A New Research on the Theory of Music Imitation

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Abstract: The theory of music imitation lacks a role in clarifying facts involved in terms of the content and expression of music. Many discussions are seemingly superficial and fail to explore the essence of the theory of music imitation. In fact, Plato pointed out that music could only refer to itself; hence, it failed to achieve imitation effects without the help of language or other representational mediums. Aristotle put forward that music essentially expresses emotion by imitating the motion of certain properties. Moreover, the theory of tone painting emerged during the 18th century and posited that people could view concepts directly through music. Although theorists frequently used them, the first two methods were independent from imitation. In reality, the theory of expression and the theory of tone painting adopted the core of imitation theory, which was seemingly the best method for solving difficulties when explaining the connection between the outside word and music, which is a non-representational medium. Poetry, music, and dance may share the same origin from the diachronic perspective. At the same time, they may be differentiated, and grouped into several branches. In summary, the imitative understanding of music became a necessity, whereas the theory of tone painting resisted this status of differentiation.

Keywords: Theory of Music Imitation; Movement; Emotion; Theory of Tone Painting

1. INTRODUCTION

Imitation theory is a form of discussion toward the occurrence and content of art, which gradually declined after the introduction of German classical esthetics to modern times. Kant believed that: in the pure appreciation judgment, the joy from beautiful art, which was different from the joy from nature, had a direct correlation with interest. The former imitated the nature to a deceptive status, and thus it pretended or it was considered as the effect of nature beauty (Kant, 2002b). Imitating nature is unrelated to the *art of beauty*. However, art exerts its effect through the unique artificial values of human beings instead of an appendage of nature. Hegel clearly put forward clearly that "the purpose of art was no longer the imitation towards the pure form of reality, which could only generate skillful tricks instead of artistic works in all cases."(Kant & Deng, 2002)

The examples that these authors presented were related to music, the story of which was in relation to imitating a nightingale's song. When the song is discovered to be imitated by a person instead of a nightingale:the beautiful singing begins to be unbearable. This is because the natural beauty here we interest in should be the indeed natural beauty. If we discover art only, we will feel that we are deceived. At that time, we find that the natural beauty will disappear at once, and we even cannot appreciate any beauty from it (Kant, 2002a). Hegel agreed with Kant's opinion and elaborated as follows: We would be soon bored with the man who imitates the nightingale's song perfectly .What we realize there is neither the free expression of nature, nor the art work of art. It is only a kind of trick …. In general, the joy from skilled imitation is limited. For human beings, it is more joyful to gain pleasure from their own creations (Georg & Zhu, 1997a). The pure imitation of nature songs (music) neglects the subjective creativity of humans, which entirely lacks artistic value. "The true value of music had been greatly ignored by the critics during the Middle Ages and the 18th century, and we should thank Kant for his efforts on recognizing the greatest art in his time."(Heidegger et al., 2015) If we only classify music as worthless imitation, then this concept is evidently contrary to the great achievement and infection of music. The reason behind this notion is that music has always been regarded as a form of imitation art. However, in fact, Kant considered music different from the art that was on the premise of the concept. For example, if one intends to draw a picture that lies within the premise of the concept of *horse*, this concept will stipulate the perceived image of a horse. Hence, "the fantasia without titles or even the whole music without lyrics" only involves the formality of free beauty, whereas beautiful music is unrelated to the external world. In addition, Hegel agreed that music itself is a romantic abstract art that reflects the mind and has no direct connection with the external world. Therefore, even if people imitate the songs of birds, then doing so exerts no impact on the abstract nature of music itself. In other words, the problem lies in the artistic *creativity* of birds instead of the music medium itself. Kant stated that, We may be confused of our sympathy towards the little joyful animals with their beautiful song. If we imitate these songs perfectly and accurately (as people sometimes could imitate the songs of nightingales), it would be of less interest to our ears (Georg & Zhu, 1997b). The logic behind this statement is that stereotyped objects (i.e., bird song) violate the free nature of appreciation, which fails to stimulate imagination. Hence, it ultimately leaves humans feeling bored, even if birds' emotions can be distinguished from their melodies. In the example of the nightingale's song, Kant and

