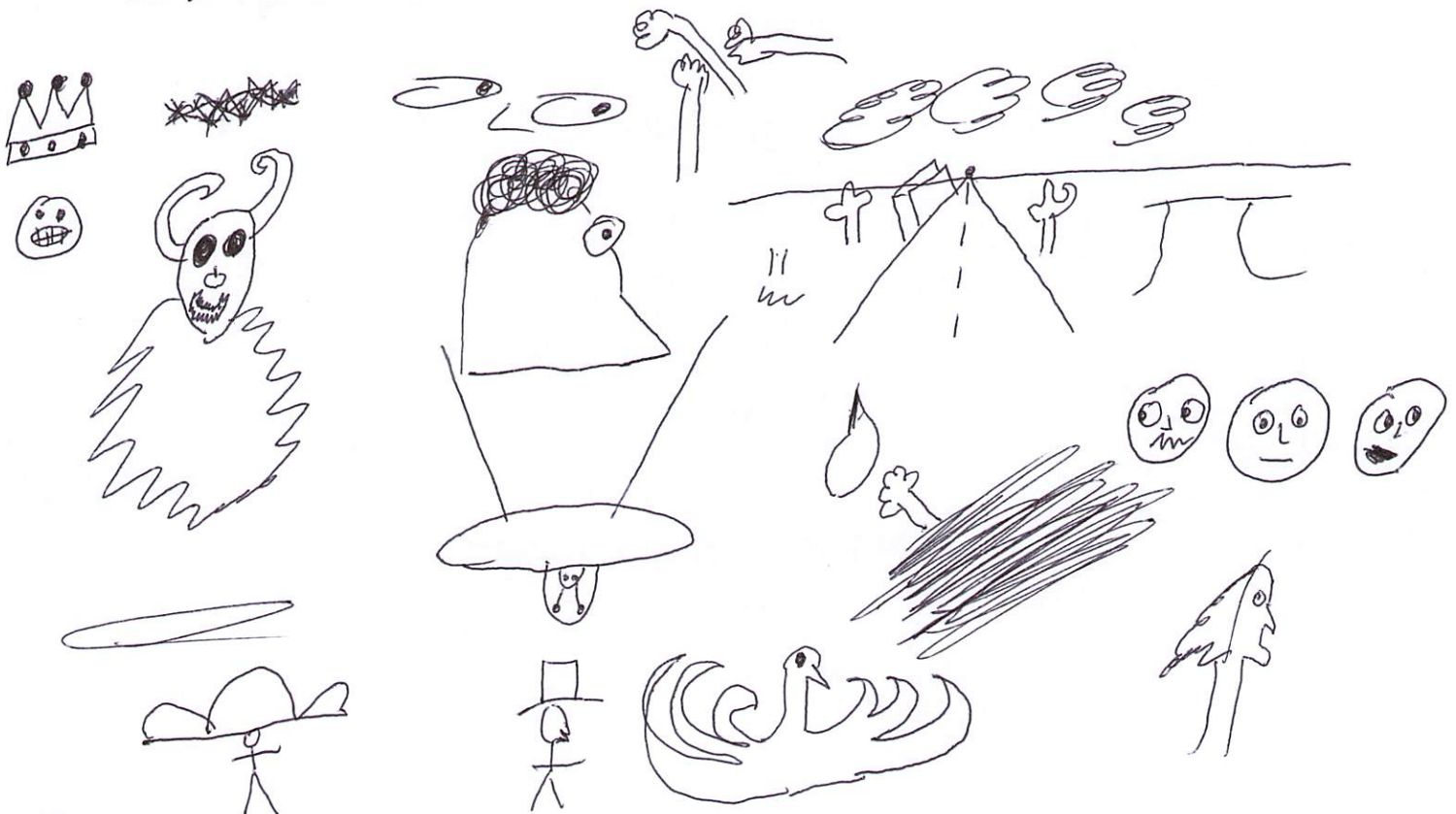


But American Pie is also a celebration. This is not the way it always was. There was a better time for this country, a better time for us. A time when the scared store still played that music that made you smile, still a time when you could go to a sockhop, and drive down to the Levee. We used to be beautiful. This country used to be beautiful. I used to be young, once. And it was beautiful. When life was a free open country highway and everyknew what good music was and before that plane crashed. But that plane did crash. And Buddy Holly died. And we're never gonna be the same.

