

Music as an Identity Saver and its Consequences in Cognition and Behavior

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Abstract

The substance and meaning of identity has far-reaching consequences in the humanities, in social sciences, arts, and music, as well as in many other research programs. It is a basic aspect in defining societies, ethnic groups, nations, lands, regions, and different cultural entities. It offers possibility to identify and characterize different cultural phenomena, their origin, historical background and presence. Musicology has different strategies to overcome the problem of identity, especially by comparison, style analysis, and classification procedures. Language and music as special forms of communication belong to most effective criteria influencing our cultural tradition, social consciousness and behavior. Some examples are presented concerning the development of liturgical and non-liturgical music (Gregorian chant), the unifying musical tendencies in reformatory movements in the 15th and 16th centuries, in the case of social and ideological changes throughout of Europe, in the 18th and 19th century etc. In the last decades much attention is given to concepts of continental and cultural identity, the Asian, African, European, Latin-

American one etc. Folk music, traditional music and national music are important elements in achieving and building identity feeling and representing it inside and outside of the societies. Musical instruments are often understood as national symbols, with their special shape, form, function, playing mode, national repertory being an integral part of the cultures and their identity.

Keyword: Culture, Identity Definition, Language, Nation, Land, Music, Musical Instruments, Songs, Symbols

* 本文為特約稿。

The Word – its meaning and actuality

The concept of identity has many meanings in relation to the area of human thinking, behavior, and activities, where the term it is used and applied. Remarkable differences are connected with distinct fields of research and their disciplinary context, where the notion can mark a set of variable phenomena, which are not completely equal or exactly alike.

Its universal character is derived from the original meaning and provenance in Latin and the Late Middle Age *identitas* and *idem*, which mark a total coincidence between two items, persons or whatever parts of a set or group of things. We have to be aware about utilization by using identity, having in mind distinguishing characteristics of persons, personalities, phenomena, but also social groups, cultural items, art expressions etc. Identity has a wide circle of impact in helping us to orientate in the real as well as the imaginary world of human symbols and constructions. We are living in a permanently continuing process of checking, searching, seeking and identifying our environment, the actual live conditions and categories of our knowledge. To identify them is a constant mood of thinking and consciousness. That means not to see always the same, similar to another, when we are comparing two phenomena and use the word identical. It is always the question what is similar or identical and where we can see and define differences. Identity is not an absolute all-embracing category but only a partial view in studying different phenomena.

Before coming to the main object of our considerations, to music, music theory, musical identities and the sameness of musical elements, we have to mention, that musicology has essential relations to a couple of different scientific disciplines and collaborates with a wide circle of research fields. Identity is a philosophical and a mathematical category, differentiating between real and logical, abstract and concrete identity. These categories are relevant for many of our musical considerations. The principle of identity expresses that we signify two phenomena as such, as far as all their elements and features are similar, equal. But this sort of identity exists only in the case of an absolute sameness, not in two, but only in one

object. The same phenomenon exists in our consciousness; it is repeated again and again from our memory, in the process of remembering. It is a repetition of the originally memorized and fixed form. This self-similarity or self-identity is an extreme form of identity. By considering the real value of identity and its use in searching different phenomena we can mention some actual fields, where in the last decades the term identity has expanded and gained great importance.

- In the procedures of identifying socio-cultural phenomena, by trying to analyze, compare and differentiate actual mono- und multicultural processes¹. They cover a wide circle of phenomena, philosophical, ideological, political, cultural, economical, as well as systems of language, aesthetics, literature, music and art. Identity of different cultures, minorities, plays in all the mentioned aspects a remarkable role².
- We can notice in the field of humanities efforts to identify special social groups with an identical social, human and ethnic status, including characteristics of their culture and manner of life. Research had to clarify the homogeneity of their cultural development, their national and geographic background, as well as many other determining aspects, concerning especially their origin and base of their existence. We can speak about a marvelous rise of identity research, directed to phenomena of continental and regional character. The question of “European”, “African”, “Asian” and other supposed entities and identities, which are difficult to define, ought to be clarified. It is tried in many projects as in the case of Europe, followed e.g. by the *Academy of Europe*, to enlighten the specific European cultural phenomena³. How in a rapid changing world are values maintained or destroyed. Central Europe was after the year 1989, affected by remarkable political changes and many

¹ Tibi Bassam, *Europa ohne Identität, die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft* (Siedler Goldmann Verlag, 2000), Katarína Podoláková(ed.), *Multikulturalita, interkulturalita, transkulturalita (Multiculturality, intercultural, transkultural)* (Bratislava: Comenius University, Institut of Culturology, ASCO art and science, 2001).

