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Consequences of the Affective Turn: Exploring Music Practices from without and within*

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Abstract

In this paper I explore the challenges of the “affective turn” and map new avenues of music research in this direction. I discuss four paths of enquiry, in deviation from the semiotic models: the discovery of the non-signified materiality and its potentiality to generate affects, the potentiality of affect to de-signify, the ability of sign machines to catalyse the production of intensities and, finally, the power of social machines to overcode the produced affect through non-discursive mechanisms. I argue that the affective turn in musicology can provide a different structuring of a view from without and a view from within, calling both for finely tuned “close reading” and for the ability of the researcher to grasp the performative context.

Key words

Music and sound studies, affective turn, critique of semiotics, Henri Lefebvre, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari

Introduction

For more than a decade the “affective turn” has been a common phrase in the social sciences and humanities.² However, in spite of its wide popularity, we still lack the answers which could help us both to navigate through this extensive and variegated field and to learn to apply its lessons to the research of social practices: what the affective turn opposes in the current scholarship, what its basic tenets are and what it strives to achieve. Moreover, from the perspective of music and sound studies, there is no clear vision regarding the following issues: when dealing with affect theory, what kind of questions concerning music and sound can this theory help us with,

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² Seminal collections which have helped establish and shape the field are Clough and Halley 2007 and Gregg and Seigworth 2010. For an introduction to affect theory in music cf. Thompson and Biddle 2013a and Hofman 2015b, 2015c.

and with what kind of objective? In this article I will try to answer these questions and to map the consequences of the affective turn for research on music and sound practices. My starting claim is that the most productive way to interpret the rise of the “affective turn” is to construe it as directly opposed to what I would call the classical (or transcendental) “semiotic model”. I will argue that this model has openly or tacitly become a doxa of cultural and music studies, turning into contemporary researchers’ comfort zone.³ I intend to show that looking at affect theory through the lens of its disagreement with semiotics or, even more generally, with representational theories, can be very fruitful in sharpening the argument of this novel approach and grasping its full potential and consequences.⁴

In order to underpin the critique of the semiotic model in accord with the affective turn, as well as showing how deeply ingrained this discord between transcendental semiotics and affect theory is, I will firstly go back to the writings of theoreticians active in the 1970s. Indicatively, these theoreticians, some of whom are now seen as the harbingers of affect theory, were highly critical of simplified versions of semiotics when it was starting to gain a footing in the realm of social and critical theory. I will argue that one of the sources of vexation these authors had towards semiotics was their proclivity to view the socius in terms of (radical) immanence, which later proved to be one of the cornerstones of affect theory (and which was, again, germane in its parting with semiotics). I find it important to introduce the name of the French Marxist, philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre amongst the authors to whom I refer in order to explain the rise of affect theory. Although he is not often seen as a leading advocate of this doctrine, I will show how his writings, particularly

³ In this regard, I find that this model is employed not only in studies which openly adhere to semiotics as their method, but more generally in the researcher’s omnipresent quest to locate the “meaning” in musical work, even when the semiotic terminology is not being used in the strict sense.

⁴ Affect theory as such has remained strangely tacit concerning its battles. In the wider picture, probably an even more controversial challenge posed by affect theory to academic doxas is the questioning of the model of *homo oeconomicus* which dominates social sciences (cf. Douglas and Ney 1998), namely, the idea that human individuals are, in the end, able to rationally assess their position in society and to make judgments in their interest. As much as postmodern and particularly Foucauldian discourse analysis and governmentality studies have, in fact, questioned the prevalence of individuals’ rational judgment, adopting these approaches does not have to mean the ultimate forsaking of one’s ability to step aside and wittingly assess the vicissitudes of her or his position. However, affect theory does precisely this – it teaches us how irreparably visceral our cognitive facilities are, even to the point of questioning the very physical and mental integrity of an individual as a separate part of the human community (cf. Brennan 2004; Blackman 2008). This uneasiness with such broad consequences of affect theory is visible in often well-articulated critical reviews of the field (cf. Leys 2011).

the studies on “production of space” and “rhythm analysis”, provide a truly radical espousal of immanence and put him at the forefront of efforts to think outside the representational models.

