

Comparing Logical Paradoxes through the Method of Sublation: Hui Shi, Zeno and the “Flying Arrow Problem”

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Abstract

This article addresses some basic methodological problems in the field of transcultural post-comparative studies of ancient logic by comparing the famous flying arrow paradox of Hui Shi (370–c. 310 BCE) with an apparently similar paradox attributed to Zeno of Elea (495–430 BCE). The article proceeds from a general introduction to the basic framework of semantically determined classical Chinese logic, to an illumination of Hui Shi’s specific contributions to the field, and finally to a preliminary explanation that emerges from a contrastive analysis of Zeno’s and Hui Shi’s respective views on the problem of motion and stasis as manifested in their corresponding paradoxes. The contrastive analysis, based on an exposition of some basic problems in the field of transcultural methodology and a description of the so-called sublation method, points to the importance of considering different paradigms and frames of reference in identifying differences between apparently similar theses.

Keywords: Hui Shi, Zeno, transcultural sublation, frameworks of reference, form and potential, the flying arrow paradox

Primerjava logičnih paradoksov z metodo sublacije: Hui Shi, Zenon in »problem leteče puščice«

Izvleček

Pričujoči članek obravnava nekatere osnovne metodološke probleme na področju transkulturnih postprimerjalnih študij antične logike skozi optiko kontrastivne analize »paradoksa leteče puščice«, ki ga – na navidezno podoben način – interpretirata tako kitajski logik Hui Shi (370–ok. 310 pr. n. št.) kot tudi predsokratik Zenon iz Eleje (495–430 pr. n. št.). Avtorica začne diskusijo s splošno predstavitvijo osnovnega okvira semantično opredeljene klasične kitajske logike, nadaljuje z osvetlitvijo Hui Shijevih doprinosov k tej disciplini in se nato loti preliminarne razlage tega paradoksa, do katere pride postopno s pomočjo kontrastne analize Zenonovih oziroma Hui Shijevih pogledov na problem gibanja in mirovanja, kot

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se prikazuje v njihovih topoglednih paradoksih. Kontrastna analiza, ki je osnovana na prikazu določenih problemov področja transkulturne metodologije in uporabi tako imenovane metode sublacije, izpostavi pomembnost upoštevanja različnih paradigem in referenčnih okvirov pri identifikaciji razlik med navidezno podobnimi tezami.

Ključne besede: Hui Shi, Zenon, transkulturna sublacija, referenčni okviri, forma in potencial, paradoks leteče puščice

Introduction: Classical Chinese Logic and the Nomenalist School (*Ming jia* 名家)¹

In the pre-Qin China, logical reasoning was closely connected to language, especially with respect to semantic issues, and was determined by its tight relation to ethics (e.g. *Mozi* s.d., *Jing xia*, 155). However, this does not mean that in classical texts which are not immediately identifiable with metaphysical and ethical discourses there were not also forms of logical and methodological thought (Cui 2021, 105). Although Chinese philosophy developed in connection with ethical ideas and metaphysical concepts, there was a close relationship between moral and metaphysical thought on the one hand, and logical reasoning on the other.²

The origins of Chinese logic can be traced back to the earliest known works, such as the *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing*), while its main development took place during the so-called golden age of Chinese philosophy, in the Warring States (*Zhan guo*) period (475–221 BC). This period saw the emergence of the “Hundred Schools of Thought”, which include the most influential philosophical discourses, namely Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, and Legalism. It was a time of extraordinary intellectual development due to political chaos and constant armed conflict between warring states. This period ended with the first unification of China and the rise of the totalitarian Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC).

1 This school of thought (in Chinese: *Ming jia* 名家) is usually translated in English as “The School of Names”. However, to facilitate their use in the adjective form, I prefer to translate them with a single term, similar to the Mohist, Confucian, Daoist, etc. Schools. Since this school was mainly concerned with the problems of names or concepts, the term “Nominalist School” would actually be most appropriate for this purpose. However, the term nominalism has already been adopted by European philosophy, in the context of which it denotes a stream of thought which holds that universal or abstract concepts do not exist in the same way as physical, tangible material. Since this position has nothing to do with the ideas and theories of the School of Names, I have therefore decided to translate *Ming jia* 名家 by the terms Nomenalist School or Nomenalism.

