

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
FACULDADE DE LETRAS
PROGRAMA EM TEORIA DA LITERATURA



PHANTASMS IN MUSIC

Sara Ellen Eckerson

Mestrado em Teoria da Literatura
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For Alberto

Estética / Aristóteles / *Mimêsis* / Música / *Phantasia*

Aesthetics / Aristotle / *Mimêsis* / Music / *Phantasia*

Esta tese é sobre a forma como a música pode ser descrita mimeticamente. Começando por discutir o tratamento contemporâneo deste tópico, comparo vários argumentos sobre música (em particular ‘música e representação’) e descrevo a razão porque estes são relevantes para a questão original da *mimêsis*. No segundo e terceiro capítulos, discuto ideias ou soluções (para o problema da ‘música mimética’ de Aristóteles) para os problemas colocados no primeiro capítulo, e relaciono estes com conceitos usados por Aristóteles nos seus escritos sobre música. O terceiro capítulo trata especificamente do tópico da *phantasia* e dou ênfase à importância da *phantasia* no argumento de Aristóteles sobre *mimêsis* e imitações em relação à música.

This thesis attempts to describe how music can be called “mimetic.” Beginning with a discussion of current work on this topic, I compare various arguments on music (mainly ‘music and representation’) and why I find them to be relevant to this original question of *mimêsis*. In the second and third chapters, I build on ideas or solutions (for the ‘mimetic music’ problem originally taken from Aristotle) for problems posed in the first chapter and relate them to concepts Aristotle uses when writing about music. The third chapter specifically treats the topic of *phantasia* and I propose the importance of *phantasia* in Aristotle’s argument of mimesis and imitations as related to music.

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INTRODUCTION

Originally my project for this thesis began from what I found to be awkward descriptions of music, yet were descriptions that could be understood by more people than perhaps a formal harmonic analysis. If we look at a text Ravel wrote to accompany his piece about a nymph, the *Undine*, it reads, “Listen! Listen! It is I, it is the Undine, brushing with these drops of water the resonant diamond-panes of your window illuminated by the dull moonbeams.”¹ I would not say that everyone who hears the piece, without knowing this text, would make such a description. However, I would argue that probably a few people, after hearing the piece, and then reading the short text could say, “It makes sense.” Another example of this kind comes from Leonard Bernstein who describes passages from the fifth movement of *Symphonie Fantastique* as “the grisly shrieks of witches; bloodcurdling laughter of demons and devils; the diabolical dancing of Halloween hags and grinning monsters; and of course who should be the chief witch? None other than that sweet little Beloved of his whose angelic melody has now transformed into a hellish, squealing ride on a broomstick.”² It was descriptions like these that began my inquiry.

In the first chapter of my thesis I try to explore some of the current debates on representation in music and the question of *mimesis*. Out of many scholars who have written on this topic, I chose two in particular: Roger Scruton and Peter Kivy. Both Scruton and Kivy remark on the passage from Aristotle’s *Poetics* where Aristotle calls music one of the mimetic arts, and from there they argue about how music can be called “mimetic”. In the account I give of Kivy’s argument, as presented in his book *Sound and Semblance*, I show how Kivy develops a series of coined terms associated with different examples from music, such as “Musical Picture,” “Musical Illustration,” and “Musical Representation.” Kivy develops a list of adjective types that we use to describe music such as “General adjectives,” “Adjectives for expressive properties,” and “Structural adjectives.” Of particular interest is the category of

¹ RAVEL, Maurice. “Undine” in *Piano Masterpieces of Maurice Ravel*. Stanley Appelbaum, trans., New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1986. It is from the original “Ondine” poem to accompany the piece *Gaspard de La Nuit: 3 Poèmes pour piano d’après Aloysius Bertrand. I. Ondine*. 88.

² BERNSTEIN, Leonard. “Berlioz Takes a Trip” in Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique*. New York Philharmonic: Leonard Bernstein. Sony, 1964.

“General adjectives” where we find synaesthetic adjectives and the “Structural adjectives” category, which brings us to examine “structural” aspects of a piece (what I think to be the “nuts and bolts” of a musical work *e.g.* tonality, form, rhythmic patterns). By exploring these concepts, I wanted to see if they had relevance to what Aristotle wrote in regards to music and if there was a way of explaining a relation between what these contemporary scholars had to say about *mimesis* and music and Aristotle’s own treatment of music.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I consider different ways that Aristotle referred to music to see if there are differences between different types of imitation (*mimesis* or representation) he speaks about in music versus what Roger Scruton, Peter Kivy and Kendall Walton allow. I also look into various situations and texts where Aristotle uses music in examples to make a demonstration; the purpose this being if the way he uses music can be compared to the categories of adjectives that Peter Kivy developed to describe how we talk about descriptions of music. After discussing a brief overview of how Aristotle spoke about metaphors, I argue that it is not a metaphorical relationship that Aristotle was describing when saying that musical modes were mimetic of certain qualities (such as virtues). The second chapter ends with a short account of the relation Aristotle makes between *êthos* and music, as the quality of a virtue presented in music is a topic brought up in the first chapter and one that is also relevant to the third.

In the third chapter of my thesis I bring back a concept that I present in this introduction (of trying to explain why we often give descriptions of images to describe music we hear), and I develop aspects of Aristotle’s treatment of sense perception and *phantasia*. The Aristotelian concept of *phantasia* can be made relevant to a discussion brought up in the first chapter of my thesis, regarding whether a certain melody can have suggestions of a narrative, though lack a fictional world from which that narrative is derived. By describing the faculty of *phantasia* and *phantásmata*, I try to show how these are important when studying the concept of musical *mimesis* and also help in the explanation of adjectives we use to describe music.

Chapter I: Roger Scruton and Peter Kivy: Recent Discussions on *Mimêsis* and Representational Music

In this chapter, I hope to shed some light on the discussion related to *mimêsis* in more recent literature with the intention of broadening the spectrum of the philosophical problem of whether music is mimetic; if it is mimetic *how* can it be called *mimetic*; and what does this term *mimêsis* mean when we are talking about music. We find music being called “mimetic” by Plato and Aristotle, and I think to develop a richer understanding and perspective on this concept from Antiquity, it is worthwhile to look into more recent literature that is built on trying to understand what Plato and Aristotle meant by this term. Rather than making a survey of all the literature of the 20th and 21st century on this problem, I chose to focus primarily on two scholars who highlight concepts that are relevant. Roger Scruton and Peter Kivy disagree on many aspects when making some kind of solution for the question of *mimêsis* and such is why I thought it useful to compare them in this chapter.

(i) Roger Scruton’s argument

Roger Scruton writes in his work on the aesthetics of music that *mimêsis* is not only found in the artistic world; It must be taken into account that *mimêsis* or imitation has a very broad realm³. He writes, “Since imitation is the way in which we form our characters, it follows that music has a vast moral significance. This was the basis for Plato’s suggestion that certain [musical] modes should be banned from the ideal republic [...] Plato drew this stark conclusion because he believed that music imitates *character*.”⁴ Scruton never argues against Plato’s thesis that music imitates character, but that we of non-Antiquity are at a loss for really understanding what this means because we do not understand what Plato meant by *mimêsis*, or the “imitation of character.” In order to introduce the problem of defining *mimêsis* and try to determine what Plato may have meant, Scruton makes the following list of possible

³ SCRUTON, Roger. *The Aesthetics of Music*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 118.

⁴ Ibid. Scruton writes that the music Plato was talking about was “sung, danced to, or marched to. The thing imitated in the music was, they thought, automatically imitated by the person who ‘moved with’ it.” 118.

meanings *mimêsis* can have, “Plato’s usage is insensitive to the principal distinctions [between them]: representation, expressing, and merely copying.”⁵

To make a distinction between “representation” and “expressing,” Scruton writes that *representation* “is displayed by narratives, stories and descriptions,” and *expressing* “may exist even in the absence of storytelling.”⁶ This remains as Scruton’s stronghold on the concept that music is not a representational art, but that it expresses, or wears a kind of expression without the suggestion of fictional worlds. In order to add more support for his argument, and for the purpose of understanding his use of *representation*, Scruton contrasts it to the way he uses the word *imitation*. He cites an example from architecture, which is an example of a specific kind of *imitation*.⁷ For him, a work of art can utilize imitation in two different ways: “it may imitate artistic forms and details; or it may imitate the forms and details of other things.”⁸ Scruton uses an example from Gothic architecture of a leaf molding that serves as an example of the second kind of imitation. “[The resulting building] is not asking us to think of the mouldings as leaves, or to understand the column as a forest narrative. *Nothing* is being said about the leaves: they are there ‘for the effect.’”⁹ He further adds to the *effect*, “we do not see the leaves as *leaves*, as we should see leaves in a painting. Rather, we see the stone as leaf-like: an imitation which delights us precisely as an imitation, and not through some thought about the thing itself.”¹⁰

The “representational” quality of music is reduced to the type of imitation that Scruton affords to leaf moldings. In instances where music uses imitation of sounds from our everyday experiences, “either the sounds intrude completely, so as to become present in the music—not so much represented as reproduced [...] or else the music gathers them up and overrides their character as sound, so that we begin to hear music in them. They cross the barrier between sound and tone, and become part of the musical structure.”¹¹ This second type refers to when, in a work of music, a passage which was supposed to (or intended to) suggest something, ends up suggesting itself

⁵ Scruton, 119.

⁶ Ibid. Scruton attributes this point as introduced by Croce, though was a concept tacit in aesthetic theories since Kant.

⁷ Scruton, 120. In another example of contrast he writes, “The voices of a fugue imitate one another: but that is scarcely a candidate for representation.” However, according to Scruton, the sound of a bird song within a piece could be a candidate for representation.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Scruton, 121.

¹¹ Scruton, 126.

primarily, “the horn always suggests the horn – and with that suggestion come many more: the hunt, the post [...] but the horn does not represent the horn or its ordinary uses, even when deliberately used to suggest them.”¹² According to this comment, it looks like the horn suggests itself primarily, which may lead to other secondary suggestions, however the horn is unable to represent a horn or anything else because its sound does not offer a narrative or description.

Suggestion, then, becomes the key word for Scruton’s argument. Rather than representation, Scruton finds that, in music, there is a *gesture towards something*, and/or that music is “wearing a certain *expression*”, and thus marked by the abstractness of a *gesture* or *expression*, the “incompleteness of the thought sets the phenomenon apart from the description or depiction of fictional worlds.”¹³ Another aspect of *suggestion* is brought up by Scruton in regards to the titles of musical works, “the relation between music and its ‘subject’ is determined only by the presence of an auxiliary text” and often when we become aware of this text we begin to “hear things *in*” the music that we had not heard before.¹⁴ The importance of represented content in a representational work of art is different for music than it is for painting or literature because, according to Scruton, in a representational work of art (like one from figurative painting) “the aesthetic interest lies *in* the representation, and cannot be detached from it.”¹⁵ An example for Scruton is that one might hear the “heavings of bottomless sound [in *La Mer* by Debussy] which can be likened to the swell of the sea. But you do not have to hear this movement as the movement of the sea or even notice the likeness. You may hear it [...] as a *purely musical phenomenon*, to which you attach no subject to your thoughts.”¹⁶ To develop this point, I will refer to a different example, “Le Cygne” from Saint-Saëns’s *Carnival of the Animals*. If one did not know the title of the piece, or know the title of the larger work in which this piece is found, after hearing this piece, the variations of things that one might *hear in* it could be as various as a “swan” to “moonlight on a winter’s night”, or indeed a *purely musical phenomenon*. I would argue here, though, that probably the “classically trained” musicians in the room would hear the piece as a *musical phenomenon* and ignore any other ideas for interpretation that were inspired by the “Le Cygne”

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Scruton, 129.

¹⁴ Scruton, 131.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Italics are mine.

listening experiment. Other non-musicians who spoke of what they *heard in* the piece as a *purely musical phenomenon* maybe were not listening to any of it in particular, or were not inspired to think of anything in particular upon hearing the piece. In short, I would say that it is based on an individual's education and experience, musical or otherwise, that might lead them to say a work of music sounds any particular way, or what they *hear in* it.

[The case of Absolute music]

It seems to me that Scruton judges music to be guilty of exploitation of natural sounds that are available in the actual world, and free to do so as it wishes, because there is no narrative involved, and no need to maintain a linear or comprehensible storyline. Of course one could argue that *program music* does not do this, or rather, it needs to follow the text or program that was given to it in some way. This *exploitation* of natural sounds that can be liberally arranged, and put together because they follow no narrative, applies to *absolute* (or *pure*) *music*, or music that has no words or auxiliary text. In the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, the entry for "Absolute music" reads, "instrumental music that is 'free of' any explicit or implied connection with, or reference to, extramusical reality [...] often defined as the antithesis of program music."¹⁷ This term lends itself to a problematic end because, as this reference work points out, "the dichotomy between absolute and program music is essentially misleading, for it obscures the complex intertwining of extramusical associations and 'purely' musical substance that can be found even in pieces that bear no verbal clues whatever."¹⁸ However, if we note the use of the term "absolute music," generally we see that the authors imply works that do not have a program attached to it (opposed to Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*) or words (in contrast to Schubert *lieder*). I would argue that the "representational" or "suggestive" ability of a work of music does not depend necessarily on the words. The verbal indications help, in most cases, for the listener to understand what the piece is *suggesting*, but by no means limits the realm of interpretation. I would say also that, similar to music, the titles of abstract paintings like that of Mondrian or Jackson Pollock do not limit interpretations, but provide a map for interpretation (however helpful or not). In fact, Roger Scruton draws many parallels between abstract painting and music. He writes on abstract painting, "there is

¹⁷ *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Don Michael Randel, ed., 4th edition. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003. "Absolute music," 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

nothing that you have to understand about a fictional world in order to see the painting correctly. Indeed, the attempt to *imagine* a fictional world in an abstract by Mondrian shows a misunderstanding as great as that which is shown by the person who sees no landscape in the Poussin.”¹⁹ I would venture to say, that *program music* may indeed insight a fictional world (that which is suggested by the program), such as Beethoven’s 6th Symphony, known as the *Pastoral Symphony* (1808).²⁰

In short, Scruton wishes to prove music to be non-representational: rather, music is “imitative”, “expressive”, and “suggestive”. The dependence on auxiliary texts (e.g. the title of a work) demonstrates an apparent *weakness* of music compared to the representational arts he describes (principally figurative painting and literature). The strength in the abstractness of music is hinted at by Scruton when he refers to the writings of Walter Pater, “music inspires and consoles us partly because it is unencumbered by the debris that drifts through the world of life.”²¹ Thereby music has a greater freedom of expression by not being representational and because our understanding of it is not based in recognizing a represented thing. This conclusion raises at least one problem, which is on our *understanding* of music. It seems that first we have a perception of music, or sound, and *then* we understand it. Though I think it is initially our perception that leads us to *hear in* music various elements that may or may not lead us to *understand* it. We see in Aristotle’s *Politics* that music has musical imitations of virtue and character.²² Scruton does not appear to throw this idea out completely and it seems that although music may not be representational for Scruton, the role of suggestion is very important for *understanding* music to have an imitation of a virtue. Therefore it looks like the ability to hear a specific work of music to have the suggestion of *prudence*, for example, would require a multi-step process: to hear the music, to recognize the suggestion of *prudence*, and then understand the music as such (perhaps as a teaching tool or demonstration of how *prudence* is, however that might be or sound). I think if we look at a work with such properties suggestive or representative or imitative of *prudence*, in order to hear *prudence* in such a work the musical mimetic process (and then consequent hearing of it) must be somewhat more

¹⁹ Scruton, 121.

