ungrammatical, obscure, ambiguous, or inelegant expressions. Everyone who has had much to do with the graduating classes



of our best colleges has known men who could not write a letter describing their own Commencement without making blunders that would disgrace a boy twelve years old. (cited by Corbett and Connors 529)

The influence of this new rhetoric was not universally appreciated, as it encouraged a universal adoption of principles of composition. Barrett Wendell synthesised these new principles into three main themes:

1. unity (composition should have a central idea);
2. mass (chief components must catch the eye);
3. coherence (relationship between the parts must be unmistakable).

He later became convinced, however, that the wholesale adoption of these three main principles meant, in his own view, that he had “exerted a more baleful influence upon college education in America than any other man in his profession” (Corbett and Connors 533). Some scholars, most notably Fred Newton Scott, a friend of John Dewey’s, argued strongly against the mechanical tendencies of the time and established a PhD course in rhetoric at Michigan in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to offer a counter to the contemporary style.

One reason for this was the strength of the opposition. In the late eighteenth century, Harvard had shifted from Latin to English as the primary focus of rhetorical instruction and the writing of formal English became the primary concern (Wright and Halloran 221). In the eighteenth century paper also became cheaper and this is when our contemporary notion—heightened immeasurably by the advent of computer technology—of writing “as continuous process of revision” develops (Wright and Halloran 225). Mirroring the increased opportunities for education in Scotland, there was also the need to teach composition to large classes of people, so the old systems of oral recitation and disputation became unworkable. The influence of Francis James Child, A.S. Hill’s predecessor as Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard is hard to overestimate as he “held a largely undisguised contempt for rhetoric in both its traditional and more literate forms” (Wright and Halloran 238) and his focus was on correctness, reducing, in the minds of some, including Scott, English studies to composition drudgery. Composition courses of the late nineteenth century became courses in mechanical correctness with writing being constrained within set down formulae and templates. Wright & Halloran ask whether classical rhetoric could not have been adapted to the needs of widening democracy and suggest that it could. In the event, however, it was

virtually abandoned “in favour of a socially and politically unaware rhetoric of composition” (240).

It was into this rhetorical environment with its focus on the “correct” way to write a composition that young Chinese scholars, such as Hu Shi, were immersed on their arrival in the United States.

## RHETORIC AND WRITING IN CHINA

It is now time to return to the situation in China at the turn of the nineteenth century. We have seen how many of the educated elite felt the creation of a national language was a crucial aspect of nation building (Gunn 1). The notion of language in the Chinese context, especially with regard its written form, needs brief explanation at this point. The literate elite wrote in a stylised form of Chinese known as *wen yan*. This was unintelligible to all but the most highly educated. The “common people” used a form of vernacular called *bai hua*, which had a written form. Indeed the most popular novels of Chinese history, such as *The Dream of the Red Mansions* and *Journey to the West*, owed their great popularity to being written in *bai hua*. However, scholarship—and this included the civil service exams and the eight-legged essays—were written in *wen yan*. So, a major aspect of language reform at this time centred around the use of *wen yan* and how to reform it. There were, of course, many schools of thought on what this new national language should be, of which the Tong Cheng school was perhaps the most famous. The school was named after an area in Anhui Province where the supporters came from, the best known of whom was Yao Nai (1731-1815), and who will be referred to again in the next chapter. The school was characterised by three main features, namely the promotion of the Neo-Confucian doctrine developed during the Song Dynasty and which still held sway in the Qing court, a didactic view of writing and the espousal of the *guwen* writing style (Chow 184). We have discussed the *guwen* style in earlier chapters, but it is important to remember that the name of this style did not imply that its proponents had to adopt a classical style. On the contrary, they promoted a writing style that was clear, unadorned and accessible to contemporaries. This was called *guwen* because this had been the style of classical prose. This was the style promoted by Chen Kui, as we saw in Chapter 3.

Their wish to establish a national form of the language raised, however, contradictions that could not be resolved. One of their members, Wu Rulun, who held a senior position at Imperial Peking University, advocated providing mass education through a form of standardised Mandarin. He was, however, unwilling to abandon *wen yan* (Gunn 32). Wu died in 1903 and, the civil service

exams—the great maintainer of *wen yan*—were abolished in 1905. It would be tempting to see the abolition of the civil service exams as a triumph for the reform-minded. While people were happy to see the end of the proscriptive and stultifying eight-legged essays, it was not necessarily because they were against a form of centralised control. Rather, they were happy to see the end of the exams because they felt they were not doing their job in producing scholars of the right (i.e., orthodox) moral stature. Zhang Zhidong himself, the author of the Imperial University's curriculum, was among the number who was critical of the civil service exams for this reason. For such critics, “the abolition of the examinations in 1905 was not a blow struck against the centrality of moral indoctrination in education but an effort to reconfirm it” (Woodside and Elman 552).