² Radoslav Hlúšek, Martin Priečko(ed.), “Etnický konflikt a identita (Ethnic conflicts and identity)”, *Ethnologia Actualis Slovaca, Revue pre výskum kultúr etnických spoločenstiev* 6 (Trnava Universitas SS. Cyrilli et Methodii 2006).

³ “Re-Thinking Europe: Literatures and Literary Histories as Media of (Trans)National Identities and Collective Memories”. *European Review* (Oxford University Press), 15/1/81(2007), pp.83-114.

research programs were introduced with the aim to put e.g. the question: Has Central Europe an identity of its own or not?

- In the last decade the world wide changes concerning also music have made from music an important indicator of diversified processes, as expressed: “...*they are the results of decisions made by individuals about music-making and music or about social and cultural practices, on the basis of their experiences of music and social life and their attitudes to them by different social contexts*”⁴. The changes were in the course of the development qualified as global, universal, unifying, as well as those of local, regional, ethnic, national or other origin. To characterize their complementary or contradictory features belongs to the most preferred circle of themes and topics of our time. For more than 30 years a projects of the *World History of Music* proposed in the UNESCO and by other international organizations⁵, could not be successfully managed. They failed in the trial to define single continental music cultures and their developments. Other institutional and editorial projects took it over and carried out this challenging task in a comprehensive way. Hans Oesch could fulfill that idea only partly, as far as only two volumes were devoted to non-european music, in comparison to 10 volumes with general and European music views⁶. The American Garland series of publication came much nearer to the original idea of a balanced worldwide survey, avoiding a restricted europeo-centric concept⁷. Media contributed in the last decades in a decisive way to a worldwide consciousness of music cultures and played a prominent role in the materialized musical changes. The media-music relation became in the last years a meaningful

⁴ John Blacking, “Identifying processes of music changes”, *The world of music*, 27/1(1986), pp.3.

⁵ Ivan Vidor (ed.), “Towards a world history of music”, *The world of music* 22/3(1980).

⁶ Hans Oesch (ed.), *Aussereuropäische Musik*(Laaber: Verlag Laaber, 1984, 1987).

⁷ Bruno Nettl, Ruth M Stone, James Porter, Timothy Rice(ed.), and many authors, *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*(New York, Hamden Garland Publishing 1998-2002). 10 vols, and 10 audio compact discs.

subject of empiric and investigative research ⁸, without which all the changes could not be grasped and comprehended with all their consequences.

In all of the mentioned running projects music plays an important role. Not only as a very specific genre of art, but also as a very influential medium, which has world wide impact and challenge for culture in general. It supports process of regional and national integrative character, being able to differentiate and to unite different phenomena and elements, more than any other type of art.

Some historical and comparative remarks

To compare and identify musical structures is one of the oldest research strategies and working procedures in musicology. The comparative view directed to musical styles, single compositions, genres, and composers was an inseparable constituent of the musicological development, starting in the late 19th century. The identity, the originality of music expression was the conceptual basis of style analysis and style critic, as proposed by Guido Adler ⁹. At the same time were brought different systems of analysis and classification of melodies, including folk as well as spiritual and ecclesiastical sources. An overview and retrospective summaries on the proposed systems have been edited in the 60ties as 80ties ¹⁰. The aim was to find identical, similar or related styles, to identify single melodies and groups of melodies, to contribute to their understanding and to reconstruct their origin and musical identity. They understood identity as a complex of style phenomena in music, connected with cultural, social, ethnic and national forms of expression. All the analytic, style analytical and comparative procedures were reflected in manifold systems of classification from the beginning of the 20th century and overwhelmed a remarkable improvement: starting with simple handwritten systematic catalogues, to punch-card systems as to those applying

⁸ Oskar Elschek (ed.), *Multimediálna spoločnosť na prahu 21. storočia (Multimedial society at the door of the 21st century, its culture, art and music)* (Bratislava: Asco art & science, 2005).

⁹ Guido Adler, *Der Stil in der Musik* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911).

