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The Sounds of *Zhèngmíng*:
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In early Chinese texts, straightness often indicates correctness, hence many things are said to be *zhèng* 正.[1] But among them, only *zhèngmíng* 正名 emerged as a rhetorical slogan promising the production of order and elimination of human confusion and fakeness.[2] In scholarship on Chinese ethics, the slogan is usually understood as working toward these goals by making behavior accord with names or by making "names" (norms or social roles) accord with behavior. By contrast, on the assumption that uses of the term "*míng*" (name/title/fame) involved what something is *called* or what is *heard* about it, the chapter focuses on interpreting *zhèngmíng* in light of ideas about speech, music, tones, and sound in general — items that are distinct from, but related to, *míng* 名.[3] The chapter considers *zhèngmíng* as part of a textual tradition wherein recurring poetic "sound-effects" appear in a variety of genres. In light of this context, it argues that the power of the sovereign's *zhèngmíng* stems from participating in such effects.

The "*zhèngmíng*" chapter of the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 provides a useful starting point for this investigation, with its claim that *míng* have "certain goodness" (*yǒugùshàn* 有固善). The chapter notes that *míng* that are good (and presumably "straight") are, among other things, non-contrary (*bùfú* 不拂).[4] Because the same chapter also asserts that the relation of names to their *shí* 實 is based on conventions — rather than some "certain" (*gù*) relation (*wúgùshí* 無固實) — it is not possible to interpret this as a claim that names' goodness consists of not being contrary to *shí*.[5] Moreover, mere compliance with conventions cannot be what makes names good, because the text calls for the rejection of some (presumably conventional) names on the grounds that they were not authorized (*shàn* 擅).[6] Hence this chapter explores the unanswered puzzle:

What makes names good or straight? It argues that the factors that make names straight include being limited in sonorous quantity (in relation to their visible counterparts) and being in accord with other name-sounds.[7] As a result, much as sovereigns concern themselves with selecting the music to which they expose their subjects, so too they must choose suitable *míng* that can be readily heard and obeyed. This interpretation of *zhèngmíng* makes the slogan part of the obligation to rule, not through active force but through harmonious "influences of air" — songs, winds, and virtue (*dé* 德) — that penetrate human subjects through hearing and smelling (*wén* 聞).[8] This apparently forceless, yet commanding, form of governance is the context in which a good ruler might hope to use *zhèngmíng* to eradicate falseness and confusion, thereby producing an orderly society.

Míng and Writing

This interpretation builds on the idea that early Chinese texts tend to use the term "*míng*" for something that is spoken or heard, a position that I argue for elsewhere.[9] In addition, this chapter presupposes arguments I have made elsewhere regarding balanced aural/visual contrasts as being a constant and crucial feature of early Chinese conceptions about the world. Thus, assuming that *míng* is aural means that it is aligned with other aural aspects of the cosmos in the context of a powerful tendency to seek aural/visual balance.[10]

Interpreters since Zhèng Xuǎn 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) have sometimes taken early uses of *zhèngmíng* as pertaining to writing per se, with the result that *zhèngmíng* is understood to mean doing something to graphs.[11] If indeed uses of *zhèngmíng* in early Chinese texts can be interpreted as being about graphs, then the slogan could concern establishing appropriate orthography, i.e., writing the standardized graphs might be *zhèngmíng*. Currently that interpretation of *zhèngmíng* is rarely applied specifically to the *Analects*, but it is employed for understanding the slogan generally in early Chinese texts.[12] In the interests of brevity, I will introduce a single, but decisive, piece of evidence that the term "*míng*" was normally understood in early China to be oral/aural.[13] This evidence comes from among references to the physical process of writing, which are uncommon in early texts but emerged with the greater expansion of literacy. (As later texts indicate, straightening out writing is one thing; straightening out names [*zhèngmíng*] is another.)[14] The example occurs in the *Kǒngcóngzǐ*'s memorial of Jì Yàn 季彥 (d. 124 CE), the ideal descendant of Confucius. As soon as Jì Yàn lets his brush drop to the page, his writing achieves form, falling into a state of completion. So, too, what he "spews" (so to speak) into speech are *míng* that are *zhèng*.

The very moment he lowered his brush, his writing took shape in perfectly formed injunction and the speech he uttered could not but straighten out names and embody principles.[15] (*Kǒngcóngzǐ* 7.2, ch. 23)

In this physical description, *zhèngmíng* does not involve writing. That is, the movements by which the brush drops do not produce *míng* in this passage.[16] On the contrary, these *míng* spring from the genuineness of "spit out" speech. With such evidence in mind, this chapter proceeds with one assumption about uses of *"zhèngmíng"*: the term is understood to be oral/aural and does not concern doing anything to graphs.

