



**Sounding the Virtual:
Gilles Deleuze and the Theory
and Philosophy of Music**

*Edited by
Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt*

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AND THE THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

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Introduction

Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt

Without question, Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) has proven to be one of the most influential and inspiring philosophers of our time. His influence on the humanities in Europe, North America, and beyond, continues to provoke new thought, challenge old ideas, and inspire scholars and thinkers of seemingly every conceivable discipline. Those familiar with Deleuze's oeuvre will undoubtedly be aware that his work was passionately devoted to the arts—film, painting, and so on. But few of the arts elicit the kind of lavish attention Deleuze accords to music.

Deleuze's writings on music are extensive, provocative, insightful, and not without complications or contradictions. But to date there has been very little response from actual music scholars.¹ What has trickled out has been piecemeal, often focused on only a small section of Deleuze's writings, and has too often treated these writings in a haphazard manner. As a corrective, *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* demonstrates that Deleuze has impacted and has even greater potential to impact the field of music scholarship profoundly. This volume resounds as a holistic response to Deleuze from a cross-section of scholars, the majority of whom are musicologists and/or music theorists. Deleuze had much to say about music. Here, for the first time, is a coherent, comprehensive reply from the field of music studies.

There are two overarching concerns when attempting to expand our ability to think music through Deleuze—and neither can do without the other. First is the need to push beyond what Deleuze (often with Guattari) was able to do. For the authors in this volume the sense is clearly that Deleuze only scratched the surface of the infinite modes of musical embodiment. There is much, much more to be done. And yet the second concern makes a mess of this project. As will be clear from many of the chapters herein, much of what Deleuze wrote about music was not transparently consistent with his overall philosophical project. Not only is an extension deeper into music necessary, but it will serve as a corrective as well.

The results are as significant for music as they are for Deleuze studies in general. One of the problems the field of music studies has faced is its seeming isolation from the larger scholarly world. Much has been imported, but with less reciprocity.

¹ Though scholars in cultural studies, literature, and philosophy *have* written on Deleuze and music. Examples include Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda, eds, *Deleuze and Music* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); and Richard Pinhas' *Les larmes de Nietzsche* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001).

And what has been “brought in” from other fields has often been selected for its use-value. This self-selection evinces a certain immunity musicology has enjoyed from outside scrutiny, primarily, we imagine, because “outsiders” simply can’t understand the language music scholars speak, especially when it comes to technical descriptions or analysis of music. Consequently, music scholarship has evaded to a large degree much of the advances in critical thinking that have benefitted other fields, and therefore has failed to make the kinds of changes such a critique might demand.

In order to *press* this kind of scrutiny and change upon the (otherwise complacent) field of music studies, what is required is the kind of intervention that is able to pivot between music and philosophy adequately—in other words, an intervention by speakers of music’s internal language: musicologists who are willing to abandon their comfort zone and tackle difficult philosophical territory that might force a reevaluation of their most basic assumptions and beliefs. This volume binds together the projects of several such musicologists who have engaged the thought of Deleuze in sustained and serious ways. The resulting whole, we believe, can and should have a significant effect on how music is thought about and taught in academia. The collective voices of the authors in this volume are clear: no longer is it adequate to sustain a discourse on music that is rooted in extended, object-oriented metaphors, or that presupposes dualisms between “the listener” and “the music.” No longer is it adequate to excise musical repetition, or to reduce musical difference to the metrics of measurement. No longer are we justified in thinking of music as subordinated to more “serious” forms of thought. No longer are boundaries between music and the body, the body and culture, culture and politics, politics and environment, or those between music theory, musicology, and ethnomusicology, or those between various cultural practices, or any number of other jurisdictional distinctions to dictate the form and flows of music and musical inquiry.

In extending the Deleuzian project more deeply into music, our writers are able to produce a better understanding of Deleuze’s various writings on music for the larger field of Deleuzian studies. This much is clear. But we believe there is more at stake. Deleuze’s repeated recourse to music tells his readers that a full exploration of his thought requires that music and philosophy constantly mediate one another through their extremes. The following chapters each address this imperative in singular fashion, moving between an intensive, informed engagement with these twin domains of thought and sound taken up at their highest pitch and intensity. For Deleuzian philosophy, one result is that, in grappling with the most demanding musical material, one can hope to push the faculty of thought beyond sedentary habit, toward the truly transcendental degrees of expression that Deleuze called for in *Difference and Repetition*. As Martin Scherzinger reminds us in his chapter, music has long been recognized to bear an uncanny power for deterritorialization. If this sublime character has been a commonplace of music and aesthetic studies for millennia, in the following pages readers will find novel *machines*, sound-

thought machines, whose mechanics are freely constructed from the toolboxes (or repertoires) of these two fields.

Just as we believe it is important for Deleuzian studies in general to “hear” the field of music speak, it is also important for music to hear itself speak outside its closed chambers—in other words, to discover *its* philosophical voice, *its* contribution to philosophy, one that is fully sufficient in its own right. Music is not *other* than knowledge. The production of concepts—which Deleuze considered the true vocation of philosophy—must emphatically include the production of musical concepts, and the pages that follow initiate this production, constructing a plane of musical thought that—finally—begins to force musical thought itself in the direction music has always excelled: to break free from the weight of structural doxa, from the analytical reductions that capture and overcode the infinite becomings of musical expression, to release instead the full intensity of the thought of sound. To sound the virtual can mean only this: the actualization of unheard ideas, decoded from the infinite flows of musical expression.

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Chapter 1

The Image of Thought and Ideas of Music

Christopher Hasty

“the fate of unhappy music ... to fade away as soon as it is born”

Leonardo da Vinci, Trattato 1, 29

Music’s resistance to representation has long been its curse and its promise. In Western intellectual cultures that value representation, music has characteristically been demoted as a problem in the sense, say, of a problem child—willful, undomesticated, and intractable. Problems can, of course, be valued if they can be seen to lead to further, new, and creative thought; or they can be devalued as standing in the way of a proper thought. Music has occasionally been valued as an opening for thought, or rather thought about thought—thought about the activity of thinking, for example, in the questions posed of music by eighteenth-century French and nineteenth-century German philosophers and aestheticians.¹ But more often music has seemed a noisy problem child, heard but not clearly seen.²

It is telling that *problem* (*problema*, throwing forth) has come to mean a difficulty or impasse requiring a solution, and that the *problematic* is understood as something doubtful that ought best be avoided. In a Deleuzian sense problems do call for a creative effort that can be difficult or burdensome, but they are not to be avoided or cut short; indeed, with the exercise of creative thought and good fortune, problems can be exhilarating. For Deleuze, problems are the actualizing, affective moments of Ideas. Indeed, he often uses these two terms interchangeably

¹ For a discussion of music’s relevance in German Romantic philosophy see Andrew Bowie, *Music, Philosophy, and Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 2007. In the twentieth century the Idea of music has served as provocation for many thinkers who in one way or another have questioned the rights of representation (for instance, Ehrenfels, Bergson, Husserl, and Čapek).

² Thus d’Alembert’s famous judgment: “Toute musique qui ne peint est rien n’est que du bruit.” The linkage of musical passage and unreason is a philosophical commonplace—one we can hear, for example, in Kant’s judgment that music “although of course it speaks through mere sensations without concepts, and hence does not, like poetry, leave behind something for reflection, yet it moves the mind in more manifold ways and, though only temporarily, in deeper ways; but it is, to be sure, more enjoyment than culture ... and it has, judged by reason, less value than any other of the beautiful arts.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 205.

(“problems are Ideas themselves”³) but prefers “problem” when focusing on the process of actualization: “In so far as they are the objects of Ideas problems belong on the side of events, affections, accidents...”⁴ After considering some problematic aspects of thinking about music we will turn to Deleuze’s concept of Idea, and then to Ideas/problems of music.

Because music is judged non-representational, non-denotative, non-mimetic (or, at best, impoverished in these categories), because music does not seem to support the paraphrastic character we so value in the realm of discourse, because we find it difficult or impossible to say what exactly we have heard, music can seem purely subjective, willful, unruly, irrational—generating even from the same or similar stimulus the most fleeting and incommensurate of impressions or emotions. What is not the Same is novel (or new, or *now*), and is of a singularity that we might fear cut off from any communication or mediation, a surd (*alogos*) that, speechless, would be not merely solipsistic but irrational (even for a subject). With Deleuze, however, we might find ways of valuing and working with such a problematic novelty or difference, a novelty and difference that, far from excluding repetition, makes repetition a necessary condition.⁵

If music is fleeting, incommensurate, and unsayable, such privative characteristics argue against a singular, reproducible musical meaning. Thus, novelty or difference in the sense of *unrepeatability* names the thought that music is communicatively indeterminate, that in itself music can have no determinate (i.e., certifiably repeatable) meaning. William James describes the general difficulty novelty poses to conceptualization: “The everlasting coming of concrete novelty into being is so obvious that the rationalizing intellect, bent on explaining what is by what was, and having no principle but identity to explain by, treats the perceptual flux as a phenomenal illusion...”⁶ From this alienated perspective of what James calls “the rationalizing intellect”—what Deleuze calls “good and common sense”—repetition and novelty are assimilated to identity and difference, and customarily valued as positive and negative respectively.⁷

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p. 162.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵ From a similar perspective, taking temporal passage seriously, William James writes: “The same returns not, save to bring the different. Time keeps budding into new moments, every one of which presents a content which in its individuality never was before and will never be again.” William James, “Problems of Philosophy,” in *William James: Writings 1902-1910*. New York: Library of America, 1987, p. 1057.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1058.

⁷ In James’ terms our opposition of novelty and repetition finds expression in the distinction of percept and concept. Like Deleuze, James reverses the customary valuation that places concept above percept: “percepts are singulars that change incessantly and never return exactly as they were before. This brings an element of concrete novelty into our experience. This novelty finds no representation in conceptual method, for concepts are abstracted from experiences already seen or given, and he who uses them to divine the

In contrast to the vagaries of the novel, repetition as *repetition of the Same* names a faith in the unity and stability of music, or rather a piece of music, and especially a composed, notated piece that can seem imminently reproducible and yet singular, as indeed the paradoxical expression, “repetition of the Same,” implies. Meaning is not a problem here, if meaning—or rather its surrogates, intention, and structure—is deemed fully determined and simply given. The order placed in “the notes” by the composer can seem to constitute the ideal and changeless truth of the composition regardless of whether this order in its necessary singularity and purity is or even can be experienced by another individual. In this way music attains a properly “eternal” conceptuality. If its essence is deemed structural or inhering in a system of fixed relations, then the differences of its actual happenings must seem accidental.

Music is problematic in many ways, but it is especially problematic in its resistance to representation—it is in this sense a violation of common sense and good sense.⁸ For this reason, music can provide a useful vehicle for criticizing the *doxa* of representation and thus for thinking in unorthodox ways that problematize notions of subject and object, unity and multiplicity, finite and infinite, knowing and feeling. Music’s resistance to conventional ways of thinking about thought is, however, strongly resisted by a musicology, which, to function properly as a logic of music, has sought to reconcile music with the demand for representation. Fortunately, such attempts have failed to satisfy many musicians and many outside the professional practice of music. I say fortunately because this failure allows music to remain highly problematic. Indeed, theories of music retain a degree of incoherence that is itself problematic. Theory’s solutions have been tolerated because theorizing about music has been largely insulated from critique. The image of music as a scientific, mathematical study of music has until recently remained isolated from the problems of science and mathematics. *Musica speculativa* permits itself the latitude to ignore its deeper “philosophical” problems. Rather than confront such problems, *musica speculativa* has been, for the most part, happy to live with a division of experience and practice and with the unproblematized categories of subject and object, form and content, and knowing and feeling (*noesis* and *aisthesis*). In maintaining such divisions music theory has attempted to solve music’s problems by putting an end to them rather than embrace the force of problems as invitations to think farther.

new can never do so but in ready-made and ancient terms. Whatever novelty the future may contain (and the singularity and individuality of each moment makes it novel) escapes conceptual treatment altogether. Properly speaking, concepts are post-mortem preparations, sufficient only for retrospective understanding ... ” (p. 1033). James here links percept with his radical empiricism and concept with rationalistic philosophy. Deleuze similarly proposes a transcendental empiricism that challenges the values and methods of the old empiricism and transcendental Idealism alike.

⁸ The French term used by Deleuze, ‘bon sens’ (as in Descartes’ ‘le bon sens est la chose du monde le mieux partagée’) covers both these meanings in English.

This broad and ungenerous criticism does not, however, take into account theory's practical side. Much of what we call music theory has had an eminently pragmatic function—the development of musical notation and categories for composing and reading music, for example, concepts of consonance and dissonance, the harmonic and non-harmonic, categories of modal species, metrical types, “formal” and interval types. The objects of writing and reading do indeed supply a necessary and efficacious fund for musical practice and its teaching. Music theory in its many forms can function more or less creatively or destructively. It can lead to a growth of skill and sensitivity, or it can lead to an alienation or distancing from aesthetic experience. In either case, the concepts and categories of music theory once learned deeply affect our engagements with music. Theory and practice are thus, for good or ill, indissoluble. Deleuze's critique of static representations of experience—which, because static, cannot truly represent experience—suggests ways of developing music theory that might foster creativity and minimize some of the more alienating effects of music-theoretical discourse. But before turning to a more explicit account of Deleuze's critique it will be helpful to consider briefly some problems of the concept of the notated musical work.

If music seems to defy representation and has occasionally challenged the claims of representation, music theory has embraced representation as a way of fixing the musical object. For many musicologists, the fully composed and notated work as an object is separate from and independent of a listening and performing subject.⁹ (I take “work” to mean any objectification of music—not just a whole piece of music, but any part of a piece.) In this thought there is one, self-same work and innumerable many subjective experiences of the work. It is not these subjective experiences that compose or constitute the work—the work is prior to such experience and unchanged by it. Thus, the question of a work's meaning can seem pointless: meaning for whom, when? It is not, of course, that music is meaningless or insignificant (few have had the temerity to suggest this), but that its meanings are hopelessly profligate and thus uncontrollable and unsayable.

What can seem unitary or always self-same is music's composition. In this view its singular meaning was once and for all created by its composer, and this fully formed intention is preserved against passage in its notation—in “the notes.” If there is a publicly available content it is to be found inscribed in the composition of the notes, the structural relations of the notes or notated sounds—sounds that can be reproduced as the Same: the same note-sounds in the same order. Determining the structure of the composition—a composite built of notes and their relationships—has been the task of analytic music theory. But where does this leave the listener and performer, or rather the performance of music? Here it

⁹ Not all musicologists are uncritical of the work concept or of claims of music theory. Among the many scholars who have written penetratingly on these issues are Richard Taruskin, Lydia Goehr, Nicholas Cook, and Christopher Small. What Deleuze might offer to these debates is a broader metaphysical context and one that explicitly engages problems of temporality.

is helpful to remember that performance (*per-formare*) means to actually, really form (*per-* here is an intensive). What is not per-formed is thus not truly or fully formed. In this connection, it should be noted that most performers are inclined to be suspicious of music theory's claims to a more authentic musical object outside performance that they cannot realize in their own hearing and practice.

In the reductions of theory, the possibility of a universalized subjective experience is awakened. If the composite parts and relations are the truth of the work guaranteed by the intent of the composer—what was meant to be communicated by the composition in its notation—then an adequate experience of the piece “must” take these as its objects. If anything, then, the meaning of the work is just this determined and determinate structure. Adequacy here is relative to an ideal in which all structural relations would be fully heard. This ideal refers back to the work's genesis, when the composer (it might be imagined) fully expressed the true relationships in composition. Perhaps a successor might be able to recreate all this in communion with the spirit of the composer, to become one with composer and composition, though it is difficult to imagine such a complete subjective identification, especially in light of the mistrust with which we view the subject when we dismiss a “merely” subjective experience. But in achieving adequacy to the work a further idealization must also be admitted. We must imagine a hearing that involves no lapse of attention and a perfect operation and coordination of all the faculties—sensation, memory, understanding, imagination, and so on. In an actual, empirical hearing it is difficult to imagine such perfection.

It might, however, be easier to imagine a complete grasp of structure, or at least a gradual, cumulative approach to this ideal through a prolonged study of the notation. A synoptic view of the score would seem to solve the problems of memory and attention. Assuming our structural categories are true or adequate, understanding could grow, and, with it, sensation and imagination could be educated and refined. Such control over passage was, after all, given to the composer who could revise, adjust, rewrite, and suffer lapses of attention in a time out of the time of musical passage. Then why should not the successor have similar powers of control? No reason at all, if we imagine music to be about control.

Deleuze presents a critique of representation that makes a virtue of musical passage and its resistance to arrest by a thought that would hold music fast (in *con-cepti*, *Begriffe*). Representation, recognition, repetition, recall... All these *re-* words bear witness to passage, but imply a control of, a defense against, passage, in a going back that that would rescue Eurydice—an understandable but unnatural attempt that betrays Orpheus' powers to move the living (and even rocks). To have the same object in time is to have that object again and again—wishful thinking.

This multiplication of the Same is clearly paradoxical. Distinctions of unity and multiplicity, identity and difference, model and copy, knowledge and sensation (as flux), finite and infinite (discontinuity and continuity) emerge as caesurae that cut us off from direct encounters with the changing world. Deleuze designates as the Image of thought, a thinking about thought that gets stuck in such distinctions.

Rather as graven images reduce the living god to a set of empirical idols, the Image seeks to focus thinking on what appear products of thought, and thus to concretize a genetic process, a performance that transcends the momentary fixations of recognition. “It is not the gods which we encounter: even hidden, the gods are only the forms of recognition.”¹⁰

Certainly, we do recognize and represent. What is proposed here is not a denial of these activities, but instead a recognition (the word is not forbidden) of the damaging effects of an Image or representation of thinking, feeling, experiencing... that would deny a transcendent activity or exercise of thought and instead imagine transcendent entities or identities, objects of knowledge—for example, musical works. From a Deleuzian (or for that matter, a Jamesian, or Whiteheadian) perspective such identities are illusory—and, I would add, unmusical, contrary to the Idea of music, which crucially involves creativity, movement, and difference, or novel becoming. Why else, but for these virtues, would we bother with music, much less find it endlessly fascinating?

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze lists eight postulates that together constitute the Image of thought—how many more might be added.¹¹ More generally, though, he points to a crucial factor—*recognition*, as a form or (in effect) a model of thought.¹² Recognition may be defined by the harmonious exercise of all the faculties on a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined, or conceived... As Descartes says of the piece of wax: ‘It is of course the same wax I see, which I touch, which I picture in my imagination, in short the same wax which I thought it to be from the first.’¹³ Conveniently, Descartes does not select music, or even language, as an example.

Recognition in this sense works backwards, not simply in going back to compare the present with the past to judge identity, but in granting the identical object a givenness that temporally and logically precedes the comparison (“the same which I thought it to be from the first”). The identity that guarantees recognition also works forward. What can be recognized as the Same must also be a definable, determinable *possibility* for future recognition. What is not recognized is the power of real and definite *potential*, or what Deleuze calls the virtual, to give shape to

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 145. Lest it seem that Deleuze is excessively monotheistic, it should be noted that the images of thought are of constant interest for Deleuze. The study of the images of thought which he later (in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 2004, with Guattari) dubs Noology is, I would suggest, already implicated in the Idea of philosophy, which without being so named is a central topic at least from his early work on Bergson.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 167.

¹² Recognition seems to characterize especially one of the four aspects of representation: *identity* with regard to concepts. “The identity of the unspecified concept constitutes the form of the Same with regard to recognition” (ibid., p. 137).

¹³ Ibid., p. 133.

new and actual experiences. Criticizing Hume, Deleuze writes, “The past is then no longer the immediate past of retention but the reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity. Correlatively, the future also ceases to be the immediate future of expectation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction, the reflected generality of the understanding . . .”¹⁴

Recognition—or, more generally, the Image of thought—gets things backwards by moving in the wrong direction. Deleuze characterizes the direction of the Image as tracing the transcendental *from* the empirical. By this he means deriving the transcendental (understood as a general) from the empirical (understood as a specific), or, more precisely, modeling the transcendental on an inadequate notion of the empiric as a thing experienced. I say inadequate because experience is not a thing which we can divorce from the adventures of experiencing (as we shall see, the actual-empirical-experiential-experimental is not so limited).¹⁵ Tracing the transcendental from the empirical results in what Whitehead calls the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness, a confusion of the abstract and the concrete—a reification of the abstract as a concrete that leaves no room for a real *concretion* or creative act.¹⁶ In this confusion, some sleight of hand works to reverse relations of power to devalue the concrete *vis-à-vis* the abstract. The universalizing concept takes on a power that makes it seem (like Descartes’ idea of wax) more real—more substantial and durable than the fleeting and innumerable individuals it is *realized* in. It is treated as a sort of hyper-individual—a single, self-same that transcends the actual individuals that find their sameness, their recognition, in the power of the (substantialized, “noured”) concept.

Thus, the Image of thought not only misconstrues the transcendental as an ideal model for the empirical (a model that serves as a model for what it is modeled on). It more fundamentally misconstrues the empirical or actual as a *concretum* which

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵ Histories of the words “empiric” and “experience” document an ongoing engagement with such problems: the Greek *peira*, a trial or experiment; thence the Latin *periculum*, an attempt, a temptation with nothing guaranteed, nothing secured or controlled in advance—thus risk and the fearful connotations of danger, *peril*. As a more down-to-earth (non-Deleuzian) good and common sense has recognized for centuries: nothing risked, nothing gained. Deleuze’s exposition is full of frightening language that shares in the aesthetics of shock fashionable in Parisian intellectual circles of his time. But some excesses of fashion should not blind us to the possibility that shock might be sincerely employed as a wake-up call—a call to face the peril of living.

¹⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York: Free Press, 1967, chapter 3. The concrete—*concretus* (past participle)—is a nominal, substantive take on the verb *concrecere*, a growing together, a condensing or congealing. Whitehead chooses the verb form “concrecence” to draw attention to the performative activity of the actual. In this growing together the many (the uncountable many of the virtual) become or congeal in a one that is always on the move in the creation of others. The abstract is not on the move—it is a stable that would (in vain) protect from the peril of actual experience.

is deprived of an essential mobility and creativity—more fundamentally, because without this reduction it could not serve as a model or lead to technologies of model and copy. The actual is the site of concretion. It is not subordinate to or dependent upon a prior “hyper-actual.” Notions of dependence, sub/super-ordination and hierarchization do not pertain to an emergence of the virtual into the actual and vice versa. The actual is a creature of innumerable difference (potentiality, virtuality) and is creative of new difference or a new virtual. An actual musical experience is produced from an actual organic, cultural, personal... past that supplies the potentials it now actualizes. This supply emerges from literally innumerable past creatures, innumerable because *as past* “they” are not separated as the individuals they were when they were actual.

The new, actual experience when past (passed) will, because of its irreducible novelty, change the composition of the virtual, and thus change the potential for later experiences. As Whitehead puts it, “The many become one and are increased by one.”¹⁷ This change, however minute and imperceptible, is real—it is organic (neural, chemical), cultural, and personal, and will be passed on to countless individuals. That is to say, this change is not a private matter. The perilous “subjectivity” of musical experience is real and effective, capable of actualization for countless new individuals or others.

Rather than deriving the transcendental from the empirical, and then modeling the empirical on the transcendental, or seeing in the empirical a copying of the transcendent Same, Deleuze proposes a “transcendental empiricism” (akin to James’ radical empiricism) that would focus on concretion or actualization—the production or performance of the actual. Here the transcendental is understood as the potential or virtual and designated as the realm of Ideas. Deleuze’s Ideas are nothing like generals or concepts. Ideas are fully real but have no actuality—they are purely virtual. Nor do they in any way resemble the actualities in which they are incarnated. Ideas have no identity or sameness because they are in themselves neither one nor many. Ideas have nothing to do with knowledge and everything to do with learning.¹⁸ In all these ways, Deleuze’s choice of the term *Idea* may be disconcerting. To appreciate the difference of this mobile Idea from the reified Ideas of traditional Idealisms and from the (Kantian) concepts of the understanding, it will be helpful to return to the forms of recognition which Deleuze suggests derive from the postulates of good and common sense.

The Image of thought relies on the notion that in all its modes of operation (the various “faculties”): sensing, understanding, remembering, conceiving...) thought is capable of depositing a same, unitary object. Thus, if a musical work can be understood, this understanding should be consonant with our hearing and seeing

¹⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, New York: Free Press, 1979, p. 21.

¹⁸ “In fact, the Idea is not the element of knowledge but of an infinite ‘learning’, which is of a different nature to knowledge. For learning evolves entirely in the comprehension of problems as such, in the apprehension and condensation of singularities and in the composition of ideal events and bodies.” Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 192.

(the notation) and with our imagining and remembering. That there is a work requires that it can be sensed, understood, and remembered as this work—that it can be re-cognized as the work (again, by “work” I mean any musical object, however brief). Deleuze calls this ideal cooperation of faculties, working in a unitary subject in which they are joined, common sense or a *concordia facultatum*. “Common” here means commonality of faculties converging on an object of knowledge.¹⁹ Of course, in this scenario the work can be more or less adequately thought, and thinking about the work can change, presumably in the direction of increasing adequacy to the ideal work. This possibility introduces the need for a good sense. Good sense introduces a regulative valuation for the operations of common sense, a faith that with good will our thinking will move toward proper understanding, that the direction of change is indeed toward an ideal adequacy, an adequacy to the ideal of the work as a stable, self-same object.

Good and common sense converge on the reproduction of the work as a pre-formed object of recognition. But if we think of work as a verb, an activity or performance in which what is (per)formed is the actual, the *wirklich*—fleeting and changeable—then the question of production can no longer be addressed by substantives (nouns). But if it cannot be addressed by substantives and the postulation of an enduring self-same substance, then by what? Deleuze’s answer to this question crucially involves Idea as a way of mediating a transcendent virtuality, or a way of moving from potential through actual.²⁰ Unlike the model of recognition supported by common and good sense, Idea doesn’t offer a bridge

¹⁹ See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 133. A term central to his critique of representation, Deleuze’s “common sense” is a response to the *sensus communis* of Kant (by way of Aristotle and the Scholastics). It should not to be confused with more customary meanings of the term which can perhaps be heard in his discussions of “the sensible,” “sensibility,” and the productivity of intuition. Sensing these connections we might imagine a more generous Deleuzian meaning for the term along Whiteheadian lines as discussed by Isabelle Stengers. “What we call common sense for [Whitehead] is not an anthropological static feature to be opposed to high-level speculation, it is a marvel, always escaping identifying frames as it speaks of our ability to meaningfully interpret and orient ourselves in a fluid, ever-changing plurality of situations. For Whitehead, it was the touchstone for any realist doctrine that it continues the adventure of common sense, enfolding the bewildering variety of what it means to be both in touch with and touched by ‘reality.’” This common sense can, and often does, stop in *doxa*, withdrawing from adventure. But failures of common sense can also be overcome, not by the “good sense” Deleuze criticizes but by an active, creative sensibility. “While all common-sense doctrines, whether of the physicists or the moralists, will be equally interpreted by Whitehead in terms of unilateral doctrinal exaggeration, common sense itself can only be enriched by new habits of thought.” Isabelle Stengers, “Thinking with Deleuze and Whitehead,” in Keith Robinson (ed.), *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 38.

²⁰ The capital I of “Idea” makes it a peculiar sort of non-substantial noun, not a “hyphen-noun”; that is, not more of the Same.

or conduit from general to specific (or possibility to its realization) through resemblance.²¹ Again, because it has no identity, Idea cannot in any way resemble the actuality it incarnates. Nor can we imagine Idea apart from actualization, as we can imagine model apart from copy. There is no virtual without actual—time does not stop. Time is the never-ending, eternally returning process of virtual-actual. The actual, *wirklich*, is a movement in which potential actualizes. Ideas specifically address questions of the relevance of the virtual for the actual and all the valuations (intensities) that create not just any (and certainly not the same) actuality but always a new one. If we want to think again of faculties involved in this process, rather than a pre-ordered, hierarchically arranged operation of faculties, we will find divergence in the play of faculties in which Ideas are performed. It is not that the faculties do not work together. Sensing activates remembering or understanding, which in turn activates (or blocks) further sensing, and in turn further sensing and remembering (or forgetting).²² It is that they do not jointly refer to a “prior” object which would then be their priority. They don’t converge on an “idea” or image. Rather, they are themselves produced by Ideas actualized. Music conceived as Idea (the Idea of music) performs us as much as we perform music.

The Idea of music names a dimension of musical experience that can not be parsed into discrete, identifiable, namable constituents. Idea is pure potential, a multiplicity that is neither one nor many, and a multiplicity that contains no cuts (the cut is, precisely, now). But to be potential, to have the power to incarnate in the new, Ideas must be differentiated or internally structured.²³ If there were not

²¹ See Reddy, “The Conduit Metaphor—a Case of Frame Conflict,” in Andrew Ortony (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Reddy’s conduit metaphor can be read profitably as a case study in the operation of the Image of thought. Moreover, it is an impeccable empirical study that reveals mechanisms of the Image in its everyday use. Revealing also are the patent absurdities which, pre-Reddy, have gone largely unnoticed. The transparency of the Image is a creature of habit (*habitus*). Reddy calls this pervasive habit of verbal expression a “pathology” in a sense he carefully and usefully defines.

²² The faculties Deleuze names should be regarded as placeholders for any number of functions that we might attribute to the workings of thought, musical or otherwise.

²³ Deleuze’s understanding of structure is quite different from that of musicology or linguistics, in which structure is regarded as a fixed form, a substance underlying the accidents of performance. Structure for Deleuze points to the differentiated multiplicity of Idea. “The reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements and relations along with the singular points which correspond to them. The reality of the virtual is structure. We must avoid giving the elements and relations which form a structure an *actuality* which they do not have, and withdrawing from them a *reality* which they have. ... When it is claimed that works of art are immersed in a virtuality, what is being evoked is not some confused determination but the completely determined structure formed by its *genetic* differential elements, its ‘virtual’, embryonic elements.” *Difference and Repetition*, p. 209 (my emphasis; see also *Difference and Repetition*, p. 183). As James Williams observes, “Structure as multiplicity is in movement and does not give priority to fixed structures

definite or differentiate-able potential, if anything at all could happen, how could just *this* happen? Novelty requires definite potential. We might say that the richer in difference or the more problematic the ensemble of Idea brought to bear in the work of actualization, the greater the degree of novelty. Music, like all thinking, makes strenuous demands for the production of novelty.

If the virtual in itself, like the past in itself, defies analysis, then so does the actual. We cannot, say, parse or take apart what happens now. We can, though, carry this happening further in reflection, a reflection that is itself now or new. Now we are in the presence of actual expressions of the virtual in which palpable selections and determinations are being made (and unmade).

As an example from music, consider tonal function, or rather the concept of tonal function. Tonal function concerns the way tones act together, in the potentials they actualize and the potentials they create.²⁴ If function can be regarded as activity, something that is expressed only in an actual, then there must be innumerable functions—a function not only for each particular musical context defined by the work as a document (its score or recording viewed as a general), but one for each actual, musical experience.²⁵ How problematic are we willing to allow our labeling to become? As problematic as we like.

There are as many tonic functions as there are expressions of the Idea of tonic (itself a definite potential involved or enfolded into the Idea of music). “Generally,” or better, as a departure into the thinking of function (unfolding musical function as a problem), we might say that tonic names a feeling of relative rest or repose in which nothing more needs be done, and is thus used for ending a piece or a part of a piece. Tonic, most generally or ideally as a tone (scale degree 1) or tonal complex (a tonic or “I” chord), has the potential to move to any other tone, which is to say it has (in itself) no definite potential for movement to another tone.²⁶ Thus,

when thinking of evolution through time ...” (James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p. 149). The fixed structures of music theory thus work backwards, like other forms of Empiricism and Idealism, deriving the transcendental from the empirical. Working forward, theory might seek to engage a temporally oriented virtual-actual structure complete with the multiplicities of the presence of past and future and so resist a reduction of structure to the fiction of completely given, static objects.

²⁴ The mathematical definition of function as a variable that given a value determines the value of another variable captures the reciprocity of the virtual-actual, but leaves out of account a temporal determination that would speak to the process or production of the new.

²⁵ In view of the uses to which “the notes” are often put it would be tempting to relate document to *doxa* and thus see the score as an ally of good sense in the service of the Image of thought. But nothing is gained by denigrating the score (moreover, the etymological connection is weak). Document comes more directly from *docilis*—teachable and willing to be taught. The document in this sense would be a vehicle for learning, an apprenticeship (as might be the teachings of music theory).

²⁶ This is, of course, an abstraction born of labeling—in any actual situation many factors will come into play to qualify the potential of tonic for repose.

tonic harmony (a I chord, or, for example, a C chord in the key of C) can move to any other chord in the key (ii, iii, IV... etc.). Other tones have more definite potentials for movement. The leading tone functioning as dominant (B in the key of C), a half-step below tonic, has a definite potential to move to tonic more than to any other tone. Dominant function is a narrowing of potential, a *promise* of continuation, specifically toward tonic, and thus an opening to future completion or (relative) repose. We say that the leading tone “resolves” to tonic. This resolution solves the problem the leading tone (together with the tonic) has created. If we stop with the leading tone we feel something more needs to be done. (For example, try singing “My Bonnie lies over the ocean” stopping on “to”—the leading tone—in the final phrase “Oh, bring back my Bonnie *to* me.”) In this case, we can say that we expect tonic to follow, but saying this can be misleading if it implies the necessity of forming an Image of tonic as a definite possibility. A (single, definite) *possibility* is a pure hypothetical (itself an actual) and should not be confused with potential or allowed to masquerade as an “actual-potential.” Of course, we can, if we choose to do so, anticipate the next move. And to do so is often a habit of engaged listening and playing. But even if the next move is the one we might predict (say, by singing in advance of its arrival), the full, unfathomable potential of the situation necessarily comes into play (even in our decision to predict) in the creation of a new event with all its actual intricacy.²⁷ Moreover, the always concomitant potential for other progressions necessarily leaves things open (even in our “predicting”). The pitch we call “leading tone” might now descend a step and in this larger context not function as the leading tone, and might have never so functioned (in this larger context). Or, a next move might withdraw tonic function from the pitch labeled “tonic.” As Yogi Berra famously put it, “It ain’t over till it’s over.” And I imagine that Berra well understood that it’s never over—this is part of the common and (for Deleuze) uncommon and problematic wisdom of the remark.

It might be argued that when the song or phrase is over all the relations or functions *having done* their work *will have become* past, and that *now* we can go back to assign them their proper labels, *now that* we know how they *have acted* and, since they are *now decided*, what they *are*. This would be an argument from the Image of thought in accord with the model of recognition. What is

²⁷ The (now) common experience of hearing a recording of a musical passage again and again with increasing delight and something akin to surprise attests to a *learning* in which a richer past (virtual, potential) can be brought into play. Think too of bedtime stories, or of playing chess or reviewing the moves of a previous match. An important distinction for Deleuze is that of learning and knowledge: “Learning is the appropriate name for the subjective acts carried out when one is confronted with the objectivity of a problem (Idea), whereas knowledge designates only the generality of concepts or the calm possession of a rule enabling solutions” (*Difference and Repetition*, p. 164). And, again “the Idea is not the element of knowledge but that of an infinite ‘learning’, which is of a different nature to knowledge. For learning evolves entirely in the comprehension of problems as such, in the apprehension and condensation of singularities and in the composition of ideal events and bodies” (p. 192).

problematic here, though, is the temporal setting implicated in the italicized verb forms. Indeed, we can “go back” (as we will in an upcoming analysis of Chopin’s E Major Scherzo), but our reflections (when do they stop) are nothing if not further movement, the function(ing) of Idea/problem.

Idea is movement (not virtual apart from actual); but movement, and music’s movement in particular, has implications that run counter to a common and good sense of caesura and a logic of whole and part. Music, of course, has its cuts, its caesurae—articulations of all sorts (even in the elemental distinctions of “notes”)—but these do not stop the music any more than phonemes, words, or sentences stop the flow of discourse.²⁸ One accomplishment of Idea, then, is an acknowledgment of the continuity of passage. The continuity of passage, or continuity in general, raises questions of multiplicity and unity—how the discrete many can be reconciled with the indiscrete wholeness of a one. Such questions, which plague music theory no less than linguistic theory in the name of part and whole (questions answered in terms of a homogenous hierarchy of levels), are effectively bypassed in the concept of a wholeness that precedes division but that also, and at the same time, engenders division. The oppositions of whole and part, continuity and discontinuity, are effectively bypassed in the cooperation of potential and actual. Ideas are potentials incarnated in actuals. But actuals and potentials do not stop, any more than the sound heard stops—there is always a moving forward into the new, the now, even if this is a movement into silence.

Since Ideas are ingressive potentials, the Idea of Music is not a thought about Music, much less a proper thought. It is rather all that comes to bear on the actual making of music (including thinking with and about music), an all that is in itself precisely unthinkable. Music in this way is not an internal matter, it is neither properly subjective, nor objective, for, as Deleuze writes, “... Ideas no more than Problems do not exist only in our heads but occur here and there in the production of an actual historical world.”²⁹ Thus, it is in this production, or actualization, or performance that we can locate the work of music, the work that music does—its *Wirkung* and its *Wirklichkeit*.

In representation’s focus on the what that is produced—a what that cannot differ in itself—lost are the means and relations of production (to borrow from Marx), the genetic conditions whereby a new object becomes actual. In this reduction there is no room for the significantly new. It might be argued that this is a necessary reduction. What can be said of the new, the now, the fleeting and individual (or “subjective”)? What can be said of the performance of music? The attempt to say what is produced (past tense) or what is to be produced

²⁸ As James puts it, “The transition between the thought of one object and the thought of another is no more a break in the thought than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the consciousness as much as the joint is a part of the bamboo.” William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 234.

²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 190.

(future perfect) must fail as a determination of novelty.³⁰ But this does not prevent us from trying to speak of genetic conditions and potentials that are constitutive of musical experience, which in its performances is always and ever new. This trying can then lead to new music and to new musical thought-experiments.

Turning to the opening of Chopin's Scherzo for Piano in E Major, Op. 54, will present opportunities to consider questions of determinacy in performance in more detail.

Example 1.1 provides an annotated score of the first 65 bars. I have chosen this excerpt in part because its notation should be accessible, in conjunction with a recording, to readers without much experience reading music, and because it does not require advanced keyboard skills from the reader who would like to try playing it. In any case, I would suggest listening to a variety of recorded performances (I recommend Vlado Perlemuter 1971 and Claudio Arrau 1984.) This descent into the empirical and the balancing of Deleuzian philosophy and concepts from music theory is perilous; it leads to many problems only a few of which I can touch on here. We will freely use the notes and other sorts of labels, which are nothing if not useful.

The first question is one likely to be the first problem for a player. How long is the (dominant) chord displayed in bars 5–8 to be held? How do we determine its duration, and when is this determination made? Let us imagine this problem from the perspective of a pianist. One solution would be to count beats. Having played four beats (here four bars), one might silently count “one, two, three, four” in bars 5–8 trying to keep the beat steady from the first four. Skilled performers will see such a solution as unmusical, not living up to the Idea of music which demands more intricacy. (The Image of a steady beat as something given in advance is not that of the moving, flexible Idea of beat.) Better to feel this duration as a whole and thus to begin the new phrase with bar 9 when the time seems just right. Held for too long, the momentum of the piece is lost, the phrase dies; too short, and a feeling of careless or overly careful, anxious rushing develops—with a sense that this duration was not given its full due (“cheated,” as musicians say).³¹ But, obviously, a feeling of right duration (not right as good sense would have it—some rectitude outside the actual experience) cannot be based on these negativities, as if we had to experiment with all these failures in order not to fail.

³⁰ Carolyn Abbate poignantly and problematically raises such questions in her essay “Music—Drastic or Gnostic?” *Critical Inquiry* 30/3, 2004, pg. 505–36 (as does Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht more generally in *Production of Presence*, Stanford University Press, 2004).

³¹ A player (for example, Arrau) might chose to let the phrase die, to hold the chord “too long” perhaps in order to increase the sense of latency in this dominant and an overall sense of latency in this initial succession of phrases with a larger shaping of the piece in mind, letting the piece blossom later. (There can be other ways of making all of bars 1–32/33 problematic—consider, for example, Shura Cherkassky 1991.) But even so, a precise feeling of “too late” will be based on a precise feeling of the duration created with bars 1–4/5. “Right” duration is a question of right for what?

Example 1.1 Chopin, Scherzo for Piano in E Major, Op. 54 (mm. 1–65)

The musical score is divided into four systems. The first system (measures 1-5) is marked *Presto* and *p*. It shows a sequence of chords: Tonic (5), 6, 3, 6, and Dom. (5). The second system (measures 6-17) includes a *ten.* (tension) marking and a *fz* (forzando) marking. It features a *Dom. of Dom.* (Dominant of the Dominant) and a *Dom.* (Dominant) chord. The third system (measures 18-24) shows chords 3, 6, 5, 6, and 7. The fourth system (measures 25-31) is marked *Tonic* and *(Dom.)* (Dominant). It features chords 8, 5, 4, 3, and 2.

continued

In this sense too, questions of external measure (measurement by “the clock”) do not matter in the question of *just duration*, especially since there are innumerable just durations in performance—durations we could only uselessly (for our present purposes) measure in terms of milliseconds.

How then are just durations determined or decided? This is a question of conditions: conditions inhering in the conditioned and conditioning. There are indeed rules (in the Deleuzian sense) or reasons for making a decision. A just

Example 1.1 *concluded*

The musical score for Example 1.1, concluded, is presented in four systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins with a circled number '33' and a fermata over the first four bars. The first system shows a complex chordal texture in both hands, with a 'Tonic' marking under the first bar and a 'fz' marking at the end. The second system continues with a 'ten.' marking. The third system features a 'fz' marking. The fourth system concludes with a 'fz' marking. The score is written for piano, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and various dynamic and performance markings.

decision here will involve responding to the duration of the first four bars with an upcoming phrase in mind. The first four-bar event is now past for the held chord, held in the hands of the player. What has been made of this event or utterance is what we now have to proceed with. The second (*sequi*, following) event—part of a larger utterance which is not past—should be commensurate with the first by repeating its length. However, this repetition is not one of equality or repetition of the Same. Practically speaking, how would we know these durations are equal? “Equal” is characteristically a quantity term that asks for a measurement from the outside—that is, a comparison of two or more fully formed objects available at the same time for comparison. But where is this “same time” outside time?

Certainly, it is not in the time of performance. To make this sort of judgment of equality we would have to measure the events in other terms—of seconds or parts of seconds, but to what point? What does any of this have to do with the performer's decision? Nothing at all, though using such measurements to study a performer's past decisions could be a very productive (if problematic) research.

If a decision emerges from a response to the past or the virtual, is there anything we can say about such conditioning? Yes, there is more to say than we can ever finally say. Let us try out some of this saying in the case of the Chopin piece in Example 1.1. If, as I suggest, the duration of the first four bars (labeled Alpha) be taken as an immediate basis on which to perform the second four (Beta), what is that basis, and how does it work? First, it should be noted that Alpha leads to Beta. We might say that it comes to rest in a Beta that will complete the phrase. Chopin has indicated a crux with the attack of the dominant chord by marking it with a hairpin sign (> obviously, not a *diminuendo*) and the word *ten(uto)*. Finding an aim in the process of Alpha might be a way of determining a character or intensity that could be imparted to Beta for a determination of the latter's just duration, a *just this* duration. *Whatever* is done in a particular performance, creating an Alpha that is *just this* Alpha, will inhabit, in all its particularity, the duration of Beta—a virtual object alive and resonant within Beta. And this results in the variety of musical (or unmusical) affects that different durations of Beta would create. To play the first four notes carelessly or aimlessly will not give us much to go on. Again, if duration is a qualitative measure, the potential “length” imparted to Beta is a determination to be made from what is made of Alpha. If Alpha is ignorant of its future in Beta, the Beta will come as a surprise, and its determination will be at risk. This interpretation has its virtues—the duration of Beta can thus be a risky, perilous adventure that, playing with the (relatively) ungrounded and chaotic, can, if successful, keep the music alive in a very intense and musical way. The musical or the Idea of music, as I understand it, is all about risk and adventure. Taking a more cautious route, I will suggest a series of experiments that probe more continuous potentials.

Without much in the way of aim, the first four or five beats can be heard as fairly relaxed; a gentle rocking up and down and back and forth.³² Example 1.2a

³² This hedging with the expression “four or five” shows something already awry in our labeling. We would like to speak of four beats as a determination of Alpha, but how can Alpha be determined, stopped (*de-*, another intensive + *terminus*, an end or limit) before “it” goes into Beta? It should be clear by now what is wrong about these sorts of expressions: “four bars,” the separation of a Beta from an Alpha, and so forth. But there's nothing wrong or misleading in using these sorts of expressions as an abbreviation for a more complex situation. The point here (as with Deleuze, James, Bergson, Whitehead, Gendlin, Reddy...) is not to limit or purify our language but to use what we have in ways that might deepen meaning.

Example 1.2 Chopin, Scherzo for Piano in E Major, Op. 54 (mm. 1–5)

shows a larger two-bar beat: B ($\hat{5}$) down to G# ($\hat{3}$) and back up to B ($\hat{5}$).³³ Sensing this motion of return can help to span the duration (in the sense of a *Spannung*). The return with bar 5 is also a turn to something new in the dense, dominant chord. Going further we can try to hear the preceding C# ($\hat{6}$) in bar 4 as an anacrusis (before the crux), itself leading to Beta with a special intensity, almost as if it were, in its special directedness, detached from the rest of Alpha. This leading to is also the function of $\hat{6}$, which is unstable relative to $\hat{5}$ and which here resolves to $\hat{5}$. In this context, $\hat{6}$ has two (general) choices for resolution: down by step to $\hat{5}$, or up by two steps to $\hat{1}$. The latter resolution occurs in bars 23–25, the “climax” or goal of the large phrase—bars 1–32. (Arguably, the motion up to $\hat{1}$ has less force as closure than the downward motion of $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$, which is how the very last part of the large phrase ends.)

In Example 1.2b we imagine this C#, as it were, laid on top of a slower motion B–G#–B shown in 1.2a. Then what of the first C# in bar 2? This tone does not resolve—it is as if abandoned with the leap down to G#. Experimenting with this sense of abandonment might enhance a feeling of anacrusis with the second C#—a feeling here of deferral, of promise delayed or suspended, or a feeling that the first C# itself (an offbeat in the two two-bar measures) has an anacrustic potential. In this case we can hear a sort of quickening with the resolution of C# to B in bar 5, or a sort of acceleration in the process. Or, using different language, we might think

³³ Scale degrees (denoted with $\hat{}$) are labels applied to the tones of the scale of the key arranged in order of ascending pitch beginning with the tonic, $\hat{1}$ (read “scale degree one”). In E major E is $\hat{1}$, F# $\hat{2}$, G# $\hat{3}$, A $\hat{4}$, B $\hat{5}$, C# $\hat{6}$, D# $\hat{7}$.

of the C#s (and the G# too) as storing energy (potential energy) released in Beta (kinetic energy played out in the duration of Beta).

How are we to relate these researches to a performance? These were experiments aimed at discovering character or definite potential in the tonal succession as a whole. We could invent other experiments, other vocabularies. In playing this music or hearing it played, whatever experience we have thus taken, deposited now in all its intricacy as Idea, can come into play and work to enliven this passage, and lead us further into the music. For example, we can use this method in determining when and how a new phrase is begun with bar 9, or how we are to feel an expansion of phrase in bars 17–32 (twice as long), or how the interruptive and enriched return with bar 33 will sound.

Although such work can certainly pay off, we can not say in what denominations it will be cashed out. None of these experiments, much less their notation, represents or expresses the rhythm of the passage. Deciding to emphasize or “bring out” one or both of the C#s would be a distortion or reduction of this complex whole.³⁴ Surely, a lively hearing of this passage will be expressed in subtle physical ways by a skilled pianist; moreover, I believe that even if it is played rather thoughtlessly, a skilled listener might hear a liveliness unheard by the pianist. In any case, the two parties cannot hear the same thing, nor hear the Same on repeated performance. This difference is the work of Idea.

Since we have limited our context to the formation of an Alpha informing Beta, it should be noted that Idea antedates these first sounds for all parties. I have claimed scale degree qualities for these tones, but when and how might these be given? Scale degree one, E, is not sounded until bar 11, and yet the key of E major is in force from the beginning for those familiar with this tradition. The structure of relations that impart to C#, the quality we call $\hat{6}$ (in the major), could be called the Idea of tonality. When is C# $\hat{6}$? If the third tone were A# we might well be in the key of B, in which case C# would be $\hat{2}$. But this is not what actually happens. In the course of this distributed and continuous passage, C# will always, from the very beginning, have been just this $\hat{6}$ (again, there are more “kinds” of $\hat{6}$ than we could enumerate—“ $\hat{6}$ ” is a useful but necessarily poor label).

The Idea of tonality is enculturated, which means that it is not the possession of a single subject. Countless parties have been and will be involved in the ever-changing Idea. Moreover, there are, have been, and will be countless other Ideas that inform musical experience. We might call all these Ideas of music, but where are we to draw the line between properly musical Ideas and the non- or extra-musical, the “purely subjective”? I do not see how we can draw a line without

³⁴ To work properly, each of these experiments must in a (Deleuzian) sense be forgotten. As past they will have become absorbed into a virtual (part of our Idea of this music), which, again, is an intricacy or multiplicity. (For an independent and remarkably sympathetic understanding of multiplicity see Eugene Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning: A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subjective*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962, pp. 151–64.)

postulating a common and good sense that would make novelty and creativity incomprehensible (“a phenomenal illusion”—James, quoted above). In this sense, the question of the listening subject can be a productive one for thinking these problems and the problems of common and good sense. If we cannot pin down scale degree quality or durational qualities in terms of quantity or number, why should we fear as intrusions the multiplicities of, say affective qualities (gentleness, rocking...) or personal, cultural, or organic histories that always come into play? Could we not say that such forces are essential or indispensable for our engagements with music, whether they lead to positive intensities of getting into the music or negative intensities of withdrawal (boredom, impatience, uncreative forgetting)? Positing musical objects as if independent of these forces is for some purposes a useful fiction but must, in honesty, be recognized as such.

Of course, we can choose what to talk about, and the language of traditional music theory can be effectively used for an experimentation that might eventually promote getting into the music, body and all. Returning to the work, I would like to continue a bit further with questions of duration and tonal function. The first small phrase (bars 1–9) ends with the opening of dominant harmony, which is to say the promise of tonic resolution. The second (*sequi*) rhyming phrase ends with a new sort of dominant—dominant to the first dominant, or an opening, not to the promise of tonic, but to the promise of leading to the first or primary dominant, which it does with the beginning of the next phrase (bar 17).³⁵ This next phrase, for many reasons, is a second to the couplet of bars 1–16. Rather than resting in its second four bars as did the first two, it presses forward with an ecstatic and difficult series of chords in bars 21–22 and comes to rest only with bar 25 and all that follows. In this sense, the music of bars 25–32 creates an expanded and enlivened *tenuto*, like those of bars 5–8 and unlike those of bars 13–16. The sound of the octave Bs in bar 26 is so like that of the first (this is the only identity of notes so far) we might be reminded of the beginning. Then there is this syncopated lingering, and then from bar 29, a descent to a promised tonic $\hat{1}$ in bar 33, covered by a new $\hat{5}$, and an actual beginning again that interrupts the promised closure. This course of events transpires in a duration already promised with the tonic resolution in bar 25.³⁶

³⁵ Note that the dominant harmony initiated with bar 17 is dissonant, a G \sharp sounding above the B bass. Moreover, it is not clear “where” this dissonant “cadential six-four” resolves (bar 24?). In a lecture/demonstration I offered at the Golandsky Institute in Princeton 2004 the pianist I was working with found that simply by once focusing on the initial dissonance as an isolated sound she was then able (withdrawing or forgetting this focus) to play to her satisfaction an 8- or 16-bar phrase that had been eluding her for several weeks. The members of the audience immediately heard the difference.

³⁶ The music of bars 26–32 is in this sense a sort of afterthought. Although it functions to close the large phrase, it is, as it were, laid on top of a tonic closure already made with bar 25. Also it presents a quite new character and a withdrawal from the increasing activity and rising pitch of the earlier phrases. If there is some superfluity or incoherence in the new

The new phrase beginning with bar 33 is a second beginning and a beginning again. It repeats with striking difference the whole of its predecessor, and, most immediately, from its beginning, makes (the music of) bars 1–32 a whole, a now past and first large phrase.

If we think of this staged concrescence as a durational hierarchy, it will be as a genetic or evolving hierarchy—that is to say, a truly durational, rather than a spatialized wholeness—one in which “levels” are fully heterogeneous and intricately mixed. Even in light of the few observations above, it should be clear that musical process like any other is genetically or generatively promiscuous. In the repetition of bars 1–32/3 in bars 33–64/5, and in the countless repetitions of this piece, a very definite past is continually and promiscuously informing the character of the newly actual.

If we say that we are reminded of the beginning sonority, or that bars 25–32 bring to mind bars 5–8, or that we recall bars 1–8 in order to hear breakthrough or fluidity in bars 17–24—such expressions should not be taken to mean that we can recall or call back those things as actual. In the moment when they might be relevant for the new (relevant, called for, raised back as from the dead) they are already virtual, and though fully definite, “they” are no longer distinct. They are already in multiplicity and so are smeared, confused, and implicate. We might better say, for instance, that bars 1–8 (and 5–8, and the first sonority...) can bring to actual mind or to throw forth as *problema* an intense and characterful course of the music of 17–32. One of the great difficulties and great disappointments of analysis is that by pointing to all these things belonging to different times and levels of actuality/virtuality as if they were all actual, we lose the virtual, or the power behind our actual experience. Analysis, in this way, can be taken to falsify experience, pretending either to capture experience, or more pretentiously to surpass experience in its abstraction and objectivity. But analysis and concepts of theory need not be taken in this way.

We have used concepts of meter and tonal function to point to and experiment with this work of music (“this” meaning your engagement with reading “this”). If we were to move further in this direction many more problems would emerge, some carrying further the problems that have been raised in the above exposition. We could be led further into the sound of the Chopin piece and/or further into the meaning of the concepts we have used. The tools of music theory are no more fixed than is the Idea of Chopin’s Scherzo.

Certainly, Deleuze would not recommend discarding such concepts. (For better or worse, in his latter work with Guattari, he quite freely used the music theoretic concepts of Pierre Boulez.) Quite unlike many of his contemporaries (Heidegger, Derrida...), Deleuze expresses great generosity toward the past (Plato, Hume, Kant...). This is not a mere courtesy extended to the history of philosophy; it is integral to his project of philosophizing. Although he rejects the regime of the

figure it could be a problem (I find bar 28 especially problematic). In fact, Chopin uses this figure later (bars 58 and following) repeatedly to open the piece.

Image of thought, he works from what is problematic in traditional concepts. He does not claim that his predecessors got it wrong, or even that they did not go far enough (they went as far as they could), but that in some of their formulations they claimed a finality that would inhibit thinking further—a solution that might finally resolve the problem. The Image of thought is not a critique, much less a rejection, of concepts. It is a critique of the temptation to fix concepts in a timeless still. Deleuze's approach to concepts is cinematic or kinematic (or musical)—a play of thinking, feeling, sensing, and signaling where nothing truly stops. In this thought, Image is not replaced by Idea—the two terms are incommensurate.

Chapter 2

Thinking Musical Difference: Music Theory as Minor Science*

Brian Hulse

Difference

One of the most persistent claims in Deleuze's philosophy is his contention that the Western philosophical tradition fails to think real difference. In this tradition the consistent trend is to relate or mediate difference through some form of identity: identity as being in opposition to difference as well as there being an identity to difference itself. Deleuze sets himself apart from Western philosophy in his belief that authentic difference escapes dependence on identity. But thinking difference in this way is profoundly elusive to rational thought. It is in the very nature of reason to represent difference through analogy, resemblance, opposition, and so on, each of which, in one way or another, routes difference through a concept of identity.¹ In everyday practical matters this approach has unmistakable advantages. But Deleuze is interested in a more creative approach to thinking difference—a potential whose object is not its utility per se, but rather the range, quality, and novelty of thought in its fullest expressive potential. He wants thought to reach beyond the logic of identity and predetermined possibilities in order to open thought to a difference that presents itself uniquely in each case. This requires nothing less than circumventing or neutralizing the grounding or comforting figure of the identical.

Deleuze places thought directly at the cusp of the dynamic state of the world. His is a “metaphysics of dynamic systems,”² but a metaphysics where there is no a priori ground or foundation, nor any “representative concept, nor any figure

* I would like to thank Jessica Gorman for her editorial assistance on this and other chapters in this volume.

¹ In this respect Deleuze's critique of philosophy follows directly on Bergson's, who tried to show the *evolutionary* reasons for the structure of rational thought as a means of understanding its limitations.

² Jeffrey A. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference*, University of Toronto Press, 2006, p. 113.

represented in a pre-existing space.”³ Everywhere Deleuze sees multiplicities (organizations, ensembles) from the molecular to the cosmic, but the totality or wholeness of a multiplicity is secondary, subordinated to an irreducible internal complex of difference: “multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system.”⁴ Accordingly, “[a] multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions ...”⁵ What Deleuze wants thought to do, whether it is thought on music or on something else, is to contemplate this intensive assembling of things in all their differences, rather than, as is so often the case with music theory, to reduce away the messy differences of actual becomings in order to postulate unities, identities, “coherence,” and so on.

Deleuze argues that thinking in terms of identities immediately places difference into a negative relation with what it is not. Not only is the particularity and singularity of difference lost, but all difference becomes collapsed together. There arises an *identity* of difference. That is, any particular difference becomes related to a universal principle of difference through representation, the negative, or the metric. Differences between domains, just as differences within domains, become understood as divisions or values of difference in general, a difference that connects all difference together. Difference is thought to have been captured, but in reality it has already escaped; dispersed by way of a “representative theology” which sometimes rejects and other times integrates difference as a “rebellious matter.”⁶ Concepts of difference are “confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined concept.”⁷ This is a failure as far as Deleuze is concerned:

Perhaps the mistake of the philosophy of difference, from Aristotle to Hegel via Leibniz, lay in remaining content to inscribe difference in the concept in general. In reality, so long as we inscribe difference in the concept in general we have no singular Idea of difference, we remain only with a difference already mediated by representation.⁸

It is important to understand this crucial point and how it affects conceptualizations of music. Difference as a general—that is, generic—concept, is at the root of thinking that difference is one thing, expressible in terms of

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 8.

⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 264–5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

different amounts or degrees of that essential identity. It underlies such questions as “how different is this from that?” or “how far is this from that?” or “what is the relation between this and that?” where the answers to these questions *themselves* are situated in or compared to preformed systems which give the differences their intelligibility. Representational schemes divert actual differences in actual situations to schematic differences in virtual situations: the differences constituting the sites and relations of the virtual scheme itself. What grounds the scheme in an actual value of difference is indeterminate. Difference= x . Metric schemes divert actual differences to striated configurations where all difference is some factor or multiple of an essential unit of difference.⁹ The unit itself is indeterminate. It is “minimum value.” Again, difference= x . This is how identity in an undetermined concept of difference becomes confused with differences in the world which Deleuze believes escape the controlling logic of differences mediated by the identity of a minimum value or a negative remainder.

Deleuze’s concept of difference presents a host of implications for music studies. One place to begin is to understand how it forces a reevaluation of what constitutes musical contrast or opposition. Traditionally, musical opposition occurs by virtue of a maximal change or juxtaposition along some scale of more or less difference. Loud is opposed to soft, high to low, close to far away (as in interval “size” or the “distance” between keys). Rationally, the increase of difference along any of these spectra ought to correspond with a homogenous scale of phenomenal effects (increasingly “different”). In reality there is no such correspondence, and it is the vagueness or indeterminacy of a corresponding value of effects which winds up smoke-screening the theoretic move where every parameter of contrast is reducible to the same abstract, general difference: “only in relation to the supposed identity of a concept is specific difference called the greatest ... it is in relation to the form of identity in the generic concept that difference goes as far as opposition, that it is pushed as far as contrariety.”¹⁰ For Deleuze, real opposition is “not a maximum of difference but a minimum of repetition, a repetition reduced to two...”¹¹ And this is the basis for a *positive* principle of difference, where difference is different from or opposes itself. As Peter Hallward puts it, “before it differs with ... anything external to itself, a differing ‘differs with itself first, immediately’...”¹² Objects and events cease their dependence upon other objects or events for comparison or for context. Certainly these sorts of relations will appear. But they will spring up

⁹ The case of musical intervals will be discussed below. According to more pedagogical (less theoretical) usages, intervals such as a ‘perfect fifth’ are used as direct signs to denote the sonic particularity of a certain combination of pitches. It is only in more theoretical approaches that intervals become literal distances in a striated space, where every interval is connected to every other interval by virtue of a common unit of difference.

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹² Peter Hallward, *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, Verso, 2006, p. 153.

as affects, as resonances and intensities accompanying the display and distribution of differences.¹³ Thinking musical difference from the most immediate moment of sound, its immediate coming into being, is to think of it not as an absolute, self-same point, but a differing from itself that is always in motion. Never the same as itself, always differing, always opening, always a multiplicity—this is a logical starting point for founding a Deleuzian conception of musical difference.

Musical Metrics and Equivalences

Affirming the positive, self-differing movement of musical sound is one thing. Developing an analytic practice that is consistent with that affirmation is another. To outline a broad path toward this goal I will follow Deleuze from his radical philosophy of repetition through his complex elaboration of Bergson's concept of the virtual. But first I will carry Deleuze's critique of conventional difference further into common theoretic conceptions of musical sound, those which, rather than affirming difference, attempt to capture it, subordinate it, or cancel it altogether. As I argued above, Deleuze maintains that real difference (musical or otherwise) is lost in conventional relational conceptions which subordinate difference to a system regulated by a consistent identity. Metric conceptions of pitch distance or time quantity trade irreducible (real) difference for reducible (represented) difference. The metric is an analytic perspective much derided in the pages of Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. It also happens to be one of the most tenacious and pervasive methodological paradigms used by music theorists (at least in North America). Metric schemas attempt to capture musical difference through volume, distance or amount. In these systems difference is measured according to a logic that says a unit of difference (such as the half step) can be added or subtracted in order to yield tallies of *how* different or *how* distant one note or chord is from another. It is what Deleuze and Guattari call a rigid or striated segmentarity, where,

each segment is underscored, rectified, and homogenized in its own right, but also in relation to the others. Not only does each have its own unit of measure, but there is an equivalence and translatability between units. The central eye has as its correlate a space through which it moves, but it itself remains invariant in relation to its movements.¹⁴

This description captures musical structuralisms rather well. The “correlate space” is a properly structural “spatium,” where a homogenous virtual ensemble (the theory part) watches over and communicates with local instantiations (the

¹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 237–8; above all, these relations are secondary, while difference is primary.

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 211.

analysis part).¹⁵ The theory part remains unchanged. It exists before and after any particular realization, and every realization is directed back to this invariant model from which it extracts its appropriate sequences of functions and properties. The structure is virtual, but the question is how *this* virtual relates or does not relate to the real processes of musical becoming (music theory's "magnum mysterium"). I argue here that the virtual-actual relations of musical becomings occur on an entirely different register than those located by traditional music theory. In Schenker, creator of another of music theory's great apparatuses of capture, the central eye is the "fundamental structure"¹⁶ which imparts to each work that obeys its law a transcendent "organic coherence."¹⁷ But in each musical case, each musical becoming, the important question is, what has escaped this virtual structure? The answer: anything that hasn't been stipulated ahead of time. Under this regime analysis becomes a process of progressive homogenization, where a dogmatic and inflexible virtual image mercilessly processes and dominates the actual/particular. The task becomes, then, to relocate that register where virtual-actual relations unfold in a process where *both* the virtual and the actual form *in tandem*; where the virtual is not predetermined, static, and overcoding actual flows.¹⁸ It is a question of analytic imagination and sensitivity to sonorous particularity versus aggressive preconception and the downgrading of tactile experience.¹⁹

Deleuze and Guattari frequently attend to analytic spaces consisting of equidistant striations, calling such spaces Royal, Major, or State, whose primary function is to reduce the range of the "problem element" and subordinate it to

¹⁵ Deleuze writes that to "discern the structure of a domain is to determine an entire virtuality of coexistence which pre-exists the beings, objects, and works of this domain ... We must therefore distinguish between the total structure of a domain as an ensemble of virtual coexistence, and the substructures that correspond to diverse actualizations in the domain." *Desert Island and Other Texts (1953–1974)*, Semiotext(e), 2004, p. 179. He also notes that "Time goes from the virtual to the actual, that is, from structure to its actualizations, and not from one actual form to another" (p. 180). This is eerily similar to the progression from the background to the surface posited by Schenkerian theory. That Deleuze understands structuralisms via the virtual is a kind of "diagnosis" of what he thinks structuralisms really are; how they are regarded in the imagination, how they exist as virtual projections rather than actual sites and positions "irreducible to the orders of the real and the imaginary, and deeper than they are" (p. 173).

¹⁶ The fundamental structure "unfolds a chord horizontally while the counterpointing lower voice effects an *arpeggiation* of this chord through the upper fifth." Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. E. Oster, Longman, 1979, p. 4.

¹⁷ Schenker claims that organic coherence is the "secret and source" of the "very being" of great music. Schenker, *Free Composition*, p. xxi.

¹⁸ There is also a register to locate where the virtual structure *is* connected to the actualization, and this is in the process of analysis itself.

¹⁹ It never ceases to amaze me when theorists "look" at music and "see" only voice-leading distances or harmonic functions. It is almost a form of selective blindness—or selective deafness, if hearing is even possible at this point.

the “theorem-element.”²⁰ “State geometry ... manifests itself in the primacy of the theorem-element, which substitutes fixed or ideal essences for supple morphological formations, properties for affects, predetermined segments for segmentations-in-progress.”²¹ “Royal” interval theory subordinates musical flows to a rigid filtration or conversion to a negative interval space. The relevance or authority of the theorem-element is presupposed, redistributing the supple morphology of musical expressions to empty dialectical conditions and symbols. The determination of analytic problems is entirely relative to the field of solvability they define.²² In other words, the moment theorists scurry after questions such as “how does this movement unfold the tonic?” or “what is the 12-tone set in this piece?” they have already articulated the answer in the problem. The “problem” is reduced to the task of reification or of dogmatic reiteration. Deleuze and Guattari refer to a “strange leap” of (Royal) dogmatism, which always “refers the truth of problems to the possibility of their solution.”²³ But the truly problematic doesn’t presuppose its solution (the way that metric or other representational schemes do). The truly problematic asks for the articulation of the problem as such, rather than its elimination or “solution.”

Another metric conception in music is that of musical time, or *meter*. Meter is conventionally thought of as reproducible units of time, and is virtually always opposed with *rhythm*. Deleuze generally upholds this distinction, although there is so much given to rhythm that meter is left to little more than an abstract concept (as opposed to something “in” the music).²⁴ Distinguishing meter from rhythm is bound up in distinguishing false from real repetition. False or empty repetition is repetition of the identical, which is what occurs in the notion of units of time being identical to one another in the measure of time as in meter.²⁵ Real repetition is rhythmic, which always involves inequalities and selection made by intensive differences and accents: “tonic and intensive values act by creating inequalities or incommensurabilities between metrically equivalent periods or spaces. They create distinctive points ... which always indicate a polyrhythm.”²⁶ Meter is generally thought to occur on two or more “levels.” But these levels can only emerge if there are differences made in accents or patterns of intensity, which is to say, through rhythm. The Deleuzian point here is that since meter is given by rhythm, then meter by itself is but a conceptual remainder: it has been abstracted

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 362.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

²² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 179.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari occasionally obscure this: for example, in stating that ‘there is nothing less rhythmic than a military march.’ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 313.

²⁵ ‘productive repetition has nothing to do with reproductive meter.’ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 314.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 21.

to its own transcendental plane. From this plane, with rhythm cut out, there is nothing left but striated space or a series of undifferentiated points (which Deleuze and Guattari sometimes confusingly equate with *pulses*).²⁷ The mistake is not in acknowledging meter, but in opposing it to rhythm, in taking it as its own separate entity—in other words, to treat meter as *metric*. What Deleuze is really calling for is the de-metering of meter; for dislodging any conflation of musical meter with metric meter.

It is therefore incorrect to say, as it is sometimes implied in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that metered music is striated.²⁸ A truly striated temporal surface only exists if meter has been wholly abstracted from rhythm—which is something theorists do, but not musicians. When musicians count out a meter there is no counting separate from the unequal rhythms that go along with it. Even Western notation (to which many misconceptions about meter can be traced) is designed specifically to accommodate the rhythmic nature of meter.

Music theorist Christopher Hasty offers a way out of the meter/rhythm dichotomy in his groundbreaking book *Meter as Rhythm*. Hasty argues that abstract representations of meter serve a short-sighted function of being “eminently analyzable.”²⁹ But this narrow or superficial benefit, while yielding neat systems and ordered hierarchies, trades on the infinite novelty and richness of rhythmic experience. Hasty argues that thinking musical meter as a reproduction of identical units of measure (“periodicity”) “will explicitly invoke the discontinuity of number and will result in the representation of rhythm as a systematic whole of coordinated periodicities in which all the parts are ultimately fixed in a scheme of changeless relationships.”³⁰ But, he says, “The time of aesthetic experience is characterized by dynamic becoming rather than static being, by novelty rather than the return of the same, and by indeterminacy of the future as potentiality rather than the determinacy of a fixed arrangement.”³¹ Hasty’s surprisingly simple but nonetheless radical analytic insight explicitly draws on the creative action of a listener and his or her capacity to retain and project temporal spans in the course of musical experience: “given a relatively modest degree of attentiveness and in the absence of any competing durational relevancies, two immediately successive events begun with sound will necessarily result in projection if the first event is

²⁷ See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 296. It is difficult to see how a series of abstract points could be equated with a series of actual pulses. But there is plenty of reason to see how a series of pulses would fail to mobilize the full virtual potentiality of rhythm, and therefore come off as aesthetically “flat.”

²⁸ Discussions on this point get especially muddled when Deleuze and Guattari invoke Boulez, whose modernist ideology essentially abandons rhythm and therefore equates smooth and striated space with metrical ambiguity versus metrical regularity. See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 477.

²⁹ Christopher Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. viii.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

mensurally determinate and the duration of the second sound is not greater than that of the first event.”³² This projection, he concludes, is “nothing other than meter—projection and meter are one.”³³

Music Theory as a ‘Minor Science’

In marking out a process-oriented approach to meter qua rhythm, and in opposition to those Major or Royal images of thought which abstract and striate meter, Hasty presents what Deleuze and Guattari would call a “minor” or “eccentric” science. Minor science “operates in an open space throughout which things-flows are distributed, rather than plotting out a closed space for linear or solid things. It is the difference between a *smooth* (vectorial, projective, or topological) space and a *striated* (metric) space...”³⁴ Minor science stands in a receptive, flexible relation to its material, subordinating its operations to the “sensible conditions of intuition and construction—*following* the flow of matter.”³⁵ It allows itself to be imprinted, rather than imprinting (imposing) itself on its object. Perceptions in it are based on “symptoms and evaluations” rather than “measures and properties.” Smooth space is occupied by intensities, “wind and noise, and sonorous and tactile qualities...”³⁶ In the absence of striated analytic surfaces, compound or complex musical events become “nonmetric multiplicities” of a “minor geometry”; an axiomatic that is “purely operative and qualitative, in which calculation is necessarily very limited, and the local operations of which are not even capable of general translatability or a homogenous system of location.”³⁷

Music approached as an intensive, minor science is restored to the sonorous, dynamic phenomenon that it is by virtue of an intuited perception, a “flowing indivisible whole...”³⁸

all musicians have always proceeded (by) drawing their own diagonal, however fragile, outside coordinates and localizable connections, in order to float a sound block down a created, liberated line, in order to unleash in space this mobile and mutant sound block, a haecceity.³⁹

³² Ibid., p. 91.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 362.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 373.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 479.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 484.

³⁸ Hallward, *Out of this World*, p. 38.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 297; “haecceity” refers to the quality of “thisness” of a thing, its absolute, immanent singularity.

Hearing music in its properly mutant, diagonal mode through analysis means, above all, to connect with it intuitively—which can only be done directly, immediately. Music theory as minor science requires that difference be defined from an aural position, rather than in the abstract. From a disengaged position objects and events relinquish their dynamic character. As Bergson critiques it, they “exist for themselves and not for us.”⁴⁰ Music theory as a minor science explores what is left for analysis or what it can mean to analyze pure difference. How can we articulate (musical) problems most truthfully, to their highest pitch of expressivity without reducing them to traditional modes of recognition? How can analysis develop and articulate problems which are always situated and singular? Dynamic experience is crucial. To contemplate music abstractly (as in Major science), where works cease being perceived expressions to become arbitrary physical (extensive) phenomena, infinitely reproducible, is to *lose contact*. In a minor science, contact, which is to say *sensation*, is primary to everything else. Sensation lies beneath any distinction between thought and feeling, or between science, philosophy, and art. As Elizabeth Grosz puts it, “[s]ensation requires no mediation or translation. It is not representation, sign, symbol, but force, energy, rhythm, resonance.”⁴¹ Brian Massumi argues that “[s]ensation is a state in which action, perception, and thought are so intensely, performatively mixed that their in-mixing falls out of itself. Sensation is fallout from perception. Endo-fallout: *pure mixture*...”⁴²

Why is it important in a minor conception of music theory to think of pitch as qualitative, heterogeneous, and primary in relation to itself? The answer has to do with the masking effect of thinking metrically, in infinitely divisible, striated spaces (or in other forms of representation). The side-effect of Royal Pitch Space is the loss of color, of timbre, of dynamics, of mood, of tension, of intensity, of reverberation. Royal Pitch Space both borrows on and nullifies the rich qualities of tones—tones as events,⁴³ as *intonings*. And although theorists often continue to project the qualitative affects of music into these striated systems as a habit, it is difficult to actually locate these affects, including the affective qualities of duration, as immanent to the austere configurations of those systems. In effect they are lost.

⁴⁰ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Zone Books, 1991, p. 164.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 73.

⁴² Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation (Post-Contemporary Interventions)*, Duke University Press, 2002, p. 98. One concept that promotes this minoritarian contact is what Deleuze calls the *Dividual*. The dividual means that an object or event cannot be divided without changing in nature. It “constantly varies and changes qualitatively according to the connections it carries out or the divisions it undergoes.” See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 105.

⁴³ Throughout this chapter I refer to musical “events” in the traditional sense, rather than in Deleuze’s special understanding of the term.

Difference and Repetition

Let us, then, continue with the project of imagining a kind of musical analytic practice made possible by Deleuze's idea of difference, beginning with repetition. Deleuze radically reconstitutes the meaning and function of repetition. There is a crucial point where difference and repetition become indistinguishable from each other. Peter Hallward explains that "[p]ure repetition . . . is *immediately* (rather than eventually) indistinguishable from pure difference."⁴⁴ It is not until repetition and difference meet, where the one term is synonymous with the other, that Deleuze's concept of difference is truly grasped: "it is at the same time and from the same point of view that difference ceases to be reduced to simply a conceptual difference, and repetition establishes its most profound link with difference and finds a positive principle for itself and for this link. . . ."⁴⁵ Repetition names an identifiable difference—what Deleuze calls a "difference without concept"—establishing positive, dynamic relations between disparate objects and events. What repeats is not identity, but difference, pure difference. That any two musical events are identical is both illusory—no two objects are identical—and a secondary effect of our listening habits. In each situation, repetition puts into play novel effects and dynamisms. It draws difference into a body, form, or line, while selectively expressing certain elements and forgetting others. It affirms difference, attributing to difference all movement and production, restoring form and wholeness to the flux and flow of "non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities."⁴⁶ A cosmic "theater of repetition" distributes difference as an "*ungrounded* chaos with no other law than its own repetition. . . ."⁴⁷

Rethinking musical repetition is a challenge because repetition is almost universally excised by established concepts in contemporary music theory. Musical repetition has the strange dual function of adding unnecessary, filler material that can be reduced out while at the same time being responsible for reifying the identities and structures that are ultimately cited for the "underlying unity" of the music. Repetition in a Deleuzian sense leads to the redefinition of repetition itself. While prevailing views oppose repetition to difference, Deleuze radically augments what falls under the category, to the point at which *both* repetition and difference inhabit music equally—where they become indistinguishable from one another. In my view this point exists at a deeper level than that at which repetition is normally understood: at the duration of tone.⁴⁸ Duration is the repetition of tone unfolding its difference, insisting and consisting in time. Yet it is also continuously different and differing, because it differs vertically, so to speak, as a concatenation

⁴⁴ Hallward, *Out of this World*, p. 151.

