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Reconsidering Aesthetic Experience in Praxial Music  
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# RECONSIDERING AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE IN PRAXIAL MUSIC EDUCATION

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In recent discussion, so-called praxial music education has strongly opposed the aesthetic as a guiding concept. According to praxialists, aesthetic object, attitude, and experience—concepts that many music educators may find confusing—cannot be beneficial in organizing and rethinking the realities of contemporary music education. Thomas Regelski has advised music educators to abandon the purport of aesthetic since, instead of capturing the multiplicity of musical practices, it represents a narrow view of music. Aesthetic refers to a directly contemplative, abstract, and intellectual experience.<sup>1</sup> Since this contemplative ideal for artistic experience can be traced to a particular historical period in Western thinking, Wayne Bowman argues that there are enough reasons to suspect that a pluralistic music education cannot simultaneously be aesthetic.<sup>2</sup> David Elliott is even more categorical: “a truly musical experience is not aesthetic in its nature or value.”<sup>3</sup> Instead of being aesthetic, the praxial alternative of these writers suggests that music is a matter of action. It is something that people do for themselves and that the shapes and purposes of this action depend on the particular cultural context.

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There are some differences between praxialists in defining action and the praxis in music, however, they all seem to share the view that aesthetic theories are at least misleading if not incorrect.

In general, I find the praxial focus on action and interaction highly relevant. However, the praxialists have not explicitly considered the aesthetic concept in a naturalist, contextualist, and pluralist theoretical framework. I propose that such a reconstruction of the aesthetic may be possible without losing the important perspective of music as praxis. In order to justify my argument I shall examine how John Dewey's view of aesthetic experience does not bear the characteristics that Elliott, Regelski, and Bowman have ascribed to the aesthetic. In my reading of Dewey, aesthetic experience in artistic connection, or an experience as Dewey called it, is (1) as much a social construction as an individual experience; (2) part of everyday life and not transcendental; (3) integral to artistic actions and not just a matter of artistic object and the appreciating subject; (4) a matter of quality of interaction in context and not a universal property of an object; and (5) embodied in nature and not abstract.

The discussion between praxial and aesthetic views of music seems to have culminated in the practical question of whether music education ought to be performance-oriented or listening-oriented. Dewey would certainly be the last among philosophers to undermine the importance of actual music-making in learning music. 'Learning-by-doing' was not only an educational principle but underlay his epistemic view in general. Although the praxial kind of "thinking-in-action" while making music, suggested by Elliott, is central in Dewey's thinking, I find Dewey's holistic notion of the aesthetic captures the multi-layered as well as the specific nature of musical events better than the kind of praxialism that we know through Elliott's cognitive approach. The main point I shall address in the last section of the paper is to show how Dewey's aesthetic leads us to situated, not only individual but also communal, transformative experiences. Hence, Dewey's pragmatism that opposed reductive individualism asks us to abandon a mechanistic naturalist world-view in favor of a humanistic naturalism in which the individual is an integrative part of her dynamic environment.<sup>4</sup>

## THE DOUBLE STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

In general, praxial critique seems to be relevant to Reimer's theory of music education as aesthetic education. In spite of his explicit leaning on Dewey and experience,<sup>5</sup> his basic starting point is very different from Dewey's pragmatism.<sup>6</sup> For Reimer, aesthetic experience is an individual subjective stream of consciousness caused by an object that carries musical and artistic qualities in its form.<sup>7</sup> For him, learning music is a matter of cognizing inwardly aesthetic qualities that the

musical object embodies so that the social, practical, ethical, or other so-called non-musical concerns become non-present or transparent. The implications need not be repeated here as they are widely known and have been discussed by Elliott among many others.

It is important to acknowledge that Dewey's action-based pragmatism does not reduce art or aesthetic to inward subjective aspects. Art does not even revolve around the question of an artistic object and an individual. Moreover, it is a serious mistake to understand Dewey's 'experience' as private experience (that which goes on inside an individual).<sup>8</sup> According to Dewey, the art product or object as such is physical and only potential whereas what Dewey calls "the work of art" is what the product does. The workings of a musical product are active and experienced.<sup>9</sup> When "the work of art has a unique quality"<sup>10</sup> it is as much because of the past and present doings and undergoings in a community as of the qualities of the physical product itself. Doings and undergoings are always social and, therefore, art as aesthetic is also a question of context, cultures, and social action.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Dewey's notion of experience, mind, and work of art should be read in the light of his holism. *Mind* is a matter of making sense of the world that involves *meanings*,<sup>12</sup> and meaning, for Dewey, is always a question of social interaction and use.<sup>13</sup> "Mind is primarily a verb,"<sup>14</sup> and meaning, as Dewey puts it, is "primarily a property of behavior, and secondarily a property of objects."<sup>15</sup> This behavior cooperates with the material and social environment and is not a psychic operation. Mind is, therefore, not the same as individual *consciousness*. Mind is persistent, contextual, structural, substantial, a constant background and foreground, a kind of "where-and-when-perspective," whereas consciousness refers to the focal, transitive, intermittent, a series of flashes of varying intensities.<sup>16</sup> It refers to the situated individual first-person, "here-and-now" process that Reimer is interested in.<sup>17</sup> However, the distinction is blurred in experience since, for Dewey, the sub-conscious is a more extensive concept than consciousness. It gives us the sense of rightness and wrongness and the ability to choose, select, reject, and so on. Mind in this sense is partly implicit in any conscious act.<sup>18</sup> Hence, generally speaking, the meaning of a particular piece of music is the sense it makes. This "sense" is not a question of subjective feelings, inward cognition, or skills in relation to the object, but very much a cultural, contextual, and public matter that can be discussed, learned, tried out, and enjoyed by focusing consciousness on different aspects that are involved in meaning-making.

