

29. *Conversations*, p. 107.
30. Whereas Laozi seems confident that finding the way will lead to social harmony, Zhuangzi appears more skeptical. Indeed, even on a personal level, obtaining the way is no guarantee that one will live a life of riches and comfort. Rather, the point seems to be that harmony and peace are to be found in acceptance of life in its many manifestations, as in the stories of the cripples who, despite their deformities, lead a life of contentment.
31. *Tropic of Cancer* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 1.
32. See, for example, Zhuangzi's description of "sitting and forgetting," Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, pp. 90–91.
33. "Reflections on Art," p. 22.
34. "Creative Death," in *The Wisdom of the Heart*, p. 10.
35. See, for example, Anais Nin, *The Diaries of Anais Nin*, vol. 1 (New York: Swallow Press, 1966), p. 198.
36. See *The World of Sex*, p. 78. Ferguson attributes Miller's early enthusiasm for anarchism to the writings of Emma Goldman and Peter Kropotkin rather than Daoism, although Kropotkin's belief that a viable social order if people are left to follow their own natural inclinations is similar to the Daoist view of *wuwei*. Ferguson, *Henry Miller*, pp. 34–35.
37. Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, p. 188.
38. As Watson notes, *fang* 方 means not only "bounds" or "realm" but "method". Watson, p. 83 n18.
39. *The Cosmological Eye* (New York: New Directions, 1939), p. 157.
40. While Zhuangzi seems to have been relatively unconcerned with truth in the sense of correspondence between our ideas and reality, he was very concerned with the issue of authenticity, of determining what was *tian* 天—heaven, nature—and what was human. Although Miller uses the language of truth, he does so in the sense of being true to oneself, of being authentic.
41. *Tropic of Capricorn*, p. 333.
42. *Letters by Henry Miller to Hoki Tsukuda Miller*, ed. Joyce Howard, p. 23, quoted in Ferguson, *Henry Miller*, p. 356.
43. Ferguson, *Henry Miller*, p. 348.
44. Zhuangzi the philosopher-author presumably would have felt the same conflict, as philosophy requires a self-reflective detachment. Perhaps the style of writing, less analytical, more free-flowing, is an attempt to reduce the conflict by catching some of the flavor of the immediacy of life.

## 6

## On Hui Shi

LISA RAPHALS

*Tian xia*, the last chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, ends on an unlikely note—a list of the paradoxes of Hui Shi 惠施, minister of the state of Wei. The *Zhuangzi* concludes with the words:

What a pity that Hui Shi's talents were wasted and never came to anything, that he would not turn back from chasing the myriad things! He had as much chance of making his voice outlast its echo, his body out-run its shadow. Sad, wasn't it?<sup>1</sup>

Hui Shi continues to provoke interest and curiosity. "The sparseness of the remains of Hui Shi is perhaps the most regrettable of all the losses in ancient Chinese literature," remarks A. C. Graham, "for everything recorded of him suggests that he was unique among the early thinkers for his breadth of talents, and interests, a true Renaissance man."<sup>2</sup>

Most of our received images of Hui Shi come from the oldest texts that mention him, the *Zhuangzi* and the *Lüshi chungiu*. Both portray him, sympathetically or not, as a sophist: as Zhuangzi's logical opponent, or as a master of fine distinctions, unwilling or incompetent to engage in real statecraft.<sup>3</sup>

The oldest layers of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Lüshi chungiu* date from the late fourth and third centuries B.C.E.<sup>4</sup> Later texts also discuss and quote his arguments and exploits: the *Xunzi* and *Han Feizi* (third century), the *Hanshi waizhuan* and *Huainanzi* (second century), and the *Shuo yuan* and *Zhanguo ce* (first century). In this paper I use this range of portrayals to present four distinct images of Hui Shi, beginning with the received view of a sympathetic sophist, Zhuangzi's maladroitness but likeable "sidekick." Next I turn to three distinct third-century views of Hui Shi. The maladroitness of the *Lüshi chungiu* emerges from several debates in which Hui Shi engages at the court of King Hui of Wei. The Hui Shi of the

*Xunzi* is a dangerous heterodox philosopher who wants to introduce laws instead of relying on the *li*. The Hui Shi of the *Han Feizi*, by contrast, is both a skilled analogist and an effective minister. These four images reappear in the second- and first-century accounts of the *Huainanzi*, *Zhanguo ce*, and *Shuo yuan*.

### THE SYMPATHETIC SOPHIST OF THE ZHUANGZI

The relationship between Zhuangzi and Hui Shi in the *Zhuangzi* has been widely commented on.<sup>5</sup> The *nei pian* contains relatively few encounters: debates about the "uselessness" of the calabash and the tree of heaven (chapter 1), a passing reference to Hui Shi leaning on his stericula (chapter 2), and the debate about essential qualities (chapter 5).<sup>6</sup> Most of the better-known vignettes are in the outer and miscellaneous chapters: Zhuangzi's disinterest in Hui Shi's office (chapter 17), the happiness of fish (chapter 17), Zhuangzi's mourning his wife (chapter 18), a debate about names (chapter 24), the death of Hui Shi (chapter 24), the "snail" dialogue (chapter 25), another discussion of uselessness (chapter 26), a discussion of Confucius (chapter 27), and Hui Shi's paradoxes (chapter 33).<sup>7</sup> Yet all these stories, with the exception of the syncretist *Tian xia* chapter, are either in the Inner Chapters, conventionally attributed to the historical Zhuangzi, or in chapters considered by Graham and Guan Feng to be closely related to him.<sup>8</sup>

In these stories, Hui Shi inevitably gets the worst of the argument, but, as Shuen-fu Lin points out in his review of Graham's emendations of the *Zhuangzi* text, the debates between Zhuangzi and Hui Shi are central to the structure of the text: "the more carefully we read the six seemingly random pieces of prose [at the end of *Zhuangzi* 1], the more we feel that there is an intricate kind of unity within them. There is clearly an 'inner logic' to its organization."<sup>9</sup> That "inner logic" may help to explain Hui Shi's place of prominence at the end of the text.

