Analyzing Flow and Deconstructing Childhood

How Hip-Hop-Based Music Education Can Benefit from Music Theory and Sociology of Childhood[1]

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Abstract *In this article I will discuss an interdisciplinary approach to Hip-Hop that integrates methods of music theory and sociology of childhood into music education research, with the aim of improving learning and teaching practices that use Hip-Hop at schools. I apply music theory to investigate flow in rap music, while turning to sociology of childhood to analyze the discourses that construct this notion within elementary (primary) schools and the culture of Hip-Hop. Both perspectives help me reflect on Hip-Hop within the context of music education. My arguments reveal specific normative conflicts and educational opportunities that arise when Hip-Hop is integrated into school curricula.*

"Starting from Scratch": Rap Music in *My* Classroom

The way I see Hip-Hop as a scholar is strongly influenced by my experience teaching music at an elementary (primary) school in Germany before I began my academic career. When I took this job as a music teacher in 2004, I had been involved with many genres of popular music, but only marginally with Hip-Hop. It was my third- and fourth-grade students who insisted that I take Hip-Hop seriously as something that truly mattered to them and their experiences. Students responded in various ways to my first attempts to include rap music in my teaching, and not all of my efforts were equally successful.

1 This essay is a revised and extended version of an article I published in 2022 (cf. Kautny 2022).

I started by using the famous German rap song "Das Rap-Huhn" (The rap chicken) (Janosa 2001), still widely used in German-language textbooks and songbooks for elementary school. The song is easy to rap along with because of its rhythm (as I will discuss later), but some of my students, especially those who were a bit older than the others, didn't like its lyrics.

This was one of the reasons that my students and I later planned a songwriting project in which they wrote and recorded their own rap songs, and about which they gave decidedly positive feedback. One challenge I encountered, though, was that the students wanted to address topics in their own texts that conflicted with my pedagogical ideas and the institutional principles of the school. This was especially the case when they were interested in topics from Gangsta rap from the United States and Germany, as found in songs from artists such as Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent, or Sido. At the time, however, I lacked the knowledge about these topics and the teaching methodologies I truly needed to help the students create their own songs, especially when it came to making the words rhyme and follow rhythm, i.e., to creating flow. A further challenge for me was to interpret the provocative codes of Hip-Hop in ways that were culturally correct and to evaluate them pedagogically.

There were three questions about using Hip-Hop in the music classroom that I found especially relevant at the time, and for which I was unable to find adequate answers either in my teaching materials or in any research:

- How can we best understand the musical aspects of Hip-Hop? And more specifically: how can we best understand aspects of flow in rap music?
- What opportunities does rap music offer for teaching and learning music?
- To what extent do certain culturally specific kinds of meaning in Hip-Hop create ethical conflicts in the music classroom?

After my professional transition from school to university (starting in 2005), these unresolved questions became my research focus, and they are also the main thread of this text. They constantly guide me as a scholar and educator as I try to improve how Hip-Hop is used in music education. In the following two sections, I illustrate an answer to these questions that follows a new research approach combining perspectives from music theory,[2] sociology of

2 "Music theory" as I am using the term in this essay refers to the specialized area of musicology focusing on the structural analysis of music in composition and performance. David G. Herbert, Joseph Abramo, and Gareth Dylan Smith (2017: 470) point to the op-

childhood, and music education. My aim is to show how well these three perspectives complement each other. To do so, I will analyze several rap songs and images emblematic of childhood in order to then reflect on the song "Das Rap-Huhn" that I mentioned above.

The crux of my interdisciplinary perspective lies in a broad understanding of music that examines not only musical, textual, and visual structures, but also sociocultural processes of musical production and reception as well as questions about music-based learning and teaching.

Before contextualizing "Das Rap-Huhn" within sociological analyses of childhood, I will first outline my thoughts on rhythm in rap from the perspective of music theory, as a basis for asking about the flow of "Das Rap-Huhn."

Analyzing Flow and Its Impact on Teaching Music

How can we best understand the musical aspects of Hip-Hop? And more specifically: how can we best understand aspects of flow in rap music?

My research on rhythm in rap, or flow, draws foremost from Adam Krims' (2000) groundbreaking study *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*. Krims' book was not only the first monograph in Hip-Hop studies with a focus on music theory, but also the first in-depth work on Hip-Hop that combined music analysis and perspectives from cultural studies. It moreover prompted an entire series of studies analyzing flow (including Adams 2008, 2009, 2015; Kautny 2009, 2015b, forthcoming-a, -b; Williams 2009; on the current state of research, see Ohriner 2019, Oddekalv 2022).

