# Musical rehearsals and Confucian harmony

## a link to anthropology

Music is the most abstract of arts. The kind of abstraction music incites in our minds is deprived of a uniform system of representation other than that of musical notation. Musical notation, for its part, does not allow for complete accuracy in transcription when confronted with phenomena such as interpretation and improvisation. Similarly, in ordinary speech, and even in the highly specific phraseology of the philosopher and the literary critic, the knowledge acquired through both the enjoyment and the study of music is often adapted into purely descriptive accounts due to the lack of an objective or more specialised means of representation. Such representation, in turn, frequently leads to the construction of generic models of understanding based on impressions and perceptions, rather than on the 'clean and cut' categorisation of concepts acceptable to philosophical inquiry.

Thus, the 'language' of music can be said to partake with myth in a common inscrutability. The kind of abstraction music allows the intellect remains removed by one step from the realm of ascribable concepts a philosopher usually inhabits. This fact has encouraged thinkers to use the musical simile as an illustration for their philosophical systems, potentially relegating it in this manner to a subordinate position in the scale of human intellectual achievement.

While musical notation is current in Westernised systems of learning, old musical traditions that still survive in cultures such as the Indian, Japanese, or Chinese among others, rely completely on the master-disciple relationship for their transmission from generation to generation. [[1]](#footnote-1) The tradition's worth is evaluated solely on the standard of excellence achieved by individual performers active within it.

The coexistence of these two apparently different systems of learning, both in an inter-cultural context and in the context of modern popular music, and the generic affinity evidenced between poetry and music, have encouraged many comparisons between aesthetic conceptions of poetic phenomena and music.

However, the equivalences have not been limited to the study of poetry, they also extend to areas of scientific research, such as mathematics and physics, as well as other areas of investigation within the field of the humanities, such as anthropology. The musical simile, like the enjoyment of music itself, stretches past the boundaries of specialisation yet affords the specialist an overview of phenomena that no other general scheme based on a human craft which is both spontaneous and popular has yet achieved.

Music, perhaps because of its inherent coherence, its close relation to physical movement, but also due to the degree of complexity it may achieve say in polyphonic or symphonic conditions, has provided over the centuries a classic model for the lay explanation of both philosophical and scientific theories. Andrew Welsh expresses the ultimate connection between music, rhythm, the body, and language accurately here:

Our concern is with the roots of rhythm in language, and from this point of view meter is a late and artistically sophisticated concept—"an exercise in abstraction" by both the poet and the listener. The melopoeia of song, charm, and speech are not intellectualized concepts but old forces in language directed at the ear, or rather at the body as a whole as a perceptor of rhythm. They are physical forces that our bodies feel, and they are concerned with power

and action. Whether meter is itself an abstraction of songmelos or of speech-melos (I believe both versions to be true, as well as a few others), its presence in poetry is the result not of any direct imperatives for magical or social action but of the conscious imposition of a conceptual pattern upon language. Its effects in poetry have been rich and subtle, but what might be forgotten is that the roots themselves are still present in language—rhythmical forces which are themselves capable of rich and varied combinations. Every poet, however skilful his use of meter, still seems to feel these forces actively working beneath his metrical pattern, directing his rhythms into different and often unexpected kinds of syncopations. [[2]](#footnote-2)

One of the theories fittingly reuniting these aspects is Claude Lévi-Strauss’ study of myths within the field of anthropology. Inasmuch as his work is concerned with mythological sources and their impact on culture, and since his efforts are contemporary with those of Pound, the use here of his analysis and method of categorisation of phenomena can be seen to highlight Pound's predilection for certain similes and examples, as well as to show how these drew him to appreciate and defend the doctrines of Confucius.

Two of the concepts advanced by Lévi-Strauss become immediately useful within our analysis; these are: "totalizing" and "*bricolage*". While the first one represents a close parallel to the idea outlined by the word "totalitarian" as used by Pound, [[3]](#footnote-3) the term "*bricolage*" conforms to a pattern of intellectual apprehension that has evolved within the humanities since the advent of the twentieth century, that directly reflects the exponential knowledge acquisition reality of modernity, and that can be traced, within this period, to figures like James Frazer in anthropology and T. S. Eliot in literature. [[4]](#footnote-4) The pattern is not exclusive to these well-known writers; other prominent figures of twentieth-century literature can be said to have benefited in large measure from a method of academic and aesthetic apprehension of phenomena particular to modernist thinkers. Manju Jain has accurately drawn on such understanding to highlight the similarities between two stylistically distant modernist writers:

In his paper on primitive ritual in 1913 Eliot singles out Frazer's comparative method for praise, for finding fixed relations not relative to the observer. In 1923 he writes ['Ulysses, Order, and Myth', *Dial*, 75, nº 5 (November 1923)]: "Psychology ... ethnology and *The Golden Bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method." James Joyce, in using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity ... is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him ... It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. [[5]](#footnote-5)

Lévi-Strauss has posited the aim of anthropology in terms that echo Eliot's praise of Frazer's work:

While sociology strives to produce the observer's social science, anthropology seeks to elaborate the social science of 'the observed': that is so whether it aims at reaching the indigenous' peoples point of view in its description of foreign and distant societies, or whether it extends its object to include the observer's society while trying to uncover a referential system founded on ethnographic experience independent both from the observer and from its object [of observation]. [[6]](#footnote-6) [[7]](#endnote-1)

In a similar fashion, therefore, Pound can be said to have succumbed to the Z*eitgeist* as had most of his contemporaries and not to have worked against it, though his own particular efforts seem to point towards a more elaborate form of *bricolage* or eclecticism out to debunk amateurism in favour of a revival of the traditions which, in the West, take us back to medieval times and, in the East, conjure up images of ancient warrior-poets and practical philosophers.

Lévi-Strauss's type of *bricolage* no doubt emerges as the consequence of his use of contemporary linguistic methodology and, particularly, the recognition of Ferdinand de Saussure's work on language structures. [[8]](#footnote-7) The ongoing modern concern in all branches of the humanities over dual interpretive models for human communication such as 'language and speech' (*langue et parole*), 'signifier and signified' (*signifiant et signifié*), 'syntagm and paradigm' (*rapports syntagmatiques et paradigmatiques*) and 'synchronicity and diachronicity' (*synchronie et diachronie*) has not only pervaded much of modern criticism but clearly remains the foundation of the structuralist movement in all its facets whether these be akin to the anthropology and ethnology developed by Lévi-Strauss, the epistemological archaeology of Michel Foucault, the semiology of Roland Barthes' statements on myth, or the psychoanalytic research of Jacques Lacan.

Lévi-Strauss writes in “La Structure des Mythes” (1955):

If we wish to become aware of the specific characteristics of mythical thought, we should then establish that myth resides simultaneously in language and beyond language. This new difficulty is not foreign to the linguist: doesn't language encompass different levels? In distinguishing between tongue and speech (spoken word), Saussure has shown that language offered two complementary aspects: one structural, the other statistical. The tongue belongs within the realm of reversible time and the spoken word belongs within time irreversible. If it is already possible to isolate these two levels in language, nothing excludes the possibility that we define a third one.” [[9]](#footnote-8) [[10]](#endnote-2)

*Bricolage* constitutes primarily a toolkit used to deal with and to allow for an explanation of the binary combinations that Lévi-Strauss identifies at the root of the primitive societies he studied in his fieldwork. As Roland A. Champagne has noted, the myth Lévi-Strauss speaks of is built on these "contradictions" or "binary oppositions" which "provide the bases for diagrams, or 'schemata,' of four levels on which the story can be generated by a series of unresolved oppositions." He adds that "[t]hese four levels are the geographic, the techno-economic, the sociological, and the cosmological." [[11]](#footnote-9) Champagne goes on to quote Lévi-Strauss and to show how he resolves this multi-layered system of mythical representation of opposites through an "analogy to the system of music":

But these sequences are organized on planes at different levels of abstraction in accordance with schemata, which exist simultaneously, superimposed one upon the other; just as a melody composed for several voices is held within bounds by two-dimensional constraints: first by its own melodic line, which is horizontal, and second by the contrapuntal schemata, which are vertical. [[12]](#footnote-10)

and:

Everything tends to suggest that, as it draws to its close, the apparent narrative (the sequence) tends to approach the latent content of the myth (the schemata). It is a convergence which is not unlike that which the listener discovers in the final chords of a symphony. [[13]](#footnote-11)

It is important to note here that although we have drawn a general parallelism of origin for the works of Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, and Lévi-Strauss, the analysis of similar topics by these authors fails to provide identical answers. In many instances, the approaches might show, as in the case of Barthes' study *Myths of everyday life* and Lévi-Strauss's own anthropological studies, a superficial resemblance; however, the weight of their arguments cannot always be seen to balance out.

Barthes' study of myth also provides a double-layered perspective on the mythical phenomenon; he suggests in his semiological analysis a primary system that signals the reality of what is signified in the myth under examination, and a secondary system that utilises and distorts the meaning (*signification*) making it available for use by manipulators. Lévi-Strauss's intent is primarily philosophical while Barthes' is obviously political. Barthes' analysis, according to Kurt Hübner, uncovers a "decisive weakness in the assertion that the primary semiological system relates in each case to a world free of myths." This assertion Hübner adds:

... is historically incorrect, for in mythical cultures the *total* reality, that is also the working processes, are interpreted mythically. But we cannot impute that even today's farmer regards good weather exclusively from the point-of-view of his economic labour and not also in a way kindred to the mythical. It is particularly with him that old customs and traditions have by no means been extinguished. In other respects, there are oppressed peoples in our epoch who are oppressed precisely because they reject Barthes' concept of reality. Thus, one can reproach colonialism for alienating the natives from themselves, in that it forced them to give up their mythico-magical intercourse with nature as woodcutters, farmers, miners and suchlike in order to accept our completely profane attitude that nature is nothing besides a source of raw materials for industrial production. [[14]](#footnote-12)

In the light of Hübner's point of order, the following excerpt from Lévi-Strauss will dissipate any doubt as to the ultimately different conceptions that structuralism as a method is able to engender within the works of various researchers:

What matters is that the human spirit, without regard for the identity of its occasional messengers, manifests an ever more intelligible structure as the doubly reflexive advance of the two thought processes acting upon each other progresses. These two thought processes can alternatively become the wick and the spark of the affinity from which will emerge their common illumination. [[15]](#footnote-13) [[16]](#endnote-3)

Perhaps the first point to be made about the use of musical similes or the language used to represent music is its almost total reliance on visual and spatial concepts once the bare naming of musical phenomena such as 'melody', 'contrapuntal melody', 'beat', 'rhythm' and others has been exhausted. Within the scope of the visual terminology used by Lévi-Strauss to convey with precision what is the total make-up of his ethnological structures, the main terms of reference remain spatial, that is, the musical simile can only make sense in the written medium through a spatial rendering of its conceptual coordinates. This is revealing because such basic spatial terminology as "horizontal" and "vertical" provide a meagre referential scheme for the depiction of what is meant to be a totalising and self-illustrating simile. Yet, however inadequate the points of spatial reference be, they help the reader conceive of volume and thus of living space (akin to the human three-dimensional physical existence), as well as to hint at the complexity provided by the re-kindled, shared memory of musical arrangements for voices or instruments.

