MUSIC IN THE COURSE OF LIFE

Joseph A. Kotarba



"Drawing from four decades of research examining the social worlds of rock and popular music, Joseph Kotarba has truly created his *magnum opus*. Written in a clear and accessible style, he speaks directly to readers and captures their attention like an impressive guitar riff. He masterfully weaves ethnographic details from the field, documenting everyday life interaction with music as it punctuates enduring markers of meaning throughout the life course. A classic in the making, *Music in the Course of Life* provides vital insight into key sociological concepts that explain our evolving dance with music from early childhood through our aging years."

Dr. Robert Owen Gardner, *Professor of Sociology, Linfield University, U.S.A.* Author of *The Portable Community: Place and Displacement in Bluegrass Festival Life* (2020)

"Sociological studies of music have often emphasized youth subcultures or intense dedicated fans of particular musical genres. But music, Kotarba shows us, is a powerful life-long experience shared by everyone. This book provides a novel symbolic interactionist approach that treats music not as a subcultural phenomenon but as an integral part in the course of life all the way from early childhood through later elders. With sensitivity to the full range of the course of life, Kotarba vividly demonstrates the importance of music to the construction and maintenance of the self, through self-being, self-becoming, and self-remembering. With wide-ranging examples across multiple genres and a lively, accessible writing style, Kotarba invites us to enjoy the sociology of music as much as we enjoy music itself."

Dr. Wayne H. Brekhus, *Professor of Sociology, University of Missouri, U.S.A.*

"*Music in the Course of Life* is a fitting crescendo to Dr. Kotarba's lengthy and powerful career as a symbolic interactionist who sees music as a key feature of the everyday life experience of culture. His updating of life course theory is a creative integration of contemporary interactionist thinking on the self-concept. This book is a collection of stories, Dr. Kotarba's and those of his respondents, that nicely capture the magic of music in all our lives."

Dr. Norman Denzin, *Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois, U.S.A.*

"This book really sings! Dr. Kotarba demonstrates the magic and meaning of music inherent throughout the entire course of life. Using insights from everyday life sociology, he integrates a wide range of literature on music experience with evocative personal stories gathered from respondents of all ages and from his own engaging stories as a social researcher and a music fan. I was particularly taken with his insight and thoroughness in depicting music as a portal of compassion for the elderly with dementia and those near death. This book will be of tremendous value to all those—researchers and laypeople alike—interested in the reflexive relationship between music and the self."

Dr. Carolyn Ellis, *Distinguished University Professor Emerita, University of South Florida, U.S.A.*



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MUSIC IN THE COURSE OF LIFE

This book illustrates how social meanings provided by music are experienced throughout the course of life. To this end, the author examines in depth the concepts of self, identity, socialization, and the life course itself.

Social scientists have traditionally focused on music experiences among different generations, one at a time, with an emphasis on young audiences. This book explores appreciation for and use of music as a dynamic process that does not begin when we enter adolescence, nor end when we become adults. It demonstrates the relationship between the experience of music and the experience of self as a fundamental feature of the more general relationship of the individual to society. Music completes the circle of life. The author bases his analysis on observations made through a variety of qualitative studies and methodologies, as well as his own music autobiography.

Clear and jargon free, this book is a timely application of key concepts from the everyday life sociologies for scholars and students in the sociology of music and culture and other related disciplines such as anthropology and ethnomusicology. It will be of interest for upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in culture, music, symbolic interaction, social psychology, and qualitative research methods.

Joseph A. Kotarba is Professor of Sociology at Texas State University, U.S.A., where he directs the *Music Across the Life Course* Project. He also serves as Medical Sociologist and Ethnographer for the Institute for Translational Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston. He received the George Herbert Mead Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction; the Society's Charles Horton Cooley Award for Best Book in the Symbolic Interactionist Tradition for *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013); and the Society's Helena Lopata Award for Excellence in Mentoring. He is currently studying the relationship between science, medicine, and music; the experience of music during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the culture of the translational science movement. He received his doctorate from the University of California, San Diego.



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Joseph A. Kotarba

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Cover image: © Shutterstock

First published 2023
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Kotarba, Joseph A., author.
Title: Music in the course of life / Joseph A. Kotarba.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2023. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022024029 (print) | LCCN 2022024030 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781032018515 (hardback) | ISBN 9781032018454 (paperback) |
ISBN 9781003180357 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Music–Social aspects. | Life cycle, Human–Social aspects. |
Music–Psychological aspects. | Life cycle, Human–Psychological aspects.
Classification: LCC ML3916 .K69 2022 (print) | LCC ML3916 (ebook) |
DDC 306.4/842–dc23/eng/20220525
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022024029
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022024030

ISBN: 978-1-032-01851-5 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-01845-4 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-18035-7 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357

Typeset in Bembo
by Newgen Publishing UK

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A common cliché in writing is for an author to claim that there are simply too many people to acknowledge for supporting their work. In my case, that claim is not a cliché but simply the truth. This book represents forty-plus years experiencing and analyzing music sociologically. The viewpoints, ideas, and visions in this book were also nurtured by seventy-five years of friends, family members, co-workers, neighbors, and others with whom our relationships always more or less involved music. I thank them all, but I want to acknowledge several who were especially helpful in recent years as the themes in this book were evolving.

The officers and members of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction have provided me an intellectual and familial home. The group has always appreciated and encouraged my work, including the existential amendment to symbolic interaction's understanding of the self. The SSSI also put me in touch with European interactionists who taught me new things about music I thought I already mastered: Vessela Misheva in Sweden and Krzysztof Konecki in Poland on the Beatles, Thaddeus Muller in England on Jim Morrison and the Doors, and Andrea Salvini in Italy on Catholic church music, among many others.

An award from the Fulbright Specialist Program allowed me to study and lecture on music in the land of ABBA at Uppsala University in Sweden. My colleagues at the NIH-supported Institute for Translational Sciences at the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston have allowed me to peer into the music-self of the contemporary scientist while I help design and evaluate the social organization of cutting-edge biomedical research.

Wimberley Valley in the Hill Country of Texas, and my town of Woodcreek in particular, are a hotbed of Americana music, as I will analyze specifically in the music-self of the early elder. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to work with the folks who operate Susanna's Kitchen at the Wimberley United Methodist Church, not only to get a first-hand view of Americana music but to be part of a

welcoming music community where someone with zilch music talent (like me) can still contribute (selling tickets, publicity, welcoming, etc.). I'd like to thank Perry Raybuck, Program Director, in particular for his openness to sociological takes on community-based music programs and performances.

Amanda Couve has been a wonderful co-researcher on our studies of elders and people living with dementia. She is a graduate of our master's program in dementia and aging studies at Texas State University and has quickly ascended to management for a growing hospice services company in San Antonio. Her access to aging and dementia residences and clients and her insights into the everyday life of her clients have been great resources for our studies on the aging music-self.

I want to acknowledge my co-authors, mentors, and friends in the existential sociology journey: David Altheide, Andy Fontana, John Johnson, and Jack Douglas. Always there. I also want to thank Norm Denzin and Caroline Ellis for easily convincing me that it is OK to write stories about our research friends while honoring the brilliance and insight of their stories.

My most recent partner in crime is Andrii Melnikov, associate professor, Faculty of Sociology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. He has brought a distinctively European take to the existential sociology journey: historical, literary, and philosophical to balance out our North American somewhat pragmatist approach to everyday life.

Finally, I want to thank and give praise to my students at Texas State University. When I lapse and want to think of them as mere pop music fans, full of earbuds and not ideas, they surprise me with appreciation for the sociological takes on music topics I propose in class and in my writing. I talk myself and them down a bit, however, when I ask them rhetorically: although they are the experts on contemporary popular music and they claim my mastery of the genre ended in 1984 with Van Halen's "Jump," who is grading whom…?

I dedicate this book to my favorite nonet: Chris, Tia, Melody, Jessie, Stan, Brandon, Isla, Andrew… and Polly—still my firework. We have all shared music like we have shared love for each other. In so many cases over the years, these tasks have been one and the same.

INTRODUCTION

About three years ago my daughter Jessie, her husband Stan, and their eighteen-month-old son Brandon flew out from their home in Reston, Virginia to visit my wife Polly and me at our home in Woodcreek, Texas. It was a typical hot and dry Central Texas day in August, roughly two months after I had knee replacement surgery. (Unlike many of my accumulating ills of aging, such as my poor hearing, I cannot attribute my bad knees to my long career as a music fan who listened to too much loud and fast rock 'n' roll in my youth and, I confess, in my adulthood.) I much appreciated their efforts to cheer me up, but the highlight of that trip—like our many trips to Reston—was just hanging out with my grandson, Brandon.

We were playing with puzzles and balls when Brandon got all excited and pointed to a book displayed on our entertainment center. The book in question was my recently published text, *Understanding Society through Popular Music*. At first, I said to myself, "Now there's a smart kid, appreciating his grandpa's good scholarship." I quickly reformed my thinking and said to myself, "Come on, you egotistical grandpa, he's only eighteen months old!" I could not make out what he was trying to say, but I could see that his finger was pointed to a picture on the cover borrowed from PBS' *Sesame Street* of Katy Perry and her infamous musical game-of-tag with Elmo. As I moved closer, I could hear Brandon saying "Elmo, Elmo," as he rudely ignored one of my favorite pop singers (Figure 0.1). I cannot tell you how often Brandon has climbed up on my lap to have me link up with Elmo videos on my iPad filled with fun songs about Elmo and sometimes sung by Elmo and his friends. Perhaps coincidentally, my technologically hip son-in-law assembled a state-of-the art audio and visual communications system in Brandon's room through which he would play Katy Perry's "Chained to the Rhythm" that lullabied Brandon to sleep.

Let's glance at the other end of the age spectrum for a moment. In spring 2019, I worked with a group of graduate students on a study to discover what

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-1



FIGURE 0.1 Brandon and Elmo

everyday life music experiences are among older people stricken with dementia. My co-researcher, Amanda Couve, and I visited a weekly caretaker respite program at the Wimberley Texas Community Center in order to converse with clients about their music. Needless to say, these conversations were not very productive, since the clients often had difficulty remembering and talking about music. The clearest statement about music was the insistence that church music is their favorite, as voiced by several of the women present.

While Amanda and I were conversing with the lead volunteer workers, the fifteen clients were sitting around a large square table, playing games, working puzzles, and just enjoying the company of the other volunteers. Two elderly gentlemen were sitting across from each other. Amanda and I had talked with both of them earlier, but they were not able to say much to us. We did learn that they were both military veterans, most likely from the Vietnam generation. As an experienced ethnographer, I knew to look around the table to observe the simple and common activities we often ignore and take for granted in everyday life. The first gentleman started tapping his fingers on the table while smiling and looking at the other. The other gentleman took his turn to tap his fingers while smiling at his friend. The finger tapping was clearly a song, and my best guess is that the song in question might have been the intro to the Allman Brothers' anti-war classic, "Ain't Wastin' Time No More" from their 1972 album, *Eat a Peach*. Gregg Allman wrote this song soon after his brother, Duane, was killed in a motorcycle accident in Macon, Georgia. To me, the fourth verse in the song is telling:

> Well, by and by, way after many years have gone
> And all the war freaks die off, leavin' us alone
> We'll raise our children, in the peaceful way we can
> It's up to you and me brother to try and try again

I consulted several friends who were veterans of the war in Vietnam about this event. They told me that the message may have been a *tap code*, conceived by American prisoners-of-war imprisoned by the North Vietnamese. The tap code allowed prisoners to communicate with each other when normal communication channels were forbidden by their captors. In the current situation, the music tap code provided a method of communicating when normal speech was precluded by late-stage dementia.

These two music experiences illustrate the magic of music: it serves as a major portal to everyday life through which culture beams the meanings that we need to make sense of ourselves and our everyday lives. Music-as-culture points to tiny things we often take for granted as well as large and dramatic things that force our attention (Fine 2012). Music can make these things meaningful, colorful, pleasant, and sometimes painful. These ethnographic experiences quickly reminded me of Tia Denora's (1999: 54) famous sociological principle, that music serves as a *technology of the self*:

> I have tried to show how actors engage in aesthetic reflexive activities of music consumption so as to produce themselves as types of actors imbued with specific feeling forms, attributes and identity characteristics, and as objects of knowledge to themselves and to others. In relation to the self, music provides a rich array of cultural resources for self-constitution and reconstitution over time.

Music is reflexive to the degree it provides meaning for who we are, but also who the other person is. Brandon may have been too young to use music to help define who he is, following the symbolic interactionist model of the self (Mead 1934), but the music served to help his grandpa make sense of himself, his grandson, and their special relationship. Numerous critics (e.g., Paul 2014) have argued that composing and performing "Ain't Wastin' Time No More" helped Gregg Allman make sense of his lost brother and himself as a grieving survivor, but the song also helped listeners like myself make sense of death, war, and being individuals at risk of military conscription for a war in Vietnam we detested.

I wrote this book to help us understand the social meanings of music at the beginning and the end of life, but also to examine the importance of music throughout what sociologists and gerontologists call the *life course*. Sociologists who have studied music as a social phenomenon have generally focused on particular stages of life, for example, adolescence and adulthood, as I have also covered in my work (e.g., Kotarba 1994a and 2013a). I designed this book to explore the breadth of music experiences by taking advantage of the power and promise of the

self-concept in the social science discipline of symbolic interaction. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will discuss the key sociological concept of *socialization* and the process by which our sense of self evolves over time. I will then discuss the concept of the *life course*, not in terms of a theory per se, but as a sensitizing concept that illustrates the reflexive relationship between self and music that extends throughout the course of life in all societies.

The Self, and the Life Course

The notion of *life course* is important to a particularly sociological perspective on people and their behavior. In general, sociologists argue that people are only partially shaped by their biological and genetic capacities. Instead, our self—who we feel and perceive ourselves to be—and how we approach social life are constantly shaped by events and experiences that happen all the way through life. We change constantly and on occasion dramatically. The concept of *life course* holds that socialization is a life-long process (Furstenberg 2004). Accordingly, our appreciation for and use of music is a dynamic process that does not begin when we enter adolescence, nor end when we become adults.

Social scientists have traditionally focused on music experiences among young audiences. The focus has been on pop music specifically as a feature of adolescent culture and, therefore, of teenagers' everyday life experiences. As Simon Frith (1981) noted in his famous sociological text, *Sound Effects*, rock music has been fundamental to the experience of growing up ever since the end of World War II. Similarly, sociologists have demonstrated increasing interest over the years in rock and pop music as indicators of dramatic changes occurring in the social and cultural worlds of teenagers. We can trace this interest at least as far back as David Riesman's (1950) classic examination of the emergence of the *other-directed* personality in post-World War II American society. The new middle class was marked by a weakening of parental control, a preoccupation with consumption, and a shift in the meaning of leisure, resulting in the masses—the lonely crowd—desperately trying to have fun. The time was ripe for the emergence of a youth culture defined by what have come to be known as pop and rock—and increasingly hip hop—music.

The popular music industry continues to expand dramatically—beyond multi-billion-dollar annual sales, globalization, CDs, iPhones, Spotify, iTunes, YouTube, Apple Beats, AirPods, TikTok, and other technological and media advances, and even the resurgence of old-fashioned vinyl records. Yet lay and scholarly observers have generally ignored or underplayed an important element of social and cultural change: popular music is no longer limited to, nor solely the possession of, teenagers and young adults. The original generation of rock 'n' roll fans—the baby boomers—are now parents and, increasingly, grandparents. The rock 'n' roll music and music culture they grew up with has stayed with them, becoming the soundtrack of North American and European cultures—and increasingly of the rest of the world, as witnessed by the success of Korean K-Pop (Williams and Ho 2016).

To better understand how music works throughout the life course we begin by discussing in some depth the concepts of self, identity, socialization, and the life course itself.

Socialization and the Self

Socialization refers to the process by which people learn and internalize the attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms of our culture and develop a sense of self (Kotarba 2016a). The concept of socialization is among the most important in sociology because it attempts to illustrate and explain the tremendous impact living in society has on shaping the individual. The individual becomes a human being through socialization and what it means to be an individual evolves over the life course. Early sociological and psychological theories of socialization, largely reflecting cultural beliefs about human development in the early twentieth century, focused on self and moral development up to what we today know as adolescence. George Herbert Mead's (1934) theory of the self that he developed in the 1920s, for example, posited three stages: infancy, play, and game stages. The final game stage occurs during adolescence when the individual is able to learn and respond to the community's norms and standards and act accordingly in everyday life. Mead assumed that the socialized self, acquired through adolescence, generally remains stable throughout the remaining life span. Symbolic interactionist thinkers following Mead have attempted to refine his theory to account for the apparent changes in the adult self-concept present in modern society. Tomatsu Shibutani (1961) presented a structural notion of *reference group* to interactionist thinking to illustrate how adults can be expected to be members of various groups which in turn serve as audiences to the self. In effect, the adult learns to be different selfs to accommodate the multiple complex situations that mark modern life. Sociologists of everyday life contend that the process of becoming an adult in our society is rich, ongoing, and worthy of detailed ethnographic analysis. Studies of adult socialization are no longer limited to traditional elderly settings. In my research on baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1964 (Kotarba 2002a, 2009a and 2013a), for example, I explored the many ways baby boomers continue to use rock 'n' roll music and culture—in their various iterations—as resources for refining their sense of self as they occupy the role of parent, lover, grandparent, and others. They shape and modify the musical values they acquired during adolescence to fit the needs of later adulthood, so that they may continue to attend rock music concerts but may prefer comfortable seating in the shade near the stage as opposed to more adventurous lawn seating.

The *self* is probably the most important concept for sociologists of everyday life. It is, however, often used improperly or confused with the concept of *identity*. Before we proceed to examine the empirical material unique to this chapter, let us discuss in some detail these important ideas. And let us begin with the self. The self, as the word itself suggests, is a reflexive object. Think, for example, of its common use in expressions like "I hurt myself." When you hurt yourself you direct attention (the realization that you are in pain) to you as an object. In doing so you are both

a subject (knower and feeler, in this case) of your action, and an object (known and felt). You are a subject in the sense that you are the one who is mustering attention and directing focus, and you are an object in the sense that such attention is focused on you. In doing so, George Herbert Mead (1934) tells us, you are *minding* yourself. It is by minding that indeed we create a sense of self. We mind our self into being by, for example, engaging in internal conversations (e.g., thinking about oneself), monitoring our sensations, experiencing feelings about the self, and so forth. The "doing" of all these things is the "doing" of the self. The self, in other words, is a constant process, a way of *self-ing* ourselves into being as a result of our actions as a subject (the "I"), and as an object of our actions (the "me").

Song lyrics are great for illustrating the components of the self as identified by Mead. Consider the following lyrics from Van Morrison's "Sweet Thing," borrowed from his classic 1968 album, *Astral Weeks*:

> I will reach my hands into the nighttime sky
> And touch a star that shines in your eyes
> And do it all not to wonder why
> And I will never grow so old again

In this segment, taken from a beautiful and very poetic love song of the hippie '60s and '70s, the subject part of the self (the "I") is obvious. The subject is the person writing the lyrics and singing to his real or potential girlfriend, if you will. Think of the "I" part of the self as the lyricist. The second part of the self, the object, is the "me." The lyricist is writing about their self as if it were a thing, an object separate from them that ages and can be predicted. The sociological view of self is that it is simultaneously a "subject" and an "object," or the lyricist and the lyric. The final part of the self, the one that *minds* the self, is what Mead referred to as the *significant* and *generalized other*. This term refers to how we think of ourselves from the perspectives of others or, more appropriately, how we imagine others see us. As Simone de Beauvoir (1977), one of the great theorists of post-World War II existentialist and feminine thought, insightfully noted, there is nothing in our bodies to tell us we are getting old. That designation is given by others, either significant (i.e., real people who are important to us) or generalized (i.e., ideal people represented by the cultures within which we live).

The analytical contrast between the concept of the *self* and that of *identity* should be clarified, since both concepts will be discussed throughout this book. Kathy Charmaz, et al. (2019) define identity as a typification of self, either imposed upon an individual by others (*social identity*) or adopted from others (*personal identity*). For example, if others view me as a rock 'n' roll fan and treat me as such my social identity is that, indeed, of a rock 'n' roll fan. Others could treat me as a country music fan simply because I live in Texas and would only be partially correct. I can internalize those definitions and make them my own, my selfs.

I will focus more on the self-concept in this work for two reasons. First, the self is a pivotal idea in the more general theoretical perspective informing this study: the

sociology of everyday life (Douglas, et al. 1980; Adler, et al. 1987; Melnikov and Kotarba 2017). Second, the self is more proximate to the individual's actual everyday experience and activities. The self is the window to the non-rational features of the individual not readily covered by the definitional and objectivist nature of identity. I will therefore examine the non-rational, affective, sometimes poetic, often spiritual, and commonly speculative features of the experience of self over the course of a lifetime.

The Self and the Life Course

The notion of *life course* is a formal way of studying, analyzing, and writing about the entirety of life. In an earlier work, I describe life course as a patterned temporal trajectory of individual experiences (Kotarba 2016b). Some scholars, most notably social psychologists and psychologists who follow the powerful tradition established by Sigmund Freud, like to identify objective and universal stages typical for most if not all individuals. Everyday life sociologists are instead less interested in determining fixed, almost diagnostic, stages and more in examining how individuals assign meanings to their progression through life. In the words of Jeffrey Clair, David Karp, and William C. Yoels (1993: vii), their focus is more precisely on "how persons occupying different locations in social space interpret and respond to repeated social messages about the meanings of age." Reflecting on the contribution of these authors, in an influential overview of the concept and research on the life course, interactionist-oriented sociologists James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium (2003: 836) write that:

> (1) age and life stages, like any temporal categories, can carry multiple meanings; (2) those meanings emerge from social interaction; and (3) the meanings of age and the course of life are refined and reinterpreted in light of the prevailing social definitions of situations that bear on experience through time.

As you can obviously see, the life course is therefore about the *becoming of self*: the fluid process through which we acquire new and diverse roles, social identities, and personal identities. Music, I argue, provides a set of symbolic and affective resources for the definition and reinterpretation of these identities; through music we continuously self ourselves into being. But, how, precisely, do we do so?

The Becoming of Self

The existential sociological concept of the *becoming of self* is a useful guide in seeking the sociological answers to this question. Existential social thought is heavily derived from and very close in nature to symbolic interactionism. A difference is that existential sociology views the self "as a unique experience of being within the context of contemporary social conditions, an experience most notably marked by an

incessant sense of becoming and an active participation in social change" (Kotarba 1984: 223). The incessant sense of becoming is a reflection of the contemporary need for the individual to be prepared to reshape meanings of self in response to the dictates of a rapidly changing social world. The well-integrated self accepts the reality of change and welcomes new ideas, new experiences, and reformulations of old ideas and experiences that help one adapt to change (Kotarba 1987).

The idea of *becoming* is one of the most important ideas in existentialist thought across disciplines because it correctly places responsibility for fashioning a self on the individual. Whereas Jean-Paul Sartre (1945) argued dramatically that we are condemned to be free and to choose who we are to become, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) insisted more moderately and sociologically that we must ground our becoming of self in the real world in order to cope effectively with it. Thus, an effective strategy for becoming begins with a foundation of personal experience and the constraints of social structure, while evolving in terms of the resources presented by culture. *Agency* is the format for the process of *becoming*.

Jack Douglas (1977) notes that there are, in fact, two analytically distinct stages of becoming of self with which the modern actor contends. The first is *the need to eliminate or control threats to the basic security of self* (e.g., meaninglessness, isolation from others, shame, and death). Although existential psychotherapists like Irvin Yalom (1978) argue that chronic insecurity—or neurosis—is pervasive in our society, Douglas argues sociologically that it is more common for the sense of security to vary biographically, situationally, and developmentally. In general, adults try to shape everyday life experiences in order to avoid basic threats to the self. Basic yet common threats to the adult self in our society would include divorce, the loss of a job, the loss of children (e.g., the empty nest syndrome), illness, disability, and poverty. The second stage of becoming of self involves *growth of the sense of self*. Growth occurs when the individual seeks new experiences as media for innovative and potentially rewarding meanings for self (Kotarba 1987). It is through growth, or self-actualization as it is often referred to today, that life becomes rich, rewarding, full, and manageable.

Phenomenology and the Authenticity of Self

Phenomenological social theory, put briefly, focuses on the social contexts of consciousness (Berger 2011). As Alfred Schutz (1967) argued, consciousness is made up of practical knowledge that allows the person to navigate through everyday life. Practical knowledge allows the person to understand and even predict—take for granted, if you will—most of the events encountered in everyday life. Practical knowledge—or commonsense knowledge—is acquired simply and primarily through one's membership in a community. A community's commonsense becomes its members' commonsense. In terms of popular music, for example, "everyone knows that the Rolling Stones are the best rock group ever" would be a statement of commonsense knowledge. Practical knowledge is also important because it allows a person to be viewed—by self and others—as a competent member of the

community (Freeman 1980: 138). Thus, if you don't know that the Rolling Stones are the best rock group ever, then (1) there is something wrong with you, or (2) at least, you are not a member of our community (i.e., you are not a true fan of rock 'n' roll).

Objects and events are meaningful, or have meaning for us, when we make sense of them in concrete situations. Alfred Schutz (1967: 6) referred to this as *intentionality*—we intend or make sense of things because we are confronted by them and must make sense of them to control, protect, circumvent, honor, etc. them. Yet, of all the things we encounter in everyday life, which do we choose to try to make sense of? Schutz (1964: 125) argued that it depends on the importance of the *purpose at hand*, that is, the situation in which we find ourselves. An object can be either immediately relevant, absolutely irrelevant, or somewhere in between. In terms of the topic at hand, the need to assess the authenticity of a song, artist, or performance is likely to shift over time. I may possibly question whether REO Speedwagon today—with only one original member, Kevin Cronin—is the same REO Speedwagon I listened to twenty years ago. Nevertheless, I will only engage that issue when I must or when it has value for me to do so. For example, REO Speedwagon's authenticity is in my primary zone of relevance when I see the notice in the newspaper that they will perform in Austin next month and I must decide whether I want to/should/must buy tickets and attend.

Phenomenologists go one step further in their discussion of practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is couched in words, and *authenticity* is first and foremost a word. Words, both in our consciousness and in our interaction—conversations—with others accomplish tasks for us. They do this through the powerful mechanism we call *reflexivity* (Garfinkel 1967). When we talk, our words not only describe something, but they also create a world in which that something can appear and is possible (Mehan and Wood 1975). On the one hand, musical authenticity is an idea or a linguistic/rationalist device that people use to accomplish social interactional goals. The social situation at hand largely determines when, how, and why an individual will involve the idea of or word "authenticity."

On the other hand, musical authenticity is a social object that is cognitive in essence yet is dealt with like any other material objects (Mead 1934). Objects like music performances can be more or less authentic. Musical styles can be authentic or inauthentic, and the assessment of either can be readily accomplished and justified by reference to the cultural rules (e.g., the mass media) governing authenticity.

The phenomenologically inspired discussion above encourages us to be aware of the ways the perception of music in terms of authenticity can impact the sense of authenticity of the self. For example, Latinx individuals who have multiple styles of music from which to choose invoke criteria of authenticity of self derived from their generation, peer groups, country of origin, family traditions, career aspirations, and so forth (Kotarba, et al. 2009). We will examine this phenomenon in greater detail in our later discussion of the music-self in adulthood in which authenticity is an especially relevant criterion for assessing music.

Music in the Life Course

Music is a life-long experience as well as a powerful one. The idea of the *life course* is a valuable tool for understanding the simultaneous evolution of music experience and the self. Yet traditional models of the life course, emanating largely from psychology and classic social psychology, have been heavily criticized for several reasons. Freud's model has been criticized for being excessively psychodynamic and focused on negative features of experience. Oher models, such as Erik Erickson's, have been criticized for being too rigid and linear, ignoring the likelihood that individuals in modern Western society will skip and even repeat stages in life. His model also assumes that successful psychosocial development is the end product of life course activities and events. Several sociologists, for example James Hendricks (2012), have tried to demonstrate how structural changes affect the progression of development, but the end product—or "dependent variable" if you will—is still something psychological. Overall, the life cycle models are essentially psychological and focused on cognitive and affective changes in the individual that are more or less independent of particular biographical and especially cultural experiences.

I first invoked the life course trope in my research on baby boomers and their music experiences (Kotarba 2013a, 2009, and 2002). My main argument has been that the powerful music experience in adolescence, which we generally refer to as *rock 'n' roll* in our culture, largely defined what it meant to grow up in the post-World War II years in the 1950s and '60s. Baby boomers did not, however, escape or outgrow the rock 'n' roll idiom as they grew older, and as the cultural critics predicted they would, but instead have allowed rock 'n' roll to inform and define the remainder of their lives and the world around them. Rock 'n' roll evolved into rock and impacted the emergence of other popular music styles such as pop, dance, electronica, punk, hip hop, jazz, contemporary classical music, etc. (Kotarba 2013a). A generation was not the only phenomenon that moved across time; so did culture, politics, technology, and the experiences of life that have profited from the meanings and feelings music has always provided. At this point in my work, I very much operationalized the standard category of *stage* with the popular culture/music idea of *generation*.

In various ways, I recently investigated the life course trope more extensively as I decided to integrate my forty-plus years of conducting sociological research and writing on music. Accomplishing this required an advanced model of the life course. My work, like most work in the sociology of music that focuses on the actor—specifically audience or artist—had earlier tended to limit analysis to one stage or phase of life, largely determined by age, gender, social class, and/or ethnicity. Thus, we have research on children and music, especially in the schools (e.g., Linnavalli 2018); adolescents and music (e.g., Epstein 1994); young women and music (e.g., Kapurch 2017); and ethnicity and music (e.g., Paredez 2009). These are great literatures, but the segmentation of the experience of everyday life tends to ignore two key features of the life-long music experience. The first

feature is *movement*. Change is a constant feature of the music experience. The idea of *stage*, one of the most important building blocks of traditional life course thinking, tends to emphasize the uniformity of each stage rather than the observable fact that tastes, availability, and performance of music are constantly in flux within and across stages (Frith 2007). The contemporary music industry is largely predicated on rapid if not volatile change—who could have easily predicted the rise of popular hip hop/country music as exemplified by Lil Nas X and "Old Town Road" in 2019? Who could have predicted that the esteemed San Francisco Symphony Orchestra would perform a collaborative concert with the esteemed heavy metal band Metallica in 2020? The second feature is the postmodern idea of *pastiche*. Strict categories in music—whether in terms of styles, audiences, performers, instrumentation, technology, criticism, and economics—can be mixed, convoluted, unpredictable, ahistorical, illogical, and pliable in many other ways… again, consider Lil Nas X.

In designing my model of the music-self, I proceeded in a way almost opposite to the traditional thinking. Instead of beginning with an abstract, theoretical model of the life course—and fitting in details on specific behaviors, attitudes, or problems—I began with a collection of findings, largely from my own work, on the relationship of music to the self. So, instead of arranging a series of stages or boxes, I accumulated a series of *scenarios*. The formulation of the concept of *scenario* is a combination of four related ideas. The first is ***place***. Place locates self-work in "a unique spot in the universe" (Gieryn 2000). This spot has physical characteristics and can be occupied by physical objects. Places also have affective dimensions. We can develop feelings of comfort in or attachment to our scenarios, in terms of what Melinda Milligan (1998: 2) refers to as *place attachment*. The real or potential loss of a cherished space can be painful, as was the case for thousands of music fans who were joyfully anticipating SXSW 2020 in Austin, Texas. SXSW is a time when a large chunk of the city is magically transformed into an adult Disneyland of music, fun, and walking Sixth Street at all hours of the night and day. In 2020, Austin was left to be just another sunbelt city whose downtown was modestly populated by a few businesspersons, government workers, and Uber drivers because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sociologically, the concept of *place* makes people's activities, relationships, and interactions observable for analysis.

The second idea is ***space***. The concept of space has become quite popular in the social sciences in recent years. It originated in progressive thinking in the discipline of geography, where it refers to an objective location organized and managed/controlled by tradition, values, and regulations (cf. Holloway and Hubbard 2014). Sociologically, space refers more specifically to the way relationships are made and maintained in locations, and the ways different spaces compare and contrast. Put differently, space refers to the social construction of locations above and to some degree removed from the physical substructure of the location. Spaces can literally reflect and be true to the physical substructure of a location or create a fantasy location with no logical or obvious connection to the substructure. As a symbolic interactionist, I find the latter possibility most attractive. Interactionists proclaim

and even celebrate the actor's ability to shape, define, and experience locations in ways only limited by imagination and the ability to convince the other actor in the location to play along.

