FANTASY CONTROL: IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTRIBUTED IMAGINATION AND AFFECT ATTUNEMENT IN MUSIC AND SOUND

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Abstract

This chapter deals with the control of imagination. Three thematically distinct aspects of sonic imagination are investigated – archive, context, and identification – together with two modes of connection with the environment – metaphorical projection and affect attunement. It is argued that much of the available work on sonic imagination, music perception, and embodied cognitive science suffers from a one-person perspective, unable to explain either the difference between environmental sound and culture-specific music, or the dominant role of feelings in our musical experiences. In its stead an approach is suggested that assigns central importance to affect attunement in our encounters with sound and music. Through a case study, different types of sonic control are exemplified, showing that control of sonic imagination may be both negative and positive for the listener.

Keywords: Affect Attunement, Control, Culture, Embodiment, Imagination, Metaphor, Music

1. Introduction

In 2006 Steven Brown and I defined control of music as "a counterpoint to musical use," for both of which "manipulation" served as a "catchall term" (Brown & Volgsten 2006, xiii). Part of the reason for this linguistic choice was a wish to align with Alan Merriam's well known distinction between "uses and functions" (Merriam 1964, 209ff). Whereas in the present chapter functions are more aptly contrasted with affordances (the latter referring to actions and activities), and since it sits better with colloquial parlance, I will speak of control as being exerted either over oneself and one's own condition (as in self-control), or over others (as in manipulation, censorship, etc.) – thus making control the overall term. Another difference is that this chapter is devoted to the control of sonic imagination, not of music per se. This warrants the question whether there is a real difference, or whether the phrase 'control of sonic imagination' is just another way of talking about musical control. After all, imagination seems to be much more abstract than music, so how could its control be studied at all?

The clue to study control of sonic imagination suggested in this chapter is to pay attention to the *distribution* of imagination (of which sonic imagination is an instance). By being distributed beyond the restricted confines of our brains and nervous systems, imagination assigns itself to critical scrutiny. In what follows I will hence be able to differentiate between three thematically distinct aspects of sonic imagination, each being distributed in a different way, each susceptible to a different type of control. Two different modes of connection, relating these aspects of imagination to the sonic environment, points to yet further means of control. I end with a note on a brief case study on a Kurdish cultural association in Stockholm, Sweden, exemplifying different ways in which imagination can be controlled, for bad or for good. Last but not least the case also goes to show that imagination is important in our everyday engagements with music.

However, before entering any further discussion of control of imagination (sonic or otherwise), a passably clear notion is called for. I therefore start by giving a brief account of imagination – or fantasy: I regard the words as synonyms – based on my own and others' theoretical work. As we shall see, music is not so much a product of imagination as it is an act of imagination. And music draws its vital force from its source in sound.

1.1 Fantasy imagined

In a couple of articles, David Hargreaves and colleagues have elaborated a theory of musical imagination (Hargreaves 2012, Hargreaves et al. 2012). Imagination, Hargreaves suggests, should be seen as the interaction of three types of "networks of association" that function as "reference points for their [the subjects'] mental representations" of the sonic environment (Hargreaves 2012, 547), enabling various types of response. The first type of network involves personal knowledge of music, memories of songs, and of their structural and stylistic properties, etc. – a sort of personal archive, or "*music library*" (Hargreaves 2012, 547; italics in original). The second type of network connects particular pieces of music with typical places and social contexts. The third network involves personal memories and experiences of music and the specific situations in which they occurred, etc. as well as preferences and aesthetic judgments. Imagination can thus be seen as the "reciprocal-feedback relationships" Hargreaves 2012, 553) that enable new associative links between nodes in the proposed networks, as well as dissociation between obsolete links. And as Hargreaves emphasizes, it is the same "cognitive processing underlying [both] musical perception and production" (Hargreaves 2012, 552).

Although Hargreaves does not enter into any detailed theorizing about the proposed reciprocal-feedback relationships, his theory looks very much like a top-down (concept-to-percept) centered account of imagination. Given the experiential character of Hargreaves' proposed networks, and their obvious resemblance with semantic, episodic and autobiographical memory, one may wonder how the networks come into existence in the first place: is there no imagination at play before the listener or producer of music has achieved enough experiences of individual musical pieces and corresponding situations to make up sufficient associative networks? What, if any, are the bottom-up (percept-to-concept) determinants of imagination?[i]

According to a traditional information-processing approach, perception is explained as the initial analysis of an unordered reality, by an increasingly complex system, the end point of which is the mental construction of an orderly conceptual model of music. Against this Eric Clarke and others have proposed an "ecological approach" according to which music is regarded as already structured when it reaches our perceptual apparatus (Clarke 2005, 17). The structural properties of sound in our environment that we perceive are those we are biologically adapted to "*resonate*" with (Clarke 2005, 18; italics in original): "Perception is a *self*-tuning process, in which the pick-up of environmental information is intrinsically reinforcing, so that the system self-adjusts so as to optimize its resonance with the environment" (Clarke 2005, 19).

