

Rhetorical Questions in *Wen Xin Diao Long*: An Enthymematic Analysis

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Abstract

There have been countless studies on the rhetorical question (RQ); however, few are on its argumentative function, and fewer still on its logical functions with regard to “enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism”, the core of Aristotle’s *logos* (logical appeal). This study, based on the incompleteness and probability features of “enthymeme”, attempts to systematically explore the distinct ways and generating mechanism of the RQ’s argumentative function, via examining the RQ-rich masterpiece, Liu Xie’s *Wen Xin Diao Long* (*WXDL*). After enthymematically analyzing RQs in *WXDL*, we find that the RQ enthymeme achieves strong deductive capability by implying or suggesting an assumption (as the major premise), providing a solid argument (as the minor premise), and suggesting or implying a claim (as the conclusion). Moreover, this inquiry shows that RQ’s logical functions are accompanied by salience of the suggested assumption or assertion inherited from the question itself. This investigation can not only provide reference for broadening RQ research scope and its research method, but also verify and even enrich Aristotle’s notion of enthymeme, thus promoting the exploration and application of core Western rhetorical concepts.

Keywords: rhetorical question, logical function, enthymeme, Liu Xie, Wen Xin Diao Long

1. Introduction

The “Rhetorical question” (RQ), which is named *fanwen* (反问)/*fanjie* (反诘) in Chinese rhetoric, has been historically prevalent as a persuasive device. Since the classical period, its argumentative power has already been noticed by many rhetoricians. Quintilian in his masterpiece, *Institutio Oratoria*, mentions that RQ can “increase the force and cogency of proof” (1921, p. 377). Similarly, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the first complete Latin rhetoric manual, also notes that the view expressed in the form of an RQ is difficult to refute (Cicero, 1954). In the contemporary era, scholars have made more accurate interpretations of this classical concept. Scott (1965), Abrams (1999), Shao (1996) and Li (2015) believe that RQ is not used by speakers to elicit information or a response, but to achieve a greater expressive force than a direct assertion and to realize a specific pragmatic purpose. After reviewing related studies on RQ, we find that many inquiries focus on its pragmatic function (Howard, 1990; Henkemans, 2009), semantic feature (Moshavi, 2011; Rohde, 2006) and syntactic structure (Sun, 2007; Yuan & Liu, 2016; Dong, 2017); however, few focus on its argumentative function, and fewer still on its logical function with regard to “enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism”, the core of Aristotle’s *logos* (logical appeal).

Therefore, we aim to further the investigation of RQ’s logical function by exploring the following questions: Which type of RQ is more closely related to enthymeme? What enthymematic forms do RQs often present? What specific argumentative functions do these RQ enthymemes mainly achieve and how? The texts for analysis are taken from Liu Xie’s *Wen Xin Diao Long* (《文心雕龙》), an RQ-rich ancient Chinese masterpiece. Because of its extensive and profound characteristics, imbedded in ancient Chinese culture, overseas studies are few to count. Zhao (1994) initiates a Western rhetorical approach to *WXDL* via two key categories of “invention”, namely, content-oriented inventional acts and form-oriented inventional acts, which complement each other in *WXDL* and are bound to circumstantial considerations. However, we failed to find Zhao’s or others’ continued efforts on linking Western rhetorical concepts with *WXDL*. As for domestic research, Zhang (2009, 2010, 2012), in his series of articles, explores interrogations in *WXDL* through a combination of syntax, rhetoric, and logic. However, to the best of our knowledge, no efforts have been made to analyze the rhetorical questions in *WXDL*

based on Aristotle's enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism. This paper therefore attempts to systematically investigate and depict the distinct ways and generating mechanism of RQ's argumentative function.

2. Rhetorical Question

The definition and classification of rhetorical question have always been controversial, which makes it difficult to guide the practical inquiry into its argumentative function. In this part, through reviewing the important definitions and classifications of RQ in rhetoric history, we try to redefine RQ and clarify its subtypes.

2.1 Definition

Concerning the method of definition, Aristotle points out in his *Topics*: "the definition consists of genus and differentiae" (Barnes, 1984, p. 8). Therefore, genus and species difference are elements for approaching a clear definition. In accordance with this, the most representative definitions of RQ are analyzed to clarify its essence.

