



**The Making Of  
The Making Of**

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**Mette Ingvarlsen**



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### **Extraits de « Théorie du son, pratique du son » (Sound theory, sound practice)**

*Steve Wurtzler*

Dans ce texte, Steve Wurtzler se penche sur le domaine de la culture pop contemporaine et les méthodes de production qui sont appliquées dans ce secteur. Il en ressort que la séparation entre l'événement « live » et le matériel « produit » n'est plus aussi nette. Dans la production musicale actuelle, l'original joue un rôle de plus en plus marginal dans la production et l'appréciation des produits marchands. Ce qui subsiste est l'aura, toujours aussi prestigieuse, du concert « live » qui semble n'être plus qu'une manière d'inciter à la vente des enregistrements « produits ».

### **Le moment du cri**

*Michel Chion*

Chion situe l'indicible dans le moment du cri : le moment où le sens se dissout et se transforme en affectivité dans la figure de l'actrice.

### **Carte sonore**

*Mette Ingvarsten et Peter Lenaerts*

### **Corps filmiques, affect et virtualité dans un monde d'expressions spectaculaires**

Interview avec *Mette Ingvarsten*

Dans ce film où l'artiste s'interviewe elle-même, Mette Ingvarsten passe en revue, à la fin de ses résidences, une série de notions centrales liées à sa recherche : effet et affect, l'inauthentique authentique, le corps filmique etc.

### **Compression de la voix (d'après la compression du corps de Bruce Nauman)**

### **Sentiment, émotion, affect**

*Eric Shouse*

Eric Shouse éclaircit la notion obscure d'« affect » : il parle d'une intensité qui est informe, pré-rationnelle et non structurée et éclaire sa thèse en distinguant l'affect du « sentiment » et de l'« émotion ». Dans son analyse, il fait référence à la psychologie comportementale et les troubles neurologiques et cite abondamment des extraits de *Parables of the Virtual* de Brian Massumi.

## **PART THREE: The format of material experimentation. Voice, affect and sound in performance and other media**

### Contemporary Popular Music-Copies Without Originals (excerpt)

*Steve Wurtzler*

#### **Contemporary Popular Music - Copies Without Originals**

Just as televised sports events have led to the perception that the live is a degraded version of the represented (thus inverting the hierarchical oppositions entailed in live recorded or event/ representation or play/replay or original/ copy), so too has a similar inscription of the recorded into the live characterized contemporary popular music concerts with important implications for the ideological work done by representational technologies and practices. Andrew Goodwin proposes three reasons why popular music audiences continue to attend live concerts: the “abstract visual pleasure of the spectacle,” the authentication of musical competence, and the opportunity to consume a star presence. The continued popularity of live concerts can also be seen to result from a representational crisis within popular music. As Théberge documents, during the 1960s and 1970s, the use of multi-track recording technology by popular music producers gradually shifted from the documentation of a studio performance to the construction of an illusory performance event. Studio looping, digital drum machines, and the use of technology such as the digital sampling music computer to encode, store, manipulate and reproduce sounds within almost limitless parameters have moved audio representation ever further from a notion of a preexisting original event. Contemporary popular music is characterized by “the increasing problem of distinguishing between originals and copies on the one hand, and between human and automated performance on the other” (Goodwin, 39). Dominant sound recording practices for popular music arguably might be seen as following a three-stage trajectory: firstly, recording conceived as the documentation of a preexisting event; secondly, recording conceived as the construction of an event; and thirdly, recording conceived as the dismantling of any sense of an original event and the creation instead of a copy for which no original exists.

The live concert is one practice through which a notion of a fully present original event is reintroduced into popular music. By acting out the production of sound in an event spatially co-present and temporally simultaneous with consumers, the concert re-inscribes a notion of a performance that exists prior to its audio representation, while the popular music industry capitalizes on an “aura” made commodifiable through the mass production of audio texts. However, the production of live popular music concerts is increasingly characterized by the simultaneous presence of “live” performance, audio playback of prerecorded material, and large screen video representations of onstage events. The practice of lip syncing at concerts has recently generated popular disdain. The “scandal” involves the discovery that recorded performances are presented as if they were live. The popular outrage is often rhetorically framed around notions of creativity and artistic integrity, but also at stake is the integrity, or rather the existence, of the live’s status as a fully present event. The disjunction between spatial co-presence and temporal anteriority reveals the artifice of representation and shatters the posited “unity” of the live event. The incorporation at contemporary popular music concerts of the “live” production of music, lip syncing to prerecorded sound, and large-screen video representations of the ongoing event poses a series of challenges to notions of the centered subject and the binary opposition, live/recorded. Such an “event” speaks of the fragmented, decentered subject privileged in discourses of postmodernism even as the collapsing of oppositions such as live/recorded or original/copy testifies to the “eclipse of the real” and other postmodernist tropes. The apparent collapsing of distinctions between live and recorded, and the difficulty of theorizing a subject effect for the popular music concert, result from the simultaneous presence of two, by definition, mutually exclusive categories: the live and the recorded. Even though the live concert struggles to reinstate a notion of the fully present original event in popular music, the copresence of the live and the recorded contribute to a potential crisis in our notions of a real that exists prior to representation.

