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THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION OF SPACE IN ANCIENT CHINESE MUSIC

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A common assumption in the West is that traditional (or ancient) Chinese music, including opera, often consisting of a single melody, exhibits a somewhat linear nature. Drawing on Zong Baihua (宗白华) (1897-1986), we suggest that this repertoire is instead profoundly spatial, much like Chinese landscape painting. Although appreciable attention has been paid to the concept of space in ancient Chinese poetry and landscape paintings, music has remained largely overlooked in such considerations. The present study will draw upon this broader aesthetic tradition—specifically, discussions of spatialization in ancient poetry and landscape painting—in order to examine the role of space in ancient Chinese music through a comparative study of Guqin music.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Ancient Chinese Philosophy, Music, Space Concept, Yijing(意境),

INTRODUCTION

In Chinese philosophy, the concept of space has its roots in the writings of Lao Tzu, a prominent originator of *Taoism*. To paraphrase from Li's insightful discussion of Lao, "Carving out a void to create a room; only where there is emptiness does the room acquire utility." (2002, 87) This suggests that the function of a room is similar to the function of "space" or "nothingness." Lao believed that all entities in the phenomenal world originated from a primordial state called *Wu* (无, wú) (Laozi 1963, 101). This concept has persisted throughout ancient Chinese philosophical thought and has also deeply permeated the artistic creations of ancient China.

In ancient Chinese art, spatial awareness is a crucial ingredient of what is called "artistic conception," or *Yijing*(意境, *yìjìng*). "*Yijing*," which literally means "the realm (boundary, situation, state) of thoughts (concepts)," is the process whereby objective scenery becomes a symbol or representation of one's own subjective emotions (Zong ang Meyer 2017, 367-396). The concept of *Yijing* can be traced back to the ninth century when Tang Dynasty poet, Wang Chang-ling(王昌龄) mapped out three parts of poetic creation in *The Poetic Style* (《诗格》). To paraphrase from Hongmei Jing's excellent article on *Yijing*: One is *Wujing* (物境, *wùjìng*). If one wants to compose a poem, one's mind is occupied with the magnificently beautiful scenery of the spring,

the rock, the cloud, and the mountain; one's body is personally on the scene, one's heart sees the scenery, and one's hand holds the general view. By understanding and feeling the comprehensive *Jingxiang* (境象, *jìngxiàng*) with one's thoughts, a similar form is obtained in one's brain. The second is *Qingjing* (情境, *qíngjìng*). Entertainment, happiness, worry, and resentment are all things that can be meaningfully expressed and physically felt. And then, through realization, these emotions are evoked. The third is *yijing*. Its truth can be accessed through the expression of its meaning and inward contemplation, aiming not at external form or emotional response, but at the realization of deeper meaning (Jing 2023, 161).

Put simply, *Wujing* is the direct description of the objective world in poetry; *Qingjing* is the emotional realm; and *Yijing* is the realization of its true meaning. Whereas the meanings of *Wujing* and *Qingjing* in ancient Chinese poetry are clear-cut, this is not so with *Yijing*. *Yijing* seems to embody the unique texture of ancient Chinese poetry, which has been difficult for translators to convey in English. *Yijing* requires a more subtle grasp of the details of the poem's text (Hee et al. 2022, 97–98.). Some translators have tried to preserve the indeterminacy in English, so that the process, not just the literal words, is reproduced. This approach allows ancient Chinese poetry to retain space for the reader's imaginative engagement (Liu 1979, 137). The translators hope to help readers better imagine the *Yijing* that exists in the original poem by feeling the *Wujing* and *Qingjing* within the poem. The process of interpreting a poem is sometimes described as a "secondary creation." In addition to reflecting the poet's own experiences and emotions, poetry can embody countless possibilities based on the reader's educational experience or cultural background.