Mapping the appearance of affect theory, I will point to the controversies, the critiques and even the inconsistencies it has brought forth. Finally, I will debate the new vistas for music and sound research, abandoning the standard semiotic model and adopting some of the ideas stemming from affect theory. Namely, I will discuss the discovery of non-signified materiality in music and sound and its potentiality to generate affects, the argued potentiality of the excessive sonic affect to de-signify, or to interfere, distort or destroy meaning, the ability of the materiality of the signifier to catalyse affect production and, finally, the potentiality of social machines to capture (“overcode”) the produced sonic affect through mechanisms which are neither linguistic nor representational. In this regard, I will point to the music and sound research which has already benefited from asking these questions in recent years, both research which has openly adopted the affective turn and that which has sought other ways to theorise its approach.

Challenging the Semiotic Models

The rise of semiotics as such was hard to halt precisely because it provided researchers within fields such as music studies a comfort zone with a simple precept as to what their research should be about. The ever-haunting question of “how is (social) meaning produced?” could be simply translated to the question “how are signs produced (in society)?” From the point of view of the fields of research which were dominated by the positivistic paradigm for the better part of the twentieth century, such as musicology and music theory, the latter question was far easier to handle, as one could study the formal aspects of sign production (that is, how, why and when certain parameters of music text act as a signifier), conveniently deciding when and to what extent one is to include the relevant context of the music practice in question (cf. Tarasti 1994; Hatten 2006). Moreover, this approach to applying semiotics in music studies did not destabilise the firm ontological status of musical work and musical text which it had acquired in musicology and music theory (cf. Goehr 1992). Needless to say, this avenue of research is in sharp disharmony with the initial impetus of structuralist semiotics, as a study of sign production in the culture itself, with an astute understanding of the societal context, as advocated by, for example, Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss. The crux of semiotics as the study of meaning-making has been

the discovery that language and communication are ordered by the system of sign production, whereas the relation between the signifier and the signified is at least to a certain extent arbitrary and socially produced. It is precisely this unfathomable and changing arbitrariness which the simplified model of semiotics, applied in music studies and honouring musical work, was not able to grasp.

However, if we go back to the 1970s, when semiotics was still an underused concept in musicological discourse, disquieting voices can be traced amongst the leading French theoreticians which prophetically foresaw the vicissitudes of the wide and simplified application of this approach. They questioned the limits of the linguistic turn in cultural studies, warned of the irreducibility of life itself to “text” and pointed to the importance of desire, pleasure and enjoyment, and to the role of lived intensities placed into a concrete physical context. Furthermore, these voices came from both within and beyond the circles of semiotics. Among the semioticians, Roland Barthes in his late oeuvre endeavoured to open avenues of research which would destabilise the discursive production of signs as the focus of art criticism. In his study “Le grain de la voix” (“The grain of the voice”, 1972), he questioned the capacity of “language”, which was, purportedly, “the only semiotic system capable of interpreting another semiotic system”, to interpret music (Barthes 1977). Barthes introduces the concept of the “grain” in order to theorise the bare materiality of the singing body which is produced in-between the language and the music:

Listen to a Russian bass (a church bass – opera is a genre in which the voice has gone over in its entirety to dramatic expressivity, a voice with a grain which little signifies): something is there, manifest and stubborn (one hears only that), beyond (or before) the meaning of the words, their form (the litany), the melisma, and even the style of execution: something which is directly the cantor’s body, brought to your ears in one and the same movement from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilages, and from deep down in the Slavonic language, as though a single skin lined the inner flesh of the performer and the music he sings (Barthes 1977: 181–182).

Barthes does not apply this kind of reasoning solely to music: in one of his last oeuvres, *La Chambre claire* (1980) Barthes discussed the effects of photography on the spectator by developing the twin concepts of *studium* and *punctum*: while *studium* encapsulates the effects which can be construed through semiotic methods, the cultural, linguistic, and political message of the photography, *punctum* stands for the direct relationship which occurs between the object and the

beholder which cannot be grasped linguistically (Barthes 1981). Furthermore, Barthes portrays this encounter as deeply visceral, describing *punctum* almost as a physical wounding of the spectator.