²⁰ See “Pastoral Symphony” in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 638.

²¹ Scruton, 122.

²² Aristotle, *Politics*. H. Rackham, trans. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972. 1340a39–1340b6.

complicated than recognizing imitations of exploited sounds from nature, like the sound of thunder or bird song.

(ii) *Peter Kivy and Re-presentation*

In his work on trying to show whether music can be called “representational” or not,²³ Peter Kivy begins with a discussion of the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Kivy argues that it was in the translation of this work by scholars that the notions of “imitation”, “representation”, and “*mimêsis*” got confused. He quotes a translation from Hamilton Fyfe (1927), “Epic poetry, then, and the poetry of tragic drama, and moreover, comedy and dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and harp-playing, these, speaking generally, may all be said to be ‘representations of life.’”²⁴ For Kivy, the crucial switch is in the exchange of “imitation” for the word “representation” in this particular passage of the *Poetics*. Translators such as G.M.A. Grube, Thomas Twining, and James Harris²⁵ rendered the concept of “*mimêsis*” to be like “imitation”, and Kivy disagrees with this translation by saying, “It is the point of an imitation or counterfeit to deceive. But that is not the point of a musical illustration. Indeed, the pleasure there lies in not being fooled, but in savoring both the disparity between medium and object, and, at the same time, the likeness achieved.”²⁶

What Peter Kivy likes in the Fyfe translation is the word “representation”. In the *Poetics* if we understand *mimêsis* or the *mimetic arts* to be those that imitate/make representations of life, we can then push this argument out further. To clarify what Aristotle sketched out for understanding Greek poetry, Stephen Halliwell writes that an essential element of Aristotle’s theory is that we place, “poetry, alongside the visual arts, music, and dancing, within a general category of artistic mimesis or representation. This dimension of the [*Poetics*], which gives its thought a breadth of reflectiveness that was not lost on post-Renaissance developers of mimeticist

²³ Kivy, Peter. *Sound and Semblance: Reflections on Musical Representation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

²⁴ Kivy, 17. His quote is from: Aristotle, *The Poetics*, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1953), p. 5.

²⁵ Reference given in the footnotes by Kivy on pp. 15 and 17: Aristotle, *On Poetry and Style*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (New York: Bobbs—Merrill Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), p. 3; *Aristotle’s Treatise on Poetry*, trans. Thomas Twining (London, 1789), p.70; James Harris, *Three Treatises: The First Concerning Art; the Second Concerning Music, Painting, and Poetry; the Third Concerning Happiness* (3rd ed.; London, 1772), pp. 80–81.

²⁶ Kivy, 16.

aesthetics [...] reoccurs at a number of later points [in the *Poetics*] including the repeated analogies between poetry and painting, and the pregnant remarks on the multiple relationship of mimetic art to ‘life’ in ch. XXV [of the *Poetics*].”²⁷ In support of the use of “represent” instead of “imitate” in the question of the mimetic arts being mimetic of ‘life’ in the *Poetics*, Peter Kivy cites a footnote from the Fyfe translation, “Life ‘presents’ to the artist the phenomena of sense, which the artist ‘re-presents’ in his own medium, giving coherence, designing a pattern. That this is true not only of drama and fiction but also of instrumental music [...] was more obvious to a Greek than to us, since the Greek instrumental music was more definitely imitative.”²⁸ Perhaps we see an insight into what Fyfe means about *imitative music* in Plato’s *Republic*, 397a1–b2, where Plato is describing a narrator that, “the more contemptible he is, the more will he imitate everything without discrimination and think nothing beneath him, so that he will attempt [...] to imitate everything [...] thunder and the noise of the wind, and of hail, and of axles and of pulleys; the notes of trumpets and flutes, and fifes and all manner of instruments; the barking of dogs and the bleating of sheep, and the cries of birds. And so his manner of speech will all involve imitation of voice and form, with possibly a little simple narration.”²⁹

Kivy wishes to support the argument that “there is no constraint on representations to resemble, in any direct or literal way, the objects of representation, there is no constraint on them to prevent their crossing sense modalities, or even having as their objects that which cannot be perceived by the senses at all.”³⁰ In order to make this claim functional Kivy describes: (1) the different kind of “representationality” music has vs. figurative painting; (2) devises a few schemes to make a comprehensible model for how music can be called “representational,” how it can be “illustrative” (being, I think, another property of *mimêsis*) and to what degrees it can be so. In the following paragraphs I am going to describe his scheme(s), which

²⁷ From the introduction: Aristotle. *Poetics*, Stephen Halliwell, ed. and trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. p. 7. To note, Halliwell translates μιμησεις at 1447a16 as “mimesis” with a footnote, “the foundational aesthetic concept of the *Poetics*; my translation generally retains the Greek noun, but sometimes, to avoid awkwardness, I use the verb ‘represent.’” p. 29.

²⁸ Kivy, 17. Quotation cited by Kivy from *The Poetics*, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe, pp. 4–5.

²⁹ Plato. *The Republic*. A.D. Lindsay, trans. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1980. Bk III (397). PLATONIS. *Respublica*. S.R. Slings, preface and annotation. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003. 397a1–b2. Peter Kivy also makes reference to this passage in support of Fyfe’s claim.

³⁰ Kivy, 18.

will hopefully lead us in the direction of the Ancient Greek treatment of music, specifically that of Aristotle.

(ii.a) Musical Illustrations

First and foremost, Peter Kivy does not wish to say that all music is representational, but rather find if there “are there *any* examples of music – either single compositions or parts thereof – that can properly be called pictorial or representational.”³¹ Kivy furthers his argument by saying that “the concept of musical representation [...] far transcends the world of sounds alone; for as [Nelson] Goodman correctly observes, ‘the forms and feelings of music are by no means all confined to sound;’ [...] music may ‘have effects transcending its own medium.’”³² In order to show the constraints of musical “representationality,” he compares a work of music to a figurative painting, *Madonna della Sedia*, where “there is no ordinary circumstance one can imagine in which it would not immediately be seen, by a ‘normal’ viewer, as a woman and child.”³³ Musical pictures or illustrations generally need some kind of indication, the reason being, he states “music is not normally representational at all; it is not experienced in a context where representation is *expected*; and what we perceive [...] is very intimately related to what we expect.”³⁴ If we think back to the “Le Cygne” listening experiment that I gave earlier in this chapter, if the group of listeners was not told anything at all about the piece or what or why they were listening to it, it is possible that no one in the group would have suggested any kind of pictorial or representational interpretation after listening to the piece. Kivy suggests that there are instances where one is listening to a piece and recognizes an instance where a series of notes *sounds like* something else found in nature, such as a cuckoo bird in Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony*, and there is no need for additional information (such as a title) for it to be identified as such. In this case, the cuckoo bird of the *Pastoral Symphony* which sounds a descending major third³⁵ would be the closest example of musical “representationality”, likened to the *Maddonna della Sedia* which would not require a title for an ordinary viewer to see a

³¹ Kivy, 19.

³² Kivy, 28. Embedded is a quote from Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), 106.

³³ Kivy, 33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ see example from Kivy, 25.

woman and child. Kivy makes a distinction between “Musical Pictures” which are not “Musical Representations” and does so in the following way.³⁶

Musical Pictures

(a) *e.g.* Cuckoo in *Pastoral Symphony*

-“The illustration is recognized as such without text, title, or the minimal information that one is listening to illustrative music”³⁷

(b) *e.g.* Thunderstorm passage in *Pastoral Symphony*

-The “listener needs to *know* that he is listening to illustrative music in order to identify the object of the illustration, but he needs no information other than that”³⁸ (however this implies a listener of a certain level of sophistication)

An even more “sophisticated” type of musical illustration is what Kivy calls a “Musical Representation”, which requires more than “the minimal information: they require a descriptive text or title.”³⁹ As an example, Kivy refers to a common object of musical representation: water. He writes,

In describing the music as rushing and flowing, we are not necessarily committed to the claim that rushing and flowing music ‘sounds like’ rushing and flowing water, except in the trivial sense that both are described in similar terms [...] we find ‘rushing’ and ‘flowing’ suitable for characterizing the phenomenal surface of musical sound, as we do for water in motion [...] when we begin to go beyond the ‘sounds like’ relation, even where the musical representation is of sound, what the music and its object really have in common may seem in many cases simply to be a *common description*.⁴⁰

This *common description* argument applies to the case when we find music not merely exhibiting a *sounds like* relation between it and the object of representation, especially when we describe sounds that cross the sense modalities.⁴¹ When there is no *sounds like* relation between the music and its object, meaning the relation between the two is *not* that music is exhibiting a sound that sounds like the sound of object X (such as a clarinet mimicking the song of a cuckoo bird by playing a descending major third). Then, “what music and its object share seems often nothing but a common description: and where the object is not sound, that common description must at the same time be a description of what can be seen, or thought, or touched, or tasted, and what can only be *heard* [...] It must simply be assumed that

³⁶ I structured this, based on information given on Kivy, 33.

³⁷ Kivy, 33.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Kivy, 35.

⁴⁰ Kivy, 43.

⁴¹ See Kivy, 44.

describing sounds, say, as ‘bright’ or ‘flowing’ – terms normally associated with objects of sight – is appropriate and unproblematic.”⁴²

One example that Kivy uses is of “God’s patience” that Handel represents by using “long notes”, notes that hold over into the next measure of the piece *Belshazzar*, Part I. The notes of the passage are of a longer duration length than those that came before, and the Soprano I and II sing the following line: “Long----- patient for repentance waits----- reluctant to destroy, waits----- for repentance, waits---, waits-- -.”⁴³ The Alto, Tenor I and II, and Bass also sing the same words in counterpoint beneath the Sopranos (almost like a fugue), sustaining the same word (“waits”). Kivy writes the following, “What we have here is a kind of musical pun or play on words, and such wordplay [...] forms the basis for a great many musical representations [...] the analogy on which the pun is based is clear and unproblematic. At a given tempo, dotted half-notes tied over the bar last longer than quarter-notes – they take up more actual time – as does the patience of God outlast the folly of men, waiting for repentance and slow to turn to anger.”⁴⁴

Kivy takes another example from Mozart and says that, due to the relative tonal restrictions of music written during the Classical period, Mozart, Haydn and others were limited to specific harmonic patterns for musical representation. The example used is in reference to the subject of “harmony” and “disharmony” which have connotations in both technical music terminology, and situations that are nonmusical. At the end of the aria “Solche hergelaufne Laffen” from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*,⁴⁵ the character Osmin “loses his temper, loses control, and the music seems to lose control as well, by going harmonically ‘out of bounds.’”⁴⁶ Kivy describes how Mozart was well-aware of the power of musical representation, and Mozart himself wrote a letter to his father on the matter of this particular piece, “for just as a man in such a towering rage oversteps all the bounds of order, moderation and propriety and completely forgets himself, so must the music too forget itself. But as passions, whether violent or not, must never be expressed in such a way as to excite disgust, and as music, even in the most terrible situations must never offend the

⁴² Kivy, 44.

⁴³ See Kivy 44–47 for reproduction of the musical score.

⁴⁴ Kivy, 45.

⁴⁵ “Stupid Dandies Always Coming” in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

⁴⁶ Kivy, 49.

ear, but must please the hearer, or in other words must never cease to be *music*, I have gone from F [the key in which the aria is written], not into a remote key, but into a related one, not however, into its nearest relative d-minor, but into the more remote a-minor.”⁴⁷ Perhaps it is in making a new kind of description of music, one more suitable not only to those who know Western tonal music theory, that the representations also find themselves fitting as descriptions for understanding a musical passage. For although someone may not have heard the aria by Mozart, or seen the musical score to thus imagine how it sounds, the description given by Mozart of a man, in rage, oversteps moderation and forgets himself, and that the music follows in such a manner, this description seems to make a picture of what the sound of the piece could *sound like*.

Under the heading of “Musical Representations”, Peter Kivy makes two further sub-classes: *Representations by Conventional Association* and *Internal Representations*. He describes the first category as “representations that function through some extra-musical association the music has acquired, often through a text, but sometimes simply through use.”⁴⁸ An example of this type are various Bach Cantatas where Bach utilizes melodies from one Cantata within another, with supposed intention that the congregation of the church would recognize the melody from its original context and also (ideally) remember the words of those melodies.⁴⁹ The category of *Internal Representations* “comprises [representations] that are not ‘inherently’ representational but exist merely by virtue of a convention internal to the musical work.”⁵⁰ A familiar example of this are the Wagnerian leitmotifs that, “‘represent’ the characters and dramatic themes of the *Ring* simply by a kind of musical stipulation on the part of the composer, very much in the way the mathematician stipulates that some symbol is to stand for some given quantity.”⁵¹

At the end of this particular chapter, Kivy makes a conclusion of what he calls a *Typology of Musical Illustrations*, utilizing what he already established with “Musical Pictures”. It looks something like this:⁵²

⁴⁷ Kivy, 50. This passage is from one of Mozart’s letters (26 September 1781) that Kivy quotes at length in his text. He cites from *Letters of Mozart and His Family*, trans. Emily Anderson (London: Macmillan, 1938), vol. III, p. 1144.

⁴⁸ Kivy, 51.

⁴⁹ Kivy, 51, 52.

⁵⁰ Kivy, 52.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See Kivy, 59.

I. Musical pictures

(a) Illustrations recognized as such without any nonmusical aids [*e.g.* Cuckoo song in *Pastoral Symphony*]

(b) Illustrations that require minimal information, that one is hearing a musical illustration, for their recognition [*e.g.* Thunderstorm in *Pastoral Symphony*]

II. Musical Representations

(a) Representations of the ‘sounds like’ kind [*e.g.* a sustained C-Major chord, played in an upper register, that we hear to be “bright”]

(b) Representations not confined to sound [*e.g.* God’s Patience in Handel’s *Belshazzar* (see below)]*

(c) Representations in musical notation, only for the eyes; specifically for the performer [examples are restricted in the sense that this type of representation is not *music* and are more like private musical jokes that performers can see, the audience cannot hear, and remains between the composer and performer].

*II. (b) expanded:

(α) representation by conventional association: representation achieved by extra-musical associations

(β) internal representations: representations in virtue of a tacit or explicit stipulation made in the work itself.

(ii.b) *Depicting; Describing; Adjectives*

Peter Kivy makes some distinctions between the adjectives we use to describe music. By looking at these adjectives, we gain another perspective on the question of whether music is representational, or, at any rate, lends itself to understanding how we can use particular words in situations that can be both musical and nonmusical.

Kivy breaks down adjectives we use to describe music into three different categories:⁵³

(I) General adjectives that refer to some simple perceptual property perceived by a sense other than the sense of hearing (though correctly applied to the sense of hearing; *e.g.* “bright; sour; soft...”)

(II) Adjectives for expressive properties of music, primarily used for emotional states of sentient beings (*e.g.* “sad; cheerful; melancholy”)

(III) *Structural adjectives* used to describe complex, structural properties of music (*e.g.* “long notes; jagged rhythm”).