Hegel criticized the object of imitation instead of imitation. If the object of imitation is a great musician, then this problem would be solved. Many perspectives provide the view that once imitation theory is specifically applied to music, then it would be relatively incompatible. The particularity of the medium of music consistently renders obscurity to the discussion of imitation theory. Kant replaced the fundamental problem of musical imitation with musical source. The inherent reality is that the bird song is an imitation of the nightingale's song instead of what the nightingale's song imitates. Studies on the origin of imitation avoid the discussion of music itself, which may be the general state of *ordinary people*. We will never hear many sounds first, instead, we would hear the sound of rolling wheels, the sound of motorbike, and so on. We would hear the marching regiments, the whistling wind, the drumming of woodpeckers and the crackling of flames. To "hear pure sounds" requires very complicated technical training. We hear the sound of motorcycles and cars first, which proves the phenomenon that the existence of things in this world exists before "perception" … What is intrinsically comprehended is what exists to be understood (Bao & Zhang, 2001). The reason why the abovementioned statement is considered imitation is that Kant and Hegel hear the nightingale instead of music. German classical aesthetics refutes the theory of imitation but does not criticize the medium of music itself in reality. The history of the theory of imitation is full of such instances and several theories of music imitation. However, they frequently seem to be merely ambiguous and undefined. The reason lies in the complexity of the theory of music imitation. In other words, the content of music imitation at all times and all over the world is relatively different and unable to decide which one is right. A few examples include music that imitates animal calls (Democritus); mathematical and celestial operation (Pythagoras); concept and language (Plato), sports (Aristotle), and emotion (Rousseau). In their specific expositions, these theories frequently mention one another. The concept of imitation is relatively clear in painting and literature but relatively chaotic in music. However, determining the essence of these imitation theories would be less difficult if past discussions are analyzed from the perspective of medium.

2. PLATO'S THEORY OF MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

Tracing the source, the systematic discussion on the theory of music imitation may be derived from Plato, who used extensive space to prove it

in his works called *The Law*. Although his opinions stimulated scholars, they continued to take Plato's views out of context and even understood his opposing views as positive ones, which seemed to contradict the original meaning. Plato first proposed that joy from successful imitation is derived from an accurate reproduction of the original object. However, when an artwork fails to generate harm or take effects, authentic and vivid reproduction would then produce attraction, which refers to a form of *pleasure* when combining other elements. Pleasure produced by music is unrelated to good or evil. As a result, a pleasant sensation could not be taken as a moral standard for judging music. It is, however, only an *accurate* imitation for measuring its effectiveness. Plato overlooked the consideration of music that pursued pleasure as a *serious genre* or proper music in a sense. In his opinion, true music should accurately reproduce or copy a concept with moral significance: Everyone must admit that all music creations are from imitation and reproduction …. He has to identify what it is because he does not know its nature; he also has to know what it tries to do and what it actually reproduces. That means he has no idea whether the author has reached his goals correctly. So anyone who wants to be an intelligent judge of an artistic representation (painting, music, and every other field) should know three things: first, he must know what is to be represented; second, how it is correctly replicated; third, whether the language, tune and melody used in the art works reflect the moral values of their archetypes. We should mention the particular difficulties in the field of music .Since authors use unaccompanied words, the melody is separated from the tune and motion. What is more, because they adopt string and wind instruments when there are no singers, the tune and lyrics are deprived from the melody .Hence, it is more difficult to know what rhythm and harmony represent and what is valuable when they imitate and reproduce something. The outcome is inevitable: This practice caters to the taste of village idiots. The desire for speed and skills (which seem to reproduce a wild animal's roar) makes the employ of wind instruments and seven-stringed harps different from those used in accompanying dancing and singing. The use of a single instrument is in fact a pure performance but not an art (Xue, 2016). Music without language will certainly imitate certain natural sounds, such as the cry of a wild animal, which is the practice of fools (the views of Kant and Hegel seemingly lack innovativeness). However, if we do not imitate nature, then music without language would be entirely disconnected from the world, which contradicts music as proposed by Plato. In his works entitled *Phaeblus*, Plato stated that, "the sounds which are soft and clear will produce a single and pure tone. Its