## harmonies to celebrate

Pound was extremely interested in music [[17]](#footnote-14) and was also prompt to identify – as he endeavoured to do in any of the fields of research he ventured into – what were ‘unpardonable *lacunae* in the history of the study of harmony’.

The fact that he recognised his shortcomings in no uncertain way did not disqualify him from understanding the facts and expressing his opinion:

Visitors come here (70 bis), I am writing verse. It seems a natural operation. They find me stumbling through a line of musical composition and they look at me as if I were committing an incomprehensible act. They assume expressions of awe and bewilderment. Yet I have put into writing poetry, twenty years of work which they do not in the least understand; and in music, apart from accommodating notes to words, I am an incompetent amateur. [[18]](#footnote-15)

In his 1910 Preface to the translation of *Guido Cavalcanti*, later included in *Pavannes and Divisions* (1918) he writes:

I believe in an 'absolute rhythm', a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable. [[19]](#footnote-16)

In *The Treatise on Harmony*, Pound recalls his early assertion about rhythm and adds:

In 1910 I was working with monolinear verbal rhythm but one had already an adumbration that the bits of rhythm used in verse were capable of being used in musical structure, even with other dimensions. [[20]](#footnote-17)

But what is most relevant to the present discussion is the way in which Pound advances what he claims to be useful facts about the nature of music and musical composition. He writes:

The early students of harmony were so accustomed to think of music as something with a strong lateral or horizontal motion that they never imagined any one, *any one* could be stupid enough to think of it as static; it never entered their heads that people would make music like steam ascending from a morass.

They thought of music as travelling rhythm going through points or barriers of pitch and pitch-combinations.

They had this concept in their blood, as the oriental has his raga and tala. It simply never occurred to them that people would start with static harmony and stick in that stationary position. [[21]](#footnote-18)

The major weakness of Pound's treatise is the lack of definitions for concepts like "static harmony" which are rejected outright. One may associate this concept, in opposition to the more 'lively' "active harmony", with a formal attachment to musical notation [[22]](#footnote-19) that might at times restrict the scope for personal interpretation of written music.

2. A trained musician (i. e. in the contemporary sense); what are these marvelous executants who appear so often to have no intelligence apart from their amazing faculty for synchronized playing? A trained musician is one who knows the size of musical things. They have this marvelous millimetric training; they can count the infinitesimal fractions of the time-inch. Having been hopelessly bewildered in childhood by idiotic teachers, it has taken me years to find out this simple fact. I used to ask Dolmetsch to write a manual for beginners, seeing how amazingly he had taught his own children to play the delicate ancient music. He never gave them scales or exercises, they learned the music; i. e. the tunes, the shape of the tunes, and the size seemed to come perfectly and of itself. But after a century of trained orchestral performers, and of the present system of training, we find "musicians" who are solely sensitive to size. [[23]](#footnote-20)

Martianus Capella’s last chapter, ‘Harmony’, in the 5th century classic *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* represents an extremely erudite [[24]](#footnote-21) account of what could be called a compendium on the musical theory of the ancients. After an extended poetical overture where Venus, Mars, Apollo, and Jupiter himself prepare her entrance in the nuptial celebrations, Harmony flaunts her own qualities and ensures the reader recognises the importance she bears on the successful fulfilment of the marriage. She then ‘opens up’ as to the real message of knowledge she bestows upon Philology and her bridegroom, the poet-messenger Mercury. She says:

Since my knowledge comprises the knowledge of the proper regulation of measures applying to both melodic and rhythmic compositions, I shall first discuss melodic composition. I maintain that whatever sounds strike the ear in the right proportion form either a whole tone, a half tone or a quarter tone, the last being a *diesis*. A whole tone is an interval of appropriate size that lies between two mutually different sounds. [[25]](#footnote-22)

Identifying tone as a musical interval’s magnitude or ‘size’ first – a necessary though not defining part of Pound’s musical hierarchy – Harmony goes on to speak of the various tonal varieties (eighteen in total), pitch, the three consonances (*symphoniae*), the fifteen *tropi* (or octave species) with their specific “compatibility or kinship”, before embarking on detailed explanations of the three principles of harmony and dedicates much time and effort to outlining the characteristics of voice.

All the while, the allegorical style and constant references to ancient Greece, the various affinities with deities and Martianus’s recurring reference to mythical genealogies provide some twenty pages of exhaustive research and exposition of everything that makes for the understanding and classification of musical concepts: from intervals, instruments, chords, and movement (enharmonic, chromatic, and diatonic) to composition itself.

It is with Martianus’ characterisation of composition that we come to encounter the concepts of *melopoeia*, and of *rhythm*, which in the Carthaginian’s words are “the effect of complete musical motion” (Pound’s ‘words charged, above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the trend of that meaning’) and the “artificer or a form of motion” (Pound’s that which ‘corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed’) respectively. [[26]](#footnote-23)

Pound’s explanations bear a striking similarity to Lévi-Strauss's propositions above but also to Martianus’ definitions and rely on a spatial rendering of musical phenomena. The spatial analogy in Pound's treatise is forced and ultimately unreliable; however, the import of the treatise, if analysed carefully and with a measure of sympathy towards the efforts the author must make in trying to name the unnameable, will lead us onto an important connection to Confucius and the wider realm of aesthetics.

Pound's preliminary claim in *The Treatise on Harmony* is that "[t]he element most grossly omitted from treatises on harmony up to the present is the element of *time*. The question of the time interval that must elapse between one sound and another if the two sounds are to produce a pleasing consonance or an *interesting* relation, has been avoided." [[27]](#footnote-24) The breaking up of 'time' is the element that makes music possible in our ears. Pound goes on to explain the physics of such an assertion and provides convincing quasi-scientific proof to suggest that what he speculates about is not an unruly expression of his intuitive perceptions, but something founded on experience:

The ear is an organ for the detection of frequency. ...

Animals probably notice frequencies favourable and unfavourable to their existence. Hence the powers of Orpheus. [[28]](#footnote-25)

Music as the ancient philosophers say, arises from number.

Let us say that music is a composition of frequencies. [[29]](#footnote-26)

This theory is given further graphic explanation when Pound advances the difference between the mathematical or purely scientific approach to composition [[30]](#footnote-27) and the actual moment of performance or creativity, something he will reiterate years later in *Guide to Kulchur* by saying that "[t]he performing musician cuts his form in the air and in the time flow. He writes it as in less stable water."

Perhaps Nicolas Carter puts it best when he equates music with language and writes:

All of this is to say that music isn’t math, music is a language. And just like our ordinary language, it is messy, subtle, complicated, expressive, nuanced and sometimes difficult. There are things you can learn, rules if you like, that make up the grammar of music. This is the system of notes, intervals, scales, chords (which we will learn in this book), etc. But to make use of theory it is always important to remember the way language works — you can’t learn a language by learning a set of rules, you have to learn it by immersing yourself in it and getting a sense of its practices. To understand music as a language means to always make theory come alive, never to let it sit and become stale. To live it and practice it by listening, playing, singing, expressing, writing and thinking it. Intervals are only as good as the real notes that compose them, and music is only as good as the linguistic expressions that it comprises. [[31]](#footnote-28)

If we care to go back to Martianus Capella’s chapter ‘Harmony’ in his philosophical allegory *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, we will see that for him, and for the large majority of Western educational institutions until the 12th century, the equivalence (or *sisterhood* as Remigius – evidently influenced by Eriugena – would have it) between harmony and arithmetic represents only one, albeit an essential one at that, of the qualifying qualities of harmony. Martianus Capella embarks on an enumeration of the faculties musical harmony engenders in humans such as military vigour in battle, the curing of illness and mental health problems, communication with animals and plants, and “countless benefactions that I have given mankind”, and lets Harmony speak for herself when the marriage of Philology and Mercury is about to be consummated:

From the time that the limitless universe of the ineffable Creator begot me as the twin sister of heaven, I have not forsaken numbers. I have followed the courses of the sidereal spheres and the whirling motion of the entire mass, assigning tones to the swiftly moving celestial bodies. [[32]](#footnote-29)

In Martianus we see Boethius’ ‘music of the spheres’ being pre-empted while we are also led to identify many other subsets of educational, philosophical conceptions and beliefs that remain extant to our day in Western thought and through which myths and accepted ideas have not only imbibed but created the foundations of modern customs and traditionally accepted models of behaviour. [[33]](#footnote-30)

Pound employs another example to highlight the essential difference between "static" and "active" harmony:

After Dolmetsch tunes a clavichord he has slightly to untune it. Why? That is to say, the proportion of the different notes remains correct but each note is sounded on two strings, and these must not be in absolute accord. He says the waves 'cut' each other and ruin the resonance.

