

## THE FIRST-PERSON FEELING THEORY OF MUSICAL EXPRESSION

BRYAN J. PARKHURST

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

What's going on when we hear music's emotional expressiveness? Views proliferate.<sup>1</sup> The one that I shall consider here holds that when listeners encounter emotion in music they engage in a fundamentally imaginative or make-believe-oriented activity. Malcolm Budd, who is sympathetic to this view, states that in hearing music expressive of anguish, "I make-believe that my experience of [the music] is an experience of anguish, or I imagine that in experiencing [the music] I am undergoing an experience of anguish."<sup>2</sup> Kendall Walton says something in the same spirit: "Listeners' imaginings are, in many instances, about their experience of hearing the sounds rather than about the sounds themselves... Anguished or agitated or exuberant music not only induces us to imagine feeling anguished or agitated or exuberant; it also induces one to imagine of one's auditory experience that it is an experience of anguish or agitation or exuberance."<sup>3</sup> For both Budd and Walton, auditory *experiences*, rather than the sounds causing and represented in those experiences, are the subjects of listeners' imaginings. They agree, in

---

<sup>1</sup> Were I to begin to enumerate the various viewpoints, this essay would quickly turn into a literature review. For a critique of, and alternative to, many prominent theories of music and the emotions that have arisen in the analytic philosophy of music during the last few decades, see the fourth section of Robinson (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Budd (1989), p. 134. Also Budd (1996), pp. 148ff. There, Budd develops a sophisticated resemblance theory which details how music can sound the way emotions feel.

<sup>3</sup> Walton (1994), p. 55.

other words, that the relevant kind of imagining is not a *de re* imagining about this C-sharp or that tonic triad, but is instead a higher-order *de se*<sup>4</sup> imagining about one's own awareness of the C-sharp and the tonic triad.

I call this view the First-Person Feeling Theory, or FPF. Here is my formulation of FPF, which I take to be the view implicit in Walton (1994):

FPF: One manner in which a musical sound sequence X expresses emotion Y is by prompting listeners to imagine feeling Y. The mental process whereby one comes to imagine feeling X is that of imaginative experiential substitution: the listener imagines of her auditory experience of X that it is instead a (non-auditory) experience of Y.<sup>5</sup>

Budd goes further than FPF by defending a resemblance-based thesis which says that noticed similarities may offer a causal explanation of what prompts (and, perhaps as a consequence, normatively licenses) the kinds of imaginings adverted to in FPF: "in virtue of how the music sounds," which is influenced by "the perception of a likeness between music and feeling," a listener might "imagine *of* [her] auditory experience of the music that it is an experience of feeling what the music expresses."<sup>6</sup> But to postulate the perception of a likeness, we should be careful to notice, is to make a substantive empirical claim about the psychology of hearing and imagining. It is *not* to claim that FPF logically entails either an awareness of, or the matter-of-factual presence of, a

---

<sup>4</sup> One may worry (as did one anonymous reviewer) that imaginings about one's own awareness do not count as *de se* imaginings because one's awareness is not the same as one's self, and so imagining about one's awareness is not the same as an imagining about oneself. I'm following Walton's usage (from "Listening with Imagination") in denominating these kinds imaginings as *de se*. But I also think that Walton has chosen the correct label. A constitutive feature of imaginings about one's own awareness is that the awareness be conceived of as *one's own*, rendering this kind of imagining is inescapably self-referential or self-regarding, i.e. *de se*. If that alone isn't persuasive, I might try saying something like this: one's awareness is (and is experienced as) a *part of one's self*, and so to engage in imaginings about one's awareness (*qua* part of oneself) is to engage in imaginings about a part of oneself. If imagining about a part of X (*qua* part of X) entails imagining about X (as seems tenable), then imaginings about one's own awareness are imaginings about one's self, and are consequently *de se*. Nothing much hangs in the balance here, though, and nothing in my arguments is affected by whether this *de se* classification is correct (though I think it is).

<sup>5</sup> In discussions of these matters, Walton told me that he accepts this crystallization of his view. I cannot see that it differs in any crucial respect from the first of Budd's imagination-types that I mention in note 6.