The categories live and recorded can be usefully conceptualized in relation to their spectator/auditors (consumers). The live is characterized by the spatial copresence and temporal simultaneity of audience and posited event. The recorded is characterized by the event’s spatial absence and temporal anteriority. By separating the spatial and temporal parameters, the relationships can be depicted as follows:

	Spatial Co-presence	Spatial Absence	Temporal	
LIVE Simultaneity	(I)	(II)		-----
-----				
Temporal Anteriority	(III)	RECORDED	(IV)	

Some Associated Representational Technologies/Practices

Position I: Public address, vaudeville, theater, concert

Position II: Telephone, “live” radio, “live” television

Position III: Lip syncing, Diamondvision stadium replays

Position IV: Motion pictures, recorded radio and television

# THE SCREAMING POINT

*Michel Chion*

A woman is taking a shower. Someone rips open the shower curtain, waving a knife. Dramatic pause, then the woman screams her head off. We can easily recognize Hitchcock's *Psycho*, de Palma's *Blow Out*, and countless other horror films. Since the cinema first discovered women screaming, it has shown great skill in producing screams and stockpiling them for immediate and frequent deployment.

This is why we can say that the plot of de Palma's *Blow Out* is clearly rigged. It gives the viewer the mistaken impression that you can't find a good scream when you need one for a movie sequence like the one I've just described.

At the beginning of *Blow Out* we are in effect watching the classic scene, shot with a subjective camera, showing the stalker who enters a bathroom, pulls a knife, throws open the shower curtain to reveal the woman ... But the action stops there, for the scream that comes from the actress's mouth is a pathetic yelp. The lights go up in the screening room. It was a sex and violence movie, for which hero Jack (John Travolta) is supposed to provide the sound effects. The scream heard was what the actress herself produced during the take, and she wasn't cast for her terrific voice. It falls to Jack somehow to obtain a convincing scream to synch to the image. Meanwhile, the film in progress seems to stop at this point of suspense, before the knife's entry. That's how the plot of *Blow Out* begins.

Actually Jack promptly forgets about the problem as he leaves work. He walks into the park at night with his Nagra, to augment his sound library with some nature sounds, especially wind — not to find a scream. An accident he witnesses and whose sound he happens to record draws him into a politics gangsters intrigue. Getting involved despite some good advice to the contrary gives him the excuse to remain deaf to the appeals of his boss: “So when are you going to get me the scream?”

What is the flamboyant finale of *Blow Out* leading up to, cleverly arranged so that everything — the Liberty Bell celebration, the great peal of church bells, a magnificent fireworks display, and the characters themselves — converges on the moment the killer slits the throat of Jack's girlfriend Sally? What is this prodigious narrative machine directed toward — where the entire sky is afire — if not the scream of the woman stabbed? Jack gets a recording of this scream, since he had wired Sally, supposedly for protection, with a micro transmitter that allowed him to monitor and follow her.

This isn't Jack's first horrible mistake. In the past an investigator whom he had equipped similarly died because of him. Jack's unconscious has arranged once again for him to place Sally into a perilous position. The sole result is that he is enabled to record remotely from her mouth the scream he's been after (and which he “missed” with the investigator's death because of a technical difficulty).



in a conventionally right thinking film, the author would “hold on” to the scream in order to feed the emotion of his own story, as opposed to the story of the film within the—film. The honesty of de Palma’s film lies in the notion that on the contrary, Jack will take this scream to his satisfied mixer (“now, that’s a scream!”). This allows the film-within-the-film to be completed, after which *Blow Out* itself just ends too, as if this whole intrigue were only a monstrous parasitic outgrowth around a professional anecdote, a duty the hero is endlessly trying to discharge.

In truth this scream, about whose credibility the characters make such a fuss, is less important as an object. What’s more important is the point where it is placed in the story: it becomes a sort of ineffable black hole toward which there converges an entire fantastic, preposterous, extravagant mechanism — the celebration, the political crime, the sexual murder, and the whole film — all this made in order to be consumed and dissipated, in the unthinkable and instantaneity of this scream.

So let us define the screaming point in a cinematic narrative as something that generally gushes forth from the mouth of a woman, which by the way does not have to be heard, but above all above all must fall at an appointed spot, explode at a precise moment, at the crossroads of converging plot lines, at the end of an often convoluted trajectory, but calculated to give this point a maximum impact. The film functions like a Rube Goldberg cartoon mechanism full of pistons, chains and belts — a machine built to give birth to a scream.