Generally speaking, popular music studies is skeptical—and not without reason, in my opinion—toward methods of music theory. The concern is often that academic analyses of this kind tend to focus on issues that musicians consider irrelevant or even nonexistent in their practice (Doehring 2012).

Before approaching the phenomenon of flow analytically, I thus first tried to understand what *significance* rap musicians attach to this category and what

portunities that incorporating analyses of music from popular music studies can have for popular music education. Ethan Hein (2018) remains one of the few authors to date to draw a connection in the field of Hip-Hop between music theory and music education.

this means in specific cases. I found what I was looking for in Internet forums for practicing flow, among other places. Here, it became evident that, from the perspective of MCs, flow serves at least three functions (Kautny 2009, 2015b):[3]

- Flow is a complex category for analyzing the interplay of speech rhythm, rhythmical rhyming sounds, and the rhythms of what is called the "beat."[4]
- Flow is accordingly also one of the key criteria for evaluating rap music.
- Flow is also a category describing the experience of producing and hearing rap; ideally, it encompasses both the enjoyment experienced when rapping oneself or that comes from hearing the flow of other MCs.[5]

How can flow be analyzed in a way that adequately considers this multiperspectival view of rap musicians who understand flow as both a process (of inventing, performing, experiencing) and a product (e.g., of sound recordings and their structures) (Kautny, forthcoming-a, -b)? I believe that a reception-aesthetic model can do well in helping us comprehend flow. In contrast to most studies of flow to date, such a model understands flow in rap as linguistic-musical structures connected to the individual and collective actions of its producers and receivers (Kautny 2009).[6] I accordingly define flow as a musical-linguistic potential whose impact can unfold quite differently depending on the situation. How flow is given specific form in certain situations depends on the actors, places, and things involved. For heuristic reasons, my analyses nevertheless concentrate on one part of this overall context (ibid.). My goal is to search for those rhythmic structures in rap music that can be assumed, with a

3 Flow as a category to describe and evaluate rap music is also an explicit theme of many rap songs (Ohriner 2019: 6–7).

4 I understand "beat" to mean the musical composition of a rap song without the vocal track(s) of the rappers.

5 On the relationship between categories of experiencing flow in Hip-Hop and conceptions of flow in psychology, see Kautny (2009), Ohriner (2019), Oddekalv (2022). A systematic analysis of this relationship has yet to be produced.

6 This approach coincides in many respects with praxeological ideas that are currently being discussed widely (Klose 2019; Schatt 2021). Both theoretical families understand music as a reciprocal relationship of musical "artifacts" (pieces of music, media, instruments/music-making objects, etc.) and sociocultural practices (actors, bodies, institutions, actions, etc.). What is crucial for both perspectives is the dynamic of specific social, cultural, historical, etc. situations—situations that have an emotional effect or produce meaning in various forms, including in categories of music aesthetics.

high degree of probability, to offer musical opportunities for enjoying the sensation of flow. Using two examples, I would like to briefly illustrate the basic idea of analyzing flow in this way.

The first comes from the German rap song "Hammerhart" (1998) by the Hamburg band Beginner. "Hammerhart" is a rap classic from Germany that is still widely praised today; on the band's last tour (2017/2018), it was still a special favorite of many fans, including young fans, who would often rap along with the performance.[7]

Rhyme Bar	
1	**A B B** **Viele wollen chatten und rappen von Hamburg bis Meppen,** *Many want to chat and rap from Hamburg down to Meppen,*
2	**C A C** **bauen Tracks in Ketten, woll'n ohne Rucksack[8] tracken. So viele** *to build tracks in succession, track without a pack. There are so many*
3	**B A+ D A+ E** **Rapper und Rapletten tun weh, ich brauch Tabletten, wenn ich mein** *Rappers and rap meds that hurt, I need some pills when I see my*
4	**E D D E E D** **Heim seh und vor Fernweh beinah' eingeh'.** *Home and nearly break down from homesickness.*

Fig. 1: Beginner: "Hammerhart" (1998), rhyme scheme, bars 1–4 (verse 1).