Interesting as the ecological approach is, Clarke has nevertheless been accused of pushing his argument against the information-processing camp too far, of equating percepts and concepts to a point where analytical simplicity surpasses theoretical poignancy (Menin & Schiavio 2012, Nonken 2008). Instead, the suggestion goes, the assumptions of an ecological account

of perception should include no more than the affordances of a non-conceptualized environment (Menin & Schiavio op cit.). An illustrative example could be the "circular reaction" occurring when a child produces a sound by accident, for instance by hitting a box, finds it pleasing and repeats it, perhaps with some variations (Delalande & Cornara 2010). In this case the perceptual input is both aural and corporeal, and the composite but non-conceptual experience will remain at the core of future imaginings of similar sound events, whether virtual or real (Reybrouck 2001).

The theme is taken further by Mark Johnson. As an "embodied schema" of meaningful action (Johnson 1987, 23), the hitting experience can be metaphorically projected by the child onto other objects in different locations and situations, thus describing the functioning of what Johnson calls "embodied imagination" (Johnson 1987, xx, 139ff), ultimately resulting in new types of actions and categorizations. According to Johnson, then, "'imagination' is a basic image-schematic capacity for ordering our experience" (Johnson 1987).

Johnson's theory of imagination is particularly interesting, since it purports to explain how imagination is what feeds "embodied meaning to abstract thought" (Johnson 2007, 176ff). This means that since all our abstract concepts ultimately emanate from concrete bodily interactions with our respective environments – action patterns being stored as generalized temporal schemata (muscular memories), subsequently projected by metaphor onto abstract domains of thought – what is left of the distinction between percept and concept can be no more than the various routes on a percept-concept continuum that our concepts have travelled. Johnson would hardly deny this conclusion, although its consequences have largely been ignored by philosophers or cognitive scientists, let alone musicologists (a few exceptions are

Lopez Cano 2006, Krueger 2011, Windsor & de Bézenac 2012; however my solution differs substantially from theirs, as I will show below).

This brings back the issue of affordances and what can be plausibly considered as ecologies in the case of music. My suggestion is that such an inquiry should take account of what Eleanor Rosch has described as different levels of *categorization* (a category is a collection of instances treated as 'same', whereas a concept is the knowledge one has about a category). Although Rosch does not speak in terms of affordances, she describes a "basic level" of categorization at which 1) we apply similar motor schemata in our interaction with the categorized phenomena, 2) the phenomena categorized have similar shapes or gestalts, and therefore 3) mental images are more easily evoked than at other levels (Garbarini & Adenzato 2004, Mervis & Crisafi 1982, Rosch & Mervis 1981, Starkey 1981). In addition to this 'basic level of affordances', as it were, Rosch describes a 'subordinate level' at which categorization requires much more detailed encoding for the differentiation between categories, and also a 'superordinate level' at which categories become increasingly abstract, requiring the concepts of Johnson's 'abstract thought'.

I have discussed the implications for music of Rosch's work on levels of categorization in more detail elsewhere (Volgsten 1999/2009, Volgsten 2006, Volgsten 2012). Here I would like to briefly mention the particular *language-dependence* of certain superordinate categories (Horton & Markman, 1980; Benelli, 1988). An instructive example is the general term 'music' and its many cognates in different cultures. 'Music' is a language-dependent superordinate concept. To hear different sounding phenomena as members of similarly general and abstract categories requires language. It is not the case that language gives us a word for a complex perceptual category that we already have. Instead, language is the very

capacity that enables us to group different sounding instances in a single category. At the superordinate level of categorization, verbal ostension postulates similarity.

The existence of language-dependent categories is interesting in the case of music and imagination, not least since it can explain the type of artistic innovation and creativity that John Blacking called "radical change" (see Volgsten 2012). It also directs focus to the need to trace the cultural and ideological *genealogies* of the bodily-based metaphors for which Johnson and others describe the logic (e.g. Echard 1999, Brower 1997-98, Saslaw 1997-98, Zbikowski 1997-98, Johnson & Larson 2003). Although metaphorical projections often are "automatic, typically unconscious, operations" issuing from bodily behavior (Johnson 1987, 82), far from all are. Metaphorical projections may originate in bodily interaction with the environment, but they may also have their source in language use, forming the basis of superordinate categories. In addition, bodily sourced projections may require language to come about in the first place, thus distributing the bodily throughout common language. What this shows is not only that any theory of sonic imagination that does not take the role of culture into account will be seriously flawed. It also shows that one important mode of connection between Hargreaves' networks of association and the environment may be accounted for by Johnson's notion of metaphorical projection of embodied temporal schemata.

1.2 One man's land

We have now a fuller interpretation of how imagination works in Hargreaves theory. Each "network" (music, context, person) is made up of cultural concepts, which in different ways (directly, metaphorically projected, and/or verbally mediated or stipulated), connect to

temporal schemata, which derive from bodily music-related behavior. Whereas the networks are themselves results of imagination, once they get thematically stable and interact in relation to new encounters, they produce a grasp of music that in itself is imaginative and which simultaneously feed back into and alter the same networks.