I use the expression screaming point to emphasize that it’s not so much the sound quality of the scream that’s important, but its placement. And this place could be occupied by nothing, a blank, an absence. The screaming point is a point of the unthinkable inside the thought, of the indeterminate inside the spoken, of unrepresentability inside representation. It occupies a point in time, but has no duration within. It suspends the time of its possible duration; it’s a rip in the fabric of time. This scream embodies a fantasy of the auditory absolute, it is seen to saturate the soundtrack and deafen the listener. It might even be unheard by the screamer.

In films like *Psycho*, the original *King Kong*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Blow Out*, and part of *The Towering Inferno*, it’s amazing to consider the extravagant luxury of the means devoted to the screenplay and production mobilized in order for everything to be lost and spent in a woman’s scream. Nothing is spared in order to reach the screaming point. Twenty story gorillas are invented, a thousand foot tall building is set ablaze, deluges of fireworks, symphony orchestras, the most ingenious and sophisticated details of production ... For, in these films, at a certain moment, all disparate plot lines converge and break at this moment that quickly dissipates and passes, this moment of the woman’s scream. As in the monstrous social rite of potlatch, nothing is too elaborate or far out if it will lead to a successful scream.

Why a woman’s scream? Is this a phenomenon endemic to a cinema of sadists, who get off on the spectacle of a woman as prey to terror? Yes, but: we might also speculate that for men, the woman’s scream poses the question of the “back hole” of the female orgasm, which cannot be spoken nor thought. In the very films that are constructed upon this scream as the absolute in terror and pleasure, the scream is not strongly eroticized, despite the frequently sadistic nature of the situation; this would tend to thwart the male climax. What it embodies, rather, is an absolute, outside of language, time, the conscious subject.

Why can’t a man’s scream give expression to this absolute just as well? This is what Skolimowski’s aptly named film *The Shout* tries to do. The film prepares us for quite a while to hear an awe-ful magic

shout, the secret weapon of a sorcerer (or pseudo sorcerer) played by Alan Bates. This shout occurs finally toward the end of the film. The director yelled it himself and then subjected it to electronic manipulation.

It is impressive, all right, but simply in a different league than the screaming point. The gender emphasis is already built into the two terms in English for these worldless cries — we tend to call the woman's cry a scream, and the man's cry a shout. Skolimowski/Bates's cry is a shout of power, exercising a will, marking a territory, a structuring shout, anticipated. If the shout has something bestial to it, it's like the identification of the male with the totemic animal. The most famous example of this is Tarzan's call, fabricated in the 1930s from multiple animal cries; a phallic cry which the male uses to exhibit himself and proclaim his virility.

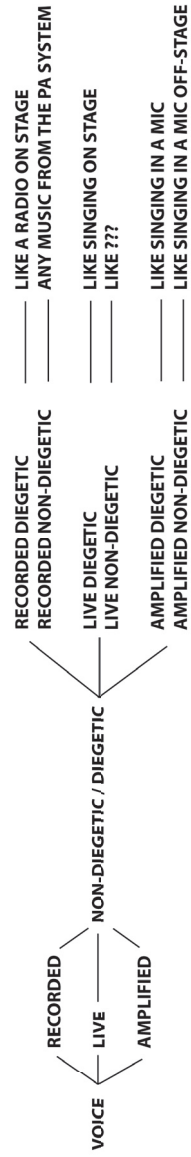
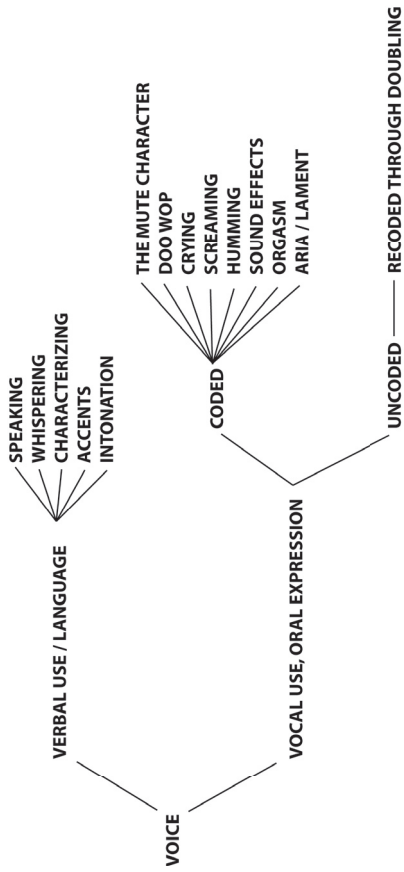
The woman's cry is rather more like the shout of a human subject of language in the face of death. The screaming point is of a properly human order. Perhaps Marguerite Duras has created the only exception, in having a man emit a scream that's neither a Tarzan's, nor a Beast's, nor a sorcerer's cry — the scream of the Vice Consul in *India Song* and in *Son Nom de Venise*.