Overlaps in Discursive and Musical Sonority

The prestige with which early Chinese texts regard music is well known, but it is less often noted that the potency of *yuè* 樂 ("music") is rooted in the way sound enters the body. In other words, the transformative power of music stems from its peculiarly penetrative capacity, which belongs to sound in general.[17] As Roel Sterckx argues, the "performative effects of music" are part of a cosmology centered on reciprocal reactions, wherein music moves on air to transform the wilds into civilization (2000, 30). In this conception, all sound moves on air and penetrates bodies. As Sterckx puts it, early Chinese texts "associate human sagacity with the ability to penetrate (*tōng* 通) the masses through the medium of sound, an idea also reflected in the occurrence of the term *shēng* 聲 ('sound,' 'reputation,' or 'aura') as a paronomastic gloss for *shèng* 聖 'human sage'" (2000, 4). This power of sonority explains why in some cases animals are described as transformed by music (*yuè*), even though they only "know" sounds (*shēng*), according to the *"Yuèjì"* 樂記. This general feature of sound also explains why the repeated claims about sound "entering" and "penetrating" are not limited to claims about *yuè*. For example, the *Xìngzìmìngchū* 性自命出 notes that sound (*shēng*) enters and stirs people's heartminds "thickly" (*hòu* 厚). The *Xúnzǐ* argues that "sound and music" (*shēngyuè* 聲樂) enter deeply, while the *Shuō Yuàn* 説苑 contends that "sound and tones" (*shēngyīn* 聲音) enter more deeply than anything else.[18] If these graphs from the *Xúnzǐ* and the *Shuō Yuàn* were reversed, we might conclude that the subject is only "musical sound" or "tonal sound," but instead it seems deliberately broader. Hence when Confucius advocates banishing the music of Zhèng 鄭, it is not *yuè* per se but sounds that he indicts as "overflowing" (*yín* 淫).[19]

> As for music (*yuè*), adopt the Sháo 韶 and the Wǔ 舞. Banish the
> sounds (*shēng*) of the Zhèng and keep glib people at a distance.
> The sounds of Zhèng are overflowing (*yín* 淫) and glib people are
> dangerous. (*Analects* 15:11)

Steven Van Zoeren interprets this criticism as aimed at the musical
performance itself, as opposed to the lyrics.[20] Indeed, the passage's denunciation
is explicitly directed at sound (*shēng*). But one need not posit that "sound"
excludes lyrics or discursive sound in this context, since the use of the graph
shēng can encompass both the sound of speech and that of music. Moreover, the
passage's shift in topic from the *shēng* of the Zhèng to the danger of glibness
— a shift that recurs in the condemnation of Zhèng sounds in *Analects* 17:18
— indicates that the target of Confucius's concern is sound in a broad sense.
Improper sonority in general is damaging to human character because of its
penetrative capacity. A series of semantic overlaps in the use of terminology
related to hearing reinforces the breadth of this concern: *yīn* 音 and *shēng* 聲, as
both "music" and "voice"; *fēng* 風, as both "wind" and "song"; and *wén* 聞, as
both "hear" and "smell." That is, in a general way, music, voice, and song are
all items that travel on air or wind to penetrate deeply through the body's holes
by means of hearing and smelling. A rigid demarcation between musical and
discursive sound is not likely, since both of them penetrate bodies through the
same means.

Moreover, insofar as comments in early Chinese texts about sonorous
penetration reflect a general pattern of aural/visual couplets, they do not exclude
discursive sound. In the case of sound penetration, the relevant aural/visual
pattern is that sound operates on the inside of the person as distinct from visual
items, like ritual, operating on the outside. The *Lǐjì* 禮記 makes this claim about
music (*yuè*), which it contrasts to ritual emerging from a person's inside.[21] But
the claim in the *Shuō Yuàn* is more expansive: "sounds and tones" (*shēngyīn*)
are best for straightening out the inside. As the aural/visual contrast entails, the
Shuō Yuàn also mentions that ritual is appropriate for straightening the outside.

> Of the things that enter from outside, none penetrates more deeply
> than sounds and tones, and none affects people more extremely . . .
> Therefore the gentleman uses ritual to straighten the outside and
> music to straighten the inside (以禮正外，以樂正內).[22] (*Shuō Yuàn*
> 19:43)

The logic of this passage seems to be that, because sounds and tones in general
penetrate deeply, musical sound is useful for transforming human interiors. In
other words, the reason music is associated with the inside is that it operates
aurally. This is borne out by the aural/visual contrast in the *Fǎ Yán* 法言. In its
explanation of the nature of seeing and hearing, the *Fǎ Yán* says:

In giving birth to people, heaven makes their eyes and ears able to see and hear. Thus, what people look at is ritual and what people listen to is music.[23] (*Fǎ Yán* 4)

In light of the contrasts between interiority and exteriority discussed above, the implication of this statement that music epitomizes sounds sensed by the ears helps clarify that it is specifically because it is audible that music pertains to interiority. Thus the contrast that the texts seem to emphasize is between (inwardly operative) sound and (outwardly operative) vision, not between music and some other form of sound.