This interpretive richness is not only present in poetry but also deeply embedded in ancient Chinese music, exemplified by the *Guqin*(古琴). As one of the oldest Chinese musical instruments, the *Guqin* uses a notation method that is completely different from Western staff notation. It adopts the performer's playing gestures as a notation method, and each pitch corresponds to a specific fingering technique (Li and Leman 2007, 65-66). Rhythm and pitch are not marked in its notation, allowing different players to interpret the same piece in diverse ways. Some scholars have discussed the connection between the *Guqin* and the natural world. From an aesthetic perspective, the fingering techniques used in *Guqin* performance often imitate forms found in nature (Mei-Yen 2023, 163-165).

To this end, this article first defines the philosophical concept of "space" in ancient Chinese art, especially its relationship with the interaction between subjective emotions and objective forms. On this basis, the first section of this paper explores how different artistic media, such as painting and music, use spatial metaphors to evoke *Yijing*. The remainder of the paper is divided into four sections. Section 2 focuses on visual art, especially traditional Chinese landscape painting, and analyzes how painting techniques such as dynamic viewing paths and the integration of temporal flow help create a rhythmic spatiality akin to musical experience. Section 3 shifts to music, specifically *Qin-ge* (琴歌) and *Guqin*, exploring how rhythm, lyrics, and performance gestures shape auditory space and evoke *Yixiang* (意象, yìxiàng). Section 4 provides a concluding discussion, comparing the spatial metaphors found in

poetry, painting, and music, and demonstrating how the ancient Chinese worldview of harmony and imagination is embodied across these three interconnected art forms.

THE SPATIAL CONCEPTION IN ANCIENT CHINESE ART

Beyond the foregoing description, the term *Yijing* can be fully understood only by breaking it down into its constituent parts. *Yi* is translated as 'idea' and *Jing* is translated as 'scene'. Intuitively, one may understand it as a scene infused with thought (Zheng, Zang, and Yi 2024, 356-358). These "scenes" are condensed from countless individual ideas, and the arrangement of these ideas changes according to the aesthetic design of different artists.

In Chinese landscape painting, this aesthetic is often expressed in the form of handscrolls. Viewers usually view paintings from top to bottom. This flowing line of sight contains the rhythm of time, leading the audience to construct the spatial layout of the picture. This technique reflects a fundamental method in ancient Chinese artistic creation: the "*unity of time and space,*" which exemplifies a unique form of spatial thinking.

The Concept of Space in Ancient Chinese Landscape Paintings

In Anglo-American visual culture, space is generally treated as visual and objective, such as geometry. Chinese painting, however, embodies a different conception of space based on the natural world. For example, the pictorial space in ancient Chinese landscape painting is not a literal depiction of the real scenery. Rather than following a central perspective in the composition, painters develop spatiality through a dynamic configuration of three directional axes, namely three directions of *yuan* (远, *yuǎn*, "distance"): *ping yuan* (平远, *píngyuǎn*, "level distance"), *shen yuan* (深远, *shēnyuǎn*, "deep distance"), and *gao yuan* (高远, *gānyuǎn*, "high distance"), in the terms proposed by Guo Xi (1023-1085) (Jiang and Zhu 2018, 296-297).[1]

Take Wang Ximeng's[2] (1096–1119) *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* as an example, Figure 1 (see on next page). Viewing the mountain from bottom to top exemplifies *gao yuan* (high distance); looking down from above illustrates *shen yuan* (deep distance); and looking straight at the scene illustrates *ping yuan* (level distance).

Compared with Western paintings—at least those before Picasso—that typically adopt a fixed perspective, ancient Chinese paintings depict multiple perspectives simultaneously. This creates a sense of spatial fluidity: the viewer does not observe the painting from a single point, but rather becomes immersed in its space, much like how aroma permeates a room (Zong 1981, 97-101).

Figure 2 (see on next page) is a set of landscape paintings of Tengwang Pavilion (painted by Guo Xi) and a photograph from a fixed perspective. It is obvious that the distant mountains shown in the landscape paintings cannot be seen from the single perspective in the photo. Therefore, when Guo depicts the distance between the mountain and Tengwang Pavilion, his structural perspective is different from a photograph of Tengwang Pavilion. It is a "flowing" perspective.