<sup>6</sup> Budd (1996), p. 148. Budd contrasts "imagining of your experience of hearing the music that it is an experience of undergoing the feeling" with "just imagin[ing] the music to be an instance of the feeling. The first kind of imagining, a *de se* one, is what FPF is concerned with. The second kind of imagining, a *de re* one, does not figure in FPF.

pertinent similarity. FPF, by itself, says only that we imagine of an experience of one kind that it is an experience of another kind. Although this leaves open the possibility that similarity – perhaps consciously attended to, perhaps below the threshold of awareness<sup>7</sup> – is indeed what grounds the imagined identification,<sup>8</sup> FPF has nothing to say about whether this must be the case, nor does it claim that perceiving such a similarity (if one is present to be perceived) is necessarily central to the apprehension of musical expression.

Is FPF at all credible without Budd's addendum concerning similarity? I suspect one can make a good case for FPF without defending a similarity thesis. This could be done by calling on the notion of suitability or fittingness. One can be agnostic about the presence of similarities between music and feelings while still maintaining that emotionally expressive music must have features in virtue of which it is *suitable* for being used as a prop (to use Walton's language) in the game of FPF make-believe. Whether or not the way music sounds is *like* the way emotions feel, in a sense that we could fill out by enumerating shared properties, the way music sounds is *suitable* to the way emotions feel (we know not how, maybe), in a respect that encourages or sanctions FPF-type imagining. It is to FPF's credit, I would argue, that it is silent on the issue of perceived similarity. Plainly, in many cases the reasons some stretch[M1] of music is suitable for being incorporated into an FPF-type imagining are purely conventional, historically contingent, and non-mimetic. Only if one were antecedently convinced of a similarity thesis would one be tempted to think that, for instance, the minor mode *resembles* anguish and melancholy in a way that explains why we tend to integrate such music into *de se* imaginings about anguish and melancholy.

\*\*\*

Now that I've characterized the FPF, I'll turn to defending it. Levinson, in chapter 6 of *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*, raises several pointed objections to the view. I'll spend the

---

<sup>7</sup> Maybe we are more disposed to imagine of an experience of type A that it is an experience of type B if A and B are phenomenologically similar in salient respects, or if the intentional objects of experience in A and B are similar in salient respects. Maybe it is even true that we would resist FPF imaginings if the right kind of similarity weren't present. FPF is consistent with these possibilities.

<sup>8</sup> Budd allows that "the perception of a likeness between one thing and another does not require that the perceiver should be aware of what the likeness consists in," because "the... perception of a likeness does require that the two items should be alike in a respect that is responsible for the perception." Budd (1996), *ibid.*

rest of the paper working through them.

Objection 1: “The main reason I find FPF unattractive is that it casts the activity of perceiving musical expressiveness in too egocentric a light: it represents expression in music as, in effect, the expression of the listener’s own, albeit imaginary feelings. But expressiveness in music [...] is something we encounter fundamentally as residing ‘out there’, as existing exterior to our own minds. The expressiveness in music is understood first and foremost as belonging to and inhering in *the music*, not in *oneself*.”<sup>9</sup>

One way responding to this objection is to point out that it assumes a false dichotomy between out-there-ness and in-here-ness. In the case of sounds, things are more porous than this. Part of what makes sounds unusual as objects of sensation, and part of what makes the art of sound special as a source of aesthetic interest, is the weird multi-spatiality of sounds: sounds can be represented in sensory experience as being (among other things) precisely located, indeterminately located, multiply located, unlocated, and internally located (like pains). I won’t explore all these possibilities in detail here, nor will I argue for an ontology of sounds – the one I accept, incidentally – that says that sounds should have object-hood conferred upon them and be counted as concrete particulars, rather than as perceptible qualities of objects (such as violins) or of sensory media (such as the air in between my ears and a violin).<sup>10</sup> All of my talk of sound as objects, I assume, can be translated into talk of sounds as abstract particulars (or however you prefer to think about located property instantiations) without affecting the success of my arguments.