2 The reasons for the decline of the latter in early medieval China are multiple and linked mainly to complex historical events and processes that shaped specific social conditions that proved to be unfavourable for the evolution of scientific thought and methodologies.

Traditional or classical Chinese logic generally refers to the logical thought developed in this era (Chmelewski 1965, 88), and these discourses were established without outside influences. However, Chinese logicians were part of a small sub-culture, while logicians in India and Europe were part of the mainstream of intellectual development (Harbsmeier 1998, 7).

Classical Chinese logical thought never elaborated an explicitly systematic and comprehensive formulation of the laws of reason, nor did it produce a coherent system of symbols for abstract thought. Before the 18th and early 19th centuries, Chinese thinkers had rarely encountered a systematic and well-formulated logical work. But as Cheng Chung-Ying (1965, 196) points out, this does not mean that classical Chinese thought lacked logical depth or consistency.

Logical ideas, concepts and methods were developed mainly within the framework of two intellectual schools, namely the Mohist and the Nomenalist schools of thought. During this period, issues such as the relationship between concepts or names (*ming* 名) and realities or objects (*shi* 實), the criteria of identity (*tong* 同) and difference (*yi* 異), or the standards of right/true (*shi* 是) and wrong/false (*fei* 非) formed the objects of inquiry across the philosophical spectrum regardless of ideological orientation (Kurtz 2011, 3). Chinese interest in logical problems grew out of the methodology of debates or disputations. The earliest evidence of this interest can be found among the so-called dialecticians or debaters (*bianzhe* 辯者), whose discourses were primarily concerned with theories of names (*mingxue* 名學), which led them to become known as the “School of Names” (*Mingjia* 名家). The leading figures of this heterogeneous current were Hui Shi 惠施 (ca. 370–310 BCE), who is the main subject of this paper, and Gongsun Long 公孫龍 (ca. 320–250 BCE), who was famous for the logical defence of his white horse paradox, which claimed that “white horses were not horses” (*Bai ma fei ma* 白馬非馬).

These discourses made important contributions to logic, together with the works of the “later Mohists” (*Houqi Mojia* 後期墨家), who—among other issues—elaborated theories of argumentation (*bianxue* 辯學). They represented a current of the school of Mo Di 墨翟, whose teachings were collected in the *Mozi* 墨子 which includes a series of brief definitions and explanations outlining procedures for determining the validity of conflicting assertions, a theory of description, and an inventory of “acceptable” (*ke* 可) links between consecutive statements.

Hui Shi, his Life and Work, and his Transcultural Significance

As mentioned earlier, I will focus here on the work of Hui Shi 惠施 (ca. 370–310 BCE), who is one of the most important representatives of the Nomenalist

current. This article provides both a general introduction to his philosophical ideas and concepts and a more detailed analysis and interpretation of his theory of the unity of identity and difference. The present interpretation takes as its starting point Hui Shi's view of allegedly paradoxical nature of this unity. But before we plunge into the deep currents of his logical thought, let us introduce the fundamental features and the social, as well as ideational contexts of his life and work.

Hui Shi was a contemporary and friend of Zhuangzi and a minister in the government of the Song State. He was one of the most famous Nomenalists, and was best known for his allegedly sophisticated paradoxes, by which he attempted to express the absolute relativity of existence appearing in the mutual relations and shared contexts of absoluteness and relativity. In general, we can say that Hui Shi's teaching, which bears some similarity to Daoist philosophy, is rooted in a theory of relativity that extends a fundamentally atomistic view of space and time. However, if we consider its embeddedness in the dynamic frame of reference of Chinese philosophy and logic, this plurality of relative aspects of reality can be seen as part of an all-encompassing, unified absoluteness of existence. For similar reasons, he also valorized the then definition of identity and difference by placing the two concepts within a dynamic, unified framework. In this paper, we will explore, among other things, the structural connection between these two forms of unity.