I think we know what's at the destination. It's Buddy Holly. And my old Chevy. And the way things used to be, before we just had to go and ruin it. We're headed for the beauty in my soul that I know exists, that I know was real, once, and if I could just reach out and grab that whiskey and rye one more time...



Miles Barth

would you say this is an  
example of

political?

philosophical?

spiritual?

...?

writing about music?



From my last essay, I chose the word 'Freedom' to talk about. I find this word interesting because it relates to music in many ways. Sometimes I feel like these two are interchangeable with each other. Freedom is music and music is freedom. Every nation and every country that had to fight for its freedom created music that expresses their freedom. People express their freedom through music. People who have earned their freedom through struggle create music that demonstrates their struggles, pains, and sufferings. Music becomes the means through which they celebrate their freedom. In a way, freedom becomes music that contains all the emotions, struggles, and joys that are the cause and effect of freedom.

On the other hand, music helps to free us human beings from our personal struggles. It helps us to express our feelings that are difficult to express through words. Some emotions can only be expressed through music. It is pure and beautiful. Good music can take all the evil out of our hearts and minds and <sup>a kind of knowing?</sup> free us from the shackles of ignorance. It washes away the dirt that is <sup>cleansing</sup> inside us and makes us pure. We find freedom through music. In this case, we can call music freedom.

Besides the above-mentioned aspect, the word freedom has a physical aspect to it. It feels like the sky, broad and limitless. It is strong and powerful but it sometimes feels like a warm hug that makes us feel safe and secure. Sometimes it feels like the most precious thing that one can possess. Music that represents this word can be happy, it can be sad, or very energetic, it can also be very emotional too. It is not supposed to express the joy or the suffering attached to it but the whole of it. Music that represents freedom as a whole.

AFTAB AHMED

this is

would you say

philosophical?

spiritual?

personal?

...?

about music?

within



Silence settles over us, and out of that silence a harp begins to play, notes rolling up and down, as if in inhale and exhale.

Though harp can't play the (notes in between the notes) that are already tuned, it can "roll" up and down. The aspect of it being able to stair up and down smoothly is making the writer feel as though it is inhaling of exhaling. It is interesting how the writer is reminiscent of our body sound. Yet, when we think about the description made, the fact that this is after the silence, it is easier imagine. One sound that is always going to be heard to us, even in the silence, would be the sound of our own breathing. In fact, as the writer points out as the harp sound "rolling up and down", and our (natural breathing has a pitch to it) which is very similar to the description. When you inhale through your nose and exhale through your month, as the air goes into the tighter way, the former will make a (higher pitch) and the latter lower. Also, as your lungs fill up or expel out, the slower the air will be going in and out, causing the pitch to slowly go up or down. This depiction let us think about how all the sound that we hear do have certain pitch and how particular aspect of music could remind us of the daily sound we hear by having a feature of the ups and downs of pitches.

gesture?

pitch in  
the same  
sense as  
a single  
pitch?

Would you say you're focused  
on a gesture as a way  
to connect a more abstract  
idea, a connection to the body,  
with lower-level musical aspects -  
notes, pitch...?