One may either graph this by picturing two sound waves, the crests of which mutually bump and depress each other, or you may say that the nodes need a certain width, they must meet, but they must meet as if on the knife's back not on the razor's edge. [[34]](#footnote-31)

The emphasis is on an anthropomorphic conception of music technology and performance. As he clarified in *Guide to Kulchur*:

The anthropomorphic expression (not to be confused with anthropomorphic belief, such as God an old man with a beard) comes nearer truth than does merely arithmetical cosmogony. [[35]](#footnote-32)

Pound's oscilloscopic depiction provides a close visual approximation to what might be happening to the musical notes one hears and therefore retains an element of usefulness that his further metaphoric elaborations do not possess. In all, both Lévi-Strauss's theorising and that of Pound are only half-true to their musical similes. Music, as we have said at the beginning of this chapter, remains abstract and alien to objective – graphic or otherwise – illustration. However, the efforts of both researchers to gather under such simile the structures of the mythical and aesthetic understanding they put forward, reveal a shared interest in the identification of phenomena that Lévi-Strauss views as ultimately irretrievable and Pound, on the contrary, aspires to reconstitute into a universal order of knowledge. Both researchers rely on a similar perception of the generalist schemes of human activity within their fields. Lévi-Strauss, using the example of technological progress in the distillation of rum in Puerto Rico as against the employment of superannuated techniques in the French island-colony of Martinique that, unexpectedly, yield better results, notes nostalgically:

Such a contrast illustrates in my eyes the paradox of civilisation whose charms essentially adhere to the residues it transports in its flux yet we are unable to stop ourselves from elucidating. [[36]](#footnote-33) [[37]](#endnote-4)

For his part Pound had written in *Guide to Kulchur* that "[a]ny sort of understanding of civilization needs comprehension of incompatibles." The two theorists even favour similar models of division and categorisation of phenomena, volunteering experimentation and first-hand information as the only reliable tools for the researcher. [[38]](#footnote-34) However, ultimately, Lévi-Strauss renounces all endeavour to reinstate an ancient order of being and openly fights previous arguments for the imitation of models based on what has been called the 'natural human'. Within the realm of art, he also identifies a rupture with the past not so much in terms of artistic production – which is prone to display historical differences across centuries – but in the nature of the orientation of artistic activity:

With the art of Modern Times, it is a matter of an increasing individualisation of patrons and not of creators. It is no longer the case that the group as a whole awaits that the artist provides it with particular objects made according to prescribed canons, but that amateurs – strange as the term may seem in a comparison with societies very different from ours – or groups of amateurs do so instead. [[39]](#footnote-35) [[40]](#endnote-5)

This is doubtless another point of agreement between Lévi-Strauss and Pound. For Pound, 'rewriting' in 1913 Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*' when "other centres of civilization (during the intervening centuries) had decided that good art was a blessing and bad art was criminal" seemed absurd. The following remarks on art should be read in that context:

The touchstone of an art is its precision. This precision is of various and complicated sorts and only the specialist can determine whether certain works of art possess certain sorts of precision. I don't mean to say that any intelligent person cannot have more or less sound judgement as to whether a certain work of art is good or not. An intelligent person can usually tell whether or not a person is in good health. It is none the less true that it takes a skilful physician to make certain diagnoses or to discern the lurking disease beneath the appearance of vigour. [[41]](#footnote-36)

What both these accounts of investigations into the nature of mythology and aesthetics provide are examples of the contemporary use of a similar methodology in two disparate fields of academic research. Lévi-Strauss attempts a totalising understanding and exposition of the mythical reality – something Champagne interprets as a "method ... not focussed by the teleological vision of a single philosophical or ideological position" – that tends to push him towards the conception of a mythical world irremediably bent on a reasoned decadence:

Having demonstrated the rigorous agency of myths and having thus conferred upon them an existence as objects, my analysis therefore emphasises the mythical character of objects: the universe, nature, man, who during the span of thousands, millions and billions of years would have, in sum, done nothing but – like a vast mythological system – deployed the resources of their own combined elements before turning them on themselves and self-annihilate in the evidence of their caducity. [[42]](#footnote-37) [[43]](#endnote-6)

In Pound's case the result is diametrically opposed. If there is something that clearly characterises Pound's delving into matters aesthetic, it is the profound self-interested, survivalist attitude towards the outcome of his investigations. Pound, according to the evidence provided by his writings, is not prepared to slide back into an 'objective' model of acceptance, however beautiful it might seem. His concern remains with building and educating, that is, with creating the conditions necessary for a renaissance of the arts but also of society.

Both Lévi-Strauss and Pound opt for general similes based on a time-formed model such as music to sum up and illustrate their own points of discovery. Then, both are seen to favour, for the purpose of exposition, a spatial and visual rendition of such temporal models that will convey graphically the structural complexity of the analysis. However, come the time for a summary of their findings, Lévi-Strauss chooses to advance wide-ranging generalisations – something suited to philosophical disquisitions – while Pound opts for a communicative approach that is meant to resolve, then and there, the arguments he has previously brought to light.

Both Lévi-Strauss and Pound are concerned with *time* and *space* as notions relevant to their specific areas of research, but only Pound reaches out towards a form of direct communication through sound, something which might go beyond the impasse brought about by merely descriptive accounts of the workings of the phenomena under scrutiny. In this sense, and since he chooses a dialogical method in his critical writings, such choice affords the reader a broad level of participation.

Pound's writing, stylistically contentious as it may appear, offers the reader the opportunity to discuss the topic, as it were, with the author himself. Whether there be an obvious assertion of fact or even an outrageous comparison drawn by Pound, these are meant to destabilise the reader from an easy and thoughtless browsing through the piece. Pound's writing is sensationalist in a healthy way, disruptive; it is meant to stir the reader out of his/her complacency or the monotony of continued academic reading. The results are stimulating since, in the process of reading his criticism, we are forced (and 'forced' is the appropriate word here) into an understanding of things which, because of the apparent lack of a polished rhetoric, manages to revolt us or draw us to agreement either partially or totally with what is being said, but also conjures up a degree of self-consciousness which Pound's 'rashness and roughness' demand from the reader, and that is necessarily awakened in him or her if they be not already predisposed to it.

Pound can be seen to agree with the live Eastern learning ritual, that is, the exchange between master and disciple to which he had been conditioned through his reading of the Greek classics and which he sought fervently in association with some of his peers amongst whom Yeats is an outstanding example.

What is it then that Pound wants to communicate? In the *Treatise on Harmony* his goal is clear:

If I can only get the mathematics of these relations so complicated that composers will become discouraged; give up trying to compose by half-remembered rules, and really listen to sound, I shall have performed no inconsiderable service to music. [[44]](#footnote-38)

In *Guide to Kulchur* he writes: “I am however trying to use, not an inch rule but a balance.” [[45]](#footnote-39) Thus, in the same way Pound might employ "an inch rule" as a paradigm for the 'wrong sort' of accuracy in the interpretation and deep understanding of aesthetic phenomena, he strives to use mathematics to 'discourage composers' from what he believes to be pseudo-artistic endeavours. And, in the same way he utilised these two scientific instruments to attack purely logical structures of understanding, he makes use of structure, to undermine a narrow knowledge of aesthetic phenomena. In this, however, he was not alone since formulations to that purpose had been made as early as 1920 by T. S. Eliot, who, in *The Sacred Wood* writes:

... the true generalization is not something superposed upon an accumulation of perceptions; the perceptions do not, in a really appreciative mind, accumulate as a mass, but form themselves as structure; and criticism is the statement in language of this structure; it is a development of sensibility. [[46]](#footnote-40)

Eliot appears to resolve his argument in favour of the structural apprehension of phenomena, and his creative writing is always conscious of structural parameters, however, what the statement gives away through expressions such as "really appreciative mind" and "a development of sensibility", is a concern for all that, in the analysis of artistic works, can barely be contained in or signalled using structural models of apprehension alone. In other words, structure is only a part of the total artistic sensibility; that is, a useful tool for analysis. Thus, Eliot's famous concluding statement:

The two directions of sensibility are complementary; and as sensibility is rare, unpopular, and desirable, it is to be expected that the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same. [[47]](#footnote-41)

Returning to music, Pound will distinguish two kinds of music "[n]ot contradictory, not hostile one to the other, but two blessed categories, each for a particular excellence." One is represented by the music of Clement Janequin [[48]](#footnote-42) and D. Antonio Vivaldi, the other by J. S. Bach. The first kind represents "form" or "music of representative outline" the second is "music of structure". Although Pound allows for the excellence of both, he cannot hide his preference for the first type, hinting that even Bach borrowed (as he certainly did) from some of Vivaldi's compositions, and that "[w]hen it comes to melody, which is after all what I (damned poet anyhow) care about, I back the Italians." Pound goes on to explain the importance of Bach's kind of music, the "total 'structure', namely lateral movement, in time space" [[49]](#footnote-43) yet, his predilection lies with:

The *forma*, the immortal *concetto*, the concept, the dynamic form which is like the rose pattern driven into the dead iron-filings by the magnet, not by material contact with the magnet itself, but separate from the magnet. Cut off by the layer of glass, the dust and filings rise and spring into order. Thus the *forma*, the concept rises from death ... [[50]](#footnote-44)

Margaret Fisher has researched the practical application [[51]](#footnote-45) of this concept and renders a detailed account of both the literary origins and the specific definition of the musical elements that make up Pound’s theory. She writes:

Pound encouraged readers of poetry to recite the best poetry aloud, “preferably in a foreign language, so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert . . . attention from the movement.”

Dante's definition of the poetic author in the Convivio tells us that a poet binds words with the art of music. Pound restates this as, “Poetry is a composition of words set to music.” The Middle Ages provide the underpinnings of Pound's song settings, and by extension, the greater basis of much of his Cantos. His statement that, “Rhythm is a FORM cut into TIME,” distinguishes Pound's twentieth century medievalism from contemporaneous SPACE/TIME theories of modernist music. Pound's theory requires that the listener discern FORM as a specific measure of variation in the proportion between a fixed point and a variable, as well as differences in timbre, which may also create FORM, because they are a matter of vibration, therefore rhythm, and proportion. [[52]](#footnote-46)

But there is another part of Fisher’s analysis, closely knit as it is to Pound’s efforts to put poetry to music, that reveals a further dimension to the relevance of music in his conception of aesthetics, philosophy, and artistic composition.

In poetry which is tied to a definite verse form, the fixed point is the underlying pace of the poem. This pace sets up an anticipation of its fulfilment. The variable is any and every sound or combination of sounds among the poem's total sounds, that conducts the feeling of the work through a rhythmic and tonal relationship to that underlying pace – the sounds might work near or against the expectation. Feeling arises from the tension engendered by expectation and actualization. Meaning would then follow and could not be divorced from the cadence, movement, or in the case of the best poetry, the “absolute rhythm” of the poem. According to Pound, it is the cadence that gives the perception of the emotion, or its significance. [[53]](#footnote-47)

Fisher’s use of the words: “anticipation”, “tension”, “expectation”, and “cadence” lead us directly into yet another major area of the poet’s process of assimilation, and of standard-setting within aesthetics and especially to poetry.

## aesthetic magnetism

It is at this point that considerations originating in the Chinese conception of society can be introduced that may be useful in understanding Pound's predilection for the Confucian lore. These considerations should be seen in the light of what has been identified as Pound's efforts to elicit an *alter* artistic level, beyond the purely structural level of aesthetic understanding, through the definition of a 'magnetism' particular to the highest examples of artistic activity and enabling the artist to operate an effectual method for communication.

According to Pound's conception, the attraction created by the 'aesthetic magnet' (Pound uses the magnet not only as a paradigm of the good art object but also as the fundamental quality attributable to men who produce such objects and other creations to which humanity is drawn) does not need to be visible yet manages to order into a pattern – 'the rose on steel-dust' – the material or the people, as the case may be, in its proximity.

