

Such a Strange Vibration: Rock Music as the Affective Site of Divergence among the Soviet Estonian Nonconformist Youth

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Abstract

While Timothy Leary was preaching “Turn on, tune in, drop out” in the late 1960s in the United States, young people in the Soviet Union were practising another kind of tuning in. Radio Luxembourg and other foreign radio signals leaked through the Iron Curtain, bringing with them “the strange vibration” that sparked new social arenas and affective engagements. Iconic hippie-era albums were illicitly distributed, copied on reel-to-reel tapes, and exchanged within the networks of music lovers. In Soviet Estonia a distinctive rock music scene evolved.

Rock music was the key source and the means of divergence for the nonconformist youth of Soviet Estonia, many of whom identified as or were connected to the hippies. The radically different sound of psychedelic rock prompted ecstatic states of mind and triggered new imaginaries. The affective engagements with music created a sense of connection with the global pop culture and youth movements and, ultimately, fostered the sense of an imaginary elsewhere. Since these engagements diverged from the predominant discourses, and the Soviet authorities often regarded them as dangerous for societal well-being, the affectively loaded practices and experiences of music guided the youth to redefine their relationship to the daily reality and ideology of Soviet life. Hence, the rock music milieu became the site in which certain affects (interest in rock music), affective states of mind (*kaif*) and expressions (practices of style, artistic languages) fostered the agency of the nonconformist youth by creating a space of sensory divergence.

I was listening to the Beatles singing from the sky – really nice voices! It was like the voices of the Beatles, but not their song. Something much more beautiful. It was unbelievable.

Vladimir Wiedemann

Introduction

The hippie movement, which culminated in the U.S. with the legendary Summer of Love in 1967 San Francisco and the Woodstock Festival in 1969, had a lasting effect on the youth in the Soviet Union. Influenced by the limited knowledge about global youth movements and western rock music that leaked through the Iron Curtain, as well as being inspired by various spiritual traditions, a counterculture of flower children developed in the Soviet Union (see for example Risch 2005; Zhuk 2008; Mikailienė 2013; Wiedemann 2013; Fürst 2014; Toomistu 2017; *Soviet Hippies*, 2017). Asking a Soviet hippie how they had become a hippie would most often receive the simple response: “Through music.” With its power to create new social arenas and stimulate affective imagi-

naries and enactments that significantly deviated from mainstream society, rock music was the key source and the means of divergence.

In this paper I focus on the role of music among nonconformist youth in the late-Soviet period in Estonia. While I draw on sources of oral history and materials up until the early 1980s, the argument I propose considers specifically the narrow period between the late 1960s and mid-1970s. This coincides with the emergence of the Soviet hippie movement and precedes the era when rock music carved out its intermittently tolerated – if not actually promoted – position in the Soviet cultural milieu, as evinced by phenomena such as touring rock groups and the vinyl releases of locally produced as well as Western rock by the official Soviet record label Melodiya (see e.g. Cushman 1995). I regard the formation of the youth counterculture in Soviet Estonia as the simultaneous effect of external influences and the local socio-political context. While the hippie movement in Soviet Estonia manifested a global cultural flow of transnational origin, the particular socio-political context conditioned its distinctive enactments. These enactments produced a common ground for commu-

nication with kindred spirits locally and across the urban Soviet Union which expanded through the 1970s into a subcultural network often referred to as *sistema*, which translates from Russian as “the system.” On the one hand, the hippie movement in the Soviet Union illustrates the global cultural flows in which different media have enabled the formation of rhizomatic (Deleuze, Guattari 1987) communities with “no sense of place.” However, the engagement with rock music and the occasional representations in the official Soviet media, not to mention the bootlegged media depicting the youth countercultural movements in the West, led towards a collective envisioning that surpassed the mere acknowledgement that their contemporaries in the “free world” were rocking in the spirit of “Make love not war,” enabling the formation of distinctive subjectivities in their own right. The available materials and scattered information, the emerging social networks among music lovers, occasional concerts and festivals, as well as the sense of the eternity of state socialism (Yurchak 2005), provoked certain imaginaries and sensitivities that were in direct contrast with the outside world and which ultimately formed a constitutive part of Soviet Estonian nonconformist youth subjectivities from the late 1960s onward.

Inspired by insights from affect theory, I refer to the affective engagements that rock music and the social life around such music stimulated as the “strange vibration”, with reference to Scott McKenzie’s iconic song from the American hippie era, “If you’re going to San Francisco.” For many of those who participated in my research, this song was one of the most memorable sources of reference to the hippie movement in the West. I use “the strange vibration” to mark the shared affects among the nonconformist youth that formed their site of divergence, ultimately becoming their “politics of the unpolitical.”¹ The influence of Western music on Eastern rebellion during the late-Soviet era has been explored in several earlier studies (e.g. Cushman 1995; Yurchak 2005; Troitskii 2007; Woodhead 2013). However, the role of affect in practices of music consumption among Soviet youth have not been explicitly addressed before. By providing a specific analysis through the lens of affect and demonstrating how affect

may relate to human agency, this paper offers a contribution that helps to reconsider the nature of the resistance of the late-Soviet youth.

In poststructuralist feminist thinking, agency is not understood as arising only in the negative paradigm of subjectivation, but societal norms can be performed and experienced in various ways. Following Saba Mahmood (2011: 18), agency should not be conceptualized “simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of *subordination* create and enable” (emphasis original). Thus the specific forms of agency are always embedded in the context of their appearance. While the Soviet hippies escaped the normative assumptions about *Homo Sovieticus* they were simultaneously inscribed to different sets of norms, e.g. what they imagined a hippie to be like in the West or what had become normative within their own community. But they also used the forms of resistance that the specific relations of subordination to the Soviet state allowed them.

To make sense of the subjectivities of the late-Soviet nonconformist youth, who in retrospect often frame their activities as passive protest or ignoring resistance, I have turned to the insights from affect theory. Affect places emotion and dynamism in bodily matter in the foreground when discussing body, culture and subjectivity (Clough 2010). Affect arises in the midst of in-betweenness (Seigworth, Gregg 2010: 1) and marks the intensities or stickiness (Ahmed 2010) in relationships between bodies, discourses, or even historical-cultural formations. Emerging between two bodies, or between bodies and the world, affect is also crucial in the production of collective identities and affinities. The hippie era youth in Soviet Estonia, who were inspired by the knowledge of the global hippie movement and enjoyed good tunes, had a radically different intensity of sensitivity compared to the generation that preceded them and the rest of Soviet society. They believed more, they loved more, and their life was in the hands of a loose concept of *kaif*, which roughly translates as ecstatic pleasure. It was certainly a highly heterogenous group of people, but if there was something they shared, it was the sense of simply *feeling* more. Hence, I regard the Soviet

¹ I have borrowed this term from the historian Gordon Craig (1995), who used it in his study of 19th century German writers.

nonconformist youth as a community most profoundly bounded by shared affect: the bodily intensity in their experiences, activities and mindset. Music, of course, played a central role in the affective milieu of the Soviet hippies. In the following pages I will demonstrate how the affective engagements with rock music that involved specific sensorial experiences, social activities and artistic self-expression provided the youth with their site of agency and fostered divergence.