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 289.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁸ I mean "tone" in the sense of an *intoning*, a phenomenal encounter with sound, rather than an abstract object such as a pitch or pitch class.

of harmonic frequencies (timbre) as well as horizontally, in that its duration continuously expands as its present sends its former beginning further and further into the past. This pastness of a sounding tone is present as a virtual dimension of the *intoning* tone. To think a musical tone as it sounds in time is to think both difference and repetition simultaneously.

Rather than differing from other tones in “space,” under this view tones differ from themselves in time. And as all musical tones have duration, music consists of nothing but repetition. There is a perpetual dislodging or upheaval. The musical particular becomes a site of “permanent transfer” into which conceptions must be nimble enough to always break apart and reformulate as music-movement-life refuses to be stopped up or arrested in its flow.

Above the level of duration, tones coalesce into broader forms and gestures. Repetition etches itself in every corner, inhabiting and spreading across music like vines. Analytically, relations may be established on the basis of repetition on any level that repetition acts, within or between any musical dimensions. Repetition must always be thought of as *haecceity*: this repetition, this moment, this place, this quality, this intensity. In whatever dimension and however great or small every repetition is a question. Why does this repeat? What is the musical effect? How does it achieve this effect? How does this repetition work in concert with other repetitions? Each situation finds an original problem. It would seem to open up additional analytic dimensions; virtual dimensions through which events communicate. Affects are drawn off by displacement, divergence, echoes, vortices, gravitations, and so on.

Repetition draws difference into lines, often binding two or more musical dimensions together in a kind of ensemble. These repetition-ensembles define layers or registers in which repetitions, or “bound” elements, interact with unhinged or “unbound” elements. They engage in a particular process of binding—a chord or a braid—drawing diagonals through coordinates of intensity and time. Unhinged elements form their own repetition lines on other layers or registers, always coming back to a primary process of duration-as-repetition.

The multidimensional process of repetition-ensemble formation can be thought of as a kind of counterpoint, but a counterpoint released from any musical dimension in particular (such as pitch); a counterpoint whose pathways are formed diagonally within and between lines. This sonorous enunciation of complex repetitions along expanding and contracting levels or registers defines a contrapuntal temporal zone, where the repeated elements and the unhinged elements are continuously in variation. This zone is not the ordinary pitch or pitch-class space, but a fully virtual space where multidimensional vectors formed by repetitions and unhingings in various sonic dimensions (pitch, rhythm, contour, intensity, timbre, etc.) produce dynamic lines and sensations.

For example, consider the well-known passage from Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony listed in Example 2.1. From the standpoint of repetition, “relations of interest” are those formed by repetitions emerging in various dimensions—indeed, *defining* those dimensions by virtue of repetition. In this case, of immediate

Example 2.1 Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, first movement (mm. 6–13)

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, measures 6 through 13. The score is arranged in four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello (with Bassoons). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The music begins with a rest in measure 6, followed by a series of rhythmic patterns. Above the staves, two types of annotations are provided: 'Pattern/Contour Repetition (2)' and 'Rhythm/Contour Repetition (6)'. The 'Rhythm/Contour Repetition (6)' is denoted as 's-s-s-L' with arrows indicating the sequence of notes. The 'Pattern/Contour Repetition (2)' is denoted as 's-s-s-L' with arrows indicating the contour of the notes. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present throughout the passage.

importance is the particular resonance of each and every *intoned* event. Imagine each note of the short-short-short-long figure as a singular occurrence, filled out with timbre, duration, quality, intensity, resonance. Imagine the cello/bassoon line as an expansive, fluidly heterogeneous unfolding, complete with every nuance of color and volume. On another stratum, consider the short “repetition-ensembles” created between the dimensions of rhythm (short-short-short-long) and contour ($\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow \downarrow$), creating a virtual line or braid six figures long (denoted “rhythm/contour repetition (6)” on Example 2.1). These six figures also form two larger repetition-ensembles: a zigzag contour pattern between the first three figures ($\rightarrow \downarrow$ [up] $\rightarrow \downarrow$ [up] $\rightarrow \downarrow$) repeated in the second three (denoted “pattern/contour repetition (2)” on Example 2.1). Each stratum (repetition-ensemble) creates a unique, dynamic musical consistency which blends and interacts with the others.

The “differences” developed analytically in this reading/hearing are not to be captured schematically or formally. They can only be grasped intuitively. The analysis itself is meant only as an aide towards a deeper, more introspective, and even more experimental hearing process. This can lead to more radical modes of listening and appreciation—perhaps to analytic insights which require careful and absolutely unique and creative exposition—or even to compositional inspiration. What is essential is learning to hear and appreciate the radical complexity of dynamic processes formed through repetition in music—processes no a priori schema or structure can anticipate or capture.

What of those dimensions which are typically of interest to conventional music theory: pitch change and chord change? Under a repetition-theory hearing, these “changes” are no less real or important; however, their relationship is considered unhinged or indeterminate—grasped intuitively rather than formally

or schematically. In other words, the analytic configuration I am proposing *inverts* the traditional conception where repetition registers as a zero value (of difference) and pitch/chord changes register as determinate values (of difference). This is not to say that a repetition theory reduces away pitch and chord changes; rather, these are harvested under duration-repetition as pure intensities in an unbound space—to be unraveled and described intuitively amid the overall musical flow and flux, rather than related/reduced to a pre-arranged system that provides their measures and functions. The point is to understand the intensity and complexity of repetition-lines in music. And to this end I am proposing nothing less than a praxis and ethics of hearing that listens *to* repetition and *only* to repetition.

The Virtual

As argued above, each *intoning* draws a line which is for the most part virtual. The virtual part of the line is the abiding presence of the tone's past with its present (or duration) as well as the perceived wholeness of the multiplicity which the sound at any given moment is (its many waves and partials, etc.) Music consists of these tone-lines, which even on the most immanent, sonorous level are experienced *primarily* as virtual (that is, we hear more that *isn't* actually sounding at any given split second than we do that actually *is*). Imagine how slender the presence to ear of sound really is—indeterminable precisely, no doubt, but something less than a fraction of a second. So when we hear a tone, say, of two seconds' duration, the entire duration opens itself and remains present to the ear, even though only a split second has ever actually resonated in the ear. All of this duration is virtual—it is *real*, and it occurs in relation to actual events, but this reality is *virtual*, and is only extrapolated through experience. Therefore coalescences above raw duration (at the level of phrase, etc.) are also virtual; which is to say that these larger tone-formations are not structures or hierarchies but rather virtual *affects*—which cannot be thought or experienced without the actual sounds that summon and receive them.

Massumi describes the virtual as a “pressing crowd of incipencies and tendencies”; it is a “realm of *potential*.”⁴⁹ The virtual is sensation (or presence) without actuality (such as the past, or even the ‘just-past’). But the virtual can only be thought in relation to actualities—at a point Massumi calls the “seeping edge” of the virtual, where it “leaks into the actual . . .”⁵⁰ Thinking the virtual doesn't come by way of a magic trick or deduction. It is immanent to all thought, immanent to all thinking even of the actual (so, thinking the actual independently of the virtual

⁴⁹ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

is an illusion), “whereas the possible names a logic of being (ontology of stasis), the virtual affirms a logic of becoming (ontology of process).”⁵¹

For my purposes here, to “think” a tone refers to engaging its sounding presence (or sensation), whether literally hearing a sound or hearing it in one’s head. What is *not* thinking a tone is identifying a concept or representation such as a node in pitch or pitch-class space. I therefore make no meaningful distinction between thinking, sensing, and listening to sound. The key is developing concepts or procedures which continually refer attention (thought) to the sensation of tone as an alternative to those which link up to conceptual systems of nodes or functions.

Scores are useful carriers of information, transmitting a kind of choreography from one performance situation (composition/improvisation) to another (rehearsal/improvisation). But the medium of the score, its all-at-once presentation of symbols, can severely distort any project of conceptualizing music. To begin with, musical works do not exist as all-present totalities the way a score appears. In relation to actual music, a score only exists per se as a slender, moving window. But even this stipulation continues to validate the score=music conception in problematic ways. Actual music far exceeds anything that could possibly be represented by conventional Western notation. This is because, during the course of listening, an extraordinary field of temporal objects—past, present, and yet to come (and all these as in some sense present)—develops concurrently with whatever sound is actually engaging the ear at any given moment. It may be that in order to adequately develop material *to* analyze there is a considerable deal of notation yet to be done. Such notation would certainly lose its usefulness for performance. Following Bergson, it would proceed in steps or slices; notation-analyses of “quasi-instantaneous moments.”⁵² These could be strung together to provide a sense of the richness of process unfolded over a span of time, freeze-frame, or even set in motion like an analytic animation. Any number of analytic technologies is possible which create new ways of notating musical time not as meter but rhythm, through its processes of repetition, differentiation, selection, and synthesis.

Some commentators have emphasized the more remote aspects of the virtual to the exclusion of its creativity, palpability, and coextensiveness with perception. The virtual as Deleuze (via Bergson) describes it literally saturates experience. It may be thought of as presence without actuality, such as the past, the just-past of ongoing duration which is so crucial to all becoming (especially musical becoming), and the future-for-now (anticipation). Where the virtual is inaccessible is as a separate or pure virtuality. The virtual can only be grasped concretely in relation to actualities; and, for that matter, actualities can only be properly thought

⁵¹ Simon O’Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 103,

⁵² For an application of Bergson’s analytic technique, see my article “On Bergson’s Concept of the Virtual,” *Gamut*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2008.

in conjunction with the virtual (in order to harvest an adequate conception of becoming, self-differing, movement, etc.)

A Deleuzian analytic practice would not resemble networks, sets, structural harmony, and other common methods. Instead, it would map the virtual in relation to the actual; a process involving very specific functions of differentiation/differenciation (formation and actualization of virtual-temporal images; see below). There is real potential for a *practical application* of Deleuzian analytics to music; one that descends from the abstract thicket of speculation in prose to the level of productive real-world techniques. However, these techniques will not simply substitute for older, established paradigms. They will call for a profoundly new kind of participation and imagination on the part of analysts. The “subject” of music will no longer be a frozen external text to which measurements or preconceived models may be inscribed or transferred. Rather, the analyst will be required to lose this subject-object distinction, lose both him- or herself and the “music itself,” at least at critical analytic junctures, in order to merge with and extrapolate processes of becoming which are irreducible to subjects or objects. To hear/analyze things differently is not enough. Analysis is a profession, a “science,” an institution, a whole series of structures that opens certain spaces while closing down others. What is called for is something that will profoundly disturb this ecology, completely redrawing the transcendental coordinates of what goes under the name “analysis” and what is possible in thinking music.

Hasty and the Temporal Image

As discussed above, Christopher Hasty argues for overturning the dichotomy between rhythm and meter. Here I’d like to explore the concinnity between Hasty and Deleuze in more detail: particularly in their conception of temporal process. The purpose is to develop further the analytic possibilities of thinking the virtual in relation to music. Both Hasty and Deleuze regard the present as a temporal complex or multiplicity in continuous flux. The *consistency* or intelligibility of the present is not given in advance, but consists by way of a process of redrawing and reconstituting itself. Past and future relate fundamentally to the present to the point where the present itself becomes inseparable from a presence of a past and a presence of a future incorporated within it. *The* past (the historical past or the past in general) is of lesser importance in the sense that it does not sustain any dynamic presence within the present, a present that is lived. What interests Hasty and Deleuze is *how multiple events, both past and yet to come, constitute coextensive dimensions* of a present becoming.

In their conception of time, past, present, and future cannot be regarded as materially the same only “located” differently (as points along a line). Rather, each dimension designates distinct conditions which cast or modulate a temporal content according to a unique nature and function within the overall circuit. Events present themselves always in *aspect*: non-exchangeable facets which change in

nature as they circulate through the dimensions.⁵³ This process of circulation is not an abstract or external phenomenon. It belongs fully to a *lived* present, a present that is always becoming, as opposed to an abstract or theoretical present that is not explicitly bound up in a perceptual act.⁵⁴ Consider the similarities between these statements:

The past and the future do not designate instants distinct from a supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself insofar as it is a contraction of instants ... the living present goes ... from the particulars which it envelops by contraction to the general which it develops in the field of its expectation... (Deleuze)⁵⁵

...now might be conceived as a definite perspective on the past and future, and a perspective without which there is no past and no future ... If what is now is “present,” then past and future can in this sense be conceived as “present.” (Hasty)⁵⁶

Both quotations refer to a tripartite structure of time where past and future are bound up with and *simultaneous* to the present (arising as “dimensions” in Deleuze’s case, “perspectives” in Hasty’s). Past and future are conceived not as independent, equivalent points along a time line but as irreducible and non-exchangeable components of the present.

Deleuze develops a sophisticated analytic paradigm of temporal process he calls the “three syntheses of time” (which he also refers to as the “crystal-image” of time). The first synthesis designates the present proper: the here and now of experience which is fleeting and cannot be held fast. It “constitutes time as a present, but a present which passes.”⁵⁷ In itself, there is no possibility of a past or future, no possibility of continuity. Thus arises the necessity of a means of preserving the passing present so that earlier moments can be retained in an immanent and supplemental relation with what is currently present—to be felt or perceived *as part* of the present, resulting in the virtual impression of a present that is sustained, that consists as well as persists. Deleuze affirms that “the past

⁵³ Deleuze describes simultaneous “peaks of present” bound up in the moment, a presentness of past and future in the now: “Adopting St. Augustine’s fine formulation, there is a *present of the future*, a *present of the present* and a *present of the past*, all implicated in the event, all rolled up in the event, and thus simultaneous and inexplicable ... a time is revealed inside the event, which is made from these three implicated presents, from these de-actualized *peaks of present*.” Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 100.

⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵⁶ Hasty *Meter as Rhythm*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 79.

does not follow the present that is no longer, it coexists with the present it was. The present is the actual image, and *its* contemporaneous past is the virtual image, the image in a mirror.⁵⁸ The filling out or determination of this virtual image is a process Deleuze calls differentiation (with a T).

Yet the virtual retention of the past as present constitutes only half of the second synthesis. The other half is a refracted or doubled image belonging opposite to it and on the other side of the present, its image in a mirror, as it were. So, for example, as I listen to a tone, its duration expands backward, into the past. But it simultaneously extends forward, into the future—as a potential image which may be repeated. There is always a cleaving or splitting of time. These mirrored images of memory's second synthesis are referred to as virtual objects. They literally saturate present perception.⁵⁹

Finally, the third synthesis designates a process whereby the virtual comes to *re-enter* the actual in a process of actualization, what Deleuze calls differentiation (with a C). Whereas the second synthesis is given by the present which precedes and largely determines it, the third synthesis is the condition whereby the virtual objects and images of the second synthesis are mobilized productively. It restores the virtual to the present as a freedom of creation and becoming. This final synthesis belongs to a time unhinged, dissociated from any actual sequence or progression, in what Deleuze describes as the “empty” form of time. “In one sense the third synthesis unites all the dimensions of time, past, present and future, and causes them to be played out in the pure form. In another sense, it involves their reorganization ... In a third sense ... the ultimate synthesis concerns only the future ...”⁶⁰ It is the third synthesis in which images in the second may be selected, transformed, *thrown forward* and actualized in new becomings—as when the *Kyrie* returns in the last movement of Beethoven's Mass in C, or in any restoration, return, consequent phrase, and so forth, where the past returns to infuse and inflect the present, where the past renews itself in the present, transforming both.

Like Deleuze, Hasty situates time according to a passing present which is always open, destabilized, in flux, and in process. The present is described in terms of the *presence* of musical sound, which is necessarily indeterminate and incomplete. What is sounding at a particular moment remains open to any number of determinations. Hasty argues “by saying that an event is present, I shall mean that the event is incomplete, that it is in the process of becoming complete or fully

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 79.

⁵⁹ Hallward notes that the actual and the virtual do not exist independently, but that “it will be the redemptive task of thought to explore the possible means of extracting or subtracting the one from the other...” Hallward, *Out of this World*, p. 35. Also: “the present is actual, the past is virtual. And for the same reason that the actual, despite its seeming solidity, is in reality ephemeral and illusory, so too is the virtual, despite (or rather on account of) its immateriality and non-presence, the only true and lasting dimension of reality. In reality it is the virtual, not the actual, that is creative or determinant” (p. 33).

⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 115.

determined in all its particulars, and thus in the process of becoming the particular event it will eventually *be*.⁶¹ What becomes of an event, among other things, is the determination of its duration. The presence of a sound continually expands in duration, which, until its duration is severed, remains open as to precisely when, or how, the closure will occur: “*what cannot remain fixed and what cannot be determinate while the sound is going on is its duration.*”⁶²

However, the indeterminate duration of a present sound, to the extent that it carries the potential of *becoming* determinate, depends first of all on a prior determination that has marked its beginning. In order for a duration to come to an end, or even to be perceived as such, it has to have begun at a determinate time as well as maintained that earlier moment (of beginning) in relation to the presently expanding duration. Even in simple duration, then, the participation of memory is required—a memory that retains the moment of beginning as present to the present, as *with* or *in* the present. This is already the second synthesis.

The greater portion of a tone’s temporal “body” (its duration) is necessarily virtual: a presence of the past in the present, expressing a virtual duration as an internal tension or qualitative intensity projected into the heart of the intoning event. When the growing pastness of the event comes to a close, its duration, and the entirety of its temporal becoming, is now determined—which also means the event is now past. But a “being” past must somehow indicate a being past *now*, or a being past *for* this present moment: “When the event ends, it is past—no longer becoming, but become. *To be past is being past in the presence of a new becoming ...*”⁶³ The determined event, fully past for this present moment, continues to be relevant (present) to the present, even though it is no longer being formed: “If an event is past, it must now be past, and if the past event has any effect on a succeeding event, this effect happens now—not as a recollection of the past event as present, but as a condition for the particularity of what is presently becoming.”⁶⁴

If a present event is part of the tracing of a larger form (say, the third bar of a four-bar phrase), the virtual part of the phrase remains in the past because it is still in the process of completion. The present is “attached” to the past as the immanent edge of its incomplete form, which also means that the past is *with* the present as the finished part of its present becoming. On the other hand, if a present event *completes* the becoming of a past event, the virtual image or object is no longer in formation. And yet it is still there, still present to the present, not simply because it contributes to the particularity of the present, but because *something new can be made of it*. Past duration may be projected onto a *present* event as a virtual envelope or outline of the duration the present comes to occupy or fill (actualize, or differentiate). In this case the virtual image is no longer passing

⁶¹ Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, p. 72.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 93; emphasis in original.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74–5, italics mine.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

from the present to the past/future, but from the past/future to the present. So the cleaved virtual object (duration) also has two distinct modes of action; one, where the image expands *into* future and past (accumulating duration, or differentiation), the other, where the image contracts *out of* future and past (actualizing duration, or differentiation). These diverging series constitute dependent dimensions or facets of a shattered virtual image; an image that is continuously splitting, expanding, and contracting. It is “cleaved or doubled into two virtual parts, one of which is always missing from the other ... It is ... a fragment, a shred, a remainder. It lacks its own identity.”⁶⁵

The circuit of the three temporal dimensions becomes much more profoundly linked or embedded as a whole process, since a singular event is simultaneously present to all three dimensions at once. Every event is thus divided and distributed by a time which cleaves present being. Deleuze depicts the perpetual divergence of becoming as “a fractured I, an I split from end to end by the form of time which runs through it ... Ideas swarm in the fracture, constantly emerging on its edges, ceaselessly coming out and going back, being composed in a thousand different manners.”⁶⁶ This primary divergence founds the crystal of time, split into “two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past ... time consists of this split, and it is this, it is time, that we see in the crystal.”⁶⁷ Hasty’s theory of projection places the analytic window at just this splitting or crystallization point and can be fitted to Deleuze’s model. A crystal of *musical* time would not be the “product of an isolation of the present from past and future (memory and expectation)” as Hasty writes, but, rather, “the mark of the possibility for creative ‘moments’ of becoming. Where ‘now’ involves the relevancies of remote ‘pasts’ and the definite potentials of distant ‘futures,’ becoming is most particular and most spontaneous.”⁶⁸ Given concordances such as these, Deleuze’s crystal-image or three syntheses of time and Hasty’s theory of projection are complementary ideas that together offer an intimate perspective on the experience of musical time, and how it may be productively conceptualized for analysis.

Repetition: The Local, the Global

Clearly, I have only been able to vaguely outline an analytic orientation attuned to musical difference vis-à-vis Deleuze. Before we go any further in this task I believe it is important to question and, ultimately, undermine, the very coordinates which delimit the “proper” space for music theory. Focusing exclusively on the immanent processes of musical becoming places artificial limitations on what

⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 100–101.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 81.

⁶⁸ Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm*, p. 299.

constitutes these becomings, what connects them to others, and the more regional, global, and even cosmic becomings they form into. It is appropriate here to map the concept of the virtual-actual configuration onto thousands of larger musical situations, such as a communally understood virtual cycle like a Hindustani tala, a gong pattern in Balinese gamelan, or the 12-bar blues; how they are brought into actuality again and again with infinite variety; how communities of musicians and listeners coalesce around such modular musical fragments that are used to create ever new sound-inventions. Consider also the dynamic trajectories of repetition belonging to larger musical flows such as musical genres. “Genre” puts a name to the intensive molecular communication (repetition) of innumerable ideas and fragments passing in innumerable actual encounters from one musical becoming to another, coalescing into huge bodies of resonance (what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *plateaus*). These bodies of resonance, which are always in motion and always multiply-connected to other bodies and flows, consist in complex and fluid webs of repetitions; repetitions which spread out simultaneously without any organizing teleology or hierarchization. Repetitions form into millions of series which indicate a sheer potentiality of infinite possible orders or circuits; huge entangled systems of micro-resonances and echoes. These repetitions are dynamic because their consistency gives rise to the qualitative impression of musical worlds (which are not to be confused with identity, essence, or closure). Referred to a point of view, a complex, total qualitative effect is drawn off. The impression of style or genre, what allows us to, for example, place the approximate date and location of a particular piece of music, testifies to the vast virtual totality produced by innumerable actual creative-repetitive acts, and the virtual “residue” they produce in bodies.

Genre amounts to a porous totality at best. It is shot through with subterranean flows, noise, and rogue communications—what constitutes part of a genre’s chemistry but which is foreign, autonomous, arising elsewhere. Generally, these transient or unauthorized migrations are suppressed by scholars in order to support certain kinds of historical or ethnographic projects;⁶⁹ those trading in meta-dialectics (the identity of or opposition between cultural or stylistic categories). But even more insidious are the presuppositions of closed genres inherent to those analytic systems which are designed to apply to specific musical repertoires, such as Schenkerian analysis or “post-tonal” theory. Arguably, in the digital age the notion of stable, traceable, and localized genres which allows for such myopic analytic practices is quickly becoming a thing of the past. The internet conducts radical, untraceable global migrations; multiplying infinitely the ways musical

⁶⁹ An example of a scholarly project that suppresses such migrations is Robert Fink’s book on Minimalism, in which he dismisses the influence of African music on minimalist composers, calling it a “self-congratulatory historiographic trope” (p. 14). Fink’s analysis clearly relies on the *incubation* of minimalism from non-Western music in order to determine its dependency on American commercial culture. Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*, University of California Press, 2005.

flows are transmitted, molded, and formed into expressive plateaus. This reality merely reflects the underlying fluidity and hybrid nature that has always been music's condition of possibility in the first place.⁷⁰

Refusing to reduce away the incongruent lines, porous surfaces, and nomadic flows which make up musical genres affirms them as central and essential to what music is (or, rather, how it *becomes*). Perhaps it is precisely in music's power to migrate across space and time, cultures and epochs that we discover the true value and function of music, or any other form of expression that demonstrates this essential mobility and supra-contextual durability.

Let's consider a specific case. The *baan* is a xylophone found in a small region of Burkina Faso, in western Africa. It is played by three musicians at once, who often overlap their mallets at high speed. Julie Strand describes the music played on the *baan* among the Sambla people in Burkina Faso as exceptionally syncopated, with complex layers of interaction among the parts, a dense texture full of inherent melodies and rhythms—these characteristics to a greater depth and degree than any other xylophone tradition in West Africa.⁷¹ Another unique aspect of this intensely virtuosic music is its use of surrogate speech. That is, during performances, which are usually village dances which run non-stop throughout the night, the lead xylophonist communicates with participants exclusively by playing his instrument.

A fascinating aspect of this music is the distinction between the lines each musician plays and the actual texture of rhythms and melodies that is heard. Strand writes that “one hears melodies that emerge from the three parts played together ... but no single person plays these melodies. Rather, they are comprised of segments of different individual parts that fit together in a cross-rhythmic and cross-melodic fashion.”⁷² This phenomenon certainly has analogues in other musical traditions (such as Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie*). But unlike the conventional correlation between *playing* and *sounding* (body-machine/sound-machine), in Sambla music there is a consistent intermediary, an *abstract machine* that is formed in-between.⁷³ It is only in tuning into this complex, this intermediary, rather than the notes and rhythms of the discrete parts, that the dynamic, rhythmic whole is perceived.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Michael Tenzer writes that “[m]usic fusion is inexorable and something of an advance guard for actual genetic fusion: no human intolerance nor any reservations about propriety stopped Spanish melodies from eloping with West African rhythms to form rumba...” Michael Tenzer (ed.), *Analytic Studies in World Music*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 17.

⁷¹ Julie Strand, *The Sambla Xylophone: Tradition and Identity in Burkina Faso*, dissertation, Wesleyan University, 2008, chapter 4, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, chapter 4, p. 30.

⁷³ And, in fact, such in-betweenedness is locatable in any musical practice.

⁷⁴ Strand relates how she could only hear the music properly when she learned how to hear the composite process of the parts—that is, to straddle the music with her ears. See Strand, *The Sambla Xylophone*, chapter 4, p. 32.

And this whole, contrary to common conceptions of Western music (and the notational practice associated with it), is not defined by a hierarchy of rhythms grounded in a dominant pulse, but is rather a composite of many simultaneous pulses and rhythmic cycles, none of which form a “root structure” or a master unit of striation (such as a time signature). Strand calls this “multidimensional music,” where “a beat can be heard in many different places at once.”⁷⁵

This machine traverses more than the bodies of the musicians, the physical apparatuses of instruments, and the sounds they produce. It is more than the Sambla language that intersects them. There is another collection of bodies attached to this assemblage—namely, the dancers, whose movements complement and complete the whole. The extreme syncopation of the music leaves a sonic vacuum where additional beats occur, and these are filled out by the rhythms of the dance. Sambla *baan* music cannot be understood apart from the feet and bodies of dancers, who are not actually contributing *sound* to the music.⁷⁶

Clearly, musical instruments are carriers and modulators of musical practices and their transmission. As physical apparatuses or as technologies, musical instruments are conductors of their own kind of flow and flux, repeating, spreading, transforming through space and time.⁷⁷ In their reproductions and migrations from region to region and across epochs, generations of instruments produce deterritorialized lines of flight. We can trace, for instance, a radical multiplicity of instrument migrations and transformations amid the rich instrumental traditions of South Asia, originating in the Middle East, Europe, East Asia, and elsewhere.⁷⁸ These abstract lines testify to the thousands of instruments, makers and players, merchants and colonists, each of which has created its own, intertwined *actual* line, navigating its own turbulent becomings (be they musical, spiritual, economic, erotic, imperial, etc.)

The *Baan* is an example of the migrating and transformative passages of musical instruments. According to Strand, various incarnations of the xylophone appear “in a swath across the (African) continent, from Mozambique, through Central Africa, across West Africa to the coastlines of Senegal and Guinea.”⁷⁹ Its transformations and adaptations are often explained in relation to specific cultural factors. In the case of the *baan*, it was transferred from the neighboring Tusiya community, who also practiced a form of surrogate speech. But the tuning

⁷⁵ Ibid., chapter 4, p. 56.

⁷⁶ See Strand, *The Sambla Xylophone*, chapter 4, pp. 47–8; if the dance *is* audible, it is barely, and can hardly be heard above the din of the *baan* and its accompanying percussion instruments.

⁷⁷ Deleuze defines a vector as a “broken line which brings together singular points or remarkable moments at the peak of their intensity.” Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p. 218.

⁷⁸ See Allyn Miner’s article “Musical Instruments: Northern Area” in A. Arnold (ed.), the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music V: South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent*, Garland, 2000.

⁷⁹ Strand, *The Sambla Xylophone*, chapter 4, p. 5.

of the instrument was adjusted in order to correspond with the tonal inflections of the Sambla language.⁸⁰ Thus, we find this intricate web of sound, language, music, and migration all connected to what ostensibly appears to be a stable and isolated musical practice.

Just as with musical practices, musical instruments and their technologies traverse cultural and geographic spaces according to forces and intensities too complex and divergent to be captured in sensible, ordered relations within whatever genre or style they happen to have settled into. Since any given genre or style consists to a significant degree of musical and technological parts arising elsewhere, it is reasonable to believe that vagrancy, migration, importation, appropriation and the modular alchemies they cluster into are essential conditions of music. But musical flows also link up with other sorts of flows—political, social, biological, cosmic, and even *ecological*. The acoustemologist Steven Feld has spent decades mapping the sonic, social, and ecological becomings of a variety of musical practices.⁸¹ For Feld, what we call “music” belongs to much larger acoustic/sonorous landscapes cutting not only across people and cultures, but across environments and species as well. He shows how music of the Kaluli, a culture in Papua New Guinea, is inexorably linked to bird songs, their unique appearances, behaviors, and patterns of flight, together with the larger ecosystem they share. The soundscape of the Papuan rainforest includes the vocalizations of dozens of species of birds and frogs, the rhythmic humming of insects, the hissing of creeks and waterfalls—all of which flow directly into the cultural articulations of time, place, and action. “Kaluli vocal and instrumental musical sounds are inspired by, modeled upon and performed with these environmental sounds ... Here, ecological and aesthetic co-evolution means that the music of nature is the nature of music.”⁸² Feld’s research aims not only at overturning the traditional coordinates which segregate music from its environmental-sonorous context, humans from place and from other species, and so on, but also at refiguring the basic arrangement of knowledge itself: music is no longer a peripheral player in the pantheon of academia—doomed always to imitation and importation from math, sociology, linguistics, cognitive science, philosophy, and so forth—rather, it challenges the very claim of essential access to knowledge heretofore privileged to these modes of language and representation. He advocates for “[t]he potential of acoustic knowing, of sounding as a condition of and for knowing, of sonic presence and awareness as potent shaping forces in

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

⁸¹ Feld defines acoustemology as the study of “local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge and imagination, embodied in the culturally particular sense of place resounding...” Steven Feld, “Places Sensed, Senses Placed: Toward a Sensuous Epistemology of Environments” in D. Howes (ed.), *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, Berg, 2005, p. 179.

⁸² Steven Feld, “A Poetics of Place: Ecological and Aesthetic Co-evolution in a Papua New Guinea Rainforest Community,” in R. Ellen and K. Fukui (eds), *Redefining Nature: Ecology, Culture, and Domestication*, Berg, 1996.

how people make sense of experiences.”⁸³ Sound—unmediated by linguistic or structural systems—*itself* becomes a mediating system; a profoundly dynamic and expressive system tying together and freeing up diverse registers and domains of human experience.

The Virtual as Global Reservoir of Potential

To this point we have considered how music *as* repetition-processes can be traced and mapped through various domains of musical becomings (as musical affects, forms, stylistic plateaus, the flow of instruments, and the couplings of sounding-bodies and sounding-ecosystems). There is a more abstract but no less real level at which repetitions manifest *no* dynamic relation and between which there is no aesthetic teleology or the formation of an assemblage (other than the global assemblage, or, as Nancy puts it, the “global sonorous space”⁸⁴). These aleatoric, discontinuous repetitions are (abstractly) drawn together from different times, locations, styles, or genres. They have no apparent relation in either a teleological or topological distribution. For example, suppose that a particular melodic figure, three or four beats long with a distinctive melodic twist and rhythmic profile, exists, note for note, in both a Mozart sonata and a Qawwali devotional song. Perhaps a distinctive rhythmic pattern in Perotin happens also to be part of a rhythmic tala in North Indian classical music. Or a riff in a Robert Johnson tune turns up in the performance of an Arabic Maqam. Each of these couplings is conceivable. And, in fact, if a figure repeats between any of them, it is likely repeated in thousands of other places as well. Thinking of the repetition of more basic components, such as rhythmic motifs, melodic ornaments, sequential patterns, chord progressions, and so on, the possible connections (repetitions) between disparate genres and epochs explode. Granulate the musical components into repetitions of scales or scale fragments, chord qualities, interval qualities, meters, and even timbres (plucked or bowed strings, percussive sounds, reed and brass instruments, etc.) and we begin to deal with substantial overlap between genres and eras. Some of these musical synchronicities may be historically connected. Many, I suspect, crept up independently, especially rhythmic gestures and patterns, certain scales, and interval qualities. This vast, infinitely combinatorial virtual reservoir of basic musical components is important to consider not simply because so many musical styles and practices draw from it, but also because these building blocks, whatever the complexity be of what is made of them, constitute significant proportions of the actual material that makes up individual expressions. It is because of the infinite modularity and variability of these basic musical elements that it is entirely

⁸³ Feld, “Places Sensed, Senses Placed,” p. 185.

⁸⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. C. Mandell, Fordham University Press, 2007, p. 12; he describes the global sonorous space as being of an “extraordinarily mixed nature—popular and refined, religious and profane, coming from all continents at once...”

conceivable (and rather likely) that formations just above this level, strings of notes, rhythmic figures, and countless other possible combinations repeat independently by the thousands and thousands, cutting indiscriminately across genres.

There are many implications to be made with respect to genre, two of which I will comment on here. First, however distinctively singular works express or embody the qualities of a genre, there is a kind of “fading” of the genre as we move from a consideration of larger musical formations to the components and materials which make them up. The reach of a genre within its individuations is limited, dissolving into an autonomous zone of repetition—a zone we may consider a kind of primal precursor, accessed only through minoritarian acts of creation and imagination. Second, since this autonomous zone of repetition is an indeterminate (virtual) region in which musical expressions (regardless of genre) draw up musical elements and wield a degree of autonomy in their configuration (law of repetition), there is a significant sense in which musical expressions *escape* genre altogether. We saw already that autonomous migrations and flows compromise the borders of genres and styles; that they arise from outside the genre while at the same time come to merge with (and, in part, define) it. But a more radical notion is this autonomous, indeterminate region of repetition outside the entire regime of genres, or, rather, opening onto a meta-genre, the global soundscape proper. The infinite potential for repetitions to spring up independently across genres and epochs testifies to this autonomous reservoir of repetition-potential out of which musical clusters from the gesture to the genre emerge.

How does all this relate back to a minoritarian vision of music theory? In the broadest terms it is a challenge: a challenge to question and to subvert traditional boundaries of what is to be included and excluded from analysis, for the very reason that we can no longer neatly segregate what we call “the music,” even when we are restricting our lens to its most immanent, perceived sensation. It means developing *usefully vague* concepts, which are capable of stretching and contracting in order to accommodate a variety of hearings and repetitions of hearings (an irony: the more precise the analytic concept, its measure, the more imprecise its real application—real listening is messy). Another implication has to do with how theorists conceive of themselves in relation to music; or, rather, how theorists are to deconstruct this relation in order to *reconstruct* other relations. It is to break whatever distance is maintained between a process of analysis and processes of creation; to slip among creations, to create among them—to plunge deep into hearing: retrieving and extrapolating movements and connections; to map dynamic temporal processes, to enact and reenact these processes in sound, in thought, in concept, in sensation.

Modes of analysis, institutional epistemologies, habits of listening, composing-creating practices, and so on require reevaluation. For analysis, a minoritarian practice means questioning the categories inherent to the so-called “theorist’s tool-box”—that hodge-podge of techniques and concepts which themselves presuppose the dichotomy between tonal and post-tonal music or between Western music and *other*, and similar effectively ontological divisions, categories,

and hierarchies. It means experimenting with thought processes that attempt to penetrate musical becomings in all their wild interconnectedness. Everything is hybrid. Separate theories for separate repertoires by nature produce false problems and false solutions.⁸⁵ What is required is a decentered, global theory, a world music theory, based no longer in preestablished identities and categories, but in *process*, *connection*, and *improvisation*.⁸⁶ *Make genres drift*. Move with complex musical-cultural situations, whatever they may be, without limit.

For institutions, a minoritarian music theory means creating ways to break down curricular divisions so that, above the level of skills courses, students explore music along lines of increasing connections, rather than increasing specialization and isolation. In terms of musical listening, it means catching up conceptually to the already radical situation that technology has created: any music, in any order, in any context. It means developing radical ways of hearing—resisting (or unlearning) trained modes of listening-identification, so that sonorous musical repetition *creates* the becoming-music, with all of the attendant temporal-perceptual machinations involved (the reaching beyond the moment, the presence and qualities of other moments within this moment, and so on), rather than the becoming-music being processed (*de-vitalized*) through preordained, static categories and identities. Composers and improvisers, as I've suggested, have always been hybridists. Reaching over into something else, to make new combinations and connections (make a raga speak jazz, or vice versa), comes naturally to musicians. But for a minoritarian music theory hearing hybridity on the most immanent level is absolutely critical. Hybridity here becomes the processes of music *diverging from itself*, *reaching beyond itself*, *binding and unbinding itself*, and of *blending multiple moments fluidly and simultaneously*, which takes hybridity always to its most immediate, most fluid musical manifestation. It is this level which constitutes the condition that allows genre-level crossings to occur in the first place. And it is here where a minoritarian music theory discovers its material.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered a broad sampling of Deleuzian ideas about difference and how they might suggest the potential for a minoritarian music theoretic practice, one that crosses over traditional thresholds between disciplines (e.g., theory and ethnomusicology), subverts subjects and objects, and amalgamates different types and registers of musical becomings. At the outset, I stated that the goal of Deleuzian thought was oriented toward the quality and depth of thought,

⁸⁵ For the precise reason that whatever analytic system is grounded in a logic of exclusion creates and solves problems based on that exclusion—a kind of (negative) over-articulation or over-determination that then permeates the derived system.

⁸⁶ Michael Tenzer raises the possibility of a world music theory in *Analytic Studies in World Music*, p. 33.

rather than toward its utility. But from the point of view of music scholarship it is difficult to argue the merits and implications of Deleuzian difference without also arguing for its practical value. Why bother with Deleuze unless there is something to be gained from it?

One practical value of thinking musical difference through Deleuze is simply in the critique it launches with respect to more conventional modes of thinking difference. Showing the *limitations* of these systems and habits of thought is not only crucial to understanding their problems and fallacies but also to recognizing a vacuum, an array of blind spots that call for deeper and more creative thinking. The inadequacy of concepts creates a sense of urgency to find solutions, an awareness of the pitfalls to avoid, and the general thrust that new thought might be able to take.

As outlined in the opening section of this chapter, the primary problem with traditional concepts of difference is that they relate all difference to identity, both in the sense of difference being the *opposite* of identity as well as to the assumption of an identity *of* all difference itself. From the first proposition flows a corresponding demotion or collapse of all repetition into identity, the repetition of the same. Not only do repetitions become unified case by case, but there is also a general identity to all repetition in the world. We lose not only the particularity of repetition in various domains (repetition in one domain is equated with repetition in another), but also the particularity of each individual repetition in a series. In music this loss, which is usually cited as establishing unity or an identity, results in masking or forgetting all the dynamic play of differences that occur in musical repetition. Repeating textures, we are told, denote a lack of information. Nothing happens.

The second proposition, that of the identity of all difference, results in thinking difference by way of negative or striated schemas in which all difference is reduced to some common unit or to the simple negation of identity. Real difference is lost in the attempt to control or regulate (capture) it. Metric schemas such as pitch space and hierarchical notions of musical meter produce empty fields—the “emptiness” being infinitely divisible and distributed as different quantities or volumes of a general difference. All the qualitative diversity of tones in combination and differences of duration are swallowed up in the system, although theorists often imagine them somehow mysteriously being produced by the empty structural ensemble anyhow.

Another benefit of applying Deleuzian difference to music is that it opens up possibilities for thinking-hearing music in new ways. The radical Deleuzian insight that finds a common link between repetition and difference has the effect of perceiving musical textures as *only* difference, but a difference that draws itself according to an autogenetic principle of repetition. In effect, everything is repetition, we listen only to repetition—repetitions that form in multiple musical dimensions at once and which crosscut or resonate laterally among those dimensions. Lines are drawn in a diagonal space: the lines draw themselves just as they draw the space in which they are drawn.

But Deleuzian difference cannot be content with staying within those bounds that are implicitly drawn between, for example, musical processes and cultural processes. Deleuze effectually abandons these jurisdictions. Instead, we are encouraged to think of cultural processes as we might musical processes, replete with repetitions, seepages, noise, resonances, and *rhythm*. Likewise, we are encouraged to think of musical processes as populations, multiplicities, migrations, collectives, and supra-subjectivities. And ultimately these processes are all linked together. Segregating people from music from instruments from culture from ecosystem is pure artifice. There is no segregation, only positive flows and forces in a vast, global system of resonance.

Finally, Deleuzian difference offers several paths toward positive analytic techniques. In this chapter I have focused especially on the Bergsonian-Deleuzian concept of the virtual. I proposed that we can think virtual-actual relations as *real* processes in music. In thinking musical time in successive “quasi-instantaneous” moments, a virtual landscape can be exploded, analyzed, and tracked over time. In the virtual we find a technical approach to thinking musical time whereby the rich temporal depths of music, completely obscured by traditional notation (which collapses time to an all-at-once spatial representation), become accessible to a different kind of thought; a thought that is fully in contact with music as a *process* rather than as a static *product*. There are surely other possibilities, but to me the virtual is the most promising and exciting possibility for rendering specific, usable techniques for analyzing music in a Deleuzian spirit.

My last point is this. Thinking musical difference is as much a process of dismantling obstructions as it is of finding ways of integrating the sonorous into thought. To animate sound in thought, sound *qua* thought, sound *as* thought, is above all an exercise in imagination.

While it is thought which must explore the virtual down to the ground of its repetitions, it is imagination which must grasp the process of actualization from the point of view of these echoes or reprises. It is imagination which crosses domains, orders, and levels, knocking down the partitions coextensive with the world, guiding our bodies and inspiring our souls, grasping the unity of mind and nature; a larval consciousness which moves endlessly from science to dream and back again.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 220.

Chapter 3

A Deleuzian Noise/Excavating the Body of Abstract Sound

Sean Higgins

Noise is difficult to pin down precisely because it is that which evades conceptualization. Douglas Kahn puts it elegantly in his book *Noise, Water, Meat*, defining “noise” as “that constant grating sound generated by the movement between the abstract and the empirical. It need not be loud, for it can go unheard even in the most intense communication.”¹ Noise is the empirical body of abstract information, that which both grounds and confounds the transmission of a signal: the buzzing of a guitar string, the humming of a phone line, the particular quality and register of a person’s voice. At the extreme limits of abstraction, this noise is what is suppressed—the guitar noise is virtually irrelevant to the pitch it plays, the humming of the phone line and the quality of the voice speaking are virtually irrelevant to the words spoken. On the other hand, Kahn follows Michel Serres on the point that “at the extreme limits of empiricism, meaning is totally plunged into noise.”² How then to communicate sonic noise itself, if to define noise is to abstract a concept of noise *from* an empirical ground, or from the noise of noise?

Kahn implicitly casts the issue in the terms of information theory, defining sonic noise as the negative term relative to a certain definition of information predicated on the possibility of delivering a static, consistent signal. When such a signal has been decided upon in advance, noise becomes nothing more than interference, or *not* signal, e.g. music and *not* music, sound and *not* sound.³ To Kahn, the attempt to conceptualize noise had made noise itself into a signal, an abstracted concept, silent and transcendental—to speak of sonic noise had been to cleave noise from real, empirical sound. He therefore sets out to bring noise “to bear on noise,” to excavate that which is suppressed in the conceptualization of noise. In his work,

¹ Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, The MIT Press, 1999, p. 25.

² Serres, “Platonic Dialogue,” in *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosopher*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, quoted in Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, p. 25.

³ For a lucid description of the debate over the definition of “information” in information theory, see Chapter 3 of N. Katherine Hayles’ *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, Chicago University Press, 1999.

the de-noising of noise stands as the figure of the suppression of the “*specifics of sound*,” a thing “done to sound that most often goes unheard.”⁴

By putting the issue in these terms, Kahn’s work acts as a corrective to a tradition that tends to conceptualize a category of abstract “noises” in lieu of *noise*. It is the first step toward defining sonic noise in differential terms that avoids reducing real sound to a silent abstract concept. In most cases sonic noise has been conceptualized from within a musical regime—“noises” are identified and then incorporated into music, and thus the noise aspect of these “noises” has been suppressed. A differential sonic noise would be more than, for instance, a composed noise—noise still in the service of a masterful, aesthetic whole. It would exceed the musically tuned clatter and blasts of machines of industry and war such as Russolo’s *intonarumori*, or Varèse’s sirens.

This chapter seeks to add to Kahn’s corrective in a manner similar to Henry Cowell’s deconstruction of the opposition of noise and music. Inverting Russolo’s assertion of a pitch, or tone, in every noise, Cowell asserts noise as an element of even the purest tones. Noise is not only inescapably present to all music, but to all sound, as even a pure tone from a laboratory is likely to reach the ear having been “corrupted by resonances picked up upon the way.”⁵ This corruption is the result of the empirical circumstances through which sound must resound. A sonic signal is thus inseparable from and grounded in this noise.⁶

Such is the problem of an abstract structural model aimed at signal recognition: it defines noise as its outside—as corruption or non-signal—and thus fails to account for its signal’s immanence to a more essential noise. Thus the buzzing of the guitar string is suppressed as noise in a model that would ideally extract a pitch without timbre, an infinitely exquisite tone. Alternatively, this chapter aims to define noise in relation to structural models in general, as the absolute difference of empirically resounding sound that must be suppressed in order to abstract static signal, constitutive of both the basis of sonic recognition by a model and that model’s blank spot, what it absolutely cannot recognize.⁷ If noise has previously been defined in the terms of a static recognizable signal, the corrective must define it in terms of the ground of that recognizable signal, the absolute difference of empirical sound.⁸

⁴ Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, p. 25.

⁵ Henry Cowell, “The Joys of Noise,” in C. Cox and D. Warner (eds), *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum International Group, 2004, p. 23.

⁶ As Jean-Luc Nancy develops sound in *Listening* (Fordham University Press, 2007) a sound “resounds, that is, it re-emits itself while still actually ‘sounding,’ which is already ‘re-sounding’ since that’s nothing but referring back itself.”

⁷ See Deleuze’s “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, Semiotext(e), 2003, pp. 170–92.

⁸ Even John Cage’s work with “Silence” has not raised this distinction, developing the unintentional or indeterminate rather than the unrecognizable. See Cage’s *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, Wesleyan University Press, 1973.

In order to escape this structural bind, this chapter will work in the register of a listener's engagement with empirical sound in which all models of listening are deployed, the only position from which one can find their blank spots. In this register the ground or *noise* will be the absolute difference of empirically resounding sound as given⁹ to the listener's senses,¹⁰ and the *signal* will be that which the listener may recognize through the application of a model of listening. Noise is the absolute difference of empirical sound in excess of sound a listener may arrest by any model of listening.¹¹

Gilles Deleuze provides a philosophical framework from which such a differential sonic noise may be extracted, particularly in his book *Difference and Repetition*.¹² For the purposes of this chapter, I intend to use Deleuze's analysis therein of "The Image of Thought" as a conceptual outline for rethinking the noise/signal binary. Deleuze's critique of the Image of thought may be read as a development of the noisy blank spot suppressed in the Western metaphysical tradition's definition of "thought" as signal recognition—the difference of the empirical ground from which the transcendental or recognizable is abstracted. His alternative to this tradition is a diagram of thought couched in this very thing suppressed, the absolute difference of the empirical as given to a body's senses—the sound of each sound, the color of each color, and so on—rather than any transcendental principle derived from it. In his redefinition of thought, his engagement with the noisy sensory ground of abstracted information, Deleuze provides a route for excavating the body of sonic noise suppressed in its conceptualization.

Deleuze begins this critique by defining the Image of thought as the successful recognition of transcendental identity, the figure of the Same. This assumption of transcendental identity is based, he argues, in a subterranean assumption of common sense, or the agreement of the faculties of recognition (memory, listening, imagination, etc.) upon the identity of the object encountered. That is, the principle

⁹ This definition of sensory input is in following with Michel Serres'; see Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley's translators notes to Serres' *The Five Senses*, Continuum, 2009.

¹⁰ Aden Evens' "Sound Ideas" in *A Shock to Thought* (Routledge, 2002) also defines noise as the absolute difference of sound, but importantly posits this absolute difference as the "obscure reserve" of potential from which all articulated sound is drawn, thereby emphasizing expression while treating the listener as essentially receptive, and neglecting to develop the measure of a body's engagement with sonic difference given to its senses.

¹¹ In this way it is closest in intent to Brian Eno's work with noise in ambient music, which plays at the hazy threshold between conscious recognition of music and sensory awareness of sound, as the sound given to the senses in both Eno's work and this paper grounds and exceeds recognition by the listener. Noise will take a character of indistinctness, "an atmosphere or a surrounding influence: a tint" of difference in excess of recognizable signal. See the liner notes to Eno's *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* (Ambient) or his interview "Aurora Musicalis" in *Artforum* (summer 1996).

¹² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Continuum International Group, 2005, pp. 164–213.

of the recognizable static signal in the environment is based in the assumption of harmony in a recognizing subject.

The true act of thought, to Deleuze, is driven by the violence of that which is unrecognizable to common sense. Thought is based in the dissonance of the faculties, their difference from one another. In this diagram, there is no transcendental subject, only a body with empirical faculties that differ from one another in their grasping of the empirical as given to the senses. This thought is then the subject's negotiation of the dissonance between that which is given to a body's senses from its empirical environment and the object that the differing faculties of recognition attempt to discern from that given. The figure of this empirical given that perplexes recognition Deleuze terms a *sign*; the figure of thought that results from this given he terms an *idea*. Thought, to Deleuze, is the meeting of the dynamic sign with the dynamic idea, difference with difference and not stasis with stasis. It is, in other words, the diagram of a body's positive engagement with the difference of the empirical as communicated by interference.

If recast in the terms of noise, this definition of thought sketches for noise a dynamic diagram opposed to the conceptualization provided by any structural model which excises noise, and so one in which its outside empirical "interferences" of signal recognition are positively defined as a flow of productive difference rather than suppressed in favor of abstract harmony, accord. In this diagram, noise will be mapped to difference, which spreads from the absolute difference of the empirical through its interference of the body's attempt to recognize an identity within its sensory given into an act of thought. When noise successfully drives an act of thought, it is the intrusion of the outside into a system, forcing that system to break down and rebuild in an attempt to maintain stasis.¹³ This interference is a motor of creation—the transmission of noise stimulates the system to develop, to *become* different in spite of attempts to stay the same. Bodies engage with the empirical environment by means of noise, and the engagement is thought itself. *True thought is a transfer of noise.*

Noise is an essentially evasive limit concept, the ungraspable strangeness of the world as given to the senses. It echoes in this respect the work of Jacques Attali, who similarly played off of the forceful organization and impoverishment of sensory input. For instance, in a passage from Attali's *Noise*, he writes that "our science has always desired to monitor, measure, abstract, and castrate meaning, forgetting that life is full of noise and death alone is silent."¹⁴ The phrase "les sens," here mistranslated as "meaning," should instead be translated as "our senses."

¹³ In this way, Deleuze's thought shows important consonances with thinkers of autopoiesis and systems theory such as Francisco Varela, Humberto Maturana, and Niklas Luhmann. For a description of the overlap between Deleuze and Guattari's "Refrain" and autopoietic principles, see Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, Routledge, 2003, pp. 66–9.

¹⁴ Jacques Attali, *Noise*, trans. B. Massumi, Theory and History of Literature Vol. 16, Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 3.

Attali and Deleuze both position the true ground of lived experience and receipt of information in the noisy life of the senses rather than recognizable significance, both find death in the sensory silence of a closed model of abstraction.

So the manner in which this paper extracts sonic “noise” from Deleuze is roughly consonant with Attali’s “noise,” but in the register of the body’s engagement with the empirical rather than the social, economical, or political. This noise, similar to Attali’s, is the purely sensory, a motor of development, though strictly an unknown quantity and not a prophetic one. Music, what Attali calls the “organization of noise,”¹⁵ is in this reading a model of listening for recognition of sonic signal through the suppression or organization of empirical difference as given to the senses. That is, music is what can be recognized, and noise is what can only be sensed. Sonic noise is the absolute difference, otherness, strangeness of each empirical sonic event rubbing up against the stasis of the abstract model trained to recognize them—the transmission of difference from the empirical world into the body through the senses, the ground of thought in that body, and the motor of a model’s development. This noise is a violent interference when it gains attention, but most often goes unnoticed as an indistinct sonic tint.

This chapter will follow the extraction of noise from Deleuze with a description of artists who work with the empirical noise of aesthetic sound. This description will develop in the terms of challenges presented by new technologies to the abstract model of music, involving the Italian Futurists, *musique concrète*, and general aesthetic uses of phonography, but specifically the work of the artists Alvin Lucier, Stephan Mathieu, and Rhys Chatham, who have succeeded in (mis)using technology to make a noise unavoidable to the listener, raising a Deleuzian sign and compelling an act of thought. The noise is sound’s empirical mediation; its body, the signature of each sonic event’s absolute difference that has haunted musical treatments of empirical sound since humans believed in the music of the spheres. They have, in other words, crafted a diagram for the use of noise in sound instead of subduing it to the form of the Same.

The Image of Thought is Not Thinking

Noise is at the very crux of what Susan Stewart calls “the struggle between reason and sensuality,”¹⁶ that constant grating between the abstract and the empirical. Gilles Deleuze’s rigorous critique of “The Image of Thought” has profound consequences when coupled with a general notion of sonic signal and noise, reason and sensuality. Placing thinking in opposition to recognition and the Kantian concept of the clean, agreeable functioning of the faculties called “common sense,” Deleuze’s work can

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁶ Susan Stewart, “Remembering the Senses,” in D. Howes (ed.), *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, Berg, 2005, p. 61.

be shown to perform a radical version of the signal/noise argument that runs like a vein through musical and philosophical discussions of sound.

Deleuze places the dogmatic Image of thought in the silenced realm of the transcendental and abstract, and thus has thought caged by its own Image, unable to truly begin and locked in a loop, attempting to repeat the Same rather than rediscovering difference. As a result, it stands in for the terms placed in opposition to noise—signal, pure tone, silence, music, “sound,” and so forth. While the Image of thought is concerned only with recognition of objective identities and the reproduction of its own models for doing so, Deleuze would like to reserve the name of thinking for an act less complacent, a reaction to an encounter with the noise of the empirical world, the unhinging of the faculties of recognition. The outside conditions of an act of thinking are those of empirical noise communicated by the senses, a noise that also constitutes the act of thought in the body. A Deleuzian noise is not a meaningless, obfuscating miasma but a rich, multivalent cloud of potential.

Deleuze begins his project by defining the “Image of thought” as a universal good sense or “the natural exercise of a faculty” with an “affinity for the true.”¹⁷ Everybody naturally thinks and so everybody knows what it is to think. Here the Image of thought betrays its dogmatism, because a thought as “universal” sense¹⁸ falls into a trap as the most general sort of representation. Believed to be naturally inclined toward truth, it finds always the result proposed in its original formulation. The “thinker” repeats always what he or she already knew, rediscovers the shape of what he or she predicts. It matters little toward what thought is directed, “as long as thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudices everything.”¹⁹ The result of thought is self-evident from the inception: this sound will be music; that one will be noise.

The Image of thought, when running up against its givens, takes the form of a transcendental model seeking to re-present transcendental principles, the form of recognition. “Recognition may be defined by the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined, or conceived...”²⁰ One recognizes when each faculty relates its given to the “identity” of the object. The model examines an object in the terms of each faculty, and then recognizes (re-presents) an identity (transcendental principle) assured by the supposed consonance of those faculties.

It has the character of a wild spread of notes resolving to a tonic chord, settling tension and reasserting a sense of unity. Music is such a model of the Image of thought, seeking to re-present transcendental principles by defining the manner in which a body listens to the sonic event given to its senses. In musical listening, the senses are given a sonic event and within the predetermined model the subject

¹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 166.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

recognizes it as a general²¹ sonic object, such as a major triad, by aligning that given with what it remembers, conceives of, imagines... to be musical. The sonic object's identity is secured in advance by the musical model.

"The form of identity in objects relies upon a ground in the unity of all the faculties in the subject, of which all the other faculties must be modalities."²² This unity of the thinking self is, in Kantian terms, common sense, or the a priori condition for recognition by whatever model of recognition—musical, moral, political... Because this self is unified, it "grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a supposed Same object."²³ Transcendental identity in the subject aligns with identity in the object—for example, what is heard must also be remembered, imagined, and so on—without any dissonance between the faculties. Musical harmony is grounded in the harmony of the subject's faculties.

The Image of thought thus holds thought to be upright and unified, the alignment of the identity of the self with the identity of the object in the form of the Same. Good sense equalizes the self—everybody can think; common sense equalizes the object—everybody's faculties operate in a harmonious fashion to recognize a universal objective identity. The image complacently recognizes the same over and again. Deleuze notes the precipitation of postulates: "the image of a naturally upright thought, which knows what it means to think; the pure element of common sense which follows from this "in principle;" and the model of recognition—or rather, the form of recognition—which follows in turn."²⁴ Nothing is *becoming*, both subjects and objects simply *are*.

The Image of thought is clearly characterized as the negotiation of noise/difference in order to recognize transcendental Sameness in both self and environment. Recognition, as a transcendental model, requires "a certain distribution of the empirical and the transcendental."²⁵ In Platonic terms, we recognize a chair as a chair, though it is a lesser iteration of the ideal form of chair, because it holds sufficient indication of that form. Extra, subjective, or contradictory indication—in other words, noise—is suppressed. The Image of thought limits the faculties of recognition, putting each given in the service of a universalized form, principle, model, or Truth. It privileges elegant conceptual silence to the wild roar of actual sensory experience. It would carry no pragmatic value if it did not rely on the detached suppression of empirical difference.

Music, a model of recognition, requires a particular type of listening to the sonic events given to the senses, as they must be communicable to the other faculties and recognized as music under a unified common sense. Everything else

²¹ The general is defined as "a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another." *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

is noise—the a-musical is suppressed. What is listened to or sounded by each body is equalized in its abstraction to universally recognizable sonic object, though it is literally impossible for anybody to play a chord on a musical instrument the same way twice due to subtle changes in acoustics, pressure applied, attack, and so on. Music reveals itself as a particular aesthetic model of sonic recognition that limits the interference of the senses' awareness of these differences under the dogmatism of the Image of thought. It organizes or overpowers empirical noise in favor of abstraction. "Ah, yes, this is Beethoven."

It is all too banal to be thinking. Yes, if these recognitions are thinking, then thinking is easy and common. It can be taught, remembered, it is necessary. "This is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, Good morning Theaetetus."²⁶ It is practicality of the most general sort, the ordering of things. "But who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts, and that when we recognize, we are thinking?"²⁷ Or that when we recognize a given sonic event as music that we are thinking of aesthetic sound? Deleuze would reserve the title of "thinking" for a "stranger and more compromising adventure,"²⁸ one in which difference scrambles the transcendental operation of recognition. He would, in other words, reserve thought for that noisy grating between the pristine abstract and the messy empirical.

Noise is Unrecognizable

This Image of thought has thought bound by its presuppositions, doomed only to recognize. Deleuze's own definition of thought finds its conditions in a hostile attack brought on the Image of thought—the noise brought on the noise it subdues. To have one's attention turned to the fact that to recognize is not to think is already to open oneself to the possibility of thought. The conditions of an act of thought are furnished by means of a critique of the implicit presupposition of the Image of thought—the unity of the faculties' response to that which is given to the senses from the noisy world; in other words, the transcendental subject.

Deleuze critiques Kant as concealing important fissures while synthesizing the model of recognition in the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant constructs the transcendental principle by first measuring the *different* contributions of the faculties. That is, the elementary stage of the model of recognition is a body's empirical awareness as communicated through its sensory givens, not a unified subject or object. From these "empirical acts of a psychological consciousness"²⁹ Kant assumes the apprehension of a universally recognized object, then retroactively assumes the unity of the faculties within the recognizing subject.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 171.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

The presupposition of the unified consciousness and transcendental identity of the object are mutually synthesized through the suppression of the natural noise between the different operative capacities of each faculty as communicated by the noise of the empirical. This subjective harmony presupposed to bless the solution of all problems is itself the solution of another better-hidden problem sleeping at the root of most philosophical discourse. All models of recognition, to Deleuze, rest on this presupposition of unity, or the Same.

Recognition, supposed to be the simple, natural alignment of the Same with itself, requires theoretical construction, noise abatement. For Deleuze, an act of thought is not an ingenious consonance finessed from a resemblance of the faculties and disguised as their harmonious agreement. To expose the construction of recognition is already to assert that thinking rests in the empirical awareness proper to each individual faculty and their essential difference from one another. For example, when listening for musical sound, one will always encounter sonic information that is available to listening but unrepresentable to the other faculties, unrecognizable within the musical model applied to it. The listener is trained to codify it as a-musical noise, a mistake in performance, the mistuning of an instrument, an irregularity. Whereas this noise communicated to the faculties is generally suppressed as interference, it is actually the very ground of the thought of sound.

The excavation of the noise elided in the construction of the model of recognition is the first antipathy that Deleuze brings to bear on the Image of thought. Thinking is neither a recognition nor recognizable, neither a clear representation nor an identifiable object. "As though thought could only begin to think, and continually begin again, only when liberated from the Image and its postulates."³⁰ It is liberation "even at the cost of the greatest destructions and the greatest demoralizations, and a philosophical obstinacy with no ally but paradox."³¹ To think of sound one must engage not with music but with the strangeness of sonic noise.³²

The act of thought itself echoes the form of this acerbic criticism, is a shocking of the body from complacency to thought just as Deleuze shocks the Image. He refers to Plato, who distinguishes two kinds of things, "those which do not disturb thought ... and those which *force* us to think. The first are objects of recognition: thought and all its faculties may be employed fully therein, thought may busy itself thereby, but such employment and activity have nothing to do with thinking."³³ The Image of thought thereby recognizes its own image the more it recognizes objects. The critique or "destructions" brought to bear on the first kind of thing will open thinking to the hidden presence of the second, the noise organized and

³⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., pg 181. He follows Heidegger, asserting that thinking is powerless insofar as it assumes its own good nature: "it will think nothing at all but remain a prisoner to opinion, frozen in an abstract possibility."

³³ Ibid., p. 175.

suppressed within the model of recognition. This is where Deleuze's language most veers into the established rhetoric of noise.

Thinking is not the thinking of concepts or the forecast of probabilities or categories but entry into a dynamic relationship with that which attacks with the claws of absolute necessity, that which is borne,

in other words, of an original violence brought upon thought; the claws of a strangeness or enmity which alone would awaken thought from its natural stupor or eternal possibility: there is only involuntary thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misosophy.³⁴

This thought-as-violence does not ensure its own necessity within a model, but instead "raise[s] up" and forces the "absolute necessity of an act of thought." A body that cannot recognize the strange, the violent, the confusing, a noise, must then think.

In the critique of the Image one finds also a critique of the conception of signal, pure tone, "sound," and music as silent transcendental states. Noise is always present to the senses and faculties; it has only been suppressed by an adherence to a model of recognition. One finds also a diagram of noise as difference—the effect of the empirical material of sound as given to the senses, communicated by the faculties, and unrecognizable by common sense, and so the conditions of a thought borne from the violence of that encounter. It is a different thought, the engagement with different, empirical sound rather than ideal sound.

Thinking is compelled by encounters that confound it; it is an act of grasping rather than an apprehension. The thinking of sound is compelled by the spectral presence of noise, the insistence of the strange material of sound that will not be properly suppressed by any model. The conditions of a sound thought arise in concert with the act of thought itself: recognition and the faculties drown in noise. Outside noise is met with inside noise.

The Dissonant Faculties, the Noisy Idea

Deleuze's act of thought is the thinking of a dynamic field of relations, an immersion into the multivalent noise of a different sort of empiricism. The encounter with empirical difference forces bodily awareness of the dissonance of the faculties, disrupting the illusion of the transcendental ideal of their consonance. Thought is the unhinging of the faculties, a mad becoming, or a becoming-mad rather than resolution.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 176.

Daniel Smith expands on this cursorily treated, dissonant aspect of Deleuze's theory of the faculties and the sensible.³⁵ It is rooted in Kant's analytic of the sublime, which sets the conditions for the synthesis of harmonious common sense in the critiques. It is in this experience of the sublime that Deleuze finds an instructive example of a faculty in its transcendental exercise, or, in the area of apprehension that is precisely and uniquely its own and so unrepresentable to the other faculties, that which the others may only grasp as noise. This transcendental exercise sets the basic conditions of the differential noise communicated between the faculties that Kant suppresses in synthesizing the model of recognition; the noise Deleuze means to excavate in order to build his own model.

In Kant's description of the sublime, the faculty of imagination reaches its limit when confronted with the unfathomable spectacle of a sublime experience (the noise and spectacle of an avalanche); the faculty of reason drives the imagination to attempt comprehension of the experience in its entirety so that all the faculties might harmonize in the recognition of an objective identity. Imagination, since it cannot comprehend the sheer immensity of the sublime experience, is forced to its limit. The imagination grasps, by running up against its own limit, what can be reasoned (an avalanche) but cannot be imagined (the entirety of its constitution).³⁶

It is in this way that imagination knows also what can *only* be imagined. Having confronted its own limit, imagination is now presented with the undeniable fact of that which it cannot imagine, cannot re-present to the other faculties. "It represents to itself the fact that the unrepresentable exists, *and that it exists in sensible nature*."³⁷ This limit "is that which can *only* be imagined, that which is accessible to the imagination *only* in its transcendental exercise."³⁸ Only imagination can know the limit of imagination by understanding the extent to which the other faculties exceed its own reach.

Smith argues that for Deleuze this figure of a transcendental exercise reveals the basic manner in which the faculties communicate. The noise of empirical difference presented to the faculties need not be sublime; but always ensures that they fray in the attempt to cohere on an objective identity. "The transcendental operation of the faculties is a properly paradoxical operation, opposed to their exercise under the rule of a common sense. In consequence, the harmony between the faculties can appear only in the form of a *discordant harmony*, since each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and divergence from the others."³⁹

³⁵ Daniel Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality," in P. Patton (ed.), *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Blackwell Critical Readers, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 29–34.

³⁶ I owe this explication to Smith's own lucid description of the Kantian sublime.

³⁷ Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation," p. 34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 183.

The most important of the faculties in this Deleuzian diagram of thought is the faculty of sensibility, sensibility being a precept of common sense that refers itself to “an object which may not only be experienced other than by sense, but may itself be attained by other faculties.”⁴⁰ This is the faculty that must be taken to its transcendental exercise in order to compel thought, because it operates under the assumption that all sensory information may be flawlessly communicated to the other faculties of common sense; it is the medium between the empirical world and the common sense operating under a model of recognition. The transcendental exercise of the faculty of sensibility, then, is that which can only be sensed, the basic engagement of a body with its own difference from its empirical environment.

With a diagram for the dissonance of the faculties, Deleuze maps the trajectory of the transmission of empirical noise through the subject. It begins with the empirical difference communicated by that which is given to the body’s senses, a figure of noise prior to the body’s attempt to extract an identity by means of the filtering mechanisms of recognition. This sensory given, this differential noise from the outside, is in Deleuze a “sign.” The primary characteristic of a sign “is that it can only be sensed,”⁴¹ but is not *sensible*. It is the object of the transcendental exercise of the faculty of sensibility, that which can *only* be sensed. It is the unwanted sibling of “that which bears directly on the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined, or conceived.”⁴² It cannot be recognized—by the logic of the communicating faculties, the sign is passed on to the other faculties as interfering noise.

Being insensible to sensibility but still given to the senses, the sign sabotages the faculty of sensibility by driving it to apprehend that which it cannot, and in the attempt sensibility learns that it cannot. This is how sensibility “finds itself before its own limit, the sign, and raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise: to the “nth” power. It reaches its limit when presented with the unrepresentability of what is beyond its limit. Sensibility, now able to grasp what other faculties cannot, cannot be finessed by common sense into consonance. This communication of this noise causes the other faculties to unhinge, and common sense frays, its “organs become metaphysical.”⁴³

Take un-anticipated dissonance within music—when an overwhelmingly noisy sound, a sign, is given to hearing, though it need not be loud, the faculty of sensibility may be driven to comprehend it in the terms of a musical model of recognition. In its inability to grasp the musical identity of the dissonant sonic event, sensibility presents to itself that which it cannot grasp but is still accessible to the senses. That is, sensibility, in this case through the mode of listening, is driven to its transcendental exercise by this dissonant noise, a sign that can only be sensed but not re-presented to the other faculties of recognition. The other

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 176.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

faculties are then taken to their transcendental exercises, attempting to map to the musical model of recognition the noise given to them. They enter into a discordant relationship attempting to identify the noise. This sonic sign is an unknown quantity to the faculties of recognition under the model of music.

The second character of the sign is: because it is that which can only be sensed, it “moves the soul, “perplexes” it—in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though the object of an encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem—as though it were a problem.”⁴⁴ The sign is violence against the faculty of sensibility that spreads to the other faculties, unhinging them, causing them to attempt to reconvene on the sign to extrapolate an identity from it. The faculties become productive; thought creates.

He draws an example of a path for this violence against common sense: a memory that cannot remember what cannot be re-presented to it by the faculty of sensibility thus finds its own limit in an attempt to remember what is empirically impossible to recall. Memory then reaches its own transcendental exercise. Thought, now attempting to synthesize a sensibility which has been taken to its “nth” power and a memory that has been taken to its “nth” power, and any other faculty taken to its “nth” power, finds its own transcendental exercise, that which can only be thought, now defined quite distinctly (insofar as it is indistinct) as that which thought grasps at but cannot reach. Thought is now in the realm of that which can only be thought, cannot be recognized, the figure of internal noise, the idea.

This violent sensory noise, the sign, is met with the noise raised by the communication of the fraying faculties. Not a consonance, but an idea, which is the principle of the only possible unity of the faculties as well as the true object of thought, a unity in dissonance, an inexhaustible diagram of differential relationships. It is a name that will be reserved for “instances which go from thought to sensibility and from sensibility to thought, capable of engendering in each case, according to their own order, the limit- or transcendent-object of each faculty.”⁴⁵ Ideas, unlike the Image of thought, have no good will but are united as a “para-sense which determines only the disjointed communication between disjointed faculties.”⁴⁶ An idea, the proper operation of a body struck by the sensory but not sensible, is a noise caused by the sensory noise of the real.

The noise of the faculties grating against one another attempting to recognize meets the sensory noise given the body from the outside. An idea is a new sensitivity to external and internal differentials. Where music would proscribe a model for easy recognition of the musical, an a-musical noise could engender a sonic idea unfit for such recognition: it is not expressed in terms of rhythm or harmony, only open-ended sonic diagrams. The proper sonic idea is not an abstraction that suppresses the empirical, but a diagram of sonic potential.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

It must be stressed that the sign and idea are a matter of attention. The sign, that which can only be sensed, can be filtered of noise and re-presented as a sensible identity that coincides with the givens of the other faculties and ensures recognition. Or, alternately, a sonic noise strikes the faculty of listening, conveying a violence that unhinges the tightly engineered mechanism of a common sense. Being sensory, this noise is always present and available, and haunts any identity even when that identity is accepted without question. The major triad, for instance, is only a controlled difference as the notes are not purely consonant; furthermore, the instrument on which such a triad is played colors the sonic event with accident in excess of the musical model.

The message is clear: a *sensible* identity recognized is an impoverishment of a noisy sign, even when the sign does not raise up with teeth and the shock of its own absolute necessity. The noise of sensory experience and the sonic object are suppressed in the recognition of easy musicality. The structural definitions of noise prove, retrospectively, to be the results of a severely limited calculus of listening inadequate for engagement with the fluid dynamics of sensory sound. *This* noise is the sensory ground from which the sensible identity is abstracted, “not a sensible being, but the being *of* the sensible.”⁴⁷ Whereas a sensible, recognizable identity is re-presentable to the other faculties, a sign indicates a cloud of potential vectors never properly exhaustible by sensibility. “What Deleuze calls a sign is therefore neither a recognizable object nor even a particular quality of an object, but constitutes the limit of the faculty of sensibility.”⁴⁸ Or: suppress sonic noise in each sound at sonic art’s peril. The potential for an idea is always present, but for the adequate listening, in the noise suppressed.

Music/Noise, Abstract/Empirical

A model of recognition applies transcendental models to the empirical in an attempt to clearly and neatly codify it and thus filter out any surplus sensory noise that might interfere with signal recognition. The Western tonal model is such a transcendental model, a specific abstraction of sound aimed at defining listening—a mode of sensibility—and thus also a language of acceptable sonic art. It has always suppressed the difference of sound—that is, the noise of sound’s mediation through empirical media—insofar as it conflicts with music’s status as an abstract language precisely articulated in regulated units of melody, harmony, or rhythm. Conditions in excess of its language or appropriative capacities are cast out as noise.

For the purposes of this argument, we will follow the trajectory of one particular technological development, phonography, and a subsequent artistic affront on the musical model of listening or recognition, *musique concrète*. We will thus give shape to a broader sense of the conditions necessary for a sonic art to present a sign

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 176.

⁴⁸ Smith, “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation,” p. 34.

and compel the idea of noise—or the absolute difference of sound’s resounding through empirical media—in its listeners. As sound is nothing but a resounding through media, we will subsequently see how a listener is led, by art, away from signal recognition and toward listening as engagement with the difference of all real sound.

The invention of sound recording technology offered one of the earlier challenges to this musical model of recognition, a chance for art to resurrect for the listener the empirical noise it had suppressed. Sound recording technologies were incapable of discerning between a noise and a sanctioned sound. This previously a-musical sonic material—that is, irregular, empirically mediated sound—which was now recordable, repeatable, and available for manipulation, finds a new purchase in the discourse of sonic art. This noise is given to the senses as a sign that is not sensible to a listening trained by a musical model of recognition. In this way it compels thought of the axiomatic music/noise divide, challenging the complacency epitomized by Henry Cowell’s stereotypical reviewer, who “writes ‘it is not music, but noise,’ [and] feels that all necessary comment has been made.”⁴⁹ Art was now free to deal with *sound* rather than the coding and ordering of musical *sounds*.

However, in the early treatment of recorded sound, the prevalent sonic model of recognition was displaced from the ideal abstract score to the ideal abstract sonic object. Where these early phonographic innovators excavated the noise of sound’s instrumental mediation as suppressed by tonal music theory, they hid another; the noise haunting recorded mediation in the attempt to perfect the infinite technological reproducibility of the sonic event. Sound-recording technologies were treated as a prosthetic faculty of sensibility,⁵⁰ as a series of “invisible data ducts,”⁵¹ or devices that reproduced sonic events for the listener without communicating the interference of their own empirical noise.

