



# The Difference Between Musical Image and Linguistic Image as the Manifestation of the World Will

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**Abstract.** Schopenhauer attribute the origin of all things in the world to the “Will”, while the phenomenal world is the representation of it, so art is the advanced form in all representations. Music and language art are both effective intermediaries for the World Will to show itself. This paper will use the methods of metaphysics, structuralism and analytical philosophy to discuss the similarities and differences between musical image and linguistic image when they are undertaking this task. And this paper asserts that musical image is much pure than linguistic image, but it also benefits from this complexity, language can achieve more goals.

**Keywords:** Music · Language · Literature · Will · Image · Schopenhauer

## 1 Introduction

Schopenhauer attributed the origin of all things in the world to the “Will” and——“Will is both the actual existence of all things in the world itself, and also the only inner essence of each phenomenon” [1]. He believes that behind the representation of all the natural things, whether human beings, animals, plants or inorganic substances, it’s the Will as the thing-in-itself, regardless of whether or not the representation has cognition, thinking or motivation. Or it can be said that the “World Will” forms everything through the process of “representation”. This rhetoric is somewhat similar to the Chinese Taoist philosophy theory that “Tao beard all the world”.

The representation of the “World Will” turns into various forms of the phenomenal world, so art is the advanced form in the representation of the phenomenal world. In Heidegger’s words, “Earth” effectively enlightens itself through art. What is the difference between musical art and language art that belong to the same “advanced representations” in the enlightening movement of the world’s noumenon? Firstly this paper should analyze this problem by distinguishing the manifestation forms as pure music and pure language, and such as the manifestation forms of the complexes of them.

## 2 The Acceptance of Pure Musical Image and Linguistic Image

When we talk about music, we should first define it as “pure music”. But most of what we encounter in reality is a combination of “music-language”. So it is inevitable to examine this complexity.

When dealing with the world, the people of ancient times tried to invent a variety of tools, among which music was the most easily discovered and used. By observing the sound of birds, animals, insects and spring water, human beings can easily imitate and reorganize the processing relationship of musical notes. So music is also called the “pre-language”. We know that music is anti-Logos, or rather, pre-Logos; while language is a typical Logos production which has lots of rational elements within it. Then something strange must happen when these two things of a very different nature are superimposed on the same dimension of time.

Schopenhauer believes that music is very different from all the other things in the phenomenal world. It is the most direct embodiment of the Will, and he think that music is the language of the world. “If music is regarded as the expression of the world, then it is the highest level of universal language... Music provides the deepest core of all images, in another word, the heart of things” [2]. Since music is a direct product of the Will, and our grasp of the Will can usually only be done through intuitive sensibility, or even to say that ordinary sensibility is not enough, we need to initiate as much of the unnamed irrationalities of high energy as possible. Here is the magical of music: it can't be said, but people can grasp some common truths by intuition. And for the understanding of the language is more troublesome, it is regarded by most people as something that can be completely comprehend, they think that it is a clear, bright thing. But it's not that simple in fact.

The musical image is a moving image of time, it is essentially the pure intuition of the heart. It cannot be discussed, but can only be guessed, and the artistic conception of music can be talk about, because it contains not only the thing itself, it's not a simplex thing, it is the extension of the mind of the subject —The subject brings many outsiders into its own perception realm, constructing a situation of “I absorbed others”. In this kind of intersubjectivity, the intellects were identifying the speakable organizational elements, and bringing the unspeakable elements by the way (though which is still not exactly).

The image of language [3]<sup>1</sup> is usually considered to be clear, by Saussure's semiotic theory symbols it is "signified-signifier", just like when we mention the words such as "water", "sky" or "pain", people think they know their reference clearly. But on careful consideration, that's not true. On the one hand, our understanding of the object comes from our interaction with it, in another word, the interaction of wills. On the other hand, it comes from existing knowledge. But knowledge is something external to the subject's experience. We often mistake the latter for the truth, and put the former in a subordinate position, so that the knowledge becomes a hegemony which invades the original comfortable realm of the perception. Helplessly, the subject swings between intuitive sensibility and external hegemony, either tending to be a submissive fool or a painful tear-breaker.