Hui Shi must have been a prolific writer, for Zhuangzi remembers him as "very versatile, as his works could fill five carts"³ (Zhuangzi s.d. Tianxia, Za pian, 7). Unfortunately, most of the works have been lost; at the time of the Han dynasty (206 BC–220), according to the commentary in Liu Xin's 劉歆 encyclopaedia *Han shu* 漢書, only one chapter of the work bearing Hui Shi's name had survived. Today, only some fragments of his philosophical positions remain. The historiography of reception and interpretation of this undoubtedly extremely interesting philosopher is limited to his well-known "Ten Postulates of all that exists" (*Wanwu shi shi* 萬物十事) and a few individual sentences (mostly paradoxically constructed) without explicit context, which are preserved in the various commentaries of his contemporaries and successors (especially in the works of Zhuangzi and Xunzi).

From a transcultural perspective, it is most interesting that many of these fragments are strongly reminiscent of the sayings of Zeno from the Eleatic school. This makes Hui Shi an interesting thinker not only in the context of classical Chinese logic, but also in terms of cross-cultural comparisons, especially—as we will see later—when we analyse the similarities between Zeno and Hui Shi from the perspective of transcultural studies.

3 惠施多方,其書五車。

It is clear from his “Postulates” that Hui Shi derives his theorems from the assumption of the organic and structural interconnectedness of everything that exists. Within the framework of the holistic worldview already defined in the proto-philosophical classics and thus shared by most classical, especially Daoist, philosophers, Hui Shi focuses, among other things, on the relationship between time and space as an expression of the relativistic structured whole, for example:

If we take a stick one chi’s length and cut off half of it every day, we shall never come to the end of it. (ibid.)

一尺之棰，日取其半，萬世不竭。

We find the same thought in Zeno of Elea’s story of Achilles and “the slower”⁴:

The slower runner will never be overtaken by the swiftest, since the pursuer must first reach the point from which the pursued started, and so the slower must always be ahead. (cf. Lee 1967, 51)

Achilles can never reach the slower runner, because every time he reaches the place where the slower stood a moment before, it has already moved a little further. This proposition is based upon the presumption that the real inseparability of pure time and space includes the assumption about the impossibility of real motion. Indeed, if there would be motion, it should actually be possible to traverse an infinity of positions in a finite time (Philoponus, cf. Lee 1967, 47)

The apparent similarity of the two theses lies in the fact that the two arguments above are both based on the assumption that spatial length is not reducible to minimal units, but is infinitely reducible. However, as we will see later, Zeno and Hui Shi wanted to prove different ideas by emphasizing such a relationship between finiteness and infinity.

From his “Ten Postulates of all that exists” (*Wanwu shi shi* 萬物十事), it is clear that Hui Shi derives his theorems from the assumption of the organic and structural connection of all that exists. Zeno also assumes the inseparable interconnectedness of everything that exists. But unlike Hui Shi, he sees this existential interconnectedness as the expression of an undivided and unchanging wholeness. This fundamental difference between the basic paradigms and the corresponding viewpoints advocated by these two ancient thinkers can be demonstrated by a contrasting analysis of their respective views on the so-called “problem of the flying arrow”. In what follows, I will attempt to conduct such an analysis by applying

4 The “slower” was in later antiquity renamed as a turtle, and thus Zeno’s story is mainly known as the story about Achilles and the turtle.

the method of transcultural sublation. Since this is a new method, not yet well known in international academia, I will first present its theoretical background, its main features, its function and the main principles of its application.

Post-comparative Approaches and the Method of Transcultural Sublation

Let us begin by clarifying the terms cross-cultural, intercultural, and transcultural. Cross-cultural studies refer to different cultures or the comparison between them in a very general sense, i.e., crossing the boundaries of one culture and entering discourses shaped by another. Interculturality is a more specific type of communication or interaction between different intellectual, linguistic, and cognitive traditions, where the differences in cultures and the corresponding linguistic structures have a decisive influence on the formation of meaning. In this sense, intercultural interactions certainly involve the process of transferring meanings, implications, and connotations between different cultures. Nevertheless, numerous current theorists criticize the very notion of cross- or interculturality with its problematic embedding in a static and one-dimensional understanding of cultures as fixed “realms”, “spheres”, or “islands”. In such a view, the very idea of culture is defined by a separatist, essentialist, and isolating character. Therefore, many contemporary scholars argue instead for a transcultural approach, because the prefix “trans-” contained in the concept of transculturality suggests that it is capable of transcending the boundaries and limitations of a fixed and static concept of culture. In this sense, it suggests the possibility of going beyond the fragmentation and separation of different cultures and philosophies (Silius 2020, 276) to create a more comprehensive and enriching approach to philosophy.