The third idea is ***performance***. We ordinarily think of performance as the work in which musicians engage and through which they present music to their audiences. From a dramaturgical/sociological perspective (Goffman 1959), however, performance can also be seen as the audience member's participation in the music. Thus, the relationship between music and the audience is *reflexive*, as classic ethnomethodology would put it (e.g., Mehan and Wood 1975). A performance includes location, space, values, expectations, feelings, embodiment, joy, sorrow, and anything else that's relevant. The audience member's contribution to a performance can be subtle (e.g., humming along, tapping fingers, or singing along in one's mind) or explicit (e.g., playing an instrument or singing the song).

The fourth idea, ***situation***, serves as an integrative feature in all everyday social life, and also in the experience of music. Situation is one of the key features of everyday life and is an especially important concept in existential social thought. According to Jack Douglas (1971), a situation is an event in which all the components of self, culture, lived experience, embodiment, feelings, thoughts, expectations, and the presence of others come together to generate, modify, apply, review, and then occasionally disperse with *meanings*. What distinguishes the existential view on situations is that we can always expect them to be experienced as *dramatic*. As I wrote in *Baby Boomers*, everyday life is saturated with uncertainty, expectations, disagreements, surprises, and a great variety of feelings that exist beyond mere cognition. Perhaps most importantly, music provides a mechanism for framing everyday life situations as dramatic. For example, consider the enduring popularity of romantic pop love songs (e.g., Taylor Swift), the emotional rush obtained from politically inspired rap music (e.g., N.W.A.), or the inspirational lift provided by Christian pop music (e.g., Lauren Daigle).

A key feature of the existentialist extension of the symbolic interactionist approach to the self is how common the experience of the self is *situational* in our contemporary if not postmodern times (Melnikov and Kotarba 2019). The sense of who one is can change quickly as the situations in which one finds oneself changes. As we will see in Chapter 5, the adult self can shift across numerous senses of self as the individual finds themselves in different places, with different groups who have different agendas for the individual to follow, at different times, and so forth. Adulthood is marked by the desire, ability, or even responsibility to manage the various ways music can impact the sense of self in different situations.

In developing a sociological definition of situation for use in the present, we need to shape it as a concept applicable to various events. There are two distinctive styles or types of situations to be found in existentialist literature, philosophy, and sociology. Melnikov and Johnson (2021) begin their comparison of existentialist thinking with other varieties of everyday life sociologies with the dramatic events most common in existentialist literature. Authors such as Sartre, Camus, and Tolstoy focus on dilemmas in which individuals find themselves during times of war,

revolution, terminal illness, unexpected pregnancies, and so forth. The characters find themselves in situations of having to make life-and-death, and possible career and relationship-ending, decisions.

Melnikov and Johnson (2021) then discuss the ways contemporary sociologists of everyday life ground research in somewhat less dramatic and a bit more common human experience. I prefer the second type of situation for a sociological application to phenomena like aging, with the existentialist proviso that experiencing everyday life is ordinarily quite dramatic (Kotarba and Melnikov 2022). We can assume that existential crises in the literary sense, that is the risk that one's very sense of personhood and individuality are at risk, are relatively unusual in everyday life in Western societies. More common are everyday situations for which music serves as a positive and useful source of meaning for self, yet conducive to feelings and emotions that can override cognition and rationality.

Music, like other common sources of meaning, is existential insofar as it never delivers a completed and comprehensive meaning for situations. As events in our lives change over time, music seems to be an available and predictable source of meaning for new and therefore novel situations. Like food, drink, and other sources of physical and affective nourishment, music has a somewhat fleeting and sometimes tentative effect on a problem or need. Hearing one's favorite song(s) in the morning on the radio is not enough. We listen to the radio the next morning, buy or rent the song on iTunes or Spotify, to make sure we experience it again and again. That is why we never tire of songs that are very meaningful to our continuous and —to us—serious everyday life situations and dilemmas and how we fit in and relate to them. Especially in popular genres, music is rarely definitive or conclusive of problems and situations. We enjoy repeating songs to sooth stubbornly troublesome situations, to help us reminisce about past experiences we refuse to abandon, or to sustain the pleasure with which music in the past surprised us. If we cannot listen to our favorite song, that could trigger a crisis (albeit likely minor) in meaning. The popular music industry exists to profitably preclude that possibility, whether the music is rap, classical, or something in between.

We need to move beyond taken-for-granted assumptions of what situations are and define them conceptually. *To call something a situation is to take an observational snapshot of an experience, activity, or event to review afterwards and to suggest conceptual generalization*. Situations exist because we as sociologists choose to define our observations that way. Our respondents may or may not agree with that definition of the situation, but the existentialist paradigm seeks accordance between the two to achieve validity in our analysis. The concept *situation*, however, is a valuable tool for unpacking—deconstructing?—sociologically important experiences and events in our respondents' everyday lives. The relationship between the individual and the organization, for example, existentially involves efforts by the individual to manage that relationship to favor their experience and security of self (Kotarba 2019; Melnikov and Kotarba, 2019). This existential concept of *situation* focuses our attention on the relationship between everyday life events and the self in all its cognitive, evaluative, and affective forms.

From Music in the Life Course to Music in the Course of Life

The main purpose of this book is to explore the reflexive relationship between music and the experience of self. This relationship exists and extends throughout life. The life course idiom has been a valuable tool for psychologists, health researchers, sociologists, and other scholars to focus on time and change in the human condition. The areas for which the life course idiom has been most beneficial are areas where the time order of experiences is at least somewhat observably influential if not causal: health, illness, careers, and educational achievement among others. I myself have used the life course idiom in my own research on the experience of music, among adolescents and the middle-aged in particular. Many social scientists accomplished similar work, but these studies have incurred the same limitations as life course research in general. They rarely extend their focus to the entire life course, choosing instead to focus either on one stage, segment, period, or some other category of life. Many scholars have tried to fix the life course idiom by, for example, injecting conditions by which an individual might reverse direction and return to an earlier stage, segment, or period in their life to repeat or experience something for the first time. These modifications tend to be fairly weak.

I am proposing a repositioning of the symbolic interactionist-inspired approach to the study of music. The life course model has proven to be a powerful tool in organizing research and analysis of strongly age, physical, and policy-related variables, such as physical/psychological development, age, health, functionality, cognitive capacity, and financial considerations (cf. Chee 2015). A classic symbolic interactionist approach would not anchor the analysis of cultural activities to an a priori, structured life course logic. Furthermore, an interactionist approach to cultural phenomena would preferably seek an understanding of those phenomena through the experiences, perspectives, and expectations of the respondents themselves.

Therefore, the life course model can be fruitfully used as a *sensitizing concept* for the study of music experiences related to the self in everyday life. Herbert Blumer (1969), one of the early masters of symbolic interaction, designed this idea as a strategy for shaping qualitative research methods to be exploratory, open-ended, open-minded, and creative. A sensitizing concept helps one begin an inquiry by pointing the researcher in the direction of a plausible and accessible group or activity. The initial study creates suggestive findings that can lead to more formal and focused research questions, can help locate other situations where the phenomenon in question can be located and explored, and helps the researcher develop more formal substantive concepts to be used eventually as building blocks for theory. For example, we will see how religious music can be readily and expectedly found in houses of worship, but can also be discovered in secular settings such as assisted living residences and other locations where people seek meaning and comfort their music can provide.

Thus, the music experiences analyzed in this book are best conceptualized as music in the *course of life*. The three basic concepts of the music-self I explore are *the self being* there (with music); *the self becoming (*with music); and *the self already been*

there (with music). I will present my data in terms of *situations* that I will operationalize ethnographically and qualitatively as *scenarios* which supersede the theoretical summation of the categorization of experiences in a higher order life course model referring to more structurally specific stages or phases of life. I will interject music experiences that cross generational, ethnic, gender, age, political, and lifestyle lines. The traditional segments of the life course model are still useful analytically for organizing the movement of age in life but are only partial determinants of the experience of self through music. The life course is primarily a sensitizing tool for organizing my writing about the music experience, much more than a skeleton framework that actually creates the music experience.

In the Remainder of This Book….

…I flesh out my model of music across the course of life with examples from my research and from my personal life. My examples and illustrations are only a very, very small sample of the pervasiveness of music in everyday life, but I believe they support my model. In drawing upon forty-plus years of social scientific research on music experiences in North America, Western and Central Europe, and East Asia, I will link my research with the growing literature on music experience when relevant. Moreover, I will insist on displaying, explaining, exemplifying, and even celebrating the power of music as an essential source of meaning for everyone's everyday life.

I have peppered this book with a number of pictures framing the place, space, and time of music experiences. I have taken most of the pictures myself over time. I hope that these visual tools serve much like the frosting on a cake, adding a bit of aesthetics and celebratory tone to situations that portray music as inherently happy.

A Word on My Methodology

All sociologists have methods for conducting their research. A method is simply the logic and strategy used to learn about the social phenomenon in question. One might well question how I could adhere to one, unified method over forty years of studying popular music in society. The fact is, I did follow one logic all those years. My logic was that of what we call everyday life sociology (Adler, et al. 1987). This genre holds that the most important contribution one could make to sociology was an understanding of how real people seek and use social meanings, obtained through cultural processes, to make sense of situations they incur in order to manage, control, deal with, and enjoy life. I explored these features of music in everyday life through a variety of qualitative methods, including conversational interviews, ethnographic observation, participant observation, and media analysis. Whenever relevant, I enjoy conducting research in a team format (Kotarba, et al. 2009). I have adhered to the rules and values of the protection of human subjects as they have evolved over the years.

I did follow several strategies to learn about particular facets of music experience. These facets range from age, gender, and ethnicity to education, occupation, social class, health status, and religion. Some of my music studies were tied into other studies I was conducting, especially those involved with health issues and funded by agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (e.g., science and music) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (e.g., music and youth homelessness). In other studies, I have referred to these strategies as comprising *ethnographic tourism* (Kotarba 1980). A phenomenon like music is everywhere. One need not search for music as one would for a distant culture or hidden social group. The point is to treat the very familiar as something strange, different, and worthy of curiosity. One should assume that there is something important not readily apparent in a group that would likely be of interest to sociologists.

In another work early in my career, I referred to my style of qualitative or field research as the *good boy approach* (Kotarba 1983). When people allow or even invite the researcher to enter, observe, and even enjoy their world, there is an implicit and sometime explicit agreement to be a good guest. In my case, that has often meant helping out on various tasks in situations that may have little if anything to do directly with sociology. I helped calm and counsel distraught teenagers backstage with the medics at outdoor rock music concerts when the effects of too much beer and summer heat were the cost of "enjoying" the Scorpions, Queensryche, and Motorhead (Kotarba 1994a). I sold tickets, posted fliers, and helped clean up at the Susanna's Kitchen Americana concerts at the Methodist Church in Wimberley, Texas (Kotarba 2022a). I sniffled and wiped my tears along with a group of elderly residents in their social room when we shared Andrea Bocelli's Easter concert in Milan, Italy, during the pandemic. We all wished our mothers were there to see and hear him sing the Ave Maria (Kotarba 2022b).

The famous Polish social philosopher Zygmunt Bauman once referred to his analytical strategy for understanding our *liquid society* as *making the familiar unfamiliar* (2000). I agree with this wise advice, with the proviso that it does not and cannot mean we should reduce the magnificent to the plain in everyday life. That would remove both the scholarly and personal good reasons for studying something as special as music.

1

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Music-Self as *Being*

George Herbert Mead (1934) set the tone for what would be later known as the symbolic interactionist theory of the self. Mead, who might be best classified as a social psychologist, was arguing against what he saw as the burgeoning discipline of psychology's overemphasis on innate characteristics such as personality. One of the pioneering contributors to sociological perspectives on the self was Charles H. Cooley (1864–1929). He asserted that people's self-understanding is constructed, in part, by their perception of how others view them—a process he termed "the looking glass self" (Cooley 1902). Scholars like him studied the self, a person's distinct identity that is developed through social interaction. In order to engage in this process of "self," an individual must be able to view him or herself through the eyes of others. That's not an ability that we are born with (Mead 1934). Through socialization we learn to put ourselves in someone else's shoes and look at the world through their perspective. This assists us in becoming self-aware, as we look at ourselves from the perspective of the "other."

How do we go from being newborns to being humans with "selfs?" Mead believed that there is a specific path of development that all people go through. During the preparatory stage, children are only capable of imitation: they have no ability to imagine how others see things. They copy the actions of people with whom they regularly interact, such as their mothers and fathers. This is followed by the play stage, during which children begin to take on the role that one other person might have. Thus, children might try on a parent's point of view by acting out "grownup" behavior, like playing "dress up" and acting out the "mom" role or talking on a toy telephone the way they see their father do.

During the game stage, children learn to consider several roles at the same time and how those roles interact with each other. They learn to understand interactions involving different people with a variety of purposes. For example, a child at this

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-2

stage is likely to be aware of the different responsibilities of people in a restaurant who together make for a smooth dining experience (someone seats you, another takes your order, someone else cooks the food, while yet another clears away dirty dishes).

Finally, children develop, understand, and learn the idea of the generalized other, the common behavioral expectations of general society. By this stage of development, an individual can imagine how he or she is viewed by one or many others—and thus, from a sociological perspective, to have a "self" (Mead 1934. Children's experience of self is very dependent on the adults raising, controlling, and nurturing them. As a feature of the generalized other, music serves as a formidable set of building blocks for the very early self. In traditional society, children were exposed to the performance of music directly, for example in terms of nursery rhymes performed by mom or sing-alongs performed in kindergarten and conducted by the teacher.

Baby boomers marked the first generation of Americans who were raised with, experienced—and who were inundated with—music broadcast on television (Kotarba 2013a). When I was growing up in the 1950s in Chicago, my working-to-middle class family provided programming several times a day on our black-and-white TV. On weekends, we had Saturday morning cartoon programs like Looney Toons and Popeye. At lunchtime during the week, when we walked home from school for chicken noodle soup and peanut butter-and-jelly sandwiches, we were accompanied by our good friend Bozo the Clown and a simple live, circus organ soundtrack. After school, we rushed home to see Garfield Goose, then the daily TV musical, Mickey Mouse Club, with Bobby and Annette, and finally American Bandstand when we reached the desirable status of "teenager."

As indicated above, self-development in children generally occurs in a process that can analytically be ordered in three stages. There are two principles of music and the self to be highlighted. First, young children are restricted to the music presented to them by others, parents in particular. They cannot independently seek out music, since they do not have access to radio, Internet, or retail music sellers, nor the inclination to do such. Music for them serves as building blocks for a self, accepted without judgment and leading to the imitation of activities around them. Put differently, childhood marks that initial experience of self existentially known as ***being*** (Douglas 1977). The self is overwhelmingly embodied and affective…fun, in plain English. Music is first and foremost fun, as we will also see in the essential music experiences of teenagers.

Children's Music and the Media

The second principle is the way the pervasive mass media increasingly expose young children to various styles and modes of popular music. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle rock concert tour, which has recently returned for an encore following great popularity in the 1990s, digital performers like the Gorillaz, and interactive media such as Nintendo's Guitar Hero all focus on pre-adolescent audiences.

Beyond simple marketing, rock 'n' roll informs our general cultural views of children. Honey, I Blew Up the Kid was a popular film comedy in 1992. The story line had a bumbling, (baby boomer) scientist father mistakenly turning his infant into a colossus. As the child innocently marched down a boulevard in Las Vegas, he grabbed the large, neon-lit guitar from the Hard Rock Café signpost and proceeded to pretend to play a rock 'n' roll song. (A generic, rock-a-billy song was actually playing in the film's background.) The guitar served as a toy for the baby. The imagery suggested the baby is an adolescent, an absurdity that helped establish the overall absurdity and humor of the story.

Young children can grasp music even when it is not intentionally produced for or marketed to them. When Los Lobos covered the 1950s hit "La Bamba" in the 1990s, it became a favorite among elementary school-age children. Like many rock 'n' roll songs, young kids find its simple lyrics silly and its beat fun to dance around to. As country music broadens its appeal by "crossing over" to rock and pop music audiences, it also creates an audience of children. Billy Ray Cyrus' rockabilly hit "Achy Breaky Heart" became a fun song for many children in the early 1990s. More recently, Train's "Hey Soul Sister" achieved the same status in 2011.

Rock 'n' roll music has now become a staple in the elementary school classroom. A very popular instructional system called "School House Rock!" enables the teacher to teach grammar, multiplications, history, and science to a rock 'n' roll soundtrack. "Schoolhouse Rock!" is a series of fifty-two educational short films featuring songs about regular curriculum topics. The shorts were broadcast on the ABC television network between 1973 and 1986. They were then broadcast infrequently during the 1990s and 2000s, with additional shows created between 1993 and 1996. An additional short, "I'm Gonna Send Your Vote to College," was created for the thirtieth anniversary video release in 2003. Patricia is a third-grade public school teacher who uses "Schoolhouse Rock!" videos frequently. The pervasiveness of rock 'n' roll in children's culture is exemplified by Patricia's—a middle-age elementary school teacher—statement that it does not make great sense to try to classify "Schoolhouse Rock!" as rock, jazz, or pop: "My kids just know it as music. The songs all sound very familiar, energetic, fun."

Today, music is pervasive in the everyday lives of young children in Western societies. On regular broadcast television, there are fewer programs available to young children. According to Animation Mentor (2021), the beginning of the end of the most popular form of children's programming, Saturday morning cartoons, came in 1990 when Congress, in response to the steady pressure on the part of parents and children's interest groups concerned with the issue of advertising to children, enacted the Children's Television Act (CTA). It was passed to increase educational and informative (E/I) programming for children and to limit the amount of advertising during children's shows. In addition, the later U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements that broadcast networks air at least three hours of E/I programming a week guaranteed the end of Saturday morning cartoons since the vast majority of people dismissed them as non-educational (Calvert and Cotler 2003).

The vast majority of television programming for young children now takes place on cable TV or the Internet. Popular examples include Peppa Pig (Netflix), Sesame Street (HBO), Mickey Mouse Funhouse (Disney), and Paw Patrol (Hulu). All children's programming has music soundtracks and some, like Sesame Street, will showcase musical performances. Young children are not able to critically evaluate and assess the music presented to them. Music for them serves as building blocks for the self that will emerge over time as their relationships become more complex, their life issues become manageable, their cognitive skills become more developed, and as Mead (1934) put it, they are able to see, think of, talk with, and shape themselves as objects.

My three grandchildren are great examples of the presence of music in the everyday lives of young children. Brandon, whom we already visited in the Introduction, is five years old and has "graduated" from Sesame Street to more age-appropriate programs like superheroes and PBS animal/nature programs. Accordingly, music for children his age evolves from sing-along and dance-along songs to background soundtracks for more story/narrative-oriented programming. His sister, Isla, is two years old and totally infatuated with two of the more popular programs for children her age: Baby Shark and Peppa Pig (Figure 1.1). For her, dancing along with the music is much more relevant—and doable—than trying to sing



FIGURE 1.1 Isla dancing to Elmo with my daughter, Jessie



FIGURE 1.2 Baby Melody and mom, Tia

along. Our youngest grandchild, Melody, is several months old and enjoying music at an early age from mom's lullabies or from programmed music provided by her father's Siri and iPhone (Figure 1.2).

Childhood music is as pervasive in growing up as it has ever been. Two aspects of this phenomenon have evolved in recent years. First, the technology of music has developed as digital treatments in general become quite sophisticated. Subsequently, children have access to much more music than we did a generation ago, especially as access to cell phones becomes more common among kids of all social class backgrounds. Second, parental interest in music education has blossomed. Elementary school bands are common, despite funding limitations in many communities. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), over 94% of all elementary schools in the U.S. offer music instruction. Needless to say, wealthier school districts generally provide more sophisticated instruction (e.g., symphonic band as opposed to general classroom music instruction). To reiterate, music experience in early childhood provides building blocks to be used later in assembling a sense of self.

Children's Culture and the Emerging Music-Self

In my book *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (2013a), I discuss the relationship of popular music to parents—or the *parental self* as I conceptualized it. When baby

boomers were becoming parents in the 1970s and 1980s, issues of morality, risk, and danger were prevalent, at least in the media. The foundation for this phenomenon really emerged in the 1950s when baby boomers were growing up and establishing a distinctive stage in the life cycle we know now as adolescence. Rock 'n' roll music was viewed by many as a stage for youth rebellion. Some teenagers saw rock 'n' roll as a liberating force to use in rebellion against repressive parents raised in the Depression and schooled in conservative religion. Some parents saw rock 'n' roll as the culprit in shaping the rebellion in terms of unbridled sexuality, cross-ethnic intimacy, and a wide range of delinquent activities fostered by the imagery of Elvis Presley. The 1984 film Footloose portrays the plausible scenario in which fundamentally conservative, small-town adults view rock 'n' roll as an evil influence on their teenagers. Rock 'n' roll is portrayed in the film as the gauntlet that forces teenagers to choose between good and evil by choosing to obey their parents or to go dancing. Pictures of record burnings broadcast on TV or published in newspapers gave the viewer or reader the impression that they were witnessing inter-generational warfare.

Well, the truth was obviously somewhere in between for most teenagers and their parents. As I noted in my essay on the positive functions of rock 'n' roll for children and their parents (Kotarba 1994c), parents were put in a position where they were expected to both control their children's music experiences and support their children's music experiences, being good, middle-class parents…. Someone had to drive their kids to the sock hop at the church assembly hall or give their kids an allowance to buy Elvis Presley records! For every Elvis Presley fan in the 1950s and 1960s whose parents threatened disowning, there was an American Bandstand fan whose mom was likely to sit next to her in front of the TV and watch Fabian and Frankie Avalon make all the girls sigh (Stuessy and Lipscomb 2019).

As the baby boomers grew up and became parents themselves, the same dual-purpose parenting with music appeared again. Parental support for music training in the schools, for providing private music lessons, and for purchasing musical instruments and equipment has never been higher (Kotarba 2022). But new boogeymen raised their heads in the 1980s and 1990s in terms of heavy metal music and rap. Middle-class activist organizations, such as the Parents Music Resource Center led by Tipper Gore, opposed rock 'n' roll for its alleged deleterious effects on the health of young people. In the 1990s, we find several court cases in which the prosecution and the defense attempted to legally link rock 'n' roll with suicide and criminal behavior, respectively (Hill 1992).

As baby boomers joined the ranks of grandparenting in the new millennium, an unusual occurrence has happened: parents' strong and media-visible objection to current popular music culture has largely diminished. Over the past decade or so, there have been several attempts to censor popular music performances, but these have largely been political-level efforts not directed specifically to concern for children. For example, in Nassau County, New Jersey, officials attempted to cancel a performance by former Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters at the Nassau

Coliseum in 2017 for his support of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement against the State of Israel.

There appear to be several reasons for this shift in moralistic climate in our culture. The right-to-speak, anti-censorship movement has gained considerable strength in recent years. This movement has focused on all the arts, from museums and theater to various music media, championed by organizations such as "Hyperallergic" in New York (Vartanian 2022). Activist themes have been focused on support for women, transgendered individuals, indigenous people, and minorities, without age specificity.

In a more general sociological, if you will, sense, Western music culture has evolved greatly over the past two decades in particular. Rap music is not a singular style directed to a specific demographic audience, like early heavy metal for example. Rap is a musical feature of the broader cultural movement of *hip hop* (Travis and Bowman 2018). Hip hop is African-American in origin with significant features borrowed from Latinx and Caribbean cultures. Hip hop is without question the major, number one pop cultural style in the U.S., infiltrating and defining theater (e.g., Hamilton); culinary arts (e.g., Snoop Dogg and Martha Stewart's cable cooking show); presidential presentation styles (e.g., President Barack Obama dropping the mic at the White House Correspondents' Dinner in 2016); dance (e.g., all the women artists from Katy Perry to Dua Lipa); television commercials (e.g., the rap group Tag Team in a Geico car insurance commercial: "Whoomp There It Is"); and so forth. My point is that rap and hip hop are no longer strange, invasive, or dangerous since they are part of our everyday lives.

Yet another factor in the disappearance of popular music and children criticism is the incredibly large amount of music available for children online. As indicated above, there is Sesame Street, Peppa Pig, and dozens of other music programs for children. A major change has occurred in what we used to call "cartoons." The cartoons I grew up with—for example, Popeye, Tom and Jerry, and Bugs Bunny—were very violent albeit often silly violence. Today, the most violent animations are marketed specifically to adults (e.g., South Park), whereas there are numerous childish animations on the Internet and cable for parents to channel directly to their children.

Cross-Generation: Peppa Pig in Trouble?

A key theme of this book is how common it is for music, music culture, and music experience to cross generational lines. The same music can impact people of various ages, but of course in different ways. Different people have different music-self needs. The example in question involves Kanye West, a very talented and popular billionaire rapper, entrepreneur, author, celebrity, and former husband of Kim Kardashian, also a celebrity in her own right. On February 20, 2022, Kanye posted on Twitter his dissatisfaction that Pitchfork Magazine rated Peppa Pig's first album, "Peppa's Adventures: The Album," a 6.5 and rated Kanye's latest album, "Donda," a 5.0. Peppa Pig is, of course, the wildly popular children's cartoon character. Peppa Pig thus

joins Kanye's endless list of "enemies" with whom he has a beef (i.e., problem). My granddaughter, Isla, has no idea what the beef is all about; she continues to dance around the family room when Peppa is on. No one else seems to know either.

Conclusion

The music we have discussed feeds two music-self experiences simultaneously. They provide building blocks of feeling and ideas for the very young through imitation and modeling. They also provide resources for adults assembling and refining their *parental self*. Does what kind of parent I am depend on how I deal with music and my children? Will I be strict and authoritarian or liberal and lenient? This is another example of how the same experience of music can affect individuals differently across generations and genders. We share and make sense of our music in everyday life with others like us and others not like us. The same music affects us one way today and will likely affect us quite differently tomorrow.

2

LATER CHILDHOOD/EARLY ADOLESCENCE

Experimenting with the Music-Self

Billie Eilish is a very popular singer and songwriter. Along with her songwriter and producer brother, Finneas, she has won numerous Grammy and American Music Awards and has sold millions of records. Billie performed at the Austin City Limits festival and Live program on PBS in 2019 (Figure 2.1). Her early work focused largely on early adolescent girl angst and uncertainty (e.g., "Bad Guy"). I attended Billie's 2019 ACL concert in Austin, which was also attended by a sea of young fans, mostly eleven-to-fifteen years of age it seemed. My most memorable experience of Billie came during her ACL Live broadcast that captured some very clear and telling video of her fans pressed right up to the stage. There, eleven-to-fifteen-year-old-girls were mesmerized by Billie as they alternately cried, laughed, and applauded their idol. At various points, the girls would seem to stare at Billie from head to toe as she came dressed in a green and yellow pants suit, with green and yellow hair, and green and yellow nails. The youngest girls seemed to watch Billie, then look at themselves, at least to make sure their nails were appropriately green and yellow. My interpretation, based upon some debriefing conversations with a control group consisting of students in my popular music and society class, is that the fans not only like Billie, but as is commonly the case with preadolescent girls, would like to be like her. As several of my students suggested, the young girls could probably get away with painting their nails green and yellow but coloring their hair similarly might be a step beyond mom's approval at the time.

"Tweens," as they are often called, are still very early in the process of assembling a viable self (Corsaro 2017). They collect ideas and experiences of who they can be, via music and other sources, but are generally not as critically selective as older teenagers are inclined to be. As stated in the Introduction, the music and self-experiences in any period of life are only common to but not limited to that period.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-3



FIGURE 2.1 Billie Eilish and her fans

Commonsense thinking in Western culture, as reflected in mainstream life course theory, posits adolescence as a separate stage of life. Also referred to as "youth," adolescence is posited as that stage of life that occurs between childhood and adulthood (Hunt 2017: 156). The literature on adolescence tends towards timely issues such as the extension of the adolescent's dependence on parents and family for financial support and residency, and therefore communication and culture (obviously to varying degrees) are well documented in the life cycle literature. In terms of the role culture plays in the adolescent experience, music is preeminent. Young people between the ages of ten and twenty-four accounted for only 16% of recorded music sales, but 26% of streaming music subscriptions, and almost 70% of live music concert sales in 2019 (Nielson Music 360 2020). Of course, the recent COVID-19 pandemic restricted live and collective music experiences in 2020 and 2021.

The theoretical relationship between self and music complicates our understanding of adolescence and music. In this chapter, I will argue that the music experience in early adolescence is very much the same as the music experience in late childhood. Music continues to serve as building blocks for the self. There remains a strong dependency on provided music up until the age of independence known as adulthood. The overwhelming popularity of digital music services (e.g., Spotify, Tidal, and Apple Music) as sources of music content strongly delimits the universe of available music. The music media (e.g., Rolling Stone Magazine and televised music awards programs) remain very significant determinants of popularity and the music star system. And music helps extend the links between children and their parents through adolescence, tempering the critics' argument over the years that popular music serves as a source of friction between children and their parents. Music in late childhood remains very physical, as witnessed by marching bands in school, mosh pits at rock concerts, and endless sometime solo dancing at rave parties.

The core theme in the late childhood self-experience remains ***being***. This is still childhood because the individual still uses music meanings to assemble a self

without having to critically evaluate and differentiate available music. The self is assembled as situations in life become increasingly complex and the role of self becomes more important to everyday life. These kids are attracted to ideas for what it means to be a family member (e.g., Billie Eilish); to experience alternative sexual feelings (e.g., Sam Smith); to sort out contrasting moral messages presented to them by parents and churches (e.g., Christian vs satanic heavy metal); what it means to be stylish (e.g., Olivia Rodrigo); and to make sense of what it means to be a man (e.g., Third Ward rap and Florida Georgia Line country). Increasingly, the importance of accepting one's body image and that of others is a common narrative (e.g., Lizzo and Megan Thee Stallion). Music-sharing situations include parties, raves, family music, concerts, school, best friends, Spotify, and peer groups.

The main link between music and self in childhood and early adolescence is that music serves as a medium for *play* in both. In general, music is *fun* for both. As we have seen among children, play for adolescents is holistic (embodied, affective, and cognitive), interactive, collective, and, perhaps most important, conducted under the surveillance if not control of adults.

Music as Play for Teenagers

As with younger children, physicality is a very dramatic feature of teenagers' music experience. Dance can break out spontaneously as well as planned. In terms of self-experience, high school status can raise the issue of whether a teenager self-defines as a dancer or not a dancer. The senior prom in America, for example, presents this dilemma. Many teenagers are unsure of their ability let alone their desire to dance at the prom. Traditionally, this has especially been an issue for boys. Over time, teenagers have invoked their creativity by dissolving their self into a collective, partner-less identity in the group by engaging in group dance routines. In Texas, line dance is very popular among teenagers because it allows for group dance that does not single out a tentative teenager as partner as individual dancing might. The following are several music-as-play experiences that can be conceptualized as play but can also cross generational boundaries. Parents—among other adults who themselves may be attempting to refine, enhance, or defend their sense of self—are commonly lurking in the forefront or background of these experiences.

Cross-Generational Self Experiences: Van Halen

One of the remarkable aspects of the power of heavy metal and hard rock 'n' roll is the way they have remained resilient in popularity across generations (Kotarba 2013a). To experience them today relates directly to different experiences of self. Van Halen is the example for us now, although the recent death of Eddie Van Halen, who was one of the premier lead guitar players in any musical genre, has likely deterred any plans for a reunion tour.

Adolescent fans have approached bands like Van Halen as the opportunity for continuing the physical and affective pleasures of childhood, without thinking about it in these words. I attended a Van Halen concert in 1984 when "Jump" from the hit album "1984" was a big hit. Although numerous critics of rock 'n' roll contended that "Jump" was an invitation to youthful suicide, there did not seem to be anything in the lyrics to support that accusation. The kids in the audience, who appeared to be of the standard fifteen-to-eighteen-year-old fan base, instead used the occasion to celebrate life. When Eddie began "Jump" with the now famous keyboard riff, the fans let out a collective scream. At the chorus, when lead singer David Lee Roth shouted "Jump," 18,000 teenagers did just that: they all jumped together like a bunch of little kids in the playground during recess—they actually shook the sturdy Summit venue (Kotarba 2018: 52)! Today, rappers like Drake and pop singers like Olivia Rodrigo and Dua Lipa receive the same level of enthusiasm.