beauty is not opposable, nor is derived from the relation to other things. The pleasure they generate is also unique."(Moloughney, 1994) In other words, although these sounds generate pleasure, they do not belong to artistic music. From the perspective of musical history, however, ancient Greece indeed appeared pure instrumental music derived from the adoption of fast trochee and iambic rhythmic "speed," bringing great fluidity for ancient Greek. Archilochus carried out a technological revolution which had an incalculable influence. Before his revolution, every note of music was inseparable from the lyrics. After that, there were all kinds of short improvisations among songs. Presumably, Nome's musical accompaniment came after the lyrics, and several instrumental solos appeared between strophes or paragraphs (Liao, 2006).In Gorgias, Plato again criticizes such *pleasure* in music: Is it possible to satisfy a lot of souls without considering what is the best? Shall we pursue nothing but only pleasure? I think playing the flute belongs to this category, so do some same industries …. It is obvious. Socrates argued that its purpose tends to feel pleasure and to satisfy the audience (Zeng, 2009). This form of music, which only pursues pleasure, could only be called *flattery music*, that is, it satisfies only the heart of the audience. One who plays the flute is unable to sing with lyrics at the same time. Hence, one becomes scolded. Without language, music could not be imitated. As a result, the ideal of doing good is eliminated, which renders music "as *a bad thing which is full of pleasure and charm.*" In short, given that music is called art, it should have a clear objective to reproduce concepts, and the creator should have a specific external purpose to exceed the artistic medium. However, this purpose should be achieved through imitation. Pleasure without purpose, which Kant calls *beauty of freedom*, is completely incompatible with art. Music, as an art, should be represented with purpose instead of emphasis on the pleasure of the medium itself. In fact, the category of music in ancient Greece, which includes several literary works, is relatively different from that of today. Taking lyric poetry as an example, Plato proposed that good music should guide people in performing good deeds, whose content should lead children to imitate to become good people. Music teachers use the similar method to impart self-restraint to the young people, discouraging them from doing evil. When they learn to play the harp, teachers teach them lyric poetries of good poets, which make their hearts become familiar with rhythm and melody with the accompaniment of the harp. By this method, they become more and more civilized and fair, being able to communicate, behave and regulate better, because the regulation of rhythm and harmony is fundamental to their whole lives (Zhang, 2001). In

ancient Greece, lyric poetries and harps were inseparable. The great masters of kanzono, who were active in the 7th century, found that their simple structures of strophes (such as antithesis sentences and short singing strophes) were based on the principles of pure instrumental music. The only explanation for the double rhythmic pause in pentameter and the rhythmic foot change appeared in a line of a strophe is derived from the internal possibility of instrumental music, augmenting the rhythmic units by the means of lengthening, shortening, and pausing. The reason for this view is that, the ancient Greek with numerous theoretical literature works does not have writing rules of lyric poetry …. In ancient times, poetics and metrics belonged to the part of the science of music, but not the category of language and poetry, whose practitioners were musicians and poets (Zhu, 1963). In other words, the concept of music in ancient Greece was extremely complex, which included not only music but also language. In Plato's opinion, language played a critical decisive role in music. In this manner, music would present its imitation capacity only when combined with representational mediums. Evidently, even appropriate happiness as a result of music and language may lack sufficient power to imitate (reach) the highest philosophy. Plato proposed that music educates guardians by develop a habit, cultivates a kind of non-knowledge sprit of harmony with the tune, fosters a sense of proportion and elegance with rhythm, and also develops the similar quality with the story language and the language closer to the reality. But music does not involve the study of seeking goodness (Gu, 2014a). Music should be set as a ladder for explore a fundamental goodness or idea. Pure music tends to satisfy pure sensory pleasure and enjoyment, whereas the so-called Platonic theory of music imitation is only an effect produced by the mixture of music and other mediums, which present difficulty in achieve the highest idea. This discussion presents the entire appearance of Platonic theory of music imitation, which is based on language, because instrumental music without language is regarded as a non-artistic sound with a pleasant sensation. This theory of music imitation denotes, in fact, the theory of language imitation (Wang, 2002b).