### THE MALADROIT SOPHIST OF THE LÜSHI CHUNQIU

Overall, the *Lüshi chunqiu* portrays Hui Shi as a man of clever arguments who cannot or will not put them to practicable use. The section of chapter 18 titled "Unstable Words" (18.5) presents a series of clever arguments with no basis in good judgment. This series ends with the story of Hui Shi's creation of a law code for King Hui of Wei:

Master Hui created a law code for the state of King Hui. When he had completed it, he showed it to the people, who all thought it excellent. He presented it to King Hui, who was much pleased by it, and who showed it to Di Jian, who said: "Good." King Hui said: "It's good, but is it practicable?" Di Jian said: "It is not." King Hui said: "How can it be good (*shan* 善) but impracticable?"

King Hui asked how something can be efficacious but impractical. Di Jian answers by analogy:

Now if there are men raising a great tree, and those in front sing "Ya xu" and those in back answer in response, this song is strong enough to raise a heavy log. It's not as if the tones of Zheng and Wei are not stirring, but in the end, this sort of thing would not be useful, and they would not be as appropriate as this.

According to this analogy, the simple "ya xu" call and response harmonize the loggers sufficiently to lift a great tree. The *Shi jing* airs from Zheng and Wei are not strong enough stuff for this limited purpose, and, as the *Lüshi chunqiu* version of the story points out, there is no greater log than the state. The criticism of Hui Shi's law code, then, seems to be that it is too "good." In other words it lacks the necessary grit to do the job of creating lawfulness in a state. This story also appears in *Huainanzi* 12 but with a slightly different ending (discussed below).<sup>10</sup> Several other scattered references in the *Lüshi chunqiu* describe Hui Shi's words as impracticable.<sup>11</sup>

The next section "Not Giving In" (18.6) begins with the argument that scholars who excel at debate and distinctions may do good or harm, depending on their motivations. It presents three stories in which Hui Shi debates with King Hui of Wei, Kuang Zhang, a student of Mengzi, and with Bai Gui, a recent acquaintance.<sup>12</sup>

In the first, King Hui of Wei tries to cede his kingdom to Hui Shi.

King Hui of Liang said to Master Hui: "In former times the rulers of states were always the most worthy men. Now I am truly not your equal in worth, therefore I want to abdicate the state to you."

Hui Shi refused. The king pressed him and said: "There is no state greater than this, and if I abdicate it to a worthy man, the greed and strife in the people's hearts will come to a standstill. I want you to obey me without further ado."

Master Hui said: "If it is as Your Majesty says, then I cannot obey. Your Majesty is indeed a lord of 10,000 chariots, and if you elevate another by [gift of] the state, you are in a unique position to do so. I, however, am a commoner, now in a position to head a state of 10,000 chariots, but if I refuse it, then this will contribute more than ever to ending greed and jealousy among the people."

Now when King Hui said to Master Hui, "In the past, the men who were in possession of states were always worthy," Shun was a case of someone who was worthy and accepted [the state]; he [King Hui] wanted Master Hui to be a Shun. Xu You was an example of someone who was worthy but refused: Master Hui wanted to be a Xu You.<sup>13</sup> Yao

was a case of one who was worthy but abdicated; King Hui wanted to be a Yao.

At this point, Hui Shi emerges as a worthy individual par excellence. A king tries to abdicate to him as a worthier man, he refuses, and for the best of reasons. The passage goes on to elaborate three kinds of worthy conduct in statecraft. Praise of Hui Shi, however, soon turns to censure:

But the accomplishments of a Yao, a Shun and a Xu You did not merely consist in the fact that the one abdicated the state to Shun and that Xu You refused it, but rather that their other actions were in accord with these. Nowadays there is none of that, but people still want to be a Yao, Shun and Xu You. As a result, when King Hui of Qi was defeated, he offered subservience in Jian in cotton cloth and cap and King Wei of Qi was unwilling to accept; and Hui Shi had to leave Wei in disguise and was barely able to escape from its territory. Therefore as to one's own actions, one must not take haphazard good auspice as real merit. (*Lüshi chunqiu* 18/6/11b-12b)<sup>14</sup>

Hui Shi wanted to be a Xu You but was not. His conduct overall was not sufficiently virtuous, and virtue, the passage argues, cannot be reckoned by one haphazard event. Even if Hui Shi does not quite emerge as a Xu You, the passage does not dispraise him, and, on the contrary, it ascribes perfectly sensible reasons for his refusal of the throne of Wei.