A sonic art that grasps the empirical noise of mediation, as promised by recording technology, requires artists to take this prosthetic faculty of sensibility to its transcendental exercise, to make it productive rather than reproductive. Only when a sonic medium, whether instrument or phonographic technology, has been made to give its unrecognizable empirical difference to the listener’s senses, when the medium’s interference with identifiable signal has become the signal itself,⁵² has sonic art arrived at a diagram for using the noise of sound’s empirical mediation. This noise, the sign, is given to the senses and met with the noise of

⁴⁹ Cowell, “The Joys of Noise,” p. 22.

⁵⁰ The concept of media as extensions of the senses has been developed in great detail by Marshall McLuhan, most prominently in his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, The MIT Press, 1994.

⁵¹ Robin MacKay defines the recording media of late capitalism as such in his excellent essay on recorded sound, “Wildstyle in Full Effect,” in K. Ansell-Pearson (ed.), *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer*, Routledge, 1997, p. 259.

⁵² Or, as McLuhan might say, once the medium has become the message.

thought, an idea, a listener grasping at a diagram for the potential and absolute difference of sonic mediation. Through this process the listener learns to abandon dogmatic abstract models of recognition and listen to the dynamic resounding of real, sensory sound.

To begin with the musical model of recognition—a certain level of noise has always been tolerated in the mediation of the language of music, which is defined here as a suppression or organization of empirical noise as given to the senses. This organized noise music presents is, however, positioned as a profaning of a pure, transcendental concept. Percussion is a prime example, tolerated insofar as it locks in a regulated rhythm; though a more precise embodiment of a musical noise is instrumental timbre, which is not in fact a pure, regular oscillation as music and acoustic science have, in the past, held:

Consider the sound of a violin. Part of the vibrations producing the sound are periodic, as can be shown by a harmonic analyzer. But others are not—they do not *constantly re-form the same pattern, and consequently must be considered noise.*⁵³

The woodwind, brass, strings, percussion, and so on are all more or less accepted instruments for the mediation of this musical image to be found closest to its ideal state as silent scribbles on staff paper. *This* piano may be the interfering empirical mediation of Beethoven's melody, but the melody itself transcends any performance, instrumentation, or situation. The transcendental ideal of Western tonal music rests in the silenced realm of its abstract language, separated insofar as it can be from any empirical noise, and thus represents a pure recognizable identity, the repetition of the Same, the dream of the musicologist.⁵⁴ It is a music that is already less than itself as soon as it is performed and given to the senses in a world marked by empirical difference.

So perhaps nothing complicated music's model of recognition for aesthetic sound as much as the invention of sound recording technology. Its logic complicates that of the abstract ideal; it folds the score into its empirically situated sounds. Even when recording tonal music, it registers only empirically situated tonality, the timbre of *that*⁵⁵ piano with a mistuned middle C, colored by the acoustics of *this* room, on *that* hour, in which Beethoven is played. Sound recording technology registers any sonic vibration that disturbs its mechanism, lacking the capacity for either recognition of an abstract musical identity or the suppression of noise. It registers sound in the same fashion a body's senses do prior to the imposition of identity by a model of recognition—defined only by the physical limits of its mechanism. In other words, it holds the potential for raising thought of sound in a

⁵³ Cowell, "The Joys of Noise," p. 23.

⁵⁴ For a lucid description of musicology's general preference for analysis of the abstract to the analysis of performed music, see Carolyn Abbate's "Music – Drastic or Gnostic?" *Critical Inquiry* 30 (Spring 2004).

⁵⁵ A Deleuzian event.

listener due to its ability to re-present the accident and noise, the manner in which the original sonic event differed from the musical image. It is, as McLuhan would say, an extension of our senses.

In its ideal form, it is a system of sound codification with a strictly empirical language—a record of all the differences and disturbances available to a listening device, and no longer a “notation system that enabled the transcription of clear sounds separated from the world’s noise.”⁵⁶ Not the record of a silent score’s profane repetition, but a transcription, a writing of all sonic events within a particular temporal and spatial frame. Phonographic technology records every empirical characteristic of sound it is sensitive enough to register. Where music finds an analog in written language, recorded sound aligns with the accidental, incidental speaking voice, not only the cracks and dips in speech but also the shouts and cries that cannot be notated. Sound recording technology re-presents the difference, the noise of each sonic event rather than the abstracted image intended by a tonal music, and carries in its language and logic all the empirical excess and violence denied by a musical model. Where music might have labored to transcribe birdsong by coding it to pitch or simulate the thunderous rattle of a train with a percussive cacophony, now those sounds could be (more or less simply) transcribed to a material memory and then manipulated. At first, it must have all seemed liked meaningless noise to a listening trained by music.

This potential for redirecting listening toward real sound, however, has been arrested by the inclination to use the technology as if it were an “invisible data duct” of signal, a noiseless extension of the senses. The recording of empirical sound is inextricably coupled with the development of sophisticated techniques for the editing and processing of that sound so as to optimize and “master” it for listening. This is accomplished through microphone placement, selection and splicing of takes, falsification of room acoustics, stereo separation, and so forth. Phonography, in the very moment it was first used to present a real sonic event, edited sound while minimizing its role in doing so. The sonic medium was treated by phonography in the same manner the musical instrument was by music.

The sonic art making use of recorded sound is, as such, not an unqualified improvement over the musical model—though challenging music, this new sonic art often merely displaced the old model for recognizing sonic objects with a new model, one that suppressed all but the useful noises of its mediation and has treated all sonic media as a prosthetic faculty of sensibility that re-presents a real, identifiable signal without coloring it in the process. Even when used to present the noise of the musical instrument to a listener, phonography suppressed its own instrument of mediation. However, the technological sonic medium carries, as much as the empirical situation of an abstract tonal score, the purely sensory surplus of the empirical over any abstract model of recognition, from the meaningless, noisy humming of a telephone or the hiss and pop of an old record

⁵⁶ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. G. Winthrop-Young and M. Wutz, Writing Science, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 24.

to the subtle cues hidden in the material of edited sound. It is, again, a matter of attention. It too can be exploited by another sonic art in order to compel an act of thought directed at an idea of this empirical noise and the training of a listening calibrated to the differential conditions of sound's mediation.

***Musique Concrète*, Musical Noise**

An early artistic use of phonographic technology, *musique concrète*, “concrete music,” as practiced and co-invented by Pierre Schaeffer, is directed at a vocabulary of sonic expression opposed to the wild transcendentalisms of the “*musique abstraite*” against which it positions itself, constructing music from concrete sounds that precede their organization rather than vice versa. Schaeffer’s approach to sound was that of an engineer—he organized empirical, recorded sonic events; he did not orchestrate the interplay of transcendental tonal rules that are then more or less perfectly situated in reality by instruments. He utilized recording technology to organize from the noisy bottom upward rather than from a transcendental music downward. It is a direct challenge to the musical aesthetic model.

Musique concrète developed music a step further than the Italian Futurists had with the “art of noises.” Luigi Russolo had called for the organization of sounds according to the existing tonal language, expanding the circle of noises organized and tolerated by the musical model of recognition—“*the rhythmic motions of a noise are infinite. There always exists, as with a pitch, a predominant rhythm.*”⁵⁷ It introduced an expanded timbral vocabulary to music, and so a certain level of noise, but not any idea of a sonic art of noise. In the age of clattering and booming machines, music needed to embrace the shock both to tame it and reignite musicality with new excitement. Noise was incorporated as an impotent version of itself, subjected to a static conceptual framework of timbre to become more of the Same, grist for the musical mill rather than a radical productive difference that could give to the models of listening an even greater shock.

The organizational tactics of *musique concrète*, however, were able to take advantage of not just the sonics of new machines, but also the manipulability of real sonic events made possible by new machines. By chopping and splicing the material upon which a sonic event was recorded, its matter could be organized and re-articulated according to the structures of music, in terms of harmony and rhythm. It also held the radical potential for sonic expression in new forms and structures previously cordoned off as irregular or extramusical. A *musique concrète* piece can be organized by relationships of timbre, spatial positioning, or duration; one could even cut and rearrange parts of single sonic events. It is a language that could potentially organize a sonic event by any of its irregular,

⁵⁷ Luigi Russolo, “The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto,” trans. Barclay Brown, in C. Cox and D. Warner (eds), *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum International Group, 2004, p. 13.

empirical characteristics, since sound no longer disappeared when musicians went silent. *Musique concrète* signaled the potential for a language of sonic art tuned to the empirical specifics, the noise of sound, rather than its degree of adherence to a strict musical model of recognition. It was a new art of noise, even more attuned to productive difference and with greater potential for exploiting it to instruct its listeners in a new calculus of listening eschewing instantaneous recognition of musical sonic identities.

Schaeffer's first piece, *Étude aux chemins de fer*, and his largest success in this respect, is little more than the manipulation of recordings of trains passing, barely chopped up and interspersed—alternating whistle and chug. Though it can be noted on first hearing that certain categories of sonic events repeat themselves, the organizational tactics remain indistinct, not clearly articulated, unrecognizable. His pieces are an intentionally posed problem to a model that organizes according to principles that impoverish the differential conditions of empirical sound.

His use of a different vocabulary and grammar raises a violent problem to the recognizable language of the musical model. To the unaccustomed listener it presents a sign to the faculties of recognition—what one hears does not correspond to tonal music's model of recognition, their map for listening to aesthetic sound. There is no score to intuit, as the "score" is inseparable from the piece itself. There is no musical notation, no transcendental instance against which it stands as a particular, more-or-less exact expression. It is *only* an empirical language. The piece, audibly sonic but not sensibly music, is a sensory noise. It brings the faculty of listening, a mode of sensibility, and subsequently the faculties of a musical common sense ("it is not music, but noise") to their transcendental exercises. The listener is able to reason that the piece is aesthetically organized, but cannot imagine its construction. Still, it persists to be heard, raises itself up with the absolute necessity of its presence. The faculties grasp at but do not cohere on the object's musical identity; the piece violently breaks them apart and forces their expansion, creating a different mode of listening.⁵⁸

Schaeffer, though, would stop short of thinking an art truly attuned to the mediation of sound, unbounded by musical forms and structures. He would eventually reject his entire oeuvre, stating "*musique concrète* in its work of assembling sound, produces sound-works, sound-structures, but not music."⁵⁹ These sound works carried too much indication of each sonic event's sources, or their empirical mediation. By these standards, his work was certainly not "music" but a first step toward a more radical sonic art he did not dare to develop to its full potential. He remained occupied with expanding or remaining loyal to the

⁵⁸ The idea that one must develop "different modes of listening to different types of sound events" is taken here from Ola Stockfelt's work, specifically in "Adequate Modes of Listening," in C. Cox and D. Warner (eds), *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum International Group, 2004.

⁵⁹ Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, p. 110.

forms and structures of a tonal music when (arguably) he could have done a great deal more.

As a result of his occupation with music, though the sonic event becomes the basis of his artistic vocabulary, *musique concrète* enacted its own noise suppression. Though this music greatly expanded the timbral, structural, and formal vocabulary of music it failed to fully account for the noise that haunts it, the purely sensory noise of sound's empirical mediation that stands in excess of the musical model of recognition. That is, it opened music to the noise of sonic events but it did so only in the terms of irregular sonic events that could be repeated via phonography, and thus eventually structured and recognized. Noise as the difference of each sonic event had been compromised in the name of music, an opportunity was missed to instruct a new sort of listening.

Schaeffer ultimately leveraged for a different sort of impossible abstraction, that of the "objets sonores"⁶⁰—the recorded sonic event as separated from all reference to its source or mediation, derived theoretically from the "acousmatic" manner in which Pythagoras would address his students, unseen from behind a black curtain. The sonorous object is not, he specifically states, the "sonorous body or sonorous instrument," or "the magnetic tape," which itself is only a "sonorous support."⁶¹ It is only present in the experience of each listener, but miraculously retains the same objective identity across all listeners, is separated from the indistinctly divided trajectory of mediation from source through audition. "Objets sonores" constitute the new principle of the identifiable object, the formulation of a sonic signal that will act as the object of a new model of recognition meant to suppress the noise accumulated in the mediation of the sonic event.

It would appear that Schaeffer still clings to the concept of the "objets sonores" as a recognizable signal, suppressing all noise that obscures their status as an absolutely repeatable, authoritatively standardized, sensible sonic event. His work replaces the transcendental ideal of a repeated score profaned by the differential conditions of its irregular performances with the transcendental ideal of the sonorous object profaned by the irregularity of its resounding through concrete media. The vocabulary of regular musical units is replaced with that of regular phenomenological units. Schaeffer treats sound, again, as if its material were itself absolutely abstract. In other words, he promotes a standardized idea of listening that still suppresses the empirical difference of sound's resounding through media.

As a result of a continued allergy to the accident of empirical mediation, the new sonic technologies had been hinted at, but were yet to be used to their full potential for exploiting its noise. They had failed to present the listener with a noisy sign that would raise a true Deleuzian idea of listening that eschews the

⁶⁰ Pierre Schaeffer, "Acousmatics," in C. Cox and D. Warner (eds), *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum International Group, 2004, p. 78.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

abstractions of a principle of “pure” sound. They had failed to present a diagram for a sonic art utilizing the noise of mediation rather than suppressing it.⁶²

The Sensibility of the Medium, a Sonic Idea

This alternate model of recognition now has the standardized sonic event, in the figure of the sonorous object, delivered through the transparent conduit of its media, which present unflinchingly the same sonorous object to each listener, regardless of location, culture, climate, time of day, and so on. The sonic medium is here supposed to operate in the same manner as the faculty of sensibility. As with the faculty of sensibility, it is normalized so as to communicate only recognizable identity to the other faculties of recognition within the body. The medium is thus aggressively standardized so as to attenuate the empirical noise of sonic mediation; for example, a specific model of record player will be manufactured by the same precise process with parts that deviate from one another as little as possible. Each record should ideally sound exactly the same playing on any record player of any specific model. One is trained to listen to these records in a way that suppresses the interference of the medium’s difference, which would raise a dissonant relationship between the body’s other faculties of recognition—listening would be taken to its transcendental exercise, the realm of that which can only be sensed, and an act of thought would be compelled.

This noise of the medium proves to be the main stumbling block of both the musical model of sonic recognition, which suppressed the mediating instrument, *and* the challenge leveled at it by the art making use of phonography, which suppressed the mediating phonographic technology. But much like the timbre of the instrument, the noise of the phonograph or in fact any analog recording technology⁶³ will not be silenced. The phonograph cannot by itself abstract a signal from empirical noise, and is faithful only to its own relation to its empirical environment, much like the body’s senses. It does not operate with the logic of the *sensible*, as it is held to do, but with the logic of the purely sensory. That is, it registers only empirical difference. Friedrich Kittler once described the phonograph as “not hear[ing] as do ears that have been trained to filter voices, words, and sounds out of noise; it registers acoustic events as such.”⁶⁴ Similarly, it cannot help but produce sound as its mechanism is designed. Rainer Maria Rilke once

⁶² It should be noted that Schaeffer’s failure was strictly conceptual—the noise of mediation had always been available to listeners, in some cases actually easier to hear than signal. Schaeffer merely neglected to make productive use of this noise.

⁶³ Brian Massumi reminds us that *all* technologies are ultimately analog, as “the processing may be digital—but the analog is the process,” in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, Duke University Press, 2002, p. 142.

⁶⁴ Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 23.

wondered in which ways the world could become sonorous if one were simply to drag a phonograph needle across its surfaces and let it translate all impressions into sound.⁶⁵ The phonographic medium, like the musical instrument, cannot decide for itself, and though subjected to a model of recognition directed at fidelity to the identity of sonorous objects, it is inherently unfaithful to its standardization and colors the abstract signal with the timbre of all its empirical noise. It does not reproduce recognizable sonic events; it produces new sonic events.

This suppressed noise which characterizes the medium's production as a new sonic event can still be heard, raises itself up with the persistence of its spectral presence, in the haze of dusty vinyl, the slight mistuning of the piano string, a glitch from a scratch on a compact disc, fluctuations in the electrical charge powering a turntable, the acoustics of a room. For a sonic art that would engage with this noise that has been organized and suppressed below the threshold of attention by the models that have trained listening, the mediating instrument or technology must be brought into the realm of that which is the empirical ground of its signal, "not the given but that by which the given is given."⁶⁶ If the sonorous object it presents is the sensible given, then the sonic event, including all the noises that interfere with the sonorous object, is the sensory by which that given is given. To present the sonic event as such is to take the medium to its transcendental exercise, to have it operate as an object of encounter, an inexhaustible sign of difference to the listener and the motor of development for a dynamic listening practice unconcerned with instantaneous recognition.

A sonic art attuned to this noise of sound's mediation must repurpose these noisy deviations of the medium in the delivery of a recognizable signal for use as a sonic material. Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* is a prime example of exactly this sort of operation. The piece is very simple: at the most essential level, it is the re-presentation of a sonorous object by the medium. "I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now ... " If played on a tape deck, these words are then played back and recorded by another tape deck. That recording is then played back and recorded by the first tape deck, and so on. What results is the slow shift of the auditory frame of reference from the word to the resonant frequencies of the room in which the message was recorded. He forcefully shifts listening from sonorous object, or identity, to sonic event, or noise, as if recording the sound of the room's timbre without a note rather than an abstract musical ghost.

To the listener, it begins with a more or less clear presentation. His voice sounds progressively as if it has separated from his body to resound in the room at perfectly timed intervals. The signal has left its original producer. The space in which the voice resounds seems smaller with each iteration of the message until the voice is nearly indistinguishable beyond the sharp blasts of the space resonating, as if the recording were clipping. By the last iteration, the sound of a once clear

⁶⁵ Rainer Maria Rilke, "Primal Sound," quoted in Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. 41.

⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 176.

voice now resembles sheets of metal scraping together, whining and screeching, more machinic and industrial than human. This harsh noise is the sound of the room resonating as he speaks—the media of his voice’s resounding has become the only communicated signal. The room as a channel for the sensible has been taken to its transcendental exercise, is now in the realm of that which is uniquely its own, is presenting and producing by its own particular conditions rather than reproducing the Same signal in perfect repetition. The listener is now clued in to the resonant frequencies of a room; attention has been shifted by this piece’s presentation of a sign. The sonorous object, theoretically an infinitely repeatable identity, has become a diagram for new sonic events.

The score as the representation of the Same has been replaced by Lucier’s proper Deleuzian idea, a diagram of the differential relationships, the emphasis on the difference of each empirical sonic event in any environment in which it is performed. He has used recording technology for an art of sonic difference, or noise, suggesting that the listener perform it again. Though the piece may be presented in the form of a recognizable recording taken from a particular performance, such a recording does not represent the piece as such, merely an instance of a sonic diagram of noise. This idea, furthermore, is articulated in the language of mediation rather than music, and sounds different performed in each room. Or, rather, each room sounds different when performed in the piece. This sonic art doesn’t grasp and subjugate the noise of each room, but instead thinks and diagrams the potential for productive noise of every sonic situation. It is a process for raising up a sign to compel thought, the antipathy against a lumbering, complacent model of recognition for sonic art.

Lucier’s logic reveals the necessary step toward an art of noise that directs listening to the absolute difference of all sound’s resounding. This logic can be applied to any sonic art by purposefully shifting the attention to the noise of any particular empirical mediation of sound. For instance, one can perform an instrument or sonic medium the same way Lucier performs the room, by shifting the frame of listening to the sound of a signal, a sonorous object, resounding through its media. Just as Lucier manipulated sound technology to obscure the signal and emphasize the noise of its grounding in and resounding through the empirical media of the room, creative use of sound technology allows one to shift the frame of attention from its own delivery of a sonorous object to the resonance of the medium itself, to bring the medium to its transcendental exercise, to make the listener aware of its status as producer of sonic events.

Stephan Mathieu, Rhys Chatham and the Transcendental Medium

By transplanting Lucier’s project to recording the sound of a specific record or tape playing, of a sound resounding through a medium, one makes the operation of that medium into the audible signal—the prosthetic faculty of sensibility is pushed to its transcendental exercise and finds itself in the realm of that which

is only its own. It now makes sonorous what it cannot represent as signal, becomes a producer of noise, repeats a noise that is different with each repetition. The medium is made to sound out with its dissonance from rather than consonance on the identity of the sonorous object. It is no longer re-productive, but productive of new sonic events. By using technology in this manner, one gestures toward the absolute sonority of the medium, the sound of a resounding itself, rather than of any particular resounding—the sound of a sonic medium’s potential for sonic difference, the extent of its capacity for noise. By using technology in this manner, one presents the listener with a sign that drives an act of thought for a new idea of listening directed at absolute sonic difference rather than the recognition of the Same.

The practical, obvious difficulty lies in the intended use of the medium—the reproduction of sound. Noise and thought are born in willful misuse, the bending and breaking of reproduction. The problem is well expressed by Moholy-Nagy: “since it is primarily production (productive creation) that serves human construction, we must strive to turn the apparatuses (instruments) used so far only for reproductive purposes into ones that can be used for productive purposes as well.”⁶⁷ Following his logic, Schaeffer’s work, and so many free jazz musicians⁶⁸ and DJs,⁶⁹ Stephan Mathieu and Rhys Chatham ask what a sound-reproducing or carrying body can do,⁷⁰ in order to force a medium beyond reproduction of “Music” or a “sonorous object.” By exploring the accidental noises of a medium, they take it to its transcendental exercise and assert the conditions of sonic mediation as sign to the listener, who then begins to think an idea, a diagram of those relations.

Mathieu’s work *Transcriptions* emphasizes the degree to which the accident distorts sound reproduction. First, he selects only records produced by the original process rather than the higher-fidelity processes developed in its wake; each was recorded by horn and vibrating diaphragm rather than magnetic microphone. He uses, exclusively, digital recordings of wax cylinders (since he lacks the technology to play them himself) or a live feed from a 78rpm record. These wax cylinders, the earliest sonic reproductions, were little more than noise to begin with—a recording of a classical orchestra hitting a climax is barely audible above the hiss and pop

⁶⁷ László Maholy-Nagy, “Production-Reproduction: Potentialities of the Phonograph,” in C. Cox and D. Warner (eds), *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Continuum International Group, 2004, p. 331.

⁶⁸ For example John Coltrane or Anthony Braxton.

⁶⁹ For example the turntablists, who made the re-productive productive by interrupting the mechanism in its operation.

⁷⁰ In following Spinoza, who said in his *Ethics* (Duke University Press, 2002, p. 142) that “no one has hitherto laid down the limits to the powers of the body, that is, no one has as yet been taught by experience what the body can accomplish solely by the laws of nature, in so far as she is regarded as extension. No one hitherto has gained such an accurate knowledge of the bodily mechanism, that he can explain all its functions.”

of static. Recognition strained to recognize sensible signal beyond sensory noise. This accidental noise becomes his material.

Mathieu then works the sound by “entropic processes”⁷¹ which require that the medium be re-mediated itself in order to register its own noisy deviations from the re-presented sonorous object. He feeds his recordings into a system designed to feed back again into itself—a microphone aimed at a speaker. What the microphone records is then fed back through the speaker, and, and, and... until nearly all that is sensible, certain, or identifiable about the signal has decayed. The result is a shifting of the auditory frame from the sensible to that which gives rise to the sensible, from the signal to the noise of the mechanism’s difference from itself. The differences in each repetition of the signal have accrued; they have become a sonorous material. A straight line becomes a cloud of vectors.

What results sounds as though it were coming from a great distance in both space and time. One can, if listening carefully, make out faint, indistinct fragments of the original piece from behind what first strikes the ear trained by the sonorous object as a distracting noise. Mathieu’s cleverly titled *Transcriptions* are pieces that move only by subtle degrees, ebb and flow. They are neon washes of texture and timbre rather than pieces of music. He has aestheticized the accumulated accident of sounds mediation, harnessing the fluidity of noise. This noise is both a sign resulting from an idea and a sign that will drive an idea, the listener now grasps at an indistinct apparition suggestive of the absolute differential potential of the medium, of all sonic media.

This process of overlay may be transplanted to an instrumental logic, one could play the same signal on multiple supposedly standardized instruments. In Rhys Chatham’s *A Crimson Grail*, hundreds of electric guitars play the “same” pieces of music, making the difference between each guitar and the cavernous space of the Sacré-Coeur into the sonic material. The result, again, is of an almost overwhelming beauty, warmth and sonic thickness in spite of its paucity of musical development, like a single chord sustained on an organ for a full hour.

The sensibility or identity of the sonorous object or musical signal is not at issue in either Mathieu’s or Chatham’s work; it is normalized so as to direct listening to the difference of the media through which the sound resounds. They are Minimalists, working with the difference of separate spatially situated instances of media or a single medium’s difference from itself over time, made sonorous by repetition. They work at the manner in which the space, the record player, the instrument color the ghost of mediated signal, harnessing “nonsonorous forces”⁷² and making them sonorous. These processes fall strictly within Deleuze and Guattari’s later concept of “sobriety”⁷³ in experimentation by keeping the “musical”

⁷¹ Stephan Mathieu, “Transcriptions,” Interview by Will Long. *Spekk* (28 October 2009) www.spekk.net/catalog/transcriptions.html.

⁷² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 343.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

in a state of relative stasis, because while there are certain anchors that tie these pieces to musical structure (accompanying, indistinct guitar in Mathieu's work and the original score of chords or pitches in Chatham's), the sonority of sound's mediation, the noisy sonic difference becomes the material. They diagram an idea of difference in mediation with an anchor in a stabilizing musical repetition.

Though the result of temporal or spatial overlay cannot always be performed and as such is often recorded by another medium—it now holds the status of a differential idea rather than sonorous object—is presented to the listener as a noisy sign to their model of recognition rather than a recognizable identity. These pieces do not often come without a description of their composition and performance; they are documents of a particular instance, instructive examples of an idea that exploits the potential of sound's mediation rather than suppressing it. The recording does not assume its own "perfect sound forever." It is an idea of the sonority of mediation equal to those developed over the millennia for tonality. They are applicable to any environmental or reproductive media, with infinite possible results—ideas not identities.

As the medium, the prosthetic faculty of sensibility, enters its transcendental exercise and finds itself in the realm which is uniquely its own, producing rather than reproducing, it becomes opaque, a noise. Its trajectory blasts it through to the sensory apparatus of the listener, opening up and unhinging a common sense that coheres on the medium as that which represents a tonal or sonic identity. It creates a differential dissonance between the body and its environment. This difference in the faculties is unified only by the difference of the idea, the idea that each and every real sound carries the difference and accident of the media through which it resounds. Thus, when sonic art fulfills certain conditions, the ear trained to recognize the Same is taught to attune itself to the noise of all sound. The ear is trained to stretch itself toward that which to which it is unaccustomed, but to which it is always subjected but for the adequate listening.

Chapter 4

The Sound of Repeating Life: Ethics and Metaphysics in Deleuze's Philosophy of Music

Michael Gallope

I see two distinct currents of musical thought in the work of Gilles Deleuze. One of them focuses on the *metaphysical* logic of “la ritournelle” or “the refrain” and the other revolves around an *ethical and aesthetic* logic of exemplary musical compositions. In this chapter, I will argue that these two currents of musical thought belong to a broad tension in Deleuze’s work between *metaphysical description* and *ethical prescription*. I will begin this analysis by first introducing the concept of repetition, as Deleuze understands it. Then I will show how this concept reveals a tension between the metaphysical and the ethical. Finally, I will turn to Deleuze’s musical thought by way of passages in the later collaborative books *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and *What is Philosophy?* (1991). In this section of the chapter I will show how this tension between the metaphysical and the ethical results in two distinct currents of musical thought.¹

Repeating Life

As is well known, a very particular conception of *difference* is central to Deleuze’s philosophy—and it is unusual. If we most commonly think of difference as

¹ In a previous article, entitled “Is there a Deleuzian Musical Work?” (*Perspectives of New Music* 46/2, pp. 93–112), I attempted to pose a standard musicological question about musical “works” to Deleuze’s philosophy as a whole. The idea behind it was simple: first lay aside Deleuze’s occasional writings about music, then use Deleuze’s strongest and most consistent philosophical ideas to come up with a new perspective on the musical work. At the end of the article I tried to flip the whole thing around, and relate this new Deleuzian idea of an immanent and absolute musical “work” back to some of Deleuze’s writings on music. Here I am doing a complementary analysis. Instead of explicating Deleuze’s philosophy from the bottom up to ask him a musicological question, I am offering an analytical take on Deleuze’s actual “musicological” writings. Special thanks are due to Chris Hasty, Jairo Moreno, John Rahn, Brian Hulse, Nick Nesbitt, Peter Hallward, Martin Hägglund, Douglas-McQueen Thomson, Audrey Wasser, Amy Cimini, and Andrew Burgard, for their thoughtful correspondence and careful readings of my work.

established *between* two actually represented identities (stars and planets, words and deeds, etc.), Deleuze thinks of difference as immanently *differing from itself* in its very being. In his great original work of philosophy, *Difference and Repetition*, he calls it “difference in itself.” This sentence in the book’s preface lays out his approach: “We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative.”² He wants to emancipate thought from a philosophy that understands difference through differences *between* or *among identities*, since such a philosophy would be dependent upon a system of representation, and representation relies upon a logic of negation. An example: Stars are *not* planets; planets are *not* stars. In the old-fashioned logic of representation and identity, this is how we would distinguish the two—by negation. But Deleuze suggests instead: before such negative statements, let us *affirm* that stars and planets, and the whole of the universe *differ from itself* in every direction, always. This thesis is the core of his philosophy.³

“Difference in itself” asks us to orient our thought away from fixed identities that are dependent upon logics of classification and negation in order to instead posit the production of differentiation itself as “an abstract and potential multiplicity,” a “swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences; a properly original space and time...”⁴ As a core principle, Deleuze *presupposes* it by casting it as a kind of *transcendental* or a priori, crowning it with the Bergsonian name of “the virtual.” The virtual (difference in itself as a transcendental presupposition), can be thus understood as a reservoir of potentiality. What does it do? The virtual creates actualizations; it creates individuals (or individuates creations) through the powers of difference in itself. The individuals actualized are concrete worldly beings (creatures and things, but also totalities, laws, or “strata” in *A Thousand Plateaus*) that are all animated by the potentiality of the virtual.⁵ This realm animated by the virtual is called the actual.

Now, in order for the virtual to be what it is, it cannot be mediated or regulated by the actual. “The actual is the complement or the product, the object

² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Columbia University Press, 1994, “Preface,” p. xix.

³ For the interested reader, I think the clearest exposition of Deleuze’s philosophical perspective comes in the introduction and conclusion of *Difference and Repetition*. The actual chapters of this book deal more closely and in more depth with problems in the history of philosophy.

⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 50.

⁵ Deleuze adopts the concept of the virtual and the actual from the vitalist thought of Henri Bergson. For good elaborations, see *Bergsonism* (1966), trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Zone Books, 1990), and a portion of *Dialogues II*, “The Actual and the Virtual,” trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam, and Eliot Ross Albert (Continuum, 2006), p. 148.

of actualization, *which has nothing but the virtual as its subject.*⁶ The actual “itself is individually constituted,” as it “falls from the plane like a fruit...”⁷ Thus, the virtual should be understood as a tireless producer of positive differences, a differential multiplicity of uncompromising strength coming straight from the untamed becomings of a living universe. It takes no time to negotiate specific compromises with what it has created, for it is in its core difference in itself—a thoroughly productive differentiator. Consequently, the best actual beings like us can do is to find a way to somehow use our own strength to embody the virtual once again, tapping its potentiality. In all: we are created by the virtual, we are actualized, and we must become virtual again and again—incessantly—in order to be all that we can be. Exactly how this works is the problem that constitutes the focus of Deleuze’s thinking, giving him a point of departure for his affirmative monographs on other philosophers (Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, and Bergson).

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), Deleuze unpacks this problem by way of steadfastly opposing the jurisdiction of any kind of Hegelian dialectic.⁸ Here, Deleuze points out that while the Hegelian dialectic recognizes the relentless production of difference (like Deleuze’s “virtual”), the dialectic never fails to subsume differentiation under a greater totality, an *Aufhebung* or sublation.⁹ This sublation eventually finds the absolute *not* in the production of difference in itself, but instead in a subject’s recognition of an unavoidable contradiction inherent in the very act of being conscious of such differences in the first place. In Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, the immanent production of difference we perceive is conquered by consciousness when the subject can overcome every moment of negative differentiation by understanding oneself to be *self-conscious*, despite all

⁶ Deleuze, “The Actual and The Virtual,” p. 133, emphasis mine.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁸ See Michael Hardt’s intellectual history in his introduction to Deleuze’s monograph on Nietzsche, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. ix–xiii.

⁹ Of course, there are innumerable paths one can take to arrive at such a philosophical orientation. In the intellectual scene of post-war France, Deleuze’s interest in a singular differential ontology had little affinity with the interests and methods of his colleagues; much of the discipline was preoccupied with processing the history of philosophy, especially German thinkers. Perhaps there is no more salient exemplar of this intellectual moment than the rise of Hegel’s thought brought on by Alexandre Kojève’s lectures given between 1933 and 1939 (eventually published in 1947) and the completion of Jean Hyppolite’s monumental *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, also published in 1947. In fact, Hegelian thought was prominent enough at the time that philosophers looking to chart their own path away from Hegel had to look to an alternative intellectual inheritance. This is one way of explaining why Deleuze (alongside Foucault and Derrida) made a turn instead to Nietzsche. Nietzsche would be read as a liberator from Hegelian thought.

the differentiation. In other words, the identity of self-consciousness triumphs over the differentiations immanent to the experience of the world.¹⁰

But Deleuze refuses such a moment of identical actualization or self-consciousness. Instead, he suggests that philosophy should keep thought oriented toward differentiation itself, toward the infinitely inhuman and virtual powers that pass through beings, never granting them the mediation of an actual conscious subject, never reifying them into fixed essences.

Of course, one might object that it is never possible to think about the life of the universe without recourse to actualities. Who can experience life as the pure chaos of differentiation? But the question is not to think the virtual as a pure state of being or even a knowable ideal. To the contrary—it is a question of *practically orienting oneself* away from logics of negation and representation, toward the untapped potentials the concept of the virtual marks. We cannot take off from the presence of the actual world into a *pure* becoming, or pure flux; we can only practically orient ourselves toward the potentialities yet unrealized. This is explained well through the model of the Nietzschean “dice throw.”

Deleuze writes in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*: “The game has two moments which are those of a dice throw—the dice that is thrown and the dice that falls back.”¹¹ The throwing of the dice is the affirmation of chance and risk; it is the opening of a life onto the *virtual* reservoir of differences. The falling dice make of this opening an *actual* concrete result or “combination.” The error is then to begin hoping for patterns in what the dice actually show. This would push us back into the jurisdiction of representation. Instead, we *affirm the whole of chance* and roll the dice again, throwing them to the sky. Nietzsche’s famous “eternal return of the same” is essentially the whole of this movement. Throw: affirmation of chance. Fall: affirmation of necessity. Repeat. Throw. Deleuze does not hesitate to feel the full Nietzschean force of this affirmation: “That the universe has no purpose, that it has no end to hope for any more than it has causes to be known—this is the certainty necessary to play well...”¹²

Deleuze develops this into the logic of *repetition*. The thesis will be presented as a *metaphysical affirmation*: this is what life does—it repeats. But it never repeats according to the logic of the same, the identical, or the similar. Instead it repeats only the production of difference. For itself, repetition takes its share of pure difference in each throw of the virtual, coming back to itself in the actual, retaking itself, again and again. The result is, like the eternal return, an unconditional affirmation of a singular becoming—what life immanently *is*.

¹⁰ While Deleuze frustratingly did not write a systematic appraisal of Hegel’s work, much of his critique of Hegelian dialectics can be read through *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, especially in the important sections rejecting Hegel’s master-slave dialectic as the bearer of guilty conscience, negatively oriented towards a crippling *ressentiment*. Pages 111 through 189 are all relevant here.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 27.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

But in many passages of *Difference and Repetition*, repetition is presented not simply as metaphysical, but as an ethical philosophy. In the ethical mode, Deleuze opens a gap between the metaphysical singularity of what *life is* and the *ethical orientation toward this being*. The result of this gap is to give us the sense that we are actual beings *attempting to reorient ourselves* toward virtual forces. This attempt never simply *is*, it must remain *an attempt*, thus retaining a prescriptive and ethical element: “To repeat is to *behave in a certain manner*, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent.”¹³

But at other times Deleuze emphasizes the *metaphysical* description of repetition by putting his prose in the passive voice: “Every time, the different throws are distinguished not numerically but *formally*, the different rules being the forms of a single ontologically unique throw, the same across all occasions.”¹⁴ It follows that repetition never tires of unseating and challenging the authority of the actual, but each dice throw is part of a *univocal metaphysics*—“a single ontologically unique throw”—something that is affirmed to be, without the question of how we relate to (or attempt) such a metaphysics. Deleuze even animates such a metaphysics with incredible powers of overcoming all forms of mediation, perhaps all dialectics: “The form of repetition in the eternal return is the brutal form of the immediate, that of the universal and the singular reunited, which dethrones every general law, dissolves the mediations and annihilates the particulars subjected to the law.”¹⁵

But if repetition inheres *metaphysically* within the structure of life, why does life need an *ethics* of repetition? One could argue that the tension stands as one between description and prescription. Ethically, prescriptively: *should not* the dice throw be regulated by any principle of equivalence (or any logic of quantitative comparison)? Or metaphysically and descriptively: *cannot* the dice throw be regulated by any principle of equivalence? The tension endures between a metaphysics that always already “dethrones every general law” and an actual ethical attempt to “behave in a certain manner” when throwing the dice.

The problem could also be put in terms of the human and the inhuman. The ethical would ask: Is this kind of repetition something that describes only *human life* in its relationship to the universe (where the human is in the ethical business of affirming the chance of the dice throw, going up from the actual to the virtual, again and again)? Whereas the metaphysical would ask: Isn’t this something that occurs in *all life*, regardless of human intervention, implying a metaphysics beyond human creation?

Deleuze interprets Kierkegaard’s concept of repetition as doing the former. Kierkegaard makes the *human* will an exceptional case from nature in general, perhaps remaining *too* ethical, and ungenerous to the being of nature, excluding a univocal metaphysics: “Kierkegaard declares that he does not speak at all of repetition in nature, of cycles and seasons, exchanges and equalities. Furthermore,

¹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 1, emphasis mine.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

if repetition concerns the most interior element of the will, this is because everything *changes* around the will, in accordance with the law of nature.”¹⁶

Nietzsche, on the other hand, for Deleuze, goes towards affirming the being of nature, as he finds the eternal return as something of a larger natural order. Deleuze writes: “If [Nietzsche] discovers repetition in the *Physis* itself, this is because he discovers in the *Physis* something superior to the reign of laws: a will willing itself through all change, a power opposed to law, an interior of the earth opposed to the laws of its surface.”¹⁷ Without stretching things very far, one can easily see how Nietzsche’s “laws of its surface” and a “power” or an “interior of the earth,” resemble instantiations of the actual and the virtual respectively.¹⁸ With Nietzsche, Deleuze strikes at something closer to his own metaphysics. He sees in Nietzsche not just an affirmation of *chance*, but more precisely an affirmation of chance that is *not* the product of a human will *against* nature, but *of* nature, *of* Being. But can he truly, at once, think of repetition as metaphysically one with the whole of natural life (human, plant, animal, and microbial) while also thinking of it as genuinely creating an ethically discernable difference in each repetition?

The Three Syntheses of Time

The problem becomes still more complicated when Deleuze moves beyond the logic of repetition (as the link between time and life) to a far more involved philosophy of time. Let us now turn briefly to the three syntheses of time in a chapter of *Difference and Repetition* entitled “Repetition for Itself.” In this chapter, life essentially *synthesizes* time. It happens in three forms.

First Synthesis

Every organism has a lived present in which it exists, but this present is actually made of a passive and unconscious synthesis of successive moments in the past that form an anticipation of the future. Essentially, habit, need, and action are all based in this foundation—a passive synthesis of successive moments in time, existing nowhere else but the lived present, opening us on to the future.

How does this first synthesis relate to the tension between the metaphysical and the ethical in repetition? Deleuze explains the relationship between these moments and their synthesis as one *between* the particular and the general. Following Hume, if an organism is synthesizing the simple mechanical repetition of a clock’s “tick, tock, tick, tock,” these particular “ticks” and “tocks” produce a difference when an

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸ Still more evocatively, perhaps, the “laws of the surface” and “a power” resemble the vocabulary Deleuze and Guattari take up in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “strata” and “lines of flight.”

organism contracts the successive moments beneath a generality. The generality produces something qualitatively new and different. It is the productivity of this *internal synthesis* or “contemplation” that a life or “self” projects or sustains, even passively, making the difference *within* repetition: “There is a self wherever a furtive contemplation has been established, whenever a contracting machine capable of drawing a difference from repetition functions somewhere. The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification—this term designating precisely the difference drawn.”¹⁹ Everything here implies a metaphysical brand of repetition. Passivity implies that no specific decision has to be made to create difference. This is confirmed as Deleuze writes that the “self does not *undergo* modifications” as if it were something to befall a life. Life’s synthesis of time is, immanently, nothing but this differentiating movement—already. Thoroughly metaphysical, there does not appear to be an “ethical” moment in the first synthesis.

Second Synthesis

The second synthesis adds the memory of a living organism to the picture. If the first synthesis of time is finite, since it explains the concrete relation a life has to its environment, the second synthesis of time introduces memory in order to mark an *infinite* component of time. The infinity of memory in the second synthesis is characterized by its unbounded openness and potentiality. Bergsonian in nature, it is made of a *pure past* of memory in which empirical succession has been left behind such that every moment can co-exist contemporaneously with every other. This memory, which all life can access, is noumenal, unrepresentable—*virtual*. It is a whole reservoir of unconscious and differential potentiality that has only higher and lower concentrations, and it is the *living present* that happens to hold the highest concentration of this pure past. Further, like the first synthesis, it is a manifestation of repeating life. However, the two repetitions embodied by the two syntheses differ in how they locate the moment of productive difference. The first synthesis “subtracts” difference from repetition in the act of synthesis; the second synthesis “includes” difference in the whole of its infinite storage.

Unlike the first, the second synthesis appears both metaphysical *and* ethical. It is metaphysical because it is infinite and unrepresentable, recapitulating Bergson’s thought of an infinite memory made and supported by a bounded material existence. But in the way Deleuze writes about it, this memory of the second synthesis is ethical as well, since we can have an exemplary *relation* to it. This happens through the intervention of a sometimes erotic and sometimes artistic compulsion towards Proustian reminiscence, in which the past must be creatively re-made, in a “rigorous imperative to search, to respond, to resolve.”²⁰ Here, exemplary access is made through the aid of modernist literature (Proust), since his books can reveal

¹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 78–9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

the truly creative nature of memory to our experience. Like the proper relation to the dice throw that affirms the whole of chance with each throw, Proust opens us on to something virtual via the presentation of memory as infinite and open.

Third Synthesis

Finally, the third synthesis of time leaves behind the movement of the living present altogether. Nothing less than a cosmological force of *change*, it ensures the production of the absolutely new in itself: “to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill God or the father.”²¹ It is the being of the pure event, a “universal ungrounding that turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come [*l’avenir*] to return.”²² The third synthesis brings repetition in the immediate form of Nietzsche’s eternal return: it draws together the before and after, unequally, to form a symbol of what an event is in its essence.

Like the second synthesis, the third is both metaphysical and ethical. Its uncompromising universality ensures its metaphysical status. But it is ethical in that it is actualized through a concrete task: realize a moment for what it is, as *disjunct* from the rest of time. He *tells* the reader: “throw oneself into the volcano.” Keith Faulkner puts it best: “The mind must create a disjunction between *this* moment and all others to make it fully real; to make it more than something we pass through, we must realize its uniqueness in relation to every other event-combination.”²³ The ethical injunction to *realize* uniqueness in relation to the whole of time stands along side the parallel (metaphysical) assertion that, regardless of any human realization, the time of the universe will still force the production of the new.

So even as the logic of repetition is complicated by the living structure of time, Deleuze still must equivocate between two registers. Are these syntheses just *what time is*, or do they not reflect Deleuze’s prescriptive passion for the affirmation of a true event, which only a life can make? The first is unconditionally metaphysical; the second is conditionally ethical. Between the descriptive affirmation of something ontological (metaphysics) and the prescriptive injunction of something sober (ethics), an equivocation in Deleuze’s philosophy presents itself.

I find this same equivocation instructive for analyzing Deleuze’s philosophy of music. In “De la ritournelle” from *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze, now with help from Félix Guattari, revisits the terrain of repeating life (now called “the refrain”) which he explored in the 1960s, and the tension remains. I will now show how the tension between the metaphysical and the ethical results in two different philosophies of music.

²¹ Ibid., p. 89.

²² Ibid., p. 91, translation modified.

²³ Keith W. Faulkner, *Deleuze and The Three Syntheses of Time*, Peter Lang, 2006, p. 14.

Deleuze's Two Philosophies of Music

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the tension between the metaphysical and the ethical corresponds to *two* distinct and conflicting philosophies of music.

Deleuze's first philosophy of music is simply metaphysical. He first affirms that the living universe (what *is*, and what *exists*) is made of repeating life. As I have already shown, repeating means self-differentiation, creativity, and innovation as much as cyclic reproductivity. And all repeating life, because of its evolution and multiplicity, lives interdependently, in assemblages. Then he asserts that this metaphysics is musical: musical refrains mimic the repetition of life, but instead of mimicking it at an essential distance (producing an imperfect, translated, or mediated copy of living processes) *music mimics life immediately*.²⁴ This makes a paradox Deleuze will sustain: Music is mimetic because music is obviously not entirely coextensive with life, and thus must emulate life's repetition at an essential distance. But, at the same time, this mimetic distance must be collapsed because music is a perfectly adequate expression of repeating life. Music is immanent to life; life is immanent to music.

If the first philosophy of music is metaphysical, the second might best be termed *ethical* or even *aesthetic*. In a way perhaps more familiar to readers of the books on cinema, literature and painting, Deleuze shows a modernist preference for specific, exemplary works of music that "stand up on [their] own"²⁵ in an "interminable presence"²⁶ that can render "sonorous [virtual] forces that are not themselves sonorous"²⁷ because the music meets the demands of specifiable aesthetic criteria that show the work to harness something genuinely new. This is *ethical* because it maintains that any thirst to ride the forces of the virtual must proceed in an act of *sobriety*. One cannot just make musical chaos in a frantic

²⁴ Though there is no direct evidence that Deleuze and Guattari are channeling Nietzsche and Schopenhauer here, it is worth pointing out that both German philosophers have attempted to think such a metaphysics of music. For Nietzsche (who follows Schopenhauer closely), music is a copy of the will that has avoided falling into a mediated mimesis. In Section 16 of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* he quotes Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*. In Nietzsche's eyes, Schopenhauer "recognized that music possessed a character and origin different from all other arts, because music, unlike all the other arts, is not a copy of the phenomenon but an unmediated copy [*unmittelbar Abbild*] of the will itself, and so represents [*darstellt*] the *metaphysical in relation to the whole physical world* and the thing in itself in relation to the phenomenal world." From Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 86. It is not difficult to see here how we could swap out Deleuze's "virtual" for Schopenhauer's "will" and swap out Deleuze's "actual" for the phenomenal world of "representation."

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. J. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. Columbia University Press. 1994, p. 164.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 44.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

effort to be innovative; one has to have the right techniques to keep the new music coherent and consistent: “For there is no imagination without technique.”²⁸ Beyond novelty, this second view is furthermore *aesthetic* because it is not oriented toward the simple existence of music, but actually tries to account for the human *perception* of specifically new works. I shall return to this in detail.

First I will explain how Deleuze’s metaphysical philosophy of music works. Then I will show how the ethical and aesthetic philosophy of music emerges out of it, with its own particular logic.

The First: *Musically Repeating Life*

As the tension between the metaphysical and ethical components of Deleuze’s philosophy shows, the real difficulty in thinking about repeating life is the question of how to extend repetition to describe the transcendentals immanent to human experience. A critical or even phenomenological philosophy of repetition would set this as its task, by retaining the fundamental starting point of the cogito and the world it perceives and thinks as *a priori* coordinates to rethink repeating life. But Deleuze’s philosophy insists that philosophy still find a way to unconditionally affirm that such repetitions, no matter the explanation, are in fact, metaphysically *one* with the movement of the living universe regardless of anybody that perceives it.²⁹ One could also put it like this: how can one trust an ethical moment of experience to *truly* be a metaphysical affirmation of chance? Or: How do we know we have affirmed the whole of the virtual, even as we must be brought back to the actual in the processes of repetition?

The metaphysical philosophy begins from an unconditional affirmation of repeating life: we can simply observe and affirm the creativity of the earth at once, in all the multiplicity of its interlocking rhythms. Such is the central logic of the refrain or *ritournelle* from Deleuze and Guattari’s “De la ritournelle.” It has one law: “sometimes, sometimes, sometimes.”³⁰ The refrain never says no. Its unflagging generosity explains what *all* life is, no matter what life does chemically, psychically, or socially, in all its forms. It immediately *is* the behavior of life from

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 344–5.

²⁹ Is Deleuze a sophisticated inheritor of Kantian critical philosophy in which the whole of philosophy is re-inscribed in the mind’s a priori conditions of experience, or has Deleuze moved away toward a pre-critical or metaphysical affirmation of Being as such? This is the ground for a fiery and thoughtful exchange between Christian Kerlake and Peter Hallward in *Radical Philosophy*. See Christian Kerlake, “The Vertigo of Philosophy: Deleuze and The Problem of Immanence,” *Radical Philosophy* 113 (May/June 2002), pp. 10–23 (www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze8.htm, accessed August 9, 2009) and Peter Hallward, “To Have Done With Justification” *Radical Philosophy* 114 (July/August), pp. 29–31.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 312.

its minimal molecular, impersonal components, all the way up through the complex social and institutional assemblages of human society. It holds the potential to deal with all scales, across all histories, in infinite recombination without any external regulation. As such, the refrain obeys the logic of the concept of the rhizome: “1 and 2. Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be.”³¹

Like much of Deleuze’s philosophy, the goal in “De la ritournelle” is to find a way to think about what life *is* without any recourse to fixed essences or relational identities (*the organism, the species, the language, the institution, etc.*). Instead of thinking of life as distributed in “arborescent” taxonomies or regulated by conventions, we imagine it to harbor the immanent potential for infinite connectivity and heterogeneity. To do this, we follow the law of unconditional affirmation: “sometimes, sometimes, sometimes” means that there are no exceptions. The refrain can handle it all, for it is the whole aggregate of the mobile and ever-changing mixtures of living things in their milieus—of nothing less than *all beings as such*—in their territories, as they cross over boundaries, affecting one another. It models the whole of life’s movement in an effort to show that life is never lost to a *general* law of identity or regulation (for example, a dialectical sublation in Hegelian fashion which Deleuze would reject) since general laws would necessarily nullify or subsume the singular uniqueness of what life is. Thus, the refrain is simply the law of all life in these milieus and territories such that all life can relentlessly recombine with itself, affect itself for good and for bad.

And as one could anticipate, the refrain recapitulates the principles behind Deleuzian *repetition*—life is not just sheer creative becoming. Life has consistency, individuation, communities and codes; it has real creaturely, actual existence. This means the refrain obeys the Nietzschean law of the dice throw: virtual-actual-virtual-actual... or, in the vocabulary of *A Thousand Plateaus*, deterritorialization-reterritorialization... Like the dice it must always fall in a finite and actual combination even as it deterritorializes to escape the vulgar repetition of the same.

Having established this, let us now turn our attention to the way “De la ritournelle” extends this metaphysics of repeating life to a philosophy of music. Metaphysically speaking, the refrains of life mimic (co-extensively and immediately) musical refrains. Take, for instance, the musical concept of rhythm. Like Nietzsche’s throw of the dice, we know every refrain entails the making of a productive difference, even with an organism’s simplest milieu: “A milieu does in fact exist by virtue of a periodic repetition, but one whose only effect is to produce a difference by which the milieu passes into another milieu. It is the difference that is rhythmic, not the repetition, which nevertheless produces it...”³² Now a *rhythm* allows us to affirm the genuine production of difference in the refrain, keeping us from the mechanism of vulgar repetition. The empty periodicities of *Difference and*

³¹ Ibid., p. 7.

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 314.

Repetition that do not participate in repeating life turn up again as a “dogmatic” and “noncommunicating” refrain, stuck in the realm of a fixed code. But now they are named with the musical concept of *meter*, to be distinguished from *rhythm*.

Meter, whether regular or not, assumes a coded form whose unit of measure may vary, but in a non-communicating milieu, whereas rhythm is the Unequal or the Incommensurable that is always undergoing transcoding. Meter is dogmatic, but rhythm is critical; it ties together critical moments, or ties itself together in passing from one milieu to another.³³

In this case, meter is utterly inadmissible to the creativity of the refrain: “productive repetition has nothing to do with reproductive meter.”³⁴ From Deleuze’s ontological principle that Being is essentially productive differentiation amidst necessary individuation, *rhythm* (not meter) *immediately* mimics the dice throw—virtual, actual, virtual, actual... (the syntheses of time from *Difference and Repetition* are gone). It is the timing of life’s relentless creativity, opening something new at every habitual cycle of its living, which the chapter uses to develop a *musical metaphysics* that testifies how a musical life, its milieus and territories, participates in a greater metaphysical vision of the universe.

Second, the refrain is not a merely material process—it is an *expressive* process. Expression means that a life draws a minimal mark, leaves a color, posts something for something else, means something in any way to another life, or is observed by another life at all. It is simultaneously life making something for anything *and* life being anything for anything. Expression = A life *for*. This means that expression is in some sense relational; expression connects beings. It does not serve its own ends (as it would for, say, the creation of an “autonomous” musical work); it serves life, allowing life to live in some qualitatively distinct way, in and as a territory, an abode, a dwelling. It allows a life to open up beyond its mere individuation, extending itself to the world. So following the line of thinking in Deleuze’s affirmative metaphysics, expression can practically be fleshed out by listing a few examples; we don’t necessarily (yet) have to account for the human *experience* of expression. Simple organisms have it “in the emergence of proper qualities (color, odor, sound, silhouette...)” or the basic “poster, placard.”³⁵ And, across the world’s creatures, life *expresses* through increasingly sophisticated vehicles. It is happening all the way up to the point at which expressive matter becomes properly semiotic: “[a]s matters of expression take on consistency they constitute semiotic systems, but the *semiotic* components are inseparable from [the] *material*...”³⁶

The concept of expression is then applied to the refrain to make it more musical. Following the work of biologist Jakob von Uexküll, expression comes

³³ Ibid., p. 313.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 314.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 316.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 334.

in two elemental forms, which, like meter and rhythm, are musical: motifs and counterpoints. The *motif* is produced from the *impulse* of the organism: “expressive qualities entertain internal relations with one another that constitute *territorial motifs*.”³⁷ These motifs sometimes engage in counterpoint insofar as the motif relates to the external world. In Deleuze and Guattari’s words, “expressive qualities also entertain other internal relations that produce *territorial counterpoints*: this refers to the manner in which they constitute points in the territory that place the circumstances of the external milieu in counterpoint.”³⁸ That is, if the movement of a life in its immanence mimics the movement of a melodic motif, the conjunction of two lives, or an assemblage of lives in movement, likewise *mimics* counterpoint. But insofar as this mimicry is immediate to life, the relations, expressive through and through, are themselves musical. Relations among beings *are* musical relations. The expressive capacity of a life is not necessarily musical in any empirical sense. Rather, the immanent properties of a life in its expressive living territorialization are *inherently* and *essentially* musical.

To sum these passages up, we might say that Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphysics claims to be musical, not in name, not by analogy, but in and through its being. *A Thousand Plateaus* shows how a properly differential notion of repeating life can go far beyond its role as an explanatory model for the aggregation of life on earth. It says more: Music *is* life; life *is* music. Empirical music-making on earth (the music we know historically, geographically, and socially) is one with the expressive living of all life, but is not essential for life to be musical. Even the weakest individuation is more than a fleck of living dust—in Deleuze and Guattari’s eyes, a life is already a frightened child singing to oneself.

We might then assume that the authors who subscribe to a philosophy of music that maintains this consistently affirmative and metaphysical orientation to *all* life would be similarly affirmative about all music, or music as such. Such a philosophy would hold to one grand affirmation of music that includes every living thing’s affective, emotional, and expressive relation to sound. The whole musical cosmos, from the beginning of the universe to the end, would be affirmed at once, as a huge plane of completely permanent affective flux. But this is not the case. Next, Deleuze and Guattari actually turn away from such a metaphysical claim about music when they pose a difficult question to themselves: “In the narrow sense, we speak of a refrain when an assemblage is sonorous or ‘dominated’ by sound—but why do we assign this apparent privilege to sound?”³⁹

Offering no answer to this question, the authors instead turn from affirmation and metaphysics pure and simple to particular analyses of how specific music can *orient us toward* such an affirmation. It is here where they slip from the metaphysical to the ethical, descriptive to the prescriptive.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 317.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 323.

The Second: The Sobriety of Musical Composition

On the first page of “1837: Of The Refrain,” Deleuze and Guattari introduce the whole of life’s repetition with a tripartite schema. Following the logic of “sometimes, sometimes, sometimes,” the three are not categorically separate. As Deleuze says, “the refrain has all three aspects, it makes them simultaneous or mixes them.”⁴⁰ The first two are *metaphysical* philosophies of music while the third is *ethical* or *aesthetic*:

1. A weak individuation, a bare metaphysical point or monad, exemplified by a frightened child singing to him- or herself.⁴¹
2. A stronger individuation, exemplified by a territory for which “sonorous or vocal components are very important”⁴²
3. A deterritorialization of an individuation, exemplified by a musical improvisation.⁴³

Broadly, the first two attempt to model more precisely how the virtual becomes actualized, fitting beneath the explanatory models of the motif and counterpoint, milieu and territory, remaining squarely within a *metaphysical* philosophy of music. But the third is distinct in that it marks *how* humans reorient themselves away from the actual back to the virtual. In *The Logic of Sense* (1969) this process is called “counter-actualization,” and in this particular passage of *A Thousand Plateaus* it is marked by a musical “improvisation” or “line of flight.”

As I will show in this final section, this human act of *reorientation toward* the virtual in the third aspect remains distinct from a basic affirmation of repeating life, and it forms the foundation of a very different *ethical* and *aesthetic* philosophy of music. The goal of the ethical or aesthetic is ultimately a stronger communion with the metaphysical affirmation of repeating life in aspects 1 and 2. But in the case of an improvised flight of deterritorialization, we move far beyond mere affirmation or repetition, using music (or other arts) to become one with animal and plant life, leaving our specific situations behind: “It is not man who sings or paints, it is man who becomes animal, but at exactly the same time as the animal becomes music, or pure color, or an astonishingly simple line: with Mozart’s birds it is the man who becomes a bird, because the bird becomes music.”⁴⁴ What makes this fully distinct from Deleuze’s metaphysics of music is that *this process prescribes a specified practice*. In fact, it is marked by the dictates of an austere modernist poetics and

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 312.

⁴¹ Here, I am supplementing the “weak individuation” with concepts from Deleuze’s affirmative reading of Leibniz’s monad. See “The Folds in the Soul,” in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, Minnesota University Press, 1993, p. 23.

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 311.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 311–12.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, “On The Superiority of Anglo-American Literature” in *Dialogues II*, p. 55.

a logic of exemplarity that renders it qualitatively distinct from any affirmation of the powers of the virtual embodied in the metaphysical logic of the refrain.

This picture unfolds through “1837: Of The Refrain” in two stages. First, Deleuze and Guattari show how sound empirically unfolds along its own immanent plane regardless of any situated origin, achieving an internally consistent autonomy. Once this has been accomplished, the authors shift to a discussion of exemplary music that gives us a counter-actualization: poetic and perceptual access to the immanence of this autonomous virtuality.

Music Becoming Autonomous

The first hint of autonomous expression comes when Deleuze and Guattari state that all expression is auto-objective.⁴⁵ This means that expression is not conceived of as an interior mind intentionally reaching out to an exterior world in order to externalize the spirit of that individual. No intention is necessary. If birds and other simple organisms can make matter expressive (through birdsong, ornamentation, display, etc.), it is because expression inheres in simple processes of life’s territorialization, regardless of any conscious or purposive activity of the organism. What is more: via these individual but non-intentional expressive processes, each medium of material (sound, light, smell, etc.) unfolds along an abstract landscape that has nothing to do with the situation of life. This is where Deleuze and Guattari move closer to the ethical and the aesthetic—when the material of expression (specifically *sonic* expression) begins to develop *in itself* without regard to life.

Let us recall for a moment how the virtual engine behind repeating life does something identical. The virtual is autonomously productive; it does not depend upon the actual world in a dialectical fashion. Even in the dice throw, the actuality of each combination of fallen dice never affects the affirmation that occurs when the dice are thrown again and the whole of chance comes into play. This means that the events of life must maintain autonomy from all actual “combinations” or situations in order to remain oriented toward the creativity of the virtual. The points and counterpoints of the refrain do the same: “an enemy approaches or suddenly appears, or rain starts to fall, the sun rises, the sun sets . . . the points or counterpoints *are autonomous in their fixity or variability in relation to the circumstances* of the exterior milieu whose relation to the territory they express.”⁴⁶ And, in fact, each of these events in repeating life, in their “points or counterpoints,” can be fixed or variable in relation to external circumstances so long as they are oriented to the pure potentiality of the virtual: “[r]elations between matters of expression express relations of the territory to internal impulses and external circumstances: *they have an autonomy within this very expression*. In truth, territorial motifs and

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 317.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 317–18, emphasis mine.

counterpoints explore *potentialities* of the interior or exterior milieu.⁴⁷ In truth, they explore potentialities. The expression of life, by way of music, is lifted up from its finite material being to the realm of virtual potentiality. Musical autonomy and virtual autonomy become one and the same.

Another passage demonstrates the shift towards the autonomous still further: “[w]e should say, rather, that territorial motifs form *rhythmic faces or characters*, and that territorial counterpoints form *melodic landscapes*.”⁴⁸ Life’s repetition becomes autonomous from its situation, forming into faces, characters, and landscapes that unfold along a musical plane without regard to their actual origin. The authors continue: “[t]here is a rhythmic character when we find that we no longer have the simple situation of a rhythm associated with a (definite) character, subject, or impulse.”⁴⁹ Character means an autonomous character that is no longer *associated* with a situated character, subject, or impulse. Then: “[t]he rhythm itself is now the character in its entirety; as such, it may remain constant, or it may be augmented or diminished by the addition or subtraction of sounds or always increasing or decreasing durations, and by an amplification or elimination bringing death or resurrection, appearance or disappearance.”⁵⁰ That is, the rhythm, the repetition of life, is now both sonorous and abstract. Since it has become its own character, it can unfold and morph according to its own immanent logic, without recourse to its specific living origin: “the melodic landscape is no longer a melody associated with a landscape: the melody itself is a sonorous landscape in counterpoint to a virtual landscape.”⁵¹ From life, to sound, back to sheer virtual potentiality, life has come back to itself—to what it immanently is—counter-actualizing in leaving one actual behind and creating another.

Actual Music

So what happens if music continues to become autonomous, in its tireless capacity to be one with the rhythm of repeating life? As soon as the music at hand is not merely metaphysical, but *empirically* musical (that is, the life at hand is actually making music, and not just engaging in a metaphysical dance of “motifs and counterpoints”) we shift towards the problems of the *ethical-aesthetic*, where it is no longer good enough to simply make music. Now we need actual criteria to counter-actualize, and get autonomously oriented towards the virtual.

The grounds that must be developed are resolutely technical. We will find that musicality is now an *aptitude* required of a life, even if the musician at hand is still an animal, and not a human: “What objectively distinguishes a musician bird

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 318.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

from a nonmusician bird is precisely this aptitude for motifs and counterpoints that, if they are variable, or even when they are constant, make matters of expression something other than a poster—a style—since they articulate rhythm and harmonize melody.” Then, with a nod to Deleuze’s affirmative readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, technical prowess has brought the life of the bird into a greater power, a power made immanently *of itself, as a life*, recapitulating the joy of the dice throw: “We can then say that the musician bird goes from sadness to joy or that it greets the rising sun or endangers itself in order to sing or sing better than another, etc.”⁵² Suddenly, the musician bird is exemplary, or producing something exemplary. Ethically, the bird has immanently made the music better than before or than another, making of music something autonomously better, something perhaps a bit closer to the full-blown practice of aesthetic apprehension. Deleuze and Guattari’s ethical-aesthetic philosophy of music, in however primitive a form, is at work already, straight out of the immanent development of autonomous music.

At this point Deleuze and Guattari turn to human music. In commenting on how Debussy rejected Wagner, the authors defend Wagner for his ability to make the leitmotif develop on its own immanent plane, with a life all its own:

But as the [Wagnerian] work develops, the motifs increasingly enter into conjunction, conquer *their own plane*, become autonomous from the dramatic action, impulses, and situations, and independent of characters and landscapes; they themselves become melodic landscapes and rhythmic characters continually enriching their internal relations.⁵³

A whole new logic is under way. Now we can specify; we have an exemplar. Example 4.1 shows the passage of music that gives us the virtual.

Example 4.1 Wagner, *Das Rheingold*, Act I, Scene 1 (mm. 749–750)

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 319.

This is a reduction of the orchestra's ominous statement of the "Ring" leitmotif from the closing of the famous first scene of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (mm. 749–750). Indeed, as Deleuze and Boulez argue, this musical material (itself already a variation on an earlier "Ring" motif) does in fact enter into conjunction with other motifs, being transformed in the process. As waves transform into clouds onstage, this motif reappears transformed in the beginning of Scene 2 as the Walhall motif in D_b major, with a slightly altered rhythm. What was a broadly diminished sonority moving as a quarter note, half note, quarter note descending in thirds followed by a rising figure that ascends in a quarter followed by an unequal quarter and eighth triplet in 4/4, becomes a major-sonority descending quarter, dotted quarter, eighth and then a rising dotted figure with an extra eighth note chord in a 3/4 meter (mm. 769–770). See Example 4.2.

Example 4.2 Wagner, *Das Rheingold*, Act I, Scene 2 (mm. 769–770)

But Deleuze has no interest in waves turning into clouds. For him, what is truly innovative about motifs such as these is the way they reveal how musical material can be transformed autonomously *without* regard to any narrative content or specific situation. The motif's virtuality lies only in its *immanent* transformation, not in any alleged significance or meaning the transformation has for the opera. To be sure, these two motifs do in fact relate to the action on the stage and function as a transition in the opera's narrative, but it is only the *immanently musical* innovations that ethically orient us, counter-actualize us, to the virtual.⁵⁴

Thus, actual, worldly, compositional properties, such as the Wagnerian leitmotif's capacity for variation and malleability, produce reorientations toward the virtual. On a large scale, these compositional properties congeal into *style*, becoming music that has begun to evolve autonomously on its own immanent plane: "This may not be art's last word, but art went that route, as did the bird: motifs and counterpoints that form an autodevelopment, in other words, a style."⁵⁵ And style is reflected through a canon of musical works and exemplars:

⁵⁴ For a convenient listing of this and many other leitmotifs in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* see Kristian Evensen's website: www.trell.org/wagner/motifs.html (accessed August 9, 2009).

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 319.

“The interiorization of the melodic or sonorous landscape finds its *exemplary form* in Liszt and that of the rhythmic character in Wagner. More generally, the lied is the musical art of the landscape, the most pictorial, impressionist form of music.”⁵⁶ Another exemplar is “Messiaen’s *Chronochromie*, with its eighteen bird songs forming autonomous rhythmic characters and simultaneously realizing an extraordinary landscape in complex counterpoint, with invented or implicit chords.”⁵⁷ In fact, Deleuze and Guattari mention a whole series of innovative exemplars in *A Thousand Plateaus* who fit this *ethical-aesthetic* philosophy of music: Berlioz, Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, Varèse, Messiaen, Berio, Stockhausen, La Monte Young, and Deleuze’s friend Pierre Boulez.

This ethical philosophy of music has a very different goal than the metaphysical one: prescribing musical practice for counter-actualization. Instead of asking how music is philosophically one with life and being, Deleuze and Guattari here ask: *How do you make something like Messiaen’s Chronochromie or a Wagnerian motif?* (Remember: in *A Thousand Plateaus* they ask, “How do you Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?”) And *how do you perceive* these musical actualities? And, significantly, Deleuze has fairly specific ideas about exactly how to do this. The practicalities of making actual music have little to do with most of the world’s music. The answers are posed in dialogue with modernist musical innovation—specifically a modernism that prizes autonomy.

Echoing the aesthetics of Swiss painter Paul Klee, Deleuze and Guattari argue that modern art (and especially modern music) has a special power to do something more than affirm repeating life. It can actively take materials such as sound and color and use them to make compositions that bring sensation on a fantastic ride back to the forces of the virtual, touching the cosmos. This counter-actualization is what Deleuze and Guattari mean by an improvisation; it is the moment when the individual deterritorializes. But *properly* improvising is far from easy. It is much more complicated than taking a solo, trying out a new part, or ornamenting a notated figure. Making music that deterritorializes and reaches the heights of the cosmos means making something *exemplary*—far beyond the mundane clichés of most music. Here is Deleuze and Guattari’s Klee-inspired manifesto of a sober, almost stoic poetics:

The artist begins by looking around him- or herself, into all the milieus, but does so in order to grasp the trace of creation in the created, of naturing nature in natured nature; then, adopting ‘an earthbound position,’ the artist turns his or her attention to the microscopic, to crystals, molecules, atoms, and particles, not for scientific conformity, but for movement, for nothing but immanent movement; the artist tells him- or herself that this world has had different aspects, will have still others, and that there are already others on other planets; finally, the artist opens up to the Cosmos in order to harness forces in a ‘work’ (without which

⁵⁶ Ibid., emphasis mine.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 320.

the opening onto the Cosmos would only be a reverie incapable of enlarging the limits of the earth); this work requires very simple, pure, almost childish means, but also the forces of a *people*, which is what is still lacking.⁵⁸

Grasping the trace of the creation in the created means grasping the virtual from the actual—rendering “sonorous [virtual] forces that are not themselves sonorous.”⁵⁹ This does not happen through the sheer ecstasy of musical experience, or through the metaphysical affirmation of music’s immanence to repeating life. It happens through the harnessed forces of a work that can exceptionally release the essence of creativity out of the created world, the “naturing” from the natural world. Only once the forces have been harnessed in the sober technical act of an actual musician or composer can music serve to let loose the virtual being of what the life of the universe is. But it is no surprise that this sober gesture of a musical work, something both *ethical* from the viewpoint of its creation and *aesthetic* from the viewpoint of its perception, is not in any sense a classical or Aristotelian being: “It is no longer a question of imposing a form upon a matter but of elaborating an increasingly rich and consistent material, the better to tap increasingly rich forces.”⁶⁰ The consistent elaboration of material comes through the material itself, not from any external, formal, or transcendent principle of regulation. Like a broad range of high modernist aesthetic manifestos, the process of making sound literally dictates *in itself* what music can be.

And, beyond its modernist orientation, for Deleuze and Guattari music is composed by great musicians who make something not only innovative, but permanent. In *What is Philosophy?* (1991) the authors write: “Composition, composition is the sole definition of art. Composition is aesthetic, and what is not composed is not a work of art.”⁶¹ And the commitment to composition proper runs deep. The authors are perfectly willing to warn against the indulgences of overblown or excessively complex musical experiments. This is where the stoic sense of moderation and pragmatic sobriety enters again. It is all ethical, all over: “Sobriety, sobriety: that is the common prerequisite for the deterritorialization of matters, the molecularization of material, and the cosmicization of forces.” And then, the authors detail how conservative the act of composition really must be. Their statement is both prescriptive in an ethical sense—*be sober about it*—and aesthetic in the more widely understood sense, since it is all related to making exemplary musical works.

The more rarefied the atmosphere, the more disparate the elements you will find. Your synthesis of disparate elements will be all the *stronger* if you proceed with a sober gesture, an act of consistency, capture, or extraction that work in

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 337.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981), trans. Daniel W. Smith, afterword by Tom Conley, Minnesota University Press, 2003, p. 48.

⁶⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 329.

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 191.

a material that is not meager but prodigiously simplified, creatively limited, selected. For there is no imagination outside of technique.⁶²

The particularity of the aesthetic half is no less clear. They make it explicit: “composition is aesthetic.” Far from being the free-for-all of unbridled creativity, Deleuze and Guattari’s *ethical-aesthetic* philosophy of music subscribes to an austere, even didactic demand that prizes simplicity, selection, and limitation above the noisy scramble of an unsculpted cosmos.

Intensity and Sensation

But just how intense is this ethical and aesthetic composition? At this level of extreme deterritorialization, having lost any sense of worldly relationality, expression is left behind to make room for an aesthetic principle still more austere and impersonal. Music, without any territory or individual to express—just bare sonorous material becoming immaterial—does no more than *capture* virtual forces.

The molecular material has even become so deterritorialized that we can no longer even speak of matters of expression, as we did in romantic territoriality. *Matters of expression are superseded by a material of capture.* The forces to be captured are no longer those of the earth, which still constitute a great expressive Form, but the forces of an immaterial, non-formal, and energetic Cosmos.⁶³

This is the highest form of autonomy. Deleuze and Guattari raise the ethical and sober gesture of musical composition to a new absolute that captures the impersonal forces of the virtual in all their purity. It is where, for example, in Debussy, “[m]usic molecularizes sound matter and in so doing becomes capable of harnessing non-sonorous forces such as Duration and Intensity.”⁶⁴

Now that expression has been left behind, music’s power is at the service of purifying sensation, perception, and affect into their immaterial essences. Here is where Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of music is most explicitly *aesthetic*. Great works of modern music that deterritorialize us do not do it alone, in the autonomy of their being as a musical work. As Paul Klee reminds Deleuze, art needs a people. Only with this people can music make its own material into a pure affect, percept, and sensation. Each is fueled by forces of the virtual, and each is impersonal. Affects rush over us, passing right by our actual identity: “Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man.”⁶⁵ With percepts, affects purify sensation into an essence: “By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 345.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 342–3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 169.

percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations.”⁶⁶

These sensations, in their purity, exceed the jurisdiction of the musical work’s *formal* properties; they exceed the “perceptions of objects.” Any specific configuration of notes, rhythms, or written sound in general, by itself, does not constitute a pure being of sensation. The only proper sensation, affect, or percept Deleuze will speak of takes place *impersonally* between the audience and the musical work, to such an extent that the rare sensation set free in a “line of flight” *escapes the score*, itself indifferent to the *actually written* sonorous object, indifferent to any subjects involved: musician, listener, composer—anyone.

The following is a passage from an essay that draws parallels between Boulez’s music and Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*. A sober gesture of the composer involves sculpting sound into what *it is* immanently; a “diagonal” that privileges neither harmony nor melody, but instead temporalizes a musical or sonorous bloc out of the whole history of musical works (Beethoven, Wagner, Webern...):

Does not the musical act *par excellence*, according to Boulez, consist in drawing the diagonal, each time in different conditions, from polyphonic combinations, passing through Beethoven’s resolutions and Wagner’s fusions of harmony and melody to Webern, abolishing every frontier between the horizontal and the vertical, producing sonorous blocks in series, moving them on a diagonal as a unique temporal function that distributes the whole work? In each case the diagonal is like a vector-block of harmony and melody, a function of temporalization.⁶⁷

Immanently, the “diagonal” that renders sound itself into preserved musical material would traverse the whole of the universe’s music, since the actual properties of the work’s form have been invoked, only to be left behind in a “line of flight.”⁶⁸ And the process whereby the musical work becomes fully immanent to sensation itself is a process that is absolutely transformative of perception *itself*: “The problem of art, the correlative problem to creation, is that of *perception* and not memory: music is pure presence, and claims to enlarge perception to the limits of the universe.”⁶⁹

In sum, the *perception* and the *making* of such a *specified* music lets us counter-actualize, reorienting us to the virtual. Specific music takes us from the shackles of identitarian thinking into the immateriality of the cosmos. Through the virtue of

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 167.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, “Boulez, Proust, and Time: ‘Occupying Without Counting,’” with an introduction and translation by Timothy S. Murphy, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 3/2, 1998, p. 70.