Pan to 2013 and one of Van Halen's reunion tours. I was in the middle of researching middle-aged music fans for my *Baby Boomer* book (Kotarba 2013a), when I happened across three gentlemen. These three VH fans were friends ever since their college days at the University of Texas. They all work at the Texas Medical Center in Houston in various professional positions: biomedical research, health law, and systems analysis. Getting together for an occasional rock music concert is one of the few ways they get to share memories of the past and current life events. VH is their favorite band from the 1980s. Being a Van Halen fan contributes to their music-self in several ways. They take pride in being loyal fans, but also loyal friends. They displayed a typical middle-class, middle-age male dilemma: they do not get a chance to get together much except for special occasions like a VH concert. They live in different parts of town, are all very busy with their careers and families, and all take some time to be involved with local civic concerns. To put on an old rock 'n' roll t-shirt—that may or may not still fit!—and share a beer is a real treat that transcends age and generation.

All-Ages Rock Music Clubs

The term "all ages" should signal a public situation in which childhood and adolescence meld, if not collide. The 1980s marked the beginning of the all-ages music scene. Club management would "card" (i.e., check drivers' licenses) to see who was eligible to drink alcoholic beverages. They would then be given a wrist band to certify that and to keep underage patrons from drinking. These clubs generally started up after the disco craze of the 1970s cooled down and a new, younger clientele interested in rock music was coming up. To be expected, some parents were concerned that their early teenage children were sneaking into these clubs and were given drinks illegally by older patrons. The local media gave considerable coverage to the parents who complained loudest. This scene struck me

as a valuable "laboratory" for observing current rock 'n' roll culture of the time, so I chose the most popular to seek permission from the management to conduct a study and to talk with staff and clientele (Kotarba and Wells 1987). I enlisted the assistance of one of our brightest undergraduate sociology majors who I felt would be valuable in approaching the youngest and thus most interesting clients for interviews.

On a typical weekend, the club was packed with patrons ranging in age from what appeared to be—and what management told me were—fourteen and up. The crowd appeared classically heavy metal: the room was a virtual sea of black t-shirts with incriminating verbiage such as "Metallica," "Iron Maiden," "Slayer," "Sepulveda," and "Anthrax" printed across the front. The differences in music and, I assumed, crowd composition across the weekend were significant. The music on Friday evening was mainstream heavy metal (e.g., Motley Crue); Saturday evening was devoted to satanic or death metal music (e.g., Slayer); and Sunday was dedicated to the Christian heavy metal genre (e.g., Stryper). When I first heard of this distinction, I assumed that each of the three evenings would attract a different audience. After a number of conversations with staff and fans, I learned that the audiences for all three evenings were essentially the same. Most fans came to the club on Friday evening as a warmup to the rest of the weekend. Serious fans perceived the match of death metal and Christian metal as the contest between good and evil or, as one seasoned headbanger put it, "We want to see who wins out, like in church, the good angel or the bad angel, St. Michael the Archangel or Satan." All this began to make sense when I learned that heavy metal is especially popular among working-class kids raised Catholic. No wonder a large number of those black t-shirts were worn and displayed by Latinx boys and girls; no wonder Houston and San Antonio have been known as the heart of the heavy metal empire.

The fourteen-, fifteen-, and sixteen-year-old boys were not really thinking critically about the music or the artists; that's to be left to older teenagers who get involved with sophisticated music experiences like taste and guitarmanship. They were not seriously thinking about themselves as a particular kind or style of fan. Everyone they knew, hung around with, went to school with, and went to church with liked metal. The heavy metal scene was experienced much like a war-like video game. Who won the battle was less important than enjoying the battle. The excitement was fueled by seeing how parents and other adults took sides against death metal bands. During the first break in a performance by Hellstar, the preeminent death metal band in Houston, the lead singer pulled out the latest copy of the weekly newspaper published by the Catholic Archdiocese of Houston. The cover story was the archbishop warning parents to keep their children away from Hellstar, an enemy of all that was good. The kids went bonkers, cheering for this band leader as he proudly held up his black and white badge of courage: what more publicity could a metalhead ask for? Competition for the self—or soul—of the heavy metal music fan continues.

Cross-Generational Self Experience: Christian Rock Music

Members of different generations, or age cohorts, can share music as a factor in their experiences of self. The case in point is Christian pop music, also known as Contemporary Christian music (CCM). CCM is composed, produced, performed, and marketed as a genre of popular music, incorporating elements from folk, gospel, pop, and rock music. Other music genres, such as soft rock, folk rock, alternative, and hip hop, have had a large influence on CCM (Stephens 2018). Since its inception as Jesus music in the 1960s, CCM has provided a platform for parent–child interaction. Some parents have seen CCM as a possible negative influence on their children, distracting them from true Christian beliefs and practices. Other parents, as we have seen in other music experiences, support their children's desire to partake in this genre. Here are two examples from my research on CCM.

I attended an Amy Grant concert several years ago in Houston, Texas, again at the Summit (Kotarba 1991). At the time, Amy Grant was one of the most popular CCM artists and has maintained her popularity over the years by branching out into "mainstream" popular music. She performed songs from her "Angels" album, accompanied by a large rock music ensemble sporting two lead guitars. The stadium was packed with thousands of young CCM fans. Interestingly, there were numerous adults sprinkled in the crowd, forming what were clearly family groups. A common activity among parents and their children was to hold a small bible in hand or to have a bible in their back pocket. Many bibles were waved when cheering on Amy Grant and her band. One young father brought his wife and ten-year-old daughter to the concert (which he learned about at his Lutheran church). When I asked him about the compatibility of CCM with Christianity, he noted:

> We love Amy Grant. She is married and touring with her husband, which is not the case with regular rock stars. Any way you can get the message of Christ to your kids is OK with us.

These parents were working through and reinforcing their sense of being good Christian parents. The hope is that their children will also grow up to be good, solid Christians. As an aside, Amy Grant soon got a divorce from her husband and remarried with Vince Gill, a popular country and CCM artist. They frequently perform together (Robertson 2015).

Rave Parties

The term "rave" refers to dance parties that are held at warehouses, clubs, vacant buildings, or other public or private venues. Music is typically performed by DJs playing some prerecorded version of electronic music. Rave was first seen in the United States in the 1990s as a follow-up to the aging disco movement. In economic

terms, the club music industry was ready to provide service to the next generation of dancers and partiers. The rave movement apparently began in Great Britain and spread to cities like New York, Detroit, and Chicago. Although the locations chosen to produce the raves can be dark, dirty, dreary, and otherwise vacant spaces, raves are often designed to appear like children's playgrounds or carnivals. Fun was the key feature sought. Bouncy castles, inflatable trampoline-like structures, are common, as are ring and bean bag toss games. Glow sticks, necklaces, and bracelets are sold and played with as toys. Many of the very creative invitation cards designed for rave parties look much like children's birthday party invitations (Kavenaugh and Anderson 2008).

The attraction of young teenagers to rave was a cause for concern for many parents. In 1994, I received a telephone call from the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA). A series of articles in the local press in Texas were describing parental concern for their young children attending rave parties, whether advertised as all-ages or not. A number of complaints to TCADA by concerned parents led to the decision to conduct research on rave parties to inform possible legislation. I was asked to conduct that research and find out exactly what was going on in those parties. I assembled a small team of graduate students from the University of Houston to help me conduct an ethnographic study of the rave scene in Houston. The grad students turned out to be quite valuable for the study since rave parties tended to start up very late at night—much beyond my bedtime!

We found that there was underage drinking and illicit drug use at most of the rave parties we visited. Nevertheless, it seemed like the bulk of this "deviant" behavior took place outside and before the rave. A very popular feature of the rave for underage girls was solo dancing behind the somewhat translucent curtain; all that could be seen to the front was a shadow. The young girls felt a bit safer not disclosing their identity on the dance floor. To be fair to all parties to the discussion, we made it very clear in our report to TCADA that the primary responsibility for controlling young people in the rave scene was parental, as long as the rave organizers abided by the very loose all-ages laws. If parents could not prevent their young children from sneaking out of the house late at night, any further enforcement would be futile (Kotarba 1994b and c).

I'd like to make one final note to our locating rave as a feature of adolescents-as-children. The rave movement has traditionally been politically oriented. Ravers see themselves as concerned about the environment, climate change, and so forth. At one particular rave party in Houston, attendees were told that they would be given a small potted sapling to be taken home and planted where trees are needed to replenish the air, provide shade for cooling the increasingly warm climate, reduce soil erosion, and so forth. As the evening, or shall I say morning, progressed, the parking area beside the venue became increasingly cluttered with the saplings. As ravers were leaving, some of the young men decided to throw the saplings at each other or against parked cars, apparently to see how big a mess they could create. Children's fun.

Teenager Affinity for Children

A special feature of the young teenager's self is seeing oneself as a good and caring big sister or brother. This proclivity illustrates a *cross-generational* feature of the music-self experience: early adolescent siblings taking care of younger siblings when music is a defining feature of the situation… not discipling them as a parent might feel obligated to do. The following is a narrative based upon personal experience with my oldest son, Chris, that I circulate among my undergraduate students. For them, it illustrates the management of deviance in popular music. In the present discussion, this story reflects the caring and concern described above.

"It's Just Like TV, Mom, That's All…."

I must confess… I am intrigued by GWAR. I have seen them four times in live performance: three times in Houston and once in Austin, Texas. My most interesting experience was at the Unicorn, in Houston. The pretext for my presence at GWAR is the fact that I conduct sociological research on various aspects of rock music, in this case specifically focusing on adolescents and heavy metal rock. The genesis of my intellectual interest in this rock genre can be traced at least as far back as 1986, when I conducted a study of adolescent rock music styles (e.g., punkers, head-bangers, preppies, and hippies) at the former all-ages music club Cardi's, on Westheimer. Thus, I can confidently estimate that I have floated on and off in a sea of black t-shirts numbering (conservatively) half a million! This is a mind-boggling thought for a senior rock 'n' roller with increasingly and depressingly poor hearing.

Nevertheless, I especially like GWAR. In a way—perhaps in somewhat of a sick way—they represent an essence of the rock music experience: rock artists pandering to their youthful audience, drawing clear cultural boundaries between the kids performing back flips before them and the adult world of parents, police officers, teachers, and other agents of social control. Gwar draws an especially clear, if disturbing, frontier between adolescent boys—the visible majority of fans—and women…women to be abused and women to abuse you.

GWAR is great adolescent camp. They remind me so much of Fright Night back in the day at AstroWorld in Houston or Sea World in San Antonio during the Halloween season, the fun of being scared by an extraterrestrial-cum-gothic version of Freddy Krueger. A number of fans have described GWAR to me as a 2021 version of KISS, but I prefer to compare them with the prehistoric/futuristic creatures of Marvel comic book villains such as Thanos. Gore is central to GWAR's shtick. I just love the way the kids leave the stage-diving pit after a song/skit, strutting around like a bunch of West Texas high school football players at halftime on a hot Friday evening, wearing their version of the red badge of courage. The kings of the pit are those who have accumulated the greatest amount of (theatrical) "blood" on their t-shirts…did you ever wonder why the kids at a GWAR concert prefer white t-shirts to the traditional black concert t-shirts worn at other heavy

metal/speed metal shows? Although Freddy Krueger seems quite content torturing his teenage victims a bit before snuffing them out, GWAR would rather eat their victims, caring less whether these victims are alive or dead at dinner time.

The kids love GWAR as much as I do. They refer to GWAR as an example of "hard core" music, as opposed to "cheese rock" stuff, you know, the kinds of soft rock or pop girls prefer. The music, however, is mainstream metal drone. The lyrics, except for an occasional "F" word, are predictably beyond audial comprehension, but the message is clear—it's youthful rebellion ★(fun) gone out of control.

When I first saw GWAR, I got a chance to go backstage and talk to the ensemble. It was one of those great experiences when conducting ethnographic research on popular music. I got to see all the high-pressure pumps used to jet colored water through some unsuspecting gnome's brain when one of the Galactic Warriors slices his head with a six-foot hatchet. I got to see all the elaborate costuming and make-up. And I got to see the members of the cast as "artists." No, they reassured me, they were not proposing or condoning abuse of women when the Galactic Warriors hack some transvestic bimbo's breasts off with an eight-foot hatchet. The bimbo in question represented groupies and other sleaze in the world of rock who ask for, no, virtually demand, abuse by their foolish, un-liberated behavior. Wow. Yes, they reassure me, the skit in which one Galactic Warrior sticks another in the bottom with a huge hypodermic needle is not an endorsement of recreational drugs, but a parody of drugs and their sad users.

Well, I decided to take my twelve-year-old son to my second GWAR experience at the Unicorn. Like many middle-aged, middle-class dads today, I want him to grow up just the way I did, or at least the way I want to remember growing up. Don't get me wrong, I gave it some serious thought. I remembered from the Numbers concert that there were some young kids present, but of course my kid is mature, gifted, anxious for new learning experiences, and all those other good things all college professors want to believe about their kids. I cooled out my wife by insisting that it was all good fun, a lot like KISS, probably no worse than the upcoming Ninja Turtles rock 'n' roll concert to which I was taking my whole family (including nine-year-old daughter and five-year-old son), and I would make sure Chris wore his foam rubber earplugs. Why not, I wear mine! The fact that the show was to start at 6:00 p.m. on a Sunday evening provided me the argument that I wouldn't even have to keep Chris out too late before a school day. I won.

What I predicted to be one of those heart-warming, father–son bonding experiences turned out to be just that, but an awful lot more from a sociological perspective. Being at the show with a twelve-year-old kid provided me with a lot of insight into the place GWAR holds in the world of rock, and the place rock still holds today in society. The bottom line: heavy metal music can mess with virtually any of society's sacred cows, but as is the case with all forms of culture, society maintains boundaries or limits beyond which those cultural forms that threaten the most essential and most sacred possessions are banished. GWAR, like faceless old men lurching around playgrounds, fuck with our kids. The political and parental

agents of social control don't like it and, as I learned that Sunday evening, working-class, heavily ethnic, common, everyday, head-banging teenagers don't like it either.

Let me start from the beginning. When we arrived at the parking lot that evening, I was admittedly a bit freaked out. There were dozens of kids hanging around the lot—some skin-heads with no hair, some punks with red and green hair. It was a veritable laboratory for a sociologist studying youth culture, but an ominous unknown for a parent with his first-born male in tow. Nevertheless, everybody was cool. All kinds of kids came up to us to ask Chris if he knew a lot about GWAR, and quit a few kids flipped us a "thumbs up" from a distance.

Once inside and waiting for the warm-up act (Agony Column: your basic neo-satanic, sweat-metal band) to begin, I approached two young boys who appeared to be about twelve or thirteen years old, to talk rock 'n' roll. They had their white, just-purchased GWAR t-shirts on, and they fit my desire to interview the youngest kids present. As I led them to a corner of the large hall to get as far away as possible from the two Marshall speaker towers, two sixteen- or seventeen-year-old kids, a Hispanic-looking boy in a black King Diamond t-shirt and a very pretty Anglo-looking girl, ran up to me, and the girl asked anxiously, "Where are you taking my brother?" After I accounted for my legitimacy and human subjects clearance, we all had a nice talk about Satanism in rock, rock venues in Houston, etc. The older sister's demeanor, however, was most notable here, showing concern for her little brother's welfare as a little boy, while playing "chaperone" for him paradoxically at a GWAR concert. She, in other words, set boundaries on what is OK and what is not OK for her little brother.

I took Chris backstage before the GWAR set, and he had a ball, scouting out all the technology, false faces, and stuff. He even got his picture taken with the band. During their performance, I put Chris up on a chair towards the side of the stage so he could see over the stage divers and slam dancers, at least until a security officer told me to get him down. I agreed with the officer's reasoning that we all didn't need any potential projectiles near the stage.

Chris loved just about everything from that moment on…the action, the non-stop combat, etc. I was quite relieved when Chris viewed the five-foot penis as hilarious, and we left it at that. But a strange thing occurred just before we left, which was unfortunately just before the twenty-foot dinosaur came onstage, we later learned. GWAR did a skit on missing children, a prominent social problem back then. Three large posters representing the pictures of missing kids placed on milk cartons were marched onstage. At first, I thought that GWAR was simply doing parody on the media-driven and problematic missing children's phenomenon, and the likelihood that most missing children are really in the possession of (another) parent passed my mind. Yet the audience was a bit more subdued during this skit, as everyone's attention seemed to be glued to the stage to see what would happen next. Sure enough, Oderus Urungus, the group's leader, screamed out to the audience something like: "Parents, do you know where your children are? Well, let me tell you, they are in Antarctica where GWAR is performing sodomy on them." Oh,

oh. There was no visible response from an audience still watching to see what was going to happen next. Sure enough, stage hands, costumed as servants to GWAR, brought a small casket-like container onstage from which GWAR removed what appeared to be the decaying body of a young child. It was clearly not designed to appear like a doll, but like a dead kid, about two to three feet long. The crowd was still and quiet as GWAR proceeded to abuse the child, cracking open its head to remove its brains for consumption, stuff like that.

I didn't like the skit, but then again, I am a parent. As Chris and I left a bit later, his first question to me out in the parking lot was: "What were they doing to that kid?" It was a serious question. GWAR was doing something bad or wrong that hit close to home to a kid not all that much more than three feet long himself. But then again, he's just a kid who probably shouldn't have been there in the first place…or so mom would later say.

I got a chance to talk to several fans out in the parking lot before we left, and I was most interested in asking them about the missing child skit. From skinheads to punks to ordinary white t-shirted kids, I got the following kinds of responses: "It was gross…not that cool…GWAR gets carried away with their shit." I did not get a lot of articulate assessments, but it was clear that the skit didn't go over well with a crowd of teenage rock 'n' rollers many (adults) might assume are pretty emotionally ruthless themselves. Thankfully, the adults are wrong.

I was a bit uncomfortable driving home. It was pretty easy talking about and explaining to Chris what all the skits were about—except for the missing child skit. How could I explain that away, how could I account for that truly scary experience …remembering that kids today see much of GWAR's kind of shtick on cable TV anyway? Why was I, a liberated dad who doesn't believe in censoring much from his kids, lost for words?

The next day, I called one of the more articulate and interesting teenagers I met the previous night, and I asked him for his reaction to the skit. He told me that, at first, he thought "it might have been funny," but when he got home, he later thought that "it sucked…you don't fuck with little kids like that." All this from a kid who is no wimp, a kid who has seen his share of King Diamond and Venom concerts.

I still love GWAR. I just wish I had the chance to talk to them after the concert about the skit. My guess is that they put the skit together for its shock effect, nothing more. The sociological irony in all this, of course, is that the wise city fathers in Charlotte, North Carolina, arrested GWAR's lead singer just the previous week on an obscenity charge, for prancing around stage with a five-foot, papier maché penis hanging out. Obviously, the city fathers believed they were protecting the moral boundaries of Charlotte by their actions. Too bad city fathers don't realize that the scruffy kids out in the audience are the true agents of social control. Even if only through the relative silence during the skit and their negative evaluations afterwards, the teenagers themselves acknowledged and protected one of the core values in American society: you don't fuck with little kids.

Cross-Generational Music Experience: GWAR

Gwar returned to Austin in 2018 to perform at the Empire Garage. This fairly sizable music venue was packed with a considerably older audience than my son and I witnessed twenty years ago. There also appeared to be more boy–girl "dates" this time around. A conversation with a manager indicated that the staff were expecting an older crowd who would see GWAR as nostalgia, while spending considerably more money at the bar drinking. My research interest that early evening was talking with older fans. A common theme among the thirty-somethings and forty-somethings was to relate stories about their more youthful engagements with GWAR: physically demanding mosh pits; sweated-up white t-shirts coated with the heroic, blood-like fluid mentioned above; and attending concerts only with other young men—girls did not generally appreciate the virtues of GWAR back in the day. What surprised me were the much older men in the crowd. I got a chance to talk with three men who came together to the concert: a father, his son, and a good neighbor (Figure 2.2).

The father in the middle of the photo told me he was eighty-two years old. His son and neighbor were life-long GWAR fans but have not made it out to a concert in some years. They decided to take dad, who also has been a life-long fan, to the concert as an eighty-two-year birthday present. (If you can notice in the photo, dad is wearing a GWAR t-shirt, also part of the birthday package.)



FIGURE 2.2 Three men at GWAR

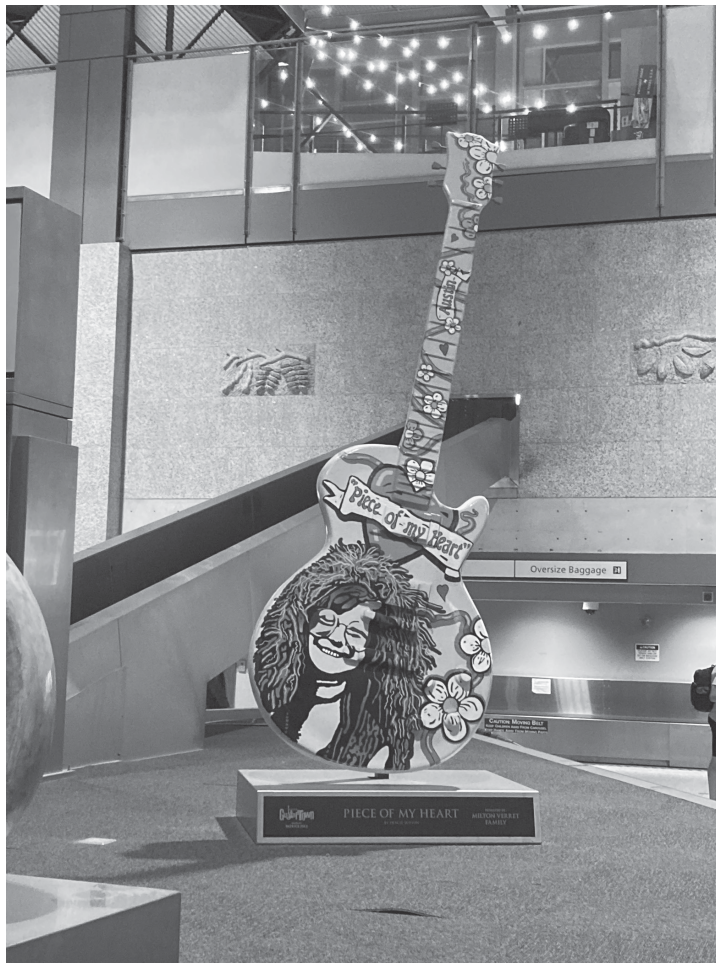


FIGURE 2.3 "Piece of my Heart" guitar

This elderly gentleman obviously self-defines as a GWAR fan but is representative of die-hard music fans whose music-self is intense. When I asked him how much of a GWAR fan is he, he quickly and strongly responded in terms of his commitment to the band: "I've been to forty-seven GWAR gigs and got the bloody (t-) shirts to prove it!"

Beyond social class, ethnic, and gender distinctions, the rock 'n' roll idiom has become and remains a firm component of American popular culture. The guitar is a major icon in this cultural realm. In the Austin Bergstrom International Airport in Texas, there is an ongoing exhibit consisting of ten electric guitars painted and decorated by local artists (Figure 2.3). The exhibit represents all styles of music important to the Austin music scene: rock 'n' roll, the blues, zydeco, and country. The guitar shown here is called "Piece of My Heart" and celebrates Janis Joplin.

The guitar exhibit is directed to all travelers to Austin, and testifies to Austin's well-earned reputation as the "Live Music Capital of the World."

Social Class Distinctions in Music as Play

Even the darker moments of rock culture have their child-like attributes. Critics claim that teenage fans commonly experience heavy metal music as a mechanism for managing lingering childhood anxieties. Metallica's "Enter Sandman" was a popular video on MTV in 1991 and 1992. At that time, I was conducting an ethnographic study of homeless teenagers aged fourteen to eighteen, "Evaluation of Community Intervention for Multi-Problem Street Youth at Risk for AIDS," funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The public health goal was to reduce risk of contagion for AIDS, as the disease was known back then, by reducing dangerous behaviors such as intravenous needle sharing and unprotected sex. A primary method of data collection was informal interviews conducted at the kids' convenience, which was typically near a local McDonald's where they waited to be picked up by their "clients" (Kotarba, et al. 1991).

A guiding premise of my research was the belief that music functioned as a primary medium for meaning for everyday life problems, given these kids generally did not have access to church, functional families or school for strategies to get through a difficult life. So, in addition to asking them about their daily routines, methods of managing tricks, and ways of finding a place to sleep at night, I'd ask them about the music they liked and to which they listened. (Most of the kids had Walkman players/recorders to play dubbed or stolen cassette tapes, but also knew which shelters to visit to watch MTV on a television.) "Enter Sandman" was very popular with them. I asked them specifically to interpret the very old, scary-looking man in the video. This was the sandman, sitting in a rocking chair in the corner of the thirteen-year-old boy's bedroom. The street kids generally saw the man as a reflection of their own real nightmare-like experiences, such as physically abusive parents and sexually abusive adults in drug-infested neighborhoods… the boogeyman, if you will.

Several weeks later, my team conducted a series of interviews with upper-middle-class teenagers, for a different project regarding recreational drug use. These kids lived out in very nice Houston neighborhoods like Memorial and suburbs like the Woodlands. We commonly heard them say that the old man represented nightmares, but only the inconsequential fantasy nightmares involving mythical figures like the boogeyman. A few kids felt that the old man was, in fact, the "sandman" who puts the boogery sand in your eyes that you notice when you wake up in the morning. Several kids even suggested the old man looked like their loveable grandpa who did nothing but nice things for them.

This study clearly established a social class distinction in the interpretation of a popular rock performance. Interestingly, we found very little difference in taste for rock music by social class membership. In general terms, rock 'n' roll and its various styles are simply quite pervasive in our society and among youth in general.

Homeless and privileged kids like the same music; it is just that rich kids have dads who buy them the best tickets to all the hot concerts and have moms who drive them to and from the concerts (Kotarba 1994b). Today, of course, rap music has that type of influence over the music available to and preferred by teenagers. Privileged teenagers generally have access to more viable cultural meanings available to establish strong and effective self-identities and do not have to depend as heavily on self-meanings from popular music—and culture—as less privileged teenagers often do. NOTE: I have been fortunate enough to avoid these sorts of heavy metal familial trysts (e.g. papier-mâché penises?) with my youngest child, Andrew. He studied classical clarinet at the University of Michigan, and graduated quickly to interests in improvisational jazz and computer-based composition. God bless EDM and hyperpop!

3

LATER ADOLESCENCE AND THE *BECOMING* OF THE MUSIC-SELF

For a sociology of music, later adolescence is not easily marked by age. Young people can engage in activities that denote late adolescence, whereas adults who seek the fun and adventure of adolescence can do the same. For the sake of argument, I would pin later adolescence as circling around the ages of eighteen to twenty-one. Of course, the traditional demographic argument claimed that adulthood begins at the point of legal access to its pleasures and responsibilities. I, like most sociologists, would argue that adulthood begins at that point when the young person is released from parents'/family's cultural and financial control. Given recent economic and cultural changes in American society, it is not uncommon to see people in their twenties and thirties financially dependent on help from parents, if not still living at home. According to the Pew Research Center (2020), 52% of adults aged eighteen to twenty-nine years live with one or both parents. Understandably, this percentage has increased since the COVID pandemic struck.

Adulthood is marked by independence of thought and action, physical abilities, and a well-developed self. The young adult is no longer simply acquiring the building blocks for self as passively as children and adolescents do. Instead, the adult is perhaps adding to the building blocks, designing them in terms of stylistic options available in culture, and presenting them in a community or culturally approved self-identity. For conceptual purposes, we can discuss people of any age who do not meet the above criteria of adulthood.

Let's consider an example of an adolescent music experience. In Chapter 2 we discussed the music self-experiences in late childhood/early adolescence. Our prime example was experience at a Gwar concert. The young woman who was taking good care of her little brother was most likely an early adolescent. Later adolescents are not likely to want to be seen with a very young sibling in a concert like that… my casual perusal of the setting supports that assertion. Furthermore,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-4

the activities available to and desired by adolescents there would preclude having a young sibling tag along.

The mosh pit is the best example here. The mosh pit consists of fans grouped in front of the stage, engaging in slam dancing, headbanging, crowd surfing, and other sometimes violent activities. I have observed how fans and concert staff/security will push young pre-teen and early teen fans away from an active mosh pit. Mosh pit participants will also shag away young and naïve fans who just want to join the fun without understanding the risks.

The Online Discussion of Illegal Club Drugs

Another example of the distinction between early and later adolescence is illegal club drug use. I was invited to join a team of social researchers at Texas A & M University several years ago to study online discussion of these drugs (Kotarba 2007).[1] My interest in the project was, of course, the role music plays in all this. Sophisticated recreational drug users, musicians, critics, journalists, and fans have consistently noted the close relationship between popular music and illegal drug use. Some observers frame this relationship negatively, for example as a path of self-destruction for otherwise talented artists and fans. David Crosby, a member of the rock band Crosby, Stills and Nash, for example, wrote a very popular autobiography describing the accumulating and debilitating legal and artistic problems in his life attributed to twenty-five years of playing rock 'n' roll while taking abusive amounts of marijuana, heroin, and cocaine (Crosby and Gottlieb 2016). Other observers have focused on the positive aspects of this relationship, for example the creative impact drug use—especially the psychoactive drugs like LSD and psilocybin—have had on musical composition, performance, and consumption. In their sympathetic biography of Jim Morrison, Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugarman (2006: 18) compared the late leader of The Doors to other self-destructive yet creative poets:

> The romantic notion of poetry was taking hold: the "Rimbaud legend," the predestined tragedy, were impressed on his consciousness… the alcoholism of Baudelaire, Dylan Thomas, Brendan Behan; the madness and addiction of so many more in whom the pain married with the visions….To be a poet entailed more than writing poems.

Members of the world of popular music have developed a culture that has provided a rich, functional, and complex discursive tradition through which they talk, disseminate information, and share experiences about this relationship. The nature of this discourse has taken different forms over the years as styles of illegal drug use, the objectives of drug talk, and the media by which this talk takes place have all evolved. I referred to this mode of communication as *drugmusictalk*. *Drugmusictalk* can appear in very sophisticated linguistic form, generally beyond the expected communicative competence of young adolescents.

Music and Drug Discourse

The popular music scenes mentioned above have all contained media for communicating about music and drugs. This communication generally reflects current musical fashion; drug fashion; and available as well as desirable communications media. Traditionally, members of the scene are likely to engage in *drugmusictalk* for the following purposes (among others):

- To share aesthetic drug-music experiences;
- To discuss fit between particular drugs and styles of music;
- To share affective aspects (e.g., sexual) of drug-music experiences;
- To discuss economic and/or ideological aspects of drug-music experiences; and
- To discuss personal tastes in music.

The major development in *drugmusictalk* was the vernacular that emerged from the rap and hip hop culture. The *drugmusictalk* that accompanied the blues and jazz was intended to keep the larger, often judgmental, white world out of the scene. Rap and hip hop talk shoved the everyday life world of Compton CA, Brooklyn NY, and Houston TX right in the face of anyone willing to listen—white kids included.

A fascinating style of *drugmusictalk* is the communication taking place in the world of rave parties, techno dance clubs, and designer drugs. Collin (2010) notes how communication in the early days of rave/techno was fairly primitive—artistic party fliers, dance floor talk, and telephone. Cummings (1994) writes about the eventual development of fan magazines dedicated to rave/techno, and the most dramatic development of all: the widespread use of the Internet among rave/techno participants.

My primary research question for my contribution to the Texas A & M project was: What is the structure and function of *drugmusictalk* in the context of the Internet? The theoretical framework for this study was symbolic interaction. As David Altheide (2016) notes, the logic and format that shapes the Internet largely determines the structure and function of discourse that occurs on the Internet. As Norman Denzin (1997) argues, contemporary media, especially the Internet, empower speakers to create realities. Media is more than just the message: it is the world in which lives are lived, cultures are constructed. As I argue elsewhere (Kotarba 2002), the Internet specifically allows people to recreate the self situationally and constantly.

Symbolic interactionism views the Internet as if it were any other setting studied by sociologists. The medium has evolved and the vernacular has changed, but we can expect many of the same pressing, everyday issues to be at the heart of electronic communication (Gottschalk 2018).