This phenomenon has received ample attention within the study of Confucianism and deserves our consideration both for its obvious parallelism to Pound's thought but also for what it suggests about the nature of this foreign system of social harmonisation and the role of music within it. [[54]](#footnote-48)

Herbert Fingarette has interpreted the tenets underlying the behaviour of the Confucian gentleman or *junzi* 君子in terms kindred to Pound's magnet simile:

[t]here is an interesting ambiguity in Confucius' remarks about the remarkable *te (de)* 德 possessed by a *chün tze* (*junzi*) 君子 or person who is *jen* (*ren*) 仁. Such persons, he seems to say, draw others to them in a kind of irresistible, necessary way and elicit from them responses that embody the *li* 禮 and the Way. [[55]](#footnote-49)

Fingarette also makes interesting remarks in his article about another interpretation of the same phenomenon which would confer some kind of "magical causal power to *te*". He writes: "I believe both ideas are present in Confucius' thought."

Lévi-Strauss has formulated a similar understanding of the processes employed by science and magic; he writes:

Therefore, instead of opposing magic and science, it would be better to set them in parallel as two modes of cognition unequal as to the theoretical and practical results they provide (since, from this point of view, it is true that science is more successful than magic, even though magic pre-forms science inasmuch as it sometimes succeeds), but not unequal as to the kinds of mental operations that both conjecture and which differ less in their nature than in terms of the types of phenomena to which they apply themselves. [[56]](#footnote-50) [[57]](#endnote-7)

The *junzi* moves others to appropriate behaviour in much the same way as the magnet draws the iron-filings to itself. The result is an order – 'responses embodied in *li*' or 'propriety' – which is easily identifiable by the Confucian. Moreover, this attraction can be interpreted in terms of effective communication or as Fingarette himself writes:

Confucius' remarks about the *te [de]* of the *jen* [*ren*] person are logically analogous to a statement such as 'One who truly communicates will enable all who hear to understand.' ... By "truly communicate" we *mean*, among other things, that this person does enable the audience to understand. So too, on the view here presented, to be "*jen*" *means* (among other things) to be living *li* relationships with others, so that all proceeds as it properly should according to the Way. [[58]](#footnote-51)

Finally, Fingarette makes use of the musical model to sum up the import of his remarks:

... the power of attraction of such a consummately human life is no more (and no less) mysterious than the power of a great musical work to arouse spontaneous response by virtue of actualizing consummately musical values. [[59]](#footnote-52)

But the modelling of the Confucian gentlemen or *junzi* type of human being under the music simile and the rules of propriety (*li*) 禮 needs to be brought within the perspective of the Confucian use of language and the ultimately harmonising role of this philosophy. Such considerations lead us back to a concept that Pound was keen to produce in his expositions, and refers directly to the importance of precise language usage. Pound's first concern for '*le mot juste'* and later for *zheng ming* 正名 [[60]](#footnote-53) is consistent throughout his career. For Pound, the discovery of Confucius' *zheng ming* signified the expansion of the limits of his own previous theories of naming to cover the fields of politics, sociology, and economics. In fact, the first sprouting of his imagist theory demands of the writer an economy of words that must go hand-in-hand with the use of precise naming and expression.

To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation",

[t]o use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something, [[61]](#footnote-54)

and

if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that *a* sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk [[62]](#footnote-55)

are all early expressions of what Pound perceived as a necessity in literature, namely, the precise use of terminology in the context of the society to which it belongs.

Pound’s translations may also be interpreted as versions or transcreations of work that gains relevance and power through a contextual reading bent on drawing valid examples of behaviour (artistic or otherwise) from the ancient contexts in which they were originally created and reinstating them in the present.

Hugh Kenner has shown how *Cathay* carries many allusions to the events of the First World War in the use of specific vocabulary, yet such allusions do not obstruct the ancient message of the poems but instead reinstate them within a contemporary setting that becomes both compelling and rewarding for the early twentieth-century reader.

For his part, Lawrence Richardson entertains few doubts when, after having examined thoroughly the poet's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, he acknowledges Pound as an "artist of translation". The verdict of his 1947 review is overall positive, but what most impresses Richardson is the fact that Pound "approaches and sometimes manages ... translation which will bring into English the wit and delicacy of Propertius through particularities and uses English with the same odd mixture of poise and intensity which characterizes Propertius' Latin." [[63]](#footnote-56) Richardson goes on to illustrate the point with numerous bilingual excerpts, but that much should suffice to illustrate our present argument about Pound's attention to the precise use of words in translation. The Confucian relevance should by now be evident:

Confucian philosophy begins from an irreducibly interpersonal conception of the human being in which self, society, and state are correlates determined through communication. Under these conditions, naming for Confucius cannot simply be a process of attaching appropriately corresponding labels to an already existing reality. The performative force of language entails the consequence that to interpret the world through language is to impel it towards a certain realization, to make it known in a certain way. And the extent to which one is able to influence the world is a function of the extent to which one can articulate his meaning, value, and purpose in such a manner as to evoke deferential responses from others. [[64]](#footnote-57)

What David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames are elaborating on here is the level at which the word – always within the Confucian tradition – acquired a significance that transcended that of merely being a 'signifier' possibly distinguishable from its 'signified' in the Saussurian sense; that is, although such structured understanding might have been there, and thus the need for *zheng ming* or 'rectification of names' ('ordering of names' as Hall and Ames have it), the purpose of such an exercise was twofold. Firstly, it resided in narrowing the gap between the real object being named and the accepted knowledge in the context of the society where it was used, and, secondly, it meant achieving an accuracy conducive to the ‘influencing’, ’impelling’ action paramount to the ‘magnetic effect’ described above and accorded to the Confucian superior man (*junzi)*.

The following quote from the *Analects* is often presented as a standard source in the discussion of this topic. Pound uses it at the beginning of his *Guide to Kulchur* to clarify his approach; he deems it self-explanatory:

If the terminology be not exact, if it fit not the thing, the governmental instructions will not be explicit, [[65]](#footnote-58) if the instructions aren't clear and the names don't fit, you can not conduct business properly

If business is not properly run the rites and the music will not be honoured, if the rites and the music be not honoured, penalties and punishments will not achieve their intended effects, if penalties and punishments do not produce equity and justice, the people won't know where to put their feet or what to lay hold of or to whom they shd. stretch out their hands.

That is why an intelligent man cares for his terminology and gives instructions that fit. When his orders are clear and explicit they can be put into effect. An intelligent man is neither inconsiderate of others nor futile in his commanding. [[66]](#footnote-59)

What is most striking about such a tirade (one of the longest in the *Analects*) is the way in which the different functions of government and the model behaviour of the *junzi* are 'stringed' together by a thread of argumentation that does not immediately fit the scheme of Western logic. There have been, as a consequence, many attempts to discredit the reliability of the original text, yet the present form has stood the test of time. In fact, the study of the Chinese classics has inevitably brought many a Western scholar to the acceptance of an expanded realm of logic not constrained by the conceptual categories to which we are accustomed in the West.

There being a model of behaviour and influence like that offered by the figure of the *junzi* 君子presupposes both an accepted similarity and an intrinsic affinity of the people to it; in the words of the *Shi Jing* 詩經 "In hewing an axe handle, in hewing an axe handle, the pattern is not far off." [[67]](#footnote-60) Such an excerpt from the *Book of Poetry*, included as it is in the *Zhong Yong* 中庸 [[68]](#footnote-61) alerts us again to the phenomenon of *forma* as expressed above by Pound.

However, the behaviour of the *junzi* can also be appraised from a different angle. The *Analects* say: "The *junzi* does not function like a utensil" (子曰：「君子不器。」*junzi bu* [not function as] *qi*); [[69]](#footnote-62) not being restrained by functionality, the *junzi* embodies a behavioural model not tied to fixed rules. He is endowed with the ability to trace a flexible yet appropriate course of events within the parameters of his natural obligations to society. This malleability is the one granted by different interpretations of the Confucian texts but also by the impossibility to pin down in the classics a behaviour which might be considered stereotypical of the *junzi*. [[70]](#footnote-63) The above quote from the *Analects* could be stretched to accommodate such an adaptable stance on the part of the *junzi*; not, of course, out of rebelliousness, but out of an individual understanding of the ever changing nature of affairs around him.

Exactly how the *junzi* achieves this cohesiveness of behaviour and how he manages to infuse it into others, represents a major epistemological problem. [[71]](#footnote-64) Although the logic in the concatenation of statements is different from that observed in Western philosophical approaches, we cannot deny that the above paragraph conforms to a logic of its own.

The best example of such inner logic alien to Western thinking models is *Da Xue* 大學 [[72]](#footnote-65) or *The Great Learning*. This is a short treatise on the basic tenets of the Confucian cosmology and the processes which keep it in place. *Da Xue* provides much evidence about the kind of anthropomorphism (in Pound's sense) which underlies Confucianism. Here, Linda W. L. Young's introductory remarks to her socio-linguistic, culturo-analytic study *Crosstalk and culture in Sino-American communication* do much to alter the image often held in the West about the nature of the Chinese quest for socio-political unity in communal terms. She writes:

But what is little understood about harmony in Chinese terms is the fact that it has been consistently paired with diversity since ancient times. Human diversity is accepted as a basic condition of social life, and the point of harmony is to minimize the conflict that comes along with diversity. Indeed, the greater the diversity, the greater the harmony sought and generated. Harmony, in fact, is a recognition of diversity in unity; diversity is respected or tolerated so long as actions are aimed toward the broader good. [[73]](#footnote-66)

As Hall and Ames explain, this alternative logic secures its roots precisely on tenets contrary to those where Western logic bases its workings. Again, the relation between language and behaviour becomes a determining point for the analysis:

Our interpretation of "ordering names" (*cheng ming*) argues against the priority of formal constructions by rejecting the suggestion that Confucius simply uses names reductionistically to organize the process of human experience into some preestablished pattern that is held to define the meaning, value and purpose of life. It argues for the priority of the aesthetic order by insisting that Confucius regarded the particular person in a specific context as the source of signification.

Confucius, in giving this priority to the person as a particular focus, regards the interpretive patternings constituted by the network of names to serve a sense of continuity and coherence and, at the same time, to be a malleable framework through which novelty and uniqueness are disclosed. [[74]](#footnote-67)

The fact that the *Da Xue* inevitably interlinked the fate of the ruler to that of the common people and that it provided a unique source of refinement and harmonisation for both, were in themselves decisive guiding tenets for Pound's adoption of Confucian principles.

