Authenticity: An Experientialist Aesthetic

by

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Remy Martin
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Summary

In this thesis I establish an experientialist, listener-focused account of authenticity in relation to recorded popular song. In response to limited musicological and phenomenological examination of listener authentication, I develop a synthesis of authenticity, self, and identity (as understood in ‘social’ theory, philosophy, psychology, and musicology) and embodied-ecological accounts of music perception and experience. Throughout, it is argued that authenticating experiences of ownership and agency arise within active, intentional, and imaginative encounters with music.

Material is organised in four parts. In the opening sections of Part One I lay the intellectual foundations for an aesthetic of authenticity that has interrelated phenomenological, temporal, processual, and relational components. Following this, I establish a composite theoretical framework that draws together strands of ecological theory, embodied cognition and phenomenologically-oriented accounts of embodiment.

In Part Two I posit authentication as grounded in bodily experience. After considering the phenomenological and musicological efficacy of Mark Johnson’s image schema theory and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms’, I examine affordances of motional entrainment, gestural recognition, affect, and temporal flow.

Ecological correspondences between listener and song form the focus of Part Three, where, through the analysis of three case studies, I argue that authentication can emerge from the disclosure of ecologies – both real and imagined – that afford recognition, identification, and immersion.
In Part Four I summarise my theoretic-analytical strategy, make a critical case for the phenomenological-hermeneutic treatment of listening experience, and, acknowledging authenticity’s ethical charge, probe more thoroughly the influence of musical experience (of self).
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INTRODUCTION

How is it that we can emerge from song with a sense of having something new to say about ourselves and/or the world around us? How can the situations imagined in the act of listening speak to and for us? Why does experiencing (self in) music – as a unique form of aesthetic engagement – matter?

To grant these questions significance, we must accept a few fundamental ideas. First, engaging with music is an act of meaning-making that is undertaken within and in relation to the wider context of everyday life. To confine music to a hermetic domain is to ignore the consequences of our interactions with it; listening to music, and interpreting the meanings we experience in it, is not an aesthetic interrogation that defines only ‘musical’ stances and tastes. Second, we should aim to describe and provide explanation for the peculiarities of musical experience. A way forward, and the spirit within which this thesis advances, is to react to recent intellectual developments that alert us to the possibility of identifying shared processes behind the forming of meaning in aesthetic experience and from everyday experience. These initial questions and ideas are at the core of two issues that I confront, and collide, in this thesis. The first concerns that ‘vexed problem’ of how to (re)understand ‘authenticity’ in relation to popular music listening experience. ‘Identity’ and ‘subjectivity’ could (and do, at times) stand in, though I engage

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1 Derek Scott (from General Editor’s Preface to the Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series, 2012).
'authenticity’ in full knowledge of its burdens. I commit to ‘authenticity’ aware, too, of an intellectual milieu I draw from and want to reach out to. The second is understanding the extent to which the embodied-ecological mechanisms that bring order and understanding to everyday life enable us to construct meaningful subjectivities in our encounters with music. While embodied-ecological experience is now being researched with renewed vigour and methodologies, these tend to be treated in isolation: authenticity as concerning the philosophical and ethical (who am I? How should I comport myself?) and the domain of the embodied-ecological as the cognitive, perceptual and experiential (how does an experience come about? What is the basis for understanding?). While pressing questions of identity have been confronted through the embodied mind thesis, an extensive account of self and authenticity, in the study of music, that has an explicitly phenomenological, listener-based focus has yet to emerge. It is here that this thesis makes its contribution.

Contestations of authenticity saturate academic, fan and journalistic writing on popular music. The term authenticity has, extraordinarily, retained its currency in discussions of all kinds of popular music right up to the present day. This resilience is noteworthy as the discussion of authenticity has remained dominant in popular music discourse despite historical shifts in production, distribution and consumption. Ubiquity has, however, come at a price. As musicologist Emily Dolan notes, ‘authenticity has been an especially complicated site within the academy’. The centricity of authenticity to discussions of popular music also remains despite intellectual refutations of its worth. However, for a number of thinkers, from musicology and far beyond, ‘authenticity rises afresh from the conflagration of postmodernism’. This is evidenced in

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2 Clemens Wöllner’s recent collection is exemplary. Clemens Wöllner (ed.), Body, Sound and Space in Music and Beyond: Multimodal Explorations (Oxon: Routledge, 2017).
the new intellectual contexts in which authenticity continues to be posited. For this reason, and
the pertinence it assigns authenticity, Anne Desler’s recent intervention in *Popular Music* is worthy
of mention here. In ‘History without royalty? Queen and the strata of the popular music canon’, Desler
examines the way in which constructions of authenticity impact upon popular music canon
formation. Her argument is that canon formation in popular music is based on the same criteria
as in the ‘high arts’, albeit with one crucial revision: authenticity replaces ‘greatness’ as a third
touchstone of artistic merit and in the formation of the ‘critical canon’, ‘constructions of
authenticity serve as the key criterion for the evaluation of artistic merit’.

A continued intellectual engagement with authenticity is needed for other reasons worth
debating at this point. It is possible, for instance, to recognise the limited focus of academic studies
of authenticity and popular music. This has been instructive and made possible the examination
of criteria of popular music value, the ethical philosophies that frame listeners’ aesthetic
engagements, and, the individual and collective identities implicated and constructed in the act
of listening. But lacunae do remain. I do not attempt to present a panoptic account of authenticity
(I doubt such a thing is possible), but instead establish an experientialist aesthetic centred on the
act of listening; in doing so, I follow and expand the listener- and identity-focused studies
mentioned above. Within this, affordances of embodied-ecological ownership and agency are the
primary analytical concern. That is, how: we ‘encounter music as engaged and embodied selves’ and
how this bodily responsiveness shapes (our understanding of) song meaning and, correspondingly, (inter)subjectivities; we can sense an ownership of experience and, with this,

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9 Ibid., p. 401.
music; music specifies familiar and potential ‘worlds’; phenomenological involvements with sound worlds afford (inter)subjective agency.

A further reason rests on the argument, with which I agree, that sound should direct musicological enquiry. Songs, idiolects, and styles that elude and challenge normative definitions of authenticity demand intelligent response. While journalistic writing can be a source of insight, interpretations typically lack anchorage in sonic details and too often the concept of authenticity is applied as a crude evaluative marker rather than as a means through which to discuss listening experience in detail. For the musicologically-minded this is troubling. I do not urge a rush to formal(istic) analysis, and remain equally suspicious of musicological fixations on and abstractions of form as I do of speculations of musical meaning that make no reference whatsoever to sound structures. To adopt either of these extremes is to risk missing how music uniquely operates and how its means of operation direct its potential to afford meaningful response. Yet within the academic study of popular music, there are few accounts which chart in detail the relations between listeners’ experiences of authenticity and authentication – of (self)identity being affirmed, recognised, liberated, or empowered – and the sound worlds such experiences emerge from. This unwillingness, or inability, to confront the musical text has, in vernacular and academic writing on music, led to a form of inarticulacy, the consequences of which are considered more fully in Part One. Suffice it to say, sensible claims for the meaning(s) of a song should have some grounding in the details of the artefact under discussion.

But as well as retaining a concern for the text, an experiential perspective also demands the identification and explanation of the connections forged within that listening experience. This requires reflection and demands the articulation and synthesis of the memory of that experience. Of course, some sense of an experience can remain without a full analytical follow through, but to establish a secure, even if mutable, understanding of the significance an experience has for you, at least some engagement with your memory of it is required. Furthermore, without articulation it is impossible to compare our experience with that of other listeners. It is impossible to know whether
we are hearing or feeling the same things and it is also impossible to disclose ways of listening to others. Without explanation, meaning is quarantined. The consequence of this being that important opportunities for the recognition and affirmation of (inter)subjectivities are missed.

My approach is, necessarily, interdisciplinary. Influential sites include musicology, recent discussions of music and ethics, embodied cognition, music perception, phenomenology, ecological psychology, and ‘social’ theory. But taken from what angle and in what balance? Georgina Born’s outlining of ‘modes and logics’ of interdisciplinarity is of help here. My research project originally took flight squarely from within a ‘subordination-service’ mode of operation; this, Born explains, involves one or more disciplines being organised ‘in a relation of subordination or service to other component disciplines’. Musicology remains the dominant voice here and musicological ambition, the enrichment of phenomenological-hermeneutic description, is the main driver. Ultimately, this thesis should be read as a broad examination of analytic, hermeneutic, and phenomenological theory concentrated through the problem of authenticating listening experience. I do not explicitly urge the epistemic change Born calls for – which includes a rejection of musicology’s traditionally philological-historicist stance, an advocacy of ‘value pluralism’, and a move away from the musical ‘text’ as it relates to the score and authorial intention – though my approach does satisfy several of her recommendations. First, I am not explicitly concerned with stylistic origins (or ‘originals’) and, aside from brief but necessary autobiographical and stylistic considerations, do not engage in historical presentation. My music examples range from 1999 to 2017 and, thus, I do address (underexamined) ‘musics of the present’. I do not make claims of value along conventional lines and, if an aesthetic advocacy is to be read in my analyses, it results from attempts at phenomenological description. Of course, to choose examples

15 Ibid., p. 211.
16 Ibid., pp. 216–219.
17 Ibid., p. 217.
(here ‘listening encounters’\textsuperscript{18}) is to impose some order of importance, though when I say that particular aspects of a track afford a particular form of engagement, I do not mean to idealise that artefact, but merely to face up to the realities of my experience of it. Finally, in emphasising experience as it emerges from interactions between listener and track, I follow recent ontological re-orientations of the musicological text. As relevant literature is surveyed, some of which is itself deeply interdisciplinary, and the experiential definition of authentication is deepened, this disciplinary emphasis becomes temporarily less one-sided. But while parts seem to move some way toward a mutualism that characterises Born’s ‘integrative-synthesis’\textsuperscript{19} interdisciplinary mode, it would be wrong to assign this modality to the work as a whole.

What, then, of logic? Of the three logics Born observes, ‘accountability’ is perhaps the closest to describing my own aims. I hope to illuminate the issue of listener authentication in a way that opens the discussion up to various disciplines, some of which have already offered contributions. And while I follow some valuable interdisciplinary interactions, some of the literature I engage with has, as far as I am aware, yet to run into popular music scholarship. With respect to other contributions to knowledge, in this thesis I critically examine established and emerging theoretical and analytical approaches; develop a synthesis of authenticity, self, and identity (as understood in ‘social’ theory, philosophy, psychology, and musicology) and embodied-ecological accounts of music perception and experience; sketch a phenomenologically-oriented, \textit{processual} approach to analysing and interpreting listening experience (that is applicable well beyond popular music); substantiate critical and philosophical speculation (of music’s affective and ethical influence) through musicological analysis and reference to empirically-supported perceptual theory; and establish a rich theoretic foundation for the study of authenticating listening experience.

\textsuperscript{18} I favour this term on account of its experiential, temporal, and processual sense. I am also cognisant of its use in core philosophical readings, namely Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen’s \textit{Music and Ethics} and Kathleen Higgins’ \textit{The Music of Our Lives}. Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen, \textit{Music and Ethics}, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). Higgins, \textit{The Music of Our Lives}.

\textsuperscript{19} Born, ‘For a Relational Musicology’, p. 211.
Four substantial parts constitute this work, and their organisation forms a very basic plot. After an initial parade of pertinent ideas and theory (Part One), Part Two and Part Three profile listening encounters, while Part Four provides an opportunity to reconvene and consider the consequences of the musical encounters analysed. That the central bulk of this thesis is centred on and requires listening is not insignificant; it is part of a deliberate avoidance of the top-down imposition of theory on listening. Elsewhere, I have written about a distinction in rock musicology\(^\text{20}\) between authors that take theoretical exposition as the bedrock of listening experience and authors that apply theory in the service of explaining listening experience. I follow the latter, and in this thesis the application of theory is viewed as a means of meeting descriptive and explanatory demands. I also have in mind a comment made by Nicholas Cook in his review of Thomas Clifton’s *Music as Heard: A Study in Applied Phenomenology*: ‘A common failing of writers on musical phenomenology is to spend so long on theoretical prolegomena that they never address music’.\(^\text{21}\) Nevertheless, prior to analysis a significant amount of preparatory work must be undertaken. A general conception of authenticity and meaning must be established. In addition to this, approaches to studying experience must be reviewed and a theoretic foundation for such study sketched. In Part One I outline the wider intellectual milieu that my research draws from and contributes to and, in doing so, begin to lay the foundations for an aesthetic of authenticity that has interconnected phenomenological, relational, temporal, and processual components. In the first subsection, I parade established as well as more recent accounts of authenticity. In philosophical discussions, I observe an emphasis on uniqueness, originality, emotion, and the problem of how these are reconciled with our social and temporal selves. I also find the ‘inner’ (self-understanding, affective experience, personal convictions) and ‘outer’ opposition (reflectivity, interpersonal relations, recognition from others) played out in psychological and social accounts.


In my review of popular music scholarship, I identify some crucial attempts to avoid essentialist evaluations of artists, performances, and recordings. From this brief cross-disciplinary survey, authenticity and authentication emerge as situated and dynamic. Following this, I offer a brief preemptive response to the (always immanent) claim that liberating authenticity from a fixed (essentialist) grounding will result in individualistic, hermetic, and solipsistic meaning(s) and discourse. Here, subjective and intersubjective conceptions of listener-text relations are reviewed, and I place emphasis on the interpretation and *explanation* of listening(s). In the third section of Part One I focus on experience – the direct appeals songs can make to our affective sense of self and the world around us – and start to consider embodied engagement a means of accessing meaning. While this phenomenon enters discussions of all kinds about the capacities of music and its resonances with identity, experiential accounts of listener authentication remain scarce. Those works that do acknowledge the experiential basis of listener affirmation tend not to specify what kinds of experience are afforded to the listener, nor do they specify affording musical structures. And descriptions of musical experience, if they are given, are often not supported by perceptual theory or phenomenological description. The final section of Part One introduces a composite theoretic foundation.

Part Two opens with a survey of how the body has been understood in popular scholarship. Within this I acknowledge the contributions of eminent scholars in challenging the reductive, and all too common, equation of popular music with sex and/or primitivism. I posit the listening (listener) body, rather than the performing (performer) body, centre stage. It is in Part Two that a range of embodied concepts are put to analytic and hermeneutic work. After noting musicological and philosophical limitations of image-schema theory, I turn to recent phenomenological accounts of movement, affect, and temporality in the analysis of several listening encounters. What emerges from Part Two, more generally, is an initial sketch of an *embodied hermeneutics* of recorded popular song.
Part Three explores ecological relations between listener(s) and song. In the first subsection, ‘Space, place, and affect’, I parade pertinent discussions from popular music studies, popular musicology, and ethnomusicology which offer perspectives on music performance within ‘spaces’; music as giving rise to personal memories of place; the use of music to emplace subjective potentialities; and sonic specifications of space and place. While the link between song and remembered places (‘this song takes me back to…’) is perhaps the most obvious instance of ecological authentication, it is the last two of these that I explore. Through the probing of three encounters, I begin to sketch a view of ecological authentication as arising from the musical specification of topographic spaces, perceptual ‘reality’, social environment, affective spaces, and sites of collective action.

The purpose of Part Four is to consider the consequences of the listening undertaken in Part Two and Part Three. To do this, I consider my analytical findings in relation to the survey initiated in Part One. While Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen\(^\text{22}\) argue for a replacement of the ‘authentic subject’ with the ‘relational subject’, here I argue instead for a conception of authentication that has relationality as a crucial component. And like Cobussen and Nielsen, and Kathleen Higgins,\(^\text{23}\) I locate popular music’s capacity to exert ethical influence in its affordance of embodied-ecological experience. It is first necessary, however, to confront head on ‘that dreaded “a” word’.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{22}\) Cobussen, and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, p. 156.


PART ONE

Theoretical and Intellectual Background

1.1 The Ideal of Authenticity

Claims for authenticity (and inauthenticity) are ineludible. Authenticity continues to carry currency into the discussions in which it occupies a central role, and a yearning to be authentic (or at least to appear to be) seems ever present. To understand popular music scholarship’s preoccupation with authenticity, and to argue for a rejuvenated effort, it is first necessary to examine the idea within a wider intellectual landscape. An interdisciplinary inspection, here involving philosophy, sociology, psychology, cultural theory and musicology, reveals a central ideal of authenticity that appears in various guises and in several discrete contexts. Temporarily adopting a broader, though certainly not exhaustive, perspective, encourages us to look beyond the narrow conceptions that too often dominate commentaries on popular music. Significantly, such a perspective urges us to challenge, expand and deepen our understanding of particular dimensions of authenticity. This is all a single doctoral thesis can hope to achieve. In this initial review, I engage with recent

contributions to the authenticity discussion in relation to more established works and surveys. Admittedly, several ideas are introduced with the promise of further treatment later.

The philosopher Charles Guignon\(^2\) traces a history of authenticity as it has been lived and understood. Emerging from his survey is a contemporary ideal driven by an ethic peculiar to our cultural present. The formulation of this ideal, Guignon observes, is a result of a reimagining of the self, both in its constitution and its role in everyday life. In summary, this involved a shift from cosmo-centric and theo-centric pre-modern worldviews to an anthropocentric preoccupation with the cultivation and enactment of subjectivities. In this ideal of authenticity, terms such as ‘deep’, ‘bounded’, and ‘subjectivity’ are pertinent and are underpinned by assumptions of ‘truth’, ‘originality’, ‘the real’, and ‘the unspun’.\(^3\) We will be returning to these terms at various points throughout the chapter, and across the thesis. This is necessary to gauge their individual currency and their interrelations in modern conceptions of authenticity - none of these terms carry a singular meaning in discussions of authenticity, nor do they surface without controversy.

For Guignon, ‘deepness’ concerns Romantic sensibilities that remain central to current ideals of authenticity. Most notably, that to be authentic one must immerse oneself ‘in one’s own deepest and most intense feelings’.

\(^4\) Thus, the word ‘deep’ not only serves to describe the potential magnitude of an experience of self, it also defines a crucial turn inward. The interrelation of these two aspects of authenticity, as we presently experience, demand and perform it, has been a primary interest of the self-help industry and, as Guignon observes, celebrity celebrants of the ‘authentic self’.\(^5\) However, we also find this dimension of authenticity prioritised in psychological scholarship and practice. An authentic(ating) engagement with emotion and feeling is encouraged in Carl Rogers’ influential client-centred therapy. Here, an ‘openness to experience\(^6\) and an awareness and acceptance of that experience, are necessary steps toward a flourishing (or ‘becoming’). The goal

\(^2\) Guignon, *On Being Authentic*.
\(^5\) Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Phil are cited as exemplary.
of this is to actualise – Rogers frames his idea within Kierkegaard’s early existentialist soundbite – ‘that self which one truly is’. We find a similar idea in Ralph Turner’s sociological concern with self-conception where Turner observes impulse as a locus of self. To impulsives, ‘deep, unsocialised, inner impulses’ are accepted as meaningful sources of self and are not to be considered deviant, or as necessarily inspiring deviance. The (ethical) challenge for the impulsive is to establish a congruity between impulse and comportment. In these accounts, we can observe a Rousseauian elevation of pre-reflective feeling. In Rousseau’s thinking (usefully summarised by Guignon), rather than being a somatic distraction from moral horizons revealed and abided by through rationality, taking seriously one’s felt organismic processes is crucial to recovering authentic moral contact with ourselves and others. In asserting that inwardly generated and phenomenological self-definitions inform our relations with others, this idea grants a relational significance to experience.

Following Johann Herder, Charles Taylor invokes the principle of originality in relation to the inward turn. In what Taylor describes (with audible suspicion) as ‘the culture of authenticity’, the authentic individual is the individual that discovers and enacts an originality. This, Taylor observes, is the commanding moral ideal of our time: ‘There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else’s. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of life, I miss what being human is for me’. That the source of this originality is deemed to be deep within the individual is a cause for concern as on the surface it appears to render the pursuit of originality, as a key marker of the authentic self, a solipsistic undertaking. This, Taylor asserts, need not be the case; however, to avoid the cultivation of trivial, self-absorbed subjectivities in the name of experiencing the ‘real me’, the individual must acquire the ability to frame their own self-

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8 Guignon, On Being Authentic, p. 58.
10 Ibid., p. 29.
development within wider contexts. This includes the social networks within which we satisfy our ‘need for recognition’.11 Being aware of the dialogical nature of human life is, Taylor asserts, a critical step in precluding narcissistic individualism. This is one way in which the ideal of authenticity supposes relationality. The acknowledgement that identities are constructed through dialogue, both within and without, in turn reveals the necessity of articulation – to fully be authentic(ated), it is not sufficient for self-understanding to be concealed. Taylor understands this as the expressivism of the modern individual:

The notion that each one of us has an original way of being human entails that each of us has to discover what it is to be ourselves. But the discovery can’t be made by consulting pre-existing models, by hypothesis. So it can be made only by articulating it afresh. We discover what we have in us to be by becoming that mode of life, by giving in our speech and action to what is original in us.12

A similar conception of authenticity finds expression in Guignon’s account of the contemporary ideal of authenticity:

The ideal of authenticity has two components. First the project of becoming authentic asks us to get in touch with the real self we have within, a task that is achieved primarily through introspection, self-reflection or meditation. Only if we can candidly appraise ourselves and achieve genuine self-knowledge can we begin to realize our capacity for authentic existence. Second, this ideal calls on us to express that unique constellation of inner traits

11 Ibid., p. 44.
12 Ibid., p. 61.
in our actions in the external world- to actually be what we are in our ways of being present in our relationships, careers, and practical activities.\textsuperscript{13}

These accounts confront how the ‘authentic life’ is (or at least can be) lived and understood through forms of introspection and expression. Before turning my attention to how popular music is utilised by listeners as a resource for engaging in such activity, a few normative applications of the term ‘authenticity’ in popular music discourse need to be considered. Surveying these reveals a prioritisation of the evaluation of performers’ enactments, as authentic or inauthentic, over how listeners use popular music to experience authentication. This disproportion is, unfortunately, still evident in writing on popular music. Unfortunate, because without a deep and thorough speculation of the possible ways in which listeners can be said to commit themselves in the act of listening, musicology fails in its responsibility to attempt to provide sufficient answers to pressing ‘so what’ questions. Without a deepening and expansion of the discussion of authenticity in relation to listeners’ engagements, glaring lacunae remain in our answers to questions as fundamental as ‘why do we bother listening?’, ‘why bother talking and/or writing about our listenings?’, ‘how and why do we use music to form and project identities?’

Does Leona Lewis know what it feels like to ‘bleed love’? Are we convinced, or indeed impressed, by Ed Sheeran’s claims to be a humble hoody-wearing singer-songwriter from Suffolk? Even a cursory browse of internet fora and social media threads reveals a vast landscape of fervently contested claims for the ideals of authenticity contained within these questions. Despite evidence of some resistance to calling on ideas of authenticity (as crudely displayed in Phil Sherburne’s dismissal, see section 2.6), evaluations of authenticity, as it relates to an artist’s expression, remain rife in journalistic writing. A recent example of this is the agreement found in several prominent popular music blogs that the authenticity (as sincerity) expressed in Future

\textsuperscript{13} Guignon, \textit{On Being Authentic}, p. 6.
Islands’ ‘Seasons (Waiting on You)’ is pertinent enough for the track to be rendered the best of 2014:

Over a strident, simple bass pattern, Herring’s voice pulls and strains and wavers at all the crucial moments, from emotive peaks to deep baritone lows, flecked with grit and gravel. His sheer unfashionable sincerity, as he conveys feelings of hope and disenchantment that rise and fall with the undulating wash of synthesiser, is notable for how much it stands out from current pop trends.14

The propensity for listeners to evaluate the ‘truth’ or ‘sincerity’ of an expression has been observed in a number of crucial musicological interventions. In Global Pop, Timothy Taylor provides an account of the authenticities demanded of ‘world music’ performers by western audiences. Of Taylor’s tripartite model, ‘authenticity of emotionality’15 is most congruent with this kind of authenticity. Here, however, the presentation of spiritual self-knowledge is as prized as the expression of ‘real’ emotion. Listeners’ constructions of ‘authenticity’ and ‘spirituality’, Taylor observes, often intersect with assumptions of ‘positionality’; that is, staying true to your ‘roots’ and not submitting to the temptations of commerce (not ‘selling out’). Wendy Fonarow captures related ideas in her engaging ethnographic study of British indie music. Within the context of the live gig, ‘authenticity’ rests on judgements of ‘credibility’ and both rely on the believability of a ‘consistency between personal experience and what is represented in performance’.16 When the artist satisfies this expectation, their performance stands a better chance of fulfilling a sense of ‘beingness’: ‘The audience wants to believe the musicians feel the emotion of the music, feel the performance, despite the fact that this may be the hundredth time the band has played this song.

16 Fonarow, Empire of Dirt, p. 191.
in the last three months. By valuing authenticity, indie strives for verisimilitude in performance. In performance, the indie audience wants to believe that what they are seeing is the truth.17 These aspects of ‘positionality’, credibility and beingness, along with the expectation to exhibit (not too much) ‘originality’ are dominant in popular music discourse to the point of becoming cliché. Though, while much discussion continues to operate within the authentic versus commercial paradigm, particularly in relation to genres such as indie where a ‘preference for non-corporate, independently owned commercial operation’18 is central to the aesthetic, this conception of authenticity, if applied in isolation, reveals itself as severely limited. Authenticity can be found in songs that are blatantly products of the ‘pop factory’. The public discourse surrounding Rebecca Black’s 2013 viral pop hit ‘Friday’ suggests that there is always the potential for authenticity to be experienced and fought for, even in relation to the most transparently commercial pop artefacts. Acknowledgement of this leads to a defining claim about sources of authenticity.

Writing in 2018, it is possible to observe a collective suspicion of essentialist readings of authenticity. While an exhaustive survey is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is useful to observe a few indicative works from the arts and social sciences. In the opening chapter of Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society,19 Phillip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams explicate a turn away from sociological perspectives that tend toward understanding authenticity as an essence. A sociology of authenticity, they assert, ‘must attend to the socially constructed, evaluative, and mutable character of the concept, as well as its impact on a number of social dimensions’.20 Within this collection of essays, we find authors working within several theoretic frameworks that offer the promise of satisfying this assertion. From a ‘pragmatic social constructionist’ perspective, Andrew Weigert explores authenticity as a ‘motivating meaning of self’.21 Authenticity, here, ‘shares the

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17 Ibid., p. 191.
18 Ibid., p. 28.
20 Ibid., p. 3.
foundational aspects of self, that is, processual, emergent, reflexive, and empirically available directly to self experience and to others through action or symbol.\textsuperscript{22} In its emphasis on embodiment (‘embodied presence’), relationality, agency, and temporality, Weigert’s authenticity shares several base components with the experientialist aesthetic I advance in relation to musical engagement.

Emphasising interactivity and temporality does not dislocate authenticity from the subjective agent. It does, however, call into doubt the existence of an immutable ‘true self’. Presenting an alternative to the underpinning essentialism of substantialist accounts of authenticity has been the focus of political philosopher Alessandro Ferrara.\textsuperscript{23} Ferrara wades through a series of critical oppositions and emerges with a notion of ‘reflective authenticity’.\textsuperscript{24} The first opposition involves \emph{substantialist} and \emph{intersubjective} notions of (authentic) subjectivity. The former projects the view that ‘every human self comes into the world equipped with an essential core, which it tries to assert through its interaction with others’.\textsuperscript{25} Ferrara finds this perspective unsatisfactory on the grounds that it does not possess the scope required to re-establish a non-essentialist definition of authenticity. And while recent studies\textsuperscript{26} reveal emerging evidence for innate human capabilities, a strictly substantialist view of authenticity is of limited use when we consider the (experiential, social, cultural) dynamics of identity formation. The \emph{intersubjective} conception Ferrara adopts is closer to the dialogical accounts introduced above. First, Ferrara promotes expression of uniqueness; this is tied to the idea that for an identity to be authentic one must posit oneself as a thesis - to promote oneself as, and be received as, exemplary. Like Carl Rogers, Ferrara promotes self-realisation as a presupposition of an authentic identity. He considers this intersubjective on the grounds that authentication requires forms of recognition (calling to mind Taylor’s ‘need for

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 38.


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 27.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 24.

Ferrara completes his intersubjective perspective with reference to Kant’s conception of reflective judgment; to establish a worthwhile authentic identity, the argument goes, the individual must develop the ability to ‘think from the standpoint of everyone else’,\(^\text{27}\) to think consistently, and be able to form and express personal convictions.

Ferrara’s second opposition concerns two fundamental qualities of (authentic) identities and personalities. The question here is whether we believe an authentic self to be a bounded, stratified collection of convictions, traits, and experiences or, alternatively, a collection of subjectivities and potentialities that exist without any core/periphery ordering. The latter understanding is a central tenet of the postmodern challenge to authenticity. However, this is not exclusive to postmodernism:

from a variety of perspectives – Humean, lebensphilosophisch, aesthetic modernist, poststructuralist, therapeutic, postmodernist, postcolonial, “ritual-theoretic”, Goffmanian - the proponents of decentred views of the self and of subjectivity are inclined to oppose all attempts to restore an internal hierarchy between what is central and what is peripheral to a life-project.\(^\text{28}\)

Guignon identifies a key concern with the decentred view, writing ‘a common criticism of the postmodern way of de-centring the subject is that it treats the self as nothing more than a pawn in games that are being played out at a social level. What is lost here, it is said, is any sense of the self as an agent playing a part in its own life’.\(^\text{29}\) I argue that listening is one way to claim ownership of as well as assert subjective agency, to make possible the experience and presentation of a bounded, though processual self (to self and others). Understanding the self as constituted through interactions within wider contexts does not necessitate the dismissal of core and centre. Charles

\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 25.
\(^{29}\) Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, p. 120.
Taylor’s dialogical account of self and identity, for example, asserts the importance of interaction and context within a, broadly speaking, narrativist framework. Otherwise put, Taylor views the self as embedded within and formed through an evolving life story which retains key themes and threads. As we shall see, our musical engagements are not only crucial aspects of (and interactions within) this narrative, they can also serve to determine the narrative. In this sense, music transcends its clichéd status as a retrospective ‘soundtrack to our lives’, as merely referential accompaniment.

Ferrara’s third opposition outlines two broad perspectives on the social (and, of course, ethical) consequences of pursuing authentic subjectivities. The ‘antagonistic’ perspective understands authenticity as being in opposition to societal demands, a basic position that often underpins readings of the pursuit of authenticity as a solipsistic and hermetic undertaking. ‘Integrative’ conceptions, alternatively, view authentic subjectivities as formed through and within engagements with social expectations, roles, and institutions. These should not, Ferrara asserts, ‘be understood as playing a merely constraining, “disciplinary” or repressive role but also somehow constitute the symbolic material out of which authentic selves and authentic conduct can be generated’. 30 While Ferrara cites Donald Winnicot’s ‘true self’ and ‘creative living’ as exemplary of an integrative perspective, Carl Rogers’ elevation of authenticity is equally representative. Rogers’ observation of crucial directions toward ‘that self which one truly is’ can, however, initially appear to possess antagonistic characteristics. The directions ‘away from oughts’, ‘away from meeting expectations’, ‘away from pleasing others’, and ‘toward self direction’ appear most complementary to principles of an antagonistic view. It is crucial, however, to consider these aspects alongside the development of an ‘acceptance of others’. Rogers is clearly aware of the potential for misunderstanding and devotes a section of his paper to confronting ‘social implications’. In short, Rogers argues that an openness to and understanding of our own experiences and complexities can provide a platform for more transparent, sympathetic, and hospitable interaction with others.

within and in relation to established social structures and institutions (Rogers imagines the impact of such interaction upon foreign relations and policy). What then of subjectivity formation through aesthetic engagement? Can musical engagement be considered through an intersubjective-integrative lens? I believe so, and supporting literature on the capacity of music to have social, political, and ethical influence is readily available. David Hesmondhalgh\textsuperscript{31} asserts the capacity of musical engagement to enable collective ‘flourishing’ as well more private determinations of self. John Street observes the role of music in inspiring individuals to contribute within political settings.\textsuperscript{32} It should be noted that in these works integrative subjectivities are often seen to be formed within communal engagements with music (pub gigs, aid concerts, political demonstrations). But what of our ‘private’ listenings? Here I take my cue from Marcel Cobussen’s and Nanette Nielsen’s ‘aural ethics’. They assert that listening can invite, speak to and of, and demand relations with others. Listening should not lead us only to inward, hermetic subjectivities, but also outward, hospitable, sensitive responses and meanings.\textsuperscript{33}

Ferrara’s final opposition, immediacy against reflectiveness, relates to what constitutes the authentic subject. Is it the transient physical, emotional, and psychological states we individually experience, or our unique memory show reel? That is, is it our uniqueness in comparison to others? Or is it the result of our synthesising of these states in relation to the ‘outside’ (social, moral) world – a conception of our similarities to others? This opposition, in some ways, speaks to a dichotomy that frequently underpins the authenticity discussion: inner versus outer. I have already introduced the inward turn, or, rephrased, turn to immediacy, in terms of ‘feeling’, ‘deepness’ and ‘impulse’. Outwardness has thus far been considered through dialogism, relationality, and intersubjectivity. Ferrara, as mentioned above, argues for the efficacy of reflectivity in the construction of a non-essentialist view of authenticity. Once more, albeit in a slightly different guise, relationality emerges as an underlying principle of this ethic. The question that interests me, then, is whether though


\textsuperscript{33} Cobussen and Nielsen, \textit{Music and Ethics}, p. 27.
musical engagement – bearing in mind music’s appeal to affective identity and memory – we can be made cognisant of our connection and similarity to others. When we are privately immersed in sound can we be in the company of others? Philosopher Jeanette Bicknell argues so, writing: ‘Even listening to music on headphones alone in a room is a social experience through and through’.\(^{34}\) Positing authentication as emerging from corporeal and ecological engagements with music is one way of observing the possibility of intersubjective connection. To attempt to put into language (authenticating) musical experience, to engage a ‘complementary combination’\(^{35}\) of phenomenology and hermeneutics, is to practice reflection and explanation with the intention of opening up – and out – meaning(s). This appeases obvious criticisms of ‘impulsive’, to recycle Ralph Turner’s term, notions of authenticity, namely their potential for social antagonism. The phenomenological immanence of human life is put into balance by our capacity to coalesce and order pertinent convictions and experiences through reflection. Within this, Ferrara also acknowledges the need for recognition (from others) in the formation of an authentic self and follows a notion of a practical relation to self that finds voice in the work of Paul Ricoeur,\(^{36}\) in his notion of ‘attestation’, and later Charles Larmore.\(^{37}\) Here, an authentic way of living is not only achieved by the individual in the present, but always also rests on real or imagined future action. How is this position non-essentialist? First, authenticity is conceived as something creatively lived-out rather than revealed. Secondly, authenticity is a creation of the subjective agent that is both established and contested (by others) over time. Ferrara explains:

The authenticity of identity cannot be reduced to constancy of character: rather it consists of my continuing to honour my commitments despite the changes in the meantime occurred in my character or circumstances: as for example when I stick to my word for

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\(^{35}\) Cobussen, and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, p. 121.


the simple fact of having given it, even if I no longer endorse my originary reasons for giving it. Precisely in my honouring a commitment that originates from me – even though certain aspects of that me may have changed in the meantime – I constitute myself as myself, as the same self that has committed itself in such a way. No one else can make such a commitment, no one else can replace me in either fulfilling or breaking it.\textsuperscript{38}

Authenticity’s temporal component is the focus of Joseph Kotarba’s\textsuperscript{39} contribution to Vannini and Williams’ collection. Attending to his chapter also draws us closer to the kind of authenticity established here - the experience of being\textit{ authenticated} by popular music. Kotarba offers a personal account of the use of popular music as a resource for aiding self-understanding and self-definition by adult rock ‘n’ roll fans. As in Ferrara’s account, authenticity is conceived of as formed and contested over time. However, unlike Ferrara who adopts a broadly integrative (more on this later) perspective, Kotarba chooses to understand selfhood within a postmodern framework, identifying six different ‘selves’ - ‘the E-self’, ‘the parental self’, ‘the believing self’, ‘the political self’, ‘the sociable self’, and ‘the old self’. His argument is that listening to music, forming an understanding of that listening, and sharing listening(s) helps form and affirm an individual’s sense of each of these selves. He too asserts the need to relinquish essentialism, but his attempt to do so via a phenomenological approach – an absence of citation and theorisation makes it is hard to discern what kind and whose phenomenology Kotarba is drawing from – is not entirely convincing. After claiming that authenticity is ‘the product of intentional, reflexive, practical social interaction’\textsuperscript{40} we later read that ‘if one’s political opponent appreciates bad, inappropriate – or inauthentic – music, the very persona of that opponent can the [sic] discredited, to his or her


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p.155
political disadvantage’. The problem is that Kotarba does not explicate that the authenticity (or inauthenticity) of an artist and/or track is an interpretation that, like all interpretations, is open to contestation.

It is in his discussion of ‘the sociable self’ that Kotarba is most clear in his argument for the role of social interaction in the formation of authenticities. Here we find echoes of Taylor’s and Guignon’s conceptions of expressivity and the relational ‘need for recognition’:

Authenticity emerges as a feature of the aesthetic and affective bonding occurring through sharing the CD. For example, I recently bought a CD of the Van Morrison performance at the Austin City Limits festival in September of 2006. I was fortunate to be able to attend this concert, and thus became the envy of my many friends who are Van Morrison fans. I burnt a copy of the CD and presented it to my next door neighbour. Like many urban neighbours, we really do not get a chance to chat that much, he being a busy newspaper editor and me being a busy academic. The CD gave us a social object that was fun to talk about, in contrast to boring talk about work or the kids. The CD marked us as cool, with cool musical tastes that have become timeless in our lives as we elegantly grow old with Van.42

Kotarba’s conception of the nature of the relationship between listener and song also demands attention. The following assertion can be easily skipped over: ‘we search for the authentic self by associating it with, in fact clothing it in, authentic things such as authentic popular music experiences’.43 I have found myself returning to it in order to clarify my own reading. It clearly says something about our experiential relationship with popular music. It also says something about why we choose to use popular music as a source for affirmation (Kotarba is keen to emphasise

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41 Ibid., p. 164.
42 Ibid., p. 165.
43 Ibid., p. 156.
authenticity’s practical usage). It is, however, worth noting the lingering threat of essentialism contained within the idea of ‘the search for the ‘authentic self’. Here Kotarba, whether intentionally or not, presents it as an essence that can be dressed alternatively, but nonetheless remains there. This betrays a conception of authenticity as a dynamic meaning and by not offering any detailed comment on sound – this may or may not be down to a general suspicion of ‘textualism’ Kotarba is unable to convincingly argue why rock ‘n’ roll, in particular, energises such commitments in the adult listener. Nonetheless, Kotarba’s essay does capture a processual sense of authentication that I wish to advance here. I do not think that songs (should) furnish us with a final definition of who we are; rather, they help us understand who we are at a particular time. Sometimes this formation of subjectivity appears in relation to earlier selves, sometimes it brings future potentialities into view.

Authenticity has, inevitably, been consumed within a musicological shift of focus toward the reception and interpretation of popular music within social and cultural context. This partly involves a renouncing of essentialism. In popular musicology, Allan Moore is the prime mover. This thesis takes it cue from several of Moore’s critical and analytical manoeuvres that shape, and emerge from, Moore’s reformulation of the authenticity question as it relates to recorded popular song. Rather than asking ‘what is authentic?’ about a performer, performance or track, Moore urges us to ask ‘who is being authenticated?’ Within Moore’s model three parties have the potential to be authenticated - originator(s), listener(s), and/or absent other(s). It is worth considering these individually. The authentication of an absent other, which Moore labels ‘third person authenticity’, and ‘authenticity of execution’, often occurs within a circular process. Moore cites Eric Clapton’s appropriation of urban blues performance of the likes of B.B King and, later, Robert Johnson’s rural blues as an example of this. In his performances of ‘Crossroads’, Clapton makes available a reading of his expression as a representative ‘truth’ not only of his own

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44 As Chris Rojek puts it in Rojek, *Pop Music, Pop Culture*, pp. 104–115. Rojek’s definition is problematic in its limiting of textualism to semiotic theory and method.

(authentic) situation, but also of (and through) Johnson’s. However, as Moore explains, ‘by appropriating, by exhibiting trust in and making available to a broader audience, the patterns of performance exemplified by black blues artists, Clapton (whose own authority was underlined by the familiar ‘Clapton is God’ graffiti) authenticates them’. It seems, in a more recent example, that singer-songwriter John Mayer understands the potential of positing himself within this cycle of authentication (albeit via Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix as well as BB King, Clapton and Johnson), though this genealogy is somewhat disguised in his 2009 recording of ‘Crossroads’. A mechanical right-hand guitar pattern is one way in which the song is regulated. Mayer’s repetition of melodic phrasing is also strict (that the melody is never taken by a single voice is perhaps a contributing reason for this regularisation). As well as spontaneity, the expressivity of ‘Crossroads’, as we know it from Johnson and Cream, also appears somewhat choked in Mayer’s recording. One manifestation of this is the way Mayer refuses his fuzz pedal its full sonic potential in the rhythm guitar part, an effect achieved by keeping his guitar volume pot set half way. It is telling that the electric guitar solo is most representative of the spontaneity that finds expression in Clapton’s and, even more radically, Johnson’s performance. The previously restricted electric guitar is now also granted a much richer tone (unusually, Mayer uses the same guitar and pedal configuration for the solo and rhythm guitar, only the volume pot is adjusted). Mayer also introduces a subtle (though not remarkable) harmonic deviation, substituting the expected chord V with a diatonic VI in the (A) ionian mode. The colouration of chord IV in the turnaround is also more readily assignable to Mayer’s more pop-oriented approach and output (it serves as chord V in the repeating G ionian I–V pattern that makes up the intro and verse to ‘Why Georgia’). Whether Mayer is heard to be

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47 Throughout I use the same modal labelling system as in Allan F. Moore and Remy Martin, Rock: The Primary Text: Developing a Musicology of Rock (3rd edn, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019). In this system, roman numerals are presented in uppercase to signify diatonicism with amendments made where necessary. Thus when a diatonic minor chord is replaced by a major chord on the same root, for example in the typical colouristic substitution of the triad built on the third scale degree of the ionian mode, III becomes III#3. The opposite of this, for instance in idiomatic transformation of a major chord on the fourth scale degree of the ionian mode into a minor chord, would read IV–IVb3.
saying ‘this is what it’s like to be Clapton and/or Johnson’, of course, depends on how interested the listener is. For some, however, it is likely that Mayer’s ‘voice’ alone is specified.

When the expressions of a performer or composer are deemed to be sincere, a ‘first person authenticity’ arises.\textsuperscript{48} Timothy Taylor’s ‘authenticity of emotionality’ (introduced above) finds correspondence with this kind of authenticity. Attempting to prove the authenticity (or inauthenticity) of a performer’s expression is an activity engaged in by both ‘expert’ (critic, musicologist, fans) and everyday listeners (which, of course, we all can be). Rarely, however, is this kind of authenticity contested with detailed reference to sonic design (and often with little acknowledgement that such discourse can be inspired within instances of listening). In the mapping of consistencies between artistic expression and everyday life, interested listeners can turn to several forms of hard-copy and online non-musical texts. Biographies found on ‘celebrity sites’,\textsuperscript{49} blogs, and reviews featured within established music press sites are key resources for authentication. Social media provides the committed follower a chance to form and re-form mappings of first person authenticity in (it seems) real-time. Published transcriptions of the dialogical activities of performers can also provide a crucial insight into the real-life situations that inform, and are seen to be embodied in, artistic expressions. Allan Moore’s and Giovanni Vacca’s \textit{Legacies of Ewan MacColl: The Last Interview}\textsuperscript{50} is a recent example of this kind of text giving rise to scholarly discussion. Musicologist Jessica Wood has recently shown that first-person authenticities can be mapped by examining biography in relation to performance.\textsuperscript{51} While another form of non-musical text is brought into play here, a publication of Cobain’s journals, Wood’s analysis is exceptional in its assessment of sonic details. Wood limits her focus to the facet of Cobain’s performance that is, perhaps, most readily accepted as an embodiment of authenticity: his

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 211.
\textsuperscript{50} Allan F. Moore and Giovanni Vacca, \textit{Legacies of Ewan MacColl: The Last Interview} (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).
‘uneducated’ and strained voice. Her analysis of Cobain’s ‘vocal cadenzas’ is in itself a useful undertaking, but it is Wood’s cross-textual methodology, however, that makes her article illuminating. In finding congruence between the qualities of sound produced in Cobain’s singing and qualities of experience described in his writing, Wood is able to share several insights. The first is, simply, an explication of this indexicality; that ‘Cobain’s timbre and life were directly linked’. Beyond this, the synthesis of multiple texts allows Wood to argue for the coherence of Cobain’s authentic subjectivity. Here the body is crucial: Cobain’s aesthetic of authenticity is bound to and bounded by the (sick) body. Thus, not only can it be said that Cobain, in his vocal performance and writing, embodies authenticity – his authenticity is embodied. But this is not to reduce embodiment to the purely visceral, as Cobain’s experience of and reflections on his own corporeality, Wood reports, also frame political and moral opinion.

The voice, it seems, is often the first facet of recorded popular song to be met with a critical ear. This is unsurprising for, as Nanette Nielsen observes, ‘the voice is one of the most fundamental human attributes; it is a means of rational communication and emotional expression, and is imbued with subjectivity’. I have found this prioritisation of the voice evident in my own students’ work on authenticity. When asked to seek out a track which to them makes available a reading of ‘first person’ authenticity, students’ choices are overwhelmingly shaped by their interpretation of the expressivity of the voice (these cases, similarly to Wood’s, are often put forward with reference to biography and/or non-musical aesthetic stances). Sia’s ‘Breathe Me’ has been called to attention several times over the past few years. Striking instances of vocal ‘cracking’ (at 0:28 for example), the argument goes, are evidence of the sincerity with which Sia relays the pained situation set out in the lyrics. Sia’s expressivity is interpreted as emanating from a position of personal involvement. The perception of unmediated expression afforded by the track is also a

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52 Ibid., p. 343.
53 Ibid., p. 342.
54 Cobussen, and Nielsen, Music and Ethics, p. 117.
matter of proximity (see Moore’s application of ‘proxemics’\(^{55}\)). In the first verse, the listener is met with a fragile – so fragile it threatens to cut out – voice that feels very close (in the ‘intimate’ proxemic zone\(^{56}\)). Breathing, the collision of the tongue with its bounding cavity, and the resulting movement of saliva are all clearly audible. This proximity is crucial to the interpretation of an authenticity of expression; an attentive listening offers an opportunity to not only hear the breath of the performer, but also, more vitally, their *pneuma* and *spiritus*\(^{57}\).

In ‘Breathe Me’, this manner of exposure is threatened with the textural intensification that marks the start of the second verse. A clean electric guitar, which performs a limited pattern from which only the repeated picking of the open G string surfaces, finds entrance above a rhythmically and timbrally (the buzz of the bass guitar’s low C stands out) assertive bass guitar and drum kit configuration. From this new setting a new possibility for interpreting first person authenticity arises. This no longer pertains to the illusion of closeness, for Sia’s breathing is rendered inaudible by the intervening musical material. However, the listener is invited to infer that if this extra material was stripped away we would hear a very similar voice to that heard in the first verse. There appears no explicit attempt by the voice to overcome the, at times (1:33–1:40, for instance), intrusive surrounding environment; instead, the voice remains true to its original manner of expression. Why? Perhaps this is all the strength it can muster. To be seen to be able to readily adopt a new manner of delivery in response to new external forces would misrepresent the capacities of the persona within the situation being presented. This is just one possible interpretation, but crucially it arises not from hearing the voice (of the performer) in isolation, but as within and in relation to a surrounding sonic environment.

\(^{55}\) Moore, *Song Means*, pp. 186–188.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 187.

The voice-environment relationship need not, of course, be antagonistic. In contrast to ‘Breathe Me’, Katy B’s ‘Katy On a Mission’ invites a reading of ‘first person authenticity’ from interpretation of a mutualistic relationship between voice and environment. A few aesthetic decisions are worth extracting here. These coalesce most remarkably on the last word of each line of the chorus (‘room’, ‘boom’, ‘resume’ etc.). The first is part of a wider embedding of Katy B’s voice within the environment. In these instances, this embeddedness is manifest in the addition of a doubling second voice (an octave lower) over which Katy B’s vocal assumes no priority. There are several other ways Katy B seems to ‘sink into the tune’. The artificial manipulation of vocal timbre creates the illusion of a capacity to submerge and resurface from the sonic environment (0:24–0:40, for instance). The fading delay applied to the voice following the delivery of ‘this right here I swear will end too soon’ (1:19–1:48) ensures a similar immersion of the voice into a ‘social’ proxemic domain. It can be argued that Katy B’s delivery of the words ‘room’, ‘boom’, and ‘resume’ suggest another form of immersion in the environment. This time, the voice affords a ‘first person’ authenticity by asserting itself as a voice emerging from ‘inside’ a cultural setting, as Katy B’s delivery of these words can be heard as an imitation of the ‘wobble bass’ prevalent in Dubstep.\(^58\) Thus, Katy B is presenting herself, to those themselves on the inside, as ‘in the know’.

To treat the voice in isolation is to miss the meanings disclosed by its relationship with the sonic environment that surrounds it. But also, there are attitudinal ‘voices’ made available by songs beyond the performance of the singer. One way to redress this is to extend this normative conception of the voice. Following Carolyn Abbate,\(^59\) Nanette Nielsen asserts that, ‘the elements within music we can refer to by means of the term ‘voice’ are manifold. In a broad sense, the voice can be understood as a musical ‘doer’ or ‘teller’, ranging from the composer through a singer to an instrument to any detail of the musical texture’.\(^60\) Further than this, however, is the need to

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\(^58\) This reading was put to me by Leila Zerai, a former student of mine.


\(^60\) Cobussen, and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, p 120.
acknowledge the mutualism between listener and musical environments (or ‘voices’). The above interpretation of Katy B’s imitation of a key dubstep ‘voice’ as an (authentic) expression of ‘being from the inside’ would not be possible were it not for a kind of ‘inside’ engagement between listener and sound world. As we move towards conceptions of listener authentication, the need to account for this mutualism becomes increasingly apparent, as does the need to look beyond the voice as the primary source of musical authentication and ‘world-disclosure’.61

In ‘This Little Ukulele Tells the Truth: Indie Pop and Kitsch Authenticity’, Emily Dolan establishes a connection between Moore’s ‘first person authenticity’ and a ‘personal authenticity’62 indie pop, it is argued, is proficient at generating. Indie pop’s authenticity, however, does not only emerge from the perception of unmediated expression of the kind translated in Sia’s vocal ‘cracking’, Cobain’s ‘vocal cadenzas’, or the ‘beingness’ Fonarow considers. Dolan observes that indie’s authenticity also emerges from an overt ‘emphasis on the process of mediation’,63 self-awareness, textual reference, and a commitment to critical engagement. Dolan also proposes that indie’s practice of kitsch, in composition and in consumption, is a defining facet of its a dialectic. To view indie’s embrace of kitsch as an act of distantiation is, however, to misconstrue its affectivity: ‘This aesthetic distance is not cynical but nostalgic; it is not an absence of emotion, but its intensification’.64 Dolan’s ‘personal authenticity’ not only implicates performers and songwriters; modes of being assumed by audience members are also granted pertinence in the question of what constitutes authenticity in indie. It strikes me that a consideration of Moore’s typology in relation to the activities of indie audiences reveals a congruence between the ‘personal’

61 I find Nikolas Kompridis’ summary of this Heideggerian phrase useful and relevant in this context: ‘World-disclosure refers, with deliberate ambiguity, to a process that actually occurs at two different levels. At one level, it refers to the disclosure of an already interpreted, symbolically structured world; the world, that is, within which we always already find ourselves. At another level, it refers as much to the disclosure of new horizons of meaning’. Nikolas Kompridis, ‘On World Disclosure: Heidegger, Habermas and Dewey’, Thesis Eleven, 37/1 (1994): p. 29.
63 Ibid., p. 457
64 Ibid., p. 464.
of indie pop and Moore’s final authenticity, ‘authenticity of experience’, or, otherwise put, ‘second person authenticity’.  

This kind of authenticity arises, Moore explains, ‘when a performance succeeds in conveying to the listener that the listener’s life is being validated, that the music is ‘telling it like it is’ for them’. Here, assumptions of ‘truth’ intersect with notions of ‘appropriation’ and ‘belonging’. Following Richard Middleton, Moore notes that the ascription of authenticity to a track – Moore’s treatment of authenticity is coherent with a wider refusal to take meaning(s) as inscribed – can arise from the affordance of appropriation and, with this, affirmation. Capturing this conception of the authentication of the listener, sociologist Tia De Nora entertains the idea that the ‘song is you’. To paraphrase, the experience of listening to music can solidify a sense of present and, possible, future identities. Authentication, in this view, is the disclosure of potentially appealing and available subjectivities and is a matter of process and possibility. DeNora captures this when she writes ‘music is a material that actors use to elaborate, to fill out and fill in, themselves and to others, modes of aesthetic agency and, with it, subjective stances and identities’. This statement contains a pertinent comment on the nature of the interaction between listener and song: the listener is not simply listening to music (as a fixed artefact), the process is not one-way, not purely one of reception.

Advancing from the foundational assertion that ‘authenticity is a matter of interpretation which is made and fought for from within a cultural and, thus, historicised position’, Moore integrates a conception of ‘belonging’ in conjunction with appropriation, citing cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg’s intervention as pertinent. In Grossberg’s reading of rock ‘n’ roll, authenticity does not, necessarily, emerge from an interpretation of the truth of a performer’s

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66 Ibid., p. 220.
69 Ibid., p. 147.
71 Lawrence Grossberg, We Gotta Get Out Of This Place (New York NY: Routledge, 1992).
expressivity and/or positionality. Rather, authenticity is formed in response to affordances of ‘a place of belonging’.

Moore redefines this sense of belonging through an application of George Allan’s term ‘centredness’, in doing so,

calling attention to the experience that this cultural product offered an affirmation, a cultural identity in the face of accelerating social change, in large part because it itself had no history apparent to its participants. This ‘centredness’ implies an active lifting of oneself from an unstable experiential ground and depositing oneself within an experience to be trusted, an experience which centres the listener.

A sense of appropriation and belonging (or ‘centredness’), then, arises from the demands music makes of responsive engagement. Both, crucially, have an experiential basis.

How, then, can the indie aesthetic Emily Dolan describes be said to generate ‘second person authenticity’? To my mind it arises from another instance of mutualism; this time between the ‘authenticity work’ (‘the term work suggests that those concerned skilfully engage the task of interpreting authenticity – giving or receiving the impression that something or someone is authentic, genuine, or real’ undertake by both performer and listener. Within the two forms of engagement Dolan foregrounds, listening and record collection, both the performer and audience member possess the potential to authenticate and be authenticated. Collection can be understood as the critical cultivation of a bounded aesthetic entity that provides affirmation of a listener’s sense of their own ‘unique constellation of inner traits’ and convictions, and attempts to share and explain the collection are articulations of that originality. In being posited within a unique collection, performers are also granted the opportunity of authentication. As Dolan notes, this can

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be despite their co-opting by the ‘mainstream’. The personal meaning(s) that arise from listening can also be viewed as matter of authentication; listening does not only offer the indie pop fan a chance of ‘musical’ aesthetic position-finding, it can also invite mappings between its characteristic lo-fi and kitsch sound world and ‘everyday’ modes of comportment.

Recall the case of Rebecca Black and her 2013 viral hit ‘Friday’. Listeners have used ‘Friday’ as a means to contest the grounds upon which value in popular music can be argued for as well as critique the (for some, cynical) commercial agreement behind the track’s production. These lines of discussion often result in essentialist claims for the track’s inauthenticity. But for a number of listeners, as evidenced in BTL (below-the-line) comment sections on sites hosting the track (and often its video) ‘Friday’ clearly affords authentication. Black evidently manages to speak for a large community, perhaps by articulating ‘collective (but repressed) wishes and desires’. For the cynic, Black’s expression is a form of strategic inauthenticity, but as Johan Fornas asserts, the perception of artificiality in a text, by normative standards of authenticity does not, necessarily, extinguish affordances of ‘first person authenticity’ or ‘second person’ authentication. Another possible perspective is to suggest that Black’s fans’ authentication ‘comes from the outside’; their authentication, and agency, is a result of being offered a chance to ‘try on’ an identity.

