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ECHOING RULERSHIP—UNDERSTANDING MUSICAL REFERENCES IN THE *HUAINANZI*

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Abstract

The *Huainanzi* text (淮南子 presented in 139 B.C.E. compiled by Liu An 劉安 179–122 B.C.E.), while defining itself as a political guide, is replete with references to Music (*yue* 樂) itself and music-related terms. While no chapter of the work's twenty-one chapters is specifically dedicated to the subject of music, no single chapter of it is without musical references. This gives rise to the question: Which functions could music possibly have in such an overtly political text?

What this article will examine are the interactions between music and the social and political spheres in the *Huainanzi*. An analysis of the text's musical references reveals an intriguing, multidimensional attitude toward music, touching upon moral discourse, discourse on political power, cosmological perceptions, and much more.

The article suggests a dual function of music in the text—on the one hand, music serves as a rhetorical tool for the authors of the *Huainanzi*, and on the other hand, it is a subject of discussion in its own right. For each of these functions of music, a model is proposed. The first model depicts the innovative musical conceptions of the *Huainanzi*; the second demonstrates how, through an analysis of musical references in the text, a model of sagely rulership is revealed. These models are illustrated and embodied in the human realm.

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舜為天子, 彈五弦之琴, 歌《南風》之詩, 而天下治。[1]

When Shun was the son of Heaven, he plucked a five-stringed zither, sang "the Airs of the South," and thereupon, the world was governed.[2] (*Huainanzi*, "Tai zu")

While emperors may not have governed their empire with a tune, the subject of music was part and parcel of political and philosophical discourse in Warring States and early imperial China. From as early as the *Book of Odes* (between c. 1000–c. 600 B.C.E.) and *The Analects* of Confucius (compiled fifth century B.C.E.),[3] there is textual evidence for the importance of musical activities, especially within the context of state-ritual. Texts compiled between the early fifth and late second centuries demonstrate a development of written musical theories. Musical ideas are all the more prominent in texts compiled toward the end of the Warring States period, where music is increasingly associated directly with concepts of governance and ideas of the time. Xunzi 荀子 (c. 340—c. 245 B.C.E.) marries it with ritual, an idea that would last for centuries to come,[4] and the *Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 (compiled by Lü Buwei 吕不韋 around mid-third century B.C.E.) strongly associates musical ideas with cosmological notions.

In 139 Liu An 劉安 (179–122 B.C.E.), king of Huainan 淮南, presented a text compiled under his patronage to Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 B.C.E.), who had ascended the throne only two years earlier. The text, known as the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 or *Huainan Honglie* 淮南鴻烈, is a twenty-one chapter compendium, which includes discussions on a wide variety of subjects (e.g. cosmology, topography, self-cultivation, ritual). The text sets itself the task of providing its reader with a comprehensive knowledge of both the human realm and the cosmic principles that preside over it.

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1. (*Huainanzi*, 20.825 "Tai zu" 泰族) see following footnote for reference method.

2. All the translations in the following article are my own work. In my translations of passages from the *Huainanzi* itself, I rely heavily on the 2010 translation by Major et al. See John Major et al., trans. and eds., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early China* (New York: Columbia University Press. 2010). Where my translation departs significantly from theirs, I footnote it and explain my choice of translation. As for Chinese texts: the *Huainanzi* passages are cited from Liu Wendian 劉文典, ed., *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2013), and are referenced in parentheses in the following manner: (*Huainanzi*, chapter number.page number, "Chapter title"). Additional primary texts are footnoted individually for reference.

3. All specific years mentioned hereafter refer to Before the Common Era (B.C.E.).

4. The *Xunzi* itself seems to be praising music as a counter-reaction to Mozi's 墨子 (c. 470–c. 391 B.C.E.) negation of it in his "Fei yue" 非樂 ("Negating Music") chapter. Despite it being a negative allusion to the concept of music (see n. 24), it is an important one to consider, possibly being the very first Chinese political discussion specifically dedicated to the subject of music.

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In recent decades, after being largely ignored for years, the *Huainanzi* has received much scholarly attention from both Western and Chinese researchers. Among other topics, its cosmological and cosmogonic theories, the question of the intellectual affiliation of the text, and its rhetoric have been thoroughly surveyed,[5] and the first complete translations into English and French published.[6] One aspect that has not been fully explored is the presence of numerous references to music throughout the text. While presenting itself as a guide to the sage-ruler, the *Huainanzi* is replete with references to Music (*yue* 樂) and music-related terms. Though none of its chapters is formally dedicated to musical discussions, not a single chapter is without musical allusions.

The appearance of music in a political text within the context of the Han era is not entirely unexpected. By the time of the compilation of the *Huainanzi* at the court of Liu An, there already existed a rich lore of musical allegories and a repertoire of ceremonial, ritual, and folk musical pieces, as well as a relatively developed musical theory, which included empirical aspects (i.e., observation of actual phenomena and their description) and was absorbed within cosmological theories of the time.[7] Yet such a vast variety of references in one compilation is worthy of an in-depth examination. An analysis of its musical references can teach us much about the text, especially when we juxtapose it with existing world views of its time.

While Western scholarship has scarcely touched upon the subject,[8] Chinese scholarship had dedicated a fair amount of attention to it, and

5. To quote but a few monographs commonly cited in this article: on cosmology in the text, see John S. Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four and Five of the Huainanzi* (Albany: University of New York Press, 1993); on intellectual affiliation, rhetoric, text structure, and more: Sarah A. Queen and Michael Puett, eds., *The Huainanzi and Textual Production in Early China* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014); on rhetoric and the principle of resonance in the text: Charles Le Blanc, *Huai Nan Tzu* 淮南子*: Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought—the Idea of Resonance (Kan-Ying* 感應*) with a Translation and Analysis of Chapter Six* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985).

6. English: Major et al., *Huainanzi* (see n. 2); French: Charles Le Blanc and Rémi Mathieu, eds., *Philosophes Taoïstes, II, Huainan Zi* (Paris: Gallimard, Collection Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2003).

7. Lothar von Falkenhausen presents a short survey of the evolution of early Chinese writings on music. See Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended Music: Chime-Bells in the Culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1–5.

8. A brief survey of some of the musical references in the text was published as early as 1914 by Louis Laloy; and the cosmological and theoretical appearances of music in chapters 3, 4, and 5 have been thoroughly researched by John S. Major. Yet, the social and political functions of the multiple musical references within the text have been largely ignored in the West. See Louis Laloy, "Hoai-nan Tze et la musique," *T'oung Pao* (2nd. ser.) 15.4 (1914), 501–30; Major, *Heaven and Earth.*

footnote continued on next page

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especially to the aesthetic and philosophical aspects of the musical thought in the text. Above all, it focuses on pointing out and resolving philosophical "contradictions" (*mao dun* 矛盾) that exist within the musical realm of the *Huainanzi*. Probably the most discussed among these contradictions are those between "sounded music" (*yousheng zhi yue* 有聲之樂) and "soundless music" (*wusheng zhi yue* 無聲之樂),[9] "roots" and "branches" (*ben/mo* 本/末),[10] and "interior" and "exterior" (*nei/wai* 內/外). Pioneering among the scholars who have defined these contradicting elements was Cai Zhongde 蔡忠德, whose ideas have ever since been echoed by many Chinese academics.[11] Still, the topic of the relation between the musical thought of the text and its practical applications remains largely untouched.[12]

This article thus explores the interactions between music and the social and political spheres in the *Huainanzi.* I will attempt to examine what motivated the authors in their extensive use of musical references: is there an underlying principle present throughout the musical references in the *Huainanzi*? What new light can we shed on the understanding of Liu An's compendium through an exploration of his approach to music? And why did such dedicated attention to music not result in a chapter specifically addressing the subject, as it did in other contemporary texts?

The method of work in the current research was one of bottom-up textual analysis. My first step was to read through the whole of the

9. While these ideas are clearly debated in the *Huainanzi*, none of these terms actually appears in the text as such. The term *wusheng zhi yue* appears several times in the *Li ji* and is attributed to Confucius. The current article will touch upon the subject of soundlessness, albeit from a different point of view—as a part of the generative process of musical creation. See discussion below.

10. This discussion is also prominent in Western scholarship and will be discussed in more detail below.

11. See Cai Zhongde 蔡仲德 *Zhongguo yinyue meixue shi* 中國音樂美學史 (Beijing: renmin yinyue, 1997), 270–96. To name but a few additional related articles (in large also revolving around such contradictions and their solutions): Wang Zhicheng 王志成 "*Huainanzi* zhong de yinyue meixue sixiang"《淮南子》中的音樂美學思想, in *Yinyue Tansuo*, vol. 4 (2002), 44–48; Xiu Hailin 修海林 and Luo Xiaoping 羅小平, *yinyue meixue tonglun* 音樂美學通論 (Shanghai: yinyue, 1999); Zhou Zhenxi 周振錫 "*Huainanzi* zhong de yinyue lilun"《淮南子》中的音樂理論, *Huangzhong* 黃鐘 (Journal of Wuhan Music Conservatory, 1996), 1–6.

12. One piece of research that does draw a line between Liu An's role as a ruler and the musical thought of the *Huainanzi* is Zhang Jingya's 張靜亞 Master's thesis. In addition to presenting the main philosophical contradictions hitherto discussed in Chinese scholarship, Zhang suggests that there exist connections between social-political practices (such as ritual and governance) and the musical theories of the text, and that these reflect the spirit of Liu An's political preferences. See Zhang Jingya, *Huainanzi yinyue meixue sixiang de maodun tongyi xing*《淮南子》音乐美学思想的矛盾统一性, Henan University, Music Studies Master's thesis, 2010.

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Huainanzi and mark any word, sentence, or paragraph that seemed somewhat related to music or the world of sound. While reading through, I took note of any distinguishable groups of references (e.g. references to the "Ritual and Music" [禮樂] pair, cosmological references, etc.). Only after so doing, did I turn to secondary scholarship and additional primary sources and start with the piece-by-piece construction of what for me was an intriguing puzzle.

For the sake of analysis, it was important to understand what "musical references," are, as well as rule out references that are "not musical." Generally, all of the musical or music-oriented data that was collected from the *Huainanzi* falls under the following definition given by ethnomusicologist Bell Yung, who writes:

> [The scope of music in the context of Chinese ritual] includes musical instruments, musicians, song texts, and musical notation, as well as the uses and functions of music, the learning process, the cognitive and creative processes, musical concepts and theories, and other considerations and related issues.[13]

Yung's concise definition provides a good point of departure for explaining what are regarded in my research as musical references. All that seems sonic or music-related in the text falls under one of the elements in his definition, and, perhaps with the exception of musical notation, of which we do not have evidence as early as the Han dynasty,[14] all elements in his definition are somehow reflected in the text:

- ***Musical instruments, musicians, uses and functions of music, the learning process, the cognitive and creative process, musical theories***—references embedding any of these were considered directly as "musical." With regard to *musical instruments*, objects that were not produced with the aim of issuing sound, but are used as makeshift

13. Bell Yung, "The Nature of Chinese Ritual Sound," in *Harmony and Counterpoint: Ritual Music in Chinese Context*, ed. Bell Yung, Evelyn S. Rawski, and Rubie S. Watson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 14.

14. We do not have certain evidence for any form of notation at that time, or information about the exact way of transmitting music. A curious possible piece of evidence for a method of musical transmission, however, is included in the story of Duke Ping and Master Kuang (also discussed in the following pages) as depicted in the *Hanfeizi*. See *Hanfeizi xin jiaozhu* 韩非子新校注 (Shanghai: Zhonghua yaoji jishi congshu, 2000) 10.205–12 "Shi guo" 十過. Duke Ping's guest, Duke Ling, hears a tune he likes, and asks his Music Master to "listen and *xie* it for me" (為我聽而寫之). This *xie* 寫, at the time of *Hanfeizi*, did not denote writing but expressed a transmission, mimicking, sketching. Music Master Juan thereupon "sits holding the *qin* and '*xie*'s' it" (坐撫琴而寫之). The fact that he was holding his *qin* means he may have "transcribed" the tune onto the instrument itself, meaning that having heard it, he copied it by playing.