## Pound and Confucianism

It is this understanding that leads us back to the statements Pound made about Confucius and Confucianism from the perspective of an aesthetic view of reality. Much of the modernist concern about tradition could be redefined according to terms that come very close to such aesthetic conceptions of human behaviour. Eliot's essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” is an example in point. What Eliot comes to terms within this piece is the fact that "improvement" in art never really takes place and that our own sense of separation from the cultural tradition to which we belong is based on a reassessment of the past in a way which was impossible to achieve for artists of previous epochs. The emphasis is on the translatability of the poetic experience (and perhaps also the psychological experience) in terms that are unique to the present yet abide within the scope of the shared aesthetic experience of the world at large, both past and present. [[75]](#footnote-68)

He [the poet] must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe – the mind of his own country - a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind – is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawings of the Magdalenian draftsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. [[76]](#footnote-69)

Similarly, Hall and Ames, though allowing for malleability, only speak of "novelty" and "uniqueness" and not of improvement or progress. 'Novelty' is certainly the factor Eliot considers to be a "conscious present" or an "awareness of the past ... which the past's awareness of itself cannot show", while 'uniqueness' easily fits the scheme of Eliot's concept of individuality in the well-known metaphor of the "catalyst". In Pound's case, the whole matter of tradition-building within literature constitutes a chain of assumptions about relative degrees of competency and a constant battle against stagnation. In the end, Eliot and Pound are not far apart:

... only the mediocrity of a given time can drive the more intelligent men of that time to 'break with tradition'.

I take it that the phrase 'break with tradition' is currently used to mean 'desert the more obvious imbecilities of one's immediate elders .... Only the careful and critical mind will seek to know how much tradition inhered in the immediate elders.

and:

I ... shall die in the gutter because I have not observed that commandment which says 'Thou shalt respect the imbecilities of thine elders in order that thy belly shall be made fat from the jobs which lie in their charge.' [[77]](#footnote-70)

Therefore, what the individual or *junzi* can offer becomes most important to the society in which he lives. But his contribution is measured in aesthetic terms, that is, his actions in society ordain a manifest harmony which both reinterprets tradition as a fresh expression and serves as a model for others. Again, the musical simile is a useful tool for the appreciation of this idea. Tang Yi-jie agrees with many contemporary Chinese interpreters of ancient philosophy who see the major import of Chinese thought to be intimately linked to the values covered by three concepts, namely: truth, the good, and beauty. His interpretation of Confucius famous dictum 六十而耳順 (*liushi er er shun)* - "at sixty my ear was attuned", [[78]](#footnote-71) is relevant to our discussion. He writes:

Here, I am using as a guide Zhu Xi's commentary on the sentence; he says: "Sound enters the heart's communication, not opposes it, knows it completely, not thinking it obtains it." "*sheng ru xin tong*" I think is related to "music" (both musical sounds and noises included); 知之之至"*zhi zhi zhi zhi*" probably means surpassing "knowing (the) heavenly order (or command)" state, this kind of state is of the sort that 'is obtained without thinking', therefore it transcends knowledge. I think it can be interpreted as a kind of intuition of [an immanent] aesthetic realm. What he obtains is a type of intuitive image which transcends experience, that is, a sort of artistic state or condition of beauty .... We know that Confucius had achieved great musical accomplishment, he "heard the rhymes of Qi" and "for three months did not know the taste of meat"; this is easily associated with the extreme aesthetic actualization implied by the phrase "not thinking it obtains it". [[79]](#footnote-72) [[80]](#endnote-8)

This kind of aesthetic appreciation of phenomena around us, and the implied harmonisation which, according to the commentators, appears to accompany it, is theoretically understandable and may also be closely paralleled with the Kantian conceptions of 'pure taste' and 'the beautiful'. [[81]](#footnote-73) But to understand the interpretation, one that Tang admits to ‘being somewhat forced' (牽強*qianqiang*), we will need further explanation of the processes by which such interchanges are effected. The *Zhong Yong* provides an excellent description of these associations and their standing within a cosmological conception of harmony:

When joy, anger, sorrow, and mirth are not released (from mind), (the nature) is called a state of equilibrium; when these are released and respond correctly to their targets, (the nature) is called a state of harmony. Equilibrium is the great root of the world; harmonization is the attained way of the world. In being able to fulfil equilibrium and harmonization, heaven and earth will be well-positioned and ten thousand things well-nourished. [[82]](#footnote-74)

Chung-Ying Cheng, the author of this translation, further explains the implications of this paragraph:

The attainment of harmony in question is indicated by a well-ordered relationship among things and by a natural tendency to act and grow among all things. Thus harmonization is a higher form of goodness than that of equilibrium and indeed is the goal for a state of equilibrium to attain. From this point of view, potential goodness in man begins with the equilibrium and aims at harmonization as the goal of its actualization. In fact the relative relationship between equilibrium and harmonization can be further explained as a constant interchange. [[83]](#footnote-75)

What the above Confucian text and these remarks imply is that not only does the harmonisation of human activity remain intrinsic to human nature, but that it is in the expression of human nature "when these [joy, anger, sorrow, and mirth] are released and correspond correctly to their targets", that is, when they are released *appropriately*, that the highest form of cosmological communication is set to work. Joy, anger, sorrow, and mirth are human emotions which, as all emotions, are characterised by pre-empting thought, they correspond loosely to the 'humours' of old Western physiology and ultimately shape our relationships with others. Moreover, these emotions are what emerge in the creative activity of artists. This is Pound writing in 1913:

You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive, etc., etc., etc. You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into dance and into music and into music with words, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate trait of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion.

When this rhythm, or when the vowel and consonantal melody or sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem (for we have come at last to the poem) is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good. [[84]](#footnote-76)

Pound's impromptu exposition defines powerfully the process of refinement of poetic expression through a scheme that, though seemingly simplistic, has been corroborated in the study of ancient Chinese prosody and, particularly, in that pertaining to its oldest extant compilation of poetry, *The Book of Poetry* or *Shi Jing* 詩經. [[85]](#footnote-77)

As Shi-Xiang Chen [Shih-Hsiang Chen] explains in his paper 'The Shih-ching [Shi-jing]: Its Generic Significance in Chinese Literary History and Poetics', this evolutionary chain would have been shaped through the onomatopoeic declamation amid a dance group, the spontaneous composition of small verses matching the rhythms of the dance, and finally, in the more complex form of the song itself. He also identifies the興 *hsing* (*xing*) [[86]](#footnote-78) principle which, in its ancient written form, offers us etymological proof for this explanation:

The *hsing* elements in the *Songs* [*Book of Poetry*] are of the quality inherited from that "fresh world." They carry with them, in terms of formal distinction, the ancient integrity, the oneness or the unity of the musical speech and the rhythm of the spontaneous and simultaneous primeval "uplifting dance." Their appeal is therefore instantaneous, even kinesthetic as well as imagistic. By observing the frequent doublets and rich onomatopoeia we hear the keynote and are tuned to the whole rhythm of any of the *Songs* in which the *hsing* element is recognised. By recalling how in the rest of the song a host of alliterations as well as rhymes or pararhymes grow as if in response to its spirit to make the whole poem vibrant with it we realize how the *hsing* element is the soul of the *lyric*. [[87]](#footnote-79)

Therefore, and through these expositions, we come to appreciate in what manner the simile of music not only fits the scheme of Chinese aestheticism at an advanced degree of interpretation but how the development of the lyric involves, as it does in Pound's short explanation, the constant interaction with music and musical concepts. In the words of Hall and Ames:

For Confucius ... music is not imitative in the strict sense, but rather seeks to foster an attunement of the unique foci to the constitutive harmonies of the total field. The particular has a determining, enriching role in the construing of this harmony. The goal of musical education is not pure knowledge. Rather, it is the copresent, "constatic" experience of realizing a harmony in the interfusion of focus with field, and the attendant enjoyment of this achievement. …

The fact that "music"樂 [*yue*] and "enjoyment" 樂 [*le*] are represented by one and the same graph would appear to be far from accidental. It is an indication of an association between the quality of achieved harmony and the consequent possibilities for enjoyment. [[88]](#footnote-80)

Although music is abstract and difficult to represent, its workings can be understood readily. The underlying cause that gives music such paradigmatic status, however, cannot be exposed without philosophical or scientific speculation. The works of some twentieth-century scientists and their uncompromising research into areas previously barred to scientific investigation has provided theories that are relevant to our study.

Proof of the workings of such highly conceptualised structures can also be sought in the historical records of religions and archaeological finds, but even then, the scholar encounters far too many gaps and problems of interpretation. If we follow Confucius' own sources, we are led to the mythical times of *Yao* and *Shun* 堯舜 [[89]](#footnote-81) and find little to satisfy a purely scientific enquiry. However, if we care to look at one of the most experimental scientists of our time, the biologist Rupert Sheldrake, we shall see that it is not impossible to find theories that might approximate very closely the less readily graspable concepts of Confucianism. Again, the simile that becomes instrumental in these theories is that of music.

Confucius spoke of the laws which inevitably govern the lives of human beings; the first chapter of the *Zhong Yong* reads:

Heaven's decree is called nature, to follow one's nature is called the way, to refine one's way is called education. The way is that which cannot be departed from even for a moment; that which can be departed from is not the way. Thus, the *junzi* is aware of what he cannot see and apprehensive of what he cannot hear. [[90]](#footnote-82)

The *Analects* say:

The Master said: “It is by the Odes [Book of Songs 詩經] that the mind is aroused.

“It is by the Rules of Propriety that the character is established”

“It is from Music that the finish is received.” [[91]](#footnote-83)

Sheldrake postulates a theory of morphic resonances which opens a door for the solving of the epistemological problems involved in the stated pre-eminence of the 'projectable virtue' of the Confucian gentleman.

If you have a piano with the loud pedal down, and you make a noise of any particular tone, "A" for example, only the A strings and their harmonics will vibrate, not the B strings. The sympathetic vibration will occur in appropriate strings. It's an automatically selective process – similarity alone will give rise to this response. Morphic resonance, however, is not exactly the same as other kinds of resonance, all of which are energetic and involve the transfer of energy. The word "morphic" shows that this kind of resonance depends on similarity of form; it's saying that similar forms will influence other similar forms and the criterion for resonance occurring is similarity of form. [[92]](#footnote-84)

Sheldrake's analogy employs both terms "resonance" and "form" to explain the nature of phenomena which, like Pound's "absolute rhythm" and "*forma*", can "influence" beings 'attuned' to an aesthetic understanding of reality. The simile is applicable to Confucian thought and to traditional Chinese thought since the traditional Chinese attitude to philosophising has always been open, in its widest considerations, to the patterns of mutability in phenomena that might confer an ultimate immanent order upon human existence and human activity. From this point of view, the goals of science and philosophy are but one and the same. The following remarks by Joseph Needham will confirm our statements to this purpose:

The key word in Chinese thought is Order and above all Pattern ... The symbolic correlation or correspondences all formed part of one colossal pattern. Things behaved in particular ways not because of prior actions or impulsions of other things, but because their position in the ever-moving cyclical universe was such that they were endowed with intrinsic natures which made that behaviour inevitable for them. If they did not behave in those particular ways they would lose their relational positions in the whole (which made them what they were), and turn into something other than themselves. They were thus parts in existential dependence upon the whole world-organism. And they reacted upon one another not so much by mechanical impulsion or causation as by a kind of mysterious resonance. [[93]](#footnote-85)

There appears to be a large measure of agreement in the description of phenomena which relates directly to an organicist conception of human existence and human behaviour. The fact that, even here, the model put forward in the analogies by these writers is still clearly based on musical similes not only offers a source of alignment between Pound's use of such models and their affinity to Confucian formulations of a harmonious society, but implies that further attention be given to the ideological and philosophical tenets of that ancient way of life.