Figure 1 shows the dense rhyme structure of the first four measures of the first verse, characterized by a number of pure and impure rhymes whose sounds both derive and deviate from each other. Viewed from the lens of reception theory, the rhyming syllables (e.g., the impure rhymes ending in [-ɛpən] and [-ɛtən]: ch**atten**, M**eppen**, r**appen**, K**etten**) enable an enjoyable perception of this phonetic repetition of the same or similar phonemes. At the

7 I experienced this on March 20, 2017, at the Lanxess Arena in Cologne and on August 29, 2018, in Cologne at Tanzbrunnen.

same time, the changing consonants preceding the rhyming syllables provide contrast, variety, and excitement (**ch**atten, **M**eppen, **r**appen, **K**etten) (Kurz 1999: 47–48).

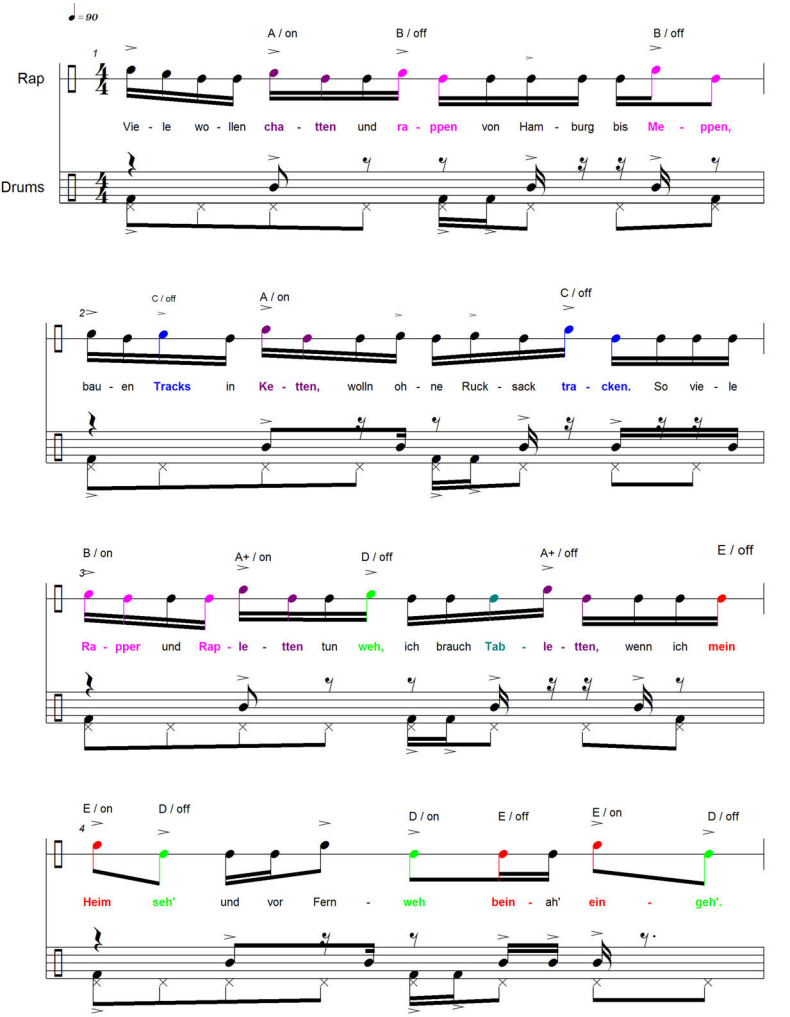

Fig. 2: Beginner: "Hammerhart" (1998), bars 1–4 (verse 1).

In figure 2, we see how German rapper Denyo inserts puns and rhymes—here and in the entire song—into almost unbroken strings of syllables (made up of sixteenth notes) that have the overall effect of making it possible to experience precisely the kind of flow I am discussing here. The rhymes function as repeated sounds that are intentionally placed in a rhythmic structure. Together with pitch, volume, tone of voice, etc., they make it possible to structure and accentuate the flow: musically, they function like percussive timbres used rhythmically, similar to a snare or bass drum in a drum set (Kautny 2009, 2015b).