The treatise of Fahnestock (2011), *Rhetorical Style: The Uses of Language in Persuasion*, is one of the most outstanding contemporary rhetoric works. In this book, RQ is defined as "A question that requires no answer other than the audience's agreement with the proposition implied" (p. 298). In this definition, "a question" is a genus, and there are three key phrases in the species difference: "no answer", "the audience's agreement" and "the proposition implied". "No answer" and "the proposition implied" indicate the selection criteria of RQ, while "the audience's agreement" indicates the purpose. In other words, the ultimate purpose of using RQ is to gain the audience's agreement. In association with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric, "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (1954, p. 24), we hold that to acquire "the audience's agreement" successfully is to achieve "persuasion". Although this definition is lucid and inclusive, some adjustments are needed to make it more suitable for Chinese classics. Therefore, we propose to define "rhetorical question" as "a question requiring no answer other than suggesting and implying persuasive propositions". Both functions of "suggesting" and "implying" will be further investigated in the following enthymematic analysis of rhetorical questions in *WXDL*.

2.2 Classification

As to classification, Chinese and Western rhetorics have their own traditions. In Western rhetorics, an RQ is classified according to its pragmatic functions in specific rhetorical situations, but in Chinese rhetorics, it is classified according to syntactical structure.

According to many renowned rhetoricians during the Renaissance and in contemporary times, such as Peacham (1593), Puttenham (1589), Lanham (1991), and Fahnestock (2011), *erotema*, the Latin term for rhetorical question, has five variants, which are *anthypophora* (also *hypophora*, to ask questions and immediately answer them), *pysma* (a succession of questions are asked together), *aporia* (asking oneself or rhetorically asking one's hearers how to find the appropriate way to approach something), *anacoenosis* (asking the judgment of the judges or audience), and *epiplexis* (asking questions in order to reproach or upbraid, rather than to elicit information).

Rhetorical question is often termed *fanwen/fanjie* (反问/反诘) in contemporary Chinese. Since the middle of the last century, Chinese scholars have begun to systematically classify RQ. Lv (1956) divides RQ into two basic categories: wh-RQ and yes-no RQ, and regards alternative RQ and X-no-X RQ as special forms. Similarly, Zhu (1982) mentions three categories of *fanwen*/rhetorical questions: wh-RQ, yes-no RQ and X-no-X RQ. Shao (2013) points out that most yes-no questions, wh-questions, and alternative questions (including X-no-X question) can be transformed into rhetorical ones, but the difficulty of transformation and dependence on contexts are different. On the basis of the above studies, we hold the view that all four types of interrogations can be used in a rhetorical way, but the difficulty of transformation, speaker's intention, and the specific contexts should be taken into account.

Considering that this study investigates the Chinese classic *Wen Xin Diao Long*, we adopt the four RQ types frequently employed by Chinese scholars: yes-no RQ, wh-RQ, alternative RQ and X-no-X RQ.

Examples of the four types of RQ are shown as follows: taken from Lv (1956) and Shao (2013):

(1) Yes-no RQ

A. 难道你守着这件东西哭会子就好了不成? (《红楼梦》)

But is it likely that by sticking to this thing and crying for a while that it will become good?

B. 王侯将相，宁有种乎？（《史记》）

Are kings born to the throne?

(2) Wh-RQ

A. 说句良心话，谁还能比他呢？（《红楼梦》）

I'll just tell you an honest truth; who else is there like her?

B. 凭他怎么经过见过，怎么敢比老太太呢？（《红楼梦》）

She may have gone through a good deal, but how can she ever presume to pit herself against an old lady like you?

(3) Alternative RQ

A. 我跟你亲戚，是老朋友？还是我欠你的？（《曹禺选集》）

Are you and I relatives, or old friends? Or do I owe you?

B. 是我挤兑他，还是他挤兑我？（《皇城根》）

Was it me that made a dig at him? Or was it him that made a dig at me?

(4) X-no-X RQ

A. 全世界找得到这样的政府找不到？（《老舍剧作选》）

You cannot find such a government in the world, can you?