What is of specific interest is that we can experience sounds, especially musical sounds, both as 1) emanating from a distal source, and as 2) (perhaps non-veridically) being located inside of us, or as emanating from inside of us; and that, further, often this is subject to volitional aspectual shifts à la duck-rabbit. Sounds obtain much of their represented spatial located-ness, when they have it, through a correlation with the visible events that are their causes and the visible objects that are their sources. When these events and objects are represented in visual experience as being distant from the percipient, and in a unique spatial position, the associated sounds often inherit the located-ness of the *visibilia*. So, when I see a person talking over there, I also (*ceteris*

---

<sup>9</sup> Levinson (1996), p. 94.

<sup>10</sup> For extensive treatment of these issues, see O’Callaghan (2007).

*paribus*) hear her voice as being over there. Sounds can also receive a false appearance of location by dint of illusory correlations with objects that are not their source. Ventriloquism relies on this. Significantly, we know that the voice is not coming from the dummy, but the voice still seems to emerge from his mouth. In addition to being tricked, we can also give sounds a different locational aspect on purpose. Shut your eyes and attend to a sustained, ambient sound in your environment, like the humming of a refrigerator or the hiss of a heating duct, and hear it now as *all around you* and now as *inside of you*.<sup>11</sup> The second possibility is what interests us here. What R. K. Elliot says about music can be extended, it seems to me, to several different kinds of sound: “As we grow more familiar with [a piece of music]... some phrases and melodies no longer seem to be directed at us from a source outside us. We may not experience them as if they were issuing from us, on an analogy with the voice, but as coming into being in us, on analogy with the process of thought.”<sup>12</sup> It is very common to have auditory experiences of the sort sketched by Elliot – where the auditory object is felt as having its genesis within us – especially in cases of sounds that persist uninterrupted (such as a building’s humming), and when the sound’s physical source cannot be located visually (the ticking of a hidden clock), as well as when sounds are heard through headphones or earbuds.<sup>13</sup>

Imagined and hallucinated “sounds” often seem internally located. For example, part of the intentional content represented in the experience of hallucinated or imagined sounds, such as tinnitus or the A440 pitch I always imagine just before an orchestra begins tuning, is that the sound and the auditor are co-located. When there is ringing in our ears, we don’t mistakenly look around for the offending sound source, because we experience the sound as originating within us.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, sounds can be like pains or itches: sensations or awareness of internal states rather than perceptions of external, public objects and events. This kinship between sounds and introspectible conditions is evinced in some types of auditory psychological pathology. When schizophrenics “hear voices,” they report experiencing the voices as “loud thoughts,” mental verbalizations over which they somehow lack ownership or control, but which they are privy to through

---

<sup>11</sup> Alternately, try hearing the clock’s ticking now as *on the wall* and now as *between your ears*.

<sup>12</sup> Elliot, (1966-67), p. 153.

<sup>13</sup> And, indeed, if I am listening through ear buds, the location of the sound’s source is literally inside of me, though of course I am not in fact the sound’s cause.

<sup>14</sup> This may be a case where I can experience the sound as unlocated or indeterminately located, too.

a kind of auditory introspection. Evidently they do not mistake these sounds for acoustical events in their immediate environment.<sup>15</sup> The phenomenology of visual apparitions and imagined scenes is not like this. The objects of non-veridical visual experiences, such as mirages, are typically represented as being “out there,” as being things the hallucinator can survey, explore, or encounter in the world, not as features of the viewer’s self. Indeed, it is hard to conceive of what it would mean for a visual object to “originate from within,” or be co-extensive with the viewer, whereas with sound this is at least intelligible (even if you aren’t moved by my examples).

