A Peircean Analysis of Correlative Thinking:
An Exercise in Cross-Cultural Metalogic

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Western commentators and expositors of classical Chinese philosophy such Marcel Garnet, Jacob Needham, D. C. Lau, A. C. Graham, Roger Ames and David Hall have all rightly argued that correlative/analogical thinking is at the very heart of ancient Chinese thought from the I Ching through Confucius and Mencius to the Yin-Yang cosmologists. While discussing correlative thinking in his magisterial work Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Disputation in Ancient China, A. C. Graham asks “How does correlative relate to analytic thinking?” This essay is a prolegomenon to an answer by way of using, and then extending, some pioneering work of C. S. Peirce in the logic of ampliative (nondeductive) reasoning.

Ames and Hall have stated that early Chinese thought “is not logical, but rather analogical” (Anticipating China,179). The thesis of this paper, contrary to Ames and Hall, is that Chinese thinking is logical even when, and then, even because it is analogical. Analogical thinking, either as argument from analogy or as Pythagorean analogia, is logical, indeed, no less logical than either deductive or inductive thinking.

First, Graham’s characterization of correlative thinking is summarized. Then, Peirce’s distinction between a logica utens — logic in pre-reflective, pre-critical use — and a logica docens — logic as a discipline resulting from the analysis and critique of logica utens which would also include metalogic — will be introduced. Analogical thinking is a part of everyone’s logica utens East or West, ancient or modern. It will be argued that when properly understood, it also belongs in everyone’s logica docens, East or West, ancient or modern, in the arts or in the sciences, as a Confucian or as an Aristotelian. Graham looked to the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jacobson to help explicate and justify his attempt to answer his own question about the relation between correlative and analytic thinking. In this paper I turn to C. S.
Peirce, whom Jacobson himself thought a better source for linguistic concepts and tools than Saussare, because Peirce is the first philosopher-logician to analyze argument from analogy in such a way that it can systematically assume its rightful place in *logica docens* by demonstrating it to be a hybrid argument form involving arguments from deduction, induction, and abduction. Extensions of Peirce’s analysis by the author have further demonstrated that it is also a species of Pythagorean *analogia*, that is, four-place analogy of the form A:B::C:D (A is to B as C is to D) and, in addition, that both of these analyses are organized by a mathematical structure known as a Klein 4-group. These analyses will be presented, followed by showing the necessary connection between argument from analogy on the one hand and the tropes of metaphor and metonymy on the other hand. These insights directly involve two other distinctions of Peirce, that between abductive and inductive arguments and that between iconicity and indexicality.

Articulating a *logica docens* that includes a better understanding of correlative/analogical thinking and of how to evaluate its logical goodness should be a common concern of contemporary philosophers both East and West. Peirce provides the heart of such a logic and metalogic of correlative/analogical reasoning that consequently, also helps correct the overly sharp bifurcations drawn by some commentators that harm the appropriate study of both Asian and Western philosophy as well as the arts and the sciences.