¹⁰ Oskar Elschek, *Methoden der Klassifikation von Volksliedweisen* (Bratislava: VEDA Slovenska akademie vied, 1969); Ulrich Schmitt, *Auswahlbibliographie zur Klassifikation von Volksliedmelodien und Melodieforschung, Dokumentationsprobleme heutiger Volksmusikforschung* (Bern, Frankfurt a.o.: Peter Lang, 1987), pp.219-272.

computer retrieval strategies, as it is usual now¹¹. The task of the analytical and classification process was to find out the origin, the ethnic character of single melodies and styles. The requirement was to answer the question of their identity and to find out how they contribute to the process of identification, concerning nations or cultural regions at all, based on folk and national music. Even more than throughout a century the inner-ethnic processes of traditional music have been analyzed by comparative and analytical procedures.

Before coming to the concrete analysis of identity in music and music structures, we have to stress, that identity is always referring to people, groups of people, societies and human beings. Culture and music is part of their life. Music can't be analyzed without this close reference to social and individual boundaries. We can't speak isolated on music without its bearers. Therefore musical identity is prevailingly interwoven with cultural groups, living in regional, local, ethnic, national and many other contextual frames. A social group is not based on music, or only on music, but it has an economic background, is living in a land and state, integrated into a special region or local environment. It has a language of its own, forms, genres of cultures, customs, style of architecture, costumes or other typical clothes, manner of handling and behaving. Music is only one form of their expression. It reflects firstly the mentioned features, but secondly, on the other side, it is an important tool, which characterizes the group under research. How to handle the mentioned two different aspects, asks for special comparative strategies.

Music and language - music as a language

Languages as a basic element of communication in a certain group of people are the most important phenomena determining their identity. From this point of view we can qualify linguistics as the corner stone of identity research. The essential role of language is not restricted to its lexicographic or grammatical structure, which was formed in a long-term development throughout centuries. Language and its

¹¹ Oskár Elschek, Lýdia Mikušová, "Publications, Studies and Activities of the Study Group of Analysis and Systematization of Folk Music of the IFMC", *Yearbook of Traditional Music* 23(New York: IFMC, 1991), pp.181-189.

structure were permanently influenced by changes and advancements, but language is also an exact reflection of all transitions in the life of the society and the running historical events. They were saved and recorded in the language of the society. The basic musical genre as the song, the ethnically formed singing practice in the folk song is a two-part phenomenon. Two forms of communications are united into one inseparable entity. Language and singing practice are identity savers representing the most characteristic elements of the single cultures. We can not define an ethnic group, a culturally homogeneous society only by their land, their state, by the region they are living, by cultural, economic or other types of institutions. The consciousness of their history and many other elements are part of the whole infrastructure of culture. They can't function with their specific features, without the previous mentioned specific expressions of language and the music of their own. One of the most preferred elements creating the feeling of identity, the consciousness of a historical tradition in songs, is joined with different epic, narrative traditions. Among them could be mentioned the myths and some special singing traditions: the imaginative epic Kalevala tradition of the Finnish, the cycle of German Nibelungen songs, the performed melodies and texts of the national heroes by the Griots in Senegal, the Island saga-tradition of, the belaud heroes in the South Slavic epics, the historic singing tradition in the Russian "byliny"(events of the past), the Ukrainian "duma", the songs of the historical events, fights and victories of the Mongols, and many others world wide practiced genres are the most impressive forms of songs cultivated for centuries. They had permanently to improve national feeling, also through education. They were fixed in the national individual and collective memory, permanently repeated and presented, supporting the idea of national, tribal or ethnic identity. Its is not only the text and the stories described, but the specific melody and singing style, moreover accompanied by most typical musical instruments used in the cultures. Among them have to be mentioned the lyra (in Greece), the lutes (in countries of the Middle East), the cantele (in the Baltic), the gusle (in the Ukrainian), the gadulka (in Croatia and Bulgaria) etc., which played an important role as national symbols The epic and

balladic tradition is the most preferred genre in literary and folk music research, as it is permanently followed by the *International Society of Folk-Narrative Research*. They have held their 9th Congress 1989, focusing mainly on identity¹². The research unites poetics, story telling, reciting, singing and playing, and includes many genres and types, in which history, presence, changing and actualization are living in the oral tradition. They integrate and represent the most important components of the national cultural consciousness as an inseparable identity saver, as a part of their oral history.