The first category is made up of words that cross over perceptual boundaries and includes synaesthetic adjectives. This category is distinguished by descriptions such as “dull colors,” and “brilliant sounds”. Kivy quotes Joseph M. Williams saying, “the semantic field of tactile experience provided the largest number of lexemes

⁵³ See Kivy, 63.

transferred to other sensory modalities; *the semantic field of acoustic words received the greatest number of items.*”⁵⁴ This lending of words from one field to the acoustic field is not necessarily related to, “the peculiar nature of music qua music, music qua art, or music qua aesthetic object”⁵⁵; Rather, it is more of a “linguistic fact” where descriptions can cross the sense modalities.⁵⁶ With reference to the fragment from the Pre-Socratic philosopher Hêracleitus, “the eyes are more exact witnesses than the ears,”⁵⁷ it seems reasonable that we use perceptual adjectives from our sense of sight to describe *better* a sound that we hear. For Kivy, the contribution of synaesthetically transferred sensory adjectives to musical representation is two-fold: (1) although there are only a few cases of musical representation that rely solely on simple perceptual property adjectives, the adjectives aid in paving the direction for describing “musical expressiveness”, and (2) there are cases that one can find that a musical representation is conveyed by a single synaesthetically transferred sensory adjective.⁵⁸ Kivy’s example of this is from Haydn, *Die Schöpfung*, Part I, where the chorus and soloist sing together the line, “Und es ward Licht”⁵⁹. When the singers reach this word “Licht”, they sing, in unison, a C-Major chord (the tonality of the piece is c-minor, so a rather sudden C-Major chord is indeed striking). Kivy describes this moment, “the full orchestra, woodwind, brass, strings, unmated, comes on like Gangbusters, on the ‘brightest’ imaginable C-major chord [...] That ‘bright’ can correctly, and univocally, be predicated of light *and* of sound is a necessary condition for the success of Haydn’s representation; and succeed it does.”⁶⁰

Kivy defends his use of the word “bright” as attributed to both light and the C-Major chord in the following way: (1) ‘brightness’ of light and of sound is predicated univocally; (2) the C-Major chord and light resemble one another in respect of brightness, both correctly and univocally described as “bright”; (3) both the C-Major chord and light possess the common property of “brightness.”⁶¹ To defend that they

⁵⁴ Kivy, 63. He quotes from Joseph M. Williams, “Synaesthetic Adjectives: A Possible Law of Semantic Change,” *Language*, 51 (1976), 463. Italics are Kivy’s.

⁵⁵ Kivy, 64.

⁵⁶ See Kivy, 62.

⁵⁷ “Hêracleitus of Ephesus” in *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: a complete translation of the fragments in Diels*, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Kathleen Freeman, trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. 101a. See Kivy reference to John Burnet *Early Greek Philosophy* (4th ed.; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1930), pp. 133–134.

⁵⁸ Kivy, 68.

⁵⁹ See Kivy, 68–69. *The Creation* symphony, the line sung is translated “and there was light.”

⁶⁰ Kivy, 68.

⁶¹ See Kivy 68, 70.

are both “bright,” Kivy gives emphasis to the fact that we are discussing adjectives linked to *simple perceptual properties* and quotes Stephen Toulmin, “such properties are directly perceived by the senses [...] They are [...] ‘unanalysable’ – that is to say, they cannot be verbally defined, either in terms of simpler qualities or in terms of any set of operations.”⁶² Kivy’s defense is that we are unable to “point to anything *else* in the music or in the light, to support our claim that both possess brightness [...] other than the property of brightness itself.”⁶³ He refers to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and cites Joseph M. Williams for support to show that it is a “linguistic fact that, ‘color words may shift only to sound.’”⁶⁴

The second category of adjectives [(II) Adjectives for expressive properties of music, primarily used for emotional states of sentient beings (e.g. “sad; cheerful; melancholy”)], Kivy writes is a type we use to describe music, that it “expresses” an emotion (like sadness) but it is not a *representation* of sadness. He writes, “sad or melancholy music is not a *representation* of sadness or melancholy, [...] although at times (but not always) it is sad or melancholy in virtue of representing something else.”⁶⁵ I think making a relation between this statement by Kivy, and views by Aristotle and Kant we can see an example of this type:

If we look at the association of pitch with emotions, we see questions raised by Aristotle such as: “why do those worried utter at a low-pitch? And afraid at a high pitch?”⁶⁶ “Why do those who weep utter high-pitched sounds, while those who laugh utter low-pitch ones?”⁶⁷ “Why is the voice rougher in those who have been sleepless?”⁶⁸ I think it is only reasonable that, following Aristotle’s opinion, if one were to mimic a woman weeping, an actor would utter high-pitched sounds, etc. If we look at Kant’s description of the “Art of Tone” in the *Critique of Judgment*, he writes,

Every expression of language has, in context, a tone that is appropriate to its sense; that this tone is more or less designates an affect of the speaker and conversely also produces one in the hearer, which then in turn arouses in the latter the idea that is expressed in the language by means of such a tone [...] the art of tone puts that language into practice

⁶² Kivy, 70. Embedded is quote from Stephen Toulmin, *Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p.10.

⁶³ Kivy, *ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Kivy also quotes Williams “Synaesthetic Adjectives,” p. 464.

⁶⁵ Kivy, 72.

⁶⁶ ARISTOTLE, “*Problems*” in *Greek Musical Writings*, XI, 32.

⁶⁷ *Problems* XI, 15 (also *Problems* XI, 13).

⁶⁸ *Problems* XI, 11.

for itself alone [...] namely as a language of the affects, and so, in accordance with the law of association, universally communicates the aesthetic ideas that are naturally combined with it; however, since those aesthetic ideas are not concepts nor determinate thoughts, the form of the composition of these sensations (harmony and melody) serves only, instead of the form of a language, to express, by means of a proportionate disposition of them ([...] relation of the number of vibrations of the air in the same time [...]), the aesthetic ideas of a coherent whole of an unutterable fullness of thought, corresponding to a certain theme, which constitutes the dominant affect in the piece.⁶⁹

If we look at the idea coming from the last part of this quotation, the sensations produced by tones (combining harmony and melody) in music *expresses* in its own language (the language of tone) *the dominant affect in the piece*. Indeed, the language spoken of here belonging to the tones is borrowed from our own spoken verbal language, in the sense that (as described by Aristotle) the pitches of our voices correspond to emotions. I think it is by following this lead that we can understand Kivy's description that music can be "sad or melancholy in virtue of representing something else,"⁷⁰ because the reason why we may say that music is expressing something "frightening" may correspond to the way that we speak when we are frightened. It is that the music is *expressing*, but also possibly be capable of *representing* a person who is afraid, according to Kivy's account (the music itself is not *representing* fear).

The third and final category of adjectives [(III) *Structural adjectives* used to describe complex, structural properties of music (e.g. "long notes; jagged rhythm")] is perhaps the most controversial one. Essentially what Kivy says regarding this category of adjectives is that the musical *structure* of a piece plays an important role in musical representation because often the subject being represented is more complex than an object you would use simple perceptual adjectives to describe; however the simple perceptual properties can be formed into structures for representational purposes or ends. Kivy describes, "Haydn actually makes use of the contrast between two simple perceptual properties, darkness and brightness, to represent the brightness

⁶⁹ KANT, Immanuel, *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Paul Guyer, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 5:328 – 5:329.

⁷⁰ Kivy, 72.

of the First Light: the brightness of the C-Major chord is highlighted and enriched by contrast with the darkness of the c-minor tonality that precedes it.”⁷¹

When Kivy is speaking about the *structure* or musical structure, I find that he must be referring to Western tonal music theory properties, in the sense that someone who is not educated in music theory may not be able to form such two-tiered comparisons as “brightness” vs. “darkness” when comparing a chord in C-Major vs. a passage preceding in c-minor; rather the description would remain in simple perceptual adjectives, to describe a vague passage, without the listener being able to give a harmonic analysis or structural analysis. I think the ability to manipulate this type of adjective depends on the sophistication of the listener who is analyzing the music. Kivy continues by referring back to the Handel example, “the long, sustained notes in Handel’s chorus in *Belshazzar* stand for the long, enduring patience of God, and as the length of God’s patience is held (at least tacitly) in relation of ‘longer than’ to the persistence of men, so the lengths of the notes on which the word ‘long’ is sung stand in the relation of ‘longer than’ to the surrounding note-values.”⁷² Kivy develops this by saying, “in all cases in which structural adjectives apply to musical representations, there is an isomorphism between representation and object, *regardless of whether or not the adjectives are used univocally* when applied both to the music and to the object of musical representation [...] [it makes] no difference whether ‘long’ is used univocally when referring to musical notes and the duration of a psychological state.”⁷³ What is important in this theory is that the music acts as a kind of map for the structure of the representation, and that there is some way of making an analogy between the musical structure and the representation. He points out a significant rule, though, for applying this to musical representation, “whenever there is isomorphism of structure, the bare bones of representation exist. This is not to say that isomorphism is a sufficient condition for representation, any more than resemblance is [...] furthermore, isomorphism, like resemblance, is a reflexive relation: that is to say, if A is isomorphic with B, B is isomorphic with A [...] a representation is isomorphic with its object, although it would imply that the object is isomorphic with the representation, would not imply that the object is a representation

⁷¹ Kivy, 73.

⁷² Kivy, 74.

⁷³ Kivy, 75. Italics are Kivy’s.

of the representation.”⁷⁴ So that one does not start making far-fetched ideas of representation (or to make a structure for the basis of representation), Kivy makes a kind of justification (which is “intention”) for representation on which I built this equation:⁷⁵

Isomorphism of structure + [composer’s] Intention to represent = Representation can exist

For Kivy, if there is no intention to represent by the composer, then there can be no representation. As we saw previously, a necessary condition for “Musical Representation” (as opposed to “Musical Pictures”) is a text or title to give indication of what one is listening to. Further complications to the *structural adjectives*, he writes, “there is enough in the combination of isomorphism and commonality of description, sans univocity, to make musical representations [...] isomorphism alone, of course, is not enough; but it is, where the predicates in question are not the names of simple perceptual qualities, a fruitful ingredient. Structural adjectives, then, do not require univocity to vouchsafe musical representations.”⁷⁶ His support for this is that structural adjectives have two categories: (1) terms that are used informally to describe music and other things (these non-technical terms are univocal between musical and nonmusical contexts); (2) terms that have a specific technical sense in music, and also have uses elsewhere (which do not have to be univocal).⁷⁷ He claims that the word ‘long’ in ‘long note’ is univocal with ‘long period of time’ or ‘long distance in the nonmusical realm.’⁷⁸ An example of the technical terms is ‘imitate,’ which Kivy writes, “to imitate is, in its root sense, consciously to ape; and, of course, a melody cannot consciously ape another. Musical description is indeed redolent with animistic overtones, but no one, I presume is willing to attribute intention and will to a melodic line.”⁷⁹

(ii.c) *Wallpaper* : Conclusion

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ see Kivy, 75.

⁷⁶ Kivy, 77.

⁷⁷ See Kivy, 78.

⁷⁸ Kivy, 78.

⁷⁹ Kivy, 81.

In this section, I plan to borrow an argument from Roger Scruton, introduce a parallel argument by Kendall Walton,⁸⁰ suggest how this can apply to Peter Kivy's work, and make a transition into the next chapter on Aristotle's treatment of music.

When trying to prove whether music is representational or not by comparing it to other arts, Walton and Scruton refer to wallpaper as an example of something which is not representational, in the sense that it does not suggest a fictional world. Roger Scruton makes the distinction between copying the form of a flower (for wallpaper), and presenting a *flower* for our contemplation (a still life by Cézanne, for example).⁸¹ Later Scruton writes, "One reason for denying that music is a representational art is that it provides our paradigms of pure abstraction: of forms and organizations that seem interesting in themselves, regardless of any 'fictional' world which this or that listener may try to attach to them."⁸²

Kendall Walton writes that music can often have moments where it seems to be representing something, but actually is suggesting one thing or another without generating an entire fictional world. He makes reference to the melody in the "Adagio" movement of Mozart's A-Major Piano Concerto K.488, where the melodic line appears to be "dallying," essentially delaying its arrival at a cadence for the harmonic resolution of the passage. Next, Walton invents a possible narrative or mildly complex story line, based on the movement or 'structural adjectives' of the work, for example in his story one character is late for a meeting (this suggested by the lateness of the melody). He writes that the story he invented is not important or necessary to think about while listening, "but the *lateness* of the upper voice, and its *dallying* quality, the *rigidity* of the bass's progression, the *fortuitousness* or *accidentalness* of the D-major triad, the *movement to something new*, are in the music. To miss these is, arguably, to fail fully to understand or appreciate the music."⁸³ It can be argued whether this is for or against the thesis of Scruton that our understanding of [music] is not based in recognizing the represented thing.⁸⁴ However, it is in *suggestions* of qualities (such as lateness, dallying, rigidity) that

⁸⁰ From his article: WALTON, Kendall. "Listening with Imagination: Is Music Representational?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 1, The Philosophy of Music (Winter, 1994), pp. 47–61.

⁸¹ See Scruton, 120.

⁸² Scruton, 122.

⁸³ Walton, 51.

⁸⁴ See Scruton, 122.

Walton is speaking of. Perhaps Scruton would agree with the *suggestions* that the passage from a Mozart piano concerto affords, but that *fully understanding* would depend on who you are talking to: a graduate student at a musical conservatory or a five-year old.

Walton continues the argument, “it would be inadequate to think of the music as merely indicating or expressing the *property* of lateness; it portrays a particular [fictitious] instance of something’s being late, even if nothing much can be said about what is that is late. Listeners imagine something’s being late on a particular occasion; they do not merely contemplate the quality of lateness.”⁸⁵ This idea possibly goes against the theory of Peter Kivy on *structural adjectives* in the sense that maybe it is in fact *lateness* that we are to contemplate, that it is *lateness* that the music wishes to represent, which then (upon thinking about *lateness*) the listener imagines a *fictitious instance of something’s being late*, but it is the concept of *lateness* that is the key that opens the door to the imagination. This shows the strength in Walton’s argument because he is talking primarily about absolute music, and not program music that immediately gives the ‘intention to represent x’ with the aid of a particular piece’s accompanying text.

In moments where there seems to be representations within music (absolute music, music without text), although there lacks a narrative to unite them, Walton agrees that the coherence and unity could be explained in ‘purely musical’ terms. He makes the example of wallpaper that has a design with a dinosaur, an ice cream cone, a truck and explains, “we may be expected to notice various individual depictions, but not to think about how they are related within the fictional world, nor perhaps even to think of them as part of the same fictional world. The overall pattern may still be a highly unified one however, even if its unity does not consist in a unified fictional world [...] musical coherence may consist more in coherence of sound patterns than in unity of representational content.”⁸⁶ I would argue that maybe there is an overall *feeling* or *expression* in such a wallpaper design, for example “a child motif,” which then *suggests* maybe childhood or children, though I agree that it could be that an entire fictional world, complete with narrative, is not suggested by a wallpaper design.

Walton writes that “if musical works do have worlds, and if they involve very much of the make-believe I have suggested they might, they are zoos – full of life, but

⁸⁵ Walton, 51.