In the second encounter, Hui Shi debates with Kuang Zhang, a disciple of Mengzi, who attacks Hui Shi in the following terms:

Kuang Zhang spoke to Master Hui in the presence of King Hui of Wei: "When a farmer catches grasshoppers, he kills them, because they harm the grain. Now when you, Sir, travel about, often with many hundreds of wagons and retainers, but at least with a few dozen wagons and retainers, you eat but do not sow, and the harm to the grain is far greater."

King Hui said: "Master Hui Shi will find it difficult to respond to you, but nonetheless I invite him to speak his views."

Master Hui said: "Now in the construction of a city wall, some labor at beating down the top; some bear earth in baskets and go about the bottom, and yet others have the plans in their hands and oversee the construction. I am one of the overseers who hold the plans. If you change a weaver woman into silk, she can no longer manage the silk. If you change a carpenter into wood, he can no longer work the wood. If you change a wise man into a farmer, he can no longer order the farmers. Now I am an orderer of farmers; how is it that you compare me to a grasshopper?"

Hui Shi wins the argument, yet the passage rejects his self-assessment with a devastating account of Hui Shi's influence upon King Hui and his poor record as a minister of state:

Master Hui's ordering of Wei was order without order. At the time of King Hui, Wei fought fifty battles, suffered twenty defeats, and casualties beyond number or estimation. The greatest general and the beloved son of the king were taken prisoner. The stupidity of his strategy was a laughingstock for the world, and people pointed at him with avoidance. And so he requested the historian of Zhou to make his name more famous. He besieged Han Dan for three years without being able to take it. His soldiers were exhausted and the finances of the state were consumed. Then armies came from all sides, all his [King Hui's] subjects condemned him, and the lords and princes did not praise him. He apologized to Di Jian, and from then on, listened to his counsel, and as a result, the state survived. But its treasures were scattered to the four corners of the earth, and the state of Wei was diminished and went into decline. *Zhongfu* is a high title, and abdicating a state is a serious matter; his expositions that he had refused [the throne of Wei] are not credible. But since they listened to him and it came out thus, he could not be deemed skillful, and when a maladroit wants to put a state in order, there is no greater harm in the world. Fortunately, only the king of Wei had listened to him, so what he did in actuality was a general harming of the world, to which he gave the name of putting the state of Wei in order. How could Kuang Zhang's condemnation not have been entirely appropriate? (LSCQ 18/6/12b-13b)

The third encounter is with Bai Gui, a recent acquaintance of Hui Shi, who criticizes him for impropriety of speech:

When Bai Gui was newly acquainted with Master Hui, he went to see him. Master Hui advised him to be strong. Bai Gui did not reply, and Master Hui left. Bai Gui spoke to some others and said: "Someone had newly received a bride. When she arrived, she was appropriately peaceful in her demeanor and delicate and gentle in her movements. A young man had lit a torch of brushwood twigs, which burned brightly and the new bride said: 'The torch is burning too strongly.' As she entered the gate, there was a hole in the threshold and she said: 'Fill it or someone will hurt his foot.' All these things were not as they should have been, but nevertheless it [her complaint] was excessive. Master Hui also saw me today for the first time, and so his advice was excessive."

Bai Gui may have been offended by the directness of Hui Shi's remark, but his use of an analogy that put Hui Shi in the humble status of a new bride,

obliged by her status to speak with the utmost of decorum, provoked offense in turn:

When Master Hui heard this he said: "Not at all! The *Shi* says 'The joyous and pleasant lord is the father and mother of his people.'<sup>15</sup> Joyous means great; pleasant means longlasting. If a lord's virtue is both great and longlasting, then he is the father and mother of his people, but do fathers and mothers wait a long time before they instruct their children? Why does he compare me to a new bride? Does the *Shi* say 'the joyous and pleasant bride?'"

Those who denigrate and calumnize others will be denigrated and calumnized in turn. Those who chastise others [wrongly] will be chastised in turn. The way in which he chastises others is the way in which he will in turn be chastised by them. When Bai Gui said "Master Hui had just recently gotten to know me, and gave me advice in an excessive way," and Master Hui heard it and chastised him by comparing himself to Bai Gui's parents, was this not even more excessive than Bai Gui's excess? (LSCQ 18/6/13b-14a)

Once again, the argument in the *Lüshi chungiu* shows Hui Shi as initially acting in a reasonable manner, but eventually undercutting himself by impracticality and excess.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the *Zhuangzi* criticized Hui Shi's logic because it interfered with his perception of reality (variously interpreted in epistemological or mystical terms); the *Lüshi chungiu* finds fault with his clever words because they are not matched by clever deeds, or worse, conceal incompetence and mislead those who might trust him. Both portray the problem with Hui Shi as a lack of efficacy, variously understood.

A different Hui Shi emerges when we turn to two later third-century thinkers: Xunzi and Han Fei.

### THE HETERODOX PHILOSOPHER OF XUNZI

Recent scholarship has called attention to Xunzi's philosophical debts, both positive and negative. David Nivison has argued that Xunzi introduced an entirely new Confucianism, "a Confucian vision that no philosopher could have conceived until after Zhuangzi's Daoism had happened."<sup>17</sup> Donald Munro (who begins his study with Nivison's observation) focuses on Xunzi's discussion of Mozi as a philosophical enemy, and argues that Xunzi's interest in Mozi suggests that Xunzi's central interest is not theories of human nature or the mind, but rather "the issues of chaos and poverty, and their causes and institutional remedies."<sup>18</sup>

Such a view of Xunzi is particularly illuminating for his treatment of Hui Shi, whom he attacks as a heterodox thinker who propounds dangerous doc-

trines and neglects essentials. The first attack on Hui Shi (*Xunzi* 3), begins with this dictum: "The *junzi* [exemplary person] does not prize improper investigations or unsuitable traditions."