Beside the common elements of the language as an elementary tool of communication and its fusion in the songs, has music a wider circle of means of identity. Among them we know the function of music in dance and dance songs. Dance is the most typical form of special movements and types of bounded moving and behaving on special occasions. Dance types and dance music are often throughout centuries characteristic elements of national or ethnic identity as for example the polka for the Czechs, the landler and waltz for the Austrians, the polonaise and mazurka for the Polish, the tarantella for the Italians, only to mention some of them. In the 17th and 18th century the musicals genre of the suite was based on the combination of national and “international” dances (sarabande, courant, branle, allemande, jig etc.). Every single type of dance represented a characteristic musical idiom and motion behavior. They were part of the European musical identity, and acting also as specialized marks for single nations¹³.

As outlined, has music in different linkages (with language, motion and others) a great ability to contribute with means, forms of artistic expressions and socio-cultural characteristics to manifold identities. Apart from the contextual boundaries, but also in combination with them, has music many independent stylistic possibilities to create with the help of melodic structures, rhythm, metric structure, harmony, tempo, sound production and performance, considerable specific musical languages of its own. No matter of fact, we don't prefer to speak on music as about

¹² Vilmos Voigt (ed.). *Folk Narratives and Cultural Identity*. Budapest *Yearbook of the Loránd Eötvös University* 1995, vols. 16-17.

¹³ Mariane Bröcker (ed.), *Tanz und Tanzmusik in Überlieferung und Gegenwart* (Bamberg: Otto Friedrich Universität, 1992).

a “language” in the proper meaning of the word, although music has without doubt structural and functional similarities with language. Music doesn’t reach the exact meaning and communicative function of the verbal language, but has many possibilities to sketch a structure of its own, to contribute to a specific musical style with a wide scope of aesthetical and emotional content. This specific musical identity doesn’t mean that it is practiced only as a musical performance in a quite independent way apart from other cultural means. Referring again to the project of the *World History of Music* János Kárpáti underlines, that to deal with different forms of music expects to search them in a “*sociological scale as follows*”¹⁴ :

- *music as part of daily life (work songs, lullabies etc.);*
- *music which serves for cults (pagan rituals, liturgical music etc.);*
- *music of social movements (non-liturgical religious songs, music of revolutionary movements);*
- *functional music (military music, music for sports etc.);*
- *entertainment music at different levels, different degrees and different milieux (amateur-professional, amusement-recreation, royal or princely court, bourgeois homes, public concert and spectacles, folk festival).”*

All of them build the complicated and determining interrelated framework of music and culture. The mentioned genres and functions are in manifold aspects restricted, because single cultures are based on special selections of genres. They reflect normally those aspects and life occasions relevant for their society, which play a dominating role in their struggle for typical forms, creating their own structure of identity.

Music as a instrument for building commonalities

Music is a sign, a mark and a unifying tool. It attaches great societies, as tribes, ethnic groups, regions, minorities, majorities, nations, lands or states. Music is very often understood as a mean for joining special groups of peoples, in order to unify and to integrate them, to reach the claimed ideal and organized unity, to “socialize”

¹⁴ Ivan Vándor(ed.), “Towards a world history of music”, *The world of music* 22/3(1980), pp.13.

them. For religious societies are liturgical practices, the recited texts, lectures, interpretations, including an ideological and philosophic background, important means of building their identity. Music played according to its emotional, time-sharing character, common singing tradition a foremost function. The words, motions, and actions are always accompanied by tunes. Melodies have to carry, interpret, and perform the liturgical texts. Their ideological cognitions and reflections should be mediated for the people of the religious society, to give them a chance to take part on the liturgical events and ceremonies. The most appropriate form for them is to recite, to sing or to perceive the artistic elements of the texts. The same integrative process takes place in all religious societies. It is in a long run a chain of changes, creating new, reforming old and use different musical forms and genres for interpreting their ideology and ideas. Every one of the religions is based on the same strategy, to try to unite in the most appropriate way all the used artistic forms and ceremonies. They live in their memory, in the oral tradition, with the aspiration, to be fixed, recorded, and to reach last not least universal validity, and being part of their textual and musical heritage. The aim was to safeguard the ceremonial behavior and all accompanying artistic elements, as practiced in every day use.