The inward aspect of sounds, if not a ubiquitous feature of auditory experiences, is at least quite common, and I suspect that that it underlies some the carnal language we use to talk about sounds and hearing. We say that sounds fill our ears, or ring in them; we say that we can’t get songs out of our heads; when a jazz musician needs to “know a tune by heart” he tries to “get it in his ear”; we “feel” the beat of dance music, rather than hearing it; and so on. Much of the inwardness of sonic experience may stem from the fact that auditory experiences routinely have a tactile component. Many times, we do literally feel the beat inside ourselves, when our flesh and bones resonate sympathetically with powerful acoustical signals. It isn’t far fetched to think that lots what we call our auditory experiences are not of a purely auditory character, then, and are instead augmented and altered by the tactile sensation of vibrations. I expect that this is true more often than we usually suppose, and that felt vibration may subtly determine the content and character of our auditory experiences even when we are not sensible of having our bodies violently shaken by sound waves.

To summarize: Levinson makes an assertion about the externality of musical expression in particular, and I answer with an observation about the interiority of sounds in general. The goal was to put pressure on Levinson’s contention that “expressiveness in music is something we encounter fundamentally as residing ‘out there,’” and to raise a worry that things are not likely to be this cut and dried. If sounds (and, if Elliot is right, especially musical sounds) can be experienced as being in us, or coming from within us, and the music is in the sounds, and the expressiveness is in the music, this all appears (by

---

<sup>15</sup> This information about schizophrenic voices was shared by John Campbell on the radio programme Philosophy Talk. The broadcast was entitled “Schizophrenia and the Mind,” and aired on 18/10/2009. Available at [www.philosophytalk.org/pastShows/SchizophreniaMind.html](http://www.philosophytalk.org/pastShows/SchizophreniaMind.html).

some kind of transitive principle) to guarantee the possibility of music's expression residing – or being regarded as residing – “in here,” as well.<sup>16</sup>

And, even if you accept none of my claims about the locational phenomenology of sounds (and it is notoriously tough to *persuade* someone who disagrees with your assertions about phenomenology), you shouldn't be carried away by Levinson's objection. For, while Levinson is surely right to say that, as a rule, one *understands* that the expression belongs to something (namely, the music) which is in fact separate from me, this does nothing to show that FPF-type imagining is not central to our aesthetic engagements with musical expressiveness. The fact that I understand that some state, W, is the way the world is does not count against a theory that says that some sphere of aesthetic activity centrally involves imagining that the world is other-than-W.

Objection 2: “Even if we did imagine something of [our sensations] it is implausible to suggest that it would be *that having such sensations was the experiencing of emotions*, because there is hardly more similarity between the experiencing of emotions and the introspecting of auditory sensations than between the experiencing of emotions and the hearing of music.”<sup>17</sup>

This objection is an *ignoratio elenchi* in two respects. In the first place, FPF hasn't been shown to stand or fall with any particular claim about similarity (as I argued earlier), so the objection doesn't speak to the point. In the second place, whether or not similarity is relevant, the objection evinces confusion about FPF's commitments. Levinson's strategy, as far as I can tell,<sup>18</sup> is (1) to insist that we have no more reason to (A) imaginatively identify the experiencing of emotions with the “introspecting of auditory sensations” than we do to (B) imaginatively identify the experiencing of emotions with “the hearing of music,” and then (2) to conclude, therefore, that we shouldn't claim that

---

<sup>16</sup> An anonymous review pointed out that Levinson's claim is that expressiveness *inheres in* the music, which is different from saying that it is *spatially located in* the music, and that thus “showing that sounds can be experienced as located in us does not show that the expressiveness of these sounds can be experienced as inhering in us.” This isn't quite what I'm trying to show. I'm simply arguing against Levinson on his own terms. He thinks that from the fact that music is (experienced as) external to us, he can infer that the emotive properties that inhere in music are experienced as external to us. I take myself to be showing that antecedent of Levinson's conditional is false, or far from obvious – in fact, music can be (experienced as) internal to us – and hence Levinson has given us little or no reason to believe the consequent.

<sup>17</sup> Levinson (1996), p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> The objection is fairly difficult to make heads or tails of, but I've tried to interpret it as charitably as I know how.