Nevertheless, a curious trait that Hargreaves' account shares with most of the theorists in the psychologist, cognitivist and musicologist camps, is the almost total neglect of the fundamental role of *social interaction* for our capacities to experience sounds as music. When a Hargreaves, a Clarke, or a Johnson speaks of culture and social activity, it is as some sort of external facet added to the otherwise non-social factors of music. On the contrary, music sociologists, while certainly attentive to social interaction, often seem reluctant to deal with any kind of claims pertaining to what is constitutive of music (as witness for instance the everything-and-nothing-notion of 'musicking'). In the end, most explanations tend to picture a Robinson-Crusoe that experiences (plays, listens to, etc.) music solipsistically, even when situated among friends in a 'social context'. And when it comes to the perception of music, it seems as if each and every human were a desert island in a sea of sound. Besides the counter-intuitive prospect of investigating music perception from the vantage point of a more or less asocial listener, the problem with such an approach is (at least) twofold: 1) it becomes hard to explain the difference and relation between environmental sounds and culture-specific music, and 2) the dominant role of feelings in our experiences of music becomes difficult to explain in any other way than as some 'extramusical' add on, whether aroused in or somehow imagined by the listener.

In the following I will counter this tendency by giving the outlines of a theory explaining how music is at root social and inter-personal. Central to this theory is the concept of affect

attunement, originally formulated by developmental psychologist Daniel Stern in his outline of the infant's emerging sense of a self. Stern's ideas are described in some detail because, as I argue, our relationship with sound and music follows a derivative path (see also Volgsten 1999/2009, Volgsten 2000, Volgsten 2006, Volgsten 2012). Eventually it will also allow us to consider the issue of control of imagination. Three aspects of Stern's theory will prove crucial. The first is the role of bodily experience, they ways in which our experiences of being in the world 'feel'. What we sense through touching, smelling, tasting, seeing, and hearing, feels in certain ways that Stern calls *affect*. As such ways of feeling, affect is not static (in the way categorical emotions are), but dynamic and temporal.[ii] The second crucial aspect is that we do not only receive affective input, but also experience it as we relate to it in a process of *attunement*, by which we register and affectively respond to the amodal variations in intensity, timing, and shape of the contours of affect. The third and final aspect I have in mind concerns how affective attunement is not only constitutive of a sense of self (on the basis of which knowledge of our selves is subsequently composed), but by the same token affect attunement is constitutive of the sense of the *other* and the surrounding world. Although the question of the other in Stern's theory has gone largely unnoticed in the literature (a notable exception is Guattari 1995, 6), it is an aspect that I suggest can shed light on our capacity to hear sounds as music, that is, it can say something important about our imaginative powers. To see how this can be, let me first spell out the relevant parts of Stern's theory in a little more detail.

1.3 Self and other

Rather than a child playing alone with toys to make sounds with (as in the example referred above), we can picture a newborn during its first days of life. This baby can already

distinguish its mother's voice from other voices (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith, 2001). By two months the infant will react differently to different prosodic speech patterns. Falling speech melodies will soothe, rising melodies attract attention, bell-shaped and falling melodies maintain attention, while bell-shaped and monotonous speech melodies are likely to discourage on-going behavior (see Papousek, *et al.* 1991). The qualities to which the child attends when hearing a caregivers voice – variations in intensity, timing, rhythm and prosodic shape – constitute temporally organized islands of coherence and coordination that the child will successively differentiate depending on whether it may actively initiate the events or not. As the infant continues its interaction with other persons in its environment (attracting attention when hungry or in a playful mood, see e.g. Beebe & Lachmann, 1988; Jaffe, et al. 2001; Trevarthen, 2002), the experience of being the agent of certain affectively distinct events but not of others becomes increasingly significant.

This increasing significance is made possible because infant and caregiver both feel in and with their bodies their own behavior as well as the other's (the latter of which is mediated by the senses). Taking vocalization as example, a caregiver's interaction will not involve a strict imitation or a mirroring of the child's vocalizations. By being responded to with a slightly different vocalization, the child gathers that the response is directed not towards some outward specifics of its behavior, but towards the feeling, the unfolding of the affective experience. Although different in detail, this *attuning* activity of the caregiver shares with the child's activity the overall affective contour. Through such affective attunement, which soon becomes reciprocal, the interlocutors come to sense something like '*I* have an affective experience that *You* respond to with a similarly affective-laden behavior, because *You* have noticed the affective experience that *I* have'. It is important to stress that this is not the kind of self-realizing process by which a subjective 'being-in-itself' reflexively appears 'for-itself' by

way of simply ‘being-for-the-other’. Rather, it is a process by which a sense of self *emerges* from a potential affective resonance (variations in rhythm, timing, intensity, shape) becoming actual attunement. Ensuing are various cognitive schemata, both of the bodily kind that one’s own action gives rise to, and schematized affective contours caused by one’s own and other’s behavior. Together they form more enveloping schemata of narrative-like temporal progression (Stern 1995, 88ff, cf. Johnson 2007 143f., 170ff), which end up as dynamic categories of ‘self’ and ‘other’ (or better, various ‘others’), by which we sort and structure future social encounters throughout our lives.