The playful potential for enjoyment that is offered by rhymed, rhythmized sounds produced in speech as part of a flowing stream of sound is further amplified here by the superimposition of two temporal planes, in that Denyo shifts from a beat in four ("**Vie-**le wo-llen…": **1**,2,3,4) to a triple meter ("**chat**-ten und…" **1**,2,3), while other parts of the beat continue in four (e.g., the hi-hats as continuous eighth notes, see: first line in fig. 2). Such cross-rhythmic tensions of beats that metrically conflict (4 against 3) are capable of spurring listeners to feel and move with the beat—an enjoyable experience. We find similar opportunities for experience in techno, for instance, or in some styles of West African and Latin American music, that are often associated with related practices of perception and movement (Pfleiderer 2006: 145–152, 159–164).

Beat: Bar:	1	x	y	z	2	x	y	z	3	x	y	z	4	x	y	z
10																there's
11	**plen-**	ty	of	**peo-**	ple	out	there	with	**trig-**	gers	rea-	dy	to	**pull**	it	why
12	you	**try-**	na	**jump**	in	**front**	of	the	**bul-**	let	young		la-		dy	
13	**uh!**	…														

Fig. 3: Queen Latifah: "U.N.I.T.Y.,"(1993), bars 11–13, (verse 3).

The second example is from the third verse of the song "U.N.I.T.Y." (1993) by Queen Latifah, a classic of what is often called the Golden Era of US rap. In this song, we hear African American rapper Queen Latifah powerfully and precisely—and quickly—perform continuous sixteenth notes: similar to Denyo, the flow of syllables is divided by off-beats into patterns that deviate

from the meter, but without establishing such clear cross-rhythmic structures as in "Hammerhart."

The potential effect of this flow, however, is something else entirely, if only because Latifah's voice sounds much more physical, percussive, and powerful than Denyo's. The possible differences also stem from the fact that flow can mean something quite different here, which brings us back to the research question mentioned above about the cultural significance of Hip-Hop practices: media other than the music make it possible to combine the perception of rhyme and rhythm with additional information, such videos, covers, lyrics, other songs on LPs, or political and cultural contexts, and thus to be interpreted in different ways. For example, it matters for many rap fans outside the United States whether one hears rap songs from one's own country or from the original "home" of rap music. Latifah is an important figure in the conscious rap movement in the United States. Her flow vocally embodies its socially critical agenda, to which she adds feminist positions. If we listen to the passage in figure 4 within this interpretive framework, we might understand it as a punchline, that is to say, as a combative challenge to the gangsta rap that was emerging in the United States in the early 1990s. And in Latifah's rapid-fire sixteenth-note salvos, we may recognize not only a sonification, but also a critique of how gangsta rap often glorifies guns. Yet just which of these semantic possibilities for impacting a listener are realized in the reception of Latifah's flow depends, of course, on the particular situation, attitude, and prior knowledge (for example about gangsta rap or the musical styles of the 1990s) that structures one's *experience* of rapping or hearing the song "U.N.I.T.Y." (Kautny, forthcoming-b).

Even though these two examples of rap flow illustrate only several of countless ways in which flow in rap can be shaped and, above all, *experienced*, they nevertheless illustrate some important basic features that I will now consider from the perspective of music education, taking up the second research question I posed at the beginning of this essay.

What opportunities does rap music offer for teaching and learning music, especially with regard to flow?

As I previously analyzed flow in terms of a potential to impact a listener, it makes sense in discussing teaching and learning music, and rap music particular, to formulate a teaching method where the experience of music plays a central role. The method I explore here is based on the work of music educator Christopher Wallbaum and his model of aesthetic experience in music

education, which he and Christian Rolle widely communicated in the German music education debates starting in the late 1990s (Rolle 1999; Wallbaum 2000; Rolle/Wallbaum 2011). Wallbaum developed a conception of music instruction as being about both experiencing and doing, and that explicitly includes all kinds of music.[8] His theory of perception draws in particular from the work of philosopher Martin Seel (2005), among others. Wallbaum takes from Seel the idea that there are three aesthetic modes of perception which always occur together, never in isolation, which he applies to the perception of music. One of these modes is corresponsive listening, in which we evaluate music primarily on the basis of whether it conforms to our own views and is thus meaningful in our lives. This happens, for example, when we identify with certain music and musicians, sometimes feeling an almost existential connection with them, as when we are a fan of certain artists. The second mode is imaginative; it plays a part when we try to understand music—e.g., when we try to interpret certain music by relating it to the history of Hip-Hop. A third way of listening, which Wallbaum calls contemplative, focuses more on aspects of perceiving a sound or groove that is enjoyable in the sense of not needing to have any deeper meaning. This kind of listening happens when music is comprehended through the senses or the body, e.g., when a listener dances to Hip-Hop beats, when we nod our heads in enjoyment to a certain flow, or when we feel goose bumps in response to a voice with an impressive sound (Wallbaum 2009: 43). All three forms of perception are usually combined in experience and occur in a wide range of different proportions. Wallbaum argues that music education, in particular, should help learners have perceptions that are successful, meaningful, and fulfilling.