However, while Barthes tried to find words to speak of this carnal leftover, these phenomena which cannot be encapsulated by semiotic methods, the other theoreticians whose arguments I intend to illustrate – Henri Lefebvre, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari – were more openly critical about the rise of semiotics itself. The foothold of their critique of semiotics was a result of their allegiance to the thought of radical immanence, whereas they viewed semiotics as another social machine, or a field of social production, which aims to govern our lived experience and to misrepresent it through introducing the field of transcendence. In the Foucauldian sense, semiosis, the production of the sign itself, was thereby seen as a social apparatus of power, and semiotics as a part of a mechanism which produces the power-knowledge used to govern individuals. In the first book of their project on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Deleuze and Guattari introduced the concept of a “body without organs” in order to conceptualise the locus of desire which is in its essence non-signified, the deterritorialised schizoid flow which “knows nothing of the law, lack, and the signifier”, which exists as such on the plain of immanence prior to being ushered into the sign-producing social machines (Deleuze and Guattari 1983). As Michel Foucault observed, semiologists (together with psychoanalysts) are openly targeted as authors’ adversaries and marked as “the poor technicians of desire [...] who would subjugate the multiplicity of desire to the twofold law of structure and lack” (Foucault 1983: xii–xiii). Discussing the ways in which signification is produced as a way of interpreting desire, Deleuze and Guattari speak of it as another “Oedipalisation” technique, which is always retrospective, describing not what is produced but what is *a posteriori* perceived as meaning and escaping the moment of the flow of the desire itself (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 66).

Henri Lefebvre, perhaps more strongly and adamantly than any other modern philosopher, strives to bring the notions of discursive and symbolic order back into the material reality and to show how they operate at the level of the lived experience. In this regard, his most important work remains the study on “production of space” (*La production de l’espace*, 1974), where he develops a specific spatial dialectic which teaches that lived space is reached through an affective and laborious process in the materiality of everyday life. Even more openly than in the case of Deleuze and Guattari, Lefebvre outspokenly develops a critique of semiotics, insisting from the opening pages of his study that the experience of space

cannot be reduced to encoded information, and that semiotics as a study of the sign relying on linguistic models cannot answer the question of the social totality of a space. According to Lefebvre, by “means of deciphering”, semiotics would have social space reduced to the “status of a *message*, and the inhabiting of it to the status of a *reading*” (Lefebvre 1991: 7). Although Lefebvre does not reject the concept of sign, he insists that symbols and metaphors are realised through space as physical objects and that their “meaning” is inseparable from their appearance – in other words, they cannot be reduced to the level of information. Therefore, he introduces the concept of *monumentality*, arguing that the “codifying approach of semiology, which seeks to classify representations, impressions and evocations [...] is quite unable to cover the facets of the monumental” and “it does not even come close, for it is the residual, the irreducible – whatever cannot be classified or codified [...] which is, here as always, the most precious and the most essential” (Lefebvre 1991: 220). Furthermore, “meaning”, a term that Lefebvre identifies with the lived social reality, is not produced by the mere decoding of the signs present in a space, but is the result of the direct production of the space, which is conditioned by social contradictions and as such always represents an ambivalent process of uncertain outcome (cf. Lefebvre 1991). In his last major work, dealing with “rhythm analysis” and published in 1992 (*Éléments de rythme analyse: Introduction à la connaissance de rythmes*), Lefebvre also explicitly deals with music. The key question Lefebvre poses is whether musical time coincides with “lived time”, that is, whether musical time is inextricably sociospatial. Answering affirmatively and renouncing the possibility of the existence of imaginary time that exists outside of the social space, Lefebvre actually waives the possibility of the existence of “meaning” as transcendental in relation to the material rhythm of the body (Lefebvre 2004).

Affect Theory and Music Studies

Affect theory finds its inspiration in these pioneering efforts to expand critical theory in order to theorise phenomena which are ineffable, or which remain irreducible to techniques of discursive analysis. Affect theory took shape as a specific branch of critical theory during the first decade of the twenty-first century, directly linking itself to the feminist literature which spoke of the body, as well as to queer theory which introduced the discourse on emotions in cultural studies (Hardt 2007) – the fields of knowledge which had already destabilised cultural studies from the inside, questioning its

