Research article

Otto Linderborg*

Patterns of Reasoning Shared Across Cultural Divides: Normative Arguments in the Classical Age of Greece and the Warring States Period of China

<https://doi.org/10.33063/diva-462458>

Abstract: In this paper, a selection of arguments encountered in a pair of canonical classical Greek and Chinese literary and philosophical works are analyzed and compared. The works in which the passages selected for analysis occur are the *Histories* of Herodotus and the *Fei Gong* section in the *Mozhi*. The present research focuses on three respective passages in these canonical classical Greek and Chinese works containing early examples of normative argumentation of an internally critical kind ('internal critique'). So-called deontic logic is then applied in order to formally analyze the argumentative content of the selected sections. It is shown that each of the Herodotean and Mohist examples of internal critique may be assigned a formally equivalent Chinese vis-à-vis Greek partner. Based on these similarities, the question of the origins of internal critique in the ancient Greek and Chinese cultural spheres is reconsidered.

Keywords: Classical Chinese logics, Classical Greek logics, Sino-Hellenic studies, Early normative arguments, Deontic logic

Introduction: Internal critique in ancient Greece and China

An often repeated assumption regarding the respective natures of classical Greek and Chinese philosophy is that they represent widely divergent strands of thought.¹ Thus even when it has been acknowledged that classical Chinese philosophy – like its Greek counterpart – strived to construct meaning by advancing argumentative patterns, it has been maintained that in the classical Chinese setting, arguments should by no means be confused with the concept as it is known from the Western tradition.² However, this contrast-assuming approach concerning Chinese forms of reasoning was called into question already in the 1960's by Chung-Ying Cheng. As Cheng conjured, early Chinese philosophy should be understood in terms of a close interrelation between ethical ideas and logical thinking.³ In this regard, Cheng called for investigations that would expound on explicit as well as implicit logico-methodological issues and theories inherent in classical Chinese reasoning.⁴

1 The radical *altérité* of Classical Chinese thought when compared to its early Western counterpart has been most forcefully asserted by François Jullien. See e.g. François Jullien *Le détour et l'accès: Stratégies du sens en Chine* (Paris: Seuil, 1995).

2 See e.g. Xinyan Jiang, "The Law of Non-Contradiction and Chinese Philosophy," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 13, no. 1 (1992): 2: "It is well known that Chinese philosophers do philosophy in a way quite different from Western philosophers. For most, philosophical truths are found by sudden or gradual realization, not by strictly logical reasoning."

3 See Chung-Ying Cheng, "Inquiries into Classical Chinese Logic," *Philosophy East and West*, 15, no. 3/4 (1965): 195–216.

4 *Ibid.*, 200.

* Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mid Sweden University, E-mail: otto.linderborg@hotmail.com

In the decades following on Cheng's study, research centered on the logical structure of early Chinese forms of reasoning – as well as on the range of logical arguments employed by classical Chinese thinkers – has indeed been conducted.⁵ Moreover, the last three decades have also witnessed a general surge in Sino-Hellenic comparative philosophy, resulting in many valuable scholarly contributions expounding on similar and diverging thought-constructs evidenced in the texts from the respective ancient Greek and Chinese cultural spheres.⁶ Lacking so far, however, have been investigations designed to uncover actual parallels in the argumentative patterns used across the classical Greek and Chinese cultural spheres.⁷ The aim of the present investigation is to rectify this shortfall, especially with regard to forms of reasoning pertaining to politico-ethical thought.

This article thus sets out to investigate comparable examples of ethical and political argumentations encountered in philosophically oriented works stemming from the Classical Age of Greece (480–323 BCE) and the Warring States Period of China respectively (475–221 BCE).⁸ More specifically, the focus in this article will be on classical Greek and Chinese arguments that aim to scrutinize and refute some normative views (specific positions on ethically charged issues) or principles (doctrines justifying normative views), held by a criticized subject, or subjects. The common denomination for these kinds of arguments would be “internal critique”.⁹ A basic definition of internal critique may be given as follows:

-
- 5 See e.g. Angus Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978). and Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 2, Part I: Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
 - 6 See e.g. Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), Jean-Paul Reding, *Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking* (London: Routledge, 2004) and Richard King, “Mencius and the Stoics – tui and oikeiôsis,” in *The Good Life and Conceptions of Life in Early China and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Richard King, 341–362. Berlin: De Gruyter 2015. The many works in the field of Sino-Hellenic studies by G. E. R. Lloyd should of course also be mentioned. In Scandinavia, Sino-Hellenic research has been pursued by Martin Svensson Ekström. See Martin Svensson Ekström, “The Phantasmatic Tomb, or Methodology and Schmutz in Intercultural Translation,” in *Regionality/Mondiality: Perspectives on Art, Aesthetics and Globalization*, ed. Charlotte Bydler, 173–206. Södertörn: Södertörn Academic Studies, 2014. Apart from Sino-Hellenic comparative philosophy, the last decades have also witnessed a general surge in Sino-Hellenic comparative cultural history, while Sino-Roman comparative research has traditionally focused mainly on topics of military history and state formation.
 - 7 Although similarities in argumentative content have been acknowledged, e.g., regarding how varying classical Greek and Chinese thinkers adhere to the ‘law of non-contradiction’ in their writings. See Reding, *Comparative*, 2004, 17–30.
 - 8 The modern categories of the political and ethical are of course not found neither in the ancient Chinese nor Greek sources themselves, since our modern politico-ethical terms and concepts derive from the 18th century (the so-called *Sattelzeit*). See Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Band 2: E–G*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), XV. In truth, the historicity of our own conceptual framework should always be kept in mind when interpreting pre-modern texts. However, to even begin understanding the ancient sources, we need to fit them to our own terms and concepts. See Geoffrey Lloyd, *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2: “...we cannot, on pain of distortion, impose our own conceptual framework. Yet we have to.” The problems inherent in applying modern conceptual frameworks to ancient source material was recognized already by Johann Gustav Droysen in his classical *Grundriss der Historik* – as has been duly noted by Sven Günther in a recent conference paper (see: <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8857>), to be published in *Journal of Ancient Civilizations* 37/2 (2022).
 - 9 This is the term in use for these kinds of normative arguments in a variety of disciplines – e.g., in social philosophy and critical theory. Cf. Arvi Särkelä, *Immanente Kritik und soziales Leben: Selbsttransformative Praxis nach Hegel und Dewey*, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2018), 89. The Swedish social scientist Johan Tralau has constructed a typology of different kinds of internal critiques: see Johan Tralau, *Inbjudan till politisk teori* (Stockholm: Studentlitteratur, 2012), 37–63.

Internal critique consists of arguments striving to refute statements by drawing out their consequences and showing that these consequences lead to logical inconsistencies within the politico-ethical belief systems of the criticized persons. Moreover, since it is an argumentative technique of normative theory – i.e., of theories dealing with value-laden questions concerning the ideal forms for society, laws and morals – internally critical arguments typically take as their object some normative principle or view adhered to by the criticized subjects.