Hong

### Music and Words Week 3 – “The way the electric guitar cries is almost human-like...”

This description strikes me because of the ambiguity of the phrase ‘human-like’. Perhaps this association between the sound and a human cry is due to the emotion the sound triggers more than the quality of the sound itself, as if it reminds the listener of what crying feels like or makes them want to cry themselves. That’s one way to talk about music; in terms of the images and sensations it conjures. *representational?*

But does this adjective also capture a quality of the sound itself? A cry lacks much of what we generally aim to produce with an instrument – consistent pitch, accurately tuned to the right note; clear rhythm and tempo; consistent, or deliberately manipulated, texture. In this sense, crying seems to me like one of the least “musical” ways we use our voice – the pitch, timbre, and texture of the sound are generally unpleasant and they’re accidental, the point lying in making the sound, not in having it be appreciated by a listener. *intentionality*

*or contains even more?*

*relationship between these more technical aspects and what is “musical”*

In one way, I see the comparison between the guitar and a cry. The pitches kind of wobble back and forth a bit like a cry, and the quality of the sounds has sharpness and scratchiness to it. But at the same time, the literal overlap between a human cry and the guitar in this piece feels small to me. The rhythm, tempo, and pitch follow obvious patterns and have a consistency that crying doesn’t – this is clearly the deliberate work of a musician. Yet, I hear what the original author of this phrase was hearing, there is some kind of quality the two share, and I can’t put my finger on it. This demonstrates to me the value of approaching a sound from multiple angles to paint a fuller picture.

*is the cry a kind of gesture? an abstraction that's common to both a human cry and a childlike “musical” cry?*

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"NOT THE RIGHT KIND OF COMFORT"

↳ SHOWING LISTENERS WANTS. THIS IS AN OBSERVATION ~~####~~ OF A WANT TO BE COMFORTED ...

A WAY TRY THIS SONG ...

HELD + ABANDONED } SHOWS PLACEMENT IN TIME. } + A MOOD COMFORTING MOOD ... BUT UNSATISFYING

THIS ANALYSIS

IS PINNING THE MUSIC'S FEELING

INTO A TEMPORARY TIME

"It feels simultaneously like being held and being abandoned, like a final embrace before parting,

forever.... There is life there, yes, but not the kind you were looking for. Not the right kind of

comfort."

THIS IS THE

LONGING ... UNFULFILLED

I CAN [ALMOST] HEAR A SOUND

THAT HURTS MY HEART

UNRESOLVED. DISSONANT. SICKENINGLY SWEET.

→ LIFE! THERE IS A PULSE.

IT IS MORE THAN SILENCE

EVEN MORE THAN MECHANICAL

~~REAL TIME~~ . THERE IS SOME SORT OF

(YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?)

PULSE TO KEEP THE PIECE ALIVE



a blip of a song that I find circulating in my head with bothersome frequency.

a blip of a song that I find:

try saying these eight words out loud. They are each monosyllabic, and flow together in a frantic yet metrical fashion, echoing the meaning of the words themselves. RHYTHM.

circulating in my head with bothersome frequency:

in contrast to the previous half of the sentence, these words do not flow together at all.

Nevertheless, these syllables too capture the meaning of the words they create: they circulate in my ears with quite a bothersome rhythm.

blip:

a word with music all its own; a sort of onomatopoeia. it's tiny, minuscule. it passes by with almost no time at all, but remains forever as a constant, nagging memory.

musical writing?

circulating:

all of my thoughts on this word come from my presupposed meaning of it. i think it does have a music of its own (each c having the same shape but a different sound!) but not one related to its meaning. I

think of a centralized air conditioning unit, CIRCULATING the air (in this case, the BLIP) around and around and around and around and around and around and around

in my head

might seem like a large place, given the brain's enormous capacity for information, but in actuality provides nowhere near adequate room for the circulation of the blip, a fact which causes great annoyance.

These words have mostly an emotional effect, I feel, and will likely speak.

potential?

BOTHERSOME:

my mind is drawn to an insect, one that will NOT leave me alone. i think the image of an annoying insect fits well with the size of a blip, being very very tiny yet IMPOSSIBLE to get rid of. This is music being VISUALLY DESCRIPTIVE as related to EXPERIENCE.

imagery?