For Dewey, experience itself is a meaningful *interaction* or *transaction* between a live creature and its surroundings involving "minding" and being as well as becoming conscious of certain aspects of the ongoing flow of events. What seems to be fresh, naïve, empirical material in our experience is actually filled

with interpretations and classifications that are given to us rather than arising as subjective inventions.<sup>19</sup> The phenomenal side of experience is a process of simultaneous doings and undergoings, which means that there is always a continuum from individual action to social action and context.<sup>20</sup> Experience includes “the materials with which an individual interacts, and, most important of all, the total *social* set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged.”<sup>21</sup> For Dewey, art or the aesthetic does not make an exception in this respect. “The material of esthetic experience in being human—human in connection with the nature of which it is a part—is social,”<sup>22</sup> Dewey writes. The individual existence has in this sense a double status and import (Reijo Miettinen calls this “heterogeneous constructivism” as distinct from social constructivism<sup>23</sup>). Dewey himself writes:

There is the individual that belongs in a continuous system of connected events which reinforce its activities and which form a world in which it is at home, consistently at one with its own preferences, satisfying its requirements.<sup>24</sup>

For while it [esthetic experience] is produced and is enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the content of their experience because of the cultures in which they participate.<sup>25</sup>

The perspectives of the social and the individual are mutually constitutive but non-reductive. Aesthetic experience, too, belongs to the public world and to the world of mind and meanings, to the processes of making sense as well as to individual spatial-temporal existence.

Music as aesthetic experience refers, therefore, not to the physical object, sounds, and their qualities as such, or their causal influence on the experiencing subject, but to the whole event and context where parts (including individual experience) can be examined although they do not explain aesthetic experience in any simple causal way. “The wholeness of music,”<sup>26</sup> quoting Reimer, is not addressed in a stimulus-response framework between the musical object and subjective consciousness, but is a much more non-reductive and non-deducible experience that is penetrated by present and past anticipation of action and its consequences and habits, which again are not merely in the heads of the agents but part of the context and situation.<sup>27</sup> For Dewey, any experience that is mindful, such as aesthetic experience, can never be only inward and private. However, as Richard Shusterman maintains, we may not necessarily experience music *as* shared but we have an experience *because* it is shared.<sup>28</sup>

## AESTHETIC AND THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

Dewey’s notion of aesthetic was not elitist either. His aesthetic did not refer only to high art. At the same time as fostering continuity between the individual experience and social life, Dewey opposed any compartmentalization and con-

ception of art that separates life, praxis, and ordinary people and their experience from and through art. Since he would agree with praxialists that music as one field of art involves our general cultural life-attitudes, a theory according to which the perceiver/student excludes the rest of the world, including other people, from her perception of music, or the attitude of a musical microbiologist in front of the purely musical and aesthetic, as Elliott puts it, cannot be a model for a Deweyan aesthetic education.<sup>29</sup>

Dewey explicitly wanted to distance himself from the Idealist tradition that treats artistic objects as self-satisfying and eternal carriers of value and tried to recover the continuity of aesthetic with the normal processes of living.<sup>30</sup> This opposition was motivated by his general attempt to *encourage interaction* as a means to gain wider meaning in life. Since we cannot separate our inward subjective experience from the processes of making sense, practices, habits, and social life in general, and since aesthetic experience is part of the social and cultural world, there is in this sense no basic difference between experience in general and aesthetic experience.<sup>31</sup> Art as aesthetic is always part of life in realist terms.

Therefore, Dewey's aesthetic is not referring to any supernatural, transcendental level of experience (in his naturalism there is no such level). Aesthetic experience involves, however, a qualitative difference. Aesthetic experience is a good experience that *transforms* life making a difference to our daily life. It means a fulfilling and inherently meaningful mode of engagement in contrast to the mechanical, the fragmentary, the nonintegrated and all other nonmeaningful forms of engagement. It is these good and fulfilling experiences that we want in our lives and education in general and in this sense aesthetic is also an ideal. For Dewey, art is the most powerful field of experience where aesthetic ideals come to flourish along with the multiplicity of involved values.