Xunzi gives example of six paradoxes, ascribed to Hui Shi and Deng Xi:<sup>19</sup>

Mountains and abysses are level.  
Heaven and Earth are comparable.  
Qi and Qin are adjacent.  
[Mountains issue out of mouths.]  
Old women have whiskers.  
Eggs have feathers.

Of these, the first, second, and last paradox appear in *Zhuangzi* 33; the others have been emended by Tang commentators and are of uncertain origin.

All these theories are difficult to uphold, but Hui Shi and Deng Xi were capable of it. Nevertheless, the *junzi* does not hold them in esteem because they are contrary to the norms of ritual and morality (非禮義之中, italics mine, *Xunzi* 6/3/3)<sup>20</sup>

His criticism is not the trivial one that they are silly, but the weighty one that they go against *li* and *yi*. A similar criticism appears in *Xunzi* 6, which describes doctrines of Hui Shi and Deng Xi that do not follow the models of antiquity:

Some men do not model their doctrines after the Early Kings, and do not affirm ritual or moral principles, but are fond of treating abstruse theories and playing with shocking propositions. Although formulated with extreme exactness, their propositions concern matters of no urgency, and their theories, though defended by discriminations, are quite useless. . . . Such men are Hui Shi and Deng Xi. (*Xunzi* 15/6/10, trans. Knoblock 1:224)

The castigation continues in "Teachings of the Ru" (*Xunzi* 8), which describes specific aptitudes in which the *junzi* is justifiably inferior to others. After justifying the proper inferiority of the *junzi* to the farmer, the trader, and the artisan, Xunzi continues:

He is inferior to the likes of Hui Shi and Deng Xi in being indifferent to the real nature of truth and falsity and the true nature of what is the case and what is not, so that the one blurs and confuses the other and ridicule is heaped on them both. (*Xunzi* 21/8/29-30; Knoblock 2:71-72)

The view is summarized in the chapter "Dispelling Blindness" (*Xunzi* 21), which describes the blindness of senior retainers, and disordered schools, and provides a virtual register of Xunzi's philosophical enemies:

Mo Di was blinded by utility and was insensible to the value of good form; Song Xing was blinded by desire and was insensible to satisfaction; Shen Dao was blinded by law and was insensible to worth; Shen Buhai was blinded by technique and was insensible to knowledge; Hui Shi was blinded by propositions and was insensible to realities; Zhuang Zhou was blinded by nature and was insensible to people. (*Xunzi* 79/21/22; Knoblock 3:102).<sup>21</sup>

In this perspective, Hui Shi's faults complement Mozi's: the one is blinded by utility, the other by propositions; the one disregarded good form, the other reality. Thus Xunzi, like the *Zhuangzi* and unlike the *Lüshi chungiu* authors, directly links Hui Shi's love of argument and word play with his misreading of reality, the "reality" of Xunzi's own Confucianism. As far as Xunzi is concerned, Hui Shi's skills, real enough, are undermined by their lack of appropriate purpose.

#### THE SKILLFUL ANALOGIST OF THE HAN FEIZI

Perhaps the most sympathetic reader of Hui Shi was Xunzi's student Han Fei, who consistently portrays, not only the skill of his analogies, but their aptness. Han Fei presents any number of instances in which Hui Shi gives practical and appropriate advice, typically couched in an analogy. In the first, Hui Shi's apt analogy saves a friend's life:

Tian Si had deceived the Lord of Zou, and the Lord of Zou was about to send men to kill him. Tian Si was afraid, and appealed to Master Hui. Master Hui sought an audience with the Lord of Zou and said: "Now if someone were to seek an audience with my Lord and then he were to shut one of his eyes, what would my Lord do?"

The lord said: "I would certainly have him killed."

Master Hui replied: "Yet a blind man shuts both his eyes; why does my Lord not kill *him*?"

The lord said: "He cannot do otherwise than shut his eyes."

Master Hui responded: "Tian Si has misled the Lord of Qi in the east and deceived the King of Jing [Chu] in the south; in his deception of others Si is [like] the blind man, so why is my Lord so angry at him?"

As a result, the lord of Zou did not kill him. (*Han Feizi* 7/433)<sup>22</sup>

Unlike Xunzi and Hui Shi's other critics, Han Fei presents the analogy of Tian Si and the blind man as an effective strategy that saved Tian Si's life. A later

passage in the same chapter also uses an analogy, this time in admonition to an acquaintance who has received royal favor:

When Chen Xu was honored by the King of Wei, Hui Shi said: "You must on all accounts keep on good terms with the attendants. Consider the willow: plant it sidewise and it will still grow, plant it upside down and it will grow, even plant a broken branch and it will grow. But if you have ten people planting willow but one person pulling them up, no willow will manage to grow. How is it that ten people planting the easiest thing there is to grow cannot overcome one person pulling them up? Because planting is hard and pulling is easy. Although you have been adroit in planting yourself with the king, if there are many who want to pull you out, you are certain to be in danger." (*Han Feizi* 7/442)

This analogy also appears in the *Zhanguo ce* (discussed below). The analogy of the willow, like that of the blind man, is apt to the purpose, and is used to help an acquaintance. It would not appear to conform to either Zhuangzi's or Xunzi's disparaging account.