Gray

This is wonderful!  
you're taking the words  
numbers as music...



"Notes rolling up and down... as if in inhale and exhale"

What does it mean for a sound to rise and fall up and down? The first thing that comes to my mind is the up and down of pitch, but only with the image of a piano in my mind. If we thought of notes not in a standardized order, but as a more abstract set of patterns, the up and down is not as clear. It is more of the effect which the note has on the ear - whether light and airy or heavy and resonate.

*separating from up: down of pitch?*

*a quality of the sound*

But up and down also seem to me to be related to a sort of progress and regress. Progress in music perhaps meaning the way the sound is carried forward, introducing new elements, and regress being the way it falls back into its common chords. I thought a lot about what it means to describe music as 'mature,' and it struck me most as the way the notes stray from their comfort zone in relation to one another - the ways they interact which are more complex than their normal, or more predictable, interactions. Mature music is, perhaps, that which is not as predictable while still within bounds.

*expectation*

*necessity: repetition*

*→ progress?*

When music rejects bounds, is there even music? It seems to me that music walks a strange line between freedom and necessary rules. Music without bounds which tries to break all natural relationships between notes and create something entirely without authority does not fall on the ear like music, but like chaos. True music creates a sense of freedom while still within the bounds of a set order, and while still appealing to the authority which the notes themselves set.

"As if in inhale and exhale..." The fact that music can be described as having the characteristics of living things is a curious one. With an inhale comes a sense of expectancy, as a person on the brink of words, or like a rising chord which could end anywhere. An exhale has the sense of release, like a music tension which builds and then all of a sudden is brought to consonance.

*as resolution*

The fact that music 'breathes' is almost to take the composer and project his life onto the very notes themselves. And to suggest that he has the ability to create life from his own life, and breathe into music some sort of life which reflects his own.

*A relationship between the boundaries, natural ordering, expectation & release... structuring principles of music and life more broadly, as the source of these principles?*

*intention, structure*



"It is easy to know this song intimately, since the strong residing tone of the bass and drums provide a distinct beat"

embodied-knowing?

I've been listening to *Break Free (Live Version)* since last week's essays and can concur. The basic repeating 'dow, duh dow dow' bass line sticks in your head quickly and builds an immediate attachment. It's Longest, short, long, long. It's the song's pace and style of walk. That's why it's repetition never gets old: it sticks around. And why it sticks with you: it comes back to me when I walk in such a way. Sort of like a strut, combined with the way that that vulture flies in *Looney Tunes*.

Ms. Nadasen-Gladstone goes on to talk about how this relates to the title and theme of the song, breaking free. Reminds me of the final in our chants. The way everything else is either higher or lower and you'll eventually return. It is our home. Here, (or arrive) rather than being a note, it's a rhythm. More like the basso continuo in the *Zefiro*. But there is a link between these two concepts. Both perspective descriptors. Ms. Nadasen-Gladstone must've recognized this, we see it in when she compares the beat to a residing tone.

And, rhythm, gesture, connection, expectation, knowing, ...

There's something about this phrase "know intimately" which has everything to do with this home-base, perspective-descriptor of ours, whether the basso continuo or the final; they not only establish the tone, but are the heart of the piece. It's found not in the chorus or the lyrics, but in this home base; that's the part that earns you the 'knowing intimately' badge. In *Break Free*, Dave makes it easy by putting that intimate knowledge out there for everyone (and the cheers of the live version sound out a confirmation of what any fan listening to this song has already felt).

And, reciting tone > residing tone

Johnson

$\phi \in N$

The body of  $\phi$  is  
known as  $\phi$ .



The song evokes a sense of movement without a destination, and a car traveling down a straight road. Like the sense of freedom one gets from driving with the windows down- strange as we sit in a confined metal box and yet feel free.