⁶⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 88–9.

⁶⁹ Deleuze, “Boulez, Proust, and Time: Occupying Without Counting,” p. 71.

created musical works, we are quite literally brought into the eternal return, into the repetition of life. But the *ethical-aesthetic* philosophy of music warns us that not all music meets its criteria. Music “needs a people” and it must be effective and perceived; it cannot remain hypothetical or in the realm of “what could have happened.” Deleuze writes of such creative counter-actualizations in *The Logic of Sense*:

Counter-actualization is nothing, it belongs to a buffoon when it operates alone and pretends to have the value of *what could have happened*. But to the mime of *what effectively occurs*, to double the actualization with a counter-actualization, the identification with a distance, like the true actor and dancer, is to give to the truth of the event the only chance of not being confused with its inevitable actualization.⁷⁰

The truth of the event cannot be “confused with its inevitable actualization.” So it is with the artwork as it is with the Nietzschean dice-throw: when we affirm the whole of chance, we take no appeal to the actualized combination of the dice show. We cannot be too preoccupied with the specific actuality that set free this virtual. Tirelessly, chance is affirmed to maintain a hold on the virtual, for, “[it] is to give to the crack the chance of flying over its incorporeal surface area, without stopping at the bursting within each body; it is finally, the chance to go farther than we would have believed possible.”⁷¹

Metaphysical Affirmation or Ethical Composition?

In closing, let us push back a bit: in analyzing Deleuze’s philosophy to hold two more-or-less distinct philosophies of music (one: a music immediate to the whole of life, and two: the exemplary human musical work that orients us to the virtual) I have tried to draw attention to how disjunct the affirmative gesture of the first and the selective and ethical gestures of the second, in fact, are. The first knows no bounds, while the second is predicated upon a gesture of limitation. The first is generously immediate to all life, available to birds and humans alike, while the second seems to require not only technical expertise, but a firm preference for modernist and often atonal innovation. The first references vague musical techniques to conduct a metaphysical affirmation pure and simple; the second sustains a dialectical attention to specific musical processes. The first is indifferent to the process of perception, using music to offer a metaphysical and non-phenomenological model for what life is, and the second holds music up as the highest of all arts in the service of enlarging “perception to the limits of

⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 182.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

the universe.” The first has no substantively locatable and specific musical moment (other than the affirmation of life itself); the second is preoccupied with its own specificity, permanence, and poetics. The first is immediately inhuman; the second is mediated by a distinctly *human relationship* to the inhuman.

Throughout the trajectory I have followed—from Deleuze’s early discussion of repetition and temporality to his later writings on music alone and with Guattari—the disjunct philosophical perspectives that arise between the ethical and metaphysical strains of his thought raise questions. Here they are:

1. If it is true that specific musical works can counter-actualize us through the ethical-aesthetic philosophy of music, why would we also apparently have the option of using a more generous metaphysical philosophy of music that could use any music to affirm the whole of repeating life at work in all living things *in general*? And, if this were possible, what would be the use of the sobriety Deleuze and Guattari prize so highly?
2. Deleuze, in *choosing* the work of a well-known composer like Pierre Boulez (or whoever else) has, for better or for worse, rendered a judgment that, explicitly or not, excludes other kinds of music. Innumerable musical works and practices were not chosen. But, from a Deleuzian perspective, should we not be *completely* oriented toward the practice of affirmation? How could we select a piece of music as exemplary without implicitly saying *no* to all the others? Is this negative exclusion problematic, no matter how subtle? If we follow Deleuze to the letter in his passionate essay on Antonin Artaud, ought we “have done with judgment?”⁷²
3. As soon as the specific and exemplary musical work is isolated and crowned with the capacity to render “sonorous [virtual] forces that are not themselves sonorous” we are likely to get caught in the delicate business of defending such a claim with evidence. Why Boulez and not Krautrock? Are all of Boulez’s pieces, or only a few, great ones? Deleuze runs into a different crop of troubles here. How far beyond “the diagonal” can we go to specify the technical procedures that exemplify the production of the virtual? If we went too far would this undervalue or overdetermine the importance of the unspecified and ultra-powerful impersonal becomings of musical affect? Too strong a focus on technical procedures might indeed bring Deleuze trouble. For even the extremely vague specificities Boulez writes about with respect to Wagner and his own works, though themselves not at the level of any formal analysis in the strict or rigorous sense, *cannot help but take recourse to a minimal concept of actual musical form*—melody, harmony, the sonorous bloc, and so on. And here, my fourth question for Deleuze might be deconstructive.

⁷² This is a title of an important essay, “To Have Done with Judgment,” reprinted in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, Verso, 1998. It refers to Antonin Artaud’s 1947 radio play, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*.

4. How can the actuality of repeatable and knowable musical form (technical procedures) bear the infinitely repeatable magic of rendering “sonorous [virtual] forces that are not themselves sonorous”? Following the more generous affirmation of the metaphysical philosophy of music, could not the resources for such a virtual orientation towards music be available at every point of living itself? If nothing, strictly speaking, stops the “properly original” powers of the virtual, why would we need to back up an argument about an immanent philosophy of music with particular examples based in little more than the historically bound aesthetic priorities of a modernist composer? Do we not risk, in our insistence on a sober practice of composition, a prescriptive musical ethic capable of listing self-identical score fragments as exemplars that in the end appears nothing if not regulative and dialectical in the old-fashioned sense?

Let us not shy away from the obvious: any dialectical residue in the ethical half of Deleuze’s work could prove devastating to his metaphysics, since indeed his point of departure is nothing less than a thought of difference designed to reject and destroy the regulative jurisdiction demanded by any totality. For a dialectic requires mediation pure and simple. If this is in fact true—that dialectical mediation lurks in Deleuze’s ethical-aesthetic philosophy of music—we can see exactly why Deleuze must describe music with a characteristically vague and arbitrarily selective ear, summoning generic descriptions such as “Wagner’s fusion of harmony and melody.” Should actual musical techniques be specified too closely, Deleuze’s philosophy of music would be held accountable for its aesthetic commitments, leading to a full-blown dialectical aesthetics in which each musical particular, specified in detail, would be justified as a legitimate carrier of the virtual. The consequences of this are clear: a philosophy of music that rigorously accounts for musical particulars would risk falling back into a dialectics that *prescribes and specifies ethical sobriety in such a way that it forecloses upon metaphysical affirmation*. The task of specifying musical techniques gets mired in the business of justifying and defending the details. We might say that, to avoid foreclosing the generosity needed for an affirmative metaphysics, Deleuze must avoid specificity, and keep his musical details simple.

Why not compare him to the musical dialectician *par excellence*? In Adorno’s work, the specific technical ground of music is crucial for discerning an authentically progressive work from a regressive copy. The techniques employed throughout the totality of the musical work are evaluated based on their honesty to a speculative history of musical techniques, and their immanent resistance to the market-based logics of commercial music. One can always quibble with Adorno’s preferences for what counts in that history of musical techniques, but his explicit insistence on the role of a dialectic relating musical objects to the immanent history of their techniques at the very least provides comparatively solid methodological footing for an orientation towards the promises of modernist music. By comparison, Deleuze’s ethical and aesthetic philosophy of music (which demands compositional sobriety

while falling short of precise aesthetic criteria) might be read as the work of a thinker who is more dialectical than he initially appears. The actual musical work counter-actualizes, sending us on an affective becoming, destroying totalities. Surely this seems to require the dialectical mediation of specific, actual, music. But it is never fully dialectical: we never really know precisely *how* the actual music counter-actualizes reliably, nor would we ever follow through on the precise consequences of this *knowing*. Perhaps it is because we can pass over these hard questions concerning technical matters that it is easier to forget or downplay the residual dialectics at play in the ethical and aesthetic philosophy of music.

To be sure, the metaphysical philosophy of music comes with its own shortcomings. Most obviously, by simply affirming music to be one with life, it seems to say *hardly anything specific or interesting about music*. It eliminates the particular mediation of actual music, of any actual exemplars. It specifies little more than the generic musical components of rhythm, meter, and counterpoint. And it draws this very simple picture of music into an equally generic description of repeating life's immanent movements in milieus and territories. So open and affirmative, this philosophy of music preoccupies itself almost entirely with the metaphysics of life, falling short of any meaningful progress on genuine philosophical questions we ask of playing, hearing, and writing actual music.

Many committed to modernist aesthetics develop fascinating and complex philosophical justifications to bolster their commitments. Some would be tempted to use Deleuze to do so. Not I, not least because I hold little axiomatic faith in the powers of specific works to reliably reproduce something like the virtuality of sensation. But, insofar as one is interested following Deleuze to use philosophy to connect music with something extra-musical (such as life's immanent potentiality), I would ask this: Does maintaining at once a commitment to a non-foundational principle of creative differentiation such as "difference in itself," alongside the conviction that it is best actualized through the innovations of modernist exemplars, *mean that one can truly dispense with a dialectic, with mediation?*

Chapter 5

Enforced Deterritorialization, or the Trouble with Musical Politics¹

Martin Scherzinger

Perhaps one day this century will be known as Deleuzian. (Foucault)

This chapter examines the way modernist music, notably that of French composer Pierre Boulez, claims residency in and serves as an important conduit for the politically oriented philosophical writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. By situating the philosophers' work in the historical context of a modern European tradition of philosophical engagement with music, with special emphasis on the socio-critical aspirations of this tradition, the paper assesses the political valences of their central arguments in the current context of postmodern capitalism. The paper argues that certain failures and fissures produced in the process of inter-semiotic transposition between music-theoretical arguments and philosophical tropes has consequences for the politics implied by their amalgamation. In short, by transforming and eliding constitutive elements of Boulez's project, Deleuze and Guattari posit a political praxis that fails to note a central aspect of capitalism's efficient functioning in our times. Is the reality of Foucault's characterization in the epigraph finally more *Boulezian* than *Deleuzian*?

Musicalized Philosophies in Historical Perspective

Philosophy in the continental tradition has long granted the figure of music pride of place. For early Romantics, music was considered ineffable, beyond the logic and grasp of representational language. In the shadow of an imagined failure of language, music was paradoxically granted the capacity for elevated epistemological claims qua music. Already in Kant, whose views about it were otherwise outmoded, music

¹ This essay elaborates and expands upon arguments made in two recent articles: "Musical Modernism in the Thought of *Mille Plateaux*, and its Twofold Politics," *Perspectives of New Music*, 46/2 (Summer 2008) and "Music in the Thought of Deconstruction/Deconstruction in the Thought of Music," *Muzikološki Zbornik / Musicological Annual* 41/2. Special Edition *Glasba in Destrukcija / Music and Deconstruction* (2005), 81–104. Sections have been reproduced here with permission. I would like to thank Nick Nesbitt and Brian Hulse for their astute readings of and insightful comments on previous drafts of this paper. These have deeply enriched the argument.

had the capacity to “agitate the mind *more* diversely and intensely” than poetry, which, for Kant, was the highest form of the arts.² While unable to conceptualize, lacking the capacity to expand the power of judgment, music was nonetheless able to express “the aesthetic idea of a coherent whole of an unspeakable wealth of thought, and to express it in conformity with a certain theme that is the prevalent affect in the piece.”³ Concepts, for Kant, could be raised to the level of ideas when they transcended their “natural determination” by way of the imagination.⁴ Poetry, which shared with music the ability to “set the imagination free,” could offer us “from among the unlimited variety of possible forms that harmonize with a given concept, though within that concept’s limits, that form which links the exhibition of the concept with a wealth of thought to which no linguistic expression is completely adequate, and so poetry rises aesthetically to ideas.”⁵ Interestingly, to rise aesthetically to ideas, concepts had to be illuminated by the very “unspeakable wealth of thought” that characterized both poetry and—even more so—music. What distinguished poetry from music in Kant’s comparison was poetry’s capacity to harmonize its “unspeakable wealth of thought” within the limits of a given concept. It is unclear why Kant did not consider music’s “prevalent affect” in terms of its analogously conceptual dimensions. Instead, music exhibited the imaginative play so crucial to idea formation, but ultimately refused to be reined in by determinate thought. Music was thus downgraded to “mere entertaining play”; patterned air.⁶ And yet Kant’s recognition of music’s unbounded wealth of thought opened the door to a radical revision in the nineteenth century of music’s metaphysical aspirations.

It was precisely its *unspeakable* wealth, detached from all conceptual determination, which became music’s greatest advantage in the imaginary of nineteenth-century metaphysics. This idealization of music took many forms. For Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, for example, music hovered angelically above the debased workings of the actual world. Likewise, for Søren Kierkegaard, music best exemplified the boundless erotic striving of the pure unmediated life force. Arguably, the quasi-religious appeal to notions of genius and inspiration in the age of Romanticism were an attempt to detach the art of music from the realm of ordinary signification. August Wilhelm von Schlegel’s account of the “origin and spirit of *romanticism*” rested on a religious dimension that “aspired to a higher perfection than that which could actually be achieved by the exercise of [one’s] own faculties.”⁷ Romantic art required the intervention of a “superior wisdom” if

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard, Hafner Press, 1951, p. 198 (italics mine).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁷ Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 196–8 (italics Schlegel’s).

it were to transcend the limited perfection which Schlegel attributed to the art of the ancient Greeks and offer us instead (via “contemplation of the eternal”) insight into “our real existence.”⁸ For Gottfried Johann Herder, too, the defining moment in the emancipation of music from outside constraint (from “spectacle, dance, mime, and even from the accompanying voice”) was “*religious awe*”—a condition best approximated by voiceless, gesture-free, wordless and pure “*sounds*.”⁹ Far from a condition of self-identical autonomy, then, the artwork required this extra “*something* [to] free [it] from all external control.”¹⁰

Paradoxically, the exemplary Romantic artwork was thus incomplete in itself, even giving an “appearance of imperfection” in Schlegel’s language, and the necessary supplemental dimension (or “mysterious alliance”) could not be captured in ordinary terms.¹¹ In short, the aesthetics of autonomy were deeply implicated in a new principle of anagoric transformation on the levels of both composition and reception, and it was music’s apparent insufficiency that secured its autonomy. Even in Eduard Hanslick’s late nineteenth-century formalist aesthetics, apparently shorn of religious dimensions, we read about the metaphysical and symbolic significance of music in its “reflection of the great laws of the world.”¹² Interestingly, references of this sort were omitted in subsequent editions of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, so that Hanslick’s later musical work began to exist in an abstract realm of self-sufficient signification. But the logic of the argument—the effort to avoid music’s reduction to ordinary referential terms—remained the same.

How did the metaphysical elevation of music in the nineteenth century function philosophically? In his *The World as Will and Representation* Arthur Schopenhauer posits music as the closest of all possible analogies to the endlessly striving will. Far from figuring music’s inability to conceptualize as a weakness, Schopenhauer diminished the very role of concept-formation to the “objectification” of the will, and thereby raised the value of music’s peculiarly independent expressive mode to new metaphysical heights. By granting the will a foundational metaphysical status, Schopenhauer shifted the traditional theory of truth-by-correspondence to one of truth-by-revelation, best embodied in the flow of music. In Schopenhauer’s view, “music does not, like all the other arts, exhibit the Ideas or grades of the will’s objectification, but directly the will itself.”¹³ Music’s very separation from the world of representation elevated its self-generative power to disclose truth: “Far from being a mere aid to poetry, music is certainly an independent art; in fact,

⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

⁹ Ibid., p. 192 (italics Herder’s).

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 192 (italics mine).

¹¹ Ibid., p. 198.

¹² Mark Evans Bond, “Idealism and the Aesthetic of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50/2–3, 1997, p. 415.

¹³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Falcon’s Wing Press, 1958, p. 448.

it is the most powerful of all the arts, and therefore attains its ends entirely from its own resources.”¹⁴ Even in the context of texted compositions (where “words are and remain for the music a foreign extra of secondary value”), music had the capacity to express “the most profound, ultimate, and secret information”; it illuminated “the real and true nature” of the feelings and actions presented by the musical drama. Music, in the final analysis, had privileged access to the fundamental truth of our lives, for in its temporal unfolding one could “hear ... the secret history of our will and of all its stirrings and strivings with their many different delays, postponements, hindrances, and afflictions.”¹⁵ Schopenhauer degraded the referential abstractions that characterized language and prized instead the “delays and postponements” that characterized music. It was music’s endless deferrals that became portals for understanding our essential nature.

In his early works, Friedrich Nietzsche too would subordinate the epistemological status of language against that of music. The concepts of language are “the separated shell of things; thus they are strictly speaking *abstracta*”; in contrast, music “gives the innermost kernel which precedes all forms, or the heart of things.”¹⁶ For Nietzsche, language is reductive and abstract, while music is generative and creative. Hence, language cannot capture the spirit of music: “Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena.”¹⁷ In agreement with Schopenhauer, then, Nietzsche argued that words rendered musically, and even feelings expressed in music, were distracting “externalities” to music’s essence: “What we call *feeling* is, in relation to th[e] will, already permeated and saturated by conscious and unconscious representations and hence no longer directly the subject of music.”¹⁸ On the *Ode* in Beethoven’s ninth symphony, Nietzsche polemically claimed that the “music blinds us totally to images and words and *we simply do not hear anything of Schiller’s poem*.”¹⁹ Against Schopenhauer, on the other hand, Nietzsche was suspicious of our ability to access, even by way of musical analogy, the workings of the will. And yet, although we “can never get beyond representations,” Nietzsche distinguished “two major species in the realm of representations,” one of which

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 451.

¹⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books, 1967, p. 102.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 111, 112.

¹⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, “On Words and Music,” (trans. Walter Kaufmann) in Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall, University of California Press, 1980, p. 113 (italics in original).

recapitulates the will's primordial "becoming and willing."²⁰ On *this* species of representation, Nietzsche wrote, "The primordial manifestation, the 'will' with its scale of sensations of pleasure and displeasure, gains an ever more adequate symbolical expression in the development of music."²¹ For the early Nietzsche, then, music's origin remained "beyond all individuation," and the will remained music's proper "subject."²²

It was music's non-individuated Dionysian strain, representing the rapturous frenzy that destroyed the veils of *maya*, and thus liberated us from conventions, images, rules and constraints, which Nietzsche granted profound philosophical agency in his *The Birth of Tragedy in the Spirit of Music*. Music's "most powerful" function lay in its capacity to "invest myths with a new and profound significance," for it prevented myths from lapsing by degrees "into the narrow limits of some alleged historical reality."²³ Music's ability to disclose truths was thus achieved in negative terms. It revitalized myth by inhibiting its historical tendencies toward ossified factuality. Following the example of Socrates, philosophy had long neglected music's creative impulse in favor of a rationalist dialectic. Just as music once gave "birth to myth" it could once again revitalize it: "Th[e] dying myth was now seized by the new-born genius of Dionysian music; and in the hands it flourished once more with colors such as it had never yet displayed, with a fragrance that awakened a longing anticipation of a metaphysical world." By musicalizing philosophy, Nietzsche sought to reinvigorate its creative and critical potential. Music illuminated the mythical dimension of the orthodoxies by which we lived; it served as a discursive site for speculation on the limits of philosophy, knowledge, and meaning. A central metaphor for that which resisted epistemological certainty, music in this kind of philosophical discourse thus functioned as a kind of discourse of the unsayable *par excellence*.

The negative privilege accorded music in nineteenth-century German metaphysics is no longer obvious in current writings grounded in philosophical tropes of negation. While some German philosophy in the first half of the century still engages music—ranging from Ernst Bloch's reflections, which emphasized the open-ended and refractory qualities in music, to Theodor W. Adorno's negative dialectics, which prominently explore the role of truth-formation (via relentless self-abnegation) in musical experience—the explicit reference to music has receded in most post-structuralism. And yet post-structuralism bears some prominent resonances with these predecessors. As it is with the nineteenth-century philosophical figure of music, deconstruction, for example, exposes the slippery movement of conceptualization, and menaces the poles of ossified historical oppositions. Deconstruction, like music, marks a philosophical limit. Following Hegel's dialectical method of marking the non-identities grounding

²⁰ Ibid., p. 108.

²¹ Ibid., p. 109.

²² Ibid., pp. 110–11.

²³ Ibid., p. 75.

all conceptualization, the deconstructive account emphasizes the structural irreducibility of that which is excluded from discourse. Like Schopenhauer's music, for example, deconstruction emphasizes the detours and delays that condition the world of representation. And like Nietzsche's music, for example, deconstruction at once resists the closure of ordinary discourse and revitalizes its horizon of possibility. Music's resistance to the grasp of self-evident perception dramatizes what deconstruction sets out to demonstrate.

Though it has generally been canceled out of post-structuralist thought, music sometimes reappears in a way that is in keeping with this historical legacy. Roland Barthes's discussion of the "grain" in the operatic voice, for example, draws on the historical idea that music—its visceral materiality—escapes the scope and authority of predicative language.²⁴ Likewise, Julia Kristeva's non-representational theory of language is distinctly musical; here the "tone" and the "rhythm" of the pure signifier reverberates as if in musical space.²⁵ Derrida too elaborates the already-discussed notion of the *supplement*, which marks the absent, yet necessary, term constituting the possibility of conceptualization, through an investigation of Jean Jacques Rousseau's discussion of melody in the *Essai sur l'origine de langue*.²⁶ And yet these references to music are rarely about music itself. They are about a theory of language-as-music. To maneuver somewhat crudely through the historical genealogy, one might say that Schopenhauer vividly divided the (debased) world of abstract language from the (elevated) world of dynamic music; that Nietzsche drew this distinction into the workings of language itself (reconfigured in terms of its Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies); and that Derrida collapsed these modalities of representation altogether, effectively drawing musical dynamism into the nature of language as a general economy.

Arguably, the most ekphrastic deployment of music for philosophy in the twentieth century is the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The second volume of their *Capitalisme et schizophrénie* is practically a study in inter-semiotic transposition, amalgamating the conceptual and sensual modalities (gestures, images, rhythms, sounds) of modernist music and those of philosophy. The book's informing context may have been the uprising in Paris a decade earlier, but its informing technical principle was a new electronic instrument, a piano-keyboard-based musical apparatus popularized at the time of the book's writing in the 1970s, commonly known as the *synthesizer*. For Deleuze and Guattari, this relatively easy to use (and then newly affordable) technological invention becomes a metaphorical model for a way of thinking that replaces Kant's outmoded a priori synthetic judgment. The synthesizer operates on the basis of *amalgamation*, creating a variety of sounds by generating and blending signals of different frequencies.

²⁴ Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, Hill and Wang, 1985, pp. 267–7.

²⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Blackwell, 1983, p. 188.

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass, University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 141–4.

In the words of the philosophers, the synthesizer “places all of the parameters in continuous variation, gradually making ‘fundamentally heterogeneous elements end up turning into each other in some way.’ The moment this occurs there is a common matter. It is only at this point that one reaches the abstract machine, or the diagram of the assemblage.”²⁷ Elsewhere, they describe how the synthesizer “unites disparate elements in the material, and transposes the parameters from one formula to another.”²⁸ In short, the synthesizer becomes a philosophical entry point into the “immense mechanosphere” characterizing a new era: “the age of the Machine.”²⁹

For the philosophers, the advantage of thinking on the model of the musical synthesizer is that philosophical discourse disentangles itself from the dialectics of “form and matter,” opting instead for the synthesis of “the molecular and the cosmic, material and force,” an unpredictable mode of thinking that blends traditionally stratified zones of conceptual inquiry into a destratified *plane of consistency*. “Philosophy is no longer synthetic judgment; it is like a thought synthesizer functioning to make thought travel, make it mobile, make it a force of the Cosmos (in the same way as one makes sound travel).”³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari label thought mobilized by metamorphoses of this sort a *rhizome*: “the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play the very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states.”³¹ Like the musical synthesizer, the rhizome is a proliferating machine intermingling diverse signifying practices no less than non-signifying ones—“artificial” perhaps, but qualitatively new. Indeed, *Mille Plateaux* gains considerable traction precisely on its preoccupation with the latter “nonsign states,” exemplified by music and sound. Thus Deleuze and Guattari unite changing mechanical techniques of sonic production and reproduction and (to a lesser extent) sonic reception with modern modes of knowledge formation, culture, and social organization. Theirs is the synthesizing hermeneutics of an abstract machine.

Musical Modernism in the Thought of Deleuze and Guattari

For all its concern for “ghetto languages,” for a “minor” music, and so on, *Mille Plateaux* is finally less concerned to use either popular music or the actual music of minorities as sites for articulating the philosophical ambiguities of the collective than it is with a political/aesthetic technique: “making [the major

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. with a foreword by Brian Massumi, The Athlone Press, 1987, p. 109.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

language/music] minor ... (the opposite of regionalism)."³² Even in matters of the political collective, the philosophers reserve their highest praise for the high modernist music of Pierre Boulez, whom they regard as “a genius for passing from one pole to the other in his orchestration, or even hesitating between them: a sonorous Nature *or* People.”³³ Boulez’s malleable orchestral technique is thus figured as an exemplary metaphor for the becoming of the Dividual. This emphasis on technique alone probably permits Deleuze and Guattari to overlook the often disarmingly patronizing tone of Boulez’s actual understanding of the behavior of collectives. On the topic of African “tribes,” for example, Boulez vividly contrasts group mentality with individual musical thought: “The tribe of epigones ... hurl themselves greedily on a chosen method, obviously having no notion of either its origin or its suitability since they isolate it from all guiding logical thought; they use it according to standard models and having exhausted its more obvious charms, incapable of grasping its internal rigour, they must find a new oxygen supply at all costs: the ant-heap waits for the shock which will galvanize it into moving house again. Such a practice, to put it crudely, suggests a brothel of ideas, and can hardly be considered composition.”³⁴ Here Boulez contrasts the instinctual behavior of the animalistic mob with the rigorous thought of the reasonable composer. In Boulez’s lexicon, the latter embodies the unique subject position necessary for the production of an aesthetics grounded in creative deviations from standardized models. Although Boulez’s casual cultural attitudes are quite different from those of Deleuze and Guattari, their politics is not, for political praxis in *Mille Plateaux* ultimately rests on analogously creative lines of flight from stratified modes of thought. Recall that in *Mille Plateaux* politics are intertwined with “technical musical” matters, and are “all the more political for that.”³⁵ In the final analysis, politics here is less concerned with the basic organization of social relations (in its civic, governmental, corporate, academic, etc., dimensions) than it is with technical aspects of contrarian modes of thinking and doing per se.

In light of the value placed on the compositional techniques of a relatively rarefied brand of European musical practice in *Mille Plateaux*, the ubiquitous ‘applications’ in recent times of Deleuzian philosophy to heavy metal, electronic dance music, improvisational jazz, and so on, should give us pause. Instead of offering yet another example of rhizomatic music, then, I will turn now to Deleuze and Guattari’s specific use of modernist musical aesthetics in *Mille Plateaux*, particularly the music and writing of Pierre Boulez. Even the philosophical figure of the synthesizer derives its argument less from the actual instrument (or from the then emerging popularity of a new movement in popular music, known as ‘new romantic’—Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet, etc.—which granted the

³² Ibid. pp. 103, 105.

³³ Ibid., p. 342.

³⁴ Pierre Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. S. Bradshaw and R.R. Bennett, Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 21.

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 340–41.

keyboard synthesizer pride of place onstage), than it does from Boulez's writings on musical modernism nearly two decades earlier. In "...Auprès et au loin," for example, Boulez discusses refinements of our perception of timbre with reference to a "hyperinstrument," understood here as a kind of synthesizer-to-come; an instrument consisting of "electronic sinusoidal sounds," or of "conjugations of existent instruments."³⁶ In short, it was Boulez's imagined synthesizer, at least as much as the actual musical instrument, that had the capacity to "assemble modules, source elements, and elements for treating sound (oscillators, generators, and transformers), by arranging microintervals," in the philosophical work of *Mille Plateaux*.³⁷

For Boulez, the synthesizing potential of these new electronic media have the potential to liberate sound by realizing what scores alone cannot. In his discussion of rhythm in "Directions in Recent Music," for example, he asks, "if, then, we want to introduce a notion of total freedom of the rhythm, what can we do but address ourselves to the machine?"³⁸ Boulez's embrace of the technical promise of the electroacoustic machine is elegantly expanded into a philosophical trope in *Mille Plateaux*, now figured as an abstract machine: "The abstract machine exists enveloped in each stratum, whose Ecumenon or unity of composition it defines, and developed on the plane of consistency, whose destratification it performs (the Planomenon)."³⁹ As it is with Boulez's synthesizing machine, the abstract machine opens philosophical thought to concrete new forms; it deterritorializes strata to generate a plane of consistency (or body without organs). For Deleuze and Guattari, planes of consistency elude the traditional dichotomy between form and content, elaborating instead "an increasingly rich and consistent material [like 'reinforced concrete'] the better to tap increasingly intense forces."⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari thereby proffer a theory of subjectivity on the model of a machine (synthesizer, concrete mixer), a kind of mélange of flesh and technics (Cybernetic Organism? Body Beyond Organs?) set adrift from the stable coordinates of a unified identity; a synthetically expanded subjectivity, nomadically pursuing multiple becomings that constitute qualitatively altered modes of possibility. In the words of Ian Buchanan, the abstract machine "enables the assemblage to become other than it is"; in short, "deterritorialized."⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Deleuze and Guattari's distancing from the dialectics of form and content in the name of transcendental empiricism echoes

³⁶ Pierre Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. H. Weinstock, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, p. 197.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 343.

³⁸ Pierre Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, p. 213.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 73.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁴¹ Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda (eds), *Deleuze and Music*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004, p. 14.

Boulez's conviction that "in music there is no opposition between form and content, between abstract on the one hand and concrete on the other."⁴²

To demonstrate and dramatize the workings of deterritorialization, Deleuze and Guattari draw on Boulez's discussion, first, of how modernism abolished the strict distinction between music's 'vertical' and 'horizontal' aspects and, second, of how modernism opened into new non-metric temporalities.

When Boulez casts himself in the role of historian of music, he does so in order to show how a great musician, in a very different manner in each case, invents a kind of diagonal running between the harmonic vertical and the melodic horizon. And in each case it is a different diagonal, a different technique, a creation. Moving along this transversal line, which is really a line of deterritorialization, there is a sound block that no longer has a point of origin, since it is always and already in the middle of the line ... and no longer forms a localizable connection from one point to another, since it is in 'nonpulsed time': a deterritorialized rhythmic block that has abandoned points, coordinates, and measure, like a drunken boat that melds with the line or draws a plane of consistency.⁴³

While this passage refers obliquely to the compositional techniques of Anton Webern (especially his distributions of pitch fields), on the one hand, and Olivier Messiaen (especially his manipulations of duration), on the other, it is Boulez's peculiar modernist reading of these composers' respective innovations that interests Deleuze and Guattari. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari's words closely follow the logic of Boulez's discussion of polyphony in his *Penser la musique aujourd'hui*. Boulez writes, "From now on the two dimensions of classical (horizontal and vertical) polyphony are linked by a kind of diagonal dimension, whose characteristics figure in each of them, in varying degrees."⁴⁴ For Boulez, "Polyphony can also be described as the diagonal distribution of structures: 'parts' or 'voices' no longer exist, strictly speaking: a morphological ... organisation of a durational block ..."⁴⁵ As it is for Deleuze and Guattari, Boulez describes the blending of vertical (harmonic) with horizontal (melodic) dimensions of musical composition into a "sound block"/"durational block," whose parts, for Deleuze and Guattari, "no longer ha[ve] a point of origin," and, for Boulez likewise, "no longer exist." As if to elaborate a philosophical paraphrase of Boulez's "cross-polyphony" (as found in his early works; *Polyphonie X*, for example) Deleuze and Guattari here construe philosophical thought in analogous musical terms: 'Deterritorialization' in *Milles Plateaux*, one might say, incorporates Boulez's 'diagonal' polyphonic thinking.

Deleuze and Guattari's creative paraphrase of Boulez takes the figure of the 'diagonal' still further, analogously positing the *interval* as that which remains in

⁴² Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 32.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 296.

⁴⁴ Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 119.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

the wake of the etiolated vertical/horizontal dimensions. With Webern in mind, for example, Boulez repeatedly discusses the emergence (and hence the autonomy) of the interval when harmony and line are linked by a diagonal dimension: “Independently of any dimension, intervals are developed among themselves in a context whose coherence is assured by complementary chromatic principles.”⁴⁶ Boulez is here referring to the carefully crafted internal symmetries Webern embeds in the partitioning of row forms. In his Concerto for Nine Instruments, Op. 24, for example, the row (B, B_b, D, E_b, G, F_#, A_b, E, F, C, C_#, A) comprises four 014 trichords, which can reappear in different orders under various transformational operations. For Boulez, Webern’s achievement is of immense historical and philosophical importance: “Webern was the only one ... who was conscious of a new sound-dimension, of the abolition of horizontal-vertical opposition, so that he saw in the series only a way of giving structure to the sound-space ... That *functional redistribution of intervals* toward which he tended marks an extremely important moment in the history of the language.”⁴⁷ For Boulez, Webern’s “way of thinking,” which “transcends notions of vertical and horizontal” introduces a qualitatively new conception of the musical *interval*, understood as a movement, which ultimately issues forth “a new mode of musical *being*.”⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari likewise emphasize how, in “smooth space” (a musical space free of striation, more about which below), the interval becomes ubiquitous; “everything become[s] interval, *intermezzo* ...”⁴⁹ Smooth space enables a qualitative shift in perception: instead of mapping a trajectory from fixed points, here “the stop follows from the trajectory; ... the interval is substance ... the line is therefore a vector, a direction and not a dimension ...”⁵⁰ For Deleuze and Guattari, the interval inhabits a kind of “middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*,” producing a line that “breaks free of the vertical and horizontal as coordinates ... a block-line passes amid [*au milieu des*] sounds and propels itself by its own nonlocalizable middle [*milieu*].”⁵¹ The very movement outside of points and localizable coordinates forms a sound block, which, analogously with Boulez, ushers a qualitatively new mode of being: “The sound block is the *intermezzo*. It is a body without organs ...”⁵²

By way of Boulez’s text, then, Webern’s new conception of the musical interval, unleashed by his unique twelve-tone practice, is performatively mapped here onto a theory of rhizomatics. The interval becomes the interbeing; musical movement becomes the body without organs. This is a noteworthy philosophical revision of Webern’s compositional endeavor as it had been assessed in light of dialectics a few years earlier. For Theodor W. Adorno, the problem with

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁷ Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, p. 149 (emphasis added).

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 227 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 478.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 25, 297.

⁵² Ibid., p. 297.

Webern's finely constructed rows is that they produce motivic unity automatically: "The ripest fruits of canonic imitation fall, as it were, of their own will into the lap of the composition."⁵³ The pre-compositional situation of Op. 24, for example, destroys the conditions for the possibility of dialectically driven development: the motivic unit, already mirrored on all sides, lacks the distinctiveness to issue an authentic synthesis with an independent formal logic. The music, altogether too consistent, becomes static. Adorno writes: "Thematic working-out extends itself over such minimal units that it virtually cancels itself out. The mere interval—functioning as a motivic unit—is so utterly without individual character that it no longer accomplishes the synthesis expected of it."⁵⁴ Adorno emphasizes the shrunken dimensions of motivic activity by drawing attention to the unexceptional sound of Webern's motifs. In Adorno's hearing, the abundance of thirds and minor seconds (interval classes 4, 3, and 1) in the music of Op. 24 would count as a willed denial of other motivic possibilities. By compressing the music's field of motivic play to fewer intervals than that of the music of the past, Webern's motifs sound impoverished and mechanical, indeed like "mere intervals." In so doing, Webern's pre-composition forecloses the genuinely historical antithesis between harmony and line required for dialectical overcoming. In contrast, for all their resistance to pre-compositional structures, to "any idea of pretraced destiny," Deleuze and Guattari paradoxically detect in the Webernian musical interval a destratified line of flight, a de-linking from punctual coordinates and an opening into a plane of consistency.⁵⁵ (Not surprisingly, *Mille Plateaux* freights a stinging critique of dialectics).

Mille Plateaux creatively adopts serial musical structure as a philosophical trope for thinking identity across strata—creating planes of consistency. Stratified systems resemble traditional tonal musical forms; they are coded whenever "horizontally there are linear causalities between elements; and, vertically, hierarchies of order between groupings; and, holding it all together in depth, a succession of framing forms ..."⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari unsubscribe from the very dialectical *agon* between succession and simultaneity upon which Adorno insists. In contrast, "consistent, self-consistent aggregates" resemble high modern serial music; they "consolidate ... heterogeneous elements ... as if a machinic phylum, a destratifying transversality ... freeing matter and tapping forces."⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari label conceptual spaces that transcend the hierarchies implied by dialectical oppositions (vertical, horizontal, etc.) *nomad*, or *smooth*. They offer a number of "models" to elaborate the contrast between "the smooth" and "the striated": technological, musical, maritime, mathematical, physical, aesthetic.⁵⁸

⁵³ Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. A.G. Mitchell and W.V. Blomster, The Seabury Press, 1973, p. 110.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 335.

⁵⁷ Ibid. (emphasis in original).

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 474–500.

The terms themselves, however, are borrowed from Boulez's chapter in *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* discussing smooth and striated spaces in music.⁵⁹

In this chapter Boulez explores the "variable spaces, spaces of mobile definition capable of evolving (by mutation or progressive transformation) during the course of the work."⁶⁰ The variability of musical space leads Boulez to redefine the concept of the *continuum* as a kind of proto-plane of consistency. The continuum "is certainly not the transition 'effected' from one point in space to another (successive or instantaneous). The continuum is manifested by the possibility of partitioning space ... the dialectic between continuity and discontinuity thus involves the concept of partition; I would go so far as to say that continuum is this possibility, for it contains both the continuous and the discontinuous ..."⁶¹ Instead of identifying the continuum with some kind of musical continuity, Boulez here construes the continuum as the very possibility of partitioning musical space in various ways; the ability to gather heterogeneous elements (continuity, discontinuity, etc.) in a plane of consistency. Deleuze and Guattari likewise refer to music's capacity to partition its components in continuous variation as a "virtual cosmic continuum."⁶² Analogously, the "continuum," for Deleuze and Guattari, a "placing-in-variation ... without beginning or end," should "not be confused with the continuous or discontinuous character of the variable itself ..."⁶³ The difference between striated and smooth space thus depends on the space's mode of partitioning. For example, "frequency space may undergo two sorts of partition: the one, defined by a standard measure, will be regularly repeatable, the other, imprecise, or more exactly, undetermined."⁶⁴ Striated partitioning can be effected in various spheres: temperament, for example, 'striates' the music's pitch space, as does pulsation 'striate' its temporality, thereby offering localizable reference points for the ear. In contrast, where partitioning is undetermined, resulting in reference-free smooth space, the ear loses its bearings. Boulez likens this audible condition to the eye's failure to gauge distances on completely smooth surfaces. As a result, smooth space is less easily categorized than striated space. Smooth space can only be classified "in a more general fashion"; smooth space is known only by "the statistical distribution of the frequencies found within it."⁶⁵ In contrast, striated space can be additionally categorized into fixed and variable, straight and curved, focalized and non-focalized, regular and irregular, and so on, and these categories furthermore can intermingle with each other to various degrees. It is important to note, finally, that Boulez's analysis of musical spaces privileges music's mode of production/partitioning over either its sounding result or its social

⁵⁹ Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, pp. 83–98.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 95.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 94–5.

⁶⁴ Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 85.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

reception. Thus, even if smooth space actually resembles striated space in some specific musical context, its mode of partitioning, and hence of musical being, is qualitatively different.

A similar perceptual ambiguity exists between smooth and striated time. Although striated time is “pulsed” (grounded in a “referential system” that is a “function of chronometric time of greater or lesser delimitation, breadth or variability”) its actual sounding can be taken for smooth time.⁶⁶ And although smooth time is “amorphous” (without either “partition” or “module”) its actual sounding can be taken for striated time.⁶⁷ For example, “a static distribution in striated time will tend to give the impression of smooth time, whereas a differentiated and directed distribution in smooth time, especially when based on adjacent values, may easily be confused with the usual results of striated time.”⁶⁸ Again, the technique of music’s production ultimately defines the difference between smooth and striated time: “in smooth time, time is filled without counting; in striated time, time is filled by counting.”⁶⁹ As it is with Deleuze and Guattari’s plane of consistency, it is smooth time that paradoxically opens to the heterogeneity of limitless connection and thus mutation. In their discussion of the “technological model,” for example, Deleuze and Guattari develop an analogous contrast between, on the one hand, knitting and embroidery (both striated) and, on the other, crochet and patchwork (both smooth), on the basis of their respective modes of production. Embroidery, for instance, operates on the basis of “a central theme or motif.”⁷⁰ For all its complexity and variability embroidery nonetheless remains an inmate of a striated back-and-forth. Patchwork, in contrast, uses “piece-by-piece construction ... successive additions of fabric.”⁷¹ Thus patchwork relates to the “fabric of the rhizome” with its limitless conjunction “and ... and ... and ...,” which Deleuze and Guattari elaborate in the opening pages of *Mille Plateaux*.⁷² Analogously, knitting needles interweave, producing striated space; while crochet produces a smooth space running in all directions.⁷³

We find in the smooth spaces of patchwork and crochet the “logic of the AND,” which ultimately overthrows ontology and nullifies endings and beginnings.⁷⁴ As “an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that can be joined together in an infinite number of ways,” patchwork thus eludes the “false conception of voyage and movement” implied by “making a clean slate, starting or beginning again

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 88, 93.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 92–3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 94.

⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 476.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 25.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 476.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

from ground zero.”⁷⁵ This being “between things, interbeing,” a transversal always and already *en route*, defines smooth space. The philosophers summarize their discussion of smooth and striated musical space and time thus: “The smooth is the continuous variation, continuous development of form; it is the fusion of harmony and melody in favor of the production of properly rhythmic values, the pure act of the drawing of a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal.”⁷⁶ And, in the final analysis, it is music in *Mille Plateaux* that time and again proffers such planes of consistency. In “Memories of a Plan(e) Maker,” Deleuze and Guattari advance Boulez’s “nonpulsed time for a floating music” and John Cage’s “fixed sound plane” as exemplary instances of rhizomatics. Such a plane “affirms a process against all structure and genesis, a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, experimentation against any kind of interpretation, and in which silence and sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement.”⁷⁷ This is music as rhizomatics.

On the face of it, Deleuze and Guattari’s interpretations of certain strands of modernism in music do not line up with widespread views about it. In particular, the curious way in which Webern’s 12-tone technique, albeit mediated by a Boulezian optic, is enlisted to buttress a philosophy of heterogeneous rhizomatics, which in turn is linked to a politics of multiplicity, is far from obvious. In recent musicological commentaries, for example, Webern’s radical musical abstractions are figured as willfully denying music’s irreducible social component; the music’s structural autonomy is figured as dogmatically repressing interpretative plurality; the patterned unity of his row forms is said to constrain the music’s subjective dimension; and, to the extent that it is linked to the political sphere, the music is linked to totalitarianism. Thus, Rose Rosengard Subotnik demonstrates how the music’s radical autonomy fails to “reintegrate [its] values with some larger and present [social] context.”⁷⁸ Likewise, Alan Street shows how Webern’s particular brand of “aesthetic unity” sustains an unswerving, but false, commitment to “the cause of formal integration” in music analysis today.⁷⁹ Adorno, as briefly discussed above, associates the hyper-intergration of Webern’s brand of 12-tone music with reified and undialectical thought. And Richard Taruskin draws attention to Webern’s totalitarian tendencies, down to his “enthusiastic embrace of Hitler.”⁸⁰ Under these readings, the “smoothness” of Webern’s musical spaces (“drawing a diagonal across

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 25, 476.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 478.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 267.

⁷⁸ Rose Rosengard Subotnik, *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 271.

⁷⁹ Alan Street, “Superior Myths, Dogmatic Allegories: The Resistance to Musical Unity,” in A. Krims (ed.), *Musical Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, G&B Arts International, 1998, pp. 57, 59.

⁸⁰ Richard Taruskin, Review: “Back to Whom? Neoclassicism as Ideology,” *19th Century Music* 16, 1993, p. 299.

the vertical and the horizontal”) would be the smoothness of compressed homogeneity instead of that of expanding heterogeneity; the “consistency” of its musical planes would be the consistency of unity and uniformity instead of the consistency of thickening intensities and de-stratified multiplicities. How can this be?

Arguably the shift in Boulez’s conception of serial technique after 1951 accounts for this curious alliance between Webern, and Deleuze and Guattari. In other words, Webern’s compositional endeavor is represented in *Mille Plateaux* as a function of Boulez’s peculiar mediation of it in the context of post-war Europe. In Boulez’s post-*Structures* serial works, that is, the row no longer functions as an integral structure but rather as a proliferating machine. Instead of deferring to the unifying internal elements of the series, Boulez employs the row as a source of smaller cells, which burgeon along independently conceived trajectories. Here we find an asymmetrical and fragmentary partitioning of the basic row forms, dispersed by diverse “multiplications” (pitch and/or rhythmic cells infused with the properties of other cells), which in turn proffer musical networks further modified by “elisions,” “tropes” and “parentheses.” In the manner of Deleuze and Guattari, Boulez employs a kind of “coalescent” logic, “linking rhythmic structures to serial structures by common organizations, which will also include other characteristics of sound: intensity, mode of attack, timbre. Then to enlarge that morphology into a coalescent rhetoric.”⁸¹ Boulez thereby argues for musical transformations in terms of coalescing characteristics of sound; transformations of musical strata, one might say, on a plane of consistency; a “hyperinstrument.”⁸² On the principle of coalescence, Deleuze and Guattari likewise describe Boulez’s music as the “*fusion* of harmony and melody ... drawing ... a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal,” and Messiaen’s music as the presentation of “multiple chromatic durations in *coalescence*”; “a diagonal for a cosmos.”⁸³

The *locus classicus* for this kind of compositional practice is probably Boulez’s aptly titled *Le Marteau sans maître* (*The Hammer without a Master*) of 1952–54. Based on poems by the surrealist poet René Char, with images that combine extreme chaos and violence with control and order, *Le Marteau* is an exploration of the dialectic between a brute and arbitrary authority principle and freedom. Like Hegel’s *agon* between master and slave, it was as if total control had recapitulated total randomness (freedom in John Gray’s radical sense).⁸⁴ There are structural reasons why these antitheses were considered collapsed in this compositional system. The serial operations employed in the work are practically undecipherable—there is no hope of “hearing” them. The music theorist Lev

⁸¹ Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, p. 151.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 478, 309 (emphasis added).

⁸⁴ John Gray writes, “We are forced to live as if we are free”; without the knowledge, that is, that grounds the possibility of real choice. John Gray, *Straw Dogs*, Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2007, p. 110.

Koblyakov first described the labyrinthine harmonic conception (multiplications, etc.) of *Le Marteau* in 1977, two full decades after its completion.

It is important to note that this kind of analytic uncovering misses the point, to some extent, of *Le Marteau*. In Boulez's lexicon, serial syntheses should resist "the aspect of a reflex" encouraged by the pre-compositional apparatus; it should seek out instead the "unforeseeable," the "unexamined," the "unperceived."⁸⁵ Boulez distinguishes between composition as "bookkeeping" (carefully observing the demands of the row) and composition as "free play" (which "projects itself toward the unperceived").⁸⁶ As if to enact these unpredictable turns in the flow of his own writing, Boulez's *Notes of an Apprenticeship* are frequently interspersed with unexpected turns, revisions, and reversals. For example, in his essay "Eventually . . ." (1952) Boulez interrupts his formal descriptions of pitch/duration structures and their multiplication processes with sentences that veer away from the guiding logic of the argument. In mid-essay he writes, "After this theoretical essay, which will appear to many as the glorification of intellectualism as against instinct, I shall finish. The unexpected again: there is no creation except in the unforeseeable becoming necessity."⁸⁷ Boulez's insistence on harnessing the unforeseeable maps readily onto the "unthinkable, invisible, nonsonorous forces" harnessed by the music of *Mille Plateaux*.⁸⁸ Under Boulez's creative gaze, the row has been re-conceptualized as Deleuzian "patchwork"; the musical series has become rhizome, a "generalized chromaticism."⁸⁹

The Trouble with Deleuze and Guattari's Musical Mappings

Nonetheless, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a generalized chromaticism—"placing elements of any nature in continuous variation [in] an operation that will perhaps give rise to new distinctions, but takes none as final and has none in advance"—is not without its paradoxes when placed alongside the music upon which it is modeled. While Boulez's music and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy both elaborate the coalescence of vertical and horizontal dimensions in terms of diagonal lines of flight, the unhinging of the interval (as interbeing) from historically sedimented coordinates, and the destratification of planes in quest of smooth space/time, their respective attitudes to heterogeneity are in fact vividly contrasting. Deleuze and Guattari would place elements "of any nature" in continuous variation; Boulez seeks out strictly "*musical*" elements for such variation. "This, then is the fundamental question," writes Boulez, "the founding of musical systems upon exclusively musical criteria, rather than proceeding from

⁸⁵ Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, pp. 172, 174.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 181.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 343.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 476, 97.

numerical, graphic or psycho-physiological symbols to a musical codification (a kind of transcription) that has not the slightest concept in common with them.”⁹⁰ Here Boulez emphasizes the radical autonomy of music, its non-reconcilable difference from externalities: number, graph, psychology, physiology. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari’s work is radically inter-disciplinary, almost anarchic in its diverse mappings (from Sylvano Bussotti to Noam Chomsky, from geometric fractal to Dogon egg), its thousand plateaus of inquiry. Far from rejecting them on grounds of non-reconciliation, Deleuze and Guattari, encourage mappings across non-identical fields (conceptual stratum as lobster’s pincer; Messiaen’s music as becoming-bird): “[The map] fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions, it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification.”⁹¹ For Deleuze and Guattari, the map modifies the content of the mapped—“becoming-child ... is not ... the becoming of the child.”⁹² The map is the rhizome, the metamorphosis produced by a line of flight.

It is an irony that Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the map as rhizome precisely derives from Boulez’s descriptions of high modernist serial procedure, operating on the basis of detachable partitions that can be individually modified, reversed, multiplied. Yet Boulez emphasizes the importance in musical composition of “making sure that all forks, twists and turns are integrated into the context,” ensuring that musical lines of flight are recouped in some kind of unified structure. This is a subtle point, for, on the one hand, it insists on the unity of experience (not unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s planes of consistency), and yet, on the other, it seems to constrain its operational field of referents aprioristically to pure, unified musical elements: a policed nomadism? It is possible of course that Boulez’s musical mappings are less unified (and his ‘purely musical’ elements less pure) than the rhetoric to support them suggests. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “tracing” and “map” accurately captures the contrast between the more obviously unified 12-tone practice of Webern (at least as Adorno conceives it) and the more nomadic post-*Structures* serialism of Boulez (at least as Deleuze conceives it): “The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged ‘competence’ ... schizoanalysis rejects any idea of pretraced destiny, whatever name is given to it—divine, anagogic, historical, economic, structural ...”⁹³ Where Webern’s carefully structured 12-tone rows arguably predestine wall-to-wall motivic unity, “always com[ing] back ‘to the same’,” Boulez’s serial transformations annul unity by splitting in several diverse directions, ever-relocating, nomadic.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 30.

⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 12.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 344 (emphasis in the original).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Still, Boulez repeatedly insists on a certain non-coalescent purity of musical language. In his critique of early integral serialism, for example, Boulez protests the nomadic blending of disciplinary spheres: “When the serial principle was first applied to all the components of sound, we were thrown bodily, or rather headlong, into a cauldron of figures, recklessly mixing mathematics with elementary arithmetic ...”⁹⁵ Boulez’s desire for non-mixed, purely musical, material leads him to posit a musical logic of “over-all and hierarchic neutrality”: He writes, “If ... one gives each sound an absolutely neuter *a priori*—as is the case with serial material—the context brings up, at each occurrence of the same sound, a different individualization of that sound.”⁹⁶ For Boulez, transformation and proliferation thus *depend* on neutralizing sound pre-compositionally. This is why he regards Webern’s absolute musical interval, unhinged from the coordinates of tonal harmony and counterpoint, as a moment of such signal historical importance: the diagonal not as rhizomic multiple but as eviscerated neuter. And, in Boulez’s view, this aprioristically non-aligned sound (premature plane of consistency?) sponsors the music’s ability to voyage into unguessed-at dimensions.

Is this the refrain required for deterritorialization? Probably not exactly. Webern’s historic achievement was, for Boulez, to annul history. Boulez’s exclusively musical material lays the foundation for a kind of utopian composition from nowhere. Boulez aspires to “strip music of its accumulated dirt and give it structure,” he states: “It was like Descartes’ ‘Cogito, ergo sum.’ I momentarily suppressed inheritance. I started from the fact that I was thinking and went on to construct a musical language from scratch.”⁹⁷ Here we find the Boulezian dream of a neutralized, non-historical sound of multiplications, as against the historically ‘bastardized’ sound of nomadic mergings and mappings.⁹⁸ Schoenberg is dead.⁹⁹

Boulez’s language of absolutes (history annulled, sound neutered, Schoenberg deceased, composition *ex nihilo*) carries awkwardly with the nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. The very idea of “making a clean slate” is regarded from the start with hostility and contempt by the latter: “starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation—all imply a false conception of voyage and movement (a conception that is methodical, pedagogical, initiatory, symbolic) ...”¹⁰⁰ For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome is “always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*”; it establishes a logic of conjunction (“and ... and ... and”) that aims to “overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings.”¹⁰¹ It is noteworthy that both Boulez, and Deleuze and Guattari seek to abolish sedimented historical modes of thought from their

⁹⁵ Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Boulez, *Notes on an Apprenticeship*, p. 175.

⁹⁷ Joan Peyser, *Boulez: Composer, Conductor, Enigma*, Cassell, 1976, p. 63.

⁹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 105.

⁹⁹ Boulez, *Notes on an Apprenticeship*, p. 268.

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 25.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

respective projects, but where Boulez posits the diagonalized interval as neutral starting point (a monad), Deleuze and Guattari posit the same as always-already *en route* (a nomad). This is Boulez's particular "freedom ... through discipline"; a carefully regulated antimemory—as against the hybridized nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari.¹⁰²

Enforced Deterritorialization: A Boulezian Century?

Does Boulez's serial technique prefigure the fundamental features of our world today? And does Deleuze and Guattari's particular reading of Boulez illuminate this uncanny resonance? In his book *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1914–1991*, Eric Hobsbawm notices the curious way the arts and aesthetics demonstrate an uncanny aptitude for prophetic foresight. "Why," he states, "fashion designers ... succeed in anticipating the shape of things to come better than professional predictors, is one of the most obscure questions in history."¹⁰³ Hobsbawm notices that by 1914 "virtually everything that can take shelter under the broad and rather undefined canopy of 'modernism' was already in place: cubism; expressionism; futurism; pure abstraction in painting; functionalism and flight from ornament in architecture; the abandonment of tonality in music; the break with tradition in literature."¹⁰⁴ For Hobsbawm, "the avant-garde revolution in the arts had already taken place before the world whose collapse it expressed actually went to pieces."¹⁰⁵ Modernism, for all its internalized self-reference (a magnified focus on its respective media, etc.) is paradoxically peculiarly predictive of the various technologies of death, and so on, to come. It is for this reason that the cultural historian should pay close attention to the evolving aesthetic modalities of art in the context of particular political conjunctures.

When it comes to Boulez's reception, the fairly predictable critical association of serialism (via Webern) with a kind of hermetic totalitarianism (the music's mathematics as anti-social hyper-integration, etc.) has given way in more recent times to a more sober, and more empirical, critical move to pin serialism and dodecaphony to the politics of the Cold War. This critique confronts the paradox that serialism's rarefied artistic retreat from commercial market values actually met with such enormous commercial success and attendant publicity in the early 1950s and beyond.¹⁰⁶ While Harry Truman still articulated a view held by many

¹⁰² Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, p. 15 and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 21, 297.

¹⁰³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1914–1991*, Vintage, 1994, p. 178.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 178–9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, The New Press, 1999 and Serge Gilbert, *How New York Stole*

Americans that linked experimental art to degenerate or subversive impulses, dodecaphony and abstract expressionism also held a contrary virtue. As a tool for foreign policy, these artistic forms spoke to a specifically anti-communist ideology, of freedom and free enterprise. Non-tonal, non-figurative and politically silent, it was the very antithesis to socialist realism. In this argument, radical art—whose explicit politics can be read as an attempt to manage or evade repetition, sentimentality, and historical reference—paradoxically, (i.e. *falsely*) parades as capitalist propaganda.

What *this* critique misses (modernism as the *false* mask of capitalism) is the *truly* uncanny prophetic resonance (in Hobsbawm's sense) of post-war radicality with the digital information network that emerged at the end of the twentieth century. Here the ridiculous argument that serialism is totalitarian (where every element has its predictable place in the series, etc.) actually comes closer to the truth, but as its inversion: serialism is totalitarianism-inside-out, a network in which *nothing* has a predictable place. This is a terrain in which the series' fixed elements are mixed, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, into concrete; or, restated in Marxist terms, a terrain in which all that is solid has been synthesized into air. Is *this* not the crisis facing us in the twenty-first century—an age of what I would call *enforced* deterritorialization, where generalized digitization coupled with economic risk and unpredictability are naturalized as everyday? Perhaps this is why Slavoj Žižek regards Jackson Pollock as *the* Deleuzian painter: “does his action-painting not directly render this flow of becoming, the impersonal-unconscious life energy, the encompassing field of virtuality out of which determinate paintings can actualize themselves, this field of pure intensities with no meaning to be unearthed by interpretation?”¹⁰⁷ It is here that one must issue a warning about the affordances of Deleuze and Guattari's transmedial thinking and point instead to the limits of their mappings and minglings. By freely mapping across media—from dodecaphony to rhizome, from musical interval to philosophical intermezzo, from smooth musical space to plane of consistency, and so on—the philosophers ignore certain prominent features of Boulez's project.

For Boulez, serialism must project itself toward risk and unpredictability. This is the terrain of perpetual crisis—the “unforeseeable,” the “unexemplated,” the “unperceived.” Such “free play” opposes the “bookkeeping,” which carefully observes the demands of the row—its combinatorial properties, and so on—to the point of becoming *obligatory*: “There is no creation except in the unforeseeable becoming necessity.”¹⁰⁸ This is the music of calculated goalpost-shifting, yielding series' whose harmonic networks elude the shrewdest decoding. This is smooth time—filled without counting; smooth space—filled without *accounting*; the machinic generation of unpredictability and rhizome. In short, what Deleuze and

the Idea of Modern Art, The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

¹⁰⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*, Routledge, 2004, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, p. 173.

Guattari miss in their conceptualization of Boulez's production is the fact that maximal uncertainty and opacity requires, as a condition for their possibility, an elusive asubjective algorithm (a non-human actor to generate the network). In other words, Boulez's quasi-mathematical multiplications (by definition unhearable) are the condition for the possibility of post-serial "rhizomic" flight. These serial structures involve two-tiered modalities of construction: on the one hand, the generative multiplication processes and, on the other, the unpredictable fields of finely proliferated networks proffered thereby; the pre-emptive, and highly centralized, algorithmic engine on the one hand, and the beautifully dispersed, but incoherent, arrays on the other; the inner workings versus the outer appearances: in sum, the technical structure of *magic*.

But is not the argus-eyed and micro-capillaried digital network, its algorithmic surveillance attuned to ever-finer gradations of *resonance* between consumer desire and niche market production, the very lifeblood of capital today? The proliferation of "Web 2.0" "social" software, and "social networking sites" (Wikipedia, MySpace, YouTube, Foursquare, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, YouPorn, LinkedIn, etc.) are platforms for supplying and storing personal data, which in turn are systematically analyzed and used to target personalized advertising to users. Quite apart from the wall-to-wall electronic surveillance that can actualize totalitarian elements in society with but the smallest tilt of logical angle, is the user-friendly network not caught precisely in the simple structure of this magic? *Transparently*, the experience of "new participatory architectures of the Web" (which Yochai Benkler's describes as a dispersed creative commons) is tethered, *opaquely* (i.e. digitized in a minefield of privacy "agreements"), to the algorithmic harvesting machine, which monitors and aggregates user-generated personal and intellectual information to companies controlling mainstream platforms, thereby delivering power to the hands of technology designers and their financiers.

Increasingly, online information sources, such as Wikipedia, no less than *MMogs* (Massive Multiple User Online Games), such as Second Life, are grounded in content that is mounted entirely by users. Benkler's terms take on an ominous tone: the "costs of production" in such volunteer-driven collaboration, he says, "is trivial."¹⁰⁹ In short, peer production becomes *immaterial*; or, again, all that is solid melts into air. Given the relative reliability and robustness of open source software, the exploitation of decentralized, non-proprietary collaboration is taking ever more systematic forms. Netflix, the online movie rental company, for example, has shifted aspects of its marketing research away from in-house computer engineers, programmers and statisticians (on payroll) to the collaborative commons (in competition): In quest of a recommendation software that could predict customers' tastes in movies 10 per cent better than their in-house software Cinematch, for instance, the company offered a million-dollar prize for the winning team. Aside from the winners (known as Bellkor, a global alliance of some 30 members), three years of labor, involving thousands of teams, from over 180 countries, missed

¹⁰⁹ Yochai Benkler, *The Wealth of Networks*, Yale University Press, 2006, p. 54.

the mark. In the words of Greg McAlpin, a software engineer (and leader of the runner-up team Ensemble): “Out of thousands you have only two that succeeded. The big lesson for me was that most of those collaborations don’t work” (*New York Times*, September 21, 2009). The simple calculus of such crowdsourcing is startling: Netflix paid for 0.1 per cent (at most) of the total labor expended on the project. Of those paid, each person received \$11,111.11 per year on a three-year limited term contract. In return, Netflix obtained a 10 per cent improvement in their predictive modeling algorithm. Benkler’s rhizome-like utopianism is disturbingly to the point: Like a hammer without a master, these hive-like collaborative efforts do not fall under the commanding attentions of the managerial class. (The question today is: Who can get lucky enough to command such attention?) The link between Boulezian serialist practice and late capitalism, then, is to be found in this mystified process of desubjectification, in which mastery and domination are hidden; high modernist serialism would in this sense have announced the future we are now living, as (apparently) unrelated innovations in the modes of control and domination. Boulezian serialism is the musical laboratory for this now generalized regime of (hidden, mystified) social control, a *mode d’emploi* for corporate cost reduction and its propaganda.

Likewise, Chevron, for example, launched an interactive online game (“Energyville”) in October 2009 that dispenses with even this 0.1 per cent marginal cost: In “Energyville” participants are “put in charge of meeting the energy demands of a city,” in a game whose rules are grounded in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s “assessment of global facts and trends obtained from numerous credible sources.”¹¹⁰ Thus Chevron, reporting record profits in 2008, can address complex scientific and business predicaments and challenges in the context of crowdsourcing—the rhizomic exploitation of online play-for-no-pay. There is a small paradoxical truth about the guiding logic of Chevron’s game embedded in the small print description on the webpage: Although its underlying algorithms model reality as accurately as possible, the description reads, “the game does not take into account the amount of time and investment needed to replace existing infrastructure with your choices.” The lack of account-taking on the side of execution (actively encouraging the gamer’s disinterest in challenges pertaining to labor) mirrors the lack of account-taking on the side of design and planning (gathered by free labor). This is a closed circuit of abstracted collective energy and effort, actively shrugging off the precariousness of working conditions even in virtual space, if not gesturing toward the outright elimination of paid work itself.

Arjun Appadurai’s recent diagnosis of what he calls “ecstatic capitalism” is relevant here.¹¹¹ Where earlier modes of capitalism were grounded in the calculative ethic of Protestant thought (the values of methodicality, discipline and sobriety

¹¹⁰ www.willyoujoinus.com/energyville.

¹¹¹ Arjun Appadurai, “The Entrepreneurial Ethic and the Spirit of Financialism: Some Weberian Thoughts on the Global Meltdown,” unpublished talk delivered at the Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University, February 23, 2009.

grounded in double-entry book-keeping, and so on), capitalism at the end of the twentieth century is characterized by the genie-like multiplication of hybridized financial instruments of opaque value, which intensify the role of speculation, optimization, chance and choice. Does this new spirit of financialism not find an uncanny resonance in the essential features of Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître*?: the genie-like multiplication of hybridized pitch and rhythm sets of opaque serial value, which in turn intensify the experience of pure musical chance. Appadurai calls the increasing focus on navigating risk via probabilistic thinking *magic*. By magic, he does not mean the dominance of mysterious or mystical thinking, but the "irrational reliance on a *technical* procedure" to solve an economic problem.¹¹² Thus magical thinking, for Appadurai, is linked to the spread of agonistic risk. And thus we return to Deleuze, via Spinoza: like all miracles, Boulezian mystification must be subjected to the Spinozian critique of miracles as quite simply the machine-like functioning of the ideological itself, hidden by hegemonic power behind the curtain of "magical" explanations or structures: "miracles," Spinoza wrote, "signify nothing other than something whose natural cause cannot be explained."¹¹³

If we draw Appadurai's analysis into a dialectical confrontation with the constitutive converse of risk, namely planning, we are faced with another dimension of magic: the appearance of risk, the reality of order. Indeed, if there is a political lesson in Boulez's *Le Marteau* today, it lies in the musical structure, which—like the surrealist poem by René Char which it exemplifies—combines extreme chaos and violence with *control* and *order*. The radical split between form and content grounds Boulez's peculiar sado-masochism at the dialectical knife edge between a brute and arbitrary authority and randomness. The lesson in Boulez is not therefore to be found in Deleuze and Guattari's emancipatory reading of it—the intermedial blending of all dialectics into the concrete mixer of deterritorialization—but rather in the two-tiered dialectical gap between hearability and unhearability; between visibility and invisibility; between the algorithmic apparatus of the insider, on the one hand, and the chaotic, seemingly decentralized, outer appearance, on the other. The dialectics of what I've called *enforced deterritorialization* echoes the irreducible uncertainty produced by what Žižek describes as being "compelled to make a decision in a situation which remains opaque to our basic condition," such that we can, in the end, understand Boulez as giving musical form to the masochistic subjection to the terrifying, ineffable Kantian law, the law which is itself the (magical/ideological) law of late capital.¹¹⁴

Does the 2008–09 financial crisis not betray the constitutive divide between the insiders who know the real numbers and the public (municipalities, insurance companies, individual traders, pension funds, etc.) who must act on the abstract

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

¹¹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, Verso, 2009, p. 63.

flight-lines of graphs and charts alone? Are the outsiders not the fools that rush in where the devils have hedgingly tread? Far from the transparency implied by the aura of the word ‘deregulation,’ does the recent wave of actual deregulation, especially the revisions of underwriting standards (whereby a financial provider gauges the eligibility of a lender to receive equity, capital, credit, etc.) for initial public stock offerings (IPOs) or for mortgage lending, for example, not precipitate the opacity with which these debt obligations can be traded? With the passing of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act in 2000, for example, financial institutions were no longer obliged to disclose derivative trades. Thus collateralized debt obligations (instituted as hybridized instruments of risk *reduction*) became the very vehicles for the intensification of risk. Through techniques of ‘laddering’ and ‘bundling’ underlying assets into esoteric diversified portfolios, powerful financial insiders manipulate share prices of packaged debt, shielding from view their real value.¹¹⁵

For all the rhizome-like speculative movement of share prices, the system is grounded in a two-tiered asymmetry: The decentralized outer appearance of risk for the many (who are left second-guessing the second-guessing); versus the predictable profiteering, yielded by high-frequency trading algorithms, for the few. As Rolfe Winkler writes: “Main Street still owns much of the risk while Wall Street gets all of the profit.”¹¹⁶ On the topic of the Enron bankruptcy scandal of January 2002, Žižek echoes the point: “those who did have the power to intervene in the situation (namely, the top managers), minimized their risks by cashing in their stocks and options before the bankruptcy. It is indeed true that we live in a society of risky choices, but it is one in which only some do the choosing, while others do the risking. ... The asymmetry gives an a priori advantage to Wall Street.”¹¹⁷ Herein lies the strange reverberation of *Le Marteau sans maître* for postmodern capitalism: for the insiders, an algorithm, a visible plan; for the outsiders, a rhizome, blind fate. On the one side, we find the hammer’s invisible master; on the other, the hammer without a master. Has the century become Boulezian?

Notes

This essay elaborates and expands upon arguments made in two recent articles: “Musical Modernism in the Thought of *Mille Plateaux*, and its Twofold Politics,”

¹¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben’s insight that the law creates the “state of exception” is relevant here. In this context, the topological structure of “*Being-outside, and yet belonging*” points to a generalized state of (economic) exception—a kind of Boulezian compositional law; or, in Agamben’s words, a “law without a law”. See Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell, The University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 35 and 39.

¹¹⁶ Cited in Frank Rich, “Goldman Sachs Can Spare You a Dime,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2009.

¹¹⁷ Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, p. 13.

Perspectives of New Music, 2009, Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer 2008; and “Music in the Thought of Deconstruction / Deconstruction in the Thought of Music” (*Muzikološki Zbornik / Musicological Annual XLI*, Vol. 2 (Special Edition *Glasba in Destrukcija / Music and Deconstruction*), 2005, 81–104. Sections have been reproduced here with permission. I would like to thank Nick Nesbitt and Brian Hulse for their astute readings of and insightful comments on previous drafts of this paper. These have deeply enriched the argument.

Chapter 6

Gilles Deleuze and the Musical Spinoza

Amy Cimini

In the conclusion to her groundbreaking “Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/Body Problem,” Suzanne Cusick speculates about what the study of philosophy might contribute to the study of embodied musical practice, exhorting music theorists to join musicologists in developing critical and methodological perspectives on what was, then, a new and transformative disciplinary interest in performing and listening bodies. What is at stake for Cusick is nothing less than the overcoming of Cartesian dualism’s notorious separation of mind from body. She asserts that “it is in that philosophically-oriented corner of the discipline [music theory] that I would expect a theory of musical bodies to flourish ... *a theory that can resolve or transcend the Mind/Body problem.*”¹

In response to Cusick’s anti-dualist injunction, this chapter is based around one such “theory,” reading Gilles Deleuze’s musical thought through his philosophical relation to seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza—one of the earliest critics of the dualist paradigm for mind/body relatedness. In the broadest sense, this chapter unfurls a narrative in the history of ideas in which music studies may find the resolution of the mind/body problem already at work, while at the same time illuminating how Deleuze’s Spinozistic philosophical position lends the materiality of musical sound and the bodies that produce and experience it a specifically ethical orientation. By situating Deleuze’s musical thought squarely within Spinoza’s philosophy, this chapter details the ontological bases for the construal of mind/body relations upon which Deleuze predicates music’s ethical potential.

At the end of his *Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze’s stunning and concise guide to Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Deleuze implies that there exists some subtle affinity between music and Spinoza’s ontology. Here, Deleuze uses music to model nothing less than *how to live*, granting both musical form and sonic materiality a specifically ethical valence.

The important thing is to understand life, each living individuality, not as a form or a development of form, but as a complex relation between different velocities between deceleration and acceleration of particles. A composition of speeds and slownesses on a plane of immanence. In the same way, a musical form will

¹ Suzanne Cusick, “Feminist Theory, Music Theory and the Mind/Body Problem,” *Perspectives of New Music* 32/1 (Winter, 1994), pp. 8–27. My italics.

depend on a complex relation between speeds and slownesses of sound particles. It is not just a matter of music but of how to live; it is by speed and slowness that one slips in among things, that one connects with something else.²

This passage offers three remarkable claims that, taken together, guide this chapter's inquiry into the Spinozistic and ethical dimensions of Deleuze's musical thought. First, Deleuze intimates a radical reduction of what constitutes musical form, which here appears contingent only upon the variable speeds at which sound moves in, through and as matter. Second, he understands *all* life through these same categories of movement and velocity, implying that individual life forms are constituted in precisely the same way as musical forms. Deleuze's thinking on music, it seems, will not respect a separation of non-organic from organic life. Thirdly, Deleuze grafts *ethics* onto this already complex analogy, asserting that there is nothing less at stake in understanding "speeds and slownesses" than understanding *how to live*. Music, it seems, has something to tell us not only about the nature of individual life forms, but also about how they should ethically interact with one another.

By casting these remarkable wagers about music's capacities as exemplary of Spinozistic concepts, Deleuze crafts an evocative tie between Spinozism and musicality. In the twentieth century, many philosophers who pay special attention to music also avow Spinoza as a philosophical influence—Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Henri Bergson, and, of course, Gilles Deleuze are part of this intellectual historical narrative. This linkage of Spinozism with music, itself a nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomenon, invites musically oriented readers to speculate about the intellectual historical conditions under which Spinoza's ontology is understood as having an affinity with musical creativity. The emergence of Spinozistic musicality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, contrasts starkly with the reception of Spinoza's work in his own intellectual historical moment—and becomes all the more curious given that his oeuvre contains next to no writing about music.

Spinoza was born in 1632, in the Sephardic Jewish community in Amsterdam. His family had moved to the Dutch Republic to join the growing community of Iberian Jews seeking refuge from the Spanish Inquisition in Amsterdam, a prime destination for Spanish and Portuguese Jews due to the Dutch Republic's then-unique guarantee of religious freedom. Article 13 of The Union of Utrecht (1579) mandated that "every individual shall remain free in his religion and no one should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship."³ The influx of Spanish and Portuguese Jews would not begin until the early seventeenth century, and

² Gilles Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley, City Lights, 1988.

³ Stephen Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy: Immortality and the Jewish Mind*, Clarendon, 2001, p. 8. This text offers a fascinating biographical and intellectual historical account of the complex roles Dutch politics, Jewish law and Jewish philosophy played Spinoza's philosophical positions.

although, as philosopher and Spinoza biographer Stephen Nadler points out, the framers of Article 13 “seem not to have considered the possibility that it would someday have to accommodate Jews,”⁴ Dutch law mandated that Amsterdam’s Sephardic Jewish community be permitted to practice Judaism openly.

Despite his publically noted intellectual potential, Spinoza was banned from Amsterdam’s Jewish community in 1656—at the young age of 23.⁵ The shockingly harsh writ of expulsion that publically performed Spinoza’s banishment describes Spinoza’s offenses against his community as “evil opinions” and “monstrous acts,” but doesn’t specify the content of those opinions or acts. Here is an extract from the anomalously vicious writ that barred Spinoza not only from religious practice, but also from the social, political and economic life of his community:

[we] have long known of the evil opinions and acts of Baruch de Spinoza ... by decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Spinoza with the consent of God ... Cursed be he by day, cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smote against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.⁶

Because Spinoza has published no work, philosophical or otherwise, at this point, it is very difficult to locate textual evidence of Spinoza’s intellectual monstrosities. Spinoza’s extant letters contain absolutely no references to this period of his life, and so, again, offer no clues about these damnable acts and opinions.⁷ After having been marked as a dangerous thinker prior to having produced any philosophical work, Spinoza published little work during his lifetime, with the notable exceptions of his *Principles of Descartes’ Philosophy* (1663) and *Theological-Political Treatise* (1670). The *Ethics*, the text with which this chapter is most engaged, often regarded as the definitive articulation of Spinoza’s ontology, appears posthumously in 1677.

⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵ Although it is commonly said that Spinoza was *excommunicated* from the Jewish community in Amsterdam, Nadler asserts that it is more accurate to refer to Spinoza as having been “banished” or “banned” from that community. According to Nadler, the concept of “excommunication” doesn’t quite capture the economic, social and political dimensions of Spinoza’s forcible removal from his community. Additionally, Nadler claims, Judaism “is a religion that has no ‘communion’ to begin with, no formal set of obligatory sacraments and rights from which one can be excluded.” And so, I refer to Spinoza’s exclusion from Amsterdam’s Sephardim henceforth as a “ban.” Nadler, *Spinoza’s Heresy*, p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

Despite his low philosophical profile, Spinoza became known as one of the finest expositors of Descartes' thought of his time. At the request of his friend, Ludwig Meyer, Spinoza reluctantly agreed to publish his own summary of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* and parts of the *Cogitata Metaphysica* in 1664, in which Spinoza explicates these texts' ideas and manner of argumentation using the geometrical method, which Spinoza would also deploy later in his *Ethics*. And yet, in his work following the *Principles*, Spinoza would use his expertise in Cartesian thought to overturn some of its most foundational principles.

As is well known, the doctrine of Cartesian dualism maintains that minds and bodies are of two distinct, separate substances—an incorporeal, thinking substance and a corporeal extended substance. Because the mind is understood to be able to cause its ideas *and* affirm its own existence without the help of the body, these substances are understood to be fundamentally independent of one another. But if, as the classic challenge to dualism goes, these substances are *truly* independent of one another, how is it possible that they unite to constitute the human subject? Spinoza, like many of Descartes' interlocutors before him,⁸ asserts that Descartes does not adequately account for the *connection* of mind to body that makes humans human. Spinoza resolves the problem of the Cartesian mind/body union by re-thinking the nature of substance. That is, instead of claiming that *two* substances constitute the human being, Spinoza asserts that *everything that exists* (including, of course, human minds and bodies) exists in a *single, infinite substance*—grounding the ontological position known as *substance monism*.

In Spinoza's monistic ontology, mind and body *do* retain a very clear distinction although they are not distinguished by virtue of their being separate substances. Instead, mind and body (or, in the words of both Spinoza and Descartes thought and extension) appear in Spinoza's philosophy as *attributes* of the single, infinite substance that comprises all that exists. Spinoza defines an attribute as "what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence."⁹ The attributes are

⁸ In their celebrated correspondence, which spanned 1644 to 1650, Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia asked, as Spinoza will do years later, *how* exactly an immaterial substance such as the mind can conceivably act on an extended substance such as the human body. In order for the mind to control the "bodily spirits," Elisabeth writes, the mind has to make *contact* with the body. How can the mind *make contact* with an extended thing if it is not itself an extended thing? Interestingly, Descartes's response to Elisabeth is not philosophical, but practical. As Daniel Garber summarizes, "the primitive notion of mind-body unity is made 'familiar to us' only through the senses. Descartes recommends that the young Princess *abstain* from philosophy, and re-enter everyday life," in order to explore the unity of mind and body through sense experience. For more detailed account of Descartes's response to Elisabeth, see Daniel Garber, *Descartes Embodied: Reading Cartesian Philosophy Through Cartesian Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, and "The Philosopher and the Princess: Descartes and the Philosophical Life," in Genevieve Lloyd (ed.), *Providence Lost*, Harvard University Press, 2008.

⁹ Spinoza uses the geometrical method to write *The Ethics* as a set of proofs. Here, I follow the precedents set in the secondary literature on Spinoza by citing the text using part

not properties or qualities of substance; they are instead ways in which substance expresses its reality to human subjects. As two different forms of expression, the attributes remain separate and distinct although they are ontologically united in a single substance. Because Spinoza's single substance is itself infinite, this substance is understood to be able to express itself through infinitely many attributes, even though humans have perceptual access to thought and extension. In Bertrand Russell's words, the attributes' infinitude imply that "we should not let our familiarity with mind and matter blind us to the possibility that there may be a multiplicity of other ways of understanding reality."¹⁰

In Spinoza's philosophy, thought and extension are two equally valid and adequate perspectives through which to understand substance in its entirety. Because thought and extension refer to the same substance, they are, in contrast to the Cartesian model for mind/body relations, absolutely inseparable. Spinoza's monistic solution to the Cartesian problem of mind/body connectedness has powerful ramifications for what it means to have a mind and a body. Because everything that exists can be conceived under the attributes of both extension *and* thought, for every body that exists, there also exists some type of mind. Spinoza thus endows all things, organic or inorganic, human or non-human, with the capacity for some form of thought—thought no longer rests exclusively with the human being. Deleuze focuses this anti-anthropocentric dimension of Spinoza's thought on musical experience when he likens musical materiality (or "sound particles") to living individualities. Through Spinoza, Deleuze is able to forge this link precisely because musical sound and living individualities are not qualitatively different—both have a share in the same infinite substance that constitutes all things and both can be conceived under the attributes through which we understand that substance.

Spinoza explains that "the mind and body are one and the same individual, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension."¹¹ Like substance, the human individual can be conceived fully and completely under the attributes of thought and extension. Like thought and extension, mind and body are not two *parts* whose union constitutes the *whole* human individual; rather, as distinct perspectives on a single substantial individual, each expresses that individual's reality with equal power. Spinoza asserts that we cannot understand the nature of the human mind without understanding the nature of the human body precisely because "the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body."¹² How should we understand the nature of the mind and body if they are co-constitutive in this way? Unlike the Cartesian thinker, the Spinozistic

numbers, followed by proposition numbers, citing Scholia, Definitions and Lemma when relevant. The extract I cite above comes from the Definitions with which Spinoza begins Part One of the *Ethics*, "Of God." *Ethics* I, D4.

¹⁰ Quoted in Genevieve Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, Routledge, 1996, p. 37.

¹¹ *Ethics*, II, P21, Scholium.

¹² *Ethics*, II, P13.

thinker cannot quarantine his or her mental life from the material world precisely because he or she is always already substantially united to that world. Under substance monism, the Spinozistic mind simply cannot be “a repository of private mental concepts set over and against an outer world.”¹³ Instead, that “outer world” becomes the mind’s proper object and the ideas the mind forms as a result of bodily affections come to constitute the mind itself. The world of sense data, then, can no longer be properly called an “outer” world because, in Spinoza’s ontology, that sensory data enjoys a *constitutive* relation to mental life.

This constitutive relationship between mind and body entails a very specific understanding of what ideas are. Spinoza explains, “By idea, I understand a concept of the mind which the mind forms because it is a thinking thing,” and goes on to elaborate that, “I say concept rather than perception, because the word perception seems to indicate that the mind is acted upon by the object. But concept seems to express an action of the mind.”¹⁴ For Spinoza, every act of perception is tantamount to the production of a mental concept. Because that concept, in turn, comes to constitute the mind, the Spinozistic mind simply *is* its capacity to produce concepts. The difference between sense data and mental images is only contingent upon the attribute under which we conceive that affection. Because, for Spinoza, sensation and ideation do not occur in two ontologically separate domains, he challenges his readers to think the sensation and the production of concepts as happening absolutely simultaneously within a single, indivisible human subject.

The capacities of the body and the mind, in Spinoza’s thought, enjoy the same simultaneous relation as sensation and ideation. That is, because the body’s affections constitute the mind’s ideas, the body’s capability to receive sense data also constitutes the mind’s power to produce concepts. Spinoza writes that “the human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things and is the more capable the more its body can be disposed in a great many ways.”¹⁵ Deleuze describes the relation of bodily to mental capacities as “a matter of acquiring knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover, in a parallel fashion, powers of the mind that elude consciousness.... It is by one and the same moment,” he continues, “that we shall manage, if possible, to capture the power of the body beyond the given conditions of our knowledge and to capture the power of the mind behind the given condition of our consciousness.”¹⁶ It is within this parallel increase in mental and bodily capacities, made possible by Spinoza’s monistic understanding of mind/body relatedness that Spinoza’s *ethics* begin to come into focus—that is, Spinoza mandates that *we pursue this increase in capacities such that we increase the same capacities in all others with whom we come into contact*. In so doing, we

¹³ Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Ethics*, II, D3.

¹⁵ *Ethics*, II, P14.

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 18.



increase the power to “persevere in existing” in all the individuals with whom we are ontologically connected.

For human agents, persevering in existence entails taking an active orientation toward bodily affections and mental ideas such that we extract from those affections their determining causes. The rational pursuit of knowledge regarding the causes of our bodily and mental affections grants us greater knowledge about our reality, allowing our minds to produce ever more powerful and more complex concepts, which, in Spinoza’s words, makes the mind ever more perfect. The collection of actions in and through which the mind attains greater perfection are associated with the affect of *joy*. “By joy,” Spinoza explains simply, “I shall understand ... that passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection.”¹⁷ Spinoza, here, binds reason together with joy to posit what Genevieve Lloyd calls an “alternative form of rational emotion”¹⁸ as the motivating force behind the ethical pursuit of greater mental and bodily capacities; unlike much Enlightenment thought, Spinoza’s ontology does not respect a clear separation of rationality from affectivity. Ethics, for Spinoza, is not only the pursuit of greater capacities, but also the experience and transmission of the joy that those capacities produce.

It is within this Spinozistic delimitation of ethics and the monistic understanding of mind/body relations that subtends it that Deleuze tells us that music has something to tell us about how to live. And yet Deleuze offers few hints regarding *how* music is supposed to help us achieve any form of Spinozistic joy. What Deleuze does do, however, is offer a construal of music’s very materiality that proceeds in lockstep with Spinoza’s understanding of extension. In Deleuze’s hands, music becomes a model for the material dimension of Spinoza’s ontology. Although Deleuze implies that music’s affinity with Spinozistic materialism carries some form of latent ethical content, he is unclear about the nature of this content and the practices that its realization might require. By using Spinoza’s understanding of matter to think through musical materiality, Deleuze *does* develop a unique conception of what music and sound are made of, but leaves the ethical potential of this conception unrealized.

In the passage from *Practical Philosophy* with which I began this chapter, Deleuze refers to the constitutive units of musical forms as “sound particles.” Bypassing formal musical constructs such as phrase and sentence *as well as* parameters such as timbre, rhythm, duration, or register, Deleuze’s understanding of musical form relies upon the materiality of sound itself. But Deleuze’s construal of musical materiality differs significantly from common figurations of musical sound as having immersive qualities. Studying sound’s capacity to touch, envelop and enter a listener’s bodily space, effacing the possibility of stably separating inside from outside and self from other has occupied thinkers ranging from Immanuel Kant, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, through the New Musicologists of the 1990s. And yet the species of sonic materiality that subtends these effects does not

¹⁷ *Ethics*, III, P11, Scholium.

¹⁸ Lloyd, *Spinoza and the Ethics*, p. 10.

quite square with the Spinozistic materiality Deleuze offers in *Practical Philosophy*. Deleuze does not figure sound as moving through air and matter as a vibrating, periodic wave, but instead as a collection of small particles individuated by their unique “speeds and slownesses.” Musical form is articulated by the interactions and compatibilities between and amongst those speeds, while Deleuzian sound is literally “made” of bounded, molecule-like units, not regular or periodic waves.

And so the Deleuze of *Practical Philosophy* sketches quite an idiosyncratic picture of musical materiality that lacks, or at least de-emphasizes, the immersive qualities typically ascribed to sonic experience. This reconfiguration of musical materiality follows directly from Deleuze’s unique concatenation of sound with Spinoza’s understanding of matter more generally. In the most basic sense, Spinozistic bodies do not pass through or envelop one another. Instead, they join together, creating ever larger, ever more complex bodies whose constitutive parts affect and are affected by one another. Contact between Spinozistic bodies *always* entails a form of mutual affectivity in which each body’s capacities are modulated by the bodies to which they are joined.

In *Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze lifts his identification of sound particles with speed directly out of Part II of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. As Spinoza explains, “Bodies are distinguished from one another by reason of motion and rest, *speed and slowness* and not by reason of substance.”¹⁹ Invoking the cornerstone of his monistic ontology, yet again, Spinoza reminds us that all bodies—people, clouds, goldfish, rocks, blades of grass—are made of the same substance. In most of Part II, Spinoza refers to each body’s “speeds and slownesses” as that body’s unique and individual “ratio of motion to rest.” These ontologically unified bodies are distinguished from one another through the degrees of motion of which they are capable. Spinoza’s concept of the “ratio of motion to rest” describes the unique collection of activities of which any body is capable, articulating a continuum of capacities that ranges from the most complex, difficult and demanding activities that body can accomplish to the absolutely minimal unity of activity that body requires in order to maintain its existence. Taken together, these maximal and minimal degrees of activity define what a body can do—what that body can do, then, becomes what makes that body different from the infinitely many bodies that surround it.

And yet a single Spinozistic body does not, in itself, determine and maintain its own constitutive ratio of motion to rest as an autonomous, independent agent. Rather, how that body inhabits its capacity for motion is, at any given moment, contingent upon the motion and rest of the infinite expanse of bodies of which it is a part. To this end, Spinoza writes: “A body which moves or is at rest must be determined to motion or rest by another body, which has also been determined to motion and that again by another and so on to infinity.”²⁰ In other words, the way in which any single body inhabits the continuum that describes its maximal and

¹⁹ *Ethics*, II, P12, Lemma 1, my italics.

²⁰ *Ethics*, IIP12, Lemma 3.

minimal capacities depends on *how* the infinite bodies that surround it inhabit *their* capacities. Taken together, this infinite concatenation of bodies constitutes, in Deleuze's words, a "Nature that is itself an individual varying in an infinite number of ways."²¹ All Spinozistic bodies thereby depend on one another for the sustenance and augmentation of their own capacities, installing a quasi-communitarian ethos of mutual interdependence and sustainability at the level of matter itself. Down to its smallest unit, the Spinozistic material world appears to be an infinite expanse of vibrating bodies which constantly affect and are affected by one another.

In a certain sense, then, the Spinozistic material world literally vibrates with mutually affective and mutually sustaining activity. The challenge, in Spinoza's ethics, is to inhabit that vibrational material expanse such that we join with other bodies that positively affect our constitutive ratio of motion to rest, empowering the body to preserve itself with ever-increasing strength—which, of course, compels the mind, in parallel fashion, to augment its power to produce concepts. However, by using music and the molecule-like sound particles that constitute it to describe *only* Spinoza's understanding of matter, Deleuze fails to enfold his understanding of musical materiality into the vision of joyful ethical life that Spinoza's philosophy, as a whole, elaborates. In other words, the Deleuzian sound particle *describes* how the material world *is* but does little work illustrating what the role of materiality, musical or otherwise, in ethical life *should be*. In short, Deleuze does not accomplish the leap from the ontological to the ethical that *Practical Philosophy*, at times, seems to promise.

It is precisely in this difficult lacuna that a musicological intervention in theorizing the ethics of Deleuzian-Spinozistic musicality might begin. In order to think musical experience from within this philosophical paradigm, we would have to think of that experience as composed of bodies and minds that are not, at their core, qualitatively different. Like any other body in Spinoza's thought, listeners, performers, instruments, spaces, musical forms, and sonorous vibration are ontologically united, distinguished only on the basis of their capacity to affect and be affected by one another. Studying a scene of listening and/or performance *Spinozistically* would entail unpacking the mutually affective play between and among these capacities. Performance and/or listening, then, becomes nothing more and nothing less than the joining together of many always already ontologically unified bodies to form a large, extremely complex composite body held together by an equally complex network of compatible, yet infinitely variable, ratios of motion to rest. The meetings of two, or more, ratios of motion to rest compels each constituent body to express its capacity in a way that is unique to its concatenation with others. The creation of the composite body allows the heterogeneous elements that compose it to express shared, emergent affinities that otherwise remain unrealized—affinities that, in a musically sonorous complex body would express mutual affectivities between, for example, player and instrument, listener and instrument, instrument and air, sound particle and sound wave. Listening, then,

²¹ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 122.

becomes an experience of *not only* joining with the composite body, but engaging a set of relationships constituted by their ability to change the bodily and mental capacities of their component parts.

And yet a closer look shows that Deleuze's particle-like understanding of musical materiality puts a few obstacles in the way of further developing this Spinozistic perspective on musical experience. What, exactly, *is* a "sound particle"? What would it take to conceptualize small units of sound as modulating one another's capacities in the manner of the Spinozistic bodies for which the Deleuzian sound particle serves as a model? Although atomistic understandings of sound date back to Stoic philosophies of matter, sonic atomism emerges in the twentieth century as the theory of sonic materiality upon which, for example, the practice of granular synthesis is grounded. Like Deleuze's Spinozistic sound particle, granular synthesis is based on the principle that sound waves can be "anatomically reduced to physical particles."²² All sound, under this logic, is understood as a collection "of grains, of elementary sonic particles, of sonic quanta"²³—this collection of grains *could*, as I'll discuss shortly, be conceived as some kind of composite body in Deleuzian-Spinozistic terms. In practice, granular synthesis isolates these "particles" by "dividing audio source material into tiny segments (around 50ms, or 0.05s)"²⁴ and then enclosing them within an amplitude envelope to form discrete and bounded atom-like microsounds, called "grains." It then becomes possible to compose with these grains by controlling their sequence and density relations.

Iannis Xenakis was one of the first composers to explore the mathematical practices and compositional aesthetics of granular synthesis, which he elaborates in his 1971 *Formalized Music*. There, Xenakis situates his study of sonic grains using an evocative analogy with light. He writes,

A complex sound may be imagined as a multi-colored firework in which each point of light appears and instantaneously disappears against a black sky. But in this firework there would be such a quantity of points of light organized in such a way that their rapid and teeming succession would create forms and spirals, slowly unfolding, or conversely, brief explosions setting the whole sky aflame. A line of light would be created by a sufficiently large multitude of points of light appearing and disappearing instantaneously.²⁵

As Deleuze does with sound particles, Xenakis classifies points of light according to their speed, be it their "rapid succession" or their "slow unfolding." Indeed, Xenakis reminds us that we can track these movements by observing the

²² Mitchell Whitelaw, "Sound Particles and Microsonic Materialism," *Contemporary Music Review*, 22/4 (November 2003): 93–100.

²³ Iannis Xenakis, *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*, Indiana University Press, 1971, p. 43.

²⁴ Whitelaw, "Sound Particles and Microsonic Materialism," p. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–4.

rate at which a collection of light particles moves from visibility into invisibility. The movement of these singular points of light both constitutes and determines the shape, movement and intensity of the firework as whole. Like Deleuze, Xenakis attributes the production of form to speed and movement; that is, both imply that form is not imposed upon matter from without, but that form is an emergent property of matter itself. And yet, although Xenakis and Deleuze share this perspective on movement's generative relation to form, Xenakis stops short of the more radical association of movement with an infinite variance of matter's capacities that Deleuze's account requires in order to maintain its ties to Spinozism. Under this reading, the sound particle that is supposed to exemplify Spinoza's seventeenth-century materialism and the sound particle of Xenakis' twentieth-century modernist aesthetics begin to enter into a conflictual relationship; as a heuristic tool, Deleuze's sound particle carries with it two historicities whose incompatibilities may be starting, here, to emerge.

The compositional methods Xenakis outlines in *Formalized Music* require him to develop much more specific parameters for individuating sound particles than Deleuze does when he impressionistically charts the particles' "speeds and slownesses." Xenakis begins by defining any single grain as a unique "instantaneous association of frequency and intensity."²⁶ By ascribing an identity to each grain based on pitch and volume, Xenakis forces the mobile sound particle to stand still for identification and classification—a stasis and isolation that Deleuze's Spinozistic particle can never achieve by virtue of its ontological connection to all other matter. Although Xenakis appears, like Deleuze, to understand matter through its styles of movement, Xenakis's concern with identifying and representing microsonic grains requires that each grain be treated as a singular, autonomous individual; this, of course, compels him to extract each grain from the collection of grains with which it concatenates to produce what Xenakis calls a *complex sound*, or what Deleuze would Spinozistically call a *composite sonorous body*.

As Xenakis explains, "all sound, even continuous musical variation, is conceived as an assemblage of a large number of elementary sounds adequately disposed in time. In the attack, body and decline of complex sounds, thousands of pure sounds [sonic grains] appear in a more or less short interval of time."²⁷ Much like the earlier firework analogy, Xenakis articulates the temporal characteristics of sonic grains by charting their unique periods of duration and decay. If, for Xenakis, the nature of a complex sound emerges in and through each grain's movement between audibility and silence—that is, if its form remains immanent to the movement of its constitutive parts—then it remains possible to continue tying Xenakis's complex sound to a Deleuzian-Spinozistic understanding of materiality. And yet a closer look at the representational strategies by which Xenakis renders

²⁶ Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, p. 46.

²⁷ Cited in Curtis Roads, with John Strawn, Curtis Abbott, John Gordon, and Philip Greenspun, *The Computer Music Tutorial*, The MIT Press, 1996, p. 169.

each grain's temporal characteristics shows this link to be quite tenuous, cleaving Xenakis and Deleuze increasingly farther apart.

This is how Xenakis's representational process works. He excerpts a very small "time-slice," in the order of 0.04 seconds in length, from any "complex sound" or "continuous musical variation." This two-dimensional time-slice is organized as a grid (which he refers to as a "screen") in which the x-axis represents increasingly higher frequency and the y-axis represents increasingly higher intensity. The screen represents the range of frequencies and intensity that Xenakis thinks are audible to human subjects; it models our aural capacities in the most basic sense. He then plots all of the grains found in that particular time-slice onto that screen. Figure 6.1 interprets Xenakis's examples of how grains can be plotted upon a time-slice screen.²⁸

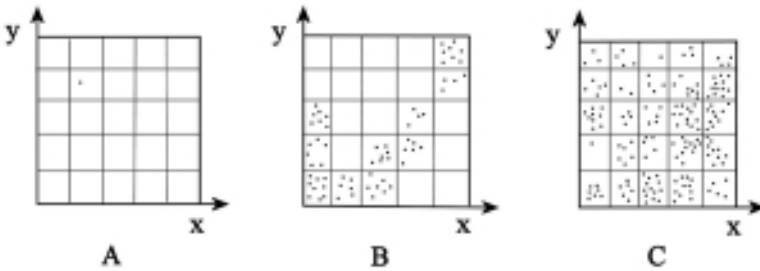


Figure 6.1 Sound particles plotted in Xenakis's time-slice screens

Screen A plots one single grain of relatively high intensity and relatively low frequency onto Xenakis's screen. Screens B and C show two different collections of grains of varying intensities and frequencies. Once *many* grains are plotted onto the intensity-frequency space of the screen, we can see contrasts between screens based on the appearance of differing grain densities in differing intensity-frequency domains. A sequence of temporally successive screens (or time-slices) will show the changes in density, frequency and intensity that constitute a continuous sound. Xenakis refers to such a sequence as a "book of screens," which represents "the life of a continuous sound." Such a "book" is rendered in Figure 6.2.²⁹ By turning the page-like "screens" of this book, we can get a sense of how grains move and change between the very short intervals of time each screen represents.³⁰

Although Deleuze might not object to *representing* sound particles as such, the figuration of movement that Xenakis's representational strategy entails does not square with Deleuze's Spinozistically inflected understanding of movement. Thinking the sound particle's different sequential positions within frequency-

²⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰ Ibid.

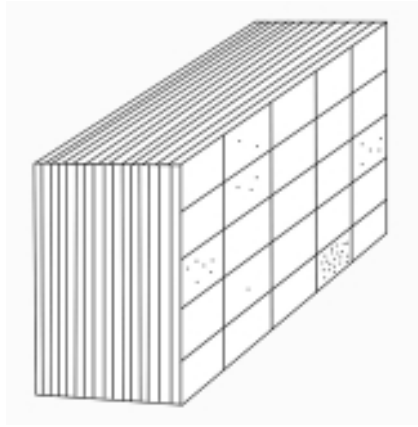


Figure 6.2 A book of screens (life of a complex sound)

intensity space from a Deleuzian perspective requires thinking their movement as indexing much more than alterations in frequency and intensity. Rather, in Deleuze's thought, those alterations express that particle's realization of one of the infinite capacities articulated by its constitutive ratio of motion to rest. What looks in Xenakis's rendering like a new position on the screen's grid would, under a Deleuzian reading, constitute the realization of a capacity always already immanent to the particle itself. Or, more radically, it might also show that particle, like any Spinozistic body, expanding the range of activities its constitutive ratio can accommodate, moving closer or farther from the maximal and minimal capacities that ratio delineates. A Deleuzian book of screens would dispense with Xenakis' demarcation of maximal and minimal intensities and frequency, counting silence as an instantiation of the particle at rest, while at the same time refusing to prescribe in advance what the particle can do at maximal capacity.

Any representation of the Deleuzian sound particle must, according to Deleuze, proceed without designating any parameters in advance; such a rendering, Deleuze asserts would somehow have to be "in principle infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; [having] neither top nor bottom or center; [not assigning] fixed and mobile elements but rather distributing a continuous variation."³¹ Under this logic, the infinite expanse of mutually affective bodies essential to Spinoza's ontology becomes absolutely incompatible with Xenakis's thoroughly bounded representation of granular movement. In order to translate Xenakis's book into Deleuzian terms, we would have to first dissolve the edges that articulate Xenakis's delimitation of aural and sonic capacity, opening the particles rendered on the screen to the infinity of matter to which they are ontologically joined.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp. 475–6.

To render forth the “continuous variation” produced by this ontological unity of matter, a Deleuzian book ought not be scored into a set of individual, successive screens but instead unfold as a unitary, three-dimensional block that does not, in advance, presume the intervals at which a particle expresses its capacity for motion and transformation.

Deleuze wants to use the moving sound particle to model the movement of bodies between and amongst one another. Deleuze wants that analogy, in turn, to encourage philosophical and practical reflection on what is the most Spinozistically ethical way to move between and amongst the infinite expanse of bodies to which we are ontologically unified. A strange species of musical materiality emerges from this evocative and powerful analogy—strange because, in Spinoza’s philosophical system, that materiality is *ontologically* understood as having a share in the production of ethical life. And yet examining the *history* of that sound particle—the figure through which this rich association of ethics and musical materiality begins to emerge in *Practical Philosophy*—reveals it to be ambivalent, and perhaps somewhat ill-fit for the analogical work that Deleuze asks it to do.

Xenakis shares Deleuze’s prioritization of the movement of sonic matter over its form, asserting that the production of form follows immanently from matter’s patterns of movement, and not the other way around. And yet, Xenakis engages the vibrating field of musical matter much differently. Deleuze invites readers of *Practical Philosophy* to use moving sound particle as a model for an ethics “founded upon ‘slipping among’ differing though ontologically united bodies.” Deleuze’s analogy works because, in Spinoza’s ontology, *all* of these bodies, regardless of their complexity or capacities, have the potential to participate in the production of ethical life and the joyful affects that it entails. In contrast, Xenakis’ *compositional processes* modulate his sound particles’ characteristics such that they lose the ontological unity and differential mobility at the core of their ethical potential in a Deleuzian-Spinozistic framework. When Xenakis isolates the sound particle in order to identify and map it as a discrete and autonomous unit, he deploys parameters and processes for individuation that directly oppose the ontology that supports the Deleuzian-Spinozistic sound particle’s concatenation with other particles. By severing the sound particle from the forms of concatenation which make Deleuzian-Spinozistic alterations of bodily capacities possible, Xenakis drains that particle of its ethical potential.

Despite departing from Deleuze’s Spinozistic position on musical materiality, the telos of Xenakis’ compositional practice does, ultimately, become intelligible within a Deleuzian-Spinozistic perspective. Although Xenakis doesn’t avow an ontology in which it is possible for microsonic grains to have, in themselves, a share in understanding “how to live,” Xenakis’s interest in the physical constitution of sound produces a prescription for listening that, in Deleuze’s words, asks us “to discover more in the body that we know.”³² In order to *hear* Xenakis’s “sound particle,” to accomplish something like *granular listening*, we

³² Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 18.

would have to radically re-imagine our aural capacities by expanding the scales at which we are able to hear. That is, we'd have to perceive *macrosonic* phenomena (that is, our experience of massive aggregations of sound particles, like sweeping orchestral crescendoes or a thundering subway train) while also considering the *microsonic* grains that, together, produce that sounds' character and capacities. Working as "an architect in sonic material," Xenakis asks us to listen *using* the granular conception of sonic material upon which his compositional process is grounded.

And yet recall that Deleuze glosses Spinoza's ethics of psychic and mental empowerment as "a matter of acquiring knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover, in a parallel fashion, *powers of the mind that escape consciousness*. [When we compare the mind with the body] one will engage in a comparison of powers that leads us to discover more in the body that we know and hence *more in the mind than we are conscious of*."³³ Without a basis in an ontology that offers a robust account of mind/body relatedness, it's hard to see how the demands Xenakis makes on our aural abilities might catalyze a parallel increase in our capacity to produce mental concepts. In contrast, the monistic ontology through which Spinoza elaborates his approach to mind/body relatedness offers precisely such an account, providing a rich starting point from which to think musical experience through the co-constitutive relations between mind and body. Because Deleuze's sound particle carries the weight of Spinoza's substance monism behind it, we can conceptualize it as ontologically connected to composite bodies of comparatively greater size and complexity. By conceptualizing musical materiality as composed of precisely these kinds of bodies, musical experience becomes a site from which we can ask, in Deleuze's words, "How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual *ad infinitum*? How can a being take another being into its world while preserving the other's own relations and world?"³⁴ From a Spinozistic perspective, the second query asks the more directly ethical question; that is, how do we increase one another's bodily and mental capacities by joining together to create complex composite bodies?

Ultimately, pursuing the overcoming of dualism—that is, responding to the injunction that, in part, inspired this chapter—from a philosophical perspective not only produces a conception of mind/body relatedness that is both co-constitutive and immanently connected, but also invites a radical reconceptualization of how musical materiality is constituted and, perhaps more importantly, what it is capable of. By leaning on Spinoza's monist position and the erasure of the differences between living individualities and sonic materiality it makes possible, Deleuze radically widens the field of what is possible with regards to the mutual increase of capacities essential to Spinoza's ethics. In order to conceptualize this field of mutual affectivity *aurally*, Deleuze's Spinozistic position encourages forms of listening that are at once much broader and much more minute in scope

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 126.

than, for example, listening strategies that prioritize formal development or harmonic function. A Deleuzian listening must somehow be able, on the one hand, to account for the infinite concatenation of matter whose movement continually affects and conditions any sonic or musical event, while, on the other, attend to the sonorous bodies whose differential micro-movements produce form as an emergent property.

Taken together, these two forms of listening, themselves culled from Spinoza's understanding of matter, encourage precisely the parallel increase in bodily and mental capacities; that is, to listen in this way is at the same time to posit musical listening as having a share in the production of a Spinozistic ethics of joy.

Chapter 7

Intensity, Music, and Heterogenesis in Deleuze*

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Introduction

Intensity, Music, and Heterogenesis

It must not be forgotten that Deleuze was never a musician, as he points out in his account of the invitation addressed to him by IRCAM with Foucault and Barthes.¹ While Deleuze wrote on literature, painting and cinema, however, he planned to write a book one day on the composer Maurice Ravel. Deleuze's readers—be they distracted or attentive, music specialists or amateurs—will doubtless notice many colors in the fibers that make up the fabric of his thought: music is one of them. Its presence is discreet, but regular; music would therefore be, in the great salon where the party that is Deleuzian thought takes place, that which, hidden in the wings, in a hollow, gives orders, helps out, reminds and whispers words to the actors on the stage. As it is not situated on the territory where the action takes place and where the saying is said, but instead on the fringes, on the edges and the periphery, music allows for a synoptic glance at what is happening onstage, and, by this glance, it *transports from the territory of the stage* to the foreground. Music moves Deleuze's work in order to break it away from the *monopoly of philosophers*, to *ex-pose* it to a plurality of influences and appropriations.

Movement is essential in music. The notion of intensity is also of the order of movement, and does it not make reference to fluxes of energy and to difference? The problem I would like to address here is the following: Might the Deleuzian notion of intensity be capable of becoming? Through musical intensity, how might one create, or rather “produce a deterritorialized ritornello as music's final goal,

* I am grateful to Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt for their helpful and instructive comments.

¹ Daniel Cohen-Levinas, “Deleuze Musicien,” in *Rue Descartes, Gilles Deleuze, Immanence et Vie*, no. 20, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998, p. 137.

and release it into the cosmos...”² And how, through this notion of intensity, can music be made into a heterogenesis where both material and compositional forces in action express differences? How, through music, might art’s capacity to be heterogenetic be restored?

Methodology: An Attempt at Bricolage

I would like to follow Deleuze without fully coinciding with the core of his thought. Following a trail in the sand consists precisely in not planting one’s feet on the footsteps already imprinted but rather behind or beside those traces. For the follower, the two shapes of feet on the sand will produce lures, a decentering; fractured trajectories; a space of the “between-two-traces.” “Understanding a thinker,” as Jacques Rancière explains it, “is never a matter of coming to coincide with his center. On the contrary, understanding implies de-porting the thinker, carrying him off on a trajectory where the joints loosen up and leave a little slack. Then it becomes possible to disfigure this thought in order to refigure it otherwise.”³ Disfiguring and refiguring are two operations that accompany any hermeneutics—and its disappointments. We interpret as we dismantle, as we *dis*-figure, which is to say when we break something down into parts. And, like the *bricoleur* of whom Lévi-Strauss speaks, when we take up a part we divert it from its first usage in order to give it another function. Interpreting is thus diverting what has been said and putting it back not in its place, but elsewhere, somewhere unexpected.

The “Deleuze” that I will present here mistrusts pigeonholing and definitions. He recommends that we speak and work on what are not our specialties; “By what right wouldn’t I speak of medicine without being a doctor, if I speak of it like a dog? Why wouldn’t I speak about drugs without being drugged, if I speak about them like a little bird?”⁴ While I am not a musician, I would like to speak here about music through the Deleuzian notion of intensity. What is the *genesis* of intensity; what is its *articulation* through the various meanings that Deleuze gives it, and what *meaning* might it have in the Deleuzian conception of music?

Genesis of the Notion of Intensity in Deleuze

In order to grasp the notion of intensity in Deleuze, one must also turn to Nietzsche, to Bergson, to Spinoza and to a certain extent to mathematicians such as Lautman

² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980, p. 433.

³ Jacques Rancière, “Existe-t-il une Esthétique Deleuzienne?” in Eric Alliez (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Une Vie Philosophique*, Institut-Synthélabo, Le Plessis-Robinson, 1988, p. 525.

⁴ Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, Les Éditions de Minuit, p. 22.

and Ruyer. Canguilhem and Bachelard must also be present—albeit discreetly—if this notion is to be understood.⁵

Nietzsche

Nietzsche is, first, the portal through which Deleuze enters into the notion of intensity. *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962) functions as a prelude. Although the notion of intensity is only alluded to in this text, it appears nonetheless as a synonym for force. For Deleuze, force is neither a substance, nor the result of multiple forces, but rather *pure difference*. This idea is taken up again in *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze makes intensity difference in itself. It is at the Royaumont conference, however, that Deleuze, through his summary of the discussions, tackles the question of intensity with his commentary on Nietzsche.⁶

Klossowski, Gueroult, Jean Wahl, Ravit, Michel Foucault, Jacob Taubes, Birault, Vattimo, Deleuze, and Maurice de Gandillac embark on a discussion. Deleuze summarizes the meaning of Klossowski's interpretation of the Nietzschean notion of "will to power": "the will to power as an intensive quantity"⁷ and "the will to power as an intensive sentiment."⁸ Jean Wahl responds that "What bothers me is this degree of intensity ... who would judge these degrees of intensity? No one, naturally..."⁹ In the summary of the conference's conclusion, Deleuze specifies that *intensity has a relationship to creation*; that is, the "superior form of that which there is."¹⁰ Deleuze affirms in turn, "In truth, Nietzsche was interested in physics as a science of intensive qualities, and he saw the will to power as an "intensive" principle, as a principle of pure intensity. For the will to power does not mean willing power but on the contrary ... freeing the way for the superior form of that which is (the form of intensity)."¹¹

Via the will to power and Nietzsche's eternal return, Deleuze utilizes *intensity* in order to critique the *principle of identity*: "The world of the eternal return is a world in intensity, a world of difference that does not presuppose the One nor the Same, but which is built on the tomb of the unique God just as it is built on the ruins of the identical self."¹² Indeed, "the unequal, the different is the true reason for the eternal return. This is because nothing is equal ... that it comes back ... the eternal return is said only of the becoming of the multiple. It is the law of a world ...

⁵ I will not treat the relationships among Deleuze, Bachelard, and Canguilhem here.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze, discussion in "Cahiers de Royaumont," *Nietzsche*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

without unity, without identity.”¹³ This critique of the principle of identity can also be found later in Deleuze’s work, in one of his definitions of the function of music. In a text on Boulez and Proust,¹⁴ Deleuze affirms that

music has always had this object: individuations without identity, which constitute “musical beings.” And the tonal system would no doubt remain a specific principle of identity, with the first degree octave or chord. But the system of blocs ... brings about a generalized refusal of any principle of identity ... Proust, just as much as Joyce or Faulkner, is one of those who overthrew all principles of identity in literature. Even in repetition, what is permanent is not defined by the identity of an element that repeats, but rather by a quality common to the elements, which would not repeat without this quality ...¹⁵

Nietzsche, through the intensity that the eternal return and the will to power express, inspires the idea in Deleuze whereby *intensity* is the means by which *musical art secures the renewed creation of affects*.

Bergson

In addition to his monograph on Bergson of 1966,¹⁶ Deleuze also published, in a volume edited by Merleau-Ponty on “Famous Philosophers,” an article on Bergson¹⁷ and another article elsewhere on “Bergson’s conception of difference.”¹⁸ In these texts, as in others, he retains many things from Bergson. First, Bergson helps Deleuze to critique the Kantian transcendental subject; indeed, Bergsonian intuition is a remedy against the Kantian transcendental subject. For Deleuze, the “conditions” in Bergson “are not, as they are in Kant, the conditions of any possible experience [but rather] the conditions of real experience.”¹⁹ Deleuze subsequently borrows the notion of *multiplicity* from Bergson. In *Difference and Repetition* he suggests that the inventor of this notion is the mathematician Riemann, and in *A Thousand Plateaus* he points to Husserl, but he finally accords a privileged place to Bergson in the elaboration of this notion: “Multiplicities: since *Les Données immédiates*, Bergson defines duration as a multiplicity, a kind of multiplicity. It is

¹³ Ibid., p. 284; Deleuze participated in the publication of *Nietzsche* in 1967. This study, which is a set of excerpts from Nietzsche’s works, does not emphasize the notion of intensity.

¹⁴ Deleuze, “Occuper sans compter: Boulez, Proust et le Temps,” in *Deux Régimes de fous*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2003, pp. 276–7.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁶ See Gilles Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1966.

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson, 1859–1941,” in *L’Île déserte*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002, pp. 28–42.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 43–72.

¹⁹ Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme*, p. 13.

an unusual word, since it considers multiple no more as an adjective but as a true substantive.”²⁰ Deleuze finally turns to Bergson in order to critique the notion of the possible while privileging the virtual, but in particular in order to give a new impetus to the question of the image and movement in cinema. Drawing inspiration from the third chapter of Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*, where Bergson conceives of matter as a *flux of energies*, an undivided whole, Deleuze hones his conception of the image as a *flux of matter* and of movement not as a simple transfer but as an intensity, that is, as “vibration and radiance.”²¹

Spinoza

Deleuze also returns to Spinozan sources in his treatment of intensity. In *Difference and Repetition* and in *What is Philosophy?*²² Deleuze presents Spinoza as a philosopher of immanence, but beginning with *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze takes Spinozan ethics to be capable of ensuring the creation of thought in art, in philosophy and in the sciences. Just as Spinoza is the source of inspiration for new possibilities of life²³ he is also, for Deleuze, “the most philosophical of the philosophers.”²⁴ Indeed, Deleuze takes up the three Spinozan notions of immanence, life, and joy, and deduces an aesthetic question from them: style.

As for immanence, Spinoza elaborated a philosophy that brooked no compromise with transcendence. The freedom to think, to act and to move need not make reference to any transcendence. For Deleuze, “He who knew fully that immanence is only immanence to itself, and thus that it was a plane traversed by the movements of the infinite, filled by intensive y axes, that was Spinoza. He is thus the prince of philosophers. Perhaps the only one who never made a compromise with transcendence, who hunted it down everywhere...”²⁵

The second Spinozan notion is that of life. For Spinoza, a concept’s speculative virtue is measured by its vital power. The importance of a life lies in increasing its consistency and, crucially, without guilt or hatred. “In every aspect of his way of living as well as his way of thinking, Spinoza sets forth an image of positive, affirmative life, against the simulacra that men content themselves with.”²⁶ In addition to immanence and life, Deleuze lauds Spinoza’s notion of joy. The latter philosopher is, finally, the creator of a style.

²⁰ Deleuze, *Deux Régimes de fous*, p. 314.

²¹ Deleuze, *L’Image-mouvement*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1983, p. 18.

²² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991, p. 49.

²³ Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et clinique*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990, p. 225.

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 49.

²⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l’expression*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969, p. 21.

Deleuze departs from the impression that has always struck readers of Spinoza's *Ethics*: that of a bare text, lacking a style proper to it because it unfolds according to a geometric order. In his "Letter to Reda Bensmaïa, on Spinoza," Deleuze distinguishes at least three stylistic moments in Spinoza's *Ethics*. The first is composed of definitions, demonstrations and corollaries, and is style that deals with *concepts*.

Next, the reader encounters "scolia," which are sorts of autonomous discontinuities and which give "a double movement of the concept with all the forces of *affect*."²⁷ Finally, in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, Spinoza speaks via *pure percepts*, through direct intuitions. Deleuze concludes by saying that beneath the appearance of a monotonous style, Spinoza's *Ethics* sets three styles, or even three languages, in tension: that of the concept (a new way to think), that of the percept (a new way to hear and to see), and that of the affect (a new way of experiencing).²⁸

Mathematicians and the Notion of the Flash

The other idea from which Deleuze draws his definition of intensity is that of the "flash." For Deleuze, "all that which appears and passes is correlative with orders of difference in level and in intensity."²⁹ Deleuze takes inspiration here from Rougier and Rosny. "The necessary condition for a phenomenon to appear in a given milieu [is that] there must exist between two regions of this milieu a difference in the factor of intensity of at least one of the energies localized therein."³⁰ Deleuze takes up this intuition in order to affirm that "every phenomenon flashes"; otherwise put, this flashing translates a "productive dissymmetry." It is precisely through the concept of flashing that Deleuze defines the "signal" and the "sign": "We call a 'signal' a system endowed with elements of dissymmetry, and having disparate orders of magnitude; we call a 'sign' that which occurs in such a system, that which flashes in the interval."³¹ What happens "between?" What is the subversive potential of the interval?

Articulation of the Notion of Intensity

Intensity in Deleuze can be understood by taking certain notions on a detour: singularity, the event, waves, and the speed of the concept.

²⁷ Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p. 224.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p. 286.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Intensity and Singularity: an Oblique Anti-Hegelianism

Deleuze and Guattari write a book that is rather classical; classical in its formulation and innovative in its content. They entitle it “*What is Philosophy?*” This apparently substantial question—for it is quiddity that is in question: the “what is?”—finds its exact formulation only when it addresses a plural viewpoint. To the question of the essence of philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari interrogate circumstances. What circumstances, what conceptual actors or characters, what combinations, encounters, bifurcations and territories does philosophy set in motion in order to create concepts?³² The response can be found in the definition that Deleuze and Guattari give of philosophy:

We can at least see what philosophy is not: it is not contemplation, or reflection, or communication ... It is not contemplation, since contemplations are the things themselves as they are seen in the creation of their own concept. It is not reflection, because no one needs philosophy to reflect upon anything ... And philosophy finds no final refuge in communication, which focuses intently only on opinions so as to create “consensuses” and not concepts ... philosophy is the continuous creation of concepts.³³

Taking this definition of philosophy as a point of departure, Deleuze and Guattari make art the authority that puts zones of indetermination into action. Once the material of art moves into sensation—and sensation can also show intensity—there is creation. Creation is singularization, fluctuation. In the appendix to *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze battles against the principle of identity as he rehabilitates the *simulacrum*.³⁴ With the simulacrum we perceive intensity, which is itself a matter of singularities: “The simulacrum revokes identity.”³⁵

The passage from intention to intensity comes about through “the movement by which intensity directs itself at itself while directing itself at the other,”³⁶ which happens through “disjointed series.”³⁷ Deleuze finally affirms that the true subject of intensity is *singularity*. Here, Deleuze is quite far from the Hegelian notion of totality and would be closer to Kierkegaard or Adorno.

³² It is rather curious to note that Deleuze and Guattari, from the beginning to the end of this text, and after long developments, continue to write “philosophy” in the singular.

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, pp. 11–13.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Intensity and Event

Temporality and territoriality, codes and decoding, deterritorializations and reterritorializations, ritornellos and machines, all of these notions turn around others in turn, such as the event. Deleuze affirms the centrality of the latter notion in numerous passages: “In all of my books, I have sought the nature of the event ... everything that I have written ... constituted a theory of signs and of the event...”³⁸ Deleuze, in order to think the event, relies upon many thinkers: the Stoics,³⁹ Leibniz,⁴⁰ Péguy, Blanchot,⁴¹ and Whitehead.⁴² He draws numerous articulations from this notion, and I would like to focus on three senses:

1. The event is not the present: It is “eternally that which just happened and which will happen, never that which is happening.”⁴³ The event therefore goes in two directions. In this sense, it has a relationship with edges and border(line)s and surfaces; “events are like crystals, they only become and grow by their edges. That is the first secret of the stammerer or the lefthander: not digging in but sliding along the edges, such that what was once depth is no longer anything at all.”⁴⁴
2. The event is a call from the future: The event gestures to us, reaches us, and breathes us in. Not backward-looking or an occasion for nostalgia, the event is that which the future holds out to us. The event is thus a kind of transcendence in Ernst Bloch’s sense; it directs itself not upwards but forward. The event ... is ... gesturing to us.”⁴⁵

³⁸ Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, pp. 194–6. The event is also a concept of combat against the logic of identity symbolized by the old ontology through the privilege given by the verb “to be”: “the event is a philosophical concept, and the only one capable of overthrowing the verb ‘to be’ and the attribute” (p. 194).

³⁹ See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 244; Deleuze explains that, as opposed to essence, the logic of the One, the notion of the event is that which poses the question of “circumstances.” Deleuze thus distinguishes between real and ideal events. “It is correct to represent a double series of events ... some that are real in terms of the solutions that they engender, others that are ideals” (p. 244).

⁴⁰ Deleuze considers Leibniz to be the “first great theorist of the event”: *Logique du sens*, p. 269.

⁴¹ Deleuze considers Péguy, in his *Clio*, and Blanchot as “these two thinkers who went most deeply into the event,” in Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 148.

⁴² Whitehead is identified as “the third thinker of the event in the history of philosophy,” after the Stoics and Leibniz. See Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988, p. 105.

⁴³ Deleuze, *Logique du sens*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

3. Finally, the event can be broken down into four components: Here, Deleuze makes Whitehead's analyses his own.

- The first component is *extension*: "The event is a vibration with an infinity of harmonics or submultiples, a sound wave or a light wave, or even a small part of space, smaller and smaller during a shorter and shorter duration."⁴⁶
- The second component is what Deleuze calls "extensive series" that "have intrinsic properties (for example, height, intensity, the timbre of a sound, shade, value, saturation of color)."⁴⁷
- The third component is the *individual* whose grasping (*préhension*) function is fundamental.
- The last component is made up of the *eternal objects that become incarnate in fluxes*. In this perspective, the event includes the notion of intensity, which is the moment where extensions enter into series.

Using these definitions of the event, Deleuze draws conclusions concerning music as he comments on Leibniz and Whitehead: "Sounds have internal properties, height, intensity, timbre ... sources of sound are nomads or prehensions that are filled with a joy of themselves ... And the notes of the scale are eternal objects, pure virtualities that are actualized in their foundations, but also pure possibilities that are realized in vibrations or fluxes."⁴⁸ Intensity is associated with the event and also with music, inasmuch as notes express virtualities.

Intensities and the Body without Organs: Waves

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, in the plateau entitled "November 28, 1947, How do you make yourself a body without organs?" Deleuze shows us an ovular, dotted sketch and writes above it "The Dogon egg and the distribution of intensities."⁴⁹ This sketch symbolizes the "body without organs," one that has the form of an egg not divided into organs, a body in which there is a circulation of intensities. "We treat the BwO [Body without Organs] as an intense egg before the extension of the organism and the organization of organs, before the formation of strata, the intense egg that is defined by axes and vectors."⁵⁰ What is a body without organs for Deleuze? First, what is a body? "A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sound, a soul or an idea, a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity."⁵¹ This broadened definition of the body makes the BwO a "limit,"

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Le Pli*, p. 105.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 109.

⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, p. 185.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 190.

⁵¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Philosophie pratique*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1981, p. 171.

and “the BwO: it is already underway once the body is fed up with organs, and wants to do away with them, or loses them.”⁵² The body without organs is that body which has repudiated the jurisdiction of organs with their respective functions; it is also that body which is full like the egg before the extension of the organism and the organization of the organs. For Deleuze, the body without organs refuses the hierarchy of functions; it is an “acentered” body where fluxes of energy circulate. So as to concretize the conception of the BwO, Deleuze turns to the clinic and takes up the *hypochondriac* body, the *masochistic* body, the *paranoid* body and the *schizophrenic*.⁵³ On this point, he uses Artaud.

For the hypochondriac body, “the destruction is already complete, nothing more will pass. ‘Mademoiselle X affirms that she no longer has a brain, nerves, chest or stomach’.”⁵⁴ The schizophrenic body carries on an active, interior struggle against its organs, whereas in the paranoid body the elements are unceasingly attacked by exterior energies. The sadistic body, finally, wants to be peopled not with organs but with “intensities of pain.”⁵⁵ The body without organs opposes a smooth body, a sliding surface, to the body with organs, or the “organized” body. Finally, what Deleuze finds in the body without organs is the *body par excellence that is Mother Nature*. The latter at its first stage does not yet have organs: it is without organs, but is a circulation of intensities and, eventually, waves: “A BwO is made in such a way that it can only be occupied, peopled by intensities, it produces them and distributes them in a spatium that is itself intensive ... It is not space nor is it in space, it is matter that will occupy space to one degree or another ... It is intense and unformed matter, intensive matrix, intensity = O ... Matter equals energy.”⁵⁶ The notion of the BwO therefore seeks to join, through clinical data (sadism, schizophrenia, paranoia...), the conception of Nature, in that it is—before individuation into organs and separate bodies—a circulation of intensities.

Intensities, Speeds, Desire and Concept

Intensity *is* the concept, in that intensity inheres in the definition of the concept. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze acknowledges a relationship of continuity between the concept and intensities. A relationship such that if, for him, philosophizing is the creation of concepts, philosophy thus becomes from then on a place where intensities are created. “Concepts are exactly like sounds, colors or images, they are intensities that either agree with you or don’t.”⁵⁷ This analogy between intensity and concepts leads, in Deleuze’s thought, to a reflexion on speed. Speed is “being

⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, p. 186.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, Flammarion, 1996, p. 10.

taken up in a becoming that is neither a development nor an evolution ... children move quickly because they know how to slip themselves in-between.”⁵⁸

The slowness and strangeness that we find within ourselves are part of speed: “What Nietzsche does with German, that’s what it means to be a foreigner in one’s own language. This absolute speed is attained in writing that is worked on as slowly as possible.”⁵⁹ If intensity is a question of differentials, speed is also important to it. Of the two planes that Deleuze distinguishes—the plane of organization and that of consistency—intensity is to be found in the plane of consistency. Indeed, the plane of organization is the plane of the law, “insofar as it organizes ... forms, genres, themes and motifs and [insofar as it] pigeonhole(s) subjects and makes them evolve.”⁶⁰ The plane of consistency “knows only relationships of movement, of rest, of speed and slowness between unformed elements ... it does not know subjects, but rather what are called ‘haecceities’ ... which are ... degrees of power that take shape, to which the power of affecting and being affected corresponds [we have here the domain of] intensities.”⁶¹ First as concept, then as speed, intensity also has a connection to desire. Deleuze and Guattari have defined desire not as arising from a lack that must be addressed but in a near-Spinozan manner, where desire is productive. Deleuze thus affirms: “We would say something simple: desire concerns the speeds and slownesses between particles, affects, intensities...”⁶² Speed is therefore that through which intensity is manifested.

Intensities, Music, and Heterogenesis

In order to understand Deleuze’s sense of the role of intensity in music, let us return to his different conceptions of music and then to the role of the “in-between”.

Conceptions of Music

Music is fluid Music in Deleuze is conceived of as fluid in relation to various arts, such as painting. Following in this regard Boulez, Deleuze believes that, through sounds, the sensations of touch and sight can be reached.⁶³ This is the force that stammers on music’s territory, that takes the diagonal in order to reconnect with the other arts, that Deleuze will utilize in order to privilege music as a moment of “deterritorialization par excellence”: “The only way of organizing the two problems of painting and music is to take a criterion extrinsic to the fiction of

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 40–41.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. 114.

⁶³ Pierre Boulez, “L’Ecriture du musicien, le regard du sourd” *Critique* 408 (1981), p. 443; “Music is made with sounds, but also with writing, gestures, concepts.”

a system of the Arts, to compare the forces of deterritorialization in both cases. It seems to me that music has a greater deterritorializing force.”⁶⁴ Since music works with intensities, transformations, and durations, it would seem to be more fluid than painting.

Music also establishes human relationships In his elegiac comments on François Châtelet,⁶⁵ after discussing the latter’s atheism, politeness, and his predilection for philosophy in particular, Deleuze identifies a conception of music in Châtelet’s thought: “He was opposed to the idea that [music] could be ‘background music’ for constant listening; music is an activity in itself.”⁶⁶ This activity is at once theoretical and practical. Theoretical, as the diverse components of sound attest; practical, because music humanizes: “Musical art has, let’s say, two aspects, one which is something like a dance of sound molecules that reveal materiality ... the other is the establishment of human relationships in this sound matter.”⁶⁷ Music thus guides politics, as it prompts movement and relation: “Music makes, and makes us make, movement.”⁶⁸

Music carries out individuations without subjects In order to discuss speed, Deleuze rather curiously chooses the example of an African drum, which he refers to reductively as the so-called *tam-tam*: “the drum isn’t 1, 2. When Black people dance,⁶⁹ it is not that they’re possessed by a demon of rhythm, it is that they

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, pp. 229–30.

⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “Périclès et Verdi,” *La Philosophie de François Châtelet*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶⁹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 42. In his response to an interview on the “New Philosophers” in France, Deleuze protested against abusive generalizations: “—What do you think of the ‘new philosophers?’” Deleuze: “Nothing. I believe that their thought is worthless ... First, they use big concepts, big like gaping holes, THE law, THE power, THE master, THE world, THE rebellion, THE faith, etc. In doing so they wind up making grotesque mix-ups...” (Cf. Deleuze, *Deux Régimes de fous*, p. 127). Might we not fear just such “grotesque mix-ups” when Deleuze uses the expression “Black people”? (LES Noirs). Which Black people is he talking about? Do they have a particular space-time, or particular itineraries? Do they have social hierarchies? Are all of their musics the same? The relationship between the drums (the *tam-tams*), Black people, rhythm and a hypersensuality that would be open to all of the body’s senses is, although it does not say so explicitly, an implicit essentialism from colonial ethnology. It is rather surprising that Deleuze, in order to speak of Africa, only relies on two elements: colonial ethnologists and myths. Although Deleuze and Guattari critique the africanist psychiatrists who “Oedipalized” Africans—such as the Ortigues couple who wrote *Oedipe africain*—they nonetheless trust colonial ethnology. The entire third chapter of *Anti-Oedipus* entitled “Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men” takes up colonial ethnology’s points without criticizing it as a variant of the colonial

hear and execute all the notes, all the times, all the tones, all the heights, all the intensities, all the intervals. It's never 1, 2 or 1, 2, 3, it's 7, 10, 14... Here we find again this question of speeds and slownesses, how they take shape (and)... make individuations without 'subjects.'"

Music is also an art of the diagonal The diagonal is a deviation with respect to the straight, vertical line and the straight, horizontal line. The diagonal dissolves the border between the vertical and the horizontal. The diagonal is transversal and it both produces and is contiguous with an adjacent space-time. "The musical act *par excellence*, according to Boulez, consists in the diagonal, in different conditions each time, from polyphonic combinations, through Beethoven's resolutions, the fusions of harmony and Melody in Wagner ... dissolving all borders between the vertical and the horizontal."⁷⁰ What could express this transversality better than the critique of tonal music? Deleuze never ceases critiquing the harmonious image of tonal music, using the notion of blocs of intensities.⁷¹ "Music has always had this as its object: individuations without identity, which constitute 'musical beings.' And tonal language doubtless restored a specific principle of identity ... But the system of blocs ... brings about a generalized refusal of any principle of identity in the variations."⁷² Although Boulez praised Deleuze as being one of the greatest intellectuals to be devoted to music,⁷³ and although Deleuze invoked Boulez very often, it remains that his appreciation of Boulez is clouded by distinctions between "atonal" and other sorts of music (including the many varieties of "tonal" music). Sometimes Deleuze gives privilege to atonal music and sometimes to music in general.

project. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that: "The idea that primitive societies are without history ... is particularly weak and inadequate. This idea was not born of ethnologists, but rather of ideologists who were attached to a Judeo-Christian tragic consciousness..." (Ibid., p. 177). In order to forge his theory of the "Body without Organs" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze uses the analyses of Marcel Griaule, a French ethnologist who worked on the Dogon of Mali. What Deleuze does not seem to want to know is that in the colonial project there was no distinction between an ethnologist, an administrator/soldier and a missionary, all of whom sought better to "know" the local populations with the goal of integrating them into their "political technologies" in Foucault's sense. As for Griaule's book, *Le Dieu d'eau [Conversations with Ogotemméli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas]*, which is Deleuze and Guattari's primary reference, it was written in part during Griaule's multiple missions in Africa (financed and supervised by the French colonial state). It lacks a real and frank criticism of ethnology from Deleuze and Guattari.

⁷⁰ Deleuze, *Deux Régimes de fous*, p. 273.

⁷¹ See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure*, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1975; Deleuze says that discontinuous blocs are fragments, p. 132.

⁷² Deleuze, *Deux Régimes de fous*, p. 273.

⁷³ See Pierre Boulez, quoted by David Rabouin in *Le Magazine littéraire* (February 2002), p. 40.

Intensity and the “in-between”

Intensity is to be found precisely at the level of the *in-between*, since, for Deleuze, creation takes place in the middle. It is therefore in that which connects and separates points that the “novum” (to use Ernst Bloch’s expression) could also be found. Music is a power of deterritorialization and nomadism. The nomadism that Deleuze speaks of always comes about in the middle, in the “in-between:” “nomads are always in the middle. The steppe grows in the middle, between the great forests...”⁷⁴ The general question we could pose is that of the function of the interval with regard to musical creation. Deleuze and Guattari use the notion of interval when they define ritornello. Musicologists could question the aptness of Deleuze’s seeming embrace of modern theoretic notions of the musical interval as well as the pertinence of his interpretation of Boulez (as some authors in the volume do), but what we want to point out here is the importance of *intercalaries* in artistic creation.

Conclusion: Intensities and Heterogenesis

Intensity is first of all linked to *difference*; next, it is related to *fluidity*, and its field of expression is the “*in-between*” (l’entre-deux); its mode of *concretization* is music. How, through music, might we attain *difference*, a difference that belies the logic of codes and identities? How, through music, might we return to Nature, in the Spinozan sense of *Natura Naturans*, *raw material*, material that is not yet organized into specific organs? How, through music, might we use the edge, the fringe, the interstice and the “in-between”? How, through the intercalary, to foil harmonic and harmonized positions so as to show and express a real, one that is a true space of capture? By these intensities which are fluxes and which we cannot master, it seems that music constitutes a Deleuzian “war machine.” The war machine does not have war as its object,⁷⁵ but rather the emission of quanta of deterritorialization, the passage of changing fluxes. All creation passes through a war machine.⁷⁶ However, is the war machine that is “music” still capable, in the kingdom where the commodity is queen, of diverting spaces of capture and of making its promise of happiness to a cynical world? Always to create something different: this is the question that is still posed in the twenty-first century, which has begun with such a racket. Not without some malice, Deleuze once remarked that “It’s a common phenomenon: each time a great thinker dies, the imbeciles feel a sense of relief and make a god-awful racket.”⁷⁷ Intensity, with its challenges, leads me to contribute to this racket...

⁷⁴ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 38.

⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, p. 518.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 526.

⁷⁷ Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p. 116.

Chapter 8

Critique and Clinique: From Sounding Bodies to the Musical Event

Nick Nesbitt

Desire only exists when assembled or machined. You cannot grasp or conceive of a desire outside a determinate assemblage, on a plane which is not pre-existent but which itself must be constructed . . . In retrospect every assemblage expresses and creates a possible and, by making it possible, brings it about. [Desire] is constructivist, not at all spontaneist.¹

The mythology of jazz, if the various musics assembled under that name can be said to have anything in common, is founded upon the putatively spontaneous expression of affect, jazz as unbounded freedom, a freedom fundamentally linked to a phenomenological, existentialist understanding of the improvising subject as intentional creator of an (improvised) composition/project. In what follows, I want to argue against this received perception, that musical creation and expression—whether improvised or not—should instead be conceived as the immanent assemblage of asubjective sounding machines that can unleash literally immeasurable potentials for expressivity. In place of the longstanding critical tradition that sees jazz through this lens of a metaphysics of human productivity, a range of actors, both human and non-human, come together in any given musical improvisation to construct a musical experiment. Instead of a protean, subject-based spontaneity, one discovers instead from this Deleuzian perspective, say, an instrument-club-musician-head-solo-influences-practice-time-mood assemblage.² In such an ensemble, contingent non-human actors such as a particularly fine reed, a broken valve, an electronic effects system or synthesizer, or the acoustics of

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, Columbia University Press, 1987.

² John Corbett has explored the concept of the assemblage in theorizing free jazz in his book *Extended Play: Sounding Off from John Cage to Dr. Funkenstein* (Duke University Press, 1994), and Jeremy Gilbert pursues this line of reflection in his article “Becoming-Music: The Rhizomatic Moment of Improvisation,” in I. Buchanan and M. Swiboda (eds), *Deleuze and Music* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004), in which he describes how a musical regime of “trans-personal intensity—a body without organs—is generated by the deliberate subversion of any simple process of composition, expression, interpretation” (p. 121).

a venue actively participate in musical expression alongside the human subject-based dynamics of individual imagination or a violent backstage argument.

Recent scholarship on jazz has called into question the very dichotomy between improvisation and composition.³ Paul Berliner, in his monumental 1994 study *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, concludes that the very attempt to distinguish between improvisation and composition ends up in insurmountable aporia and tautologies. “The popular definitions of improvisation that emphasize only its spontaneous, intuitive nature ... are astonishingly incomplete ... Improvisation depends, in fact, on thinkers having absorbed a broad base of musical knowledge, including myriad conventions that contribute to formulating ideas logically, cogently, and expressively.”⁴

Brian Hulse’s article “Improvisation as an Analytic Category” offers a compelling overview of recent critique of the category of improvisation. Hulse reminds us that “There is never any sense in which improvised music is completely ‘free’; that is, where it is not pre-figured or conditioned by the instruments at hand, the performer’s ability and background, or other factors.”⁵ What’s more, echoing recent scholarship by critics such as Bruce Ellis Benson and Michael Jarrett, Hulse finds the traditional dichotomy between composition and performance to be fundamentally misguided, reductively overcoding a rich diversity of practices, drawing abstract analytic distinctions devoid of phenomenological relevance. In trying to determine whether the category of improvisation can sustain analytical relevance in contemporary music studies, Hulse seeks to return the musical event within its richly complex processes, both temporal and phenomenological. The Bergsonian virtual is the concept adequate to describe “this field of emergent ideas [in which] whatever is prior to the production of a sound, or the writing of a note, is a necessary aspect of its creation.”⁶ This musical virtuality describes the expressive engagement of a domain of potentiality, and its actualization as sonorous affect. The result of such a shift in our understanding would be to find in improvisation the creation of “an opportunity for invention, for the improvisation of analytic concepts,” drawing our understanding of improvisation “into the

³ See for example: Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, University of Chicago Press, 1994; Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, University of Chicago Press, 1996; Bruno Nettl, “An Art Neglected in Scholarship,” in *In the Course of Performance*, University of Chicago Press, 1998; Bruce Ellis Benson, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue*, Cambridge University Press, 2003; Marion Guck, “Analysis as Interpretation: Interaction, Intentionality, Invention,” *Music Theory Spectrum*, 28/2 (Fall 2006).

⁴ Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 492.

⁵ Brian Hulse, “Improvisation as an Analytic Category,” *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*, 13/1, 2008, p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

sacrosanct jurisdiction of composition and challenging those concepts which warp and suppress the creative content they claim.”⁷

In what follows, I will address a number of Deleuzian categories, including assemblage, machine, affect, expression, and above all *law*, to argue that expression in jazz is a coefficient not of spontaneity but rather of the well-constructed musical *agencement*, what Bruno Latour has called a “laboratory,” for the creative assemblage and musical expression.⁸ The proper names we give to these assemblages of people, instruments, concepts, and voices include Miles Davis, who was an unparalleled master in the art of assembling ensembles, John Coltrane, who took the art of expressing all that a body is capable of in jazz to its highest pitch, and Jaco Pastorius, who, besides revolutionizing the technical possibilities of expression on his instrument in the tradition of Louis Armstrong, Bird, Coltrane, and Jimi Hendrix, was particularly interested in the asubjective interfacing of human and non-human agents in his pursuit of musical expressivity.

“The minimum real unit,” said Deleuze in his conversations with Claire Parnet, “is not the word, the idea, the concept, or the signifier, but the *agencement/* assemblage.”⁹ One could say the same for music as did Deleuze in this quote of literature: the minimum real unit is not the phrase, the key, or the chord-scale, but the assemblage. The *agencement*, it will be recalled, consists for Deleuze and Guattari, of two ‘axes,’ one of content, and the other of expression. The assemblage brings together various *bodies*¹⁰ into a “machinic assemblage ... an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another.”¹¹ The assemblage is simultaneously, however, a unit of “collective enunciation” and of “incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies.”

The assemblage is thus a means of conceptualizing what Alain Badiou has recently called “democratic materialism”: the belief that “There are only bodies and languages.”¹² While the Deleuzian assemblage is not explicitly limitative in the sense we find in Badiou’s polemical formulation (there might well be something else beyond the bodies and enunciations of the *agencement*, within a Deleuzian transcendental dialectics), the coherence of these two formulations is striking.

⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 57.

⁹ Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 51; I want to retain here the French *agencement* to preserve the sense of ongoing, active construction that is lost in the more passive English “assemblage.”

¹⁰ Note the retention of this Spinozian terminology, which will lead me in what follows to locate the prehistory of this quintessential Deleuzian concept in Spinoza’s combinatory ethics of expressive bodies.

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 88.

¹² Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, trans. A. Toscano, Continuum, 2009, p. 1.

In fact, one should rigorously pursue the strict coherence of Deleuze's concept of the transcendental faculty that "confronts its limits" and, indeed, pushes beyond them, with Badiou's concept of a truth that breaks free of the sedentary specifications of its "world."¹³ The Deleuzian transcendental is precisely such a transgression of all established limitations, codes, and laws. Each of these two transcendental operations unfolds within a plane of immanence (while truths are for Badiou not supplements, but rather "exceptions to what is," exceptions whose being is to "(in)exist within a world," these moments of transcendence are nonetheless "materialist," insofar as "every world is capable of producing its truth within itself.")¹⁴

Here as at so many other conceptual points in their shared universe of problems, resources, and concepts, the agonistic confrontation of Badiou with Deleuze (largely staged by the former) is a mere sham, a histrionic attempt to differentiate from one's most intimate enemy. The point of their incoherence lies instead in their differing relations to time: The Deleuzian transcendental faculty operates in a continuously variable process of the infinitesimal differentiation and locomotion of sensibility and the overcoming of sedentary identities, while Badiou's notion of truth is both punctual, occurring in relatively rare evental sequences, and is indexed upon an "eternal" existence of truths (such as the eternal political truth of equality). Deleuze's transcendental faculty, in musical terms, is Bergian (the Berg whom Adorno referred to as the "Master of the Smallest Link"), while Badiou's truth is Weberian, punctual and pointillist.

The Deleuzian *agencement* is directly productive of expression, bypassing all forms of representation.¹⁵ The *agencement* is not a productive machine (with its implication of a subject's conscious project), but a structure, an asubjective system of relations that allows for "a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another."¹⁶ Instead of an intending, phenomenological subject, we must "do away with any subject in favor of an assemblage of the haecicity [singularity] type that carries or brings out the event insofar as it is unformed."¹⁷ At the same time, this expressive structure is not static: the *agencement* expresses instead the predominance of distinguishing, differentiating enunciation over

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 141; see also Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*.

¹⁴ Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, pp. 6, 8. Furthermore, Badiou continues, "I give the name of 'truths' to real processes which, as subtracted as they may be from the pragmatic opposition of bodies and languages, are nonetheless in the world ... The materialist dialectic is an ideology of immanence" (*Logics of Worlds*, pp. 9–10).

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 89.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90. Here, again, the Spinozian tenor of the description is palpable and direct.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

relatively static “language and words.”¹⁸ As Martin Scherzinger points out in his contribution to this volume, Deleuze and Guattari conceive the notion of the *agencement* in fundamentally musical terms: this infinitesimal varying machine finds its ideal model in the historical example of the passage from late tonality (Wagner, Mahler, Brahms) to the early free atonality of Schoenberg. This transformation itself is infinitely mediated (as Adorno had argued in his study of Berg), no “pseudobreak between the tonal system and atonal music” but rather brought tonality (“temperament” in their idiosyncratic usage) “to its ultimate conclusion.”¹⁹ The result of this assemblage was a “widened chromaticism” that “made audible the nonsonorous forces of the cosmos” in “virtual lines of an infinite variation.”²⁰ The resulting enunciation of such machinic assemblages is an infinite process of despecification from constituted identities and hegemonic images of thought that Deleuze and Guattari famously term a “generalized chromaticism” which “plac[es] elements of any nature in continuous variation.”²¹

The *agencement* is, Deleuze and Guattari continue, “not universal, or even general, but singular.”²² Each machine constructs a virtual structure of rule-based potentials for actual expressions, rules which themselves are in unending variation in relation to their expressive actualizations (“differentiation” in the language of *Difference and Repetition*).²³ Each musical assemblage poses a problem (say, the negotiation of dense and rapid tripartite harmonic modulations in Coltrane’s *Giant Steps*), and the improvisation then unfolds “lines of continuous variation” in the actualization of this problem. Furthermore, this singularity is “always designated by the proper name of a group or individual,” as in the so-called “Giant Steps changes,” while the “assemblage of enunciation” (say, Coltrane’s famous, and Tommy Flanagan’s more infamous, negotiation of those changes in his May 4, 1959 recording) is “always collective,” devoid of all primacy of the individual.²⁴

What are some of the musical consequences of such a shift in perspective from the metaphysics of subjective improvisation to the asubjective infinitesimal expressive variations of the machinic *agencement*? Without a doubt, they are infinite, so let me focus on three that seem particularly interesting in thinking about creative music (as Anthony Braxton likes to say) in the African-American vernacular tradition. First implication: to analyze any musical event as an *agencement* of productive forces is to describe an asubjective sound experiment, a creative network without a center of consciousness. Second consequence: this network will be immanent and singular, including the concepts that participate in

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 96.

²¹ Ibid., p. 97.

²² Ibid., p. 100.

²³ See Scherzinger’s contribution to this volume (Chapter 5) for a description of this process of infinite logarithmic variation as it unfolds in Boulez’s *Le Marteau sans maître*.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 100.

its self-fashioning, devoid of abstraction, generating its own criteria for successful expression. Third, and following from the former two, any musical event will be expressive, generative, and creative, but not, or not primarily, a human-centered result of the metaphysics of productivity.

Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* brings together a vast array of data to describe the complex process of self-fashioning and reflexivity that goes into and prepares the event of a successful jazz improvisation/composition. He describes how any student of the music must memorize and analyze the standard repertory of compositions, memorize and imitate classic solos and phrases to reproduce their precise modes of expression. This long apprenticeship is highly analytical, "bring[ing] to light," says Berliner, "the underlying principles of improvisation."²⁵ For all its depth of analysis and originality in articulating a phenomenology of jazz improvisation, Berliner's analysis, like most phenomenologies, continues to remain heavily anchored to a humanist model of the metaphysic of subjectivity. Taking its place in the long tradition of jazz criticism that focuses on the inspired genius of the creator, Berliner's model is theoretically impoverished, unable convincingly to account for much of the fascinating data he has assembled. He sees jazz improvisation as a fundamentally unilinear, decisionistic process expressing human choice over the musical materials improvisors have dominated: "Performers constantly make selective judgments about materials for study ... They work on some pieces and not others, absorb some new phrases and not others [etc.]. Each decision, even on the most simple matter, has a direct impact on the performer's developing style of improvisation."²⁶

Such a model of the phenomenology of improvisation is unable to describe the rich network of elements, each making their specific contributions to any given expressive event, each interacting and fashioning that expression as active, transformative agents within any given musical *agencement*. Among many examples from jazz lore, Berliner describes how "on one Village Gate performance ... a valve on Miles Davis' trumpet became stuck in the midst of improvisation. Davis simply accepted the loss of its associated pitches as a compositional constraint and formulated the rest of his solo without them."²⁷ Was this simply an obstacle for Davis to negotiate, or was there something more complex going on here, the valve itself actively structuring the singular texture Miles' improvisation took on that night?

