

Musical Picturing

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Pictorial vs. structural representations in music

- In structural representation, a “structural element in the music corresponds with something” extra-musical (Kivy 2002: 190).
- Pictorial representation allows us to perceive the object *in* the representation itself.

Kivy's Restriction (KR):

[P]ictorial representations in music, if indeed there are any, represent what is *heard*: we *hear* in the music whatever it pictorially represents. So it seems clear that **pictorial representations, if any, in music, must be representations of sounds**. This does not mean music cannot represent other things besides sounds.... But they can't represent them pictorially. (184; cf. 1984: Ch. 2)

[N.B. I assume that x can be musically pictured iff x can be auditorily pictured.]

I: The metaphysical basis of KR

1. In sense modality M, x is a candidate for M-type pictorial representation if and only if x has M-type perceptual appearances.
- ∴
2. KR iff auditory appearances belong only to sounds.
 3. If auditory appearances belong only to sounds, then sounds are individuals, not sensible properties.
- ∴
4. KR iff sounds are individuals.

II. Acousmatic listening & the nature of sounds (1)

- Scruton, Martin, & Nudds: “acousmatic experience” suggests an independence of sounds and sources incompatible with the Property View of Sounds.
- Reply:
 1. The possibility of acousmatic experience requires only the possibility of *attentionally* isolating sounds from sources.
 2. That you can attend to A without attending to be B does not show that A is independent of or separable from B; it shows only that A and B are non-identical.

3. Property-instances are not identical with their bearers. *So*,
4. The possibility of acousmatic experience is compatible with the Property View.

III. Acousmatic listening & the nature of sounds (2)

- Arguably, the relative ease of abstract listening (cf. the abstract seeing of color) suggests that sounds, unlike colors, are individuals.
- An advocate of the Property View needs an alternative explanation of this relative ease.
- Hypothesis:

The relative ease of abstract listening is explained by the relative epistemic poverty of audition.

 - o Thanks to the fundamental passivity of perceptual recognition, vision's epistemic richness imposes a cognitive—and attentional—burden that interferes with abstract perception of properties such as color and shape.
 - o This hypothesis receives confirmation from strategies viewers and listeners employ to facilitate abstract perceiving.
- Kivy's hypothesis:

The relative ease of abstract listening is explained by audition's relatively low survival value.

IV. Consequences for musical picturing

- The door is now open a Property View of sounds.
- Consider the Event-Property View (EPV):

Sounds are properties of their event sources.
- Consequences of EPV:
 1. Both sounds and their event sources have auditory appearances. *So*,
 2. Both sounds and their event sources are candidates for musical picturing. *E.g.*,
 3. Thus, at a live performance of Honegger's *Pacific 231*, you may:
 - a. *hear the sounds* of the orchestra playing;
 - b. *hear the orchestra's playing*;
 - c. *hear in* the sounds of the orchestra's playing *the sounds* of the engine's activity; and
 - d. *hear in* the sounds of the orchestra's playing *the engine's activity*.
- In sum: thinking differently about sounds opens the door to a more catholic and richer conception of music's powers.