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Chapter draft for *Entrance-ment The strange border lands of dreaming, waking and imagination* (ed. Ruth Finnegan)

EVERYDAY TRANCING AND MUSICAL DAYDREAMS

'Listening to ... a symphony by Glazanow I had the inner vision of an unknown landscape, a wild northern bay ... against this backdrop ... I beheld the strangest apparitions ... crowds of people dressed in red, also white horses, but also terrifying mythological beasts ...' [Frau Maria] (Lee, 1933: 351-2)

'You know just before you properly wake up in the morning ... you're not asleep, but you're not really back in the land of the living? Sometimes I can get like that with the music - it's taking you away somewhere isn't it? [David]

INDUCTION

In the years immediately prior to World War 1 British writer Vernon Lee (remembered principally for her contributions to the fields of supernatural fiction and aesthetics) compiled a now all but forgotten questionnaire and interview study of the music listening experiences of 150 individuals in Germany, France, Italy and the UK. Lee highlighted two ways of responding to music - 'listening' and 'hearing'. For 'Listeners', music was the main focus of (effortful) attention. Their mode of listening was primarily autonomous - 'about' the music. The experience of 'Hearers' was very different - a multimodal interweaving of musical characteristics with extra-musical detail:

'...moments of concentrated and active attention to the musical shapes are like islands continually washed over by a shallow tide of other thoughts: memories, associations, suggestions, visual images and emotional states ... they coalesce, forming a homogeneous and special contemplative condition ...Musical phrases, non-musical images and emotions are all welded into the same musical day-dream...' (Lee, 1933: 32)

Lee here identifies two key characteristics of lived experiences of music: 1) the presence of a fluctuating, distributed attentional focus and 2) a perceived move away from a baseline or 'normal' state of consciousness. The Arts are inextricably linked to consciousness transformation, both in terms of their creation and reception. The process of imagination constitutes one of the most fundamental transformations of consciousness. Without the capacity to imagine the Arts could not exist - a theme I'll return to later in this chapter. But, of all art forms, music appears to afford the most versatile means of customising individual, subjective experience (and communal inter-subjective experience) across a diverse number of everyday life scenarios. As a non verbal, multivalent means of communication, incomplete in terms of sensory information, music prompts a performative stance to sense making, where individual interpretation is necessary to 'fill in the gaps' (Windsor, 2000). Music's semantic malleability makes it a potent mediator of experience, able to blend together elements of external awareness that would otherwise remain perceptually separated and connect internal and external concerns. In other words, music may function as a prosthetic technology of the self (DeNora, 2000: 46-74) to "choreograph" consciousness. I have suggested elsewhere

(Herbert, 2011a) that this type of interaction between music and consciousness may be usefully conceptualized as a form of musical trancing.

Six Observations on musical trancing

Universalism

Transformations of consciousness (whether termed 'trance', 'entrancement', 'altered states', 'alternate states' etc) occur universally in all cultures (Brown 1991; Nettl, 2000) and are considered to have adaptive value in evolutionary terms (Dissanayake 1988; Lewis-Williams 2002). Music's association with consciousness transformation is ancient (e.g. as used in ritualistic contexts) and the transformative power of music i.e. 'the use of music to provide some kind of fundamental change in an individual's consciousness' has been considered as a universal¹ (Nettl, 2000: 468).

Relativism

The neuropsychological processes characteristic of musical trancing remain constant cross-culturally, but different trancing vocabularies attach to different cultures and crucially, the contents and raw 'feel' of subjective experience vary. Ethnomusicologist Judith Becker has employed Bourdieu's notion of habitus to capture the situatedness of musical experience, 'an embodied pattern of action and reaction in which we are not fully conscious of why we do what we do' (Becker, 2010: 130).

Process

Transformations of consciousness are best considered as processual, rather than as discrete 'states' (Becker, 2004; Herbert, 2011a, 2011b) The term 'entrancement' and the gerund 'trancing' both point towards the dynamic nature of subjective experience. The processes of imagination, falling asleep (hypnagogia), dreaming and waking (hypnopompia) may all be usefully conceptualised as instances of trancing.