It is because sound pertains to interiority that early Chinese texts present moral instruction as a matter of aural internalization. Learning is a process of hearing, internalizing, and embodying in action. For example, the *Shuō Yuàn* (16:179) and the *Xúnzǐ* (Book 1) describe instruction as something entering the ears, being stored in the heartmind, and then manifested in action. While such passages are vague about the extent to which the sonorous education entering the ears is musical, the instruction is explicitly musical when rulers initiate music-making in early Chinese texts. Rulers take an exceptional interest in the socially regulative function of music, installing music directors and commanding that music be created. According to Kenneth DeWoskin, in early China, the five tones required a fixed pitch, and "control over the moment and pitch at which music began was control of the entire performance" (1982, 44, 48). Hence, ethical rulers authorized music and thereby metaphorically established the pitch (*Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 呂氏春秋 22.6, 5.4). It is not surprising that their instruction was musical since, as Michael Nylan points out, the visual pun connecting music (*yuè* 樂) to joy (*lè* 樂) is a reminder that studying through music is a most palatable way of imbibing instruction (2001, 100). But this means that, even if the ethical learning described as entering the ears in the *Shuō Yuàn* and the *Xúnzǐ* is best understood as discursive or argument-based, it was likely to have capitalized on the benefits of sonorous rhetorical devices. With internalizing sound as the optimal method for moral instruction, it would be neither necessary nor useful to posit any firm distinction between musical and discursive instruction.

The odes (*shī* 詩) are a compelling example of the difficulty of positing a rigid distinction between discursive and musical sonority.[24] As implied by Confucius's "refined speaking" (*yǎyán* 雅言) of the odes, their sonorous effects were important. Indeed, Van Zoeren argues that, at an early stage, Chinese texts understood the odes primarily in terms of their sonority (1991, 28–35). This is plausible not only because the odes were metered and rhythmic but also because they were performed to music and perhaps even sung with special pronunciation and in a special key (Nylan 2001, 91). Moreover, the claim in the *Shū Jīng* 書經 that, from its very inception, the sovereign's music (*yuè*) involved *shī*,

counters any presumption that early Chinese texts strictly differentiate *yuè* from sound that involves speech. In the *Shū Jīng*'s story of the appointment of Kuí 夔 as music master, it is metered, rhymed, and sung speech that is at issue. The passage emphasizes the role of speaking by noting that the music master will operate via the method of making *shī* "speak" (*yán* 言) the heartmind's aims:

> Kui! I appoint you Overseer of Music (*yuè*) and to teach our sons. . . .
> The odes speak (*yán* 言) of aims, singing elongates this speech (*yán*),
> sound (*shēng* 聲) relies on that elongation, and pitch-pipes harmonize
> sound (*shēng*). (*Shū Jīng* 2)

Thus, the odes, as "measured songs," are inextricably linked to "music" (Picken 1977, 88–89). Moreover, "musical conversation" is part of what the *Zhōulǐ* 周禮 presents as the task of the Music Master:

> [The Grand Music Master shall] employ "musical *dé*" (*yuèdé* 樂德 musical virtue? musical charisma?) to instruct the sons of people of rank in uprightness, harmoniousness, respect, constancy, filial piety, and friendship. [He shall] use "musical conversation" (*yuèyǔ* 樂語) to teach them stimulus (*xīng* 興), exposition (*dào* 道), admonition (*fèng* 諷), praise (*sòng* 誦), speech (*yán* 言), and conversation (*yǔ* 語).[25] (*Zhōulǐ* 3)

The passage attests that musical conversation is a technology that can be used to teach a variety of other discursive skills: speaking (*yán*) being only the most obvious.[26] Thus, as these uses of the odes indicate, moral instruction appears likely to include a combination of musical and discursive aspects.

The freedom with which early Chinese texts interpret the odes also indirectly points to the importance of their sound. When excavated texts cite the odes, they frequently use homophonous sounds but different graphs, which leads Martin Kern to conclude that "the highly archaic and poetic language of the Odes was . . . open to numerous possibilities of understanding" (2007, 783). Because the writing system was unstable, while the sounds of the words were not, the auditory aspects of the words could easily have seemed more important than any particular semantic aspect. This could explain why specific semantic content does not seem to have been the criterion for appropriate usage of the odes. Many early Chinese texts show the odes being interpreted in ways that are suited to whatever point needed to be made.[27] In spite of stories about the odes originating in folk songs and being adapted by blind musicians in the service of rulers, there seems to be no presumption that successful use of them required reconstructing those "original meanings." As Haun Saussy puts it, the odes served as a "poetics of quotation" — a means by which to express one's *own* intent by properly reciting the words of others (1993, 64). Thus, to the extent

that early Chinese texts seem unperturbed by attributing varying semantic content to the odes, it does not appear that a lot hinged on any specific semantic content. Perhaps what mattered more was how they were, in Van Zoeren's words, "crooned or chanted in a rhythmic and singsong fashion" (1991, 40), which contributed to whatever they were thought to express (or betray).[28]