As a single and clear example of such a strategy the Gregorian chant of the Catholic Church, can be quoted. The 2000 years lasting changes, redefinitions and reconstructions show in all times the endeavor of unification in texts and tunes, in order to reach a universal, normalized form, a complete identity of their ideas in the mind of the religious community. The liturgical as well as the non-liturgical texts, the scriptural lessons were intoned and sung to make them audible. The repertory of the proper Gregorian plainsong was the result of complicated and severe reforms, starting in the 6th century. The leading strategy was to cancel all non-Roman traditions in the Catholic Church. After the different and older liturgical practices and ideas were repressed, as the Old Roman, the Ambrosian, Gallican and Mozarabic liturgical traditions a new Gregorian liturgical tradition grew up. The result was a 1000 year lasting unifying process for reaching the necessary universal

identity of the plainsongs and its function in the Roman Catholic religious society. It was finished about the 10th century, as it is documented in numerous liturgical sources¹⁵. They recorded the practiced texts, but in a rather inconsistent way also the musical part of the songs and items. The texts could be spread over according to the copied manuscripts. Music remained as to the 11th and 12th century more or less a part of the memory and the usually music practice. The same process refers to the song books (cantonale) in the time of religious reforms from the 15th and 16th centuries. Their aim was to publish normative, binding, and universally usable song books. The liturgical and spiritual texts were recorded more or less in a complete way in the written und printed songbooks, but largely without the melodies. The music remained also in the following centuries memorized and interpreted from the memory of the singers and the members of the religious society. The music could play in the mind of the individuals as well as the collective memory a much more meaningful role being a part of their consciousness and musical memory. It was an important part of their musicality, musical consciousness and cultural tradition. That was the reason why the religious society could influence with their repertory, their musical tradition general music education at large in a decisive way. Music, identity, musical thought and style had especially in Europe, depending on religious music had for more than 1000 years such an influential position. The identity of music and spiritual music were very much interpenetrated.

Naturally the development music in Europe was much more complicated as I tried to explain it in connection with spiritual music and the plainchant. But it was a typical relation between music and religion, which was in all religions beside the Catholic one too, in the great non-Catholic religions of Asia, Africa and Asia similar in their influential role for their music at large. On the other side we know that between religious music and secular music often was a remarkable gap and stylistic difference. The development was in secular music searching for their identity much more dependent on local, regional, and national factors, representing a larger diversity and variability of music cultures. We can state that their scope of

¹⁵ Renáta Beličová, *Hudba v kultúre európskeho stredoveku (Music in the Middle Ages Culture of Europe)* (Žilina: Žilinská univerzita, 2006).

identity was rather restricted and without universal aspirations, based on individual and free reflection between life and musical expression.

Musical instruments as symbols of identity

The Gregorian chant was identified with ideas, texts and tunes. They were in the liturgical practice understood as universal spiritual values, very close connected with words and accompanying means. Instruments were forbidden or practiced in a restricted and diminished approach. The only legal instrument was the organ (in Europe but later also in overseas, or the harmonium) as a liturgical sound symbol in combination with liturgical songs and vocal practices. That doesn't mean that instruments and instrumental music were completely excluded from the music practice. The instruments had in general the meaning of a secular profane and an impure reputation. They were symbols of the secular, social lower classes, the poor, and the folk and often of the proscribed people. Instruments played in most of the religious movements an inferior role, beside some exception (as David's harp, or the angels trumpet-horn etc.). The organological research has many possibilities to analyze the mentioned state of musical instrument in Europe, also as a part of visual arts¹⁶ and many independent musical projects as covered by the yearbook *Imago musicae*, continued from the year 1984 as now. Musical instruments all over the world became a widely wanted object of musicology as well as of ethnoorganology. The world's musical instruments were documented by sound, audio and audiovisual means, penetrating into many technical details, into their spiritual and symbolic meaning. Hundreds and thousands of instruments were representatives of different musical cultures of all continents¹⁷. The view and panorama of their distribution has shown that single types are connected with their own culture and musical heritage. They were part of ideologies, philosophic ideas, special technologies and musical environments. They were characteristic parts of musical identities of cultures, from the visual and typological side, but also with

¹⁶ Emanuel Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art* (London: Faber and Faber limited, 1967).

¹⁷ Ruth Midgley, (ed.), *Musical Instruments of the World* (London Paddington Press Ltd., 1976). (German edition Orbis Verlag, 1988).

their typical musical manifestations. Without doubt was for China the ch'in the instrument expressing their music and meaning, throughout the history as a part of their musical identity, the lute for the Arabs, the vina for India, the drums for the Africans, different flutes for the American Indians, the gamelan for Indonesia etc. It was not only the historical heritage but their identifying role remained as to our days the integrating form of their musical identity. Naturally it is a simplification, because of the hundreds of instruments in every one of the mentioned cultures, where similar but also different instruments have been used. In Europe are for the single regions such instruments with national and cultural identity function well known. The bagpipes for Ireland and Scotland (supporting their fight against the English), also for Italy, the hurdy-gurdy for France, types of lutes for the musical cultures of the Balkan, the dulcimer and cithara for Central Europe, the long flute fujara for Slovakia, the nickelharpan for Sweden etc. Mainly folk and traditional musics are closely related to the mentioned instruments. They are the most impressive means, with a highly sophisticated meaning and importance, which are in fully accordance with their supposed musical identity.