In fact, most people do not take these two extreme paths, but rather compromise. When facing the hegemony of knowledge, people are mainly inclined to submit to it, in the same time they are less inclined to do some active or unconscious struggles more or less—when we learn a text, the ready-made knowledge repeatedly gives us a general convergence of direction, we in repeated practicing them and take the sample of the greatest common divisor, finally this "common divisor" became the standard answer. Knowledge cuts, packs and assembles minds with boundaries. As time passes, we no longer need an external force to automatically complete this set of procedures. But the initiative of the subject will always forces us to secretly cram some of our preferences into these knowledge "containers": for example, when we read the Romeo and Juliet stories, where the most prominent literary images are "man" "beauty", "hatred", "family" or "love". Then some readers can imagine by their own temper: assuming that Juliet is an unknown hermaphrodite, then this love may be more wonderful. That is to say, aesthetic subjects can secretly blur the outline of the concept of standardization and infiltrate their own will into the acceptance event.

Then again, there is a more extreme case involved. When a set of languages depict rigid laws, does it mean that the image of these languages is completely determined and mandatory? No, there is no container in the world that is so dense and airless that not a drop of water can penetrate. Law clauses appear to be signified symbols with definite and undisputed meaning. However, different subjects have different understandings of words, grammar and language context. Therefore, no matter how clever the law clause is,

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<sup>1</sup> A definition needs to be clarified here. When we talk about musical art, its carrier is obviously "musical imagery", while when we look at literary art, its medium is "linguistic image", that is, a fragment of words, which seems to be rhetorical problems here. When we mention the concept of "language" everyday, it is naturally understood as a practical and definite form of social consciousness; and "literature" is an art form specially designed to express thoughts and emotions. So, is there really an essential difference between language and literature? In Heidegger's opinion, that "language itself is poetry in the fundamental sense", that is, language itself is a media representation that brings the existence to the uncovering state, which itself is a very "artistic". (See Heidegger: *The Road in the Woods*, the Commercial Press, 2020, p. 67.) In Heidegger's opinion, the narrow sense of "poetry" (or other artistic literary forms) is closest to the essential meaning of "language". To take an inappropriate example, when monkeys see humans communicating by using long passages of language, they must regard it as a bizarre and magical gesture. Therefore, when we talk about "literary image" and "linguistic image", there is no essential difference between them.

when it is actually implemented, it requires lawyers to do an interpretation, and sometimes different lawyers will have fierce disputes about it. But there is no denying that there is a difference between the language as the clause of law and the language as poetry for presenting the truth, the latter is light, while the former is rigid.

Marx once said: “The name of things is completely external to the nature of things. Even if I knew a man’s name is Jacob, I know nothing about him.”<sup>2</sup> This statement is not about Kant’s agnostic, but the perversion between ready-made knowledge and inner experience. Kant believes that human sensibility is anti-truth. In fact, when talking about linguistic images, the agnostic nature of the object is no longer important, then the important task is: what are we going to do with these ready-made “containers”?