As already mentioned, the nonconformist youth in Soviet Estonia was a highly heterogeneous and amorphous group of people. There were those who identified as hippies, who more or less actively participated in the *sistema* network, engaged in certain lifestyles and style practices, and disengaged from the conventional social norms of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there were substantially more people who passionately related to the rock music scene but simultaneously accomplished their studies, professional commitments and participation in Komsomol (the Young Communist League); or who engaged with the hippie circuits temporarily; or who balanced their life skilfully between the officially approved and the underground milieus, as, for example, did many artists, musicians and composers. In the context of this article, I refer to the subjects of my study as both the hippies and the nonconformist youth and sometimes use these terms interchangeably. While I acknowledge the differences between their respective subject positions, these differences nevertheless do not significantly affect the main argument in this paper regarding the role of music as the source and the site of divergence.

The article is based on an independent anthropological research project with which I have been involved since 2011. As part of a wider trans-media documentary project,² I have conducted lengthy interviews with eighteen individuals from the generation born between 1939 and 1963 in Estonia and seventeen others from Russia, Latvia, and Ukraine; this paper, however, relies mostly on the material collected in Estonia. Approximately

half of the research participants in Estonia and all the participants in the other countries considered themselves as hippies, participated actively in Soviet hippie social networks for a large part of their adult life, and often still do. The other half of the Estonian research participants were musicians, artists and writers who were influenced by the late 1960s “hippie era” and who, in turn, influenced others with their creative work and spirit. Most of the interviews were filmed; for those which were not, audio recordings were made. In addition, I worked extensively with visual archives (mostly from private sources, but also film archives), engaged in many shorter conversations and online communication with people associated with the Soviet hippie culture, and relied on digital oral history as well as on material from the state archives. In the pages that follow, in the first section I elaborate on the theoretical framing of the argument, describing the nonconformist youth in Soviet Estonia as a community of shared affect that was based on their engagements with the imaginary elsewhere and which drew them into mimetic communication with their imagined counterparts in the West as well as with each other. This is followed by four shorter ethnographically driven sections on the rock music milieu. First, I elaborate on the individual affective experiences of engaging with rock music, giving attention to the notions of empowerment, connectivity, love, and *kaif*. Next, I continue to describe the social arenas that developed around the rock music phenomena, specifically the networks of record exchange and live music events. Then, I provide a brief overview of some examples of the ways in which “the strange vibration” was meaningfully expressed in artistic languages. This is followed by discussion of the material in relation to the reactions of the Soviet authorities and mainstream society, which often regarded the affective engagements with the rock music scene as dangerous for societal well-being, while at the same time also posing the question of whether and how these activities can be seen as a form of resistance. I conclude with the suggestion that the affective engagements

² The research has also resulted in a feature-length documentary film *Soviet Hippies* (Estonia, Germany, Finland 2017), which I directed, as well as the multimedia exhibition *Soviet Hippies: The Psychedelic Underground of the 1970s Estonia* that I co-curated and exhibited in the Estonian National Museum in 2013, in Moderna Museet in Malmö, Sweden in 2014, in Uppsala Konstmuseum in Sweden in 2014, in Presentation House Gallery in Vancouver, Canada in 2014, in Red Gallery in London, U.K. in 2016, and in GalerieKUB in Leipzig, Germany in 2018.

with rock music provided the youth their site of agency, mainly by serving as the statement of disengagement from the Soviet discourses and reality and by stimulating the sense of internalized elsewhere.

The shared affect of the nonconformist youth

Compared to the rest of the Soviet Union, Estonia was known for its relatively relaxed atmosphere and higher exposure to Western influences, especially through its contacts with Finland and its access to Finnish television (Miil 2013). Due to these impressions, Estonia was often dubbed as the Soviet West (Risch 2015). During the Khrushchev Thaw (1956–1964) a substantial number of beat bands emerged in Estonia (Salumets 1998). However, the stagnation that accompanied Brezhnev's rule (1964–1982) and the cultural repressions that soon followed the emerging hippie aesthetic among the late 1960s youth, further marked by the events of 1968 in Prague, fostered the burgeoning of a youth culture which deliberately distanced itself from the Soviet ideology, prevailing societal norms, and the approved practices of youth culture.

In Soviet Estonia, the first individuals to associate themselves with hippies appeared in the late 1960s, but the movement lasted throughout the late Soviet period and involved several generations. By the mid-to-late 1970s, the growing network of alternative youth across the urban Soviet Union had developed characteristics of a subculture,³ with phenomena such as communal activities, extensive face-to-face communication, elements of style, a distinct slang language, and its own social spaces. In larger cities, certain places emerged where the hippies could find others who shared their views and who could be recognized by their attire and manners. Information about gathering places and music festivals was shared between them, as well as the addresses and phone numbers of other people who were associated with *sistema*. The emerging social network made it possible to travel to another city and immediately find social support and a place to stay. From the mid-1970s it became a tradition to gather in Tallinn on the first of May, which marked

the beginning of the hitch-hiking season. One of the first hippie summer camps in 1977 was also held in Estonia, in Viitna. Yet among the wider circuits of nonconformist Soviet youth, Estonia was prevalently known for its distinctive rock music scene, which drew visitors from near and far.

Hippies, both in the West and in the Soviet bloc, positioned themselves against the established order. In the U.S. the established power structures were intertwined with rigid ideas about race, gender, class hierarchy, family model, morals, and colonial power and institutionalized order; in the Soviet Union they were more likely to be associated with authoritative discourse, morals, militarism, censorship, cultural repressions, and proclaimed atheism. These were the dominant power structures that the hippies were keen to resist. Most commonly, the starting point of divergence for these young people was the influence of western rock music, as, for example, in the following experience of Vladimir Wiedemann:

At the age of twelve or thirteen I already started doubting the school propaganda and the superiority of the Soviet reality and power. That was the starting point for me. Being a little bit different. The rock music: Woodstock sessions, rock 'n' roll, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, etc. The hippie movement started. I knew about it from early on. First from the radio, then there were publications in the Soviet media. They criticized hippies a lot, described them as completely crazy – strange clothes and protest against the capitalist society. Basically it was a protest against the well-established system. That was also the case in the Soviet Union. We couldn't protest against capitalism, because we didn't have it here. But we had the same bureaucrats, red-necks and just very box-headed people. (Vladimir Wiedemann, born 1955, Tallinn).⁴

Wiedemann's recollection underlines the core of their struggle, seeing these subjectivities as a protest against the established system and acknowledging that this struggle differed from their western counterparts inasmuch as there was a difference between their respective dominant ideo-

³ In the sense of e.g. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (1990) and Dick Hebdige (1979).