From this initial survey, authenticity emerges as something experienced, lived-out, interpreted, and contestable. It can be experienced in the moment, and formed through reflective action. It is not a quality inscribed in the identity of an individual, an institution, or a song. Nor is the ideal itself inert. Musical authentication – which is a matter of meaningful connections between individuals and aesthetic artefacts – should be understood within this intellectual context. Whereas we have seen authentication discussed in relation to notions of ‘belonging’ and ‘centredness’, I choose to also speak in terms of ownership and agency. The phenomenological and relational grounds

for this will become clear over the next three sections. Refuting authenticity as an essence of some sort or some thing, liberating it from a fixed, static grounding, does bring to the fore several pressing questions. In what are we to anchor our aural experiences and interpretations? Is it possible for an authenticating experience to be intersubjective? Or, is authentication a matter of purely personal meaning? It is to these questions I now turn.
1.2 Perspective

In the first section of Part One, I posited the ideal of authenticity in a broad intellectual context and, in the process of surveying pertinent literature, introduced the phenomenological, temporal, processual, and relational components of my aesthetic of authentication. Here, I situate the questions raised at the close of 1.1. Theoretically the discussion remains closer to home with musicological works forming the core; however, it as this point that I begin to integrate aspects of phenomenological and hermeneutic thought.

The musicological writing I survey here broadly confronts musical meaning, analysis, and subjectivity. ‘Authentication’ - an aural experience’s affordance of subjective ownership and agency - is not explicitly referred to, though is implicit in a few cases. This is true of Christian Kennett’s essay ‘Is Anybody Listening?’1 Positing meaning as wholly situated, Kennett exorcises the recording-as-text (or ‘musicological object’) of essence. His concern is that a range of specificities relating to listening events, including listener experience, style/genre competence, intentionality and ecological setting, render the identification of a ‘correct’, ‘suitable’, or ‘responsible’ textual meaning impossible. Kennett instead suggests that out of the reality of ‘personalised using’ and ‘personalised listening’ emerges only ‘personalised meaning’.2 While not explicitly calling on notions of authenticity, authentication, or appropriation, there are several obvious intersections between his ‘personal text’ and the authentication I anatomise. For instance, Kennett’s hypothetical listening profiles reveal how musical meaning emerges from mappings formed in the act of listening. In the case of the bank clerk, one of Kennett’s invented analytic subjects, meaningful connections are forged between the track ‘Shadowboxing’ and personal experiences of listening to drum ‘n’ bass in London (thus, a form of stylistic and ecological ownership). Future

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2 Ibid., p. 208.
potentialities – or, a sense of agency – are also afforded: in experiencing the track, the clerk anticipates a party he is later throwing. Kennett’s third hypothetical listening subject, the Major, finds correspondence between ‘Shadowboxing’ and (his own) perceptions of musical impoverishment, declining moral standards, and urban topography. In his summary of the clerk’s response, Kennett captures a form of subjective appropriation: ‘He wishes the bass response of the shop’s speakers wasn’t so feeble, but his fluent knowledge of the tune helps fill in the auditory gaps’. Not only is the clerk experientially immersed in sound, he is also involved in actively constituting the sonic body of ‘Shadowboxing’. With this, the ontology of the ‘musical work’ is challenged and subject/object separations dissolved. Referencing Salomé Voegelin and Jean-Luc Nancy, Nanette Nielsen considers the (ethical) consequences of this re-orientation from text to listening and describes the situation as follows:

a thinking which takes listening as its starting-point immediately questions the notion of a transcendental, a priori subjectivity and objectivity: rather, the one constitutes the other. Listening produces music as a ‘subjective objectivity’. Or…both the listening subject and the heard object or event at once affect and are affected by each other.

Nielsen advances this understanding of listening through a comparison of visual and aural engagement:

distance, which is necessary to engage visually with the world, necessitates a detachment and objectivity that presents itself as truth. The visual gap nourishes the idea of structural certainty and the notion that we can truly understand things. Listening, on the other hand,

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3 Kennett, ‘Is Anybody Listening?’, p. 213.
4 Salomé Voegelin, Listening To Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art (New York: Continuum, 2010).
6 Cobussen, and Nielsen, Music and Ethics, p. 162.
has no opposite: we are amidst sounds. Therefore, it cannot offer a meta-position; there is no place where I am not simultaneous with the heard. Consequently, listening means sharing time and space with the sound source.7

The ‘personal text’ is, then, Kennett’s ‘subjective objectivity’. At least it seems to be on the face of it. However, Kennett’s account of meaning and appropriation appears to leave little room for intersubjectivity whereas Nielsen’s is, throughout, deeply concerned with relational meaning and discourse (I return to this issue in Part Four). It is in its emphasis on situated individual listening that Kennett’s account also invites relation to the first-person perspective foundational to phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the phenomenon of perspective – ‘to see is always to see from somewhere’8 – is exemplary of this position. Kennett’s essay also concerns two crucial components of phenomenological life: embodiment and environment. However, bodily engagement is limited to dance (and a brief aside on the corporeal-kinetic affordance of *Die Schöne Müllerin*) and is not a working component of his cultural-acoustic model. Nor are relations between body and environment taken on as a theoretic foundation or analytic concern. Kennett’s emphasis on environment is, however, illuminating. Beyond arguing that listening environments impact meaning, Kennett also highlights the potential for environments to be specified within the act of listening. This form of world-disclosure, as captured in Kennett’s hypothetical listening summaries, can be central to experiences of authentication and agency. Tia DeNora extends this idea by asserting that place and time can be experientially mapped within acts of listening, noting ‘when it is music that is associated with a particular moment and particular space, music reheard and recalled provides a device for unfolding, for replaying, the temporal structure of that moment, its dynamism as emerging experience’.9 It is in Part Three that I examine the potential for sonic

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7 Cobussen, and Nielsen, *Music and Ethics*, p. 163.
structures to specify (real or imaginary) ecological settings and structures. Unlike Kennett, I retain a close focus on the details of sonic texts as they are perceived.

‘Is Anybody Listening?’ represents a musicological perspective (and methodology) toward the relativistic and individualistic end of an intellectual spectrum that has objectivism/universalism (and, in support of this, formalism) as its opposite pole. Such a position poses obvious musicological and hermeneutic challenges. Allan Moore claims of Kennett’s perspective that ‘if we are to take seriously his cure, then we can only address the individual listener’; after all, a strict application of Kennett’s cultural-acoustic model only enables self-profiling (if we are to avoid recourse to hypothetical invention). This is not, necessarily, an unworthy undertaking. As evidenced in DeNora’s ‘Music and Self-Identity’, such a process can be formative of a deep understanding of the self in relation to engagements with music. The worry is that this outlook leads to atomistic engagement and meaning(s); meaning, that is, that exists only in the hermetically sealed experience of the individual listener. Moore offers a voice of concern on behalf of the musicologically-minded when he argues that Kennett’s approach leaves us ‘powerless in the face of the music’.

But Kennett’s rejection of the reliability of the recorded text is not just a challenge to established musicological practice, more crucially it deepens the hermeneutic problem. Losing the recorded artefact as a point of reference makes arguing in reason about our subjectivities a much more difficult task; the danger being that we slide into inarticulate debate and pure subjectivism. If our experiences of authentication (or rejection) are to carry any significance beyond our own life narratives, we must be prepared to make our interpretations available to others and to argue for them. Charles Guignon understands this, in ethical terms, as the ability ‘to give an answer, to be answerable or responsible in our exchanges’. Anchoring interpretations in the details of the music under discussion is one way of articulating a reasoned response to our experiences. After all, vigorous discourse on music is impossible without some recourse to possible

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10 Moore, Song Means, p. 221.
11 Ibid., p. 221.
12 Guignon, On Being Authentic, pp. 136–137.
ways of listening (to something). This outlook does not deny the phenomenology of listening and nor does it urge essentialism. Instead, it asserts the (ethical) value and potential of committing to description and explanation.

With this, we move some way toward an analytic-hermeneutic perspective situated between universalism and radical subjectivism. This is where Eric Clarke posits his account of meaning and subjectivity, using ‘subject-position’, an idea established in film theory. Clarke finds subject-position to be of use in several pertinent ways. First, subject-position understands that music texts, their formal structure and sonic qualities, demand responsive engagement. Clarke captures this basic point, which lies at the heart of an outlook informed by James Gibson’s ecological psychology, in the phrase: ‘To listen to music, is to engage with music’s meanings’. Perception is considered active and direct, as is our tendency toward making sense of what it is that we perceive. Our engagement with music then, is no different from our perception of real world environments. (I tend to use the coffee shop as a ‘real world’ example when explaining this to students, and invite them to think of the way in which our attention is drawn to particular sounds and strands of conversation at the expense of others enabling us to build an understanding of what is happening. In fact, I encourage that music be understood as an environment within which we can chose to orientate ourselves in particular ways, and within which we can alter our spectatorial focus. This way of thinking is more fully explored in Part Three). Unlike Kennett’s ‘personal text’, subject-positions are not infinite and not entirely dependent on situation and individual listener. Clarke, citing Sheila Johnston, establishes a distinction between the ‘empirical spectator’ and subject-position. Kennett’s personalised account of meaning is very close to Clarke’s description of the empirical spectator, where a response to a text results from ‘the individual’s particular circumstances, experience, background, and aesthetic attitudes as well as the

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specific viewing occasion’.\textsuperscript{15} The empirical spectator position also shares with Kennett’s ‘personal text’ a wholesale relativism that accepts ‘an infinite pluralism which posits as many readings as there are readers’.\textsuperscript{16} Alternatively, the subject-position perspective asserts that texts afford a bounded range of responses. But crucially the range is determined, in the first instance, by textual properties - the sonic text remains the central site of specification. Expressed in other terms, the idea here is that meaning-making starts from our perception of the sonic text. Secondly, subject-position offers a way of taking seriously aesthetic qualities without needing to claim that a singular ‘actual meaning’ (to borrow a phrase that dominates popular music discussion forums) inheres in the text. Subject-position arises – in view of Clarke’s positing of the idea within a Gibsonian perceptual framework – out of exploratory and pragmatic interactions between perceiver and text.

This conception of meaning-making invites relation to a second component of phenomenological thinking: intentionality. This, broadly taken, concerns the directedness of our perception towards the world around us. In a more strictly phenomenological sense it concerns a somatic being-towards the world. This perspective informs the discussion of embodied musical authentication hosted in Part Two. I am not the first to unify authenticity and intentionality, though my application of it in the hermeneutic study of music is relatively unique. In his philosophical exploration of authenticity as ‘embodied selfhood’, Corey Anton declares: ‘Phenomenological notions of intentionality must be centrepieces for any rigorous account of embodiment’.\textsuperscript{17} Anton is not concerned with authenticating aesthetic experience but with phenomenal experience as it relates to everyday enactments of selfhood. Anton cites several key phenomenological writers – including Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Husserl, and Calvin Shrag, among others – in his explanation of corporeal intentionality. From Heidegger Anton appropriates the correlation of ‘intentio’ and ‘intentum’, in addition to an understanding of the intentionality of ‘objects’; in simple terms, the uses objects afford. Next, Anton looks to ‘pre-reflective’ and

\textsuperscript{15} Clarke, \textit{Ways of Listening}, p. 92–93.
\textsuperscript{16} Johnston, ‘Film Narrative and the Structuralist Controversy’, p. 245.
‘reflective’ modes of intentionality distinguished by Merleau-Ponty. This theoretic scaffold supports subsequent explorations of bodily motility, bodily affect, bodily senses, and imagination. Music is granted passing mention in Anton’s analysis of sonic perception and his comments, in their emphasis on temporal specification and embodied affordance, intersect with the phenomenological view of listening presented in this thesis: ‘Listening to some music, I hear a rich tapestry of sounds unfolding over time, a texture which makes room for the different instruments’ sounds. Moreover, sounds are often spatialized in particular bodily configurations: my entire body may be enlivened and animated’. However, in addition to explicitly adopting phenomenological perspectives and terminology, Anton employs – to borrow Duane Davis’ description of Merleau-Ponty’s writing – a characteristically ‘complex’ style of writing. Part of the problem with Anton’s presentation is that he cites works and embeds phenomenological terminology without providing sufficient explanation and supporting examples. In his introduction to intentionality, as throughout much of the book, linguistic and terminological saturation serves to obscure rather than emboss key ideas.

But this is to extend the discussion of intentionality beyond what is required in this section (and to risk setting up a fuller review of Anton’s book – this is not the time or place for that). The link I wish to make at this point between a perceptual perspective and phenomenological intentionality is more straightforward and general. When we listen we ‘lean in’ not to just hear sound, but to engage with and form meaning. We instinctively orientate ourselves toward the possible meanings and uses of that sound. Authentication is the culmination of this intentional perceptual process; authentication results from our being-toward, and our interest in, appropriating sound and meaning.

18 Ibid., p. 40.
19 Duane H. Davis, ‘Review, Merleau-Ponty’, The Review of Metaphysics, 59/1 (2005): p. 192. The following passage from Anton’s text is exemplary: ‘Intentionality, then, refers to the multifarious means humans have been granted for comporting themselves and so of worlding the world. Ultimately, it underlies and accomplishes the meaningful and significant particularising of Earth’s existential decompression into spatialized and temporalized world-experience’. Anton, Selfhood and Authenticity, p. 27.
Is subject-position complementary to the (phenomenological, temporal, processual, relational) view of authenticity I have thus far proposed? Some frictions do arise. For instance, a complete dismissal of the ‘empirical spectator’ seems to render impossible examination of the experiential mappings forged in the act of listening. How can one argue for affordances of authentication and/or belonging without some recourse to understandings of self-identity and ‘personal’ experience? This is neither possible, nor useful in the context of this work. However, subject-position’s perspective is directing, for musicological and relational reasons. First, subject-position has an explicit intersubjective dimension as it starts from an understanding that meaning is perceived from within a ‘shared cultural context’ and that this collective spectatorial perspective gives rise to a range of responses. Within this way of thinking, shared meaning is certainly possible. Indeed, Clarke’s decision to employ subject-position seems partly based on its assertion of shared starting points and, potentially, responses. It posits the musicologist/critic and reader in (as far as possible) a shared staring point; in responsive engagement with sound. And while the reader’s way of hearing the music may depart from the researcher’s interpretation along the way, the hope is that the relational process of reading, listening, and committing to interpretation is illuminating even if not all affordances are shared. The problem with ‘empirical spectator’ approaches, is that they rarely lead back to the sonic structures which invite response. They do not illuminate the nature of the relationship between listener and song and/or explicate sounds that afford. Subject-position represents an opposite angle of approach; here, it is through engagement with the text that subjectivities are established. Crucially, and unlike social accounts of music that do not refer to sound, or too eagerly dismiss textual analysis, music is not distanced from its (potential) meaning(s). The analytic perspective adopted in this thesis has aspects of both subject-position and the ‘empirical spectator’. Rather than attempt to separate the two, I accept the fusing of ‘what

20 Clarke, *Ways of Listening*, p. 93.
the text seems to be saying’ and ‘what the text seems to by saying to me/us’ as formative of authenticating (inter)subjectivities.

Allan Moore emphasises interpretation and explanation in his ‘interrogative hermeneutics’ of recorded popular song (and his discussion of authentication is embedded within this analytic-interpretive framework). Moore’s strategy is not to argue for ‘objective meanings’ that result from musicological essentialising, but to offer possible ways of interpreting listening experience. Driving this is a hermeneutic outlook – explicitly indebted to Paul Ricoeur – within which the text, as heard, remains the primary point of reference. But, as Moore highlights using passages of Ricoeur’s work, texts should not be engaged with interpretively in order to find or ‘prove’ authorial intention, as if this is the most secure and worthy meaning available. Moore’s text is not a closed text that demands decoding, but a text that can afford a range of (inter)subjective responses within the act of engagement. Here, listening – I am modifying Ricoeur’s phrase to suit a musical focus – ‘is the concrete act in which the destiny of the text is fulfilled’. Following Ricoeur, Moore emphasises the necessity of making our individual or group interpretations available to others and, with this, being prepared for them to be contested. In arguing that all meaning is culturally situated and thus intersubjective, Robert Walser acknowledges the necessity of interpretation as well as possible consequences of engaging in interpretive action: ‘since there is no way to stand outside cultural understandings, there can be no Archimedean objectivity. Thus we must work all the time with interpretations- our sense of what things mean and why they are what they are. Musical interpretations are always open to refinement and contestation, but they are never arbitrary, and there is no way to avoid committing interpretation’. And like Moore, Walser identifies (musicological) interrogation as a means of establishing interpretations: ‘So we work for the most illuminating ones, drawing upon our own knowledge of history and of how

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22 Paul Ricoeur From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II (London: Continuum, 2008): p. 120.
music works and signifies’. 24 Only by attempting to make our interpretations communicable, Moore asserts, can we avoid residing ‘in a hermetic space accessible only to the appropriator’. 25 Taking explanatory action opens up the possibility of recognition, whether that is affirming or challenging. In the undergraduate classes I teach I have seen, albeit on a relatively small scale, the compelling intersubjective meanings that can be established when members of perceiving groups undertake explanatory action with the aim of seeking interpretive agreement. It is in this spirit that I offer interpretations of listening experience.

If we choose to follow up more fully Moore’s hermeneutic lead to Ricoeur, we meet a pertinent connection that Ricoeur himself makes between interpretation and ‘appropriation’. ‘Appropriation’ in this context speaks directly to the notions of ownership (‘the constitution of the self is contemporaneous with the constitution of meaning’ 26) and ‘agency’ (‘understands himself differently’ 27) that support my ‘authentication’. Consider the following passage from ‘What Is a Text? Explanation and Understanding’:

By ‘appropriation’, I understand this: that the interpretation of a text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself. This culmination of the understanding of a text in self-understanding is characteristic of a kind of reflective philosophy that, on various occasions, I have called ‘concrete reflection’. Here hermeneutics and reflective philosophy are correlative and reciprocal. On the one hand, self-understanding passes through the detour of understanding the cultural signs in which the self documents and forms itself. On the other hand, understanding the text is not an end in itself; it mediates the relation to himself of a subject who, in the short circuit of

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25 Moore, Song Means, p. 10.
26 Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 114.
27 Ibid., p. 114.
immediate reflection, does not find the meaning of his own life. Thus it might be said, with equal force, that reflection is nothing without the mediation of signs and works, and that explanation is nothing if it is not incorporated as an intermediary stage in the process of self-understanding. In short, hermeneutical reflection – or in reflective hermeneutics – the constitution of the self is contemporaneous with the constitution of meaning.\footnote{Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 114.}

Notice first that Ricoeur observes the tendency of interpreters (in our case, listeners) to fuse textual interpretation with understandings of self (\textit{identity}). Above I conceive of the fusion of ‘textual meaning’ and ‘subjective meaning’ as resulting from an intentional perceptual process. Tia DeNora’s discussion of musical introjection – the ‘presentation of self to self’\footnote{DeNora, ‘Music and Self-\textit{identity},’ p. 141.} – is also recalled, though like DeNora, Ricoeur also considers how aesthetic interpretation can afford a sense of agency; future potentialities can be disclosed in the act of interpretation. Related to this, is the reflective component built into Ricoeur’s account. This invites relation to Alessandro Ferrara’s assertion that reflective judgement, of the Kantian intersubjective kind, is crucial to the formation of (authentic) subjectivities. We can also observe consistencies between Ricoeur’s description of the process of appropriation and Moore’s conception of musicological-hermeneutic process. Reflection is integral to both. Ricoeur:

\begin{quote}
Initially a text had only a sense, that is, internal relations of structure; now it has a meaning, that is, a realization in the discourse of the reading subject.\footnote{Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 115.}
\end{quote}
And Moore:

To analyse a popular song is, of its very nature, to offer an interpretation of it, to determine what range of meaning it has, to make sense of it. Such determination, such making, is an after-the-event operation. Think what happens when we encounter somebody we do not know. Frequently, after that encounter, we will find ourselves reflecting on it, thinking of alternative ways it could have gone, coming to a decision (however implicit) as to how to act should we encounter the person again. The analogy with what happens in listening to a song is, I think, a good one. While listening, we are simply experiencing the song. Afterwards, however, if we are so inclined, reflection on that experience can produce for us an understanding of ourselves within that experience, and an orientation to adopt in listening to the song again.31

Despite acknowledging that only the perceiver can ‘actualise’ a text by perceiving it, Ricoeur sometimes describes the situation as the text moving ‘toward a world and toward subjects’.32 I tend to think of the situation in reverse – appropriation, in my view, involves the appropriator moving towards, inhabiting, and filling out, the world(s) disclosed by a text. In this intentional view, the perceiving agent imposes their ownership and agency. Though in describing the overcoming of ‘cultural distance’ as the appropriator ‘making one’s own what was initially alien’,33 Ricoeur hints at a perspective more in agreement with my own. Detail aside, Ricoeur bequeaths a vital idea: interpretation can be an authenticating act.

Simon Zagorski-Thomas broadly follows the intersubjective perspectives of Moore and Clarke. However, we also see in his analytic-interpretive writing an explicit assertion of the possibility of universal meaning. He argues for universality on the basis that recordings can afford

31 Moore, Song Means, p. 5.
32 Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 115.
33 Ibid., p. 114.
and specify familiar embodied patterns and ecological settings, an idea rehearsed with reference to Lisa Hannigan’s ‘I Don’t Know’. The perception of a relaxed, low effort performance within an intimate environment, Zagorski-Thomas argues, gives rise to a universally available reading of social intimacy. The connection Zagorski-Thomas makes between interpretation and the embodied-ecological listener is one that informs my positing of authentication as phenomenological and, potentially, intersubjective. And his emphasis on embodiment and environment influences my analysis both hermeneutically and phenomenologically. However, I am mindful that any attempt to argue for the universality of the body is open to the criticism of generalising the phenomenology of the body and ignoring social pressures as they apply to the experience of the body in everyday life. As feminist scholar Susan Bordo asks: ‘What, after all, is more personal than the life of the body?’ ‘Embodied cognition’, the subfield of cognitive science that Zagorski-Thomas partly draws from, has had similar critiques levelled at it. Take, for instance, Susan Henking’s review of Mark Johnson’s book *The Body in the Mind*: ‘It is disappointing insofar as it fails to consider differences in human embodiment and to remind theories of metaphor with perspectives emphasising the body that division of mind from body, of rationality and embodiment, in Western patriarchy has been tied to issues of gender and power. It is problematic insofar as its emphasis is upon a possibly monolithic embodied rationality’. My interpretive analyses must ultimately, of course, be understood as reflections on a ‘unity of mind and body in action’ that is my own; though acknowledging this does not preclude shared experience.

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1.3 Experience

Songs can make direct appeals to our felt sense of self and the world around us. ‘Sound agitates directly, as a commotion of the organism itself’,¹ wrote John Dewey. We assign special significance to songs capable of speaking to our experience with precision and depth and despite our better judgement, it can sometimes seem as if the (music) makers have us in mind. I am not only thinking of lyrical specification here, though online discussions of song meaning suggest lyrics remain a primary point of connection. I am concerned with authentication as it is afforded by all aspects of song, including texture, rhythm, timbre, form, space, and contour. Analysing song, that is, enforcing a virtual separation of streams of sound in order to illuminate the significance of their interrelation, is itself a significant task, and an undertaking fraught with practical and theoretic pitfalls. The problem of analysis is compounded when we attempt to secure an understanding of and communicate our experience of recorded sound. Experience is notoriously difficult to apprehend and to put into language. Daniel Stern², working primarily from psychology and psychotherapy, identifies several reasons for this. First, experience concerns complex ‘wholes’ that resist straightforward reductive description. This generally goes against the still dominant musicological practice of taking isolated elements or parameters and attempting to explain them through supporting theory. The emergent characteristic of music and experience presents another problem, notably that it is more difficult to analytically pin down something that unfolds across time, than it is to establish an interpretation of something accepted as in some way (temporally) fixed. This, I suspect, explains musicology’s historical favouring of the ‘musical work’ and god’s-eye analytic perspective over the phenomenal reality of listening. In addition to this, experiential

processes are often hidden from view\textsuperscript{3}, or otherwise put, ‘operate below the level of self-referential intentionality’.\textsuperscript{4} Stern notes:

The leap to a Gestalt is as mysterious as the appearance of an emergent property. The sciences struggle with it (e.g. dynamic systems theory, complexity theory, and chaos theory). However, wholes, Gestalts, and emergent properties are what we have to work with and are, largely, what the familiar world seems to be made of. We accomplish this extraordinary integrative act all the time without thinking about it.\textsuperscript{5}

How, then, to avoid surrendering in the face of such complexity? It would certainly be easier to accept aesthetic experience as a meaningful eruption of sensation without attempting to explain or describe it. After all, songs live perfectly well (within us) without analytic support. While this may be true, there is, I submit, much to be gained from attempting to put into language our experience of songs. In sum, setting into action a coalescence of phenomenology and hermeneutics enables: 1) the outward projection of inner expressivities enacted in listening; 2) receptive connection with others as well as self; 3) the disclosure of (inter)subjective potentialities; 4) the positing of immanent, experiential meaning within wider networks. But in order to do this, we must be able to translate our experiences of music into communicable forms of description. In practice, this requires separating out aspects of experience. If it is bodily (self-) motion that a passage affords, then the qualities of that movement must be described as fully as possible. If it is the replaying of an affective state that a musical moment affords, then that experience must be described in relation to original as well as current contexts. When musical structures correspond with embodied structures, we must endeavour to explicate their form and their significance within

\textsuperscript{5} Stern, *Forms of Vitality*, pp. 5–6.
and outside of our experience of that music. We must also attempt to consider in words the phenomenology and sociality of ecological specifications (when real or imagined spaces and places are disclosed in the act of listening). Add to this list the need to seriously examine the temporal dimension of listening and, with this, the ‘enduring act of consciousness’ that enables a phenomenological sense of music and self in time. In summary, listening experience must, to some degree, be interpretively reduced if we are to avoid infusing our explanations with a mystery and complexity characteristic of emergent experience. And phenomenological description and hermeneutic speculation should be anchored in sonic description; otherwise put, we should always extend an invitation to others to hear specific sounds in particular ways. To put these introductory comments into an intellectual context, and to declare some of the thinking that has influenced my phenomenological method, it is necessary to review a few pertinent studies of experience.

Allan Moore’s musicological synthesis of authenticity and listener experience, which remains the most explicit, first surfaced in a study of U2’s ‘With or Without You’.7 ‘Centredness’ – ‘a cultural identity’ – is the key experiential idea here, with the Gibsonean concept of ‘affordance’ (more on this later) employed to support a view of authentication as arising from active, intentional engagements with music. Moore’s focus is on sonic and referential correlates. Of the track’s unconventional structure, Moore observes an immediacy, intuitiveness and naturalness which specifies unmediated expression. However, Moore does not explicitly consider possible phenomenological responses to this structure, nor is it made clear how such responses contribute to listener affirmation. Moore’s interpretation of the song’s simplicity is also phenomenologically restrained. Rather than considering specific experiential affordances of the track’s harmony and bass guitar design, again only a cultural, or style coded, centredness is argued for. Moore is right to note the bass’s sonic specification of punk, but in exploring this reference, Moore could have considered its kinetic-affective potential. A more embodied reading of harmonic material is also

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available; for instance, the diatonic Ionian I–V–VI–IV open-ended pattern embodies, for me at least, a sense of bodily balance and, with this, an enduring corporeal centredness. Stylistic familiarity contributes to this response, though I also suspect the spacing and shape of the root pitch sequence as played on the (bass) guitar, where scale degree 1 is literally in the middle, underpins a more obviously corporeal understanding of centredness and balance. Thus, while these musical features may be ‘self-evident in their effect’, a fuller examination of affect and enabling perceptual mechanisms is required if we are to consider centredness as an experiential affordance. This hints at the crux of my review: in accordance with musicological convention, Moore’s analysis of sonic dynamics is more detailed than his description of experiential dynamics. In dealing with experience in only general terms, his sketch stops short of a phenomenology of listening and, thus, authentication. In this thesis, I take up the challenge of establishing what such a thing might look like.

The view that musical experience is situated in and informed by culture is shared by ethnomusicologist Greg Downey. In an engaging study of Brazilian capoeira, Downey observes cultural experience and meaning embodied in kinetic-affective performance. In the capoeira performance ‘game’, the interaction of dancing (and sometimes fighting) bodies is moderated by an encircling music ensemble. To see capoeira in performance, Downey asserts, is to witness phenomenologically engaged participants in a social space and, here, embodiment is understood as deeply intersubjective. But rather than attempting to establish shared experience on an understanding of human embodiment as universal, Downey emphasises that embodied response is mediated through a culturally learned embodied listening. That is, capoeiristas acquire the skill of hearing capoeira music – led by the berimbau bow – as inscribed with embodied patterns and gestures: ‘Music becomes generalised in the limbs, not localised in a relation between the ears and the mind. Music emerges in a field of corporeal potential rather than in a cognitive space. The

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adept’s body is experienced as intertwining with the berimbau in the presence of the music, even when the instrument itself is absent. This embodied listening is revealed, Downey reports, in the way in which practitioners tend to refer to physical actions that cause and alter sound rather than in describing music at the abstracted level of ‘melody’ and ‘tone’.

Downey’s analytical account of capoeira experience is supported by a synthesis of ethnographic and phenomenological method. In contrast to analysts who, broadly, start from their own listening experience, and I include myself among these, it is not the researcher’s experience that is under investigation here (despite it being evident that Downey sought berimbau instruction). Instead, Downey presents an interpretive report of the experience of capoeira practitioners that draws from observation as well as interviews. Acknowledging the challenge of interpreting others’ experiences, Downey pursues a method of phenomenological excavation that aims not to understand the dynamics of musical experience but the ‘processes through which it is apprehended’. Phenomenal experience is reduced by means of observing corporeal interaction and entrainment and of the physicality of instrument learning and performance. This makes for illuminating reading; however, the issue with employing an ethnographic approach, as opposed to analytical, is that it is difficult for the reader to corroborate the researcher’s interpretations. This is particularly true of Downey’s descriptions of berimbau-dance relations, where more concrete analytic examples would likely aid the reader.

Wendy Fonarow’s examination of phenomenological indie spectatorship has much in common with Downey’s study. Participant comportment, bodily interaction, and structured social setting are key themes. Ethnographic methodology is another point of connection, as too is a determination to critically elucidate the meaning(s) of participatory modes. However, Fonarow’s participants are audience members rather than practitioners or individual listeners; her anthropological eye is trained on the collision of spectating, rather than performing (in the

10 Ibid., p. 499.
11 Ibid., p. 504.
conventional sense), bodies. Phenomenological experience is explicated as a particular aspect of the indie gig ritual, and as expressively enacted in a specific area of the gig venue. Labelled as ‘zone one’, this is the densely populated area closest to the stage typically inhabited by the most junior audience members. Phenomenological intensity and somatic engagement, Fonarow argues, distinguish this zone from other spectatorial zones. In detailing the physiological pressures zone one exercises on the spectator, Fonarow illuminates an embodied, social, intersubjective phenomenology of the live music setting. The physicality of zone one is captured in the following passage:

Standing outside a venue after a show, it is fairly easy to distinguish between those who were in zone and those who were standing in other parts of the venue. Those in zone one leave with their clothes dishevelled, their hair soaked in perspiration, chatting enthusiastically about the performance. Those from the other zones do not appear terribly different from when they entered. The heat and density of people makes breathing difficult as well. Those in the front submit themselves to the physiological stresses of somatic pressure, intense heat, oxygen deprivation, and physical exertion, often in conjunction with the use of alcohol.¹²

But Fonarow does not stop at sensory description. As well as describing the zone one experience in relation to ‘altered states’ characteristic of drug-induced and religious experience, Fonarow outlines a phenomenology of spectatorship as a means of grounding metaphysical discussion. Visceral experience is tied to the meaning(s) it gives rise to. The key idea is that phenomenal experience is not, necessarily, an end in itself, but a means of accessing particular meanings. A

deep sense of cultural belonging, emotional connection to others, and freedom are listed as common, though by no means guaranteed, affordances. And while ‘authentication’ is not explicitly argued for, it is implied that the embodied spectatorship that defines zone one works to authenticate the audience member’s experience as well as the on-stage performance. Overall, then, there is a neat alignment between the observed situation (experience giving rise to meaning) and Fonarow’s write up (development of phenomenological description into metaphysical speculation).

I want to highlight one further idea that surfaces in Fonarow’s phenomenological account of indie: modes of spectatorship change over time. Fonarow describes this extensively in relation to the tendency of spectators to graduate from zone one to zone two as they get older and increasingly familiar with ritual convention. This transition accompanies a marked modification in physical behaviour and interaction and, with this, phenomenological intensity. Physical restraint and ‘mental interiority’ replace emotional expression and somatic connection, an observation Fonarow later encapsulates as ‘the decay of emotion’. I quote here a passage from Fonarow’s excellent summary:

The indie gig is a ritual abut producing adults who believe that being overwhelmed by emotional sentiment is a merely youthful thing, a phrase that people go through. While one is involved in the event, the emotional world is given shape and encouraged by participation. At the point of exit, however, the emotional world is asserted to be unreliable and worthless. There is a ritual of transition to convey youth from adolescence to adulthood, where emotional sentiment is a misleading and empty trifle of a world best left behind. Indie’s trick is to assert first that emotions are the centre of the universe and then, in the decay of signification caused by the immersion in the very thing loved, it shows that
what was once considered truth is mere performance, spontaneous creation is cliché, and what was once considered the centre of the universe is just entertainment.\textsuperscript{13}

In summary, then, what is it that I take forward from these readings? From Moore, I appropriate a fundamental connection of authentication with listener experience. I also retain his endeavour to identify correspondences between sound structures and listening experience. I take ‘centredness’ as one possible experiential affordance, but argue that ‘centredness’, as well as being a cultural meaning, points to and arises within a phenomenal body. The listening body excavated in my thesis is, as in Moore’s work, in the first instance that of the researcher. I take an interest in the bodily entrainment Downey observes in capoeira education and wonder how this mode of engagement might apply to private listenings. That music can be gestural is an unremarkable claim, but describing the dynamics of musical and \textit{self}-motion and then interpreting possible meaning(s) presents a musicological challenge that requires the serious involvement of phenomenological theory and method. I advance Fonarow’s assertion of the experiential basis of meaning, where musical experience matters not only on account of phenomenological profile, but because experience grounds and enables access to deep and crucial meanings: authentication of self is one such meaning. I remain aware too of the temporal dimension of phenomenological life; as Fonarow observes, the way in which we engage with and experience particular music can change over time. A repeat listening does not always entail an exact replaying of prior experience and, for many listeners, registering changes in musical experience is a vital means of sketching a narrative of self.

From the wide-reaching survey undertaken thus far, a general outlook begins to appear. It is possible to conjure up a sense of this according to a series of key terms. Essentials include ‘intentional’, ‘phenomenological’, ‘interpretive’, ‘intersubjective’. These can be contextualised in the following phrases: experiences of authentication result from intentional engagements with music; listeners actively perceive, and seek access to, meaning; immanent, embodied experience often forms the basis of meaningful connections with music and self; intersubjective understandings of song meaning can be secured by committing to interpretive and explanatory action. At various points in what has come so far, I have highlighted the theoretic and analytical requirements a discussion of listener authentication demands. I have also, out of necessity, hinted at particular theoretic directions and terminology. Here, I explicate a composite theoretic foundation that is formative of, and complementary to, my broader outlook. While each theoretic component has its own emphasis, they broadly share an active, experientially engaged view of meaning-making. In addition to this, each element furnishes the researcher with useful terminology and – appealing to the pursuits of the musicologist – approaches to analysis. First, I want to consider ‘ecological perception’.

Despite attracting increasing musicological attention, and making recent high-profile appearances, ecological perception is still by no means a dominant theoretic approach in the analysis and psychology of music. Eric Clarke, in his book-length application of ecological theory,\(^1\) compares the perceptual view, as originally developed by James Gibson, with that of the more dominant ‘information-processing’ approach.\(^2\) It is, in part, on account of its representational ‘cognitive’ basis that Clarke rejects the ‘information-processing’ outlook. Clarke argues – and this

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\(^1\) Clarke, *Ways of Listening*.  
\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 12–16.
is, in the context of this thesis, pertinent – that information-processing appears a fundamentally disembodied process where experience is discounted. ‘Perception is treated as a kind of disinterested contemplation, with no connection to action – which bears little relationship to the essentially exploratory and orienting function of perception in the life of an organism’, Clarke notes. The disembodied characteristic of information-processing is related to the indirect perceptual process it delineates. Starting with primitive abstractions (of sound), it involves an ascent through increasingly complex stages of abstraction (‘pitch’ to ‘scale systems’ and ‘melodic organisation’) prior to the perceiver reaching higher-level abstractions (‘aesthetic value’, ‘reference’, ‘meaning’). Even if the process is open to re-ordering, advancing through (mental) representational stages remains vital to the act of perception. Clarke offers a broad summary of the ecological alternative in the following comments: ‘When humans and other animals perceive the world, they do so actively. Perception is essentially exploratory, seeking out sources of stimulation in order to discover more about the environment…Actions lead to, enhance, and direct perception. Resonance is not passive: it is a perceiving organism’s active, exploratory engagement with its environment’. A view of perception as direct and active, and an understanding of an intentional immediacy between listening and meaning is what the ecological view distinctly offers. Meaning is not the result of stimuli passing through a multi-stage representational process, but is formed in and directed by our intentional engagements with ‘objects’ and occurrences in our surroundings. Neither is meaning contained within an individual’s ‘mental picture’ of the world; meaning can be physically enacted and experientially formed. This points to the organism-environment mutualism that underpins the ecological outlook. But how is it we come to know the world (and music) in such a way that we can orient ourselves around it, and make sense of it, in appropriate and meaningful ways? Is this capacity innate or acquired? The answer from ecological

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3 Ibid., p. 15.
4 I am paraphrasing Clarke’s schematic representation of an information-processing approach to music perception. Ibid., p. 13.
5 Ibid., p.19.
perception is that we are born with capacities for perception, but that these are enhanced and developed in the course of our experiential lives. Clarke’s idea of ‘perceptual learning’ has an explicitly evolutionary aspect; we become attuned to the world around us, and aesthetic interactions within it, through a capacity for adaptation and a tendency toward making things familiar. Simon Zagorski-Thomas understands this as the creation of ‘well-trodden pathways’ in thinking and bodily action. Perceptual development is, of course, also culturally situated. Ecological ‘perceptual learning’ is a point of a connection with the view of meaning-making proposed by the branch of cognitive science known as ‘embodied cognition’ (to which we will shortly come). ‘The meaning of something is its relations, actual or potential, to other qualities, things, events, and experiences. In pragmatist lingo, the meaning of something is a matter of how it connects to what has gone before and what it entails for present or future experience and actions’, explains Mark Johnson. What actions might listening to popular music lead to? For our purposes, possible actions include interpretive discourse, embodied-affective engagement, the presentation of self to self and/or others, the enactment of (inter)subjective potentialities disclosed in listening events.

From philosophy, I take Joel Krueger’s ecologically-oriented account of embodied-affective listening experience, to which I will return at several points, as instructive. In a concise but far-reaching essay, Krueger uses ecological theory to paint a picture of listening experience as actively constituted from ‘sustained, responsive engagement’. And, like me, Krueger looks to empirical studies of embodiment and perception to support phenomenological discussion. For Krueger, music is an external resource – a ‘vehicle of cognition’ – that can be used to provide

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10 Krueger borrows Christopher Small’s famous term ‘musicking’ to posit listening as active and involved. See Christopher Small, Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1997).
access to ‘novel’, heightened (in force and complexity) experiences, and an expanded ‘phenomenological repertoire’. In Krueger’s words: ‘when listening attentively to a piece of music we often feel as though we have temporarily accessed a realm of feeling and expression that somehow goes beyond that of our everyday non-musical life’. This is understood with reference to the ‘hypothesis of extended cognition’ more generally, and the ‘musically extended mind’ more specifically. To be clear, this is not a Cartesian, cognitivist mind; ecological principles, notably ‘affordance’, a term I explore more fully below, allow Krueger to consider phenomenological experience and, with this, the enactive nature of music perception and meaning-making. Along the way interrelated motor, attentional, and emotional capacities are considered. Krueger’s understanding of entrainment informs the analytical discussion staged in section 2.5 and his ‘musically extended mind’ influences my understanding of temporally (2.6) and ecologically (3.3, 3.4, 3.5) extended experiences of self.

Others have adopted a Gibsonian perceptual outlook as a means of avoiding the shortcomings of semiotic theory. ‘Although much of my work has been described as semiotic, I have never felt easy with such a description since the insistence in critical discourse on music on concepts of ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ seems to me to misrepresent what musicians do’, Moore explains in ‘Interpretation: So What?’. In the essay’s concluding remarks, Moore argues that while semioticians of music, including Philip Tagg and Thomas Turino, ultimately share a concern for identifying correspondences between music and listener experience, the ecological approach is better equipped in such a task because it foregrounds the organism’s interaction with ecological properties that are facets of experiential reality. I have followed a similar trajectory and take a wonderful quotation from Charles Sanders Peirce as instructive. Comparing his work with that of

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15 Ibid., p. 424.
William James, that other great Nineteenth Century pragmatist, Peirce declares: ‘He is so concrete, so living; I a mere table of contents, so abstract, a very snarl of twine’.\(^{16}\) I broadly construe ecological theory as setting out a concrete and living agenda, while finding semiotics, on account of its own representational emphasis, disembodiment, and its limited ability to explain and describe experiential dynamics, exemplary of such a snarl. The language of semiotics, too, seems far removed from the often metaphor-dependent language of listeners and musicians. I have seen students delight in the abstract, quasi-scientific manner of expression semiotics can lend an interpretive analysis; though, I am equally aware of the alienation semiotic abstraction can afford. ‘This is not how I know music’, is the general claim. I am reminded of Tiger Roholt’s summary of Lydia Goehr’s critique of analytic philosophy’s treatment of music: ‘The misplaced claims of analytic philosophers result in claims that clash with pretheoretical intuitions, and which fail to adequately account for the phenomena under consideration’.\(^{17}\) I think this review is equally applicable to semiotically-oriented analysis. My turn to ecological theory is also, as I discuss below, on account of its compatibility with phenomenological conceptions of intentionality. Luke Windsor’s\(^{18}\) attempt to reconcile semiotics and the ecological view is, bearing in mind their differences, noteworthy. Windsor modifies the signifier/signified binary, in an act of renovation, by incorporating the ecological concept of affordance. Windsor’s key manoeuvre, however, is to collapse separations made between ‘semiotic’ (symbolic, coded) and ‘ecological’ (natural) worlds; or otherwise put, the worlds these theories are generally understood as oriented toward.

So, what are the key terms in ecological theory? Three emerge as crucial. The first, *invariant*, refers to constant ecological properties. It is in the concept of invariant that the ecological view expresses its emphasis on the world as structured and familiarised through perceptual learning. We

\(^{16}\) For my own purposes, I have revived this quote as an informal test: ‘The Peirce Test’, no less. I take it as a basic standard against which my own research and pedagogic practice can be reviewed.


do not wake each day to find ourselves surrounded by a world whose colours, shapes, textures and sounds are entirely new and confusing. The same principle applies to previously encountered music (whether at the level of instrument, song, performer, idiolect, or style). Invariants of the ‘real world’ urban ecology might include smooth stretches of tarmac, large grey structures and a sonic din interrupted intermittently with sharp bursts of sound. Gently flowing water and expanses of open land are invariants more commonly associated with the rural idyll. Invariants in music can operate both within and outside of an individual track. A melodic hook is an example of an invariant likely to be particular to a track (or, otherwise, deployed intertextually). A specific textural arrangement might also be an invariant of an individual track, though it could also be an invariant at the level of idiolect and style. Harmonic mode, melodic pitch collection, instrumental timbre, rhythmic regularity (and irregularity), and vocal expression can be added to this list of potential musical invariants.

Affordance, the second vital concept, relates to our active, responsive engagement with invariants. A smooth stretch of tarmac might afford driving, cycling, or skateboarding. The urban din might afford flight, by whatever means, to the rural idyll where flowing water affords swimming and/or relaxed contemplation. Gibson originally defined affordance as, ‘what things furnish, for good or ill’ and, in doing so, hinted at a mutualism between invariants and affordances: ‘what they afford the observer, after all, depends on their properties’. Clarke chooses to describe affordances as ‘environmental opportunities’ or, rephrased, possibilities for thinking and action disclosed in the act of perception. Harry Heft offers a similar description: affordances, he asserts, ‘are relational in nature. They are the environmental counterparts to the animal’s behavioural potentialities’. Such potentialities are not, however, fixed, and nor are they solely determined by invariant properties. As we have seen in the example of the tarmac road, its use –

20 Ibid., p. 285.
this is the functional aspect of affordance – is partly dependent on the perceiver’s desires and needs. Windsor is explicit in his understanding of affordances as ‘functional meanings’ as well as ‘culturally relative’ and ‘open to social mediation’. The functionality of affordances resonates with authenticity (and authentication) as a functional meaning. Recall Andrew Weigert’s conception of authenticity as a ‘motivating meaning’, and Joseph Kotarba’s emphasis on the practical usage of music and the authentication it affords listeners. Affordance’s functionality is tied – though this is not always made explicit in theoretic writing – to intentionality. I refer explicitly here to the phenomenological deployment of that term. Heft, usefully, puts corporeal intentionality at the centre of an ecological view of organism and environment reciprocity, writing: ‘Affordances are specifiable relative to what an individual can do, relative to what his potentialities for action are. That is, the environment’s affordances are to be identified in relation to the body as a means of expressing various goals or intentions’.

Part Two can, in several ways, be read as an application of this general thinking to popular song analysis. In this context, affordance refers to the consequences of a listener’s situated, relative, active engagement with sound (I have thus far discussed this with reference to ‘appropriation’ and ‘subjective objectivity’).

What of music’s affordances, then? Clarke offers the following initial list: dance, worship, co-ordinated working, persuasion, emotional catharsis, marching, and foot-tapping. This thesis is intensely concerned with one overarching affordance: authentication. The wide-reaching analytic, hermeneutic, and ethical discussions undertaken within the thesis are concentrated through this single, general affordance. While itself general, it has a number of affordances that support it, two of which I have had reason to repeatedly call attention to in Part One: the affordance of a sense of ownership, and the affordance of a sense of agency. But in the subsequent analyses, I drill down further and, in the process of doing so, consider a range of other experiential affordances.

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22 Ibid., p.11.
23 Clarke, Ways of Listening, p. 38.
Specification is the third key term. The addition of specification to ‘invariant’ and ‘affordance’ completes the basic perceptual process outlined by Gibson, for what invariants afford depends on what they specify. A smooth stretch of tarmac affords driving a car because it specifies an accommodating road. In music, sounds frequently specify instruments, but other perceptual information can accompany this most basic connection. A particular performer can, for instance, be specified. Invariants integrated into tracks can also refer outside of the world of ‘music’ as sonic specifications are not always related to originators or physical entities. The world of signification that Windsor describes, which includes symbolic and coded systems ‘relative to the social agreements of a group of individuals’, is pertinent here. Specifications, as well as affordances are situated, relative, and informed by perceptual learning. Similarly, Clarke has argued that specification can operate across domains. In the recording of Hendrix’s infamous ‘Star Spangled Banner’ performance, Clarke hears specification at the level of sound, music (style, genre), culture, and ideology. Clarke concludes: ‘Culture and ideology are just as material (in the concreteness of the practices that embody them) as are the instrument and human body that generate this performance, and, as perceptual sources, they are just as much a part of the total environment. These are not ‘interpretations’ drawn out of thin air and arbitrarily imposed on the music; they are specifications of the material relative to listeners enculturated in a particular context’. I employ the term with a similar breadth and flexibility. In Part Two, specification extends to patterns of bodily motility and experience. Here specification and affordances appear in close correspondence and hint at a reversibility between specification and affordance. In my exploration of spatial authentication, topographic as well as social, affective, and bodily environments are specified.

The second core element of my theoretic foundation can be labelled – and I write this with some reservation – ‘embodiment’ theory. This broad descriptor serves to capture the work of several authors themselves employing unique terms, aims, and angles of enquiry. Despite this, their

25 Clarke, Ways of Listening, p. 61.
writings reach agreement on several issues: body-mind integration is a given and motility, pre-reflective embodied capabilities, and affective experience are principal concerns in all of the studies considered here. There is also a shared acknowledgement of organism-environment coupling as vital to agency and meaning (even if Gibson’s ecological approach is not explicitly referred to). Add to this an interdisciplinary spirit within which empirical as well as critical and artistic works are given credence. However, while there is a collective strength, internal debates remain lively. Such disagreements, where they do occur, will need to be considered here if the richness of this debate, and what is at stake in it, is to be faithfully represented.

The first strand of this collection is known as ‘embodied cognition’. Like ecological theory, this outlook seeks to explain experiential origins and processes. It does not dodge the complexity and inscrutability of experience, but instead puts it centre stage in the discussion of meaning. The unification of ‘embodied cognition’ and ecological theory is by no means new,26 nor is it unique to musicology.27 I take, as others have, Mark Johnson’s work in the field as a starting point. Its recent orientation toward aesthetics make it a particularly useful resource. I have already captured above some general tenets of the embodied meaning Johnson promotes, but crucial to Johnson’s positing of the body as the basis for meaning – including abstract and aesthetic – is his argument that underlying embodied patterns and structures direct and inform understanding. Echoing Kant, Johnson labels such structures image schemata and offers the following definition:

in order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be a pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions. A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering

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activities. These patterns emerge as meaningful structures chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions.²⁹

There is a direct, intentional connection to be made here – image schemata, despite being general and abstract in one sense, are in and of the world, not mental representations of it. It is useful at this point to consider a few pervasive sensorimotor schemas. While all schemas presuppose an organism-environment coupling, some centre more explicitly on the phenomenological body; the VERTICALITY³⁰ (see figure 2) and BALANCE schemas are exemplary. The former refers to the bodily experience of uprightness and gravitational groundedness. BALANCE, meanwhile, represents a re-orientation of this proprioceptive sense. Whereas VERTICALITY and BALANCE explicitly concern rectilinear motion, the CONTAINMENT (see figure 1 for illustration) schema underpins and directs common spatial relations. Johnson explains:

Our encounter with containment and boundedness is one of the most pervasive features of our bodily experience. We are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers into which we put certain things (food, water, air) and out of which other things emerge (food and water wastes, air, blood, etc.). From the beginning, we experience constant physical containment in our surroundings (those things that envelop us). We move in and out of rooms, clothes, vehicles, and numerous kinds of bounded spaces. We manipulate objects placing them in containers (cups, boxes, cans, bags, etc.). In each of these cases there are repeatable spatial and temporal organisations. In other words, there are typical schemata for physical containment.³¹

³⁰ I use capitals to specify schemata as well as experiences that have a readily assignable underlying schema.
Johnson also observes how schematic structures of experience underpin and emerge in our expression of abstract concepts. Cross-domain metaphorical extension is the enabling act here. CATEGORIES ARE CONTAINERS, MORE IS UP/LESS IS DOWN, UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING are but just a few of the examples that Johnson extracts from Joseph Grady’s study of primary metaphor. In saying we ‘find escape in music’, or ‘find ourselves in the music’ we metaphorically engage the CONTAINMENT schema to describe the consuming, constraining capacity of sonic perception. But how can image schema theory be applied in musicological study? It can be transformed into an analytic challenge, though interpreting musical structures as specifying particular schemata is a relatively straightforward task. Several authors have deployed image schema theory to analytic and descriptive ends, with varying degrees of reliance on the theory as a general foundation for understanding how perceivers make sense of music. In the second and third sections of Part Two I review musicological uses of image schema theory and consider its efficacy in explaining – musicologically and phenomenologically – listening experience. I take a particular interest in image schema theory as a theoretic basis for acknowledging pre-reflective, or ‘pronoetic’, roots of experiential authentication.

Figure 1. Illustration of CONTAINMENT schema.

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Johnson’s embodied outlook is heavily indebted to the pragmatism of John Dewey, and in *The Meaning of the Body* this influence is apparent throughout. In a discussion of how experiences present themselves to us, Johnson looks to Dewey’s conception of experience as arising within situational gestalts that are constituted by a ‘whole complex of physical, biological, social, and cultural conditions’.

In this regard, *situation* is a term that appears to speak directly to the experientialist view of listening I sketch.

I extend the embodied-ecological theoretic foundations established by the likes of Moore and Zagorski-Thomas to involve phenomenologically-oriented accounts of embodiment. Two writers warrant special mention: Shaun Gallagher and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. As far as I am aware, their interdisciplinary examinations of embodied life are yet to receive significant musicological attention. Of Gallagher’s work, I refer primarily to *How The Body Shapes The Mind*, a study of impressive breadth and insight. It spans philosophical theory, including phenomenology, as well as ‘third person’ empirical studies from fields as wide-ranging as developmental psychology, cognitive linguistics, neuroscience, and neuropsychology. The book provides compelling support for a turn, in theory and analysis, to embodiment, and is a source of empowerment for the musicologist that steps out – *steps in* – and chooses to take seriously first person phenomenal experience. Gallagher considers two pairs of terms relating to bodily experience that are worth

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considering at this point. The first pair, consisting of ownership and agency, is familiar. Ownership is a vital component of authentication as an experiential affordance. Gallagher defines it phenomenologically as the ‘sense that is I who am experiencing the movement or thought’.34 Recalling notions of ‘appropriation’ and ‘objective-subjectivity’, I apply this with the general view that listeners not only actively constitute their experience, but also that it is, in the first instance, from a ‘first person’ phenomenal perspective that subjectivities are formed and enacted. The latter idea corresponds with the embodied ‘agency’ Gallagher describes as the ‘sense of being the initiator or source of movement, action, or thought’.35 I am not claiming that listeners understand themselves as initiators of sonic activity. While listeners can not alter sonic events, they can, however, assert a determining role at the level of signification. In their attunement to patterns of sound, joined36 with the music not merely receiving it, listeners ascribe – embody – expressivities. These can be attitudinal, affective, and/or gestural. In some cases, as in my presentation of interpretive analyses, listeners can become consciously, reflectively aware of these. More commonly, listeners experience a sense of involvement in songs as they unfold without perceptual monitoring. Gallagher’s philosophical argument for prenoetic bodily performance as a direct form of self-awareness invites a musicological connection between embodied listener engagement and listener identity (here concentrated through the concept of authentication). ‘Agency’ points to other consequences of aesthetic experience: in authenticating listening situations, a range of potentialities – critical, social, and ethical as well as kinaesthetic – can be disclosed. It also captures the empowering and temporal scope of musical engagements: listening not only gives rise to fleeting ‘here-and-now’ experiences and meanings, but also to future possibilities for identity and action.

34 Gallagher, How the Body Shapes the Mind, p. 173.
35 Ibid.
A performative emphasis also characterises Gallagher’s *body schema*, an embodied concept he diligently separates from *body image*. Gallagher defines a body schema as ‘a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring’.

37 It is, as Gallagher later states, ‘a dynamic, operative performance of the body, rather than a consciousness, image, or conceptual model of it’. In contrast to Johnson’s image schemata, which are general and abstract, Gallagher’s ‘body schema’ more explicitly speaks to bodily motility, intentionality, and dynamics, to our embodied activity and attunement in/to the surrounding world. Some schemas are developed from innate capacities. Reaching out to grab something is an act constituted of schemas we start refining very early on in our lives. Dancing to music, irrespective of style, can also be an early achievement. The performance of tricks on a moving skateboard is, alternatively, a result of effective motor action that relies on a collection of schemas that are learned and extensively rehearsed. I consider the specification and affordance of body schemas as an aspect of our authenticating interactions with sound.

Body image involves a shift in perceptual focus. Whereas body schema concerns our pre-reflective, pragmatic bodily interactions with our surroundings, body image arises when our bodies assume the role of intentional object. Gazing into a mirror, medical examination, and taking up a new sport (ice-skating comes to mind) are situations that bring the body into an ‘intentional field of consciousness’. In popular culture, body image is used to describe the subjective attitudes and feelings an individual has of their body. These frequently centre on the quest to achieve one of the desirable forms dictated by contemporary frameworks of beauty and attractiveness. Gallagher instead considers perceptual experiences of the body, focusing on the sense of ownership that comes with having a reflexive awareness of the body in form and action (Gallagher also details pathological cases where individuals do not experience a sense of ownership of the body they

38 Ibid., p. 32.
39 Ibid., p. 28.
perceive). In Part Two I explore ways in which engagements with music can give rise to a conscious awareness of aspects of bodily form and motility.