If we follow this idea, then it can be deduced for the experience of flow in the music classroom that students should have "rich, satisfying experiences of rhythm" in their own rapping, listening, and reflecting on rap flows (Wallbaum

8 The concept of aesthetic experience and perception in the tradition of Wallbaum and Rolle with which I am working here is not to be confused with the understanding of aesthetic experience as an intellectual experience that is purely contemplative, abstract, and intellectual—a notion that has been directly challenged by praxial music education (see Elliott 1995 contra Reimer 1989). Seen from the perspective of Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics, the concept of aesthetic experience I am using is in fact compatible with an understanding of music as social practice. Hence it differs from models of aesthetic experience for music education such as those presented by Reimer (1989) (for contextualization, see Westerlund 2003).

2009: 45).[9] I believe the potential that flow has to impact listeners offers excellent opportunities for music education to create such rich experiences of aesthetic rhythm in all forms of perception postulated by Wallbaum. And the example of the song "Hammerhart" shows that the potential of rap music to impact listeners—on the level of both language and music—can uniquely move them to experience the music in a way that is primarily contemplative, that is to say, through their senses and their body. Experiencing flow in the bodily enjoyment of rhythmically structured time can, in some situations, become significant in ways that are rich and satisfying on their own, without the need for a text or image to have any particular meaning (Hein 2018: 103)—though meaning, of course, can also play a role in how "Hammerhart" is perceived.

Latifah's song "U.N.I.T.Y." can be understood as an ideal example of how rap flows offer a variety of opportunities to perceive music imaginatively, i.e., in ways that are *intentionally and consciously* structural and interpretive. This can be seen, for instance, in how students come to better understand Latifah's flows in wider contexts, such as US-American music and cultural history, society, and politics.

Queen Latifah's song might also have the potential (and in a way that might even be provocative and possibly transformational) to encourage students to engage with their own corresponsive experiences, that is to say, with their own identity, inasmuch as it offers an opportunity to address central issues of gender or racism, in addition to ongoing controversies provoked by gangsta rap as a genre.

If we agree with these general reflections about music pedagogy and hope to use rap in music lessons with these intentions, a number of further questions arise that I can only briefly touch upon here:

- How might we help students have rich and satisfying aesthetic experiences with rap flows in the music classroom?
- I believe this also entails asking about different levels of difficulty and skill in rapping and how students can learn to experience and produce flow in formal and informal educational settings.

Studies on flow, for example, show that flow exists in a number of different forms: as simple or highly complex; as more instrumental or based on the

9 On further learning opportunities centered on groove music, see Klingmann (2010) and Kautny (2017a, b).

rhythm of speech; as centered metrically on the down beat, strongly syncopated, or metrically free. Each of these is likely to offer a wide variety of opportunities to experience flow. What remains to be explored is whether learning flow is enhanced by an educational approach that gradually builds on a series of steps which themselves foster a rich and satisfying experience of rhythm through increasingly complex kinds of flow. Kool Savas, one of the most technically proficient rappers in the history of German rap, emphasizes that learning through progressively more difficult steps can also be effective for experienced rappers, as well. Looking back on his own musical education, he recalls consciously "training" simple on-beat flows, then progressing to more difficult patterns (Johannesberg 2002).[10]

Finally, I would like to point out a central problem regarding the use of rap music in music education: namely, determining which rap songs should be used for learning rapping. How many compromises in teaching and learning methods should be made when using rap songs arranged specifically for school settings compared to "original" rap music? And this brings me back to "Das Rap-Huhn," first published in 1995 with nine other "animal raps" by German songwriter, arranger, and author Felix Janosa. In 1997, this compilation was awarded the prize for "Good Music for Children" by the Association of German Music Schools (Verband deutscher Musikschulen), and it had been published in five editions by 2001. To make it easy to use this song in classroom teaching beginning with grade 9 (Janosa 2001: 3), Felix Janosa composed this song with a continuous chain of sixteenth notes that alternates between syncopated and completely straight, i.e., on-beat, endings.[11]