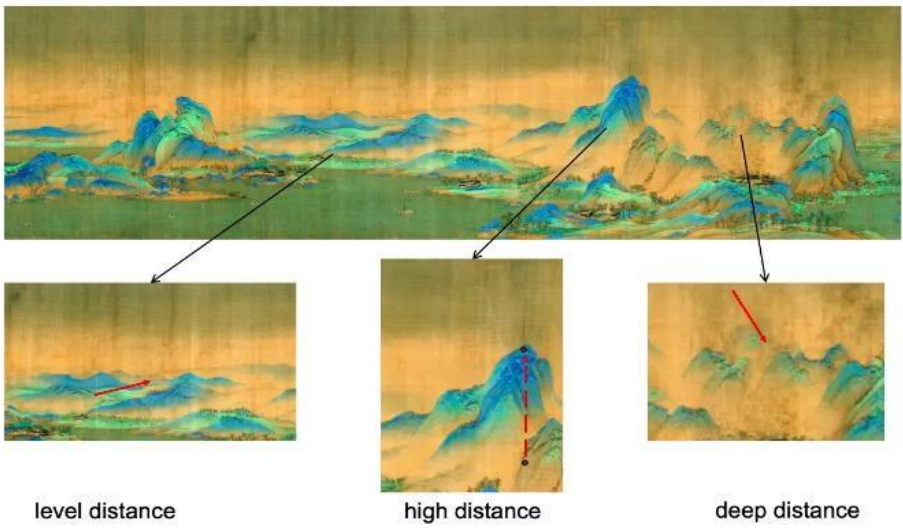
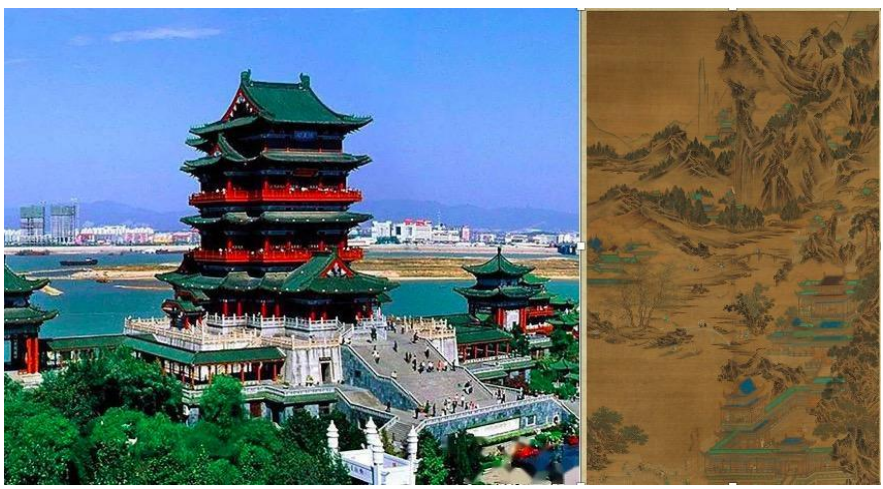


Figure 1| ***A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains*** **(Partial view) by Wang Ximeng(1096–1119).**
Image source: https://timelessmoon.getarchive.net/media/wang-xi-meng-panoramic-landscape-f2d53d.This figure has been visually segmented into three parts to illustrate the traditional spatial axes of Chinese painting as defined by Guo Xi: level distance (left), high distance (center), and deep distance (right). Used here for academic and educational purposes only. Copyright belongs to the original rights holder and the Palace Museum, Beijing.



A. *photo (left)* B. *Guo Xi, landscape painting (right)*

Figure 2 | *Tengwang Pavilion.*
A. Photograph of Tengwang Pavilion, source: Sina.cn (n.d.). Available at: https://k.sina.cn/article_2470614745_934296d900100tcmv.html?from=history. B. Guo Xi's landscape painting of Tengwang Pavilion. Originally created during the Northern Song Dynasty, this work is currently housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Image obtained from HSCCI Art (n.d.). Available at: https://www.hscciart.com/goods/info?id=2094. Images used here for academic and educational purposes only. Copyright belongs to the original creators, publishers, and respective institutions.