A third strand of Gallagher’s phenomenology that I draw from is his emphasis on the temporality of consciousness and embodied experience. In an illuminating application of Husserl’s ‘time-consciousness’, Gallagher aligns phenomenological ownership and agency with our capacities to perform processes, including cognitive and bodily schematic processes, in a unified manner across time. Gallagher uses the perception of musical melody as an example of our capacity to make an enduring whole of something that temporally occurs in momentary parts (notes). What makes this possible, the Husserlian model asserts, is our capacity not only to be conscious of an event (a ‘primal impression’ of a note, for example), but also to retain our perception of related events in previous phases of consciousness (‘retention’) and anticipate what is about to happen (‘protention’). In the context of listening, it is possible to make powerful and wide-reaching phenomenological connections between retention and ownership and, protention and agency. My attempt to analytically establish such connections is located in the final section of Part Two.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s investigation of embodied life, starting with 1966’s The Phenomenology of Dance, spans five decades. The Corporeal Turn showcases a selection of essays that extend from 1979’s ‘Can the Body Ransom Us’ to a chapter newly composed for the reader’s publication in 2009. The book provides a useful starting point for scholars new to phenomenological study and captures Sheets-Johnstone’s deeply interdisciplinary approach to examining embodied life as it is lived and performed. Sheets-Johnstone’s argument for phenomenological method and the prioritising of lived experience is at full extension (and in full flow) in the following passage from ‘On the Challenge of Languageing Experience’:

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To describe the dynamics, one must first actually experience them. In actually experiencing them, one readily finds that ‘for all this, names are lacking’. The phrase comes from Husserl and is apt beyond words, one might say. Names are indeed lacking not only because everyday language is basically deficient with respect to dynamics but because names cannot do justice to dynamics. The situation might be compared to those instances in which we are at a loss for words, so stunned by something that cannot speak. In such instances, we are in thrall to the felt sense of an event. It is emotionally laden in the double sense of permeating us to the bone and animating – or not animating – us to the bone. Indeed, emotions move through us in distinctive ways. Their double dynamic is as experientially evident in feelings of determination, conviction, hesitancy, doubt, and curiosity, that is, in what are sometimes referred to as ‘cognitive emotions’ – as it is in feelings of fear, sadness, and delight. In each instance a felt dynamic moves through our bodies and moves us to move – not to move – in an affectively unique manner. A dynamic congruity obtains between affect and movement, feelings and action. The challenge of languaging experience, of distilling experienced ‘hidden processes of interiority’ and languaging their basically non-linguistic dynamics is clearly illuminated, even crystallised, in experience itself.41

But Sheets-Johnstone does provide names; or concepts, rather, as well as lists of experiential qualities that hint usefully at analytic frameworks. In ‘Thinking in Movement’,42 originally published in 1981 and extended in 1999, kinetic flow is considered. Broadly taken, this refers to the open, ongoing, unfolding nature of human movement. Using improvisatory dance as an example, Sheets-Johnstone extends this basic idea by establishing a connection between unfolding bodily movement and interpretive consciousness. Dancers, in their performative exploration of

possibilities, are ‘thinking in movement’, they are determining and embodying aesthetic choices in a motional present. It seems reasonable to think of listening in this processual way, though, as ‘subject position’ instructs, it is not entirely open-ended. Invariants of recorded popular song impose some constraint on affordances of embodied interaction. Nonetheless, authenticating experience can, I argue, be a case of thinking in movement; that is, interpretations and affordances of authentication can arise from moments of kinesthetic entrainment. Another pertinent connection is invited here, namely between Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘thinking in movement’ and Clarke’s perception-action coupling, both of which can be considered through a broad notion of appropriation. In foregrounding gestural expressivity, Sheets-Johnstone necessarily has to confront the issue of what kinds of meaning are at stake. After all, bodily motion is not necessarily symbolic, it doesn’t necessarily refer to specific things. Refuting ‘symbolic referentiality’ Sheets-Johnstone instead offers a view of gesture as a direct, existential expression of being that can potentially specify culturally situated meanings. For instance, in Part Two I consider a range of music examples that I perceive to afford kinetic sequences (or ‘kinetic melodies’) that are, potentially, both subjectively and (sub)culturally recognisable.

‘Sensory-Kinetic Understandings of Language’ features a critical discussion of Johnson’s image schemata. The problem, Sheets-Johnstone argues, is that despite his efforts to foreground embodiment, Johnson does not go phenomenologically far (deep is perhaps a better way of putting it) enough. Image schema theory, the argument goes, suffers from an abstraction and cognitive basis. Schemata do not describe a body-in-action, and are too general to describe experiential dynamics; in the author’s own words, they ‘need to be specifically packaged corporeally – to be embodied – in order not to remain embedded in a purely mental sphere’.

Johnstone offers a similar judgment of Gallagher’s ‘body schema’, though, in view of the examples of body schemas presented in *How The Body Shapes the Mind*, it is hard to fully accept this critique. ‘Archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations’ (ACKs) is Sheets-Johnstone’s alternative. These are embodied concepts that attempt to refer specifically to phenomenological experience. I take one ACK, ‘insideness’ – the experiential understanding of being inside, things being inside other things, putting things inside other things – and consider its usefulness in capturing authenticating specifications in Korn’s ‘Freak On A Leash’.

For Sheets-Johnstone, expression is a kinetic phenomenon, and motion is inextricably tied to affect. Drawing support from empirical studies, Sheets-Johnstone argues that bodily motility should be understood as generative of emotion as much as the more commonly accepted reverse situation. In an attempt to closely account for neuromuscular movement, and its affective relations, Sheets-Johnstone outlines four qualities of movement that are only analytically separable: tensional, linear, amplitudinal, and projectional. These, I suggest, aid the musicologist in meeting analytic-descriptive demands. Perhaps more crucially, they invite the musicologist to consider how the gestural specifications of musical invariants afford kinetic-affective engagement and meaning(s).
1.5 Summary of Part One

This chapter has sketched a phenomenological-hermeneutic direction for the study of authenticating listening experience. Following pertinent non-essentialist views, I posit authenticity as a processual meaning interpreted and experienced by listeners. Avoiding wholesale subjectivism and objectivism, I instead argue for authentication as arising within interactions between listeners and music. I have also hinted at the hermeneutic, intersubjective, and ethical importance of attempting to articulate phenomenal listening encounters, an issue I later take up in Part Four. Finally, after an initial review of some studies of active, experiential musical engagement – from musicology, ethnomusicology and anthropology – I establish a theoretic foundation that draws together strands of ecological psychology, embodied cognition, and phenomenology.
PART TWO

Embodied Authentication

2.1 Music and the Body

While the aim of Part One was to establish an intellectual foundation for a non-essentialist, experiential aesthetic of authentication, the present chapter sketches an embodied hermeneutics of song, with authentication as the central affordance. The basic assumption, to borrow from Wayne Bowman and Kimberley Powell, is that musical experience is ‘distinctively, perhaps uniquely, a form of embodied agency’. Building on this, I propose that authentication can be understood both as an immanent and pre-reflectively constituted embodied meaning – connection – and as a meaning that can be consciously experienced. Let me restate what authentication means in this context. Following Allan Moore’s eminent work on authenticity and popular music, I understand (‘second person’) authentication as the sense of being affirmed by a musical experience. This relies, as Moore points out, on the establishment of connections between music and listeners’ life experience. I attend to the pre-reflective, affective, kinetic, and temporal

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dimensions of such experience across the six sections that make up Part Two. I also follow Tia DeNora’s relation of music and identity3 that, similarly to Moore’s perspective, emphasises listeners’ appropriation of music – expressed in the phrases ‘the song is you’ and ‘finding me in the music’ – as the foundation for authentication. The argument here is that listeners authenticate music and themselves when they claim ownership over it; that is, when musical experience informs (inter)subjective trajectories. Explaining the basis of compelling connections between musical experience and identity requires significant theoretic and analytic exploration, and here I start to undertake such work. In sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 I highlight the deeply embodied roots of relations between music and self, arguing that somatic experiences and mechanisms that shape everyday experience also underlie experiential connections between music and self. In section 2.5 I more fully explore gesture as a means by which listeners (inter)subjectively appropriate, recognise, and interpret sound. I suggest that in becoming motionally entrained to sonic events, whether outwardly or imaginatively, listeners expressively claim ownership and assert agency. In the final section of Part Two I relate temporality and embodiment and argue that listening can afford perceivers an absorbing involvement in unfolding experience that is can be at once momentary and temporally extended. I propose a reciprocal view, wherein it is understood that meaningful temporal-affective identities are specified by and given to music (by listeners). In addition to considering ways in which listeners experience ownership, I also seek explanation for the intentional mechanisms that shape listening and enable the experience of (inter)subjective agency. In doing so, I acknowledge the capacity of listening experience to authenticate past, present, and future identities. Analysis of music examples is undertaken with three primary aims in mind: 1) to introduce forms embodied interaction that serve as the basis for authentication; 2) to register how useful specific embodied theories and concepts are in explaining and describing experiential encounters with music; 3) to gauge the efficacy of embodied theories and concepts to detail sonic

dynamics in relation to experiential affordances. It is first necessary, however, to provide some insight into ways in which the body has been implicated in music studies. I do not intend to provide an exhaustive survey; instead, I will introduce some works representative of the corporeal turn in music scholarship, a turn particularly apparent in ‘music perception’ studies but also now having a notable impact on popular musicology. Nor do I aim to add to the growing body of empirical study, instead I acknowledge it as a compelling and authoritative basis for phenomenological-hermeneutic analysis.

Confronting normative accounts of the body has been the concern of several eminent popular music scholars. In a review of *Music and Cultural Theory*, Philip Tagg observed the adoption, absent of any problematisation, of reductionist notions of the body. As in the example Tagg cites (below), corporeal specifications are too often and too easily equated with sex:

> The famous guitar riff in ‘Satisfaction’, mentioned three times, is qualified on each occasion as ‘sexual’, rather than as, for example, ‘obstinate’, ‘insistent’, ‘driving’, ‘forthright’, ‘full-bodied’, ‘pushing and pulling’, ‘to and fro’, ‘round and round’ - descriptors provided by other individuals of their experience of the same sound. The authors’ solely sexual reading of the sound might be explained by reference to one line in the song’s lyrics and to culturally specific sonic connotations of the song for certain individuals of a certain age in certain places at certain times in history, i.e. a reading the authors should, according to their own terminology, place at the ‘secondary’ rather than ‘primary level of signification’, the latter being more compatible with such descriptors as ‘insistent’ or ‘to and fro’. However, the problem here is not so much one of choosing an inapposite ‘reading’ to illustrate structural homologies but of equating forceful bodily movement of a repeated or oscillating character with sex, as though human beings had spent more time in uninspired

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metronomic copulation than in a combination of climbing, digging, dragging, defecating, hacking, hauling, hewing, hovering, horse-riding, jumping, lifting, kneeling, pulling, pushing, sawing, cycling, scrubbing, shovelling, stopping, sweeping, etc.\(^5\)

The thrust of Tagg’s critique is that by automatically limiting music’s embodiment to sexual enactments, the analyst runs the risk of missing the potential range of (non-sexual) embodied specifications and affordances that constitute a song (or riff) and shape our interpretation of it.

Two decades have passed since Simon Frith offered his own take on the body problem. In *Performing Rites*, he noted how clichés of musical embodiment sustain dismissals of popular music’s intellectual value and serve as the basis for (occasionally sinister) essentialist assumptions of sex and primitivism. The ‘high cultural’ argument holds that popular music’s rhythmic appeal to the body is indicative of its ‘brainlessness’.\(^6\) In this view, a perceived ability to directly access bodily affect sets popular music in opposition to musics for the mind, whatever these might be. Frith goes on to observe several other unhelpful binaries that are commonly attached to the central mind/body split, including serious/fun and aesthetic/hedonistic. This chapter calls for the avoidance of false dissociations of corporeal immediacy and analytic-hermeneutic acts, with pre-reflective embodied interaction and kinetic-affective experience instead understood as grounding and enabling interpretive and ethical insight; that is, in listening events, perceivers necessarily draw from (inter)subjective experience in order to shape their understanding of musical experience. Ramón Pelinski captures this when he asserts that ‘cognitive processes in which corporeal capacities are implicated play a fundamental role in musical practices’\(^7\) (and, notably, his definition of musical practice involves listening as well as instrumental performance and dance).

The increased academic presence of the body has led, inevitably, to a reinvigorated examination of the role of the body in the performance and reception of music. Hallgjerd Aksnes,

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for example, urges the music analyst to recover the ‘musical body’ – a body that ‘transcends Cartesian duality’ and involves ‘auditory, visual, emotional, kinesthetic, linguistic, and other modes of cognition’. This is not straightforward, however, as it requires overcoming what music educationists Bowman and Powell describe as a historically inscribed ‘somatophobia’ and ‘priority of abstraction’. Their basic summary is instructive: ‘The history of reflection on the nature and value of music is a game of hide and seek: hide the body and its materiality, its subjectivity, its temporality, and its specificity; then seek compensatory value in characteristics deemed durable, objective, trustworthy - the formal, structural, the ideal’. Kathleen Higgins sees a similar situation in philosophical writing on music, singling out Immanuel Kant and Eduard Hanslick. Both, in turn, worked to solidify a disembodied formalism that remains dominant in aesthetics. Kant outlined the principal view, in which form assumes priority in aesthetic judgement and music’s experiential appeal is deemed of limited importance. Affect is rendered secondary and best hidden from (written, spoken) view. Hanslick, for his part, embossed the formalist outlook with an emphasis on intellectual judgement. Imaginative contact with form – which he chose to confront in abstracted segments – is, for Hanslick, the proper means by which to appreciate music. The grand challenge, then, is to overhaul this philosophical somatic malaise.

Formalist thinking remains influential in popular musicology. Elements of it live on most noticeably in North American analytic writing, some of which exhibits the disfiguring and disembodying abstraction Higgins resists. This is not to say that formal analysis can’t be interesting and insightful, but it should certainly not be taken as offering a complete conception of what that music is. Nor, of course, can it be said to be definitive of meaning. Walter Everett remains an eminent figure in this field of activity. Despite showing a recent interest in embodied theory –

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10 Ibid.
albeit in a manner generalised in order to correspond with principles of Schenkerian method – Everett’s analyses remain unconcerned with the phenomenology of musical passages. Instead, lyrics serve as an objective starting point, with harmonic analysis providing support. Taking formal abstraction to questionable depths, Everett encourages the reader to look beyond the sonically and, presumably, phenomenologically apparent if the analysis of ‘surface’ harmony does not yield satisfactory interpretive results. Such work is representative of a formal approach that not only grants theoretic exposition priority over phenomenological description, but also seems to allow theory to constrain listening experience.

Elsewhere, however, we can find formal analyses that are informed by somatic considerations. Brad Osborn’s detailing of math-rock rhythmic irregularities, for instance, is directed by the entrainment of bodies. Osborn observes how ‘disruptive’ metric alterations are corporeally negotiated by listeners and performers. Here, then, disruption is a kinetic-affective reality, not a theoretic aberration. Similarly, Nicole Biamonte considers the phenomenological consequences of metric ‘dissonances’ common in rock music. Crucially, Biamonte treats rhythm in relation to texture, timbre and pitch-based structures, thus avoiding the problematic isolation and overestimation of a single parameter characteristic of Everett’s formalism.

Outside musicology, discussions of the body exhibit varied emphases. In ‘The Musical Experience Through the Lens of Embodiment’, Greg Corness seeks to provide a general phenomenological view of body-text interactions. In the course of the essay, Corness establishes a conception of music as ‘a phenomenon experienced through the senses of the body, regardless of the media used to render it’. Merleau-Ponty’s ‘reversibility’, re-applied to music, serves as a

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19 Ibid., p. 21.
theoretic foundation for a dynamic, embodied view of music engagement and supports a pertinent central claim: listening experience is a result of an embodied reciprocity. This, in part, mirrors the idea, already introduced in this thesis, that in listening situations, we simultaneously assume the role of both subject and object. Corness explains the experiential situation as follows:

Thus the listener is experiencing music through all the body senses. The process of perception places the listener not in the world of music – a virtual world constructed of sonic objects – but rather in an interactive union with the whole environment. Through the listener’s perception of all his/her senses and their use of attention, the listener gains experience and builds perceptive knowledge in preparation for constructing understanding from experience.\(^{20}\)

Pelinski broadly shares Corness’ embodied, intentional view of music perception. Primary phenomenological sources are also shared. Pelinski is paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty when he writes: ‘Music is not what I think, but what I live’.\(^{21}\) This idea can also be expressed, Pelinski demonstrates, in Husserlian terms:

During perception we are living in the perceived music, without conceptual or rational mediation that separates the subject from the object, the perceived from the object. If embodied perception is decisive in our cognitive processes, musical knowledge as the derivation of a perceptual, intuitive, lived experience is secondary knowledge.\(^{22}\)

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 24.


Corness’ reciprocity, too, hints at a pre-reflective recognition – ‘to engage the world as one both hearing and being heard’\(^{23}\) – that occurs in listening. While this is not explored in detail, it invites relation to experiences of affirmation (and to the necessity for subjectivities to be established through external recognition). Corness draws from the empirical discovery of ‘mirror neurons’, proven to enable a pre-reflective embodied understanding of others and their intentions, to support this view and to hint at an intersubjective, relational conception of musical experience. Corness is clear too in his belief that interpretation emerges from phenomenal experience. However, his notion of interpretation, and phenomenological interaction, is skewed, as is common, towards performers: ‘the intention of the performer is arguably what is being produced and understood in music’.\(^{24}\) This extends to gesture, as Corness does not consider the ownership and agency afforded to listeners, as possessors of subjective intentionalities, in their embodied engagements with sound. Nor does Corness provide sufficient examples. Aside from a brief description of Tabla performance, there is little in the way of descriptive-hermeneutic analysis.

These general discussions share the view that perceivers make sense of music in their embodied engagement with it. Bowman and Powell express this in the clearest terms when they argue that without the body,

\[\text{one simply cannot account for such musical essentials as rhythm, accent, motion, gesture, timbre, consonance and dissonance, tonality, modulation, volume, balance, line, phrase, and expression. We do not just think music; nor do we simply hear it. We enact it. Things like melodies, rhythms, and textures are as much muscular as they are mental. Whatever else music may be, it is invariably a bodily fact.}^{25}\]

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\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 23.

Bodily (inter)action is now a focal concern in the fields of music perception and empirical musicology. Jack Matyja and Andrea Schiavio, for instance, talk of ‘enactive music cognition’, a descriptor employed to define a sub-field of music perception study as well as a general view and condition of engagement. This outlook, which they set apart from cognitivist and representational theories (including linguistically-based semiotics) and more recent ‘embodied’ accounts, grants a more radical primacy to bodily activity. Enactive Music Cognition (EMC), they assert, represents an improvement on the embodiment that is now established in music perception research and their review of literature offers a useful insight into vital developments in the field. They observe, for instance, that the body has previously been introduced to either revamp representationalist thinking – Charles Nussbaum’s *The Musical Representation: Meaning, Ontology and Emotion* is taken as exemplary – or to serve as a mediator. In other words, the body is merely a link between ‘music’ (as object) and brain. EMC, they argue, provides a ‘stronger anti-representationalist framework, still sharing with the embodied paradigm the agents’ situatedness and corporeality’. Matyja and Schiavio initially draw on Mark Reybrouck’s writings to distinguish EMC from cognitivist and more recent ‘embodied’ outlooks. One significant move can be summarised as involving a turn from representation and towards construction; external objects are not internally ‘understood’, but actively constituted. Reybrouk writes, ‘rather than stating that music as an artefact, is ‘out there’, ready to be discovered, I claim that music knowledge must be generated, as a product of development, and that music cognition is not a path towards a true understanding of the music as an ontological category, but a tool for the adaptation to the sonic world’.

We can observe a degree of alignment between EMC and ecological thinking, namely in a shared understanding of perception as situated, of adaptation as necessary for effective sense-

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making, and of a fundamental perception-action coupling. Reybrouck’s use of ‘affordance’ is also noteworthy. These two views might, however, be seen to subtly part ways at the point at which ‘the’ environment is defined. Ecological approaches tend to take the environment as a structured field of perceptual information, though one shaped over time by perceptual learning, whereas EMC seems to hint at an emphasis on the world as always immanently constituted by embodied action. The ecological link does not go unnoticed by Matyja and Schavioa and, later in the review, they consider a connection between ‘sensorimotor contingency theory’, where bodily movement is understood as vital to music perception, and Gibsonian affordances. Joel Krueger’s investigation of listening experience, within which bodily doing replaces disembodied judgement, is introduced to further illuminate the role of sensorimotor action in perception. Matyja and Schavio extract a crucial line of Krueger’s: ‘[W]e enact music perception via the sensorimotor manipulation of sonic structures’. The perceiver, then, assumes ownership and agency. In other words: the perceiver is not merely receiving pre-defined material, but has the capacity to shape sonic material; embodied structures are not merely superimposed on pre-defined musical structures; musical structures are actively constituted by (pre-reflective, pre-conceptual) bodily action. Nor is bodily engagement reduced to a mimetic act. Interestingly, Matyja and Schavio choose to separate this form of immanent, embodied sense-making from ‘high level’ – to borrow their phrase – understandings informed by ‘music analysis’. I do not subscribe to such a blunt separation and think instead that embodied engagements with music can and should be factored in to analytic-hermeneutic discourse. This is vital if we are to take musical experience and ‘identity’, and what it is that connects them, seriously.

Marc Leman and Pieter-Jan Mans offer an alternative review of music perception research, foregrounding Leman’s own extensive, systematic body of research into gesture and movement. In their study, the corporeal emphasis of recent music research is understood within the broader

intellectual context of cognitive science’s action-oriented turn. ‘Embodied music cognition’ is introduced as primarily concerned with how ‘the human motor system, gestures and bodily movements play a role in music cognition’,30 a view that the authors observe as being of increasing interest in the related disciplines of music affect research, music engineering, wellbeing, and brain studies. Analytic-hermeneutic popular musicology does not feature in this list; while this area of music research has, as we shall see, turned to aspects of embodied cognition as a basis for meaning, kinesthetic and gestural interaction – as prioritised in ‘embodied music cognition’ – is often only granted brief and generalised consideration.

Leman and Mans first consider the role of bodily interaction in the understanding of expressivity. They explain the empirical conditions and findings of several examinations of gesture and expression. From these studies, many of which were undertaken at Ghent University’s IPEM Institute for Systematic Musicology, a range of gestural types surface. In experimental studies of listener response, the authors observe a consistent finding that among groups of ‘similar’ people, corporeal responses are often similar, with mimetic action offered as a likely explanation. Thus, ‘elementary gestures’, as they are coined, are intersubjective in two ways: first, they are shared between listeners; secondly, they reveal an embodied relationality between listeners and performers. ‘Expressive-responding’ gestures also relate to kinetic comportment, but with the added consideration of how listeners’ metaphoric descriptions of sound align with enactive responses. Again, commonality is observed. ‘Expressive-supporting’ gestures, less thoroughly defined in this essay, are the sensorimotor actions that enable performers to encode expression in sound. ‘Repetitive’ gestures, a fourth type, are discussed with specific reference to dance choreography, and point to regularities in entrainment and performance. It is in their discussion of dance (two dances, in fact, the Charleston and Samba) that Leman and Mans posit bodily action as an aid to understanding music rather than as an enactive construction of it (as EMC would have

it. In their words, ‘dancing may facilitate and disambiguate the perception of music’. This position evades, in a dextrous manner, charges of being overly cognitivist, objectivist, and/or constructivist, for while Leman and Mans talk in terms of ‘encoding’ and ‘decoding’ they are not referring to the purely mental processing of an already fixed artefact. Rather, the encoding and decoding of musical expression is conceived of as an embodied ‘sense-giving activity’.

Complementing this, bodily interaction is suspected as underlying listeners’ capacity for musical anticipation. The basic point, then, is that action shapes perception and vice versa.

Peter Sedlemeir, Oliver Weigelt, and Eva Walther take a corporeal turn in the study of music preference. Psychology’s concern with ‘the mind behind musical experiences’, it is asserted, has been to the exclusion of investigation of the body’s contribution to preference judgment. Their test is relatively straightforward; have participants listen to ‘neutral’ music (music that is unfamiliar) on headphones while enacting ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ forms of physical gesture. Preference is then measured using a 10-level Likert-style response form. The results, after some adjustment to account for style preferences, largely confirm the researchers’ suspicions with participants performing positive gestures generally showing a higher degree of preference compared with those performing negative gestures. The experiment, of course, does not reflect the majority of ‘normal’ private listening situations (it does not claim to), primarily because gestures that are not necessarily afforded to the listener are installed, acting as perceptual filters. (Two of the gestures are, I suspect, foreign to musical engagement anyway. The ‘positive’ actions I am

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31Ibid., p. 239.
32Ibid.
36Likert is a scaling method commonly employed in questionnaires. A common five-level Likert item features the following possible responses: ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘agree’, ‘strongly agree’. 
thinking of involve listening to music with a pencil placed between the teeth, and placing both palms on a table surface and exerting downward force. The negative variations of these are a pencil placed between the lips and pushing upward from underneath a table top. The third gesture type, nodding of head for positive and shaking of head for negative, is far more familiar.) And while preference is closely related to appropriation, the focus and design of this study highlights the distinction between *liking* and authenticating experience and usage.

Thus far we have seen embodied listener engagement understood as enactive, expressive, formative of preference, and imitative. The last of these, mimetic activity, is central to Arnie Cox’s musicologically-oriented hypothesis. Cox draws on empirical support from research fields including infant development and cognitive science – which enables him to consider mimetic behaviour in the broader context of embodied life – in addition to music perception (where Marc Leman’s systematic study is cited). Cox also notes the contiguity of his mimetic hypothesis with ‘simulation theory’ where the discovery of mirror neurons has provided impetus for intersubjective accounts of the body. Cox promotes two primary types of imitation that, in his view, are central to musical understanding: ‘mimetic motor action’ (MMA), which describes outward, physical imitative enactments; and, ‘mimetic motor imagery (MMI)’, which refers to the mental simulation – or representation – of actions observed in music. In short, music is mimetically embodied both outwardly and internally. With MMI, Cox sketches an intriguing ‘embodied imagination’ or, alternatively, ‘imaginative embodiment’. From two core principles, that MMA and MMI are intersubjective and MMA and MMI involve a relationality between listeners and sound-producers, twenty others are generated. Some are very general in focus whereas others are targeted at music cognition. I do not have the space to assess all twenty, but it will be necessary to consider a few. Principle 2 is stated as follows: ‘Many or most musical sounds are evidence of human motor actions that produce them’. Electronic sound design and production manipulations presents an

38 Ibid., p.37.
obvious challenge to this claim. More generally, I am not sure that this connection is as assured and consistent as Cox assumes and even if it is apparent, it is not always the most pertinent specification. This is not to say that listener-performer connections are unimportant, rather that the specification of performer motor-action is a singular, limited aspect of embodied interaction. Principle 4, ‘MMA and MMI are bodily representations of observed actions’\(^{39}\), exhibits an entanglement of perception, representation, and comprehension. This explanation follows:

Perceptions of external stimuli are nonmimetic representations, including the auditory perception of musical sounds. However, when we give our full attention to musical sounds, they are also represented in the form of MMI and often in the form of MMA. These mimetic representations of musical sounds occur within a time frame that is effectively simultaneous with perception, but MMI and MMA are not perceptions in a strict sense. They are motor-related representations, which I have been referring to as mimetic comprehensions.\(^{40}\)

There is an implied, though noteworthy, detachment of perception and embodied action which distinguishes Cox’s embodied cognition from the perception-action coupling of enactive music cognition. In addition to this, perception and comprehension are only speculatively defined; without supporting literature, evidence, or examples it is hard to unpick or corroborate Cox’s understanding. That some clarity and precision is lost in application might be expected; it is after all a musicological thesis and while it draws support from some ‘scientifically’-supported theory, it is not an account of that theory.

That last observation points to a specific challenge afforded by interdisciplinarity; namely, how to usefully and faithfully import ideas from the ‘outside’ and, crucially, how to do them justice.

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 40.

\(^{40}\) Ibid.
Reading is an initial act of engagement with summary and review being the next steps toward reconciliation. A meaningful relationship is actualised when connections are assessed and directions for study explored. In this section I have attempted, albeit briefly, to set off this process by considering works from music perception and empirical musicology. I take their endeavour to explain the nature of our bodily interactions with music as instructive. This detail, with supporting empiricism, is frequently missing in musicological and ‘social’ studies that make claims of perception and understanding. It is where empirical studies stop – at subjective consequence, meaning, and identity – that musicology seems best placed to take flight. Nonetheless, there is now a community of authors working within musicology that are thinking in embodied terms both theoretically and interpretively. A noticeable number have exploited the analytic and explanatory potential of image schema theory, providing an obvious starting point for the analysis of relations between sound and listener and, more precisely, embodiment and authentication.
2.2 Image Schemata and Embodied Meaning

Image schema theory has been applied as a means of examining relations between music theory and music experience. Janna Saslaw\(^{41}\) was early to this. Saslaw’s concern is to illuminate the embodied-schematic underpinning of a number of key ideas relating to harmony in *Systematic Study of Modulation as a Foundation for the Study of Musical Form*. Crucial to Saslaw’s rethinking of Riemann’s theory is the elaboration and extension of image schemata into metaphorical interpretations. Take the simple chord progression I–V–I, for example; underpinning this progression, Saslaw suggests, is a circular SOURCE-PATH-GOAL (figure 3) schema. This schema can be grouped with schemata that relate not necessarily to a bounded phenomenal body, but to common experiences of orientation in the world. By including an additional chord in the progression, chord IV for instance, the schema is augmented, though the unifying experiential SOURCE-PATH-GOAL structure endures (see figure 4). In Saslaw’s illustration of this, adding an ‘underdominant’ also appears to reshape the path, from circular to linear (see figure 4).

Figure 3. Saslaw’s illustration of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema\(^{42}\)

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\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 223.
According to Saslaw, Reimann’s characterization of harmonic modulation, which invokes SOURCE-PATH-GOAL and FORCE schemas, extends to metaphorical projections built on experiential mappings:

When Reimann talks about leaving the tonic and returning to it, he is using conventional metaphorical mapping of the source-path-goal kinesthetic image schema onto the domains of harmonic progression and modulation. This mapping is still conventional today. Try to imagine talking about progressions or modulations without speaking of going and returning. However, when Reimann says that the Return leads us home, smoothing the way that we wish to go, he is extending the source-path-goal schema in a way that is not standard parlance. He has created a new metaphor: RETURN IS A SMOOTH PATH, and perhaps by implication, MODULATION IS A BUMPY PATH.\(^{43}\)

And while Saslaw’s analysis retains its focus on Reimann’s theory, more general comments are offered along the way. In the following passage tonal activity is understood in relation to everyday kinetic-affective experience:

We often talk about a minimum of force of effort needed to effect a modulation to a closely-related key, and a greater force needed to achieve a modulation to a more

\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 229.
distant key. If composers and listeners conceive of tones as objects that move in space, then these conceptual objects can have the attributes of real-world objects: weight, speed, force, direction of motion, etc. If these tone-objects have corporeal attributes, then, by, metaphorical extension, there may be harmony or conflict between them. We also have a sense of the emotional associations of harmony and conflict. A scenario in which a person surmounts obstacles to achieve a goal has a certain emotional climate.44

Saslaw concludes by noting that image schema and conceptual metaphor theory help explain why it is we write music and write about music in the ways we do. In Conceptualising Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis45 Lawrence Zbikowski advances a similar view. Zbikowski engages image schema theory in support of the overarching argument that the conceptualization of music, theoretically and experientially, is grounded in everyday embodied activities and processes. As in Saslow’s essay, image schemata are defined as ‘repeated patterns of bodily experience’46 that play a supporting role in providing the grounding for metaphorical and ‘cross-domain’ mappings. The description of pitch in terms of ‘high’ and ‘low’ is used as an example of a pervasive cross-domain musical mapping. Here, Zbikowski explains, familiar spatial orientations – up-down, for instance – are mapped onto to the musical pitch spectrum.47 The VERTICALITY schema (see figure 2) serves as the foundation for this mapping. So, it is not that image schemata are merely useful descriptors: image schemata are the experiential grounding for the musical language we employ and they direct the way we choose to describe music. Zbikowski goes on to make two other important claims regarding the significance of image schemata in musical sense-making. First, schematic connections established in listening are pre-reflective and pre-conceptual. That is, we

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44 Ibid., p. 235.
46 Ibid., p. 68.
47 Ibid., p. 66.
pre-reflectively ‘use’ image schemata to understand music. Another way of putting this is that we instinctively draw from prior experience, our (inter)subjective ‘embodied knowledge’, to establish meaning. As a process this is typically immanent and ‘hidden from view’, though Zbikowski argues that in the act of analysis it is possible to conceive of and assign – to bring into view – image schemata (though it does suggest that the act of attributing specific schemata and, with this, particular conceptualizations is a speculative commitment). Which of the three forms of embodied interaction introduced in 2.1, *enactive, expressive, imitative*, does this view suggest? Imitative seems the least obvious fit. Zbikowski is claiming that embodied cognition enables the constitution of music, not that the body imitates what is already sonically ‘there’. In contrast, it is possible to understand the drawing on of prior embodied-ecological experience as enactive. That foundational embodied structures enable and give rise to subjective expressivity is also conceivable, though arguing this requires some extra work. Zbikowski starts to undertake this when he considers how general schematic structures anchor more specific, intentional specifications of gesture.48

Zbikowski’s second central claim is that image schemata act as constraints, directing musical experience, interpretation, and conceptualization. It is on this point that Zbikowski’s usage intersects with the exploration of image schema theory by popular musicologists.

William Echard sees Johnson’s image schema theory as furnishing the analyst with a new toolkit to explore, and applies this toolkit with an overt interest in its phenomenological and hermeneutic efficacy. Echard’s process is straightforward – he re-presents an analysis of formal structures, with a conventional emphasis on melody, harmony, phrase structure, and instrumental

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48 On an instance of word painting in Palestrina’s *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Zbikowski writes: ‘There is additional reason why Palestrina’s text painting is as convincing as it is, however. The image of descent created by Palestrina relies on more than just the general notion of descent, which could have been evoked in a variety of ways: by a downward leap of a single interval; by a short sequence that alternated descending thirds with ascending seconds; or through having each voice enter in turn, beginning with the highest voice and ending the lowest. The scalar descent chosen by Palestrina, however, provides a striking analogue for the descent of our bodies through physical space (when this descent is unaided by artificial means). Such a descent involves a lessening of potential energy and a continuous action in one direction, articulated by the regular transfer of weight from one leg to another’. Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music*, p. 73. With this, Zbikowski moves beyond the generality and abstraction of schematic structure and toward the phenomenological description of gesture, or what Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, by way of Luria, refers to as, ‘kinetic melody’.
interplay, through the assignment of image schemata. The G Ionian I–IV verse of Neil Young’s ‘Powderfinger’, for instance, is understood through a TWIN-PAN BALANCE schema (see figure 5 for summary illustration). Here, ‘force a’ is the attraction to the tonic, the centre-point relates to the tonic, and ‘force b’ is understood as the shift to IV. Echard’s emphasis on the ‘feeling’ of the passage, and of the ‘centredness’ afforded by the return to tonic is noteworthy. While I share a sense of centredness when listening to this passage, I find ‘centredness’ arises not from a twin-pan balance schema but rather a sense of VERTICALITY. The roots of this bodily logic lie, again, in my experience as a guitarist. Moving from G to C in open position (as in ‘Powderfinger’) requires an ‘upward’ left-hand shift while retaining a close proximity to the third fret. This logic is of course slightly confused when we consider that moving ‘up’ a string when playing the guitar actually entails moving closer to the ground (assuming you are not playing the guitar behind your head). Performance experience is perhaps also the reason I find agreement with the horizontal oscillation schema Echard points to in relation to the III–IV pattern. This experiential departure points to the subjective, dynamic nature of image schemata and metaphorical projection, and fits with Echard’s own understanding of image schemata as constructed and modified by and within lived experience. Here, then, image schema theory is applied with a view to organizing and illustrating kinetic-affective specifications as they relate to musical structures. But unlike Moore’s49 description of Hendrix’s ‘All Along The Watchtower’ (see figure 6) through the TWIN-PAN BALANCE schema, in Echard’s usage musical units do not directly align with parts of the schema. Both readings, however, foreground phenomenological sense.

Echard goes on to engage a range of other schemas in his analysis. The OSCILLATION schema (see figure 14 illustration on page 110) is used to capture the kinetic sense of ‘Powderfinger’s III–IV alternation. However, for Echard, the centre point of the TWIN PAN BALANCE schema (figure 5) affords suspension and ambiguity rather than experiential ‘centredness’. Arrivals on chord V are experientially understood in relation to the PATH schema (see figure 16) and a notion of musical agency – of ‘increased potential’ – is hinted at. In addition to this, Echard discusses the engagement of the PATH schema in relation to a distinctly embodied temporality, whereby the preceding OSCILLATION schema is (re)understood in the context of schematic-experiential possibilities. Protention, the anticipatory aspect of Husserl’s model of time consciousness, is also
implied in Echard’s assigning of the POINT-BALANCE schema, with listeners afforded ‘a strong expectation of harmonic resolution’.

Understanding schemata as being engaged and perceived in relation to each other is what makes Echard’s interpretation particularly interesting and enables him to consider correspondences between music and experiential dynamics. The following passage is exemplary:

In the end, the harmony and texture both return to a kind of neutral point, waiting for the next verse to begin. In the guitars, this is marked by a return to a TWIN-PAN BALANCE texture. In the harmony, I hear something else happening. At this point, the strong linearity of the PATH dissipates, and there is no longer any sense that we are approaching a singular, transcendent event that will take us outside regular songstructure. The PATH curls into a circle, and we realise that it was all part of a large CYCLE, which can periodically allow the PATH-like energy to build, but which also periodically re-absorbs it.

In his introductory comments, a specific phrase stands out. Echard writes that image schemata ‘tend to suggest specific analytic possibilities’ but what is meant by this is left unclear. We might interpret Echard as suggesting that analysing a track with a taxonomy of schemata in mind will lead to particular readings. While this is a possible and not unworthy outcome, Echard himself identifies a limitation of viewing image schema theory as an analytic method: ‘there is a distinctly mechanistic aspect to the analysis, and this is almost certainly a limitation of the model as it now stands. As I prepared this analysis, I felt very much as if I was drawing plans for some sort of machine.’

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51 Ibid., p. 142.
52 Ibid., pp. 133–144.
53 Ibid., p. 144.
schemata as the analytic starting point betrays the phenomenological principle of working back from experience and avoiding the top-down imposition of theory on listening. Alternatively, Echard can be understood as making the more fundamental claim that image schemata are constraints on the range of experiences and meanings afforded by a track. The latter is far more likely, after all, Echard – like Moore and Zagorski-Thomas – is appropriating embodied cognition’s central claim that image schemas underpin experience and understanding. Following on from this, I now want to consider image schemata as providing the immanent, experiential, corporeal grounding to authenticating connections between music and aspects of self-identity.
2.3 Image Schemata: A Phenomenological-Hermeneutic Analysis of Slipknot’s ‘Eyeless’

Personal attachment draws me to ‘Eyeless’. Of course, all analyses emerge from and reveal forms of subjective attachment; such a claim is equally true of music studies that commit to observing intersubjective meaning(s). In some cases, however, this relation is based more obviously on an experiential encounter rather than analytic curiosity (but I am careful here to avoid enforcing an experiential/intellectual dichotomy). It is many years since I first listened to ‘Eyeless’ and yet despite differences in my age, form, self-understanding and situation, it retains its ability to specify and afford bodily action. Of course, I can relate recent listening to early experience, and I do have an argument for why this track, and the style with which it is consistent, was such a crucial facet of (the authentication of) my affective world. This will surface in the course of my discussion. I am also sure that the temporally-extended nature of my engagement with the track is an aspect of my sense of ownership of it. Selecting repertory based on experience does not require justification, though it does still invite accusations of subjectivism and/or solipsism. But from where else could a phenomenological account of authentication begin? Subjective attachment is, however, only part of the analytic rationale. I strongly suspect that the affordances I identify are not unique to my experience as even a cursory investigation of the meanings attached to Slipknot’s music – and nu-metal more generally – reveals correspondences between my intuitions and those of others. Listeners’ use of metal music, more broadly, is recognised as formative of subjectivities and of relations between members of metal communities. Identity, self, agency – in the guise of power.

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empowerment and capital – belonging, and affective experience are key themes in the literature. This ‘context’ should be kept in mind throughout the analytical discussion that follows.

Adam Rafalovich’s analysis of metal lyrics broaches all four themes. In his essay, identity, self, agency and experience are gendered, with masculine identity forming the focus. Masculinity in contemporary metal, the author observes, is established through expressions of individualism rather than materialism and misogyny (as in the hard rock and metal of the 1980s). Rafalovich’s individualism, with its related atomism and emphasis on uniqueness, calls to mind Charles Taylor’s seminal conception of the modern ideal of authenticity. There are several other noteworthy intersections between Rafalovich’s conception of self in contemporary metal and established understandings of authenticity. For instance, we find a self that is malleable and informed by relations with others. Agency too is considered, though as expressed by performers and/or songwriters rather than as disclosed to listeners; Rafalovich’s ‘emergent and galvanised self’ specifies a temporality relating to self and musical experience that is, unfortunately, not explored (later in this chapter I concentrate on authenticating temporal relations). In addition to this, affect as posited as crucial to identity formation, with the author noting ‘masculine identity is demarcated by emotional experiences’. Rafalovich’s discussion is engaging, though after only briefly acknowledging the role of interpretation, his lyric analysis implies an objectivity that can’t be assumed (on several occasions lyrics are referred to, rather discomfortingly, as ‘the data’). The divorce of lyric from articulation and sonic environment is also noteworthy, and, for this reason, Rafalovich’s claim that ‘heavy metal lyrics are treated in this essay as vocal gestures that reveal aspects of contemporary male identity and illustrate masculine perceptions of self and other’ is unconvincing. (Rafalovich approaches a hermeneutic treatment of text-sound relations when he writes: ‘it may be asserted that the ‘heaviness’ characterising metal music describes two different subjective positions. Heaviness is conveyed in one manner through the subject bearing the ‘weight

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5 Keith Kahn-Harris, Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge (New York: Berg, 2007)
7 Ibid., p. 21.
of the world’ on his shoulders but, also, via a subject that crushes the world by his own heavy hand. In the analysis of ‘Eyeless’ that follows, I consider how lyrical themes of withdrawal and introspection are sonically presented, embedded, and supported but, overall, sound is given priority.

It is necessary, then, to examine the sonic and embodied roots of such experience. In interpreting sound in relation to experience (of ‘identity’) I, partly, engage with a similar analytic problem to that posed by Jonathan Pieslak in his treatment of Korn’s ‘Hey Daddy’. However, in addition to taking a rather more systematic approach, at least to begin with, I wield a markedly different theoretic toolkit. Harris Berger’s writing is another point of connection between my analysis and work coming out of ‘metal studies’. While Berger’s essay is textual and phenomenological, analysis mostly remains theoretic; that is, Berger is most interested in detailing how his research subjects’ conceptions of musical structures differ from his own. What we see is Berger ‘disabused’ of his formalist readings – which, in the fashion of Everett, occasionally prioritise linear motion – by active members of the Akron metal scene. This dialogical method, which is referred to as an ‘ethnography of perception’, is commendable on account of its overt relationality, its argument that analysis be (and it is) grounded in perceptual and social reality, and its refutation of musical structures as universally encoded. There is hermeneutic insight here too, notably in the latter stages of the essay where Berger considers correspondences between musicians’ conceptualisation of music structures and situated intersubjective experience. We read, for instance, that:

death metal’s emphases on themes of chaos and disruption not only lead songwriters to compose chromatic and unpredictable parts, but they also impact upon perceptions as well, predisposing listeners to hear lines in a highly fragmented fashion. Both the general

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9 Berger, ‘Death Metal Tonality and the Act of Listening’.
sonic context and the main themes of the genre are informed by the everyday social experiences of the death metal’s main constituency – white, working-class youth. Confronted with limited job opportunities, a collapsing industrial base and ever-shrinking representation in the workplace and government, the metal head’s life is one of profound frustration.10

Discussion of listener agency supplements textual analysis. For Berger, death metal invites listeners to explore emotional subjectivities in addition to affording an empowering sense of resolve. What of distinctions, then? First, Berger attempts to explain the perceptual realities of others whereas I make no explicit attempt to do such a thing. Second, Berger’s listenings are clearly constrained by theoretic knowledge; for this reason, it is unsurprising that his readings are at odds with his respondents’. I instead engage theory to describe, rather than direct, listening experience. Third, Berger deploys phenomenological theory, notably Husserl’s ‘time-consciousness’, to support an argument for how musical structures are theoretically conceptualised rather than affectively experienced (later in this chapter I use Husserl’s theory to consider temporally enduring, unified experience). Finally, Berger’s account of perception lacks a theoretic foundation, embodied, ecological, or otherwise.

So, what of the sonic-embodied design of ‘Eyeless’? (My connecting of ‘sonic’ and ‘embodied’ serves to highlight a reciprocity of sound conceptualisation and bodily affect. It also defines an analytic approach that examines musical and corresponding embodied structures concurrently, as opposed to consecutively. It does, however, expose a possible tension between understanding image schemata as fundamentally pre-reflective and assigning schemata to music structures.) It will be necessary to extract individual passages and structural units before putting the track back together again. The track’s opening (0:00–0:06) is noteworthy on account of style.

The accelerated ‘Amen, Brother’ sample is referential of drum ‘n’ bass in several ways (and, thus, is indicative of nu-metal’s fragmentation of metal by borrowing from outside of rock), most obviously in speed. The ‘breakbeat’ patterning, too, is stylistically typical. The timbral identity of the sample distinguishes it within the sound world of the track and, for some listeners, will specify other musical and material lives. Structural usage also reveals style reconciliation and there are a few possible understandings of function. It can first be described as an introductory unit that is later reemployed as a framing device. Alternatively, the sample can be seen to operate as a ‘break’ which temporally specifies the present moment and, as in EDM, is anticipatory. It is tempting to explain the inclusion of the sample as an instance of what Philip Tagg’s calls ‘genre synecdoche’, though ‘outside’ referents – notice too that opening hip-hop turntable ‘scratch’ – are so thoroughly embedded in nu-metal practice that it seems strange to designate them as ‘foreign’.

The opening also affords authenticating affectivities that are both subjectively and subculturally recognisable and image schema theory goes some way in explaining these. Most notable is the affordance of a sense of constriction. In schematic terms, it seems sensible to assign the CONTAINMENT schema (figure 1), which is particularly pervasive and useful, and CYCLE (figure 7) schema. Understanding the looped sample as (temporally) cyclical is straightforward. Explaining constriction as underpinned by the spatially-concerned CONTAINMENT schema requires more careful consideration. The first thing to say is that the kit sample is temporally bounded. In ‘clock time’ the track advances, but the looped sample specifies an illusory stasis; the listener is held in a repeated present. The fragment’s temporal brevity – through a ‘cross-domain’ mapping of time and space – also specifies confinement. The ‘lead’ guitar part that overlays the sampled kit pattern, and marks a new phase (0:06–0:12) in the track’s extended introduction, is equally restrictive and serves to intensify the affordance of constriction. It too is temporally

constricted and like most other sub-structures in ‘Eyeless’ it is two bars in length. Tonally it is bounded too, playing out a friction created by a splitting of two C# pitches (held on two strings, and thus projecting subtle distinctions in intonation) to C# and C. That’s the technical and musical explanation, but what of affect? One way of articulating my experience, is to say that tension between pitches corresponds with – is conceived of as – muscular dynamics. That is, the C#/C pitch collision affords tension while the unification of the two pitches on C# carries a sense of relative relief. Blending spatial and force-related dynamics is another means of explaining this fragment’s affectivity; the C simultaneously specifies downward directionality while at the same being attracted upwards to C#. ATTRACTION (figure 8) and REPULSION are the force schemata that ground this affordance. Pitches here, then, are understood as involved in a constraining tensional dynamic that arises from concurrently acting as forces and under the influence of external forces. But I think bodily specification extends beyond this. I do not hear the unit simply as involving tension/release and upward/downward oppositions. This musical structure is, I argue, almost gestural. I say ‘almost’, because the gestural motion and tension it specifies is not obvious, nor easily attributable to a single familiar everyday action. Rather, in my listening at least, it specifies a strained and angular, though restricted, manner of somatic comportment and muscular tension seemingly focused around the head, neck and shoulder area (this specification seems to fit focal lyrics, notably ‘it’s all in my head’). The performative gestures of contemporary metal performers are also called to mind (including the contortions of Marilyn Manson and Korn’s Jonathan Davis).

What, then, of schematic underpinning? This is also less straightforward as there is no singular image schema that seems to capture the muscular and kinetic dynamic of this affordance, nor does it fit obviously into a single schematic category. This hints at the argument fleshed out later in this chapter that image schema theory is of limited use when it comes to describing gestural specification.

Phenomenological constriction is played out new ways as the introduction accumulates in texture and energy through four further phases. In phase 3 (0:12–0:17), a resonant, ‘live’ kit and
intricate drop-B guitar riff (see example 1) afford, initially, a sense of release from the (temporal, melodic, textural) stricture imposed by the sample kit loop and two-note lead guitar part. ENABLEMENT, with COMPULSION (figure 10) as its temporal correlate, is the schema that likely underpins this affective shift in force dynamic. However, this is a restricted ENABLEMENT/COMPULSION, as the full realisation of a REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT dynamic is delayed. These two schemata are, as Sandra Cervel has argued, related. Rather than understand ENABLEMENT and REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT as two independent schemas, Cervel posits ENABLEMENT as subsidiary to REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT on the basis of ‘logical entailment’. A close look at the alignment of riff and kit from 0:12–0:17, in view of what succeeds this section, supports a reading of the progression of the passage as seemingly obstructed. While stylistically typical, the I5 guitar ‘chug’, which involves a physical restraining of the guitar strings with the palm, and supporting quaver tom-snare double hits act as a BLOCKAGE (see figure 11). The drum sample and lead guitar figure remain texturally present and surface in isolation for three beats. It is worth noting too, that the riff is set in stereo opposition to the treble-range guitar fragment; phenomenological tension, then, is played out across the ‘soundbox’.

An augmentation of the riff from 0:17–0:22 (see example 2) specifies an intensification that is anticipatory of a fuller release of energy. Rather than stopping at downbeat chugs, the single line progresses in steady quavers through a B phrygian/locrian 3-6-1-2-6-2 with the effect of filling textural as well as phrasal space. Correspondingly, the kit part becomes rhythmically saturated. It is a modification in the kit’s rhythmic identity that marks phase five (0:22–0:32) in the introduction’s increasing affordance of ENABLEMENT and RELEASE FROM RESTRAINT. While the drop-B riff retains its melodic and timbral identity, the kit replaces quickfire cymbal-kick stabs and tom fills with a driving backbeat pattern (steady kick quavers are the likely source of the ‘driving’ specification). This rhythmic (and textural) ‘opening out’ specifies a part-release

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13 See discussion in Moore, *Song Means*, pp. 29–44.
from the constriction that is the dominant phenomenological quality of the track up to this point. The dropping out of the drum sample adds to this affordance.

Phase six (0:32–0:41), as I hear it, is where the REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT force dynamic (see figure 13) is most fully realised. Sonically, we are presented with a marked alteration in texture – for the first time the lead guitar drops out – and timbre that corresponds with a mid-range vocal growl. With this in mind, the OUT schematic (figure 12) structure might also be considered constitutive of understanding (and perhaps as the second instance of OUT schematic structuring, the first being the exit of the opening kit sample). Instead, two guitars, which, in their careful placement specify a saturation of the soundbox’s horizontal axis, operate in unison. The riff projects a melodic and timbral profile new to the track, but stylistically typical both in technique, open string (tonic) attacks interspersed with ascending ‘barred’ powerchords, and sound. The guitar’s heavily saturated, distorted tone is expressive of agency (normatively ‘power’) and contributes to authenticating affordances of ENABLEMENT (see figure 9). Rafalovich’s ‘galvanised self’ – the self ‘that rises above negative circumstances’\textsuperscript{14} – is recalled. Notice that this metaphorical mapping relies on a relation of height and emotional-physical resolve pertinent to schematic mappings (of pitch and energy) in my reading of ‘Eyeless’. What of the frequent (and frequently rapid) recourse to the low B tonic in riff construction? Rafalovich lends hermeneutic guidance here, too. One way of conceiving of this strategy is to understand the (tonally, phenomenologically) centring tonic as the core of an individualistic self that outwardly asserts itself (specified in the barred powerchord bursts). That the tonic is the lowest note might also support a metaphoric interpretation of 1/I as providing a ‘grounding’, or \textit{centre}, for an affective identity. Alternatively, recourse to the tonic can be read as representative of introspective withdrawal, as a retreat to self. These are just some interpretive possibilities, none of which are entirely inconceivable. My own experience, on reflection, seems to be shaped, again, by what it feels like

\textsuperscript{14} Rafalovich, ‘Broken and Becoming God-Sized’, p. 27.
to play the riff on an electric guitar – involving alternating restraint and release of strings with the left-hand – as much as the experiential agency afforded by melodic ascension. Again, no single schema seems to fit, and while OSCILLATION (varying in amplitude) is perhaps the closest in kinetic characteristic, it operates on the wrong axis. In accordance with pitch-as-height metaphoric conceptualisation, as well as the experiential reality of the left hand shifting ‘up’ the fretboard, an up-down\textsuperscript{15} orientation is specified. An OSCILLATION-VERTICALITY (see figure 15) compound might be the closest we get to a schematic structure that usefully captures this pattern of experience. Tensional dynamics are, however, not accounted for in this schema.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{cycle(schema).png}
\caption{CYCLE schema}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{attraction(schema).png}
\caption{ATTRACTION schema}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{15} See Zbikowski, Conceptualizing Music, pp. 65–76.
Example 1. ‘Eyeless’, intro drop-B riff 1

Figure 9. ENABLEMENT schema

Figure 10. COMPULSION schema
Figure 11. ‘Eyeless’, intro riff 1 + BLOCKAGE schema

Example 2. ‘Eyeless’, intro riff 2 (part RELEASE OF RESTRAINT)
Figure 12. OUT schema

Figure 13. ‘Eyeless’, intro riff 3 + REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT schema
Figure 14. OSCILLATION schema\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
    \node at (0,0) (A) {\textbf{Border A}};
    \node at (2,0) (B) {\textbf{Border B}};
    \draw[->] (A) -- (B);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Figure 15. OSCILLATION-VERTICALITY composite schema

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
    \node at (0,0) (A) {\textbf{Non-tonic}};
    \node at (0,-2) (B) {\textbf{Tonic}};
    \draw[dotted,->] (A) -- (B);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{16}Echard, 'An Analysis of Neil Young’s ‘Powderfinger’, p. 140.
Figure 16. PATH schema

Figure 17. DIVERSION schema.

Figure 18. COUNTERFORCE schema
With the commencement of the verse (or section ‘A’) at 0:41, affordances of restriction return. The section A riff specifies temporal truncation and, with this, blockage. Texture, too, in its alternation between fullness and sparsity, specifies restraint. But it is crucial to understand that a tension/restraint-release dynamic is played out not only locally – that is, at the level of riff, hypermetre, and structural unit – but also across sectional phases and units, and large-scale repeats. Despite local bursts of energy, afforded by vocal exertions as well as temporal, textural, and timbral shifts, a full RELEASE-FROM-RESTRAINT is frustrated for the entirety of the track. The persona’s inability to fully escape specifications of (temporal-spatial) confinement and overcome (physical-emotional) restraints is a key aspect of the track’s affective identity and potential to authenticate. The environment of the following section (0:51–1:00), that on account of rhythmic and textural intensification can be heard as a pre-chorus (I prefer to label this section ‘B’), specifies a similar release of energy to phase six of the introduction. However, the manner in which verbal space is saturated, actually affords bodily constriction and, thus, sets up a voice-accompaniment hermeneutic divorce. I suspect this sense has to do with the muscular tension (focused in the abdomen) that goes with the sustained breath required to sing each phrase. Is this, then, an imitative affordance? My interpretation certainly speaks to a form of imitation outlined by Arnie Cox, whereby listeners imitate (simulate?) perceived exertions. Two of Cox’s three mimetic forms seem implicated. The first, ‘intramodal imitation’, Cox explains, ‘involves feeling, for example, what it would be like to sing like the singer, or to play what the pianist is playing’.17 ‘Amodal imitation’, which also seems to speak to the phenomenology of B, Cox writes:

involves the exertions of the abdominal muscles, and it is amodal in that is underlies the limb movements and vocal exertions of intramodal and cross-modal imitation. In chapter 1 I suggested that it could also be thought of a supramodal, except that it has its own more

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or less specific modality that involves the muscles of the abdomen, or the core. The muscle activity here is a clenching and relaxing in the gut that matches something of the energy dynamics, or energy schema, of the music. Because these exertions underlie those of the limbs and the voice, in part they also match the pattern, rate, and intensity of those exertions evident in the musical sounds, but a broader sense of ‘energy dynamics’ is likely more significant. For those of us not in the habit of attending to such basic biomechanics, these exertions are also abstract, in that they can be relatively challenging to bring into full awareness. A lack of awareness of these exertions is integral to their power in shaping musical experience, because they contribute to a feeling, even if it is ineffable, without our knowing how we are being affected.  