Music as a powerful arm and symbol of identity

In then long run of centuries in all societies, at different events, and struggles, served music as a powerful mean for keeping their own identity, to defend it against foreign influences, domination and cultural superiority. It was a shield against assimilation, slavery, fighting with music for their ethnic and national emancipation. Songs connected with the national language, sung with old traditional and historical musical styles had an extraordinary function in the course of building their identity. In the 10-15th century B.C. was the sound of the Scandinavian bronze lures was the announcements and forecast of the arriving hordes to different shores of Europe. The conquerors recalled with their big sound fear and metus. All the crucial fights for new religions, reforms, and socio-cultural movements utilized music as a powerful “arm”. Some short examples should be quoted. At the beginning of the 15th century hauled the Czech Husit folk army

across Central Europe against the crusades with the song “Who are God’s warriors” and were fitted with an expansive similar repertory of spiritual songs. Hearing their choral the enemies flew from the battlefield, before the fight could be started. We know the influence of the Marsellaise and similar song on Napoleon’s soldiers and on the armies of the defending European kingdoms. Military March and battle music was used in an effective way, to reinforce the consciousness of the own army and demoralize the others. That was a widely used practice in the time of the October-revolution in Russia, with chores of the Don-Cossack’s cavalry. The World war second is rich on examples of misusing music for different contradictional activities. It a large literature published under the heading “Music and revolution” which should not be mentioned in detail. As the last example could be pointed out the inner war of Yugoslavia in the 90ties of the 20th century where patriotic music, songs, aggressive rock music and other genres were used for strengthen their power and manipulate the consciousness of the solders¹⁸. Music had to homogenize the involved fighting units, to remember them to their identity of national, ethic or regional origin. Apart from this extreme form of identity managing music, also the more or less “normal” identity improvement of music as for example in the advertising champagne for the European Union is known and used¹⁹. Music is the most powerful tool with the possibility to influence human consciousness in a short- as well as in a long-term process.

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¹⁸ Lada Čale Feldman, Inec Prica, Reana Senjković (ed.), *Fear, Death and Resistance. An Ethnography of War. Croatia 1991-1992* (Zagreb: Institut of Ethnology and Folklore Research Matrix Croatica, 1993); Svanibor Pettan (ed.), *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia* (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore research, 1998).

¹⁹ Patricia Sturm, Mit Beethovens neunter in die EU, *Multimediálna spoločnosť na prahu 21. storočia (Multimedial society at the door of the 21st century, its culture, art and music)*. (Bratislava: Asco art & science, 2005), pp.258-274.

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音樂作為認同及其在認知與行為裡的影響力

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摘要

認同的本質與意義，有其在人文領域，在社會科學、藝術，和音樂，以及在許多其他研究領域裡深遠的影響力。其為在定義社會、族群、國家、地土、區域，和不同文化本質裡之一個基本的面向。它提供了可能性，去確認、特徵化不同的文化現象、其由來起源、歷史的背景與存在。音樂學有其不同的策略以克服認同的問題，特別是透過比較、風格的分析，和分類的過程。語言和音樂，作為溝通的特別形式，隸屬最有效力的標準，影響著我們的文化傳統、社會意識和行為。一些例子呈現在有關於儀式或非儀式音樂的發展，如葛利果聖歌，在十五、十六世紀的改革運動裡有其合一化的音樂趨勢，在十八、十九世紀，整個歐洲又有其社會與意識型態的轉變等等。在最近這幾十年來，更多的注目是在洲的概念與其文化認同上，如亞洲的、非洲的、歐洲的、拉丁美洲的。民歌、傳統音樂，和國家的音樂，均是重要的要素以達成構建認同的感覺，和在現其社會的內在與外在。樂器，以其特別的形狀、形式、功能、演奏調式、國家裡的種類等作為文化

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及其認同之一個不可或缺的部分，常被理解作為國家的象徵。

關鍵字：文化、認同的定義、語言、國家、土地、音樂、樂器、
歌曲、象徵