Stern speaks of ‘the sense of an emergent self’, ‘the sense of a core self’, ‘the sense of a subjective self’, and ‘the sense of a verbal self’. With the body as the primary reference point (Stern 1985, 46), these different senses of self occur at different phases in early life, from about two months of age to the second year when the child starts to acquire a spoken language (the different senses of self do not replace each other, but remain through life, open to revision in different constellations). The verbal sense of self eventually enables a narrated personal self, as well as more abstract ‘theories’ of what a self might be. The point I want to make (and shortly transpose to sound and music) is that one’s sense of self emerges together with the ability to sense an other (Stern 1985, 60f, 70 n.1). Stern names the sense of a core self a ‘self versus other’, which, as it increasingly comes to acknowledge this other, turns into a ‘self with other’ (Stern 1985, 69, 100), also enabling a sense of ‘we’. In other words, our emerging sense of a ‘core self’ necessarily involves a simultaneous emergence of a ‘core other’, against and with which our selves are articulated. Likewise we unfold our sense of being a ‘subjective self’ in relation to our sense of there being a ‘subjective other’. Stern locates affect attunement mainly to this subject-producing phase. Yet, within the pre-subjective processes of emergent self and core self, affect is the requisite amodal commons

that connects not only the different sense modalities and action patterns of each singular body, but each and everybody together (Stern 1985, 53ff, 64). The one would not become a 'self' without the becoming of the 'other'.

Although Stern does not speak about imagination except for the symbolic workings of the verbal self (Stern 1985, 167), we can see that imagination is at work within the other phases too, such as when a vocal interaction causes a disruption between the affective flows of the body and sensory observation (emergent self, core self), leading to a new and expanded experience, that of sensing both a self and an other (subjective self). This is a distributed imagination in so far as my sense of self emerges as a result of an other's sense of myself as other-than-self.

The key is affect attunement, which is what enables the other's affective experience to become a constitutive counterpart of my own, and vice versa. Now while there is what we may call the sympathetic aspect of affect attunement, which by focusing on the agents rather than on their activities tells the interlocutors that they have both received the world in a similar fashion, there is also a metaphorical aspect focusing on the doings rather than on the agents, which renders one's own and an other's activity similar. The metaphorical and the sympathetic aspects of affect attunement thus turn out not only to be two sides of the same compassionate coin, but also to reveal the imaginative source of affect attunement.

Decisive in this matter are what can be described as the *protomusical* aspects of behavior: rhythm, timing, shape, intensity, etc. which remain as basic qualities in music. The protomusicality of these types of temporal qualities, of which I say more below, makes a strong case for the claim that music has its imaginative source in pre-verbal social interaction,

that music is at root a social and affective phenomenon, and that these early social experiences remain as embodied memories 'against' and 'with' which subsequent encounters with music resonate, in ever new affective attunements.

1.4 The role of affect attunement for the ontological expansion of the soundscape

The common denominator of the emergence of self and what might be called our 'sense of music' are the protomusical sounding shapes and gestures available at a basic level of categorization. These shapes and gestures – which as articulations of "present moments" may range between one and ten seconds (Stern 2004, 41) – afford affective attunement to the listener. Analogous to the sense of an other, as implied by Stern's theory, affect attunement may hence give rise to what I propose to call an emerging sense of music.

Feeding on the immediate source of basic musical qualities are the metaphorically mediated projections of embodied schemata onto more extensive clusters of sound, rendering the latter as formally complex patterns. As these schemata are stored in memory, forming their own networks of association, they may be retrieved thematically as temporal concepts that enable the categorization and archiving of musical objects, situations and personal preferences (cf. Hargreaves op cit.), in what might be described as an ontological expansion of the soundscape (e.g. pitches, modes, scales, chords, melodies, songs, etc.). This cultural process[iii] is what eventually enables *musical* affordances, such as singing along (Hosokawa & Mitsui 1998), dancing (Dankworth & David 2014), courting (Dissanayake 2006), personal identification (Frith 1996), cultural distinction (Martin 2006), emotional self-regulation (De Nora 1999), and even such abstract conceptual activities as doing music analysis (Cook 1992).

In this outline of the process of an emerging sense of music – pointing towards what we now may describe as basic, sub- and superordinate levels of associative networks – we need to be clear about the differences between the immediately affordable and the verbally mediated. Not only do abstract formal relations require verbally formulated concepts (Volgsten 1999/2009, 47ff), so do systematically organized details such as pitch, scale, and harmony. In contrast to the basic qualities of music (rhythm, timing, shape, intensity) are those that require subordinate categorization at the level of fine-grained detail (pitch, scale, harmony, etc.). And although subordinate categorization may to some extent occur spontaneously (e.g. Drake, 1997), when it comes to systematic organization, such categorization is ultimately motivated by the abstract conceptualization of a superordinate level of language. By sharp contrast, the life spark of music – that which prompts us to characterize melodies and rhythms by metaphors such as tones moving lively (or solemnly, happily, sad, etc.) through musical time and space – emanates directly from its shared social roots at the basic level of affordance of perceived sound (imagined or 'real', cf. Grimshaw & Garner 2015), to which we affectively attune.