basic model, which had essentially remained structuralist, and asking questions about the resistance that our bodies and emotions provide to a seemingly orchestrated processes of labelling. From its onset, affect theory was positioned as a deeply heterogeneous field, conjoined by an overall questioning of the notion of the Cartesian duality of “spirit” and “body” and, in this respect, the paradigm of *homo oeconomicus* (see fn. 2). Two broad branches developed, one inspired by the psychological tradition and writings of Silvan S. Tomkins, where affects were interpreted as specific biologically based pre-emotional states, phenomena which precede emotions or which are not articulated as emotions (cf. Tomkins 1995), and the second, inaugurated by Brian Massumi and shaped by the strong influence of ontology developed by Gilles Deleuze (and Félix Guattari). In its short history, affect theory tried to find its position by resisting a relapse into psychology or queer/feminist cultural studies, becoming more than philosophical reflection, escaping post-Heideggerian phenomenology and, finally, openly flirting with or adopting cognitivism. In my research I choose to follow the second current of affect theory, launched by Brian Massumi when he identified affect with *intensity*, understood in terms of Deleuzian ontology (Massumi 2002).⁵ This means that there is an ontological as well as a disciplinary gap between affect and emotion: affect cannot be named as emotion-like, or a pre-emotional state, as it stands completely outside the discursive realm, presenting as the pure unsigned defaced intensity which is produced on the edges of the actual and the virtual.⁶ This philosophical interpretation of affect is perplexing as it gives few answers, but it is also deeply significant as it opens new avenues of research. Understood as such, affect theory transforms into the study of materiality which is dehumanised and deindividualised (cf. Brennan 2004, Thrift 2008; Seyfert 2012).

What are the consequences of this deeply ontological thesis on the ways we answer the seemingly simple question of “how social meaning is produced” and what is the role of music practices in this process? Should we delve so deeply into these questions when doing ostensibly straightforward research in the well-defined purview of our disciplinary borders and, if so, to

⁵ One of the benefits of grounding affect theory in Deleuzian ontology is the opportunity to get involved with the legacy of the Deleuzian philosophical lineage in theorising affect, most famously with Baruch Spinoza, but also with Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, etc.

⁶ This, of course, presupposes that we accept that emotions are on some level also socially and discursively constructed. My aim is to radicalise this perspective and to claim that, for example, we cannot speak of affect of fear, or affect of affection. The question of the singularity of affect (in other words, what is *an* affect) should be answered solely based on Deleuzian ontology, as an intensity produced in a single transformation of the reality of the virtual into the actuality of the real.

what extent should we discuss these issues? In order to answer these challenging questions, I will refer to a simple diagram (see illustration 1). My argument is that even seemingly unproblematic research, well and narrowly defined in disciplinary terms, is on some level, at least in the humanities, inevitably conditioned by a certain ontological understanding of the world, either of our own, or the one that percolates the dominant paradigm of our discipline and which we uncritically adopt. Semiotic models of music research are based on a fallacious equivocation, where the question “how is meaning produced?” is simply translated to the question “how are signs produced?” This has to occur with the (tacit or articulated) presupposition of *transcendence*, as in order to reduce meaning to signs we have to neglect the materiality of the signifier and the embodied resistance to the processes of semiosis, to observe the signs as transcendent codes and to ignore the physical resistance of the bodies and the socius in the process of inscribing the meaning they purport. In Platonic words, the material world remains the world of shadows, easily shaped by the play happening in the “real” world, the world of “ideas”. If we, however, accept that affect is in the being, we also claim that the process of meaning-production occurs on the plain of *immanence*, in which both the materiality of the signifiers and the flows of affect operate. Instead of asking one straightforward question, we then have to ask three related, albeit different and sometimes divergent questions – not only how sings are produced (taking into account their materiality), but also how *affects* are produced and, finally, how affects contribute to the production of meaning *in situ*, that is, in the lived spatiotemporally situated experience. These additional questions lead us to new avenues of research which open new vistas for investigating music practices: the discovery of the non-signified materiality and its potentiality to generate affects, the potentiality of the excessive affect to de-signify, the ability of sign machines in their full materiality to catalyse the production of intensities and, finally, the potentiality of social machines to capture (“overcode”) the produced affect through mechanisms which are neither linguistic nor representational.

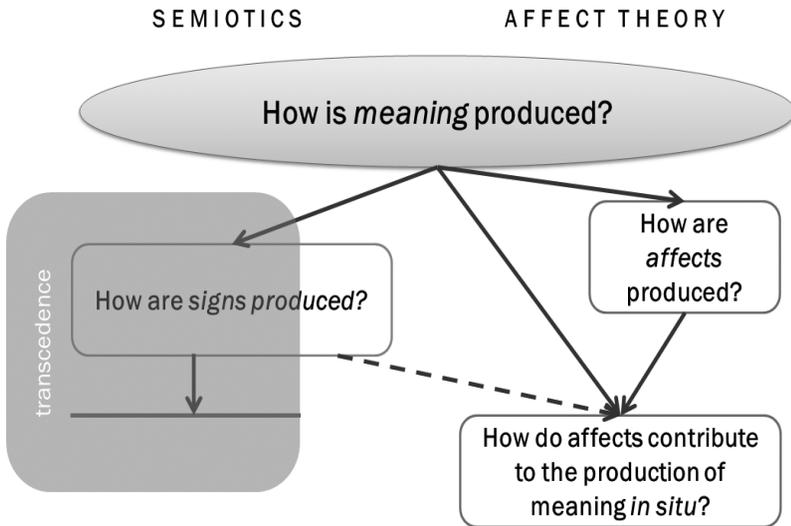


Diagram 1.