The study was based primarily on a content analysis of the Internet site's forums. The following are the five essential themes extracted from traditional *drugmusictalk*, based upon my content analysis of the Internet site's forums:

- Sharing aesthetic drug-music experiences

The Internet site participants talk about their drug-music experiences as if they were like artistic or theatrical performances. This discourse is frequently sprinkled with efforts to describe the sublime pleasures associated with dancing. The stories tend to be long, well-written narratives. For example:

> **12:00 am-** One of my favourite DJ's was going to start in half an hour and the dance floor hadn't fully packed out yet so we went up to dance. As soon as I stood up I though "oooooh I feel good!". There was a feeling of warmth going all over my body but it felt like it was coming from my lower abdomen or even inside my ass! Probably quite true. Starting dancing and getting into the music forgetting about the pill but already feeling great.
>
> *Kotarba 2007, p.167*

and

> **12:30 am-** Oh the bliss! I was so overwhelmed by these warm rushes of pleasure all over my body that I couldn't even talk! Dancing was cut down to the basics. A little bit of a bop and jelly like arm movements were all I could manage, a huge ear to ear grin filling my face. From this point on you couldn't say that I was off my trolley, the trolley had knocked me over! Both friends looked like they were having a time as good as mine but none of us had to say a word because we all understood what each of us were feeling.
>
> *Kotarba 2007, p.168*

- Discussing the fit between particular drugs and styles of music

Internet site participants talk about the fit between drugs and music much like a chef designs a menu. The following post illustrates the holistic nature of designer drug experiences:

> So here's my story, it's a bit long
>
> I'm going through an incredible time in my life, something which happens once in a lifetime.
>
> I've done E (ecstacy) 2 weeks ago for the last time, it was incredible. I've been doing E for a year now, once every 3 weeks and it's always been great. I'll always remember what happened the first time, it was a life changing experience. I'll always remember my last time because it was an experience which truly and fully opened my mind to some of the ways of friendship and love I haven't even imagined. I did it with other three people in a Summer Solstice Party in a forest. The after party was at a friend's house. My best friend, and now I know this. And that night was his first pill!!!

> I'm in love with his ex-girlfriend, his most important girlfriend and it seems that she is in love with me. The last time on E he realized that, and he also realized that our love is real, this thing was something that strengthened our friendship in the purest way. I still can't believe that he wants us to be together. Me and her, and me and him. And this morning I realized he even helped the whole thing. Man my last time on E was an incredible journey, maybe I'll do a trip report when I calm down and analyze fully the whole situation.
>
> Last friday I was at a club with two girls, really close friends, great house tunes, great place, great party… I had a pill in my pocket… and I didn't eat it!!! I was willing to eat it, a lot. But I didn't. I danced 4 hours in a row just on 2 drinks, it wasn't near as good as on E, but I was happy, so happy that I didn't eat the damn pill, and I was happy in general. The day after I was with her and some other people. she told me a lot of very important things, including she wasn't ever trying ecstasy, she wanted me to tell her everything about E, but she has decided that she won't do it. She also told me that she didn't mind if I took it in moderation. And she made me understand that she really believes in our relationship which is just starting. I'm 29 but feel like if I was 16, this is the most beautiful thing that has ever happened in my whole life. The night after our conversation, I didn't sleep, I had this pure euphoric feeling, well you know, way beyond what ecstasy could give you, and I even put some tunes on and it was incredible the way I was hearing the music, better than on E.
>
> Tonight I'm taking her for our first real date. And I'm thinking on quitting E. She will even let me go to Ibiza this summer, but I don't see the point anymore. My next pill is due two weeks from now, a big party, the biggest summer party in my town, organized by friends of mine. I'll be taking E for the last time, if I do. I won't be trying convincing her in trying E. She knows what she wants really well, and I think she just wants me, sober and no chemicals.
>
> maybe I won't be reading this board for a while. I love you people. I love E, it really made me the way I am now, and I feel like I'm on top of the world. But I know my next pill won't be that special thing, because there's something alive and real and it's so very special for me right now
>
> *Kotarba 2007, pp. 167–168*

- Discussing economic and/or ideological aspects of drug-music experiences

Economic and/or ideological aspects of drug-music experiences are very common. Only certain participants, largely male and a bit older than most, pursue these topics. For example:

> just because you download EDM doesnt mean that you are going to be safe and the RIAA wont touch you. be smart with your filesharing, if you are worried about being caught then do not share files… as soon as you download them move them to another folder that isnt shared.

> also there is a program out there called peerguard (something like that). from what i understand it uses a list of known RIAA ip addresses and blocks them from connecting to your computer. again, this increases the changes that the RIAA wont catch you, but it does not make you 100% safe. the only way to really be 100% is to stop using p2p/file sharing apps all togeather, but really now, whos gonna do that?
>
> think about it thou. how many ppl share files over the net? millions? more? how many people get caught? 1000? less?
>
> *Kotarba 2007, pp. 172–173*

- Discussing personal tastes in music

An Internet site participant recently raised the following question in the "Music and DJs" forum: "What are your musical preferences?" The variety of sub-genres within the dance music scene is overwhelming. "Typical a week straight. It mainly happens when i hear something new that i fall in love with, or when my jungle addiction takes over…I have to cut myself off after about a week straight."

Interestingly, music fans who are not participants in the techno/rave/dance scene have great difficulty differentiating among these various styles or subgenres. There are three possible explanations for this complex phenomenon. First, multiple musical styles represent a cultural value in the scene. High status is attached to members who are sophisticated in their taste in music. The ability to differentiate and choose among many subgenres illustrates this sophistication. Second, dance music by itself is pretty simple music. It is rhythm-intensive and repetitive. Dance music lacks the textual complexity of lyrics. Participants in the dance music scene may maintain if not rejuvenate interest in the scene by creating subgenres. Third, and perhaps most relevant to my study, outsiders are oblivious to the nuances and variations within dance music because the nuances and variations are only perceivable when high on drugs (Kotarba 2007).

- The Internet allows people to create and perform situational identities

As postmodern existentialism tells us, the contemporary experience of self is complex and situational. We can be different things—to ourselves and to others—as the situation requires and our past experience suggests (Kotarba 2002b). The Internet provides a great opportunity to create, develop, and project a self in a way never available to older media. The Internet allows for long and immediate, narrative presentations of self. Describing one's self is not constrained by the grammatical and stylistic constraints posed by older media. The great complexity of the site structure of the Internet—with its chat rooms, forums, and homepages—allows a wide variety of venues to write for a very specific and directed audience, and audience as close to one's interests and expertise as ever possible in the history of communications.

Yet, in our mass-mediated, postmodern world, people can be different selfs at different times in different situations. Internet site participants may be different self-identities in other aspects of their lives, in front of other audiences.

Drug and Music Connoisseurs

One of the more interesting findings from the survey data on music and drugs was the styles by which Internet site participants answered the following question: "What types of music seem to go best with specific types of drug experiences?" The following is a brief albeit representative sample of responses.

- The *first type of response* is simple and direct. It mirrors the way earlier blues, jazz, and rock audiences largely perceived their drug and music options.
  - classical and Rock are by far the best to listen to when high/ drunk.
- The *second type of response* illustrates the essential complexity of the techno/ dance culture that lies beyond mere dichotomous choices:
  - Smoking cannabis alone at home: any music I like also otherwise;
  - Smoking cannabis with friends at home, in a park or other controllable environment: electronic music with a rich sound environment (Astral Projection, Hallucinogen);
  - Mushrooms: something peaceful and rich in sounds, as Pink Floyd or
  - Twin Peaks soundtrack
  - Ecstasy: fast techno music
  - Although individual preference plays a large part. I think fairly fast
  - slightly hypnotic yet melodic music with anthemic breaks goes down well with most people on most drugs. Generally speaking trance, house, happy hardcore.
- The *third type of response* illustrates a sophisticated mastery of the phenomenon:

  > That is an entirely personal question (greatly varying between people), but for myself I would say that ambient techno (some orbital, Groove Armada) "chick music" (Sarah McLachlan, Tori Amos, etc) are good for home experiences with one other friend. This makes the experience very calming, less chaotic and quite personal. Industrial techno, jungle, house and happy hardcore techno are lovely for a large gathering of people.

The most sophisticated responses seem to come especially from older adolescent but also some early adult (twenties) college-educated, male participants. They talk about music and drugs in ways very much like older wine connoisseurs talk about which cut of beef goes best with a frisky merlot. Interestingly, most respondents who go into great detail on this item list alcohol and place it very specifically in their inventories. Simpler responses tend to state that alcohol—or marijuana for that matter—go with all sorts of music. The sophisticated experience and portrayal of *drugmusictalk* generally falls between the more visceral experience of teenagers

being initiated into rave drugs (e.g., "Yah, man, I was really fucked up, man") and the experience of veteran adult ravers who can be a bit more blasé about their drugs because that much less of their music-self is dependent on interactional mastery of drugs and music (e.g., "Whatever the drug, you're still there to chill and enjoy yourself") (Kotarba 2007: 177).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed some of the ways later adolescents gain control over their music-self. The illustrations from our study of rave activities on the Internet illustrate the transition from being a teenager who still absorbs music and music culture, as was much the case in childhood, and adulthood in which the individual exerts more agency over music experiences by shaping them to fit one's preferred sense of self. Put differently, music becomes a tool for shaping one's self and not simply assembling it. Of course, not all adults in Western societies take control over their music. Those who remain passive to music self-define as either non-fans or indifferent fans. Nevertheless, one can never escape music in everyday life whether or not it has significant impact on one's sense of self.

Later adolescence also marks the typical point in the course of life when music is taken to be a *life project*. This would occur when the individual locates music as a major if not primary sense of self, in contrast to other sources or models of self. This could occur if the individual decides to pursue music as a career or as the basis for an occupation. Examples of this would be the high school graduate who decides to major in music in college, the rock guitarist who decides to pursue a recording contract, or the business-oriented person who wants to work towards a position in the recording industry or in music/arts law. As I've been mentioning all along, though, the decision to make music can happen at almost any stage of life, as we will see later in terms of the retiree seeking new avenues of self-definition.

Note

1 Lexington Press has generously given permission to cite material from pages 161–179 in "Music as a Feature of the Online Discussion of Illegal Drugs" in *Real Drugs in a Virtual World* (Edward Murguia, ed.) (2007) on pages 41–47 in this book.

4

BECOMING OF THE MUSIC-SELF IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

The shift from late adolescent experiences of self to early adult experiences of self is not determined by the calendar, birthdates, legal or academic designations, or other external criteria or events. The shift occurs when one accepts or at least takes on new responsibilities with family, work, friends, and the community in general. The person in early adulthood begins to take a critical stance towards music as it relates to sense of self. Therefore, I define early adulthood as a situation when the individual can no longer simply absorb music meanings and feelings from the media and peer group, but begins to carve a distinct self-identity in terms of music preferences and experiences (cf. Clair, et al. 1993: vii). The intense importance music holds in the self-experience of the adolescent precludes the traditional belief that adolescence and adulthood are somehow uniquely identifiable stages in life. The adult music experience of self is a process, one interactionist and existential sociologists would refer to as a ***becoming***. The individual becomes an adult as they gain independence and responsibility for the music in their life.

In early adulthood, the individual begins to acquire multiple senses of self as life becomes increasingly complex. In my *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (Kotarba 2013a), I discuss the many ways middle age can be marked by music experiences of self, which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter. This process can actually begin in early adulthood considering evolving family and work responsibilities but is perhaps most notably marked sociologically by the advent of concern for *authenticity* in music.

The Concern for *Authenticity* in Music Among Young Adults

In an earlier work, I discussed *authenticity* as a commonsense concern popular music fans have as they grow older (Kotarba, et al. 2009).[1] Authenticity can be simply defined as truthfulness and reality in music. The authenticity of a song, style,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-5

performance, or performer is always judged in terms of another music phenomenon. In terms of popular discussion, writers in the popular music industry, the mass media, and fans alike treat authenticity as a reality, that is, as a feature of popular music that can be discovered, assessed, measured, and evaluated. Authenticity is assumed to be a feature as much as quality, beauty, and dance-ability.

The popular music industry is concerned with two issues related to authenticity. The first is marketing and product definition. For example, Gigmasters is a nationwide agency that books musical acts (www.gigmasters.com). Among all the artists they promote, groups that mimic the Rolling Stones are among the most popular. Gigmasters is very careful to indicate that their groups are not fakes that attempt to trick the audience into believe they really are the Rolling Stones—they are touted as tribute bands. In one of their online ads, they note:

> Satisfaction is exactly what fans of The Rolling Stones will get any time they view Rolling Stones tribute acts. That's because—from Mick's skinny bod to Keith's unkept hair—Rolling Stones music played by cover groups sounds almost identical to that of the mega-rocker band.

This type of product definition and delineation has been a major attribute of all styles of popular music. As Richard Peterson (1997) has argued, the country music industry centered in Nashville, Tennessee, became a powerful force in popular music by producing music that was marketed and appreciated as authentic country music (Kotarba 2009b).

The second issue consists of efforts by the mass media to generate mountains of publishable copy through stories on authenticity. Much of this writing appears as critical evaluation of performers and performances in terms of authenticity. David Grazian (2003), in his work on blues music, writes at length about the importance critics maintain in determining whether contemporary blues music and musicians are authentic. The mass media have field days over authenticity issues that are legal in scope, for example the frequent court cases intended to establish which singing group has legal claim to the name The Platters. They especially thrive on authenticity issues that are especially scandalous in tone, for example the print mileage squeezed from the Milli Vanilli scandal in the early 1990s (Kotarba 2013a).

My interest in authenticity is to approach authenticity from a third perspective, that is, through the perceptions of young adult popular music fans. Authenticity is an important and useful type of meaning for this population. In terms of music, existential social thought provides a strategy for exploring the emerging importance of authenticity for young adults (Kotarba and Melnikov 2022). First, we should expect that, in everyday life situations, authenticity is not experienced primarily as an integral variable. Music is not ordinarily perceived as more or less authentic. Authenticity is not a constant feature of and issue in our everyday music experiences. Instead, existential social thought tells us to be open to the discovery and description of experiences in which *inauthenticity*, as a social phenomenon, may

be a practical problem as well as a resource for making sense of a particular situation. Put differently, inauthenticity could have positive uses in everyday life.

Second, the experience of inauthenticity, when dysfunctional for the self, may be akin to the notion of *alienation*. In existential thought, alienation refers to the experience of estrangement or distance from the world (Fontana 1980). This largely affective as well as rationalistic separation can result in a state of meaninglessness: if I depend on the world for meaning for my life, but it is no longer available to me, then my sense of self can be suddenly void. Propositionally, if I have filled my earlier life over time with popular music but realize now that I no longer fit with the music that was available to me and was popular when I was younger, then I have a meaning void to fill.

Therefore, I define *authenticity work* as the interactional process by which the assessment of authenticity in cultural phenomena, such as popular music, serves as a resource or tool for recreating, defining, verifying, or developing a viable self (Kotarba, et al. 2009). This viable self may or may not necessarily be perceived as authentic in so many words. There are any number of styles or depictions of self that can be the outcome of *authenticity work*. The point is that *authenticity work* creates a relationship between music and the self that can be positive or negative on the self, and that can lead to stagnation or growth (Kotarba 2009 and 2013a).

Critics and fans alike have traditionally viewed popular music as a meaning resource for youth navigating through adolescence. I will now explore the relevance of popular music for self-identity through early adulthood and address the topic for older adults in the next chapter. As noted above, existential social thought tells us that the process of self-development is constant throughout life. What changes are life circumstances, the biological and affective aging process, reassessment of the past, and strategic relationships with others. As these contingencies change, so does the experience of self. Yet, as Andy Fontana (1977) notes, the style of relationships and interaction experienced during adulthood can help make sense of getting old, for example, acting out the role of the "joiner."

I will argue that authenticity becomes a situation to address for young adults when they perceive a cognitive and affective distance between their current station in life and tastes in music, and their earlier stations in life, particularly as adolescents, and earlier tastes in music.

Authentic Bands

As one grows older, especially adolescents and young adults, one attempts to separate the emerging music-self from that of a child. One way to do that is criticize current bands as inauthentic in comparison with bands during one's childhood. For example, current rock music bands that have been popular for many years can be criticized for not being staffed by all original band members. This criticism is most telling when the band in question is very popular now among younger fans. Examples of current bands that still record but especially still tour include REO Speedwagon and Styx. These bands typically consist of the original band leader

surrounded by new bandmates. For REO, the leader continues to be Kevin Cronin. For Styx, there's Tommy Shaw. For original fans, the quality of the reconstituted band's music is less an issue than, again, authenticity. In the world of soul music and R&B, '60s groups such as the Temptations, Four Tops, and the Platters, the group currently may consist of only one original member who has legal rights to the group's name.

Cover bands quickly and easily elicit debates on authenticity. Original fans sometimes can be brutal in assessing current cover bands such as the Fab Four and Queen Nation… more about Beatles cover bands later!

Rappers

Young adult critics of current rap stars often compare them with older and sometime original rappers from the 1980s. As one respondent told me, "Young Thug is derivative. Nobody can beat REAL rappers like Tupac and Method Man." This is the conversation from which the now common expression "Old School" originated. Generational distinctions among rappers became quite apparent during the halftime show at the Super Bowl in 2022. Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar and 50 Cent all performed in this highly choreographed and well-produced show. The stage was populated by millionaire entrepreneurs. In my conversations with rap fans in their teens and early twenties, from all ethnic backgrounds, I repeatedly heard criticism of the senior rappers. The complaints were not always meaningful or based on biographical fact, but one point was clear. The young rap fans did not identify with the senior rappers largely because the fans did not feel they *belonged* to them or their generation. Gold chains?

The Impact of Music on Emerging Selfs

The Parental Self

Popular music is pervasive in modern family life. Getting married and starting a family has traditionally marked entrance into early adulthood. Today, of course, one need not be married to start a family, but a certain level of maturity is expected in our culture nonetheless. When baby boomers got married in the 1960s and '70s, they comprised the first generation of Americans to introduce popular music into the formal wedding ceremony—beyond having Elvis sing "Hawaiian Honeymoon" at a wedding chapel in Las Vegas—sometimes with great effort. The "our songs" couples insisted on playing in church, chapel, or synagogue—in concert with the overall movement to personalize marriage ceremonies—ranged from Led Zeppelin's (romantic?) "Stairway to Heaven" to the Sandpipers' truly romantic "Come Saturday Morning" (Kotarba 1997).

More recent generations have an even greater selection of options for wedding music, but a single trend over the past two decades or so has empowered newlyweds to take even more control over the soundtrack of their early family life. It is now

commonplace for newlyweds to design and produce the entire soundtrack of their wedding. One relatively young biomedical researcher who has participated in my ongoing research in translational science obtained licensed copies of all the songs played in church and at the country club reception and burnt them to DVDs, along with a bit of video from all related events, as gifts to wedding guests (Kotarba 2019).

As the partnership evolves and children join the family, the mom and dad start acquiring a *parental self*. They increasingly see themselves as parents in terms of all the complex aspects of that self-definition. We have already seen how complex managing music has become for new parents with very young children and a television just loaded with broadcast, Internet, and cable programming options for them to manage and, occasionally, censure. As newlyweds evolve into parents, music permeates the ever increasingly complex job of parenting. Take family vacations, for example. Take the modern family vacation. Baby boomers made the notion of a family vacation to a theme park popular and indeed commonplace in the burgeoning family leisure and vacation industry (Kotarba 2013a). Family theme parks typically have some attraction related to pop music, such as the complete mock-up of a 1950s small town main street in the Fiesta Texas Theme Park in San Antonio, or an 1880s version in Mainstreet in Disneyland or Disneyworld. Parents need to manage music all sorts of ways as their sense of who they are as parents changes over time as their children grow up. The issue of authenticity dissolves into the pragmatic need to make the family excursion as successful as possible for all. The children need to be impressed enough to pay attention to the event. The parents need to feel that their family is safe and secure, especially if rides are involved.

The Working Music-Self: The Biomedical Research Scientist

A large portion of our sense of who we are is derived from our work and our careers. Men in American culture have traditionally been seen as depending largely—or even excessively—on their successes and failures, victories, or defeats, for meaning of who they are. Music plays a part, sometimes a large part, in how we deal with the demands and rewards of work. Our case study for this analysis comes from a study I conducted recently at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston (UTMB). In examining the relationship between the translational science movement and the self-identity of the biomedical scientist, I discovered just how important music can be in navigating through that very complex and rapidly changing self. The focus here will be on the young or junior scientist.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the theoretical relationship between translational science and music (Kotarba 2019).[2] The world of science has been undergoing tremendous change in the past few years. Particularly in the biomedical realm, new approaches such as proteomic techniques, the use of nanoparticles in research, and biomarker discovery platforms are just a few of many promising advancements scientists have developed to combat disease. Perhaps the greatest advancement at the paradigmatic level has been the widespread movement towards the *translational science* concept. Translational science research is a scientific

movement that aims to facilitate the efficient application of biomedical research to clinical services design and delivery (Wooten, et al. 2013). A major organizational strategy for operationalizing translational science is the *team science* concept. Team science is an organizational strategy by which a number of researchers, staff and administrators work together to accomplish specific scientific goals (Kotarba 2014). Research teams are expected to be interdisciplinary, horizontal in leadership, and with explicit attention paid to mentorship and community involvement. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the U.S. has provided generous support for the implementation of team-based, translational science.

One feature of the translational science movement, however, calls for a qualitative, interpretive, and symbolic interactionist regimen for evaluating the endeavor. This feature focuses on organizational cultural change associated with the movement. As the structure of research evolves, one would expect to see the everyday values, procedures, assumptions, and practices also evolve. This, of course, is what I do in my work as medical sociologist and qualitative researcher at UTMB. A qualitative approach inspired by interactionism also provides the opportunity to examine the place of the scientist in the movement. The interactionist concept of the *self* provides a useful platform for this examination, especially in terms of the variant concept of the *existential self* (Kotarba 2014). My discussion here focuses on the experience of music specifically as an example of a bridge—and occasional buffer—between the self and the organization.

Translational science research is a scientific movement that aims to facilitate the efficient application of biomedical research to clinical services design and delivery (i.e., improving the "bench-to-bedside" process). The Institute for Translational Sciences (ITS) at UTMB received its Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) from the NIH in 2009. The CTSA at UTMB now consists of fourteen interdisciplinary teams, including: Addictions and Impulse Control Disorders; Aging, Muscle and Sarcopenia; Hepatocellular Carcinoma Biomarker Development; Maternal Fetal Medicine; Obesity and Its Metabolic Complications; and Pediatric Respiratory Infections—Otitis Media. Team science is a major theme at UTMB. The qualitative research team I lead approaches the study and evaluation of the multidisciplinary translational teams and overall program leadership through a fairly integrated symbolic interactionist approach to organizational research.

A major feature of my analysis was understanding cultural change at UTMB in light of the CTSA grant. I conceptualized the process of cultural change in the CTSA in terms of stages. To date, there have been three analytical stages:

- **Stage One: Cultural Invasion.** Many scientists perceived the implementation of the CTSA project in 2009 and lasting approximately to 2012 as *cultural invasion*. The traditional meaning of certain significant symbols, i.e., "my lab" and "mentoring" became problematic. New ideas on the meaning and conduct of science were introduced largely from centralized settings like the NIH, as opposed to the scientists' particular specialty areas. Perceived by some respondents as positive, and progressive, but by others as strange and invasive.

- **Stage Two: Cultural Accommodation.** Internal responses to change follow the normal scientific paradigm, from approximately 2012 to 2014. The business model was increasingly taken for granted, as terms like "enterprise," "continuous improvement," and "talent" entered everyday conversation. Scientists integrated the translational model into their ongoing work without giving up their fundamental sense of science or self. The perception of translational science as a radical shift in research procedures fairly quickly disappeared.
- **Stage Three: Cultural Expansion.** The organizational and cultural platform for conducting science expanded regionally, nationally, and cross-disciplinarily, from approximately 2014 to 2016. The number of problem-area networks and regional data and patient sharing groups continues to expand. The introduction of strategies for continuous improvement and strategic planning added a layer of rationality to the increasingly important concept of accountability in doing and evaluating science. Practical strategies for integrating "continuous change" are implemented (Kotarba 2014 and 2019).

The Self-Identity of the Scientist

The movement to translational science can seriously impact a scientist's self-identity. This impact can be positive or negative. A positive impact is the awareness that one is now at the cutting edge of scientific design and strategy. A negative impact can be the awareness that one is now expected to surrender some of the independent comfort zone of isolating oneself, and perhaps a post-doc or two, in one's lab.

Scientists at UTMB generally see themselves, or shall I say, "fancy themselves," as intellectuals. They maintain this traditional self-identity in spite of the massive changes taking place in the organizational and cultural contexts of modern biomedical research. The contemporary researcher spends increasing time and attention on budgets, personnel issues, hiring, legal issues such as patents and permissions, and government relations. The scientists generally refuse to see themselves as all these things, and reject others' definitions of them as such, but prefer to self-define as thoughtful, well-read, politically astute, rational yet idealistic, warm and humanistic.

Routine and Tradition vs. Experiment and Innovation is a dilemma that exists in the minds of both prospective CTSA participants and those already committed to the program. The scientists see the CTSA as an effort to change both the means and the end of biomedical research. One scientist noted that the scientific method in which he was trained and which he has pursued for several decades has served him well in terms of discoveries, publications, prestige, and grants:

> Good science has to take place at its own pace. Adding this translational component simply makes the discovery and application process take longer…. You see, to the layperson, scientists seem to apply for the same grant over and over again. We're not reinventing the wheel; we're sanding it and polishing it.
>
> *Kotarba 2019: 54*

For him and other scientists, especially among basic science researchers, the objective of translation should require only a partial revision of the scientific method at the University of Texas. This revision would most likely occur at the end of the research process when scientific discovery is turned over to engineers, patent attorneys, and corporations (e.g., pharmaceutical and medical technology companies). These traditional scientists still perceive science philosophically as a linear process to be tinkered with when and where necessary. The scientists who have seriously bought into translational science, however, agree with the NIH argument that the entire research process needs to change in order to achieve positive results. Input from engineers, patent attorneys, and corporations should emerge at any point in the research process, when relevant.

By stage three, however, many scientists have adopted a useful strategy to manage and maintain a healthy self-identity, given the rapid organizational change taking place around them. This strategy involves placing the new as well as traditional expectations on them in a functional order. For example, we have heard several scientists say that they are no longer threatened by the expectation on them to learn and adopt certain features of business culture. Instead of seeing business as a threat to their sense of self, they see business culture as a limited project, material to learn, but material that is easily mastered by them—much like a hobby.

Science and Music

In my conversations with scientists at UTMB, I routinely interjected the following questions into the conversation: What kinds of music do you like? What do you listen to? When do you listen to music? These somewhat unexpected questions served two functions. First, they rejuvenated an aging and perhaps boring interview by drawing the respondents' attention to something (perhaps) more interesting than discussions of work. Second, they help me focus on the self-identity of the scientist directly. They involved experiences in leisure, family life, friendships, community, spirituality, and the *vocation* of being a scientist—in general, the self-identity of the scientist. The specific research question relevant here is: How can the self-experience provide a forum for a dialogue between the scientists' sense of who they are and the organizational world of science out there that seemingly wants them to be something different? Physical chemist and novelist C.P. Snow (1959) argued that there is a growing chasm between science and the arts. He proposed that practitioners of science and the arts build bridges to further the progress of knowledge and social progress. My study located the problem at the everyday life level. I argued that music specifically and the arts more generally can and do serve as a bridge between science and the humanities. Social scientifically, this bridge can be located in everyday life at the level of the self and interaction.

Over the millennia, the relationship between music and science has been of great interest to philosophers, historians, musicologists, and now social scientists. As Peter Pesic (2014) notes, liberal education in ancient Greece consisted of four components: music/arithmetic/geometry/astronomy—the quadrivium. More

recently, observers of the practice of science have generally posited music as a charming accompaniment to thought, but less powerful than rational science. A strong voice to the contrary was Albert Einstein, who was asked by a friend: "Do you believe that absolutely everything can be expressed scientifically?" "Yes, it would be possible," he replied, "but it would make no sense. It would be description without meaning—as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation in wave pressure" (quoted in Clark 1971).

The historical and philosophical literature still tends to rely on "Big Scientist" analysis and opinions of this relationship, whether they be Steven Weinberg, Stephen Hawking, or Jane Goodall. We argue that the common, university-trained, highly specialized, and professional scientist is clearly much more the typical case today. The question then becomes: What place does music have in the everyday life and work of the modern scientist?

Our research has found that scientists not only should integrate the arts into their self-identity, but that they do. Music not only provides a charming accompaniment to thought, as Pesic put it so well, but also serves as a particular sort of buffer between the scientist's self and the outside world. The concept of the *existential self* is a very useful framework for exploring the dynamics of this buffer. All paradigms in sociology posit essential relationships between the individual and society. In symbolic interaction, this relationship is conceptualized in terms of the self and society, the self being the person's sense of and experience of individuality (Blumer 1969). A variation of the symbolic interactionist model of the self is the existential model, which posits a *confrontational* relationship between the self and society (Kotarba 1984). The existential self-concept sees the individual as an active agent in seeking meaning for problematic situations in everyday life (Melnikov and Kotarba 2017). Sources for meaning in our postmodern culture increase as the mass and electronic media continue to expand, and access to the media becomes widely available in society. The new media create new meanings while also creating new frameworks for old meanings (Altheide 2016).

The point is that scientists already meld science and the arts into their self-identities. More specifically, a common strategy among translational scientists is to use music as a *buffer* against the stressors the translational science movement locally and in general places on the security of their sense of self (Douglas 1977).

Here are six ways translational scientists use music to help achieve a sense of a *balanced self*:

- **Music can reinforce the self-definition of *intellectual*.** The self-definition of intellectual is very important to many scientists. This self-definition can come from reading history or engaging in quality films. High-quality music, largely classical, fits in well. Much of the contemporary scientist's work is pretty routine: everyday monitoring of chemical activities; caring for animals in the lab; writing up daily research reports; and so forth. A senior researcher, typically referred to as the "principal investigator," is most likely to have a staff of junior scientists and graduate students to do much of the lab work. The management

of lab staff is a task very few senior scientists are prepared to do but a task one may not want to have attached to their self-concept.

- **Music can serve as an escape from over-rationalized expectations of others.** One scientist working extensively with bio-informatics indicated how his "escape" from NIH is the Grateful Dead. Playing the role of a "Dead Head" in the lab indicated to others he was not just another lab nerd. The Dead also help him establish cognitive and affective distance between his self-identity and that of a business person chasing patent attorneys and preparing thirty-second elevator talks that the translational science movement expects of them.
- **Music can facilitate the return to the community.** One scientist indicated that his current community involvement is to serve as a voluntary board member for the local community orchestra. He sees continuing and even expanding his involvement as a way of easing into retirement after a long and illustrious career as a scientist. Getting involved with music in the community or even in broader contexts can be preferable to other retirement activities such as local government involvement or singular hobbies.
- **Music provides another outlet for creativity.** A junior scientist was very proud of the DVD she assembled of her wedding music mix. She not only assembled the playlist but received permission to record the actual songs on the list. She designed the artwork for the DVD cover. She was also proud that assembling the music reflected her skill at organizing and categorizing tissue samples for her study of inflammation.
- **Music can facilitate a rhythm for exploration.** Several scientists noted that they listen to music through headphones or earbuds while in the lab. Different lab tasks require different styles of music. One scientist noted that thoughtful tasks (e.g., writing or working on calculations) fit better with ambient music like Moby or Aes Dana, whereas feeding the mice allows for louder and fast-paced rock music like The Who or Metallica.
- **Music can help establish a sense of being alone.** Several scientists noted that they will listen to music through headphones to cut out noise while working. Interestingly, one scientist said that the level of noise in her lab has increased since translational science has led to the increased size of her team. In this case, any style of music would work (Kotarba 2019: 53–54).

The goal among these scientists, whether consciously or not, is to achieve a *balanced self* (Kotarba 2013b). To the degree their attachment to science is a vocation, they attempt to adjust themselves to new external expectations. To the degree their attachment to science is a job, or even a profession, then they are more able to incorporate new external expectations into their work and their sense of music-self.

The approach we take in this study is not only compatible with programs/workshops in staff development, professional training, and self-development for junior and senior scientists, but is supportive for their more personal sense of music-self. In today's very complex world of biomedical research, one must be in

a position to manage numerous shifting expectations on the self as well as time and thought—managing a *mutable self*, as Louis Zurcher (1977) put it so elegantly. Music can approach the unknown—as does science—but with an aesthetic instead of a reason.

One last thought on the sociological/interactionist study of culture. To search for and find music in science is not a reach. William James (1890) wrote about culture as "Much-at-Onceness." Culture is not in a toolbox, somewhere in the clouds, or somewhere in a textbook. It is everywhere and in abundance. Our job is to understand both the common-ness and pervasiveness of music, while appreciating the magical ways it forms a soundtrack for our everyday lives—good things and bad things, powerful thing and weak things, sacred things and secular things. The widespread introduction of personal music into the technical world of the scientific lab is largely a result of the experiences of the younger scientists. When I think of them, I recall the now very common behavior of my undergraduate students who can be seen with their earbuds in in the elevator, in the cafeteria, or on the way to the parking lot. All this cultural change sometimes makes me feel old, coming from a generation in which music was much more compartmentalized and kept separate from the rest of everyday life.