The RELEASE energy dynamic anticipated by section B is not satisfied. Instead, ‘Eyeless’ changes direction. This temporal-directional specification can be explained as grounded in a general PATH schematic structure, with DIVERSION (see figure 17) as its more specific force-related subsidiary. Here DIVERSION relates primarily to marked distinctions in temporal (a halftime pulse may be inferred) and rhythmic profile and tonal centre. This relies, of course, on an understanding that such differences are perceived in relation to what has (experientially) preceded. The dominant quality of section C (1:19–1:28) is constriction. Musically this is, in part, played out through a tightening of the rhythmic relationship between accompanimental textures. The guitars’ 7-quaver grouping, set off by a 3-quaver set on the downbeat, is closely supported by the kit (notably in kick quavers - see examples 3 and 4 below). That we lose the (loose) open-string B tonic, is another aspect of the unit’s tensional quality (playing the riff is, after all, an aspect of

18 Idis., pp. 45–46.

my experiential reality that cannot be ignored). Pitch collection, too, which is diminished here to a clustering of G and C# pitches affords boundedness. That this is a b5 powerchord built on either G or C# is a likely theoretic understanding. The tensional force dynamic specified by this cluster is noteworthy too and two related schematic readings are invited. The first, correlates with the ATTRACTION and REPULSION schematic structure earlier assigned to the introductory two-pitch lead guitar figure. In the case of the b5 powerchord of section C, both pitches can be heard as exerting upward and/or downward force. This friction can be understood another way. The directional potential of each pitch, and the resultant tension, can be read as built on a COUNTERFORCE schematic structure. Conceptualising it this way points to other hermeneutic possibilities. For instance, the COUNTERFORCE (see figure 18) structure of the guitar design can be seen to relate to – to influence – the DIVERSION schematic quality; to simplify, there is a pertinent experiential relation between COUNTERFORCE and DIVERSION. Cerval, again, explains this on the grounds of ‘logical entailment’, writing: ‘Bear in mind that when two forces collide face to face, they often take separate ways in order to reach different destinations, which makes DIVERSION subsidiary to BLOCKAGE and to COUNTERFORCE’. This can be extended to a reading of persona-environment relations, as it may be argued that the environment actively supports the lyrical diversion specified by the persona, and indicative of the persona’s situation. Alternatively, the environment can be granted an intervening role, whereby the environment is perceived as forcing a shift in personic perspective. Rhythmic-tonal setting can be examined another way. If we choose to listen to this passage with the spatially-concerned CONTAINMENT schema foregrounded, a different interpretive line surfaces, one that pays more attention to lyric and, correspondingly, proxemic setting. The initial phrase, ‘it’s all in your head’ seems to implicate the listener in proceedings. The second iteration, altered to ‘it’s all my head’ specifies experiential intersubjective relations between persona and listener. As well as constriction,
(inter)subjective introspection is also afforded. This specification is supported by the receding – the *withdrawal* – of the voice IN to the environment. The voice also becomes increasingly distorted, which indicates an intensification of (affective) involvement. Finally, the part-gestural dynamic of the introductory lead guitar figure of ‘Eyeless’ is potentially recalled.

Example 3. Sketch of guitar and kick-snare relations in section C

![Example 3](image1.png)

Example 4. Alternative sketch of guitar and kick-snare relations in section C

![Example 4](image2.png)

A re-iteration of phases 2 and 3 of the introduction precedes a repeat of sections A, B, and C. After this, a new riff-based unit is introduced. Distinctive in shape and sound, the section ‘D’ (2:05–2:38) riff, in my listening, is explicitly gestural. A single-string pre-bend and release on the 3rd fret followed by an idiomatic B (phrygian/locrian) I5–II5 ‘chug’ technically describes the riff’s design. Of the kit, we can say that it supports the rhythmic and timbral profile of the riff. It also shares a sense of unfolding force dynamic with the guitar riff. Release followed by TENSION/RESTRAINT is the basic form. Rather than start with a list of schematic structures,
working back from (an attempt at a description of) the specific bodily action I hear may be more useful. First, this is a gesture that involves the whole body. An upright standing posture with feet flat to the ground and placed closely together with arms by the side constitutes the starting position. From here, the sensation of falling forward from this position, with the torso and head advancing toward the ground while the feet remain rooted, is afforded by, and coincides with, the release of the 3rd fret pre-bend. The smooth, uninterrupted quality of the fall, surely, corresponds with the smooth traversal of pitches that string bends facilitate and the sense of downward motion is a result of up-down embodied metaphorical projections of pitch. But musically, the ‘fall’ is interrupted as the rapid I5–I5–II5 chugs, rhythmically emphasised by the kit, afford intervention; in other words, the affordance of falling forward, free of muscular tension, is interrupted. In gestural terms, the fall is stopped just before the point at which preventative action becomes no longer an option\(^{22}\) (i.e. if the fall was to continue uninterrupted for any further length of time, the gesturing body would end up face down on the floor; that the temporality of the gesture, as physically enacted, aligns with the temporality of the riff is likely what makes the affordance so compelling). In reality, this relies on one foot being planted in a forward position, thus in muscular terms, exertion and, with this, tension is required. Interestingly, the track closes with repeated repetitions of the section D riff, though at a much slower speed. With this temporal alteration, gestural specificity is lost. Elsewhere, in a deathcore cover of ‘Eyeless’, Bring Me The Horizon eschew the pre-bend and, in doing so, strip the riff of its original corporeal-kinetic affordance.

So much for kinetic action, what, then, of schematic underpinning? The RELEASE FROM RESTRAINT and BLOCKAGE schemata may, then, be assigned, though these are of limited usefulness when it comes to explaining the unit’s temporal and directional qualities. In addition to these force schemas, the orientation and gravitational characteristics of the VERTICALITY schema are pertinent. Some form of BALANCE schema, too, underpins my

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\(^{22}\) I physically demonstrate this in lectures, much to the amusement of my students and I have even braved a performance of it at a conference. The stunt has, thankfully, yet to go wrong.
understanding of this experiential affordance. This may sound speculative, but, if we are to take seriously the embodied view of meaning put forward by Johnson, we must believe that:

we do not merely project (imaginatively) these schemas onto music, any more than we project them onto our ordinary bodily experience of motion. Rather, such image schemas actually constitute the structure and define the quality of our musical experience. They are in and of the music as experienced; they are the structure of the music. And they have meaning because they are partly constitutive of our bodily experience and the meaning it gives rise to.\(^{23}\)

In the case of this gestural affordance, however, directionality, amplitude, and velocity — and the meanings that arise from gestural particularities — cannot be detailed solely through the identification of image schemata. Here I am reminded of a comment featured in the conclusion of William Echard’s schematic analysis: ‘in the future it [image schema analysis] will need to find ways to allow other flavours to come through as well’.\(^{24}\) As we shall see, there are other theoretic perspectives that offer alternative approaches to the parsing of embodied engagement.

So, to meaning. What hermeneutic options are made available? It is possible, first, to consider the meaning of the gesture in relation to experience afforded elsewhere in the track. The quality of release is, here, markedly different from that which comes before. Whereas forward momentum elsewhere appears to be the result of an exertion of energy that enables the overcoming of restraint, in D, momentum is a result of the body in free fall. That is, forward motion results from a lack of exertion. Hermeneutic possibilities abound. A sense of abandon or surrender on the part of persona is one possible option. It might alternatively be read as an act of defiance, though this smacks of immaturity (I am thinking of the way young children let their body

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flop when made to do something or go somewhere they don’t want to) – in doing so, chiming with the claims of nu-metal’s detractors. The gesture can also be read as an embodiment of a self-destructive individualism of the kind Rafalovich finds common in metal lyrics (though, in the bodily action afforded here, self-harm is averted). An awareness of Slipknot’s on-stage behaviours may also, it should be acknowledged, influence my gestural understanding of this riff. A comparable gesture can be seen, for instance, at 1:06 in the video to 1999’s ‘Wait and Bleed’ (see figure 19). These are interpretations of the expressions of personae, but such readings are equally relatable to the authenticating affective experience ‘Eyeless’, and nu-metal more generally, offers its listeners access to.

Figure 19. Falling gesture in ‘Wait and Bleed’ video.

One other distinct unit of material is added. Section ‘E’ (2:38–3:07), as I label it, features a new mixed-modal, and constricting, 1–#3–2–b3 line (retaining B as the tonic centre) set against a
return of the introduction’s lead guitar fragment, foregrounded turntable scratches and, to begin with, kick-cymbal stabs. Gradual rhythmic saturation in the environment supports vocal intensification, which builds before the return of section D (at 3:07) marks a RELEASE OF RESTRAINT. I suspect, however, that the voice is the primary site of affordance at this point and two aspects of it are worthy of consideration. First, its manner of delivery is unique to this unit and is striking in its embodiment of what I (mis)hear as, ‘I feel sick, seems you’re sick’ (the ‘official’ lyric is ‘I feel saved, seems you’re saved’). Sonic-embodied affordance, it seems, is directing my comprehension of lyrics. On account of tone and articulation, comparison with other rock vocalists is invited with Jonathan Davies of Korn, once again, being an obvious association. So too is Kurt Cobain, who, as Jessica Wood observes, was preoccupied by giving voice, in singing style as well as in writing and drawing, to his experience of sickness. Wood aligns Cobain’s ‘eviscerated timbres’ with other notable vocal enactments of vomiting in rock, listing Buzz Osborne, Tad Doyle, Scratch Acid, and Butthole Surfers. In ‘Eyeless’, it is not vomiting that is enacted, but rather, Corey Taylor’s delivery captures the sense of anxious reservation and vulnerability that precedes vomiting. With this, abdominal tension and tightness in the chest and throat is also specified. While prior experience is, of course, what makes this affordance possible, assigning schemata to explain and describe this particular bodily experience is far from straightforward. A bodily CONTAINMENT is the only obvious option. The second thing to note about the voice in ‘E’ is its embeddedness in the environment; proxemically, the voice recedes further than previously heard (in section C, for instance) with the careful use of reverb, delay, distortion, and compression support and exaggerating this effect. What we hear in section E corroborates the claims made by both Rafalovich and Berger that in metal music and, by extension, for metal fans, experiential inspection of the damaged self is viewed as a means of strengthening

personal resolve: phenomenal experience, then, is constitutive of, and gives rise to, empowerment and agency.

Image schema theory offers a theoretic foundation for considering authenticating experience and provides an explanation for the embodied roots of connections between music and listener identity. It also, to my mind, offers a compelling starting point for reconciling phenomenological and hermeneutic description. Johnson’s fundamental claim of image schema theory as it relates to musical meaning, corresponds with the view of listening as a reciprocal, relational event set up in Part One and the beginning of Part Two of this thesis. I do not observe ‘Eyeless’ from the outside, nor do I merely receive or decode what is happening; rather, my own experiential reality shapes, at the same time as it is shaped by, what is sonically unfolding. Image schema theory suggests that listeners are, in a deeply embodied way, ‘amidst sounds’. We take ownership of musical experience by both constituting it and – this is where agency comes in – allowing action and self-understanding to be directed by it. There is something to be said, too, about the analytic experience image schema theory affords. In inviting the analyst to ascribe experiential structures, it foregrounds such experience and lends analysis a phenomenology that is discounted in stricter formalist approaches.

This is not to say that image schematic analysis is without limitations. While the usefulness of image schemata is in their generality and abstraction, this causes some issues when it comes to phenomenological description. What, for instance, is being ‘contained’? What is ‘oscillating’? What is ‘enabled’? What is going ‘out’? What is being ‘released from restraint’? The music, it is often assumed. But, in accordance with the principles of an embodied view of meaning, that such forces are perceivable is a result of the prior experience of a perceiver. That a listening body is being moved or being constricted must be inferred. That is, ‘image schemata’, as phenomenologically applied – this is a point also made by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone that we will return to shortly – need to have

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a corporeal subjectivity added to them. This relates to the limited efficacy of image schemata to fully capture bodily dynamics. In attempting to describe the gestural qualities afforded by the introduction and section D of ‘Eyeless’, image schematic analysis was extended to its phenomenological limit. Another concern relates to how effective image schema theory is in capturing the affective wholes; that is, how sound unfolds across more global structural levels. It is, I find, able to aid the description of distinctions between units and schematic analysis also – as demonstrated in my analysis of ‘Eyeless’ where CONTAINMENT, BLOCKAGE, and RELEASE OF RESTRAINT are primary patterns – supports an analytic explanation of relationships between units. Image schema theory does not, explicitly at least, explain how it is that we are able to meaningfully conceive of musical and experiential phases in relation to other. In a later section, I explore Husserl’s ‘time-consciousness’ and Stern’s ‘vitality affect contours’ with this in mind and to promote temporal flow as crucial to experiential authentication. Finally, does image schema theory enable the avoidance of abstraction characteristic of semiotic studies? Or, in assigning (and drawing) schemata, are we again left with a ‘mere table of contents’? While it is possible to view the schemas I identify as a list of sorts, it is crucial to remember that such structures are, the argument goes, constitutive of meaningful experience and, thus, not just illustrative abstractions of it.
2.4 Phenomenological Perspectives I: Archetypal Corporeal-Kinetic Forms and Relations

Nevertheless, there is something about the process of identifying and illustrating schemata that renders them, and the musical structures they are attached to, static. It is partly, I suspect, a problem related to the wider challenge of naming embodied structures. It is also, perhaps, an inevitable result of analytic description that exists on the page. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, a key voice in the embodiment debate, thinks that the problem runs deeper and is not only an issue of written application. Sheets-Johnstone’s assessment of image schemata is pertinent to any critical discussion of image schema theory, but especially phenomenologically-interested applications. Sheets-Johnstone’s sustained examination of the ‘kinaesthetic-tactile’ body is widely referenced and her work is regularly engaged with in interdisciplinary texts on embodiment (including those of Mark Johnson and Shaun Gallagher). The terms image schema theory operates within, in Sheets-Johnstone’s thinking, are both unnecessarily abstracted and - this is where the critique goes further - conceptually misguided. The overarching argument is that, simply put, ‘image schemata’ is not up to the task of phenomenological investigation. Neither is it up to the challenge of translating experience into language: to speak in terms of ‘image schemata’ is, for Sheets-Johnstone, to fail to ‘be true to the truths of experience’. Rather than attempt to modify, or re-draw, or re-imagine image schemata, Sheets-Johnstone offers ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms’ (ACKF) as an alternative. A discussion of ACFK here is theoretically worthwhile, for, as mentioned in 2.1, this thesis aims to register how useful specific embodied theories and concepts are in explaining and describing listening experience and to consider their musicological efficacy. There is also an interdisciplinary logic that justifies a brief excursion into Sheets-Johnstone’s theory; a musicological application of ACKF, I argue, provides insight into the distinctions

between image schema theory and Sheets-Johnstone’s phenomenological alternative. Add to this the direct relevance of ACKF to understandings of authenticity (introduced in Part One) as a ‘deep’, ‘inner’, and corporeally ‘centred’ meaning(s).

Some of Sheets-Johnstone’s distinctions need stating. First, image schemata are not, as Mark Johnson would have it, truly foundational structures (of language and experiential meaning). Sheets-Johnstone claims that it is in fact ACKF that ground understanding, whereas image schemata, if we are to speak in such terms, are derived from underlying archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms. The CONTAINMENT schema, discussed above, is a derivative of the ACKF insideness. I engage insideness here not only because it is given the fullest treatment by Sheets-Johnstone, but also because, like CONTAINMENT, it seems particularly pertinent to phenomenological-hermeneutic investigation of recorded popular song. The first of the two passages that follow provides a useful explanation of ‘insideness’ as an example of an archetypal corporeal-kinetic form. The second explicates the relation, and distinction, between ‘insideness’ and ‘containment’:

An infant closing and opening its hand over an object is at the same time forging a nonlinguistic, i.e., corporeal, concept that we might designate as in, inside, being inside, or more generally, as insideness. It is of conceptual and not just of linguistic interest to note that the preposition in is the first locative state and locative act to appear in a child’s acquisition of verbal language; being in or inside something, and placing in or inside something, constitute primary and ongoing experiences in infant and early childhood life and are the basis of the corporeal concept of insideness. Archetypal forms and relations are thus not preconceptual entities as embodied schemata are consistently described, but are the substantive conceptual backbone to language when it appears.²

Insideness – in, inside, being inside – is a fundamental corporeal concept. Containment is a conceptual derivative: something is contained if and only if it is found in or put inside something else. Insideness is the archetypal relation grounding the relation of containment, thus the experiential foundation for the ‘embodied image schemata’ containment.³

In the former excerpt, we see Sheets-Johnstone explicate a conceptual/preconceptual distinction that separates her understanding of the bodily roots of language from that developed by Johnson and George Lakoff⁴ and, elsewhere, by Raymond Gibbs⁵. In addition to outlining a conceptual stratification, the second quotation hints at another critical distinction Sheets-Johnstone works to establish; the claim is that ACKF are in the truest sense embodied and experiential, whereas image schemata are disembodied abstractions that, while connected to bodily experience, are not grounded in experiential dynamics. And because ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations are a more exact descriptive specification of nonlinguistic experience’⁶ than image schemata – and this is pertinent to musicological applications of image schemata theory – they have ‘greater explanatory power’.⁷ ACKF are also unburdened by image schemata’s associations with ‘mental’ and ‘cognitive’ processes and ‘brain mechanisms’. In Sheets-Johnstone’s phenomenological view, then, ACKF are both more experientially immanent (or local) and more foundational (global) than image schemata.

Let us look at insideness more closely. In the first instance, it relates to, and centres on, a fourth bodily dimension. This dimension, Sheets-Johnstone asserts, is an important site of subjective affect: “This fourth coordinate is directly experienced by living bodies and in significantly basic ways not only in terms of the experiential difference between attending to the felt dynamics

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⁸ Ibid., p. 221.
of one’s movement and attending to its perceived three-dimensionality, but in terms of the body itself. At the most obvious level, heart fluttering, a gripping overall tension, stomach rumblings and churnings, back pains and so on, attest to experiences of ‘insides’ and to their quintessential import. Elsewhere, Sheets-Johnstone considers inside as the site from which deeply meaningful aspects of identity, including ‘soul’ and ‘mind’, carried by breath, emanate. Insideness is also, of course, a spatial concept. As an archetypal bodily concept, insideness informs our understanding of, and interaction with, ecological and, by extension, cultural and social structures. Insideness, as it relates to authenticity and authentication, is not an unfamiliar idea; indeed, a general understanding of it has already been engaged hermeneutically at several points in this thesis. In the case of ‘Katy on a Mission’, considered in Part One, environmental immersion was read as specifying an authenticating (sub)cultural ‘inside’ knowledge. In ‘Eyeless’, the tendency of the voice to proxemically recede was interpreted as signifying, and inviting, an individualistic withdrawal into the affective self – a retreat to the ‘me’ inside. There is a sense, then, that insideness fits ‘everyday’ descriptions of musical practices as well as connections between music and self, identity, belonging, and affect. With this in mind, to speak of CONTAINMENT, in comparison, seems an imprecise, abstract correlate. To get a better sense of insideness in action, a fuller analysis is required.

Korn’s seminal hit ‘Freak On A Leash’ makes for a worthwhile case study. And my reasons for choosing it should be declared. First, insideness, as we shall see, seems an especially pertinent concept in Korn’s music, both thematically and, in my listening, sonically. In lyric, sound, and performance, bodily insides – emotional and physical – can be interpreted as being specified. I employ ‘specification’ here with deliberate reference to Gibson’s ecological usage (see 1.4). That is, bodily insides are perceived as a site of sonic and affective expression. Affordances of affective engagement emanate from this specification which, I argue, is dominant to the point that insideness becomes a corporeal invariant in Korn’s idiolect. In fact, insideness has come to be an

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corporeal concept that organises and binds my understanding of the authenticating potential of Korn’s brand of nu-metal. Second, as I argued in the introduction, listening should inform theoretic import. In setting up his analysis of Korn’s ‘Hey Daddy’, Jonathon Pieslak9 makes a similar claim, suggesting that metal, fragmented as it is, demands a wide range of theoretic approaches with some fitting particular styles and idiolects better than others. Thirdly, ‘Freak On A Leash’ is stylistically related to ‘Eyeless’ and, thus, invites an implicit comparison of image schema analysis and ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms’.

Vocal sounds and techniques are obvious points of connection between ‘Freak On A Leash’ and ‘Eyeless’. In verses, a fragile body is specified by a throaty and wayward manner of delivery comparable to that heard in section E of ‘Eyeless’. A restraint resulting from an overall tension and muscular weariness is also specified. Note how the descriptor ‘fragile’ points to an insideness that can be both emotional and physical in experience. The voice also affords an affective emptiness that is equally psychophysiological. The sense of emptiness is also specified by a sparse textural arrangement typical of Korn’s early idiolect; in ‘Freak On A Leash’ two effected electric guitars, playing in their upper register, overlay a bass ostinato and backbeat kit pattern. Guitar 1 outlines a D phrygian 1–5–2 while guitar 2 responds with a downpicked D phrygian 1–4–1 arpeggiation. Stereo separation of the guitars serves to amplify this spatial illusion. The rhythmic inconsistency in the presentation of the arpeggio is also noteworthy, and can be interpreted as signifying insecurity or as embodying the precariousness of the situation. Nor does it allow the listener to settle; the subtle variation demands listener engagement in an unfolding affective present. Timbrally, too, the guitars specify inside bodily stirrings. Most referentially obvious is the transformation of the final tone of guitar 1’s three-note figure through the use of high-rate phase modulation. Corporeal specifications include churnings and palpitations located in the stomach and chest area and added to the mix is a spatially-mobile quiver that, in lacking a

clear pitch-related role, is decidedly paramusical. Together, then, vocal and guitar timbre and rhythmic irregularity conspire to specify, and afford, a psychophysiological experience that relates to overall muscular tension as well as other unwelcome affective surges and awakenings. Inwardly directed verse lyrics – ‘feeling like a freak on a leash/feeling like I have no release’ – and the embedding of an effected second voice support a broader reading of vocal signification with reference to the ACKF insideness.

The chorus’ distinctive alteration in tone is anticipated by timbral and amplitudinal intensification played out in the pre-chorus. We might assume, then, a change in specification. Pieslak understands a comparable shift in the chorus of Korn’s ‘Hey Daddy’ as, more generally, ‘emotional release’. A strengthening of resolve, too, is an obvious interpretive option. Nonetheless, insideness can still be viewed as vital to specification and affordance, though not only of bodily inside, but also of the ecological experience of being inside. Vocal facility is the source of the former specification. Davis’ overdriven vocal can both be viewed as signifying outward emotional exertion and as specifying related inside bodily processes. Tim Hughes’ discussion of this technique is instructive: ‘Distortion, or overdriving, is not a timbral quality. It is a physical process, and it works in the same way for the voice as it does for electronic signals. Distortion is, simply put, the sound of a signal too powerful for the system transmitting it’.

Hughes cites Walser’s conception of the overdriven voice in metal in support. Here, vocal overdrive is posited as a facet of metal’s projection of (human) power:

Not only electronic circuitry, but also the human body produces aural distortion through excessive power. Human screams and shouts are usually accompanied by vocal distortion, as the capacities of the vocal chords are exceeded. Thus, distortion functions as a sign of extreme power and intense expression by overflowing its channels and materializing the

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exceptional effort that produces it…The vocal sounds of heavy metal are similar, in some ways, to the guitar sounds. Quite often, vocalists deliberately distort their voices, for any of the same reasons that guitar players distort theirs. Heavy metal vocalists project brightness and power by overdriving their voices (or by seeming to), and they also sing long sustained notes to suggest intensity and power.\textsuperscript{11}

While a useful, general definition of distortion in metal, it is only partly accurate of Davis’ chorus vocal. The signification of ‘intense expression’ is likely. So too is the physical dynamic of the ‘voice’ ‘overflowing its channels’. But it is not just that this sound functions as a ‘musical’ sign; rather, it \textit{specifies} a particular strain placed on the body. That such exertion can cause discomfort and damage is, surely, pertinent to experiential affordances. In sum, the vocal points to phenomenologically recognisable insides. Davis’ overdriven chorus vocal does not, however, function as ‘a sign of extreme power’. The fragility of the verses is not wholly relinquished, and a sense of constraint as much as outward ‘power’ is projected. Davies’ vocal does not achieve a level of saturation and sustain comparable to that reached by Taylor in ‘Eyeless’ and, as such, Davis is still able to negotiate melody and allow enough ‘note’ through to ensure pitch and contour is easily discerned. It is also worth noting that it is in choruses that the voice is most fully embedded in the environment. While musically unsurprising, this strategy has hermeneutic consequences. In the analysis of ‘Eyeless’ the CONTAINMENT schema was assigned to explain the sense of the persona being ‘contained’ within/by an affective situation played out in the sonic environment; here we can explain the perception of the voice’s embeddedness on account of \textit{insideness}, recognising the spatial-affective relations that constitute it as a somatic concept. Finally, environmental texture-timbre relations can be seen to correspond with the voice. Just as the chorus voice does not achieve the kind of overdriven saturation we may expect – and that does come in

\textsuperscript{11} Walser, \textit{Running With the Devil}, pp. 43–45.
a later ‘break’ in the track – nor does the accompaniment and instead we get a form of timbral juxtaposition between electric guitar and bass guitar that is ‘typically Korn’ in design.\textsuperscript{12} The sharp attacks of a percussive, clicky bass guitar employing ‘slap’ technique contrast with the mid-scooped, saturated overdrive tone of Korn’s 7-string electric guitars. The overall result is a sense that the texture falls short of its potential for saturation and sustain and, with this, it also seems to fail to maximise its amplitudinal capacity – it remains \textit{inside}.

As the track progresses, the voice is increasingly pushed to its limits and, correspondingly, specifications of insides are advanced. In the distinctive, ‘nonsense-utterance’ bridge, wherein the voice assumes the role of expressive focal point, Davis compellingly gives voice to an affective insideness. As David Lloyd\textsuperscript{13} asserts, this is a manner of expression that goes beyond normative lyric writing. Lloyd extrapolates a great deal from this strategy, arguing that gibberish is a means of nu-metal performers overcoming ‘forces that have robbed them of their identity and authenticity’ and the ‘semantic walls that are imprisoning them’\textsuperscript{14}. Elsewhere, Lloyd understands this as Davis ‘giving voice to his inner basic feelings’. Crucially, Lloyd recognises the viscerality driving Davis’, and other nu-metal artists’, inarticulacy. A deliberate presencing of the body – and bodily insides, more precisely – is a vital means of affording authenticating experience. Lloyd understands this as injecting ‘more of the body into the sound of the music and vocal performance’, writing: ‘There is no erasure of the physical and spatial specificity, or of the grain, in new metal recordings. Human limitation is made instrumental in the form of vocal distortion and the sound of the lips, teeth, throat, tongue, mouth, and breath’\textsuperscript{15}. The bridge of a ‘Freak On A Leash’ is a seminal instance of this. What we are invited to experience, and not merely witness, is an exploration of corporeal and emotional potential\textsuperscript{16}. To make sense of the affective potential

\textsuperscript{12} Nicholas Braee’s coining of ‘sonic pattern’ in his analysis of Queen’s idiolect is useful here. Sonic pattern refers to ‘common musical features articulated in the same way across different songs’. Nicholas Braee, ‘A Kind of Magic: Identifying and Analysing Queen’s Idiolect, 1973–1980’ (PhD. Thesis, University of Waikato, 2016); p. 5.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 164.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Sam Amidon’s delivery of ‘As I Roved Out’ is an instance of this within a very different style context.
of this sound, we are invited to experientially engage, even if imaginatively, with Davis’ presentation of the body and, in doing so, claim ownership over that corporeality.

Some concluding comments are required. I hope to have shown how Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations’ offers another way of considering the embodied connections between listener and song from which authentication arises. I do think ACKF enable a discussion of affective experience that is, at once, more experientially immanent than image schemata and, in the case of ‘Freak on A Leash’s specifications and affordances, insideness does seem less abstracted in comparison to CONTAINMENT. That is, the archetypal corporeal-kinetic form insideness encourages the analyst to attempt to describe more precisely what bodily processes and feelings are being specified and afforded. However, while ACKF have the impression of being more corporeally and phenomenologically ‘concrete’ than image schemata, it may be said that they are less obviously applicable in musicological analysis. Thus, in a musicological context, they are simultaneously less abstract and more abstract. It is far easier, after all, to analytically map musical structures onto specific image schemata (as illustrated earlier). It is possible that analysts will apply ACKF as a next-stage in an analysis that foregrounds more general embodied structures (like image schemata), as I have done, though this is to ignore Sheets-Johnstone’s insistence that ACKF actually serve as the foundation for image schemata. It needs to be noted that Sheets-Johnstone’s ACKF has yet to acquire the degree of empirical support, and breadth of application, that Johnson’s image schema theory has received (it might be that a historically – and institutionally – entrenched suspicion of ‘first-person’ phenomenological study is to blame for this. Pressures from across the corridor/campus might also be why studies such as Johnson’s stop short of ‘subjective’ phenomenological description.) Here, then, in the pursuit of experiential explanation and description, I knowingly follow a phenomenological path the musicological ‘truth’ of which has yet to be established.
2.5 Phenomenological Perspectives II: Entrainment, Appropriation, and Kinetic-affective Dynamics

I now (re)turn to relations between motion, affect, and authentication. More specifically, I argue that motional engagement underpins authenticating experiences of being (inter)subjectively involved *with* music; here, ‘appropriation’ and ‘belonging’, terms familiar from Part One, resurface as key ideas. I also posit gestural involvement as a means by which listeners enact and *express* authentic(ated) subjectivities. Thus, while sections 2.3 and 2.4 explored ‘deep’, ‘inner’, ‘immanent’, and frequently ‘hidden’ and ‘pre-reflective’, embodied connections between music and listener, here I detail embodied interactions that are more obviously outward, expressive and, (inter)subjectively recognisable. Here, authentication is understood as arising from affective experience of the self in kinetic *flow* and hermeneutic insight emerges from a form of – non-symbolic, non-representational – processual, meaningful engagement Sheets-Johnstone famously labelled ‘thinking in movement’.¹ I start the discussion with a review of some pertinent empirical, phenomenological, and social studies of embodied entrainment and gesture. Following this, the gestural specifications of several tracks are analytically and interpretively examined. Finally, I apply Sheets-Johnstone’s phenomenological list of motional qualities before offering some concluding thoughts on kinetic-affective relations as they relate to authentication.

While the connection between gesture and affect is well established in music scholarship,² rarely, however, do discussions explicitly assert kinetic-affective engagement as the basis for experiential authentication. (Authentication is too slippery, too subjective perhaps. Its substitution, in some parts of the academy as well as in journalistic discourse, of ‘value’ might also be a cause

for concern.) As we have seen, correlations between gesture and preference have been empirically established. The role of corporeal-kinetic response in listeners’ perception of musical expression has also been thoroughly examined.

In Trost, Labbe, and Grandjean’s³ study of rhythmic ‘entrainment’, affect is foregrounded and entrainment is defined as a form of synchronization that arises when two systems interact, thus fitting the reciprocal view of listener-text relations established thus far here. The reader is presented with a review of a broad range of theoretic and empirical literature on rhythmic entrainment and, out of this, the identification of four entrainment ‘levels’. The first, ‘perceptual’ entrainment, refers to the conceptualisation of rhythm that relies on pattern formation. At a very basic level, this allows listeners to conceive of rhythmic groupings (i.e. ‘4/4’ and ‘3:3:2’), with beat being the musical focus. The researchers’ discussion reveals a cognitive, representational view similar to that put forward famously by Lerdahl and Jackendoff⁴ and recently applied in the context of popular music study by David Temperley⁵ (I have noted my concerns with Temperley’s outlook elsewhere⁶). But, crucially, Trost et al. also acknowledge a subjective component to the processing of rhythm, that rests on listener engagement; in short, patterns and their distinctive emphases do not inhere in sound, but are ascribed in the act of perception. An established understanding of connections between perceptual entrainment and affect, they assert, has yet to be empirically constituted, though they note that a listener’s ability to compute pulses and patterns – to achieve ‘clarity’, in their terms – has been related to increased listener ‘activity’⁷ and the affordance of more ‘pleasant states’. ‘Autonomic physiological entrainment’ is the second level of entrainment discussed. Here, we move toward a more obviously embodied, as opposed to ‘cognitive’, form of

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musical interaction. This level is identified from attempts to evidence the synchronization of music and biological processes, namely respiration and heart rate. Tempo, rather than ‘beat’, is the focal parameter here. The authors signpost some intriguing intersubjective findings, notably that ‘in choral singing, researchers have shown that cardiac and respiratory efforts between the members of the choir and the choir director’.\(^8\) Shared corporeal response – and gestural motion is implicated here – is also characteristic of ‘social entrainment’. The authors suggest that, ‘synchronous movements to a musical rhythm in a group or with a partner can induce diverse social feelings, such as an increase in trust, compassion and cooperation’.\(^9\) A sense of embodied belonging, as it relates to authenticity and authentication, could be added to this list of experiential affordances.

The remaining level, ‘motor entrainment’, refers to physical enactments music can afford, including toe-tapping and dance. This kind of entrainment can be understood, Trost et al. argue, as an ‘entrainment to kinematic information in the music that facilitates affective responses to living organisms’.\(^10\) ‘Pleasant’ emotional states, ‘enjoyment’, and ‘trance’-like states are identified as key findings in empirical investigations of entrainment and affect.

The article and the body of literature it surveys evidence the importance of kinetic-affective relations in musical experience. In identifying the subjectivity involved in the construction and experience of rhythm, the authors also present a view of listener-sound interactions that challenge, and go beyond, mimetic hypotheses put forward by the likes of Arnie Cox.\(^11\) This is to be welcomed, as views that posit embodied engagements with music as primarily imitative tend to underestimate the intentional, exploratory nature of listeners’ involvements with sound. Elsewhere, Egil Haga has observed subjective differences in dancers’ gestural responses to music that support a more exploratory embodied view, noting that ‘correspondences may be perceived

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\(^9\) Trost et al., ‘Rhythmic Entrainment’, p.104.

\(^10\) Ibid., p.103.

\(^11\) Cox, *Music and Embodied Cognition*. 
with a high level of flexibility, i.e. that the same musical excerpt may correspond to different variations of movement.12 As in Trost et al., Haga finds that the investigation of music-movement relations reveals intersubjective connections between perceivers; thus, a relationality that rests on kinetic forms of embodied engagement.

Borrowing from Eric Clarke’s ecological account, Haga usefully chooses to understand music-movement relations as part of perceivers’ ‘perceptual reality’. The affective perceptual reality presented in ‘Rhythmic Entrainment as a Musical Affect Induction Mechanism’ is limited to general affordances of ‘arousal’ and ‘pleasant’ and ‘connected’ intersubjective states. The survey does not consider kinetic-affective relations as representative of meaning-making grounded in a perception-action mutualism (the hermeneutic consequences of embodied experience are not their concern). Here, I seek to establish connections between motion and identity and meaning on the basis that sound can afford listeners an embodied sense of kinetic ownership and agency. These are not, at this point, obviously ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ affective states (though in the last chapter of the thesis we shall see how experiences of the self as involved in sound can be understood as having positive consequences); nonetheless, they are vital to the meaningful experience of being authenticated by music. And the perceptual reality of Trost et al. is either physical or disembodied. That is, entrainment is physically enacted or ‘cognitively’ computed. As Haga rightly notes – as too does Arnie Cox, in a different way, with his ‘mimetic motor imagery’ – kinetic responses can also manifest in non-symbolic, and pre-reflective, imaginative engagement. But this should not be understood as any less dependent on embodiment. And affect and meaning can be afforded with equivalent force from imaginative contact with sound. Finally, it should be noted that Trost et al. focus on some of the more obvious specifiers of rhythmic motion including beat, accent, pulse, and tempo (as do several of the studies they cite). But kinetic synchronisation, as we shall see, can

also arise from interactions with other acoustic parameters; as Eric Clarke notes, ‘every musical sound has the capacity to specify some kind of motion’.13

Sociologist Tia DeNora offers an alternative understanding of bodily interaction, highlighting organism-environment relations. DeNora asserts that environments (of which music can be a part) that specify invariant patterns – consistencies in quality and/or profile – can afford corporeal-kinetic entrainment. In her view, environments and music can operate as an ‘organising device of the body’14 and lead to forms of motional interaction that have practical and affective consequences. In accordance with the title and intellectual aims of her book, DeNora offers examples from everyday activity (including baby feeding) as well as musically-directed activity (aerobics classes, for instance). Two related types of affordance are foregrounded: ‘embodied awareness’ and ‘embodied security’. Both have obvious ties to conceptions of authenticity surveyed in Part 1 as well as, more broadly, the experiential view established in this thesis. The term ‘embodied awareness’ is employed to describe an exploratory, animate form of engagement with, and use of, environmental properties. Notions of (pre-reflective) agency and intentionality are central components in DeNora’s phenomenological understanding, as outlined in the following passages from Music in Everyday Life:

By this term (‘embodied awareness’) I mean a non-propositional, non-cognitive, creaturely orientation and expectancy towards the physical environment. All of us are bodily aware as we organise our actions and behaviour, for example, in our response to water (as something to drink or to be avoided in order to remain dry), ice underfoot, cliff faces, or sunlight versus shade. This kind of awareness is part of what we casually refer to as ‘common sense’, ‘horse sense’ and so on.15

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15 Ibid.
Bodily awareness of environmental properties would appear to be a pragmatic, semi-conscious, matter. It need not involve any reflection or articulation as propositional ‘knowledge’, though at times it also may do so. For example, those who are able to walk – or walk on a slippery surface – need not think or talk about the physics or physiology of how walking is accomplished and yet they may produce walking as a matter of course. Beings of different kinds thus orient to and organise themselves in relation to environmental properties – for example, the waking-sleep cycle may come to be mapped on to the cycles of daylight and darkness. In this way, environmental patterns come to afford patterns of embodiment and behaviour through the ways they are responded to as entrainment devices.\(^\text{16}\)

Later on, DeNora involves ‘appropriation’\(^\text{17}\) to describe this phenomenon. In my reading of this, DeNora hints at a phenomenologically-oriented version of Richard Middleton’s\(^\text{18}\) argument that the music listeners find authenticity in and are authenticated by, is the music that, for them, affords appropriation. The synthesis of these two understandings of ‘appropriation’ runs through my understanding and analysis of experiential authentication.

‘Embodied awareness’ precedes, and serves as the general foundation for, ‘embodied security’. DeNora describes this broadly as the experiential sense of ‘fitting in’ with an environment. While corporeal-kinetic entrainment is initially the focus of DeNora’s discussion and supporting examples, this idea has obvious experiential-hermeneutic extensions, notably to music’s capacity to afford subjective and intersubjective senses of affirmation and ‘belonging’. The somatic

\(^{16}\) Ibid., pp. 84–85.

\(^{17}\) ‘It is, however, reasonable to suggest that, to the extent that the body’s connection to a range of other materials, the body/environment divide can be replaced by a concern with how ‘bodies’ are configured. This alternative (and interdisciplinary) perspective illuminates bodily states and forms of embodied agency as produced through the body’s interaction with and abilities to appropriate environmental materials – materials that can be perhaps best understood as resources for the constitution of particular states over time and social space’. DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, pp. 87–88.

intensity (and discomfort) Wendy Fonarow\textsuperscript{19} observes that younger indie fans seek at gigs might be understood as an attempt to achieve the form of phenomenological and behavioural attunement DeNora terms ‘embodied security’. ‘Embodied security’ might also be deployed to add an embodied emphasis to the Allan Moore’s culturally-situated ‘centredness’.

Marian Dura’s\textsuperscript{20} review of phenomenological literature points to some other pertinent understandings of motional entrainment. Of the works surveyed, those of Don Ihde and Mikel Dufrenne appear particularly useful in the context of the present discussion. Dura extracts ‘bodily listening’, explained in the below passage, from Ihde’s phenomenological writing:

To listen is to be dramatically engaged in a bodily listening which ‘participates’ in the movement of the music. It is from this possibility that the ‘demonic qualities’ of music arise. In concentrated listening its enchantment plays on the full range of self-presence and calls on one to dance.\textsuperscript{21}

As Dura notes, Ihde offers an extended understanding of ‘dance’ to involve ‘everything from actual dancing to the covert rhythms and movements felt internally while quietly listening to music’.\textsuperscript{22} From Dufrenne, ‘rhythmic schemata’ – which in name and focus has obvious ties to embodied concepts already discussed here – invites appropriation. These are musical occurrences as well as motional stirrings in the body of the listening subject. The following explanation, which Dura also lifts from Dufrenne’s text, is pertinent to the listening experiences I detail below: ‘they [rhythmic schemata] will awaken certain echoes in the body. We are most conscious of the movement of an object when the movement is within us’.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19} Wendy Fonarow, \textit{Empire of Dirt: The Aesthetics and Rituals of British Indie Music} (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006).
\textsuperscript{22} Dura, ‘The Phenomenology of the Music-Listening Experience’, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{23} Mikel Dufrenne, \textit{The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience}, trans. Edward S. Casey (Evanston: Northwestern
As my focus is on ‘private’ listening, it will be necessary to consider some music examples that specify and afford ‘embodied awareness’, ‘bodily listening’, ‘rhythmic schemata’, and embodied agency and ownership. I start with Imogen Heap’s ‘Goodnight and Go’. This track specifies and affords kinetic dynamics through spatial design. Across the track, textural and spatial juxtapositions conspire to compelling effect. The track’s opening figure, for instance, is notable for its oscillation (notice my use of a familiar schematic descriptor) across the left-right axis of the four-dimensional virtual space Allan Moore calls the ‘soundbox’. In his perceptual discussion of musical motion, Eric Clarke gives us two basic ways in which we might make sense of what is happening here. The first is that the ‘music’ is moving; that is, listeners are static observers of a musical object that is moving before or around them. Alternatively, we can experience a form of subjective embodied synchronisation with the musical figure. Clarke, citing Neil P. McAngus Todd’s ‘neurobiological’ view, understands this as the experience of ‘self-motion’. It is here that ownership, appropriation, and agency operate as key experiential affordances. By ownership I mean that we experience motion as ‘my own’, and in using the term ‘agency’, I point to the phenomenological sense that unfolding kinetic patterns should be attributed to an intentionally involved ‘me’ as much as, if not more so, than ‘the music’. When our bodies are deemed to be kinetically involved in this way, a deeply attuned, embodied appropriation is afforded. While I experience several aspects of ‘Goodnight and Go’s design in this way, this particular way of experiencing musical motion is by no means guaranteed. Musical motion is, as Clarke notes, ‘underdetermined’, and the ecological ‘relativity of motion (‘am I moving relative to the surroundings, or are the surroundings moving relative to me?’) means that there is always potentially an uncertainty. I submit that when it is self-motion that is afforded, listening experiences can be especially consuming and affirming.

25 Clarke, Ways of Listening, p. 75.
Spatial dynamics afford a different kind of self-motion (or ‘dance’ in Idhe’s terms) in the verses of ‘Goodnight and Go’. Here, the three more obviously locational dimensions of the soundbox are explored, with variations in the breadth (left-right axis), height (register), and depth (proximity) of sound-sources specifying motion. The accompanimental textures of the first two bars of four-bar verse groupings can be broadly described as involving alternations between narrow/wide stereo and bass/treble registral profiles. In my listening, these juxtapositions afford a kinetic pattern that has an obvious corporeal correlate; the spatiality of the track, then, corresponds to, affords, a corporeal spatiality. An attempt to put into language this bodily action might go something like: the bass stabs appear located centrally in the soundbox and as such afford a relatively narrow, contained body position. The abrupt spatial and registral shift heralded by the replacement of the singular, central bass with a bifurcated and wide treble synth part affords a spreading of the body in both a laterally outward and upward manner, with an outward extension of the arms is a possible kinetic association. The gesture’s corporeal, proprioceptive orientation is also defined by a forward directionality that, it might be assumed, results from a sense of the treble sounds being closer in proximity to the listener. This is potentially confusing, for if it is first-person motion that is afforded, that is, motion is deemed to be projected by the listening body, one might suspect that a sense of forwardness would arise when sounds are perceived as moving ‘away’ from the listener and perhaps ‘deeper into the mix’. Here the illusion is that the listener is facing the soundbox. However, there is an ecological logic to the perception of treble frequencies as specifying greater listener proximity to the sound-source. Clarke explains this in the following extract, which I lift from his analysis of musical motion in Wozzeck and Fatboy Slim’s ‘Build It Up. Tear It Down’:

High frequencies are absorbed and dissipated more rapidly than low frequencies, leading to the characteristic ‘bass heavy’ quality of amplified music heard at a distance (the ‘open air pop festival’ sound). As the distance to the source decreases, or the degree of occlusion
declines, the high frequencies increase in relative intensity, shifting the timbral balance toward increased brightness. It is for this reason that the continuous change in filtering on the Fatboy Slim track gives rise to a powerful sense of approach to (or approach by) a sound-source.  

This hints at the interesting though difficult question of where listeners, as embodied agents, understand themselves to be located in relation to sound-sources and, more generally, in sound ‘worlds’. The affordance of gestural motion, and, with this, a sense of corporeal ownership and agency, may well rely on perceiving the bass and treble sounds as conceivably emanating from the activity of a singular ‘body’ (Clarke makes a similar claim in his analysis of listener engagement and Mozart’s String Quartet in C Major.) And indeed, a sense of somatic singularity, and first-person motional action, is lost when the soundbox is more fully populated in the latter half of the verses’ four-bar groupings.

The above example details the kinetic affordances of invariant spatial strategies. But momentary, singular figures can also specify motional entrainment. Indeed, large-scale musical and narrative ‘movement’ is frequently supported by the inclusion of brief anticipatory gestures. Philip Tagg, in his semiotic sign typology, identifies short ‘one way processes’ he calls ‘episodic markers’ as serving exactly this purpose. Unlike Tagg’s ‘anaphones’, which concern paramusical signification, episodic markers function internally; that is, they are a notable way in which a track can refer within itself. It is perhaps for this reason that I have tended to understand episodic markers as having relatively limited bearing on the meaning of a song. (In my teaching of Tagg’s typology, I have, on reflection, tended also to assign the least amount of lecture time to episodic markers). This is an assumption that I think results from the kind of thinking a hermeneutic

26 Ibid., pp. 81–82.
application of semiotics – wherein external or ‘paramusical’ references can seem most significant, or naturally given priority in the ‘search’ for signs – invites. But when listening experience, or embodied listener-text ‘interaction’, is more thoroughly parsed, episodic markers can emerge as especially important moments. What we find is that common referential functions, including anticipation and propulsion, are a result of, and are strengthened by, what they corporeally afford. It should be unsurprising that episodic markers are points at which listeners can become involved: first, episodic markers mark temporally significant moments in tracks; and, they hail or anticipate notable changes in environmental (rhythmic, textural, timbral, harmonic, spatial) structure and intensity. The perceptual, sense-making logic behind this is that environmental changes demand heightened awareness and responsive engagement. While motional entrainment is just one possibility for action, this can be experienced in several ways. First, a general sense of physiological and/or affective attunement to the music can be afforded. It may also be that this kind of embodied involvement is the basis for sympathetic relationships between listeners and (sonically and lyrically present) personae. In acknowledging this, I phenomenologically extend Moore’s view of authenticating listener-artist interactions, which is outlined in the following sentence from ‘Authenticity as Authentication’: ‘Particular acts and sonic gestures (of various kinds) made by particular artists are interpreted by an engaged audience as investing authenticity in those acts and gestures – the audience becomes engaged not with the acts and gestures themselves but with the originator of those acts and gestures’. I think the authenticating appropriation of sonic gestures can go further than this. It is possible that kinetic-affective involvement places the listening subject at the centre of the action, with listeners not only becoming attuned to the situation of a persona, but experiencing themselves as originators, and the ‘story’, as it were, as their own and partly self-determined.

It is possible that the episodic markers featured in Pixie Lott’s ‘Gravity’ and Dua Lipa’s ‘New Rules’ afford one or more of these types of embodied entrainment. ‘Gravity’ works in a relatively conventional manner. Here, a stylistically typical sweep – of the kind normally achieved either through the reversing of cymbal decay or the manipulation of ‘white noise’ – precedes texturally and registrally climactic choruses. In terms of musical motion, episodic markers operate in counterpoint to descending open-ended Ionian I–VII–IVb–IV patterns (and down-pitched vocal gestures). The pre-chorus, upward sweeps play an obvious narrative role too, anticipating texturally supported changes in lyric perspective. But I think the contribution of these anticipatory gestures is more specific than a broad stylistic description – and semiotic description, whether in terms of ‘episodic marker’ or ‘kinetic anaphone’ allows. Their motional quality specifies an embodied action that is vital to the process of understanding, and appropriating, the persona’s changed expressive attitude and resolve. The action I am thinking of is an outward extension of the chest and elevation of the shoulders that correspond with a long, inward breath; ‘getting ready for the fight’ would be the basic description of this affective and physiological sequence.

‘New Rules’ and ‘Gravity’ specify comparable narrative situations. And, as in ‘Gravity’, ‘New Rules’ features one-way gestures that correspond with a texturally and lyrically galvanised – *empowered* – persona (the lyrical ‘you’ is noteworthy, and seems outwardly projected). It is likely to be affordances of empowerment that contribute to more general experiences of authentication, whether this rests on a sympathetic affective connection with the persona (or Lipa as performer) or a more thorough appropriation of the sonic-narrative setting. The narrative placement of one-bar episodic markers is relatively obvious in ‘New Rules’; they come after Lipa lists her new rules and, we are to assume, prior to their implementation. But the kinetic-affective relation they afford

29 ‘Kinetic anaphones have to do with the relationship of the human body to time and space. Such movement can be literally visualised as that of a human or humans riding, driving, flying, walking, running, strolling, etc. through, round, across, over, to and fro, up and down, in relation to a particular environment or from one environment to another’. Tagg, ‘Towards A Sign Typology of Music’, p. 3.

also suggests difficulties in both preparing to enforce ‘new rules’ and in following them through. The motional action afforded is, initially at least, stuttering, hesitant, and uncoordinated. Indeed, the episodic markers of ‘New Rules’ afford corporeal involvement – or ‘embodied awareness’ – in their challenge to listener entrainment and demand for temporal-kinetic re-adjustment. In musical terms, this arises from the momentary disguising of the pulse and disruption of an otherwise clearly accented backbeat. While snare hits remain a feature, as expected, on beats 2 and 4 of the bar, an explicit bass drum/synth downbeat is replaced by a quaver percussion fill. A bass drum/synth hit on the fourth quaver of the bar, rather than fifth, results in a phenomenological sense of clarity and coordination being hinted at the very end of the one-bar episodic marker and fully established in the succeeding measure. The temporal push and pull that results from a disrupted pulse and backbeat is both momentary – that is, having bearing on the experience of that singular bar – and of wider phenomenological-hermeneutic consequence. In basic motional terms, the whole sequence can be described as involving hesitation, readjustment and then propulsion. Again, this can be easily related to the persona’s narrative. It can also be said to underpin the authenticating experience of empowerment potentially afforded to the listener. What we hear, and potentially feel, is an affective body in motion that emerges restored, back in control, and galvanised. This is authenticating not only because it might effectively correspond to ‘real’ situations, but because the positive valence and empowerment – or ‘becoming’, to bring Carl Rogers’ psychological view of authenticity back into play – afforded by the musical experience can be carried into everyday self-understanding. ‘something does last after the music is gone’, as Antonio Damasio writes.31

‘Body War’, by New-York based hardcore post-punk band Show Me The Body, specifies a restless and inconsistent body in motion. Extended gestural variation and range here relates to striking shifts in texture, timbre, speed, and melodic direction. This track, too, challenges entrainment, but disruption is a central facet of the track’s affordance of corporeal engagement

and of the motional specifications listed above. And while it is out of an unfolding, accumulative – and typically noisy – whole that gestural expression emerges, enforcing some analytic separation will be helpful. It is possible to understand the track as constituted of two primary riff-based units of material, identifiable as choruses and verses, though vocal and instrumental overlays and the down-tempo drop from 2:58–3:30 slightly confuse this reading. As there are no exact repeats, it will be necessary to inspect several choruses and verses. Indeed, in the first two iterations of the chorus, which are separated by a verse, we can observe gestural transformation. The first chorus features an effected A aeolian 1–7–2 cyclical line (this also serves as introductory material) which is then imitated in an explicit bass layer. In (constricted) melodic shape, (slow) speed and (fuzz-heavy) timbre we are firmly in the stylistic realm of ‘sludge’. The loose rhythmic relationship between melodic-harmonic parts and the kit, which eschews an obvious backbeat, supports this signification and the motional qualities specified by the passage. Chorus two, by comparison, specifies a markedly different energy and motional shape. Notice first, the increased speed the track now advances at. Secondly, and this is related to the tempo shift, the rhythmic backdrop is now perceivably tighter (but by no means metronomic) and more concentrated, with the kit now settled into an explicit backbeat pattern. Thirdly, things have been, to a limited degree, timbrally cleaned up. Particularly striking, however, is the inclusion of a contrapuntal melodic overlay. Against a bass that reaches upwards from scale degree 7 to 1, we hear a treble profile that descends in semitonal steps from Db to Bb. (In addition to motional opposition, then, there is also modal tension. To align it with the bass, the figure can be understood as an A aeolian #3, 3, 2, b2; indeed, there is little to be gained from modally re-contextualising it). The rhythmic-melodic variation of this line is also noteworthy and contributes to affordances of gestural fragmentation.

What movements are specified here? To meet the descriptive demands such as question makes, recourse to phenomenological language, even if vernacular, is necessary. ‘Awkward’ is a general descriptor that captures an aspect of the kinetic characteristics of the two choruses.
‘Languid’ might be assigned to the energy of chorus 1 and ‘angular’ and ‘twisting’ have some relation to the contrapuntal tensions presented in chorus 2. The use of phenomenological theory is not strictly necessary, though as I have argued, it can be very worthwhile. Sheets-Johnstone, for instance, offers a basic four-part understanding of motional dynamics – emphasising the feeling of movement – that enables a more nuanced parsing and comparison of the gestures afforded here. The first part, ‘tensional’, relates to the effort involved in a movement sequence. Consider the (for many of us) familiar act of kicking a football, for instance. The effort required to kick the ball five yards to a teammate is different from that needed to pass to a player standing forty yards away. The strength with which you kick a football also relates to the distribution of muscular effort across the body, with long-distance passes involving increased tension in the arms and torso as well as the legs and feet. ‘Linear’, the directional contour traced by a movement, is the second component of Sheets-Johnstone’s motion dynamics. If we think again of the footballer in action, two obvious lines can be sketched: the first follows the relative verticality of the player’s positioning, whereas the second follows the swing of the footballer’s leg, first back and then forward. Force and contour relate to the ‘areal’ – or ‘amplitudinal’ quality of a body in motion. In Sheets-Johnstone’s description we see that the ‘areal design’ of the body in motion and the ‘areal pattern’ outlined by a movement concern size and shape:

In quite general terms, the areal design of a moving body may be anywhere from constricted to expansive, its shape at the one extreme being small and inwardly oriented, at the other extreme being large and outwardly oriented. Similarly, the areal pattern of a

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movement may be generally described as anywhere from intensive to extensive, the spatial amplitude of the movement itself being anywhere from small to large. When we are contrite, we tend to shrink in size and stay put, the areal design of our body being small and the areal pattern of any movement we might make being equally small. In contrast, when we run down the street with open arms to greet someone, the areal design of our body is expansive, the areal pattern of our movement is extensive.\(^{35}\)

The ‘projectional’ quality of a movement is Sheets-Johnstone’s fourth concern. The *sustained* motion of the long-distance pass is the kinetic manifestation of the tensional and areal qualities of the action. Equally, the *abrupt* projectional quality of the short pass is related to its weak tensional quality, and small and confined areal design and patterning. But as we see in Table 1 below, which details the gestural affordances of the first two choruses of ‘Body War’, low-effort movements are not necessarily abrupt and, equally, sustained movements are not always strong (see Table 2 for phenomenological treatment of gestural affordances, discussed above, of ‘Eyeless’, ‘Goodnight and Go’, ‘Gravity’ and ‘New Rules’).