Somehow the “new” language had to accommodate the new vocabulary and concepts that were flooding in from abroad. At the time, there were many different groups all advocating different styles but all claiming to serve “the cause of *ti-yong*” (Gunn 37). This is why “all intellectual groups sooner or later gave in to the ready-made compounds invented in Japan to translate Western-language terms” (Gunn 33). It is also why the Tong Cheng school lost favour at Beijing University and its members and followers were replaced in 1914, somewhat ironically, by classical scholars. The reason for the appointment of these classical scholars was, however, that they were supporters of language reform and keen to spread literacy (Lin X. 46). But it was Hu Shi, also a member of the University's Chinese Language and Literature Department who became the most influential. His proposal of adopting *bai hua* as a medium of educated discourse “had the effect of finally dropping the notion of *ti*, of essence, as futile enterprise, in favour of considering first and foremost what was of utility, *yong*” (Gunn 38). And, although the Tong Cheng school lost its influence, Hu Shi felt that it had cleared “the way for the literary revolution whose goal was to teach the Chinese to write simple and unadorned prose” (Chow 205). In this way, Hu Shi credited the Tong Cheng school with an influence it perhaps did not deserve.

As You (“Alienated Voices”) has pointed out, Hu Shi was influenced during his five years as Boxer indemnity scholar at Cornell, where he enrolled in 1910. He himself wrote that he was most influenced by John Dewey and Instrumentalism (Pragmatism), so much so that he moved from Cornell to Columbia and completed, in 1917, a PhD “A Study of the Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China” under Dewey's supervision (You). Dewey was also hugely influential among many Chinese intellectuals at the time, many of whom had also studied with him at Columbia. His educational theories were particularly attractive, as they fitted well with historicism, centring as they did around the inevitability of change and the non-existence of any universal or

everlasting truth. Dewey spent some two years between 1919-1921 on a lecture tour of China, during which Hu Shi acted as his interpreter (Haffenden 439).

While there is no doubt that Hu Shi's thinking was influenced by his time in America and by educational philosophers such as Dewey, we want to suggest that his ideas for the reform of language—in particular writing and the rhetoric of writing—may also have been influenced by Chinese scholars, not only by people such as Yao Nai of the Tong Cheng school, but possibly also by those of a much earlier period, in particular by Chen Kui of the Southern Song dynasty, whose *Rules of Writing* we reviewed in Chapter 3. The historical contexts in which the two men were writing hold some interesting parallels. Both were times of great literary change. The development of printing during the Song period saw the popularisation of reading and education. This rapid expansion of education was not without its critics, among whom was Chu Hsi, the leading Neo-Confucian philosopher of the time. He published his “Rules of Reading” in response to what he saw were the sins of book culture (Cherniack). These sins included the desire to gobble down as many books as possible, speed-reading and superficial reading. He recommended that people read less and more slowly and with greater concentration, one book at a time. His twelfth-century concerns about the growth of the exam culture resonate today. Walton quotes him:

Scholars must first make a distinction between the two separate things, the examinations and the learning, as which to value as more weighty. If learning occupies 70% of the will, and the examinations 30%, then it is all right. But, if the examinations are 70%, and learning is 30%, then one will surely be defeated (by being focused on external reasons for learning, rather than the self); how much more if the will is entirely set on the examinations! (13).

However, given the extraordinary increase in education and in the number of boys and young men sitting a series of examinations, it is perhaps not surprising that Chen Kui felt the need to write “The Rules of Writing.” While we might suspect that he was partly motivated by the same concerns that led Chu Hsi to write “The Rules of Reading,” as we argued in Chapter 3, his major motivation was to provide a helpful handbook for students. The book is full of practical hints and advice. By way of recapping, we summarise them as four major principles:

1. Texts should be natural. The words of a text must be suitable to the time, occasion and context. The length of sentences should

be determined by the needs of the content. Clinging blindly to a model must be avoided.

2. Texts should be clear. A text must make its meaning clear.
3. Texts should be succinct and straightforward. Being succinct, texts must also be complete. Being succinct does not imply omitting important information. And while a straightforward approach is to be preferred, at times, the content may require more complex forms of expression.
4. Texts should be written in popular and common language. They should not be difficult to understand, but accessible.