As one might expect, the performance of music during work at UTMB is more common among younger scientists. Younger adults have grown up in the earbud generation. I routinely assign an exercise to my undergraduate course in popular music and society, in which I ask students to list every situation in one typical day in which music is a feature of which they are aware in any way. Keep in mind that a large proportion of our students work at some sort of job while enrolled in courses, most of which are in the service sector. Nevertheless, over 85% of the students who work say that music is performed during work, either collectively or individually. Some of that music is common in certain job situations such as fast food where a radio is usually blaring in the back of the kitchen. Some of that music is a feature of the youth of the workers, who have learned to wear earbuds in almost any social situation.

For adults working full time, there seems to be two ways they use music. The first is as an *escape* from a tedious, boring, or overwhelming job. The music experience allows the individual to entertain a separate, hidden self certainly more pleasant than the job per se. The second way to use music is *complementary* to the job. The work situation is fine, but music can make it better by, well, adding rhythms, sounds, stories, and feelings to what might be a completely rationalist situation at work. This is the reason I am now listening to "Spa Instrumental" on SiriusXM through my earbuds at home (Kotarba 2013b).

Conclusion

Music in adulthood can provide a resource for meaning that is complementary to other experiences of self. The older one gets, the more demand is placed on occupying and succeeding at additional selfs such as family, career, and community.

Music may start being a "my time" experience as it fades away from one's visible identity and increasingly is enjoyed alone or only in certain situations. Relatedly, a final feature of music in early adulthood is the way the individual may have a lessened need or time to search for new music or for new music styles. The young adult may find themselves increasingly surrounded by people with whom music is not a primary feature of their relationships.

Notes

1 Taylor & Francis Informa has generously given permission to cite material from pages 153–168 in "Pop Music as a Resource for Assembling an Authentic Self" in *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Phillip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams. eds.) (2009) on pages 48–51 in this book.

2 *Qualitative Sociological Review* has generously given permission to cite material from pages 44–55 in "The Everyday Life Intersection of Translational Science and Music" in QSR (2019), 15(2) on pages 52–59 in this book.

5

ADULTHOOD

"Still *Becoming*"

Music can relate to the experiences of adults in many creative, fearful, pragmatic, loving, and nurturing ways. Music relates to two probable features of full adulthood, especially middle age. The first, which we have already introduced, is the *mutable self*, which is a pragmatic response to the increased complexity of middle age in Western society (Zurcher 1977). The second is the postmodernization of culture, which allows for if not demands the non-linearity of the life course at this phase. As I indicate in my book *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (Kotarba 2013a), "the middle-aged individual in today's postmodern or post-postmodern world can or may expect to entertain various experiences of self as everyday life situations are fluid and can shift in orientation or expectation." Among the styles of self I list are the E-Self, the Intimate Self, the Parental Self, the Religious Self, and the Integrated Self. Whereas most of these experiences of self begin or at least are nurtured in early adulthood, the middle-aged person continues living with and often developing them, as they are no longer locked into and obedient to peer-group styles of music experiences of earlier youth.

The core theme in middle age is music as a feature of the continuing ***becoming of self***, refining the self through music to adjust to the changing expectations and conditions of aging (e.g., designing the music playlist for one's retirement party or memorial service). The middle-aged life is complex, especially among upwardly mobile individuals of any ethnicity, gender, or political persuasion who have the resources to explore and experience difference music experiences. Consequently, adult fans can experience a wide range of music, for example oldies and revival groups; ABBA; Michael Bublé; early R&B/Motown; and Broadway musicals. Early retirement can create the possibility of learning to play an instrument, engaging in music cruises (e.g., Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville Cruises), or enjoying grandchildren's music concerts at school.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-6

Authenticity in Adulthood: Seeking Honesty for the Music-Self

In the previous chapter, we discussed the processes by which people entering adulthood learn the importance of perceiving authenticity as a positive and functional feature of the adult self. I will now continue that discussion by examining how authenticity serves as a dynamic tool in the fleshing out, revising, and enjoying the wonders of the course of life. *This is a clear example of how cross-generational and dynamic an everyday life feature like authenticity-in-music can be, and how it is not limited to a particular stage, segment, or time of the course of life*. I define authenticity work as the interactional process by which the assessment of authenticity in cultural phenomena, such as popular music, serves as a resource or tool for recreating, defining, verifying, or developing a viable self. This viable self may or may not necessarily be perceived as authentic in so many words. There are any number of styles or depictions of self that can be the outcome of *authenticity work* among adults in or approaching middle age. The point is that *authenticity work* creates a relationship between music and the self that can be positive or negative on the self, and that can lead to stagnation or growth.

Critics and fans alike have traditionally viewed popular music as a meaning resource for youth navigating through adolescence. I will explore the relevance of popular music for self-identity through middle age and beyond. As noted above, existential social thought tells us that the process of self-development is constant throughout life. What changes are life circumstances, the biological and affective aging process, reassessment of the past, and strategic relationships with others. As these contingencies change, so does the experience of self. As Andy Fontana (1977) notes, the activities used during adulthood to make sense of the self are likely to be the same types of activities used to make sense of getting old. The "baby boomer" generation was the first Western generation to grow up entirely in the world of rock 'n' roll music and culture, and many baby boomers experienced rock 'n' roll as a master script for life. Therefore, this highly self-integrated cultural resource, enhanced by the power of the mass media, remains central to the self-identity of many baby boomers as old age enters the horizon.

The issue of authenticity can appear in any number of pop music experiences. The starting point for this analysis is the argument that, in our postmodern world, we experience different selfs in different situations and different social worlds (Zurcher 1977). Music can impact any or all of these selfs in different ways and at different times. In another work (Kotarba 2009b and 2013a), I suggested nine styles of self-experience relevant to popular music. I will present updated case study data here to illustrate the ways authenticity fits four of these nine adult music-selfs.

The Experienced Parental Self

As we discussed earlier, the *parental self* is a self-definition and experience of someone who relates to, is responsible for, can enjoy, feel with, and live life with some younger person who is affectively, cognitively, and evaluatively intimately

close. As the parent ages, however, many of the attractive aspects of the earlier self are more difficult to maintain. There is a tendency for youthfulness, energy, risk taking, appearance, sensuality, and other aspects of the adolescent or young-adult self to become either less available or less desirable. Our culture does, however, provide a self-identity that resonates with the affluence of adulthood, as well as with the continuing need to establish status/self-esteem.

In our capitalistic/media-driven culture, it is quite easy to get all caught up in the parental self. At various times in adulthood, many people come to the point where they want to preserve and be proud of their very personal music-self and place limits on being a "doting parent." For example, I attended a Justin Bieber concert at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo several years ago. My primary research objective was to interview adult fans in terms of their interest in the then teenage heartthrob. I encountered Christine and Earl who came to the Reliant Stadium early to avoid the big crowds and to possibly get a glimpse of the Biebs (Figure 5.1).

The concert itself was packed with screaming girls, mostly between the ages of six and sixteen, who set a one-day attendance record for the Houston Rodeo: 79,999. My initial question turned out to be: Who was this older, middle-aged man attending a Justin Bieber concert with a girl who looked about twelve or thirteen? I quickly learned that Earl was Christine's stepfather. It turned out that

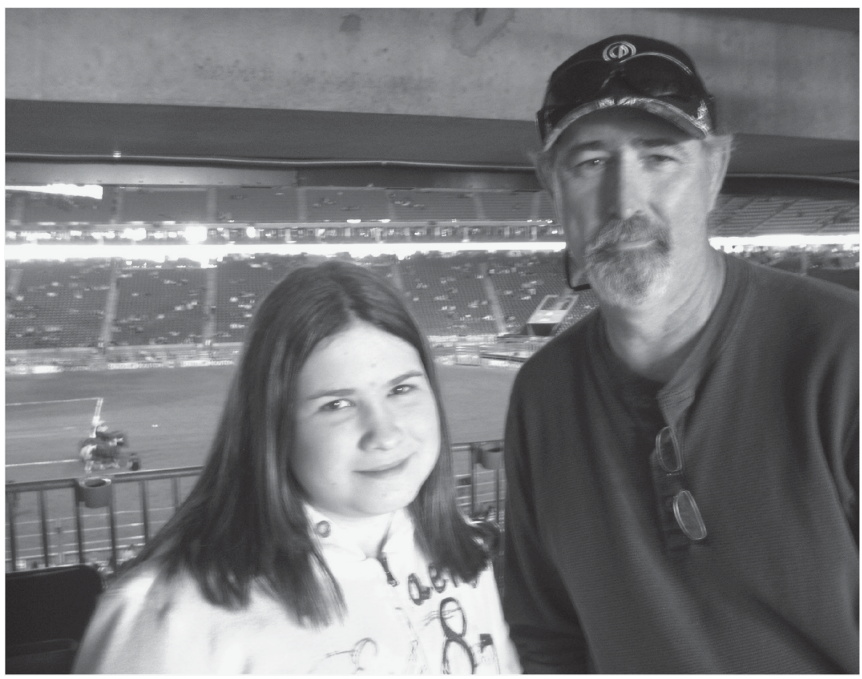


FIGURE 5.1 Christine and Earl

Christine's mother was originally intending to go to the concert but had to back down because something important came up at the last minute. Earl, being the good stepfather that he is, volunteered to accompany Christine. I thought this was a very good gesture on Earl's part. When I asked Christine and Earl about their more general tastes in music, Earl quickly but politely let me know that he was NOT a Justin Bieber fan, that is, a "belieber" as the fans like to define themselves:

> Heck, no, I'm a Willie [Nelson] fan, you know, George Strait and Alan Jackson! I grew up on the ol' boys and still like 'em. … I come to the rodeo a couple times each year, when the ol' country boys are playin'. Sometimes I bring my wife when she wants to see one of the newcomers, like Sugarland.

Earl was *experimenting culturally* by being a good stepfather (Kotarba 2012). This is an experience that committed parents often have when trying to be good parents. It is one thing to be a supportive parent, but being seen as a parent who actually shares their children's potentially discreditable cultural tastes, well, that is going a bit too far for a dedicated country music fan like Earl:

> My daughter and her friends go crazy over this Bieber kid. Oh, I don't have any real problem with it. Christine played one of his CDs in the car on our way over here… not too bad, not too crazy like that hard rock or rap stuff they listen to when I'm not around… it seems like good music for good kids.
> *Kotarba 2012 :76–77*

For Earl, his country music is not only authentic; he has an authentic music-self by adhering to his tastes without serious compromise, but with a bit of criticism for the music he can't stand. Other older middle-aged parents can establish their music-self through identifying with and appreciation for their now near-grown up children.

The Normalized E-Self

The *e-self* refers to an experience of individuality in which the affective and philosophical self-resources of rock 'n' roll media are displaced or at least supplemented by the increasingly technological and commodified aspects of the media. Clearly, the e-self begins earlier in life, largely in late adolescence and early adulthood. For the middle-aged fan, what you play your music on can be at least as, if not more, important than what you play.

Middle age results in less concert attendance and more music experience in the comfort of home, automobile, and for the energetic person, on the jogging trail. A content analysis of a recent issue of Wired (Volume 37, May 2021), a magazine that is geared toward the affluent and technologically interested adult, discloses the strategy of marketing popular music to its audience. There are ads for Wi-Fi connected speakers that allow one to listen to music from the Internet at any spot

on one's property. There are ads for all sorts of sophisticated earbuds that allow you to listen to your music even while working out. There are ads for fashionable electric bikes that have a place on the handlebar to attach a cell phone. I won't even start with ads to secure your crypto cold storage. Such marketing sometimes resonates with the adults it targets. George is a fifty-one-year-old Anglo electrical engineer who just installed a satellite radio system in his Lexus sedan. He sees two benefits of his musical purchase: "I don't have to mess with CDs or radio anymore. I get to play only the music I like to hear.... There are stations dedicated just to '80s heavy metal on SiriusXM...cool."

George's perception of inauthenticity in pop music is found in currently popular music. His desire to filter available musical selections through his satellite radio serves two functions for his sense of self. First, he no longer has to "fish" through broadcast radio to find the music he enjoys, a menial task for an upper-middle-class professional. Second, his ability to conquer the threat of inauthenticity marks him as a person beyond the realm of popular in popular music. The popular is magically transformed into the exclusive, allowing him to demonstrate the level of control over his musical experiences that he has achieved in other facets of his life: his professional career and his family.

The Cautiously Political Self

Popular music serves as a soundtrack for the situations in which adults perceive themselves as political actors. For example, New York punk poet and singer Patti Smith performed a concert in Houston on March 28, 2003—right at the beginning of the war in Iraq. The concert was originally scheduled simply to support an exhibit of her art displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Arts. The audience was overwhelmingly middle-aged people, dressed up in their jeans and long (hippie) skirts. Through conversations with numerous fans after the concert, it was clear that they *enjoyed* the concert. Patti Smith's poetry and songs (e.g., "People Have the Power") gave them a relevant and identifiable venue for sharing their overwhelmingly negative *feelings* about the war.

Musical inauthenticity can serve as a powerful interactional tool in establishing one's political acumen as correct and one's political self as astute. If one's political opponent appreciates bad, inappropriate—or inauthentic—music, the very self of the opponent can be discredited, to his or her political disadvantage. A recent example of this phenomenon was the media coverage to a survey inquiring as to the 2020 U.S. presidential candidates' musical preferences. One could almost predict the differences between Joe Biden's and Donald Trump's favorite artists (www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-54644163). Donald Trump likes the Rolling Stones, Eminem, and Elton John. Joe Biden likes the Four Tops, Bruce Springsteen, Lady Gaga, and Sam Cooke. Although Trump's list is a bit more up-to-date, neither president appears to prefer today's music much. James Brown is the only African-American on Trump's list. What does it say that our two most recent presidents are not big music fans and probably had to make up their lists when asked?

Returning to the previous presidential candidates is even more telling. Since he was a member of the baby boomer generation, there is no surprise in learning that John McCain's favorite style of music was 1950s and '60s rock 'n' roll. He was also a big fan of ABBA, and purchased a CD album, "The Very Best of the Beach Boys." Again, predictably, Obama's taste in music is much more eclectic, matching the tastes of the "Generation X" of which he is a member (e.g., Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Bach, and the Fugees). Whereas Obama's conservative critics lambasted him for pandering to his youthful and therefore unsophisticated supporters, McCain's liberal critics used his choices in music as evidence that he is old and out of touch with today's styles and values.

The Sociable Self

As one enters adulthood, the self-identity of *friend* becomes difficult to manage if not maintain. This is especially the case among men, whose hectic and fragmented everyday lives do not always leave space for the kinds of friendships engaged in during childhood and adolescence. Sure, middle-aged and middle-class men have business associates, bosses, subordinates, golf partners, and neighbors. But friendships do not always get the time and personal investment needed to thrive.

Gift-giving is a traditional method for nurturing friendships, but the question remains: What kind of gift can one male friend give another? Enter popular music. Many middle-aged men, who spend (too much) time in front of a computer, will burn CDs and DVDs to give to friends at work, in the neighborhood, and so forth. A gift like this marks a person to self and other as (1) someone who is thoughtful; yet (2) someone who is not caught up in the trivial materialism of gift-giving; and (3) someone who knows their music. Authenticity emerges as a feature of the aesthetic and affective bonding occurring through sharing the CD. For example, I purchased a DVD of the Van Morrison performance at the Austin City Limits festival in September of 2006. I was fortunate to be able to drive up to Austin to attend this concert, and thus became the envy of my many friends who are Van Morrison fans. I burnt a copy of the DVD and presented it to my next-door neighbor. Like many urban neighbors, we really do not get a chance to chat much, he being a busy newspaper editor, and me being a busy academic. The DVD gave us a social object that was fun to talk about, in contrast to boring talk about work or the kids. The DVD marked us as "cool," with cool musical tastes that have become timeless in our lives as we elegantly grow old with Van.

Cross-Generation Case Study: Established Latinx Music Scenes

The very popular and growing Latinx music scenes provide great insight into two key topics in this discussion: cross-generation music experience and authenticity. I will report on an ongoing, ethnographic, multi-site, team study of four established music scenes in which Latinx music is produced, performed, experienced, and celebrated in Texas: conjunto, mariachi, salsa, and Latin jazz (Nowotny, et al. 2010).

This analysis builds upon previous work that examined emergent music scenes in Houston by incorporating three distinctly interactionist concepts—the scene, idioculture, and place—to illustrate established scenes (Kotarba, et al. 2009). The earlier study focused on Latinx music scenes quite popular among later adolescents and early adult fans: reggaeton, rock en Español, gay Latino dance music, and professional soccer supporters' music. Our later study demonstrates that authenticity is especially relevant to older established Latinos/as who grew up with and have celebrated what they consider to be traditional and therefore authentic styles of music. Members of traditional Latinx scenes use the narrative of authenticity primarily to validate their participation. Authenticity is especially problematic in Latinx music scenes that invoke potentially conflicting criteria of quality—particularly scenes that are populated by Anglos as well as Latinos.

The traditional Latino music scenes we have observed and described are vibrant features of their respective communities. Conjunto and mariachi accept change—such as the inclusion of women—very slowly, if at all. In this regard, conjunto and mariachi are very much like other forms of family-oriented ethnic music. We see the same conservatism in other ethically oriented polka music, klezmer, and the blues, for example (Kotarba 2000). The purpose of these forms of music is not to create new cultural worlds, but to preserve the ongoing cultural world. Additionally, both conjunto and mariachi are family-oriented in two ways: (1) the music groups themselves are frequently composed of family members, as in the case of Los Monarcas from Houston (who received the 2009 artist of the year award from the South Texas Conjunto Association) and Mariachi Estrella featured previously, and (2) the music is utilized at celebrations that typically involve the family, like weddings, birthdays, and *quinceañera*. This family-orientedness is another feature of their authenticity. Interestingly, neither scene is anchored to specific geo-social locations, as Irwin would expect. In other words, individuals do not typically go to a specific place to hear the music; rather the music is brought to a specific place (like a wedding, birthday party, or *quinceañera*) for the purpose of celebration.

Salsa and Latin jazz are similar to one another insofar as their Latino fans increasingly view them as inauthentic due to the invasion of non-Latino participants. Their authenticity is problematic because they are newer musical styles, having emerged in the mid-twentieth century; they have not maintained their original format and musical style, but instead have incorporated new styles and sounds; and they are frequented by non-Latinos who view scene participation as a means of acquiring social capital. These two musical genres do, however, maintain distinct scenes that include both the cultural phenomenon (the artists, audience, music, etc.) and actual ecological locations like clubs, bars, and restaurants.

What seems to unite all four scenes is their conformity to tightly written scripts. One of the most crucial scripts in each of these scenes involves dancing. Participants in each music scene noted the importance of movement and dance to scene participation; in fact, *not* dancing in these scenes would be a violation of the tightly written scripts of the scene and would clearly mark one as an outsider. However, it

is important to note that the style of dance varies. In the two highly authentic scenes (mariachi and conjunto), the dancing is informal and spontaneous. However, in the two less authentic scenes (salsa and Latin jazz), the dancing is more formalized. In the case of salsa, for instance, the dance is so formalized that schools have even emerged to teach people the dance steps.

As we earlier found among emerging Latino music scenes, each of these traditional scenes evokes a unique sense of place. Conjunto and mariachi remind scene participants of a previous time and place, typically of their home country or the land of their ancestors. Salsa also serves this same purpose for many Latino participants. Conjunto and mariachi also serve to create family-oriented places by providing the background and context for important celebrations. Salsa and Latin jazz, on the other hand, are thoroughly cosmopolitan scenes that simply serve as "the place to be" for many individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

Cross-Generation Case Study: Blues Music

Blues music provides one of the clearest lenses to view the place music holds in the course of life. The blues are among the oldest styles of music in America, reaching back to the era of slavery in our country. The blues are international by birth, including elements of African, British, French, and Anglo-American cultures. The blues form the basis for much of what we know today as popular music, inspiring rock 'n' roll, jazz, pop, and hip hop. The blues are cross-generation, with young musicians and fans admiring its contributions to guitar artistry and older fans appreciating its accessibility and warmth. I will explore several features of the blues, keeping in mind that people at various stations of life and personal circumstances can use the blues as a resource for addressing many kinds of problems we face throughout life.

The Blues Heritage in Houston and Its Impact on Rock 'n' Roll Culture

The following is a personal account of my life with the blues. There is nothing extraordinary about my story, except to say that it is extraordinarily common for young white men who grew up in the blues capital of the world: Chicago.

Consider the following narrative. My first true experience of the blues—or at least the one I remember best—occurred while I was a freshman in college in 1965. One would not ordinarily consider this a late introduction to the most American of American art forms, except for the fact that I grew up in Chicago. The 1960s countercultural folklore adheres religiously to the belief that all young males growing up then and there spent all their spare time like Paul Butterfield did—hanging out at the Regal Ballroom or the old blues clubs around South Michigan Avenue and East 47th Street. Not us. We listened to Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, the Beach Boys (girls liked them), and all the Motown R&B artists such as Smokey Bill Robinson and the Miracles, who comforted us with songs like "The Tracks of My Tears" when the girls didn't like us, and a little Jefferson Airplane. We didn't blow

off the blues because it was Black music. It was old people music—to be avoided like Lawrence Welk, jazz, and the plague.

All this changed when I entered St. Procopius College in 1965. Located in a pristine rural area, west of the Big City, St. Procopius was run by the Benedictine monks and was home to 350 male students. There wasn't much to do at night except to sneak beer into the dorms, speculate on what girls were all about, and listen to Big Duke. Several days each week, the Duke hosted a live radio program on WOPA from his club, Duke's Upper Level Lounge. The Lounge was located on the West Side of Chicago, in a big old two-story brick building with a deserted storefront downstairs—a building, incidentally, that was destroyed during the urban uprising in 1968 following the assassination of Dr. King.

Duke spoke in a deep, gorgeous baritone voice. He presided over what appeared to be a continuous party consisting of live and recorded blues music. One could hear Walter Jackson sing "It's an Uphill Climb to the Bottom," or Hound Dog Taylor groove on a guitar riff for what seemed like forever. Duke's Upper Level Lounge was a juke joint, one of the numerous music venues blues historian Paul Oliver (1998) described as:

> English pubs and Western saloons without the charm of the former or the romantic appeal of the latter; they're social clubrooms to which church members don't go…. They are in fact unappealing, decrepit, crumbling shacks, which never seem to have been built yesterday, but always thirty or forty years ago, and unpainted since. They're the last retreat, the final bastion for black people who want to get away from whites, and the pressures of the day. It was in these juke joints that blues found a home.

It was at Duke's Upper Level Lounge that we found a home in the blues. Like his other faithful fans, we started calling Duke on the telephone to say hi and to tell him how cool we thought he was. In turn, Duke would acknowledge us on the air as his "blue-eyed college boys," which is without question the coolest moniker I have ever had bestowed on me.

One fateful Saturday evening, Duke invited us on the air to join him at his club. We worked up our courage—with the help of more than a few beers—and somehow made our way down the interstate to Duke's. We parked in a dark and foreboding alley and climbed the creaky old wooden stairs. As we entered the club, I vaguely remember a lively room, simultaneously dark and bright from a thousand little party lights strung all over. Duke was of smaller stature than we imagined him to be, given his heavy radio voice. He was totally surprised to see us but made us feel right at home. We had no idea what to say to him, but I think we wanted him to both celebrate us for our hip appreciation of the blues and forgive us for being white. I can't tell you who the band was playing that night, but I remember the loud and piercing electric guitar that filled the club. I'm sure I haven't heard that band since, but I hear that same guitar every time I hear Jeff Beck, Carlos Santana,

Robert Cray, Eric Clapton, or Gary Clark, Jr. plug their guitars into the aesthetic wonderland we call the blues.

Now, how does this lengthy autobiographical tome help us understand the impact of blues music on rock music culture in Houston? The popular writing on this topic tends to view this phenomenon in two different ways. First, the popular literature discusses how the rock music industry has ripped off blues artists. Although blues music has served as a major precursor to modern rock 'n' roll, this fact has only been acknowledged recently and sporadically by white artists. More importantly, African-American blues artists have rarely tasted the financial fruits of their creativity to the degree their white protégés have. It is now widely known that Elvis Presley not only received inspiration from listening to the records of Big Boy Crudup and Big Momma Thornton, but also got rich covering Otis Blackwell's "All Shook Up" and "Don't Be Cruel"… Pat Boone, Dion and the Belmonts, and on, and on.

Second, the biographical literature on major rock stars points to the pervasive influence of the blues on these stars. According to Davin Seay (1986: 166), the boyish Rolling Stones

> fell under the spell of black American music, in particular the raw, electrified exoticism of Chicago blues and early rock and roll as championed by artists like Elmore James, Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters. Eric Clapton covered Sonny Boy Williamson's "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" while a member of the Yardbirds, and cites Freddy King as his: "number one influence".

Van Morrison and ZZ Top, among many other rockers, claim that John Lee Hooker has served as a major inspiration… the Beatles, the Who, and on, and on.

Although the argument that rock music rips off the blues is obviously true and historically supported, it too is not quite as conclusive as often stated. First, musicians and lawyers readily admit that there is much gray area between artistic influence and borrowing, and artistic theft. Second, there is some evidence that ripping off the blues is intraracial as well as interracial, as witnessed by the now well-chronicled exploits of Don Robey of Duke-Peacock Records in Houston in the 1950s (e.g., George 1988). Third, there are examples, albeit admittedly few in number and minor in impact, of blues artists who have profited by covering white songs, for example, Billy Stewart's stirring 1960s rendition of George Gershwin's "Summertime" and John Lee Hooker's 1970s soulful version of Van Morrison's "T.B. Sheets." Apart from the legal and financial problems infecting the relationship between the blues and rock music, there is little question that the blues have inspired rock music artistically.

The sociological concern here is how the myth of the blues inspiration is essential to many rock stars' self and identity. Put differently, a critical audience today would probably question any rock 'n' roll star who did not claim blues inspiration—how else could they possibly be authentic rock 'n' rollers! Rock fans expect blues

inspiration, and the mass media provide much evidence for it. I can't recall the last time I heard or read the following question posed to any rock star: "And who were your sources of inspiration?", and at least one of the now culturally correct and discrete lists of old blues artists was not mentioned. My cynicism on this issue was solidified when I recently read Ringo Starr's claim that Lightnin' Hopkins was his major musical influence. Ringo Starr? What we do know for sure is that white fans and musicians like to tell stories about the importance of the blues to their lives and music. As the French theorist Roland Barthes (1972) reminds us, our everyday lives and culture consist largely of and are driven by the myths we create and relay to each other.

My *story* of Duke's Upper Level Lounge is probably more important to me today than when it actually took place. This story now helps me to make good, nostalgic sense of a very complex (racially, interpersonally, and educationally) period of my early adult life (Adams, et al. 2014). Sociologically, we can learn two things by analyzing these stories: the complex interactional, inter-group, and cultural processes by which one musical form impacts another; and the role these stories play in narrating American culture. Accordingly, I conducted seven in-depth interviews with local, white rock artists. I had them relate the stories of their artistic careers to me, and I probed specifically for the role the blues played in the emergence of those careers. The following are excerpts from two of the most illustrative and interesting stories.

Ezra Charles

Ezra Charles is among the most successful local musicians in Texas and Louisiana in terms of work: he is always working. With his band, The Works, Ezra plays clubs throughout the Gulf Coast region. He has performed at the Compaq Center and the Toyota Center arenas during Rockets basketball games, keeping the audience entertained during time-outs. He characterizes his music as a cross between rockabilly and the blues. He plays piano—and how! In 2013, Ezra was awarded the Houston Press Award for Best Keyboardist.

Ezra grew up in Beaumont, Texas. His earliest direct blues influences were white blues guitarists Johnny and Edgar Winter, who went to high school with him. Until he traveled to Houston in the mid-1960s to study electrical engineering at Rice University, Ezra's only exposure to African-American blues was through records. The records he listened to included Ray Charles and Otis Spann.

A key point that emerged from this interview was a portrait of the impact of segregation on white blues men that differed from the standard literature. Specifically, segregation was not so much a barrier to be overcome courageously by infiltrating Black blues clubs, like we did up north. Instead, segregation in the south shaped the white blues experience more forcefully if insidiously.

Young white boys did not routinely attend Black clubs. Most access to Black blues men came about when the blues men played white clubs. Famous Black blues men from Houston, like Juke Boy Bonner and Jimmy Reed, were allowed

to play Liberty Hall, the major rock venue in town, but only as national stars and not as local artists. Integration worked slowly in Houston. Blues men like Lightnin' Hopkins were invited to perform at Rice University during the later 1960s. Liberal students and faculty members celebrated them as folk artists.

I would argue that, ironically, this sophisticated designation worked against the blues artists' interests. Folk artists are not expected to earn as much at a gig as a regular juke joint player. There is no bar at a coffee house to "up" the money. Furthermore, the folk artist designation turns the blues man into a white, middle-class cultural artifact who is valued because he is important, not because he can jam. Ezra also noted that Black blues men did not and do not always want young white boys infiltrating their turf.

As we moved into the 1970s and '80s in Texas, and the pressures of public segregation waned, Ezra would take his band to Black clubs to see various artists. Ezra's saxophone player, Ernest Potts, is an African-American. Ezra recounts how, when they were once walking towards a Black club, Ernest exclaimed: "my legs are hurting, why don't you boys just go ahead." Ernest used this ploy to lag behind all the nerdy white boys, with whom he did not want to be associated by his friends.

Carolyn Wonderland

Carolyn Wonderland is a now middle-aged white blues singer, nicely along the lines of Janis Joplin in style. Like Ezra, she plays throughout Texas quite a bit. She has recorded several critically acclaimed CDs and signed a songwriting contract with a major record company. Carolyn is important for our analysis because she represents the blues/existential side of white blues, as opposed to the industry/job-side projected more by Ezra Charles.

Carolyn's model of the blues is very simple. To her, the blues represent authenticity and honesty, most commonly displayed through up-front feelings. She cites Etta James, Trudy Lynn, and Joe "Guitar" Hughes from Houston as her major influences. She liked Etta because she could "swing;" she likes Trudy because she is "cool;" and she liked Joe because of his soul: "I've seen him play, like I was one of four people there and I've seen him play in front of four hundred people, and he was the same. I don't know if I can do it like he does." (Etta James passed away in 2012 and Joe "Guitar" Hughes passed away in 2003.)

Like Ezra, Carolyn's first live blues experience was with a white blues man, Little Screamin' Kenny. Her parents took her to the Juneteenth Festival at Miller Theater in Houston, where she saw all kinds of African-American performers. Her most memorable live blues experience came when she was sixteen years old and snuck into the Evening Shadows Club on the southside of Houston to see Joe Hughes and Trudy Lynn.

Carolyn painted a portrait of her live experiences of Black blues that is different from the literature. Again, we are ordinarily given the image of young white boys' attention glued on the fingers and frets of old blues men. Carolyn prefers to listen with her eyes closed: "I usually have my eyes closed. Maybe this isn't true for

everybody, but when I have my eyes open, you're so easily distracted by all the visual things going on.... I like to keep my eyes closed and just listen."

The musicians' expertise is in what "makes you shake." Carolyn defines "shake" as "when the hairs on the back of your neck stand up." The member term "shake" resists definition and middle-class conceptualization. In contrast to the typically arrogant white blues kid, Carolyn does not think of her music as blues. She says she cannot write the blues but, more importantly, she thinks she is too young to write the blues! Yet Carolyn believes that she was able to feel the blues when she got thrown out of high school for protesting the hair length rule. In sum, Carolyn gives the distinct impression that one cannot learn the blues. You can only be ready to play the blues.

Discussion

Mass media terms like "influence" and "inspiration" simply gloss over the immensely complex relationship between African-American blues and white rock 'n' roll. The excerpts from biographic stories presented above suggest several ways these kinds of stories function for the artists' self-identities. These stories (a) factually describe the impact of the blues on rock artists' work and careers. Rock artists learn about lyrical content, feelings portrayed by the blues, and blues techniques; (b) these stories enhance the rock artists' sense of self as artists. The stories locate the artists within a musical tradition highly esteemed by the rock audience and press; (c) these stories help explain to the world why the rock artists became "blues artists," as opposed to adherents of other styles of popular music; (d) these stories serve to romanticize one's biography as an artist, by showing that one did not simply learn about the blues through formal study but took risks and chances to learn about the blues; and (e) these stories serve to locate international rock artists within American culture.