Moreover, Dewey's aesthetic does not contradict the functional uses of art.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Reimer who tries to demarcate aesthetic from "other cognitive modes,"<sup>33</sup> in Dewey's theory, the practical, the social, and the educative can be integrated in aesthetic form.<sup>34</sup> According to Dewey:

Esthetic experience is always more than esthetic. In it a body of matters and meanings, not in themselves esthetic, *become* esthetic as they enter into an ordered rhythmic movement toward consummation.<sup>35</sup>

Shusterman has argued that the opposition between the practical and aesthetic results from "[c]onfusing means with mere external and coercive causal conditions for an end."<sup>36</sup> In pragmatism, art as aesthetic experience can function as a means and practical end for romantic love, religious worship, social celebration, and so on, and simultaneously be a freely chosen and enjoyed end in itself. Art is not merely instrumental to some other end (cognition, morality, psychical bal-

ance, or cultural stature), says Shusterman, nor does it possess autonomous values that make it separable from the joys and sufferings of practical life.<sup>37</sup> In *Art and Experience*, Dewey explained:

It is not possible to divide in a vital experience the practical, emotional, and intellectual from one another and to set the properties of one over against the characteristics of the others. The emotional phase binds parts together, 'intellectual' is no more than a name for the fact that the experience has meaning and that the 'practical' indicates interaction between human organism and events and objects in her environment.<sup>38</sup>

When art is aesthetic, it is significant "not by itself but as the integration of the parts."<sup>39</sup> In this integration, parts are no less than the whole and the whole is not simply a sum of its parts. For example, the political aspects of music do not make music less aesthetic nor does the political aspect disappear when music is experienced as aesthetic. Being political is one aspect of how music makes sense. Music being simultaneously artistic and political captures something of our manifold world that in a particular context gets its resonance and becomes an experience, a good experience, that transforms life in that context.

## AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND MUSICAL ACTION

Elliott claims that since aesthetic education focuses on the objects of art and the qualities of these objects, it thus cuts artistic action away from the process. Performing becomes the mere means for producing the object. He also criticizes aesthetic immediacy, which does not seem to appreciate the cognitive values of music.<sup>40</sup> According to Dewey, there is a different connotation between art and aesthetic. According to Dewey, "Art denotes a process of doing and making" whereas "the word 'esthetic' refers . . . to experience as appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying."<sup>41</sup> Dewey, however, pointed out the process nature of artistic experiences and held that aesthetic experience is inherently connected with the experience of making.<sup>42</sup>

The tendency to relate value to the means is characteristic in Dewey's thinking and comes out when he writes:

estheticians reverse the performance, and see in good acts means to an ulterior external happiness, while esthetic appreciation is called a good in itself, or that strange thing an end in itself.<sup>43</sup>

Performing a piece of music is not simply a means as external causal condition for the aesthetic experience and work of art to appear, but rather the means are integral ingredients of an experience. In music,

[t]he one who knows something about the relation of the movements of the piano-player to the production of music from the piano will hear something the mere layman does not perceive—just as the expert performer “fingers” music while engaged in reading a score.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, Dewey’s aesthetic experience in art involves concern for the relevant details of musicianship, related meanings, and the qualities of the experience. To make aesthetic judgments is to claim to have knowledge and to perceive with knowledge is to perceive more richly and intensely.<sup>45</sup> If knowledge means trying out meanings, musical performance has to be very central in Deweyan aesthetic education.

However, a performer’s position is not given the final authority even in education. We can examine the question in relation to Dewey’s idea of the means-ends continuum. In the means-ends continuum the value of the means is conditioned by the end result and the value of the end is conditioned by the nature of the means. In this process of valuation means and ends are distinguishable but not completely separable, nor is one privileged over the other.<sup>46</sup> If Elliott’s praxialism points out the pleasure one gets from one’s own musical success while learning, in Dewey’s praxialism performers are imaginatively or actually part of larger “wholes”; musical events that are articulated and framed for a particular cultural context and situation for good experiences to appear. This process involves “loving” and “caring deeply for the subject matter,” not only for its own sake but also in respect of how the performance may transform the life of those who come to transact with the performance.<sup>47</sup> In Dewey’s words, “[t]he artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works.”<sup>48</sup> One can appreciate both the musical consummation as an end-in-itself as well as the musical process that is guided by the ideals of such a consummation. It is not an either-or-question. However, as both Elliott and Reimer point out, we should be seriously interested in understanding the most effective means in the process of learning and meaning-search in particular contexts, situations, and stages of development.

## AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AS A CULTURALLY DEFINED WAY TO INTENSIFY EXPERIENCE

“Art is a quality of doing and of what is done,”<sup>49</sup> says Dewey. If aesthetic means a qualitative difference in experience, this quality is determined in objective ways on the means and materials. Dewey’s naturalist and empiricist philosophy entailed that art can be examined in objective terms as to how it organizes the means and materials that in their organized form belong to the common and public world.<sup>50</sup> However, artistic qualities are neither inherent in physical sounds nor in an individual’s inward subjectivity independent of the directed activity and ener-



gies. Qualities are in the interaction between the two so that the human being must do something in relation to them. As Sidney Hook writes, “[t]o attribute aesthetic quality is tantamount to saying to someone: ‘Do such and such, and you will perceive this and that.’”<sup>51</sup> This transaction is culturally conditioned in the sense that an individual listens, performs, dances, and experiences through the ears of a whole tradition, practice, and culture. The structure of music is the character of events and not a causal entity or source of an event.<sup>52</sup> There is, therefore, no permanent aesthetic form waiting to be discovered, which is also what the praxialists claim.