The screaming point, in a male directed film, immediately poses the question of mastery, of the mastery of this scream.

The question of the means and power used to obtain the scream is posed outright in a famous scene in *King Kong* (1933). On a ship making its way toward Skull Island where the gorilla resides, a sadistic film director makes heroine Fay Wray try out some screams in a screen test, prepping her by describing the horror of the monstrous beast. Usually where a filmmaker constructs a good story full of complications in order to draw things out to a screaming point, he makes sure to show how the screaming point can escape the very person orchestrating it in the story; the character can only give himself the illusion of being Master. With Hitchcock, de Palma, or in *King Kong*, it is clear that the man is but the organizer of the spectacle, the producer of this extravaganza, but that the screaming point ultimately is beyond him, just as it is beyond the woman who issues it as the medium.

The man's shout delimits a territory, the woman's scream has to do with limitlessness. The scream gobbles up everything into itself — it is centripetal and fascinating — while the man's cry is centrifugal and structuring. The screaming point is where speech is suddenly extinct, a black hole, the exit of being.

All of cinema, this omnivorous and diverse art, is thrown into the operation of this mechanism, this strategy of obtaining a screaming point in which the insane mobilization of resources justifies and even loses itself.



# CINEMATIC BODIES, AFFECTS and VIRTUALITY IN A WORLD OF SPECTACULAR EXPRESSIONS

*Mette Ingvarsten*

## **Can you explain what you consider a cinematic body to be?**

Cinema functions through doubling, the doubling of reality, of narratives, of characters, of bodies, of image and sound. In those terms a cinematic body is a representational body – a body that fills a position in a respective narrative, but at the same time a specific position within the image. I also understand the cinematic body as a vehicle that can transfer sensations. A catalyst of expression which in certain cases manipulates the spectator and in other cases doesn't, depending on the genre of cinema we are considering. In any case the cinematic body produces an effect, change or influence on the spectator's body which is the mechanism I find particularly interesting.

## **Why?**

Because it operates on the level of recognition which in itself is uninteresting, but when what is recognized and what is physically sensed are no longer synchronous, something else happens. It is, for instance, when the editing of a film becomes more important than what is represented within a single shoot that such a shift can take place. One could probably think of other examples as well, but it has to do with shifting from a language-based understanding to a physical sensation-based transfer. From an effective to an affective mode of experience. What is in between the images, the gaps, the cuts and connections is what makes it possible for a movie to become about something else than what is represented. It's interesting to think about this in relation to how form and content are connected also in relation to theatre.

## **Could you maybe specify what you mean with a shift from effect to affect?**

First we probably need to define the words in order to detect their difference. It is clear that the two concepts are basically each other's opposite, though we can attempt to produce a relation. An effect is something which produces a change, something which is visible to the outside. In this sense it operates through language and what we can perceive as a change within recognition. The effective is the outcome of different elements working together to produce a result we in some sense already know how to experience. It is based on past experiences and an inherent knowledge of how a certain media functions, be it cinema, a concert, opera or theatre. Naturally this does not mean that new forms cannot emerge as a hybrid of these functions and still have an "effect".

Think about how in cinema “special effects” are exactly the hyper reality of an expression. It is the production of intensification and excess which induces the effect/change in perception.

**That indeed sounds like quite the opposite of affect?**

Yes, affect is something else. Affect is the not yet nameable, the movement of becoming before a sensation solidifies as feeling or emotion. It is a preconscious state of experiencing and has no externalized relation to social structures, which is exactly why it is so hard to talk about producing. Affect as in Massumi can also be understood as a way of being in the world — but what does this mean?

I don't know if it helps us to think about how affects can be produced, because they cannot. They work on you when you least expect it and once you realize you are experiencing “an affect” it no longer is one. The moment an experience is solidified, concretized and manifested it is no longer an affective one.

**Why are you then thinking about this idea in relation to performance and spectatorship, if the spectator can never experience it?**

First, because it is an idea that forces thinking out of rational clarification and which resists simplification. It somehow forces us to reconsider what contemporary experience can be understood to be.

Second, because it's the mode of functioning the world is following for the moment, whether we think about entertainment, commercialism, capitalism or politics. The affectivity of politics is no longer based on the content of speech but rather on how the tone of the voice affects bodies and what kind of effect it produces within the body of the people. This also relates to notions of fear — and how it is produced through speculation and in actuality, like for instance the speculation around terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and so on. The factual or the actual has stopped to govern bodies and the fictional, imaginary, even virtual is what produces and controls the affective state of the time we are living in.

**But why are you interested in reproducing such manipulative mechanisms?**

I guess I am not.