I will close with Houston Baker's (1993: 81) warning to Black Studies scholars who would investigate another critical cultural form: rap. I think the warning also applies to those of us who study the blues:

> Yet the demand felt by forty-something experts seems to be to get "hip" and provide instant-replay analysis in the fashion of commentators for Monday night football. However, the instant-replay mode vis-a-vis historically situated and resonantly important forms of transnational cultural expressiveness constitutes only a self-aggrandizing act of scholarly hipsterism. But one might recommend that they be at least as exacting in their knowledge of rap as the rappers they pretend to discuss, defend, categorize, or stand witness for.

Cross Generation: Blues Societies

Blues music is clearly a mainstay in American, and increasingly international, music culture. Blues music is also experienced and appreciated by all generations. Middle school music teachers teach children how to play a common type of three-chord

song, the simple twelve-bar blues, that used in blues and rock 'n' roll. Early adolescents most likely learn to play a blues riff as their first guitar song. Older teenagers and young adults—or teenagers and their baby boomer grandfathers—argue over who plays the best blues guitar: Eric Clapton or Jimi Hendrix or…? The universal appeal of blues music allows it to be a part of people's lives all the way across the course of life.

Of particular relevance to this study is how blues music supports various experiences of self. To be acknowledged as a legitimate blues man, such as Buddy Guy, sets a musician up for life (Figure 5.2). Since very few musicians can make a claim to be a Buddy Guy, blues fans who perceived themselves as *joiners* can creatively enter Buddy's cultural world by participating in blues societies. According to the nonprofit Blues Foundation, there are approximately 165 blues societies in the U.S. and around the world (www.blues.org). Local blues organizations are generally staffed by volunteers and engage in the following types of activities:

- Publication of newsletters
- Weekly or monthly blues jams
- Benefit activities
- Educational programs (Kotarba 2013a: 75)

The membership of these organization reflects widespread diversity. A survey of engaged blues fans (e.g., those who belong to blues societies, subscribe to blues

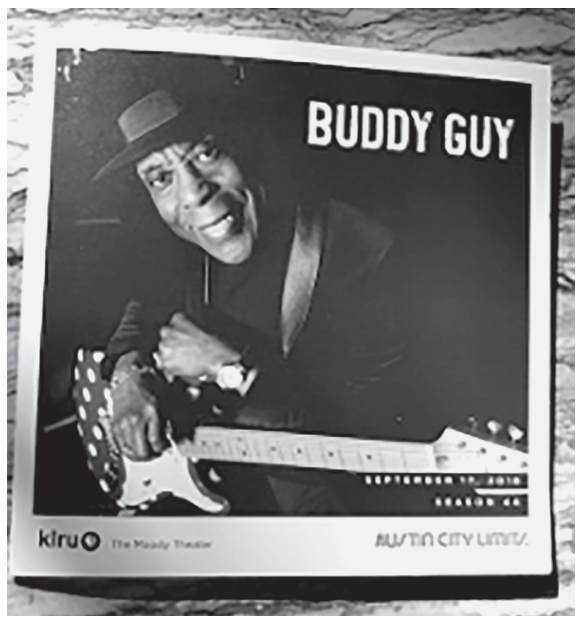


FIGURE 5.2 Buddy Guy

publications, etc.) conducted by the Blues Festival Guide (https://bluesfestivalguide.com/) found that:

- 48.2% are 51 years of age or older
- 66.1% are either married or with a significant other
- 91.2% are white
- 48.9% earn over $50,000 annually
- 75.1% have at least some college education
- 77% own their own home
- 71.6% purchase music CDs online
- 75.8% are not musicians or artists

My experience with the Houston Blues Society supports these findings. In general, blues music fans who actively engage the blues scene are middle-aged, middle-American folks. There are African-Americans involved with blues societies, but mostly as musicians, artists, producers, and club owners. Most members are white, middle-class, family-oriented, respectable, and quiet people. The blues society appears to them to be a place where they can meet and be with other people much like them, where they can volunteer for fun and good causes (Kotarba 2013a).

A major activity among most blues societies is funding and conducting a "Blues in Schools" (BIS) program. This is clearly a *cross-generation* effort to teach the history of the blues to school-age children, but also to help generate the next generation of blues men and, of course, women. I established and managed the BIS program in Houston in 1994 and obtained good funding from the Houston Arts Alliance, a city agency. I put together small ensembles of especially older musicians for whom working with BIS was a major portion of their income. We also "booked" major recording and touring artists to enhance the perceived relevance of the program to teenagers. The picture in Figure 5.3 shows Carolyn Wonderland and me after a program we presented to neighborhood kids at the Project Row Houses cultural center in Third Ward Houston. This was one of several programs we presented in the community during summer.

A real highlight of our work was obtaining a grant from the Hohner Harmonica Company consisting of several dozen harmonicas, sheet music, and accessories. We gave these things to the kids who attended workshops on playing the harmonica conducted by perhaps the most important harmonica virtuoso in the Gulf Coast area, "Sonny Boy" Terry Jerome. Terry was also the first president of the Houston Blues Society. (He is pictured in Figure 5.4 presenting a lecture and performing for my Sociology of Popular Music course at the University of Houston.)

You probably had the same reaction I did when I saw the numbers: "91.2% are white" in the above statistics on blues societies' engaged fans. As I noted, African-Americans tend to prefer performing and sharing the blues rather than administering them organizationally. This informal division of labor seems to work just fine in most blues societies, since it is clear the organized support of the blues requires commitment from both groups.



FIGURE 5.3 Caroline Wonderland and Joe



FIGURE 5.4 Sonny Boy and Joe in his class

Cross-Generation: Black Men, Black Voices

The Blues Society in Houston generated one more response to the "90.21%." In order to enhance the self-identity of our blues men and to celebrate the cross-generational features of Black music, I designed a new project I called "Black Men, Black Voices" (Kotarba 1998). Small grants through the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, H&H Music Company, and the College of Social Sciences at the University of Houston provided the resources to design a project to assemble performances showcasing a variety of music performed by Black male artists. The University of Houston and the Houston Blues Society co-sponsored the program. The key strategy was to have different groups perform together to illustrate how well they complement each other. A related strategy was to demonstrate the common belief among critics and ethnomusicologists that blues music and blues culture affect and inform other forms of African-American music and culture (e.g., Frith 1981).

We produced seven concerts in 2000–2001 involving twenty-six artists in the following performing groups: a guitar blues band, a piano blues band, a zydeco band, a jazz ensemble, a gospel ensemble, and a spoken word/hip hop crew. We performed at two community centers, a neighborhood blues club, a local folk music club, the University of Houston, and a public middle school. We put at least two different styles together, taking turns playing their music, and inviting them to join for a casual discussion of commonalities and differences, problems and successes.

A very special event was a scripted performance at DiverseWorks Alternative Arts Space in Houston. Our performance was part of the "Ten Minute Max" series in which new or upcoming performers cold present works lasting no more than ten minutes, to give the audience a taste of their creativity and vision. I produced a two-person act in which a young spoken word/rapper, Kool B, and a veteran bluesman guitar player, Texas Johnny Brown, took turns performing and commenting on each other's influence on them. They actually performed together spontaneously on one song/poem. The audience really appreciated how creative and honest they were. Many observers of African-American musical culture, in cities like Houston in particular, have wondered why there has been such "bad blood" between bluesmen and rappers. We have heard in conversation older bluesmen accusing young rappers of being thugs and no-talent druggers, whereas young rappers would accuse the older bluesmen of being old Toms playing down their music to please—appease?—white audiences. My guess is that they simply have not had the opportunity to sit down and talk with each other about the broader world of Black music culture they share.

At the conclusion of our project, we generally agreed that Black men's music is, at various levels, already seriously shared by all generations of African-Americans. We simply and humbly were able to explore those commonalities through some really beautiful music. Oh, and before I forget, our project also brought Black

women into the conversation. This occurred most clearly in our conversations on the gospel music traditions.

Conclusion

A trend among adults in American society is to generally refine, expand, extend, and enjoy the music genres they grew up with. Instead of seeking new styles as they did when younger, they seek new ways to experience their favorite music. A pop music fan, for example, may search for and find more relevant pop channels on SiriusXM than on broadcast radio; ask for an Adele L.A. concert DVD for Christmas; view and record on the family DVR all of Adele's appearances on late-night talk shows; and love their husband forever for spending a paycheck—or more!—on Adele concert tickets for their anniversary or dream about being sufficiently wealthy to take a Caribbean cruise with Adele as the star. Ditto for the Beyonce fan, the Van Morrison fan, the boy band fan, or the Luis Fonsi fan.

6

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE ADULT MUSIC-SELF

Thus far, we have focused on the examination of music in the course of life on primarily the American music-self, including my music-self in places where I have lived and grown up. We will now focus our attention on adolescent and adult music experiences in other societies. I have been fortunate to have traveled to other countries, most often in terms of research or other scholarly activities. Although my study of experiences-of-self does not involve the use of formal, social-psychological instruments, my qualitative-interpretive methods orientation encourages me to take *place*, *space*, *performance*, and *situation* into account when observing and experiencing another group and its members. In these other countries, I was also fortunate to not have to battle with language barriers since most of my hosts spoke beautiful English—clearly better than my Chicago-accented English! So, my observations in other countries were very much like my observations at home: guided by intense interest in what I was looking for and assembling my observations directly and commonsensically. In my discussion below of Poland and Sweden, I will emphasize the *cross-generation* features present in all of these countries.

Cross-Generations: Poland

Many scholars have noted how popular music has a reflexive relationship with social and cultural change. Popular music can foster change by disseminating ideas, mobilizing agents of social change, and helping to form coalitions. Popular music can also reflect, illustrate, and monitor change by means of the malleability of musical styles and content. In recent years, Poland served as a laboratory for examining the relationship between social change and popular music. The purpose of this paper is to report on our ongoing research on the evolution of popular music during the movement to democratization in Poland.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-7

The changes taking place in Central and Eastern European societies in the late 1980s through the 1990s have been broad and complex. Beginning with Poland, the former satellites and client states of the Soviet Union have all experienced various degrees of democratization, capitalization, and Westernization. In a word, many people living in Central and Eastern Europe have worked feverishly to catch up with the late-capitalistic West—largely in economic, cultural, and political terms. The culture of the West, which Jameson (1984) and many other observers have referred to as postmodernism, is most notably marked by a shift in the economy from production to consumption, the disappearance of the distinction between high and popular art, and the near hegemony of the mass media.

Harvey (1989) argues that the two defining characteristics of postmodern culture in the late capitalistic West are *ephemerality* and *fragmentation*. Elements and styles of our way of life are increasingly both fleeting and diffuse. Harvey's discussion of the net consequence of postmodern culture on personality, motivation, and behavior on an individualistic level is of direct relevance to the present discussion. A powerful metaphor for individual experience is *schizophrenia*. In its common, as opposed to clinical, sense, the individual is schizophrenic to the degree he or she is neither capable of nor desirous of integrating the past, present, and future. Cultural items are subject to rapid transformation, and time is overwhelmingly the present. In the present analysis, I examine these cultural processes as they occur in Polish popular music more generally and across generations. The key feature of this analysis is the intriguingly close relationship between adolescent and adult popular music experiences. The music videos media in Poland simultaneously represent an excursion into Western popular culture formatting, as well as cultural content that incorporates elements from the past and present (Kotarba 2002b)

I base my analysis primarily on three trips to Poland since the Polish revolution. In 1992, I was invited by the Institute of Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Wroclaw to lecture on my research on the HIV-AIDS epidemic. This visit also allowed me to converse with teenagers on the impact proximity to German society and culture had on their music experiences and sense of self (Kotarba 2002b). In 1999, I visited the city of City of Krakow in Southern Poland specifically to continue my research on music experiences, but also to begin the examination of the importance music videos hold in Polish culture. In 2016, I was invited to present a keynote address at the annual meeting of the European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. This trip provided me the opportunity to update my understanding of music in Poland while observing the popular music scenes in Lodz and the capital city of Warsaw. In addition, I continued my examination of Polish music videos back home in Houston and Austin, Texas, where sizable communities of Polish immigrants live. Specifically, I encountered some of my most informative and sophisticated Polish respondents through my connections at Rice University in Houston. The leadership of the Kosciuszko Foundation in Houston were faculty members at Rice and managed a scholar exchange program of which I was able to take advantage after my presidency of the organization (Kotarba and Rybicki 2000).

A Brief History of Popular Music in Poland

During the twenty years or so preceding the revolution of 1989, popular music in Poland reflected the cultural and economic constraints imposed by the socialistic system. There was not much of a music industry per se. Music was performed, recorded, and distributed locally. Musical styles were a mixture of traditional Polish tastes and some material from the West. There were flourishing jazz and cabaret scenes in the large cities (Dziegiel 1998). The peasantry maintained their own styles of music with distinctive regional flavors (e.g., *goral* music from the Tatra Mountains area in southwestern Poland). Recorded music has always been a scarcity, supplanted by a large and sophisticated system of underground or bootlegged recording of a wide range of musical styles.

To understand popular music in Poland, however, one must understand the centrality of rock music to Polish culture. The history of popular music in Poland is notably marked by a long and rich love affair between young people and rock 'n' roll music. Ryback (1990) and other observers have cited 1957 as the year several Polish bands began playing their versions of "Rock Around the Clock" and "Don't Be Cruel." Since then, the Polish rock scene has produced numerous artists performing music ranging from punk and heavy metal to pop rock and rap. Rock music has been and remains very popular among Polish youth.

George Lipsitz (1994: 138) noted that popular music specifically plays a complicated yet critical role in times of great political fervent, for "It helps to construct the nation state while at the same time being constructed by it." Accordingly, rock music has served as a political medium for youth during the cyclical episodes of economic and political unrest that marked Poland's history under communism. In a brief historical essay, Pekacz (1992) assesses the quality and integrity of Polish rock music in terms of its status as an instrument of protest. In the 1970s, Polish rock music did not protest directly against the communist authorities, but "Instead, it was focused upon broad, 'existential' or 'all-human' universal issues in a post-hippie style" (Pekacz 1992: 205). With the imposition of martial law in the 1980s, the government used rock music to co-opt potentially revolutionary feelings among youth. Nevertheless, the emergence of punk rock in the 1980s produced militant, anti-government music.

The punk movement in Poland largely vanished by the mid-1980s. The most popular bands turned to the search for commercial success. Huge crowds at rock music festivals—such as Jarocin, which annually draws tens of thousands of fans—and large sales of cassettes largely replaced open political criticism. The Polish government supported rock music as an apolitical safety valve to channel young people's anger and energy, even to the point of providing radio programming for American heavy metal music (Weinstein 1991). And, of course, we cannot ignore he pervasive popularity of Poland's First Son, Frederick Chopin; the International Chopin Festival is an annual classical music festival held in Duszniki-Zdrój in the Kłodzko Valley of Poland (Kotarba 2002b).

The everyday musical experiences of Polish youth before the democratizing events of 1989, especially those of the massive working class, directly reflected the drudgery of everyday life under communism. O'Rourke (1988) visited Warsaw in 1986 and observed how the ultimate boredom produced by socialism led young people to drink themselves constantly into a stupor. For many, there was little prospect of a meaningful job, and even less prospect of a useful education. Alcohol and heavy metal music provided efficient analgesia from the pain of totalitarianism. Sadly, the ultimate economic poverty of socialism even precluded punk rockers from spiking and coloring their hair because of a shortage of commercially available cosmetics in Poland. Youth disappeared from public life by escaping into vodka and rock 'n' roll (Kotarba 2002b).

Since the revolution in 1989, the popular music scene in Poland has become increasingly fragmented. The move to a market economy has resulted in an explosion in the amount, quality, and diversity of popular music available to all consumers. One of the dramatic examples of the rapid transition to a commodity economy was the explosion in the number of televisions, VCRs, cable television systems, and TV satellite dishes. The number of television stations in Wroclaw, for example, grew from two before the revolution to more than a dozen by 1992. The emergence of Western-style, mall-like music stores in all major cities brought CDs to the marketplace. Perhaps the most significant technological development in Poland has been the widespread availability of Internet services. The widest range of music is now available to Polish kids through Internet services such as SiriusXM, Spotify, and other Internet radio programming. For over thirty years, major record companies like Sony and Warner Music have been distributing CDs and DVDs in Poland and developing local talent for eventual global marketing (Kotarba 2002b).

Consequently, the styles of popular music have expanded three ways. First, Poles now have access to all the popular music available to American, British, or German consumers. The traditional time lag between popularity in the West and popularity in secondary markets like Poland's has virtually disappeared. Poles no longer have to rely on Voice of America to broadcast popular American music, nor do they have to rely on poor-quality bootleg tapes. Second, Polish artists are devising local versions of all this globalized music. There is now Polish rap music (Kazik), Polish "boy bands" (Just 5), and even Polish Celtic New Age Music (White Garden). Third, Polish artists have been creating much new music that is true to traditional musical styles. Cabaret music, performed in melancholy or torch style by a singer accompanied by piano or some other very simple instrumentation, has traditionally been very popular in Poland and remains so, for example in the person of Anna Maria Jopek. Cabaret music also reflects the continuing popularity in Poland of what I refer to as "cocktail jazz." Patryk Galuszka (2020) and his collaborators have assembled a detailed and complementary update of the history of popular music in Poland, especially in terms of its international implications.

The Birth of the "Teenager" in Poland

As in late-capitalistic society, we expect young people in Poland to increasingly organize their personal identities around ever-changing styles, a very situational and selective use of history, and an overwhelming dependence on mass-mediated resources for identity construction. A *teenage culture* has developed in Poland over the past thirty years. There are other indicators of the expansion of popular music in Poland. The market for "teen" music magazines, largely from Germany, exploded as local entrepreneurs began publishing Polish versions of them (e.g., machina and Tylko Rock). Western rock bands, such as the Rolling Stones and the Cure, have begun to perform in Poland. Before the revolution, these concerts were very rare because the weak economy and the weak Polish zloty resulted in widespread and fact-based skepticism among rock performers that they would be paid for their concerts in currency with any kind of reasonable exchange value back in the West. There were even plans for Michael Jackson to finance the construction of an amusement/theme park near Warsaw (The Warsaw Voice 1996).

The Role of Music Videos in Polish Popular Culture

In less than twenty-five years, music videos have become a mainstay of popular music in the West. Music Television (MTV) has taken advantage of an entire generation's strong appetite for audial and visual media. As the major distributor of popular music videos, MTV Networks broadcasts to approximately 266 million households in seventy-five territories on five continents (Hanke 1998). These numbers have been enlarged by the recent popularity of Tik Tok. Polish audiences view popular music videos on MTV Europe, in addition to Internet-based media such as Tik Tok. National and local stations (e.g., TV1) also provide extensive broadcasts of music videos produced in Poland. In all Western societies, including Poland, streaming media services, such as Spotify and iTunes, provide a virtually endless supply of music for anyone having a cell phone.

There are in fact three styles of music videos in Poland: *traditional*, *modern*, and *postmodern*. Sociologically, these videos serve to tie cultural themes in Poland before, during, and after the revolution (Kotarba and Rybicki 2000).

Traditional Polish Videos

Traditional Polish videos represent musical styles held over from the communist era. Heavy metal music has been very popular in Poland for the past forty or so years and continues to be among younger boys, as is the case in the U.S. Houk's "Pieniadz" ("money") is a classic heavy metal video. The band is seen performing on stage, singing a loud and audially and visually disturbing song. Another heavy metal band, Republica, has maintained its popularity through and following the revolution. A more recent band, MGLA, is currently among the most popular metal bands in the world.

One of the most interesting Polish bands in this genre is Vader, who continue to perform a distinctively Polish style of death metal music. Their "Ultimate Incantation" (1992) remains a classic death metal hit. American and Western European death metal bands celebrate death, violence, corruption, and even satanism in a distinctively anti-Christian way (e.g., Sepulveda and Cannibal Corpse). Vader is distinctively Polish when projecting gnostic, animistic themes unconnected to Roman Catholicism, the predominant religious faith in Poland. Vader have performed and recorded for over thirty years; their most recent album is "Solitude in Madness" (2020). Vader, like other heavy and death metal bands from Poland, are the most popular Polish rock bands in other countries. Their genre is universal among teenagers, as is metal cover art. Vader also represent the Westernization of Polish popular music by recording their most recent work in Great Britain, which helps the technical quality of the recordings, and recording some of their songs in English (Krgin 2020).

Dance music remains very popular in Polish music videos. M.A.F.I.A.'s "Noc Za Sciana" ("Wall of Night") is classic European dance music. The video displays explicit men gazing at women that is sensually provoked. Yet the performers are dressed modestly by Western standards. The men in the video display adolescent male curiosity more than adult male aggression towards women.

Novelty music also remains popular in Poland. Elektryczne Gitary's "Co Ty Tutaj Robisz" ("What Are You Doing Here?") exemplifies the simple humor, clumsiness, and silliness of this style of Polish video. The humor in this video may not be self-explanatory to an American viewer, much like the strangeness of Benny Hill to many Americans. Polish humor may represent decades of cultural suppression resulting from foreign military, political, and cultural occupation. The inability to create culture in an independent and chance-taking way results in a mass, under-developed if not pre-adolescent culture in which "Alf" reruns remain very popular.

Modern Polish Videos

Modern Polish videos represent efforts to catch up with and comply with Western popular music styles and content. Democratization has opened the floodgates of Western culture, and Polish artists experience the freedom to incorporate Western musical values into their work. Natalia Kukulska's "Piosenka" ("Love Song") is an attempt to portray an attractive Polish singer in the style of a Mariah Carey or a Britney Spears. Natalia's tennis dress is provocatively short, and she is accompanied by two Black back-up singers of unknown national origin. She is seen singing in urban settings that are distinctively Western—a colorful warehouse loading dock and a downtown scene that could be in New York City or Berlin. She is playful yet sexy. We also witness the emergence of the Polish version of the American boy bands—for example Just 5, to whom we will return in a bit (Kotarba and Rybicki 2000).

Postmodern Polish Videos

Postmodern Polish videos represent efforts to create distinctively Polish popular music that is compatible with Western values—especially capitalistic marketing values. These videos are exciting because they represent efforts to establish a sophisticated popular culture that can be appreciated in the West, but not dependent upon approval from the West. This is Poland the way Polish people want it to be.

The first video we will consider is "12 Groszy" ("12 Cents") by Kazik. Kazik was the single most popular pop performer in Poland at the time of the revolution. He serves simultaneously as the lead singer for Kult, a hard rock band that predates the 1989 revolution, and as a solo performer. The video in question represents his move into the world of hip hop, but instead of copying American rap components, he performs in distinct accord with Polish styles and sensibilities. Kazik muses on ways to spend his very modest wages—whether to give money to the government for military excursions into Yugoslavia, to buy some heroin, etc. Kazik's work is postmodern insofar as it fits the processes of cultural globalization. Kazik can be seen wearing a white t-shirt with the words "Chicago Polish" printed on the front. In a great display of postmodern ambiguity, the viewer is not sure whether the t-shirt indexes a member of the Polish-American community in Chicago, Illinois, or a popular style of sausage in the U.S., or most likely: both. Kazik's style shows how popular music in Poland can be fun and political at the same time. Kazik's most recent album, "Ostatnia Płyta" ("The Last Record"), performed with his long-term band, the Cult, was released in 2021.

Postmodernism implies the mixing and matching of cultural elements, often in apparent contradiction to each other, but acceptable to the contemporary audience. We will briefly describe this process in Poland. First, we witness the very well-produced video in which the very popular boy band Just 5 can be heard singing a song in honor of the Holy Father's visit to Poland in 1999. A number of the most popular of Poland's entertainers can also be seen singing together, à la "We Are the World," a song dedicated to the Pope. Natalia Kukulska, the sexy chanteuse discussed earlier, can be seen in the video singing in a somber and holy manner as if she were a novitiate for the convent. Incidentally, the Holy Father had the highest-selling CD in Poland in 1998 and 1999. "Abba Pater" is a collection of hymns, prayers, and poems performed by the Holy Father within the musical context of a romantic Italian symphony (Kotarba and Rybicki 2000).

Return to Traditions

Finally, the Polish culture industry is rejuvenating a traditional style of music that may become Poland's next great contribution to global culture: cabaret. Edyta Bartoszewicz was the lead singer for a soft rock group, Varius Manx, before embarking on a solo career. In her hit video of 2010, "Piosenka" ("In Spite of It All"), Edyta can be seen singing in traditional cabaret or torch style… alone, accompanied perhaps by a piano, tearful, yet resolute and very European. (Her

most recent album is "Ten Moment" in 2020.) Cabaret remains very popular in Poland, and it may be the one style of music and music video through which Polish sensibilities can be marketed to a global market always hungry for something new and different.

Disco polo remains incredibly popular among the working classes and rural peasantry in Poland. It is a nice example of the current status of social class conflict in that rapidly changing society. Milano's "Wszyscy Razem" ("All Together") is typical for his genre insofar as it celebrates a stereotypical version of American mass culture (e.g., beaches, palm trees, big cars, and big boats). From all indications, the urban educated middle class, or intelligentsia, despises disco polo for its naïve story lines, primitive musical compositions, and obsession with the lowest common denominator of American culture.

Like much of Polish music, disco polo has continued to be Westernized in order to be attractive to both Polish and European youth and young adults—the major consumers of commercial music in all countries. Daj To Głośniej ("Play It Loud") is a musical performing group led by a beautiful and multi-talented woman, Emilia Sanecka. Their video skits include traditional as well as contemporary elements. The settings are often in small towns or rural Poland. The costuming is traditional rural or peasant clothing, especially for the women. Although the women's costumes are red skirts, with peasant ornamentation, they can be very short and suggestive. The relationships are almost always man chasing woman who turns him down even after flirting with him quite a bit. The cars in the videos are BMW sedans or similar luxury cars, even on the farm. The music is very simple with a Polish melody and a disco polo rhythm, but with an occasional hip hop styled lyric delivery… very postmodern.

Cross-Generation: Adolescent and Adult Music in Poland

In the years preceding the Polish revolution in 1989, music tastes among adolescents and adults were quite separate. Adolescents preferred rock 'n' roll and pop music, readily obtained by radio from Germany or commonly purchased through illegally copied cassette tapes. Again, before the revolution, the Western music industry was virtually non-existent in Poland since companies could not be guaranteed royalties from record sales or profits from concerts. Adults were oriented toward traditional adult music styles. Classical music was, of course, popular, with local hero Frederick Chopin at the top of the list of favorites. The working class (i.e., "peasantry") enjoyed the simple songs of disco polo.

The revolution generated significant changes in music tastes. Adolescents acquired more access to Western music, through increased record, cassette, and CD availability. The movement towards a free market economy slowly increased expendable income for families, resulting in the widespread emergence of what Americans know as "allowances." Nevertheless, a viable Polish music industry still produced quality recordings such as popular rapper Taci Hemingway's "Postcard from Warsaw, Summer '19" (2019) and Daria's "Paranoia" (2021).

In general, the revolution helped create the idea, identity, and music-self of the "teenager" (Kotarba 2002). This concept, which entered American culture following World War II, implies young people having personal resources, "the allowance;" relative independence from tradition; the ability to compare oneself positively with teenagers elsewhere; and the possibility of a bright future worth achieving. The relative independence from tradition, however, does not mean a complete disregard for the past. The revolution now allowed young people to look to the past favorably, in terms like "nostalgia," without fear that the bad aspects of the past would reappear.

Adults in Poland, especially among the "intelligentsia," who are members of the middle- and upper-middle class and the ranks of the professionals, have experienced some significant changes in their music-self experiences. When I was in Wroclaw in 1992, I had the opportunity to converse with a number of intelligentsia, largely affiliated with Wroclaw University. Before I left for Poland, I consulted several friends who were familiar and quite up-to-date with everyday life in Poland. When I asked them what I should carry with me as gifts from the U.S., almost all of them advised me to take music, especially popular cassette tapes, to give. In Wroclaw, when I was invited to a dinner at a faculty member's house, I created quite a commotion offering my humble gifts. My hosts said that they were like all the intelligentsia; they loved American music but were still not able to purchase American music. What was the most preferred tape?… Faith No More's "Angel Dust." When I voiced surprise at the high esteem given to a so-so Seattle grunge band, they elegantly told me that they were still dealing with going through a revolution without a soundtrack to encourage action, provide meaning for change, and to help them develop a sense of self to carry them through the move to Western democracy and market economy. They looked to the young people in Poland, their students and their children, in this regard, given that young people there have had a tradition of using rock music as a voice for critique and change. I have since reviewed my opinion of Faith No More and have elevated it.

When I returned to Poland in 2017 for my visits to Lodz and Warsaw, I witnessed what I should have predicted, and what other observers of Polish society should have predicted. There were indications all over of the resiliency of Polish culture melded with the new things of the present—not necessarily as tradition on which to be dependent but as a past to enjoy. A successful revolution maintains continuity with things from the past, perhaps having them redefined but still serving as a baseline for change. We concluded the very sophisticated conference with a dinner held at an elegant estate in Lodz. After the toasts and thank you's at dinner, we were directed to a ballroom for entertainment, the substance of which was kept secret. I, like some other guests, was expecting something clearly "Polish," perhaps a string quartet performance of something with which the Americans and Brits would be familiar, say Chopin's Opus 9, Number 2. What we got instead was a surprise for all: a Beatles cover band, "The Postman" (Figure 6.1).

As guests from the U.S., the UK, France, Germany, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Bulgaria, etc., etc., began clapping, dancing, and singing along, it was no surprise.



FIGURE 6.1 Postman Beatles band

Our Polish hosts did not have to rely on the singular music hero from the past to impress us. They were now like us Westerners, but on their own terms, and were rightfully proud of it.

Cross Generation: Sweden… and More Beatles!

I've been to Sweden twice, both times to the wonderful city of Uppsala. The first visit was in 2013 for a meeting of the European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. The second visit was on a Fulbright Award in 2016. I was privileged to experience a range of music experiences that demonstrated a finely tuned relationship between teenagers and adults who are both able to enjoy music from the past and the present. Put differently, I observed how comfortable Swedes are with each other and each other's music (Misheva and Kotarba 2015).

Music in and for the Family

During my visits to Uppsala, I learned quickly that music is very much a family activity in Sweden. Families go to concerts together. Families will share tastes in music—the ongoing love affair Swedes have for ABBA is my evidence here. On my second trip to Uppsala, I had the opportunity to attend two events where families were very visible. The first was a get-together in Kulturoasen Park on a sunny



FIGURE 6.2 The Lisa Lystam Family Band

Sunday afternoon in the community center. This event is conducted just about every Sunday and is highlighted by live music, coffee, and cake. On this particular Sunday, a local rock band, the Lisa Lystam Family Band, performed (Figure 6.2).

The attendees I got a chance to talk with included young parents and elder couples. They all indicated they try to attend as many of these afternoon events as possible, given weather conditions. There is no charge for admission, and families with children are welcome as long as the children are well behaved. As we can see in Figure 6.3, several generations are represented at the concert. The fact that a rock band was performing was of little concern to any of my respondents. One elderly gentleman, who appeared to be in his eighties, laughed and said that he leaves his hearing aids in for a concert like this but turns down the volume.

More Beatles

When I was in Uppsala on my Fulbright grant in 2016, the new Beatles film, "Eight Days a Week," premiered. I quickly realized I was surrounded by two die-hard fans, my wife Polly (on the left) and our host Dr. Vessela Misheva (on the right) from Uppsala University (Figure 6.4).

We made a date to see the film together including Vessela's husband, Dr. Andrew Blasko, who is affiliated with the Institute of Population and Human Studies in Bulgaria. My biggest fear was being swamped by a mob of middle-aged women



FIGURE 6.3 Swedish concert fans at Kulturoasen Park



FIGURE 6.4 Two Beatles fans



FIGURE 6.5 Beatles poster

screaming and crying when the film started. Well, that did not happen. The theater was full and the audience was overwhelmingly baby boomers like us. The most common behavior, in addition to an occasional "Oh, Paul!" during the film was seeing many of the men dozing off—like I'm sure they do while watching television, like men do in the U.S. Other men were glued to the screen.

The mixed reaction to the Beatles movie highlights, I believe, one of the strengths of my model of music across the course of life. One's reaction to a situation is not fully determined by one's gender or age. Our Western cultures allow us to not act our age on occasion. The Beatles phenomenon occasions fans to act as if they were teenagers again and to experience their music-self as if they were fifty years younger. How else could we explain the enduring popularity of artists like the Beatles (Figure 6.5)?