Rhythm in Chinese landscape painting

The philosopher Mitsuji Fukunaga (1971), referencing Schopenhauer's statement, "all arts adore the state of music (Park 2020)" asserted that we can discern a universality within Chinese aesthetics, which developed a unique artistic theory grounded in the philosophy of music. Spatial arts such as painting and calligraphy are considered musical movements; and while the rhythm of music may not be visibly apparent in paintings, within Chinese aesthetics, musical metaphors encourage us to apply musical vocabulary (such as rhythmic energy or vivid movement) to enhance our comprehension of artworks.

As Kin Yuen Wong (2013, 361) puts it, mountains in Chinese art can make "music." By beginning with spatial composition, Chinese artists move toward "temporizing" their experience of mountains, which can obtain energy flows and oscillating rhythms in the dynamics of space and time. This rhythm is sometimes directed by poetry. Since the Yuan Dynasty, painters have frequently inscribed poems onto paintings to complement their paintings (Leong 1972, 265). For example, the painter Wen Zhengming[3] quoted Su Shi's[4] poem of the same name written in 1082 in his painting *The First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff* (1558), see Figure 3.

Figure 3 | *The First Prose Poem on the Red Cliff(1558)* by Wen Zhengming.
Original image from the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Available at: https://dia.org/collection/first-prose-poem-red-cliff-64772. This figure has been edited for scholarly illustration by visually segmenting the original work. No part of the artwork has been altered. Used here strictly for academic and educational purposes. Copyright © Detroit Institute of Arts.

The painting takes the unfolding of poetry as a clue and smoothly integrates three different spatial axes, allowing viewers to feel the flow of space when viewing the painting. This technique is called "*unity of time and space*" in the creation of ancient Chinese landscape paintings and is used to express the *Yijing* in artistic works.

THE EMBODIMENT OF SPATIAL CONCEPTS IN ANCIENT CHINESE MUSIC

As objects of musical perception, tones and tonal relationships unfold gradually over time and follow a temporal sequence (Alperson 1980, 407). The concept of *time* holds great significance in ancient Chinese artistic creation. As mentioned in Section 2, the technique of *the unity of time and space* is often employed in traditional Chinese landscape painting to convey *Yijing* (意境), reflecting musical metaphors embedded in ancient Chinese artworks. In ancient Chinese musical creation, musicians often incorporated spatial concepts to preserve *Yijing* and to guide the listener's imagination. Taking *Guqin* music as an example, the concept of space in its music is usually reflected in two ways. First, the echo effect in the relationship between what the performer sings and plays is experienced by the listener spatially. Second, musicians use pure musical language to depict the concept of space. This method is more abstract. It maps spatial images *(yìxiàng*, 意象) in people's minds by changing the timing of the music (tempo, etc.), thereby leading the listener to experience *Yijing*.

Qin-ge (琴歌)

In China, the *Guqin* is one of the oldest musical instruments, dating back to the pre-Qin period. It held great significance in ancient China and was often used to accompany singing. During the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties, as well as the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the *Guqin* was commonly used to accompany[5] *Xianghege* (相和歌, *xiānghègē*)[6] and *Qingyue* (清乐, *qīngyuè*)[7]. *Qin-ge* is a musical form featuring the *Guqin* as the primary accompaniment for vocal performance. With its long history and widespread influence, this musical tradition has endured through time. Several representative *Qin-ge* works have been preserved to this day. Musicians selected poems written by famous ancient poets and carefully composed *Guqin* music to accompany them. The music and poetry are intricately intertwined, vividly reflecting the *Yijing* embodied in ancient verse.

Take the *Qin-ge,* "*Three Repetitions of the Yangguan Tune*" (《阳关三叠》) as an example. The lyrics of this piece are adapted from Wang Wei's (王维, 699–759) poem, "Farewell Song to Yuan Er on His Journey to Anxi." The poem is shown in Figure 4.