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instruments were also noted (e.g. "drummed on their bellies" 鼓腹 2.57, "Chu zhen" 俶真, "knock on pots and tap on jars" 叩盆拊瓿 7.284, "Jing shen" 精神).

- ***Musical concepts***—the ambiguity of some Chinese characters may at times make it difficult to determine whether a word appearing in a text is "a musical concept" or not. The most obvious example of such ambiguity is that of the very character used to denote the general term "Music"—the character 樂—which can be read as either *yue*, meaning "Music," or *le*, meaning happiness, joy, to rejoice and so on.[15] When clearly referring to the mere emotion of joy, I did not consider it to be a musical reference. In the same way, "musical verbs" such as *he* 和 (also pronounced *huo*—harmony/to harmonize/to mix),[16] *tiao* 調 (also *diao*, to tune or to regulate), and *zhang* 張 (to tune a stringed instrument/string a bow/stretch, etc.) often appear in non-musical context (e.g. "the ruler and ministers are not in harmony" [君臣不和] 8.299 "Ben jing" 本經). When not in musical context, they were not regarded as musical references.[17] Musical concepts that were always considered as relevant references were names of notes (either from the pentatonic scale or the pitch-standards), tune titles, and names of contemporary musical styles.

- ***Song texts***—the *Huainanzi* cites the canonical text of the *Odes* (or *Book of Odes*, *Shi jing* 詩經) twenty-one times. The usage of poetical texts as canonical is noteworthy, however the citations themselves usually have nothing to do with music, and are more likely to be making a moral point. Thus, unless cited within a musical context, such citations were not taken to be "musical references." Much more relevant, though, is the way in which the *Huainanzi* talks *about* the *Odes*. As poems and their rhythmic structure are often perceived

15. A detailed discussion about the meaning of the term *yue* and its translation follows.

16. Although I adhere in this article to the common translation of *he* as "harmony," one should bear in mind that the ancient term *he* is not completely identical in meaning (or in its various meanings) to the Latin/Greek *harmonia* that comes to mind when speaking of harmony. It is possible that the Chinese *he* originates in several different characters, meaning musical concord, but also a successful mixture of flavours. For a discussion on the meanings of *he* and its comparison with Greek notions of harmony, see Chenyang Li, "The Ideal of Harmony in Ancient Chinese and Greek Philosophy," *Dao* 7 (2008), 81–98.

17. By excluding these terms from the scope of "musical references," I might differ from other scholars. Erica Fox Brindley, e.g., chooses to dedicate attention to the notion of *he* as part of the world of music, though acknowledging that it is does not always appear as merely musical. See Erica Fox Brindley, *Music, Cosmology, and the Politics of Harmony in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 12–20.

as a tool for governance (see below, "the fake scholar"), references to the *Book of Odes* (and not mere citations from it) were taken to be musical references.

- ***Other considerations and related issues***—related issues include some important references to the sense of hearing, which help us to understand why and on what basis it is perceived as important. The relations between sound and silence are also important in the text, as "silence is the great ancestor of sound" (see next section) and in an ideal world, as we shall soon learn, people live in silence and are not stirred by the alluring sounds of music. Thus, in order to understand fully the concept of music in the *Huainanzi*, references relating to sounds in general, and the lack of sound, were also explored.

In recent years, many studies of early Chinese texts, and in particular studies of the *Huainanzi*, have taken a quantitative approach, i.e., used tables and statistics enumerating the frequencies of specific terms (or sets of terms) or concepts in the text (or in several texts) to make their points. Two of many examples of effective usage of such approach in *Huainanzi* scholarship can be found in John Major's recent article on tool metaphors in the *Huainanzi*, and in Charles Le Blanc's monograph on the concept of resonance in the text. Major substantiates his suggestions as to dating and political tendencies of some texts by showing that they use specific tools in a frequency similar to that of the *Huainanzi*; and Le Blanc maps the *Huainanzi*'s usage of other sources in order to later demonstrate where and how the text departs from them.[18]

In light of the complexity in defining musical references (as well as music itself as a coherent term, as will be discussed below), it was impractical to take such an approach in this article. While very specific aspects of music could be examined this way, this article deals with music in its broad sense. It does not deal with the term *yue* alone, but takes into account the vast world of musical phenomena as reflected in the text as well as reflecting it. Dozens of terms were thus taken into account. Additionally, a single "musical" term can denote the "musicality" of a whole paragraph (which may be much too wide in scope to be defined as a single "musical reference"). Hence, musical references are not quantified in the following article.

Although the *Huainanzi* was written by a large number of authors, the current discussion treats it as bearing an overall unified view of music. Though some very subtle contradictions within its treatment of music

18. See John Major, "Tool Metaphors in the *Huainanzi* and Other Early Texts," in Queen and Puett, 153–98, table on p. 182; Le Blanc, *Huai Nan Tzu*, 79–99, table on p. 83. Additional articles in *Huainanzi and Textual Production* also use quantitative methods.

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may be found, pointing them out is beyond the scope or the aim of this work. Additionally, the debates over the intellectual affiliation of the text and its main influences are complex, and have not been included in this article. I generally adopt Sarah Queen's approach and take the text to be what it proclaims itself to be—a text presenting a comprehensive view that does not affiliate itself with any specific existing stream of thought.[19]

The first part of this article explores the concept of music through the eyes of the *Huainanzi*—what does the text tell us about music? How did its authors understand, and think about, music? The second part addresses the question of what do the *Huainanzi*'s references to music teach us about the text? (Namely, what does the text mean to say through its references to music?) Each of these sections will propose a model that answers its respective underlying question. I will then briefly present some applications of these models through music in the human realm, by surveying several archetypal figures and the way the *Huainanzi* portrays them in the light of their "musical" conduct. My main claims will be as follows: first, the *Huainanzi* offers a unique perception of music and its process of generation, which reverses the hierarchy within the world of sonic phenomena as it existed in other texts of the time. Secondly, using its theories on music, we can construct a clear model of rulership that incorporates several notions suggested by scholars of the text up to today. Lastly, the *Huainanzi* shows consistency of thought, and its models are reflected in the way it discusses typical figures in the human realm.

"Listen to Its Sounds": Music in the Eyes of the *Huainanzi*

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing
the inexpressible is music."
Aldous Huxley, *Music at Night and Other Essays*

19. See Sarah A. Queen, "Inventories of the Past: Rethinking the 'School' Affiliation of the *Huainanzi*," in *Asia Major* 14.1 (2001), 51–72. Queen states (54) that "to impose […] an identification would negate all that its authors sought to achieve." The discussion of the text's intellectual affiliation is still ongoing, the main tendencies varying between categorization of it as an eclectic work, in accordance with its late Han categorization by Sima Tan as "miscellaneous" (*zajia* 雜家), or a work with no specific affiliation (Queen above), to affiliating it with early forms of "Daoism" (affiliations with Huang-lao 黃老 thought or inner cultivation practices)—for the latter see Harold D. Roth, "Daoist Inner Cultivation Thought and the Textual Structure of the *Huainanzi*," in Queen and Puett, 40–83. Cai Zhongde concludes (and his conclusion is adopted by many Chinese scholars in years to follow) that the existence of the philosophical contradictions in the text symbolizes an integration of "Ruist" views into "Daoist" ones, representing a Han dynasty "new daoism" (*Han dai xin daojia* 漢代新道家) that is promoted by the *Huainanzi* authors. See Cai, 296.

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If we want music to tell us about any text, we first have to understand what music itself means. The concept of music is an enigmatic one, and any attempt at framing it into a definition shall be subject to interpretation and debate. It is, by nature, so broad, complex, and determined by variations in culture, that even from a linguistic perspective it is difficult to define. In the words of Bruno Nettl, "most languages don't have a term to encompass music as a total phenomenon."[20] In the case of Chinese there is, of course, the term *yue* 樂—however, as we shall soon see, it too is limited in scope and falls short of being a comprehensive and all-inclusive term.

Consequently, when looking into the music of a text such as the *Huainanzi*, we need not define what *music* is. Rather, we should explore what is included under the scope of music *in the specific text* we study, and ascertain how its perceptions coincide or clash with those of its era. In a recent article, John Major suggested that our understanding of the *Huainanzi* would benefit from an exploration of the role of musical metaphors in the text.[21] While many musical metaphors indeed appear throughout the text, the scope of musical references in it is far from being limited to the metaphorical; quite the contrary—musical metaphors take up a relatively minor part of the rich variety of references to music in the text. Additional rhetorical usages of music include multiple narratives involving music, or concrete argumentative discussions on various topics such as morality, physical and natural theories, and so on. An inquiry into the music of the *Huainanzi* as reflected through these references reveals a unique, even innovative perception, as shall be demonstrated below.

By and large, the *Huainanzi* discusses music in two different ways. One way we may define here as "Theory" and the other as "Moral Philosophy." "Theory" includes technical observations and descriptions of natural or cosmological phenomena, i.e., basic ways in which the universe operates. These could include acoustic theories (the origin of sound and its production, including accurate calculations) or cosmological/cosmogonic theories about the Way (*dao* 道) and its workings. "Moral philosophy" includes discussions about what one should and should not do, how one should or should not behave, and so on. Often, discussions about moral philosophy make use of the theoretical knowledge, or refer to it, reflecting upon the question of what is the "right" way to implement it.

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20. Bruno Nettl, "The Art of Combining Tones: The Music Concept," in Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983, 2005), 21. The cited entry (occupying pp. 16–26) contains a stimulating and concise discussion of the concept of music.

21. John Major, "Tool Metaphors in the *Huainanzi*," 153, n. 1.

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On the technical and empirical aspects, the *Huainanzi* demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the musical theory of its time. Musical elements are widely incorporated into its three major cosmological chapters (chapters 3–5), which include accurate mathematical calculations of musical intervals not found in texts preceding the *Huainanzi*'s compilation. Additionally, on many occasions the text demonstrates knowledge of the way in which musical phenomena operate, for instance the amount of pressure to be put on strings in musical instruments, the phenomenon of acoustic resonance, and so on. As striking and noteworthy as the *Huainanzi*'s technical musical notions are, they have been widely surveyed before and shall not be revisited here.[22] However, we should keep in mind the very fact of this attention to the theory of music, which emphasizes the importance the *Huainanzi* attaches to the natural phenomena at the root of music. Henceforth, this kind of reference will be mentioned only if it serves the main aim of this article, namely to understand the role that musical references play in the *Huainanzi*.

On the moral-philosophical aspect, the *Huainanzi* more often talks *by means* of music than it does *about* music. But a few passages distributed across the text demonstrate a clear, indeed unique, theory, not only about what music is and where it arises from, but also about its role within society. The following passage, in which the authors define the evolution of music, is a good starting point:

> 樂生於音，音生於律，律生於風，此聲之宗也。法生於義，義生於眾適，眾適合於人心，此治之要也。故通於本者不亂於末，睹於要者不惑於詳。法者，非天墮，非地生，發於人間，而反以自正。(*Huainanzi*, 9.356, "Zhu shu" 主術)

> Music arises from the patterned-sounds; the patterned-sounds arise from the pitch-standards; the pitch-standards arise from the winds. These are the fundamentals of sound. Law arises from righteousness; righteousness arises from all that is fitting; all that is fitting corresponds with the human heart. These are the essentials of government. Hence, he who penetrates through the root shall not find chaos in the twigs

22. In addition to his monograph *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*, cited above, Major dedicates an article specifically to the technical and cosmological musical theory of the *Huainanzi*. See Major, "Celestial Cycles and Mathematical Harmonies in the *Huainanzi*," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 16 (1994), 121–34. Besides Major, who conducted comprehensive research exclusively on the *Huainanzi*, the unprecedented calculations made in the text are mentioned in numerous other articles relating to the development of Chinese Musical theory. See, e.g., Ernest G. McClain, "Chinese Cyclic Tuning in Late Antiquity. With translations by Ming Shui Hung," *Ethnomusicology* 23.2 (1979), 205–24.

> and branches; he who observes the essentials shall not be befuddled by the details. As for Law, it was not sent down from Heaven, neither did it arise from Earth. It was issued from amongst humans, and [they] return with it to their upright selves.

