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Therese Wiwe Vilmar
PhD fellow, School of Communication and Culture
Aarhus University

Literature's listening spaces

Representations of music listening in two contemporary novels

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Abstract

Literary descriptions of music are – of course – pure fiction. However, such narratives are also windows into the phenomenological and sociological workings of music in modern society. Many novels share detailed descriptions of music in their fictional worlds, and this article examines what two contemporary novels reveal about modern-day music listening as both a cultural and private practice. The article will analyse the nature of 'listening spaces' represented in A Visit from the Goon Squad *by Jennifer Egan (2010) and* Kafka on the Shore *by Haruki Murakami (2005). Both novels have been published within the first decade of the 21st century and describe Western popular music. Music experienced by fictional characters can be valuable empirical data, because novels represent different listening situations varied by geography, epochs and genres, and they depict characters with different demographics, lives and musical/cultural backgrounds. This enables scholars to collect and compare multi-faceted datasets. The aim of this article is to use literary descriptions to ask qualified questions about sociological and phenomenological aspects of contemporary music listening practices. The analysis will focus on the* atmosphere *of listening (Böhme, 2017) – and especially the fictional listeners' bodily presence in musical spaces – in dialogue with sociological studies of music listening by especially Tia DeNora (2000), David Hesmondhalgh (2013) and Even Ruud (2013). The analysis indicates how fiction articulates a connection between music, body (in space and place) and mind (emotions, temporality and memory).*

Introduction

> Then the sisters began to sing. Oh, the raw, almost-threadbare sound of their voices mixed with the clash of instruments – these sensations met with a faculty deeper in Bennie than judgment or even pleasure; they communed directly with his body, whose shivering, bursting reply made him dizzy (Egan, 2010, p. 31).

The above quotation describes a musical experience in Jennifer Egan's novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010). Music is an important theme in its fictional world. Indeed, it seems plausible to call this work a 'music novel'.[1] Each chapter thematises different kinds of music in various time periods and through the ears of several characters. In this particular scene, the record label owner, Bennie Salazar, listens to the (fictional) pop duo Stop/Go. Through the focalisation of Bennie and the description of his bodily and emotional responses to the music, the reader gains insights about his musical experience. Bennie's bodily responses progress from shivering dizziness to sexual arousal and, in the end, to nearly fainting. 'He felt the music in his mouth, his ears, his ribs – or was it his own pulse? He was on fire!' (p. 31). The music then triggers Bennie's involuntary memories: 'God, it hurt him to think of this now – hurt

him physically, as if the memory were raking over him' (p. 33), and he experiences extreme changes of emotion, from passionate joy to embarrassment and defeat.

Even though such literary descriptions of musical experience are fictional, they are also windows into the workings of music in modern society. In this article, I examine what two contemporary novels can reveal about modern-day music listening, as both a cultural and a private practice. I will analyse the musical experiences represented in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* (2005), originally published in Japanese in 2002. Both novels thematise Western popular music extensively. To study the musical experiences, I will approach them as *musical spaces* inspired in particular by Gernot Böhme's phenomenological conception of music's spatial *atmosphere* (Böhme, 2017). Taking on this approach, I will focus primarily on the listener's phenomenological bodily presence in the atmospheric musical space. The term 'listening spaces' has been used by, for instance, Carlos Rodriguez (2014). To Rodriguez – and to me – 'listening space' is a useful term for bridging disciplines, such as music theory, psychology, philosophy and sociology (p. 88). Obviously, literature's listening spaces studied in this article are physically different from Rodriguez' actual spaces and Böhme's atmospheres: the listening situations represented in novels are metaphorical, taking place in fictional worlds. They might, however, still function as indications of general contemporary experiences of music and add to its sociological and phenomenological discourse.