Transcultural approaches therefore aim at overcoming the outdated, static and immobile concept of culture. This does not mean, however, that there is no culture. It is still a real thing, like language, for example. Both are dynamic, historically grown and constantly changing entities without fixed borders. Therefore, the ontological assumption underlying the concept of culture does not necessarily refer to a metaphysics of an abstract substantial being. Here, the concept of culture is understood to be based on a metaphysics of relations.

Now, on the basis of this reflection, let us return to our basic question, which is linked to problems encountered by Western—or Western-trained—scholars who are dealing with Chinese philosophy and logic. From the transcultural point of view, working in Chinese logic and interpreting classical Chinese texts has much to do with transferring meanings across different languages and patterns of

understanding. But as we all know, concepts and categories cannot be simply and directly transferred from one socio-cultural context into another. The semantic connotations by which they are defined often simply do not overlap. Therefore, we must consider the referential frameworks into which they are embedded.⁵

Knowledge of the specific frame of reference that has emerged in the historical development of Chinese philosophy is of paramount importance in order to interpret certain concepts and transfer them into the framework of global philosophy. In this context, the methods of discursive translations are of utmost importance. For translations are necessarily also interpretations of the multiple connotations of concepts and categories embedded in different semantic and referential networks. Moreover, translations of different logical systems that belong to different semantic frameworks, different linguistic structures and different methodological paradigms, can never be limited to merely translating one language into another. They must also involve the “translation” or transposition of different discourses, as well as interpretations of individual textual and linguistic structures, categories, concepts, and evaluation criteria that differ according to the corresponding socio-cultural contexts.

The problem of transferring meanings, however, goes even further and also concerns the concept of transcultural philosophical comparisons.⁶ Many scholars see

5 Theories that have been historically developed in different socio-political traditions and linguistic areas also produce different referential frameworks, which are, on the other hand, linked to different methodologies applied in the process of perceiving, understanding and interpreting reality. A referential framework in this sense can be defined as a relational structure of concepts, categories, terms, and ideas, which are applied in the cognitive processing of the objects of comprehension. It also includes paradigms and perspectives that influence and define the comprehension and evaluation of particular semantic elements within this structure, as well as the structure as a whole. In other words, it defines every concept applied in the theory, and determines its specific semantic connotations. And in the same way, it defines the relations between concrete notions, as well as the entire network of these relations as such. Here, we start from the assumption that using different languages and different patterns of thought associated with their individual grammatical structures, different cultures continuously create different frames of reference that assume an influential role in human understanding and interpretation of a given reality. Thus, frames of reference are comprehensive instruments that filter perceptions and create meanings. Different reference frames can lead to different descriptions and interpretations of one and the same objective reality. For a more detailed explanation of the notion see Rošker (2021).

6 Comparative methods are especially important to Western researchers of Chinese philosophy. These scholars have been educated and socialized in cultures that have shaped philosophical discourses embedded in frames of reference that differ from those developed in Chinese cultural-linguistic circles. Thus, when we study and examine Chinese philosophical discourses, we are constantly confronted with the need to compare certain concepts and categories developed in the Chinese tradition with certain ideas, methods, and categories prevalent in our own traditions of thought. Although most of the resulting comparisons are made on an unconscious level, it is precisely the method of comparison still has a decisive influence on our work.

the main problem of such comparisons in the fact that we have a “unifying methodology and one single philosophical language, and apply it on culturally concrete, different materials”. In my view, however the core problem is much deeper and much more complex, because the methodology in question is a system underlying one of the philosophies under comparison, namely the Western one. There is no third, “objective” methodology. The *tertium comparationis* is thus determined by one of the two *comparanda*, which commonly belongs to the methodology and terminology of Western philosophy.