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Table 1. ‘Body War’, analysis of gestural specifications using Sheets-Johnstone’s list of kinetic qualities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectional Unit</th>
<th>Kinetic qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chorus 1 (0:10–0:32)</td>
<td>Tensional: Lethargic somatic comportment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Verticality (though legs and upper body slightly collapsed); pendulum contour; central, upright starting point, then backwards bodily lean followed by forward swing on to toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Relatively constricted areal design (arms hanging by side, one foot planted in front of the other for balance); relatively expansive areal patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projectional: Sustained movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus 2 (1:16–1:45)</td>
<td>Tensional: High degree of muscular tension related to specification of upper-body contortion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Composite lines resulting from movements of arms and torso.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Expanded areal design (with arms extended); inwardly oriented areal patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projectional: Abrupt, fragmentary movements corresponding with the treble line and more active bass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verses of ‘Body War’, by contrast, are more ‘ballistic’ in quality with sharp, overdriven chordal stabs and assertive four to the floor kick patterns. The vocalist conforms to this kinetic-timbral backdrop with short bursts that each specify the momentary (abdominal) tension, horizontal linear profile and outward areal patterning that results from a rapid outward breath. Affective authentication arises from the listener being invited not only to appropriate, to become attuned to, the sound world’s gestural profile but also its corresponding attitudinal stance; a stance that is at once subjective, but also, potentially, perceived as shared. This points to embodied engagement, then, as the basis for links between authenticating experiences of appropriation – here concentrated through the notion of entrainment – and intersubjective, (sub)cultural belonging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Sectional Unit</th>
<th>Kinetic qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Eyeless’</td>
<td>Section ‘D’ riff</td>
<td>Tensional: Muscular relaxation followed by acute tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Vertical line traceable in starting position; concave downward curve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Constricted areal design for most part, with momentary expansion at the end of sequence; expansive areal patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projectonal: Sustained for most part with abrupt close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Goodnight and Go’</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Tensional: Increase in tension at close of gestural sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Verticality; horizontal line across body tracing opening out of body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Constricted and then expansive areal design; expansive, outward areal patterning in latter part of motional sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projectonal: Sustained for most part, with an abrupt, momentary motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Gravity’</td>
<td>Episodic marker</td>
<td>Tensional: Increasing tension as the gesture unfolds (relating to tightening of torso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Verticality (lifting of shoulders); outward profile linked to extension of the torso.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Constricted areal design; constricted areal patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projectonal: Sustained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘New Rules’</td>
<td>Episodic marker</td>
<td>Tensional: Shifting intensity, from relatively strong (stuttering motions and attempt at re-orientation) to more relaxed (balance, verticality restored)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linear: Off-centre verticality followed by centred verticality; oscillation between hesitation (backward pull) and propulsion (forward profile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Areal: Relatively expansive areal design; expansive areal patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Projectonal: Stuttering, fragmentary, weak then sustained and assured.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, to make sense of authenticating embodied engagements, and the interpretations they lead to, two vital relations need to be considered. The first is familiar, and concerns the dynamic, interactional relation between listener and text. I have established a composite theoretic
foundation for this, drawing on: Clarke’s ecological view of perception-action mutualism; DeNora’s and Middleton’s understanding of ‘appropriation’; embodied ‘entrainment’, as discussed by Trost et al.; Lemans’, and others’, studies of gestural response; and, to a lesser degree up to this point, phenomenological understandings of ‘intentionality’. What distinguishes my exploration of embodied interaction is that my primary concern is not how listeners imitate or corporeally perceive the expressive gestures of musicians; rather, I am interested in how listeners might (inter)subjectively embody aspects of musical and sound design. This, of course, relates to my choice of examples, where gestural affordances are not always obviously related to the specification of instrumental performance. A basic summary of my own way of understanding this embodied, interactive process will be helpful at this point. I have come to understand gestural interaction as an intentional process within which, in the act of listening, the perceiver ascribes corporeal sequences – ‘kinetic melodies’ – to sound. Embodied listening of this kind is active and exploratory, not purely imitative, and gives rise to interpretive insight. Kinetic melody is a descriptor of functional bodily motion that originates in the neuropsychology of Aleksandr Luria, but has been taken up in phenomenological writing and is useful here. Kinetic melodies are patterns of movement inscribed over time that enable effective and expressive comportment. Sheets-Johnstone, connecting ‘kinetic melodies’ with a Husserlian intentionality, notes that they ‘constitute the basic, vast, and potentially ever-expandable repertoire of ‘I cans’ permeating human life: walking, speaking, reaching, hugging, throwing, carrying, opening, closing, brushing, running, wiping, leaping, pulling, and pushing’. They are kinetic dynamics that vary in complexity and intricacy – think of the degrees of complexity between, for instance, picking up a guitar, playing a chord on the guitar, and playing a virtuosic solo while running around a stage. Smooth kinetic melodies are fluid, coordinated sequences of motion that unfold seemingly without the need for ‘conscious’ awareness. In this, they are comparable to Shaun Gallagher’s ‘body schema’, which is

described as, ‘a system of sensory-motor functions that operate below the level of self-referential intentionality. It involves a set of tacit performances – preconscious, subpersonal processes that play a dynamic role in governing posture and movement’.38 What makes ‘kinetic melodies’ appealing to phenomenologists, however, is an emphasis on felt kinetic dynamic, the retention of a phenomenological awareness of the body that ‘accompanies all movement and cognitive activity’.39

Luria observed (as Gallagher does in his more recent studies) ways in which kinetic melodies can be (pathologically) disrupted. My focus is on musical entrainment and the analytic examples above detail musical affordances of both smooth (‘Gravity’, ‘Goodnight and Go’) and disrupted kinetic melodies (‘New Rules’, and ‘Body War’). I argue that authentication can arise when the absorbed listener experiences coordinated, fluid involvement with sound, but also when kinetic melody is disrupted and entrainment is challenged. The specification of kinetic disruption can, for instance, force the (inter)subjective body more acutely into view. In phenomenological terms, this involves a heightened awareness of the tensional, areal, projectional, and linear qualities of movement. Hermeneutically speaking, the foregrounding of the listening body represents an advanced degree of appropriation that shapes the listener’s (inter)subjective interpretation of a track’s meaning(s). I submit that when the listening body becomes phenomenologically apparent, an authenticating correspondence between music and self is more likely to be established.

Another possible consequence is that the listening body surfaces as an object of attention. That is, the body enacting subjectively and (sub)culturally recognizable kinetic melodies attracts reflexive response. Gallagher understands this in terms of ‘body image’, noting three forms of ‘intentional contents’: ‘body percept’, which refers to the ‘subject’s perceptual experience of his/her own body’; the individual’s conceptual understanding of the body, labelled ‘body concept’; and, ‘body affect’, the ‘subject’s emotional attitudinal toward his/her own body’.40 Body percept is

39 Ibid., p. 27.
40 Ibid., p. 25.
hinted at in all of the textual analyses featured above – this may be put down to the phenomenologically-oriented analytic approach employed; nonetheless, I maintain that the perception of a body in motion is an aspect of experience (particularly when entrainment is challenged). While it is less straightforward to relate musical affordance to body concept and body affect, it is reasonable to assume that (inter)subjective and (sub)cultural gestural affordances also ground self-referential affective responses. This points to another form of authenticating appropriation, where musical experience invites the listener to pass judgement on an embodied self. Surely, this is part of the significance of popular music – from the empowered electronic pop of recent artists including Dua Lipa and Sigrid to nu-metal and grunge, where the self-referentiality embodied by its pioneers, including Jonathon Davies and Kurt Cobain, is appropriated – to younger listeners. And, potentially, older ones too; to Joseph Kotarba’s\textsuperscript{41} list of authentic selves (see 1.1), a reflexive ‘embodied self’ may be added.

To close this section, I come full circle and return to movement and affect, though this time emphasising their simultaneity. This second key relation recognizes, more fundamentally, the mutualism of listeners’ affective\textsuperscript{42} connection with music and listeners’ kinetic attunement to music. In considering this relation, we gain insight into the potential of music to afford a range of felt qualities and how, more generally, authentication can be understood as arising from a dynamic experiential whole. Sheets-Johnstone understands this gestalt as a congruency between emotion and motion where ‘the two modes of experience happen at once’\textsuperscript{43} on the basis of shared dynamic profiles. Recall the analytic-interpretive readings sketched above, noting: the staccato flow of movement of episodic markers in ‘New Rules’ and how this dynamic also underpins affective


\textsuperscript{42} It is necessary to maintain some distinction between affect, broadly understood, and emotion. I take Antonio Damasio’s analytic separation of ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion’, as they relate to consciousness, as instructive: ‘For the purpose of investigating these phenomena, I separate three stages of processing along a continuum: a state of emotion, which can be triggered and executed nonconsciously; a state of feeling, which can be represented nonconsciously; and a state of feeling made conscious, i.e., known to the organism having both emotion and feeling’. Damasio, The Feeling of What Happens, p. 37.

affordances of hesitation and resistance; accumulative, but frequently stifled, ‘release’ in ‘Eyeless’; and the affordance of a restless and conflicted neuromuscular attitude in ‘Body War’. There is a reciprocal component to this mutualism that is empirically well-established. In simplified terms, affect informs, can lead to, movement and movement can be generative of affective response. Despite this relation, affect and motion are phenomenologically separable. That is, we can experience a felt affective sense without enacting (or imagining) a corresponding movement. Equally we can become kinetically engaged without experiencing emotion(s). Authentication, then, can be experienced as affective and/or kinetic. Kinetic entrainment can provide access to, or serve as a manifestation of, authenticating affective involvement and affective attunement can give rise to the motional appropriation of sound – the experience, and expression, of self in motion.
2.6 Phenomenological Perspectives III: Ownership and Agency in an Enduring Present

In the final analytical section of Part Two, I prioritise a vital component of authenticity that has up to this point only been considered implicitly or in passing: temporality. It is not only social¹, philosophical², and psychological³ literature on authenticity that points me to this, but also phenomenological⁴ theory, which posits temporality and embodiment as ‘equiprimordial⁵ and temporality as vital to lived experience. And perceptual sense-making too – we are able to understand life as it unfolds, the basic argument goes, because we process what is presently happening in relation to what has already happened and what may happen. In simplified terms, we track and trace, and adapt to, change in meaningful ways. Antonio Damasio, relating consciousness and self-understanding, introduces the ‘autobiographical self’, a concept that relies on this temporal dynamic:

The autobiographical self is based on autobiographical memory which is constituted by implicit memories of multiple instances of individual experience of the past and of the anticipated future. The invariant aspects of an individual’s biography form the basis for autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory grows continuously with life experience but can be partly remodelled to reflect new experiences.⁶

Just before this, Damasio uses music as an example of enduring temporal experience. This is unsurprising as music is uniquely capable of affording temporal attunement. It is the temporal

³ Stern, Forms of Vitality; Damasio, The Feeling of What Happens.
⁵ Anton, Selfhood and Authenticity, p. 115.
dynamic sketched above that it is the basis for authenticating experiences of absorption, of being consumed and swept along by music. Listeners’ temporal involvements are also the basis for the personal and social appropriation of songs, of experiencing a sense of ownership of, and agency within, sonic-narrative situations. If listener authentication, as Allan Moore defines it, is based on correspondences between music and life experience, understanding the relations between the temporal characteristics of music and those of everyday experience is vital. ‘Sonic-narrative situations’, to return my earlier use of this phrase, can be understood, at a basic level, as pointing to the way listeners perceive sequences of sonic events as specifying unfolding narratives. Beyond this, it relates to temporal connections between musical and (inter)subjective trajectories that listeners themselves establish and experience in the act of perception. To explore this, I bring together temporal experience and authentication in the analysis of music examples using, first, Husserl’s model of ‘time-consciousness’, as recently summarised and applied by Shaun Gallagher, and, later on, Daniel Stern’s ‘dynamic forms of vitality’.

Gallagher posits temporality as a fundamental component of both gestural and ‘cognitive’ activity, noting that bodily movements and phases of consciousness unfold within, and themselves establish, ‘temporal flow-structures’. These can be hidden from view and formed pre-reflectively, though occasionally we are simultaneously aware of our part in unfolding thought and movement. An example of this would be an instrumental performer engrossed in a particularly difficult passage; in addition to being corporeally aware of the technical demands of the section they are playing, they are also motivated by their progress through it and sense relief as the end draws near. For the performer, ‘that section’ is that phenomenological-temporal dynamic and it is characterised by a particular, in Roman Ingarden’s terms, ‘temporal colouring’. How might this work in

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9 Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*.
11 Stern, *Forms of Vitality*.
listening? Recall the interpretive analysis of ‘Eyeless’ presented above (see 2.3). The gestural understanding of the section ‘D’ riff relies on an awareness of a temporal-kinetic structure that unfolds in both ‘musical time’ (i.e. one bar at approximately 102 bpm) and in ‘real time’ (approximately 1.7 seconds). In this case, it is the correlation of these temporal flow-structures that solidifies the authenticating kinetic-affective dynamic afforded.

In addition to remedying the shortcomings of other sensory-feedback models, Gallagher views Husserl’s alternative as phenomenologically advantageous, as describing more effectively how experiences unfold in a continuous and unified way. Gallagher’s key move is to illuminate a relation between his concepts of ‘ownership’ and ‘agency’ with components of Husserl’s time-consciousness model (see figure 20). First, ‘ownership’ is attached to ‘protention’. Ownership, as we have seen, refers to a subject’s sense of being the source of movement and/or thought; in other words, that I am involved. Retention – ‘r’ in the figure 20 below – refers to a perceptual ability to retain an embodied and/or ‘cognitive’ impression of a past event. In Husserl’s model, the ‘past’ is the ‘just past’, but a synthesis of Husserl’s model of time-conscious with Damasio’s ‘autobiographical self’ – and broad philosophical conceptions of the centred, narrative self¹⁴ – suggests the model can be applied more widely. In the analyses below I refer primarily to local temporal flow-structures, but as the likes of Tia DeNora¹⁵ have argued, music is used to solidify and direct understandings of identity past, present and future. Gallagher takes the perception of melody as exemplary; listeners think of a series of musical events (notes) as a unified, enduring sequence, because they retain a sense of what has come before and relate that sense to events (‘p’, meaning ‘primal impression, in the illustration) happening ‘now’. The same temporal mechanism underlies the perception of chordal sequences as ‘progressions’. As well as pitch-based events, retentioning enables the meaningful perception of alterations in sound design, as in the high to low frequency shift – a trick typically achieved using high-pass and low-pass filters – presented in

¹⁴ See Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity; Guignon, On Being Authentic.
¹⁵ DeNora, ‘Music and Self-Identity’. 
the first verse of Fickle Friends’ ‘Glue’ (0:04–0:27). Affordances of musical ownership, I argue, are underpinned by this process of integration.

‘Agency’, the individual’s sense of directing movement and/or thought, is connected to ‘protention’ (‘p’ in figure 20). Both agency and protention are about *anticipation*; that is, they have to do with future potentialities. Whereas retentioning concerns the act of connecting past and present, protentioning is the act of formulating, from this, an anticipatory impression of what may happen next. In the case of ‘Glue’ (mentioned above in relation to retention), the protentional mechanism enables the listener to actively anticipate, and become attuned to, the opening out of frequency and texture that marks the transition from the verse to the chorus (0:27–0:53). In Gallagher’s explanation, the protentional mechanism underlies a ‘double intentionality’ involving ownership and agency:

My experience of a passage of a melody is at the same time a non-observational, pre-reflective awareness of my own flowing experience. This retentional self-awareness delivers a sense that this thinking process is *mine* – that I am the one who is listening to the melody or uttering the sentence. Without meaning to suggest any other kind of symmetry, is there not something like a double intentionality involved in protention as well? That is, my anticipatory sense of the next note of the melody, or of where the sentence is heading, or that I will continue to think, is also, implicitly, an anticipatory sense that these will be experiences *for me*, or that I will the one listening, speaking, or thinking. In effect, protention also has what Husserl calls a longitudinal aspect – it involves a projective sense, not only of what is about to happen, but what I am about to do or experience.16

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Gallagher’s double intentionality, then, relates directly to the view of authenticating musical engagement – that I am actively involved – established thus far in this thesis. To offer further thoughts on the connection between temporal experience and authentication, it is necessary to apply Husserl’s model to some listenings.

Figure 20. ‘King’ melody mapped onto Husserl’s model of time-consciousness\(^\text{17}\)

Retention and protention can be perceived to be played out musically. That is, parts can project retentional and protentional characteristics. Mara Carlyle’s ‘King’, for instance, can be analytically bifurcated according to these terms. The 1–5 cadential bass figure that repeats throughout is regressive; tonally, it sustains a D centre, but temporally, while specifying an upbeat and downbeat, it seems to simply recall what has come before. It serves to suspend time, rather than push it forward, and if an anticipatory sense is to be ascribed (or afforded), it is brief, hermetic, and sequentially limited. While the bass figure functions as, and in, a retentional continuum, harmonic and upper melodic layers, most notably the main vocal line, are anticipatory. In general

\(^{17}\text{This design is taken from Gallagher’s illustration of Husserlian time-consciousness. Gallagher, } \textit{How the Body Shapes the Mind}, \text{ p. 191.}\)
terms, the melody is developmental and exploratory. Melodic saturation, which a comparison of
the track’s first two verses reveals (see example 5), contributes to a sense of increasing intensity
and expressive spontaneity.

Example 5. Sketch of ‘King’ verse melodies

The design and articulation of melody is also protentional. Stepwise lines specify forward
directionality as too do Carlyle’s intervallic slides (notably connecting scale degrees 1 and 3, and 3
and 7 in the opening verses). Global registral expansion, textural intensification, and timbral
variation as well as local rhythmic displacement (the second phrase of verse 2 is an early instance
of this – see annotations in the sketch below) add to the specification of an unfolding situation.

However, the usefulness of Husserl’s model lies not in its ability to describe musical
behaviours – to do so is to ascribe an intentional consciousness to ‘the music itself’ – but rather in
the explanation it offers for how we make sense of musical events. In any case, understanding
musical events as regressive or anticipatory is a result of temporal flow-structures established and
experienced by the engaged, retentioning and protentioning, listener. These mechanisms also
enable the listener to establish meaningful wholes from tracks that lack obvious structural and narrative relations. Take, for instance, Mara Carlyle’s ‘How It Felt To Kiss You’, where Carlyle abandons conventional song form and lyric and instead presents emergent sound. And experience – ‘How It Felt To Kiss You’ is itself a phenomenological essay, an attempt to describe, albeit in sound, an experiential sequence. The track’s organic and accumulative designs resist conventional sectional descriptors (‘verse’, ‘chorus’, etc.) and, thus, invite division by alternative means. In line with the terminology of time-consciousness, I choose to analytically separate ‘How It Felt To Kiss You’ according to phases. Retention and protention enable us to experience these phases as related in and across time. Using ‘phases’, rather than ‘sections’ or ‘passages’, foregrounds phenomenological-temporal dynamics and enables the parsing of textural form. Six global phases can be identified across which a textural arc is realised. Phase 1 (0:00–0:10) presents a singular sound-source that is paramusically referential (I hear it as a purring cat). Phase 2 runs from 0:10–1:07 and involves a growing collection of sustained string lines that individually surface and recede, but together specify an accumulating whole. While emergent lower layers provide brief moments of melodic direction and arrival, the phase is tonally unanchored and temporally indeterminate (the suspension of time is the general effect). The addition of a fluttering synthetic overlay at 1:07, which is fully audible by 1:26, marks a third phase. It is in Phase 4, from 1:45–3:21, that a rhythmically and melodically energised bass specifies a regular pulse and, in doing so, dramatically alters the temporal flow-structure of the track. Whereas before the passing of time was previously obscured, it is now explicit. Put otherwise, now the perceptual reality is that of living through an unfolding event, rather than in a moment. Elsewhere, ascending overlays complete melodic, rhythmic, and textural saturation and contribute to a climactic, collective dynamic swell that peaks at 3:00. Just prior to this, singular sonic swells specify surges of feeling that cut through surrounding affective content. A semiquaver pedal tone in the bass at 3:21 disrupts the momentous temporal and affective flow of Phase 4 and precedes a relatively abrupt falling away of lower registers. By 3:47 the track returns to the textural profile projected in the early stages of Phase 2
and time, once again, seems to be standing still. All that remains at 4:14 is the singular paramusical sound-source from Phase 1; thus, the textual-dynamic arc is completed.

While the track title suggests we are hearing a representation of a past temporal-affective event, to listen to the track is to become involved in an enduring present. I mean this in two ways. First, authentication can arise from a sense that I am continuing, by affectively reifying, a past situation: I am enabling the situation to endure. Ownership and retention are the key concepts here. Secondly, authentication can result from a sense that I am not only attuned to a temporal flow, but that I am now extending it and, intentionally, determining its affective profile. I am, to recall theoretic terms, a protentioning agent – I am actively involved in a situation that is unfolding ‘now’ and being established in (my) real-time. Authentication, then, not only arises from the perception of correlations between music and life experience, whether real or imaginary, but from the way in which music unfolds temporally in, and in relation to, affective experience. There is a unification and integration of sound, experience, and self here that time-consciousness explains. 

Husserl’s model also provides an explanation for the way in which in the act of perceiving (sonic) events, affectivities, and subjectivities are given narrative trajectories. Timothy Rice has argued that music gives symbolic and affective shape to pre-existing or emergent identities18; here, I propose a slightly differently understanding, instead arguing for an interactive view of listener-text relations within which music, as perceived, both affords and is ascribed affective and temporal identity and shape.

To conclude this discussion of time-consciousness, I want to briefly explore a few other ways in which its temporal mechanisms can be said to underpin authentication. My first claim is that protention is the basis for affirming imaginative acts. In proposing this, I steer the discussion in the direction of established studies of music and identity that emphasise imaginative engagement. Simon Frith’s contribution, to which I have already alluded (see 1.1), is especially

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noteworthy. For Frith, ‘identity is always already an ideal, what we would like to be not what we are’.\(^{19}\) It is one thing to state that music is uniquely capable of affording an engagement with future selves, but it is another thing to specify how. Husserl’s mechanisms provide one possible explanation. First, protentioning not only enables intentional musical anticipation, but also an imaginative involvement in potential trajectories. In more concrete terms, musical engagement invites listeners to not only become affectively engaged in the present but also to imagine themselves outside – *ahead* – of the current moment.\(^{20}\) Another way of putting it is that protentioning enables a temporal extension of self, echoing – albeit in retrograde form – Ulric Neisser’s seminal narrativist view. Neisser’s ‘temporally-extended self’\(^{21}\) relates to the recognition of remembered, past selves while here I am pointing to the experience of future identities. But the process is not one-way, not only of looking forward. Instead, I think of the process as a continuous back and forth, a process of retention and protention in which we successively step outside of and then return to the present. But the experience affords simultaneity and unity as well as fluidity and, as a result, future and present are difficult to distinguish. Indeed the ‘now’ and ‘what could be’ are vitally related: without retention, experiences of self in musical encounters would lack familiarity, anchorage, and centredness; and without protention, experiences would lack a sense of possibility and agency (and, as such, would, I suspect, become rather stultifying). This sounds abstract and speculative, but in reality it is rooted in affect. Typically, this manifests in experiences of energy, of excitement, of vitality, invigoration, and empowerment. ‘Empowerment’ itself points to a relation between affordances of corporeal (being ‘strengthened’) and emotional agency (including


\(^{20}\) The following passage from the opening of Han Kang’s novel *The White Book* is called to mind here: ‘Each moment is a leap forwards from the brink of an invisible cliff, where time’s keen edges are constantly renewed. We lift our foot from the solid ground of all our life lived thus far, and take that perilous step out into the empty air. Not because we claim any particular courage, but because there is no other way’. King’s focus is more general, of course, but this could be applied to imaginative musical experiences. However, I think music makes looking forward a less perilous and less empty act; rather, music invites a positive engagement with subjective potentialities. Han Kang, *The White Book* (London: Portobello Books, 2017): p. 7.

feeling restored and resolved, and of having a new emotional depth and range revealed. Higgins captures when she writes ‘in listening to music, we feel that our powers are attuned’.

But for how long can this last? Is there a temporal limit to such experience (and its impact)? It is to these questions that Keith Negus and Patria Velásquez turn in their attempt to interrogate, expand, and offer a ‘more nuanced’ view of music-identity relations. For them, musical experience is temporally bounded and impermanent and it is music’s temporality ‘that renders links to the identity of a person, collectivity and specific time and place in an extremely tentative way’. The alternative to understanding musical experience as temporary, they assert, is to view identity and belonging – in accordance with postmodern conceptions antagonistic to the broadly integrative, centred, narrativist view I favour – as transient. Later we read: ‘The temporality of music may actually be one of the characteristics which does not so much allow an affirmation or construction of identity as a retreat from the social categories with which our sense of self must be negotiated’. Thus, the imaginative affordances of possibility, potential, and agency promoted by Negus and Velásquez are (potentially) of a more detached, transcendent kind than those emphasised in my analyses. Yet, to accept music as impermanent is to run the risk of disconnecting musical experience from everyday life and, as such, to limit the consequences for action as well as self-understanding of our musical interactions. Is it the case that we forget, as it were, the potentialities disclosed in listening experiences? Higgins offers a philosophical counter to such a view, and lists capabilities revealed through musical retentioning and protentioning that can endure. These include the ability to deal with tension in everyday life as we deal with it in musical experience, as processual, and as an enduring process that can itself be a source of satisfaction. Next, Higgins points to the ‘divided attention’ – ‘the intelligent apprehension of a flux of discrete

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22 Kathleen Higgins understands this to be an aspect of music’s capacity to exert ethical influence. See Higgins, The Music of Our Lives, p. 122.
23 Ibid., p. 118.
25 Ibid., p. 134.
26 Ibid., p. 143.
27 Ibid.
elements in continuously changing tensions with one another\textsuperscript{28} – music perception requires and, in doing so, hints at a connection between the temporality of musical experience and ethical life. Later, Higgins directly confronts temporal experience and urges that everyday interactions should be approached with the same sensitivity to temporal uniqueness that is employed and experienced in listening. Thus, aspects of agency and capability disclosed in the ‘unique now\textsuperscript{29} of listening can endure after the music stops playing.

Time-consciousness explains how individuals intentionally perceive unfolding events – corporeal and cognitive – as unified, connected, and enduring. Husserl’s model can also be extended to provide support for narrativist, or ‘autobiographical’, conceptions of the self. I have argued that the mechanisms of retention and protention underlie authenticating experiences of musical ownership and agency. By contrast, Stern’s ‘dynamic forms of vitality\textsuperscript{30} are affective-temporal properties that emerge within, and from, the gestalt flow of lived experience. Stern himself establishes a connection between forms of vitality and authenticity, though authenticity in the context of his work relates to the verisimilitude communicated in face-to-face interactions with others. How do forms of vitality relate to musical authentication? Most importantly, because affordances of vitality forms frequently correspond to experiences of (self-)agency of the kind discussed above in relation to protention (where empowerment, invigoration, and attunement are exemplary). To see how dynamic forms of vitality manifest in musical experience it will be necessary to arrive first at a working definition. Stern himself is careful to distinguish dynamic forms of vitality from other ‘content’ including emotions on the basis that vitality forms are felt: Stern writes, ‘only when the contents are yoked to arousal do they take on a dynamic form of vitality’.\textsuperscript{31} This is, of course, not the whole story because emotions can take affective form. Rather,

\textsuperscript{28} Higgins, \textit{The Music of Our Lives}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 171.
\textsuperscript{30} Stern has elsewhere referred to this in other terms – including ‘vitality affects’, ‘vitality affect contours’, and ‘vitality contours’ – though he argues that changes in terminology should not be read as relating to significant conceptual differences. Stern, \textit{Forms of Vitality}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 23.
emotions must take on the temporal and intensive dynamic of forms of vitality if they are to find full phenomenological expression but this does not mean that the temporal and intensive dynamic that shapes the experience of that emotion is solely a property of that emotion. Stern uses the example of anger to clarify the situation: ‘anger can ‘explode’, ‘ooze out’, ‘sneak up’, or be ‘cold’. These four vitality forms do not belong to anger alone. Most often we feel the amalgam of a type of emotion plus a vitality form as if they were one event, even though they result from the coupling of separate phenomena that use different neural pathways’.32 Prior to this, Stern invites his readers to consider a list of words that describe the temporal-affective dynamic of vitality forms, which includes: exploding, swelling, forceful, drawn out, rushing, relaxing, fluttering, tense, surging, bursting, disappearing, powerful, languorous, effortful, gentle, swinging, fleeting, accelerating, fading, easy, tentative, tightly. As Stern notes, these do not describe emotions, and while they point to bodily feelings, nor are they sensations in the strictest sense because they lack a modality; instead, these words relate to flow patterns and changes in intensity (e.g. ‘the heat is slowly rising’; ‘the song is gradually building in intensity’) that vitality forms phenomenologically specify. While they share some dynamic components with gesture, namely projection and tension, vitality forms are not physical bodily movements. In Stern’s words, they ‘fall between the cracks. They are the felt experience of force – in movement – with a temporal contour, and a sense of aliveness, of going somewhere’.33 It is precisely music’s affordance of this sense of ‘going somewhere’, of trajectory and energy that I want now to explore.

Rhythm is a primary site of musical energy, and shifts in perceived intensity and arousal level frequently correspond with rhythmic developments. Strategies abound and modifications can occur locally – i.e. the subdivision of the beat, the length of a measure – and at more global levels, including hypermetric and sectional groupings. I want to first point to affective interactions with that most fundamental temporal component: pulse. Typically, recorded popular songs establish

32 Ibid., p. 28.
33 Ibid., p. 8.
and adhere to a consistent, phenomenologically apparent pulse stream. However, it is also possible for songs to advance according to multiple pulse streams; in such cases, the ‘primary pulse’ – what Brad Osborn understands as the ‘temporal level at which a listener’s or performer’s primary kinesthetic involvement (e.g. dancing, foot tapping) with a groove occurs’\textsuperscript{34} – can be disrupted. This strategy has a range of possible phenomenological affordances, but most notably it demands a re-entrainment that relies on tensional, kinetic, and/or affective adjustment. When the listener becomes attuned to a new pulse stream that specifies an increased tempo, an increased level of energy and arousal is typically afforded. With this, I argue, comes the potential for the affordance of (protentional) agency.

Maggie Rogers’ ‘On + Off’ presents an example of the affective use of multiple pulse streams. While not temporally explicit, the opening sample figure seems to accent a crotchet primary pulse at 130bpm. This is supported by a bass layer that outlines an E ionian IV–I at one chord per two bars with a momentary transition to V on beat 8. The entrance of a half-time backbeat kit at 0:14 marks a dramatic shift in temporal feel, and instead invites a primary pulse count of 65bpm, rendering the temporal profile of the sample figure – which remains present – secondary (or, rather, we are invited to feel this as a ‘fluttering’\textsuperscript{35} embellishment of the main pulse). With this, the listener is also required to adjust to a new harmonic pace and (two bar) phrasal grouping. The track’s harmonic profile is also slightly altered by this shift with the bass movement to scale degree 5 now functioning as an anticipatory quaver upbeat to I rather than as a one beat shift to V and, thus, like the opening sample, becomes an embellishment. From Stern’s list of adjectives, ‘drawn out’, ‘pulling’, ‘floating’ and ‘languorous’, partly capture the effect – and affect – of this temporal change.

While remaining settled from 0:14, an explosive, ‘surging’, ‘powerful’, ‘pushing’, ‘accelerating’, shift in feel occurs at 2:04, where a 130bpm primary pulse stream is once again

\textsuperscript{34} Osborn, ‘Beats That Commute’, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{35} I use inverted commas here, and elsewhere, to signify that the descriptor is drawn from Stern’s list of dynamic terms.
foregrounded. On this occasion, it is a modification in the beat layer that is the primary specifier of temporal modulation. Initially, the new kit pattern suggests a rhythmically energised, but momentary, displacement of the established 65bpm backbeat pattern. However, subsequent repetitions suggest that what are in fact hearing, and now attuned to, a regular backbeat pattern at 130bpm. Thus, snare hits are not experienced as ‘off beat’, but as accents on (a new) beat two. In figure 21 this change is conceived of as a temporal transformation that experientially unfolds in momentary phases that reveal a unified, overarching time line. In terms of authentication, the listener is invited to experience a changing – and then changed – temporal-corporeal self.

Figure 21. ‘On + Off’ temporal transformation as unified, unfolding experience
This shift in intensity is not a down to the backbeat pattern alone, and is marked also by a textural drop (of the opening sample and other atmospheric sounds), which seems to add a sense of concentration to the energy specified, and the addition of a rhythmically and spatially active percussion layer that, in sound and function, is reminiscent of a hi-hat. While the track quickly re-establishes a 65bpm primary pulse, harmonic (diatonic E ionian I–II–IV–V loops at one chord per bar) and textural ‘swells’ afford a renewed sense of energy, force, and power – empowerment – in the latter stages of the track. The overall effect is that ‘On + Off’ never fully settles and, as such, the track retains a sense of potential for temporal-affective change that itself affords vitality. The perception of two pulses, potentially as simultaneous, also affords exploratory, intentional temporal involvement: in basic terms, listeners are invited to posit, and experience, themselves in the track as it unfolds.

A related temporal strategy is deployed in Sigrid’s ‘Don’t Kill My Vibe’ where it contributes to an attitude and vitality critically recognized as ‘empowered’. (Andrew Hannah’s36 review for online magazine The Line of Best Fit is exemplary. Hannah first declares that ‘Don’t Kill My Vibe’ represents ‘empowerment at its best’ and then later writes of Sigrid’s performances as ‘life-affirming’.) In ‘Don’t Kill My Vibe’ the double-time temporal shift occurs in the bridge and, unlike ‘On + Off’, is abrupt and unanticipated. The renewed vitality and acceleration afforded by this change actively supports a defiant and youthful lyrical stance (‘say I’m young, I don’t care, I won’t quit no no no huh!’). The reason why this may be heard as a shift in primary (crotchet) pulse, and not just a quaver subdivision is that the sound-source (synchronized group hand claps) driving the change specifies, and affords, (primary) kinesthetic activity and entrainment. With affordances of arousal and corporeal action, comes an involving and empowering sense of collective strength and attunement – belonging – of the kind DeNora (see 2.5) describes as ‘embodied security’. In this corporeal, collective context, the lyric can be read as an outwardly - and socially -oriented directive.

While the pulse shift sonically and affectively concedes to the original primary pulse, some sense of the increased vitality remains, and as the handclaps return – in a receded proxemic location – ‘Don’t Kill My Vibe’, like ‘On + Off’, offers concurrent temporal energies.

Vitality contours are also afforded by other developments in the track, notably in timbre. The striking manipulation of the voice contributes to the specification of increasing force, power, effort, and ‘push’. Distortion is the means through which the voice is manipulated and while such manipulation presents itself as synthetic in the latter stages of the track, the specification of ‘natural’ embodied effort is retained (live recordings evidence Sigrid’s ‘natural’ timbral range). Vocal overdrive is initially hinted in the first chorus (0:42 on the word ‘kill’) where increased strain results in a momentary creak in tone. At this stage this tonal inflection sounds like a natural result of the physical tightening of the neck and throat, though it is likely that some production ‘cartooning’ – ‘the deliberate exaggeration of a single characteristic of a recording’ – is already taking place. It is worth noting that the large tom sounds present in chorus one are also distorted – and loud, as a result of compression and reverberation – and thus support vocal intensification. Chorus two presents further intensification, this time through the doubling and increased distortion of the vocal lead-in ‘I try to play it nice but’ (1:28–1:30) which, along with increased effort and force, specifies an (illusory) surge in volume. On this occasion, vocal tone is also supported by an imposing, fuzzed bass synth. Vocal distortion reaches peak saturation in the lead-in (2:32–2:34) to the texturally climactic final chorus. While this is a ‘global’ aspect of the track’s timbral design, with each instance of intensification a new, local vitality contour is afforded.

In recent ‘indie’ singer-songwriter music, we can observe a trend where the exploratory use of texture, timbre, and space has become the primary means through which forms of vitality are translated into sound. Bon Iver is the big name here, in whose music we can observe a shift in idiolect owing to developments across these parameters. 22 2 Million marks the latest realisation

of an approach to sound design where, as a general rule, nothing stays the same for long, where variance is a dominant invariant property. Texture is highly variable, sounds are heavily processed and manipulated, and the sense of ‘naturalness’ and ‘intimacy’ prized in his early idiolect is abandoned in favour of more synthetic and dislocated stagings. With this, large-scale form is frequently obscured or abandoned and the listener is posited in an emergent sonic-affective present. ‘22 (Over Soon)’, the album’s opener, features cracks and crackles that, in their mobility across the stereo axis, specify motional contour. The track also intermittently threatens to cut out, a design strategy that specifies a sound world that is insecure, temperamental, and lacking in power (it also specifies a materiality reminiscent of tape and vinyl). Vitality contours are also specified by spatially – and stylistically (the import of gospel is noteworthy) – dislocated and fleeting vocal parts, and the tendency for vocal samples to return sonically transformed, an album-wide compositional strategy, affords a sense of timbral and temporal brevity. All of this takes place over a dronal pulse that temporally concentrates the track on the unfolding ‘now’. The heavily crunched and temporally bounded loops of ‘10 deathbreast’ also specify an enduring present and serve to obscure large-scale formal development. Distortion is the track’s dominant quality and it adds to ‘10 deathbreast’ a dynamic, and at times gestural, sense of ‘forceful’ exertion. Heavily effected vocal layerings – that are generated using Bon Iver’s custom-made Messina live-harmonisation system, which lends vocal lines a timbral-melodic identity and spontaneity independent of their human originator – add affective swoops and swells. ‘33 God’ is equally expansive in its textural, timbral, and spatial design and while marked changes in textural profile define sectional units, delineating structural functionality is not straightforward. We move some way toward conventional song design with ‘29 #strafford ATPS’ which features idiomatic open-position guitar accompaniment, though the primacy of the ‘natural’ voice-acoustic guitar setting is threatened by

typically effected vocal harmonisations as well as unsettling harmonic turns and disruptive crackles. ‘8 Circle’ features a rare instance of open-ended harmonic patterning and the voice retains an unmediated singularity for a notable portion of the track. Later in the track it is, once again, effected vocal layerings that specify vitality affect contours.

Related compositional strategies can be observed in the work of Icelandic singer-songwriter Ásgeir. 2017’s ‘Unbound’, like 22 A Million, prioritises the male falsetto voice, timbral juxtaposition, regular and marked textural variation, sophisticated spatial staging, and rhythmic disruption. The way parts frequently spatially recede and re-surface is also reminiscent of Bon Iver’s idiolect – and also that of Frank Ocean, an artist operating in an equally exploratory fashion in the stylistic realms R&B, hip-hop, and soul – as too is the demand this strategy makes for involved listening. In terms of vitality contours, the introduction of ‘Unbound’ features repeated vocal-synth unison swells that afford affective surges and accent (B Ionian IV–VI–V–Ib) chord changes. Choruses, in contrast, foreground synth-bass swells that sketch 4–6–5–3 and, subsequently, 4–6–5–3–1 lines. Fluttering overlays (1:49–1:51) and breaks (1:18–1:21) present themselves as translations of phenomenologically recognisable bodily stirrings. Tears in the track’s textural fabric correspond with inconsistencies in beat design, most notably in the way that a steady quaver pulse – as normatively provided by the hi-hat – is eschewed. The hi-hat part’s rather awkward rhythmic design contributes to a sense of irregularity and inconsistency and is itself fractured at several points (2:23–2:26). Add to this a tendency for the kick-snare backbeat to be disrupted at the end of sectional units (1:16–1:20) and the overall, though locally concentrated, quality is of stop-start motion which carries tensional and affective attachments. The environment can be perceived as musically translating the ‘Unbound’ of the title and lyric subject matter in other ways too. Here I appropriate Allan Moore’s model within which the musical ‘environment’ – the

39 Kate Bush’s use of mixed-modal patterns in ‘Wuthering Heights’, which obscures otherwise intimate subject matter, comes to mind.
sonic and structural space within which a vocal-lyric persona operates – is understood as made up of ‘textural matters’, harmonic setting and formal setting. It is harmony that, by relatively conventional means, adds to the expressivity of persona that is lyrically (‘I want you to be out there with me/ I want you to be unbound with me’), vocally (that floating falsetto) and texturally (in its changeability) ‘unbound’. The strategy is straightforward: limit iterations of I and withhold a strong, cadential move to chord I – *arrival* at ‘the other side’, perhaps – until the track’s final gesture.

Moore’s discussion of environmental ‘positions’, of which five are theorised, aids the functional description of *22, A Million* and ‘Unbound’ and a brief exposition of this is worthwhile here. Moore’s scale starts with ‘inert’ environments, thus labelled because their function is limited to genre-setting. Inert environments do not contribute to meaning(s) specified directly by lyric and voice, and merely provide accompaniment in accordance with the technical, rhythmic, and tonal expectations of a given style. A track like Karine Polwart’s ‘Daisy’ – and the same can be said of many of the songs performed by folk contemporaries including Heidi Talbot (‘Willie Taylor’) and Damien O’Kane (‘Strands of Magilligan’) – exemplifies this situation. As Moore observes, all environments operate, at the very least, in this way. Going slightly further this, environments can also frequently project an attitudinal tone that corresponds with that set out by the persona. Moore refers to this relationship as ‘quiescent’ and points to the rhythmic looseness, in voice and accompaniment, of Bob Dylan’s ‘hedonistic, hippy’ ‘Just Like A Woman’ as an example. Alvvays’ dreamy, ‘jangle’ indie track ‘Archie, Marry Me’ is a more recent instance of this; here, looseness and lethargy are reified, as in my hearing of ‘Just Like A Woman’, by the specification of disinterested, and potentially immature, gestures, including the slow side-to-side swinging of arms and twisting of hips and (literal) shoe gazing. This attitude is embodied in a striking manner in the second verse when the electric guitar gives up playing chords and instead contributes an untidy and intrusive layer of ‘noise’ achieved using feedback (calling to mind an
image of the guitarist literally letting go of the instrument) and unfussy depressions of the guitar’s
tremolo arm.

In the third stage of Moore’s scale we meet ‘active’ persona-environment relations; here,
Moore explains, ‘we begin to approach that realm where some attention to the detail of the
environment is necessary in order to apprehend the expressive richness of the virtual performances
of particular personae’. In simple terms, ‘active’ environments directly support and play out
meanings and situations specified lyrically. In my teaching of Moore’s model, I have used UK
garage act The Streets’ ‘Blinded By The Lights’ to illustrate such relations. The track’s lyrical
narrative is explicit both in its composition – a persona in a night club who, while waiting for
friends takes several pills and later, suddenly, experiences their effects – and in Mike Skinners’
characteristically straightforward performance of it (the indigeneity of Skinner’s expression is also
noteworthy). The delayed onset of the drug rush, which along with lyrically evident paranoia and
anxiety points to ecstasy, is played out in an invariant, if somewhat wonky, accompaniment made
up of a slow backbeat, syncopated synth, and atmospheric pads and sweeps. A few key
environmental alterations then correspond with a sudden shift in narrative, including a textural
drop that makes room for the line ‘maybe I shouldn’t have done the second one, I feel all fidgety
and warm’), and the addition of a straight semiquaver ride cymbal that – like the now altered state
of the persona (‘everything in the room is spinning, I think I’m gonna fall down’) – is off-kilter
with what surrounds it (namely, the syncopated synth).

Finally, we come to a fourth stage in the continuum. At this level, the environment not
only supports the persona and narrative, but is ‘interventionist’ in its provision of ‘more
information than is present in the lyric’. It is here that I interpret 22 A Million and ‘Unbound’ as
operating. It is, in one way, relatively straightforward to argue that Bon Iver’s – and Ásgeir’s to a
lesser degree – sound designs do the meaning(ful) work, as lyrics can be fragmentary, difficult to

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42 Ibid., p. 197.
decipher and/or deliberately obscured. But this line of argument undermines just how profound the intervention of the environment is in 22 A Million. It is not simply that the environment specifies symbolically encoded ‘information’; rather, it specifies and affords vital affective phases and states. The authenticating connection that, evidently very many, listeners experience with this music depends, then, on involved, affective engagement on the part of the listener.

It is always tempting to try to establish connections between musical trends and wider ‘real world’ developments, and this impulse is acute when a particular track or album is perceived as in some way embodying the mood of the times. Amanda Petrusich succumbs to this, speculating that 22 A Million’s ‘nagging songs’ map an alienation that is ‘arguably the reigning sensation of our time’. Later, Petrusich writes of 22 A Million as ‘a personal record about how to move forward through disorienting times’, in doing so, offering a biographical, or ‘first person’, reading of authentication. What of second person authentication, the authentication of the listener? It is likely that Petrusich’s reading, which emphasises detachment, speaks to the experience of many listeners.

22 Million and ‘Unbound’, can be perceived to have other, slightly different specifications, namely instability, insecurity and, related to this, temporal brevity. Frequent textural and timbral juxtapositions, as well as proxemics shifts and stereo oscillations, also specify an environmental changeability that can be understood as a translation of a rapidly changing (cultural, social, political) world. In offering this explanation I hint at authenticating ecological experience, the focus of Part Three of this thesis. Along with this, there is an acuteness of affect in momentary phases that seems to correspond with experiences of vitality (read: empowerment, opportunity, and mobility)

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44 In emphasising insecurity, the above analysis appears to intersect with Walter Everett’s interpretation of meaning in post-millennial rock. A few significant differences need stating, however. First, I use ‘millennial’ to refer to generational experience whereas Everett uses ‘post-millennial’ to temporally define the music texts he subjects to analysis. Second, Everett’s analysis prioritises pitch-based relations – as is typical of his analytic work – whereas I consider wider aspects of sound design. Thirdly, and this is the facet of Everett’s analysis that I am most keen to distinguish my own approach from, in Everett’s discussion there is a lingering sense that interpretations of meaning(s) are based on observations of musical (tonal) aberration. Walter Everett, ‘The Representation of Meaning in Post-Millennial Rock’, in Dietrich Helms and Thomas Phleps (eds.), *Black Box Pop: Analysen Populärer Musik* (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2012): pp. 149–169.
and anxiety (which can be characterised by concentrated surges of feeling) recognised in critical commentaries on the ‘millennial’ experience and milieu.
2.7 Summary of Part Two

In this detailed discussion of a range of theory, tracks, and idiolects I have proposed that musical authentication is grounded in, and emerges from, embodied musical engagement. Taking Mark Johnson’s image schema theory as my starting point, I initially considered musical sense-making as enabled by pre-reflective, embodied interaction. While finding this useful in providing an explanation for the body’s fundamental role in the formation of meaning, and in enabling the mapping of authenticating musical and embodied structures, phenomenological limitations were noted. To overcome these I subsequently considered the enhanced explanatory power of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s phenomenological alternative ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms’ with reference to specific somatic and affective affordances in Korn’s ‘Freak On A Leash’. Next I looked to more obviously active and expressive forms of experiential ownership and agency, notably motional entrainment and gestural recognition. Here movement, physically enacted and imaginatively experienced, was understood as giving rise to affirming correspondences between sound and (inter)subjectivity. Finally, I proposed that musical authentication can rest on powerful experiences of self in and across time. Husserl’s model of ‘time-consciousness’ was used to explain fundamental retentional and protentional mechanisms that underpin our capacity to experience unfolding events (and, by extension, experiences of self) as unified and as having future – ‘temporally extended’ – potentialities. Daniel Stern’s ‘dynamic forms of vitality’, by contrast, were deployed to aid the close examination of localised temporal-affective relations.
3.1 Space, Place, and Affect

I now turn to the second component of my embodied-ecological view of listener experience. If Part Two provided a sketch of an embodied hermeneutics of recorded song, Part Three is an attempt to emphasise the interpretive significance of ecological dimensions of musical experience. This is not to enforce a radical separation between the body and environment, for as contemporary studies of embodiment and perception reveal, the actions and experiences of animate beings are always informed by a fundamental organism-environment coupling. Mark Johnson understands this as ‘the ecological body’, writing ‘the body is not separate from its environment and that any boundaries we choose to mark between them are merely artefacts of our interests and forms of inquiry’. And it is enquiry that drives my virtual separations, as confronting embodied and ecological experience individually does enable a more concentrated parsing of forms of authenticating experience. From the chapter on embodied authentication, I carry over an emphasis on meaningful listening, and a view of listener-text relations as interactive, exploratory, and

imaginative. In part two, I argued for embodied engagement as a site of vital connections between music and (inter)subjectivity, whereas here I propose that recorded popular music’s power to specify ecologies, to disclose (inter)subjectively recognisable and inhabitable worlds – real and imagined, natural and synthetic, private and social – is an important component of its ability to afford self-understanding and articulation. As in parts one and two, experience and identity are understood as processual as opposed to inert, and it is argued that experiencing place and space in music can afford a sense of agency and possibility. Despite ‘environment’ having many meanings in the literature there is, as Mark Reybrouck identifies, ‘not yet a major tradition of thinking of music in ecological terms’. It will be necessary, then, to review what writing is available and to look elsewhere. This discussion is deeply interdisciplinary; necessarily, I venture outside of popular musicology to establish an intellectual framework for analysing listening experiences within which perceptual interactions with(in) environments give rise to meaning. But prior to engaging in the close analysis of a series of recorded popular songs, I steer the focus of the music-space-place discussion towards listening and, in the process of doing so, begin to sketch my own phenomenological-hermeneutic conception of ecological engagement. What I present is, again, speculative, though the perceptual perspective I promote is increasingly supported by analytical and empirical literature.

Scholarly studies of music and environment(s) abound and the disciplinary breadth of such activity is noteworthy. The Ashgate collection *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity* is a useful entrance point that, in disciplinary terms, operates relatively close to home. Several essays take musicological and ethnomusicological approaches while, in other contributions, discussions exhibit cultural and anthropological emphases. In the introduction, editors Sheila Whiteley, Andy Bennett, and Stan Hawkins outline a broad intellectual landscape within which

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3 Sheila Whiteley, Andy Bennett and Stan Hawkins (eds.) *Music, Space and Place: Popular Music and Cultural Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004).
they situate and relate the book’s individual chapters. To commence proceedings Whiteley notes ‘what draws the debates together is the recognition that musical processes take place within a particular space and place, one which is inflected by the imaginative as well as the sociological’.\(^4\) Performance, unsurprisingly, surfaces as a central musical process at several points in the collection. But, as exemplified by Claire Levy’s essay\(^5\) on Balkan *chalga* and Kevin Dawe’s exploration\(^6\) of *lyra* music, instrumental music-making is always situated (culturally, politically, socially, and in gendered settings). Elsewhere musical processes are understood with reference to the presentation,\(^7\) reception, production,\(^8\) and business of music. Kay Dickinson’s critical examination of female performers’ use of vocoders confronts relations between embodiment and identity, production and reception, and technology and agency. In the contributions of Tony Mitchell,\(^9\) Lee Watkins,\(^10\) and Stan Hawkins,\(^11\) most notably, interpretive textual analysis – listening, then – functions as another form of musical process.

It is in Hawkins’ editorial overview that initial distinctions and relations between *space* and *place*, two far-reaching and dominant terms in (broadly speaking) ecological discussions of music, are established. Indeed, space and place typically appear together and only occasionally does Hawkins hint at meaningful separations.\(^12\) Hawkins notes that global developments, namely an intensification of human movement, complicate common-sense understandings of places as

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\(^8\) Part 4 of the collection is constituted of four essays that, in differing ways, examine production.


\(^12\) It seems that ‘place’ and ‘space’ intersect in enough ways for the two terms to be used interchangeably and conflated. For a critical and historical discussion of the conflation of place and space see John Agnew, ‘Space and Place’, in John Agnew and David Livingstone (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Geographic Knowledge* (London: Sage, 2011): pp. 316–331. Elsewhere, Fiona Ross avoids the problem of distinction by using ‘space/place’, though she does use a footnote to call attention to distinctions noting that ‘space is usually used to refer to the abstract and place to the domesticated or known’. Fiona Ross, ‘Sense-Scapes: Senses and Emotion in the Making of Place’, *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 27/1–2 (2004): p. 38.
singular or isolated. Music, it is argued, offers a vital point of connection and ‘can bond displaced peoples, effectively bridging the geographic distance between them and providing a shared sense of collective identity’.

Nonetheless, ‘place’, as a concept, retains a locational and temporal specificity that ‘space’ – and here is the basic difference – transgresses. John Cornell and Chris Gibson observe how scholarship on music and place has produced ‘cartographies of cultural production, reception and consumption’. ‘Place’ frequently frames discussions of musical practices and national identity, but it is also possible to conceive of places as locally constituted and expressed. Peter Webb’s theorisation of the ‘Bristol sound’ – which emerged, it is argued, from reconciliatory style practices – is exemplary. Webb deploys Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological notions of ‘relevancies’ and ‘typification’ to explain how individuals involved in this local milieu orientate themselves stylistically; become attuned to and involved in collective cultural practices and comportment; rely on relations with others in the group to negotiate and recognise self-identity; establish and understand local idiolects in relation to wider (national and international) style contexts. In sum, Webb’s account demonstrates how the practices of a locally situated ‘cultural field’, even if stylistically diverse and reconciliatory, can be viewed as bounded and expressively unified. And while Webb does not explicitly involve ‘authenticity’, the mutualisms and reciprocities he describes have obvious relations to understandings reviewed in part one of this thesis. First, in making particular style choices, individual musicians authenticate and are authenticated by – that is receive recognition from – the wider cultural milieu. Secondly, in contributing to, and in doing so constituting, place, individuals are afforded belonging. Thirdly, in understanding local expressivities in relation to global forms of expression, individual and local identities are posited in meaningful ways in wider contexts (what Charles Taylor speaks of as social

15 Webb, Interrogating the Production of Sound and Place: the Bristol Phenomenon, from Lunatic Fringe to Worldwide Massive, pp. 66–85.
‘horizons of action’\(^\text{17}\) and ‘horizons of significance’\(^\text{18}\). In Webb’s chapter, musicians are the focus, but I will argue that these authenticating processes are pertinent to the experiences of individual listeners.

How, then, does ‘space’ conceptually operate? Hawkins, like Fiona Ross\(^\text{19}\), hints at a basic distinction between place as locationally and temporally specific and space as more general in nature. Bristol and Liverpool, in this understanding, represent places whereas ‘rural’ and ‘urban’, Hawkins’ examples, represent spaces. In the analyses that following this initial theoretic review, I argue that as well as rural and urban, tracks can also specify ‘natural’, ‘synthetic’, ‘digital’, ‘social’, and ‘affective’ spaces. Both place and space, then, can be physical, and physical spaces can be partly constitutive of place. Both place and space also involve social contexts; Kirsten Hastrup argues ethnographic research reveals this fundamental relation, writing ‘entering the field means incorporating a particular sense of place, which is experientially inseparable from the social space, and becoming captured within it – often unawares’.\(^\text{20}\) Both, then, are sites of human action and expression wherein individuals ascribe and are afforded, cultural, social, affective and other identities. Emotional engagement with and in spaces is the focus of Alison Dundon and Susan Hemer’s curation *Emotions, Senses, Spaces* which aims to illuminate how phenomenological experience, emotion, and space are ‘mutually constitutive’.\(^\text{21}\) In emphasising affective experience, the interests of Hemer and Dundon, and contributing authors, intersect with my own. However, in their collection’s essay on music,\(^\text{22}\) it is spectacle and spectatorship in public performance events, rather than private listening, that is analysed (this is unsurprising, bearing in mind the book’s


\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 66.

\(^{19}\) Ross, ‘Sense-Scapes: Senses and Emotion in the Making of Place’, pp. 35–42.


ethnographic emphasis). In its discussion of spaces as organised sites of sensorial and climatological experience, Dianne Rodger’s study of hip hop events has obvious connections with Wendy Fonarow’s anthropological account (reviewed in Part One) of indie gigs, though this scholarly connection is not acknowledged. Rodger also observes the expressive importance of kinetic-affective engagement, noting that somatic constriction, whether the result of imposed seating restrictions or the density of a standing area, can diminish the spectator’s experience of the event. Rodger reports that restricted hip hop spectators ‘felt that they were somewhat unable to fully express their emotional state through their bodily movements’. Spaces, then, can determine levels and forms of bodily interaction and, with this, both ‘constrain and evoke emotion’.

The interrelation of embodiment and (musical) space is pertinent in the context of this thesis, and it is worth noting some other ways in which corporeal-spatial connections are being explored. In Luke Windsor’s contribution to the psychology-oriented Body, Sound and Space in Music and Beyond performing rather than spectating bodies and spaces are privileged. To analyse the ‘ecology of performance’, Windsor establishes a theoretic foundation that is ecological in two ways. The first part of Windsor’s framework is familiar, and is built on James Gibson’s perceptual relation of organism and environment though the concept of affordance (see 1.4). The second dimension of Windsor’s ecological view concerns ‘behaviour settings’, an idea – and analytic focus – primarily attached to, and animated by, social psychology. The basic idea here is that the properties of spaces ‘constrain and motivate action’. Harry Heft’s three-part conception of spatial behaviour information (to which I will return in this chapter) is singled out and later used to inform analysis. Topography, which includes physical structure and objects in the environment – in the case of popular music venues this would likely include a stage, standing and seating areas,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 42.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 32.
\item \textsuperscript{26} From Harry Heft, Ecological Psychology in Context: James Gibson, Roger Barker, and the Legacy of William James’s Radical Empiricism (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001). I refer to Heft’s engagement with Gibson’s ‘affordance’ in section 1.4 of this thesis.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
and a bar – is the first component of Heft’s model. ‘Climatological properties’, which include heat and lighting, and ‘socio-cultural practices’ – ritual, interpersonal, and behavioural conventions – complete Heft’s set of ecological components. This outlook, which Windsor presents as a rejection of the abstract and formalist conceptions of musical space put forward by the likes of Eduard Hanslick and, later, Roger Scruton, is applied in the parsing of two case studies. The first concerns how the musical potential of instrument design, the Böhm flute in this case, relates to sonic potentialities afforded by performing spaces. Windsor next details Barbershop chorus performance, homing in on ‘stacking’, a strategy involving the physical placement of singers. ‘Space’, here, has multiple meanings, referring to both the deliberate spatial positioning of singers and the acoustic spaces performing choruses are situated in and required to adapt to. Recognising the potential of this ecological coupling, Windsor argues, is vital to a Barbershop chorus taking the necessary steps to achieving, via design, the ideal sonic ‘blend’.