Now, it would perhaps be natural to assume that these kinds of normative arguments – especially as they (for the modern reader) may come across as not very refined – form a kind of human universal, and that hence internal critique would be encountered in all cultures throughout history. However, the truth of the matter is that systematic inquiries into the preserved archaic Greek and early classical literary sources have been unable to identify clear-cut examples of internally critical arguments earlier than in some of the earliest tragedies. In the ancient Greek cultural sphere, the earliest clear example of internal critique is in fact detectable in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* (ca. 460 BCE). The argument comes to the fore towards the end of the last play in the trilogy, the *Eumenides*, when the goddesses of revenge, the Erinyes, begin to confront Apollo. Here, the Erinyes reveal an inconsistency between a normative principle defended by Apollo with reference to the will of Zeus and a normative view instantiated earlier in the universe of the tragedy. The principle holds that one should honor one's noble father higher than one's mother. However, this principle is clearly not consistent with the normative view inherent in the act of Zeus murdering his own father – and this inconsistency is also duly pointed out by the Erinyes.¹⁰

It should be noted, however, that the archaic Greek sources do exhibit other kinds of refuting arguments. In fact, indirectly refuting deductive arguments of the *modus tollens* type (if A then B, but not B, hence not A) is a common feature among the pre-Socratic philosophers.¹¹ In the pre-classical Greek sources, however, these arguments are never of a kind as to be directed against normative principles and views held by subjects in order to reveal inconsistencies in their politico-ethical outlook – i.e. they do not form instances of internal critique.¹² Thus at least within the ancient Greek cul-

¹⁰ πῶς ταῦτα τούτοις οὐκ ἐναντίως λέγεις; ('How could you not contradict this in [saying] that?') See Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 607–643; expounded on by Johan Tralau "Other Wilder Origins? Political Philosophy from Plato, Sophocles and Aeschylus to Homer and back to Anacharsis," *Eranos*, 109 (2018): 37–54.

¹¹ See e.g. Heraclitus, B 40, 91, 110 and 127 and Xenophanes, B 11, 14, 15 and 23–26 (Diels & Kranz).

¹² Although something resembling normative arguments of an internally critical kind may be detected in a fragment ascribed to Sappho by Aristotle: *Rhetorics* 1367a11–14. Here the Sapphic critique, however, does not take as its object some distinct moral principle or view in order to refute the statements of the person (Alcaeus) adhering to them. Rather, the argument calls into question the way Alcaeus reasons surrounding the subject matter of his poetry – i.e., his poetic-ethical outlook. For a similar example of a refuting argument of the *modus tollens* type with ethical content ascribed to Sappho by Aristotle, see *Rhet.* 1398b29–30. Moreover, various forms of socio-moral criticisms are of course encountered in the archaic Greek sources as well. An elegy ascribed to Solon, for instance, orders its audience (the Athenians) to keep away from the "Ill order" (Δυσνομία) caused by social unrest, and turn to "Good order" (Εὐνομία) instead. See Sol. fr. 4 (esp. 30–32) (West). The Solonian social criticism here, however, does not really seem to reveal inconsistencies in the normative views and principles adhered to by the criticized subjects. Rather, it seems simply to state that a well-ordered social system should be restored, since attaining such a state will be for the greater good of the city. As has been pointed out by the second reviewer of this article, Sven Günther, it is true, though, that the author of the poem turns specifically against those who would assign all social ills to the divine sphere (πόλις κατὰ Διὸς οὔποτε ὀλεῖται: "the city will never be destroyed by Zeus" (1)), and places the blame on amoral individuals instead (αὐτοὶ φθείρειν μεγάλην πόλιν ἄστοι χρήμασι πειθόμενοι: "the citizens destroy the city themselves, persuaded by money" (5–6)). Further, the author of the poem points out that is in fact the very own 'arrogance' (ὑβρις) and 'insolence' (κόρος) of the corrupt citizens that will cause the expected social downfall (8–10). Thus, a form of internal critique which could be labeled as exposure of counter-productive principles (a revelation of the counter-productive nature of the principle approving of arrogance and insolence) could perhaps be identified in the Solonian lines. Cf. Tralau, *Inbjudan*, 55–57. In fact, social critiques of this kind, where the subjects are criticized for applying some particular normative principles or views deemed to be

tural sphere, this argumentative technique – which was brought to perfection first in the works of Plato –¹³ does in fact have an origin. Presumably, then, these beginnings were connected to the radical societal interruption realized by the formation of the first full-scale direct democracies. Within the civic communities of the democratized – or democratizing – Greek city-states, a “strong principle of equality” was brought to life, which made all enfranchised male citizens liable to be directly accountable to the same moral standards – or the same normative views and principles – regardless of socio-economic status.¹⁴ Can a comparable beginnings for internal critique within the ancient Chinese cultural sphere be assumed?

Interestingly, the ancient Chinese literary evidence does point towards a similar sequence of indirectly refuting arguments of a more general kind having preceded normative arguments that may be recognized as varying forms of internal critique. Thus, the Confucian *Analects* exhibits examples of *modus tollens*, but normative arguments that could be analyzed in terms of internal critique are not to be found here.¹⁵ In the Confucian canon, it is in fact first in the *Mengzi* that we begin to encounter traces of the latter kinds of argumentative patterns.¹⁶ The question that arises is thus which societal progressions, or changes, may have enabled the rise of internal critique in the ancient Chinese social context? Of course, China never saw any democracies, and in fact scholars have often assumed that ancient Chinese political thought never recognized an alternative to the overarching framework of monarchic government either.¹⁷ But perhaps it could be hypothesized that the Warring States Period

non-beneficial, are quite common in archaic Greek literature. Thus Hesiod in *Works and Days*, for instance, states that it is only those “kings” (βασιλείς) that judge rightfully who will see their cities prosper, while those practicing wrongful justice will see their cities haunted by misfortunes instead. See Hes. *WD*. 220–227. Here, Hesiod’s reasoning could be analysed in terms of an internal critique exposing a counter-productive principle, too, namely as a critique opposing the principle justifying the “crooked judgments” (σκολιαὶ δίκαι) of the βασιλείς leading to social ills. However, arguments of these kinds are not really exposing logical inconsistencies between normative principles and views – rather, they merely turn against the views and principles adhered to, or offer more beneficial alternatives. They are thus more difficult to discern and classify in terms of internally critical argumentative patterns (as these have been defined in this investigation). All the same, they seem to form the archaic forerunners of the more explicit, varied and refined forms of internal critique practiced during the Greek classical age (as well as in modern times).

- 13 For a particularly refined example of Platonic internal critique, see Plato, *Republic* 340c–342e. Here, Socrates argues that the moral principle held by Thrasymachus – according to which justice equals τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον (“the interest of the stronger”) – stands in opposition to the very idea of ruling as it had been conceived of by the participants earlier in the debate, where ruling was defined as τέχνη (“form of art”) handled with regard to the needs of the ruled rather than the ruler.
- 14 For the strong principle of equality as pertaining to classical Greek democracies, see Ian Morris, “The Strong Principle of Equality and the Archaic Origins of Greek Democracy,” in *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, eds. Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 23–24. Of course, it is highly likely that such an equality-principle was in place already among the ruling groups in the broad instances of elite-rule, the “isonomies”, that preceded the direct democracies of the Greek classical age – and consequently the democratic breakthrough may only be fixed as a *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of internal critique in the ancient Greek cultural sphere. For the idea that the aristocratic symposia of the Greek archaic age provided the earliest setting for discussions of a wide range of topics on a more egalitarian basis, see Katarina Nebelin, “Intercultural Intellectual Contacts: Archaic Ionia and the Emergence of Early Greek Philosophy,” *Journal of Ancient Civilizations*, no. 31, iss. 1 (2019). 29.
- 15 See *Analects*, VI. 12; expounded on by Chi-Ming Lam, “Confucian Rationalism,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 46, no. 13 (2014). 1450–1461.
- 16 See e.g. Mencius 1A1. In this passage, the internal critique assumes the shape of an attempt to uncover a lacking clarity with regard to how different principles should be weighed against each other. In essence, Mengzi is here reproaching the ruler for allowing the principle of profit-making to take up the space in his politico-moral outlook that – according to Mengzi – should be reserved exclusively for the immensely more valuable principle of humaneness.
- 17 See Geoffrey Lloyd, *Demystifying Mentalities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 122–123. Cf. John Pocock “Ritual, Language, Power: An Essay on the Apparent Political Meanings of Ancient Chinese Philosophy,”

in China nevertheless witnessed a “Greek-like” initiation of moral equality – or at least a strong striving towards such a state – within the in-group of gentlemen forming the political elite, and that it was thus that the shared patterns of reasoning between the ancient Greek and Chinese cultural spheres were made possible as well.¹⁸