(A) is going on, and should instead prefer (B). I fail to see, though, how this is an objection to FPF, since FPF doesn't claim that (A) is going on. FPF does not claim that one imaginatively equates *introspecting* one's auditory experience with feeling an emotion. It claims, rather, that we imaginatively identify the auditory experience itself (not the introspective act by means of which, presumably, we are made aware of the experience as an experience) with a feeling of some emotion. And, indeed, that seems to be roughly the kind of imagining that (B) talks about. Thus, to the extent that he is endorsing (B), Levinson is unintentionally supporting FPF.<sup>19</sup> If Objection 2 affects our credence about FPF at all, it is to boost it.

As for similarity, it seems to me that the kinds of experiences imaginatively identified with one another in FPF-type imaginings – auditory experiences and emotional experiences – are strikingly similar, such that, if similarity turns out to be something the theory requires (which I've argued against), it has as much of it as it needs. For instance, both types of experience have a kind of interiority or inwardness<sup>20</sup> that is less pronounced in other kinds of experiences (e.g. visual experiences of the shape of objects); they are both involuntary, or at least difficult to govern to the extent that we would like (sounds and emotions, unlike visual experiences, resist being “shut off”); they can both be intrusive and violatory; they both induce characteristic somatic responses; they both resist linguistic characterization in a way that, e.g., visual objects do not (we don't have the same verbal repertoire for describing, e.g., musical timbre or social anxiety that we have at our disposal for describing colour and shape); we may be at times oblivious to them even when we are (in some definable sense) experiencing them, though, interestingly, we rarely have much success at *trying* to ignore them; they both have a great capacity to be painful and pleasant; and so on.

Moreover, even if the experiences were radically dissimilar<sup>21</sup>, it isn't clear that this would pose an insurmountable obstacle, or even a surmountable one, to imaginatively equating them. Suppose a canvas has drawn on it a few equally sized circles encompassed

---

<sup>19</sup> However it is not entirely clear, from the way Levinson frames the objection, whether he means to endorse (B).

<sup>20</sup> I take this to be an uncontroversial claim about emotions, and I argued at length for the inwardness of auditory experiences in my reply to Objection 1.

<sup>21</sup> Whatever that might mean. We would need to have a theory of similarity, and levels of similarity, in order to know what radical dissimilarity consists of.



by one large circle, and is entitled “Possible Worlds and the Pluriverse.” The make-believe game that this picture authorizes (to use Waltonian language) involves imagining that the little circles are possible worlds and that the big circle is the pluriverse.<sup>22</sup> This ought to do away with any lingering worries about the difficulty of imaginatively identifying radically dissimilar things with each other.<sup>23</sup>

The lesson here, I think, is twofold: 1) the plausibility of an imaginative identification theory is not a function of the similarity of the things to be identified; and 2) even if it were, FPF would come out looking quite plausible.

Objections 3 and 4: “It is implausible to suggest that the listener introspects his auditory sensations while listening; just attending to the musical substance of music of any complexity is enough of a task to preclude much in the way of simultaneous introspection on the side,” and “It is implausible to suggest that we imagine anything *about* such sensations, even if we were to attend to them introspectively.”<sup>24</sup>

Objection 3 and Objection 4 go together, and I think they are strong enough to give us pause. On the face of it, there is indeed something immediately odd and implausible about the proposal that, in hearing expressive music as it is supposed to be heard, one first introspects one’s auditory experience and then imagines counterfactual stuff about this introspected thing. But this oddness is not, *pace* Levinson, a function of how utterly absorbing and complex music is.<sup>25</sup> It instead arises, I contend, from considerations related to the so-called “transparency of experience.” According to one leading view of sensory experience, when I attempt to introspect my perceptual experiences, I end up seeing through them, and attend instead to their representational content. The point is illustrated by an example from Gilbert Harman:

When Eloise sees a tree before her, the colors she experiences are all experienced as features of the tree and its surroundings. None of them are experienced as intrinsic

---

<sup>22</sup> It may also authorize imagining that in seeing the big circle I am seeing the pluriverse.

<sup>23</sup> I don’t know what one could say about how the pluriverse and the big circle are similar. Certainly it doesn’t seem that the pluriverse and the circle are *perceptually* similar.