The Discovery of Non-Signified Materiality

The semiotic model of music research has led scholars to focus on the bits of a musical text that we can recognise as signifiers that provide reference to the signified which lies outside the text itself. Unravelling a musical text (or even a musical event) as a repository of references which interconnect with other musical and social texts, our analysis becomes essentially biased as it reduces itself to the “hunt for codes” and fails to comprehend the musical/sound event in its full materiality. The questions remains, what is left of a music event when it is divested of all the bits that can be subjected to deciphering, and what is the function of this “leftover”? The answer brought forward by the affective turn is that it is precisely the non-signified materiality of the sonic event which shapes its potentiality, as a “vibrational body” to generate affect. Understanding affect as the intensity unleashed through the collisions of bodies, its production is fundamentally based on the intrinsic capacities of bodies to affect their surrounding bodies.⁷ Understanding the features of the sonic event which are not encapsulated by semiotic models, and which in terms of customary musicological analysis might seem dangerously superficial (such as volume, timbre, texture, etc.) we can understand

⁷ Baruch Spinoza defines affect as “affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections” (Spinoza 1994: 154).

its power to affect the individuals who engage in music practices. Thus, studying the non-signified materiality of music does not entail giving up music analysis itself, but it does entail a change of perspective and a consistent reconsideration of the existing models of analysis when they prove inadequate to grasp the germane features of the sonic event.

Proving that this kind of analysis has merit for the traditional repertoire of “classical music”, Lawrence Kramer has recently tackled the analysis of the non-signified layers of musical text in some of the canonical works of Western music engaging with Jacques Lacan’s concept of *sinthome* (Kramer 2004, 2009). Lacan introduced the concept in his seminars on psychoanalysis in 1975 in order to “conceptualize what of the symptom cannot be reduced to structural determination – that is, to a determination ‘of language’” (Brousse 2007: 83). *Sinthome* thus represents the layer of materiality which seeks no interpretation but appears as a pure *jouissance* without reference. Discussing the finale of Beethoven’s String Quartet in E minor, op. 59, no. 2, Kramer describes what he calls the “craziness” of “probably the most transcendently buffoonish movement that Beethoven ever wrote”:

When it begins with a theme on two left feet, a lurching dotted figure in what seems to be the wrong key, we know we are in for a wild ride – and sure enough the harmony lurches as well as the tune. This key-switching is a travesty of the first movement’s mode-switching. It makes neither formal nor dramatic sense, nor is it supposed to. Instead it represents a Lacanian “*sinthome*,” an action full of “idiotic pleasure,” in Slavoj Žižek’s phrase, a pleasure embraced precisely because it is mindless, meaningless, heedless (Kramer 2009: 72–73).

In his earlier study, Kramer provides an in-depth analysis of the texture and harmony of the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in G Major, op. 31 no. 1, in order to show how this “idiotic pleasure” not only does not refer to something outside of musical enjoyment, but how it can also influence the underlying tonal structure of the movement (Kramer 2004: 303–306). Kramer’s succinct analysis proves that, in order to understand how music functions as a sonic event, there is a need to approach the non-discursive “leftover”, even in the pieces of Western art music where one would think that nothing had escaped the purview of both traditional and semiotic analysis.⁸

⁸ The Lacanian concept of *sinthome* and its application in music analysis is further explored in Michael L. Klein’s forthcoming book *Music and the Crises of the Modern Subject* (Klein 2015; cf. Klein 2012).