In order to further consider the possibility of an establishing of in-group-specific moral equality lying at the heart of the earliest forms of internally critical arguments evidenced in both Greece and China, this article aims to survey and compare a selection of early evidence of internal critique encountered in classical Greek and Chinese literature. The presentation begins with an analysis of three passages from Book III and IV of Herodotus’ *Histories*, featuring Greek tyrants (τύραννοι) and internally critical arguments. Along with the early tragedies, Herodotus’ work contains the earliest extant examples of internal critique in the ancient Greek cultural sphere. Thereafter, another three passages containing examples of internal critique in an ancient Chinese context are dealt with. The examples of Chinese internal critique are evidenced in the *Fei Gong* (非攻) section (the section ‘against aggressive warfare’) in the Mohist canon: the *Mozi*. By applying so-called deontic logic, it will then be made clear that some of the argumentative patterns encountered in the Mohist and in the Herodotean corpora are formally equivalent with regard to their implicit logical form. The article closes with a discussion of the bearing of the research’s findings on the question of the *altérité* of classical Chinese thought when compared with Greek forms of reasoned argument, and with a reconsideration of the origins of internal critique in Greece and China against the background of the following textual analyses.

Applying deontic logic to the analysis of internal critique

Before proceeding to an identification of the internally critical passages selected for analysis, an outline of deontic logic as employed here will be offered.¹⁹ Deontic (touching on ‘what one ought to do’) modes of reasoning were first given a formal analysis by the Swedish-speaking Finnish logician Georg Henrik von Wright. As presented by von Wright, deontic logic deals specifically with things as acts. By being pronounced, e.g., as either permitted (*P*), forbidden (*~P*) or obligatory (*O*), these acts can then be turned into propositions. For instance, the proposition that an act is permitted can be expressed by stating *P A*, whereas its forbiddance would be pronounced as *~P A*. The atomic names of acts (e.g. *A* and *B*) can also be combined into molecular complexes, either as conjunctions (*A & B*), as

in *Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, ed. John Pocock, (London: Methuen, 1971), 78. More recently, however, the assumption of monarchy as the defining feature of ancient Chinese political history and political thought has been put into question by Youngmin Kim. In the understanding of Kim, the notion of monarchism is not sufficient to capture the complexity of ancient Chinese political thought, since the Chinese political discourses in fact show a paradoxical coexistence of the image of a strong state and an abundance of passive governance. See Youngmin Kim, *A History of Chinese Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 10–11.

¹⁸ Cf. Kim, *History*, 37 and 41.

¹⁹ The formalizations by means of deontic logic as conducted in the present article do not constitute depictions of arguments that would amount to demonstrations of validity in an actual system of logic. In truth, it would be highly inadequate to apply the modern category of validity to the inferences inherent in the arguments of the early classical Greek and Chinese literary texts, since these texts predate the formation of any form of formal logic. Consequently, deontic logic is here merely used as a convenient system of notation – i.e., solely for depicting logical structure. These logical structures would be tantamount to the underlying logical features and strategies inherent in the forms of argument shared by the analyzed Greek and Chinese passages. The validity of the depicted argument structures rests solely on logical intuitions, as it did for the Greek and Chinese thinkers who actually made use of them.

disjunctions ($A \vee B$) or as implications ($A \rightarrow B$). These complexes can then also be pronounced as propositions by using the deontic operators introduced above: P , $\sim P$ and O .²⁰

Now, when applying deontic logic to criticisms dealing specifically with normative principles and views – i.e., to internally critical arguments – the atomic names for acts must be amended with names for distinct normative views (e.g. NV_x) and normative principles (e.g. NP_x). Names for underlying assumptions (UA_x) and circumstance of actions (C_x) should also be introduced into the analysis. Accordingly, all these normative denominators can be combined into complexes, which can then be pronounced as permitted, forbidden or obligatory. An example would be the proposition $\sim P$ (NV_x & NP_y), which states that the normative view X cannot be held in combination with the normative principle Y . The propositions may themselves also be combined with other propositions and pronounced as complex “second-order propositions” (propositions about propositions). An example of the latter would be the complex proposition $(\sim P (NP_z \& C_x)) \rightarrow (O (\sim NP_z \vee \sim C_x))$, which states that if it is not permissible to hold the normative principle Z in the circumstance X , then it is obligatory either not to hold the principle Z in question or for the circumstance X not to apply.

In what follows, the arguments of the Herodotean and Mohist passages will first be made explicit and then formalized using the above kind of applied deontic logic.

Early Greek internal critique

The first example of Herodotean internally critical argumentation is encountered in Book III of the *Histories*. The passage singled out for analysis depicts a discussion between the Samian tyrant Maeandrius and Charilaus, the latter who is Maeandrius’ imprisoned brother. The person making use of normative arguments in the form of internal critique is the incarcerated Charilaus, who tries to persuade his brother Maeandrius to confront the invading Persians, instead of surrendering Samos without resistance:

Μαιανδρίῳ δὲ τῷ τυράννῳ ἦν ἀδελφεὸς ὑπομαργότερος, τῷ οὐνομα ἦν Χαρίλεως· οὗτος ὃ τι διῆ ἑξαμαρτῶν ἐν γοργύρῃ ἐδέδετο· καὶ διῆ τότε ἐπακούσας τε τὰ πρησόμενα καὶ διακύψας διὰ τῆς γοργύρης, ὡς εἶδε τοὺς Πέρσας εἰρηνάϊως κατημένους, ἔβόα τε καὶ ἔφη λέγων Μαιανδρίῳ θέλειν ἐλθεῖν ἐς λόγους. ἐπακούσας δὲ ὁ Μαιάνδριος λύσαντας αὐτὸν ἐκέλευε ἄγειν παρ’ ἐωυτόν. ὡς δὲ ἄχθη τάχιστα, λοιδορέων τε καὶ κακίζων μιν ἀνέπειθε ἐπιθέσθαι τοῖσι Πέρσησι, λέγων τοιάδε· ἐμὲ μὲν, ὦ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν, ἐόντα σεωυτοῦ ἀδελφεὸν καὶ ἀδικήσαντα οὐδὲν ἄξιον δεσμοῦ δῆσας γοργύρης ἡξίωσας, ὀρέων δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκβάλλοντάς τέ σε καὶ ἄνοικον ποιέοντας οὐ τολμᾶς τίσασθαι, οὕτω διῆ τι ἐόντας εὐπετέας χειρωθῆναι· ἀλλ’ εἴ τοι σὺ σφέας καταρρώδηκας, ἐμοὶ δὸς τοὺς ἐπικούρους, καὶ σφέας ἐγὼ τιμωρήσομαι τῆς ἐνθάδε ἀπίξιος· αὐτὸν δὲ σε ἐκπέμψαι ἐκ τῆς νήσου ἔτοιμος εἰμί. ταῦτα δὲ ἔλεξε ὁ Χαρίλεως.

