

A Specialised Theory of Music

'The basic concept is the articulate but non-discursive form having import without conventional reference, and therefore presenting itself not as a symbol in the ordinary sense, but as a 'significant form,' in which the factor of significance is not logically discriminated, but is felt as a quality rather than recognized as a function. If this basic concept be applicable to all products of what we call "the arts...then all the essential propositions in the theory of music may be extended to the other arts, for they all define or elucidate the nature of the symbol and its import' (Langer, 32).

Langer's theory calls upon music as a symbolic projection, a morphological 'theatre of feeling'. The morphology of these meandering and listless musics express a 'feeling' or awareness that is akin to dreaming. But 'dreaming' is too loaded a term. Psychoanalysis and surrealist conceits have burdened it with a logic that distorts the actively creative realm of non/sense, which these work express. 'Reverie', dreaming while awake, better characterises the poetic of a music whose call for attention is always elsewhere, otherwise than being. A dream is something we endure or suffer while a reverie is something that mingles with waking life to make reality a plastic and malleable experiment (Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, tr. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 167. The state of fluctuating absorption and flickering preoccupation is the reverie of a mind that drifts with this music, a music-mind that drifts upon any moment as the local expression of its own cosmic territory.