⁴ Interview with Vladimir Wiedemann, September 2, 2012, Tallinn. Most interviews were conducted between 2012 and 2015, various informal communications and a few more interviews followed until 2018.

logies. This, however, would not necessarily lead to a conceptualization of the hippies as a group bounded by political protest. The nonconformist youth in Soviet Estonia opposed the Soviet norms through various means of self-expression, but they did not share a clear oppositional stance, and nor were they actively – let alone strategically – protesting against the state. They differed considerably in their involvement in artistic or social activities, spiritual practices and critical thinking about politics. Yet there is still something that united these people and marked their difference from the rest of the society. Juliane Fürst (2014) has emphasized the distinctive emotional style of the Soviet hippies, how they “wanted to feel differently by looking different from the ‘grey masses’” (ibid.: 585). Their activities could be described as an emotional practice rather than a “political movement.” Elaborating on Fürst’s stance, I regard the Soviet hippies and the wider circuit of nonconformist youth as a group driven first and foremost by certain affective engagements. Nevertheless, as I will show, this emotional practice was the site of their agency as a form of sensorial divergence from the societal norms.

Drawing on the insights from the affect theory on the dynamics of embodiment and subjectivity, I consider the Soviet hippie subjectivity as deeply ingrained with the affective craving for an imaginary elsewhere. The imaginary elsewhere encompasses not only its associations with the *zagranitza*, the Imaginary West that is well described by Yurchak (2005) as the archetypal manifestation of the unattainable west, yet at the same time a constitutive element of late Soviet reality. The imaginary elsewhere also contains the realms of altered and ecstatic states of consciousness, dreams, fantasies and spiritual quests – all of which formed a substantial part of the Soviet hippie lifestyle. The imaginary elsewhere as an elsewhere within holds the transcendent experiences that the hippies pursued through spiritual practices, the use of psychedelics and, most likely, through the sensory experiences generated by the fuzzy and distorted sounds of psychedelic rock music.

Affect plays a central part of the lived experience of the imaginary elsewhere, as it encloses the sensory intensity, the intersubjective relation between the idealized, exciting and ecstatic other and the material here and now. In the framework of affect theory, a body is webbed in its relations,

pulled beyond its surface-boundedness through affective encounters, which eventually compose a body (Seigworth, Gregg 2010: 3). In a Spinozan-Deleuzian sense, subjectivity can be perceived as an “envelope of possibilities” rather than a fixed individual organism (Gibbs 2010: 187). The engagements with the imaginary elsewhere provide the means to open up one’s body for perpetual becoming and consequently distance oneself from the material reality, their “fixed” subject position, allowing the subject to emerge in a perpetual space of becoming. The Soviet hippies wanted to lift their bodies from their daily environment, to deterritorialize (Yurchak 2005: 114–116) their subjectivity from the space and time of the Soviet reality. They wanted to be in constant movement towards the promises and the potential of the imaginary elsewhere. Seigworth and Gregg (2010: 3) have noted that affect is driven precisely by its promise, its “not yet”. Since the elsewhere to strive for is imaginary, it is always a promise rather than the actual and material here-and-now. Yet this promise was precisely the key that captivated the nonconformist youth in Soviet Estonia, and while engaging with this promise, this “strange vibration” from elsewhere, the internal deterritorialization from the Soviet reality which surrounded them already took shape. Subsequently I argue that the affective experience of rock music fostered the drive for the imaginary elsewhere. The shared affect as “the strange vibration” in turn resulted in distinctive social and also artistic practices. While Soviet authorities often considered these affects as dangerous for societal well-being, the affective promise in rock music ultimately guided the youth to redefine their relationship to the Soviet daily reality and ideology. In the next section I describe the processes of affective divergence in the rock music milieu in the cases of subjective sensorial experiences, social networks and live events, and in artistic languages.

Turn on, tune in... the radio, and then, drop out

While in the late 1960s in the United States, the former professor of Harvard University, Timothy Leary, was preaching “Turn on, tune in, drop out,” which was meant to encourage the young to counter the existing social conventions through the use of psychedelic drugs, the youth in Soviet Estonia saw another kind of “tuning in.” Radio

Luxembourg and other foreign radio broadcasts kept people updated not only with events, but also with the new trends in music elsewhere in the world. For Estonia especially, the access to Finnish television was a key source of divergence. Young minds were captivated by the iconic hippie-era albums mostly from the U.K. and the U.S., which were illicitly distributed, copied on reel-to-reel tapes, and exchanged within networks of friends. Generally, information about rock music reached the young through foreign radio channels that were accessible in the medium or short wave radio spectrum and which, despite their low sound quality, were greatly appreciated. Apart from the Voice of America and some Swedish and Finnish radio channels, Radio Luxembourg was possibly the most popular of these. Estonian rock musician Gunnar Graps even dedicated a song to it, calling the channel “the spiritual kitchen of pop life” (Ornament “Radio Luxembourg”, recorded ca. 1973–1974).

Classic hippie albums were listened to countless times at private or collective listening sessions. A young man laying on his bed in a student dormitory with headsets on and a vinyl player at his side would have been a familiar picture for many who witnessed student life in the 1970s. The Tallinn home of Aare Loit (born 1953) was often the site for collective listening sessions:

We played music on a tape or record player, settled in a comfortable position and just let go. Only some basic indispensable phrases interrupted it. The rest was just music. You could close your eyes. Some just stared at one point. You could, but it was certainly not compulsory to use something in order to get in the right mindset. The music alone was enough.⁵

Loit’s recollection illustrates the powerful affective quality of this music – something that made the group of friends sit still, close their eyes and go with the flow of the music. Despite the often rather low sound quality of the re-recorded tapes of western rock and the fact that they usually did not understand the lyrics in English, the previously unheard sound of psychedelic rock with its

distorted fuzzy guitar sound and extended solos affected the minds and triggered the imagination in remarkable ways. “Such a strange vibration” is how Aksel Lampmann⁶ (born 1955) described his first experience with the western sound, shaking his body to illustrate his point.

Not less significant was the fact that this sound was coming from a world unknown to them, from the often idealized West. Together with the snippets of information that leaked through the Iron Curtain – bootlegged band photographs, magazine articles, foreign radio broadcasts that depicted the hippie movement, the Woodstock festival and the rock music scene in the West – as well as the few articles published in the Soviet media often condemning the decadent western youth, the radically new sound shook their collective consciousness, made them vibrate, and came to signify a promise. “The strange vibration” stimulated the imagination of a different world, a sense of individual freedom, and a more natural, peaceful and love-driven state of mind. The music provoked sentiments of wildness, sacredness or otherworldliness that seemed to be absent from the proclaimed Soviet ideology and morals. Ultimately, it gave the youth some sense of empowerment:

You don’t need to know the lyrics to reach the feeling of security. The joy of exploration that you put into music. It somehow reaches you. And you start spreading that sense of security. It gives you confidence in your own choices. (Riho Baumann, born 1952, Tallinn).⁷

I’ve been wondering what fascinated us [in music]. It’s not easy to put it into words. It’s the feeling that transcended logic, and simultaneously carried some kind of uniting power. (Aare Loit).⁸

An important part of the excitement about rock music was the sense of connectedness to the global pop culture and the subsequent experience of an imagined community (Anderson [1983] 2006) with the global youth movements. The “uniting power” that Aare Loit refers to signifies this sense of participating in the global pop

⁵ Interview with Aare Loit, January 4, 2013, Tallinn.