渭城朝雨浥轻尘，	The morning rain in Weicheng is covered with light dust,
客舍青青柳色新。	and the guesthouses are green and willow-colored.
劝君更尽一杯酒，	I advise you to drink a glass of wine and
西出阳关无故人。	leave Yangguan in the west without any old friends.

Figure 4 | *Farewell Song to Yuan Er on His Journey to Anxi* by Wang Wei (王维, 699–759).

Wang's seven-character quatrain was composed as a farewell to friends departing for the frontier battlefield. It was widely circulated as a song during the Tang Dynasty. The first two lines of the poem describe the setting of the farewell. The morning rain (*zhāoyǔ*, 朝雨) plays a crucial role in this imagery. It ceases just after moistening the dust. On the road going west from Weicheng (now Xi'an, Shaanxi Province), dust would normally rise when horses pass. But now, the morning rain has stopped[8] just in time to dampen the dust and prevent it from flying. The road appears especially clean and pleasant. The character "浥" (*yì*) in the phrase *covered with light dust* (*yìqīngchén*, 浥轻尘) means 'moist' in Chinese, indicating that the dust is dampened but the road is not soaked. This indicates that the rain merely dampened the dust without soaking the road or impeding travel. Everything seems arranged with perfect subtlety. It is as if Heaven had prepared a clean path for travelers bound for distant places. The guest house (*kèshè*, 客舍) emphasizes the transient nature of the lodging. The willow (*yángliǔ*, 杨柳), phonetically similar to the character for "stay" (*liú*, 留) in Chinese, is thus often used as a poetic symbol of farewell. The combination of these two elements implies that the poet is preparing to bid farewell to his friend.

Wang Guowei, a scholar from the Qing Dynasty, wrote in *Poetic Remarks on the Human World*: "All descriptions of scenery are expressions of emotion" (*yīqiè jǐngyǔ jiē qíngyǔ,* 一切景语皆情语) (Wang 1969, 81).[9] This statement stems from the highest spiritual ideal in Chinese philosophy: the "harmony between man and nature." Modern epistemological dualism, beginning with Descartes, approaches problems through an antagonistic dichotomy between humans and nature. It presumes a subject that exists independently of the world, leading to a separation between humanity and the natural world, as well as between subjects and social objects (Almog 2005, p.4). By contrast, traditional Chinese thought holds that humans and nature are unified. Liu Xie, a literary critic in the Southern Dynasties, proposed the theory of the blending of mind and body in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*(《文心雕龙》) (Liu 1983, 2)[10] He believed that humans are the most exceptional among the five elements and the spiritual core of heaven and earth (为五行之秀，实天地之心). This kind of idea has also led ancient Chinese artists to personify natural phenomena in their creations, endow the scenery with human attributes, and interpret all of nature as the deliberate, meaningful arrangement of "gods."

As the Swiss thinker Henri Frédéric Amiel (1821–1881) stated, "Any landscape is a condition of the spirit." [11] *Yijing* is the crystallization of "emotion" (*qíng*,情) and "scenery" (*jǐng*, 景). "Scenery" also functions as an image (*yìxiàng*, 意象). As mentioned above, poets have given the willow in nature the image of "stay." Ancient Chinese poets transformed real (*shí*, 实) scenes into virtual (*xū*, 虚) realms, turning images into symbols within their creations. Therefore, the description of the natural landscape in the first two lines of the poem creates a melancholy and poignant atmosphere, which is consistent with the sad mood expressed by the poet in the last two lines of the poem when bidding farewell to his friends. This technique of blending scenes highlights the *Yijing* of the entire poem.