Certainly, working in educational settings with such simple patterns can support fundamental learning in addition to fostering a rich experience of flow. Nevertheless, as I will show here, in planning music lessons (for example, in selecting material to be used in instruction) a purely music-theoretical view of musical education oriented toward fundamental musical skills is inadequate. Music teaching requires both a music-theoretical and a sociocultural reflection on music (Kruse 2018: 159), since consciously or unconsciously, "Das Rap-Huhn" almost "literally" adopts a rhythm for most of its verses from the 1982 song "The Message" (verse 1, "Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat"). This

10 Systematic studies on the informal learning processes that rappers use to develop flow, among other questions, have yet to be carried out.

11 The verse is notated in half tempo, i.e., in eighth notes; the phrasing here appears as a two-bar change.

is a classic of the so-called old-school of US rap par excellence that Janosa explicitly recommends as a supplementary listening example to his rap songs in class, and for which he offers a brief explanation of historical and sociocultural context (Janosa 2001: 3). However, the various ways in which "Das Rap-Huhn" has been used in German educational songbooks for elementary schools have not really included any historical comparisons to Hip-Hop culture.[12] And "The Message," a classic US-American rap song adapted by Janosa (perhaps unintentionally) in "Das Rap-Huhn," disappears as a listening example not only within this specific reception history but also within Janosa's arrangement. This happens for several reasons. First, because Janosa does not mention "The Message" as a model. Second, because he chooses a comparatively regular, "straight" bar from a song that itself has many syncopated borrowings from funk rhythms. And third, because in the arrangement or recording, those features of the song disappeared that refer to its origin as Black music:[13] e.g., the style and sound of Melle Mel's voice as well as its many off-beat accents, as found for example at the end of bars.[14]

Perhaps my students in 2004 and 2005, many of whom were quite familiar with Hip-Hop culture, intuitively perceived that something was wrong in "Das Rap-Huhn" on the level of the song's flow, compared to the standards of Hip-Hop at the time, but they were unable to name it. Perhaps some students felt uncomfortable at rapping a song that had no context, no palpable history; that was arguably outdated from their point of view, not really authentic; and that had been altered for educational reasons (see also Kruse 2018).[15] In the following section, I will return to "Rap-Huhn," but from the perspective of the sociology of childhood.

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12 See, for example, the education songbook *Duett*, which was especially widely used in the German-speaking world in the 2000s (Neumann 2006: 148). School songbooks, however, are usually not the kind of media that provide detailed contextualization of the songs.

13 Understood as a collective term for genres of popular music that are strongly influenced by African American cultural history, including Hip-Hop, funk, and soul, among others.

14 The word "junkies," for instance, is brought forward in the first verse, making the syllable "ju" an off-beat.

15 This form of "overwriting" a song that critiques society from an African American perspective can be seen as a problematic cultural appropriation. However, I cannot pursue this argument any further here.

Deconstructing Childhood—And Its Benefits for Music Education

The teaching practice of using Hip-Hop in elementary schools and the conflicts this can provoke, as I have exemplified via the song "Das Rap-Huhn," leads me to third research question:

What culturally specific kinds of meaning emerge in Hip-Hop and what possible ethical conflicts might they create in the classroom?

In retrospect, I wonder whether my class in 2004 could have been experiencing another normative conflict: a conflict over ideas about childhood.

Following up on work in the sociology of childhood by UK scholars Allison James and Alan Prout (1990),[16] German sociologist Doris Bühler-Niederberger has examined these kinds of conflicts over norms about childhood (2005, 2020). Bühler-Niederberger defines childhood as socially constructed through a process in which various social actors and institutions negotiate and set normative models for what supposedly constitutes a "good" childhood. One significant model in Europe (and other places) that became established from the seventeenth century onward is that of a long and sheltered childhood separate from the "dangers" of the adult world. Bühler-Niederberger highlights the ambivalence inherent in this process. On the one hand, this view of what is appropriate for children has undoubtedly been extremely beneficial for children, for example, by prompting the prohibition of child labor in Europe during the twentieth century. And yet on the other hand, this view has often served the interests of adults who wanted to enforce their ideas of social norms by defining what they considered appropriate for children, e.g., in regard to related ideas of family, school, church, the world of work, or politics. Niederberger points out, for example, that the image of the long-sheltered child served the German bourgeoisie between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries as a means to claim legitimacy and prestige for its own way of life (Bühler-Niederberger 2020: 113–127, 131). From this perspective, social strata with fewer financial resources than the bourgeoisie and children who experienced less sheltered forms of childhood, such as street children, were often considered to be of lesser value and were subjected to negative social

16 For more details on the theoretical concepts and references used by Bühler-Niederberger, see Bühler-Niederberger (2020).

sanctions. Bühler-Niederberger uses this example to show that such generational processes of establishing and reinforcing social norms must always be viewed critically in light of how power is socially distributed.