B. 仗着老子娘的脸面，众人倒捧着他去，你说可气不可气？（《红楼梦》）

Yet it's because everyone places such reliance on the fine reputation of their father and mother that they exalt them. Now, do tell me, is this sufficient to anger one or not?

3. Enthymeme: Incompleteness and Probability

Enthymeme comes from the Greek word *enthymema*, and its root *thymos* means “the seat of emotions and desires, or of motive” (Walker, 1994, p. 48). This concept has been developed over thousands of years and enthymeme has become a popular rhetorical term in Western rhetoric. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, enthymeme is “the substance of rhetorical persuasion”, and “the most effective of the modes of persuasion” (1954, pp. 20-22). At the beginning of the work, he (*ibid.*, p. 19) mentions that “Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic”, which links rhetoric with philosophy and logic. There is syllogism in dialectics; correspondingly, there is enthymeme in rhetoric, so Aristotle (*ibid.*, p. 26) calls enthymeme “rhetorical syllogism”. He does not give a formal or standard definition to enthymeme, but defines it with two distinct

traits: incompleteness and probability.

Incompleteness means that in contrast to a standard syllogism, an enthymeme often appears with certain proposition(s) omitted, which Aristotle illustrates in detail as follows:

The enthymeme must consist of fewer propositions, fewer often than those which make up the normal syllogism. For if any of these propositions is a familiar fact, there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself. Thus, to show that Dorieus has been victor in a contest for which the prize is a crown, it is enough to say ‘For he has been victor in the Olympic games’, without adding ‘And in the Olympic games the prize is a crown’, a fact which everybody knows. (ibid., p. 28)

The above citation seems to offer us a rather clear explanation of enthymeme’s incompleteness feature. However, it still triggers controversial interpretations, especially concerning the number and type of proposition(s) which can be omitted. Many researchers, such as Corbett (1965) and Deng (2003), hold that enthymeme can only omit one proposition. Yet, we firmly believe that this is not the whole picture, as evidenced in the above example given by Aristotle himself: not only is the major premise, “in the Olympic Games the prize is a crown”, left out, but also the obvious conclusion, “Dorieus has won a crown”. So we are justified to say that enthymeme can omit one or two propositions, either premise or conclusion, depending on the particular rhetorical situation. Derived from Yuan (2006), Table 1 uses Aristotle’s Dorieus case to illustrate all six possible incomplete forms of enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism:

Table 1. Six incomplete forms of enthymeme

Number	Major Premise	Minor Premise	Conclusion	Omitted Proposition(s)
1		Dorieus has been victor in the Olympic games.	Dorieus has won a crown.	major premise
2	In the Olympic games the prize is a crown.		Dorieus has won a crown.	minor premise
3	In the Olympic games the prize is a crown.	Dorieus has been victor in the Olympic games.		conclusion
4		Dorieus has been victor in the Olympic games.		major premise, conclusion
5	In the Olympic games the prize is a crown.			minor premise, conclusion
6			Dorieus has won a crown.	major premise, minor premise

Although all six truncated forms of rhetorical syllogism are possible, different purposes will lead to different choices. In terms of conciseness, Forms 4, 5, 6 are preferred, especially in daily conversations; with regard to seriousness, then the first three forms should be employed more frequently; and concerning subtlety or euphemism, Forms 3, 4, 5 are definitely favored, especially when the conclusion is discouraging or negative (Yuan, 2006). As we see, each incomplete form can achieve different functions, which are not confined to what we have mentioned above, and it is often the rhetorical situation that determines which form of enthymeme is more appropriate.

The feature of probability suggests the “contingent” nature of enthymeme in contrast to the “necessary” feature of standard syllogism. It starts from the premise(s), especially the major premise which is often generally true, but not necessarily or absolutely true, e.g. the maxim given by Aristotle, “There is no man in all things prosperous” (1954, p. 136). The conclusion deduced thereafter, for example, “The king is not in all things prosperous”, bears the feature of probability as well, although it is highly acceptable.

We have so far briefly stated the two features of enthymeme: incompleteness and probability. With either of them being met, we can treat the syllogism as a rhetorical one. However, it is not difficult to find that a typical rhetorical syllogism (in contrast to a standard one) needs to satisfy both incompleteness and probability, as illustrated by Yuan and Jiang (2010) and further evidenced in the following RQ investigation.