The "Musical" Aspects of *Míng*

Taking this a step further, sonority might have been important in other genres besides *shī* 詩. If, as the *Zhōulǐ* puts it, "musical conversation" facilitates teaching both speech (*yán* 言) and conversation (*yǔ* 語), then it does not seem far-fetched to posit that sound would be relevant in ostensibly argument-based texts. Wolfgang Behr contends that "aurally effective devices" figure heavily in pre-Qin philosophical prose. While "rhyming nets" and "assonance chains" characterize earlier texts, he notes that, by the fourth century BCE, texts like the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* also began to feature "paronomastic cadence" and "symmetrical arrangements of lexical roots" (2005a, 26). Behr describes paronomasia as becoming "extremely popular in late Warring States and Han philosophical discourse" (2005a, 28). He even sees a link between the use of paronomasia and musical metaphors for rulership:

> Musical metaphors such as the pitch pipe standards (*lǜ* 律) for the rule of law or the notes on the pentatonic scale for the basic social relationships abound. But it is not only through metaphors and more commonly, metonymy, that such arguments [about music as a means of appropriate rulership] are enhanced. Equally frequent is the device of paronomasia. (2005a, 28)

If, as Behr argues, rhymes, assonances, and paronomastic cadences appear in all sorts of texts that are not, strictly speaking, "musical," sonorous techniques of rulership need not be limited to music per se.

Indeed, wherever aurally effective devices appear in early Chinese texts, there is no reason to expect they were not seen as pertaining to the *míng* in the text. Meaningful utterances were seen as containing *míng* (although it is not clear whether every minimal signifying unit of an utterance was understood to be a *míng*).[29] Insofar as *míng* are relatively short, by themselves they cannot be described as having rhythm or creating rhyme, assonance, or paronomastic cadences, but through their use in sound-correlated figures they can echo other *míng*. (For example, the slogan "*zhèngmíng*" itself is used to resonate through associations of that sort. The *Analects* 12:17 explicates *zhèng* 政 through *zhèng* 正, and *míng* 名 is often written with *míng* 命, while the *Zhuāngzǐ* 4 and

Zhuāngzǐ 5 write it as *míng* 鳴.)[30] This may shed light on the recommendation of *Analects* 17:9 to study the odes for greater knowledge of the *míng* of birds, animals, grasses, and trees. Since the odes were in an archaic language, it is unlikely that they would be employed to teach students the current names of entities with which they were unfamiliar. Instead, learning *míng* by reciting the odes would foster acquisition of refined pronunciation. Such knowledge would enhance one's ability to manipulate the poetic devices required to incisively "cap" a situation (whether in official service or at home, as the passage notes). Thus, it would be important to listen and reproduce proper ancient *míng* in order to enhance one's skill in wielding resonant sounds.

Implied in this phenomenon of learning ancient pronunciations is the possibility that actual features of linguistic usage might help to account for the texts' repeated suggestion that sounds that were once *zhèng* in ages past have now become confused. This declension narrative applies to *míng* as well as to music — an impression reinforced by a shared use of terminology to describe them. For instance, *Xúnzǐ* 20 explains that "corrupt tones" (*xiéyīn* 邪音) have made refined sounds "chaotic" (*luàn* 亂), just as *Xúnzǐ* 22 notes that "corrupt spoken explanations" (*xiéshuō* 邪說) have made *zhèngmíng* "chaotic." *Lǜshì Chūnqiū* 6.3 contrasts the gentleman's emission of music through *zhèngdé* (正德以出樂) with "music that has overflowed" (*yuèyín* 樂淫), which it associates with the sounds of Zhèng and Wèi (鄭衛之聲). Using similar rhetoric, the *Lǜshì Chūnqiū* employs the term "*yín*" 淫 to depict the form of speech that has destroyed *zhèngmíng*. If *míng* are *zhèng* then there is order.

> If *míng* are destroyed then there is chaos. What causes *míng* to become lost is overflowing (*yín*) "spoken explanations" (*shuō* 說). With overflowing spoken explanations, the acceptable can be unacceptable, what is so can become not so, and what is this can become not this. (16.8)

In the contexts of both music and *míng*, the perception is that overflowing sound blurs proper boundaries — a concern that might reflect historical changes in the use of sound.[31] Laurence Picken speculates that the new repertory of Zhèng exhibited greater than usual irregularity in line rhythms (1977, 107), while DeWoskin, working with more recent archeological evidence, hypothesizes that Zhèng music featured a new scale that exceeded five tones (1982, 45). Like these musical innovations, the sound changes that occurred in linguistic usage in early China were not insignificant. The *Lǜshì Chūnqiū* indirectly notes this in its complaint that between the past and the present, speech has become different and legal statutes have diverged. Hence it adds:

The *míng* 命 (commands? terminology?) of old mostly do not communicate (不通) in the speech (*yán* 言) of today. (15.8)