3. ARISTOTLE'S MUSIC MOTION THEORY

Compared with Plato's imitation theory, which mixed mediums with language, Aristotle directly discussed the imitative value of the medium of music, which is derived from the hypothesis of four factors proposed by Aristotle in *Metaphysics and Physics*. In other words, understanding an object

based on four aspects, namely, material, form, power, and purpose, is necessary for ensuring its existence. Out of the four, form refers to essence. In terms of music, material refers to sound, whereas form pertains to rhythm and melody. Its power and purpose are to convey feelings and meaning. Aristotle continued to insist on his imitation theory and briefly mentioned in *Poetics* that music was an imitative art based on the mediums of rhythm and tone. In *Problems*, he further explained that rhythm and tone of music were motions, which could convey moral qualities, such as human movement. Aristotle had eliminated Plato's theory of mixed medium imitation and further explored the mystery of music medium imitation. In fact, Aristotle's theory of music imitation is fundamentally different from that of Plato, who emphasized that music should be combined with a representational medium to generate imitative power. For Aristotle, however, rhythm and melody were *the closest imitation of reality*, which directly reflected anger and gentleness, courage and temperance, and all opposing qualities and temperaments. The rationale is that … musical melody itself is the imitation of character. Different musical melodies of different natures will cause different moods and attitudes of the audience. For example, some mixed music makes people sad and serious while some unconfined and harmonious music makes people weak and soft …. The same goes for rhythm. Some are calm while some are exciting. And in the exciting rhythm, some are vulgar or noble (Wang, 2002a). This imitation of characters or psychological states equips music with effective characteristics that differ from those of other artistic mediums. This concept is called the originator of the theory of expression. In *Politics*, Aristotle focused on the following question: Most people today learn and practice music for entertainment, but music is originally designed for education .Human nature seeks not only for labor, but also leisure .Leisure is the sole origin of all lives. If both labor and leisure are necessary, leisure is preferable to labor, and is the aim of labor. The movement it causes in the soul is relaxation, and we gain relaxation from this agreeable movement. Yet leisure itself can bring enjoyment, happiness, and extreme relaxation. This is not suit for the busy ones, but will be gained by the idle ones. The happiness of the kindest is the purest, which is derived from the noblest thing. Hence, it is obvious to set some education courses for leisure. The above education and learning are set for its own range while the necessary education of labor is not for its own range. Therefore, music is classified into education, which is not a necessity nor a practical thing since it does not have such quality…. because we do not realize its function. Thus, the rest may be the amusement in leisure time, which obviously is