4. Enthymematic Analyses of RQs in *Wen Xin Diao Long*

Written by Liu Xie (刘勰) around 501 AD, *Wen Xin Diao Long* is a masterpiece specializing in literary theory and criticism. Liu Xie (about 465-520 AD), a literary theorist and critic in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589 AD), was orphaned in his youth, and never married. From his twenties to thirties, Liu studied Buddhism with Seng You (僧祐) and helped edit sutras at the Dinglin Monastery (定林寺), where *Wen Xin Diao Long* was completed. *WXDL* comments systematically and extensively on previous literary works, and analyzes their successes and failures. At the same time, the book insightfully addresses many important theoretical issues on literature and rhetoric. Admiration for Liu Xie, throughout the ages, has been incessant, as evidenced lately in Shih (2015, p. lxi): “He inspires the reader not only

by the content of his work, but also by his incomparable style.”

Wen Xin Diao Long consists of fifty essays which are divided into four parts by modern scholars: “General Principles” (总论), “Stylistic Theories” (文体论), “Writing Theories” (创作论) and “Literary Criticism” (文学评论). Each essay features a main body and conclusion/*The Tsan* (“赞”), from about 600 to 1000 words. There are three complete English translations of *Wen Xin Diao Long*: *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Shih, 1959), *The Book of Literary Design* (Wong, Lo & Lam, 1999), and *Dragon-Carving and the Literary Mind* (Yang, 2003). This study chooses the latest revised edition (2015) of Vincent Yu-chung Shih’s original 1959 work, the first full English version and first published translation in the western world, and which has received high evaluations. Hawkes (1969) comments that the language of Shih is more rounded, elegant and readable. Lanciotti (1960), an Italian scholar of Chinese, also highly appreciates this version and believes that its detailed index and accurate annotation are of great practical value to researchers of Chinese literary theory.

Three latest Chinese language editions are used for data collection: *Modern Translation of Wen Xin Diao Long* (《文心雕龙今译》) (Zhou, 2013), *Wen Xin Diao Long* (《文心雕龙》) (Wang, 2014), and *The Translation and Annotation of Wen Xin Diao Long* (《文心雕龙译注》) (Wang & Zhou, 2016). Since there is no electronic version of Zhou (2013)’s edition, we have to screen the RQs in it manually, while the other two versions are used for autonomous screening in AntConc v3.5.7. After that, RQs in all the three versions are verified manually. With both autonomous screening in AntConc v3.5.7 and manual verification, we find a total of 115 questions, among which 97 are rhetorical questions.

According to the specific strategies of purposive sampling in qualitative research, three representative essays are selected from *Wen Xin Diao Long*: “The Physical World” (Ch. XLVI), “An Understanding Critic” (Ch. XLVIII), and “The Capacity of a Vessel” (Ch. XLIX). After closely examining these articles, we have located all the RQs in them, and the number in each is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. The number of RQs in the selected *Wen Xin Diao Long* essays

Title	Number of RQs
The Physical World (《物色》)	4
An Understanding Critic (《知音》)	5
The Capacity of a Vessel (《程器》)	8

In the following subsections, we select five typical rhetorical questions (one from “The Capacity of a Vessel”, and two from each of the other two essays), with the English translations from Vincent Yu-chung Shih (2015), and their Chinese counterparts from Zhou Zhenfu (2013). Although limited in number, the samples to be enthymematically analyzed are representative.

4.1 “The Physical World”

Chapter Forty-six of *WXDL*, “The Physical World” (*Wu-se*, 《物色》), discusses the relationship between literary creation and natural scenery, and puts forward the argument that “One responds with varying emotions to these varying phases, and the form of language used depends on the emotion” (Shih, 2015, p. 323). Liu Xie thinks that the external scenery affects one’s feelings and emotions, from which rhetorical expressions are derived. Emotions and scenes are closely blended. Literati, when writing, on the one hand, should describe the situation of the scenery pertinently; on the other hand, should express their feelings for the scenery, so as to achieve the goal of “leaving nothing whether in their feeling or in the appearance of things undescribed” (Shih, 2015, p. 324). In the first paragraph, Liu Xie uses the following RQ to emphasize that scenery has a profound impact on writers:

- (5) 微虫犹或入感，四时之动物深矣。若夫珪璋挺其惠心，英华秀其清气，物色相召，人谁获安？

Insignificant as these insects are, even they are affected. Profoundly indeed are things moved by the four seasons. Excellent jade inspires the mind of the intelligent, and glorious flowers shower splendor upon the soul that is pure. All things exert influence on one another. Who is there that can rest unmoved?