Not only does a sense of music emerge through this imaginative process of affective attunement, so too does a corresponding sense of a listener (by which I include dancers, singers, musicians, etc.).[iv] In a similar way that a sense of self – what Stern labels a core self, a subjective self, and a verbal self (senses of self that may group and regroup in different formations) – emerges 'with' and 'against' an other, so does a sense of being a listener emerge 'with' and 'against' the emerging sense of music. This may be a sense of an individual listener as much as it may be a sense of being a collective listener, a 'we'.

In performance situations this happens when the sensitive player or singer of music attunes to and is attuned to by the listener or audience (and the other musicians and participants, if there are any). This affective attunement involves, among other things, prediction of others' response and selection of appropriate performative action. However, as music has become mass mediated through sound recordings it is obvious that affect attunement can also be one-sided, what I have elsewhere described as "quasi-dialogical" (Volgsten 2013, cf. Thompson, 1995). We may hear music *as if* it attuned to us, when the music either corresponds to or contradicts our own – present, remembered, or newly disclosed – moods or feelings. We may even arrange for music to do so by means of various media players and sound systems. It would be easy to dismiss this one-sidedness by explaining it as simple entrainment to preexisting musical sounds on the part of the listener (cf. Jones & Bolz 1989, Trost & Vuilleumier 2013). However, once a sense of listener and a corresponding sense of music – emergent, core, subjective or verbal (see Volgsten 2012) – has been attained it will not dissolve, although it may rise to prominence or subside depending on such differences as types of music, situation and context, and individual listener. Thus, once affect attunement has occurred it will remain as a resounding mnemonic trace of those special occasions when we attune with our fellow beings.

In sum, for there to be music with aesthetic qualities of any self-conscious cultural kind, there has to be a listener for whom the projection and ascription of these qualities are part of the sense-making of the affective experiences that the attunement to sound has brought about (whereby also the categorical distinction between noise and music becomes possible, cf. Attali 1985, Hendy 2013). Once in place as affective body schemata, music may also be conceptually imagined, as Johnson's schemata and Rosch's categorical levels suggest. To the extent that we can talk about the music 'itself' (abstracted from its performers) attuning to the

listener, it is a matter of music's capacity to sound the way emotions feel. Or rather, it is a matter of us listeners imaginatively hearing sounds as music, sounding the way we feel. Consequently (and this is Hargreaves point too), it is the listener that imaginatively creates the music – whereby in the same distributive moment of imagination the listener is affirmed as a corporeal listener to music.

2.0 Control of imagination

Imagination enables new interconnections and relations between the schematic memories of sound and affect, at basic, sub- and superordinate levels. In their interconnectedness these memories make up thematically comprehensive networks of associations in our minds. Imagination involves the reciprocal-feedback relationships that enable new associative links between nodes in the networks of associations in our minds, as well as the dissociation of obsolete links. Affect attunement is prevalent in these interactions and processes of imagination. It puts imagination into play. Although different from metaphorical projections of body schemata, I also suggest that affect attunement be regarded as a second (though by no means secondary) mode of connection between the associative networks in Hargreaves' model of imagination and the sonic environment. As listeners we attune to new encounters with music in new situations and contexts, which also affects our experiences of ourselves and of others (cf. Frith 1996).

As pointed out in the introduction, a clue to study control of sonic imagination is to pay attention to its distribution beyond the restricted confines of our brains and nervous systems (this being in line with a view of "mind" including brain, body and environment, see Grimshaw & Garner 2015, 63). In what follows I will discuss in what respects the three

thematically distinct aspects of imagination of Hargreaves network-model are distributed. I will also suggest how the specific modes of connection with the environment that I have highlighted – affect attunement and metaphorical projection – may be seen as distributed. Needless to say, this preliminary sketch allows for further detail of each thematic aspect, as well as of further aspects. The three networks concern *musical archives*, *spaces and contexts*, and *identifications*. As the distinctions between the networks are thematic constructs, some amount of overlap is inevitable. The types of connection relating the networks with the environment are *metaphorical projection* and *affect attunement*.

2.1 Music archives

The associative network defining each listener's culture specific knowledge of music is not only localized in personal memory, but distributed in various multiple 'archives'. Whereas culture-specific knowledge may be such that enables categorization and labeling of songs, styles, genres, artists, etc., the specific instances of each category are archived in collective memories, recordings of different sorts (from notations to digital sound files), collections of such recordings, from libraries to the digital storage of different streaming sites, etc. Control in this case will largely be a matter of access to and availability of the different archives. As the decades around the millennial turn have shown, public availability of digital music archives is to a large extent subject to the copyright control of the music business (e.g. Volgsten 2013, Volgsten & Åkerberg 2006). The impact of corporate copyright control increases proportionally with the waning of personal record collections (so common during the second half of the 20th century), as streaming services become more and more widespread. However, archives of any sort are not, and have never been, "neutral" tools for memory, but had better be seen as selective "anticipation[s]" of collective memory (Appadurai 2003). The

same goes for collective memories, the access to and availability of which quite naturally require collective situations and contexts for the memories to be actualized. In other words, there has to be places, virtual or real, for the members of cultural collectives to meet.