⁶ Interview with Aksel Lampmann, May 30, 2015, Tallinn; interview conducted during a visit to St. Petersburg.

⁷ Interview with Riho Baumann, January 4, 2013, Tallinn.

⁸ Interview with Aare Loit, June 29, 2015, Tallinn.

culture and being tuned in with “the strange vibration.”

The vast affective influence of western rock music over Soviet youth cannot be considered without considering the significance of the Beatles. It was the The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* album (released in 1967) that Loit was listening to non-stop for days until his mother became severely concerned and decided to check the mental health of her 15-year-old son at the psychiatric hospital. The circulation of the Beatles albums from the late 1960s sparked Beatlemania in the USSR, and this lasted for decades (Safonov 2003; Woodhead 2013; Valme 2014; Anton 2015). The Beatles came to signify the life and pop culture of the free world in the West (Valme 2014), and thus gave the youth a sense of participation in the global pop culture. The Beatles were singing about non-violence and love, which were already radically potent ideas against the backdrop of the militaristic and authoritarian Soviet context. Hence, a different sense of connection to reality was triggered – the kind based on the notion of love:

Then came the purity of being. You can use different labels, but it arrived. It is here and ongoing. But you won't find some big book on it. There is no exam you can take. You can't read up on it. It's just some essential quality. You can't fake it. My grandmother somehow managed to teach it to me. “All You Need is Love” by the Beatles – regard everything with love. It doesn't mean hitting someone on the head if they don't love you. By relating to the whole existence with love, you'll reach a genuine connection with it. (Riho Baumann).⁹

In these profound affective experiences, a shifting stance towards Soviet ideology was embedded. In Aare Loit's opinion, the Beatles' albums *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour* stimulated his imagination in quite the same way as LSD, unavailable in the USSR, would have done. The fuzzy and distorted sound of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and other significant bands triggered the minds to travel to unknown dimensions. One of the key slang words among the hippies and others was *kaif* – this is a loose concept that signifies things that feel good, whether in music, ambience, sex or drugs. In oth-

er words – things that hold an ecstatic, fun, enjoyable quality. It is the ultimate pleasure; *kaif* is “the high.” Emphasizing the importance of sensorial pleasure, *kaif* became one of the central notions that shaped the practices and lifestyles among the hippies. The rock music that made your body vibrate and your mind wander to unknown regions was certainly perceived as *kaif*. Yet the fuss surrounding the American rock musical *Hair* (premiered in 1967), which marked the start of the new *Age of Aquarius*, triggered the discourse of New Age in Soviet Estonia. This led to a growing interests in Eastern religions, mysticism, meditation, and yoga.

Hence, by triggering imagination and signifying a promise, western rock music, with its mesmerizing fuzzy guitar drive, had a profound affective influence over the young. Their affective engagements with music, which were tied to the notions of empowerment, love, and *kaif*, as well as to a sense of unitedness with the western youth movements and participation in the global pop culture, provided a means of breaking away from the daily reality imbued with Soviet ideology, authoritarian discourses and morals. However, it is important to note that while rock music was the most prominent site for these experiences, they were not strictly limited to rock music, but could also be induced by early electronic music and blues, as well as Indian classical music.

Social networks of record exchange

The passion for western music and the desire to experience more of this “strange vibration” generated active social networks of record exchange and re-recording. In the early days, Western vinyl records travelled into Soviet states through relatives who lived abroad or through those who held powerful positions in the state apparatus and had a chance to travel outside the USSR; but as time went on more and more black market connections developed through sailors and through contacts with Finns, especially after the hotel Viru was opened in 1972 in Tallinn (see also the documentary film *Viru. Vabaduse saatkond*, 2013). Harju hill became a location known for illicit record exchange. Already by the late 1960s there was an active social scene around the circulation of Western vinyl records. Since the price of

⁹ Interview with Riho Baumann, January 4, 2013, Tallinn.

an original record was relatively high compared to average salaries, they were often bought and shared among groups of friends, and usually re-recorded countless times on reel tapes. A tailor based in Tallinn, Aleksandr Dormidontov (born 1950), attracted not only those who fancied a pair of bellbottoms, but also who desired to delve into his collection of western records:

Russian melodies and records from the socialist states – I didn't even consider them to be records. It had to be Apple, original records. I had over a hundred of them. I could afford it. A couple of days of sewing and I could already buy a record. I had quite a big collection. And a tape recorder as well. When people came to borrow a record, they would bring one in return. I recorded it, the other person recorded the one he received and then brought it back. That sort of fiddling. There were people who went door to door to get records in order to copy them and collect music, because it was hard to come by.¹⁰

In these social circuits, a specific knowledge developed – not only about the rock music scene in the West, but also about the technologies for copying vinyl on to reel-to-reel tape and about the people who also collected foreign records. An active member of the experimental and progressive rock bands Psycho and Radar, Paap Kõlar (born 1954) describes it thus:

The records travelled from hand to hand. "What have you got?" "I'll get *Led Zeppelin IV* next week. What can you offer in return?" That's how it went. We developed thematic underground social networks. Musicians and instrumentalists interacted. "He has a great tape collection. He's got everything." Others wanted it too. "Make me a copy. Hendrix Experience! Make me a recording. On wide tape, 19.5 cm/s, you'll get better quality."

Tapes were hard to get. Everything was hard to get. We'd get things under the counter. Someone's aunt worked at a record store, we used to check every week whether something had come in. "I got some tape! Some new Russian variety, gives higher frequencies, 12 000 cycles. OK, let's record at 19 cm/s, not 19.5. We'll use more tape, but the quality will be decent."¹¹

Benson (1987) has suggested that by the mid-1980s around 80% of Soviet youth were participating in the networks that served for the exchange of foreign and locally produced rock music. While probably exaggerated, this bears witness to the claim that the rock music milieu, affected by western music, had gained wide popularity in the late Soviet period. However, it should be noted that besides the affective qualities of the music, which was the main reason for the flourishing social networks and knowledge surrounding the music and record exchange, these practices were also used as a statement of status and differentiation among the youth. The as yet not readily available features of western rock music made it significantly more desirable for the young, and the opportunity to participate in the global pop culture gave a sense of satisfaction that boosted the social status of the participant.