It is a wh-RQ since Shao (1996, p. 173) mentions that the RQ marked with the interrogative pronoun “谁” (who) is a wh-RQ. Just before this, Liu describes that in spring, ants burrow, and in autumn, the mantises store food for the winter. Everything is influenced by the change of the physical world. In his opinion, no one can be indifferent to the appeal of nature. The RQ “Who is there that can rest unmoved?” (人谁获安?) is based on all the above paragraph’s descriptions, but for the convenience of deduction, we leave out the middle part which conveys a similar meaning, and just focus on the first and last sentences in English.

Implied MP: Humans are higher than non-humans.

Expressed mp: Even insignificant insects are affected by the physical world change.

Suggested Con: (No one can rest unmoved.)

Humans are certainly influenced by the physical world change.

It is reasonable to paraphrase the RQ “Who is there that can rest unmoved?” into “No one can rest unmoved”, which is equivalent to the suggested conclusion that “Humans are certainly influenced by the physical world change”. The minor premise is lucidly expressed that insignificant insects are affected. Then we can deduce the major premise as “Humans are higher than non-humans”, which is commonly accepted.

Different scenes unfold in four seasons, with different features. Liu Xie believes that words and expressions are inspired by emotions, while emotions change with the scenes. If a fallen leaf and the chirping of insects can spark emotions, beautiful scenery is more likely to do so, such as a clear wind, a bright moon, a rising sun, and a spring forest.

(6) 一叶且或迎意，虫声有足引心，况清风与明月同夜，白日与春林共朝哉！

One single leaf may suggest something significant, and the chirping of insects is often enough to induce an inner mood. So how much greater an influence will be felt if we experience a clear wind and a bright moon on the same night, or a bright sun and a spring forest on the same morning!

Although this sentence is marked with an exclamation mark in all three editions (Zhou, 2013; Wang, 2014; Wang and Zhou, 2016), it is still a wh-RQ, since “况” is extracted from “何况”, a conjunction to get further inference with a tone of RQ. Liu once again emphasizes the influence of natural scenes on creative inspiration through an RQ which can be enthymematically understood as follows.

Implied MP: Grand beauties echoing each other have a greater influence on us than small single beauties.

Expressed mp: One single leaf may suggest something significant, and the chirping of insects is often enough to induce an inner mood.

Suggested Con: (A greater influence will be felt if we experience a clear wind and a bright moon on the same night, or a bright sun and a spring forest on the same morning.)

A clear wind and a bright moon on the same night, or a bright sun and a spring forest on the same morning will have a greater influence on us.

From the RQ (“So how much greater an influence will be felt if...”), we can infer its declarative counterpart that “A greater influence will be felt if we experience a clear wind and a bright moon on the same night, or a bright sun and a spring forest on the same morning”, which is equal to the statement that “A clear wind and a bright moon on the same night, or a bright sun and a spring forest on the same morning will have a greater influence on us”. The minor premise can be easily identified from the previous part that “One single leaf may suggest something significant, and the chirping of insects is often enough to induce an inner mood”. On the basis of the conclusion and minor premise, we can deduce that the major premise or the assumption should be “Grand beauties echoing each other have a greater influence on us than small single beauties”.

4.2 “An Understanding Critic”

The 48th essay in *WXDL*, “An Understanding Critic” (*Chih-yin*, 《知音》), discusses literary appreciation and criticism. *Chih-yin* (知音) originally refers to the in-depth comprehension of the art of music, which in this essay is used to indicate a thorough understanding of literary writing. In Liu Xie’s opinion, it is very difficult to be “an understanding critic”, because there are three pitfalls, which are: valuing the past and despising the present, praising highly of oneself and belittling others, and believing in falsehoods and doubting the truth. Liu then uses the following RQ in order to warn critics of the danger of being careless in evaluating literary works:

(7) 形器易徵，謬乃若是；文情难鉴，谁曰易分？

If these, which are all physically tangible things, and easily distinguishable, have been so mistakenly perceived, how much harder it must be to judge accurately when we come to deal with literature, the nature of which is so difficult to understand!