⁸⁶ Walton, 52.

discrete bits of life, each in its own separate cage – not a working ecological system.”⁸⁷ I might suggest, if we were to take a work of absolute music, that were to represent something like *lateness*, if within the music there were an overwhelming number of musical representations of lateness (such as the melody entering at times that, according to theory and also sound as such, would be considered “late”) that the piece would give the overwhelming suggestion of *lateness*. Building on Walton’s zoo example, maybe this would be a kind of zoo that had only one type of animal: a tiger zoo that had only different varieties of tigers. I would agree that in between all the representations of “lateness,” there would be gaps that would not exactly be able to be called representations of anything in particular, and thus we would lose our greater concept of a fictional world that had a narrative (unless of course we had a text to accompany the trip through the “tiger zoo,” a text that might enlighten us about the purpose of the ‘dull moments’ that we find in the musical piece).

Regardless of the presence of a fictional world or not, and the concept of “representation,” Roger Scruton, Peter Kivy, and Kendall Walton all agree that music has the ability to *express* a wide array of things. It seems that the evidence points to the conclusion that music is unable to produce a fictional world on its own, complete with narrative, without the help of an auxiliary text (such as in the case of program music). However, I feel that music’s abstraction as emphasized by Roger Scruton, who draws on Walter Pater saying that music is “unencumbered by the debris that drifts through the world of life”⁸⁸ cannot be 100% accurate. Indeed, when we listen to music, we generally do not feel weighted down with “debris,” though it seems likely that, depending on the listener, a particular piece could be interpreted as “heavy” in additional sentiment, further than what may have been intended to be expressed by (to use Kivy’s vocabulary) a *musical representation* or *musical picture*. However, it seems that there is some kind of quality to music, beyond whatever may have been intended by a composer to be understood, that drives a listener to imagine a particular thing when he or she hears a particular passage.

For example, Kendall Walton invents a detailed narrative based on how he hears two measures of Mozart’s A-Major Piano Concerto, K.488. It seems a somewhat irrational process in our mind to say a piece (of absolute music or program music) represents something like *patience* more so than a mere ‘musical picture’ of a

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Scruton, 122.

cuckoo-bird. It would seem, then, that music may have a specific aim or agenda (more likely than not, intended by the composer or performer) to inspire a particular reaction. Most certainly it is not a complex series of thoughts, complete with narrative (unless the listener went far and beyond what was to be expected from listening to a work of absolute music, like Walton's example) like in a fictional world involving dragons or a tiger zoo. To achieve this, I would point to Kant's suggestion of language in the 'art of tone' that is essentially borrowed from our own language, the sounds in a piece of music mimicking the sounds we make when we are experiencing a particular emotion. Regarding pieces that are less specific, that do not have such blatant or obvious suggestions of the human voice or reference to sounds in nature, etc., it would seem that they do not have an agenda, remain more abstract and perhaps leaves one fishing for words that can describe it that are not only technical musical terms.

It is regarding these concepts that I will focus on in the next chapters. In addition, I find the discussion of how to translate the Platonic and Aristotelian use of *mimêsis* (in the context of music) as, "representation" or "expressing" to be a rather fruitless discussion of vocabulary and will lay that problem to rest here. In the chapters that follow, I will refer to Aristotle's treatment of music in various texts, and address aspects of *mimêsis* in a later chapter. I will also explore how music can [still possibly] be put into categories (as Aristotle did), how it could be that these categories were first designated, and the role of imagination in that.

Chapter II: Aristotle on Music and Tones

In this chapter I will outline some of the ways that Aristotle talks about music or uses music in examples. I intend to show how it is possible to relate these examples to the topic of *mimêsis* and imitation as established in Chapter I.

(i) *Mathematics and sound*

Aristotle uses music in a variety of examples when speaking on many different topics throughout his work. He describes the mathematical component and ratios of music, for example when he is making a definition of a lunar eclipse in *Posterior Analytics*, Book II.⁸⁹ In this section, he is speaking about “Demonstration and Definition”⁹⁰ where Aristotle states there are different types of things that we know, and there are four types of questions that we ask, respectively, concerning these things. The questions we ask are:

The question of fact, the question of reason or cause, the question of existence, and the question of essence. (1) when we ask whether this or that is so, introducing a plurality of terms [*when introducing a predicate and a subject*] (e.g. whether the sun suffers eclipse or not), we are asking the question of fact [...] it is when we know the fact that we ask (2) the reason; e.g. if we know that the sun suffers eclipse and that the earth moves, we ask the reasons for these facts [...] but there are others which take a different form: e.g. (3) whether a centaur or god exists. The question of existence refers to simple existence, and not to whether the subject is (say) white or not. When we know the subject exists, we ask (4) what it is; e.g., “What, then, is a god?” or “a man?”⁹¹

Aristotle continues by saying that with the question of fact or simple existence that we ask [or questions (1) and (3) from the passage above], we are inquiring “whether the *thing* has a middle term or not; but when, after ascertaining that the proposition is a fact or that the subject exists [...] we then proceed to ask the reason

⁸⁹ ARISTOTLE, *Posterior Analytics*. Hugh Tredennick, ed. and trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960. 89b23–90a34.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, margin note 89b23.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 89b24–35. Included is an italicized bracket containing additional information provided in a footnote. In a different footnote on this passage, Tredennick writes, “The four questions intended seem clearly to be (1) Is S P? (2) Why is S P? (3) Does S exist? (4) What is (the definition of) S? – *i.e.* it is implied that each is asked about a subject term or substance.

for the fact, or what the subject is, we are asking what the middle term is.”⁹² In a note on this passage, Tredennick describes further what this *thing* could be or the nature of it, “the ‘thing’ for which the middle term is sought must properly be an attribute or a connexion. It is only in so far as *middle term* = *cause* that the formula can be applied to substance.”⁹³ Aristotle continues describing the “middle term” in a different way, explaining that when asking “Does the moon exist” or “Does night exist?”, the essence of these question is really “Is there a middle term?” and this is “because the middle term is the cause, and that is what we are trying to find out in every case [...]. The cause for a substance’s being – not being this or that, but simply existing – and the cause, not for its simply existing, but for its being coupled with some essential or accidental attribute– is in both cases the middle term.”⁹⁴ Aristotle concludes that the “question of essence⁹⁵ and the question of cause are identical”⁹⁶ and explains why this is. It is in Aristotle’s exposition of this point that we have the discussion of the lunar eclipse coupled with the discussion of concords or *symphōnia*. It should also be noted that Aristotle’s original introduction containing four questions has more or less been dissolved into two: ‘Is X Y?’ and ‘Why is X Y?’ because with investigation into the middle term, we essentially are developing a causal definition.⁹⁷

Q. “What is an eclipse?” A. “The moon’s deprivation of light through obstruction by the earth,” is the same as Q. “What is the cause of the eclipse?” A. “Because the (sun’s) light fails owing to the obstruction of the earth.”

Again, Q. “What is the concord (*symphōnia*)?” A. “A numerical ratio of high and low pitch,” is the same as Q. “Why is the high note concordant with the low one?” A. “Because they exhibit a numerical ratio”; and Q. “Are the high and low notes concordant?” is the same as Q. “Is their ratio *numerical*?” And when we have grasped that it is, the question follows “Then what is their ratio?”⁹⁸

As Tredennick points out, and we can note this from Aristotle’s use of the lunar eclipse, *symphōnia* (concords) and centaurs, Aristotle is referring more to

⁹² Ibid., 89b38-90a2. Italics mine.

⁹³ Ibid., see note, p. 176; 89b39.

⁹⁴ *An. Post.* 90a5–12. In a footnote to 90a11–12 on the word “accidental,” Tredennick adds that when Aristotle is speaking about the cause is ‘coupled with some essential or accidental attribute’, that Aristotle means to say “ ‘Non-essential’ instead of ‘essential or accidental’ because “a purely accidental attribute would be outside the scope of science.”

⁹⁵ Or “what is (the definition of) S” described in Tredennick’s breakdown of Aristotle’s four questions. See footnote 89b35; p.174.

⁹⁶ *An. Post.* 90a14–15.

⁹⁷ See Tredennick’s introduction to *An. Post.*, 11–12.

⁹⁸ 90a15–23. I divided the two parts in half, for simplification.

phenomena and attributes and focusing less on substances⁹⁹ in regard to this theory. I doubt that it is by chance that the lunar eclipse and *symphōnia* are presented together in this way. If we look at the translation of *symphōnia* we see that it means: concord or unison of hearing; or metaphorically “harmony” or “agreement.”¹⁰⁰ A lunar eclipse is something that we experience with our sense of sight, as a musical interval is something we experience with our sense of sound. The *fact* in these cases that is being described is something we perceive directly with our senses.

Aristotle writes in the paragraph following the comparing of questions and answers I quoted above, “That the object of our inquiry is the middle term can be clearly seen in cases where the middle term is perceptible by the senses. We ask our question when we have not yet perceived whether there is a middle term or not.”¹⁰¹ A footnote refers us back to a passage in the first book of the *Posterior Analytics* regarding the eclipse and sense perception,

Sense-perception must be concerned with particulars, whereas knowledge depends upon recognition of the universal. Hence if we were on the moon and saw the earth intercepting the light of the sun, we should not know the cause of the eclipse. We should only perceive that an eclipse was taking place at that moment; we should have no perception at all of the reason for it [...] however, by observing repeated instances we had succeeded in grasping the universal, we should have our proof; because it is from repetition of particular experiences that we obtain our view of the universal. The value of the universal is that it exhibits the cause.¹⁰²

I think with these passages, Aristotle is showing ways of how to use sense perception to help us (eventually), after repeated perception, make a conclusion as to the cause of a particular phenomenon. The *middle term* that Aristotle uses to explain the reason for *symphōnia* or concord has to do with a discovery by Pythagoras regarding intervals’ (or pure intervals) ratios of string length or frequencies including 1:2 (octave), 3:2 (fifth), 4:3 (fourth), 3:1 (octave plus fifth) and 4:1 (double octave).¹⁰³ In this case, the mathematics serves as a *proof* for the consonant sounding intervals (or *cause* for the definition), but it is the ear that notes first or suggests inquiry into the reason or *essence* of the interval. However, it is interesting to speculate how the

⁹⁹ See *An. Post.* 89b39, footnote p. 176.

¹⁰⁰ “*Symphōnia*” in *Intermediate Greek–English Lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott’s Greek–English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

¹⁰¹ *An. Post.* 90a24–26

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 87b37–88a5.

¹⁰³ See, “Greece. I.” and “Pythagorean scale” in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*.

Pythagoreans developed the system of ratios and concordances. Perhaps it was from repeated practice and study of string length that brought about the *reason* why an octave is a concord, though most likely developed first from hearing the octave and notating how the sound is produced on a string. This seems also a lot like the example Aristotle gives of standing on the moon and, through repeated perception, gaining the proof to then develop a theory of a *universal*. For the Pythagoreans, regarding their system of ratios, “notes are treated as entities one whose attributes, that of pitch varies quantitatively, and can be expressed in numbers. Intervals between notes are to be expressed as ratios of numbers. Notes, then, are items possessing magnitudes of some sort.”¹⁰⁴ Although there exists, then, a system of ratios, and although the pitches are measured quantitatively, the system of pitches is based at its core in sound (something that can be sensed).

Aristotle’s theory of concordance related to mathematics (following the Pythagoreans), or that music is subordinate to mathematics, can be seen in other passages of *Posterior Analytics*. He writes, “Nor can a proposition of one science be proved by another science, except when the relation is such that the propositions of the one are subordinate to those of the other, as the propositions of optics are subordinate to geometry and those of harmonics (*harmonía*) to arithmetic.”¹⁰⁵ Of course, also, there is a difference between music and *harmonía* or “harmony or concord of sounds,”¹⁰⁶ but most certainly the two are intricately related. Aristotle is using for the basis of his examples that ratios and/or arithmetic stand(s) as the *reason* or explanation for a particular interval to sound concordant.

Considering these quotations, I do not believe that the connection between mathematics and concordances was the most critical thing that Aristotle wanted to prove. Earlier in *Posterior Analytics*, he says that a *fact* and a *reason* may be studied by different sciences respectively. The subjects are related, and one is subordinate to another (such as ‘harmonical problems to arithmetic’), but this does not mean that music is the same as mathematics.¹⁰⁷ Probably harmony was a convenient example: it was a topic that was maybe easy to relate to because music was something present in 4th century BC Athenian life. M.L West writes on this subject: “Music in one form or another impinged on everyone in Greek society. There was no one who was not

¹⁰⁴ Barker, *Greek Musical Writings: Volume II*, 8

¹⁰⁵ *An. Post.* 75b14–17.

¹⁰⁶ “*harmonía*” in *Liddell & Scott’s*.

¹⁰⁷ *An. Post.*, 78b34–79a2.

exposed to it, and no one who did not think that it was in principle a good thing, even if he deplored particular styles. In the earlier period, down to the fifth century BC, the level of participation in music-making was relatively high, and we cannot always draw a clear line between the professional and the amateur.”¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, what is interesting is how the Pythagoreans, famous for their theories about ratios and music, also “claimed to have developed (or rather to have inherited from Pythagoras) a science of musical psychotherapy and a daily programme of songs and lyre pieces that made them bright and alert when they got up, and when they went to bed purged them of all the day’s cares and prepared them for agreeable and prophetic dreams.”¹⁰⁹ We see that even the Pythagoreans understood music to have peculiar aspects, and at least had other uses than a demonstration of ratios. This reminds us of Schopenhauer who wrote that music, “is so grand and altogether splendid an art, has so powerful an effect on a person’s innermost being, is there so entirely and so deeply understood by one as a completely general language, whose distinctness surpasses even that of the perceptual world itself, that we certainly have more to seek in it than an *exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi*, which is how Leibniz regarded it [...] as he was only considering its immediate and external significance, its shell.”¹¹⁰ Even though Schopenhauer shows a certain negativity towards a mathematical approach towards music, I also do not think that he is shutting out mathematics completely from the picture. Arithmetic remains an important element to music, not only in ratios, but rhythmic notation. Nevertheless it is not the whole story, and I think this statement is congruent with what Aristotle says when he is speaking about *harmonía* and *symphônia*. Schopenhauer writes, “we have to attribute a much more serious and deeper significance to music, referring to the innermost essence of the world and of ourselves, with respect to which the numerical relations into which it can be resolved stand not as that which is signified but as, in the first instance, the sign.”¹¹¹ He adds that, “were [music] nothing beyond that which we feel upon correctly solving some

¹⁰⁸ WEST, M.L. *Ancient Greek Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. 34.

¹⁰⁹ West, 31.

¹¹⁰ SCHOPENHAUER, Arthur. *The World as Will and Presentation*. Volume I. Richard E. Aquila, trans. Daniel Kolak, ed. Longman library of Primary Sources in Philosophy. New York: Pearson, 2008. §52 [The Special Case of Music] #302, pp. 305–306. The Latin is translated in a footnote: [an unconscious arithmetical activity in which the mind is unaware that it is counting] from Leibniz, *Epistolae*, ed. Kortholt, letter 154.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 306. §52, #302.

problem with calculations, and could not be that inner pleasure with which we see a voice given to the deepest interior of our essence.”¹¹²

ii) Metaphor and word use

Aristotle, in *De Sensu* when speaking on a theory of accounting for colors, remarks that colors other than black and white could also depend on ratios like concords, “colors are determined like musical intervals (*symphônia*). For on this view the colours that depend on simple ratios (*arithmois eulogistais*¹¹³), like the concords in music, are regarded as the most attractive, e.g. purple and red and a few others like them – few for the same reason that the concords are few –, while the other colours are those which have no [pure] numerical ratios.”¹¹⁴ Essentially it looks like these ratios provide a certain kind of structure that gives a reason why something sounds concordant or that a color is pleasant. Much like notation in a score, the mathematical notation proves helpful to the individual who understands what the symbols mean, but it does not indicate anything more than a particular way of organizing or structuring tones in an abstract way.