Live music events

Music also functioned as an important social scaffold beyond the circuits of record exchange: bands had their regular rehearsals, and concerts and open-air music festivals drew audiences from near and far. Estonia soon became known for its innovative rock music scene¹² among the networks of hippies and music lovers across the Soviet Union. On April 28, 1968, a "guitar ensemble recital" took place at the Kosmos cinema in Tallinn featuring five bands. This has been regarded as the first rock music festival in the Soviet

¹⁰ Interview with Aleksandr Dormidontov, June 30, 2013, Tallinn.

¹¹ Interview with Paap Kõlar, June 18, 2012, Hiiumaa.

¹² Other emerging influential collectives which used experimental, psychedelic and prog rock elements in their repertoire were Kooma (with the charismatic singer Joel Steinfeldt), Meie (experimental band with vocalist Tajo Kadajas and guitarist Kalle Vikat), Psycho (improvisational collective with Paap Kõlar on drums and Andres Põldroo on guitar), Mess (often claimed to be the Soviet Union's first progressive rock band formed by then 17-year-old Sven Grünberg), Ornament (with lead singer and drummer Gunnar Graps), and Suuk (psychedelic rock band from Tartu which stood out for its collaboration with Aleksander Müller).

Union for which the authorities issued a permit (Kiwa 2013; see also *Kosmos '68*). In 1972, a music festival was organized in the small town of Elva in southern Estonia, which has been seen as a “hippie festival”. The rare Super8 film footage by Heino Maripuu¹³ from the Elva festival shows the crowds of young people dancing and rocking in ecstasy by the open-air stage. There was also a series of rock concerts in Pärnu in 1970–1971. The most memorable of these was the so-called Pärnu Flower Party, when the entire stage was covered with flowers that the organizers had picked from the neighbourhood gardens the previous night.¹⁴ In Tallinn, concerts were regularly held in the hall of the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute. Throughout the 1970s, festivals took place in Viljandi. Later on, from 1979 through 1991, a rock festival, Tartu Music Days, was held annually in Tartu. At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, a series of semi-clandestine rock festivals took place on Saaremaa island, located in the Soviet Union’s strictly guarded border-zone. These concerts and festivals were significant sites that affectively engaged with “the strange vibration.”

For example, one of the very first psychedelic rock bands in the Soviet Union, Keldriline Heli (which translates as “the cellar-like sound” – a name inspired from Brian Epstein’s book *A Cellarful of Noise* (Jõela 2014)) was established in 1970 in the basement of the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute (currently the Tallinn University of Technology). As noted by Margus Kiis (2013), the band modelled itself on the classic hippie band from San Francisco, Jefferson Airplane. Their songs relied on psychedelic structures and metaphorical lyrics. They also emphasized the spectacular nature of their shows. For example, at their concert on March 26, 1971, the stage was covered with candles and the hall filled with balloons (Jõela 2014). One of my research participants describes the concert in highly emotional terms, as if “the whole crowd was breathing together that night.” Recalled in such specificity several decades later, it underlines the affective promise of something *more*

that the band succeeded to deliver and which impacted the audience in meaningful ways. The influence of the show did not remain unnoticed by the authorities, since the group was banned from performing in public after that gig, but for a while they continued under a different name,¹⁵ Väntorel. At other times these events led someone to join the hippie milieu. Pille, from Tartu, recalls her first impression with the hippies as a child witnessing Tartu Music Days, which some years later drew her into the movement:

The long hair – I saw this hit during the Tartu Music Days, when the whole Town Hall Square was multi-coloured with the long-haired guys. I was 12 and just on my way home from children’s art school. The system always seemed dull, so I was trying to find ways how to be the least useful for this system and eventually I chose art school.¹⁶

Within the network of *sistema*, the image of the Estonian rock music scene was also cultivated, which in turn often made these festivals the sites for hippie socialization. Youth from all over the Soviet Union travelled to Estonia to experience its rock music scene; visitors from as far afield as Vladivostok have been recalled. A few days before the beginning of Tartu Music Days, for example, the locals made phone calls to Riga, Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and apparently that was enough to get the crowds moving towards Estonia.¹⁷

As in various other fields of cultural production in the Soviet state, there was no total ideological control over the music scene. Rather it depended extensively on the particular personal preferences or methods of those in ruling positions (Rommel 2014). The freedom to play cover songs of the western bands depended on the particular circumstances of how much the venue’s manager was personally invested in rock music or on the extent to which they were willing to risk. Many influential bands, most prominently Ruja, had a see-saw relationship with the authorities, sometimes being banned from performing, at

¹³ A copy of Heino Maripuu’s footage is with the author.

¹⁴ Interview with Herbert Murd, January 30, 2013, Tallinn.

¹⁵ Changing the name of the band used to be a common strategy by musicians who were banned from performing in public.

¹⁶ Interview with Pille, February 2013, Tartu.

¹⁷ Interview with Peti, February 2013, Tartu.

other times having an album released by Melodiya (Garrie 2013).¹⁸ The authorities also kept a keen eye on the bigger live music events. For example, for the Elva festival in 1972, it has been recalled that the bands from Tallinn were not allowed to perform in order to keep the event smaller. A few years later a concert connected with the students' summer work camp in Võru was supposed to take place, but rumours about another rock music festival quickly spread around various Soviet cities. When groups of hippies appeared, the authorities declared a sanitary day¹⁹ in the whole town of Võru, cancelled the event, and arrested all the long-haired youths.²⁰ Thus, while the festivals and concerts were mostly happening within a legal framework and under the observance of the officials, they were nevertheless important sites of socialization and self-expression and a source of divergence, as they held within themselves the capacity to spread "the strange vibration." In the next section, I shall provide a brief outline of how some musicians drew on "the strange vibration" in their artistic expression and experienced it as their site of divergence.

Affective drive in artistic languages

The affective states of mind that youth had been exploring, often enough under the influence of western rock music, were also reflected in various forms of locally produced artistic expression, which in turn simultaneously regenerated these affective sentiments for the musicians and the audiences alike. After 1967 (Anton 2015: 23), all groups had to pass an annual qualification in order to acquire a permit to perform in public. For these reasons, as well as others, the political stance of the musicians was usually masked into poetic lyrics, expressive gestures or the elements of style on stage. Yet "the strange vibration" exposed on the stage at these occasions held the power of stimulating a kind of divergence.