Subsequently, in the final analysis, cultural context and situation determines “aesthetic form.” Context does not refer to the original (authentic) context of a particular musical practice only, which is what interests Elliott, but also the actual here-and-now context as well as the situation. This means that when music loses some of its funded meanings or when it is introduced into a new cultural milieu, it is *recontextualized*. In this sense aesthetic experience is then *reformed*, as Hook has argued.<sup>53</sup> Even when “authentic” meanings, purposes, and uses of a particular music are examined as important ingredients of the experience, music is in some ways recontextualized in and for a particular educational context.<sup>54</sup> South African freedom songs, for example, do not have exactly the same meaning in Finnish schools as they do in South Africa.

In this recontextualizing process it is important that the teacher knows what the music is for and how it functions, what features can or must be changed, what to omit, how to build a situation or a musical event that ends up being a good experience, an experience. The important aspect is not only to understand what the music means for some people somewhere but also to how this kind of “doing” can transform experience for “us” here-and-now. In order to integrate music in school life, a practically and praxially oriented teacher may bring some new features to the music or bring it to an entirely new artistic context, such as a drama, for example. Praxis, in Dewey’s educational thought, is directly concerned with the life and wellbeing of the students in the *actual* educational context.<sup>55</sup> Aesthetic then is a question of bringing quality to the ongoing experience and not only producing qualitatively good music in terms of some authentic rules.

Having said this, we do not need to see foreign musics as something alien to our own experience. We can always find something common between two musical practices and it may be the common ground that forms the bridge that dissolves the discontinuity in experience. We then learn to hear with the ears of the other and expand our experience toward other life-attitudes than those resulting from our own experiential environment. This process is a matter of communication and participation in values of life by means of imagination,<sup>56</sup> but it is also a matter of bridging two life-experiences.

## AESTHETIC AND THE HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE HUMAN BEING

Elliott relates the aesthetic concept to the idea of multi-arts education. In multi-arts education all art forms are examined from the viewpoint of aesthetic sensitivity.<sup>57</sup> Elliott opposes this view: "it is highly doubtful that there is any such general capacity as aesthetic sensitivity. Multiple intelligence theories and contemporary studies of creativity argue against such possibility."<sup>58</sup> In Dewey's thinking, the integration of various senses in musical experience does not mean that in aesthetic experience there is some mystical connection called 'aesthetic' between various senses. However, it is always the whole sensing human being that is involved in the actual event that leads to a good experience. It also is characteristic of human cultures to search for good experiences through activities that are sensed with more than one sense-organ. Moreover, aesthetic experiences as good experiences are not reserved for music only.<sup>59</sup>

Integration of various senses is related to the question of aesthetic immediacy. Elliott is right: Dewey did write that "[i]t cannot be asserted too strongly that what is not immediate is not esthetic."<sup>60</sup> Although art involves reflection, for Dewey, aesthetic is referring to actual sensual perception of the whole situation and immediacy in that sense.<sup>61</sup> Aesthetic experience involves maturation and does not appear out of the blue and yet it is the primary experience, the perceptual flow, and the sensual that needs to be present for such experiences to take place. Immediacy of primary experience refers not to subjective inwardness of experience but to the fact that our lives are constituted by events and experiences that are not entirely consciously thought or reflected.<sup>62</sup> Because of the feeling of familiarity, the experience of our culture is "natural" for us and in this sense effortless, instead of something called "cultural." Aesthetic is related to our cultural way of celebrating life-values, but we are never *fully* conscious of the way it does that.

Aesthetic is, therefore, not equal to knowledge and conscious problem-solving. John Shook writes: "[s]trictly speaking, for Dewey no knowing occurs when a person is engaged in unproblematic activity, using the meaningful objects in one's environment to attain goals."<sup>63</sup> When one searches for right steps in a Cuban salsa performance and by trying, watching, and listening, solves problems so that experience is transformed by new meaning-forming, then we are talking about knowledge and inquiry. However, strictly speaking when dance and music in a salsa event are "performed," they are done in order to gain good experiences, an experience through steps, movements, rhythms, sounds, lyrics, and so on, and not in order to solve problems as in learning situations. These two aspects can, however, be joined in education.

Combining other art forms with music provides an opportunity to heighten

and intensify experiences. Sounds, together with movement, dance, drama, lyrics, visual material, and so on, can be combined in an experience that is qualitatively fulfilling. It is noteworthy that this kind of integration has not quite the same purpose as integration in other school subjects, such as combining history and music, for example. In this sense, I agree with Reimer that other arts could strengthen music education rather than vice versa.<sup>64</sup> When drama, for example, is involved in music education, it is there to build up an event in a certain meaningful way, to articulate and frame the situation with several media. It is not necessary that through drama one learns something that is essential in music-making although I believe that even that is possible. It is after all the whole human being that plays, sings, and expresses and not her ears only.

