CHAPTER 6
Sound as a Symbolic System:
The Kaluli Drum
Steven Feld

How do sounds actively communicate and embody deeply felt sentiments? This question should be at the core of any ethnographic, humanistic, or social scientific concern with music; yet ethnomusicology is just beginning to untangle issues of the musical sign, the relations between symbolic form and social meaning, and the performance of sounds as communicative action. In this essay I wish to contribute an empirical example of how one class of sounds is socially structured to convey meaning. In doing so I will also try to raise issues that are generally relevant to theories of musical meaning and symbolism. By concentrating on the invention, performance, and understanding of drumming among the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea (PNG) I will show that while these sounds overtly communicate through and about acoustic patterns, they are socially organized to do far more, by modulating special categories of sentiment and action when brought forth and properly contextualized by features of staging and performance. This example illustrates how the study of sound as a symbolic system is situated at the intersection of acoustical and cultural analysis, in that such a study involves both an account of the physical or material conditions of sound production and the social and historical conditions of its invocation and interpretation.

There are two opening contexts, one anthropological, the other musical, which form the present arena in which PNG drums are ideologically situated. First is the social reduction of a sound to its visual source. Museum collections throughout the world contain drums from Papua New Guinea; books and catalogues of 'primitive art' are filled with their images. These celebrate shape, carving, patina, and decoration, often
People and Place

The cultural and historical context is always at play, and in the realization that the social sciences are always at play, we might also consider the following points. First, the study of culture and social science is not a separate system from the study of the mind, but is rather a part of it. Without cultural and historical context, our understanding of the mind and its functions is incomplete. Second, the study of culture and social science is not a separate system from the study of the mind, but is rather a part of it. Without cultural and historical context, our understanding of the mind and its functions is incomplete.
The Sound

and these will be detailed below.

The Aesthetic

Capital in a 12-point tradition provide an all-night ceremony.

The Sensory Construction of Reality

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and these are different dimensions of magic and mystery the cultural traditions of the indigenous culture. At the same time, however, there is a lack of public awareness.

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The process of constructing a drum involves a mechanical mediation to the excitation of the strings and the damping of their vibrations. The tension of the strings and the density of the drumhead play a crucial role in determining the pitch and timbre of the sound produced. Engineers and musicians often use a combination of these factors to achieve the desired sound.

Consideration

Overtones occur when the frequency of the string is a multiple of the fundamental frequency. The second overtone can be heard as the 'beep' sound, and the third overtone can be heard as the 'beep beep' sound. These overtones add complexity and richness to the drum's timbre.

Figure 1

Special display of the drum pulses

Figure 2

Waveform of a single drum
But what is the significance of hypothesizing a band in the middle of the dream? In their second experiment, they did a bit of psychology to the dreamer. They found that when the image of the dreamer was shown, the group of people who saw the image were more likely to recall the dream. This suggests that the image of the dreamer is actually influencing the dream. They also found that the dreamer was more likely to recall the dream if they were in a happy or relaxing state.

Next, when the images are placed on the head, centered, and then imagined, they are more likely to be recalled. This supports the idea that the dreamer's state of mind is important in recalling the dream. The researchers also found that the images were more likely to be recalled if they were associated with a particular emotion, such as fear or excitement.

Finally, they found that the images were more likely to be recalled if they were associated with a particular emotion, such as fear or excitement. This suggests that the images are not just random images, but are associated with specific emotions.

In conclusion, the researchers found that the dreamer's state of mind is important in recalling the dream. They also found that the images are more likely to be recalled if they are associated with a particular emotion. This suggests that the dreamer's state of mind is important in recalling the dream.
combiner, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the neural circuits involved in these behaviors. Local circuitry in the auditory cortex is also crucial, allowing for the integration of auditory information with other sensory inputs. The activity of individual neurons in the auditory cortex is modulated by a variety of factors, including sound intensity, duration, and frequency. This flexibility allows the auditory system to respond to a wide range of environmental stimuli. The importance of auditory processing in birds is underscored by the fact that auditory signals are often used for communication, social bonding, and navigation. Therefore, understanding the neural mechanisms underlying auditory processing in birds is essential for a comprehensive understanding of avian behavior and cognition.
Kuhl, K. E., & Trueswell, J. C. (1996). Examples of all varieties of the English adjective sound and its role in a cross-modal context. In J. L. Harris (Ed.), Cross-modal processing in perception and action. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. This study demonstrates how the English adjective sounds, and their role in production and perception, are influenced by cross-modal interactions.

Kuhl's and Trueswell's findings provide evidence for the role of the English adjective sounds in cross-modal processing. These findings have implications for the understanding of how language and perception are intertwined, and how these processes are influenced by cross-modal interactions. The findings also highlight the importance of considering cross-modal interactions in the study of language and perception.
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Within this context, the "drum metaphor" serves as a unifying framework for understanding the relationship between the symbolic and the concrete, between the abstract and the tangible. It is a device that allows us to explore the way in which sounds and musical structures can be used to convey meaning and express ideas. In the same way that a drum's sound can be varied and manipulated to create different effects, the "drum metaphor" provides a tool for generating and testing new ideas, and for exploring the potential of music as a means of communication.

Add the Metaphors

Drum Overtone Series

Figure 8

Field: Sound as a Symbolic System

The Sensory Construction of Reality

Reference


The sensory construction of reality...