Literary texts throughout history have produced an enormous corpus of music descriptions. The phenomenon that I call *diegetic melophrases*[2] (Vilmar, 2020) – that is, music taking place in the fictional world of the characters – can be valuable empirical data in understanding modern music listening: literary texts represent different listening situations, varied by geography, epochs and genres, and they depict characters with different demographics, lives and musical/cultural backgrounds. This enables scholars to work diachronically and collect nuanced datasets. Many scholars of 19th-century music have examined music practice through the source of literature,[3] but less attention has been paid to the phenomenological music experience in contemporary fiction.[4] The goal of this article is therefore to use *diegetic melophrases* to ask critical questions about contemporary music listening situations. I will do so in dialogue with sociological studies of music listening by especially Tia DeNora (2000), David Hesmondhalgh (2013) and Even Ruud (2013). Before addressing the melophrases, however, I will conceptualise the idea of musical space in a phenomenological and sociological context.

Music listening as spatial experience

To approach the 'music listening space' through diegetic melophrases, it is important to highlight an evident shift from temporality to spatiality in aesthetics stud-

issn 1904-500X

ies. Music has traditionally been considered a temporal art form in the same way as literature,[5] but this general conception changed during the second half of the twentieth century with what is popularly called the 'spatial turn'. For instance, soundscape theories like those proposed by Murray Schafer (1974) indicate that music is as much a spatial medium. The work of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre has also contributed to a sociological understanding of spaces as interrelated social and cultural constructs that express certain rhythms of the social.[6]

Phenomenologist Gernot Böhme (2017) bases his new aesthetics of 'atmosphere' explicitly on this shift from temporality to spatiality in aesthetic studies of art forms such as music (p. 26). In Böhme's aesthetics, atmospheres 'fill spaces' (p. 25), just as music does, and their betweenness is rendered possible through the listener's bodily presence in space. Atmosphere is, with a musical metaphor, a 'tuned space' which creates a certain mood that is always both spatial and emotional (p. 2). Böhme thus defines musical space as

> the expanded space of the body, i.e., the sensing out into space, which is shaped and articulated by music. This realization that music is the fundamental atmospheric art form has solved an old, always bothersome and yet unavoidable problem for music theory: the question what the so-called emotional effect of music actually consists in (p. 170-171).

Recognising that music is fundamentally atmospheric can help conceptualise music's many effects, though it may not fully explain the role played by emotion. Nevertheless, Böhme's aesthetics suggest that music as atmosphere can be understood as a tuned space of moods that must be experienced through the bodily presence in that space, resulting in emotional effect. This interest in music as an atmospheric art form has gained momentum in cultural musicology, and Böhme is far from the only scholar who has connected the musical space with atmospheres. The recently published anthology *Music as Atmosphere: Collective Feelings and Affective Sounds* (2020) offers many different and valuably perspectives on the topic. However, I find that Böhme's phenomenological focus on the body in space is more applicable to the present study than the affective focus offered by other contributions. Böhme's approach will thus underlie the structure of my analyses.

In sociological studies of music listening, scholars often include a notion of space. Music sociologist Tia DeNora's (2000) *Music in Everyday Life* seeks to answer 'how real people actually press music into action in particular social spaces and temporal settings' (p. x). She later summarises how 'music is a device of emotional, biographical and corporeal regulation', aiming to 'bring [...] to the fore feeling, body and energy' (p. 110). She uses this description to indicate a larger context of music's social, cultural and political ordering. To DeNora, musical space is an absolute space bound to a specific place or environment. Even though she acknowledges how the

issn 1904-500X

private space mediated by music affords a certain activity (p. 60), she focuses primarily on the social and cultural spaces of interaction (chapters 5 and 6). It is only rhetorically that she points to more relative spaces, such as entering '*into* the music' (p. 7) or defining music as a 'container' of both feelings (p. 58) and memories (p. 67). The music therapist Even Ruud (2013) further develops DeNora's conception of the private musical space in his study of music and identity, pointing out how DeNora's conception of music as a 'mirror' for identity can be understood as an access to a 'privat rom' (translated as 'private space' or 'private room') (Ruud, 2013, p. 118) or an inner room in oneself (p. 136). He insists on the term 'rom'– without defining what is meant by this space/room, allowing the 'rom' to apply to specific geographical places, personal space (p. 82), social space (p. 139), the space of time and place (p. 197) and the transpersonal space (p. 236). In this sense, Ruud represents a more relative or metaphorical idea of space from the perspective of identity in sociological studies. In David Hesmondhalgh's (2013) *Why Music Matters,* he follows a guiding question '[H]ow might music enhance collective experience among people who share the same space?' (p. 8), thereby also bringing space to the fore. He describes his work as a '*critical defense of music*' (p. 3, emphasis in original) that examines 'the social value of music' (p. 3). However, this shared space that underlies Hesmondhalgh's work is always – like DeNora's – bound to a certain *place*. Carlos Rodriguez (2014) describes the listening space as 'a metaphor for the mental world constructed by the listener [...] serving as a bridge between musical perception, cognition, and affect' (p. 101).