### A DEWEYAN CONTRIBUTION TO ELLIOTT'S PRAXIALISM

But what do we gain by taking the aesthetic view of music and music education? It has become clear now that Dewey's aesthetic is not something we can separate from other experiences and experience as such. Fulfilling good experiences are ends in the sense that the aesthetic needs knowledge, maturation, and sequential steps to bring it satisfaction. However, an experience is certainly not an activity that we can decide to perform or go through every now and then. Casey Haskins explains that aesthetic experience is not something good that we engage with primarily for its own sake, such as eating ice cream. These activities exhibit experience's final phase.<sup>65</sup> An experience is also not something merely instrumental as trying on a shoe, or buying a concert ticket. It is a *consummatory* experience that involves both characteristics: it is instrumental for further ends and an end in itself.<sup>66</sup> Dewey's consummatory mode of experience is, as Haskins writes, "in a literal, axiological, and phenomenological sense, life at its fullest."<sup>67</sup> It is a felt sense that in the immediacy of the present moment, for instance, a musical moment, one's prior efforts are brought to fruition. However, instead of occurring once and for all at a given point, consummation of such a moment is relative and recurrent. Life is punctuated by our pursuit to achieve these fulfilling experiences but there is no final term in satisfaction. Consummatory experiences can, therefore, be related to the idea of growth in general.<sup>68</sup> In Dewey's philosophy, art becomes important because it is the most direct and complete manifestation of consummatory experience.

Pentti Määttänen has paid attention to the similarity between Elliott's flow and Dewey's aesthetic experience.<sup>69</sup> In my reading of Elliott and Dewey, there seems to be a crucial difference between them. Elliott's flow refers more to an individual's self-satisfied "autotelic" experience than to Dewey's aesthetic experience, as described above.<sup>70</sup> I find it very important to understand how Dewey

combines the aesthetic, music, and the socially reconstructive as well as individualizing educational goals. At its peak, Dewey's aesthetic signifies "complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events," but "instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations," this merging is, according to Dewey, a sign of "active and alert commerce with the world."<sup>71</sup> By emphasizing the enjoyment of musicing as an activity Elliott seems to rely on performative rule-based know-how of the individual as an overall explanatory scheme. The learner's brain is completing certain cognitive operations in relation to the rules in the given musical practice and the success of education depends on how her brain manages this knowledge-based process. Dewey's aesthetic, when related to art, transforms not only the individual but also the community. For Dewey, art as an experience is a mode of communal life. He wrote:

Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also *marvelous aids in the creation of such a life*. The remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression is not an isolated event confined to the artist and to a person here and there who happens to enjoy the work. In the degree in which art exercises its office, it is also a remaking of the experience of the community in the direction of greater order and unity.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, it is unfortunate that by focusing on individual cognition and capabilities, Elliott's praxialism does not elaborate the significance of actual musical events and the situational social nature of music.<sup>73</sup> The underlying holism of Dewey's 'experience' forces a perspectivalism in which musical events can be examined from the third-person perspective as manifestations of social practice and cultural habits or rules but in which this communal and collective perspective does not represent the individual experience with all its subjectively felt aspects, with its struggle, resistance, as well as satisfactory adaptation. It reminds us of the need to see music not only from the viewpoint of the individual learner, but also from the viewpoint of the learning community. The community does not merely influence the individual learning but forms the bedrock of energies and emotions through which individual transaction takes place.

If the ideal in Elliott's praxialism is the flow of one's own skills in actual music making, the ideal in Dewey's music education as aesthetic education adds the good experience of being part of building up musical events. Hence, Dewey's aesthetic encourages us to recognize collective works in music education as creating an ethically concerned artistic environment. *Co-operative music learning and problem solving* offer a possibility to ethically concerned music education, which combines the individual and social aspects. *Joint musical products*, 'oeuvres,' as Jerome Bruner after Meyerson calls them,<sup>74</sup> help in creating conditions of dia-

logue in education and also in giving up the idea that everyone should learn the same things. In such a music education musical action does not remain a solipsistic challenge but continues Dewey's idea: "[I]earn to *act* with and for others while you learn to *think* and to judge for yourself."<sup>75</sup>