Based on thorough reflection and analysis of such issues inherent in traditional comparative procedures, many scholars have elaborated new methodological tools that could overcome such problematic approaches. Such experimentalisms and new models of transcultural philosophizing have been termed post-comparative philosophies. These methods aim to develop new modes of transcultural philosophizing rather than doing traditional comparative philosophy. In other words, they are based upon procedures of “conceptual comparing” rather than merely “comparing concepts”. This challenging idea is based upon a self-critical account of comparative philosophy that has been long overdue. Two of the most widely known methods of such post-comparative approaches are denoted the philosophy of fusion and philosophy of synthesis, respectively. In my view, each of them has certain flaws, but due to space limitations I will not elaborate on this critique in this paper.⁷ Instead, I will propose another method that can be implemented in the framework of post-comparative approaches, i.e. the method of transcultural sublation.

Although similar to the term synthesis, “sublation” also forms a part of Hegelian lines of thought and could hence be problematic, it is still much less deflated than the concept of synthesis. On the other hand, its Latin origin encompasses all three notions that are of crucial importance for any process of creating something new from interactions between two or more different objects or phenomena. In this philosophical sense it has the three connotations of eliminating, preserving and arising. Besides, in contrast to “synthesis”, or “fusion”, the notion of “sublation” refers to a process rather than a stage.

This approach is not only about identifying differences and similarities between two or more philosophical discourses. With this method, certain aspects derived from philosophies of different cultures can be used contrastively as inspirations for our own philosophizing. In this sense, the tension between those contrastive aspects of philosophical perception and interpretation of reality can help us raise

7 My critical evaluation of both fusion and synthesis philosophy can be found in my recent book on the methodology of Chinese philosophy (see Rošker 2021).

our ideas to a new level and provide new insights by preserving certain elements of both aspects and eliminating others. In this way, it is possible to transcend the static notions of cultures in which the philosophies under comparison were embedded.

The basic structure of the sublation process is based on the following five steps or stages:

- *Step 1: Similarities* – first we identify the similarities of the two *comparanda*.
- *Step 2: Differences* – then we identify the differences between them by considering the main paradigms of the respective frames of reference to which they belong.
- *Step 3: Dialectic of eliminating and preserving* – in the next step we eliminate certain aspects of the two *comparanda* and preserve certain other elements. This decision does not arise automatically from the internal structure of dialectical thinking (as, for example, in Hegelian dialectics), but is the result of a conscious choice made on the basis of inspiration arising from the tension between the differences identified in Step 2.
- *Step 4: Sublation* – the process established in steps 1–3 leads us to a cognitive shift that is the condition for the possibility of the realization of step 5.
- *Step 5: New insight* – this new insight is the result of the shift accomplished in step 4. This new insight can manifest itself in one or more new ideas, propositions or theses.

In the following I will demonstrate the operation of this method by means of a contrastive analysis of two *comparanda* belonging to different cultures, namely Zeno's and Hui Shi's theses on the flying arrow problem.

Zeno's and Hui Shi's View of the Flying Arrow Problem

Let us now thus take a closer look at two other famous theorems of Zeno and Hui Shi, which at first sight are also very similar, although the two scholars were separated by great distances. Both are concerned with the observation and mechanics of flying arrows, i.e. with the question whether they move or not.

Step 1: We will proceed from similarities. The two similar theses to be compared are, first, Zeno's assumption that a flying arrow does not move, and, second, Hui

Shi's assertion that—at a given time—a flying arrow does not move but does not stand still either. Let us begin with Zeno. His assumption that there can be no motion also led him to believe that the “flying arrow is at rest” (Philoponus, cf. Lee 1967, 53).

Hui Shi discovered something that is, at first glance, quite similar:

The problem with the tip of the flying arrow is that there is a time when it does not move, nor does it stand still. (Zhuangzi s.t. Tianxia, *Za pian*, 7)

鏃矢之疾,而有不行不止之時.