The sociological understandings of musical space by Böhme, DeNora, Hesmondhalgh, Ruud and Rodriguez include notions of the body, time and memory as well as various aspects of the mind, such as emotions and identity. Informed by the above-mentioned studies, we can view musical space as a staged atmospheric space involving bodily presence, a (metaphorical) inner space of the mind or identity and a social structure of cultural spaces. However, a strict division between space and place is not evident, since all the above-mentioned studies – Ruud's in particular – use space interchangeably to refer to a geographical place as well as a metaphorical space.

Two literary listening spaces

The motivation for this study is highly inductive. By reading several 'music novels' such as the two presented here,[7] I realised that many of them are largely bound to themes of memory, identity and temporality, and that music was extensively described through metaphors[8] – a finding consistent with the conclusions of the music sociologists discussed above. Many prominent scholars in the field of music sociology also take their empirical data from *written* or *spoken* material. DeNora bases her book on interviews with fifty-two British and American women (DeNora, 2000, p. 48). Ruud's study is based on what he consistently calls 'musical autobiog-

raphies' written by his students of music therapy (Ruud, 2013, p. 74). Hesmondhalgh includes interviews 'conducted with a number of people about their musical practices' (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p. 6). Many celebrated studies of musical experience appear to be based on data that is inevitably *verbal*. Therefore, the musical experiences imagined by a writer and expressed in literary texts seem as useful as Ruud's 'musical autobiographies' or DeNora's and Hesmondhalgh's interviews. Ruud, for instance, highlights in his autobiographies how the experiences are always attached to a *story* (Ruud, 2013, p. 258) like a narrative pattern (p. 259), since identity is itself constructed as a story (p. 259). He even exemplifies his statements with reference to authors of fiction, such as Karl Ove Knausgaard (p. 254) and Anthony Burgess (p. 267). Musicologists have also long used novels as evidence of musical practice, and fiction can communicate and illuminate themes similar to conventional sociological datasets. However, looking at musical space and musical experiences through literature can also add to our understanding of music listening. Fiction provides a different form of knowledge that not only can describe the physical, phenomenological, cultural, psychological, sociological and aesthetic aspects of music listening, but also appear as abstract, fabricated and aesthetically enhanced versions. Music novels can then allow the reader to scrutinise a character's life, emotions and bodily responses through a medium that can configure temporality, identity and cultural life in a unique way.

The novels of Egan and Murakami are valuable contributions to the discourse of popular music in everyday life. They both feature Western popular music as a central theme, and, although written on different continents, they were published only a few years apart, allowing one to read diachronically across them. To explore the (metaphorical) atmospheres of these musical spaces as presented in fiction, I will focus on the fictional characters' bodies (in space and place) and minds (feelings, time and memories) in dialogue with Böhme, DeNora, Hesmondhalgh and Ruud. While Ruud and DeNora focus on the emotional effect in their analyses of musical experience, my approach is inspired by Böhme and focuses on the bodily presence in a musical space as the factor that generates a character's emotional/mental response. Although I will not conduct conventional literary analyses of the novels, I will, like Ruud, seek to construct a pattern that highlights some (but indeed not all) of the elements constituting the novels' music listening spaces.