In Viljandi in 1976, Urmas Alender, with his band Teravik, was singing expressively "The spike

is pointed downwards" ("Teravik on suunatud alla"), while the guitarist Andres Põldroo, standing next to him, wore a T-shirt with the imagery of the British flag. At the same festival, Aleksander Müller, with in his band Suuk, was citing lyrics by the Estonian cult poet Jüri Üdi (a pseudonym for Juhan Viiding) "I'm a junky!" ("Olen narkomaan!"), suggesting the stereotype of a hippie, as a result of which he was banned from performing for the next three months. Keldriline Heli (later Vântorel), in their song "Väsimus", with lyrics by Viljar Rähn, sang "You may think of anything that makes your head go round, but tell the things that please everyone" ("Võid mõelda kõigest, millest pea ringi käib ja öelda hoopis muud, mis kõigil meeldiv näib"), reflecting the intact freedom and ecstatic potential of the mind. For Paap Kõlar, his radical compositions with his band Psycho (a name inspired by Hitchcock's film *Psycho*, which he saw on a Finnish television transmission) were his site of affective divergence:

We were very protest-minded. So we ignored everything. To begin with, we ignored the minor/major system. Our music was cacophonous or at least modal. And we used modal music all the time, up to the end, even during the Radar period [the band Radar was active in 1978–1987 – T.T.]. But it started with Psycho. Then we tried ignoring the form. Why does a piece of music have to have a form? Let's try making music without form! We experimented with names as well. Tried doing songs without melody or harmony. We made fearless experiments. The more hopeless the surroundings, the more you needed to cocoon yourself in order to do what you wanted. As it turned out, it was possible to remain independent of that crap. Even though everyone around you was in it neck deep, it was possible to be in it and still be actually free.²¹

From the above, it is clear that the forms of his compositions were the means to challenge the

¹⁸ Taking jazz as an example, Yurchak (2015: 165–170) explains vividly the fluctuating relationship of the Soviet state to some forms of cultural production originating from the West, which could be simultaneously criticised, tolerated and promoted.

¹⁹ Sanitary day was a Soviet era concept to take a day off from the normal work flow in an institution, organisation or, in this case, in the whole town, and declare it a day for deep cleaning, inventory or organizational tasks.

²⁰ Interview with Aleksandr Dormidontov, July 20, 2018, Tallinn.

²¹ Interview with Paap Kõlar, June 18, 2012, Hiiumaa.

normative assumptions with regard to the practice of art in the USSR, which in turn made him feel independent and gave him a sense of freedom in this alternate creative space of his own. To take another example, that of the composer Sven Grünberg (born 1956) who, at the age of 17, established the innovative progressive rock band Mess (active 1974–1976): in retrospect, Grünberg considers his work with Mess as a creative laboratory, in terms of both his electronic innovations with the synthesizers developed by Härmo Härmo and his incorporation of visual art by Kaarel Kurismaa.²² The artist sketched his art works inspired by the music while sitting at the band's extensive rehearsals. Kurismaa's psychedelic pop art objects appeared on the stage at Mess concerts, creating a multimedia experience that was unique at the time in the Estonian artistic landscape (Kiwa 2013). The inclusion of electronic music in Grünberg's view, however, also created possibilities for altered experiences of perception:

The electronic world enables dreamlike states of mind and evokes it in others, a perception of some totally different kind of dimensions. This kind of perception is not awakened by academic music. The academic instruments just don't have this impact on human perception. For example, with electronic music you could begin the sound from almost zero, so that you won't perceive the beginning of it. This creates the opportunity for different perceptions or states of mind to emerge.²³

Grünberg's revelation underlines the potential of music to trigger affective engagements with the imaginary elsewhere, which gave musicians and audiences alike a kind of feeling of the vast potential of and, essentially, the sense of freedom existing within the dreamlike worlds. The Soviet state apparatus did not perceive this as a serious threat, due to the difficulties in pinpointing the ways in which the abstract forms of artistic expressions may oppose the state ideology. Hence, what many artists as well as audiences could have interpreted as something in line with the notion

of psychedelia rooted in the western hippie era was vague and abstract enough for the authorities not to see any sense of threat to Soviet discourses.²⁴ The main sources of potential trouble for musicians were the lyrics and certain modes of aesthetic/ethic self-presentation.

“Western poison” and the struggle for agency

I have now demonstrated the immense influence of western rock music over the Soviet youth from the late 1960s onwards, which inspired the different sensitivities, imaginaries, emotional and artistic practices that stimulated self-expression and the sense of imaginary elsewhere within. The affective power of these engagements fostered the emerging social networks around record exchange as well as private sessions and public events such as concerts and festivals dedicated to music. While these practices and experiences opened up spaces of deterritorialization (Yurchak 2005: 114-116) with respect to the proclaimed reality of the Soviet system, it is pertinent to ask to what extent these can be regarded as a form of resistance.

In general, the hippies and other nonconformist youth did not intend to strategically subvert the system. Rather they wanted to steer away from society and its politics, which they perceived as stagnating, rigid, and imbued with Soviet state ideology. In the Baltics, the youth usually despised the Soviet state in more or less explicit ways. They also identified politics in narrow terms, equating it with the Soviet political structures such as Komsomol (Young Communist League), the Estonian Communist Party, and communist ideology. Hence, 'politics' *per se* was the last thing they wanted to deal with. Furthermore, as the regime was perceived as so rigid and unalterable, the young did not even envision any possibilities of conversion and change, with or without their political engagement. 'Politics' was merely perceived as boring. Thus, instead of active participation, let alone any protest against the Soviet state, the hippies and other nonconformist youth tried rather to ignore the state and remain invisible –

²² Interview with Sven Grünberg, August 28, 2017, Tallinn.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Following a similar trend, examples of the creative use of psychedelic sensitivity can be found in several examples of Estonian animation (e.g. the work of Rein Raamat, Avo Paistik, Ando Kesküla) and graphic illustrations (e.g. Aili Vint, Vello Vinn).

“so that they wouldn’t touch us, and we wouldn’t touch them.” (Aleksandr Dormidontov).²⁵

Despite the prevailing passivity among those who, in the late 1960s, were most profoundly driven by the desire for self-expression and fun than rather political resistance, the authorities nevertheless regarded the long-haired youth as a threat to societal well-being. This led to the politicization of the hippies and their activities soon after their initial emergence.²⁶ The public discourse addressing the hippies was often focused on their attire and their lack of participative action. Based on the few available official reports from 1970, the hippies at the time were not seen so much as an ideological problem as an aesthetic or moral problem. An outstanding example of the official discourse on hippies in Soviet Estonia emerges from the report written by Aare Purga, then the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Leninist Young Communist League in Estonia. The letter was addressed to the Central Komsomol League in Moscow and describes the situation of the youth in Estonia:

In the summertime, young people gather on the streets and other places, and there are lots of so-called “longhairs” among them. Their appearance – long hair, outlandish clothing – and a sloppy manner popularizes degenerate Western “fashions.”