Informed by this theoretical framework, I conducted an analysis of images of childhood in discourses surrounding elementary school music education in the Federal Republic of Germany between the 1960s and the early 1990s (Kautny 2015a). My study focused on examining a large body of teaching materials and discourses in music education. Asking whether engaging with popular music in elementary schools was considered appropriate for children, I uncovered several positions in the discourse.

a) Until the early 1990s, as seen for example in the context of a widely used German textbook, *Quartett*, German music educators argued that the characteristics of what was considered a "correct" childhood corresponded to themes of nature and life in rural villages, and that musically this norm most closely aligned with German folk and children's songs, and with easily understandable art music. By contrast, it was generally held that popular music of the time was not appropriate for children, demonstrated, for instance, by Peter Fuchs, Willi Gundlach, and Hermann Große-Jäger (1989/1990).
b) In the 1970s and early 1980s, some music educators in Germany, such as Helmut Segler (1974) or Ulrich Günther (1974), argued that elementary school children participate in the same musical and media world as adults, and that elementary school music classes should therefore also engage with popular music.
c) To this day, the model of a so-called protected childhood, in which children in elementary school encounter popular music—but preferably only music composed especially for them and prepared in a way deemed "appropriate for children"—has proven particularly successful.

One well-known example of a sheltered children's pop world that is more isolated from the adult sphere (the media, the world of work, politics, violence, sexuality, public spaces, etc.) is the music of the German songwriter Rolf Zuckowski, e.g., his song "Die Weihnachtsbäckerei" (The Christmas bakery), which is quite well known in German-speaking countries.[17]

17 All the images of childhood described here are made by adults, and for this reason can also seem very attractive to adults, since it makes them ideal for being shared with

As I see it, Felix Janosa's "Das Rap-Huhn" and his handling of the lyrics of the US-American rap song "The Message" (1982) is to be understood precisely in this tradition. In this rap song, Duke Bootee and Melle Mel take the point of view of a father who denounces the social conditions in American "ghettos," where residents are mostly African American. The lyrical I of this song is also concerned about children and young people who grow up in the so-called urban jungle and are at risk of crime: "You'll grow in the ghetto living second-rate / And your eyes will sing a song of deep hate." The dangerous social minefield for adults and children decried in "The Message," however, is replaced in Janosa's "Das Rap-Huhn" by a humorously exaggerated, harmless world of the farm:

> Hallo Leute, wir sind heute auf dem Bauernhof
> Alle Tiere sind in Ordnung nur eins ist doof!
> Denn es findet sich so lässig und so obertoll
> Und es quasselt allen anderen die Ohren voll.
> (Janosa 2001: 5; "Das Rap-Huhn," first verse)

> *An English translation*:
> Hello folks, we're on the farm today
> All the animals are fine—except one's got no charm.
> Because he thinks he's so much better, so cool
> And he won't stop yapping, bothering everyone.

The social conflict in the song is reduced here to several animals and a farmer being annoyed by a cocky rapping chicken. Janosa thus (perhaps unconsciously) overwrites not only parts of the flow from "The Message", but also the "street" narrative as the world of Hip-Hop, even though—as I noted above—he does at least recommend in his preface that teachers engage in their pedagogy with the song and its sociocultural context. The history of how "Das Rap-Huhn" was used within elementary schools rendered this sociocultural context entirely invisible, however—appearing, for instance, in songbooks for children that lacked any comparison to the original on which it was based.

This way of representing childhood differs not only from that found in "The Message," but also from the ways in which childhood is constructed in

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children by teachers as a space of imagined childhood. This might serve, for instance, to help adults look back nostalgically at their own childhood or to look ahead with hope toward a better future to be shaped by children. This may also be the reason for Zuckowski's enormous success with parents and educators.