The first sentence of this passage clearly portrays the generative process of sonic phenomena. Music (*yue* 樂) is presented as the last generation in the sequence of these phenomena, after patterned-sounds (*yin* 音), pitch-standards (*lü* 律), and winds (*feng* 風), all within the great family of sound (*sheng* 聲). A certain hierarchy exists between these four members of the sound family. This hierarchy is expressed by means of analogy to "roots" and "branches," and can be better understood once the meanings of the concepts themselves are clarified, see below.

Yue in early Chinese terminology in general, as well as in the *Huainanzi*, refers specifically to that kind of music composed or created by humans, an end product, and not to any music-related natural phenomena. Such human composition encompasses not only the audible aspects of music, but also its performative and visual aspects. Hence dance is also included within it, and visual aids such as banners and feathers, axes and shields, denote its presence in the same way that musical instruments do.[23] In this article, I follow Scott Cook in translating *yue* as Music ("M" capitalized), a term that the reader should read as incorporating all of the elements mentioned above.[24] In the passage above, Music is paralleled with law (*fa* 法). The parallelism is followed by the

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23. A proof that Music is not only an audible concept, but also a visual one, is the reference: 目觀掉羽、武象之樂 (*Huainanzi*, 1.44 "Yuan dao" 原道)—"When *the eyes observe* the Music of the 'falling feathers' or the 'Martial Images' […]"—the eyes, thus, can observe *yue*, meaning it is not merely audible. The two compositions mentioned in this reference are musical pieces, the first said to have been composed by the Duke of Zhou (Major et al., 72). Scott Cook suggests keeping in mind that *yue* is still first and foremost a sonic phenomenon, and dance is but the final extension of this development. See Cook, *Unity and Diversity in the Musical Thought of Warring States China*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of Michigan, 1995), 53–54.

24. Scott Cook, "'Yue ji' 樂記: Record of Music: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary," *Asian Music* 26.2 (Spring–Summer 1995), 21. I also support Ori Tavor's suggestion of translating *yue* as "musical performance." However, having defined this ("capitalized") "Music," I see no need to use the longer term here. See Tavor, review of Brindley's "Music, Cosmology, and the Politics of Harmony," *Journal of Asian Studies* 72.4 (2013), 970. As mentioned above, the character 樂 may refer to *yue*—Music, or *le*—joy, to rejoice, pleasure, and so on. In this article, its translations alter between the two meanings, depending on context. At times, the meaning appears ambiguous (such ambiguity is often the conscious choice of Western Han authors). In such cases, I have chosen one translation that in my eyes fits the context better. The word "music" (lowercase "m") will denote the concept of music in its broader, all-inclusive sense (and not be used to translate any specific word).

clarification that law is not a divine or cosmological phenomenon, but the work of man, created in order to enable a return to the natural principles from which it arises. Music, as its parallel, is also a man-made product, belonging to the world of sound.

Yin are principally any patterned forms of sound. The word *yin* has previously been translated as *tones, tunes*, [pentatonic] *notes, voices/timbres* or *music*.[25] All the above translations make sense in their own contexts, however it is important to know and understand the reasoning that makes all these choices possible.

The conception of *yin* by Early Han theorists, followed also by the authors of the *Huainanzi*, is concisely articulated in the *Yue ji*:[26] "Sound that achieves refined-pattern is called *yin*"(聲成文, 謂之音).[27] According to this perception, once a sound is ordered into a pattern,[28] it is termed *yin*. Thus, sounds arranged as a musical scale (tones, or notes if marked with names), composed into a musical piece (tune), categorized as having a certain instrumental quality (timbre/voice) or produced as part of a performance (music), all are types of *yin*.[29]

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25. Most authors use several different translations for *yin*, according to context. Cook, noting that this term signifies the transition from mere sounds to music, decides to translate it generally as "music." See Cook, "'Yue Ji' 樂記—Record of Music," 19–21.

26. The *Yue ji* appears as a chapter in the eclectic *Li ji* 禮記, as well as being incorporated in its entirety into the "Yue shu" 樂書 chapter of Sima Qian's *Shi ji* 史記 (compiled c. 100). It is generally agreed among scholars nowadays that the *Yue ji* does not pre-date the time of Han Wudi (r. 141–87 B.C.E.). It is also claimed by some that the "Yue shu" was not added to the *Shi ji* by Sima Qian himself, but was a later addition to the text: Martin Kern, e.g., gives convincing evidence to show that at least the parts of the "Yue shu" other than the "Yue ji" are probably a late Western/early Eastern Han addition. The *Yue ji* itself may or may not have existed earlier, and it draws largely upon *Xunzi*'s "Yue lun." Since it seems to have circulated separately from these texts, I refer to it here as an independent work (thus it appears italicized). In citing it, I use the following editions: *Li ji jijie* 礼记集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989) for the "Yue ji" (chapter 19), *Shi ji lunwen* 史記論文 (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1967) for the "Yue shu" (chapter 24). For discussions on the dating of "Yue ji" and "Yue shu" chapters respectively, see Cook, "Yue Ji—Record of Music," 3–10; Martin Kern, "A Note on the Authenticity and Ideology of Shih-chi 24, 'The Book of Music,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.4 (1999), 673–77.

27. *Li ji jijie* 19.976 "Yue ji"; *Shi ji lunwen* 24.114 "Yue shu." Hereafter "Yue ji," "Yue shu."

28. The kind of pattern remains unspecified, however the character wen 文 denotes a pattern which is of cultured, human qualities. The human aspect of *yin* is a main characteristic that differentiates it from *sheng*.

29. For an interesting discussion about *yin* see Kenneth J. DeWoskin, *A Song for One or Two: Music and the Concept of Art in Early China* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982), 52–53. DeWoskin puts it well: "Yin is sound that is patterned or marked by virtue of being placed in an ordered context."

Often, *yin* appears as an abbreviation for *wuyin* 五音—"the five [pentatonic] tones." The pentatonic tones are a group of five notes, related to each other by means of the melodic intervals between them. Their mutual dependency makes these five tones themselves a musical pattern.[30] This pattern does not have a fixed pitch, meaning that in principle one could start singing these tones at any chosen pitch, and get a *wuyin* pattern as long as they adhered to the correct set of intervals between them.

In this article when *yin* is mentioned within a theoretical frame and without a different fitting context or as part of a binome, I translate it as *patterned-sounds* (or, in some cases, *sound-patterns*). When the specific pattern it denotes is clear (e.g. *guan xiao you yin* 管簫有音 "pipes and flutes have voices/timbre"), I shall translate it accordingly.

Lü (hereafter "pitch-standards") are a series of twelve absolute pitches, essentially serving as markers that enabled musical ensembles to play along with each other. As von Falkenhausen puts it, "In a nutshell, pitch-standards were a means of defining musical notes, but were not notes themselves."[31] The *Lüshi chunqiu* tells us how the Yellow Emperor sends Ling Lun 伶倫 to create pitches. Ling Lun thereupon cuts bamboo pipes and creates twelve pitch-pipes (all generated from the first pipe he cuts, which he calls "Yellow Bell" *Huang zhong* 黃鍾), six of them emulating the calls of the male phoenix and six emulating the calls of the female. Following that, he is asked by the Yellow Emperor to "cast twelve bells, by means of which to harmonize the five tones" (以和五音).[32] Carefully calculated, the pitch-standards were considered a human revelation of a cosmic standard. Existing from at least as early as the fifth century B.C.E. as two sets of six standards, they evolved into a unified set of twelve during the Warring States period, side by side with the development of cosmological theories. As such, they appear in many

30. According to DeWoskin (44), prior to the fourth century B.C.E. the *wuyin* possibly denoted not only patterns of five different notes, but also fivefold groups of other musical qualities such as timbre, volume, and so on.

31. Lothar von Falkenhausen, "On the Early Development of Chinese Musical Theory: The Rise of Pitch-Standards," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112.3 (1992), 436.

As a way to clarify the relations between the two systems (pitch-standards and notes), one might say that principally speaking, if you asked two musicians to play a *shang* (one of the five tones) on their instruments, they would look at you and ask—"Which *shang*?!," to which you would reply something like "A *Shang* in 'Responsive Bell' standard!" Only then will they know which note to produce that would correspond to their colleague's playing.

32. *Lüshi chunqiu xin jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋 (Shanghai: Guji, 2002), 5.5.288 "Gu yue" 古樂.

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cosmological and calendrical accounts as corresponding to the twelve months and the twelve earthly branches.

Finally, *feng* literally refers to winds. A natural phenomenon, winds were known to stir and provoke sound by means of vibration. Elsewhere in the *Huainanzi* the authors refer to the same phenomenon: "[It is] like the winds encountering reed-pipes offhandedly stirring them, each responds by high or low [notes]!" (若風之遇簫，忽然感之，各以清濁應矣. *Huainanzi*, 11.422 "Qi su" 齊俗).[33]

The nature of the process of musical generation now becomes clear—Music, a human creation, is traced back, each step moving closer to a less artificial, more natural term. This tracking is displayed in order to enable the reader to "penetrate the root," thus implying that the root, the essential part of the sonic phenomena, lies in their natural origins.

Lü 律, Sheng 聲, Yin 音, and Yue 樂—the Generation of Music

The conceptualization of Music as a human creation, as well as the division between Music, sound, and patterned-sounds, are not unique to the *Huainanzi*. The three concepts were recognized as interrelated (but distinct) probably as early as the late Spring and Autumn period (fifth century B.C.E.).[34] Some relations between them were discussed in Warring States texts,[35] and by the Western Han these relations had been thoroughly examined and described in detail.

The insertion of pitch-standards and winds into such discussions, however, is not as commonly seen in early texts. Similar descriptions of the role of pitch-standards as organizers of sound can be found in texts dating to much earlier, e.g. in the *Guo yu* 國語 (c. fifth–fourth centuries B.C.E.), stating that "with sounds one brings harmony to Music, with pitch-standards one brings equilibrium to sounds" (聲以

33. With this, the *Huainanzi* resonates the views of the *Zhuangzi*. For discussions on *Zhuangzi*'s view on winds and piping, see Shigehisa Kuriyama, "The Imagination of Winds and the Development of the Chinese Conception of the Body," in *Body, Subject, and Power in China*, ed. Angelo Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 33–34; Park So Jeong, "Musical Thought in the *Zhuangzi*: A Criticism of the Confucian Discourse on Ritual and Music," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 12.3 (2013), 341–42. Zhou Zhenxi suggests that *feng* means that it refers to songs of the people, i.e. "airs," such as the *feng* poems that appear in the *Odes* (see Zhou Zhenxi, *Huainanzi zhong de yinyue lilun*, 4). However, in light of the nature of the discussions in the text, it is more likely that the *Huainanzi* echoes the ideological concepts of the *Zhuangzi*.

34. Cook, *Unity and Diversity*, 60. Also Li Chenyang. *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), 40.

35. E.g., the "Yue lun" 樂論 chapter of *Xunzi*, where sounds are said to be issued by people as an expression of joy, requiring an orderly formation in the shape of Music.

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和樂，律以平聲).[36] These, however, exist within a completely different discourse, predating the lengthy musical disquisitions developed in the late Warring States by philosophers such as Xunzi. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, compiled slightly later than the *Xunzi*, does include the pitch-standards within its musical chapters, however it confines them largely to cosmological and cosmogonic accounts. It is in the *Huainanzi* that, for the first time, the pitch-standards appear in a cosmological context while also being presented as deeply involved in the generation of the human Music. They are directly affiliated with both the aesthetic phenomenon of music and its underlying ethics. Not only do they appear in the very same paragraph that depicts the emergence of law (as seen above); they are also discussed as an aesthetic standard in several additional places in the text: the *Huainanzi* claims that those capable of tuning instruments or composing musical pieces, or just capable singers, must *bi yu lü* 比於律 "be in accord with the pitch-standards."[37] The pitch-standards are hence fully incorporated by the *Huainanzi* authors into the world of aesthetic creation, and in this world, since they are paralleled with the "root," presented as more essential than the final human creation itself—Music.

The *Yue ji* 樂記, probably the musical text dating closest to the *Huainanzi*, seems to disagree with this incorporation:[38]

> 樂者，非謂黃鐘大呂弦歌干揚也，樂之末節也。[39]
>
> "Music" is *not* what we call [the pitch-standards] "Yellow-Bell" or "Great-Regulator," the [playing of] strings and singing, [or the] raising of shields. These are [but] the branch segments of Music.