<sup>24</sup> Levinson (1996), p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> Levinson thinks that “just attending to the musical substance of music of any complexity is enough of a task to preclude much in the way of simultaneous introspection on the side” (*ibid.*, p. 94). This argument from complexity seems like it should work equally well against Levinson’s preferred theory, which has us hearing the music’s expressiveness as an externalization of an emotion on the part of the music’s imagined “persona,” but there isn’t room here to pursue that criticism.

features of her experience. Nor does she experience any features of anything as intrinsic features of her experiences. And that is true of you too. There is nothing special about Eloise's visual experience. When you see a tree, you do not experience any features as intrinsic features of your experience. Look at a tree and try to turn your attention to intrinsic features of your visual experience. I predict you will find that the only features there to turn your attention to will be features of the presented tree...<sup>26</sup>

If what Harman says is right (which, needless to say, is a matter of dispute among philosophers of mind), then the very notion of a strong form of introspection – the idea that introspection acquaints me, in some kind of quasi-perceptual way, with quasi-perceptual qualities of experience that are not simply experienced as qualities of objects – is built on sand. Rather than being a procedure whereby we survey our perceptual experiences (meta-perceptually, as it were), introspection instead misses its intended target, bypasses experience altogether, and furnishes us with nothing save an awareness of the objects of our perception (e.g. Eloise's tree). Harman's is a deflationary theory of introspection. If it is correct, either introspection just collapses into perception, or we are left with a vitiated notion of introspection that classifies it as nothing more than whatever conscious activity allows us to come to know our own beliefs, desires, and thoughts. And if the strong form of introspection is swept away by transparency arguments, so is FPF. At least, that is a worry you might have, if you worry about such things.

There is a way around this: I might not need the sort of introspection Harman abjures – the quasi-perceptual kind – in order to carry out the kinds of imaginings FPF requires of me. The doctrine of transparency says that I can't *perceive* my experiences, which seems straightforward and commonsensical enough. But the access to my experiences I require in order to imagine things about them needn't be perceptual, so it is no worry that I can't *see* my visual experiences or *hear* my auditory experiences. After all, there are lots of necessarily perceptually inaccessible entities (things I can't even in principle have sensory awareness of) that I have no trouble imagining things about, such as numbers and other *abstracta*. It is as uncontroversial, I would think, to say that I can *imagine* pi to be a rational number as it is to say that I can *know* pi to be an irrational number (or, even less

---

<sup>26</sup> Harman (1990), p. 36.

controversially, that I can imagine four to be the number of years old that I am, or something along those lines). I suspect that there is an important underlying principle that emerges from this observation, which I will state without defending: the possibility of holding beliefs about X is a sufficient condition for the possibility of imagining things about X. I take “imagining about” to include things like imagining that X exists, imagining that X has properties it does not have, and imagining seeing X, though not all of these need apply in any given imagining of X.

Can I believe things about perceptual experiences? Obviously, yes: I believe that I undergo them, for instance. It is true that I can’t *see* the visual experience I am having at this moment; when I “introspect” it, this introspection fixes on a white Apple laptop computer and a pair of hands, rather than on a *visual experience* of a white Apple laptop computer and a pair of hands. Nonetheless, I do believe something about my experience: I know that it has as its intentional content, *inter alia*, a white Apple laptop computer and a pair of hands. That is, in introspection, I encounter properties, such as *representing a laptop*, that do not attach to any of the objects of my experience, but instead attach to the experience itself. The question, now, is: what kinds of possible imagining does this form of knowledge acquisition implicate?

The answer is that I might imagine of my visual experience that its intentional content is other than it is. For example, I might imagine that the visual experience (which actually represents a laptop and a pair of hands) represents a bear trap and a pair of paws. But you might then wonder: am I really imagining something about my experience, or I am I just imagining that my laptop is a bear trap and that my hands are paws? Is this a *de se* imagining about experience, or just a *de re* imagining about objects? This looks to be a case of what we could call the “transparency of imagination”: one where, in trying to imagine something about my perceptual experiences themselves, I simply end up imagining something about the *objects* of my experience. *Prima facie*, this is not enough to rehabilitate FPF.