In the last argument in the chapter, Han Fei quotes the words of Hui Shi to show that human actions are not inherently good or bad, but must be judged in the context of their purposes and the motives behind them.

Earl Tian Ding's esteem for gentlemen (*shi* 士) caused his lord to survive; Duke Bai's esteem for gentlemen caused disorder in [the state of] Jing. They were alike in their esteem for gentlemen, but different in the reasons for their actions. Gongsun Ji mutilated himself in order to recommend Bai Li; Shu Diao castrated himself in order to ingratiate himself with Duke Huan. They were alike in mutilating themselves but different in the reasons for their actions in mutilating themselves. Therefore Master Hui said: "When a madman runs east and someone pursuing [him] also runs east, they are alike in running east, but different in their reasons for running east." Thus it is said: "When people do the same thing, you cannot not make distinctions according to motive." (*Han Feizi* 7/446)

He takes the argument one step further in another passage where he contrasts the motives of a mother and an expert archer.

Master Hui said: "If Hou Yi put the thimble on his right thumb, held the middle of the bow with his left hand, drew the bow, and then released the string, then even men of Yue would contentiously go to hold the target for him. But when a small child draws the bow, then even the compassionate mother will run into the house and shut the door."

Hence the saying: "If certain of no miss, even men of Yue would not doubt Hou Yi. If not certain of no miss, even the compassionate mother will escape her small child." (*Han Feizi* 8/456, trans. Liao 1:247)<sup>23</sup>

In another passage (which also occurs in the *Zhanguo ce*, discussed below), Hui Shi loses an immediate debate, but may have succeeded in making a broader argument:

Zhang Yi wanted to use alliances with Qin, Han and Wei to attack Qi and Jing, while Hui Shi wanted to use [alliances with] Qi and Jing to stop hostilities. When the two men debated, the ministers and their assistants were in favor of the words of Master Zhang, and wanted to profit by attacking Qi and Jing, and no one was in favor of the words of Master Hui, so the king in fact listened to Master Zhang and considered Master Hui's words to be impracticable. After the attack on Qi and Jing was accomplished, Master Hui went to court for an audience, and the king said: "You, Sir, should have said nothing. The attack on Qi and Jing has in fact been profitable, and the entire country expected as much."

Master Hui had the following explanation: "It was impermissible to not examine the matter! Now as for the attack on Qi and Jing, it has been profitable, as the entire country expected, but does that mean that the country is full of sages? If the attack against Qi and Jing had not been profitable and the entire country had expected that it would be, would the country be full of fools? All strategies are dubious, and a consummate doubter considers them to be half practicable and half impracticable. Now if the entire country considered it practicable, this means that Your Majesty has lost half [who did not]. A ruler who retreats [from such matters] is one who has lost the other half." (*Han Feizi* 9/530)

Hui Shi's loss of the original debate with Zhang Yi does not diminish the force of his subsequent argument. Its structure contrasts to that of most of the *Lüshi chunqiu* arguments, which portray Hui Shi as starting with a reasonable position, but ending with a ridiculous one. Here, his initial position is impracticable, but his ending defense is entirely plausible (whether or not the king listened to him).

In summary, Han Fei seems to portray both Hui Shi and his arguments in a surprisingly positive light, given his own relative lack of interest in debate. In one passage, however, Han Fei does, in passing, include Hui Shi in a series of pro-pounders of impracticable theories, which he compares to a painting of a whip. Their words are too minute to be scrutinized and too ineffable to be carried out in practice. Like the painted whip, they cannot be used.<sup>24</sup>

## SECOND-CENTURY ECHOES

Second-century compendia, such as the *Hanshi waizhuan* and the *Huainanzi*, seem to reflect the orthodoxy of Xunzi's new Confucianism in their treatment of Hui Shi. The passages in the *Hanshi waizhuan* are all but derived from the *Xunzi*. The *Huainanzi* retells the *Lüshi chunqiu* story of Hui Shi's law code, but ends it with a new judgment that defends the primacy of the rites over laws in ordering a state.

### *The Hanshi waizhuan*

The *Hanshi waizhuan* gives an account of Hui Shi's paradoxes that is almost identical to Xunzi's. The passage begins with the statement that a *junzi* does not respect foolhardiness in conduct, sophistry in explanations, or a notorious reputation; he respects only what is fitting. The example of sophistry is the paradoxes of Hui Shi and Deng Xi:

Mountains and streams are level, Heaven and Earth are comparable, Qi and Qin are adjacent, it goes in the ear and comes out the mouth, barbs have whiskers, eggs have feathers—all these theories are difficult to uphold, but Deng Xi and Hui Shi were capable of it. The *junzi* does not hold them in esteem because they are contrary to ritual and morality. (*Hanshi waizhuan* 3/29a–b)<sup>25</sup>

A second passage tersely summarizes the contents of Xunzi's censure of ten of the twelve philosophers attacked in *Xunzi* 6:

Now the ignorance of the present age is due to the dressing up of heterodox theories and esteeming as cultured treacherous words that disorder the empire and confuse the common people so that in their ignorance they become so confused that they cannot tell right from wrong or order from disorder. The ones on whose account this situation persists are the likes of Fan Sui, Wei Mou, Tian Wen, Zhuang Zhou, Shen Dao, Tian Pian, Mo Di, Song Jian, Deng Xi and Hui Shi. (*Hanshi waizhuan* 4/36b–37a)<sup>26</sup>

### *The Huainanzi*

The second-century *Huainanzi* (c. 140 B.C.E.) also seems to echo Xunzi's reservations about Hui Shi. *Huainanzi* 12 repeats the *Lüshi chunqiu* analogy of Hui Shi's impracticable law code. The *Huainanzi* version of the passage concludes: "For governing a state there are the rites, and it does not consist in patterns and discriminations" (*wen bian* 文辯 *Huainanzi* 12/190).<sup>27</sup>

So the problem with Hui Shi's law code is not that it is too nuanced or refined for the "rough" job of governing a state, but that it is the wrong kind of

solution: the rites (*li* 禮), according to the *Huainanzi* and *Lüshi chunqiu* passages, are the right way to govern a state. In other words, the problem with Hui Shi may not be that he is sophistic or incompetent, but rather that, in the new Confucian discourse, he is heterodox.

### FIRST-CENTURY ECHOES

The *Shuo yuan* and *Zhanguo ce*, both first-century (B.C.E.) texts attributed to Liu Xiang, echo assessments of Hui Shi in earlier texts; both represent him sympathetically.

#### *The Skillful Analogist of the Shuo yuan*

The *Shuo yuan* specifically depicts Hui Shi as a propounder of analogies, and records both his skill at analogy and the discomfiture it could provoke. In the chapter "Skill at Explanation," an opponent attacks Hui Shi for using analogies, or as Christoph Harbsmeier terms them, "illustrative comparisons."<sup>28</sup> He defends the practice convincingly:

A retainer said to the King of Wei: "When Master Hui speaks about affairs, he tends toward illustrative comparisons, but if Your Majesty should order him not to use illustrative comparisons, he will not be able to speak."

The king agreed. The next day he gave an audience to Master Hui and said: "I wish, Sir, that when you speak about affairs, you would use straightforward language, with no illustrative comparisons."

Hui Shi said: "Now if we have someone who does not know what a *dan* is, who asks 'What are the characteristics of a *dan*?' and you reply: 'The characteristics of a *dan* are like a *dan*,' then will anything have been communicated?"

The king said: "It would not."

"But if you were to reply instead that the characteristics of a *dan* are like a bow, but with a bamboo bowstring, then would he know?"

The king said: "He would."

Hui Shi said: "Now as for explanation, it consists of using the known to communicate the unknown and in that way making the person understand it. If Your Majesty now says 'No illustrative comparisons,' it cannot be done." (*Shuo yuan* 11/4a)<sup>29</sup>

#### *The Strategist of the Zhanguo ce*

Given the *Zhanguo ce*'s concern with rhetoric, we might expect a sympathetic

Some stories depict Hui Shi as an ineffectual pawn in the game of politics. In his first appearance in the text, Zhang Yi has driven Hui Shi from Wei to Chu. The king of Chu takes counsel with his ministers on his impending dilemma: How to help Hui Shi without offending Zhang Yi and the state of Qin. The proposed solution is to send Hui Shi to Song: this move avoids displeasing Zhang Yi, but also has the advantage of keeping Hui Shi indebted to the king of Chu.<sup>30</sup>

In another account of these shifting alliances in the story "The Five States Attack Qin," Wei wanted union with Qin and sent Hui Shi, the minister of Wei, to Chu, who was going to send him on to Qin when Du He said to Zhao Yang:<sup>31</sup>

The country most responsible for the attack on Qin was Chu, but today Shi comes on behalf of Wei and you would send him to Qin. This would make it quite clear that Chu is responsible for the attack and convince Qin that Wei initiated peace [put Chu in a bad light and Wei in a good one]. You would be better advised to ignore Hui Shi and secretly send a man to Qin to offer peace terms yourself.

Zhao Yang presents the opposite of this persuasion to Hui Shi:

Wei was first to attack Qin. If you now leave to seek peace from Chu, Chu will receive all the credit and Wei the resentment.

Zhao sent Hui Shi home to Wei and offered to send a peace envoy from Wei, but the king of Wei was unhappy. As a result, Zhao Yang made peace in Wei, to prevent Wei from joining forces with Qin and leave Chu exposed. Hui Shi comes off badly, but not because of analogies, impracticality, or heterodoxy. The hero of this persuasion is Du He, a peacemaker who speaks both for and against Wei, and persuades Zhao Yang to make peace there.

By contrast, Hui Shi is the rhetorical hero (if not the political victor) in two stories that appear in both the *Zhanguo ce* and the *Han Feizi*. The story "Zhang Yi Wants to Use Wei to Unify Qin and Wei" repeats a variation of the story of the debate between Zhang Yi and Hui Shi over whether to attack Qi and Chu.<sup>32</sup> "Tian Xu Honored by the King of Wei" repeats the *Han Feizi*'s account of Hui Shi's analogy between planting willow and securing political influence.<sup>33</sup> Other stories also show him persuading effectively.<sup>34</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the received view of Hui Shi as he appears in the *Zhuangzi* and *Lüshi chunqiu* marks the earlier end of a continuum of stories which portray four fairly distinct images: (1) a sympathetic logician whose fundamental *amartia* makes the waste of his talents inevitable; (2) a maladroit sophist, more to be mocked than to be feared; (3) a dangerously heterodox philosopher who attempts to undermine the primacy of *li* and *yi*; and (4) an able strategist who uses apt analogies to give

in second- and first-century retellings and embellishments. All agree that Hui Shi played with words, used analogies, and was a minister in Wei. Thereafter, it becomes a matter of perspective.