This sentence is labeled with an exclamation mark in Shih’s English translation,

but from the interpretation of three Chinese versions (Zhou, 2013; Wang, 2014; Wang & Zhou, 2016), we can affirm that it is a wh-RQ because of the interrogative pronoun “谁”. Here, Liu Xie intends to stress that, compared with physically tangible things, such as a unicorn mistakenly seen as a hornless deer, pheasant as phoenix, pearls as gravel, and stone as jade (mentioned earlier in Para. Six), literature, such an intangible thing, seems more difficult to be judged precisely.

Implied MP: The non-physical is much harder to be judged accurately than the physical.

Expressed mp: Physically tangible things (i.e. unicorn, pheasant, pearl, and stone), being easily distinguishable, have been mistakenly perceived.

Suggested Con: (It must be much harder to judge accurately when we come to deal with literature.)

It is much harder to judge literature accurately.

The suggested conclusion (“It is much harder to judge literature accurately”) is converted from the second half of the RQ “how much harder it must be to judge accurately when we come to deal with literature”. The first half, “If these, which are all physically tangible things, and easily distinguishable, have been so mistakenly perceived”, offers proof for the minor premise. Based on the syllogistic pattern, the major premise is deduced as “The non-physical is much harder to be judged accurately than the physical”. From this RQ, we can see that literary writings are very complicated; thus it is hard for critics to gain a proper understanding and make an impartial evaluation of them. In other words, Liu implies that if an objective and fair literary review cannot be approached, it may have a harmful impact on its author.

In the following paragraphs, Liu attends to the methodology of appreciation and criticism. In order to properly understand and judge a work, Liu thinks that reviewers should observe its artistic form from six aspects (cf. Shih, 2015, p. 342): “genre and style” (位体), “rhetoric” (置辞), “flexible adaptability” (通变), “conformity or nonconformity to orthodox principle” (奇正), “factual and intellectual content” (事义), and “musical pattern” (宫商). His assertion here is that if the reader can explore the inner emotions based on the external form and style of the work, even its most profound and lasting thoughts will certainly be revealed. With another wh-RQ, Liu Xie makes an analogy between lute playing and writing, to show that they are similar in conveying feelings:

(8) 夫志在山水，琴表其情，况形之笔端，理将焉匿？

If it is possible for a man's impressions of mountains and rivers to find expression in his lute playing, how much easier it must be to depict physically tangible forms with a brush, from which no inner feeling or idea can be successfully hidden.

Although this sentence is not marked as a question in the English version, it is still a wh-RQ because of the interrogative pronoun “焉”, which means “怎么/哪里” (how/where) according to *Ancient Chinese Dictionary* (2002, p. 1805). Here is a more accurate translation—“how much easier would it be to depict physically tangible forms with a brush, from which no inner feeling or idea can be successfully hidden?” This RQ is a distinct combination of example (the other element of logos) and enthymeme where Liu Xie draws an analogy between lute playing and literary writing. The player thinks of mountains and rivers in his mind while playing the Chinese lute, and his feeling flows out in the sound of the instrument; similarly, it is hard for a writer to hide his feelings or thoughts while putting his mind to the writing brush.

Implied MP: It is much easier to express oneself through words than through music.

Expressed mp: It is possible for a man's impressions of mountains and rivers to find expression in his lute playing.

Suggested Con: (It must be much easier to depict physically tangible forms with a brush, from which no inner feeling or idea can be successfully hidden.)

It must be much easier to express the inner feeling or idea through literary writing.

The second half of the RQ, “how much easier...”, can be transformed into “It must be much easier to depict physically tangible forms with a brush, from which no inner feeling or idea can be successfully hidden”. As “with a brush” means “literary writing”, it is justifiable to further transform and simplify this sentence into “It must be much easier to express the inner feeling or idea through literary writing”. The minor premise is stated lucidly through the other half of the RQ and the major premise can be deduced from the known conclusion and minor premise as “It is much easier to express oneself through words than through music”.