1. In (Opper, 1973, p. 197) we find remarks regarding the radically different natures of musical activity in East and West that may be used to support our present discussion. Opper writes: “This [compensatory change, as a principle for patterning in music] has been conclusively proven by Taylor's study [Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Taylor, Gene Fred, *Culturally Transcendent Factors in Musical Perception*, Florida State University, 1969] which shows that African, Hindu, and Chinese music depends primarily on this principle. Complementary variables, on the other hand, appear to be the almost exclusive property of Western culture, "because no culture outside the Western (and especially the Western since the Renaissance) elevates to as high a status the type of logical relationship - or the higher order completeness with which it is associated - which constitutes the nature of that factor." That the Orient in general is dominated by the radically empirical component of knowledge, in contrast to the primacy of logical postulation in the Occident, has been further demonstrated by Northrop's monumental study, *The Meeting of East and West*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (Welsh, 1978, pp.194-95) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew Little has researched the use of the word 'totalitarian' by Pound. He writes: "... in the context of his own [Pound's] writings he uses the word as an adjective approximately synonymous with comprehensive or holistic. / Pound uses totalitarian to describe an all-embracing approach to learning and knowledge, 'the New Learning or the New Paideuma' that he mentions in the sentence in which he calls the Guide to Kulchur 'notes for a totalitarian treatise'." (Little, Pound's use of the word totalitarian, vol. 11, 1982, p. 153.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The work of these writers has been analysed in terms of their polyphony and support of mythologising schemes. Marc Manganaro has provided much evidence in the cases against these two authors to substantiate that: "A profusion of voices may stand out as diversity, but they ultimately move toward the system or idea that unites, destroying variation in the process. In this respect, Frazer and Eliot, and specially Frye and Campbell, are noted for far-ranging encyclopaedic texts that, in uniformitarian fashion, persuade through their very scope that human nature and endeavor can be reduced to fundamental ideas." (Manganaro, 1992. p. 17) Although the ultimate purpose of *bricolage* is to conserve such diversity and not to drown it into some pre-established system of thought, the initial tendency towards drawing from diversity can positively be considered a common antecedent in the writers mentioned. Similarly, Pound, in his early essay 'The Serious Artist' (1913) advocated "a recognition of differences, of the right of differences to exist, of interest in finding things different." (Pound E. , Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, 1954) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. (Jain, 1992, p. 130) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. (Lévi-Strauss C. , Anthropologie Structurale, 1958, p. 397) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. My translation of: « Alors que la sociologie s'efforce de faire la science sociale de l'observateur, l'anthropologie cherche, elle, à élaborer la science sociale de l'observé: soit qu'elle vise à atteindre, dans sa description des sociétés étranges et lointaines, le point de vue de l'indigène lui-même; soit qu'elle élargisse son objet jusqu'à y inclure la société de l'observateur, mais en tâchant alors de dégager un système de référence fondé sur l'expérience ethnographique et qui soit indépendant, à la fois, de l'observateur et de son objet. » [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
8. Saussure's research is at the base of a large cross-section of the conceptual distinctions explored in the later part of the twentieth century by structuralists and deconstructionists alike. The sets of binary elements he identified in the use of language have given way to an extended debate since the posthumous publication of his *Cours de Linguistique Générale* in 1916. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Later included in (Lévi-Strauss C. , Anthropologie Structurale, 1958, p. 230) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. My translation of: « Si nous voulons rendre compte des caractères spécifiques de la pensée mythique, nous devrons donc établir que le mythe est simultanément dans le langage, et au-delà. Cette nouvelle difficulté n'est pas, elle non plus, étrangère au linguiste : le langage n'englobe-t-il pas lui-même des niveaux différents ? En distinguant entre la langue et la parole, Saussure a montré que le langage offrait deux aspects complémentaires : l'un structural, l'autre statistique ; la langue appartient au domaine d'un temps réversible, et la parole, à celui d'un temps irréversible. S'il est déjà possible d'isoler ces deux niveaux dans le langage, rien n'exclut que nous puissions en définir un troisième. » [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
11. (Champagne, 1992, pp. 50-1) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
12. (Champagne, 1992, p. 51) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
13. (Champagne, 1992, p. 52) The two quotations from Lévi-Strauss can be found in (Structural Anthropology, 1976, p. 161 and 165) respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
14. (Hübner, 1985, pp. 354-57) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
15. (Lévi-Strauss C. , Le Cru et le Cuit, 1964, p. 21) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
16. My translation of: « Ce qui importe, c'est que l'esprit humain, sans égard pour l'identité de ses messagers occasionnels, y manifeste une structure de mieux en mieux intelligible à mesure que progresse la démarche doublement réflexive de deux pensées agissant l'une sur l'autre et dont, ici l'une, là l'autre, peut être la mèche ou l'étincelle du rapprochement desquelles jaillira leur commune illumination. » [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
17. There has been much commentary about Pound’s interest in music. The current chapter should provide sufficient proof of not only the poet’s seriousness and slant of interest (overtly bent towards the study of poetry and rhythm), but of the type of knowledge he possessed in the field. For a contrasting opinion, I quote here another outline of how Pound came across to his peers within the music circles of his time: “As guided by a sort of literary formalist trance, Pound had bought various musical instruments during this period in order to bring his theories of music deconstruction to practice. From Arnold Dolmetsch he had purchased his own clavichord. In fact, for R. Murray Schafer, Dolmetsch is Pound’s seminal influence in music, and perhaps even stronger than Antheil’s.29 However, Pound never acquired what he probably most needed: a formal education in Music. Since his days as a music critic, he resorted to an unorthodox vocabulary that puzzled readers. He wrote on a Frank Bridge composition as ‘a sort of pee-wee-pee-wee sound, with a hang and drag in it’ and defined César Franck as a musician who ‘believed that if you could keep up some sort of bim-bim-bim-ation long enough you would end by exciting the auditor.’30 It is thus reasonable to expect certain mistrust about his book on Antheil.” (Morató, p. 136). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
18. (Pound E. , Varia, Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony with Supplementary Notes, 1927, p. 134) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
19. (Pound E. , Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, 1954, p. 9) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
20. (Pound E. , Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, 1954, p. 79) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
21. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, pp. 77-86) Pound's peers are the likes of Charles Sauzay whom he quotes as saying: "Il faut se borner à penser que J-S. Bach écrivait la musique par certains procédés dont la loi générale nous échappe." (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951) Also, Ernest Friederich Richter who is quoted on page 29 of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* as saying: "'these [theory, counterpoint, and harmony] are the laws and they have nothing to do with musical composition which is a different kind of activity.'" [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
22. Pound wrote in an April 1921 letter to Agnes Bedford: “I do think musical notation is the damndest thing to get simple facts from ever invented. Perfectly simple AFTER the fact, but impenetrable before it.” Found in Margaret Fisher’s ‘Sestina Altaforte: Ezra Pound sets his poems to music’, (Fisher, The Ezra Pound Society, 2015). This, however, will not stop Pound from exploiting the image of musical notation in *The Cantos* as has been pointed out skilfully by Mark Byron: “Memory and sound combine to inscribe the score outside of Pound’s tent. The birds write themselves on the wires as musical notation, and the reader is already reminded that “the Muses are the daughters of memory/Clio, Terpsichore” (LXXIV/445). The ephemerality of art (and that art traditionally closest to transcendence), is represented in a notation that is not inscribed for the narrating consciousness, but is instead the temporary formation of birds on electric wires.” (Byron M. , A Defining Moment in Ezra Pound's Cantos: Musical Scores and Literary Texts, 2002, p. 164) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
23. (Pound E. , Varia, Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony with Supplementary Notes, 1927, pp. 131-33) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
24. There is an ongoing debate, revisited with much vigour over the last four decades, about the actual didactical relevance and ultimate objective of Martianus’ famous work. Scholars now appear to view with much more interest and attribute a higher importance to the satirical elements and structure of *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* and highlight cognitive inconsistencies and situational facts about the book that would seem to align it more with an open-ended critique of encyclopaedic knowledge and didacticism (the work is classified as a Menippean satire) as opposed to what has, heretofore, been an acknowledgment and use of this late ancient source as a repository for knowledge and learning. One such scholar, Julieta Cardigni writes: “To begin with, we have no reference as to how Martianus’ contemporaries might have read or made use of De nuptiis. His posterity, on the other hand, began immediately to read, reproduce and use it ostensibly, as can be seen from the number of manuscripts made of it during the 9th and 10th centuries, and especially from the profusion of didactic commentaries and annotations made on it from this same period onward.4 By medieval times, scholars already lacked the numerous sources that Mar-tianus had used to compose his work, and so it seems logical that they should seize upon the knowledge condensed in De nuptiis. The problem lies in that these readings – legitimate and in their own way worthwhile – established a line of interpretation of the work that is didactic and of which, to the present day, it is difficult to let go, a didactic line of interpretation that places the text in an uncomfortable container, making deep understanding of it difficult.” (Cardigni, 2019, p. 191) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
25. (Capella, 1977, p. 9) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
26. (Capella, 1977, p. 372) The dictionary’s definition of melopoeia reads as follows: “Late Latin, from Greek melopoiïa, from melopoiein to write a lyric poem, to set to music, from melo- melo- entry 1 + poiein to make”. A reminder of Pound’s own definition: “MELOPOEIA, wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning.” And “rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed.” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
27. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 77) It is interesting to view the comments made about this point by a researcher of English prosody: “From classical times to the present there have always been prosodists who have rightly insisted that the power of rhythm in poetry derives from the controlled movement of language through time, though it is only in this century that we have been made fully aware of the degree to which that vital movement is the product of the reader's own acts of perception. In responding to the metrical organisation of a poem, the reader is exercising a skill developed over a lifetime, through the daily experience of rhythmic movement in the actions of the body, in the use of language, and in the enjoyment of every level of sophistication of the arts of dance, music and verse itself. That skill is intimately bound up with the perception of time, and whatever blind alleys the temporal tradition has wandered into, it has been true at least to that fundamental insight.” (Attridge, 1982, pp. 26-7) [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
28. As early as the 5th century AD Martianus Capella writes about the powers of music and song. Harmony speaks in *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*: “The Thracian lyre was one who demonstrated that animals are sensitive to my songs and are drawn to follow directly. In this case it was not a myth but actual fact that established his reputation.” (Capella, 1977, pp. 358-59) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
29. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 82) In this respect, Pound may be tracking, perhaps through Eriugena (who is believed to have translated *De Institutione Musica*), an understanding of music akin to that of Boethius: “For this reason the power of the mind ought to be directed toward fully understanding by knowledge what is inherent in us through nature. Thus just as erudite scholars are not satisfied by merely seeing colors and forms without also investigating their properties, so musicians should not be satisfied by merely finding pleasure in music without knowing by what musical proportions these sounds are put together.” (Martin Bower, 1967, p. 44) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
30. (Pound E. , Ezra Pound and Music: the complete criticism, 2008, pp. 252-53) Murray Schafer writes: “How much of Pound’s writing about Antheil may have been taken over from Antheil’s scribblings? Certainly, the notion that harmony “was a matter of what preceded and what followed” became the core thesis of the Treatise on Harmony. Pound needed no one to tell him about rhythm, but the idea that the history of music is a gradual development toward more and more precise expression and accuracy of notation, this was new, and it came from a Stravinsky-inspired Antheil. The temptation here was to place machines higher than men, a temptation to which Antheil surrendered, along with the Futurists, Marinetti and Russolo; and there are a few rather strained lines in Pound touching on this theme. Somewhat later he planned a book on “Machine Art,” though it seems to have remained incomplete. More importantly Pound treated Antheil as a convenient personification for ideas which reflect his own advancing musical theories. Antheil sensed this from the start and was embarrassed.” Again, here we see Pound’s best and worst at play. While clearly seeing the implications of breakthroughs in musical understanding leading into the use of machines, he cannot avoid, without scruples it seems, using a fellow artist for his own purposes and not give a second thought about discarding him when that appears to be the most convenient way forward. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
31. (Carter, 2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
32. (Capella, 1977, pp. 356-57) [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
33. Reading through *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, it is possible to re-discover the origins of many practices that have been perpetuated and remodelled through history but not completely changed. From the significance of Hymen, ever present throughout the book both in its coercive (the preservation of purity and celebratory joy before marriage) and its liberating qualities (the pervasive element of liberty in union delivered to its destiny), the preparations and betrothal of the couple, the reserve of the bride as she approaches the altar facing Jove and her husband to be, to the small distinctive gesture of the bride’s mother giving assent to the commencement of nuptial music, as it were, when Philology is about to walk down the aisle. It is there that the allegorical sense of all-encompassing dependence on a past deified in the personae of ideas turned into gods and the unshakeable traditions of our history become thoroughly absorbing and enlightening. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
34. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 85) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
35. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 172) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
36. (Lévi-Strauss C. , Tristes Tropiques, 1955, pp. 344-45) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
37. My translation of: « Ce contraste illustre à mes yeux le paradoxe de la civilization dont les charmes tiennent essentiellement aux résidus qu'elle transporte dans son flux sans que nous puissions pour autant nous interdire de le clarifier. » [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
38. In his 1918 essay on Henry James for *Little Review*, Pound observes: "One does not know, simply does not know, the true curve until one has pushed one's method beyond it. Until then it is merely a frontier, not a chosen route. It is an open question and there is no dogmatic answer, whether a writer should write and rewrite the same story (à la Flaubert) or whether he should take a new canvas." (Pound E. , Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, 1954, p. 321) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
39. (Lévi-Strauss, Entretiens avec G. Charbonnier, 1968, pp. 69-70) The same phenomenon has been widely identified within the Aboriginal community of Australia which has experienced a 'boom' in the demand for its art too often accompanied by a complete lack of knowledge about the processes and signification of the art itself. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
40. My translation of: « Avec l'art des temps modernes, il s'agirait donc d'une individualisation croissante, non pas du créateur, mais de la clientèle. Ce n'est plus le groupe dans son ensemble qui attend l'artiste qu'il lui fournisse certains objets façonnés selon des canons prescrits, mais des amateurs -- aussi bizarre que le terme puisse paraître, dans une comparaison avec des sociétés très différentes de la nôtre -- ou des groupes d'amateurs. » [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
41. Pound, E., “The Serious Artist”, *The Egoist*, London, August 1918. Pound, Ezra. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. T. S. Eliot (ed.). London, Faber and Faber, 1954, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
42. (Lévi-Strauss, L'Homme nu, 1971, p. 620) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
43. My translation of: « En démontrant l'agencement rigoureux des mythes et en leur conférant ainsi l'existence d'objets, mon analyse fait donc ressortir le caractère mythique des objets: l'univers, la nature, l'homme, qui, au long des milliers, de millions, de milliards d'années, n'auront, somme toute, rien fait d'autre qu'à la façon d'un vaste système mythologique, déployer les ressources de leur combinatoire avant de s'involuer et de s'anéantir dans l'évidence de leur caducité. » [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
44. (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 84) [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
45. (Pound E. , Guide to Kulchur, 1956, p. 33) [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
46. (Eliot, The Perfect Critic, 1920, p. 15) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
47. (Eliot, The Perfect Critic, 1920, p. 16) [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
48. Mark Byron’s research on the topic shows the declension of Trobadour words and sound through the centuries that led Pound to promulgate medieval origins as foundation for true achievement in poetry. He writes: “Janequin’s medievalism deserved praise for keeping alive aural precision: “I think Janequin inherited from the troubadours the fine clear cut representation of natural sound, the exactitude of birds and flowers.” Whilst the spirit of *motz el son* was transmitted from the thirteenth-century canzone down to the sixteenth-century chanson, the balance between the words and music had changed. No longer “made into one perfect fabric,” Pound discerned that the “tune has learned from what the words, centuries earlier, had taught the music.”14 This general partitioning of words and music led, according to Pound, to a decline in metrical ability and discipline amongst poets. Musicianship, on the other hand, could flourish: “Francesco da Milano, wishing to express Janequin’s concept without using a chorus of twenty people, edited the Canzone degli Uccelli for the lute.” This arrangement afforded no aesthetic loss: “As early as 1475 Francesco da Milano could present complicated voicings on the lute, comprising all the dimensions of the chorus.” (Byron M. , A Defining Moment in Ezra Pound's Cantos: Musical Scores and Literary Texts, 2002, pp. 159-60) [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
49. It is interesting to note, following our previous discussion on the special/graphic explanation of musical phenomena by Pound and Lévi-Strauss, that Pound seems to view 'structural music' as the only type of music that can somewhat be depicted in a graphic fashion, while the second type appears to escape such graphic illustration through its affinity to conceptual "form". [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
50. (Pound E. , Guide to Kulchur, 1956, pp. 151-58) [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
51. Among many other things, Margaret Fisher “… has published on Futurism and early Italian Radio, and with composer/conductor Robert Hughes she has published five volumes of the complete music oeuvre of Ezra Pound, including engraved music scores with audio CD.” (Fisher, Margaret Fisher) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
52. (Fisher, Ezra Pound's Philosophical Opera: Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 1) [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
53. (Fisher, Ezra Pound's Philosophical Opera: Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 2) [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
54. Pound could have used a much closer thematic source to the magnet analogy had he chosen to utilise Plato’s *The Ion* dialogue, potentially bridging in one stroke the God-given inspiration from the paraclete in Canto LXXIV with a direct allusion to function of magnetism. Enquiring of Ion (“not a poet but a rhapsode or ‘songstitcher,’ a professional reciter of poetry”) Socrates explains how he sees poets receive inspiration: “I'm going show you what I think it is. For your speaking well about Homer is not an art, as I was just saying, but a divine power which moves you like the stone which Euripides called Magnet, but most people call Heraclean. In fact, this stone not only attracts iron rings but also puts power in the rings so that they also have power to do the same thing the stone does and attract other rings. Sometimes quite a long chain of iron rings hangs suspended one from another; but they're all suspended by the power derived from that stone. So too the Muse herself causes men to be inspired, and through these inspired men a chain of others are possessed and suspended. For all our good epic poets speak all their beautiful poems, not through art, but because 5343 they're inspired and possessed, and so similarly our good lyric poets too.” (Plato, The Dialogues of Plato: Ion, Hippias Minor, Laches, Protagoras, 1996, p. 13) We can only assume that Pound found Socrates’ assessment of poets distasteful. The fact that within this dialogue the Greek withdrew all allowance for artistry and even access to a ‘right mind’ from poets in the act of composition may have been a little too much for Pound. I acknowledge here (Sadler) [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
55. (Fingarette, 1983, p. 342) [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
56. (Lévi-Strauss, La Pensée sauvage, 1962, p. 21) [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
57. My translation of: « Au lieu, donc, d'opposer magie et science, il vaudrait mieux les mettre en parallèle, comme deux modes de connaissance, inégaux quant aux résultats théoriques et pratiques (car, de ce point de vue, il est vrai que la science réussit mieux que la magie, bien que la magie préforme la science en ce sens qu'elle aussi réussit quelque-fois), mais non par le genre d'opérations mentales qu'elles supposent toutes deux, et qui diffèrent moins en nature qu'en fonction des types de phénomènes auxquels elles s'appliquent. » [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
58. (Fingarette, 1983, p. 342) Legge’s translation of Chapter VI Section2 of *The Works of Mencius* referring directly to the actions of the Superior Man (*jun zi* 君子) may help us understand better what the Confucian school meant by such an individual: ”The courses pursued by those three worthies were different, but their aim was one. And what was their one aim? We must answer – ’To be perfectly virtuous.’ And so it is simply after this that superior men strive. Why must they all *pursue* the same *course*?” (Confucius, The Works of Mencius within The Four Books, 1988, p. 908) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
59. (Fingarette, 1983, p. 343) [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
60. (Confucius, The Works of Mencius within The Four Books, 1988, p. 357): "The Master said, 'In language it is simply required that it convey the meaning." [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
61. (Pound E. , A Retrospect, 1918, p. 95) [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
62. (Pound E. , A Retrospect, 1918, p. 103) [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
63. (Richardson, 1947, p. 24) [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
64. (Ames and Hall, 1987, pp. 268-69) [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
65. It is remarkable to witness the prescient emphasis that Confucius (and Pound) accords to communication (and governmental communication at that) and it being drawn as the first measure of success in the campaigns states wage daily in ruling the society of his time. The current relevance of this notion across the world is exemplary to say the least. The current COVID19 global crisis has brought to the fore – at times painfully – what ‘missing the point’ and ‘getting it right’ in public communications means. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