Maeandrius the tyrant had a brother Charilaus who was half-insane and had been imprisoned in a dungeon for some offence or other. Upon hearing about the occasion in question, Charilaus leaned out of his dungeon to see what was going on. When he caught sight of the Persians peacefully sitting there, he exclaimed that he wanted to discuss with Maeandrius. Maeandrius heard his cries and gave instructions for him to be released and brought to him. As soon as Charilaus was brought in, he scolded his brother in the following manner, in an attempt to persuade him to attack the Persians. ‘*You complete and utter coward! You have me, your own brother thrown into a dungeon for some trivial misdemeanour which does not warrant imprisonment, while you let the Persians get away with expelling you from your home and country without having the guts to make them pay for it. It’s not as if it would be at all difficult to overcome them. If you’re so afraid of them, give me your mercenaries, and I will make them regret ever having come here. And I’d be happy to get you safely off the island.*’²¹

²⁰ See Georg von Wright, “Deontic Logic,” *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy* 60 no. 237 (1951): 1–15.

In the above passage, Charilaus is depicted as scrutinizing his brother's reasoning by means of an argument that may be analyzed in terms of a specific kind of internal critique. Here, Charilaus' argument assumes the shape of an "uncovering of an inconsistency between an implicit normative principle and an explicit normative view."²² The implicit principle in question may be derived from the approval of physical force underlying the imprisonment of Charilaus at the hands of his tyrant brother:

ἐμὲ μὲν, ὦ κάκιστε ἀνδρῶν, ἔοντα σεωυτοῦ ἀδελφεὸν καὶ ἀδικήσαντα οὐδὲν ἄξιον δεσμοῦ δήσας γοργύρης ἤξιωσας...

You have me, your own brother thrown into a dungeon for some trivial misdemeanour which does not warrant imprisonment...

The explicit normative view, in its turn, may be traced to Maeandrius' unwillingness to take up arms against the Persians.

ὁρέων δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκβάλλοντάς τέ σε καὶ ἄνοικον ποιέοντας οὐ τολμᾶς τίσασθαι, οὕτω δὴ τι ἔοντας εὐπετέας χειρωθῆναι.

...while you let the Persians get away with expelling you from your home and country without having the guts to make them pay for it.

How can Maeandrius approve of the violence manifested in the forceful act of imprisonment directed against his own brother, and yet completely disregard the principle of rightful violence in his dealings with the Persians? This, in essence, is the internal critique Charilaus applies in the argument he uses against his tyrant brother.

By applying deontic logic, Charilaus' argument may now be formalized in the following way. In the below scheme, NP_M stands for the normative principle allegedly adhered to by Maeandrius ('approval of violence'), NV_{-P} for one of the normative views ascribed to him ('disapproval of violence against the Persians') and NV_C for the other of his alleged views ('approval of violence against Charilaus'). NV_{-X}, again, stands for disapproval of violence against any subject:

$(NP_M \rightarrow \sim P NV_{-X}) \rightarrow (\sim P (NV_{-P} \& NV_C))$ (If, if 'approval of violence' (in principle) then not permissible that 'disapproval of violence against any subject', **then** not permissible that 'disapproval of violence against the Persians' and 'approval of violence against Charilaus').²³

The second passage exemplifying Herodotean internal critique comes to the fore in Book IV of the *Histories*, at a place in the narrative where a group of Ionian vassal tyrants discuss whether to revolt against their Persian master, king Darius:

Μιλτιάδεω μὲν τοῦ Ἀθηναίου, στρατηγέοντος καὶ τυραννεύοντος Χερσονησιτέων τῶν ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ, ἦν γνώμη πείθεσθαι Σκύθησι καὶ ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην, Ἰστιαίου δὲ τοῦ Μιλησίου ἐναντίη ταύτῃ, λέγοντος ὥς νῦν μὲν διὰ Δαρεῖον ἕκαστος αὐτῶν τυραννεύει πόλιος, τῆς Δαρείου δὲ δυνάμιος κατατρεθείσης οὔτε αὐτὸς Μιλησίων οἷος τε ἔσεσθαι ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄλλον οὐδένα οὐδαμῶν βουλήσεσθαι γὰρ ἐκάστην τῶν πολίων δημοκρατέεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τυραννεύεσθαι.

21 Herodotus, *Histories* 3.145. Trans. Waterfield. Modified by Onyinyechi Duru. For commentary, see David Asheri & al. 2007. *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 520.

22 Cf. Tralau, *Inbjudan*, 46–48.

23 Here it should be noted that (for the modern reader) Charilaus' argument may come across as lacking immediate intuitive validity. However, in the context of the in-group of 6th-century BCE Greek tyrants (and for the 5th-century BCE Greeks recalling their actions and reasoning) this "validity" was probably clear as glass. A subject that had done something against a member of his own strictly defined and highly restricted in-group of 'equals', but then refrained from the same kind of acts against strangers for whatever reason, could certainly be reproached. In fact, according to Charilaus' way of reasoning, by forcefully imprisoning his tyrant brother, Charilaus had implicitly approved of violent acts committed by any subject against any other subject. This sentiment was probably shared by Herodotus (and his audience), since the general picture of Maeandrius in the *Histories* is that of an utter coward and villain.

Miltiades of Athens, the tyrant of the Hellespontine Chersonese, who was one of the military commanders, was of the opinion that they should do as the Scythians were suggesting and free Ionia from Persian rule. Histiaeus of Miletus, however, took the opposite view; he argued that every one of them owed his position as tyrant of his community to Darius, and that if Darius were to fall, he would not be able to rule Miletus and nor would anyone of them be able to remain in power, as there was not one of their communities which would not prefer democracy to tyranny.²⁴

The above passage contains internal critique of a kind that may be recast as a “questioning of premises”.²⁵ In internal critiques of this type, the criticized person is granted the moral principle or view he or she adheres to, while it is shown that the conceptual assumptions underlying his or her politico-ethical outlook are confused. In the argument employed by the Milesian tyrant Histiaeus against the Athenian Miltiades – who was also the tyrant of Chersonese – the former may be understood to grant the latter the justification of the normative view approving of actions aiming towards political freedom for Ionia:

Μιλτιάδεω μὲν τοῦ Ἀθηναίου [...] ἦν γνώμη [...] ἐλευθεροῦν Ἰωνίην.

Miltiades of Athens was of the opinion that they should free Ionia.

The way Histiaeus then argues against Miltiades and the normative view he adheres to is by applying an internal critique based on the assumption that the basic premise underlying the proposal of Miltiades – namely, that a revolt against Persia would be beneficial – is flawed. Accordingly, the view Miltiades adheres to – that Ionia should be liberated from Persian control – would show itself to be counterproductive and hence non-permissible. Histiaeus’ questioning of Miltiades’ premise does not proceed, however, from the expected failure of such a revolt – but rather from the assumption that the political autonomy that the revolt could in fact effect would endanger the power of the Ionian tyrants: for Miltiades, freedom means nothing but the tyrant’s autocratic “freedom to rule”:

Ἰστιαίου δὲ τοῦ Μιλησίου ἐναντίη ταύτη, λέγοντος [...] οὔτε αὐτὸς Μιλησίων οἶος τε ἔσεσθαι ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄλλον οὐδένα οὐδαμῶν.