Definition

Trance may be most profitably understood not as a unitary state, but as a 'Wittgensteinian category, a set of similar events that bear "family" resemblances to one another' (Becker, 2004: 43). This accommodates empirical findings that although individual instances of trance may be quite diverse, they do share common features. Through my empirical study of musical trancing I have adopted the following inclusive definition:

... trancing-as-process [is] an over-arching concept that subsumes absorption (total involvement) and dissociation (detachment) within it ... I define trance as a process characterized by a decreased orientation to consensual reality, a decreased critical faculty, a selective internal or external focus, together with a changed sensory awareness and - potentially - a changed sense of self' (Herbert, 2011a: 50).

Attentional focus

¹ The use of music to afford consciousness transformation may be considered to constitute an 'absolute' universal i.e. a phenomenon that has been identified from the ethnographic record as occurring across ALL cultures.

Musical trancing episodes may focus on acoustic attributes of music, on sources specified by music (associations, memories) which trigger imaginative involvement, physical entrainment to music, emotions represented or induced by music, or a fusion of aural, visual and kinaesthetic elements (i.e. a multimodal, heteronomous focus).

Research

The disciplines of ethnomusicology and anthropology have both embraced the study of transformations of consciousness (usually labelled as 'trance' or 'altered states of consciousness' (ASC). Psychological studies of musical experience however, have tended to avoid this topic, partly because of concerns that is not a credible, academically respectable area of study, and partly because research has been dominated by a focus on emotion to the exclusion of other experiential phenomena (Herbert, 2012c).²

HYPNAGOGUE Noun. 'an agent that induces drowsiness or sleep' (WordNet, 2010)³

Origin: late 19th century: from French *hypnagogique*, from Greek *hupnos* 'sleep' + *agōgos* 'leading'

Since 2005 I have carried out a series of empirical enquiries focusing on the everyday listening practices of individuals in the UK, driven by an interest in the range of consciousness music listening episodes may encompass. The primary aim has been to examine the interaction between music, mind, culture and context via phenomenological study (semi-structured interviews and free descriptions) of the psychological processes present in real world musical experiences and the subjective 'feel' of the totality of such experiences as they unfold. To date nearly 100 individuals, from 9 to 85 years of age, from diverse social backgrounds and with an array of musical tastes have contributed to a developing library of listening experiences. Detailed discussion of experiences gathered between 2005 to 2007 can be found in my book *Everyday Music Listening* (Herbert, 2011a) and elsewhere (e.g. Herbert, 2011, b; Herbert, 2012a, b; Herbert, 2013). In the following section I offer some snapshots from reports of music listening, drawn from my past and ongoing research.

6 *musical daydreams*

Super powers (Autobiographical fantasy)

Soundtrack: Russian Privjet (Basshunter)

I definitely use music to day dream. Quite a lot. I've got this very weird obsession since I was very young that I've got some strange power built up in me and in certain

² Within the field of music and affect studies, it is now accepted that emotions do not account for the entirety of subjective experiences of music. See for example the revised Handbook of Music and Emotion (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010: 940)

³ The ASC's experienced by almost all ordinary people are dreaming states and the hypnagogic and hypnopompic states, the transitional states between sleeping and waking. (Tart, 1972:1203) Princeton University "Hypnagogue." WordNet. Princeton University. 2010. <<http://wordnet.princeton.edu>>

music that I will imagine myself doing some weird super power thing... In one piece – something by *Basshunter* -I just see myself in some random road which is a bit funny but yeah I just see myself floating in the air, moving stuff with my mind...Well, it wouldn't be a road it would sort of...I would be randomly in the middle of the playing fields just sort of controlling the weather, that sort of thing... And as the music progresses [it's] sort of a bit like a sci-fi movie. The actions and the drama gets more intense as the music gets to its climax and then it would sort of dwindle.