From a social perspective, Christopher Driver and Andy Bennett posited embodied (inter)action as central to the formation, expressivity, and identity of music scenes. Their central claim is that ‘bodies are not just the ends of doing music scenes – they are also the means by which scenes must be continuously re-produced’. The Queensland hardcore scene is their analytic focus and from their ethnographic examination some familiar ideas emerge. First, space is understood primarily in relation to social spectatorial events, though the scene as realised in event spaces, Driver and Bennett argue, is an ‘anchoring place within everyday urban, regional and, increasingly, rural landscapes’. The assertion here is that modes of comportment, interaction, and experience observable within scene spaces can spill into and inform everyday life. Event spaces are posited – calling to mind the studies of Fonarow and Downey reviewed above – as deeply corporeal, where moving and colliding bodies constitute and experience forms of collective unity; that is, embodied

28 Ibid., p. 109.
29 Ibid., p. 99.
connection with others in the ritual space is a means of accessing meaningful affective and social experience. Recourse to ‘authenticity’ is also noteworthy – along the way notions of authenticity are deployed in relation to participant identity and behaviour as well as to the status of the hardcore scene more generally. One of the researchers’ crucial moves is to align authenticity with forms of scene competence, variously referred to as ‘skilled practice’, ‘cultural knowledge’, and ‘scene-specific knowledge’. Once again, corporeal-affective engagement is key; becoming culturally knowledgeable, Driver and Bennett assert, requires the ‘slow, experientially-driven development of a distinctive form of dexterity’. Bourdieu’s ‘a feel for the game’ is involved in support, though dexterity can also be seen to intersect with Tia DeNora’s view of social-corporeal attunement and agency (discussed in terms of ‘embodied security’ in section 2.3 of this thesis) and Greg Downey’s use of ‘embodied learning’ to describe capoeira training (see 1.3). More broadly, the ecological concept of ‘perceptual learning’ (see 1.4) also fits the authors’ description of what is happening. Driver and Bennett also observe that hardcore scene spaces have a desired, authentic(ating), environmental feel that simultaneously affords and relies on energised, yet competent, somatic activity.

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3.2 Ecology and Self

Acknowledging the mutualism of organism and environment, means also recognising the importance of ecological experience to self-identity. After all, an individual’s movements, convictions, activities, and identities are always situated in wider ecologies. So too is their use, understanding, and expression of aesthetic experience. It is the agent’s orientation in physical and interpersonal surroundings that psychologist Ulric Neisser famously captured in his notion of the ‘ecological self’. From a description of ecological perception – of a direct, first-person, intentional, Gibsonian kind – Neisser establishes an exploratory, active, imaginative conception of the individual as embedded in human, and other, networks, concluding: ‘We know ourselves not only as objects of thought and experience but also as objects of perception, genuinely engaged with our fellow human beings and our shared environment’. I hope that the discussion staged thus far hints at how our engagements with popular music evidence the first part of Neisser’s claim and, to a lesser degree, the second half too. Fleshing out an argument for how musical engagement can disclose authenticating ‘shared environments’ and specify human contexts is the analytical task of Part Three, and a philosophical aim of Part Four.

Understanding how the ‘ecological self’ emerges from and is formed within musical experience is enriched by looking to philosophical thinking from outside musicology. And psychology, too; while psychology gives us a view of the reality of perception and the self, philosophies of environment probe the issue of the meaning(s) of ecological experience. ‘Philosophical’ thinking is taken broadly here, and ranges from (ethical) philosophy established in the academy to disciplines practiced out(side) in the world, including soundscape ecology and psychogeography. The discourse of latter ‘practices’ is frequently framed by ‘academic’ (or

2 Ibid., p. 23.
‘professional’) philosophy, though practitioners also understand that being out in, interacting with, and experiencing the world can lead to and reflect forms of philosophical thought. Musical experience, especially the ecological, world-disclosive aspects of listening, can be – and has been, Andrew Bowie’s study\(^3\) is exemplary – understood as both an object of philosophy and as giving rise to and conveying philosophies. After observing the flowering of philosophically-interested musicology, Bowie writes ‘in my view such work using philosophy to look at music puts rather too much faith in philosophy, and too little in music itself’.\(^4\) Bowie points to Daniel Barenboim’s tribute to Edward Said as representative: ‘He wrote about important universal issues such as exile, politics, and integration. However, the most surprising thing for me, as his friend and great admirer, was the realisation that, on many occasions, he formulated ideas and reached conclusions through music; and he saw music as a reflection of the ideas that he had regarding other issues’.\(^5\) Cornel West’s broadcast soundbite ‘I’m a blues man in the life of the mind, and a jazz man in a world of ideas’ also hints at a view of music and philosophy (and history) as co-essential. I ‘put faith’ in sonic specifications and affordances, the ethics of which are discussed in Part Four.

Philosophical works on environment typically centre around human relations to ‘natural’ environments. Of course, music can be part of, and can specify natural environments, though, as we shall see, it can also be more abstract and artificial. Nonetheless, key philosophical writings on natural ecology and environmental ethic offer some key concepts that intersect with notions of the authentic self and can resonate with affirming listening experience. In the writings of Heidegger and Naess we are presented with the powerful concepts of ‘home’, ‘dwelling’ and ‘belonging’ all of which point to a positive, centred, and fundamentally relational view of the self as connected to spaces and places. ‘Home’ and ‘dwelling’, on first glance, smack of conservatism and stasis – their deployment by conservative writers, namely Roger Scruton, only adds to this sense – and yet, as

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\(^4\) Ibid., p. 2.

Luca Valera argues, home and dwelling rely on active world- and meaning-making. Valera explains: “Through dwelling human beings open spaces and create new worlds. They rediscover the actual meaning of things and establish essential links with spaces through memory, artistic production, construction of places etc.; to put it briefly, through the act of changing the world”. A connection of these terms and ‘world making’ (and ‘agency’, more broadly) is invited. More significantly, home, dwelling and belonging specify a form of ecological identification that I recognise in musical engagements. In the simplest terms, songs give us spaces and places to be (the ‘third’ listening position) and to identify with. This is not just retrospective; that is, our ecological connections to music are not limited to experiences, however meaningful and powerful, of being ‘taken back to’ somewhere by a song. Music not only provides access to subjective ecological archives, songs also demand that we make something of their worlds as we encounter them. One possible response is ‘identification’, a form of (authenticating) appropriation, where ‘the human being can create a home because it identifies itself with the place in which it has chosen to dwell’. The tracks that authenticate us are those which invite us in, those which specify worlds we recognise and are recognised by, and those which specify places and spaces that afford meaningful experience and action. With this, we move closer to the processual view of authenticity surveyed early on in this thesis, though the specific argument made here is that experientially interacting with spaces and places, in music and elsewhere, is a vital aspect of self-assessment, development and affirmation.

Before moving on, I want to briefly make one final point, to which I will need to later return. Heidegger’s notion of ‘home’, it has been noted, projects an exclusionary sense ‘inherent in his philosophy’. Valera approaches the broader problem of the development of the ecological self with, and at the expense of, others via Sartre, who observed the conflict that inevitably results

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7 Ibid., p.5.
between situated, subjective forces in the world. Recorded music, by virtue of its accessibility, abstract (or ‘virtual’) nature, and invitation to imaginative engagement, negates the physical problem of ‘real world’ ecological antagonism. Put simply, immersive listening experience offers us a way of enacting, developing, and expressing ecologically situated subjectivities that is not detrimental to others. In this sense, the ‘other’ worlds opened up by music can be understood more positively as sites of ecological opportunity and being (though the issues of context and ‘competence’ are unavoidable here).

In a useful, if occasionally unanchored, synthesis of environmental and transpersonal psychology and (Næss’) philosophy, Einar Strumse offers a broadened understanding of both the ‘physical environment’ and the ‘ecological self’. Strumse’s conceptual expansion results from, and is concentrated by, a fundamentally relational, integrative view of ecological relations. In simplified terms, the self is not a contained ego, but is established by identifying with, and seeking to be identified by, its surroundings. ‘The realisation of this sense of self’, Strumse explains, ‘starts when we cease to understand ourselves as isolated, narrow and competing egos and begin to identify with other humans such as family and friends and continue to the whole human species. In order to include the global level the requirement is that this identification goes beyond humankind to include the non-human world’. It is argued that self-identification occurs through five primary modes of ecological interaction, all of which can be related to kinds of ecologies, and forms of involvement, specified by recorded popular song. Indeed, the interpretive analyses that form the second half of part three are organised, albeit loosely, according to combinations of these kinds of interaction. The first, ‘external, physical location’ points to an individual’s perception of the properties of, and objects featured in, their ecological surroundings. Strumse conceives of this as a ‘scientific’ – observational, objective, detached even – form of environmental experience. Heft’s ‘topography’, discussed in 3.1, is called to mind here. In academic and vernacular discourse on

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Sigur Rós’ *Takk* idiolect, for instance, we see topographical specifications prioritised. While acknowledging the basis for these, in 2.4 I detail immersive, affective, and emergent affordances. Strumse next acknowledges environments as ‘social systems’. Human relations are the focus here and, as such, this form of ecological experience is of special interest to social scientists (Strumse uses these two forms of experience to set up a scientific/social opposition). After providing an overview of developments in symbolic interactionist and affect control theory, Lynn Smith-Lovin\(^{10}\) offers an alternative to this, discussing socially situated agents in terms of an ‘ecology of identities’ and, in the process of doing so, offers a dynamic view of self-social system relations. Simply put, ‘selves and social environments sustain and shape one another’.\(^{11}\) The use of plurals (‘identities’ and ‘selves’) is intentional and noteworthy, as Smith-Lovin asserts the potential of agents to assume multiple identities. Such agency, it is argued, rests on the interactional and, with this, affective affordances of social systems. Thirdly, Strumse describes the environment as an ‘emotional territory’ experienced ‘exclusively in terms of emotions and associations’.\(^{12}\) The authenticating appeal of Ed Sheeran’s ‘Castle On The Hill’, for example,\(^{13}\) surely rests on its ability to inspire imaginative engagement with affectively domesticated places (the ‘take me back to when’ line is also neatly supported by overt stylistic regression, notably in the appropriation The Edge’s use of delay on the guitar). The influence of this expressive stance is popular and of influence; elsewhere, we can observe Brighton-based singer-songwriter Maisie Peters attempting to channel a similarly reflective outlook on ‘The Place We Were Made’, which is not unremarkable bearing in mind she was fifteen at the time of the song’s release. Recorded song’s capacity to afford, with a special directness, autobiographical association can be understood within this concept. I argue that songs can also specify potential emotional territories; that is, affective settings experienced in song but

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11 Ibid., p. 167.
not, in the obvious sense, in everyday life. I also submit that authenticating engagements with songs result from the simultaneous – in knowledge of the gestalt nature of musical experience\textsuperscript{14} – specification of topographic, social, and affective worlds.

Environment as a ‘setting for action’, Strumse’s fourth understanding, is easily integrated into this list. While we have already seen how physical musical spaces afford modes of expressive comportment, the challenge now, then, is to relate perceiver action to sonically disclosed ecologies. Finally, Strumse points to the ‘mystical’ experience of environment as self, where ‘the environment is no longer something that can be easily detached from the person, because the detachment itself turns the person into something else’\textsuperscript{15}. This idea can be readily applied to experiences of musical attunement – ‘the song is you’ – and especially to the forms of embodied entrainment discussed in part two, where the musical environment is understood not as separate from the listener, but as part of a two-way, perceptual relationship where listener (identity) and sonic environment are simultaneously constituted. It is worth noting that when applied to music, the first of Strumse’s types, ‘physical location’, seems to explicitly concern ‘specification’, whereas the others hint more obviously at experiential ‘affordances’.

My interest in ecological writing from outside of professional musicology, philosophy, and psychology rests on practitioners’ shared emphasis on the exploratory, imaginative, and affective use of environment. One unlikely but noteworthy influence is ‘deep topography’, an emerging discipline that has close ties with the established and once again intellectually popular psychogeography. Both psychogeography and deep topography prioritise walking as a means of exploring environments and both have an emphasis on contemporary urban and ‘liminal’ environments. It is not, then, mode of environmental interaction, or topographic emphasis that bear direct relation to musical experience, but more broadly the pursuit of interaction with

\textsuperscript{14} I consider this issue in section 2.3 with reference to Daniel Stern’s phenomenological study. Daniel N. Stern, \textit{Forms of Vitality: Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy, and Development} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 13.
environment as a means of experiencing space, and place; in short, the intentional use of environment in order to experience meaning and self. In the writings of Nick Papadimitriou, deep topography’s somewhat eccentric originator, ecological interactions lead to deep connections with landscape and, with this, self – to ecological ownership and agency. Papadimitriou’s perambulations around North London also led to the formation of historical and social understandings of place and space that are imbued with subjectivity. But deep topography is not a purely solipsistic practice: while it is understood that the perceiver experiences the world from a first-person perspective, by opening oneself up to experience the perceiver not only enables the formation of personal connections with environment but also insight into the collective phenomenology of ecological settings. The act of writing up ecological experiences also points to deep topography’s hermeneutic – and, thus, intersubjective – as well as phenomenological ambitions. In Papadimitriou’s book Scarp,16 we are presented with phenomenological concepts that, in their identification of the transformative and interpretive potential of ecological experience, invite translation into a musical context. One such concept, ‘proximity flight’, is explained in the following, typically personal and lyrical, passage:

A particularly strident line of pylons follows the stream’s course and adds a peculiar intensity to the landscape this is definitely a place of history and power, one of those Celtic ‘thin places’, where a sense of something other lurks behind the visible. At one time, a few years back there were nettle-edged, but they seem to have dried out. I love to sit by the track crossing below the high-tension cables and imagine that I’m somewhere in the Ukraine, circa 1952, starting up at these triumphant monuments to the electrification of my region. I’m a veterinary surgeon working on a sovhoz located somewhere unpronounceable deep in the shimmering wheat plains. I see tractors and fat sows; I see

Olga, the pig-tailed farm nurse who comes to me at night. In the evening I smoke cheap cigarettes and drink vodka. I will die of cancer in 1972. Proximity flight: that’s what I call this using of environment to trigger mental journeys to another place and time in which the same stimuli can be found. I find it lifts my sense of the environment out of its codified framework and into fresh possibilities of interpretation.\(^\text{17}\)

Music I argue, can afford proximity flight – imaginative and affective transportation – to spaces and places with corresponding ecological structures, though perhaps infrequently with the degree of specificity and drama of Papadimitriou’s experience of the North Middlesex/South Hertfordshire escarpment. For instance, in 3.4 we see the specification of vast, ‘natural’ landscapes in Sigur Rós’ post-rock idiolect described within these terms. I am also drawn by the agency and ‘fresh possibilities for interpretation’ that ecological experience can furnish the listener. In the context of authentication, this idea resonates with Frith’s understanding of music as offering listeners a chance of ‘try on’ identities and, thus, the chance to lift the self from a fixed, ‘codified’ framework. And Joel Krueger’s understanding of music as a vehicle for ‘extended’ emotional experience can be modified to account for music’s affordance of extended ecological experience.\(^\text{18}\)

In this view, the possibility afforded by musical experience is prioritised. Flight proximity also points to an important ecological-temporal relation that is vital to authenticating musical experience, and hints at an extension of DeNora’s claim that ‘musical structures provide a grid or grammar for the temporal structures of emotional and embodied patterns as they were originally experienced’\(^\text{19}\) to include a focus on the ‘grid or grammar of ecological structures’ and to recognise the protentional (self agency) as well the retentional (experientially remembered) power of ecological listening experience.

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\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., pp. 43–44.


In this short opening review, we have encountered some broad theoretic concepts and descriptions of ecological experience that direct a phenomenological-interpretive analysis of recorded song. I will have need to refer to ‘place’ and ‘space’, often together, throughout this chapter, but I endeavour to retain a meaningful distinction between them. Doing so is vital to moving from more general and theoretic levels of discussion to nuanced interpretation. It is now necessary to consider how notions of environment, space, and place relate to a somewhat different form of musical engagement to that emphasised in the above writing on music: (private) listening.

Rather than observe and interpret the structure, spectatorial behaviour, or ‘vibe’ of real-world musical event spaces, I focus on how recorded music can specify places and spaces (‘the domesticated or known’, 20 ‘home’) and spaces (‘the abstract’ 21) to the listener and, in doing so, can afford experiential absorption, affirmation, and agency.

20 Ross, ‘Sense-Scapes’, p. 38.
21 Ibid.
3.3 Towards an Ecology of Listening

Realising a shift in focus to listening requires a not insignificant rethinking of musical environments. Up to this point in the chapter, musical environments have primarily been understood in relation to the everyday and ritual event spaces within which music is engaged with and made – music as in environments, then. What I initiate now is an exploration of the environments in – or rather, the environments that are disclosed by – music. When I speak of the listener as immersed in a particular kind of environment, I am not talking about the venue within which the listening is taking place (the gig, the bedroom, the high street), but the ecological experience, which can equally be social, affective, (sub)cultural, and embodied, afforded by that listening. In sum, I urge a turn away from understanding music in environments, and towards music as environments. I am not the first to adopt this view, though my unification of phenomenology and identity with a conception of song-as-ecology is original. For this reason, it is necessary to consider a few instructive works and to set out my own basic understanding of ecological listener-text relations.

Allan Moore’s musicological conception of environment, to which I have already referred, is pertinent. Music is discussed in terms of environment in several ways in Moore’s writing, but always in support of hermeneutically-oriented analysis. In section 2.6 I applied Moore’s persona-environment relations, within which musical accompaniments are understood as environments that, to varying degrees, support or contradict the lyric-vocal expressions of personae. In addition to being a deliberate attempt at alignment with ecological theory, Moore’s use of the term ‘environment’ recognises the way in which personae inhabit and interact with song worlds, worlds that can support lyric attitude and narrative and explain ‘why the persona is acting in the way the

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song reports’. Moore’s analysis of forms of persona-environment coupling – which points to an interdependence – leads to some interesting observations, notably that environments can have an impact on the persona and that environments, when more deeply encoded than lyrics, can suggest interpretive readings that ‘the persona represented by the singer can be predisposed to take up’.

While this aspect of Moore’s interpretive method centres on interactions between personae and environments, it relies on a hermeneutic presupposition that listeners hear and experience songs as world-disclosive - that is, songs are perceived as corresponding with ‘already interpreted’, in other words potentially ‘real’, worlds as well as worlds with new possible ‘horizons of meaning’ and that it is possible for listeners to experience absorption in such worlds. A few pages earlier in *Song Means*, Moore analytically integrates a second vital relation, that of the interpersonal relationship between listener and persona. Edward T. Hall’s theory of proxemics, which Moore applies to musical engagement, serves as a connecting thread between listener, persona, and song world and enables Moore to consider how listeners (physically) experience contact with personae in sonic environments. The basic idea here is that listeners experience degrees of proximity to, and distance from, personae depending on the extent to which they are embedded in surrounding musical material. As in his persona-environment continuum, Moore delineates four stages, or ‘zones’. The first, the ‘intimate’ zone, refers to a perceived closeness between listener and persona which relies on the persona being ‘set in front of the environment’. Thus, listener-persona intimacy relies on a separation between persona (and presumably listener) and sonic environment. A ‘personal’ proxemic connection represents a marginally decreased separation between persona and environment and, with this, a marginally increased perceived distance between listener and persona. In musical terms, aspects of vocal performance that are readily audible in ‘intimate’ settings – including intakes of breath, whispers, coughs etc. – are now lost to intervening sonic material. As we move through the last two zones, ‘social’ and ‘public’, these degrees of separation

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3 Ibid., p. 200.
are increasingly augmented. Moore’s model is analytically incisive and useful, though – and this is a matter of phenomenological interest – the emphasis here is on the immersion of personae, rather than listeners in sonic ecologies, and the implicit idea seems to be that the listener remains static ‘in front’ of a voice that advances and recedes according to levels of environmental intervention. My own experience suggests that increased levels of sonic intervention not only distance the persona from the listener, but also serve to draw the environment closer to the listener and, in doing so, afford increased levels of ecological absorption (I am thinking here of the immersive spatial affordances of styles like shoegazing, dream pop, and post-rock where social and public proxemic settings are consistently favoured).

Elsewhere, musicological examinations of spatial design point to how tracks are shaped into and specify structured environments. In *The Musicology of Record Production*, which commendably unifies production practice and listener experience, Simon Zagorski-Thomas confronts the multi-modal nature of audio perception and highlights the technical tricks producers have developed to overcome recorded song’s missing visual component. ‘Staging’ is the term assigned to ‘external’ production interventions – he points to the use of particular microphone arrangements, mixing strategies, and the tools of the modern studio including compression, limiters, reverb, distortion, and equalisation as examples – that shape the representation of ecological settings and serve to direct listener attention. Along the way, Zagorski-Thomas asks some fundamental questions that relate to staging and spatial impression. First, what is the nature of the environment and event being staged? In other words, does it aim for realism (a mimetic representation of a performance event) or artificiality (an obvious manipulation or abstraction of a musical event). Zagorski-Thomas argues that both kinds of ecological impression involve some degree of exaggeration and manipulation, and both possess a potential to afford meaningful world-disclosure. Nonetheless, this basic distinction is a useful one, and provides a starting point in the analysis of a track’s sonic ecology. Later Zagorski-Thomas points to several other analytic oppositions that enable a more nuanced analysis of spatial (small/expansive) and atmospheric (constant/dynamic,
clear/indistinct) properties and related interpersonal specifications (singular/collective, intimate/social). Going beyond forms of staging, Zagorski-Thomas examines ecological relations between ‘performers’ and listeners – drawing, like Moore, from Hall’s proxemics – and performers within the sound world of recordings. It is in his discussion of functional staging that he deepens the problem of listener interaction. Classical recordings, it is observed, tend to suggest a small degree of separation between listener and sound event, whereas pop favours an intimacy between listener and text that affords an experience of personal connection (I tend to think of Joshua Radin’s brand of acoustic singer-songwriter pop as exemplary). Dance recordings, in contrast, are designed in such a way that the impression of a large-scale spatial impression is invited and, with this, a ‘vibe’ of communality.5 Zagorski-Thomas’ theorisation of staging is compelling in both its explanation of production choices, which Zagorski-Thomas supports with examples drawn from his own professional experience of production and sound engineering, and its acknowledgement of the role listeners play in discerning staging interventions and interpreting spatial impressions.

For Lelio Camilleri,6 the organisation of space(s) is the organisation of meaning(s).7 This assertion underpins a perceptual view, within which both compositional properties and listener interpretation matter. In this sense it is similar to those employed by Zagorski-Thomas and Eric Clarke (though there is no recourse to Gibsonian terminology in Camilleri’s paper). This claim also grants primacy to sound design in the analysis of musical meaning rather than, as has been the musicological norm, pitch-based and rhythmic relations. Camilleri’s theorisation of sonic environments represents a departure from musicological formalism – and transformational theory – in several other ways too, most notably in its emphasis on what we hear and what we remember rather than what should be heard, or what should happen. Furthermore, the ‘sonic image’ a listener perceives is a result of the phenomenological impression that track makes. Spatial interpretation,

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7 Ibid., p. 204.
then, is a matter of affective engagement; no matter how abstract or ‘artificial’ the design of an environment, musical ‘stages’ can afford feeling.

From an explanation of interrelated ‘sonic spaces’, Camilleri points to a crucial relation between ecological and narrative specifications, to how a song’s space contributes to the dramaturgy of the text. Listener involvement is only implied here, but I think a more explicit relation can and should be made, for the environmental-temporal relation Camilleri hints at is, to my mind, vital to listeners’ experience, and intentional appropriation of song. And, as is the case with Moore’s model of persona-environmental relations, a connection to narrativity – of story worlds, of temporally unfolding action – is invited. For those interested in pursuing this association, David Nicholls’ application of narrative theory to popular music provides a useful starting point. Beyond an overarching argument for the analytic pertinence of narrative theory, and a general observation that listeners seek to ascribe narrative meaning, Nicholls presents a five-level, lyric-centred model of narrative function. At the first level, lyrics and ‘music’ lack narrative specificity. Following this, at level two, lyrics exhibit some narrative properties though the music is not designed in such a way to directly support this (Moore’s ‘inert’ and ‘quiescent’ are called to mind). Levels three and four refer to instances where both lyrics and music contribute – with varying degrees of alignment - to narrative discourse (Moore’s ‘active’ environment, then). Level five captures instances of sophisticated multi-textual and large-scale narrative creation (Nicholls, unsurprisingly, looks to the progressive, ‘concept’-interested end of rock for examples of level-5 narrative structures). While Nicholls’ theorisation of narrative complements other analytic-interpretive approaches surveyed here, I view Camilleri’s, and others’, prioritisation of the ecological-temporal design of popular song as enabling the analyst to go beyond lyric- and persona-centred approaches that limit discussions of narrative. Thus, in what follows, I promote listeners’ exploratory, intentional, story-making engagements with song worlds, whereby possibilities for narrative not only involve lyrically specified personae, but also listeners’ experience of integrated, contributive selves – their story as the story. The connection between this kind of appropriation
and authenticity is an obvious one and can be partly captured by Alessandro Ferrara’s claim (see 1.1) that authenticity requires the expressive act of ‘positing oneself’.\(^8\) What is committed in authenticating connections with song worlds, I argue, is an autobiographical, relational self, reified and afforded agency not only lyrically but also ecologically, temporally, and, as explored in Part Two, corporeally.

To details, then. Camilleri offers an alternative, though at points obviously relatable, conception of ecological staging to that presented by Moore and Zagorski-Thomas. And there is much here to interest the analyst of sound design. First, there is Camilleri’s three-part representation of ‘sonic space’, which represents an extension of Moore’s ‘soundbox’. This outlines three spaces that, together, constitute a track’s overall sonic space: 1) ‘localised space’ – similarly to Moore’s soundbox, this concerns the proximity and left-right placement of sound sources; 2) ‘spectral space’ – this space results primarily from aspects of timbral, and with this registral, design; 3) ‘morphological space’ points to temporal specifications and the spatial impressions that result from them. In the case of ‘morphological space’ (and the use of ‘image’ in ‘sonic image’), an embodied, motional overlap with Johnson’s image schema theory (see sections 1.4, 2.2, and 2.3) is readily observable. Take, for instance, the following passage from Camilleri’s explanation:

> Sound unfolds temporally through its morphological shape, whose streaming gives fluidity to the sound components and their other space types. But sounds can evolve differently in time, providing different types of sensory perception, senses of direction, stasis, cyclicity, or oscillation. These sensations can be expanded by placing the sound in a given space, or can create the feeling that a sound structure inhabits the particular kind of space evoked by its motion.\(^9\)

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In sum, Camilleri’s incisive model explains how from the dynamic perception of spatial placement, sonic quality, and temporal activity, listeners form overarching ecological ‘images’ of music. ‘Saturated space’, ‘tidy space’, ‘changing space’, ‘closed space’, ‘open space’, and ‘empty space’ are listed as common ecological images, each resulting from a different combination of spatial, spectral and morphological characteristics. There is some hermeneutic insight here too, as, for instance, when Camilleri writes: ‘open space evokes freedom and vastness while close space calls to mind constriction but also intimacy’.

As an additional result of, and aid to, analysis, Camilleri lists eco-behavioural oppositions, some of which are familiar to the above textual analyses, including stable/unstable, separate/mixed, in focus/out of focus, and natural/musical (artificial).

These works provide a musicological foundation for the study of song ecologies. But understandings of music as specifying and affording interactive access to environments are not only to be found within musicology of the textual, interpretive kind. In ‘Music As Environment: An Ecological and Biosemiotic approach’ Mark Reybrouck hosts a more ‘empirical’ – ethological and evolutionary in framework – discussion of music perception and along the way introduces a range of pertinent ecological concepts, including ‘sonic universe’, ‘the sonic environment’, ‘coping with sounds’, ‘world-making’, and ‘identification’. Though more ‘scientific’ in one sense, Reybrouck ultimately calls for a qualitative understanding of the nature and meaning of perceivers’ interactions with sonic environments. The musical ‘sonic environment’, or ‘sounding world’ – a subset of the ‘collection of sounding elements that represent the totality of sounds as a virtual infinity of possible combinations of individual vibrational events’ that constitute the ‘sonic universe’ – is, in Reybrouck’s broadly ecological view, at once both objectively there and subjectively determined, through perceptual attention and experience. Recognise, for instance, the

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10 Ibid., p. 205.
12 Ibid., p. 3.
collision of ‘first-person’ phenomenological intentionality and Gibsonian principles in the following explanation:

Music, considered as a phenomenal subniverse, or sonic Umwelt, can be defined as a collection of subjective meanings imprinted upon a subset of the sonic world, including all the meaningful aspects of the sounding world for a particular listener. Taking this position as a starting point means that the perceived qualities of the sounding world are not to be considered merely as objective characteristics of the sounds themselves, but as attributions that are acquired by the sounds having entered into diverse relationships with the listener. Or stated in ecological terms of organism/environment interaction: the listener – considered as organism – fits the world to itself, ascribing functions to the objects it encounters and integrating them into a coherent system of its own.  

Reybrouck chooses to frame this act of integration within the borrowed concept of ‘world-making’ as well as ‘coping with sounds’, a concept created from Gibson’s ecological principles (including affordance). Both are deployed to call forth an impression of listeners as active, exploratory, sense-making agents who beyond relying on vital functional capabilities seek to establish meaningful connections with sonic environments. ‘Coping with sounds’ refers more generally to listeners’ tendency for responsive engagement, whereas ‘world-making’, in contrast, points more specifically to how listeners ascribe and are afforded affective, subjective, and intersubjective profiles. Occasionally, it is argued, ecological interactions with music can lead to the forging of ‘special’ world-making connections, including ‘self-experience’ ‘social relatedness’,

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13 Ibid., p. 6.  
‘attunement’, ‘resonance’, ‘recognition’ and ‘identification’ – these all (potentially) concern affirming experience.

What has not yet been explicitly acknowledged is the obvious point that production and consumption technology shape listeners’ ecological interactions with music. The ‘staging’ strategies highlighted by Moore, Zagorski-Thomas and Camilleri, for instance, depend on, and emerge from, developments in stereo presentation. And with further advances in audio technology comes the potential for producers to specify, and listeners to experience, increasingly sophisticated spatial worlds. It is the (potentially) changing nature of ecological interactions between ‘producers’, listeners, and technology that results from such developments that Peter Lennox speculatively explores in ‘Music as artificial environment: spatial, embodied multimodal experience’.\(^\text{15}\) While the chapter reads, initially at least, as a review of ecological literature – that is, of perspectives that explain and describe environmental perception and experience – Lennox does home in on emerging surround sound technologies and the compositional and experiential possibilities these afford. The fundamental point that runs through Lennox’s essay is that what is technologically (and thus, compositionally) possible relates to what is experientially possible. New possibilities for ‘spatial music design’ may, it is suggested, lead to the affordance of more sophisticated ecological experiences that rest on an advanced level of (physical) perceiver interaction: the ‘traditional flow of information from broadcaster to recipient will give way to bidirectional paradigm placing choice in the hands of the end user; instead of music being conveyed to passive percipients, perceivers will actually assume some of the compositional responsibility for their experiences’\(^\text{16}\). Of course, Lennox’s focus on immersive and interactive listening as it relates to physical positioning, of speakers and listeners, is somewhat different from the ‘everyday’ listening situations assumed in this thesis, though in considering the ecological relation between listeners and sonic texts his essay shares some of my concerns. And in any case, it is certainly possible to argue (see Part Two) that


\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 199.
listeners, in their enactive perception, contribute to the referential status of songs. It is perhaps another thing to understand this as listeners assuming ‘compositional responsibility’, but in the intentional perspective I advance, and the empirical studies I have surveyed, a track’s identity is established responsively.

Is it possible to speak of listener/listening positions in such a way that relates to ‘everyday’ – headphones, home speaker – engagements? And how might this relate to interpretation and authentication? Moore is alert to such possibilities and, in characteristically incisive and anticipatory form – Moore so often arrives early to pertinent analytic and hermeneutic questions, even if extensive discussion is not undertaken – hints at a useful and recognisable conception of listener involvement. His basic three-position model sketches a way of thinking very close to my own sense of listener-text ecological relations, though, in emphasis and interest, we subtly part ways. Moore’s identifies the following possible positions: 1) that of the observer, an ‘outside’ spectatorial position from which the listener looks in on a narrative situation; 2) an experiential affiliation with a central persona, or their situation, that also marks the listener as protagonist; 3) even if the appropriation of the persona’s perspective is not afforded, listeners can nonetheless still experience a sense of involvement, in this case as an antagonist. It is the latter that interests me most and that I develop, speaking as it does to notions of subjective appropriation, attunement, ownership and agency. So, what of differences? The basic distinction can be expressed in the following, admittedly simplified, way: Moore is concerned with listener-persona relations whereas I take interest in meaningful reciprocities between listener and song world (more broadly understood). Notice how the subheading under which Moore discusses listening positions – ‘address’ – carries a lingering sense of listening understood in terms of ‘communication’, as too does his later discussions of persona where Moore’s posits the question ‘to whom are we listening?’ as vital though, in view of Moore’s consistent emphasis on listener interpretation and experience, one must be careful not to read these aspects of Moore’s text too literally. Nonetheless this does point to a difference in emphasis; Moore’s discussion retains an analytic attachment to lyric-vocal
personic expression whereas I urge a broader focus on world-disclosive, referential interactions between listener and song.

To do so, I examine various types of ecological specification – including topographic, affective, collective and embodied – that cannot straightforwardly be deemed as encoded in lyric or vocal articulation. The difference in emphasis and in interest is not, however, only analytic; it is phenomenological too. Restricting involvement, or ‘immersion’, to the appropriation of lyric-vocal expression is to risk missing the compelling experiential authentication that can arise from listeners’ exploratory, intentional positing of self in places and spaces disclosed by the design and movements of sonic environments. In such cases, the listener is not a bit part antagonist in an already interpreted narrative, but is involved in imposing and realising a new subjective ecology and narrative: in world-making. I am arguing for the possibility of a different and deeper understanding of appropriation from that hinted at by Moore. In my view, ‘external’ lyric-vocal narratives can be experientially integrated into the (inter)subjective world established by the listener, rather than, as in Moore’s reverse reading, the listener superimposes a sense of self onto the situation expressed by the persona.17 (Ricoeur can be recalled to provide hermeneutic support for this view, notably his claim that ‘the constitution of the self is contemporaneous with the constitution of meaning’.18)

A directly comparable model of possible listening positions, as far I can tell, does not exist, though some useful concepts are available. Eric Clarke’s application of subject-position19 comes

17 In a more recent return to the problem of listening position, we see Moore grappling with his experience of Amy Macdonald’s ‘This Is the Life’ in slightly altered terms: ‘So that key question – where am I in all of this? How does this track position me? Am I observer, an addressee, a participant?...Although I don’t want to go into the theory behind my use of the term, I feel I am here *interpellated* by the track. I am drawn in, enfolding by it, seductively immersed in it. I am not permitted the choice of simply brushing it off. The texture then broadens out, amplifying my focus. By the time we come to the chorus, I am being addressed’. Notice, then, the more general terms within which Moore understands ecological-narrative involvement – ‘participant’ certainly opens things up beyond ‘antagonist’ – but at the same time a retention of the listener as addressee. Allan F. Moore, ‘So just what kind of life is this?: Amy Macdonald’s ‘This Is The Life’’, in Ralf Von Apppen, André Doehring, Dietrich Helms and Allan F. Moore (eds.), *Song Interpretation in 21st Century Pop Music* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2016): pp. 168–169.


to mind as too, albeit from a very different disciplinary perspective, does ‘extent of immersion’, a
dimension of stereophonic perception empirically studied by Andy M. Saroff and Juan P. Bello.\textsuperscript{20}
In an attempt to get at the phenomenological charge of my own outlook, I find myself drawn,
once again, to Wendy Fonarow’s\textsuperscript{21} import of spectatorship (see 1.3) and, as a result, the synthesis
of a model designed to describe live performance events and an account of listening. This goes
beyond contextual difference, however, as a bridging of a disciplinary and analytical gap is also
required. For these reasons, I am careful not to assign too much significance to this theoretic
mapping, but maintain that it is nonetheless worth highlighting. The main point of connection is
between Fonarow’s description of spectatorial ‘zone one’, the audience area positioned closest to
the stage, and Moore’s ‘third position’, which I develop, and rests on an acknowledgement of the
shared degree of phenomenological intensity and immersion of these positions. With this, is the
advanced degree to which participant (spectator/listener) action constitutes the (inter)subjective
experience and meaning of the event. The physical distance and ‘decay of emotion’ that
characterises Fonarow’s zone 3, the spectator position most detached from the performance,
speaks to distinctions between Moore’s protagonist and antagonist positions, both of which
assume a level of subjective appropriation, and the ‘outside’ observer position. In terms of
authenticity and authentication, zone 3 and the ‘observer’ hint at a form of rejection and
detachment oppositional to authentication, as Middleton has it, whereas Fonarow’s zone 1 and
zone 2, Moore’s protagonist and antagonist, and my ‘third position’, all emphasise the
(inter)subjective commitment and responsive action necessary for a perceiver to experience the
self as an agent in a musical event.

The literature reviewed in 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 can be synthesised as a series of potential questions
that can be put to a listening experience. First, what kind of environment (space and/or place) is


\textsuperscript{21} Wendy Fonarow, \textit{Empire of Dirt: The Aesthetics and Rituals of British Indie Music} (Middletown CT: Wesleyan
University Press, 2006).
being specified? Am I perceiving a topographical, social, or emotional territory and is this space a site of action and/or self-identification? Is this environment vast or constricted, intimate or public, private or social, tidy or cluttered, saturated or empty, urban or rural, natural or synthetic? Next, what specific compositional (‘staging’) strategies determine the track’s gestalt ‘sonic image’ (or ‘sounding world’, in Reybrouck’s terms)? Are pitch-based relations noteworthy, or does world-disclosure depend on aspects of spatial, temporal, or timbral design? Finally, what does this ecological – ‘world-making’ – experience afford (identification, recognition, immersion, attunement, appropriation, absorption, autonomy, agency, belonging, centredness, rejection, detachment)? I will now put these questions to some musical encounters. These are, of course, my own, and are chosen in order to sketch a range of specifications and authenticating experiential affordances, though the list is by no means exhaustive. And, as in Part Two, I detail encounters as a means of introducing wider aspects of listening experience. I avoid getting involved in the business of predicting the specific autobiographical associations song worlds potentially afford, and instead aim to explain more fundamental aspects of ecological experience; that is, possible ways in which, in the act of perception, listeners become engaged with(in) sonic ecologies. Here, initial interrogative work – I deploy Moore’s soundbox and proxemics, Camilleri’s ‘sonic image’ and spaces, and Zagorski-Thomas’ ‘staging’ – provides a platform for some more probing interpretations of meaning.
3.4 Affordance of Space(s), ‘the Natural’, and the ‘Third Position’ in Sigur Rós’ Ambient Post-Rock Idiolect

The work of Icelandic band Sigur Rós is an appealing place to start the analysis of ecological specifications in popular music. It is perhaps an obvious choice too, with vernacular and critical responses revealing widespread recognition of the music as encoding and embodying (a sense of) the landscape of Iceland, though it is perhaps not an obvious choice for analytically-minded musicology, where there is currently only limited engagement with the band’s idiolect. Beyond ‘the music’, the broader Sigur Rós aesthetic project, which involves documentary films and calls for artistic and audiovisual collaboration, promotes a conceptual emphasis on ecology. For instance, we see the Liminal mixtape project described in the following terms: ‘Liminal is more than an ambient Sigur Rós mixtape curated by Jónsi, Alex Somers, and Paul Corley. Liminal sees Sigur Rós as an eco-system’.¹ Though it is the 2007 tour film Heima (‘at home’), which documents a series of performances and Icelandic topographies that typically forms the focus of scholarly writing on Sigur Rós and serves to direct interpretations of the band’s music. Dorbjörg Daphne Hall² interprets the film as depicting a particular aesthetic and ideological impression of Iceland, rooted in both the ‘Krútt’ and nostalgia. Krútt, which can be said to intersect with the post-millenial ‘hipster’ in several ways, refers to an appreciation of D-I-Y and the ‘handmade’ (notably in music, commerce, food, and fashion) as a means of refusing modern consumerism and an emphasis on sustainability and nature activism.³ Underpinning the broader krútt stance presented in the film, Hall suggests, is a nostalgic ‘longing for a simpler life’ and a reconnection with (rural) nature (along the way Hall offers some pertinent political observations, notably the right-wing appropriation of krútt ideology in the name of preserving of ‘national culture’). Heima, then, can be viewed as presenting regressive impressions of ‘home’ and ‘dwelling’ – to recall Heidegger’s terms – that rely

³Ibid., pp. 39–40.
on a redressing of the balance of power between ‘the human’ and ‘the natural’. As Hall points out, the film affords a sense that we are seeing the band in the process of locating an authentic ‘home’ and authenticating rootedness (or centredness) – and by extension, the ‘good’ life – provided not by a turn inward, but instead through ecological relations. While Hall offers some arguments for how music embodies the Icelandic landscape as understood by Sigur Rós, she does not consider how music contributes to the pursuit of such authenticity and authentication. Nonetheless, there is some interesting interpretive work here. Hall’s analysis includes some insightful textual and hermeneutic discussion of two live performances in Heima covering instrumentation, harmony, vocal style, and lyric setting. Hall’s argument for hypermetric extension in ‘Heysátan’ as specifying ‘timelessness’ is instructive, as too is her argument that Sigur Rós’ use of the nonsense language ‘hopelandish’ contributes to a nostalgia-supporting sense of temporal displacement. Elsewhere, Hall explains paramusical associations summoned by falsetto lead vocals. It should be noted, however, that Hall’s analysis is informed by an in-depth contextual and historical knowledge, well beyond that likely possessed by most (especially non-native) viewers. And, of course, her analysis of music in Heima is mediated by visual representations of krútt and place, that are missing in Sigur Rós’ studio recordings.

Nicola Dibben⁵, discussing Heima as part of a wider study of Icelandic music video, takes a slightly different approach. Rather than analyse performances documented in the film, Dibben aligns Heima’s cinematography with aspects of the Sigur Rós’ idiolect as realised in the studio. Key music-film correspondences include ‘wilderness’, ‘vastness’, the ‘suspension of time’ and ‘an unusual sense of journey and movement’.⁶ Dibben first points to temporal signifiers in Sigur Rós’ early idiolect, notably extended track duration, slow tempi, and recourse to surface musematic⁷

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⁴ Ibid., p. 41.
⁶ Ibid., p. 138.
repetition and (reportedly improvised) variation. Next Dibben identifies the sparse use of directional and cadential harmony as referential of both stasis and (some) movement. With melody providing some sense of movement locally, it is textural and registral development that, for Dibben, specifies direction. And while Dibben is right when she says ‘arguably, Sigur Rós’ conception of Iceland as ‘geographical space’ is articulated through spatio-temporal characteristics of their music’, in emphasising melody, harmony, and texture some crucial aspects of spatial design, notably proxemic setting, are missed. I will have need to return to these in my analysis of some snippets from Takk. In addition to some illuminating close analysis, Dibben offers some convincing contextual interpretations along the way. For instance, Dibben’s observation that Icelandic video – with Heima as exemplary – affords the construction of (national) identity according to nature rather than politics is insightful and hints at possibilities for a broader understanding of the interpretive potential of Sigur Rós’ music. And in reading Heima as presenting ‘a link between music and land as a historic entity belonging to the Icelandic people’, Dibben is able to explain how music contributes to identity formation.

In his Interference article, Lawson Fletcher trains a critically incisive eye (and ear) on Heima and post-rock more widely. Fletcher’s key move is to look beyond the attachment of (some) post-rock to (some) national identities, in doing so blowing open the music’s ‘psycho-spatial’ interpretive potential. For Fletcher, post-rock’s ambient, textural, and timbrally expansive soundscapes, afford immersive, exploratory, ‘indistinct’ listening experiences that invite dynamic, affective ‘imaginings of place’ as opposed to fixed meaning. Fletcher chooses to explain the power of the music to transport and afford imaginative flights in relation to the concept of ‘auditory drift’, in doing so steering the discussion into familiar psychogeographic and phenomenological intellectual territory (see 3.2):

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9 Ibid., p. 135.
11 Ibid.
Unanchored, post-rock listeners are free to wander. In this non-prescriptive yet highly-situated engagement, the auditory drift is perhaps closest to the Situationist practice of the derive: a method of wandering that uncovers the psychic undercurrents of the city, ‘the lineaments of subjective space’\(^\text{12}\). This psychogeography enjoins mood and environment, the external social space of the city and ‘the internal, private space of subjectivity’\(^\text{13}\). Similarly, the ultimate promise of the auditory is that post-rock’s celebrated emotive landscapes might not just refer to the ‘inscapes’ of mood and emotion but also to our outer landscapes.\(^\text{14}\)

We can take from this that hearing a specific domestic place in music – hearing ‘Iceland’ in Sigur Rós, for instance – is never the only reading available to the engaged listener. Nor should we assume that it is a national rural and ‘natural’ that is unproblematically embodied by Sigur Rós’ work, as Fletcher’s nuanced analysis of Heima shows. With this, Fletcher urges the analyst to look beyond cliché attachments of the ‘vast’ and ‘glacial’ and to instead focus on Heima’s political project of strategically repositioning Sigur Rós’ ‘relationship to Iceland, as a band who question and mourn the destruction of the Icelandic landscape rather than retreat into it’.\(^\text{15}\) Heima, for Fletcher, should not be understood as an enactment of authentic dwelling and contact with land, but rather as showing how music ‘enables a reliving or recovering of past emotional-spatial experiences – a reverie for spaces that are now physically erased’.\(^\text{16}\) Sigur Rós’ Heima, in Fletcher’s reading then, does not reify or reflect a present Icelandic ‘homeland’; rather, it represents an attempt to recover one.

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., p. 26.
\(^\text{14}\) Fletcher, ‘The Sound of Ruins’.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{16}\) Ibid.
Tony Mitchell’s psychogeography of Sigur Rós and *Heima*,\(^\text{17}\) involves textual and autoethnographic description and as well as an emphasis on the specification of ‘imagined’ places and communities. But it is a unification of Daniel Grimley’s understanding of spatial signification and Denis Smalley’s ‘spectomorphological’ that leads Mitchell to his principal claim: ‘Sigur Rós’ music provides the listener or viewer with a sonic and visual expression of an Icelandic imaginary’\(^\text{18}\). Earlier on in the essay, we see this kind of audiovisual signification understood as a ‘sonic evocation of a memory bank of images’\(^\text{19}\). Overall, however, Mitchell struggles to establish an analytical case for this. Jónsi Bergisson’s ‘androgynous glossolalia’ is instead only generally related to listener affect and involvement. Aside from a passing acknowledgment of Nordic folk practice, Bergisson’s signature bowing of the electric guitar is read as supporting the signification of an ‘othered’ musical persona which resists rock conventions of ‘masculine’ expression. Thus, Mitchell’s argument for the ‘audiovisual’ falls down partly on account of limited textual analysis and partly due to an absence of enabling theory, whether semiotic (Philip Tagg’s anaphones come to mind), ecological (where ‘specification’ and ‘affordance’ would be of use), or otherwise. Indeed, interest primarily arises from Mitchell’s more general descriptions and considerations, some of which hint at interesting analytical avenues of enquiry. In the closing lines of the essay, for instance, Mitchell aligns topographic specification with affordances of social experience, writing: ‘We seem meditative and secluded, but also bound together in an imaginary space where the sonic geography of the music articulates an imaginary cartography of a remote place on the other side of the world’.\(^\text{20}\) Here, Mitchell is describing the experience of being a member of a live concert audience, but we should ask if ‘private listening’ can afford a similarly ecological experience of belonging and agency.

In what follows, I argue that it can. But, to be clear, in my analysis of aspects of the album

\[^{18}\] Ibid., p. 182.
\[^{19}\] Ibid., p. 181.
\[^{20}\] Ibid., p. 196.
I do not relate ‘the music’ to scenes from *Heima*; offer a political critique of artistic intention; find Icelandic animism to be a primary specification; read Sigur Rós’ music as specifying a ‘known place’ (to recall Fiona Ross’ definition); experience the music as primarily ‘visual’. Instead, I argue that the idiolect projected by *Takk* has the potential to afford authentication on the grounds that it specifies and affords: a sense of (inter)subjective embeddedness in a sonic topography that is both familiar and emergent; dynamic embodied-ecological experience; forms of social relatedness and ecological situatedness. In short, I argue that Sigur Rós’ sounding worlds are particularly adept at affording the immersive ‘third position’ (discussed in 2.3) where the listener is posited in(side) the environment. What follows is an attempt to explain the (sonic) source and character of such experience and to argue that authentication arises from demands for active perceptual and affective engagement. My reading does not supersede ‘visual’, place-specific experiences of Sigur Rós’ music, but instead points to more fundamental phenomenological possibilities; indeed, it is hoped that the following attempts at explanation will, at the very least, enrich current understandings but also, more crucially, describe pertinent authenticating subject positions.

To sonic details, then. The album’s short opener, ‘Takk’, sets listener expectations for ambient and atmospheric sound design but also stylistic convention. Familiarity here is notably provided by a looped G ionian I–V–VI–IV bass pattern established from 0:39. The introduction of the bass loop also imposes a recognisable temporal flow and pulse, which serves to constrain the track’s temporally ambiguous ambient layers. With the entrance of the bass the specification of ‘timelessness’, often and perhaps too easily attached to Sigur Rós’ idiolect of this time, dissipates. But the bass loop not only serves a temporal role, it also contributes in marked fashion to the track’s gestalt spatial image, providing spectral separation in contrast to the track’s otherwise saturated and narrow body of atmospheric material. The relationship between the bass pattern and the shimmering ambient textures is representative of a wider strategy employed by Sigur Rós that

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can be conceived of as the reconciliation of two ‘morphological’ (to use Camilleri’s term\textsuperscript{22}) spaces, one of which – here the ambient streams of sound – specifies relative stasis and/or ambiguity while the other – here the bass pattern – explicitly specifies motion and progression (typically by means of discursive repetition\textsuperscript{23}).\textsuperscript{24} These two morphological spaces are not only technically decipherable, but in their affordance of different forms of listening engagement they are also experientially distinct. The latter strategy, in its temporal regularity and (often pitch-based) stylistic convention affords forms of corporeal entrainment I have discussed above with reference to DeNora’s ‘embodied security’ and ‘embodied awareness’, ‘motor entrainment’ from Trost et al., Dufrenne’s ‘rhythmic schemata’, and Moore’s ‘centredness’. In terms of authentication, this relates to listeners’ pre-reflective, corporeal appropriation of the sonic environment. The former morphological strategy demands a form of exploratory, immersive perceptual interaction with streams of sound that, I suggest, affords a particular kind of subjective agency; here, the listener is actively and intentionally charting the development and movement of specific sound-sources and textures. The listener, then, is afforded an involved, ‘third position’. In the case of ‘Takk’, this rests on demands to pick out and align oneself with streams of sound that subtly surface and recede from a dense atmospheric tapestry; after all, a foregrounded voice, and thus persona, is missing (indeed, there seems little room for one). Identification – with and of an affective identity – then arises not from the appropriation of a persona that is set apart in some way from the ‘external’ (or, in musical terms, ‘accompanimental’) environment, but from the appropriation of aspects of the environment itself. To add to this, the listener’s ‘extent of immersion’ will determine the degree to which ‘Takk’ affords authentication. We may choose to understand this in similar ways to Dibben and Hall, as the (‘natural?’) environment reassuring dominance, though I suspect such a reading

\textsuperscript{22} I point the reader to the following part of Camilleri’s description of morphological space: ‘But sounds can evolve differently in time, providing different types of sensory perception, senses of direction, stasis, cyclicity, or oscillation’. Camilleri, ‘Shaping Sounds, Shaping Spaces’, p. 202.


\textsuperscript{24} Theoretical baggage is one reason why I avoid using the terms ‘surface’ and ‘background’ to describe this organisational strategy. But more importantly, \textit{I hear} these as interacting spaces, rather than as foreground and background structures.
would depend upon the subjective assignment of place, or the knowledge of particular cinematography out of the immediate reach of the ‘casual listener’. I prefer instead to understand it as affording a more indistinct kind of ecological embeddedness, and relationality, that is not itself without ethical meaning. And if we are to understand ‘Takk’ as affording ‘flight proximity’ – the imaginative transporting of the perceiver to another place – it is not necessarily because the track’s sonic space corresponds with a specific national topography, but because the sound world of the song specifies modes of (experientially fulfilling or ethically affirming) environmental interaction attributed to ‘other’ (real or imagined) places.

‘Glósóli’ can also be analysed in terms of multiple morphological spaces. Here again it is the discursive use of open-ended gestures, here also a G ionian I–V–VI–IV, that specifies a bounded, cyclical morphological space. We do have some subtle linear development, a turn from the verse’s closing IV to a V momentarily breaks the cycle (1:39), though this is quickly subsumed by a familiar, though this time temporally stretched, shift to VI and IV. A stomping four to the floor explicit rhythm layer acts as an additional, familiar temporal constraint. Despite being technologically mediated, this specifies ‘natural’ paramusical sources (feet and grit) and motion (trudging, initially), adding to the affordance of motional entrainment. That ‘Glósóli’ and ‘Takk’ share tonal centre and harmonic design is noteworthy and, in terms of signification, is likely to contribute to the album’s signification of continuity (or ‘timelessness’). There is a more general, ‘indistinct’, way of reading this: harmonic-temporal patterns afford a centring familiarity in the face of spatial, textural, and timbral variations that constitute a second, this time emergent, morphological space. It is worth examining this space more closely. Within this, notice first the use of ‘localised space’. This, recall, is the descriptor Camilleri (see 3.3) gives to aspects of left-right (commonly ‘stereo’) spatial design (Moore talks of this in terms of the ‘laterality’ of the soundbox). Here I

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25 This is a morphological alternative to Amanda Petrusich’s claim that “Glosoli’ manages to be both ethereal and concrete at the same time, which is Sigur Rós’ most effective trick’. Amanda Petrusich, ‘Sigur Rós: Takk’, (https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/7155-takk/), 2005): accessed 20 July 2018.

26 Moore, Song Means, p. 31
am pointing to the way sound sources emerge and commute from discrete spatial locations. The track’s opening synthetic crackles, for instance, sketch a distinct laterality that provides insight into dominant environmental characteristics, notably unpredictability and mobility (where oscillation is a key morphological quality). In their lateral dispersion across the soundbox from a concentrated (right channel) starting position, dynamic swells (heard for instance, from 0:48–0:51) exemplify the track’s dynamic localised space profile. The spatial manipulation of the voice, to which I will shortly return, also supports the illusion of a contingent sound world.

So what? Perhaps, the morphological dialectic should be understood more generally as affording powerful ‘world-disclosure’ in the two senses of the term Nikolas Kompridis deduces; that is, of involving the simultaneous disclosure of the familiar and of ‘new horizons of meaning’. 27 I think it also worthwhile to understand this aspect of spatial design in relation to specifications of the ‘natural’ in Sigur Rós’ music. But I depart, once again, from vernacular readings; I am not thinking of the ‘natural’ as the specification of Icelandic animism, but rather the experience of perceptual reality where localised sounds emerge and move and, thus, demand attentive engagement. This is a sound world of which the listener becomes a part, becomes attuned to and, according to their intentional focusing of attention, shapes. The ecological reality I interpret is not, then, that of a specific geographic place (though one should not deny the music’s topographical profile), it is about the appropriation, through immersion, of multiple dynamic spaces that interact to form an overall sonic world. This world has a sense of ‘nowness’, of an unfolding present, about it too; it is an ecology emerging and being formed in the listening present. It is not pre-determined and, thus, not necessarily ‘nostalgic’ (to offer a phenomenological response to Hall’s contextual reading). It is for this reason that I think some listeners find themselves in this music and why the Sigur Rós sound world is adept at affording ‘world-making’ ownership and agency. In sum, authentication arises from the listener being afforded access to a particularly active, situated kind

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of ecological involvement.