Histiaeus of Miletus argued that if Darius were to fall, he would not be able to rule and none of them would remain in power either.

The argument employed by Histiaeus against Miltiades may now be formalized in the following way. In the below scheme, NV_H stands for the normative view ascribed to Miltiades by Histiaeus, ‘Ionia should be freed’, while UA_M stands for the assumption underlying Miltiades’ reasoning: ‘Ionian freedom is beneficial’:

$((PNV_H \rightarrow UA_M) \& \sim UA_M) \rightarrow \sim PNV_H$ (if permissible (non-counterproductive) that ‘Ionia should be freed’ then ‘Ionian freedom is beneficial’ and ‘Ionian freedom is not beneficial’ (for the tyrants themselves), **then** not permissible (counterproductive) to hold that ‘Ionia should be freed’).

The final example of Herodotean internal critique dealt with here occurs in another passage from Book III of the *Histories*. Here, the Corinthian tyrant Periander reproaches his son Lycophron for staying loyal to his mother, whom Periander himself had slain. The quote takes up the story in the aftermath of Periander’s issuing of an edict to the effect that no one was to be allowed to offer his runaway son housing:

τετάρτη δὲ ἡμέρῃ ἰδὼν μιν ὁ Περίανδρος ἀλousίησί τε καὶ ἀσιτήσι συμπεπνῶκτα οἴκτειρε· ὑπεῖς δὲ τῆς ὀργῆς ἦε ἄσπον καὶ ἔλεγε· ὦ παῖ, κότερα τούτων αἰρετώτερα ἐστί, ταῦτα τὸ νῦν ἔχων πρήσσεις, ἢ τὴν τυραννίδα καὶ <τὰ> ἀγαθὰ τὰ νῦν ἐγὼ ἔχω, ταῦτα ἐόντα τῷ πατρὶ ἐπιτήδεον παραλαμβάνειν;

²⁴ Hdt. 4.137.1-2. Trans. Waterfield. Modified by Onyinyechi Duru. For commentary, see Asheri, *Commentary*, 667.

²⁵ Cf. Tralau, *Inbjudan*, 48–52.

ὅς ἐὼν ἐμός τε παῖς καὶ Κορίνθου τῆς εὐδαίμονος βασιλεὺς ἀλήτην βίον εἴλεν, ἀντιστατέων τε καὶ ὀργῇ χρεώμενος ἐς τὸν σε ἥκιστα ἐχρῆν.

Three days after the edict, Periander saw him in his unwashed, starving state and felt sorry for him. Letting his anger go, he went over to his son and said, ‘Son, what would you rather do? You can either carry on with what you’re doing now or become reconciled with me, your father, and inherit my kingdom and all the advantages of my position. You are my son and a member of the prosperous city of Corinth, but you have chosen to live like a tramp, because you are feeling hostility and anger towards me, when I am the last person in the world you ought to treat this way.’²⁶

In the passage above, the internal critique is of a kind where the aim is to demonstrate a lacking clarity with regard to the subject’s application of normative standards (principles or views).²⁷ In internal critiques of this kind, the normative argument purports to show that the normative principle or view adhered to by the criticized subject should be sidelined in favor of some competing principle or view. Essentially, Periander is confronting his son with the charge that if the principle of justice the latter adheres to is causing him as much pain as it does now, Lycophron ought to cease from applying it altogether.²⁸ There is, according to Periander, no such principle as would justify the absolute inequity of the son of a tyrant taking a stand against his father:

ἐὼν ἐμός τε παῖς καὶ Κορίνθου τῆς εὐδαίμονος βασιλεὺς ἀλήτην βίον εἴλεν.

You are my son and a member of the prosperous city of Corinth, but you have chosen to live like a tramp.

By means of deontic logic, the internally critical argument as employed by Periander may be formalized in the following way. In the below scheme, A_j stands for the alleged acts of Lycophron in accordance with the principle of justice and C_s for his suffering:

$(\sim PC_s \ \& \ (A_j \rightarrow C_s)) \rightarrow (O \sim A_j)$. (If not permissible that ‘Lycophron suffers’ and if ‘Lycophron suffers’ if ‘Lycophron acts in accordance with the principle of justice’, **then** it is obligatory that ‘Lycophron does not act in accordance with the principle of justice’).

The following section begins the explication and formalization of the Chinese counterparts to the examples of early Greek internal critique dealt with above. In this connection, the formal parallelisms between the Mohist and Herodotean examples of internal critiques will also be made evident.

Early Chinese and early Greek normative arguments compared

The first example of Mohist internal critique is encountered in the opening chapter of the *Fei Gong* section. The passage in question argues for a more consistent approach to how – in domestic as well as in foreign affairs – the principle of 仁 *Ren* – i.e., humaneness or benevolence – should be applied:

今有一人，入人園圃，竊其桃李，眾聞則非之，上為政者得則罰之。此何也？以虧人自利也。至攘人犬豕雞豚者，其不義又甚入人園圃竊桃李。是何故也？以虧人愈多，其不仁茲甚，罪益厚。至入人欄廄，取人馬牛者，其不仁義又甚攘人犬豕雞豚。此何故也？以其虧人愈多。苟虧人愈多，其不仁茲甚，罪益厚。至殺不辜人也，拖其衣裘，取戈劍者，其不義又甚入人欄廄取人馬牛。此何故也？以其虧人愈多。苟虧人愈多，其不仁茲甚矣，罪益厚。當此，天下之君子皆知而非之，謂之不義。今至大為攻國，則弗知非，從而譽之，謂之義。此可謂知義與不義之別乎？

Suppose a man enters the orchard of another and steals the other’s peaches and plums. Hearing of it the public will condemn it; laying hold of him the authorities will punish him. Why? Because he injures others to profit himself. As to seizing dogs, pigs, chickens, and young pigs from another, it is even

²⁶ Hdt. 3.52.3–4. Trans. Waterfield. Modified by Onyinyechi Duru.

²⁷ Cf. Tralau, *Inbjudan*, 53–55. Admittedly, normative arguments of this kind form less clearly recognizable instances of internal critique than arguments which aim to reveal actual logical inconsistencies in the application of normative principles and views. Cf. f.n. 13 above.

²⁸ Cf. David, *Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV*, 449.

more unrighteous than to steal peaches and plums from his orchard. Why? Because it causes others to suffer more, and it is more inhumane and criminal. When it comes to entering another's stable and appropriating the other's horses and oxen, it is more inhumane than to seize the dogs, pigs, chickens, and young pigs of another. Why? Because others are caused to suffer more; when others are caused to suffer more, then the act is more inhumane and criminal. Finally, as to murdering the innocent, stripping him of his clothing, dispossessing him of his spear and sword, it is even more unrighteous than to enter another's stable and appropriate his horses and oxen. Why? Because it causes others to suffer more; when others are caused to suffer more, then the act is more inhumane and criminal. All the gentlemen of the world know that they should condemn these things, calling them unrighteous. But when it comes to the great attack of states, they do not know that they should condemn it. On the contrary, they applaud it, calling it righteous. Can this be said to be knowing the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness?²⁹

In this passage, the internal critique is of a kind where an inconsistency between an implicit normative principle and an explicit normative view is ascribed to the noble gentlemen (君子 *junzi*) forming the political elite. These are the persons engaging in aggressive warfare. The criticized implicit principle concerns the gentlemen's non-approval of harming other gentlemen. The explicit view, in turn, relates to their lacking condemnation of attacks against foreign states. How can the Chinese gentlemen avoid minor acts of harming others within the bounds of their own state, while being sympathetic to the most horrific acts of hurting their fellows in other states? This forms the basis of the internal critique as applied by the Mohists in the above passage.