How is movement without destination reflected in the beat of this song? There is a strong and

consistent pulse. The song immediately starts with this pulse that is picked up by other

instruments. At this point in the music video, one man singing switches to many cars in a blurred

video driving down the highway together. The words are clearly the focus of the song, but the

background provides the listener with a pulse. I imagine the writer of this sentence saw themself

on a straight road because the beat is mostly predictable- the listener anticipates the downbeat

where the downbeat falls. This gives the song the feeling of being confined and free at the same

time, in a metal box and on a straight road, but by choice. By following instinct, rather than

planning. The beat wants to be followed, it doesn't force you to follow it. It's the sort of song you

want to walk to, and while you walk your footsteps will become aligned with the beat of the

song. I imagine the writer of this sentence understood the feeling of being in a car rather

solitarily on foot because of the multiple sounds which make up the beat in the background. Yet,

in minute 2.06 all of the noise in the background drops out and we are left with a lighter pulse

with an eerie tone. I wonder what this would represent on a journey with no destination. In this

song, it left me feeling like I was at some destination, but one which was unknown, maybe

unpredictable, which tracks with the freedom which the writer of this sentence describes.

choice  
instinct  
planning  
expectation  
suggestion

predictability/  
freedom?

unpredictable - unpredictable

Indira Naclsen - Gladstone

→ *Stimulus input*

Our experiences with our own body's rhythm (breathing, heartbeat, speech) may influence how we feel about external beats.

Music --> physical reaction --> emotional reaction

Frequency of beat. How does the instrument influence frequency? Flexibility of sound, how much vibration can an instrument create. What is vibration? Relationship between light (silent, white space) and dark (sound)?

*Sound tempo pitch regularity?*

*increased presence of vibration*

"My beat that buzzes in and out like a cicada"

*structural frequency*

Proximity of sound? Rhythm as background to melody vs. Rhythm in the foreground. How are they different? White space creating rhythm?

*attention?*

"Beat"  
Rhythm,  
→ foundation, tempo, meter

Comparison to nature, other experiences. Our experiences with sounds all influence each other. Why the desire to relate sounds like this? Associations?

"My"  
What is the relationship between listener and performer? Who's beat is it? Mine? Yours? Can a beat be one's own? Music-body connection: is it through the physical experience of music that we can appropriate it? At what point does a song become "yours"? How do people experience beat differently?

*embodiment as ownership*

*beat as emotional via physical?*





### Words and Music Week3

"Bob and the Plugz, his backing band, are a band of coyotes running through the hills overlooking Los Angeles, howling at the moon. They're lean and fast and looking to bite anything that moves."

-----From No.7 of the Words and Music - Week 2 selection

This portrayal effectively captures the untamed and wanderlust-infused essence of Bob Dylan and Plugz's performance in 1984. My initial reaction to this depiction was "Wow, this band must be really dominating the studio." This impression is drawn from the evocative terms "Coyotes" and "howling at the moon," which conjure a vivid and captivating mental image. <sup>tapped in to your own experience</sup> Some nights in the lower smoking area, I have personally witnessed the moment when a pack of Coyotes begins to howl for some enigmatic reason, responding to one another with ever-increasing volume. Therefore, I can suddenly envision the vibrant and nomadic performance inciting the entire studio into a frenzy of madness and euphoria. This music likely has <sup>inviting musical qualities from this analogy...</sup> a brisk tempo and a robust drumbeat, which sounds like a core melody of a restless night for youth.

[Video as part of the song]

After investigating the video on the Internet, I have come to realize that my assumptions, based on my classmate's description, are quite accurate with reality. This revelation deepens my admiration for this description. The musical dynamism becomes my newfound revelation after watching this performance. The entire song unfolds seamlessly; once it commences, the potent melody remains unyielding and dynamically unaltered until its conclusion. Also, Dylan's voice sounds determined and fervent throughout the whole song. They truly sing like coyotes, with no pauses, poised for a spirited assault with a galelike pace.

Intensify that  
an analysis can  
be inserted  
into something  
generative...

Peng