But I think the idea of resistance needs to be rethought also in relation to theatre. I don't think that a “no to spectacle” necessarily resists the spectacle, but rather reinforces the marginalization of resistance.

It is interesting to think about how a system can only be subverted from within its own rules, so when the top negotiator all of a sudden is the hostage taker the police force has a problem — how do you talk down the master of down talks?

It is only through producing navigation within the sea of spectacular/affective states of manipulation that real resistance can be articulated. It has to work through the senses and somehow induce a forced or even forcing navigation that might lead us to new places. There is no way to be outside, so what can be done is to move faster and smoother and operate from within the system.

**It is interesting that you address the relation between reduction and theatricality also from the point of perspective of the last ten years of theatre, but what is the alternative?**

Let's for a moment think about reduction as a system of subtraction. Removing parts until the

moment something becomes visible within “what’s missing”. But what if we consider the same effect but through opposite means: through multiplication or overproduction. If for instance an image is multiplied, what arises is a relation. The relation between one image and another, between one version of something and another — this relation can be understood as an access point to “the virtual”, the imaginary or the speculative — but as it is produced in front of your eyes you cannot not sense it and at the same time register or reflect on it. It is in this double bind of multiplication that the invisible becomes visible and that the virtual can be experienced, although only in its effects. I very much like this sentence from Brian Massumi where he says: The virtual that cannot be felt cannot but be felt, in its effects.

**This explains your interest in working on the effective, but still don’t you think you risk to fall into the trap of conventional effectivity of theatre performance?**

For the moment I am thinking a lot about performance formats and also how the notion of audience participation can be rethought. As I am not entirely convinced about the oppositional thinking that arises from separating material from immaterial performance, I am trying to think of the relation between them. For this reason I think that one frame alone cannot produce activation. I don’t think that participation or activation can only take place by removing the object of performance, but nor can it be produced if the frames of theatre remains the same. It is by framing materiality within the immateriality of affective production that something radical can take place.

**How do you imagine this?**

Perhaps this could be done by connecting different formats of performance. By not accepting the conventional setup of a 60- to 90-minute-long performance on a frontal stage. What would for instance happen if a frontal stage performance’s second part were to be a triple screening in the foyer, continued by a DVD performance (given to the audience before leaving) that only takes place once they come home and put the DVD into their computer? It is interesting to think about how the understanding of performance duration changes in this way. Each medium proposes and allows for a different form of expression and communication to take place and at the same time different forms of circulation and participation/access can be produced. I mean this in the sense of what kind of performance experience someone would have if they only got the DVD from a friend or found it back three years after they had actually seen the show? It is in the multiplication of formats that the complexity of theatricality can be navigated or manipulated.

**You don’t seem to have much resistance to manipulation of the senses?**

It is a question of what kind of manipulation for what kind of reason; there is never a simple answer to good and bad, especially not when it comes to performance and theatricality.

**But how does all this relate back to the notion of the cinematic body?**

Maybe the cinematic body is too narrow a definition of what my interest entails. Cinema is only one of many different forms of mediatization, which is probably a more accurate topic. Or how the connection between the body and media is what produces a new understanding of subjectivity through affectivity.

**Are you sure this is a more accurate explanation, it sounds rather general?**

Maybe the centre of the investigation is still cinema if we go back to this idea of doubling. But all the other forms of media, television, radio, internet, iPods and so on are part of this transformation of reality. It is in the relationship between these devices and the live body that we can get to understand something about contemporary subjectivity.

**So you are interested in different media of expression?**

Yes, different media or maybe even different genres of expression.

Or actually no, I am rather interested in the relations that arise between them, in their connections and in how the body inhabits and functions within many different kinds of media. In Second Life you can literally teleport yourself from one location to another within seconds and this changes your understanding of mobility and movement. It is an extreme version of what people who travel a lot experience on their own bodies, in terms of non-belonging and flexibility.

The interest in connecting genres of expression is more related to topology/territory and belonging rather than to an eclectic collection of different media expressions. It is in the passages from one field to another, from one format to another that a new theatricality can arise. It is in the loss of place of belonging that the body can start to be in many places at once. In the multitasking of skyping, while writing, while watching a movie, while having a conversation, while showering, while making love, while arguing about what the body can do.

**Maybe I can just bring you back to the track of doubling: why is this such an important notion for you to address in relation to theatricality?**

It has to do with accepting the fact that expression is never original, yet believing that it is possible to rethink expression in a way that makes something relevant appear. As times are constantly changing, so is the expression of the body. Doubling is a way of de-authenticating the spontaneity of expression, something I have tried to define as the authentically inauthentic. The authentically inauthentic is a representational model which does not pretend to be "true". As it does not pretend to be universal it also does not suffer from not fulfilling that exact theatrical expectation. It is simply about constructing another form of staged reality. Not representing or mirroring how expressions function in the world, but trying to produce an entirely new functioning. Trying to twist those recognizable forms into a virtual reality construction, where logic does not function the way it does in "real life".