the original intention of setting up music courses. Music is considered as a means of amusement for the freeman …. There should be an education, based on which, the children of citizens are taught to live neither for utility nor necessity, but for noble and free sentiments (Gu, 2014b). Aristotle postulated that music was set for relaxation or pleasure and that music could change leisure into *enjoyment, happiness, and extreme pleasure*. In addition, music evidently differs from painting and literature, which set goals for *other external things*. It has no practicality but aims at *its own range*. Music is neither necessary nor practical. The general consideration is that this form of artistic theory of self-discipline has emerged during the time of Kant, which was evident in the abovementioned arguments of Plato and Aristotle. Interestingly, the musical purity of Aristotle was derived not from the abstraction of music medium, which could not imitate specific external things, but from the specific ways that people felt, which differed from the concept of Kant. Both melody and singing of music are the most pleasant thing for every person .Music, as a matter for expressing feelings, has entered people's communication and relaxation activities reasonable …. All the pleasures which are beneficial and innocuous are not only conducive to man's ultimate end, but also bring relief to them People often relax themselves only for the sake of enjoying the lightness and joy alone (Wang, 2002c). Music, whether accompanied by language or not, can bring people into a state of pleasure and relaxation. However, the sensory pleasure caused by music will not bring real indulgence, because it is only a form of imitation or fiction, such that the *physical (sensory) pleasure* that it generates will not take place directly. Although its happiness may be contrary to moderation, it maintains itself in the realm of the soul. In this manner, given that art (imitation) avoids indulgence or temperance in the flesh, then the boundary between music and other arts will be eliminated, though they are nearly of the same purpose. In Nicomak's *Ethics*, Aristotle mentioned painting and music in the same breath: Temperance may be only bodily pleasures, or even bodily pleasures do not require entire temperance. For example, those who prefer visual pleasure, such as color, image, painting, etc., are not moderate or indulgent. Although it is believed that this kind of pleasure should be presented in its own way, being excessive and inferior. The same is true of hearing. No one considers that a person who is too keen on music and opera is indulgent or moderate (Zhu, 1980). This explanation is relatively different from that of Plato who neglected the indulgence brought by art, because art could avoid this kind of problem. In terms of the form of expression, Aristotle acknowledged the specificity of music. However, he argued that, in contrast to other arts, music had no

direct connection with the body, which confuses music with other arts. In this sense, this concept is the result of Baumgarton's *aesthetic* thinking. When classifying representational and non-representational arts, music is generally classified as non-representational. Dewey argued that, "Aristotle, who presented the classical form of representational art, at least avoided divisional dualism. He conveyed a deeper conceptual understanding towards imitation, which was more intelligently. Then, he declared that music was the most representational one in all arts — this art was concluded by some modern theorists into the non-representational category. He did not foolishly think that music reproduced the sounds of birds' chirping, cows' lowing, or a stream's singing. He considered that music recreates the impressions of emotion and feeling through sound in the context of combat, sadness, triumph, and sexual excitement when seeing the objectives. Representational representation included all the natures and values of any possible aesthetic experience."(Miao, 2016b) Dewey summarized Aristotle's opinions as music that imitates the mind, which overemphasizes the connection between music and emotion. In fact, Aristotle also proposed that music was only for the purpose of *itself* and was unrelated to any external objects. However, it could express characters and emotions, which was evidently contradictory. Aristotle attributed this power of music to the effect of imitation. The reason underlying the influence of music influence on emotion is its imitation toward emotion, which became *the most realistic imitation*. Meanwhile, the purity of music mediums excluded external objects, even emotions, which was the forerunner of Hans Lick's view of "emotional expression being not musical content." Furthermore, Hans Lick proposed that: music can only express the "das Dynamische" of emotions. Music can imitate the following movements of physical motions: fast, slow, strong, weak, rising and falling. However, movements are just a kind of property or an aspect of emotion, but not the emotion itself (Miao, 2016c). In his works called *The Problem*, Aristotle put forward that: Among all the things we feel, only the one that is heard is endowed with moral character. This is because music is given moral character even it has no words at all …. The movements in response to the sounds we feel and follow are similar to the moral character in tempo and in the order of high and low pitch (Gao, 2005). Hans Lick explicitly rejected the emotional imitation theory of music, whereas Aristotle, who founded music on the same theory basis of motion imitation, believed that music imitated emotions and characters. In other words, whether emotion is imitated is only a subjective judgment. In fact, according to their views, music is essentially a pure imitation toward motion, whereas emotions or

characters experienced from musical motions are only a result of the associative thinking of listeners. Scholars believed that green means hope, and red means passion, with emotion excluded from the representation of color. Therefore, Aristotle's theory of music imitation is essentially based on the imitation of certain motion attributes, whereas the so-called emotion imitation is only a subjective feeling of motion imitation. In this manner, Hans Lick's view seems relatively old. Compared with Plato's music imitation theory, which is based on language, Aristotle's motion imitation theory is closer to the essence of music.