In *Topics*, Aristotle also makes use of music in examples. This time it is not with relation to mathematics, but specifically to color. In the introduction to Book I, he writes “The purpose of the present treatise is to discover a method by which we shall be able to reason from generally accepted opinions about any problem set before us and shall ourselves, when sustaining an argument, avoid saying anything self-contradictory.”¹¹⁵ Through Aristotle’s investigation in *Topics* on different types of reasoning and problems, he speaks about “the number of ways in which a term can be used, we must not only deal with those terms which are used in another way but also try to assign their definitions.”¹¹⁶ In this particular section, Aristotle looks at how the same word, such as ‘good’ can be used in different circumstances or sentences but have a different meaning, “in one sense, ‘good’ is said to be ‘justice’ [...] in another

¹¹² Ibid, 306. §52, #302.

¹¹³ According to *Liddell and Scott’s* “*eulôgistos*” means “rightly reckoning, thoughtful.”

¹¹⁴ ARISTOTLE, *De Sensu*, W.S. Hett, trans. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964. 439b33–440a4. See Aristotle, *Problems* XIX.41, “concords exists between notes that are well-ratioed to one another” in *Greek Musical Writings: Volume II*, pp.94–95.

¹¹⁵ ARISTOTLE, *Topica*. E.S. Foster, ed. and trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960. 100a18–21.

¹¹⁶ *Topics*, 106a1–4.

sense ‘good’ is said to be [...] ‘conducive to health.’”¹¹⁷ In finding how to identify the way in which a particular expression is used in different senses,¹¹⁸ he describes different ways that a particular word can be used to describe tones and can also be used to describe another thing. The particular word may appear to be the same; however, when we examine its opposite (or “contrary”) in a particular situation or use, we see that the word has different senses, even if two situations share the same word. Aristotle names one example when talking about the opposite for the word ‘sharp,’ because if speaking about tones the word is ‘flat’ (*barú*), but when speaking of a material object it is ‘dull’ (*amblú*). Such then, there are many different meanings for the opposite of ‘sharp.’ This being the case, the word ‘sharp’ will also have many different meanings that are corresponding respectively, “for ‘sharp’ will not be the same when it is the contrary of ‘blunt’ and when it is the contrary of ‘flat,’ though ‘sharp’ is the contrary in both cases.”¹¹⁹

In another example, Aristotle refers to colors and tones where he says that there sometimes is not a difference in the words used but their “variation in kind” can be clearly observed from their use. We can see this in the use of ‘clear’ and ‘dim’ (literally ‘white’ and ‘black’),¹²⁰ because both sound and color are said to be ‘clear’ (*leukon*) and ‘dim’ (*melan*). The words used are not different, but by looking at their use, the “variation in kind” becomes apparent. The word ‘clear’ is not used in the same way when speaking about color when one is describing sound, “this is manifest also through sense-perception; for sense-perception of things which are of the same kind is the same, but we do not judge ‘clearness’ of sound and of colour by the same sense, but the latter by sight and the former by hearing.”¹²¹ What is interesting about this subject is that we have a word like ‘clear’ that looks like the same word in two contexts, but is used when describing instances with two different kinds of sense perception. In a later section of *Topics* Aristotle explains, “*Leukon* (‘white,’ ‘clear’) as applied to a body denotes colour, as applied to a note it means ‘easily heard.’ The case of ‘sharp’ also is similar, for it does not always bear the same meaning. For a quick note is ‘sharp,’ as the theorists of rhythmic harmony tell us, and an angle which is less than a right angle is ‘sharp’ (acute), and a knife with a sharp angle (edge) is

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 106a4–6.

¹¹⁸ See *Topics* 105a24–25.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 106a12–17.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 106a25. Footnote, page 310.

¹²¹ Ibid., 106a26–32.

‘sharp.’”¹²² What we are studying in these passages are words that cross over the boundaries of the senses and are shared, though do not have the same causal definition. When we utilize the same word (or adjective like ‘sharp’) in different contexts when describing perceptual properties, although the objects are not the same and not perceived by the same sense, this type of word sounds a lot like *synaesthetic adjectives*.

[Metaphor]

An interesting topic to look at is how unlike many who describe music as being representational and do so by applying metaphors, I do not think that Aristotle defines music (and certainly not concords) in terms of metaphors. Rather, it seems that music has properties of its own. Sometimes other kinds of perceptual things can exhibit a property that has a similar or even the same word. However, we should look carefully into the particulars or aspects, which make up the larger entity we are investigating, and to avoid ambiguous language. Aristotle writes,

It is easier to define the particular than the universal; and therefore we should proceed from particulars to universals [...] [a] definition demands clarity; and this will be achieved if we can, by means of the common features which we have established, define our concept separately in each class of objects (e.g. define similarity not in general but in respect of colours or shapes, and define sharpness in respect of sound), and so advance to the general definition, taking care not to become involved in equivocation. If we are to avoid arguing in metaphors, clearly we must also avoid defining in metaphors and defining metaphorical terms.¹²³

We see in the *Rhetoric* that metaphors and similes must be used carefully in speech and description, “metaphors should be drawn from objects which are proper to the object, but not too obvious,”¹²⁴ also “most smart sayings are derived from metaphor, and also from misleading the hearer beforehand [...] and clever riddles are agreeable for the same reason; for something is learnt, and the expression is also metaphorical.”¹²⁵ In the *Poetics*, we see the definition of metaphor, “a metaphor is the application of a word that belongs to another thing.”¹²⁶ I think when we look at the *synaesthetic adjectives* that Peter Kivy talks about, such as “brightness”¹²⁷ it looks

¹²² Ibid. 107a13–17.

¹²³ *An. Post.* 97b28–39.

¹²⁴ ARISTOTLE, *The ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*. John Henry Freese, trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967. 1412a (III.xi.5).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1412a (III.xi.6).

¹²⁶ *Poetics*, 1457b7

¹²⁷ See Kivy pp. 68, 70.

more like what Aristotle qualifies “metaphor by analogy” which are cases “*b* is to *a* as *d* is to *c*: one will then speak of *d* instead of *b*, or *b* instead of *d*.”¹²⁸ I think it is this type of relationship because although the word may be the same, it is imported from another sense, or shared in two different circumstances; so it is like using *d* instead of *b*, though it may look like the same word, its definition is different from the word used in the original phrase. And I believe this is what Peter Kivy is eluding to when he wrote, “how [...] can light and sound have the common property of brightness, being the objects of two different sense modalities [...] ‘bright’ cannot be used univocally here: in effect, the sense of ‘bright’ in ‘bright sound’ must be an attenuated, extended, or metaphorical one,”¹²⁹ although Kivy argues that the word can be used univocally because ‘brightness’ is a “simple perceptual property.”¹³⁰ However, it looks like if Aristotle is going to talk about music in any way that is not defining by way of concords and ratios, it seems that he will be speaking using similes or metaphors when he says that certain modes are mimetic of ethical characters, for example.

But there is a difference I think between a phrase that Aristotle gives when explaining simile, “He rushed on like a lion”¹³¹ and the idea that “melodies and rhythms contain likenesses of ethical qualities and states – anger, mildness [...] and our souls respond to these likenesses when we hear them. Differences of ethos and effect are especially manifested in the *harmoniai*.”¹³² Certain modes are *mimetic*, and it seems that this is a quality or part of the fabric of the tones that make up the mode and is not a metaphorical relation.

(iii) *Ethics*

Aristotle attributes moral qualities to certain melodies and rhythm.¹³³ Warren D. Anderson argues that Ancient Greek music was one-dimensional, opposed to the music of our culture, which has two-dimensions: “Depth (harmonic or contrapuntal, or both) as well as length (melodic) characterizes our Western composition, and its

¹²⁸ *Poetics*, 1457b16–18.

¹²⁹ Kivy, 68.

¹³⁰ See Kivy, 70.

¹³¹ *Rhetoric*, 1406b (III.iv.1). This is a phrase from the *Iliad* where Homer is describing Achilles.

¹³² West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 249. He refers here to Aristotle’s *Politics* 1340a6–b19.

¹³³ *Politics*, 1340a20–23. See, ANDERSON, Warren D. *Ethos and Education in Greek Music: The Evidence of Poetry and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968. 134.

vertical dimension is as important as its horizontal.”¹³⁴ The ethical assessment that the Greeks developed regarding music was based on “a peculiarly Greek complex of hypotheses, traditions, and associations. Use of a one-dimensional form brought unusually keen awareness of melodic and rhythmic structure [...] the schematized or abstract form of melodic structure is the mode, the *Harmonia*; and this too was felt as a determinant of melodic character. Bound up with the concepts of *Melos* [melody] and *Harmonia* were certain conclusions.”¹³⁵ *Harmonía* for the Greeks had a specific meaning related to mode and melody. Andrew Barker, in an article on Aristoxenus, writes that *harmonía*, “does not mean the same as our ‘harmony’ [...] it can mean particularly the tuning of an ordered scheme of intervals forming the basis for a musical scale: and here, by extension of the notion of a scale as a permissible sequence of intervals, the title [of Aristoxenus’ work on music] *harmonika stoicheia* is probably best understood as ‘elements (or principles of melody)’ – what makes this, but not that, a *tune*.”¹³⁶ The restrictions on what notes could constitute a melody perhaps lent itself so that certain modes expressed specific things by sheer limitation, the same or similar results (melodic patterns, for example) were inevitable.

Aristotle writes in *Politics*,

Since it is the case that music is one of the things that give pleasure and that virtue has to do with feeling delight and love and hatred rightly, there is obviously nothing that is more needful to learn and become habituated to than to judge correctly and to delight in virtuous characters and noble actions; but rhythms and melodies contain representations (*homoiómata*) of anger and mildness, and also of courage and temperance and all their opposites and the other moral qualities, that most closely correspond to the true natures of these qualities [...] (when we listen to such representations we change in our soul); and habituation in feeling pain and delight at representations of reality is close to feeling them towards actual reality.¹³⁷

Anderson adds to this saying, “broadly speaking, only what the ear perceives has ethical power to any significant degree, but the melodies taken by themselves contain imitations (or “likenesses”) of character.”¹³⁸ Though what it looks like Aristotle is saying, is that we can learn about characters (a particular aspect through a specific likeness in the music) through a *good* pleasurable experience, that being

¹³⁴ Ibid, 135.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 135.

¹³⁶ BARKER, Andrew, “Music and Perception: a study in Aristoxenus.” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, London: The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, Volume 98, (1978), pp. 9–16, 9.

¹³⁷ *Politics*, 1340a14–25.

¹³⁸ Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 126.

listening to a specific work of music, as though it were some kind of (educational) movie.¹³⁹

Upon examining the idea that we change in our soul when we hear these “representations” or *homoiois*, this does not look like a metaphorical relation (or metaphorical representation), or that we are talking in metaphors, but rather some kind of intrinsic property. It seems that particular melodies or rhythms contain likenesses that are so much like a particular virtue that we “change in our soul”. I would say that the likenesses are not metaphorical, but it is also not actual, it is to a lesser degree, but a very similar sensation; I would argue they could trigger the same sensation, but the likenesses to a diminished intensity to reality.¹⁴⁰

Anderson responds to the idea of musical modes exhibiting moral virtue by saying, “Aristotle’s proofs relating to ethos remain determinedly empirical, with almost no admixture of musical psychology or any other kind of theory [...] the core of Aristotle’s argument is simply this: we must see whether music has the power to affect, i.e., to qualify, the soul’s ethos; obviously it does – we all agree that the modes affect us variously, and experts have said which ethos results from any given mode or modal type; then our plan of education must include music.”¹⁴¹ It is important to remember as Anderson pointed out that Aristotle’s theory is based on observation and the opinion of specialists, and Aristotle believed that musical modes contained representations of *êthos* as proved by observing the affect of music on social behavior.¹⁴² In order to see better why Aristotle included music in the *paideia*,¹⁴³ we should look at the kind of virtues and *êthos* music can exhibit qualities of according to Aristotle, and how the role of music in education could work.

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, we see that there are two kinds of virtue: one, which is *intellectual* and is developed by instruction, requiring experience and time; the other, which is *moral* or *ethical virtue* is the result of habit (*ethos*). Aristotle comments that the word “character” (*êthos*) is the word from which habit (*ethos*) is

¹³⁹ I suppose something like a National Geographic documentary or instructional video on how to build a table (rather than reading a manual on how to build a table).

¹⁴⁰ What I imagine is similar to how, according to Aristotle, we experience emotions at a tragedy. The audience experiences fear and pity in the controlled setting of the theatre, and understands that what is going on in the tragedy is not the real world (although there is the feeling that it *could* happen to us). See *Poetics*.

¹⁴¹ Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 127.

¹⁴² See Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 136.

¹⁴³ See Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 136. *Liddell and Scott’s* defines *paideia*: I. 1) the rearing of a child; 2) training and teaching, education; 3) *its result* culture, learning, accomplishments; [...] II. 1) youth, childhood.

derived.¹⁴⁴ Further he describes, “none of the moral virtues is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit.”¹⁴⁵ Aristotle continues with an example of the maxim that practice makes perfect by saying we acquire the virtues by first having practiced them, similarly to the way we practice the arts, “we learn an art or craft by doing the things.”¹⁴⁶ The importance of moral activities can be seen when Aristotle says, “our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities. Hence it is incumbent on us to control the character of our activities [...] it is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great or rather of supreme, importance.”¹⁴⁷ Aristotle explains that the theory of conduct, however, is not a precise science and when we are faced with particular situations or cases, an agent must consider “what is suited to the circumstances on each occasion, just as is the case with the art of medicine.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, it seems critical that we are educated in such a way that affords this type of imprecise science, or better, that prepares an agent to be able to reason well on his feet, when he is faced with a choice of action.

It is interesting that Aristotle says that musical modes have imitations of characters because, 1) “Pleasures (*hêdonas*) and pain are the things with which moral virtue is concerned,”¹⁴⁹ and 2) “we all pronounce music to be one of the pleasantest (*hêdistôn*) things, whether instrumental or instrumental and vocal music together.”¹⁵⁰ Aristotle continues that, “pleasure causes us to do base actions and pain causes us to abstain from doing noble actions. Hence the importance, as Plato points out, of having been definitely trained from childhood to like and dislike the proper things; this is what good education means.”¹⁵¹ Therefore it seems, by comparatively similar passages in *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* that music is concerned with moral virtue.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*. H. Rackham, trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934. 1103a14–17.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1103a18–20.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1103a31–35.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1103b22–25.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1104a1–10.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1104b9–10.

¹⁵⁰ *Politics*, 1339b19–21. The word for “pleasure” in the quote from *Nicomachean Ethics* is from *hêdonê*. The word from *Politics* translated as “pleasant” is the superlative and comparative form of *hêdus*. Though the word is not the same in both passages, I feel there is a strong relation between the two.

¹⁵¹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1104b10–14.

¹⁵² Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1104b10–14 and *Politics*, 1340a14–18.

