Lendl Barcelos—Anethics of Aural Ambiguity

David Cecchetto—Hyperstitutional Algorithms, capital and sounding art

Eleni Ikoniadou—Abstract Audio

Charlie Blake & Isabella Van Elferen—The Return of the Überthing: Sonic Spectrality, Affective Engineering & Temporal Paradox

Joey Ryken—Asymmetrical warfare in Sound, Magic and Humour: Psycho-sonic parody, slap-stick, neuroaesthetics, and supra-sensory chicanery

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Lendl Barcelos—Anethics of Aural Ambiguity

“The law is the first fiction, and no less the law.” — Paul Mann

“the oral hang-ups change//a concern for listening” — bpNichol

A play of utterance lends polyvalence.

As a code of conduct, aural law dictates a rule that codifies, restricts and affords specific modes of behaviour. Anything outside the habits sedimented by aural tradition—the as-yet-unknown and/or prohibited—becomes unsound, and anyone that risks transgression fails to hear the prophecy of the law. Unofficial prescriptions condition how we integrate the past, orient to the future and compose in the present via rumoured customs. A circumscribed ethics, aural law is a limiting model of aurality: the liminal space of audition between the listener and unanticipated sound is mapped by deterministic epistemologies so that one is able to prepare for sounds to come. Such an orientation alienates the listening subject from unchartable contingencies, lending him or her a false sense of security by allowing for a feigned mastery of the environment; since the future can be determined, nothing can be outside this listener's horizon. Within this
teleological model, sounds are made redundant and, as a result, all possible (sonic) futures are annihilated (via genre-specific listening, earworms, audio branding, etc.). Yet, this law is fiction.

Radical openness is a(n anethical) disposition that allows one to acknowledge participation in a larger unconscious economy—that is principally beyond one’s control—constituted by manifold interconnections that delimit what is possible and what is not. To put it another way, if aural tradition shapes our conception of sound, can we develop other ways to think of and engage within the field of sound leveraging the hidden propensities of existing audio interfaces—biological and/or technical—to induce as-yet-unknown experiences? Radical openness develops theoretical models of audition. Such alternative conceptions operate through improvisation and experimentation: proceeding into the unknown, eliciting continuous renegotiation so as to attune oneself to various ‘economies of frequency’ and the potential (un)sound outside of them.

David Cecchetto—Hyperstitional Algorithms, capital and sounding art

It is not only the sheer volume of data that is notable today, but also the changes in how we encounter this data that come with this volume. What makes big data "big DATA" is not so much the amount of information present but the fact that it increasingly comes to be understood as information post factum through networked digital algorithms; in this, the concept of "information" today bears as much resemblance to late capitalism as it does to its provenance in the Shannon-Weaver model. As a result of this algorithmic mediation, the basic but essential problem of agency is intensified: how does one act responsibly when one’s actions are implicated in nonlinear networks? Or, more pointedly, how does one conjure alternate forms of responsibility from the fatal—in both senses—grasp of capitalism writ large?

This paper examines the ways that sounding art might address this bind. Specifically, I share certain of my own aural experiments to argue that aurality-informed approaches to digital technologies can reveal certain perceptual biases that underwrite these technologies, opening the ground for meaningful innovation in their use, design, and dissemination. In particular, the paper considers how creative practices can test the extent to which it is possible to use sound to develop alternative affective sensitivities to algorithmically abstracted data, sensitivities that might reveal hyperstitious agential possibilities within contemporary capital (particularly insofar as the latter is almost today unthinkable outside of the network form).

Eleni Ikoniadou—Abstract Audio
In the age of computational media, sound and its subcultures can offer more dynamic ways of accounting for bodies, movements, and events. Particularly in the last decade, theorists and practitioners have programmed, performed, manipulated, and philosophized the rhythms of sound media technologies. This emerging audio culture echoes an attempt to resist the tyranny of ocularcentrism – the Western prioritization of vision – and the logic of representation inherited from the Platonic and Cartesian privileging of the mind. While the ‘sonic turn’ enables the consideration of new models of thought, and their belated reluctant acceptance by the arts and the humanities, this paper argues that there is room for stretching the debate further.