In comparison, below are the eight guidelines Hu Shi penned in the context of promoting the vernacular *bai hua* as the medium of educated discourse:

1. Language must have content
2. Do not (slavishly) imitate classical writers
3. Make sure you pay attention to grammar and structure
4. Do not complain if you are not ill—in other words, don't overdo the emotion
5. Cut out the use of hackneyed clichés
6. Don't cite or rely on the classics
7. Don't use parallelism
8. Embrace popular and vernacular language

The similarity between these four principles and Hu Shi's eight guidelines are remarkable. Chen Kui was also insistent that meaning was more important than form. People should use language that would be easily understood by contemporaries. We do not know whether Hu Shi read Chen Kui. Given the similarity between his eight guidelines and Chen Kui's four principles, however, it is at least possible that Hu Shi and others were influenced by the Chinese rhetorical tradition in the context of adopting the vernacular and a simple, clear style as a medium of educated discourse. We conclude this section of this chapter by suggesting that the U.S. in the nineteenth century also saw an exponential increase in the number of people seeking an education and this, along with technological reform, especially the increasing availability of paper, led to a rhetorical and literary reform represented by the rise in the importance of written rhetoric and composition. Hu Shi and other Chinese intellectuals looking for inspiration for language reform arrived in the United States at this time. They happened upon an America itself undergoing literary reform with the focus upon composition and writing.

We now turn to briefly review the publication of early twentieth-century Chinese texts on language and rhetoric which introduced Western ideas to the Chinese. Probably the best known and certainly the most influential of these texts was Chen Wangdao's *Introduction to Rhetoric (Xiucixue Fafan)* first published in 1932. Chen was one of the many thousands of Chinese students who studied overseas in Japan in the early years of the twentieth century and his book is largely influenced by Japanese sources which were themselves influenced by Western sources (Harbsmeier 119), including Alexander Bain's 1866 *Modes of Discourse* (Wang Chaobo 169). In his discussion of *youdao wen*, or writing that seeks to persuade readers to alter their views, Chen W. (*Xiuci Xue Fafan* 130) argues that the author must observe these seven conditions, some of which seem to echo both Chen Kui and Hu Shi. This suggests that Chen was also himself influenced by both Chinese and Western traditions:

1. Do not use too much abstract language
2. Be tactful, mild and indirect
3. Be serious, but not overly so
4. Do not over-elaborate
5. Make sure your choice of language suits the readers
6. Avoid monotony, use variety
7. Use a light (*qing*) to heavy (*zhong*) sequence

By "light" to "heavy," we argue that Chen means adopt the inductive or "fame-main" sequence, advising that the writer lead the reader to the main point. Chen Wangdao also asserted that an argumentative essay should have three parts: the thesis statement; the proof; and conclusion and be formulated "in concrete and assertive terms" (You, *Writing in the Devil's Tongue* 53).

It will be noted that Chen advises his writers to be "indirect." We return to a discussion of what "indirect" might mean in this context below, but suggest it refers to the Chinese preference for frame-main argument which we proposed earlier.

Chen and his work were very influential, not least because he was director of the Shanghai chapter of the Chinese Communist Party and later became President of one of China's most prestigious universities, Shanghai's Fudan University. That he was appointed to this position in 1952 by Mao himself will naturally have added to his personal and intellectual influence (Wu Hui). Fudan remains a leading centre for the study of rhetoric (Harbsmeier 118).

The early 1920s saw a flood of books on rhetoric written by Chinese who had studied overseas. *Rhetorical Style (Xiuci ge)* was published in 1923 and introduced Anglo-American rhetoric to China. This led Chen Wangdao to call it China's first scientific book on rhetoric (Wu Hui).

This was also a period when other types of writing—in particular creative writing—flourished. The New Culture Movement saw, in addition to translations of Western novels, the publication of many new literary journals and the emergence of many novelists, essayists and poets writing in the vernacular *bai hua*. These included such luminaries as Ba Jin, Lao She, Mao Dun, Bing Xin and Lu Xun, the latter a candidate for the title of the greatest writer never to have won the Nobel Prize.