**I know you have been working with doubling as a procedure, especially relating to the voice, why?**

Actually the idea of doubling came from thinking about stunt doubles and how the stunt double is always the invisible character acting within spectacular expressions. First I thought about how a performance could be based on this principle of making the invisible visible. Turning the margin into the centre of attention. While working with these stunt ideas I realized that so much of their effectivity is based on the contrast to the narrative, the psychological motivation and conventional dramaturgical tension. But as I am not at all interested in that part of cinematic expression, like the motivation behind the jumping from a building in order for it to be exciting, it was necessary to come up with a different approach. What came was the idea of "effects without a cause" and working on the effectivity of effects while not allowing them to function as they usually do. Approaching the body from the perspective of choreography rather than from theatre and narration. The idea has more to do with how

“effects” can be understood as movement that influence and affect us even without the entire narrative buildup or psychological motivation. The interest lies within the mechanism of spectacular effectivity in relation to the mechanism of the authentically inauthentic of doubling.

### **But have you already done more concrete experiments relating to this?**

One of the ideas we worked quite a lot on was the idea of ‘doubling’ the voice.

Working on the voice in cinema and the way the characters speak within verbal language, and how this leads to theatricality, was actually the least interesting. It was more the choreographic/expressive qualities of the voice that opened up the possibilities of doubling.

We tried to find out what the voice could be if not speech and came up with a definition connected to how oral expressions are still coded even when they are not within a verbal language. Here crying and screaming, singing and humming, came up as elements we could actually work on.

The idea of reproducing or doubling at that point became interesting to use as a way of transposing expression form one medium into another:

*we took all kinds of crying scenes out of actual films, edited them together and extracted the sound from the image. With this soundtrack we performed the sound by all performers hearing it through headphones and at the same time trying to reproduce it simultaneously within the group.*

What you get is a double ‘doubling’: we double the film itself, but also the sound pattern that everyone’s producing, which constructs a kind of multiplication of the expression that somehow undermines it. Crying is such a strong and clear expression, which in film of course is systematically produced. Not only by the actor, but also by the whole post-sync production and editing.

There’s an interesting thing that happens when you make the crying sound with more people: the impact is kind of similar to the mechanism of cinema, but it’s done through completely different means, since we don’t have the possibility of recording, retaking and post-syncing ourselves. This live doubling was a research into trying to recreate the impact of the movie sound/image design but with completely different means, and totally undermining the authenticity of the expression by omitting the character reference.

Another thing we started speaking about while doing it, was how the green space in this context can become a fictional space, which through what is happening in it can reflect different kinds of locations in the spectator’s imagination. Not as concretely as them imagining the performer sitting on a bus or lying on a bed, but realizing that the space is changing, and that this is happening through the voice. The voice connects to the green non-space, and the projection of the mind’s imagination is the only thing that is actually taking place.

### **If you were to continue working on this, what would you do?**

The next step could be to get more precise about how the doubling performativity of the voice functions. If you look at the crying scenes in cinema, the characters can be recorded looking straight into the camera, which is actually really odd for such an internalized emotion. We didn’t get far enough into controlling the scenes and the reception of what we are doing in relation to a potential spectator. We were going fully into the reproduction of the voice, and not yet into how the body and the gaze are implied, also in relation to how it produces locations. These specific imaginary spaces that become



visible to the spectator had much to do with the kind of physicality we would produce in relation to the voice expression. One performer's crying interpretation is different from another, and out of these multiple interpretations a multiple space is constructed: like the scene is happening in the kitchen, the bathroom, the bedroom and the bus at the same time. Except there are no real locations.

### **What kind of location is this then?**

For me it is a virtual space: a space that is nothing and at the same time full of everything. I don't think it's confusing, because the multiplication is itself very clear and recognizable. My question would be how far one can distance oneself from this recognizability before losing every trace of the intention or the meaning of the expression. For me it is important to make a distinction between the meaning of the representation we're performing and what the thing produces in the space and between the bodies, which is something more than the representation. It should cancel out authenticity, but still express and displace a strong emotion that relates to the effectiveness of cinema. Everything that is in-between the actual representations is not in itself confusing, but hopefully open enough to produce different imaginations. Somehow by delaying understanding.

### **So delaying the reading of the expression?**

Yes, something like that.

Sometimes I think one has to be careful in using language to narrow down possibilities. If we are speaking about the functioning of material expressions it is important to work out the representations in the doing, which then also produces a "material understanding". The deformation of cinematic expression - like crying, fighting, negotiating, screaming, dying and so on can only be banal when done within language. The functioning of this fictional world needs to come through doing, testing and trying out the twisting of experience. Material experience cannot be thought out beforehand; it has to be done.