66. (Pound E. , Guide to Kulchur, 1956, p. 16) Pound's later translation in *Confucius* reads: “5. If words (terminology) are not (is not) precise, they cannot be followed out, or completed in action according to specifications. 6. When the services (actions) are not brought to true focus, the ceremonies and music will not prosper; where the rites and music do not flourish punishments will be misapplied, not make bullseye, and the people won't know how to move hand or foot (what to lay hand on, or stand on) 7. Therefore the proper man must have terms that can be spoken, and when uttered be carried into effect; the proper man's words must cohere to things, correspond to them (exactly) and no more fuss about it.” James Legge's translation which Pound used as a reference and from which he borrowed the format for his paragraphs, reads as follows: “If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music will not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect.” (Confucius, The Works of Mencius within The Four Books, 1988, p. 298) Lastly, Roger T. Ames' translation: “When names are not properly ordered, what is said is not attuned; when what is said is not attuned, things will not be done successfully; when things are not done successfully, the use of ritual action and music will not prevail; when the use of ritual action and music does not prevail, the application of laws and punishments will not be on the mark; and when laws and punishments are not on the mark, the people will not know what to do with themselves. Thus, when the exemplary person (*chün tzu*) puts a name to something, it can certainly be spoken, and when spoken it can certainly be done. There is nothing careless in the attitude of the exemplary person (*chün tzu*) toward what he says.” (Ames and Hall, 1987, pp. 269-70) [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
67. (Confucius, The Works of Mencius within The Four Books, 1988, p. 58) [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
68. The title of this section of the *Book of Rites* 禮記 included by Zhu Xi 朱熹 during the Song dynasty 宋朝 (960-1279) in the compounded collection which would be named *Si Shu* 四書 or *Four Books* has undergone numerous translations that emphasize to different degrees the syntactical categories of the words *zhong* and *yong* in the Chinese language. Legge's translation only provides a loose version of the terms of the original, opting for a heading that may be directly understandable to the English reader. Pound's translation concentrates on a nominal interpretation of the terms and though with "unwobbling" he comes close to expressing the verbal notion of *zhong* (*zhong* pronounced in the fourth tone and not the first is a verb meaning 'to hit' or 'fit exactly') his translation is unnecessarily influenced by the pictographic interpretation of *zhong* 中. Tu Wei-Ming, who calls Pound's translation "idiosyncratic" and Pound's note to the text "fascinating", explains his own translation in the following terms: “*Chung-yung* [*Zhong Yong*] has been translated as 'The Doctrine of the Mean' by James Legge, 'The Mean-in Action' by E. R. Hughes, 'Central Harmony' by the Classicist Ku Hung-ming, and 'The Unwobbling Pivot' by Ezra Pound. Although the term can be rendered as 'centrality' without causing much controversy, the concept of *yung* raises many puzzling questions. In one of its earliest commentaries, *yung* is defined by Chen Hsüan as 'practice.' *Chung-yung* thus means 'the practical application of the principle of central harmony.' Ch'en I (1033-1107), one of the most perceptive thinkers in the Sung dynasty, said, 'By *chung* is meant what is not one-sided, and by *yung* is meant what is unchangeable. *Chung* is the correct path of the world and *yung* is the definite principle of the world.' Ch'eng's disciple Kuo Chung-hsiao further stated that '*chung* is the ultimate realization of that which is absolutely rectifying in the world, and *yung* is the comprehensive penetration of that which is absolutely transforming in the world.' Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi], however, after systematically studying virtually all available interpretations, concluded that *yung* signifies that which is 'ordinary' and 'common.' It should become clear in the course of our discussion that *yung*, which we will translate as 'commonality,' must be taken to include such connotations as 'practicality' and 'unchangeability.'” (Tu W.-M. , 1989, pp. 16-7) [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
69. *Lun Yu*, Book II Chap. 12. (my translation) The last section of Book XVIII, Chapter VIII of the Confucian Analects in Legge's translation reads as follows: "'I am different from all these [men who retired from the world]. I have no course for which I am predetermined, and no course against which I am predetermined'." [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
70. Although there is no denying that the Confucian classics are ultimately guides for correct behaviour, the number of situations in which the Master finds himself contradicting his own statements for a good reason is large enough to remind us that a stereotype of the junzi cannot be built. The closest we come to it is when Tsze-Hsiâ [Zi Xia] says in Book XIX, Chapter IX (Legge): "'The superior man undergoes changes. Looked at him from a distance, he appears stern; when approached, he is mild; when he is heard to speak, his language is firm and decided'." Even here, the stereotype hinted at is based on the basic quality of mutability. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
71. It is interesting to note that Pound considered the *Da Xue* or *Great Learning* a Confucian epistemological system of thought which uses the concept (and practice of) *zheng ming* as its foundation. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
72. Today, the term 大學 is the standard Chinese translation for the English word ‘university’. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
73. (Young L. W., 1994, p. 8) There is a popular conception or image of the Chinese whereby Chinese people see themselves accurately represented as ‘a fistful of sand’, abundant, highly malleable, and extremely difficult to hold on to or to amalgamate. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
74. (Ames and Hall, 1987, pp. 274-75) [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
75. Seen in this light, Pound's adherence to the principle of discipleship can be judged favourably, as can his efforts in translation. Frederick C. Tsai expresses a similar idea with the following words: "Translation is a discouraging game, but it is also a rewarding one. In literary translation, in spite of all the sweat and pains, can bring you very much closer to a genius and make you share in a measure his ecstasy of creation. Some writers actually have the habit of turning to translation when they have nothing brilliant to say, because translation opens their mind." (Tsai, 1978, p. 120) [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
76. (Eliot, Tradition and the Individual Talent, 1962, p. 2208) [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
77. (Pound E. , Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, 1954, pp. 227 and 247-48) [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
78. This is Ames' translation of one section of the famous passage in the Analects he renders as follows: "At fifteen my heart-and-mind were set upon learning; at thirty I took my stance; at forty I was no longer of two minds; at fifty I realized the ming [命] of t'ien [天]; at sixty my ear was attuned; and at seventy I could give my heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the mark." (*Analects* 2/4) [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
79. (Tang, 1990, 页 29) [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
80. My translation of:  这里，我再引用朱熹对这句话的解释，他说：\"声入心通，无所违逆，知之之至，不思而得。\"\"声入心通\"当和\"声音\"有关（\"有声之音\"和\"无声之音\"都可以包括在内）；\"知之之至\"应是超于\"知天命\"的境界，这种境界是\"不思而得\"的，所以是超于认识的。我想，它可以解释为一种直觉的审美境界，它所得到的是一种超乎经验的直觉意象，也可以说是一种艺术的境界、\"美\"的境界。这种对\"六十而耳顺\"的解释或许\"牵强\"，但照杨伯峻的看法，自古以来的\"解释\"大都牵强，我的这一解释无非是在诸种\"牵强\"的解释中再增加一种而巳。但我自信这种解释不能说全无道理，特别是由哲学的观点看，它或许是有新意的。我们知道，孔子对音乐很有修养，他\"在齐闻韶\"，\"三月不知肉味\"；\"三月不知肉昧\"自然是\"不思而得\"的一种极高的审美境界。 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
81. Kant writes: "Le goût est la faculté de juger d'un objet ou d'un mode de représentation, sans aucun intérêt, par une satisfaction ou une insatisfaction. On appelle beau l'objet d'une telle satisfaction." (Kant E. , 1965, p. 55) (*Sophia* tome 2 p. 254 see also p. 262) However, there exists a significant difference between the two conceptions; while Kant underpins his statement with human judgment; the Confucian approach expressly states the lack of thought or *bu si* 不思particular to such attainment. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
82. (Confucius, Zhong Yong, Chapter I:4. “Theory and Practice in Confucianism”, 1974, p. 189) [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
83. (Confucius, Zhong Yong, Chapter I:4. “Theory and Practice in Confucianism”, 1974, p. 189) [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
84. (Pound E. , The Serious Artist, 1954, p. 51) It is important to point out that although Eliot's own view of emotion as needing to be discarded or 'escaped from' is opposed to Pound's who obviously uses emotion as vehicle and content of his creativity, Eliot's essay does not offer a clear cut-view of the psychological processes through which he arrives at this dismissal of emotion and personality. In fact, the word ‘escape’ seems rather emotional and relegates the critic to a position of weakness which reveals an element of emotional dependency. Moreover, Eliot's conceptual approach, allows space for that which does not first manifest itself in the way of conscious thought. He writes: "It [emotion] is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation." (Eliot, Tradition and the Individual Talent, 1962, p. 2212) "Deliberation" is the exact translation for the Chinese word and character *si* 思. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
85. W. A. C. H. Dobson has provided detailed evidence of the processes of refinement of the songs included in the *Shi Jing*. He writes of the oldest pieces included in the book (the *Chou Sung* 周頌): “These pieces were used in court ceremonial, being either the hymns of invocation and confession used in the temple at the sacrifice, or songs of fealty and welcome exchanged between the king and his feudatories in the audiences and feasting which accompanied the sacrifices. ... It is quite clear from the *Chou Sung* pieces that the transition from prose paragraph to verse was first made in China for liturgical use and that the earliest prosody was shaped in the adaptation of prose to the rhythms of the ritual temple dance and its music.” (Dobson, 1968, pp. 233-36) [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
86. Translated into English as: “[xing1] prosper; rise; prevail; become popular; start; begin; encourage; promote; get up; rise; permit; allow; maybe; perhaps.” [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
87. (Chen S.-H. , 1974, pp. 32-3) [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
88. (Ames and Hall, 1987, p. 281) R. P. Peerenboom who has examined the propositions of Hall & Ames as well as those of other commentators on Confucius, initially chooses to divide the participants into two camps which he calls respectively the "logical" and the "aesthetic". However, seeing that many of the tenets held by both camps necessitate each other to achieve coherence in philosophical terms, he ends up favouring a scheme of understanding where aestheticism takes pre-eminence. He writes: “In any event, the degree of overlap between logical-aesthetic and pragmatic coherence-foundational correspondence views remains considerable. It is the epistemological implications of the former that underscores and makes attractive the cosmological insights of the latter. At the same time, if the pragmatists' attack on transcendence and correspondence is persuasive, then it matters little whether metaphysically the world is predetermined or not, a universe or a multiverse. Either way, one is, like it or not, thrown into an aesthetic rather than logical world where responsibility for the order generated, for the kind of world one lives in, is thrust squarely upon one's own shoulders and those of one's fellow human beings. For Confucius, this amounts to a call to realize a humane state that achieves the highest quality of social harmony possible.” (Peerenboom, 1993, p. 117) [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
89. Two sage kings of antiquity (fourth millennium B.C.) [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
90. (Confucius, The Doctrine of the Mean, 1988, pp. 43-4) [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
91. (Confucius, Confucian Analects, 1988, p. 222) Confucius refers here to three of the six classics The Book of Songs (詩經, The Book of Rites (禮記) and the Book of Music (樂經) the latter of which was lost, Roger T. Ames’ translation of the same section in the *Analects* reads as follows: “Be stimulated to new levels in the songs, take your stance in the rites and find completion in music.” [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
92. (Sheldrake, Morphogenetic fields: Nature's Habits, 1986, p. 80) [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
93. Needham, J., *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)