The chapters of Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* shift in time, place, narrative style and focalisation, simulating a 'concept album' (Strong, 2018, p. 479). This structure lets readers engage with different listening characters in various situations. For instance, the novel follows Bennie Salazar from the time he played in his high school band (called the Flaming Dildos) at the end of the 1970s to the height of his career in the 2000s. It ends with Bennie as an out-of-date senior in a changed musi-

issn 1904-500X

cal industry of the 2020s. It also depicts Scotty (the guitarist in the Flaming Dildos) as an angry punk in the late 1970s and a social outcast in the 2000s.

Kafka on the Shore portrays a world of magical realism. The 15-year-old protagonist, who calls himself Kafka Tamura, runs away from home to escape an oedipal prophesy (Murakami, 2005, p. 217). His quest can be said to function as the allegorical adventure of an empty self in search of identity (Wattanagun & Chotiudompant, 2009, p. 26) or as the progression from boy to man. Kafka stays at the Komura Memorial Library, where he meets the characters Oshima and Miss Saeki. It is left ambiguous at the end of the novel whether Miss Saeki, his lover, is actually also his mother. Parallel to Kafka's story is the story of the analphabetic and seemingly dim-witted Nakata, who, accompanied by the truck driver Hoshino, is on a quest for magical objects. The two plotlines are spun together in a whirlpool of time and place. 'Kafka on the Shore' refers not only to the novel's non-fictional title, but also to two fictional art pieces in the narrative: a picture of a young boy at the shore, and a hit song written and performed by a young Miss Saeki. These fictional 'leitmotifs' (Wasihun, 2014, p. 1200) become important to Kafka's identity which is initially characterised by his taste in 'real' popular music, such as Prince.

Fictional bodies in musical space

In both novels, actual *places* are different from the musical *spaces* that are created. Kafka listens to his Walkman at the gym, in bed and on the bus, thereby creating his own virtual space through the music. The same is true for the listeners in Egan's novel, no matter whether they listen to an open-air event in New York in the 2020s or a punk band practising in a garage in 1979. Places change with the musical atmosphere: for instance, chapter 4 ('Safari') takes place in Africa in the 1970s. Lou hands his girlfriend, Mindy, a 'cassette player':

> [E]ach time the experience of music pouring directly against her eardrums – hers alone – is a shock that makes her eyes well up; the privacy of it, the way it transforms her surroundings into a golden montage, as if she were looking back on this lark in Africa with Lou from some distant future (Egan, 2010, p. 68).

Here, Africa becomes a setting for a private atmosphere created by the music. Technologically mediated music covers up the present moment, transforms the surroundings and pours like a watery substance over Mindy's listening body.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafka listens to a Prince album during workouts, where the music serves as a distraction from the place and situation:

> [T]hen do some circuit training, plugged into my Walkman, Prince blasting away. It's been a while and my muscles complain, but I manage. [...] Listening to 'Little Red Cor-

issn 1904-500X

> vette,' I try to soothe that reaction, suppress it. I take a deep breath, hold it, exhale (Murakami, 2005, p. 337).

Clarke, Dibben and Pitts (2009) discuss this idea in *Music and Mind in Everyday Life*: '[M]usic may distract people from the discomfort they experience during exercise, allowing them to work harder and longer, perhaps because it reduces focus on the self' (p. 97). DeNora also highlights that music is a 'device with which to configure a space such that it affords some activities' (DeNora, 2000, p. 60). Kafka is 'plugged into' his Walkman as if it were a lifeline, the musical atmosphere urging him on, leading him to focus on music and breathing rather than on his complaining muscles. The activities afforded by music can also be of a more intimate character, which occurs when the same music by Prince enters the sexual space of Kafka and Miss Saeki:

> You hold your breath, listening. [...] You inhale, hold it, exhale. [...] Prince sings on, like some mollusc in your head [...] You become someone else there, *something* else. You are somewhere else (Murakami, 2005, p. 343).