It goes without saying that this brings a stronger critical communal aspect to Elliott's praxial music education as well as to his views on the multicultural. The here-and-now educational community and its wellbeing become aspects of our experience and thus also an aspect where transformation is ultimated. In addition to having meaning *de facto*, community is something that needs to be developed.<sup>76</sup> It is in a process of achievement without becoming ever finally achieved. The "'we' and 'our' exist only when the consequences of combined action are perceived and become an object of desire and effort,"<sup>77</sup> Dewey writes. In spite of the necessary integration between the educational context and the larger society, the effort which is invested in order to achieve the 'we' is not simply reproducing the functions of the society or some other distant society through its music.<sup>78</sup> A Deweyan music education is interested in a musicing community that develops individuality through joint action by reconstructing the social in intelligent ways. It criticizes practices when needed and tries to achieve an inclusive, ethically concerned community of learners who act for themselves. Education is in this sense not for the future life only, but also its own end.<sup>79</sup> When we relate the basic idea of Dewey's aesthetic to his ideas according to which variety is the spice of life<sup>80</sup> and that culture, the interaction that we experience as natural, is not an end in itself, it should be clear that Dewey's music education also widens the meanings in life through critical multimusical education.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Praxial writers in music education have reminded us how our notions of music and art are mingled with the language we use, with scientific paradigms, practices, and culture. The aesthetic concept is heavily loaded in this respect, and if wanted, we could use another term instead. Such changes in language are possible. Finnish language, for instance, did not have a word for art, 'taide,' before the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

Here, however, I am not suggesting that we abandon the aesthetic concept. If philosophy is cultural critique, as Dewey claimed, and if philosophy of music education is seriously interested in changing our educational culture, then we could pose further questions to Elliott and other praxialists: Why is "music as experience" still considered to be something that goes on inside the skin of the individual? What possible practical implications are there from the notion? We can further consider the reasons why music as praxis and music as aesthetic are set

as opponents. In Dewey's philosophy, we can at least combine the two notions without entertaining philosophical inconsistency. Dewey's profound antifoundationalism did not choose between the two poles of dualities such as individual *versus* social, aesthetic *versus* everyday life-experience, aesthetic *versus* artistic making, and so on. Rather, it made an effort to rethink how the dualities construct our reality and institutions and how we could reconstruct their workings. His philosophy acknowledged the historical aspect both in personal life as well as at the social and institutional level and yet did not fix the perspective of actuality to the past.

If Elliott's praxialism, as he says, offers a philosophical map for music educators to navigate in the world of music and education,<sup>82</sup> Dewey's philosophical map-making more clearly acknowledges that maps, including his own, infer that interest and emphasis are provisional.<sup>83</sup> Then, philosophy of music education as cultural critique is not getting its apodictic foundation from a snapshot of the musical world. I believe that Dewey's antiessentialism and social meliorism, his anti-individualism together with respect for individuality that places the multilayered questions of the individual and the social in the center of examination, offers fruitful tools for examining various questions in our pluralistic world. A Deweyan holistic aesthetic education is, therefore, interested in taking actions not merely to improve individual apprenticeship in various musics but also to shape collective occupations in this consumption, to determine the direction of interest and attention and hence affect desire and purpose. Besides having its workings upon a particular person, music as aesthetic experience has a less conscious adjustment of experience proceeding from the total environment that is created by music(s) of a time, which means that aesthetic is a question of the whole way in which art exercises its humane function.<sup>84</sup>

If central in Elliott's map is action and individual flow, Dewey's map is deliberately dominated by "event" and "the social."<sup>85</sup> It is, however, current everyday life that gives those concepts their content and raises questions, not Dewey's philosophy. Perhaps now is the time to focus on the other side of the coin; namely, how we can make and re-make culture in music education rather than how we can gain knowledge and understand musical cultures, ours or that of others. Music education as aesthetic education, then, involves horizons where it creates continuity in experience and community that did not physically preexist and thus "insinuates possibilities of human relations not to be found in rule and precept, admonition and administration."<sup>86</sup> Unlike the Aristotelian world, a Deweyan world involves individual and communal possibilities not present in actuality. In such a world, music education is an experiment of our doing. In this sense aesthetic and aesthetic education can have a contextually and situationally changing focus, but yet, quoting Dewey, "neither kernel nor shell."<sup>87</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Regelski, "Prolegomenon to a Praxial Philosophy of Music and Music Education," *Finnish Journal of Music Education* 1, no. 1 (1996): 34; "The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 36.

<sup>2</sup>Wayne Bowman, "The Problem of Aesthetics and Multiculturalism in Music Education," *Canadian Music Educator* 34, no. 5 (May 1993): 23–30.

<sup>3</sup>David Elliott, *Music Matters. A New Philosophy of Music Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125.

<sup>4</sup>Margolis argues that Dewey's philosophy is a post-Kantian and praxis-centered, naturalistic, and biologized philosophy that comes closer to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty than Hegel. See, Joseph Margolis, "Dewey in Dialogue with Continental Philosophy" in Larry A. Hickman, ed., *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 240.

<sup>5</sup>See, e.g., Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1989), 101.

<sup>6</sup>A detailed analysis on differences between Reimer and Dewey as well as Elliott and Dewey is presented in Heidi Westerlund, "Bridging Experience, Action, and Culture in Music Education," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 2002). My reading of Reimer in relation to Dewey differs, therefore, in some respect from John Richmond and Ralph Smith and is quite opposite to Brian A. Roberts' interpretation. See John W. Richmond, "Reconsidering Aesthetic and Religious Experience: A Companion View," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 29–49; Ralph A. Smith, "Justifying Aesthetic Education: Getting it Right," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 33, no. 4 (Winter 1999) 17–28; Brian A. Roberts, "New Music Education Guidelines for Policy Administrators," *Arts Education Policy Review* 97, no. 6 (July/August 1996): 36–40.