Bruno Latour has taken Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *agencement* and developed it into a full-blown analytical apparatus for investigating the sociology of science, which he calls Actor Network Theory. This follows through on Deleuze's assertion that "a true abstract machine pertains to an assemblage in its entirety: it is defined as the diagram of that assemblage."²⁸ In particular, Latour talks not

²⁵ Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 493.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 91.

so much about human subjects and their decisions, but rather the ways various “actants,” human and non-human, dynamically modulate any given assemblage (what he calls the “experiment”). Actor Network Theory analyzes the makeup of an assemblage, its constitutive elements, and focuses on those nodes in that structure that are transformative. Latour opposes what he calls “intermediaries,” passive junctions in an assemblage in which input and output are entirely predictable, with active transformers that he calls “mediators”: “For intermediaries, there is no mystery, since inputs predict outputs fairly well: nothing will be present in the effect that has not been in the cause ... For mediators, the situation is different: causes do not allow effects to be deduced ... As a result, lots of surprising *aliens* may pop up in between.”²⁹ The goal of this shift from human subject to actants and mediators is to more fully render the complex creative and modulatory practices at work in any *agencement*. The locus and forms of creative activity become much less certain with such an approach. The goal in analyzing any *agencement* thus becomes that of determining “what is acting and how.”³⁰ In other words, determining what the difference is that any actant, material or immaterial, conscious or devoid of consciousness, organic or inorganic, introduces into a state of affairs.³¹

Berliner records, for example, the input that instruments, and not only when they malfunction, contribute to the structuration of jazz expression.³² “The body pursues physical courses,” he observes, “shaped not only by the musical language of jazz, but by idiomatic patterns of movement associated with the playing technique of an instrument. These, in turn, reflect the instrument’s particular acoustical properties, physical layout, and performance demands ... Whereas the piano’s regular arrangement of keys and the mechanical nature of its sound production enable competent improvisers to sustain musical invention in any register, Chuck Israel considers that ‘it’s hardest to achieve keyboard kind of freedom in the low register of the bass or trombone.’”³³ Berliner goes on to describe how the interface of trumpet and embouchure (like that of the wasp and orchid for Deleuze and Guattari) enforce limited high-note endurance and limit the possibilities of wide intervallic leaps, in contrast to the invitation to easily make octave leaps on the saxophone or to play fourth-based melodies and chords on guitar and bass. Drummers respond to the pleasure of physical interaction with the drums, while pianists are too-often forced to negotiate the broken keys of a

²⁹ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 58.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³² “Pianists must adapt to instruments in various states of repair with unfamiliar and sometimes undesirable playing action or sound quality. Even such apparently minute differences as the spacing of keys can be vexing initially. Bass players must adapt to instruments of different sizes with strings of varying gauge and tension, and drummers to [differing] combinations and physical arrangements of drum components” (Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 454).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

club's piano. Finally, Berliner tells how one night Booker Little closed the car door on Art Davis's hand. The broken finger "forced Davis to explore alternative techniques involving multiple fingers that resulted in ways new to him of moving around the bass."³⁴

Consider a few musical examples from the jazz tradition in which a complex network of actants, from the inorganic machines we call musical instruments, to computers and digital effects, to human capabilities, decisions, and affects, have all actively contributed to forming these specific, singular musical events. First *agencement*: Jaco Pastorius, his beat-up old fretless Fender jazz bass and his huge Acoustic bass amplifiers, a new (circa 1979) MXR Digital Delay and a distortion effect, the massive popular crowd Jaco plays off of in a Joni Mitchell concert in Los Angeles, and maybe even the drugs and alcohol Jaco was starting to get into and which would later take his life.³⁵ The interplay between Jaco and the MXR digital delay in the solo pieces he was fashioning in this period is complex, each one reacting to the other, live and unpredictable, input never exactly equaling output; what is playing whom here? "Tools [such as the musical instrument or digital delay]," Deleuze and Guattari assert, "only exist in relation to the interminglings they make possible or that make them possible."³⁶ The improvisation itself is still somewhat rudimentary, a brief exploration of the limits of a then new technology that today has been explored in infinitely greater compositional/improvisatory detail by musicians as diverse as Willy Porter, Pierre Boulez, and Thea Musgrave ("Narcissus for clarinet with digital delay.")³⁷

Consider another, much more complex example from the jazz repertoire: "Crisis," the opening composition on Jaco's finest piece of work, the album *Word of Mouth*. Jaco's wife Ingrid has described the complex interaction of machine, recording technology, presence and absence, time delay, and Jaco's staging of musical encounters between absent interlocutors, human and inhuman.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

³⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdY-KAmj5fU (accessed November 13, 2009).

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 90.

³⁷ The latter composition is particularly complex, constructing an 'arch' of six interconnected sections that explore the relation between clarinet and its own digital palimpsest (program notes, Tadej King, King's College Chapel, University of Aberdeen, November 11, 2009).

³⁸ Jeremy Gilbert describes in similar terms the experiments in editing and sound collage that Miles Davis undertook with his producer Teo Macero in his 1970s recordings (Gilbert, "Becoming-Music," p. 123). Though somewhat similar in their displacement of the sovereign subject of improvisation, I think this later piece by Pastorius is an infinitely more complex and successful exploration of the asubjective limits of improvisational practice, insofar as this listener often has the impression that the Davis recordings are simply extended, often unfocused "jams" in which Macero simply salvaged whatever unfocused material he could from the many hours of tape that these Davis bands produced, arriving at something that may have often been "cosmic," says Gilbert quoting Deleuze and Guattari (ibid., p. 123), but which was for the most part musically unpolished and hardly a match

About a year before recording *Crisis*, Jaco was [in Miami ...] checking out a new effects system ... When he tried it out, this wonderful bass line came up, looping, so he asked for a blank cassette to dump it on and take home. During the recording of *Crisis*, mostly done at home ... Jaco would have each musician record with the bass groove independent from hearing what others had already laid down on the *Crisis* track, but he would once in a while reach over to a knob on the board, and bring up a track to get a musical reaction from the artist recording on the tune at the time.³⁹

The musicians Jaco brought into his studio were among the finest improvisers in jazz: Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, Michael Brecker, Peter Erskine, and others. The result is one of the most original and exciting bits of improvisation in the history of jazz.

Berliner describes in exhaustive detail how expressive potential in jazz is the result of an extended apprenticeship. “Meaningful improvements in the expressive use of the language of jazz,” he writes, “follow a musician’s increasing physical comfort and dexterity in negotiating a musical instrument ... Mastery over particular technical features of performance increases both the nuances of musical sound and the artist’s ability to express emotion.”⁴⁰ The development of expressive capacity is multifaceted, however, and the Deleuzian investigation of expression suggests important aspects of its assembling left underexplored by Berliner. In particular, as we saw above in the later conception of *agencement*, to explore the political valences of the concept requires referring back to the more detailed 1967 examination of Spinoza’s ethics of expressive bodies.⁴¹ In chapters XVI and XVII of *Expressionism in Philosophy*, Deleuze examines in exhaustive detail Spinoza’s ethics of bodies, an ethics whose founding axiomatic injunction is to discover “what any body can do.”⁴² To do so is the art of structuring encounters with other bodies “which compose with our own in a favorable relationship” in order to “go as far as it can.”⁴³ Though Deleuze’s text follows Spinoza in referring merely to bodies in general, his analysis can, I think, be profitably read as referring not only to biological bodies, but to those that concern us here: sounding bodies, of whatever modality. The fundamental criterion in this analytic of expression

for the innovative and singular music musicians such as Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, Dave Holland, Keith Jarrett, George Benson, and Dave Leibman would create at other moments in their careers.

³⁹ Ingrid Pastorius, www.jacop.net/story_oriole.html (accessed May 21, 2008).

⁴⁰ Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 117.

⁴¹ See also Amy Cimini’s examination of this aspect of Deleuzian thought in her contribution to this volume (Chapter 6).

⁴² Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, trans. M. Joughin, Zone Books, 1990, p. 236.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

is “capacity or power [puissance].”⁴⁴ This ethics of constituent power envisions the capacity to endow sound with singular shape and form, to constitute its manifold transformations and becomings. The primary distinction Deleuze draws here is between a morality and an ethics of bodies. The former would seek to subject bodies to limiting regimes of “obedience” and law, allowing only for what a body is *permitted*. Such a regime of legal morality, in musical terms, sets down the limits of what counts as music, of the (sonic) practices that are allowed recognition of their citizenship in the well-policed domain of the “musical.”⁴⁵ Among the many legal codes of Western modernity, what we now call the rules and system of “Western harmony” are, of course, exemplary.

If the maximization of expression is the goal of an ethics of (sounding) bodies, how, in the first place are we to assess, judge, and compare this power of expression? Deleuze asserts that the revolutionary move from law to the Spinozian absolute right of maximum expression begins with a shift from a regime of hierarchy to one of “parallelism.” In music as in politics, this is the fundamental shift necessary to escape from all moral regimes of codified law. In the absence of a transcendent authority (of tonality, tonic/dominant relations, etc.), the historical shift that Deleuze will identify as the turn to free atonality (as well as in the historically contemporaneous shift to the non-developmental parallelism of quartal harmonic fields in Debussy’s *reflets dans l’eau*) is already figured, in abstraction, as the “parallelism that excludes any eminence of the soul.”⁴⁶ The *conatus* of a body, its desire or striving, Spinoza tells us, expresses its capacity for “doing many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once.” One thinks of Boulez’s *Sur incises*. In this process, Deleuze concludes, “the substitution of ethics for morality is a consequence of parallelism, and shows its true significance.”⁴⁷

Discovering and enabling (sounding) bodies to do all that they are capable of is thus for Deleuze an ethical problem, one that requires escape from the regime of transcendental, constituted law. Deleuze follows Spinoza in affirming the revolutionary disjunction of right from law. Historically, right has tended to be derived from law: we have the right to do whatever the law admits as possible, whatever the law *allows* (whether civil code, moral stipulation, or practical habitus such as the Western harmonic regime). Spinoza’s revolutionary proposition was to disengage for the first time law from right, and to conclude that any body,

⁴⁴ Deleuze’s usage of the pair *pouvoir* and *puissance* is ambiguous in this section, but I follow here Negri’s distinction between constituted power (*pouvoir*) and constituent power (*puissance*).

⁴⁵ Sean Higgins describes how this moralistic policing of the domain of the “musical” expels all expressive practices judged unfit for such citizenship to the infernal domain of mere “noise.”

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 256.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

regardless of its specified identity, has the right to do all and anything it can. “All a body can do (its power) is also its ‘natural right.’”⁴⁸

In an ethical vision of the world it is always a matter of capacity and power, and never of anything else. Law is identical to right. True natural laws are norms of power rather than rules of duty. Thus the moral law that purports to prohibit and command involves a kind of mystification: the less we understand the laws of nature—that is, the norms of life—the more we interpret them as orders and prohibitions.⁴⁹

The implications of Spinoza’s proposition to eliminate the subordination of right to law, truly the founding gesture for what Jonathan Israel has called the “Radical Enlightenment,” are as profound for musical practice as for the realm of the political. It would take two and a half centuries for music to catch up with Spinoza, and for Schoenberg to equal Spinoza’s revolutionary ethical simplicity with the limp statement: “Any note can follow any other.”

But in order for this new absolute right of musical expression not merely to sound anarchic randomness, but *all* that a body is capable of, requires building upon this initial ethical axiom a *combinatory* practice of multiple bodies. Spinoza’s ethics is communistic: human beings are by nature unable to express all they are capable of in isolation; they require instead social structures that allow them to combine and extend their powers, and they must therefore seek out other bodies that allow them to maximize these powers: “If someone happens to encounter a body that can combine with his own in a favorable relation, he tries to unite with it.”⁵⁰ Precisely what happened, say, in the perfect encounter between Bill Evans, Scott Lafaro, and Paul Motian in the short space of 1959–61, or in Ellington’s magical, and equally short-lived Blanton-Webster band of 1940.⁵¹

The right of a body, of any body, is to “always go as far as it can, in passion as in action.”⁵² Such a conception refigures the concept of law: no longer limitation, “the law of nature is never a rule of duty, but the norm of a power, the unity of right, power, and its exercise.”⁵³ Power as right in Deleuze’s Spinozian ethics is “primary and unconditional,” while “duties, of whatever sort, are always secondary relative to the affirmation of our power, to the exercise of our power, the preservation of our right.”⁵⁴ Deleuze points out that Spinoza takes over this derivation of right from the powers of a body from Hobbes. Spinoza, however,

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 268.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 257.

⁵¹ The event, writes Badiou, “is an exceptional form of the One, the form of what dwells in itself as whole and as an element of the whole. This form of the One is but a passage, a visitation: the laws of being close up on that which will have violated them for a flash of time” (Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, p. 368).

⁵² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 258.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 259.

reconfigures Hobbes' corporal doctrine to disengage it from all reference to a "final perfection," and instead locates its impulse in an "initial desire" (*conatus*). While Hobbes justified the alienation of right to a transcendent authority, Spinoza sought, he said, to preserve right in its totality with the individual body.⁵⁵ External authority is consequently delegitimized, and "nobody has the authority to decide my rights."⁵⁶ In place of legitimate and constituted authority, the *contract* and its "principle of assent" becomes the organizing principle structuring the encounters of bodies. While politically, Spinoza's proposition leads directly to Rousseau's social contract and the egalitarian politics of the French and Haitian revolutions, in musical terms, the contract becomes the form the virtual takes in structuring musical expression. Every musical encounter is a site of radical contingency, in which participating bodies agree to certain ground rules that will organize their performance, and follow those through as an actualization of musical freedom (as in, say, Anthony Braxton's composition "JMK-80/CFN-7 (Composition 26b)").⁵⁷

This Spinozian social contract that allows, or, more precisely, *enables* any body to do absolutely anything and everything it can is the precise opposite of an "anarchist" (in the pejorative sense of the term) (musical) politics in which "anything goes." Instead, it becomes necessary to organize encounters that maximize expressive capacity, and to invent the virtual rules that enable singular soundings. "We cannot avoid all bad encounters, we cannot avoid death" (the lesson, say, of Scott LaFaro's terrible and sudden demise in 1961 or Jimmy Blanton's in 1942), "but we can strive to unite with what agrees with our nature, to combine our relation with those that are compatible with it, to associate our acts and thoughts with the images of things that agree with us."⁵⁸

The criterion of judgment that Spinoza offers for this combinatory is that of "adequacy." If Descartes located truth in the clear and distinct idea, Spinoza goes farther, and argues that these criteria are necessary, but insufficient in the pursuit of truth.⁵⁹ They must be supplemented with that of *adequacy*; it is not enough that a truth remain an interior certainty. It must furthermore find adequate *expression* to be truly ethical in Spinoza's sense. This process of expression occurs in two phases: the first is passive, the second active. A body first strives to "experience a maximum of joyful passive affections; and thence pass[es] on to a final stage in which our power of action has so increased that it becomes capable of producing affections that are themselves active."⁶⁰ The model is immediately cognizable in

⁵⁵ Cf. Christian Lazzari, *Droit, pouvoir, et liberté: Spinoza critique de Hobbes*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998, p. 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this composition, see the December 5, 1985 interview with Braxton "Speaking of Music" at <http://radiom.org/detail.php?omid=SOM.1985.12.05.c1.A> (accessed November 13, 2009).

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 261.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

terms of an active and passive relation to musical expression. The first, which Berliner describes in extensive detail, is that of apprenticeship, or, for the listener, of passive consumption of musical objects. In the phase of apprenticeship, the student copies the solos of the masters, imitating with ever-increasing facility the sounding capacities of their mentors (Bird, Trane, Miles...). Branford Marsalis has described how Wayne Shorter once told him how he achieved his own personal voice—by embodying to perfection the sound of his masters: Hawk, Newk, Bird, Trane—and how Shorter then proceeded to invoke each of them to the stunned Marsalis, who suddenly saw these sonic figures rise up before him one after another, before Shorter then finally proceeded to modulate his voice into his own instantly recognizable signature inventions. This apprenticeship is the mastery of a “state of reason [that] is one with the formation of a higher kind of body and a higher kind of soul, enjoying natural rights corresponding to their power.”⁶¹ The ethical axiom of music apprenticeship is to overcome by all our efforts our initial alienation from ‘our power of action.’⁶² In other words, to answer Deleuze’s Spinozian question “How [to] exercise our capacity to be affected in such a way that our power of action increases,” a single answer, from Bird to Trane to Jaco remains unchanging: Practice! Woodshed, to the point at which one becomes an *active* creator, where one has mastered the expressive potentials of one’s sounding body.⁶³

This combinatory art is furthermore that of “organizing encounters” that will maximize expressive potentialities within a particular assemblage. “The effort expended to organize encounters is above all the effort to form an association of humans within a *relation that composes itself*.”⁶⁴ This expressive empowerment is what Spinoza calls “joy” (*Laetitia*): not happiness, but rather “the passion through which the mind attains a greater degree of perfection.”⁶⁵ A joyful sound can express the highest degree of sorrow; above all it will avoid sadness not as sorrow, but as the inability to express all it is capable of. In the vernacular, it is the musician unable to make the changes, no matter what mood or affect a piece explores, who is truly “sad.”

⁶¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 264. Berliner elaborates: “The player converses with predecessors within the jazz tradition [sustaining an] inner dialogue with themselves ... To the extent to which expression is shaped by idiomatic features of playing technique, or by idiosyncratic features of an instrument’s responsiveness, the player converses with the instrument as well. Artists’ conversations also have a historical dimension on the personal level: in each performance, the player’s unfolding ideas grow, moment by moment, out of a cumulative lifetime of performance and musical thinking” (Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, p. 497).

⁶² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 269.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 240 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁵ Benedict de Spinoza, *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, ed. E. Curley, Princeton University Press, 1994; *Ethics*, 3, proposition XI, scolie (p. 424).

This highest measure of expressive perfection of sorrow as *laetitia*/joy through the art of association was achieved, for example, on February 12, 1964, in Lincoln Center. Miles Davis was to play for the first time with his new ensemble in this elite concert hall, the performance space of the New York Philharmonic. Anticipation and tension were high, and the musicians went through the roof when they discovered they wouldn't be paid for this concert to benefit the NAACP. To express all that a sounding body, an ensemble or *agencement* could achieve on that night meant precisely to channel and express a series of contingencies, anticipation, anger, a response to the moment as much as to American racism and the recent assassination of Kennedy, and all with the highest degree of virtuosic and creative intensity.

The city, Deleuze writes, is the site in which humans can “come to meet one another in relations that are compatible, and so form a reasonable association.”⁶⁶ If the Hobbesian city of fear (as racism) and renunciation compel the search for a new mode of right (as constituted civil rights granted from on high), a Spinozian city substitutes instead the presupposition that the sovereign is the whole: say, the musical commons of the AACM initiative, or, at a simpler level, that of any creative sounding ensemble (Lewis). Beyond any mere Hobbesian preservation of the self in its static, self-same identity, the Spinozian city is transformational: “The whole cannot preserve itself unless it tends toward something that has at least the appearance of reason,” even if it is not yet itself fully reasonable.⁶⁷ It must preserve as its basis freedom of expression, the public sphere, in which all are fundamentally free to express all they are capable of.⁶⁸ “The power of knowing, thinking, and expressing one’s thought remains an inalienable right, which the City cannot compromise without reintroducing between itself and its subjects relations of simple violence.”⁶⁹ Jazz is this urban music of the composed encounter of sounding bodies.

To fashion an *agencement* that allows for the maximum of expressive potentiality means to pass from a state of passive consumption of music to one of active creation, whether through actual performance or an Adornian practice of the fullest creative attention to any performance.⁷⁰ Paul Berliner extensively documents how, in learning to improvise, the jazz musician reflects upon his or her varied musical materials. In Spinozian terms, this means passing from an

⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 265.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁶⁸ This of course is the final and perhaps fundamental immediate political claim of Spinoza’s *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Israel, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Spinoza*, p. 268.

⁷⁰ Richard Leppert rehearses in detail the contradictions of Adorno’s much-debated concepts of active and “structural” listening in his article “Pushed to the Edge of Existence (Adorno, Listening, and the Question of Hope),” *Cultural Critique* 60 (Spring 2005): 92–133.

abstract, exterior idea of jazz to a fully adequate, “common idea” of jazz that both understands and expressively enacts an improvisational potential. “We are active,” Deleuze writes, “insofar as we form common ideas. The formation of the common idea marks the moment in which we enter into *formal possession* of our power to act ... Reason in its genesis is the effort to organize encounters.”⁷¹ It is not enough, Spinoza tells us, simply to accumulate multiple experiences of joyful passions. To attain a fully adequate idea of jazz improvisation, it is not enough for the apprentice to consume the recordings or performances of others. The practice must be learned and mastered from within if we are to attain knowledge of what any body is capable of. The musicians Berliner interviews recall how, on first encountering jazz, they wondered: “How does Bird (or Trane, or Miles) do that?”⁷² How to overcome the initial tendency to explain something we cannot comprehend as what Spinoza so scandalously deconstructed as a “miracle”⁷³ To do so, we must understand musical expression from within, and grasp in fullest adequacy how we “come to form” an adequate improvisation. We must move beyond the “speculative”⁷⁴ viewpoint of the “fan,” to form the common notion of how a great improviser proceeds, first as passive (Cartesian) knowledge, and then with an active (Spinozian), fully adequate knowledge of that musical truth. In striving to answer the question “how did s/he do that?” the improviser “must then break out of the mere concatenation of passions” (as sequences, as riffs), and make the “leap,” first from listening to playing, and then from passive imitation, to active singularity of expression.⁷⁵ This occurs, Berliner shows, through a process of reflection and formation, in which a musical structure as simple as the three chords of the blues comes to be seen not as a limitation, but instead as the basis for framing an infinite potential of expressive possibilities, as in Coltrane’s classic “Blue Train” solo. Musical form should be conceived in this view as an “Abstract machine.” It is virtual, “consist[ing] of *unformed matters and nonformal functions*. [These are] a composite of unformed matters exhibiting only degrees of intensity ... and diagrammatic functions exhibiting only differential equations ... the Galileo, the Bach or the Beethoven abstract machine.”⁷⁶

From the point of view of any asubjective, trans-individual assemblage, musical form is not a transcendental regime of laws limiting performance choices and policing the choices of a subject. Instead, musical form is properly virtual, enabling an infinite series of potential expressions. Any musical form is immanent

⁷¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 259.

⁷² Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*. Coltrane famously remarked, in a 1960 *Downbeat* article, “The first time I heard Bird play, it hit me right between the eyes” (*Downbeat*, September 29, 1960, www.downbeat.com/default.asp?sect=stories&subsect=story_detail&sid=353, accessed June 15, 2010).

⁷³ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 280.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 511.

to a given assemblage: the D Dorian of Coltrane's "Impressions" has no preexistent, transcendental relation to Mahler's First Symphony (though such a relation is virtually immanent to its construction, if a performance/analysis can articulate it). It is a mistake, Deleuze and Guattari write, "to believe in the adequacy of the form of expression as a linguistic system [or] an abstract machine of language."⁷⁷ Instead, compositional/performative analysis would demand that we recognize that "a true abstract machine pertains to an assemblage in its entirety: it is defined as the diagram of that assemblage." Content and signifiers, musical expression and material, are both "variables of the assemblage [existing within] a plane whose elements no longer have a fixed linear [arborescent] order: the rhizome model."⁷⁸

Witness the extraordinary assemblage of December 31, 1969 at the Fillmore East that Jimi Hendrix called the Band of Gypsies. Midway through his 12-minute improvisation "Machine Gun," the assemblage of Hendrix, a Stratocaster, and full-on Marshall amplifiers generating nearly uncontrollable feedback loops explodes into a metallic wail of sound that is not the imitation of a human voice, but a literal war-machine, all at once the suffering of Viet Nam, the inhuman machine or machine gun itself, the cry of the blues in the age of napalm and carpet bombing. This cry at once human and inhuman, of suffering and terrorization, has been differently captured at various moments in music: think of Marie's cry of anguish at the beginning of Act 1, Scene 3 in *Wozzeck*, in Anja Silja's voice, the deepest human suffering coexisting in one note with a tone as cold as *Wozzeck's* razor across the cheek of Herr Hauptmann, or the knife that will claim her own life. Listening to Silja or Hendrix, we must ask again, what's playing or vocalizing whom here? That in Hendrix's case it seems as much the feedback of his Marshall stack as the guitarist himself merely adds to, rather than detracting from, the intensity of expression achieved on that night.

Along with Louis Armstrong, Johnny Hodges, and Miles Davis, John Coltrane was a master at achieving expressive intensities and discovering all that a sounding body-assemblage could attain. While from the Deleuzian perspective it might appear that his turn to free jazz after 1964 would embody the heights of expressive capacity, it would be wrong to overlook his earlier accomplishments in his so-called "sheets of sound" period. For in classic solos such as "Blue Train" (on the album of that name) or "Straight, No Chaser" (on Miles Davis's *Milestones*), Coltrane undertook a critique of law that put into practice with musical perfection the peculiar form of contractual sabotage of the rule of constituted law that Deleuze identifies as the formal practice of Masochism. In Coltrane's case, as a constitutive formal procedure, this had nothing to do with sexual practice, but enacted instead a systematic subversion of musical law via dissidence; in other words, Coltrane destroyed the constituted laws of jazz harmonic language by following through their logic point by point to the limit of sustainability, exploding them through faithful adherence to their formal stipulations.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

In his study of Sacher-Masoch (“Coldness and Cruelty”), Deleuze argues that the psychological construct known as “sodomasochism” is conceptually misguided. In fact, the world of Sade and that of the history professor and novelist Leopold von Sacher-Masoch are utterly distinct: “The genius of Sade and that of Masoch are poles apart; their worlds do not communicate.”⁷⁹ Masoch’s procedure, unlike that of Sade, was a systematic attempt to fend off the infinite, obscene demands of the superego/father by means of the contract. Deleuze’s definition is worth citing at length:

The masochistic hero must evolve a complex strategy to protect his world of fantasy and symbols, and to ward off the hallucinatory inroads of reality ... This procedure which ... is constantly used in masochism, is the *contract*. A contract is established between the hero and the woman, whereby at a precise point in time and for a determinate period she is given every right over him. By this means the masochist tries to exorcise the danger of the father and to ensure that the temporal order of reality and experience will be in conformity with the symbolic order, in which the father has been banished for all time. Through the contract, that is through the most rational and temporarily determinate act, the masochist reaches toward the most mythical and the most timeless realms.⁸⁰

Coltrane’s struggle was an attempt to banish the law of the master through musical means. In post-war American popular music, the hegemonic authority was the simplified form of Western harmony encoded in the jazz tradition of standards and blues (the latter a hybrid Afro-Atlantic form that reduces this tradition to a sequence of three chords).⁸¹ The mother with whom Coltrane signed his contract was, of course, Euterpe, the Muse of music.

Coltrane’s hyperkinetic explorations of the jazz tradition in his first mature phase, stretching from his joining the Miles Davis Quintet in 1955, peaking in his “spiritual awakening” of 1957, and culminating in the period of “Giant Steps,” involved a systematic investigation of the forms and language of the post-bop jazz tradition. In these few years, Coltrane moved from what Deleuze calls a “Socratic” relation to the law (in which the law is an external, received model of the Good), to a Kantian one, collapsing some three thousand years of development into the flash

⁷⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. J. McNeil, Zone Books, 1991, p. 133.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁸¹ This is not to deny, of course, that enormous expressive potentials have been realized by musicians pushing against the limits of those laws, from Rameau to Rollins. My point is rather that Coltrane (along with Cecil Taylor) took this *critical* practice much further than even his most progressive colleagues of the time (Monk, Rollins, Tristano), to the point of exploding and moving beyond those limits into a new musical world, informed, unlike the equally progressive music of, say, Ornette Coleman, to its core by that previous mastery of Western harmonic law.

of a moment. In the former, Coltrane explored the traditional, constituted forms of his art (standards, blues); when he had exhausted that material, he immediately moved on to what might be described as a Kantian practice, one in which, Deleuze says, “law no longer has its foundation in some higher principle from which it would derive its authority, but that is self-grounded and valid solely by virtue of its own form. For the first time we can now speak of THE LAW, regarded as an absolute, without further specification or reference to an object.”⁸² Coltrane’s period of Kantian—rather than Platonic—formalism was, of course, his experimentation with autologous harmonic forms: “Moment’s Notice,” “Countdown,” “Giant Steps,” “26-2,” “Satellite,” “Fifth House.” Coltrane was a musical dissident, or what Deleuze called a masochistic hero:

While the sadian hero subverts the law, the masochist should not by contrast be regarded as gladly submitting to it. The element of contempt in the submission of the masochist has often been emphasized: his apparent obedience conceals a criticism and a provocation. He simply attacks the law on another flank ... We all know ways of twisting the law by excess of zeal. By scrupulously applying the law we are able to demonstrate its absurdity and provoke the very disorder that it is intended to prevent or to conjure ... The law is no longer subverted by the upward movement of irony to a principle that overrides it, but by the downward movement of humor which seeks to reduce the law to its furthest consequences ... It is a demonstration of the law’s absurdity.⁸³

Like all dissidents, Coltrane uses the law of the master, takes it at its literal word (whether the Rights of Man or the Helsinki accord, or the musical commandment that every dominant should be followed by a return to the tonic), and ironizes that formal commandment through the absurdity of total, literal adherence.

Coltrane’s “Blue Train” solo offers a canonical example of this art of masochistic dissidence. For a post-bop composition, the harmonic structure of “Blue Train” is rudimentary in the extreme. It consists of only three chords: I(#9), IV(#11), and V(#9) in a rudimentary I–IV–I–V–I 12-bar progression.⁸⁴ Over this foundation, Coltrane’s solo constructs a dense weave of harmonic substitutions and superpositions, principally through modal interchange (bars 1–4, 5–6, 19, etc.) and a panoply of alternate II–V substitutions and chromatic interpolations (bars 10, 11, 21, 28, 31, 33–35, etc.). Coltrane interpolates an array of chord scales and arpeggiations whose extensions vastly expand the tune’s simple triadic harmony (bars 26, 31, 105), and his careening, double- and triple-time phrases (as in bars 80–83) offer a wild contrast to the solid rhythm section plodding along underneath. The subjective effect is of a mad scientist running wild in his laboratory, bringing to life a blues monster.

⁸² Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, p. 82.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁸⁴ My comments draw on Don Sickler’s 1975 transcription and analysis of the solo.

And yet, Coltrane's methodology is impeccable, every phrase eminently analyzable within the traditional norms of pre-Schoenbergian harmony.⁸⁵ The wild condensation and acceleration of musical material is perfectly unfolded; witness, for example the way an extended three-measure run of 16th and 32nd notes extends across the bar line of a new chorus, while Trane hits the tonic with perfection as he passes the starting pole at top speed (bars 60–62), or how a series of highly chromatic chord substitutions creates an extreme tension in the final bar of the sixth chorus, while perfectly enfolding the return to the tonic in bar 85.⁸⁶

Having exhausted the sounding potentials of this traditional material from the perspective of post-bop stylistics,⁸⁷ Coltrane completed his critique of constituted musical law with his famous series of autologous compositions based on the now standard "Coltrane changes." These were a perfectly balanced tripartite division of the circle of fifths that Coltrane developed in his own compositions of the period, in which the chord changes of a piece undergo three modulations of a descending major third each—i.e., B \flat → F \sharp → D. See Figure 8.1.⁸⁸

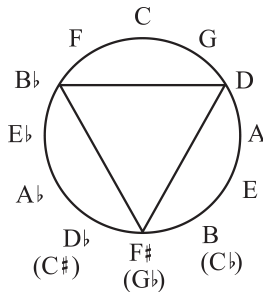


Figure 8.1 Coltrane changes

While Coltrane quickly mastered and then exhausted the pure formalism of this "Kantian" material, this final level of critique essentially opened the path for his famous move from a subordination to a hierarchal musical law to the pure parallel world of the Tyner-Jones-Garrison Quartet. Coltrane's Masochian critique

⁸⁵ An extensive exploration of these processes from the perspective of jazz harmony is to be found in Dave Leibman's *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody*, Advance Music, 1991.

⁸⁶ Similar techniques are in evidence in another of Coltrane's finest blues solos from this period, "Straight, No Chaser" from the *Milestones* album. See David Baker's transcription and analysis in *The Jazz Style of John Coltrane: A Musical and Historical Perspective*, Alfred Publishing, 1990.

⁸⁷ Of course, Coltrane would continue to play standards and blues to the end of his career, but henceforth with a fully individualized conception of the art of improvisation.

⁸⁸ Image from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coltrane_changes (accessed November 13, 2009).

is fundamentally the preparation of what Alain Badiou has called a “site” within the world of hierarchical structural harmony. The site, in Badiou’s parlance, is a location within a field (say, post-bop jazz practice circa 1957–61), in which one of the elements within that field (the musical subject “Coltrane”) becomes self-referential; in other words, rather than simply reproducing via its received norms of practice, it becomes self-reflexive. Though this happens in the case of all strong musical expression, in Coltrane’s case this reflection upon the norms of practice went beyond mere modifications of existing practices—new heads, say, over old changes—and with “Giant Steps” began to draw out, with striking singularity, the fullest consequences of these reconfigurations, to the point where Coltrane was able finally to break through the gravitational pull of the world of structural jazz harmony, and to open onto the new world of the musical event that would go under the proper name “Coltrane Quartet.”⁸⁹

If Deleuzian analysis allows us to ascertain the infinitesimal, immeasurable differentiations of any becoming, Badiou’s logic allows us to describe the process of discontinuity, in which a nascent subject brings to fruition an overwhelming intensity of existence of a new transcendental configuration, a new musical world.⁹⁰ Coltrane’s case is particularly interesting in the context of this volume. It is my contention that the breakthrough from “Giant Steps” to the 1962 performance preserved as “Out of This World”⁹¹ is a true event, a radical shift in the logics of musical worlds, in which the transcendental coordinates for what *counts* (as music, as jazz, as “bad”) are radically reinvented, and, furthermore, that this was an *event* and no mere musical singularity insofar as the sound-world of the classic Coltrane Quartet soon became hegemonic in the jazz world, as that of figures such as Armstrong and Bird had before it.

And yet the world this Coltrane event opened onto was the flat, Deleuzian plane of musical immanence, a breakthrough from the world of hierarchy onto a plane or plateau of sheer immanence. This was the world of planar sound (modalism), McCoy Tyner’s quartal harmony over perfect-fifth piano ostinatos and bass pedals, the openness of pentatonic melodic material, and the churning, kinetic flow of Elvin Jones’s polyrhythmic independence and erasure of overt reference to beat.⁹² Though many of its elements were drawn from preceding sound worlds

⁸⁹ This analysis follows the schematic apparatus of Badiou’s logical combinatory of the site, in which phenomenological occurrences pass through successive degrees of novelty and power, from mere *modifications*, to the real change of the *site*, to that of the *fact* that fails to instantiate itself, to that of the more lasting *singularity*, and finally to the stage of the *event*, which manages to actualize a maximum of substantial consequences in its unfolding (Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, pp. 366–76).

⁹⁰ Badiou describes this musical-historical process in somewhat impressionistic terms in the case of the Schoenberg event (*ibid.*, pp. 79–90).

⁹¹ On the first full-length recording of the classic quartet, the 1962 album *Coltrane*.

⁹² On Tyner’s harmonic style, see Paul Rinzler, “McCoy Tyner: Style and Syntax,” *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 2 (1983): 109–149. Lewis Porter has extensive analysis

(Africa, blues, spirituals, European musical impressionism, etc.), these raw elements were structured under the domain of an entirely new musical logic. The breakthrough from Coltrane's earlier Platonic and Kantian worlds into this new Truth (and its nomination as the "Coltrane Quartet") opens before us in the churning soundscape of "Out of This World." This was the perfect Spinozian *agencement*, a concatenation of bodies suddenly sounding in their fullest extension, demonstrating all that a musical body (as quartet) is capable of, making musical impossibility possible as an "aesthetic of intensities," a new world of sound that has gone on to achieve hegemony as one of the fundamental sonic worlds of the post-bop universe.⁹³ In music, the proper noun Coltrane designates not a biological individual, but a sounding machine of immeasurable intensities, an encounter between Coltrane and Elvin Jones that energizes "a set of nonsubjectified affects" to the highest pitch.⁹⁴ The break, and all its consequences, enabled Coltrane's sequencing of a new world that would soon articulate its proper name: freedom.

of Coltrane's style in *John Coltrane: His Life and Music*, University of Michigan Press, 2000.

⁹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

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Chapter 9
Logic of Edge:
Wolfgang Rihm's *Am Horizont*

Judy Lochhead

Concepts and Sensation

Gilles Deleuze wrote frequently about art and aesthetics, his works including *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (to which my title alludes)¹ and two books on cinema.² However, he affirmed these texts as “philosophy, nothing but philosophy, in the traditional sense.”³ In his later work with Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze defines philosophy as the creation of concepts, distinguishing it from science and art and claiming the three as the “great forms” of thought.⁴ Distinguishing the three from one another and claiming their equal status, Deleuze and Guattari characterize philosophy as the creation of concepts, art as the composition of monuments through sensations, and science as the determination of functions.⁵ For them, philosophy is not a fundamental form of thought prior to all others but rather a distinct mode of engaging the world through conceptualizing. Given the equal status of philosophy, art, and science as ways of thinking of the world, some significant questions arise about relations between these forms of thought. Here, I focus on the relation of art and philosophy in light of Deleuze’s claim that his writings on art are “nothing but philosophy” with the larger goal of developing a critical approach to music through the prism of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical thought.⁶

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. D. Smith, University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

² Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, and *Cinema II: The Time Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta, both published by University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

³ Quoted by Daniel Smith in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. viii, from a 1980 interview with Catherine Clément.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. J. Tomlinson and G. Burchell, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 197.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 117–200.

⁶ My exclusion of science from this discussion is simply practical. The relations of science to art and philosophy to science are of equal significance but consideration of them is peripheral to this essay.

If we take Deleuze's writings on Francis Bacon's paintings as "philosophy," as creative conceptual thought about the creative sensual thought of Bacon, then what is the relation between Deleuze's philosophy and Bacon's art? In claiming philosophical status for his writings on art, Deleuze apparently wanted only to position his observations as flowing from an engagement with art that ends in the creation of concepts. However, when asked whether one of the goals of *Francis Bacon* is "to make readers see Bacon's paintings better," Deleuze conceded that it would "necessarily have that effect if it succeeded."⁷ "But," he continued, "I believe that it has a higher aspiration of which everyone dreams: to approach something that would be the common ground of words, lines, and colors, and even sounds. To write on painting, to write on music always implies this aspiration."⁸ Since Deleuze agreed to the idea that philosophical thinking on art would result in an "improved" apprehension of it, we might assume that it is the interaction of concept and sensation that generates this effect. And, while the affect of concept on sensation in this context might more productively be conceived as intensification or transformation, it flows from a general notion of concept as entailing a perpetual shaping and reshaping of the world.⁹ At the same time, Deleuze and Guattari insist that concepts do not precede the sensations of art or the functions of science. Rather, they claim a "rich correspondence ... between the planes [of the three modes of thought]," allowing that "sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function; ... concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept."¹⁰ So, while philosophical thought might be understood to positively affect aesthetic apprehension, that affect arises from a rich and complex network of interactions among concepts and sensations.

Nonetheless, Deleuze's off-hand statement about the pragmatic affects of concepts on aesthetic apprehension speaks directly to the practices of art criticism. Daniel Smith, the translator of *Francis Bacon*, writes in his introduction, however, that: "Readers who approach this book expecting a work of art criticism will thus be disappointed. There is little discussion of the socio-cultural milieu in which Bacon lived and worked; nor of his artistic influences or contemporaries ... nor of his personal life ..."¹¹ While Smith defines art criticism as taking account of the biographical, historical, and social forces that shape artistic creation, it is a rather loosely defined set of practices that addresses art and artists from other perspectives as well. But implicit to all critical writings lurks the question posed to Deleuze about his Bacon book—do critical accounts of art works have the effect

⁷ Daniel Smith, quoting an interview with Hervé Guibert, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. xx.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

⁹ Or, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, a perpetual process of territorializing, deterritorializing, and reterritorializing.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 199.

¹¹ Smith, in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. ix.

of “improving” our apprehension of them? And further, following Deleuze and Guattari, we might ask: if art is a self-standing mode of “thinking” the world, then would not critical writing about art aim to *produce* better art, and not merely an improved apprehension of it?

These questions raise some other larger ones: who are the intended recipients of critical writing on art and how can writing about art affect its apprehension and production? Critical writing on art may be warranted because it uses linguistically-articulated concepts to take account of sensation, utilizing one form of thought to illuminate or amplify another. But there is no parallel and explicit category of art that explicates philosophy or science, even though some art may affect philosophical or scientific understanding. In other words, the category of art criticism is unique in its relation to artistic practices.¹² As a category of writing, art criticism straddles the three modes of thought, relying on concepts, functions, and perhaps even sensations in an effort to register the sensations of art; and, in doing so, critical writing acknowledges an audience. More than science and philosophy, art depends on the viewer, the listener, the observer—the one who senses apart from the creator.¹³ It is *this* audience who is the implicit subject of art criticism.

Deleuze's acknowledgement that his writing would result in an improved apprehension of Bacon's art is itself acknowledgement of the audience: it is viewers of Bacon's art whose apprehension is improved. Thus, while Deleuze and Smith claim only a philosophical goal, *Francis Bacon* certainly functions like art criticism. For instance, it serves as a form of advocacy for Bacon's work, draws attention to how the material presences of lines, colors, and textures of the paintings express the lived body, and demonstrates how pigment creates affect. Such writing draws out the sensations of art, highlighting their character and “logic.” The denial of affinities with criticism may perhaps speak more to a refusal of the implicit evaluative component of some critical studies and the hierarchical and specialist implications of authoritative judgment that inhabits some art criticism. Nonetheless, Deleuze's strategies in his writings on art—in both his solo works and those with Guattari—prove suggestive for music criticism.

¹² One can easily and persuasively demonstrate that there are works of art that affect in significant ways the production of philosophy or science. But those works of art are not in a separate category of philosophy criticism or science criticism. Art criticism seems to be in most senses a unique category of writing.

¹³ Obviously, philosophical and scientific work depends on reception by other people. But there is a qualitatively and quantitatively different relation to others in artistic practices. And, further, it is worth noting here that even the people who are the creators of art themselves are observers of their own work and of others.

Deleuze on Art/Music

As with its sister field of the plastic arts, critical writing about music can encompass a wide variety of different types: from journalistic accounts and appraisals to historical accounts that situate musical practices within a broad cultural and political context. And, of particular relevance in this case, music study has also encompassed a long-standing practice of music analysis which focuses on the structures of music. While the particular brand of analytical writing current since the mid-twentieth century has been criticized as formalist, abstract, and technical, the attention given to the details of musical works has also been valued by a wide array of authors.¹⁴ The philosopher Stanley Cavell, in a much quoted statement, remarks on the “systematic and precise vocabulary” that musicians and music scholars use for the “description and analysis [of musical] objects.”¹⁵ The musicologist Joseph Kerman also speaks to the “power of analysis” because it allows authors to address in concrete detail the “balance” and “coherence” of musical works that arise from harmonic and melodic design.¹⁶ The ethnomusicologist Stephen Blum defends analytical “close reading” since it allows us “to recognize and alter our habitual responses” and since it is a necessary part of understanding how music “inscribes ... cultural concepts, assumptions, and aspirations.”¹⁷ In other words, these authors value the attention to the material realities of musical sound that occurs in music analysis. This attention to musical detail, to music as a sonic presence, accords in significant ways with Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of art as thought through sensation. The materials of art—its colors, textures, shapes, arrangements, and so forth in their sonic, visual, and tactile manifestations—are not themselves sensations, but only through the material can sensation arise: “*the material ... passes into sensation*” and “*sensation is realized in the material.*”¹⁸ Thus, an approach to art as sensation—as a logic of sensation—must begin with its material realities.

¹⁴ Some of the more pointed criticism of analysis has come from Gary Tomlinson, “Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer,” *Current Musicology* 53 (1992): 18–24 and Susan McClary, “Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition,” *Critical Critique* 12 (1989): 57–81. Others, including some of the authors quoted below, offer criticism while arguing for a transformation of analytical practice.

¹⁵ Stanley Cavell, “Music Discomposed” in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 186.

¹⁶ Joseph Kerman, “How We Got Into Analysis, and How to Get Out,” *Critical Inquiry* 7/2 (1980): 321–2.

¹⁷ Blum raises the issues of “concepts, assumptions, aspirations” in response to an article by Gary Tomlinson. (Tomlinson, “Musical Pasts and Postmodern Musicologies”): Stephen Blum, “In Defense of Close Reading and Close Listening,” *Current Musicology* 53 (Fall 1992): 49–50.

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 193, emphasis in original.

This is certainly Deleuze's approach in *Francis Bacon*, in which he tends to questions of the figure, shape, pigment, texture, and the body, while at the same time addressing a wide array of philosophical concepts. More specifically, he develops the idea of sensation as a form of thought, working out its logic in a series of concepts (including the cliché, the diagram, haptic vision, and color modulation, as well as others). Deleuze's account of Bacon's paintings certainly qualifies as art criticism in the best sense of the practice, and serves as a useful model for a music criticism that addresses the logic of sonorous sensation. Such a music criticism would begin with sonorous materials of music in an effort to bring forth the sensations of musical thought and to produce new hearings through the prism of concepts.

A music criticism premised on ideas from Deleuze's solo and his duet writing with Guattari would start, as Smith points out, not with the question "What does it mean?" but rather "How does it function?"¹⁹ In other words, such a criticism would focus on how sonic materials pass into sensation and how sensations are realized in sonic materials.²⁰ Some of the descriptive methods of music analysis provide an initial starting point for such a music criticism, but only a starting point, since music analysis often takes as its goal an exposition of the technical details of musical "structure"—such structure often understood as compositional technique. For Deleuze and Guattari, the work of art "is never produced by or for the sake of technique."²¹ However, the material reality of sound cannot be fully disentangled from the techniques of its creation. Thus, criticism of a musical work must fully engage the technical features of creation, while also seeking the sensations that "are realized in the material." An address of "function," then, is an account not simply of the technical details of creation, but, for instance, of how the affects of an airy flute or smoky harmony work together with the percepts of a floating melody and an adamant rhythm to create the sensations that give the work its unique sense.²²

A music criticism that seeks to bring forth the sensations of sonic materials aspires to "approach the common ground of words, lines, and colors, and even sounds."²³ It would seek out that plane of aesthetic thought that uniquely

¹⁹ Smith, in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. xii.

²⁰ See Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 193.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²² In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write about sensation comprising percepts and affects. Their Chapter 7 develops these concepts in some detail. An extended discussion of them would not well serve my goals here, but in brief percept is a concept of what transcends specific perceptions, and affect what transcends affections.

²³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. xx; It is interesting to note Deleuze's emphasis of sound ("even sounds.") He apparently finds critical discussion of musical sound more challenging. He is, of course, not alone in this sense, and perhaps this special "problem" of sound is behind the turn in professional music scholarship to technique.

characterizes musical sound. In doing so, it approaches the domain of philosophy. The goal of such a music criticism is not to represent the sensations of musical thought, but rather to produce hearings that give rise to new sensations. A criticism that is “productive” in this way would aspire to generate hearings that are not so much “improved” as they are transformed, intensified, and refreshed. With an explicitly generative goal, productive criticism encourages new hearing “experiments.” In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write that the “task of philosophy when it creates concepts . . . is always to extract an event from things and beings, to set up the new event from things and beings, always to give them a new event: space, time, matter, thought, the possible as events.”²⁴ This is a viable model for music criticism (and art criticism generally): in taking account of the sensations of the sonic materials of a musical work, productive criticism would “extract the event from sound” in order to set up a new and transformed event—in other words, to produce new hearings. The task of productive criticism—like the task of philosophy—is generative.

Am Horizont

The next part of my chapter exemplifies a productive critical account of a 1991 musical work by the German composer Wolfgang Rihm, *Am Horizont*, for violin, cello, and accordion. I have encountered this piece through a recorded performance by the Ensemble Recherche²⁵ and through the published score of the work.²⁶ My particular approach to productive criticism of this work comprises three strands of thought, each woven out of ideas deriving from various sources. These strands allow me to take account of music as a unique form of aesthetic thought, to develop a notion of “hearing” as a sensual and bodied act, and to address the special challenges of conceptualizing sound.

While Deleuze’s primary focus in *Francis Bacon* is on the visual domain of painting, he often compares painting and music. In the chapter on “Painting Forces,” he writes that “music must render non-sonorous forces sonorous, and painting must render invisible forces visible.”²⁷ In addition, throughout much of the book, Deleuze targets the “Figure” in particular paintings of Bacon, showing how it makes visible such forces as isolation and the fearfulness of the future. And given his focus on painting here, Deleuze does not fully develop the senses in which music might render the non-sonorous sonorous. But the writings of another philosopher who has targeted sound can provide some insight. In his *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound*, Don Ihde has developed some suggestive ideas about how sound—not necessarily musical sound—makes mute objects sonorous;

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 33.

²⁵ Wolfgang Rihm, *Trios 1969–1994*, Ensemble Recherche, KAIROS, 2000.

²⁶ Wolfgang Rihm, *Am Horizont*, Universal Editions, 1993.

²⁷ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 48.

for example, when we hear the edge of a die rolled across a table or the point of a pencil when it falls on the floor.²⁸ My account of Rihm's *Am Horizont* will explicitly address questions of how its sonic materials render the non-sonorous in musical sensation.

Hearing the "edge" of a die already suggests something about the nature of hearing and the nature of the things heard. Most obviously, an edge is something seen and touched, but it can also be heard. Each sense, while having a focus, opens onto the world in concert with the other senses, the body serving as the place of sensory intercommunication. This notion of intermodal perception, central in the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, figures prominently in Deleuze's aesthetics as well. With respect to painting, Deleuze points out that one of the roles of the artist is to "make visible a kind of original unity of the senses, and [to] make a multisensible Figure appear visually."²⁹ In a similar way, Rihm creates multisensible sonic gestures in *Am Horizont* that make edges and precipices hearable, and, in doing so, Rihm's music engages the body as a unitary place of sensation. But, as Deleuze has suggested, music "disembodies bodies"—"it strips bodies of their inertia, of the materiality of their presence [while in painting] the body discovers the materiality of which it is composed ..."³⁰ Musical sound then is the medium which transports listeners to an imaginative realm in which the everyday realities of the lived body are transformed and sometimes even transcended—music discovers a body freed from the gravities of its here and now. My analysis of *Am Horizont* focuses specifically on how the material realities of the body are refigured through the bodily sensations of sound.

If, following Deleuze, one of the roles of the musician (as composer or performer) is to "make hearable the original unity of the senses," then one of the challenges for the critic is how to conceptualize that sense of musical sound. Deleuze himself alludes to this challenge in his qualification of sound when he identifies the aspiration of critical writing on the arts: "to approach something that would be the common ground of words, lines, and colors, and *even* sounds".³¹ As Deleuze suggests with the qualification "even sounds," music as sounding event poses an epistemological challenge to the goals of critical writing about it. Typically, critical accounts of music rely on verbal description and linguistic concepts in conjunction with the visual symbols of notation or other graphic depictions as tools for comprehending the sense of musical sound. My analysis similarly employs these tools, but I have chosen to develop more fully graphic modes of depiction in the form of musical maps which chart out a territory of sound.

The sort of visual mapping of musical sound I employ constitutes only one possible means of grasping the sensations of musical sound, but I find it particularly

²⁸ Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound*, SUNY Press, 2007.

²⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 37.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

suggestive because the shapes and layout of graphic figures have non-linguistic senses analogous to sound.³² And, following Deleuze and Guattari, I engage the idea of the map not as a “tracing” but as “open and connectable in all of its dimensions; [as] detachable, reversible, [and] susceptible to constant modification The map has to do with performance. . . .”³³ A visual map of a piece of music is unlike musical notation which provides a set of instructions and symbols that are used to generate a performance of a work; rather, through its visual sense a map takes as its goal the production of some of the possibilities of musical hearing. Such a map must tend to the materiality of musical sound while at the same time approaching the sense of it. And further, the map, as the result of mapping as a process, constitutes a central action in the critical encounter with music that engages the body as a unitary place of sensation.³⁴

Rihm’s *Am Horizont* inhabits a sound world of edges. It transports me as a listener through a sounding place characterized by ledges, precipices, and the possibility of falling.³⁵ My mapping of the edges of Rihm’s music visualizes, to paraphrase the philosopher Edward Casey, “how it feels and [sounds] to be on or in [a musical] land, being part of it, groping through it. . . .”³⁶ At its beginning, *Am Horizont* produces the sensation of being on a precipice, a feeling that begins somewhat tenuously but grows stronger as the music sounds out a sense of immense distances and makes palpable in sound what presents itself visually as the horizontal junction of earth and sky. Figure 9.1 maps out the sounds of the opening of *Am Horizont* as this felt sense of edge emerges over time.

The thin, straight lines evoke the sonic edges and the various bulges indicate dynamic swells. The sensation of edge is reinforced by the quality of the sounds

³² Color has a similar function to shape and layout but, due to publication restrictions, it was not an option for this paper.

³³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 12; Deleuze and Guattari conceive mapping as a “performance” that is “oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real”, p. 12.

³⁴ While mappings need not be visualizations, such modes of critical engagement with music have a long history. I discuss visualization of music more generally in “Visualizing the Musical Object,” in Evan Selinger (ed.), *Expanding (Post) Phenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, SUNY Press, 2006. It is also worth noting here the real pitfalls in connecting sound to visual depictions. Given the prevalence of visual modes of thinking in the Western philosophical tradition, the relevance of the visual to the sounding must always be a foremost concern in the mapping encounter. This is a long-standing issue for all sorts of writing about music.

³⁵ Throughout this critical account, I will sometimes refer to “listeners” and sometimes to myself as a listener. Such references are meant to convey possible hearings, and, while building on my own sense of possible hearing, I make no specific claim that others will necessarily have had or will have such a hearing. Rather, the goal of productive criticism is to invite new hearing experiments, as suggested above.

³⁶ Edward B. Casey, *Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. xvi.

Edges



Figure 9.1 *Am Horizont*, map of opening passage

themselves, which feel “edgy.” The violin, cello, and accordion play straight sounds that are thin and austere, inhabiting a medium and high register. The string players use mutes and various techniques—such as harmonics, *senza vibrato*, *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, and *flautando*—all of which contribute to edgy, piercing sounds.

While Figure 9.1 graphically depicts the sense of edgy sounds through shape and general aspects of register, Figure 9.2 gives more specific details of octave and timbral quality. The graphic uses different shapes to map differing timbral qualities (as listed above), and the Shape Key at the bottom shows the link between shape and a particular quality. The map also demonstrates the frequent occurrence of relatively high pitches (in the fifth and sixth octaves particularly).³⁷

The edginess of the opening music and its sensations of precipice are set off and dramatized by a subsequent phase of *Am Horizont*. This second phase begins with an airy, cottony music which is interrupted by an edgy, falling gesture. A final third phase remembers the edges of the initial phase. Figure 9.3 maps a more schematic overview of the work, showing its three large phases: Edges, Cotton, and Edges/Remembering.³⁸

The cottony sounds in the middle phase have a softer, more comforting quality that derives from the lower register of the tones, a simpler timbral quality, and an overall harmonic warmth due to pitch content and harmonic spacing. Figure 9.4 cites the score of the first moment of cottony sound in *Am Horizont*, measures 24–26. It indicates the characteristics that produce the cottony effect. These characteristics include the initial sonority whose pitch content is a warm diatonic pentachord spaced with a triad nested in the middle, and the gradual evaporation of five pitches to a single D4, played as a harmonic by the cello.

³⁷ I utilize the octave labeling system adopted by the Acoustical Society for America. In this system, middle C on the piano is C4.

³⁸ All examples which specify timing rely on the Ensemble Recherche recording.

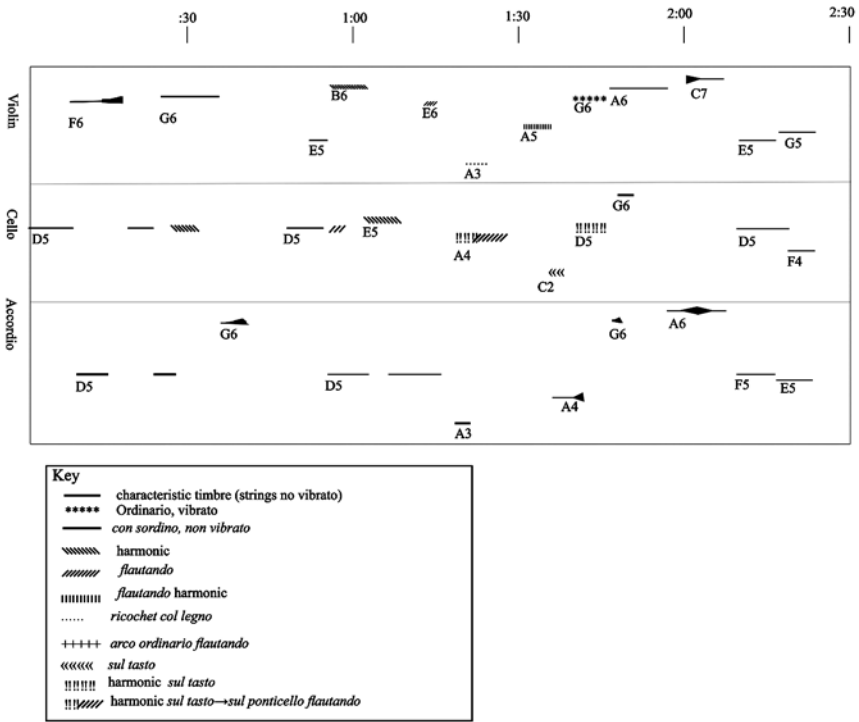


Figure 9.2 *Am Horizont*, opening of Edges phase, showing pitch register and timbral quality

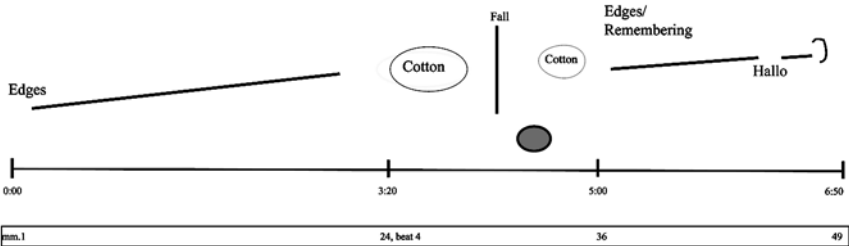


Figure 9.3 Schematic map of *Am Horizont*

The choreography of the two types of sound character—edges and cotton—shape the temporal flow of *Am Horizont*. A more detailed consideration of both types of sound character within the three phases will lead us into a closer listening of this “logic of edge.”

Warm Harmonic intervals			
2	unison	octave	harmonic
5	G	D	D4
4			
11			

Generally lower register
Simple timbral quality

Figure 9.4 *Am Horizont*, mm. 24–26

Figure 9.5 maps more of the sonic details of the initial Edges phase of *Am Horizont*. The map visually separates into simultaneous layers: edgy and cottony sounds and another layer showing silences. The relative pitch height (intensity) of sounds is indicated by vertical placement of graphic symbols (labeled high and low on the left side), and the specific timing of events is shown horizontally. The map uses graphic shapes to suggest sound characteristics and the customary features of score layout to depict time and general aspects of pitch range. It shows that most of the sounds of this phase are edgy, but that some cottony sounds begin to insinuate themselves early on. First, the event at 1:15 alludes to the sensation of cotton with the low sound of the accordion (A3) and the ensuing *ricochet col legno* of the violin.³⁹ Second, in a moment of anticipation of the Cotton phase, the accordion plays a low and airy sound at 3:06. The Edges phase consists predominantly, however, of sounds in a high or medium pitch register, often played with an edgy timbral quality. Further, there are few silences. The music gives the sensation of precipice, coupled with an apprehensive feeling of a possible fall. Hearing across the map from left to right in order to replicate the passage of time, one may observe the slow emergence of edginess through the initial stage of the Edges phase (Stage 1: 0–2:10; measures 1–15).

A second stage of the Edges phase (from 2:10 to 3:15; measures 16–24) increases a sense of apprehension through an alternation of less and more edgy sounds. The chord-like passage of 2:10–2:30—including another version of the *ricochet* figure in the accordion that concludes the chords—relaxes the tension, ever so slightly,

³⁹ This *ricochet* figure recurs at several later moments in *Am Horizont*. Each occurrence carries the resonance of the earlier ones.

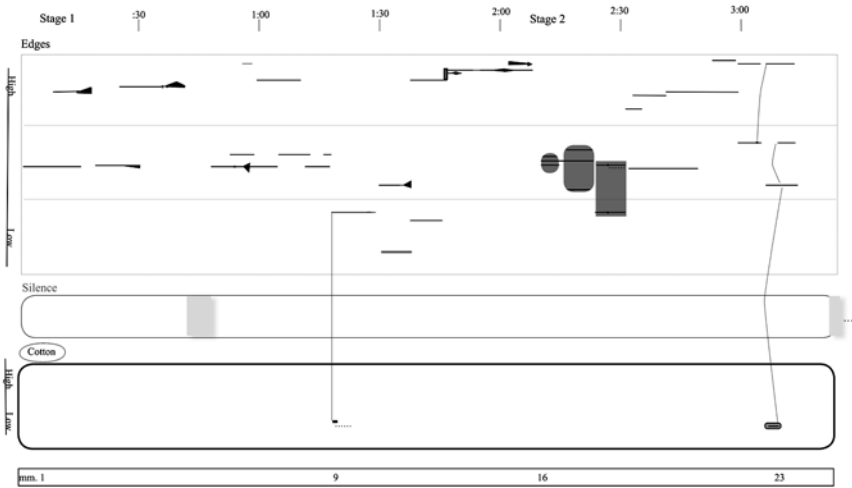


Figure 9.5 *Am Horizont*, detailed map of the Edges phase

with the close spacing and somewhat lower register. An edgy tension re-imposes itself from 2:30 to 3:15, creating a sense of vertigo with the extremely thin and high sounds. The Edge phase concludes with events that underscore apprehension, yet hint at comfort of the cottony sounds. In Figure 9.5, the vertical lines toward the end of the Edges phase (after 3:00) indicate the grouping of pitches that span low and high registers. This spanning gesture has a multivalent sense. It alludes to the vertical distances implied by precipice, driving home the feeling of danger, but the sense of connection across distance implies a kind of bonding that soothes.

The detailed map of the Cotton phase in Figure 9.6 shows a different sonic strategy. First, the softer events in this phase contrast noticeably with the edgy sounds of the Edges phase. The cottony sounds inhabit a low to medium pitch range and are surrounded by silences which begin and conclude the Cotton phase. Second, unlike the initial phase which gradually develops the tension of the precipice, the Cotton phase dramatizes the sense of both edge and cotton by sharp juxtapositions of the two types of music, and by a dramatic staging of a fall that was implied in the previous Edge phase. The greater frequency of silences and the slowly deliberate unfolding of events from 3:15 to 4:00 (mm. 24–29) set up a sense of urgent expectation, despite the comfort of the cottony sounds. The startling reassertion of edgy sounds at 4:03 comes as a jolt with the loud and sharp attack in the higher register. In the ensuing downward plunge, through several octaves, the implication of precipice is enacted. However, this falling event is cushioned by the extraordinary sound of the accordion's low E (in octave 1) at 4:29. The airiness of the sound cushions the fall, dissipating the sense of bodily tension into cottony ease. Figure 9.7 cites the score of the Fall and its cottony cushion in measures 30–32. It links the quality of edge to high pitch, dynamics,

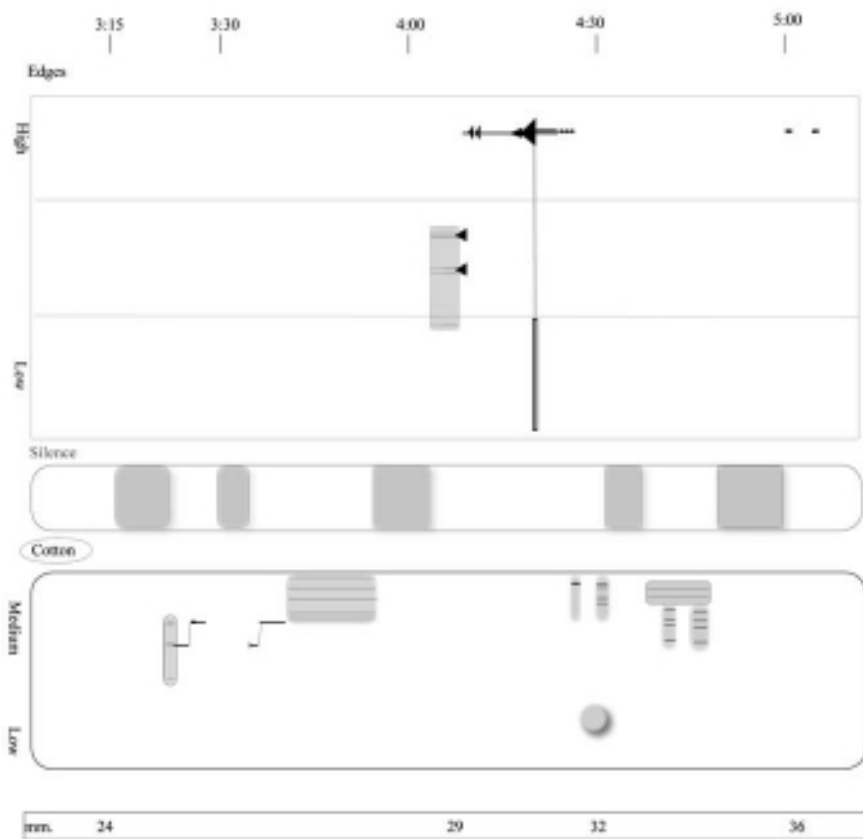


Figure 9.6 *Am Horizont*, detailed map of Cotton phase

accents, and timbre (*Bartok pizzicato* and *am Frosch*), and the cottony quality to the timbral airiness of the accordion at such a low pitch.

Figure 9.8 maps the final phase of *Am Horizont*, Edges/Remembering. The map shows a recurrence of edgy sounds, virtually all of them now in the upper register. The phase begins at 5:00 (m. 36) with a halting and reluctant remembering of the sense of edgy precipice, moving persistently higher and higher until nearly the end. The remembering of the sensations of edge in the final phase does not, however, simply recall the vulnerability of the precipice. Rather, the memory of the cushioned Fall inhabits the music as it makes its stratospheric flight in defiance of the downward pull of gravity. In its defiance, this ascent embodies a remembering of the cottony sounds that offer the promise of comfort. In addition to such an implicit remembering, there are two events which explicitly reverberate with moments directly preceding the Fall. First, the *Bartok pizzicato* and dynamic accents at 6:00 (m. 43) recall the moment that initiates the Fall (4:19, m. 31;

Edgy sounds: high pitch, extreme variation in dynamics, Bartok Pizzicato, *am Frosch*, accents

The Fall

Cottony sound: low airy timbre or the accordion

Figure 9.7 *Am Horizont*, mm. 30–32, the Fall

see the score in Figure 9.7). Second, the gently pulsing *ricochet* figure at 6:16 (mm. 45–46) remembers the accordion’s at 4:25 (m. 31), which pushes into the Fall.⁴⁰ Further, we may note that this pulsing *ricochet* figure is the single event of the Edges/Remembering phase that alludes to the softer sounds of the Cotton phase, as Figure 9.8 indicates. Played by the cello as harmonics *sul tasto*, the pulsing sounds have both an edginess and an airiness that emanate from the bowed harmonic, a sound quality that gives the figure a multivalent reference. Figure 9.9 shows this *ricochet* figure in its notated context.

In live performance, the concluding moments of *Am Horizont* enact a bit of musical theater, developing in a new way the sense of precipice and the distance it implies. The players are instructed in the score to sit as far apart as possible on the stage in order to give the sense of an empty stage. The sense of distance is reinforced through physical gestures at the end of the piece. During the silence beginning at about 6:25, the violinist mouths the words “hallo” in a “mute gesture of calling” as if across a cavernous chasm. After the final instrumental event—the accordion playing high, edgy sounds very softly—the work ends with the cellist holding a cupped hand up to her ear as if listening across an abyss (see Figure 9.9).

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that this *ricochet* figure remembers several preceding versions as well—at 1:20, 2:27, and 4:25.

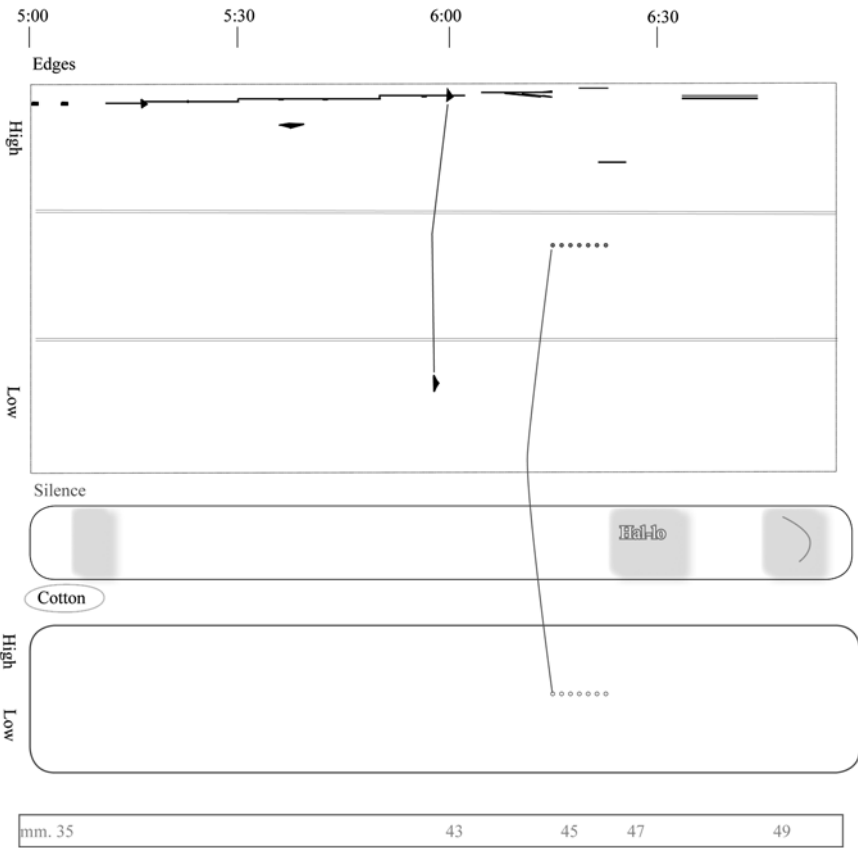


Figure 9.8 *Am Horizont*, detailed map of the Edges/Remembering phase

The concluding phase of *Am Horizont* remembers the sounds of edges and their sensation of precariousness from the opening phase, but that sensation is mitigated by the memory of the cushioned fall. The remembering enables a new sort of bodily sensation—one in which the sounding tensions of edge and precipice are infused with the promise of a sonic ease.

Am Horizont transports me to places of edges and vulnerability, of precipices and expansive vistas, of falling and anxiety, of cotton and comfort, of softness and ease. The sensations of *Am Horizont* effect sonic places whose logic develops temporally, a logic in which an implicit sense of falling in the Edges phase becomes explicit in the Cotton phase and defused in the Edges/Remembering phase.

Rihm's title *Am Horizont* itself alludes to horizontal edges, to the distant line between earth and sky. It alludes to the nature of human knowledge—to horizon as limit, to the boundary of what is possible. An instance of artistic thought,

poco rit.----- **quasi senza tempo** (wie in einem Traum.....)

stumme Geste des Rufens
(Hand am rufenden Mund)

stumme Geste
des Lauschens
(Hand am
horchenden Oln)

(niente) **pppp** < **ppp** > **pppp** (niente)

↑
Gently pulsing *ricochet* figure;
remembers the moments preceding
the Fall

↑ Mute gesture of calling
(hand around a calling mouth)

↑ Mute gesture of hearing
(hand cupping the ear)

Figure 9.9 *Am Horizont*, mm. 45–49, conclusion of Edges/Remembering phase

Am Horizont sonically sees the horizon as limit and possibility through the sensations of edges and cotton, of vulnerability and comfort. Significantly, as part of its temporal logic, the sounds of *Am Horizont* transform the realities of the body. The implicit sense of falling in the first phase, in becoming explicit in the second, is amended in the third phase. The persistent rising up in the Edges/Remembering phase defies the usual sense of downward pull that tugs on the body, and the sensations of edge at this sonic moment are infused with both the anxiety of the precipice and the promise of a cushioned fall.

In his writings on art, Deleuze insists on the centrality of the body as the place of sensation and distinguishes painting from music in terms of how the body is addressed. In painting “the body discovers the materiality of which it is composed” yet music “*disembodies* bodies,” releasing them from “the materiality of their presence.”⁴¹

Rihm’s *Am Horizont* reveals something about the sensations of such a musical disembodiment. As my critical account of the work suggests, the sounds of *Am Horizont* have a palpable affect on my listening body, but they transport me to realms that transform the realities of my bodily existence. The sensations of edge and precipice, of falling, and of cottony softness permeate my bodily awareness in an imaginative place of musical sound. And, in the musical transport to this place, the sensations of the body are transformed – they are unconstrained by the material realities of the world. *Am Horizont* thinks horizon as limit and possibility through the sensation of sonic edges and cotton and through a transcendence of the realities

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 47.

of the lived body. Its logic of edge encompasses the sensation of apprehension and the promise of comfort in sonic places in which the limitations of the body are aesthetically transformed. As an exemplar of a productive musical criticism, my account of Rihm's *Am Horizont* will, if it is successful, engender new listening encounters with the piece and perhaps even with other music.

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Chapter 10

Music and the Difference in Becoming

Marianne Kielian-Gilbert

When I started painting the pelvis bones I was most interested in the holes in the bones—what I saw through them—particularly the blue from holding them up in the sun against the sky. ... They were most wonderful against the Blue—that Blue that will always be there as it is now after all man’s destruction is finished.

The Bone series is a kind of thing that I do that makes me feel I am going off into space—in a way that I like—and that frightens me a little. ... I always feel that sometime I may fall off the edge—It is something I like so much to do that I don’t care if I do fall off the edge—

(Georgia O’Keeffe on *Pelvis with the Distance*, 1943, and
Pelvis I (Pelvis with Blue), 1944¹)

“On the edge,” the “pelvis bone” paintings by Georgia O’Keeffe move between senses of the potential and actual: the empty socket of bone becomes a portal to the visual composition and to a world of sky. Interacting with these multiply imaged holes of bleached animal bone makes fluid and ever changing virtual connections of hole, bone, and sky, edging one by the other and another. *In motion*. O’Keeffe’s visual and textual images, “the holes/[wholes] in the bones,” highlight the textures and tensions—both psychic and material—that activate the aesthetic oscillations (movements) of subject, object, and frame in performative/expressive temporal becoming. Experiential encounters, moving edges of difference, imbue the images with becoming potentials—bone becoming hole becoming bone becoming sky becoming whole. Perceivers become participants: changing temporal perceptions multiply differences and connections become metamorphic opening up unforeseen *differenciations* (actualizations). *In motion*.

My aim in this chapter is to consider such processes of “becoming music”—the in-between and ever-changing/metamorphic differentiations of music becoming.² Drawing from critical ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and feminist writers Luce Irigaray and Elizabeth Grosz, Rosi Braidotti and Gloria Anzaldúa, I emphasize these interactions as processes different from a logic of lineage and

¹ *Georgia O’Keeffe: Visions of the Sublime*. Exhibition, Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN, 15 January—3 April 2005.

² See also my “Beyond Abnormality—Dis/ability and Music’s Metamorphic Subjectivities,” in N. Lerner and J. Straus, *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, Routledge, 2006, pp. 217–34.

resemblance.³ I argue that music offers a singular milieu for actualizing and thinking about an ontology of change, effects of becoming, and their promise for life.⁴ The shift is from construing music as a text—as a passive bearer of qualities—to re-activating and engaging music in differentiating temporal processes and affiliations.⁵ Actualizing an “in-between,” in the middle of things without being contained by them (moving between conditions and/or upper and lower limits), articulations of becoming and remembering engage aesthetic zones of asymmetrical exchange (contagion, infection) in which something of one passes into another. Encountering musical difference as expressive, productive, and affirmative in temporally and metamorphically changing relational dynamics of subject, frame, and other(s) actualizes the new and unforeseen. The play of perceptual/experiential orientations becomes alternately variable and multiple, temporally retroactive, successively and simultaneously moving (left-to-right/right to left and front-to-back/back to front). Music’s discerning aesthetic becomes multidimensional, configuring the social, ethical, and political.

Perception will no longer reside in the relation between a subject and an object, but rather in the movement serving as the limit of that relation, in the period associated with the subject and object. Perception will confront its own limit; it will be in the midst of things, throughout its own proximity, as the presence of one haecceity [singularity] in another, the prehension of one by the other or the passage from one to the other: Look only at the movements.⁶

The question is how a Deleuze-Guattari philosophy of becoming can be transformative of particular musical problems (and vice versa) and open up new ways of listening, hearing, and thinking about music. Music and music experience

³ See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987; Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, Columbia University Press, 1994; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Aunt Lute Books, 1999; Elizabeth Grosz, “Thinking of the New: Of Futures Yet Unthought,” in E. Grosz (ed.), *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, Cornell University Press, 1999, pp. 15–28; Luce Irigaray, *to be two*, trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc, Routledge, 2001; Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Polity Press and Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

⁴ In the translator’s introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi indicates that Deleuze and Guattari regard the French *milieu* as a technical term combining three meanings, “surroundings,” “medium” (as in chemistry), and “middle” (p. xvii).

⁵ These temporal processes differentiate and intersect with different dimensions of time. See Jay Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, Continuum, 2006, p. 8: “There is the contracted habitual time of the present, the embedded memory time of the past, and erotic groundless time of the future’s eternal return.”