Actually, the similarity of the two statements is quite superficial, for it only rests on the fact that both scholars aim to investigate the spatial, temporal and mechanical state of a flying arrow, and on the fact that their arguments differ from what we commonly assume about the state of flying arrows. But if the similarity is only apparent, where are the differences?

Step 2: The differences between the two arguments can be identified and explained by considering the referential framework in which each is embedded. Let us now take a look at the differences between the two propositions, from such a perspective.

Zeno starts from a referential framework whose basic paradigm is the unchanging, i.e. static, nature of being. Hui Shi's paradox, on the other hand, is embedded in the dynamic framework of change.

Zeno thought that since every object or entity is a form of being identical with itself, they are all necessarily immutable and static. Zeno was a faithful disciple of Parmenides, who thus sought to confirm his teacher's theory that reality is one, indivisible, and immovable. With this view Zeno explained the impossibility of change and motion. Thus, for any form of being in this totality, there can be neither a change in space nor a change in time. Therefore, the motion of the flying arrow is in reality the sum of innumerable static sections of space; it is not motion. In this way, Zeno actually denies the continuity of motion by dividing it into a series of successive, mutually isolated sequences of static space.

For Hui Shi, on the other hand, every object or entity has a multifaceted nature and can change depending on the point of observance, which is always relative. Hui Shi's presumption is relativistic, which means that his basic paradigm, i.e. the paradigm of change and motion, is also not absolute. It can only exist in a dialectical relation with stasis. According to the commentaries of Sima Biao (249–306) from the Jin dynasty, Hui Shi here proceeds from the two basic properties of the

arrow, namely its form (*xing* 形) and its potential (*shi* 势)⁸. While the form is fixed and unchangeable, and thus unmovable in the time and space of the flying arrow, its potential causes its movement. Hence, there is a time in which the flying arrow is at rest and, simultaneously, in motion.⁹

Step 3: Now we proceed to the next phase of our reasoning, i.e. to the dialectic of eliminating and preserving particular aspects or views included in the two *comparanda*. In this sense, Hui Shi's proposition includes and expands on Zeno's argument, but due to its insufficiency it also negates it. Zeno argues the flying arrow stands still. In Hui Shi's view, it does not stand still, (although it also doesn't move). What do we preserve and what do we eliminate in this dialectic of conflicting statements?

Indeed, from the viewpoint of form and potential, the flying arrow is at rest. However, it is also not at rest, because it is moving. In order to make room for a new understanding of the fundamental question of the existence and nature of motion, we decide to start from the processual view, which is closer to Hui Shi's theory. The reason for this decision is that dynamic flow is wider and leaves us more space for identifying new aspects of the basic question. The processual view can include both static and moving phases, whereas the unmovable and unchangeable being cannot include any motion. In other words, the dynamic can include the static, but not *vice versa*. Thus, we eliminate Zeno's basic presumption, according

8 Sima Biao wrote: “形分止，势分行；形分明者行迟，势分明者行疾。目明无形，分无所止，则其疾无间。矢疾而有间者，中有止也，质薄而可离，中有无及者也。” (Form denotes standstill, and force (tendency) denotes movement. When we cannot perceive the form of the arrow with our eyes because individual static sequences cannot be differentiated from one another, there is a problem of an absence of intermediacy. The problem with the intermediacy with the flying arrow is, again, that there are sequences of standing still in-between, which it can be isolated despite of their tiny duration. And this in-between is endless. (Sima Biao, cf Wang Jisheng 2021, 1)) This form and potential argument is reminiscent of Jin Yuelin's (1895–1984) ontology, because his interpretation of the ultimate cosmic principle *dao* 道 is likewise based upon a differentiation between form and potential, although he denotes the two terms with different terms: While Sima calls form *xing* 形 and potential *shi* 势, Jin denotes form *shi* 势 and potential *neng* 能 (see Jin 1997, 186–239).