Basshunter's very techno-modern and it is easier to access it in the techno-modern music because it is very ... sort of bass dominated so you can get very strong feelings from it and ... if the volume's at a certain pitch I find it a lot easier to access that path. I can't do it with classical music. Just really big sounds. I can get really into my imagination. I have got a bit of an over active imagination!

It's a sort of alternate world sort of thing... because I don't really like **my** world a lot. In that [alternate] world everything is sort of right ... so since young I sort of, it's just been a place to go. [John, 17]⁴

For John, music provides a regularly accessed forum for experimentation with identity - a common preoccupation in adolescence. Listening here is clearly multimodal and heteronomous. Musical attributes and lyrics prompt a dream-like, filmic succession of personal and cultural associations and memories. The attentional focus is inward and there is a clear motivation to escape to an 'alternate world' where 'everything is sort of right'.

All the day dreams come out (Fictional fantasy)

Soundtrack: Luna (Astor Piazzolla)

I have a big habit of having daydreams, and when I'm listening to music I just seem to – all the daydreams seem to come out and I might either imagine stories or I might imagine the future, or depending on the type of music I might think of different people ...

When I was listening to *Astor Piazzolla* in the car there was this rather creepy track and I imagined there was someone being murdered – a small child actually, and there was this evil killer who we don't know of – no-one's ever seen their face as it's hidden under a black hood. And they're the one killing all these children. And it leaves. And it sees a little poor baby. It's had some trouble with being a child in its previous life and it thinks that all children are horrible due to what's happened to it in its childhood. It looks at the child and it starts to feel sorry for the child. Then it forgets, throws it into the river and starts murdering a whole load of other kids. So that's one of – that's one of the stories. I can't really remember all of the stories I dream about. It's usually quite dramatic. [Lily, 11]

Both John and Lily accept daydreaming to music as a regular mode of musical experience and both have a developed imaginative capacity⁵, revealed in their inwardly directed attention and production of spontaneous imagery. Lily's daydream possesses more of a narrative

⁴ All names have been changed.

⁵ John and Lily's accounts are taken from my current study of young people's musical engagement. As part of that study participants completed a range of psychometric measures. Both participants scored highly on the Creative Experiences Questionnaire (Merckelbach et al.) and Modified Tellegen Absorption Scale (Jamieson, 2005), which tap the capacity for imaginative involvement

quality however - a sense of 'storying' to music, involving fictional characters. Phenomenological reports I have collected so far suggest that this type of imaginative fantasy is more likely to arise in pre-pubescence and early adolescence.

Paper-thin aliens. (Dissociation from surroundings)

Soundtrack: Music for 18 Musicians (Steve Reich)

Reaching the roundabout on a dual carriage way, the sharp clarity of the yellow and black chevron pattern shouts at me to appreciate it ... traffic slows as we approach Orpington outskirts and I feel curiously remote. Stare at some pedestrians at a junction and realize I feel almost too distant. They look paper thin, almost alien, I have no connection with them: or rather, I do have a connection but am observing it and them. [Will, 57]

Subjective experience is reconfigured as repetitive patterns within a minimalist piece of music blend with and heighten perception of repetitive patterns in external surroundings (the chevron pattern). The initial absorption afforded quickly shifts to a dissociative, semi dream-like experiential vantage point ('no connection') where objects assume a preternatural quality (pedestrians seen as 'paper thin, almost alien').

Hallucinogenic notes and chords (Absorption in sound attributes)

Soundtrack: The Mythical Laboratory (Mikhail Karikis)

Listening to CD on the train. Fascinating textures, no melodies dreamy & very relaxed. Love the hallucinogenic quality of sustained notes & chords with endlessly repeated rhythms. Drift for a while into smile inducing vacancy ... timbres, rhythms for their own sake with no particular rational attempts to make associations ... 50 per cent experiencing them as hypnotic, and 50 per cent noticing that they had hypnotic qualities. The latter impinges on the former. [Max, 46]

In contrast to the previous excerpts, subjective experience here does not encompass visual elements (real or imagined), but relies solely on a fascination with acoustic attributes. The episode features a relaxed critical faculty and a reduction in thought ('vacancy'). Max explicitly recognises that his conscious awareness has been altered ('hallucinogenic', 'hypnotic'), but the subjective feel of the experience is influenced by a belief that certain musical qualities will act to transform consciousness i.e. that music is a stimulus capable of inducing specific effects.