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 282.

express modes of becoming in ways specific to their expressive language and suggestive for ways of experiencing and thinking about the world.

Deleuze-Guattari Philosophy—Becoming “as Music”

Actualisation breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle. ... In this sense, actualisation or differentiation is always a genuine creation.⁷

Music actualizes *in motion*⁸ the temporal perception and experience of sonic events in ever-changing conditions, interactions, and connections. This flow embodies a perceptual openness to an as yet virtual future. Understanding the ways in which becoming configurations are or can be “musical,” is to enter a Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy of radical immanence and intensity. Ontologies of change permeate these becomings, shifting from event perceptions of noun and gerund (for example, from noun “cross” and gerund “crossing”) to those of verbs and infinitives and processes in motion “*in-between*” terms (e.g., as in the infinitive “to cross”).

For Deleuze, difference is the affirmation that surpasses the four “illusions” or “shackles” of mediation: identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance.

These forms are like the four heads or the four shackles of mediation. Difference is ‘mediated’ to the extent that it is subjected to the fourfold root of identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance.⁹

Eschewing representation and signification, their philosophy attends to the construction, affirmation, and interaction of difference as varying speeds and intensities of events in modes of becoming.¹⁰ Becomings are creative productions

⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 212.

⁸ Eric Clarke’s discussion of motion in music identifies the perceptual experience of motion vs. self-motion as the perceiver’s sense of music moving toward (or away from) a stationary observer or of an observer / musical subject moving toward (or away from) a stationary musical object. See Chapter 3, “Music, Motion, and Subjectivity,” in his *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*, Oxford University Press, 2005, especially pp. 75ff. on the relativity of motion and the perceptual differences of hearing as an observer or as a participant: “Am I moving relative to the surroundings, or are the surroundings moving relative to me?” The motion considered in my chapter describes *motion between* limits and conditions that are also in flux.

⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 29.

¹⁰ Also see Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, p. 74: “[Deleuze] says an event is assembled from the circumstances of a concept’s where, when and how.” On contacts between events, Lampert comments: “When one event affects another not just by connecting externally with it, but also by introducing a germ around which another event can crystallize then it becomes the self-causality of another. Topologically, it is a fold;

and affirmative connections, the multiplicities and singularities of difference articulating repetition and vice versa:

The wheel in the eternal return is at once both production of repetition on the basis of difference and selection of difference on the basis of repetition.¹¹

[A]ll becomings are molecular: the animal, flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectivities, haecceities, not molar subjects, objects, or form that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or by habit.¹²

The musical practice is thus one of discerning difference as repetition and repetition as difference, rather than opposing or excluding each other.

Thinking from imaginative encounters with the music of such composers as Boulez, Cage, Debussy, Messiaen, Schumann, and Varèse, Deleuze and Guattari outline a philosophical practice that involves the creation of ideas,¹³ the radical turning of the virtual to the actual (with the interaction and surplus of the virtual spawning further actualizations), and the powerful tangible intensity of the actual. The first volume of their collaborative work subtitled *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Anti-Oedipus* (1972) conceives desire as a productive force and the social body of desire as the Body without Organs (BwO), a term adapted from Antonin Artaud. This body can be cancerous (self-same endless replication), empty (non-productive), or full (productive):

How can we fabricate a BwO for ourselves without its being the cancerous BwO of a fascist inside us, or the empty BwO of a drug addict, paranoiac, or hypochondriac? How can we tell the three Bodies apart? Artaud was constantly grappling with this problem.¹⁴

The full body without organs is a body populated by multiplicities.¹⁵

phenomenologically, it is 'memory'; temporally, it is simultaneity at a distance; ethically, it is care of the self" (p. 110). Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge that though the aspects of representation and signification are ever present, they do not account for the productive/creative values of difference.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 42.

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 275.

¹³ For Deleuze and Guattari, ideas differ from concepts in that they have internal differentiation and multiplicity, while concepts have a single identity determined by the four aspects of representation (identity, similarity, analogy, or opposition).

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 163.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

The second volume *A Thousand Plateaus* conceives a fullness and productivity of desire in which difference and repetition engage in an open-ended process of becoming:

A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points. A point is always a point of origin. But a line of becoming has neither beginning or end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination; ... A line of becoming has only a middle.¹⁶

Music's potential for materializing philosophical ideas (aesthetic, political, ethical) and philosophy's potential for materializing musical ideas emerges in the process of questioning representation and signification. Music becomes a working out and/or a way of articulating and actualizing—a philosophy, memory, quality of sound, of what it means to do or think or feel in music (e.g., to waltz, waltzing, becoming waltz). Pursuing the musical dimensions of their philosophy, one must question apparent analogy and resemblance (representation and signification) and thus any one-to-one mapping of music to philosophy (or vice versa). Paradoxically this means resisting analogy or resemblance and the direct mapping of music to philosophy (or vice versa) in these terms, while at the same time embracing their potential in encounter and interaction.

How might one actualize a praxis of difference in creating musical ideas (in which music's aesthetic, ethical, and social dimensions interact)? How do the "becoming" manifestations of difference differentiate a musical surface, spawn new theories and analytical practices, or manifest as ways of listening/hearing or conceptualizing musical thought on both surface and deeper levels of experience? Because each age has different assumptions, values, and stylistic traits, how can an aesthetics of becoming be historically productive or politically relevant and specific? What of a listener's experience and analysis in a temporally dynamic and interactive encountering of music? These are questions and problems for a Deleuze-Guattari philosophical/experiential practice of music.

The Difference in Becoming

A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both. If becoming is a block (a line-block), it is because it constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man's land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 293.

two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other—and the border-proximity is indifferent to both contiguity and to distance.¹⁷

Becoming: the forming of the “not yet”, emerging, process in motion and movement, metamorphically changing and transforming states and conditions.¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari’s radical immanence calls attention to intensity, intensities in flux, and their varying dimensional speeds and affects. Their approach and philosophy is more about the play, becoming, and interaction of intensities than about meaning or interpretation per se. They emphasize expressive intensity, and the creative expression and performative engagement that metamorphically invents the new, novel, and unanticipated. In a Deleuze-Guattarian orientation, as Stephane Symons comments, the process of “emancipating the subject from its status as the subjected, i.e., as the bearer-of-qualities” is what brings to fruition the creative potential of those very qualities.¹⁹

“Becoming” is thus paradoxical, a process directed both toward imperceptibility and invisibility and toward discernability, differentiation, and actualization and refinement.²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari initiate the becoming process from the position of man: “becoming woman” is the first of the processual stages, followed by becoming-animal, becoming-insect, becoming-mineral, becoming-molecular, and becoming-imperceptible.²¹ Feminist philosophers such as Luce Irigaray

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Process” or “repetitive” music may suggest rule-based procedures of musical succession; in contrast, the emphasis of “becoming music” is expressive, focusing on the manner and matter of transformation.

¹⁹ Stephane Symons, “Deleuze and the Various Faces of the Outside,” *Theory and Event* 9/3 (2006), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v009/9.3symons.html (accessed May 2008).

²⁰ Michael Halewood also takes care to argue that Deleuze (related to Alfred North Whitehead’s notion of “unfolding” in a specific environment and fashion) “also develops a robust account of the very physicality of existence” (“On Whitehead and Deleuze: The Process of Materiality,” *Configurations*, 13/1 (2005), p. 61). Halewood quotes Whitehead, and links his notion of creativity with Deleuze’s notion of repetition, “These various aspects can be summed up in the statement that *experience* involves a *becoming*, that *becoming* means that *something becomes*, and that *what becomes* involves *repetition* transformed into *novel immediacy*” (p. 70, quoted from Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay In Cosmology*, ed. David Ray Griffin D. and Donald W. Sherburne, Free Press, 1978, pp. 136–7).

²¹ Also see Brian Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involuntary Afterword),” *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 24/3 (1998), www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/works/crclintro.htm (accessed May 2008) for the similar ordering of the becoming of sensation from ocularity to becoming-tactile, becoming-aural, becoming-proprioceptive, becoming-synaesthetic, and becoming-imperceptible. Braidotti explores feminine/feminist alliances with, and the gender lines of “becoming insect,” an “axis of titillation, horror

and Elizabeth Grosz have critiqued this appropriation of “becoming women.”²² By specifying “becoming woman” as the basis for the becoming of man, Deleuze and Guattari bypass the power of women to speak for themselves and their potential to actualize the specificity of sexual difference. Both Irigaray and Grosz speak not only about the dangers of neutralizing the specificity of female experience and the political struggles and self-determination of women, but also about the necessity of critical challenges to binary logic and of an affirmative/productive understanding of difference (Grosz 1993).²³ Irigaray in particular claims the connection between sexual difference (being in the presence of another) and becoming (growth through social exchange with “what is irreducible to oneself”):

Perception implies: I am not you, you are irreducible to me. The one who looks and the one who is looked upon cannot be substituted for each other, and not just in this active-passive relationship. They do not look in the same manner. They look at each other between each other..²⁴

But is my existence not protected by your irreducibility? ... to touch one another in intersubjectivity ... In us, sensible nature and the spirit become in-stance by

and cultural consumption” (*Metamorphoses*, p. 151): “Other qualities that make insects paradigmatic are their power of metamorphosis, the parasitism, the power of mimetism or blending with their territory and environment and the speed of movement. ... In this regard the insect provides a new paradigm for discontinuous transmutations without major disruptions. ... In Deleuze’s terminology they are multiple singularities without fixed identities” (*Metamorphoses*, p. 149).

²² Irigaray elaborates an identity of woman as “the other of the other” rather than simply “not-man” (the other of the same), an elaboration that demands that assumptions between sameness and difference, and thus differences between women, be taken into account: Janice Richardson, “Jamming The Machines: ‘Woman’ in the Work of Irigaray and Deleuze,” *Law and Critique* 9/1 (1998), pp. 94–5 and passim). Relatedly, Rosi Braidotti construes the “nomadic feminist” and related figures as “calling into play a sense of accountability for one’s locations” (*Metamorphoses*, p. 13). Drawing from Deleuze-Guattari and Irigaray, she regards the body “as the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces ... a play of forces, a surface of intensities, pure simulacra without originals. This ‘intensive’ redefinition of the body situates it within a complex interplay of social and affective sources” (*Metamorphoses*, p. 21).

²³ Grosz writes “Sexual difference is irreducible difference, yet it is not a measurable, definable difference between given entities with their own characteristics but an incalculable difference that reveals itself only through its temporal elaborations. It is that difference which, in the future, will have been expressed, will have articulated itself, but which, in the present has only represented itself from the point of view of one sex”: Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, Duke University Press, 2004, p. 67.

²⁴ Irigaray, *to be two*, p. 40.

remaining within their own singularity and grow through the risk of an exchange with what is irreducible to oneself. ... The other changes, and I also change.²⁵

These critiques stress the changing intensities of positionality and location—the dimensionality of social-material relationships, the difference in becoming. How might music’s becomings express productive differences of temporal-material and relational multidimensionality?

Becoming Mechanisms in Music

The poet, on the other hand, is one who lets loose molecular populations in hopes that this will sow the seeds of, or even engender, the people to come, that these populations will pass into a people to come, open a cosmos.²⁶

What are some of the mechanisms of difference and becoming in music and how is that becoming expressive (what does it do)? In this section I first imagine a possible spectrum of relationally and materially transforming processes that one might experience and construe as *musical*. The musical examples by Bach, Chapin Carpenter, Stravinsky, and so on that follow explore particular becoming mechanisms in different musical registers: lines of flight, “twists” and “zig-zags” (oscillations and diagonals of encountering other/difference); metamorphic becoming (transforming by overlapping and/or threading between limits); asymmetrical turning points and motivic morphing; and becoming imperceptible (the work of the secret and hearing spaces of transition).

Such “musical” processes differentiate particular levels of intensity and temporal expressivity of music elements and events, forms and genres, threading between terms and conventions, between the “given” and the “constructed”. In music, temporal spans and events interact, oscillating, overlapping, dispersing, diffusing and suffusing, and recombining in time.²⁷ Their “touching” becomes metamorphic and transformative. Virtual memory and the potentials of “vertical” past come into the present in a circulating feed-forward/feed-back of new potentials for future forming. Through “double articulations” of (asymmetrical) (musical) oscillation, one part or aspect of a temporal span (formal design) contacts and partakes of another, changing in the process. Asymmetrical turning points embody

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 9, 26, 29, 41.

²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 345.

²⁷ Events are dimensionally complex. See Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, p. 8: “Events are singularities, but they carry pre-histories and post-histories along with them. Genuine novelty paradoxically requires that all events already co-exist in the form of an unbound system. That is why the future is the eternal return, in that every event qua future throws the dice of the past and affirms whatever line of continuation communicates its excess.”

an “encounter” of difference that redirects temporal flow. In motivic morphing (dissimilarity and re-turning the source of development), such a turning keeps motivic association temporally mobile; motives change in interaction with other motives (and vice versa). “Becoming” processes refigure insider-outsider relationships, moving between and undoing them, to actualize something new and unforeseen.²⁸ They bring different perceptual ideas into temporal interaction, carving a space of “becoming” between them that may materialize musically in different ways. Musical events and ideas become ever-changing, interconnecting with other groups, and partaking of indeterminate borders, overlapping interests, multiple points of connection with one another, in an always open relation with an “outside” that deterritorializes and de-defines them.²⁹ By experiencing and conceiving difference as (musically) productive and affirmative, Deleuze and Guattari assert that one can better comprehend and embrace the actual in order to transform it in conditions of emergence that in turn produce new ideas.³⁰

This is what becoming is of necessity—a movement of differentiation, divergence, and self-surpassing or actualization of virtualities in the light of the contingencies that befall them.

The point is not simply semantic: it is a question not of dumping the word “possible” and replacing it with “virtual”, but of understanding the concept [of the virtual] in an entirely new way, understanding the processes of production and creation in terms of openness to the new instead of preformism of the expected. ... our very concept of objects, matter, being—well beyond the concept of life itself—needs to be open to the differentiations that constitute and continually transform it.³¹

Experiencing and construing these processes as *musical* can enrich philosophical understanding of the creation of new ideas. As the following music examples show, “becoming” mechanisms may activate, evolve into, and/or differentiate another. They create movement through discernment, differentiation (of difference in repetition and vice versa), and imperceptibility (one of the “later” stages of

²⁸ The changing interplay and movement actualizes and/or calls attention to something new, for example in listening and hearing ways in which a subject changes its context even as that context shapes that subject.

²⁹ See Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, p. 243: “after years of colonization, all the divides disappear a little bit because the colonizer, in his or her interaction with the colonized, takes on a lot of their attributes. And of course the person who is colonizing leaks into our stuff. So we are neither one nor the other; we are really both. There is not a pure other; there is not a pure subject and not a pure object. We are implicated in each others lives.”

³⁰ In this sense, “becoming” is expressive rather than mimetic.

³¹ Grosz, *Becomings*, pp. 27–8.

becoming), in and through a fissuring (rhizomatic/schizophrenic) contagion, infusing and diffusing in zones of contact. This “contagion” is the surplus of the virtual, the “life” by which building processes exceed or surpass reducing processes.³²

[Becoming] originates in the space that lies between terms but is, precisely for that reason, never contained by them.³³

Encountering Bach: Double Articulation and the “Twisting” of Becoming—Emergence and Metamorphic Change (Suite for Violoncello in G major, Menuet II in G minor)

The Menuet II in G minor from Bach’s Solo Cello Suite in G major (Example 10.1) articulates and moves between upper and lower limits of two genre types in interaction: lament bass “variations” and Baroque dance (menuet). The idea is that these encounters each maintain or present distinct “lines of flight” within each orbit (of the genre concept) but also interact such that one produces a threshold (metamorphic change) in the other that spawns and spurs their subsequent interaction and course of development. In double articulation and/or asymmetrical-turning in zones of exchange (contagion, infection) something of the lament passes into that of the menuet dance (and vice versa). Between the two limits, events are never “end points” or final solutions but parts of becomings that are inventions on their way to further becomings.³⁴

The perceptions depicted as “repetition becoming difference” in the top portion below the score of Example 10.1 track the changing lament bass pattern of the succession of parallel 10ths (B \flat /G, A/F, G/E \flat , F \sharp /D) as “variations” over the course of the “three-phrases” of the “menuet” (mm. 1–8, 9–16, 17–24). In the first section the varied 10ths pattern occurs twice (mm. 1–4, 5–8). In the second phrase the tenths undergo a metric shift in the “menuet,” occurring on even measures (mm. 10, 12, 14, 16): tenths compress to thirds, and undergo an intensification of

³² An element of energy or difference enters: the curve and the swerve. See John Rahn, “The Swerve and the Flow: Music’s Relation to Mathematics,” *Perspectives of New Music* 42/1 (Winter 2004): 130–49.

³³ Symons, “Deleuze and the Various Faces of the Outside,” 9 of 24.

³⁴ Isabelle Stengers construes the working relationship between Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in these terms: “The encounter is never between two persons. More precisely it is not between two persons as they would be able to communicate and agree. The encounter between Deleuze and Guattari was the encounter between two lines that contingently discovered that they needed each other, not to cumulate knowledge or exchange experience, but to cross a threshold—a distinct one for each probably, but one both needed in order to escape suffocation.” Isabelle Stengers, “Gilles Deleuze’s last message,” www.recalcitance.com/deleuzelast.htm (accessed June 2009).

key (to B \flat major, III, m. 16), thus altering the final tenth F \sharp /D to F/D (B \flat). The final phrase (mm. 17–24) complicates these earlier moves in “repetitions” in which previous “tenths” or “thirds” become descending “sixths,” each now part of a 7–6 suspension (B \sharp /G (!), A/F, F \sharp /D (!)), while shifting to a new mode of difference in which the arching melodic patterns of mm. 9–10, 11–12, and 13–14 rise in overall contour in measures 17–18, 19–20, and 21–22.

Hearing *difference becoming repetition* (Example 10.1) might focus attention on the metrically stressed dyad sixths of phrase 3 (mm. 17, 19, 21) in relation to the sixths of mm. 18, 20, 22: these are distinguished in the upper and lower analysis of the third “menuet” phrase below the score. Now those stressed intervallic sixths (upper analysis) engage tonal functions that skew toward becoming dominants. In a swerve to becoming, “difference becoming repetition” suggests that (retroactively constructs) the “hidden” (“secret”) motivic pattern of descending sixths in phrase 2 (see Example 10.1, bottom, E \flat 4/G3, D4/F3, C4/E \flat 3, B \flat 3/D3)³⁵ might function as a “catalyst” for another twist, forging invertible counterpoint at the 12th in a T5 transforming of the opening pattern of 10ths (phrases 1 and 2) now becoming harmonic sixths and thirds! (See the arrows and dyad pairs: E \flat 3–C4/E \flat 4 (m. 18); D3–B \flat 3/D4 (m. 20); C3–A3/(C4) (delayed to m. 23!); and B \flat –G/B \flat (m. 24)). These shifts of contour and tonal/contrapuntal “weight” move performative/expressive emphasis to the off-measure and higher registral patterns of measures 18, 20, 22 with the final “10ths” delayed, breaking the sequence and forming the concluding cadence of measures 23–24. They thus slip or play against the tendency of a stylized grouping of four-bar (and strong-weak) “menuet” dance patterns.

At stake in these modes of listening (hearing tenths compress to thirds / *repetition becoming difference*; hearing sixths transforming from tenths through a process of invertible counterpoint at transposition T5 (a perfect fourth higher) / *difference becoming repetition*; hearing lament bass variation interact with menuet dance form and vice versa) are the musical modalities of problems of becoming. Genres transform each other, as listeners thread a line or space between them in time (in motion), a dimension of experiencing the materiality of becoming that will be taken up in the next section.

In his essay on analyzing Bach, “Heightening Levels of Activity and J.S. Bach’s Parallel-Section Constructions,” Joel Lester outlines “three constructive principles [that] underlie the large-scale thematic and organizational aspects of J.S. Bach’s compositions ... all pertinent to contemporaneous theoretical perspectives” that interact to provide “a unified perspective on Bach’s creations in all genres.”³⁶

³⁵ C4 = middle C (e.g. on the piano). Each span of C–B marks a particular octave: e.g., C4–B4 = middle C to B above middle C.

³⁶ Joel Lester, “Heightening Levels of Activity and J.S. Bach’s Parallel-Section Constructions,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 54/1 (Spring 2001), p. 96: The principles are “(1) the opening of a piece states a core of material that is worked with throughout the composition; (2) recurrences of material almost invariably exhibit a heightening level of activity in some or all musical elements; and (3) movements

Example 10.1 J.S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007, Menuet II
(continued opposite)

Menuet II *Phrase 1*

10 10 10 10

Phrase 2

9 7 - - - - - 3 7 - - - - - 3

Phrase 3

6 - - - - - 3 17 7 - - - - - 6

Menuet I
da Capo

7 - - - - - 6 7 - - - - - 6 6 - - - 5

Lester's principles support the listening and music analysis suggested here, and they strive for a unified perspective. The becoming processes of listening (encountering and attending) that I have characterized run contrary zig-zags—that are related to those principles but also open to ways that conventions are or can become strikingly interactive and entwined: lament bass variations materializing menuet, and (asymmetrically?) menuet materializing variations (these processes in turn complicated by the “position” as a minor-mode Menuet II preceding the da capo restatement of the G major Menuet I). In Menuet II the “encounter” of repetition differing from itself especially in the third phrase (G minor/G major-minor 7th) crosses a threshold in the process of a T5/perfect fourth contrapuntal transforming of the opening to effect tonal-harmonic closure in G minor.³⁷

quite frequently subdivide into roughly parallel sections within which these heightened recurrences appear.”

³⁷ Transformation can be construed as rule-bound by concept or relation (e.g., T5 invertible counterpoint); in contrast, “becoming” also bestows the matter/materiality of “variations/menuet” temporality emerging in the manner of transformation.

Repetition becoming difference: B \flat /G, A/F, G/E \flat , F \sharp /D

Measures											
Phrase 1				Phrase 2				Phrase 3			
1	2	3	4								
5	6	7!	8	10	12	14	16!	17	19	21	23?
			*				**	!		!?	!?
B \flat	A	G	F \sharp	[B \flat	A	G	F]	(A \flat)—G	(G)—F	(E \flat)—D	?
G	F	E \flat	D	[G	F	E \flat	D]	B \sharp	A	F \sharp	?
							!	!	!	!	?
10	10	10	10	[3rds]			!	7—6	7—6	7—6	6?

Difference becoming repetition: B \flat /G, A/F, G/E \flat , F \sharp /D [inv.ctp., T5 to] C—E \flat , B \flat —D, A—C, G/B \flat

Measures														
Phrase 1				Phrase 2				Phrase 3						
1	2	3	4											
5	6	7!	8	10	12	14	16!	17	18	19	20	21—2	23	24
			*				**	**						
[B \flat	A	G	F \sharp]	[B \flat	A	G	F]	(B)	C	(A)	B \flat	(F \sharp —G)	A(A)	G
[D—				(E \flat	D	C	B \flat)							
E \flat				[G	F	E \flat	D]	E \flat		D			C(D)	(B \flat)/G
[G	F	E \flat	D]										!	
[10	10	10	10	[3rds]			!	6	6			6—5	(6)	
B \flat														
G														

T5 motion
and contrapuntal exchanging

Metamorphic Becoming—Crossing between Limits and Thresholds, Refrain and Tango. Mary Chapin Carpenter, “He Thinks He’ll Keep Her”; Igor Stravinsky, *Tango* (1940); “El tango de Roxanne” from *Moulin Rouge!*

[T]he limit designates the penultimate marking a necessary rebeginning, and the threshold the ultimate marking an inevitable change.³⁸

And it is not in the same time, the same temporality. *Aeon*: the indefinite time of the event, the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened. *Chronos*: the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject.³⁹

The process of becoming is one of differentiating and changing matter/material conditions, threading within and between internal limits, and activating what Brian Massumi calls “fluidity at the limit of its staying power”,⁴⁰ for example, water becoming ice infolds an always present reminder/remainder of fluidity, an in-between state of liquid becoming ice. This takes place in the time of the event, forming in speeds and intensities (in contrast to the time of measure of something pre-formed or pre-determined). A lingering presence combines with a differentiating, emerging condition with an enveloping limit: for example, ice crystals forming with the borderline or “anomaly” of a limit state, such as the always present gaseous vaporization of water. Thus there is a limit or zone of “staying power,” continuing fluidity in the process of change, and another of emerging difference, of “becoming-solid, looming like destiny, as a remainder of fluidity.”⁴¹ The temporal/performative experience of music imparts a multiplicity of approaches to ever changing conditions of borders and bordering.

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 438.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁴⁰ Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involutionary Afterword).”

⁴¹ See Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involutionary Afterword),” for further discussion of the water/ice/gas example: “Each dimension (crystal, mist, water-lag) had its own consistency and time-form. Each was also a limit-state whose virtual superposition described the overall process, immanently determining the multiple dimensions of concurrent divergence as belonging to a single process. The internal limit was a becoming-solid-form (which under other conditions might be a sedimentation rather than a crystallization). The enveloping limit was a vaporization, or a becoming-molecular. And the in-between was a limit of staying-power, water too late to be what it nonetheless is, and as such, as much a reserve of becoming-solid, looming like destiny, as a remainder of fluidity” (Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involutionary Afterword”).

[T]he origin of the word *anomal* (“anomalous”), an adjective that has fallen into disuse in French is very different from that of *anormal* (“abnormal”): *a-normal*, a Latin adjective lacking a noun in French, refers to that which is outside rules or goes against the rules, whereas *an-omalie*, a Greek noun that has lost its adjective, designates the unequal, the coarse, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialization. The abnormal can be defined only in terms of characteristics, specific or generic; but the anomalous is a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity. ... [The anomalous] is a phenomenon of bordering.⁴²

The becoming process desires the “in-between” of enveloping and internal limits: the shift is from representation (via analogy, identity, opposition, or resemblance) to movement/composition by speeds and intensities. Massumi characterizes Deleuze/Guattari becoming as “a double generative distinction internal to a single material process. The process is expression.”⁴³ Becoming events are thus metamorphic; limits of repetition, recognition, remembering, and differing transform to the intensities and processes of doing—to expressivity and performativity emergent in temporal-material character. Becoming music furthers an action-oriented listening in which sounds cross a threshold to a dynamic aesthetics of doing, proceeding by speeds and affects rather than representation, shifting from “the songbird” to the “sound molecule.”

The properly musical content of music [tends] to become progressively more molecular in a kind of cosmic lapping through which the inaudible makes itself heard and the imperceptible appears as such: no longer the songbird, but the sound molecule. ... becoming and multiplicity are the same thing. ... [A] multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors. ... In fact, the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities.⁴⁴

This “lapping” (encountering, infolding, and unfolding) creates a touching between bird and singing-becoming-bird that activates a morphing border between stylized and literal/“real”.⁴⁵ The performative activation approaches the “real” or

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 243–5.

⁴³ Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involutionary Afterword).”

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 248–9.

⁴⁵ See the Deleuze/Guattari example of the double articulation of wasp/orchid becoming (*A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 293–4): “The line or block of becoming that unites the wasp and the orchid produces a shared deterritorialization ... The line or the block, does not link the wasp to the orchid, any more than it conjugates or mixes them: it passes between them, carrying them away in a shared proximity in which the discernibility of points disappears.” Ian Buchanan, “Introduction: Deleuze and Music,” in I. Buchanan and M. Swiboda, Edinburgh University Press, 2004, p. 11, describes a related example: a person’s “becoming bee” would differ from simply wearing the costume of a bee to the extent that they intensionally materialize and

“literal” by creating an excess or surpassing of the “stylized” as “constructed.”⁴⁶ Always coming from somewhere on the way to somewhere else. Performative processes both refer to something constructed and at the same time perform, enact, and materially become that “construction” (and thus approach their indiscernibility “as construction”). These ideas, in conversation with Deleuze-Guattari, point up the changing dimensionality and materiality of becoming in performance.

Rather, [the difference between noise and sound] is the *labor of the refrain*: Does it remain territorial and territorializing or is it carried away in a moving block that draws a transversal across all coordinates—and all of the intermediaries between the two? Music is precisely the adventure of the refrain. ... [N]ot only does the content have nothing to do with an external subject or object, since it forms an asymmetrical block with the expression, but the deterritorialization carries the expression and the content to a proximity where the distinction between them ceases to be relevant, or where the deterritorialization creates their indiscernibility.⁴⁷

Several examples follow.

Mary Chapin Carpenter, “He Thinks He’ll Keep Her” (1992)

In a 1970s series of Geritol commercials (Geritol, now medically inadvisable, was a supplement for iron deficiency), a man proclaimed his wife’s unlimited energy, declaring at the end of each commercial, “My wife, I think I’ll keep her.” For singer/songwriter Mary Chapin Carpenter, “that line has always stuck with me. It’s just such a joke.”⁴⁸ Her well-known hit single and torch song “He Thinks He’ll Keep Her” came out in 1992 also as a track on her album *Come On Come On*. In 1993 the song received a Grammy nomination and live performance in a CBS special *Women of Country*, where in performance Carpenter was joined by six “women of country”: Emmylou Harris, Kathy Mattea, Patty Loveless, Trisha Yearwood, Suzy

internalize the manners or forming processes of a bee: “The first strategy is mimetic and the result is usually laughable because it calls to mind nothing so much as someone in a costume; the second strategy, by contrast, is expressive, and usually more successful because it calls to mind not someone in a costume, but what Deleuze and Guattari would call a ‘becoming-bee.’”

⁴⁶ “The performative interrupts a continuity of similar occurrences, and it establishes a new continuity across time-lines to make the event take hold” (Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, p. 73). Also see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 80–82: “[T]he transformation of the accused into a convict is a pure instantaneous act or incorporeal attribute that is the expressed of the judge’s sentence. ... The transformation applies to bodies but is itself incorporeal, internal to enunciation.”

⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 302, 307.

⁴⁸ David Bauder, Wide Appeal, “Songs ‘aren’t iron-clad idiom songs’: Carpenter’s music is country, and more,” *Wilmington Star-News*, October 19, 1992, p. 13.

Bogguss and Pam Tillis.⁴⁹ This performance in conjunction with the music and title of the song evokes a double entendre: the claim of the “husband” in contrast to the emergent potential (unspoken secret) of the “wife.” Interestingly this song also articulates this double meaning in reverse double entendre: the steady descending *major-mode* melody repeats in three verses to articulate the text that sings of the repetitions (drudgery?) of “woman’s” work (Verse 1. She makes his coffee / She makes his bed [E4–D4–C#4–B3–C#4 / E4–D4–C#4–A3] (A major/F# minor–D major).

The song unfolds in alternating refrains: Verse 1, Bridge 1 / Verse 2, Bridge 2, Chorus / Verse 3, Bridge 3, Chorus / Bridge 4, Chorus. Refrains—repeating and refraining (“music is precisely the adventure of the refrain”⁵⁰). In this sense, in the middle, the Deleuzian refrain has the potential either to bind (territorialize) or unbind (deterritorialize) music sound to the categories and conventions that might objectify it. The cutting edge of deterritorialization approaches the indiscernibility of expression and content.

The music of Bridge 1 (“When she was twenty-one”) intensifies the cognitive dissonance of the verse, shifting to and similarly extending the E major dominant harmony in comparison to the A major tonic of the verse. The dominant extension of the bridge incorporates the same chord succession (F# minor–D major) in its elaboration, effecting a harmonic double entendre in relation to those same harmonies that extend the tonic harmony in the verse (last line of Bridge 1: “She said forever with a / smile upon her face”) [B3–C#4–B3 / A3–E4–D4–C#4–B3] (E major / F# minor–D major–E major). Differing from both verse and bridge, the chorus (“Everything runs right on time”) features primary major-chord harmonies (A major: I–IV–V–I) in an up-tempo rendition that ironically renders time marching along in perfect lockstep harmony/synchrony with the expected life events of marriage, such as baby “number three” and a card with a perfect family picture every Christmas.

Verse 1, Bridge 1 / Verse 2, Bridge 2, Chorus / Verse 3, Bridge 3, Chorus / Bridge 4, Chorus.

After the second chorus (“Everything runs right on time”) that follows Verse 3 (“She packs his suitcase”) and Bridge 3 (“When she was thirty-six”), the music-text shifts to Bridge 4 (“For fifteen years she had a job”), omitting Verse 4! This shift musically materializes and *performs-becomes metamorphically* this change in life and time through the repetition and pairing of Bridge 3–Chorus and Bridge 4–Chorus. Bridge

⁴⁹ The video of this performance can be accessed on youtube.com; this song became Carpenter’s first number one hit: see review by Mike DeGagne and Thom Jurek, www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=10:30qpg4hbtv2z (accessed May 2009). In 1995 the song was nominated for Record of the Year, the second time in Grammy history that a nomination in this category had gone to a country artist. See also Carpenter’s website, www.marychapincarpenter.com/content/view/53/72 (accessed May 2009). The text is credited to Mary Chapin Carpenter and Don Schlitz.

⁵⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 302.

4 tells that after fifteen years of marriage, at age thirty-six, she leaves her husband only to confront another (related) set of circumstances (“For fifteen years she had a job / and not one raise in pay / Now she’s in the typing pool at / minimum wage”).

Carpenter’s *singing* by a woman with a group of women and directed to women of her time *performs* (intensionally embodies) through vocal reiteration (and in the force of their repeated strumming on acoustic guitars) the acquisition of strength and self-respect, dimensions not mentioned or spoken of in the text.⁵¹ When previously constructed meanings (social, textual, material, musical) are challenged, what sorts of problems and new questions arise (as in perceptually seeing the word “green” colored “red”; seeing/hearing women perform repetitions of assertion *en force*)? This doubling of difference / otherness is “the presentation of a twist in becoming”.⁵²

A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or at the limit, an identification. ... To become is not to progress or regress along a series. ... What is real is the becoming itself ... not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes. ... Becoming is always of a different order than filiation. It concerns alliance. ... [T]o involve [become] is to form a block that runs its own line “between” the terms in play and beneath assignable relations. ... Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own.⁵³

The “twists” of becoming express subjective connections (encounters with difference) through the “zig-zags” of double articulation, asymmetrical processes of folding in and turning out.⁵⁴ The idea of Deleuzian, or “musical,” double articulation allows for graded relational modes of interaction (through touching,

⁵¹ Thanks to Erick Carballo for calling my attention to similar performative dimensions of the song “Baracunátana” covered by the Columbian band Aterciopelados, as performed by singer Andrea Echeverri. In her performance, the song becomes “a dialogue between women (the female singer and the women who listen to her ...) ... Aterciopelados is able to insert a woman’s voice into ‘Baracunátana’ without taking a single word out of the man’s text. Andrea Echeverri takes possession of the man’s words, like a disturbing poltergeist.” See Carmelo Esterrich and Javier H. Murillo, “Rock with Punk with Pop with Folklore: Transformations and Renewal in Aterciopelados and Café Tacuba,” *Latin American Music Review* 21/1 (2000), p. 39.

⁵² Massumi, “Deleuze, Guattari and the Philosophy of Expression (Involuntary Afterword).”

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 237–9.

⁵⁴ Deleuze characterizes subjectivity in terms of a fold, a twist in becoming, the temporally active and retroactive twisting of a social-material environment. Also see Halewood’s “On Whitehead and Deleuze,” p. 76: “[I]ndividual subjectivity must be regarded as a twisting of a social, physical environment. The physicality in question does not limit the body to its own immediacy—its genes, molecules, cells, and so on—but opens it up, through the reconceptualization of the physical; that is to say, the conceptual is to be seen as an integral element of the physical.”

contagion, infiltration, bordering, morphing, absorbing or exuding, emerging, etc.) and certain kinds of contingencies (anomalies, glitches, changing alliances) that are part and parcel of the ways unforeseen or outside chaotic forces intrude or express new percepts, affects, and intensities (as ways of taking in the world). In “Deleuzian motions” contact materializes in performative enaction, by which I mean the asymmetrical shifting or oscillating from the *matter* of transformation to the *manner* of transformation.

The line does not go from one point to another, but runs *between points* in a different direction that renders them indiscernible. The line has become the diagonal, which has broken free of the vertical and the horizontal. But the diagonal has already become the transversal, the semidiagonal, or free straight line, the broken or angular line, or the curve—always in the midst of themselves.⁵⁵

Stravinsky's Tango for Piano Solo (1940)

The tango sets in motion a dance of relations of power, controlled struggle, appropriation, and masquerade. Tango, a word with African roots,⁵⁶ describes a hybridization of text, movement, sound, and context in a mixture that never blends. It embodies and choreographs a complex history of exchanges between dancers, in view of ever-present spectators, a dance of bodily interventions, engaging by both confounding and enticing the positions it articulates.

In the characteristic “promenade” of the tango, partners take up a cheek-to-cheek position and, extending arms and bending knees, stride in long gliding steps across the floor. The dancing bodies, split horizontally, entwine in mutually influencing, sensual movements. Social memories of “tango-teas,” film performances, and colonial histories and appropriations enhance the morally daring aura surrounding the dance.⁵⁷ As visual spectacle, tango both feeds and repudiates the “silent” spectator/consumer.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 298

⁵⁶ Meaning “indoors—the closed space which was used for dancing” (with connections to African dances). See www.pasiontango.net/articles.aspx?id=tango-Etymology (accessed October 2009).

⁵⁷ In parties and tango teas at British and American nightclubs, gigolos or paid dancers taught society women how to perform the new dances; Rudolph Valentino's film performances of the tango in the 1920s also increased the aura of the dance. Also see Gerard Béhague, “Tango,” In *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27473 (accessed July 2009).

⁵⁸ “The male/female erotic tensions (their intimate sexual politics) are consumed by the expectant desire of the colonizer's gaze. The couple, not the female anymore, is the passionate source for the reassurance of the colonizer's identity. ... The Latina couple has been exoticized ... and the distance, the difference attained, is pleasurable” (Marta E. Savigliano, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, Westview Press, 1995, p. 80).

Intended as a vocal work to be supplied with a commercial lyric, Stravinsky's *Tango* for piano (1940)⁵⁹ features some of the most metrically regular music with syncopated accents that Stravinsky ever wrote, stylizing a tango introduction and tune (see Example 10.2a, mm. 9–12). Measures 17ff. (see Example 10.2b) introduce a two-beat metric shift of the tune that begins to stretch beyond the confines of the two-bar phrase grouping in measures 20ff. Example 10.2b shows the lengths of the three-note melodic patterns from the beginning of one pattern to next. Preceded by a rest, the function of the melodic-rhythmic figure in measure 20 (rest–D4–F4–C5) as end or beginning of a phrase group opens to question. As the patterns mark spans of six eighth notes set against the bass (brackets, mm. 20–21), the repetitions draw attention to the upper part in counterpoint with the chromatic descending bass line (C to F, mm. 21–23). The length of the melodic pattern of measure 21 shortens by one eighth such that the next repetition in measure 22 unexpectedly shifts to an accented position, no longer beginning with a rest: [m. 20] six 8ths: rest–D4–F4–C5; [mm. 20–21] six 8ths: rest–D4–E4–C5; [mm. 21–22] five 8ths?: rest–D4–F4–C5; [m. 22] three 8ths: D4–F4–C5 (no rest, pattern early!). In measure 21, the bass departs from the metric regularity of its previous attack patterns. Thus both melody and bass become out of sync, in counterpoint with each other and between the (suspended?) metric frame. Within and between metric orientation, the motions of these musical bodies subtly connect

Example 10.2 Stravinsky, *Tango* for piano (right- and left-hand rhythms), a. mm. 9–12; b. mm. 17–25

The image displays two musical examples, labeled 'a' and 'b', from Stravinsky's *Tango* for piano. Both examples are in 4/4 time. Example 'a' covers measures 9-12. The right-hand part (RH) features a melodic line with syncopated accents, while the left-hand part (LH) provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. Example 'b' covers measures 17-25. It shows a more complex rhythmic structure with a two-beat metric shift. The RH part has melodic patterns of varying lengths, and the LH part has a chromatic descending line. Harmonic analysis is provided above and below the staves, including chord symbols like E C, D F C, D F C, E D A, and A G# F#, along with durations in eighth notes (e.g., 5, 3, 5, 8, 7). A bracket in measure 21 is labeled 'pattern early!'.

⁵⁹ Stephen Walsh, "Stravinsky, Igor," in *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52818pg8 (accessed July 2009).

two-bar subgroups of the bass in a larger rhythmic-melodic grouping (mm. 21–24)—a *tango-slide*: [mm. 21–22] five 8ths?; [m. 22] three 8ths; [m. 22] five 8ths: D4–F4–C5; [m. 23] eight 8ths: E5–D5–A4; [m. 24] seven 8ths: A4–G#4–G4–F#4.

These moments and movements both stylize and embody the tango in concrete form. Stravinsky composes into the work a breaking of aesthetic distance in these measures. Music steps into and out of its embodiment of frame becoming performative dance: what was a single melody initiates and enacts a counterpoint, becoming *tango slide* into, around, and out of a dance. “Becoming tango,” sound separates from and in relation to the metric frame. Metric process, melody, bass—the physical choreography of piano performance (body, right hand, left hand) and the imaging of the dance—shifts from observation to participation (intensional embodying), in physically morphing between stylization/construction and performative doing. Hands and musical voices separate themselves from their surrounding framework while at the same time remain part of it. “Becoming tango,” their emergence and independence is interactive with each other as well as with the larger framework that defines them.

“El tango de Roxanne” from the Film/Musical Moulin Rouge!
(Baz Luhrmann, 2001)

This number musically and visually stages inner and outer music-narratives in such a way to create “moments of contact” between these narrative layers (with literal and symbolic elements). This tango becomes an inner/staged story re-enacting and infolding/embodying the outer cinematic story of famous courtesan Satine, who is threatened with rape when she resists Duke’s intentions spurred by her growing love for the young Bohemian poet Christian. The stereotypical figures and forces of the tango embody the “real” couple in love and their confinement by the forces of the Duke (and vice versa). The “double address” becomes the “double story,” the “tango” of story within story, and song within song: the tango dance and story of love, jealousy, betrayal and death that the Argentine sings for Christian as they wait for Satine’s meeting with the Duke; and the “song” combinations of tango “Tanguera” by Argentinean composer Mariano Mores (b. 1918),⁶⁰ and hit rock song “Roxanne” about a prostitute in Paris, written by Sting (lead vocals, bass guitar) of the rock band The Police. The points of contact (and interaction) emerge in the hyperbolic media juxtapositions and combinations of tango dance and rock song, lyrics, and cinematic oscillation between shots of Christian, The Argentinean, and Moulin Rouge dancers, and of Satine and the Duke.

The Argentinean sings the portions of the song “Roxanne”, transposed to G minor with falling minor third (B \flat 4–G4), exhorting the prostitute, Roxanne

⁶⁰ See also the entry for *Moulin Rouge!* at the Internet Movie Database: www.imdb.com/title/tt0203009 (accessed July 2009). Thanks to Erick Carballo for discussion of Mariano Mores’s “Tanguera” in *Moulin Rouge!*. My text, timings, and analysis are based on the DVD (2003) performance.

(danced by the character Nini), to change her ways (1:20): “Roxanne, you don’t have to put on that red light / Walk the streets for money / You don’t care if it’s wrong or if it’s right / Roxanne, you don’t have to wear that dress tonight / Roxanne, you don’t have to sell your body to the night.” The tango “Tanguera,” with oscillating neighbor-note melody highlighting alternating scale degrees $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$ and later soaring melody in G minor sung by Christian forms the stage for their contrapuntal interaction. Christian sings (1:21): “Why does my heart cry? [B \flat 3–A3–G3–E \flat 4–D4] / Feelings I can’t fight [B \flat 3–A3–G3–G4–F4 (later F \sharp)] / You’re free to leave me [D4–C4] / but just don’t deceive me [C4–B \flat 3–A3] / and please believe me when I say [A3–G3–E \flat 4] / I love you [F4–E \flat 4–D4 (later A4–G4–F \sharp 4: V⁷ of G minor)]”. In contrast to the emotional intensity of the dramatic danced sequence and musical combinations, Satine, ensnared upstairs and threatened by the Duke, responds with a fragmented echo of her and Christian’s earlier song whispered to the wind (1:23): “Come what may” (F \sharp 4–G4–E \flat 4; E \flat as raised $\hat{6}$, alluding to new beginning?). Unable to articulate the subsequent lyric, the absent music and text of her response “I will love you till my dying day” continues in and doubly fills the silence that follows (with allusions to her undying love and pending death by tuberculosis—the entrapment is both tango plot and the unthought/unthinkable future slipping away of Satine’s physical/psychic strength).

In this tango the becoming music draws as much from the interactive intensities, physical, rhetorical, and sonic, of the combining layers internalizing a conflict, as from the “identification” or “citation” of either “Tanguera” or “Roxanne” materials as pre-formed or triggering the narrative. These intensities create the “performative problem” of their and our interactions with them; that is, the melding of a particular manner and mode of expression with the material-structural conditions and transformations to which the rhetorical expression gives voice. The performative is both expressive of material-social conditions as well as a heightening that calls attention / attends to its constructed aspects.

Allegory implies parallel stories that don’t usually meet: a story and its characters (fictional, biblical, mythic, historical) amplify “real life” (and vice versa). The counterpart to the allegorical may be the “real-life” of someone who is listening to story or sermon. At some point one experiences a moment of identification (of familiarity and repetition) to make the connection—a sudden “shock” or identification links the (fictional) story to a potential “real-life” outcome in a special way not understood or thought about before. The simple shock of identification and resemblance, however, do not have the potential either to affect the original story or to change the parallel counterparts, nor do they set up an interaction between them that can metamorphically change the outcome of either. Usually, there is the expectation that the allegorical insight or parallel story might be enough to spur some desire for a different outcome, but that desire emerges from a set of material circumstances outside allegory and structural analogy. That desire with its productive and intense expressivities emerges in the vividness of dimensional (and sensory) multiplicity and materiality. The processes of virtual insight and connection arise through the remembering and re-sensing of the virtual

potential of the actual. If or as points of contact emerge in the tango-allegory in *Moulin Rouge!*, it is because one dimensional “story” folds upon, within, and between another not through a specific content or essence but through a continuous asymmetrical process and instability that yields a changing relational dynamic.

Becoming does not take sound outside of itself:⁶¹ threading between conditions, music folds the past in present into future and back again in becoming newly vivid/intense. The intensities (attentiveness/vividness) capture a multisensory dimensionality and materiality (multiplicity) that cannot be reduced and from which new sounds (and ideas) emerge. This shifting into performing is a crucial dimension of becoming. The critical move—with philosophical, theoretical, social, and experiential implications—is toward performative expressivity and away from objectifying music as a text; that is, as a passive bearer of qualities. In this performing/expressivity, encounters with the inventive and the novel align with new ways of experiencing and thinking. Music embodies (intensionally infolds) the complex of ways that sensing occurs as both artifice (the aesthetic, composed and constructed) and as real/literal/veridical doing (enactment and experience). Analysis of becoming music becoming process taps into the latter of these counterparts (differing) as a way of understanding and experiencing the first (being).

This distinction—between artifice (composed/constructed) and real/literal (doing, enactment)—that Edward T. Cone described for opera is central to music and interactions of performance and analysis.⁶² I would like to draw a connection to the differences Cone notices in his distinction between experiencing the aria as an operatic convention and its moments and effects of being “real song” or speech. In sensing the performative, the becoming, one notices the ability of music to enact by doing the values and relationships that it embodies. To perform—to do things with music⁶³—is to become, to play out in time(s), engaging with a certain self-

⁶¹ “The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside.” (Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 96–7; quoted in Halewood, “On Whitehead and Deleuze,” p. 74).

⁶² See Edward T. Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, University of California Press, 1974, and “The World of Opera and Its Inhabitants,” in Robert P. Morgan (ed.), *Music: A View from Delft: Selected Essays*, University of Chicago Press 1989. From the latter, “the fundamental operatic ambiguity (is speech or song being represented?)” (p. 131). Also see Carolyn Abbate’s discussion of the ways self-reflexive moments in opera present “the very means by which operatic works turn into sung reality” (*In Search of Opera*, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. xiii) and/or the uncanny phantom sounds that opera points to that cannot be sounded. In contrast to highlighting the role of repression and the psychic dangers of phantom sound, my discussion emphasizes the creative surplus of performativity.

⁶³ This phrase plays on that of J. Austin, “doing things with words.” See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, Harvard University Press, 1975.

consciousness that in singing gives notice to that doing (manner and matter). The persuasive capacity of this performing comes (emerges) from a particular set of experiences and constraints that connect rhetorical voice with/from the material-structural conditions to which that rhetorical expression gives voice.

In the asymmetrical “twists” of becoming, in the “folding,” inside and outside encounter the other and become imperceptible/indiscernible and temporally retroactive. The resulting receptive or analytical “twists” open up new modes of interaction and actualizations of potential. The insider responds to the outsider within. The other, the outsider, never really lies outside: its irreducible (radical) difference/otherness allows it to gain strength to become imperceptible or indistinguishable from the inside. At the same time, the “inside” (the ooze of the “secret”) is always subject to what lies beyond it, evolving strategies and structures in response to forces outside it, and reigning over what it can internalize or appropriate.⁶⁴

[T]he secret, defined as a content that has hidden its form in favor of a simple container, is inseparable from two movements that can accidentally interrupt its course or betray it, but are nonetheless an essential part of it: something must ooze from the box, something will be perceived through the box or in the half-opened box. ... Influence and doubling, secretion and concretion, every secret operates between two “discreets” [“discrete (terms)”] that can, moreover, link or meld in certain cases. ... The secret, as secret, must now acquire its own form.⁶⁵

Between, in the middle of, morphing—moving between concepts, between upper and lower limits, mixing elements of, or movements “to the other side”—in the “twisting” of becoming perceivers-performers encounter things from one side made “new” and “unforeseen” in (an)other, qualitatively transforming performer as listener and listener as performer.

Symbolic meanings, especially if regarded as arbitrary convention, cannot contribute an impetus for change. I have argued that creative (affirmative, expressive, constructive) difference ensues from the productive multiplicities of performative interactions and their multi-dimensional, multi-modal, and multi-interactive processes. Interacting between and re-charging, the movement between

⁶⁴ This is the nature of encounter, an awareness of difference that honors and preserves difference with unforeseen potential. As a performer with smaller hands, I described my physical encounter with the (left hand) simultaneous tenths and (right hand) neighbor-note figure of measures 15–16 and their “strange” variation in measures 17–18 of Clara Schumann’s *Romanze* Op. 21, No. 1 (see “The Woman in the Music (On Feminism as Theory and Practice),” *College Music Symposium* 40 (2000): 62–78). The physical dimensions of performance draw one into their unmatched harmonic differences, “tonic” (A) minor becoming “major tonic” V^7/iv in the first set, and “diminished tonic” (C–F#–A, with G#4–F#4 as 6–5 suspension) ii°/V in the second set.

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 287–8.

abstract symbol and performance becomes alive and emergent in performing doing (and in hearing and listening for that doing). In that movement, that becoming music (e.g., that “becoming tango”) has the potential to impact and morphically transform different ends of the spectrum, the abstract and the performative.

The potential for social involvement arises in this metamorphic emergence between differing states without eschewing or polarizing category distinctions (abstract / actual-literal) and in approaching multidimensionality and multiplicity (in the circular twisting of becoming). Performance, performing, and the performative—differentiating and actualizing, embodying, listening/sensing, hearing and internalizing—music’s sonic-physicality becomes multidimensional and expressively productive. In a Deleuze-Guattari affirming, it may thus not be solely idealistic to think that one’s discursive readings could effect political-social change in the world.

Deleuze and Guattari take up problems of construing the constructive productivity of non-binary modes of description in a world where those descriptions are not readily available, and of creating blocks of becoming space that offset relativism and inertia for ethical-social commitments with potential to “sow the seeds of, or even engender, the people to come, that these populations will pass into a people to come, open a cosmos.”⁶⁶ They argue against the reification of any one particular idea. Though they do not explicitly acknowledge feminist strategies, their work draws from these strategies of local and micro-level political action.⁶⁷ Relatedly, Luce Irigaray and other feminist philosophers take up the problem of the potential of sexual difference of all kinds in a world where that differentiation is neutralized or rendered ineffective as a basis for social interaction.⁶⁸ Her re-reading warns against the policing of philosophy and explicitly critiques discourse for and between men that would limit the expressivity of alterity. Figuring

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 345. The work of Deleuze-Guattari and Irigaray engages the relation of theory and practice, philosophy, and political struggle, and the role of the intellectual in post-1968 France (Richardson, “Jamming The Machines,” p. 94). (Deleuze was also particularly concerned with homosexual rights, and the Palestinian liberation movement. His brother was arrested for resistance activities during the German occupation of France and was killed on route to Auschwitz.) See Gilles Deleuze: Biography, European Graduate School, www.egs.edu/resources/deleuze.html (accessed July 2009).

⁶⁷ See Richardson, “Jamming The Machines,” p. 94.

⁶⁸ Though Deleuze and Irigaray were contemporaries, they did not directly engage each other’s thought. Luce Irigaray wrote her doctoral dissertation *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Cornell University Press, 1985) between 1969 and 1973; for this work she was ostracized and deprived of her university position. Her work and book *This Sex Which Is Not One* (trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke, Cornell University Press, 1988) attends in particular to the poetic dimensions of language as a way of figuring interpersonal and political change. See Luce Irigaray, “Luce Irigaray, The Career of a Woman Researcher,” trans. Rachelle Bunce, 2003, www.nottingham.ac.uk/modernlanguages/research/irigaray_biog_english.php (accessed July 2009).

multiplicity in different ways, the works of Irigaray and Deleuze-Guattari articulate “geo-philosophies” of location and strategies of creative resistance.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar is choreographer, dancer, and artistic director of Urban Bush Woman, a company that creates a sense of community on stage. In *Praise House* (1990), collaborating with co-choreographer Pat Hill-Smith, Zollar combines live music, a cappella vocalizations, theater, and movement in exploring “spirituality and the gift of artistry in three generations of African-American women” (Prologue).⁶⁹ Inspired by the life of Minnie (Hannah) Evans (1892–1987), known for her folk-inspired mystical paintings, a younger Hannah (her granddaughter) and her worried mother become the catalysts for this choreographic study of the split between their worlds and the continuum of difference that the older Hannah offers in the spirit world. Zollar comments, “As a part of Urban Bush Women, what we look for are the ways that we can take what is the Afro-American experience—that experience which has specifically happened here—and have it be connected to and in honor of, and continuing with whatever we understand of the African experience.” The refrain repeats “There is no turning back,” yet, to quote Zollar again, “What I need in particular from dancers are people who can call up from their life experience, their knowledge and living of Afro-American culture. It is not just learning the dance forms, it is knowing the culture that it [that life experience] comes out of . . . So it’s not necessarily a conscious connection. I think it’s real important to be conscious of the connection so you can understand what might be moving through you in terms of spiritual forces, in terms of ancestral energy.” In such energies and intensities, “movements” emerge and affirm the creative potentials of difference (giving expression to alterity) in which moving forward becomes a calling up (memory) and a calling forth (becoming). The specificities of music’s expressive languages offer performative potentials of reflecting and expressing, hearing and listening, “both/and” emerging and changing in and over time (performing repetition with difference and difference with repetition). Music’s dimensionality and materiality, its processive play of intensities, come from somewhere on the way to somewhere else.

Traversing between the “screens” (categories) of convention, between and resisting categorization, music, as active bearer of qualities, “becomes.” Interactions of performance and analysis activate this “in-between”—the middle of things—becoming and moving in the flow space between concepts without

⁶⁹ See Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, director, *Urban Bush Women. Praise House* (video recording), Third World Newsreel, 1991: the quotations in my text are drawn from my transcriptions of the documentary on the video recording. Original stage play written by Angelyn DeBord; screenplay adaptation by Julie Dash. Based on a concept by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar for Urban Bush Women. Originally broadcast on the PBS television program: *Alive from off Center*. Also see *New York Times* review by Anna Kisselgoff, “‘Praise House’ . . . emerges from a new time and from lived rather than imagined experience”: www.nytimes.com/1991/11/25/arts/review-dance-blacks-realities-by-urban-bush-women.html (accessed June 2009).

being subsumed by them. This “movement” continually desires and is thus *non-localized* and *rhythmic* in a deep sense, in turn and turning, carving out a space between representation and categorization, and transforming one’s orientations as those orientations also transform in “production of production.” From these temporally evolving “becoming” intensities emerge music’s relational dynamics and the social voices of its sonic materiality.

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Chapter 11

Transformation and Becoming Other in the Music and Poetics of Luciano Berio

Bruce Quaglia

Basically, everything can be transformed, not just melodies and memorable physiognomies, but even the idea of transformation itself. But there is one problem: even though transformational procedures always signify something, this doesn't guarantee them an expressive meaning.¹

(Luciano Berio)

The musician is in the best position to say: "I hate the faculty of memory, I hate memories." And that is because he or she affirms the power of becoming.²

(Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari)

There are a thousand ways of forgetting music, and I am mostly interested in the active ways of forgetting rather than the passive and unconscious ways.³

(Luciano Berio)

Berio and Deleuze

The music and thought of Luciano Berio present a rich field of possibilities for thinking through the implications of Gilles Deleuze's writings on the arts and particularly those written about music.⁴ The handful of allusions to Berio's works

¹ Luciano Berio, *Two Interviews with Rosanna Dalmonte and Balint Andras Varga*, trans. and ed. David Osmond-Smith, Marion Boyars, 1985, p. 104.

² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 296.

³ Luciano Berio, "Forgetting Music," Lecture III of *Remembering the Future, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures*, Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 61.

⁴ I will make no special distinction in this essay between those texts that Deleuze authored by himself and those that were co-authored with Félix Guattari except where noted. Deleuze's ideas were so intimately intertwined with those of Guattari within the works that they co-authored that it would be impossible to make specific attributions to either author. Further, as Ronald Bogue notes, each author treats the various collaborative works as if they were that author's own work when they later return to subsequent solo

(such as *Visage* and *Coro*) that are scattered across *A Thousand Plateaus* present us with compelling evidence of Deleuze's interest in Berio's art. Two recently discovered letters written to the composer may now further document Deleuze's esteem for Berio's music. The first of these undated letters suggests some initial encounter that evidently left a significant impression on Deleuze:

Dear Berio,

Once again I must tell you of my admiration. It was a joy to have heard you, and I do believe that I owe much thanks to you. Regarding this subject, I have worked a small part of the night as you have made something new possible for me. You are perhaps the only musician who has found a means to maintain the joy. Something urgent: can you please tell Clément Rosset if your composition "Visage" is available on disc and if there is also a text of your presentation. If you have time on the 16th, call me or else I can call you at IRCAM.

Your dear friend,

Gilles Deleuze⁵

Whatever the specific details may have been of his encounter with Berio (and with his electronic composition *Visage*), the experience evidently made a substantial impact on Deleuze and, by his own account, stimulated his work in some important way.⁶

Without attempting to assert any direct influence upon Berio by Deleuze, I believe that Deleuze's thought may also be productively applied to Berio's music and poetics as a means for illuminating and expanding both. To this end, Deleuze's thought may be applied as but one of many possible critical remedies for some persistent problems that have attended the reception of Berio's music—especially the understanding of his critical philosophical stances within North American musical academic communities. Berio's words about music have often been misunderstood in these communities, not only due to the unfamiliar sources that Berio frequently drew upon when writing about his music, but also because his views continued to evolve throughout his career in ways that may appear at times

projects, "freely expanding on that work's concepts and expanding them into new areas of investigation." Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, Routledge, 2003, p. 9.

⁵ Undated letter in French from Gilles Deleuze to Luciano Berio, Paul Sacher Stiftung; the author gratefully acknowledges Jordan De Haan for the translation that is presented here and both the Paul Sacher Stiftung and Talia Pecker Berio for their permission to publish it.

⁶ Although it is impossible to surmise the circumstances of this encounter with any certainty—since this letter and another that appears with it are both undated—it seems likely that Deleuze was present at some performance-lecture of *Visage*, perhaps at IRCAM where Berio directed the electroacoustic division from 1974 to 1980. The implication of Deleuze's letter is that this encounter was significant and acted as a stimulus to his work. Since the original publication date of *Mille Plateaux* was in 1980, and Berio is discussed within that work, I think it probable that the encounter would have taken place some time in Paris in the late 1970s.

to present conflicts and even contradiction.⁷ Although Berio appears to have never drawn directly upon Deleuze as a source, his early interest in the relationship of linguistics and phenomenology to music opens but one of several doors through which Deleuze may naturally enter into the conversation. I believe that there are many others, and that a firm understanding of post-war European philosophical and cultural developments is critical to understanding Berio's music and poetics. Deleuze is a critical component of that history. The manner in which Deleuze drew upon sources such as linguistics and phenomenology (among many other ways of thinking philosophy), only to then exceed these in order to confront new problems, may be taken as a model for how we might proceed when tracing problems that appear as recurrent themes throughout Berio's thought. More importantly, it may also suggest new ways for us to engage with his music.

Berio's music has frequently been a topic of analytical interest for music theorists, yet an appropriate set of analytical tools that engage meaningfully with his philosophical and creative sources has appeared relatively elusive by some commentator's lights.⁸ I will not be concerned presently to dismiss or replace the

⁷ Richard Herman has remarked extensively upon the difficulties that North American scholars encounter with respect to both Berio's terms and his sources. Hermann has discussed this as a tension between the way that Berio's "shop talk" on music is configured and the manner in which music theory research is typically practiced in North America. To reconcile this tension Hermann has explored the role that French Structuralism (for example Saussure, Jakobson, et al.) assumed in Berio's theoretical lexicon and has sought to interface that understanding with North American music theory research by correlating Berio's terms and concepts (as much as possible) with those commonly in use by Anglophone North American music theorists, see: Richard Hermann, "Why is Berio's Music So Hard to Understand – for Anglophone North American Music Theorists?" (paper presented at the Festival Honoring Luciano Berio, hosted by the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York, April 29, 2003). Janet Hander-Powers has also closely examined the wide range of sources that Berio drew upon during the turbulent days of the early avant-garde (the decade that Berio has sometimes called "the Roaring Fifties") and has considered these in relation to the writings of some of his more influential colleagues from that era, writers such as Umberto Eco and Henri Pousseur. The interested reader is urged to consult her dissertation for an extended treatment of Berio's evolving ideologies and aesthetic stances: Janet Hander-Powers, "Strategies of Meaning: A Study of the Aesthetic and Musical Language of Luciano Berio," PhD diss. University of Southern California, 1988. Hander-Powers prioritizes those themes that persist and evolve in Berio's thought over time (pp. 77–8). I will follow that example in this essay by focusing largely upon those themes that still preoccupied Berio by the mid-1990s when he presented his Norton lectures at Harvard. I will turn to Deleuze throughout the essay in order to reconsider those themes and to move beyond them.

⁸ For an extended analytical account of Berio's *Sequenza IV for Piano* that is informed by structural linguistics, see Richard Hermann, "Theories of Chordal Shape, Aspects of Linguistics, and their Roles in Structuring Berio's *Sequenza IV for Piano*," in Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann (eds), *Concert Music, Rock and Jazz Since 1945*, University of Rochester Press, 1995, pp. 364–98. In the present chapter, I primarily intend

music theorist's toolbox with some other set of analytic procedures, but instead I will simply return to some of those problems with which Berio seems to have been frequently concerned, and consider in what ways Deleuze's writings may recast some of the questions that Berio raises. The strong tendency of Berio's music toward constant transformation and becoming other, suggests not so much a need for new analytical methodologies—although neither does it confirm the sufficiency of any specific extant theoretical models—as instead it suggests the need for some new epistemological framework within which to engage those methods.

What is Analysis?

Ever a literate composer, in the sixth and final of his Charles Eliot Norton lectures given at Harvard in 1993–94, Berio comes full-circle across the body of interviews and articles that he produced throughout his long career, and arrives again at the topic that he called the “poetics of analysis.” In that lecture he proceeds by suggesting that he is concerned to reconcile the “creative and analytical levels of music.”⁹ Berio's discussion is both complicated and far-reaching in its consequences and must be parsed very carefully if we are to engage his thought with that of Deleuze. Both the terms “poetics” and “analysis” are explored at length in this lecture but their relation to one another remains intentionally problematized in order to develop some productive tension through which something new may emerge. Poetics in Berio's hands become a new category in which he raises the concept itself to an elevated status that is intentionally isolated from its own long associated history—a history within which the term “poetics” had usually been understood to operate in relation to its own analysis. Instead, he now supplants that understanding with the elusive process by which the modern composer brings new works into being. This process is seemingly synonymous with those individually discernible modalities of expression that identify a particular composer apart from any shared system of cultural values that would historically have resulted in adherence to a “style.”¹⁰ This is a new condition that Berio acknowledges as

to use Deleuze's thought as a corrective device for re-orienting the analyst's ear toward this music's multiplicity and its tendency toward constant transformation and *becoming other*. These qualities, in my view, stand in opposition to the search for structural coherence and unity that so many North American music-theoretical tools seem primarily designed for, and so many analyses intent upon.

⁹ Luciano Berio, “Poetics of Analysis” in *Remembering the Future*, p. 122.

¹⁰ “Style” is here used in the usual sense to mean adherence to a set of rhetorical musical conventions through which a normative syntax and even the appearance of a musical semantics emerges. Thus for example we have the “Classical Style” as it has been endlessly encoded and decoded by musical analysts. But there is another more Deleuzian kind of “style” that may bear productively on Berio's concept of poetics as it will be considered here: a creative force that acts as an autonomous being upon the raw materials of music.

particularly unique to the modern era.¹¹ Although Berio's revitalized conception of poetics remains somewhat elusive in its details, we may attempt to initially summarize its attributes with some terms and concepts borrowed from Deleuze: those individual qualities that Berio calls a composer's poetics elude logical description, are specific to the composer, and are primarily identifiable by their intensities and affects. It is the identifiable residue of a composer's way of (musically) being in the world, and it must be understood as a creative, productive force in all contexts in which it appears. For Berio, musical thinking—whether it embraces poetics, analysis or both—is fundamentally a function of listening to and creating music. He is never concerned to explain musical works via criticism, and twice within this lecture he elliptically comes to the conclusion that “the most meaningful analysis of a symphony is another symphony.”¹² In the face of such an ambiguous interdependency, one may be tempted to pose suitably open-ended questions such as “What is Poetics?” or “What is Analysis?” Both are deliberately cast here in a mode parallel to that of the title of Deleuze and Guattari's final collaboration: “What is Philosophy?” Each of these is a cumulative question that must be returned to later in life, and each has much to do with the concerns of this present essay.¹³

Berio's answer to “What is Analysis?” might have been different at various earlier points in his career, but in 1993 his answer to this question was as succinct as it is suggestive: “[If] the analyst is a composer ... the analysis will always be self-analysis.”¹⁴ The composer's own “poetics” thus open upon the encountered work of another and act as a catalyst, but not as a filter in any reductive sense. Rather, we may instead conceive of this transverse operation more like a machine that acts upon the music at hand, and which transforms it in a creative manner that produces new and different trajectories. It is a machine that acts upon other machines in an

In *What is Philosophy* Deleuze and Guattari describe the blocks of sensation that are produced by art as the *affects* or “nonhuman becomings of man” and the *percepts* as the “nonhuman landscapes of nature” in which they take place. Both of these are raised beyond the lived experiences of perceptions and affection to a new autonomous status that Deleuze and Guattari identify as “style.” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 169–70.

¹¹ “The notion of poetics, however general the term, has always implied self-awareness, and an evolutionary view of music making and of the criteria that guide it. Whenever description enters into the specific details of a given work, poetics give way to analysis.” Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 124.

¹² Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 125.

¹³ The introduction to *What is Philosophy?* begins with the lines “The question *what is philosophy?* can perhaps be posed only late in life, with the arrival of old age and the time for speaking concretely.” Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 1. Berio's return to questions of poetics and analysis throughout the Norton lectures may also be viewed as a similarly “late” reflection upon those questions which had led him in his youth toward the fields of linguistics, phonology, semiotics, phenomenology, and others.

¹⁴ Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 125.

assemblage that resembles a network, a network of what Berio simply refers to as “Texts.” We will return shortly and in a more careful manner to the topic of how such a process corresponds to Deleuze’s “machinic assemblage,” but in order to do so we must first briefly consider how the performance of such an analysis (consisting in part of the composer’s own poetics) constitutes or avoids the construction of an acting subject.¹⁵ A self-analysis of the kind that Berio describes must first of all be distinguished from mere opinions, the kind of thinking that Deleuze insists closes affects off and translates them into reducible and over-simplified concepts, and which in turn positions the subject (the composer) in a simple binary relationship to the object of his analysis. Instead, by following Berio’s own contention that all of music—including composers themselves—is made up of Texts, we may relegate any resulting line of subjectification to a minor role that is subsequently subsumed as a secondary aspect appearing within the incalculable number of points of contact between such texts.¹⁶ The composer in this alternative analytical

¹⁵ In order to resist the kind of subjectivism (with its subsequent reduction of affects to mere opinions) which might result from a more banal consideration of a composer’s self-analysis of the work of another, we may appeal here instead to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “creative fabulation,” a concept which they use to specifically oppose memory in *What is Philosophy?* The topics of memory and its relation to the creative force are not only germane to the question of a composer’s “self-analysis,” but it lies continually at the heart of all six of Berio’s Norton lectures. “Memory, which summons forth only old perceptions, is obviously not enough to get away from lived perceptions; neither is an involuntary memory that adds reminiscence as the present’s preserving factor. Memory plays a small part in art (even and especially in Proust). It is true that every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. The monument’s action is not memory but fabulation. We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present. Music is full of them. It is not memory that is needed but a complex material that is found not in memory but in words and sounds: ‘Memory, I hate you.’ We attain to the percept and affect only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience them. . . .” Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 168.

¹⁶ In the course of his first Norton lecture, Berio posits “Perhaps the difficulties composers encounter when they talk about texts arise from their feeling that they themselves are a musical Text; that they live inside a text and therefore are lacking the detachment necessary to explore, with some objectivity, the nature of the relation they entertain with themselves as text.” The presence of the composer as a subject in the relational situation between texts is then subsequently further deflated to an even more diffuse status when “performers, listeners and indeed composers undergo a sort of alchemical transformation in which recognition, knowledge and conceptual associations—all fruits of their relationship with Texts—are spontaneously transformed into a living entity, a ‘being’ which transcends and sublimates technical realities” (Berio, *Remembering the Future*, pp. 10–11). The exchange that takes place between texts, or signifying entities, and which is modeled in these remarks is a critical feature of Berio’s thinking about music. The dynamicism and

setting might properly be regarded as what Deleuze and Guattari describe as a “desiring machine” as opposed to a subjective ego.¹⁷ This positions a composer’s analysis of another’s work as a “production” or “flow” that transcends subject/object relations. For now I will simply assert that such an analysis is a fresh way of thinking that may produce an opening to the outside, or what Deleuze would call a “line of flight,” extending diagonally through the singularities of specific works that are situated within their own planes of consistency. There may, of course, be many different types of these lines of flight, and the composer’s analysis is but one instance. It is important to distinguish this kind of thinking from other more rationalist types of analyses: those modeled on a representational thinking that is grounded in a particular a priori system or theory of musical coherence. The first difference one notices within this machinic mode of analysis is that it may not be measured by whether it is demonstrably accurate or true, instead it can only be considered in terms of what it does (or makes possible) and therefore by what it produces. It is *creative* as opposed to *reductive*, and it *opens out* instead of *closing in*. Frequently, for Berio, it seems that what is produced may simply be “another symphony”—a new musical work, a transverse becoming. Composing and analysis are then the same kind of thinking, out of which a particular new work might be produced as one of many possible trajectories.

Berio’s model for analysis is limited here to only composer/analysts, but the injection of the composer’s own poetics into the business of analysis (or more properly of the productive force of their desire when connecting with those other works), positions this particular brand of analysis as an act of potentially open-ended poesis. This is especially so because of Berio’s consistent focus upon listening to and creating music. By locating the composer’s “poetics” at the site

transformation that Berio foregrounds here, but especially the resulting autonomy of the process through which the exchange itself becomes an independent “living entity” fits nicely within Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *machinic assemblage*.

¹⁷ Berio’s own description of a composer performing a self-analysis invokes the imagery of psychoanalysis: “The composer reveals himself *on the couch* of someone else’s work” (Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 125; my emphasis). In general, psychoanalysis is not a prominent feature of Berio’s literary legacy (see below). My repositioning of the composer here as a “desiring machine” is intended to invert the image of the composer as both analyst/analysand by bringing several themes from Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* into play. The composer’s subjective presence in their own “self-analysis” is thus replaced with a “desiring production” and thus the composer as a “Text” connecting to other “texts” becomes part of a “flow” and not simply another link in a chain of unlimited semiosis. “Desiring-machines are binary machines, obeying a binary law or set of rules governing associations: one machine is always coupled with another. The productive synthesis, the production of production, is inherently connective in nature: ‘and...’ and then...’ This is because there is always a flow-producing machine, and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of this flow (the breast-the mouth).” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 5.

of this desiring, one may begin to productively engage certain key concepts such as schizoanalysis—concepts that are developed throughout Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. This, in turn, may eventually force a complete reevaluation of the goals of musical analysis as it is typically practiced. The schizo-musical mode of analysis does not need be restricted to composers alone, although Berio plainly regards that situation as being the safest, or at least the most revealing one.¹⁸ Throughout his lecture on the "Poetics of Analysis," Berio expresses caution and outright skepticism about the ways in which analysis may become excessively "creative," but especially when the analyst attempts to interiorize a closed system that is subsequently intended to be demonstrated or even proven by their analysis.¹⁹ Berio's criticism of such systems of analysis seems to concern their reductive nature, and he becomes especially scathing when he cites Schenkerians or neo-positivists as examples of this practice.²⁰ The interiorized system in such analyses reduces the potential of the music as a Text by closing off the proliferation of alternate connections: by reducing the points of contact that may spring up, like rhizomes, with and between other texts or machines. In spite of this cautionary stance concerning overly "creative" analyses—a critical stance which I have taken here really to be aimed at the reductive as opposed to the literally creative aspects of such analysis—Berio still seems to remain optimistically concerned to discover a new analytical space in which a diverse and maximally connected kind of listening may take place. This kind of listening must be creatively intensive but still fundamentally analytical: it would open out to a world of "possible pieces" which may potentially become "new symphonies" in their own right, even when they do not literally become works with new titles.²¹ While Berio never turns openly toward Deleuze as a source for this intimated kind of musical thinking, I nonetheless infer at least a basic sympathy between the two writers. This sympathy is based upon their mutual recognition of how analytical meaning is constructed within what Berio calls the "domain of signs" and what Deleuze calls (with a great deal more specificity) the "regime of signs." Deleuze describes several traits of a regime of signs: among these, "circularity" and "expansion" are the means by which the regime of signs organizes itself in a negative capacity. A fog of meaning and interpretation is thus imposed by the mere

¹⁸ Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 127.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 128–9.