Indeed, such linguistic confusion may have occurred. Analysis of phonological reconstructions, phonetic series, and *Shī Jīng* 詩經 rhymes have led historical linguists to posit that Old Chinese featured derivational morphologies wherein grammatical morphemes combined with lexical morphemes to convey certain aspects of meaning. Although it is impossible to determine when exactly the derivational affixes of Old Chinese disappeared from the language, Behr suggests that at least some would have still existed in the Warring States period and a memory of them would have persisted up to the Western Han.[32] Thus what might have been felt to be disappearing from the language were sounds that to some degree contributed to understanding *míng*. Moreover, the increasing use of paronomasia observed by Behr might constitute one attempt to compensate for this change in linguistic sound. While puns in the *Zhuāngzǐ* seem to celebrate the slippery play of meaningful sound, the puns in most early Chinese texts are generally presented as if they confirm its reliability. In light of this history, the *míng* that appeared to be "non-contrary" (*bùfú* 不拂) could have been those that resonated with other *míng* used in similar ways.

Another factor that might have been perceived as causing a decline into acoustic confusion was the mere proliferation of sound. In terms of confusion in music, whereas Picken's and DeWoskin's accounts focus on irregular rhythm and tone, the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 (B10.1) implicates a quantitative form of sonorous excess: its example of *yínshēng* (淫聲) is playing the same music more than five times.[33] Something like this quantitative type of sonorous excess might be the target of the choice of "directness" (*jìng* 徑) as a criterion for goodness in names in *Xúnzǐ* 22. In fact, both the discussions of *zhèngmíng* in the *Xúnzǐ* and the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* imply that the production of *míng* should be limited. This limit appears to be set by adherence to the visual *shí* 實 that they are supposed to match. *Xúnzǐ* 22 addresses the application of *míng* to appearance (*zhuàng* 狀) and location (*suǒ* 所), both of which pertain to visual perception. The number of names to be used depends on what the visual elements indicate about how many entities should be counted, as if for every (visible) action, event, or thing, there should be one *míng* and no more. The discussion of *zhèngmíng* in *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 16.8 also notes that *míng* match "forms" (*xíng* 形), another visual term. Since the *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* discussion of *zhèngmíng* also emphasizes limiting the extension of *míng* (providing "only enough" [*zúyǐ* 足以] speech to accomplish particular goals), the concern seems to be that, unless otherwise checked, the number of *míng* tends to exceed that of their visual counterparts. From this perspective, keeping in mind that *zhèngmíng*'s failure is caused by an "overflowing" (*yín* 淫) form of speech, a *míng* that is *zhèng* is one that is "direct," that is, restrained by the count of visible entities. In its depiction of *zhèngmíng*

as saying little while having one's orders enacted (言寡而令行, 正名也), *Shīzǐ* 尸子 1.5 is a variation on this. (Since Xúnzǐ 27 describes *xíng* 行, in contrast to sound, as that which can be seen, *Shīzǐ* 1.5 can be read as an assertion that *míng* are *zhèng* when orders consisting of concise sounds produce visible actions.)[34] But it is worth noting that an emphasis on brevity in *zhèngmíng* need not imply a preference for silence. For instance, when *Lǜshì Chūnqiū* 16.8 presents *zhèngmíng* as the opposite of the ruler's inclination to use the name "*shì* 士" (gentleman) without knowing its "referent" (其所謂士), his ignorance about how to use "*shì*" is exposed no less by his repeated silence in "response" (*yìng* 應) to questions about "*shì*" than by his misuse of it. Thus, *zhèngmíng* implies responsive brevity, not silence, reflecting a tendency toward parallelism of aural and visual things. The required restraint in the apparently ever-proliferating amount of sound is supposed to be achieved through *zhèngmíng* being "direct" in relation to their visual correlates.

This analysis of *míng* as sound is equally applicable to its use as "fame." The fact that both *shēng* 聲 (sound) and *míng* are employed to mean "fame" signals that fame entails hearing sound. In this sense, the ruler's *míng* is expected to be as broadly audible as possible. References to a virtuous person's widespread *míng* rarely bother to qualify it with mention of its ethical status: the assumption is that it matches virtuous deeds.[35] When *míng* functions in this way as "long-distance sound," the implication is that it has power to create positive transformations in those who hear it. This feature of sound is epitomized by the sympathetic resonance in stringed instruments, which DeWoskin calls "a splendid example of accomplishment through nonaction" (1982, 74). As the initiator of sound, in setting the pitch, the ruler's reputation causes responsive actions. Being the source of his own *míng* (fame), he "sets the tone" that implicitly informs the world of his virtue and thereby transforms it.