Comparing Swedish and American Music Experiences in the 1960s

In order to more formally examine societal differences in our understanding of the music-self, Vessela and I conducted a comparative study of baby boomers (born between 1945 and 1964). We decided on these ages because baby boomers lived through some of the most dramatic times in recent memory, but in very different societies where world events—the war in Vietnam, for example—were quite different.

There is a rich and growing social scientific literature on music. This cultural phenomenon has generally been studied in terms of many conventional sociological

variables, ranging from age and gender of the audience to organizational complexity of the music industry, styles of performance, socialization of musicians, and so forth (Shepherd and Devine 2015). In general, these studies focus on music as experienced in particular societies, largely the U.S. and Great Britain but also in France, Germany, South Korea, and others. We conducted our study to compare the early musical experiences of a particular popular cohort (i.e., senior citizens) in two industrialized societies (i.e., the U.S. and Sweden). We will argue that the 1960s musical experiences of people who were then teenagers, but are now baby boomers, compare and contrast on seven socio-cultural dimensions. These dimensions index the broader social-historical contexts that both informed and have been impacted by popular music in the 1960s (Misheva and Kotarba 2015).

The Study

We obtained our data from two concurrent studies of the musical experiences of adults aged 65 and above in the U.S. and Sweden. Both studies were conducted by graduate university students as course exercises in seminars in social psychology. The instructors and students collaborated to design a semi-structured interview protocol that was presented to men and women selected largely for convenience. The data were enriched by other studies conducted by the authors, including the second author's research on *Baby Boomer Rock 'n' Roll Fans* (2013a). We analyzed the data through the grounded theory approach as developed by Kathy Charmaz (2014). Thus, the seven socio-cultural dimensions discussed below were derived directly and specifically from the data, although our analysis was enhanced by the relevant social scientific literature.

War

In the U.S., war specifically and political conflict more generally were important features of popular music for American teenagers in the '60s. America was in the midst of the Vietnam conflict throughout the decade, and American teenagers—boys in particular—were directly impacted by the risk of being drafted into the army fighting an increasingly unpopular war. Consequently, the American respondents included a number of the popular anti-war songs in their recollection of that period of their lives, songs such as "American Woman" by the Guess Who, "One, Two, Three, Four" by Country Joe and the Fish, and "Eve of Destruction by" Barry McGuire.

In Sweden, our middle-aged respondents indicated that the war in Vietnam was of very little interest to them. They were aware of anti-war music produced and performed in the U.S., but not readily broadcast in Sweden. Put simply, the war was simply not relevant to them since Sweden was not involved with it in any way. However, several respondents indicated that they felt the war was simply one more aggressive military adventure for Americans, so nothing was new.

Social Policy

In the U.S., our American respondents recalled the importance of social policy issues in the music of the '60s. Peter, Paul and Mary and the early Bob Dylan were prominent artists in this vein. The most frequently mentioned issues were the civil rights movement and workers' problems in the mining and agricultural industries. One might speculate in a social class dimension here, with the assumption that the social activists of the 1960s became the college professors, government bureaucrats, and social activists of the 1980s and '90s. On the contrary, the 1960s were noted for the fact that "protest songs" were popular music songs, performed for and appreciated by the pop music audience. Our American respondents recall seeing Peter, Paul and Mary and Bob Dylan songs on the Top 40 lists at the record store.

Our Swedish respondents did recall the Progg movement in the 1970s. The Progg movement was a progressive rock movement that eventually included a range of musical styles. Several respondents noted that Progg was most popular among concert and festival goers at a time when they were already moving into adult relationships and culture. They also noted that pop music in Sweden has always been and remains the most popular music style (e.g., ABBA) for most Swedes. Respondents generally did not mention past and current issues of concern such as tenants' rights and increasing immigration as relevant to music.

Religion

Religion was probably the area of greatest difference between our American and Swedish samples. American respondents indicated that religious music was much more common in the 1960s than now. For example, several respondents recalled seeing and hearing "Ave Maria" performed on regular TV variety programming by crooners such as Pat Boone, Kate Smith, and Andy Williams. A bit more protestant music programming was common on the Laurence Welk Show. Much of this programming was shared with parents who insisted their teenaged children watch TV with them before disappearing with their friends later in the evening. The Americans, of course, understood that religious music of all sorts is rarely broadcast now on regular television.

Our Swedish respondents categorically denied the presence of religious music in their past and current everyday lives. This finding matches all the analysis that indicates that regular Christian church attendance in Sweden is less than 10% of the population.

Music Education

Music education in the U.S. varied by local school district. Respondents said that social class determined which schools provided the best music instruction and resources.

In Sweden, music education has always been mandatory. The respondents indicated strongly that they really appreciated having that gift that lasts a lifetime.

Pirate Radio

Our American respondents indicated that pirate radio was virtually unknown in their generation. The only example of pirate radio mention was Wolfman Jack's offshore radio broadcasts in the 1960s, but the respondents who mentioned this said they read about Wolfman Jack and did not actually listen to him. All respondents said there has been and continues to be plentiful and varied radio programming, especially if you count Internet radio services (e.g., Spotify). Our Swedish respondents said that pirate radio was very important when they were growing up in the '60s, largely because the number and quality of pirate broadcasts from nearby countries like Germany but especially England have been good.

The Beatles

The Beatles in the U.S. remain as popular as ever, especially among the baby boomers, who spent their adolescent days with the Beatles and other bands in the British invasion in the 1960s. Our Swedish respondents noted that the Beatles were also very important growing up. The only issue seems to be the language difference, which was very distinctive, much more so than today when English is fairly widely spoken in Sweden.

Ethnicity

Our American respondents generally agreed that ethnicity has been critical for them in popular music. They felt it was an important mechanism for learning about the "other." Our Swedish respondents clearly indicated ethnicity was not relevant in music when they were growing up. Back in the '60s, before migration, especially from the Middle East, impacted Sweden, Sweden was a one-race and one-culture society.

Key Finding

Music is very important among baby boomers in both countries but is experienced in different ways. Although Sweden has a much smaller population than the U.S., it maintains a very sophisticated music industry. Groups are known and appreciated around the world. Although samples for this study were quite small (N=24) and the interview guide was very simple, the findings indicate how cultural and societal differences can influence the music-selfs of people

who otherwise seem quite similar. This small but suggestive study found that Americans are more likely to emphasize the micro impact of music on the self. Swedes were more interested in the impact of history on their music. The next phase of this study will be to assess the impact of the war in Ukraine on music experiences in the U.S. and Sweden.

7

THE EARLY ELDERS' MUSIC-SELF AS "*BEEN THERE*"

The transition from adulthood to old age is a tricky phase of music life to discern and understand sociologically. The age of retirement in Western society seems to be extending in both directions. Young professionals increasingly prepare to retire early, often taking advantage of the "rule of eighty"—allowing a worker to retire when their age and years employed add up to eighty. On the other hand, many workers desire to work longer than the traditional retirement age of sixty-five because they feel good, enjoy their job, feel comfortable at work, like making money, aren't sure what they would do with their extra time otherwise, or simply cannot afford to retire on time. The complexity and ambivalence of aging is reflected in the difficulty we Americans have in coming up with a term for the aging person that is acceptable to all and not condescending or offensive to others… old people, the elderly, seniors, ol' timers, the aging, older Americans, older adults, for starters. I like the term "elders" because it strongly implies, from its origins in tribal or simple societies, that an older person is valuable and useful to the group simply because they are old and members of the group. The term also implies that being old means a person has experience with life, has insights into life, and serves as a link to the history of the group.

I will examine two phases in the experience of being an elder in Western society in terms of the place music holds in each. In this chapter, I will discuss the music-self of the early elder who is considered, by the values of the group, to be an older member of the group who is not expected to live very much longer or to achieve a very different position or status in the group in the future. In terms of music, the early elder is denoted as someone who can still actively engage music without the need to enhance, enrich, grow, or change their music-self. Music is not the cause of getting old, but how it is experienced is a feature of getting old (Kotarba 2009a). The older one gets, the less need there is to prove anything, either in terms of one's need to master music as a fan or make music as an artist or as a music worker.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-8

Health, financial resources, social relationships, and cognitive abilities may actually hinder one's ability to do music, but aging may alter one's ability to work on their music-self.

The core theme in the music-self in the early elder is ***been there***. The desire to explore and experiment with new styles of music and music experiences lessens as the desire to explore and experiment new styles of self itself diminishes. Actively working on the self, to refine it or develop it, is less desirable than simply accepting it. The evolving culture of aging as well as the relevant technology of aging leads to the possibility of active—albeit perhaps less social—music experiences. Older adults also have the increasing ability and resources to remain independent in their experiences of music, what Westerhof, et al. (2012) refer to as *agency* among the competent elderly. Aging also creates the opportunity to return to earlier music styles that are again feasible options, for example church choir membership. I will discuss the following music experiences prevalent among early elders: music on the Internet via cell phones and iPads; church choirs; increasingly prevalent televised music specials (e.g., CMT Awards); music programming at the community level; music programming in residential facilities; and rejuvenated music careers for aging baby boomer artists. In Chapter 9, I will discuss the most passive and dependent of music-selfs, that of the very old person who is ***still been there***.

Susanna's Kitchen

In his classic ethnographic study of everyday life in a formal retirement community, Andy Fontana makes the strong argument that the lifestyle one enjoys while being productive in middle age is likely to be the lifestyle of choice in retirement, assuming personal and social resources remain accessible (1977). For people who are retired or close to retirement, the message in our culture is to stay active and stay sociable. Use all the time you now have at your disposal to enjoy life, do good things, and stay social. Music can be a useful vehicle for these goals.

In Wimberley, Texas where we live, there is a long and proud tradition of being involved with music no matter one's age. A number of Austin-based musicians retire to our peaceful country valley town. Active musicians, such as Ray Wiley Hubbard to be discussed below, live here. Multiple Grammy award winner Sarah Jarosz grew up in Wimberley and still has family here. One of the premier music journalists in Texas, Joe Nick Patoski, who writes often for the Texas Monthly magazine, lives here.

One of the signature music programs in the Wimberley Valley is Susanna's Kitchen (SK). This program is housed at the Wimberley United Methodist Church, high up on a hill on the town's outskirts; the program is neither a religious nor an official Methodist activity (Figure 7.1).

For twenty-five years, concerts have been staged in the Fellowship Hall, which seats about 125 every third Thursday of the month. The program is staffed by volunteers, most of whom are retired or near retirement. In addition to some



FIGURE 7.1 Susanna's Kitchen sign/Carolyn Wonderland

quality music for a ticket price of about $25, $5 for students, money is raised by selling tamales, pizza, home-baked pie, coffee, and sodas. The artists get the door and proceeds from the kitchen go to a number of local charities including the Barnabas Connection, Operation Good Shepherd, and Camp Good Sam Wimberley, as well as scholarships for preschoolers at Bright Beginnings.

SK is an excellent example of the extent of the music-self concept of ***been there***. The style of music booked at SK is what is referred to in the business as "Americana." As I noted in my *Baby Boomer* work (Kotarba 2013a), some number of aging rock stars are still performing, largely as "reunion" or "nostalgia" acts. Today, that group includes the Rolling Stones, Chicago, Paul McCartney, Van Morrison, Styx, Lindsey Buckingham, Ringo Star, and Motley Crue, among many others who continue to tour and occasionally record. One message is clear: older bands are, as a group, the most successful live rock music acts performing today. In 2019, top veteran acts on the road included Elton John, KISS, Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, and Cher (Billboard Staff 2019). (Statistics for 2020 and 2021 are not very useful, given the great disruptions of the music touring industry by the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Americana music is a fairly recent phenomenon in the world of popular music that has done wonders for the careers—and self-identity—of a number of baby boomer popular music performers. The genre of Americana music was created in

1995 as a radio format, as a response to the growing dominance of slick, corporate, commercial radio. As Pete Knapp (2011) notes:

> Americana, as defined by the Americana Music Association, is "American roots music based on the traditions of country. While the musical model can be traced back to the Elvis Presley marriage of 'hillbilly music' and R&B that birthed rock 'n roll, Americana as a radio format developed during the 1990's as a reaction to the highly polished sound that defined the mainstream music of that decade."

The various styles of music associated with Americana music include folk, country, the blues, old fashioned rock 'n' roll, and, on occasion, Tejano. The Americana music scene began as a smart marketing strategy to repackage traditional styles of music performed by aging musicians—often former rock 'n' rollers—without creating, or having to create, any new or innovative musical styles. The Americana Music Association (AMA) produces an annual awards program in Nashville, the Americana Music Festival and Conference. The organization also hosts local music programs and promotions.

The Americana artists performing at SK over the years have included Grammy award nominee and blues singer Ruthie Foster, Kelly Willis, Jimmy LaFave, Terri Hendrix, Shake Russell, Jesse Dayton, Dale Watson, and the up-and-coming blues act the Peterson Brothers (Figure 7.2).

Whereas the Americana music movement has rejuvenated a number of veteran artists, it has also fit the music-self of early elders who are still able to get around and be actively involved in community activities. The music consists of the styles with which volunteers and fans feel comfortable; they enjoy it from the time it was called folk music, soft rock, singer-songwriter music, country music, the blues, etc. The economy of Americana music is modest; twenty-five dollars is quite affordable on a retiree's budget. There is no super loud music or unruly fans. The stories in the music nicely fit the Texan, southwestern, and to some degree southern way of life. Yet it is still sufficiently sophisticated to be attractive to the professionals retiring to the Wimberley Valley from far-away places like Houston and California (Figure 7.3).

The dedicated early elder music fans enjoy ***being there*** as long as they can. Typically, a married couple will own a small camper, just enough to get the two of them on the road to the internationally renowned Kerrville Folk Festival. A seven-hour driving trip to Taos, New Mexico for singer-songwriter music festivals is doable and reasonable since they are held off-season for skiing. An occasional one-hour trip to Austin to catch a national act is acceptable. One of the attractions of SK is the fact that they do not have to drive through the dark and sometimes heavy traffic to attend a concert in Austin… they leave that to the kids! The music-self experience is the comforting notion of continuity in one's music regimens. The



FIGURE 7.2 Peterson Brothers

decision and ability to attend a local peaceful concert or an outdoor festival several hours away resonate well with memories of music in the 1960s for the baby boomers. Organizations like Susanna's Kitchen create space for boomers to participate as adults: selling tickets at the door (which I do); band set-up, with minimum lifting; after-concert clean-up; talent booking for those volunteers with skill and experiences in the business; and kitchen work.



FIGURE 7.3 SK fans

Patriotic Events

Commonsense in our culture generally holds that people get more politically conservative as they get older. Political science and sociological research more recently has found that most people's political attitudes remain fairly stable over time, although on those occasions when political attitudes do shift across the life span they tend to move towards conservatism (Peterson, et al. 2020). Our research on elders has found an interesting phenomenon shared by both early and later elders: *patriotism*. A love and respect for country was most commonly observed in those situations in which patriotism provided a basis for community get-togethers, picnics, celebrations, fireworks, and, of course, music. The music-self complements well the other selfs present in these situations: good citizen, loyal military veteran, sincere community member, and perhaps even religious selfs such as good Christian.

The First Baptist Church Wimberley, Texas occupies a large, relatively new, circular, auditorium-like building. The church is readily recognized as a typically sunbelt home of religious services that sprang up in the 1960s to serve growing congregations extending from California to South Carolina. The church's large seating capacity of 2,000, excellent acoustics, and community-friendly leadership result in a major cultural center for the semi-rural Wimberley Valley.

The church will host several concert events during the year that all have a patriotic dimension to them, including Christmas and Veterans Day. The all-volunteer



FIGURE 7.4 July 4 church concert and flag

Wimberley Valley Community Band performs appropriate music ranging from John Williams to John Philip Sousa. The Fourth of July concert is especially dramatic. All four branches of the U.S. military are represented by elderly veterans, who present colors (Figure 7.4).

The veterans served in wars as far back as the Korean conflict. Video segments are presented on the church's large screens that include images of gravesites at the Arlington National Cemetery and Normandy France; a Blue Angel flight demonstration; Civil War battle locations; and so forth. During the patriotic portion of the program, most attendees stand and wave miniature American flags and/or salute. The use of canes to support standing is pervasive (Figure 7.5).

Although many of the attendees are members of veterans' organizations (e.g., American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars), the Fourth of July event at the Baptist church is special. The music selection is great for an older generation ranging from baby boomers to older. Being able to sit comfortably in an indoor air-conditioned venue in the afternoon is surely preferable to any of the outdoor civic events generally held in the evening. Above all, attendees we spoke with voiced a sense of possessiveness over the Baptist church event. As one Vietnam veteran wearing a t-shirt with an American flag proudly displayed on it said:

> We're really grateful that Pastor Weatherford lets us hold this event. We're grateful that they do it for us. The music is tasteful and respectful. We're here



FIGURE 7.5 July 4 church concert fan

> because we appreciate what our country does for us. We also enjoy being appreciated for what we do for our country.

This veteran explained the interdenominational aspect of the event:

> It doesn't matter that we're in a Baptist church. We're Catholic, go to St. Mary's in town… We all believe in the same God and the same country…. Hey, we come here for the Fourth and they come over to our church for fish fries in Lent.

The music selections for interdenominational events like this reflect sharedness. Simple spirituals, such as "Peace in the Valley," originally recorded by Mahalia Jackson in 1937, provided a sense of sharedness among attendees by avoiding theological differences presented by more formal church music.

The Believing Self

Adults learned to love, play, dissent, and celebrate through popular music. They also experienced spirituality through their music (Seay and Neely 1986). In adulthood,

the spiritual dimension of rock 'n' roll continues to impact the self as believer. The lyrics and mood created by such performers as Van Morrison ("Astral Weeks") and U2 ("The Joshua Tree") provide baby boomers with non-sectarian yet religion-friendly soundtracks. New Age music, such as that produced by Windham Hill, has functioned in much the same way for twenty years or so.

Popular music, including rock 'n' roll, has also had a direct influence on spirituality by helping shape organized religious ceremonies and rituals to fit the tastes of the adult member. For example, Catholic baby boomers grew up at a time when the church, largely as a result of the Vatican II Council, encouraged parishes to make use of local musical styles and talent. Witness the emergence of the rock 'n' roll mass in the 1970s.

As baby boomers age, there is a tendency to return to organized religion (Roof, 1999). Some of that movement is obviously fueled by being married, having children, responding to pressure from grandparents, attending weddings and funerals, and so forth. Changes in church or ecclesiastic music can raise questions of authenticity. As an illustration, I will briefly discuss the issue of authenticity for two recent styles of music permeating Christian worship: praise and worship music and the Christian singer-songwriter.

Praise and worship music originated in the youth-oriented "Jesus Movement" in the 1960s and '70s (Scheer 2007). The young people involved in this Southern California-originated movement were seeking an alternative, timely, and user-friendly way to celebrate the basic Christian beliefs with which they were raised. Over time, this festive, exciting, upbeat musical style became integrated with the larger Christian music industry and came to be known as praise and worship music. This style has been very interdenominational in scope and gained great popularity by its use of contemporary instrumentation (e.g., amplified band instruments, keyboards, and guitars) and links with the pop music industry (e.g., concern with charts, producers, recoding companies, sales, and marketing). The songs continue to be an upbeat blending of lyrics derived from both the Old and New Testaments. Major stars include CeCe Winans, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, and Lauren Daigle.

Discussions over authenticity in praise and worship music tend to focus less on the status of any particular songs than on the validity of the genre itself. *Is praise and worship music really (authentic) Christian music?* The proponents of praise and worship music clearly feel that any style of music that brings people closer to the Lord is authentic. The detractors, however, argue that the musical style itself is consequential and cannot be accepted arbitrarily.

Danielle is a fifty-seven-year-old music and choir director for a Catholic parish. She has seen the styles of music shift greatly in the church, beginning with Latin-based psalms in the 1950s, to the first English-language songs in the 1960s to rock masses in the 1970s to the open horizon of styles resulting from the praise and worship movement. For her, the issue of authenticity has shifted over time, just as the music has evolved. The principle seems to be that *musical styles such as ecclesiastic music inherently call for discussion of authenticity, regardless of the particular music, song or artist in question*. The concern seems to be that music can have deleterious effects on people, so it must be controlled. In an ironic way, Danielle approached

praise and worship music in much the same way critics (e.g., the Parents' Music Resource Center) approached heavy metal music in the 1980s. For Danielle and other senior music directors in the church, authentic praise and worship music is that which is not confounded by a "star system." By star system, Danielle is referring to the ego-centered careers of some Christian music performers "who put themselves above their music and the good message they should want to convey." Therefore, for Danielle and other baby boomer musicians, *authenticity in Christian music is synonymous with, parallel to, and operationalized by the humility of the performer and performance*.

The issue of complexity in the authenticity of current Christian popular music is illustrated well by the very popular duo "for King & Country." This brother group is originally from Australia and has recorded four award-winning albums. The apex of their career to date was the live performance, on the Country Music Association (CMA) Christmas special on broadcast television, of the title song from their Christmas album, "Little Drummer Boy" (YouTube). This is a relatively recent Christmas song, dating from the 1940s, that is ordinarily performed solemnly by church choirs on Christmas Eve and Carrie Underwood on the SiriusXM Christmas Channel. For King & Country performed their powerful version in December 2019 as we were all headed into the COVID-19 pandemic. On stage were eight rock musicians and about a dozen drums in addition to double drum sets. There was a bass drum, a snare drum, a floor tom—you name it. The sedate parts of the song were interspersed with loud, fast, and almost deafening drumming involving all the drums on stage. I watched the program and, believe me, it was breathtaking.

In order to obtain members' interpretations of this music scene, I consulted several experts: ten middle-aged and older men and women who attend the First Baptist Church of Wimberley, Texas. I knew them to be "experts" on the music in question since I worked with them at the Susanna's Kitchen music program at Wimberley Methodist Church. (OK, OK, I know, I'm throwing a lot of religion at a sociological audience!) Here is a composite of their very singular understanding of "for King & Country" as Christian music:

- Are you a Christian? Yes.
- Do you appreciate Christian music? Yes.
- Did you see for King & Country on the CMA Christmas program this past Wednesday? Yes.
- How did you like their version of "Little Drummer Boy?" It's not my cup of tea, but I really liked it. All the drums kind of showed the power in the birth of Jesus. He's much more than a babe in swatlin' clothes.

John Michael Talbot

John Michael Talbot is an exemplar of authentic, contemporary, Catholic/Christian music for people of faith like Danielle. Talbot is an American Roman Catholic

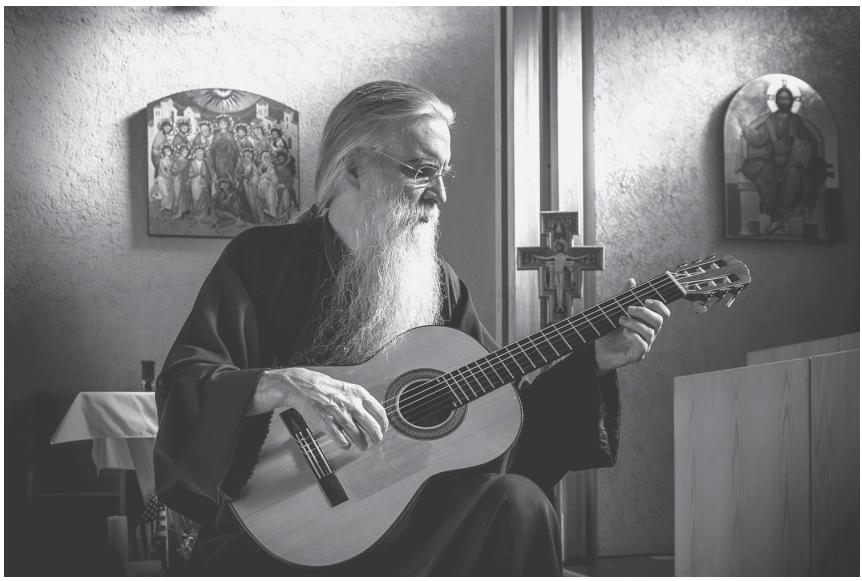


FIGURE 7.6 John Michael Talbot

singer-guitarist who is founder of a monastic community, the Brothers and Sisters of Charity (Talbot 2015). He is the largest-selling Catholic musical artist, with over four million albums sold. He has authored or co-authored fifteen books. John Michael tours through the U.S. in support of his monastic community nestled in the beautiful Ozark Mountains in Arkansas. On the surface, John Michael appears much like the high-profile artists about whom Danielle is cautious. John Michael Talbot is authentic to his followers, however, because he leads a simple lifestyle and does not personally profit from his talent and dedication. In a very postmodern way, John Michael is able to integrate his Internet site, concert tours, and many followers into a pristine, humble, and monastic lifestyle that will never make the cover of People Magazine. His persona is refreshing—and authentic—to those adults who are a bit overtaken by mass culture, even of an ecclesiastic sort (Kotarba 2013a: 57–63) (Figure 7.6).

Other Music Experiences Among the Early Elders

There are major distinctions in music opportunities between early and later elders. Transportation is a major distinction. The ability to drive or to have transportation provided by others creates music opportunities like the Fourth of July concert described above. Local transportation also allows for participation in group music activities such as church or community choir. Attendance at children's or grandchildren's music recitals; family celebrations such as weddings; and a host of other experiences involving others help keep the early elders sociable and interactive.

Health, previous music experiences in life, residential location, and finances are other factors that impact music as a social experience. Of course, mediated music is available to all who can operate a television, radio, or computer. But, again, early elders are typically not very interested in seeking new music. They are more likely to seek situations, technology, and other people in their lives to help them enjoy the music they know and love. Nevertheless, music for early elders can be supported by close relationships with other institutions and organizations working them such as veterans' organizations—increasingly comprising Vietnam veterans—and Chambers of Commerce.

8

COMMUNITY AS THE VORTEX FOR MUSIC AND THE SELF

We have thus far examined the wide range of audiences that provide meaning to the self through music. This list of *others* ranges from significant others like parents and siblings to generalized others such as the pervasive culture of music fostered by the music industry and the Internet. Another dimension of the music experience occurs at an analytical level very important to the sociological way of seeing social life: the *community*.

The classic, commonsensical definition of community is the most significant group of which one is a member, after the family. Community is populated by neighbors who look, act, and behave in similar ways. Sociologists see community more as a concept than a place, like a neighborhood. A community is essentially people who share a similar viewpoint, a common task, a useful meaning, and—perhaps most importantly—have a feeling if not an understanding that there are others like them. A community can consist of people who live thousands of miles away from each other yet share an interest. As Rob Gardner (2020) discovered in his study of the world of bluegrass music, fans and participants may not interact with each other on an everyday basis, but they love to get together whenever possible to share life at bluegrass festivals.

In terms of music, communities can generate, sustain, and enjoy music as a soundtrack for their common life, or even as a badge to announce proudly to others that they are as one. We saw this earlier in our discussion of the Fourth of July Concert in Wimberley, Texas. The main point here is that *communities have the power to impact the self-experiences of their members through the sharing of music*. Communities of various kinds approach their members as *audiences*, which makes for an efficient and often cost-effective method of performance. But even more so, communities' music activities can address a range of self-experiences as shaped by the complexity and diversity of the community. Music thus becomes the consolidating feature of the event, tying a complex and diverse group of people together through themes

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-9

such as patriotism, celebratory historical aspects of the community, or shared religious ideas and feelings. The following is a case study of a recent community-based music experience.

Saturday Evening in Reston, Virginia

On a warm and clear Saturday evening, my wife, Polly, and I had the opportunity to attend a concert with a Beatles cover band at the "Reston Concerts on the Town." This free concert was held in the Town Center of this bustling and trendy Virginia suburb just south of Washington, D.C. Many cities and suburbs have recently developed these recreations of traditional small-town centers, and Reston's has been among the more successful plans (see Figure 8.1).

At the suggestion of our daughter and son-in-law, we attended the concert with them and their very young children. Town Center was full that evening with an estimated 1,500 attendees. The band had three costume changes as they played songs from across the Beatles' career. The crowd seemed to love the music, which was in fact fairly authentic. As I am wont to do in similar situations, I circulated among the crowd, introducing myself to a range of fans, describing my research on music in everyday life, instructing them on the human subjects' protections in my study, and then talking with them about the event. I only approached people during intermissions and band break times, to avoid interfering with their enjoyment of the evening.



FIGURE 8.1 Reston concerts

Music in the Community

> Where words fail, music speaks.
>
> *Hans Christian Andersen*

Music as a feature of community life is clearly not a new or novel idea. Our modern and pre-modern brethren always had music at the core of communal activities (Nettl 2015). Music serves as the core of the outdoor summer entertainment series in Reston, Virginia. On this particular evening, a Beatles cover band, Hard Day's Night, presided. The magic of the Beatles is the way they have permeated all corners of the cultural world. It seems everyone has at least heard of the Beatles, if not everyone likes the Beatles. Experiencing the Beatles musically and historically provides a number of ways it can provide meaning for self-experience.

The Band

Hard Day's Night organize their concerts in terms of the evolving history of the original Beatles, who performed live from their early days in German pubs to their final concert in Candlestick Park, in San Francisco, in 1964. Hard Day's Night's most elegant set was "St. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band". The general sense in the audience was that the colorful and authentic costumes were a highlight of the evening for all (Figure 8.2).

Beatles for Families

A number of families, with young children, peppered the audience. They could be seen on the edges of the crowd where there was room for strollers. If the children were older, they could sit together in the audience. The family in Figure 8.3 drove all the way from Washington, D.C. for the concert. Mom and dad were confirmed Beatles fans, having purchased most of their records and attended one of their concerts back in the 1960s.

They were very proud of the fact that they were able to share their self-identities as Beatles fans with their two boys They purchased "authentic" Beatles t-shirts to proudly exclaim that they were a "Beatles family." Being good spouses, they wanted to sustain the good feelings for the Beatles they shared when courting back in college. Being good parents, they hoped to encourage their children to join them. Why the Beatles? Mom and dad agreed that the Beatles represented good, clean, happy music fit for a family. Mom indicated that many Beatles' songs were in fact like fairy tales that could be read to their children, although much better if performed. Understandably, the two boys indicated that what they knew about the Beatles they received from their parents. The concert was fun for them, including the hotdogs and cokes.



FIGURE 8.2 Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band



FIGURE 8.3 Fab Four

Beatles for Retired Couples

The Reston, Virginia area is becoming a retirement destination for people living on the East Coast of the U.S. An interesting married couple rode up to the concert on fancy bicycles and recently moved to Reston from New York City. They really enjoy the opportunity to bicycle across town on the wooded path system the Founders of Reston wisely designed. They are among the retirees who want to escape the high cost of living and the stress of the big cities, while avoiding the more serious geographic and cultural relocation to Florida or South Carolina. They routinely exercise, eat well, engage in volunteer work, welcome their children and grandchildren to visit, travel when advisable, and overall live the comfortable life of an upper-middle-class couple. For them, the Hard Day's Night concert was the sort of multi-dimensional experience with which they enjoy being identified. The weather was perfect, the crowd was happy and peaceful, the snacks available were healthy if a bit pricey, they easily rode their bikes to Town Center, and they could come and go as desired. They felt having a high-quality Beatles cover band perform was a sign of good taste on the part of Reston Parks. When asked about the choice of a Beatles cover band for this concert, they together exclaimed, "Everybody likes the Beatles!" (see Figure 8.4).

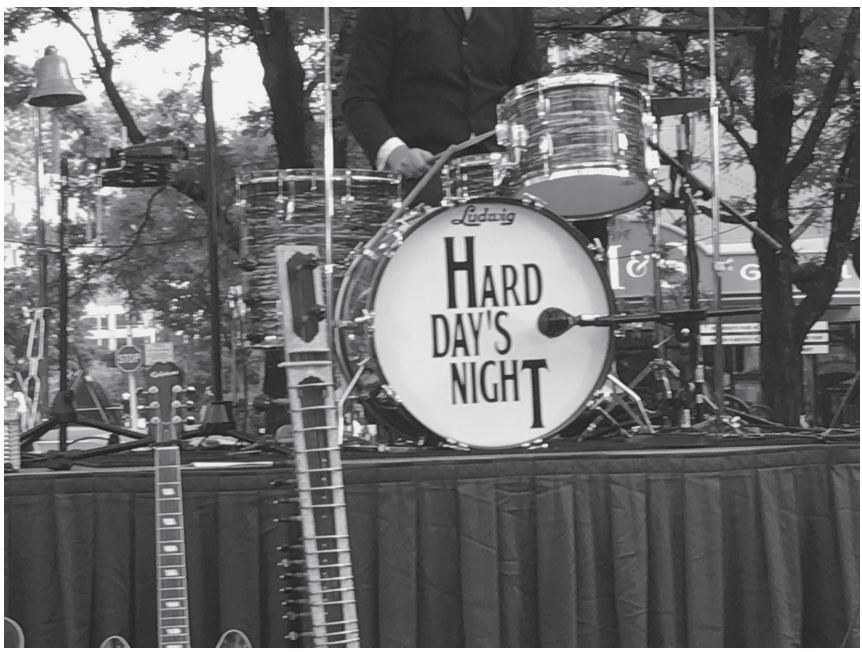


FIGURE 8.4 Hard Day's Night concert



FIGURE 8.5 Two friends enjoying coffee at the Reston concert

Beatles for Senior Citizens

A very positive feature of these sorts of community get-togethers is that they serve all generations well. Senior citizens, perhaps in their seventies and eighties, who attended the Hard Day's Night concert seemed to represent a range of ethnicities and both genders (see Figure 8.5).