²⁰ "At their worst, such theories take the form of authoritarian systems—intolerant and dogmatic—which, in their own little way, preach the elimination of the outsider. The poetics of analysis thus become the politics of analysis—a search for procedural pedigrees. It is at this point that the history of music comes in and hands over the check, which the analysts, predictably—especially if they are a bit of a Schenkerian or a neo-positivist—find themselves unable to pay." *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²¹ We thus consider the production of a new kind of multiple subjectivity, a topic that will be explored in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

“formal redundancy” of the regime.²² It spirals outward from a central nexus: a core in which signs not only loop back upon themselves, but also simultaneously move outward to connect with other new circles of signification. This process overcomes the inherent entropy of the system of signs and ensures the growth of the regime itself—it is an essentially arboreal organization that facilitates the regime’s growth outward from a central core. Deleuze finds this core to be essentially empty: a pure abstraction that is basically “nothing.”²³ I believe that Berio recognizes a corresponding instantiation of this same vacuum when he confronts the interpretive nature of musical analysis in the following lines from “The Poetics of Analysis”:

There are cases in which analysis is brought to bear on experiences which do not easily lend themselves to linear and numerical description. In such cases the creativity of the analyst may experience some difficult moments, especially when dealing with something that has no immediate meaning (a sound doodle or an accidental and indecipherable noise) but which can be made to mean something. Even within the frame of the most self-referential analytical strategies, a constructive and adventurous flexibility in the relationship between what the analyst wishes to demonstrate, and what is analyzable but not demonstrable, can be developed.²⁴

And then shortly thereafter:

I nurture the same feeling of suspicion for the theories whose main concern seems to be building shelters against the incursions of the diversified, noisy concreteness of the world as it is, in the process of becoming, or as we would like it to become.²⁵

Berio’s critique of musical analysis here is in fundamental sympathy with Deleuze’s writings, not only in its shared aversion for dogmatic authority, but also by virtue of the kind of imagery that is invoked by the last quote: chaos, materialism, and becoming. It targets the redundant and self-referential structure of thought through which such analyses proceed, and it disdains the resulting consolidation of meaning that defensively builds shelters against the chaos of the world as it is. By contrast, what is sought here is the possibility of a different kind of analysis, one that can live with and respond to the chaos of the “diversified,

²² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 117.

²³ “There is not much to say about the center of significance, or the Signifier in person, because it is a pure abstraction no less than a pure principle; in other words it is nothing. Lack or excess, it hardly matters.” *Ibid.*, p. 114–17.

²⁴ Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 130.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 130–31.

noisy concreteness of the world as it is, in the process of becoming,” and one which subsequently may become pointedly Deleuzian in its approach. Such an approach to analysis would suggest a kinship with what Deleuze and Guattari refer to alternately as *nomadic thought*, *pragmatics*, or *schizoanalysis* (among many other terms). This new type of thinking is the recurring focus of both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Brian Massumi, who translated *A Thousand Plateaus* into English, describes nomadic thought as an attempt to open a “smooth space of thought” that “may rise up at any point” and which spills outwards beyond the boundaries of traditional philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari model nomad thought upon the rhizomatic structures that they believe to be endemic to both mathematics and music. Thus, their brand of philosophy presents a sort of “music with content.”²⁶

The nomad thought of *A Thousand Plateaus* offers an open and extensible process that is not delimited by the particular examples or proliferating neologisms that Deleuze and Guattari put into play. As they state in their own *Introduction: Rhizome*: “In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification.”²⁷ By reading this introduction as an invitation to move beyond *A Thousand Plateaus* and instead into its applications as other readers have done, we might begin to actualize Berio’s “analysis of becoming” by tracing paths through Berio’s comments and away from other starting points in Deleuze’s writings. The result will be something new. In Deleuze’s writings we may find the means to confront those problems that Berio identifies as a “no-man’s land” between the analysis of “the notes and the sound” and “the theoretical speculation that seems to promote the idea of an imperturbable and essentially passive musical form.” It is specifically this void of analysis that Berio confronts in the following passage from “The Poetics of Analysis”:

I wish that idea of absolute form (a new kind of *musica mundana*) and that no-man’s-land could open up and communicate through concrete and creative trajectories: through a true poetics (or *poesis*) of analysis. The ultimate sense of these trajectories can be revealed in the traces of those already covered and of those yet to be covered.²⁸

If we view that passive, imperturbable form which grounds musical analysis as another instance of the essentially hollow and redundant organization of the regime of signs, then Deleuze offers a concrete means by which to move beyond that form and to trace those creative trajectories toward the virtual that Berio calls upon us to chart a course for.

²⁶ Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, The MIT Press, 1992, p. 6.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 3.

²⁸ Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 132.

From State to Nomad: Berio's own "Capitalism and Schizophrenia"

In order to productively bring nomad thought to bear on that "passive form" of music-theoretical speculation that Berio identifies as a new *musica mundana*, the problem of musical signification must be situated in some further detail. It will be necessary to resituate signification altogether by modifying its underlying terms as they relate not only to music, but also to every other dimension of the sphere of human (and nonhuman) activity. The problems of signification that Berio discusses throughout "The Poetics of Analysis" are of great personal concern, for, as he acknowledges, the matters at hand are intimately involved with his own compositional work.²⁹ Faced with the perceived inadequacy of language to describe music, Berio traces the relation of philosophy and music back to a prior historical point. Much of this historical interrogation is initially configured in his first Norton lecture, titled "Formations," which proceeds as a brief archaeology of music theory wherein he explores the advancement of musical analysis and its evolving epistemological ground. Berio traces the underlying dialectical relation of "music's practical and conceptual dimensions" back to the time of Boethius, in order to highlight the broader integration of thought within which the ancients had subsumed music theory. By referring to the conceptual framework that connected the *musica humana*, *musica instrumentalis*, and *musica mundana*, Berio points out the contrasting lack of a *quadrivium*, or other comprehensive system within which music theory may be framed in the modern era.³⁰ In what may only be considered a negative pronouncement, he concludes that musical analysis has at last been brought "into the domain of signs."³¹ The domain of signs is thus situated against the recognition of a lack: the lack of a common practice, of a universal language and of an enfolding *musica universalis*. It is, in other words, the musical complement to that late modern crisis of reason and representation that has occupied so many European thinkers of the second half of the 20th century. By situating Berio's own recognition of the "domain of signs" and its attendant lack as responding to that chaos "of the diversified, noisy concreteness of the world as it is"—that same chaos which not only Deleuze's work speaks to but also that of so many others among Deleuze and Berio's generation—we may begin to reconceive of that lack in new and productive ways that seek to replace the negation

²⁹ "This time I will be talking about things that are implicitly bound up—more closely than has usually been the case until now—with my own work ..." Berio, *Remembering the Future*, pp. 122–3.

³⁰ "I am raising these questions to remind you that the need to conduct conceptual speculations parallel and perhaps prior to concrete musical experience has very deep and long-standing roots. Boethius's theoretical proposal did not attempt to formalize experiences that had already taken place or a practice under way, but instead appropriated *in advance* the experience of sound, while conditioning its very formation and development." Berio, *Remembering the Future*, p. 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

inherent in “lack” with the connectivity of rhizomatic or nomadic thought. For Deleuze, art, science, and philosophy, while not exactly integrated, each responds through its own autonomous means to the productive fullness of the chaos within which we live. The three may be conceptualized as separate planes that attempt to draw some measure of consistency from that chaos by developing *concepts* (in philosophy), *functives* (in science), and intensifying *affects* or *percepts* in music and the other arts. The problem Berio confronts in his Norton lectures is often of how to form analytical concepts that can bind some small measure of that chaos in ways that speak directly to the intensification of those affects and percepts in the musical domain. As for so many of his generation, that discourse begins with an examination of language.

The topical prominence of signification in Berio’s thought is in no way surprising given the post-war intellectual milieu within which he (and Deleuze) developed. As Michel Foucault remarks in his Preface to *Anti-Oedipus*:

During the years 1945–1965 (I am referring to Europe), there was a certain way of thinking correctly, a certain style of political discourse, a certain ethics of the intellectual. One had to be on familiar terms with Marx, not let one’s dreams stray too far from Freud. And one had to treat sign-systems—the signifier—with the greatest respect. These were the three requirements that made the strange occupation of writing and speaking a measure of truth about oneself and one’s time acceptable.³²

Given Foucault’s recollections of a holy intellectual trinity consisting of Freud, Marx and “The Sign,” it is hardly surprising that in Berio one finds regular references to the terminology and concepts of linguistics in general, and of semiotics in particular. His early study of Saussure’s *Cours de linguistique générale* and his life-long personal and professional relationship with semiotician Umberto Eco position The Sign prominently within Berio’s discourse about music.

However, what one does not find in his written work, or at least in its English translations, is a correspondingly open engagement with either Freud or Marx. While Freud does not appear to have played an overt and direct role in Berio’s musical thinking (although psychoanalysis in general, but perhaps more via Lacan, may have played some role in his ideas about theater),³³ Berio’s socio-

³² Michel Foucault, “Preface” to Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. xi.

³³ I do not wish to make too strong an argument against the relevance of Freud for Berio’s thought here but instead merely wish to observe that—at least in that part of Berio’s discourse on music that has been translated into English—Freud does not appear prominently by name. Then again, neither does Deleuze, who I am asserting is of great importance for our understanding Berio. Although it remains beyond the scope of the present essay, I believe that “the truth of Freud” (via Lacan) must be highly relevant to any discussion of Berio’s music in which the terms of signification and subjectivity are at stake, as they are here. Because I am considering Berio from the vantage point of Deleuze

political views are of the highest importance for understanding his ideas about music—especially in its relation to signification. Piecing those socio-political views together is no simple matter. Berio's intellectual and artistic stances rarely remained static during any substantial length of his career. Further, the profound differences that exist between European and North American receptions of Marxist theory, and the varying emotional responses that are elicited by Communism in those two settings, have complicated the dissemination of Berio's political views to English-speaking audiences in a variety of ways. The political dimension of how signs are legislated in virtually all discourse (much less in a musical and analytical context specific to Berio) therefore remains a relatively unexplored topic for most of those same audiences. For example, in his important 1981 interview with Rossana Dalmonte, Berio's political views regarding the Italian Communist Party have been neatly redacted from the translated edition available to English-speaking readers. This was presumably done for fear of Berio's politics being grossly misunderstood by an American audience that was still gripped within the ideology of the Cold War.³⁴ While a comprehensive accounting of Berio's political views will prove to be beyond the scope of this present essay, his 1968 article "Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse" deserves some consideration here.

and particularly from the vantage point of Deleuze as coauthor with Guattari (whose break with Lacanian discourse is at the heart of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project), an extended treatment of Lacanian subjectivity in Berio's music and thought must await another occasion. I believe that Berio's conception of musical subjectivity (especially via theater), and particularly those exchanges of coding that occur across the thresholds of audience/performer/composer, would benefit from a close Lacanian reading. These same exchanges will be considered here from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's *Rhizomatics* instead.

³⁴ The English version of Berio's interviews with Rossana Dalmonte and Balint Andras Varga were both translated and edited by David Osmond-Smith. In his preface to those interviews, Osmond-Smith remarks obliquely that "[It] seemed sensible to provide a compressed version of Dalmonte's interview, omitting those sections which are relevant only in an Italian context" (Berio, *Two Interviews*, p. 13). The "Italian context" here likely refers to the opposition of Fascism via Communism. While Berio's expression of anger toward Fascism remains a prominent theme in those interviews and also in some articles that are available to readers of English, Communism does not. Janet Hander-Powers comments further: "Berio's political views, in particular, have never been discussed in American publications. His statements about more recent political affiliation with the Communist Party in Italy have even been expurgated from Osmond-Smith's translation of Berio's interviews with Rossana Dalmonte. The subject of his political sympathies is germane not just to flesh out the personal angles of his life, but to explore the depth of his commitment to society which is necessary to understand his concept of music is and what music means" (Hander-Powers, *Strategies of Meaning*, p. 55, note 82). Neither a detailed examination of Deleuze and Guattari's refined use of Marxist thought in their writings, nor one of Berio's own evolving political views will be explored here, although the author does believe that such an exploration would likely provide further points of contact and conductivity between Berio and Deleuze-Guattari.

Its depiction of “poetics” in relation to music theory is an important precursor to the more fully developed arguments of the Norton lectures written nearly three decades later. Moreover, the historical context of the year 1968 in which it was written, together with the pronounced anti-Fascist tenor of its rhetoric, allow it to be read as partaking of a shared *Zeitgeist* with Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* and later *Mille Plateaux*.

Berio’s “Meditation” begins with a loud proclamation of renewed anger toward the Fascism of his youth that had “deprived [him] of knowledge of the most essential musical achievements of [his] own culture,” and which “was capable of actually falsifying spiritual reality.”³⁵ Though some 20 years had passed since the events to which Berio refers to as “Italy’s political situation” up to 1945, his opposition to Fascism becomes reoriented at this critical juncture—displacing it away from the historical events of his youth, and instead toward those contemporary circumstances wherein “a more subtle Fascism is taking shape, a disguised Fascism which, while it is not at the moment depriving us of any current ‘information,’ is threatening all the same to change our consciences and our recognition of our responsibilities in regard to music as a social act.”³⁶ Lest Berio’s statements be mistaken as naïve, he reminds us almost immediately that “music can’t lower the cost of bread” but that instead it does create “modes of conditioning” of the listener, and that these modes (which he also calls “poetics”) are always in direct relation to the “ideological configurations” of society.³⁷ The subtle Fascism to which Berio addresses himself here is not embodied explicitly by the composition of 12-tone music per se (despite his provocative title, both Schoenberg and Webern emerge unscathed), but instead by those fetishistic neo-positivist systems for thinking about and creating music: a thinking, he contends, that has become characteristically aloof and removed from music’s social dimensions. In this sense, he opposes 12-tone music when it is rendered as a “system” instead of as a proliferating and diverse “poetics.” Like Fascism (and racism) this kind of thinking is marked by “the tendency to reduce live processes to immobile, labeled objects, the tendency to deal with formalities rather than substance.”³⁸ Although the philosophical sources from which Berio draws in this article include Enzensberger, Lévi-Strauss, Chomsky, and Adorno, his allegiances are not strictly to any of those thinkers. I turn instead to Deleuze and Guattari at this point as relevant contemporaries with an at least partially shared set of concerns. Berio’s opposition to those subtler forms of fascism that ground reductive forms of musical thinking (remarked upon not only in the “Meditation” but also revisited in the Norton Lectures) is identifiable with Deleuze and Guattari’s own opposition to what they call “state thinking.” We must therefore consider the terms under which signification becomes a self-organizing power structure, or

³⁵ Luciano Berio, “Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse” *Christian Science Monitor* (July 15, 1968), p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

regime, in representational modes of thinking (state thinking) and also consider in what individual manners Berio and Deleuze each seek to oppose those modes of thinking.

The first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is usually regarded as a direct response to the events of the student/worker uprisings in Paris, May 1968, but the implications and extensions of Deleuze and Guattari's revolutionary work needn't be restricted solely to that historical context. *Anti-Oedipus* unrelentingly assails fascism writ both large and small and proffers a new way of thinking and being that seeks to move beyond the codes of Marxism, psychoanalysis and semiotics; in other words, the codes within which Deleuze and Guattari initially proceed. Nomadic thought is developed in this volume and the later *Mille Plateaux* as a radical means for fresh thinking—thinking that opposes the stasis of state thinking with movement.³⁹ It will be considered here as tool for moving beyond the regime of signs, beyond that stratum which Berio warns passionately against in 1968, and within which (by 1993) he finds analysis to have become firmly sedimented.

In attempting to argue for the relevance of schizoanalysis to Berio's music, I have begun by freely drawing lines from Berio's own thoughts on the poetics of analysis and then tracing these outward and through characteristics of Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought. This trajectory begins with Berio's self-analyzing composer: a subject-less desiring machine that seeks connectivity and the flow of intensities. This composer-as-desiring-machine approaches the work of another composer armed only with an impersonal style that acts upon that second composer by forgetting, through a stuttering that experiments with the *langue* of that other composer and then becomes imperceptible. When this trajectory rebounds from Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought back toward Berio's own embrace of poesis as analysis (and vice versa), it traces these questions: how does a composer become imperceptible? And, how does a music become minoritarian?

Transforming the Past: Notes toward a Minor Musical Literature

Berio's poetics of analysis proceed from his long-held conviction that "the best way to analyze and comment on a piece is to do something, using materials from that piece. The most profitable commentary on a symphony or an opera has always

³⁹ In Brian Massumi's words "Nomad thought does not lodge itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference. It does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept and being; it replaces restrictive analogy with a conductivity that knows no bounds. The concepts it creates do not merely reflect the eternal form of a legislating subject, but are defined by a communicable force in relation to which their subject, to the extent that they can be said to have one, is only secondary. Rather than reflecting the world, they are immersed in a changing state of things" (Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 5).

been another symphony or another opera.”⁴⁰ Rather than simply strengthening the underlying terms of intertextuality in a literary sense and deepening the set of relationships that obtain within that canon, I believe that Berio actually holds a much more radical and transformational aspiration for the poetic/analytic act of “remembering the future,” by creating rhizomatically out of the past. Transcription or translation—both woefully inadequate terms for the process we are going to describe here—are but one means by which Berio attempted throughout his career to bridge the gap between the aesthetic or analytic domain and the poetic. Although there are instances in which Berio literally transcribed earlier works much in the manner of an arranger—sometimes even famously “completing” the original work—I am more concerned here to reconsider another less literal process of translation. Repeatedly during his career, Berio turned toward earlier extant works and then moved outward from them by creating new musical trajectories from within the given materials of those pieces. He cast these trajectories in decidedly different and more open terms than those framed by the signifying features of the original, essentially liberating them from that regime of signs and bringing them into a new and asignifying transformational state.⁴¹ In many instances the work that was acted upon, which was opened outward into a *becoming other* or a *becoming music*, was in fact Berio’s own earlier work. His famous series of solo virtuosic pieces titled as *Sequenzas* were frequently later opened outward to become new works that were then usually (but not always) titled as *Chemins*. Some of the *Chemins* were even then opened outward again, into yet other instances of *becoming music*, so that still another *Chemins* resulted. For example, *Chemins II*, which transforms the material of *Sequenza VI* into a new work for chamber orchestra with viola soloist, was itself subsequently transformed into both *Chemins II b/c* and finally *Chemins III* for large orchestra with soloists.⁴² While these two parallel series of works are the most famous and obvious examples of self-translation in Berio’s catalog, they certainly do not represent the only instances in which Berio analyzed and transformed his own work. Paul Roberts, Berio’s long-time assistant, reports

⁴⁰ Berio, *Two Interviews*, p. 107.

⁴¹ Berio’s own contention is that “transformational procedures always signify something” but that “expressive meaning” may not result (see note 1, above). In a literal sense, of course, any transformation forges a signified/signifier link between the transformed material and the result of that transformation. Berio’s point seems to be that such a link may very well yield no new encoding as a result, and it is precisely this possibly that opens that transformation up to an asignifying state of becoming. I have thus read the “problem” Berio refers to here as a problem for signification and expressive meaning, and not as a problem with the idea of transformation itself.

⁴² My own examination of Berio’s compositional sketches for *Chemins III* has revealed the very material nature of this transformation: Berio taped a copy of his pencil score for *Chemins II*, piece by piece onto the much larger sheets that he then sketched *Chemins III* on. The composition of *Chemins III* then seems to have proceeded by rhizomatic growth outward from the details of the taped-up score.

that this additive process of composing onto and outward from earlier work was a consistent and critical feature of Berio's compositional aesthetics, and that virtually all of his larger concerto-like works proceeded in some way from such additive transformations of earlier pieces.⁴³

While the relationship of works such as the *Sequenzas* to their corresponding *Chemins* may be deemed "additive" in a certain strictly material sense, I would like to also position such techniques, along with those other related means by which Berio transcribed or translated the works of other composers, within a more general aesthetic of transformation that transcends the merely additive. In his interviews with documentarian Reuven Hecker, Berio speaks at length about his own compositional predilections and asserts a disdain for strictly additive processes, within which determinant musical structures grow forth from some initial cell-like material. Instead, Berio describes his own inclination toward what he calls a "subtractive" process, wherein a comprehensive totality must first be partially perceived so that something new may then be "extracted" from it. More important than either the terms of addition or subtraction themselves, is the constant and unpredictable dialogue between the two dimensions that supplies a chaotic and adventurous passage back and forth.⁴⁴ In the context of this discussion, Berio explicitly revisits that often remarked upon musical analogy supplied by Goethe's *Urpflanze* in which the leaf, the stem, the root, and so on each develops from a single basic shape in accordance with its required function. This metaphor is the basis for a long-standing ideology of musical organicism, particularly Schoenberg's, that Berio now effectively reinterprets from the perspective of transformation and becoming, rather than from the traditional teleological perspective of developing identity based on specific functions. Berio's own take on the *Urpflanze* is in fact the image of a rhizome. It may also be considered here as the mechanism by which Berio enters into a dialogue with the past, in some instances with his own past and in others with the inherited past that he freely reconceived as needed. The partially perceived totality in such cases represents the swarm of relationships between musical texts, especially those material musical relationships that proliferate endlessly and from which he then extracts something new to use. It may be instructive at this point to consider Berio's own revisions to musical organicism as an ideology based in transformational reciprocity and to view it from the related perspective of Deleuze's own concept of counterpoint in nature. This concept is developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* as an extension to the biosemiotics of Jakob von Uexküll:

The spider's web contains "a very subtle portrait of the fly," which serves as its counterpoint ... This is not a teleological conception but a melodic one in

⁴³ Paul Roberts, "The Chemins Series" in Janet Halfyard (ed.), *Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis*, Ashgate, 2007, p. 117.

⁴⁴ Reuven Hecker, *Luciano Berio*, Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2002, from approximately 48:45 on the DVD version.

which we no longer know what is art and what nature (“natural technique”). There is counterpoint whenever melody arises as a “motif” within another melody, as in the marriage of bumblebee and snapdragon. These relationships of counterpoint join planes together, form compounds of sensations and blocs, and determine becomings.⁴⁵

By understanding “counterpoint” not as a fixed binary relationship between two closed identities, but rather as a reciprocal and asignifying transformation that results in new becomings, we may think similarly of Berio’s transformations of earlier material as capturing or extracting some motif from within that earlier material, and then forming new blocks of sensation by joining or connecting the individual planes of consistency. The process of becoming that results is open, extensible, and ongoing—it is not simply a momentary reconfiguration to another static relational formation. While such transformations are a critical feature of Berio’s creative process in general, the mode of “active forgetting” that he applied when transforming the work of an earlier composer can now be situated more specifically.

Throughout *Mille Plateaux*, Deleuze and Guattari develop their ideas about difference and alterity by distinguishing majoritarian and minoritarian positions. These distinctions should not be misunderstood as simple binary oppositions, but instead as developing independent and revolutionary positions of becoming within the various milieus that the authors consider. The majoritarian position is not defined as the condition that is most common. It is not literally the majority. Instead, it is simply the dominant regime whose framing terms are established as normative, and which therefore present “the other” as specified by the terms already given in relation to the majoritarian position. Minoritarian positions are those that are always in a state of becoming (becoming woman, become child, becoming animal, etc.) and which thereby elude the framing identity of the majoritarian position by riding its own difference. Once a minoritarian position ceases to reiterate the difference of becoming and instead locates in its own immobile identity, it too is majoritarian. Minoritarian positions are thus always political in nature because they work from the inside out of a majoritarian position and *deframe* them.

Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of a minor literature, primarily in their book about Kafka. While the appropriation of their work on literature may seem an unusual point of departure, in considering Berio’s own practice of transcription and transformation in music (especially when one considers the extent to which they discuss music itself elsewhere), Berio’s way of thinking and talking about music is so often explicitly literary in its conception that the comparison here will be instructive on several counts. Berio’s position that music is always configured as a network of relationships between texts may now be recast into terms that specifically avoid recourse to sign systems and their corresponding regimes. This is desirable because transformation in Deleuzian terms invokes pre-signifying

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 185.

affects that a musician works with as intensities rather than as signifying chains. From Berio's perspective, musical texts had in the past signified in relatively specific (if complex) ways. These were at least partly determined by a loose correspondence to the basic representational aspect of language which was in turn framed by imposed comprehensive systems of thought such as the *quadrivium*, or a common rhetorical musical practice. The canons that were thus established, including those normative and reductive theories that were developed for the analysis and description of those canons, including even those aloof neo-positivist systems of composing and thinking that emerged in the absence of these, may all properly be regarded as constructing a majoritarian position to which Berio's poetics of transformation respond from the inside out. In this sense, Berio forgets the past by transforming the blocks of sensation that are extracted from it. He takes the language of the past and makes it stutter by using it in an intensive and asignifying manner. He is not sentimental about the musical past, but instead his relationship to it is both open and pragmatically dynamic.

If a minor literature always deterritorializes a major language, and Deleuze and Guattari insist that it does, then we may begin to position Berio's transformation of the music of the past in similar terms. For a particularly vivid example we may consider the famous third movement of Berio's *Sinfonia*, "In ruhig fliessender Bewegung," which not only transforms the corresponding scherzo of Mahler's second symphony, but also interpolates a great deal of quoted material from a variety of other earlier music of that same era. These quotes are mostly drawn from works written in the decades surrounding the composition of Mahler's own "Resurrection Symphony." The concept of a major language must necessarily be modified or supplanted here by the more musically germane concept of a major repertoire. The deterritorialized repertoire in *Sinfonia* then is (early) Modernism: a repertoire which at one time was also minoritarian, but which had ceased its own becoming-music by the time of Berio's eventual encounter with it in 1945. Modernism had, by that point, become a major repertoire. Because Italy's fascist regime had denied the young Berio any direct engagement with that tradition during his formative years, his eventual connection to it was not only accompanied by the emotions of anger toward Fascism that he describes in "Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse," but also necessarily by a critical distance from that same denied tradition. Modernism is the equivalent of the major language that is not Berio's own and from within which he may therefore construct a minor practice. This distance is the first requirement for all minor literatures. Minor literatures are not lesser literatures; they are the source of all revolutionary movement in literature. In the example of Kafka, Prague German is the deterritorialized language, a language that is "impossible" for a Czech Jew. Kafka enters into the major language from the inside and then pushes past its threshold to a purely intensive usage that is removed from its own signifying features. In Deleuze and Guattari's words, Kafka chose to "oppose a purely intensive use of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it, "to arrive at a perfect and unformed

expression, a materially intense expression.”⁴⁶ In the passage that directly follows this description, Deleuze and Guattari offer Beckett and Joyce as further examples of other minor practices (now by Irish writers) who are in relation to still different major languages. The identification of these two writers as creators of a minor literature is especially important since the works of both Beckett and Joyce had already been co-opted by Berio as precedents for his own experiments with the deterritorialization of language. The electronic composition *Thema – Omaggio a Joyce* continues the deterritorialization of English that Joyce himself had begun in *Sirens*. Fragments from Beckett’s *The Unnamable* form the bulk of the text that is used by Berio in “In ruhig fliessender Bewegung,” where it is also joined by occasional quotes from other sources, including Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Berio’s own essay “Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse.” Berio’s *Sinfonia* is not part of a minor literature just because it uses literary sources, which themselves form a minor literature, but rather because it uses its own musical sources (Mahler, Schoenberg, Debussy, Ravel, etc.) to exceed an expressive threshold in the same ways that Kafka, Joyce, and Beckett crossed their respective literary thresholds within the major languages that they were distanced from.

Many analyses of the third movement of *Sinfonia* proceed by describing the piece as a collage, despite the fact that Berio himself has dismissed the use of that term in relation to this work.⁴⁷ The term “collage” will also be considered generally unsatisfactory for our purposes here. Even when the term “collage” is not underdetermined with respect to its actual compositional use, it seems to be persistently predicated upon the signifying features of the material that is quoted: a semantic meaning is either randomly generated by the mere juxtaposition of signifying materials that are now presented in an aleatoric manner, or else meaning is synthesized from the striated structure into which the quotes are carefully situated. In both instances the signifying features of the quoted material appear to remain intact, and at most a slight reterritorialization results. No threshold has thus been crossed, but the material has been resituated with respect to what Deleuze would generally refer to as “Sense.” In a minor literature, the revolutionary quality of “becoming intense” requires a basic elimination of Sense, not a mere reorientation of the deterritorialized language’s relationship to it.

The third requirement of a minor literature is that the concept of a “master” now be replaced by a “collective enunciation,” that is itself a utopian precursor to a revolution yet to come. It is the elimination of a subject and the creation of a *becoming world*. In music no less than in literature, this is the calling into being of a people yet to come, of an Earth yet to come, through the mechanism of an audience yet to come. Before their work on Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari had previously examined the question of how a collective subjectivity can be created in music. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they examined the “absence of a people” within

⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Berio, *Two Interviews*, pp. 106–107.

those earlier majoritarian repertoires, like Romanticism, where instead a singular heroic subjectivity is primarily created. The creation of the *One-Crowd* through the collective subjectivity of the *Dividual* is a much later musical development that they tie explicitly to orchestration, with a specific relationship to the voice. In works such as Berio's *Coro*, *Opera*, and even *Sinfonia*, we find examples of what Deleuze and Guattari would call the "multiple-cry" of the people.⁴⁸ In *Coro*, Berio builds a virtual musical city in which instruments and voices are paired in a chorus of folk texts, which become transformed into a network by working directly with their intensities, and by acting machinically upon their material techniques at different speeds. Of *Coro*, Berio says:

Sometimes the speed of enunciation of the text also varies independently of the general articulation. *Coro* is therefore also an anthology of different modes of "setting to music," hence to be listened to as an "open project" in the sense that it could continue to generate ever different situations and relations. It is like the plan for an imaginary city which is realized on different levels, which produces, assembles and unifies different things and persons, revealing their collective and individual characters, their distance, their relationships and conflicts within real and ideal borders.⁴⁹

Berio's choice of the "imaginary city" as a metaphor here also calls to mind the familiar text *Invisible Cities* that was written shortly before *Coro* by his close friend and colleague Italo Calvino. While Calvino's own meditation on signification, memory, and desire is also an appropriate model for comparison to Berio's *Coro*, and a likely source for Berio's own metaphorical use of the "imaginary city," the production of a new subjectivity through a collective enunciation is the more explicit concern of Deleuze and Guattari. We will therefore pursue Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *assemblage* one last time here, in relation to this collective enunciation. The production of a new subjectivity, of a collective subjectivity in particular, is also a critical element of Berio's transformational aesthetic. In "Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse," he declares that "music can't lower the cost of bread, is incapable of stopping (or starting for that matter) wars, cannot eradicate slums or injustice," and in *Sinfonia* he echoes those same words as a collective cry. What music can do, Berio tells us, is invent and elaborate "patterns of expectation," to create the "modes of conditioning the perception of a willing listener." In short, music can call into being a new audience through its collective enunciation.⁵⁰ It is a social assemblage of desire, and it is in this crucial sense that Berio's poetics engage directly with the political, social, and cultural dimensions of music by developing a minor subjectivity. An assemblage,

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 341–2.

⁴⁹ Luciano Berio, Liner Notes to *Luciano Berio – Coro*, Deutsche Grammophon 2531270, 1980.

⁵⁰ Luciano Berio, "Meditation on a Twelve-Tone Horse," p. 8.

as Deleuze and Guattari tell us, always has two sides: the collective assemblage of enunciation and the machinic assemblage of desire.⁵¹ If the composer is a desiring machine, seeking connections and flows of intensity with the music of the past and with the virtual music of the future, then it is this desire itself that keeps creating the machine, and that never stops creating the machine. The machine is always becoming another machine. “There is no machinic assemblage that is not a social assemblage of desire, no social assemblage of desire that is not a collective assemblage of enunciation.”⁵² The desiring machine of the composer then, does not produce a statement that ever refers back to a subject or even to two subjects: one “who emits the statement,” and the other “about which the statement would be emitted.”⁵³ It produces instead a collective enunciation that is a polyphony of subjectivities—subjectivities of the virtual that can wash away the regimes of the past and the present in a violent forgetting. Thus, while music cannot stop or start the wars or feed the hungry, it can create the virtual subjectivity of the yet to come, to condition the willing listener and so create the opening for a revolution yet to come. For Berio, as for Deleuze and Guattari, then, the forgetting of the past is the becoming intense of the present, and it is the opening to the proliferating virtual of the future.

⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 81.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Chapter 12

Line, Surface, Speed: Nomadic Features of Melody

Ildar Khannanov

Line

Music theorists like to refer to melodic line. Emphasis is often placed on its unique character and essential influence on other parameters of musical structure. This understandable desire is realized, however, in a disappointingly common strategy of segmenting, measuring, and straightening, fixed on a preexistent, static Cartesian plane. For example, Schenker's *Umlinie* is, in fact, a straight line. All other lines are compared to this segmented straight line and their diversity is reduced to nothing. The line is placed on a flat plane (the score) controlled by two Cartesian axes, vertical and horizontal. The straight segmented line is furnished with a temporal aspect—after all, music is a temporal art. This aspect, however, is measured and counted in the same fashion, as a number of segments per unit of time. Initially, we might speculate that the ideas of line, surface, and speed came out of a genuine musical intuition. Yet they have been reconceptualized according to the ordinary logocentric strategies of Western thought since Socrates, for whom even democracy was a subject of segmentation, measuring and counting. Descartes in his *Discours de la méthode, deuxième partie*, suggested that if one encounters a phenomenon more complex than he or she can handle, it is advisable to cut it into smaller pieces which are possible to understand and to put them together with the hope that their local meanings will, miraculously, create a larger meaning by mere summation.¹

If this strategy is chosen, I argue that real musical line, its surface and speed, will escape conceptualization. There are no lines in music in the Euclidian sense of a line. There are no surfaces as manifestations of underlying depths. Even speed in music is not what is understood by speed in classical physics (distance in time).

¹ “The second, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution. The third, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend little by little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.” René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode suivi des Méditations*, Bibliothèques, 2000, p. 46. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

Music has a distinct nomadic quality and a weak sedentary tendency. Music is like the nomadic war machine: it follows the lines of flight and travels across the channels of communication at the speeds immeasurable in units. I propose to experiment with *nomadic* notions of musical line, surface, and speed in order to understand the nomadic aspects of *sedentary* music which escape traditional analyses.

The Bashkirian Nomads and their Music

I begin with an example of nomadic music. A remote descendant of the Tatar-Mongol war machine, the contemporary Bashkirian Republic occupies a large space between Volga River and the Southern Ural Mountains. Most of its territory is plains, limited in the East by the rolling hills of the Urals—an ancient mountain system. This mountainous region is rich in metal ores, it is *l'espace trué* which connects itself to the nomadic space and *conjugates* with the sedentary. Even nowadays, the West is related to Bashkiria via metallurgy and mining.

Bashkirs speak a Turkic-related language; they prefer raising livestock to agriculture. Most of the Bashkirian soil had not been ploughed until the so-called Stolypin's reform of the mid-1910s. One very dramatic Bashkirian prolong song is called "Myzha" (Bashkirian for "fence or dividing stripe between lots"). It mourns not the fallen hero, but the historical fact of measuring and fencing the territory of Bashkiria by the agricultural reforms of Pyotr Arkadievich Stolypin. Bashkirs, like many other groups of the same nomadic tradition, revere the surface of the steppes. The reluctance with which they plant seeds and their rejection of railroads manifest a fundamental disagreement with sedentary culture.

The territory of nomads is separated from the West not by a real line (borderline) but by a climatic factor. According to Lev Gumilev, a famous Russian scholar of nomadic cultures, "the line that separates the nomads from the western sedentary nations passes through the atmosphere; it is an isotherm of January."² The temperatures on the western side of this line are mild and the climate is humid in winter, the result of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. The temperatures on the eastern side of this line are frigid in the winter and the climate is harsh and dry. According to Gumilev, all the attempts of nomads to cross this line have led to military and political failures. This aspect of nomadic life, specificity of their perception of space, is reflected in nomadic music.

There is no notation system in the Bashkirian musical tradition. This may lead to a hasty conclusion about its "primitive" or "developing" character. However, Bashkirs use different methods of orienting themselves to music. It has nothing to do with either segmentation or counting, with either comparisons with preexistent form or predetermined content. In fact, it is atmospheric, or, in terms of Deleuze, haecceic.

² Lev Gumilev, *Ritmy Yevrasii, Epokhi i Tsvivilizatsii* [Rhythms of Eurasia, Epochs and Civilizations], Ekpros, 1993, p. 67.

Since Bashkirian nomads never ploughed the earth, never built channels, walls, roads, or fortifications, their land remained a smooth surface. What made them move around was the availability of grass for their livestock. Gumilev mentions a hundred-years-long drought which took up the whole third century BC and turned the middle part of the Tatar-Mongol territory into the Gobi desert. This climatic change resulted in separation of Tartars into White, Black and Blue. While sedentary nations divided their smaller territories into minuscule segments and used roads to travel, the nomads followed their horses and the paths which had more grass. Travelling this way was much faster than following winding and slow, poorly paved, roads. That is why the sedentary people perceived the nomads as capable of unseen speeds. Nomadic territory had no geometric points, except for stone *babas*. Even Bashkirian traditional weddings took place on horseback. In this situation it would be hard to create the blueprints of the territory, or topographical maps. Instead of blueprints and topographical maps, the nomads used *topological* maps and a schematic memory of direction, intensity, and movement. The topological map does not have exact measurements; it only points at the approximate positions and directional relationship of objects.

Although the land is indivisible, Bashkirs are divided into seven tribes (Burjan, Usergan, etc.), each having a rich history and a tribal sign, the brand. The representatives of each of these seven tribes live also in Siberia, Crimea, Moldova, and in Middle Asian republics of the former USSR. Therefore, contemporary geopolitical segmentation of the map does not characterize the real placement of ethnic groups in the area from Mongolia to Moldova. This is an example of what Deleuze calls double-deterritorialization,³ in which the territorial divisions of the State are doubled by the lineage distribution of power, which has proved on many occasions to be a force to be reckoned with.

All these geographic distinctions between the sedentary and the nomadic inner divisions of topos are directly related to music. It is futile to look for the precise notation of pitch and rhythm in Bashkirian music. There are no bar lines, metric divisions, pitch structures, or any kinds of taxonomy offering itself to a blueprint. Russian adherence to neumatic notation (*Znamennyi* chant, which was used until the late seventeenth century) can be explained by nomadic intuitions of Russian chanters. I argue that because the *land* is indivisible, the *musical flow* cannot be parsed into countable and measurable units.

Bashkirian prolonged song and the tradition of playing the Bashkirian folk instrument the *kurai* (a relative of the *nai*) is considered by many to be the gem of folk music of the former Soviet Union. An example of a prolonged song (*ozon kui*) in Bashkirian tradition is “Hairullakai”⁴ recorded in 1992 in Dyoma

³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Editions de Minuit, 1980, , pp. 487–8.

⁴ This song has been recorded by Dr. Fanusa Nadrshina and Dr. Ildar Khannanov and transcribed by Dr. Khannanov in the summer of 1992. Quoted from *Bashkort Folk Songs, Songs-Legends*, Kitap, 1997, p. 222.

River region, in the western part of the Bashkirian Republic (see Example 12.1). The song displays a continuous line. Its shape follows the shallow curves, related to the pneumatic beginning, of an elongated sigh, and, ultimately, the shape of the hills. This unity of landscape, *spiritus (pneuma)* and affect forms the poetic space of a Bashkirian prolonged song. The five-line notation in this example cannot and does not reflect the nuances of Bashkirian music. The notational strategy here is based upon a reasonable compromise of the details for the clarity of the musical idea. It is especially problematic in relation to rhythm. In fact, the rhythm here is not based upon intermittent sequence of strong and weak beats. For example, the first phrase presents a wave-like shape of strong, stronger, even stronger, the strongest; slightly less strong, even less strong, weaker, weak and the weakest beats. It is based not upon even-odd distinction but a gradual variation of intensity. This principle of rhythmic organization defies the Western system of meter. In general, a simplified geometry of five-line notation does not express the main idea of the song, in which the mother prepares her son Hairullakai for a long journey away from the Smaller Motherland. She compares her son to a nightingale, whose melodies rise and fall like the mountains of the Motherland; the mother is asking her son to sing like a nightingale. The onomatopoeic features of the melody accompany the idea that the voice of the young man sounds like silver and gold. The foreigners will ask him to sell his horse for 150, but he will never lose his dignity and never part with it.

Example 12.1 Bashkirian prolonged song “Hairullakai,” verse 1

Al - ty - y - ny hy - na mi - ka - - - ne -

ai byl do - nya Ya - ne - yeme ke - ye - ke Hay - ru -

lla - kai byl - by - ly bu - lyp hai - ra

ale Ke - mesh ke - na mi - - -

ken shul by - y - ly do - ny - ya - - -

The melodic shapes here mix several dimensions: climbing up and galloping down the hills, sighing of the mother, soaring of the nightingale trills, and the sweetness of life in the Motherland. Thus, several distinct points of divergence from sedentary melody⁵ follow:

1. The melody is distinctly “linear.” Its pentatonic mode is followed without leaps (assuming the motion of a contiguous third in the scale is not considered a leap).
2. The thirds can be considered as larger steps (larger than a sedentary large step) or as holes in the holed space of metallurgy.
3. There are no bar lines, only tension created around the anticipated and real accents. Segmentation of the smooth line is problematic. The line itself, as a curve controlled by an eye (as discussed by Deleuze in *Le Pli*⁶) is not the issue; controlled motion is not the part of this tradition.
4. Melodic accents are very much like the stone monuments in the steppes; that is, places to feed the horses, the stops, arrests in motion.
5. The shape of the melody imitates the rolling hills. The melody is running while standing still. The speed of melody is not measured by succession of steps/beats.
6. The Bashkirian *kurai* player is a horseman and a poet. He plays and sings while riding. He makes the *kurai* out of a dried plant without getting off his horse. There is a coupling of music and the war machine.
7. Most of the prolonged songs of Bashkirs (*ozon kui*) are performed in the steppes by shepherds or (in older times) by warriors. The songs address the mountains and the steppes and are directed at them. The problem of subjectivity (both phenomenological and post-phenomenological) applies and plays out very interestingly in this situation. This music is not created for human listeners (subjects), but for the mountains, steppes, and the Sky (*Kook*, the ultimate God of Bashkirs in the pre-Muslim religion of Tengri *Kook*, literally “the blue of the skies,” absolutely non-anthropomorphic!)
8. The texts of most of the songs play out the theme of imprisonment and the attempt to escape. But there is no place where the hero can escape. The place to which he intends to go is called Smaller Motherland, but, as explained earlier, the Motherland is not so much a topographical location as it is a series of intensive relationships. For the tribe which covers in its yearly itinerary the one-sixth of the dry land, the *topos* as origin is problematic.
9. The *kurai* is not “played.” The horseman “smokes” *kurai*. *Kurai tartabuz*—we are playing [smoking] *kurai*. The conception of the corporeal manifestation of the pneumatic is an interesting aspect of Bashkirian music.

⁵ By “sedentary melody” I mean melodies composed for Western notation, and the relationship of that notation to sedentary (non-nomadic) civilization.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque*, Éditions de Minuit, 1988.

When compared with the sedentary, the geometry of nomadic melody proves to play a constitutive role. In other words, any sedentary tradition has a nomadic history and so can be described from the nomadic point of view. Geometry in this case originates within a nomadic tradition and becomes refined and transformed in the sedentary. Deleuze follows Husserl's "Origins of Geometry" and circumscribes this difference.⁷ Thus the difference between sedentary geometry (which operates with both perceivable things and their ideal essences) and nomadic proto-geometry is that the latter is essentially inexact.⁸ The circle is a fixed ideal essence (it is organic), but the round is a vague and fluent essence, which distinguishes not only the circle, but all other objects round in shape. The round is a dynamic model for any fixed ideality, the same way that nomadic melody can be the model for sedentary melody. It is important that Deleuze describes the sedentary geometric object (the circle), a fixed ideal essence, as "organic." This puts the recent discussion of "organicity" in music theory (beginning with Schenker's understanding of the "organic") into a new perspective. Paradoxically, in a Deleuzian context, the category of organic is unusable for describing music. The vague essence of music, for Deleuze and Guattari, is the body without the organs, while organism in this sense is the mechanical unification, the analog of the State Apparatus.⁹ Deleuze and Guattari add that vague geometry appeals not to the thingness of things, but to their corporeality. Deleuze's use of this term, as well as its remote equivalents used in late phenomenology, has to be separated from the everyday understanding of the body. Deleuzian corporeality is, if anything, not the body as is commonly understood. Nor it is an onto-theological concept. And perhaps nowhere else does this notion of corporeality manifest itself better than in nomadic traditions. There is much less distinction between "my body" and the nature, landscape, and acoustic environment among Bashkirs than there is among typical Western individuals. A very popular prolonged song "Salimakai" compares the difficulty of climbing up the hills of the Irandek mountain range with the curved eyebrows of the girl named Salimakai. The curve which makes one breathless exists on the landscape, on the body of a beautiful girl, and in the melody. This problem is, of course, much more general than art criticism or music theory typically addresses. Deleuze's appeal

⁷ "Husserl talks about a proto-geometry which addresses the essences of vague morphologies, that is, vagabond and nomadic ... The science which he describes, the proto-geometry, will itself be vagabond: it will be neither exact as the sensible things, nor exact as the ideal essences, but inexact and therefore rigorous ("inexact by essence and not by chance)." (Translation is mine-I.Kh.) Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, p. 454.

⁸ "The circle is a fixed ideal essence, but the round shape is a vague and flowing essence which distinguishes itself in some way in a circle as well as in other round things (a vase, a wheel, the Sun)." (Translation is mine-I.Kh.) *Ibid.*, p. 455.

⁹ When music theorists engage the apparatus of transformation and deformations (as, for example, in Darcy and Hepokoski's understanding of the sonata allegro form) the results are always more impressive than those which consider only fixed idealities.

to nomadic traditions, to Eurasian nomads in particular, is explained by a broader necessity to find an alternative model for subjectivity.

Surface, Steppes, and the Politics of Exception

The line as discussed above, together with the ideas of nomadic music theory, may sound as an unwanted digression from the musical-theoretical tradition *comme il faut*. Indeed, there is a sense of lawlessness, of “everything goes” in this alternative theory, as, indeed, there is in the texts of Deleuze and Guattari in general. In comparison with nomadic theory, the sedentary one seems to be based upon strict rules: it models the apparent laws (conformities) of music and nature. But nomadic theory harvests the rules *and* the exceptions – which, I argue, places it in closer contact with the sonorous reality of music.

Nomadic tradition exists on the borderline with lawlessness. It is impossible to separate politics from music in this case. Exactly as the very existence of a nomadic tribe depends on endless motion and change of positions, the politics of the nomadic is in constant need of exception. Philosopher Carl Schmitt tried to reconcile the traditionally sedentary political life of Germany with its unstable condition in the 1930s. George Schwab formulated it in the preface to his book on Schmitt’s theory *The Challenge of the Exception*: “Schmitt was greatly concerned with the problem of the state of exception [which is] any type of severe economic or political disturbance that requires the application of extraordinary measures, and for which the constitution makes provisions. Legally it usually means the temporary, partial or total suspension of ordinary and constitutional laws by the president to restore order.”¹⁰ We may add that such a condition manifests itself as temporary for any sedentary culture; it proves to be permanent for the nomadic. In this sense, Bashkirian music lacks notation, segmentation, and social milieu for proper perceptive mechanisms, including aesthetic evaluation by listeners. The wild tunes sound in the dark hours over the endless flat of the steppes. Nobody listens. A *kurai* player is free to pour out his suffering directly on the surface of the steppes. Only a slight echo from the hills responds to the player.

In his 1938 text *Der Begriff des Politischen* Carl Schmitt distinguishes between *staatlich* and *politisch*. While the State is commonly defined as “a political status of a territorially delimited and organized people,”¹¹ the definition of the political itself is seldom found in the literature. Schmitt notes that it is always given in opposition to other well-defined terms, such as “religiöse, kulturell, wirtschaftlich, rechtlich, wissenschaftlich.”¹² As a result of his analysis, Schmitt suggests an understanding of the political as the relationship between the Friend and Fiend.

¹⁰ George Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936*, Greenwood Press, 1989, p. 7.

¹¹ Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (1932), Duncker & Humblot, 1963, p. 20.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

In this sense, his *staatlich/politich* pair maps quite well onto the state apparatus and machine of war suggested by Deleuze and Guattari in *Mille Plateaux*. To support this distinction, Schmitt refers in his preface, written in 1963, to his other works, such as “Nomos der Erde” (1953) and mentions his idea of the revolutionary and the partisan. A partisan becomes a model of the political for Schmitt in his article “Geschpräch über der Partisanen” (1963) and a book on the same topic published in 1975. Not surprisingly, Bashkirs are famous for their participation in wars as partisans. Bashkirian partisans made a significant contribution to a victory over Napoleon in 1812; Gumilev mentions that that was the last time the bow and arrow was used in European warfare. Then, Bashkirs and other Eurasian partisans participated in the siege of Lepzig. Bashkirs were a notable force in all the wars of the Russian Empire and the USSR. It would not be a far-fetched suggestion that the Bashkirian nomadic tradition enhances Schmitt’s understanding of the political. We can thus reformulate his definition, using his statement quoted earlier: if the State is the reflection of the political in the organization of the ethnos on a limited territory, then the political itself is the relationship of friend/enemy which identifies the ethnos regardless of territory. The political is the State without, or independent of, territory. More precisely, it is independent of segmentation, lining up, parceling, mapping, and other strategies provided by sedentary culture. The fact that the territory does not determine politics of friend/foe is suggested by another idea of Schmitt, that of the difference between the politics of land and sea.¹³ In this distinction one can clearly see the future idea of the segmented-striated versus the smooth surface of Deleuze and Guattari. Paul Virilio’s work on dromoscopy, speed and politics is also anticipated by Schmitt’s reasoning. Indeed, the Bashkirian steppe functions more like a sea, rather than land in a sedentary understanding.

In this respect, it is important to mention that although the Bashkirian musical tradition does not provide terms related to what Western theorists call “structure” (it is hard to find words in Bashkirian language responsible for “strong beat,” “musical interval,” “harmonic progression,” “voice leading,” “formal structure,” etc.), the idea of the law in music and its relationship to the law of the people or the law of the land, are clearly defined. The word *kui*, which is a part of the term “prolonged song” (*ozon kui*) is an interesting analogue of the Russian musical term *lad*. Both words refer to the attachment of two or more parts: Russian *priladid’* means “to attach tightly,” Bashkirian *kuilap kuyurga* means “to put together solidly, tightly” and *kuilasha* means “the dress fits well.” Bashkirian language carries another word which is used commonly to describe something melodic, beautiful, lawful, natural, and eternal: *mong*. This term is given an emphasis in descriptions of music, culture and people. The adjective *monglu* may mean several things, such as tight-knit, harmonious, agreeable. In fact, it is the same word as ancient Greek *νόμος* with the rotation of m-n, common among Indo-European languages.

¹³ Carl Schmitt, “Das Meer gegen das Land,” *Staat, Großraum, Nomos: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1916–1969*, Dunker & Humblot, 1995, pp. 395–401.

Very similar to Greek, Bashkirian language gives a polysemic interpretation to this word. In Greek *nomos* means the law as well as the tune (or mode). In Bashkirian it is possible to say *mongly kui*, which means “lawful melody.” This law, *nomos*, is different from the sedentary *taxis*, which is a type of rational regulation. While *taxis* is the law based upon measurement, calculation and evaluation, *nomos* is the product of a less formal process, that of history, tradition, custom. *Nomos* is, in fact, a rhythmicization, resonance; a quasi-acoustic agreement or a product of random combination. For example, Archytas suggested three types of tetrachords, but these types remain random and asystematic, and there is a suspicion that there were more species than just three. No one knows where Archytas learned about these tetrachords and how one can formally justify their existence. *Nomos* is what Greeks did by tradition, by custom. Schmitt suggests the *nomos* of land as a separate category of the political. He does not limit the land to the territory of a country and suggests even a larger space, the *Großraum*, as the scene of the political. Even the last line, the global one which separates the western hemisphere, receives a critical reading as “eine Linie der Selbstisolierung.”¹⁴

The term *nomos* requires a musical explanation. It is a song (Greek: *nom*; Bashkirian: *mong*; English: *song!*). As such, its role is primarily political. Strangely enough, in sedentary cultures it has been overshadowed by the functions of mimesis and ekphrasis. These are important in the work of constituting the subject (in Cartesian and Kantian terms), but what precedes them is the constitution of *nomos* by means of a song. I would not go as far as to say that this can be a birdsong, although Deleuze seems to have no problem with such transition. The problem of relating a nomad to an animal is another topic, large enough for a separate book. Here, we have to admit, however, that territorializing songs describe *nomos* quite well. There is one step from *nomos* to *phone*, from the socializing song of a bird to the voice of a socialized subject. What is important, though, is the difference between *taxis* (parsing of land into lots, parsing of sentences into syntactic units, parsing of people into classes) and *nomos* as a purely unifying power of rhythmicization. Nomadic melody does not follow the law of *taxis*; in this sense it is lawless and in need of exception. It does, however, constitute *nomos* and as such presents a precondition to any possible law.

Speed, Time, Land, Sea

It has been already mentioned that metric-rhythmic organization in Bashkirian song is characterized by gradual changes and fluctuations of intensity. The category of speed is also very important for nomadic traditions in general and for nomadic music in particular. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the sedentary understanding of speed as passing of a number of segments of space in a unit of

¹⁴ Carl Schmitt, “Die letzte globale Linie,” *Staat, Großraum, Nomos: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1916–1969*. Dunker & Humblot, 1995, p. 444.

time would be hard to reconcile with both nomadic qualities of space (smooth space, smooth surface) and nomadic perceptions of time. We have discussed the specific features of nomadic space. Nomadic time is a more difficult topic. There is a legendary anecdote: when the Chinese Emperor wanted to punish the northern nomads, he would refuse to give them the calendar. Without the calendar, the nomads were left in complete timelessness. Since they were moving through the vast spaces of Eurasia neither the seasonal changes nor agricultural periods were available to them as the sources of reference for time-keeping. In this situation, the perception of time had to be purely phenomenological. The sounds of *kurai* seem to create this simulacrum of the flow of time. It is done not by the beats (which are irregular), but by the intensity of vibrato. Both the sound of *kurai* and the low vocal drone which is commonly added to it have their independent amplitudes and frequencies of vibrato. The speed of musical expression is, therefore, manifested by these changes, by acceleration and deceleration. In this context, without the outer reference points, the idea of time must be studied from within perception. Edmund Husserl's famous *Texte zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtsein* (1893–1917) proposes such a view of time. In particular, he discusses the category of tone (*Ton*) in relationship to other singularities, such as place (*Ort*) and color (*Farbe*). He writes: “The momentary phases of perception constantly ‘sink’; they continuously experience modifications ... Any time-object sinks back into time, i.e. newly presented content constantly modifies itself. It also presents every time around something different which constantly changes the view.”¹⁵ This ever-changing view of the moments of time, without any link to an external source, characterizes nomadic time-perception. A nomad galloping in the steppes does not feel the speed in the sense of crossing a metric distance at a certain rate. Rather, he experiences speed as a quality of time, or pure intensity. The moments of time (time objects) sink under his horse into the past. You might say he is absolutely motionless and only the view/conception (*Auffassung*) moves about him. It is like watching a movie. The speed becomes absolute, it is both very high and equals zero. Succession (*Sukzession*) becomes perception (*Wahrnehmung*); perception becomes succession. Husserl's subchapter 28 is called “Die Identität der Tones, des Zeitobjekts und jeder Phase des Zeitobjekts im Flusse der Zeitbewußtsein”—the identity of tones, time objects and each phase of the time objects in the flux of time consciousness. This is how time can be treated in the absence of outer reference points. Husserl does not deny objective time (*Kontinuität*) and identification of time objects, but he places them outside the inner time consciousness. He explains it using the example of melody. This reference to music in Husserl is unique. It is evidence of the link between deep structures of consciousness and musical temporality. “If we repeat c, g, and e three times, first time it will be perception, second time—reproduction, and the third time—another reproduction. I notice that the reproduction refers back to the primary memory, as if I went through the

¹⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Texte zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtsein* (1893–1917), Felix Meiner Verlag, 1985, p. 80.

line of the tune with my eyes three times, and this is exactly the consciousness of identity of meaning.”¹⁶ This particular kind of double repetition, however, is not available for a nomad, since he is galloping along a smooth surface. There are no repetitions, no roads to come back around to, no points of *Erinnerung* (recollection). Repetition in a Deleuzian sense is quite different from Husserl: it is irreducible to a correlation of signifier with the signified. Consequently, nomadic melody does not double itself with the row of signifieds. It is, in fact, meaningless in terms of semantic meanings. Instead, it repeats itself automatically.

According to Husserl, the tone as such and the color as such lack temporal distribution (“fehlt die zeitliche Verteilung”). Melody, on the other hand, is a temporal expansion (“Eine Melodie ist zeitlich ausgedehnt.”)¹⁷

Husserl refuses to accept the meaning of a melody as its end phase, or its last note. He suggests that melody in its temporality does not depend and cannot be reduced to it. In this context I should mention Meinong’s book entitled *Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Wahrnehmung* (On the Objects of Higher Order and their Inner Perception), which Husserl critiques harshly. It is one of many attempts to apply hierarchical and organic understanding to the phenomena of inner perception, very similar to Schenker’s intuitions concerning organic structure. This approach proved to be a dead end, however. Both Husserl and Heidegger considered it to be onto-teleological error. Instead, Husserl suggests that we possess an inner unity, an unbroken and non-segmental continuity which is present in the form of consciousness of the flux.¹⁸

Even more so, the meaning of melody as its end phase is inapplicable to nomadic music. If anything, nomadic melody does not have a goal note, it does not move toward a large-scale cadence. Most Bashkirian melodies end by dispersing and vanishing into the vastness (Russian *prostor*), into the interval between darkness and light (German *Lichtung*). The time of Bashkirian melody is based upon the objects which sink into the past. The speed of Bashkirian melody is unmeasured. Thus the time is united with its endlessness (in Husserlian terms, “Einheit der Zeit und ihre Unendlichkeit”¹⁹). For all these reasons Husserl’s conception of inner time-consciousness, as a unique continuum, a unity of expectation, memory and perception, well describes nomadic music. One can add to this argument the evidence from the series of works by Paul Virilio concerning speed and politics. These works, as well as other geopolitical studies, including Schmitt’s book on land and sea, neatly elaborate the phenomenological ideas of Husserl and Heidegger. Virilio summarizes the geopolitical history of mankind as the “struggle between two types of humanity”: one populating the land, the other the oceans. The “right to

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁸ “We have a continuous consciousness of unity and it gives us (as a substrate) unbroken and genuine endless unity, identified in temporal continuum, the continuous time-flow” (Translation is mine-I.Kh.) Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

sea,” it seems, is a particularly Western idea, just as, later, the “right to air space.”²⁰ We would add that for the nomads, the “right to steppes” is an analogue of the two above. Virilio suggests that: “The fleet ... creates a new democratic idea: the notion of displacement without destination in space and time.”²¹ Of course, this applies to both nomadic migrations and to nomadic melodies. They are, indeed, displacements without destination in space and time. Virilio brings back time into the equation: “It seems more interesting to consider the chronometric aspect of this [naval] empire that displaces its violence in the invisibility of the nautical glacis, a floating nation that resembles that other Time machine, History. In fact, victory (decision in the world without reference-point) or accident of the fleet ... requires that one be situated, if nowhere on Earth, then at least in Time—in other words, in planetary mechanics ... Mastery over the sea demands that over Time ...”²²

This, however, does not apply to nomads. The difficulties nomadic cultures have had with calculating time are well known, as mentioned earlier. In 1988, two *kurai* players from Bashkiria were invited to Moscow for a recording session. They did not speak a word of Russian, and had never been in a large city. Yet they knew where their hotel was, how to get to Red Square and when to come to their appointments. They oriented themselves by the position of the Sun and by their inner time-consciousness. For them the Megapolis was not a sedentary taxonomy of segments and squares, but a perfect analog of the desert, the steppe, or the sea. For aeons, the nomadic caravans had to rely upon time in the absence of spatial reference points on a plane. Yet the time available to a nomad is not related to the mastery of the clockwork, but to an inner time-consciousness.

Musical Distance, Size and Direction in Nomadic and Sedentary Traditions

In Example 12.1, the notation suggests certain proportionality of distances and adjacency of pitches. It is easy to make a distinction between the main intervallic categories in a pentatonic context. It may seem that we deal here with a step and a leap. Experts in the sedentary art of tuning would easily calculate the proportions of the intervals involved in ratios of string length or in ratios of frequencies. The ultimate question remains, however, whether the leaps are perceived as leaps by Bashkirian musicians, *kurai* players, singers, and listeners. Although the indigenous terminology is well developed, there are no genuine terms for step and leap in the Bashkirian language. In comparison with the Western system of half and whole steps, the Bashkirian system is augmented. Since there is no half-step, Bashkirian melody goes by larger intervals, which reflects the difference between sedentary (static) and nomadic (constantly moving) cultures. Using Deleuzian

²⁰ Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics: An Essay in Dromology*, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

metaphors, the larger steps (m3s) are the holes on the surface, like those on the fringes of nomadic land. The function of the larger step is also related to speed and acceleration. Wider intervals, since there is more room to accelerate, allow for an increase in speed, especially when going up. In fact, the speed in the steppes can be perceived only as acceleration or deceleration, by the changes in intensity. In Example 12.1, a sudden acceleration occurs on the way down in m. 4. It is followed by an even more sudden slowing down, as if the singer has a lapse in attention. In general, there is no such category as “constant speed” in the steppes and on the high sea. So, in comparison with, say, Gregorian chant, in which the speed is carefully controlled, in Bashkirian prolonged song it is constantly changing. Thus, as in the beginning of “Hairullakai,” there is a m3 repeated in order to gain energy and a M2 that follows. This creates curved lines. The interaction between time and intervals is such that certain intervals are always taken at the “wrong,” unexpected time, and at the expected time the “wrong,” unexpected intervals are taken. The art of singing Bashkirian folk songs is based on this deception strategy, just like the movement of nomadic troops in the steppes. The third agency which adds to the strategy of avoidance is the direction. Again, there are no indigenous terms in Bashkirian language for “high” and “low” notes. In fact, there are no “notes” (in a sense of *puncta*). Direction of melody is not controlled by the correlative pairs of reference points. High voice (*asu taush*—shrieking, bitter sound) and low voice (*kalun taush*—thick sound) characterize music in a non-technical way. If one would want to apply directional terms in the Bashkirian language, the words that come naturally to mind are *borolup barurga* (to turn around), *eilenderep kujyrga* (to flip over). In other words, these are motions on a two-dimensional plane unmeasured and unrelated to special reference points.

Contrary to the treatment of distance, size, and direction in a nomadic musical culture, measuring distances among scale steps seems to preoccupy contemporary Western music theory more than any other aspect of music. In both Schenkerian and Fortean doctrines, distance determines everything, including the final aesthetic value, the “Meisterwerk in der Musik.” If voices in a four-part progression move using the smallest intervals, thus reaching the condition of parsimony, the quality of harmony is considered superior. The linear aspect of harmony, its mysterious connection to “counterpoint” in Schenker, has the ultimate priority over any other possible aspects of music. The very idea of background structure in Schenkerian theory is based upon the category of adjacency. The evaluation of distances in both Schenkerian and Fortean theories goes as follows: m2 (1) is the smallest, M7 (11) is the largest, with all the rest filling in the distances in between.

However, in reality, contrary to postulates of theory and akin to nomadic perception, the distances between notes in Western music vary significantly. The most outstanding melodies have both stepwise motion and leaps. These leaps are mechanically dismissed by Schenker (they are reduced to “structural notes” as chord skips). However, their role in forming melody is too important to simply disregard their presence. Therefore, there must be a separate method of measuring the leaps. In addition to melodic presentation, leaps are often coordinated with

the triadic structure of chords. So, there are two kinds of leaps: purely melodic (for example, a leap from a chord tone to a non-chord tone, or a leap between two non-chord tones) and harmonic (chord skip). This may lead to an assumption that leaps are harmonic in nature. (Later on, I will suggest that melodic scale-steps are also harmonic and their linearity is deceiving.)

In order to measure leaps, one must abstain from measuring distances between two note heads on a five-line staff. This habitual procedure does not consider the 25-centuries-long development of music theory and notation systems in Europe. The five-line notation is a relatively new method. In a neumatic system, as well as in letter-based notation of Greek music theory, the distances measured in half-step increments are not as obvious as in five-line notation. What is more evident in Greek theory is that the distance between two tones is defined by ratios. The simpler in proportion, the closer the tones are. Of course, the simplest proportion is 1 to 2. This provides the mathematical basis to consider the octave to be the smallest interval. Indeed, acoustically the closeness of tones at the octave is self-evident. The much later acoustic view, which includes not only a comparison of fundamentals, but of all the spectra of harmonic and partials for each particular noise, enhances this argument. In other words, what we hear is different from what we see on a five-line staff. Real sizes of intervals go as follows: P8 is the smallest; m2 is the largest. All the rest of the simple intervals do not fit into gradually increasing space between these two. Rather, each interval has its own size, specific to its position on the topological map.

This seemingly strange logic of intervals describes music beyond Logos, music as anti-Logos. Alice in Wonderland becomes smaller by growing bigger.²³ Deleuzian metaphor, again, corresponds with real musical distances.

The very possibility of translation of aural information into visual is the unexplainable capacity of the mind. How these translations from one environment into another take place is a mystery for both cognitive science and philosophy. However, the results of translation can be evaluated from different standpoints. On the one hand, our ability to translate the aural information into visual is adaptive and, as such, quite useful. The most commonly quoted example is the escape from a predator, during which an animal uses hearing as backward-looking radar, while its vision is used to navigate the path of escape. In this case, the properly visual orientation allows for navigation of the path of escape, while the path of the predator is placed on an internal quasi-visual map of the terrain; the latter is the result of translation of aural signals into visual spatial representation. Needless to say, in this case the translation of aural signals into visual is vitally important. On the other hand, philosophers of the twentieth century have noticed just how detrimental for our understanding the overuse of visual metaphors is. This handy tool has been applied not only in the situation of a predator and a prey, but in most noble discussions of being, time, eternity, and nature; in other words, in classical discourse of metaphysics. And although since Aristotle the study of metaphysics

²³ Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens*, Éditions de Minuit, 1969.

has been placed outside the world of tangible objects and real facts, nevertheless philosophers continued to visualize its aspects. This is in a nutshell the critique of Being as presence developed in the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Deleuze, and Derrida. Music fits very well into the description of this unfortunate state of philosophy, in which transcendental qualities have been converted into visual metaphors of space and time.

Nomadic Features of Chopin's Music

The separation of nomadic from sedentary music is too simplistic a strategy. It is not the goal of this study. A more fruitful idea would be to see the nomadic element as a constituting power (in a Husserlian sense) for any music, nomadic, transitory, or sedentary. In the last segment of this chapter, I will consider the nomadic features of harmonic progressions in music of Frédéric Chopin.

The chromatic linear progressions in Chopin's oeuvre, such as descending lines in his first Mazurka, Op. 6 No. 1 in F# minor, in his last Mazurka, Op. 68 No. 4 in F minor, and in his Prelude, Op. 28 No. 4, and ascending lines in the Codas of the Ballades, Op. 23 in G minor and Op. 38 in F major are beloved by theorists, especially by those of the Schenkerian tradition. For the latter, they present strong cases of prolongation. In quite passionate language, these theorists express scorn toward the older generation of *Funktionstheorie* supporters. The point they are making is serious: the chords between the initial tonic and the last tonic should not be given functional definitions because they are linear combinations or contrapuntal sonorities. This idea to disregard the chords inside the pair T-T is the main postulate of Schenkerian theory. Yet, if one would still try to analyze each chord in terms of tonal-harmonic function, the result will be far from any rational explanation, let alone fitting the syntactic postulates of *Funktionstheorie*. Consider Chopin's Ballade No. 2, Op. 38, measures 183–185 in Example 12.2.

In Example 12.2, Ballade No. 2 in F major, everything goes according to the syntactic rules, until measure 185. The chords follow each other in strict agreement with voice-leading grammar and tonal-functional syntax. Some abrupt modulations are present; they remain within the text-book rules, including the enharmonic modulations via the diminished 7th chord. All this ends, however, at the resolution point in m. 185. Here, a simple cadential progression of $ii \frac{6}{5} - V^7$ lurches into a Fr^+6 . This would have been more or less normal if the next chord was the dominant. Oscillations, quickly touching the predominant chord between two strong dominants seem to be OK, at least from a Schenkerian point of view. However, the $Fr+6$ remains in the air; the next chord begins a chromatic ascending sequence.

Here we should take time to ponder the meaning of these events. The chords between the dominant in m. 185 and the next dominant in m. 192 are not just "contrapuntal sonorities." They cannot be reduced to the "foreground." In these chords Chopin breaks the law of sedentary music and leaves the closed

Example 12.2 Frédéric Chopin, Ballade No. 2, Op. 38, mm. 183–185

a: $ii^{\#6}_5$ V^7 Fr^{+6}

Time flow:



space. His strategy has something to do with affecting musical temporality and directionality.

Music does not exist in a preexisting time. Rather, it constitutes time. It has dynamic means to do so. Musical temporality occurs as the result of inner power of functions to create tension. The French augmented sixth chord has its place in the syntax of the normal temporal flow. It *must* precede the dominant. In our case it does the opposite: it follows the dominant. While this does not change much on paper and on a Schenkerian graph, in real musical space it wreaks havoc. All the forces of chaos are unleashed. The power of reverse functionality is such that the flow of time (and space) changes its direction. In fact, the musical time in m. 185 of Chopin's Ballade No. 2 flows backward.

At this moment, there is a break in the fabric of time, a Derridean *coupure*. This *is* the line of flight. It is not a line as such, but the attempt to escape from linearity. This is not a linear contrapuntal sonority: rather the rejection of any linearity and iconoclastic struggle with time itself.

Example 12.3—Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 68 No. 4 in F minor—presents an even more sophisticated temporal strategy. Here, music does not try to reverse the flow of time. Instead, it attempts, quite successfully, to leave the time line altogether.

Harmony constantly juts out from the line, in a paradigmatic fashion. The first two measures seem to establish a very comfortable situation, harmony of home-like ambience, the i^6 to V^7/V . Nothing predicts the break, which happens on the outtake of a phrase, on the last beat of measure 2. That chord may still be considered syntactically safe and sound, as V^7/V with the lowered fifth. The strong beat of the next measure, however, introduces this same chord (in its absence on the strong beat!) together with the B_b in the melody as the Fr^{+6} in the key of C_b major. It can be also perceived as a V^7 tritone substitution in F major. However, on the second beat of this same measure we hear an instance of the Tristan chord

Example 12.3 Frédéric Chopin, Mazurka, Op. 68 No. 4, mm. 1–8

The musical score shows two systems of music. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. The piano part consists of chords, and the melody includes trills. Below the score are boxes containing chord symbols and a diagram of the harmonic flow.

Chord symbols for the first system:

- f: i^6
- $V7/V$ $-^b5$
- cb : Fr^{+6} V^7
- Bb : Gr^{+6} $ii^{#4}_3$ $V^7 -^b5$
- A: Fr^{+6} $vii^{#4}_2$ V^7

Chord symbols for the second system:

- (A^b : $vii^{#4}_2$)
- f: $vii^{#7}$ iv^4_4 V^9 i - $add6$

The diagram illustrates the harmonic flow over time. A horizontal dashed line represents the progression of time, starting at a dynamic marking 'f' on the left and ending at 'f' on the right. Dotted arrows branch off from this line to various chords: 'V' (upward), 'cb' (downward), 'B \flat ' (downward), 'A' (upward), and '(A \flat)' (downward). A final dotted arrow points from the '(A \flat)' chord back up to the 'f' at the end of the time flow.

(a half-diminished supertonic seventh chord) in B \flat minor (or major). On the strong beat of the fourth measure we hear the V^7 of B \flat minor. Since it appears on the strong beat, we lose the track of the tension-resolution pairs. The next chord is the V^7 of B \flat minor with a lowered fifth, or, as it becomes clear in the fourth measure, the Fr^{+6} , which then flows into a $vii^{#4}_2$ and V^7 in A minor. In measure 6, though, the next

transformation turns the previous chord into a Fr^{+6} which leads to vii^{04}_2 in A_b major, but that lead is never realized. Instead, this vii^{04}_2 is reinterpreted as vii^{07} of F minor and the progression unwillingly returns to F minor. It is important to notice that these harmonic digressions are happening across the metric lines and in random relationship with motivic structure. On the surface, one can hear a descending sequence of very simple melodic patterns. However, they are harmonized in a most dramatic, unconventional way.

These recalculations of functional meanings and vectors of chords are happening with a speed unseen in sedentary music. The speed of reorientation completely disorients the listener. It is the nomadic war machine in action. The transformations are happening not once in a measure, not once on a beat, but several times on the same chord. In general, these progressions are far from being peaceful unfoldings or “organic” tree-like outgrowths of a Schenkerian type. These are the lines of flight in their ultimate realizations. Everything written on speed of nomadic transitions by Schmitt, Gumilev, Deleuze, and Virilio applies here.

In comparison with Bashkirian prolonged song from Example 12.1, these progressions violate the surface. The Bashkirian nomadic linearity is based upon rolling at the highest speeds over the surface, along a temporal horizon. Chopin’s strategy is that of a metallurgist, a miner who drills the surface of the steppes. In addition to Bashkirian transversality and limitless speed, Chopin offers another dimension to the lines of flight. Deleuze calls the mines “the paths of flight.”²⁴

In comparison with Mongols, who still live in the traditional nomadic world and who bury their dead not under the surface of Earth but on the top, covered with stones, Chopin’s nomadic strategy brings his music closer to the most dangerous event in the nomadic tradition. He punctures the Earth, the surface of the mode, with the metal tools, chrome and iron. Deleuze calls miners and artists “itinerant and ambulant” nomads. He also finds the right words for the composer’s affinity with miners and metallurgists.²⁵

The holes in the ground which Chopin digs out so gracefully and effortlessly lead to the transcendental. For Chopin, these unrealized resolutions to C_b major, to B_b minor and to A major, while he travelled from tonic to tonic in F minor, present the unrealizable possibilities; the probability of the possible in Kantian terms. The only difficulty with the transcendental in Kant is that there are no trains circulating between the real and the transcendental. It was impossible to organize such traffic by means of classical metaphysics. Heidegger, Deleuze and Derrida applied all their efforts on proving that it was impossible. The field of the transcendental can

²⁴ “Toute mine est une ligne de fuite.” Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, p. 513.

²⁵ “If metallurgy exists in an essential relationship with music, it is so not because of the noise of the forgery, but because there is the tendency which unites both arts, the tendency to create, beyond the separate forms, the value of the continuous development of the form, and beyond of the variable materials the continuous variation of the material: the extended chromaticism carries both music and metallurgy, a blacksmith-the-musician is the first “transformer.” (Translation is mine-I.Kh). Ibid., p. 512.

be entered only by force and the entry is irreversible, as in Kaffka's "Report to Academia." The field of the transcendental connects directly only to the field of the immanence, and never to the real. Chopin has learned how to sense that field in the immediacy of his harmonic intuition. In Mazurka, Op. 6 No. 1 he reacts on the unrealizable impulses of an adolescent love: the image of Mlle la Comtesse Plater incites the cascade of sighs and gossamer visions of unachievable goals. In the last Mazurka, these are the same unrealizable and untraceable directions as those he had when he was 16 years old, but now they are entangled in the labyrinths of *les temps perdu*.

It is important to acknowledge that, for a Mongol nowadays, to break the surface of the Earth is a more horrifying event than his own death. In the Bashkirian epic poem *Zayatulak*, the legend attributes heroic deeds of this hero to the times when "the Earth stood cracked open" (*Yer yarylghan waktu*). Only an epic hero, such as *Zayatulak*, could have travelled to that place. Apparently, Chopin's psyche called him to escape through the same route to see death itself. He has done it many times, from the first Mazurka to the last, the one which never ends.

The purpose of writing this chapter was quite rhizomatic: it may look like the author pursued many goals at the same time and had his hands in many pots at once. It seems, however, that the reason for this is that Deleuze and Guattari offered more than their generation was capable of digesting and even today their ideas overwhelm the channels of perception. For example, the question of nomadic strategy as a constituting power for sedentary methods proves fruitful in a number of applications. The significance of this strategy is caused not solely by the curiosity toward the unknown cultures. The dramatic breakthrough is made possible by Deleuzian philosophical interpretations when the category of the nomadic is applied to the mainstream postulates and tenets of sedentary traditions and leads to rethinking of the basic assumptions of music theory.

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