The music enables Kafka's body to enter a familiar rhythm of breathing in a new physical place, allowing him to retune the space, change his identity through the sexual act and become *someone else*. The connection between music listening and intimate life is evident in both novels. As Hesmondhalgh says, '[t]here might be various reasons for this link, including historically constituted ideas that both music and sex are both [*sic.*] forms of pleasurable experience that can somehow bypass thought' (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p. 57). My initial example of Bennie's encounter with the Stop/Go duo describes an atmosphere that stimulates his body and tunes the room with an intense *mood* that leads Bennie beyond the physical barriers of impotence. This connection between music listening and sexual stimulation also occurs in the story of Lou who becomes Bennie's mentor in the music industry. In the back row of the Flaming Dildos' 1979 concert, the focaliser, Rhya, attends the concert with her friend Joycelyn and the much-older Lou. As the music plays, Jocelyn gives Lou a blowjob 'like the music is a disguise and no one can see them' (Egan, 2010, p. 55). Kafka, Lou and Bennie's responses to music connect bodily presence and wellbeing to musical listening, which can disguise reality or upend societal norms (blowjobs in public or, in Kafka's case, sex with your mother/employer). Listening to music is thus described as a transcendent force that enables body and mind to work in a different manner, here suggesting new identities or sudden potency.

According to DeNora, however, music can never be a force on its own. 'Music is not an objective "force" or a "stimulus", but [...] its specific properties provide mechanisms for achieving those effects' (DeNora, 2000, p. 107). For the three sexual experiences described above, music is not an object that stimulates, but an atmosphere or tuning that modifies the space in which the body can achieve a desired effect.

issn 1904-500X

Kafka's sexual act may be precisely what leads him to his new identity (Wattanagun & Chotiudompant, 2009, p. 34), and the presence of music in these sexual encounters facilitates an 'embodied awareness' that is 'a non-propositional, non-cognitive, *creaturely* orientation and expectancy towards the physical environment' (DeNora, 2000, p. 84). Music enables a phenomenological stage of pure 'sensing out into space', as Böhme states in his definition.

Despite DeNora's view that music is no force on its own, both novels insist on metaphorical descriptions of music as indeed a natural force, and especially as a watery substance. Music *pours* through Mindy's ears, and, when Kafka sits down alone to listen to 'Kafka on the Shore' on an old record player, the voice of Miss Saeki cleanses his mind like rain. Two chords hit Kafka like a cold wind:

> [I]t gently cleanses your mind, like a spring rain washing over stepping stones in the garden. [...] Two unusual chords appear in the refrain. [...] The total unexpectedness of the sounds shook me, unsettled me, as when a cold wind suddenly blows in through a crack. Once the refrain is over, though, the beautiful melody returns, taking you back to that original world of harmony and intimacy. No more chilly wind here (Murakami, 2005, pp. 245-246).

The unexpected chords – a moment of musicological discovery – indicate a negative physical atmosphere, and the listening becomes a dynamic between bodily tension from the unusual chords and relaxation when the music returns to the conventional harmony.

The futuristic live music space created by Scotty in the very last chapter of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is similarly described as a swell of rain with wave-like qualities:

> [A] swell of approval palpable as rain lifted from the center of the crowd and rolled out toward its edges, where it crashed against buildings and water wall and rolled back at Scotty with redoubled force, lifting him off his stool (Egan, 2010, p. 344).

Scotty's effect on the crowd is described metaphorically as rain or water that lifts from the crowd, crashes off the buildings and rolls back onto the stage. The enabling force of the live, social space is a dialectic between audience and musician. This romantic (or perhaps even naturalist) articulation of music in both novels suggests a concept of music that is simultaneously detached from culture and a natural part of humanity: a natural force in cultural life.

Fictional minds in musical space

In both novels, music encapsulates and activates memories and enables identity creation through bodily activity. At Scotty's punk concert in 1979, the punks create their identity through a collective musical space defined by movement and the exchange of bodily fluids. 'We tussle and push and get knocked down and pulled