The Mohist argument corresponds to the internal critique as applied by Charilaus against Maeandrius in Book III of the *Histories*. As we may recall, Charilaus had judged Maeandrius for incarcerating him, while remaining passive against the Persians. In the argument as employed by Charilaus, the criticized normative principle was one approving of violence and harmful acting, while the explicit normative view disapproved of aggression in the specific circumstance of aggressive acts directed against the Persians.

Laid beside each other, the formal structures of the Herodotean and Mohist internal critiques may now be compared:

Herodotean

$$(NP_M \rightarrow \sim P NV_{-X}) \rightarrow (\sim P (NV_{-P} \& NV_C))$$

Mohist

$$(\sim NP_M \rightarrow \sim P NV_X) \rightarrow (\sim P (NV_{-NG} \& NV_{FG}) \text{ (If, if not 'approval of violence' (in principle) then not permissible that 'approval of violence against any subject', then not permissible that 'disapproval of violence against native gentlemen' and 'approval of violence against foreign gentlemen')})$$

Here, one may further note that the Herodotean and the Mohist arguments are mirror images of each other also with regard to their respective recognitions of the differing degrees of deplorability pertaining to the moral views they criticize. Thus the Mohists argue that certain violent acts, and the normative views approving of violence they are justified with, may be considered more intolerable than others, depending on how much harm the acts in question cause – whereas in the Herodotean case the condemned non-violence is argued to be all the more wretched on account of the recipients' foreignness.

The following chapter in the *Fei Gong*-section contains the next example of Chinese internal critique:

²⁹ *Mozi*, 17. Trans. Mei.

今師徒唯毋興起，冬行恐寒，夏行恐暑，此不可以冬夏為者也。春則廢民耕稼樹藝，秋則廢民穫斂。今唯毋廢一時，則百姓飢寒凍餒而死者，不可勝數。今嘗計軍上，竹箭羽旄幄幕，甲盾撥劫，往而靡壞腑爛不反者，不可勝數；又與矛戟戈劍乘車，其往則碎折靡壞而不反者，不可勝數；與其牛馬肥而往，瘠而反，往死亡而不反者，不可勝數；與其塗道之脩遠，糧食輟絕而不繼，百姓死者，不可勝數也；與其居處之不安，食飲之不時，飢飽之不節，百姓之道疾病而死者，不可勝數；喪師多不可勝數，喪師盡不可勝計，則是鬼神之喪其主後，亦不可勝數

Now, about a country going to war. If it is in winter it will be too cold; if it is in summer it will be too hot. So it should be neither in winter nor in summer. If it is in spring it will take people away from sowing and planting; if it is in autumn it will take people away from reaping and harvesting. Should they be taken away in either of these seasons, innumerable people would die of hunger and cold. And, when the army sets out, the bamboo arrows, the feather flags, the house tents, the armour, the shields, the sword hilts – innumerable quantities of these will break and rot and never come back. The spears, the lances, the swords, the poniards, the chariots, the carts – innumerable quantities of these will break and rot and never come back. Then innumerable horses and oxen will start out fat and come back lean or will not return at all. And innumerable people will die because their food will be cut off and cannot be supplied on account of the great distances of the roads. And innumerable people will be sick and die of the constant danger and the irregularity of eating and drinking and the extremes of hunger and over-eating. Then, the army will be lost in large numbers or entirely; in either case the number will be innumerable. And this means the spirits will lose their worshippers, and the number of these will also be innumerable.³⁰

In the above argument, the internal critique may be recast as a kind of questioning of premises. For the sake of argument, the Mohists now grant the gentlemen criticized by them the normative principle justifying aggressive warfare. Consequently, however, the Mohists then turn this very principle on the people adhering to it – namely, by showing how the real-world circumstances work against the application of the principle in question. The principle approving of aggressive warfare cannot be justified, (so the argument goes), because the cost of maintaining such a principle would simply turn out to be too high.

The above example of Chinese internal critique corresponds to the argument employed in Book IV of Herodotus' *Histories*, at the place in the narrative where the Ionian leaders took counsel and then decided – against contrary opinions – that they should approve of the expansion of the Persians and avoid setting Ionia free. There, the decision was reached on the ground that, if realized, the political autonomy of the Ionian city-states would endanger the Ionian rulers' own positions as vassal tyrants under Persian rule. In the Herodotean argument, the principle of freedom is thus shown to be worth as little for the subjects adhering to it, as the principle justifying aggressive warfare would be according to the argument of the Mohists.

A formal comparison between the Herodotean and Mohist internal critiques of the premise-questioning type would be as follows:

Herodotean

$$((P \text{ NV}_{\text{FI}} \rightarrow \text{UA}_{\text{M}}) \& \sim \text{UA}_{\text{M}}) \rightarrow \sim P \text{ NV}_{\text{FI}}$$

Mohist

$((P \text{ NP}_{\text{AW}} \rightarrow \text{UA}_{\text{CB}}) \& \sim \text{UA}_{\text{CB}}) \rightarrow \sim P \text{ NP}_{\text{AW}}$ (if permissible (non-counterproductive) that 'aggressive warfare' (in principle) then 'the costs of aggressive warfare are bearable' and 'the costs of aggressive warfare are not bearable', then 'aggressive warfare' is not permissible (even in principle))

³⁰ Mozi, 18. Trans. Mei.

The above examples of internal critique are even more similar than the ones of the previous comparison. Indeed, here the Herodotean and Mohist arguments show themselves to be parallel also with regard to the values of the atomic components forming the respective complex propositions. From a formal point of view, then, the only major difference between the Herodotean and the Mohist arguments is the fact that the former takes as its object a normative view – whereas the latter deals with a normative principle.

The final example of Chinese internal critique analyzed here comes to the fore in the last chapter of the *Fei Gong*-section in the *Mozi*:

今王公大人天下之諸侯則不然，將必皆差論其爪牙之士，皆列其舟車之卒伍，於此為堅甲利兵，以往攻伐無罪之國。入其國家邊境，芟刈其禾稼，斬其樹木，墮其城郭，以湮其溝池，攘殺其牲牷，燔潰其祖廟，勁殺其萬民，覆其老弱，遷其重器，卒進而柱乎門，曰『死命為上，多殺次之，身傷者為下，又況失列北撓乎哉，罪死無赦』，以譚其眾。夫無兼國覆軍，賊虐萬民，以亂聖人之緒。意將以為利天乎？夫取天之人，以攻天之邑，此刺殺天民，剝振神之位，傾覆社稷，攘殺其犧牲，則此上不中天之利矣。意將以為利鬼乎？夫殺之人，滅鬼神之主，廢滅先王，賊虐萬民，百姓離散，則此不中鬼之利矣。意將以為利人乎？夫殺之人，為利人也博矣。又計其費此，為周生之本，竭天下百姓之財用，不可勝數也，則此下不中人之利矣