The comfortable non-state. (Dissociation from self - partial)

Soundtrack: When I see scissors I can't help but think of you (Dead Texan)

The sounds consist of very little more than looped string sections, which are layered to allow for slow and quite subtle thematic shifts ... I have selected well and this allows me to drift into the comfortable non-state ... I wander around town and pop in and out of the quirky little shops, just browsing and apparently advertising my insularity ... the whole point is to be as unaware of my physical self as is realistically possible - the music allows for gradual and deeper dislocation. Like a waking dream I think, where I am the conductor and the real world activity ... is really just a game in which I am choosing to whimsically dabble in. I'm lost in the music - it is feeding my spacelessness. This works well until I visit the market and am asked a question as I browse the CD stall ... I am roused from my reverie & all of a sudden thrust into the 'onmode' again ... I wander away and realize that something new has to be chosen. I will remain disconnected and insular. [Gary, 33]

As in the first of these six musical daydreams, there is the suggestion of a rehearsed, established listening behaviour. For John ('Super powers') the intention was to access a powerful fantasy identity and alternate world; for Gary it is to enter 'the comfortable non-state' i.e. to detach from self - particularly negative mentation. As in Will's experience, where music afforded a preternatural, fantastical sense of external surroundings, Gary's perception of reality is altered by his engagement with music which provides an insulatory 'auditory bubble' that allows for 'dislocation'. The 'objective' world is experienced as emotionless and dream-like, as if through the eyes of another.

Somewhere else to go (Dissociation from self - total)

Soundtrack: False Freedom (While She Sleeps)

On the bus listening [to metal] I start looking out and I do know I am looking out and then eventually there is just a fade where I am just unaware that I am unaware ... kind of inside the music, disappearing ... it's not positive or negative, just about an alternative space, somewhere else to go ... I am not aware of myself, I am just aware of the track, like the track is my thoughts. [Jake, 15]

A particularly common form of musical daydreaming for teenagers appears to involve the use of music to dull consciousness by flooding it with sensation (here, extremely loud techno metal). Jake's field of awareness becomes narrowed and the alternative space he 'disappears' into acts to provide absents him from all aspects of self. The experience is neither positive nor negative in valence, instead providing a dissociation from affect - and from the effort of functioning as a separate being ('the track becomes my thoughts').

HYPNOPOMP. n. (neologism) 'relating to the state immediately preceding waking up' (Oxford dictionaries.com).⁶

Origin: early 20th century: from Greek *hupnos* 'sleep' + *pompē* 'sending away'

An 'Experience Economy'

The fourth phase of the experience economy is here. We call it 'virtuality and involvement' (SOTT trend research and innovation agency web statement, 2012)⁷

The concept of an 'experience economy', originally a business philosophy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), has exerted a growing influence during the last decade on marketing strategies across a range of industries and organisations - from tourism, hospitality, leisure and the Arts to education and healthcare. Key is the notion that consumers (particularly in affluent societies) value experiences rather than material objects (of which they have plenty). Two current manifestations of this in the music business are: - 1) the growth in the number of music festivals and live music events; 2) the promotion of tours via record albums, rather than the previous promotion of albums via tours.⁸ Established trend research and innovation agency Science Of The Time's recent research on the experience economy highlights public demand for both memorable experiences and experiences that reference fictional or virtual realities. Clearly, music 'fits into the realm of the experience economy rather than simply being a service or product for consumption' (Pearce, 2013: 5) because it is a complex stimulus which affords a multifaceted interaction to the perceiver. 'The mental, physical and social worlds of the music consumer all help define an experiential encounter as opposed to a service or material object purchase' (Pearce, 2013: 5). It may be tempting to dismiss the 'experience economy' label as a glib, cynically manufactured and over-hyped business construct. Yet, evident alongside the unashamed manipulation is a recognition of the active, creative nature of mental engagement. And in highlighting the human propensity for experiences which take us 'somewhere else', trend researchers and strategic marketing experts are keying into behaviours that, in the fields of ethology, cognitive archaeology, evolutionary psychology and ultradian studies, are considered to be psychobiologically inevitable and crucial to the process of enchantment. The final section of this chapter offers a brief overview of this multidisciplinary territory.