9 However, Sima Biao's form and potential argument is not the only valid interpretation that can be made in consideration of Hui Shi's relativist view. In a private correspondence, Dan Lusthaus, for instance, has pointed out another possible explanation, which proceeds from the tip (or the head) of the flying arrow. It is not coincidental that the relativist Hui Shi speaks about the arrowhead and not simply about the arrow. The reason the arrowhead (*zushi* 鏃矢)—and not just the arrow—is at the same time not moving and not at rest, is because of what it is relative to: “Relative to the rest of the arrow, it is fixed and not moving from its position on the arrow; in terms of it being on an arrow that is in flight, it is moving. His claim could be expressed in its inverse as well—the arrow head is both moving and at rest. There is nothing metaphysical about his observation. It is entirely practical and concrete.” (Dan Lusthaus, Academia.edu. message to author, January 20, 2022)

to which there can be no movement, because entities of being that are identifiable with themselves cannot occupy different spaces. Instead, we preserve the processual presumption, according to which a flying arrow is—from the perspective of its potential—moving, but from the perspective of its form, it simultaneously stands still.

Step 4: The sublation phase starts from the viewpoint that the above-stated perspective is not an exhaustive explanation of Hui Shi's flying arrow proposition, because he does not say that there is a time in which the flying arrow is simultaneously moving and at a standstill. Actually, he claims the opposite, namely that there is a time in which a flying arrow is simultaneously not moving and not standing still. There is tension between these opposing notions, and this tension can lead us to a shift, a sublation of the two arguments.

Thus, according to the form and potential argument, the flying arrow moves and stands still at the same time. However, as mentioned above, this is not what Hui Shi explicitly says, for he states the opposite. But it is clear that we might see a new perspective in Hui Shi's flying arrow argument if we could explicitly connect the two perspectives.

Therefore, we will sublimate the argument of simultaneous movement and stasis in order to arrive at Hui Shi's opposite statement. This can be done when we place the first argument in the framework of Mohist philosophy, or, more concretely, in its explanation of the concept of antinomy using the example of a herd containing two kinds of animals, namely oxen and horses. A herd which simultaneously includes oxen and horses cannot be called a herd of oxen, nor a herd of horses. Considering and re-applying this formal type of antinomy, the following can analogously be claimed: if there is a time in which there is simultaneously movement and stasis, this is also a time which is not determined by (pure) movement and neither by (pure) stasis. In other words, the reason because of which such time is a moment in which the flying arrow is not in movement nor standing still is precisely because that very same moment comprises both movement and stasis, and can thus not be reduced to either of them. It is a moment in time in which there is no movement and no stasis.

Step 5: In this way, the use of the sublation method has led us to a new re-interpretation of Hui Shi's flying arrow paradox. This re-interpretation is based upon a threefold insight. This threefold insight is structured in the following way:

- A) The apparent similarity of Zeno's and Hui Shi's flying arrow arguments is only superficial, because they are both embedded in different referential frameworks.

- B) The processual nature of Hui Shi's framework of reference leads us to the form and potential argument, which allows for simultaneous movement and stasis.
- C) Simultaneous movement and stasis can be transferred into simultaneous non-movement and non-stasis by consideration of the Mohist concept of antinomy.

Conclusion

I hope this demonstration has helped us to understand the meaning and process of the so-called sublation method. The similarities identified went beyond the boundaries of the respective cultural contexts in which they were originally developed. The identification of the differences did not proceed from the search for differences in the cultural backgrounds, but from different paradigms determined by the two frames of reference in which the respective sentences were developed. In this way, it is possible to overcome the static notions of cultures in which the philosophies being compared were embedded. In other words, the sublation method can help us overcome the time and space that determine certain notions shaped by different cultural discourses.

In addition, this paper has also shown that Hui Shi was a kind of logician concerned mainly with the metaphysical foundations of logical discourses rather than with their purely formal principles.¹⁰ In this sense, it is clear that his contribution to the specific character of classical Chinese logical thought was of paramount importance. Indeed, he showed that none of the seemingly isolated propositions such as form and potential—any more than the notions of stillstand and motion—can function as independent or isolated concepts in the immanence of real, concrete life, which is inherently relational and governed by ceaseless change.

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¹⁰ These metaphysical foundations were often incompatible with formal logic, in which antagonisms such as that between static and dynamic qualities are not valid (see Vrhovski 2021, 87).

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