But introspection, such as it is, doesn’t just tell me what the content of my experience is. It also tells me what kind of experience I am having. In seeing a dog, it is manifest not just that there is a dog and that the dog has certain dog-properties, but also (I hope inarguably) that sight is the mode of presentation of this dog-content. Introspection,

therefore, does not bottom out solely with intentional content; the introspective bedrock also includes, so to speak, an assignment of the intentional content to a sense modality. This kind of non-inferential “discovery” can mark a difference between *types* of perceptual experience in a way that content-awareness alone can’t. Consider the case of a person with perfectly accurate blind sight. When an orange is placed in front of him, he reports having orange-thoughts that are so comprehensive that they rival veridical visual experience in their accuracy and level of detail. Everything that one can know on the basis of seeing the orange, the blind-sighted man also knows, but he has no subjective experience of sight. He is as certain as he can be that he doesn’t *see*. Here, it is a “felt difference [of modality] – a difference given in introspection”<sup>27</sup> that marks the difference between the perfectly blind-sighted experience of the orange and the normal-vision experience, not a difference in represented content. The difference between perfect blind sight and normal vision is a difference we gain knowledge of through a form of introspection that has the power to identify properties distinct from representational content: namely, properties related to an experience’s sense modality.

If I imagine something about the *modality* of my perceptual experience, are we caught in another “transparent imagining” trap? I think not. Imagining of an olfactory experience of wine that it is a gustatory experience of wine (the way a desperate but disciplined recovering dipsomaniac might, as he longingly sniffs at, but resists imbibing from, his glass of 1998 Château Cheval Blanc) doesn’t appear to reduce to imagining something about the air one smells; it doesn’t reduce to imagining that, e.g., the air is a piquant Bordeaux instead of a clear gas. That would have some odd imaginative implications, to say the least (shouldn’t he then imagine that he is drowning in wine?). Far more accurate, I should think, to say that he imagines something about his experience, namely, that its modality is taste rather than smell. Likewise, if FPF is correct, when I listen to expressive music, I don’t imagine that musical sounds are emotions, or something like that, but instead imagine that an *experience of sound* is an *experience of emotion*. This is a substitution of *modality*, a substitution which is imagined introspectively.

These considerations exonerate FPF of the charges brought against it by Levinson. There remains an important set of questions about whether FPF could be a component of

---

<sup>27</sup> Tye (1992), pp. 166-167.

a decent empirical psychological theory concerning our detection of emotional qualities in music, and a set of questions about how we would experimentally demonstrate its theoretical adequacy. These are questions I don't have the expertise (or, at present, the space) to answer, so I'll content myself to end by gesturing at them.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Bryan Parkhurst is a PhD candidate in both the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Music Theory at the University of Michigan. He did his undergraduate work in harp performance and music theory at Rice University in Houston. His interests have mostly to do with philosophical aesthetics and musical analysis, and in putting these disciplines into dialogue with one another, but also extend to the history of philosophy (particularly ancient philosophy and, lately, German idealism), political philosophy (especially Marx), and meta-ethics. His recent work can be found in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Humanities*, and *The American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal*.

REFERENCES

- BUDD, M. (1989). 'Music and the Communication of Emotion.' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47: pp. 129-138.
- BUDD, M. (1996). *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry, and Music*. (London: Penguin Press).
- ELLIOT, R.K. (1966). 'Aesthetic Theory and the Theory of Art.' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 67: pp. 111-126.
- HARMAN, G. (1990). 'The Intrinsic Quality of Experience.' *Philosophical Perspectives*: p. 31-52.
- LEVINSON, J. (1996). *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).
- O'Callaghan, C. (2007). *Sounds*. (New York: Oxford University Press).
- 'Schizophrenia and the Mind.' *Philosophy Talk*. Ben Manilla Productions, Inc. 18 Oct. 2009. Radio.
- TYE, M. (1992). 'Visual Qualia and Visual Content', in Tim Crane (ed.) *The Contents of Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): pp. 158-176.
- WALTON, K. (1994). 'Listening with Imagination: Is Music Representational?' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52: pp. 47-61.
- Robinson, J (2005). *Deeper Than Reason*. Oxford: OUP.