During the last two years, but especially in 1969, the habit of imitating Western “hippie” fashions in a vulgar way has increased. Some of the young people have started wearing long hair, which in some cases even reaches the shoulders. The first to adopt these fashions have been the poorly educated²⁷ constant club goers, including a steadily increasing number of working class young people.²⁸

The distinct emphasis on appearances in the letter can be read in relation to the wider practices of regulating bodies. In the context of Cold War propaganda, the authorities framed long-haired

young people who engaged with rock music as people who had become infected by Western influences. This use of infectiousness as a powerful metaphor represents certain population groups or certain kinds of affects as infectious agents, and thus as dangerous for societal well-being. Here, the metaphor of infectiousness projected onto some people (such as hippies) or certain “toxic” affects (such as interest in western rock music) functions as an instrument to differentiate between socially approved and disapproved behaviour. The passion for rock music or bell-bottom pants as representative elements of style emanating from the capitalist societies was framed as “Western poison” – that is, stimulated by an affect that was considered toxic. In other words, the authorities perceived the locally emerged hippies as being “different” and thus “deviant,” as individuals who could pose a danger for Soviet society because of their “toxicity” – that is their ability to popularize degenerate Western fashions. This discourse resulted in several measures designed to rein in the youth, such as strategic surveillance by the KGB, limits on cultural activities, expulsions from schools, universities and other educational institutions, arrests on the basis of public performances or appearances, and forced treatment in psychiatric hospitals. Hence, from quite early on, but especially from the year 1970 onwards, the hippie movement was essentially politicized as a result of the action and the discourses produced by the Soviet authorities.

This politicization, in turn, made a significant proportion of the nonconformist youth perceive their activities as being indeed in opposition to the Soviet regime, giving them a sense of a mission and strengthening their sense of self as different and divergent. In tandem with the process of a kind of politicization just described, my research participants often frame their subjectivities as being driven by “passive protest” or “ignorant resistance.”²⁹ The regime was considered so all-encompassing and rigid that their active participation or

²⁵ Interview with Aleksandr Dormidontov, June 30, 2013, Tallinn.

²⁶ Mikailienė (2013) notes the same about the hippies in Soviet Lithuania.

²⁷ In fact, the first hippies were actually the children of the powerful and well-educated families.

²⁸ Document No. ERAF.31.112.52, dated 29th June 1970, National Archives of Estonia.

²⁹ The complex relation between the apolitical intentions of the hippies and external politicization is also discussed by Živilė Mikailienė (2013) in relation to the hippies in Soviet Lithuania, and by Madigan Fichter (2011) with regard to the youth counterculture in Romania.

resistance would either have changed nothing or would have resulted in severe repressions. A popular saying circulating in the hippie crowds was: "It's better to step into shit than into politics!" By the late 1970s, as a result of these various forms of suppression by both the authorities and the wider society alike, the attitude among the hippies became even more escapist. "We don't disturb society and we don't want society to disturb us!"³⁰ was one of their mottos.

However, these ignorant positions, symbolic practices and even the intense ecstatic sentiments of the Soviet nonconformist youth nevertheless bore a political stance. Essentially, the Soviet hippie identity was linked to the struggle for agency in the Soviet context; they were most vocally craving for "freedom". As Saba Mahmood (2011: 18) noted, agency is not necessarily about opposing the norms, but it can be performed and experienced in various ways depending on what the specific relations of the particular subordination allow. Given the socio-political context of the late-Soviet era, the youth experienced agency in ways in which their subordinate position to the Soviet state and society enabled them to. It would have been unthinkable to organize a protest march on the streets, since the rumours of what had happened in Moscow on June 1, 1971, when well over one thousand nonconformist youth were arrested by the KGB (see *Soviet Hippies*, 2017), or in Kaunas in 1972, after the self-immolation of Romas Kalanta, had reached the notice of the youth in Soviet Estonia. Besides the fundamental principle of the Stalin regime of instilling into the population an implanted fear of being constantly spied upon, the risk of prosecution was real and feared. Hence, the Soviet nonconformist youth used instead the means that were available for them. With regard to subcultures, Dick Hebdige (1979: 18) has stated that their opposition to the hegemonic norms is often not expressed directly, but rather through meaningful practices of style. Even if the hippies did not get involved with politics directly, their symbolic expressions signifying their embeddedness in "the strange vibration" bore their performative agency (Butler 1993), their opposition to the Soviet society, its bleak promise and prevailing

norms. Their elements of style were indicative of their embeddedness in "the strange vibration." It was used as their weapon to fight for the freedom of their minds, by spreading it among themselves with their practices of style, face-to-face communication and other social activities, and, of course, with their artistic expression – all of which was perceived by the participants, at least to some degree, as their means of resistance.

Meanwhile, the Soviet authorities' attitude toward rock music went through considerable changes within a rather short period of time during the 1970s, when suddenly some forms of rock and some groups of music were promoted and sponsored by the state. Also, as noted by Cushman (1995: xii), previously "subversive" cultural products from the West were "repackaged" and released by Melodiya for general consumption. The "strange vibration" of the late 1960s and early 1970s that sparked the Soviet hippie movement and created the sensorial space of divergence had already become a much more widely shared sentiment among the youth by the late 1970s. Eventually it was not so "strange" any more at all, but along with the accelerating rock music scene and emerging café culture in Soviet cities, as Yurchak (2005: 126–157) demonstrates, these alternative milieus rather became a constitutive element of late-Soviet reality.

Conclusions

In this paper I have outlined how the air in late 1960s Soviet Estonia vibrated with the exciting wave of the rock music that had leaked through the Iron Curtain, and how young people soon became enchanted by this "strange vibration." The sound of the rock music, whether experienced at a concert, a festival, or at the often ritualized listening sessions, prompted an experience of the freedom of the mind. Soundscapes of guitar effects created the feeling of ecstasy, while the messages of the Beatles stimulated an approach to life based on love. Hence, young people who were inspired by the knowledge of the global hippie movement and enjoyed good tunes developed radically different sensitivities compared to those of mainstream society. Despite the differ-

³⁰ Interview with Pille, February 2013, Tartu.

ences among themselves, these young people were united by the characteristic that they *felt* more, they shared a kind of affect.

The affectively engaging experiences of the nonconformist youth held the promise and the potential of an imaginary elsewhere, not only in response to the radically new sound of psychedelic rock music, but also because this music was usually produced in the West. The latter created a sense of participation in the global pop culture and the feeling of involvement with the global youth movements of the era. Subsequently, these affective engagements generated distinctive social relations among the youth such as the record exchange networks, as well as the activities tied to the networks of *sistema*. In this light, rock music can be regarded as the key source and the means, and hence, the affective site of divergence for the nonconformist youth of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Soviet Estonia. The paper therefore elaborates on the idea of Fürst (2013) with regard to the emotional practice of the Soviet hippies as well as on Yurchak's (2005) notion of the internal deterritorialization of Soviet reality. Through the affective engagements with rock music, the young people cultivated their internal imaginary elsewhere, the sensorial space of "freedom", the other-side within the Soviet reality.

The Soviet authorities, however, at first treated the affects and enactments tied to rock music as a sign of wildness and as an undesirable influence from the decadent West that might lead to moral

decay. As a result, the affective engagements of the nonconformist youth were politicized, which in turn led to various forms of persecutions. In this tense context, the affective engagements along the practices and experiences of rock music became the politics of the unpolitical, in which certain affects (like an interest in rock music), affective states of mind (*kaif*), and expressions (practices of style and artistic languages) were the site of agency for the nonconformist youth in fostering their sensorial divergence. As such, this may be treated as a kind of resistance to the prevailing societal norms. Since these affective engagements represented something much more promising than the dominant Soviet discourses, imbued as they were with authoritarian rhetoric and the ideal of atheism, they held the capacity to create a sense of empowerment in the vast playground of elsewhere within.