issn 1904-500X

back up until our sweat is mixed up with real punks' sweat and our skin has touched their skin. Bennie does less of this. I think he actually listens to the music' (Egan, 2010, p. 48). By connecting with the atmosphere of the music and the identity of the group in a bodily way, the listeners *feel* real. Unlike Bennie and Lou, who leave their societal and physical bonds behind when listening in order to enter a private, 'disguised' space, the punks use music as a mirror of their collective identity (Ruud, 2013, p. 91 + 189). Martin Moling (2016) notes how music touches Bennie's 'bodily core [... which] enables Bennie to fully embrace the present moment' (p. 55). My analysis, however, shows that the present moment seems to slip away in the listening situation. The musical space of both Bennie and Kafka becomes a moment on its own outside time and place, like the scene in Africa. Bennie's present moment is veiled by a musical disguise that erases his physical barriers of impotence and mental concerns about the music business. This disguise, however, is disrupted by involuntary memories that change his positive bodily response to a negative one.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, the song 'Kafka on the Shore' facilitates memory like a 'container for the temporal structure of past circumstances' (DeNora, 2000, p. 67) in a concrete, yet magical, way. Kafka's listening experience happens in the room where Miss Saeki wrote the song, and where the painting 'Kafka on the Shore' hangs. These two other media (music and painting), while not overtly present in the novel, function as magical mirrors (Ruud, 2013, p. 130) of Kafka's identity and the story as a whole. The song becomes a remembered space outside time, bringing to life the ghost of the young Saeki and the identity of Kafka as her former lover. Time – like music – repeats itself. 'The music feels like it is taking me and the whole room off to some different time, a world before I was even born' (Murakami, 2005, p. 270).

This temporal aspect of music listening is also evident in the repetitions that characterise listening in both novels. Kafka continuously listens to the same ten albums he brought from home, but he only listens intensely to the fictional song 'Kafka on the Shore.' 'I listen to the record three times. [...] Not exactly catchy lyrics. But if you listen to them a few times they begin to sound familiar. One by one the words find a home in my heart' (Murakami, 2005, p. 245). 'Listening to it over and over, I start to get some idea why "Kafka on the Shore" moved so many people' (p. 246). Upon finding the sheet music to the song, Kafka even 'practise[s] it over and over' (p. 269). Although Kafka is defined by the real-life music he enjoys, such as Prince, the key to his identity (and the story as a whole) lies in the listening situation of this specific, fictional song which becomes a space of memory, mirroring and metaphors. Hesmondhalgh notes how '[w]e often use music to evoke a sense of a particular place, reviving memories or stimulating our imagination. In all kinds of genres [...] some composers and performers invoke where they came from' (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p. 123). So, music can be a factor in the creation and the manipulation of identity, '[b]ut it can also enable life-enhancing forms of collectivity, not only

in co-present situations but across space and time' (p. 85). This collectivity between Kafka, Miss Saeki and her deceased boyfriend does indeed expand across time, but not necessarily across space, since the song actually evokes where Miss Saeki comes from – i.e., this very room.

In Kafka's last redemptive journey through a magical forest – the journey into himself, perhaps – his mind and feet wander, accompanied by imagined music:

> [I]t's McCoy Tyner's piano solo I hear, the left hand carving out a repetitious rhythm and the right layering on thick, forbidding chords. [...] The patient, repeating music ever so slowly breaks apart the real, rearranging the pieces (Murakami, 2005, p. 414).

This imaginative music demands a bodily participation, the music twice defined by its repetitious rhythm. The forest similarly mirrors the repetitions of music, time and life. 'It has its own rules and patterns, and once you stop being afraid, you're aware of them. Once I grasp these repetitions, I make them a part of me' (p. 427). Through repetitive listening, Kafka finds himself.[9]