Aristotle, in a following passage, describes the link between acting and virtue, “we assume therefore that moral virtue is the quality of acting in the best way in relation to pleasures and pains, and that vice is the opposite.”¹⁵³ It is clear that we must be taught, and judge when a circumstance presents itself, what is *correct* pleasure because, “the susceptibility to pleasure has grown up with all of us from the cradle. Hence this feeling is hard to eradicate, being engrained in the fabric of our lives [...] again, pleasure and pain are also the standards by which we all, in a greater or less degree, regulate our actions. On this account therefore pleasure and pain are necessarily our main concern, since to feel pleasure and pain rightly or wrongly has a great effect on conduct.”¹⁵⁴ If music is a pleasant thing, and can exhibit imitations of good character it should make sense that music is included in the *paideia* as a tool: give a demonstration of correct pleasure, and for one to learn how to feel “pleasure rightly.”

Regarding virtues and the states of the soul, Aristotle writes that the “dispositions are the formed states of character in virtue of which we are well or ill disposed in respect to the emotions; for instance, we have a bad disposition in regard to anger we are disposed to get angry too violently.”¹⁵⁵ Further he says, “Excellence or virtue in a man will be the disposition which renders him a good man and also which will cause him to perform his function well.”¹⁵⁶ Aristotle writes, “Virtue results from the repeated performance of just and temperate actions.”¹⁵⁷ Earlier he says that it must be with a certain frame of mind that an agent may act in order to have his actions called ‘just’ or ‘temperate’: “First he must act with knowledge (knowledge of what he is doing and knowledge of moral principle); secondly he must deliberately choose the act, and choose it for its own sake; and thirdly the act must spring from a fixed and permanent disposition of character.”¹⁵⁸ In order to gain such a disposition, practice of virtue will be necessary, and learning about *êthos* and good character-building as a child can only be good in the task of pursuing *good* action later in life.

The musical modes affect our souls and cause us to behave or act in a certain way and this, perhaps, is the proof that Aristotle uses for establishing his argument that the musical modes have imitations of characters. Anderson cites J.G. Warry who

¹⁵³ Ibid., 1104b27–28.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1105a1–8.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 1105b26–28.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1106a21–24.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1105b4–5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1105a32–1105b1.

“suggests the difference between [musical] and pictorial mimesis is the difference between a rational and irrational faculty: music produces a nervous or muscular reaction reproducing the experience of life, while painting creates mood.”¹⁵⁹

What I find interesting is that Aristotle affords likenesses of *êthos* to musical modes. However, within the musical modes’ melodic structure or *Harmonia*, one is able to make concords. Nevertheless, ratios and mathematics are not afforded the same “likenesses of character” that musical modes are. Of course Aristotle says that it is representations of character in a musical mode that inspire a certain feeling in the soul and *not* the definition of why the music sounds a particular way. The cause of music to have ethical likenesses must be based in something additional to a mathematical or ratio cause (definition) and most certainly based in perception. I would argue that one is unable to perceive the likenesses of character of a particular melody without hearing the actual sound of it. The behavior the mode inspires (virtuous or otherwise) is in the sound and not numbers (or other notation) written on paper. I think then, it is necessary to look into Aristotle’s study of perception and how the perception of sound may give us the key for making a conclusion regarding the mimetic qualities (ethical or otherwise) of music.

¹⁵⁹ Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 266–267, footnote #35. Regarding the theme *mimêmata tôn êthôn* from *Politics* 1340a18–39, J.G. Warry writes about this in his book *Greek Aesthetic Theory* [New York, 1962], p. 109.

Chapter III: Sense perception, *phantasia*

Sense perception, in Aristotle, is a quite large and looming topic. I wanted to find a way to address it in terms that would be agreeable and not unnecessarily detailed in the context of this chapter. I tried to imagine what concept could fit somewhere in the middle between direct sense perception of sound and what might inspire Aristotle to say a melody has likenesses of *êthos*, for example. Indeed, the Aristotelian concept found here is the faculty “in virtue of which we say an image occurs to us,”¹⁶⁰ and without such an image, it is impossible to think.¹⁶¹ the faculty of *phantasia*.

This chapter will start with an overview of *phantasia* (from the Aristotelian perspective); move on to suggest how different music can inspire different types of *phantasia* and conclude with the proposal of an idea of how music can be understood as a mimetic art.

(i) *Phantasia definitions:*

Simply put, as found in *Liddell and Scott's Lexicon*, *phantasia* is a noun meaning “imagination, the power by which an object is presented to the mind.” The “object” presented in this case is a *phántasma*. Consequently, *phántasma*, *phantasmata* (plural) means *an appearance*, *phantasm* (an illusion or ghost), *phantom*, *vision*, *dream*; also, its secondary meaning coming from Plato is *a mere image, unreality*.¹⁶² Malcolm Schofield, in his essay on *phantasia*, writes that Plato uses the term to talk more about unreal appearances in general.¹⁶³ Plato’s use can be found in his talk about Forms and the cave, and in the progression of ascension to seeing true Forms. After the ascension and one is accustomed to the bright glare of light in his eyes, “finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in the water or phantasms [*phantásmata*] of it in

¹⁶⁰ ARISTOTLE. *De Anima Books II and III (with passages from Book I)*. D.W. Hamlyn, trans. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. 428a1–2.

¹⁶¹ *De An.* 431a17–18.

¹⁶² “*phántasma*” in *Liddell and Scott's*.

¹⁶³ SCHOFIELD, Malcolm. “Aristotle on Imagination” in *Essays On Aristotle's De Anima*. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 249–277. 266.

an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place.”¹⁶⁴ Both of these words, *phantasia* and *phántasma* derive from the verb *phantazomai* / *phantazô* (a verb found only in the middle and passive forms before the Hellenistic period) meaning, “to become visible, appear, show oneself.”¹⁶⁵ *Phantasia* is commonly translated as “imagination.” In Aristotle the verb associated with the concept of *phantasia* (and I found occurring more often) is *phainetai*, from the verb *phainomai*, and it means “he/she/it something appears” (in the passive/middle cases). Generally in Aristotle this verb is translated as “something appears [to us].”

(ii) *An introduction to phantasia and phantásmata*

To begin my overview of *phantasia* in Aristotle, I will look first to a passage in *Metaphysics* where Aristotle writes, “and concerning reality, that not every appearance (*phainomena*) is real, we shall say, first, that indeed the perception (*aisthêsis*), at least of the proper object (*idiou*) of sense, is not false, but the impression (*phantasia*) we get of it is not the same as the perception (*aisthêsei*).”¹⁶⁶ In this passage we find one of the three types of objects of perception (*aisthêton*), described in *De Anima*, Book II, Chapter vi: *idios*, a “special object,” translated in the passage above as “proper object of sense” is something that cannot be perceived by another sense, and one cannot be deceived regarding it, e.g. sight is concerned with color and hearing with sound and taste with flavor. Further, “each judges about these and is not deceived as to the fact that there is color or sound, but rather as to what or where the colored thing is.”¹⁶⁷ The use of the word *phantasia* in the passage quoted above from *Metaphysics*, portrayed in a phenomenalist vein, shows the importance of perception and sense data in the creation of *phantasia* and *phantásmata*. Moreover, the proper object of sense, *phantasia*, and sense perception are all interrelated.

¹⁶⁴ PLATO. *The Republic. In Two Volumes: Volume II, Books VI–X*. Paul Shorey, trans. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1942. 516b4–6. Cf. passage in Slings edition.

¹⁶⁵ “*phantasia*” and “*phántasma*” in *Liddell and Scott’s*.

¹⁶⁶ ARISTOTLE. *Metaphysics*. Hugh Tredennick, trans. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933. 1010b 1–3.

¹⁶⁷ 418a11–16, see Hamlyn

Aristotle makes a series of distinctions between perception (*aisthêsis*) and *phantasia*. Below is a list with the breakdown of passage 428a7–16¹⁶⁸ of *De Anima* into five parts:

1. Perception (*aisthêsis*) is either a capacity (like sight) or an activity (like seeing); but something can appear (*phainetai*) to us even if neither of these is in question, e.g. dreams.¹⁶⁹
2. Perception is always present but not imagination. If [perception and imagination] were the same in actuality, it would be possible for all beasts to have imagination; and it seems that this is not so, e.g. the ant or bee, and the grub.¹⁷⁰
3. All sensations (perceptions / *aisthêsis*) are true, but most imaginations (*phantasiai*) are false.¹⁷¹
4. It is not when we are exercising our sense accurately with regard to objects of perception that we say that *this appears (phainetai) to us to be a man*, but rather when we do not perceive it distinctly; and then it may be either true or false.¹⁷²
5. Visions appear (*phainetai*) to us even with our eyes closed.¹⁷³

If we examine number four on this list, we may think of expressions in the following format: “It appears to me to be a man”; or “It looks like a man”; or “I imagine it is a man.” These expressions, by nature of their format, suggest an additional step beyond what we actually perceive in particular cases.¹⁷⁴ The judgment made to produce such a phrase is not clear or without doubt, rather the expressions describe how we perceive an object at a distance or something that is difficult to discern, and it suggests how we interpret our perception, in this case, sight.

It is especially important to note the role of *phantasia* in thinking and learning because although *phantasia* is neither thought nor sense perception, these three concepts are interdependent. We see in *De Anima*, “the objects of thought (*noêta*) are

¹⁶⁸ Cf. 428a7–16, Hamlyn and notes regarding passage on pp. 131–132.

¹⁶⁹ Translation is Schofield’s, see 260.

¹⁷⁰ Trans. Hamlyn, see note to 428a5, p.131. The ant, bee, and grub are not supposed to have *phantasia*.

¹⁷¹ ARISTOTLE. [*De Anima*] *On the Soul*. W.S. Hett, trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964. 428a12–13.

¹⁷² *De Anima*, 428a13–15. Hamlyn, trans.

¹⁷³ 428a15–16, translation mine.

¹⁷⁴ See Schofield, 258.

included among the forms (*eidesi*) which are objects of perception (*aisthêtois*), both those that are spoken of as in abstraction (like mathematics) and those which are dispositions and affections (*pathê*) of objects of perceptions (*aisthêton*). And for this reason unless one perceived things one would not learn (*mathos*) or understand anything and when one contemplates one must simultaneously contemplate an image [*mental picture or phántasma*]; for images (*phantásmata*) are like sense-perceptions (*aisthêmata*), except that they are without matter.”¹⁷⁵

Another important qualification for *phantasia* versus sense-perception (*aisthêsis*) and thought (*diánoia*) is found in *De Anima* 427b15–25, “*phantasia* always implies perception and is implied by supposition/judgment (*hupolêpsis*) [...] for the former (*phantasia*) is an affection (*pathos*) which lies in our power when we wish (*boulômetha*); but believing (*doxazein*) [included in ‘supposition’: *hupolêpsis*] is not up to us, for it must be either true or false. Moreover, when we believe that something is terrible or alarming we are immediately affected [...] but in the case of the imagination (*phantasia*) we are just as if we saw the terrible or encouraging things in a picture.”¹⁷⁶

By this quotation, it looks like we have control over our imagination or *phantasia*, as though it were a light in a room we decide to turn on and off. In addition it is not only that, but like a light with a dimmer on it so we can control how bright or dim the light is as we choose (this being symbolic of how important or unimportant *phantásmata* are in respective judgments we make).

There are, however, cases where we are deceived by *phantasia*, says Aristotle, particularly in moments of fever and strong emotion or pathological states.¹⁷⁷ Most often, we are able to recognize when a *phántasma* or appearance is not really what we are seeing (provided we remember that imaginings are for the most part false), and we are therefore able to remain unaffected emotionally by it and stand as though spectators “looking at a picture.” It is due to the often conflicting definitions and descriptions of *phantasia* given by Aristotle that Malcolm Schofield, in his essay in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*, makes the distinction between *Normal Phantasia*

¹⁷⁵ *De An.* 432a5–11, trans. Hamlyn. The parentheses are additions of mine, from the Hett translation and corresponding Greek text.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 427b15–25. Cf. Hamlyn and Hett translations.

¹⁷⁷ ARISTOTLE. [*De Insomniis*] *On Dreams*, W.S. Hett trans., Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964. 460b10–20. See also Schofield, 262.

and *Abnormal Phantasia*.¹⁷⁸ I find these distinctions helpful, especially when applied to our perception of music.

Normal Phantasia, would be the kind of *phantasia* that Aristotle describes specifically in *De Anima* Book III, Chapter iii. For example, he writes, “for the thinking soul, images (*phantásmata*) take the place of direct perceptions; and when it asserts or denies that they are good or bad, it avoids or pursues them. Hence the soul never thinks without a mental image (*phantasmatos*).”¹⁷⁹ This shows how *phantasia*, (*normal phantasia* in this case) helps us in judgment and works as a tool for interpretation.¹⁸⁰ Dorothea Frede, in her essay on *phantasia*, translates the first part of this paragraph as “to the rational soul, images serve as perceptions.”¹⁸¹ In his introduction to *De Anima*, Hett writes that the “sensitive faculty is confined to animals and higher beings; the intellective to man ‘and anything higher than man.’ The other faculties – imaginative [...] are more irregularly distributed and resist tabulation; they will either fall under the sensitive or are shared by it with the intellective faculty.”¹⁸² Though seemingly obvious, it is important to remember that it is only in rational animals (*i.e.* man) that can use *phantasia* for judgment and something beyond mere inspiration for motion.¹⁸³

For more information on *normal phantasia*, we can look to *De Anima* 431b6–10. Hamlyn translates, “but sometimes you calculate on the basis of images or thoughts in the soul, as if seeing (*hōsper horôn*), and plan what is going to happen in relation to present affairs. And when one says, as there, that something is pleasant or painful, so here one avoids or pursues – and so in action generally.”¹⁸⁴ Dorothea Frede also comments on this passage, “the soul would not be moved towards anything if it could not envisage it under a concrete aspect.”¹⁸⁵ We see in this passage a sense of planning for the future. Planning for the future can be further aided by the idea of

¹⁷⁸ See Schofield, 271.

¹⁷⁹ *De An.* 431a15–16. Hett, trans.

¹⁸⁰ We see another example in *De Memoria* 449b31–450a2 where Aristotle describes drawing diagram, and we imagine a triangle before we draw it. What we imagine is not identical to that which we will draw.

¹⁸¹ FREDE, Dorothea. “The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle” in *Essays on Aristotle’s De Anima*. Martha Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 279–295. 289.

¹⁸² “Introduction”, *De An.* Hett, trans. 4.

¹⁸³ I will refer to this point again with more detail.

¹⁸⁴ *De An.* 431b6–10. Hamlyn trans., see 431b2.

¹⁸⁵ Frede, 289.

practice or repeated *phantásmata* of the same or similar objects of sense, which can lend to better understanding and potentially better action.

Frede notes, “*phantasiai* can thus be separated from their origin while perceptions cannot, and this means that they can give us a coherent picture of a situation that transcends the immediate perception.”¹⁸⁶ In *De Anima* 417b18–26 we find Aristotle saying,

Actual sense-perception is so spoken of in the same way as contemplation; but there is a difference in that in sense-perception the things which are able to produce the activity are external, *i.e.* the objects of sight and hearing, and similarly for the rest of the objects of perception. The reason is that actual perception (*aisthêsis*) is of particulars, while knowledge is of universals; and these are somehow in the soul itself. For this reason it is open to us to think when we wish, but perceiving is not similarly open to us; for there must be the object of perception.¹⁸⁷

We begin to get the idea that *phantásmata* can possibly help us in understanding and grasping universals. In a previous chapter, I refer to how Aristotle claims that we can understand the universal of a lunar eclipse by repeated sense-perception of the event.¹⁸⁸ It seems relevant that the mental pictures, although vague, help us to plan for the future by remembering perception from the past.