One way of trying to make sense of these diverse images is suggested in a study by Christoph Harbsmeier on humor in ancient Chinese philosophy. Bearing in mind the many caveats on assessing humor across both time and place, "humor" may nevertheless provide a useful perspective to help us account for the mixed reception of Hui Shi. What sense would an author (or compiler) who had (or lacked) a sense of humor have been able to make out of the Hui Shi stories? Harbsmeier's assessment of the degree of humor (or lack thereof) in pre-Han and Han texts provides an interesting perspective on these varying assessments of Hui Shi.

The text that most strongly disparages Hui Shi is the *Xunzi*, which Harbsmeier describes as: "totally devoid of any sense of humor whatsoever," "serious and didactic throughout," and with "nothing light-hearted even in the poetic parts."<sup>35</sup> Harbsmeier may have underestimated *Xunzi*, but his account suggests an interesting rapport between Hui Shi's style and, at least, certain kinds of senses of humor. The *Lüshi chunqiu*, with its "fair share of entertaining tales" and "grotesque" and "almost surrealist black humor" provides, at least partially, a sympathetic account of Hui Shi, as does the *Zhanguo*, which, according to Harbsmeier, "was clearly compiled by someone with a taste for the light humorous touch." Most striking, perhaps is the sympathetic account of Hui Shi in the *Han Feizi*, according to Harbsmeier, the single most important extant source of pre-Han jokes.<sup>36</sup>

What better foil for Zhuangzi's own edge and wit than the deliberate outrageousness of Hui Shi's puzzles, despite the poor opinion of the syncretist compiler. When Hui Shi died, Zhuangzi, by his own account, had no one with whom to talk things over, and compared Hui Shi to the man of Ying, who

smeared the tip of his nose with plaster like a fly's wing and made Carpenter Shi slice it off. Carpenter Shi whirled up the wind with his axe, listened for the moment, and sliced. All the plaster was gone, the nose was unharmed, and the man from Ying stood perfectly still and composed. Lord Yuan of Song heard about it, summoned Carpenter Shi, and said "Now do it for me." Carpenter Shi replied, "Time was when I could do my side and do the slice, but now, my partner has been dead for some time." (*Zhuangzi* 24/843)

#### NOTES

1. Zz 33/1112, trans. Graham 1986, p. 285.
2. Graham 1989, p. 76.

3. Zhuangzi's own position on "logic" is not without its own debaters. For a range of views, see Graham 1970 and 1989 and responses to Hansen and Nivison in Rosemont 1991; Hansen 1983, 1991, and 1992; Ivanhoe 1992; and Raphals 1992 and 1994.
4. Both texts present complex problems of dating and authorship. For discussion see the entries on the *Zhuangzi* and *Lüshi chunqiu* in Loewe 1993. The *Zhuangzi* passages are discussed below.
5. Graham's discussion of Hui Shi (1989, pp. 76–82 and 174–83) focuses on several encounters between Hui Shi and Zhuang Zhou in the *Zhuangzi* (Zz 24/48–51, Graham 1986, p. 124; 33/81–83 Graham 1986, p. 285; 33/69–74, Graham 1986 p. 283f.; and 17/87–91, Graham 1986 p. 123) and one in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (LSCQ 18/5). He also mentions two passages in the *Shuo yuan* (SY 11/4ab, Graham 1978, p. 444f.), and *Liezi* (Lie 5.1a, Graham 1989, pp. 79–80 and 1960, pp. 94–96). For further discussion, see Hansen 1993 and Kjellberg and Ivanhoe 1996.
6. See Zz 1/36, trans. Graham 1986, pp. 46–47; Zz 1/39, trans. Graham 1986, p. 47; Zz 2/74, trans. Graham 1986, p. 54; and Zz 5/220–21, trans. Graham 1986, pp. 82–83.
7. See Zz 17/605, trans. Graham 1986, p. 123; Zz 17/606–7, trans. Graham 1986, p. 123; Zz 18/614, trans. Graham 1986, pp. 123–24; Zz 24/838–40, trans. Graham 1986, p. 101; Zz 24/843f., trans. Graham 1986, p. 124; Zz 25/891f., trans. Graham 1986, pp. 153–54; Zz 26/936, trans. Graham 1986, p. 100; Zz 27/952–53, trans. Graham 1986, p. 102; and Zz 33/74–89, trans. Graham 1986, pp. 283–85.
8. Graham dates the Hui Shi passages to the late fourth or third century, and the *Tian xia* chapter to the second (Guan 1982, pp. 61–98; Graham 1969, pp. 27–29, 1986, and 1989, pp. 172–74):

Century	Section of the <i>Zhuangzi</i>	Chapter
4th	Inner Chapters (1–7) of Zhuangzi (c. 320 B.C.E.)	1, 2, 5
3rd	"School of Zhuangzi" (17–22)	17, 18
	"Ragbag Chapters" (23–27) by or closely related to Zhuangzi	24, 25, 26, 27
2nd	"Syncretist" chapters (15, 33, parts of 11, 12, 13, 14)	33

By contrast, Liu Xiaogan has argued that the *Zhuangzi* text is far less corrupt than Graham suggests (Liu 1987). Harold Roth dates the entire compilation to the second century, at the court of Liu An at about 130 B.C.E. (Roth 1991).