In *A Visit from the Goon Squad,* musical time (and space) is particularly evident in the much-discussed PowerPoint chapter 12, written from the perspective of the young girl Alison. She uses the PowerPoint as a diary, describing life with her parents and her brother Lincoln's extreme obsession with 'Great Rock and Roll Pauses' (Egan, 2010, p. 242) which he analyses, records and loops, repeating the pause eternally. As Alison's mother, Sasha, explains to her husband: 'The pause makes you think the song will end. And then the song isn't really over, so you're relieved. But then the song *does* actually end, because every song ends, obviously, and THAT. TIME. THE. END. IS. FOR. REAL.' (p. 289). Melissa J. Strong (2018) argues that Alison's diary and Lincoln's pauses are 'an effort to pause and slow the inevitable end' (p. 477) . The progression of time can be temporarily paused by spaces – like a song with a pause. According to Moling, these pauses are an illusion of timelessness: 'By repeating the pauses, which merely suggest the song's ending, but actually prevent us from reaching it, he [Lincoln, ed.] tries to step out of time' (Moling, 2016, p. 60). The songs become immortal. The music listening spaces create a different sense of time, illustrated by these musical pauses. Music holds a 'power to redeem' (p. 74) and, in both novels, the repetitiveness of listening underlines how music can create a temporal space outside real time. In that way, music is experienced subjectively by characters. This is what Paul Ricæur (1999) points to in 'The Fictive Experience of Time', a chapter in *Time and Narrative, Volume 2.* He reads three modernist novels that stand out because they 'explore the hierarchical levels that form the depth of temporal experience' (p. 101). Ricæur argues how fiction can configure the experiences of time for literary characters as well as readers of literature. In his reading of temporality in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, he asserts that 'the narrative configuration [...] serves as the basis for the experience that its characters

have of time, and that the narrative voice of the novel wants to communicate to the reader' (p. 102).

For the characters – and the readers – of both Egan's and Murakami's novels, the narrative configuration can similarly be experienced as time paused, reversed, repeated. Such temporal disturbances do not only appear in the plot, but also the textual level. Virginia Yeung (2016), for example, analyses Murakami's use of narratological temporal configurations, such as prolepsis and analepsis: 'The author uses different types of temporality in his construction of the plot. Time stands still, and time's arrow changes its direction' (p. 147). Similarly, the pauses in Egan's novel enable the listening character as well as the reader to step out of time and, especially, the PowerPoint chapter that alienates the literary medium serves as a new, epiphanic voice that points directly to temporal pauses in literature as well as music.

This configuration of temporality does not only affect the characters' listening spaces through memories and repetitions that build their identities, but also affects the reading experience: narrated time does not equal narrating time, and the temporal construction of literature stages the characters' listening experience in a setting that is completely different from the sociological datasets of Ruud, DeNora and Hesmondhalgh (among others). This is one of the ways in which literature can add to and expand such approaches. In these two cases, the emotional effects of music are often derived from the bodily presence in space that creates a notion of identity, encapsulates memories and creates a virtual sense of time.

Concluding remarks

The aim of this article has been to uncover some elements of the listening spaces in two novels. It is important to stress that this is a small study that primarily serves to illuminate some paths that appear when the phenomenology of contemporary music listening is explored through its literary representations – in an attempt to draw a pattern, like Ruud. The two novels showed similar patterns concerning intimate life, music's natural force, musical disguise of the present, memories, identity, a subjective sense of time and a general inseparability of time and space. In spite of the sparse material, these are tendencies from which we may ask critical questions for further studies of musical experiences in literature and in life.

What is at stake in the listening spaces of the two novels relates to the traditional qualitative or ethnographic studies conducted on music listening. The novels both show how listening to popular music is of personal and cultural value. The listening experience of Bennie Salazar or Kafka Tamura can thus be just as valuable empirical data as Ruud's students' 'autobiographies' or DeNora's interviews. Additionally, fiction may contribute to sociological studies in a number of ways. Firstly, literature can illustrate and configure a sense of time in a different manner than traditional

issn 1904-500X

sociological datasets. By staging the flow of time through prolepses and analepses, for instance, bringing forth memories or repeating scenes from various perspectives, readers can gain a multi-faceted perspective on a situation. Secondly, literature also enables analysts to collect and compare data from the US to Japan, from antiquity to post-modernism, and to scrutinise specific elements of the musical experience – for example, the representation of the music industry, technological development, memory, identity, social control, fan culture and so forth. Thirdly, literature includes a narrative voice to mediate the story, implicitly or explicitly suggesting certain conceptions of music. For instance, the many descriptions of music as a natural force on its own (like water or wind) indicates an objectified music in both novels that, unlike DeNora, articulates musical atmosphere from a phenomenological point of view as an aesthetic 'force' that can work on people and not just as a cultural impact. This also suggests a survival of romantic idealisation of music in modern literature and discourse.