An analysis of proxemic setting in ‘Glósóli’ – of the ‘prominence’\textsuperscript{28} rather than ‘laterality’ of sound sources – reveals other typical staging strategies. Taking Moore’s cue, it is worth focusing on vocal setting. In accordance with other ‘atmospheric’ rock idiolects, the voice tends to be embedded within, rather placed in front of, the sonic environment; that is, the voice is typically situated in either ‘social’ or ‘public’ zones both of which involve a high degree of separation between listener and the lead voice. In ‘Glósóli’ this is achieved in several ways. First, surrounding environmental material serves to intervene and overwhelm the voice (a ‘realist’ reading would suggest this is unsurprising, bearing in mind lead singer Jónsi Birgisson’s consistent use of falsetto). This is marked at 2:05, when Birgisson’s untidy overdriven and heavily reverbed bowed guitar, itself specifying vast timbral, spectral and spatial potential, surfaces. The track’s large-scale cumulative textural and timbral shape results in the voice receding to a ‘public’ space from 4:01 and being fully consumed at 4:42. It is likely that the gradual immersion of the voice, which lends the track an additional morphological contour, will afford some listeners a corresponding experiential sense of integration and envelopment, of ecological situatedness. This may alternatively be construed as encroaching ‘natural’ forces or, more philosophically, it might afford a sense of the individual within wider social ‘horizons of significance’, as Charles Taylor has it, or as ‘giving one an intuition of one’s self as engaged with and responsive to a larger world’.\textsuperscript{29} In both cases, the environment, however this is understood, undermines the singularity and primacy of the persona. Singularity, or ‘individualism’ if you are inclined to run with this line of interpretation, is undermined in other ways too, including vocal multitracking and manipulation. Multitracking lends the persona a collective expressivity whereas the artificial modulation and fragmentation of vocal tracks suggests fragility and mediation.

Texture and timbre can also be described in terms of morphological space, for it is these

\textsuperscript{28} Moore, \textit{Song Means}, p. 31.

parameters, most markedly, that specify direction. And development too, both in terms of sonic intensification and, correspondingly, cumulative experiential intensity. There is organicity to textural and timbral development that serves to both disguise formal structure and specify ‘the natural’. In other words, textural saturation is experienced as emergent rather than pre-designed (it is of course a matter of compositional design, but the illusion of spontaneity – and perhaps ‘wildness’ – is an important facet of its ecological specification). The sense of saturation is amplified by increasing levels of distortion applied to rhythm (the kick drum), bass (fuzz effect applied to bass guitar) and harmonic layers. The explosive entrance of heavily overdriven and reverbed guitars at 4:41 signals a fulfilment of sonic-ecological potential and marks a point of narrative climax. This makes for an intoxicating experience, as at this point the listener is invited to discern and chart spectral juxtapositions and tensions within a densely saturated and indistinct sound word. Narrative, then, is constituted not from the interpretation of lyrical material, but from an appropriation of the track’s gestalt sonic-affective trajectory. This leads to a crucial point about the mutualism of environment and body; the sound ‘world’ of ‘Glónsóli’ is not only understood through ecological specification, but also through embodied affordance. In other words, topographical development has a corresponding affective shape. The terms through which Stern explains ‘dynamic forms of vitality’ (see 2.6) – notably ‘surging’, ‘powerful’, ‘pushing’, ‘accelerating’ – are of descriptive value here while Husserl’s ‘protention’ can be understood as the enabling anticipatory perceptual mechanism. Comparable sonic-affective trajectories can be observed in ‘Milánó’, where textural intensification provides morphological contrast to dronal stasis, and in ‘Svo Hljótt’ where musematic melodic variation is constrained by open-ended harmony.

In ‘Með Blóðnasir’ and ‘Sé Lest’ some other noteworthy environmental strategies can be observed. The world of ‘Með Blóðnasir’ is initially formed from a spatially and sonically fragmented re-presentation of ‘Hoppípolla’, the preceding track on Tákk. The distribution of

melodic material across the localised space lends the material a new, oscillating morphological profile that posits the listener in a central, surrounded listening position. This re-working of material invites the listener to experience both a sense of continuity and familiarity – or ‘experiential before-ness’\textsuperscript{31}, to borrow Christopher Doll’s phrase – as well as a sense of development. In terms of authentication, it can be understood that experiential familiarity here affords ‘centredness’ and ownership, whereas ‘Með Blóðnasir’s transformation of ‘Hoppípolla’ into something new affords a processual sense of agency and potential. In more general terms, the environment can once again be characterised as emergent, though on this occasion development rests on the decay and transformation of pre-existing properties. Of course, this particular interpretation arises from listening to ‘Með Blóðnasir in relation to ‘Hoppípolla’, though I suspect that a hearing of the track in isolation would afford an analogous sense of process and transformation.

Thus far I have argued that the idiolect projected on *Takk* partly relies on the superimposition of distinct morphological spaces. In ‘Sé Lest’ ecological juxtaposition and transformation is taken further. I am referring to the reconciliation of an atmospheric, spatially well-balanced, ‘abstract’ – in the ‘musical’ sense – sound design and a more ‘realist’ sound world that specifies ‘live’ performance. Another way of describing this is that as listeners our position, or role, shifts from solely perceiving a ‘studio’ presentation of a composition, to witnessing a performance that is being documented in ‘real time’.\textsuperscript{32} That it is a performance in (localised) motion


\textsuperscript{32} Electronic duo Sylvan Esso’s ‘Hey Mami’ is another compelling example of the juxtaposition of abstract and ‘real’ sound worlds within a single recording. Initially we are presented with what seems to be an outside field recording of a vocal performance. The sustained hum of passing cars suggests a setting more obviously urban than rural, though it is perhaps not paramusically populated enough to confidently interpret this as an urban topography. Elizabeth Farrell, a student of mine, put it to me that the space resembles something closer to what Ian Sinclair, Will Self and other psychogeographers and deep topographers have called ‘liminal zones’, the areas that fall between urban and rural topographies. The aura of isolation and detachment that such spaces typically carry certainly supports the track’s engaged lyrical subject matter. However, this ‘real world’ setting is subtly undermined with the entrance of hand claps that are carefully placed across the sound box and hint at ‘abstract’ studio design in contrast to the raw ‘documentation’ – here I am using David Carter’s term - aesthetic projected elsewhere. Hard left-panned handclaps which surface at 1:19 advance spatial dislocation and the encroachment of studio design. The entrance of a dirty bass synth and synthetic percussion complete an ecologically vivid and powerful reconciliation of ‘field’ and ‘studio’, ‘natural’ and ‘synthetic’, ‘reality’ and abstraction. David Carter, ‘Well Past Time: Towards a Musicology of Audio Record Production’, *Proceedings of the First Art of Record Production Conference* (http://www.artofrecordproduction.com/index.php/arp-conferences/arp-2005/17-arp-conference-archive/arp-217)
is not insignificant either as this adds to affordances of perceptual reality. While the paramusical illusion here is of being witness to a walking brass brand, the sonic explanation for this is that brass band sound sources gradually move from the right side of the stereo (or localised) space to the left before the leaving the stage altogether. As the ‘abstract’ layerings, albeit receded, remain audible, the listener is required to perceive these two ‘sounding worlds’ simultaneously.

There are a few possible ways this can be experienced. Hearing the brass band as passing through, but integrated within, a singular gestalt sonic ecology of which the listener is a part is one such way. Alternatively, we might hear the brass band as a foregrounded, ‘real’ ecological entity that is distinct from an ambient, ‘abstract’ background. The former is a better description of my own experience of this complexity. How, then, can this passage be said to afford authenticating involvement? One obvious way is that for many listeners, the mobile brass band performance will operate as a sonic and kinetic anaphone specifying community events such as carnivals and parades as well as specific places attached to these. It may well have, then, a subjective social and ecological resonance, from which all kinds of centring autobiographical and place-specific connections can be established. Alternatively, it might inspire imaginative engagement with ‘other’ possible social settings and places, thus revealing subjective potentialities rather than (present) realities. Paul Ricoeur’s processual claim that ‘the constitution of the self is contemporaneous with the constitution of meaning’\(^33\) is once more called to mind, as too is Reybrouck’s conception of the perceiver as ascribing functions to the ‘objects’ that constitute the sonic environment in order to integrate them into a ‘coherent’, meaningful ecology. Perceptually, the passage affords a first-person phenomenological perspective within which the listener is posited amidst – in the ‘third position’ – a sounding world in action. In this sense, it is possible to speak of such experience as having ‘natural’, or ‘real’ perceptual characteristics. Beyond this, we can say that allowing oneself to become perceptually engaged in this way requires an intentional, sense-making involvement.

\(^{33}\) Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, p. 114.
with sound that is itself an act of appropriation. To stay with Ricoeur and the concept of appropriation for a moment, we can that say it is this phenomenological proximity that enables the listener to hermeneutically overcome any initial ‘cultural distance’\(^{34}\) between themselves and the text. Agency, then, is both asserted and afforded.

To summarise what I have sketched here, ecological narratives and places are never inherent in music or fixed – that is, an Icelandic imaginary is not the only possible specification of Sigur Rós’ music – but are formed within the listening experience. I mean this in two ways: first, narratives are composed and given affective identity as we interact with sonic activity, as we chart musical motion and/against structural constraints; secondly, we can choose to map emergent sonic ecologies, narratives and forms of interaction onto other ‘real world’ or imagined settings and possible identities. In stating this, then, I do not dismiss the national identities and topographic specifications that many listeners find in Sigur Rós’, but instead seek to show how encountering this music can more broadly afford intentional, ecologically engaged listening and how its ecological specifications point to human contexts and ways of being in the world. In stating this, I move closer to Kathleen Higgin’s claim that music can ‘suggest models’ – social and ecological – that ‘are of relevance to our ethical lives,’\(^{35}\) a point I return to in Part Four. But it is to recorded popular song’s sonic specification of social territories and modalities that I now turn. Two PC Music tracks are used to steer the discussion of social experiences away from ‘public’ interactions of the kind had at concerts, record fairs, and nightclubs and toward ‘the imaginary forms of community allowed by recordings’\(^{36}\).

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 114  
3.5 (PC) Music as Milieu

At this point it is worth clarifying a few lingering issues. The first concerns my analytical-interpretive use of ‘specification’ and ‘affordance’. Up to this point, I have assumed a degree of distinction between these terms that follows my initial explanation in Part One and my application of them to explain embodied listening experience. However, a closer consideration of their deployment in Part Three is analytically revealing, for while they operate relationally in Gibson’s perceptual model – with specification giving rise to affordance – my use seems to hint at the possibility of a separation. ‘Specification’, as applied here, speaks more obviously to the power of textual properties to determine subject position – or to ‘signify’ in semiotic parlance – while ‘affordance’ provides access to phenomenological description. There is a risk that this can be (mis)understood as reifying a formalist divorce of ‘text’ and ‘experience’ in contradiction to this thesis’ theoretical framework and overarching experientialist aesthetic. This is, of course, not my intention. Alternatively it can be read as enabling the fine-tuning of analysis, of the homing in on particular stages and aspects of listening experience. This, as I explain more fully in the opening section of part four, is closer to my understanding of the situation. Nonetheless, I do think it is important to be critically aware of how terms are put to use, for it strikes me that some experiences may invite prioritisation. On reflection, the short analysis of Sigur Rós’ idiolect above, for instance, seems to reveal an emphasis on affordance that I suspect says something about the kind of (affectively involved, ‘third position’) experience had and the degree to which the experience is imaginatively, affectively, and corporeally absorbing. The use of ‘specification’ may or may not suggest a degree of detachment, of interpretation undertaken from a more ‘outside(r)’, analytical perspective.

The second issue I want to clear up is related to the argument made in passing in the introduction to this thesis that music should drive musicological enquiry. While wholly unremarkable taken at face value, this claim is pertinent to discussions of authenticity and popular
music. Popular music researchers have a responsibility to provide analytically and theoretically intelligent responses to recent developments in music production and consumption. When we do justice to this we sometimes find that vernacular deployments (and dismissals) of established evaluative concepts, especially ‘authenticity’, become unconvincing. PC\(^1\) Music, a beguiling EDM-pop collective that received considerable attention in 2014 is a case in point. In response to a sound world that draws from trance, happy hardcore, K-pop, J-pop, vaporwave, and chiptune, to a name just a few influences, Pitchfork magazine’s Philip Sherburne declares: ‘Authenticity is probably the last word that’s ever going to turn up in the context of PC Music, and that’s probably a good thing, because duh: authenticity is boring’.\(^2\) I will not attempt to predict the source of the disquiet aired after the colon. I am, however, urged to take issue with what precedes it, as this crude resistance to understanding PC Music through ideals of authenticity is misguided. Sherburne misses the ways in which vernacular evaluations of PC music are often framed by and/or set against academic and lay understandings of authenticity. To start with, the relative secrecy surrounding the label and the individuals behind the personas it presents online is a hot topic. This is unsurprising, as PC Music producers appear to be deliberately denying us access to that most crucial question of authenticity: ‘to whom are we listening?’ Furthermore, the label’s name, as acknowledged by founder member A.G Cook, appeals to an empowering DIY approach (an ‘anyone can do it’ authenticity): “The label’s called PC Music, which alludes to how the computer is a really crucial tool, not just for making electronic music but for making amateur music that is also potentially very slick, where the difference between bedroom and professional studio production can be very ambiguous.”\(^3\) The specification of sincerity is also highly prized. On A.G. Cook’s ‘Beautiful’ Andrew Rhyce writes: ‘Of all the ‘cute’ songs to emerge from PC Music’s reign of musical terror in 2014, ‘Beautiful’ might be the cutest. It’s also the most

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1 As in ‘personal computer’.
confrontational...What’s most confrontational about ‘Beautiful’, however, is its earnestness. The ‘serious’ institutional musical training obtained by PC Music producer Danny L. Harle is also often recognised as a reputable foundation for sincere artist endeavour. I am particularly intrigued, however, by the tendency of vernacular accounts of PC Music to map out connections between the music and the milieu it emerges from and speaks to. Ryan Bassil’s reading of Hannah Diamond’s ‘Pink and Blue’ is exemplary:

It’s like a lullaby – but made for teenagers that send every pink emoji on the iPhone keyboard. The track is cute; it’s the sound of kiss-chase and passing notes around class, but jarring, too – like sleeping in a strange bed with a decimation of hassled pillows that are more overwhelming than comfortable...The music – whether you think it’s bad or good – is enticing, innocent, and demands repeated listens. I repeatedly pressed the play button to try and make more sense and the more I did, the more I understood. By the end I felt like I’d read every drafted but never sent tweet from Hannah’s phone. It was like stumbling on a private Tumblr page of an ex-girlfriend; something you’re never meant to see but slowly, as you read more and more it all starts to makes sense.⁵

In these accounts of PC Music, it is not an inherent authenticity – of the kind that can result from essentialising – that is argued for. But authentication is, nonetheless, up for grabs. Not in response to questions along the lines of ‘is this authentic?’, but rather from experiential and ecological mappings⁶ established in the act of listening; PC Music – vernacular responses support this hermeneutic hunch – is particularly adept at inviting correspondences between its ‘sounding world’ and everyday social spaces and modalities. While topographical and affective territory can

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⁶ PC Music’s cross-domain aesthetic further embosses the kind of world(s) it offers up for appropriation.
be interpreted as the dominant specification of Sigur Rós’ music, PC Music is understood here as primarily specifying a social-cultural territory that can be read initially as a development – an exaggeration even – of the pseudo-modernist, consumerist world of phoning, clicking, pressing, surfing, choosing, moving, and downloading Alan Kirby described in his now famous essay ‘The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond’.⁷ I am not, however, claiming that this music merely ‘reflects’ contemporary social activity – to do so would be to fall into a way of thinking that, as David Hesmondhalgh⁸ notes, is restrictive – but instead that the authenticating appeal of this music lies in its potential to invite experiential connections between sonic aesthetics and recognisably modern social (media) spaces and sensibilities. PC Music’s (more ‘global’) reconciliatory pop/EDM aesthetic, which resists, in knowing fashion, more dominant aesthetic developments in contemporary EDM, contributes to the identification it affords, and the ‘outsider/outrider’ mentality Moore and Martin⁹ speak of in relation to rock may be applicable here (to both performer- and listener- identity). This can be understood in a slightly different way as an enactment and expression of difference, of a critical articulation of originality, within mass cultural structures. To return some of Peter Webb’s¹⁰ thinking into play, it can be said that PC Music affords aesthetic orientation and agency and provides listeners with an opportunity to experience attunement to wider cultural practices. ‘Belonging’ provides a useful conceptual label, though, as discussed below, PC Music’s signification of detachment and obscurity complicates the kind of situatedness at stake. Acknowledging the role of scene ‘competence’ and ‘cultural knowledge’ is also necessary, as Driver and Bennett¹¹ remind us. Like vaporwave, a related 2010s style that Jordan Minor recognises as ‘a thoroughly internet art form¹², PC Music’s ‘scene’, if we

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⁸ Hesmondhalgh, Why Music Matters, p. 91.
¹⁰ Webb, ‘Interrogating the Production of Sound and Place’.
¹¹ Driver and Bennett, ‘Music Scenes, Space and the Body’.
choose to describe it in these terms, is primarily active online and thus demands knowledge and attachment to digital rather than ‘physical’ spaces. I want to add to this the idea that aesthetic experience functions – here I am recalling an emphasis on how we use environments, ‘real’, musical, or otherwise – to affirm, reify, and sustain external social identities and activities and to ‘fill out’ their aesthetic profile and meaning. Beyond this, interactions with music can equip us with modes of expression and comportment necessary to operate meaningfully within specific cultural ecologies; in the case of PC Music and internet culture, this includes in the fluid creation and curation of identities digitally liberated from conventional forms of authentic selfhood.

Analytically substantiating this impression is the challenge. A cursory treatment reveals PC Music as stylistically and conceptually oppositional to Sigur Rós’ rock idiolect, though imposing a pop/rock divide is too crude, and of little analytical value. Instead, it is worthwhile exploring sonic-ecological distinctions that can be discussed through reference to the following general oppositions: natural/synthesised, enduring/fleeting, contemplative/immediate, involved/detached, emergent/pre-designed. Two prominent tracks from PC Music’s output, Hannah Diamond’s ‘Pink and Blue’ and QT’s ‘Hey QT’, provide analytical focus. ‘Synthesised’ captures both the technological and aesthetic properties of both tracks. The electronic basis of PC Music which priorities synth timbres, samples, and unpitched noises (including sweeps, blips, and ‘bubbles’) is in obvious contrast to Sigur Rós’ use of ‘real’ (or ‘acoustic’) sound sources. And while Sigur Rós’ music has the potential to specify ‘natural perception’ (or ‘perceptual reality’), the ‘sonic images’ of ‘Pink and Blue’ and ‘Hey QT’ are more obviously ‘musical’ – ‘abstract’ and ‘synthetic’ can be substituted in – compositions. The pitch shifted, ‘chipmunk’ vocals employed on ‘Hey QT’ and Hannah Diamond’s disjunct verse phrases (0:54–0:57, for example) invite a hermeneutic extension of the natural/synthesised opposition to human/mechanical (or ‘disembodied’). The frequently abrupt and crooked melodic phrasing in the verses of ‘Pink and Blue’ and ‘Hey QT’ also serves to actively support a lyrical superficiality that, as Ryan Bassil’s reading suggests, correlates with modes of online dialogue (‘tweets’ are the contemporary marker of quick-fire,
provisional interactions) and media exchange (‘meme culture’ comes to mind). Conventional and constrained formal design, which favours concise structural units, supports the specification of ‘fleeting’ temporal experience, while lyrics, vocals, and sonic fillers (those bubbles and squeaks), are imbued with a sense of playfulness that seem to intentionally resist a seriousness (‘authenticity’) levelled at other contemporary EDM forms and, more generally, the ‘new sincerity’ Minor assesses as being ‘all the rage with the youth these days’.13 There is also a brightness to the timbral and spectral profiles of ‘Pink and Blue’ and ‘Hey QT’ that complements PC Music’s glossy visual aesthetic – a brand14 property captured by performer QT’s ‘upward shine’15 soundbite – and is markedly different from the emphasis on lower registers in more dominant forms of EDM. The fast, relatively dry, intricate, fidgety synth designs of ‘Pink and Blue’ also specify bursts of energised activity that are direct, immediate and short-lived (see example 6). The interacting synth parts cry out to be heard as dialogical. ‘Immediate’, then, captures both discursive local design and, in view of concise sectional design and repetition, global temporality as ‘Pink and Blue’ and ‘Hey QT’ suggest little in the way of large-scale dynamic-affective trajectory. Sectional delineations, while marked, instead afford a sense of ‘in the present’ action.

The involved/detached opposition is especially interesting when we consider the phenomenology of PC Music in relation to its wider cultural-aesthetic world. In terms of persona, QT, within and outside of the world of the track, projects an overt fictionality characteristic of other notable PC Music names (despite being less avatar-like, GFOTY aka Girlfriend of the Year seems to aim for a similar degree of obscurity). In this way, QT eludes conventional understandings of the authentic ‘performer’ as expressing the ‘truth’ of their ‘real’ situation and instead

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13 Minor, ‘Drown Yourself Beneath the Vaporwave’.
14 The use of brand here points to QT’s conceptual emphasis on commodity; indeed, the track ‘Hey QT’ is reported to have been released in support of the promotion of an energy drink called QT.
corresponds with forms of ‘digital age’ anonymity and, with this, hyperreality\textsuperscript{16} (in the sense made famous by Jean Baudrillard). This reading can be taken further by considering sonic specifications of mediation and dislocation. In both its formal and sonic properties ‘Hey QT’ specifies careful, tidy design, in marked contrast to Sigur Rós’ emergent, organic, undefined ecological idiolect. The synthetic manipulation of the voice, mentioned above, is an obvious source of signification. However, it is the voice’s part in the track’s overall sonic ecology that is especially suggestive.

Stylistically, ‘QT’ parades, in blatant fashion, a collection of EDM and pop tropes including syncopated bass lines (see example 7) and anticipatory noise sweeps from trance, four-to-the-floor and backbeat drum patterns, and drum machine samples. However, texturally, ‘Hey QT’ s sound world can be described as minimalist, with singular synths, synthetic drums, and voice (s) operating as core components. ‘Hey QT’ specifies a tidy, tight and relatively contained sound world. Dryness, too, is a dominant quality of the track’s production aesthetic. And yet, within this, vocals occupy discrete positions. The lead vocal’s dryness – achieved through compression and an absence of reverb – seems to exceed that of its surrounding sound sources and, as a result, is foregrounded. Any sense of the intimate, unmediated, or emotionally sincere is, however, undermined by its pitched-up sonic presentation and fragmentary phrasal delivery. Obscurity, rather than clarity, is denoted. The chorus’s supporting vocal interjections add something of a collectivity to proceedings, and suggest that the persona we are presented with should not be understood as wholly singular. That we are hearing ‘multiple identities’ is a possible reading; for my part, I choose to conceive of this as lending the QT persona a social presence, positing QT not as a singular definable ‘person’, but instead an indistinct contributor to the PC Music milieu. With this mind, it would be unconvincing to interpret the persona as wholly disconnected from the world specified by the track. While occupying a unique locational position within the song world, the persona is also recognisably part of both the world of the song and the broader – ‘contextual’, if you like –

\textsuperscript{16} Anon, ‘PC Music, Post-irony, and the Cynical Hyperreal’,
https://themusicofhyperreality.wordpress.com/2016/12/03(pc-music-post-irony-and-the-cynical-hyperreal/,
PC Music ecology. The persona is at once both fantastical and real (to the modern milieu PC Music speaks to). It is not spatial observation that leads to this claim, but a broader interpretation of aesthetics and expression. The persona’s performance and sound have attitudinal consequences, suggesting an intentional *stance* that relies on both involvement, ‘insiderness’, and detachment (‘outsiderness’). This basic understanding is not only relevant to the situation of the persona, however, it can also serve to frame an interpretation of the embodied-ecological engagement offered to the listener.

Example 6. Sketch of ‘Pink and Blue’ chorus kit pattern, chord progression, and synth lines

Example 7. ‘Hey QT’ intro/chorus synth line
A straightforward answer to the question of how ‘Hey QT’ invites listener involvement would be to say that the (per)sonic anonymity and lyrical banality allows ‘space’ for subjective appropriation. With no defined ‘human’ character or narrative, greater world-making demands are made of the listener (an idea frequently rehearsed in commentaries on the authenticating power of Coldplay’s ‘beige generation’ lyric writing). Alternatively, it may be argued that the obscurity of ‘Hey QT’ offers opportunities for imaginative agency, a chance to ‘try on’ an otherness specified in sound. But to leave it there would be to only account for text and persona and, thus, not do justice to the subject position ‘Hey QT’, as a sonic-ecological whole, affords. The issue, as I see it, is what kind and what degree of experiential involvement is at stake. To the uninitiated listener, I suspect the experience afforded by ‘Hey QT’ corresponds with the (per)sonic specifications of both involvement and separation discussed above. Take the reconciliatory style profile, for instance. To listeners conversant with contemporary pop many aspects will afford familiarity, notably harmony, formal structure, and synth timbres. The rhythmical conventions of four-to-the-floor and backbeat beat patterns, in their interaction with syncopated synth lines, constitute a recognisable ‘groove’ that invites stylistic and somatic absorption. The rhythmically and texturally energised choruses and breaks of ‘Pink and Blue’ have the potential to offer a similar degree of engagement, though the altered backbeat (see example 6) and angular synths challenge this. And if some level of entrainment is achieved in these sections, or indeed in the verses in which a thick, vaporwave-esque dreamy synth outlines a rudimentary E ionian I–VI–IV–III, the stark variation of texture, timbre, rhythm between sectional units is unsettling. ‘Hey QT’s capacity to afford experiential withdrawal rests, I suspect, on both alienating vocal presentation and an exposed texture that eschews ‘wet’, ‘atmospheric’ sounds typically considered to afford (contemplative) immersion. All of this suggests a complicated perceptual situation. Assigning one of the three ecological positions introduced above – ‘outsider’, ‘persona’, subjective ‘third position’ – is far from straightforward.

One option is to say that the encounters with ‘Hey QT’ and ‘Pink and Blue’ suggests a kind of perceptual fluidity between the (detached) ‘outsider’ and (involved) ‘persona’ and ‘third positions’. Mobility, then, rather than settled ‘centredness’ is the main dominant perceptual affordance; indeed, acknowledging this is, I submit, vital to understanding the possibilities for identity and agency that this music offers. The mobility and fluidity that characterises (my) perceptual experience also points to a profound consequence: in sonic encounters the listener is posited, and given the necessary capabilities to operate, within the wider cultural ecology and community PC Music specifies. A ‘fourth’, extramusical, position is concurrently disclosed. In other words, in encountering a sonic ecology, the listener can be imaginatively thrown out into – and demanded to make sense of – a wider ‘ecology of identities’¹⁸ and interactions.

¹⁸ I appropriate this term from Smith-Lovin, ‘Self, Identity, and Interaction in an Ecology of Identities’.
3.6 ‘I Know a Place We Can Go’: Place, Space, and Collective Action

With reference to one more ecological encounter, I advance my argument for the capacity of recorded song to afford authenticating experiences of communality, belonging, and, here specifically, solidarity. In doing so, I offer a counter to the not uncommon view that ‘private’ modes of listening encourage individualism or, more worryingly, solipsism. Directing the reader to Michael Bull,¹ Hesmondhalgh writes of the situation: ‘it is understandable that some would feel that modern life has seen a profound individualisation of musical experience, when we consider the rise of the Walkman and MP3 players, where individuals use music to cut themselves off from their surroundings and project all kinds of values and imaginings onto strangers and urban landscapes around them’.² The ubiquity of the smartphone, and the on-demand streaming it allows, we would think, has only deepened this detachment. And yet, as I have argued in previous sections, private listening can afford an attunement to ‘surroundings’, both physical and social. It can bring us closer – move us toward – real and imagined others. Hesmondhalgh’s ‘all kinds of values and imaginings’ reads as somewhat dismissive, and rather underestimates the relational capability – the potential of recorded sound to provide individuals with a space to experience and enact (inter)subjective identities, expressivities, and ecologies – of private musical encounters. Of course, side-lining private listening serves Hesmondhalgh’s purposes and provides the critical platform to argue for – and Hesmondhalgh makes a persuasive case – the importance of public forms of participation. To attempt to convincingly claim that private listening has the same degree of ‘publicness’ as dancing and singing together would be fruitless. Nor am I interested in making a case for the greater importance of either public or private ‘musicking’,³ to use Christopher Small’s famous catch-all term for musical activity. Rather, I am highlighting the phenomenological-hermeneutic significance of another, equally pertinent form of relational experience. In any case,

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³ Christopher Small, Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Hanover: Wesleyan Press, 1997).
while not ‘ordinary sociability’ in the group participation sense, listening, as a means of experientially and imaginatively accessing intersubjective worlds, is as ‘ordinary’ – as ‘everyday’ - as singing and dancing together.

So much for collectivity, but what of action? How can listening ‘alone’ be said to relate to action? The solidarity and collective strength afforded by public performance is well documented, and we can all easily think of events and spaces where music inspires communal action, be that a nightclub, a festival, a march, a concert, a religious ceremony, or an aerobics class. Add to this the reality that different spaces specify particular forms of action (peaceful, violent, direct, indirect, gestural, symbolic etc.) and specific expressive aims (support, resistance, reunion, solidarity etc.). I submit that music not only facilitates and constitutes collective action in public spaces, but, in its recorded form, it can also inspire imaginative and affective identification of and with settings of collective action. Significations of this kind vary in their degree of specificity from the general to the exclusive depending on autobiographical attachments and the perceiver’s subjective ‘knowledge’ of the music (style, idiolect, or band) and/or context. This is not an ‘academic’ flight of fancy. Read, for instance, the following reviews of Muna’s ‘I Know A Place’:

The song promises to offer a shelter from harm where listeners can be unapologetically themselves, proud of their gender, race and sexuality. ‘I know a place’ is, then, the mainstream sound of a pluralist, progressive community.4

In their latest single…they’ve created an anthem for the safety of the LGBTQ community. ‘I know a place’ is meant as a rallying cry and a reminder that safe spaces can exist.5

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What sources inform these interpretations? Critical discourse, of which there is plenty on the significance of Muna’s brand of ‘political synth-pop’ and on the ‘unapologetically queer’ identities of all three band members, is a likely source. Documented interviews with the band also offer insight into authorial intention and meaning. The attachment of ‘I Know A Place’ to significant current events must also be acknowledged. While reportedly written days after the 2015 Supreme Court ruling on state-level same-sex marriages and in support of Pride Week, the 2016 shooting at Orlando’s Pulse Nightclub informed its production and altered the track’s meaning, turning the metaphorical (‘club’, to which I will return) into the literal. It is unsurprising, then, that reviews of the track frequently reference (a ‘known’) place. But it would seem strange to assert the track’s resonance is purely contextual. To accept this would be, in a way, to accept meaning as ‘closed’ and, as such, to discount dimensions of its affective and world-disclosive potential. Lyrics, of course, direct readings of the kind presented above but neither do these provide the full story. I propose that a close parsing of production, formal design, and narrative allows for a persuasive case to be made for the track’s authenticating specification of a collective, (‘third position’) participatory, ‘safe’ space. In the analysis that follows, I address each aspect in turn.

The sound world of ‘I Know A Place’ is formed through a blend, albeit uneven, of Zagorski-Thomas’ realist/artificial and acoustic/electronic staging oppositions. A centrally placed lead voice, (subtly) right-panned single note (lead) guitar fragments, left-panned ‘chucking’ (rhythm) guitar and wide choral vocals hint at a ‘live band performance’ model of presentation. Aspects of technique and proxemics add to the part-realist aesthetic, namely call-response interactions between (foregrounded) lead vocals and a receded supporting choir. However, in terms of staging, the ‘live band’ appears highly integrated; indeed, electronic sound sources assume precedence – proxemically, texturally, morphologically – over acoustic sounds which sit within a principally abstract sonic ecology. Filter swells and noise sweeps provide spectral range, while

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6 Barlow, ‘Muna: I Know a Place’.
carefully timed oscillating synths add a modest sense of width, depth, and morphological direction. The experience of sonic envelopment tallies well with my interpretation of ‘I Know a Place’ as specifying – on account of spatial size, style, sound sources, and dynamic – a club setting. (The dynamic and spectral swell of the track’s opening seconds specifies the experience of entering the main space of a club, where the music’s full sonic image is revealed, from a location where the sound is initially muffled – i.e. outside or downstairs. The upward dynamic of the fade-in invites a metaphoric mapping of moving ‘up’ and ‘toward’ the music.) The broad appeal of this comes from its lack of specificity, i.e. ‘this could be a club anywhere’. This is not to dismiss the importance some listeners find in the track’s attachment to Pulse, but rather to acknowledge an inclusivity and broader potential to specify. What, then, does this reconciliation of realist and artificial design afford? Zagorski-Thomas offers some instruction when he speculates that realist stagings typically offer intimate connection while more large-scale abstract settings, with dance music cited as exemplary, signify a vibe of communality⁸; with this in mind, ‘I Know A Place’ can be said to inspire an inclusive individual/collective dialectic.

But there is more to say about the track’s sound design. The heavy use of delay and reverb adds a washy, ‘wet’ impression to track’s sonic image that adds spatial depth and enhances its appeal to listener absorption. And the more saturated overdriven guitar tone employed in the bridge marks an empowered attitudinal borrowing from rock. Consistency and security are two other fundamental ecological properties, with the avoidance of disruption being the general rule. In contrast to Sigur Rós’ Takk idiolect, textural accumulation is typically subtle which ensures a constancy of scope throughout. And in stark distinction to ‘Pink and Blue’, the delineation of sectional units is relatively small. There is little sense of morphological direction, with development occurring only according to stylistic convention. The sound world of ‘I Know A Place’ is also defined, with the outer spatial parameters – in view of the track’s ‘nightclub’ specification, the

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⁸ Zagorski-Thomas, The Musicology of Record Production, p. 86.
‘walls’ may be a better way of putting it – established in the opening chorus remaining in place throughout. That the group vocals, which appeal to participation, play a key role in determining the span and depth of the recording is vital to the specification of a human space defined by the community which inhabits and constitutes it. Underlying rhythmic regularity is also evident, with a backbeat departed from only in four-to-the-floor episodic markers, the bridge lead-in (where we get an embellished four-to-the-floor kick pattern) and the bridge pattern (which features three ‘off beat’ kicks and a single snare hit on beat four). There are no dynamic shocks either. The track’s compressed sound points to a modern production aesthetic within which dynamic consistency – typically ‘loudness’ - is favoured (even in the track’s drop chorus the voice assumes a sufficiently dominant presence to maintain the overarching dynamic impression). While ‘hi-fi’ in its polished, compressed profile, the sonic design of ‘I Know A Place’ does exhibit some regression. Indeed, sonic reference to the 1980s is conspicuous. The use of the chorus effect on the guitar is strongly reminiscent of 80s practice, as is a synthetic snare timbre which calls to mind contemporary uses of gated reverb. Notice also the reverb-soaked tom rolls in the bridge (e.g. 3:20) and the Eb ionian 2–3–7–1 glassy, bell synth lines in the drop chorus (3:38–3:50). The return to popularity of 1980s style indicators in modern pop may mean that understanding these as instances of ‘genre synecdoche’ is misguided, though deploying Tagg’s semiotic term does encourage us to account for the significant cultural and historical attachments these gestures bear. Overall, the reconciliation of modern production aesthetic and ‘retro’ sound sources serves to make specific temporal or ‘place’ attachment far from straightforward.

The track’s formal design is equally ‘safe’. In accord with measured textural design, structural regularity lends the track a predictable, undemanding temporal flow which invites the listener to settle – or ‘dwell’ – comfortably in the track’s ecology. Concise 8+8 verse groupings, mirrored in the chorus, conform to standard and are separated by 4+4 pre-choruses and 4-bar

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post-choruses the last two bars of which anticipate the succeeding unit through sweeps, swells and cuts. An attitudinally resolute 8-bar bridge is followed by a half-length drop chorus before an 8+8 chorus takes the track to its close. Sectional function is as clear as sectional succession. Choruses are obvious and their arrival is anticipated in stylistically typical fashion. Verses operate according to convention too, with textural and rhythmic simplification enabling the greater saturation of ‘verbal space’ and, with this, a more direct form of lyrical address. The bridge, as expected, affords some lyrical, rhythmic, textural, timbral and harmonic re-orientation, but rather than being disruptive, it provides a break in proceedings that allows for rejuvenated action – here I am referring to both textual specifications and the listener involvement – in the final chorus. Harmony marks another noteworthy formal dimension, for this too is, in its constraint and adherence to conventional templates, undemanding. Verses are built on rudimentary Eb ionian I–V–IV–V open-ended patterns and pre-choruses perform preparatory IV–V alternations. Choruses retain this tonal centre and repeat I–V–VI–II–IV–V progressions that hint at a tin pan alley functionality. The IV–VI–IV–VI–V of the bridge, as expected, provides a transitory orientation away from I.

A narrative of inclusion, expression and community emerges not, then, from harmonic development or large-scale textural expansion, but rather from facets of vocal address and setting. Some linearity is afforded, though development occurs only over the span of each verse-pre-chorus-chorus; that is, the ‘story’ is localised rather than being revealed over the entire track (a strategy that aims for rapid absorption, perhaps). The verses feature a persona appealing directly, in an unmediated, sympathetic manner to ‘you’, with a shift of focus from ‘you’ to ‘me’ suggesting an attempt on the part of the persona to quickly establish trust. The neat mirroring of ‘somebody hurt you’ and ‘somebody hurt me’ across the verse not only provides a familiar melodic hook, it also exemplifies the persona’s open, sympathetic stance. In terms of verse delivery, the lead voice adopts a conversational approach, characterised by dense phrases and rhythmic irregularity which gives the illusion of lyric-driven design – i.e. what is said, not how it is said assumes priority. An
analysis of melody and delivery reveals the track’s adherence to what David Temperley10 theorised as the LVTC (loose verse, tight chorus) model. Finally, we can observe the persona’s ‘private’ proxemic setting in the verses, which adds to the signification of a one-to-one dialogue.

Thus, up to this point social relationality concerns a relatively discrete interaction. However, enhancing the ‘cultural space’ specification the pre-chorus hints at the mass communality that follows with backing vocals, in a ‘public’ proxemic space, joining the unit’s closing line (‘if you want to go out dancing’). It is in the chorus that a collective, participatory setting is established, the experiential consequence of which is the affordance of ‘third position’ entrainment and absorption. Put another way, the listener is invited to become affectively and imaginatively attuned to and experience involvement in socio-cultural practices, and to forge imaginative relations with others that offer solidarity and (identity) recognition. While the lead voice retains a relatively foregrounded position, substantial (‘verbal’) spaces between lead vocal phrases encourage a shift in perceptual focus to choral backing vocals that in their layering and span are referential of a collective confidence, strength, and elation. The simplicity of the ‘yeahs’ and (wordless) ‘oos’ suggests inclusivity (they are not directed at anyone or anything) and implores participation; furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the immediacy and brevity of these interjections suggests that singing forms only part of the activity taking place in this space. This, along with stylistic and ecological specifications, invites the listener to imagine the chorus in terms of a corporeally energised ‘behaviour setting’11 where dancing – that most vital means of abandon and, indeed, resistance – is the primary action. With this, the story moves from one of address to participation; in other words, from dialogue to (communal) expression, action, and belonging. Of course, the degree to which attunement is experienced and forms of ‘cultural’, autobiographical, and contextual knowledge are applied will determine the shape and intensity of the ‘emotional

territory’ disclosed. These factors also inform just how ‘special’, to recall Reybrouck, or *authenticating* the world-making connections forged are.
3.7 Summary of Part Three

In this chapter I have argued that authentication can arise from the specification of environments – both real and imagined – that listeners actively recognise, identify with, and become immersed in. The opening section of Part Three was concerned with the examination of existing literature on music, space, and place. In this I observed an instructive emphasis on affect and embodiment as it relates to musical (and non-musical) activity within physical and social environments. In 3.2 I looked to studies from outside of musicology to explain fundamental connections between ecology and identity. In 3.3 I steered the discussion towards spatial listening experience, reviewing pertinent studies from musicology and psychology that direct the analyst toward an understanding of music as, rather than in, environment. The three sections that follow feature close examinations of forms of ecological experience. Sigur Rós’ idiolect formed the focus of 3.4, where I analytically confronted topographic, temporal, affective and attentional affordances. In 3.5 I argued that PC Music’s affordance of identification, recognition, and agency rests on the sonic presentation of contemporary (online) social spaces and modalities. Lastly, I interpreted Muna’s ‘I Know A Place’ as affording authenticating experiences of solidarity, belonging, and, collective action.
PART FOUR

Consequences and conclusions

4.1 Summary of Theoretic-Analytical Exposition

In Part Two and Part Three I put the composite theoretical foundation established in 1.4 to analytical-hermeneutic work. In places, theories were applied in a relatively discrete fashion. 2.3, for instance, can stand alone as an exposition of Johnson’s image schema theory. The same can be said of section 2.4 where I critically consider the phenomenological-hermeneutic usefulness of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘archetypical corporeal-kinetic forms’. The expositions that follow these are, however, notably less singular in focus. In 2.5 a range of concepts, including ‘entrainment’, ‘embodied security’, ‘embodied awareness’, ‘bodily listening’, and ‘kinetic-affective relations’ complement musicological deployments of ‘body schema’, ‘body image’, and Sheets-Johnstone’s model of gesture. In the closing section of Part Two, I explore temporality (and affect) drawing from both Edmund Husserl’s ‘time-consciousness’ and Daniel Stern’s ‘vitality affect contours’. Theoretical separation is even less apparent in Part Three. Gibson’s ‘specification’ and ‘affordance’ provide the basic analytical framework and ‘place’ and ‘space’ offer an interpretive starting point, but textual examination relies on the sophisticated assimilation of a range of musicological theory.
Rather than separation, then, a view from above reveals theoretic relation. This is local, in the first instance. While structurally separated, even sections 2.3 and 2.4 are vitally related – Sheets-Johnstone’s theory of ‘archetypal corporeal kinetic forms’ is critically confronted as a phenomenological alternative to Johnson’s image schemata. Though such relations are by no means exhausted; the analytical connection of image schemata and ecological ‘invariants’, for instance, warrants future consideration. It is nonetheless hoped that the organisation of theoretic material does offer a useful glimpse into specific intellectual territories. I think it vital, too, that we do not hold back from applying theory in order to better makes sense of our experience of individual tracks. The danger, of course, is that special pleading is inferred; that repertory is seen to be carefully curated to support theoretical points. This may be inevitable, though it is important to understand that examples are chosen to critically illuminate, not prove, theory, and despite referring to foundational embodied-ecological processes at no point do I make claims for phenomenological-hermeneutic universality.

This brings me to an important global relation. The theories and concepts I look to should be viewed as operating in a hierarchical fashion. The earliest introduced in each part are fundamental but unnuanced, with subsequent theories increasing the fineness of phenomenological focus and description (I have in mind the process of gradually focusing a microscope). That analysis takes flight from the explanation of general perceptions and ‘hidden’ processes but subsequently seeks to explain the specific and phenomenologically ‘apparent’ is another way of understanding my theoretic-analytical strategy. Image schema theory provided a starting point in Part Two but, in order to meet descriptive demands made by affective and motional aspects of authenticating listening experience, I subsequently traversed archetypal corporeal kinetic forms, kinetic-affective relations, and dynamic forms of vitality. This process is localised in Part 2.6 with Stern’s dynamic forms of vitality supplementing Husserl’s foundational model of time-consciousness. In Part Three I charted a path from general conceptions of place and space (as well as specification and affordance) to types of ecological territory (topographic,
affective, social, collective) which I latterly related to sonic design through the application of a set of musicological theory. It is worth considering one final example to demonstrate how going through these successive phases can aid the analyst in making ever more sense of a listening experience. An analysis of Jamie Woon’s ‘Gravity’ also reveals some other slightly different theoretic relations and pathways. My overall sense of ‘Gravity’ emerges from interrelated somatic and ecological specifications, but in order to arrive at something close to an explanation of the whole, it is necessary to isolate aspects of spatial, corporeal, and temporal experience.

The track’s spatial design is striking, sophisticated and highly suggestive and, as such, it is likely the parameter chiefly responsible for the affordance of absorption. Variation in ecological shape and character draws the aural gaze and demands responsive engagement. The first phase of analysis, however, involves a general determination of the track’s environmental identity. In theoretic terms, this means considering whether it is ‘place’ or ‘space’ specified. Place, recall, has been theorised as the (geographically) ‘domesticated’ and ‘known’ whereas ‘space’ refers to ecologically distinct, but locationally indistinct settings, a difference that I have argued is of use in understanding musical appropriation. Authenticating experiences of place in music frequently rely on autobiographical connection, whereas the perception of space, I submit, offers wider possibilities for experiencing (inter)subjective agency. The indistinct, synthetic design of ‘Gravity’ resists attachment to ‘known’ places; instead, the listener is invited to experience imaginative involvement with a space that embodies psychophysiological anxiety and disturbance.

In the next phase, theory aids with a series of related analytical questions, all of which relate to authentication. What kind of territory is disclosed? What are the dominant qualities of this space? What ecological position is the listener invited to take up? Einar Strumse’s five-part understanding of how environments are experienced in relation to the self – first introduced in 3.2 – focuses a response to the first of these lines of enquiry. Of Strumse’s environment as ‘physical

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location’, environment as ‘social system’, environment as ‘emotional territory’, environment as ‘setting for action’, and environment as ‘self’, it is the third and fifth modes that speak to my sense of ‘Gravity’. It is an inner world that is disclosed; that is, the listener is invited to perceive and appropriate a flow of psychophysiological experience. In everyday terms, bodily flutters, shudders, and swells as well as varying degrees of mental clarity are sonically (and lyrically) specified. In this instance, body, environment, and self are connected in ways previously hinted at (see analysis of ‘Freak On A Leash’), but not explored with explicit reference to ecology. Here, the body assumes an ecological identity, the self is experienced as a corporeal space, and changes in the (sonic) environment are experienced as changes in the self. In acknowledging this, we move toward considerations of ownership and agency as they are afforded to the listener.

Lelio Camilleri’s broad ‘sonic image’ descriptors enable a description of some dominant ecological qualities. While I hear ‘Gravity’ as a singular and thus ‘closed’ ('inner') space, it is ‘changing’ and ‘unstable’. Transformations in the sonic ecology do contribute to formal definition, as is typical, though sound sources spill over sectional boundaries; in the second half of the verse, for instance, atmospheric pads reminiscent of the track’s ‘indistinct’ introduction, intrude in an otherwise clear setting. Interestingly, sound sources not only contribute to the overall sonic image, they also appear to be the cause of changes to it. Notice the dramatic clearing of ambient sound that follows convulsive, metallic ripples (first heard at 1:07). It is also an environment that projects varying degrees of focus, a tendency that informs an interpretation of a persona besieged by invasive thoughts and feelings and, ultimately, failing to achieve resolution and clarity.

Johnson’s Image schema theory helps explains the roots of such experience. Hearing the space as an ‘inner’ environment likely stems from the recurrent experience of ourselves as containers, with the CONTAINMENT schema as fundamental. It is not only possible to assign an image schema to the type of space specified, Johnson’s theory can also be used to consider the

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2 Ibid., p. 13.
locational setting of the persona. In the case of ‘Gravity’, the persona is highly integrated IN the surrounding sonic environment and, eventually, retreats fully into it (4:37) and thus OUT of the track’s sonic image. CONTAINMENT – as well as the IN schema – also provides a theoretical grounding for the authenticating absorption ‘Gravity’ potentially affords the listener. Elsewhere (p. 202, for instance) I have discussed this in terms of a ‘third position’ – a variant of Moore’s ‘antagonist’ – where the listener experiences a heightened sense of immersion and involvement.

In these first two phases theory enables the general explanation of spatial impression and phenomenological sense. In a third phase, musicological theory enables the analyst to better understand spatial specifications and affordances in relation to sonic sources and strategies. As observed above, the sound world of ‘Gravity’ is changeable and thus it is necessary to separate sectional units. The track’s introduction sets expectations for saturated, atmospheric (or ‘wet’) and artificial ‘staging’⁴. The heavily reverbed synthetic string lines and percussion hits make for an indistinct, expansive spatial impression. The contrapuntal design of the strings lends the intro a ‘collective’ (rather than singular or ‘intimate’) identity as well as some spectral scope. In terms of ‘morphological space’⁵, the manner in which string lines surface and recede suggests some localised motion though this is by no means dramatic. The manipulated snare hits add ‘localised’ width as well as depth. From Camilleri, we can also borrow the descriptor ‘untidy space’, and from Zagorski-Thomas we can appropriate his notion of ‘abstract’, as opposed to realist, staging. The environment changes dramatically in the first verse. First, the substitution of sustained sounds for sounds with sharp attacks affords the impression of the space being cleared. In comparison with the introduction, the first half of verses specify a tidy, distinct, and relatively empty sonic image. Verses present a more ‘realist’ and ‘acoustic’ image too, with acoustic guitar and voice foregrounded. And yet, despite the significant modification of spatial impression, we retain a sufficient sense of the atmospheric opening to suggest we are in the same general space (I suspect

⁵ Camilleri, ‘Shaping Sounds, Shaping Spaces’.
it has to do with a corresponding ecological expanse specified by the reverbed vocals and acoustic
guitar and the stabs that ripple across the soundbox) and the retention of the intro’s chord-per-
bar harmonic pace and F#m–E–D set ensures morphological consistency. Things then start to
change again in the second half the verse. Tonally ambiguous synthetic pads threaten the relative
clarity, proxemic intimacy, and realism of the opening 8 bars of the verse. Gradual ambient
intensification and four open string powerchord guitar ‘chugs’\(^6\) seem to anticipate the arrival of a
texturally saturated first chorus but instead we are presented with a relatively empty sonic image
achieved through a new combination of sound sources. Made up of a voice, subtle synthetic pads,
kick and abrupt stabs, the chorus lacks explicit bass and harmonic layers. Consistent quaver kick
hits and a new mixed-modal harmonic profile heighten the chorus’ sense of diversion. These
varying sonic profiles are presented in subsequent sections before a gradually emergent bass line,
confirming the chorus’ E–G–D pattern, coincides with the retreat of the lead voice through
private, social, and public proxemic zones before its complete disappearance.

As previously discussed with reference to Sheets-Johnstone, translating affective
experience into language is a particularly difficult task. Finding descriptors for sensation is one
issue, explaining the ‘mysterious’\(^7\) way bodily senses become present in the phenomenological field
is another. Going through successive theory-directed phases can, however, aid the analyst in
overcoming such issues in the analysis of a track’s corporeal specifications and affordances.
‘Gravity’, again, makes for a good case study as the body is specified in several distinct but related
ways. Hearing the track as a sonic representation of psychophysiological experience is one option.
In this imaginative reading, the sound world is taken to embody a phenomenological reality that
the listener is invited to recognise and identify with. This is one way in which ‘Gravity’ may
authenticate the listener. Another way is that the listener claims ownership over the situation by

\(^6\) Achieved by detuning the low E string to D.
experientially interacting with invariant corporeal properties. Here, affordance is the enabling mechanism and appropriation is the authenticating act.

To the analysis of corporeality, then. Image schema theory provides a fundamental but unnuanced starting point. As hinted at above, the CONTAINMENT and IN schemata can readily be assigned. That is, we can speak of the track’s environment as documenting a flow of experience contained within a mind/body. In this reading, the (a) body also takes on the role of dynamic sound source. And a sense of being ‘trapped in thought’, a cliché that captures the basic psychological narrative, is concurrent with a flow of ‘inner’ physiological feeling. But this does not get us far phenomenologically or hermeneutically. Operating primarily at the level of structure, image schema theory does little to explain the specifics of the temporal-affective dynamics of ‘Gravity’. The more refined phenomenological focus of Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘insideness’, an ‘archeyptal corporeal kinetic form’
8, takes an analysis of ‘Gravity’ into a new phase - ‘insideness’ invites us to describe what is happening inside as well as what specific ‘insides’ are signified. One is particularly obvious. It is hard not to hear (in rather cliché fashion) the steady quaver kick pulse of the chorus as a heartbeat; indeed, it is a prominent part of the track’s sonic and experiential referentiality. But why a heartbeat? Its rhythmic consistency, which is in contrast with an otherwise washy, loose environment, is one reason for this specification. Its registral profile is another. The experience of ‘autonomic physiological entrainment’
9 – the attunement of biological processes to music – might also play a part in the forming of this response. The timbral and spatial manipulation of the kick in verse two confirms this signification. Here, two muffled but distinguishable kick sounds result in a gesture strongly reminiscent of the ‘lub-dup’ (or, in medical parlance, ‘s1–s2’) heartbeat patterning; however, Woon’s uneven (and syncopated) design represents a reversal of

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the natural pitch order, with ‘dup’ seemingly preceding ‘lub’ (see figure 22). The irregularity of the pattern also points to anxiety-induced palpitations.

Figure 22. Sketch of ‘Gravity’ verse heartbeat kick pattern (2:33–2:36)

While less literal in their sonic translation, other ‘inside’ psychophysiological events are perceivable. Sharp stabs, discussed above with reference to the spatial dynamics of ‘Gravity’, specify acute muscular spasms located around the upper abdomen. But such events are not purely ‘physical’; as the likes of Sheets-Johnstone instruct, they contribute to, and shape, dynamic flows of vitality that also frequently have an emotional character. Elsewhere, a ‘ringing’ sustained pad – which intermittently returns after a first appearance at 1:47 – specifies sonic agitation located in the head (tinnitus is the obvious experiential association). The emergent bass specifies ‘gut’ feelings that correspond with psychophysiological symptoms of anxiety including a ‘sense of dread’, nausea, and stomach ache. It is also possible to identify more general, but nonetheless experientially recognisable, ‘inside’ senses. Textural saturation translates as psychological distraction and increased affective intensity and the clearing of the environment corresponds with a psychophysiological sense of ‘emptiness’ (and perhaps isolation).

Stern’s ‘dynamic forms of vitality’ (or ‘vitality affect contours’) take the analysis of corporeality into a third phase. While the corporeal-kinetic form ‘insideness’ enables the location of aspects of bodily experience(s), dynamic forms of vitality help the analyst account for amplitudinal and temporal behaviour and relations and, as a result, the kinds of ‘under the skin’ vitality afforded to the listener. Stern, recall, offers a list of terms that capture temporal-affective qualities of felt experience, including exploding, swelling, forceful, drawn out, rushing, fluttering,
tense, surging, bursting, disappearing, powerful, languorous, effortful, fleeting, accelerating, fading, easy, tentative, tightly. These enable the more refined phenomenological description of the insides identified above. The sharp, but fleeting (abdominal) convulsions, for instance, can be described ‘bursting’ ‘powerfully’ into the phenomenological field. In contrast to these affect contours, the sustained, ringing pad ‘sneaks’ into the listener’s perceptual focus. The ‘swelling’ bass line that ultimately overwhelms the persona embodies a ‘drawn out’ affect contour that becomes ever more ‘powerful’. Stern’s descriptors also help explain the track’s localised temporal narrative, where, for the most part, fleeting affective-temporal events, rather than large-scale developments, afford direction.

What I have summarised in this section is a theoretic-analytical strategy that enables the analyst, as they move through successive phases, to make ever more sense of a phenomenological encounter. The theories I deploy, and the pathways I outline, are by no means style-specific and, as such, they invite application outside of popular musicology.
4.2 Doing Justice: Interpretation, Explanation, and Context

Having considered the analytical application of some musicological and non-musicological theory, I now return to hermeneutic issues raised by Part Two, Part Three and section 4.1. First, I briefly review the interpretive position – *space*, perhaps – occupied here. Following this I suggest that my phenomenological strategy informs and reveals a *process* of interpretation. Finally, I look to Nanette Nielsen’s concept of ‘doing justice’ to make a critical case for the phenomenological-hermeneutic treatment of (authenticating) listening experience.

In Part One I follow non-essentialist conceptions of meaning and authenticity in arguing that the meaning of a track is never fixed or inscribed, but that instead a ‘subjective objectivity’,¹ as Cobussen and Nielsen have it, is formed within listener-text interactions. In this view the perceiver plays an active, *intentional* part in the experience and interpretation of meaning. Allan Moore’s interrogative-hermeneutics, Eric Clarke’s ecological ‘subject position’,² and Paul Ricoeur’s theory of interpretation also provided some initial guidance. From Moore and Clarke, I appropriated an emphasis on the interpretive possibilities disclosed by sonic texts. For Moore, interpretation enables an ‘after-the-event’³ determination of meaning. Clarke, in a related view, understands listening as a direct, sense-making activity within which interpretation takes place. Ricoeur, for his part, conceives of interpretation as the act of actualising meaning and of the fulfilling of a text’s ‘destiny’.⁴ These views illuminated the space between objectivism and subjectivism that I subsequently operated within. Along the way, I have also argued for a phenomenological-hermeneutic position that avoids the essentialism and abstraction of formal(ist) approaches as well as the concerning detachment of sound and meaning characteristic of wholly ‘contextual’ (including ‘social’) perspectives.