2.2 Spaces and Contexts

The significance of music depends largely on where the music may be encountered. Whereas most music today is available through commercial mass media, this was not so in earlier times (Fornäs 2014). Music was largely tied to certain localizations and times depending on its social and ritual function. But irrespective of its diffusion through media today, we may even now expect different music to be played in a church, in a concert hall, or in a nightclub. Different places, situations, and contexts may thus function as associative nodes in a distributed network, enabling different kinds of "fit" for different kinds of music (e.g. North & Hargreaves 2006). Consequently the transfer of music from one context to another may alter its meaning and significance for the listener, for better or worse (Brown & Volgsten 2000). Moreover, situations and contexts depend on socially produced space (cf. Schmid 2008).

2.3 Identifications – personal and collective

Music affords the listener to do identity work, both on the individual and on the collective level. I mark my identification with a specific group by listening to a specific kind of music, for instance Euro disco, hip-hop, or early music. Who I am depends on other persons who I am not, who identify with the same kind of music as I do, and those who do not (Hall 1996, Volgsten 2014a). Thus both our personal and our collective identities are distributed beyond

our bodily limits. As our identities become more movable and flexible, less fixed and predetermined, as result of globalization of media and communications, the question of who decides the personal and cultural identity of an individual becomes more and more urgent (Benhabib 2002). Who am I allowed to be? Who decides? For some, this question may be no more than an opportunity for witty ways of deriding the "disgusting habits" of the liberal "forms of life" that intrudes on one's own immaculate *culture* (Scruton op cit., 386 et passim); for others, in other situations, this same attitude may be what literally turns the question into one of life or death, which the murder and execution of many musicians and artists attest to (Korpe, Reitov & Cloonan 2006).

2.4 Metaphorical projection

Whereas it was Immanuel Kant that brought the issue of metaphor's role for imagination to the light (Johnson 1987, 161f), it was only in the wake of his 'third critique' that genius came to be seen as the original and exclusive locus of artistic creativity (see Battersby 1989, Volgsten 2014b, both of which also discuss Kant's precursors in the systematic erection of genius). This was a necessary soil for the development of copyright, and although the myth of genius has long since been discarded in legal contexts, it lingers on in popular versions, which thereby justify the expansion and extension of copyright laws, both locally and globally. Against this tendency works the cognitive sciences and philosophies of mind that argue for the distributed character of music, mind, and imagination – that is, a displacement of the creative powers beyond the enclosed and appropriating soul of the romantic (male) genius. That verbally generated metaphors require language is a truism, and of course language is distributed among those who speak it and their written traces. However an important instance of control may also be metaphor itself, which in its "structural" capacities projects the

relationship of an entire categorized domain of experience onto another uncategorized domain (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 61ff). When a structural metaphor has got hold of a domain it is difficult to apply and make sense of a deviating metaphor, irrespectively of whether it has its source in otherwise relevant body schemata or not. A particularly interesting case is the metaphor of the musical 'work', and the continuous struggles of different parties throughout the ages to explicate the metaphor according to their own interests (von Loesch 1998, 1999, Volgsten 2015). As Paul Ricoeur points out, when a new metaphor is alive and kicking, it puts conventional wisdom within brackets (Ricoeur 1978), which is why it will be contested by those for whom it will mean a disadvantage.

2.5 Affect attunement

Following the work of Tania Zittoun and Fréderick Cerchia, sonic imagination can be described as a temporary "disjunction between the flow of embodied experience, anchored in the unfolding reality, and the flow of inner life or consciousness," initiated by some sound or music, resulting in a conjunct "expanded experience" (Zittoun & Cerchia 2013, 17). Although mainly modeled on metaphor, as a general outline the description works quite well for affect attunement too, in so far as we conceive of the encounter with music as a momentary rupture that strives towards a "flow" between the self and the world (but see Stern 2004, 42f, on the asocial character of flow). Equally important is the outcome, an expanded experience, which in the case of sound may implicate a judgment that it is music one hears – what I described above as an ontological expansion of the soundscape. An, or perhaps the important difference between metaphorical projections and affect attunement to sound and music is the temporal character of affect attunement. Affect attunement not only takes time, it articulates time and so makes chronological time graspable as an expanded affective experience (Stern op cit., 7,

et passim), which may recur in different sensuous guises (Massumi 2003).[v] Can attunement be controlled? Or can it only be destroyed through intentional misattunement? To some extent affect attunement can be controlled through any of the ways that the other distributed aspects of imagination can: for instance through the place and context where attunement occurs (a classical concert at a concert hall will not allow attunement through dancing or singing along); through knowledge about what is heard (when it is not deemed worthy of attention, and thus of attunement); or through personal identity ('I don't like this kind of music, it is not addressed to my kind' and so attunement is occluded). But as we shall see in a moment, there are positive ways too of taking control of attunement.

