

Makis Solomos

Aesthetics of Agostino Di Scipio's Ecosystems

“Molecularisation” / Granular Paradigm

[Audiofile: [1-molecularisation.wav](#) 12 min.]

Deleuze/Guattari:

“If there is a modern age, it is, of course, the age of the cosmic. [...] The assemblage no longer confronts the forces of chaos, it no longer uses the forces of the earth or the people to deepen itself but instead opens onto the forces of the Cosmos. [...] The essential relation is no longer matters-forms (or substances-attributes); neither is it the continuous development of form and the continuous variation of matter. It is now a direct relation material-forces. A material is a molecularized matter, which must accordingly "harness" forces; these forces are necessarily forces of the Cosmos. There is no longer a matter that finds its corresponding principle of intelligibility in form. It is now a question of elaborating a material charged with harnessing forces of a different order. [...] 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. [...] This is the postromantic turning point: the essential thing is no longer forms and matters, or themes, but forces, densities, intensities. The earth itself swings over, tending to take on the value of pure material for a force of gravitation or weight. [...] When forces become necessarily cosmic, material becomes necessarily molecular, with enormous force operating in an infinitesimal space”.

(Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 342–343.)

Paysages historiques

1. Paris. Robotique des Lumières

[Audiofile: [2-paysage.wav](#) 9 min.]

“Becoming” / Emergence

[Audiofile: [3-becoming.wav](#) 12 min.]

Deleuze/Guattari:

“[...] A kind of order or apparent progression can be established for the segments of becoming in which we find ourselves; becoming-woman, becoming-child; becoming-animal, -vegetable, or -mineral; becomings molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles. Fibers lead us from one to the other, transform one into the other as they pass through doors and across thresholds. Singing or composing, painting, writing have no other aim: to unleash these becomings. Especially music; music is traversed by a becoming-woman, becoming-child, and not only at the level of themes and motifs: the little refrain, children's games and dances, childhood scenes. Instrumentation and orchestration are permeated by becomings-animal, above all becomings-bird, but many others besides. The lapping, wailing of molecular discordances have always been present, even if instrumental evolution with other factors is now giving them growing importance, as the value of a new threshold for a properly musical content: the sound molecule, relations of speed and slowness between particles. Becomings-animal plunge into becomings-molecular. This raises all kinds of questions.

In a way, we must start at the end: all becomings are already molecular. [...] Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfills, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to

what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire. [...]

That is the essential point for us: you become-animal only if, by whatever means or elements, you emit corpuscles that enter the relation of movement and rest of the animal particles, or what amounts to the same thing, that enter the zone of proximity of the animal molecule. You become animal only molecularly. You do not become a barking molar dog, but by barking, if it is done with enough feeling, with enough necessity and composition, you emit a molecular dog. [...]

Yes, all 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. If this is true, then we must say the same of things human: there is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child, that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities (although it is possible—only possible—for the woman or child to occupy privileged positions in relation to these becomings). What we term a molar entity is, for example, the woman as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject. Becoming-woman is not imitating this entity or even transforming oneself into it. We are not, however, overlooking the importance of imitation, or moments of imitation, [...] All we are saying is that these indissociable aspects of becoming-woman must first be understood as a function of something else: not imitating or assuming the female form, but emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman. [...]"

(Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 272–277.)

Editor's note:

The audio-documentation of Prof. Solomos' lecture stops here abruptly. The following shows the slides of his presentation only.

Due di uno

[Audio-file missing]

“Deterritorialization” / Critic of sound reification

[Audio-file missing]

Deleuze/Guattari:

“Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings. [...] If becoming-woman is the first quantum, or molecular segment, with the becomings-animal that link up with it coming next, what are they all rushing toward? Without a doubt, toward becoming-imperceptible. The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula. [...]”

(Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 279.)