Later, musicians composed melodies based on Wang Wei's poems. The actual musical performance exceeds the length of the original poem. Therefore, to make up

for the melody of the subsequent missing lyrics, some lyrics were added to enhance the sentiment of farewell. The melody of the whole song is simple and passionate, with a touch of melancholy, expressing the separation and care for friends who are traveling far away. Its music score can be found as early as *Zheyin Shizi Qinpu* (《浙音释字琴谱》, before 1491) compiled by Gong Jing (龚经) in the Ming Dynasty. The whole song is repeated three times, and each time the performer changes the rhythm to reflect different emotions.[12]

Guqin Music

In the *Qin-ge* of *"Three Repetitions of the Yangguan Tune,"* most of the lyrics created after Wang Wei's poems are interjections or phrases expanding upon the poet's sad feelings. This type of creative expansion is considered by many literary critics to have destroyed the original *Yijing* of poetry. Kuang Zhouyi[13], a famous lyricist in the late Qing Dynasty, said in *Huifeng Cihua* (《*蕙风词话*》):

> In the Tang dynasty, people would compose a poem in the morning and give it to musicians by evening. If the melody was sparse and the rhythm tight, harmonies would be added. All harmonies were filled in with real words, and thus it became ci. The emotion, literary grace, and rhythm of the ci all extended from the poem—hence it was called shiyu (poetry left over) (Kuang and Sun 2009, 4).

Kuang believed that the subsequently added lyrics followed the rule of dubbing one word with one sound. The lyrics are sung like the overtones of the *Guqin*, which may not sound harmonic to the ear. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, many *Guqin* musicians stood up to criticize the excessive creation of *Qin-ge*. In response to this outcry, some *Guqin* players proposed to give full play to the expressive power of music itself without resorting to words.[14] They believe that music has its own uniqueness in expressing emotions, which cannot be achieved by words. Similar to how poets express their emotions in natural things, *Guqin* musicians express emotions in the form of music. It's just that the *Yijing* expression in *Guqin*'s music is reflected in its unique performance gestures and musicality.

Performance Gestures

Notation for *Guqin* music details the finger positions of the hands and how the hands should move and pluck the strings. It is simplified by using only part of the basic literal characters, which are reorganized again into special new symbols called *jian-zi*(减字). This notation is called *jian-zi pu*(减字谱), see Figure 5. The process of musicians learning *Guqin* is basically completed through oral communication and reference to pictures.

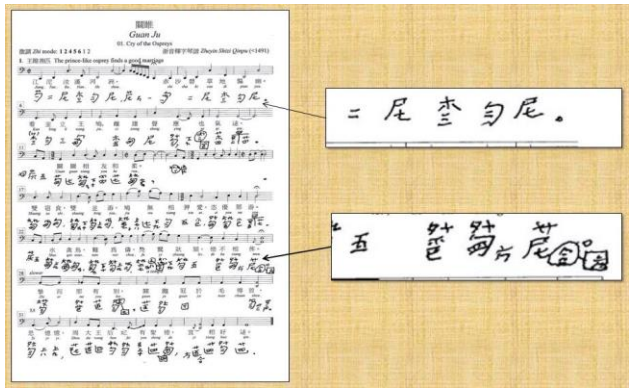


Figure 5 | *Jian-zi pu for "Guan Ju"* （《关雎》）, based on transcriptions from *Zheyin Shizi Qinpu* （《浙音释字琴谱》）

Figure re-drawn and annotated by the author for academic use.

Guqin playing gesture diagrams are produced by imitating the states of animals and plants in nature, and are often accompanied by poetic names, see Figure 6.

Figure 6 | *Guqin playing gesture.*

Reproduced from *Hand Gesture Diagrams from the New Edition of the Great Compendium of Supreme Music*, in *Collected Scores of Guqin*, Vol. 1, Chinese Academy of Arts Music Institute, Beijing Guqin Research Society. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010, pp. 63–80. Used for academic and educational purposes only. Copyright © Zhonghua Book Company.

This kind of graphic or poetic metaphor makes the enjoyment of *Guqin* playing extremely Zen-like. The sense of space in *Guqin* playing is reflected in two aspects: First, its playing gestures express the movement logic of all things in nature in the form

of dance, thereby transferring this sense of space to the performance of *Guqin* music and bringing endless imagination to the audience. Secondly, if the playing gestures represent a "virtual" (*xū*, 虚) world as a form of dance spirit, then the content of *Guqin* music itself constitutes the "real" (*shí*, 实) world. The performance gestures enrich the musical experience. Its movements change with the flow of the music, that is, the space changes based on time. This combination of "virtual" and "real" techniques is consistent with the rhythm or musicality of space in Chinese landscape paintings mentioned in Chapter 2.