The sonic event discussed by Steve Goodman in his study on “sonic warfare” is of a completely different kind, but testifies to the kindred dissatisfaction with the idea of sonic media which merely communicate meaning and to the effort to escape the “linguistic imperialism that subordinates the sonic to semiotic registers” (Goodman 2010, 82). The object of Goodman’s analysis is *sonic warfare*, the “use of force, both seductive and violent, abstract and physical, via a range of acoustic machines” which aims to “modulate the physical, affective, and libidinal dynamics of populations, of bodies, of crowds” (Goodman 2010: 10). In order to explore how the sonic functions as an instrument of war, Goodman is thus not interested in sound as a transmitter of the message, but in its capacity to affect, even hurt the listener in a visceral, physical way which often relies on the vibrational/timbral qualities of the sound and its sheer intensity, also reminding us of Barthes’s concept of *punctum*. Kramer and Goodman represent two distant poles, even in disciplinary terms (whereas Kramer remains firmly in the purview of musicology, Goodman’s work could be described both as an essay in affect theory and sound studies), but both prove that, in order to understand a sound event and its capacity to affect, we have to pay attention to the non-signified materiality of the sound event and listen to the layers which lie outside the web of codes.

The Potentiality of Affect to De-Signify

Once we have discovered the potential of the non-signified materiality in music to generate affect, the question we have to pose is how this affect interferes with the purported meaning of the music. One of the possible answers is to argue that excessive affect can distort, deconstruct, or even destroy the meaning. In Deleuzoguattarian terms, one can argue that the affect produced on the surface of the socius can destabilise and break the linkage between the social machine and the body without organs, revealing the pure autonomy of the affective. In the 2012 documentary film *The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology*, directed by Sophie Fiennes, Slavoj Žižek, presenting his own screenplay, makes a similar claim in connection to the German metal band Rammstein, and particularly their live performance of the song *Reise, Reise*, originally released in 2004.⁹ Žižek denounces criticism of Rammstein as sympathisers of Nazism, based on their use of performative elements of the Nazi Party in live performances, claiming that the band actually corrupts this ideological text:

⁹ Žižek has not (yet) treated this example in published work. His argument has been addressed by some of the online critical reviews that this film received (Brody 2012; Costa 2013; EDA Collective 2014).

Watch them closely and it should become clear that Rammstein, rather than promoting it, has actually found the key to undermining Nazism. By clearing fascist propaganda of all its content and presenting only the empty frame – the gestures without precise ideological meaning – Rammstein is able to denude fascism, emptying it of its power as a solution for social ills. By fighting Nazism like this in its pre-ideological state, music fans can enjoy the meaningless collective gestures while the band critiques fascism from within (Brody 2012).

Rammstein thus allows the enjoyment of the physical enactment of the performative elements connected to Nazism “in their pre-ideological state” (Costa 2013), destroying the code which would otherwise unequivocally convert the physicality of the performed signifier into the ideologised signified of Nazism. It is important to emphasise that this destruction of the code is not performed by discursive means – it is not in any linguistic way explicated to the audience. This intensity of affectation also fails to recognise the boundaries between the senses: the affect of the live performance of *Reise, Reise* is at the same time sonic, performative, visual and gestural, and the purviews of our particular sensual faculties combine in the univocity of the lived situated experience. It is brought forward by excessive affect, by the overemphasised enactment of the gestures accompanied with the intense sound layer, which in a certain way “overload” the capacity of the desiring-machine to overcode the affectations of the body and destroy its link with the physicality of the signifier. It is as if the “volume” – understood as the intensity of the transmission of the code – has been increased to such a level that the message of the transmitted code becomes incomprehensible to the receiver, the level where the “noise” overwhelms the code. Crucially, it then becomes the domain of the receiver themselves, the capacities of their own body, to destroy the code by diving into the field of unsignified pure enjoyment in the intensity, or even to produce a new code in order to comprehend the materiality they encounter.¹⁰ It is through these instances that we find the autonomous agency of affectation itself offering avenues of freedom from the Oedipalising structures of the discursive apparatuses.¹¹

¹⁰ Similarly, Ana Hofman discusses how the Partisan songs have been reused in the current political setting of Slovenia through their partial resignification, insisting on the role of affects of the performances (and rehearsal) as a key mechanism in this process (Hofman 2015).

¹¹ “For indeed, no one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of Nature alone, insofar as Nature is only considered to be corporeal, and what the body can do only if it is determined by the mind” (Spinoza 1994: 155).