4. TONE PAINTING THEORY

The core of music imitation theory lies in the connection between music and external concepts. Plato believed that music imitated concepts through language, whereas Aristotle argued that music implied emotions through movement. In addition, a special imitation theory, which is called tone painting theory, is prevalent in the west. On the one hand, it acknowledges the abstractness of music medium; on the other hand, it posits that music could achieve the same representative effect of painting, that is, to *see* a concept through the way of *listening.* In the Introduction, this study presented that Kant and Hegel criticized the aspect of music imitating the sound of nature as a low level of tone painting theory. However, the most unique part is that it directly reveals a visual feeling, which is similar to viewing paintings through music without imitating its natural sounds effects. Emerging during the 18th century, this theory may be related to the rise of empiricism and symbolism. In his works called *New Theory of Sight*, Berkeley pointed out that: based on the medium of light and color, other different ideas could also be implied in the mind. But hearing also has this indirect effect, because it could not only find out its natural sounds, but also implies the ideas of space, figures and movements in people's mind through the medium of hearing, as well as the ideas expressed through the literature (Yang, 1980). In the 19th century, Baudelaire further proposed that all forms of arts were interactive, transformable, and interlinked. "If the arts could not replace each other, at least they could borrow new powers from each other."(Miao, 2016a) Represented by Qian Zhongshu, the Chinese academic circle typically explains this phenomenon as *Synesthesia*, which includes visual metaphors, or associations caused by music. In his works called The Northern Forum, Qian provided the following example: When the music is resounding, people are touched and

their mood run high; when the music is sad, people feel upset and depressed; when the music stops, silence is better than cry; elegant sounds will make people feel comfortable and pleasing. Kong Yingda explained the substance of a chapter in *The Book of Rites and Justice* as follows: "the sound is so touching that it could encourage people to imagine what it looks like."(Guan, 2017). In fact, tone painting theory is fundamentally different from synesthesia, which conforms more with *Anders Streben*, which was proposed by the English philosopher Pater. In his collection called *The Renaissance* in 1877, Pater discussed this phenomenon in detail, where he defined *Anders Streben* as the tendency of art to *get rid of its own limitations*: the "most beautiful music is more likely to form some shapes or some pictorial quality."(Pingyuan, 2011) Additionally, Pater mentioned that *Anders Streben* did not refer to a mere figure of speech. Compared with painting, how then does music express its external material objects? Kirk proposed three methods in his works called *Language of Music*. First, direct imitation refers to the imitation of objects that may produce a sound with a fixed pitch, such as a cuckoo's voice, a shepherd's flute, or a hunter's horn. The second method was approximate imitation, which refers to the imitation of an object that produced a sound without a fixed pitch, such as thunder, the sound of a running stream, or the creaking of a tree branch. The third method was suggestion or symbolization, which denotes or symbolizes physical objects identified purely by sight through music, such as flashes, clouds, or mountains.(Wang, 1998) Although both are related to tone painting theory, musicians, and aestheticians criticized the first two theories many times, whereas the third theory presents the most characteristic technique of tone painting. However, Kirk perceived that these theories were full of contradiction and stated that painting and music were similar and different at the same time. In this regard, such a similarity indicates that music could present painting-like vision, whereas this difference implies that music "was not equipped with the ability of direct communication." Without the help of titles or other means, the object to be conveyed could not be identified. In a sense, Kirk recaptured Plato's tradition. Moreover, Berlioz is also extremely contradictive. He believed that: music imitation refers to describe or paint the phenomena that can only be seen by the eyes through the means of music …. As a matter of fact, the purpose of the art of painting is to accurately reproduce or imitate the nature, but music is an art which has its own characteristics: it does not imitate anything, because its unique measure is already able to take people's breath away. It could make people gain the feeling produced by painting art (Zheng, 1996). This measure intends to *describe* the *sensations produced by*