Musicality

Guqin music creation appears similar to poetry creation to some extent. The well-known philosopher Han Xing (1266–1341) of the Yuan Dynasty once wrote:

> When I play, it is not for others, not even for Zhong Ziqi; I sit before my instrument, and my fingers move over the strings of their own accord. 'Flowing Streams' and 'High Mountains' are in my thoughts. Why would other people need to know that? (Yung 2017, 510)[15]

This also implies that the creation of *Guqin* still follows the philosophical view of "harmony between man and nature" to a large extent. Natural objects such as "mountains" or "flowing water" are given symbolic meanings by musicians and are depicted in music performances. For example, in the *Guqin* song *Wine Mad* (《酒狂》) played by *Guqin* player Zhang Ziqian[16], the music adopts three beats, and sometimes there are heavy low notes or long notes on the weak beat, which creates a top-heavy and unstable feeling for the audience. This piece of music vividly depicts a drunken person with a chaotic gait and confusion, and this image will emerge in the listener's mind along with the music. This is also in line with the original intention of the creator of this *Guqin* piece when he first played it. In Zhu Quan's[17] *Shen Qi Mi Pu*(《神奇秘谱》)[18], he once wrote:

> Ruan Ji[19] lamented that the Tao was not working and was out of step with the times, so he forgot about the world and worried about the body, and relied on alcoholism to enjoy his lifelong ambition. Is it true? Do you really like drinking? It's just to seek the right path![20]

It means that Ruan Ji, the creator of *Wine Mad*, felt sad about the political decay at that time, but was unable to realize his ambition to change the situation, and hence pinned himself on alcoholism and created this work. The drunkard portrayed in the music is himself. As the music flows, the connections between the images create spatial changes in the music. For example, sometimes a strong pause occurs shortly after a phrase is played. This not only depicts his stumbling steps after getting drunk, but also expresses his depressed mood of being unable to make progress and being blocked in every single step under the repressive social background at that time. When listening to the entire piece of music, all the images tend to form a dynamic picture in

an interconnected manner. The emotions of the musicians are intertwined with the characters they portray, making the music interesting and spatial.

CONCLUSION

Ancient Chinese artists would try to incorporate philosophical thinking into their creations. For example, the early Chinese philosophy of "harmony between man and nature" has led many artists to blend scenery with their own emotions when creating. The following conclusions can be drawn from the current study:

(1) Ancient Chinese philosophers believed that human thought constitutes the essence of the world. For example, in ancient Chinese landscape paintings, artists superimposed the spatial axes of landscape paintings with different dimensions according to certain sight lines, forming a painting with musical rhythm. This pattern of sight essentially formed within the painter's own imagination. The painter combines the rhythm of his own imagination with space, and uses this technique to depict a special *Yijing* (意境).

(2) This philosophical concept of space that appears in Chinese landscape paintings is also reflected in poetry and music. Poetry sometimes appears as lyrics in the creation of ancient Chinese music. Its language is usually short and concise, and its creative counterpoints are neat. The poet pays great attention to the rhythm of the tone. Sometimes a single word can describe a scene. For example, the word "red" in ancient Chinese poetry can be used as a noun, red flower; as an adjective, red; or even as a verb, dye red. Under the influence of this language art, poetry has created infinite space for the audience to imagine. Music plays a more supporting role at this time, that is, to make up for the artistic conception that language cannot express.

(3) In *Guqin* music, there is a subtle accompaniment of poetry. Ancient Chinese musicians used the rhythm and pitch of music as their brushes to help listeners imagine pictures in their minds. In order to express the *Yijing* of the music, these pictures will change with the flow of the music, as *Yixiang*(意象). This is also a technique that integrates time and space, adding the concept of space to ancient Chinese music.

