

Sounding as God's Name: Adorno on Music's Similarity to Language

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Abstract

The complex and tangled relationship between music and language has been a fundamental subject in the development of western music. Adorno coins the term “music’s similarity to language” to discuss this relationship and uses the configuration of “God’s Name” for explicating the unique form of music representation. This article contains three parts. The first part brings out Adorno’s distinction of “sign” and “image” in his *Dialectic of Enlightenment* through which the distinction between the “language of science” and the “language of art” emerge. The second part turns to *Aesthetic Theory*, in which Adorno argues that the aim of the language of art is to reveal the “non-identity” of “natural beauty”. The third part focuses on the language, which music is similar to, is not normal, everyday language. Instead it is a subclass of language related to the “proper name”, which can be extended to “God’s Name”. In Jewish tradition, a proper name has the power to call into existence the bearer of the name. Music, like proper names, obtains its absolute presence in sound; and like God’s Name, (as in the “Tetragrammaton”) it is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Because of the similarity to language, music possesses a unique “cognitive character”, which discloses the real knowledge of humanity.

Keywords: God’s Name, Humanity, Language, Music’s Similarity to Language, Tetragrammaton

以上帝之名鳴響： 阿多諾論音樂的類語言性

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摘 要

音樂和語言之間錯綜複雜的關係一直是西方音樂發展中的重要課題。阿多諾鍛造了「音樂的類語言性」這個詞來說明這種關係，並且使用「上帝之名」的結構來展現音樂的獨特表現形式。本文包含三個部分。第一部分探討阿多諾在《啟蒙辯證法》中對於「符號」和「圖像」的區分。透過這種區分出現了「科學的語言」和「藝術的語言」。第二部分根據《美學理論》，論述藝術語言的目的乃是要揭露「自然美」之中的「非同一性」。第三部分根據阿多諾指出，音樂並非類似於一般或是日常的語言，而是語言中的一個子類「專名」，還有其延伸「上帝之名」。在猶太教傳統中，專名具有呼喚其名稱擁有者的存在的力量。音樂既如同專名，在聲音中獲得其絕對的存在，又如同上帝之名（亦即「四字神名」），在開顯自身的同時也隱藏自身。因為這種類語言性，音樂才具有一種獨特的揭露人性真實知識的「認知特性」。

關鍵詞：上帝之名、人性、語言、音樂的類語言性、四字神名

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