Dreaming, imagining, artifying, musicking

⁶ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/hypnopompic?q=hypnopompic> <accessed 14th Sept.2013>

⁷ <http://scienceofthetime.com/study/mentality-trends/virtuality-involvement/> <accessed 20th Sept. 2013>

⁸ As evidenced by PriceWaterhouseCoopers' global entertainment and media outlook: 2013-17.

<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/global-entertainment-media-outlook/segment-insights/music.jhtml> <accessed 14th Sept. 2013>

An important and persuasive multidisciplinary cross-section of research suggests that the processes of dreaming, imagining and making and receiving art are inextricably intertwined. In warm blooded vertebrates at least, sleep constitutes the most evolutionarily ancient form of consciousness transformation (Opp, 2009). Significantly, although all mammals and birds are thought to experience REM or dream sleep (Jouvet, 1999) only humans are thought to be capable of recalling their dreams. Cognitive archaeologist David Lewis-Williams (2002) has theorised that it was the development of long term memory that made recollection of imagery in dreams (or ritualised trancing) possible, in turn promoting the development of the imaginative faculty, and that such imagery was then 'artified' by being engraved or painted on cave walls. On this view, once the capacity to imagine was established, the emergence of the arts was inevitable. Ethologist Ellen Dissanayake (1988; 1992) considers such 'artifying' to constitute a process of 'making special' which carried adaptive value in evolutionary terms - partly because it enhanced routine tasks, facilitated sharing of concepts in ritualistic contexts etc., but also because the transformations of consciousness accompanying artifying promoted innovative thinking, relief from trauma and psychophysiological recuperation.

Lewis-Williams's (2002) theory stresses the shared perceptual territory between alterations of consciousness, imagination, the arts and the REM stage of sleep. The 'REM state', identified by pioneer of sleep research Nathaniel Kleitman in 1953, is a period of rapid eye movements that occurs approximately every 90 minutes during sleep⁹ and that corresponds with times when dreams take place. Kleitman maintained that this cycle of REM - non-REM sleep persisted in the form of a 'basic rest-activity cycle' (BRAC) in waking hours (Kleitman, 1982). Although evidence supporting this theory is inconclusive, the notion of a waking BRAC has been the subject of an intriguing empirical study, employing diary and questionnaire methods (Duchniewska & Kokoszka, 2003). The authors noted that 'Rest' episodes were passive in nature, featuring an inwardly directed attentional focus, and increase in imaginative activity. They observed that 'culturally accepted behaviours' e.g. leisure activities (including listening to music, reading and other 'aesthetic activities') could accompany such episodes (2003: 155). The tantalising possibility the notion of a waking BRAC offers of the interaction between artistic engagement and trance awaits further research.

Across the industrialised West trance has tended to be misrepresented, misunderstood, mistrusted and under-valued as a phenomenon. As Becker emotively puts it:

We have no reputable trance states, no awards for revelations from mediums, no summer camps for learning to trance, and no serious attention from the scientific community ... we have written off trance. (Becker, 2004: 13)

Yet, a growing body of evidence from evolutionary psychology and chronobiology indicates that the capacity for consciousness transformation - for *entrancement* - is a human given, an essential contributor to effective daily functioning and psychophysiological wellbeing. One key function of the arts, from their first origins appears to have been to access alternate states of mind. Music appears to be a particularly versatile mediator of everyday entrancement, a conclusion supported by the prevalence of secular musical trancing in everyday life.

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⁹ It can thus be considered as an example of 'ultradian cyclicality' - a biological cycle that occurs more than once during a 24 hour (circadian) period.

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