The present study does not extend to important considerations, such as gender or technology, the time and geography underlying the two publications and larger issues such as the intermediality of music/literature or the use of translated literature in such analyses. I also chose to omit discussions about the social and political power of music listening which are dominant in all the theories I have discussed. For example, as Böhme says: 'The art of producing them [atmospheres, ed.] – above all music [...] – is at every moment also the exercise of power' (Böhme, 2017, p. 27). Neither did I address the representational value of novels that depict a different time period than that in which they are produced. Can a 2010 novel represent the musical experiences of 1979 punks in a valuable manner? As Bennie and Sasha agree in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*: 'Five years is five *hundred* years' (Egan, 2010, p. 35) in the music industry.

I hope that this article will show that – even on the basis of a small empirical dataset and even though literary texts are fiction and emit no sounding music on their own – they can add to our knowledge and help formulate and reflect upon the consummation, distribution and experience of music, the phenomenological music space, the cultural value of music listening, and how differently listeners actually listen.

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Notes

1 A term used by, for instance, Gerry Smyth in *Music in Contemporary British Fiction* (2008).
2 See '"It's in the silence you feel you hear": Music, Literature and Melophrasis' (Vilmar, 2020). Melophrasis is a term developed from Rodney S. Edgecombe's 'Melophrasis' (1993) as a literary representation of something musical – a verbal representation of musical representation. The term mirrors the *ekphrasis* from word and image studies that is a 'verbal representation of visual representation' (Mitchell, 1994, p. 152). I distinguish between 'diegetic melophrasis' that is music on the level of characters in the fictional world, and 'non-diegetic melophrasis' that is music on the formal level of the text.
3 Ruth Solie's (2004) *Music in Other Words* explores how sources such as literature can reveal more 'about those aspects of musical practice and experience that went without saying' (p. 2) in Victorian music making. Gillen D'Arcy Wood's (2010) *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840,* takes its outset from the 'Virtuosphobia' defining the time period – that is, unease towards the virtous or genious. The purpose of his interdisciplinary study is to 'compose a historical narrative of romantic literary culture in Britain [...] through the lens of the contemporary music culture those writers inhabited' (p. 10). Lawrence Kramer (1990) has contributed widely to a general turn towards cultural musicology. He bridges music and literature in many of his works – for instance, in *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (1990). In Kramer's discussion of some specific musical works, he includes 'close attention to non-musical texts and practices' (xiii) and uses methods from the field of literary criticism, anthropology, philosophy and cultural history (xii). Recently, Lise Karin Meling (2019) published an article examining the role of the piano searching through all the Norwegian fiction from 1850 to 1900 that has been digitalised.
4 Stephen Benson (2006) studies the contemporary representation of music in novels as a part of the general musical discourse. This is an important work that moves the word and music research field into a more culturalist approach. However, Benson focuses more on the cultural articulation of music through literature than on those musical experiences that are described. This same is true for Gerry Smyth (2008).
5 See, for instance, a historical perspective on this in Calvin S. Brown's (1949) *Music and Literature*.
6 See *The Production of Space,* originally published in 1974, and *Rhythmanalysis,* originally published in 1992.
7 This article constitutes the outline of a larger project with 25 novels, in which I aim to return to some of the questions and findings discussed throughout this article.
8 I do not view the melophrasis as a metaphor. This is one of my main concerns regarding the field of word and music studies, as scholars tend to understand literary descriptions of music as mere musical metaphors – for instance, Werner Wolf's theoretical landmark *The Musicalization of Fiction* (1999). See extended argument in Vilmar (2020). Even so, the melophrasis works *through* metaphors by describing the music through images and comparisons that make it come to life in the fictional world and the 'inner ear' of the listener.
9 This idea of repetition is well established in scholarship on music cognition and can be traced back to Leonard Meyer's (1961) *Emotion and Meaning in Music,* originally published in 1956: 'Repetition, though it exists physically, never exists psychologically' (p. 49).

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