other things through music. Rousseau agreed with this understanding: "Music would not directly present things, but it could arouse our emotions — just as the emotions generated by seeing them with people's own eyes." Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony" was frequently used to illustrate the theory of tone painting. However, Beethoven declared that: anyone who had a little experience in rural life could imagine the author's purpose without the aid of titles. People were able to know its entirety even there was not any explanation; expression of sentiments was more than tone painting. The pastoral symphony was not a painting, but a pleasant feeling caused by the description of rural life (Pater & Hill, 1980). In other words, they were supposed to be the heirs of Aristotle. Several scholars confuse the theory of tone painting with traditional imitation. In the early 1700s, musical aesthetics was based on the imitation theory, while tone painting theory and expression theory were established as two different categories of imitation. To act means to imitate emotions …. To paint means to copy the sounds of various movements, or simply to imply the movement itself, especially in the aspect of rising, falling, fast, slow and so on (Powers, 1980). If this case is true, then the theory of tone painting would be relatively old, that is, it is merely a copy of music imitation theory of the ancient Greeks. The underlying reason for this notion is that the theory of tone painting was questioned since its inception. In 1780, German aesthetician Engel first discussed the theory of tone painting systematically in his article Über die Musikalische Malerei. He mentioned that tone painting was relatively suitable in a sense for music combined with language and other representational mediums. However, he was doubtful of instrumental music, since understanding tone painting was difficult for the audience in terms of its vague expression. Moreover, Engel distinguished instrumental tone painting into three levels. First, tone painting was most reasonable only when it imitated tone events (klangliche Ereignisse), such as the thunder. Second, according to the analogy principle of transzendentelle Ahnlichkeiten, music could also describe general characters, such as speed or light and shade. Lastly, the real power of music lies in its ability to express the feelings and movements of the mind and to make an objective expression of tone and painting in coordination with the subjective feelings and movements of the spirit. Evidently, Kirk's trichotomy method referred to that of Engel. However, Engel's argument was based on questioning the theory of tone painting, intending to rationalize it, and integrating it into the mainstream theory of emotional expression. Sulzer, a German aesthete of the same period, proposed that the theory of tone painting was opposite to the theory of emotion: Music and its movements can imitate wind,

thunder or the roar of ocean. Even the most proficient composers would use such techniques. But tone painting goes against the real spirit of music in expressing emotions and feelings, instead, it conveys images of things (Coover, 1959). The real theory of tone painting pertains to a transcendental or perceptive feeling that breaks through the limitations of musical mediums to show visual image content. In this process, it is not reliant on any synesthetic metaphors or similar sounds. Schumann believed that visual sense cooperated with auditory sense in musical imagination. In other words, visual sense could strengthen and maintain sound, which renders it clearer and more definite in the play of music. The examples he used were also interesting: Schubert is an outstanding master who makes use of music to describe life contexts in detail . When a friend and I played Schubert's march, I asked him if he had imagined some specific scenes during this composition after finishing it. He replied: "Yes, I seem to see myself walking on a street of Seville as many ladies and gentlemen a hundred years ago. I wear a long robe and pointed shoes, and gird a sword on …." It is worth mentioning that my fantasy is almost the same as his, and even the city is Seville! No one can make me believe that this little example is unimportant!(Wu, 2010). Coincidentally, in Shih Chi, the story of Confucius learning about Chin indicated Confucius' understanding toward musical instruments. It underwent four stages, namely, melody, math, spirit, and human. Finally, Kong Qiu knew the author of the music, who was dark and tall. His eyes were bright and deep as he was the king and governed the four kingdoms. Except the King Wen, no one could create this song! When Shi Xiangzi heard it, he stood up, bowed down again and replied, "that is what the teacher said when he learned it. It is called The Chant of King Wen!"(Kramer, 1975). Confucius also *saw* the real image of King Wen through this abstract melody. Tone painting theory implies the understanding of the representational content involved in musical melody without depending on any methods of imitation or representation. However, it is similarly accurate to a painting, which is evidently unexplainable. Individuals who intend to explain the theory of tone painting through imitation theory are bound to make several reasonable changes to the theory of tone painting, which is similar to the tendency of Engel. Many theorists of tone painting are faced with this problem. For example, Schumann said that a composer wanting to express, narrate, or describe an object is *a wrong idea.* Obviously, it is also compromise theory when facing the problem of the media heterogeneity of music and images. In his argument, Goethe maintained the original appearance of tone painting as follows: the purest and highest painting in