As described before, the principal differences between these two kinds of *phantasia* or rather, what makes normal *phantasia* ‘special’ is: (1) it is an affection in our power to choose or wish to use *phantasia*¹⁸⁹ and (2) we have the ability to remain unaffected emotionally by the appearances that come to us. I would say *normal phantasia* is one that works for us in a rational way as an aid to judgment and opinion, and as an aid for acting in the right way.

Abnormal Phantasia, applies often in the context of Aristotle’s *De Insomniis / On Dreams*. Early in this book, Aristotle describes dreams, saying, a “dream appears (*phainetai*) to be some sort of mental image (*phántasma*).”¹⁹⁰ Aristotle also describes that when in fever or strong emotional or pathological states, we are deceived by such mental images we see (or imagine that we see) for various reasons. The faculty of *Abnormal Phantasia* works in the same way as *Normal Phantasia* in the sense that it

¹⁸⁶ Frede, 285.

¹⁸⁷ 417b18–26, Hamlyn trans., see 417b16.

¹⁸⁸ See *An. Post.* 87b37–88a5.

¹⁸⁹ *De Anima*, 427b20

¹⁹⁰ *De Insomn.*, 459a19.

is the faculty by which mental images or *phantásmata* occur to us, but our ability to govern them and how we are affected and/or control these *phantásmata* is different.

Aristotle gives the example of a man experiencing high fever often imagines (*phainetai*) that he sees animals on the walls due to the slight resemblance (*homoiótêtos*) of marks on the walls.¹⁹¹ He also describes a coward, in an emotional state of fear, will think that he sees (*horan*) his enemy. The coward's imagination is stimulated by more remote resemblances (*homoiotêtos*) in proportion to the degree of his excitement.¹⁹² In this case, the imagination is often stimulated by, and subjected to, the degree of pathological state and not necessarily controlled by the conscious 'will' or wish of the individual.

He continues by saying, "sometimes the illusion corresponds to the degree of emotion (*pathesin*), so that those who are not very ill are aware that the impression is false [...] but if their illness (*pathos*) is more severe they move (*kineisthai*) in accordance with what they think they see."¹⁹³ Notice the word used here for "move" is *kineisthai* and not from the verb *prassô*, *prattein* (to act)¹⁹⁴. We see in *De Motu Animalium* that movement can be linked to *phantasia*, "for the animal moves (*kineitai*) and progresses in virtue of desire or choice, when some alteration has taken place in accordance with sense perception (*aisthêsis*) or *phantasia*."¹⁹⁵

If we move in accordance to an impression, it seems that not only are we incapable of emotionally detaching from the visions we see, but also that *phantasia* acts as a sort of / or feigned *hupolêpsis*; *hupolêpsis* being the word Aristotle uses for "judgment" or "supposal" in *De Anima* 427b17¹⁹⁶ when talking about the difference between *phantasia* and judgment. More specifically, he qualifies *hupolêpsis* as something that takes many forms: knowledge (*epistême*), opinion/belief (*doxa*), understanding (*phronêseis*) and their opposites,¹⁹⁷ things which clearly *phantasia* is not. Aristotle continues by saying, "thought, distinct from perception, seems to include imagination (*phantasia*) on one hand and supposal / judgment (*hupolêpsis*) on the other."¹⁹⁸ The *phantasia* then, when we are experiencing pathological states,

¹⁹¹ *De Insomniis* 460b11–13.

¹⁹² *De Insomn.*, 460b6–8.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 460b13–16.

¹⁹⁴ For example, see *Nicomachean Ethics* III.i.20–23.

¹⁹⁵ ARISTOTLE. Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*. Martha Craven Nussbaum, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. 701a4–5.

¹⁹⁶ See Hamlyn, trans. *De An.*, 427b17.

¹⁹⁷ See *De An.* 427b25–28.

¹⁹⁸ *De An.* Hett, trans. 427b29–31.

becomes the basis on which we move, but it is not a rational action because it does not involve true *hupolēpsis* or practical syllogism. Rather, one is emotionally affected by an appearance, a vision of something that is not the case.

The explanation Aristotle gives for this deception is that the “controlling sense (*kúrion*) does not judge these things by the same faculty as that by which sense images (*phantásmata*) occur.”¹⁹⁹ Aristotle reasons this by using his famous sun example: [when we look up at the sun] “the sun appears (*phainetai*) to measure a foot across, but something else often contradicts this impression (*phantasian*).”²⁰⁰ The cause of our deceptive judgments (by the failure of the ‘controlling sense’) is explained further down in the same passage, “appearances (*phainetai*) of any kind may come to us, not only when the object of sense (*aisthêtou*) supplies the stimulus, but also when the sense (*aisthêseôs*) is stimulated by itself, provided that it is stimulated in the same way as by an object of sense; for example, to persons who are sailing past the land seems to move, though really the eye is being moved by something else.”²⁰¹

Regarding this deception, Aristotle says, “the same faculty by which we are deceived in illness when we are awake causes this affection (*pathos*) in sleep.”²⁰² Here we find a parallel between sleep and dreams and those affected by illness and pathological states: the failure of the controlling sense. Additionally, it is by slight resemblances that we are swayed to move, believing the *phantásmata* inspired by these resemblances to be reality.

When Aristotle writes, “the sensation (*aisthêtou*) still remains perceptible even after the ‘external object perceived’ (*aisthêmata*) has gone”²⁰³ I believe this is because the *phantásmata* we may have related to the ‘external object of sense’ keeps the ‘sensation’ *alive* in our minds. Furthermore he adds, “we are easily deceived about our perceptions (*aisthêseis*) when we are in emotional states (*pathesin*).”²⁰⁴ This deception most likely is in virtue of our *phantásmata* that we believe to be the case while in an emotional or feverish state. It is taking into account these more deceptive aspects of *phantasia* and our sense perception of sound that I would like to suggest

¹⁹⁹ *De Insomn.*, 460b16–17.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 460b18–21.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 460b22–27.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 458b27–28.

²⁰³ *De Insomn.*, 460b2–3.

²⁰⁴ *De Insomn.*, 460b3–4.

how it might be that particular images or *phantásmata* arise to our mind upon listening to particular modes, melodies or sorts of music or sound. Not only that, but I will elaborate on the power or control that these *phantásmata* can potentially have. Frede makes the following comment, “*phantásmata* are flexible and can be enriched by repeated observations, while immediate sense-perceptions cannot. *Phantásmata* are often depicted as inaccurate impressions [...] but it is that less detailed and more general picture that we need for our generalizations.”²⁰⁵ The flexible nature of the *phantásmata* could lend itself to the importance of education in certain matters that are based in *sense-perception* or objects of sense, such as musical modes and its relation to *êthos*. Nevertheless one must not forget the influence of delusions and pathological states on *phantásmata*. I think this is why Aristotle is so careful when he treats the topic of musical modes and the likenesses they exhibit.

(iii) Phantasia / phantásmata / musical modes in action

In *Politics*, Aristotle makes reference to the classification of melodies that philosophers had made before him: ethical melodies [*êthika*], melodies of action [*praktika*], and passionate or enthusiastic [*enthousiastika*] melodies with certain harmonies related to each kind.²⁰⁶ When Aristotle says how music should be employed and for what benefit, he gives three different purposes that music should serve: (1) for education, (2) for purgation / catharsis, and (3) for amusement, to relax our tension.²⁰⁷ We might ask how it is possible to categorize or apply such descriptions to music. Aristotle gives an explanation by saying:

“Everybody when listening to imitations (*miméseôn*) is thrown into a corresponding state of feeling (*sumpathesis*), by the rhythms and melodies themselves, even apart from the words.”²⁰⁸ Warren D. Anderson provides a slightly different translation of the last part of the sentence, “even in the absence of text, owing to the rhythms and melodies themselves.”²⁰⁹ And, as I presented before, “rhythms and melodies contain representations (*homoiómata*) of anger and mildness, and also of courage and temperance and all their opposites and the other moral

²⁰⁵ Frede, 291.

²⁰⁶ *Politics*, 1341b32–35. Translations are from H. Rackham unless otherwise noted.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1341b38–39; 1341b41.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1340a11–14.

²⁰⁹ Anderson, 126.

qualities.”²¹⁰ In addition, Anderson writes in a footnote, “both Plato and Aristotle contend that music is the great medium of *êthos*; neither considers the possibility of *êthos* in nonmusical sound.”²¹¹ Anderson develops the idea of ‘musical sound’, adding, “a musical sound, *i.e.* a tone, has a regular pattern of vibration frequencies, while a nonmusical sound is identifiable as such because its pattern lacks regularity.”²¹² Even though Anderson argues that Aristotle could not have been aware of this technicality in sound, it seems that in Aristotle’s arguments regarding concords, ratios and *Harmonia*, we know musical modes and melodies were based on these things. I think at the very core, the sound of concords, melodies based on these concords, and the rhythms typical of specific modes was how Aristotle developed the idea that musical modes contain representations. For example, M.L. West describes the performance of epic poetry (the Stichic form specific for the “Homeric epic”), had limitations like most Ancient Greek music, “the melodies of this form were limited to three or four notes [...] and [the performer] disposed syllables over them with regard both to word accents and to repeating melodic scheme.”²¹³

What Aristotle is interested in finding out initially in the *Politics*, which precedes his categories and explanations of music, is whether we can see if the influence of music reaches in a manner to the character (*êthos*) and to the soul.²¹⁴ By the end of this section of the *Politics* I argue that he answers his own question with a resounding “yes”. I trace my conclusion back to what Aristotle says initially which is indeed to “see” if music’s influence reaches our character and soul. The word Aristotle uses in the passage is “*horan*”, from the verb *horaô*: “I see”. The first, and most common occurring sense of this verb is actually “seeing with our eyes, to look at, to behold,”²¹⁵ though it can be used metaphorically. Perhaps more evidence for Aristotle’s claim can be seen when we investigate one of these types of music that he describes. I believe the point is more easily recognized when we look at enthusiastic / orgiastic / cathartic music, rather than ethical music. We realize that this particular kind of music is rather peculiar from the others, because Aristotle treats the subject of cathartic music almost with a surgeon’s gloves, reverting back to it throughout the

²¹⁰ Ibid., 1340a18–22.

²¹¹ Ibid., 260, note #2.

²¹² Anderson, 261. Note #2.

²¹³ West, 328. See also p.208. West describes that there were three structural types in Greek music: stichic, strophic, and free astrophic.

²¹⁴ *Politics*, 1340a6–7.

²¹⁵ See *Liddell and Scott’s*.

description of music in *Politics*, making sure the reader is aware of certain instruments that belong to this category. However, even by use of so much reference to the subject, I do not think Aristotle is making the claim that he thinks this type of music is more powerful than the others on our character and soul. Rather I think he is trying to show the *particular* strength it has.

First, I think it is important to define what it is when we read the word “*enthousiasmos*” or “*enthousiastikos*” in this text. The verb *enthousiazô*, according to *Liddell and Scott’s*, is “to be inspired or possessed by the god, be rapt, be in ecstasy”. A more modern definition of the English word “Enthusiasm” gives us the first definition, “(1) Intense and eager enjoyment, interest or approval. The second definition is more appropriate which is (2) religious fervor supposedly resulting directly from divine inspiration, typically involving speaking in tongues and wild, uncoordinated movements of the body”²¹⁶.

Aristotle associates the Phrygian mode with this type of music,²¹⁷ saying, it is, “violently exciting and emotional. This is shown by poetry: for all Bacchiac (*Bakcheia*) versification and all movement (*kinêsis*) of that sort belongs particularly to the flute [...] and these meters find their suitable accompaniment in tunes in the Phrygian mode [...] for example, the dithyramb is admittedly held to be a Phrygian meter.”²¹⁸ Rackham clarifies a few terms in this passage in his note, “*Bakcheia* and *kinêsis* denote bodily movement accompanying song, or may denote the emotional frenzy expressed and stimulated by it. The dithyramb was a form of poetry of this class, originally celebrating the birth of Dionysus.”²¹⁹ So here with melodies in the Phrygian mode, you have not only a pathological state that could be induced or made more aggressive, but also a physical reaction from the person (such as the *kinêsis* or ‘bodily movement’). We find additional information on specific Bacchaic rhythm by Aristides Quintilianus who writes, “the bacchiac [rhythmic pattern] gets its name from the fact that it is suitable [*harmozein*] for bacchiac melodies.”²²⁰

²¹⁶ *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2nd edition.

²¹⁷ He says that Plato was wrong for selecting this mode in his classification of modes for education, see *Pol.* 1342a35.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1342b2–8.

²¹⁹ See *Pol.*, footnote “e”, pp. 672–673.

²²⁰ ARISTIDES QUINTILIANUS, “De Musica” in *Greek Musical Writings, Volume II: Harmonic and Acoustic Theory*. Andrew Barker, ed. Cambridge Readings in the Literature of Music. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 392–535. Chapter 16, 37; p.441.

In the chapter, “The Blessing of Madness” by E.R. Dodds from *The Greeks and the Irrational*²²¹ we find descriptions of Dionysian ritual and Corybantic traditions as found in various texts by Aristotle, Plato and others. Dodds describes Corybantic ritual, related to the *korubantiôntes* as appearing in Plato’s *Ion* who are either people in an anxiety state or those who take part in Corybantic ritual (the Korybantes being dancers who worshiped the Phrygian goddess Cybele).

Dodds writes that (1), the Corybantic ritual was similar to the ancient Dionysiac cure, “both claimed to operate a catharsis by means of an infectious ‘orgiastic’ dance accompanied by the same kind of ‘orgiastic’ music – tunes in the Phrygian mode played on the flute and the kettledrum.”²²² Physical symptoms are described by Plato in the *Symposium* as weeping and the heart beating violently,²²³ “accompanied by mental disturbance; dancers were ‘out of their minds’, apparently having fallen into some kind of trance.”²²⁴

(2) The disease or ailment that Plato wrote the Corybantes proclaimed to cure was, “phobias or anxiety feelings arising from some morbid mental condition [...] the real test seems to have been the patient’s response to a particular ritual: if the rites of a god X stimulated him and produced a catharsis, that showed that his trouble was due to X.”²²⁵ In *Ion*, Plato writes that the Corybantes, “have a sharp ear for one tune only, the one which belongs to the god by whom they are possessed, and to that tune they respond freely with gesture and speech, while they ignore all other [melodies or tunes].”²²⁶

(3) Aristotle and Plato found these rituals to be “at least a useful organ of social hygiene, they believed that it worked, and worked for the good of the participants.”²²⁷ In a related passage from Aristotle’s *Politics*, we see this in his description of catharsis, “for any experience that occurs violently in some should be found in all, though with different degrees of intensity – for example pity and fear, and also religious excitement (*enthousiasmos*): for some persons are very liable to this form of emotion, and under the influence of sacred music we see these people, when

²²¹ DODDS, E.R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951.

²²² Dodds, *Irrational*, 78.

²²³ PLATO. *The Symposium*. M.C. Howatson and Frisbee C.C. Sheffield, eds. Howatson, trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 215E

²²⁴ Dodds, *Irrational*, 78.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

²²⁶ The quotation is from *ION* 536a C, embedded in Dodds, *Irrational*, 79.