It presents its own (and more commonly found) version of the generation of music as follows:

> 凡音之起，由人心生也。人心之動，物使之然也。感於物而動，故形於聲。聲相應，故生變；變成方，謂之音；比音而樂之，及干戚羽旄，謂之樂。[40]
>
> Generally, regarding the origin of patterned-sounds—they arise from people's hearts. The stirring of people's hearts—things cause it to be so.

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36. *Guo yu jijie* 國語集解 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1930), 3.24 "Zhouyu xia" 周語下.

37. *Huainanzi*, 10.407 "Cheng mou" 繆稱; 13.522 "Fan lun" 氾論; 18.760 "Ren jian" 人間.

38. This is not to say that the author/s of the *Yue ji* knew the *Huainanzi*, though it is not completely impossible. In any case, it is quite a reliable source of comparison, representing a Han musical text.

39. "Yue ji" 19.1011; "Yue shu" 24.116.

40. "Yue ji" 19.976; "Yue shu" 24.114.

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> [It is] stimulated by things and is moved, hence takes form as sound. When [such] sounds respond to each other, an alteration is produced. When the alteration achieves a set pattern, it is called "patterned-sounds"; placing patterned sounds side by side and rejoicing in them to the point of [representing them with visual aids of] shields and axes, feathers and banners—this is called Music.

The generation process of the *Yue ji* is similar in its components, but in essence is the complete opposite of what the *Huainanzi* presents. The *Huainanzi* speaks of the musical process in terms of tracing and tracking the *natural roots* of Music. According to the *Yue ji* and its like, however, Music as a result and a human creation is the very pinnacle of the process. Its cosmological roots sum up to Music's being "The harmony of Heaven and Earth" (天地之和也),[41] but its true meaning lies in its ability to both represent and regulate the emotions, and thus the morality, of human beings.

In fact, as far as the *Yue ji* is concerned, morality is exactly that which differentiates mere patterned-sounds from Music.[42] Thus, when the Marquis Wen of Wei compares the old ceremonial music to the "new-music" produced in the states of Zheng and Wei, insisting that he finds the latter more pleasing, Zixia admonishes him:

> 今君之所問者樂也，所好者音也！夫樂者，與音相近而不同。[…] 天下大定，然後正六律，和五聲，弦歌詩頌，此之謂德音；德音之謂樂。[43]
>
> Now, what you inquire about is Music, [but] what you are fond of are [just] patterned-sounds! Now, Music and patterned-sounds are closely related, yet are not the same. […] After all under heaven reached a state of grand stability, [the sages] fixed the six pitch-standards, harmonized the five sounds, and [with these at hand they] played and sang the odes and hymns. These were called virtuous sound-patterns; virtuous sound-patterns are called "Music."

So highly valued is the art of making patterns into Music, that "It is the superior man alone who holds the ability of knowing Music" (唯君子為能知樂).[44]

Echoing a notion first presented in the *Xunzi*, the *Yue ji* often couples Music with another human creation, Ritual (*li* 禮). The two are described as having been created by the ancient kings in order to regulate society—Ritual in order to differentiate between dissimilar categories,

41. "Yue ji" 19.990; "Yue shu" 24.115.
42. See also Cook, *Unity and Diversity*, 54.
43. "Yue ji" 19.1015; "Yue shu" 24.119.
44. "Yue ji" 19.982; "Yue shu" 24.114.

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and Music in order to "unite that which is the same" (樂合同).[45] The *Huainanzi* does not deny the conviction that the ancient sages created Music in order to appease the people's pleasure-seeking nature, nor does it ignore the pairing of Music and ritual:

> 故先王之制法也，[…] 因其好色而制婚姻之禮，故男女有別；因其喜音而正《雅》、《頌》之聲，故風俗不流。(*Huainanzi*, 20.815–16 "Tai zu")
>
> Thus, as for the ancient kings' regulation of laws—[…] Following their (i.e., the people's) fondness of sex they regulated the rite of matrimony, hence there was a differentiation between male and female; following their joy in tunes they fixed the sounds of the *ya* and the *song* odes, hence airs and customs did not wander adrift.

But do the texts really agree upon the role music plays in society? The authors of the *Huainanzi* admit that sounds (and here they interestingly use "sounds," rather than "Music") have the ability to affect human conduct. They do not deny the importance of music in helping to regulate social order, however, while for the *Yue ji* Music is one of the highest forms of moral attainment, for the *Huainanzi* it is more of a tool than an ideal. The ideal society portrayed in the *Huainanzi* relies on simplicity rather than on skills of putting together complex patterns, and within it sounds, and in particular Music, become practically meaningless:

> 道德定于天下而民純樸，則目不營於色，耳不淫於聲，坐俳而歌謠，被髮而浮游，雖有毛嬙、西施之色，不知說也。掉羽、武象，不知樂也[…]。由此觀之，禮樂不用也。(*Huainanzi*, 8.301 "Ben jing")
>
> If the Way and its Potency[46] are stabilized in the world and the people are pure and simple, [their] eyes would not become befuddled by splendid sights, [their] ears will not be overwhelmed by sounds. Sitting [in groups] and singing ballads, roaming about with the hair let loose, and even having the appearance of Mao Qiang or Xi Shi[47]—[they] would not know these are [supposed to be] pleasing. [If dances such as] "The Fallen Feathers" and the "Martial Appearances" [were to be performed], they wouldn't know it is Music.[48] […] From this perspective, rites and Music are useless [in such an ideal world].

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45. *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1954), 20.255 "Yue lun."

46. I adopt Major et al.'s translation of the combination as "The Way and Its Potency" (道德).

47. *Mao Qiang and Xi Shi* symbolize perfect beauty. These were the names of two beauties who helped bring to destruction the state of Wu by distracting the king. See Major et al., 249, n. 29.

48. Alternatively—wouldn't find it joyful. Within this context, both translations make perfect sense.

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This passage not only belittles the status of Music, it seems to stand in complete contrast to Xunzi's declaration from slightly over a century earlier, at the opening of his "Yue lun" 樂論 (Discourse on Music) chapter, that Music is something that "human feelings just cannot avoid!" (人情之所必不免也.)[49] According to the *Huainanzi* humans ideally could, and should indeed, emotionally avoid Music. One may then ask, if sounds are ideally to pass by people's ears, and if Music is ideally useless: what is it that we should cherish instead? Elsewhere in the text we find the answer, when an ancestry of the whole great category of sound is given:

> 無音者, 聲之大宗也。(*Huainanzi*, 1.34 "Yuan dao")
>
> Silence[50] is the great ancestor of Sound.

The concept of silence as being the forebear of sound is not its own innovation, however the *Huainanzi* seems to be using silence to somehow overshadow music itself. Music is the most inferior product of silence, which is deep, profound, and natural. Music is a branch, and silence is the root, the closest among sonic (or a-sonic) phenomena to the Way itself.[51]

The fact that in the *Huainanzi*'s idealized reality patterned-sounds lose their meaning to silence does not mean that the authors of the text do not acknowledge their importance in actual reality. As Michael Puett has

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49. *Xunzi jijie*, 20.252 "Yue lun."

50. Major et al. (63) rightly translate *wu yin* 無音 as "toneless." I translate it as "silence," but wish to emphasize that this silence, as I perceive it, is not an absolute lack of sound. This complex term deserves further enquiry and I intend to write more about it in the future, but a short explanation here may be necessary nevertheless: drawing upon the translation of *yin* as "patterned-sounds" I suggest that this silence means a lack of *organized, patterned* sounds, rather than a complete stillness, i.e., it includes primary, "wild," uncultivated sounds, but not sound patterns. The Way, hinted upon in the citation above, is on numerous occasions described as being soundless (*wu sheng* 無聲). When taking into consideration this and other descriptions of the Way, we see that it is not described as being a complete vacuum, but as an unorganized existence of things. As a reference, one could examine the term *pu* 樸—unhewn, or uncarved—which is prevalent in the *Huainanzi*. *Pu*, constantly related with positive ideas of a sort of primary purity, does not mean the lack of material, but a material (or often—a person) that has not been arranged, shaped, affected, and maybe even harmed, by human hands and human ideas. Such is, I believe, the type of "silence," or soundlessness, rendered in our text. I am indebted and grateful to my anonymous reviewer for suggesting the possible parallel between *pu* and *wuyin*, thus drawing my attention to the research of conceptions of silence in the *Huainanzi* (as well as other texts).

51. And indeed it is additionally stated that the Way (referred to as "the One") "Is soundless, but the five notes all resonate from within it" (無聲而五音鳴焉 1.35 "Yuan dao").

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demonstrated—such "as-if statements" (in his words) as they are presented in early Chinese texts should not necessarily be taken as assumptions of the authors. Rather, they are ideals bearing a nostalgic air, not fitting the modern, changed lives of people.[52] The *Huainanzi* constantly moves within a dialogue between the ideal and the existing (or ideal and optimal), between reminiscing the magnificent mythological past and guiding its reader in how to deal with a present that can no longer be this past.

Model Number One: A Reversed Hierarchy

It comes down, then, to a model. For the *Huainanzi*, Music is but the branch (*mo* 末), the final, man-made—and therefore inferior—outcome of a process much grander than Music itself. Its immediate roots (*ben* 本) are its components—going down to the concept of sound, and even deeper to the concept of silence. While in the *Yue ji* Music itself is the greatest culmination of virtue (*de* 德), according to the *Huainanzi* in a time of ultimate virtue there will be no meaning to Music.[53] While the "superior man," portrayed by Xunzi a century earlier, "does not lend his ear to lewd sounds" (君子耳不聽淫聲[54]), the ideal society of the *Huainanzi* cannot be allured by sounds whatsoever, be they moral or immoral ones. Their portrayal of an imagined ideal society in which silence overcomes sound does not necessarily imply that the authors of the *Huainanzi* believed that the ruler should or could aim at attaining such a society. Acknowledging the challenge in attaining it, the authors of the text do see in Music a useful and necessary tool for creating social order; but in order to make sure they are well understood, they have to

52. Puett interestingly reaches this conclusion while discussing the ideals standing behind the ritual perceptions of the *Li ji*. See Michael Puett, "Constructions of Reality: Metaphysics in the Ritual Traditions of Classical China," in *Chinese Metaphysics and Its Problems*, ed. Li Chenyang and Franklin Perkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 120–29. He has a similar discussion regarding the *Huainanzi* in his article "Sages, Creation, and the End of History in the *Huainanzi*," in Queen and Puett, 269–90.

53. For more scholarship comparing some musical aspects of the *Huainanzi* with those of the *Yue ji*, see Guo Xiuling 郭秀岭 "*Huainanzi Yueji* yinyue guandian bijiao" 淮南子樂記音樂觀點比較, *Journal of Suihua University* 26.3 (2006), 96–98; Hong Yongwen 洪永稳, "*Huainanzi* he *Yueji* de 'wu gan shui' bijiao," 《淮南子》和《樂記》的"物感說"比較, *Journal of Anhui Agricultural University*, Social Science edition 17.5 (2008), 73–75. Guo uses the two texts to relate to the aforementioned "contradictions" often mentioned by Chinese scholars who write about music in the *Huainanzi*. Hong compares between the philosophies of the two texts as reflected through their musical views, but does not discuss the role, or generative process, of music itself in the texts as an independent subject of inquiry.

54. *Xunzi Jijie*, 20.254 "Yue lun."

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warn against its potentially harmful effects, defining Music's role in society as follows:

> 樂者, 所以致和, 非所以為淫也。(*Huainanzi*, 8.320 "Ben jing")
>
> As for Music, it is [meant to be] that by which [one should] bring about harmony, not that by which [one] creates lewdness.