Liu Xie clearly explains the reason for this analogy. Just as with observing the shape of an object with one's eyes, the reader can comprehend the assertion of the essay with a clear mind: "[A]s long as our mind is alert, there are no feelings or ideas which cannot be conveyed" (Shih, 2015, p. 343). This also paves the way for Liu Xie's inner voices: an essay is the most beautiful flower, which needs rumination and appreciation to capture its beauty, and Liu hopes that those who want to comprehend and peruse literary works will pay close attention to these problems mentioned in *Chih-yin*.

4.3 "The Capacity of a Vessel"

"The Capacity of a Vessel" (*Cheng-Qi*) is the 49th and last essay in *WXDL*. Cheng (程), means "measure" or "weigh"; and Qi (器), refers to "a talented person". Liu Xie here discusses the moral character, literary talent and working competence of literati. In this essay, we locate altogether 8 rhetorical questions, the highest frequency of all pieces, and they are used mainly to emphasize the assertion or thesis: a man of letters should possess not only literary talent, but also moral character and political talent (capacity for practical affairs), so that they can become role models to others.

Why is it not enough for literati to possess only literary talent? History has proved that, one who has literary talent but lacks political talent, has a low status throughout life, for example, Yang Xiong (扬雄) and Sima Xiangru (司马相如). Therefore, Liu believes that "both the art of literature and the art of war fit in wherever there is talent" (Shih, 2015, p. 349). Literary and military talents should be both available and complementary to each other. Here Liu Xie cites Xi Hu (郤縠) and Sun Wu (孙武) as examples in two successive rhetorical questions. As a marshal, Xi Hu is also familiar with ancient books such as *The Book of Songs* (《诗经》) and *Book of Documents* (《尚书》). Sun Wu writes *The Art of War* (《孙子兵法》) in a beautiful language, and he is also proficient in military strategies. Because of the same structure, we choose the example of Sun Wu for analyzing. Although this RQ is translated as a wh-RQ in the English version, we still need to conduct the analysis on the basis of the original Chinese version. In all three versions, "岂" is interpreted as "难道" in the RQ (5); therefore, it is classified as a yes-no RQ.

(9) 孙武《兵经》，辞如珠玉，岂以习武而不晓文也？

Sun Wu's work on military science is written in a language as beautiful as pearls

and jade. But when did he, because he was skilled in military arts, ignore literary excellence?

Through the enthymematic analysis, we will not only gain a complete picture of its meaning, but also obtain the thesis of the essay, or Liu Xie's overall criterion of weighing talents.

Implied MP: Those skilled both in literary excellence and military arts are desirable talents.

Suggested mp: (He never, because he was skilled in military arts, ignored literary excellence.)

Sun Wu was skilled in both military arts and literary excellence.

Implied Con: Sun Wu was a desirable talent.

The RQ “But when did he, because he was skilled in military arts, ignore literary excellence?” here actually suggests the minor premise “He never, because he was skilled in military arts, ignored literary excellence” which can be restated as “Sun Wu was skilled in both military arts and literary excellence”. The conclusion implied, according to the topic of the essay (“*Cheng-Qi*” or weighing a talent), should be “Sun Wu was a desirable talent”. From this conclusion and the suggested minor premise, we can deduce that the major premise or the assumption is “Those skilled both in literary excellence and military arts are desirable talents”.

5. Conclusion

Our inquiry, equipped with Aristotle's theory of enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism, has covered five typical RQs in *WXDL*, and made three major discoveries. With regard to which type of RQ is more closely related to enthymeme, we find that there are a total of 115 questions in *WXDL*, among which 97 are rhetorical questions. Of 97 RQs, 55 are yes-no RQs, 42 are wh-RQs, and none are alternative RQs or X-no-X RQs. This may be related to the parallelism and ornateness of Liu Xie's rhythmical essays, which remains a significant research point for further exploration. The number and typical examples of the two RQ types can be found in Table 3:

Table 3. Types of RQs in *Wen Xin Diao Long*

Type	Number	Example
Yes-no RQ	55	是以楚艳汉侈，流弊不还，正末归本，不其懿欤？（《宗经》）
Wh-RQ	42	伪既倍摘，则义异自明，经足训矣，纬何豫焉？（《正纬》）

Of all the 97 RQs, 47 can be enthymematically analyzed, among which the number of yes-no RQ is 18, while that of wh-RQ is 29, as shown in Table 4. As illustrated by the statistics, wh-RQ seems more closely related to the enthymeme/rhetorical syllogism of Aristotle's *logos*.