These ways in which *míng* 名 participate in "sound effects" also help explain the role of *mìng* 命 (command, fate) in discussions of *zhèngmíng*. The interchanging of *míng* 名 and *mìng* 命 emphasizes that, in the process of instituting names and titles, the ruler also performatively commands. The "*Zhèngmíng*" chapter of the *Xúnzǐ* elaborates on this, both by asserting that the ruler's aims and intentions must be made clear so that his *mìng* 命 can be obeyed, and by suggesting that *míngcí* 名辭 (*míng* in conjunction with phrases) are capable of conveying these commands.[36] Hearing is a fitting metaphor for how such commands operate, because one cannot shut or even tighten one's ears. The penetration of sound through the ears suggests inescapable obedience.[37] One might say that the commanding tones of the ruler's naming penetrate the ears deeply enough so that the hearers must "listen" (*tīng* 聽) and obey their fate (*mìng* 命).[38] (Perhaps this explains the otherwise puzzling portrait in *Mencius* 7B:33 of the ideal "gentleman" as simply awaiting orders/fate.)[39] In

the same way that rhythm, melody, rhyme, and paronomasia create harmonious and orderly patterns, so too a tone of voice that is suitable for giving commands might facilitate rulership. Indeed, there are repeated references to the ruler himself being "quiet" (*jìng* 靜) as he issues *zhèngmíng*.[40] The implication might be that the ruler needs to avoid, for example, the impression of vehemence or brashness. Speaking his commands from tonal quietude might allow greater control of how his intentions are heard.

In a context where music is valued precisely because humans are susceptible to the sway of airs/winds, there is no reason to expect the resonant power of what enters the ears to be limited to non-discursive sounds. Sound in general penetrates human inwardness deeply. The degree to which early Chinese texts are structured by means of sound-based rhetorical devices suggests the measure of their awareness of these aspects of speech *as sound*. In such a context, the "straightening out" of discursive sound would be a potent force for prompting responses in both speech and action. Thus, the ethical ruler might simply be still and straighten out *míng*, because instruction that penetrates the body through air has the effect of gentle inevitability, like the wind bending the grass, or like fate itself.

NOTES

1. I am not proposing the "core meaning" of *zhèngmíng* in early Chinese texts, since that notion implies that meanings exist independent of the context of use and interpretation. Nevertheless, focusing on one consistent thread from early Chinese texts — the transformative potency of resonant sound — highlights something that is part of the relevant background for our (necessarily limited) attempts to reconstruct tendencies in the use of the slogan in the early Chinese period. The appropriateness of "straight" as a tentative translational equivalent of *zhèng* is suggested by the spatial metaphors for *zhèngmíng* and *zhèngyán* that emphasize the difference between direct fit and indirection through "leaning" (*yǐ* 倚) and "crookedness" (*wǎng* 枉). For the implications of standard translations of *zhèngmíng*, see Defoort (1997, 168–77). For other discussions of *zhèngmíng*, see Im (2008), Moeller (2000, 91–107), Makeham (1994), Defoort (1998, 111–18; 2003, 217–42), Creel (1974, 106–24), and Loy (2008).

   The source for my analysis is passages in early Chinese texts predominantly dating from the fourth century BCE to the first century BCE. Unless otherwise noted, all chapter numbers for Chinese texts in the original follow the Chinese University of Hong Kong CHinese ANcient Texts "CHANT" database. Unidentified translations are my own.

2. The significance of *zhèngmíng* for Confucius's own thought might be exaggerated, as Bryan Van Norden (2007, 82–96) argues, but these claims occur outside the *Analects*. Examples of such assertions about order include: "If names are straight, there is order" (名正則治, *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 16.8); "straighten the names and [thereby?] order the things" (正名治物, *Sīmǎfǎ*

司馬法 1); "if names are straight and portions are clear, the masses will not be confused about the way" (名正分明則民不惑於道, *Guǎnzǐ* 管子 10); "Huángdì straightened the names of the hundred things to enlighten the masses to share the wealth" (黃帝正名百物以明民共財, *Lǐjì* 24); "Therefore in making the laws, the sages needed to render them clear and easy to understand, and with names straightened, the stupid and the knowledgeable were all able to understand them" (故聖人為法, 必使之明白易知, 名正, 愚知睃能知之, *Shāngjūnshū* 商君書 26); "with preservation of attentiveness and straightening out of names, falsity and deceit will cease" (守慎正名, 偽詐自止, *Guǎnzǐ* 15).

3. Given the broad range of understandings of "word," it is important to avoid using it as a translation of *míng*. It would be surprising if *míng* had been employed in early China in a way that resembles any understanding of "word" in modern linguistic theory or even in ordinary parlance. Moreover, uses of *yī yán* 一言 ("one unit of speech") as what we might call "one word" also complicate that reading. Hence, instead of treating "*zhèngmíng*" as something done to "words," this chapter approaches the slogan from a perspective that foregrounds *míng*'s most common uses: name, fame, and title. In addition to its use as names of persons broadly (including *xìng* 姓 and *hào* 號), and its use as "title" and "fame," "*míng*" is used to talk about names in the sense of special "terminology" or "technical terms." Evidence that *zhèngmíng* has implications for speech is famously apparent in the *Analects* 13:3, where it results in smooth speech.