2.6 Notes on a case study: control of sonic imagination among participants in a Swedish music association

To exemplify the issue of fantasy control I have chosen the case of three young participants in a Kurdish music association in Stockholm, Sweden. The participants were interviewed as part of a project aimed at investigating the role of music in Sweden's many state-financed culture associations based on 'ethnic' grounds (see Volgsten & Pripp, forthcoming). The informants' replies, which are briefly summarized here, tell about several instances of control of imagination, both positive and negative.

As perhaps the most obvious form of control, Kurdish music has been subject to censorship by the Turkish state. Since 1924, and for much of the 20th century, public use of Kurdish language has been prohibited. In line with this, "in 1967 the Turkish government made it illegal for Kurds to own or distribute recordings in a language other than Turkish" (Blum & Hassanpour 1996). The restrictions on Kurdish language have since been relaxed and the

traditional *Dengbêj* singing has been allowed (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009, Schäfers, 2015). To the three interviewees, all born in Sweden and thus not subject to the restrictions directly, the era of censorship remains as a backdrop for their cultural identities. Against this underdog tendency works the active seizing of control over their access to public space that the active participation in a cultural association allows. The association is housed in the suburb Alvik in Stockholm, where courses in Kurdish music (singing, playing and dancing) are organized, as well as wedding parties are hosted, etc. The space of the association is not limited to the actual locale of the association, however, but also extend to the virtual space of the Internet, wherein young Swedish Kurds disseminate traditional Kurdish music, as well as popular music with texts dealing with Kurdish issues. In addition, the interviewees have all worked actively with various festivals to raise money for Kurdish refugees. Thus we can see how archives of collective memories, as well as situations and contexts are resources of sonic imagination over which different social and political interests struggle. However it should be pointed out that neither the state-financed culture organization or the Internet provide 'free spaces' in any absolute sense; each allocating its own forms for expression, the former subject to governmental cultural policy and bureaucratic praxis, the other subject to the corporative logic of commercially financed sites and platforms.

A closely related issue concerns the question of identity, both on a collective and on a personal level. The way I experience music in different contexts and situations depends to a significant extent on who I am, who and what I identify with personally and culturally. For the interviewees this is very much a question of negotiating and defining their identities as Swedes with Kurdish backgrounds. As 'new' identities, from a traditional Swedish perspective, they are frequently being questioned and even denied by some anti-immigrant activists. To an extent this alienating tendency also goes for the traditional Kurdish

perspective, the vantage point of which does not automatically confirm the notion of a Swedish Kurd. Although this is not an uncommon situation for people in diaspora, it may have different consequences for sonic imagination. Two of the three interviewees emphasized how, as they approached their twenties, the Swedish and international pop music of their upbringings were suddenly set in relation to the Kurdish music that had remained as a background foil in their homes. Whereas their personal identities were to a large extent articulated with and against their peers in a Swedish context with pop music, their Kurdish heritage was articulated against and with a different 'soundtrack' in a rather exclusive way. As they were leaving their teens behind, the interviewees recount, the Kurdish and the Swedish identities that had until then been quite separate, now started to interact in a more self-reflective and inclusive manner. In the process of self-identification sonic imagination was consciously taken control over.

When it comes to talking about specific experiences of music it is the Kurdish music of their childhood homes that crop up in the interviews. Two aspects are particularly interesting from the perspective of sonic imagination. The first that is mentioned is the omnipresence of dance. As one interviewee puts it, "as soon as you cried, mom or dad put on some music, Kurdish music, and then you danced." The other thing mentioned is the sound of the music, of the particular instruments: "you recognize the songs and the instruments, and that gives you a feeling of security." In the first place we see how music not only affords dance and emotional self-regulation; it is also remembered as such. As result of metaphorical projections, music is conceived of, and thus stored in memory, in terms of the body schemata that encodes the movements of dance. The body "starts to dance by itself" when music is heard. The other aspect mentioned is sound, the particular sensuous sounds of the instruments: "the instruments make us feel, they awake emotions in us, a sort of homesickness for Kurdistan."

What connects the two – dance and sound – is affect. A similar affective experience is evoked by the triggering of a body schema, in the one case through the close connection between listening and dancing to music (via body schemata music affords the dance that invokes the positive affect), and in the other case through the specific situational and contextual memories that mediate the sound of the instruments (as a part for whole, the sound evokes memories of music associated through body schemata with positive affect).