<sup>7</sup>Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 35, 93, 106; see also, e.g., "Music Education in Our Multicultural Culture," *Music Educators Journal* 79, no. 7 (1993): 25.

<sup>8</sup>See, e.g., John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, (New York: Dover Publications, [1925] 1958). Several Dewey researchers have made efforts to explain the danger of misunderstanding Dewey's "experience." See also David Fott, "John Dewey and the Philosophical Foundation of Democracy," *The Social Science Journal* 29, no. 1 (1991): 34; Susan Haack, "Pragmatism" in Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa, eds., *A Companion to Epistemology. Blackwell Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 253; and Reijo Miettinen, "The Concept of Experience in John Dewey's Philosophy and its Significance on Teaching," *The Finnish Journal of Education* 1 (1999): 31–39.

<sup>9</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1934), 162.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>11</sup>See also Pentti Määttänen and Westerlund, "Tradition, Practice, and Musical Meaning: A Pragmatist Approach to Music Education" in Frede V. Nielsen, Sture Brändström, Harald Jörgensen, and Bengt Olsson, eds., *Nordisk musikkpedagogisk forskning*, Yearbook 3 (1999), 33–38.

<sup>12</sup>Dewey wrote that “[w]orks of art . . . are literally pregnant with meaning.” Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 118.

<sup>13</sup>Dewey opposed any idea which cuts meanings from works of art. Meaning is related to any action that is mindful. As an example of how meanings are learned, Dewey wrote that a child learns the meaning of a hat through the use of a hat. Meaning is not only something attached to the word of hat and its use but involves the interaction with the object of hat. See Dewey, “Democracy and Education” in Dewey, *The Middle Works: The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882–1953*, Vol. 9, Jo Ann Boydston, ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 19.

<sup>14</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 263.

<sup>15</sup>Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958[1925]), 179.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>17</sup>There is also a difference between the mind and consciousness in terms of change. Dewey wrote: “Mind changes slowly through the joint tuition of interest and circumstances. Consciousness is always in rapid change, for it marks the place where the formed disposition and the immediate situation touch and interact. It is the continuous readjustment of self and the world in experience.” Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 266.

<sup>18</sup>See also Ralph B. Winn, ed., *John Dewey: Dictionary of Education* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 83–84.

<sup>19</sup>Dewey, in Jo Ann Boydston, ed., *The Later Works: 1925–1953. The Collected Works of John Dewey 1882–1953*, vol. 1 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), 40.

<sup>20</sup>See, e.g., Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 10, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Dewey, *The Later Works*, Vol. 13, 26, orig. italics.

<sup>22</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 326.

<sup>23</sup>Miettinen, “The Concept of Experiential Learning and John Dewey’s Theory of Reflective Thought and Action,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 19, no. 1 (January-February 2000): 69.

<sup>24</sup>Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 244.

<sup>25</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 326.

<sup>26</sup>Reimer, “The Experience of Profundity in Music,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 19.

<sup>27</sup>Dewey’s habit is not a cognitive scheme, determinate behavior, or latent experience. It is an adjustment of-not merely to-the environment that is necessary in order to become sensitive to the qualities and to stabilize ways of doing things that function well. In that sense context and situation is no less than a process of inhabiting through the context. See Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 101, 281; Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 9, 52. Also, e.g., Fott, “John Dewey and the Philosophical Foundation of Democracy,” 34.

<sup>28</sup>Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics, Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 28.

<sup>29</sup>See, e.g., Elliott’s critique in *Music Matters*, 33.

<sup>30</sup>In general, Dewey opposed the entire tradition of aesthetics as understood throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by writers such as Croce and R. G.



Collingwood. Dewey himself wrote: “the trouble with existing theories is that they start from a ready-made compartmentalization, or from a conception of art that ‘spiritualizes’ it out of connection with the objects of concrete experience.” See Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 11. See also Casey Haskins, “Dewey, John: Theory of Expression” in Michael Kelly, ed., *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* vol. 2 (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup>Dewey thought that even when we deal with fine arts there needs to be a continuity between everyday experience and the works of art. Fine art grows out of the practical and the practical arts are never merely practical, but contain a consummatory aspect. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 3, 46. See also, S. Morris Eames, *Pragmatic Naturalism: An Introduction* (London and Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 161; Bertram Morris, “Dewey’s Theory of Art” in Boydston, ed., *Guide to the Works of John Dewey* (London & Amsterdam: Feffer & Simons, Inc., 1970), 167.