### 3 Using a Comprehensive Acceptance Method: Artistic Conception Experience

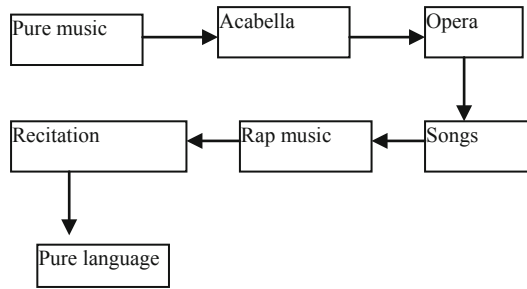
Another better way is to use the artistic conception. First of all, the artistic conception of the language is not the context. Context is like a bond between words, like the solvent in a solution—the solvent determines how the solute particles work together. When a group of solutes is put into another solvent, they will change the rules of their interactions with each other. And what is the artistic conception? Artistic conception is like throwing a bunch of assembled boxes into the vast ocean, so the value of these boxes becomes less important at that moment, what is more important at that moment is that aesthetic subject can float and sink in the ocean in countless ways. Of course, after becoming a free fish, the subject still collides with those containers in the water, but it doesn’t matter, the vastness of the sea and the freedom of the “moi” is the most important purpose.

Therefore, the focus of language art is on artistic conception rather than image. For literature, the artistic conception is deeper than the image, and it carries a heavier will. From image to artistic conception is an expansion process of will movement; For music, however, it is just the opposite way: the image of music is an absolutely free experience of the mind, while the artistic conception of music is bond up with many realistic factors. For music, the process from image experience to artistic conception experience is an “indecent degradation” of the will movement. But if the music is to compare with the language, the downgraded music artistic conception is still freer than the upgraded language artistic conception. After all, the musical image is less disciplined than logos.

In this way, when music and language are combined together<sup>3</sup>, linguistic image is a kind of narrow domain activity to music experience, while music is a kind of expansion activity to language. For example, the songs with words are heavier than the pure music, and the poetry sung is livelier than the read dryly. We can divide the degree of the

<sup>2</sup> Marx: *Das Kapital*, Volume 1, Chapter 3: Money or Commodity Circulation. People’s Publishing House, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the word “combine”, music and language are formally a physical overlap, rather than the chemical conception “compound”. They have clear boundaries between each other, but the language itself can have the tone (even if it has not yet been recited by the vocal medium). And the effect of this combination is obviously much more than  $1 + 1 = 2$ , something magical will happen to their overlap.



**Fig. 1.** From pure music to pure language.

“music-language” complex, and if pure music and pure language are located at the two poles of the degree relationship of the complex. Then add some other composite forms to them may be like: (see “Fig. 1”).

From the perspective of view, the language is discrete: vocabulary.

From the perspective of duration, language is discrete: Words are obviously discrete, they break apart and alienate each other, they are relatively closed as packed boxes (of course, the texture of these boxes can never be absolutely solid, they sometimes leak), they stick together by context, just like a string of beads strung together. And the nature of music is obviously “during” (In the words of Bergsen). From a philosophical perspective, language is a slice of the world, a fragment of the mind and the will. And music is the complete mind or the complete will. Because of this, language often expresses feelings rather than intentions. Express willingness is a very difficult thing, and it usually requires metaphysical contemplation or clarity of perception rather than the borrowing of physical tools.

Of course there are exceptions, that is, “one word meant another”, in Chinese literary criticism it is said “when you got the meaning you can through the words away”. The artistic conception of different categories of literature and art can be distinguished, according to the internal degree of “stagnancy-lightness”, which can be arranged as: reportage, fiction, prose, poetry, etc. Among them, the artistic conception of poetry is the most spiritual, which can lead to dreams and irrationality. It can be seen that when the artistic conception of language is very subtle, it can also clarify the truth.

Language also has other “bad qualities”, it is often “sensationalist”. When the music and the language work together, people often mistakenly think that the music is a supporting role of the language, think that music is only to enhance the atmosphere, so they focus on the language arrogantly. Therefore, in popular songs, there is a phonetic creation routine of melody, that is, the composers often modify the spoken tone of a certain sentence so that it becomes a song paragraph. For example, in the national anthem of China, the tune of “rise, people who do not want to be slaves” is almost exactly like the spoken pronunciation of this sentence.