Table 4. Types of enthymematic RQs in *Wen Xin Diao Long*

Type	Number	Example
Yes-no RQ	18	然则声不假翼，其飞甚易；情不待根，其固匪难；以之垂文，可不慎欤？（《指瑕》）
Wh-RQ	29	形器易徵，谬乃若是；文情难鉴，谁曰易分？（《知音》）

In terms of the form/pattern, it is discovered that almost all the selected RQs (except Ex. 5) are found to have a form similar to Aristotle's example of Dorieus, with just one explicitly expressed proposition, the minor premise, and the other propositions either implied (mostly major premise) or suggested (often conclusion). This form can be treated as Type 4 in the table of "Six Incomplete Forms of Enthymeme". The two "omitted" propositions should be interpreted as one "implied" and the other "suggested" (more than implied but less than expressed), which is a refinement of the previous studies on the truncation of enthymeme.

As shown in Table 5, of all 47 enthymematic RQs in *WXDL*, 42 RQs present Form 1: an implied major premise (MP), an expressed minor premise (mp), and a suggested conclusion (Con); 3 RQs have Form 2: a suggested major premise, an expressed minor premise and an implied conclusion; 2 RQs have Form 3: an implied major premise, a suggested minor premise and an implied conclusion. Furthermore, among the selected samples, only in Ex. 5 is the minor premise suggested via being transformed from the RQ itself, and both the major premise and conclusion are implied.

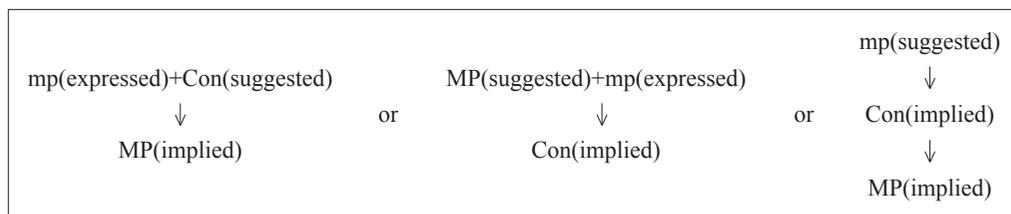
Table 5. Enthymematic forms of RQs in Wen Xin Diao Long

Form	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3
Pattern	Implied MP Expressed mp Suggested Con	Suggested MP Expressed mp Implied Con	Implied MP Suggested mp Implied Con
Number	42	3	2

With respect to the function, which is related to the form, we discover that the RQ enthymeme achieves strong logical functions. Thus, the major premise involved in RQ is generally an implied or suggested assumption, which is common sense or opinion acceptable to both the speaker and audience involved; the minor premise always provides a solid argument; and the conclusion suggests or implies a claim, which is usually an assertion that the speaker does not want to say explicitly. These logical functions are achieved via implying or suggesting propositions (as major premise and conclusion), and providing the solid argument (as minor premise). Also, our enthymematic analyses have shown that an RQ enthymeme’s logical functions are accompanied by salience of the suggested assumption or assertion transformed from the question itself, strengthening the key information as well.

The enthymematic deduction patterns of rhetorical questions in *Wen Xin Diao Long* can be illustrated through Figure 1:

Figure 1. Enthymematic deduction patterns of RQs in *Wen Xin Diao Long*



Although we have made these encouraging discoveries, the RQs analyzed via enthymeme are limited and confined to “The Physical World”, “An Understanding Critic”, and “The Capacity of a Vessel”, being only three essays of Liu Xie’s 50-piece work. Further exploration, therefore, is expected to be conducted on whether enthymeme is applicable to explaining RQs in the rest of his essays and whether our findings are universal to the rhetorical questions in other classics as well.

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