The Discursive Apparatus as a Catalyser of Intensities

If affect is produced at the encounter of bodies, discursive apparatuses can only be capable of engaging in this production through the materiality of the signifier itself, the physical body of the apparatus, understood not only as a “discourse” but as a web of physical objects which embody the discourse as a social machine (cf. Agamben 2009). In other words, discourse as such cannot *produce*, *generate* affects *ex nihilo*, without the proxy of an embodied apparatus. However, it can engage in *catalysing* the affects which are produced at the meeting point of the bodies, as a catalyser which remains outside the production itself, but multiplies its speed and intensity. In other words, encountering a body which is a signifier produces greater intensities than encountering a “mere” body. How we understand, theorise and explore this role of discourse as catalyser of intensities and still remain faithful to radical immanence is a key question. I propose three points by which these inquiries can differ from the stereotyped critical discourse analysis: the understanding of the full materiality of the discursive apparatus, doing research *in situ* and reconceptualization of the ways in which discourse operates through the concept of embodied memory. As examples of this approach I cite two studies which explore distinct social practices in the contemporary post-Yugoslav space: Ana Petrov’s study on Tereza Kesovija’s recent concerts in Belgrade (Petrov 2015) and my study of Serbian pilgrimages to Kosovo (Atanasovski 2015). Petrov focuses on the ways in which the discourses of Yugonostalgia are actualised in Kesovija’s live performance by scrutinising the interplay of the performed songs themselves, Kesovija’s rhetoric and the affective ecology produced at the event. In my study, I dealt with the soundtrack of the pilgrimage route, showing how certain pieces of music (both a contemporary revived Byzantine chant and Serbian patriotic folk songs from the late 1980s) act as mnemonic palimpsests, hybridising the physical experience of the pilgrimage with the apparatus of Serbian religious nationalism. In both cases, Petrov and I start off with our own situated physical experience of the music event, using participant observation as the primary method of research. The situatedness of the observed individuals, their physical, embodied presence at the concert or pilgrimage, the sense of “being there”, is seen as a key factor in both producing and catalysing the intensities. Furthermore, we analyse the physical materiality of the music objects which affect the individuals who are the subjects of the studies. In this regard, the analyses are deeply situated in the time and place where the observations took place and neither author makes attempts to generalise their conclusions beyond the scope of

the studied events. Finally, in order to explain how the discourse of Yugonostalgia or Serbian nationalism is embedded in music artefacts, we deal with the mechanisms of embodied memory, which is situated in the bodies of the individuals who participate in a practice, and not in the discourse understood as other to the immanent materiality. In other words, this mode of analysis follows Guattari's precept that "the signifying structure does not transcend the libido" (Guattari 2013: 24), exploring how it is embedded directly within the flows of intensities.

Overcoding the Affect

It is important to note that in the previous examples it was the co-situatedness of the discursive apparatus and of the bodies engaged in the production of affect which gave meaning to the lived experience of the individuals taking part in the particular social practice. In other words, the production of situated social meaning in its essence did not occur through a discursive mechanism, but through the physical agency of the apparatus. In explaining how desiring-machines operate on the body of the socius, Deleuze and Guattari described these processes by coining the term "overcoding": the machinic production of desire is reterritorialized through the presence of the social machine which striates the smooth surface of the body without organs, capturing its affect and subjugating its flows (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 1987). Overcoding is thus a process through which affects and flows produced through an initial encounter of bodies and codes are rigidified, re-inscribed in a symbolic, imagined transcendent plane. This overcoding is never complete, as the fullness of the rhizomatic body is unsusceptible to its mechanisms. However, the question remains, how do the mechanisms of overcoding operate outside the discourse itself, and how can the sonic affect be captured by these mechanisms? In their opening discussion on the 2010–11 riots which broke out in the UK in response to public spending cuts and increased tuition fees, Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle emphasised the role of popular music in mobilising the protesters in spite of the fact that it "had no overt political content". As they report, protesters were "dancing, marching and chanting along to a variety of soundtracks", and the music helped "to instill a sense of collectivity" in the protesting community (Thompson and Biddle 2013b: 2–3). Not only did the music not carry any message related to this political intervention, but it can also be seen as another commodity of the post-industrial age which is part of "the exploitative practices of the culture industry and mainstream musical production" and thus an active part of the system

that protesters were rioting against. The soundtrack of the riot was “not transgressive, subcultural or radical” as one would expect it to be in order to express the ideas of the protest:

In short, this music is entirely incompatible with traditional or normative understandings of politically conscious or politicized music: it resists nothing. And yet, in spite of its semantic content and its modes of production, this chart pop music was made to facilitate resistance. [...] Instead of providing a message of opposition for people to rally around and to identify with, music mobilized bodies through affective transmission. Sound was used to create a particular ambience or atmosphere, via the induction, modulation and circulation of moods, feelings and intensities, which were felt but, at the same time, belonged to nobody in particular (Thompson and Biddle 2013b: 4–5).