This brings us once again to affect attunement. The affect experienced in the above cases (dance and sound) is an affect attuned to. Depending on the situation (context and/or current personal mood) attunement may be either encouraged or discouraged. Interesting to note is what may be described as different routes to a similar affective experience, via either dance or sound. A phenomenon of a similar kind appears in the description by one of the interviewees of her attempts to understand her father's traumatic war experiences through music. Although her father was reluctant to tell her anything in detail, either about his experiences or his feelings about what he had been through, she pieced together the narrative fragments she could recollect with the often sad songs he used to sing to himself, all resulting in what she experienced as a feeling of getting close to her father and understanding him on an emotional level. This can be explained as an instance of sounding music mediating a concealed lived experience (the father's) through a common affective experience. The father's war memories folded into an affective envelope (cf. above) that could be repeated, transformed into a sensuous expression of music, to which the daughter intentionally attuned (cf. Stern 2004, 62ff). Affect attunement thus enabled the interviewee to take control of imagination and thereby tighten her relationship with her father through the affective mediation that the music afforded. Without succumbing to the theoretical temptation of reifying affects – we can only attune to others' affective expressions, never appropriate or incorporate them – this final

example reveals what might prove to be the most powerful means there is of controlling imagination: that of sound and music mediating lived experience through serving as an iterable body of feeling.

Summary

Hargreaves' model of imagination, as a set of associative networks wherein links between nodes may be made up, changed and deleted, has some serious blind spots. Taking into account Eleanor Rosch's theory of different levels of categorization (basic, sub-, and superordinate) it is possible to make complementary distinctions between conceptual and non-conceptual relations within the networks of imagination and to the surrounding world. These distinctions also have consequences for the notion of musical affordances that prove to be more complex than at first sight, considering the difference between the conceptual (and cultural) and the non-conceptual. The work of Mark Johnson aids us by explaining how metaphorical transfers of body schemata feed non-conceptual temporal experiences to the conceptual realm. Nevertheless Johnson does not go far enough in tracing the non-conceptual roots of music. Adding the developmental-psychological insights of Daniel Stern concerning the role of bodily felt affect attunement for the emergence of the human being's sense of self and other, enables the novel claim that a similar and derivative process underlies our emergent sense of music. Moreover, affect attunement can itself be described as a process of metaphor. Being an outcome of affect attunement, music can thus be said to build on the same protomusical qualities as the human beings' pre-conceptual senses of self in relation to others. This in its turn explains the pervasive descriptions of musical experiences in emotional terms as not stemming from any mystic but a fundamentally social realm – which ultimately implies that music cannot be successfully explained without consideration of the bodily, the social

and the cultural.

Studying the control of imagination is possible in so far as imagination is distributed beyond the confines of human brains and nervous systems. According to the present view distribution of imagination is present in each of the three associative networks proposed by Hargreaves (here defined as *musical archives*, *contexts*, and *identifications*), as well as in the two modes of connection with the environment suggested, i.e. metaphorical transfers of body schemata and affect attunement. Whereas the control of archives to a large extent is a question of availability, whereby the regimes of copyright and on-line streaming may have a constraining impact, context is decisive in matters of fit for different kinds of music, while personal and collective identity affects the openness to different kinds of music, as well as different kinds of music tend to promote certain identities at the cost of others.

Projections of temporal schemata feed conceptual imagination with various bodily experiences of the environment, and as much as metaphor may open up new realms of imagination, it simultaneously infers new limits and constraints as the metaphor in question seizes new domains and becomes literal. Affect attunement in the case of music enables the emergent sense of music as other than oneself. To the extent that affect attunement can be controlled it is through the same ways by which other distributed aspects of imagination can: through the spaces, situations and contexts where attunement occurs; through knowledge about what is heard; and through the processes of personal and collective identification.

Finally the case of the Kurdish music association in Stockholm highlights the everyday functioning of imagination and the possibilities and constraints for each and everyone to take control over imagination (rather than reserving the creative powers of imagination to the myth

of genius). It shows how control of imagination issues in cases of personal identity and collective solidarity, as well as in the actively produced spaces for these imaginative processes. More specifically, it shows how positive affect is produced through different connections between affect attunement and metaphorically extended body schemata. In the end, then, investigating the control of imagination seems to have directed us to nothing less than the very essentials of imagination, what Hargreaves would describe as the reciprocal-feedback relationships of the linkages between the nodes in the associative networks. Or more simply put, the flexibility and ingenuity of imagination.

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[i] Paraphrasing Kantian terminology one might say that Hargreaves' model deals more with understanding (*Verstand*) than with imagination (*Einbildung*). This may be because Hargreaves starts his discussion from a "creative" composer/player perspective, whereas the perspective taken here is more inclusively directed towards perception and listening (cf. note iv).

[ii] This notion of affect – literally 'vitality affect' – is more encompassing, event-like and experiential than that of Massumi (1995). For a discussion of Stern's concept of vitality affects, see Køppe, et al (2008).

[iii] Given the circumstances by which music is usually encountered, music is always already conceptualized by preceding peers. As put by one commentator, with explicit reference to Martin Heidegger, "human beings are 'thrown into' a world of meaningful discourses and practices, and it is this world that enable them to identify and engage with the objects they encounter" (Howarth 2000, 9).

[iv] The label 'listener' must be used with caution and should not be confused with a contemplative listener in a modern Western sense.

[v] See note ii.