One recurring question surrounding this period of imperialism and reform is the extent to which the changes were enforced by the West or sought by the Chinese. It would be naïve to argue that imperialism was anything other than the dominating factor in this, but the extent to which Chinese intellectuals actively sought and campaigned for reform should not be overlooked. We have seen, for example, how strongly many Chinese intellectuals felt that the Chinese language had to be reformed, if not abandoned. One quirky example of where this tension between imperialism and reform can be seen is in the introduction of Basic English to China by I.A. Richards. Basic English (BE) was developed by two Cambridge scholars, Ogden and Richards, and was a reduced version of the language containing only 850 words and eighteen verbs. The impetus for its development came from the chaos and tragedy of the First World War, which Richards saw as the consequence of an error “produced by a crucial misunderstanding of language” (Koenke 14). Ogden and Richards designed BE to be “a logical medium of fostering better understanding between different cultures” (4). Ogden hoped that it would become “an international auxiliary language for the benefit of science and peace” (Haffenden 305).

In 1929, Richards accepted a lectureship at the newly established Tsing Hua University in Beijing. Tsing Hua had, unlike many of the other missionary-run tertiary institutions being founded at the time, a secular curriculum with a focus on science and Western languages. The notion of BE seemed to offer some Chinese scholars, given their antipathy to their own language which we have described earlier, “an ideal solution to their country’s problems” (Koenke 5). Richards undertook several visits to China—the last being as late as 1979—and assiduously promoted the idea of BE. In 1933, he established the Orthological Institute of China, with an American, Jim Jameson, as director (Haffenden 437). The major aim of the Institute was to develop and promote BE. This required, for example, the writing of textbooks in BE and the translation of major works from their original English into BE. Richards had even translated Homer’s *Iliad* into BE. He achieved such success that, in 1937, the Ministry of Education agreed to institute BE throughout the school curriculum. Success was short-lived, however, as the Japanese invaded two months later and brought an end to the BE experiment in Chinese schools.

Was BE an imperialist construct designed to get the Chinese (and others) to think in English and thus think like the English? Churchill thought so, as he viewed BE as a possible tool for disseminating English across the world. Or was it, as Richards himself maintained, “fundamentally anti-imperial” and “multicultural” (Koenke 9)? Today the answer seems clear—that it was a naïve and ill-conceived product of cultural imperialism—naïve and ill-conceived in that no simplified form of a language has ever been successful in taking on the role of a language of international communication. Neither Ogden nor Richards apparently understood how a whole host of historical, political and socio-cultural factors influence the development of any language. Yet there is no denying that many Chinese intellectuals took BE seriously and saw in it, a possible solution to China’s backwardness. BE was seen by many Chinese as a way of “defying the legacy of empire and a step towards Chinese autonomy” (Koenke 215). Richards remained a “friend” of China until his death. Indeed his final visit in 1979 was at the invitation of the Chinese government itself and was viewed as a “gesture of rapprochement” with the West after the years of the Cultural Revolution and China’s period of isolation from the West (Koenke 8).

In this chapter we have argued that Chinese language reform—and thus contemporary Chinese writing—was influenced both by traditional Chinese rhetoric and by Western—particularly Anglo-American rhetorical styles. We argue, therefore, that the position argued by Kaplan (“Cultural Thought Patterns”), which has been so influential among scholars of contrastive rhetoric, that writers from different cultures necessarily use rhetorical structures which are particular to their culture, is difficult to support.

In concluding this chapter, we consider this further and review two important studies which compare the rhetorical organisation of paragraphs in Chinese and English academic writing. The first is a study of paragraph organisation in English and Chinese academic prose by Wang Chaobo. Rightly insisting that contrastive rhetoric must compare the writing of people who are writing in their first language—it will be remembered that Kaplan and many other contrastive rhetoricians have drawn their conclusions from the writing in *English* of people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds—Wang analysed the paragraph structures of articles taken from Mainland Chinese and American academic journals. He found that English writers heavily favoured deductive patterns but that Chinese writers were far more diverse, with some showing a preference for deductive patterns, some for inductive patterns, and some for paragraph structures which combined deductive and inductive patterns. He summarised his findings in the following way (108–9):

1. Almost all paragraph types can be found in both English and Chinese writing.



2. The deductive paragraph is predominant in English.
3. The three styles—deductive, inductive and mixed—are evenly split among Chinese writers.

He also argues (110) that reasoning and ideas are developed in one of three ways:

1. claim-elaboration and/or justification (the deductive pattern);
2. reasons/elaboration-generalisation/claim (the inductive pattern);
3. combinations of 1 and 2.