Thompson and Biddle’s case study offers a window onto some important questions: how can a situated musical event take part in creating affective ecologies and producing social meanings which are not in any discursive manner connected with the content of the music itself, or even go against its ostensive signification? In other words, how does sonic affect become overcoded in a concrete spatiotemporally situated experience, creating a social reality in seemingly unexpected ways? Again, in order to provide an answer the analysis has to be finely tuned in order to grasp the circumstances of the given sonic event.

Conclusion

The cited examples of contemporary sound and music studies prove the complexity and variegation of the challenge which affective turn presents to our disciplines. The questions that we are impelled to pose when stepping outside the semiotic model are both divergent amongst themselves and asking for a different kind of analysis compared to what we are used to – different methods and competences through which we truly enter into the postdisciplinary age. Importantly, the affective turn challenges us to restructure and extend both the view from without and the view from within the music itself:

- Listening from *within*, in order to understand how the music or sound event creates intensities in the lived experience, we need even closer reading/listening to the sound itself. We need to truly understand the properties of the sound event, as a vibrational body, which empowers it to interact and affect

other bodies. This analysis may look superficial, even shallow, but this is precisely because it orients towards the *surface* of the event, the layer which most poignantly affects/wounds the body of the listener. And in situations where existing modes of analysis prove inadequate to address the questions of volume, timbre or texture, we need to find innovative ways of grasping and theorising these aspects of sound.

- Observing from *without*, our understanding of the context in which a certain sound appears has to be highly tuned to a concrete the spatiotemporal position and the exigencies of the event with its multi-layered web of meaning. Beyond understanding what object a certain signifier in a musical text refers to, we need to explore the sound event as a palimpsest, where different layers of meaning can trigger different embodied memories through the participatory practices and music artefacts. Ideally, this kind of analysis asks for participation on behalf of the researcher themselves, who would – much in terms of the Lefebvrian “rhythm analyst” – expose their own body in order to capture the rhythm of the lived time, to understand the mechanisms of catalysing and overcoding of the affects which occur *in situ*.

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ПОСЛЕДИЦЕ „ЗАОКРЕТА КА АФЕКТУ”: ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ МУЗИЧКИХ ПРАКСИ ИЗНУТРА И СПОЉА

(Резиме)

У овом раду истражујем изазове које такозвани „заокрет ка афекту” у културалним студијама поставља пред постојеће моделе истраживања музичких пракси и мапирам могућности његове примене у музикологији. При томе полазим од становишта да се „заокрет ка афекту” може тумачити у опозицији према ономе што се може означити као стандардни (или трансцендентални) „семиотички модел”, а који је, отворено или прећутно, прихваћен као опште мњење у сфери студија музике и културалних студија уопште и који се преобразио у својеврсну „зону комфора” савремених истраживача. Како бих формулисао критику семиотичких модела истраживања, позивам се на списе теоретичара који су били активни током седамдесетих година XX века – Анрија Лефевра (Henri Lefebvre), Жила Делеза (Gilles Deleuze) и Феликса Гатарија (Félix Guattari) а који су били изражено критични према семиотици већ у њеној конститутивној фази. Сагледавајући поље студија афекта указујем на предности оне гране ових студија које афект виде као неозначени интензитет, постављен у координатама онтолошког система Жила Делеза. Ово нас води к разумевању процеса произвођења значења као процесу који се одваја на разини иманенције, у којој оперишу како материјалности означитеља, тако и токови афекта. Како потенцијалне последице теорије афекта често остају неразјашњене, верујем да би било посебно плодно размотрити четири усмерења истраживања која се њоме отварају, а која одступају од стандардног модела семиотичких анализа: откриће неозначене материјалности и њеног потенцијала да генерише афекте, потенцијал прекомерног афеката да разозначава, способност знаковних друштвених машина да у својој пуној материјалности делују као катализатор у производњи интензитета, и, коначно, потенцијал друштвених машина да наткодирају произведене афекте кроз механизме који

нису ни лингвистички ни репрезентациони. На основу овога изводим тврдњу да заокрет ка афекту у студијама музике може пружити другачије моделирање како погледа изнутра, тако и погледа споља. Наиме, да би се спровела наведена истраживачка питања, с једне стране су неопходни специфично разрађени модели „блиског читања” музичког и звучног догађаја, а с друге разумевање ширег перформативног и друштвеног контекста.

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