The paper explores the traces and potentialities prompted by the sonic but pointing to contingent forces outside the periphery of sound. In particular it proposes that, under the guise of the sonic, unidentified algorithmic computational events allow an engagement with the virtual dimension of audio. It asks what rhythm-analytical methods and modalities might help us tap into this capacity of the sonic to act as harbinger of the event yet to come. The proposition is that a notion of rhythm detached from the idea of counting and regularity can unlock affective potential enveloping experimental digital media artworks. The paper then attempts to engineer an abstract level for the audio event, coexisting with but not exhausted by what is actually heard, sensed, and consciously perceived.

PANEL 2—Saturday June 28, 16:45-18:15 (“Room 3”)

Charlie Blake & Isabella Van Elferen—The Return of the Überthing: Sonic Spectrality, Affective Engineering & Temporal Paradox

The notion of the time paradox has been rehearsed consistently in film and fiction since the year 1895, in which the Lumiere Brothers first exhibited cinematic time reversal in The Destruction of a Wall in Paris and HG Wells published his seminal novella, The Time Machine. Less common is the investigation of the time paradox in relation to music and sound. Founded variously in Leipzig 1742, Vienna 1921, Clarksdale, Mississippi 1936, Darmstadt 1958, Tokyo 1981, Detroit 1985, and then Utrecht and London in 2008, one of the defining characteristics of the SMASL Research Unit has been its hyperstitional investigation of paraphonic structures embedded in sonic media and recording technologies. Through this methodology SMASL was able to explore the virtual temporal loops enabling sonic and affective communications from the distant future not only infiltrating the experience of music in our past and present, but also initiating its creation and composition. In this presentation we will file our most up to date report on virtual temporal loops in sonic media, on the spectralism of noise as medium and matter, on daemonotechnics, and on the use of hyperstitional technology as a paradoxical engine of affect and expression.
Joey Ryken—Asymmetrical warfare in Sound, Magic and Humour: Psycho-sonic parody, slap-stick, neuroaesthetics, and supra-sensory chicanery

This paper is an attempt to formulate some provocations and polemics regarding the interstices between sonic, magic and comic practices, and how these might form a reified counter-cultural assemblage. Tracing some performative and situational links between these, I am interested in exploring how disorientations and heightening of sense might be deployed as a modelling of insurgent knowledge production / exchange. Relative to ever-present methods of psycho-sensual manipulations—from the disorientations of shopping malls to sonic tortures at Guantanamo Bay—I am interested in questioning whether tropes of banality and playfulness might serve as distractive and discursive tactics, and how they might be accumulated into transcendent models of practice beyond clichés of prankster-ism.

Critically, this paper will ask: How can oppressive neuroaesthetic methods, materialities and phenomena—contingent to the (para)military entertainment complex—be re-appropriated, via some dreamy model of extra-sensorial hooliganism? How might practices of trance, invocation, and ceremonial ritual utilise existent and available technologies to shape conceptual platforms for “storm(ing) the reality studio” on street level? How might these platforms be formulated to organise concrete, transmittable instructions for radical embodiment (possession, telekinesis, zombie-invocation)? If this could be implemented with the ease and use and rabid adolescent bravado of the three-chord punk band, what outlandish cultural horizons might be imaginable?

eldritch Priest—Upstream Color; Downstream Habits

In his later writings Baudrillard talked of the impossible exchange of the world, of thought, of life as what establishes an ineliminable and radical uncertainty. Without an equivalent neither “the world” nor "life" nor "thought" can be verified—none can be reflected as true or real or meaningful, but instead must persist as systems or apparatus bent on the denial of their impossible exchange. But where Baudrillard focuses on contemporary culture’s elaborate prophylactic (simulated) system remaindered by an angst driven reality principle that refuses to recognize its own impossible exchange, the film maker Shane Carruth imagines a more catholic distribution of despair, confusion, and simulation. In his 2013 film Upstream Color, the existential angst of the impossible exchange is shown to circulate not only among us symbol-monger creatures. Worms, pigs, and orchids have their share of denial and uncertainty, too. In this talk I consider the figure of the parasite that features in Upstream Color as a pragmatic principle that has the dual and paradoxical function of spreading and occluding the impossible exchange. The parasite I propose then is a form of existential "noise" (Serres) whose passage between entities both operationalizes "pure experience" (James) and breaks it.