Like other texts before and contemporaneous with it, the *Huainanzi* divides the world of sonic and related phenomena into sounds, patterned-sounds and Music. However, it turns their hierarchy upside down. Additionally, on top of the three common components—Music, sound-patterns, and sound—it adds the pitch-standards (that themselves derive from the winds), which receive special attention also in the text's cosmological accounts. In doing so it connects the natural and theoretical with the moral and aesthetic. A close examination of the way *Huainanzi* theorizes about music therefore shows us that the text composes a unique, unprecedented perception of the concept. While other texts, represented here by the *Yue ji* perceive the generative process of music as (in ascending order of importance):

Sounds (*sheng* 聲) → Patterned-sounds (*yin* 音) → Music (*yue* 樂)

The model of the *Huainanzi* is reversed, and more complex:

Music (*yue* 樂) → Patterned-sounds (*yin* 音) [→Pitch-standards (lü 律)

→ Winds (*feng* 風)]=Sounds (*sheng* 聲) [→ Silence (*wuyin* 無音)][55]

Having distinguished the *Huainanzi*'s approach to music from the more "common" one, we are now able to see more subtle differences, even with sentences that seem similar. Thus, whereas for the *Xunzi* and the texts inspired by it Music can actively "change manners and alter customs" (移風易俗[56]), the *Huainanzi* states that:

> 樂聽其音, 則知其俗；見其俗, 則知其化。(*Huainanzi*, 9.331 "Zhu shu")
>
> Music—listen to its sound-patterns, and you'll know its manners; observe their manners, and you'll know their transformations.

---

55. In square brackets are the elements that do not appear in the *Yue ji* model. Also, in the *Huainanzi* model, the concept of sound is comprised of all previous concepts, rather than "arises from the winds," hence I use the mark "=" rather than an arrow, implying that the whole process sums up with "Sounds."

56. *Xunzi jijie,* 20.254 "Yue lun." From the *Xunzi* on this expression is commonly used in texts. The *Huainanzi* cites it no fewer than five times. It does believe in Music's power to change, but reasons differently. The expression only appears in a musical context where it is said that unlike sounds and patterns, law (*fa* 法) "cannot (不能) change manners and alter customs" (9.330 "Zhu shu").

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It is not that Music itself actively changes customs because it is a creation of the sages. Its deeper principles are what matter. Thus, if you listen to (i.e., analyze) the patterns of music, you can go one step upwards in the hierarchy and understand where it comes from. In the following sections we shall attempt to do exactly this.

The Text through Its Music

"Master your instrument. Master the music. And then, forget all the bullshit and just play."
Charlie Parker

We know now how the *Huainanzi* sees music. But why is music in the text to begin with? What is it that we can learn about the text from looking at its music? An examination of the musical references within their context unveils a model of sagely rulership suggested by the authors. According to this model, the sage operates first and foremost by obtaining the knowledge of things that are changeable by nature (and indeed, *need* be changed), and those that are immutable. Once in possession of this knowledge, he is expected to react to situations that arise, as well as to create transformation in his environment when needed. As we shall see, the components of this model—abidance by natural principles and response to stimulations—have been individually discussed in previous scholarly works. However, under "musical" examination they become perhaps clearer than ever, and are interwoven into a coherent single model.

The Way of Stone and the Off-Key Affairs

故聖人所由曰道，所為曰事。道猶金石，一調不更；事猶琴瑟，每弦改調。故法制禮義者，治人之具也，而非所以為治也。(*Huainanzi*, 13.516 "Fan lun")

Thus, what the sages rely on is called "the Way"; what they do is called "affairs."[57] The Way is like [musical instruments of] metal and stone, once tuned, they do not alter [their sound]; "affairs" are like the *qin* and *se* [stringed instruments], where often the strings are in need of retuning. Therefore, rules and regulations, rites and propriety are the ruler's tools, rather than [the principles] by which he rules.

57. While Major et al. translate *shi* 事 here as "activities," I choose to translate it consistently as "affairs," so as to make clearer the point that the *dao* and *shi* discussed here are the same as those discussed at the beginning of the postface. One could equally choose to translate it consistently as "activities" instead.

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The Way/affairs division, and the relationship between the two, are a prominent motif throughout the whole text. At the very beginning of the postface to the *Huainanzi*, its authors state that the aim of the compendium is "to knit together the Way and Potency, interweave human affairs" (所以紀綱道德, 經緯人事. 21.851 "Yao lüe" 要略). Some time ago, Charles Le Blanc noted that the text is organized upon a reasoning of moving from "basic principles" (chapters 1–8) to "applications and illustrations" (chapters 9–20).[58] Le Blanc's notion became widely accepted amongst scholars of the text.[59] Major et al. argue that the Way and affairs signify these basic principles and applications respectively, and that their division is a manifestation of "the more fundamental metaphor of 'roots and branches' that operates on many levels throughout the entire work."[60] In a recent article, Andrew Meyer develops the notion of "root and branches" even further, claiming that beyond being a mere metaphor, it acts in the text as a fundamental theory explaining all dimensions of reality.[61] The movement from root to branches, as Meyer demonstrates, exists in the *Huainanzi* not only diachronically (developing from one chapter to the next) but also synchronically (within chapters and within phenomena),[62] and its representations are pervasive and consistent throughout the text.[63]

The passage above, cited from the "Fan lun" 氾論, a chapter that primarily deals with the concept of change, provides a simple and elegant explanation of the Way and affairs: the Way is analogous to the type of musical instruments that are tuned once and forever hold their tuning; and affairs are comparable with stringed instruments, which not only *can* be retuned along time, but constantly *require* retun-

58. Le Blanc, "Huai nan tzu," in Michael Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 189.

59. Martin Kern further demonstrates that this division is apparent through an analysis of the pattern of rhyme between the chapter titles. The titles rhyme with each other, the first rhyme pattern lasting through the titles of chapters 1–8, with two more patterns in the remaining part. Notion attributed to Kern in Major et al., 14, n. 22 and 843, n. 5.

60. Major et al., 14–15. See discussion also in Griet Vankeerberghen. *The Huainanzi and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 95–97.

61. Andrew Meyer, "Root-Branches Structuralism in the *Huainanzi*," in Queen and Puett, eds., 23–39.

62. We have demonstrated such inter-phenomenal movement in the previous section of the current article: the evolution of music from natural roots to human "branches." We have also seen that this conception is a reversal of the one common to other contemporary texts, which perceive human-made music as being the root, and its components the branches.

63. Meyer, 34–35.

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ing. While the root and branches metaphor serves well to explain the essentiality and constancy of the Way in comparison with those of affairs, the instrument analogy is helpful in illuminating how they should be utilized. Both are musical instruments in the hands of the sage: the "Way" instruments he cannot change, and on their constancy he relies; the "affairs" instruments he must retune whenever the need arises. The second half of the passage demonstrates this utilization—laws and rites are not what the ruler relies upon in order to rule; they belong to the "affairs" category, and as such, they act as tools in the ruler's hands.

Distinguishing the "Way" components from the "affairs" ones is the first and most essential skill any sage or ruler should possess, and it is necessary for ruling, directing, or guiding things or people at any level. The following passage does not refer directly to the Way and affairs, but does emphasize that any leader must be perspicacious. Again, the action of tuning serves as analogy:

> 耳不知清濁之分者，不可令調音；心不知治亂之源者，不可令制法。必有獨聞之耳，獨見之明，然後能擅道而行矣。(*Huainanzi*, 13.519 "Fan lun")
>
> He whose ear does not know high [tones] from low cannot be asked to tune notes; He whose heart does not know the origins of good order and chaos cannot be asked to regulate laws. There must be an ear that hears distinctively, a vision that distinctively sees, and only then can one be well versed in the Way and conduct it.

"The Echo Does Not Respond at Random"[64]—Action and Reaction

> While reason implies the disjunction of subject and object, resonance involves their conjunction. Where reason requires separation and autonomy, resonance entails adjacency, sympathy, and the collapse of boundary between perceiver and perceived. (Veit Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance*[65])

Knowledge of the Way and affairs and the ability to differentiate between them are not enough. When the time comes, the sage will be required to take action. This action is not one of initiative. Rather, it is mostly *a reaction* to the course of events around him. Like the silence that

64. (*Huainanzi*, 1.12 "Yuan dao"), translation adopted from Harold D. Roth, in Major et al., 53.

65. Veit Erlmann, *Reason and Resonance: A History of Modern Aurality* (New York: Zone Books, distributed by MIT Press, 2010), 10.

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holds within it all existing forms of sound, the sage holds within him the essential knowledge of the constant and changeable aspects of his environment, and hence is expected to be able to operate them and embody all forms of spontaneous reaction. Musical instruments, silent as long as not activated, are again useful explanatory tools:

> 鼓不(滅) [藏][66] 於聲，故能有聲；鏡不沒於形，故能有形；金石有聲，弗叩弗鳴；管簫有音，弗吹無聲。聖人內藏，不為物先倡，事來而制，物至而應。(*Huainanzi*, 14.574–75 "Quan yan" 詮言)
>
> A drum does not store sounds [of its own], hence it is capable of sounding out. A mirror does not hold on to form, therein lies its ability to manifest [any] form. [Musical instruments of] metal and stone (i.e., bells and chimes) have sounds, [but if] unstruck, they shall not ring. Pipes and flutes have voices, [but if they are] not blown, there will not be a sound. The sage stores [actions] within, but does not act as an initiator among things.[67] Affairs come his way—and he then regulates [them]; things appear—and he then reacts [appropriately].

One could say that the sages are literally expected to, well—"play it by ear." Like musical instruments, they do not produce a thing unless triggered to do so.[68] They respond (*ying* 應) to the comings of things, rather than initiate action.[69]

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66. Amendments of text (round brackets for words that should be erased, square ones for the words that should substitute them) are based on the commentaries in the Liu Wendian edition, as well as on information in www.chant.org, which is the online version of D. C. Lau's concordance to the text. See D. C. Lau, *Huainanzi zhuzi suoyin* 淮南子逐字索引 (Institute for Chinese Studies Chinese Text Concordance Series. Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992).

67. Quite symbolically, the literal meaning is equal to "does not act for things as the first-one-to-sing." The expression 先倡 is sometimes written 先唱 (both pronounced *xian chang*)—lit. "to sing first."

68. This is the *Huainanzi*'s version of the familiar Laozian/Zhuangzian term of non-action (*wuwei* 無為). Chapter 9 (9.355 "Zhu shu") defines: "He who is non-active (he who 'wu wei's)—it does not mean he freezes and does not move; it means there is nothing he issues from within himself." (無為者，非謂其凝滯而不動也，以(其言)[言其]莫從己出也)

69. In fact, in this sense it can be said that Liu An was not just philosophizing. At least during the first years of Emperor Wu's reign, he seems to have supported a policy of non-initiation himself. This may be reflected, e.g., in his advice to the emperor not to intervene in the conflict between the Min Yue 閩越 and the Nan Yue 南越 in 135 (the emperor, however, did eventually intervene before Liu An's plea had reached him). One can understand Liu An's personal interests in giving such advice: a few years back, such interference resulted in heavy economic cost to the Huainan area. Additionally, keeping the policy of "innovation" to a minimum could mean that the local kings, such as Liu An himself, could each manage their own affairs, without having to fear

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The principle of reaction is not merely *metaphorized* by means of music. Rather, it is an actual acoustic (and physical) phenomenon, well documented by the time of the *Huainanzi*, that the sages are expected to emulate in their conduct. The phenomenon is called "Resonance." It is again Charles Le Blanc who notes the importance of this principle within the *Huainanzi.* Le Blanc poses the subject of resonance as no less than "the central idea of the *Huainanzi*."[70] While this may be somewhat of an overstatement,[71] the idea of natural reaction is indeed a significant one in the text. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music* defines resonance as "A large amplitude of oscillation built up when a vibrating system is driven by an outside periodic force of frequency close to the natural frequency of the system."[72] Being ubiquitous in people's daily environments, easily observed and audible, phenomena of resonance are an easy principle upon which to base a moral model.

Thus, when speaking of military affairs and how to defeat an enemy, the authors proclaim:

> 響不為清音濁。觀彼之所以來，各以其勝應之。(*Huainanzi*, 15.615 "Bing lüe" 兵略)
>
> The echo does not resound with a low note to a high one.[73] Observe the means whereby they emerge, and respond to each with what conquers it.

And when discussing the importance of moral conduct:

> 故叩宮而宮應，彈角而角動，此同音之相應也。其於五音無所比，而二十五弦皆應，此不傳之道也。(*Huainanzi*, 11.438 "Qi su")
>
> Now, when you pluck a *gong* [note string], [another] *gong* string responds; when you strum a *jue* string, another *jue* string moves. This is the mutual response of tones which are the same. [If the string you

being forced into submitting their territory to the empire. For more on the incident see Vankeerberghen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority*, 51–52.