As far as I know the senses cannot smell a thought or touch a logic, or can they?

# VOICE PRESSURE

*(after Bruce Nauman's body pressure)*

Press as much air out through your larynx as you possibly can.  
Allow the voice to produce any kind of sound that might come out of this pressure.

Press hard and concentrated

Form a pressing sound image of your voice.  
(suppose you just produced an un-recognizable sound which you would want to be able to reproduce.)

Press the air very hard and concentrated to reproduce the sound image.

(the sound of pressing very hard)

Press the air and the sound image together to one thing.

Notice the difference between the air pressure and the sound image.  
Which part corresponds and which part doesn't.

Consider the part of the air pressure which does not fit the sound image.

Concentrate on the tension in your facial muscles, the pain in your larynx, the taste in your mouth.

This might become a very affective exercise.

# Feeling, Emotion, Affect

*Eric Shouse*

1

AFFECT/AFFECTION.

Neither word denotes a personal feeling (sentiment in Deleuze and Guattari). *L'affect* (Spinoza's *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection* (Spinoza's *affection*) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body ... (Massumi, *Plateaus xvi*)

2

Though feeling and affect are routinely used interchangeably, it is important not to confuse affect with feelings and emotions. As Brian Massumi's definition of affect in his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* makes clear, affect is not a personal feeling. Feelings are *personal* and *biographical*, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal*. In the remainder of this essay, I will attempt to unpack the previous sentence and provide some examples that will illustrate why the distinction I've made between feelings, emotions, and affects is more than pedantry.

3

A feeling is a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled. It is personal and biographical because every person has a distinct set of previous sensations from which to draw when interpreting and labelling their feelings. An infant does not experience feelings because she/he lacks both language and biography. Yet, almost every parent will state unequivocally that their child has feelings and expresses them regularly (what the parent is actually bearing witness to is affect, about which, more shortly).

4

An emotion is the projection/display of a feeling. Unlike feelings, the display of emotion can be either genuine or feigned. The distinction between feelings and emotions was highlighted by an experiment conducted by Paul Ekman who videotaped American and Japanese subjects as they watched films depicting facial surgery. When they watched alone, both groups displayed similar expressions. When they watched in groups, the expressions were different. We broadcast emotion to the world; sometimes

that broadcast is an expression of our internal state and other times it is contrived in order to fulfill social expectations. Infants display emotions although they do not have the biography nor language skills to experience feelings. The emotions of the infant are direct expressions of affect.

## 5

An affect is a non-conscious experience of intensity; it is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential. Of the three central terms in this essay – feeling, emotion, and affect – affect is the most abstract because affect cannot be fully realised in language, and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness (Massumi, *Parables*). Affect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience. The body has a grammar of its own that cannot be fully captured in language because it “doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts...” (Massumi, *Parables* 30). Before this gets too abstract, let's return to the example of the infant.

## 6

An infant has no language skills with which to cognitively process sensations, nor a history of previous experiences from which to draw in assessing the continuous flow of sensations coursing through his or her body. Therefore, the infant has to rely upon *intensities* (a term that Massumi equates with affect). “Affects are comprised of correlated sets of responses involving the facial muscles, the viscera, the respiratory system, the skeleton, autonomic blood flow changes, and vocalisations that act together to produce an analogue of the particular gradient or intensity of stimulation impinging on the organism” (Demos 19). The key here is that for the infant affect is innate. Through facial expression, respiration, posture, color, and vocalisations infants are able to express the intensity of the stimulations that impinge upon them. Thus, parents are correct when they say their children express emotion. On the other hand, they are incorrect when they attribute feelings to the little tots. Their offspring have neither the biography nor the language to feel. The transition from childhood to adulthood is one in which we partially learn how to bring the display of emotion under conscious control. Affects, however, remain non-conscious and unformed and “are aroused easily by factors over which the individual has little control . . .” (Tompkins 54). For the infant affect is emotion, for the adult affect is what makes feelings feel. It is what determines the intensity (quantity) of a feeling (quality), as well as the background intensity of our everyday lives (the half-sensed, ongoing hum of quantity/quality that we experience when we are not really attuned to any experience at all).

## 7

One of the simplest ways to understand how affect continues to operate meaningfully in the lives of adults even after they have gained some conscious control over their emotions is to look at an individual whose affect system has gone haywire. Neurologist, Oliver Sacks, described his experience with such a person. She was an elderly patient who had suffered a hip fracture. The fracture resulted in the immobilisation of her leg for an extended period of time. At the time Sacks began working with her, the woman hadn't regained feeling in her leg in three years. She was not able to consciously move her leg and she felt that it was “missing.” However, when she heard music she would involuntarily tap her foot to the beat. “This suggested the possibility of music therapy – ordinary physiotherapy had been of no use. Using support (a walker, etc.), we were able gradually to get her to dance, and we finally achieved a virtually complete recovery of the leg, even though it had been defunct for three years” (Sacks 170-1).