<sup>32</sup>This is what both Shusterman and Määttänen have argued. Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics, Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, 49–50; Määttänen, “Aesthetic Experience: A Problem in Praxialism,” *Finnish Journal of Music Education* 5, no. 1–2 (2002): 148–154. I use the terms ‘use’ and ‘function’ approximately as complementary. It is possible, however, to make a distinction between ‘use’ as referring to the situation in which music occurs in action and function that is related more to the particular reasons for its occurring and employment as well as the purposes it serves. Such a distinction was made, for example, by Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

<sup>33</sup>Reimer makes distinctions between the mode of conceptual rationality, the aesthetic mode, the interpersonal, the intuitive, the narrative/paradigmatic, the formal, the practical, and the spiritual modes. Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, 11–12.

<sup>34</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 327.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 326, orig. italics.

<sup>36</sup>Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, 50.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>38</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 55.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>See Elliott, *Music Matters*, 32, 36. He writes that aesthetic experiences are said to be pre-given instead of constructed.

<sup>41</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 47.

<sup>42</sup>“[T]he distinction between aesthetic and artistic cannot be pressed so far as to become a separation.” *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>45</sup>See also Sidney Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), 204–205.

<sup>46</sup>Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 346. See also Haskins, “Dewey, John: Theory of Expression,” 22; Michael Eldridge, *Transforming Experience: John Dewey’s Cultural Instrumentalism* (Nashville and London: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), 116.

<sup>47</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 47–48.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid, 48.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid, 214.

<sup>50</sup>See also, Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*, 201–202.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>52</sup>See, Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 73.

<sup>53</sup>Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*, 202–203, italics added.

<sup>54</sup>Also Westerlund, “Multicultural Music Education and Pragmatism: A Deweyan Approach to Musical Pluralism and Democratic Education,” in Määttänen, ed., *Pragmatist Viewpoints on Art: Proceedings of the AWE Symposium*, Working Papers F 19 (University of Art and Design, Helsinki, UIAH, 2000), 61–68.

<sup>55</sup>This is where Elliott’s and Regelski’s praxialism also differ. Regelski is interested in the ‘goods’ that are correct or right *in or for a given situation*. See Regelski, “The Aristotelian Bases of Praxis for Music and Music Education as Praxis,” 28.

<sup>56</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 336.

<sup>57</sup>Elliott, *Music Matters*, 249.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 201–202, 206–207.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 293.

<sup>62</sup>Dewey, *The Later Works: 1925–1953*, Vol. 1, 25.

<sup>63</sup>John R. Shook, *Dewey’s Empirical Theory of Knowledge and Reality* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 258.

<sup>64</sup>See Reimer, “Philosophical Monism in Music Education,” *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 51 (Summer 1977): 13; and “Toward a More Inclusive Mission for Music Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” in Elizabeth A. Hebert, ed., *Schools for Everyone: A New Perspective on Inclusion* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 59–60.

<sup>65</sup>Haskins, Dewey, *John: Theory of Expression*, 23.

<sup>66</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 139.

<sup>67</sup>Haskins, Dewey, *John: Theory of Expression*, 23. Lekan and Lachs have pointed out that there is a difference between the Aristotelian and Deweyan approach in this respect. Dewey opposed the process/activity distinction. See Todd M. Lekan, “Ideals, Practical Reason, and Pessimism: Dewey’s Reconstruction of Means and Ends,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* XXXIV, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 113–147; John Lachs, “Aristotle and Dewey on the Rat Race” in John Stuhr, ed., *Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 97–109.

<sup>68</sup>Lekan, “Ideals, Practical Reason, and Pessimism: Dewey’s Reconstruction of Means and Ends.”

<sup>69</sup>Määttänen, “A Pragmatist Notion of Work of Art,” <http://www.members.aol./jtgates/maydaygroup/penttiAWE.html>.

<sup>70</sup>See, Elliott, *Music Matters*, 114.

<sup>71</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 19.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 81 (*italics added*).

<sup>73</sup>Elliott does mention once in his book the importance of actual musical events. He writes, “musical events set up a kind of magnetic field that brings people of different musical understandings and backgrounds together.” *Music Matters*, 205.

<sup>74</sup>Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 22–23.

<sup>75</sup>Dewey, *The Later Works: 1925–1953*, vol. 6, 98.

<sup>76</sup>Dewey, in Boydston ed., *The Later Works: 1925–1953*, Vol. 2, 240, 330.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.* See also Martin Carnoy, “Education, Democracy, and Social Conflict,” *Harvard Educational Review* 53, no. 4 (1983): 398–402.

<sup>79</sup>Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 9, 293.

<sup>80</sup>Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 10, 288.

<sup>81</sup>Ilkka Niiniluoto, “The Opening Words of Symposium on Skill” in Ilpo Halonen, Timo Airaksinen, and Niiniluoto, eds., *Skill* (Helsinki: Finnish Philosophical Society, 1992), 8.

<sup>82</sup>See Elliott, *Music Matters*, 9.

<sup>83</sup>See Dewey, *The Later Works*, vol. 1, 309.

<sup>84</sup>See, Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 346.

<sup>85</sup>See Raymond D. Boisvert, “Dewey’s Metaphysics: Ground-Map of the Prototypically Real” in Hickman, ed., *Reading Dewey*, 159.

<sup>86</sup>Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 349, 336.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 297.