² Clarke, *Ways of Listening*.
³ Moore, *Song Means*, p. 5.
⁴ Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, p. 120.
The analytic discussions hosted in Part Two and Part Three bring a third opposition – or scale, perhaps – into view, namely ‘Theory-based’/‘speculative’ analysis. Walter Everett’s use of Schenkerian method (discussed in 2.1), and William Echard’s application of image schema theory (see 2.2) are notable examples of theory-driven musicological analysis. In these works, theory serves to direct method. Meaning, I have argued, is also constrained by the strict and isolated application of theory. In Everett’s work phenomenology is discounted, while in Echard’s (and my own, for that matter) schematic analysis reveals phenomenological and musicological limitations. Purely speculative analysis, by contrast, is open; that is, it encourages different kinds of exploration. In taking a Theory-based approach, the analyst is invited, however unconsciously, to take pleasure in discovering ‘fits’. The more critically minded will also be cognisant of the flexibility and boundaries of particular theory. Meanwhile, the speculative analyst, freed of theoretic direction and hermetic terminology can pursue avenues of enquiry as and how they present themselves. Justification of the kind demanded in Theory-based approaches is not required either, as speculative analysis advances without foundation. But as Agawu observes, this can cause intellectual concern, transgressing as it does some core academic – and, more specifically, musicological – values, most notably the need for theoretical ‘framing’ and ‘grounding’.

Eric Clarke has confronted this opposition in relation to his own application of ecological theory. Positioning his work as theory-based, Clarke asks what theoretical ‘framing’ can achieve. First, it is argued, the use of ‘different terms’ can reveal ‘previously hidden and unexpected’ relationships. While they can be useful in describing musical designs, words themselves do not reveal sonic-affective relations; thus, we must assume Clarke is accounting for meaning (and intellectual context) in his use of ‘term’. The necessarily wide range of theory that I have used to direct and

6 Clarke, Ways of Listening, p. 202–203. However, Clarke’s theory-based approach is by no means closed. Indeed, the invariant-specification-affordance perceptual framework he adopts lends itself to open, interpretive action; and Gibson’s ‘affordance’, more specifically, invites the speculative exploration of a possible range of (inter)subjective functions and experiences.
enrich analytical discussion has inevitably resulted in a substantial number of terms being introduced along the way. However, I have avoided using theoretic terms in isolation and instead have used them to signal the alternative conceptual and metaphorical models – ‘framings’ – they contribute to and allow. And, at different levels, ‘hidden’ relationships have been revealed. At the foundational perceptual level ‘invariant’, ‘specification’, ‘affordance’ and ‘time-consciousness’ have enabled a connection of sound and responsive, interpretive action. Elsewhere, ‘image schema’, ‘archetypal corporeal kinetic forms’, ‘body schema’, and ‘entrainment’ illuminate sonic-somatic interactions. ‘Embodied security’ and ‘centredness’, among other terms, reveal appropriation (or ‘ownership’) as a meaningful aspect of listener-track relations. At the level of ‘the music’, a synthesis of complementary musicological terms has enabled the relation of aspects of formal (namely pitch, rhythm and structure) and sonic design (I point the reader to my use of Moore’s ‘proxemics’ and ‘soundbox’ and Camilleri’s ‘sonic spaces’ to illuminate textural-spatial-kinetic ‘images’).

Clarke’s next argument resonates with my application of theory in the service of phenomenological description. ‘It [theory] may’, Clarke writes, ‘genuinely help explain phenomena that were previously inexplicable, by presenting them in terms of quite different elements and within a different conceptual framework’.8 I list, in rough order of appearance, the ‘terms’ that I have found to function in this manner: (Sheets-Johnstone’s phenomenologically-oriented) ‘insideness’, ‘kinetic flow’, ‘areal design’ and ‘areal pattern’, ‘kinetic melodies’; (Shaun Gallagher’s perceptual) ‘body image’; (Daniel Stern’s temporal-affective) ‘dynamic forms of vitality’, or, as used elsewhere, ‘vitality affective contours’; (Brad Osborn’s technical-phenomenological) ‘primary pulse’; (Moore’s ecological-experiential) ‘antagonist’ and (my related) ‘third position’; (Saroff and Bello’s ecological) ‘extent of immersion’; (Nick Papadimitriou’s psychogeographic) ‘flight proximity’.

Lastly, Clarke makes the case for theory-based ‘grounding’ on account of its ‘limiting of hermeneutics’ room for manouvre’ which, it is written, ‘helps to avoid the vicious circle that potentially undermines it’. Theory, in this way of thinking, enables conclusion; that is, it forces the analyst to \textit{arrive} at an understanding that stands up to presentation. There is an intersubjective charge to this that, although not highlighted by Clarke, also warrants celebration. First, the explanatory perspective and language that theory provides aids the analyst in avoiding inarticulacy (to echo Charles Taylor\textsuperscript{10}). Second, theory can enable the analyst to offer interpretive readings that acknowledge fundamental, and thus shared, processes; the power of Clarke’s hermeneutic application of (ecological) theory, for instance, lies in the universality of its perceptual framework. I have drawn from a range of experientially and empirically corroborated theory to argue for the shared roots of a form of experienceable meaning – authentication – too often depreciated as purely subjective and, even worse, solipsistic.

I hesitate to assign the label ‘Theory-based’ to my work on account of the extensive span of different (albeit complementary) theory I explore and because my approach is not (in the manner of Clarke, Echard or Everett) solely directed by theory. Instead, I think of my approach as involving worthwhile qualities of both Theory-based and speculative approaches. As the opening discussion of Part Four reveals, my exposition of theory is driven by phenomenological sense. In other words, theory is not imposed on experience, but instead employed to aids its description. Also, theory is not chosen to constrain meaning or to provide hermeneutic conclusion, but rather is deployed to meet the explanatory demands made by listening experience. I do not want to deny, either, the hermeneutic allure of theory, for I think that theory \textit{can} disclose new avenues of interpretive enquiry. The danger here, of course, is that the delight taken in being directed by a theory can distract us from the phenomenological truth of an experience. Theory is used here to explain and probe rather than alter experience, and abstraction is explicitly resisted.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., pp. 202–203.

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Ultimately, I think of my work as evidencing a dynamic reciprocity between theory and ‘speculative’ analysis. Theory is applied in response to experience and the hermeneutic hunches that emerge from it. But then the application of theory can give rise to possibilities for hermeneutic speculation which themselves make demands. And so it goes. The import of theory from the ‘outside’, as we have seen, can also lead the analyst into non-traditional hermeneutic territory; in the phenomenological spirit of being ‘true to the truths of experience’, I have embraced this uncertainty. This is what I understand as the process of interpretation. Cobussen and Nielsen’s processual ‘attentive listening’ is called to mind (to which I return below): ‘Attentive listening means informed listening, perhaps even structural listening. However, it remains a bit like Wittgenstein’s ladder: once climbed it must be left behind. In that sense, attentive listening is (also) a post-structural listening’.12 I do not go quite as far as this, as I think what is established in attempts to document and explain listening experience has intersubjective and expressive value and should not be left entirely behind. Furthermore, ‘securing’ an understanding does not necessarily lead to (musicological) essentialism. Interpretations should always be understood as situated, intentional, temporally-defined and, thus, in a sense impermanent. While written analysis can never fully capture the multifaceted energy of music(al experience), I hope that, in reading my explorations, the reader gets some sense of the vitality of the encounters they are offered in response to. As we shall see in section 4.3 there is ethical value in probing experience and meaning but not ascribing finality to it.

From a musicological perspective, Allan Moore speaks of achieving a ‘secure purchase on the sounds’ in terms of (intellectual and interpersonal) maturity.13 Nanette Nielsen, alternatively, argues that explaining musical experience is a matter of (ethical) agency and responsibility. ‘Discourse’, for Nielsen, is also a vital opportunity to ‘do justice to what music is capable of

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12 Cobussen and Nielsen, Music and Ethics, p. 33.
13 Moore, Song Means, p. 6.
14 Cobussen and Nielsen, Music and Ethics, pp. 37–58.
And while these principles are targeted at the ethical criticism of music (variously defined) in Nielsen’s chapter, they can be readily transferred to my experientialist account of authenticity. Nielsen’s discussion takes flight from an incisive review of Peter Kivy’s analytic (in the philosophical sense) exploration of music and morality. After initially calling out Kivy’s limited (euroclassical) repertory and crude relation of ‘great music’ and ‘moral force’, Nielsen goes on to confront the unsatisfactory relation of objectivity (that is, moral qualities understood as in music) and subjectivity (moral properties that are a result of ‘subjective apprehension’) that serves to undermine his account. A lack of reference ‘to either music-theoretical insights or empirical evidence of psychological responses to music’, it is argued, leads to vague and superficial explanation. In Part One I observed a similar divorce of objectivity and subjectivity in authenticity discourse; claims for authenticity, it was argued, too frequently slide into unsupported essentialism or inarticulate subjectivism. My mission has been to show how the use of empirically-supported phenomenological and perceptual theory enables the analyst – who is at the same time concerned with musical detail – to bridge this gap and to more rigorously account for and explain authenticating encounters.

Next, Nielsen takes issue with Kivy’s acceptance of musical experience as a ‘divine mystery’ and offers a clear and compelling response:

There is no doubt that music can have a profound effect as we experience it. But we do not have to succumb to ineffability and thereby settle for failure to explain what is actually going on in this experience or disregard the potential for effects to continue once we turn off the stereo or exit the concert hall. Nor (by implication) must we concede that this

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15 Ibid., p. 49.
18 Ibid.
‘divine mystery’ must remain a mystery, that we are forced to avoid more probing discussions of music. In fact, for ethical criticism, as we discuss below, not explaining it does justice neither to music nor to ourselves as listeners.20

Nielsen’s argument tallies well with my overarching analytical ambition, and ‘authentication’ could replace ‘ethical criticism’ in the above passage. But how do we ‘do justice’? And what, exactly, should be explained? These two questions can be taken together.

First, it is suggested that we can do justice to an ethical criticism of music – and, in my view, an examination of music’s affordance of authentic(ated) subjectivities – by acknowledging how music engages our imaginative faculties. Nielsen posits imagination as a vital connection between aesthetic experience and moral engagement. In sum, our imaginative capacities, which become especially attuned in listening encounters, lend a vitality to our moral lives by enabling us to think about things in new ways, to consider other perspectives, and, as a result, to make to other decisions available. I, alternatively, have argued for imagination as enabling compelling interactions between music and experiences of affirmation and agency. This is most apparent in Part Three, where imaginative engagement is viewed as fundamental to world-disclosure and ‘world-making’. Elsewhere, I have pointed more broadly to the role of imagination in the mapping of musical and (extended) subjective narratives. It is also worth noting my connection of imagination and perceptual theory, for instance in my exploration of Husserl’s model of time-consciousness in section 2.6. Following this, Nielsen urges us to acknowledge the formative role played by listeners’ knowledge of musical conventions and ‘associations’ as they relate to emotional and social contexts. Using a scene from Schindler’s List as an example, Nielsen considers how convention and association informs interpretation and experience and, most importantly, ethical reflection. For my part, I understand knowledge – referred to at various points as ‘competence’ – and ‘association’

20 Ibid., p. 44.
as influencing the degree of ownership and agency experienced in listening. Thus, reflection in my analysis, primarily concerns the interpretation of presentations of (a present or potential) self to self, though the ethical connections between authenticity and self – and by extension self and others – makes such reflection a relational, rather than hermetic, activity. In pointing to knowledge and association, Nielsen leads us to a defining claim: musical meaning and experience, ethical or otherwise, is always in ‘context’, even if that context emerges primarily from autobiographical or imaginative response. This is an insightful and unconventional understanding of context as self-generated and phenomenological as more typically, context is understood as relating to historical, social, or political circumstances (surrounding a text, performer, or style). Nielsen acknowledges such an emphasis in the high-profile musicology of Richard Taruskin and Susan McClary. It is at this point the issue of musicological obligation and responsibility comes to the fore. Nielsen observes that for Taruskin, in particular, historical and political considerations are fundamental musicological ‘oughts’ and ‘shoulds’. To ignore them is, in Taruskin’s outlook, to fail to do justice to musicological investigation and, potentially, to fall into a form of hermetically-sealed, unanchored hermeneutics that lacks the critical rigour and explanatory focus necessary for responsible music scholarship.

How does my phenomenological project fare with all this in mind? In showing limited concern for history, it would seem that my project falls short of some of Taruskin’s ‘oughts’ and ‘shoulds’. But surely responsible musicology does justice to the task at hand? And not all musicological tasks are the same. Nielsen understands this when, later in the ‘Discourse’ chapter, she poses the question, ‘what exactly is being done justice to?’ Acknowledging this is the first step in overcoming tensions between hermeneutics, analysis (textual, critical, historical, or otherwise) and, in the case of my project, phenomenology. Of course history assumes primacy for Taruskin; he is, after all, involved in the writing of narrative histories, most famously in his multi-

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volume *The Oxford History of Western Music*. But starting with historical considerations would not get us far in explaining how correspondences between sound and (inter)subjectivity experienced in listening come about and why they matter. Working from experience is, I argue, the most suited path to doing justice to the (phenomenological) task I have established. The application of empirically-supported embodied and ecological theory is a more responsible and rigorous way of confronting (inter)subjective experiential meaning(s). And, in any case, context is acknowledged here. While I am primarily interested in the self-generated, felt, aesthetically afforded kind illuminated by Nielsen, analyses are frequently supported or enriched by social and cultural contextual discourse. My analytical examination of nu-metal’s embodied affordances was substantiated with reviews of (sub)cultural discourse – both vernacular and scholarly – surrounding the style. Elsewhere in Part Two empowered commercial hits and exploratory new singer-songwriter idiolects are posited in a wider ‘millennial’ milieu. In Part Three *Takkk* was analysed with reference to broader historical, social, cultural, and geographical readings of Sigur Rós’ work. An acknowledgement of online culture and comportment, as well as related styles, informs my phenomenological-hermeneutic explanation of P.C Music’s authenticating potential. My aim for section 3.6 was to explain affirming specifications of social affect and action in Muna’s ‘I Know a Place’.

Finally, Nielsen looks to Simon Critchley’s understanding of ethical activity as involving ‘demands that demand approval’. With this, we are taken further into the realm of ethical comportment (and philosophical parlance). And yet Nielsen convincingly relates this idea to aesthetic experience and ethical criticism of music, observing that in our encounters with music (ethical) demands are made of us, and in the (ethical) statements we make about (the ethics or authenticating potential of) music we, in turn, make demands that require approval. The fundamentally intersubjective nature of this idea is revealed in the following passage:

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When we enter into ethical criticism and make statements about relationships between music and ethics, we can see this as committing ourselves to experiences of ‘demands that demand approval’. And it would take understanding of our ethical subjectivities and experiences to explain why various ethical-musical demands would be so strongly felt.\textsuperscript{25}

Once again, it is easy to see how this links critically with my focus on music-self correspondences. For instance, it is equally true that when we commit to explaining music we (inter)subjectively identify with, we are committing to making demands that demand approval; that is, we are inviting others to accept or reject the subjectivities that we form in that encounter and that we express in our (in my case written) explanations. It is also equally the case that it takes understanding our authentic subjectivities\textsuperscript{26} and experiences to explain how they come about and why they are so strongly felt. This takes significant work, as evidenced in my critical exploration of an expansive range of phenomenological and perceptual writing. To conclude, I offer the following summary: songs make experiential (and ethical) demands of self and identity that demand approval and only by committing to phenomenological-hermeneutic explanation can we do justice to these. And, as we have seen throughout, one of the potential demands made by music is the experience of self in (social, cultural, political) contexts.

\textsuperscript{25} Cobussen and Nielsen, \textit{Music and Ethics}, p. 57.
4.3 The Ethics of Musical Experience: Influence and ‘Attentive Listening’

As argued in part one, authenticity maintains significant currency in modern life. It has lost none of its power in the cultural arena, where it remains a headline, a value standard that, when deployed dominates others. To be labelled ‘inauthentic’, whether you are an artist or fan, still stings. In social discussions ‘authenticity’ carries a seriousness relating to human ‘rights’, privilege, mobility and ‘belonging’. Pernicious (social) media developments such as ‘fake news’ have confirmed the pertinence of authenticity to political commentary. It is partly, most crucially, the concept’s ethical charge, then, that sustains it. After all, authenticity is about action and development – of lifestyle and lifestyle attachments, ‘outlook’ and comportment – as a means of constructing and projecting meaningful identities; identities that are worthwhile, that are of value, that are exemplary (to recall Alessandro Ferrara¹). It is also, as hinted at in section 4.2, about responsibility, integrity, and obligation. Recorded popular songs make demands that afford responsive action, expression, and connection. It is from this interaction that authenticating arises. But to allow musicological study to be driven by a concept as ethically-laden as ‘authenticity’ and make no serious attempt to define what the ethics of this might mean in the context of musical experience would be unsatisfying. It would mean not doing justice to the topic or task at hand. Taking my cue from two important works, The Music Of Our Lives² and Music and Ethics,³ and following up the initial discussion of authenticity hosted in 1.1, in the discussion that follows I probe more thoroughly the ethical consequences of the listening encounters analytically explored here as well as listening more generally. The works I survey are, of course, driven by some intellectual questions and ambitions different from my own. Nonetheless, they confront several key issues and dimensions of musical experience considered here, and to not scrutinise these overlaps would be to miss an opportunity

¹ Ferrara, ‘Authenticity Without a True Self’.
³ Cobussen and Nielsen, Music and Ethics.
to make further sense of the significance of such experience. This is not merely an afterthought - the ethics-focussed understandings of musical experience considered below are formative of the experientialist aesthetic I propose and have intermittently surfaced throughout Parts One, Two, and Three. Some more sustained attention is warranted and, in lending a focus to the final sections of my thesis, useful.

In the exceptional *The Music of Our Lives*, Kathleen Higgins sets out a compelling case for music as ethical ‘educator and influence’. Higgins’ argument (and indeed, book) makes for engaging and persuasive reading and, as such, it makes sense to confront key ideas loosely in their original order. Her starting point is a critical summary of the philosophical thinking taken to task in the first four chapters of the book:

Western aesthetics have become sceptical of the easy connection that most of the world makes between music and ethical life. In particular, the field’s tendency to treat music as an autonomous structural object and to minimise concern with the holistic character of musical experience (which depends significantly on context) has obscured the experiential basis for recognising music’s symbolic and motivational roles with respect to ethical living. Higgins mounts a response to this according to three ethical aspects of musical engagement and, in doing so, elucidates a way of resisting the legacy of formalism. The ‘psychophysiological’ power of music to move us – corporeally and intellectually (in ‘outlook’⁶) – is acknowledged first. Experience, then, is granted priority in task of explaining music’s ethical significance. Indeed, affective involvement is fundamental to all the ethical dimensions Higgins identifies. Next, Higgins argues for music’s ability to ‘develop capacities of value for ethical living’⁷, highlighting empathy,

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⁵ Ibid., p. 114.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
appreciation, and reverence. Thirdly, Higgins explores the idea that the metaphorical and symbolic function of music aids ethical thinking. Higgins’ argument is wide-reaching and, as such, demands a fuller treatment than it is possible to give here. With limitations of scope in mind, I prioritise Higgins’ discussion of psychophysiological ethical influence.

Arguing for the ethics of experience requires some preparatory intellectual manoeuvres. Higgins’ enabling move is to expose Eduard Hanslick’s misguided formalist assumption that music’s affective power, its phenomenological appeal, detracts from more intellectual forms of engagement. Higgins urges a holistic view, pointing to how music, uniquely, ‘provides simultaneous satisfaction to the various components that make up a person’. Let us turn our attention back to my work, with this fundamental point in mind. In my choice and application of specific theory – empirical, critical, and analytical – I have shown how understanding the phenomenology of music requires an overcoming of the mind/body duality. But I also hope to have shown how analytically attending to experience can be a deeply stimulating process that benefits from and leads to significant intellectual exposition. I do not think that the ‘unconscious’ influence of music is necessarily dulled by analysis; going beyond this, I have argued that committed interrogations of a phenomenological-hermeneutic kind can lend the act of analysis an experiential character. Higgins’ holistic outlook, which tallies well with my experientialist aesthetic, informs an initial experiential-ethical relation: in encounters with music we can ‘feel our powers attuned’ and experience a sense of harmoniousness. This, it is argued, is a necessary condition for ethical comportment. Notions of attunement can be seen at play in several of the listening encounters detailed in this thesis. Recall the discussion of nu-metal’s ‘galvanising’ capacity staged in section 2.2, where, it was argued, empowerment emerges from the attunement of emotional and physical capabilities. In 2.3, investigation of the empowered modern pop of Sigrid, Dua Lipa, and Maggie Rogers revealed an emphasis on kinetic-affective and temporal attunement. Elsewhere, the

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8 Ibid., p. 118.
music of Sigur Rós was understood as providing ‘simultaneous satisfaction’ to corporeal and
imaginative ecological capacities. I make no explicit claim of the ethical significance of such
encounters; nor do I explicitly claim that they afford ‘harmoniousness’. And yet Higgins points to
ways in which they can be said to be of ‘influence’ beyond the ‘moment’ of listening. Like Higgins,
I assert that such attunement – or ‘sense making’ – can occur pre-reflectively, in forms of
‘unconscious’, enactive perceptual engagement. In Part Two I made the case for the bodily roots
of authenticating experience and, in the process of doing so, considered the musicological efficacy
of Johnson’s image schema theory and Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms’.
Higgins does not mention intentionality, but, as I have argued with reference to a range of
phenomenological literature, acknowledging this is vital step in understanding ‘pre-reflective’
absorption as directed and active rather than passive and purely sensorial.

Higgins offers another way of understanding the significance of phenomenological
attunement. Pre-reflective experience, in her view, is not just about affective impulse, it is crucial
to music’s enabling of self-awareness; that is, of making us aware, in various ethically pertinent ways,
of ourselves in relation to others. Put another way, it reminds us of what and who we are, and how
our understanding, formation, and expression of identity depends vitally on recognising and being
recognised by others. Through Higgins’ manoeuvre, we are invited to consider how the various
tensions of authenticity considered in Part One can be positively reconciled. The ‘inward turn’, as
we saw critically challenged by Charles Guignon and Charles Taylor, or Carl Rogers’ ‘openness to
experience’, need not be viewed as drivers of atomism, but as enablers of relationality. Rousseau’s
alignment of affect and outward moral contact is once more called to mind. Remember too Ralph
Turner’s ‘impulsive’ conception of self. In positing experience as giving rise to self-awareness
Higgins establishes a vital link between affect and comportment. Finally, we can observe
correspondences between Higgins’ relational notion of self-awareness and the ‘intersubjective’,
‘integrative’ and ‘reflective’ components of Alessandro Ferrara’s authenticity thesis.
The body, for Higgins, is primary. ‘Listening to music’, it is written, ‘also makes me aware that I am an embodied being’. In both theory and analysis, this view governs the aesthetic I establish in this thesis. In what I have proposed, appropriation, identification, and absorption arise primarily at the level of corporal involvement. In Part One I established a composite theoretical foundation for this, drawing from Johnson’s brand of embodied cognition as well as the phenomenologically-oriented studies of Gallagher and Sheets-Johnstone. In Part Two, these were deployed in the service of musicological analysis, and while image schema theory and archetypal corporeal kinetic forms were used to explain the pre-reflective roots of experiential understanding, they were also found to be partly useful in describing recognisable – ‘conscious’, if you will – bodily involvement. Music’s enabling of bodily awareness was more explicitly acknowledged in the discussions of gesture, motility, and ‘vitality affect contours’ hosted in 2.5 and 2.6. Also in 2.5, I used Shaun Gallagher’s concept of ‘body image’ to describe the appearance of the body as an intentional object in musical encounters. I treat bodily interaction, drawing empirical support from the fields of ‘embodied music cognition’ and ‘enactive music cognition’, as a musical fact: Higgins understands it as an ethical enabler. Conscious somatic involvement, in her view, encourages the development of receptive and non-defensive selves. Listening, after all, requires openness to affective experience and responsive engagement. Sometimes, as for instance suggested in my discussions of PC Music and Sigur Rós, establishing meaningful connections with music means overcoming varying degrees of (sonically specified) ‘cultural distance’. Appropriating music that was once unfamiliar, requires one to be hospitable to sounds or ‘sounding worlds’ that were once ‘other’. With this mind, claims made solely of music perception encountered earlier suddenly acquire ethical charges; Mark Reybrouck’s understanding of embodied music cognition as a ‘tool for the

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9 Ibid., p. 120.
10 Ibid., p. 121.
adaptation to the sonic world\textsuperscript{11} stands out for this reason. From Higgins’ argument it follows that ethically good non-musical interactions rely on the very same capabilities.

Thus, it is not only sensation that is at stake when we become phenomenologically involved in music: when fully engaged, various selves, sensibilities, and capabilities are disclosed. In stating that musical experience makes ‘a range of emotional conditions’\textsuperscript{12} available to the listener, Higgins points to music’s developmental capacities, to its potential to afford, in Joel Krueger’s terms, ‘extended’\textsuperscript{13} experiences. In a later paper, Krueger understands this as a ‘functional gain’, writing: ‘In using music as a resource to construct our emotions in real-time, we gain access to an enriched palate of expressive capacities lifting us beyond our normal modes of experience and expression’.\textsuperscript{14} Higgins’ basic argument is that in helping us develop a varied emotional gamut, musical experience equips us with the means to act more ethically in the social world(s) we inhabit. Musical experience enhances our abilities for understanding and empathy because the (potentially) shared experiences it offers are a vital opportunity to feel what others (potentially) feel. Music is adept at this, Higgins argues, because in responsive engagements with it ‘we feel that others’ living experience is actually our own’.\textsuperscript{15}

Drawing from Neisser’s seminal work on the self and the ‘protentional’ component of Husserl’s time-consciousness, I have argued, alternatively, for music’s capacity to reveal temporally extended conceptions of self. While temporality is noted in philosophical (see Ferrara) and sociological (see Kotarba) writing on authenticity, this thesis is unique in its analytical synthesis of authenticity, temporality, and listening experience. The basic observation is that in authenticating listening encounters we become experientially implicated in, and imaginatively propelled by,

\textsuperscript{15} Higgins, \textit{The Music of Our Lives}, p. 128.
musical transformation. When music is (texturally, timbrally, and spatially) emergent or cumulative this sense can be particularly acute, as I have argued with reference to ‘How It Felt To Kiss You’, ‘22 (Over Soon)’, ‘Unbound’, ‘Takk’, ‘Eyeless’, and ‘Sé Lest’, to list just a few examples. Experience of temporal and emotional extension suggests that music makes it possible for us to commune with (possible) future selves. Following DeNora, I have understood this as one of many affirming potentialities listening affords. The point I have tried to make clear in my discussion is that in interactions with music, future selves are experienced directly, as already connected to our present identity in some way and thus, crucially, as possible. Songs present identity and experience as enduring, continuous, and as having recognisable trajectories. More generally, I have argued that authenticating impressions of agency rest on – affective, social, cultural, aesthetic as well as temporal – forms of projection. This facet of listening does not go unnoticed in Higgins’ discussion, where we read:

I am able to experience and enjoy music because I perceive along the dimension of time. In listening, I also discover myself to be capable of temporal projection. In most musics of a familiar style, I expect certain things and am satisfied when they occur. The music of my tradition (as well as many others) plays with tension and change. I find myself to be part of a world in which transformation occurs. Music reminds me that I exist in a world in which change is possible and that I am myself changing.16

Higgins’ ‘absorption’ also speaks to exploratory and imaginative capacities of the ‘third position’, contextual, and extra-musical kind explored in relation to the idiolects of Korn, Bon Iver, and Sigur Rós as well as in ‘Unbound’, ‘Hey QT’, ‘Pink and blue’, ‘I Know A Place’, and, latterly,

16 Ibid., p. 120.
‘Gravity’. In these cases, the specification of wider milieux – socio(sub)cultural and affective – is noteworthy.

This leads to Higgins’ arguably most significant ethical claim: ‘As a listener, one discovers oneself to be a social being’.\textsuperscript{17} That is, even in our most private moments of ‘musicking’, intersubjective connection(s) can be disclosed. I have endeavoured to theoretically substantiate Higgins’ speculative claim that ‘even music heard through headphones sounds like it comes from external reality’\textsuperscript{18}; a reality within which the ‘ecological self’ is situated and that concerns real and/or imagined ecologies of identities and interactions. To do so, I have engaged a substantial but complementary range of theoretic concepts and models in the analysis of musical experience, including, but not limited to, persona-environment relations, proxemics, staging, sonic image, dwelling, belonging, and identification. My detailed examinations of sound (design) also lend analytical support to Higgins’ declaration that ‘one is aware of music as a shared experience and of its potential to be shared by other listeners as well’.\textsuperscript{19} In my ecological reading of ‘I Know A Place’, and gestural account of ‘Body War’, this affordance is especially apparent. Higgins’ suggestion that ‘music also gives one an intuition of one’s self as engaged with and responsive to a larger world’\textsuperscript{20} hints a meeting point between (an understanding of) musical experience and Charles Taylor’s assertion that worthwhile forms of authentic selfhood require the acknowledgement of ‘horizons of significance’.\textsuperscript{21} While this is perhaps most obvious in the ecological encounters detailed in Part Three, a similar claim could be made of the (sub)culturally recognisable affectivities and gestures scrutinised in Part Two. In other words, the experience of ‘larger worlds’ can emerge from kinetic-affective specifications as well as stylistic and spatial impressions. Finally, Higgins declares that music’s sociality is related to the ‘appreciation’ (of others) it is adept at cultivating. Her supporting discussion is skewed towards authors and

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 124
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 123.
\textsuperscript{21} Taylor, \textit{The Ethics of Authenticity}, p. 66.
performers but, as I have shown, appreciation can be granted a far wider scope (to include real and imagined others, communities, and environments), and can emerge from (inter)subjective forms of embodied and ecological attunement experienced in the act of listening. It is important to note that while Higgins does not deal directly with popular music, her approach and thinking, like my own, is not genre specific and, as such, can be broadly applied.

All of this points to a very positive view of music’s enhancing influence. The ‘non-defensive’, ‘non-competitive’ stances Higgins makes the case for are clearly in opposition to antagonistic views of subjectivity. In this, Higgins’ account finds agreement with the intersubjective, integrative views paraded in part one. And yet, scrutinising identity as it relates to music practice and usage does reveal narratives of resistance, rejection, and difference. Indeed, in recorded popular songs, tensions between protagonists and antagonists – named or implied – constitute core subject material. And authentic subjectivities made available to listeners do, sometimes, rely on a rejection of other persons, communities, ideas, and institutions. For instance, it is impossible to interpret Will Varley’s ‘We Don’t Believe You’, a track that falls squarely with the folk protest genre, without acknowledging its expression of resistance. The opportunity to act against is, by consequence, a key facet of the track’s authenticating appeal. For ‘I Know a Place’ to be an inclusive, ‘safe’ space, some exclusion (of hostile people and views) is necessary. Experiencing ‘a state of mind, in which one does not oppose oneself to other human beings’ is undoubtedly one of music’s ethical pleasures and powers; however, it is wise to remain critically alert to the possibility for authentication – a much sought after and potentially ‘enjoyable’ experience – to arise from forms of opposition. There is, however, a case to be made for the ethics of experiencing difference in musical encounters. If we take seriously Higgins’ fundamental point that music enables forms of ethically enhancing self-awareness, we can say that musical encounters, in the ‘coordinated manipulation of tension’ they invite, can: 1) help us identify sources of

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difference; 2) make us more critically attuned to the value (or indeed the maturity) of the antagonistic oppositions we express and give meaning to; 3) enable us to overcome oppositional relations.

It must be acknowledged that in this thesis I have not only demonstrated ways of listening – in the embodied, ecological, and interpretive sense – but also a kind of listening. Or a level of listening, perhaps. The encounters detailed are by all accounts ‘close,’ and ‘involved’; indeed, phenomenological-hermeneutic interrogation of the kind pursued here does not allow for distracted engagement. Instead, it depends upon a commitment to engaged, exploratory, and imaginative listening. For Marcel Cobussen and Nanette Nielsen, such a stance is not only musicologically necessary, but also ethically significant. In *Music and Ethics* they encourage ‘attentive listening’, a far-reaching aesthetic attitude which, Nielsen explains, ‘implies immersion and experience rather than logic and rationality of a primary visual reality’.23 As in Higgins, then, phenomenological sense is granted priority. It is in the second chapter of the book, ‘Listening’, that the various components of this concept are most clearly outlined. Taking his cue from Adorno, Cobussen initially understands attentive listening as involving the meeting of ‘music’s immanent demands’.24 This can be taken to mean allowing textual particularities to direct analysis and points to a sensitivity to momentary gestures typically missing in structural and god’s-eye analytical perspectives. Attentive listening, by extension, also means having an ‘ear for the singular’,25 and being critically aware of the limitations of large-scale reduction and top-down theoretical exposition. In sum, it means taking an encounter in and on its own terms, to be open to its uniqueness, even if this challenges our (‘cultural’, stylistic) knowledge.

A concern for the musically and affectively singular has driven my phenomenological-hermeneutic interrogations and my exploration of (some lesser-known) theoretical territories, and is particularly apparent in my examinations of: vitality contours, which by their very definition are

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24 Ibid., p. 29.
momentary, in ‘Unbound’ and ‘How It Felt To Kiss You’; temporal flow in ‘On + off’ and ‘New Rules’; gesture (in ‘Body War’); proxemics; and localised and morphological spaces. Next Cobussen establishes an open and processual view of listening: ‘Attentive listening makes it possible to relate to each piece of music in a unique way, different each time – that is, each time beyond the familiar frames within which we often try to enclose music’. While itself ambiguous, the latter half of this quotation critically exposes, with equal precision, the limitations of formalism (where meaning is constrained by theoretical abstraction) and pure subjectivism (which quarantines meaning within the ‘empirical spectator’). The opening half advances the ‘singular’ view of listening initially appropriated from Adorno and with which my experientialist aesthetic is broadly in agreement; indeed, my critical prioritisation of the term ‘encounter’ is informed by Cobussen and Nielsen’s processual conception. As a matter of perception, then, listening is dynamic. What constitutes a listening is the interaction had between listener and sound. The intentional – that is, directed – facet of listening also requires acknowledgement; after all, it is possible to put music to different uses, to listen for different things in it, to allow listenings to be directed by different (theoretical, autobiographical, and contextual) specificities, and, as a result, for listenings to disclose different subject positions which themselves shape meaning. Cobussen considers a similar relationality with reference to attentive listening, which he claims ‘reveals the unheard’. This might seem to present a contradiction in terms, after all encouraging listening suggests a heightened sensitivity to the audible. But what Cobussen illuminates is a sensitivity to factors that shape experience and meaning, some of which resist straightforward location in sound sources and structures. Providing explanations with reference to sound has been my goal, and I have tried to support even some of more speculative of my claims with detail. Nonetheless, I
accept that reader may, in their own reflection on the heard and unheard, find some claims momentarily unanchored. Attentive listening, though, should not be read as a dismissal of the referential and affective power of the sonic text; rather, it recognises the fundamentally interactive nature of sense-making. As considered above, committing to explanation is one way to attempt to provide a record of something that unfolds through and within a series of ‘nows’. Such is the challenge of ‘languaging experience’, as Maxine Sheets-Johnstone has it. I have endeavoured to argue for the value of this, and here want to add that explanation is a means of presenting and encouraging attentive listening. Descriptions, where given, should never be understood as conclusive judgments, but instead as accounts of the process of (making sense of) experience.

To illuminate his own and others’ thinking, Cobussen refers at several points to repertory. For instance, Cobussen considers the exemplarity of ‘difficult’ musics – including free improvisation, noise music, and aleatoric music – suggesting that in their (stylistic) transgression and autonomy they appeal to ethical sensibilities namely tolerance (of the kind considered by Attali), hospitality (as proposed by Derrida), and courage (Badiou is referenced). While making direct ethical claims of the music can leave us vulnerable to (ethical) criticism, Cobussen reminds us to remain cognisant of such connections. The process of defining attentive listening also leads Cobussen to offer some musicological instruction. In the following passage, popular music is implicated:

Analysing the music of Bob Dylan with traditional tools, examining melody, harmony, rhythm and structure, will most likely leave a professional musicologist with a feeling of disappointment. Accustomed to exuberant late romantic symphonies or sophisticated serial music, s/he will qualify this music as uninteresting (though perhaps worth listening to for other, personal or sentimental reasons). However, attentive listening might perhaps

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bring Dylan’s music in line with electronic music experimentation. Both may not serve as fascinating material for melodic or harmonic analysis, but reveal instead the importance of another musical parameter: timbre or sound.\textsuperscript{31}

Leaving aside Cobussen’s niggling alignment of professional musicology and euroclassical practice, and underestimation of Dylan’s rhythmic nuance, his basic point, if not by any means original, is taken. The need for hermeneutics to account for all parameters of sound has informed my own approach to integrating ‘traditional tools’ into more nuanced examinations of space, timbre, and movement. My examinations evidence the idea that perceptual and analytical sensitivity to sonic nuance reveals relational dimensions of experience. Paying close attention to spatiality, for instance, can make us aware of the socio-cultural specifications of a track’s sounding world. It can also afford a more acute sense of our presence within (or outside of) it. Timbre, as demonstrated in my readings of ‘Eyeless’ and ‘Body War’, is not only a matter of style, it can also disclose corporeal forces and, correspondingly, attitudes (which are ethically laden). But Cobussen isn’t just challenging musicological tradition here, he is extending the scope of ‘attentive listening’ to account for the ‘resonances’ – heard and ‘unheard’ – that arise when one is sensitive to (timbral) nuance. With this, we arrive at the more profound sounding ethical listening, a substitution that enables Cobussen to concretely relate musical experience to ethical behaviour. That is, how in ‘confronting us with ethics’, aesthetic experience can influence our behaviour and interactions in the everyday world. Music, it is claimed, offers a space within which we can practice ethical capabilities. Through attentive listening, music also affords encounters where ethical concepts, including ‘hospitality’, ‘alterity’, ‘openness’, ‘receptivity’, and, as I have argued in this thesis, authenticity ‘come into existence’, are interacted with, and are made experienceable.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31} Cobussen and Nielsen, \textit{Music and Ethics}, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 23.
Thus we return, strengthened, to the ‘so what?’ question. Higgins, Cobussen, and Nielsen remind us of the ethical consequence(s) of listening. Technical-theoretic description, while important, is by no means the only thing at stake when we listen closely, when we concern ourselves with nuance, when we allow ourselves to become ‘fully engaged’, and when we commit to explaining our experience. In Cobussen’s words: ‘one must listen’.33

33 Ibid., p. 35.
4.4 Transformative Listening: Materiality, Method, and Opportunity

These arguments for the social and ethical significance of listening can be enhanced through a closer alignment with my experientialist aesthetic and recent developments in theory. In this final section, I situate my phenomenological-hermeneutic account of authenticating listening experiences in the context of other recent studies that fall broadly within a ‘4E’ – embodied, embedded, enacted, extended – approach to understanding music and cognition. My discussion has shown the fundamental interconnectedness of these dimensions of ‘sense-making’ – with a specific concern for experiences of ‘authenticity’ and ‘authentication’ – but also how the phenomenologically-interested researcher can enforce a separation that enables a more refined analytical focus. The first dimension, which acknowledges the role of the body in directing cognition and experience, has been explored across several levels from ‘deep’ underlying experiential patterns (image schemata, body schema, archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms) to more obviously ‘felt’ and performative forms of experience (including vitality affect contours, body image, gesture). The prioritisation of embodiment is crucial to the enactive view of listening I establish through the use of Gibson’s ‘affordance’ – which provides the fundamental ecological conception of listeners as active, intentional agents within environments – ‘intentionality’ from phenomenological writing and, following these, ‘entrainment’, ‘embodied awareness’, and ‘embodied security’. Embedded dimensions of listening are discussed in this thesis in terms of socio-cultural specifications (see the analyses of PC Music and ‘I Know a Place’) and ecological listening positions, where terms such as ‘absorption’, ‘immersion’, and ‘detachment’ inform the nuanced description of forms of involvement in sound (and, with this, narrative) worlds. Music’s affordance of extended experience has been considered at several points but typically in passing, and the extra attention it is granted in this section is warranted. To summarise my use of the idea up to this point, listening to music opens up possibilities for heightened affective experience and novel and imaginative experiences of (past, present, and future) self-identities and (topographic and
emotional) spaces as well as authenticating experiences of involvement in – belonging to – social ecologies.

The 4E view is flourishing most obviously in studies of music cognition, perception and emotion1 where it is directing fresh interdisciplinary perspectives. The recent collaborative efforts of Dylan van der Schyff and Andrea Schiavio2 are especially noteworthy and showcase new directions that have wide-reaching consequences for music psychology, musicology, anthropology, education, and sociology. Through the notion of ‘telemusicality’,3 van der Schyff, Schiavio, Silke Kruse-Weber and Renee Timmers offer empirical insight into the development of enhanced, exploratory, somatic, goal-oriented, and musically expressive responses to music in infants of between six and ten months; in doing so, they establish a persuasive account of musical experience and expression as a fundamentally 4E phenomenon (rather than a result of pre-given programmes, as traditionally understood), the (inter)subjective consequences of which bear direct relation to authenticating, ‘extended’ experiences of identity explored in this thesis. Elsewhere,4 van der Schyff and Schiavio argue for an evolutionary musicology that overcomes the nature/culture dichotomy and instead understands music cognition as ‘biocultural’, as emerging from situated interactions between bodies, brains, and environments (intersections with Gibson’s ecological theory are explicitly acknowledged). Their article draws on an extensive body of empirical research in support of an argument that can be read as a warning against the application of (disembodied) formalist, and cognitivist (including representational) theory in musicology. In ‘4E Music Pedagogy and the


4 van der Schyff and Schiavio, ‘Evolutionary Musicology Meets Embodied Cognition’.
Principles of Self-Organisation’ van der Schyff and Schiavio turn their attention more explicitly to music education, where a 4E view underpins a call for ‘autopoietic’ learning; that is, pedagogy that understands musical skill not as coming from the ‘outside’ (i.e. from the teacher) but from the learner’s embodied (including sensorimotor), affective, and creative interactions within an educational and, with this, socio-cultural milieu. The synthesis of skill acquisition and (‘self-organised’) musical identity is especially noteworthy, and hints at wider connections between musical competence (including listening) and enhanced self-understanding. Van der Schyff, Schiavio, and leading education theorist David Elliot⁵ collaboratively employ 4E to encourage an enactive, participatory sense-making approach to music education and to promote the ethically-laden relational autonomy. In brief, this urges teachers to embody and to enable creativity, critical cognisance, self-presence, imagination and collaboration.

Central tenets of the 4E approach also inform other pertinent social and ethical arguments made in music education – where Elliot and Marissa Silverman⁶ are key voices – and music psychology, where we can find research that prioritises the self-transformation and social-ethical development of listeners.⁷ As well as revealing a growing interest in the experiential basis of identity and social relations across disciplines, a cursory review of this literature adds empirical support and definition to the ethical perspectives applied to authenticity in sections 4.2 and 4.3. It also reveals other approaches to understanding how we listen (and learn to listen) and the contribution of music listening and interpretation to our social and ethical lives. As well as this, 4E-informed studies also demand that the materiality of music be taken seriously; that is, how music, and the devices we use to consume it, should be construed as experientially and ethically transformative resources.

I want to start with the issue of materiality for a few reasons. First, because it forces us to confront what music *is* (to us) and provides, practically. It is all too easy to accept music’s role in our lives without feeling the need to provide a defined or concrete understanding. And, of course, definitions vary depending on the context of the discussion being undertaken. As we have seen, musicology’s ‘music’ is different from sociology’s, and indeed philosophy’s. Kathleen Higgins’ ‘ethical educator’ (see 4.3), for instance, makes sense in the context of her critical examination of the ethics of musical experience, but it is by no means an overarching or universal definition. Such a thing might not ultimately be achievable, but some more recent conceptions of music as a *material* tool show promise in their wider potential for application.

Joel Krueger is a leading contributor to recent discussions of the materiality of music. His concise understanding of music as of practical use in everyday life – an outlook in alignment with that of Tia DeNora, Krueger’s University of Exeter colleague – is phenomenologically-oriented, focused on listening (rather than music-making) and explicitly involves 4E components. I take the following definition from the opening of ‘Musicing, Materiality, and the Emotional Niche’:

This term [materiality] is meant to emphasise two things: first that music shows up for us, experientially, as something we use, something we do things with; second, this is because music is mediated by artefacts and environments that afford different uses. And one of the central ways we use music, I will argue, is to actively manipulate space – and in doing so manipulate our emotions. Acts of musicking, seen as processes of environmental space manipulation, might thus be considered, seen as environmental space manipulation, might thus be thought of as examples of what I will call ‘emotional niche construction’. The materiality of music is what makes these practices possible.⁸

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In Krueger’s claim that music is ‘something we do things with’, action is emphasised. Indeed, Krueger is keen to assert the enactive nature of listening in even the most apparently passive circumstances; for example, we later see the playing of background music described as involving the active manipulation of ‘music and listening context: the genre, the order of the tracks, volume, length of our listening episode, how closely we attend, which device we use to listen, where we position it and so on’. The embodied dimension of listening is acknowledged in Krueger’s passing comment that ‘we encounter music as a spatially-structured soundworld comprised of qualities that beckon for further exploration and bodily engagement’. Affect, however, assumes primacy and is concentrated around the concept of ‘emotional niche’, which in simplified terms, relates to our use of music to engineer special circumstances and settings which afford novel emotional episodes. Krueger’s work, in convincing fashion, also asserts the ecological power of music. That is, our use of music to manipulate the emotional, social, and corporeal resonance of the spaces within which we listen. And, crucially, Krueger observes the marked shift to modern consumption devices and practices that allow for individual, or to employ his preferred term, personalisable listening. In ‘Musicing, Material, and the Emotional Niche’ Krueger does not explicitly mention the dominance of streaming platforms such as Spotify and the smartphone; nonetheless, his argument covers exactly the kind of ‘musicing’ these materials allow. The accessing of ‘otherwise-inaccessible’ experiences within ecologically-situated musical encounters speaks to the ‘extended’ and ‘embedded’ dimensions of the 4E outlook. Krueger does not explicitly present his ‘extended’ (musical) mind as a basis for ethical arguments (or ‘authentication’), but it certainly carries the potential for this usage and, as such, I will have need to return to it shortly.

We can find complementary views of materiality presented in applications of Material Engagement Theory (MET), a recent development that is having considerable impact in the fields

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9 Ibid., p. 44–45.
10 Ibid., p. 45.
12 Ibid., p. 55.
of cognitive archaeology and anthropology. While music is often not the primary concern of proponents of this approach, MET has conceptual and interdisciplinary intersections with 4E-directed music research, and with some of the phenomenological theory – most notably Sheets-Johnstone’s ‘thinking in movement’ and gesture – applied to music in a novel fashion in this thesis (see 2.5). MET offers a clear, and radically anti-cognitivist, view of mind. It argues against separations of ‘mind’ and ‘matter’, of ‘internal’ and ‘external’. In doing so, it offers another way of overcoming disembodied (and, within this, representational) understandings of mind and, crucially for our purposes, self. MET’s basic argument is that understanding emerges from fundamental relations between humans and the surrounding (material, cultural, social) environment they are (always) situated within. Lambros Malafouris, whose recent publications\(^\text{13}\) provide a useful entrance into the field, explains this as materiality becoming ‘entangled with our lived experience and thinking’\(^\text{14}\). In sum, there is no ‘mind’ separate from our bodily interactions with the things around us. *Thinging* is the term employed to describe this active, situated, embodied view of cognitive activity: ‘thinging denotes the kind of thinking we primarily do *with* and *through* things. For the material engagement approach *withness* and *throughness* takes precedence over aboutness’.\(^\text{15}\) The potter shaping clay at the wheel is taken as illustrative of a dynamic, non-linear, continuous\(^\text{16}\) process of *material transformation*. Malafouris’ (and MET’s) claim is that is impossible to account for the activity of pottery making though traditional binaries of subject/object, mind/matter, and nature/culture. There can be no separation of the potter’s intention and the final product; rather, the intention is continuously realised through the physical manipulation and formation of clay which in turn directs the potter’s intentions. Rather, what can be observed in pottery making, Malafouris notes, is a form of *cognitive becoming*: ‘That is, we see a flow of energies within and


\(^{14}\) Malafouris, ‘Mind and Material Engagement’, p. 5.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{16}\) Malafouris uses ‘retention’ and ‘protention’ – the Husserlian concepts put to work in section 2.6 – to explain temporal and experiential continuity.
between varieties of materials’. This speculative observation leads Malafouris to a profound phenomenological claim which fits directly with the enactive view of listening I adopt in order to explain musical authentication:

This is how energies are being transformed into agencies. Agencies when embodied in living bodies can also acquire experiential content and sometimes develop awareness, i.e., a ‘sense’ of agency. But this awareness of agency, characteristic of human bodies, is largely an illusion. There is no agent apart from the action. Agency is not a permanent feature or property that someone (human or non human) has independently of situated action but the emergent product of material engagement.

Notice first the deeply phenomenological, affective conception of ‘agency’ employed here. But Malafouris makes an important point about experiencing agency, or ‘ownership’. While the experience is felt within the individual (and as the individual’s) it relies on embedded (inter)action. Agency depends on directed – intentional to recall the phenomenological idea – and responsive action that arises from material encounters. In this experiential present, the subject and the object direct each other’s transformative potential and, as such, are ontologically inseparable.

These accounts of materiality offer a concrete explanation for music’s transformative capacities. They show how experiences of self and space that arise within musical encounters are not merely flights of the mind, but are situated in embodied, relational encounters. As well as supporting the view of listening I develop in Part Two and Part Three, Kreuger’s materiality and MET – in defining more clearly the dynamic between listeners and music – phenomenologically enrich the ethical argument made by Higgins, Cobussen and Nielsen that when we listen we engage in encounters that have ethical potential; in other words, encounters within which our sense of

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17 Ibid., p. 11.
18 Ibid.
self and our sense of and connection to others can be authenticated and altered. Music as an isolated thing is not ethical. Rather music’s presence, the opportunity for experiential interaction it invites, has the potential to affirm, alter, and guide our sense of self, our behaviour, our outlook, our convictions, and our relations with others. Music provides a material opportunity for encounters that reveal new ways of seeing ourselves – new authentic subjectivities – and/in the world around us. In Krueger’s understanding of the ‘extended musical mind’, music serves as a tool to which we can ‘offload’ our regulation of emotional and bodily behaviour. As Krueger notes, this material offloading can result in deeply relational experiences with others based on forms of emotional and corporeal entrainment. To extend this, I argue that music also enables the offloading of, and provides a scaffold for, experiences of individual and collective identities: in other words, music affords the materialisation of authenticity and agency. But, as Krueger also reminds us, when musical offloading is involuntary, as in the case of musical torture, agency can be denied.

Personal and social transformation also form the focus of psychologist Paul Elvers’ framework of musical experience. It is Elvers’ illumination of the connection between the personal and the social through a 4E outlook, and a clear conception of musical as social material, which makes ‘Songs for the Ego: Theorizing Musical Self-Enhancement’ pertinent here. And in using ‘self-enhancement’ to cover affordances of social cohesion and affiliation and empathetic feelings as well as improved self-esteem, Elvers’ account is deeply relational and, as such, ethically significant. First, Elvers considers ‘ego-projection’, the tendency of listeners to identify with musical personae. In Elvers’ explanation, personae can be understood to function as identity-material to which the listener offloads affect and senses of self. Material and self-transformation occurs here as a result of a blurring of boundaries between listener, personae, and songworld. This leads Elvers to his focal idea that music serves as an ‘esthetic surrogate’ of social interaction. This idea has obvious overlaps with Krueger’s application of the extended mind thesis – and

21 Ibid., p. 9.
22 Elvers, ‘Songs for the Ego’.
‘worldmaking’ – though Elvers’ ‘esthetic’ surrogate uniquely understands music listening as providing opportunities for experiencing affirming social interaction with (virtual) personae\textsuperscript{23} that embody positive, empowered identities in a ‘safe’ environment. The second aspect of Elvers’ framework relates to music’s embodied, social affordances, with familiar notions of synchronisation and entrainment presented. Finally, Elvers explores musical pleasure and reward, arguing that ‘pleasure might support self-enhancement but only when it is accompanied by positive affect or positive self-referential feelings’;\textsuperscript{24} phenomenological authentication, as I have argued, is an especially affirming, and meaningful, basis for the kind of transformative pleasure Elvers addresses.

In the education-focused work of David Elliot and Marissa Silverman, a 4E outlook underpins grand and engaging arguments for music’s social function and potential. And while ethical claims of musical experience can be inferred from the literature acknowledged above, here they are explicit. The discussions Elliot and Silverman host also invite the researcher to lift analytical and ethical considerations of music listening out of written academic expression and into ‘everyday’ music practice, and to not understand theory solely as an explanatory opportunity, but also as a basis for action. For these reasons, they provide a fitting focus to the conclusion of this thesis.

The publication of the seminal \textit{Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education} – a text that critically confronted established practice and theory and offered radically new pedagogic perspectives and approaches that accounted for the corporeality of music– confirmed for Elliot a dominant presence in the field. In more recent publications, including ‘Music Education as/for Artistic Citizenship’, we can observe Elliot arguing for the wider significance of music education, in doing so fortifying our understanding of transformative connections between musical activity (vitally, he includes listening in a broad definition of music-making), (self)identity, and social

\textsuperscript{23} Sigrid, Dua Lipa, and Maggie Rogers, discussed in sections 2.5 and 2.6, are pertinent current examples.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 7.
action. Elliot urges educators to prioritise the ‘whys’ of their practice over the ‘whats’, and to view the role of music education as providing individuals with an opportunity to develop what he calls ‘artistic citizenship’, an ethical and collective sensibility that is enabled by several complementary educational themes. The first, Elliot explains, involves educators preparing students to ‘put their music to work for the betterment of other people’s lives and social well-being’. As I have proposed, performance and composition are not the only ways of putting ‘our’ music ‘to work’. Being committed to developing and articulating our interpretive responses to music is another means of opening up dialogue and empathetic relations with others (real or virtual). In addition to this, the emergence of (authenticated) identities in and through listening encounters affords experiential and critical understandings of self that are always in consideration of and relation to others, in doing so providing a basis for developed ethical judgement and comportment. We should, in short, conceive of musical engagement as ethical – or, rather, ethically applicable – action, the second theme of Elliot’s music as/for artistic citizenship. Musical encounters accord responsibility, giving us the choice to act on and carry forward the new worlds and ways of feeling, thinking, and being disclosed, or to forfeit such a privilege.

Listening together, Marissa Silverman argues, is a means of unlocking music’s transformative potential. Silverman describes a method of educational listening she labels ‘democratic music listening’, in doing so pointing to opportunities for the exploitation of music’s ethical materiality. This involves the tutor and students sharing and collectively interpreting personally important pieces that relate to broad themes (including ‘Revolutionary and Evolutionary Musicians’). Listening and discussing song interpretations in groups is a familiar experience to those of us employed in higher education to lead music analysis and hermeneutics classes; however, Silverman’s development of a structured, facilitated approach, and her application of it in secondary level education is novel. Her critical findings are profound.

26 Silverman’s study is situated in the USA, but her democratic music listening would be, as far as I’m aware, novel in the context of UK music education.
Community listening, it is argued, creates pathways for teacher-learner and peer interactions that are ‘inclusive, educative, ethical and transformative’. It is the *negotiation of identity* that is foregrounded in the process. That is, democratic listening, which involves the respectful, hospitable, open, participatory, interactive interpretation of music, invites listeners to critically reflect on their own experiential responses to music, life situations, and beliefs within the context of a community that is constituted of distinct and diverse subjectivities. Music, then, is not the only material resource here; the hermeneutic community and process established in the classroom serve as resources for affective and gestural ‘offloading’ and, as a result, are sources of relational affirmation, solidarity, and authentication. In engaging with the process, students are learning how to listen – to music and others – and learning of the fulfilment and value in being dedicated to, and expressive in, something larger than themselves. Democratic listening, then, as process and resource, affords students an extended sense of personal-musical potentialities, and *through* this, concrete possibilities for and experiences of (self)transformation. In sum, Silverman’s ethnography urges us to acknowledge music’s special capability of opening up relational spaces for individual and ethical growth.

These emerging theoretic directions lend further support to, as well as confirm the currency of, my phenomenological-hermeneutic account of music-identity relations. More importantly, they make powerful and timely claims for music’s contribution in and to our material world. They also remind us of the embodied and imaginative access to novel, emergent identities and worlds musical encounters afford. Finally, this body of music research – to which my thesis now contributes – reveals the (inter)subjective and, with this, ethical significance of having and taking opportunities to interact with and through music.

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