4. The other things are "directness" (*jìng* 徑), which is discussed below, and "easiness" (*yì* 易), which I do not discuss because it is not specific enough to be informative about what constitutes goodness in names.

5. Standard translations of *shí* (實 (objects, actuality, reality, stuff) inevitably seem to present misleading implications about what it is that names name. They invoke what Bruno Latour (2004) calls "matters of fact," whose composition is unaffected by the very power of naming that this chapter explores. Hence I leave *shí* 實 untranslated.

6. *Xúnzǐ* 22 also notes that the appropriateness of naming conventions is not "certain" (*wúgùyí* 無固宜), so the conventions alone seem unlikely to produce "certain" goodness.

7. Roger Ames (2008) argues that, insofar as the production of meaning involves non-referential associations among names, *zhèngmíng* is a matter of regulating the way meaning operates through the associative power of language. In ethics, such an interpretation of *zhèngmíng* is an affirmation of relationality: just as the "meaning" of *míng* emerges through the context of echoed relationships with other *míng*, so too "meaningful" lives are created through particular relationships in resonance with their discursive communities.

8. "Influences of air" is Kenneth DeWoskin's expression (1982, 92). For a note on the significance of "smelling," see Nivison (1996, 24).

9. My argument is that the few uses of "*míng*" as meaning "graph" in early Chinese texts are aberrations that occurred as a result of the need to develop a term to indicate a single graph. See Geaney (2010).

10. For the argument that early Chinese texts feature an oral/aural conception of *míng*, see Geaney (2002, 109–35; 2010).

11. See Geaney (2010) for the limitations of Zhèng Xuǎn's interpretation of *míng* as "graph."

12. For instance, Chad Hansen maintains that what Confucian philosophers called the "rectification of names" was "following the sage's instructions, which were written in . . . characters" (1993, 393). Henry Rosemont reaches a similar conclusion regarding the use of *míng* to mean "graph" in the "*Zhèngmíng*" chapter of the *Xúnzǐ* on the basis of the idea that "good" names are graphs that look like what they signify (personal communication, Spring 2006).

13. See Geaney (2010) for a more detailed version of this argument.

14. The phrase "*zhèngzǐ* 正字" is not common, but it does occur in the first century *Hànshū* 漢書 and the second century *Tàipíng Jīng* 太平經, meaning something like "standard graphs."

15. Yoav Ariel translation, slightly modified (1996, 137).

16. This is not to claim that *míng* cannot be written, but the fact that *míng* are recorded does not mean that *míng* are graphs, any more than the graph for "action" refers to writing because "actions" can be written about.

17. The conception of music in the "*Yuèjì*," while not necessarily characteristic of the whole of the early Chinese period, seems to fit the broad definition proposed by John Blacking (1973, 3): "humanly organized sound." The "*Yuèjì*" explains that *yuè* is the first level in a hierarchy of sound that appears to be based on degrees of complexity — higher than *yīn* 音 (tone or tune) and *shēng* 聲 (sound or voice). Nevertheless, my interpretation of *yuè* as the highest form of humanly organized sound might need to be supplemented by the suggestion in the "*Yuèjì*" that visual elements that emerge after sound (shields, axes, plumes and ox tails) are also part of the technical requirements of *yuè*.

18. For the *Xìngzìmìngchū* examples, see *Guōdiàn Chǔmù Zhújiǎn* (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), strips 23, 30–31, and 36; 180. See also *Xúnzǐ* 20 and *Shuō Yuàn* 19.43.

19. I gloss the term *yín* 淫 in note 33.

20. Van Zoeren (1991, 31). See also Nylan (2001, 90). Van Zoeren's claim is part of a thesis about the historical development from an early treatment of the odes as music to the Hàn 漢 habit of interpreting the *Odes* through textual exegesis. Although the development is undeniable, his argument does not notice the ways in which the term *yán* (which he calls "language") is presented as if its qualities were similar to, rather than opposed to, those of music.

21. The *Lǐjì* says, "Music emerges from the inside; ritual acts from the outside" (樂由中出, 禮自外作). It also says, "Therefore music is something that acts on the inside; ritual is something that acts on the outside" (故樂也者, 動於內者也; 禮也者, 動於外者也) (*Lǐjì* 19.1, *Shíjì* 3.2).

22. My choice of a male-gendered translation for *jūnzǐ* is a deliberate historical reminder that the focus of concern about the *jūnzǐ* in early Chinese texts is generally not on female-bodied persons.

23. See also a slightly different comment in *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 1: "[His] eyes have never seen ritual and etiquette, and his ears have never heard the ancients or the past" (目未嘗見禮節, 耳未嘗聞先古).