²²⁷ Dodds, *Irrational*, 79.

they use tunes that violently arouse the soul, being thrown into a state as if they had received medicinal treatment and taken a purge.”²²⁸

The Dionysian ritual, “ritual madness” as the type of madness Dodds qualifies it to be,²²⁹ from an “irrational religion,”²³⁰ can also be described as something collective or congregational, something highly infectious, and invoking the use of wine and religious dance.²³¹ The Dionysian ritual had a psychological, cathartic social function, “it purged the individual of those infectious irrational impulses which, when dammed up, had given rise, as they have done in other cultures, to outbreaks of dancing mania and similar manifestations of collective hysteria; it relieved them by providing them with a ritual outlet.”²³² Dionysus offered freedom and happiness for all as Dodds describes, “Dionysus was a god of joy, and his joys were accessible to all, including even slaves.”²³³ The joys of Dionysus ranged from simple pleasures for simple people: dancing on greased wineskins, to the *hômophagia*, the tearing to pieces and eating raw, of an animal body.²³⁴ Dodds writes, in his introduction to *The Bacchae* that it “seems likely that the (animal) victim was felt to embody the vital powers of the god himself, which by the act of *hômophagia* were transferred to the worshippers.”²³⁵ In short, “he is the god by very simple means, or by other means not so simple, enables you for a short time to *stop being yourself*, and thereby sets you free.”²³⁶ Ironically, in addition, Dionysus, “is the cause of madness and the liberator of madness.”²³⁷

In the *Bacchae*, in an introductory song, the leader of the revelers, the individual representing the person of Dionysus, is said to cry out: “Sing out your Phrygian incantations. As the holy flute roars holy hymns, glorify him.”²³⁸ Seeing Dodds qualifies Dionysian ritual where the use of the Phrygian mode is employed, as “madness,” it seems useful to examine his description of madness. He writes, “the common belief of primitive peoples throughout the world [was] that *all* types of

²²⁸ *Pol.*, 1342a5–11.

²²⁹ See Dodds, *Irrational*, 76.

²³⁰ See Dodds, *Irrational*, 69. He refers here to Nietzsche and Nietzsche’s work *The Birth of Tragedy*.

²³¹ Dodds, *Irrational*, 69.

²³² *Ibid.*, 76.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 76.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

²³⁵ “Introduction” to EURIPIDES, *Bacchae*, E.R. Dodds, introduction, ed. and commentary., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944. xv.

²³⁶ Dodds, *Irrational*, 76.

²³⁷ “Introduction”, *Bacchae*, Dodds, xiv. See *Bacchae*, 860.

²³⁸ EURIPIDES. *Four Plays: Medea, Hippolytus, Heracles, Bacchae*. Stephen Esposito, introduction, ed., trans., notes, Newburyport: Focus Classical Library, 2004. Lines 151-159.

mental disturbance [were] caused by supernatural interference [...] [and] the notion of possession would easily be extended to epileptics and paranoiacs; and eventually all types of mental disturbance, including such things as sleepwalking and the delirium of high fever, would be put down to daemonic agencies.”²³⁹ Prophetic madness, such as the seeing of visions like Theoclymenus, or the oracles of Apollo who relied on *enthousiasmos*, “was due to an innate faculty of the soul itself, which it could exercise in certain conditions, when *liberated* by sleep, trance or religious ritual both from bodily interference and from rational control.”²⁴⁰ We have already seen that in high fever, sleep, and pathological states that our ability to create *phantásmata* is not exactly heightened, but we often falsely take what we see in our visions to be actually what we are *seeing* in reality. I think the “trance” and “religious ritual” that Dodds refers to here can be included in the states I mentioned taken from Aristotle’s *De Insomniis / On Dreams*. I would venture to say that, in Aristotle, it is the use of the Phrygian mode in the cases of religious ritual that fuels the madness and *phantásmata* and is why Aristotle is so careful with the subject. The Phrygian mode in these cases does well by inducing a catharsis of emotion, but can also be dangerous. It is dangerous in the sense that if we remember the *Bacchae* by Euripides, Agave kills and tears apart her own son Pentheus,²⁴¹ while under the influence of Dionysus, seeing her son to be a mountain lion or “lion-like prey.”²⁴²

If we look back to the *Politics*, Aristotle describes, simply, how the different modes of music are felt in different ways,

Pieces of music²⁴³ [...] do actually contain in themselves imitations [*mimémata*] of character [*êthôn*]; and this is manifest for even in the nature of the mere melodies [*harmonión*] there are differences, so that people when hearing them are affected differently and have not the same feelings in regard to each of them, but listen to some in more mournful and restrained state, for instance to the Mixolydian mode, and to others in a softer state of mind, but in a midway state and with the greatest composure to another, as the Dorian mode alone of tunes seems to act, while the Phrygian makes men enthusiastic [*enthousiastikous*].²⁴⁴

²³⁹ Dodds, *Irrational*, 67.

²⁴⁰ Dodds, *Irrational*, 71. Dodds uses Aristotle’s *Problems* 30, 954a 34 ff. as support. Italics are mine.

²⁴¹ “Agave, foaming at the mouth and rolling her protruding eyeballs, not thinking what she ought to think (*ou phronous’ ha chrê phronein*)”. 1122–23. *Bacchae*, trans. Esposito. See, *Bacchae*, Dodds edition.

²⁴² See *Bacchae*, Dodds, 1120–1135, 1173, 1195.

²⁴³ [*en de tois melesin*]

²⁴⁴ *Pol.*, 1340a39–1340b7.

He adds a general comment on rhythm saying, from the varieties of rhythm, some “have a more steady character [*êthos*]: others have a lively quality; and these last may again be divided, according as they move with a more vulgar rhythm or move in a manner more suited to freemen.”²⁴⁵ Aristotle does not remark much on the Mixolydian mode or music for amusement or hearer’s pleasure in the *Politics*, though he says that it is a type assigned for competitions and shows good for relaxation.²⁴⁶ The Dorian mode, for Aristotle, is the one most appropriated for education and learning,²⁴⁷ he further describes the mode as “sedate and of manly character.”²⁴⁸ Though, it seems apparent that Aristotle spends a lot of time on the Phrygian mode because of the movement it inspires.

The words Aristotle uses to say “imitations” or “representations” in these passages, such as 1340a40, is *mimêmata*, deriving from the word *mimesis*. Subsequent uses of the word “imitations” or “representations” he uses “*homoiôis*” or “*homoiômata*,” which have been translated elsewhere as “resemblances,” for example in the passage in *De Insomniis / On Dreams* where Aristotle says that a man with high fever imagines he sees animals on the wall merely from slight resemblances.²⁴⁹

(iv) Conclusion

I would argue that our ability to recognize melodies or rhythms as resemblances of *êthos* or character requires *phantasia*. Nonetheless, there is an awkwardness to this statement, an awkwardness that is two-fold: (1) when we are unable to discern something well with sight we say “it appears like a man” and by saying this we are expressing a kind of doubt or confusion that can later be confirmed whether the blurry object was a man or not when he comes closer; (2) Yet to say that a melody contains “representations of anger,” we are unable to confirm, as with sight, that this is a “representation of anger” or “this appears to be ‘anger’” or “this melody looks like ‘courage’” because what we are essentially doing is describing an affect that we cannot see. Because we are unable to *see* the thing that is giving

²⁴⁵ ARISTOTLE. *The Politics of Aristotle*. Ernest Barker, ed., trans., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958. 1340b8–11.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 1342a22. Rackham, trans.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 1342a27.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 1342b12–14.

²⁴⁹ *De Insom.* 460b11–13.

resemblances, I think *phantásmata* are very important for understanding characters in this sense from Aristotle. Not only that, but once music is heard, it disappears; I think we rely on our memory and principally *phantásmata* in order to speak about it (for a *phántasma* remains after the sense object is gone) and we describe it, using what sounds like metaphors to do so. However, it must be that enough people *see* music in such a way that the statement works (in the sense that it must be some kind of property the object has) that the Dorian mode can be called “sedate and of manly character.”²⁵⁰ As Anderson said, Aristotle relied on specialists in music for his conclusions about music having categories (such as educational, cathartic, for pleasure).²⁵¹ Even so, we could conjecture that enough people heard a particular melody in a specific mode, *phantasia* occurred to them upon hearing it, it made them think in a certain way, and perhaps inspired action, such as dance.

When people refer to pieces exhibiting certain qualities, or inspiring narratives (such as Kendall Walton’s development from a Mozart Piano Concerto,²⁵² or Peter Kivy’s ‘bright C-Major chord’ in Haydn²⁵³) I think quite possibly this is a kind of explaining the *phantásmata* that occurs upon listening to a piece that is the basis of their respective descriptions. This conclusion then, could apply to both music that has words or absolute music, seeing Aristotle’s theory applies to music even in the absence of auxiliary text, “everyone who listens to examples of musical mimesis experiences a corresponding state of feeling.”²⁵⁴

Scruton argues in the beginning of his chapter on music and representation that the music the Ancient Greeks had in mind was, ‘sung, danced to, or marched to. The thing imitated in the music was, they thought, automatically imitated by the person who ‘moved with’ it.”²⁵⁵ This thought echos the ‘movement’ inspired by the Phrygian mode as developed by Aristotle. Not only that but Scruton’s remark almost makes it look as though the Aristotelian treatment of music in the *Poetics* (calling music a mimetic art),²⁵⁶ to be very confining and irrelevant to our times, at least because the music we have now is not all made for the purpose of inspiring movement (there are many other genres aside from *e.g.* disco, techno, and waltz).

²⁵⁰ *Pol.* 1342a27.

²⁵¹ Anderson, 142.

²⁵² See Walton, 52.

²⁵³ See Kivy, 73.

²⁵⁴ Anderson, 125.

²⁵⁵ Scruton, 118.

²⁵⁶ *Poetics*, 1447a14–16.

The flexible notion of *phantásmata* (as introduced by Dorothea Frede)²⁵⁷ can also help in the support of our memory and understanding of music. If we hear a certain piece and it inspires us to think in a certain way or talk about it in a certain way, this *phántasma* that aided in thought could be remembered and used for future judgments on specific pieces of music or even be applied in the future, if we are in a situation that perhaps reminds us of a piece of music. For example, we recently heard a ‘heroic’ piece of music, and are presently in a situation that requires this type of *êthos*; perhaps the *phantásmata* from the previous experience could help in the second. This also could prove as support for Aristotle’s claim of the importance of music in the *paideía* and the learning of *êthos*. Anderson writes on this topic,

One may feel some curiosity about the facts of musical perception as they relate to *êthos*. According to a recurrent hypothesis of Aristotle’s the soul, which exists only potentially until it actualizes its potential in thinking, never thinks without an image. The present passage calls mental images or forms *homoiômata*, “likenesses.” [...] [Aristotle’s] general theory of perception, however, suggests two conclusions: the likenesses must be projections of forms within the soul of the agent; also, their influence upon the auditor takes the form of finally realizing the corresponding potential or predisposition within his nature.²⁵⁸

In a footnote to this paragraph, Anderson notes that in a study on the work *De Musica* of Philodemus, “Annemarie Neubecker holds that *homoiômata* in [*De Anima* 429a15–24] is a synonym for *mimêsis*.”²⁵⁹ With this suggestion, we could see the ‘likenesses’ as *mimêsis*, understood by us via *phantasia*; and thus it looks like *phantásmata* could be an essential part of why Aristotle claims music to be a mimetic art.²⁶⁰

However, it must also be remembered that it is not only or exclusively the words in a piece that serves to provide ‘likenesses’ or representations. We could possibly, though perhaps not all, understand what Mozart is talking about in his letter regarding the aria “Solche hergelaufne Laffen” from *Die Entführung aus dem*

²⁵⁷ See Frede, 291.

²⁵⁸ Anderson, *Ethos and Education*, 128. The use of ‘the present passage’ is vague in the text, though I believe he is referring to *Pol.* 1340a18–22. It also looks like Anderson is equating *homoiômata* to *phantásmata*.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 267, footnote #36. The work he is referring to is by Annemarie Neubecker, *Die Bewertung der Musik bei Stoikern und Epikureern: Eine Analyse von Philodems Schrift De Musica* [diss. Berlin, 1956], pp.78–79, 92.

²⁶⁰ It could be that *phantásmata* were so much of a part of his theory on perception that Aristotle neglected to develop this idea in relation to music.

Serail.²⁶¹ Upon hearing it (and not knowing of the program behind it), “seeing” an angry, out-of-control man²⁶² is not beyond the realm of how we could understand virtue in music, in this case it is vice. It often can happen that we “understand” a certain feeling in a Bach cantata, for example the aria from *Ich hatte viel Berkümmernis*, “Sei nun wieder zufrieden, meine Seele”²⁶³ without understanding the language in which the piece was written. We can at least imagine certain aspects upon hearing it, whether these aspects or *mental pictures* were intended or not by the composer may be another question all together.

Questions raised by what Aristotle called ‘mimetic music’ leaves a lot of confusion. I do not think there is a simple solution for explaining how music is mimetic comparable to the explanation of ratios and mathematics to explain concords. When we get into the concept of music having ‘imitations’ or ‘representations’ (however one translates *homoiois*), most resort to the phrase ‘this passage expresses such-and-such’ rather than a more binding term such as ‘representations’ (that for Scruton and Walton implies narrative). I attempt to challenge an aspect of this argument by examining what Aristotle means when talking about *homoiois*, its relation to a virtue or ethics, and music. And what it seems is that some kind of narrative, however vague, is implied. Indeed if Scruton is right that the music was accompanied by dance or song or particular motion, a loose narrative could be strongly suggested. However, I argue it could be by something similar to pictorial representation (that Scruton refers to) that is present in Aristotle’s comment on music. If we look at sense perception and the development of vocabulary that we use to talk about music, there are often items that cross sense modalities (such as a ‘black note’ in *Topics* 106a25). If Aristotle implied *phantasia* or *phantásmata* in his argument, without mentioning it explicitly, perhaps the sometimes pictorial way of hearing music (descriptions using sight vocabulary) or ‘imitations of virtue’ is via a mental picture one has upon hearing a work of music (though this does not imply that everyone must have identical *phantásmata* upon hearing a piece of music in order for it to be heard as mimetic of X). I find that the ability to call music representational and/or mimetic derives from the Aristotelian notion of *phantasia* and *phantásmata*. The descriptions where we say, “music is mimetic of X” is built on the notion of

²⁶¹ “Stupid Dandies Always Coming” from *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

²⁶² See Kivy, 49.

²⁶³ BWV 21. *My Heart was Deeply Troubled*, “Be Peaceful again, my soul.”

mental pictures we have upon hearing a work of music. These mental pictures, then, serve to help bridge the sense modalities and make it possible for us to see “brightness” in sound. It also shows that the connection between the description and *phantásmata* is stronger than a metaphorical relation. I think that our interpretations (as Kendall Walton invented) of a “melody mimetic of X” can be traced back to *phantásmata* or phantasms that haunt our memory. The ephemeral quality of music works against an interpretation of music compared to an interpretation of a painting that could be made while in the presence of the object. Considering this aspect, I think it is also reasonable that our descriptions of music are often filled with terminology for describing objects of sight due to the *phantásmata* keeping the sensation of the sound of a particular piece alive in our mind. *Phantásmata* help in understanding our perception of music, and in understanding music as a mimetic art.

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