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„Selline kummaline vibratsioon“: Rokkmuusika kui afektiivne eristumise paik Nõukogude Eesti mittekonformsete noorte hulgas

Terje Toomistu

1960. aastate lõpu Ameerika Ühendriikides ärgitas Timothy Leary noori oma teadvust äratama ja oma-päi tegutsema loosungiga „Tune in, turn on, drop out“. Samal ajal olid Nõukogude Liidu noored haara-tud omamoodi teadvuse äratamisest. Radio Luxembourg ja teised välismaised raadiokanalid imbusid läbi raudse eesriide, tuues endaga kaasa „kummalist vibratsiooni“ (*strange vibration*), mis tekitas uusi sotsiaalseid keskkondi ja afektiivseid sidemeid. Põrandaalustes kanalites levisid märgilised hipiajastu albumid, mida salvestati magnetlintidele ning vahetati melomaanidest sõpradega. Nõukogude Eestis kujunes välja iseloomulik rokkmuusika skeene.

Nõukogude Eesti noorte hulgas, kellest paljud identifitseerisid ennast või olid seotud hipidega, oli rokkmuusika põhiliseks eristumise allikaks ja vahendiks. Radikaalselt teistsugune psühheedelse roki heli tekitas ekstaatilisi meeleseisundeid ja uusi kujutlusi. Olles inspireeritud afektiteooria lähenemistest (Seighworth, Gregg 2010), kirjeldan rokkmuusika stimuleeritud afektiivseid suhteid kui „kummalist vib-ratsiooni“, viidates siinkohal Scott McKenzie märgilisele Ameerika hipiajastu loole „If you're going to San Francisco“. Sellest „kummalisest vibratsioonist“ sai noorte tunnetusliku erisuse paik ning kokkuvõttes oli see nende mittepoliitilise poliitika.

Afektiivne suhe muusikaga lõi ühendatuse tunde globaalse popkultuuri ja noorteliikumistega ning stimuleeris kujuteldava mujaloleku kogemust. Kuna afektiivselt laetud muusika tegemise ja kuulamise kogemused erinesid valdavatest nõukogude diskursustest ning võimukandjad nägid neis sageli ohtu ühiskondlikule healolele, aitasid need noortel ka suhet nõukogude igapäevarealsuse ja ideoloogiaga ümber mõtestada. Seega sai rokkmuusika miljööst paik, kus teatud afektid (huvi rokkmuusika vastu), afektiivsed meeleseisundid (kaif) ja väljendusviisid (riietusstiil, kunstiline keelekasutus) toetasid mitte-konformsete noorte tegutsemisvabadust (*agency*), luues tunnetusliku erisuse ruumi.

Niisiis käsitlen käesolevas artiklis muusika rolli mittekonformsete noorte hulgas hilisnõukogudeaeg-ses Eestis. Kuigi tuginen suulisele ajaloolle ja teistele allikatele, mis puudutavad perioodi kuni 1980ndate alguseni, keskendun kitsale perioodile 1960. aastate lõpust 1970ndate keskpaigani, mis kattub nõuko-gude hipiliikumise tekkega, ent eelneb ajale, mil rokkmuusika leidis oma – küll sageli vastuolulise – koha nõukogude kultuuriruumis. Nõukogude Eesti noorte kontrakultuuri kujunemist mõjutasid samaaegselt kohalik sotsiopolitiiline keskkond ja globaalsele kultuurilisele voolavusele osutavad välismõjud. Tekki-nud ilmingud löid ühise suhtluspinna sarnaselt mõtleivate inimestega teistest nõukogude linnadest, are-nedes 1970ndate jooksul subkultuuriliseks võrgustikuks, millele sageli viidati kui *sistema*'le (vene k. süs-teem). Nõukogude hipid olid küll heterogeenne grupp, kuid kui püüda neis midagi ühist leida, oleks see jagatud afekt: teatud kehaliselt tunnetatav intensiivsus kogemustes, tegevustes ja meelelaadis. Mõistagi mängis muusika nõukogude hipide afektiivses miljöös keskset rolli.

Artikkel põhineb iseseisval antropoloogilisel uurimistööl, millega olen olnud seotud alatest 2011. aastast. Laiema transmeedia projekti osana, mis hõlmas dokumentaalfilmi¹ ja rändnäitust,² viisin läbi kaheksateist intervjuud inimestega Eestist, kes on sündinud vahemikus 1939–1963, ning seitseteist in-tervjuud inimestega Venemaalt, Lätist ja Ukrainast. Sellele vaatamata põhineb artikkel peamiselt Ees-tist kogutud materjalil. Artikli keskse teesi teoreetilist raamistust laiendan, kirjeldades Nõukogude Eesti mittekonformseid noori kui jagatud afektil põhinevat kogukonda, kes püüdis kujuteldava mujaloleku tunde poole. See tekitas mimeetilist kommunikatsiooni (Gibbs 2010) nii nende endi vahel kui noorteli-iikumistega Läänes. Järgnevas neljas lühemas etnograafilises peatükis analüüsin rokkmuusika miljööd,

¹ *Nõukogude hipid*. Dokumentaalfilm. Režissöör Terje Toomistu, Kultusfilm, Kinematon, Moukka Filmi, 2017.

² *Nõukogude lillelapsed: 1970ndate psühheedeline underground*. Kuraatorid Kiwa ja Terje Toomistu, Eesti Rahva Muuseum 2013, Moderna Museet (Malmö) 2014, Uppsala Konstmuseum 2014, Presentation House Gallery (Vancouver) 2014, Red Gallery (London) 2016, GalerieKUB (Leipzig) 2018.

alustades individuaalsetest afektiivsetest kogemustest psühheedse rokkmuusikaga, mida kirjeldati selliste mõistete abil nagu väestumine, ühendumine, armastus ja kaif. Rokkmuusika ümber tekkinud sotsiaalset elu kirjeldades keskendun plaadivahetusringkondadele ja elava muusika üritustele. Samuti annan põgusa sissevaate viisidest, kuidas „kummalist vibratsiooni“ rakendati kunstilistes väljendusviisides. Lahates materjali seoses nõukogude võimukandjate ja peavooluühiskonna reaktsioonidega, püstitan küsimuse, kas ja kuidas saab artiklis kirjeldatud tegevusi käsitada vastupanuna. Võtan artikli kokku teesiga, et afektiivne side rokkmuusikaga lõi noortele tegutsemisvabaduse ruumi, väljendades nõukogude diskursustest eemaldumist ja stimuleerides seejuures tunnetuslikku mujalolekut.