24. I use the formula "the odes" to mean their pre-canonical state, as distinct from their later form as "The *Odes.*"

25. Translation modified from Saussy (1993, 62).

26. A number of factors related to how *yán* 言 ("speech") functions make plausible the idea that speech and music intersect. The fact that animals are credited with the ability to speak (*yán*) is one hint that a fairly wide range of sonorous communication must count as *yán*. (See *Lǐjì* 1.6 and *Zhōulǐ* 5.24 and 5.26.) Moreover, that which *yán* seems to communicate — *yì* 意 — appears to involve something like the sounds of the heartmind (as suggested by its entry in the *Shuōwén Jiězì* and by the fact that it interchanges with *yīn* 音 ["tone"] in excavated manuscripts). As Chad Hansen argues, *yì* does not resemble mental concepts (1992, 76). The use of *yì* as well as *zhì* 志 in relation to *yán* makes speech resemble other means of expression, suggesting something along the lines of an overall "intent" or "aim," such as can be said of music and dance.

27. While the hermeneutic principles implied in *Mencius* 5A:4 and 5B:8 might be an exception, for the most part the interpretation of odes in the *Mencius* also seems fitted to suit the occasion. Moreover, in spite of calling the *Odes* a "classic," the *Xúnzǐ* treats determining their meaning as requiring little effort, with an attitude that suggests that questions about how to interpret them are not particularly complex or pressing. For the *Xúnzǐ*, it *is* a problem that the writings and rhythms of the very ancient sages are lost. Nevertheless, the contemporary gentleman seems to have no trouble manifesting the way of the Zhōu 周 through what he prizes in his behavior (*Xúnzi* 5).

28. Through an interpretation of *Zuǒzhuàn* B9.27.5 and B9.29.13, Martin Svensson Ekström posits that the difference between an iteration of the odes qua music and qua coded message is this:

> As music, the *Odes* are transparent, non-manipulatable and reveal the corruption or virtue of their makers like a Freudian slip reveals the innermost secret of the neurotic. By contrast, when a person recites the *Odes* to "express his intentions" (言志 *yánzhì*), he is in full control of both himself and the poems that serve both to veil and disclose, whereas music presents him "warts and all." (2006, 84–85)

29. See note 3. In early Chinese texts, surnames, personal names, nicknames, and titles (not to mention reputations and terminology) are not necessarily monosyllabic. Still, "*míng*" generally seems to refer to smaller units of discursive sound than "*yán*," except perhaps some uses of "one *yán*" (*yīyán* 一言).

30. For a listing of some early Confucian uses of paronomasia, see Ames (2008, 37–43).

31. As DeWoskin notes (1982, 92), this corruptive "influence of airs" might account for the analogy in *Analects* 17:18 between the sounds of Zhèng and the way the color purple robs from vermillion.

32. However, Behr maintains that consciousness of language change is only a rare undercurrent in pre-Qín discourse about *zhèngmíng* (2005b, 17, 20–21).

33. These observations from Picken and DeWoskin are helpful because, while in the context of music, "*yín* 淫" has often been taken to mean licentious sexuality, that

reading is not plausible for explaining its effects on discursive sound. Indeed, it probably is not apt for music either. In *Zuǒzhuàn* B10.1, *yínshēng* (overflowing sound) is not sexual excess, but it fosters that excess through something like contagion.

34. "Speech can be heard and action can be seen" (言為可聞 行為可見) (*Xúnzǐ* 27).
35. The modification of *míng* by *yín* 淫 in *Guóyǔ* 7.7 is a rare and illuminating exception. The *yínmíng* 淫名 that is heard (*wén* 聞) throughout the world belongs to a power-usurping ruler who oversteps boundaries.
36. The chapter's distinction between *míng* 名 and *cí* 辭 is similar to that of the "Neo-Mohist Canons" 11.2 ("With names, pick *shí*; with *cí*, sift intentions" 以名舉實, 以辭抒意), as well as that of *Lǚshì Chūnqiū* 18.4.
37. By contrast, it might have been thought that even the pores can be tightened. See Kuriyama (1994, 37).
38. According to post-phenomenologist Don Ihde, such assessments of sound as penetrating appear in other languages, in which they are also linked to the notion of sound-as-command. Ihde writes:

> [H]earing and obeying are often united in root terms. The Latin *obaurdire* is literally meant as a *listening* "from below." It stands as a root source of the English *obey*. Sound in its commanding presence *in-vades* our experience . . . one's train of thought is likely to be upset by the "command" of the sound which is so penetrating or loud that he can't "hear" himself think. (1976, 81)

39. "Speech and conversation must be trustworthy, but not for the sake of correcting actions. The *jūnzǐ* enacts models in order to await orders/fate, and that is all" (言語必信, 非以正行也. 君子行法, 以俟命而已矣) (*Mencius* 7B:33).
40. *Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 5, *Hánfēizǐ* 8, and *Shīzǐ* 1. See also *Jiǎyì Xīnshū* 賈誼新書 8.3. The term *jìng* 靜 is used to mean both "quiet" and "still," but, in light of the interchange of *yì* 意 with "tone" (*yīn* 音, see note 26), its use in conjunction with "empty" (*xū* 虛) in this formula also evokes the quiet tone of an empty heartmind.

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