Deleuze/Guattari:

“What does music deal with, what is the content indissociable from sound expression? It is hard to say, but it is something: a child dies, a child plays, a woman is born, a woman dies, a bird arrives, a bird flies off. We wish to say that these are not accidental themes in music (even if it is possible to multiply examples), much less imitative exercises; they are something essential. Why a child, a woman, a bird? It is because musical expression is inseparable from a becoming woman, a becoming-child, a becoming-animal that constitute its content. Why does the child die, or the

bird fall as though pierced by an arrow? Because of the "danger" inherent in any line that escapes, in any line of flight or creative deterritorialization: the danger of veering toward destruction".

(Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 299)

Deleuze/Guattari:

"It seems that when sound deterritorializes, it becomes more and more refined; it becomes specialized and autonomous. [...] Sound owes this power not to signifying or "communicational" values (which on the contrary presuppose that power), nor to physical properties (which would privilege light over sound), but to a phylogenetic line, a machinic phylum that operates in sound and makes it a cutting edge of deterritorialization. But this does not happen without great ambiguity: sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us. It takes leave of the earth, as much in order to drop us into a black hole as to open us up to a cosmos. It makes us want to die. Since its force of deterritorialization is the strongest, it also effects the most massive of reterritorializations, the most numbing, the most redundant. Ecstasy and hypnosis. Colors do not move a people. Flags can do nothing without trumpets. Lasers are modulated on sound. The refrain is sonorous par excellence, but it can as easily develop its force into a sickly sweet ditty as into the purest motif, or Vinteuil's little phrase. And sometimes the two combine: Beethoven used as a 'signature tune'."

(Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 347–348.)

Di Scipio:

Modes of interference / 3

"...is a sound installation working in real-time, in the real-space (= the sound affects the surrounding environment, and the latter affects the process by which the sound is generated)

...consists in a dynamical network of sonic interactions, a system that lives only on feedback (Larsen tones) and regulates its own behaviour depending on the sounds that emerge from the feedback loop

...is a work on the electric guitar as a today torn and frayed pop-culture icon, with its overstated and consumed phallic symbolism

...is, especially, a work on the self-feeding and saturated sonority of the electric guitar, and therefore a deconstruction of an instrument experienced here as a kind of (worn-out, consumed) sonic icon

(Agostino Di Scipio, *Modes of interference / 3*: "Presentation")

Abstract

This paper proposes a deleuzian-guattarian reading of Agostino Di Scipio's aesthetics, putting into parallel lines some characteristics of his music with ideas from Deleuze's and Guattari's *Thousand plateaus*. It starts with the granular paradigm and its peculiar use from Di Scipio, and it compares it to the deleuzian-guattarian concept of "molecular becoming". Then, starting this time from a deleuzian-guattarian concept, the concept of becoming, it develops the idea of emergence, one of Di Scipio's major ideas. Finally, it shows that Di Scipio's critic of sound can be compared with the concept of deterritorialisation, which is one of *Thousand plateaus'* most important concepts.

Author

Makis Solomos is Professor at the University Paris 8 (Esthétique, musicology et creation musicale). His main fields of research are: 1. Xenakis' music: PhD on the notion of »sonority« (1993), articles and papers that introduced new topics, books, and conferences in various countries. In collaboration with Benoît Gibson and Sharon Kanach, he is currently preparing a critical edition of Xenakis' writings (in nine volumes). 2. Researches on recent music, exploring questions on subjects like Adorno, globalization, new technologies, spectral music, electronic music, etc., and composers like Wagner, John Zorn, Webern, Varèse, Boulez, Vaggione, etc. He has published *Formel Informel: musique-philosophie* (with Antonia Soulez and Horacio Vaggione: Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003); he has edited or co-edited *L'espace: musique-philosophie* (1998), *La métaphore lu-mineuse. Xenakis-Grisey* (2003), *Musiques, arts, technologies. Pour une approche critique / Music, arts and technologies. Towards a critical approach / Músicas, artes y tecnologías. Por una aproximación crítica* (2004), *Espaces composables. Essais sur la musique et la pensée musicale d'Horacio Vaggione* (2007; English version: *Horacio Vaggione: Composition Theory, Contemporary Music Review*, volume 24 parts 4+5, 2005). He has co-founded the review *Filigiane. Musique, esthétique, sci-ences, société*.

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