The rulers and lords of to-day are quite different. They all rank their warriors and arrange their boat and chariot forces; they make their armour strong and weapons sharp in order to attack some innocent state. Entering the state they cut down the grain fields and fell the trees and woods; they tear down the inner and outer walls of the city and fill up the ditches and ponds; they seize and kill the sacrificial animals and burn down the ancestral temple; they kill and murder the people and exterminate the aged and weak; they move away the treasures and valuables. The soldiers are encouraged to advance by being told: “To suffer death is the highest (service you can render), to kill many is the next, to be wounded is the lowest. But if you should drop out from your rank and attempt to sneak away, the penalty will be death without moderation.” Thus the soldiers are put to fear. Now to capture a state and to destroy an army, to disturb and torture the people, and to set at naught the aspirations of the sages by confusion – is this intended to bless Heaven? But the people of Heaven are gathered together to besiege the towns belonging to Heaven. This is to murder men of Heaven and dispossess the spirits of their altars and to ruin the state and to kill the sacrificial animals. It is then not a blessing to Heaven on high. Is it intended to bless the spirits? But men of Heaven are murdered, spirits are deprived of their sacrifices, the earlier kings are neglected, the multitude are tortured and the people are scattered; it is then not a blessing to the spirits in the middle. Is it intended to bless the people? But the blessing of the people by killing them off must be very meagre. And when we calculate the expense, which is the root of the calamities to living, we find the property of innumerable people is exhausted. It is, then, not a blessing to the people below either.³¹

In the above passage, the normative argument proceeds from the assumption of a thorough exacerbation in the conduct of the current rulers when compared to their ancestors: the great sage kings of the past. Here, the internal critique is of a type where a lacking clarity with regard to the criticized subject's application of principles is pointed out. When today's rulers conduct the warfare as poorly and in as misleading a fashion as they presently do, (so the argument goes), one may seriously question whether the principle favoring aggressive warfare can be justified in any situation – i.e., in any given circumstances of the given world with their current leaders.

The normative argument in the above section corresponds to the passage in Book III of the *Histories* in which Periander – the Corinthian tyrant – reproached his son Lycophron for staying loyal to his deceased mother – whom Periander himself had slain. As we may recall, Periander maintained that it would be completely futile for Lycophron to remain unsympathetic towards his father and “to choose the life of a wanderer” (ἀλήτην βίον εἶλεν), because, as Periander would have it, no such

31 *Mozi*, 19. Trans. Mei.

moral principle exists as would justify the absence of equity in a tyrant's son turning against his own father.

A formal comparison of the Herodotean and Mohist examples of internal critiques aiming at exposures of a lacking clarity with regard to applications of normative principles would be as follows:

Herodotean

$$(\sim PC_s \ \& \ (A_j \rightarrow C_s)) \rightarrow (O \sim A_j)$$

Mohist

$(\sim PC_{PW} \ \& \ (A_{KW} \rightarrow C_{PW})) \rightarrow (O \sim A_{KW})$. (If non-permissible that 'warfare is conducted poorly' and if 'warfare is conducted by the present kings' then 'warfare is conducted poorly', **then** it is obligatory that 'warfare is not conducted by the present kings')

In the above scheme, the Mohist and Herodotean examples of internal critique again show themselves to be formally equivalent when analyzed by means of deontic logic. In both cases, the argument strives to show that the criticized subject, or subjects, have actually committed themselves to an obligatory avoidance of certain acts in accordance with certain principles. This they have done, by holding a belief in the non-permissibility of a certain circumstance, whilst simultaneously believing that the non-permitted circumstance is in fact implied by acts in accordance with the principle to be avoided.

This completes the formal comparison of the examples of Greek and Chinese internal critiques selected for analysis in this article. What follows is a concluding discussion of the article's findings.

Conclusion: reconsidering the origins of internal critique in Greece and China

The present research has not aimed to denounce the general point of view according to which the reasoned arguments practiced within the classical Chinese cultural sphere diverged from their Greek counterparts. Without doubt, variant Greek and Chinese forms of philosophical thought show major differences with regard to both their respective preoccupations as well as their preconditions. In truth, these contrasts may be at least partly explained by the socio-political context in which the respective forms of thought developed and were practiced.

Hence, in the Warring States Period of China, philosophers usually addressed themselves directly to a sole ruler – whose moral amelioration was in fact equaled with the welfare of the society at large.³² It is hardly surprising, then, that ethical and social concerns would be given priority in the intellectual activities undertaken in the societies of the Chinese classical age.³³ With regard to the societal context of the classical Greek city-states, again, we know that a plurality of constitutional arrangements was in place. This manifoldness was then accompanied by, on the one hand, the earliest extant political theories admitting of a range of explicit alternatives to the prevailing form of rule.³⁴ On the other hand, we encounter within the classical Greek cultural sphere evidence of a pursuit of knowledge, which from very early on seems set on grappling expressly with abstract logico-philosophical problems.³⁵ In this regard, Chinese thought – in as far as it may be conceived of as having

³² See Mencius, 4A20, where it is stated that the rectifying of the ruler would equal the correction of the society.

³³ Cf. Harbsmeier, *Science*, 276.

³⁴ Indeed, the classical constitutional alternatives – democracy, oligarchy and monarchy – are juxtaposed for the first time in the history of the world in Book III of Herodotus' *Histories*. See Hdt. 3.80-82. Cf. Otto Linderborg, "The Place of Herodotus' Constitutional Debate in the History of Political Ideas and the Emergence of Classical Social Theory," *Akropolis: Journal of Hellenic Studies* 3 (2019): 19-26.

been generally aiming towards practical utility rather than disengaged validity – could indeed be understood to represent a kind of radical *altérité* when compared to its early Western counterpart.³⁶

However, what the formal analyses of the early Greek and Chinese arguments conducted in this article have shown is that – at least in the specific context of normative theorizing – classical Chinese philosophical arguments do in fact sometimes follow the very same patterns as their Greek dittos. Moreover, in connection with the comparisons conducted in the present investigation, the similarities in content have also been striking. Indeed, this article has made clear that classical Chinese and Greek normative arguments occasionally deal with the very same normative principles and views – although the actions or policies they propagate may of course nevertheless differ. Consequently, the present research may be seen to have continued on the path disclosed by that part of the Sino-Hellenic scholarship of the last two or three decades, which have stressed the similarities in underlying argumentative structure that emerged in these two geographically widely separated axial civilizations.³⁷

Finally, we may return to the question of the origins of internal critique in Greece and China. The following starting point for what is presupposed for normative arguments of an internally critical kind to emerge may be presumed:

*Normative argumentation of an internally critical kind presupposes a realized notion of moral equality applying to an in-group in a way, which makes everyone belonging to that group not only liable to be judged on account of some shared moral conception, but in fact directly accountable with regard to the same moral principles and views.*³⁸

Because the archaic Greek sources bear witness to such a conspicuous lack of internal critique, it can only be assumed that for most of that age and before, the moral enclosure of the Greek world was generally fixed in ways that did not allow for the creation of a space for conditional (in-group-specific) moral equality and accountability.³⁹ However, as I noted in the introduction a *terminus ante quem* for the origins of internal critique within the Greek cultural sphere may certainly be fixed based on the date of the formation of the first direct democracies.⁴⁰

Now, reconsidering the examples from the Herodotean corpus dealt with above, one may note that the establishment of a space for equality and accountability in the moral sphere is exactly what takes place in the text of the passages. Charilaus – although thought of as insane and therefore kept in prison – belongs to the same tyrant family as his tyrant brother Maeandrius, and thus enjoys the freedom to confront his brother as his equal. In the assembly of the Ionian tyrants, a similar equality is naturally supposed to have applied, and the creation in the Herodotean text of the same type of

35 See Geoffrey Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 68–73.

36 Cf. f.n. 2 above.

37 See f.n. 6 and 7 above.

38 Cf. Johan Tralau, “Der Ursprung der Politischen Philosophie: Die Evolution Normativen Denkens und die Selbsterstörung der Vergeltungsmoral in Sophokles’ Elektra,” *Antike und Abendland* 64, no. 1 (2018): 27–51.