US-American Hip-Hop that I have previously investigated in picture books, films, songs, and videos (Kautny 2018) where narratives about street children and teenagers dominate. The photographs of Martha Cooper (Zeb.Roc.Ski 2013) or the film *Beat Street*, for instance, are documents from the early phase of US-American rap in the 1970s and 1980s. They portray street kids on their own, probably no older than ten to fourteen, who appropriate the urban street culture of Hip-Hop—far removed the control of parents at home, teachers at school, or other generational instances of establishing and reinforcing social norms. Over the course of the 1980s, big-city street narratives become more violent, at times representing children, especially in the context of gangsta rap, as both perpetrators and victims within criminal milieus. Films and songs in Hip-Hop often tell retrospective stories from the point of view of adults who felt socially disadvantaged as children and young adults—not least by the education system—and yet ultimately managed to empower themselves and fight their way through (The Notorious B.I.G., Eminem et al.). These narratives of danger, of big-city streets, and of self-assertion also meant a lot to my students at an elementary school in Düren, as they themselves reported: gangsta rappers from the United States (such as 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg) and Germany (Sido) were their favorite artists in the mid-2000s. Kerstin Wilke's 2012 empirical study on how gangsta rap (among other genres) from the United States and Germany was received by students in German elementary schools confirms, beyond the individual case of my school at the time, that this genre of rap music could be extremely important for elementary school children.

And this background illuminates the potential for conflict that existed between two competing views of childhood in the tension between "Das Rap-Huhn" and Hip-Hop culture. One conception draws from the image of sheltered childhood, while the other draws from norms of Hip-Hop street culture, its construct of authenticity (see Kruse 2018), and its images of autonomous childhood. This poses a dilemma that is not easy to resolve from a pedagogical point of view. For one thing, some of the ethical principles found in certain subgenres of Hip-Hop are incompatible with contemporary pedagogical ideas of child welfare. Moreover, when schools uncompromisingly ignore or erase images of what is supposedly a "bad childhood," they always run the risk of consciously or unconsciously perpetuating precisely those asymmetrical social processes that Bühler-Niederberger critically illuminated as instances of generational discipline and formation.

I can only hint here at possible consequences for music education:

- Instructors interested in introducing Hip-Hop in music lessons should leverage their understanding of this cultural tension. They can gain an awareness of the narratives in Hip-Hop that resonate with students (in this case: childhood and street life).
- At the same time, teachers can reflect on generational processes of establishing and reinforcing social norms by reexamining, for instance, their own teaching roles or stereotypical portrayals of childhood in teaching materials.
- This may help to ensure that classroom discussions with students and possibly a shared search for suitable learning materials and practices are as nonviolent, critical of power structures, sensitive to the emotional needs and musical interests of students, and affirming as can be (Honnens 2018; Kautny 2021).

Conclusion

My thoughts on Hip-Hop in the music classroom are intended to show how it can be productive to approach the topic from various scholarly perspectives and to explore the relationship between them in order to improve the practice of music education. Reflections on the processes of aesthetic experience in music pedagogy, for instance, can be profoundly enriched by insights from music theory, e.g., by knowledge about the potential that music has to impact listeners and about varying degrees of difficulty in flow. Perspectives from sociological or cultural studies can likewise enrich music education in helping to reveal stereotypes in teaching materials and fostering a standpoint of critical reflection in the classroom. And innovative critiques or improvements of teaching materials, methods, and basic pedagogical attitudes toward engaging with Hip-Hop can in turn benefit the practice of music teaching.

One key prerequisite for successful interdisciplinary engagement with Hip-Hop in music education—both in research and practice—is embracing an open concept of music. I advocate for a reception-theoretical model that presupposes a reciprocal relationship between music production, musical products, and their reception and is thus capable of mapping both music-analytical and sociocultural aspects of music. Through my analysis of "Das Rap-Huhn," I intended to illustrate how a dual music-analytical and sociological

perspective on flow is especially apt for decoding the complexity of the topic I have raised—both with regard to rap music and to associated processes of musical instruction and learning.

This concept of music furthermore helps build a bridge between various areas of research or fields of practice engaged with rap or Hip-Hop. This is especially necessary where there has been an overemphasis on one of the two dimensions (music theory and music sociology), while the other has been overlooked or dismissed.

In this regard, I hope for my research to build connections between different areas of teaching and research, thereby stimulating greater collaboration among educators and scholars.

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