9. Lin 1996, pp. 25–26.
10. The *Lüshi chunqiu* passage ends: "The state is the greatest log" (18/5/11a–b), a remark that is not in the *Huainanzi*.
11. For reference to his impracticable law code, see LSCQ 18/5/11b and 21/1/7a.



12. On the issue of actual face-to-face debate, see Lloyd 1994 and 1996. I am indebted to Nathan Sivin for discussion of this issue. I am indebted to my colleague Christopher Callanan for extensive discussion of Richard Wilhelm's translations of these passages.
13. Xu You 許由 was a legendary sage who turned down offers of rule.
14. I have consulted Richard Wilhelm's German translation of the *Lüshi chungiu*.
15. Mao 251.
16. The next section, "Responding to Arguments" (18/7), presents six anecdotes about clever rejoinders to arguments, starting with the debate between Hui Shi and Bai Gui presented in the previous chapter (18/7/14a-b). Brief references to these debates also appear in chapter 13; as to references to Bai Gui, see (13/4/7b-8a) and Kuang Zhang (13/7/12b). In another passage, Kuang Zhang questions Hui Shi's method of study (21/5/8a-b).
17. Nivison 1991, p. 137.
18. Munro 1996, p. 193.
19. Deng Xi 鄧析 was an official in the state of Zheng during the sixth century. He developed a code of penal law, inscribed on bamboo tablets; he also had a reputation for raising objections and "turning wrong into right and right into wrong" (LSCQ 18/4/18a). According to an apocryphal story, he was executed by Prince Chan of Zheng for using his skills to undermine the law code promulgated by Prince Chan. The *Zuo zhuan* (Ding 9), however, states that he was executed some twenty years later by the minister Si Chuan 駟歎, who nevertheless continued to use the law code he developed. For discussion, see Knoblock, 1:165.
20. This translation is indebted to Knoblock 1:174.
21. 惠子蔽於辭而不知實。
22. In preparing the following translations from the *Han Feizi* I have consulted Liao 1939 (1:236, 1:240, 1:243 and 1:287-88).
23. Han Feizi also invoked Hui Shi in an argument that a ruler must compare what he sees and hears to get the real.

For further illustration, the men of Qi claimed to have seen the earl of the River; Master Hui remarked that the ruler had lost half the brains in the country. Its contrary is instanced by the starvation of Shu Shun by Shu Niu and the interpretation of Jing's customary law by Jiang Yi. (HF 9/518, trans. Liao 1:282)

24. HF 11/612, trans. Liao 2:27. Another passage gives an example: Mozi took three years to construct a wooden kite, which broke on the first day. His disciples praised his skill in making it fly. He replied that he was less skillful than the maker of the cross-bar for yoking oxen, who spends less than a morning on a bar that can pull a heavy burden for a long way and lasts for many years.

- Hearing about this, Master Hui said: "Mozi was exceedingly skillful, considering the construction of the cross-bar skilful and the construction of the wooden kite clumsy" (HF 11/625, trans. Liao 2:34).
25. For another translation, see Hightower 3.33, pp. 116-17.
  26. Xunzi adds two more names to this list: Confucius's disciple Zi Si 子思 and Meng Ko 孟軻 (X 15/6/3-16/6/13). For another translation of this passage, see Hightower 4.22, pp. 145-46.
  27. This passage is similar to LSCQ 18/5 (trans. Graham 1989, pp. 76-77). Two other references to Hui Shi appear in the *Huainanzi*. Chapter 11 describes an encounter between Hui Shi and Zhuang Zhou; chapter 19 relates Zhuangzi's mourning at the death of Hui Shi (19/342).
  28. Harbsmeier 1989, p. 304.
  29. A second reference to Hui Shi appears in the chapter "Miscellaneous Sayings" (SY 17), which recounts a conversation between Master Hui and a boatman who is taking Hui Shi to Liang to (he hopes) succeed the minister of Liang, who has just died (17/3b-4a).
  30. ZGC 16:543, trans. Crump 1970, p. 198.
  31. ZGC 16:545-46, Crump 1970, p. 190
  32. ZGC 22:804, trans. Crump 1970, p. 316
  33. ZGC 23:838, Crump 1970, p. 333
  34. In another chapter, after the death of King Hui of Wei, heavy snow fell and the heir's ministers urged him to delay the burial. They consult Hui Shi, who persuades the heir to delay the burial accordingly (ZGC 23:826, trans. Crump 1970, p. 308).
  35. Harbsmeier 1989, p. 294.
  36. Milder versions of Xunzi's criticisms recur in the *Hanshi waixhuan*, a text Harbsmeier finds lacking in humor, but not without instances of sarcastic wit. Similarly, he finds the *Shuo yuan* to contain elements of "Confucian wit" (p. 294). See also pp. 298-99 (*Lüshi chungiu*), 296-98 (*Zhanguo ce*), 299-303 (*Han Feizi*), and 303-5 (Hui Shi).

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