70. Le Blanc, *Huai Nan Tzu*, 8–9.

71. Le Blanc (9) bases his claim, among other things, upon the fact that resonance appears in all of the twenty-one chapters. I could say the same thing about musical-phenomena, and yet, I think they serve as a tool rather than a central idea. The way I see it, and explain here, resonance, or "reaction" is a main component of a model central to the text, yet cannot be defined as "the main idea," of this rich text. Furthermore, it derives from a yet deeper principle—knowledge of the Way and affairs.

72. Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 15. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 757.

73. Major et al. (618) translate: "an echo cannot be a high note if the sound [itself] is a low note." I see it as the opposite—lit. "the echo—does not for high sound—[resound-a-] low."

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> pluck] is not comparable with any of the five [pentatonic] notes, and yet the twenty-five [*se*] strings all respond—this is the unconveyed Way [which moves them].

The vibration of a string caused by another identically-tuned string played elsewhere is a real acoustic phenomenon called "sympathetic resonance." Many texts in early China describe this resonating of strings to emphasize the mutual responsiveness of things belonging to the same category.[74] However, forms of reaction in the *Huainanzi* are not restricted only to responses between similar things. The activation of all strings by a sound external to them—which Le Blanc calls "total resonance"[75]—is presented as a process so noble that it touches upon the mysterious *Way* itself. Though such a phenomenon is highly unlikely to have been observed and empirically verified at Han times, it is theoretically possible to calculate a frequency that could cause vibration of all strings.[76] The applicability of it, however, is not as important as the notion that the text proposes here of another form of resonance mechanism. The untuned string is generally perceived of as silence—which has an absolute quality;[77] and what the *Huainanzi* states is that silence has the ability to activate any form of sound. This activation is, however, highly theoretic—an ideal—rather than an observable possible action.

The reaction of the sage to things "as they come" is a theme that recurs often in the text in many different variations. Often also referred to as "stimulus and response," the prominent aspect of resonance is the "response" rather than the "stimulus."[78] However, the process works both ways. Holding the necessary knowledge base, the sage knows not only how to *react*, but also how to *act* in ways that will provoke the desired reaction. The *Grove Dictionary* definition of resonance continues: "It plays an important part both constructively and destructively in all

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74. See *Chunqiu fanlu jiaoshi* 春秋繁露校釋 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chuban she, 2005) 13.809–10 "Tonglei xiangdong" 同類相動; *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 24.839 "Xu wugui" 徐無鬼; *Lüshi chunqiu* 13.2.683 "Ying tong" 應同, 20.4.1369 "Zhao lei" 召類; *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補註 (Taipei: Yiwen yin shuguan yinxing, c. 1963) 13.420 "Qi zeng: Miu jian"《七諫》:《謬諫》.

75. Le Blanc, *Huainanzi*, 140–42. See also Le Blanc, "From Cosmology to Ontology through Resonance: A Chinese Interpretation of Reality," in *Beyond Textuality: Asceticism and Violence in Anthropological Interpretation*, ed. Gilles Bibeau and Ellen Corin (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 69.

76. Such a phenomenon has not been observed so far. However, in theory only, it is plausible. Theorists of Han times may have deduced it by making more basic calculations.

77. Le Blanc, "Cosmology and Ontology," 69.

78. And indeed, the word *gan* 感, to stir, appears 36 times in the text, while the word *ying* 應, to respond, appears as many as 151 times.

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acoustic systems and musical instruments. It can be used to enhance tone but in the wrong place it can produce disastrous effects."[79]

The *Huainanzi*, using numerous anecdotes, demonstrates the constructive and destructive effects of resonating actions. Two of those anecdotes (see below, neither of them original to the *Huainanzi*) can serve as examples.

A demonstration of constructive resonance is the story of Ning Qi 甯戚, a poor man of Wei who managed to become an official and raise his social status by singing a song. Ning Qi could not afford to gain an audience with Duke Huan of Qi (齊桓公, d. 643 B.C.E.), and so waited for the latter to head out of the city gate. As Duke Huan was exiting the city in his carriage, Ning Qi sang a sad song. The Duke was moved by the song and knew right away that the singer was not an ordinary person. He ordered Ning Qi to be brought to his court and eventually granted him office. The story of Ning Qi is mentioned in no fewer than five different chapters of the *Huainanzi*.[80] The resonance in the story may be minor and personal (an effect extending from one singer's voice to one person's emotions) but it is meaningful nevertheless.

The second anecdote, illustrating the destructive force of resonance, tells the story of Duke Ping 平公 (d. 532 B.C.E.) and Music Master Kuang 師曠. Master Kuang plays a specific musical piece on his *qin*, and thereupon natural disasters befall the realm of Duke Ping, and he himself becomes ill and impotent and loses his territory.[81] In the original story as it is found in the *Hanfeizi*, probably well known by the time of the *Huainanzi*, Duke Ping demands that Master Kuang play more and more "dangerous" tunes, ignoring the latter's admonitions. The Duke demands to hear tunes written in certain modes which are, according to Master Kuang, reserved only for the ears of rulers of the highest virtue, which the Duke has not yet attained. The playing of tunes in the wrong context is what brings about the terrible disasters.[82]

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79. Sadie, 757.

80. Fully articulated in 12.467–68 "Dao ying" 道應. Additional references: 9.330–31 "Zhu shu"; 10.406–7 "Cheng mou"; 11.414 "Qi su"; 13.541 "Fan lun." Ning Qi's name appears in many earlier texts. The whole story is articulated in the *Lüshi chunqiu*—19.8.1320 "Ju nan" 舉難.

81. *Huainanzi* 6.229 "*Lan ming*" 覽冥. Interestingly, the story is told elsewhere in the *Huainanzi* (20.844 "Tai zu") with an alternative ending, whereby Duke Ping stops the music to prevent disaster, having received a warning from Master Kuang that it is "the Music of doomed states."

82. *Hanfeizi*, "Shi guo." For an English translation, see Burton Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 53–56.

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Wrongs and Rites

The sage, then, is supposed to hold the knowledge of, and differentiate between, the "Way" and "Affairs," and he is expected to react to and tune affairs in accordance with what happens around him. But what, in practice, is the "Way"? What are the "affairs"? What is the sage to tune?

Throughout the text, the "Way," or basic principles, are universal, cosmological, and theoretical principles, which can be learned by observation. They are presented as axioms that the sage should inherently have as his "knowledge base." These axioms themselves never change, but using them, the sage can create an infinite number of variations:

> 音之數不過五, 而五音之變, 不可勝聽也。(*Huainanzi*, 1.35 "Yuan dao")
>
> The number of notes does not surpass five, but the alterations of the five notes cannot be fully heard.

Anything created by man, on the other hand, is necessarily alterable by nature, and hence belongs to the "affairs" group, which should be occasionally examined and regulated. Music, and its oft-matched ally ritual (*li* 禮), are both included under the "affairs" group, and thus gain the position of regulating tools. While in an ideal society they may not be necessary, in the real world they are crucial instruments for conducting rulership.[83]

> 是故以道為竿, 以德為綸, 禮樂為鉤, 仁義為餌, 投之于江, 浮之於海, 萬物紛紛孰非其有。(*Huainanzi*, 2.60 "Chu zhen")
>
> Therefore, [the sages] make the Way their pole, the Potency their fishing line; rites and Music their hook; humaneness and righteousness their bait. They throw them to the rivers, float them on the seas. All the things, one by one—which shall not be their own?

In this sense, the *Huainanzi*'s treatment of the pair is unique. Starting in the Warring States period, writers tended either to harshly criticize the creation of Music[84] or elevate it.[85] Ritual is similarly glorified or, at

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83. Like the natural elements of music, some types of immutable ritual behaviour are also depicted in the cosmological chapters of the text. Chapter 5 refers to which colour the emperor should wear, what he should do and what instruments the ladies of the palace should play for each month of the year. This, even if not openly stated, is in a way a ritual behaviour. Looking into the functions of ritual and perceptions of it in the text can thus serve as an extension of this current research.

84. Particularly *Mozi*, "Fei yue." See *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993) 8.379–83.

85. Most of all *Xunzi* "Yue lun." Generally by the Han it was more this attitude that was adopted (e.g. in the *Yue ji* as the first section of this article has demonstrated).

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times, neglected.[86] While some of the texts (particularly those identified with the Ru 儒 way of thought) exalt Music and rites for the mere reason of them having been created by the ancient kings, and hence are very careful in advising to change them, the *Huainanzi* emphasizes this very change as an inherent need. Its explanation lies in the fact that the ancient kings and mythological emperors themselves differed from each other in both their Music and their rituals. Giving the names of each mythic emperor and their different rites and airs, the text states:

> 此皆因時變而制禮樂者。(*Huainanzi*, 13.511 "Fan lun")
>
> These are all [cases] of following the alteration of time with the regulation of rites and Music.

It is important, indeed an obligation, to "retune" rites and Music:

> 故聖人制禮樂, 而不制于禮樂。(*Huainanzi*, 13.512 "Fan lun")
>
> Hence the sages regulate rites and Music, rather than being regulated by rites and Music.

Failing to understand that these things indeed *require* retuning and change simply indicates a lack of technical awareness:

> 今握一君之法籍, 以非傳代之俗, 譬由膠柱而調瑟也。(*Huainanzi*, 11.430 "Qi su")
>
> Now, holding on to the rules and records of one ruler, and with it disregarding customs passed on from previous generations, is just like gluing the bridges of the *se* to tune it.[87]

While even texts such as the *Li ji* had to admit that rituals of the past cannot be left untouched, and must incorporate contemporary needs,[88] in the *Huainanzi* this change is not acknowledged begrudgingly, but presented as an essential and urgent need. If the text seems reluctant to acknowledge anything, it is the very notion that rites and Music still need to exist in the world at all, because reality is still far from the ideal that the text portrays.

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86. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, though philosophizing positively about Music, says very little about the subject of rites.

87. The *se* at the time had movable wooden bridges, the mobility of which is what enabled its tuning. Thus gluing it means not being able to play the *se* any longer. For more on the *se* structure see Walter Kaufmann, *Musical References in the Chinese Classics* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1976), 99–100.

88. On the *Li ji*'s view regarding the change of rituals, see Michael D. K. Ing, *The Dysfunction of Ritual in Early Confucianism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 86–92.

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Model Number Two: Echoing Rulership

We may now want to take a second look at one of the musical examples given above, this time within a broader context ("new" parts appear in italics):

> 夫物有以自然，而後人事有治也。[…] 故先王之制法也，[…] 因其好色而制婚姻之禮，故男女有別；因其喜音而正《雅》、《頌》之聲，故風俗不流 […] 此皆人之所有於性，而聖人之所匠成也。故無其性，不可教訓；有其性，無其養，不能遵道。人之性有仁義之資，非聖人為之法度而教導之，則不可使向方。[…] 故因其性則天下聽從，拂其性則法縣而不用。(*Huainanzi*, 20.815–16 "Tai zu")

> *Now, things have their natural course of being, and only then human affairs have* [*the ability to create*] *orderly rule.* […] Thus, as for the ancient kings' regulation of laws—[…] Following the people's fondness of sex they regulated the rite of matrimony, hence there was a differentiation between male and female; following their joy in tunes they fixed the sounds of *ya* and the *song*, hence airs and customs did not wander adrift. […] *These are all [things] that people already possess by nature, and sages carve and complete. Thus, if [people] didn't have their natures, they could not be taught and instructed; if they had these [things in their] nature, but did not have their cultivation, they would not be able to abide by the Way. People's natures have a supply of humaneness and righteousness, [however] if the sages do not create laws and measures for them, teach and guide them, these cannot be directed to face [the right] way. […] Thus, [if you] accord with its nature, the world will obey and follow, [if you] counteract its nature, even if you set rules, they will be of no use.*

All of a sudden the passage does not at all seem to deal with the Music and rites *per se*. Music and rites are rhetorical tools for explaining something grander: the setting of musical pieces and rites, both human creations, by the ancient kings, is used (among many other things in the original passage, actually) as a demonstration of ideal rulership, in a model involving the combination of knowledge and response. In order to affect the conduct of the people, the kings used their knowledge of those inherent and unchanging qualities in their natures (deriving from the Way); only then did they tackle and shape the affairs—rules, rites, music—and use them for creating order. The constant and alterable aspects of knowledge are mutually dependent—the changing aspects of reality *need* to be changed so that the constant ones can be put to best use. Where the underlying nature (the constant, the "Way") does not exist, the sage can take no action. But also—if the sage-ruler does not tune that which needs tuning—the subjects will not undergo the desired change.