music is a practice which could be described as: it is an important thing that could take the listeners to a poetic situation personally. Based on the context of the text, images emerge gradually by listening to the music, without knowing exactly how these images were generated (Will, 2002). The relationship between the theory of tone painting and the theory of imitation is very subtle. In fact, the two theories are unrelated. Although the theory of imitation is formed in the process of explaining the theory of tone painting, it does not effectively explain the nature of tone painting. On the contrary, it gradually deviates from the original meaning of tone painting theory.

5. THE ORIGIN OF IMITATION

Alternatively, music imitation theory fails to elucidate the facts in explaining the expression of musical content. Instead, it is constantly changing in terms of historical development, which is mainly concluded in three aspects. First, music refers to itself. To connect with external objects, it should resort to other imitation mediums of representation to render itself an imitative art. Second, music imitates objects and leaves impression on the mind through movement. Third, objects could be visually intuited through music. Although the majority of theorists explain it from the perspective of imitation, it is entirely unrelated to imitation. In fact, no theorist can entirely restrict the domain of discourse from a personal point of view. The discussion involves at least two other views. The reason underlying this notion is that the medium of music is non-conceptual and has no direct connection to the outside world (except for simple and similar natural sounds). To break through its limitations, music should connect with the external world through various means; hence, imitation is the most convenient method. However, this form of connection is mainly presented through the theory of mind imitation due to the particularity of the mediums of music. In the context of the general theory of art in the 18th century, vision is mainly responsible for the communication between people and the outside world compared with other foundational senses. Thus, the achievement of music encourages it to begin to covet the position of the visual sense and usurp the effect of painting via tone painting theory. At present, the interpretation of musical effect still cannot exceed the scope of imitation theory, which includes the understanding of tone painting theory. From the point of view of medium, this form of the connection of music is weak and indirect but seems relatively rational.

Reviewing the articles of Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Berlioz, Chopin, Schumann, Goethe, Hans, and other scholars and musicians in detail, this study finds that these individuals consistently tend to discuss music, painting, poetry, and other representative art in one sphere regardless of whether they support the theory of music imitation. In this manner, this notion also seems to reflect a dilemma when discussing the content of music. Perhaps, similar to a statement from Guangqian, music, poetry, and dance were rooted from the same origin, and they were originally a trinity mixed art. In primitive times, poetry may have lacked meaning; music may have been devoid of harmony; and dance was performed without gesture. However, melody was indispensable. In a later evolution, they began to differentiate. In addition to the preservation of rhythm, music pursued harmony; dance pursued gesture; and poetry pursued text meaning. As a result, they were increasingly deviated from one another. For the other two forms of arts, differentiation did not influence the understanding of their content and effect due to representation. However, after breaking away from this mixed context, music was forced to resort to imitation theory, which was more beneficial to the representation of mediums, in explaining the problems it encountered. In this manner, tone painting theory relatively endeavored to escape from the interpretation of imitation theory, which restored the original situation of music. Similar to the statement of Adorno: As an artifact, an art works not only needs to communicate internally, but also communicate with the external reality that it is trying to get rid of but still has to depend on its content basis …. Art in the formal field is opposite to the art in the real world. But generally speaking, through mediation, aesthetic form becomes the accumulation of content. The form of art which seems to be pure, that is the traditional musical form, is derived in all respects from the external contents such as dance, along with the details of musical language (Sulzer, 1995).

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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