Although senior citizens were dispersed throughout the audience, they seemed to be concentrated at the comfortable area at the rear of the community center. If the senior citizen was accompanied by a family member or caretaker, they could be seen in the general audience. Several of the local senior citizen residential facilities and assisted living centers transported residents to the concert. Having them sit together at the rear of the center made good sense. They were a short walk to the street where vans could easily drop them off and pick them up. They were a good distance away from the more crowded—and noisier—area near the stage. The senior citizens I talked with indicated that the Beatles cover band were fine, but the most enjoyable aspect of the concert was getting outside, enjoying fresh air, and being around other people for a change. They did not generally indicate the value of a Beatles cover group concert to their self-experience… probably any music performance would have been fine, it seems.

I do not mean to imply that there were not any true Beatles fans among the elderly. I talked with several elderly men who attended without spouses or partners,



FIGURE 8.6 The Beatles in Germany

including two gentlemen who are good neighbors and friends. They are having a great time reminiscing about their careers and speculating on the stock market. Both men kept their cell phones on the table at which they sat. They joked about having the phones close by just in case their wives would like for them to hurry home or stop at the grocery store on their way home. More seriously, they both said their wives feel more comfortable knowing their husbands are simply a text message away (Figure 8.5).

The Beatles continue to be popular all over the world. One more example is Germany (see Figure 8.6). In 2011, I attended the International Symposium on Symbolic Interaction at the University of Kassel. While spending a few days visiting nearby Berlin, I observed numerous posters along the boulevards signaling an upcoming Beatles cover band concert.

Community is a very important level of social life to help us understand the critical role music plays in shaping residents. Music is a reflection of the social structure of the community, for example by highlighting the patrons who donate large amounts to the concert in the park series. Music also serves to establish status among residents by highlighting those students who, regardless of social class membership, assume esteemed leadership positions in cultural activities such as the school choir, band, or orchestra. In sum, music is one of the most democratic of community activities in American society.

9

COMPASSION FOR LATER ELDERS AND MUSIC AT THE END OF LIFE

The Music-Self Comes Full Circle



FIGURE 9.1 Thaves cartoon. With permission[1]

As has been the case thus far in my examination of the course of life, I am reluctant to firmly attach age boundaries to the experience of later aging. For the later elder in Western society, however, the end point is just that: the end of life. We can estimate the beginning of later aging by one of its primary points of contrast with early aging: *agency*. The existentialist context for my study provides a simple yet working definition of agency as one's capacity to make decisions and act upon them (Kotarba, et al. 2003). In practical terms, later elders can lose their ability to travel independently, for example driving a car or flying in an airplane. Later elders also come under the surveillance if not control of caretakers. Later elders lose their ability to perform physical tasks due simply to physical aging (e.g., muscle mass loss or sarcopenia), chronic illness (e.g., heart conditions), injuries (e.g., falling).

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-10

Later elders are commonly viewed clinically as members of the "Fourth Age," those who are seventy-five years or older who are "dependent on the care of others" (Hunt 2017: 262). This dependency incorrectly leads to the conclusion that the elderly are "child-like." This can especially be a problem when caring for people with dementia for, as Fontana and Smith (1989: 39) point out, they are all too quickly and easily categorized as child-like because of their "inability to care for themselves, sudden mood swings, silly ideas, fantasies, selfishness, and tantrums…." Whereas the interpretation of the later elder's self can vary extensively from family members and health care deliverers to caretakers and volunteers, the question remains as to how the later elder perceives their sense of self.

What happens to the self during the experience of later aging remains unresolved among academics and clinicians. One viewpoint sees the self as necessarily deteriorating as the sources of positive self-worth in adulthood (e.g., work, family, and social networks) disappear (Rostow 1974). This traditional scientistic and gerontological approach sees aging essentially as a loss. The contrasting viewpoint takes a phenomenological or interpretive approach to aging. This research approach requires communicating directly with the elderly and in terms of their language resources (Kontos and Martin 2013). The result is that the later elder's perceptions and experiences of life—not primarily or only in terms of "aging"—may not find the elderly necessarily falling into some self-identity as an "old person." Rather, the self per se is ageless, as Kaufman (1993: 14) notes from her research:

> I heard many older people talk about themselves, their pasts, and their concerns for the future. I observed that when they talk about who they are and how their lives have been, they do not speak of being old as meaningful in itself… they do not relate to aging or chronological age as a category of experience of meaning. To the contrary, when old people talk about themselves, they express a sense of self that is ageless—an identity that maintains continuity despite the physical or social changes that come with old age.

Kaufman goes on to state that old people, even those who are isolated by living alone, boarded in the guest room of an adult child, or housed in a room in a residential facility, continue to interpret their participation in the social world. The social world in this regard can range from immediate caretakers and fellow residents to programming available through television, radio, or Internet media. *Agency* among later elders may not involve major initiatives such as driving out to a concert or church choir rehearsal or purchasing recorded music on Amazon as early elders are still able to do but can involve taking advantage of the resources available to them in the immediate environment.

Interestingly enough, my first acquaintance with the concept of an *ageless self* occurred during a reading of Mike Gane's excellent discussion of French social theory (2003). Simone de Beauvoir's writing on the life course of women, *The Second Sex* (1972), pretty much set the stage for her very existentialist thinking on aging and agism (1977). In essence, de Beauvoir argues that there is nothing in

individual experience—"being-in-the-world"—that tells us our age in years. We adapt to changes taking place in our bodies, but the definition or concept of "old age" in particular comes from others and our shared culture. As is the case with gender, external or cultural definitions of internal subjective experience tend to be constraining if not repressive in capitalist society, thus appearing and functioning as *ageism* as we know of it today.

The *Later Elder* as a Situational Phenomenon

As we discussed in Chapter 7, the music-selfs early elders can experience are extensions of music-selfs acquired during adulthood. As we note in our baby boomer rock 'n' roll fans study (Kotarba 2002a and 2013a), one can "choose"—in existentialist terms—from among the e-self, the parental self, the patriotic self, the romantic self, the spiritual self, and others in late-capitalistic society as the situation demands or at least suggests. The early elder by definition has the ability and resources to manage situations not readily available to later elders. Thus, we can conceptualize the later elders' music-self as ***still been there***. The process of the *becoming of self* so critical to adulthood is less important among early elders, who can be quite satisfied with the self they've assembled over the years and are able to sustain the lifestyle that is home for the self. The later elder has no need for new music experiences because there is no need, nor cognitive and social resources, for generating and nourishing a new self. The later elder can be quite content with the music-self they already have and enjoy, and can revisit through modalities such as nostalgia, classical music, and oldies.

The large number of clinical observations and research findings have located a range of factors that determine self-identity among later elders. These factors include physical health, cultural values, social resources, and relationships, among others (Kirwood 1997). Over time, active concern for refining or designing a sense of self diminishes for elders (Fontana and Smith 1989). There is a plateauing of self as the individual loses the resources needed to actively manage the self and becomes increasingly concerned with maintaining self as is—healthy and viable. Simultaneously, the individual becomes increasingly dependent on others to provide the necessities and desirables in life. This dependency includes cultural resources such as music. Paradoxically, *this music experience signifies the closing of the circle of the music-self*. One becomes musically dependent on others. This passivity may be the result of lack of personal physical or motor ability to "perform" music. There may also be a lack of resources such as cognitive abilities to appreciate music. Individuals in later old age depend on others, for example caretakers and family members, to provide access to and appreciation for music. The music-self in this regard is, again, ***still been there***. The self is not dependent on music as a resource for growth or development. The self is dependent on music as enjoyment, reminiscence, and awareness of life. They are not necessarily "child-like" infants entering the life world at the beginning of life. They are more like people with long biographies who are either content with their existing, developed music-selfs or indifferent to them.

Being an elder in music does not mean one necessarily stops doing music. One's poor eyesight or hearing may result in the decision to not attend live music performances. One's limited income may prohibit purchasing DVDs or Internet music subscriptions. Missing those activities may seem like a loss to someone used to engaging music actively, but they may not affect the music-self of the older person, especially for someone who is *comfortable* with their existing music-self.

I will now discuss two different ways music is presented to later elders. The first is as a demonstration and celebration of *compassion*. The second is a more formal or clinical use of music to enact an improvement in the person, largely in terms of memory or cognition. I will make it clear, however, that the distinction between the two types of activities is often analytical only.

Music as an Act of Compassion

Our interaction with hospice personnel, volunteers, family members, and others leads us to easily and safely claim that the most typical reason others provide music for later elders is to simply do a good deed (Couve and Kotarba 2020). Whether in formal group settings like assisted living centers and nursing homes or more informal and less personal settings like the caretaker's home or visiting hours at the facility, the expectation is to make everyday life a bit more pleasant, comforting, and perhaps even more meaningful than the routines of getting older. Music can provide the energy and meaning for compassionate interaction with older elders.

The Easter Parade During COVID-19

The "Common Experience" at Texas State University in 2021–2022 is "Compassion." The common experience is a theme that the entire university community is invited to share, create works for, and shape one's thoughts around. The university's statement of purpose is:

A Shared Conversation

In 2004, Dr Denise Trauth, President of Texas State University, announced an initiative designed to cultivate a common intellectual conversation across the campus. "Early on, the vision was to connect entering students to a shared conversation," Trauth said,

> but it quickly grew to include upper-level classes, student support services, campus activities, performing arts, and the San Marcos schools and community. The intentional connecting of many facets of university life is the kind of project that a small private liberal arts college might take on, but we cannot find evidence of a large public university ever having undertaken something so ambitious and encompassing.
>
> *Texas State University 2021*

The "Common Experience" for the 2021–2022 academic year, largely triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic…

> …is an academic and real-world look at who we are. We'll focus on topics such as mindfulness, support, relief, and genuine human kindness—for ourselves, for others, and for everything around us.
>
> When you do well, you feel the spotlight.
>
> When you do good, you illuminate the world.
>
> This Common Experience theme focuses on compassion as a concept that unites in commitment to affect change for the better beginning with the self and expanding throughout the campus, community, country, and world.
>
> *Texas State University homepage*

My graduate seminar in qualitative research methods at Texas State University completed a team project in fall 2021 on music as a format for compassion for elders. My students decided to design their multi-media project based upon sociological definitions and ideas about compassion. This project was both photographic and textual. There are a total of seven plaques, each with photo(s) and text. The first plaque is presented in Figures 9.2 and 9.3. The occasion was the week before Easter Sunday in 2020. My co-researcher on studies of aging and dementia, Amanda Couve, who was Coordinator of Volunteer Services for a local hospice organization, organized staff members and volunteers to conduct a parade of decorated cars through a large, multi-unit, assisted living complex:

Creating Community from the COVID-19 Isolation…. Through Compassion

The COVID-19 has relegated many elderly people to increasingly stringent social isolation. The elderly are already at risk of losing valuable social and emotional support if they live alone without a partner, family or close friends. Large, assisted living facilities like this modern complex in San Antonio have become virtual ghost towns over the past two years.

Sociologists tell us that a sense of *community* is a necessary feature of everyday life for all of us. Community represents a *culture* that gives us a shared direction for navigating through our relationships, problems, and aspirations. In order to help create a sense of community at this facility, a number of professional caregivers and volunteers designed and produced a car parade, with music, bringing joy and companionship to the residents. They decorated their cars with pom poms, shiny flowers, and flowing streamers without placing residents at any additional risk of COVID.



FIGURE 9.2 Compassion Plaque Easter Sunday



FIGURE 9.3 Compassion Plaque Easter Sunday



FIGURE 9.4 Masked guitar player

The residents with whom we were able to converse clearly enjoyed the event. They very much appreciated the volunteers going to all the trouble to decorate their cars and drive through their complex playing a variety of pleasant pop songs. The key theme in our informal debriefings, if you will, was how enjoyable it was to be in a "normal" holiday situation. As one married couple expressed their joy:

> The facility gives us quite a bit of music at lunch time and with occasional visits by musicians. This was different… it was like being at home again where the people around you are neighbors.

The growth in the number of large, multi-level, comprehensive living facilities for the elderly is conducive to compassionate activities like parades and other outdoor activities involving music. Volunteers not only perform the music but assemble the playlist and kindly control any conversation that accompanies the performance. The audience is passively appreciative. The photos in Figures 9.4 and 9.5 capture a wonderful Memorial Day celebration at another residential facility. The masked woman playing guitar regularly performs at residential facilities performing a collection of



FIGURE 9.5 Masked guitar player's audience

folk songs and patriotic songs. The next photo shows my co-researcher, Amanda Couve, managing the pleasant event in a common outdoor area. She also organizes games, recognition certificates, and raffles to keep everyone happy.

Sharing Music Together: Andrea Bocelli

The television is a remarkable source of music for later elders. Whether viewing at home or in a residential unit, broadcast and Internet channels provide a wide range of music programming at all hours of the day if needed. The residents and caretakers at residential facilities we talked with indicated that the televisions in the dining and visiting rooms were almost constantly in use, and music programming is among the most popular. There are seemingly endless music awards programs, holiday specials, dance and voice contests, and musicals. Adding in commercials and regular program soundtracks, music can be and often is a constant companion for later elders. When living at home alone, at least for the better part of the day, music becomes the sole companion for many, so that being able to easily control the television set is a requisite—thank God for remote controls!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, music became especially important to the elderly, who also felt quite isolated due to various quarantines that kept visitors from home or facility away. One of the more interesting music performances during the pandemic took place on Easter Sunday in 2020. In the midst of one of



FIGURE 9.6 Andrea Bocelli

the most serious periods of the pandemic world-wide to date, Andrea Bocelli's live performance of religious and spiritual songs at the Duomo di Milano on Easter Sunday, 2020, was the most widely watched classical music event ever in YouTube history (Figure 9.6). Fans across the world watched the thirty-minute performance, by means of more than 35 million hits on YouTube. Data collected by YouTube suggest a large proportion of viewers were over the age of sixty-five. The setting was stunning: this elegant Gothic cathedral, designed and built in the fifteenth century, empty except for Andrea and his organ accompanist. We talked with a group of assisted living residents a week after the concert and received a range of responses to the concert. Each of them was able to relate the concert to a sense of who they were. A seventy-two-year-old woman who self-defined as Catholic indicated that she was pleasantly surprised to hear Bocelli sing the Ave Maria, her favorite religious song: "I never thought I would hear that song on TV again… I had to cross myself like a good Catholic would." A seventy-six-year-old woman raised as an Episcopalian added: "It [the Ave Maria] is a beautiful song, but everyone could appreciate Amazing Grace." A sixty-eight-year-old Latina related the concert to another facet of her self, that of a loving daughter: "I cried when he started to sing the Ave Maria, my mother's favorite song."

Music Compassion Through the Window

University students who serve as volunteers for a hospice company in Central Texas took it upon themselves to improvise during the height of the COVID-19



FIGURE 9.7 Window concert

pandemic. Since they were not allowed into the center, they could not take advantage of their most powerful tool: touch. The women in the room slept through the volunteers' visit, but that did not mean the visit was a failure. Compassionate activities with dementia persons are intended to enhance communication as well as other skills (Clare, et al. 2020). In this common case, the volunteer was still quite pleased with her outreach. She indicated in interview that playing her guitar for a sleeping lady was OK; it reminded her of singing a lullaby to a sleeping baby. This situation is another example of the full circle of music experience throughout life, beginning with music dependency in infancy and extending through music dependency as a later elder (Figure 9.7).

Music as a Clinical Intervention: The Case of Dementia

Attempting to discern the self of the person living with dementia is a daunting task. The ongoing loss of cognitive abilities results in difficulty in perceiving one's self and subsequently communicating about one's self (Kirwood 1997). There is relatively little research on music as a feature of self among people living with dementia. The event discussed at the beginning of this book, in which the two gentlemen at a caregiver respite gathering communicate through finger tapping of a mutually

appreciated song, is telling insofar as it highlights the difficulty people living with dementia have in communicating "normally." The trend in research is to examine the arts as a vehicle for enhancing communication and perhaps even sustaining the self. This literature also focuses on the value of the arts (i.e., visual arts, dance, and music) to enhance the work of the caretaker as well as communication between patient and caretaker (e.g., Kontos and Martin 2013). Interventions are increasingly formal and the outcomes (e.g., increased memory) are somewhat measurable.

The issue is the status of the self among people living with dementia. The traditional perspective is to assume the self disintegrates as the cognitive skills needed to power the self, if you will, deteriorate. Fontana and Smith (1989: 36) argue that the

> progressive loss of memory by the afflicted individuals, coupled with continued normal physical functioning… continue to interact on the surface as if they were sentient beings, while they are in fact losing the rational "content" of their self and relying increasingly only on "forms" of sociability.

The contrasting viewpoint is that of the "person-centered" approach that sees the person living with dementia as at least potentially capable of experiencing specific characteristics such as sexuality, gender, and subjective embodiment (Sandberg 2018).

The literature on the place music holds in the experience of dementia follows two trends. The first trend is to see music as a therapeutic intervention. Briefly, music is introduced to dementia patients clinically, as a tool for improving cognition and memory, reducing anxiety, and non-verbal communication (Clare, et al. 2020). The second trend is to present music primarily with the hope that it will also enhance cognition and memory (Couve and Kotarba 2019). Both approaches are, of course, important additions to the management of dementia. The second approach is more explicitly in the realm of compassion since it does not seek or expect clinical improvement or at least positive results as an outcome. People living with dementia are not necessarily "patients," but individuals for whom activities like music can simply bring some joy into their everyday lives.

Music Compassion and Intervention Through Music and Dance

The situation was lunchtime recreation for the dementia residents at this memory care center in Central Texas (Figure 9.8). The staff were playing recorded music, including the Tejano music that was a favorite for both Latinx and Anglo residents. This staff person took it upon herself to engage the gentleman in the chair, who was not responding in any observable way to the music that day. The staff person held his hands and moved his arms to and fro to the music. The resident's face broke out into a wide smile as he was too weak to chair dance by himself. The therapeutic benefits from this experience situation are commonsensical: touch, balance, muscle motion, and rhythm.



FIGURE 9.8 Wheelchair dance

Chris Johnson and his associates (2017) argue that sensory engagement modalities (e.g., arts-based bodily engagement such as elder clowns) can encourage reciprocal communication. Overall, the person-centered care model seeks to maintain the person living with dementia's sense of self, which I argue can include the music-self.

One of the more intriguing programs utilizing music to enhance cognition and memory is "Memories International" (jim@memoriesinternational.com). This organization is led by Reg Rowe (Scotland) and Jim Kenton (U.S.). Their reminiscence programs are designed to trigger pleasant memories from the 1950s and 1960s to get seniors talking and having fun. They focus on three subjects: music, films, and baseball. Each program will recruit participants from local agencies

and organizations working with the elderly with memory problems. Participants include elderly as well as caretakers. A program will last anywhere from 30–60 minutes. Everyone gets together by Zoom. The facilitators will post various slides soliciting responses including the name of the artist or athlete in question; the song or film title; the year the performance was first presented; etc. Participants will shout out the information or answers; sing along with the music; offer anecdotes from personal experience, etc. The Zoom format allows participants to either be involved actively or to remain passive and enjoy the program.

"Memories International" points to music-self experiences from the past—retrieved and reconstructed. I've sat in several of these programs, mostly in terms of music memories. I cannot recall observing any negative reactions to the songs played. Participants either choose not to display sadness or anger, or simply do not see value in experiencing sadness or anger. I would argue that negative memories are not typically imbedded in the songs per se. That would include songs that we cherish, then or now, that provide pleasure in crying over a failed relationship or a lost friend retrospectively when it makes no difference now. In my music experiences, Smokey Bill Robinson and the Miracles had a great hit song in the 1960s titled "Tracks of My Tears."

Case Studies: Music in Everyday Life with Dementia

I now present four case study reports prepared by hospice volunteers. These reports very clearly denote the place music has in the everyday lives of volunteers and clients at end of life. I decided not to paraphrase the reports; these wonderful encounters are best spoken in the words of the volunteers who conduct, experience, and record them.

Case #1:
5/20/2019
2:30 pm to 3:12 pm

Demographics:
Female
87

Primary Diagnosis:
Alzheimer's Disease, unspecified

Secondary Diagnosis:
Dementia in other diseases classified elsewhere with behavioral disturbances

Tertiary Diagnosis:
N/A

Scene:
This was a patient visit on a memory care wing within an assisted living facility. The volunteer/intern provided emotional support and companionship/socialization to this patient who was resting in bed, drowsy and sleepy.

Narrative:
Upon arrival, this patient was resting in her bed. When the volunteer asked the patient how she was feeling and if she was in any pain; the patient denied she was in any pain but stated that she has "not been doing well." The volunteer/intern probed this response and the patient stated that she has been feeling "sad" lately and doesn't know why she is feeling sad. The patient stated that the nurses take good care of her and that she has a few visitors that visit throughout the week.

The volunteer/intern held the patient's hand and they talked for a while. Even when the patient became sleepy the volunteer continued to hold her hand as she rested. However, before leaving the volunteer asked the patient if they could sing "Amazing Grace" together at their next visit. The patient responded with a smile and stated she "would like that."

Volunteer Coordinator's Notes:
The author needs to incorporate her coordination notes into this narrative, meaning a new abbreviated face sheet needs to be created. So, the question of how the volunteer knew to ask the patient if she would like to sing "Amazing Grace" at their next visit becomes established and buttresses her methodology. Which is all going back to this individualized patient-centered care that her hospice agency incorporates into their end-of-life services.

Case #2:
5/20/2019
3:12 pm to 4:14 pm

Demographics:
Male
85
Married (wife lives in the same ALF [Assisted Living Facility] but not in Memory Care)

Primary Diagnosis:
Parkinson's Disease

Secondary Diagnosis:
Dementia with Lewy Bodies

Tertiary Diagnosis:
Dementia in other diseases classified elsewhere with behavioral disturbances.

Scene:
This was a patient visit on a memory care wing within an assisted living facility. The volunteer/intern provided emotional support and companionship/socialization to this patient who was resting in bed but awake upon arrival.

Narrative:
When the volunteer arrived, this patient was resting in bed but awake. This is when the volunteer spoke with the facility staff if they could please get the patient up and in a wheelchair. The volunteer then wheeled the patient to the dining area and put on some country music, Hank Williams to be exact. This patient seemed to respond positively to the music, which was observed as an increase in his arm movements, brief smiles and increase in eye-contact with the volunteer/intern. Getting the patient's permission, the volunteer held his hand for a short while.

Volunteer Coordinator's Notes:
Include coordination notes into this narrative! Volunteer coordinator does remember speaking to this patient's son who stated that his Dad loves Hank Williams music.

Case #3:
4/22/1998
1:10 pm to 2:40 pm

Demographics:
- Female
- 99

Primary Diagnosis:
Senile Degeneration of the brain not elsewhere classified

Secondary Diagnosis:
Unspecified dementia without behavioral disturbance

Tertiary Diagnosis:
Essential (primary) hypertension

Scene:
This was a patient visit on a memory care facility. The volunteer/intern provided emotional support and companionship/socialization to this patient by discussing cats & dogs and pushing her around in her wheelchair.

Narrative:
When the volunteer arrived, the patient was awake and sitting in the living room area. The volunteer reported that they conversed about cats and dogs. Then, she pushed the patient around in her wheelchair, which seemed to make her sleepy.

The volunteer stated that the patient took a little nap, talking to her off and on. She also stated the patient was singing a little song but did not state what song it was. The volunteer offered to bring some pictures and the patient stated she thought that would be nice. The volunteer ended this passage stating that listening to music with the patient was challenging.

Volunteer Coordinator's Notes:
This was a narrative where the implementation of music did not seem to be successful with this patient. I believe it may be due to this patient's hearing loss and ability to only hear out of her right ear. Again, coordination notes were not included due to missing information from the abbreviated face sheet. Also, in a case such as this one, I believe the patient would probably enjoy listening to music on headphones off an iPad or iPod.

Case #4:
5/17/2019
9:30 pm to 11:30 pm

Demographics:
Male
79
Married

Primary Diagnosis:
Alzheimer's Disease, unspecified

Secondary Diagnosis:
Dementia with Lewy Bodies

Tertiary Diagnosis:
N/A

Scene:
This was a patient visit at a memory care facility. The volunteer provided emotional support and companionship/socialization to this patient by sitting with him, conversing and reading to him.

Narrative:
When this volunteer arrived, this patient was up in his wheelchair, awake and alert. The volunteer reported that she read articles to the patient from a magazine called "Field and Streams "and that the patient played with musical instruments intermittently as they sat and visited. Also, she stated that this patient can give one-word responses but that those follow with "illegible speak." In addition, this patient declined listening to music.

Volunteer Coordinator's Notes:
I found this passage interesting because the volunteer reported that he was playing with musical instruments intermittently throughout the visit. So, the patient enjoyed playing with the musical instruments but declined listening to music. Which could mean that maybe he is enjoying making the music himself, because it gives him control or personal autonomy in his life versus somebody playing the music for him. Coordination notes needed…I remember having a great conversation with his wife.

Music at End of Life

One of the most rewarding experiences a hospice worker or volunteer can have is sharing music with a client at the end of life. Case reports seem to indicate that the experience is very much the same whether the dying person has dementia or not, a finding I feel is very important for the end-of-life worker and the researcher who studies this phenomenon. Below is one case study report compiled by interns at a hospice center in Central Texas.

Case #1: Death
5/16/2019
9:00 am to 11:22 am

Demographics:
- Female
- 84 years old
- Married

Primary Diagnosis:
Senile degeneration of the brain, not elsewhere classified

Tertiary Diagnosis:
Type 2 diabetes mellitus without complications

Scene:
This was a patient visit by a volunteer/intern that happened on the memory care wing within an ALF [Assisted Living Facility]. The patient was resting in the bed and non-responsive. The family members and others that were present throughout this visit included the following: patient's husband, patient's sister, volunteer coordinator, volunteer/intern and Hospice nurse/RN.

Services/Activities:
Provided by the volunteer/intern were emotional support and companionship, to not only the patient but family.

Narrative:
Volunteer/intern contacted this patient's family the day before to set up visits with this patient. At which time she was made aware that this patient was "imminent" and was only expected to live for a couple more days. Volunteer/intern wanted to go and spend time with the patient and family. Since this was going to be her first visit and considering the circumstances, the volunteer coordinator accompanied the volunteer/intern to this visit.

Upon arrival, the situation at hand was discussed before entering the patient's room. When the volunteer/intern and volunteer coordinator entered this patient's room we were welcomed by the patient's husband who was playing gospel music very loudly. He told us that this is a cd from the church choir she had been in years previously, he stated "she loved singing in the choir." Also, that he had heard that "hearing was one of the last things to go before death."

The patient was lying in bed, well groomed and sleeping, with labored breathing. I asked her husband how she responded to touch and if it would be okay if we held her hands? He said he thought she would appreciate that, and even though she was sound asleep we whispered in her ear who we were before taking her hands. At this time the husband lowered the music and showed us pictures on the wall of the patient, her parent's, daughter and sister. He informed us that his wife "loved" music and that she had a PhD in music. He continued with some more biographical information at which time the music ceased and I assisted him with putting on another one of the patient's gospel cd's. The volunteer/intern and I sat on either side of the patient and held her hand. At which time, I noticed a semi dried red carnation and purple statice next to the patient's hand.

This is when the patient's husband informed us that the patient's sister would be coming into sit with her because he had to go to physical therapy. He stated he was going to pick her up and drop her off at 10:00 am. We told him that we would stay with her and we sat with the patient holding her hand until 10:20 am at which time I got up to see if I could find the patient's sister or figure out what was going on? So, I asked the staff if they had seen this patient's sisters and they said, "oh yes, she has been walking around the hallway" and pointed her out to me. So, I went over to the patient's sister and introduced myself. Then I let her know that I was going to be leaving soon but that my volunteer/intern would be able to stay with her sister and that if she was wanting some alone time with the patient to just let the volunteer know. She informed me that when she was done with her walk that she would go in to see her sister. She seemed to be anxious at the time, as she was fidgeting with her hands while she was talking to me.

Due to other work obligations happening at the office, I had to leave by 10:30 am to get back by 11:00 am. I went in and discussed what was happening with the volunteer/intern and asked her how comfortable felt with staying with the patient? She wanted to stay and talked to me about coming back later tonight and tomorrow afternoon. I told her to discuss this with the family and to keep me posted on what was happening with the patient. Before leaving, I squeezed the

patient's hand, whispered "goodbye and Godspeed" into her ear, then caressed her forehead gently.

At 10:58 am, I received a text message from the volunteer/intern that informed me the patient had stopped breathing several times since I had left. That the nurse from our company had come by and could not get a BP read and thinks she will be passing within the next few hours. The volunteer/intern asked if she could stay into the afternoon if the patient holds out for that long? I replied with "Yes, of course" and praised her for staying.

The volunteer stated the pt.'s sister was here but still walking around. Then, the volunteer/intern text me that she was holding the patient's hand and singing "Silent Night" when she stopped breathing. She stated that she sang the song to her twice and by the end of the second time the patient had died.

Volunteer Coordinator's note:
This was a beautiful death, in which the volunteer/intern honored this patient and her love of music until her very last breath.

Note

1 Andrews McMeel Syndication has generously given permission to use a Frank & Ernest cartoon (2021, Thaves 1–25) in Figure 9.1.

CONCLUSION

I am both happy and sad about the ways I described and discussed music across the course of life. I'm very happy because I have given the reader a variety of sociological ways music informs the music-self, with a variety of examples from my research and my personal life. I'm sad because I have only touched on the innumerable situations in which music provides meaning for life situations and events. I wish I could have spent more time and space on classical music and jazz. My observations of these two great musical styles have led me to conclude, however, that they adhere to most of the economic rules, media formats, and audience expectations of popular music. I also wished I could have drawn examples from other societies besides the United States, Poland, and Sweden. I strongly believe, however, that my model of the music-self *being, becoming, and been there* would apply to any number of cultures and situations.

My book also serves as a snapshot of the rapidly changing business, technology, culture, and style of music. Since I began writing this book a bit over a year ago, we have witnessed the rapid growth of *hyperpop*, the online, playlist-centered micro-genre sufficiently hip to attract a feature article in The New Yorker (Battan 2021). K-Pop from Korea has become the newest version of the boy band, ready for the next generation of boy band fans. Super rap stars, e.g., Jay-Z and Kanye West, have become the new billionaires of popular music. The super heavy metal band Metallica's greatest and most visible work has turned out to be its co-performances with the San Francisco Symphony. And, perhaps most unnerving for me, Billie Eilish, whom I celebrate in Chapter 2 as the role model *par excellence* for eleven-to-fourteen-year-old girls becoming enthralled by hair color and designer nails, now understands that her audience is growing up and is susceptible to the temptations of adult fashion and boys. She is now the subject of cover photo shoots for Vogue and serves as a host for Saturday Night Live.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003180357-11

All this is an argument for why assembling sociological interpretations of music is so important: our theories and research methods can rapidly adapt in order to keep up with the rapid changes always taking place in culture. Our books, including mine I hope, allow us to take snapshots of everyday life along the way and to savor everyday life. As I conclude my book, I'm sitting at my desk, in Woodcreek, Texas, with a black and white poster of the Rolling Stones in front of me. An autographed picture of Katy Perry, gifted to me by my first M.A. student at Texas State University, is positioned on the wall to my left and an autographed picture of Dion, gifted to me by my fifth student, is to my right. The soundtrack for the task at hand is Channel 66, "Watercolors," on SiriusXM. Dave Koz is playing "Definition of the Beautiful" on his heavenly saxophone. This very mellow music is freeing my attention to be drawn to the herd of deer passing through our yard on their way to the field across from us where they will find their dinner in the high grass. For the moment, I am ageless. Music also does this to and for me—and you, I'm sure. I'm not growing old, but like Billie and her fans, I'm growing up.

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