故瑟無弦，雖師文不能以成曲；徒弦，則不能悲。故弦，悲之具也；而非所以為悲也。(*Huainanzi*, 11.437–38 "Qi su")

> Now, if the *se* has no strings, even Music Master Wen cannot produce a tune [on it]; the strings alone, [however,] cannot produce sorrow. Therefore strings are the tools of sorrow, but not what produces the sorrow.

Hence another model is formed—the model of sagely rulership as suggested by the music-loving authors of the *Huainanzi*. There are the unchanging (or "Way") principles of the universe and the changing (affairs) ones, which are mostly man-made. Being able to tell them apart, the sage needs to react to the circumstances that surround him. Rites and Music, belonging to the "affairs" group, are among those things that the sage needs to constantly examine and change.

The comprehensibility of musical references, the great variety of ways in which one can use them, and the very fact that music itself is divided into unchangeable factors (natural theory) and flexible ones (human aesthetic creation) makes the world of music one of the authors' favourite rhetorical tools. In particular they are fond of using musical instruments in their analogies, as these contain within them the whole process of musical generation. Untouched, they represent an ideal silence; their tuning is guided by pitch-standards; and when played they produce patterned-sounds, which in turn can be modelled into Music.

Musical Chairs: Illustrations in the Human Realm

The "rulership model" presented above is not intended merely for rulers. The distinction between the Way and affairs and its application in actions and reactions is what the *Huainanzi* authors imagine the life of any worthy man to entail. So much so, that their whole perception of a person's value seems to derive from the extent to which this person abides by these principles in their own life. Often, it is the person's "musical conduct" that serves to demonstrate their worth, or musical means that serve to teach us about it.

These socio-musical perceptions of the *Huainanzi* are personified, and embodied by several archetypal figures that reappear throughout the text. The following pages present four of these archetypes—defined here as "the wise man," "the general," "the commoner," and "the fake scholar." These characters epitomize the correct and incorrect usage of the principles outlined so far. All are assessed by the authors on the basis of the extent to which they are capable of putting the models into practical use.

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The Wise Man

For the authors of the *Huainanzi*, he who knows how to operate in accordance with the circumstances is a wise man. While not necessarily defined as "a sage" (*sheng* 聖), any person who can apply the principles—gain knowledge and act or react using it—embodies sagely qualities and is described in a positive light.

This stamp of approval comes regardless of the wise man's social class. Perhaps in order to emphasize that the knowledge one should gain is not the same kind of knowledge scholarly learning can give, the *Huainanzi* supplies numerous anecdotes of people of lowly status applying the supreme form of knowledge. We have already encountered the case of Ning Qi, who although impoverished was able to gain an office by singing, thereby "activating" the correct emotions of Duke Huan. Another interesting case of a low-class wise man can be found in chapter 18: We are told of Confucius' horse, who goes missing while the Master is travelling. The horse is found eating the crops of a local farmer, who thereupon gets angry and ties it up. Zigong, a disciple of Confucius, fails to persuade the farmer to return the horse, because he uses polite scholarly persuasions which the latter cannot understand.[89] Confucius' stable boy thereupon succeeds where Zigong had failed, saying to the farmer: "You till all the way from the Eastern Sea to the Western Sea, within my horse's wanderings, where could he not have eaten a grain that is yours?" The farmer, greatly flattered and pleased by the compliment, sets the horse free, and we are then musically told the moral of the story:

> 說若此其無方也，而反行。事有所至，而巧不若拙。[…]夫歌《采菱》，發《陽阿》，鄙人聽之，不若此《延(路)[露]》、(《陽局》)[以和]。非歌者拙也，聽者異也。[…] 物之不通者，聖人不爭也。(*Huainanzi*, 18.754–55 "Ren jian")

> A persuasion such as this has no method, and yet it had succeeded and worked. Among affairs, there are issues that befall us, and [in handling them] skill is not as good as ineptness. Now, [when you] sing "Gathering Caltrops" or play "Northern Bank" and countrymen hear them, this is not as good as [when you sing] "Perpetual Dew"[90] to harmonize

89. Confucius compares his persuasion attempt of "[trying to] persuade people with what they cannot listen to" with "[trying to] please flying birds by singing the 'Nine Shao.'" (夫以人之所不能聽說人 […] 以《九韶》樂飛鳥也.)

90. "Gathering Caltrops" and "Northern Bank" are old songs of Chu, which according to Liu Wendian represent the ultimate musical aesthetic creation, while "Perpetual Dew" is a common rural song. Nevertheless, the country people are more familiar with "Perpetual Dew" and thus join it in singing, rather than appreciating the beauty of the Chu songs. See Liu Wendian commentary in *Huainan honglie jijie*, 754–55.

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> them. It is not the ineptness of the one who sings, but the fact that the listeners are different. […] The sage does not fight those things that are impenetrable.[91]

Wisdom essentially resides in the ability to adapt one's actions to the existing "Way" principles. One does not, and indeed cannot, force the very same tools upon different types of environment. Such adaptation takes time, practice, and cultivation:

> 忠信形于內，感動應於外，故禹執幹戚，舞於兩階之間，而三苗服。(*Huainanzi*, 10.389 "Mou cheng" 繆稱)
>
> [As] loyalty and trust take form internally, stimulations and movements respond from without. Thus, Yu grabbed a shield and an axe and danced in between the two platforms, and thereupon the three Miao [tribes] submitted [to his authority].

The story, borrowed by the authors from the *Hanfeizi*, originally remarks that Yu wished to attack the unsubmissive Miao tribes, but was not allowed by Shun to do so. Shun then taught Yu for three years, and only then, after gaining a strong basis of knowledge and amending the way of military and governance, did Yu dance the war dance. At this point, his dance demonstrated such profound knowledge of the art of battle that the Miao tribes submitted instantly.[92]

Well trained and well versed in both the Way and affairs, the versatile character of the wise man thus represents the model of ideal governance in the *Huainanzi*.

The General

One curious and noteworthy sub-category of the wise man is the figure of the general (*jiang* 將). What is of particular relevance to the current discussion is the fact that both the general himself and the affairs of the military, over which he commands, are epitomized by a specific musical instrument—the drum. Drums echo all through the fifteenth chapter of the *Huainanzi*, the "Overview of the military" (*Bing lüe* 兵略), and accompany almost any reference to the military throughout the text.[93]

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91. This story also exists in the *Lüshi chunqiu* 14.8.837 "Bi ji" 必己, but lacks the final musical moral, which is unique to the *Huainanzi*.

92. *Hanfeizi*, 19.1092–96 "Wu du" 五蠹. In fact, it is not completely clear whether it was Shun or Yu who danced the war dance. The *Huainanzi* mentions this story on another occasion (11.432 "*Qi su*"), with Shun, rather than Yu, performing the dance.

93. For a recent discussion on the figure of the general in the *Huainanzi* (not regarding musical issues), see Xu Gao 高旭. "*Huainanzi* 'jiang' lun xi yi: Jian yu *Sunzi Bingfa*

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The general himself is presented as a type of sage, a ruler external to the realm. In this sense he is just like the drum to the five notes:

> 夫物之所以相形者微，唯聖人達其至。故鼓不與於五音，而為五音主；水不與於五味，而為五味調；將軍不與于五官之事，而為五官督。[…] 是故將軍之心，[…] 因形而與之化，隨時而與之移。(*Huainanzi*, 15.614–15, "Bing lüe")
>
> Now, that by which things manifest each other is subtle. Only sages can fully comprehend it. Hence, the drum is not amongst the five notes, but it is the ruler of five notes; water is not amongst the five flavours, yet is the conductor of five flavours; the general's command of military matters is not amongst the affairs of five offices, yet [he] directs the five offices. […] Thus, the general's heart […] traces [the origin of] form and alters with it; follows [the alterations of] seasons and changes with them.

The general, therefore, acts as a "ruler from without," conducting affairs though not actively a part of them. Like all sages, he changes in accordance with time, and like all sages, he needs to embody the Way:

> 將失道而拙，得道而工 (*Huainanzi*, 15.592 "Bing lüe")
>
> A general who lets the Way slip is inept, [a general who] comprehends the Way is successful.

The acceptance of drums and banners, which is the official act of the general's acceptance of his mission, symbolizes his departure from the "inner realm" owned by the emperor into his own external realm:

> 將已受斧鉞，答曰：「國不可從外治也，軍不可從中御也。二心不可以事君，疑志不可以應敵。臣既以受制於前矣，鼓旗斧鉞之威，臣無還請。願君亦(以) [無] 垂一言之命於臣也。[…] 」 (*Huainanzi*, 15.623 "Bing lüe")
>
> After the general has accepted the *fu* and *yue* battle-axes, he replies: "The state cannot be governed from without, and the military cannot be managed from within [the state]. One cannot serve a ruler with two hearts, and neither can he respond to the enemy when his will is full of doubts. Here before your majesty I receive control [over the military], [and therefore am responsible for] the might of the drums, banners, and battle-axes, I do not have far reaching requests, [but the] wish that your majesty shall not pass down to me a single word of command."

Sunbin Bingfa de sixiang bijiao" 《淮南子》"将" 论析议: 兼与《孙子兵法》《孙膑兵法》的思想比较, *Journal of Nanchang Hangkong University: Social Sciences* 17.1 (2015), 41–48.

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The drums represent the general's authority and wisdom. But above all, they represent the might and potential he holds. In their silence they embody all that may occur. This is reminiscent of the representation of the sage as an unstruck drum (cited above). Until triggered to act, all he holds is a major silent potential. The *Huainanzi* depicts three ways of using the military. The highest form is when all is peaceful and the military is not actually utilized: drums are not mentioned in this form. Next, there is the middle form of usage, when "bells and drums face each other" (鼓鐸相望), the military is prepared for battle, but the enemy flees upon seeing the high level of preparation; the last and most inferior is when an actual battle occurs. Only here do the drums actually produce sound ("they string together the drumsticks and use them to roll the drums" 維枹綰而鼓之).[94] Although victory is gained, this is not the desired situation.

We are again reminded of the picture of an ideal world, where sound, in this case the rumbling of drums symbolizing war, is not needed.[95] Here, too, there is an interplay between the ideal and the practical. While the military affairs are ideally never put into practice, there is still an appreciation of the ability to implement them correctly. The illustrations are, as one could expect, taken from the world of sonic phenomena:

> 善用兵, 若聲之與響, 若鐘之與鞈 [⋯] 故鼓鳴旗麾, 當者莫不廢滯崩陁. (*Huainanzi*, 15.604 "Bing lüe")
>
> He who is skilled in utilizing the army is like sound to an echo, like the booming to the drum roll.[96] Thus, when the drums call and the banners are unrolled, among those witnessing it, there will be none who does not surrender or is not extinguished.

The Commoner[97]

Though the lives of the common people tend to remain outside the scope of literary texts in early China, the *Huainanzi* provides some vivid

94. *Huainanzi*, 15.596 "Bing lüe."

95. Interesting, in this sense, is the fact that the expression "to destroy the drums and snap the drumsticks" (破/毀/敗鼓折枹) appears three times in the *Huainanzi* (12.496 "Dao ying"; 20.836 "Tai zu"; 21.862 "Yao lüe") as a symbol for giving up warfare. It appears nowhere else but in the *Huainanzi.*

96. The two characters *tang* 鏜 and *ge* 鞈 (medieval Chinese pronunciations *thop* and *thang* respectively) are both onomatopoeias, the second also meaning "drum roll"—which fits according to the parallelism with the previous set of characters, i.e., sound (result) to an echo (stimulus) vs. booming (result) to the drum roll (stimulus). Major et al. (595) translate it as "like a gong to the drum."