While method 1 is most common in English, both Chinese and English use all three, but Chinese use is more evenly distributed. What this also shows, however, is that both Chinese and English writers use linear patterns of reasoning. There is nothing circular about Chinese reasoning in these texts. The often expressed frustration that Chinese writers writing in English “never get to the point” or that Chinese students rarely place the subject of a sentence first” (You, *Writing in the Devil’s Tongue* 72) can perhaps be explained by their relatively frequent use of the inductive pattern through which Chinese writers will present a series of arguments—which may not be explicitly linked—leading to the main point. This pattern, of course, follows the “frame-main” and logical and natural order that we earlier identified as fundamental principles of reasoning and rhetorical organisation in Chinese.

Wang also sought to explain why contemporary Chinese academic writing was more diverse than English academic writing. As he felt that traditional Chinese rhetoric may have influenced the writing of some of the Chinese writers, he analysed a total of fifty paragraphs taken from ten classical argumentative texts. He then compared the percentages of deductive, inductive, mixed and “double-faced” (explained below) paragraphs in the English, Chinese and Classical Chinese texts. The results are shown in the table below, adapted from Wang (179).

Table 8.1

| Paragraph type | English | Chinese | Classical Chinese |
|----------------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| Deductive      | 81%     | 40%     | 31%               |
| Inductive      | 7%      | 24%     | 40%               |
| Mixed          | 12%     | 36%     | 29%               |
| Double-faced   | 0.55    | 10%     | 12%               |

Wang defines double-faced paragraphs as those in which “a sentence or group of sentences functions as conclusion to the previous communicative act, but something else to the subsequent one” (98).

The table shows the overwhelming preference for the deductive pattern in English writing and the low use of the inductive pattern. It also shows that both the deductive and inductive patterns are attested not only in modern Chinese but also in Classical Chinese, as, indeed, we have ourselves earlier shown. He concludes that the diversity of use seen in modern Chinese writing can be explained by a combination of Classical Chinese and Western influences, the latter introduced during the reform period of the early twentieth century. Indeed Wang goes as far to say that the Western influence during this period was so great that, “modern Chinese academic writing... has its roots more in the tradition of Western science than in that of classical Chinese learning” (161).

The second study we review is by Yang and Cahill. They analysed the rhetorical organisation of Chinese and American students’ expository essays. They studied four different groups of students: two classes of native speakers of English in an American university; one class of Chinese majors at a Chinese university; two classes of Chinese first year English majors at a Chinese university; and two classes of Chinese third year English majors at a Chinese university. They conclude that Chinese students, like the Americans, prefer directness, but that “U.S. students tend to be significantly more direct than Chinese students” (123). They also noted that the more advanced the Chinese EFL writer was, the more direct was their writing.

In this, their study supports the findings of Wang summarised above. To quote again from Yang and Cahill, “Chinese students also prefer directness in text and paragraph organization, but they are significantly less direct than American students” (124). Yang and Cahill, however, also point out that many Chinese classical texts followed a deductive pattern so the use of the deductive pattern in contemporary Chinese academic writing was not simply due to Western influences. As the table above shows, Wang also identified a relatively high percentage of deductively organised paragraphs in Chinese classical texts. And as we showed in earlier chapters, the deductive style has always been an option for Chinese writers. Our argument is that it was traditionally used for particular effect. We would sum this up by reverting to the use of the terms “marked” and “unmarked” and say that the *deductive* style is *unmarked* in *English* but *marked* in *Chinese*. By the same token, the *inductive* style—as often realised by a frame-main sequence—is *unmarked* in *Chinese* but *marked* in *English*.

Yet, as we argued earlier, the sheer volume of translations from Western languages into Chinese influenced Chinese linguistic and rhetorical structures. By 1904, 533 books had been translated into Chinese (Wang Chaobo). Two

direct consequences were the introduction of loan words and an increase in sentence length. Other consequences of the Westernisation of Chinese included the Europeanisation of the use of connectives and a corresponding increase in a main clause—subordinate sequence in complex clauses (Xie 75), which also encouraged a tendency towards adopting a deductive style in paragraph and text organisation.

All this linguistic change took place at a time of remarkable and profound political and socio-cultural change. We started this chapter by quoting Chinese scholars who saw the Chinese language as being inadequate for the modernisation of China and who disparaged Chinese education on the one hand and glorified Western education on the other. We end by citing Woodside and Elman who argue that those reformers who saw Western-style schools and education as the basis for modernisation and power were over-simplifying an immensely complex situation. What was actually happening was “one form of educational expansion, oriented towards the reproduction of Confucian values... was (being) displaced by another form of educational expansion based—haltingly—on the production of new kinds of knowledge...” (554–5). The language and ways of writing had to change in order to accommodate this new knowledge. But, as we have argued, the Chinese rhetorical tradition was able to provide the foundation for this change.