## 8

The woman in the previous story couldn't move her leg via the usual conscious mechanisms because the leg had become disconnected from her a-conscious awareness of her body, or "proprioception." Proprioception is the "continuous but unconscious sensory flow from the movable parts of our body (muscles, tendons, joints), by which their position and tone and motion are continually monitored and adjusted, but in a way which is hidden from us because it is automatic and unconscious" (Sacks 43). Affect adds intensity, or a sense of urgency to proprioception which is why music – the recollection of which is partially stored in the body – could move this woman's leg when will alone could not.

## 9

What is remarkable about the story of the woman whose leg danced all on its own is not so much that affect trumped will in this particular case, but that this is just one example of the way in which affect always precedes will and consciousness (Massumi, *Parables* 29). At any moment hundreds, perhaps thousands of stimuli impinge upon the human body and the body responds by infolding them all at once and registering them as an intensity. Affect is this intensity. In the infant it is pure expression; in the adult it is pure potential (a measure of the body's readiness to act in a given circumstance). Silvan Tompkins explains that affect has the power to influence consciousness by amplifying our awareness of our biological state:

## 10

The affect mechanism is like the pain mechanism in this respect. If we cut our hand, saw it bleeding, but had no innate pain receptors, we would know we had done something which needed repair, but there would be no urgency to it. Like our automobile which needs a tune-up, we might well let it go until next week when we had more time. But the pain mechanism, like the affect mechanism, so amplifies our awareness of the injury which activates it that we are forced to be concerned, and concerned immediately (Tomkins 88).

## 11

Without affect feelings do not "feel" because they have no intensity, and without feelings rational decision-making becomes problematic (Damasio 204-22). In short, affect plays an important role in determining the relationship between our bodies, our environment, and others, and the subjective experience that we feel/think as affect dissolves into experience.

## 12

What does all of this mean for individuals who are interested in media and cultural studies? It means that describing "media effects" in terms of the communication of ideology sometimes results in the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after this therefore because of this) fallacy. This has to do with the second term in Massumi's definitions of affect/affection. *L'affection* is the process whereby affect is transmitted between bodies. "The transmission of affect means that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure distinction between the 'individual' and the 'environment'" (Brennan 6). Because affect is unformed and unstructured (unlike feelings and emotions) it can be transmitted between bodies. The importance of affect rests upon the fact that in many cases the message consciously received may be of less import to the receiver of that message than his or her non-

conscious affective resonance with the source of the message.

### 13

Music provides perhaps the clearest example of how the intensity of the impingement of sensations on the body can “mean” more to people than meaning itself. As Jeremy Gilbert put it, “Music has *physical effects* which can be identified, described and discussed but which are not the same thing as it having meanings, and any attempt to understand how music works in culture must . . . be able to say something about those effects without trying to collapse them into meanings.” In a lot of cases, the pleasure that individuals derive from music has less to do with the communication of meaning, and far more to do with the way that a particular piece of music “moves” them. While it would be wrong to say that meanings do not matter, it would be just as foolish to ignore the role of biology as we try to grasp the cultural effects of music. Of course, music is not the only form of expression that has the potential to transmit affect. Every form of communication where facial expressions, respiration, tone of voice, and posture are perceptible can transmit affect, and that list includes nearly every form of mediated communication other than the one you are currently experiencing.

### 14

Let me clarify that the transmission of affect does not mean that one person’s feelings become another’s. The transmission of affect is about the way that bodies affect one another. When your body infolds a context and another body (real or virtual) is expressing intensity in that context, one intensity is infolded into another. By resonating with the intensity of the contexts it infolds, the body attempts to ensure that it is prepared to respond appropriately to a given circumstance. Given the ubiquity of affect, it is important to take note that the power of many forms of media lies not so much in their ideological effects, but in their ability to create affective resonances independent of content or meaning.

### 15

The power of affect lies in the fact that it is unformed and unstructured (abstract). It is affect’s “abstractivity” that makes it transmittable in ways that feelings and emotions are not, and it is because affect is transmittable that it is potentially such a powerful social force. This is why it is important not to confuse affect with feelings and emotions, and why I agree with Brian Massumi that Lawrence Grossberg’s term “affective investments” doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. If, as Massumi proposes, affect is “unformed and unstructured,” and it is always prior to and/or outside of conscious awareness, how is one to “invest” in it (*Parables* 260)? Investment presumes forethought and a site for deposit, and affect precedes thought and is as stable as electricity. This isn’t to say that there aren’t practices where certain enhancing forms of affect are more prevalent, only that the people who engage in those practices are not investing in affect, but rather in the hope of being moved. Of course, one of the lessons of cultural studies is that investing in hope has moved people before.

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