NOTES

1. Guo, X (郭熙). (ca. 1000–1090) *Linquan Gaozhi*(林泉高致)*[The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams]*. Jiang, C. and Zhu, C. (2018) 'Bilingual and intersemiotic representation of distance(s) in Chinese landscape painting: from yi ("meaning") to yi ("freedom")', *Semiotica*, 2018(225): 293–311. https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2016-0226.

2. Wang, X.:王希孟, A Chinese painter from the Song Dynasty who was good at painting landscapes.

3. Wen, Z.:文徵明 *"Hengshan Jushi" (衡山居士), a painter, calligrapher, writer, and poet in the Ming Dynasty.*

4. Su, S.:苏轼 *A famous writer, politician, and artist in the Northern Song Dynasty.*

5. Reference from Shang Shu. *Yi Ji (尚书·益稷).* (Qin and Han Dynasties). It records the discussions and mutual advice between Shun, Yu, and Gaotao (2357 BC - 2070 BC) and describes the music and dance performances after the discussion. It is recorded that Guqin and Se sing. (*博拊琴瑟以咏*)" This reflects the long history of Guqin. Bo holds the harp and chants.

6. Xianghege. *One of the most representative traditional dances in ancient China.* It is mainly played on occasions such as banquets and entertainments among officials and wealthy businessmen, and is also used in court New Year's Day gatherings and banquets, worshiping gods, and even traditional folk activities.

7. Buddhist Scriptures. *A type of Buddhist music chanted with instruments for leisure and happiness.*

8. Poetic Context. *"The rain stopped" expresses the poet's wishful scene for a farewell.* Because the poet wants to express that the weather obeys their wishes, it is just suitable for the poet to see off his friends.

9. From Notes 10, the original text is: 昔人论诗词，有景语、情语之别。不知一切景语，皆情语也。

10. Note: The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons· Wu Se(《文心雕龙·物色》is the forty-sixth chapter of The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons.This article discusses the relationship between literature and reality based on the influence of natural scenery on literary creation.

11. Paraphrased from Taylor, K. (2008) 'Landscape and Memory: Cultural landscapes, intangible values and some thoughts on Asia', Unpublished manuscript.

12. Video example: Li, F."Parting at the Yangguan Gate". Link:《阳关三叠》李凤云 琴歌 | "Parting at the Yangguan Gate" | Li Fengyun | guqin

13. Kuang, Z. 况周颐 *One of the four great poets of the late Qing Dynasty.*

14. Yan, C.:严澂 (1547–1625), a guqin player of the Yushan School in the Ming Dynasty. *Preface to the Collection of Qinchuan Pu (琴川谱汇序).* Included in *Songxianguan Qin Pu (松弦馆琴谱)*. It is mentioned in it that "the way of sound is subtle. It is based on the text, but not limited to the text. The sound is the essence of the text. （盖声音之道微妙圆通，本于文而不尽于文，声固精于文也。）"

15. Han, Xing(韩性), the original poem is::鼓琴元不为钟期，对坐冰絃指自随。流水高山原寄意，何须更要别人知。paraphrased from Yung, B. (2017) "An Audience of One: The Private Music of the Chinese Literati." *Ethnomusicology* 61, no. 3 (2017): 506–39. https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.61.3.0506.

16. Video example: Zhang, Ziqian."Wine Mad". Link:古琴大師張子謙先生演奏《酒狂》

17. Zhu, Q.: 朱权(1378-1448) *was the seventeenth son of Ming Taizu Zhu Yuanzhang*.

18. The compilation of "Shen Qi Mi Pu（《神奇秘谱》）" lasted 12 years and was completed in the Yisi year of Hongxi (1425). Divided into three volumes, it contains a total of 64 guqin tunes, including some Tang and Song dynasty scores. It is the earliest known collection of guqin tunes with reduced word scores published.

19. Ruan, J. 阮籍, *A poet and official of the Wei State during the Three Kingdoms*

period of China, he was one of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove(竹林七贤)".

20. The original text of these two sentences in this passage is "籍叹道之不行，与时不合，故忘世虑于形骸之外，托兴于酗酒，以乐终身之志";" 岂真嗜于酒耶？有道存焉!"

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