The fundamental reason for this is the laziness—When a set of uncertain things and well-defined things are present at the same time, people automatically want to grab the latter first. That means people always choose the path which is easier. Therefore, in the music with both words and music, creators often make an artificial match between the

intensity of these two kinds of images—where the intensity of music is high, it happens to be semantic key point. This is a create skill to mastering the aesthetic mind of the public under the premise of the use of music will energy to achieve the signified purpose of words, which just like Zhuge Liang's "borrow the east wind". In fact, music is self-contained, it does not serve literature, and this aesthetic psychology has led to music being misunderstood for a long time, and those conceptions like "narrative music" and "title music" may have come from here.

What is easy to ignore is that language has the shading characteristic which music does not have. Music is a kind of "being" that opens itself completely. It is ambiguous precisely because it does not point to value judgments. It is just there, flowing freely; language is the slice of the world, it can put the bright side toward you to give you instructions, it can also deliberately hide the light and let you to misunderstanding. For example, when we tell others about an experience, we can choose some statements which are not wrong but deliberately misleading, so that under the cunning of language, the listener goes in a bad direction under the "real statement". This is called "Chun-Qiu Writing method" in journalism theory in China, or normally called verbal trick.

Thus, the mood of music often does not match the lyrics, such as Blues music, its melody is clearly light and beating, reminiscent of a lively mood; but its lyrics are melancholy, "please don't leave," and "Oh Lord, please guide me" and so on. When early Black Americans sang blues songs, their aesthetic motivation was perhaps what the melody was, and the lyrics pointed to the actual suffering of their existence, so here is a fracture. It is difficult to define whether this "dislocation" is a good or a bad thing, it may lead to the confusion or even hysteria of the aesthetic subject; or it may be used to reach to an interesting playful effect, such as sarcasm. In this view that the so-called "title music" could be impossible, but we should remember that title can only be the attribute of literature. After the overlap, music and literature is still unique, they just walk side by side, support each other, and not intermixed.

Of course, this is not contradictory with Heidegger's view that "language will reveal the existence of the being". Because Heidegger chose language as the reference system of representing the Earth, we can also use music as the first discipline reference system when researching the problem of artistic manifestation of the truth.

One question worth saying separately is the difference between alphabetic characters and hieroglyphics. We know that languages have the function of signified-signifier, and here need a symbolic intermediary among them. Alphabetic words have two dimensions: sound and meaning, while hieroglyphics have an extra "image" dimension based on this. Take Hanzi for example, so is the image of Hanzi a visual abstract imitation? It's not. Some Hanzi are indeed imitated the objects profiles of real life, but some Hanzi are logical symbols concentrated together in a small space according to the disciplines like upper and bottom, left and right, etc. This type is more especially seen in simplified Hanzi. So here is the problem, besides "sound" and "meaning-signifier", Hanzi also has a hidden "image-signifier", which may be different from its meaning-signifier. Therefore, Hanzi can be easily used for password games.

There is another very important point about language art is that its artistic conception can be multi-dimensional. The experience of music itself is only about beauty, which is pure sensibility, and the artistic conception of music may be expanded to the level

of value judgement to a certain extent, such as the emotional cognition of happiness or sorrow. However, the subject's aesthetic appreciation for pure music usually does not extend to the fields of ethics, scientific cognition or other fields. In language art, all the feasibility of knowledge, emotion and willingness are included. Thus, the experience of music is generally "does or does not beautiful? How beautiful it is?" or "sad or happy"; while the experience of language art can also be about ideology or ethical good and evil. In this way, the language art carries more practical value, which is more like the art form serves the mature and composed people, while the temperament of music is more in line with the vigorous and reckless lives.

## 4 Conclusion

Whether music or language art, they are the media forms of revealing the truth. The key difference between music and literature lies mainly in the dimension of the form of the material. Because of the difference in forms, the manifestations of the World Will presented by them are different. In general, there is no discrimination between art forms, but there is a difference in the transparency of the will they take. Music is obviously much pure than language, but also because of the complexity of the language, it can achieve more flowering goals.

**Authors' Contributions.** This paper is independently completed by Qiumin Chen.

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