97. Several different terms denote the concept of "common people." Most common in the *Huainanzi* is probably *bai xing* 百姓 (the hundred names), but in the musical

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descriptions of their musical habits. The masses of the *Huainanzi* have an active musical life. They have their own folk songs (as we have seen on "the wise man" section, in the story of Confucius' horse); they react to music; they seek it. When happy and grateful, they sing to express it ("the common people sang ballads to rejoice in his acts" 百姓歌謳而樂之 *Huainanzi* 20.836 "*Tai zu*"). Their naïve and spontaneous reactions to their surroundings are perceived positively, as they follow their own natural principles without even knowing. Thus, even though they may never be able to tell "Way" from "affairs," and will never be capable of ruling all under heaven, they certainly do embody the world of resonance-related phenomena:

> 征羽之操，不入鄙人之耳。抮和切適，舉坐而善。(*Huainanzi*, 17.712 "Shui lin" 說林)
>
> The musical modes of *zhi* and *yu* are something the ears of the vulgar cannot comprehend. [But upon hearing] a swirly harmony with a quick rhythm, they will all sit together and find it wonderful.

The *Yue ji*, in its own way, also puts an emphasis on the masses' lack of knowledge. Its commoners are inferior, for they are incapable of participating in discussions about Music:

> 是故知聲而不知音者，禽獸是也；知音而不知樂者，眾庶是也。唯君子為能知樂。[…] 是故不知聲者不可與言音，不知音者不可與言樂。[98]
>
> Thus, those who know sounds but do not know sound-patterns are the birds and beasts; those who know sound-patterns but do not know Music are the masses. It is the superior man alone who holds the ability to know Music. […] Thus, you cannot discuss patterned-sounds with those who do not know sounds; you cannot discuss Music with those who do not know sound-patterns.

But as far as the *Huainanzi* is concerned, demonstrations of knowledge are not what we need from the common people. As they are most easily affected and transformed by their environment, the common people serve as an effective indicator of the quality of their governance:[99]

> 末世之政[…] 愚夫蠢婦皆有流連之心，悽愴之志，乃(使)始為之撞大鍾，擊鳴鼓，吹竽笙，彈琴瑟，失樂之本矣。(*Huainanzi*, 8.320 "Ben jing")

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context, *biren* 鄙人 (rustic people) or just *bi* 鄙 is also commonly used. An additional term is *zhong* 眾 or *zhong shu* 眾庶—"the masses."

98. "Yue ji" 19.982; "Yue shu" 24.114.

99. For more on the transformative power of music, within both the human and natural world, see Roel Sterckx, "Transforming the Beasts: Animal and Music in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 86.1 (2000), 1–46.

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> In governments of later ages […] silly men and foolish women all had scattered and confused minds, wretched and sorrowful wills. When they are like this, starting to ding the grand bells, beat the resounding drums, blow the pipes and flutes, or strum the *qin* and *se* for them—is letting slip the very roots of Music.

The Fake Scholar

The last archetype to be presented here, and probably the one most disdained by the authors of the *Huainanzi*, is embodied by any person who seeks and cultivates the external appearance of a knowledgeable person without truly holding that knowledge. Many musical examples in the text depict this kind of person, whom we shall name "the fake scholar." It is not explicitly said who these people are, but the impression is that they are somewhat related to those who the *Xunzi* names "vulgar Ruist" (*suru* 俗儒, as opposed to "great Ruists" *daru* 大儒).[100] These are the people who purport to be scholars, while in reality lacking knowledge and seeking only the financial and reputational benefits of scholarship.

In their lack of knowledge, the fake scholars are no better than the commoners:

> 今夫窮鄙之社也，叩盆拊瓴，相和而歌，自以為樂矣。嘗試為之擊建鼓，撞巨鍾，乃性仍仍然，知其盆瓴之足羞也。藏《詩》、《書》，修文學，而不知至論之旨，則拊盆叩瓴之徒也。(*Huainanzi*, 7.284–85 "Jing shen")

> Nowadays, in impoverished rural societies, people knock on pots and tap on jars, harmonize with each other and sing, and they perceive themselves as making "Music." If you try to beat the great drums for them, or strike the gigantic bells, they will be bewildered and distressed, [suddenly] knowing how shameful their pots and jars were. Storing the *Odes* and *Documents* without knowing the underlying meaning of the discussions—this is following the principle of tapping on pots and knocking on jars.

The fake scholar stubbornly adheres to successes of the past, failing to realize that such successes cannot be regained by following the exact

100. On the perception of "vulgar Ru" in Early China, by the *Xunzi* as well as by other texts, see Ann Cheng, "What Did It Mean to Be a Ru in Han Times?," *Asia Major* (3rd ser.) 14.2 (2001), 103–5.

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same paths as before. By so doing, the "scholarship of recent ages" is said to drive itself into confusion:

> 晚世學者，不知道之所一體，德之所總要，取成之跡，相與危坐而說之，鼓歌而舞之，故博學多聞，而不免於惑。(*Huainanzi*, 8.309 "Ben jing")
>
> The scholars of recent ages do not know how the Way consolidates all substances, how Potency encompasses all essentials. They track the traces of [past] success, [and then] facing each other, they sit upright and discuss it; they drum, sing, and dance [in veneration of] it. Hence [even] a man of broad learning and many teachings will not avoid confusion.

In this sense, the fake scholars are worse than commoners. Not only do they not obtain knowledge, they also refuse to follow the path of what is natural. Consequently, they follow neither part of the "rulership model"—they lack the knowledge and do not respond as they should. The following passage is a somewhat cynical allusion to those who only cultivate the external symbols of knowledge. It is worth noting that the lyrics of the *Odes* are presented here as the wrapping of songs, but not as their main component—the natural principles of music—which is what actually attracts people:

> 歌者有詩，然使人善之者，非其詩也。鸚鵡能言，而不可使長。是何則？得其所言，而不得其所以言。(*Huainanzi*, 16.630 "Shui shan" 說山)
>
> Songs have lyrics, but what causes people to be fond of them is not the lyrics. The parrot can speak, but cannot use persuasions and extend a conversation. How come? It possesses what one needs in order to speak, but does not possess what one needs in order to make a conversation.

And in another mocking of people's blind preference of external scholarly representations:

> 邯鄲師有出新曲者，託之李奇，諸人皆爭學之。後知其非也，而皆棄其曲，此未始知音者也。(*Huainanzi*, 19.797 "Xiu wu" 脩務)
>
> Among the [Music] Masters of Handan there was one who came up with a new tune. He [falsely] attributed it to Li Qi,[101] and all the people strived to learn it. Later, when [they] realized it was a lie, they all abandoned his tune. This is not even beginning to know patterns of sound.

101. Li Qi, according to Tao Fangqi's 陶方琦 commentary found in the Liu Wendian edition (797), was a skilful musician of the state of Zhao.

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On Tuning and Being Tuned

Two levels of what one may call "tuning" are essential, according to the *Huainanzi*: one should know how to tune their environment (i.e., how to affect it by changing "affairs"), but just as importantly (maybe even more)—one should know how to be tuned by it (i.e., how to resonate with ongoing natural changes).

The four archetypal models presented above demonstrate three different representations of these skills. The wise man, and the general as its sub-category, hold both skills. They can react and they can act, tune and be tuned. The commoners do not know how to utilize nature in order to act, but do react to external stimulations in accordance with their own nature. The fake scholars on the other hand, are missing the whole point. They stick to an irrelevant past, refusing to be tuned by time, and, needless to say, they are incapable of tuning their environment.

Conclusion

It begins with a silence. A potential, so much stronger than the act itself. The drums not yet rolled, the zithers not strummed. Something grand waiting to happen. "In the hands of performers of an older generation," says Laurence Picken, "the instrument tends to be used to suggest, rather than to produce, sounds."[102] For the *Huainanzi*, music—like warfare; like rulership; like any kind of wisdom—is a matter of knowing its natural limits and limitlessness much more than a matter of action.

An analysis of the musical references in the *Huainanzi* reveals an intriguing, multidimensional attitude toward music, touching upon moral discourse, discourse of political and military power, cosmological perceptions, and much more. Music has a twofold function in the text. In addition to using music as a rhetorical tool, the authors actually develop a multilayered theory about music as a subject of discussion in its own right.

Accordingly, this article presented two models—one taking music as its main theme, and one examining the text through the rhetorical tool of music. In its thought *about* music, the *Huainanzi* is innovative. This innovation is expressed by its reversal of the hierarchy between musical phenomena as presented in other texts of its time, as well as the insertion of new, natural terms into this aesthetical and ethical hierarchy. As opposed to other popular texts of its time and prior to its time, it does not glorify the *human* creation of music. Rather, it puts an emphasis on the natural

102. Laurence Picken, "The Music of Far Eastern Asia: China," in *The New Oxford History of Music*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 87.

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roots of music, including the pitch-standards (*lü* 律), which hitherto were generally excluded from moral discussions on music. According to the *Huainanzi*, the grand ancestor of music is silence, an epitome of the Way itself. Silence represents potential, containing within itself all sounds and tunes that may ever reach human ears if triggered to be sent out into the open.

An analysis of the way the *Huainanzi* thinks of the world *through* music reveals the underlying model of sagely behaviour it promotes. This model brings together two prominent notions in the text, notions which were previously observed by scholars separately but here are amalgamated. Firstly, the universe is perceived as divided into "root" principles—unchangeable elements deriving from the Way—and "branch" principles—changeable, mostly human-made elements. In musical terms, the "Way" principles are metaphorized into stone and metal instruments, which dictate the tones and do not need to be retuned; while the "affairs" are compared to stringed instruments which need to be retuned every once in a while. The second notion put into the model of rulership is the notion of action and reaction, or resonance. Using his knowledge, the ruler (or any person with sagely qualities) is expected to respond to changes in his environment, or create changes when this environment needs "retuning." The two notions are combined into a complete model of rulership—one should obtain the necessary knowledge base, and use it in one's actions.

It becomes clear, after understanding the place of music in the text, why the authors do not dedicate a specific chapter to it. As a natural phenomenon, music is ubiquitous in the *Huainanzi*, and particularly within its cosmological chapters. Being present everywhere, it does not need a chapter of its own. As a human creation, Music, that *yue* that everybody speaks of, is nothing more than a representation, a tool, an affair. Why, then, should it receive its own chapter?

Previous scholarship has focused on moral discussions about music starting in the Warring States period[103] or on the complex and sophisticated musical-cosmological theories in later texts, including the *Huainanzi*.[104] I believe, however, that it is in the degree of connectedness between the moral and the practical-theoretical that the uniqueness of the *Huainanzi* lies.

Indeed, in the court of Huainan, discussions about tradition and change seem to have received their own rhythm, composition, and timbre. Essentially, what the *Huainanzi* suggests to the ruler who aspires to

103. See, e.g., the articles and books by Cook, Brindley, and DeWoskin cited above.

104. Most prominently, Major's *Heaven and Earth* and his "Celestial Cycles and Mathematical Harmonies in the *Huainanzi*."

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sagacity is to act like a musician. Learn the essentials before you apply them, it suggests. Learn the Way before you tackle practical affairs. And after you have done so—allow yourself to improvise. Your audience will follow.

統治的映射——《淮南子》中音樂相關文本分析

艾葦婷

提要

劉安（公元前 179–前 122）撰寫的《淮南子》（成書於公元前 139 年），儘管基本上是討論政治思想的記載，但是它包括許多關於“樂”的記錄以及音樂相關的文本。雖然全書二十一章裡沒有專門論述音樂的章節，但是沒有一個章節是對音樂隻字未提的——由此引發了這樣的問題：在這樣的政治文本中，音樂起到了什麼樣的作用呢？

本文旨在研究《淮南子》中體現的音樂和社會政治層面的相互影響，通過分析書中與音樂相關的文本，揭示了一個多元化的對待音樂的態度，涉及了道德話語、政治權力話語、對宇宙的認知等諸多內容。

本文提出了《淮南子》文本中音樂的雙重功能：一方面，音樂是該書編著者們使用的一種修辭手段；另一方面，音樂本身也是該書討論的一個主題。本文為上述兩種功能分別提出了模型，第一個模型闡釋了《淮南子》中創新性的音樂理念，第二個是通過分析書中的音樂相關文本提出的賢明統治的模型。

Keywords: music, early China, Han, *Huainanzi*, Musical thought, Liu An, the general
淮南子, 音樂思想, 統治與音樂, 劉安, 將