39 Cf. the introduction above.

40 See f.n. 15 above. The question of when and where the breakthrough of democracy first took place in the Greek cultural sphere is debated. At the moment of writing, the dominant scholarly view holds that full-scale direct democracy emerged originally at Athens in 508 BCE as a consequence of the reforms ascribed to Cleisthenes. Cf. Paul Cartledge, *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 57–62. However, an alternative viewpoint underlines the importance of the elite-disempowering reforms in 462 BCE ascribed to Ephialtes for the effectuation of direct democracy at Athens. Cf. Tracey Rihll, “Democracy Denied: Why Ephialtes Attacked the Areopagus,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 115 (1995), 296–297. As an alternative to both of these views, Eric Robinson has placed the earliest realization of people’s rule at Argos in the 490’s BCE. See Eric Robinson, *Democracy Beyond Athens: Popular Government in Greek Classical Age*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2011), 196–197.

equality in the context of the reproaching directed by Periander against his son Lycophron is underlined when Periander – himself a tyrant – gives Lycophron the title ‘king’ (βασιλεύς).

In Herodotus’ case, it is possible that he in fact projects the in-group specific moral equality he depicts on a historical context (pre-democratic 6th-century BCE Greece), where this kind of conditionally egalitarian moral outlook had not yet emerged. However, when turning to the parallel Chinese examples of internal critique, we may note that here the context is contemporary. The rulers addressed by the Mohists are put on par with other gentlemen forming the political elite, and as a collective body their politico-moral outlook is then shown to be both inconsistent and deficient. In truth, in view of the Mohists, the far superior rulers of the past are the only ones above reproach. These can never be blamed, because in fact they exemplify the highest imaginable political and moral standards, and it is the recognition of this lost superiority that guides the Mohist’s internal critique of the contemporary political power-holders as well.

By way of concluding, it may be stated, then, that the early examples of Greek and Chinese internal critique that have been dealt with here are both retrospective, but in very different ways. Evidently, the Greek texts place a contemporary politico-ethical in-group equality onto a historical context where it may not have been in place, whereas the Chinese texts strive to establish a similar politico-ethical equality in their own time and place by looking back towards the immensely more moral leaders of the past.⁴¹

Acknowledgements

I owe a large debt of gratitude to the other members of the project ‘The Origins of Political Philosophy in Ancient Greece’ – particularly to Johan Tralau, Charlotta Weigelt and Rosa Maria Lupo – for the many stimulating seminars and discussions that have enabled this research.

References

- Asheri, David. & al. *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Cartledge, Paul. *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Cheng, Chung-Ying. “Inquiries into Classical Chinese Logic.” *Philosophy East and West*, 15(3/4) (1965): 195–216.
- Els, Paul van. 2013. “How to End Wars with Words: Three Argumentative Strategies by Mozi and His Followers,” in *The Mozi as an Evolving Text*, eds. Carine Defoort & Nicolas Standaert, 69–94. Brill: Leiden, 2013.
- Diels, Hermann & Kranz, Walther. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Erster Band*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1906.
- Graham, Angus. *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978.
- Harbsmeier, Cristoph. *Science and Civilisation in China: Volume 2, Part I: Language and Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Ivanhoe, Philip. *Mencius*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Jiang, Xinyan. “The Law of Non-Contradiction and Chinese Philosophy.” *History and Philosophy of Logic*, 13, no. 1 (1992): 1–14.
- Jullien, Francois. 1995. *Le détour et l'accès: Stratégies du sens en Chine*. Paris: Seuil, 1995.
- Kim, Youngmin. *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- King, Richard. “Mencius and the Stoics – tui and oikeiôsis,” in *The Good Life and Conceptions of Life in Early China and Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. Richard King, 341–362. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *Geichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, Band 2: E–G*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972.
- Lam, Chi-Ming. “Confucian Rationalism,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 46:13 (2014): 1450–1461.
- Linderborg, Otto. “The Place of Herodotus’ Constitutional Debate in the History of Political Ideas and the Emergence of Classical Social Theory.” *Akropolis: Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 3 (2019): 5–28.

⁴¹ It should be noted, however, that the *Mozi* forms an exceptional text in the ancient Chinese tradition, and the striving towards politico-ethical equality it manifests should thus not automatically be assumed to reflect a general feature of the Warring States Period. I am indebted to the first reviewer of this article, Halvor Eifring, for this observation.

- Lloyd, Geoffrey. *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origin and Development of Greek Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Lloyd, Geoffrey. *Demystifying Mentalities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Lloyd, Geoffrey. *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Morris, Ian. "The Strong Principle of Equality and the Archaic Origins of Greek Democracy," in *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, edited by Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick, 19–48. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Nebelin, Katarina. "Intercultural Intellectual Contacts: Archaic Ionia and the Emergence of Early Greek Philosophy," *Journal of Ancient Civilizations*, 31:1 (2019): 21–38.
- Pocock, John. "Ritual, Language, Power: An Essay on the Apparent Political Meanings of Ancient Chinese Philosophy," in *Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, edited by John Pocock, 42–79. London: Methuen, 1971.
- Raphals, Lisa. *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Reding, Jean-Paul. *Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Rihll, Tracey. "Democracy Denied: Why Ephialtes Attacked the Areopagus." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 115 (1995): 293–308.
- Robinson, Eric. *Democracy Beyond Athens: Popular Government in Greek Classical Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Svensson Ekström, Martin. "The Phantasmatic Tomb, or Methodology and Schmutz in Intercultural Translation," in *Regionality/Mondiality: Perspectives on Art, Aesthetics and Globalization*, ed. Charlotte Bydler, 173–206. Södertörn: Södertörn Academic Studies, 2014.
- Särkelä, Arvi. *Immanente Kritik und soziales Leben: Selbsttransformative Praxis nach Hegel und Dewey*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2018.
- Tralau, Johan. *Inbjudan till Politisk Teori*. Stockholm: Studentlitteratur, 2012.
- Tralau, Johan. "Other Wilder Origins? Political Philosophy from Plato, Sophocles and Aeschylus to Homer and back to Anacharsis," *Eranos*, 109 (2018): 37–54.
- Tralau, Johan. "Der Ursprung der Politischen Philosophie: Die Evolution Normativen Denkens und die Selbstzerstörung der Vergeltungsmoral in Sophokles' Elektra," *Antike und Abendland* 64:1 (2018): 27–51.
- Waterfield, Robin. *Herodotus, The Histories*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- West, Martin L. *Iambi et elegi Graeci*, volumen II. Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Wright, Georg von. "Deontic Logic." *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, 60:237 (1951): 1–15.